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Santa Barbara

The Milwaukee Moment: Oppression, Policing, and Possibilities

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Sociology

by

Katherine Matthews

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June 2018

The dissertation of Katherine Matthews is approved.

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George Lipsitz, Committee Chair

June 2018

The Milwaukee Moment: Oppression, Policing, and Possibilities

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by

Katherine Matthews

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ABSTRACT

The Milwaukee Moment: Oppression, Policing, and Possibilities

by

Katherine Matthews

This dissertation examines how Black residents in Milwaukee, Wisconsin experience and manage their relationships with law enforcement. My analysis is based on eight focus group interviews with thirty Black Milwaukee residents ages 18-70. Research questions were: How do Black Milwaukee residents experience policing by the Milwaukee Police Department? What possibilities exist to repair the fractured relationship between the Milwaukee Police Department and the city's Black communities? Findings focus on gender specific experiences of policing in the city, citizen complaints about the Milwaukee Police Department, and participant driven ideas to reinstate police legitimacy in Black communities. These findings uncover the complex relationship that over-policed, but under-protected communities have with law enforcement as participants reveal that they desire the police services, but demand to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

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I. Chapter One- Introduction and Background

On Saturday August 13, 2016, Sherman Park, a Black neighborhood located on the North Side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, erupted in violence and protest. The two-day long “Sherman Park Uprising” came after the death of Sylville Smith, the latest in a long series of Black men shot and killed by a Milwaukee Police Department officer. Many people who did not live in Sherman Park criticized the protesters for the damage done to the neighborhood, finding the behavior to be senseless and unjustified. However, Sherman Park residents offered an alternative reading of the situation. The protests were not in response solely to the killing of Sylville Smith, but rather the eruption came in the context of long simmering unresolved tensions caused by experiences with aggressive policing, mass incarceration, discrimination, poverty, unemployment, and educational inequality. The Sherman Park Uprising occurred just as data collection began for this project and further elucidated the relevance of its research focus: police relationships with Black communities. This project revolves around two primary research questions: How do Black Milwaukee residents experience policing by the Milwaukee Police Department? What possibilities exist to repair the fractured relationship between the Milwaukee Police Department and the city’s Black communities? To understand the grievances of Sherman Park protesters and their decision to take forceful action, it is important to know the history and social landscape of Black people in the city of Milwaukee.

A. Black Migration to Milwaukee

In 1817, what we now know as Milwaukee, the largest metropolis in the state of Wisconsin, had only 300 residents. Similar to many other episodes in the history of colonialism, by 1832, Indigenous people and Europeans clashed over property claims culminating in the

Black Hawk War. The war covered southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois and resulted in the expulsion of nearly all the Native population from Milwaukee (Jones 2009).

The City of Milwaukee was incorporated on January 31st, 1846. Some Black people arrived in the region in its early and formative years. Historical accounts identify Joe Oliver as the first Black resident. In 1835, he started work as a cook for one of the founding fathers of Milwaukee, Solomon Juneau. Competing accounts designate Henry and Georgiana Anderson who arrived from Green Bay, Wisconsin around the same time as the first Black settlers in the city. By 1850, there were only 100 Black residents in Milwaukee out of a population of twenty thousand. At this time, most of the Black residents were self-reliant and prosperous. The majority of them were formerly enslaved people who had either purchased their freedom or escaped from bondage. The Black pioneers in Milwaukee were literate and skilled, trained as artisans, barbers, cooks, waiters, clerks, and mechanics, among other lines of work. Some Black people owned property, and a few entered interracial marriages. The year 1850 also marked a turning point in the somewhat stable race relations between white and Black Milwaukee residents. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 compelled the entire nation to serve as slave catchers, making all Americans lawfully obligated to return any escaped enslaved Black person to the grips of slavery. The prospect of lawful kidnapping caused tensions between white and Black Milwaukeeans, prompting many Black people to escape to Canada. At the same time, the Fugitive Slave Act sparked local political organizing among Black residents and their abolitionist allies (Jones 2009).

During the mid-nineteenth century, there were contests over voting rights and competition over jobs. In 1855, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled in favor of African American voting rights in the case of *Gillespie v. Palmer*. At the same time, Milwaukee

experienced an influx of German and Irish immigrants that created greater job competition for Black workers. Battles over employment opportunities translated into increased interracial tensions. In 1861, a fight broke out between two Irishmen and two African American men that resulted in the fatal stabbing of one of the Irishmen and the subsequent public lynching of one of the Black men by a white mob. In 1863, the state legislature received petitions to prohibit the migration of African Americans to the state (Jones 2009).

By the 1880s, formal and informal mechanisms regulated the color line in Milwaukee. Laws, court decisions, social customs, and traditions relegated Black residents to the status of second-class citizens. Although de jure discrimination never took root in Wisconsin, de facto segregation and discrimination were common and they continue today.

African Americans challenged the discrimination they faced in Milwaukee. In 1889, African American railroad porter Owen Howell was refused seating at the Bijou Opera House. He successfully sued for his right to admission to the venue. In 1895 attorney William Green led the effort to pass Wisconsin's Civil Rights Act that banned discrimination in restaurants, hotels, theaters, and other public spaces (Jones 2009).

Job opportunities after the First World War attracted more African Americans to the city of Milwaukee. By 1930, there were only 7,000 Black inhabitants. Wisconsin did not experience as large an influx of African Americans moving from the Jim Crow South to Northern cities during the first great migration (1916-1930) as the neighboring states did, due to the limited availability of the kinds of agricultural and skilled manufacturing jobs with which Southern Black people had experience. In Wisconsin, most farms were operated by families that owned them and required little hired labor. Many of the skilled jobs in cities were held by European immigrants who had arrived earlier, in the mid-nineteenth century. Widespread anti-Black bias,

segregation, and discrimination in housing and employment made Wisconsin unattractive to Black migrants.

The great Depression of the 1930's affected all Americans, but African Americans felt the consequences more severely than their white counterparts. As late as 1940, 45% of Wisconsin's Black population was unemployed, compared to 13% of the white population. Despite World War II's demand for labor in defense industries, the employment Black people experienced was often temporary while other forms of discrimination about job classifications, promotions and housing opportunities continued (Jones 2009).

Black Wisconsin experienced a large increase in its population after World War II during the Second Great Migration era (1940-1960). The Black population increased by roughly 600% during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1940, there were only 12,158 Black residents compared to 74,546 twenty years later. Many new Black residents were drawn to the region by the availability of manufacturing jobs that paid high wages. However, as more Black people arrived, racial discrimination and segregation increased, creating insulated racial enclaves that persist today.

B. History of Black Milwaukee

By 2008, Wisconsin had 348,308 Black residents. They made up 6.1% of the state's population. The number of Black people in the state had increased by 10% since the 2000 Census. Ninety percent of Wisconsin's Black population is concentrated in six counties located in Southeastern or Southern Wisconsin: Milwaukee, Dane, Racine, Kenosha, Rock, and Waukesha. Milwaukee County accounts for 69.4% of the State's Black population. Today, the average Black resident of Wisconsin is 28 years old, making the group relatively young compared to their white counterparts who average 38 years (2008a).

In 2015, Milwaukee was a plurality Black city as African Americans comprised 39% of the residents. There were slightly fewer white residents who made up 36% of the city's population. Latinos comprised the third highest representation with 18%. The remaining 7% were distributed among Asian-American, multiracial, Native American, and other identified groups. Census data from 2016 shows that Milwaukee has slightly more women, with 52% of the population female as opposed to 48% male (USA 2017).

C. Racial Residential Segregation

Milwaukee has a long history of struggles for Black freedom. In 1967, the NAACP Youth Council led by Catholic Priest Father James Groppi, spearheaded protests that on August 28 culminated in a violent racial confrontation on the Sixteenth Street Viaduct. At the time, the Sixteenth Street Viaduct was compared to the "Mason Dixon" line dividing the predominately African American North Side from the primarily white ethnic South Side. An old local joke holds that the Sixteenth Street Viaduct at that time was the longest bridge in the world because it allegedly joined "Africa" to "Poland" (Jones 2009). Black Milwaukee residents had traditionally been denied access to live in -- or even travel freely on -- the South Side. The demonstrators marched across the bridge to demand open housing. The peaceful protestors were met with violence from angry white men and women who cursed and propelled rocks and bottles at demonstrators. Over the next six months, the city continued to experience heated confrontations. In 1968, Milwaukee's city council enacted an open housing code.

Segregation creates different communities with different degrees of amenities, opportunities and services. The quality of education, jobs, health care, nutrition, and property values in Milwaukee neighborhoods are outcomes of racial segregation, differential investments,

and uneven access to resources. These core conditions that shape this research project emanate from the correlation between racial residential segregation and the fact that Wisconsin leads the nation in incarcerating Black males at a rate that is twice the national average (Pawasarat and Quinn 2013). In the United States generally, Black and white segregation reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s, and has since been slowly declining. Researchers have used the Index of Dissimilarity to capture the degree to which two groups are evenly spread among census tracts in a given city. The value produced, D , gives the percentage of one group that would have to move to achieve an even residential pattern, one where every tract replicates the group composition of the city. A value of 60 or above is considered very high. In 2010, Milwaukee tied with Detroit as the most racially segregated cities in the nation with D scores of 79.6 (Logan and Stults 2011).

Another widely used measure of segregation is Exposure Indices (P^*) that refer to the racial/ethnic composition of a tract where the average member of a given group lives. Exposure of a group to itself is called the Index of Isolation, while exposure of one group to other groups is called the Index of Exposure. In 2010, Milwaukee ranked fifth highest in isolation with a score of 65.5. This means that the average Black person in Milwaukee lives in a neighborhood that is two thirds Black. This is far greater than most of the rest of the nation where the average Black person lives in a neighborhood that is 45 % Black (Logan and Stults 2011).

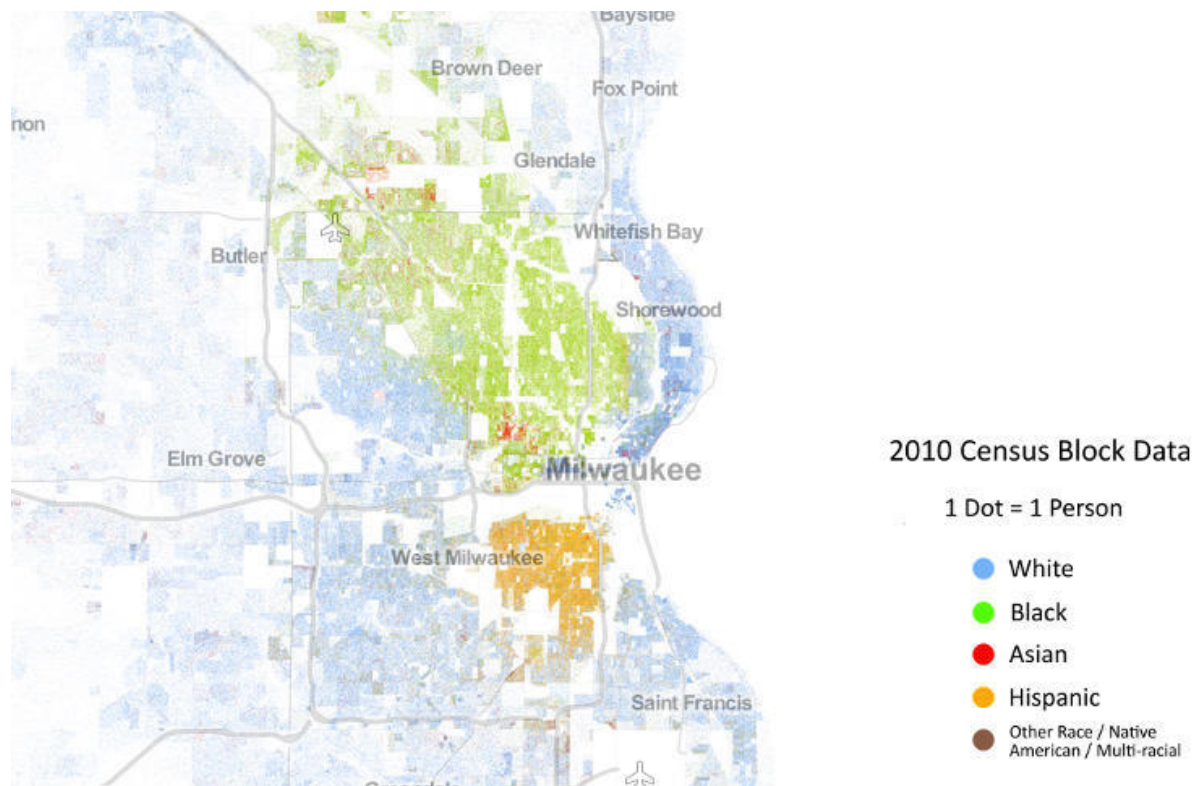


Figure 1: 2010 Census Block Data for City of Milwaukee

Source: <http://wuw.com/post/ranking-milwaukee-still-countrys-most-segregated-metro-area#stream/0>

Recently, scholars have challenged the traditional measures of racial segregation because of embedded research assumptions that reflect a white bias. Traditional measures assume integration means Black people moving into white neighborhoods. The Index of Dissimilarity and Exposure Index, for example, imply that Black people must move into predominately white neighborhoods to produce integration. Rather than solving the problems of racial isolation, this would entail a dispersal of African Americans, a destruction of Black enclaves and social networks, and a diminution of Black political power. Racial dispersal could have dire consequences for the Black community. In response, scholars suggest an instrument that treats Black and white populations as equal partners in the integration process. This re-focused framework would help policy makers better assess the strengths and weaknesses of racial integration and diversity efforts (Quinn and Pawasarat 2003).

Scholars have conducted block level analyses to gain better understanding of white-Black dissimilarity segregation. From these analyses, scholars have found that almost a third of African Americans live on blocks that are more than 90 percent Black and over half of white people live on blocks that are more than 90 percent white. Considering block level analyses, we can observe the extreme degree to which Milwaukee is racially segregated. This suggests the need for counteractive measures to end racial discrimination and housing segregation, particularly for low and moderate income African American families who desire to live in suburban areas (Quinn and Pawasarat 2003).

Long histories of racial antagonisms and high levels of racial and economic segregation manifest themselves vividly in the practices of policing and punishment: two thirds of those incarcerated in Wisconsin come from six of the poorest zip codes on Milwaukee's north side. In Milwaukee County, fifty percent of Black men in their 30s and 40s have served time. In the 53206 zip code, where 96% of the residents are Black, 62% of men have served time by age 34 (Pawasarat and Quinn 2013).

D. Wisconsin Mass Incarceration

Since the 1990s, Wisconsin's prison population has more than tripled. Wisconsin leads the nation for Black male incarceration. In the state, 12.8% of Black men are incarcerated which is twice the national rate of 6.7% (Maternowski 2016).

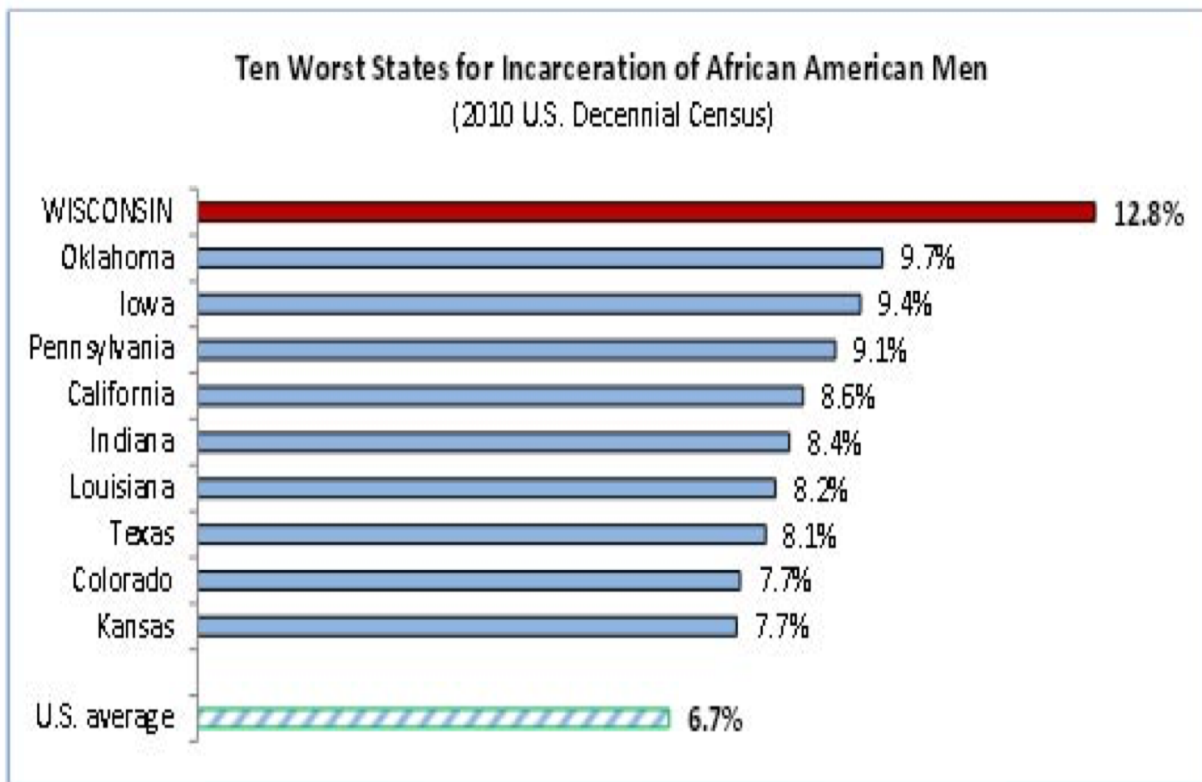


Figure 2: Ten Worst Stats for Incarceration of African American Men

Source: <http://wuw.com/post/democratic-debate-addresses-wisconsins-high-rate-black-male-incarceration>

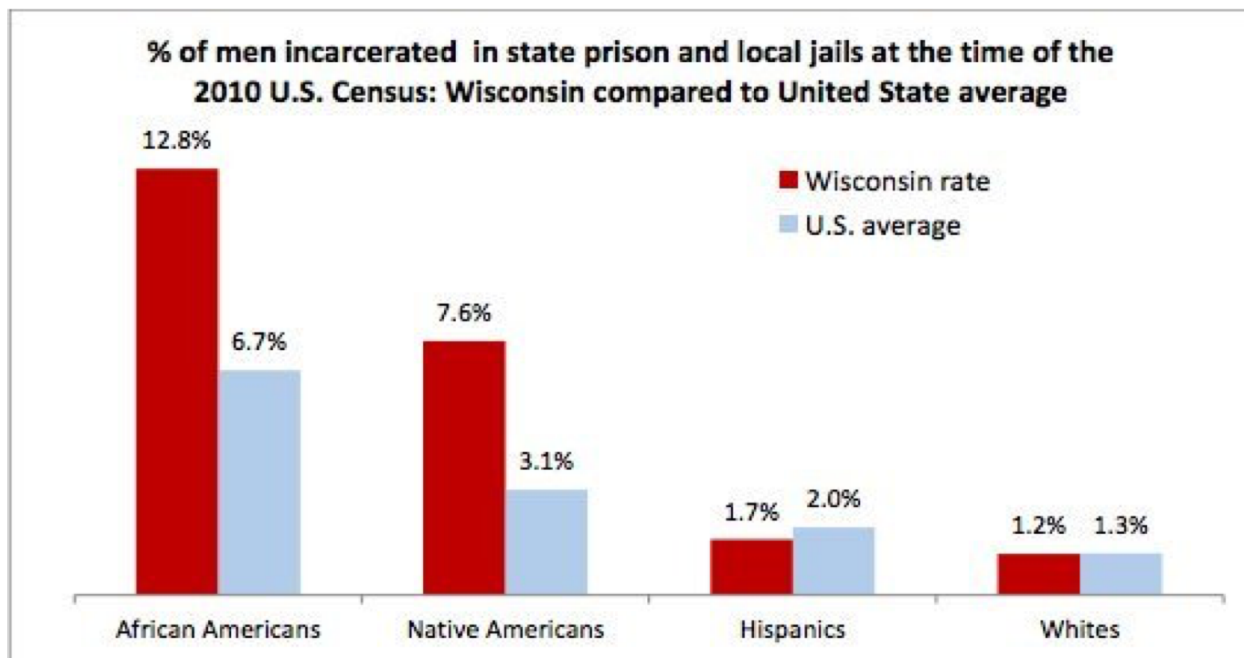


Figure 3: Percent of Men Incarcerated in State Prison and Local Jails WI v. US

Source: <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/04/24/178817911/wisconsin-locks-up-more-of-its-black-men-than-any-other-state-study-finds>

Researchers have proposed many explanations for the growth of the state's inmate population. Most of these coalesce around punitive state policies rather than on any spikes in crime rates. The federal government's preference for funding drug enforcement rather than treatment, the subsidies to bond holders and real estate interests that are used to increase prison construction, and harsh three-strike rules, mandatory minimum sentence requirements and "truth in sentencing" laws create the conditions of possibility for mass incarceration. These conditions include concentrated policing in minority communities, the likelihood that poor people will "plead out" rather than contest criminal charges, the punitive collateral consequences of criminal convictions that include re-incarceration for minor probation violations, and the pervasiveness of "broken windows" policing that entails bringing criminal charges for small "quality of life" violations, as well as outright racial discrimination in discretionary decisions about who to prosecute for which crimes and which sentences to be meted out to which people are responsible for the racialized dimensions of mass incarceration that Wisconsin has experienced (Pawasarat and Quinn 2013).

The combination of mass incarceration and severe residential segregation in limited geographic areas makes it likely that poor Black people in Milwaukee have negative police-citizen interactions that result in arrests and incarceration. Repeated interactions with law enforcement officers give Black Milwaukeeans a linked fate that helps form a collective social and political consciousness.

Formerly incarcerated citizens endure additional burdens after release in the labor market that adversely shape their life chances and opportunities. Yet the criminality associated with Black identity in the white mind, means that even those who have never been convicted of

crimes are presumed guilty by employers and other people in positions of power. Devah Pager (2008) conducted a sociological experiment that entailed an audit of employers in Milwaukee. She inquired into the relationships between race and the stigma of a criminal conviction. The study discovered that anti-Black bias is so strong that white men *with* a criminal record fare better on the job market than Black men *without* a criminal record. In other words, race plays a greater determining factor than credentials and criminal records in the labor market (Pager 2008).

E. Poverty & Education

This project considers multiple institutions, including the educational system, as compounding factors that pattern the experience of Black mass incarceration. In Wisconsin, a typical Black household makes about half of a white household's median income. In 2011, Milwaukee was rated as one of America's most impoverished big cities with a poverty rate of 29.4%. Nationally, Milwaukee comes in second in terms of Black poverty with a rate of 39.2%. The city also has the widest Black white employment gap (2016a).

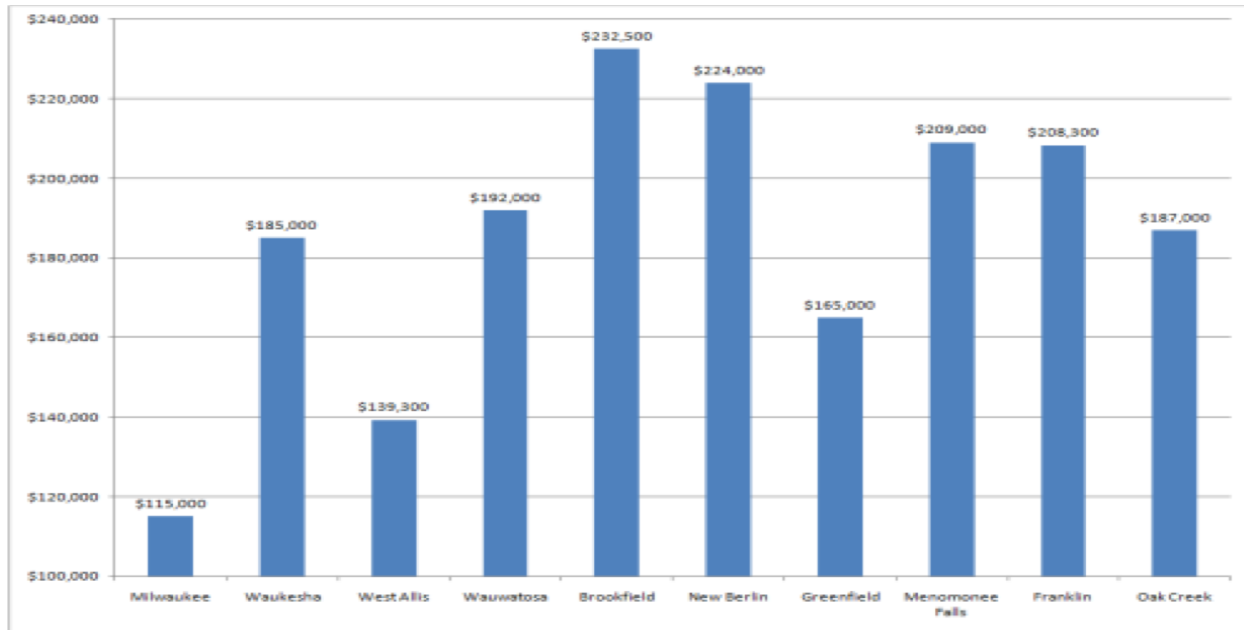


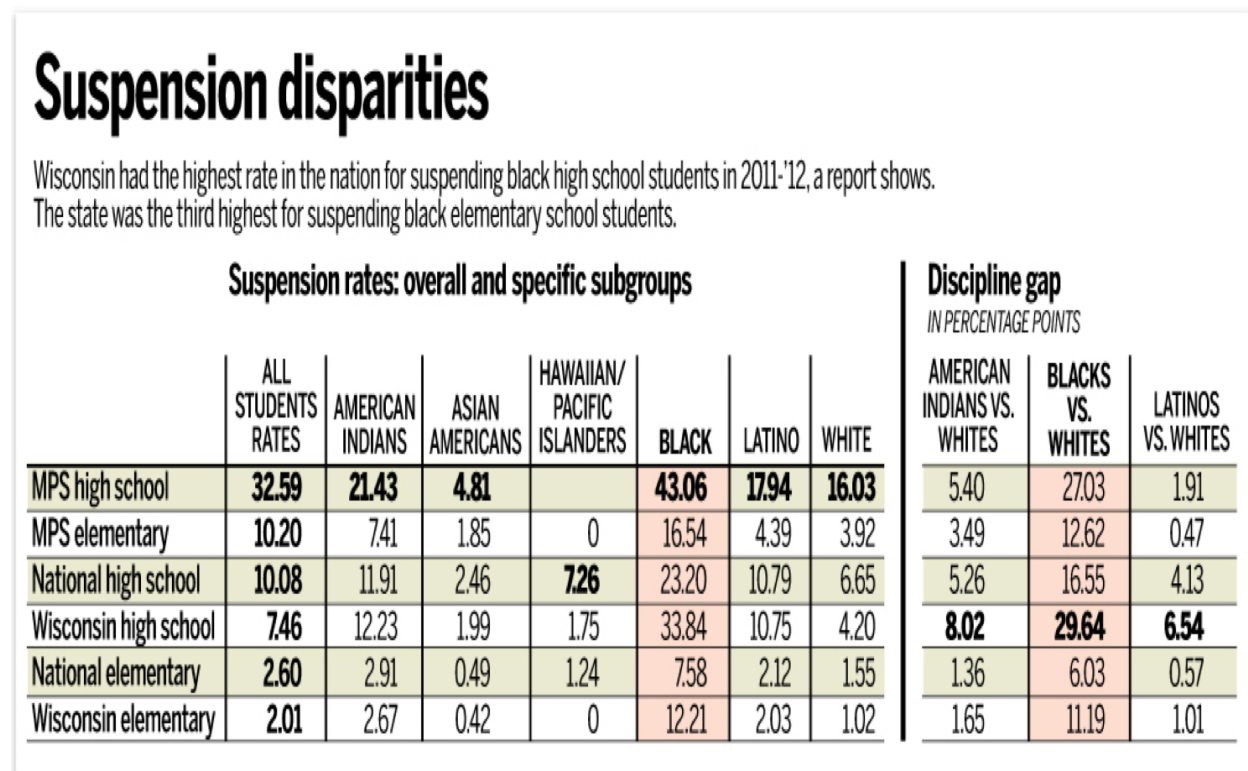
Figure 4: Average Household Income by County in WI

Source: <https://themilwaukeeedrum.com/2010/02/01/race-matters-in-milwaukee-the-causes-of-milwaukees-segregation/>

Milwaukee is the foremost city in the nation in failing to protect the wellbeing of Black children (2016a). In Wisconsin, 4 out of 5 Black children live in poverty. A broken educational system adds to residents' vulnerability and lack of access to resources that might improve life chances (Losen, Hodson, Keith II et al. 2015). The education system in Milwaukee especially contributes to the inequality that poor Black residents experience. Research has identified a school-to-prison pipeline responsible for pushing already disadvantaged students out of the education system and into the criminal justice system. The vicious cycle of miseducation and mass incarceration plays an influential role in the everyday lives of individuals and communities (Hadden 2001). Wisconsin's state budget allocates more money to corrections than to higher education. Milwaukee has more Black students than any city in the state and contributes the most to Wisconsin's racial achievement gap. A recent study conducted at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) revealed that Wisconsin has the largest achievement gap between white

and Black students in the country. Furthermore, the state ranks last in reading comprehension scores among Black fourth graders (Losen et al. 2015). Wisconsin ranks first with the widest gap in test scores for Black and white students in every category (2016a).

