



Essays on Policing, Legal Estrangement, and Urban Marginality

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ESSAYS ON POLICING, LEGAL ESTRANGEMENT, AND URBAN MARGINALITY

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Committee on Higher Degrees in Social Policy

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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in the subject of

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ESSAYS ON POLICING, LEGAL ESTRANGEMENT, AND URBAN MARGINALITY

ABSTRACT

How do parents and youth in American cities understand policing in their everyday lives? This dissertation tackles this question using three cases. The first empirical chapter visits Washington, DC, in 2012-2013. I draw upon fifty in-depth interviews to understand how African-American mothers living in low-income housing perceive and strategically rely upon the police. The chapter identifies four frames that justify momentary trust in the police: officer exceptionalism, domain specificity, therapeutic consequences, and institutional navigation. The chapter aims to situate mothers' interactions with police within a broader social milieu than is usual in scholarship on police-community relations.

The second empirical chapter visits Cuyahoga County, Ohio. There, based on in-depth interviews with a racially and socioeconomically diverse sample of seventy-three parents, I show how families use the police as part of the neighborhood frames they apply to communities within and beyond Cleveland. Policing, like schooling, is a located institution that actively gives meaning to place. In a similar spirit to the DC study, the Cleveland study situates policing within urban social processes—here, neighborhood framing.

The third empirical chapter brings us back East, to Baltimore, Maryland, shortly after the death of Freddie Gray in 2015. Drawing from fifty in-depth interviews with African-American youth collected through participatory research, this chapter shows how police harshness and the Baltimore “riot” fed into young people's larger understandings of the collective fate of their city. These youths fought to maintain their personal aspirations in a city they saw as declining. The results contribute to theory on civil unrest, collective efficacy, and the aspirations of marginalized youth.

The dissertation, as a whole, has broader ambitions. In Chapters One and Five, I describe and develop the concept of *legal estrangement*. While other concepts, such as legal cynicism, shed light on the perceived bindingness or efficacy of the law and legal authority, legal estrangement focuses on the perceived *group inclusivity* of law and legal authority. This concern about the inclusiveness of the law connects to a normative interest in *social solidarity*, a value that should (again) guide empirical research, policy discussion, and legal interpretation.

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I dedicate this dissertation to Eddie Thompson (1924-2008) and Gathe Gary Thompson (1920-2018), my beloved grandparents, who resisted misguided orthodoxy and freed me to “get [my] lesson.”

And to Bryson and Reagan, for whom I’ll try to do the same.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My journey to this point has been long, improbable, and complicated. It took many friends, loved ones, generous mentors, ephemeral alliances, and moments of grace to get me here, and I want to personally and specifically thank as many fellow travelers as I can. So, strap in, with apologies for lacking conventional academic restraint.

For insight and generosity throughout my dissertation completion process, I owe great thanks to my committee, Bruce Western, Matthew Desmond, Michèle Lamont, and Rob Sampson.

Bruce Western has fundamentally shaped my thinking about the basic project of academic sociology. Bruce's example challenges me to think not just about prescriptive sociology, but normative sociology—the idea that from our empirical work, principles for how the world could and should be organized might emerge. The Justice and Inequality reading group offered a rare space in which to engage these questions with Bruce and with fellow graduate students. Chiefly for this reason, Bruce's influence is observable throughout this dissertation and will continue to shape my future work. Bruce, along with the reading group, also made me feel more legitimate as a sociologist of criminal justice. I did not set out with a mission of studying any aspect of the criminal justice system, and I still feel only precariously identifiable as a criminal justice researcher. However, the opportunity to dialogue with people working on punishment, and to play a very small role in the *Boston Reentry Study* (BRS), gave me a familiarity and whet my appetite to go deeper into this field. I was initially too intimidated to approach Bruce about BRS, but through a stroke of luck I still don't understand, I wound up getting to join the study team anyway. It was thought-provoking to work on a team project with a completely different group of people than those I had worked with in the past, and the experience helped me grow as a qualitative researcher. It is also worth mentioning that Bruce is not only an influential and rigorous scholar, but also a generous and humane person who cares about community—not just theoretically, but tangibly. This aspect of being his student has been critical to my graduate school experience, and it is one I hope to emulate in my own career. Thanks to Bruce for bringing me into his orbit, and for his constant support and kindness.

Similar to Bruce, Matt Desmond inspires me to try and create work that matters in the world. But Matt also taught me the nuts and bolts of writing a sociology paper. (I hope these chapters do not completely belie his efforts.) Earlier in graduate school, Matt pored over multiple drafts of my qualifying paper. He told me, in a kind yet direct way, when I “had game” and when I lacked it. When I lost my advisor and had difficulty getting my qualifying paper approved, Matt advocated for me and stood in the gap. When I got my first solo revise-and-resubmit decision, Matt spent hours walking me through how to respond, even sharing some of his revision memos. During at least two critical moments during graduate school, I found myself on the phone with Matt crying about a dumb professional move. Each time, he spoke with me immediately and helped resolve the issue, never making me feel I was wasting his time. When I unexpectedly needed recommendation letters for the job market, Matt—while on book tour and traveling in California—helped me decide who else I could ask on short notice, wrote a strong letter himself in just two days without asking me to provide content, and followed up to make sure I had asked for the other recommendations. Matt's guidance propelled me through some of my darkest days as a graduate student. I wish there were more illustrative words, but simply and sincerely—thank you. I'll spend the rest of my career paying that forward.

When I was clerking in 2009-2010, I came across Michèle Lamont and Mario Small's "How Culture Matters: Enriching Our Understandings of Poverty." As arcane as that primer might have seemed for a lawyer, it is the piece most responsible for convincing me to return to school despite my misgivings. That chapter showed me that sociology could help me engage in nuanced conversations about culture, poverty, and the law. Later, I was pleased to learn that Michèle was not only one of the most insightful scholars thinking about culture and inequality today, but also the mentor of budding sociologists' fantasies. When I sent Michèle an annoying introductory email as an applicant to the program, she responded graciously, the same day, while on leave. Once I was admitted, she talked to me over the phone from Paris. Michèle gave me my first research assistant position, working on the project that would culminate in *Getting Respect*. Michèle arranged the "Inside the Sausage Factory" workshop as well for her advisees, and being part of those conversations kept me grounded in the discipline's theoretical developments. Michèle's gracious decision to let me teach undergraduate Social Theory in Spring 2014 re-educated me about sociological theory and unexpectedly contributed to much of my scholarship in law and sociology since. Michèle, more than anyone I have known in any discipline, is absolutely invested in shepherding her students. She lets no one slip through the crater-sized cracks in the grad school pavement. Thank you for providing that sense of security to me and many others.

Rob Sampson has been a more recent addition to my committee, but he has been an intellectual inspiration since the day I stepped into the now-defunct Urban Social Processes Workshop. I came to understand, mostly from Rob, that sociology is not a discipline of particular methods but a discipline of important questions about social life and social context. I remember an early workshop in which Rob demanded that a presenter go out into the world and spend time doing fieldwork to get better ideas about mechanisms. As anyone who reads any part of this dissertation will see, my neurons and synapses are now stained with Rob's ideas, especially legal cynicism and collective efficacy. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be in conversation with his scholarship and eagerly anticipate many future conversations.

Though not officially on my dissertation committee, Kathryn Edin is the reason every project in this dissertation happened. When I was a first-year student and eager to start field research when I should have been studying for generals, Kathy gave me a research budget to fund the study described in Chapter Two. The next year, I joined her and Stefanie's How Parents House Kids research team, based in Cleveland, Ohio, and Dallas, Texas; the Cleveland study anchors Chapter Three. Chapter Four was also possible because of Kathy. Over the years, my interest in policing came into sharper focus. Thus, when Kathy got funding for a "rapid response" project on Baltimore youth and policing a few days after the Freddie Gray unrest, she brought me in and gave me free reign to design a study, to make it participatory, to hire researchers, and to write using these incredible data. While I was in Baltimore, Kathy relinquished her office space to my lovely yet drama-filled research team. I cannot repay any of this. But beyond supporting my research, Kathy completely shaped my approach to fieldwork. Every time I put together an interview guide, the first question is, "Tell me the story of your life." When I advise a student doing a qualitative project, I begin by sharing with them Kathy's "Ten Commandments" (and Stefanie's Pearls of Wisdom). Kathy Edin brought me here, and I am truly appreciative. I am also grateful to Kathy for sharing Kaitlin Edin-Nelson with me during Summer 2015, a stellar researcher and a ray of light.

Stefanie DeLuca has also been a ray of light during this journey. Aside from being an insightful scholar, Stefanie is the best manager of people I have ever encountered. Under any conditions, team fieldwork can make people testy, but in both 2013 and 2014, something very difficult happened in my

personal life a few weeks before we started fieldwork. This is to say, I was not the easiest person to have on board. But Stefanie has a knack for reinterpreting bad situations into positive ones, and for helping people embrace the messiness of research and life. Now, when I look back on Dallas, I think mostly about amazing interviews and evenings by the pool; I chuckle about everything else (#embraceDallas). In Summer 2015, Stefanie was a positive and welcoming presence in Baltimore despite working long hours on her book. Her brilliant spirit makes the occasionally grim world of academic sociology tolerable, and I hope to have much more time together in coming years.

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Presentations at the Culture and Social Analysis Workshop at Harvard, the Urban Social Processes Workshop at Harvard, the Proseminar on Inequality and Social Policy at Harvard, Yale Law School's Moot Camp, The *Yale Law Journal* Reading Group, the Benjamin E. Cardozo School of Law, Emory Law School, the Aage Sørensen Conference, and presentations at ASA and LSA, along with job talks at the law schools of Boston College, Boston University, Brooklyn Law School, Columbia University, Cornell University, Duke University, Fordham University, Georgetown University, New York University, Northeastern University, Seton Hall University, Stanford University, University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Chicago, University of Connecticut, University of Georgia, University of Pennsylvania, University of Richmond, University of

South Carolina, University of Texas, William & Mary, and Yale University, sharpened my interdisciplinary lens and the theoretical arguments on legal cynicism and legal estrangement, as reflected in Chapters 1 and 5.

Amy Chua sent me on what at times felt like a Sisyphean journey toward a full-time academic position. Before meeting Amy, I had never seriously considered becoming an academic and really did not know what they did. But I had the great fortune of being assigned to Amy Chua's first-year Contracts section, and purely through the grace of the Universe, wound up doing well on her exam. When we met to go over my exam, Amy started closing the meeting by asking, "Have you ever considered becoming a law professor?" Then she spoke animatedly about how being a law professor was "the best job in the world" and insisted that I would be good at it. Amy's pitch for academia could not have come at a better time: After the Fall 2005 semester at Yale Law School, I was at a loss as to what I was doing there. I had little interest in case law, though I arrived tentatively hoping to become a civil rights litigator. With some exceptions, classes left me confused and intellectually cold. I spent my evenings imagining alternative careers (sometimes gazing longingly at the website for Harvard's Social Policy Ph.D. program). I did not know even then that I wanted to become a professor, only that I desperately wanted to be learning *something else—anything else*. But Amy had pegged me perfectly. To be sure, there were many times when it felt I had taken a wrong turn, as if the work I loved had no place in the academy—certainly not the legal academy. Yet, here we are. I am so thrilled that it finally feels real and to have Amy not only as a mentor, but as a colleague and friend.

Tracey Meares taught me criminal law in Spring 2008, which is only the third class I loved in law school. Most of my class comments were off-base, but I kept trying. When I raised my hand, Tracey usually looked at me with what seemed a mixture of pity and irritation. (Actually, she probably was not having such thoughts, but like many law students I was insecure enough to feel pitiful and irritated with myself on the professor's behalf.) Tracey somehow got wind that I was considering academia, and she took me to lunch at an Indian restaurant near campus in December 2008. Afterwards, I wrote a couple of friends an email with the subject, "I survived"—as in, I survived lunch with Tracey Meares. It is now nearly a decade later, and Tracey has moved very far from being someone I mostly feared to someone I deeply respect, admire, and wish to emulate. Her willingness to provide rich and detailed comments on a paper that took issue with some of her work, and even *advocating* for me when she could have used her power to much different ends, is a testament to her seriousness as a scholar and her generosity as a person. Moreover, Tracey has made herself available as a substantive mentor in ways that I have never experienced (and thus do not know how to react to). I look forward to what will hopefully be many years as colleagues and friends.

The Culp Colloquium and Emerging Scholars program, named for pioneering critical race legal scholar Jerome McCristal Culp Jr., entered my life recently in May 2016. Yet the Culp community has had a radical impact on my daily work and my personal development since then, and is fully responsible for any success I had on the job market. I cannot fully articulate how grateful I am to Dorothy Brown, Guy Uriel-Charles, Rick Banks, and especially to Bertrall Ross for bringing me to their attention. Thanks to Aziza Ahmed and Paul Gugliuzza for helping to prepare me for the market, and to Daniel Abebe, Jamal Greene, and Kenneth Mack for incredible kindness. Among the junior Culp community, Tendayi Achiume, Chaz Arnett, LaToya Baldwin-Clark, Rabia Belt, Jessica Eaglin, Trevor Gardner, Jasmine Harris, Eisha Jain, Irene Joe, Craig Konnoth, Portia Pedro, Veronica Root, Josh Sellers, and my old friend Matiangai Sirleaf are genuine compatriots.

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For four of the five years I resided in Cambridge, I lived at Lowell House as a resident tutor. Lowell, though gorgeous, was teeming with unexpected roommates by the end—huge cockroaches, mice, and carpenter ants, among others. There were times when my workload felt overwhelming, and I was not always a great tutor. But to meet and ultimately to befriend Soa Andrian, Alex Diaz, Hana Kim, Karina Shaw, Natalie Smith, and Beatrice Walton, every mouse pellet and moth ball was worth it. Ana Barros and Nafisa Eltahir were not Lowellians, but they are two of my true heroes. Some of my strongest bonds were with fellow tutors. In the early years, returning to Lowell and seeing Michael Uy, Alyssa Liles-Amponsah, Aalia Liles-Amponsah, David Amponsah, Jonathan Bruno, Brandon Terry, Sheggai Tamerat-Terry, and Shaniece Criss made it feel like coming home. Cassie Robertson was a sociology friend before she became a Lowell friend, but overlapping with her as a tutor in 2016-2017 deepened our connection, and seeing how much better apartment B-13 looked with her living there instead of me was humbling. Spending Christmas 2013 with Michael Uy's family is a precious memory that increased my resolve to relocate to California one day. Finally, no recognition of Lowell House would be complete without specific thanks to Diana Eck, Dorothy Austin, Beth Terry, and Caitlin Casey.

The Honorable Cameron McGowan Currie allowed me to be her term law clerk the year after I graduated from law school. Judge Currie assigned me cases that she thought I would enjoy working on, and several were so interesting that I still think about them. The Judge also encouraged us to nourish our personal lives, and so for me, the year was also full of Anusara yoga, farmers' markets, road trips to the beach and the mountains, and strolls along Riverfront Park. My clerkship experience was so ideal that when I did not love the work, I realized that there was no place for me in traditional legal practice. When a job is unpleasant, people often blame their boss, or their coworkers, or some other situational variable. It

usually takes them a while to think, “Maybe this type of work is just not for me.” But because the Judge was so terrific, and my fellow clerks Virginia Vroegop and Emily Harrill were so wise and gracious, there was no escaping that the problem was me. Because this realization came early in the clerkship year, and because I did not go through a period of hating my boss or my coworkers, I spent evenings and weekends researching graduate schools and studying for the GRE. In this way, in addition to being the best boss a budding lawyer could ask for, Judge Currie laid the foundation for my more natural career as a sociologist.

Receiving the Harry S. Truman Scholarship during my junior year of college opened a whole new world for me. “Trumanity” has supported me through countless setbacks, celebrated my victories, inspired me to press on, and has become a part of my extended family. I am eternally grateful to Scott Henderson, Judith Bainbridge, and Glen Halva-Neubauer for opening the Truman pathway for me. I am also grateful to the anonymous application readers and to the 2002 Atlanta Regional Review Panel: Rep. Stacey Abrams, President James Barker, Fred Slabach, Mary Tolar, and Tara Yglesias (then Kneller).

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I shudder to imagine where I would be without Gladys Robertson, who started T.L. Hanna’s speech and debate program and ran it for decades. Gladys, with her trademark humor and outrageousness and directness, is my only conceivable answer to the “Who was your favorite teacher?” security question. Because of debate and because Gladys required that we write our own cases instead of using prefab materials from debate camps, I read Rawls, Adler, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Hobbes, and Aristotle as a fifteen-year-old public-school student, holed up in the Anderson County Public Library. Gladys also embraced my free-spirited quiriness, which has evolved but remained present. She thought it was funny rather than shameful when I brought a lunchbox covered with ants to her class, or a bucket of cashews, or an untouched jumbo-sized bottle of lotion. During one practice, shortly before the state championships and district qualifier, Gladys ribbed me for lacking a killer instinct compared to Courtney and Chetan. Even now, when I don’t feel like dealing with an annoying issue, I occasionally wonder, “Was Gladys right? *Do* I lack a killer instinct?” Whatever work ethic I lacked in high school, Gladys demanded more from me—and from all of her students—in ways that motivate me nearly twenty years later.

I even thank Betty Reese, a cynical elementary school teacher who became the target of my earliest achievement-oriented revenge fantasies (e.g., “I wonder how Mrs. Reese would feel if she knew I was student body president?”, “I wonder how Mrs. Reese would feel if she knew I got a college scholarship”, “I wonder how Mrs. Reese would feel if she knew I went to Harvard,” and so forth). If anyone ever comes across Mrs. Reese, please inform her of these developments.

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I dedicate this dissertation to Big Mama and Big Daddy, who were more like additional parents than regular grandparents. Big Daddy used to listen to this cassette tape of a Baptist preacher who whooped, “I don't need—*ah*—no flowers—*ah*—when I'm dead—*ah*.” To Big Mama and Big Daddy: In lieu of flowers, I hope you will accept this dissertation.

Before I was born, Big Daddy worked as a public-school janitor, and Big Mama spent decades as a housekeeper, working with Miss Ernestine to cook and clean up after the Allens and their children. Both Big Mama and Big Daddy grew up tenant farming in rural South Carolina, and neither went to school beyond sixth grade. Yet they made us believe that the world was big and was ours. By the time I came around, Big Mama and Big Daddy were retired, so they spent most of their time doing Stacey's and my bidding—carting us back and forth to school, to the public library, to piano lessons, to “the country,” and in my case to insipid after-school jobs at Chick-fil-A and Winn-Dixie. Our demands were endless.

As I grew older and left Anderson, visits to Big Mama and Big Daddy's house became less frequent but more important. Coming home from college, campaigns, or law school to a dish of banana pudding or a tray of “graham cracker cookies” reminded me that even if others needed a moment to assess whether I was still pure enough to be worthy of embrace, their embrace was unconditional. In their last years, any time I was in South Carolina, their home on Thomas Street was my first stop. During each visit, as my role gradually shifted from care-receiver to care-giver, the joy and comfort we shared with each other was always palpable. Big Mama died in the final days of January 2018 as I was putting the finishing touches on this dissertation. When I helped clean out her house in March, we found several boxes carefully packed with my favorite book series from childhood: *Babysitters Club*, *Sweet Valley High*, R.L. Stine's *Fear Street*, *Wayside School*. Apparently, someone had tried to get rid of them, but Big Mama insisted on keeping them for me.

In difficult times, I transport myself to particular moments in the past. I watch Big Mama bait my hook and drop my fishing line into Broadway Lake, Big Daddy sitting on an overturned pail. I pick through a brown paper bag stuffed with oranges, apples, walnuts, and Brazil nuts, an illicit Christmas gift. I sit across from Big Mama, who proudly shows me an article from *The Hometown* with my name in it, extracted and preserved in a photo album. I devour a mammoth slice of watermelon with a spoon, digging too close to the rind for Big Daddy, who grouses that I should get another piece instead. I pluck a barely-ripe orb from the plum tree they planted in the back yard of our house on Drew Street, slightly disappointed that because of my and my mom's brown thumbs, the peach tree never bore edible fruit. I debate with Big Mama, pushing back against her analyses of Sharon's latest misdeeds on *The Young and the Restless* or Brooke's on *The Bold and the Beautiful*. These memories—mundane, life-sustaining.

Elizabeth Diane Fruster is an Olympics-level mother who deserves every ounce of recognition for anything I have achieved. In her earliest years, before the adoption, she survived truly abject living conditions. Although she never had the opportunity to go to college, she was a quintessential nerd, a serious Trekkie who loved Poe and the Brontë sisters and thus always nourished my intellectual interests. When I wanted to shirk chores and lose myself in books, she allowed it. When I wanted a chemistry set, she bought it. Because she knew music was in my genes, she found a way to get me a violin and a piano. Although she couldn't always afford the newest reference books, she filled several bookcases with secondhand Childcraft books, Funk & Wagnalls, World Book Encyclopedias, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and much more. Our home was a slightly dated reference library, and it was wondrous.

When I was ten, Diane Fruster bought a used IBM, loaded only with educational games like "Typing Tutor 5" and "Math Blaster." (I had to advocate for "The Oregon Trail," which Mom insisted was stupid but that I argued could teach us history, and for "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?," which Mom eventually allowed because it taught geography.) At the time, most people in our orbit did not really know what a computer was, certainly not a personal computer. Mom worked up to three jobs at a time, but she came home from work and drilled me on spelling bee words, listened to me practice the piano, and sat through endless rambling about the speech and debate team. I grew up believing that my ideas, activities, and ambitions were more important than everything else. We were working class but concertedly cultivated.

Diane Fruster also put more effort into fun than most of our friends' parents. I look fondly on a childhood filled with elaborate slumber parties, Pizza Hut, Blockbuster Video, and "Chocolate Delight." Even though Black kids are not generally known for romping around the mountains, Diane Fruster regularly took us on camping trips (more like "glamping"), where—after begrudgingly hiking for an hour, usually the Carrick Creek trail at Table Rock—we slept in log cabins, ate mail-order bacon-wrapped steaks, roasted marshmallows, and wiled away the hours playing Uno, Sorry, or Monopoly. Several of my "friends" hung around because my mom was the coolest and they wanted in on the action.

When it came time for college and church rules presented an obstacle, Diane Fruster nimbly maneuvered around them. It disgusts me that she had to ask church leaders to allow me to accept a full college scholarship, but she sought their permission for me. For the first eighteen months of my postsecondary schooling, after working long hours all week, Mom picked me up each Saturday morning and returned me to school on Sunday evenings. For other Zion kids, the beginning and end of the inquiry was, "Well, Sister Guest said saints don't go to college." Though she may regret it now, I thank my mother for shielding me from that unjustified edict.

An inevitable consequence of raising a child to think freely and research thoroughly is that at some point, that child is going to interrogate the institutions that structure her own life. That happened here. It is sad and frustrating that Zion has robbed my mother of well-deserved maternal pride, but I remain hopeful—prayerful—that she will one day find freedom, clarity, and peace.

I appreciate the existence of Timothy Neal Bell. Mom gave me smarts; Tim gave me music.

I've spent a large portion of my life laughing with and often at my sister, Stacey Elizabeth Hagood. My time in graduate school marks our growing closer, more like sisters that we had ever been before. Stacey kept us feeling and operating like family when religious circumstances threatened to separate us. Stacey has grown into a vibrant and vivacious woman who brings me great joy. My niece, Reagan Elizabeth Hagood, may be the biggest diva I have ever seen despite being seven years old. I predict future celebrity. My nephew, Bryson Isaac Hagood, is sweet and thoughtful, possibly the most loving child I have ever met. I treasure the Pokémon cards he has gifted me. I try not to show it, but I am just as upset when we part ways as he is. In addition to Big Mama and Big Daddy, I dedicate this work to Bryson and Reagan, whose health and well-being I am as committed to as Big Mama and Big Daddy were to mine.

Asad Asad was my first friend in graduate school. I had an inkling that he was not just generically nice but fundamentally good when he was the only person from our cohort to let me know that we had an assignment when I had to miss the first day of school. Over our first year, through weekdays of coursework, weeknights of *Glee*, and weekends of debate judging, Asad became my closest friend. Over subsequent years, we challenged but always loved each other, learning that sometimes, “it is what it is,” but at other times, transformation and true understanding are possible. Today, Asad is a member of my family in every sense of that word: He is one of “my people”—the people who thrill you, amuse you, open your mind, make you scream, and break your heart, but who will always be a cherished part of your life. Our friendship has made us both better, and I look forward to lifting each other, figuratively and literally, over the coming years.

To call Yaseen Eldik my “best friend” is to seriously understate his role in my life. In an unexpected way, this final foray into graduate school brought us together: We met at Truman camp but did not spend social time together until the Summer of 2011. He was a summer student with Harvard's Leadership Alliance program, and I was in Cambridge for a few days to look for apartments. I told Yaseen I was visiting and suggested that we meet for lunch or coffee, expecting to engage in the usual mentorship conversations. Instead—in typical Yaseen fashion—he took me to a traditional Italian dinner and dessert in the North End and then, the next day, on a long tour of Harvard's libraries. Even though we didn't know each other well, Yaseen reminded me of what honest friendship felt like. I had been famished but did not know it. Through all the carbs and the walking, we forged an unexpected but undeniable connection, and we've managed to eat a lot more carbs and do a lot more walking together since. I also thank Sanaa Nadim, Elsayed Eldik, and my adopted siblings Marwa and Hysem for letting me be a tiny part of their family. I love them all so much, and I look forward to resolving the Nilla Wafer v. Oreo v. Lorna Doone banana pudding debate with them before next Thanksgiving.

And finally, I thank the Universe for allowing me to be a part of it.

CHAPTER ONE:

AFRICAN AMERICANS, URBAN MARGINALITY, AND LEGAL ESTRANGEMENT

How do parents and youth in American cities, especially African Americans, understand the role of policing in their everyday lives? For as long as scholars have studied the relationship between African Americans and criminal justice, they have documented deep distrust of the system. In the early twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois was likely the first scholar to empirically document this distrust (see Du Bois 1904; Morris 2015). As part of a series of studies of African-American life, Du Bois and his collaborators collected survey, interview, and administrative data on crime, arrest, and incarceration. Du Bois and collaborators found, among other things, that white officials and black men had greatly divergent perspectives on the possibilities of justice for African Americans in Georgia courts. Du Bois reasoned that punishment practices prevalent at the time, such as lynching, “spread[] among black folk the firmly fixed idea that few accused Negroes are really guilty.” (Du Bois 1904: 65). Du Bois also condemned the relative lack of legal protection for African Americans, as well as criminal justice practices such as the leasing of convicts, that sent a message to African Americans that the purpose of the system was to make money for the state rather than to rehabilitate supposed lawbreakers (ibid.).

Du Bois’ research was prescient, at least with respect to the direction of research and scholarship on African Americans’ relationship to the crime control system over the next century. A high watermark was the 1968 Kerner Commission Report, commissioned by the Johnson Administration in the wake of twenty-three episodes of urban unrest during the mid- and late-1960s. The Report concluded that, for many African Americans, the “police have come to symbolize white power, white racism, and white repression.” (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968: 5). Like Du Bois’ Georgia study, the Report documented “tension” and “hostility” between law enforcement and urban African Americans, blaming the “abrasive relationship” on a combination of increased demands for protection

and service and the police practices thought necessary to provide those services. In the South and in the Northeastern and Midwestern Rust Belt cities where many African Americans relocated during the Second Great Migration, police forces often functioned to maintain the expulsion of African Americans from the center of social and political life, at times violating the law in service of racial control (e.g., Johnson 2003; Muhammad 2010). Despite pervasive harsh policing that ostensibly was intended to suppress and deter crime, African Americans felt neglected and inadequately protected (e.g., Forman 2017; Fortner 2015; Venkatesh 2000).

The litany of evidence confirming the existence of a tense and distrustful relationship between African Americans and law enforcement mounted over the ensuing decades. Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969), for example, drawing from a survey of Denver civilians and police officers, find that many African Americans expected the police to discriminate against them and so were unwilling to call them, even when they needed assistance. These and other findings led them to conclude that African Americans, Hispanics, and whites “live[d] in completely different worlds” with respect to policing (141). Hagan and Albonetti (1982) used data from a national survey conducted in the late 1970s to conclude that, although African Americans were more likely than whites to see all aspects of the criminal justice system as unjust, they perceived the police as the most unjust aspect of the criminal justice system. Weitzer and Tuch find, based on a nationally representative survey of Hispanics, African Americans, and whites, that these groups “differ on virtually every issue” they explore—how critical they are of the police, how much they believe police are racially biased in their work, how widespread they believe police misconduct is, and the types of reforms they suggest (2006: 180-181). Bobo and Thompson reached similar conclusions, finding that while 68% of white respondents in a 2001 national survey expressed at least “‘some’ or ‘a lot’ of confidence in the police,” only 18% of black respondents said the

same (Bobo and Thompson 2006). Recent research has largely supported the same findings (e.g., Kirk and Papachristos 2011; Muller and Schrage 2014; Ray, Marsh, and Powelson 2017).

Poverty and other forms of disadvantage multiply the racialized character of criminal justice system interaction. Perceived police nonchalance about crimes against residents of struggling communities further alienates the community from the government officials tasked with protecting them, a perceived indifference with deep history and ongoing salience (e.g., Anderson 1999; Leovy 2015). Residents of predominantly black disadvantaged neighborhoods often suspect that police uses of force are merely displays of power, and are not born of a desire to meet communities' safety needs (Anderson 1999; Brunson 2007). Contemporary events have shed new light on longstanding tensions between African Americans and law enforcement. Disproportionate use of fines and warrants, along with controversial policies like broken windows policing and "stop-and-frisk," have exacerbated the troubled relationship between poor African Americans and law enforcement (Fagan 2002; Harris 2016; Stuart 2016). Of course, the various potential "back ends" of the criminal justice system—repeated arrest and processing (Feeley 1979; Kohler-Hausmann 2013), probation (Doherty 2016; Phelps 2017), parole (Petersilia 2003; Simon 1993), incarceration (National Research Council 2014; Western 2006)—reinforce race and class hierarchy.

Contemporary social science research on policing and the public tends to move in one of two directions. Social psychologist Tom Tyler, with various colleagues, has produced some of the most well-known research on trust in the police. It largely focuses on the *legitimacy* of legal authorities (e.g., Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008; Tyler and Huo 2002; Tyler 2005). Generally, Tyler and colleagues use a conception of legitimacy that, despite taking account of concerns like inclusion and group value (Tyler, Jackson, and Mentovich 2015; Tyler and Sevier 2014), tends to focus more on whether people, generally speaking, are more or less likely to comply or cooperate with law enforcement

based on how the police treat them. In some work, Tyler and colleagues have been more attentive to the racialized milieu of police-community contacts and relations (e.g., Tyler, Jackson, and Mentovich 2015; Tyler and Wakslak 2004). Yet, because of the individualist and direct interaction-focused framing applied even in that work, this body of research tends to imply that the core issues shaping trust in law enforcement relate to the respect shown in encounters and the affirmation of individual dignity, not the social meanings of law enforcement to particular social groups, or the deep structures that link up with those meanings (see Hinton 2016: 102; but see Meares 2009).¹

Trust is a multidimensional concept that scholars understand using myriad approaches, some emphasizing rational choices in exchange (Coleman 1990), others power dynamics and risk (Luhmann 1979, 1988), others ideology (Eisenstadt 1995), and others the almost dramaturgical aspects of interaction (Giddens 1990). Regardless of how trust is conceived or measured or conceived, much literature has shown that African Americans, particularly those who are poor or who live in high-poverty or predominantly African-American communities, tend to be less trustful not only of police, but also other governmental institutions, their neighbors, and even their intimate partners in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups in the United States (see Smith 2010). The picture that emerges from the research on race, poverty, and trust—separately from policing—is one of profound social diminishment. While this does not encapsulate the fullness of the African-American experience, it indicates that poor African Americans as a whole tend to have a distinctive social experience from those of other ethnic and

¹ Recently, other critiques of the Tyler research have gained notoriety. These critiques focus on whether Tyler and colleagues have identified a *causal* link between procedural justice and compliance with the law (Nagin and Telep 2017; Murphy 2017). Ultimately, these critiques make a case for humility about research findings, based on the limitations of methodology; they do not question the focus on compliance as the appropriate outcome. Indeed, these pieces propose randomized controlled trials or field experiments to better test whether the treatment produces the compliance outcome. Such trials would face their own causal challenges, especially if ecological context were more richly taken into account (see Sampson 2008), and other modes of causal inference abound (e.g., Hedström and Ylikoski 2010; Morgan and Winship 2007; Tavory and Timmermans 2013). Moreover, all research methods have limitations that should be taken into account in analysis and interpretation. This does not invalidate them or eliminate their value (see, e.g., Lamont and Swidler 2014). For these reasons, I focus on conceptual issues.

socioeconomic groups in the United States. Most discussions of African-American “distrust” of the police only skirt the edges of a deeper fracture between poor communities of color and legal authorities.

Other research on communities and the police, using a variety of methods, embeds the problem of police distrust within a larger framework of marginalization related to race, class, and place (e.g., Terrill and Reising 2003; Weitzer and Tuch 2006). Some recent examples include the work of Carla Shedd (2015) who, in a rich study of youth, school, and policing, finds that unequal policing of African-American students in diverse contexts makes them more aware of their social position and thus exacerbates their distrust of legal authority and perception of social injustice relative to youth who attend more segregated schools (see Chapter 4). Forrest Stuart (2016) shows that residents of Los Angeles’ Skid Row, largely African-American and Latino, moves away from a trust/distrust framework and describes a number of strategies that Skid Row residents use to navigate policing in daily life, particularly newer forms of “therapeutic” policing that are ostensibly intended to help people who are struggling get on their feet but are ultimately “more like abuse. More tough than love” (19) (see Chapter 2). In these works and others (e.g., Goffman 2014; Jones 2010; Miller 2008; Rios 2011), the relevant question is not how people in marginalized feel about the police affectively or even whether they trust the police to deliver certain goods. Instead, the broad, common set of questions might be: How does policing send messages to groups about their place in the social order? How do members of those groups cope with the daily realities and consequences of those messages?

Legal Cynicism

Twenty years ago, sociologists Robert J. Sampson and Dawn Jeglum Bartusch described “‘anomie’ about law” in predominantly black and poor neighborhoods in Chicago, a phenomenon they labeled “legal cynicism.” (1998: 778). In using the term “anomie,” Sampson and Bartusch were describing ruptures in the social bonds that connect individuals to their community and, in particular, to

the state through law enforcement, thereby perpetuating criminal offending (see also Kirk and Papachristos 2011).² To measure anomie, they used a modified version of Leo Srole's anomia scale (1956), a survey scale that attempted to capture the experience of anomie on an individual level (see Teevan 1975). Rebutting the idea that crime was high in predominantly African-American neighborhoods because African Americans were more accepting of criminal behavior than other groups, Sampson and Bartusch find that African Americans and Latinos were *less* tolerant of deviance than whites, but higher in cynicism about the law and legal authorities because of concentrated disadvantage.

In the years since Sampson and Bartusch developed the legal cynicism concept, scholars built on the notion, though not necessarily the theory. While a few scholars retained at least the phrasing of “anomie about law,” (e.g., Hagan and Ivkocić 2006; Hertogh 2014; Lee et al. 2011), most scholars who have written about legal cynicism take one of a few different paths. Some choose not to offer a conceptual definition of legal cynicism, focusing instead on the survey questions they use to measure it (e.g., Browning 2009; Fagan and Tyler 2005). Some use “legal cynicism” as an antonym for trust in the law or legitimacy (e.g., Hitchens, Carr, and Clampet-Lundquist 2018; Jackson et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2011). Others use the idea to capture virtually any negative feeling about the law or legal authorities, which makes it less parsimonious but enhances its applicability (e.g., Carr, Napolitano, and Keating 2007). Kirk and Papachristos (2011) offer an important interpretation, describing legal cynicism as a “cultural orientation in which the law and the agents of its enforcement, such as the police and courts, are viewed as illegitimate, unresponsive, and ill equipped to ensure public safety” (2011: 1191). This is helpful to the theory, as it gets closer to the concept of anomie than some other redefinitions. However, it still emphasizes the subjective outcome of perceived illegitimacy rather than embedding a specific set of processes, or the precise structural conditions thought to produce it, into the theory.

² To be sure, and as noted above, scholars have long captured some of these dynamics, both before and as contemporaries with Sampson and Bartusch. For example, Elijah Anderson credits the tendency to use extra-legal forms of violence to “the profound sense of alienation from mainstream society and its institutions felt by many poor inner-city black people” (1999: 34).

In *Great American City* (2012), Sampson broadens the concept in a different direction, focusing on “legal/moral cynicism” and “moral cynicism” rather than mere “legal cynicism” (see Sampson, Morenoff, and Raudenbush 2005; Sampson and Graif 2009 for earlier uses of this synonymy). According to Sampson, moral cynicism “taps the darker side of human nature” (2012: 225). Moral/legal cynicism “is all about how people do *not* care about the norms of others—it is in effect a form of *anti*-altruism” (228). While research on both legal cynicism and moral cynicism provides important insights, I argue that moral and legal cynicism should not be collapsed together in studies of the social meanings of crime, criminal law, or crime control institutions. Sampson refers to “laws or collective moral rules” as if they are interchangeable (2012: 225), but laws do not necessarily align with collective moral judgments. The processes by which certain behavior becomes licit or illicit, and the power dynamics and political forces that shape which laws are adopted and enforced, *might* indicate collective moral agreement but also might indicate power relations and constructed naturalization (e.g., Bourdieu 1987; Gottschalk 2015; Kadish 1962; Schauer 2015; Shapiro 2011; Smith and Visher 1981; Western 2006). The longstanding literature on law and social control (e.g., Black 1976), and the growing literature on overcriminalization (Beale 2005; Carbado 2016; Chacón 2005; Husak 2008; Luna 2005), reinforce the notion that there may very little consensus regarding the construction of legal boundaries. The sociology of morality similarly questions the relationship between legal rules and moral rules and acknowledges the extremely fluid dynamics—an “unstable alliance”—linking those social facts (e.g., Heimer 2010; see also Ewick and Silbey 2003).

Perhaps the distinction between legality and morality is unimportant for the outcomes that Sampson and others (e.g., Kirk and Papachristos 2011) are most interested in, such as violent crime and homicide. Most would agree that there is a collective moral rule against individuals killing other people, and it is usually also illegal to do so. However, this notion becomes murkier when applied to a broader

array of homicides. Consider, for example, the *legal* killing of a person who enters another's home or personal vicinity, with no duty to retreat, protected under the Castle Doctrine and its progeny, "Stand Your Ground" laws. Of many social cleavages the killing of Trayvon Martin and acquittal of George Zimmerman laid bare, one of them was intense disagreement over whether and to what extent these doctrines, enshrined in the codes of numerous states, are in line with a collective sense of morality—and if so, whose (e.g., Gruber 2014; Torres, Cannito-Coville, and Rodriguez 2017; see also Suk 2009).

Consider, as another example, non-prosecutions or acquittals of police officers involved in the homicides of civilians, such as Charleena Lyles, Tamir Rice, Yvette Smith, Anthony Lamar Smith, Rekia Boyd, Alton Sterling, Samuel DuBose, Ezell Ford, Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Daniel Shaver, Brandon Jones, Patrick Harmon, Korryn Gaines, Ramarley Graham, David Latham, Sean Bell, Kelly Thomas, Amadou Diallo, and Freddie Gray. These and other unpunished homicides reveal deep schisms regarding whether the objective reasonableness standard that courts use to determine whether police violated the law when using lethal force matches up with our collective ideals (see Boykin, Desir, and Rubinfeld 2016; Lee 2018; Ristroph 2017; see also *Graham v. Connor* 1989). These episodes of violence may produce lasting social consequences that undermine the legitimacy of legal authority, if not morality (see, e.g., Desmond, Papachristos, and Kirk 2016). On the opposite end, retaliatory violence (Black 1983; see also Kirk and Papachristos 2011) and honor killings are illegal, but they align with some collective's sense of morality (see Cooney 2009). Of course, most homicides of interest to Sampson and others are both illegal and morally offensive. Yet, especially at a time when state-sanctioned police violence has become highly visible—perhaps, because of changes in technology, more than ever before—it is important to acknowledge how the highly contingent lawfulness and unlawfulness of homicide may contribute to *legal* cynicism, quite apart from moral cynicism or adherence to social norms.

Legality and morality are even more divergent once we step away from violent crime and consider, for example, crimes closely associated with poverty, such as welfare/food stamp fraud, criminal child maltreatment, or various misdemeanor offenses (Edin and Schaefer 2015; Gustafson 2011; Kohler-Hausmann 2013; Natapoff 2015; Roberts 2002). It is unclear that it violates our collective sense of morality for a mother who receives a few hundred dollars a month in TANF to augment her income by becoming the neighborhood “candy lady,” doing hair at her kitchen table, or working off-the-books in some other capacity, but it *is* illegal; people in affected communities are frequently aware of that fact (see, e.g., Rhodes and DeLuca 2014; Venkatesh 2006). It is similarly unclear that the collective would assume that these willing lawbreakers are “anti-altruistic.” It is also possible that such a lawbreaker would believe the law is unjust or itself immoral, which further moves the conversation away from other-regardingness. Yet, this type of law-breaking might be constant and could be at the forefront of a person’s mind who is trying to survive poverty. One of the questions researchers frequently use to measure legal cynicism is whether and how strongly respondents agree or disagree with the statement, “Laws were made to be broken.” But which laws? The reasons a person may engage in criminal behavior, or believe law generally has a positive social meaning, may have little to do with whether they ascribe to moral rules. For all of these reasons, connecting legality with morality, or law-abidingness with righteousness, is challenging.

It is important to note that Sampson is chiefly concerned with urban ecology, especially collective efficacy and social cohesion—phenomena that make thriving community dynamics possible. Sampson analyzes moral cynicism as a barrier to altruism, which, again, is more related to norms than to specific laws. This interest is demonstrated through innovative letter-drop and return experiments and analyses of teen birth rates to study moral cynicism; these are studies of behavior that is perfectly legal but perhaps discordant with collective notions of morality. When Sampson discusses the meaning of “law,” he does

so in the Durkheimian sense of social norms (collective consciousness) and in the Weberian sense of adopted process (see Hyde 1983); any specific laws enacted through politics that diverge from social norms are aberrations, and the substance of the law is tangential. Thus, these concerns need not unsettle his theory. The general concept is that a tendency toward law-abidingness and respect for the law are important for social cohesion and collective efficacy at a neighborhood level. Thus, for research on community life generally, thinking about moral and legal cynicism in tandem might be appropriate. However, for research on the social meaning of *specific* laws and legal authorities, morality should be separated out given that in daily life, regular people frequently perceive particular laws and law enforcement institutions—for example, the police—as lacking in moral authority (see Ewick and Silbey 2003).

One of the most-recognized contributions of the legal cynicism concept is its reorientation of African-American distrust of the law and law enforcement from individuals to context. Sampson and Bartusch modified the usual unit of analysis to think about conceptions of law and legal authority as a consequence of place, not just individual psychology or racial “subculture.” Yet, one of the underemphasized contributions of legal cynicism is its potential to steer debates away from “trust” and thin conceptions of legitimacy altogether, toward thicker conceptions of the relationship between African Americans and the state, as mediated by law enforcement.

Legal Estrangement

In this dissertation, I use “legal estrangement” to recapture and deepen the original meaning of legal cynicism—*anomie* about law and legal authority. Building from aforementioned work and from other key scholarship on legal cynicism (e.g., Gau 2015; Kirk 2016), legal estrangement attempts to capture both legal cynicism—the subjective “cultural orientation” among groups “in which the law and the agents of its enforcement, such as the police and courts, are viewed as illegitimate, unresponsive, and

ill equipped to ensure public safety” (Kirk and Papachristos 2011: 1191)—and the connection of structural processes, such as resource deprivation, segregation, and criminalization—that give birth to this orientation.

