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“Ask Him If You’re Being Detained”: bystander resistance in street police encounters

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Sociology

by

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ABSTRACT

“Ask Him If You’re Being Detained”: bystander resistance in street police encounters

by

Katherine D. Matthews

Recent uprisings in Baltimore, Maryland and Ferguson, Missouri have revealed a crisis of legitimacy for police in poor communities of color. This project considers the crisis of legitimacy for police at the street level. Data come in the form of third party videos collected by a local resident of the Fillmore, a poor black neighborhood subject to aggressive policing located in San Francisco, CA. Videos capture police-citizen interactions and analysis focused on bystander participation during the street encounter. Videos were analyzed using methods of analytic induction and visual coding schemes. Findings show that bystanders use taunting and insulting the police as a form of resistance. Additionally, bystanders give advice to the subject of the encounter. Furthermore, bystander comments reveal the ways they believe gender and race to be relevant to the police-citizen encounter and relationship with law enforcement more generally. Bystander talk reframes the encounter and positions the subject as victim and law enforcement as the source of trouble. Bystanders accuse the police of going beyond the parameters of their jobs to express sexual desire and racial antipathy. Additionally, bystander participation dramatizes the limits of police authority as bystanders offer the subject legal advice and creates derogatory experiences for the police.

I. Introduction

The weeks long civil unrest that erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014, which was prompted by the police killing of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown serves as an emblematic example of the legitimacy crisis the police are facing in urban communities of color in the era of proactive policing. Brown's death happened less than a month after New York Police Department officer Daniel Pantaleo administered a fatal chokehold that killed Staten Island black resident Eric Garner. Nationwide, people took to the streets and staged demonstrations to protest the Brown and Garner police killings. Among the many notable actions, citizens boycotted the Black Friday shopping holiday, staged die-ins in busy public spaces, and the #BlackLivesMatter social media campaign spread bringing international attention to the extralegal killings of black people by United States police officers and civilian vigilantes. Celebrities joined the movement; professional National Basketball Association players sported "I Can't Breathe" t-shirts on their courts in memory of Garner's last words. Courageous protest actions reflected the attitudes of the Americans who disapproved of the grand jury decisions to not indict the police officers involved in the Brown and Garner cases (37% and 57% disagreed with these decisions respectively) (PEW Research Center and USA Today 2014).

A look at the national trends in regard to the Michael Brown and Eric Garner grand jury decisions reveal a shift in American attitudes toward police legitimacy. A nationwide PEW and USA Today study revealed that half of American citizens (50%) sided with the grand jury to not bring charges against Darren Wilson in November 2014 (PEW Research Center and USA Today 2014). General public opinion shifted after the December 2014 Garner decision. At that time, the majority of the public (57%) believed the grand jury was

mistaken in the decision not to indict Officer Pantaleo with only 22% in support of the grand jury's decision, a sharp decline from the aforementioned 50% in the Brown case. This negative shift in public support for law enforcement actions relative to the Brown and Garner decisions signal a general trend towards weakened perceptions of legitimacy in law enforcement as the public increasingly objects to aggressive and seemingly discriminatory police behaviors and procedures.

The deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner and the public's response to them have revealed a broad base loss of faith in law enforcement in communities of color, as is evidenced in both the divergent racial attitudes regarding the grand jury decisions and national protests against these events. The PEW/USA Today study shows that 80% and 90% of black people disapproved of the grand jury decisions in the Brown and Garner cases respectively. These figures differ dramatically from white respondents who were more likely to support the grand jury decisions. Only a quarter (23%) of whites disapproved of the Brown decision and less than half (47%) opposed the Garner ruling (PEW Research Center and USA Today 2014). While black people relative to whites overwhelmingly object to non-indictments of Officers Wilson and Pantaleo, among all citizens polled, there was an increased disapproval of police procedure in these cases revealing a lack of faith in law enforcement generally. These results suggest that not only is the current state of police-citizen relations in crisis, but that Americans have little faith that matters will improve in the future. In fact, 35% of Americans believe relations between local police and minorities will worsen over the upcoming year whereas only 21% believe they will improve. When we account for race, again see divergent attitudes, as more than half of black respondents (52%) believe that relations between the police and minorities will worsen relative to only a third of

white respondents (34%) (PEW Research Center and USA Today 2014). In short, black people in America overwhelmingly disprove of the police and show the least faith in the likelihood of improved relations between law enforcement and communities of color in the coming future.

Taken together, these factors reveal a crisis of legitimacy for police in communities of color. This crisis of legitimacy does not mean police forces are completely obsolete or even that the community completely rejects the police. However, this crisis complicates the ways in which communities of color engage with law enforcement. Dominant narratives describe the police as the institution tasked to protect and serve the public; however recent aggressive policing tactics deployed in communities of color have undermined the purpose of the institution.

This project considers the crisis of legitimacy for police at the street level by focusing on police-citizen encounters and the informal gathering of bystanders that often surround them. By way of video analysis, this project identifies resistance strategies employed by bystanders that challenge police authority and legitimacy in both the immediate encounter and more generally as an institution. Bystanders use talk to reframe the encounter they are having with the police. During police citizen interactions, the police treat the subject of the encounter as the source of a problem. However, bystanders reformulate the occasion and reposition the police as the problem and the subject as the victim of harassment. Bystanders accuse the police of using their authority to do something beyond the parameters of their jobs whether it be fulfilling sexual desires or expressing racial antipathy. By doing so, bystanders dramatize and demonstrate the limits of police authority. They do so practically by lodging jokes and insults about, yet past the police to one another. Bystanders also test the boundaries

of acceptable behavior by physically mocking the police and coming close, but hardly ever crossing the line of unruliness. Bystanders demonstrate the legal limits of police authority by acting as pseudo public defenders and offering legal advice to the subject of the encounter. In all, bystander talk strategically challenges officers' sense of self as masculine, fair, and servants of the community. Bystanders use techniques of degradation to attack the organizing principles of the police profession. The forms of bystander participation described here reveal a lack of trust between the community and law enforcement as onlookers object to police procedures. These unconventional methods of protest constitute an incipient form of social movements in the era of mass incarceration and aggressive policing.

To understand modern practices of policing in communities of color, I review the literature of proactive policing. Next, I review the literature of procedural justice to provide a positive alternative to dominating policing strategies. To understand how communities of color respond to police domination, I consider the politics of resistance and the politics of degradation that provide the theoretical context for bystander participation in this study. I then describe the data, review the methods of analysis and discuss findings and their implications. I end with a discussion of the significance of findings to the policing literature and ideas for future scholarship.

II. Review of the Literature

A. Proactive policing

In the late twentieth century, the United States experienced an explosion in the domestic inmate population commonly described as mass incarceration. By 1996, there were

1.2 million people confined to federal prisons when just 25 years prior there were barely 200,000 inmates. At the same time, mass incarceration reflected and exacerbated racial disparities as today, black men are six times more likely to go to be incarcerated than white males and 2.5 times more likely than Hispanic males. Put otherwise, one in every three black men born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime (Mauer 2011). The unprecedented increase in the inmate population is directly tied to the War on Drugs and a shift to proactive policing strategies specifically within poor communities of color (Alexander 2012, Currie 2013, Gilmore 2007, Mauer 2006, National Research Council 2004, Rios 2011, Wacquant 2009). Proactive policing is an outgrowth of Broken Window Theories¹ of crime that prioritize regulating physical and social signs of disorder in efforts to reduce serious crime (Wilson and Kelling 1982). Proactive policing describes police mobilization in anticipation of crime. This contrasts from traditional methods of policing in which police respond to crimes after they have been committed or once a citizen has called in a policable complaint. Police departments that adopt proactive policing strategies encourage increased execution of motor vehicle pretext stops, citations, street interviews, and arrests of suspicious and disorderly citizens. Traditionally, police rely on direct knowledge and observations when policing, however advances in technology and the rise of police information management systems allow officers to use computerized databases to execute police business (Sherman 1986). An example of technology's impact on policing strategies is evident in "hot spot" policing. Also called placed based policing (Weisburd 2008, Weisburd and Telep 2014), this method targets police resources on specific geographic locations with high crime rates.

¹ Broken Windows theory of crime underpins stop and frisk policies and other more aggressive proactive policing methods. Wilson and Kelling (1982) use the metaphor of a broken window to argue that if left unchecked, disorder will cause serious crime in a community. From this view, police should focus resources on policing physical (e.g. litter, vandalism, graffiti) and social (e.g. panhandling, prostitution, illicit drug use) disorders in communities in the effort to deter more serious crime like rape and murder.

Proactive policing methods have been proven successful in reducing crime in the short-term, but there lacks consensus in the literature regarding the long-term successful effects (Rosenbaum 2006, 2007). Some studies show that proactive policing erodes police-community relations and threatens police legitimacy (Rosenbaum 2006, Weisburd and Braga 2003, Weisburd 2004). The erosion of police-community relationships is especially salient in communities of color as poor minority urban communities are more likely to experience proactive policing (National Research Council 2004:189, 92).

B. Procedural (In)Justice

In addition to proactive policing methods, police conduct also accounts for people's judgments of police legitimacy. Citizen's judgments of procedural justice rely on the perceptions of fairness with which the police exercise their authority (Tyler and Wakslak 2004). According to Tom Tyler, procedural justice is determined by four features regarding police decision-making and interpersonal treatment (Schulhofer, Tyler and Huq 2011, Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler and Wakslak 2004, Tyler 2009, Tyler 2011). Features of procedural justice include: 1) citizen's participation in the decision making process, 2) officer neutrality in unbiased decision making, 3) officer distribution of politeness, dignity, and respect to citizens, and finally 4) trust in officer motives. Examples of behaviors inconsistent with a procedural justice framework include verbal abuse, physical abuse and unwarranted stops—which are likely to be experienced as unfair, disrespectful, and intrusive procedures (Weitzer and Tuch 1999, Weitzer and Tuch 2002, Wortley, Hagan and Macmillan 1997). Experiences of procedural justice during a police encounter have a greater influence on citizen's views of police than the negative or positive resolution of the encounter. In other words, process is more important than outcome for understanding citizen's views toward law

enforcement (Tyler 2004, Tyler and Wakslak 2004, Weitzer and Tuch 2006). According to studies, police departments should be concerned with citizen's perceptions of procedural justice as they influence immediate compliance and pattern future relationships between law enforcement and the community. Empirical studies show that there is a positive correlation between perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy and behavioral cooperation among citizens (Reisig, Bratton and Gertz 2007, Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler and Fagan 2008).

Today, experiences and perceptions of police misconduct are racially patterned. Police misconduct is most prevalent in poor minority neighborhoods (Fagan and Davies 2000, Mollen Commission 1994, Smith 1986). Black and Hispanic people are more likely to report an experience of disrespectful treatment and excessive force by police officers than white people (Tyler and Huo 2002, Weitzer and Tuch 2002, Weitzer and Tuch 2006). Additionally, black and Latino males are more likely to report repeated police stops than white youth, minority females, and older black people and Latinos. Minority youth view these stops as unwarranted and simple harassment (Office 2001, Statistics 2001, Weitzer and Tuch 2006).