Scholars have identified zero tolerance policies and expulsions from schools as key factors responsible for the school-to-prison pipeline (Hadden 2001). K-12 schools in Wisconsin suspend Black high school students at rates higher than any other state in the country. Furthermore, Wisconsin has the second largest disparities of suspensions between Black and white students. In Milwaukee, the figures are even more striking, as the city suspends Black high school students at twice the national average (Losen et al. 2015).



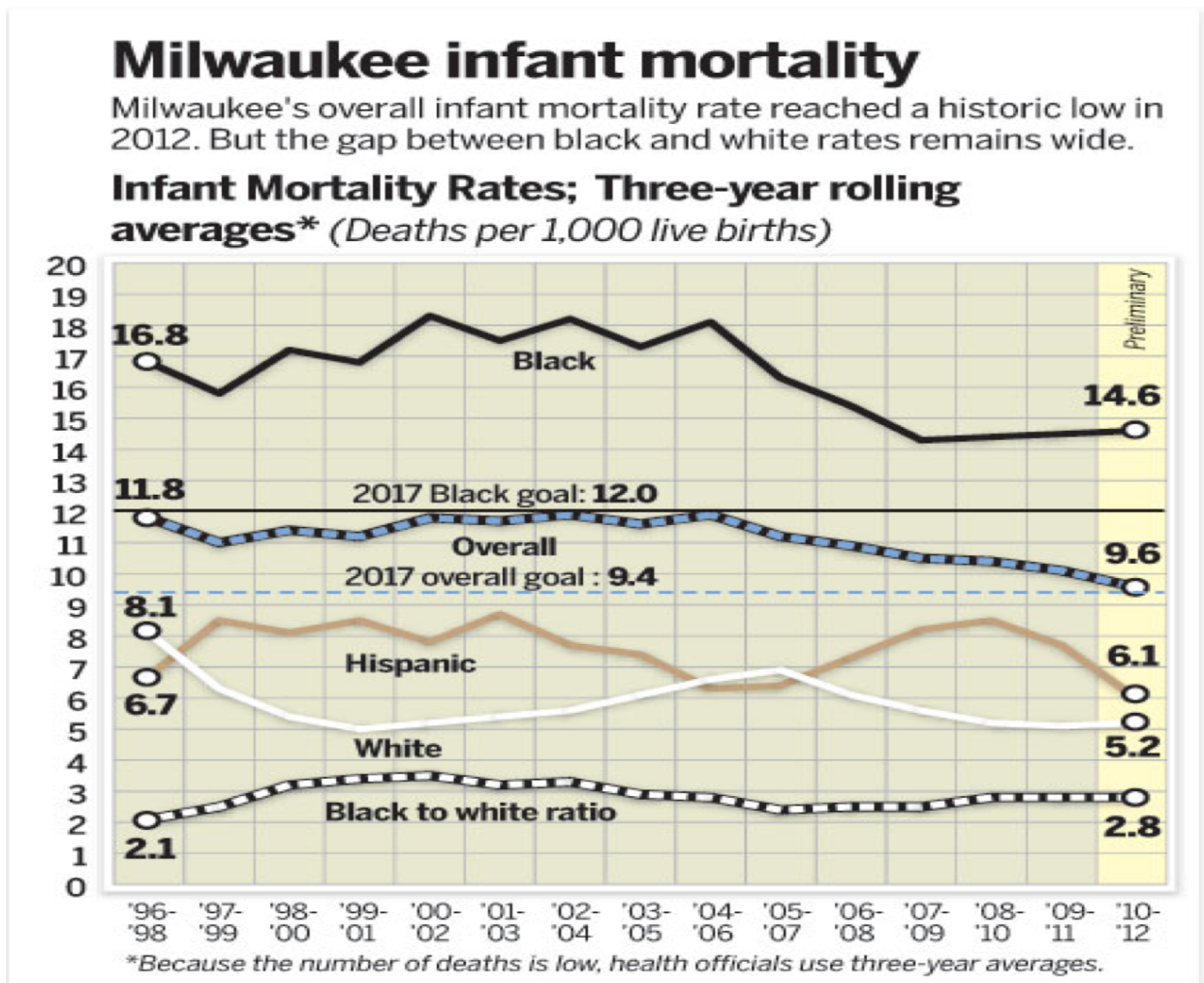
Source: Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles

Journal Sentinel

Figure 5: Suspension Disparities: MPS, WI, US

F. Black Health Outcomes

In Milwaukee, Black babies die at a rate that is 3.2 times higher than the rate for white babies. In 2015, the Black infant mortality rate (IMR) was 14.9 meaning that for every 1,000 Black babies born in Milwaukee, nearly 15 died. During the recession years (since 2009) Black babies' IMR has risen (14.3 pre-recession), while white IMR has steadily declined from 5.6 to 4.6 as of 2015. The racial disparity in Black and white infant mortality rates has always been prevalent, but has steadily grown every year since 2007 when the ratio was 2.4 (2016b).



Source: City of Milwaukee

Journal Sentinel

Figure 6: Milwaukee Infant Mortality

Recent studies have found that 60% of infant deaths can be attributed to preterm birth. Poor women with little education have higher IMR than women with a college degree within any racial group. However, when income and education are controlled, racial disparities in IMR still remain, as white American women with a college degree experience three times fewer infant deaths (4 deaths per 1,000 births) than Black women with the same amount of education (10 deaths per 1,000 births). In fact, poor white women with limited education have better birth outcomes than Black mothers with college degrees (2008b).

Geoffrey Swain, medical director and chief medical officer at the Milwaukee Health Department, attributes the racial gap in IMR to chronic stress. The stress that expecting mothers experience, however, is racially determined. Black women experience more chronic stress than white women over the course of a life due to poverty, violence, racism, food insecurity, housing shortages, undiagnosed health problems, pollution, and unemployment. Combined, these factors cause premature births. In Milwaukee, the racial disparity in IMR is a direct reflection of the differential lived experience of Black and whites in the city (Stephenson 2016).

The solutions for high IMR would require long-term structural changes. City officials would have to invest in early childhood education, job preparation programs, transitional jobs programs, alternatives to incarceration, and increases neighborhood safety among many other measures (Stephenson 2016).

G. Milwaukee Municipal Courts

Angela Davis posits that one function of the prison is to serve as a mechanism of wealth extraction from African Americans (Davis 2005). The municipal courts in Milwaukee generate considerable revenue for the city. The revenue is mined from poor Black residents as they are

overwhelmingly cited and fined for petty offenses such as spitting in public, littering, loitering, or removal of contents from a waste bin. John Pawasarat and the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Employment & Training Institute conducted a study that found that from 2008-2013, 9,277 people in the city spent time in jail for failure to pay municipal citations. Of those detained, 78% were Black and 84 % were men. Nearly 50 % lived in the city's five poorest zip codes. The citations of detainees totaled \$6.5 million dollars. The majority of those responsible for repayment were unemployed, while those who were employed held low-wage jobs (Pawasarat 2015). In fact, the city rarely succeeds in collecting many of the fines it administers. Of the total 66,623 citations given totaling \$15.7 million, 85% went unpaid. The excessive number of unpaid fines make people even more vulnerable to incarceration because they become arrest warrants that officers can enforce during unrelated or routine encounters. Municipal court judges could use discretion and employ alternative sanctions like community service, but most do not despite higher rates of compliance than with paying fines (Pawasarat 2015).

H. Suspended Driver's License

Fifty-six percent of all license suspensions in Wisconsin come from failure to pay fines on citations unrelated to moving traffic violations (NPR 2015). Suspending driver's licenses can create more "crimes" and debts further propelling the cycle of incarceration and poverty. In some of Milwaukee's poorest neighborhoods, up to two thirds of working age Black men do not have driver's licenses as a direct consequence of failure to pay fines. At the same time, three fourths of available jobs in Milwaukee County are located in suburban areas not easily accessible by public transportation (Pawasarat 2005). In 2009, almost 40% of inner-city Milwaukee residents did not have a personal vehicle. Taken together, Black people who live in the poorest parts of

Milwaukee have difficulty driving to jobs located in the suburbs, jobs that would be vital in positively impacting their economic status. Poor public transportation in the city requires people with suspended licenses to drive. Combined with the experience of racial profiling, poor Black residents with suspended licenses have a higher likelihood of being stopped and cited for additional violations than their white counterparts. These factors work together to continue the cycle of poverty.

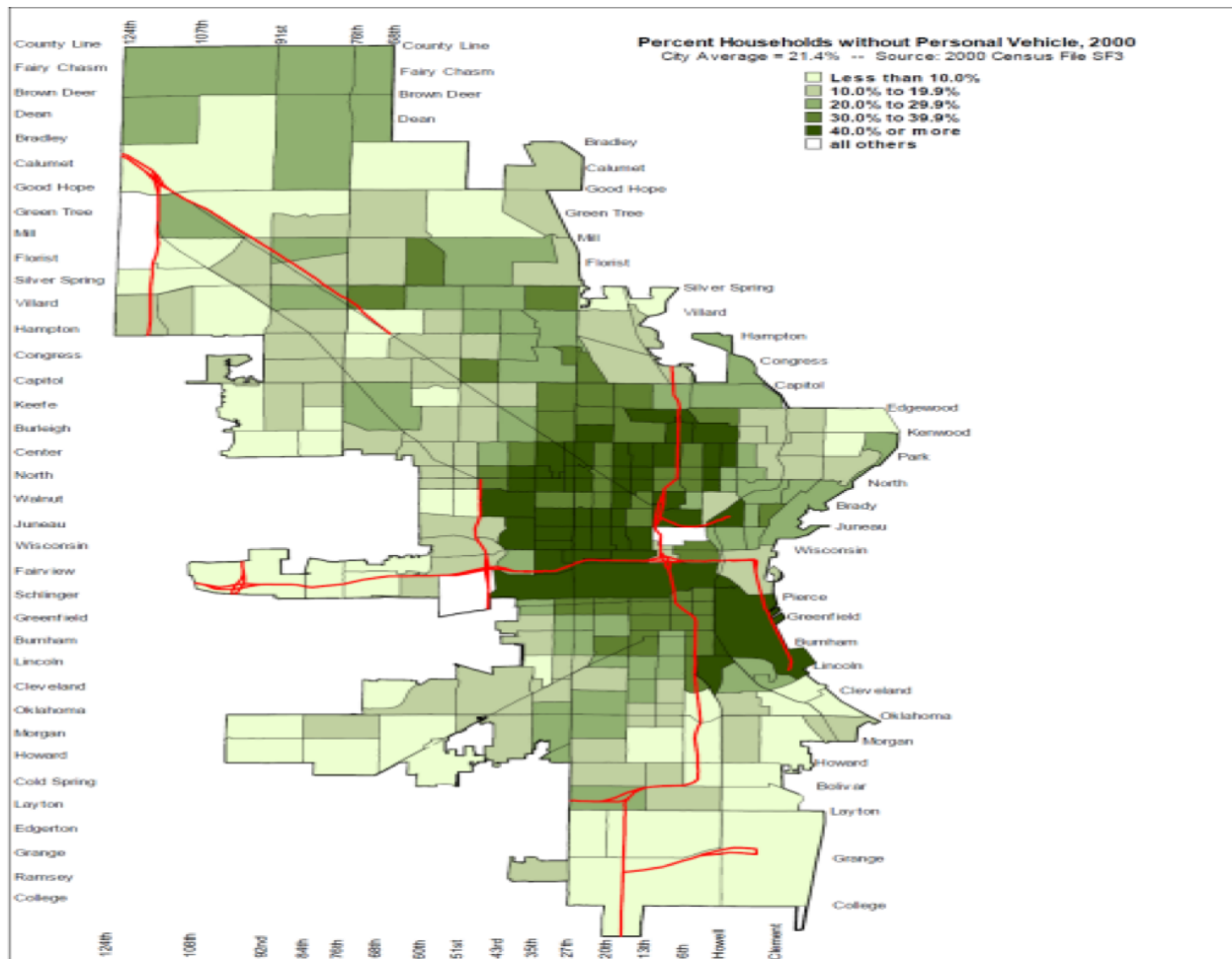


Figure 7: Percentage of Households Without a Personal Vehicle in 2000

Source: <https://themilwaukeeedrum.com/2010/02/01/race-matters-in-milwaukee-the-causes-of-milwaukees-segregation/>

Angela Davis asserts that another one of the functions of the prison-industrial complex is to withhold the vote from people of color (Davis 2005). Driver’s license suspensions have dire

consequences for civic participation. In May 2011, the Wisconsin Legislature passed Wisconsin Act 23, which required Wisconsin residents to present a photo identification document in order to vote (2011). Minorities and poor residents are most likely to have driver's license issues. Research shows that only 47% of Black adults compared to 73% of white adults in Milwaukee County hold valid driver's licenses. In greater Wisconsin, 85% of white adults compared to 53% of Black adults hold valid driver's licenses (Pawasarat 2005). Due to the racial disparities in driver's license suspensions, in May 2014 federal Judge Lynn Adelman found Wisconsin's state photo ID law unconstitutional (Adelman 2014).

I. Complaints Against the Milwaukee Police Department

The vast amount of official complaints filed against police officers serve as one indicator that law enforcement in Milwaukee is experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. In 2012, 289 citizens filed complaints with the Fire and Police Commission. The most common complaints regarded department procedures -- an unauthorized or inappropriate deviation from established department policies or procedures (Blee 2012). There were 75 formal and 77 informal complaints of this nature. In 2012, 61% of the 121 formal complaints filed against MPD were from Black residents compared to 32% of white complainants. Of all complaints filed, 60% were by men and 40% by women (Blee 2012).

1. Police Brutality Upon Unarmed Black Victims

There is an extensive history of police brutality in Black communities. Additionally, police officials have long turned a blind eye to white vigilante violence upon carried out upon Black bodies. Similar to the New York (New York) and Ferguson (Missouri) police departments,

the Milwaukee Police Department has been under fire for the beatings and deaths of unarmed Black men. Several of these incidents sparked widespread community outrage and protest. Most notably, the cases of Daniel Bell (1958), Ernest Lacy (1981), Frank Jude Jr. (2004), Derek Williams (2011), Dontre Hamilton (2014), Jay Anderson (2016), and Sylville Smith (2016) were all instances where the community publicly challenged the actions and explanations of the Milwaukee Police Department. In each case, charges were either not brought against the officers responsible, or juries acquitted the accused. The community responded with various forms of protest.

On Sunday February 2, 1958, two uniformed white officers, Thomas Grady and Louis Krause, pulled over Black 22-year-old Daniel Bell for a faulty taillight. When Bell pulled over, he jumped out the car and ran, starting a foot pursuit by the two white officers. The officers fired several warning shots, but were unsuccessful in stopping Bell. They then commandeered a passing car and continued the search until they found and stopped in front of Bell with guns drawn. Officers pursued Bell between homes until Officer Grady caught up and shot Bell at nearly point blank distance. The fatal bullet entered Bell's back and exited through his skull. While Officer Krause left to phone and report the incident, Officer Grady planted a pocketknife on Bell's dead body. Officer Krause believed the knife was too small, so Officer Grady replaced it with a larger knife in the victim's right hand.

Officers Krause and Grady reported that Bell exited the vehicle waving a knife while confessing to being a "hold up man." The officers stated they believed Bell matched the description of a suspect responsible for a string of armed robberies making him a "fleeing felon," an important distinction needed to authorize the use of deadly force. Later Officer Grady claimed Daniel Bell lunged at him with knife in hand. Immediately discrepancies in the officers' accounts

emerged. Claims that the left-handed Bell attacked an officer with his right hand and the recovery of Bell's personal pocketknife at home caused many to question the officers' claims. Furthermore, two Black witnesses came forward to challenge the official story of events.

Historian Patrick Jones writes, "the gunshot that killed Daniel Bell was the signal shot for the Black freedom movement in Milwaukee" (Jones 2009). The white district attorney and an all-white inquest panel cleared Officer Grady of any wrongdoing stating he "had justifiably shot and killed" Daniel Bell in "the reasonable execution of his duty as an officer making a lawful arrest, and in self-defense." This decision sparked community outrage and protest (Jones 2009).

On the evening of July 9th, 1981, Ernest Lacy was arrested on the 2200 block of W. Wisconsin Avenue due to a woman's report that a Black man nearby had raped her. Before officers could put Lacy into their police car, he allegedly tried to run away. Police officers claimed that he fell to the ground as they attempted to subdue the suspect. However, the medical examiner's report revealed over thirty cuts and bruises on Lacy's body, despite the officers' claims that they never hit the suspect during the struggle. Witnesses reported officers holding Lacy face down in a gutter with a knee in his back. Lacy was placed into a police van and fellow prisoners report that Lacy was unconscious in the car. He was pronounced dead an hour later (Jones 2009).

On October 24, 2004 Frank Jude Jr. was severely beaten by three off duty Milwaukee police officers. Charges were initially filed against the three officers involved in the beating (Jon Bartlett, Andrew Spengler, and Daniel Masarik). The trial proceeded before an all-white jury despite prosecutors' objections. The jury acquitted the officers involved, prompting community outrage. On April 18, 2006, an estimated crowd of 3,000- 5,000 people gathered to march from the Milwaukee County Courthouse to the Federal Courthouse demanding a federal investigation.

On May 15, 2006, a caravan of 300 cars proceeded through the streets so their inhabitants could deliver a petition to United States Attorney Steven Biskupic demanding a federal investigation. A federal trial ended in July of 2007. It resulted in the three officers' convictions for conspiring to violate the civil rights of Jude (Diedrich 2007).

On July 6, 2011 Derek Williams died while in police custody. Many have claimed that the Williams incident is a repeat of the Lacy case thirty years prior. Despite Williams repeated complaints that he could not breathe (he suffered from sickle cell disease), the officers did not call for medical attention until Williams fully lost consciousness. Initially, the medical examiner ruled the death a result of natural causes, but after review of the police video, the findings were changed to homicide. In response to a citizen complaint filed by Williams's girlfriend and mother of his three children, Sharday Rose, the Fire and Police Commission declared that they would not pursue discipline against the three officers (Jason Bleichwehl, Jeffrey Cline and Richard Ticcioni) involved in the case. An internal investigation concluded that the officers did nothing wrong despite obvious cuts and bruises found on Williams's body. The assigned special prosecutor, John Franke, did not file charges because he was not confident that he could prove the officers' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt (Ramde 2013). Following the decision not to pursue charges, roughly 75 protesters gathered to walk to police headquarters at City Hall demanding justice (Anderson and Garza 2013). To this day, charges have not been filed regarding Williams's death.

On April 30, 2014 Dontre Hamilton, a Black unarmed man, was asleep in Red Arrow Park near downtown Milwaukee. Hamilton was 31 years old and had suffered from mental illness. Two Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) officers conducted a wellness check on Hamilton and determined he was doing nothing wrong. Later, MPD Officer Christopher Manney

approached the sleeping Hamilton on a park bench and began patting him down. When Hamilton awoke in a panic, Officer Manney fatally shot Dontre Hamilton 14 times (Lutheran 2014). Police Chief Edward Flynn fired Officer Manney for failure to follow departmental procedures. On November 10, 2015, federal prosecutors announced that they would not file federal criminal civil rights charges against Officer Manney. The night of the announcement, a reported 1,200 people gathered outside of Milwaukee City Hall in protest (Taylor, Sears and Delong 2015). The same day, Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn announced that that he was seeking a collaborative reform agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice (Lutheran 2015). This is the same process requested by St. Louis area officials in the wake of the Michael Brown slaying that produced a 182-page federal report exposing the illegitimate practices of the Ferguson department. Additionally, in December of 2014, the common council pushed for all officers to be equipped with body cameras. On October 2015, the Fire and Police Commission approved the new policy.

On August 13th, 2016, Officer Dominique Heaggan-Brown and his then partner Officer Ndiva Malafa were patrolling a North Side neighborhood in Milwaukee. They approached Sylville Smith, 23, on suspicion that he was involved in a drug deal because he drove a car with an out of state license plate (Nolan and Bosman 2017). As the officers pulled Smith's car over, he fled the vehicle and began to run toward a fence. He stopped to throw his gun over the fence before attempting to jump over it. Officer Heaggan-Brown fired the first shot, striking Smith in the right arm. He fell to the ground when officer Heaggan-Brown fired a second shot that hit Smith in the chest. According to the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Officer, the second shot was the fatal one, travelling through his heart and lung. The prosecution argued that the second shot which was fired after Smith was disarmed was unnecessary. However, the defense justified the officer's conduct as merely following police procedure's "one-plus rule" that

assumes if a person has a weapon, he might have another (Nolan and Bosman 2017). After Smith's death, over 100 protesters filled the Sherman Park streets demanding justice. After two days of protests, dozens of arrests, and few officer injuries, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett enforced a 10 p.m. curfew (Bendix 2017). In former officer Heaggan- Brown's trial for the shooting of Smith, he was found not guilty on the charge of first-degree reckless homicide. Heaggan-Brown was fired for a separate unrelated case of sexual assault charges of sexual assault where he admitted guilt in a plea deal, agreeing to serve three years in prison and an additional three years of extended supervision (Press 2018).

Following the 1981 Ernest Lacy death, police chiefs, lawmakers, and city leaders pledged tougher policies and better training. Since 1983, it has been unlawful for police officers to fail to provide medical aid to detainees. In 1992, authorities commissioned a review board to examine cases in which citizens are killed, injured, or shot by police officers. However, the board was dismantled by 1997. Since 1994, officers have been systematically trained to avoid pressing their knees into the backs of suspects when they are handcuffed and face down (Barton 2012). In response to the video recording of the 2011 Derek Williams incident going viral and the attendant community outrage, Police Chief Edward Flynn issued a directive that requires officers to call for help if a detainee is having trouble breathing, bleeding profusely, or complains of moderate to severe pain. Although this directive had actually been in place for police training since 1983 following the Lacy killing, officers still deny citizens necessary medical attention. Additionally officers did not follow their training as Williams experienced a knee to his back while detained (Barton 2012).

When one considers the reforms that have been made to improve police policy for detained citizens, the question arises, "why do unarmed Black men continue to die while in

police custody?” These incidents continue because the reforms made have been superficial at best. There has been no real push to change the structures that pattern the lives of people subject to intense police surveillance.

J. Milwaukee Advocacy Groups

Although Milwaukee has a combative history characterized by racial confrontations and stand offs with authority, the city has also sprouted community grassroots efforts for social and political change.

Father Groppi and the NAACP Youth Council are memorialized in popular memory and the historical record as the face of community engaged direct action to effect social change. Yet organizations had long existed in Milwaukee with intentions of changing the social, cultural, and political landscape. The Milwaukee chapter of the NAACP was established in 1924 as one of the first branches in the nation.

In the 1930’s, William Kelley of the Milwaukee Urban League began the fight for African American teachers to be included in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). Initially, white officials granted Black teachers employment, but only in schools that held a sizeable Black population. However, after the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, Black teachers began to teach in integrated settings.

On August 28, 1963, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Milwaukee carried out what many believe to be the first civil rights demonstration in the city. In May of 1964 half of the Black students in Milwaukee supported a CORE boycott of Black schools. In 1965, Lloyd Barbee filed a lawsuit against Milwaukee Public Schools to challenge the persistence of segregation. He accused the school board of practicing and allowing discrimination. In 1976, a

series of judges ruled that schools in Milwaukee were illegally segregated. It wasn't until 1979, however, that the school board implemented a five-year desegregation plan

Often in the fight for social justice, the onus is upon the oppressed to initiate and carry out social change because of the idea that it is "their" problem. However, white people have also self-organized to call attention and effect change with issues rooted in white supremacy. Currently, the group Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) is a national network of efforts to organize white people for racial justice. SURJ works to connect, support, and collaborate with scattered racial justice organizations to provide a space to build relationships, skills, and political analyses to act for social change . SURJ Milwaukee connects with its members by way of Facebook. The group describes itself as an organization of local Milwaukee residents who want to do the work of "challenging and dismantling racism by calling in white people to learn, organize and act against white supremacy." The group aims to move white people to act against white supremacy and whiteness with passion and accountability. While dismantling the structures of white supremacy, SURJ members take an intersectional and anti-respectability perspective and practice. Currently, the group is undergoing restructuring and finding a new direction to identify and meet both short and long term goals.

K. Conclusion

Despite evidence of racially biased and aggressive policing in Milwaukee, many citizens and high-ranking officials either deny or remain unaware of the criminal justice system's predatory behavior toward Black residents. In October of 2015, Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke proclaimed on television that police brutality and racism were relics of the past. He remarked, "First off, there is no police brutality in America. We ended that back in the '60s"

(Clarke 2015). The findings in this study challenge these assertions by Sherriff Clarke and others that deny the persistence of racism and police misconduct in Black communities. Yet, this project pushes further by not only acknowledging the persistence of racial inequality in the criminal justice system, but also by finding possible community led solutions to resolve the fractured relationship that characterizes Black communities and the Milwaukee Police Department.

II. Chapter Two- Theory and Literature

In this dissertation, I examine the relationship between Black Milwaukee residents and the Milwaukee Police Department. I focus on residents' policing experiences where they may call upon law enforcement for help or encounter them involuntarily. I rely upon focus group interviews from Black Milwaukee residents, situating my analysis in the sociological literature of policing with an emphasis upon racial projects and racial formation. This study uncovers the varied experiences that Black Milwaukee residents have when interacting with the local police force and considers how these experiences inform and shape the attitudes and relationships they form with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD). Furthermore, this project explores community driven solutions that reflect the imagination that guides Black residents' visions of possible better relationships with MPD.