The idea that anomie is normlessness and under-regulation comes from Durkheim, who believed rules are necessary to restrain humans’ natural “[i]nextinguishable thirst” for resources, services, pleasures—everything ([1897] 1951: 247). It was a real problem for social order, then, if people did not adhere to these rules, which allegedly sprung forth from the collective conscience. Merton repurposed the concept to argue that anomie arises from “strain,” the increasing ambitiousness of shared goals in society combined with society’s failure to provide everyone the means to achieve those goals (1968). Rules are relevant because they strengthen the social fabric (Teymoori et al. 2016). The broadest reading of anomie theory—that the purpose of the legal system is to create a cohesive and inclusive society, and that a broken social order leaves some people without the resources for full social membership—is a core theoretical underpinning for this set of projects.

If we deemphasize the normlessness and under-regulation version of anomie and focus on strain and social inclusion, how are law and legal authorities relevant? I argue that legal authorities—particularly the police in this set of projects—are a key institution for signaling inclusion and social solidarity. Police engage in interaction rituals with the public, both small, two-person interactions and also broad-based collective interaction (Collins 2004). These rituals can create positive, “effervescent” emotional energy that strengthens the social fabric, or they can fail. (For example, the routinized interactions between young African-American men and the police that Nikki Jones and others have documented might constitute a failure (Jones 2014)). Pulling together a few different strands of Durkheim’s thought—*anomie*, rituals, collective effervescence, and solidarity—suggests that there is a much richer role for legal authorities than legal cynicism theory or other police-focused research usually

contemplates. Law is not just a bundle of rules that people can adhere to or not, and if they do not, they are “normless,” with the police as embodiments of those rules. Instead, law is a dynamic component of society with which people and communities engage; that engagement is what can reinforce social solidarity or further “estrangle” marginalized groups.

At first, this type of theoretical extension and reorientation seems unnecessary: Why not just call it legal cynicism and give it a richer definition? When I set out on this bundle of projects, that was my intention. This is the main work of Chapter Two, on mothers and their justifications for police-calling despite being distrustful of the police generally. However, the necessity of this shift became clear as I presented some of my work to people in other disciplines. Even Kirk and Papachristos’ conception, which comes closest to capturing estrangement from law, falls short because it is purely subjective and cultural and does not (overtly) investigate structural and deep cultural prerequisites for legal cynicism, such as collective memory. Through several presentations in 2016 and 2017, scholars pushed the idea to see how far it could go and how parsimonious it was. In order to be of value, the concept had to potentially explain more than my specific case, but not every case, as we generally see in theories of the middle range (see Merton 1968). Thus, in the context of presenting my work, I usually received at least one of the following questions:

- (1) “Are Trump voters legally cynical?”
- (2) “Are Wall Street professionals who engage in shady financial dealings legally cynical?”
- (3) “Are well-to-do white people who see footage of people being killed by the police and think, ‘The police are really awful,’ legally cynical?”

My instinct was to respond, first, that I would not know these answers without collecting data from those groups. I could have tried guessing how people in these groups would answer survey questions about legal cynicism, but that did not seem like a rich enough response either. After the obligatory preface about

needing data, I would want to answer, “maybe, but probably not,” “no,” and absolutely not,” respectively. However, I had to explain why those were my answers, and the purely subjective and attitudinal nature of legal cynicism literature and measures created challenges.

On Trump voters: I was willing to speculate that this group could meet the criteria for legal cynicism since they drew strongly upon cultural scripts of disdain for government regulation and because the iconic Trump voter was struggling financially and felt unable to access the American Dream (Hochschild 2016). While they certainly do not face the same history of police violence and the same types of structural subjugation that African Americans do, the whites are more likely to go prison if they are poor, perhaps especially in state prisons in the American South and Southwest that have high incarceration rates and lower-than-average racial disparities in incarceration (see Mauer and King 2007; Simes 2017). Also, poor whites have a long history of structural subordination on the basis of class and were often used as workers in the warehousing of African Americans (Isenberg 2016). However, voting and other forms of political participation suggest at least *some* belief in the system, or at least belief in your group’s power to effect change in the system. That is collective efficacy, but collective efficacy is strongly negatively correlated with legal cynicism (Kirk and Matsuda 2011). The conversation became more complicated in answers to the other questions.

On Wall Street: When asked Question 2, I would usually say no and argue that legal cynicism implies a feeling of social exclusion. In addition, the Kirk and Papachristos version includes responsiveness and safety, which are probably not live issues for the Wall Street gentry. On the other hand, Wall Street bankers might have a cultural orientation that the law and legal authorities are illegitimate, unresponsive (for example, when if financial regulators selectively enforce regulations and organizations learn to just maneuver around them with impunity (e.g., MacKenzie 2011; Pernell, Jung, and Dobbin 2017)), and not really concerned about public safety (if financial security is part of public

safety, which seems reasonable). But that type of cultural orientation is not anomie if we incorporate a concern about the divide between social ideals and traditional means. This is not an issue for Wall Street workers who engage in shady dealings.³ Anomie is not just normlessness; it also incorporates some understanding of why norms are alternative, lacking, or perceived as non-binding.

On empathetic whites: The last question was simpler to answer: no. I would sometimes get pushback because of the lay meaning of the word “cynical,” but that was easy to overcome by explaining that legal cynicism is anomie about law, going back to Sampson and Bartusch’s construction, and then connecting to Merton and Durkheim to argue that social exclusion and inequality of opportunity were embedded into the definition of legal cynicism, as I was then using it. Other literature on legal cynicism implied that signaling of social exclusion and inequality might be key mechanisms that explain race- and neighborhood differences in legal cynicism, but they were not usually explicit.⁴

I could also answer this question by stressing the ecological aspect of legal cynicism. After all, the police satisfaction questions that Kirk and Papachristos include in their measure of legal cynicism ask respondents about *their own neighborhood*. This answer is not really satisfying, though, because it only explains why they might not answer the survey question in the same way that some of the young people we interviewed in Baltimore might have. It does not really explain why their feelings that the police are an illegitimate, unresponsive, and ineffectual force cannot be captured in the same concept.

Virtually all of the literature on legal cynicism theorizes that neighborhood conditions, such as concentrated disadvantage, are part of what leads to legal cynicism. However, that is not the same as arguing that legal cynicism can *only* be attributable to these or similar structural conditions. I wanted to

³ However, if we think about anomie as it is presented in *Suicide*, Wall Street workers might be the quintessential example. Durkheim theorized that anomic suicide was the result of financial upheaval and the lack of external constraints upon the wealthy; the poor, in his view, were too constrained by poverty and not sufficiently socially integrated to commit anomic suicide, and might instead be at risk of fatalistic suicide instead ([1897] 1951: 254; Bearman 1991).

⁴ They were explicit about *concentrated disadvantage*, but not inequality. Inequality is what aligns with Merton’s conception of strain; after all, if there were no one who had the socially legitimate means to reach collective ideals, the ideal would shift. The harm of relative deprivation is that people are aware of a better-off reference group and perceive themselves accordingly (Davis 1966; see also Shedd 2015).

argue that if a group developed the same cultural orientation about the law and law enforcement as people in disadvantaged communities, but that orientation emerged because people in the group watched videos and were outraged, they are not “legally cynical.” Legal estrangement is a process by which legal cynicism emerges from social marginality and both direct and vicarious experience of both the state’s brute force and its neglect. Converting the concept to legal estrangement was necessary to make that conceptual move.

Another reason to answer no for empathetic whites is because of the outcomes legal cynicism literature focuses on, such as neighborhood crime and violence. A playful answer might have been, “Unless the people in your neighborhood who are watching the videos start committing homicide under theories of self-help, no.” However, I do not believe that legal cynicism is only of concern if it results in violence or other outcomes people typically associate with the iconic ghetto (Anderson 2012). Using the law and legal authorities to produce social solidarity is intrinsically of interest.

I use legal estrangement to account for two aspects of interest to me that legal cynicism touches, but does not adequately capture. First, I am interested in the structural conditions that produce legal cynicism, such as segregation, racial marginalization, and dispossession. I also hope to account for deeper *cultural* components, especially collective memories of state violence and social exclusion (e.g., Eyerman 2004; see also Halbwachs 1952; Olick and Robbins 1998). In addition to the neighborhood conditions that others have amply discussed, legal estrangement is grounded in collective memories of stigmatization that are historically grounded but continually reinforced through structures, institutions, cultural practices, and interaction (Balkin 1998; Buford May 2000; Teeger 2014). Policing is only one part of those dynamics but a hyper-salient one given the institution’s role as the face of the state, especially in marginalized communities in recent decades (Meares 2014; Soss and Weaver 2017).

In sum, the concept needed bounds. A substantial body of literature already exists that moves further away from the conception of legal cynicism I wanted to capture. There are certainly other groups to whom legal estrangement might apply; Hagan, Kaiser, and Hanson's (2015) recent application to marginalized dissidents in Iraq is a good example. However, this framing is both larger and more targeted.

This Dissertation

This dissertation presents three empirical essays that illustrate how legal estrangement manifests in America today from distinctive vantage points. Chapter Two draws from a solo study I conducted in Washington, DC in 2012-2013. I interviewed fifty poor African-American mothers regarding their interactions with law and law enforcement along different axes—mostly the police, but also housing authority officials, the Child and Family Services Agency, welfare bureaucrats, sometimes school officials, various types of courts, and so on. I was surprised to learn that the mothers I interviewed often viewed all of these institutions by reference to the police. I had intended to write about civil courts, in part because I had been working at a civil-side Legal Aid office in DC before graduate school. Field research moved my work in a different direction.

Substantively, the chapter builds on Kirk and Papachristos' (2011) vision of legal cynicism as a cultural frame (Goffman 1974; see Lamont and Small 2008). Thinking of legal cynicism as a cultural frame is an important step, but I conclude that they did not go far enough to discuss the *situational contingency* of the legal cynicism frame. Thus, I drew upon the work of Swidler (2001) to discuss how the frames people apply to relate to the police vary by specific aspects of situations, such as whether they have developed a personal relationship with a specific officer (officer exceptionalism), the specific location of the disturbance (domain specificity), the other institutions poor mothers navigate and their demands for police engagement (institutional navigation), and whether they believe they can harness the

system to get therapeutic benefits for a loved one (therapeutic consequences; see also Stuart 2016). These findings help us think about when the legal cynicism frame might guide action, or when some other frame might be operating.

Chapter Three draws on interviews with the heads of seventy-three families in Cleveland, Ohio, which were collected as part of a large research team through the How Parents House Kids Study (HPHK). HPHK covered two metropolitan areas, Cleveland and Dallas. In 2013 and 2014, I was part of the field team—in Dallas. Thus, this chapter essentially draws on secondary analysis of qualitative interview data, which has many challenges that I sought to overcome through an extended and intensive coding process (see, e.g., Deterding and Waters 2017), and by having people from Cleveland read various versions of the manuscript. The chapter raises the concept of located institutions as a way of understanding how institutions, situated in place, might shape residential preferences in ways that perpetuate residential segregation. The chapter envisions the police as a located institution and demonstrates how parents of young children use the police as a lens through which to understand the desirability of neighborhoods and suburbs. The chapter also joins other scholars in situating a study of policing within research on processes maintaining urban marginality, segregation perhaps most importantly. Segregation is one of the central processes embedded into the legal estrangement concept, as it lays a foundation through which unequal status before the law, and the devaluing of particular people and communities through the law, operates.

Chapter Four takes a turn away from direct analysis of police-community relations, though it begins by examining the social meaning of the civil unrest in Baltimore City that broke after the death of Freddie Gray in April 2015. I draw upon fifty interviews with African-American youth who were living in West Baltimore or East Baltimore in Summer 2015 through a youth participatory study. I led a research team of twelve, including seven African-American youth who lived in West Baltimore and Easy

Baltimore. The study contained observational and educational components, but I exclusively draw upon the interviews in this chapter. The chapter explores the social aftermath of civil unrest among people who were directly affected, a severely understudied topic in research on riots and collective violence. Most research examines the causes or dynamics of unrest. This chapter focuses first on these young people's experiences of the unrest and their interpretations of it. Then it describe how the unrest fits in to their sense that Baltimore, as a place, is collectively doomed. However, most youth maintain high hopes for their own futures, and they use scripts of escape and exceptionality to bridge the gap between their assessment of Baltimore's collective fate and their individual aspirations.

Chapter Five concludes. This chapter suggests directions for an expanded body of research on legal estrangement, moving beyond police, beyond the urban core, and beyond African Americans. It also (somewhat tentatively) embraces a normative sociological vision, centering social solidarity.

CHAPTER TWO:

SITUATIONAL TRUST: HOW DISADVANTAGED MOTHERS RECONCEIVE LEGAL CYNICISM

The relationship between poor minority communities and the police is of urgent national concern after recent, much-publicized incidents in Baltimore, MD; Cleveland, OH; Ferguson, MO; North Charleston, SC; Staten Island, NY; and numerous towns and cities across the United States. A March 2015 interim report from the White House Task Force on 21st Century Policing, convened in response to some of these incidents, identified building police trust and legitimacy among communities of color as the first pillar and “foundational principle underlying this inquiry nature of relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve” (President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing 2015: 7). Correspondingly, an abundant and longstanding body of sociological literature finds that African Americans and residents of high-poverty neighborhoods are cynical about the law, distrust legal authorities, and believe police are ineffective (Hagan and Albonetti 1982; Kirk and Papachristos 2011; Sampson and Jeglum Bartusch 1998). This research concludes that those groups thus generally avoid official channels for public safety, governing themselves instead according to a “code of the street” whereby violence becomes an acceptable extra-legal strategy of protecting oneself or resolving disputes (Anderson 1999; Venkatesh 2000; see also Black 1976, 1983).

Of course, the code of the street has never been fixed or universal among poor African Americans. At the same time that urban sociologists were documenting distrust of the police and a resultant propensity toward self-help among the black urban poor, policing scholars were reporting, based on data from urban areas, that poor people called the police more often than wealthier people because they “depend upon police assistance in times of trouble, crises, and indecision,” often to resolve noncriminal issues (Reiss 1972:63). More recent ethnographies have identified poor African-American women, especially women with children, as occasional instruments of the penal state who contribute to

processes of crime control, criminalization, and incarceration in disadvantaged communities by, for example, using the police to control male partners and children (Goffman 2009; Jones 2010:39-45; Rios 2011; Venkatesh 2000). Rios (2011), in a qualitative study of black and Latino boys in Oakland, California, finds that mothers are part of a “youth control complex” along with police, probation officers, schools, community centers, the media, and other institutions. According to Rios, because mothers acquiesce to institutional messages about appropriate parenting behavior, they call the police on their children and thereby label them as criminal. Goffman (2009), in an ethnographic study of a Philadelphia neighborhood, finds that women sometimes proactively contact the police as a means of socially controlling their male intimate partners, and at other times are actively coerced to report their partner’s, son’s, or grandson’s whereabouts through threats of arrest, loss of child custody, and physical force. Research using administrative data on police reporting has shown that—even controlling for crime rates—African Americans, women, and residents of high-poverty neighborhoods are equally or more likely to call the police than other groups (see Avakame, Fyfe, and McCoy 1999; Baumer 2002; Bosick et al. 2012; Desmond and Papachristos 2016; Schaible and Hughes 2012). Taken together, these studies suggest that African-American women’s reports to the police contribute to the criminalization and, sometimes, incarceration of African-American men.

Women’s use of the police can be costly: Although contacting the police does not usually lead to arrest, it sometimes does, with unpredictable consequences for intimates and family members. When men are locked up, it separates couples and cripples family relations, making it difficult to retain cohesive relationships and financial support (Braman 2004; Comfort 2008; Suk 2009; Waller 2002; Western 2006; Wildeman and Wakefield 2014). Allowing convicted family members to stay with them can put mothers at risk of losing cash assistance and housing (Geller and Curtis 2011; Gustafson 2011). Reputational harm can result, with women labeled “snitches” for contacting police (Goffman 2009). Mothers may also fear

that they are subjecting their loved ones to potential police violence. Yet remarkably little research has focused specifically on mothers' experiences and thought processes to better understand how cynicism of and reliance on police fit together. Drawing on in-depth interviews of fifty low-income African-American mothers in the District of Columbia, this paper explores the context within which, despite expressing distrust of the police and reporting negative experiences with the criminal justice system, these women develop strategies that enable occasional proactive engagement with police.

These mothers' narratives of occasional police reliance, despite their overarching distrust, urge a richer account of cultural orientations about law and criminal justice among poor African Americans. Although distrust of the law—"legal cynicism"—predominates among this population, alternative cultural orientations, or frames, emerge under particular circumstances, triggered by structural and situational dynamics. This article argues that a situational approach, examining how conceptions of the police and police reporting vary depending on contexts and characteristics of particular events, is a constructive way of reconsidering how culture works in relation to law enforcement. I draw primarily from Swidler's (1986, 2001) concept of cultural repertoires (see also Hannerz 1969). Building on earlier insights about the importance of subjective interpretation of human experience as critical for understanding human action (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Blumer 1969; Thomas and Thomas 1928) and aiming to investigate connections between subjective understandings *at a group level* as "culture" and human action (see Geertz 1973), Swidler defines a cultural repertoire as a "bag of tricks" that people draw from that guide their actions.⁵ People use different strategies within available culture depending on characteristics of situations (2001:33-34; see also Collins 2004; Norton 2014).⁶ The strategies identified

⁵ Though some scholars have criticized this model of culture as overly voluntaristic (e.g., Patterson 2000; Schudson 1989), this concept is valuable for understanding micro-level use of shared meanings, heterogeneity in the use and deployment of those meanings, and how these meanings dynamically interact with structural conditions (Harding 2007; Wilson 2009). That people use or draw on culture based on situational context does not necessarily mean that they do so rationally or consciously.

⁶ In using concepts from cultural sociology here, I am inspired by recent papers that draw related connections (see Bell et al. 2016; Lamont and Small 2008; see also Kirk and Papachristos 2011).

in this article are part of a broader cultural repertoire about law and the criminal justice system.⁷ Instead of placing individuals or neighborhoods on a trust-distrust continuum, this approach examines how trust and distrust operate on a micro-level, situated within a broader cultural and structural milieu.

In this sample, four alternative strategies emerged that justified reliance on police. The first is *officer exceptionalism*: Mothers hold cynical views of the police as an institution but view the individual officers who patrol their neighborhoods on a daily basis as more trustworthy. Second, *domain specificity*: Mothers see police as effective interveners for issues occurring inside or near the home, but ineffective responders to street crime. Third, *therapeutic consequences*: Mothers are more likely to trust police when they believe the call will result in a beneficial outcome for the target of the call. Fourth, *institutional navigation*: Mothers believe that calling the police sometimes protects them from, or gives them leverage with, other institutions. Although nearly all respondents express cynical general opinions of the police, respondents use alternative conceptions when recounting incidents where they reached out to police for help.

African Americans, Police & Legal Cynicism

The fraught relationship between poor African Americans and police is deeply rooted in American history and contemporary life, and it has birthed both moments of outrage and movements for racial justice. African Americans were regularly subjects of police violence in Northeast cities at the turn of the twentieth century, sparking numerous demonstrations against police violence (Johnson 2003). In the early and mid-twentieth century, widely accepted, disproportionate police harshness in predominantly black communities contributed to blacks' greater likelihood of being arrested, charged, and sentenced more severely for crimes than whites (Chicago Commission on Race Relations 1922; see Muhammad

⁷ Legal consciousness scholarship, which is concerned with the daily, conflicted use of culture as a means of maintaining the hegemony of law, takes a similar approach (Silbey 2005:329; see also Abrego 2011; Ewick and Silbey 1998; Hernandez 2010; Merry 1990). This scholarship has not focused on the criminal justice context. Nonetheless, perhaps another way of describing this article is that it focuses on the legal consciousness (or police consciousness) of mothers as they engage in the crime control system.

2010). In the mid-twentieth century and beyond, urban police readily admitted that they believed African-American slum residents “will respond only to fear and rough treatment” (Westley 1953:40; see Reiss 1972). Disparities in police treatment have persisted; for example, between 1980 and 1998, police were roughly six times more likely to shoot and kill young African-American male felony suspects than to shoot or kill young white male felony suspects (Brown and Langan 2001; see also Terrill and Reising 2003). Lab-based experiments have indicated that police in larger and more heavily minority cities are more likely to shoot unarmed African-American suspects (Correll et al. 2007; see also Plant and Peruche 2005). Residents of predominantly black disadvantaged neighborhoods often suspect that police uses of force are merely displays of power, and are not born of a desire to meet communities’ safety needs (Anderson 1999; Brunson 2007). Contemporary events, such as police-involved shootings of unarmed African Americans, disproportionate use of fines and warrants, and controversial policies like “stop-and-frisk,” have exacerbated the troubled relationship between poor African Americans and law enforcement (Collins 2007; Harris, Evans, and Beckett 2010; Stuart 2011).

Against this backdrop, a decades-old and growing body of scholarship shows that legal cynicism, or distrust of the law and legal authorities, is a pervasive cultural orientation among African Americans (e.g., Bobo and Thompson 2006; Hagan and Albonetti 1982; Muller and Schrage 2014; Weitzer and Tuch 2004; Werthman and Piliavin 1967). Sampson and Jégoum Bartusch (1998) coined the term, defining it as “anomie about law” and distinguishing it from a subcultural tolerance of violence among African Americans (see also Short and Strodtbeck 1965). Though the term is broad, the literature has focused primarily on criminal justice. Research indicating that African Americans tend toward skepticism of the crime control system dates at least to Du Bois (1904), who argued that discriminatory practices led blacks to hold to a “firmly fixed idea that few accused Negroes are really guilty” (p.65). The 1967 Kerner Commission, convened by President Johnson after a spate of urban riots, concluded that for many African

Americans, “police have come to symbolize white power, white racism and white repression” (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1967:10). Scholars have consistently found, regardless of the measure used, that African Americans have higher rates of legal cynicism and express greater dissatisfaction with police than do whites.

Other literature focuses on the ecological components of legal trust and cynicism, emphasizing how this cultural orientation arises from disadvantaged neighborhood contexts and perpetuates neighborhood-level phenomena, such as rates of violence. This ecological focus is one of Sampson and Jégum Bartusch’s (1998) central contributions. They find that, although blacks are significantly more likely to express legal cynicism than are whites, concentrated disadvantage at the neighborhood level explains a substantial amount of this variation (see also Reisig and Parks 2000). Ethnographic accounts likewise suggest that neighborhood dynamics, rather than race alone, explain distrust of the law (Anderson 1999; Goffman 2009; Werthman and Piliavin 1967). Following these insights, other scholars have shifted the unit of analysis in research on legal trust from the individual to the neighborhood, distinguishing between neighborhoods with high and low rates of legal cynicism (Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Kirk and Papachristos 2011).

The sources of cynicism are complex, but they may include police violence, nonchalance, unresponsiveness, racial bias, ineffectiveness at fighting crime, and failure to arrest those who have committed crimes (Desmond and Papachristos 2016; Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Kirk and Papachristos 2011; Sharp and Johnson 2009). Scholars posit that legal cynicism increases neighborhood violence by making it more likely for people to seek extra-legal resolutions to conflict (Black 1983; Kirk and Papachristos 2011). Anderson (1999) explains that many residents of a poor African-American neighborhood in Philadelphia “are alienated from the police and police authority,” conditions that deter people from reporting crimes to the police (p. 34). Police may be called “only in a dire emergency”

(p.321). Legal cynicism is associated with increased rates of homicide and teen pregnancy and reduced arrest for crime (Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Sampson 2012).

A Social Psychological Approach. Social psychology has contributed to the question of police trust largely through process-based research on legitimacy and procedural justice (e.g., Tyler and Huo 2002). One of the central messages of the procedural justice literature is that fairness in individual encounters with the police shape perceived legitimacy of police authority. Research on legitimacy has focused primarily on individual attitudes about legal authority, sometimes with comparison by race, but with relatively little focus on ecological context. Only recently have scholars begun to seriously explore, for example, the impact of social networks on legitimacy (see Papachristos, Meares, and Fagan 2012). Policing scholars have also pointed out that, while the fairness of interactions with police affects police legitimacy, people's cognitive orientations toward their neighborhood have an independent effect as well (Nix et al. 2015). Legal cynicism theory, which is grounded in racial, cultural, and ecological context, has rarely been incorporated into social psychological theories of procedural justice and police legitimacy despite cynicism's potential mediating effects on the procedural justice-legitimacy relationship (Gau 2015). The present study thus takes a more context-focused approach to legal legitimacy, exploring how a group that is marginalized by gender, race, parenthood, and poverty make meaning of relying on the police (see Crenshaw 1989; Collins 1991; see also Obasogie 2013; Paul-Emile 2015).

A Cultural and Microsociological Approach. Legal cynicism is often described as a *cultural orientation* that perpetuates high crime in specific racial and ecological contexts (Sampson 2012). As such, cultural sociology offers potentially useful ways of analyzing this orientation, but it has scarcely been applied to this domain of social life. Kirk and Papachristos (2011) began the project of moving toward a new cultural approach to legal cynicism. They operationalize legal cynicism as a "cultural frame," building from Goffman's (1974) concept of frames as lenses through which people interpret the

social world. This conceptualization, combined with sophisticated survey and administrative data, allow Kirk and Papachristos to capture neighborhood-level heterogeneity in mean levels of cynicism and to explore how differences in mean levels of cynicism connect to neighborhood violence.

This notion of legal cynicism as a cultural frame yields a clearer understanding of this cultural orientation: It is a way of thinking about law and order, not an inert value (see Harding 2007). Yet, more can be learned about how the cultural orientation of legal cynicism operates by examining micro-level accounts of interactions with legal authorities, exploring the meaning-making processes surrounding experiences with the police rather than purely objective interactions, such as the mere fact that a person was stopped, questioned, or arrested by the police (see Berger and Luckmann 1966; Blumer 1969; Thomas and Thomas 1928; Mead 1934). These subjective experiences and accounts are not static. As Swidler (2001) explains, the frames and strategies within people's cultural repertoires are organized around scenes, imagined situations, and stories. Shifts in situations and contexts call up different parts of cultural repertoires (pp.33-34; see also Collins 2004:8). Accordingly, we learn more about how legal cynicism operates by exploring people's understandings of specific engagements with police (see Clarke 2005; Fine and Fields 2008; Norton 2014 (describing microsociological and situational approaches in the study of culture); see also Silbey 2005 (describing legal consciousness as a means of studying culture about law)). Structural, individual, and situational factors are fundamental to how culture works, and for understanding human action. Scholars interested in the relationship between poor African Americans and the police should thus explore diversity and dynamism of trust in the law: If culture is a repertoire and legal cynicism is one orientation or frame within it, what are some of the other orientations and what conditions or situations trigger them? The present study extends legal cynicism theory by using qualitative data to explore conditions under which the use of legal cynicism as a cultural frame shifts and alternative strategies that emerge depending on situational dynamics.

Research spanning subfields and disciplines has suggested that the cultural context surrounding police-community relations in disadvantaged context is variable, and that additional insight could be gained from investigating meaning-making processes. Anderson (1990), for example, describes urban black boys' distinction between "local" police and "downtown" police; local police "usually make a kind of working peace with the young men on the streets," while downtown police take an impersonal and coercive stance toward young boys. Carr, Napolitano, and Keating (2007) find that youth express overwhelmingly negative dispositions about the police but nonetheless recommend greater police involvement as a core strategy for improving their neighborhoods. Clampet-Lundquist, Carr, and Kefalas (2015) more recently describe a "sliding scale" of "snitching," such that when certain people in a neighborhood call the police under specific circumstances (for example, when a grandmother calls the police about drug dealing in her yard), young men who typically enforce anti-snitching norms may let the caller go unpunished or restrict the type of retribution to property damage, leaving the "snitch" physically unscathed. In addition to the research of anthropologists, criminologists, psychologists, and sociologists, legal academics have identified "dual frustration"—displeasure with both crime and policing—among African Americans (Meares and Kahan 1998; see also Brooks 2000; Kennedy 1997), shedding additional light on context-variant ideas about the law and formal social control.

Police relations might be especially complex, contradictory, and ambivalent among poor African-American mothers given the web of social and institutional dynamics in which they are caught. As scholarship on job search (Smith 2007), welfare (Edin and Lein 1997), eviction (Desmond 2012), and intimate partnership (Burton et al. 2009) has demonstrated, trust is low among this population along several axes (Levine 2013; Smith 2010). Multiple forms and levels of distrust may work in tandem. A microsociological study is well-suited for exploring the dynamics of police trust and cynicism within a population that is generally distrustful of law enforcement.

Methods

This study focuses on moments when African-American women with children engage and interact with the police. Although less likely to be arrested, incarcerated, or victims of police violence than men (Carson and Sabol 2012), women may be just as likely as men to encounter police nonchalance, unresponsiveness, corruption, threat, racial bias, or ineffectiveness—all of which are believed to contribute to legal cynicism (Brunson and Miller 2006). Most current scholarship focuses on populations in the aggregate, youth, or men, particularly African-American men; there is little focused analysis of women or mothers. Yet, this inquiry is important given research suggesting that mothers of color play a pivotal role in processes of crime control, criminalization, and incarceration in disadvantaged communities (see, e.g., Goffman 2009; Rios 2011; Venkatesh 2000). This study therefore includes narratives from African-American women with children in developing a theoretical perspective on police-community relations.

Interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C. Washington's police force composition, policies, and strategies, like other cities', have evolved to some degree over the past twenty years. The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) claims to use a "community-oriented policing" model, and has emphasized relationship development as key to its police work (Buntin 2012). The MPD's racial composition mirrors the demographics of the District: A majority-minority force polices the majority-minority city (which, as of the 2010 Census, was 50.0% African-American, 34.8% non-Hispanic white, 9.1% Hispanic, and 3.5% Asian) (Fontaine, Markman, and Nadeau 2010; Weitzer, Tuch, and Skogan 2008).⁸ MPD's stated strategy is to deemphasize minor offenses, choosing instead to focus on "bigger" crimes like drug dealing and gun-related violence (Buntin 2012).

⁸ Research is inconclusive as to whether minority officers perceive high-poverty neighborhoods or do police work in ways that are meaningfully better for minorities than white officers do (e.g., Brunson and Gau 2015; Cochran and Warren 2012; Eitle, Stolzenberg, and D'Alessio 2005; Moskos 2008; Sun and Payne 2004). Local police culture may predict the effect of force racial composition more fully than numbers alone.

The study consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with fifty low-income African-American women with children between June 2012 and January 2013. The sample is limited to African Americans to provide a closer look at the racial group most often associated with negative views of laws and legal authorities. As a screen for income, and to make it easier to follow up with respondents,⁹ the sample was drawn from women who were residing in subsidized housing.¹⁰ Respondents reside in public housing (25), project-based Section 8 housing (18), private rental housing subsidized with a Section 8 voucher (6), or transitional housing for homeless families (1). Respondents range widely in age, from 20-61. The sample is diverse in neighborhood racial and socioeconomic composition: Respondents were drawn from twenty-one Census tracts in all four city quadrants, selected purposely to maximize heterogeneity of age and neighborhood within the category of poor African-American mothers (see, e.g., Edin and Kefalas 2005). Among these tracts, black population ranges from 24.4% to 97.3% (2010 Census), and tract poverty rate estimates range from 12.9% to 53.8% (2008-2012 American Community Survey) (Table 1). To qualify for the study, potential respondents had to be the custodial parent of at least one minor child. All respondents were born in the United States.

⁹ Subsidized housing residents may be somewhat more stably housed than poor people who rent on the private market.

¹⁰ This sampling frame may be a limitation: Most poor American families do not receive housing assistance (Desmond and Bell 2015). No study of police-community relations of which I am aware compares outcomes according to whether people live in public housing, receive a housing subsidy, or rent unassisted on the private market. However, these studies often compare neighborhoods with “concentrated disadvantage”—a measure that includes benefit receipt—to those without such disadvantage (e.g., Kirk and Papachristos 2011; Sampson and Jeglum Bartusch 1998). Qualitative studies of law, culture, and police-community relations are often based in neighborhoods where a significant portion of the housing stock is comprised of subsidized housing (e.g., Jones 2010; Venkatesh 2000; Websdale 2001). Legal cynicism theory is thus implicitly founded upon a residential context reminiscent of this sample’s. Nonetheless, future research might examine whether and how subsidized residential context matters for police trust.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

CHARACTERISTIC	MEAN	RANGE [†]
Age	40.54	20–61
Years in Current Residence	8.80	0.33–24
*Tract Poverty Rates	35.58	12.8–57.3
<i>Below 30.0%</i>	0.36	
<i>30.1%-40.0%</i>	0.18	
<i>40.0+%</i>	0.46	
†Tract Black Population	77.01	24.2–97.3
<i>Below 30.0%</i>	0.02	
<i>30.1%-50.0%</i>	0.24	
<i>50.1%-85.0%</i>	0.08	
<i>85.0+%</i>	0.66	
Children		
<i>Number of Children</i>	3.36	1–12
<i>Age Oldest Child</i>	19.33	0–41
<i>Age Youngest Child</i>	9.40	0–18
<i>Has Daughter</i>	0.84	
<i>Has Son</i>	0.80	
Marriage		
<i>Currently Married</i>	0.18	
<i>Never Married</i>	0.70	
Education		
<i>College Graduate</i>	0.12	
<i>Some College or Trade School</i>	0.20	
<i>High School Diploma or GED</i>	0.40	
<i>Less than Diploma or GED</i>	0.28	
<i>Total Years of Education</i>	12.20	8–14
Public Assistance		
<i>TANF</i>	0.56	
<i>SNAP</i>	0.90	
<i>SSI</i>	0.26	
Employed	0.24	
Ever Sued for Eviction in DC	0.68	
<i>× Number of DC Eviction Suits</i>	4.33	0–53
Ever Arrested	0.54	
Ever Incarcerated	0.18	
Ever Investigated by Child Services	0.52	

*American Community Survey 5-Year Data, 2008-2012

†2010 U.S. Census Data

× This mean includes those who have never been sued for eviction in D.C. Limited to those who have been sued, the mean number of cases is 6.42. Omitting an outlier of 53 suits, the mean drops to 4.97.

†Ranges are 0-1 unless otherwise specified.

The study gathered data on respondents' life history and childhood experiences, romantic and family formation history, residential history, interactions with neighbors, and previous experiences with legal authority. The interviews elicited opinions about the police, reasons articulated for contacting police, and detailed accounts of each recent decision to contact the police. Although talk and action are not equivalent, interviews that elicit concrete descriptions of specific events may partially substitute for real-time observation. Interviews have the distinct advantage of capturing descriptions of events over long periods of time and are a powerful tool for understanding perceptions. All but three interviews took place in the respondent's home or the home of a close relative or neighbor.

Neighborhoods in Washington were selected using Census data and information from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the DC Housing Authority, aiming to identify high-density public housing projects or site-based Section 8 developments across quadrants. The researcher posted study recruitment flyers in complexes or at nearby bus stops, which yielded 25 respondents. Twenty-one respondents were recruited through managed snowballing; respondents could refer up to three participants. The study also randomly sampled from one project-based Section 8 housing project, generating four interviews. Respondents were compensated with \$25 cash for one interview.

At the close of each interview, and in the neighborhoods during data collection, field notes were taken to identify emerging themes. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. After listening to the audio recordings and reading through entire transcripts, Atlas.ti was used to code the transcripts in multiple phases, using open, thematic, and selective coding, beginning with broad themes and then focusing on narrower themes as the coding process continued (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967; LaRossa 2005). I present the most salient themes in the findings, though other themes (including neighborhood racial context, examined in the discussion) emerged more tentatively. With research assistants, I analyzed the transcripts, assured the validity of the argument, and compiled

quantifiable descriptive characteristics (Table 1). Using electronic court records, we checked the validity of information obtained during interviews about arrests, criminal cases, and housing cases.

Findings

This chapter shows how a sample of poor African-American women with children understands their interactions with police. Legal cynicism is high in this sample: Only three respondents made uniformly positive statements about the police, and eight respondents made only negative statements. Thirty-nine of 50 respondents, however, made a combination of positive, negative, and neutral statements about the police. The number of police calls is an imperfect measure of police reliance; police are so heavily present in most respondents' neighborhoods that they can seek assistance without placing a call. As one respondent explained, "The police be around here enough." Moreover, respondents—like the general populace (see, e.g., Bosick et al. 2012; Reiss 1972:66-67)—do not report most incidents that could warrant a police call. Yet 33 of 50 respondents admitted to calling the police at least once. Respondents in their twenties were more consistently cynical of police than the oldest respondents.¹¹ Nonetheless, four of nine respondents in their twenties admitted to occasionally calling the police.

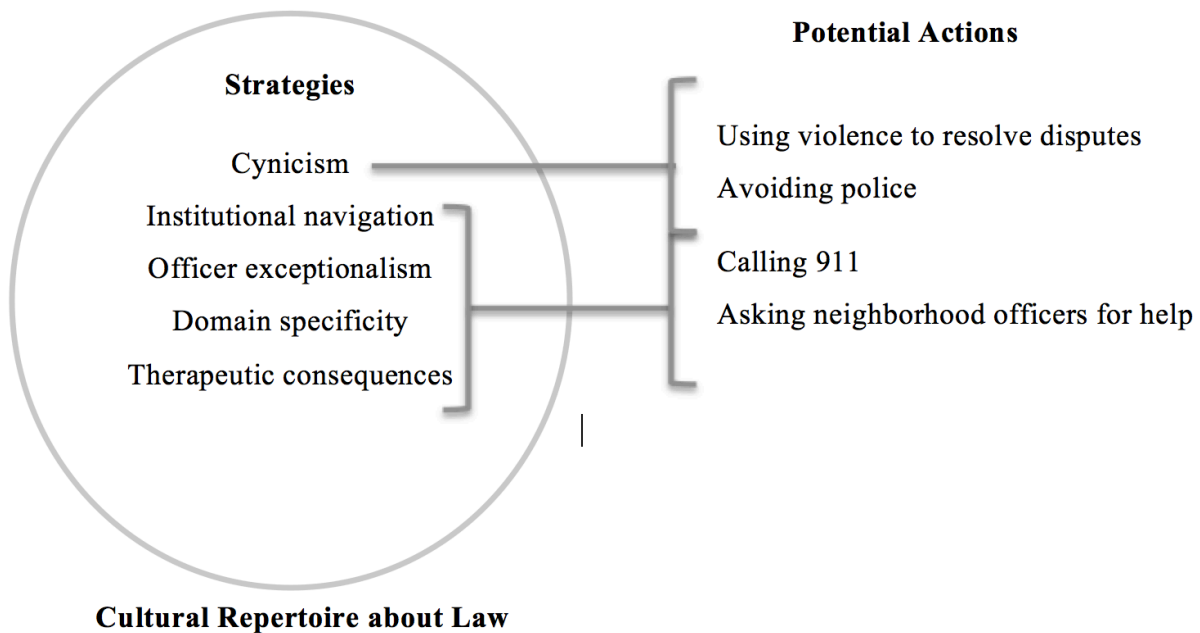
This article argues that one way to understand the police relationships of poor African-American mothers is by examining conditions under which these women defy their own and others' expectations by relying on police, thereby engaging in situational police trust. Crucially, "trust" here does not imply a total sense of faith. Instead, it is akin to what scholars call "strategic trust" (Smith 2010; Uslaner 2002) or "suspended trust" (Burton et al. 2009).¹² It includes some expectation of reliability (see Giddens 1990), and it requires risk (Luhmann 1979), but it is limited and circumstantial. Writing on low-income mothers'

¹¹ The age gradation is expected given a long line of research finding that African-American youth and young adults have more negative views of police than older adults do (see Du Bois 1904; Carr et al. 2007).

¹² "Strategic trust" emanates from a rational choice perspective and describes "individuals' expectations that specific trustees will act in accordance with their interests in specific situations or around specific issues" (Smith 2010: 464). "Suspended trust" has a similar meaning, but has been applied to low-income women's romantic relationships to explain relationships that have "a transactional orientation, entering relationships with the interest of getting particular needs met (e.g., rent, food for children) and usually under circumstances when a short-term crisis (e.g., needing money to pay the rent) arose in their lives" (Burton et al. 2009: 1115-17).

trust in intimate partnerships, Burton and colleagues (2009) explain that couples with suspended trust took on “very limited and specific roles in each other’s lives”; “the emotional risks of the arrangement were low and the duration limited” (p.1115). Here, as there, trust is tightly attached to context, such that the respondent who says, as a general matter, that “Police are crooked,” might trust a police officer to escort a troublemaker away from her home, or may over time develop trust in the reliability of specific officers without trusting the institution writ large. There are at least four alternative cultural strategies through which women engage with the police. As noted above, they are (1) officer exceptionalism; (2) domain specificity; (3) therapeutic consequences; and (4) institutional navigation. The conceptual link between these strategies and mobilization of police is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Neither the strategies nor the actions in the figure above are exhaustive. The figure illustrates, however, that multiple strategies exist within a cultural repertoire, and that each strategy might suggest different actions. Although strategies can be identified separately, they often intersect and overlap.

Officer Exceptionalism

In line with previous research on disadvantaged African Americans, respondents are deeply wary of police. They see police as corrupt, biased on the basis of race and class, and nonchalant about poor African Americans' lives. However, many respondents (20), despite making cynical statements about the police *in general*, decouple, or analytically separate, "the police" as an institution from officers as individuals. Rather than projecting positive feelings about individual officers onto the institution they represent, these relationships often remain localized. This decoupling is an increasingly available strategy in an environment where police are part of daily interaction.

Donna, 50, initially reacted to a question about her perspective on the police with, "They suck," and she then described police corruption observed in "the crack joints" and heard about through local news. Yet as her story unfolded, she revealed a casual relationship with an officer who patrols her neighborhood whom she nicknamed "Andy Griffith":

[How do you think about police?] They suck... I mean, some will help if you need help. They're human beings. I watch the news on the TV, and some of them have done some dumb things. A lot of them get away with it. I have seen some of them come out here and rob the crack joints. They take the money. I see that a lot of times, and it will be around Christmas time... *[So you said they're around here a lot?]* Yeah, there's one here occasionally. I call him Andy Griffith. *[So it's like an older guy?]* Yeah, he's older, but he's nice. A lot of people don't like him because he ask questions, but he's just asking questions because he's talking to them. A lot of people think it's because he's police. He'll drive around and beep, and sometimes he'll sit on the corner. He's all right. It's people.

This response should be viewed in light of Donna's background with the crime control system. Over the past two decades, she has been arrested on several criminal charges. Most were dropped, but she served two stints in prison for drug possession. Now, she lives in a neighborhood that she describes as "terrible," and explains that, "Living here, I've seen a lot of killing." When talking with the police now, her guidelines are simple: "I respect them. I talk to them. That's how I learn. I ask questions." The police have been continually present in her life, in multiple ways, for decades. It is thus unsurprising that she has a somewhat more complex set of interactions with officers than cynicism theory alone would predict.

Pam, who at 44 is recovering from a decades-long crack addiction, believes that a lot of police officers are “doing crooked stuff.” Nonetheless, she takes time to get acquainted with the officers who work in the vicinity of her apartment building:

We have Metropolitan working here, and I got to know all of them. I used to take them to dinner. They’re fine with me. I feel like they’re here to protect us. *[Did you feel this way when you were using?]* Yeah. I was still talking to them. They knew you were using. It wasn’t about who was using, but it was about who was selling it... They’re pretty good. I mean, the ones that ain’t doing crooked stuff. *[Do you feel like a lot of them are doing crooked stuff or just a few?]* A lot of them because we’ve always got them on the news doing stuff. Every time you turn on the news they’re doing something. I know one time they had four of them up in the 4th District selling drugs. Then they had the police that killed that little boy up in Southeast a couple years ago. The boy had no gun. You know what I’m talking about? There’s a lot of police brutality going on out there, a lot of crooked stuff. What can we do?