C. Politics of Resistance

Anecdotal evidence suggests that police aggressiveness in black areas may contribute to urban race uprisings (Sherman 1986). The LA uprisings of 1965 and 1992 serve as iconic historical examples of black communities acting on judgments of procedural *injustice* in resistance to aggressive policing. In both events, protesters responded to accusations of police brutality experienced by black community members Marquette Frye and Rodney King during regular police traffic stops. The McCone Commission explained the 1965 LA uprisings as “riff raff” theory portraying the perpetrators of the riots as a small group of unemployed, poorly educated, delinquent juveniles and uprooted black people (The McCone

Commission 1965). However, Robert Fogelson challenged this theory and argued that the riots were articulate protests against genuine grievances and as such meaningful protests against the south-central ghetto (Fogelson 1967, Fogelson 1968). Whereas urban uprisings reflect episodic and extreme forms of community resistance to police domination, citizens engage in everyday and routine forms of resistance practices.

Research shows that people who live in poor high-crime communities of color experience aggressive policing, but there is much to be known about how citizens resist police domination. The literature on police-citizen interactions relies heavily on surveys and interviews and focuses primarily on attitudes, rather than behavior or practices (Brunson 2007, Brunson and Weitzer 2008, Frank, Brandl, Cullen et al. 1996, Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello et al. 2005, Tuch and Weitzer 1997). Literature that does focus on behavior pays attention to police officers treatment of citizens more so than the reverse. Those that don't, study citizen demeanor for its effects on the outcome of encounters with police (Dai, Frank and Sun 2011, Mastrofski, Reisig and McCluskey 2002, Maxson, Hennigan and Sloane 2003). This project uses a unique collection of third-party video to uncover resistance practices bystanders use in real time while interacting with the police.

Until now, most of the research on police-citizen interactions has focused on direct participants in the police encounter. This project expands the scope of the police literature by considering how community members outside of the encounter – e.g., those gathered around the encounter as it unfolds -- understand what is happening and seek to intervene in it. As events in Ferguson, MO (and similar events in other cities) have exposed, a community's understanding of police encounters are likely to be derived from a sense of “linked fate” which suggests that black individuals have an acute awareness that what happens to the

group also impacts them (Dawson 1995, Simien 2005, Tate 1998). Rod Brunson and Ronald Weitzer advance the concept of vicarious experiences (Brunson and Weitzer 2011). These second hand experiences are indirect, but internalized by an individual to pattern their attitude toward law enforcement. Although bystanders are not the direct targets of a police-citizen interaction, they serve as witnesses to the brutal and sometimes fatal encounters that spark public outcry and resistance. I push back on the idea that bystanders have *second* hand experiences of police behavior to consider them first hand victims as they are collateral damage during negative police-citizen interactions. This project builds upon previous research of politics of resistance by drawing from real time video data to reveal how *bystanders* collectively work to resist police domination.

D. Organized Practices of Resistance

African American Studies scholars describe how black communities have deployed strategies of policing the police. For example, in the wake of the 1965 Watts rebellion, the Black Panther Party for Self Defense created the organization, Community Alert Patrol (CAP) led by Ron “Brother Crook” Wilkins. Brother Crook would follow police officers with cameras and tape record their activities to ensure they did not commit acts of police brutality against members of the black community (Bloom and Martin 2013). Later in 1992, Los Angeles erupted in civil unrest following the acquittal of police officers responsible for beating Rodney King despite video recorded evidence of the assault. In both instances, urban economically depressed communities of color engaged in collective action in response to chronic injustices suffered at the hands of the police department. This project considers a more common and less violent form of resisting pervasive policing, the gathering and participation of bystanders during street police-citizen interactions.

The formation and behavior of crowds can reframe our understandings of political resistance in social settings. Social movements scholar Pamela Oliver argues that social movement scholars should pay attention to new and unique forms of resistance and mobilization in the context of mass incarceration (Oliver 2008). She argues that these new forms of resistance may take the form of illegal activities alongside political mobilization. Similarly, James Scott uses “infrapolitics” to characterize the everyday forms of cultural resistance and noncooperation that disempowered communities engage in to combat oppression and domination. These forms of resistance, which he calls “weapons of the weak,” require little planning, organization, and coordination and are used by groups and individuals to resist without directly confronting or challenging elite norms (Scott 1985). Robin Kelley takes up Scott’s notion of infrapolitics and places the discussion within the frame of black working class opposition to racism and exploitation. He calls those who engage in resistance and survival tactics “race rebels” (Kelley 1994). Furthermore, George Lipsitz borrows the term “upstander” from Milton Reynolds that describes active forms of resistance. Lipsitz argues that one purpose of direct action is not to persuade opponents, but to change the balance of power by transforming bystanders into upstanders (Lipsitz 2010). At first glance, tactics employed by marginalized communities may not appear to be forms of resistance, but in the contemporary moment of mass incarceration, these tactics may be considered a form of collective behavior challenging aggressive policing. This project considers crowds and the behaviors they display to be incipient forms of a social movement against police domination.

E. Degradation as Resistance

Bystanders in this project use degradation as a strategy of infrapolitics to resist intrusive and pervasive policing. Research on resistance focuses primarily on material exploitation, however, I privilege the symbolic nature of dignity and autonomy when considering strategies to resist police domination. Scott also privileges dignity and autonomy in his discussion of the “weapons of the weak” (Scott 1985). Furthermore, assessments of dignity and respect are part of the primary components in the procedural justice literature that constitute positive or negative experiences with law enforcement.

In the data collected, the police commonly withhold dignity and autonomy when conducting police business. Residents respond to humiliating body searches and street interviews with a similar type of withholding by way of degradation. Harold Garfinkel writes that degradation ceremonies are public shaming practices aimed to reduce the total identity of the target into a lower social type. Degradation ceremonies work to induce feelings of shame to cause the target to withdraw from the encounter in efforts to save his/her ego (Garfinkel 1956). Since street-level police-citizen encounters are so common and routine in certain neighborhoods, resistance takes on the less formal and more spontaneous form of a degradation incident (Schoepflin 2009). During the degradation incident, the public perceives the degraded as lower in the scheme of social types. Schoepflin writes about degradation incidents as a negative practice when discussing his experience with homophobic harassment. However, bystanders use the practice of degradation incidents as a form of resistance to the ways in which they experience proactive policing. Rather than transform the officer’s total identity, the degradation incident discredits the police officers’ authority at both an interpersonal and institutional level. The bystanders respond to being degraded by degrading the degrader, who in this case would be the police officers on the scene.

Bystanders induce social isolation and humiliation upon the police as a way for them to experience a fraction of what citizens endure during public searches, arrests, and seizures.

F. This Study

This project uses a case study analysis of an urban, economically depressed community of color that is subject to intense police surveillance and proactive policing methods. Specifically, I consider the ways in which bystanders participate in street police-citizen interactions as a form of collective behavior that is informed by the context of mass incarceration (Oliver 2008). I consider the organic forms of bystander participation to be unique methods of infrapolitics. In this neighborhood, bystanders use techniques of degradation to directly challenge the legitimacy of the police by lodging jokes and insults and by collectively taunting law enforcement representatives. Bystanders also challenge the legitimacy of the police as an institution by making complaints, and posing as pseudo-public defenders in offering the subject of the interaction legal advice for successful completion of the encounter. Bystanders act upon judgments of procedural injustice informed by a sense of linked fate when they choose to verbally or physically intervene in police-citizen encounters. Linked fate refers to the acute recognition that what happens to the group will also happen to the individual. Black political scientists Michael Dawson and Katherine Tate find that black people develop linked fate from lived experiences of regular encounters of racial oppression and economic exploitation (Dawson 1995, Tate 1998). These shared experiences lead black people to participate in politics, or in this case, infrapolitics. These resistance strategies work to subvert law enforcement in the immediate and future contexts as bystanders testify to and narrate for the camera in hopes of appealing to a future audience.

III. Data

The data for this study is drawn from a larger collection of third party video recordings collected from a local resident in the Western Addition located in San Francisco, California. Raymond Washington, a local resident of the Fillmore neighborhood in the Western Addition collected hundreds of hours of police-citizen interactions using a handheld digital video camera in efforts to deter police brutality. Sometimes he would wait outside his apartment complex for police action and other times residents would call him to the scene of police presence. While conducting ethnographic research in this neighborhood, Dr. Nikki Jones encountered Ray who furnished his collection of tapes to be used for research. This collection of third party video would be considered ongoing as Ray recorded multiple police-citizen interactions in his neighborhood for the better part of a decade. Furthermore, Ray still continues his cop watch efforts and is locally regarded as *Hood Focus* (Jones and Raymond 2012).

At the time I began this study, a team of researchers had digitized and cataloged the original 83 videotapes (each of which can capture up to 90 minutes of video). The footage from the tapes was numbered, time stamped, and labeled to indicate whether or not the recording included police activity, such as an arrest, raid, traffic stop, etc. The original activity log showed that over half of the tapes included at least one police-citizen interaction, with some tapes capturing more than one encounter.

IV. Methods

After review of the original dataset, I became interested in instances of bystander participation and created an independent dataset where I collected all instances of police-citizen interactions that had at least one person present in addition to the videographer. Criteria for the video collection required that the videos capture an instance of a police stop, search, and or interview. If it became evident that the target of the interaction was a juvenile, the video was excluded from my analysis. Finally, the audio and visual quality had to be suitable for the analysis to occur. I renamed the encounters using tag lines from the videos in the new dataset. Reviewing the videos with the aforementioned criteria produced a collection of 33 video clips of police-citizen encounters. The time of the clips ranged from 58 seconds to 22 minutes 27 seconds.

All clips selected for this study contain the police conducting a stop, search, or interview with a citizen. These events happen in public spaces most commonly sidewalks and residential parking lots at all times of day and night. A majority of the scenes pick up after police have made initial contact (often because people call the videographer to the scene or he happens upon a police-citizen interaction and then begins filming). Of the total data set of 33 clips, 11 cases captured people being stopped, questioned, and released from police custody. These instances resulted in a verbal warnings, tickets and citations, or removal of property like towing a car away. In 9 of the cases of civilians were handcuffed, detained, interviewed, and then released. In 13 cases people were arrested and escorted from the scene with the police. Most of the remaining police-citizen interactions included verbal exchanges, but there were three cases of physical confrontations between community members and police. This dataset are ideal representations of community interactions everyone on the scene participates in some way and often build upon each other's verbal contributions.

Bystanders talk to one another, the police, the subject, and the camera. Police and the subjects of police interactions respond to bystanders meaning that their contributions are heard, acknowledged, and taken seriously to some extent.

I analyzed the collection of video records on a case-by-case basis using a form of analytic induction. Initial cases were used to find commonalities and to develop provisional explanations. As new cases were introduced and examined, contradicting hypotheses were used to rework existing explanations either by expanding the definition of the phenomenon or through the identification of a negative case. The process of seeking out confirming and disconfirming evidence helped to sharpen my analysis of bystander participation in police-citizen encounters.