Common conceptions find the police necessary to societies to manage crime and maintain law and order. Ahead of his time, sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois examined crime causation and control in Philadelphia with a focus on power in his publication *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899). This was the first study to systematically document the living conditions of working class Black American urban life. Du Bois found crime to be a functional part of collective social life in the contexts of financial stress and industrial boom and bust cycles. Black people had been overrepresented in crime statistics since their introduction into the city leading some to perceive there to be a "Negro Problem," Du Bois writes that the "Negro Problem" did not stem from Black people's purportedly natural and uncontrollable inclinations to commit crime, but rather it grew from three peculiar Black experiences. He identified slavery and emancipation, mass migration from the rural south to the industrial northern cities, and the unjust social world Black people inhabit as producing the conditions that led to Black crime yet led the larger public to

perceive Black people as biologically criminal. Du Bois emphasized that Black people faced intense racial discrimination and they encountered unfairness in the criminal justice system relative to whites. In particular, he cites the disproportionate prosecutions for stealing by prosecutors who vigorously charged Black people with petty theft and burglary while whites received leniency for committing crimes like embezzlement (Du Bois 1899). Over a century later, cities like Milwaukee still suffer from what appears to some to be a “Negro Problem” as Black communities face issues of overrepresentation in every sector of the criminal justice system. In the contemporary landscape, mechanisms for control have reinvented themselves over changing eras to reproduce the same inequitable outcomes for urban Black people today that those in Philadelphia experienced a century ago.

Contemporary theories of crime resort to narratives steeped in biological essentialism and racism by attributing high crime rates in communities of color to the alleged criminal propensities of the people who inhabit those spaces. Elliott Currie (2013), however, showed that violent crime in the United States is caused by the persistence of inequality, extreme poverty, and social exclusion. Data from the 2014 FBI Uniform Crime Report places Milwaukee within the top thirty most dangerous counties in the nation. With a population of 953,402, there were 997.1 violent crimes per 100,000 people reported, making it the seventeenth most violent place in the nation (FBI 2014). As outlined in chapter one, Milwaukee suffers from extreme residential segregation that makes Black communities experience social inequality that manifests itself in inferior education, lower income, poorer health, and less favorable legal outcomes. Even with pervasive and aggressive policing methods, Milwaukee suffers from high crime rates revealing the need for a comprehensive approach to resolve the social issues that create criminogenic conditions. Strikingly, Black people who live in these crime-ridden communities find it difficult

to relate to police officers and maintain a positive relationship with them as partners. Black Milwaukee communities perceive themselves to be over-policed, but under-protected. Black Milwaukee communities are in an adversarial relationship with law enforcement, as evidenced glaringly by the Sherman Park Uprising in the summer of 2016¹. I provide a review of policing literature focusing on issues about race, proactive policing, procedural injustice, and theoretical approaches to policing to contextualize the landscape which is Black Milwaukee. I end with a Black feminist perspective to situate the experiences of Black women in the study and to highlight the gendered dimensions of racial and class subordination.

A. Race, Place, and Policing

Today, experiences and perceptions of police behavior are racially patterned. Across communities, there is the belief that the police treat Black and white residents differently (Weitzer 2000). Police are more likely to stop, question, search, and arrest people of color than white Americans (Fagan and Davies 2000). Black and Hispanic people are more likely than white people to report an experience of disrespectful treatment and excessive force by police officers (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). Highly publicized incidents of police brutality erode support for law enforcement at both the local and national level. The erosion of support is greater for Black and Latinos than whites, while for Black people

¹ Following the August 13th, 2016 fatal shooting of Sylville Smith by former Milwaukee Police Officer Dominique Heaggan- Brown, the Sherman Park neighborhood erupted in a two-day long protest where dozens of people were arrested and few officers were injured. The events prompted Milwaukee Mayor, Tom Barrett, to enforce a 10 p.m. curfew.

and Latinos brutality incidents have greater longevity in the collective memory of the group (Tuch and Weitzer 1997). As a result, people of color have less favorable attitudes toward the police than their white counterparts (Taylor, Turner, Esbensen et al. 2001).

Neighborhood context also affects police practices. Herbert Jacob (1971) found that in Milwaukee, perceptions of police officers varied between and within neighborhoods depending on patterns of race, socioeconomic status, and the quality of experience with the police (Jacobs 1979). Police misconduct is most prevalent in poor minority neighborhoods (Fagan and Davies 2000, Mollen Commission 1994, Smith 1986). Specifically, people of color living in disadvantaged urban communities disproportionately experience proactive policing strategies and various forms of police misconduct (Brunson and Miller 2006). Research finds that law enforcement officers enact more aggressive behavior and higher level of force in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Terrill and Reisig 2003). Verbal and physical abuse, unjustified stops of people on the street, and corrupt police practices are more likely to occur in high-crime than in low-crime areas (Mastrofski, Reisig and McCluskey 2002).

Following the Watts Rebellion of 1965, Robert Fogelson (1968) found that the levels of resentment that led to the uprisings stemmed from Black people's experiences of police brutality and harassment, police corruption, lack of law enforcement, and the absence of recognized and legitimate channels for addressing abuse, harassment, and inadequate law enforcement (Fogelson 1968). Similar to the conditions that bred the Sherman Park uprising in Milwaukee, Watts protesters were responding to a complex set of long term conditions including police misconduct, class subordination, racism, consumer exploitation, inadequate living accommodations, racial discrimination, unemployment, residential segregation, lack of Black leadership, inferior education, and inadequate transportation (Fogelson 1967).

B. Proactive Policing

In the late twentieth century, the United States experienced an explosion in the domestic inmate population, a process 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 expressed racial disparities, as one in three young Black men were under some type of formal supervision by the criminal justice system by being in jail, in prison, or on parole or probation. (Mauer 2006). Marc Mauer (2006) details the phenomenon of mass incarceration in *Race to Incarcerate*. His book summarizes his work at the Sentencing Project, a leading nonprofit organization in the fight for criminal justice reform. Mauer offered irrefutable evidence as to the unprecedented explosion of the prison population and its predatory relationship to communities of color. It is not that there are more Black and brown criminals, but rather that minority populations have been stopped, arrested, charged, convicted and sentenced in racially predatory ways. African Americans make up only 12% of the American population, yet account for 40% of the inmate population. At any given time, 12% of Black men aged 25-29 are behind bars relative to only 2% of white men in the same age range. Furthermore, nearly one third of Black men will spend some time in prison. According to these statistics, Black men are more likely to go to prison than to attend college, or serve in the military (Mauer 2006). 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, Council 2004, Currie 2013, Gilmore 2007, Mauer 2006, Rios 2011, Wacquant 2009).

Proactive policing describes police mobilization in anticipation of crime. This contrasts with traditional methods of policing in which police respond to crimes after they have been committed or once a citizen has called in a policeable complaint. Proactive policing is an outgrowth of Broken Window theories² of crime that prioritize regulating physical and social signs of disorder in efforts to reduce serious crime (Wilson and Kelling 1982). With proactive policing, officers tend to execute pretext stops of motor vehicles, issue citations, interview and arrest suspicious and/or disorderly citizens at high rates. 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 directs police resources to specific geographic locations with high crime rates. Hot spot policing creates the conditions for abuse and discrimination by providing generic causes for police presence in pre-determined locations that inevitably lead to disproportionate contact with law enforcement relative to non-identified hot spots.

Proactive policing methods have eroded police-community relations and threatened police legitimacy (Rosenbaum 2006, Weisburd and Braga 2003, Weisburd 2004, Weisburd and Telep 2014). The erosion of police-community relationships is especially salient in communities of color as poor minority urban communities experience the greatest amount of proactive policing. A report by the National Research Council found that disadvantaged and high crime

² The 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.

neighborhoods were more likely to receive punitive enforcement oriented policing (Council 2004). Similarly, research by the Los Angeles Community Action Network found that “petty³” policing overwhelmingly impacts poor minority citizens. They note that even if initial interactions with law enforcement do not lead to large fines and arrest warrants, these encounters create opportunities for police to violate citizens’ dignity, privacy, and liberty (Doherty 2014).

Research shows that aggressive policing measures may also increase violent crime in communities. Susan Phillips (2012) investigated the methods and success of a 2003 FBI task force known as Operation Fly Trap. She found that “surgical police action” did not curb drug dealing or using in two gang controlled neighborhoods. In fact, when undisturbed, gang leaders had a positive effect on crime control by regulating neighborhood violence. Furthermore, by removing older gang leaders, the operation led younger gang members to engage in violent crime that previously senior people would have controlled. In the wake of an aggressive incarceration campaign to remove gang members from the community, violence among the unrestrained members rose. Although these findings cannot be generalized, other research shows similar findings. One study showed that when cities intentionally lowered their incarceration rates, violent crimes decreased (Gilligan 2001). Another study showed that increasing incarceration in a city one year increases violent crime the following year (Clear 2002).

C. Procedural (In)Justice

Citizens’ judgments of procedural justice rely on perceptions about the fairness of the procedures through which the police exercise their authority (Tyler and Wakslak 2004).

Procedural justice is determined by four features regarding police decision making and

³ By petty policing, the author referred to enforcement of laws that criminalize harmless behavior like jay walking, loitering, and some traffic pretext stops.

interpersonal treatment (Schulhofer, Tyler and Huq 2011, Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler and Wakslak 2004, Tyler 2009, Tyler 2011). These include: 1) citizens' participation in the decision-making process, 2) officer neutrality in unbiased decision making, 3) officer politeness, dignity, and displays of 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 one's views of the police than the negative or positive resolution of the encounter. In other words, process is more important than outcome for understanding citizens' views toward law enforcement (Tyler 2004, Tyler and Wakslak 2004, Weitzer and Tuch 2006). Police departments should be concerned with citizens' 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).

The LA uprisings of 1965 and 1992 serve as iconic historical examples of Black communities acting on judgments of procedural justice related to policing. In both events, protesters responded to allegations and experiences of police misconduct on Black community members, first Marquette Frye and later Rodney King, during regular police stops. The McCone Commission explained the LA uprisings by using the “riffraff” theory, portraying the perpetrators of the riots as a small group of unemployed, poorly educated, delinquent, juveniles and uprooted black adults (The McCone Commission 1965). Robert Fogelson challenged this

theory, however, by arguing that the riots were articulate protests against genuine grievances, and, as such, meaningful protests against conditions in the south-central Los Angeles ghetto (Fogelson 1967, Fogelson 1968). Anecdotal evidence suggests that police aggressiveness in Black areas may contribute to urban race uprisings (Sherman 1986).

D. Theoretical Approaches to Policing

Although not the focus of his research, Kahlil Gibran Muhammad (2010) briefly addressed police brutality and its relationship to Black criminalization. Traditionally, Black researchers and reformers have stood as a minority voice attempting to explain Black criminality as a consequence of racism in the criminal justice system instead of a result of Black inferiority or criminal propensity. They have argued that police misconduct, corruption, and brutality have been responsible for producing disproportionately high African American arrest rates (Muhammad 2010). Groups such as the National Urban League (NUL) and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) brought attention to issues of police brutality and racial disparities in prisons and jails during the 1920s and 1930s. Nonetheless, Black crime generally remained portrayed in the mainstream as a problem caused by the alleged deficiencies of Black people, not a product of structures, institutions, and police practices

Very few critical studies of policing use traditional theoretical frameworks. Those that do, rely on the group position thesis and focus on the opportunity structure and lack of constraints approach to examine dynamics of policing.

1. Group Position Thesis

Historically, whites have a far more positive relationship with police than communities of color. Researchers use group position theory to evaluate white and minority attitudes toward police and reforms in policing. Traditionally, researchers use group position theory to explain group attitudes to other groups, but Tuch and Weitzer (2006) extend it to include groups' relations with social institutions. They suggest that if the dominant group believes they are entitled to resources, they will have an affinity with institutions that serve their interests (i.e. whites and the criminal justice system). Coercive crime-control practices and proactive policing strategies may in the aggregate benefit the dominant group.

According to the group-position thesis, racial attitudes are not free floating feelings or stereotypes, but rather a reflection of intergroup competition and conflict over material rewards, power, and status in a multiracial society. Prejudice is rooted in a collective sense of group position and group interests are the driving force underlying contentious intergroup relations and racial attitudes. Challenges to current policing practices and movement toward future police reform often reflect investments in group position. Because whites are the dominant group in society, they perceive challenges to the status quo as a threat and they fear losing privilege. Conversely, minorities perceive an advantage in challenging the current racial order and criminal justice system with the belief that their group interests will be enhanced with the changing of current systems (Weitzer and Tuch 2006). Because dominant group interests align with the state, whites are more likely to dismiss and minimize police criticism and view these critiques as threats to their group position.

Empirical studies reflect differences in citizens' attitudes toward the police by race that reflect a sense of group position. Research shows that Black people and Hispanics are more

likely to view the police as contributing to their subordination through legal, but improper methods, to believe that police misconduct is a serious problem, and to believe that their group interests will be advanced by greater controls on police. As a result, there is an increased chance that Black people and Hispanics will perceive the police as a “visible sign of majority domination” and as an acute problem that affects minorities (Bayley and Mendelsohn 1969). Research shows that whites are more satisfied with the police than other groups. Black people living in high crime communities believe they receive inadequate law enforcement protection and demand intensification of police service. Black people find themselves in a precarious position of being over-policed, but under-protected. Black people more than whites believe that police officers abuse citizens, treat minorities more harshly than whites, and are not held accountable for misconduct. Whites will be most reluctant and Black people and Hispanics will be most inclined to believe that the police often engage in various types of misconduct, that they routinely discriminate against minorities, and that a whole host of institutional reforms are justified (Weitzer and Tuch 2006). Although we know that race matters, little research focuses on the factors that shape each racial group’s outlook on the police. By considering experiences of procedural justice, scholars can better understand the factors that influence racial groups’ attitudes toward police.

2. *Opportunity Structure and Lack of Constraints*

Researchers explain differential attitudes toward the police by neighborhood in two ways. First, they have found that the structure of disadvantaged communities allows for greater frequency of police misconduct. The pervasiveness of street crime, disorder, and frequent and aggressive police patrols increases the potential for contact between citizens and officers that

could potentially include misconduct. Misconduct most often takes the form of, but is not limited to, unwarranted street stops, verbal abuse, and corruption (Weitzer and Tuch 2006).

Second, researchers find that residents of disadvantaged communities lack social resources to resist police domination effectively. According to conflict and social disorganization theory, favorable socioeconomic conditions are important for residents to gain access to resources and secure leverage to influence elites. Affluent residents have greater connections to not only capital, but also to elites with resources to hold the police accountable for their actions. Residents in poor neighborhoods are virtually powerless in the face of abusive police practices (Kane 2002, Kubrin and Weitzer 2003, Weitzer 2000).

In Milwaukee, racial and economic inequalities in social institutions and material resources reinforce the group-position thesis. Black participants take seriously the problems of police misconduct and find that by controlling this institution, their group interests might be advanced. Poor attitudes toward the police by Milwaukee residents are a direct consequence of group position and a lack of privilege. Participants in this research project live in disadvantaged communities which impact the frequency by which they experience police misconduct.

Theories of group position, opportunity structure, and lack of constraints have been used to explain differential group attitudes towards law enforcement. However, the literature leaves us with the impression that vulnerable populations are powerless victims of total structures of police domination and respond only in their attitudes. Studies of resistance and social movements offer insight into the ways in which dominated people respond to oppression and engineer new opportunities to effect change (Oliver 2008, Rios 2011). Black feminist theory provides indispensable tools for the study of police-community relations (Crenshaw, Ritchie, Anspach et al. 2016, Ritchie 2017).

E. Black Feminist Theory

I engage a Black feminist approach to contextualize the experiences of Black women. Patricia Hill Collins, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Beth Richie have developed an intellectual tradition and framework that constitutes Black feminist theory. This epistemological approach and a call for practice to bring about political empowerment and social justice. A Black Feminist Perspective relies on five main tenets. The first principle of Black Feminist Theory is attention to interlocking oppression. The oppression of Black women is complicated and layered. Kimberlé Crenshaw advances the concept of intersectionality to describe the interlocking oppression that Black women experience (Crenshaw 1989). Race, gender, sex, color, class, and other stigmas simultaneously affect Black women. In this regard, intersectionality is relational, structural, political, and ideological. Second, Black Feminist Theory privileges standpoint epistemology. The experience of Black women should be at the center of research and analyses. Standpoint epistemology assumes the people who are closest to the experience they are analyzing will have more accurate knowledge than those who observe from a distance, even though the people who see things from far away claim objectivity and impartiality. The third tenet of Black Feminist Theory is the focus on everyday knowledge and privileging the common meaning and interpretation of experiences. Similar to standpoint epistemology, this locates authority in those who experience a circumstance rather than traditional outside “experts”. Fourth, Black women are characterized by dialectical images in Black Feminist Theory. These varying images of Black womanhood shape Black women’s identity and social positioning. In this theory, analysis allows for Black women to be all these

competing images at once making their identity fluid and in conflict with dominant hegemonic femininity. Finally, Black Feminist Theory prioritizes social justice praxis. In this view, scholars insist that research on Black women be linked to efforts to change the structures that produce subordination (Richie 2012).

The data collected from Black women illuminates interlocking oppression. Black women deal with the statuses of Black and woman concurrently and their unique experiences interacting with the police institutions reflect this. Not only do these Black women describe difficulty communicating with police officers, but also their distinctive domestic violence experiences and obstacles to obtaining police assistance signify the intersectionality of the stigmas Black women combat. By privileging the testimonies of Black women, this project embraces Black standpoint epistemology. I take the experiences of Black women as related by Black women to use as the knowledge base and entry point for analysis. I do this by using the direct quotes and the logic of Black women to describe their experiences with criminal justice institutions. The data gathered draws from the everyday knowledge of Black women and locates authority in their interpretation of events. Yet while centered on Black women, this study is not only about them. Rather, the ways of knowing and ways of being are used as a point of entry, as a basis for generalizable theoretical claims, as a move toward universality. Black and white men, white women, and members of all groups and both genders can be studied productively through the lens of Black feminism.

In this study, Black women inhabit diverse social positions and identities simultaneously as they prove to be sometimes victims and other times aggressors. They request and require police assistance while at the same time rejecting police methods and procedures. The approach taken to describe and support Black women finds its roots in a social justice praxis as I draw

attention to the structures that contribute to Black women's subjugation and the possibilities that might alleviate them.

It is important to examine women's relationships with the police and the greater criminal justice system because there are more than 1 million women under the direct control of the criminal justice system. Women are also the fastest growing sector of the prison population. Black women are overrepresented behind bars as they comprise 30% of the inmate population but only 13% of the national female population. In 2000, black women were incarcerated in state and federal prisons at six times the average of white women. 1 out of 18 black women can expect to be imprisoned in a lifetime relative to 1 out of 45 Latina women and 1 out of 111 white women (Mauer 2013). Moreover, Black women play key roles in responding to the incarceration of Black men. They mediate discussions with authorities, raise children in the absence of their incarcerated partners, tend to the needs of often ill and frequently unemployable ex-offenders, raise money for bail and fines, and keep family networks active. So often conversations surrounding policing and mass incarceration concentrate solely on Black men, but what we see as mass incarceration injuring Black men is actually an attack on the entire Black community. It is the accumulated effect of oppression that creates the breeding ground for mass incarceration. Men and women are affected equally, but differently.

Black women are especially vulnerable to police misconduct and incarceration. Yet conventional feminist analyses of gender-based oppression often fail to include the relationship power imbalances and abuse inflicted by racial subordination. To counter this, Black feminists such as Beth Richie (1995, 2012) reveal the unique ways Black women fall vulnerable to male violence. She offers a critique of feminist based anti-violence movements that obscure the issues of race and class to gain mainstream support and resources for victims. Richie cautions against

relying on mainstream state institutions to solve complex social problems because they often in fact exacerbate them. Black women's precarious status in society positions many to rely on the state for assistance, but the punitive legal policies embedded in state assistance alleged to help can hurt Black women. In Richie's calculation, Black women are vulnerable to the injustices inflicted on them by a prison nation, an entity which she describes as characterized by "dimensions of civil society that use the power of law, public policy, and institutional practices in strategic ways to advance hegemonic values and to overpower efforts by individuals and groups that challenge the status quo" (Richie 2012:2).

III. Chapter Three- Data & Methods

This study explores police-community relations in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a Midwestern city that had a 2015 population of about 600,000. Milwaukee continues to be the most racially and ethnically diverse city in Wisconsin. In 2016, 38 percent of the population identified as Black, 36 percent as white, and 18 percent as Hispanic. The remaining 8 percent of the population identify as Asian-American, Native American, or a combination of two or more races. In the same year, the average Milwaukee resident was 32 years old and earned about \$37,500 a year. Men made up about 48% of the population and women constituted the remaining 52% making them the slight majority in the city (2016c).

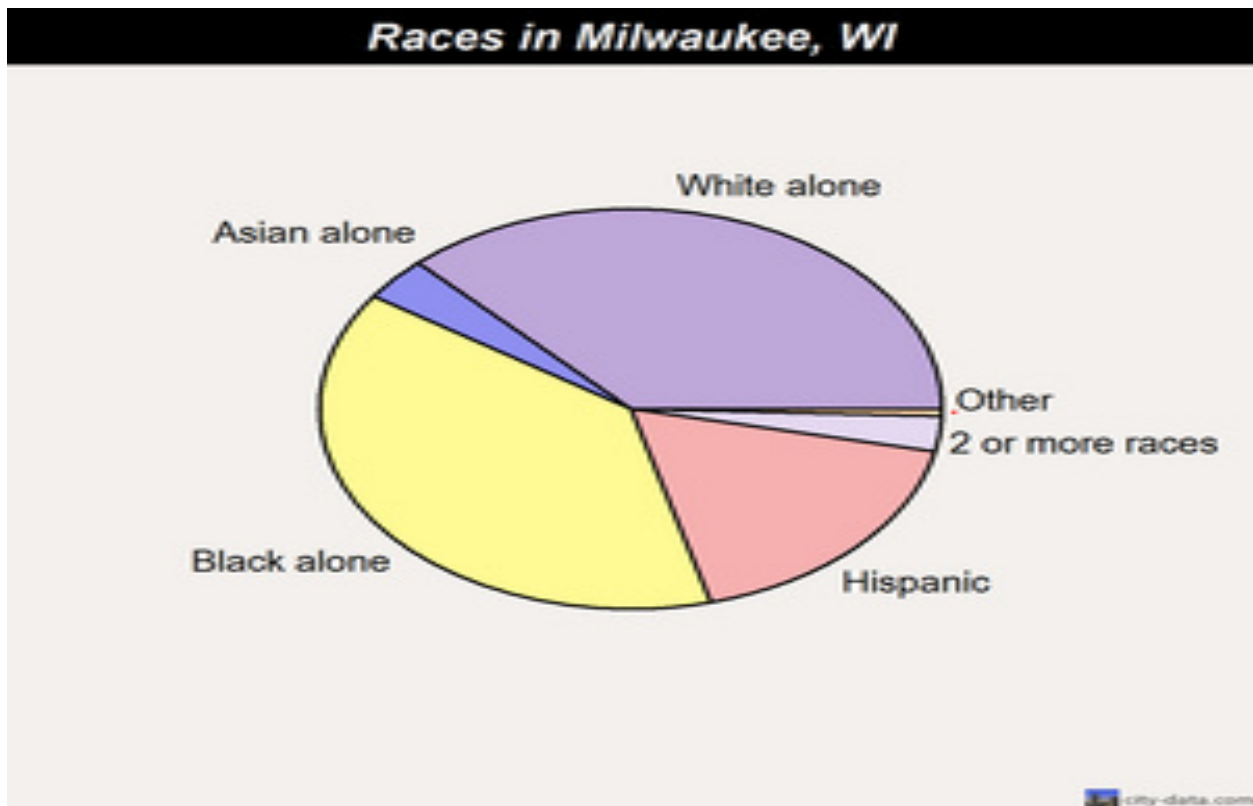


Figure 8: Races in Milwaukee

This metropolitan area is primarily served by Milwaukee Police Department which is two thirds white and 83 percent male in a city where whites only make up roughly a third of the

population and men almost half. Thirty-four percent of the sworn officers and command staff are non-white minorities, a statistic that remains unchanged since 2008. As of 2015, data revealed that Black officers accounted for 18 percent of the ranks in a city that is nearly 40 percent Black (Lutheran and Crowe 2017).

The study has two main aims: (1) to explore the attitudes and experiences of Black Milwaukee residents toward the Milwaukee Police Department; and (2) to explore community imagined possibilities to repair the fractured relationship between MPD and the city's Black communities. I use a combination of archival and focus group methods for this research. The analysis is qualitative as I use constant comparison with transcribed interviews.

A. Focus Groups

Experiences of Black Milwaukee residents with the Milwaukee Police Department were measured through a series of eight focus groups. Focus group research is "a way of collecting qualitative data, which—essentially—involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (or discussions) 'focused' around a particular topic or set of issues" (Wilkinson 2004).

The focus group technique was selected for two reasons. First, focus group research is an economical, fast, and efficient method for capturing data from multiple people simultaneously and increasing the potential number of people in a study (Krueger and Casey 2000). A low-cost project is ideal for the dissertation due to the limited financial resources available to sustain a lengthy project. Focus group research is especially suited for gaining insights into people's shared understandings of everyday life. The ways in which people influence each other in a

group situation such as in a community subject to aggressive and pervasive policing make focus group interviews well suited for capturing shared experiences.

Secondly, I chose focus groups because they create an encouraging and supportive environment to discuss challenging topics like law enforcement's relationship with Black Milwaukee communities. Focus groups can foster a sense of belonging and cohesiveness that then helps participants to feel safe and encouraged to share information (Blee and Taylor 2002, Peters 1993, Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub 1996). I desired a diversity of participants and opinions within Black communities. The focus group allowed for people who might not otherwise engage in this sort of conversation to do so, yielding nuanced responses. Furthermore, focus groups can create the conditions for spontaneous responses that would otherwise not be expressed in traditional interview settings (Butler 1996). Studying experiences with law enforcement calls participants to reflect upon previous experiences that can otherwise be forgotten or distorted. By engaging in a communal conversation, other participants' reflections and experiences may provoke memories and cause spontaneous utterances that would otherwise not emerge. Furthermore, the participants within the focus group can prompt conversations and reveal phenomena the researcher had not considered. This spontaneity can generate new knowledges.

B. Mini focus groups

For this study, mini-focus groups were used to collect data. Krueger (1994) encourages interviewing 3 or 4 participants when these participants have specialized knowledge or experiences to discuss in the group. Morgan (1997) suggests using smaller focus groups especially if the topics are highly charged (Morgan 1997). Carey and Smith (1994) agree and

state that the smaller the focus group, the greater likelihood participants will interact. Yet these can become labor intensive (Carey and Smith 1994). This project conducted multiple focus groups to assess the extent to which saturation has been reached (i.e. occurring when information occurs so repeatedly that the researcher can anticipate it and whereby the collection of more data appears to have no additional interpretive worth (Samure and Given 2008, Sandelowski 2001). Krueger (1994) and Morgan (1997) suggest that three to six different focus groups are adequate to reach data saturation with each group containing similar types of participants (Krueger 1994, Morgan 1997).

