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Signature: *Tatenda Mangurenje Merken*

Name typed: Tatenda Mangurenje Merken

Date: April 29, 2022

Fractured Belonging: Black Police Officers and the New Civil Rights Movement

By

Tatenda Mangurenje Merken
Doctor of Philosophy
Cultural Anthropology

Dr. Peter J. Brown (Advisor)

Dr. Bruce Knauft (Committee member)

Dr. Justin Hosbey (Committee member)

Accepted:

Kimberly Jacob Arriola, Ph.D, MPH
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

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By

Tatenda Mangurenje Merken
B.S., University of Arizona, 2014

Advisor: Peter J. Brown, Ph.D.

An abstract of a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology 2022

Abstract

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Tatenda Mangurenje Merken

This dissertation examines how Black police officers navigate their dual identities of being Black and Blue in the age of the Black Lives Matter Movement. Historically, Black Americans have been excluded from the police force by white supremacist sociocultural imaginaries that conceive of police as white males. As a result, they have fought for recognition and inclusion in police departments across the nation. While the notion of police as white males persists, today, Black police officers are largely represented in most urban police departments and have been able to make gradual changes to the perception of police and policing as their role has shifted from tokens to leaders.

Through 12 months of ethnographic research, I explore how the seemingly contradictory identities: Black and Blue are lived out by Black officers during the Black Lives Matter Movement. I argue that policing offers Black police officers temporary access to white civic participation – which in the U.S. is a currency that brings along social and cultural capital. I do so using the analytic of double consciousness – a theoretical construct that examines the duality of being Black and Blue in one dark body. To be a police officer means performing one's civic duty and serving as the arm of the state. It implies white respectability that is denied to Black people due to the lack of social status epidermalized on their skin. If historically, Black skin has been a marker of non-being, keeping Black people at the bottom of the social hierarchy, being a police officer today offers the possibility of borrowed personhood through inclusion into white civic participation placing Black officers in opposition to those advocating for Black life.

By focusing on Black police officers, this dissertation is in dialogue with the literature on race, identity, social movements, and social transformation by examining their antagonistic relationship. This research critiques diversity efforts without structural changes by interrogating the role of Black police officers in our society. This research centers itself within broader conversations of critical race theory, diversity, social movements, and the importance of structural change for effective inclusion.

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Preface

"I didn't know I was Black until I came to America" (Adichie, 2014). This poignant declaration by the acclaimed feminist Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie best encapsulates my experiences as a Black African immigrant living in America. This is not to say that I did not know that my skin color was Black before arriving on these shores. However, it means that I did not realize that there was a meaning ascribed to Blackness, a set of social rules and obligations, and a feeling of inferiority prescribed to me simply because of the color of my skin.

As a child in Zimbabwe, born a decade after independence, the issue of white supremacy was never a significant fixture in my daily life. Like many others living in virtually racially homogenous societies (aside from the few remaining white Rhodesians who stayed behind and the visiting missionaries and students from Western nations), I lived under a veil of ignorance. What determined my identity and defined the trajectory of my future were my class and gender. My life as a female child in a low-income family could best be understood through Marxist class struggles and gendered analysis of women living under patriarchal control. Blackness, at this point, was at the periphery of my existence.

My family spoke very little about their colonial past. They didn't show me their pass cards that they used to get around in apartheid Rhodesia or speak of how the white colonists brutalized them. The only times my mother brought up Rhodesia was when she lamented losing her mother a few months before independence. My grandmother had passed away in November, and the following April, Zimbabwe gained independence from Rhodesia. Every Independence Day, my mother would speak with sadness about how much she wished her mother had lived long enough to see and be part of Zimbabwe. It was a long time before I understood why this loss brought her such sadness.

It wasn’t until I moved to America that my veil of ignorance was lifted. For the first time in my life, being Black was the defining feature of my humanity. Identity in this sense is what Social Theorist Stuart Hall describes as the difference between “what we really are and what we have become” (Hall & Morley, 2018). What or who I really was had been my cultural identity as a Zimbabwean young adult, with the history of my ancestors and the lived experiences of a female in a patriarchal society. However, whom I became was someone with no history, someone with no identity, someone who was invisible. I was remade into a new being, both racialized and minoritized into a member of the lowest social group in this society. It became clear that I had entered what Franz Fanon described as a zone of non-being (Fanon, 1963)

In Arizona where we settled, I learned that I was Black. No longer was my identity predicated exclusively on my social class and gender; it was now defined by the color of my skin. My first lesson on what it meant to be Black was at my local high school. An understanding of education as one of the fundamental political spaces in Black life shaped my immersion into what it means to be Black in an anti-Black world (Wilderson III, 2020). It is in schools that much of what it means to Black is both defined and fought against the West. Schools, as the first points of contact with the outside work, are where the expectations on Black children are ingrained in the psyche. I was one of no more than ten Black students in my graduating class at my local high school. It was in this space that I was taught that Black students were not as intelligent as their white peers, that our accomplishments (if any) were due to tokenism, not our academic abilities, and that if we challenged the status quo, we would be harshly punished in ways that exceeded the perceived crime. I learned to keep my head down, not say too much and avoid any interactions with those in positions of power to avoid getting into trouble. Being Black in a predominately white space meant being invisible. I began to police myself, my speech, and my interests, in order to fit into prescribed notions of what being a Black girl, was. As such, being Black was a journey of self-discovery for me; it was not something that I was born with. However, it was something that was placed upon me by others. It was not who I was, but rather, I became something in a process of disposition. In this sense, I view Blackness in the way it's considered in America – not as the natural state of describing one's skin color, but a racialized category that is positioned by others at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This identity once ascribed, one cannot escape.

My own experiences of being Black in America brought me to this dissertation research. I sought to understand how people became who they are. How identities are both fixed and fluid as they change through space and time. Learning about and experiencing global anti-Blackness forced me to think through the place of Black people in our society and the ways we interact with the world around us. As permanent outsiders, how do Black professionals navigate the duality of their roles in both being policed and being the police?

I first came to this question during my gap year between my undergraduate and graduate studies. During this time, I took a position as a social worker at a company that was a contractor for the Arizona Department of Child Services (AZ DCS). In this position, I was responsible for visiting families under DCS investigation. I would monitor their progress, assist them with daily tasks and help them meet their court-ordered goals. Those who passed were graduated, reunited with their children, and their cases closed. Those who failed would have their children removed from their custody either temporarily or permanently, with some being incarcerated for child abuse or neglect. This position exposed me to how Black and Brown families live under constant police surveillance in this country. What stood out to me the most was that the overwhelming majority of the people I worked with and in the different agencies we routinely collaborated with were Black and Brown themselves. Although the leadership was predominantly white, the foot soldiers in social work, even in Tucson, Arizona, were predominately Black and Latinx women. However, the language used and how investigations took place were imbued with white supremacist ideology. Black and Brown families were primarily cast as welfare queens, and unfit parents and their children needed white saviors who would adopt them out of these unsafe environments. The conditions that led to challenges these families faced were rarely considered. As people around ascribed racist and white supremacist language and behaviors to Black and Brown families, it was clear that racism was not limited to individual white people; however, it was embedded in the institutions that we are all a part of. It was not my coworker, X, who was racist; it was social work itself. I did not get a chance to explore these thoughts longer as I left for Atlanta to begin my graduate studies.

It wasn't until 2017 that I returned to my thoughts about social work; however, this time; they were focused on our partners, the police. I was visiting family back in Phoenix, and my brother was tasked with picking me up from the airport. He was coming from work, so it was easy for him to stop by the airport before heading home. My brother is in the U.S. military, and he was wearing his uniform. We decided to stop for a late snack before heading to see the rest of the family. It was a chance for us to catch up without everyone else around. As we stopped at a local eatery, I noticed how people around us treated him. They opened the door for him and offered to pay for his meal. The restaurant even comped his portion of the meal. I was bewildered because I had never seen him being treated like this before. I asked him what was going on, and that is when he told me that when he's in uniform, he is visible. He transforms into some kind of celebrity. Instead of being a regular Black guy off the street that most people avoid or ignore, he becomes a respectable member of society. People who would not typically give him a second glance now go out of their way to accommodate him. He joked that he considered his uniform some sort of superpower. This interaction stuck with me.

After getting back to Atlanta, I looked for possible research projects as my original idea had fallen through. I thought about my lunch with my brother and the events that were going on in the world. As the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement continued to dominate public discourse, I wondered about the role of the officers that I knew back in Tucson. Were they, like my brother, visible when in uniform? Or were they social pariahs? These questions led to my dissertation research.

My journey to this project began as a newly arrived Black immigrant learning what it means to be Black in the world around me. It was how others defined Blackness and perceived Black people that reshaped my worldview. It wasn’t until I was a Black professional, working within a system that criminalized Black life, that I began to see how insidious anti-Blackness was. It wasn’t only white and other non-Black people who actively engaged in anti-Blackness but also Black people. The constraints of this position, my interaction with my brother, and the most significant social movement since the 1960s Civil Rights Movement laid the groundwork for my engagement with the question of how Black people operated in systems that were designed to oppress them.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introducing the field

"Why us?" These were Captain Davis' first words after we sat down in his office. He could sense my hesitation as I attempted to answer this seemingly simple question. However, a week before our meeting, my gatekeeper had sent out emails to her police contacts to ask if they would be willing to participate in my study and connect me to other officers who too might be interested in participating. I was overly optimistic about the responses that I would receive as she had a wonderful working relationship with officers, lieutenants, and captains in different precincts. However, the following morning, I woke up to a long list of emails that all contained the same message. My gatekeeper was telling all the people that she had emailed on my behalf in what appeared to be a panicked realization of the dangers of conducting this kind of research with police officers. She told them all that she was in no way associated with me and that her initial email was simply a favor she did for someone in passing. I was devastated as I knew the potential ramifications for my project, however, at the same time, I understood where she was coming from. Who would want to be associated with this? It could easily end her long-established relationships with these officers and affect her future work opportunities. I stared at those emails all day, knowing that for the most part, my project was all but finished.

A few days later Captain Davis responded. He was willing to meet, and this gave me hope that the project might still be alive after all. He agreed to meet at his precinct and set a date and time. When we met, he was tall and elegant. He's over six feet tall frame towered over me and although he appeared to be intimidating in his clean-lined uniform, he spoke with a gentle voice that revealed his lovely and gracious nature. We chatted about the weather as we walked into his office, however, there remained unspoken discomfort that remained in the air as if we both knew we were about to discuss something taboo. So, when the question came, “Why us?” the room felt as though he had awakened a ghost that we all tried to hide. There was a sense of what Avery Gordon in her theorization of haunting explained as the awakening of the American consciousness (Gordon, 1997). The issue of blackness in America has always been a hidden subject to White America, something that exists under the surface, that all know but are uncomfortable confronting. However, in the last few years, social media brought this ghost to life, and we were all forced to examine it. There was no more hiding. However, even with that in mind, I was still unsure how to answer this question, “why us?” I knew I was treading on thin ice, and my response would determine whether this project continued.

Theoretical context

My thoughts raced to the theorists that had led me to this topic and population. It all started with Orlando Patterson’s theorization of slavery. Patterson’s book Slavery and Social Death describes slavery as a relational dynamic. As explained by Patterson, an enslaved person is an outsider insider in the community of the master (Patterson, 1982). In this sense, the slave is both local and foreign. He is local in the sense that he is a part of everyday activities, he is normalized in the routines of daily life and his presence is recognized by others (Patterson, 1982). However, he is foreign in the sense that he is not of that community, and as such, he is not afforded the same legal protections and rights as the citizens of that community (Patterson, 1982). In this sense, he is both visible and invisible. However, what is key to our understanding of the racialization of Black people in America is the enslaved person’s foreign otherness. It is his foreignness/otherness that marks the enslaved person’s difference and his lack of legal subjectivity. As such, this difference marks him as an enemy from within, particularly one that has to be controlled, regulated, and in some cases, expelled. The key argument made by

Patterson is that slavery, unlike other forms of labor, both voluntary and forced, is a form of social death. The uniqueness of slavery lies in the notion that it is comprised of three elements: (1) natal alienation, in which the enslaved person is separated from their home, from their people, and placed in the community of the master, (2) dishonor, which results from the natal alienation, the lack of belonging and the general lack of personhood as one is excluded from the rights and rituals of the master's community, and finally, (3) naked violence, which is the mechanism through which the institution of slavery and social death are maintained (Patterson, 1982). Both the physical activity and psychological threats of violence are ever-looming in the life of a slave. They are brought to the master's community through acts of violence, whether war or conquest. They are kept in the master's community through both the threat of violence and the physical expression of violence (Patterson, 1982). In this sense, gratuitous violence is both structural and performance; it is used to procure slaves and maintain their permanent state of non-being in the master's community (Wilderson III, 2020). Violence thereby constitutes both the prehistory of slavery and the concurrent lived experience of the enslaved person, and police as the arms of the state are instrumental in maintaining the structural and performative aspects of this violence (Wilderson III, 2020). They are tasked with the management and simple control of enslaved people from patrolling slave communities to their present-day iterations of predicting crime in ways that target Black communities.

The physical expression of violence expands beyond traditional understandings of battery to sexual violence, as rape becomes a tool for exerting violence against the slave and a mechanism by which enslaved people are reproduced. Therefore, violence is central to the creation and maintenance of a slave society. However, Patterson's analysis of slavery and social death is comprehensive as it describes the various slave societies throughout history. He does not focus exclusively on anyone and posits that everyone is a potential slave and master. Through this lens, slavery and social death are positions that change over time as new societies emerge and change occurs.

However, in this dissertation, I focus exclusively on American slavery and the global exportation of the slave status to all peoples of African descent, regardless of their actual history as either enslaved or non-enslaved peoples. The uniqueness of American slavery compared to other historical forms of slavery lies in the foundation of this nation. In his groundbreaking work, The Racial Contract (1999), Social philosopher Charles Mills examines how racialization is essential to understanding our current world. Unlike Marxist theories that offer a perspective in which the world system is predicated on the struggle between the owners of capital and the workers or gender theorists who argue that the world is divided along gender lines instead of capital; a world in which the patriarchy is the dominant system of society, or even post-colonial theory, in which the world is divided between the settler and the native. Mills argues that white supremacy is the foundational system on which modern society is built (Mills, 1999).

Mills' argument centers around the Western concept of the social contract. The social contract was presented by philosophers such as Hobbs, Locke, and Rousseau as an unspoken agreement between a state and its citizens (Mills, 1999). In this agreement, the state provides protection, rules, and laws, in exchange for citizen civic participation (Mills, 1999). However, this social contract automatically excludes enslaved people through their non-person status. Therefore, through chattel slavery, the American liberal state created two categories of people, the living, and the dead. The first is "we the people." These are the people given sociolegal status by the state and are designated as participants in the social contract between the state and its citizens. The second group is excluded from "we the people" and thus consists of outsiders to the state. As explained by Orlando Patterson, these individuals can be understood as members of the slave class, therefore, as outsiders (Patterson, 1982). Mills (1999) expands on this distinction between "we the people" and the "outsiders" as he simplifies this process by redefining "we the people" through the lens of the American social contract as "we the white people," thus exclusively excluding non-whites from the social contract which simultaneously recasts the social contract as a racial contract (Mills, 1999). Through this understanding of this liberal state and its social contract with its citizens, it becomes clear that race in America is thus produced through this symbiotic relationship between the state and white supremacy. Through this lens, global white supremacy intersectionality encompasses both Marxist and gender theories as a power structure of both formal and informal rule in which legal benefits and duties, as well as gendered and socioeconomic privilege, are predicated by a racial hierarchy that leaves slaves and their descendants as non-persons (Mills, 1999, Crenshaw, 1989).

Building on the work of both Orlando Patterson and Frantz Fanon, afro pessimists (Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson III, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014; Wilderson III, 2020) argue that Blackness is an ontological category of non-being. This perspective differs from an intersectional approach that argues for examining the interaction of all these identities without giving supremacy to one of these identities (Crenshaw, 1989). Afro-pessimism argues that the ontology of Blackness as non-human organizes and mediates all supplemental categories of identification, such as ethnicity and class. My understanding of race, class, and gender are influenced by Afro-pessimism as the centrality of race as supported by ethnographic evidence of the interactions between individuals of black, white, and Hispanic, as well as lower and middle classes, different genders, which illustrates that race is central to our configuration of individual identities in America (Shange, 2019; Bell, 2018; Vargas, 2018; Smith, 2016; Wilderson III, 2014; Rios, 2011). Blackness exists in opposition to whiteness, and every other racial category between the two strives to separate itself from associations with blackness (Muhammad, 2010; Wacquant, 2010). This is primarily seen in the whitening of immigrants in the U.S. (Muhammad, 2010). The uniqueness of American chattel slavery and the subsequent global exportation of antiblackness racism through colonialism, blacks, unlike other ethnic groups, are marked by their skin to forever exist in permanent underclass status (Fanon, 1963; Biko, 1979). Evidence for this position is provided by African immigrants to the US and other parts of the world, where they are treated mainly as the lowest group on the social ladder (Smith, 2017). The loss of ethnic honor experienced by those subjected to the transatlantic slave trade has subsequently become globalized to the loss of ethnic honor among all peoples of African descent, regardless of their status as formerly enslaved or not. As such, blackness is a different kind of racialization than other racial identities due to the permanence of anti-black racism, which is easily marked by black skin.

Anti-Black racism is neither unique nor limited to the US. Although this project is limited to the US, anti-Black violence is a global phenomenon that has diasporic implications for all those epidermalized as Black as ethnographic research in Brazil, France, and South Africa has demonstrated. The state of social death and non-personhood for peoples of African descent has expanded to include all with black skin, leaving the state of social death permanent and not simply tied to American sociolegal categorizations. For that reason, I will be referring to my participants as Black as described by scholars such as Franz Fanon, who recognized that blackness as a social and relational category is epidermalized on the skin of all peoples of African descent, making slavery and its resulting social death, a permanent state (Fanon, 2008). Although the epidermalization of blackness marks all those with black skin, social death is not without agency but one with revolutionary power. Fanon argues that attempts to curtail black life result in collective claims by black people of black life as being (Fanon, 2008). This brings us to the events that brought Officer Davis to the question, “why us?”

In 2014, a love letter sparked a global cultural revolution. In 2013, a black teenager, Trayvon Martin, was shot and killed by his white neighbor, Andrew Zimmerman. Following Zimmerman’s acquittal from all charges, Alicia Garza, a black activist from Oakland, California, and one of the Black Lives Matter Movement founders put into words the collective sorrows of the black community. Written from the perspective of a grieving sister, who had lost her brother, Garza took black Americans in her arms and sought to comfort people who were realizing that even with a black President, the nation still did not value or love black life. The centrality of anti-blackness remained constant and pervasive (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014; Sharpe, 2016). The sadness that engulfed this feeling of defeat after what had appeared to be hope for a new era gave rise to the failures of the Reconstruction era. At this moment, the ghosts of the past were creeping back in. It was following the hope of freedom in the post-emancipation era that was met with the full brutality of the post-reconstruction period. The memories of the Black Wall Street, a time where people thrived and were building intergenerational wealth, all to be brutally and violently destroyed at the hands of white violence (Johnson, 1998). It was the continuation of the cycle of violence that had begun on the shores of African coasts when the ancestors were brutally extracted from their homelands and brought to the shores. Carol Anderson aptly described it as white rage (Anderson, 2017). Following periods of Black challenges to the social order or what can be referred to as efforts towards Black economic and social liberation, white rage was never far behind. Acting as vigilante police forces (in some cases involving actual police officers), white rage expressed itself as retribution for what was viewed as potential slave revolts. This gratuitous expression of violence is triggered by acts of resistance. Therefore, to maintain the social order, the enslaved person must be constantly reminded of their position as an enslaved person through performative acts of violence. Garza's love letter was written to hug and comfort a people who had so frequently seen these horrors. It was one that highlighted this continuity and frustration against this never-ending assault. In her love letter to Black people, in a world that had continued to deny us life, humanity, and personhood, she wrote a love letter in which she stated, "*We don't deserve to be killed with impunity. We need to love ourselves and fight for a world where Black lives matter. Black people, I love you. I love us. We matter. Our lives matter (*Alicia Garza, "Love Letter to Black Folks," 2013). Following Garza's letter, her friend and co-founder of BLM created the now global hashtag from the last three words. The hashtag simply read #BlackLivesMatter. This simple hashtag, born out of sisterly love for a lost brother, sparked a movement that aimed to dismantle one of white supremacies' largest and staunchest defending institutions: American policing. The visibility of the violence against black boys and men, from Trayvon Brown to George Floyd, illustrated that the ghosts of America's past continued to haunt the present (Morrison, 1987; Gordon, 1997). In American society, the centrality of anti-Black racism (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014; Sharpe, 2016) became glaringly evident and impossible to avoid. What had been buried had suddenly been reawakened. It became clear that however far the nation had come, civil rights and justice under the law continued to allude black people.

At this time, police and victims of police violence were cast as two distinct and separate categories. Police were cast as white subjects, while the victims of police brutality were exclusively cast as black subjects. It was at this junction that this dissertation was conceived. In thinking about policing and the police, I thought about the officers I had seen in the areas I had frequented, most of whom were black. As academic conversations and political debates raged on about the nature of the police, I began to contemplate what it meant to be both black and blue. At this nexus of what appeared to be increasingly inconceivable conflicting identities, I decided to rest my inquiry.

Going back to the question, “why us.” As I thought about my response, I thought about all these events, from the theories that had guided my thoughts to the political movement that had taken over the world. However, most importantly, I thought about my position as a black woman in America, living in an anti-Black world, navigating careers that, at times, put me at odds with the black community. I was simultaneously a victim of anti-Black racism and, at times an agent of the perpetuation of this violence. Jared Sexton, one of the key figures of afro-pessimism, uses the term “borrowed institutionality” to describe the temporality of black social and political agency as merely borrowed to be quickly returned to the master’s when demanded. It is what Carol Anderson describes in her analysis of white rage as a retributive force that follows periods of black success (Anderson, 2017). In this dissertation, I propose the term “borrowed personhood” to describe the position of black agents of anti-black racism.

I answered Captain Davis’ question by telling him a little bit about myself. I told him that I had previously worked as a social worker and, in that position, I was not only responsible for policing the black family, and I also worked alongside police officers who served as a backup in encounters where we did not feel safe. In this role, I was introduced to the different forms through which black life is policed in everyday life. I also told him that my interest in this topic heightened when my brother joined the military. Walking down the street with him in regular clothing, he was treated like any other black man. To some, he was a threat, and they simply crossed the street to avoid him, others clutched their purses, but he was largely invisible for the most part. This notion of both invisibility and hypervisibility as attributed to black American people is primarily attributed to Ellison's Invisible Man (1952), in which he theorizes that black men are both invisible as in excluded from personhood but also hypervisible as their physical presence represents a threat to society, leading to hysterical blindness, in which one fears the unseen. The physical body of the black man, in this sense, my brother, becomes the threatening ghost that haunts white society.

However, when he was in his uniform, he was neither a threat nor invisible. Instead, he transformed into someone entirely different. In the army uniform, he became a person. He was visible and accepted. People who would typically clutch their purses or walk on the other side of the street suddenly opened doors for him. They looked to him for directions and assistance. The uniform transformed him from a non-entity to a respectable member of society. I told the captain that seeing my brother and his uniform made me think about the discourse that surrounded the police and policing.

The duality of this existence as both person and non-person was grounded in my brother's capacity for violence. As an ordinary black man, he is a threat to society; however, in uniform, he is a vector for violence through which others can accomplish themselves. In thinking through this duality during the BLM movement, I pondered the question of the role of Black police officers who had been rendered invisible in the discourse surrounding police and anti-Blackness. As I was speaking, he sat there with a blank stare. His facial expressions did not betray him, so I could not read him. After I finished, he said, "okay," and excused himself as he walked out of the room. I was left sitting there terrified that I had failed an interrogation. He returned with a younger officer, Officer Jenkins. He told me that he too had been in the military, as have many in his unit and that they routinely have social service calls so they understand how challenging the position can be. He concluded by saying he had been called into a meeting, so he could not participate in my study today. However, Officer Jenkins had agreed to take his place, and he was going to recruit other Officers who might be willing to chat with me. I breathed a sigh of relief, knowing that this project was getting off the ground.

Therefore, this dissertation is situated at the disjuncture between a broader social structure, particularly the rise of a civil rights movement and its articulation in everyday life. I have hoped that working at understanding the gaps between social movements and the kinds of visions they produce, and the way they are played out by those existing complicated realities of both victim and perpetrator would enable us to understand the context of policing while black differently. In its attention to culture and lived experience, anthropology presents an opportunity for us to explore these articulations and give voice to borrowed personhood. Borrowed personhood is a theoretical framework that I have developed as an expansion of the borrowed institutionality that was initially theorized by Jared Sexton and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to increase more significant numbers of minoritized people in professional and leadership positions across institutions. I examine what it means to be diverse, inclusive, and equitable in spaces where black social death persists. In examining these questions, this dissertation appears to deviate from afro-pessimism by also recognizing black people as agentive, as participants in oppressive apparatuses such as policing but remains in line with the afro-pessimistic perspective on Black social death that is argued by Saidiya Hartman and Wilderson (Hartman, 1997; Wilderson III 2014, Wilderson III, 2020), while challenging their premise that enslaved people are not agents of their own will and volition. This project deviates from Patterson (1982) but mainly decentering the slave-master relational dynamic and mainly focusing on the slave-slave internal dynamics. As such, this dissertation follows afro-pessimists such as Jared Saxton and cultural theorists such as Fred Moten challenge to this notion of enslaved people as instruments of other people's needs without their own will and volition to task by arguing what is known as borrowed institutionality (Sexton, 2012; Moten, 2008). This perspective examines Black life through the everyday lived experiences of social life in social death on a plantation. Borrowed institutionality thereby examines agency inside of social death. As this dissertation will show, those living with borrowed institutionality, such as police officers, also suffer from the same gratuitous violence that befalls their disposable brethren in expressions of anti-Blackness. Structurally, these two groups are the same in the paradigm of slavery as social death. Those participating in oppressive apparatuses are simultaneously instruments of anti-Blackness and victims of its oppression. To understand borrowed institutionality, I employ the concept of complex personhood that was theorized by Avery Gordon (1997). This theory attempts to understand the contradictions, the suffering, greed, selfishness, and transformations that make up the human experience (Gordon, 1997). In a form, this theory is in line with both black feminist conceptualizations of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and anthropology of the good (Robbins, 2013) in their effort to understand the multifaceted nature of personhood. It is a theoretical shift from the anthropological considerations of the suffering subject (Bourgois, 2002; Farmer, 2005; Karandinos et al 2014; Ralph, 2014), which views suffering from both Marxist and gendered perspectives. I will be expanding on this theory by introducing the notion of irrevocable structural violence. The idea of irrevocable structural violence stems from an understanding of the epidermalization of anti-blackness, meaning the structural barriers faced by black people cannot be removed as blackness is embedded on their skin. This theory of irrevocable structural violence centers afro-pessimist thought in my analysis, as Afro-pessimism posits the centrality of anti-blackness above all other forms of violence and suffering. Blackness, unlike other forms of oppression, has no real end. It cannot simply be upended by giving capital to the worker, dismantling the patriarchy, or returning land to the natives. Unlike these forms of structural violence, blackness is epidermal in a way that makes it biological. It is a struggle of life and death between the living and the socially dead. As such, borrowed personhood attempts to understand those in the state of in-between, where they're temporarily living, and the decisions made during that time. Taking a multifaceted approach to our understanding of personhood allows us to recognize that although race remains central, the human experiences that are encompassed under the umbrella of race lack uniformity.