In preparation for analysis, I uploaded video clips and transcripts² to *Dedoose*, a web based qualitative analysis program. I renamed the cases and created two preliminary coding schemes to capture 1) who spoke to whom and 2) what action the talk produced. The first set of codes captured how bystanders interacted with 1) fellow bystanders 2) the subject of police interaction, and 3) the police officers. The second set of codes tracked more specifically 1) insults and jokes 2) taunting and teasing 3) complaints and 4) legal advice (see table 1 for description and code application). I then selected the most illustrative cases to present findings in the thesis. Criteria for selection for the thesis depended on clarity and quality of video and audio. I used this approach to data analysis to build a theory of how

² Transcripts were labeled according to speaker. The nature of crowd participation makes the voices indistinguishable at times. In these cases, I used the general label of “crowd” to identify a bystander contribution. For the transcripts, I used the following labels and abbreviations for the speakers: Officer Male (OM), Officer Female (OF), Civilian Male (CM), Civilian Female (CF), Crowd Male (CRM), Crowd Female (CRF), and Videographer. I numbered the participants as they entered the scene. All names and personal information were omitted from the excerpts.

bystander intervention in police-citizen interactions: 1) reflects a sense of collective identity and 2) operates as a form of resistance.

A. Description of Setting

Black people have lived in San Francisco since the gold rush of the late 19th century. These black pioneers have had a starkly different experience than the commonly discussed black urban dweller in the East and Midwest who moved from the South after emancipation and during the waves of the Great Migration. Black pioneers in the 20th century in the San Francisco Bay Area found themselves inhabiting cities and towns and participating in metropolitan life free from formal segregation like the Southern Jim Crow. Although people of color in the region did experience discrimination, it was a drastically different experience than the de jure Jim Crow South (Daniels 1991).

Until the 1940s, black San Francisco did not have a large black working class population (Daniels 1991). However, World War II drastically changed the American economy, labor force, and, as a result, the racial geographic distribution in the city. The wartime industry attracted many black people from the South to the West in search of economic opportunity. Before the war, black people migrated as individuals, not mass groups over a long period of time. At the time of their arrival, black people were treated as newcomers and allowed to settle in various parts of the city. However, when black people migrated in large numbers to the West in WWII, the familiar ghetto emerged as it did in Eastern and Midwestern cities (Daniels 1991). Housing shortages combined with discriminatory real estate agents promoted the modern ghetto segregating and concentrating the black population in San Francisco in the areas like the Fillmore (Jackson and Jones

2012). According to the redlining archives, the Western Addition³ received a “D” rating, the lowest score assigned to neighborhoods which negatively affected black residents’ bank loan eligibility, real estate pricing and availability, and insurance coverage and rates (Marcian, Goldberg and Hou) This project focuses on the modern day Western Addition.

As stated earlier, a feature of proactive policing is the deliberate surveillance of known “hotspots” for crime. Newspaper reports give us insights into the city’s local knowledge of the neighborhood’s crime landscape and in particular the characterization of the Fillmore district as an area associated with crime and violence. San Francisco’s Western Addition is an identified “hot spot” as the area experiences unusually high levels of crime relative to the rest of the city. In 2005, the San Francisco Chronicle reported the Western Addition as the “city’s deadliest neighborhood” (Gordon 2005). In 2006, the Western Addition was labeled a “homicide hotspot” in need of greater police presence (Hammer 2006). Taken together, the violent characterization of the Western Addition in the media cements the image of the neighborhood as a hotbed for crime.

Not only does the news characterize the Western Addition as a high crime area, but it describes the police as a desirable and positive presence in the neighborhood. News stories that detail the eruption of crime in the Western Addition express a desire to increase policing in hotspot neighborhoods (Hammer 2006) and articles that laud the decline of crime credit police presence and proactive policing methods for increased neighborhood safety (Vega 2008). All in all, residents of the Western Addition experience a disproportionate amount of crime and as a result routinely come into contact with police proactively patrolling their neighborhood.

³ The Western Addition refers to the area where the Fillmore neighborhood is located in San Francisco, CA.

The data for this project is filmed in the Lower Fillmore neighborhood, but this area crosses multiple census tracts. The majority of the neighborhood falls predominately within one census tract and the others border it therefore, we will rely on the primary tract for demographic data. In the primary census tract, 15.1% of residents' family incomes in the prior year fell below the poverty level. These residents are worse off than their neighbors showing rates at 8.6% and 3.6%. Compared to the national poverty rate of 10.1%, residents in the Fillmore were poorer than the average American in 2010. Interestingly, the Fillmore has a higher mean household income than the surrounding neighborhoods and the nation, but shows the most poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). These economic incongruences indicate the wealth is present in the neighborhood, but it is highly concentrated in the hands of few as poverty is fairly persistent.

There is a concentration and sizable population of black residents in the Fillmore. 48.1% of the area residents were white, 34.2% were black and 8.5% were Hispanic or Latino. Although black people do not make up the majority, their numbers are more than double the national average of 12.6% meaning that there is an unusually high concentration of black residents in this neighborhood (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

B. The Use of Video Records

Cell phones, and other handheld devices have made video-recording police-citizen interactions a central part of neighborhood watch efforts and documentation. This provides researchers with a unique benefit, since capturing these encounters on videotape allows the researcher to observe subtle micro-interactional patterns in speech and movement that traditional data sources, like field notes inevitably lack (Goodwin 2000, Katz 1999). For example, live videos of police-citizen encounters allow the researcher to transcribe what

participants say, record nonverbal communication between residents and officers, and witness the real-time emotional reactions of parties present. Research that relies on video in other institutional settings reveals that participants often come to treat the camera as an “honored guest” much as they do the field researcher (Sacks 1992). Although video cameras can shape how people interact with one another in a negative way the video evidence suggests that the presence of the camera is oftentimes desired leading us to believe the participants intentionally act to document their daily experiences.

C. Defining Bystanders

In this study, I use the term bystanders to describe community members who stop to observe and/or provide commentary on police-civilian encounters *without* cameras in hand. In contrast, the videographer is a privileged type of bystander: he is known in the neighborhood as someone who regularly records encounters for his community cop watch project. In 2009⁴, Washington offered the following explanation to describe the start of his police surveillance efforts;

“So I got off into the camera and just kind of liked it. There was a need for it because there was just so much police brutality going on, I mean, right in front of us, and you couldn’t prove it because it was their word against our word. Well, now I have proof. I started videoing and I’ve been doing it now for about six years. Got a lot of pieces in court, federal court, state court all, all over. That’s why I started” (Jones and Raymond 2012).

The videographer’s privileged status is reflected in the consequences he experiences for his presence and participation as police officers reserve particular sanctions for him that camera-less bystanders are not subject to. For example, at times, the police attempt to intimidate the videographer by threatening to confiscate his recordings or to arrest him for the act of recording their behavior.

⁴ Ray offered this explanation during a visit to Jones’s course, “Criminal Justice and the Community,” during the fall 2009 academic quarter.

Community members also orient to the videographer as a privileged bystander in the ways they interact with the camera. Bystanders turn to the camera and directly engage with it by narrating events on the scene in efforts to properly contextualize the encounter. Similarly, bystanders engage with the camera to testify in a way that would appeal to an imagined future audience. Like the narration, testimonies often disclose information not captured by the camera such as previous negative encounters with particular officers. Bystanders are well aware that the videographer is recording them and sometimes express their gratitude for his efforts with compliments. However, in some instances bystanders request not to be filmed because of embarrassment or lack of familiarity with the videographer's project.

In the collection of video records compiled for this study, the videographer is the only person on the scene with a camera. The data gives us a look through the videographer's lens as a community documentarian. He frames the data and provides the lens making him an atypical bystander in the study. Observers without a camera adopt a more typical bystander role since they do not take up documentation measures. Instead, they literally stand by.

D. Bystander Participation

It may be tempting to think of police-citizen interactions as private matters. Yet, a review of the video records reveals the public nature of field interviews and body searches, which can take place on crowded sidewalks during the day or night. Privacy serves police officers by ensuring a level of autonomy that provides greater latitude and discretion that could potentially include police abuses. However, bystanders in the Fillmore intentionally remove the cover of privacy and hold law enforcement accountable by gathering around police-citizen encounters. The presence of others often reduces instances of arrest and use of force, so the mere formation of a bystander gathering serves as a form of resistance

(Friedrich 1980). Some community members walking by stop and observe silently.

Sometimes when community members gather and watch police encounters, they comment to one another about the incident. This commentary involves an exchange of information about the police-citizen encounter, including the cause for the stop and any available evidence against the suspect. In addition to talking to one another, bystanders talk to police officers on the scene. Sometimes they have conversational exchanges, but more often bystanders engage officers in verbal conflict.

V. Findings: Taunting as Forms of Resistance

The data demonstrates the range of ways that bystanders do not find the police legitimate. For one, the presence and talk of bystanders reframes the police-citizen encounter they are having with the police by repositioning the subject of police presence as a victim and the officers as troublemakers. A lack of faith in the legitimacy of law enforcement is illustrated in the ways bystanders taunt police officers during street police-citizen encounters.

Bystanders dramatize the practical limits of police autonomy by collectively taunting the police indirectly and keeping their remarks primarily within the group. In most cases, the police are unable to take action against the bystanders because the talk is comical, non-threatening, and directed past the police towards fellow bystanders.

Bystanders use physical insults to challenge the legitimacy of the police officer. The insult as a form of resistance is revealed in the following excerpt. The recording begins with the videographer approaching a police-citizen encounter during the day on a sidewalk. A young adult black male in a black hooded sweatshirt holds his hands above his head while

facing two white, middle-aged, plain-clothes officers as they conduct a body search. Also on the scene are two uniformed police officers who stand to the side of the police-citizen interaction. They do not appear to be directly involved, but they are observing the events. Another young adult black male is narrating the scene for the camera as it comes closer to the interaction. Before he approaches, this young man immediately recognizes the familiar scene in his neighborhood as he utters, “you feel me this what they do man... harassing him for nothing baby, this what they do.” A crowd of approximately fifteen people gather to watch the scene unfold. Bystanders talk to one another, the camera, the subject of the encounter, and the police. While everyone waits for officers to return with information, the bystanders exchange words with police officers. Over the course of the exchange, bystanders insult the officers. In some cases, bystanders direct their talk directly to the police, but most residents talk to one another. In this case, bystanders degrade the police as they talk amongst themselves, shouting loud enough for the officers nearby to hear them.

[Excerpt 1]

CM1: You feel me? I know. And we finna make a movie of this shit see this what y'all don't know.

CRM1: His muscle neck ass. [Insult]

CRM1: Y'all thought y'all was hoppin' out on somebody.

CRF1: He thought y'all was doing something.

((lines omitted))

CRM1: The giffenator.

CRM2: He all up in...

CRF1: Is he 911 too?

CRF2: Look at him, all fat in the front. [Insult]

CRF3: This nigga got condoms.

Crowd: Hahaha!