In Pam’s words, there is a sense of resignation to widespread police violence and corruption. Yet in her own neighborhood, police officers have been “fine.” Despite her concern that the police are “crooked,” Pam has reached out to them on several occasions, particularly for managing relations with her PCP-addicted adult son. Pam explains, “I just got tired of it. Enough is enough.” She was particularly worried about his tendency to punch walls and break furniture because property damage could spark eviction from her Section 8 apartment (a well-founded fear given that Pam has been sued for eviction more than 20 times).

When I asked women about “the police,” they consistently drew distinctions between the police as an institution—almost universally expressing cynical views—and the beat officers they encountered on a daily basis. Social psychologists might explain this tendency using a general individuation model: Although respondents might hold negative views of police as any out-group, they begin to individuate officers with whom they have regular contact (see Shriver and Hugenberg 2010). Due to shifts in law enforcement since the 1990s that have intensified police presence in high-crime neighborhoods, people in low-income minority neighborhoods like the women in this sample constantly encounter police as a part

of regular life. As Tara explains: “Sometimes they come out here and do stuff with the kids at the Rec... It’s not all the time they’re around here that they’re arresting people.” Although other scholars have recognized the presence of a few “good cops” in the neighborhood (e.g., Anderson 1990; Rios 2011: xii), I argue that these multifaceted experiences produce contradictions within women’s institution-level opinions of the police and their individual-level perspectives on officers, thereby making occasional reliance on police more possible. However, even positive encounters that create trust in specific officers, or that might be perceived as procedurally just (see Tyler and Huo 2002), stop short of building a sense of legitimacy or trust in the broader system of crime control. The stickiness of institution-level cynicism may be due to the collective memory and current-day collective experience of police mistreatment (see Gau 2015).

Domain Specificity

Respondents believe that calling the police is occasionally a reliable strategy for regaining control of situations they perceive as a direct threat to themselves or their children. Familial or public order domains close to or within the home are where police can be trusted most. Police are deemed fairly efficacious in escorting away violent partners, finding runaway children, or quieting disruptive neighbors. However, they cannot be trusted to protect respondents or their families from violent street crime. This belief is demonstrated through respondents’ reported police contacts, with 35 of 54 contacts occurring in response to issues inside the home, 13 for order maintenance in the periphery of the home, and only six contacts for street crimes. Only one respondent admitted to reporting violent crime outside the home (Table 2).¹³

¹³ Table 2 likely undercounts the actual number of police contacts from respondents. Respondents who described making multiple calls to police usually could not give a precise number, and would instead say something like “many times” or “all the time.” Because I could not get a precise number, I used the most conservative estimate, including only contacts that the respondent described in detail as distinct incidents. The maximum number of detailed contact descriptions per respondent is 6; the modal number is one.

Table 2. Characteristics of Reported Police Calls

CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER OF CONTACTS (N=54)	PERCENTAGE
Incident Type		
*Intimate Partner Violence	22	40.7
Other Family Disputes	13	24.1
Neighbor Disputes	6	11.1
Vandalism	3	5.6
†Drug Use	3	5.6
Drug Dealing	1	1.9
Other (e.g., child hit by car, prostitutes)	6	11.1
Sphere of Incident		
Street/Neighborhood	6	11.1
Order-Maintenance Around Home	13	24.1
Familial/Domestic	35	64.8
Perpetrator Relationship		
Stranger	6	11.1
*Neighbor or "Associate"	18	33.3
R's Romantic Partner	19	35.2
R's Child	8	14.8
Other Family Members	2	3.7
<i>Intimates and Relatives (partner plus child plus family)</i>	29	53.7

* Includes against R and others

† I report here only when R indicated that drugs were the reason she called the police. Incidents involving drugs where R indicated that she called for another reason are omitted from this count.

* Includes romantic partners of R's children and neighbors

Tiffany, a 34-year-old mother of three, explains that calling the police on drug users in the hallway immediately outside her door has been an integral strategy for calming the environment. When

she first moved to the neighborhood 13 years ago, she perceived the area immediately outside her apartment as loud and dangerous: “We had dudes hanging all outside, smoking in the building, drinking in the building, doing whatever they wanted to do.” This has since changed; her group of apartments is now “the quietest court.” Tiffany credits this change to a collective neighborhood effort to first ask them to leave, and then to call the police:¹⁴

The people that have moved in these buildings now, we don’t want any of that in here. We don’t want smoke or crack... We tell them, “You’re not respecting our kids, so why should we allow you to do what you’re doing? ‘Cause if you were respecting our kids, you wouldn’t do that crack in the hallway or be making all of this noise at night. You know it goes up under the door, and the kids are in the house.” So we call the police. [*How often?*] If you see them in the hall, all the time. We call them.

Although Tiffany uses the police in this way, she expresses a general contempt for them. When asked to describe her relationships with police, she responds: “The police around here, always negative. Always negative.” She goes further: “You have to know your rights, because if you don’t know your rights, the police will get over on you... That’s why people are always saying, ‘Fuck the police.’” Her words are a clear expression of police cynicism. Yet when drug users are in her hallway, she and her neighbors respond by calling the police. It is, of course, difficult to know whether the changes Tiffany has observed over time are attributable to her and her neighbors’ police-reporting efforts or to other factors, such as increased patrolling, general neighborhood change, or transitions in the local drug market. What is important is that she *believes* her home is safer because she contacts the police.

Vera, a 39-year-old mother of 2, is concerned about rampant drug dealing in the courtyards and playgrounds of her apartment complex. Despite her own years dealing drugs just outside of D.C. in Montgomery County, Maryland, she is now convinced that the drug trade is detrimental to her neighborhood: “If I could do something about the drug dealers, I would, but I can’t,” she said. She believes the police already know about drug dealing but choose to ignore it. Initially, Vera claimed that

¹⁴ This is a rare example of collective efficacy (see Sampson 2012). Usually, police-reporting is a decision made alone.

she would never call the police on anyone: “I have kids,” she explained. But Vera recently called the police to respond to a noisy altercation between the woman who lives above her and her boyfriend. She had heard the couple fighting before and asked her neighbor to keep it down: “I wasn’t scared they would hurt me or anything because I had told her I didn’t appreciate all the noise. I have to get up and go to work in the morning. My kids have to go to school.” Vera wanted the noise to stop, and she “was getting real worried because the noise was getting real loud. The banging was getting real serious.” Her call was successful: Vera has not heard the noise since. (She does not know the status of her neighbor’s relationship.) Here, the perceived cost of reporting was low, and she thought the police, despite choosing to ignore drug dealing, might effectively intervene in a domestic altercation. This report was also tethered to her maternal goals: She reported the noise because, among other things, “my kids have to go to school.” Reporting drug dealing would be antithetical to that duty: “I have kids.”

Familial or public order domains are where police can be most trusted and effective. When it comes to violent crime, however, women see calling the police as a useless and potentially dangerous strategy. In keeping with now-common wisdom on crime reporting, women do not willingly “snitch” about violent crime. Nickie explains the danger of reporting violent street crime to police:

Around here, it’s you snitch and they’re going to look for you and kill you. It’s a couple of people around here just got killed around here and shot in the head, and a couple of people snitched around here, and now they’re in the Witness Protection Program. One of the people that snitched was like family to me. When she left, she went back to New Orleans, but they was coming back to me and saying, “If we see her get off the plane we’re going to kill her.” She can’t come back to D.C. because they already got a hit on her. Around here, if you snitch on somebody, especially if you go to court and testify, you’re a done deal.

Yet, in another situation, Nickie called the police on her daughter’s father, who struggles with alcoholism, because he was drinking heavily. Foregrounding the therapeutic consequences finding below, she thought having him arrested might get him into treatment.

Similar repudiations of snitching, or being “hot,” were present throughout the sample. However, the social meaning of “snitching” about violent crime and “snitching” about family violence, noise, or truancy are divergent. The powerful script against police-reporting applies most strongly to drug trafficking and violent crime, which are more likely to have enforcement weight of youth and gangs behind them, and less to other crimes (see Clampet-Lundquist, Carr, and Kefalas 2015).

Domain specificity is thus an important pathway to police reliance. Earlier research noted the poor’s tendency to call the police about noncriminal matters, arguing that the poor may lack *awareness* of more appropriate or proportionate modes of recourse for these types of matters (Merry 1990; Reiss 1972). However, by virtue of living in heavily policed neighborhoods and having close contact with the crime control system, ignorance is rarely a reason for domain specificity in this sample. Instead, respondents made *strategic choices* to call the police to protect the home and rarely for crimes that occurred beyond their home’s immediate perimeter, even if they were aware of criminal activity. As Etrulia, a 56-year-old mother of twin boys, explains: “I see stuff, and I don’t see stuff, ok? That’s the way I roll. This is my house. You do whatever you want as long as it don’t touch my house.” My results show that women are deeply concerned about crime in their neighborhoods but engage the police to halt crime closer to home. Women may not *consistently* report crimes like domestic violence to police, but they are more likely to report these disturbances than street crimes.

Therapeutic Consequences

When women call the police, they are often turning in people about whom they deeply care—intimate partners and children (see Thomas 2013). One way respondents explain these calls is by emphasizing potential therapeutic consequences of police involvement, such as getting into social service programs or interrupting destructive patterns. Of thirty-five reported police contacts that deal with issues in the home, respondents spontaneously articulated rehabilitative rationales for twelve of them.

Shay, a 35-year-old mother of 5, grew up in a particularly crime-ridden housing project during the peak of the crack cocaine era. On one hand, she believes in a “street code” against calling the police: “When you grow up like I did, some stuff is almost like the law... You don’t always call the police on people.” Yet she has called the police on multiple occasions to help friends facing domestic violence and to control her teenaged son and daughter. Her son is currently in juvenile detention in another state. She called police because her son was “being a disrespectful child—talking back and being aggressive, not listening”:

At the end when he was not going to court, he had bench warrants for his arrest because he wouldn’t go back to court on the charges. They were looking for him. I couldn’t get him to turn himself in himself. He looked at it like I had set him up because I had to get him to the house for them to get him. He was real reckless. I just didn’t want him to harm himself or to harm someone else. I didn’t want him to get into some serious trouble because he was hanging with the wrong people. One of the persons he was hanging around with is now doing 30 years.... Can you imagine if he was on the street? I had to explain to him why I had to do what I had to do when I was really able to sit down with him—“This is why mommy did this.” It makes sense to him now. He knows now when hearing about all the other things that were going on with the rest of his friends and how they started to get into serious trouble. They were doing robberies now and serious things. If he was home right now, he’d be doing the exact same thing that they’re doing. He knows now that mommy saved him.

Despite her belief that contacting the police is generally inappropriate for someone who grew up in a poor neighborhood, Shay justifies calling the police on her son as an effort to “save him.” She sees calling the police as an interventionist parenting strategy, an effort to hold her son accountable for previous wrongdoing, divert him from law-breaking peers, and warn him of the potential consequences of continued criminality. Although research indicates that serving time in juvenile detention hardens young men and potentially increases the likelihood of recidivism (Nurse 2002), Shay is hopeful that by interrupting her son’s spiral into deeper delinquency, she has helped reset his future. Many mothers are likely aware of these risks. Yet, structural and situational context nonetheless encourages them to make

the difficult choice to trust the crime control system, hoping that calling the police will provide a path toward redemption.

Problems arise when respondents seek therapeutic consequences but receive punitive ones or harsh treatment instead. Angie, a 39-year-old mother of three, was shocked at her exchange with a police officer who responded when she called the police on her estranged husband. After an argument with her husband that involved threats of violence, Angie told the police that she did not want her husband around their children. When police arrived, the officer allegedly told Angie that her home was immaculate and it looked like there were no household problems. Angie felt that the officer “tried to condemn” her:

She took me into my back room and she was like, “Why are you calling the police on your husband?” I said, “Because I felt threatened.” She said, “You know, your house is immaculate. People whose houses this clean don’t usually have any type of issues going on like that in their home.” I’m just looking at her like—? When someone says something I just play it off. Ok, that’s what you think. She’s like, “Where’s your family? You don’t have no one to help you?” I said, “Ma’am, my family is not here. I don’t have a support system.” ... She kept saying that, and I said, “Ok, ma’am, are you finished?” I started walking to the door, and she wanted to keep going on and on, but I just tuned her out because I think she wanted to provoke me. I feel like some women cops like that. She wanted to provoke anger out of me so I would pursue an argument with her. She’d have been like, “Ma’am, you’re going to jail.” I wasn’t going for that.

This exchange was disappointing, but it did not deter Angie from calling the police the next time she had an argument with her husband. She was happier with that outcome: Calling the police led to counseling for her son who has mental health challenges. After the call, “another social worker came, and she listened to me and was excellent.... She was basically giving me advice as far as helping with my son getting into therapy and managing his behavior.” This call produced the “support system” that Angie otherwise lacks.

Disadvantaged mothers have limited options for parental support outside the crime control system. What Bourdieu (1998) calls the “left hand of the state”—income support, housing, child services—can be precarious and punitive. At the same time, as researchers and policymakers are

increasingly recognizing, the criminal justice system—the “right hand”—sometimes provides more robust support than social welfare programs do (see Garland 2001; Western 2018). But police are not social workers. Calling the police on neighbors about minor disagreements escalates conflict and, in the aggregate, may erode neighborhood trust. Calling the police on family members deepens the reach of penal control into communities and homes.

Institutional Navigation

Many disadvantaged African-American mothers parent in the shadow of social services bureaucracies (Gilliom 2001; Rios 2011; Roberts 2002; Sykes 2011). Crime control and social welfare are gendered parallel structures, men monitored by the criminal system and women by the social welfare system (Goffman 2009; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011; Wacquant 2009). Poor families’ involvement with other state institutions is one surprisingly unexplored factor in their relationships with and use of police. Respondents identified social welfare institutions as a justification for more than one-quarter of contacts to report children or neighbors.

Janice called the police to move from a violent public housing project to a safer one. After her son was murdered about a decade ago, DCHA moved her to a smaller apartment. However, they moved her to a different complex notorious for violence. In this neighborhood, Janice says, “Every time I turned around, someone was trying to jump my daughter.” Once there was a large crowd threatening to attack her daughter, and Janice intervened. In response, someone threw a chain at her but missed. Although Janice ordinarily uses extra-legal approaches to address neighborhood disputes, she decided to be more strategic this time:

I went through the police and let them handle it. I moved that way... I reported them. You get a report number, and Crime Victims helps you. For young people, for us citizens, there are a lot of things that the government has that we don’t know and we’re too lazy to get stuff. Like you’re doing research to find out things? I’m a researcher. Anything to better myself, to better my child’s life, I’m going to find it... The girl was arrested, so she was a threat to me and my child. They moved me.

Janice used the police for institutional navigation despite her general cynicism about police. She claims to “keep my distance” from the police “because a lot of them crooked... police lie. They twist the truth.” Here, calling the police was a shrewd response to Housing Authority policies that incentivize calling the police.¹⁵

Tory also called the police about a dispute with a neighbor. She rushed to report her neighbor before her neighbor reported her: “I tell [police] so they can ruin *that* person... On our lease, one violation is fighting. You *will* get put out of here.” The struggle to retain housing plays a role in women’s decisions to report crimes to police (Desmond and Valdez 2013). This is a particularly potent issue in D.C., where rapid socioeconomic and racial change has drastically reduced the affordable housing stock. Retaining subsidized housing may be the only way most respondents can continue to live in their home city. As seen in Table 1, 68% of the sample has been sued for eviction in DC.¹⁶ Housing insecurity is an institutional constraint that can override legal cynicism and convince a mother to call the police. Income insecurity may also factor into decisions to report crime, particularly when illicit activity provides economic support (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Venkatesh 1997).

The incidents above might be particularly salient in a sample drawn from residents of subsidized housing. However, the most commonly mentioned fear was losing custody of children, a concern that is not peculiar to assisted renters (see Roberts 2002). More than half of respondents had been subject to a child protective services investigation. Only a small number of these investigations resulted in even brief removal of a child from the home, but there is nonetheless a perception that child removal is pervasive: As Althea commented, losing one’s children “is common in an urban neighborhood.” Stories and

¹⁵ The relevant Housing Authority policy is D.C. Municipal Regulation 14-6402, which requires that public housing transfer requests due to “situations of a life threatening medical or public safety nature” are given first priority. D.C. Mun. Reg. tit. 14 § 6402.18(a) specifies that “these life-threatening conditions must be documented and verified.”

¹⁶ This does not count potential suits in other states or some younger respondents who have never held their own lease. Also, because my sample does not include unassisted renters, it may not capture the full scale of the housing affordability problem.

proverbs about avoiding child removal abound, with some respondents worried that if their home is disheveled, or if their kids publicly misbehave, their children may “go into the system and never come out.”

It sometimes seems that calling the police helps mothers avoid this fate. Daniqua, 34, was having trouble keeping track of her teenage son. He was rarely home, and she could not ensure that he was attending school. Child and Family Services (CFSA) had already investigated Daniqua because of another school attendance issue: Her daughter had been absent from school for several weeks after contracting Kawasaki syndrome. According to Daniqua, the school reported the extended absence to Child and Family Services two days after her doctor’s note expired. A lesson Daniqua learned from this experience is that she should avoid truancy at all costs. Not only does truancy trigger a child welfare investigation, it could also lead to a criminal misdemeanor conviction. As do more than half of U.S. states, the District prosecutes parents for their children’s truancy under educational neglect statutes.¹⁷

After years of calling police to track her son, Daniqua and her husband contacted the MPD’s Youth Investigations Branch, which manages programs targeting youth who exhibit deviant behavior. Her son now has a probation officer who has imposed a curfew, regularly tests him for drugs, and ensures that he is at school. Daniqua is pleased with her decision to call the police on her son. However, she has misgivings about the police generally, lamenting their failure to get involved in events that led to her brother’s 2010 murder: “If the police would have intervened, my brother would have been still alive... Why didn’t you go down there and tell them to break it up? [The officer] just let it go on, like ‘It’s the ‘hood and who gives a damn?’” There is a palpable bitterness in Daniqua’s voice as she tells this story. Yet despite this and other disappointments, the institutional context surrounding her son’s unruly behavior left her with few alternatives to the police department. Ernestine expresses frustration at this double-bind of high parental liability and low parental autonomy: “You know, if the kids don’t go to school, they lock

¹⁷ D.C. Code § 38-251 (2012).

the parents up. You can't make a kid go to school!... The government isn't really letting you raise your kids." By calling the police, mothers can signal adequate parenting effort to the state, thereby avoiding their most dreaded outcomes.

Some respondents explain that fear of social welfare agencies dissuaded them from calling the police when they otherwise might contact them. Calling the police can precipitate a child protection investigation. Katina, for example, called the police when her daughter's father Byron threw a lamp in an argument over visitation. The police advised her to pursue a restraining order, and she did. A week later, after receiving a tip from Byron's mother, CFSA investigated her. After finding evidence of marijuana use, CFSA removed Katina's children for a week, a time she tearfully refers to as "the worst seven days of [her] life." Depending on the agency at issue and the circumstances of the case, mothers might rely on police or avoid them. The goal in this navigation process is living up to the full promise of motherhood: maintaining custody of children, protecting them, and helping them flourish.

Discussion & Conclusion

This article has examined poor black mothers' reported experiences with police to gain a better sense of how legal cynicism theory fits with research showing that mothers in high-crime neighborhoods turn in intimate partners and children to the police, and that police receive more calls from the people and neighborhoods highest in cynicism. The findings encourage scholars to expand the study of cultural orientations about the law toward situated culture, or the culturally available strategies that emerge when orientations operate in real-life situations. Legal cynicism is a dynamic strategy that is part of a larger repertoire about legal authorities, and it operates differently depending on the nature of moments of crime and disorder. Other strategies exist that are similarly triggered by circumstance. Four alternative strategies to legal cynicism emerged from this study: officer exceptionalism, domain specificity, therapeutic consequence-seeking, and institutional navigation.

This approach provides initial responses to some questions that remain unanswered in the legal cynicism and police legitimacy literatures. First, an approach that examines micro-level situational dynamics provides an additional dimension to how race and neighborhood matter for trust in the law. Both race and neighborhood play a role, but trust also varies depending on how law and legal authorities are operating within interactive moments. One way that survey research might better capture this dimension is by asking respondents at a more fine-grained level about their use of police in specific situations.

Second, this approach points to the intersubjective quality of trust. Trust is not a purely mental exercise, but is negotiated and deployed in emotionally charged moments between actors (see Katz 1988). These moments generate energies that carry over into future interactions with police, such that even if mothers still generally distrust police, possibilities for situation-specific trust remain (Collins 2004). Because distrust is high in this population along several axes (e.g., Burton et al. 2009; Desmond 2012; Levine 2013; Smith 2007, 2010), neighborhoods with concentrated poverty might also be thought of as neighborhoods with concentrated distrust. This study invites a broader exploration of how concentrated distrust fits into a broader milieu to affect the lives of poor families.

Limitations. There are several limitations of this exploratory study. One is that we know little about the frequency at which women use the strategies identified in this paper. Although the study inquired about situations in which police were not called during the data collection process, instances were certainly omitted. It is extremely difficult to gain an accurate sense of “the denominator”—the number of times a person *could* have called the police but did not with data collected using retrospective surveys or interviews—as any number acquired through retrospective methods would likely be tainted with recall bias (see, e.g., Smith and Thomas 2003). The current study’s primary empirical contribution is to provide understanding of mothers’ explanations of their engagement with the police which, research

shows, is non-negligible. The study cannot, however, explain the *average* or *modal* responses to crime or disorder. In future research, this design could perhaps be expanded to better capture which strategies are more or less salient over time, and which strategies are used to explain decisions not to notify the police of crime.

Second, this study was concerned with how to understand mothers' use of police. While focus on this critical population is a main benefit of the study, it is a limitation as well. Men and women without children are not studied, and they may interact with the police in different ways from my sample. What, if any, are the heterogeneous cultural conceptions of police for these groups? Are their strategies similar to mothers', or are there other ways that these groups understand the crime control system? Additionally, though this study did not detect systematic differences based on other variants such as age or prior incarceration, it is conceivable that situational trust would manifest differently among twenty-year-old mothers than among fifty-year-olds (see Bosick et al. 2012), and among those who have been incarcerated than those who have not been (see Buckler et al. 2011). These might be fruitful topics for further study.

Race. Although not a core aspect of the findings, race mattered a great deal to respondents' general opinions of the police and the crime control system. Race was rarely mentioned, however, when respondents told stories about specific interactions with the police. In encounters, problems with police were attributed to personality issues or police desire to assert authority. This is likely because of the demographic composition of D.C.'s police force: As explained above, 70% of D.C.'s police force is comprised of ethnic minorities, nearly all of whom are African-American. It seems that respondents would be less apt to attribute poor treatment to racism when the officer and respondent are of the same race, even if they see themselves as targets because of race. (However, some disagree—as Melissa notes, “You’ve got a lot of black police, and I think they kind of discriminate too.”).

Race played a larger role when mothers described their general opinions on the criminal justice system and the types of neighborhoods in which they want to live. Most respondents express a belief that the system disregards the lives of poor African Americans. Respondents from neighborhoods undergoing racial and socioeconomic change (“gentrifying”) report that police presence is high, and they are pleased to have the additional security. However, they believe the police are there to make the neighborhood safer for new (white) residents, not them. As Youlanda, who lives in a gentrifying neighborhood explains, “We see the police with the white people. We only see the police when the white people come in.”¹⁸ These references to neighborhood racial composition point to the importance of keeping in mind the ecological contexts in which situations occur. This article seeks to bring situations to light, but race and neighborhood context remain critical factors as well. These historically rooted factors create the backdrop against which micro-level factors operate. Future studies might explore the relationship between race, place, and situation in greater depth, expanding to a broader array of ethnic groups and delving deeper into police-community relations in the context of gentrification.

The findings lead to broader questions. Anderson (1999) explains that police may be called “only in a dire emergency” (p. 321). What does it mean, then, that respondents rely on police primarily to protect the home? What does safety mean to poor black mothers in the city? The results suggest that safety means familiarity with the actors who wield power in their daily lives. Safety means securing the home; although securing the neighborhood would be ideal, it is not as essential as the home and family (cf. Rosenblatt and DeLuca 2012; Wood 2014). In this process, the goal is to produce therapeutic outcomes, not punitive ones. One aspect of safety for these women is the importance of retaining support from the welfare state while keeping its harsh penalties at bay. More research is needed on the potentially divergent meanings of safety for people and the institutions tasked with keeping them secure.

¹⁸ Desmond and Valdez (2013) found that police in Milwaukee patrolled neighborhoods that are 60% black more than neighborhoods with higher or lower percentages of black residents (p.130). In DC, police deploy “an initial surge of officers” as a neighborhood begins to gentrify (Hermann 2012).

The shift toward policing predicated on individual relationships with residents of high-poverty neighborhoods gives space for residents to develop more complex understandings of officers. Yet, despite developing positive relationships with some officers, respondents are deeply concerned about police corruption and violence at an institutional level. Respondents attribute occasional trust in the police to officer personalities and situation-specific circumstances rather than a trustworthy and effective police force. They often refer to media depictions of police as corrupt and incidents of police overreaction or violence when making cynical statements about police. Policing experts must keep in mind that the development of relationships between a few extraordinary beat officers and community members will not on its own build trust in the police as an institution. Residents will need to perceive force-wide respect and fairness in order to build a force-wide sense of trust and legitimacy.

The findings also indicate that police and poor black women have divergent beliefs about the incidents they are best equipped to address. Women want police to help them in or near the home, but officers are more interested in street crime. Police sometimes express frustration at their calls, especially when they call for help with non-violent family altercations (see Reiss 1972). To foster a more robust sense of trust, police should take the problems that poor mothers bring to them seriously and treat them fairly. Respect in these interactions means more than politeness. It means recognizing that when mothers take the drastic step of calling the police about what might appear a minor situation or “family matter,” these issues are, for them, Anderson’s (1999) “dire emergencies” (see also Tyler and Huo 2002).

Mothers prefer to call the police when they foresee therapeutic consequences for the offender. Yet the crime control system currently produces only a limited set of therapeutic consequences. Many jurisdictions are developing rehabilitative alternatives to incarceration such as problem-solving courts and innovative forms of probation. Although further research is needed, the results imply that the expansion

of these alternatives could produce a collateral benefit to law enforcement by increasing trust, legitimacy, and willingness to report crime.

What are the implications of a situational perspective for policing policy? Less-adversarial dynamics, community engagement, and specific moments of procedural justice in some DC neighborhoods (see Reisig and Parks 2004; Tyler and Huo 2002), have provided an opening where some respondents' cynical views on police momentarily yield. Programs such as Police Activity Leagues, in which police organize and participate in enrichment activities with at-risk youth, might be an example of an intervention that, carefully conceived, could over time expand the number and type of situations in which disadvantaged populations might trust and rely on law enforcement (see Institute for Municipal & Regional Policy 2009). Recall Tara, who offered in her limited defense of police, "Sometimes they come out here and do stuff with the kids at the Rec." Policies that encourage officers to divert low-level offenders to community resources without first arresting them (see, e.g., Beckett 2014) might also indirectly increase community trust by making it more possible for police involvement to produce therapeutic consequences.¹⁹

These extrapolations are necessarily cautious given the nature of this study. Nonetheless, a situational perspective might sensitize policymakers to the potentially considerable effects that finer-grained policy and practice, rather than broad policy commitments (e.g., "community policing"), might have on community members' highly contextualized daily experiences of crime control, and correspondingly, police legitimacy. This perspective might also sensitize policymakers to the difficulty of mothering in the context of poverty: Because of the retraction of non-criminal social systems (e.g., Edin

¹⁹ In contrast, "zero-tolerance" or "broken windows" policing has been associated with declining trust among typically legally cynical populations (Greene 1999; see Wilson and Kelling 1982). Black and Latino plaintiffs in *Floyd v. City of New York*, the 2013 case that struck down New York City's "stop-and-frisk" policy, testified that repeated stops and unjustified searches made them feel distrustful of the police (2013:557; see also Collins 2007). The gradual incorporation of police paramilitary units into traditional police forces (Kraska and Kappeler 1997) similarly hinders police efforts to develop the non-adversarial relationships crucial for increasing trust.

and Shaefer 2015), the criminal justice system has become one of few socially sanctioned avenues through which mothers can procure resources and security for their families.

This chapter offers a situational perspective as an expanded mandate for research on the cultural context of police-community relations. Previous research that has not taken such an approach has established important facts with respect to the types of people and neighborhoods least likely to trust the police. That research has also demonstrated the negative effects of legal cynicism on various macro-level outcomes. This chapter aims to spur an additional body of research that explores, in greater depth, how legal trust operates across complex situations.

CHAPTER THREE:

LOCATED INSTITUTIONS: RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION AND THE CASE OF POLICING

To unsnarl the knotty problems of persistent residential segregation and neighborhood inequality, a growing body of research is examining residential selection as a social process (Bruch and Mare 2006; Crowder and South 2008; Sampson and Sharkey 2008; Sampson 2012). Scholars are beginning to explore in greater depth the multitude influences over where people live, and specifically to understand the complex bundle of factors that yield individual preferences for certain neighborhoods over others. With some exceptions (e.g., Rosen 2017), the preferences debate tends to under-theorize structural and institutional aspects of how preferences develop. Recent scholarship has called for deeper investigation of factors that shape the housing market and perpetuate segregation (Crowder and Krysan 2016).

This chapter describes *located institutions* as a way of articulating how institutions—schools, churches, retail spaces, green spaces, industries, and in this case, the police—become a lens through which people make meaning of places and thus express preferences for particular neighborhoods or communities. To date, research on “neighborhood narrative frames” has focused on broad perceptions of neighborhoods, such as whether a neighborhood is considered a “beautiful place” or “the projects” (Small 2002: 24-25; see also Tach 2009). But when people describe neighborhoods or communities, they often evaluate specific institutions and use them as a lens through which they assess places. Institutions situated in place shape neighborhood frames and “residential choice frameworks” (Darrah and DeLuca 2014). Moreover, over time, located institutions can form a pathway toward a spatial reputation; for example, places can become known for especially good schools or especially harsh policing, which is important in part because of neighborhoods’ critical role in shaping identity and life chances (e.g., Brown-Saracino 2018; Wilson 1987). Located institutions are thus an essential but oft-overlooked contributor to residential preferences.

Drawing upon seventy-three interviews with a diverse sample of family heads in Cuyahoga County, Ohio—anchored by the City of Cleveland—this chapter envisions policing as a key located institution that contributes to the reproduction of segregation. To the extent that institutions are already explicitly recognized in the literature on residential choice and neighborhood segregation, the primary focus has been on schools situated within neighborhoods (e.g., Goyette, Farrie and Freely 2012; Owens 2017; Rhodes and Warkentien 2017). However, as schools and residences grow ever more disconnected in the era of “school choice,” other institutions’ influence will likely increase. This chapter provides a general way of thinking about the linkages between various community and governmental institutions and residential preferences.

Why Segregation Persists

What keeps neighborhoods the way they are, and what spurs them to change? This question motivates much research on segregation and gentrification. Those analyses tend to focus on structural factors such as racial composition, neighborhood crime rates, or housing policy (DeLuca, Garboden, and Rosenblatt 2013; Papachristos et al. 2011; Sampson and Raudenbush 2004). Yet scholars also examine cultural or socially constructed factors, such as neighborhood identity, reputation, and stigma, as essential contributors to neighborhoods’ trajectories (e.g., Bader and Krysan 2015; Hwang 2016).

Depending on who you ask, there are two or three longstanding theories that sociologists typically use to understand persistent racial residential segregation (Crowder and Krysan 2016). One is *spatial assimilation*, a theory of how inequality in human capital—chiefly income, wealth, education and, for certain groups, language assimilation—locks dispossessed racial/ethnic minorities into poor neighborhoods. On this theory, persistent segregation is primarily attributable to persistent resource inequality, and once resources are distributed more equally, we should expect segregation to decline

significantly (Iceland and Wilkes 2006; Iceland and Nelson 2008; Massey and Mullen 1984; Wagmiller, Gage-Bouchard, and Karraker 2017).

Another is *place stratification*, a theory of how public and private discrimination structures the housing market such that African Americans, and to some degree Hispanics, have a different set of housing opportunities than whites (e.g., Alba and Logan 1993; Crowder, South, and Chavez 2006; Dawkins 2004; Pais, South, and Crowder 2012; Roscigno, Karafin, and Tester 2009; Sampson 2012). On this theory, equalizing resources is insufficient; as a group, African Americans cannot purchase or perform their way into residential freedom. Research by and large suggests that for some groups, such as Asian Americans and to some degree Hispanics, spatial assimilation is a better theory for capturing their residential trajectories (e.g., Alba and Logan 1993; Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015b; Iceland, Weinberg, and Hughes 2014). For African Americans, in contrast, while spatial assimilation theory might explain the movement of some middle-class African Americans to whiter neighborhoods, place stratification may be an overall more explanatory theory given persistently different residential experiences for blacks and whites even once socioeconomic status is taken into account (Alba, Logan and Stults 2000; Friedman, Gibbons, and Galvan 2014; Massey and Tannen 2015).

A third theory, supported by a somewhat non-cumulative body of research, seeks to understand residential *preferences* as a set of individual-level mechanisms that reinforce segregation (e.g., Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Bruch and Mare 2006; Charles 2006; Farley, Fielding, and Krysan 1997; Fossett 2006; Krysan and Crowder 2017; Schelling 1971). In sum, this research shows a persistent hierarchy of neighborhoods, marking all-white neighborhoods as most desirable and predominantly black neighborhoods as the least desirable, at least to whites (see Hwang and Sampson 2014). Scholars have repeatedly demonstrated whites' preference for predominantly white neighborhoods (e.g., Bruch and Mare 2006; Charles 2006; Krysan et al. 2009), or at least their desire to avoid predominantly black

neighborhoods (e.g., Emerson, Chai, and Yancey 2001). This research reveals some of the micro-level dynamics of place stratification, as it suggests that prejudice against minorities, rather than mere affinity for one's own group, explains racialized neighborhood preferences (e.g., Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2007; Lewis, Emerson and Klineberg 2011).²⁰

To understand the full impact of preferences, however, scholars must probe the predilections of minorities as well as the preoccupations of whites. Thus, researchers ask whether, why, and under what circumstances racial minorities prefer to cluster together (see, e.g., Charles 2006; Krysan, Carter, and van Londen 2017). Generally, decades of research show that African Americans prefer diverse neighborhoods over homogenous ones, but with African Americans overrepresented compared to their proportion in the general population (Farley et al. 1978; Farley, Fielding, and Krysan 1997; Krysan and Farley 2002). A few studies find that minorities prefer to “self-segregate” and suggest that this desire emanates from ethnocentric preference to live in racially distinctive neighborhoods (e.g., Clark 2008; Freeman 2002; Patterson 1997), but others reject this interpretation. They conclude instead that self-segregation is not a very powerful explanation of persistent segregation (e.g., Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi 2002), and that any self-segregation is more a product of concern about white hostility than special affinity for one's own group (e.g., Krysan and Farley 2002). Racial composition may not be a driving factor in African Americans' neighborhood preferences; other factors, such as school quality or crime, may be more important to African-American home seekers (Lewis, Emerson and Klineberg 2011).

Studies of low-income families, which in practice are often studies of a subset of African Americans, tend to show that families value proximity to social support, ease of accessing transportation, and the spaciousness of their housing unit over concerns like school quality and other neighborhood

²⁰ Some research probes whether white prejudice is purely about racial aversion or about “rational” correlates such as crime or reduced property values. Results are mixed, but most studies suggest that controlling out socioeconomic correlates and crime rates does not eliminate evidence of a significant independent effect of race on whites' neighborhood preferences (e.g., Harris 1999; Lewis, Emerson and Klineberg 2011).

characteristics (Rhodes and DeLuca 2014; see also Asad 2015; Boyd et al. 2010; Rosenblatt and DeLuca 2012; Rufa and Fowler 2017). To the extent these priorities are counterproductive for social mobility, they are also malleable, but only with aggressive policy intervention (Darrah and DeLuca 2014; DeLuca and Rosenblatt 2017; see also Schwartz, Mihaly, and Gala 2017). Increasingly, those studies, often of housing voucher holders, are moving from a preferences framework to a focus on “cognitive constraints” (Sharkey 2012:17; see also Edin, DeLuca, and Owens 2012; Rosen 2017). Discussions of “preferences” and “choice” can seem ancillary given durable structural barriers to mobility, ranging from shortsighted housing policy to deep and longstanding dispossession (DeLuca, Garboden, and Rosenblatt 2013; Desmond 2016; Sharkey 2013).

When researchers try to account for how institutional perceptions mediate preferences, their probing of institutional roles tends to be shallow. For example, Krysan and colleagues conclude that perceptions of employment discrimination, biased policing, housing market discrimination, and other neighborhood discrimination did not distinguish African Americans’ neighborhood racial composition preferences. However, the questions used to assess discrimination were backward-looking and individualized (e.g., “Have you ever felt that you had been unfairly stopped, searched, or questioned by the police because of your race or ethnicity?”) rather than forward-looking and more general about how they believe the police tend to treat people of their racial or ethnic group (Krysan et al. 2009: 556). Thus, the authors could account for between previous *experiences* with institutions but not *expectations* about institutional behavior. Questions about expectations likely better capture meaning-making about race, institutions, and place.

There seems to be a growing consensus that all three theories—spatial assimilation, place stratification, and preferences—at least partly explain persistent segregation. However, greater understanding of the mechanisms that contribute to segregation are still needed (Crowder and Krysan

2016; Fossett 2006), mechanisms that link structure, social networks, individual preferences (Krysan and Crowder 2017)—and institutions. The link between schools and neighborhood segregation is robustly discussed in the literature, but the connection between other community institutions and neighborhood selection has enjoyed scant scholarly attention. How do individuals link their preferences to collective space—that is, how do individuals make meaning of their physical communities, and how does this meaning-making process shape their preferences of places and neighborhoods? How do institutions, which are central to community life, play a role in people’s meaning-making about places and their residential preferences?

Neighborhoods: Identities, Reputations, Stigma, and Frames

Scholarship on residential preferences tends to use individuals both as the unit of measurement and the unit of analysis, meaning that meso-level factors are not adequately considered. However, individual preferences often emanate from larger dynamics, including longstanding identities of places, the reputations or stigmas that attach to certain physical communities, and shared cultural frames that attach to places, which may shift in their availability and use based on cohort, race, age, and other characteristics.

Community reputations are the shared meanings attached to a geographic space, which are often attributable to structural attributes of an area and are rooted in history and long-term dynamics (Logan and Collver 1983; Suttles 1972; Zelner 2015). Some scholars argue that reputations emanate from external perceptions of a place (Kaliner 2014). Others focus only on internal perceptions or do not clearly distinguish between external and internal meanings (e.g., Guest and Lee 1983; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Pais, Batson, and Monnat 2014). Synthesizing internal and external perspectives, Sampson theorizes the formation of neighborhood identity through the concept of the “looking-glass neighborhood”: Similar to Cooley’s concept of the looking-glass self in developmental psychology,

which envisions the individual self as a product of the perceptions of others, neighborhoods “gain their identity through an ongoing commentary between themselves and outsiders” (Sampson 2012: 54; *see also* Cooley 1902). Whether externally or internally imposed, or some combination thereof, reputations affect the general desirability of a neighborhood in ways that shape neighborhood preferences on a micro-level (Permentier, van Ham, and Bolt 2009).²¹ Reputations may not be universal; whether external or internal, there is some heterogeneity in the social meanings of neighborhoods that varies based on individual attributes and situational context (see Krysan 2002; Small 2002).

Structural factors, such as race and class composition, the number of voucher holders in a neighborhood, or the perceived or actual performance of students in schools in a neighborhood play a central role in neighborhoods’ acquisition of particular identities and reputations (Logan and Collver 1983; Matei, Ball-Rokeach, and Qiu 2001). For example, having a highly regarded school district can make a neighborhood or suburb desirable to certain families (Holme 2002; Lareau 2014). Being home to a large percentage of African-American or Hispanic residents can lead to neighborhood derision and stigma, even among members of those racial groups (Krase 1982; Kurwa 2015; Tach 2014; Wacquant 2016). Industrial pollution and poor community health can also yield place stigma (Auyero and Swistun 2009; Bush, Moffatt, and Dunn 2001). Place stigmas can produce negative individual outcomes as well—people can become “ecologically contaminated” (Werthman and Piliavin 1967; *see also* Besbris et al. 2015; McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin 2012).

Yet we know from cultural sociology that social meanings are conflicted and heterogeneous. For this reason, cultural sociologists have developed conceptual tools, such as scripts, narratives, and frames, that allow us to investigate shared social meanings while acknowledging their heterogeneity and situational contingency (e.g., Lamont and Small 2008; Swidler 2001; Young 2010). While predominantly

²¹ Most studies of preferences have focused on individuals’ preferred racial compositions of an ideal neighborhood, not their preferences for specific actual neighborhoods. Thus, the impact of neighborhood reputations tend not to come into view in those studies.

African-American neighborhoods tend to have enduring reputations for social disorganization (Sampson 2012), various aspects of a neighborhood's reputation are made salient under different circumstances.

A small body of sociological scholarship has explored local variations on how people perceive their own neighborhoods by investigating residents' neighborhood narrative frames (Rosen 2017; Small 2002; Tach 2009). Although sociologists of crime, race, poverty, and urban social organization have increasingly used the concept of frames to understand community perceptions of various institutions (Kirk and Papachristos 2011; Warikoo and de Novais 2015; Young 2004), the neighborhood frames concept has appeared less frequently. Much of the research on criminal justice and urban communities that have used the general frame concept has been insufficiently attentive to the situational variation in when and why people draw upon particular frames and the usefulness of frames for explaining heterogeneity within status groups or communities (Lizardo 2017; Swidler 2001). Critics of the cultural frame concept sometimes argue that frames and other cognition-focused concepts in cultural sociology fall short; some scholars fail to analyze how a frame was created or why it is deployed in any given situation, making "culture" seem like a menu of options people consciously choose from instead of a larger "cultural structure" that is connected to particular outcomes or social realities (Patterson 2014a; Sampson 2015; Schudson 1989).

Neighborhood frames, as Small developed them, are "the continuously shifting but nonetheless concrete sets of categories through which the neighborhood's houses, streets, parks, population, location, families, murals, history, heritage, and institutions are made sense of and understood." (Small 2002: 22). In the same way that frames shape narratives that justify and guide action in other aspects of social life (Polletta 2006; Somers 1994), neighborhood frames ultimately shape whether and how individuals engage with their community. Neighborhood frames are not generally thought of as a way people select neighborhoods, but more of a set of interpretations once people are already in place. Putting theories of

neighborhood reputations and neighborhood frames together, one might think of reputations as meta-narratives about neighborhoods that tend to persist over time. In contrast, neighborhood frames produce more localized narratives that are subject to situational influences.

Policing and the Meaning(s) of Neighborhoods

It is axiomatic that police experiences and perceptions vary by spatial context, perhaps just as much or more than they vary by the race and gender of civilians and officers (e.g., Cao, Frank, and Cullen 1996; Carr, Napolitano, and Keating 2007; Clampet-Lundquist, Carr, and Kefalas 2015; Fagan et al. 2010; Sampson and Bartusch 1998). The policing and neighborhood context research draws inspiration from Werthman and Piliavin (1967), who predicted that police will suspect every person they encounter in a high-crime neighborhood as an offender or potential offender, even if their other characteristics would not be perceived as suspicious in other settings. Scholarship has largely supported this hypothesis (e.g., Fagan and Geller 2015; Sharp and Johnson 2009; Terrill and Reisig 2003; Weitzer and Tuch 2006; Westley 1970). People's proactive engagement with the police, as measured by calls for service, varies by neighborhood as well, even controlling for crime rates (Desmond, Papachristos, and Kirk 2016; Schaible and Hughes 2010).