C. Data & Sampling

Requirements for participation in a focus group were the participant: 1) had to be a legal adult; 2) must racially identify as Black; and 3) had to be a resident of the city of Milwaukee. Black Milwaukee residents were purposely sampled because they have specialized experiences of being policed while Black in the city of Milwaukee. The topic of policing in Black communities is a highly-charged topic especially at the current moment of mass incarceration, #BlackLivesMatter, and the preponderance of videotaped fatal interactions between law enforcement officers and Black civilians. It was accurately predicted that all participants had some experience with the police, both first hand and vicariously through others, making the sample appropriate for the project.

Groups were arranged in three ways. First, people could sign up via a survey monkey link provided on a digital flier (appendix). This hyperlink led potential participants to a page to provide their name, gender, race, email, phone, year of birth, zip code, scheduling preference, and indication if they could bring a guest. This link could be accessed via cellular phone, tablet,

or computer. To publicize the flier and link, I used social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), email, and word of mouth. Print fliers were put in local shops, eateries, boutiques, and beauty service centers. Fliers were also printed on business cards to hand out personally during various community meetings. Second, interested participants could contact the researcher by calling or texting a google number. Thirdly, I extended personal invitations to people I encountered in Milwaukee. Participants were encouraged to bring someone along, so even a person who may not have encountered the flier could be an invited "plus one." I used snowball sampling as a method to recruit additional participants. For every interview, I offered a meal and a \$10 gift card remuneration for an hour of the participants' time.

Once the participant completed the sign-up survey and communicated time and day of availability via telephone, I constructed focus groups among those who had overlapping availability. Meetings were scheduled at one of the city's public libraries due to the convenience and accessibility they provide. Milwaukee Public Libraries are open after first shift work hours, located along the public bus lines, offer free meeting spaces, provide activities for children who may accompany participants, and serve as a neutral meeting place.

I purposely sampled mini groups within the larger project to gain a gendered understanding of the project. Focus group #3 had four Black men and Focus group #2 and #6 had 4 and 3 Black women respectively. The project drew upon a Black Feminist perspective as its theoretical framework; therefore, insights discovered among Black women were especially important.

I conducted conversations with a total of eight focus groups with thirty participants (see Table 1). The sample was 40% men and 60% women. The average participant was 34 years old. The youngest participant was 18 years old and the oldest was 67. Seven percent of participants

had less than a high school education, 17% completed high school, 20% attended college, but did not graduate, 30% held a bachelor's degree, 10% obtained an associate's degree, and 17% held a post bachelor's degree. Most of the participants live in the 53206 zip code.

D. Data Collection

1. Pilot Focus Group

A pilot focus group interview was carried out using a convenience sample of five Black Milwaukee residents. The purpose of the pilot interview was to test the interview guide. The researcher needed to confirm that the interview questions probed the research topic; experiences with the Milwaukee Police Department. Secondly, the pilot interview evaluated the appropriate number of participants. Thirdly, the pilot interview assured that an hour was enough time to obtain rich and meaningful data.

The topics were covered meaningfully in 1 hour. It was decided focus groups would range between 3 and 5 participants. If more than five participants were in the focus group, it would be difficult to allow time for equal contribution from everyone. Additionally, it would be difficult for one facilitator to moderate more than five individuals and control the session. The interview guide required no alteration as the questions were understood and answered satisfactorily. The moderator remained in the background and did not contribute to the conversation, but intervened to prompt and clarify questions. The pilot group provided rich data and proved more successful than anticipated.

2. *Procedure*

The interview questions were developed through reading literature on proactive policing and Black communities' attitudes toward law enforcement. This reading produced a preliminary list of key issues to explore during focus group interviews. Topics covered participants' attitudes toward and experiences with the Milwaukee Police Department and ideas to change the current structure of the police force. Broad questions were used and participants did not have access to the questionnaire at any point.

Participants were contacted 24 hours prior to the focus group to confirm participation. At this point, participants were provided with a meal order (not to exceed \$8 in value). I would arrive at the public library thirty minutes before the interview time to ensure the room was prepared (cleared out and set up with meals and recording devices). Data were collected using three audio recording devices; a tape recorder, cell phone microphone, and laptop microphone. During the pilot interview, the tape recorder malfunctioned and the researcher improvised by using two backup devices. Depending on the room set up, location of participants, and the volume of the speaker, the sound quality on one recording may be muffled or distorted. Placing multiple recording devices in different places optimized the sound quality and aided in the transcribing process. If at any point the sound became inaudible, another device picked up the sound.

Participants were greeted at the door and given the meal. When all members arrived, I handed out a consent form, read it to the group, collected signatures, and stored a copy. I also provided participants with a copy they could take with them. I then handed out a five-question pre-test⁴ to get a sense of participants' frequency of police encounters, attitudes towards law

⁴ Pre-test results were collected, and will be used in future publications.

enforcement, reliance upon emergency resources, and safety in their neighborhoods. With the pre-test, participants were assigned a numeric identification that would be used for that point forward. After the pre-tests were collected, I alerted participants that recording would commence and we began the interview. I asked the group a total of nine guiding questions that often led to related topics we would explore with follow up questions prompted by the discussion. I allotted one hour for the focus group so at times I would intervene and move discussions along to ensure we covered all topics. I also interjected to probe for explanations and to incorporate participants who did not get as much speaking time as others. After the final question, I asked participants if there was anything they wanted to say that I did not cover in discussion. I then turned off the recording devices and circulated a post test⁵. I took another measure of participants' attitudes toward law enforcement, experience with police brutality, and reliance upon emergency resources. I also gathered demographic information of gender, birth year, race, zip code, and highest level of education completed. I collected post-tests and thanked guests for their participation.

After each focus group, I recorded answers from the pre-test and the post-test. I labeled and saved the interview audio files for future transcription. I replayed the audio files to get a sense of initial observations and reflected on how to develop themes for coding and future findings.

E. Data Analysis

After the focus group, interviews were transcribed and prepared for analysis. Transcript based analysis is the most rigorous and time consuming method of analyzing focus group data. In

⁵ Post-test results were collected, and will be used in future publications.

conjunction with field notes, the transcripts of the interview data allow for familiarity and intimate knowledge of one's data. From the transcribing process, the researcher can identify powerful quotes, and preliminary themes.

Although researchers have increased their use of focus groups for data collection, little is known about the specific data analysis techniques that would best analyze focus group "raw data". For this study, I used a form of constant comparison analysis. This method was developed by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Glaser 1978, Glaser 1992, Strauss 1987) for use in grounded theory research. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2007, Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2008) discuss constant comparison analysis as a technique to analyze focus group research.

Constant comparison analysis has three stages. The first stage is open coding. The data is cut into smaller units as the researcher attaches a descriptor to each of the units. The second stage of constant comparison analysis is axial coding, grouping the codes into categories. In the final stage of constant comparison analysis, the researcher develops themes that express the meaning of each coded groups' discussions (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech et al. 2009).

Constant comparison analysis is useful for focus groups when there is more than one group in the same study. Multiple focus groups allow the researcher to ascertain saturation and guide the coding process accordingly. Constant comparison analysis is compatible with focus group research because as each additional focus group is analyzed, emergent themes can be added to assess the meaningfulness of the previously identified themes and subsequently refine findings (Charmaz 2000). In other words, each newly analyzed focus group can confirm or challenge previously identified themes. This identification process aids in determining saturation as additional focus group analyses can indicate when there no longer appear to be new themes.

IV. Chapter Four- Citizen Complaints and Impacts on Community-Police Relationships

A. Citizen Complaints

Complaints about the Milwaukee Police Department coalesced around five issues: 1) residency requirements, 2) behaviors of Black police officers, 3) treatment as suspects rather than citizens, 4) racial profiling and harassment, and 5) a lack of police accountability.

1. “They actually are an occupation for us”: Police Officers and Residency

Black Milwaukee residents desire policing, but want the officers who serve them to live in the neighborhoods they patrol. In focus groups, both men and women of all ages expressed a sense of distance from the officers that patrol their neighborhoods. They identified this alienation as a main cause of the negative relationship that the police force has with the Black community. Participants believe officers who live outside of their neighborhoods and outside of the city entirely generally lack familiarity with, and investment in, the City of Milwaukee and its residents. They take issue with the 2016 revised residency rule that no longer requires City of Milwaukee employees to live within the city’s limits⁶.

⁶ On July 26, 2016, the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee adopted legislation that imposes a residency requirement on law enforcement and fire personnel as well as employees categorized as “emergency personnel” like the Emergency Communications Manager and Sanitation Supervisor. These employees must reside within 15 miles of the jurisdictional boundaries of the City. By setting up the 15-mile radius, the ordinance authorized police officers to live outside the city limits. This charter ordinance, adopted pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. 66.0502 (4)(b). This legislation became effective October 11, 2016 (Milwaukee, City of. "Residency Rules". (<http://city.milwaukee.gov/fpc/Residency-Map.htm#.WcLrA9OGPp6>).

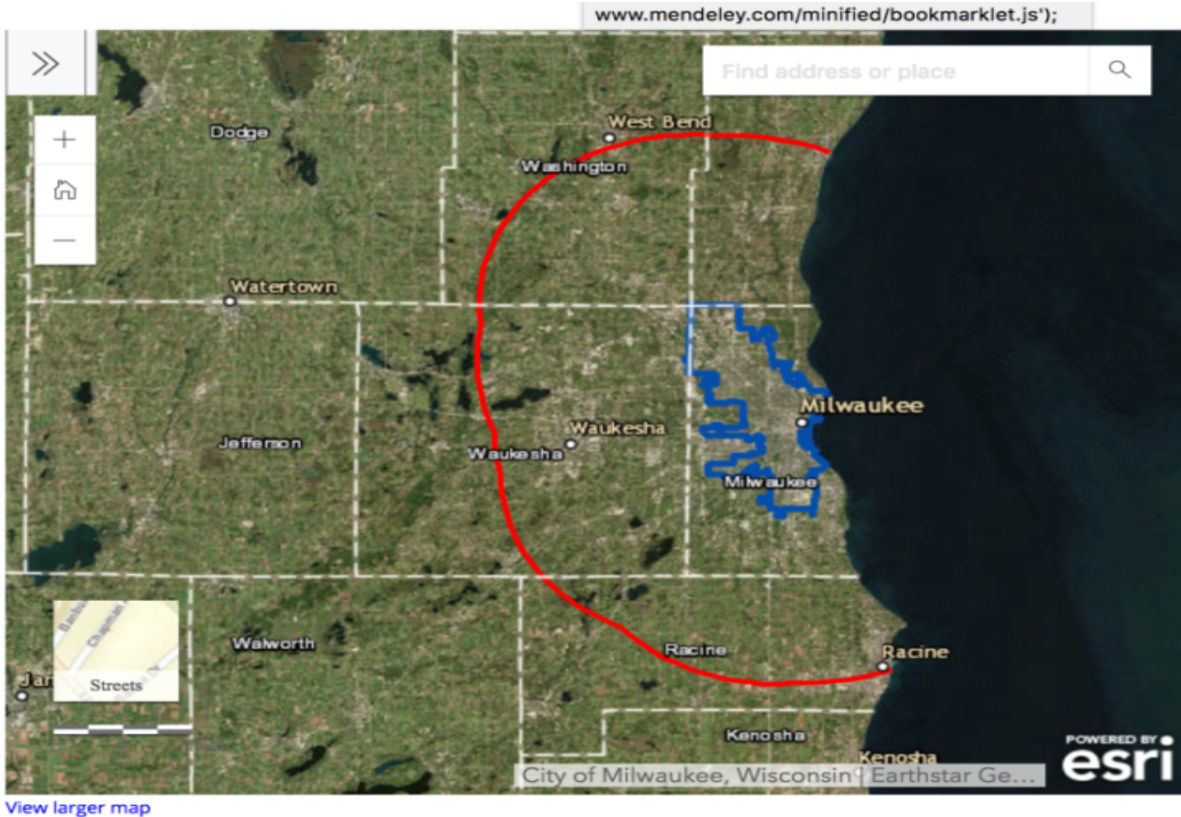


Figure 9: Residency Zones

Currently, about 33% of Milwaukee police officers live outside of the city and there continues to be a steady flow of city employees who move away from Milwaukee every year. Non-resident employees earn almost \$92.5 million in salaries. These funds funneled from city of Milwaukee tax payers, go to support suburban housing and tax bases. It is estimated that consumer expenditures on retail goods and services have been reduced by \$57 million annually in Milwaukee because of this out-migration. Additionally, the city's tax base has been reduced by \$649 million (Murphy 2018). Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said, "Now we have a situation where the people who were helping us pay for the salaries of the police officers, the firefighters and the general city employees -- those people who are getting those salaries, often very good salaries, are not paying for them" (Sanchick 2018).

Although Mayor Barrett and focus group participants find the residency rule problematic, not everyone agrees. The president of the Milwaukee Police Association, Mike Crivello believes the law increases officer morale which translates into a benefit for the city. Additionally, the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty issued a statement that portrayed housing decisions as the result of complex personal preferences, and challenged city politicians to enact policies that they claimed would make Milwaukee a more attractive place in which to live (Sanchick 2018). Nonetheless, it is impossible to deny the negative outcomes of the residency rule. It is estimated that by 2024, nearly two-thirds of city of Milwaukee employees will live outside of Milwaukee (Murphy 2018). The residency law results in a loss of property taxes and spending in the city, perpetuating the economic inequities in Milwaukee. Additionally, it leaves non-resident city employees financially unaccountable to city residents, which some participants in the focus groups charged leads to a lack of social accountability as well. Moreover, in addition to the loss in revenue, Milwaukee neighborhoods have also suffered a loss of local leaders.

Focus group participants report that the demographics of the police force do not represent the diversity of the city. They observe and resent the overwhelmingly disproportionate presence of white officers patrolling Black neighborhoods. The state of Wisconsin is only 6% Black, however Black people make up 40% of Milwaukee residents. Milwaukee stands as the second most racially segregated city in the United States and Black people in the city are concentrated on the North Side (USA 2017). The Milwaukee Police Department has a pronounced racial disparity with relatively few Black officers and many white ones. Data collected between 2005 and 2015 showed white officers held 66% of MPD jobs versus only 18% held by Black officers. On the police force, 83% of officers were men and only 17% were women (Lutheran and Crowe

2017). Experiences with racial residential segregation combined with occupational segregation cause participants to see police problems with race as related to problems of place.

Chantae, 29, from focus group two describes the landscape that the residency rule has created as it relates to reinforcing racial residential and occupational segregation:

Chantae: We have white officers who police our communities but live in a totally different area and I do know the only time they come across Black people is via their job or when they are seeing us in the media on the news which is always bad images. So, I already know you are being brainwashed as well to think that we are a certain type of way. So, when you come at me, in my mind I already know you think like this, so I get a certain way because I know how you think or because I understand why you think that way.

White officers, who make up most the Milwaukee Police Department, primarily reside in communities outside of the North Side Black neighborhoods. Furthermore, less than 20% of the police department is Black. Therefore, when white officers are assigned to patrol Black neighborhoods, it is very likely that this is one of few instances in which they interact with Black people. Combined with the negative images of Blackness found in media outlets, the encounters white officers have with Black people in law enforcement relationships create a negative perception of Black people which is reflected in the negative relationship MPD has with Black communities.

In focus group eight, Curtis, 41, claimed that the city does a poor job in staffing the police department by allowing non-city residents on the force. From his perspective, people who live outside of Milwaukee already have a negative perception of its residents and treat them aggressively:

Curtis: They are hiring people who live in Pewaukee, walking in to secure Milwaukee and they don't know the community, they just know the perception of this community. They think everybody is bad and they come in aggressive... I'm respecting you to do your job, and the least you can do is at least be respectful. They're not respectful to this community. That is why I don't think you can hire people from outside communities, to monitor the community. They don't live there because they don't care. Which is why you have what you have over here, they don't care.

Curtis expressed his idea that police who do not live in Milwaukee treat its residents disrespectfully because they do not care about the people there proven by their decisions to live

outside of the city. Residents of largely white suburbs feel like strangers, interlopers, and occupiers in Black neighborhoods. They are both defensive and aggressive. Participants in almost every focus group expressed similar discontent with the ways officers treat Black citizens. They too find disrespect as one of the driving forces patterning the crisis of legitimacy that the MPD faces in Black neighborhoods.

In focus group five, Jayla, 52, believes the police officers who work in Milwaukee and live outside the city express a racial bias against the city's Black inhabitants:

Jayla: They need the local police force here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin because we are the most segregated town, and the police here do not like us. And a lot of them [who] have come from little towns to come down here to be a police officer has never liked a Black person ever in his life. When they get into this, when they put a white officer in these Black communities, they don't know nothing about relating.

Jayla advocates for a "local police force" because she believes officers who elect not to live around Black people cannot relate to the community when patrolling Black neighborhoods. Problems emerge when white officers have little to no commitment to seeing the humanity in Black people and their communities in their personal and work lives.

One consequence of police officers living outside of the communities they patrol is that community members feel awkward when interacting with law enforcement. Michelle related that she feels uncomfortable around the police because there is no common point of understanding. She says "It's just a point of being uncomfortable because you don't understand. If you don't live here you don't understand us." In her estimation, if the police officers came from local neighborhoods, they might do a better job of patrolling the area because of the connections and familiarity they would bring to the job would translate into compassionate policing. They would feel at ease with residents and understand their prevailing codes of communication.

Black residents express the belief that police officers should have an investment in the communities they patrol. Jasmine, 26, and Michelle, 26, from focus group two discuss the lack of care police officers show for neighborhoods they do not inhabit:

Jasmine: I work primarily in the ZIP Code [53206] and also the police officers that police in the area do not come from the area, they do not live there. My belief is that if you are policing this area and have an investment in this area and the people here, you should have some sort of connections. And so, when I think about police it's just very far removed, it's very disconnected, and there is just no accountability for the issues. And that's on our part and on the system and the structure that allows them to exist in general.

Michelle: You can't understand it if you don't live there, if you don't know who I am, or if you don't know where I'm from.

Jasmine: Thank you, exactly, or care you know what I'm saying? My thing is, to be invested. You know because I grew up on 19th and Locust so 53206 is home for me like my grandparents still own property like right there. So, for me that's home and I care very much about what happens. When I see trash in the neighborhood, I care to pick it up because that's home. When I see a kid running in the street doing something bad I'm like 'Hey what are you doing? Make better choices' you know I'm saying? Because I'm invested in the community, because it's my community you know.

From Jasmine's perspective, police officers are not invested in the communities she lives in because they do not live there themselves. By implication, she argues that those who do not live in the neighborhood will not be truly committed to its interests. She takes a structural approach to understanding the lack of connection officers have because the city rules allow them to live and work in separate areas. She emphasizes her own commitment to her neighborhood as a model of how she believes police officers would feel and act if they did live in the neighborhoods they patrol. For many participants, this perceived lack of investment in inner-city neighborhoods translates into a lack of understanding of and compassion for its residents and results in poor policing methods and outcomes. Similarly, Sydney, 31, believes that officers do not police properly because they do not see the community as composed of homes or neighborhoods. She uses an analogy to her job compared to her self-employed business to make a distinction between how police patrol neighborhoods where they do not have residency:

Sydney: ... but they are not even forced to live within the community that they are police within, which is a problem because it is not your home. Like me, I work my own job, and I work for a company. When I'm at a company I do the bare minimum, because it is not my company. But my [business], I put my heart in it. So, it is like that when you don't live in a community, you don't care about the people there. I hate to say

most of them are white and we are Black in a neighborhood that they're policing. They come in, and they see us as different from them instantly because we are always portrayed as thugs and criminals no matter who we are or how we look.

Sydney observes white officers patrolling Black neighborhoods and sees this as problematic.

White officers do not see the humanity in Black neighborhoods because they do not live in those communities and cannot view them as relatable.

In focus group four, Ryan, 67, advanced the view that police officers who reside outside the city perceive Milwaukee residents to be primarily suspects to be apprehended rather than citizens to be protected:

Ryan: I think one of the problems with the police department of Milwaukee and some other places is the police don't represent the community, and I don't think that's going to get better now that they eliminated the residency laws. So, we'll really have some outside influences where they actually are an occupation for us. Because they go into another community that's strange to them, they have no ties other than 'this is my job', and they deal with everybody as suspects, not as citizens requiring service.

Ryan compared the policing he experiences in Milwaukee to a military occupation. During a military occupation, residents of the invaded nation are surveilled, suppressed, belittled, and demeaned. From Ryan's perspective, the police who "invade" Black neighborhoods perceive these areas to be unstable and in need of aggressive policing to establish order.

Collectively, focus group participants take issue with white police officers in Black neighborhoods because of the racist attitudes they bring and enact upon the inner-city residents. The second factor that constitutes a violation of what they perceive as the procedural justice to which they are entitled is officer decision making (Tyler and Wakslak 2004). Participants believe officers possess racist attitudes that impact the way they police. They judge the police to be unfair which then influences the negative attitudes they hold for law enforcement in general.

One might think that desegregating the police force by hiring more Black officers would solve many problems, and some participants did support that reform. But most found the issues to go beyond mere than racial representation, because they perceived a deeper issue of anti-

Blackness ensconced inside the structures and practices of police training, supervision and reward.

2. *“These Black officers on the force is just as bad as the white ones if not worse”:
Black Police Officers on the Force*

Respondents complain that white officers express anti-Black prejudice and police the Black community aggressively and disrespectfully. When discussing Black officers however, participants find that they also display anti-Blackness, often to an even greater degree than white officers. Participants report very few positive experiences with Black officers. Most who spoke specifically about Black officers expressed negative attitudes toward them and reported hostile experiences with them. Research shows that Black officers generally are likely to discriminate against Black residents due to pressures to adopt organizational practices that condone this behavior (Nicholson- Crotty, Nicholson- Crotty and Fernandez 2017).

One of the few comments relating a positive interaction with a Black police officer, however, came from Jayla. She recounts an experience in which her son was brought home by two Black officers after running into some legal trouble. She was grateful that Black officers handled him, because if they had been white, she believes, her son could have faced a harsher consequence for his behavior:

Jayla: The first time I had an instance with a Black police officer here was when my son was here. He was 18 years old, and he was a juvenile delinquent, and two Black officers brought him back to my house and thank God. I’m not trying to be funny, I was thankful they were two Black officers because they told me just to watch over him. They could have taken him to a jail because he stole somebody’s bike or whatever. I don’t think I would have the same situation if it had been two white officers.

Mod: What do you think would have happened?

Jayla: I think my son would be in jail, handcuffed, knocked down to the ground, and slammed. I have seen my brothers have their faces slammed into the ground [and] punched in the stomach. I have had my brother being treated like that, by the police officers up here.

Although Jayla expressed gratitude that these Black officers acted as they did, others in the focus group shared glaringly different experiences. Imani, 33, contends that Black officers show a much more punitive stance toward Black residents than white officers:

Imani: Black officers, a lot of time I feel my opinion on them is they are trying to prove a point.

Mod: How do you describe that?

Imani: There is, a majority of the time, when I would see a Black officer, they are usually paired up with another one [white officer]. So, they are trying to even like stand out, or impress the other one or something like that. Something to that nature where we are not the same, like I'm some kind of animal or something like that, and you're somebody different because other white people portray us as animals. So, they tend to treat us more harsh when they are around other white officers to make a point, to prove a point, or to show the difference, I don't know.

Imani theorizes that Black officers act harshly against Black citizens to prove to white officers that they are different from and better than those in the city. She contextualizes her ideas by stating this occurs especially when Black officers work alongside white officers. Cory, 38, in the same focus group echoed the sentiments of Imani. In Cory's example, the white officer had to intervene and protect the Black resident from the Black officer's aggression:

Cory: Me and my cousin one day we got pulled [over] right there on 35th and it was crazy because we were just coming out of the gas station right there. He didn't have no music, like he didn't have a chance to put the face on his radio yet. But they [the police] swear up and down that they heard loud music, and that's only because when they walked up to the truck with the flashlights they seen speakers all in the back. So, he got his license in there thinking he's legit too, so he bust out the license. Pretty much, they wanted to know his license. Next thing we noticed, a Black and a white officer, now regardless the Black cop was more aggressive, like the white dude had to calm the Black dude down.

Imani and Cory experienced a Black officer acting aggressively in the presence of a white officer. While one might expect Black officers to have allegiance to Black citizens, the opposite happened.

Ryan acknowledges noticing an increase in minority candidates hired as police officers, but complains that the training given to these recruits by their white superiors indoctrinates them into aggressive anti-Black policing:

Ryan: From the makeup of the police department, from what I believe, like there are more minorities, they are hiring more, there are more Black police and things like that, but as part of their initiation into the force

and stuff, they are taught how to deal with the community regardless. They can't, they are being overseen by their superiors because most they're all white.

Ryan does not believe that the increase in minority hires in the Milwaukee Police Department changes the treatment that Black residents receive because as an institution, the force trains all officers in anti-Blackness. Furthermore, white superior officers surveil Black officers which pressures them to police in ways that reproduces the status quo with negative outcomes for Black residents. Raven, 27, from focus group seven commented similarly to Ryan when she discussed officers' training as embedded in white supremacy:

Raven: ... but now you've got Black men who are thinking like and who have the mind of white supremacy embedded in them so they're acting just like their coworkers are acting... I'm really agreeing with what the brother said honestly, but I could take it even a step further. Just having a Black force and a white force because if you have a Black force that is doing the bidding of those who think like the same white officers who was shooting us down, what would change? You have the brother who killed Sylville Smith, that was a Black man. I mean eventually he ended up going to jail.

Raven points out that a Black officer, Dominique Heaggan-Brown⁷, was responsible for the shooting and killing of Sylville Smith, a Black citizen that touched off the Sherman Park uprising. She attributes the officer's actions to the white supremacist training he received. From her perspective, increasing the presence of Black officers would not change the relationship the police have with the Black community because they too possess a white supremacist ideology. Instead, she suggests that whites should police other whites and a community controlled force of Black officers should police African American areas.

⁷ In August 2016 Milwaukee Police Department officer Dominique Heaggan-Brown fatally shot 23-year old Sylville Smith and was subsequently charged in December 2016. Both were Black men involved in the encounter. The officer was cleared of first-degree reckless homicide in June 2017. The shooting sparked the two-day long Sherman Park uprising. He was in custody, unable to pay the one hundred-thousand-dollar bail, awaiting his trial for the Smith shooting where he was eventually cleared. He was later charged with two counts of second degree sexual assault, two counts of prostitution, and one count of capture an intimate representation without consent. In January of 2018, he pled guilty to give charges and was sentenced to serve three years in prison, 180 days in the house of correction, in addition to extended supervision (DeLong, Katie and Myra Sanchick. 2018. "3 Years in Prison in Sex Assault Case for Former Mpd Officer Who Killed Sylville Smith." in *Fox6News*, Nolan, Kay and Julie Bosman. 2017. "Milwaukee Officer Is Acquitted in Killing of Sylville Smith." in *The New York Times*.

Sydney observes a pattern similar to what Raven sees, where Black officers express especially virulent anti-Black sentiments. Curtis offered that he has experienced white officers intervening in defense of Black citizens when Black officers act aggressively. Sydney, however, sees the Black officers as every bit as much anti-Black as the white ones. Curtis chimes in that they are even more anti-Black:

Sydney: You know and the whole problem we have with that is Black people on the force who just are racist as the white people on the force... is so weird because it is like, when you see one pull up, like, any time a police is involved something with me and I see it's a white officer, and I see a Black one, I'm still hesitant because I'm always like, 'Okay what kind of Black person are you?' because they be the worse ones ...like, I had a personal situation where a white male officer attacked me, and a Black female officer sided with the white male officer. I'm like 'but you don't see that as a problem? A white male officer attacking Black female?' That is what you are, like you don't see how that's a problem you are standing right there watching this? I don't know if you can call that racist though, because they're Black and they still see us as the criminal, regardless of the situation.... These Black officers on the force is just as bad as the white ones if not worse.