CRM3: What you looking at? Punk!
Crowd: Shut up man!
((lines omitted))
Crowd: 'Cause we look so goooooood!
CRF1: look at his neck hanging [Insult]
((lines omitted))
CRF1: Aye come on. Look at his neck hanging we ain't got time
lets go! [Insult]
((lines omitted))
CRF1: Look that's why he turns red!
CRF1: He want a piece of pork! Let's go get...
CRF1: Pork on the grill! Hahahaha!
CRF3: It don't matter you ain't got to argue with them!
CRM4: Nigga ain't got no neck!
CRM5: What's his name?
((lines omitted))
Crowd: Hahahaha!
CRF1: Let's go put him a piece of pork on the grill hahaha!
((lines omitted))
CRF1: Look at the back of his neck hahahaha! [Insult]
CRM6: Chicken Little, that nigga Chicken Little hahaha!
[Insult]
CRM6: Chicken Little!
CRM7: Your name Chicken Little! [Insult]
((lines omitted))
CRM6: That nigga ain't got no neck! [Insult]
Crowd: Hahahahaha!

In the excerpt above, at least eight insults are indirectly aimed at the officer. Bystanders draw from the black folklore tradition of “playing the dozens” as a means of degradation. Common among poor black communities, contestants exchange witty insults until one gives up. This usually happens in front of an audience who encourage, applaud, laugh, and the

contestants (Wald 2012). Generally, participants playing the dozens have a mutual understanding of the temporality of the jokes lodged, however bystanders in the Fillmore intend for their insults to seriously injure officers and remind them that there is a cost associated with aggressive policing in the neighborhood. Here, the bystanders insult the officers' physical appearance. For example, early in the encounter one young man mentions one officer's neck ("His muscle neck ass"). Shortly after that, others join him, as when a young woman invites others to "look at his neck hanging." She adds that "he looks like he wants a piece of pork" and invites the crowd to return to their barbeque and prepare pork on the grill for him. Others then comment on related aspects of the officer's appearance, saying "Chicken Little, that nigga looks like Chicken Little." Across these cases, bystanders talk to one another, with each next comment building on what others have said, suggesting a level of agreement among the participants that may ratchet up the insults.

In launching these insults at officers, bystanders engage in a degradation incident (Schoepflin 2009). These tactics are intended to publicly shame the police and diminish the officer's status. Considering that police have asymmetrical power and authority as the coercive arm of the state, bystander insults and jokes attempt to level the playing field for the competing groups. By withholding the deference traditionally granted to law enforcement, bystanders work to reduce police officers to the level of average citizens. By lodging jokes and insults, bystanders turn their negative experience of intrusive policing into a negative experience for the police. Public degradation incidents serve as a ritual of destruction that reinforces group solidarity.

Bystanders use jokes to degrade the police physical presentation, imply counter-surveillance efforts, and to physically mock law enforcement activities. In doing so,

bystanders take advantage of their subordinate status in the asymmetrical power relationship with police officers by trying to chip at officers' professional face. Bystander comments are loud enough for officers to hear, but because they are exchanged amongst themselves, remarks are not necessarily intended to elicit a response from law enforcement. No longer are the police the only ones on the scene with a form of power, but bystanders pool their resources together in collectively degrading law enforcement as resistance. Bystanders ridicule police officers using demeaning language thinly disguised as jokes serving as forms of public degradation incidents. As bystanders co-construct an un-enjoyable experience for police officers their collaborative degradation of the officers strengthens the solidarity of the group.

Bystanders use taunting as a way to intimidate the police. In the same case *Am I being detained*, bystanders taunt officers with their police surveillance project, *Hood Focus*. Residents in the Fillmore are subject to heavy intrusive policing, but bystander participants turn surveillance on its head by video recording police-citizen encounters. In the following excerpt, bystanders collectively carry the metaphor that police officers are “stars” in the “movie” the community is producing via the cop watch efforts. Bystanders use taunting as a way to remind the police officers that they too have a form of power that is beyond the limits of the law's control. Although the police are able to stop, search, and interview civilians temporarily restricting their freedom, bystanders resist and reclaim their power by video recording the interactions and collectively taunting officers.

[Excerpt 2]

CM1: You feel me, because they ain't about to touch hood focus either man that's all I'm saying. They ain't about to touch hood focus man, it ain't going down man you feel me, we

with our uncle, we with our uncle the cameraman, this our uncle right here man getting y'all. You feel me? Because we making a movie I'm trying to tell y'all. We finna make a movie of y'all man. You know what I mean?

CRM1: Y'all the stars, y'all the stars!

CM1: Y'all is the stars man, come on man yeah, they is the stars right here man. You know what I mean? I want to be a star with them too you feel me? But I'm not, because they the stars man. You know what I mean.

CF1: Excuse me! Excuse me I'm trying to get to my..

CM1: Y'all blocking all traffic!

CRM2: And they all in the way!

CM1: You know what I mean see they want to block shit!

CRM2: They all in the way.

CM1: They want to block shit you know what I mean. People got to, People got to move and shit you know what I mean they trying to get by.

CF1: I can't move y'all blocking it!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Well he's the Fillmore security guard he should assist you right there.

CM1: Right here huh?

VIDEOGRAPHER: The gentleman in the tie.

CM1: Oh, yeah.

(Horn blares)

VIDEOGRAPHER: You can speak with the officers in regard to letting that lady in on the property that she's trying to get on for her grandma.

CM1: You know what I mean? The stars! Aaaahhh!

CRM2: Y'all bull shitting.

CM1: The stars though! That's y'all new nick name the stars.

CRM2: Y'all bull shitting!

CM1: The stars man.

CRM2: Y'all need a new day job though.

CM1: Come on man, cause this ain't going to cut it!

CRM2: Y'all need a new day job!

CM1: This ain't going to cut it right here! We finna make a movie!

CRM2: Y'all starting shit!

CM1: We finna get money off this movie right here though.

CRM2: Especially the people who ain't doing shit.

CM1: The stars! You know what I mean?

CRM1: Y'all making up shit to harass us!

CRM2: That shit weak!

CM1: The stars!

CRM1: The real stars huh?

((lines omitted))

CM1: See what I mean? The stars though man!

CRM2: You know what I said!

CM1: Come on man, we going to get all of these motherfuckers man. The Fillmore Center man, they want to harass a motherfucker by the Fillmore Center while a motherfucker trying to walk to the store and some more shit what's going on man?

SUBJECT: Everybody here have a nice day though.

CM1: That ain't cool baby. You know what I mean?

CRM2: Yeah everybody!

CM1: Yeah I'm a always have a motherfucking nice day you know what I mean when these stars come!

CRM2: Everybody have a nice day!

CM1: When these stars come that's when I really have a nice day! You know what I mean? Sometimes it be a bad day, sometimes it be a good day, you know what I mean!

In this case, the remarks that the leader of the crowd, CM1, makes are rooted in a sarcastic metaphor of the police being movie stars in the *Hood Focus* production. By labeling the officers as stars, they are positioned in a glorified role when in fact the community holds them in contempt evidenced by their verbal insults and taunts. Bystanders are aware of the inconvenience and humiliation they pose to police officers by gathering and recording police-citizen interactions and use humor and irony to exaggerate the interaction. By calling police officers the stars and the cop watch efforts a movie, bystanders reinforce their resources and highlight the officer's inability to effectually stop them from continuing the video project. The privacy that traditional street encounters have is permanently removed as not only bystanders observe, but the videographer records. The recordings create an archive of instances of perceived police misconduct that will tell the narrative of proactive policing from the vantage point of the community members. This "movie" serves as a counter narrative to the police as champions of justice dedicated to protect and serve the community. Rather, the police are a cast of aggressors preying upon a vulnerable neighborhood. In this way, the act of video recording the police serves as resistance to police domination.

Once the target of the interaction is released from custody, he joins the crowd. He is reinstated as a bystander and from this position he joins with the others in taunting the police. The former target of the interaction and fellow bystanders challenge the legitimacy of the police as an institution by degrading the importance of police work. One of the bystanders yells "yall need a new day job" and the other bystander joins in and echoes this taunt. This remark undermines the legitimacy of police work as "real" work and suggests that bystanders do not find the police useful in general. Rather than waste the community's time with harassing stops, bystanders urge the police to find alternative forms of employment.

Just as these sidewalk performances entertain bystanders, they also impact police officers. Bystanders do not lodge dry insults, but rather infuse them with creative metaphors and humorous styles turning the degradation ceremony into a form of entertainment or play. This is a radical and creative use of humor that works as resistance. Bystander taunting may appear disruptive, rude, and mean spirited, but these are the tools the oppressed use to resist. Robin Kelley discusses Malcolm X's appeal as an activist to the masses for his ability to find oppositional potential of the frivolous, the frowned, upon, and the forbidden by using humor and playfulness with the crowd (Kelley 1994). Likewise, participant bystanders use improvisation and pull from their repertoire of tools for degradation to create a sense of blackness out of the spectator's position that is not cowering and intimidated.

By publicly shaming the police, bystanders act to undermine the legitimacy of the police. From this experience, police officers know any contact with a community member will come at a cost: they will be subject to an onslaught of verbal attacks. This serves as a form of resistance because community members are able to affect their police experiences and successfully navigate the encounter. In this liminal space, community members push the boundaries of law and behavior to see exactly what bystanders can get away with.

The Fillmore community and officers know the cop watch efforts are forms of resistance to deter officers from abusing power and engaging in excessive use of force. This is evidenced by the direct interaction police officers have with the camera and videographer in other clips. Police regularly allude to prior interactions with *Hood Focus* and request (or demand) copies of the films for institutional purposes. Also, the police and videographer at times make casual conversations and jokes about captured footage.

Getting Physical

James Scott writes that people in power need to make a show of it. Spectacles like the chain coffle and lynchings were never aimed at the person being “punished,” but rather served as an intimidation device warning others of the consequences of getting out of line (Scott 1990). Additionally, these crimes against black people commonly went unpunished and the community was unable to reciprocate with the same treatment. Similarly, police-citizen street encounters in the Fillmore unfold as public spectacles. In this neighborhood, police show off their power by discriminatorily wielding their authority to stop, search, and interrogate whomever they deem suspicious. Further extralegal uses of power such as verbal disrespect, degrading body searches, and humiliating directives like kissing the pavement enhance the public spectacle and works as a disciplining mechanism to onlookers.

Police officers rarely respond to bystander verbal insults and taunts, but when they do officers attempt to reassert their authority with a warning to other bystanders of the dangers of “crossing the line”. For example, in the following excerpt when a bystander breaks from the crowd and moves beyond verbal attacks to physically mocking gestures and degrading the police, an officer responds by making an example out of her.

In the case *Arrested In Front of Kids* a young black woman physically mocks the police by assuming the position while sarcastically baiting the officers. The scene opens with a dozen bystanders congregating in the parking lot of an apartment complex. We see one probation officer and three uniformed officers who appear to be finishing a house visit of some sort. As a young black woman from the neighborhood walks by when a uniformed officer asks about her criminal record treating her as a suspect rather than a citizen. She

responds by “assuming the position⁵” first with her hands behind her head then bent over a car with her hands on the hood. After the crowd bursts out in laughter, the police place her in handcuffs and conduct a body search while verbally reprimanding her.