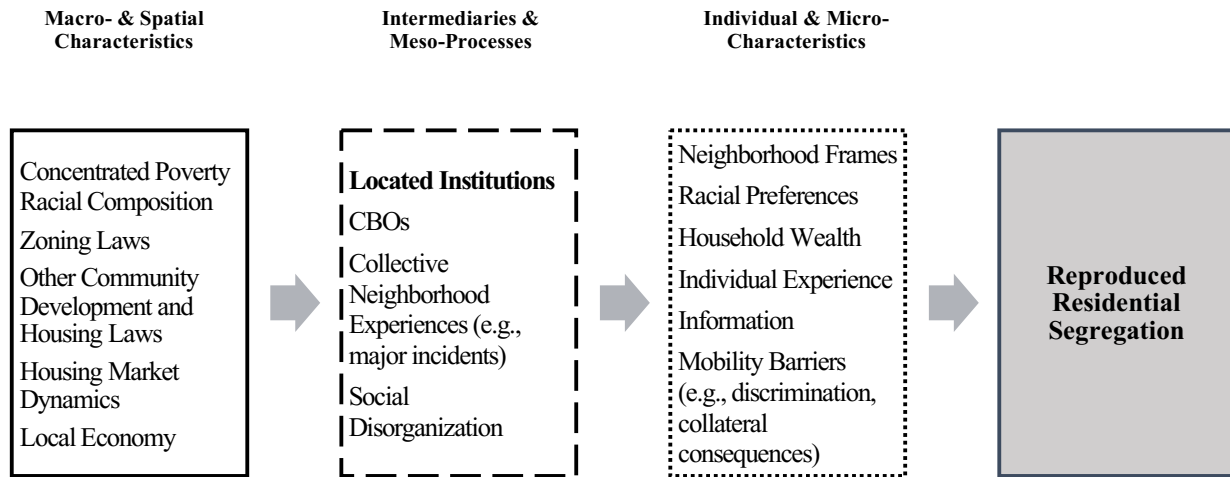
To date, little work has examined policing as a component of neighborhood frames. Theorists, however, have suggested that policing is a critical meaning-making institution for certain people. For example, British criminologists Ian Loader and Aogán Mulcahy have begun developing a cultural sociology of policing based on field research in England. They, too, emphasize the meaning-making capacity of the police: “[S]tate policing,” they argue, “remains an especially rich site for the production and dissemination of meaning; an institution, it seems, that offers an interpretive lens through which people make sense of, and give order to, their world” (Loader and Mulcahy 2003: 45). Sampson, too, envisions policing as a key institution that shapes a neighborhood's reputation and thereby its destiny:

“The police,” he writes, “are at the forefront of dividing up the city into easily understood categories shaped by race and class, and their own visible presence in the community can actively reinforce the priors of residents and further cement a neighborhood’s reputation as disorderly, potentially leading to further decline” (Sampson 2012b: 101). Sampson highlights the visibility of police officers, which in his estimation contributes to a perception of certain neighborhoods as riddled with crime. In contrast, this chapter envisions policing more broadly (and relatively independently from crime) as an institution that yields a variety of neighborhood frames.

The literature on policing and spatial context demonstrates that police operate differently across neighborhoods (depending largely on racial composition and socioeconomic status), and that citizens are aware of this variation. Yet, researchers to date have not deeply interrogated the influence this source of neighborhood variation might have on neighborhood selection and preference. This chapter explores a critical yet often overlooked feature that varies across neighborhoods and contributes to residential preference and choices: the police. Do people seek to move toward, or away from, certain types of police practices? How do parents weigh police presence and police activity in their assessments of a neighborhood’s suitability for raising children, particularly as they imagine deciding where to live?

I draw upon semi-structured, in-depth interviews drawn from *How Parents House Kids*, a qualitative study conducted in two American metropolitan areas, Cleveland, Ohio and Dallas, Texas. The goal of this chapter is to provide a grounded, nuanced view of how parents assess the influence of policing in their daily lives, and to demonstrate how legal and regulatory decisions about policing exert a direct influence over community life. Located institutions, such as police departments, schools, retailers, and so forth, are a factor overlooked in the literature that contributes to the reproduction of segregation, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Linking Located Institutions and Reproduced Segregation



Data & Methods

How Parents House Kids (“HPHK”) is a collaborative effort that brings together researchers from Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University, and Northwestern University. This study, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, was designed to seek an in-depth understanding of the factors families with young children consider when deciding where to live. Given persistent segregation in U.S. metropolitan areas by race and socioeconomic status, the study was particularly focused on potential class and racial differences in residential understandings and, where observable, decision-making. The study focused on families with young children in part because residential segregation is even more intense among those households (Ellen 2007; Iceland et al. 2010; Owens 2016).

We pulled a random sample of addresses from stratified randomly sampled Census block groups in Cuyahoga County, Ohio.²² The sampled block groups were stratified by median income of families in the block group, which we determined using Census data. The three sampled strata include low-income

²² The study was also fielded in Dallas County, Texas. The analysis in this chapter is limited to the Cleveland-area study, as the dynamics in Dallas are distinctive in ways that a single paper or chapter cannot adequately capture.

(<\$25K), middle-income (\$25K to \$50K), and high-income (>\$50K) block groups. To ensure an in-depth examination of decision-making processes among poor and minority families, we purposively over-sampled from predominantly African-American and low-income block groups. A household was considered eligible for the study if at least one child between ages three and eight resided there. Members of the research team visited each randomly sampled address in each block group to determine the household's eligibility for the study and to recruit the child(ren)'s primary caregiver(s) for an interview. We interviewed 73 of 83 eligible families, for a response rate of 87.9%.

The sample is 64.4% African-American, 24.7% non-Hispanic white, 5.5% Hispanic, 2.7% Asian, and 2.7% multiracial (both African-American and white). 56.3% of the sample was from a low-income neighborhood, 28.5% was from a middle-income neighborhood, and 15.2% of the sample was from a high-income neighborhood. Given that we sought to interview the primary caregivers of young children and the persistence of gender norms around parenting, the focal respondent in more than 80% of the interviews was female (see Table 3).

Table 3. Sample Characteristics (N=73)

	N	%
Race/Ethnicity*		
Black/African-American	47	64.4
White	18	24.7
Hispanic/Latino	4	5.5
Asian	2	2.7
Two or more categories	2	2.7
Sex*		
Female	62	84.9
Male	11	15.1
BG Median Income		
<\$25,000	43	58.9
\$25,000-\$50,000	18	24.7
>\$50,000	12	16.4

**Refers to the race or sex of the primary caregiver. In instances where researchers interviewed couples, they asked the couple who was the primary caregiver. All respondents identified as cisgender females or males.*

Although the sample is more than 64% black, 58.9% of the sample lives in predominantly white Census block groups. 42.6% (20) of African-American respondents reside in Census groups that are technically predominantly white; three white respondents live in predominantly black groups. All Asian and Hispanic respondents reside in predominantly white block groups. Given the racial composition of these block groups, it is more accurate to think of most of the “predominantly white” block groups as “diverse” and the predominantly black block groups as “black.”

Data were collected using in-depth, semi-structured interview techniques. We asked questions related to a vast array of social life, including an extensive history of every address respondents had ever resided as an adult, perceptions of current and past neighborhoods, factors they considered in moving from place to place (both retrospectively and prospectively), relationships with current and past landlords, experiences with foreclosure and eviction, their children’s experiences with schooling, their own employment and educational backgrounds, marriage and relationship backgrounds, any immigration experiences, and issues related to their physical and mental health and the health of their partners and children. To maintain participant confidentiality, each sampled address was assigned an anonymized code. The average interview took roughly 2.5 hours, ranging from 30 minutes to more than five hours. Respondents were offered a stipend of \$50 as a token of appreciation for their time.

After data collection was complete, a professional transcription company transcribed interview recordings verbatim. These full transcripts were uploaded into Dedoose qualitative data analysis software. Data were analyzed in a four-stage coding process using Dedoose and Microsoft Excel. At Stage 1, I read the transcripts through completely and engaged in a modified form of “open coding,” focused on any mention of police and the surrounding conversation. After going through this process of coding in large blocks, I created a simple coding dictionary that divided mentions of police into specific categories.

At Stage 2, two research assistants read through the entire transcripts as well, applying the codes in the dictionary to quotations involving crime and police and suggesting modifications to the coding dictionary based on their readings. Each research assistant reviewed the entire body of transcripts to ensure inter-rater reliability and created memos on the data to express any concerns or disagreements about how a quotation should be coded. At Stage 3, we all reviewed the coding, pulling out only the sections of transcripts that illuminated the emerging argument about policing and residential preference and reanalyzing them in Excel using close reading and summary.

Finally, at Stage 4, I reviewed all of the codes and examined potential demographic interactions, focusing on the race, gender, age, and income of the respondents, along with the demographics and characteristics of their neighborhood, particularly its racial composition and median household income. Although the coding strategy moved from being fairly open-ended to increasingly specific in line with traditional grounded theory methods (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967), we moved iteratively between the literature and the data over time (Deterding and Waters 2017) and used a combination of inductive and abductive reasoning for theory development (Timmermans and Tavory 2012).

All names used throughout this chapter are pseudonyms. Because using the real names of the neighborhoods I discuss is analytically important, I have slightly altered some less important information, such as respondents’ precise ages and occupations, to maintain confidentiality. Finally, it is important to

keep in mind the goals of qualitative analysis when reviewing these findings: The aim here is to generate a deeper and more contextual understanding of how policing shapes neighborhood frames. Accordingly, when I report frequencies at which a frame is used among different subsets of the sample, it is only intended to transparently illustrate, at least at a superficial level, how I have identified patterns in the data. It is not meant to fetishize numbers in exchange for a focus on words and meaning (see, e.g., Lareau and Rao 2016).

Policing & Community Life in Cleveland

Alongside oil companies, rock and roll history, LeBron James, and Polish boy sandwiches, residential segregation is one of Cleveland's most enduring legacies. More than forty years after Judge Frank Battisti called living in central Cleveland "a badge or indicia of both slavery and poverty," in *Mahaley v. Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority* (1973), the city remains one of the nation's most segregated. Although segregation in Cleveland, as in nearly every major American city, has declined since the 1970s, it is still very high (Glaeser and Vigdor 2012). In Massey and Denton's classic *American Apartheid* (1993), Cleveland was one of sixteen cities classified as "hypersegregated." Severe segregation of African Americans was statistically observable in Cleveland as early as 1930 (Kusmer 1976; Massey 2001). As in other Great Migration destination cities, the processes that caused segregation were likely well in place well before racial sorting became statistically detectable in the Census (Logan, Weiwei, and Miao 2015).

Many of the most historically segregated American cities have changed course, but Cleveland is one of few that remains hypersegregated today (Massey and Tannen 2015). As of the 2010 Census, the Cleveland metropolitan area was the fifth-most segregated metropolitan area in the nation with respect to blacks and whites, after Milwaukee, New York, Chicago, and Detroit (Frey 2015). Enduring segregation in Cleveland is not by happenstance, but is traceable to a complex web of past and present

policies and practices (e.g., Rothstein 2017; Sugrue 1996: 241). Concerns over policing have come along with this segregated landscape.

In April 1966, the United States Commission on Civil Rights went to Cleveland to hold televised hearings in hopes of getting a deeper sense of racial tensions and inequities in the city. Witnesses recounted a litany of stories of negative police treatment or non-response to crime they faced. One researcher concluded that the police systematically took longer to respond to calls in the African-American community (especially in the Fifth District, which included Hough) than to white communities. Witnesses complained that the police department refused to recruit and promote black officers and discriminated against potential officers who were members of civil rights groups; during the time of the hearing, only six to seven percent of the force was African American (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1966). Police treatment became, according to one account, “by far the most explosive issue during the hearings” (Moore 2002: 44). Segregation brought racial tension that often boiled over into direct conflict and assault against black youth. African American residents complained that officers, who were generally white, seemed unconcerned about this violence (Moore 2002).

Just three months after the hearings, riots erupted in the predominantly African-American and poor community of Hough, leaving four African-American Clevelanders dead and much of the area destroyed. The 1967 election of Carl B. Stokes as the first African-American mayor of Cleveland set in motion a reorganization of the Cleveland police department, with particular emphasis on hiring African Americans. Stokes’ efforts resulted in major controversy over changes to the test for police officer applicants. After the Glenville Riots of 1968, which began with a shootout between police and the black nationalist group Republic of New Libya that left seven people dead and lasted for five days, the possibility for deep and lasting reorientation of the relationship between police and African Americans in Cleveland seemed even more remote (Moore 2002). In Stokes’ autobiography, he described the Glenville

unrest and its aftermath as an even that “would haunt and color every aspect of my administration for the next three years” (1973: 139). Moreover, as the home of two landmark Fourth Amendment cases—*Mapp v. Ohio* (1961), which held that the Fourth Amendment’s exclusionary rule applies to the states,²³ and *Terry v. Ohio* (1968), which established the “reasonable suspicion” standard for police stops—the City of Cleveland came to occupy an outsized role in the legal structure of policing during the 1960s. The unrest in Cleveland happened in a similar time frame as urban uprisings in cities such as Newark, Detroit, Watts, and more, which led to the Kerner Commission and Report.

In the ensuing years, the relationship between Clevelanders (especially African-American Clevelanders) and the police seemed unchanged. As in other cities, the “Crack Era”—roughly between 1986 and 1992—brought on a host of new policing strategies (e.g., Reinerman and Levine 1997; Johnson, Golub, and Dunlap 2000; Forman 2017). For example, the Cleveland Police Department initiated a strategy in the mid-1980s to arrest people who possessed drug paraphernalia, such as crack pipes (a misdemeanor) with felony drug possession as long as a trace of the drug was detectable. This practice, combined with especially harsh policing on Cleveland’s East side, resulted in a situation where African American Clevelanders who possessed crack pipes were charged with and often punished for felony crimes while everyone else who possessed a crack pipe was punished for a misdemeanor offense (Lynch 2011). As in other Midwestern and Northeastern cities, middle-class African Americans departed inner-city Cleveland during the 1960s and 1970s, leaving behind deep pockets of concentrated poverty and racial isolation (Alba, Logan, and Stults 2000; Wiese 2004; Wilson 1987). But in the wake of the Crack Era, even affluent African Americans were more exposed to violence than lower-income whites, largely due to enduring and worsening segregation between different suburbs and between suburbs and the city (Logan and Stults 1999).

²³ The Exclusionary Rule is a doctrine arising out of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It provides (with some exceptions) that when police officers discover incriminating evidence as a result of an unconstitutional, unreasonable search or seizure, the court may not consider the evidence. Because of *Mapp*, the Exclusionary Rule applies in both federal and state court.

The fraught relationship between Cleveland and its police has held steady over time, even as the specifics of police policy and practices have shifted and as violent crime has declined (Chapin et al. 2008; Kratcoski and Noonan 1995; Sharkey 2018). In August 2000, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) opened an investigation pursuant to the Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 14141 and concluded that Cleveland policing routinely violated individuals' constitutional rights. In 2004, the Department laid off 15% of its police force in the wake of budget shortfalls, closing neighborhood substations and eliminating some specialized units (Butterfield 2004). The Department went through the consent decree and monitoring process and emerged successfully in 2005.

In March 2013, however, DOJ reopened its Cleveland investigation. That investigation centered on whether the Cleveland Police Department (CPD) engaged in a pattern or practice of violating the constitutional rights of Cleveland residents. The DOJ issued its final report in December 2014, less than two weeks after the late November killing of twelve-year-old Tamir Rice. The DOJ report concluded that the CPD did violate constitutional rights by using excessive lethal and non-lethal force, often against those with mental illnesses and disabilities, and had a tendency to create situations where using force was more likely. Since 2015, the Cleveland Police Department has again been operating under a consent decree with DOJ that required the Department to make a large number of changes to its policies and practices surrounding uses of force, community engagement, mental health crises, accountability, searches and seizures, data-gathering, and so forth; the Cleveland Police Department is one of only two agencies in the entire country to be subject to consent decree twice. Racial disproportionality of the police force is still a live issue in Cleveland: As recently as 2015, only 25% of Cleveland police officers were African-American compared to 53% of the city's population (Lowry 2015).

Cleveland's history of racial unrest, its persistent segregation, and its constant institutional challenges surrounding policing are not unique. While no single city can truly be "representative" of

others, Cleveland is emblematic of a few key structural and institutional dynamics found in many American urban centers. Thus, the city and its suburbs are a compelling site in which to explore how these dynamics connect with meaning-making on the ground.

Findings

Policing is more than crime control. Policing is a public good (Meares 2017) that actively makes places and communities (Gordon 2017; Wilson 1968). This chapter uses policing as an example of a located institution, such that policing makes place in ways that shape people's residential choice frameworks and may ultimately yield spatial reputations. First, describe how people draw upon perceived spatial differences in policing to make sense of communities in Cuyahoga County. Then I document two lenses through which parents use policing as a located institution—police as a community amenity, which manifests through multiple pathways, and as a public nuisance. Finally, I describe how policing operates at both an idealized aspirational level and a non-ideal experiential level, especially for African-American parents who have more direct experiences with the police. For this reason, brutal direct experiences with the police might not shape neighborhood frames as directly as one might expect. Instead, police reputations for non-responsiveness or arbitrariness might be more damaging to the people's perception of a place than a reputation for harshness.

Policing as a Dimension of Place

A substantial portion of respondents analyzed neighborhoods by comparing the perceived quality of policing within a city and its suburbs or between different parts of the city. Thirty-four of the seventy-three families described differences between the policing that residents of different parts of the metropolitan area experience, many claiming that certain policing approaches, practices, or reputations attracted them to or repelled them from specific areas. When these respondents are broken out by race, a slightly larger proportion of white respondents described differences between policing in different parts of

the county than did black respondents (ten of eighteen white respondents compared to twenty-one of forty-seven African-American respondents).

Simone, who is 23 years old and biracial (Black and White), has resided in many parts of the city as well as the suburbs but is currently staying on the West Side. Comparing police service across the county, Simone described Cleveland as “almost like three cities in one.”

Simone: Because everybody’s divided each side of the city.

Interviewer: Hmm. Yeah.

Simone: We got different police for each side of the city.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Simone: They got East Cleveland Police. We have West Police. East Cleveland Police are assholes. Parma police are assholes.

Although we do not know precisely what Simone meant by “asshole,” we do have clues based on her description of the treatment she expects in Parma,²⁴ a large and more than 90% white suburb, when she brings her boyfriend’s dark-skinned son with her. Simone is very light-skinned, and she does not usually arouse suspicion in Parma on her own. But she believes that with a noticeably black child, she becomes conspicuous. “Everybody in Parma is white,” Simone declared. “So whenever I’m driving down the street, and I got him in the car with me, the police will follow me for six blocks just because I got him in the car with me... If I’m by myself, I won’t get in trouble. I won’t get followed. If I have him in the car, then they want to run my plates, they want to follow me, they want to pull me over just because I have him in the car and I’m in Parma.” Simone lives in Cleveland but works as the manager of a fast food restaurant in Parma. To some extent, she loves the area. She would even like to live there at some point, and at various points refers to the town as “my place.” However, she worries about the suburb’s

²⁴ For detailed descriptions of the neighborhoods respondents mention in this chapter, see Appendix 1.

suitability for her growing black family. Of the town, Simone anticipates, “They’d be ‘Who brought that monkey here?’ And shit like that.”²⁵

Justin, a thirty-eight-year-old white software engineer, and his wife are raising two young sons in Shaker Heights, a well-known affluent Cleveland suburb. “Pretty much any place where you’re served by Cleveland Police, we would not consider,” Justin declared. In contrast, he sees the Shaker Heights Police Department as a real draw to the community, applauding their fast response time and thoroughness when investigating crimes. However, he fears that minorities who live in Shaker Heights might not be experiencing its police force as positively as he does: “[T]hey don’t get along very well with the minorities that live in Shaker Heights. I don’t even know that first hand, but that’s what I have heard from neighbors.... [T]hey are upstanding citizens, I guess you would say. So I take it at face value that it’s happening.” While Justin was one of many white respondents who described the benefits of living under a suburban police regime, he was the only white respondent who expressed concern that those benefits might accrue unequally across racial lines.

Policing as an Attractive Amenity

In response to questions that were focused generally on desirable neighborhood attributes (did not specifically probe the police), forty of seventy-three respondents identified police as a desirable institution in their neighborhood. This view was observable across the sample’s demographics. With respect to race, 23 of 47 African-American respondents, 12 of 18 white respondents, 3 of 4 Hispanic respondents, and both biracial respondents spoke of police as a central positive institution within any neighborhood they would find desirable. With respect to neighborhood median income level, 22 of 43 from low-income

²⁵ Simone is likely not exaggerating the degree of resistance to black infiltration in Parma, at least historically. The suburb actively resisted integration and used various techniques to keep African Americans from purchasing homes there until at least 1980. *United States v. Parma*, 494 F. Supp. 1049 (N.D. Ohio 1980). From Simone’s description, policing in Parma remains at least one way in which the town can adhere to fair housing laws while maintaining its overwhelmingly white population.

block neighborhoods, 7 of 12 from high-income neighborhoods, and 11 of 18 from middle-income neighborhoods made such statements.

Policing on a Checklist

Several respondents spoke about police, and particularly police stations and substations, as one of many items on their neighborhood inventory. These respondents alluded to police spontaneously and quickly, rattling off police or policing styles in the same breath as schools, parks, and other community resources. For example, Elijah, who is African-American, moved to a three-bedroom house in a lower-income East Side neighborhood with his fiancée and three daughters two years ago. He did not exactly “select” the neighborhood: He and his fiancée were informally evicted from their old apartment on the West Side, and his parents could get him into the East Side house. When discussing other neighborhoods he would consider, Elijah identified Hough, Buckeye-Shaker, and Forest Hills, all neighborhoods close by on Cleveland’s East Side. Elijah knew that all of these neighborhoods are in areas that have undesirable reputations. However, he preferred those parts of the East Side because of their amenities: “[W]here I’m talking about is kind of—yeah, it’s kind of rough over in those areas too but ... The shopping centers are right there. The Rapid [transit] is right there. The bus lines run all night. They’re right there. The police station is right there. The park is right down the street. Daycare centers everywhere. Good schools—well, decent schools, decent schools.” Convenient shopping, public transportation, schools, trees, green spaces—these are amenities that urban home-seekers often take into account (Clark et al. 2002; Donovan and Butry 2010). Proximity to a police station, too, served as an attractive amenity.

Similarly, Eva, who also lives on Cleveland’s East Side, aspires to live in the West Side neighborhood of Old Brooklyn. She describes Old Brooklyn as “a nice neighborhood—like, umm, there was a police station, like right across the street from the complex. There is really, like nice people that live

there. It's quiet, clean—the Metroplex [MetroHealth] is literally like the next side walk from it.” Paula, a Latina who is raising four children on the West Side, was like other respondents in listing the police station as a desirable neighborhood amenity, like Wal-Mart: “I also like to be close to stores and hospitals. Here, I'm close to metros [transportation], Walgreens, gas station, the highway, police station is right there. There's Wal-Mart and all the other stores here. I try to stay in a location where I can have access to everything.”

To be sure, there are almost certainly factors in these parents' framing processes that they are not verbally articulating. It is notable, for example, that all of the desirable neighborhoods Eva and Elijah (both African-American) identified are within Cleveland's city limits, even though we showed them a list of neighborhoods that included several suburban areas. These parents could be demonstrating what Bourdieu called *amor fati*, or “the taste for the necessary” (1984: 178; Comfort 2012), or this could reveal a lack of information about other neighborhoods (Krysan and Bader 2009). However, it is still notable that proximity to a police department was on a short list of important neighborhood characteristics. Also, in these narratives, police are not the sole driver of residential preferences. Paula prioritizes stores and hospitals over police stations. Eva and Elijah are simply listing police stations in a long list of desirable neighborhood institutions. However, the mundane presence of police on this checklist of neighborhood amenities is an important aspect of some respondents' ideology of neighborhood selection, one often overlooked in discussions of preferences and community attractiveness.

Policing as a Commodity

For wealthier, usually suburban respondents, attentive public policing was an amenity that could capitalize into greater home and community value (see Kuminoff and Pope 2014), a commodity that parents must shop for when they search for a family home (see Goold, Loader, and Thumala 2010; Loader 1999; Magliozzi 2017; Newburn 2001). Many suburban respondents extolled the virtues of

policing in their communities compared to areas under the dominion of Cleveland Police Department officers. Julie, a white thirty-seven-year-old mother of two, has “the utmost respect” for Cleveland police officers, but prefers the quality of policing she receives in her tony suburb of Rocky River. Julie comes from a family of first responders and counts three Cleveland police officers as family members. She spent much of her early life living on Cleveland’s blue-collar West Side. As a child, she would visit relatives in Rocky River, and she hated it. They were “very snobby,” in her estimation. Yet, as an adult, she moved to Rocky River with her husband.

According to Julie, although she heavily values school quality and proximity to her family when making residential decisions, an incident involving police was her and her husband’s breaking point in their decision to escape Cleveland for Rocky River a few years ago. In Cleveland, they were living next to a neighbor whose ex-girlfriend came over from time to time, and they would get into violent domestic disputes. This neighbor was “kind of gruff, but yet very nice to us,” Julie assessed. One day, the neighbor was fighting with his ex-girlfriend, and someone called the police. Julie looked out the window and saw three police cars and officers with their guns drawn. “I was home with one of the kids one day, and I’m like looking out the window, like ‘Oh my gosh, there’s three police cars. They’re here, guns out. Oh my gosh.’ And [my husband’s] like, ‘Would you get away from the window?’ I’m like, ‘Well, they’re all outside talking now but they still have their guns out.’ And he’s like, ‘Oh my gosh.’ So I was like, ‘Okay, it’s getting time to move.’”

One way to interpret Julie’s story is that the experience of potential, proximate crime in her Cleveland neighborhood created a “narrative rupture” that drove her family out of the city (Rosen 2017). Yet when Julie describes their residential decision-making process, she attributes their move out of the city to systemic policing problems rather than concerns about crime alone. Talking about Cleveland police, she explains, “I mean, I have the utmost respect for them. It’s not their fault if they can’t get there

right away. But I mean, it's just like, I'm like, 'I'm done.' I can't take a chance on that with the kids. So yeah, so I mean, that's how we came [to Rocky River]." To Julie, living under the jurisdiction of Cleveland officers, would be to "take a chance," to put her children at unnecessary risk.

What does Rocky River do better than Cleveland? Julie rattled off a list of benefits. "[T]he Rocky River Police have email that you can sign up for, and so if you have lights out, when there's an altercation, or they are even just seeing a lot of house break-ins or car break-ins, they'll send out an email and tell you. And you see them around a lot." Living in Rocky River meant that the police would be more responsive, have a greater presence, and share more information. There is also a Rocky River officer who lives in Julie's neighborhood, which makes her feel even more secure. Julie chuckled when she told us about her officer neighbor. "Right? So we get the extra."

Some respondents interpreted the police as providers not just of safety, but for other forms of social support. Critically, this phenomenon was not limited to low-income respondents—indeed, higher-income respondents were especially likely to frame their relationship with police in this community-oriented, service-focused way. For example, Ann, a 33-year-old white woman, lives in Lakewood, Ohio, an inner-ring Cleveland suburb, with her husband, Ron, and three-year-old son. Ann and Ron have one of the highest household incomes in the sample at approximately \$98,000 per year, and they both hold professional Masters degrees. Ann is a Lakewood police enthusiast.²⁶ When we asked her how she would describe the area to someone who does not know anything about it, her first reaction was "walkable." But after talking for a short time about walkability, biking, and events, Ann moved to the police. "The police are amazing," Ann exclaimed. "Our taxes go to great use."

²⁶ Ann and Ron love Lakewood policing, but it is worth noting that thirteen respondents from all over across the county specifically discussed Lakewood policing and distinguished it from policing elsewhere. Most non-whites who spoke about Lakewood concluded that Lakewood's police are too punitive ("thirsty," Simone called them) and a reason to avoid that community. But even Mary, a wealthy white woman who lives in the even more affluent suburb of Rocky River, claims that Lakewood's policing strategies are overzealous: "The thing about Lakewood is that Lakewood cops . . . they just—they love to respond. They never just stop the car and give them a ticket; three cops stop the car and give them a ticket. And it's always sirens blaring and, 'We're responding, we're responding.'" Lakewood policing has produced a heterogeneous set of residential frameworks, but these frameworks might have hardened into a reputation.

What makes the police “amazing”? After clarifying that “we’ve never had to use them for us,” she said that she loved seeing them respond “when we had issues with the neighbors,” “an accident that we saw outside,” and when “there was a [power] line down outside.” Their response was “immediate.” Even though Ann used the language of safety, she was not only referencing safety from violence or property crime. Instead, she was drawing upon a more *capacious* notion of safety, one that was more about community investment than avoidance of victimhood.

Ann: The police are amazing. Anytime we’ve had to, which we’ve never had to use them for us obviously but, when we had issues with the neighbors or there was an accident that we saw outside or there was a line down outside, immediate. Our taxes go to great use.

Ron: They’re high but we get what we pay for.

Ann: For sure.

...

Ron: Staff. Staff is a good ‘cause they’re not understaffed.

Ann: Right.

Ron: They’re not, you know, not hurtin’ for officers. There’s plenty of money to help hire people. So, I mean, there’s a presence. There’s a certain—

Ann: Yes.

Ron: A good, safe presence. Not like a, you know, an overwhelming presence.

Ann: Guns-a-blazing presence, but—

Ron: Yeah. You know? You see, you ‘em driving, patrolling, doing their job. That’s nice.

Ann and Ron assess Lakewood police using language that one might apply to a commodity, giving greater value to suburban life. Taxes are high, but “we get what we pay for.” Scholars of policing tend to emphasize the benefits of community policing for disadvantaged communities, but there is also demand for community policing in higher-income areas.

Ann and Ron also had an optimal amount of police presence in mind, and they thought the Lakewood police had achieved that balance. Moreover, Ann talks about Lakewood police officers in the way one might talk about local politicians—she values seeing them around and watching them respond to community defects such as fallen power lines. Thinking about police as an amenity in this framework

suggests that the idea that “the police are our government” might not be limited to people residing in poor, predominantly minority neighborhoods (see Soss and Weaver 2017).

Courtesy Destigmatization

Police presence was both instrumentally and symbolically valuable to some respondents, especially residents of economically depressed neighborhoods in Cleveland who wanted to set themselves apart from the chaos of living in struggling communities. Consider Brad, a 48-year-old low-income white father of four, is a lifelong resident of Cleveland’s West Side. Although he sometimes seems proud to call himself a “West Sider,” he is ambivalent about the quality of the community. When they moved most recently, Brad hoped to move his family to a suburb or a part of town that he considered “a better part of Cleveland.” But he and his wife could not afford those neighborhoods. Thus, they looked for a satisfactory neighborhood that was still on the West Side.

Brad asked friends and neighbors for information about good places to live, and they suggested that the part of town where policemen and firemen lived was a better place than other parts of the community. “I talked to some other people and they were like ‘Oh, yeah. That little brick land, you know? Good area, you know, lot of policemen, firemen.’” One benefit of living in this neighborhood is the direct line to crime deterrence—Brad feels like more of a police insider than an outsider because his neighbor is an officer. “We see something wrong,” he explained, “I know he’s a policeman and I can call him and say, you know ‘Something ain’t right’ or whatever. He can get something expedited.”

Brad could be finding value solely in the potential crime response benefits of living close to police officers. However, several aspects of Brad’s talk about his police neighbors cut against the pure crime-response interpretation and suggest that Brad sees status benefits to sharing a neighborhood with police officers. First, Brad describes the area as having a lot of police officers *and* firefighters. While there could be an analogous first-response benefit to living near firefighters, Brad never mentions one. Second,

in an interview that lasted just under two hours, Brad mentioned his police officer neighbor four times. Third, Brad complained that one set of his next-door neighbors are “obnoxiously loud,” but jokingly noted that “[i]t doesn’t help to have a policeman that lives next door to you. I know, because my other neighbor’s a policeman.” Brad is not interested in using his police neighbor to respond to even this mundane issue. Fourth and most importantly, Brad takes pride in his social proximity to the officers in his neighborhood. Again discussing his neighbor, Brad explained, “He patrols this area and, like I said, there’s other policemen that live in here... He’ll come through on his patrols and, um, my [other] buddy he’s a policeman in the district. He’ll come by just to stop by. I’ll say, ‘Man, I got burgers if you guys want to stop by.’ They’ll stop by, you know and I’d give them a burger when they’re on their way. And so, usually we’ll see them at least a couple times a day.” The benefits of sharing meals with police officers are not just crime reduction and reaction. These relationships are accomplishments to be celebrated.

Like Brad, Delores also saw both safety value and status value to police living in her neighborhood. Delores, an African-American woman in her early forties, is raising five kids (children and grandchildren) mostly on her own in the long-troubled Glenville section of Cleveland’s East Side. She receives a disability check, but not a housing subsidy. Delores’ neighborhood is located in a generally tough area, but she thinks her street is okay in part because of the type of people who are her neighbors. “It’s a lot of police and a lot of postal people that’s on this street.”

What is the value to Delores of living on a street with police and “postal people”? Delores explained, “Cause I feel a little bit safer, you know. Not sayin’ that they gonna run to my rescue if something happen but...” Delores trailed off. “You know, I haven’t seen a lot of young boys and all that kind of stuff, walking up and down the street late at night and all that kind of stuff so, that’s good.” The argument for police here is clear under a straightforward crime-reduction rationale, but the argument for postal workers is more complex. Police officers theoretically provide safety from the “young boys.” Yet

when police officers, like postal workers, live in your neighborhood, it is also emblematic of a type of neighbor—salt-of-the-earth, steady, reliable, economically stable, and wholesome enough to be in the public’s employ. Delores directly states that her rationale for enjoying the presence of police and postal workers in her neighborhood is *not* because she expects faster response; there was some other reason that she struggled to articulate.

Given the tendency among some people who live in troubled neighborhoods to engage in “telescoping,” or describing their neighborhood in small units such as the blockface (Rosenblatt and DeLuca 2013), police residency in neighborhood hot spots with bad reputations might be thought of as “courtesy destigmatization”: In an opposite type of process from that theorized by Goffman (1963), in which people become stigmatized because of their association with other stigmatized persons (courtesy stigma), some respondents believed that association with a police officer might attract more positive attention to a neighborhood and make both them and their neighborhood more respectable. Association with officer-neighbors allowed them to describe, and possibly to experience, their neighborhoods more positively than objective indicators might suggest.²⁷ To be sure, there are likely both material and symbolic benefits of having these neighbors.

Exclusionary Amenity

Neighborhood amenities can function to attract potential residents or to exclude them (Strahilvetz 2003). None of the white respondents directly verbalized that they used police, or any other amenity, as a

²⁷ This destigmatization effect could be an unrecognized benefit of a longstanding but little-recognized U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program called “Good Neighbor Next Door” (GNND). GNND, formalized in 2006 but preceded by Officer Next Door and Teacher Next Door policies established in 1999, aims to get police officers and other “good neighbors”—K-12 teachers, EMTs, and firefighters—to purchase homes in tough neighborhoods by offering a 50% subsidy. In exchange for receiving the subsidy, beneficiaries agree that they will make the subsidized home their sole residence for three years (HUD Good Neighbor Next Door (GNND), 70 Fed. Reg. 53480 (Sept. 8, 2005)). To date, this policy has received virtually no scholarly attention. HUD evaluated the preceding “Officer Next Door” and “Teacher Next Door” policies in July 2004 and concluded that they reduced crime in the two cities studied, Rialto, California and Spokane, Washington (Pacific Western Technologies 2004). This evaluation appears to be the only investigation of the relationship between “good neighbor” residency and reduced crime. As revealed Brad’s and Dolores’ stories reveal, the policy could have benefits other than crime reduction.

means of drawing boundaries between themselves and undesirable neighbors (see Lamont and Molnár 2002). However, some middle-class African-American respondents reported using police in this way. Notably, these respondents tended to reside in declining areas that have increasingly become new destinations for poor families (e.g., Kneebone and Berube 2014; Murphy 2010). This shift in the location of the poor is especially noteworthy in the Cleveland metropolitan area, where more than sixty percent of poor residents live in the suburbs (Tavernise 2011).

Samantha, a middle-class African-American mother of two boys who lives in the “symbiotic” suburb of Cleveland Heights (Murphy 2010),²⁸ provides a quintessential example of this way of thinking. Samantha grew up in Cleveland Heights, but she views her community negatively. “[T]here’s a lot of depravity in the neighborhood,” Samantha explains. “If you walk down the street you see it. You can look out the window and see the people walking down the street. There is a lot of violence.”

While Samantha has grievances about Cleveland Heights, she does favor its police compared to those within Cleveland’s city limits. She attributes her preference for the suburbs (especially University Heights, Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, and Maple Heights) in part to the distinction between proactive and reactive policing.

Interviewer: What is it about those places?

Samantha: They’re just better neighborhoods. You’re not going to hear...like I said, I’m not going to say there’s nothing bad, but you’re less likely to hear gunshots or have too much traffic and noise, and it’s mainly because [of] the police in those neighborhoods. See, the police in Cleveland, they focus on crimes that have already been committed.

Interviewer: Okay.

Samantha: But the police in the suburban neighborhoods they focus a lot on crimes that could be committed, so if they see people clustered around on a corner they tend to be a little nosier than the Cleveland cops. The Cleveland cops consider that normal.

Interviewer: Right.

Samantha: So they just keep going. But if that were happening in Cleveland Heights or South Euclid or Shaker Heights they’re probably going to maybe drive around the block

²⁸ In 2016, Cleveland Heights was 26% poor with a population that is 43.6% African-American, according to American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

and circle back and see kind of what's going on. They may even question the people.

Interviewer: And you like that about those neighborhoods?

Samantha: Yeah, because—I know it sounds bad because everyone says, ‘Oh, that’s racial profiling or whatever.’ I mean, I don’t think it will matter what race the people were. If they were clustered around, more than likely they might be into something that they shouldn’t be doing, so I would prefer a neighborhood where I know that the police aren’t going to wait until—because it’s kind of too late once they’ve already snatched a kid or once they’ve shot someone.

Samantha’s take on these issues is challenging because the policing methods she seems to desire would violate the Fourth Amendment. The fact that people are standing on a corner, by itself, would not support a finding of reasonable suspicion for police to initiate a stop or search (*Brown v. Texas* 1979). However, Samantha’s description of this police behavior in suburbs may well be accurate given sociological research showing that young African-American men may be especially subject to police surveillance in predominantly African-American middle-class neighborhoods in which residents feel that they are on the brink of decline (e.g., Bass 2001; Clampet-Lundquist et al. 2011: 1169-70). Samantha’s taste for unconstitutional policing might emerge out of her economic and social precarity, which reveals itself in a desire to use the police as a form of border patrol: She, like wealthier, white suburbanites, may use the spatial boundary as a means of symbolic boundary-drawing (see Baumgartner 1988; Lamont and Molnár 2002).

Some similarly situated respondents who live within the city pointed to potentially different practices within Cleveland based on the neighborhood. For example, Moke, a thirty-four-year-old African-American mother of two, enjoyed living in the West Cleveland neighborhood of Old Brooklyn in the past. She likes that the neighborhood is “quiet.” “The police don’t play in Old Brooklyn,” Moke explained. “On that bridge over there, they *will* pull you over.” It is worth nothing that Old Brooklyn is adjacent to Parma, the tony suburb where Simone aspires to live. If policing truly is heavier in Old

Brooklyn, it may be at least partly a consequence of careful enforcement of the physical, jurisdictional border between Cleveland and Parma.

While no white respondents specifically expressed the border patrol mentality that seemed to animate Samantha, some African-American respondents ruled out certain neighborhoods because of their expectation that policing would serve this exclusionary role through by stopping, questioning, frisking, and otherwise investigating their bodies and their belongings. Wes, a twenty-nine-year-old African-American father of three, and his girlfriend Nikki, live in Clark-Fulton, an ethnically diverse low-income West Cleveland neighborhood. When we asked Wes and Nikki about the places they would consider moving among Cuyahoga County's neighborhoods, they talked about most of the suburbs last. They named Lakewood, Rocky River, and Westlake as a few areas that are "kind of high class." A major negative attribute, though, is the racial bias they would expect in those communities, and policing's role in giving effect to that bias. "They don't like a lot of black people over there," Wes explained. "Police will be on you." Wes and Nikki first rattled off a list of positive attributes of those communities, then pivoted to the suspicion of African Americans in those environments:

- Nikki:* The houses are great. The school systems, I believe, are great.
Wes: The school system, places like that, their levies are based on their taxes. So, they got good tax money, their levies are passing.
Nikki: They got good tax brackets over there.
Interviewer: Mm-hmm.
Nikki: Those kids aren't hurting for too much of anything.
Wes: When black people come around, it's like, "What are you guys up to?"
Nikki: "What do you make? How much do you make? What did you do?"
Wes: Right. "What did you do? Why are you here?"

Despite acknowledging those places' excellent resources for raising kids, due to their concerns about police discrimination, Wes and Nikki would not move there. Their greatest concern is prejudice in general, but they see the police as a key institution that would carry out these communities' racial projects. In this light, this institution is emblematic of a deeper racism within these communities, the

officials licensed to represent community prejudice and make it real in the lives of minorities who enter white suburbs. This interpretation is in line with the idea of exclusionary amenities that function as proxies for community whiteness and homogeneity (Strahlivetz 2003; see also Baumgartner 1988), except that the quintessential amenity in that work—the golf course—is of a much different nature and status than the police.

Public Nuisance

In legal parlance, a public nuisance is an activity that negatively affects the health and welfare of a community. Some have attempted to apply public nuisance doctrine to a wide range of costly conditions such as subprime mortgage lending, handgun ownership, lead paint, and climate change (Ewing and Kysar 2011). Under certain circumstances, institutions can be perceived as public nuisances, and this perception can shape people's neighborhood frames. A substantial number of respondents viewed police, especially within Cleveland, as this sort of institution.²⁹ Twenty-nine respondents spoke about the police as a nuisance that stood in the way of living in or spending time in certain neighborhoods. Twelve respondents only applied the nuisance frame, while seventeen applied both frames depending on their reference point. Unlike the amenity frame, which arose in many different manifestations, there was suggestive evidence of a race and class pattern in use of the nuisance frame: Eleven of the twelve respondents who only applied a nuisance frame (91.7%) are African-American, and nine (75%) live in Census block groups with low median incomes; none of the high-income respondents saw the police only as a public nuisance (see Table 4). It may also be notable (and unsurprising) that of the eleven African-American respondents who applied only a nuisance frame, eight reside in low median-income

²⁹ It is worth noting that an actual lawsuit arguing that police conduct constitutes a public nuisance would likely fail given courts' conclusion that public nuisance doctrine does not apply to conduct that is subject to detailed regulation and is sanctioned by the government (see Ewing and Kysar 2011). The label is nonetheless useful here because it expresses how people embed their perceptions of the police into their neighborhood frames.

neighborhoods.³⁰ When whites said policing would deter them from living in certain communities—usually neighborhoods within Cleveland’s city limits—they also applied the amenity frame to describe policing in other areas.

Table 4. Frame Usage by Race and Neighborhood Income Level³¹

	<i>Amenity**</i>	<i>Nuisance**</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>None</i>	Total
Black	23 (14)	20 (11)	8	5	47
White	12 (5)	8 (1)	3	2	18
Other	5 (4)	1 (0)	1	2	8
Low-Income*	22 (14)	17 (9)	9	3	43
Middle-Income	11 (5)	9 (3)	1	3	18
High-Income	7 (4)	3 (0)	2	3	12
Total	40 (23)	29 (12)	12	9	73

**Income designations refer to median neighborhood income, not respondents’ household income.*

*** Numbers in parentheses capture respondents who only used the amenity or nuisance frame; as noted in the text, seventeen respondents used both frames.*

Raymond is a thirty-year-old father of three who grew up in King Kennedy Estates, a housing project in Central, an East Side neighborhood that was a popular destination for African Americans during the Second Great Migration. Raymond now lives in a racially mixed low-income neighborhood close to Case Western Reserve University. The racial mix of the neighborhood particularly appeals to him and his wife Letisha. “[T]his street in particular is like . . . well, it is intermixed. You got like, Chinese people standing on the street. Blacks, whites. So my kids, they play with all different races. That’s what I like, so we moved.”