Curtis: Racism is racism! That's the word.

Sydney: Is that considered racism though?

Curtis: She is hating her own kind, I mean you are making it seem like that is not possible. It's racism! It's racism against their own kind that is just pure and simple. I mean I have seen Black cops go way harder in front of a white cop and he comes in and intervenes, I have seen that too. You hating your own kind, there is a lot of self-hate. Racism is racism whether you are the opposite side of the fence, or you're on the same side of the fence with that same hate.

Curtis and Sydney debate whether it is racism that Black officers express when they treat Black residents poorly. However, they agree that whether it can be called racism or not, Black officers who behave this way are the worst for Black residents to encounter.

A key element of the principle of procedural justice states that trust or lack of it in officer motives partly constructs the public's perception about the police (Tyler and Wakslak 2004).

Black and white officers alike express anti-Black sentiments when patrolling Black neighborhoods. Participants' comments reveal a lack of trust in Black officers' motivations when they interact with Black citizens. Instead of believing that Black officers are present to provide police services, the majority of focus group participants described Black officers as working to distance themselves socially in an effort to appease the white policing apparatus.

3. *“Even if you’re a victim, you become the suspect no matter what”*: *Victims Become Suspects*

Police officers’ perceptions of race and place shape their views of young Black males as symbolic assailants and of their neighborhoods as “suspicious places” (Terrill and Reisig 2003). Terrill and Reisig find that “officers tend to view minorities as individuals associated with an increased likelihood of violence, it may also be that officers apply a similar, and even more powerful perceptual framework around geographic space” (Terrill and Reisig 2003:308). People who live in high crime areas are treated as trouble makers and experience more aggressive police action than low crime areas (Smith 1986).

The overwhelming majority (is this true?) of focus group participants claim that police officers perceive and treat all Black citizens as if they are suspects, even when they are victims of crime. Black men asserted that because of their race and gender, the police would commonly enter an encounter aggressively and treat them as a guilty suspect rather than an innocent citizen. Ryan contended that white officers treat Black Milwaukee residents as suspects because of residential segregation and the city’s residency rule. Combined, these dynamics reinforce the disconnect white police officers have with the Black citizens they police in inner city neighborhoods.

Curtis attributes the aggressive interactions he has had with the police to the anti-Black biases that many of the white officers hold and express. He doubts that any change in police academy training will rectify the experiences he has because individual officers are imbued with racial hatred that they enact upon the public:

Curtis: My interaction is, I want to say, they are always aggressive, like you say you are always considered guilty before presumed innocent. Just like you have no rights if you are Black, that is how they approach me. Meaning I’m a Black male, I’m already a threat for some reason. Regardless of my military career, my

schooling, anything. They see, because of my skin tone, I'm obviously an aggressor, without even having that sort of persona. So, I don't think it has anything to do with training. I mean they obviously don't get trained as well as they should... That's the issue. At the end of the day, if you already have a stigma or a preconceived notion about Black people, it doesn't matter who you are or what you do, because you are still that Black person. You are still that preconceived notion, regardless of whatever your education or background is, period... I think that's the real essence of the problem, they can get trained all day, but if you go home and say, "Nigger," or that's what he feels Black people are, it don't matter. You can do a thousand hours of training, soon as you get in the car and he approach that first suspect, with that person he thinks things of, what is the first thought in his head? Still the same, you can't curb that. It has to be culturally done on a massive level.

Multiple participants recounted instances where police officers treated them as perpetrators by using an aggressive tone, doubting the validity of their claims, and asking for personal information unrelated to the incident that led them to call for help. Participants shared instances where they experienced car theft, but the police officers suspected them of foul play. In focus group one, Robyn, 37, shared a time when her car was stolen at gun point and the police officers questioned her daughter's half-brother aggressively as if he was a potential suspect:

Robyn: Even if you're a victim, you become the suspect no matter what. And I just don't understand because I'm trying to tell you [what] was going on with me. Like this happened to me one time. My car get jacked at the gas station, right? My daughter had a gun put to her head, her brother was in the gas station, he comes out and gets the gun put to him too. They take my car. She calls the police and they take forever to come. I'm standing at a gas station for almost 2 hours waiting for the police. When they get there what do they do to my daughter's brother? They charge him up like he was a suspect, asking him 'What's your name?' Just this, that, and the other, so aggressive. So, he gets hot and I had to calm him down. Now two officers approaching [him] might be about to wrestle him down or something. And then they said 'Well, we don't have to take your report.' He is a victim in a messed-up situation. He was robbed at gunpoint, and they treated him aggressively.

Mod: They said they don't have to take a report?

Robyn: They told us they don't have to take our report if he keeps being hostile with them because he's asking them 'Why you're questioning me like I'm the robber? No, it happened to me.' They questioning him as if he the one who did it to himself.'

Mod: It's the way they questioned him?

Robyn: Yeah! How they were talking to him like he is the criminal, like wait a minute! So, they finally asked [what] the guys look like and he's describing how the guys look and stuff. And then they ask 'Well, what were you doing?' He said 'I was coming up out the door and I see my little sister standing at the pump with this look on her face and so they question her too. Questioning her asking what happened. I said this is so messed up... It's like, okay then if you don't want to do your job, I'm going to fuck these people up and maybe that will get you to respond. You're going to take me to jail though because I'm going through something and I'm trying to get some help? You all are not reacting in the way that you should be acting. That's crazy!

Robyn's comments revealed another common complaint with policing in Black neighborhoods, that the police prove ineffective and deliver subpar service in times of need. They perceive how Black neighborhoods to be over-policed while under-protected. The police officers in her case used their position of power and discretion when they threatened to ignore the criminal complaint if her daughter's brother did not change his demeanor. In most cases, people reach out to the police because they are the best bet for resolving matters like theft. The police have a monopoly of power and a host of resources at their disposal that can remedy the problems that citizens have. By using their power and discretion to withhold services in efforts to gain behavioral compliance, however, they further fracture the strained relationship poor Black people have with law enforcement,

In focus group four, Kiara, 65, shared an experience after her car was stolen. When the responding officers arrived, they treated her husband, Ryan, as a suspect:

Kiara: We've had experiences where our car got stolen, and we called the police and they came to the house and say, 'Oh! Your car got stolen? Okay, just a minute.' [He] took our name or whatever and then went outside. They came back in and said, 'Okay, Ryan doesn't have any warrants. So, now let me get your information.' Their first thing wasn't to say, what kind of car you got, what happened? No, what's your name? Let me go check and see if I need to arrest you.

Her husband chimed in and shared another time where their son's car was stolen and the police treated them as suspects after they called to report the crime:

Kiara: Even with our son's car, the first car got stolen we were living...

Ryan: Down in the city, off 14th and Concordia.

Kiara: Off Concordia, [our son's] car got stolen, we called the police. He came, it was a Black officer, he came, he was very nice. He took our information and everything. He left then 2 hours later, somebody came to the door, it was a cop.

Ryan: Yeah, it was a detective.

Kiara: He said, 'Oh! We found your car.'

Ryan: It was in a cul-des-ac like here.

Kiara: Yup in the cul-de-sac and that's where the car was, he had stolen the car and then they had...

Ryan: Stripped it off the radio and stuff.

Kiara: ...stripped the radio and stuff and left it there. So, he was like, accused us really of making a false report or not reporting, that we took our car down there and stripped it and then we are going to make a report to get insurance. Because he said we hadn't called the police and said the car was missing. I was like, 'Yes we did. There was a police officer here.' So, then he checked further and found out, okay, that officer just hadn't gotten back to file the report. But it was automatically [assumed that] we must be trying to file some kind of false claim.

Ryan: Because these are the second people, they were detectives that came and stuff and this wasn't, it was no longer a neighborhood doing it, these were crime investigators. So, they were...

Kiara: ...and the first thing you think is that I'm trying to rip off some insurance?

Alexis: To get over....

Kiara: Because I didn't report this car stolen, and it was right down the street here, and its stripped, like I must have drove it down there, stripped it, left it, and come home and then now I was going to call it in and say...

Alexis: Why the hell would somebody do that?

Kiara: Yeah. They're like, 'No you have not called us.' I said, 'We did, we called.'

Ryan: It was annoying.

In two separate instances, Kiara and Ryan experienced car theft and police officers unjustly treated them as suspects rather than victims.

Leila, 35, from the same group shared a time when someone broke into her car. The police who arrived at the scene asked what she perceived to be questions unrelated to the crime for which she called the police:

Alexis: When you had a car by [name] and it got broken into?

Leila: They kept asking me where I work and I was like, 'Why? Why do you need to know that?'

Mod: How did that make you feel? What do you think they were trying to get at?

Leila: I have no idea what that has to do with the car being broken into. I mean like, 'So, do you work?' 'Yes' 'Where do you work?' 'Why?' 'Well, I needed some info for my reports.' 'Why?' Like I already was upset because they wanted to know my address and my birth date and I was like, I don't understand. If you want to know how old I am I can tell you that, I don't understand why you need all that identifying information.

Alexis: To look you up.

Leila: For them to say, 'What do you do? Where do you work?' I said, 'Why?' I said it like 7 times. My brother said, 'Chill out.' I'm like, 'No, why do they keep asking me about where I work when I'm telling you somebody broke into this car? I work at Kohl's, now what? What does that mean?' Okay, does it matter that I'm professional?

The responding police officers upset Leila by questioning her and asking for identifying information instead of investigating the crime at hand. She did not work at Kohl's but gave a sarcastic answer to get past the line of questioning in hopes of receiving police assistance to have her car returned.

Sometimes when citizens reach out for police assistance, they can face arrest for unrelated matters. Chantae shared a story she heard from her friend, a Black male Milwaukee Police Department officer. In this instance, a Black man came to the police station to report a crime, but was almost arrested for an unrelated matter. The white police officer in Chantae's story, insisted on policing the perceived crime in front of him, a Black man who possibly drove drunk, instead of investigating the complaint that someone was robbing citizens at gunpoint. Although the complainant did not confess to drinking and there was no actual proof that he did commit a crime, this took precedent over an eyewitness account of a nearby crime in progress:

Chantae: I'll just use an example of a very close friend of mine was a police officer. A Black man came into the district because someone was getting robbed on the corner. It was late night ...he says, 'Hey somebody getting robbed' blah blah blah and the white officer at the front desk says, 'How did you get here?' because obviously, this man who drove to the police station was drinking. And my officer friend told me that he could tell that he had a drink but he wasn't drunk. The officer asked, 'How did you get here?' and he answered, "I drove here, I'm letting you know they're down there, they got guns out there robbing people!" and the white officer at the desk said, 'Well were going to have to take you in for driving intoxicated.' So, you know, the [Black] officer spoke up and said, 'This man is coming in here to report a crime and you're arresting the man?' you know what I'm saying? That's just one incident. But there are plenty of incidents where you can call then end up with dinner in jail.

One would expect the police officers to take the Black man's witness statement seriously, especially when considering prevailing narratives that Black residents prove uncooperative and refuse to "snitch" when they witness crimes. Chantae's account was one incident, but she claims people oftentimes wind up in jail when they come to the police as victims and witnesses. It is no surprise that they commonly avoid the police and instead find alternative methods to address issues they face in the community and in their personal lives.

When police officers treat Black residents as suspects unjustly, they undermine the social cohesion that exists within the community. People need strong relationships that nurture them and affirm a sense of belonging (Jamieson, Koslov, Nock et al. 2013, Mirowsky and Ross 2012:18). Social support networks provide people with a sense of being loved and cared for. Disruption of those social support networks can weaken self-respect and self-efficacy (Thompson Fullilove 2005). Additionally, psychological disorders can emerge from the disruption and instability of social cohesion (Chan and Mendoza-Denton 2008, Mirowsky and Ross 2012). Individual instances of discrimination affect entire communities by undermining the social cohesion that makes people believe that despite their differences, they are worthy of enough for the police to work with them to resolve community problems (McBride Murry, Brown, Brody et al. 2001, Thompson Fullilove 2013). Practices like racial profiling, harassment, and underservice that make people feel like interlopers in their communities disrupt generational communication and cooperation. Consequently, family authority is undermined and intergenerational tension and conflict emerge which damage all people in the community (Thompson Fullilove 1996). Disruption of social cohesion and social support networks have real consequences for the residents in communities. Research shows that social cohesion strongly contributes to positive community health. Emotional support and mutual respect lessens wear and tear on metabolic systems which greatly account for physical wellbeing (Mirowsky and Ross 2012:14).

4. *“They just be harassing people”*: Racial Profiling and Police Harassment

Research shows that Black people are victims of constant harassment by the police which translates into them having little faith in the organization (Brunson and Miller 2006). In high

crime areas, verbal and physical abuse, unjustified stops of people on the street, and corrupt activities are much more likely to occur (Mastrofski et al. 2002). Participants complain that the members of the Milwaukee Police Department racially profile and harass Black residents. They also report experiencing and witnessing false arrests.

The Milwaukee Police Department divides the city into seven areas called districts. Within each district stands one police station. Residents who live within the district's boundaries fall subject to routine policing by officers assigned to that area, making encounters with familiar police officers a common and likely occasion.

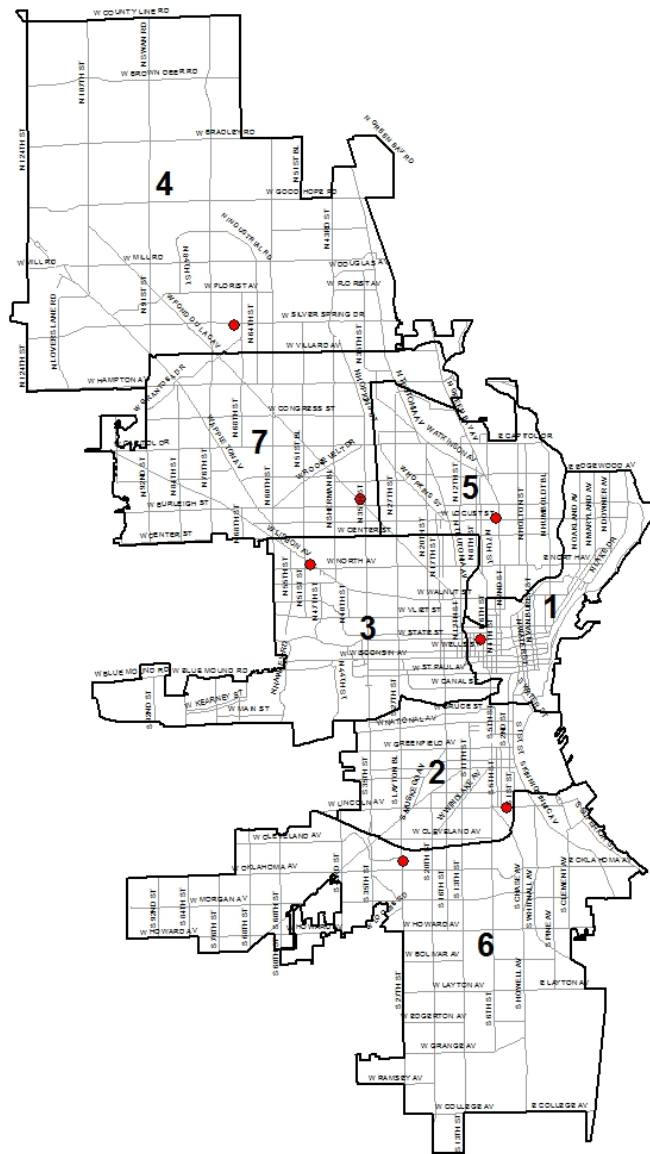


Figure 10: City of Milwaukee Police Districts

Source: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/mpdAuthors/Districts/2016PoliceDistrictMap.jpg>

It is not unusual for residents to know specific officers and vice versa. Some districts have a reputation for aggressively policing the community. District three is located on the Westside of Milwaukee, in the heart of the inner city where many poor Black residents live. In

focus group one, Robyn and Megan, 24, discuss this district's second shift and its notorious reputation for harassment:

Megan: It depends on what district, because district 3 second shift...

Mod: Second shift district 3 is bad?

Megan: Horrible! All up and through here. Between 16th and 38th they just be harassing people. Literally. and I done watched this dude—we were on my cousin's porch, he was walking past and said, 'Let me hurry up and step over here, they gonna try to harass me.' Sure enough, they [the police] came up on our porch and harassed him. We got their badge numbers because they were trying to run...

Robyn: Well you know a lot of them are on bikes and they just be harassing and all this extra stuff that the police be getting away with. It needs to slow down. If not stopped, it needs to slow down.

District three's second shift's negative reputation may cause residents and people passing through to be on guard or to outright avoid the area at that time for fear of undeserved profiling and police harassment. This knowledge inconveniences the community members and further strains the negative relationship the police have with residents.

In focus group three, James, 28, shares an experience when he was falsely arrested for old fines he did not accrue. The police misspelled his name when checking their computer system to confirm his identity. The mistakenly arrested and fingerprinted him for someone else's warrant:

James: Yup, so, I've been arrested for nothing before. My dad had to come pick me up for nothing. I'm coming home from work one time, I didn't have my license, so, I got pulled over and a cop came to the car. We were in the car and he's like, 'The license and registration.' I'm like, 'Oh! I left my license at home, but you can look me up in the system, I got nothing on my record at all.' So, then he was like, 'Okay.' So, he went back to the car, he came back, he's like, 'Well, we are not finding your name.' Yes, so, I'm like, maybe because I've got nothing on record, but I don't know. I don't have my license with me, but I do have one. 'You can run the plates.' So, he's running the plates and all this, but he was just like, 'You are going to have to step out of the car for a second.' So, I'm like all right cool, I'll step out. 'Step out of the car, and put your hands behind your back.' I'm like, 'What?' He was like, 'You're driving on suspended license' and blah, blah, blah, and he's like arresting me. Then he booked me, he took me inside, he took my fingerprints and then he was like, 'You've got to call your parents to come bail you out. It's now \$900 to bail you out, or you've got to be in here for 30 days.'

Mod: What was the charge?

James: He's like, for some old fines or something. I'm like, I have no fines, well, I'm like, 'Okay, I'll call my dad.' Then in the midst of telling my dad all the information, he came and told me, he tapped me on my shoulder, so I tell my dad, I'd have call you back or talk to you later. So, I hang up with my dad, and then the cop was like 'Oh! Well, we looked up the wrong name, we misspelled your name, and we saw you have some fines, but it really wasn't you so, you can call your dad back, he can come get you.' I was here for 3 hours by this time. So, he says, you can call your dad, he will come get you. My mom and dad came to pick

me up, and he was in there going off. They start threatening to arrest my dad, and then my dad and mom says, 'let's go.'

Perhaps if James had his license on him, he could have avoided this encounter. However, leaving home without a wallet is a common mistake many people make. The police officer should have done his due diligence to identify the driver properly. Additionally, the police officer arrested James for "crimes" discovered after he had incorrectly run his name in the computer. That leaves two questions, 1) What was the original cause for suspicion? and 2) are unpaid fines crimes worthy of arrest and incarceration? Arresting citizens for failure to pay tickets is generally a crime of condition caused by an inability to pay, not a crime of conduct. Punishing people for unpaid fines better positions those with the means to access funds to cover the expense as opposed to the poor who perhaps cannot afford to pay unexpected and potentially exorbitant fines. When money is scarce, people must choose between paying for everyday necessities and arbitrary municipal fines. The rational choice would likely be to leave violations unpaid. Furthermore, in this example, when James' father confronted the police officers for holding his son for three hours unjustly, they threatened to arrest him, using their position and state sponsored power to avoid accountability instead of resolving a conflict that could easily be settled.

Michelle shares a time where she was arrested for fines she accrued. Like James' encounter, the police officers did not arrest her for any crimes she committed while driving. Instead once they ran her name and discovered her outstanding fines, they then had legal cause to arrest her. Again, this begs the question, are unpaid fines crimes worthy of arrest or imprisonment?

Michelle: I work out in Brookfield and me and my fiancé come from Milwaukee to Brookfield. And they might be Brookfield police but it's all Milwaukee to me and at this point we are parked. I guess the police officers were going a different way. He's coming this way, we were going that way. I guess while he's sitting here he's running tags on the cars. But by the time he gets to us we're parking, were getting out of the car. [He says] 'Well I'm pulling you over.' and I'm like 'What? You can't pull us over if we're not in

the car.' He says, 'Yes I can.' and blah blah blah. He made a whole thing. Mind you, I'm on my way to work. I already had a warrant for a previous ticket, not even a warrant but I forget what they call it when you owe money, but it was a commitment to pay. So, this is what you have to do? Now he's like 'Who's car is this? Is that your girlfriend's?' because I already walked into the door. 'Is that your girlfriend's car? Is that the owner of the car?' 'No' but he still came in there, he came into my job to come and get me for what? Because you can't do anything else. Because you're standing on the fact that you can't pull us over we are not in this car. You can't come behind and say, 'I'm pulling you over hey hey hey' no! I'm out of my car, out of the vehicle and you can pull over somebody who's not in the car? Who was not doing anything in a moving vehicle? What are you doing? What are you talking about? Nothing has been done. It was just a whole big issue to the point where they called other [police] cars. I'm in handcuffs and I'm in the back and they take me to pay the ticket. I pay the amount because I wasn't going to sit there. It was a whole scene. I missed a lot of work. I got in trouble at work for it.

In both James' and Michelle's example, the police did not arrest them for any moving traffic violations. This would lead one to assume they were profiled while driving. Chantae acknowledges the persistence of racial profiling and vehemently opposes the practice. She says, "Profiling has to be directly illegal. It can't be no such thing as a hunch. Officers are able to pull people over for hunches and that's legal." Proactive policing methods such as pre-emptive traffic stops erode police-community relationships and threaten police legitimacy (Rosenbaum 2006, Weisburd and Braga 2003, Weisburd 2004, Weisburd and Telep 2014). Furthermore, research shows that these interactions create opportunities for officers to violate citizen's dignity, privacy, and liberty (Doherty 2014). Poor Black communities experience the greatest amount of proactive and punitive enforcement oriented policing which works to further erode police-citizen relationships. (Council 2004).

Many participants stated that depending on where they drive, the police pull them over without probable cause in search of an offense for which to arrest them. This is especially true when Black participants drive in predominately white neighborhoods. Race, income, and place are inextricably tied together in Milwaukee and its surrounding suburbs. Black poor people are concentrated in the city whereas moderate and high income white people make up most of the suburban population. Participants are acutely aware of this difference and they find that the police treat them different accordingly. In focus group two, Mercedes, 27, reflects upon her

experiences with the police when she lived in Milwaukee and Cedarburg, a neighboring suburb 20 miles north of the city:

Mercedes: I think it's unfair like based if you have money or not a lot of money because I stayed in Milwaukee and in Cedarburg so I see a big difference. Just based on the fact that Cedarburg has more money. People in Cedarburg make more money than those who stay in Milwaukee, and they get treated differently. Like even if I'm driving to Cedarburg and I get looked at by the police officer, I'm wondering if he's going to pull me over because I'm Black or if it's because of a different reason. So, I think it could be unfair based on like demographics like where you are so with me staying in both places I see different sides.

Despite Mercedes' residency in Cedarburg, she still feels like an outsider as she worries that the police will pull her over for no probable cause. This anxiety stems from her local knowledge that officers over-police Black drivers in white neighborhoods.

Chantae encounters the same officer repeatedly when she is pulled over in Menomonee Falls, a predominately white village to the Northwest of Milwaukee. She accuses the officer of racial profiling and fears she may find herself in a fatal encounter like Sandra Bland⁸:

Chantae: ...but small interactions like traffic tickets and stuff like that I am very quiet when it happens. Especially when I done did some shit like speeding I don't even say nothing. I have my incidents where I go to Menomonee Falls and it's the same cop that's steady pulling me over. I'm driving one way and you turn around and pull me over. So, then I said, 'Why did you pull me over in the first place?' He says it's my tags, but you didn't know my tags were expired when you came behind me. So, it's those incidents of [racial] profiling that comes first that causes the reaction. But then all of a sudden, I'm resisting arrest and I'm Sandra Bland even if I was or was not speeding.

Cedarburg, Brookfield, and Menomonee Falls all are neighboring suburbs of Milwaukee.

Participants experience and observe racial profiling when driving in these predominately white areas. The over-policing that occurs for Black people in white communities give the impression that Black people do not belong in those areas and if they are present, it must be for some illegitimate reason. This further alienates Black people from both the police and white

⁸ Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old Black woman, was arrested on July 10th, 2015 in Waller County, Texas for allegedly assaulting a police officer during a routine traffic stop. Three days later, she was discovered hanging in her cell and her death was ruled a suicide. Her family and the public protested her death and suspected it to be a racially motivated homicide. On June 2017, charges of perjury against State Trooper Brian Encina were dropped in exchange for him agreeing to end his law enforcement career. Bland's mother received \$1.9 million dollars in a wrongful death lawsuit against the county jail and police department (Sanchez, Ray. 2015. "Who Was Sandra Bland?" in *CNN*).

communities. Black people's mere presence in white communities should not be a policeable matter, however profiling them in hopes of finding an offense serves as a policing method designed to protect white property by disrespecting Black humanity.

In Milwaukee, police stops are based on race and ethnicity. Policing practice expert David Abrams, professor of law, business economics, and public policy at the University of Pennsylvania reviewed MPD police data and found that Black citizens are stopped more than six times the rate for white drivers and pedestrians in Milwaukee. Additionally, police officers concentrate traffic stops in predominately Black and Latino police districts at a rate that is three times more than what is conducted in white districts. Furthermore, he finds that Black and Latino people are more likely than white people to experience traffic stops in predominately white districts. Specifically, in predominately white district 1, police officers stop Black and Latino drivers six times more than white people and similarly in district 6, it happens more than three times as much. During these stops, Black people are more likely to be searched despite the fact that for Black and Latino drivers, police officers are more than 20% less likely to discover drugs or weapons. Law enforcement expert, Margo L. Fraiser reviewed over 350,000 records of police stops conducted between 2010 and 2017 and discovered that 48% of traffic stops and 59% of pedestrian stops in Milwaukee lacked legal justification. Policing expert Samuel Walker concluded that stop and frisk practices are engendered into the policing structure of the Milwaukee Police Department, but finds that MPD lacks accountability as it neglects to supervise stop and frisk encounters and fails to ensure that constitutional practices pattern the stops for citizens (ACLU 2018).

5. *“Where the hell did the good cops go when the other cops is doing in bad shit?”:*
Police Accountability

Focus group participants expressed the view that the Milwaukee Police Department lacks accountability for its practices and conduct within Black communities. They elaborated five practices routinely used by the police that signal that they feel no accountability to the community at large: 1) disrespect and lack of professionalism, 2) excessive use of force, 3) displays of aggression, 4) corruption, 5) the protection of problematic officers, and 6) lack of punishment for deadly police encounters due to self-investigations of these instances.

a) *Police Disrespect and Lack of Professionalism*

Jasmine experiences positive treatment from police officers while in her professional work environment. These encounters cause her to reflect positively upon officers in this specific context:

Jasmine: In my work setting, they are wonderful. Everything I need done, I need you for this information, I need this work, I need this data from you, I never have an issue. So, I will say the positive is, when you have a certain status, professionally, socioeconomic, race, gender, you can get the things you need, or get a certain amount of respect in my experience.