[Excerpt 3]

CF1: I ain't even got nothing what you want to do? Search me?
G'on head!

(assumes the position with hands behind head)

CF1: Here you go! Want to search me?

(assumes the position hands on the car)

CF1: What pat me down?

(searches boots)

CROWD: Hahaha

CF1: You want to search?

OM1: (inaudible)

(signals OF1 officer and approach CF1)

CF1: What did I do? My kids are right here.

(OF1 handcuffs CF1)

CF1: So you just going to search me right?

OM1: (inaudible)

CF1: *(scoffs)* What did I do? What did I do?

OM1: You asked me to search you.

CF1: Oh, I'm just saying that's what you act like you wanted to do... Okay my kids right there, can y'all watch my kids?

Since y'all putting me in handcuffs in front of my kids.

That's like, traumatizing.

OF1: Could you spread your feet please?

OM1: I was pretty nice about it but,

⁵ Assume the position refers to police directive for citizens to physically stand with their legs spread apart and hands held visibly behind the head. From this position, police officers commonly conduct body searches and place citizens under arrest.

CF1: But I thought you wanted to, shit I'm just saying it sound like you wanted to find something.

OM1: (inaudible)

CF1: No it just seemed like it.

OM1: No no no You and I have known each other for a real long time

Bystanders who physically intervene in police citizen interactions run the risk of becoming future targets of police attention and the next public spectacle. Excerpt 3 looks familiar to many police-citizen encounters with bystanders taunting police officers as a comedic performance. However, the female bystander breaks from the crowd and takes a prominent role in physically mocking the police. Her actions succeeded in entertaining the crowd and degrading the police officers, but also moved her from a bystander to subject of the police encounter. The officer's decision to take the bystander up on her offer to be searched works as a disciplining mechanism for the woman and for fellow bystanders. As a public display, the encounter serves as a warning to other bystanders that they could be next if they cross the line. Furthermore, the public discipline of the bystander for crossing the line repairs the perceived injury to an officer's authority. The police are able to reassert their dominance by reminding the bystanders that they still hold a reserve of state power that they can wield at their discretion.

The crowd of bystanders who gather on the street become an audience to the police performance and create a counter spectacle by their participation in the encounter. The crowd offers refuge to bystanders by creating anonymity and confusion as many voices jump out without a clear author. The crowd also has built in supporters that aid in street degradation incidents. In some ways, it can be less risky to intervene in police-citizen encounters from a crowd because it lowers the potential for police officers to single one out for behavior that

many engage in. However, as seen in excerpt 3, police may single out a bystander as a neutralizing technique. This seems to be common when bystanders break from the custom of congregating and shouting insults.

VI. Findings: Bystanders give advice to the subject of the encounter

A sense of linked fate influences how bystanders in the Fillmore observe and participate in police-citizen encounters. At times, they lodge insults and jokes, while at other times they pass along legal advice to one another or the subject of police attention. This form of bystander intervention serves as collective resistance as bystanders band together and pool their knowledge to combat possible police misconduct due to ignorance of the law. By relaying legal advice to the subject of the interaction, bystanders dramatize the legal limits of police authority. By offering legal advice, bystanders help the subject navigate the police encounter in a way that does not end with the use of force or arrest. Additionally, bystanders can actively construct evidence of police wrongdoing by offering this advice while the videographer records the encounter.

In the familiar case *Am I Being Detained*, bystanders do more than insult and degrade the police. Bystanders help the subject by making him aware of his rights and providing advice for how to deal with the police officers. The videographer leads the charge by suggesting the subject of the encounter ask whether or not he is being detained.

[Excerpt 4]

VIDEOGRAPHER: Just ask him are you being detained, and if you are not being detained you can walk.

CM1: Yeah! Ask him!

VIDEOGRAPHER: And say it loud so it can be heard.

CM1: Aye, ask him aye!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Just ask him, are you being detained.
CM1: Just ask him!
SUBJECT: Do I smoke?
CM1: Ask them are you being detained. Ask him say it loud nigga!
SUBJECT: Do I smoke?
CM1: Come on man.
CRM1: Did you ask him if (inaudible)...
CM1: come on man!
SUBJECT: It ain't none of your business if I smoke.
CM1: You feel me. Come on man.
OM3: Yeah it's my business.
SUBJECT: No it's not.
OM3: Yes it is.
SUBJECT: No its not. Because I got... (inaudible) for three weeks.
CF1: He always...(inaudible) that's why he turned red.
CM1: Ask him if you are being detained my nigga!
SUBJECT: No its not.
CM1: Ask him if you're being detained!
CM1: Ask him are you being detained!
SUBJECT: Why would I show you some weed?
CF1: He want a piece of pork! Let's go get...
CM1: If he ain't being detained they should let him go!
CF1: Pork on the grill! Hahahaha!
CRF1: It don't matter you ain't got to argue with them!
CRF2: Nigga ain't got no neck!
CRM1: What's his name?
CROWD: Hahahaha!
CF1: Let's go put him a piece of pork on the grill hahaha!
SUBJECT: Am I detained? Wassup? What's going on bruh bruh?
Alright.

VIDEOGRAPHER: Say it louder!

SUBJECT: Let me know something.

CM1: say it louder! Say it louder man!

SUBJECT: This is bullshit. This is bullshit man!

VIDEOGRAPHER: 'Cause if you're not you can walk away, you have the right to walk away!

CM1: So the camera can hear it!

SUBJECT: I ain't doing nothing!

VIDEOGRAPHER: If you're not being detained..

SUBJECT: I ain't do nothing

CF1: If you're not detained you can walk away, you ain't on no paper work they can't even go in your pocket!

SUBJECT: Nothing man!

CRM1: They ain't even got him cuffed then he not detained!

SUBJECT: I can't even walk home!

CM1: Hell no he ain't detained they ain't even got him cuffed come on man.

While officers continue to search and question the subject, the videographer interjects with "Just ask him are you being detained, and if you are not being detained you can walk." After the videographer issues the directive to "ask if you are being detained," fellow bystanders agree and encourage the subject to invoke his rights. We hear others join in agreement and echo the first directive with "yeah ask him," and "ask him if you're being detained my nigga". There are at least six additional charges supporting the move for the subject to ask the police about whether or not he is being detained. In this instance, bystanders define the perceived violation of the individual rights and redefine what the "trouble" is here. The suspect is repositioned as the victim of police misconduct as officers unlawfully conduct a street search.

Bystanders show a local awareness and knowledge of their rights. Bystander utterances reflect the logic in their legal understandings. A young black male bystander turns to the camera and says “if he ain’t being detained they should let him go”. A young black female bystander reflects her legal understating of detention procedures, “If you’re not detained you can walk away, you ain’t on no paper work they can’t even go in your pocket”. In her estimation, because the subject is not under formal surveillance such as parole or probation (paperwork), he should be released and no longer subject to police scrutiny. Following her logic, those “on paper work” experience second-class citizenship as their convict status gives cause for the police to stop and search people in the area. Another black man says “They ain’t got him cuffed then he not detained”. This bystander mistakenly believes that police detention is accompanied by handcuffs which would make it an arrest. Nonetheless, the basis rests his conclusion on the absence of formal arrest procedures. It is clear that bystanders are bringing their local legal knowledge that has been picked up from previous experiences with the criminal justice system directly and indirectly. They have transposed those understandings from previous encounters and used them to make sense and complete the immediate encounter.

The legal advice bystanders offer during police-citizen encounters is consequential for how the street encounter unfolds. The fact that subjects of these encounters take and act upon advice provided by bystanders makes local knowledge about police procedure and citizens’ rights salient in the community. The subject listens and takes the advice that the bystanders provide by asking officers “Am I detained? Wassup? What’s going on bruh bruh?” Officers ask a few more questions, but end up letting the subject of the encounter free after his name returns without warrants.

Not all instances of bystander's offering legal advice are intended for the present moment. Sometimes bystanders offer advice that the target of the interaction can use in a future context. In another case, *Remain Silent*, a young black male is being escorted in handcuffs from his home to a squad car by police officers. A lone bystander shouts advice for the subject to take and use in the future.

[Excerpt 5]

VIDEOGRAPHER: Said he'd be done in a couple of hours?

CM1: Remain silent buddy fuck 'em in they ass!

CF1: Exactly!

CM1: Fuck them in they ass buddy!

In this case, bystanders watch and only comment with legal advice. A man on the scene shouts "Remain silent buddy fuck 'em in the ass!" and fellow woman bystander echoes this sentiment with "Exactly." Although bystanders cannot save this subject from arrest, they offer advice to help minimize any further incrimination that would lead to additional legal trouble. In this way, the bystanders position themselves as supporters to the subject in an adversarial relationship with the police. Bystanders respond to the police removing a community member with aggression and hostility. As in other instances, bystanders use insults to an officer's manhood to publicly degrade the officers.

In some cases, bystanders use their knowledge of the law to directly challenge the legitimacy of the encounter, the authority of the police officers and in an effort to change the course of the interaction. In the same way, bystanders use their knowledge of the law to alert members of the community not present on the scene of police misconduct that could potentially have negative legal consequences. In the case *He's A Juvenile* the police are in an apartment complex parking lot conducting multiple field interviews including some with

juveniles. While law enforcement question citizens on the scene, an officer uses a master key to open the trunk of a vehicle without the owner's permission. Bystanders on the scene see the officer entering the car and call the owner at her job to alert her of the police activity while simultaneously launching accusations of unlawful entry and search.

[Excerpt 6]

CF1: That's [NAME], that's [NAME] car?

CF2: That's [NAME] car!

CF1: excuse me! officer!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Let him do it, let him go, let him go.

CF1: That's my little cousin's car and she's not around.

VIDEOGRAPHER: It has nothing to do with any of this he'll find out later.

OM1: She can come talk to me about it.

CF1: She's at work. She works at city hall hold on.

OM1: I don't know what to tell you.

CF1: What's her number?

CF2: ###-####.

CM1: Go get her mama...there ain't nothing in there by the way. Go get your mama.

CF2: What?

CM1: Ain't that your sister's car?

CF2: I don't have nothing to do with this... I don't fuck with them...that's they business.

CF1: (on the phone) poo poo, is this your white ____ in the parking lot?

CM1: yeah that's her car!

CF1: (on the phone) The police are going in your trunk.

CF2: Where did they get the key?

CF1: (on the phone) I don't know but they don't have it. They out here, uh...

CF2: He got a master key and shit.

CF1: (on the phone) No, he talking about tell her come talk to me.

CF2: He pulled that shit off the key ring.

CF1: (on the phone) Yes... he is all in your trunk they in your trunk. I just wanted to call you and tell you.

CF2: Find anything other than clothes?

CM1: Hahaha!

CF1: (on the phone) Okay, hold on.

CF1: (to police) Excuse me, she wants to talk to you.

OM1: That's okay, she doesn't need to talk to me, what does she need to talk to me for?

CF2: oooohhhhhh!

CF1: Because you just went in her trunk. For what?

OM1: I can explain it to her, but I'm not going to talk to her on the phone.

CF1: That's why she's on the cell phone she wants to talk to you.