³⁰ These comparative patterns must be approached and interpreted very cautiously: 64.4% of the sample is African American and 58.9% lives in low median-income neighborhoods. Small numbers and a purposely disproportionate sampling strategy limit the usefulness of these comparisons. These data are better for providing an in-depth picture of heterogeneous respondents’ frames than for comparing groups within the sample.

³¹ I have included this table upon request, but these numbers are likely more prejudicial than probative. As explained in the methods section and reiterated below, the *How Parents House Kids* study was not focused on policing frames. Some respondents were asked about the police, and others were not but spoke about policing spontaneously. As displayed in the table, in nine interviews, neither the interviewer nor the respondent mentioned the police. Twelve respondents mentioned or discussed the police, but not in ways that were interpretable as particular frames; for ease, I have called this category “neutral” in the table. As the study progressed, we inductively developed more of a sense of salient issues and thus did not ask each respondent the exact same questions with the same probes (see Small 2009). Also, the deliberate substantial over-sampling of African Americans and residents of lower-income neighborhoods limits the persuasiveness of comparisons by race and neighborhood median income. These caveats should not distract from the central finding: These frames of policing were observable among a substantial portion of the sample, across all categories. It is for other researchers using better-suited methods to provide a definitive picture of variation across race and class groups in their policing frames.

When talking about neighborhoods he would consider moving to, Raymond introduced a wide array of criteria—crime levels, tax rates, proximity to the North Olmstead Mall. He talked about police reputations in places that he believes have particularly aggressive police. For example, Raymond had mixed views on Garfield Heights, seeing it as “a nice place to move,” but hesitating because, “The police don’t play no games. . . . You move to Garfield, and you better be ready to settle and be easy because they ain’t playing no games.”

Even if Garfield Heights might be workable, the police make other places, such as the virtually all-white inner-ring village of Cuyahoga Heights, completely off-limits. “Cuyahoga Heights—I wouldn’t move there because of the police. They don’t play. And you can’t do nothing wrong. You can’t—I don’t think you can even drink a can of pop without them making it something.” Raymond seems most concerned about disproportionate response to minor criminality in Garfield Heights, but in Cuyahoga Heights, the concern is arbitrariness: Normal daily activities could set off an unfortunate series of events. This risk disqualifies the suburb for Raymond’s residence. These twin potential consequences of heavy police surveillance—the criminalization of legal behavior and the hyper-criminalization of minor crimes—drive Raymond’s framing of Cuyahoga County communities.

Harshness of policing could be a nuisance, but absence or unresponsiveness could constitute a localized nuisance of another sort. Tonya, living near the border of both Cuyahoga Heights and Garfield Heights, recounted a recent stop in which police assumed cigarette ashes in a cup holder were illicit drug residue: “They mess with everybody around here,” she lamented. In line with preexisting literature, Tonya was also frustrated that at a time when she wanted the police to come, after someone shot out the windows of her home and then burgled it. According to Tonya, it took several hours for officers to come take her report. “The police took forever. It took about eight hours to come out here . . . That’s a shame.” This slow response reinforced Tonya’s belief that the only police purpose in her community is to harass

people, not to provide services. “They act like they’re there to protect this Earth. The majority of them are not.”

Taye, a thirty-year-old African-American divorced father of two, owns a home in Garfield Heights. When Taye and his partner were searching for their home, they looked at a variety of homes in several neighborhoods, all that seemed relatively similar in crime rates. One of the homes they looked at was right on the border between Garfield Heights and Cleveland, such that it was within the Cleveland school district. That home was less expensive than the home they chose and had more space, but in their narrative, the potential that they would be within a Cleveland police district was one of the reasons they would not have purchased that home.

Interviewer: If that house had had a garage (because it sounds like it was less expensive than this house), so if it had had that amenity, would you have purchased that house or would the fact that it was still technically in Cleveland have kept you from purchasing the house?

Taye: Um, it depends. It depends on—it would have depended on, if I call the police, which police department’s coming? If it’s Garfield, I’d have probably stayed there. If it’s Cleveland, I wouldn’t stay there.

Interviewer: What’s the big difference between police departments?

Taye: Whether they gonna come or not, within ten minutes or 30 minutes.

A large body of research already shows that people value police responsiveness. However, this finding is usually not discussed in relation to its role in shaping how people perceive difference neighborhoods and communities. The perception that police responsiveness is different across space contributes to a perception of stigmatization and the sense of a lack of social recognition (see Lamont forthcoming). Thus, it plays a non-trivial role in how places are conceived as suitable for living and raising a family.

Police Trust as an Aspiration

As noted above, most people whose narratives used the public nuisance script also spoke of the police as at least a *potential* neighborhood amenity. Seventeen respondents wavered between both scripts over the course of the interview. Deeper analysis reveals that, when African Americans and lower-income

respondents' narratives used both scripts, they were often using public nuisance to speak about their experiences and neighborhood amenity to speak about their aspirations. Even when these respondents believed their experiences with the police made the institution untrustworthy or even brutal, they still seemed to see the ideal world as one with trustworthy, responsive, reliable, and respectful police.

Michelle, who is twenty-three, studying to become a medical assistant, and living on the East Side with her two kids, critiqued police conduct in her neighborhood. "I think the police force is set up—it's not even set up the right way. They do anything just to pick with people, to spice up [lie about] people." Michelle lives on a block where, according to her, the police never come. When we asked her how she felt about this absence, she responded, "I love it."

Without mentioning specifics, Michelle explained her disdain for the police through the story of Malissa Williams and Timothy Russell, two African-American Clevelanders who were shot to death after a high-speed chase with more than one hundred officers. Williams and Russell were unarmed; police officers initially mistook the backfiring of their 1979 Chevrolet Malibu for a gunshot. Once officers started firing on Williams and Russell at the end of the chase, some officers mistakenly believed their own gunshots were coming from Williams and Russell. In the end, thirteen officers fired 137 rounds at the pair, resulting in their death (*Ohio v. Brelo* 2015). Michelle drew upon the Russell and Williams chase as an example of police malfeasance.

Just like that—that little shootout for that high-speed chase with them two people that happened. That didn't make no sense. It wasn't a gun on site. It was just too many bullets that went through that car, that little car, for just two people. Now, I don't understand, like seventeen or however many police officers out there—it shouldn't have went down to that.

Michelle thinks the police had a responsibility to investigate further before shooting and, more broadly, to avoid jumping to conclusions. "[B]efore you all put to do all that shooting, you all should've checked to see if they had a firearm.... Give somebody a chance first."

Yet Michelle used different frame when speaking about the type of neighborhood she hoped to move to in the future. Michelle said that she likes when there are a lot of police in neighborhoods because “I don’t have to feel unsafe.” She went further:

If I know you’re [police officers are] here, I know you’re seeing a crime and they ain’t gonna be no more crime because they won’t be around when they see a lot of police. When there’s no police, they can get away with anything because nobody is watching you. So, no witnesses, nobody gets in trouble. That’s how it is. Police stay around, I feel safe, I know my kids—my kids know what police is; I want them to know everything. They know how to call 911. They know all the emergency contact numbers.

Here, Michelle uses an amenity frame. But she does not apply it to a concrete incident or experience; instead, she is drawing on an imagined future of crime victimhood. She also frames policing in the context of her parenting goals. For Michelle, part of being a good parent is to raise children who believe they can call on police in a time of need, even if she otherwise believes that police “do anything to pick with people.” Meeting this parenting goal is a real challenge in a place like Cleveland, where demands of parental racial socialization might partly push against raising one’s children to have such a sanguine view of the police (see Russell-Brown 2009; Brunson and Weitzer 2011).

One might expect that the coupling of experience-based nuisance frames with aspirational amenity frames would be more common among women, but it is worth noting that some of the few African-American male respondents applied frames in this pattern. Chris, for one, has become the primary caregiver for his three nephews at just twenty-four. He does not like his neighborhood in general, but he thinks his street is a reasonably fine place to raise children. “I don’t have to worry about them playing out here,” he explained. “We got a lot of old people on the street, too. . . . It’s pretty cool out here. And that’s another thing—police district, like three minutes away.” In similar ways to others who used the amenity frame, Chris sees the presence of the police station as a buffer against risk for his nephews.

Yet, as a young African-American man living on the East Side of Cleveland, Chris has had a number of encounters with the police. At the end of his interview, when we asked whether there was anything else he wanted to discuss, Chris focused on the police. “The cops beat your ass around here, too. Tell you that, the cops fuck you up around here.” Chris went on to discuss some of the strategies he uses when the police pull him over, especially at night: “Make sure you’re up under lights and you’re by a *whole bunch* of lights. Don’t pull over in no dark area, none of that shit. I don’t care whether you’re a nigga [male] or a girl because they will throw you [in] the cuffs and fuck you up quick.” He juxtaposes this routine against the amenity frame he draws upon when talking about raising his nephews in this neighborhood. Policing is a lens through which he interprets the place where he lives, but that lens is deeply conflicted and perhaps contradictory (see Ewick and Silbey 1998: 226-227).

Many people may experience the police as harsh, but they may nonetheless still believe in the *ideal* of police as protectors and guardians of their security where they live. The persistence of the idea of police as a protector is not unlike the persistent American Dream, which social scientists usually operationalize as economic and social mobility, home ownership, or college graduation (Nielsen 2015; Putnam 2015; Hochschild 1999; Clark 2003). That work generally finds that people hold on to the aspiration of owning a home or graduating from college even when those realities seem quite distant and perhaps even counterproductive to their lives in other ways (Deterding 2015; Schlay 2015). Here, we might think of police protection as one component of the American Dream, a chimera that people cling to even when doing so seems irrational (see Frye 2012). Being able to call the police and have them respond is part of what it means to be a member of this society, so the master narrative that police should protect the public and ensure their security still has power.

Discussion & Conclusion: Police as a Located Institution

This chapter underscores the necessity of thinking more broadly about the processes that underlie persistent segregation. As others have observed, “The presence of a segregating process is as important to urban theory as the level of segregation.” (Logan, Weiwei, and Miao 2015). We already know that many American cities are intensely segregated by race and by class, both internally and across the metropolitan areas surrounding them. We also know, and are continuing to learn more about, the previously overt legal architecture of racial residential segregation. We know less about the subtler mechanisms that influence the residential selection process and, in some instances, reproduce segregation. Scholars have recently called for new research on segregation that moves beyond the “big three” theories, looking at under-theorized influences such as, for example, community knowledge (Crowder and Krysan 2016; Krysan and Bader 2009). Institutions—especially the police—are another one of those under-theorized influences. It is important to uncover each of those processes, as laws, policies, and institutions that seemingly have little to do with residential segregation may be reproducing it in ways that are not understood, and thus go unaddressed.

Fulfilling this need in the research will require a holistic approach. Understanding how segregation is reproduced requires identification of mechanisms and processes, recognizing that no single institution maintains segregation on its own. To date, the scholarship on factors that influence neighborhood selection and residential segregation has tended to emphasize factors that are more squarely in the housing domain—for example, zoning and redevelopment laws (Rothwell and Massey 2009), possible landlord or realtor discrimination (e.g., Freeman 2012; Metzger 2014), family ties and social support (Boyd 2008; Rhodes and DeLuca 2014), the quality of housing units (Rhodes and DeLuca 2014; Wood 2014), the racial composition of neighborhoods (Charles 2006; Sampson and Raudenbush 2005), and “social disorganization” (Shaw and McKay 1942; see also Hill, Tital, and Greenbaum 2009;

Sampson and Groves 1989). All of these factors are critical to investigate, but a broader view is critical for capturing the full set of segregation-reproductive mechanisms.

The scholarship that links schools and neighborhoods has significantly advanced neighborhood selection literature by recognizing that institutions that are not traditionally considered to be in the housing domain can influence residential choice and reinforce segregated landscapes (Goyette, Iceland, and Weininger 2014; Holme 2002; Lareau 2014). The takeaway these scholars tend to emphasize is that schools are critical institutions that reinforce segregation through differences in school quality (Goyette, Farrie and Freely 2012; Owens 2017; Rhodes and Warkentien 2017). It is, of course, sensible to draw a link between segregated schools and segregated neighborhoods, since both housing and schools are both major public institutions that were racially separated by law until relatively recently. In contrast, the disparities in policing by race and neighborhood have always been more *de facto* (in reality) than *de jure* (by law). Nonetheless, a more capacious takeaway from the schools/neighborhoods literature is that *various institutions* that differ by neighborhood can become lenses through which neighborhoods gain meaning, thereby shaping individual choice and reproducing segregation. As schools become less tethered to neighborhoods because of expanded school choice (see Pearman and Swain 2017), other institutions will likely ascend to take their place as key located institutions that shape neighborhood frames and reputations. This chapter extends the literature on neighborhood framing, incorporating the mechanism of policing more centrally and explicitly. It thus contributes to urban cultural sociology by centering policing as one under-theorized component of how people construct neighborhood frames.

What can sociologists say about other, less direct, institutional influencers of neighborhood “choice”? The potential role of police and other criminal justice actors in shaping housing preferences and constructing neighborhood availability is a critical inquiry for scholars and policymakers. For example, in 2016, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued new guidance intended to discourage

landlords from using criminal records as a categorical disqualifier for potential tenants. The guidance suggests that this use of criminal records might violate the Fair Housing Act given the strong correlation between race and criminal justice involvement (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2016). In issuing this guidance, the agency recognized that institutional actors need not operate *directly* within the housing domain to be an important intermediary housing institution. Future research should explore a richer set of institutional go-betweens that may shape neighborhood preferences and place constraints upon residential choice.

There is much that this chapter cannot and does not intend to argue. For example, this work does not support a claim that there is a counterfactually causal relationship between policing and residential segregation. Instead, I show that policing contributes to neighborhood preferences; it is also clear from research and case law that segregation, born in part from preferences, produces different approaches to policing (e.g., Fagan et al. 2010; Fagan and Ash 2017). Thus, the relationship between policing and segregation is mutually constitutive in ways that reproduce social inequality (see Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Wright 2010). The causal story is complex, and preferences are only one component of a fluid set of causal mechanisms (e.g., Gross 2009; Tavory and Timmermans 2013). It is also noted that people are not fully conscious of their decision-making processes or the full set of cultural tools they draw upon (Lizardo 2017; Martin 2010). I have tried to be clear throughout that the interviews reveal conscious discursive scripts, justifications, and ideologies, and are not fully accurate reports.

There are number of benefits and limitations of studying policing and residential preferences in Cleveland. The Cleveland metropolitan area remains highly segregated Midwestern city. It also remains overwhelmingly black and white, with smaller Latinx, Asian, Native American, and other racial/ethnic populations. The relevant located institutions in region with differently organized residential segregation, such as the South or the Midwest, might be institutions other than the police (Iceland, Sharp, and

Timberlake 2013; Grigoryeva and Ruef 2015). In the context of greater ethnic diversity, other institutions, such as immigration enforcement (which involves the police, but in different ways) might be more salient (see Armenta 2017; Asad and Rosen 2017).

The site of Cleveland provides many opportunities for important analysis given its all-too-common combination of segregation and poor police-community relations, but the deep entrenchment of both problems constrains our ability to identify which mechanisms might be more or less powerful. Some might argue that because Cleveland is so segregated and has such a fraught history of policing, the case “selects on the dependent variable.” The goal of examining these issues in Cleveland is to observe some of the mechanisms at work—here, framing of the police—in relation to neighborhood preference. It is not to show, as others have suggested, that there *is* a relationship between policing and segregation. It is also worth noting that there is scarcely any American city with a sizable population of African Americans that is low in segregation—nineteen of the U.S. metropolitan areas with the largest populations of African Americans have dissimilarity scores greater than 60, and none of those cities have a dissimilarity score lower than 30.³² In some sense, selecting any city would be selecting on the dependent variable if that were a reasonable methodological concern for an in-depth qualitative study.

A future study might also engage in a more fine-grained analysis of suburban neighborhoods. America’s suburbs are increasingly socioeconomically and racially diverse, with vast demographic differences both within and between suburban towns (Kneebone and Berube 2014; Lacy 2016; Murphy and Allard 2015). When our interviewers primed respondents to talk about neighborhoods, we showed them a list of neighborhoods that were discussed on the Cleveland City Planning Commission’s website, along with a list of suburbs. Our materials broke the City of Cleveland itself into multiple neighborhood

³² Generally, scholars classify areas with a dissimilarity score greater than 60 as “high segregation” and those with a dissimilarity score lower than 30 as “low segregation.” Of course, dissimilarity scores are a rough way of measuring of segregation and do not capture the lived experience of racial separation and isolation. They are a widely used but fraught measure (compare Massey and Denton 1993 with Winship 1978).

levels (East Side and West Side, and then smaller neighborhoods within each area). However, the names of nearby suburbs appeared without finer distinctions, even for suburbs that are quite populous (e.g., Parma, Garfield Heights). This might have meant that, when respondents spoke about suburbs, they were not as likely to discuss any micro-level differences in policing within these towns.

On the other hand, like Detroit, Milwaukee, and other Rust Belt cities, Cleveland remains somewhat more in line with an urban-suburban dynamic in which poverty and racial isolation are concentrated in the urban core, despite the growing presence of suburban poverty (Lacy 2016). More importantly, given recent scholarship showing the ascendance of “macro-segregation”—racial segregation between places such as cities and suburbs rather than within them—this feature of the study might make its results more relevant (Lichter, Parisi and Taquino 2015a). Located institutions might provide a more powerful way of understanding macro-segregation considering that institutions likely vary more across jurisdictions than within them—or, at the very least, jurisdictional difference is thought to be a legitimate reason that institutional behavior would vary.

Finally, the study was not designed to focus on the police specifically, but on neighborhood preferences and constraints. This is mostly a benefit, as the overwhelming majority of the data on policing frames emerged from general discussions of neighborhood perceptions. The questions did not provoke these framings. However, the primary focus of the study—neighborhood preferences and how they are mediated by unit quality, neighborhood quality, and schools—means that interviewers often (reasonably) chose to probe respondents on topics other than policing. Future research should investigate these frames in even greater depth. However, the usual spontaneity of the policing responses ultimately bolsters this chapter’s claim that policing plays an often central yet under-recognized role in how families understand community life.

This chapter contributes to the sociology of policing in multiple ways. First, it injects segregation, and not just race or poverty on their own, more explicitly into the study of police-community relations. Too often, the scholarship on police mistrust deals with race simplistically: People are divided into different racial groups, the racial groups' views are compared, and the takeaway is usually the same: African-Americans distrust the police more than other groups do. Policy conversations tend to follow this structure. This way of thinking about race and policing, however, tends to overlook structural and cultural processes, such as segregation and neighborhood selection, that give race meaning. When many African Americans say they distrust the police, their reference point for policing may well be worlds apart from that of most whites because of the segregated and too-frequently dispossessed neighborhoods where they live. Racial comparisons of trust thus miss the larger story: Legal estrangement emanating directly from racial segregation.

This chapter also highlights the importance of investigating how parents, specifically, perceive and interact with the police. Foucault posited that family units are particular sites for advancing societal discipline, and parents are key collaborators in systems of social control because they are especially invested in making their children “normal” (2006: 115). Along these lines, advancing the interests of the police and other external social control institutions is, in part, the essence of good parenting.³³ Under this theory, policing scholars likely underestimate relationships between parenting and the police, and family scholars may also overlook police as an institution that influences childrearing and familial decision-making. Police perceptions, neighborhood preferences, family dynamics, and persistent segregation are deeply interconnected, and more scholarship should investigate their complex linkages.

³³ Perhaps the ultimate example of this dynamic is the special talk that many African-American parents have with their children to teach safer strategies for interacting with police officers. Many parents of black children view having this talk as an essential aspect of their duties (see, e.g., Dow 2016).

CHAPTER FOUR:

“THE HOME OF THE BRAVE”: COLLECTIVE FATE AND SITUATED ASPIRATIONS AFTER THE BALTIMORE UNREST OF 2015

What does it mean when an uprising ends?³⁴ How do people in affected communities respond? How does that moment influence how they think of themselves, their neighborhoods, and their cities? Although a large body of mostly decades-old sociological research has investigated the causes and mobilization dynamics of civil unrest, the vast majority of this research has overlooked the *aftermath* of riots, particularly their meaning in the lives of people directly affected by them.

Most research on collective violence and property damage either seeks to uncover the causes of unrest (e.g., Bergesen and Herman 1998; Broidy and Santoro 2017; Olzak, Shanahan, and McEneaney 1996; Rosenfeld 1997; Spilerman 1970; Tilly 2003) or the dynamics of unrest—how rioters chose targets, how violence diffused, what became of interest to the media, and so forth (e.g., Auyero and Moran 2007; Baudains, Braithewaite, and Johnson 2013; Martin, McCarthy, and McPhail 2009; Myers 2000; Myers and Caniglia 2004). Recent scholarship, noting that some areas resist disturbance even when a riot or uprising is occurring, has sought to explain what causes riots *not* to occur (Newburn 2015). To the extent scholars have studied how community members interpret unrest, they have, with few exceptions, focused on understanding why people participated in it (e.g., Geschwender and Singer 1970; Kuwalerowicz and Biggs 2015; Paige 1971; Warren 1969). Scholars have largely neglected to

³⁴ *A note on terminology:* In this chapter, I usually refer to the Baltimore incidents following Freddie Gray’s death as “unrest” or “uprising” but occasionally refer to them as a “riot” or “the riots.” While the term “riot” can have a negative racialized connotation, it is also laden with political content and salience that connects it to previous periods of civil unrest, such as the 1992 Los Angeles riots and the late 1960s urban riots that yielded the Kerner Commission report, which highlighted problems of disenfranchisement and police violence. It is notable that respondents referred to the unrest as a “riot” even when we asked them how it should be labeled. However, I am not merely adopting folk concepts as my analytic concepts (Wacquant 2002). It is likely *sociologically* accurate to describe the Freddie Gray unrest as a “riot” if one adopts the view that a riot can be defined as political speech or rebellion against oppression (see, e.g., Goldstone and Useem 1999; Hartmann 2016; Moran and Waddington 2016; Robinson 1941; Wilkinson 2009; Marx 1970; Spilerman 1976; Olzak and Shanahan 1996). Focusing on the aftermath of the “riots” need not distract from the structural and institutional context surrounding them (Fernandez-Kelly 2016). Some refer to the larger set of events surrounding Freddie Gray’s death as an “uprising” and the specific events of property damage and violence between April 25-27, 2015 as “riots” (Serpick 2015).

inquire about how ordinary community members grapple with the consequences of unrest and the social problems that produced it. Yet, this inquiry is critically important: Periods of civil unrest usually begin and end over the course of a few days, but communities process, debate, interpret, and react to them for months and years.

In order to investigate how people think about their communities and their lives after civil unrest, we set out to understand how young African Americans in the city were understanding and responding to the Freddie Gray death and collective property damage. We interviewed fifty African-American youth within six months of these incidents. To avoid unduly imposing external constructs on youth given the sensitivity of the inquiry, and to promote heterogeneity of experiences and life circumstances within the sample, we used a modified participatory research model (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995; Wilkinson and Wilkinson 2017). Several African-American youths living in Baltimore were trained in research methods and employed as part of the research team, working alongside university researchers to design the interview questions, recruit participants, and conduct interviews.

This chapter presents two main findings that help develop the literature on civil unrest, collective efficacy, and youth aspirations. First, I show that many respondents drew upon the 2015 unrest to explain a collective sense of gloom about the fate of their city. I draw attention to collective fate and collective inefficacy as important subjects of inquiry in urban and community sociology. One might expect that a political uprising would have an encouraging effect on youth, perhaps open new imaginings of the possibilities for change. While a few respondents took pride in the unrest as an expression of resistance, the overwhelming majority spoke of the unrest as if it were emblematic of the city's downward trajectory. This sense was observable not only through how they spoke of the unrest, but also in how they discussed more general traumatic violence and troubled city institutions. Many of the young people postulated that only deeply systematic, moral, or spiritual reform would help: Police

reform was never at the center of their responses.³⁵ Second, I show that despite exhibiting collective gloom about the city's fate, most young people's *personal* aspirations remain relatively high. The unrest cemented these youths' sense of Baltimore's challenges, and it also presented specific obstacles to realizing their futures that they used various culturally available tools to overcome. Youth tried to develop scripts of escape and exceptionality to maintain their resilient and positive personal outlooks despite negative collective expectations.

Baltimore, April 2015

The final two weeks of April 2015 in Baltimore, Maryland motivate this study, and thus require a brief accounting here.³⁶ On April 12, 2015 just before 9:00 AM, Freddie Gray and another man saw four Baltimore police on bicycles and began running away. The officers pursued Gray and the other man. After a short time, Gray stopped running and the police arrested him. (Running away from the police, on its own, may not create reasonable suspicion to justify a stop, let alone an arrest. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, for example, has noted that intense racial profiling in Boston might make it rational for Black Bostonians to flee the police even if they are not breaking the law. The Department of Justice's report on Baltimore suggests that racially biased policing has long been rampant there as well.)³⁷ After arresting Gray, the officers called for a van ("paddy wagon") to take him to the station.

Gray, like many people who grew up Black and poor in the city, suffered from asthma (see Akinbami et al. 2009; Gergen and Toghias 2015). At the beginning of the ride, he allegedly told police

³⁵ This finding was notable considering that we arguably primed them to give such a response, given that we told them before booking the interview, before booking the interview, and immediately before beginning the interview as part of the informed consent process that we would be interviewing them about their feelings on Freddie Gray, the unrest, and their experiences with criminal justice actors in the city. We also asked questions about reforms Baltimore needed toward the end of the interview, after we had begun discussing policing in the city. These conditions made the lack of vocal advocacy for police reform as part of a course correction for Baltimore particularly striking.

³⁶ Except where cited differently, all of the event information is from the Baltimore Sun's official timeline of Gray's arrest, death, and aftermath (*Baltimore Sun*, "Timeline: Freddie Gray's Arrest, Death, and the Aftermath," 2015).

³⁷ See *Commonwealth v. Warren* (2016).

about his asthma and asked for an inhaler and other medical support; they did not provide him with any. Complaining that Gray was acting out, police stopped the van and put him in leg irons. Police made at least one additional stop under mysterious circumstances. It is unclear what happened between roughly over the next 30-45 minutes in the van, but police summoned a medic unit to check on an unconscious male (Gray) at 9:26 AM.³⁸ By 10:00 AM, Gray had been taken to the University of Maryland Medical Center's "Shock Trauma" unit, where he received spinal surgery for broken vertebrae. Gray fell into a coma shortly thereafter, and he died on April 19, 2015.

Protestors, including members of the Baltimore NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, began peacefully demonstrating at the Western District Police Station shortly before Gray's death. After his death, they expanded to police headquarters and City Hall, and they engaged in peaceful protest for several days. The protests gained great attention in part because Gray was part of a grisly fraternity of African Americans who died in police custody, or who had been killed with impunity during the visible heyday of the Black Lives Matter movement. Twelve-year-old Tamir Rice had been shot and killed by an officer on a playground in Cleveland, Ohio on November 23, 2014, less than six months before Gray's death. Michael Brown had been shot and killed by officer Darren Wilson on August 9, 2014; on November 14, 2014, the Ferguson prosecutor announced that his office would not pursue charges against Wilson. Both before and after the announcement, the generally peaceful protest in Ferguson included some violence, but unrest was sporadic. On July 17, 2014, Eric Garner died when Staten Island police officer Daniel Pantaleo put him in an illegal chokehold as he resisted an arrest for selling loose cigarettes; on December 3, 2014, a grand jury chose not to indict the officer for Garner's death. On August 5, 2014, John Crawford picked up an unpackaged BB gun from

³⁸ Some news outlets implied that officers took Gray on a "rough ride," an illegal but not uncommon practice in which police officers intentionally make sharp turns, thereby injuring anyone who is not secured in the back of their paddy wagons without directly beating them with their hands or a stick (e.g., Donovan and Puente 2015; Fernandez 2015; Graham 2015); the driver Officer Caesar Goodson, was ultimately found not guilty of all charges related to Gray's death.

the sporting good section of an Ohio Wal-Mart. An officer, responding to calls from customers, ultimately shot and killed Crawford believing the BB gun was a real gun. There are disputes over whether Crawford was waving the gun around or not, but footage suggests he was talking on his cell phone and had not received any verbal commands to drop the gun before the officer took a shot. The grand jury decided it would not indict the officer on September 24, 2014.

Some other African Americans killed under bizarre circumstances during the same time period, by people who were not police officers, include Renisha McBride (killed on November 2, 2013, killer convicted on August 7, 2014), Jordan Davis (killed November 23, 2012, killer convicted on October 1, 2014 after an initial mistrial), and most notoriously, Trayvon Martin, whose killer George Zimmerman was acquitted on July 13, 2013. It was after the Zimmerman verdict that activists Alicia Garza, Opal Tometti, and Patrisse Cullors created #BlackLivesMatter. This is to say, Gray's death and the protests that followed were part of a larger narrative about the precariousness of Black life and the unresponsiveness of state institutions that was reaching its crescendo.

As the peaceful protests continued, Maryland's governor deployed thirty-two Maryland State Troopers to Baltimore "to keep things under control. The last thing we need is more violence in Baltimore City" (Cox 2015). Two days later, on April 25, thousands of Baltimoreans gathered in Gilmore Homes, the public housing development where Freddie Gray had lived. They marched to the Western District Police Station and then to City Hall. After the planned demonstration, some protestors marched to Camden Yards, where the Baltimore Orioles baseball team was scheduled to play later that day. Some Orioles fans got into physical and verbal altercations with protestors. Some protestors threw rocks at police cars that were surrounding the stadium. Yet, at that time, violent protest was still limited in scale (see Serpick 2015).

Freddie Gray's funeral took place on Monday, April 27, 2015, with many guests, including Trayvon Martin's mother. It was not until that afternoon that violence and property damage became widespread. Earlier that day, police heard rumors of a planned "purge," during which some young people allegedly planned to commit crime with impunity. According to the police, they heard that these young people, also planned to physically attack police officers. Police thus shut down bus service and blocked roads near West Baltimore's Mondawmin Mall and Frederick Douglass High School, leaving many students with no way to leave the premises (Serpick 2015). In several Baltimore neighborhoods, mostly but not exclusively on the West Side, some youth erupted. Analysis of the riot incidents shows that, unsurprisingly, the events were concentrated in predominantly black and poor Census tracts with little economic opportunity (Huggins 2015).

During the unrest, television networks played nonstop footage of looting and violence. They prominently featured a burning West Baltimore CVS store and young people throwing rocks and bricks at empty police cars. The media became enthralled with one young mother, Toya Graham, after she physically struck her son on camera for participating in the riots. (An October 2015 *Washington Post* story referred to Graham as "[t]he most famous mom in Baltimore," and went on to explain that she had been unable to convert her short-lived fame into economic stability (McCoy 2015). Several respondents knew Ms. Graham's son). Public officials at local and national levels spoke out about the unrest, but made what many young people saw as a hurtful and racially charged error by referring to the rioters as "thugs."³⁹

On April 28, 2015, after the unrest had largely subsided, future U.S. president Donald Trump Tweeted about it multiple times. "Our great African-American President hasn't exactly had a positive impact on the thugs who are so happily and openly destroying Baltimore," he wrote. Another Tweet

³⁹ Some of the officials who called the riot participants "thugs" include President Barack Obama, Governor Larry Hogan, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and City Council President Jack Young. Young and Rawlings-Blake later backed away from their use of the term (*Baltimore Sun* Editorial 2015).

criticized the police and suggested that the city was not worth rebuilding: “Now that the ineffective Baltimore Police have allowed the city to be destroyed, are the U.S. taxpayers expected to rebuild it (again)?” Finally, he responded to a misinterpreted statement by then-mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake: “The Mayor of Baltimore said she wanted to give the rioters ‘space to destroy’ - another real genius!”⁴⁰

For all of the attention the Baltimore riot received, it was a tame event in a longer history of urban riots in the United States, and in Baltimore. The Baltimore unrest of 2015 went on for no longer than three days, and it was a quintessential “commodity riot,” directed primarily at police and stores (Janowitz 1968). There were no casualties directly related to the unrest. While the city remains economically depressed, recovery has been underway. As of November 2015, more than 90% of the business affected during the arrest had reopened, relying in part on recovery grants from the Baltimore Development Corporation (Seltzer 2015). The infamous burning CVS at Pennsylvania and North Avenues reopened in March 2016 (Campbell 2016). The impact of the riot was serious: It caused nearly \$9 million worth of damage to homes, businesses, and municipal properties (Toppa 2015). In March 2017, approximately sixty store owners (roughly one-third owners of West Baltimore liquor stores)⁴¹ filed suit against the city for failing to prevent violence (Complaint, *Chae Brothers, LLC v.*

⁴⁰ Mayor Rawlings-Blake stated: “It’s a very delicate balancing act. Because while we try to make sure that they were protected from the cars and other things that were going on, we also gave those who wished to destroy space to do that as well. And we worked very hard to keep that balance and to put ourselves in the best position to de-escalate.” Rawlings-Blake meant to explain that the city was trying to balance using the police to de-escalate the unrest while also protecting police officers from harm, and that their choices had given rioters more “space to destroy” than was ideal. However, media outlets, especially conservative ones, used Rawlings-Blake’s inartful phrasing to paint a broad picture of Baltimore depravity. For example, a piece in *The Daily Caller* claimed Rawlings-Blake made “a stunning admission” that “she wanted to give space to those ‘who wished to destroy’” (Ross 2015).

⁴¹ The concentrated presence of liquor stores in a neighborhood is both a symbol, a consequence, and perhaps a reproducer of poverty (see Moore and Diez Roux 2006). After the unrest, Baltimore City denied redevelopment grants to reopen twenty-three liquor stores that engaged in practices the City viewed as contributing to crime and blight, using the unrest as an opportunity to advance one of the Rawlings-Blake Administration’s signature neighborhood development priorities. The City offered the owners of those liquor stores interest-free grants to create new types of establishments in their place (Editorial, “City Shouldn’t Support Non-Conforming Liquor Stores,” 2015).

Baltimore 2017). Yet, the physical and economic impact of the 2015 riot seems less dire than the legacy of riots past.

Baltimore's most recent large-scale riot before 2015 took place in 1968, beginning two days after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The 1968 Baltimore riot lasted from April 6 to April 14. President Johnson sent 5,000 troops to secure the city. There were six casualties, roughly 700 injuries, and more than 5,000 arrests. More than 1,000 businesses suffered. The 1968 riot caused more than \$13 million worth of property damage in 1968 dollars, which equates to about \$93 million in 2018 dollars (Yockel 2007; U.S. Inflation Calculator). Yet unlike the urban riots of yesteryear, African-American political leaders have not rushed to construct a narrative of the Baltimore unrest as political resistance. The 1960s riots "came to be *used* rhetorically by black leaders as a tactic and widely interpreted as a form of political protest within the black community" (McAdam 1983: 750 (emphasis in original)). In contrast, the political class universally maligned the 2015 Baltimore unrest.

Our study began two months after the April 15th events and went on for three months. Partway through our time in the field, on July 13, 2015, Sandra Bland was found dead in a jail cell in Texas after stopped, ostensibly for failing to signal before changing lanes. Some respondents talked about Bland. At the time of the study, State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby had announced indictments for the six officers involved in Gray's death, but it was well before those cases unsuccessfully ended.

As I describe below, the riot became a script youth used to explain their sense that Baltimore was unredeemable. Yet, youth repeatedly reminded us that there was nothing new about the condition Baltimore was in. If anything, the unrest was an outward expression and bubbling over of a long-held frustration about the broader struggles their communities face. As if to underscore this point, after Freddie Gray's death and the unrest, Baltimore's annual number of homicides has increased dramatically since the events. Though the annual record *number* of homicides in Baltimore was 353 in

1993, the city was more populous then, so the overall homicide rate was 48 per 100,000. In 2014, there were 211 homicides (Bidgood 2016). In 2015, the year of the Freddie Gray events, the number of homicides leapt to 344 (55 per 100,000)—a record high homicide rate at the time; the city’s highest homicide rate to date is 57.2 per 100,000 in 2017 (Schuppe 2018). In addition to the violence, Baltimore has received national media attention more recently for its inability to heat its public schools (e.g., Ericson 2018). The 2015 unrest occurred in a much broader and often overlooked context.

Civil Unrest and Its Aftermath

Riot Causes, Riot Dynamics

Civil unrest has been a matter of social scientific inquiry for many decades, at least since the nineteenth century (see Le Bon 1895; Wilkinson 2009 for a review). However, the literature on civil unrest did not become robust until the late 1960s and early 1970s. As riots rocked several major American cities just before that time period, sociologists trained their eyes toward the etiology and diffusion processes associated with civil unrest. Some of the central debates within that literature included, for example, whether riot activity was the result of planning and organization (resource mobilization) or a broken system of social control (e.g., Tilly 1978; Useem 1998). Another key debate focused on the attributes of direct riot participants, showing that riot participants tend not to be fringe members of the community, absolutely deprived, or deeply deviant—then known as the “riffraff theory.” These scholars bolstered the idea that the 1960s riots were community-level responses to long-held grievances (e.g., Fogelson and Hill 2009 [1969]; Geschwender and Singer 1970; Oberschall 1973; Sears and Tomlinson 1968).

In subsequent years, the study of riots declined in volume. This may be in part because there were fewer major moments of civil unrest in the United States, though numerous important uprisings occurred elsewhere (see, e.g., Auyero 2010; Kawalerowicz and Biggs 2015; Malmberg, Andersson,

and Östh 2013). The 1980s and 1990s saw a brief uptick in scholarship on collective violence in response to unrest in Miami, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Scholars usually extended earlier theories on the causes or dynamics of unrest or updated theories on these topics to account for situational differences (Olzak and Shanahan 1996; Rosenfeld 1997; but see, e.g., Bergesen and Herman 1998). More recent work on collective violence—still focused on its causes and contours instead of its residual meanings—has argued against the long-dominant idea that collective violence emerges because of the negative behavioral tendencies of certain individuals or groups, emphasizing how relational and interactional dynamics give birth to unrest (e.g., Auyero 2012; Tilly 2003).

Riot Aftermath

Political scientist Steven Wilkinson (2009) has criticized riot studies for almost exclusively seeking to identify causes of collective violence; he hoped to provoke scholarship on state responses to insurgency. In an analogous way, researchers rarely gather and probe the micro-level accounts of those involved or affected. Sociological studies of civil unrest have tended to examine structural characteristics that coincide with the violence (Caren, Gaby, and Herrold 2017; Kapsis 1976; Kawalerowicz and Biggs 2015; Lieberman and Silverman 1965; Olzak, Shanahan, and McEneaney 1996; Spilerman 1970, 1976), attributes of direct participants (McPhail 1971; Moinat et al. 1972; Wohlenberg 1982), or newspaper coverage (Jacobs 1996; see also Myers and Caniglia 2004). Studies of civil unrest also tend to seek explanation of why a riot did or did not occur, often with focus on ethnic competition (e.g., Bergesen and Herman 1998; Morgan and Clark 1973; Newburn 2015; Olzak 1994; Ray 2014; Tilly 2003), or the dynamics at play during a riot, such as how people learned about a riot or how direct participants decided which targets to hit (e.g., Auyero and Moran 2007; Baudains, Braithewaite, and Johnson 2013; Berk and Aldrich 1972; Martin, McCarthy, and McPhail 2009;

McPhail 1994; McPhail and Wohlstein 1983; Myers 2000; Pires and Crooks 2017; Rosenfeld 1997; Greenberg 1992; Stark et al. 1974).

To the extent scholars have studied the aftermath of civil unrest, they have mostly focused on economic or structural aftermath, such as the unattractiveness to business and the depressed property values (e.g., Collins and Margo 2007) and, more recently, short-term spikes in expected racial residential segregation (Brazil 2016). Broader studies of social movements, too, are more likely to investigate “hard” outcomes rather than social meanings (e.g., Cress and Snow 2000).

A small body of sociological research has sought to understand the social interpretations and consequences of these moments of unrest. For example, Gordon (1983) studied the emergent norms and political approaches among thirty-six community leaders in the years following the 1967 Detroit riots. Gordon described a transition between ideological and political polarization by race to pragmatic cooperation over the course of a decade. More recently, Ribiero (2012) studied the aftermath of the 1968 Pittsburgh riots and demonstrated that, in the five years after the riots, the progress black Pittsburghers experienced was incremental and largely surpassed by the negative outcomes, such as worsened police-community relations, heightened racial tensions, and weakened African-American business areas. Neither study really hones in on the meaning of riots to everyday community members, though they do deal with aftermath in a richer way than usual.

Focusing on somewhat more recent events, Murty, Roebuck, and Armstrong (1994) interviewed African-Americans living in South Central Los Angeles about their perceptions of the 1992 Los Angeles riots and found that, whether they participated or not, respondents generally believed the riot was productive. Riot participants viewed themselves as “freedom fighters.”⁴² Abelmann and Lie (1995) drew upon fifty in-depth interviews with Korean Americans living in Los Angeles. Korean American-owned stores were a target of looting and burning during the 1992 unrest. Abelmann and Lie

⁴² Sears and McConahay (1969) reached a similar conclusion about the post-riot interpretation of the 1965 Watts riots.

documented a diverse set of responses to the unrest, ranging from slight empathy with rioters' concern about racism to full-on embrace of racialized culture of poverty arguments, blaming African Americans for their plight in Los Angeles. Korean Americans exhibited different levels and types of acculturation into the American racial hierarchy and its varieties of racism (see also Lee 2002; Roth 2012).

A related body of research examines how *states* and *other authorities* aim to shape the meaning of past conflict and discord, largely through education and commemoration. For example, Rivera (2008) describes how the Croatian tourism industry, including bureaucracies and private companies, managed national stigma after its wars of secession from Yugoslavia. Rivera's work fits into a line of scholarship that deals with elite meaning-making and representation of traumatic historical events (e.g., Alexander 2012; Eyerman 2002; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). Rivera discovers that, in contrast to post-WWII Germany, Croatia's tourism industry deals with its stigmatized past by reframing it and covering, not directly acknowledging the horror of past episodes. Teeger (2015), writing on how schools educate children about apartheid in post-apartheid South Africa, shows that teachers in diverse schools try to shape the interpretation of apartheid in a race-neutral way in order to diffuse potential race-based conflict at school. Both of these studies highlight the *external* process of *creating* a narrative of a past disruptive event. They do not examine how ordinary members of the community remember and come to understand these events. However, they helpfully shed light on the complex macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level processes of collective memory (see Fine and Beim 2007). The gap in the literature on civil unrest and how communities understand it remains.

Collective Efficacy and Its Alternatives

In urban sociology, the central concept for thinking about collective, neighborhood-level notions of groupness and power is *collective efficacy*. For decades, scholars have investigated collective efficacy—that is, (1) *social cohesion* and (2) *shared expectations for social control*—and its

relationship to various positive outcomes for neighborhoods. Most research has focused on the reduction of neighborhood violence, but scholars have also linked collective efficacy to other positive outcomes (Sampson 2012; Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls 1997; see also Browning and Cagney 2002; Jugert et al. 2016). As used in sociology,⁴³ collective efficacy refines and extends early Chicago School social disorganization theory (Sampson 2012; see also Shaw and McKay 1942; Whyte 1943 [1993]). Scholars attempted to replace the specific findings of social disorganization theory—which argued that poverty, the presence of African Americans, the presence of immigrants, inadequate housing, and high rates of certain physical and mental illnesses caused neighborhood juvenile delinquency rates (Shaw and McKay 1942)—with a more general claim that “community-level variations in social control contribute to varying crime rates” (Sampson 2012: 150).

Because of this genealogy, the literature testing, developing, and critiquing collective efficacy theory has often explored the link between collective efficacy and crime. This work generally either confirms the link with more nuance (e.g., Burchfield and Silver 2013), applies it to specific types of violent crime (e.g., Jackson 2016; Kawalerowicz and Biggs 2015), examines intervening variables (e.g., Browning, Dirlam, and Boettner 2016) or challenges the perception that a lack of collective efficacy suggests deficit and disorganization (e.g., Hunter and Robinson 2016; Rios, Carney, and Kekelay 2017).