Jasmine’s comments reveal that police officers have the capability to behave competently when a citizen is in a professional setting. However, focus group participants largely complain that in their neighborhoods, police officers choose to treat them with disrespect and unprofessionalism. Existing research shows that minority suspects experienced disrespect more often than whites (Mastrofski et al. 2002).

Like Jasmine, Alexis refers to the difference in officers’ attitudes when she is working with them in a professional setting as opposed to a street encounter. Alexis responds to the question ‘How would you describe the Milwaukee Police Department?’ She, like participants in

other groups, believes that the police act negatively on the job because there is no system to hold them accountable for their behavior:

Alexis: Condescending. Like I've never seen a positive interaction with other people and the police in those types of settings... I know you have the capability to show respect to people that look like me, to be professional, or to hear me out whenever there is a check associated with it. But when you're out in the street, and you ain't got nothing to lose because again nobody's going to hold you accountable, I see your true colors because that's what I feel like. Your true colors and that's what I've seen.

In Alexis' estimation, the police have the capability to act respectfully to Black citizens as she has experienced it on the job. However, when she is not at work, she experiences the police as condescending because they have greater discretion in neighborhoods.

Another example of unprofessional police behavior in the community comes from Robyn who describes an instance where officers teased bystanders while conducting a vehicle search:

Robyn: ...They took my guy, searched his car, searched him down, threw him in the car, and I guess they arrested him or whatever. [While] waiting for a car to arrest him to take him to jail, one white cop said to the other 'hee hee hee hee hee, they don't like us they hate us, hee hee hee hee.'

Mod: they laughed about it?

Robyn: I'm like now if I give a smart remark from that or something like that then it's a whole other issue and it's not that people don't like the cops, it's the cops that's in that uniform with that personality.

As Robyn explains, Black citizens do not completely reject the police, but they do take issue with degrading treatment. In this example, the laughter between officers showed a lack of respect for the community they policed. While the arrested citizen and bystanders watched an unfortunate event occur in the form of arrest, responding officers showed a lack of compassion which translated into a humiliating experience for those involved especially when considering that the community had no recourse or form of retaliation as the police have a monopoly on power in police-citizen encounters. Nikki Jones writes in her research on proactive policing with African American men in San Francisco that the stop and frisk event can reaffirm negative attitudes towards the police for not only for the subject of the encounter, but also for bystanders who witness it unfold (Jones 2014). Bystanders are aware that there is little they can do in the

face of a police encounter and feel a powerlessness that results in an experiential mortification: “an individual witnesses a physical assault upon someone to whom he has ties and suffers the permanent mortification of having (and being known to have) taken no action” (Goffman 1959:33, 35).

Perceptions of degrees of fairness that officers display as they exercise their authority pattern the relationship the community has with law enforcement. Robyn’s comments coincide with theories of procedural justice that find that improper police conduct accounts for people’s negative judgments about police legitimacy. Another key feature of procedural justice refers to the distribution of politeness, dignity, and respect to citizens. Research shows that experiences with the degree of procedural justice have a greater impact on people’s views of the police than the negative or positive resolution of an encounter (Tyler 2004, Tyler and Wakslak 2004, Weitzer and Tuch 2006). In this case, despite the negative outcome of an arrest, police could keep their legitimacy intact by treating the citizens and bystanders with respect and dignity and refraining from laughing and taunting onlookers.

Imani and Jayla believe that police officers’ attitudes contribute to a negative relationship with the community. Participants find it difficult to relate to and deal with police officers when they enter an encounter aggressively with an authoritative demeanor. The ways in which officers try to establish dominance upon entering an encounter with citizens create a power struggle in which officers almost always have the advantage because of the resources at their disposal to gain compliance:

Imani: If you call them, they come out with this demeanor of just like they’re the boss, they run stuff, and it’s like ‘what the hell did I call you for?’ So, it’s the attitude and all that. I don’t like none of that, like you know you talking to me any kind of way. Don’t try to tell me how to run my household, none of that. You do your job, let me do what I’m doing.

Mod: Is that how you would describe the majority, all, or, some of the police department?

Jayla: Yeah, they are all really authoritative, and like they want you to know that they are in charge, and also will say whatever they want to you, but if you say something to them, it is disorderly conduct. How is that disorderly conduct?

Imani: Immediately.

Jayla: They don't have no boundaries, they are the law and they can do what they want to, and I don't like stuff like that.

Police officers' authoritative approaches to citizen interactions create a combative relationship between the two parties and lessen the chances of a positive encounter. Jayla, like Robyn believes that if she behaved in the way officers do, she would face legal consequences and police retribution in the form of a disorderly conduct charge. Jayla believes that it is the lack of accountability that enables police to act disrespectfully. Because officers do not face consequences for their poor attitudes, they do not fear behaving in ways that disrespect the public. The police have the upper hand in the relationship with the public as the state supports and legitimizes the power they have whereas the public is subject to police directives and bad behavior. The theories of policing that identify lack of constraints as a problem support Jayla's assertion that the police misconduct persists because disadvantaged communities like those inhabiting Black spaces in Milwaukee lack the social and economic resources to resist police domination effectively.

Leila echoes the sentiments of Jayla and Imani as she reports experiences with police officers who talk to her condescendingly when she has called them for service:

Leila: It is still the understanding that you are not here for me, you are here for you and your interest and majority of the time you are expecting somebody who could care less about your day and what's going on. Somebody that's probably condescending, who already has their opinion set up. Whether you are white or Black because like she just said, they all have been brain washed in some way shape or form. So even if it is a Black cop, at this point 'I'm a cop now so I have this authority.' So, they can be like 'Hey you can shut up and you gonna take this ticket, I don't have to respect you.'

Leila finds that the role of an officer transcends race as she has experienced both Black and white officers wield their institutional power to impose their will upon the public disrespectfully.

When people call for the police, they need the services officers can provide, yet doing so often comes at the expense of their dignity. Instead of having a humble service oriented and approachable attitude, the authoritarian approach that officers take negatively affects the way citizens think of law enforcement as a resource.

Participants commonly acknowledge that police officers encounter difficult citizens who show disrespect, however they still expect their own interactions with law enforcement to be professional. Mercedes made comments emphasizing the lack of professionalism police sometimes show on the job, but shows them sympathy by citing the humanity and fallibility that anyone possesses especially in customer service roles. Jasmine retorts in disagreement, articulating high expectations for police professional behavior despite the challenges that might meet officers:

Jasmine: I was a teacher for three years and I had a ton of bad days. But I was never allowed to go into my classroom and not be professional with my kids or want to take that out on my kids, do you know what I'm saying? So, as a police officer, you sign up to deal with the worst of the worst and you signed up to protect and serve. That means you protect and serve people who are addicted to drugs, that means you protect and serve people who might make poor choices in the moment, that means to protect and serve Black, brown, white, yellow, blue. You signed up for that job. That's not to say that they deserve a lot of the things that they receive nor do I know a lot of the things that they receive. I can't pretend that I've ever been a police officer, however I know that when you sign on to that job, you don't get to pick and choose when to hold and when to fold. That job is far too important to me... So I hear what you are saying but I also think as a cop you have to take the good and the bad and at the end of the day your job is still to protect and serve and make sure people get due process make sure they get their day in court... For me, I always go back to that it is YOUR job to protect and serve, it's not my job to understand. You have training and you are paid for this, we pay your salary. So, yes you are human but then you should be able to properly diffuse the situation because that's your job as a police officer. I know police officers, and they have talked to me about some of the training, and they do, they have conversations where they talk about how to properly diffuse situations where people are overwhelmed, when people are belligerent, they have that training. I believe you said, it's 'are you in the moment taking the time to apply those things.' So, I agree with what you are saying, yes, they are human, but at the end of the day this is not me and the interviewer having a conversation, this is me and a police officer who is trained to protect and serve and handle me properly in these situations. So, I think I get what you are saying but for me I always look at it like it's your job you are supposed to handle it.

Jasmine takes a zero-tolerance approach and finds no excuse for citizen disrespect. Officers are agents of the state and represent the police department as an organization. Therefore, their behavior while on duty reflects upon the entire police department. Because taxes paid by city

residents contribute to police officers' salaries, citizens feel officers should be obligated to treat them with dignity and respect.

b) Excessive Use of Force

Participants express the belief that the police should attempt non-lethal methods of detaining and arresting subjects. Stories of unarmed Black men and women involved in physically violent and sometimes fatal encounters with the police emerged in the focus group discussions. In every case, the participants sympathized and defended the citizen in the encounter. DeShawn, 20, formerly worked as a security guard and would routinely call the police for assistance because he was not allowed to handle people physically while monitoring the businesses he protected. As such, he witnessed many interactions with the police and unarmed thieves. He recounts a time where he witnessed a police-citizen interaction where the police used excessive force, which in his opinion, was unnecessary:

DeShawn: When I was a security guard and we called the cops, it was not our business. Personally, part of our rule when I was a security guard, you could not like physically touch people. So, we will have our own routine there, we would call the cops... I know it is [a bad neighborhood] but still don't be doing that stuff, that's not cool. If I see that, I will just be like, 'That ain't right.' You got all of this, you got these weapons and you are physically trained. Like to me personally, if you are physically trained, you're technically an above average human, you don't need mace, cuffs, a night stick, gun, Taser, all of that, why did you need all of that? Why did they give them all of that? I just don't know. If you going to give it to the people, give it to people who work at this community. Because it really don't make sense to give it to an outsider. They don't know these people, they are not going to care.

DeShawn lists the many resources police have at their disposal to gain compliance from citizens, yet he finds police officer training as the most important tool they could use.

Some participants share anecdotes of extreme cases where the police used fatal force to gain compliance. Robyn remembers a time in high school where an officer shot and killed one of her classmates in efforts to break up a fight:

Robyn: okay, one case when I was in high school one of my classmates, he was trying to break up this brother from fighting. The officers end up shooting him and he died and they still handcuffed him! When

the ambulance got there, he was handcuffed, laid down, face down, unresponsive. So why did y'all handcuff him when y'all know y'all already shot him?

Mod: Did he survive?

Robyn: No, he did not and I don't know if his mama got a lawsuit against them or not but she very well earned her lawsuit. It won't bring him back but she deserved something. Some kind of justice or something even though they were officers.

After the fatal shooting occurred, the police still handcuffed the student as he laid unresponsive waiting for an ambulance. This instance of excessive force resulted in a fatality when the police had other resources available to gain compliance that they chose not to use. Robyn, like others, wanted to hold the police accountable for the harm they caused the victim's family.

As quoted earlier, Chantae stated "But then all of a sudden, I'm resisting arrest and I'm Sandra Bland even if I was or was not speeding." Chantae expresses a linked fate with other Black people when she imagines that what happened to Sandra Bland could easily happen to her during a traffic stop. This linked fate is the recognition that what affects them as a group has consequences for each of them as an individual (Simien 2005). When citizens experience vicarious traumas by bearing witness to excessive and fatal force that police officers use upon citizens, this has a direct impact on their attitudes and behaviors toward law enforcement. Scholars point to vicarious experiences in police encounters to explain the impact that secondhand stories and observed encounters have on citizens' attitudes toward the police (Browning, Cullin, Cao et al. 1994, Brunson 2007, Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello et al. 2005). These indirect police contacts result in hostility and distrust among people because of perceptions of pervasive police harassment. Furthermore, personal relationships with police officers and positive interactions do not cancel out negative experiences (Leiber, Nalla and Farnworth 1998, Smith and Hawkins 1973). Witnesses to police misconduct see first-hand the callous ways the police interact with members of their community, but they also may imagine the same thing happening to them in the future.

c) *Displays of Aggression*

Research shows that police officers show more aggression towards citizens who live in high crime neighborhoods (Terrill and Reisig 2003). Police officers are significantly more likely to use higher levels of force when suspects are encountered in disadvantaged neighborhoods with higher homicide rates, notwithstanding situational factors (e.g., suspect resistance) and officer-based determinants (e.g., age, education, and training). A suspect's race is mediated by neighborhood context. The results reaffirm Smith's 1986 conclusion that police officers "act differently in different neighborhood contexts" (Smith 1986, Terrill and Reisig 2003). Participants find that when police officers approach an encounter with a hand on a gun, it sets a negative tone for the interaction. Participants take this act as a form of aggression and a display of excessive force. Curtis questions the motive for police officers approaching a nonlethal encounter with hands on their guns. He finds this to be a show of hostility when officers have other available resources that can help to gain compliance:

Curtis: So, people might have been intoxicated, they might be drunk, they might be brawling or whatever but then these two people are under the influence. They don't have years of training, they don't have like 100,000 man hours out here. So, somebody who pulls upon a scene, who has training, who has 1000 different ways that they can assess the situation, goes to one thing, and that is putting his hand on his gun. Like you said, you've got Taser, you've got a spray, you've got physical force, it's two of you who are sober, against two drunks, that were simply fighting, no telling what they were fighting about. Why do you need to be overly aggressive and go straight to your holster? You bypassed your Taser, you didn't even think about the spray, but you make sure you get your point across when you put your hand on the hip, why?

Curtis believes that police officers deliberately bypass nonlethal resources to gain compliance deliberately, to establish dominance quickly in encounters by symbolically reminding citizens that they could be subject to lethal force. Michelle feels uncomfortable when officers interact with her with hands on their guns during routine encounters. When asked to describe her encounters with the Milwaukee Police Department, she answered:

Michelle: Negative it's always negative. It's not comfortable it's always negative because you are uncomfortable. You don't know this person and immediately it's your first thought because you watch and when they approach you, they have their hand on their waist or they got 50-eleven more cars pulling up on you. Its uncomfortable it's negative.

In addition to the show of easy access to lethal force, the overabundance of back up officers for routine police encounters makes Michelle feels over-policed and places her in an adversarial relationship with the police in which she is outmanned and under armed. Kevin, 27, echoes Michelle's observation as he discusses his experiences of routine traffic encounters with the officer approaching the stop with hand on gun:

Kevin: I just moved back a couple of months ago, and some of my experience with the police have been fairly limited, except being pulled over, and now that you mention it, they always like holding their gun as they approach the car.

Kevin responded as if he takes police encounters with hand on gun for granted. Raven also experienced a police officer approaching her during a traffic stop with his hand on his gun. She perceived the officer as guarded and found the encounter to be nerve-racking. She interpreted the officer holding his gun as him being ready to draw it upon her:

Raven: My very most recent interaction was being pulled over a couple of weeks ago. When the officer first approached me, you could see he was very guarded. He was holding on to this gun and he kind of appeared on the side where I was. Then after he ran our plates and everything, he just came back and like, okay just, get your headlights checked, make sure you get this, I said, 'Okay, no problem.' But it was a little nerve-racking because of the way he came up to the car like he was already ready to draw his weapon, but I don't have weapons in my car, I don't carry a gun, I don't have a knife, I don't have anything.

Collectively, Black participants viewed officers who approach encounters with a hand on a gun as undue aggression. In response, they felt heightened levels of anxiety, distrust, and a sense of threat to their lives. Black participants have a collective memory of police officers fatally shooting Black and other unarmed civilians during common interactions like a traffic stop or welfare check. This is especially true when considering the cases of Dontre Hamilton⁹ and Terry

⁹ On April 30th, 2014 Hamilton was fatally shot 14 times by Milwaukee police officer Christopher Manney while asleep on a bench in Red Arrow Park following a routine welfare check.

Williams¹⁰ who were recently shot and killed by the Milwaukee law enforcement. When police officers approach routine low stake encounters with a hand on their weapons, it is reasonable for Black participants to become fearful and imagine this encounter ending fatally as so many others have for fellow Black citizens.

d) Corruption

Focus group participants reported having frequent encounters with “crooked cops” who influence their opinion about the entire force. Crooked or dirty cops are colloquial terms to describe officers who engage in illegal activity while policing. This could take the form of using undue force upon citizens, engaging in illegal trades of sex and drugs, and making false statements on legal documents among other unsavory things. Megan explains how the bad police officers make it difficult for the community to trust the entire police department:

Megan: Let's just say if I was selling drugs and I'm known for selling drugs and they try to catch me and it's crooked cop after crooked cop. They shaking me down taking whatever I got and stuff like that, okay those are the bad ones. And then you have the ones that would actually like take what they had, take it down, put that in evidence, and throw you in holding.... The bad ones make it hard for the good ones, so those are the ones ruining it for everybody. We lump them all together, you see one cop, and you see another one down the street, they are together, they work together, you can't trust one and you can't trust the other.

Mod: So, you see them as one almost?

Megan: Yes, because if one is crooked, they all crooked now.

Megan assumes that police officers who condone illegal behavior of other officers are complicit in the crime and by extension too are crooked. When professional police officers allow illegal behavior by their colleagues to go unreported and unaccounted for, this taints the community's opinion about legitimate police officers.

¹⁰ On June 11th, 2017 Williams was fatally shot by Milwaukee County sheriff's deputy when during a traffic pursuit he jumped the curb on Lincoln Memorial Drive.

Cory experienced first-hand an officer plant drugs on him during an encounter. He was visiting family and officers stopped and searched him. The search turned up futile, but because he carried a large amount of cash, the police took it and planted drugs on him to justify an arrest and the confiscation:

Cory: I have had drugs put on me by Milwaukee police.

Mod: Do you want to share the incident?

Cory: It is just in certain neighborhoods, you can't even go visit your own family on certain blocks... when you just got off the bus, or you just parked, and you are on your way up to your mom's house or whoever family member house, when they see they don't got nothing on you, or they see you have a nice amount of cash, the cash disappear, but dope all of a sudden appears. That pretty much was my situation.

It is unclear how many police officers engage in targeted illegal behavior like Cory experienced, but these stories circulate in the Black community and serve as a basis to distrust police officers.

e) The Protection of Problematic Officers

Not all police officers patrol with disrespect, excessive force, or anti-Black bias.

Participants state that they distinguish between good officers and bad ones. Many police officers embody the motto to protect and serve and do a great job interacting with the communities with which they work, however, when these officers witness and hear of police misconduct and do nothing to report or curtail the misbehavior, they then become complicit in it. Participants take this viewpoint as many express that “good” officers too often protect the “bad” ones. Common sayings like “one bad apple spoils the bunch” prove true as problematic police officers taint the perceptions and attitudes that participants hold toward all officers on the force. Ryan articulates this sentiment when he said “You’re not a good cop if you ain’t telling on the bad cop. I mean you know, because you’re a law enforcement officer, when you see a police do something illegal like assault somebody, then as a law enforcement you should be using that on him.”

Curtis reiterates the idea of good officers protecting bad ones. He takes the logic of accessory to a crime for citizens and applies this logic to police officers:

Curtis: Everybody want to talk about there are many good cops. Where the hell did the good cops go when the other cops is doing in bad shit? You are standing there then you are an accessory because that is where they were while they were doing it. If you committed a crime, and I didn't do anything and I just sat there, and I didn't call them, I'm an accessory, so it makes you all be held accountable.

Curtis pushes back against what makes a good officer. He uses the criminal charge of being an accessory to a crime and applies it to the police. The legal system which the police play a part in defines an accessory to a crime as one who does not participate in the commission of the crime as a joint principal, but aids by command, advice, instigation, or concealment (Accessory 2008). By this definition, the police officers who help conceal others who use misconduct or outright illegal behavior are just as guilty.

Leila draws upon her experience and the regulations she follows as a social worker to reflect upon the role of officers who do not speak up when they witness police misconduct. In her profession, if she does not report misconduct, she jeopardizes her own license. She believes the police should be subject to the same regulations:

Leila: The problem I have with that is again going back to what I was saying about being licensed there or certified or whatever. If there is a social worker and that's a field that I am, I mean if I know of a social worker who is abusing clients and abusing them, their relationship, either taking money, having sex, do anything like that, if I don't tell on them I can lose my license. I want to tell on them because I don't want anybody think this is what social workers do. So, if you are proud of being a police officer then you should want only the best to be a police officer, and I run the risk of losing my license because I don't tell on somebody. But they can, you know, once all the smoke clears and this person gets paid time off, and then maybe they have to separate and they get paid out, whatever, all the people that cover for them continue to be police officers. There are no reprimands, nothing like that. So, that right there built a distrust, I mean like all of the recent activities are all about police being held accountable. If they weren't held accountable, first of all they wouldn't be so many incidents, people would think before they act. But also, then there wouldn't be this distress where like, you can do anything to me and they are not, that's what happens.

Leila's focus group occurred not long after the Sherman Park uprisings. She understands the unrest and hostile attitudes toward the police as a direct function of the lack of police accountability and the failure to issue reprimands when officers are involved in a citizen fatality. Not only would increased police accountability deter officers from using fatal force when it's

unnecessary, but also the community members would feel a greater sense of faith and trust in law enforcement. In focus group five, the issue of officer accountability emerged. Jayla explains the code of silence among police officers as a well-known “blue line” in which officers protect each other and stick together even in the face of abuses and illegal behavior.

Not all police officers condone and cover up police misconduct. Chantae draws on knowledge of police inner workings from stories shared by officers in her personal life. She has secondhand knowledge relayed to her by an officer who tried to speak up and report abuse by fellow officers. However, instead of the problematic officers facing discipline, the reporting officer encountered an informal punishment. She tells the group that if officers do speak up and report fellow officers’ abuse, they face punishment which deters them and others from doing the right thing. Furthermore, supervisors do not take the reported claims seriously, and rather than confront the issues, reassign officers so that they do not have to deal with a problematic partner:

Chantae: ...but with him stepping up and saying that they punished him. Since the police are protected by the union they can't really say ‘Oh were going to put you on leave’ unless you murder a Black person that you might get that but they don't put you on leave or nothing like that. What they will do is discipline you by giving you the worst shifts like third shift you know stuff like that...So officers who do speak up they get punished and when certain situations are being brought to officers or people who are like chiefs, or sheriffs, you know people of a higher rank, it gets ignored or people will say ‘Yeah, we already know about that, just don't work with him’ or they switch partners. We know officers are crooked and corrupted instead of disciplining or correcting that error they say ‘Well, we would just switch his shifts so he won't work with you’ you know I'm saying?

Common theories blame high levels of unsolved violent crime in Black communities like Milwaukee on the “no snitching” code of the street. However, the same logic exists within communities of color to explain the lack of charges and convictions for officer involved brutalities and fatalities. The “blue wall of silence” that normalizes officers refraining from reporting one another for abuse and misconduct exists and contributes to the community mistrust in law enforcement.

f) Lack of Punishment for Deadly Police Encounters Due to Self-investigations of These Instances

Participants express their discontent with the lack of charges brought against police officers who kill Black civilians. Nationally, it is rare for police officers to face charges for on-duty fatal shootings of civilians despite the race of the victim or officer. It is even less likely that officers will face conviction for a fatal civilian shooting. Data gathered and analyzed by Bowling Green University Criminologist Philip Stinson reveals that from 2005 to 2017, only 82 state and local officers have been charged with murder or manslaughter after an on-duty fatal shooting. Of those charged, only 19 have been convicted, and most of those for less than manslaughter charges. Only one officer has been convicted of intentional murder. These figures represent a small sector of the on-duty shootings that occur, considering that an estimated 900 to 1,000 civilians are killed yearly by on-duty officers (Stinson 2017). Since the late 1970's, a Milwaukee police officer had not faced homicide charges for an on-duty shooting until the 2016 Sylville Smith case. Former Milwaukee Police Department officer Dominique Heaggan-Brown was charged with first degree reckless homicide for his role in the August 13th, 2016 Smith fatal encounter that sparked the Sherman Park two-day unrest. Later, on June 21st, 2017 Heaggan Brown was cleared of all charges associated with the Smith killing (Sanchick and Shannon 2016).

Robyn expresses her discontent with officers escaping charges and convictions when Black civilians are killed in a police encounter. She compares the light punitive consequences for police officers compared to the almost certain charges a civilian would face for the same action.

Robyn: They upset me when they shoot and kill a Black person and get away with that. Let a Black person shoot another Black person, they get charged with it right? So, fair is fair. You shoot, you kill, you get charged with it. Shouldn't matter if it was an officer, a lawyer, a judge, a doctor whoever, it don't matter what color you are, you are supposed to get treated fairly. They get put on desk jobs and stuff like that. No, you killed somebody, you took somebody away from somebody, that was not your call. That upsets me.

The discrepancy in punishment for officers relative to civilians can add to the disdain community members have for the police. Not only do white officers patrol Black neighborhoods, they do so with a lack of professionalism and exhibit outright disrespect at times. Then an officer responsible for taking the life of a community member escapes formal charges and punishment. The police department allows these officers to keep their jobs and continue to police the very communities where they have caused harm. Together, these elements help pattern the poor relationship and distrust Black communities have with police officers and law enforcement agencies.

In the event of shootings and cover-ups captured by cameras, somehow police officers still avoid homicide convictions. Raven references the 2015 killing of Walter Scott, a Black North Charleston, South Carolina resident who was pulled over for a broken tail light during a routine traffic stop. Scott fled from former officer Michael Slager who shot him multiple times in the back from more than 17 feet away. Slager claimed he experienced total fear when Scott wrestled away a Taser from him which then caused him to fatally shoot Scott. A bystander captured the encounter on video which did not show any contact between Slager and Scott. Instead it showed former officer Slager dropping a Taser next to the unarmed lifeless body of Scott. At trial, Slager denied trying to plant evidence on the victim although the public and prosecutor argued otherwise. A mistrial at the state level due to a hung jury of one Black and eleven white jurors excused Slager from a homicide conviction (Sanburn 2016). Later, Slager entered a plea agreement to settle charges he faced in both state and federal court. In this agreement, he pleaded guilty to federal civil charges of deprivation of rights under the color of law. He also admitted that he did not shoot Scott in self-defense, but used excessive force. His confession came as part of a plea deal that dismissed homicide charges in state court, but left it

up to federal court to sentence him for the crime which he plead guilty (Yan, Shah and Grinberg 2017). On Thursday, December 7th, 2017 federal judge David C. Norton considered the case one of second-degree murder and sentenced former officer Michael Slager to 20 years in prison for violation of Scott's civil rights under the color of law (Blinder 2017). The Scott case is one of the very few instances where an on-duty officer has been prosecuted for an on-duty shooting:

Raven: Walter Scott was killed on camera, shot in the back, the officer literally on camera dropped the weapon next to his body. He didn't get charged— he got charged but he didn't go to jail. The jury said, 'oh! He didn't do anything wrong.' He planted a gun next to this man, and tried to pin him! That's what they do to us!

Raven's comments about Scott's shooting reveal a sense of linked fate as she says, "That's what they do to us!" She aligns herself with Scott and sees her lived experience, identity, and fate as interconnected with his. Arguably, bearing witness to unjustified fatal shootings of Black civilians and the subsequent lack of punishment doled out for these crimes can lead to vicarious trauma.

Participants also reference the local killing of Dontre Hamilton. The unarmed 31-year-old Black man had a history of mental illness and was sleeping on a park bench in downtown Milwaukee. Officer Christopher Manney fatally shot Hamilton 14 times after he alleged that Hamilton attempted to grab his baton during a pat down. Officer Manney was never charged in the shooting. Megan from focus group one perceived the case to be one of excessive force and could not understand how the law could protect and excuse officer Manney from prosecution. Robyn reiterated her previously stated point that if a Black youth would have done the same to another Black person, they would have faced charges and jail time:

Megan: I don't understand how that one officer basically got away with shooting Dontre Hamilton. He shot that man 14 times. That was overkill. They shot that man to death.

Robyn: A Black man, a Black teenager, a Black youth would have did that to another Black person, the judge would slam dunk him.