OM1: I don't talk to people on the phone, I can't prove that, is that her car?

CF2: Did you find what you was looking for?

CF1: Well can you write down your information so I can have her come contact you?

OM1: I'll give her my (inaudible).

CF1: Well can I have it, do you have a pen?

CF2: Did you find what you...

CF3: All these police out here got pens.

CF2: Did you find what you was looking for? We'd like to know, did you find what you was looking for?

((lines omitted))

CF2: They just went in her trunk!

CF1: I knew he was gone want to talk.

CF2: Now he want to get on the phone.

CF1: After I went and get his information, shit he ain't got no right to go in her car, for what?

CF3: Wasn't nobody hanging on her car!

CF1: [NAME] work at city hall.

CF3: Wasn't nobody in or out that car and she not even here.

CF1: No she at work, [NAME] work at city hall.

CF2: No [NAME] at work, is her mama home.

CF3: Wasn't nobody sitting on her car or nothing.

OM1: (on phone) Just don't let, just don't let people hang around or inside your car.

CF1: Wasn't nobody in her car!

CF2: Wasn't nobody in her car!

VIDEOGRAPHER: It's a parking lot where everybody lives and sits... there ain't no hanging.

CF1: Wasn't nobody even in there we just sitting out here, that's okay Raymond got it.

VIDEOGRAPHER: This is ridiculous.

CF2: You on candid camera.

(officer hands phone back to CF1)

CF1: (on the phone) Hello...yeah... the car is locked ain't nobody in it.

CF3: Get them murders! That's what you do!

CF2: [NAME] said your car wasn't open.

CF3: Her car was not open!

CF2: Wasn't nobody around it.

CF3: Wasn't even nobody around your car they're lying!

CF1: (on the phone) [NAME], wasn't nobody in your car.

CF3: They need to get them murderers.

CF1: (on the phone) Wasn't nobody around your car.

CF3: Them robbers, them gangstas. A lot of that shit going on, get them murderers. Get these murderers!

Although multiple police-citizen encounters are going on at the same time in this parking lot, bystanders remain highly observant and quickly notice police tampering with a vehicle that appears to be unrelated to a criminal incident and whose owner is not present. This case serves as a clear instance of the community policing the police. Almost immediately, bystanders intervene on behalf of a woman who is not present by gaining the officer's attention and challenging his right to enter the vehicle. More bystanders chime in with their local knowledge of law citing the lack of probable cause and permission to enter the vehicle. When the officer takes the phone and tells the owner of the vehicle that others were hanging around her car giving him cause to search the vehicle, multiple bystanders and the videographer jump in to challenge the officer loud enough in the background for the caller to hear. When the officer returns the phone, bystanders continue to object to the officer's narrative by asserting that no one was near her vehicle.

Bystanders not only challenge the legitimacy of the police encounter verbally, but they also take action to notify the owner of the vehicle of the police intrusion. Bystanders collectively gather information by finding the absent woman's phone number and passing it along. Furthermore, the bystanders broker a conversation between the police on the scene and the woman on the cell phone who is currently away at work. There is little bystanders can immediately do to deter officer behavior beyond making verbal challenges, reporting the violation to the owner, and video taping the encounter on "candid camera". However, bystanders hope that by warning the absent car owner of the police intrusion she can anticipate any additional encounters with law enforcement that come from this search.

VII. Findings: Gender Consequences

Bystander talk intentionally targets the organizing principles of police work as masculine, fair, and community service oriented. To do so, bystanders use gendered logics upon which to base their remarks and actions. Bystanders make gender relevant in three ways. 1) Bystanders lodge insults to injure the police officer's sense of manhood and the institutions' authority, 2) bystanders draw on gendered lines to illuminate boundaries for protection of poor black women as they make complaints about the inappropriate use of force, and 3) female identified participants can use their gender categories to challenge and/or request an alternative treatment by law enforcement agents.

Gender-Specific Insults

Like law enforcement, hegemonic masculinity depends on its ability to exert dominance and control. Attacking police officers' masculinity is especially damaging because of the hyper-masculine nature of policing. Prokos and Padavic study of a police academy found a hidden curriculum that socialized and encouraged recruits to practice hegemonic masculinity. This institutionalized notion denigrated women and femininity by clinging to the myth of police work being action packed and dangerous (Prokos and Padavic 2002). Similarly, scholar Susan Martin suggest that public perceptions of "real police work" involving aggressive crime fighting strategies are associated with traits of bravery and danger marking policing as "men's work." She also states that police department culture discourages feminized traits such as emotional expression (Martin 1999).

The overemphasis on police work being "men's work" makes bystander challenges to police officers' masculinity especially injurious on a personal and institutional level. For example, in excerpt 1, members of the crowd call an officer a "punk." In another case, (*I'm*

Claustrophobic) bystanders call officers punks and bitches. Gender and sexuality is confounded and it is not uncommon for bystanders to sexualize gender specific-insults. For example, in the previous case, (*Am I Being Detained*) when the encounter begins the subject tells bystanders that officers have already checked him. He states, “he already checked me, sexual assault ass.” This is to imply that because the subject has already been searched there is no further reason to continue the body search beyond some erotic pleasure the officers gain from the action. This comment reframes the stop and frisk a perverted sexual excursion, instead of as an impersonal police practice. Additionally, this comment reframes the officer to be the violator and positions the target of the interaction as a victim of sexual assault.

Similarly, in the following excerpt (*Prove You Live Here*), a black woman in her mid-thirties makes a testimonial about the sexual predatory nature of a particular officer in efforts to shame him. She verbally berates the officer who gives directives to her daughter and uses the opportunity to degrade his masculinity by calling him a faggot. Again, the bystander does not direct her talk at, but past the police and to the camera when degrading his manhood.

[Excerpt 7]

CF1: Didn't I tell you... channel one!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Because he asked one previous shareholder to leave.

CF1: Channel one!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Now he just checking ID for others.

OM1: You need to properly identify yourself if you want to leave.

CF1: Channel one!

VIDEOGRAPHER: They're actually here for other reasons.

CF1: [NAME]! Didn't I just tell you this motherfucker preys on women?

CM1: Here, just cause you don't know me, here.

(CM1 Hands OM1 paperwork/identification)

OM1: I don't know you.

CM1: I know.

CF1: You see him sending somebody, another man to do his motherfucking job?

CM2: *(makes sound)* hahahaha *(sings)* kush and patron on me!

CM3: He better not say shit to me!

CF1: Think he done something, he ain't did shit. Hate your faggot ass!

OM1: Your name is [NAME].

CM1: Yeah, [NAME], it take that long.

OM1: Alright, thank you very much.

CM2: Only reason why you saying something is because [NAME] said something.

(OM1 returns paperwork/identification)

OM2: Don't ride your bike without a helmet.

CF1: Don't tell my daughter what to do go tell you motherfucking daughter what to do, you faggot!

This scene emerges at the close of an unrelated police-community encounter. While the police finish their original business, they interact with bystanders on the scene. The woman bystander on the scene tells the videographer that the specific officer has a history of preying on women. This is particularly important as the woman makes three attempts to gain the videographer's attention and document her accusation. Having failed to find a policable matter, the officer intrudes into her space as a mother by reprimanding her daughter for riding a bike without a helmet. The mother sharply objects to the police officer's directive and degrades his masculinity by calling him a faggot. Just moments before, she says she hates his faggot ass.

It is unclear whether bystanders use “faggot” as a homophobic derogatory term or if the term serves as a shorthand for a gendered and sexualized insult that targets the heart of the job of policing. A fag implies the weakest form of manhood in which boys are penetrated and lack masculinity and control over his own and others bodies (Pascoe 2011). Similarly, the terms punk and bitch when lodged against men are intended to further degrade one’s manhood. Taken together, these insults degrade the masculine organizing principle for which officers make sense of their position and behavior with the public. In this context, police officers as public servants are not granted the same latitude to level insults back at bystanders in the manner in which they are received. Although at times the police retaliate and arrest bystanders for talking back on the scene, the insult itself is not a policeable matter. As a result, male police officers are stuck wearing a label of emasculation (faggot) almost defenseless against verbal insults. In other data not shown, when verbal insults increase in degree to imply physical violence such as threats officers sometimes break from their sense of professionalism and respond to invitation to fights or return their own physical threats. In these instances, exchanges remain verbal and become idle threats as crowds disperse and officers leave the scene.

At times, bystanders move beyond challenging the legitimacy of the encounters and particular officers towards using gender-specific insults to challenge the legitimacy of the police *as an institution*. In the following excerpt, (*Mixed Messages*) a bystander observes what he deems to be an illegal use of power as he deems the traffic stop of a young black man as unjustified. He, like in the previous excerpt, takes shots at the police officers’ masculinity by accusing him of stopping the car not for a traffic violation, but rather because

he was motivated by sexual attraction. However, the bystander takes this insults one step further by suggesting that this homoerotic tendency is characteristic of the entire police force.

[Excerpt 8]

CM1: (to officer) Hey sir, hey sir have a good night.

CM1: (to camera) They got a bunch of young booties out here, young booties. And the young booties, they ain't nothing, they just, they trying to do what they do. The black man out here dying, they can't catch none of them. They want to stop a man for a traffic ticket, man they must be gay.

VIDEOGRAPHER: Hahaha!

CM1: Guy over there, look funny (inaudible) plump booty.

VIDEOGRAPHER: Hahahahaha!

CM1: A bunch of them gay, a bunch of them gay, a bunch of them all gay.

The bystander challenges the legitimacy of the encounter and of the officer on the scene when he finds the traffic ticket trivial and credits the stop to the officer's sexual pursuit of the driver. He goes even further beyond the immediate encounter to degrade the police as an institution by saying "a bunch of them gay." Although he cannot stop the interaction from continuing, the bystander makes known his objection and degrades the police officer's sense of masculinity in the same blow. Again, the bystander used indirect tactics in the battle for autonomy and dignity with the police as the talk is direct toward, but past the police officer as he speaks to the camera. Bystanders commonly lodge insults and challenge police officer's masculinity to one another and the camera, but they do not directly confront the police.

Gendered Complaints

Bystanders direct gendered complaints toward fellow bystanders, the camera, the subject of the encounter, and police officers. The three most dramatic cases in the dataset

show the crowd of bystanders in verbal and physical conflict with the police because of community judgments of excessive use of force on black women. In some instances, police forcefully gain compliance and arrest multiple bystanders on the scene who were not the original targets of police presences in the first place.

In the following excerpt (*Girl Fight*), I illustrate how bystanders object to police use of force on black women. On the scene, dozens of police officers and community members are outside in the neighborhood. The clip captures two police-citizen encounters. In the first, police are controlling entry into an apartment complex where three black women are cursing and insulting police officers. Although hostile, this encounter does not escalate to physical violence. Simultaneously, another encounter across the street finds a group of a dozen people and half a dozen officers standing outside when a short heated argument erupts between two black women and they begin to exchange physical blows. Bystanders watch the women fight, take sides, and cheer for a winner. The police on the scene rush in to break up the fight and eight officers take down one of the combatants. Bystanders protest to what they deem as excessive force and physically intervene on behalf of their community members while making verbal objections. Police on the scene respond by arresting multiple bystanders and we see two additional women arrested by four officers at a time.