This dissertation examines those who reside in the middle, those who are both good and bad, both victims and perpetrators, and the stories that they tell themselves about themselves, the challenges they face, their social worlds, the changing sociopolitical climate, and how they navigate through a space of in-betweenness. As American culture changes, these individuals are the precipice of a future reawakening ghosts of the past. Through the centrality of anti-blackness, this project explores the ways that African American police officers see themselves as black people who are both victims and weapons of white supremacy and their perceptions of where they fit in this narrative (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014; Sharpe, 2016).

Although policing is not yet a significant research focus in cultural anthropology. This project builds upon a growing body of literature that examines the ways through which police operate on the ground. Traditionally, anthropologists have avoided studying the police, leaving this area of research to criminologists. A large part of this avoidance was due to the dependency of early anthropological researchers on the colonial governments (Malinowski, 1926; Malinowski, 1984). By not wanting to be seen as oppositional to local governments, thereby allowing their research to be conducted undeterred, anthropologists made a calculated decision to ignore the colonial enterprise and instead focus on the "other" (Malinowski, 1926; Malinowski, 1984), leading to the disciplinary nickname: "The Handmaiden of Colonialism" (Erickson and Murphy, 2013).

It wasn't until Clifford Geertz in Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight that policing was somewhat brought to the forefront of anthropological research. In this anecdotal text, Geertz went against the police, allowing him to build rapport with local populations (Geertz, 1973). In this sense, being against the police was a means to an end, not necessarily a challenge to their authority and the role they play in everyday life.

Around the time of Geertz's writing, anthropology as a discipline was going through a metamorphosis as a reaction to the world around it. Following a Boasian shift, anthropology began cultivating a largely antiracist legacy that became heightened following the decolonization and civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Fanon, 1963; Fanon, 2008; Jackson & Jackson, 2006; Hall, 1978; Shakur, 1987). This disciplinary shift is tied to broader sociopolitical movements that have inspired the restructuring of old academic disciplines to separate itself from its early iterations.

With these new perspectives, questions of power and the state's role in managing and controlling populations came to the forefront of anthropological thought. Policing and being policed began subjects of inquiry. The narratives of those who are policed dominated anthropological thought. Scholars such as Laurence Ralph and Christen Smith examined both historical and contemporary policing practices (Ralph, 2013; Smith, 2016). On the other hand, the Comaroffs wrote about public safety and police power in post-Apartheid South Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2016). Most notably, scholars such as Didier Fassin conducted ethnographic studies with the police themselves, attempting to understand the way French officers police African and Middle Eastern migrant communities in Paris (Fassin, 2013). My project builds on and adds to this work by examining how Black officers police Black people in America, their agency, and the structural limitations of their position as Black and Blue.

Chapter contents, research design, and methods

Methodologically, this project answers Laura Nader's (1972) famous call to anthropologists to study the powerful. Traditionally, anthropologists have focused their analyses on the powerless by giving voice to the voiceless and sharing the narratives of marginalized communities. However, Laura Nader (1972) asks us to study those in positions of power, those whose actions result in the suffering of others. With this in mind, this dissertation is a study of power. It is a study of police officers who have been shown to make daily decisions about life and death. I sought to understand how the everyday practices of policing are shaped and shape formal rules and procedures, politics, and informal daily acts such as the hopes, fears, race, class, and gender positions of the police themselves. As such, I employed ethnographic methods from participant observation to semi-structured interviews with both the police and those who are policed. It is comprised of forty semi-structured interviews with members of the police force, ranging from Officers to Captains. Thirty-five of these participants are men, and five are women. Additionally, this dissertation is also comprised of eight community member semi-structured interviews and four community leader semi-structured interviews.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first is the introduction which provides a brief overview of the dissertation topic and the theories that guide it. The second chapter examines the history of policing in the United States, from its origins in colonial America to its present state, with a strong focus on Southern policing. The third chapter focuses on the black communities that are policed. Their interactions with the police, their reactions to the police, and their visions for the future of policing. The fourth chapter examines police themselves and their experiences on the force, their responses to the Black Lives Movement, and their efforts to reform the field. The fifth chapter examines the proposed national solutions to policing and the debates surrounding the Defund the Police movement. Lastly, the conclusion provides theoretical insights into the role and nature of policing in the US and its relationship to blackness.

Chapter 2: From Objects to Subjects?

"We've always been policed. We fought hard to become the police. The Atlanta eight, these guys were the first to join the force here, and it wasn't easy for them but look where we are now. Our chief is black and most of us are black. Change doesn't come easy though. I always tell people that my mother hated cops before I become one because we've been on the receiving end of this profession, and it hasn't always been good (Lieutenant Hillingdale, male officer, late 40s)*."*

As he spoke, I could sense both a ping of pride and discomfort as he discussed the journey of Black officers in America. As Lieutenant Hillingdale took a sip of his water, I couldn't help but think back to the statement, "*we've always been policed*." Although said in passing, it was a powerful reflection of the fraught relationship between the Black community and police officers. This chapter seeks to examine this relationship and the role that Black officers have played in being both the objects and subjects of policing.

"*We've always been policed*." To understand the fullness of this statement, I begin this journey not on American soil but in Africa and in the deep waters that became known as the middle passage. Enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas via brutal extraction, with their bodies and movements policed to prevent escape. This was the beginning of the policing of black people in the Americas. This policing only intensified in the middle passage, where slave traders worked to ensure that captured enslaved people would not try to escape or take over the ship. Enslaved people were whipped, chained, and beaten into submission to prevent any forms of rebellion against the crews. Once on American shores, the policing of Black slaves diverged into two parts: Northern and Southern policing.

Colonial and Antebellum Policing

Northern policing in colonial America began as informal formal watch or city guard systems that followed the British policing method of targeting groups that were categorized as dangerous classes. This form of policing was originally developed by Sir Robert Peel as a response to crime in England. Dangerous classes consisted of those deemed to be of low moral character, particularly; the poor, criminals, prostitutes, homeless populations, people of unwanted religious affiliations (for example Catholics) and ideological beliefs as well as unwanted foreigners (Jackson, & Schultz, 1972; Kanstroom, 2007). Religion, wealth, health, and morality were therefore the common measures of acceptability. These common measures of acceptability were exercised to control, manage, and in some instances exclude or expel individuals or groups from the colonies (Kanstroom,2007). This idea of categorizing people or groups of people as dangerous classes sets the stage for public fear and state-sanctioned exclusionary policies that have persisted through time. Groups labeled as dangerous classes were "othered" in ways that stigmatized their very beings. To manage and control these groups, proto-police forces known as formal watches or city guards were formed to protect citizens from dangerous classes (Jackson, & Schultz, 1972; Kanstroom, 2007). These formal watch or city guard systems laid the foundation for what would become policing in America. Although Northern cities did not operate on a premise of specifically targeting Black slaves, the inclusion of Blackness as a dangerous class category under the guise of presumed low moral character, set the stage for hyper surveillance and extrajudicial policing practices that continue to this day. Antebellum records show that in cities such as Philadelphia, free Black Americans were arrested and convicted at disproportionately larger rates when compared to their white counterparts for the same crimes (Curry, 1981). As such, prisons across Northern states were filled with Black inmates. Thus, the idea that Black Americans were habitual criminals was implanted in the American psyche long before the Civil War.

As Southern States clamped down on escaped slaves and Northern States for being safe havens for escaped slaves, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 forced Northern States to adopt a more vigilant and punitive attitude towards Black Americans who sought freedom (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.). Thus, the status of Black Americans, although better in the North than in the South, was also precarious and one filled with both the threat and actual acts of white violence.

On the other hand, Southern states did not adopt the British model that operated by targeting dangerous classes but instead focused on the issue of slavery. The main goal was to control and regulate the behavior of slaves to prevent opportunities for escape and rebellion. In attempts to meet this goal, Southern states developed a policing system which became known as the black, Negro, or slave codes (Cross, 1964; Dulaney,1996). These codes regulated the movement and behavior of Black people, by preventing slave gatherings, preventing them from carrying or owning weapons, limiting their movement by preventing them from leaving plantations without passes or permission slips, and most importantly, disrespecting or attacking a white person (Dulaney,1996). The punishment for violating any of these codes ranged from whippings, and castrations, to hangings. These punishments were not only dehumanizing, they were designed to kill not only the physical body of those who challenged them but to kill the resolve to fight back in those remaining.

These codes were enforced by what was known as slave patrollers (Sheth, 2009). The slave patrol was comprised of all white men who were required by law to punish any disobedient slave. Punishing slaves became part of Southern civic duty and participation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mills (1999) expands on Patterson’s (1982) distinction between slaves and whites by creating categories of “we the people” and the “outsiders” as he simplifies this process by redefining “we the people” through the lens of the American social contract as “we the white people” thus exclusively excluding non-whites from the social contract which simultaneously recasts the social contract as a racial contract (Mills, 1999). Through this understanding of this liberal state and its social contract with its citizens, it becomes clear that white racial identity in America is thus produced through this symbiotic relationship between the state and civic participation. As such, the performance of racial performance becomes key to the formulation of white identity. Policing thereby becomes central to white male identity. Slave patrolling as civic participation increased the belief and support for racial purity that served to unite poor whites along with rich landowning whites over their shared superiority and exclusivity (Sheth, 2009). White Southern male identity is therefore tied to having policing power over Black people.

Ariella Gross’ analysis of racial performativity provides another layer of the gendered dimension to our understanding of the production of whiteness and racialized policing (Gross, 2010). According to Gross (2010), the gendered formulations of whiteness as behavior was largely predicated on the performance of civic duties, which during the time of the cases and to some extent even now, are largely gendered. A reputable white man was defined as one who performed his civic duty by voting, serving on a jury or serving on a militia, or as a slave patrol. This idea of white masculinity is seen today as ethnographic evidence of white members of the US military, and police forces generally list civic duty as one of the main reasons for enlisting (Finley, 2011). We also see that the idea of white masculinity as part of a racialized masculinity tied to civic participation extends to informal white male violence against black and brown peoples as they feel justified in protecting their communities from the threat of the black or brown body (Ritskes, 2015). White masculinity is thus largely tied to the civic performance of state protection. On the opposite end, black masculinity is largely categorized as criminal and deviant thus deserving of persecution by white males (Ritskes, 2015). It is therefore no coincidence that black males make up the majority of criminal justice-involved males in the nation, which denies them the right to vote and subsequently, prevents them from completing their civic duty as members of this polity (Alexander, 2010; Goffman, 2015). Even with the Civil Rights Movement's attempt to reconfigure the racial contract into a social contract, the continued racialized criminalization of black males reproduces and maintains the objectives of race-based exclusionary citizenship (Alexandra, 2010). The slave patrol laid the groundwork for policing Black Americans as we see to this day.

First Black Officers

Although this racist and hostile environment served to promote white supremacy and embolden the white community against the Black community, the antebellum period was also the same period in which we see the first Black American police officers. These pioneers worked within a system in which the color of one's skin not only determined one's legal and lived outcomes but also one in which they had to explicitly participate in the oppression of Black people (Dulaney,1996). What may seem like a contradiction between individual autonomy, the opportunity for personal advancement, and the lack of racial solidarity is the groundwork for the promotion of Black civil rights.

Who were these first Black officers? The first Black American police officers were free men of color who were members of the New Orleans City Guard (Everett, 1953; Dormon, 1977; Berlin, 1974). These free men of color could also be understood as "slaves without masters" (Berlin, 1974). New Orleans was unique in that unlike other Southern slave colonies, it had high rates of intermarriages between Black women and White men ((Dunbar-Nelson, 1916; Dunbar-Nelson, 1917; Everett, 1953; Dormon, 1992). As a result, the children of these unions – mixed race individuals formed the largest proportion of the “free people of color” population. They not only straddled the racial lines as neither Black nor White but also the citizenship lines as free in a world where the one-drop rule left those with Black ancestry in a permanent slave state, regardless of their legal status (Berlin, 1974). Despite these challenges, free persons of color established themselves as a strong and powerful economic and social group in the city (Dunbar-Nelson, 1916; Dunbar-Nelson, 1917; Berlin, 1974). Their desire to maintain their own position and status saw them at odds with their enslaved counterparts (Berlin, 1974). They sought to separate themselves from slaves and ultimately, from the shackles of Blackness by ascribing to White notions of citizenship. This allowed them to join the New Orleans police force on which they served until 1820 (Everett, 1953; Berlin, 1974). During this time, their primary responsibility was policing Black slaves, most notably in suppressing the 1811 slave insurrection (Everett, 1953; Berlin, 1974). Their participation in this suppression laid to rest fears that arming black men would be a threat to the colony. They were loyal citizens and they sought to enjoy the rights and privileges of American citizenship. If this meant serving as slave catchers, patrolling, terrorizing, and suppressing black communities, these men were up to the task in order to improve their own precarious status in a society in which servitude was epithelialized on one’s skin. It was clear even then, that regardless of the color and legal status of early police, the institution served to promote and protect white interests. therefore, despite all their efforts to prove their loyalty to white supremacy, as the immigration of white populations into the city increased, these individuals lost their positions to incoming white officers. No matter how much they rose; their Blackness still made their position precarious. Their class and multiracial identity could not protect them from anti-Blackness. Ultimately, it was the Blackness that they had worked hard to distance themselves that defined them. Although not much is known about these individuals, one can speculate that these individuals did what they could to survive in a world that was openly hostile to them, that they were motivated by both self-interest and a sense of duty and service to a nation they considered theirs.

Even today, we see that the motivations for joining the force are still fraught between middle-class stability and the desire to improve the outcomes for the Black community. These officers, like their pioneering forefathers, recognize the contradictions in being Black and blue but in spite of these difficulties, they continue to strive to improve the outcomes for the Black community.

> *"I only joined for the health insurance. What can I say, at that time, I was working 2 to sometimes 3 jobs and had a fiancé (my now wife) who was pregnant with our first baby. I realized that this was not sustainable and the money that I made even in basic, was more than I was making at all those jobs. So, I'm not gonna lie, I was broke and needed something stable. But after a while, I realized that I couldn't see this career as a job and once that switch went off, I became better. I think that's when I felt like I was a cop and actually started working towards helping people and the community, not just seeing this as a paycheck* (Officer Zober, male, 40s)."

Reconstruction Era

The emancipation of American slaves in 1865 was a monumental event in American history that brought about major changes to the nation's relationship with its new Black citizens. It was the first time that all Black people were not only free but full citizens of this nation. What did it mean to be a citizen? Going back to Mills and Gross's understandings of citizenship, this meant that Black people, particularly, Black men could theoretically exercise their rights and obligations to the state by partaking in the civic duty in public arenas such as policing.

Reconstruction Era freed people used their newfound freedom to not only improve their lives but to also challenge and dismantle the logics of white supremacy and black inferiority (Du Bois., 1989; Johnson, 1998). Black Americans had long realized that they could not depend on the police to protect them from white violence. In some instances, police officers routinely participated in the harassment and murder of black citizens. As a result, one of the first post-Civil War demands of Black Americans was a fair and just law enforcement system (Dulaney,1996). Black elites pressured white city leaders to instill Black people in positions of authority such as Black police officers by threatening to withhold the Black vote. The first Black police officers in the post-Civil War South were appointed in New Orleans in 1867 after newly enfranchised citizens threatened to elect a Black mayor (Dunbar-Nelson, 1917). Unlike their free men of color predecessors, these Reconstruction Era Black officers took positions with the notion that Black people were now fully recognized as American citizens, with the same sociolegal power as their white counterparts. For Black citizens, these officers represented a new hope for fair treatment under the law as they were appointed to protect Black citizens from endemic white violence and terrorism that characterized the antebellum era (Cross, 1964; Hacker, 1992). Whites had assumed that these officers would maintain the status quo, as the freemen of color had done, however, their actions of subversion such as refusing to enforce city streetcar segregation laws, demonstrated that Black officers would challenge white authority (Bacote, 1955). Arguments of inherent black inferiority were being challenged by the increased sociolegal power of the newly enfranchised citizens.

This shift in American understandings of race and racialization was expanding beyond Southern black circles. Anthropologists of the time also began to challenge the notions of genetic racial inferiority, Anthropologists such as Edward Burnett Tylor argued that education, instead of biological polygenesis was the only difference between civilized and uncivilized groups of men (Erickson and Murphy, 2013). They argued that the English peasant and the African Negro were culturally similar and with enough education, both could reach civility as seen in the upper classes. This perspective argues that environment, not biology, determines life outcomes.

However, these views did not become mainstream, nor did the success of the reconstruction era last for the majority of black Americans. As argued by Carol Anderson, periods of black success are quickly followed by white backlash (Williams, 2015; Anderson, 2017). White fears of black success during the Reconstruction Era gave rise to Jim Crow laws which were formally codified as law in the South, (with the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court verdict) and also informally practiced in the North (Plessy vs. Ferguson, Judgement, Decided May 18, 1896). These laws created a system in which African Americans were institutionally excluded from equally participating in the dominant white society. This white backlash or better yet, white rage as described by Carol Anderson (2017) is exemplified by Police Commissioner Heddinger's 1898 declaration that "It would be a humiliation of Anglo-Saxon blood to appoint colored policemen and have them arrest white citizens" (Dulaney,1996). White resentment of Black officers became one of the most important features of Reconstruction governments. It can be argued that tapping into this hatred helped pave the way for the Redemption Era.

Although short-lived, the presence of Black police officers in the post-Civil War South achieved equality and mobility that was not seen again in most places until the 1960s. During their short time as officers, these freedmen arrested whites, worked in all areas of the cities in which they served, and were instrumental in mitigating some of the post-Civil war violence against Black Americans (Dulaney,1996). These individuals challenged genetic arguments for white supremacy and paved the way for the full inclusion of Black Americans in American policing.

Redemption Era/Jim Crow Era

*"Law enforcement means domination, and the white man is not used to being dominated by negroes" (Mississippi Whig Politician Ethelbert Barksdale) (*Dulaney,1996: 15)

The redemption era, also known as the Jim Crow Era, is a period of time between the Reconstruction Era and the Civil Rights Era in which we see the formal codification of post-Civil War anti-Blackness in the American South (Dulaney,1996). During this period, we see white politicians tapping into white American fears of the Black peril and the fears of black revenge terrorizing white communities. They feared that Black people were getting out of their place, better known as being “uppity” (Dulaney,1996). To white Americans, Black people were of inferior stock, always slaves, so the idea of Black success challenging these genetic assumptions under which the nation was built proved difficult. In response to the "Africanization" of previously white-dominated sociopolitical systems such as policing, white backlash resulted in the expulsion of Black leadership and their Republican allies from elected office (Dulaney,1996). The result was a retake of the South by Southern democrats, which gave way to oppressive and violently brutal Jim Crow laws. White Southerners immediately enacted black codes which sought to return new Black American citizens to a slave-like status (Muhammad, 2010). These laws created a system in which Black Americans were institutionally excluded from equally participating in the dominant white society. Blacks were once again relegated to a quasi-slavery socioeconomic system in which sharecropping was the only viable employment opportunity in the Southern States. Southern blacks were relegated to a quasi-slavery system in which state-based terror that reasserted white dominance over their lives (Muhammad, 2010; Reichel, 1998; Williams, 2015).

Howard Rabinowitz in his research found that during this period, Black Americans were punished at a higher rate than their white counterparts for the same crimes (Rabinowitz, 1976). Black Americans were punished to the fullest extent of the law for crimes that were routinely ignored when committed by whites (Rabinowitz, 1976). During the redemption era, the criminalization of Black Americans far exceeded what would be expected for their population (Rabinowitz, 1976). The reconstruction era's hope of improved policing practices for newly enfranchised citizens failed in practice as Black codes dominated the criminal justice system. Systematically, Black officers were removed from police departments for minor infractions or openly racist changes in the legal system that by 1910, there were no Black officers remaining in most Southern states, including South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama (Rabinowitz, 1976; Dulaney,1996).

Second-Class Status

"Negro Police are the greatest menace to white supremacy in the city since Reconstruction days." (Democratic Mayor West Tennessee 1927: Dulaney,1996*: 31)*

The redemption era brought with it the elimination of Black Americans from police forces all over the South. The confederates had been in their terms, "redeemed" to the position on the top of the racial hierarchy. In this quasi-slavery state, white supremacy once again reigned supreme. It wasn't until the 1940s that Black Americans were again employed as police officers in deep Southern states (Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana) (Dulaney,1996). Through the implementation of Jim Crow laws and the employment of anti-

Black police officers, unabated violence and intimidation of Black Americans continued at the hands of law enforcement (Hacker, 1992).

Resolute, Black Americans all over the South continued to advocate for Black inclusion in police forces. White politicians and police chiefs all over the region continued to thwart the efforts by either outright refusing to hire Black Americans or by making it impossible for Black candidates to pass their entrance exams Atlanta was one such notable city (Bayor, 1992).

Black Police in Atlanta

Atlanta was one of the few major Southern cities that did not admit Black officers to their police during the reconstruction era (Bayor, 1992). White Atlantans closed rank to ensure that Black Americans would be excluded from city positions, including those in the police department. White Democrats were successful in tapping into white voter fears of Africanized police forces thereby making it imperative to not only redeem the city and regain political power in Georgia but to also ensure that Black political power was limited, if not outright eliminated (Bayor, 1992). Redemption in 1872, effectively put in an end to Black political power (Bayor, 1992; Dulaney,1996).

Reeling from a series of defeats such as Redemption in 1872, Black Americans continued to seek political representation and inclusion in the city's public sectors including the police department (Dulaney,1996). The white Atlanta police department continued to serve as an oppressive force in the Black community well into the twentieth century. In the Atlanta 1906 race riots, for example, the police not only supported the mob that was shooting and killing Black citizens and burning them out of their homes, but many officers also participated in the riot by disarming, attacking, and murdering black citizens (Dulaney,1996). Additionally, during this time the majority of people arrested and prosecuted by the police were Black Americans for infractions that were ignored when committed by white citizens indicating the deliberate systematic targeting and oppression of Black citizens by law enforcement (Dulaney,1996). These incidents only emboldened the Black community to continue their fight for representation in the police force.

In 1933, the city's Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) in collaboration with the Committee for Citizens submitted a request to the Atlanta city council with data supporting why Black Americans should be hired to the Atlanta police force. Their data argued that Black Americans should be hired into the police force because: "(1) This would help decrease Black homicide rates, (2) It would reduce the workload of white officers, (3) It would help to control Black communities, (4) it would help improve police relations in the Black community and thereby improve Black behavior, (5) this is something that had already been successfully implemented in other Southern cities" (Atlanta NAACP et al., 1937).

This argument of race-based policing as a method of curtailing crime in Black communities had been the driving force behind the support for Black police officers. It was also based on the belief in inherent Black criminality. Even those trying to help the Black communities resolved to making arguments that sought to make Black people respectable through behavioral improvement, not necessarily challenging the structural conditions that placed individuals in positions that left them vulnerable to becoming a "dangerous class." However, in their desire to maintain the status quo, the Atlanta city council denied this request in 1934 and Atlanta's police department remained all white (Atlanta NAACP et al.,1937; Sisk, 1964).

The movement to employ Black officers gained momentum in 1946 when over 300 Black World War II veterans protested their inability to be employed in Atlanta's police department even though they had fought for this nation against the axis powers (Dulaney,1996). They could not fathom why they were able to serve their nation at the highest order but could not qualify to work in their local police departments (Dulaney,1996).

The pressure on the city's Democratic leadership was increasing and in 1947, Savannah made national headlines as the first city in Georgia to employ Black police officers (Sisk, 1964). This sparked fears among Atlanta's elites as they knew it was only a matter of time before they had to concede to the changing times. In October 1947, The Negro Police Commission finally received the support of Mayor William Hartsfield who supported their proposal to hire Black police officers (Sisk, 1964). Hartsfield's support pressured the city council to consider the proposal of hiring these officers. During the city council hearing on the proposal, white supremacists such as the former Mayor of Atlanta, the State Commissioner of Agriculture, and members of the Ku Klux Klan attended the meeting to prevent the passage of the proposal by intimidating and harassing those in support of the inclusion of Black officers in the police force (Sisk, 1964). Commissioner Linder said that "white supremacy in Atlanta had to be maintained because one race must dominate the other and it had to be white race over the Negroes" (Dulaney,1996). This statement represented the need to maintain the status quo. It was this fear of being dominated by the Black race that drove white rejection of Black officers. Regardless of the opposition from white supremacists, in December 1947, the Atlanta city council finally approved the employment of its Black citizens in the police force (Dulaney,1996).

The city council's approval came with four conditions (Dulaney,1996: 44):

1. Black officers are not allowed to exercise police power over white people.
2. A separate Negro precinct must be established.