The first component of collective efficacy is social cohesion. Sampson is careful not to equate cohesion with the dense social bonds of friendships with which the term is often associated (see, e.g., Stack 1976), instead implying something more like what Harrison White (2008) or Charles Tilly (1978) might have called “catnet” (categories plus networks), or Robert Putnam’s formulation of social

⁴³ Although Robert Sampson is the central proponent of the concept in sociology, there is an even longer engagement with the term (albeit not the full concept) in the psychological research of Albert Bandura (1986). Bandura is mostly often associated with the concept of *self*-efficacy, but he also envisioned collective efficacy as a key concept within the study of human agency (Bandura 1986, 1997, 2000; see also Matsueda and Drakulich 2016). Sampson and colleagues have understood collective efficacy as a collective, neighborhood-level property, not merely a bundle of individual perceptions of group efficacy.

capital, which emphasizes social connections, trust, and norms of reciprocity, related to “civic virtue (2000: 19). It is also akin to what Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper (2000) might refer to as groupness: A sense that individuals occupy a similar category, that they have some modicum of relational connectedness, and perhaps that they do, on some level feel that they belong together (though Sampson may be less concerned with identification) (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20).

The second component of collective efficacy is shared expectations for control, which is a collective sense that community members will engage in daily practices associated with informal social control of the community. Some of the survey questions used to test collective efficacy focus on whether neighbors would intervene in various situations: if children are being truant, if children are spray-painting graffiti, if children are disrespecting adults, if there were a fight in front of their house, and if their local fire station might have its budget cut (Sampson 2012: 156; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). In this way, the questions are meant to capture willingness to enforce interactional norms, to demand adherence to institutional rules, to protect the physical condition of the neighborhood, to directly quell violence, and to engage in political activism. These expectations of behavior are intended to capture the “cultural structure”—or generally persistent modes of information, representation, and reproduction—of collective efficacy in neighborhoods (Sampson 2012: 367).

The alternative to collective efficacy, one might presume, is collective *inefficacy*, a state of social disorganization in which few people know or trust each other. However, a number of scholars, particularly urban ethnographers, have contested this view. They have argued that even in high-crime communities, there may well be a sense of collective responsibility and an organized and collective mission; that mission just may not have the same content as that expected through the lens of social disorganization theory (Duck 2015; Pattillo 2013 [1999]; Martinez 2016; St. Jean 2007; Stuart 2016; see also Reiss 1986; Rios, Carney, and Kelekay 2017; Whyte 1943). Still others have argued that local

political turf wars, not a lack of a sense of community or collective efficacy, is often the true reason violence persists in certain communities (Vargas 2016). Sampson argues that collective efficacy is important not just for quelling delinquency, supervising other people's children, and calling the police, but also helps us understand power to affect institutions, such as local budgets (2012: 152-53).

Sampson and colleagues recognize that collective efficacy is situationally contingent (Sampson 2012: 154). However, whether a community seems to have shared expectations for control does not illuminate why they might or might not have such expectations. Sampson has examined certain correlates of collective efficacy that make it to some extent endogenous—segregation, poverty, residential stability, and other neighborhood characteristics (ibid.). Those correlates are structural and institutional aspects of the neighborhood, not cultures or ideologies about the neighborhoods or cities. To be sure, ideologies emerge out of structure: For example, a collective sense that a neighborhood is on a pathway toward doom is almost certainly predicted by its level of concentrated disadvantage. Nonetheless, much in the same way that collective efficacy itself is a “cultural structure” that is important to examine despite its endogeneity, collective fate is a precondition for understanding whether and why a neighborhood is high or low in collective efficacy. People may not bother to intervene to stop people from spray-painting graffiti in their neighborhood if they believe the city has already failed to clean up preexisting graffiti and will continue to do so. People may not bother to intervene to get children to go to school if they believe children are at great risk of violence or harsh discipline at school, or if they believe the schools in their city are educationally worthless. Some of the types of informal social control Sampson and colleagues assume the basic efficacy of institutions. In an environment where residents see public institutions on an inexorable path toward failure, they may be less likely to exert informal social control.

Collective efficacy research has explored many potential mechanisms—concentrated poverty, residential churning, vacant housing, physical disorder, and more (Sampson 2012; St. Jean 2007). One cultural variable that is not explicitly discussed is the collective sense of the fate of collective entities other than the neighborhood, including spatial collectives such as the city. One way of reasoning about collective efficacy is to focus on people’s perception of their *neighborhood*, as the literature currently does. Another way is to explore their perception of the city in which their neighborhood is nested, as well as the institutions that serve their neighborhoods and cities. Now, scholars and laypeople are deeply concerned with *between-city* variation in segregation, concentrated poverty, distress, and insolvency across cities such as Detroit, Stockton, Flint, Baltimore—and even Chicago (see, e.g., Anderson 2014; Chaudhury, Levitin, and Schleicher 2018). Doubt about the city’s resilience is “inefficacy” in a sense—these residents do not believe they have the power to set their city on a new course. However, it is inefficacious in a much different way from the types usually envisioned in discussions of collective efficacy, as the spatial locus of doubt is the city and its institutions, not the neighborhood, the types of people who reside there, or themselves. These differences are important because the mechanisms imply different interpretations of data on behavior and would suggest different types of policy interventions.

Different types of collective understandings related to local and global political power might produce very different outcomes. For example, Saskia Sassen (2011) has argued that the Arab Spring emerged because of collective powerlessness. At first, this claim gives pause: Despite rich debate in the social movements literature, most scholars presuppose that *some* amount of organization, strategy, expectation of success, and collective identification are necessary preconditions for political action (e.g., Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Goldberg 2003; Jenkins 1983; Klandermans, Toorn, and Stekelenburg 2008; McCammon et al. 2001; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Soule and King 2008; Tilly

1978, Useem 1998; Walder 2009). People who feel powerless do not tend to mobilize for political action.

However, in Sassen's view, "[p]owerlessness is not simply an absolute condition that can be flattened into the absence of power" (2011: 574). Sassen describes "complex" powerlessness, distinguishable from impotence, that motivates groups to engage in politics while still ultimately lacking power. Collective "impotence," in contrast, might correspond with social disorganization and non-cohesion, and would likely not motivate a protest movement. Although a large body of social movements research has sought to understand collective identity and collective emotion as a mobilizing tool (e.g., Collins 2004; Durkheim 1912; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Jasper 2011; Summers-Effler 2010), little of this research has been in dialogue with the notion of collective efficacy, nor has it looked beyond movements to examine enduring senses of collective fate on a neighborhood, institutional, or municipal level. This is important to do because social movements, though pervasive, are still occasional—especially among "society's true marginals" (Jasper 1997: 3). Collective meaning-making is occurring even in the absence of movement.

The Ideals and Aspirations of Disadvantaged Youth

How do collective fate and collective efficacy connect to individual aspirations and self-efficacy? Although collective efficacy and sense of self-efficacy and personal aspirations are distinct and separately measurable, social psychologists frequently note their collinearity and potential mutual causality (e.g., Bandura 1997, 2000; Gecas 1989; Goddard and Goddard 2001; Jugert et al. 2016; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2007; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007; Stajkovic and Luthans 2002). Psychological research links high self-efficacy with high aspirations and ideals, especially among youth (e.g., Bandura et al. 2001; Rottinghaus et al. 2002; Uwah, McMahon, and Furlow 2008). Scholars of youth resilience relatedly view high aspirations and ideals as critical protective factors against difficult

environments (e.g., DeLuca, Clampet-Lundquist, and Edin 2016; Jarrett 1997). Collective identification, when positive, can also be a source of individual resilience in otherwise difficult situations (Lamont, Welburn, and Fleming 2013); one can imagine that a negative sense of collective fate would weaken possibilities for resilience and level aspirations.

Youth aspirations, especially career aspirations, have long been of deep interest in sociology. Perhaps most famously, Paul Willis (1977) demonstrated through rich ethnography how “lads” (sons of working-class fathers) and “ear’oles” (sons of middle-class fathers) developed cultural scripts and strategies that fed them into working-class and middle-class careers, respectively, thereby reproducing the class structure. Willis was focusing on white boys in the UK, and thus American scripts of employment opportunity and the “American Dream” and racialized scripts about achievement did not factor heavily into Willis’ findings. In contrast, Jay MacLeod’s seminal work in *Ain’t No Makin’ It* (2009) delved deeply into the occupational aspirations and outcomes for a group of boys in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Instead of “lads” and “ear’oles,” MacLeod followed “Hallway Hangers” and “Brothers.” Instead of tracking how class shaped ideology and then reproduced class position, MacLeod focused on divergent ideology *within* the African-American working class and how it can differentially shape outcomes.

High aspirations are an important pathway toward greater educational and occupational achievement, particularly in the face of disadvantage (e.g., Beal and Crockett 2010; Kao and Tienda 1995). Disadvantaged youths’ aspirations might “level” or become more driven by practicality as they grow older and become more aware of the structural constraints they face (Abrego 2006; Bourdieu 1984; Gonzales 2011; Kao and Tienda 1998; MacLeod 2009; Scott, London, and Edin 2000). Aspirations level over time for other reasons as well, such as competing and contradictory cultural cues about appropriate aspirations (Correll 2004; Vijayakumar 2013) and messages sent from institutions

about appropriate goals, or “cooling out” (Clark 1960; Rosenbaum 1976). This research assumes a certain rational choice model in which adolescents and young adults calculate the opportunity costs of pursuing high goals and then settle for other goals.

Some scholars believe that when aspirations are *too* high—meaning that they seem unrealistic, or that there is a serious mismatch between youths’ expectations and their actual achievements—they can encourage risky behavior (Beattie 2015; Reynolds et al. 2006; Rosenbaum 2001). Young (2004), writing about marginalized African-American adult men, distinguishes between ideals and aspirations, arguing that ideals, unlike aspirations, are not tethered to a plan of action or even a concrete understanding of how the ideal could be achieved. Ideals, unlike aspirations, may matter less for outcomes. However, some research finds that low-achievers who had reported high aspirations still fared better in life than low-achievers who reported low aspirations (Martin and Gardner 2016).

Most research on aspirations from the past decade or so suggests that young people, or even adults into their thirties, maintain high aspirations (in particular, educational aspirations). For example, in a study of Baltimore youth, Alexander, Bozick, and Entwistle (2008) find that cooling out was more likely among 28-year-olds than 22-year olds, but that even 28-year-olds remained generally ambitious—they “hold steady” (see also Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person 2006; Nielsen 2015). These young people maintain high aspirations for various reasons, not necessarily because they have rationally calculated their desired outcomes to be likely. They, like more privileged youth, are sensitive to cultural messages about the importance of education, and thus might articulate high goals as an assertion of their morality and identity (Deterding 2015; Frye 2012; Nielsen 2015; Oyserman et al. 2004; Young 2004). Perhaps especially for youth who are struggling in the status quo, looking to the future and seeing a positive outcome can realize their agency (Hitlin and Johnson 2015) and allow them

to present themselves as “someone who strives” (Nielsen 2015: 276; see also Deterding 2015; Smith 2017).

Harding and colleagues (2016), studying reentering former prisoners, develop a set of processes that determine change or stability in narratives over time when social structure constrains positive outcomes. They find that when structural constraints are so intense that people’s scripts for moving forward are incompatible with them, their narratives may shift depending on how institutions and informal social network members respond to their narratives. This is not unlike the cooling-out thesis: According to Harding and colleagues, if institutions reject a narrative (such as high educational aspirations), one might expect people’s narratives to shift (see Clark 1960). As applied to the aspirations of marginalized youths, one might expect that high educational and occupational aspirations win vocal network and institutional support, even if those network members and institutions fail to provide adequate practical support for fulfilling those aspirations. Thus, it may be possible that youths’ scripts for moving forward remained positive despite structural incompatibility; institutions, networks, and culture may influence aspirations just as more or much than rational calculations do (see Bozick et al. 2010). However, little research explores the scripts disadvantage youth use to justify high personal aspirations, particularly in light of their understanding of the fate of their families, neighborhoods, or broader communities. This study allows examination of youths’ aspirations as they are situated into various contextual spheres—most importantly, their city.

Data & Methods

This study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews of young people ages 15-24 who lived in Baltimore during 2015. Data were collected between June and September 2015, as we aimed to keep the time frame proximate to Freddie Gray’s death and the unrest. To design the study, recruit the sample, and collect interviews, we used participatory research methods (e.g., Cornwall and Jewkes

1995).⁴⁴ Of twelve members of the research team, eleven were also between the ages of 15 and 24 (all but myself). Ten were living in Baltimore during Freddie Gray's death and the subsequent unrest. While four staff members were college students or graduating seniors who were in Baltimore for school, seven were longstanding community members recruited through two Baltimore organizations that support young people. Of the community staff members, three were or had recently been unhoused and were seeking longer-term employment, and four were high school students who were members of an organization that provides mentors to students who seem to be underperforming. All members of the research team were officially hired by Johns Hopkins University and compensated for their work; the high school students were also participating in YouthWorks, a summer employment program for young people run by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. While race matching has both benefits and potential drawbacks when conducting this type of research (see Young 2004: 209), it is noteworthy that the entire research team consisted of people of color, ten Black Americans and two women of Hispanic ethnicity. Eight team members were women and only four were men; it is unclear how this gender imbalance might have affected the recruitment and interviews.

Our team viewed this research process as a mutual learning experience. Community interns were critical to the refinement of research questions and development of the interview guide. All were trained on interview techniques and research ethics, and all but two served as formal interviewers on the project.⁴⁵ In addition to the formal tasks typically associated with research—designing studies, recruiting, and collecting data—we also engaged in weekly enrichment activities as crucial aspects of the participatory research process. For example, we took at least a half-day each week out of the field to

⁴⁴ Our practices were distinct from strands of participatory action research in which participants engage in social change initiatives as part of the research process. We emphasized building a collaborative research process rather than dictating to community members how they should use the data.

⁴⁵ The two who did not serve as interviewers, both high school students, were offered the opportunity but said they were too anxious to interview people. They felt that interviewing was risky and violated the norm of minding one's own business in their neighborhoods.

meet with guest speaker or to watch and discuss a relevant film. Some of the benefits of this approach included infusing the study with local knowledge so as not to impose outsider perspectives on the community, expanding participation to youth who would be unlikely to find appealing a study led only by Harvard and Johns Hopkins researchers, and enriching interviews because community researchers often asked questions that university researchers did not anticipate due to their deeper awareness of respondents' social contexts. There are also numerous challenges to using this mode of research, primarily reduced efficiency and logistical concerns. In addition, there are numerous ways in which this study fell short of the participatory ideal; for example, all Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators were university affiliates. We were also attentive to community staff members' freedom *not* to participate in certain aspects of the research and writing process (Levinson 2017). However, we believe the benefits of this mode of youth participation in the research outweighed its shortcomings.

Our team interviewed fifty African-American youth between June and August 2015. We used multiple strategies to recruit a heterogeneous group of youth, primarily in West Baltimore. Twenty-one respondents were directly recruited from the social networks of the seven paid community interns. In this way, the community interns participated not only by helping to shape the research, but also by recruiting respondents and interviewing respondents who they did not already personally know.⁴⁶ We also spent significant time in West Baltimore neighborhoods, attending community events, participating in community service activities such as food pantry distribution, playing basketball with young people in the community, and conversing with people. We took field notes on these experiences, and we primarily used participant observation to sensitize us to themes that might emerge from the interviews and to ensure that the interviews were focused on the appropriate issues. However, we also

⁴⁶ A plurality (41.1%) of respondents was recruited through community interns' social networks. No one recruited more than five respondents from their personal networks, all referred at least one, and the interns were not well-acquainted before working on the study, and none of their close social ties overlapped. While our intention was not to be "representative" (see Small 2009, we wanted to ensure that the sample was not limited to a single closely connected network.

recruited thirteen respondents through this ethnographic sampling. Five respondents were randomly sampled from the Penn-North and Upton neighborhoods in West Baltimore using a list of addresses from the U.S. Postal Service. Four respondents were recruited through a local youth-led community support organization. Three respondents were snowballed from youth in the random sample. Finally, four of the seven community staff members asked to participate in the study as respondents, feeling that they also had a perspective worthy of inclusion in the data.

The goal of using multiple recruitment strategies was to purposively construct a heterogeneous sample of youth who directly experienced the events surrounding Freddie Gray’s arrest and death. This type of purposive sampling bears many labels, but it is sometimes known as “maximum variation” or “maximum heterogeneity” sampling, or theoretical sampling with multiple stages (see Edin 2008; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Strauss and Corbin 1990). We tracked potential respondents’ ages, as older youth (ages 20-24) tended to be easier to recruit than teenagers through random sampling and neighborhood sampling. We also purposively sampled by gender: Research shows that men are more likely to willingly participate in riots (e.g., Santoro and Broidy 2014), and we initially found young women easier to recruit than young men. We ultimately wound up with a slightly larger number of men than women in the sample (23 women and 27 men). Table 5 contains basic demographic and descriptive information about the sample.

Table 5. Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	Mean	N
Age	19.3	NA
Female	0.46	23
Currently in School	0.5	25
Currently in School \leq 18	0.88	22
Graduated from High School $>$ 18	0.6	15
Enrolled in College $>$ 18	0.12	3
Currently Employed	0.36	18
Currently Employed $>$ 18	0.28	7
Parent	0.24	12

Parent < 18	0.04	1
Baltimore Native	0.88	44
*Has Experienced School Discipline	0.46	23
*Has Experienced an Arrest	0.44	22
*Has Experienced Detainment/Incarceration	0.22	11
*Has Been on Probation/Parole	0.26	13
*Has Been in Foster Care	0.22	11
*Has an Incarcerated Family Member	0.5	25

**Note: These numbers are based on self-reports, not public reports.*

We used a multi-stage interview coding process, moving between data and literature multiple times (see Deterding and Waters 2017). At Stage 1, we developed a set of analytic codes based on the interview guide and field notes collected during the field period, which coders applied to the transcripts using MaxQDA. At Stage 2, we used the applied codes to identify themes that were consistent across interviews. At Stage 3, we read back through the entire transcripts and wrote detailed memos on each respondent’s whole story, focusing less on the precisely coded interview sections, to ensure that we interpreted quotations within their full context. As part of this stage of the analysis, we paid careful attention to the number of times a respondent used a phrase, moments of silence and the duration of pauses, and inflection if the written transcript seemed unclear; we returned to the audio recordings when necessary to assist in this process. Once we developed main findings, we re-examined the data for negative cases in order to refine our interpretations (see Becker 1958; Katz 2001). Finally, for all respondents, we used publicly available Maryland court records covering criminal cases, civil cases (including paternity and child support), and traffic cases to verify and clarify some of respondents’ stories.

The analysis and write-up of findings operated more in a conventional research mode than the participatory mode (see Wilkinson and Wilkinson 2017). While I had reservations about this shift, I became aware during the data collection period that the youth community staff was not interested in analyzing the data or writing papers about the findings. Thus, I concluded that it was more respectful of

these team members to heed their wish not to participate in the coding and writing process. Demanding that community staff take time away from school, new employment, and other activities to participate in this phase of the project would make research appear more conscientious of community needs, but it would not have truly respected the desires of the actual young people who worked on the study from the beginning. To further validate these findings and interpretations, I shared preliminary results with the entire research team for feedback and have shared drafts with community leaders and other members of the community.

Findings

Narratives of the Unrest

Almost none of the youth we interviewed—just two of the fifty—reported that they actively participated in the unrest. Some thought it would be fun to join in, but their parents or older relatives forbade it. However, most said they thought participating was wrong, physically dangerous, or placed their futures at risk in other ways (for example, getting caught on security cameras). Most youth claim to have stayed indoors, trying to keep their windows closed and doors locked down and watching the events unfold on local news and through social media.

Bianca,⁴⁷ sixteen, told a typical story. She had left school early because her friend's mother had heard about the potential disturbance. She went to her grandmother's house and did not plan to leave. "It was crazy," she remarked, "I was home in my bed." On the first day, her grandmother smelled smoke, so Bianca got up and peered outside. "I look out the window and I see, like, the flames. It wasn't close by me, but it was. It was probably like a few blocks down. And I saw all these flames, I'm just sitting there like, "That's ridiculous!" Anthony, sixteen, was just getting home from school in East Baltimore and turning on the family television to watch Family Feud when his show was interrupted by

⁴⁷ Appendix 2 contains descriptive information about each respondent referenced in the Findings section.

breaking news. “I couldn’t believe it.” To him, the unrest created an image problem for Baltimore: “They’ll think we was just wild animals, just killing each other for no reason and stealing and stuff.”

Twenty-year-old Jessica has a fragile housing situation and did not have the privilege of nesting at home during the unrest. She had a three-month-old son at the time of whom she recently lost custody. “I’m going through some problems and some situations that he can’t be around right now,” she tearfully confided. She and her son’s father, whom she met when they were both in foster care, were struggling to stabilize themselves enough personally and financially to care for a child. Part of the challenge has been avoiding people who they consider to be negative influences. They usually spend nights in a large shared house with some people they would otherwise like to avoid; as much trouble as they can cause, at least they provide reasonably safe place to sleep.

On the morning before the unrest broke out, Jessica, her partner, and their baby headed downtown to the Harborplace Mall. “We’d rather not be around certain groups, so we go downtown to the mall and browse and window shop a little.” They walked a bit along Baltimore’s Harbor and then through the mall’s upstairs food court, trying to have a pleasant day. When the unrest broke out, they were caught in it. Heading outside and walking west, they heard windows break. Jessica described coughing and walking through tear gas. She tried to navigate their way back toward Northwest Baltimore where they were staying. “I see other people getting pushed. I try to stay away from that stuff. We was like, away from the crowd because in fact, our son was with us. And the traffic couldn’t get through, so there was no buses to take us where we need to go, so what was we going to go? So we fall to the back, you know, towards other things where people ain’t, near like the coffee shop, down there. Watch it from there. Thank God my son was asleep.” They gradually walked the six miles or so back to the house.

Several interviewees said that they were caught outdoors during the unrest, though they had no intentions of participating. Shawna, for example, who grew up in the same neighborhood and housing development that Freddie Gray did, tried to head to a friend's house for dinner but got caught in the melee. "I had gotten off the subway and we were heading towards her house so I could get some spaghetti because I was hungry. Then, all of a sudden, all of these kids start running down the street! And I was like, 'What in the world?' Then there were bricks everywhere. They started breaking bricks and they had on these little fake masks and these dollar scarves. I was just like, 'I know these kids! I know some of these kids. I'm going to tell your mother.'" Shawna chuckled. Her venture was unsuccessful. "I never made it to get that spaghetti. I'm still wondering what that tastes like."

Only two respondents, Kasim and Telvis, openly admitted to intentionally participating. Aside from being young African-American men living in Baltimore, they are markedly different people. Kasim, one of the oldest study participants at twenty-three, had just gotten out of prison in December 2014. When we interviewed him, he was still on parole and worried about returning to prison. During the unrest, he tried to stock up on various items, mostly shoes. Although Kasim is relatively fortunate compared to many people coming out of prison because he was quickly able to find work, his job barely pays a living wage. The income he earns now is much less than the solidly middle-class income he claims to have brought in selling crack. Kasim is sharing a house with three other adults and is looking to move out as soon as possible.

Kasim says he did not know anything about Freddie Gray at the time and did not even see any images of him until the unrest was over. But when he heard from friends about the economic opportunity provided by the moment, he tried to capitalize on it. He was largely unsuccessful. "The majority of the places that I approached were pre-broken into, 'cause people were already ahead of the plan. I was actually in the house with my girlfriend and I got the call that DTLR was being broken into."

It took ‘em three minutes from where I was living to make it to DTLR and they stripped the place clean.” Kasim might have been a bit disappointed at the time; he only “got a little”—no sneakers. In hindsight, he thinks these minimal returns might have saved him from getting penalized for violating his parole. “I’m not gonna go down to Mondawmin and steal knowing I have no way back. You’re not gonna catch me walking up the street with a bag in my hand. They didn’t catch people robbing. They caught people that robbed.”

Kasim was caught up in the emotional fervor of the moment, recording videos on his phone and taking selfies. But now he thinks getting involved was a bad choice: “I was out there doing stuff I shouldn’t be doing, risking, being dumb. Just plain and simple. I was being dumb and moving off of impulse instead of doing what I was supposed to be doing ... God forbid things didn’t go the way that I calculated.”

Telvis, sixteen and one of the youngest respondents, was the other open participant. Unlike Kasim, he did not aim for big-ticket items, nor did he visit multiple stores. Like most respondents, Telvis reports staying inside the first day, watching the news. But the next day, he ventured outside with friends to a store that had already been burned. Once they entered, they discovered that much of the wrapped merchandise was still edible despite being covered in soot. Telvis’ main interests were soda, chips, and cookies, which he brought home, cleaned off, and shared with others. He never felt particularly at risk because he was not behaving violently or instigating; he says, “[T]he police were allowing certain things.” He avoided the main strip near Mondawmin Mall, where he heard people were throwing bricks. “It would be crazy to get bricks thrown at you,” Telvis opined. Unlike Kasim, he does not completely regret participating because of the months worth of snacks he provided to his family and friends. Yet he does not think participating was productive from a community standpoint. “I

would like to do it again because of all the stuff, but not. I wouldn't want to do it, because it's pointless."

Nearly all of these youths reported watching social media very closely during the days of unrest. Tyson, a seventeen-year-old community organizer who has secured several college scholarships, believes that social media is a more reliable source of information in general. The traditional media "just misinterpretate every situation." Tyson encourages people to become more active on Facebook and Instagram. "In order to find the truth, you need to have your phone out, tweet things, take videos about things." Fayard, eighteen, has gotten most of his information about the unrest from local rap artists on YouTube, some during the unrest and some later. One of his favorites is Young Moose, whose May 2015 Freddie Gray-inspired single, "No Sunshine," begins with information about the money Baltimore has paid in settlements related to the police since 2011, scrolls through graphic images of police violence and violent response, and links the death of Freddie Gray to the violent abuse of Rodney King and Emmett Till. Fayard does not trust traditional media because "they just pump everything up and they just make it seem way more overdramatic than what it really was." Months before a national dialogue erupted over "fake news," Fayard explained that he "can't listen to the news because they could be telling you anything. They get paid regardless, so they could be telling you anything, and you'd still have to go with it."

Reid, twenty-four, was also active on social media during the unrest. Unlike Tyson and Fayard, he was on social media mostly to share in the collective experience of the event without placing himself at risk. Reid, like many respondents, thought what happened to Freddie Gray tragic but commonplace. "People was dying before that," he remarked. Having struggled through serious childhood abuse, foster care, incarceration, probation, and homelessness, Reid was preoccupied with managing his own situation and was too risk-averse to get deeply involved. "This didn't change my life at all," he

declared. Yet he posted heavily on social media during the unrest—images that looked “cool” such as someone throwing a Molotov cocktail toward police, missives about the CNN coverage, and jubilant notes about State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby, with whom he is “in love. I hope she, like, acknowledge me. I hope she hears this. Psych.” Reid chuckled. Even though it was “maddening” that he could not go outside, he felt that “it was kind of entertaining... I was loving it. They put Baltimore on the map. So, I was just really into it.” Later, Reid expressed some regret for not participating. “Afterwards, I’m like damn, you got all these shoes, and I ain’t got shit. I know people that got a lot of stuff and I’m like, ‘Yo, I ain’t got shit.’”

Reid occupied a positionality that most of the sociological literature on collective violence does not contemplate. Most research, based on moments of unrest that took place in contexts where Internet use is limited or uncommon or focused on images of violent confrontations in which all studied must have been physically present, analyzes direct participation in crowd violence or, less often, vicarious participation by attendant onlookers (Collins 2008; Kawalerowicz and Biggs 2015). While most respondents in this study claimed only to be onlookers, Reid used social media to actively share in the collective emotion generated by the unrest without entangling himself in any actual violence.

Interpretations of the Unrest

Given that so many of the respondents did not actively participate in the unrest, it is unsurprising that many of them labeled the event “dumb” or “stupid.” Anthony, the sixteen-year-old Family Feud fan, was “disappointed in [his] whole city.” Stephan, eighteen, asked, “What’s the purpose of setting police cars on fire? It’s not helping you. They’re sitting here laughing at you because they know at the end of the day, you’re going to be locked up.” Mikayla, twenty-two, insisted that there was no connection between the unrest and the Freddie Gray case. In her view, rioters were interested in

either consumption or attention. “I think they did that as a come-up to get stuff for themselves to steal things they wanted. I didn’t think they had anything to do with having justice for him,” she declared.

Many respondents shared Mikayla’s general interpretation but through a more complex lens. Justin, eighteen, surmised that some people participated because “it’s a quick come-up,” but he concluded that, “At the end of the day, I don’t approve of it.” Justin, who was headed to college that fall on an athletic scholarship, considered joining in the protests and the subsequent unrest but avoided engaging altogether once violence broke out. He imagined a future query from a dubious interlocutor. “Next thing you know, they got me on camera or something like that, and my career is over. I just think of things for the future. All it takes is, somebody ask me, ‘When the protests happened, where were you at?’ ‘I was down there protesting peacefully.’ ‘You were *peacefully protesting*, huh?’” At the same time, Justin did not judge people for taking advantage of the resources available during the riots. “You see an opportunity, you need something, you aren’t thinking about, ‘This isn’t right,’ you’re thinking about, ‘Man I need this, I’m going to go get it.’ ... I’m not going to shame the people that is doing it because you don’t know what’s going on.”

Ashley, who is seventeen, pregnant, out of school, and living in abject poverty in West Baltimore near Mondawmin, offered some of the sharpest words about the unrest, perhaps wading into the offensive. “When the whole riot thing happened: Oh, my Jesus Christ. I have never seen so many dumb African Americans. I seen people running out with toilet paper, Arizonas [Iced Tea]. I’m like, ‘Y’all couldn’t just simply wait until food stamps came out?’” she said to (African-American) researchers. “I’m mad as crap because I can’t go to CVS anymore and get no dadgum Tastykakes.” At first, Ashley’s theory of the unrest focused on consumption; she was more comfortable than Justin judging this aspect of the unrest, even criticizing participants who took diapers. Yet Ashley expressed thin pride in the effort when she critiqued the response of Mayor Rawlings-Blake. As much as the

unrest frustrated Ashley, she thought there were aspects of it that the mayor could have highlighted to make Baltimoreans feel more heard and supported. “Baltimore, I can actually say that was the first thing we’ve ever done together.” She called the city “family” and “a helping system.” After highlighting these aspects of the city, Ashley thought back to the mayor. “How you going to make the citizens of Baltimore feel like you don’t care? I mean, you’re put in this position to care, to help.” To Ashley, the riots were a troublingly consumerist but perhaps admirably collectivist approach, especially in the face of nonchalant leadership.

Cordell, eighteen, joined Ashley, Justin, Mikayla, and many others in seeing the riot as happening “so people can get free shit” and “to get noticed.” Like Reid, Cordell was unemotional about Freddie Gray’s death, characterizing it as just one of so many incidents. “I feel sorry for Freddie Gray and all that, but it’s been like this.” “It’s been like this,” Cordell insisted, sometimes varying with “It’s been like *that*.” “Police been doing cruddy shit,” he explained. Cordell told a story of a friend the police killed in front of 7-Eleven after someone reported that the friend was armed. “It’s been like this,” he uttered for the sixth time. For Cordell, because police violence was so rampant, it was unfathomable that Freddie Gray’s death was the riot’s true catalyst. Thus, he presumed that participants were driven by baser concerns.

Even so, Cordell thought the unrest was valuable because it got outsiders to finally pay attention to issues affecting his life and community. “I was just happy they finally newsed our shit,” he professed. “Finally, Facebook and Instagram went to something other than us killing each other or fighting each other. They finally went to something like helping us, broadcasting what they’re doing to us.” Several respondents joined Cordell in harshly criticizing the unrest and its active participants while concluding that the unrest might have been necessary to bring attention to the plight of marginalized Baltimoreans. Prophet, twenty, was one of them. After calling the initial protests “a beautiful sight” and

lamenting that “we had to show our ass,” Prophet moderated his assessment. “I’m gonna keep it all the way G [real] with you. If we wouldn’t have got a little bit of violence, we wouldn’t have gotten that much attention.”

A few respondents interpret the unrest through the lens of the hardships that people in marginalized Baltimore face. The core struggles, according to this group, are the violence of poverty and the trauma of violence. Chanel, nineteen, emphasized both. She concluded that the unrest was not about Freddie Gray, but was instead about “getting attention” for Baltimore’s problems. Starting with deprivation, she rationalized, “It’s a lot of stuff. It’s people need help. It’s not the resources out here.” About violence, she said, “Every day, I see this person died, that person died, and it’s been continuous.” Julius, twenty-one, likened Baltimore’s youth to “a cat backed against a wall.”⁴⁸ He rejected interpretations of the unrest like Anthony’s:

They [police] just wanted to take pictures. Like, “Oh, we—it’s so—it’s so bad in Baltimore, they’re—they’re just going crazy.” No. Y’all putting us in predicaments where we’re like a cat backed against a wall. We’re tired of it. Like so many, like the whole Freddie Gray issue . . . I’ve been searched and they’ve went all in my pants, all in my private areas and everything just because I was walking to the store. I never was a drug dealer, I never did those things.

Julius was one of few respondents who saw the unrest as a direct response to police violence, but he was also troubled by it: “And it’s sad because I realize that doing those—like the rioting and all that—I realize that doesn’t change it.” He saw the entire set of events as a sign that Baltimore needs better leadership.

Richard, nineteen, was at his cousin’s house during the unrest; his baseball coach demanded that all of the team members go to a family member’s house and stay away from the uproar. He shared the conflicted feelings that many others did. “I was like, supporting them, but at the same time I was like, ‘You really is messing up Baltimore even more too.’” Part of his analysis was similar to Justin’s:

⁴⁸ While such animal references may troublingly hearken to a long history of African-American dehumanization (see Goff et al. 2008), Anthony’s and Julius’ words vividly illustrate central interpretations of the unrest and thus are beneficial to include.

“The people that did the looting, I think they wanted some more stuff in their house so they had some more clothes, and like especially the people living in the streets a lot, they were probably like, ‘Oh yeah, this is my chance to get some clothes and then sell something.’ ... So, I really don't blame them.” Yet he also added another layer, tethering the events to the stress of living in Baltimore. “It’s just a lot of things been going on so they probably just did that to just to release some stress.” When we asked him what things had been going on, Richard spoke about death. “Well, some stress people probably be going through is, like, a lot of death. And some of [those deaths] probably from cops, but some of them just from people, but they didn’t get locked up for it yet.” Respondents consistently described death, especially unpunished homicide, as a special risk in Baltimore (as I will discuss in more detail below). Richard was one of few respondents who identified violent death as a catalyst for the unrest.

Overall, most respondents saw the riot as a Janus-faced opportunity for Baltimoreans to gain and consume resources. They varied on whether they thought taking advantage of that opportunity was legitimate or justifiable. To a lesser extent, they interpreted the riot as an outlet for rage at a host of social problems in their communities, police violence the most visible but not necessarily the most profound.

Although most respondents acknowledged that most people confronting these social problems in Baltimore are African American, most rejected explanations of the unrest that *center* race and racism. They did not see the riot as a collective response to racial stigmatization (see Lamont et al. 2016). Like many white Americans (Bonilla-Silva 2018; Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll 2009), several respondents drew upon the repertoire of colorblindness to discuss how race does and should operate in society. Only overt, personalized racism was legible to some respondents, so they decentered a race-based justification for the unrest by alluding to the advances of the Civil Rights Era or mentioning the numerous African-American police officers in Baltimore (approximately half of the force). For

example, fifteen-year-old Louanne, a politically engaged young woman who is on her school's debate team, highlighted the involvement of African-American officers as a reason that race was not a reason for Freddie Gray's death: "It was a black police officer involved in it, so I'm confused . . . people just don't know why they be mad."

Seventeen-year-old Zima echoed and amplified these views on the meaning of racism. Zima has had several negative encounters with the police, including being maced at school after she got into a fight with another young girl and being tackled by an officer after she and her brother were fleeing. Her injuries were so bad that she had to receive medical treatment. Yet her overall views of police officers are more positive, or at least forgiving, than those of most respondents. "I don't like the simple fact that everybody got to think so negative about the police." She was critical of how the police responded to Freddie Gray, but she—again like many Americans—assumed he was doing something "for the police to actually take their time out" to arrest him.

Zima fully rejects a race-centered explanation for Freddie Gray's death and the unrest. "There's black polices, and I'm pretty sure they from Baltimore. . . . Y'all acting like all the police are white." Zima also thought racism was a thing of the past and that young people should focus on what we have in common as humans: "Why is people still living in past? Racism is way back in the past. Why are people still bringing that up? That's over with. We all bleed. We all the same." Rejecting this racial narrative was a sign of maturity: "I'm really waiting on that time for a lot of people in Baltimore to just grow up. Just grow up. Get over the whole racism, get over the whole police not on our side—get over all that. My generation, my age of peers, grow up. Come on now, get over it."

Other youth rejected the racial frame because they found the *idea* of racism psychologically taxing, not because they thought it was inaccurate. Sam, a nineteen-year-old filmmaker, saw Freddie Gray's death as "Black man died. Oh, what a shock. Because I'm used to hearing that all the time. And

actually, if I could be honest with y'all . . . I was really getting tired of like, hearing about black people down everywhere." Sam described his mother as "black people strong," raising a fist to explain that term. She points out racism everywhere, including in reality television shows. "It gets pretty annoying over time," he sighed. Sam's teacher showed the film *Twelve Years a Slave* in class and he "really didn't want to see it." Afterward, Sam claims that he was "like, completely racist for like three hours." From Sam's perspective, when he rejects the racial frame for Freddie Gray's death, it is because he is tired of thinking about race and seeing racism. "Geez," he wearily remarked, "We learn about this all through our lives. It's still going. Can't we just take a break for maybe twenty years or something and then come back to it?"

Justin, the college-bound footballer introduced above, also rejected a racial frame for the unrest and for police violence. He preferred to blame police violence and mistreatment on the human tendency to abuse power. "People who have never had power before, they finally get power, and they want to abuse it." Yet this view was not strongly held; it was more a script he deployed for mental preservation. "I try my best not to look at it as a racial thing because I know that's only going to make me mad and stress me out. So, I try to look at it from all angles." The sociological literature on responses to racism and "managing the self" (e.g., Lamont et al. 2016), as well as the psychological literature on coping with racism (e.g., Brondolo et al. 2009), suggest that Sam's and Justin's strategy—protecting themselves from the exhaustion of racism by finding alternative explanations for racialized situations—is not unique. While the open-ended structure of the interviews does not allow definitive comparison between the trajectories youth were on and their adoption or rejection of a racial frame (compare McLeod 2009), the bigger story for the purposes of this study is that most of these youth, regardless of their trajectory, did not share the racial frame or the focus on policing that movement actors have centered.

Collective Fate

Respondents consistently held low expectations for Baltimore's future, feeling that the city faced both structural and ideological challenges that were not obviously reparable. Overwhelmingly, they perceived Baltimore as a risky place to live and a city to be avoided if possible. Cordell calls the city "the swamp" and "a big-ass jungle." Prophet calls Baltimore "Setup City. They set it up for you to fail." Reid says Baltimore is "a hustling city." Bianca refers to Baltimore as "a drug city." When I asked Keisha, sixteen, how she would describe Baltimore to me if I had never been there before, she answered, "I'd be like, you made a big mistake when you came here." Anita, twenty-two, predicts, "Baltimore City is gonna go straight downhill." Rachele, sixteen, observed, "You hear things like, 'the home of the brave,' and stuff. And it's just like—you have to be brave in order to live here, because clearly it's just too much nonsense."

Several respondents directly linked the unrest with their perception that Baltimore is on a downward trajectory. Jalanda, sixteen, blames not only the unrest, but also the peaceful protests, for the increase in mortality. "What did people do? Keep protesting and stuff, wanting them to stop. Last time we did that, what happened? The situation got worse." The specific situation that got worse, in Jalanda's view, was death: "More people got killed and more people got away with it."

Vance, twenty-three, complains that no one is fully considering the consequences of Freddie Gray's death or the subsequent unrest:

People not thinking about the real simple consequences behind the whole tragedy. That boy's beating got on camera. On camera, on national television. It was so crazy and tragic. Why would y'all do such a thing? It hurts me every day to wake up and really ask myself, what's going to happen next? That's my main question going through my mind a lot. What's going to happen next? What's the next move? What's the next move for Baltimore? How are they going to sit there and improve Baltimore now? They keep talking about they want to lock this part down, lock that part down. That's not going to do nothing. All that's going to do is make people more angry and mess around and go bananas. Ever since that Freddie Grey incident, Baltimore is in the top four murder rate.

Vance blames this anger people feel, in part because of police harshness and violence, for the uptick in homicide. Yet he also proffers that the riots provided more legitimate justification for police violence. Despite empathizing with riot participants, Vance maintains that they “gave [police] better reasons to harass us.”

DeVaughn, seventeen, claims that post-riot West Baltimore is “a war zone.” He was somewhat impressed by the unrest, calling it “a historical moment in America.” Similar to Richard, part of the reason he could not participate was because he was at practice for his sport; he lives so close to Mondawmin that there was no clear way for him to get from school back to his neighborhood. Perhaps more importantly, he thought the situation was dangerous. After the unrest broke out, DeVaughn stayed at his grandfather’s house in another neighborhood for three days. “I just didn’t feel like I could stay here and be safe,” he explained. Since the unrest, DeVaughn is more worried about his friends and family:

I used to just tell my friends, “Be safe.” Now, it’s like you got to tell your friends, “I love you. Be safe. Call me as soon as you get where you get.” That may be the last time you may see that person. You be thinking, like, “Not that person, that can’t happen.” And then it happens. Then you start asking yourself, like, could it be me? Could it be you, my mom, my sister, my niece? It’s just crazy. It’s not something that you ever want to witness or imagine.

Zima made a similar point about salutations in the city:

In Baltimore, after every time you talk to somebody, when you done [with] the conversation, it’s always, “be safe.” “Be safe, hit me up, let me know when you made it home.” “Be safe, watch your back,” and it’s just like—it shouldn’t be like that. You shouldn’t have to keep watching your back everywhere you go.”

It is perhaps unremarkable that young people feel they must take safety precautions when they move about any city. However, Zima understands these greetings as endemic to Baltimore and symbolic of the city’s exceptional risk level. “Don’t be surprised. Anything can happen in Baltimore,” she explains, wearily. The issue is not that youth tell each other to stay safe or use normal security measures. The

critical point is that these utterances indicate, for some respondents, a deeply felt sense of risk that after spending time with a friend, “That may be the last time you may see that person.” In most respondents’ view, that type of risk emerges because they live in Baltimore.

Cedric, nineteen, resides in a West Baltimore housing development where parts of the television show *The Wire* were shot. Unprompted, he compared real Baltimore to the city depicted in *The Wire*, and he contends that real Baltimore is “ten times worse”:

For people who aren’t from here and are just coming to sightsee and everything, it’s good for them. But they don’t understand the gist of what really goes down here. When people ask us where we’re from and we say Baltimore, the first reference they go to is *The Wire*. I’m pretty sure you guys know *The Wire*. But *The Wire* is nothing. And this is my honest opinion, *The Wire* is nothing compared to living in Baltimore. I believe Baltimore is ten times worse.

Cedric seemed to sense that there were at least two Baltimores, one for native Baltimoreans and one for visitors. The visitor version had some nice aspects, but Cedric believed that for people *from* Baltimore, the city is a bad place. “There’s nothing here in Baltimore. I can say that if you’re from here, there’s nothing here.”