[Excerpt 9]

CF2: He hit her in the mouth!

CM1: You see what he did?

CF2: He just hit [NAME]!

CM1: Who hit her?

CF2: Right there!

CM1: Who him?

(CM1 points at officer)

CF2: Yes!
CM1: I'll beat your punk ass up out here!
OM1: I didn't hit her! Shit!
CF2: Yes you did!
CM2: Put that camera up, he hit her!
VIDEOGRAPHER: I know!
CM2: He hit her!
OM2: I didn't hit her!
CRM1: I'll beat your pussy ass!
CM2: [NAME] calm down, calm down!
(crowd yells as police put detained people into police cars)
CRM1: Take your belt off, take your belt off, take it off!
IM: You can see me with it on, you can see me with it on!
CF3: Hold up! Hold up! He handling her too fucking bad!
VIDEOGRAPHER: Totally, totally!
CF3: He handling her too mother fucking rough!
VIDEOGRAPHER: I'm a get all of it.

Bystanders protest police use of force when detaining one of the combatants in the fight and gender becomes relevant in this interaction. Bystanders do not complain about the civilian women physically assaulting one another, in fact they encourage the brawl and place bets on winners. However, when male police officers physically intervene to break up the fight, onlookers find it to be a violation of community gender rules. Specifically, the CF3 remarks that the police are handling her “too fucking bad” complaining about the degree of force used, not the police attempt to detain the subject. Bystanders respond to the violation by complaining to the camera and pointing out the offender. Although the officer denies the accusation, the bystanders continue to lodge insults and threaten physical violence.

In excerpt 9 bystanders turn the myth of the strong black woman on its head. Unlike white femininity, it is commonly believed that black femininity can withstand almost anything including the middle passage, slavery, and continued subjugation from society. This idea is tied to the matriarch trope that positions black women as emasculating black men while proving themselves as just as, if not more, capable of performing tasks associated with masculinity (Collins 2004). By and large, black women are not afforded the same privileges of delicacy and protection that white women experience. This experience is magnified when police use physical force on black women.

Similarly, the response of black men on the scene is tied to normative understandings of masculinity and the common expectation that men should protect women. At times, male bystanders on the scene voice their protest loudly or physically threaten police officers in defense of a female community member. Protecting one's family is also an expectation that is consistent with hegemonic masculinity (Collins 2004). Within the framework of "linked fate," the community can be seen as an extended family. This is not unfamiliar for black people who have extended family relationships that resemble kinship networks regardless of blood ties. Poor black women are especially vulnerable to exploitation and multiple forms of violence because of their compounded subordination that stems from the intersection of gender, and race, and class (Richie 2012). When the police roughly handle black women in the community family in the presence of black men, men sometimes respond with explicit threats to fight. This hyper-masculine response suggests that men see the police behavior as an injury not only to the woman, but also to their sense of manhood. Men may attempt to re-assert their manhood through this performance of masculinity.

Gendered Challenges

At times, the subject of the police-citizen interaction can make gender-based challenges as a basis to request alternative treatment by law enforcement. By virtue of being (black) women, participants can draw upon normative gender expectation to indict officers for violating commonly accepted gender rules regarding the use of force on female identified bodies. In the following case, (*I'm Claustrophobic*) a black woman is detained, arrested, and escorted to a police wagon. Dozens of officers and bystanders surround the scene and engage in multiple verbal battles. The woman advocates on her own behalf for the police to use less force when placing her in the vehicle. Bystanders jump in and align with her complaint as they echo her remarks and ask questions regarding police activity and use of force.

[Excerpt 10]

SUBJECT: I'm a woman don't do me like that! Don't do me like that! Ouch ouch let go of my arm!

VIDEOGRAPHER: 1, 2, 3, 4 officers!

SUBJECT: They're too tight!

VIDEOGRAPHER: She's complaining about them being too tight, all of that.

CRM1: She ain't did shit!

(Officers escort black female subject to paddy wagon)

SUBJECT: Don't put me in there, I'm claustrophobic put me in a regular car, put me in a regular car please, put me in a regular car, put me in a regular car!

CRM1: Aye, What is you slamming her like that for?

SUBJECT: Ouch my arm, my arm, they tight!

((lines omitted))

CRM1: Dirty motherfuckers, I'm a sue them...we going to make a citizen's arrest against you for disturbing the peace, y'all want to start a riot?

The subject of the interaction makes two complaints regarding the process of her arrest. She protests that the handcuffs are painfully tight and that she is claustrophobic and would prefer to ride in a regular patrol car rather than the paddy wagon to booking. She prefaces her complaints by announcing her gender category as a woman before making requests for alternative treatment. By announcing her status as a woman and calling attention to the disproportionate use of force upon a *woman's body*, the subject publicly indicts the arresting officers for violating widely accepted gender norms. This rhetorical move repositions the alleged suspect as the victim of gender violence.

Bystanders intervene and align themselves with the subject of the interaction. Initially, they protest the basis for the arrest as they profess the subject's innocence. However, as the subject protest the physicality of her arrest, bystanders echo these complaints and a question the police for treating her in a harsh manner.

There has been a long-standing concern with the way in which police deal with women in the black community. Community complaints about police excessive use of force on black women have led to prominent instances of community uprisings against law enforcement. The six day long Watts Rebellion of August 1965 began because of rumors that police officers roughly handling a pregnant woman during an arrest. The encounter began as a traffic check where police stopped and arrested a young black man, Marquette Frye for speeding. A crowd quickly formed around the street stop and bystanders lodged complaints and someone spat at the officers on the scene. An alleged pregnant woman was brutally arrested for suspicion of spitting and rumors quickly spread igniting the Watts uprising (Conot 1967).

At the end of the interaction above, a male bystander threatens to sue and make a citizens arrest upon the police officers for disturbing the peace. He then goes one step further and threatens a riot by suggesting it could soon proceed given the actions the police exhibited while arresting this woman. Although the Fillmore residents may not be cognizant of the Watts uprising history, the same gender expectations that ignited the six day long protests holds the potential to provide the basis for a “riot” in the contemporary era.

VIII. Relevance of Race

Bystanders object to the ways in which police officers conduct themselves during police-citizen street encounters. This is reflected in the gendered objections of excessive use of force on black female bodies. Community members often view these stops and searches as unjustified and forms of harassment. Just as bystanders accuse the police of abusing their authority to pursue sexual desires in the previous section, here the bystanders allege the police do the same to express racial antipathy. The complaints bystanders lodge reveal the ways they are acutely aware of their race and black people’s disproportionate and unjustified encounters with law enforcement more generally. Participants make their blackness relevant in three ways. They find their race 1) as the *sole* basis for police contact, 2) the basis for punitive consequences relative to white citizens, and 3) the basis for fatal police encounters when unsupervised by bystanders and the videographer.

Race as Basis for Contact

In the following excerpt, (*Am I Being Detained*) the subject of the street stop makes explicit his racial readings of the encounter. He suspects that the police has stopped and frisked him because he is a black man rather than because he has actually committed an

offense. As he challenges the basis of the encounter, bystanders support his inquiry and position themselves against the police officers by lodging insults.

[Excerpt 11]

SUBJECT: Can I put my hands down?

CRF1: Why don't you let him take the sweatshirt off?

SUBJECT: I ain't do shit though.

CM1: Can he put his hands down? Can he put his hands down? He don't got nothing.

CRF1: He ain't do shit.

CRM2: Come on man.

SUBJECT: 'Cause y'all bull shitting. Y'all stopping me for nothing!

CM1: Huh?

CROWD: 'Cause we look so goooooood!

CF1: Look at his neck hanging!

SUBJECT: 'Cause I'm a, 'cause I'm a nigga? What you stopping me for?

CROWD: Look at his neck hanging hahaha!

SUBJECT: 'Cause I'm a nigga?

CROWD: Come on man!

SUBJECT: I'm a black man you know what we is. You know what you stopping me for.

CF1: Aye cause he thought y'all was doing something when y'all was going to the store.

CRM2: We baby, we family!

SUBJECT: Watch me. This bull shit man. Y'all bull shitting right here man.

Crowd: Come on man.

CRM1: This his second time.

CRM2: We ain't doing nothing we family baby we got a barbeque going on man come on man.

SUBJECT: Y'all bull shitting right here man, y'all bull shitting.

CRM2: You feel me? Come on man let's get back to our barbeque man come on.

SUBJECT: Y'all just making niggas look like criminals.

CF1: Aye come on. Look at his neck hanging we ain't got time lets go.

CRM2: Is you done with him? Is you done with him?

In high crime neighborhoods, police typify residents as troublemakers and act indiscriminately aggressively toward them (Smith 1986). The comments the subject of the encounter makes reflects the experiences of indiscriminate harassment and criminal typification as a function of aggressive policing in the Fillmore. The subject believes the stop is unjustified and motivated by his status as a black man in the neighborhood. Furthermore, he shows an acute awareness of the police's role in the criminalization of blacks in America. The subject believes that the policing of his neighborhood is shaped by the racial motivations of the officer. Furthermore, these motives lead the police to treat black people as criminals. In effect, this criminal treatment is responsible for the image of the back criminal.

Bystanders do not explicitly echo the subject's race complaints, but they do align themselves with him. The community's linked fate allows for the subjects' racial understandings to stand in for them as well. Bystanders show solidarity when they echo the subject's request to put his hands down. Furthermore, they explicitly call each other family and mention their ongoing barbeque that the police-citizen encounter has interrupted. They appear to agree that the stop is unjustified, which is reflected in their urgency to end the encounter by continually saying "come on" and asking "is you done with him yet?"

Bystanders further pit themselves against the police by collectively degrading and insulting the police by describing their official business as a bogus stop.

Like the subject, bystanders read the stop as one motivated by racial antipathy rather than just suspicion of criminal activity. In this consideration, the street encounter becomes a pretext to do something else. This rhetorical maneuver repositions the subject of the encounter as a victim rather than a troublemaker. By reversing the relationship between the police and community, bystanders deem the subject of the interaction as the victim of police misconduct and the officers as agents of harassment. This objection and redefinition of the encounter contextualizes the interaction for future viewers who may be unfamiliar with the experience of living while black in the Fillmore and engaging with the police on a regular basis.

Race as basis for punishment

Bystander's complaints not only reflect their inordinate exposure to police surveillance as black Americans, but also reveal their perceptions of disproportionate punitive consequences relative to white citizens. In some cases, bystanders believe the trajectory of the police encounter would unfold in a more favorable way if the subject were white rather than black. In the following excerpt, as a vehicle is towed away bystanders suggest the strictly punitive and non-discretionary treatment the subject receives to be a consequence of his race. They argue that the police would have pardoned a white person without incident for the same infraction.

[Excerpt 12]

OM1: License was no good. No discretion.

CM1: No discretion?

OM1: No discretion.

CM1: Because we black.

OM1: Per SFPD rules.

CM1: Don't she got a...

OM1: She wasn't driving.

CM1: It's her car though.