3. A delegation must be sent to other southern cities to study their method of operation and regulations.
4. Negro police are not to be given civil service status until their success has been proven

The Atlanta Eight

In April 1948, Willard Strickland, Willie T. Elkins, Johnny P. Jones, Robert McKibben, John Sanders, Jr, Henry H. Hooks, Claude Dixon III, and Ernest Lyons reported for duty as the first Black police officers in Atlanta (Dulaney,1996). This watershed moment represented the first time that Black police officers were allowed to join the Atlanta police department. It was a hard-fought battle that enabled Black Atlantans to finally have representation in law enforcement. It gave renewed hope to Black citizens who had long believed that only their own would be fair and equitable officers (Mullen, 2016). Race-based officers began to mark the end of white supremacy in a city that had been long controlled by confederate Democratic elites. It was the beginning of a new era.

For the Black community, these officers represented a new hope. A new beginning in which one of the last vestiges of white supremacy was being dismantled. Police had long served as the arm of white supremacy, however, those who were policed were finally joining the ranks.

The Atlanta eight were welcomed by their community. They policed the neighborhoods in which they lived, one’s in which they had grown up and knew the community. It gave them and the local residents a sense of belonging as they were serving and protecting their families, friends, and neighbors (Walker, 1983; Brown, 1989; Brown, 1990). During our conversation, Officer Miller mentioned his pride in policing the Black community. He spoke of one incident when arresting a Black suspect. He had arrived at the scene with his white partner to support another team of white officers who were exasperated by an uncooperative suspect. He had been belligerent and not willing to work with officers or follow their commands. However, the suspect was overjoyed to see Officer Miller. He asked only to talk to the Black cop. He had been happy that Officer Miller was there, representing the community. He spoke of how the suspect said: "*Hey, I don't even want to talk to the white folks, I only want to talk to the Black guy"* (Miller, male, 30s). Officer Miller reports how validating this request was as a Black officer surrounded by a group of white officers. It meant one of his own was happy to see him in uniform, felt represented by him, and trusted his arrest to him. He continued "*I'm all the way back and he spotted me and he's like, there's a black officer right there, let me talk to him*" (Miller, male, 20s). Officer Miller joked that although he was happy to be the one chosen by the suspect and understood the significance of his role in the face of Black suspects. The suspect trusted him as a fellow Black person to treat them fairly, to listen to them, and to diffuse the situation without violence. Having one of their own on the force was for Black people, the primary reason why they had fought for hundreds of years to be represented in policing. It is interactions such as these that highlight the importance of representation within this profession. Officer Miller ended this point as he joked that he was also slightly disappointed because this meant he had to write the police report, which resulted in him having to stay late at work and missing dinner plans with his new girlfriend.

The Atlanta eight were practicing what we now know as community policing. This type of policing is what is missed by present-day officers. Their presence in local Black communities helped reduce crime as community members trusted their presence and as a result were more willing to report and come forward with any information regarding crime (Walker, 1983; Brown, 1989; Brown, 1990). The officers that I interviewed lamented the loss of these community police programs. One officer, Officer Bailey spoke fondly of the Officer Happy program that his police department used to offer. He missed the days when officers lived in the neighborhoods that they policed and patrolled the same beats their entire careers. He spoke of how in the good ol' days, officers were part of the community, not just patrolmen from anywhere. The Officer Happy program had allowed officers to build bridges with the community. Because they were part of the community, they worked hand in hand with local residents to promote positive values, to reduce crime, and to steer children away from gangs and gang activity. However, with the advent of the militarization of policing and computerized policing, these programs that had made segregated policing work for the Black community were dismantled in favor of data-driven policing. Officers are no longer working in the same precinct in which they live, they now patrol zones all over the city without opportunities to build relationships with the communities in which they work.

However, with all diversity and inclusion initiatives, there were drawbacks to the Atlanta eight. They were not allowed in the whites-only precincts (Lee, 2013). They were not allowed to wear their uniforms to and from work, they were instead assigned a separate area in which they would get dressed (Lee, 2013). They were also only relegated to policing black neighborhoods, without the possibility of promotion to specialized units such as vice or homicide (Lee, 2013). Most importantly, they were not allowed to arrest white citizens (Lee, 2013). These limitations in power and authority made many both black and white question whether they were real police.

The legacy of not being the real police is still felt today as, during my interview with Officer Miller, he described a situation in which he went in to assist in a domestic violence call. In an attempt to assist the woman who had called in, he recalls that she became agitated as she felt slighted that only Black cops had shown up. He reported that she kept asking, "*where are the real cops at? Why am I only getting the Black cops? I want the white cops. Y'all are racist for* *only bringing the Black cops to the Black woman*" (Officer Miller, male, 20s). This idea of Black cops being less than or not being the real cops is rooted in the early treatment of the first wave of Black police officers in America. Because they were not granted the same authority as their white counterparts, they came to be viewed as less than. In a sense, people policed by Black officers have taken this a slight, as though they are being disrespected by being arrested by the not "real cops".

The struggle of being seen as tokens is one that has continued to plague Black professionals in "white" dominated spheres. In order to be hired, the Atlanta eight had to be the best of the Black community. They had to represent the best that Black people had to offer. Four of the eight had college degrees and two completed their degrees while working in the force (Dulaney, 1996). They had to be twice as good as their white counterparts to garner half the respect. The overwhelming majority of white officers only had high school diplomas but to be considered for the same position, Black officers had to have a college education. They were also watched more intensely by their supervisor, with every minor infraction counting against them, something that white officers rarely contended with. The inequality in treatment continues today as a good number of Black officers in Atlanta hold at least a bachelor's degree, with some holding master's degrees or higher. This was acutely described by Officer Scott as he described his initial fears of inadequacy when he first joined the force.

> *"Going to the academy was intimidating. I had just graduated from college and the majority of the guys in my class had previous military experience. I was worried that I was going to be the dumbest one in the class and you know what that means for us, we aren't held to the same standard. If I fail, we all fail, so that scared me. But you know what, as class started, I quickly realized that these white dudes didn't know anything. I was doing just as well or better*

than most of them. It made me feel better because I wasn't embarrassing us" (Officer Scott, male, 20s).

This idea of having our best people forward is rooted in Black inferiority and white supremacy. Black people are not viewed as individuals but as part of a collective, so the behavior of one reflects the world's perception of the entire race. Other races are not afforded the same level of scrutiny, so both on an individual and group level, Black people have internalized this hatred and worked to present their best people in attempts to advance the goals of the group. We will later explore how the BLM movement has sought to challenge and change this perception.

Separate and Unequal

The Plessy vs. Ferguson verdict had cemented the separate but equal status of Black Americans (Plessy vs. Ferguson, Judgement, Decided May 18, 1896). Although the fight for inclusion had been won, it was only the beginning of the first for equity. Diversity and inclusion without equality meant Black American police were only "half-police", they were not seen by many as "real police." The next struggle would be to dismantle the four conditions set forth by the 1947 city council in their attempt to appease the white populous in the election of Black police officers (Dulaney, 1996).

The Civil Rights Era

In response to this backlash against black success during the Reconstruction Era and the Jim Crow Laws that followed in the Redemption period, Black Americans all over the nation continued to resist their second-class status by challenging their oppression. Black Americans, while operating on the margins of the dominant white society, continued to resist white supremacy and the oppression of black people around the world as a rising social consciousness was growing amongst the black youth through their interactions with other diasporic Africans

(Jackson & Jackson, 2006; Shakur, 1987). This global recognition of shared oppression gave rise to the solidarity of black consciousness movements both here in the US and abroad movements (Biko, 1979; Fanon and Philcox, 1963; Jackson & Jackson, 2006; Shakur, 1987). These continued acts of resistance gave rise to and supported the 1960s Civil Rights Movement which successfully dismantled the Jim Crow system, putting an end to Confederate Redemption. Through the civil rights movement, Black Americans were able to end housing, education, voting, segregation of public spaces, and employment discrimination. The law regarding policing put forth by the Atlanta 1947 City Council was stricken off the books and in 1969, the Atlanta police department officially disbanded the Black beat (Dulaney, 1996). Black officers were able to assume command positions, arrest white citizens, and were officially integrated into white police departments. These changes brought forth a new era of Black policing. No longer were Black officers an "other", or second-class token officers, they were officially being recognized as full members of the police establishment. However, their legitimacy in white policing came with a few complications.

One of the major benefits of segregated policing is that Black citizens felt as though their officers were their own. They worked for their communities and were from their communities. With integration, black police officers were now being transferred to other neighborhoods and were eligible for promotions that removed them from the streets. All these benefits are wonderful for the individual as well as for the group as they represented the progression into full middle-class status. However, these changes represented a shift in the policing of Black communities. New officers without knowledge of the community, its history, and its people were coming in. The seeds of erosion of the trust in the police were being replanted in the communities they served.

A second struggle we see is that these officers now had to contend with the duality of their roles. As the Civil Rights Movement raged on, it was the police that served to protect the State from the citizens. This pitted Black police officers against Black communities who were fighting for the rights of Black citizens. This often meant having to use physical violence against Black protesters in the protection of either white officers or simply the State. Black officers were thereby stuck in the middle between Black and Blue. These instances required Black police officers to choose sides, either fight Black people (who are fighting for them) or protect police officers (for whom their uniform now requires loyalty). In most cases, Black officers did their jobs, they defended officers against the protestors, but in some, they served to protect Black people from overzealous, violent colleagues (Dulaney,1996). These actions eroded the trust between the Black community and Black officers in a way that hasn't been recovered to this day.

We see with the BLM movement; Black police officers continue to wrestle with their sometimes conflicting dual identities.

"Umm, one of the main differences is that even in Black community, they only see me as a cop, not as a black man. They see me as a black cop, not as a black man who is a cop. If you get what I mean. I'm a police officer first. So, they look at the police aspect, they look at the police aspect of the police brutality, you know knocking on your door, you know when you know doing a traffic stop on. So, they see the uniform and a gun and badge first before they identify the individual. They see the destruction, they see the Gestapo, they see the man, they see the government before they see the person the person behind, the person they talking to. The only time that I ain't a cop is when I'm asleep" (Officer Carter, male, 40s).

“But I feel like the only one is the Black Lives Matter to where like its, they can be a little aggressive but like I'm black too, but I’m not looked at as black anymore it’s like I'm looked at as blue. So, I went to Blue” (Officer Denitro, male 20s).

Well. So to be honest it bothers me because it's just like man, my people. Because you know just being honest, like you don't want to be alienated from the black community for what you do as far as a livelihood, career and something that you actually love” (Officer Permino, male 20s).

A third struggle that Black officers experienced was one of expectations (Forman Jr, 2017; Dulaney,1996). The Black community had fought for over half a century to have representation in police forces in the South (Forman Jr, 2017; Dulaney,1996). This was not a struggle that was taken lightly. However, of the Black officers that joined the force, not all believed in policing as a way to move the cause forward. Some simply wanted jobs and stable careers. For these men, it was not a racial calling, but a chance at middle-class stability that drove them. These conflicts between racial representation and personal interest come to head in the decisions made by officers when their dual identities come into collision.

“I only joined for the health insurance. What can I say, at that time, I was working 2 to sometimes 3 jobs and had a fiancé (my now wife) who was pregnant with our first baby. I realized that this was not sustainable and the money that I made even in basic, was more than I was making at all those jobs. So I’m not gonna lie, I was broke and needed something stable. But after a while, I realized that I couldn’t see this career as a job and once that switch went off, I became better. I think that’s when I felt like I was a cop and actually started working towards helping people and the community, not just seeing this as a paycheck” (Officer Zober, male, 40s).

One approach through which that Black police officers attempted to deal with the challenges that came with being both Black and Blue was to form their own professional organizations. (Dulaney,1996). These were not meant to segregate Black officers from their non-Black peers but to recognize that theirs was a unique position and building a community to support each other would enable them to find ways to thrive in a system that was designed to oppress them (Dulaney,1996). These associations also served and continue to serve as a bridge between Black police officers and the larger Black community (Dulaney,1996).

The success of the post-civil rights era was short-lived as Black Americans began to see a similar white backlash to black success as had been witnessed in the Reconstruction Era. However, this expression of white rage took on a new approach. The post-civil rights era also saw the rise of neoliberal globalization, an economic system that led to deindustrialization. The convergence of the success of the Civil Rights movement and deindustrialization thus led to the destruction of the unity of the Black community (Wacquant, 2010; Forman Jr, 2017; Carbado and Richardson, 2018). The middle- and working-class black communities that were united due to their shared natal alienation and social death in the segregated ghettos were spatially, politically, and economically separated due to these social and economic changes as desegregation allowed the out-mobility of the black middle-class from the urban ghettos (Wacquant, 2010; Forman Jr, 2017; Carbado and Richardson, 2018). Although the black middle class is largely underemphasized in works by social theorists such as Michelle Alexander and Carol Anderson, as they focus primarily on race, and not class divides, the effects of their exodus and subsequent political alliance with the white middle class also had detrimental effects on poor, working-class black communities (Alexander, 2010; Anderson, 2017; Carbado and Richardson, 2018; Forman Jr, 2017; Wacquant, 2010). As the Black middle-class in cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. rose to positions of political and economic power, this group, through its political power was able to participate in the policymaking, which, affected the poor and working-class black communities. Through the Black middle-class, a new form of anti-Blackness emerged. This is largely based on covert racial practice in a post-racism world. Through black legislators, the criminalization of drugs, and the stringent laws against welfare programs beginning with the Reagan and increasing in severity with the Clinton administration, middle-class black Americans passed laws that led to the growth of mass incarceration in the Black community (Carbado and Richardson, 2018; Forman Jr, 2017; Wacquant., 2002; Wacquant, 2010). At this point, we see how black police are mobilized to police Black communities in an effort to reduce crime in Black communities. This idea of mobilizing Black officers was rooted in the belief of respectability politics touted by the Black middle class. Like their 1933 counterparts, these 1990s officers were rallied to control the behavior of Black people and the communities. No longer were Black officers being mobilized to support communities, they were being used to enact modern-day Black codes, slavery through incarceration.

These individuals believed with good intention that advocating for the mobilization of law enforcement in black communities, they would help improve the lived outcomes of community residents as lower crime rates increase communities' economic viability, attracting investments, safety, and social mobility. They viewed expedient solutions to crime, most notably through incarceration as means of moving the race towards middle-class status, as they themselves had. The idea was to promote while sacrificing the few that lived on the margins. Anthropological insights on intracommunity class analyses are somewhat discussed in Christine Smith's (2016) exploration of the motivations of black police officers in Brazil. Smith (2016) concludes that although the color of the person in charge is black, the uniform itself remains blue, meaning, the institutions in which black elites are employed are inherently anti-Black so it is not surprising that white interests continue to be served. Smith uses the example of the black slave police whom themselves were chained but nonetheless served the interests of the plantation owners (Smith, 2016). This is seen in the US through motivations, agency, and constraints faced by Black law enforcement and political elites that are twisted to serve white interests. Due to the desire to improve the lived outcomes of Black citizens and communities, increased policing was intended as a means to an end, not an end in itself. The root causes of crime, such as education, employment, and housing were intended to be addressed alongside with policing. However, as many programs that are intended to help the poor, they never came to fruition. Instead, politicians latched on to easy targets such as white fears of the "Black peril," that had worked since slavery, all the way through the redemption era to garner votes that enabled increased policing of Black communities. What these Black leaders and law enforcement officers failed to realize was that "racism's enduring role" would constrain that option and lead to initial decisions of supporting increased criminalization of Black communities. This in turn would have detrimental long-term effects on the communities they originally intended to serve. Smith's analysis is also supported by the Comaroff's work in South Africa as the economic interests of the whites are still supported by the black political elites whether directly or indirectly (Comaroff, & Comaroff, 2017). These examples highlight the intersections of race and class in which white interests reign supreme in the age of colorblindness. Without changes of the systems, changes in diversity will not actually lead to true structural equality (Forman Jr, 2017). This period serves to highlight the ways that Black people, many of whom were initially celebrated by the Black community as agents of change, in the form of fair and just policing practices, became agents, not just victims of anti-Black policing.

Conclusion: Resistance: Contemporary Issues of Policing, Race, and Racialization in America

The exodus of the black middle class from the ghettos to middle-class white suburban communities failed to provide these communities with the class-based protection they hoped to gain. Although liberal whites publicly championed integration, in practice, they strove to maintain the social distance between themselves and African Americans (Wacquant, 2002). Although many Black police officers joined the law enforcement with the hope of escaping poverty, however, middle-class success, even the blue uniform itself did not make them immune to racism. Officer Mitchell recalled being pulled over and randomly stopped by white officers. It was only after he showed them his badge that they tried to find justifications for their illegal searches. He recalls one incident:

"*I was pulled over by these young white cops. It was right here in Georgia; I had been visiting family in Alabama around 11 pm. You know I know the law; I've been in this game for 20 + years and I knew I hadn't done anything wrong, so I let them alone and they talked to me how they wanted. They had no idea that I knew more than them. Once one of them was done trying to mouth off about my car, I showed him my badge. This usually does the trick, and they stop, but maybe he was trying to show up to his friend, so he just continued mouthing off to me. I'm a lieutenant, I'm his superior but because I'm black it didn't matter. He was trying to put me in my place. I finally had enough and threatened to call his supervisor who's white. He then backed off, but it pissed me off because I just thought of how far I have come in my career, in my life as a man, a father, only to be saved by a white colleague. My position got me out of that, but being Black could've easily got me killed*" (Officer Mitchell, male, 50s).

Even those who believed their class to be a protective factor are still routinely reminded that ultimately, they're black. As discussed by W.E.B. Du Bois, the challenge of strivings to be "blue" and the strivings to be "black" — in one "dark body. This one "dark body," which Fanon described as epithelized otherness and afro pessimists contend is the defining feature that makes Blackness, fundamentally different from any other form of oppression in that it cannot be escaped, by money or status. Mobility into middle-class status highlights the ways that anti-Black racism continues to haunt Black people.

The killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in a middle-class suburb reawakened the recognition of black vulnerability in the black middle-class consciousness. Trayvon Martin's shooting and the subsequent police killings of other black men such as Michael Brown and Tamir Rice all brought forth a renewed awareness of the centrality of blackness over class consciousness and thus sparked the Black Lives Matter Movement (Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014).

The threat of the black male body is once again central to our understanding of race and racism as its enduring legacy and permanence in American life continues to affect Americans of African descent, even in this age of colorblindness (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015). Anthropologists and other critical race scholars have argued that the notion of colorblindness has been inadequate in helping address the issues of race and racialization, as evidenced by the inability of the Obama presidency to decrease crimes against black bodies (Anderson, 2017; Coates, 2014; Ritskes, 2015; Sharpe, 2016; Wilderson III, 2014). As argued by Carol Anderson (2017), white rage is highly visible and strongly retaliatory in its violence following black success. This is seen in the Bacon rebellion, the establishment and growth of the KKK during the redemption era, the wars on drugs and welfare following the civil rights movement, and now, the continued permanence of black genocide in the aftermath of the Obama election and the Trump presidency.

As we saw on January 6th, 2021, the Black police who were sworn to protect and service the Capital were under attack from the very same people who claimed Blue Lives Matter. The attack on the Capital highlighted the permanence of anti-Black racism as the same defenders of policing were launching racial epithets at Black police officers in a show of both white supremacy and the “otherness” of Black people in Blue. The message was clear, Blue Lives Matter, meant White Police Lives Matter. Mississippi Whig Politician Ethelbert Barksdale couldn’t have said it better when he said, "Law enforcement means domination, and the white man is not used to being dominated by negroes” (Dulaney,1996: 15).

Chapter 3: Black Rage: The Aftermath

The eruption of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and riots brought about a new face to Black rage. Globally, Black people and their allies were demonstrating that they had enough. What had started off as a response to police violence against Black males, had turned into a movement against global anti-Blackness. In response, individual police officers and police departments had to think of ways to change. The status quo was no longer working, departments were being held accountable for their treatment of Black populations. In the sweep of this movement, I sought to investigate the changes that my local police department was implementing to prevent future incidents of unmitigated violence. The police had to find ways to officially distance themselves and the profession from white supremacy.

History of Black Rage

I am borrowing the term Black Rage from Carol Anderson's White Rage. Anderson conceptualized the term white rage to describe periods of white backlash against what can be viewed as Black socioeconomic and or political advancement. White rage has been seen in many periods throughout history beginning with the introduction of race-based chattel slavery after a successful indentured servant revolt to the Redemption Era which followed the end of slavery and the reconstruction era that saw freedmen gain U.S. citizenship, and begin to make political, economic, and social gains with their newfound freedom. However, despite the hard-fought gains, freedmen and women were faced with new affronts to their freedoms, such as numerous wars on drugs, crime, and poverty that followed the success of the Civil Rights Movement, destroying the black family in their wake, and most recently, the reactionary election of Donald Trump to the office of President following the Obama Presidency. White rage in this sense is the attempt to retain white supremacy in the face of any perceived threats of Black success. As I thought about the ways that white rage manifested itself, I thought about whether there are incidents of the inverse, that is Black rage, and if so, how does it manifest?

In thinking through this, I found that the fear of Black rage has haunted white society as the ever-present threat of reckoning and in a way, one of the primary drivers of white rage: the fear of both Black successes and of Black revenge. This fear can be seen in the construction of both the Black peril and the super predator, both of whom were projections of white sexual violence imposed on Black males. However, instead of expressing itself as Black revenge against whites, Black rage has historically and continues to manifest itself through protest. Protest and riots have been the voices of the unheard and every now and then the Black population has weaponized these forms of expression to garner attention and demand change in a system that has been designed to work against them through its systematic promotion of white supremacy. Examples of Black rage range from slave revolts such as the Nat Turner Revolt, voting rights, anti-lynching campaigns through the redemption era, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Panther Movement, and most recently, the Black Lives Matter Movement. All of these incidents have one thing in common: the demand for equality in treatment both under the law and in civil society.

What started as a Love Letter, erupted in a global expression of Black rage that has not been seen since the Civil Rights Movement and anti-colonial movements of the 1960s, the Black Lives Matter movement has forced our society, from both public and private sectors to reevaluate their relationship with anti-Blackness. Most importantly, it has forced the arm of the state, the police as an institution to reevaluate their role in our society. This chapter explores how one Southern metropolitan police department navigates the post-BLM world.

Black Police Officers in the Aftermath

Black officers had been lauded as the beacons of hope by their communities. The Atlanta eight were celebrated when they joined the force, community members lined the streets to wish them well as they signaled a change to the status quo. Finally, black representation was fully realized in police forces, and the fair and just policing practices that had been long fought for were finally realized. However, by 2015, the nation's mood had shifted into viewing the police as swine. So, what had propelled this seismic change? How were the long sort after the Black officers now the enemies of the people? The answers to this question lie in the nature of police work itself.

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Policing

Beginning in the late 1940s, police departments around the country began to hire Black officers into their departments. It wasn't until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, that most departments fully integrated, with Black officers gaining the opportunity to expand their patrol areas beyond black neighborhoods, to arrest white citizens, and to transfer to more respected and higher-paid units such as homicide, financial or property crimes as well as move up the leadership ladder. The push for affirmative action in the 1970s only served to further promote Black inclusion in a field that was and continued to be the arm of white supremacy. The goal was to use diversity to reduce opportunities for and incidents of police brutality against Black communities. Black officers were assumed to use their sociopolitical capital to end racial discrimination and to fight against police violence. However, these assumptions were made without considering the motivations, attitudes, and incentives that drove Black officers to join the force but also the culture of policing itself.

The nature of policing and the journey that Black officers took to gain full acceptance into police forces made it difficult for Black officers to challenge the status quo. Many had seen or heard stories of those that chose to fight back and instead of being rewarded by the system, were instead terminated. As the previous chapter mentioned, many Black officers even to this day, join law enforcement for the stability the career provides. As such, many were not going to risk their financial and social stability to be race reformers. These issues were placed on the back burner or ignored as Black officers sought personal advancement in the force.

As the BLM movement has shown, the intended hope of diversifying police departments with the hope that inclusion will lead to equitable policing practices enforcement has failed to actualize.

Becoming the Police

"I can't say there was a particular time early on like I mentioned, I got into this for the pay and benefits. However, as things went on, I started to take this role seriously. I realized that I had to change my friends, they like to drink, to party, and do foolish things, that no longer fit with my lifestyle. I had to separate myself from all that" (Officer Harper, male, 40s).

"It's interesting, I started noticing things that I never noticed before. Like in my neighborhood. People that were just sitting around now looked different. I could tell who was on drugs or selling them. I got tell who was up to no good, I could just see it on them. Before I just saw these people as my neighbors, but once I became a cop, and I learned more about crime, my eyes were open to whole other world that was right in front of me before. It's something civilians don't usually get" (Officer French, male, 30s).

"I always sit with my back against the wall, facing all exits. My family knows this about me, so we go to restaurants or anywhere, I check out the place, looking for any entry and exit points

> *before sitting. It can be annoying for them, but they're used to it. It's just something all of us cops do"* (Officer Morgan, male, 50s).
>
> *"I can tell when someone's a cop by just the way they carry themselves. It might be something little like carrying all groceries in their left hand because our right hands need to be free for our guns. It's something that is drilled into us, so we all just sort of do these things that connect us"* (Officer Harris, male, 20s).

These excerpts illustrate the move from civilian to law enforcement officer. As Black officers are enculturated or professionalized in the profession, they begin to separate from the communities from which they came. The ideological differences between their former peers and the needs of the profession force these individuals to readjust themselves, their behavior, and their social circles to meet new codes of conduct: the blue code. Interestingly, participants reported this shift as they themselves shifted their perceptions from seeing policing as simply a socioeconomic gain but instead to seeing it as a lifestyle. Previous research has alluded to socioeconomic differences being the key driver of the lack of racial solidarity between Black officers and the Black community, but what these participants show is that it is the acceptance of and into the thin blue line that shifts Black officers' perceptions. By seeing policing as more than just a stable paycheck, these officers signal a change in not only their role but a change also to meet certain codes of conduct that are universal to all within the occupation. These officers, therefore, cease to be Black officers but become officers who also happen to be Black. This serves to illustrate that as diversity and inclusion increase in policing, the system itself will remain the same, just with a new mix of participants, instead of them changing the system. They are enculturated in the same system as their white counterparts and become key actors and supporters of the very system they were hired to change. It is not the individual actors that are the problem, but the system itself.