Cedric based this intense negativity about Baltimore on his life experiences. “Nobody’s life is easy. Especially here in Baltimore, it’s always a struggle,” he remarked. Compared to the rest of the sample, Cedric grew up under relatively privileged circumstances. He grew up in far Northeast Baltimore in an area that resembles traditional suburbs, despite being within city limits. His family arranged for him to go to Baltimore County schools, widely thought to be better and safer schools than those in the city. Although Cedric thinks the schools were decent, he found that some individuals were “racist in certain aspects.” Cedric, who called himself “a little troublemaker” and said that as a child he lived “a very miserable, angry life,” experienced a lot of school discipline. Once, when he was waiting in the principal’s office to receive punishment for stealing another student’s iPod, he saw another student, who was white, walk away with detention for fighting. Cedric was suspended for a week.

Cedric eventually made it through high school and started community college for music technology, but he stopped attending classes after a few months.

About six months before the interview, Cedric had been released from prison; unlike Kasim, he was having tough luck with his job search. When the Freddie Gray incident occurred, Cedric was otherwise preoccupied. “I was more focused on trying to get back on my feet and trying to get a job and everything. I really didn’t know anything about it until a little bit before the riot came.” Indicative of his relative network and familial privilege (based on his neighborhood of origin and suburban education), Cedric’s mother used a childhood personal connection to help him get an internship in music production out of state. However, he felt boxed in by all of the violence he had seen and experienced in the city. “I’ve been in it long enough. . . . Got me fucked up.” The violence, in his view, is evidence that children in the city are “destroying theirselves. Some people are just born into it, for real. That’s all they know.” Cedric was not interested in discussing policy or structural reforms as a way of resolving these issues, instead positing that religion, specifically Christianity, is the only answer to the problems confronting the city. He pointed to a large Bible sitting on the kitchen table. “Their only help is that book. Their only help is that Bible.” As I describe below, despite his fatalism about the city and the challenges he personally faces, Cedric still has fairly ambitious expectations for his future.

Khalila, eighteen, uses a similarly gloomy script to discuss the city. In some ways, Khalila has struggled like Cedric; she has a history of fighting that got her expelled from one school. Because of the fighting, Khalila meets regularly with a probation officer, a woman she likes and describes as “just like your second mother, kind of, but they working for the law, really.” However, she is enrolled in another school now, and she has improved her grades enough to take Advanced Placement classes.

When we asked Khalila what advice she gives her younger sister, she answered, “I always tell her stay out of trouble. And watch who you befriend. That’s the main thing.” She explained why it is so

important to watch who you befriend. “People just be setting up each other. You can set up anything.” Khalila shared a story of an incident in which a young woman she knew had been lured to her boyfriend’s house where three men raped her. “Her mind been on a different mindset ever since then,” she said. In this regard, Khalila’s own mindset is not dissimilar from those of other young people who live in high-violence neighborhoods—friendship is dangerous, and thus young people must carefully and strategically approach it (e.g., Chan Tack and Small 2017).

A few months earlier, Khalila had lost a close friend to gun violence. She isn’t sure, but she heard from others that someone set him up. She had just spoken with him the day before she heard he died. “I didn’t know how to react to it. I was just—‘What?’ I’m like, ‘No, not him. Not him.’ I just was talking to him. He just posted a picture on Instagram.” She had only recently deleted his last text messages to her, and she occasionally still tried to call him. “One day, I had just called the phone, and the phone was like, ‘The person you’re trying to reach is not located.’” I asked Khalila, “What did you think was going to happen?” She didn’t know. She thought maybe she would hear his on his voicemail, or maybe his mother would answer. “For that [recording] to say, ‘The person you’re trying to reach is not located’—when she says ‘not located,’ I was like, ‘Yeah, because he’s dead, genius.’” Khalila is not receiving any sustained mental health support to cope with the death of her friend; when we asked, she said that others were closer to him and were mourning him more intensely. She claimed to be “over it,” but it became clear during the interview that she was not. “I just pray he in a better place, because I wouldn’t want to be here sometimes. It’s crazy out here.”

This context is important for understanding how Khalila and many other respondents see the risk of living in Baltimore and the complexity of maintaining their goals and dreams in the face of what feels like random violence. In many respondents’ view, the risk of early death springs mostly from uncontrollable circumstances and accidents of geography, and only minimally from criminal behavior

or poor choices. Twenty-seven of the fifty respondents discussed a friend or family member who had been a victim of serious violence, most lethal.⁴⁹ While it is true that most gun violence is concentrated within tight networks of people who commit crimes (Papachristos, Wildeman, and Roberto 2015), these young people, simply by making friends in their neighborhoods and at school, are often part of such networks (e.g., Haynie, Silver, and Teasdale 2006). Moreover, a large body of research suggests that acquiring a criminal record, moving in and out of court, and spending time in prison may be largely attributable to geography (see, e.g., Fagan and Geller 2015; Kohler-Hausmann 2018; Sampson and Loeffler 2010; Simes 2017). There may be a lower *probability* of arrest for criminal offending in a high-crime neighborhood (Kirk and Matsuda 2011), but there are simply more arrests, more monitoring, and more engagement in the type of offenses that the state tends to reward with punishment and perpetual surveillance (e.g., Kohler-Hausmann 2018; Stuart 2016). It is no coincidence that exactly half of the sample mentioned a loved one who was incarcerated. Thus, even if gun violence is not truly random, these young people often see and experience it as random.

Khalila, unlike Cedric, does not believe that reading the Bible is the only potential resolution to these issues. Yet, her expectations of traditional political and legal interventions are low. At the time of the study, several respondents were still excited by Marilyn Mosby and her decision to indict the officers involved in Freddie Gray's death, but Khalila accurately predicted that the ultimate result would be an acquittal. "They in trials where they try and see what's going to happen. I told [my mother], I said, 'They going to be found not guilty.' When they be found not guilty, they going to sit up here and riot again. I know that's going to happen." When we asked Khalila what could happen in Baltimore to make it a better place, she paused for a long time. The only thing she thought of was that the city could get a new mayor. Like two other respondents, her choice was Sheila Dixon, the former

⁴⁹ This is likely an underestimate of the youth who had a friend or family member who was a victim of serious violence, given that we did not systematically ask respondents about victimization. In the context of pervasive injury, it would be asking too much to expect an unprompted, full recounting of all of the violence and injury youth were experiencing (see Ralph 2015).

mayor who resigned in 2010 after being convicted of a misdemeanor for mishandling \$600's worth of retail gift cards.

Among these youth, Baltimore's propensity for untimely death was a common lament. Nearly all respondents expressed frustration at persistent violence in their communities. However, they were just as unified in their concern that the problem would not be resolved through criminal justice processing or most other crime-related interventions. In contrast to the findings of studies of urban youth in other places and at earlier times, such as Philadelphia in the early 2000s (Carr, Napolitano, and Keating 2007), these youths did not use a script suggesting that more and harsher policing, or even police reform, was the answer to the problem of violent crime and early death. The only commonly endorsed policy or political interventions raised in these interviews were (1) getting a new mayor who felt more like she was on their side; (2) making it easier for people to find jobs, even unskilled jobs; and (3) reopening recently closed recreation centers, a hot topic in Baltimore at that time that has since lost attention. By and large, these youths seemed to see their problems with policing as a consequence of deeper social cleavages, especially income and neighborhood inequality, that police reform would not fix.

Most of the youth we interviewed were bursting with opinions about local politics and were very interested in current events. They often reserved their strongest language for the mayor, like Louanne, who exclaimed, multiple times, "The mayor really burns my biscuits!" This fervor, however, did not necessarily mean that they were formally politically active. To be sure, sixteen respondents were under the age of eighteen, so they could not have voted if they wanted to. Yet the analysis of older respondents suggests that age might not be the only factor.

For example, Gabriel, twenty-four, spoke extensively about why he disliked then-mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. He offered a detailed critique of how she handled the Freddie Gray incident

and fallout. But he did not plan to vote in the coming election. The reason he gave is that he is not in “really in that group” (meaning the group of people who get involved with elections). In contrast to his fluid description of the riot, police misdeeds, and the mayor’s missteps, he stumbled to explain they he does not vote and settled on a script about social class. “So, I don’t vote or nothing—it’s important, I know that stuff but—I don’t vote. Like, low-income, like us—nothing—my living situation might be lower class—don’t really pay attention to the government. We just [watch] the news, like, who died today, or who got locked up, or that type of stuff.” Gabriel concluded that lower-income people focus on gaining information about violent deaths or arrests, not getting involved in the government. More importantly, he did not have a readily available script to process his rejection of formal political involvement.

Kelly, an eighteen-year-old dancer recently emancipated from foster care, credited Baltimore’s problems to the “negative energy ... flowing through these streets.” She finds this energy difficult to repel. “You have to let it flow past you and not through you.” Instead of the police being a potential tool for shifting this negative energy, she suggests that the institution adds to it. Yet, she realizes that her view is context-specific and regrets that she cannot share in the mainstream ideal that police help the community:

Every time I think about [the police], I think about being a kid and watching TV shows and policemen are supposed to like, help you cross the street, and they’re supposed to be one of the people that you can go to that make your community better, that make society easier for you, to eliminate the criminals, and eliminate the negativity that flows through the streets. But it has come to be the total opposite of that, and it’s definitely shameful.

Kelly is a model student and foster care alum, with well-recognized talent, the ethereal comportment of an artist, and importantly in this context, no criminal record of any kind. She has police officers in her extended family. Yet, when we asked how she feels around the police, she responded that she feels uneasy. “Completely. Completely, even if I’m not even doing anything. Completely.”

Julius, twenty-one, is introduced in greater detail in the next section. He echoed Kelly's words in identifying police as adding to, not subtracting from, the city's "negative energy." During a recent incident in which Julius' mother's home was searched, Julius claims the police were particularly aggressive: "It was a lot of negative energy, a lot of aggression. A lot of, 'You're lying, you're this, you're that. Shut the fuck up! Sit the fuck down! Move the fuck back!'" More than the aggression, though, what bothered Julius was a sense that the police did not care about his mother's home or health. "Our house was already old and needed maintenance and things. They just destroyed my mother's home. Took her medicines, never seen it again, took her jewelry, they ripped the birth certificates in my home, they ripped up letters from people in jail, like very disrespectful." About his mother, he complained, "They didn't care about her living or dying..." Julius trailed off. Stories of police aggression, especially aimed at youth, are supported in the 2016 U.S. Department of Justice report on its investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department. That report finds that Baltimore police actively seek out youth and routinely embroil them in unconstitutional stops and searches. Julius is frustrated because, even if the search here was justified, the way police conducted themselves signaled strongly that his family, and people like him, lack social value and are unworthy of kindness and respect (see Bell 2017; Bradford 2014; Meares 2009; Tyler 1989).

Some respondents were less consistent in their despairing framing of the city's trajectory. For example, Reuben, like Justin, is eighteen and headed to college on an athletic scholarship. Unlike many respondents, the pathway toward the bright future he envisions for himself is somewhat clearer. Part of him espouses Baltimore pride, but he recognizes some internal conflict in doing so. On one hand, he is looking forward to leaving Baltimore because "there's really nothing in Baltimore. Like, the same stuff happening every day. Like, someone actually just got shot right outside of my house. So, it's really nothing but trouble and a lot of haters." When I asked him what he would tell me about the city if I had

just moved there, he started like Keisha, with a warning, but quickly pivoted to reveal unsettlement within this negative script:

I would tell you, ‘Be careful,’ and I mean—[pause]—I really wouldn’t know because, like, I wouldn’t want to tell you anything bad. Because I’ve been here. I actually love Baltimore, but I know Baltimore isn’t for everybody. You kind of like—you got to be tough to live here—like, mentally.

Reuben draws upon conflicting scripts that are available to him, one of pride in his community, and another more resonant with collective trepidation. Reuben had just graduated from a predominantly white private school that he attended on scholarship, and he was used to representing West Baltimore to outsiders on a daily basis, so he might have been more likely to activate a pride script than other respondents. He might have also been more consciously strategic about the script he used than most other respondents because of the cultural flexibility he has developed as he daily moves between different types of social spaces (e.g., Carter 2012).⁵⁰ He attempted to reconcile the conflict by noting the importance of exceptional mental toughness, a type of narrative device discussed in greater detail below. However, Reuben ultimately left the conflict unresolved, concluding, “I love Baltimore, but I hate it too.”

Similar to African Americans more generally (Lamont et al. 2016), the possibility of a Baltimore pride script among these youths may emerge from the idea that it takes particular strength and resourcefulness to survive the city. Youth overwhelmingly emphasized the difficulty of life in Baltimore and reiterated that these difficulties were Baltimore-specific. However, to the extent there were negative cases, those respondents based their pride on the positive traits it reveals about an individual to succeed despite being born in the city. Aaron, twenty-three, sees Baltimore as “if it’s not the highest, it’s *one* of the highest oppressed states, for real, in America.” Aaron was about four years

⁵⁰ Relatedly, there could have been an interviewer effect operating here: If Reuben was thinking strategically about what to tell us, he may not have been sure whether the pride script or the trepidation script would be best. His interviewers were, on one hand, an African-American woman and a Latina, and on the other hand, university affiliates from other cities.

old when musician Tupac Shakur died, and Shakur had lived in Baltimore for roughly two years in the 1980s. However, he is one of the people Aaron looks up to as a paragon of Baltimore strength: “That’s Tupac’s definition of a thug: When you take those circumstances, you overcome them. Tupac was from Baltimore, for real, he studied in Baltimore, so he knows.” Repurposing and reframing a line from a song about New York City, Aaron determined, “If you can make it out of Baltimore, you can make it anywhere.”⁵¹ This small group of respondents did not reject the idea that the city was on a downward trajectory as much as they glorified the struggle of individually overcoming the obstacles endemic to Baltimore life. Overall, the most salient collective unit to how these young people understood and approached community life was their city, not necessarily their racial group, and not their neighborhood—the imagined spatial unit embedded into most collective efficacy research. To be sure, respondents’ conceptions of the city were anchored in experiences within particular parts of the city—they did not describe experiences in wealthier neighborhoods in the Inner Harbor or those enshrouding Johns Hopkins University using the same language as for West Baltimore neighborhoods. They projected experiences in particular neighborhoods onto the whole city, which is not surprising given that subjective, socially constructed spatial boundaries rarely align with physical, official spatial boundaries, especially for residents of low-income communities (see, e.g., Campbell et al. 2009; Hunter 1974; Hwang 2016). Yet they also did not explicitly carve out those higher-income neighborhoods when analyzing the city as a whole. What is important is that their social understanding of the relevant spatial unit was the whole city and not any particular sub-section of the city.

Personal Aspirations

Despite their dire predictions for their city, nearly all respondents had high aspirations for themselves. Reid, for example, aspires to become a social worker; because of the abuse he experienced,

⁵¹ The line, “If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere,” comes from the Liza Minelli recorded theme song of the 1977 Martin Scorsese film, “New York, New York.” Frank Sinatra recorded the more popular version in 1979.

he feels uniquely positioned to make a positive impact. “I want to help people that was suffering like I was,” Reid explained, “Maybe I can save them, or help them—not *save* them, but help them.” At the time of the interview, Reid was interning at a youth organization. Rachelle, who eventually wants to become a mortician, has already picked out the liberal arts college she wants to attend. She hopes to major in psychology and gender studies. “I’m really hardcore about feminism because I just feel as though there’s not enough equality rights for females going on in the world now. And they say it’s a big improvement from the past, but it’s still too much gender stereotypical issues, as well as race. . . . I’m all about equality and all that junk.” Reuben and Justin, with football scholarships, both want to pursue professional football careers after college and are making backup plans to pursue business careers. Khalila, Louanne, Keisha, and Jamila all dream of becoming lawyers. Cordell is captivated by sneakers and wants to become a shoe designer. Kelly is focused on her career as a dancer: “If dancing was a person, I’d marry it,” she joked. DeVaughn was interning with a financial accounting firm and wants to pursue an MBA. Anthony wants to be either a judge or an EMT; if he can improve his grades, he wants to go to Stanford and study law; if not, he will go through the EMT certification program. Some of the older female respondents with children, such as Anita (22), Mikayla (22), Shayna (23), and Malisa (24), had practical but lofty goals given the obstacles they faced, such as owning a daycare center, a hair salon, or becoming a chef.

For some, their ideas about the future were *ideals* that they had no clear understanding of how to reach (Young 2004). Most ideas were aspirations that might be achievable but are not yet concretely planned (Frye 2012). Some, but relatively few, were expectations for which there was a clear blueprint (Carter 2001; Tyson 2011). For the purposes of this analysis, it is unimportant to distinguish between types of future orientations. The key takeaway is that these positive *personal* future orientations

remained despite youth's consistently negative assessments and forecasts for Baltimore,⁵² and they usually expressed belief that they could reach those goals. Mostly, they exhibited a sense of self-efficacy in the face of collective inefficacy.

Aziza, twenty-one, described great admiration for a cousin of hers who went to prison a few years ago but “then she came home and she still just be pushing forward. She just is a really good person.” Aziza has a clear explanation for her cousin's situation: “You're from Baltimore, it's easy to get caught up.” Aziza was enrolled in community college at the time of the interview but, separately from her academic studies, she was writing a novel loosely based on her life. (The family origins are hers—parents who are “victims of addiction,” an estranged brother—but the rest of book sees the protagonist leading an adventurous double life and learning lessons about the emptiness of wealth.) Aziza was fiercely devoted to this book, but she was working through it slowly.

I have a plan for my book and I want to do it the right way. I don't want to just publish it and just be. I really want to do it the right way because I really—I really want this to be my career. So, I'm taking my time with it. I wrote the first chapter when I was seventeen, and then I rewrote it when I was twenty, and now I am trying to critique it, trying to edit it. I don't really know what I'm doing with it. I just know I need to finish it.

Aside from being a published author herself, Aziza intends to finish college with an English major and business minor, and she eventually plans to become a literary agent in Los Angeles. Aziza writes out her goals to keep herself focused. “I'm not like the regular girl from Baltimore City,” she declared.⁵³ It was quite common for young people, regardless of their current accomplishments, to draw boundaries between themselves from the people around them to imagine themselves as uniquely gifted, focused, or hardworking (compare with Newman 1999 (on older, working-poor urban residents)).

⁵² Hereinafter, I refer to these future orientations only as “aspirations.”

⁵³ Since the interview, Aziza has published her novel; it is available from multiple major booksellers. At the time of the interview, Aziza's novel publication seemed like more of an aspiration than an expectation, but she completed the work far ahead of the ten-year time frame she gave during our conversation.

Richard, who attributed the riot to the stress young people felt about all of the deaths, has a long career planned. He had initially wanted to go to college on an athletic scholarship, but he ultimately was not recruited. Instead, he has decided to enter the military, and he wants to stay in the military for about twenty years until he can retire from that profession. Afterward, he wants to pursue home construction and real estate; he really enjoys looking at houses and imagining himself living in one in the future.

A few weeks before the interview, Richard saw that indulging his desire to see nice houses could be risky. According to Richard, he, his cousin, and a couple of close friends he calls “brothers” were taking a long walk home from one friend’s house to another. They were in an area where there isn’t public transportation, so they had to walk for hours and they took several breaks along the way:

It was just me and my brothers. We was just walking from our homeboy’s house ‘cause we was just having fun. It was the summertime. We was walking through a nice neighborhood ‘cause we never really saw that neighborhood. So, we [were] looking around, and then we [were] just sitting down ‘cause we was tired, ‘cause we had a long walk.

One of the places they stopped to sightsee was a predominantly white residential neighborhood near a golf course. They really enjoyed seeing this neighborhood as it was so different from anything they had seen before. “We was just having fun like teenagers supposed to be, having fun, living life, not doing anything stupid. That could have been our last day with each other, because you never know.” Richard and his friends were particularly impressed by the swimming pools. “They had pools and stuff! We didn’t know pools [were] out there. We didn’t know how nice it was. So, we was just looking around, just looking, just roaming the streets, just looking at everything.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a group of teenaged African-American boys strolling through this neighborhood, admirably gazing at the houses and yards, attracted suspicion (e.g., Fagan 2002). Eventually, someone called the police. “I guess one of the neighborhood watchers said there [were]

some kids goofing.” Richard was worried that his cousin, who was a bit younger than the other boys, might be afraid. He recounted the conversation between him and his “little cousin”: “I told him just stay calm, you with your big cousin, he got you. If they got to take me, I’ll tell them to take me but keep you out.” Fortunately, the police officer was calm. She asked them if it was their first time in the area, and they explained that they “we was just checking it out. We’re not doing nothing wrong, we just looking at the houses. Because we want to be able to live like them, we just looking at the houses like them.” For these youth, being aspirational might also require comfort with risk. As should be apparent, Richard is not a naïve Pollyanna. He likely knew that “just roaming the streets” in an unfamiliar neighborhood is unwise. But he was happy to see a life he wanted up close.

The overarching finding is that young people continued to hold high aspirations and to believe they had the capacity to reach their goals despite life’s uncertainty. However, there were some who had “leveled” aspirations (MacLeod 2009) or high aspirations with little perceived self-efficacy. For example, Fayard, introduced above, had just graduated from high school when we interviewed him. He is proud of this accomplishment because his academic success looked uncertain most of the time; he used to get into a lot of trouble at school, and he did not seem exceptional to most of his family members. “When it comes to my family, graduation is not something that really happens a lot,” Fayard explained. But after his father left the family and predicted that Fayard would “run the streets” without him around, Fayard wanted to prove him wrong. So, he worked to become a better student and got his diploma.

Fayard, who calls himself “a shoes and clothes type of person,” expressed some interest in pursuing a short-term career in fashion retail, perhaps at a local urban apparel store. He is also considering working at a fast food or fast casual restaurant; we spent a significant portion of the interview discussing the relative merits of fast food and retail jobs. Fayard rejects the idea of working

somewhere like McDonald's because "McDonald's looks like it's just a whole bunch of 'hood people that just wanted a job and got a job." He has friends who work there and does not want to emulate them. "I know how they are, so anybody could get that job. I wouldn't want to have an anybody job." He is also not excited about working somewhere like Target because "Target, you're really just like a boring—it's like some boring-ass cashiers at Target. I've never met a funny person, or a person that'll actually have a conversation with you." Somewhere like Chipotle, where there is "a cool vibe" and the restaurant is "set up all nice, and the little bowl be set up all nice, like you're about to have a good dinner" or Starbucks, where "it looks like you've got to have some type of sense to work there" would be better. Ideally, though, somewhere like the urban retailer DTLR would be best because "you've got a life if you work at DTLR, because you know how to communicate with people. It seems like you've got to communicate with people, you've got to be cool, chill to just work there." Essentially Fayard, like many people, wants to see his work as a reflection of his identity. He views himself as stylish, interesting, and personable, not "'hood," "boring," or unintelligent. Near the beginning of the interview, perhaps because it is so normative to do so (see Deterding 2015), Fayard said that he wants to go to community college, but he later seemed ambivalent about that pathway.

Fayard does have a few very practical, near-future ambitions. However, he rejects the idea of long-term planning altogether, and reports that the last time he thought about his life in the long term was when he was in tenth grade. "I just live for tomorrow. I used to look long-term before all this shit started happening." Most respondents enjoyed the final portion of the interviews where we talked about their future goals and dreams; these questions often start the process of closing the interview on a positive, hopeful note. However, Fayard became agitated when I asked him what he might be doing in two years. "I can't call it. I really can't call it, honestly." He eventually settled on the vague goal of

becoming “financially stable.” When I asked him what he might be doing at twenty-eight, he pushed back. “I don’t really look that far, honestly.” I asked him why:

‘Cause no day is promised. As you can see, no day is promised. I’d rather have my fun now and have my fun until my time comes. I just don’t look that far. I would *like* to look that far. But it’s like, anything could happen, especially in this city. That’s why I keep saying, Baltimore is one of a kind. Anybody can go for any reason.

Fayard talked about three friends who had died recently. One, a young man, died due to homicide; the other two, young women, died in separate car accidents. For Fayard and a few other respondents, mortality was the harm; its cause was an ancillary concern. Although urban researchers and political commentators often focus on deaths through homicide, especially in neighborhoods like those many respondents reside in, Fayard and some others did not view the causes of death as salient. Fayard saw both the shooting and the car accidents as part of a bundle of risks endemic to living in Baltimore, and the trauma of those deaths reconfigured his future orientation. He was preoccupied with death, fearing it, imagining it, and preparing for it.

I’m so scared to die. I’m so scared to die. I think of that shit every day, every single day, ‘cause it’s nothing you can say. [If] you’re gone, you’re gone. And I don’t know what death is. Is it like you sleep? You know you’re dead, but you sleep, but you can’t wake up? So, it’s black, like you can move your eyes, but you just can’t move? Or is it like, really a heaven? I think about that shit all the time, all the time, every single day.

I asked Fayard whether thinking about those topics was stressful. He paused. Then he explained that it was not stressful because he knows “what could come about, especially with this city.” “I just expect the unexpected,” Fayard said, flatly. “That’s just how I go through everything.”

As should now be clear, Fayard is not the only respondent who discussed unexpectedly losing a loved one. Indeed, twenty-seven respondents discussed the unexpected death of a loved one during their interviews even though we did not ask any direct questions about death. Khalila, Cordell, and others still retained ambitious aspirations despite traumatic losses. In this sample, a substantial majority of youth continued to imagine their own futures. Having these experiences with mortality does not

guarantee that youth will stop thinking long-term about their futures. However, Fayard's less common way of thinking is understandable given this litany of untimely deaths.

Julius has maintained high ideals but has little sense of self-efficacy. Although he grew up in a high-poverty community, he "always felt like I was a bit different from my peers. . . . we had different outlooks of the world. I've always been like a peacemaker type of happy person." Julius wants to become a marine biologist or a zoologist. "That was something I always wanted to do," he explained. "I love animals—I love—I feel like I can relate to animals more than humans . . . I feel like people can learn a lot from animals, the way that they do things, the way how they're organized, and how they adapt to the world."

Julius has had many setbacks. He recently dropped out of the community college he was attending after getting behind academically and struggling financially; he was arrested and missed a lot of school while he was in jail awaiting his hearing. Julius had stopped by an old friend's house, and police stopped and searched them. They found nothing on Julius, but they confiscated pills that were hidden in his friend's pockets. Police took both of them in. On the way to the precinct, hoping to get out of the situation, the friend told police where a gun was located; Julius was in another vehicle, so he is not sure exactly what happened. According to Julius, both he and his friend were charged for gun and drug crimes.

While he was in jail awaiting a hearing, Julius shared his story and vision with the officers, and they seemed receptive, impressed, and encouraging. "I'm talking to these officers and I'm thinking they will understand where I'm coming from. They like, 'Oh, so we see you got a good head on your shoulders.'" But they did not help him get out of jail. After twenty-one days, he went to a hearing and the entire case against him was dismissed. But once he was released, Julius was too far behind in school to catch up:

They asked me what I was in college for. I said I want to be a marine biologist, zoology. They gave me all this bull crap. “Yeah, oh that’s good, yeah. But we still taking you down there.” And I still sat in that jail for twenty-one days before I was released. And then when I finally went to court, they threw the case out. So, I felt like they used that just to get—like I felt like they deprived me of my education. Because of those almost three weeks that I was there, my grades started dropping. You can’t miss. You can’t miss one class—you go back into school, you completely lost.

So, like, I already was struggling with my finances. I already couldn’t pay for books. I would have to sit in the bookstore to be able to do my homework. By me being arrested, my grade point average dropped immediately, and I feel like that—it’s a part of the main reason why I’m not in school now. Because I feel like, if that didn’t happen, maybe I *still* would be struggling to do school, but because of those weeks that I missed, that killed my GPA.

And I was a freshman. This is my first experience at college. I was ready, like—I waited two years . . . so I waited, wanted to give myself time to be ready, “Okay, this is what I want to do.” Not just go in like, “Oh, this is what you’re supposed to do after high school,” and then fail. No, I wanted to go and succeed. But I went and that kind of messed up my experience with college. Like, I didn’t even want to go back, because I felt like, any day now, I can be arrested again for who knows what. Just for being at the wrong place at the wrong time. That’s something I can’t even control. Stuff the officers were saying to me, it just—I don’t know, it was just false hope.

While Julius has faced other challenges, including acute housing insecurity, this particular incident made him feel that even when institutional actors—here, police officers—pretend to honor his dreams, they will erect barriers anyway if doing so is easiest for them. He feels estranged from them: “That’s why I just—I have a very negative—uh—feeling about the government and police and things of that nature,” he told us.

Now, Julius’ aspirations are even more nebulous. “At first, my goal was to just get out of Baltimore,” he said. “I want to do more than that. I want to get out of United States, period. I want nothing to do with it.” When we asked him where he intended to go, he had no idea. “Uh—Australia, maybe? I don’t know, an island somewhere.” In so many words, Julius describes the dated psychological concept of “learned helplessness” (Seligman 1972) when he describes how he feels about his goals at this point: “As a child growing up, everybody called me like this ‘light.’ Like, ‘You

got a bright light in you.’ I feel like that light was dimmed because of the stuff that’s going on around me.” Yet, in contrast to “learned helplessness” theory, Julius is not docile in response to this shift in his outlook. He is actively fighting it:

I feel like I don’t want to say there’s no chance, but I feel like there is none. There’s, like, really not a chance for me to be successful, and I’m *Mission Impossible* right now, like I’m trying to do something Godly. . . . So, I don’t know, it brings my hope down. It kind of brings my faith down. But me being the strong person I am, I try to continue to strive throughout this. A lot of my peers aren’t as strong. So, I’ve seen my friends lose to this struggle. I’ve seen them be falsely arrested. I don’t know. It’s—it’s—it’s—it’s very over—overwhelming. Like, sitting here right now, I feel like I could bust out in tears just because I have—I have so much I want to say.

Julius feels that his life outcomes are largely out of his control. Generally speaking, a sense of unpredictability mediates against future planning. However, Julius’ self-perception is still bound up in his identity as a person who is striving to reach his goals. To reconcile these narratives, he imagines himself escaping Baltimore, and America, and moving somewhere he can fulfill his dreams, including having regular access to marine animals. In this regard, he is not an outlier. Although Julius is vocal about feeling personally powerless, he uses a common script, one of escape, that most respondents use to explain their continued high aspirations in the face of collective turmoil.

Modes of Reconciliation

Respondents used several different types of scripts to reconcile the gap between the misfortune they predicted for Baltimore and the success they predicted for themselves. Two of the most prevalent centered on escape or exceptionality.

Scripts of Escape

Statements suggesting that leaving Baltimore is a precondition to success were common in the sample. Twenty-three respondents said not only that they might want to live outside of Baltimore in the future, but also that they believed it was important to leave Baltimore for specific reasons. The places they might go varied widely. Julius’ Australia was the farthest from Baltimore. Keisha, sixteen, also

hoped to leave the country, preferably for Paris. “I just always wanted to live there.” Paris would be ideal, but her main mission is to look in “other cities, not Baltimore.” Rachelle has been to Canada to visit relatives and is eager to move there. “I don’t think Baltimore has enough for me. That’s why I need to get out of here. It’s too boxed in.” In Canada, Rachelle says, “I don’t really worry and stuff like that. And it’s just like, I love walking. And it’s so clean. I love cleanness.”

Cedric does not know where he wants to go, but he knows that it needs to be somewhere other than Baltimore. “We and my girl, we going to pack our shit and we getting out of here, because I don’t want her around this negativity.” In contrast, Keira, twenty-two, has been researching ideal cities. In the first few minutes of the interview, after we had only asked Keira to tell us about her life, she asserted that “Baltimore is not a place where you want to live” and shared her dream of moving to Newport Beach, California seeking clear ocean water and friendlier people.

Mona, seventeen, wants to leave Baltimore and work as a pharmacist, also ideally in California. She is not set on California. “I just like somewhere quiet,” she explained. The key goal is to leave Baltimore, which Mona describes as “depressing.” She hopes her future job will transfer her to another state: “I wanna get a job where they transfer me to another state because Baltimore is not it. I want to get out of Baltimore. It was fun while it lasted, but now it’s just depressing. I think Baltimore is really depressing.” The problem with the depressing conditions of Baltimore, Mona notes is “be[ing] all depressed” is “gonna hold you back.” She is insightful here—one takeaway from Julius’ and Fayard’s stories is that being depressed can hold you back. Her solution is to leave the source of depression, which she sees as Baltimore and not individualized circumstances or conditions.

Not every respondent who wanted to escape their living conditions thought it necessary to leave Baltimore altogether. Some had more fine-grained interpretations of the issues that plagued Baltimore, thinking of these issues as attributable to neighborhoods and not the entire city. Jessica, who

was caught in the unrest with her partner and infant son, want to move “somewhere where it’s more peaceful, more quiet, more neighborly, you know—probably like, white people neighborhood.” Chelsea, sixteen, has dealt with housing instability for most of her life. Yet, thus far, through “God’s work,” she and her family have avoided eviction, as far as she can tell (see Desmond and Shollenberger 2015):

My mother, she gets eviction notices every month, and it’s sad because she can never pay the bill on time. So, it’s like, we always pray, and just before we about to be evicted, something—like a miracle—happens. We either get some money some kind of way, or the people always work with us. I think that’s God’s work.

Chelsea strongly dislikes her East Baltimore neighborhood. She claims that people on her block were shooting during the riots, which made her “terrified.” She describes the neighborhood as “horrible” and explains that, in order to live there, “you gotta develop this attitude. You gotta stand up for yourself when you move over here. I just didn’t like it and I still don’t like it.” Moving out of her neighborhood is top priority for Chelsea, and for her mother, who “wants us to move to a peaceful neighborhood.” When I asked Chelsea what makes a neighborhood peaceful, she responded, “Where the white people are.” Right now, Chelsea does not believe they have the money to move to a white neighborhood. Yet, there may be hope. Not long ago, Chelsea and her family learned that she might be eligible to receive a settlement for lead poisoning. (Baltimore City has one of the most serious problems of child lead poisoning in the nation, a major public health crisis (Markowitz and Rossner 2013)). Chelsea is hopeful that the settlement might help her family relocate to their ideal community and give her access to better schools that would prepare her for college.

They recently found out that I have lead, so I get a case and we wait for that to settle, so we can get away from here, and we can stop struggling. So, we just waiting on that. And that’s when she’s going to buy a house and get us away from here.

Chelsea thinks that perhaps her lead poisoning was God’s work too. “I always say to myself, maybe it happened for a reason. Maybe it was a way for us to get some money to get out of here.” Chelsea, who

goes to a school where she thinks the teachers have “given up on us,” sees education as a specific good she is missing out on because of where she lives. Planning for a move to a better-resourced neighborhood allows her to retain an individual sense of purpose.

Black-white residential segregation in Baltimore remains acute: Baltimore is one of eight U.S. metropolitan areas that remained “hypersegregated” in 2010 (Massey and Tannen 2015). The intensity of segregation means that these youths well aware that resources of all kinds, including money and safety, flow toward predominantly white neighborhoods; while low-crime, low-poverty African-American neighborhoods exist, even in relatively close places like Prince Georges County, Maryland (e.g., Lacy 2007), these respondents linked the proportion of white people in a neighborhood with quiet, peace, and even neighborliness. In general, the most ambitious respondents spoke about leaving the city altogether, not just their neighborhood. However, whether respondents’ escape scripts involved escaping the country, escaping their city, or escaping their neighborhood, there was a widespread sense that moving was necessary to unlink the city’s fate from their own.

Scripts of Exceptionalism

A second script that respondents used to bridge the gap between their collective and individual expectations focused on their personal exceptionalism—their “strength,” their uniqueness, their particular resistance to “peer pressure.” Recall the novelist Aziza’s pronouncement that she is “not like the regular girl from Baltimore City.” Julius, despite the challenges he faces, still sees himself as set apart from others around him in ways that allow him to retain his dreams if not his sense of efficacy: “I feel like I’m from a whole other generation,” he related. Justin, the college-bound athlete who expressed empathy for riot participants who took property, thinks Baltimore’s only hope is to “use us,” meaning the people like him “who are motivated.” Rejecting essentialism and easy classification, Justin suggested that the city “stop putting us all in the same category. You can’t keep doing that just because

we're all the 'youth on the bottom,' or the younger African-American teens." Keira, the twenty-two-year-old home hairdresser who aspires to own a salon, reports that "it takes a lot of strength to survive in Baltimore, period. You have to be strong. You can't let nobody influence you. If you do, they're going to just eat you up alive and just spit you right back out. It's a tough city that I live in." In her view, she survives because she doesn't "believe in peer pressure." Even though Keira has friends who engage in behavior she sees as undesirable—drinking, selling drugs, smoking marijuana, have unplanned children—her personal script is one that sets her apart from the deeds of others. Jamila, nineteen, is the first person in her family to graduate from high school and one of multiple aspiring attorneys in the sample. She thinks that part of the reason Baltimore is a difficult place to live, especially for African Americans, is because "Baltimore was not designed for us to be here . . . this was a slave port." In her view, Jamila's own success stems from her identity as a "new inventor," part of a group of "new world innovators" (see also Frye 2012; Deterding 2015; Nielsen 2015).

Hakim, twenty-one, has had a somewhat more bifurcated path than many respondents. He was born in West Baltimore and lived there until he was thirteen, at which point his mother moved him to the County. He went to Baltimore County schools and, immediately after high school, he went to college out of state. Things took a turn, though a year before the interview when his mother fell ill. He left the four-year university he was attending and initially returned to the suburb where they lived. Shortly after his return, he and his mother moved back to West Baltimore. Unlike most respondents, Hakim claims to like the city, and is concerned about its image. "Most people that don't know Baltimore just hear the bad things." He wants people to know good things about Baltimore. Yet he notes that Baltimore can be challenging for certain groups. "You see people standing on the corner. People fighting. People getting beat up. People getting stabbed. People getting killed. You just become accustomed. A lot of people become stagnant or depressed about what they see," he recounted.

Hakim presents a script of personal separation and wherewithal to overcome the “mindset” associated with these conditions. “You’ve just got to live the right lifestyle,” he explained. “It just depends on the person. If you want better for yourself, you’ll go out and get it.” Even though he had to leave college, Hakim attributes his can-do spirit to the time he spent away from the city. Now that he has returned, he no longer feels the same need to escape that most respondents do, those who have not lived away from the area. Hakim now wants to help the city. “I want to ultimately come back to Baltimore and be able to show some of the good things that’s happened in Baltimore. Because you don’t really see much.” The exceptionalism script and the escape script can work in tandem or in opposing directions. Julius, for example, wants to retain his sense of being special, and escape is a way of reasserting his exceptionality in the face of Baltimore’s uncertainty. In contrast, Hakim believes he has the wherewithal to avoid the risks associated with Baltimore, and so does not connect his exceptionality to escape.

An exceptionalism script may be more easily available to youth who have gained some recognition or institutional endorsement of their talents and goals, people like Hakim and Jamila. However, many respondents who were struggling maintained their goals in part through this exceptionalism script. Shayna, twenty-three, was similar to Keira in that she told us that she wanted to leave Baltimore in the first few minutes of the interview, in response to a general opening question about her life. She did not know where she would go for sure, maybe Florida or New Jersey or the Carolinas where she knows a few people, but she thinks leaving Baltimore is key: “I’m sure it’s nice parts of Baltimore that I haven’t been at or whatever, but I’m just done with the city life. That’s all. I’m not saying I want to live on the farm because I probably wouldn’t know what to do with farm animals but—I wouldn’t mind.” Shayna laughed. Toward the close of the interview, she reiterated again, “the

first chance I get, I'm leaving." Like Julius, she used an escape script to maintain her sense that she was set apart from the people around her; escape enabled exceptionalism.

Shayna has dealt with significant hardship, most of which she attributes to living in Baltimore. A few years earlier, her best friend had been killed in an outdoor shooting. The homicide remains unsolved, and Shayna is still devastated. "What happened to [her] just really made my circle small, made me not wanting to go certain places and stuff like that." Shayna had a four-year-old daughter, but lingering depression and some difficulties she faced in leaving a physically abusive romantic relationship made it difficult for her to parent full-time. Thus, Shayna was staying at a friend's house, and her daughter was living with a relative. Despite her situation, Shayna maintained her dream of becoming a chef. She had worked in catering and excitedly told us about meeting former Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis at an event. Farther into the future, Shayna hopes to travel internationally and learn a new language.

Repeatedly, Shayna emphasized that she feels out-of-place in Baltimore. It was not just that she wanted to leave; it was as if she saw nothing in common with other people in her community. "I feel like I don't belong around here. I belong in a better neighborhood. I belong in a better place for me and my kids. . . . I feel like I'm out of place, even though this where I grew up." She distinguished herself from others who are "trapped" or "comfortable with their life [being] like this." However, her exceptionality was not only about ambition, but also personality traits. "I always was quiet," Shayna explained. "You see how they sit out front and talk? I don't like doing stuff like that." Unlike Keira, Hakim, and some others, Shayna did not base her exceptionalism on being extraordinarily talented or strong. Instead, her script highlighted a perceived dissonance between her perceptions of Baltimore, her perceptions of her neighbors, and her personal values and identity.

Discussion

After Civil Unrest

This chapter seeks to advance sociological understanding of the aftermath of civil unrest, with particular focus on the meaning-making process to communities affected. Although a small number of respondents took pride in the recognition the riots brought to longstanding issues in the city, most seemed ashamed that the riots took place and sought to distance themselves from the national narrative about their city. They did not try to rehabilitate the city; they instead sought to represent themselves individually as “respectable.”

To the extent that any young people in our sample expressed positive feelings about the riot, they were more like Cordell and Prophet, viewing the event as an extraordinary means to make the city’s struggles apparent to its leaders and to the broader public. Cordell did not believe that riot participants had the justice-oriented motives that more progressive institutions assigned to them but believed that, regardless of the *reasons* for rioting, its *effects* were somewhat hopeful. Their vision hearkened to those of Black Nationalism, believing that change (or even attention) would not be possible with some sort of violent uprising. Most youth did not share this vision, but it was a strand among a noteworthy portion of the sample. Some young people did not quite view the riot in a positive light, but saw it more pragmatically as a response to resource deprivation. They saw the riot as neither demonic nor heroic. Almost universally, they saw the riot as costly both to their communities and to their reputations. Nonetheless, nearly all of them could articulate reasons for the unrest, mostly having to do with the lack of community resources and resultant feelings of marginality and distress.

These findings begin to fill a notable and somewhat surprising gap in the literature on civil unrest. To the extent scholars have been interested in aftermath, they have focused on structural effects such as the impact on the economy or segregation (e.g., Brazil 2016; Collins and Margo 2007). To the extent scholars have emphasized meaning making, they have examined media reporting (e.g., Myers

and Caniglia 2004; Rosenfeld 1997). This study has engaged in a more straightforward exploration of post-unrest narrative construction and script deployment. It has taken media narratives and structural impact into account as they relate to youths' own scripts and narratives, but the goal was to center youths' perspectives.

Collective Fate

Shortly after the Freddie Gray unrest and only a few weeks before our study began, Orlando Patterson used the Baltimore events as an invitation to decry the “Wild West” culture of disconnected (neither working nor in school) black youth aged 16-24 (Patterson 2015). Yet, most of the eighteen “disconnected” respondents in this study exhibited no love for “a threatening vision of blackness openly embraced as the thug life” (ibid.), and indeed, most sought relentlessly to avoid the “thug life” (except, perhaps, as Aaron described “Tupac’s definition of a thug”—taking one’s circumstances and overcoming them). To be sure, we spoke to a very small number of admitted riot-involved young people. Perhaps if our sampling strategy had focused exclusively on riot participants, for example, our work would support Patterson’s conjecture. However, our conversations with disconnected youth, as they were, suggest that their vision of blackness and, more importantly, their vision of the good life, is much more complex than Patterson’s depictions suggest. More scholarship should try to get a sufficiently nuanced view of the culture of black youth in the context of both personal and municipal disadvantage.

Influential humanistic accounts of the conditions Black youth face have described pervasive “nihilism,” or belief that life is essentially meaningless (hooks 2000; West 1993). Yet, like “thug life,” nihilism is not the most accurate way of describing the anomic sensibilities of the youth in this study. For the most part, they fought to *retain* a sense of meaning and not to believe that the trajectory of Baltimore was in synch with their personal trajectory. They assigned the failures of the political and

institutional structure to those structures, not primarily to themselves or their own lives. They perceive systemic injustice (Shedd 2015). This is anomie or estrangement, but it is not necessarily aimed internally at the individual. It is anomie about law and politics. It is legal cynicism. When viewed in the light of myriad structural disadvantages mediated by race, class, and geography, it is also legal estrangement.