OM1: By the book, everything by the book.

CM2: Man you can't do that man if he were white, if he were white it would be way different.

CM1: Hell yeah.

CM2: If he was white they would of just let him go.

CM1: Fuck yeah.

Bystanders question the police rationale for impounding the car instead of using discretion to issue a warning. Understanding discretion as determined by officer's will, bystanders are dissatisfied with the officer's decision to not to extend discretion to the black subject. They are dissatisfied not because they object to the original violation, but because they believe the treatment the black subject receives is more punitive than if he had been a white person. Although one bystander makes this remark, another bystander verbally supports the claim suggesting this is a local knowledge that residents share.

Race as basis for police brutality

In some cases, bystanders express gratitude to the videographer for his recoding efforts. Bystanders truly believe the presence of the camera positively impacts police treatment of citizens during street stops in the Fillmore. In the following excerpt, the videographer and an additional black male bystander offer commentary while watching police officers detain and search a young black man. The bystander makes complaints about

the racially biased policing and the potential for police brutality, which, the bystander suggests, is reduced by the videographer's presence.

[Excerpt 13]

CM1: And we at, at the corner. We at the corner we ain't bothering nobody. We at the cameraman. Know nothing about no Barry White oh yeah!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Hahaha!

CM1: These folks out here, we got a black man, a black man hemmed up. Something happened (inaudible) and somebody told him he looked good. And because (inaudible) it's a bad thing. And we got an officer right here.

CM1: (to officer) Hey sir, hey sir.

VIDEOGRAPHER: You know they not going to...

CM1: How you doing? Oh yeah. He got his back to us. It's gonna be a black thing. We tired of this bull shit people getting beat up by the police out there, and guess what Barry White says Oh yeaahhh!

VIDEOGRAPHER: Hahaha!

((lines omitted))

VIDEOGRAPHER: So at the end of it all, I guess it the basic fix it ticket.

CM1: Well you know what, you know what?

VIDEOGRAPHER: what's that?

CM1: If it weren't for you, a bunch of these niggas be dead man. That camera...

VIDEOGRAPHER: Oh yeah.

CM1: A bunch of them be dead. Give me your hand.

VIDEOGRAPHER: Oh yeah definitely

CM1: A bunch of them be dead right? (inaudible)

VIDEOGRAPHER: Yup!

CM1: (inaudible) That camera, it saves lives.

VIDEOGRAPHER: It saves a bunch of them.

CM1: Saving lives man.

The bystander makes an observation about the police having a black man “hemmed up” implying that the driver is cornered or trapped. Immediately after, he makes mention of being tired of the “bull shit” of “people getting beat up by the police out there” as if this were a common scene he has witnessed. Later on in the interaction, he thanks the videographer for his documentation efforts because without him, a lot of the young black men in the neighborhood would be dead. Taken together, these comments reflect the vulnerable position residents of the Fillmore occupy especially when encountering the police. CM1 finds undocumented police-citizen encounters as potentially abusive if not fatal for fellow residents.

Video recordings of police injuring and killing unarmed black civilians have ignited public outrage and protests across America, but especially in cities with large black populations. Recently video evidence has captured and widely publicized the fatalities of Oscar Grant in 2009, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice in 2014, and Walter Scott and Freddie Gray in 2015. These few examples reflect a larger phenomenon of the public policing the police. In the wake of the 1965 Watts rebellion, the Black Panther Party for Self Defense created the organization, Community Alert Patrol (CAP) led by Ron “Brother Crook” Wilkins. Brother Crook would follow police officers with cameras and tape record their activities to ensure they did not commit acts of police brutality against members of the black community (Bloom and Martin 2013). Today people from different communities of color continue to record instances of police misconduct and in the current age of the Internet, civilians are able to upload and share their recordings quickly and to a global audience.

Like the bystander in this excerpt, people continue to record and share videos because they believe it impacts the ways in which people are policed. The presence of others greatly reduces the chances of police misconduct (Friedrich 1980). However, even after police misconduct has happened, the presence and evidence provided by the video camera holds the potential to impact the administration of justice. Video evidence has been used to bring charges against police officers and police departments for their role in the unjustified killings of unarmed black people. In 2015 North Charleston, South Carolina police officer Michael Slager shot and killed unarmed black 50-year-old Walter Scott. Video evidence captured the cold-blooded killing and subsequent effort to plant evidence of a weapon on the body after the suspect was handcuffed post shooting. The video not only sparked public outrage, but pressured North Charleston police department to terminate Officer Slager and charge him with murder. Although precedent has made charging police officers responsible for civilian deaths difficult, video evidence has removed a layer of ambiguity regarding the events that lead to these fatalities and may the ability of citizens to hold police departments accountable for their actions.

IX. Conclusion

This project addresses the current crisis of legitimacy facing police in poor black communities by examining street police-citizen interactions and the crowds that gather around them in real time. Data come in the form of video recordings collected by a community member in what has been described as a “hot spot” neighborhood. In total, 33 video clips were analyzed in this study. The study takes place in the Fillmore, an area in which poor black residents are concentrated (see census data in table 2) located in San Francisco, California. High crime activity in the area has characterized the neighborhood as a

“hot spot,” which validates the hyper-surveillance of the community relative to other places in the city. Consistent with Broken Window theories of crime, police in this neighborhood adopt proactive policing strategies as they patrol signs of community disorder by policing low-level offenses in efforts to deter serious crime. As a result, a number of community members routinely experience coercive public stops, searches, field interviews, and temporary and permanent detentions as intrusions while conducting their normal daily business. Likewise, community members regularly witness and participate as bystanders during street police-citizen interactions.

Findings reveal that bystanders participate in police-citizen interactions as a means of collective resistance to police domination. Bystanders draw upon available limited resources and use clandestine resistance practices consistent with James Scott’s (1985) notion of weapons of the weak and Robin Kelley’s (1994) concept of infrapolitics. Specifically, bystanders collectively taunt police officers by lodging jokes and insults well within earshot of law enforcement. Bystanders construct unpleasant degradation incidents (Schoepflin 2009) for the police as they “play the dozens”, make jokes at the officers’ expense and otherwise demean their physical appearance and sense of manhood. Findings also show that bystanders pose as pseudo-public defenders as they make complaints and offer legal advice to the subject of police attention. Bystanders regularly object to police procedures and pool their local knowledge and resources to help one another complete a police citizen interaction without arrest or citation.

Bystanders and subjects of police attention make gender and race categories relevant during the street encounter. They draw upon gender expectations to insult a police officer’s manhood, make claims about inappropriate use of force on poor black women, and to request

the type treatment appropriate for a woman. Comments, complaints, and inquiries reveal the ways participants are acutely aware of their linked fate (Dawson 1995, Tate 1998) and subordinated status as black people in the context of hyper-policing and mass incarceration. Bystanders believe they receive more punitive and harsh treatment from the hands of law enforcement than they would if they were white. Furthermore, bystanders express gratitude for the camera's protection from police misconduct, including lethal violence, which they believe they might experience if not for a documentarian.

My study opens a discussion on agency and resistance among disempowered communities. This focus complements the existing literature on police-citizen interactions, specifically in poor black communities subject to hyper-surveillance from law enforcement. Previous studies have paid attention to the nature of police domination and civilian's attitudes towards law enforcement, but we know little about *how* people respond to and resist police power. The benefit of video analysis as a method is that it shows us in real time the ways participants use their agency to resist police domination, including the verbal and nonverbal cues actors on the scene give and respond to. Findings reveal that bystanders verbally and physically participate in police-citizen interactions in a variety of ways and how their actions are consequential to the unfolding of the encounter.

Finally, my study raises questions about the potential for social movements in the era of mass incarceration. Technological advances of the camera, the cell phone, and the Internet have drastically altered the possibilities for social change. People are able to collect and rapidly share real time video evidence of police conduct, and specifically misconduct. As recent events related to the police killing of black unarmed Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, and many others reveal, civilian video evidence has the potential to ignite

social protest across the world as people share clips on the Internet and social media platforms. Pamela Oliver (2008) urges social movement scholars to pay attention to new forms of mobilization and resistance in the era of mass incarceration. This project offers insight into organic forms of community mobilization and reveals the incipient stages of a growing social movement. Tracing the local and new technological forms of resistance and mobilization will add new dimensions to studies of social movements.

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Appendix

Table 1: Coding Scheme

Code	Description	Application
Insult/Jokes	Bystander, videographer, or target makes a derogatory remark and or sarcastic joke at the police officers' expense. An offensive remark that shows lack of respect for authority.	103
Taunt/Teasing (coded as "slick talk")	Bystanders co-construction of degrading remarks and/or gestures. Usually happens in a sarcastic and mocking tone aimed at criticizing the police officers. Can also include group cruel laughter.	27
Complaint	Statement showing disapproval or dissatisfaction with police field interviews and/or procedure.	85
Legal Advice	Bystander provides information regarding citizen rights or legal/police procedure. Provision of legal help serves as a recommendation for immediate action.	17

Table 2: 2010 Census Data/ 2009-2013 ACS

Topic	Census Tract(s)			The US
	158.01*	159	161	
Age				
Under 18	38.4%	3.6%	27%	19.2
18-64	14.3%	20.3%	15.1%	12.6%
20-24	6.7%	15.8%	6.4%	7.1%
25-34	24.3%	20.8%	19.5%	13.4%
65+	46.3%	20.2%	26%	9.5%
Sex				
Female	52.1%	54.4%	57.3%	50.8%
Male	47.9%	45.6%	42.7%	49.2%
Age Group and Sex				
18-24 years				
Female	11.6%	22.5%	9.8%	9.6%
Male	3.7%	14%	6.5%	10.4%
Mean Age				
Female	37	37.7	53.4	38.6
Male	36.4	36.6	36.8	36
Income				
Mean Household Income (dollars)	\$81,431	\$64,850	\$41,786	\$70,883
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$46,083	\$39,453	\$20,438	\$51,914
Poverty				
12 Poverty**	15.8%	8.9%	3.6%	10.1%

Employment Status				
Unemployed	8%	5.3%	7.6%	7.9%
Employed	69.1%	54.7%	40.4%	59.4%
Educational Attainment***				
No High School Diploma	2.4%	3.4%	14.6%	8%
High School Diploma	18.3%	11%	21.4%	28.1%
Bachelor's Degree	27.6%	32.4%	24.8%	18%
Graduate or Professional Degree	24.1%	20.2%	15.3%	10.8%
HS grad+	95.6%	89.6%	77%	86%
Bachelor's +	51.7%	52.7%	38.1%	28.8%
Family Structure				
Married-couple Family	31.3%	21.9%	15.3%	48.7%
Single Male Head	2.5%	3.9%	4.6%	4.7%
Single Female Head	13%	20.5%	12.4%	15.8%
Race/Ethnicity				
White (only)	48.1%	37.1%	27%	74%
Black (only)	34.2%	15.8%	36.9%	12.6%
Hispanic or Latino	8.5%	9.5%	9.5%	16.6%

*Primary census Tract

**12 Poverty: Percentage of families and people whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level. (All families)

***Educational Attainment refers to population 25 years and over