On Black Lives Matter (BLM)

I knew the section of questioning was off to a bad start the moment he questioned me. I had called the events during which Black men died during police contact, “incidents of police violence”. The previously cheery Officer Tucker immediately tensed up, rearranged himself in his chair and his stance shifted from relaxed to visibly uncomfortable. Trying to hold in his anger, he simply responded by saying, “*oh, that’s what you call it*.” I was taken aback and attempted to salvage what was left of our interview by stating, that’s what I had heard in the media and the literature but that is why I’m here talking to him. I sought to learn how he perceived this and what he understands these encounters to be. That seemed to diffuse some of the tension, however, the interview never recovered from my faux pas.

His discomfort with calling these incidents police violence permeated through the next set of questions. He preferred the term, “those incidents.” It was noteworthy but this was the first step in divorcing himself from the horrors faced by members of his racial community, committed by his professional community. There was an air of not wanting to engage. In a sense, keeping allegiance to his profession, meant having to disengage himself from what was happening to his racial community. I found this to resonate with the research of Black police officers in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement, who in keeping the Blue Line, were active participants in the torture and abuse of fellow Black citizens as they fought against the State for Black rights, as were the freedmen in New Orleans suppressing slave revolts. What all these groups had in common through space and time is the continued loyalty to the badge. It was the profession that was designed in a way to ensure that all who joined, regardless of background, would promote white supremacy.

As the conversation continued, Officer Tucker voiced his concern that the methods through which BLM protested seemingly worked against the Black community. He saw himself as a defender of the community, having joined the force to fight crime, to remove criminals that plagued his community from the street with the hopes of creating a safer and better future for inner-city children. As such, he saw BLM and the movement's proclivity for violent protests, and its blind eye to looting and rioting as steps against the success of the Black movement. He lamented the Civil Rights Movement during which protests were peaceful. He was ashamed that BLM was showing Black people in a bad light. He stated that "they already see us as criminals and thieves, so imagine my disappointment when I turn on the news and all they're showing all day is burning and looting. This movement is moving our people backward. It's too loud. We need to be quieter." This idea of a controlled rebellion is rooted in fears of Black criminality. It is safer to make ourselves smaller so as to not make others uncomfortable.

Black rage, unlike white rage, breeds fears into the mainstream American psyche, so people prefer to not be confronted by it. Additionally, the idea of being loud is also rooted in the same concept. It's the fear of the Black peril coming and exacting revenge on the unsuspecting mainstream psyche. It also plays into the same respectability politics that drove the Civil Rights Movement. The idea that Black people are inferior, so the only way to be taken seriously was to put forward our best foot. This could be choosing Rosa Parks over Claudette Colvin as a more acceptable face for the movement; to choosing the MLK's nonviolent tactics to the 'any means necessary' approach taken by leaders such as Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. All these decisions helped shape what even today Black leaders think is acceptable behavior. It is always up to the Black population to maintain their anger, to both appease and appeal to white sensibilities. The BLM movement has rejected this approach and chosen to highlight incidents of violence no matter whom they happen to, and with the freedom is the expression that refuses to make itself small to accommodate the feelings of the white community. It is at this moment that Black rage was fully expressed around the nation. It was an anger that built up over generations, Black folk were being told to be patient – that freedom, justice, equity, and respect will happen over time. Instead of waiting, Black people were demanding it. This is what the BLM movement was able to accomplish in its expression of Black rage.

Officer Reglan called me a few days after George Floyd was murdered. He was at the gym, but he couldn't hold back his thoughts and feelings about the events surrounding the protests and riots. Like Officer Tucker, he expressed the same frustrations with the BLM movement. These officers held the same concerns about the disruption being caused by the rioters and looters that accompanied the protests.

"For me as a black man in this country, I have experienced racism, I have experienced bias, I have experienced favoritism. For me, I don't look at those situations as a victim or put myself in a situation. I was arguing with somebody and he was like the curse of being a black man here in America and I'm thinking of it like, for me, I would like to think, for me this is boasting, and pounding on my chest, because for me I still know that for me to born as a black man in America, I'm still at a disadvantage, but I feel like I would have that mindset, if I had been born 60 years earlier, when the suppression, and racism were still at the forefront, I would still have the mindset of feeling blessed, I would be trying my best to take every opportunity that I can. I get so upset with some of these folks because they don't realize that there's still slavery today, that a lot of people all over the world with a lot less than what we have here. So, every

time I'm arguing with people, right, wrong, or indifferent, look at people here like what the fuck are you talking about. I understand that in the moment, you are ae evaluating the moment that you're in. I see people out there destroying stuff or rioting or whatever everybody's reasons for being there is totally different. It causes me to evaluate, well what are they truly there for? Are they there because of George Floyd or is George Floyd just an excuse for why they are they there because they're pissed off because their license got suspended or are they pissed off because they're very bad with money so they had to file bankruptcy so they're not getting any tax returns so they're there because they feel like they were screwed up by the federal government, or they're there because his father has been locked up for the last eight years because he was a cocaine dealer, or so everybody there has a measure of hate, some people are there because they don't like Trump, some people are there because they just like chaos, they like to destroy things. It gets me looking like, what are really doing, if we have a situation where we feel like things need to be addressed, the best course of action is to become educated, get into these systems, and take over these systems, or replace these systems with something else. If you look more in the last 10-15 years, we're seeing more diverse people, it's not going to change overnight, it's going to take a generation, or two generations, or three generations. Everything takes time" (Officer Reglan, male, 30s).

Remarkably, there was no interrogation of the events that caused the riots and looting. There was no discussion of George Floyd or even policing protocols that were either in place or violated by Derek Chauvin or his fellow officers. All blame was placed firmly on the Black community's reaction to the lynching of one of their own. Even Black officers failed to be critical of the events that led up to the protests or to take in why people would react in such a way. They went out of their way to obfuscate the harm caused to the community, by focusing on the destruction of the buildings that represented the oppression and injustice suffered. It was clear, Black lives did not matter.

However, other officers took a different approach to their relationship with BLM. Instead of being frustrated at the physical expression of rage that they saw on the streets, they acknowledged their powerlessness in changing the system. To them, it wasn't that Black Lives didn't matter, but rather that diversity and inclusion couldn't change their outcomes.

As discussed by Officer Sumner:

"Do I agree with some of the things that officers do, no. But what can I do about it. I'm just a herding dog, you have to understand, we're at the bottom of the system, we can't change anything. I do what I'm told, I go where I'm asked to. I herd the sheep, I don't decide where they graze, or where they sleep, I just push them into the pen and others decide when they should move" (Officer Sumner, male, 50s).

Police in this sense are powerless pawns in a game whose outcomes are dictated by others from prosecutors to mayors and other higher-ranking politicians. As people who do as they are told, these officers demonstrate that they have no autonomy. This both deals a blow to the hopes of Black officers changing the system from within and removes all accountability for their actions. It is easy to say, it's not my decision, I was just taking orders. We saw this train of thought being challenged in the Nuremberg Nazi war crimes trials as concentration camp guards were convicted of crimes against humanity despite claims of lack of agency. When determining accountability, bottom-up reform efforts work under this premise. Police cannot expect change only from the top-down, but also need to make concerted efforts to enact bottom-up changes.

This vision of policing leaves officers with no responsibility for their actions. It is the higher-ups, from the police commissioners to mayors, and politicians who make decisions on which approaches are approved and how to police. His assessment was echoed by other officers whom all agreed that for change to occur, people in higher-up positions must make the decision to reform the profession.

In the next section, we examine how police accountability is demonstrated on the ground. We explore an effort by department higher-ups to change department culture and practices. Instead of simply denying that there is a problem, a concerted effort is taken to remedy police/civilian interactions by providing an educational seminar on trauma-informed policing with the goal of retrained officers to approach civilian interactions from a trauma-informed perspective.

Trauma, BLM, and Policing

A few weeks later, I had the opportunity to participate in a department-wide employee training that was designed to train officers on a new form of policing, trauma-informed policing. In a bottom-up reformation approach, this method of policing is intended to minimize the occurrence of violence during police-civilian encounters by training officers to recognize and understand the effects of trauma and the effects it has in perpetuating the cycle of violence. Following the BLM protests, police departments around the nation began thinking of ways of reforming their profession, as well as their local precincts to ensure that the events that led up to the murders of Black men would not be repeated in the future. The goal of this training was to help officers recognize trauma, which will aid in their interactions with suspects. Instead of resorting to violence during civilian encounters, having a trauma-informed approach allows for a greater understanding of the mental health and social issues that might lead to encounters with the police. This approach can include referrals to medical and social services instead of automatically deferring to the criminal justice system which can help build community trust and crime reduction.

Sixteen officers attended this training session, of those sixteen, two were white males and the remaining fourteen were Black, and of those, two were women. The training was led by a psychologist hired by the department along with his assistant. Dr. Jones (the psychologist) started off the presentation by explaining why it was important for police officers to learn about trauma. She explained that the goal of the training is to develop trauma awareness amongst the officers with the anticipation of them responding in trauma-informed ways when they're interacting with civilians and/or suspects.

The three main benefits of being trauma-informed that were discussed were:

1. *Officer Safety.*
2. *Reduce recidivism*
3. *Have the power to promote recovery*

I found it quite striking that again, officer safety was listed as the most important priority in dealing with civilians/suspects. Safety can mean several things. It can be safety in terms of perceived or actual danger. The issue with this is that black people, primarily black men have always been perceived as dangers to society. The physicality of black masculinity has been interpreted to mean a "threat" to the white body politic. By placing officer safety at the top of the list, without first critically engaging with the term safety, places civilians, particularly, Black people in danger. This open-ended subjective take on what constitutes safety is what routinely leads to Black men and boys being killed during police contact because the officers perceived themselves to be unsafe.

In the cases of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice, we see the invocation of officer safety as the main justification for their murders. These three were described as physically large and intimidating and their presence not only struck fear and safety concerns among the officers but warranted the use of deadly force in their interactions with law enforcement. Michael Brown was described by Darren Wilson during his Grand Jury testimony as “obviously bigger than I was” and that “I felt like a 5-year-old holding onto Hulk Hogan,” even though both men were the same size (6’4) (Ritskes, 2015). In this defense, Wilson replayed his fear at the threat of being attacked by a large black male. He described himself as a child to further highlight the presumed differences between white and black men. As expected, the black male body was described as large and dangerously unsafe to the 5-year-old child who was about to be crushed by it. Through this logic, it makes sense for Wilson to want to defend himself by inflicting as much bodily harm as possible to ensure his personal safety. He continues to describe his reasons for repeatedly firing his gun into Michael Brown by stating that, it was like “he was almost bulking up to run through the shots” and that he looked like a “demon”. In these descriptions, Wilson manages to paint Michael Brown, a man of similar stature to him, one without the expert training that he has as inhuman. He argues that the Black male body is something supernatural and the only way to contain it, is to line it with bullets. Only a weapon can contain these supernatural violent beings. Not only does this paint Wilson as a terrified victim, but also a hero, one who removed this “demon” from our society. By murdering Michael Brown, the officer is cast as both a child and a hero in the eyes of the law. In a profession that casts itself as the front-line defender in the fight between good against evil, Darren Wilson has succeeded in meeting his duty of serving and protecting.

Similar invocations of size as a defense were made in Eric Garner's case when NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo described him as the "size of an elephant" as a justification for his murder (Ritskes, 2015). In the same vein as Darren Wilson, Daniel Pantaleo invokes the logics of officer safety that are being trained to these officers as part of the post-BLM reformed policing strategies, to describe officer presumed fears of suspects, primarily Black males, by describing them as inherently physically dangerous due to their physical existence, warranting elimination through violent death in the hopes of keeping officers safe from harm.

These notions of large and threatening Black bodies are not limited to descriptions of adults but start in childhood. The harrowing murder of Tamir Rice is an example of this. As a 12-year-old child, the officers who killed him justified his murder by stating that they believed he was an adult, due to his size. The medical examiner, in this case, contradicted their statements by reporting that, Tamir's build was "consistent with the reported age of 12 years" (Ritskes, 2015). This adultification of Black children allows for unabated violence to be perpetrated against them. It goes back to plantations where Black children were torn from their mother's arms, sold at auction, and made to work. They were dehumanized, sold like cattle, and entered into the national psyche as subhuman. We see the continuation of these practices today as children such as Tamir Rice were brutally murdered in reaction to threatening officer safety. As our society and institutions maintain a white gaze, the visuality of Blackness remains a permanent fixture, one that haunts and threatens even those that are trained to protect the rest of society. It becomes a pretext under which Blackness is not only heightened but also justifiably extinguished (Wilderson 2012, Hartman 1997). Without critically interrogating the meaning of safety or lack thereof, we continue to propagate a system that promotes harm to black boys and men, even during reform.

This initial introduction was followed by a get-to-know-you exercise. Participants were asked to write on a whiteboard reasons/situations that can lead to trauma. Some of the examples listed were *"illness, sickness, death, being a victim of a crime, child abuse, extreme poverty, physical or sexual abuse, drug abuse, parental/spousal arrest, and incarceration".*

The trauma triggers above are things that the public can agree on. What was significant about this list is that a number of these officers listed arrest and incarceration as trauma-inducing events. Although they focused on the trauma imposed on the families of arrestees and incarcerated people, they acknowledged that involvement with the criminal justice system can be traumatic. This is important because it gets us thinking about ways in which police can reform to allow for less traumatic encounters. However, at the same time, it is relevant to note what was unsaid. Policing is built on the good versus evil dichotomy with the officers being good and suspects being bad. Several officers have mentioned to me that part of their motivation for joining law enforcement was fighting evil or fighting the bad guys. This notion of law enforcement officers as the good guys who fight the bad guys sets the stage for why these officers would not include the trauma that arrestees go through during arrest because they come into these encounters with the presumption of guilt. In a society where black bodies are seen as criminal, it is not difficult to understand why in definitions of trauma, black suspects are cast as unsympathetic subjects as the presumption of guilt exists prior to the encounter. Therefore, any violence inflicted on the body is not considered as potentially harmful as it is deserved.

The officers were then shown a video on the cycle of violence. The video illustrated how violence is cyclical; how violence can be a response to victimization; how violence keeps individuals safe and how it helps individuals survive.

Following the video, the officers responded by giving their own perspectives on violence. Some notable responses included:

"Not trying to be funny, it's kinda hard to relate to someone. Some things we might normalize that other might not. For example, in the Black American culture, we get beat with a switch, so you might feel like its justified when you go into a home, and you hear about domestic violence where someone beats up a child. Maybe some of this is normal" (Male officer, 30s).

This idea of normalizing violence can also extend beyond domestic violence scenarios, to violence committed against civilians by fellow officers. If violence is normalized in policing, it is not difficult to see how officers can easily turn a blind eye when they see their fellow officers/superiors enacting violence on civilians, particularly, those deemed deserving. These harmful beliefs are particularly damaging to Black communities as we see above, Black people are already viewed as subhuman, so when they report issues to the police, they are less likely to be believed.

Dr. Jones' assistant Jessica stepped in and tried to help the officers reframe their thought process to think beyond their preconceived notions by reminding them that the people in the video did not think that violence is normal. As such, she wanted the officers to think about how to respond in a trauma-informed way in situations that they might personally not find problematic, but their caller does.

Another officer chimed in taking a similar approach to that of the first officer that spoke: *"Is this kinda subjective?" One person's trauma is not always everyone's trauma"*. Jessica then responded to him by explaining, *"your job is not to determine. Your job is not oh they're faking. Your job is to deal with the person you are presented with."*

The participants of this seminar appeared to be discounting the effects that trauma can have on people. They were quick to dismiss it as people are faking. As mentioned earlier, police tend to see people on their worst days. This in addition to seeing themselves as the good guys who are fighting the bad guys, which automatically casts all suspects as bad guys frames how they think about the people and their interactions with suspects. They tend to automatically assume that everyone is guilty and that people are just trying to lie their way out of situations. As such, they can be dismissive of the effect that they and their interactions can have on individual suspects and communities at large. These dismissive behavior breed distrust and question the legitimacy of police in communities.

Jessica responded by giving an example of PTSD in the military. She gave her own account of service and how some in her unit suffered from PTSD from their shared experiences, while others did not. She told the officers that fighting the same battle doesn't mean having the same outcomes. This appeared to make it through to some of the skeptics as they nodded in agreement as she spoke.

It was following Jessica's clarifying statement that other officers shared how their work experiences have informed and improved their awareness of some of the underlying causes of people's behaviors. For example, one officer explained how he made the switch from strictly abiding by the belief of personal responsibility to understanding the larger forces that influence behavior. *"When I worked in the prison, I heard all this predator/prey thing, but I just thought they all made their choices but now I'm in the gang unit, I'm seeing juveniles who are getting into gangs, and they don't want to but my dad is a high ranking G and my brother is a G. I don't want to go car jerking, but they'll kill me if I don't. The problems start at home, bad parenting. I* *didn't know all this until I started working in this unit. It starts at home, and everyone is different"* (Male officer, 40s).

In this excerpt, the officer recognized his prior faults and instead of seeing people in black and white, he began to realize that other factors can affect individual behavior. The issue that I saw with this is that he stopped firmly at blaming the family for the issues that arose in these young men. However, did not extend beyond the micro-level of analysis. Pushing beyond this to understand the role that macro-level forces such as the structural factors that contribute to the entire family's participation in the drug trade, would result in a deeper understanding of why he's seeing juveniles in this system. It is easy to obfuscate these structural factors and place blame on individuals and families for the choices they must make to survive, however, without taking into account, the ways by which structural violence dictates and shapes individual choices, the systems that propagate these issues will continue unabated.

During this discussion, one female officer raised an interesting concern that switched the discussion from a focus on officer-civilian relationships to the officer experience. She spoke to Dr. Jones and Jessica and told them, *"I know you're trying to teach us about trauma. We are from the community, so we have also experienced similar traumas but we as officers are taught to think in a punitive way. We are trained to see everything punitively"* (Female officer, 30s).

This statement revealed something inherently incongruent between what the officers were being taught and what their job requires them to do. Firstly, this statement highlights the differences between the police and civilians. As a Black woman, she acknowledged that she too is from the community and has gone through similar traumatic experiences as her fellow community members, but then, she immediately made the distinction between herself as a Black woman and an officer who also happens to be a Black woman. This shift in perception is discussed in the Becoming the Police section of this chapter but serves as a reminder that the profession not only changes how one thinks and approaches certain situations but also changes who one is. Being blue becomes the primary identity that these individuals take on, and instead of being proof that replacing the bad apples with minority officers will bring about change, only serve to highlight, that it is the system, not necessarily the individuals within it that we should be re-examining as all who join, become part of it, not the other way around. Policing as it currently stands, is organized in a way that is incompatible with trauma-based approaches as it is focused exclusively on punishment, not rehabilitation. Policing is brutal because it is meant to be brutal, not because of a few bad apples.

Policing Trauma

This switch from civilians to officers prompted more participants to discuss their own occupational trauma. One officer mentioned that *"Officers don't laugh when they see a dead person, on a crime scene. We laugh because this is how we cope. I have never gotten a call that says officer, you've done a good job"* (Male officer, 40s).

Other officers echoed the sentiment by challenging the training. They explained their frustration that they are being trained on other people's trauma, but the department doesn't seem to care about their trauma. *"We have to see this and we're at the same time dealing with our own problems, our kids are having problems, we're dealing with trying to pay our bills, etc. You are seeing everyone on their worst day, but our trauma is not processed"* (Male officer, 40s).

The issue of occupational and personal trauma dominated most of the training sessions. It was interesting to me that this was a post-BLM matter event, that was designed to help officers develop improved strategies to help mitigate the occurrence of violent civilian interactions. However, these officers had no interest in discussing civilians. It appeared their minds were made up even before the seminar. However, they were not opposed to the overall discussion of trauma, and instead wanted to focus on how they have suffered without any support from peers or their department.

As they began relaying their experiences and the group became livelier. More people participated and although it was almost lunch time and this seminar had gone on for far too long, officers began to perk up and share their experiences. There was a new energy in the room, they were no longer being forced to participate in something they were not interested in but instead in a space where they could share their pent-up frustrations. They spoke as though they had finally been given an opportunity to share their grievances. Although it was cathartic for them, it was also disappointing as the group missed an opportunity to discuss meaningful ways through which civilian relations could be improved.

As the officers shared, below are some of the meaningful takeaways from the discussion. *"I think what happens sometimes as cops, we have a superman, batman persona. Your confidence gets shot, you're like I can't believe this happened to me. I was hurt seven months ago and last Sunday was my first day back at work. After I put on my uniform, it was very hard for me to leave the house and go to work. My cousin was like aren't you supposed to be at work and I was like, man give me a minute"* (Male officer, 30s).

Another officer shared his experience during a car accident in which he was also hurt. *"First thought, you think about the other car and taking care of other people"* (Male officer, 40s). He didn't think to care about his own injuries but went straight to try to help.

Someone in the group mentioned that a few cops have experienced suicide by cop. The group fell silent as they acknowledged that the weight of the position can take a toll on any one of them.

The second female officer also chimed in, *"as officers, we don't even speak to each other. I don't know if it's because of technology, some people say it's because of technology. If you can't even speak to me, I think about how you must interact with others out there. We are supposed to be a brotherhood/sisterhood. Among ourselves, we don't even treat each other right and that transitions out*" (Female officer, 40s).

This conversation carried into lunch as Lt. Sarah stopped by with sandwiches to learn what was being discussed. As a commanding officer, she took time to sit and listen as the officers talked to her about how the department needs to work to change its culture. She asked the officers how they are doing and what can help. They responded by informing her that, "*we need to help each other deal with our pain. We can't keep doing the same things, we keep hearing we have Chaplin, and we have medical insurance, but we need to change. You gonna keep going through something, you gonna cope one way or the other. We are gonna hold supervisors accountable for transferring people who are going through stuff. People kept telling the supervisor that the guy needed help and the supervisor just made fun of him and I think supervisors see something is wrong, but they don't do nothing. The guy transferred to Cobb. If I tell you I feel like murder, you don't send me out to patrol. I have an immediate family that died and you're told if you go to the funeral and not come to work, you're fired because we're short-staffed. Folks in the department should talk about their experiences freely without being made fun of, without being judged. From an outsider looking in, the only problem this department has is being able to communicate without reprecautions. The sense of family has disappeared. We need more social events so people can feel more comfortable to express themselves"* (Male officer, 40s).

The culture of policing is one based on hegemonic masculine values such as strength and stoicism (Kimmel and Connell, 2005). Whereas traditionally viewed through a lens of gender oppression, we see here that in a traditionally male-dominated field, one that was founded as a civic duty of all white men, hegemonic masculinity transcends gender as both male and female officers ascribe to these ideals. A key aspect of this form of masculinity is the notion of not being soft, or as described by David and Brannon (1976) as “no sissy stuff”. Although both male and female officers participate in this form of hegemonic masculinity, it remains grounded in the idea that “sissy stuff” is women’s stuff. As such this form of masculine behavior is centered around the notion that men are different from women, therefore, to be a man, one’s beliefs, behaviors, and practices must be different from those of women (David and Brannon, 1976). Showing emotions, being afraid, and being open are all things that are attributed to femininity, so to be a good officer, one must simply shrug off the negative parts of the job. Bringing it up as discussed above, results in being made fun of or ignored. Policing, therefore, has created an environment in which its participants are not able to vocalize or show their trauma. Through the motto, protect and serve, it is an occupation that by its very nature requires you to put others’ needs above your own. As seen in the example provided above, one of the officers ignored his own injuries following a car accident, to ensure that everyone else was safe. It makes sense given the people who seek out these positions have a savior complex. They believe they are untouchable and are destined to save the world. In the fight between good and evil, they see themselves as the first responders on the side of good.

The constant exposure to secondary trauma leaves officers in psychologically vulnerable states. Transferring out, instead of providing assistance or treatment to those who report experiencing mental health problems only serves to shift the crisis to another area. This leaves not only the officers themselves but also those whom they interact with at risk for injury or worse, death. One officer reported that he felt like committing murder. To reform the profession, the mental health of officers should be included in the definition of “officer safety”. If officers are going through challenges, they should not be out patrolling the streets nor should they be afraid to ask for help. This culture of toxic masculinity only serves to increase the risk to the communities they claim to serve and want to protect.

In their efforts to find alternative coping strategies, participants revealed the challenges in keeping healthy personal relationships because of their occupational stress. They reported large numbers of divorces, domestic violence, and participation in reckless behaviors such as excessive drinking and gambling. In addition to risk-taking policing socialization also encourages the lack of preventative behaviors as preventative measures are equated to femininity. For example, as discussed above, police officers are discouraged by the fear of being ridiculed by their peers for asking for help when they need backup (Wester and Lyubelsky, 2005). This can lead to violent interactions with civilians as officers in their zeal to not be sissies take matters into their own hands. Instead of working to diffuse situations, shooting first can be viewed as a masculine approach in presumed dangerous encounters. On the other hand, the lack of preventative health behaviors leads men to not seek help for mental and physical health conditions (Finley, 2011; Wester and Lyubelsky, 2005) and protection (Bourgois, 1995; Wester and Lyubelsky, 2005). Of particular note, several participants noted during their interviews that in addition to fearing superiors in terms of reporting trauma, they also fear the medical practitioners who work to assist them.

One participant noted, “*we have a psychologist and a psychiatrist that we can see, but who wants to do that, whatever you tell them goes in your file and can be used against you in* *court. A good defense attorney can subpoena those records and show that you are depressed, or you had suicidal thoughts at one point, it can cause your whole case away. That will get you in more trouble, so why would I risk that. So, most people just tend to avoid them. We can't seek help because it will affect our careers"* (Male officer, 30s).

Other officers echoed this sentiment, going as far as to extend it to peer support groups. One officer stated, *"they started a peer support group but I'm not going to go. I mean, it's a nice idea, but I just don't feel like participating. You tell your peer what you're going through and next thing you know, they're telling their friends. They say they won't but once you get a few beers in them, they could start telling everyone my business and I'm not down with that. And I'm not the only one, it's not very popular"* (Male officer, 40s).