Megan finds the excessive amount of shots fired, fourteen, to be evidence of overkill which suggests Officer Manney was not acting out of fear, suggesting something besides self-defense was the cause for the gunfire.

Chantae views the prevalence of officer involved killings as a function of the police institution. In her estimation, the police and legal system is designed to protect rather than hold these officers accountable for the harm they cause. She suggests a legal reform that requires mandatory charges brought up against officers involved in civilian shootings:

Chantae: ...and you are going to get away with it because the system protects you because you work for them. So, it's like the entire thing is flawed. It [police involved fatalities] has to be something that we say—so like these officers are charged with manslaughter or first degree murder and they get off because you have to pre-meditate in order to get first degree murder. We know that's not the case and we know that's how these officers get off right? So, there has to be something created to where there is a policy or something on the lines of murder by enforcement. We have to create that totally new policy and what that looks like. So that's why we are losing. We don't have that so it's like we have to create what that looks like.

The new mandatory charges do not guarantee conviction, but they might caution officers to use deadly force only when necessary. Also, these charges might restore some faith in the police from the community who perceive that police officers are above the law. At the very least, these charges would create a record of officers who have a history of fatal encounters with the public. Chantae's comments reveal another common complaint; participants disapprove of the investigation process for officer-involved fatalities.

Wisconsin state law requires an outside agency to investigate officer-involved deaths. Usually, the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation handles these matters. However, for the first-time, Mayor Tom Barrett elected for the Milwaukee County Suburban Investigations Team to examine a case, that of Jermaine Claybrooks.¹¹ He made this change because it takes unnecessary time for the State Department of Justice representatives to

¹¹ On March 16th, 2017 Claybrooks was killed by Milwaukee police officers while he was the target of an undercover drug investigation. Shots were fired after a police SUV ran Claybrooks vehicle into a tree.

arrive in Milwaukee from Madison and begin the investigation (DeLong 2017). Although the WI DOJ and Milwaukee County Suburban Investigations Team are not affiliated with the Milwaukee police department, participants homogenize law enforcement agencies together despite the distinctions they have by jurisdiction. From their perspective, law enforcement agencies have an allegiance to one another and if they are charged with investigating officer-involved deaths, citizens will always be at a disadvantage.

Dante, 55, expressed his dismay at the police involved fatalities investigation process. Other focus group members agreed and added that they believe officers coach one another to interview successfully and avoid charges for these cases:

Dante: Well what I don't like is the department investigating. Investigations, I've always said, should be [conducted by] a completely separate agency. Nothing to do with the police because they will cover each other's back. It's improper the way they do it right now. So, the agency that's looking into the police or the DA [should] have their own detectives... I want to say that when they investigate those shooting, it should be an agency that has no ties to the police at all. No favoritism, no promotion, no ties, no DA. A complete detective unit apart from the police.

Mod: Are you talking about an external review?

Dante: Completely

Robyn: You already know they are going to sit and coach each other. They will rehearse with each other.

Dante: Not even a department from a different city should come in and do it. To me, that's doing them a favor. Like 'you come investigate and we will do the same thing, okay?' I want something completely neutral.

Mod: Okay thank you, do you have anything last-minute?

Janet: Nope, but I agree with what he said.

Robyn: They need to be investigated too, the police, the judges...

Megan: It's ways around that though.

Robyn: That's why they cracking jokes and laughing all the time, because as the DA and the judges all of them. They probably eating dinner and wine off the bail money and all of that together.

Whether participants know the actual processes that surround officer-involved fatalities investigations, they see themselves in opposition to the state. Instead of envisioning a collaborative process that seeks justice to increase the legitimacy of police departments and

improve relations with the communities, participants believe investigative agencies work to protect officers whether they are guilty or innocent. Participants view the investigation process as one that aids officers in avoiding accountability for fatal encounters, a process designed to exonerate the accused, adding to their frustrations with the occurrence of fatal police-citizen encounters.

B. Impacts on Community-Police Relationships

The negative relationship that exists between the Milwaukee Police Department and the city's Black residents results in two main outcomes: 1) participants refuse to call the police and instead use alternative methods to resolve problems and 2) participants try to avoid the police altogether.

1. "I've been shot before and didn't call the police": Refusal to Call the Police and Alternative Policing Methods

The Milwaukee Police Department's poor relationship with the Black communities it patrols results in many negative outcomes, one of which is that Black residents refuse to call upon the police for help in emergency situations. Martin, 18, summed up this sentiment when he said, "I don't call the police, I don't think that's going to do anything." Many participants expressed the opinion that they would rather, and often do, call upon alternative resources for resolving legal complaints, issues emanating from intimate partner violence, and medical crises that the police would normally address. Participants use alternative resolution methods because they trust them more than they trust the police. They find that calling the police produces more problems than it solves because of the punitive measures the police take, such as harassing potential suspects, arresting victims and witnesses, and writing tickets for issues unrelated to the reasons why the officers were called to the scene in the first place.

Jasmine explained her refusal to call on the police as an issue of trust. Instead of summoning the police to handle neighborhood issues, she relies upon community members whom she trusts to a greater degree than the legally constituted authorities tasked to ensure her

safety. She names the Nation of Islam specifically as one of the groups she calls to help manage problems in the community:

Jasmine: If I have an issue, I have a phone and I have people in the community that I call that I trust. I have called the Nation of Islam for some issues that I had in my community. I've called different brothers in the community. I never in my 26 years of existence called the police for any issue I've had and I've always had a 100% success rate with dispersing any issues that I've had whether personal or something that I've seen in the community [by] using people in my community. So, they [the police] impact me because of the trauma that I have to see day to day with my brothers and sisters and seeing them being impacted but in terms of me, I don't deal with them. 911 would be the last number I will call for anything I promise you that, I'm not kidding.

In Jasmine's experience, her decision to call upon alternative methods for resolving police matters has resulted in a successful resolution every time. Conversely, she has witnessed the police interact negatively with community members. These two facts taken together make the Nation of Islam a more favorable resource for managing conflict in her community because they have a high success rate of resolution and little to no record of harming her peers.

Cory has greater faith in himself than the police to rectify any situation that he might encounter. Unless it concerns his children, Cory finds no use for the police even in potentially life threatening situations. Like Jasmine, he feels that the lack of trust between himself and law enforcement is responsible for his decision to avoid police intervention:

Cory: Me personally I try my best not to call the police...I would not normally call them in a case of emergency, but I will say as far as my kids or something, if something happens to kids, you know that, 911 is going to be there, you automatically got to call the police. But as far as anything else, I can handle it on my own. I would rather handle my own and take a chance than depending on the police.

Mod: So, you would call police in like a potentially life threatening situation, is that what you would say?

Cory: If it has something to do with my kids.

Mod: But not for yourself?

Cory: No.

Mod: Okay that's interesting.

Cory: I don't even trust them like that.

Cory would only call the police to protect his children because unlike his own life, he is unwilling to take a chance regarding them. This would imply that he has some sort of faith in the

police to resolve matters, but only when absolutely necessary. Although Cory hypothesized that he would not call the police if his life was at stake, Chantae actually found herself in a life-threatening situation and still refused to call the police. She was shot, but rather than contact emergency services, she drove herself to the hospital:

Chantae: I've been shot before and didn't call the police, I went to the hospital. I honestly don't get with them, but I will call The Nation [of Islam]. Like people think it's odd to have your own policing, like that sounds absurd, but at one point there was no police. We can do that if we just have that mind frame as the Black community. The Nation will come out at any moment, but we have to get that out there. We have to get people to believe that, because the police is not your savior. If someone calls them, then somebody has to go to jail. That's not helping. I really don't deal with the police. I don't have any encounters with the police besides something like when I'm driving and then there's the police, it's just that mental 'Damn, stay behind them' type of shit.

Chantae believes that if the police are called to the scene of a crime, their primary form of conflict resolution is to remove someone from the interaction by way of arrest. However, jailing people does not address the real issues in the community that cause crime, and she questions the value of a punitive approach. She gestures to a moment in history before organized police were in charge and people managed their own affairs. Like Jasmine, Chantae references the Nation of Islam as an effective alternative resource to manage policeable matters. With the help of the Nation of Islam, Black people could create a community where real problems were addressed and the first reflex would not be to imprison and remove people from their homes, families, and neighborhoods which only increases dysfunction.

Curtis echoes Chantae's concerns, stating that he refuses to call the police because he believes someone will get shot or arrested which would only cause more harm than help. Furthermore, the officers who are involved in fatal encounters with citizens avoid consequences even when their actions are captured on camera:

Curtis: ...because if you're open to call cops, do you know somebody will get shot, or somebody will get arrested? It is all going to be recorded on video, but somehow, they still will get off, because the judge is their buddy, the whole system is their buddy. They only going to let them go down if the cop is Black.

Curtis' belief that the police could avoid criminal consequences even in the instance of recorded evidence to prove excessive use of force is realistic when considering the Eric Garner and Philando Castile cases. On July 17th, 201, Eric Garner was killed after Staten Island, New York police officers performed an illegal chokehold while arresting him for selling loose cigarettes on the city's sidewalk (Smith 2017). On July 6th, 2016, Philando Castile was gunned down by a St. Anthony, Minnesota police officer during a routine traffic stop (Baker, Goodman and Mueller 2015). Both instances were captured on camera and nationwide protests ensued. Officers were never charged in the Garner case and in the Castile case, the responsible officer was acquitted. These national incidents and many others like them create the lack of faith that Curtis expresses about law enforcement and its commitment to protect and serve the community.

DeShawn echoed sentiments like those expressed by Chantae and Curtis regarding the police's impulse to use punitive measures to resolve conflict. DeShawn believes that the police desire to ticket people instead of trying to resolve conflicts or violations. Combined with the aggressive mood he finds that officers manifest when he has interactions with them, DeShawn tries his best to avoid calling upon the police:

DeShawn: I mean I can't call police. With my experience with them, I won't call them. I only get interactions with them if I'm being pulled over from the court house. Every time I interact with them it is always like they are in an aggressive mood. Like when they pull you over, they are looking for a ticket.

Raven views the police as an organization that does not protect and serve her community which makes her not want to call upon the MPD for help. She thinks the only benefit that the MPD brings to the community is that they come to pick up dead bodies. In fact, one time she heard gunfire on her block, but did not bother to call the police because she believed they would be ineffective and only cause more problems rather than solve the crime at hand:

Raven: ...the benefit that I've seen them do is come pick up dead bodies after, because I've literally seen them come to pick up the dead body... There was, shit, like a couple of drive-bys going on, on my block last summer. I didn't even call the police.

Mod: Why didn't you call them?

Raven: For what? I couldn't think of a reason to call them.

Mod: Why not?

Raven: I didn't call for a few reasons. Number one, I know that there are cruisers that sit up just a block ahead that sit and watch people speeding or they check you if you don't have your plates, right? They sit just a block away. You mean, you didn't hear those shots? You clearly don't care. What am I going to call you for? Now, I knew nobody died they just shot at somebody's house, and I didn't really think they called the police because no police came by. My next reason was, say I call the police, the way the crime rate is right now, you might just target a Black man walking around who hasn't done anything, who has nothing to do with this and now all of a sudden, he is your suspect, he is your target. So, who am I going to describe to you? So, I don't know who did that, I didn't see him. So, I'm like, you know, there's no need to call you because now you're going to come through here, you're going to start canvassing and harassing people and you're probably not even going to get the people who actually did it. So, I just didn't have enough patience.

Raven's comments question the commitment of the police force to protect and serve. If the signal of a potential violent crime in progress like an audible gunshot does not result in police action, why are they in the neighborhood? Raven is aware that her calling and reporting to the police could potentially exacerbate already counterproductive policing methods of racial profiling, therefore she refuses to contribute to that pattern.

Raven stated that she did not call the police because she did not want bystanders to become suspects. Cory explained a time when that very thing happened to him. Cory has a criminal record and from his perspective, he is indefinitely tied to the system. He does not call the police because he is a perpetual suspect. In one example he shared, Cory called to report a white person committing a crime and he wound up arrested:

Cory: I actually called the police on another person and I specifically said a white person. You call the police on them, but at the end of the day, I'm the one in the back seat, I'm the one getting my name ran, you know what I mean? It's like, that's ridiculous. It is like a waste of time to call on them, because they are trying to dig up something on you, when you're the one who called them in the first place.

Mod: So, you feel that you call as a victim, and then you became victimized?

Cory: Right, because you know, when they ask your name, for one, I'm always taken off to the car and they run my name. If you've got any type of criminal background, or in the system period, you are automatically tied to you know, to the system.

Cory avoids calling the police to protect himself from further entanglement in the criminal justice system. This means that because Cory has a criminal record, he finds himself ineligible for police assistance, even in deserving encounters.

2. *“They don't know me and I don't know them”*: *Avoiding the Police*

The poor relationship that Black communities have with law enforcement results in many people intentionally working to avoid the police. Jayla does not like the police due to her prior poor interactions and negative disposition toward law enforcement. “I try and avoid them because I don’t like you, and I have nothing nice to say to you, and I don’t have to kiss your ass. I don’t like the fact that, that you think that I got to talk nicely to you, but you can talk to me any way you like.” Some participants go out of their way to avoid sharing physical space with the police. DeShawn will cross the street so that he does not have to cross paths with officers:

DeShawn: I just try to avoid them as much as possible.

Mod: You try to avoid them? Intentionally avoid them?

DeShawn: If I see the police on the same sidewalk that I’m on, I just go to the other side walk.

Mod: You cross the street?

DeShawn: Yeah, I cross the street.

Cory will evade the police while driving to avoid any potential interactions. If driving and an officer appears in the rear-view mirror, he will park and walk away from his car to eliminate a potential traffic stop. He says “If I see they are steady following me, I hit my signal. If I see they are hitting a signal behind me, I will stop, jump out, and walk to somewhere, to a point like that’s where I was going. Then when they pull off, and they are going on about their business, I give it a couple of minutes and hop back in the car.” The police profile Black men

especially during traffic encounters, so it is reasonable that Cory fears an interaction. Black men have been fatal victims of police force during routine traffic stops.

Jayla shared that she would behave similarly to Cory. She too would change the route she is driving if an officer appears behind her. She says, “I actively avoid any confrontation with police officers. If I see a police officer coming my way, I go the other way. If I’m driving down the road, my daddy bought a new Lexus, of course that car is going to be a target.” Jayla believes the police would profile and stop her because of the luxury vehicle she drives. In an economically depressed city like Milwaukee where Black people driving luxury cars could easily be suspected of either stealing them or obtaining them by illegal sources of income.

In some cases, participants refuse to associate with the police because they fear community retaliation. The police have such a poor relationship with the community that emanates from disrespect, abuse, and unfair arrests. As a result, the police for some, are in direct opposition to Black communities and their interests. From this perspective, anyone from the community who aids the police in investigations that would have possible negative outcomes for the community, become traitors and disloyal to the communities in which they claim membership. This is true even in extreme crimes such as murder investigations. Megan discusses the perception community members might have of someone if they are caught talking to police officers. Friendly or not, if the police know who you are by name, you become suspected as an informant:

Megan: You're already guilty in their [the community's] eyes. If you're not cooperating with the police, don't do stuff like let them see you walking down the street with them or yell your name. Other people think that you are cooperating with the police.

Mod: So, when other people are friendly with the police-

Megan: Not even just friendly, if they come up to you because they know you.

Mod: So, friendly or not, if you're talking to the police other people might think that you are an informant or something?

Megan: Yeah.

Mod: So, you don't want any contact with police?

Megan: They don't know me and I don't know them.

Participants in focus group five talk in detail about the perception they and others have of community members who associate with law enforcement. Cory echoes the Megan's sentiments regarding community members dealing with the police:

Cory: I do slow down if I see an interaction as far as like, are they cool or something? First thing come my mind, he is snitching, if he is trying to set somebody else up...It is true to certain extent, because even in jail you got brothers who did set up brothers. You got sons that set their mama's up, you got sons that set up their sisters and brothers and I mean it is pretty much true. A street dude ain't got no business with the police, unless it is search or some sort of trouble. But if I'm sitting there free will with the police, and everybody knows that I'm a neighborhood criminal, it is not going to add up.

The police often rely upon witnesses and informants to solve crimes, especially if there is a lack of physical evidence. Furthermore, leveraging deals against people arrested for crimes could involve turning in additional suspects for reduced charges or sentences. Cory draws upon his local knowledge of people who have turned others in to justify his impulse to think that known criminals would turn informant when they interact with law enforcement.

Jayla remembers a time after the Sherman Park uprisings when a news crew filmed a woman and the police working to lift spirits by giving away free cupcakes and hugs. She was in the same area, but told the news to not air her in a friendly interaction with the police for fear of community retaliation:

Jayla: After the riots that happened in Sherman Park, there was a lady that was standing out there, I was standing on the bus stop. They were standing out there handing out free cupcakes and free hugs. These two white police officers pulled up in this tactical van, got out, stopped right in the street, and hugged all of us. I was like, 'Oh well,' then the camera started taking pictures of all of us being hugged by them. I told the news people, 'Do not post this on TV, don't post me being hugged by them, don't do that' because I had to say this much, the Black community will retaliate. I don't want problems. I am not hugging you all. He came over here and hugged us, because we were standing on the bus stop, that's your idea...That is why I won't date a cop. I don't want that picture taken of me with that cop hugging me. We'll just say that's exactly how the Black community feels if you are hugging on a police officer. That is why I quit dating them too, because my family really started to stop talking to me when I was dating a police officer.

Jayla's family's decision to refrain from talking to her because of romantic relationship with an officer could stem from their fear of her partner using knowledge he learned about them in a personal setting against them criminally. Furthermore, Jayla's loyalties could shift from her family to her partner as she becomes deeper involved with him, putting her in a precarious position.

It is possible that if the police would prioritize anonymity and work in ways that punish only the wrong doers instead of innocent bystanders and witnesses, then the disposition towards those who aid investigations might change. Instead of viewing community members who interact with officers as potential informants and snitches causing greater harm to the community, they could be viewed as partners in dealing with crime in the neighborhood. Kelly, 25, discusses how her neighborhood knows her grandmother as a "police caller." Community members know this because when officers arrive on the scene, they come to her house, in uniform, to follow up on the report. Kelly would prefer officers act discretely to increase anonymity and community safety:

Kelly: ...or even just being a police caller. My grandma is known as one. Everybody knows, plus they [the police] come up to your house. So, if you do see something and just say 'I'm a bystander or whatever and I've seen blah blah blah send somebody out' they come to your house and ask you everything. They don't even be discreet about it. They just come to your house three hours later. How we supposed to be safe with that like?

Kelly's concern for safety in the face of police association is justified when considering the comments made by others about community retaliation and suspicions of informing. The police approaching your home in uniform after a disturbance is sufficient evidence for those seeking to enact retribution toward those who bring the police into the neighborhood. The risk of community retaliation outweighs the fear Kelly has regarding whatever the reason why the police were called in the first place.

V. Chapter Five- Gendered Aspects of Police Experiences

A. *“Black Men Are Target Practice”*: Relationships Between Black Men and Law Enforcement

In focus group discussions, respondents contend that Black men face greater consequences for traffic offenses than Black women. Participants believe women receive less harsh treatment because the police perceive them as less threatening and less dangerous. Black women are conscious of the gendered differences they experience when interacting with the police to the point that they fear for the safety of Black men more than they do for themselves. Jasmine, 26, confided that she feared more for her Black relatives in the city of Milwaukee when dealing with the police than she did for them when she lived in Texas, a southern Republican state with a distinct history of overt racial violence against Black people. Because of her fear for Black men’s safety when encountering the police, she experiences anxiety and finds herself taking extra measures to ensure her that her loved ones will be safe:

Jasmine: I don't really fear it as much for myself as I do for like the men in my family. Me and my boyfriend just moved back here from Texas and it scared him so much to think about what our life would look like. Mind you, I'm in Texas okay, it's Republican and redneck but I felt he was safer in Houston, Texas and Dallas, Texas than he would be coming back to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. So, every day I find myself on it ‘baby you okay?’ it was never like that. So, the way I feel about the men in my life has shifted. I'm always just— for them my heart and my emotions are just scrambled all the time when I'm thinking okay is my nephew going to get home tonight? Is my brother going to get home tonight? Is my dad going to get home tonight? Is my man going to get home tonight? So, I know Black women we have our things that we need to start to address more because Black women are getting shot and killed just like Black men. Again, the statistics and the data right now is that Black men are target practice.

When Jasmine expressed these thoughts, the women in the group nodded and verbally agreed with her fears. Although Jasmine acknowledges that women too are victims of fatal police encounters, she and many others believe that the Milwaukee Police Department intentionally targets Black men for deadly force.

Participants in focus group four express similar ideas when comparing the treatment that the MPD gives to Black men relative to Black women. Leila, 35 recounted a time where she was

misperceived as a man. When officers discovered she was a woman, they let her go with only a warning, even though she was violating a city curfew ordinance:

Leila: I'm just saying, we were just driving around and the police stopped us. They were just in the street and stopped us. The one police officer to the side [where] I was driving said, 'It's a car full of chicks, let them go' and they let us go. So, I feel like, if it was my brother and his friends then everybody would have been out the car. Actually, we were not supposed to be out, I was 16 years old, and it was about midnight, 12:30 at night because the Rave was letting out. I could have, I mean we were violating curfew, but not that I wanted to be pulled over, but I'm saying they just let us go, it wasn't an issue.

Kiara: That happened to you when you had that hat on?

Leila: I got pulled over and I had on [my friend's] hat. So, I got pulled over and when I set the hat off, he came and he had his hand on his gun and he saw me, he didn't take my ID. He said, 'okay, slow down.'

Mod: So, you think it's a gendered aspect that goes on?

Leila: It's definitely a gender aspect.

Mod: Other people agree?

Kiara: I would say that.

Leila shared another similar, but separate experience with the MPD where officers drew their guns, then put them away upon discovering that all the occupants inside the vehicle were women. In this instance, the police profiled a car with extremely dark tints believing that perhaps men were inside. However, the police officer did not explain the reason for the traffic stop, and did not ticket or arrest anyone:

Leila: Actually, I was pulled over in my friend's car. She was driving. She got tinted windows. The police came upon both sides, we were on Fond Du Lac, with their guns drawn. When they saw that it was a car full of chicks they put their guns away. My friend was like, 'Why do you guys have your guns out?' He was like, 'Oh, we just wanted to see something.' She said, 'Why did you put them away?' and I thought we were going to jail. But she was like, 'But why are you putting them away? So, you saw us? This is why you put it away?'

Black women shared several experiences with police encounters, but they often defined them as situations with low stakes where they were given warnings rather than tickets or arrests. As expressed above, Black women believe that the police would give them much harsher and more punitive treatment if they were men.

Cory, 38, described a time when he was pulled over by the police. In this incident, he believed that the outcome would have been different if not for the female passenger that accompanied him. Instead of getting off with just a warning as he did, he believed that if he had been alone, the police would have arrested him:

Cory: For instance, we were coming from, where was that? West Allis one day, we were coming from West Allis. Her seat lay back, they didn't do nothing but see me. You know they ride past, [I was going the] speed limit, matter of fact I was going probably a little bit under the speed limit. Ride past, no reason to mess with it. They wait till we get to the end of the light, we get close to the light, like they can't pull us over. 'What did you pull us over for?' The female officer said I was speeding and then the male officer said that my top brake light on my truck was out. Now how did you see my brake light when I never hit the brakes until we just made it up here? You know what I'm saying, it was just.... and then when they see she is just a female, when she raised up, they see she is a female because at first after that they were talking about the truck being suspicious. They called and said that I was rolling in the neighborhood and my truck was suspicious. But when they see her raised up and they see there was a female, it's like, 'Oh have a nice day, get this light fixed' and I'm sitting there like, if I was by myself, anything could have possibly happened. I probably would have went to jail for something.

In relating his anecdote, Cory surmised that the woman's presence lessened his threat to police officers as a dangerous person or someone possibly engaged in criminal activity. A woman in this instance could be a witness whose presence impeded the officers from harassing him in search of an offense for which he could go to jail. Focus group participants have rational fears for the safety of Black men given the fact that this demographic is overrepresented in every sector of the criminal justice system, from street and traffic stops, to arrests, and incarceration.

B. "We are the ones who have to call the police": Relationship between Black Women and Law Enforcement

Black women describe a complicated relationship with police officers. The terms under which Black women interact with the police differ greatly from those of Black men. Black women are burdened by the police, when they interact with them, but also because they become responsible when Black men intertwine with the criminal justice system. Chantae, 29, articulated

that Black women often must interact with police because of their relationship with Black men. Black men's absence due to premature death from illness and murder or their removal from society by the criminal justice system leaves Black women to speak up on behalf of Black men:

Chantae: I don't know the statistics and 70% of statistics are made up on the spot [all laugh at joke], but I can say a high percentage of Black women are mostly dealing with the police. We are the ones that have to call the police. I don't see Black men calling the police like that, it's always the women. The Black woman or the Black neighbor. When it is our sons, our husbands, our fathers, and brothers who are in jail, we had to deal with the system. We have to put money on the books. This is what we are doing as Black women. I feel like we deal with the system and the law more than any other. Well we have our voice and we are able to do stuff because our men are either murdered or in jail and can't speak and they need someone to speak for them.

Black women find themselves compelled to be advocates for Black men because Black men are not able to defend themselves from the criminal justice apparatus adequately. Additionally, Black women provide emotional and financial support for incarcerated Black men by showing up at jail visitation hours and adding funds to prison accounts. Black women are forced to interact with the criminal justice system when they support arrested and incarcerated Black male loved ones.

Men and women in communities of color are inextricably linked and what happens to one, undoubtedly affects the other. Black feminist scholars have recently illuminated the importance of studying and alleviating the ways in which state power operates in the lives of women of color. Black women have often been left out of the conversation because of their precarious position in society. They have economic marginality, but domestic centrality. They are expected to bear responsibility for the wellbeing of the family, but have the least ability in the labor market to secure the resources needed to do so. Black men have been devastated by artificially low wages and kept in a reserve army segment of the labor force, working mostly subsistence jobs or less. Furthermore, millions of Black men have been removed from the community and labor market by way of mass incarceration. The gendered dynamic of the criminal justice system has left women and dependent children abandoned and burdened with

bearing the brunt of the community's problems. The upside, however, is that Black women have had to be more public, solve more problems, and remain more active in the workplace than white women have, precisely because Black women cannot depend on the family wage and have to struggle in the absence of the presence of men a lot of the time.

Black women find themselves in uninvited encounters with police officers, often on behalf of a Black man they know. In these encounters, the testimonies I collected entail claims that police officers misinterpret Black women's communication style as combative when they are merely just passionately expressive. Watching a loved one removed from his social support system can cause emotional distress for those around him. Yet the police expect Black women to behave calmly and to speak rationally without emotion during these difficult and potentially traumatic situations. When Black women engage the police during these upsetting encounters, they may have trouble communicating effectively with law enforcement personnel. Mercedes, 27, explains how police officers regularly perceive Black women to be confrontational, combative, aggressive, and uncooperative, when in fact, they intend to be none of these things:

Mercedes: We can be talking, but that does not mean I'm mad, that does not mean I'm going to beat her up. That's just our emotions [when] we are heavy into the conversation. With this conversation, it's nice hearing different points. It would be nice if we were talking to police officers and they could understand that she's not getting jazzy, she's just trying to get her point across. Sometimes the police just don't see the whole picture. You don't know what this person just came from. Okay, my baby just got shot and I have all these emotions going and they are just not understanding. Okay, her screaming or her cursing is just her way of expressing herself. That's not her going against the cops. It's just the fact that she is trying to express— well she can't express how my baby just got shot or my brother just got shot or my brother is in jail and I don't know how to explain that. It just happens.