Collective fate is distinct from the idea of what Dawson (1994) calls “linked fate”—the idea that Black Americans see their destiny as connected, and thus exhibit political solidarity. Linked fate is meant to capture an idea that individuals see themselves as part of a collective, *and* that their individual fate is connected to that community fate. Collective fate is simply the fate of an entity larger than the individual, and individual fate might not be linked to the fate of collective. In this study, I have focused on a *spatial fate* belonging to a city, but one can imagine other relevant collectives that vary across contexts and situations. Most of the youth who participated in this study did not seem to see their reference point for linked fate as all African Americans, or even all African Americans in Baltimore—they did not, for example, take pride in their Black mayor or the previous police chief, who was Black. Instead, their reference point was Baltimore itself, and at times *similarly situated* Black Americans *in Baltimore*. (Racial solidarity was conditioned on class and place.) Recent research in political science has suggested that linked fate is not uniquely high among African Americans, at least as traditionally measured (Gay, Hochschild, and White 2016). The broader idea of collective fate might help untangle these findings. By interrogating the relevant collective, scholars might move beyond racial categories to examine how the “interactive intersections” (Ferree 2009) of various categories might determine the reference group for linked fate. In other words, scholars interested in linked fate might need a richer way of understanding to whom is fate linked and under what circumstances. Perhaps the notion that racial groups, without any intersecting identifiers or context, are going to see their fate as linked is

mostly out-of-step with modern life (see, e.g., Hochschild, Weaver, and Burch 2012; Saperstein and Penner 2012)—though the Trump phenomenon suggests that a broad segment of Americans do still think and organize politically along these lines (Bobo 2017).

African-American youth living in Baltimore post-Freddie Gray are hardly the only people who respond to a sense of the collective fate of a city or a neighborhood. Perhaps white flight, the massive movement of whites to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s is the quintessential response to urban collective fate (Wilson and Taub 2006). On a neighborhood level, the phenomenon of “tipping point” when neighborhood becomes “too” black, could suggest a similar mechanism on a city level (ibid.)—indeed, some scholars emphasize the importance of looking beyond hyper-local racial conditions in a place (such as the racial composition of a Census tract) and looking at neighborhood conditions in surrounding areas to better understand the white flight phenomenon (Crowder and South 2008). Specifically in Baltimore, even before the Freddie Gray incident, one White writer wrote a notorious blog post suggesting that Baltimore City was “breaking [her] heart” because, among other things, she was “tired of being looked at like prey” (Halvorsen 2014; see DeLuca, Clampet-Lundquist, and Edin 2016). In their concerns about the collective fate of their city, these youths are not exhibiting an “oppositional culture” (Fordham and Ogbu 1986) or non-dominant cultural perspective (Carter 2005) on engaging with the community. As many others have found in a range of related contexts (e.g., Carter 2005; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Edin and Nelson 2013; Hays 2003; Moore 2011; Tyson 2011), they are using the same frames and scripts as many middle-class whites do but lack the resources to easily move away and to make their ambitions legible to the broader world.

Situated Aspirations

As envisioned by Willis (1977) and MacLeod (2009), aspirations were situated within family origins, class, and (for MacLeod) racial group. More recent research has, by and large, shared these

emphases. In contrast, this study has situated youth aspirations not just within their families and school environments, but also within their neighborhoods and city. These young people were concerned that their geographic location within Baltimore's city limits, not necessarily anything about their own skills or talents or work ethic, would shape their life outcomes. Perhaps the riots brought the potential consequences of living in the city to the forefront of their consciousness. Yet, rather than "leveled," their aspirations were nested within their understanding of their neighborhoods and the city. To bridge the gap between high personal ambitions and low ecological expectations, youth deployed scripts of exceptionalism and escape. One might think of the escape script as psychological migration: Despite lacking the resources to physically leave Baltimore at this time, they tried to locate themselves in a new place as a way of divorcing themselves from Baltimore's stigma and its future. One might think of the exceptionality script as a source of dignity, grounding both their current identity and anchoring their future destinations (see Silva 2013).

The literature on youth aspirations has been attentive to social location (race, class, gender, age) but has not been as attentive to ecology or to how aspirations are situated or nested in space. Sociologists have long been concerned about the various inputs into the cultural frames and life-ways of young people living in disadvantaged contexts. Sociologists have given relatively little attention to the political perspectives of young people, how young people view their municipal institutions (aside from schools and police), and how major events become embedded into their narratives. There are, of course, exceptions. For example, Frye (2012) explored the imagined futures of rural Malawian girls, paying special attention to national policies and ideological campaigns by nongovernmental organizations to help explain the girls' aspirations. Future research should do more to interrogate the nested and dynamic development of aspirations rather than relying upon static classifications. A situated theory of youth aspirations would not merely include demographic factors and place in the

analysis, but would also interrogate how these factors shift and intersect in their salience according to context. This type of inquiry would be helpful for policy because it brings to light a more layered understanding of what young people living in certain disadvantaged contexts need to be resilient *from*—perhaps not just their personal traumatic experiences, but the collective challenge of living in a stigmatized city. This approach would examine individual trajectories in light of spatial and other collective trajectories—not just the neighborhood, but the city, the nation-state, and beyond.

Gender

Gender was an important and intentional source of variation in our study. While the two admitted riot participants were male, we did not see much variation between young men and young women with respect to their interpretations of the unrest or their views of the city. When we spoke with youth about their experiences with the criminal justice system, young men were more likely to report actually being arrested or spending a night in jail. Yet, young women were more likely to talk about getting maced at school or to report being disrespected by officers in ways that did not escalate toward handcuffing or arrest. Young women were also more likely to mention catcalls or other sorts of potential threats related to sexual harassment and violence (Brunson and Miller 2006; Hitchens, Carr, and Clampet-Lundquist 2018; see also Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda 2014). By and large, with some exceptions, the young women in the sample did not seem to subscribe to the idea that police harshness and violence is a risk reserved for young men.

With respect to aspirations, some of the young women who were over eighteen, and particularly if they had children, did report lower (perhaps leveled) aspirations compared to young men. However, their aspirations seemed to be pragmatically situated in the realities of their family lives, as previous research suggests (e.g., Scott, London, and Edin 2000). They were not situating their aspirations within the context of Baltimore's fate, *per se*.

Age

Age was one important axis of variation in what these youths thought about the riots, how they used escape and exceptionality scripts, and their aspirations. While people ages 15-24 are standardly considered “youth” in sociological and policy research (e.g., Ferguson, Bender, and Thompson 2018; Krupnick and Winship 2016), much research has shown that there is often a compression of life experience by age in disadvantaged contexts. Young people who live under marginalizing conditions may not experience the extended adolescence or period of “emerging adulthood” often associated with the White middle-class (e.g., Arnett 2001; Hayford and Furstenburg 2000). Sociologists of children and youth refer to this process as “adultification,” or a process through which “youth are prematurely, and often inappropriately, exposed to adult knowledge and assume extensive adult roles and responsibilities within their family networks” (Burton 2007: 329; see also Ferguson 2003; Schmitz and Tyler 2016). DeLuca, Clampet-Lundquist, and Edin (2016) describe young adults in Baltimore as being on an “expedited path to adulthood,” and point out that, like Fayard, many young people believe that life is very short—even shorter than the already dire numbers for life expectancy for Black Baltimore suggest. Rather than a “winding road” (Arnett 2001), many young people see themselves on an expressway toward adulthood and in some cases, toward death. Given this frame of mind, it is not surprising that most of the high school-aged respondents in this sample had bigger dreams than the older youths, especially those who had already become parents.

Limitations

This study does not attempt to provide a generalizable or representative picture of the experiences and meaning-making processes of Baltimore youth. The findings of this study are not intended to statistically generalize to the broader population (see Small 2009). However, the study might help researchers understand some of the underlying meanings of generally applicable findings.

For example, if researchers conducted a survey and found that a substantial number of young people agree that they live a “thug life,” this study might help them interpret the results: Instead of assuming that “thug life” means “hypermasculinity, the aggressive assertion and defense of respect, extreme individualism, materialism and a reverence for the gun” (Patterson 2015), they could explore the alternative interpretation that “thug life” means overcoming one’s obstacles. If researchers conducted a survey after a moment of civil unrest, they might design it keeping in mind some of the nuances in narratives discussed herein. They might explore whether riot participants’ descriptions of themselves as “freedom fighters” (Murty, Roebuck and Armstrong 1994) were static or more complicated, as suggested by our conversations with Telvis and Kasim.

With respect to collective fate, the study is limited in its ability to describe the etiological status of the sense of the city’s destiny. It is not clear whether meaning-making about the city preceded or followed the unrest, and whether it is best understood as a cause or an outcome (see Ermakoff 2017). Unlike the theory of collective efficacy, the idea of collective fate is not used here to explain higher or lower crime rates. Future research will have to explore how collective fate connects with a variety of other outcomes in ways that collective efficacy might not fully explain.

Finally, this cross-sectional interview-based study was conducted in response to a major event in the life of Baltimore’s young people. This timing was the intention of the study, and is thus a benefit of it. However, a reader might reasonably ask questions about the study’s ability to shed light on even these respondents’ *usual* modes of meaning-making about their city, their neighborhoods, and their futures. The findings on collective fate and situated aspirations would have been strengthened with a longitudinal approach. Future research should engage in an analysis of these theories and dynamics that are not situated in the aftermath of civil unrest. In conclusion, this chapter has reported on the social meaning of urban unrest, and it has also developed an alternative hypothesis for how individual

aspirations are situated within social context—not within families or schools, but within place—and specifically within the city.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THINKING EMPIRICALLY & NORMATIVELY ABOUT LEGAL ESTRANGEMENT

This dissertation has examined the relationship between policing and community life and its connection to urban inequality and marginality based on three empirical cases from Washington, DC, Cleveland, Ohio, and Baltimore, Maryland. This dissertation has proposed *legal estrangement* as a theoretical through-line between these cases. As explained in Chapter One, legal estrangement is meant to capture disconnection from law and legal authority, both as a “cultural orientation” among groups and as a cause and consequence of resource deprivation, segregation, and criminalization. It is also concerned with how interpretations of history might matter in present-day assessments of a community’s relationship with the law and legal authorities. Putting these ambitions together, an approach to studying law and legal authority through the lens of legal estrangement is especially attentive not only to severe distributional inequity but also to perceived inequalities of inclusion, or group membership, within society—or what Lamont (2018) calls “recognition gaps.” Recognition gaps, similar to wealth and income gaps, are socially, politically, and *legally* consequential because sustainable progress for everyone requires a certain degree of group social membership and solidarity.

Thinking Empirically

The cases presented in this dissertation open a conversation about legal estrangement, but they do not carry it nearly far enough. More work needs to be done to refine and measure the concept, to clarify its relationship to related concepts, to ground it more richly in the literature on collective memory and cultural trauma, and to explore its specific effects. Research should also examine the concept in a wider array of empirical settings, moving beyond the police and beyond urban cores on the East Coast and in the Midwest.

Concept Refinement and Measurement

Even with the clarifications set forth thus far, it might be hard to see how legal estrangement meaningfully differs from legal cynicism. One way of interrogating the distinctiveness of the concepts is by imagining the type of questions a survey researcher might ask when trying to measure legal estrangement and how they would differ from the validated survey questions that have been used to measure legal cynicism.⁵⁴

Using survey data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN), Sampson and Bartusch (1998) measured legal cynicism using a five-question scale. Respondents used a traditional Likert scale to indicate whether and how strongly they agreed with five statements: (1) “Laws were made to be broken,” (2) “It’s okay to do any thing you want as long as you don’t hurt anyone,” (3) “To make money, there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy ways and hard ways,” (4) “Fighting between friends or within families is nobody else’s business,” and (5) “Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself” (p. 786). The point of these questions is to measure “the sense in which laws or rules are not considered binding in the existential, present lives of respondents” (Sampson and Bartusch 1998: 786). In *Great American City*, Sampson explains that the five-question scale was meant to “gauge general beliefs about the sense in which *laws or collective moral rules* are not considered binding in the present lives of Chicago residents” (2012: 225, emphasis added). Back in 1998, Sampson and Bartusch labeled this concept purely as legal

⁵⁴ There are a number of related concepts such as “trust in the law,” “legitimacy,” “trust and confidence” and so forth that rely upon various survey measures that I have carefully reviewed. While helpful, I do not engage in extended discussion of them here because they would probably measure legal estrangement less effectively than legal cynicism scales would. For example, Muller and Schrage (2014) and Meares (1997) have studied trust in the law using a single question from the General Social Survey: “In general, do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?” Respondents may answer “too harsh,” “not harsh enough,” or “about right.” Tyler and Fagan (2008) use a seven-item scale to measure trust and confidence in the police: (1) “I have confidence that the NYPD can do its job well;” (2) “I trust the leaders of the NYPD to make decisions that are good for everyone in the city;” (3) “People’s basic rights are well protected by the police;” (4) “The police care about the well-being of everyone they deal with;” (5) “The police are often dishonest” (reverse scored); (6) “Some of the things the police do embarrass our city” (reverse scored); (7) “There are many things about the NYPD and its policies that need to be changed” (reverse scored). While some of these questions might partly measure legal estrangement, they are framed too generally to capture a sense that police and criminal justice exclude specific social groups: The frame of reference is “the city” or “everyone” and not “people like me” or any particular group.

cynicism, and scarcely mentioned the word “moral.” Sampson’s thinking has evolved over the years to center moral regulation as well as legal regulation.

Reasonably, most survey-based studies of legal cynicism since Sampson and Bartusch have used the original statements or modified them only slightly. For example, Fagan and Tyler (2005) used the same five statements but collected their own surveys from 215 children and adolescents in Brooklyn, New York. Fagan and Tyler understood legal cynicism as one of three “domains of legal socialization,” along with legitimacy and “moral disengagement,” which is meant to capture attitudes about people’s responsibility for the treatment of others. Browning (2009) uses the PHDCN data but creates his legal cynicism scale using only four of the five original statements, omitting “Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself” statement without explanation.

Kirk and Papachristos (2011), also using PHDCN data, significantly modified the legal cynicism scale to focus only on one item that Sampson and Bartusch used and to add two other statements that had been in the section on what Sampson calls “police satisfaction.” Kirk and Papachristos aimed to hone in on what they saw as *legal* cynicism and to set aside moral cynicism and anomie (2011: 1207). Their three-item scale assessed agreement with (1) “laws are made to be broken,” (2) “the police are not doing a good job in preventing crime in this neighborhood,” and (3) “the police are not able to maintain order on the streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood.” In this formulation, only the first question sheds light on Sampson’s core concern about communities’ perception of the law, or the police, as *binding authority*. The Kirk and Papachristos version of legal cynicism, as articulated through these survey questions, emphasizes the perceived *efficacy* of the law (specifically the police).

Instead of whether law feels binding, or whether it operates efficaciously, legal estrangement is more concerned with whether law is perceived as *solidarity-enhancing* or *solidarity-diminishing*—that is, whether it tends to create an environment for group inclusion or group exclusion within political and legal

architectures. Authority and efficacy are certainly related to inclusion and exclusion, but they are not the same. Recognition is critical, but it is important to guard against individualistic notions of recognition that prevail in procedural justice literature (e.g., Tyler and Huo 2002) and to vehemently attend to group recognition (Lamont forthcoming). Law can feel morally binding and still feel exclusionary, and thus might tear at the social fabric in significant ways that are not easily observable in, for example, homicide rates. The police could be responsive and effective in reducing crime but still engage in practices that marginalize particular social groups.⁵⁵

Measuring Legal Estrangement?

If one were to design a survey to measure legal estrangement, one might take up some of the questions used or implied in scholarship on legitimacy and legal cynicism but analyze them from a different structural framework, or in relation to other scales. One could probably do well measuring legal estrangement by using preexisting survey questions on legal cynicism and adding questions about race and class bias, or perhaps just analyzing them in a new way. However, new questions might be better. Here, I have preliminarily brainstormed survey questions that could potentially be used to measure legal estrangement as part of a five or six-item scale.

Potential Survey Questions on Legal Estrangement

- My community is important to the police.
- My community is important to politicians.
- My community is important to the government.
- The police treat people from my community like they do not matter.
- The police treat me like I do not matter.
- The government treats my community like it does not matter.
- The government treats me like I do not matter.
- The law was not designed to protect people in my community.
- History has shown that the police do not protect people like me.
- History has shown that the government does not respond to people like me.

⁵⁵ When confronted with the idea of legal estrangement, one response might be, “So what?” Skeptics might argue that if people in communities feel excluded by the law but still obey it, there is no harm or outcome that should concern social scientists or policymakers. Individual and group inclusion might be nice, but from a skeptical view, it may not have the obvious urgency of, for example, quelling homicide. As I discuss below, however, this work proposes that social solidarity has independent normative valence.

- People from my community have had longstanding problems getting along with law enforcement.
- No matter how hard people from my community try, the legal system keeps us down.
- I expect the government to make laws that are good for people from my community.
- The police have treated people from my community better over time (or, “How have the police treated people from your community over time?” with answers much worse, worse, about the same, better, much better).
- The government has treated people from my community better over time (or, “How has the government treated people from your community over time?” with answers much worse, worse, about the same, better, much better).
- When I see the police, I expect them to treat me disrespectfully.
- When I go to a government office, I expect to be treated disrespectfully.
- When I see the police, I expect them to treat me unfairly.
- When I go to a government office, I expect to be treated unfairly.

Some of these questions are reminiscent of Bobo and Johnson’s 2001 and 2002 Race, Crime, and Public Opinion surveys (see Bobo and Thompson 2006). Bobo and Thompson report results of a “police responsiveness scale” that asked a sample of Black and White respondents what would happen if their home were burglarized, and they ask how likely they are to call the police, whether and how strongly they believe the police will respond quickly, and whether and how strongly they believe the police would take their complaint seriously (2006: 466). They also ask about expectations of bias from several actors in the criminal justice system. The scale on “perceived criminal justice bias against Blacks” consists of four items that included whether respondents believed the criminal justice system “is biased in favor or against blacks” and whether they had confidence that the police, judges, and prosecutors treat Blacks and Whites equally (ibid.). Some of these questions are partly inspired by the small social psychological literature on expectations of discrimination (e.g., Levin et al. 2002), except I think it would better capture estrangement to ask about expectations of stigmatization or assaults on dignity rather than discrimination, which is viewed as more formal and legalistic than race-based maltreatment (see Lamont et al. 2016). In any event, this set of potential survey questions helps illustrate some of what legal estrangement attempts to include that legal cynicism thus far has not emphasized.

Beyond the Police

It is also critically important for this scholarship, along with scholarship on legal cynicism and trust in the law, to move beyond the police. Through decades of research, social psychologist Tyler and others have transported psychological models of “procedural justice” and legitimacy well beyond the policing context, though their work on policing receives the most public recognition (see, e.g., Ainsworth 1991; Abramowicz 2005; Atuahene 2014; Berrey, Hoffman, and Nielsen 2012; Brooke and Tyler 2011; Shestowsky 2016; Solum 2004). In contrast, legal cynicism theory has stayed closely anchored to policing and criminal justice. One recent and helpful exception is an article by McElhattan, Nielsen, and Weinberg (2017), which applies the legal cynicism framework to employment discrimination lawsuits brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Those researchers find that the straightforward racial story that applies to legal cynicism in a policing context may not apply in the same way for law that marginalized social groups view as potentially justice-enhancing, such as civil rights law. They posit that the theory of legal cynicism might do better to think in terms of social location rather than a rigid notion of race, a suggestion that is in keeping with the idea of “interactive intersectionality” on fields noted in Chapter 4 (Ferree 2009; see also Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). Much like the scholarship on “trust” in the context of race and class marginality generally (e.g., Burton et al. 2009; Levine 2013; Smith 2007, 2010), it seems likely that legal institutions well beyond the police contribute to a sense of estrangement between particular social groups in particular ecological contexts and the law. My future work will seek to interrogate some of the dynamics discussed in this dissertation outside of the police-community context.

Beyond the Urban Core

The empirical cases in this paper are all anchored in major metropolitan areas on the East Coast and Midwest, which makes sense because these types of urban areas have been major touchstones for crime and for changes in police policy and practices, especially over the past three decades or so.

However, we know little about the presence and structure of legal estrangement and police-community relations in other types of geographies. The policing and court crises in Ferguson, Missouri, for example, have shown that problems of policing traditionally understood as “urban” problems can occur in suburbs, particularly low-income suburbs like Ferguson (see, e.g., Lacy 2016; Murphy 2010). Moreover, the specific context of Ferguson—a poor suburb that lacks any wealthy tax base—drove municipal court policies that guaranteed biased policing (see Lowry 2016). The number of poor suburbs is substantial and growing (Murphy and Allard 2015). More research should shed light on these settings, as well as smaller cities (see Brown-Saracino 2018).

Rural areas, too, are ripe for research on legal estrangement. “Rural poverty” is often understood to be code for “White poverty,” even though this framing does not fully capture reality: There are many rural poor Hispanics, Blacks, and Native Americans (e.g., Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2012), and indeed some of the most popular “new destinations” for immigrants are in the rural South in historically African-American rural areas (e.g., Marrow 2011). Perhaps policing is not central to the legal consciousness of the rural poor, given that intensive policing strategies, such as “hot spots” policing, are generally not part of the milieu in those areas. One might expect the rural poor to feel more positively about the police and perhaps the government as well, but recent research on the white rural poor in Louisiana implies that they might feel a sense of estrangement from the government, but not necessarily the police (Hochschild 2016).

Not only do force practices differ in rural areas, obviously force sizes also differ. In some rural areas, local police forces consist of very few officers; indeed, most of the nation’s more than 12,000 police departments employ fewer than ten police officers (Reaves 2015). Under some circumstances, this small number of officers could mean that they are essentially absent from people’s lives; under others, this could mean that those police boundaries are essentially fiefdoms in which a single officer’s biased

views could have intense and unchecked power over people's daily experiences. This type of rural policing organization may have led to the death of Bernard Bailey in Eutawville, South Carolina (population 315) in 2011—a fifty-four-year-old father, unarmed, who was killed by the town's sole police officer in broad daylight in a dispute about a traffic ticket Bailey's daughter had received (see Bell 2017). Police policymakers champion local control, but small police departments could breed a lack of accountability. Yet, to date, there is little empirical grounding to understand police-community relations under circumstances like those that preceded the Bailey incident. In sum, policing and police relations deserve empirical exploration across a broader range of geographic settings.

Beyond African Americans

The geographic lens applied to police-community relations is too often urban, and the racial lens applied to police-community relations is too often African-American. Research suggests that the police distrust and exclusion Black Americans experience is particularly intense. However, African Americans likely do not inhabit a uniquely pathological space in which police repulsion is inevitable. More research, particularly comparative research, might shed light on general processes of estrangement. For example, research on police-community relations in Israel-Palestine, Apartheid-era South Africa, pre-Peace Agreement Northern Ireland, and postcolonial Zimbabwe shows that police distrust among the most marginalized groups is common in the context of deep social and political division (Brewer 1994; Hasisi 2008; Weitzer 2017). While legal cynicism literature is concerned with general processes such as persistent segregation and economic inequality, most of that research has been concentrated in Chicago, a place with a substantial African-American population that has a tumultuous relationship with the police. It would improve both theories to test them more thoroughly in locales with smaller Black populations and perhaps less segregation, within the United States and abroad.

Thinking Normatively: On Solidarity and Culture

Over the past several decades, disciplines in the humanities and other social sciences have offered new and influential ways of evaluating law and policy. Classical and traditional economists taught the legal field to interrogate whether and how a law is Pareto optimal or Kaldor-Hicks efficient (e.g., Calabresi 1970; Coase 1960; Posner 2014) and whether a law or policy maximizes individual utility or welfare (e.g., Kaplow and Shavell 2002). Behavioral economists and psychologists have taught the legal field to ask whether law and law enforcement comport with how individuals react to the world (e.g., Jolls, Sunstein, and Thaler 1998; Rachlinski 1999). Neuropsychologists have introduced questions about law's consistency with the functioning of human brains (see, e.g., Brown and Murphy 2010; Goodenough and Tucker 2010; Steinberg 2017). Political scientists have brought into law ways of examining the efficacy of administrative bureaucracies (e.g., Berry and Gersen 2017; Chilton and Versteeg 2016). Philosophers have taught legal scholars to think intensively about the relationship between law and morality and the true meaning(s) of justice (e.g., Dworkin 1977; Shapiro 2011; West 2011). While sociologists have been conducting law-related scholarship since the discipline began, sociologists have been timid in offering portable evaluative concepts to the worlds of law and policy.

Many sociologists are hesitant to engage in all but the shallowest normative analysis and policy prescription. Although sociology had an unsavory early relationship with colonialism and eugenics (e.g., Connell 1997), the discipline also has a long legacy of illuminating issues of justice and seeking to rectify them. For example, when Du Bois founded the Atlanta School of Sociology at Atlanta University in the early 1900s, part of the mission of the school was to teach Black scholars to “embrace an intellectual discipline as a weapon of liberation” (Morris 2015: 59). Du Bois then believed, and taught his students and collaborators to believe, that facts had the power to reveal the folly of racism and ultimately, to soften the color line. There are rich and endless debates about the role of sociology in normative thinking and

policy debate—too extensive to fully engage here (see, e.g., Burawoy 2005; Patterson 2002, 2014b; Stacey 2004; Wright 2010).

For today, it is important to note that legal estrangement, like most sociological concepts, has a normative subtext. In a recent paper, Matthew Desmond and Bruce Western (N.d.) develop a normative theory of the sociology of poverty rooted in the values of human dignity, collective virtue, and justice. Their position is perhaps easier to engage than the public sociology debate because, regardless of the type or level of public engagement, a large portion of social science research has a subtle normative message. By choosing to study gender inequality, for example, researchers are tacitly suggesting that gender equality is a value. By studying the involvement of non-custodial fathers in their children's lives, family researchers imply that parental involvement is important. Normative theories lurk behind the sociological enterprise, and these theories should provoke deliberation and investigation.

Desmond and Western propose dignity and justice as alternatives to values arising from economics. I propose another alternative, deeply rooted in sociology: *solidarity*. One of the most central values underlying the sociological enterprise is to understand community, how it is made possible, and when it is threatened (see Sampson 2012). For example, the idea of collective efficacy is critically important for understanding why violence occurs, why some communities are more politically active than others, and so forth. Yet I would wager that relatively few lawyers and policymakers know what “collective efficacy” is—certainly fewer than know what “efficiency” means.

Normative scholarship on solidarity originates in a similar place as empirical scholarship on social capital, social cohesion, and community, with the most basic Durkheimian insight that understanding groupness is central to understanding modern social life: An individualistic lens is not enough. As Markovits (2010) has argued, the value of collectivism is often challenged in modern liberal societies that set forth individualism as a prime value. Thus, “the problem of sustaining social solidarity”

is one “that every legal order must confront” (2010: 487; but see Hart 1967). Yet modern-day conversations about social marginality in sociology and discussions about law and policy in mainstream public forums rarely mention solidarity.

Scholz (2008) has identified three basic features of scholarship on solidarity, which spans sociology, history, theology, and political and moral philosophy: (1) solidarity mediates between the individual and community and thus is neither purely individualist nor collectivist; (2) solidarity assumes the existence of some identifiable unifying collective—or a subjective sense of groupness (see Brubaker and Cooper 2000); and (3) solidarity suggests the existence of binding moral obligations to others in the collective. According to Scholz, the moral obligations in a state of solidarity are not only descriptively present, but *should be* present.

The conception of solidarity supported here is not a thin, rational choice conception that emphasizes the additional wages or other utils an individual can expect to enjoy if the individual cooperates with others in a collective (e.g., Hechter 1988; Levin 2003; Posner 1996). Instead, it is a thick conception—or what political philosopher Bernard Williams calls a “thick ethical concept” that is both evaluative and descriptive of a complex social meaning (Williams 1985; see also Kohler-Hausmann 2017). As social theorists Kathleen Lynch and Judy Walsh explain, “[s]olidarity . . . is about an ideal, a moral principle in its own right” (2009: 48). Without moral content, solidarity and social cohesion could be mistakenly equated with internally focused bonds interested in maintaining homogeneity (see Markovits 2010; Stern 2013). Deviating from Frank Parkin’s vision of solidarism as a form of social closure by marginalized groups (Parkin 1974), Lynch and Walsh distinguish between solidarity and social closure, describing social closure solely as cohesion aimed at maintaining internal cohesion and privilege for the exclusion and exploitation of other groups (2009: 48; cf. Western and Desmond 2018).

Solidarity need not demand social sameness or reject diversity, as Putnam (2007) suggests. Political philosopher Juliet Hooker (2009) has proposed a vision of solidarity that is not based on “mutual identification, shared nationality, or some form of cultural or racial homogeneity” (2009: 170). Instead, solidarity in a diverse society should be understood as “the product of structural conditions that require individuals who are strangers to one another to develop contingent solidarities, however momentarily, every day” (ibid.). The source of solidarity is simply the spaces people inhabit, recognizing that individual actions have consequences for other individuals, and for the collective.

Although the legal foundation for valuing solidarity is less explicit than for dignity or justice, this diversity-respecting notion of solidarity already has roots in American civil rights law. For example, the Supreme Court has recognized “neighborhood standing” for white complainants under Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (the Fair Housing Act) (*Havens Realty Corp. v. Coleman* 1982). Under this theory, whites may have a cognizable claim under the Fair Housing Act if they argue that they are being denied the benefits of living in an integrated neighborhood, in community with people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Also, under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibits private employers from discriminating against employees and potential employees on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, and national origin) white employees have a cognizable “interracial solidarity” claim for the associational and certain dignitary injuries they experience from discrimination against other racial and ethnic groups (Rich 2010). Judicial interpretations of these statutes have permitted whites to live out their moral obligations as part of solidaristic geographic and institutional spaces.

The Supreme Court’s cases on affirmative action in higher education cases could also be read to advance a vision of diversity that emphasizes the possibility of social solidarity. To be sure, the *Bakke* and *Grutter* Courts mainly just defer to the stated educational missions of defendant universities in order to conclude that diversity is a compelling state interest that justifies affirmative action. However, the *content*

of those educational missions, in both cases, was breaking down stereotypes and increasing academic freedom (see *Grutter v. Bollinger* 2003; *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* 1978). Reducing the influence of stereotypes and facilitating free, informed discourse makes social cohesion across difference possible.

The way a solidarity principle might operate in affirmative action jurisprudence might be similar to the “antibalkanization” principle Siegel (2011) has described. In contrast with the anti-classification principle, which rejects all racial categorization, and the anti-subordination principle, which emphasizes the eradication of racial hierarchy, antibalkanization is “more concerned with social cohesion than with colorblindness” (2011: 1281).⁵⁶ Thus far, antibalkanization decision-making in Supreme Court jurisprudence has produced somewhat more conservative results than anti-subordination would; most cases have involved a concern about alienating Whites. Yet, one could envision a solidarity-enhancing line of cases that are concerned about marginalizing other groups. For example, Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s infamous dissenting opinion in *Utah v. Strieff* lamented the “risk [of] treating members of our communities as second-class citizens” (2016: 2069). Sotomayor is concerned about dignity and subordination but also social solidarity:

We must not pretend that the countless people who are routinely targeted by police are “isolated.” They are the canaries in the coal mine whose deaths, civil and literal, warn us that no one can breathe in this atmosphere. . . . They are the ones who recognize that unlawful police stops corrode all our civil liberties and threaten all our lives. Until their voices matter too, our justice system will continue to be anything but (2016: 2071).

On Justice Sotomayor’s account, the Court and the public should feel obligated to see police targeting of poor and minority citizens as an issue of great significance to the American community, regardless of race

⁵⁶ Antibalkanization, like dignity, has gotten its most loyal support from allegedly soon-retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy.

or geography. To borrow from Norman Rockefeller, Justice Sotomayor reimagines police maltreatment as a “problem we all live with.”⁵⁷

Solidarity is not the only concept from sociology that needs broader dissemination in law, however. As Patterson (2002, 2014b) has argued on multiple occasions, concepts from cultural sociology desperately need to be articulated more clearly to lawyers, judges, and policymakers. This applies not just to the norms-values version of cultural sociology in which Patterson engages, but also the school of cultural sociology that is concerned with frames, scripts, repertoires, recognition, and boundary work (see, e.g., Lamont forthcoming; Lamont and Small 2008; Swidler 2001). This necessity was apparent in the Supreme Court case *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes* (2011), in which the Court ruled that a trial court was incorrect in certifying a broad class of female current and past employees of Wal-Mart in a class action lawsuit for employment discrimination. The theory justifying the class was that *all* female employees of Wal-Mart were subjected to a discriminatory organizational *culture*, and thus suffered discrimination.

In a typically blistering opinion, Justice Antonin Scalia disregarded sociological expert evidence on Wal-Mart’s corporate culture because the expert sociologist, Dr. William Bielby, had reasonably refused to claim that culture was a but-for cause of a certain percentage of Wal-Mart’s employment decisions (2011: 353-354). Justice Scalia repeatedly put “culture” and “social framework analysis” in quotation marks, underscoring his disrespect for this evidence. The American Sociological Association and the Law & Society Association had jointly submitted an amicus curiae brief in the case. The position the organizations took is curious: Most of the brief was concerned with clarifying that sociology is a rigorous science, well equipped to make causal claims under certain circumstances. The brief frequently analogizes social science to natural science. Although the brief timidly defends Dr. Bielby’s methods, it repeatedly states that the organizations “offer no opinion on the substance of Dr. Bielby’s testimony or

⁵⁷ This is a reference to the iconic 1964 Norman Rockefeller painting, “The Problem We All Live With,” that depicts a six-year-old African-American girl, Ruby Bridges, as U.S. marshals escort her toward a newly desegregating New Orleans elementary school.

conclusions” (Brief of Amici Curiae 2011: 9)—perhaps because his methods for the expert report were actually too flawed to warrant bolder support (Mitchell, Monahan, and Walker 2011).⁵⁸

The brief devotes an entire numbered subsection to explaining that Bielby’s “social framework analysis” is not a sociological method but is instead a legal term, going so far as to note that the term “social framework analysis” had not appeared in *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, or *Social Problems* (as if a theory is only sociological if one of those four publications has legitimized it) (p. 11-14). For sociologists who read the brief, this argument likely rang hollow and might have even seemed disingenuous: While “social framework analysis” is not a standard sociological term, “frame analysis” (e.g., Goffman 1974); “cultural frames” (Fligstein 2001; Lamont and Small 2008), and “framing processes” (e.g., Benford and Snow 2000) were common concepts within sociology by 2011, even in elite peer-reviewed journals. Indeed, “framework analysis” had recently undergone a resurgence in the discipline deemed worthy of a write-up in *The Annals* (Young 2010).

Regardless of the numerous and seemingly valid concerns about Bielby’s methods, the ASA and LSA brief in *Dukes* represents a missed opportunity to educate lawmakers and the public about the myriad potential contributions of sociology to our polity and public discourse. While sociology *can* engage in counterfactual causal analysis (see Morgan and Winship 2007), its other valid contributions span theory development, rich description (see Besbris and Khan 2017), identification of causal mechanisms and processes (Hedström and Ylikoski 2010), and so on. Despite the early efforts of Comte, the warrants for and practices of sociology cannot and should not mirror those of physics and other “natural sciences” (Du Bois 2000; Durkheim 1982; Weber 1978). Yet for other reasons, sociological research and theory have value in policymaking. More than that—sociological ideas should be shaping

⁵⁸ Bielby is a former president of the American Sociological Association—hardly a fringe sociologist. The associations thus may have been reticent to fully clarify their position on his research.

debates on policy, justice, community, and democracy. The research presented in this dissertation represents another tentative step toward realizing that vision.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Descriptions of Selected Cleveland Neighborhoods and Suburbs⁵⁹ (Chapter 3)

Area	Description
Buckeye-Shaker	Buckeye-Shaker, on Cleveland’s East Side, includes old Buckeye, Larchmere, Woodland Hills and Shaker Square. From 1980 to 2000, the neighborhood witnessed a steady increase in its Black population, and about 80% of residents identified as Black in 2010.
Central	Cleveland’s Central neighborhood sits between Euclid Avenue to the north, Woodland Avenue to the south, East 22 nd to the west, and East 71 st to the east. As of 2014, 94% of residents identified as Black. The poverty rate in Central is more than double the poverty rate for the city of Cleveland.
Clark-Fulton	Clark-Fulton is a diverse neighborhood with substantial Black, Latinx, and White populations. Most of the Latinx population is of Puerto Rican descent. The neighborhood was home to Central and Eastern European immigrants in the mid-1800s. Puerto Rican migrants arrived to work following World War II and many settled here.
Cleveland Heights	Cleveland Heights is one of the largest inner-ring suburbs, bordering Cleveland on the east side. The suburb has a poverty rate just above 19% compared to 34.7% within the city. Forty-two percent of the city identifies as African-American; the suburb is slightly majority-white. Cleveland Heights’ open government portal reports that the city’s public safety budget has remained in the range of \$20 million since 2011. Over half of the public safety budget goes towards supporting the police force.
Cuyahoga Heights	Cuyahoga Heights is a predominantly White village located approximately six miles south of downtown Cleveland. 97% of Cuyahoga Heights’ six hundred residents are White. Median household income is \$47,237, which is nearly double the median household income for the city of Cleveland.
East Cleveland	Adjacent to Cleveland’s East Side, East Cleveland is a city struggling with poverty and industrial decline. During the 1960s, White residents of East Cleveland refused integration, fleeing the town. East Cleveland went from 98% White in 1960 to 59% Black in 1970. By 1990, the city was 94% Black. Over half of East Cleveland’s residents abandoned the city between 1990 and 2010; the population declined from 33,000 to 17,800. The government has laid off half its workforce and fired almost half of its police officers. East Cleveland considered annexing to the city of Cleveland in 2016.
Forest Hills	Home to the mayor of Cleveland Heights, Forest Hills stretches across Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland. In the early 20th century, oil magnate John D. Rockefeller and his family summered in Forest Hills. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. bought the estate from his father in 1923 and planned to develop an upscale residential and commercial neighborhood. Rockefeller attached covenants to the houses in Forest Hills that required the permission of the developer and/or neighbors for sale. Though these covenants did not mention race specifically, they aimed to keep the neighborhood free from Jews and African-Americans. By 2000, Forest Hill was almost 100% African-American. Today, the neighborhood struggles with vacancies after the 2008 housing crisis.
Garfield Heights	Garfield Heights, located to the southeast of Cleveland, is a city of approximately 28,000. Median household income for the city stands just under \$40,000, and the city has a poverty rate of just over eighteen percent. The city was about 60% White in 2010 and has a substantial Black population—just under 40%. Historically, Garfield Heights was a White immigrant community.
Glenville	Glenville is a predominantly Black and high-poverty neighborhood on Cleveland’s East Side. At the start of the 20th century, Glenville was Cleveland’s largest Jewish neighborhood. Glenville’s Black population rose from 900 in 1940, to 22,000 by 1950. The Black population of Glenville has constituted more than 90% of neighborhood residents since 1980. Today, 97% of Glenville residents identify as African-American.
Hough	Hough is a predominantly black and poor neighborhood on Cleveland’s East Side. The neighborhood is known for the Hough Riots of 1966. Black residents still face some of the underlying challenges related to poverty and social marginality that sparked the Hough Riots.
Lakewood	Lakewood borders Cleveland on its West Side and is the most densely populated city in Ohio. As of 2015, 87.99% residents identified as White, 6.59% identified as African-American, 3.51% identified as multiracial, and 1.38% identified as Asian.

⁵⁹ These are the neighborhoods mentioned by the respondents who are featured in this chapter’s findings. Demographic information in this chart is compiled from Census data, American Community Survey data, and documents from local planning commissions.

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Maple Heights	Maple Heights is a small, predominantly Black inner-ring suburb. 69% of residents identify as African-American. A quarter of the city's residents are White. The city entered a period of white flight in the 1970s, and income plummeted. Today, 20.8% of Maple Heights' 22,478 residents live below the federal poverty line and suffer from a lack of city services. Maple Heights has struggled to pave roads, to repaint lines on city streets, and to maintain an adequate police force in recent years.
Old Brooklyn	Old Brooklyn is a majority White neighborhood on Cleveland's West Side. Old Brooklyn has long opposed school and residential integration; a community organization, Old Brooklyn Citizens for Neighborhood Schools, intensely opposed busing in the 1970s. Old Brooklyn enjoys lower poverty rates than other neighborhoods in the city of Cleveland, and home ownership is higher there than elsewhere in the city.
Parma	Parma, the second largest city in Cuyahoga County, and the seventh largest city in Ohio, boasts a population of approximately 80,000 residents. With a White population of 92.1%, Parma has historically been home to people of German, Polish, Italian, Slovakian, and Irish descent. A General Motors plant has economically buttressed the city since it opened in 1949. The plant remains the city's largest employer. Although Parma is located seven miles southwest of Cleveland, its median household income almost doubles that of Cleveland's at \$50,440.
Rocky River	One of the wealthier suburbs in Cuyahoga County, Rocky River is a city located on Lake Erie approximately nine miles from downtown Cleveland. Median family income is just over \$90,000, and the median home value stands at \$211,100. Rocky River enjoys two private clubs—Westwood Country Club and Cleveland Yachting Club—and residents have access to nine City parks and Metroparks.
Shaker Heights	Shaker Heights is one of the oldest cities in Cuyahoga County. The city was developed on the Garden City model, with strict guidelines on building heights and architectural styles. During the 1960s, Shaker Heights was the wealthiest community in the United States. Shaker Heights historically tried to foster integration and inclusion. The city "re-examined" its foundational racial covenants in the 1950s, and in the 1970s, Shaker Heights schools participated in a voluntary busing program. Today about one-third of Shaker Heights residents identify as African-American.
University Heights	University Heights is a suburb in Cuyahoga County approximately two miles from the eastern Cleveland border. It is home to John Carroll University. Almost 80% of University Heights' residents identify as Caucasian. Approximately 65% of University Heights residents are homeowners.
Westlake	Westlake, located approximately twelve miles west from downtown Cleveland, is one of Cuyahoga County's wealthier suburbs. Median household income for Westlake is \$76,449, and the city enjoys a poverty rate under 5%. Westlake is predominantly White, with 87.2% of residents identifying as Caucasian. Asian and Hispanic are the second and third largest racial or ethnic groups respectively. There were 1,834 Asian and 1,051 Hispanic Westlake residents in 2015.

Appendix 2. Featured Respondents (Chapter 4)

Name	Gender	Age	**“On Track”	Parent	High School Graduate	Ever College	Employed	Ever Homeless	Ever Arrested	Ever Foster Care
Aaron	Male	23	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Anita	Female	22	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Anthony	Male	16	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ashley	Female	17	No	Pregnant	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Aziza	Female	21	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Bianca	Female	16	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Cedric	Male	19	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Chanel	Female	19	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Chelsea	Female	16	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cordell	Male	18	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
DeVaughn	Male	17	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Fayard	Male	18	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Gabriel	Male	24	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hakim	Male	21	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Jalanda	Female	16	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Jamila	Female	19	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Jessica	Female	20	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Julius	Male	21	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Justin	Male	18	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Kasim	Male	23	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Keira	Female	22	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Keisha	Female	16	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Kelly	Female	18	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Khalila	Female	18	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Louanne	Female	15	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Malisa	Female	24	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Mikayla	Female	22	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Mona	Female	17	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Prophet	Male	20	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rachelle	Female	16	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Reid	Male	24	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reuben	Male	18	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Richard	Male	19	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Sam	Male	19	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Shawna	Female	18	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Shayna	Female	23	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Stephan	Male	18	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Telvis	Male	16	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tyson	Male	17	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Vance	Male	23	No	Pregnant	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zima	Female	17	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

*“On track,” a term developed in DeLuca, Clampet-Lundquist, and Edin (2016), means either working or in school.

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