This culture of distrust creates a system where everyone is suspicious of each other does not bode well for the civilians that whom they interact. If one is already very suspicious and distrustful of anyone else, the encounters they have with civilians are going to be those of assumed guilt. This creates a cycle of violence where officers harm themselves and in turn harm those they are sworn to protect and serve. These systems not only harm the recipients but also the actors. As we see with policing, the culture of the profession not only places civilians, particularly, Black boys and men at risk for death, but also the officers that work within the system themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my experiences with different officers were very revealing. On one hand, some officers showed the indifference to Black lives that comes with being enculturated into white supremacist systems. It is what scholars term, multiracial anti-Blackness. On the other hand, the officers that wanted to continue the work of promoting Black lives found themselves in a position that was oppositional to their occupation without much hope of making lasting changes. As a result, they resigned themselves to the idea that change can only be top-down, and until those in power will it, nothing would change.

As we saw with the Black Live Matter movement, those in power were forced to make changes. Departments around the country in their zeal to avoid negative publicity, city-wide protests, and expensive lawsuits sought to implement changes that would bring about reform. Trauma-informed policing is one such idea. However, the exercise that I attended revealed more about the problems that lie at the heart of the profession, more so than anything related to civilian interactions. Mental health issues are prevalent among police officers and efforts are not being taken too seriously enough to remedy this issue. The trauma that officers can be correlated to their behavior during civilian interactions and addressing this issue can be one step toward meaningful reform whose impact can reverberate beyond office walls into communities that fall victim to police violence.

Chapter 4: From Theory to Practice: Policing in Action

Introduction

> *Growing up, a lot of us had negative experiences with the police. Growing up, I had been chased, pushed to the ground, and called a nigger by cops. I had no respect for them and believed they existed to work against our community. I thought by joining the force, I could change things from within"* (Officer Carrington, male, 40s).

"I grew up listening to NWA and the likes, so I grew up thinking Fuck the Police, just like everyone else in my hood. It wasn't until I was in my 20s, trying to figure out what to do with my life, that I saw policing as a viable option. It took a lot of me to switch from Fuck the Police to I am the Police, but I'm here now, and I'm glad I chose this path. It's getting hard now with all this negative attention on us. We're not all like this. Every job has bad people, but you don't gotta write off the entire profession because of it" (Officer Wilson, male, 40s).

Before joining the force, many of these officers had had their fair share of personal and collective intergenerational trauma experienced by Black Americans at the hands of police. These officers believed that by joining the force, they could change it from within. It was going to be through diversity and inclusion that fair and just policing were to be achieved. They believed that the more Black American police officers there were, the better policing outcomes would be. This belief was predicated on the accepted canon that the people are the problem, not the system they are a part of. The institution of policing itself was not under interrogation; instead, it was the individual "bad apples" that Black officers could replace. But where did it all go wrong? How did the beacons of hope transform into Uncle Tom's and race traitors?

For the first half of my project, using a semi-structured interview guide, I sat down with the officers at their offices, in different coffee shops, or in Chick-Fil-A locations around the city

(Mangurenje, 2020). I sought to understand their relationship with Black communities, their challenges policing their own in the age of Black Lives Matter, and their successes in reaching out and removing some of the barriers between themselves and the communities (Mangurenje, 2020). As mentioned in Chapter 3, I also attended training seminars that police officers received in their efforts to prevent the events that caused police violence from reoccurring. In these self-reported meetings and departmental training sessions that I attended, I got police officers' perspectives, the stories they tell themselves about themselves, the challenges they face, their social worlds, and how they navigate through a space of in-betweenness. From the beginning of policing in this nation, Black officers were either meant to be or feared to be working in favor of Black communities. However, we have seen that the work of policing itself challenges these preconceived notions or intentions as it sometimes pits Black officers against communities of color. The previous two chapters provided examples where Black rage is met with police violence as policing as an institution is an arm of the state. As a result, Black police officers are caught in the middle as they are deployed to protect the state, which on the one hand, harms them while simultaneously paying them to exert harm on those who are fighting on their behalf.

On the days that the officers showed up to our meetings in their uniforms, we received a few glares from restaurant staff and patrons (which officers reported had become commonplace); however, some restaurants also gave them free meals to thank them for their service (Mangurenje, 2020). One officer lamented that gestures like this had been the norm. But, as he noted, respect for officers has decreased because of the Black Lives Matter movement as the public has grown increasingly critical of policing practices (Mangurenje, 2020). He went on:

When I first started, Black police officers were respected within the Black community. We were part of the community; we gave our people hope for better policing. They looked up to us, but *that's no longer the case. Now we're seen as Uncle Toms or race traitors* (Officer Raymond, male 50s).

For several officers, the desire to be a positive influence defined their motivations for joining the force:

So, the reason why I say Rodney King influenced my decision to join the force is because I felt that I could be that light, even in the African American community, to show them that one of your own is a police officer, and we can be professional and fair (Officer Milton, male 50s).

So how and why did Black officers fail to meet these expectations? To answer this question, I sought to understand these officers' interactions with Black communities in the Black Lives Matter era. So far, my project had shown me how officers think, the stories they tell about themselves, their profession, and their perceptions of why people react to them the way they do. As a next step, I wanted to transition from what people say to what they do. Methodologically, I employed participant observation to gather information on how Black officers act and how that matches what they do and say in relation to the Black community. I also sought to understand community members' reactions to Black police in their own words, from their perspectives.

Police Perspectives

To understand this shift in perceptions of Black American police officers, I had to understand the nature of police work. In their daily policing practices, the African American police officers I got to know aimed to embody a spirit of professional and fair policing (Mangurenje, 2020). They sought to challenge discriminatory practices, mainly when carried out by fellow officers. They described not shying away from reprimanding other officers or speaking out against what they perceived as unfair stereotypes (Mangurenje, 2020). However, their departments’ measures of success did not always align with their personal values. In this sense, these officers struggled with being both Black and blue (Mangurenje, 2020).

Fundamental to understanding these officers’ struggles is W. E. B. Du Bois’ (1897) and Frantz Fanon’s (1967) conceptualizations of double consciousness as applied to race and professional identity. Du Bois theorized that African American police officers have to negotiate two historically distinct strivings, the striving to be “blue” and the striving to be “Black”—in one “dark body.” This notion of double consciousness can be understood as the psychological conflict that comes with having dual irreconciled identities (Mangurenje, 2020). As such Black officers exist in two worlds (Mangurenje, 2020). One of the Black community, with the obligations and expectations of representing the race, being beacons of hope for fair and just policing (Mangurenje, 2020).

On the other hand, they are part of an institution grounded in white supremacist ideology predicated on the oppression and subjugation of the Black community. So as Black officers, they exist between two warring ideals. By giving into one, they undermine the other. For the officers in this project, the incompatible identities of Black and blue are reconciled through capitulation to blue logics. Blackness becomes a tool through which individual exceptionalism is deployed to justify racialized policing practices (Mangurenje, 2020). Success within this framework requires the performance of symbolic blackness through diversity and inclusion hiring practices. Such approaches promote a select few African Americans to middle-class status while simultaneously weaponizing their employment to continue oppressive practices in low-income African American communities under the guise of post-civil rights, “colorblind” policing strategies (Alexander 2010).

Officers related their struggles with maintaining their personal values in light of departmental expectations.

As one other officer recounted, "*I had to go out and be the beacon of hope that Black Americans expect you to be and not offend the power structure. This is an ongoing struggle for me"* (Officer Milton, male, 50s).

Another officer echoed this sentiment by relating his struggle between departmental expectations and personal values. As a community officer, he recounted personal experiences engaging in trust-building exercises by playing soccer with local children and otherwise enmeshing himself in the community he policed (Mangurenje, 2020). But he recounted his horror when his department placed his image on their website, celebrating his contribution to a successful U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid, which ran counter to the "Officer Friendly" image he was working to cultivate (Mangurenje, 2020). This discordance between what represented departmental success (arrest stats, cooperation with other federal or local anticrime agencies) and local officers' efforts to build up community institutions served to highlight the difficulty they faced in their efforts to ascend through the ranks while simultaneously maintaining residents' trust (Mangurenje, 2020). The nature of their work seemed antithetical to their efforts to pursue police reform through the increased representation of Black and other minority officers within police departments (Mangurenje, 2020).

Part of this balancing act was finding ways to appease Black and other minority communities while simultaneously practicing, promoting, and perpetuating practices that harmed them. Officers relied on respectability politics as a moral agentive tool deployed to justify techniques such as racial profiling that primarily targeted Black people (Alexander 2010; Mattingly 2014). They differentiated between racial and criminal profiling by defining the former as indiscriminately targeting members of a particular racial group and the latter as targeting individuals who just did not “fit in” (Mangurenje, 2020). These individuals were said not to be limited to any racial category. Still, they were identifiable through their presence in a particular area, clothing choices, and behavior in a given situation. Through criminal profiling, the officers rationalized policing practices directed at Black Americans as largely individualized and based on suspicious behavior, without racial discrimination as their driving force (Mangurenje, 2020). This distinction guides Black Americans as they work within the system, separating themselves from their overpoliced brethren by negating the social value of those deemed moral failures (Mattingly 2014). This shift in perspective from “beacons of hope” to profilers of criminals leads to the reproduction of the same racialized logics that these officers had initially vowed to change (Mangurenje, 2020).

My first opportunity to witness these logics in action was when the officers invited me to a code enforcement event in a predominately Black, low-income neighborhood in the Southwest part of the city. Code enforcement is a local government division in Georgia under the jurisdiction of police departments. Code enforcement teams, as they are known, enforce housing, commercial, and industrial codes that are rules and regulations set by local governments to ensure public safety. These can include graffiti ordinances and fire and building codes that meet local government standards. In Georgia, fines for violating code enforcement ordinances range from $100-$1000 per infraction, depending on the type of infraction. Fined property owners must address these issues to bring their properties up to standard (Atlanta PD, n.d; Compasspropertymanager, 2019). Minestown is a small neighborhood on the Southern edge of a large Southeastern city. It gets its eponymous name from the original mining tenants in the area.

After the Civil War, the city saw an industrial boom that brought many rural Southerners to the town in hopes of a prosperous future.

Many residents who settled in the area worked for the nearby mine, giving its name. Newly freed Black citizens moved to the neighborhood, and many saw economic gains that had previously alluded to them. This multiracial, multiethnic city prospered until the great depression. White families moved out of the neighborhood after WW1 in search of better opportunities. Their black middle-class counterparts followed suit shortly after the Fair Housing Act, leaving behind poor and working-class black residents. By the 1950s, the Minestown neighborhood was predominately Black (Mechanicsvilleatl, n.d.). The Civil Rights movement and its successes also provided opportunities for Black flight. No longer was the Black middle class relegated to ghettos or low-level employment opportunities. As the political, social, and economic constraints that created Black Meccas began to collapse, so did the unity between the middle and lower/working classes. The Black middle class saw and took this opportunity for personal advancement, leaving behind the poor and working-class populations in what eventually became the hyperghettos. While the black middle-class escaped to white-majority suburbs (following the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. 3601), the black working-class and poor were forced to remain in the ghettos. Without middle-class investment and state intervention, these ghettos gradually fell into disrepair as the legacy of redlining continues to influence investors, lenders, and buyers (Coates, 2014). The only exception has been current gentrification practices, in which young, predominately white middle-class residents who are priced out of white middle-class neighborhoods due to increasing housing prices, are moving into historically poor Black areas, revamping the spaces to meet middle-class standards while driving up property taxes, forcing poor and working-class Black families out of these communities, and pushing them further into the margins of society (Bhavsar et al., 2020; Cole et al., 2021; Ralph, 2014).

In tandem with housing discrimination, the economic shift to a suburban-based service economy also had detrimental effects on the Black community. This new information and technology labor market forced working-class and poor blacks out of the job market by way of undereducation and the continued lack of investment in public schools in low-income areas, leaving them unable to compete with their white counterparts (Levine-Rasky, 2016; Ujifusa, 2015). In addition, the rise of neoliberal globalization policies of the 1980s brought on both deindustrialization. This was primarily driven by advances in communications and transportation technologies and cheaper labor markets that allowed corporations to outsource their means of production to other nations (Fernández-Kelly, 1983; Ong, 1987; Sklair, 1993; Walley, 2013; Wright, 2001). Simultaneously, an upsurge of working-class immigration from Asia, Central America, and the Caribbean created job scarcity, which left large segments of the Black workforce unable to compete, thus rendering them an underemployed surplus class (Bourgois, 1995; Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009; Holmes, 2013; Muhammad, 2010; Kanstroom, 2010). As a result, population decline continued to be a dominant fixture in neighborhoods such as Minestown. Minestown's population continued to decline, with one of the main reasons being its lack of access to employment opportunities. The promises of housing developments fell by the wayside and with them, so did the hopes of improved living conditions. Gradually, those that could left, leaving those most vulnerable to undereducation and underemployment, further sinking them into a hyper ghetto. By the 1990s, the neighborhood had lost over 90% of its 1960s residents (Mechanicsvilleatl, n.d.). Of the remaining population, only 38% had completed high school, 80% of the households were female-headed, and over 78% of the residents lived below the poverty line (Judt, 2015). Minestown can be understood as a hyper marginal, hyper ghetto. These terms were first brought into use by Loic Wacquant (2010), who posited that advanced or hypermarginality represents "new forms of exclusionary closure translating expulsion to the margins and crevices of social and physical space" (p. 232). Wacquant, alongside other scholars of hypermarginality in America, such as Alexander (2010), Bourgois (2002), Bourgois and Schonberg (2009), Ralph (2014), Goffman (2015), and Wilson (1999), argue that these new forms of exclusion that range from housing, economic, and employment opportunities stem from the economic shifts from industrialization to deindustrialization in the post-Fordist era. The changes that saw a middle-class flight from inner-city neighborhoods resulted in the exclusion of poor and working-class Black people from the formal labor sector, creating a new lumpenproletariat. The residents of Minestown have had little to hope for over the last few decades; however, despite all the loss, they continue to retain a sense of community. Most individuals who live in the area were born and raised there, as were their parents and grandparents. For these approximately 5,886 people, it remains home.

The culmination of these factors led to the creation of the hyper ghetto, which became a zone of social abandonment (to borrow from Biehl, 2013) that saw the loss of jobs and the Black middle class. Scholars such as Wacquant (2010) argue that these zones of social abandonment were left isolated and separated from the rest of the nation; however, although socially and economically abandoned through divestment, these neighborhoods are neither socially, politically, nor financially isolated. Instead, they remain primarily connected to the nation and the rest of the world through their involvement in the informal drug economy and the state’s management and control of its participants. These neighborhoods can be understood not simply as abandoned islands of unmitigated poverty and violence but as spaces through which middle-class aspirations can be reached. It is in these neighborhoods that undereducation, gang violence, incarceration, and addiction coexist with working- and middle-class Black and white outsiders who work to both provide care and punitive control of these populations (Ralph, 2014; Sufrin, 2017). In this sense, they are also sources of employment for state employees, many of whom do not reside in these communities, leaving little to gain in tax or other civic investments. Community residents thereby become avenues through which wealth is extracted, in similar ways as the labor of their enslaved ancestors worked to support and build capital for white elites. This connection to the broader world is key to understanding the relationship between the residents of neighborhoods such as Minestown and the police.

Following class decomposition and deindustrialization, the people who remained in these hyperghettos sought new employment opportunities. Due to their exclusion from the formal labor market, many turned to the drug economy, which indiscriminately employed poor black males to fill its ranks. As argued by Karandinos et al., "in many U.S. inner cities beset by public and private sector disinvestment, the drug economy filled the economic vacuum and became the most readily accessible ‘equal opportunity employer’ for poor male high school dropouts" (Karandinos et al. 2014: 3)." The consequence of their involvement in the drug economy is an integration into the global and national economies in two ways. First, they are integrated into the global economy because the drug economy is a worldwide business that stretches from the Middle East and Latin America, the Caribbean to the Cape Town Flats (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2017; Goldstein, 2003; Ralph, 2014; Rios, 2011; Thomas, 2011; Smith, 2016). As such, drug movers in cities such as Atlanta, DC, Chicago, and NYC are part of a more extensive network of a globalized economy (Bourgois, 1995; Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009; Goffman, 2015; Ralph, 2014).

Secondly, their involvement in the drug economy places them at greater risk for state intervention through incarceration and social services such as Child Protective Services (Edin and Kefalas, 2011; Edin and Nelson, 2013; Goffman, 2015; Roberts, 1991). As such, both men and women in hyperghettos are under increased state surveillance, an industry that employs large numbers of largely middle-class Blacks and whites alike (Alexander, 2010; Goffman, 2015; Roberts, 1991). Although hyperghettos are devoid of economic and social opportunities, they are not isolated as they provide economic and social opportunities for middle-class Black people who work in the criminal justice system alongside their poor- and middle-class white partners akin to plantation overseers and slave catchers.

Code Enforcement

Involvement in the drug economy was central to this morning's code enforcement. Under the guise of maintaining public safety, these officers intended to remove some of the users and pushers of the drug market from this community.

The code enforcement began at 7 am, but because I was afraid of being late, I decided to leave at 6 am. After GPSing the community center, I realized it was only 20 minutes away from my apartment near the Emory campus, so I could take the streets to kill time. Driving through the well-manicured neighborhoods between Emory and Minestown, I was reminded of the familiarity of the privileged university life that I had become accustomed to. It was only after pulling into the outskirts of the neighborhood that I noticed the stark difference 20 minutes could make. Instead of small artisan bakeries, large houses with well-manicured lawns, and sprawling public parks filled with exercising young mothers wearing designer-labeled workout gear with a baby in a stroller in one hand and a Goldendoodle in the other, a different reality instead confronted me. Dilapidated homes lined the streets. Falling branches and tall grass covered the pavements, and littered trash was all over the ground. The few pedestrians walking the streets were slowly pacing as though they had nowhere to go, as though time had no meaning. A few young men stood on the street chatting, not breaking a stride in their conversation as cars sped. It's a small neighborhood with nothing much in it. The code enforcement team I had been invited to observe planned to meet at the local convenience store in the heart of the community. To the left of the convenience store is a laundromat and to its right is a barbershop. Across the street is a large apartment complex where parents were getting ready to walk their children to the elementary school. Next to the elementary school is the local community center, which houses different programs for children and adults, ranging from after-school programs to support groups for victims of gun victimization. A block away is a Juvenile Detention Center, which looms over as a constant reminder of the omnipresence of police and policing in the everyday lives of the community's children and adults.

I was one of the first to arrive. I surprised myself by being early. But soon enough, the parking lot of the small corner store was surrounded by police cars and SUVs. If I hadn't known, I would've thought the President was coming to visit. It was overwhelming, and I admit, I was intimidated by the heavily armed police presence that had descended upon this neighborhood. One by one, they got out of their vehicles in full police gear with their guns on their holsters. Everyone was in a pleasant mood for such as cold morning; the officers were laughing, catching up, and sharing stories. You'd have never guessed that we were surrounded by police vehicles, fire trucks, and armed people. It seemed like an after-church get-together. I shuffled through the crowd looking for Officer Michaels.

He had texted me late last night to ask if I wanted to join him and his department on a code enforcement in Minestown. I wanted to go but was also wary of being seen with the police, especially after adamantly denying that I was the police when conducting research in the neighborhood. Here I was, about to tag along with the police on a policing mission. I worried about the optics if one of my study participants saw me with officers and what that would mean regarding the trust I worked to develop with the residents. Knowing that this code enforcement was at 7 am, way before any of the regulars were usually out and about, calmed me down a bit, and I figured I'd be in the backseat of a patrol car so no one would see me.

I had anticipated this would be low-stakes code enforcement, as they are generally publicized as responses to calls of code violations from neighbors (Atlanta PD, n.d). Given these descriptions, I expected it to be just Officer Michaels and possibly one to two other officers. However, I was surprised when I arrived to see a sea of police officers and firefighters, all in their uniforms, labeled vehicles, and guns and tasers in holsters gathered around the small parking lot of this convenience store. Approximately 30 officers and ten firefighters were present at this code enforcement. I realized then that this was not a simple response to an irate call from a nosy neighbor but a routine neighborhood-wide code enforcement. It was an intimidating sight that would be expected to raise concerns of passersby as though a significant accident/crime had occurred. As a routine exercise, this code enforcement did not arouse suspicion as mothers, and other caregivers walked their children to school. It was like any other day. It gave way to the normalization of state-sanctioned violence in this community or, better yet, the normalization of the exceptional. In my fifteen years living in different cities and neighborhoods in this country, I had not once seen code enforcement, let alone one this violently intimidating. It made me reexamine my privilege. Besides the children walking to school, there was a lack of reaction from the community, as if nothing was happening. It was as though the residents knew that this was just part of their morning routine. This desensitization to violence can be attributed to generations of being subjected to community trauma. Community trauma can be understood as collective trauma experienced in communities with routine exposure to violence (Davis & Pinderhughes, 2016). Community trauma results from multiple exposures to violence ranging from interpersonal forms of violence (domestic, gun victimization, police brutality), through structural violence (under-investment in social services such as healthcare, schooling, housing, and economic opportunities), to historical and intergeneration trauma (from the legacy of slavery to Jim Crow exclusionary practices) (Goffman, 2014; Davis & Pinderhughes, 2016). These forms of violence together produce community trauma and create environments where violence becomes the norm. The heavy police presence brought upon by this routine code enforcement reinforces this community trauma as residents of Minestown are numb to what can be described as a militarized response to a few dilapidated buildings. As a community that has experienced slavery, lynchings, exclusion from the state capital, and underemployment, this scene becomes another example of how state intervention, mainly the police, are not mobilized to serve and protect but to intimidate and exert control over Black communities.

As this was a routine practice, the officers I observed were not disturbed by their heavy-handed descent into this community. They operated as though this was a standard practice that should be expected in this community, even though they would not tolerate this in their neighborhoods.

For example, Officer Webb, in talking through policing, mentioned:

> *"I live in a nice neighborhood, and when I see the police in my neighborhood, I'm like, why are you here? We don't need you here. It's because we are able to manage our community ourselves, so if you're over here, something is wrong. But I think in some of the more challenged communities, we rely on the police to manage our community.*

Therefore, this heavy police presence is justified by arguing that members of hyperghettos simply cannot manage their own communities in ways that middle- and upper-class communities can. This classist analysis fails to consider why nice neighborhoods such as the one where Officer Webb resides have not suffered the same levels of historical/intergenerational violence as well as continued experiences of structural violence that have left them in a state of disarray. This narrative obfuscates the real issues that led to these conditions and blames individual people for their inability to manage their communities. Instead of being cast as part of the problem, the police are reconfigured as heroes, working to restore order where communities have failed. Code enforcements such as these are normalized as responses to community failures at self-management.

After the day's plan was distributed, Officer Michaels told me we would be walking instead of driving. We would leave the cars here with a few officers guarding them, and we'd go through the neighborhood on foot. It wasn't a large neighborhood, plus doing inspections would be easier on foot instead of driving with one foot constantly on the brake. I was even more worried now about being seen with the police and as the police, but I figured that being bundled and remaining in the middle of the crowd would be a good enough cover.

Code enforcement meant going around the neighborhood and tagging houses, buildings, and other structures we deemed unsafe and reporting the owners to either fix them or risk losing them altogether. I was walking in a group of 4 officers. Officers Michaels, Martin, Lopes, and Scott. They were all lovely people, laughing and joking around. Officer Michaels stayed with me, explaining what was happening and why it was necessary.

Early into our walk, we stopped to tag a house that was a known drug den. It was dilapidated, with neither windows nor frames. The place was falling apart, and Officer Michaels pointed at the site, saying, "*this is why we're here, to rid communities of these places. Who can live like this*?" This was both a condemnation of the physical structure and a moral judgment on those whose lives had led them here. This code enforcement was an opportunity to remove drug users and push them from the neighborhood and the city. Officer Michael's reasoned with me that:

"With perpetrators, we just try to get them out of the neighborhood, out of the city. Code enforcement has been really good about that. You see, a lot of these guys aren't really trying to keep nice, clean homes and stuff like that; that's just a pain in their butt because they're just there to sell drugs and have the meetup locations. They're not here for the house; the house is just there, a place for transaction, you know, so we've been using code enforcement as much as we can to push out all the wrong types of folks."

The idea of pushing the wrong type of folks is a romanticized notion that is rooted in the concept of respectability politics. These officers believe that they can cleanse away any harmful or criminogenic elements in communities by simply displacing them to new areas and bringing communities up to the standard of white notions of respectability. At this same time, this shows Black officers as actively responding to community needs (in a sense, Black police are perceived as doing something by the same communities that fought for generations to get them on the force). Bourdieu refers to this as usurping ventriloquism in which "someone speaks in the name of something which is made to exist through this very discourse" (Bourdieu, 1984: 5:63). The community who speaks here is part of an artifact of the "order maintenance" approach, primed to talk to the police's language of law and order. As such, the "clean" community members are primed to be sold the idea of becoming consumers of revamped spaces.

Simultaneously, clean community members are also swept up in the zeal to remove criminals from local spaces, with their homes also becoming collateral damage to these code enforcements. Their homes are also subject to fines and seizures. Therefore, instead of simply being sold on the idea of becoming consumers of revamped spaces, these encounters further increase neighborhood hostility against the police. Instead of welcoming the police cleanup presence, officers are viewed as an invading force that disrupts the daily rhythm of life. Drug dealers, on the other hand, are perceived as local heroes as they invest in the community, unlike the state.

As discussed by Officer Graham,

> *"Because you have people that are drug dealers, but they also give back to their community, but then we have the type of evidence that we built against them, and we arrest him in the daycare that he's giving money to. You know, something like that can be easily looked at as like what the hell he's just dropping off his son, or like he comes here every day and gives the seven hundred dollars' worth of his money, like what the hell.* Like why y'all do that, he comes here every day and gives us $700 worth of this money, but what you might not know is that $700 is being made selling crack cocaine, and you know certain things like that.
>
> *We as police officers need to do better with this, like when we arrest someone, we need to inform the community better on informing the community about what's going on. Like I'll say, I'm guilty of this when I arrest someone, like when someone says, "Hey, what's going on, nothing, leave me the fuck alone, leave me alone. Because once you turn on your game face, it's like I'm trying to focus on the matter at hand, officer safety; I'm not trying to worry about you, number one or number 2, 3 being nosy as far as what's going on, you can see it on the news, or you can call the police department later and figure out what's going on but other than that, it's like we need to do*

> *better at communication because even I notice as a police officer, that once I tell people what they did and why I'm arresting them, they do relax and be like oh shit, and I'll be like, thank you, thank you!"*

Revealingly, this excerpt from Officer Graham revealed two critical pieces of information. First and foremost, inadequate officer communication during arrests leads to confusion and distrust from local communities. As described by Officer Michael, drug dealers are subject to code enforcement due to their contribution to the decay of their local communities. However, this conversation reveals the inverse as drug dealers are portrayed as patrons of local businesses and community centers. In this sense, they cannot simply be understood through the perpetrator paradigm as they also serve to support communities by filling gaps left behind by the state. The violence they inflict on themselves, their neighbors, and their communities at large can be understood through the lens of Primo Levi's "the gray zone" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). They operate in a morally ambiguous area where the communities depend on their charity while simultaneously being directly affected by the acts that generate this capital. It makes local community members sympathetic to their cause, making them less likely to report or side with the police. This creates a culture of silence in which the state is the enemy and, by extension, the Black officers, many of whom rose from these communities with the idea of protecting and serving their people. This moral ambiguity leaves drug dealers to operate with impunity, continuing the cycle of violence that dominates areas of hyper marginality.

Secondly, and most importantly, Officer Graham revealed that officer safety is the main priority during contact with presumed perpetrators and the public. This shifts the narrative from public safety being the number one priority. As we saw with the video of George Floyd's public lynching, officer safety was the primary concern as officers ignored both Floyd's and the public pleas that screamed that he couldn’t breathe. During those eight minutes, the officers were in the zone in a similar way as described above by Officer Graham, *who states that once you’re in the zone, you don’t give a fuck about anything or anyone else around you.* This hyperfocus and the prioritization of officer safety signals a shift in policing, focusing on the individual officers, not the public at large. This form of policing is primed to blame the public for mishaps instead of forcing officer accountability. This became clear when I attended an officer-led community event a few weeks later.

As we continued to walk and tag, a few people peered through their windows to see what was going on, and upon seeing us, they immediately drew their blinds so as not to attract attention. The residents appeared to know that heavy fines were about to come down on landlords, which meant increased rents for tenants and possible home losses for homeowners. This is how the city collected tax revenue and hoped to get residents safe living conditions. I asked if people were typically able to get their properties up to code, and he replied rarely; it’s expensive. So, what happens is they end up getting buried in fees, and either must sell or go to prison. Most homeowners can never afford to fix these homes, especially when things get this bad. He could tell I felt sorry for their lot and remarked, “look, I get it; I’m black too. I have parents on Medicaid and relatives on food stamps. It’s not like I don’t get the struggle.” In this instance, he equated Blackness to socioeconomic status. Blackness to him was poverty, and because he was now middle class, he believed the way to identify with the people was through their shared experiences in poverty. Officer Lopes, hearing this laughed, “I guess I’m black too because my family was also poor growing up.”

The officers all laughed and continued tagging homes. Blackness to these men was not epithelized; it was class-based, something one could transcend through hard work and determination. To be Black, in their eyes, was a choice. This understanding of race and racialization is antithetical to how race is primarily viewed, particularly from an afro-pessimistic perspective. These officers believe that race is not static or central, but rather dynamic and discursive, shaped primarily by economic differences, not antiblackness. This notion was prevalent amongst officers that I spoke with. Many blamed the circumstances of their poor brethren simply on terrible life choices without examining the structural factors they participated in and contributed to. Here we were enforcing city codes that these officers knew that poor homeowners would not be able to pay. Yet, they could not see that they were actively participating in the further decline into poverty these communities face. The dissonance between the two was a common theme that became more evident when I attended a police/community event in response to the BLM movement.

Police/Community Meeting

A few days later, Captain Tenner invited me to a community forum where Black American residents spoke to a group of police officers on ways to improve police-community relations. This event was held at a local restaurant. Captain Tenner had rented the space out, as he does every month in Black neighborhoods around the city. This month, it was in Minestown, so he thought it was the perfect opportunity for me to witness his community activism. This was a passion project he began two years before we met in 2016 and had garnered some accolades from the department and the city. The Black Lives Matter movement, the police violence that caused it, and the resulting negative perception of police that followed were the impetus that drove him to start these forums. Captain Tenner wanted to build bridges to show that not all police are wrong. The event began at 8 pm. As I drove up, I was not expecting to see many people; I even assumed that the majority of those attending would be elderly residents as when speaking to Officer Jenkins on this topic, he said:

> *"There are a lot of programs that the police department is putting out. There was a lot of community outreach that we put out there, and oftentimes it is not reaching the younger people that don't like us because of all this messaging or the people that are criminals. Criminals typically always stay away from law enforcement. The people that attend these functions are pretty much law-abiding citizens, mostly the older people that appreciate what we do in the first place."*

I was expecting to see a few older people who still remembered the first Black police officers and the hope of better policing that they had brought forth. However, to my surprise, the small Jamaican restaurant was packed with community members of all ages. About 40 people were sitting, including the eight officers standing around. A few young children, no older than six, were running around trying to go in-between the tightly packed chairs. A few couples sat together and chatted as though they were out on a couple's date night. Music was playing, and the place was lively. It was a relaxed atmosphere as the police mingled with the residents. It was going to be my first-time meeting Captain Tenner. Although we had talked on the phone, it dawned on me that I didn't know what he looked like. I looked around at the officers standing, attempting to figure out who he might be. I noticed this domineering man, laughing and chatting with everyone like they were old friends, and I figured that must be him. His presence and confident bravado matched the person I spoke to on the phone. I went up to him and introduced myself. He was happy that I could make it and quickly introduced me to a few of the people he was talking to. The event was about to start, so we all took our seats.

“Although the group of police officers was racially diverse, only Black American officers spoke while white and Hispanic officers listened (Mangurenje, 2020). Captain Tenner introduced all the officers and explained that the two white officers were police academy cadets and were here to listen and learn, not participate. The community members clapped in acknowledgment of the importance of centering Black voices and Black spaces and giving white people the opportunity to learn, particularly while in training, with the hope that they will carry these lessons into their practice. During the forum, community members relayed harrowing narratives of negative police encounters. These ranged from individual to collective intergenerational trauma at the hands of the police. Policing to these community members was violence. It was not an institution they felt safe and protected by but needed protection from. One young Black American woman, no older than twenty-five, spoke of how her brother was murdered by the police in a midwestern city, prompting her to flee and move to Atlanta (Mangurenje, 2020). She communicated her gratitude to Atlanta officers for holding forums such as these, encouraging dialogue between police and community members, even on uncomfortable topics (Mangurenje, 2020). She then proceeded to ask how police worked to protect and serve the Black American community in Atlanta. Although the officers were sympathetic to this young woman’s loss, their responses to her puzzled me (Mangurenje, 2020). I slowly noticed that the discussion was not centered on how police work to serve the community but on how Black American civilians can best behave to avoid negative police interactions (Mangurenje, 2020). Residents were given specific advice: keep their hands on the wheel when pulled over, obey the commands of police officers, and follow all instructions until the encounter was over (Mangurenje, 2020). This struck me as odd since residents like this young man had related memories of firsthand experiences with police violence (Mangurenje, 2020). The message from the officers was geared toward good citizen behavior; in other words, the expectation was placed on the citizen to prevent adverse interactions (Mangurenje, 2020). For me, the strategic employment of respectability politics at this event highlighted a fundamental shift in the Black American police officers' perspectives (Mangurenje, 2020). Many were the same officers who joined the force because they had been unjustly violated by police during their lives and had seen their service as a means to combat racialized police violence (Mangurenje, 2020). Yet this forum laid bare the dominant attitudes of the force: it was community residents, not the police, who needed to learn how to behave (Mangurenje, 2020). The individual suspect did not "fit in" and had to modify themselves to fit prescribed notions of belonging (Mangurenje, 2020)".

Although Black American police officers may have hopes for reforming the police, it became clear that once they became part of the system, they employed similar logic that gave rise to "bad apples" (Mangurenje, 2020). For them, the individual "bad apples" were under interrogation, not the institution of policing itself (Mangurenje, 2020). They justified this logic by challenging a middle-aged woman who spoke of her family members being racially profiled. She mentioned to the group that most of the deaths that have resulted from police interactions result from racial profiling. That officers indiscriminately target Black people going about their everyday lives in a way they don't to members of other races. The officers challenged this idea of racial profiling by arguing that they do not racially profile but instead criminally profile. They argued that the distinction between the two sometimes gets lost in translation.

One of the Black officers explained:

> *"So racial profiling is basically thinking that way because this person is black, like putting black jeans black shoes and he's walking versus driving that BMW or some or even if he's driving that all white BMW that's not registered his name. You think he stole it. Yeah. Even*

> *though it might be his mom's, you don't know, or somebody might have loaned him the car, or because of the fact he's dressed a certain way, sagging or whatever, even the car can smell like weed or whatever, but you're like man is black, I think he did. That's what the kind of racial profiling mean, or you all of the same and think he did his crime because of the fact that he is a black man or a white man or something like that. Certain crimes are associated with certain ethnicities and colors. You can lie and say I've have dealt with anybody black with meth yet. I've dealt with black people with marijuana all the time. I haven't dealt with anybody white with marijuana yet. I've dealt with tons of white folks with cocaine and meth. So, it's just one of those things. I haven't dealt with any Hispanics with any drugs though. But it's just one of those type of things based off of like what's going on. Another thing is with. Criminal profiling is just like you know somebody is an active, not active warrant, but you know they're known to break the law. They just got out of jail, they just got out on parole or whatever, and you're basically, you know, hounding them, following them, trying to see what they're doing. Umm, when somebody's on parole you can basically go up to them and search them at any given time; it doesn't matter if they're involved in a crime or not. But you're using that as a potential shakedown to get drugs or to get possible information towards somebody else. Or it's just like certain ways you go about stuff can be easily illegal. But people that are on parole they that are felons. They don't have a Fourth Amendment right"* (Officer DeMarco, male, 30s).

These officers understand racial profiling as targeting people because of their race, regardless of their participation or lack thereof in criminal activities. On the other hand, criminal profiling uses presupposed stereotypes about certain racial or ethnic groups as drivers for targeting members of that group regardless of their participation or lack thereof in illegal activities. As the officers spoke, I was baffled by these definitions because they did not sound too different. On the one hand, racial profiling is targeting people solely based on their racial background, while on the other, criminal profiling is targeting people based on racial stereotypes. In the age of colorblind racism, however small, this distinction has important implications. Criminal profiling becomes the reconfiguration of racial profiling in a package that suits present-day liberal sensibilities. What is most striking about this discussion is the invocation of the right to search felons resulting from their lack of fourth amendment rights. In the United States, one in three Black men has a criminal record (Shannon, et al. 2017). Black codes that followed emancipation were enacted through criminalization and replaced slavery to control Black labor, movement, and freedom in the reconstruction and redemption Era South. The legacy of these policies has resulted in the continued disproportionate incarceration rates of Black Americans. Through the recategorization of enslaved people as criminals, we see the groundwork for the recategorization of racial profiling into criminal profiling in present-day policing practices. The consequences of overcriminalization have been well documented in research as scholars such as Michelle Alexander, Loic Wacquant, and Alice Goffman have shown that people with criminal records face discrimination that ranges from being excluded from the formal labor market, lack of access to public services such as housing, food stamps, and other social services.

Most significantly, felons are denied the right to vote. What is least discussed is what these officers revealed. People with criminal records, particularly felony records, are subject to random searches and seizures without the need for warrants. Like their slave precursors, they are nonbeings, and have no rights, and with the State in place, the police can operate with impunity during interactions with them. We saw this with the fatal arrest of Eric Garner by Justin D'Amico in July 2014 in New York City, sparking nationwide Black Lives Matter Protests. Garner, who had over 30 arrests since the 1980s, was under constant surveillance and faced daily harassment from the police. With his final breaths, Garner attempted to understand the officer:

> *"Get away [garbled] for what? Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it. It stops today. Why would you...? Everyone standing here will tell you I didn't do nothing. I did not sell nothing. Because every time you see me, you want to harass me. You want to stop me [garbled] selling cigarettes. I'm minding my business, officer; I'm minding my business. Please just leave me alone. I told you the last time, please just leave me alone (Capelouto, Susanna (December 4, 2014)" CNN. Archived from the original on February 10, 2021. Retrieved June 18, 2020).*

Through criminal profiling, Black people, particularly Black men, remain subject to harmful policing practices that lead to the loss of life. Eric Garner was routinely targeted by New York officers who, through colorblind racism, were able to argue that they were not indiscriminately targeting Black men but instead were simply following someone known to break the law. Through these logics, racialized policing practices directed at Black Americans are primarily individualized and based on what is presumed as suspicious behavior from past criminal behavior to one's presence in a particular area, their clothing choices, their body size, and their behavior in a given situation. All these are to say; that the police have discretion on whom to search primarily based on the individualization of racial stereotypes. Through criminal profiling, Black American police officers can individualize and weaponize the rhetoric of respectability politics to perpetuate anti-Black logics that perpetuates the notion of the Black criminal (Bell 2018). This perspective does not bring critical analysis to the institution of policing but instead turns scrutiny back on communities whose residents are blamed for the resulting over-policing. This distinction guides Black officers as they work within the system, separating themselves from their overpoliced brethren by negating the social value of those deemed moral failures (Mattingly, 2014). Black American officers joined the force to reform the ways their communities are policed. However, this chapter illustrates that increasing diversity in the police force without implementing structural change reproduces the very forms of inequality that racial diversity in policing was intended to address. The capitulation of these Black American officers to anti-Black logics that see Black people as a threat, an entity that needs to be contained and subjugated, highlights an occupational transformation that these Black officers undergo, from serving the public to serving the institution.

Community Perspectives

"This here is the plantation; over there (pointing at the downtown police department) is the massa's house. Them N that you see here are the overseers; they be working for the massa, not us"* (Mr. G, male, 40s).

Sitting under the tree next to the community center, I spoke to Mr. G and his friends. I told them that the cashier at the convenience store had directed me to them. He had told me they would be willing to talk about policing, so I walked over to them, hoping not to get shut down again. My first attempt at approaching community members had been shut down by a young man in his 20s who, before I could tell him what I was doing there, immediately told me that he was not interested in voting. I was walking around with a clipboard with my questions on it. Seeing that I was new to the community and had no contacts, I figured a clipboard would make me less suspicious when approaching random people, but instead, a sense of formality that might make people willing to talk to me. The clipboard had spectacularly backfired as this young man had thought I was trying to sign him up to vote. He didn't wait around to hear my response but kept walking away from the store. Mr. Fox had been generous enough to let me loiter outside his store, asking his patrons if they'd participate. Although it was already late afternoon, the storefront was not bustling with traffic as I had hoped, but I did notice three men sitting on the bench, so I walked over to them, hoping that this day would not be a total waste. This is how I first met Mr. G and his friends.

They had noticed me standing outside the storefront with a kind of curiosity, hoping that I wouldn't try to approach them as well but also wondering why a stranger was hanging around outside their store with a clipboard. As I came to them, they seemed both curious and annoyed. I didn't care. I just kept walking, hoping that they would talk to me. I arrived at their table and gave them my short elevator speech, relaying that I was interested in their perceptions of the police. One of them asked if I was the police, and I told him, "*no, I'm just a student, interested in police and policing.*" Mr. G., in noticing my accent, asked where I was from. I told him that I was from Zimbabwe and his other friend laughed, saying to the man who asked me if I was the police, "*she ain't no police, she African.*" All three men burst into laughter and invited me to sit down. They were intrigued by my "otherness" and sought to tell me their perspectives on policing, as one would say to an airport stranger about their lives. They wanted to share with me their knowledge and experiences on the nature of Black life in their small community and the country at large.

A broader understanding of my otherness was not simply my immigration status but my Africanness. To Black Americans, Africa has been a place that they have been historically taught to hate or look down upon. Orlando Patterson's discussion of slavery provides insights into this position. Natal alienation is required in the creation of an enslaved person. The enslaved person is taken from his home, removed from all connections of his past, and left a nonbeing, one without history, a present, or a future (Patterson, 1989).

In expanding on Patterson's work, natal alienation is not simply removing an enslaved person from his place of origin but also entails the violent, destructive creation of a new being. This new being is taught to hate their history, to see themselves with self-loathing while praising the master, the master's history, and the master's community. In Black Skins, White Masks, Franz Fanon captures this feeling as he describes growing up in colonial Martinique, where from a young age, he was ingrained with the psychological, not only physical, effects of colonial subjugation. He was taught to hate Black children and people and to support white people. In this same vein, Steve Biko talks about Black consciousness from the South African perspective in which he discusses the need for Black people to free themselves from mental slavery. This mental or psychological subjugation is necessary to maintain a slave class. If people are bred to dislike themselves, their race, history, and culture are also erased; they are primed to feel inferior, thereby upholding a system in which the master and his community are seen even by the enslaved people themselves as inherently superior. In thinking through these understandings of Blackness, it is clear that even in the aftermath of slavery, Africa is still viewed as a primitive, uncivilized place by our Black diasporic brethren. For Mr. G. and his friends to say, "*she ain't no police, she African,"* they embody the consequences of this mental subjugation. They are saying, as a Black African, I can't be part of an institution to them that is inherently white. As Africans, it is not something we possess the capacity to create, maintain, or even consider. We are inherently inferior. In a sense, it is designed to make the enslaved person grateful for their position. They, too, could be African, but the Master and his community have civilized them to a point where they are set apart from that whence they came. Mr. G. and his friends wanted to educate me; they saw themselves as a civilizing force. With them, I was to get a master class on

American history, politics, and the way of life. As their ancestors were civilized, they too were passing it forward.

That led to Mr. G.'s statement: This is the plantation; over there (pointing at the downtown police department) is the massa's house. Them N* that you see here are the overseers; they are working for the massa, not us. I asked him what he meant by that, and he explained how things had changed very little for Black people in this country from their arrival as slaves to the present day. He pointed at his neighborhood, the dilapidation and the apparent poverty that was a fixture of everyday life here. To Mr. G and his friends, their present condition was a direct result of the enslavement of their ancestors in this country and the endurance of anti-Black racism. They spoke of how Black police officers were employed to manage and control, not serve and protect the Black community as seen in white communities such as Foothills – an affluent white suburb in the Northern end of the city. To them, Black police officers were traitors who served the system that continued the oppression of their population. When talking about having been perceived as Uncle Tom's, this is what the officers I spoke to referred to. The idea of the past not only haunting but also continuing to influence the present remained salient in our discussion. They spoke of how these officers changed once they joined the force. This was the general understanding in the community, with some having had personal experiences with those who had officers and others hearing about these changes from family and friends who felt abandoned by their former friends once they joined the force. The officers themselves echoed this sentiment. You can no longer socialize with your old friends, you can no longer spend time in the old places, you become a new person, and as such, you have to shed the past, in a sense, shed one's Black self for a new blue self.

> *“Adapting to police like you've got to change. If your friends that ain’t umm on the straight and narrow, you have to separate yourself from them and I had many friends that enjoy drinking a lot, you know partying on a weekend, some smoked marijuana. I had some that were umm, to be honest just criminals, thieves and you had to separate yourself from them. My friends changed as soon as I went into the academy”* (Officer Carter, male, 40s).

In becoming the police, Black officers take on a new respectable identity. This requires a change in not only their occupational status but also their personal lives. As explained above, even friends who are not engaged in criminal behavior but instead party are cast out as possible harbingers or negative perceptions. The idea is to protect one’s respectability that harkens back to the initial Black officers selected from the “best of the race” to represent the “best of the race.” This notion of not being good enough, thereby requiring modifications to one’s life to fit in, is designed to separate the exceptional from the disposable, creating a false sense of acceptance into whiteness for Black officers. This metamorphosis is demonstrated not only in social interactions but also in professional ones as Mr. G and his friends relayed instances of harsher police violence at the hands of their Black brethren. In one incident, Mr. G’s friend recalled being aggressively handled by a Black officer who appeared to want to prove to his white partner that he was not biased or in any way showing favoritism to Black suspects. To this man, what had started as a possible hopeful encounter, turned into one of brutality at the hands of one of their own. This experience with a Black officer is emblematic of the larger structural factors that affect Black officers around the nation. They are trained in the same academies as their white peers, follow the same standards of operations, and most importantly, they are placed in a position where they must prove their loyalty to an institution predicated on anti-Blackness. The act of not wanting to show favoritism to Black suspects indicates something deeper within policing itself. To be accepted as “real police, " black officers must exhibit anti-Black behaviors. As such, the violence and dilapidation that accompanies life in Minestown are structural; their imprints are rooted in institutions and practices generated in the antebellum era and have come to define everyday life (Thomas, 2011).

The similarities between what Mr. G and his friends encountered at the hands of the police and the interactions between community members and the police all go back to the statement that this is the plantation, and right there is the massa’s house. By remaining on a metaphorical plantation, where anti-Blackness is normative, it doesn’t matter who the overseers are; their position as overseers remains the same, which means the actions and motives are guaranteed to stay the same. BLM, as discussed in the next chapter, is attempting to challenge the existing status quo and transform this paradigm by not targeting the “bad apples” or the “regular overseers” but instead by challenging the system that keeps the massa’s house in place, giving rise to the Defund the Police Movement.

Conclusion

This chapter served to illustrate the ways through which Black officers capitulate to the institution of policing. The transition from race reformers to defenders of the institution provides important insights on diversity and inclusion without structural changes. It is not simply enough to include minoritized groups in anti-Black spaces, as it is the institution, not the individual actors, that determine outcomes. Angela Davis, in her writing, warns against the insidious promotion of individualism (Davis et al., 2016). Instead of focusing exclusively on the need to exert revenge on identifiable racists such as Darren Wilson or George Chauvin or allowing them to bear the burden of history, we must unmask the real culprit – systemic and racist police violence. Black officers and their role in maintaining the status quo serve as an illustrative example of how without structural changes, the system continues to propagate its violence against a people. Therefore, juxtaposing the code enforcements and the Minestown community members is a powerful tool to illustrate how the plantation lives on in the afterlife of slavery. The application of the plantation as a descriptor of contemporary Black life highlights how the subjugation of Black people continues. In a zone of social abandonment, all that remains is the police.

Similarly, on a plantation, where one has been rooted from their natal home, separated from their social and cultural bonds, all that remained were the overseers and slave patrols. It is through continuous control and management of Black life that our society becomes desensitized to Black death. The police can descend on neighborhoods such as Minestown, terrorize residents with daily expressions of routine violence, and ultimately blame their victims for their deaths. As we move on to the next chapter, we will discuss how the Black community attempts to take a stand and the consequences.

Chapter 5: Imagined Futures: Defund the Police

Introduction

"I can't talk right now; can I call you back in a few days. Things here are a little crazy right now" (Officer Smith, male, 30s).

On June 12th, 2020, Rayshard Brooks was shot and killed by Atlanta Police Officer Garrett Rolfe (Ortiz, 2021). This shooting took place amid the George Floyd protests that engulfed the nation. A few days before the murder of Mr. Brooks, I had been trying to schedule an interview with Officer Smith. This interview had been a few months in the making; however, he had been waiting on his supervising Officer to give the go-ahead. It finally came in early June 2020, and we spent the next few days trying to find a time that worked for both of us.

We had scheduled an appointment for June 14th. However, the shooting of Mr. Brooks' forced another change in our schedule. I called Officer Smith on June 13th to check on how things were going and try to reschedule for a different time once things cooled down. Our call lasted no more than 2 minutes, as he told me: *"I can't talk right now; can I call you back in a few days. Things here are a little crazy right now."* I told him I understood and would reach out in a few days once things calmed down a bit more. We ended our call. From then on, I was glued to the television, watching as the fallout from the aftermath of Mr. Brooks' murder unfolded in Atlanta.

Rayshard Brooks was a 27-year-old Black man who was shot after being discovered sleeping in his car at a Wendy's drive-thru (Boone, 2020). Following a breathalyzer exam, Mr. Brooks' blood-alcohol content was above the legal limit (Ortiz, 2021; Boone, 2020). Responding Officers Rolfe and Brosnan attempted to arrest Mr. Brooks; however, in their efforts, Mr. Brooks grabbed Officer Brosnan's taser and ran off (Ortiz, 2021; Boone, 2020). Officer Rolfe ran after him, fired his taser at him, and shot Mr. Brooks three times, while Mr. Brooks fired the stolen taser twice (Ortiz, 2021; Boone, 2020). The shots fired by Officer Rolfe caused fatal wounds. However, before being transported to the hospital, Officer Rolfe kicked Mr. Brooks as he lay on the ground bleeding, and Officer Brosnan also stood on his shoulder (Ortiz, 2021; Boone, 2020). Neither officer provided first aid nor contacted (Emergency Medical Technicians) EMTs for over two minutes to render first aid to a dying Mr. Brooks. Mr. Brooks later died following an unsuccessful attempt at surgically treating his wounds (Ortiz, 2021; Boone, 2020).

What followed was a city-wide anti-police protest targeting the police department and police violence. The Wendy's restaurant where Mr. Brooks was shot was burned to the ground as protesters were rife with anger with the police and policing as an institution (Boone, 2020). A city steeped in a history of resistance and embroiled in the George Floyd protests was further emboldened by the murder of Rayshard Brooks. It was time to take a stand. The Black leadership had failed the people as this was now happening in their city.

In efforts to assuage the protestors and rioters, Officer Rolfe was immediately charged with murder, and the Atlanta Police Department (APD) Chief of Police, Erika Shields, retired. Even the then Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock (later Senator Warnock), who was running for a Georgia seat in the U.S. Senate, spoke at Mr. Brooks' funeral (Boone, 2020). During his speech, he stated that *"Mr. Brooks wasn't just running from the police, he was running from a system that makes slaves out of people. This is much bigger than the police. This is about a whole system that cries out for renewal and reform* (Ortiz, 2021; Boone, 2020)*."* This categorization of Mr. Brooks as someone who was "running from a system that makes slaves out of people," offered a layered understanding to policing and by extension the criminal justice system as a whole. Scholars such as Michelle Alexander in the New Jim Crow (2010) have discussed how slavery was reinvented through the 13th Amendment. The 13th amendment was written to right the wrongs of slavery and end the system. However, it came with a caveat. Through the 13th Amendment, slavery was allowed to persist in the country; only now, it had another name: incarceration. The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for the crime of which* the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction (National Archives, 2022)." Punishment for a crime thereby became a means for slaveholders to retain their enslaved labor without breaking the law. This one statement served to re-enslave Black Americans. Through the 13th Amendment, post-Emancipation Black codes became strictly enforced, and the police gained their formal power as an arm of the government. Policing and the criminal justice system became codified in law as institutions designed to enslave and re-enslave formerly enslaved people. Therefore, this statement by Reverend Warnock is a testament to the continuation of this legacy. Policing, through the eyes of the Black community, is an institution that is designed to ensnare people into slavery. Unlike the enslaved person described by Patterson (1989), who is uprooted from his milieu and brought to the master's home, this enslaved person already exists in the master's community. He has been emancipated, but in efforts to regain control, slavery is not ended, but instead, recast through a new lens that allows the same process to occur, just under new rules. The exclusion of Black Americans from the racial contract sets the stage for this (Mills, 1999). Through this understanding of policing and its role in Black life, Atlanta could no longer hide under the legacy of the Black Mecca or the City that is too busy to hate. Instead, the shooting of Rayshawn Brooks alerted residents to the ever-present threat of police violence, even in a Black dominated city. The institution, not only the people, was the problem. It became clear that police and policing needed to be reformed.

The discussions of police reform did not go over too well with APD officers. They felt attacked over something that was standard practice. They felt that politicians and social justice advocates who don't know police and policing procedures were quick to blame them even though they were simply following their training. Therefore, in response to these protests, we witnessed a major unofficial police strike in the city. The officers were fighting back.

The Blue Flu

My quick phone conversation with Officer Smith had been on June 13th, 2020, the day after Rayshard Brooks was shot and killed by an APD officer. By the 17th, a sizeable unofficial police strike was underway. Known as the Blue Flu, over 65% of APD officers called out in protest of the charges against Officer Rolfe with Zones 1, 3, and 5, where Minestown is located, experienced the largest callouts with over 90% of officers calling out in solidarity with Officer Rolfe (Keenan, 2020). Watching this play out was extraordinary. Police were not responding to emergency calls or crimes reported around the city (Keenan, 2020). The very same officers that I had spoken with through the duration of this project were now sitting at home, calling out sick. On the one hand, this was not surprising to me as the strength of the Thin Blue Line had become evident during our conversations. However, part of me still held hope as these officers talked about reform and their pride in serving the Black community.

Thinking back to the struggles of the Atlanta eight, and now bearing witness to the successors of this struggle, highlighted how much the ideal of having Black officers for the betterment of the Black community had failed to materialize. Instead of serving the people, Black officers served the institution and their fellow officers. When asked to speak on the Blue Flu, the Atlanta Police Foundation spokesperson, Robert Baskin told reporters, "The police morale has been extraordinarily low since the recent indictments; officers were already under "extraordinary pressure because of the coronavirus." He added that police have been under "verbal assault" during the recent spate of Black Lives Matter protests (Keenan, 2020)."

Police, through this lens, are recast as the victims of unjust indictments, the coronavirus epidemic, and most importantly, the Black Lives Matter movement. Instead of critically interrogating their institution to understand what could have led to such an outpour of public rage against policing, the problem is reframed as that of the people "verbally assaulting" officers as the primary offense. Riskes (2014) described this as the excess flesh of bodies, while in 2021's The Second, Carol Anderson refers to it as the thuggification of black victims of violence. Although these scholars use different phrases to describe this phenomenon. It is the broad stroke painting of white people as law-abiding citizens and Black people as lawless criminals. Black people are categorized as inherent threats to white society, and the only way for white civil society to be safe is if Black people are controlled and subjugated. It is the physical presence of Black bodies that is threatening, not necessarily their actions. Even white police, those who are trained to manage and control unruly suspects, become fragile in the face of Black people. The officers need protection, not the people. APD officers are no different. It is the "verbal assaults" from Black Lives Matter protests that put them over the edge. They can no longer perform their duties in the face of such dire threats.

911 calls go unanswered, and crime reports go uninvestigated because protestors threatened officers. The unrelenting violence that Black people have experienced at the hands of the police since they were forcibly brought to these shores is ignored. What becomes the focus is how those exerting the violence are themselves victimized by the presence of Black bodies. This is especially noteworthy as policing as a professional field is predicated on the notion of hegemonic masculinity is a concept that seeks to describe dominant masculinity in Western

societies and is generally understood as descriptive of the white, middle-to-upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian male (Kimmel and Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity conflicts with both other men and women. In efforts to prove their dominance, men who practice hegemonic masculinity, such as police officers, are typically physically strong, leaders, fearless, and not afraid of confrontation.

And what was police academy like. It was interesting. It was it was right in my wheelhouse when it comes to the physical fitness aspect. I was a top-notch athlete. The physical aspect was me. It was trying hard, but the training aspect physically was what I do right now (Officer Jenkins, male, 20s).

When I was a rookie, I was one of those that wasn't afraid to body slam somebody. I'm still not if I have to, but now I choose to communicate through it. I think when you start off, most of us come with an attitude that I'm the man and to be a man is to be violent. Now that I've grown up, I see that the way we communicate with people is more powerful (Officer Harper, male, 40s).

Policing, therefore, attracts a particular personality type, one regardless of race, that ascribes to hegemonic forms of masculinity. In this view, these men ascribe to what David and Brannon (1976) as "no sissy stuff." This form of masculine behavior is predicated on the notion that men are different from women; therefore, to be a man, one's beliefs, behaviors, and practices have to be different from those of women (David and Brannon, 1976). Through this lens, being female is being weak, needing protection, and being emotional. Police officers are not sissies. They do not fit into this mold, nor does the culture of hegemonic masculinity allow for sissy behavior on the force.

We don't really show emotions here; it's not something that most of us are comfortable with. Maybe it's a generational thing or just the way we view manliness. But being emotional is the same as being weak and we can't be weak in this position (Officer Jackson, male, 40s).

Interestingly, the contradictory ways in which hegemonic masculinity is applied when in contact with Black suspects. The juxtaposition of the ideal male officer and the reality is startlingly different. Instead of the strong male figure, these officers come across as weak, fragile men, everything they self-proclaim to stand against. Significantly, it is only in confrontation with Blackness that weakness is the default position without questioning these officers' masculinity. Instead of being strong, these officers are not only comfortable with but also use fear and weakness as justifications for their use of violence. Blackness as an inherently dangerous, animalistic position thereby recasts the arms of the State as victims. Instead of seeing themselves as the perpetrators of violence against a people, the people who are perceived as having inhuman strength place the most masculine of our society at risk. If even the police are afraid of Blackness, what hope does the regular citizen have? This redirection breeds fear in the general public and allows police departments to act with impunity. The violence acted upon Black people is thus justified. The Blue Flu is a response to a crack in this mentality and approach. Unlike previous police murders of Black people, Officer Rolfe was not given a slap on the wrist. He was immediately indicted. The change in approach or the change to the rules of the game frightened officers, and they played the last hand they had by striking out. They hoped to scare the city into backing down, into giving in to the fears of the Black peril; however, the city and its people stood firm. As stated by Reverend Warnock, it was time for police reform.

Defund the Police

As one of the few women in this study, I was excited to meet with Officer Mitchell. It wasn't the meeting that we had initially planned, but thanks to the online video call platform Zoom, which had been popular since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we could meet face-to-face. The world around us had changed; between the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter Movement reclaiming the streets, the police were stretched thin. I was grateful that she had made time for this call. We spoke about her unique position as a Black woman in a male-dominated field and when the conversation came to Black Lives Matter and the issue of police reform, this is what she had to say:

"As a department, there's something or the system is broken. Within the agency alone, when we put on this uniform, we are retraumatizing each other but we don't even know it. When we go out in the street, people are angry at the uniform. How do we fix it? I'm about solutions. I'm tired about hearing about the problem; I want to know how to fix it" (Officer McKelly, female, 30s).

Like many of her peers, Officer Mitchell was tired of the lip service discussions around police reform. She was ready for solutions. She wanted to know what actionable steps she, along with her peers, could take to start to fix the problem, to end police brutality, and to rebuild trust between the police and the Black communities around the nation that has long felt both under- and overpoliced for generations.

Besides local police officers themselves and many others around the nation, from activists and politicians to the public and academics, the issue of police reform was abuzz as news coverage of the George Floyd protests dominated the news cycle. The loudest voice calling for police reform came from the Minnesota-based black liberation organization Black Visions Collective under the infamous slogan: Defund the Police (Wortham, 2020). In 2017, Black

Visions Collective has been actively involved in the Black Lives Matter protests and has lobbied for the divestment of city funds from police departments to community-based programs that support people experiencing mental health issues, homelessness, domestic violence, and drug dependency (Wortham, 2020). The idea behind their lobbying efforts is that police departments are unnecessarily highly militarized, overfunded, and taking on extra duties such as responding to issues relating to homelessness, mental health, or drug dependency (Wortham, 2020). As such, instead of the police bearing the weight of these issues alone, the idea of defunding the police meant to divert funding from police departments and reallocate it to the proper social service providers (Wortham, 2020). Through this lens, the goal of this movement was to stop police and policing from being the first responders to social issues. They believed that an increase in social services would help decrease crime by improving problems such as mental health, addiction, homelessness, and poverty.

Some of the officers I spoke with agreed with this sentiment, even though they were not keen on seeing budget cuts for their departments. Officer Harris mentioned that, "*Because of the work that we do, I went out and got my first-responder certificate. I'm now a certified EMT. We are at the frontline of all kinds of problems, and I realized that knowing how to patch people up is useful. A few weeks ago, our unit was called out to a situation in which a man had been shot. I was the only one there that knew first aid and was able to keep him alive until the paramedics arrived. I was the only one who knew what to do so I'm glad I was there to help. My team knows this about me and they're happy when I'm there. I wish more people got this training. It's hard to because we now have to wear many hats but it's worth it if you can help save someone*" (Officer Harris, male, 20s).

Officer Harris saw the additional work of being a paramedic as central to being a police officer. He believed it helped improve his career and his relationship with the community that he policed. However, other officers were not as enthusiastic about having to take on extra duties. For example, Officer Haney voiced his concerns:

> *"We're expected to be everything for everybody now. Hell, I'm not a psychologist or a mental health provider but a lot of the calls that I get a mental health-related. I'm not trained on what to do. I signed up to be a cop, not to be a mental health expert. These people shouldn't be seen by us; they should be calling mental health lines. But because there's no one else, they just call us. We have to respond to everything ourselves"* (Officer Haney, male, 30s).

Officer Sparks echoed this sentiment:

> *"I don't like being on the street anymore. All we do is move people from jail and back to the street. A lot of these people are homeless, and they need social services, but because we don't have any, they call us. You put them in jail, and three days later, they're out and back at it again. It's a revolving door and it's sad to watch. I wish we could actually get them the help they need"* (Officer Sparks, male, 30s).

Carolyn Sufrin, in her text, *Jailcare* (2017), discusses the ways by which the criminal justice system has become, for many, a source of both care and comfort. In what appears contradictory, this punitive system has become a social safety net for many suffering from a wide array of medical, mental health, and social problems. Due to the lack of social services in many areas across the nation, the criminal justice system becomes the only source of care and treatment. At the front line of this system are the street-level officers that I spoke with. They decide on whom to arrest and whom to leave on the street, and for some of them, they see arresting people as an act of mercy, with the knowledge that jails will provide the safety and comfort that is lacking on the streets.

Officer Driskill stated,

> *"I see many repeat offenders that are better and safer in jail than out here. They are things that I could let go, but you can tell that someone is in danger if they stay on the street. Taking them to jail means they'll get a warm meal, a comfortable and safe place to sleep, and some medical care. Even if it's for a few days, it helps"* (Officer Driskill, male, 30s).

To these officers, the moral ambiguity of safety within the punitive system becomes a last resort in a society that underfunds social services in favor of expensive military-grade artillery for police departments.

The Defund the Police Movement, aims to remove some of this burden by increasing funding to social services programs, thereby decreasing the workload of these officers. Instead of abolishing the police, this movement aims to address the root causes of crime, meeting the original goal of the Black political pioneers (Forman Jr., 2018)

What seemed like a radical idea in 2020 was something that Black leaders and white allies have discussed since the post-Emancipation era. For example, Dr. Robert Reyburn, the Surgeon-in-Chief of Howard University Hospital in 1868 and the founder of the first Black Medical Society in the U.S., wrote in his 1866 study (Reyburn, 1866):

> *"the same causes which produce scrofula among the colored people may be seen (to a limited extent) in operation among the poorer class of white people in many of the larger cities of the Union and produce among them precisely the same result; in other words, we believe that scrofula is nothing more than the effect produced upon the human system by unfavorable*

hygienic influences, and any race of man will suffer from it in the exact proportion as they are subjugated to these deleterious conditions (Reyburn, 1866)*.”*

Dr. Reyburn recognized the issues with scientific racism that subscribed to the notion of innate Black inferiority. Although this study focuses on medicine, it highlights the importance of addressing the social causes of illness, which will lead to better health and life outcomes. To improve the outcomes for Black people, social issues needed to be addressed. Although the prevailing science focused on innate Black inferiority, we see the changes in discourse as Black outcomes were beginning to be recognized as a function of the conditions under which Black Americans lived. As such Black scholars and white allies took on the mantle of addressing the root causes of both Black health and criminal justice involvement. It was not that Black people were innately animalistic, but instead, the conditions under which they lived, such as the Black Codes, predisposed them to both poor health outcomes and increased incidence of involvement in the criminal justice system, particularly the police.

In addition to addressing the root causes of poor health and crime, scholars of the radical Black tradition such as W.E.B. In Black Reconstruction America (1935), Du Bois argued for the removal of institutions rooted in racist and repressive practices, such as police forces, prisons, and convict leasing systems. Instead of simply addressing the root causes of social problems, W.E.B. spoke about ‘abolition democracy,’ which was rooted in the removal of racist institutions. These institutions had to be dismantled for Black people to be genuinely free. Continuing with this tradition of abolition democracy, Angela Davis, from the 1960s onwards, writes and speaks about abolishing or defunding police departments (Davis et al., 2016). In 2017, Alex S. Vitale, in his book The End of Policing, also wrote about defunding the police.

The idea of addressing the root causes of crime and abolition democracy continued to dominate Black political thought. Unlike the Du Boisian approach, a new generation of Black leaders took a different direction. Instead of abolishing these systems of oppression, they vied to change them from within through diversity and inclusion. Beginning in the 1970s, in large part due to affirmative action policies, large numbers of Black Americans rose in different areas of U.S. governance in roles ranging from police officers, prosecutors, city council members, mayors, governors, and congressional members in which they played a significant role in facilitating and legitimizing the mass incarceration of fellow Black Americans (Forman Jr., 2018). This can be viewed as a contradiction to the Black tradition that saw an increase in Black leadership as a way to prevent the over-policing and overcriminalization of Black Americans. In their efforts to curb the onslaught of drugs and crime in their communities, these leaders signed on to tough-on-crime legislation that primarily targeted poor Black communities around the nation (Forman Jr., 2018). However, these were always seen as short-term solutions. Black leaders operated under the premise that by quickly ridding their communities of drugs and guns, they could reduce crime and violence and then switch their focus to the actual work, the work of addressing the root causes of crime from education, employment, housing discrimination and poverty (Forman Jr., 2018). However, the funding for social programs never materialized, and the war on crime grew more punitive with each successive government (Forman Jr., 2018). Black legislator's support was leveraged to strengthen the criminalization of drugs and the stringent laws against welfare programs beginning with the Reagan and increasing in severity with the Clinton administration; middle-class black Americans participated in the passage of laws that led to the proliferation of mass incarceration in the black community (Carbado and Richardson, 2018; Forman Jr, 2018; Wacquant., 2002; Wacquant, 2010). That day of addressing the root causes of crime never came. Instead, the police gained more power, became more militarized, the prison industrial complex grew, and we saw what Michelle Alexander aptly termed the New Jim Crow (Alexander, 2010). Millions of Black people, primarily Black men, were criminalized and incarcerated, most between the ages of 18-44, taking away men in their prime working years, thereby destroying the lives of these individuals and their families and communities at large (Goffman, 2014). By the time the consequences of these policies were realized, it was too late. Too many lives had been ruined, yet the root causes had not been addressed. Black leaders had long since believed that if core social and economic inequities that plagued the Black community were resolved, then crime would be reduced. However, we never got to see this in action.

This is all to say that the movement to defund the police is not a novel idea that is simply a reaction to the Black Lives Matter Movement, but rather a continuation of a long Black radical tradition to limit the power of institutions that are rooted in racist practices and to divert funding to the social causes of suffering.

Backlash

The backlash against this movement was swift and harsh. It came from both sides of the political aisle. In a mirror to the War on Crime, crime became central to the discussion of defunding the police. In 2020-2022, leading Democratic and Republican politicians led the attack against the Defund the Police slogan that was popularized by the Black Lives Matter movement as well as the progressive arm of the democratic party with politicians such as Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Levine, 2021). The then-Democratic Presidential Nominee (now president) Joe Biden stated that he did not support defunding the police and instead wanted to increase police budgets around the nation (Levine, 2021). Former President

Donald Trump led the charge against the slogan on the republic side. Republicans had seized on the slogan to undercut their political opponents by arguing that Defunding the Police would increase crime. President Donald Trump compared it to anarchy, raising fears about increases in crime (Baker & Kaplan, 2020). Donald Trump went on to say, “We must give power back to police or America will never be safe. We cannot let Communist Democrats destroy our great cities. If we don’t stop them, our communities and our country will be lost forever.” He added, “We have to respect our police — we have to take care of our police. They’re protecting us, and if they’re allowed to do their job, they’ll do a great job (Baker & Kaplan, 2020).” The rhetoric of losing cities and the country as a whole without the police is reframed under the guise of public safety. The centering of safety as a primary concern negates the harm that communities of color, particularly Black communities, experience at the hands of the police. The conversation is reframed, not as police are dangerous. However, it is dangerous not to have police. Police are also framed as victims, not perpetrators of violence. It is them that need protection from Black rage, not Black people who have been subjected to racist state violence. This centers whiteness as police are framed as “our police,” and they are “protecting us.” Through our understanding of the racial contract proposed by Mills (1999), it is clear whom the police serve and protect. It is not George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, and the many others listed in this dissertation and those whose names did not make the headlines. Black Death, therefore, is decried and normalized as a prerequisite for white safety.

These logics of white supremacy are not limited to white people. Black people have also actively participated in and contributed to both the logics and organizing principles of the racial contract. Unsurprisingly, one of the loudest and most notable voices against the Defund the Police slogan was former President Barack Obama, highlighting that the racial identity of a leader is not on its own enough to dismantle racial inequality. Former President Obama warned against using the "snappy slogan" Defund the Police as he joined in the growing criticism against the slogan (McCoy, 2020; Evelyn, 2020). He feared that using what he attributed to being an inflammatory phrase would alienate a large portion of the nation, thereby alienating white voters who would otherwise support police reform measures that were recognized as needed following the death of George Floyd. Instead of understanding the slogan's meaning, which was not to abolish police departments but to reduce their responsibilities as police and the criminal justice system overall had become a social safety net. Instead of leaving police responsible for many social ills such as mental health, homelessness, drug abuse, or truancy, social services providers such as social workers, EMTs, mental health providers, restorative justice teams, and other community-based professionals should instead be charged with managing these matters (Vermeer, 2020; El-Sabawi and Carroll, 2020).

Progressive lawmakers such as Cori Bush (Missouri Congresswoman) and Jamaal Bowman (New York U.S. Representative) criticized former President Obama's comments, with Cori Bush arguing that Defund the Police is not simply a slogan. Instead, she argued, "it's a mandate for keeping our people alive (Bush, 2020)." Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar and Kentucky state representative Charles Booker supported Cori Bush by arguing that Black Lives had not been lost due to bad slogans, but instead, because of policing practices. Jamaal Bowman supported and furthered this statement by voicing his concerns that Americans showed greater concern over a slogan than they did over the death of Black people at the hands of policing Bowman, 2020). This represented the enduring role of racism. Even after a very publicly recorded death, the focus remained on protecting the very institution that caused Black death, not on the victims of this slow genocide.

During his presidency, Obama had attempted to address this issue by creating a task force in 2015, known as the Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which proposed different recommendations, including an end to racial profiling, an increase in community policing efforts, and improved training for officers (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).

However, the suggestions of this task force were no more than lip service; with suggested reforms such as expanding body camera usage among officers and anti-bias police training, the number of deaths at the hands of police remained essentially unchanged (Penn Medicine News, 2020).

However, fears of crime-ridden streets dominated the news cycle. The slogan and the movement that accompanied it was dead before it even took hold. In Atlanta alone, the city failed to pass a proposed $73 million police department budget cut. Over 170 police officers called in sick to protest the budget reallocation proposal in which 30% of police funding would be diverted from the police department to refunding communities by expanding existing and developing new social service institutions that address the root causes of crime such as mental health, housing, education, drug dependency services that can respond to people in crises without weapons. These community programs aim to keep nonviolent offenders out of the criminal justice system (Capelouto, 2021). Public safety through this lens is not meant to be safeguarded by violence but instead by nonviolent-based approaches. Instead of supporting these measures, over 200 officers quit the force, with only 60 hired (Jonsson, 2021).

Officers voiced their distress over the negative outlook on their profession without considering the causes of public distrust and the need for fund reallocation. Even though these officers admit that they are overworked and unpaid and that help from social services providers would help ease their load, when the opportunity to do so is presented, they chose to revolt instead of supporting the movement.

Many discussed leaving the force or not encouraging their children to join the profession.

> *"When I first started, this profession was respected. But now, everyone hates us. It's hard to be constantly told you're bad when all you want to do is help people. I can't deny that they're bad cops that have made us look bad, but that's not all of us. Most of us just want to help people and go home to our families at the end of the day. This job is not worth it anymore. If it wasn't for my pension, I would find something else* (Officer Pratt, male, 40s).

> *"A lot of the young recruits don't last six months. We don't get paid enough for the shit we deal with. I don't blame them. If I could start over again, I'd leave to"* (Officer Unas, male, 30s).

> *I'm burnt out. I'm thinking about moving to Florida. Things are better there, they don't hate us as much, and the pay is better, so if my wife agrees, I'm getting out"* (Officer Kinglen, male, 30s).

> *"I won't encourage my kids to do this. If anything, I'll suggest they become prosecutors or other high-level criminal justice jobs. Being on the street in this climate is not worth it"* (Officer Juniper, male, 40s).

The responses to these questions illustrate the frustrations felt by police officers. They see themselves as under attack, as the victims of anti-policing sentiments. Instead of being reflexive of the harm their profession has caused, they are frustrated by the consequences of those actions. The focus is not on reform but on the supposed loss of respect and deference they feel they deserve. Even Black officers whom the BLM and Defund the Police movements are fighting for serve to illustrate that once in the system, it's the thin blue line that takes precedence.

Refund the Police - Return to the Status Quo

By the November 2020 Presidential election, things were starting to die down. The Black Lives Movement was losing steam, and the backlash against the Defund the Police Movement was only getting louder. Democrats who had come out in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement found themselves at odds with the defund the police position. The idea of defunding the police was not something the nation was not ready to embrace, with public safety being touted as the most significant reason police departments should remain funded. Talk of addressing the root causes of crime was suddenly obfuscated by fear-mongering talk about rampant crime in cities across the nation. It was then that talk of refunding the police began to dominate the news cycles. Even Democratic Presidential Nominee and future President Joe Biden pledged approximately 300 million dollars to refund the police (Speri, 2020). What has been salient about the refund the police movement has been the importance of recognizing the resilience of the police as an institution despite the undeniable visibility of its violence. It wasn't that blatant racialized violence perpetrated by the institution that was on trial, but the activists and protesters who were attempting to hold the same system accountable that were being recast as criminals who were going to lead the country into anarchy without police. The issue became about how do we support the institution of policing instead of the worthiness and justice of Black life. The real problem of systemic and racist state violence was once again obfuscated and masked by discussions of white safety and comfort. Public safety discussions were limited to how the nation needs police, not how the police harm communities of color. It was clear that what was meant by public safety was white safety, as the institution was created to serve and protect whiteness.

Although the officers in this study did not support the Black Lives Matter and Defund the Police movements, they also did not support a return to the status quo. They recognized that something about the institution was profoundly problematic and needed to change. For some, it was addressing the root causes of crime, and for others, it was addressing the ways by which police.

> *"I want to do my best to curve; you know, help society whatever you know enforcing law and order. Ideally as you become a police officer, and as you get through the years, you realize that there's systemic issues that putting somebody in jail repeatedly does not change the quality of their life or the quality of the community in which you enforce it in. So, it's bigger than just what I thought as a rookie cop or some kid watching these shows and these dramas to so that as soon as take them off the street, they're right back. So now almost 22 years of doing this, I realize that my role, of taking arrest warrants out on individuals and arrest them for it does not solve the problem. It doesn't. It takes people, it takes the problem out of the mainstream and puts it a vacuum and puts it in a certain area until it's not in an area anymore, and then, it could be right back out in society"* (Officer Moodie, male, 40s).

Here, Officer Moodie acknowledges that current policing practices of arresting people and placing them in jails or prisons fail to improve outcomes. Taking a criminal justice approach to what can be considered social or public health issues is incompatible with the version of policing that these officers envision. Instead of addressing the root causes of crime and helping to heal the individuals and the communities from which they emerge, police serve to temporarily diffuse the issue, only for the culprit to return in a few days/months. Officer Moodie acknowledges that this is not a sustainable way to maintain a society. Something has to change. This is what the defund the police movement was advocating for; however, instead of diverting some police funding to address these issues, the solution was to keep everything the same and increase funding to police departments to maintain the status quo.

In addition to addressing the root causes of crime, some of the officers I spoke with challenged how police operate in their units.

> *"There's a lot. I'm a firm believer that policing has changed. I saw policing in an environment where I knew people on my beat; I got up my car, I knew people on my beat and it crosses races. Yeah. When I became a rookie cop this man named ---- blonde blue-eyed white man what a country draw. He knew everybody on his beat. He was an officer, they called him sarge. In an the urban environment, in the hood, when the neighborhood, community called you Sarge and you not a sergeant its a show of respect. Never known him to have to do any and he was an older guy when I saw him out there and honestly, I don't think a man my stature right now, if we got into a physical fistfight, he would come up on the tail of that time if I was so, I'm a young as we call it piss and vinegar cop right, I'm new on the job, a year or two, I'm that guy oh, high speed chases and all that, so, I got you know a high chase and I'm in the car, I got the tag number and dah dah dah, I'm running it and he was like, 2106, 106, that's ----, he lives at ---- drive, his momma named ---. And then whenever ---- bailout and makes it to the house later that night, or later that evening, he was like (knocking sound), come on ----, you gotta go to jail and that the kind of rapport he had. So, as I got my own beat, was assigned my own beat, I made it a point to know those on my beat. So, policing has changed in the black community and I'm just talking, this is what happened, not just black officers, this is any officer, that when they got to know their people then you developed a rapport, policing has changed, they police now, where they're all over the place. Back in my day and I'm not, I know I'm going off a little bit. You I had your watch. Your watch was how many of our officers worked at the same time frame. So, we*

had day watch, evening watch, morning watch. I was evening watch, so your watch could be 40, 50 officers. Then you had your Sectors, you're a sector and B sector so, this watch, I worked B sector, I have no reason to be on A sector. In today's policing they may be a B Sector car way at the tail end of the city that's way up here at A sector. They're just all over the place and then, your sector group, those that are in my sector, I would hold them out, hey man, I had three calls on your beat man, they told me you was on A sector on 107's beat, you are 108, why are you on 101's beat? You didn't need to have a sergeant, or lieutenant or captain or major, or anybody of rank to kind of bring you in" (Officer Hansen, male, 50s).

"They are failing to understand about the local communities because they are not trying to know about the local communities. I've been off the street for a long time but I still go out every once in a while. I still hear things, I still talk to some of those officers are out there that are serving you, many years in the department like me that might be a sergeant, like a lieutenant, that we have a relationship with because we have been on for so long together and they're all saying, man, these officers man, these young officers, they ain't like we were, we knew folk, I used to go eat dinner at people's tables, like some of the old ladies, like in the projects or whatever, I used to park my car and get on the golf cart and ride. I didn't need my car because all hell was going to be raised in this gigantic project, but there aren't projects anymore. And then, Miss Lucy or one of these wonderful old ladies or whatever would cook dinner, and we'd eat dinner together and build a relationship. And I think that's the difference" (Officer Wilson, male, 40s).

"Technology has ruined policing. We started policing off of computers. We start evaluating and predicting crime based off an algorithm. Smartphones, I think technology in society's that are to the point where the gun shoot cop, the flat foot, that's walking the beat is no more. I think it's all about a quick response to a quick call because its customer service, its customer service-based,

and I ain't saying that the model of policing is, is what it is now, I just think that's why the change" (Officer Kanser, male, 40s).

The officers begin by describing their desires to go back to community policing. Community policing allowed both officers and local community members to build trust and establish lasting relationships that provided opportunities for discretion in arrests. Instead of rushing to use their weapons, officers knew the people they policed, they knew their friends and family, and when something went wrong, they could discern whether it was a social or criminal issue. This is the kind of policing advocated for by the Defund the Police Movement, only with extra support for officers when dealing with social problems. However, the negative backlash that the movement received, primarily because of what was described as a "snappy slogan," took away from the work activists and police attempted to achieve.

Ethnographic evidence from French Anthropologist Didier Fassin also supports the need for community policing. In his experience working with Paris Banlieue officers, Fassin discovered that the communities were predominantly North African and Middle Eastern economically and socially disadvantaged immigrant communities. In contrast, the officers comprised white rural French officers, many of whom had no prior experiences or encounters with migrants. The cultural discrepancy between the two created an environment in which minor infractions are more likely to lead to spectacular displays of violence (Fassin, 2013). Like their American counterparts, French officers relied on stereotypes of immigrants, and the resulting fears that came with immigrants being classified as dangerous criminals led to the trigger-happy officers (Fassin, 2013). If officers from these communities were local or lived locally, allowing them the opportunity to get to know the people they policed, most of these violent displays would have been avoided.

Predictive Policing

In efforts to prevent officer bias in civilian interactions, policing has instituted something more sinister than the officers themselves. Known as Predictive Policing, Officer Coley describes it as “technology has ruined policing.” Predictive policing is a science-based policing that uses algorithms to predict when crime will occur to prevent future crime. It comes in two primary forms: place-based predictive policing and person-based predictive policing (Lau, 2020); (Pearsall, 2010). Place-based predictive policing is what the aforementioned officers described during our interviews. It is the use of algorithms to predict which areas/neighborhoods/communities are prone to high levels of crime and, in response, introduce heavy police presence in those areas, also known as “hotspots,” to help manage and prevent future crime (Lau, 2020); (Pearsall, 2010). This can include more boots on the ground and cameras to monitor civilian behavior (Lau, 2020); (Pearsall, 2010). In a sense, these hotspots become areas of state management, with everyday life under constant police surveillance. In the previous chapter, I mentioned how local Minestown residents referred to the community as a plantation. This idea of place-based predictive policing places local populations, remarkably, Black people, under constant surveillance akin to living in plantations.

The second form of predictive policing is person-based predictive policing (Lau, 2020). In this method, it is not the heavily surveilled place but individuals or groups who are classified as potentially high-risk offenders, thereby requiring constant monitoring and surveillance (Lau, 2020); (Pearsall, 2010). Risk factors are primarily determined by a history of past arrests, participation in at-risk behaviors such as involvement in gangs or other criminal activities, and prior history of being a victim of a gang or gun violence (Lau, 2020). Risk factors can also include age, gender, marital status, history of substance abuse, and criminal records (Lau, 2020).

One key thing that is not listed is race. These algorithms are designed to be race neutral. In the age of color-blind racism, predictive policing can be seen as another tool to maintain the same racialized policing practices while removing the blame and accountability from individual actors. This is concerning because predictive policing algorithmic data is based on police reports on their past encounters. To determine whether neighborhood X or person Y is a high risk, algorithms used past criminal records and arrest records, all of which were entered by officers with their own biases. The results of these biases are thereby encoded into the data. They become both normalized and standardized. Circularly, these algorithms, therefore, perpetuate the very systems designed to dismantle. Racist-based crime statistics become the basis for making predictions, leading to increased surveillance of particular neighborhoods and individuals, continuing the cycle of racist predictions and misleading crime data (Norga, 2021). Officer Miller aptly summarized the dangers of this by stating that: "*If you hang out in a place long enough, you will see some stuff going down.*" Instead of being objective, this method of policing's scientific basis is rooted in subjectivity, primarily scientific racism, which argues that places and people are predisposed to certain crimes, thereby justifying their subjugation and control. Black Americans have dealt with these claims since they arrived on these shores. Scientists, including anthropologists, played an essential role in creating today's racial biases. Early anthropology was designated the title: "The Handmaiden of Colonialism" as the discipline largely propagated scientific racism (Erickson and Murphy, 2013). This scientism served to justify and provide a rationale for slavery, colonialism, segregation, and the inhumane treatment of non-whites both locally and abroad (Erickson and Murphy, 2013; Baker, 1998; Mullings, 2005). Through predictive policing, we are seeing a reinvention of old practices, only now, without the individual actors to blame. Blame is shifted entirely on the algorithm touted as a scientific objective and race-neutral instrument. The marriage of science and 21st-century policing is taking us right back to plantation policing.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the resilience of the police as an institution, one that has managed to reinvent itself even when the visibility of its violence against Black communities is undeniable. The rise and fall of the Defund the Police movement was a testament to the infallibility of this institution. What should have been a moment of reckoning, recognizing, and acknowledging the dangers Black Lives face during daily interactions with the police became how we protect the police, increase their funding, and further their intrusion into racialized communities.

The dream of addressing the social causes of crime has once again been sidelined in favor of oppressive policing practices in the form of predictive policing. As we look into the future, we see how the matter of Black lives remains unchanged. Even in manumission, the slave is never free. The chains are simply changed to suit the times. Predictive policing is a return to scientific racism, with its chains rooted in objectivity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: The Future of Policing Black Life

Introduction

"We've always been policed." This statement by Lieutenant Hillingdale highlighted the primacy of policing in Black lives. Police, unlike any other government entity, has been central to the story of Black Americans. From the African coast to antebellum plantations, it was the police who managed and controlled Black populations. It wasn't until the late 1940s that Black Americans finally saw full representation in police forces. For the first time in history, Black officers were fully integrated into police departments; it was the beginning of a new method of policing. One in which race and racialization were issues of the past, with justice and equity under the law leading the way in 20th and 21st policing. So, where did it all go wrong?

Eight minutes and forty-six seconds. That is how long Minneapolis police offered Derek Chauvin pressed on George Floyd's neck while Mr. Floyd begged that he couldn't breathe. For eight minutes and forty-six seconds, Derek Chauvin and his fellow officers ignored Mr. Floyd's cries and those of the civilian bystanders around them, leading to George Floyd's death. It was the Summer of 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, that police brutally and senselessly murdered another Black man in broad daylight. Seven years after the original Black Lives Matter protests, the world saw a social movement like it hadn't before. In the middle of a global pandemic, people worldwide, from Minneapolis to London and Johannesburg, broke quarantine protocols to protest the matter of Black lives. What started as a protest of police violence, George Floyd's murder, was a cataclysmic moment that morphed into a global anti-black racism protest.

Like many of the heavily publicized police violence cases in the years since the Black Lives Movement took hold, Derek Chauvin was white, and his victim, George Floyd, was Black.

The interactions between white officers and Black civilians made headlines, with white officers being the perpetrators of violence and Black civilians being their victims. In this dichotomous world, Black officers lay somewhere in the middle. They were both Black (victims) and Blue (perpetrators of police violence). In this discussion of modern-day racialized policing practices, I sought the understand where Black officers fit.

When the Black Lives Matter Movement began in 2013, it reopened old wounds; it awoke old ghosts of the past. Instead of celebrating the age of colorblindness, it was clear that white supremacy still reigned supreme. How could this be? For the first time, we had a Black man, Barack Obama, at the helm of the most powerful office in the world. His attorney general, Eric Holder, was also Black, and most police departments were filled with minority, predominately, Black officers. Black people in 2013 had finally made it. So why were we seeing the birth of a movement protesting the matter of Black lives?

This dissertation attempted to understand the conditions that led to the birth of the social movement; its proliferation over the years through an investigation of the actors at the center of this stage: Black police officers. Although largely neglected in national discourse around police and policing, Black police officers in major cities significantly shape police policy. They are not only the boots on the ground, but by and large, they are in leadership positions, placing them in charge of police departments. They are the living embodiment of the dreams of their enslaved and newly freed ancestors, who hoped to someday have their own in policing.

This dissertation concludes that the answer to this lies in the permanence of anti-blackness. Afro-pessimists contend that Blackness, unlike other forms of "otherness," exists on a plane that cannot be reconciled with other identities (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014; Sharpe, 2016). Blackness is fundamentally different from any other form of oppression in that it cannot be escaped by money or status as it is epithelized on the skin of its bearers (Fanon, 2008). In thinking through the permanence of anti-blackness on the ground with Black police officers policing during the most significant social movement to date, it becomes clear that policing is an institution borne out of white supremacy, for white supremacy, and even while dominated by Black Americans, the institution, and its practices, remain static. As described by Michelle Alexander, it's a new face to an old design. The declaration, *"we've always been policed,"* becomes even more apparent as Blacks, particularly in the South, were foundational to the formation, growth, and proliferation of professional policing. Policing has its roots in slave patrols and their management of Black populations at the behest of the State. This is an issue that the nation has yet to address and attempt to redress.

Additionally, and most importantly, this dissertation demonstrates that police and policing did not magically transform into an antiracist institution following the passage of civil rights. Instead, what happened is that the participants of this institution simply went from wearing to not wearing hoods. However, white supremacist ideology remained imbued with their everyday practices.

The Black Lives Matter Movement laid bare the failures of the past civil rights movements. The visibility of the violence against black boys and men, from Trayvon Brown to George Floyd, illustrated that the ghosts of America's past continued to haunt the present (Morrison, 1987; Gordon, 1997). In American society, the centrality of anti-black racism (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014; Sharpe, 2016) became glaringly evident and difficult to avoid. What had been buried had suddenly been reawakened. However far the nation had come, it became clear that civil rights and justice under the law continue to allude Black people. It also brought to light what it means to be diverse, inclusive, and equitable in institutions where Black death is routinely practiced and normalized.

Black Officers or Police Officers who are Black

This has been the critical discussion in my attempts to understand the dual nature of being both Black and Blue in a racialized occupation. Franz Fanon first theorized this duality in his conceptualization of Blackness in French Martinique as one of double consciousness. He understood being Black as existing in two spaces, one in the Black world and the other in the White world. Double consciousness prescribes nonwhites to the internalization of self-loathing and beliefs in white superiority while simultaneously prescribing whites to believe in notions of their racial superiority (Biko, 1979; Mills, 1999; Fanon and Philcox, 1963; and Shakur, 1987). In a sense, this can be expanded to be an understanding of the enslaved person as theorized by Orlando Patterson (1989). An enslaved person exists in two spaces: enslaved people's inner world (with the mental connection of the natal home) and the master's world (one of perpetual subordination and inferiority). The same analytic can be used to understand double consciousness as Black officers exist between two warring ideals—one of being Black in America and the other of serving the oppressors of Black Americans.

Black leadership has attempted to change the system from within throughout history to reconcile these two conflicting ideals and create a unified consciousness. Instead of constantly fighting against the State, particularly white officers, Black leaders believed that having their own in the force would change how their community was policed. One of the initial demands of the Reconstruction era freedmen was to have Black officers. This was primarily because Black leaders believed that Black officers would serve the interests of the Black community by treating Black people justly and fairly under the law. Additionally, as newly freedmen and new citizens of the country, policing represented access to citizenship and equality guaranteed to all white men – as part of their civic participation. To be a police officer was, therefore, a means to become men in the eyes of the nation. No longer would Black men be inferior or less than. They, too, would be included in the hegemonic masculine ideal of being a man in America.

However, white leaders fought for decades to prevent this from happening. The idea of being equal to formerly enslaved people was unfathomable and unnatural. Whites had formulated a system in which they were the dominant race, and policing, as the arm of the state, was one way to enforce this dominance. Therefore, the goal of having Black officers on the Southern police forces was not fully realized until the late 1940s, when white leadership finally capitulated to the post-war demands of Black service members and political advocates.

Black police officers were met with a fervent hope that equality under the law would finally be achieved for Black Americans. Black officers had been integrated into police forces with the belief that they would center their Blackness in their practice. Fair and just policing practices would finally be realized in Black communities through them. However, by placing their own racialized ideals on incoming Black officers and the power that these individuals would hold in changing a racialized institution, Black advocates set themselves up for disappointment as Black officers did not and could not change a system that was not designed for them. Their only hope for survival was to join it. In these early days, the signs of the architecture of the resilience of policing as an institution were put in place.

Early on, Black officers learned that being race reformers came with penalties, including suspensions or even removal from the force. They were watched more than their white counterparts, their every decision scrutinized, so it was best for many to fall in line and follow the status quo. The few that attempted to challenge the norm were immediately dismissed. Black officers learned very on that it was not worth the personal struggle. The ideal of having Black officers as representatives of Black communities on the force was quickly replaced by the reality of having officers who also happen to be black. The institution demanded change from its participants, not the other way around. We see Black officers who joined the force in protest of the Rodney King murder being against the Black Lives Matter movement. The switch from the Black person seeking work in law enforcement to being a law enforcement officer who is Black is a result of the occupational demands of the force. This is mainly due to the Blue Wall of Silence that exists not only because of occupational loyalty to peers but also because of the internal consequences lobbied against those who speak out. Black officers, as historically shown, are the prime example of this. Continuing this tradition, This project, as well as supporting research from other scholars, illustrates that Black officers remain less likely to be promoted to higher-level positions; they are more likely to be disciplined as they are held to higher standards as compared to their white counterparts, from educational requirements to on-the-job performance, they are also more likely to be transferred out, and are less likely to be placed on specialty units (Sewell et al., 2020; Gilbert & Ray., 2016).

Being Black on the force means having to comply with white supremacist ideology and practices or risk losing one's livelihood. Further research illustrates that this is a systemic, not simply a rotten department issue, one that hides behind diversity ideology to maintain the status quo (Sewell et al., 2020; Gilbert & Ray., 2016). Diversity and inclusion efforts are smoke screens under which the institution can hide behind, preventing people from looking behind the curtain in what is known mainly as – colorblind racism. As diversity and inclusion increase in policing, the system itself will remain the same, just with a new mix of participants, instead of them changing the system. They are enculturated in the same system as their white counterparts and become critical actors and supporters of the system they were hired to change. It is not the individual actors that are the problem but the system itself. What is salient in this analysis is the continued lack of access to citizenship and equality that was promised through civic participation. It becomes clear that even with inclusion in white spaces, those spaces do remain limited to white citizens. This creates what I term borrowed personhood for Black police officers. Although they are temporarily included in white spaces, they are not of those spaces. As Mills (1999) argued in the Racial Contract, the social contract as theorized by philosophers such as Hobbs, Locke, and Rousseau is, in actuality, a racial contract (Mills, 1999). We, the people, thereby mean we, the white people. Black civic participation is thus a means to an end, one in which the management and control of Black life are reconfigured as non-racist through the recruitment of Black participants (Forman, Jr, 2018).

Community Responses

What had started in the late 1940s as a joyous celebration of a dream fulfilled quickly turned into a nightmare. Black residents of inner cities rapidly realized that Black officers were not on their side. Instead, they were the new overseers of their modern-day plantations: the hyperghettos. In Scenes of Subjugation: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America, Saidiya Hartman examines what she refers to as the “afterlife of slavery.” Akin to the work of Michelle Alexander in the New Jim Crow, Hartman discusses the move from plantations to the punitive controls of the reconstruction and redemption era policies that resulted in incarceration (through the 13th amendment), limited access to healthcare, poor educational systems, poverty, and increased mortality and morbidity. Although Hartman’s work is focused on the 19th century, it is clear by examining neighborhoods such as Minestown that inner-city Black populations still feel the legacies of these policies to this day. It is why Minestown locals refer to their community as the “plantation” and their local police department as the “Massa’s house.” The continued use of antebellum language among Black populations raises the question, did slavery end?

Afropessimists would argue that it never ended, nor will ever end, because, since the advent of chattel slavery, Black and slave have been synonymous, meaning they are the same. While looking at modern-day Black police officers through this lens, they are on borrowed personhood as perpetual slaves who work for the master. In thinking through Patterson’s analysis of slavery as social death, enslaved people cease to be people in their master’s territory. Therefore, it is deduced that enslaved people working for the master are granted a temporary status of personhood, one that is quickly revoked once their duties are complete. They are, therefore, living on borrowed personhood. This becomes clear in the examination of the Black middle-class.

The murder of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in a middle-class suburb sparked the Black Lives Matter Movement. Additionally, it raised challenging questions about class and race among the Black middle class. The Black middle class had been under the impression that their class was a protective barrier against white racism (Wacquant, 2002). However, the killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in a middle-class suburb reawakened the recognition of black vulnerability in the black middle-class consciousness. Trayvon Martin’s shooting and the subsequent police killings of other black men such as Michael Brown and Tamir Rice all brought forth a renewed awareness of the centrality of blackness over class consciousness and thus sparked the Black Lives Matter Movement (Ritskes, 2015; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson III, 2014). Therefore, the Black middle class, which consists of Black officers, realized that race and racism as its enduring legacy and permanence in American life continue to affect Americans of African descent, even in this age of colorblindness (Bell, 2018; Ritskes, 2015).

While looking at modern-day Black police officers through this lens, they are on borrowed personhood as perpetual slaves who work for the master. In thinking through Patterson's analysis of slavery as social death, enslaved people cease to be people in their master's territory. Therefore, it is deduced that enslaved people working for the master are granted a temporary status of personhood, one that is quickly revoked once their duties are complete. They are, therefore, living on borrowed personhood. The racialization and racial profiling experienced by Black middle-class police officers in this dissertation serve as evidentiary support for this assertion as their temporary humanity is only realized when in uniform. Even then, it is also retained if they ascribe to the demands of occupational white supremacy. Workplace diversity inclusion and equity efforts have failed to make substantial changes in this profession simply because of the lack of Black humanity in our society and its subscription to white supremacy. Slavery has, therefore, never ended. It has been merely redesigned to allow a few of the "best of a people" to participate in the continued subjugation of the Black population, in what can be understood as turning the exceptional against the disposable.

What Then?

This dissertation aims not to provide prescriptive solutions to this issue but rather to highlight the limitations of diversity and inclusion without structural changes. Instead of this, I have rather observed and documented some specific attempts that have been taken to remedy this situation. For starters, on the local level, police departments such as the one studied in this project have attempted to reform their practices by introducing trauma-informed care policing strategies that will help officers move from the victim/offender paradigm to understanding that even offenders have experienced trauma in their lives, so taking healing, instead of punitive approaches can be helpful in attempts to defuse tensions and prevent unnecessary loss of life. One of the critical issues with this reform effort is that police are trained to be punitive. Instead of working from a public health model, they operate through a criminal justice model. This makes it challenging for officers to reframe their approach to match reform efforts. Before implementing trauma-informed changes, public health understandings must first be taught in police academies. Through the restructuring of police education, these interventions can be applied. With a different approach to police training, new officers, instead of perpetuating the structural racism that plagues Black communities, can work to help minimize them. Instead of being drivers of mass incarceration, they can help redirect people to service providers that can help them heal instead of furthering the damage to individuals and communities.

Following the murder of George Floyd, an alternative to policing has also been proposed as a solution to police violence. Instead of investing in police reforms, a proposal has been made to Defund the Police. Advocates of this program argue that by diverting funds from police departments to social service organizations, the violence perpetrated by the police among minoritized communities, particularly, Black communities, will be mitigated as communities will have less contact with the police. Instead of the normative "*we've always been policed,*" police presence in Black communities will be limited, replaced by social workers and other social service providers.

However, the reality of policing and white supremacy's ability to survive by reinventing itself should not be taken lightly. Instead of Defund the Police, the message quickly turned to refunding the Police. The proposals to address the root causes of crime through public policy and public health measures were thereby cast aside for more punitive approaches to crime. These ranged from simply increasing police budgets, thereby increasing the militarization of police. However, as policing increasingly becomes a science, scientific ideals of neutrality and objectivity are embedded into the practice. This has resulted in the rise of predictive policing – in which algorithms are used to predict and prevent crime from occurring, either from increased surveillance of places or people considered high risk. Although objectivity sounds attractive to preventing officer bias in arrests, this form of policing increases the probability of arresting Black people from Black neighborhoods as these individuals and communities are deemed high risk. In a sense, understanding that the enduring role of racism has always been about using science to predict–making certain racial groups, particularly Black people seem as though they are genetically predisposed to crime and using this as a justification for their management and control. This dissertation asserts that this form of policing only furthers white supremacy; it continues the enduring legacy of slavery, one in which Black inherent inferiority and criminality is a justification for white domination. The return of scientific racism answers the question that slavery never ended.

Recommendations

Although this dissertation did not set out to provide prescriptive solutions on how to go forward, it would appear disingenuous to not provide ideas from lessons learned during the duration of this project. Although racism will never cease to exist, work can be done to combat its systemic effects. As this project shows, we all participate in systems of oppression, and this process is naturalized. A few key ways to denaturalize this process within policing would include:

1. Holding the bad apples accountable and ensuring that taxpayer money is not used to pay legal costs for cases involving police brutality but instead charging police unions and departments for the failures of their members/employees. This should force unions and departments to take issues regarding racialized violence more seriously.
2. Improving police education, instead of only training officers from a punitive criminal justice perspective, ensure that training includes public health and public policy approaches to the root causes of crime.
3. Defunding the police and diverting police budgets to create and support existing social services. This dissertation and the existing literature show that the criminal justice system is used as a social safety net. Instead of relying on the criminal justice system, it is essential that some of the funding allocated to social services within the criminal justice system be utilized by social services outside of this system.
4. Most importantly, demilitarize the police, do away with predictive-based policing and return to community policing. All officers should be forced to live in the neighborhoods where they work for at least two years. Although this already happens by choice in wealthy, predominately white communities, having officers working in Black communities be part of the community will work to remove some of the racial stereotypes that make officers trigger happy. Like their community policing predecessors, they will know the communities and the people they police.

Conclusion

This dissertation sought to understand the place of Black officers in the age of Black Lives Matter. Individuals who were once hopes of a people were recast as villains. As all police became pigs, it was clear that it was not simply an issue of bad apples but something more profound at the profession's core. The bad apple analogy is an individualization of a larger white supremacist structure. It is a critical narrative that is mobilized to obfuscate the real issue by trying to switch blame onto the individual. It is easier to remove a single bad apple than to examine the rot at the tree's core. However, the Black Lives Matter movement has revealed that something must be amiss with trees if bad apples keep appearing from different departments across the country. It has highlighted how policing is weaponized into systemic violence against Black populations. It is something police departments and the nation can no longer push under the rug. The public revelation of how white supremacy is embedded into American policing could no longer be avoided. Diversity and inclusion efforts have proven to be catastrophic failures in deterring white supremacist practices, as, without structural changes, minoritized individuals will only join the existing system, not change it. In the case of Black Lives and the police, even those suggested to replace officers in reform efforts are police by another name. As concluded by afro pessimists and my take, the issue is that only a new world can help one without the knowledge of the ghosts of the past and can remove the stigma of slavery from Blackness. Without systemic changes, slavery will continue to reinvent itself by other names.

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