As a result of police officers misinterpreting Black women's communication as combative, they wind up the subject of a negative police encounter. Police accuse Black women of being “jazzy” or “mouthy” and often respond with punitive consequences like arrests:

Chantae: I feel like a lot of Black women are in jail because of our mouths... We are very emotional beings so we might talk like this, but we don't feel nothing. We don't feel no certain type of way, it's just how we talk. We can disagree, we can whatever, but it comes off [as] very powerful and aggressive to people who don't look like us. So, I know a Black officer was partners with a white officer. So, they come into a situation and something just happened, a baby got hit by a car or whatever the case may be, and we are

excited and the officers are men saying, 'you need to calm down right now or I'm going to have to put handcuffs on you' and it's like, no, chill, this just happened to her and this is how she's expressing herself. So, when I am talking to officers I really have to find myself calming down.

Police officers use the resources at their disposal to obtain compliance from citizens.

When police officers do not approve of the ways Black women talk or behave, they use arrests and incarceration to neutralize a situation. Being irate or difficult in communication is not a police-able offense, but the discretion given to police officers and the effectiveness of the threat of arrest and incarceration work well to eliminate the need to entertain or resolve a dissatisfied citizen's complaints. Citizens often fall victim to "contempt of cop" arrests. In these instances, the public shows contempt for an officer by their manner of speaking or by refusing to do what an officer orders. Although one behaves legally, these abusive arrests occur because an officer does not like what a citizen does (Lopez 2010).

Black women are aware that officers, white officers in particular, do not understand their communication style. To accommodate this and prevent misunderstanding, Black women must police themselves and remain acutely aware of their speech and demeanor and how officers interpret them to avoid police retribution:

Mercedes: Right, you have to police who you are.

Chantae: Yeah, I have to police who I am. So, I then find myself being silent. So, there are a lot of incidents where the police are around and you won't find me saying anything. Either I'm not saying nothing or I'm saying everything. There is no in-between for me.

Michelle: Exactly. I can't talk to you how I want to so you can feel what I'm saying, so you can't feel what I'm saying.

Because Black women can find themselves on the negative end of an encounter with police officers if they speak or behave emotionally, they must pay special attention to themselves. It seems easier and safer to forfeit the conversation and lapse into silence instead of trying to communicate with officers who do not understand their intentions.

Recognizing the social gap in communication, Black women in this study express a desire for officers to take the time to understand them. They acknowledge that cultural differences exist and do not expect an automatic common ground to arise. However, if police officers would try to understand and help rather than to punish and police, they contend the impact would positively alter the relationships citizens have with the criminal justice system:

Jasmine: For me, I would feel better about that if there was the desire where cops genuinely wanted to understand. I'm cool with you not understanding. I'm a Black woman you're a white man. I don't know how much we are going to understand each other, but if I felt there was a genuine desire for you to take a moment and ask me, or be asked, in those moments, that would make me feel better about it. But I don't ever feel like there is effort to try. And that's where I get frustrated.

Communication is one of the most effective tools police officers have to resolve conflict. If they would place more emphasis upon using this resource and showing interest in the person they interact with beyond the encounter, then it is possible both parties could find common ground and encounters would end successfully. At the very least both parties could walk away without negative feelings and attitudes.

C. “If the cops don’t come, that woman may die”: Managing Domestic Violence Encounters

Beth Richie (2012) explores the ways in which Black women experience male violence. Specifically, she analyzes how structures of racism, economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, and the ideology that informs conservative public policy conspire to make Black women particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of male violence. She argues that the “blind spots” of both feminist campaigns that do not deal with race and antiracist campaigns that do not deal with gender leave Black women vulnerable to particular forms of male and state violence. Black women are the most stigmatized and least protected group of women, therefore

they are in the greatest danger. Richie posits that the farther a woman's sexuality, age, class, criminal background, and race are from hegemonic norms, the more likely it is that she will be harmed, and the more likely that the harm will not be taken seriously by her community, by anti-violence programs, or by the general public. The disadvantaged position of some women renders the abuse they face invisible. The difficulty Black women experience when attempting to access police resources in the face of violent domestic encounters reflects the distinct ways in which Black women are perceived. Testimonies by Black women in this study reflect the vulnerability they experience when they find themselves in one of these encounters.

Many of the Black women in my study would like to rely upon the Milwaukee Police Department as a resource for managing domestic violence incidents. These women express a desire for the police to protect them in these situations. At the same time, they complain about the difficulty they encounter when attempting to access the safety resources that the police department offers. They report that 1) police and dispatchers do not take their domestic violence complaints seriously, 2) they experience long wait times for the police to arrive, 3) jurisdictional boundaries limit where, how, and which police officers can assist them, and 4) they become suspects when they reach out for assistance as victims.

Black women believe that the police offer one of the few resources that can protect them when managing intimate partner violence. For the women in this study, domestic violence problems are the rare -- if not the only -- instances in which they will initiate contact with the police. Many believe the police can protect them from potentially fatal encounters and they highly value the help the police department offers in this regard. Jayla, 52, described how grateful she was for the police assisting her in handling a domestic violence situation, although even she recognized the limits of police assistance. Not only does she desire the police to show

up when called, but she acknowledges that if not for the police, she might jeopardize the freedom and safety of a relative who might unlawfully manage the situation for her:

Jayla: When I first moved here I was in a situation with someone and I had a domestic violence situation. Thank God, it was police [who helped]. I mean we need help, when you are in a domestic violence situation you need the cops. I don't want my brother to go over there and beat him with a baseball bat. I want the cops to do something about it.

Mod: Why would you prefer the cops handling it?

Jayla: Because if my brother goes over there and beats him up, to keep him away from me, then my brother is going to jail for a long time, because the dude is a cop. My brother is going to go jail for beating him up. Versus the police going over there, after I got a Black eye or whatever, the police are going to put him in jail, and I get my restraining order or whatever. Not that restraining orders really help, but once you have it, oh my God...After I got my restraining order I felt like I needed that, but then I still had to go and go get my brother. I did, because some domestic violence situations, I'm going to tell you right now, if the cops don't come, that woman may die.

Jayla is grateful that she can obtain a restraining order, but she still has her brother on reserve to protect her in the future. Even with a court order of protection, when there is an immediate threat of danger, a piece of paper will not stop violence or save a life. There are many times where women are hurt or killed by those whom they have legal protection from. If these women survive an attack from someone they are legally protected from, it is only then that the attacker might face jail time for violation of a court order.

D. Domestic Violence Complaints Not Taken Seriously

Although women acknowledge the police as a preferred resource for mitigating domestic disputes, they find a host of barriers that prevent them from successfully accessing the safety that law enforcement offers. Women complain that police and emergency dispatchers do not take their domestic violence complaints seriously. Women feel that they must provide evidence of physical harm, debate their claims with police personnel, and answer questions they deem unrelated to the current emergency before police will act on their behalf.

Kelly, 25, explains that one must prove a history of abuse before obtaining a restraining order against a violent intimate partner:

Kelly: To even establish it in court something has had to happen. They gotta do something to get the police over there for them to help you put somebody on papers. You can't just say this happen and then they do something about it. There has to be a record of it.

Mod: Are these domestic experiences or in general?

Kelly: Domestic, because I will see on TV like somebody wanted a restraining order, and they denied the restraining order that somebody wanted prior to that. So, they just see it as, this person wasn't trying to be malicious. So, they say 'if something else happens we already have this on record. Continue on with what you're trying to do because then it might be malicious in the future.'

Robyn: By then he might be too late.

Janet: Riiight

Kelly: Sometimes it be too late though.

Participants in focus group one agree that the burdens of proof required to access the police and legal protection orders are too great and can potentially allow for fatal occurrences. If police officers took complaints seriously and granted safety resources to assist in domestic matters, their help could potentially avoid a fatality.

Participants also discussed frustration at the rules required to prove that an intimate partner has violated their rights. Janet, 23, gave a personal example describing a time when a boyfriend took her car without permission. She called the police for assistance, but the dispatcher did not send help because her situation did not meet the requirements for police intervention:

Janet: Let's say somebody you know, you give this person permission like a boyfriend or something, you give them day by day permission to, you know, to drive your car or whatever. But at a certain point in time you're like okay 'no you cannot take my car' and they take your car anyways. They will say like 'oh, your car has not been stolen because he's driven it before' but he's driving it without my consent and he has stolen my keys.

From the police policy perspective, Janet's car was not stolen. Nonetheless, she found herself in a situation where she was without transportation when she had obligations to fulfill.

Phone interrogations by emergency dispatchers serve as another source of frustration for women attempting to access police resources in domestic violence situations. In times of

emergency, participants desire an immediate police presence, but instead they face resistance in the form of questions they deem irrelevant and inappropriate in the moment. Kelly provided an example of a conversation with a police dispatcher that interfered with obtaining police help:

Kelly: I think it's all crazy because when I call the police I understand what they are doing. But when you are in a panic or an emergency it frustrates you that you can't just get a response from the authorities right away. Because when I call they're like 'well, do you know the suspect? [What] was the person's first name? What's his last name? What's their eye color? Hair color? Kind of car? License plates?' I'm thinking if I knew all that about the person that was trying to harm me then I wouldn't call you. I don't know. If I could tell you a couple of things then I would. You are sitting there wasting all this time asking all these questions.

Although Kelly showed an understanding of police procedure, she felt the line of questioning she endured went against the reason for her call. She perceived the interaction to be a waste of time, and in a domestic violence dispute, time is of the essence.

E. Long Wait Times for Police Assistance

Even in cases when women do not face difficulty convincing dispatchers that they need police intervention, they can find that when they contact the police and dispatchers grant them services, these services take a long time to arrive. Time is of the essence when dealing with domestic violence encounters and sometimes it can be “too late” -- meaning women may find themselves gravely injured or dead if police do not arrive in a timely fashion. Kelly discussed not only the barrier of proving the severity of her incident to obtain help, but once she made her case, she still had to wait for police assistance because her matter was not deemed sufficiently urgent compared to other calls. Even after promising help, the police never contacted her. She later learned that she missed their ineffective attempts to reach her. Again, this participant, like other women, believed that she could have been killed because the police did not take her complaint seriously by making a concerted effort to ensure her safety:

Kelly: One time I called for domestic problems, and they took three hours. They tell me nobody had a gun so they were responding to calls that are more urgent first, meaning someone who's seen a gun. So, I'm

thinking maybe if I had been shot or had a rifle pointed at me, then I can call then? Basically yes, if they have a gun, they will come faster. If they don't, then you are behind others. When I called back they supposedly said they came at seven, rang my doorbell, called my phone private, and then left. I could have been dead right there. Plus, my memories aren't fresh then, what am I supposed to do then?

Understandably, the dispatchers must prioritize calls to manage police resources. The fact that domestic violence calls fall to the bottom of the pile unless a gun is present, however, reflect just how lightly the police system takes violence against women.

A similar complaint about extremely long wait times for the police to answer urgent domestic dispute calls arose in focus group six. Kayla, 31, works within the public library system. She recounted a story she heard from a colleague. In this instance, library staff, including a security guard, tried to protect a woman from an abusive man as she was attempting to reach the police. Before help arrived, the staff called 911 four separate times:

Kayla: So, with calling for situations within a library, I think the police sometimes have a slower response time. So, if there is an incident, they take a longer time to come out. I guess it all depends on what the situation is, but sometimes these situations are out of control, and we need them here immediately, but they take, I mean it takes like 5 times where you would call them for them to come out to handle the situation that's going on in the library.

Mod: Anything specific you want to share?

Kayla: I heard at Center Street Library they had a domestic dispute where the man was trying to drag the woman out of the library. The staff there were trying to find different ways to secure the woman and keep her out of harm's way. So, they were in different rooms and she was going in and out, but the man still was chasing her. So, meanwhile the staff is still trying to alert the police. I was told that they had to call at least 4 times before the police actually came. So, finally the guy exited the library. Now they have this new cipher codes on the door. So, one of the librarians was able to badge in and lock him out and then finally the officers finally came to the library and was talking to the guy. But in that incident, so much is going on, you try to keep this individual safe and there is only so much you can do. There is always so much a guard can do. They're told not to put their hands on the individual, so, they're trying.

Mod: The guards?

Kayla: Yeah.

Mod: Okay.

Kayla: So, the guards can't really physically take this man out of the situation or take this woman. So, it just kind of has to play out. But while all this is happening, you're saying, 'where is the police?'

In this instance, untrained staff members risked their own safety by physically intervening on behalf of a woman involved in a domestic dispute. Surprisingly, security guards hired to protect

patrons and staff have limited resources available to them when it comes to matters of physical intervention. In fact, library policy specifically directs security personnel not to touch citizens, even during violent encounters like the library incident. Considering the limitations placed upon security staff, one would expect police to respond in a timely matter, but in this case, staff members had to call four separate times and lock the library doors as they waited for police help.

F. Jurisdictional Boundaries

Women in this study complained about jurisdictional boundaries for police departments as barriers to police help. Milwaukee County is segmented into separate cities, each of which contains its own police force. Therefore, city of Milwaukee police cannot handle matters that occur in neighboring cities like Brown Deer or Mequon. Although these departments may work in tandem with one another, they cannot act as first responders in each other's jurisdictions. Janet shared an experience she had managing a domestic conflict. Although she made the call from Milwaukee, she fled to the neighboring suburb of Brown Deer for safety. The Milwaukee police she called could not help her because jurisdictional mandates prevented them from providing service in that area:

Janet: I had a similar instance. Somebody was trying to kill me. Somebody tried to shoot me, and I was in somebody else's house. I knew he had access to a gun, so I call 911 and I get put on hold right away. So, I'm calling and calling, and I'm getting put on hold, and then they call me back and was like 'What is your emergency?' This is like 10 minutes later. I tell them 'This guy has access to a gun, he threatened to shoot me, he threatened to shoot up somebody's house.' They say, 'Okay they're going to bring a squad out there.' And I said, 'I'm not staying around to get shot by anybody.' So, I went to Brown Deer but they say they don't have jurisdiction out there, but I see them out there all the time. They said, 'We can't do anything if you're not around to talk to us.' I thought that [was] stupid and I hung up the phone. They call me back and ask 'Okay, where are you? We're going to send the squad [car] out there to you right away.' They never showed up. They never did.

Mod: They wanted you to stay where you called from?

Janet: Yes, they wanted me to stay there.

Mod: Would they help you if you do not stay there?

Janet: They said they had no jurisdiction to where I was going, but I had nowhere else to go. I didn't want to put anyone else's life in danger. So, I went to the furthest place I could go, which was Brown Deer, and he said they had no jurisdiction out there so they didn't help me at all. I even went back and tried to resolve the situation myself, I ended up resolving it myself.

The artificial boundaries created by municipalities and police departments take precedence over the safety of women who call with claims of domestic violence.

G. Victims Become Suspects

In some domestic violence instances, the caller becomes the subject of a police encounter after the victim has reached out for help. Sydney,³⁶ recounted a domestic violence experience where she called the police and the two women officers who responded scolded her for jeopardizing the freedom of a Black man:

Sydney: This is the aggression they got against us... We don't even see them as protection, because we call them, somebody white might come, you already know that, so why call them?

Mod: Even people that call for help, do you think that is the case?

Sydney: I have called for help from police officers and I'm the one who they made me look like I'm the bad guy.

Curtis: When you call them, just know that you are going to be guilty before proven innocent. You are guilty by just being there, because you're a Black and there is no way for me to get around with my skin color.

Mod: Even as a victim?

Curtis: Exactly, you are still a suspect even though you could have called them and said, 'Hi, somebody is robbing me.' They going to call in, and look at you side eyed too, like 'you are guilty, how do I even know that what you are saying is true?'

Sydney: I mean from a personal experience I have called when somebody was trying to attack me in my home, and when they came and got that person, and it was two Black females. It was like 'why are you are trying to make it hard for this Black male?' He tried to attack me in my home! He had drugs on him and everything, and they just overlooked that, and then they came and scolded me.

Mod: Even after you were the one who called them?

Sydney: I'm like, this is my home, and you are telling me I can't call? So, next time just shoot him and we have whole 'nother of investigation that's going to be happening?

Curtis: You are still guilty.

Sydney: Exactly, so which one am I supposed to do? Call you guys, or take care of him myself, because every time I take care of myself, that is when I get cuffs on me.

In the above example, Sydney not only did not receive services, but police officers reprimanded her for what they perceived to be a systematic issue of Black men's overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. This left Sydney in a double bind where she could either contact the police and hope they will assist her, or else handle the problem herself and possibly jeopardize her safety and lead to her incarceration. Participants believe that the police are not there to serve them or to protect them, but to lock them up, even when they are the victim. For this reason, and many more, people do not initiate contact with the police because they cannot be sure that the call will not jeopardize their own freedom.

Jayla shared a domestic violence experience she witnessed where the woman defended herself against a male attacker. Because she injured the man, however, the woman went to jail. Her decision to defend herself resulted in an arrest. When she took immediate action to protect her from immediate physical harm, she was choosing the lesser of two evils:

Jayla: Because some domestic violence situations, I'm going to tell you right now, if the cops don't come, that woman may die. I have seen a woman beat up a man before. This one was, I don't know what this dude was doing with this bigger whore, but she [was] slamming [him] and hit him in the head with a frying pan. When the police came, she went to jail. He was hurt, but she went to jail.

The woman in this instance was left to take matters into her own hands, but she faced consequences for attempting to protect herself. Perhaps if police resources were more reliable and responded more swiftly, women would not find themselves in these precarious encounters where they must make hard choices to defend themselves from aggressors.

VI. Chapter Six- Community Driven Possibilities for Repairing the Relationship with Law Enforcement

Milwaukee residents raise many complaints about the Milwaukee Police Department and its relationship with the Black communities it serves. At the same time, however, they imagine ways to improve the fractured relationship that exists. When asked “What would you change about the Milwaukee Police Department?” participants offered a host of suggestions that could improve the organization and repair the community’s relationships with law enforcement. Some discussions envisioned radical changes to the structure of the police force as we know it today. For example, Malik, 43, and Raven, 27, held a conversation about creating separate police forces for Black and white communities:

Malik: I think we should start policing ourselves or whatnot.

Mod: What does that look like? We can police ourselves?

Malik: I don’t know, but it is hard to explain, it is very hard to explain but we don’t need them in our community. Well, I take that back, there is no such thing as a Black community; we don’t need them in our hoods. I don’t know, it’s hard to explain.... we need to police our own people. We need, to me, we need to bring a Black Panther, like some type of Black organization that [can] look out for us. [One] that look over them looking after us, if that makes sense...I think we need separate departments where Black folks should be trained to police us. I think white folks should be trained to police them. It should be an all-Black police department and an all-white police department. Let us deal with our situations and problems, let them deal with their situations and problems, simple.

Malik’s proposal for separate police forces for white and Black communities would require an intense recruiting effort to attract and hire Black officers and a major restructuring of the police department. His suggestion for a separate organization for the policing of Black neighborhoods or oversight of white officers in Black communities, however, coincides with the views of other participants who already use alternative methods to manage police-able affairs like calling on the Nation of Islam in crisis situations. Overall, Malik’s concerns show a lack of trust in the current Milwaukee Police Department which, from his comments, works to protect the interests of white communities at the expense of Black people.

Raven responded affirmatively to Malik's ideas, but pushed for a new conceptualization of police training that would require "righteousness" as the guiding principle for managing communities:

Raven: I'm really agreeing with what the brother said honestly, but I could take it even a step further. [Not] just having a Black force and a white force, because if you have a Black force that is doing the bidding of those who think like the same white officers who was shooting us down, what would change? You have the brother who killed Sylville Smith, that was a Black man. I mean eventually he ended up going to jail. I mean they added some more charges... but now you've got Black men who are thinking like and who have the mind of white supremacy embedded in them so they're acting just like their coworkers are acting... So, I don't really think that it will take a separate police force but the police force has to be trained in a righteous way, in a way that we'll say, okay, you're not just, your first result isn't pulling out a gun on your own people.

Raven's comments were discussed earlier to highlight the complicated relationship Black residents have with Black officers. As she pointed out with her example of Sylville Smith and the officer responsible for killing him, Dominique Heaggan-Brown, both parties were Black. If the police department's reward structure and training programs indoctrinate all police officers with aggressive anti-Black sentiments, then hiring Black officers may do little to curb the negative patrolling Black residents experience. It is possible that the Black officers will be co-opted into the practices of white supremacy as residents contend they are when they discuss the aggression they encounter when interacting with Black law enforcement officers. Raven follows up her idea of separate police forces for Black and white residents by explaining the issue with Black communities and officers as one where officers see little value in Black life which resonates in the policing tactics they use:

Raven: No amount of training is going to train you how to be really a human being and treat me as a human being, because there is no training that exists like that. All the training that I could think of is getting away from me. Let me train my own people to do our own thing. Y'all go over there. If you can't see me as anywhere near worthy of life, then you got to stay away from me. I don't have to convince you. We don't have to be friends. We don't have to live in kumbaya harmony, just going over there. That's it!

Chantae, 29, reiterates Raven's point regarding Black officers shooting and killing Black civilians. She too finds that simply reorganizing the current system of policing would do little to

curb these instances. Instead, she insists that the police systems should be dismantled and started over:

Chantae: I definitely think the entire system would have to be dismantled. Sylville Smith was murdered by a Black officer. Jay Anderson was murdered by a Black officer. The officer was in South Carolina, a Black officer. You know our Sheriff is Black. Freddie Gray was murdered by three of the officers. Those that were in charge were Black, the DA was Black, the mayor was Black, our president is Black and still no one was charged. So, the entire system is flawed so it would have to be dismantled and we would have to start over. Well I know that's not finna happen right now because that's gonna take bloodshed. And that's what has to happen, we have to start completely over. People have to die.

The desire for increased hires of Black officers while rejecting the current relationship Black officers have with Black communities seems paradoxical. However, it is possible that if there were a large concentration of Black law enforcement agents in all ranks of the police force, then the interests of Black civilians might be better reflected and incorporated into policing practices. If Black police forces re-conceptualized approaches to communities in a non-punitive and less aggressive manner, it might change the behaviors of Black officers and make consequent responses from Black communities change from adversarial to collaborative. Michelle, 26, in the same group supports Chantae's idea when she says, "Start it all over. You just gotta throw out the whole police department and start it all over. Ain't no fixing. You can't put no band aid on that or dress it up real nice." Again, more Black officers inside the current apparatuses of policing might not meet the needs of participants, but restructuring the police force in a way that prioritizes the Black community might positively impact and constructively repair the relationship Black participants have with policing in the city.

In conversations regarding radical restructuring of the police department, Chantae offered a historical critique of the police that proposes a complete overhaul of the entire system. She references the long history of policing to subjugate Black people and cannot envision ways of working within such a system to improve it when it was never intended to protect and serve the community in the first place:

Chantae: Yes, historically speaking, so their entire job and existence came about to catch runaway slaves. Like, this was their job. So, your entire existence has been to catch Negroes, Black people. Now we come to this time and we're here in this day and age, 411 years later and it's like okay your entire system is still, you might be a good officer, but your entire job is to antagonize Black people and poor people and minorities of the lower class. Because your entire job is to pull someone over who may not have stickers or don't have a license because they are poor and they can't afford to do all these things.

Chantae is correct in her assertions about police forces. In the early eighteenth century patrols emerged to preserve the slavery system. The main duties of slave patrollers were to search slave quarters, disperse slave gatherings, and protect white property by patrolling the roads in efforts to recapture runaway slaves and prevent slave revolts. White Southerners who made careers out of patrolling then became officers in the urban South's first police forces (Hadden 2001).

Chantae's astute analysis of how the police continue the subjugation of Black, poor, and marginalized people is strengthened by her example of criminalizing poverty in the form of ticketing and arresting citizens who cannot afford to keep current their driving credentials like licenses and annual registration stickers. These measures further the cycle of poverty by adding financial burdens in the form of tickets and fines to those sectors of society who struggle to meet the basic requirements of life. The consequences of unpaid fines can and often do lead to warrants and imprisonment, furthering mass incarceration for poor Black people.

Although participants discussed dismantling and reconstructing police forces in their entirety, most ideas to change the Milwaukee Police Department were conceptualized within the current framework of law enforcement. Participants' ideas coalesced around five areas: 1) changes to the current selection of officers, 2) new training routines, 3) relationship building activities and reinstated residency requirements 4) altered police procedures and processes, and 5) increased accountability.

A. Changes to Police Officer Selection Process

Participants take issue with the Department's recruitment and selection processes. Specifically, they want to diversify the police force and increase Black representation in all ranks and increase the rigor of psychological screenings for potential police officers. Together, these efforts would help participants better identify with those who patrol their communities, but also restore legitimacy to the police force because the public could be assured that the best people for the job have been hired and are working with them as community partners rather than as parts of a hostile occupation force.

1. Diversification of the Police Force

As previously stated, the Milwaukee Police Department between 2005- 2015 was made up of 66% white officers as opposed to 18% Black officers. Additionally, 83% of all officers were men, while women comprised 17% of the force (Lutheran and Crowe 2017). In a city where Black residents are 39% of the population there is an underrepresentation of them on the police force (USA 2017). Additionally, there are more women in the city of Milwaukee (52%) than men (48%), showing another disparity in representation (Bureau 2017). Jasmine, 26, addresses both racial and gender disparities on the force. She states bluntly, "Diversification! I think if you are working in the service I think they need to look at the demographics in each zip code in the city and then try their best to have that proportion of police officer representation both in gender and in race." Jasmine, like many others, notices the evident disproportionate racial and gender composition of the police force. This relationship adds to the alienation and sense of disconnection community members have with law enforcement as they do not see themselves or their interests represented.

Because of the intense racial residential segregation that exists in Milwaukee, race and place are often conflated. Although some participants do not explicitly express that they want more Black officers, they do say they want officers who reflect their communities. For these Black participants who live in Black enclaves, that would mean officers who are not only from the inner city, but also who are Black. Further discussions of this dynamic emerged in discussions of reinstated residency requirements.

Participants' complaints regarding the lack of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity on the police force align with findings from the U.S. Department of Justice draft report to assess the Milwaukee Police Department completed in 2016. Findings show that 1) the MPD does not have racial, ethnic, or gender diversity among all ranks nor is it reflective of the community it serves and 2) the MPD lacks a strategic approach to recruitment to ensure diversity within the next three to five years. The draft report also shows that the MPD lacks ways for the community to have input in the recruitment and hiring of police officers (Justice 2016).

Alderman Bob Donovan released a statement in March, 2018 stressing that “the number of police officer vacancies caused by retiring Milwaukee police officers has reached a crisis point for the city (Donovan 2018).” In addition to the already 118 vacancies that exist, an additional 224 officers are eligible to retire in 2018. The current classes of recruits are nowhere nearly large enough to make up for the expected loss in law enforcement personnel. Donovan acknowledges that police officers cannot solve all the public safety challenges the city faces, but at the same time he realizes the need for officers to fulfill necessary law enforcement duties. Donovan blames the mass exodus of officers eligible to retire on former police chief Edward Flynn whom he alleges was responsible for low morale on the force.

Although activists, policy makers, and residents call for a diversified police force, research shows that this alone does not reduce shootings of Black men. In fact, some research aligns with participant complaints citing that Black officers are more likely to discriminate against Black residents due to pressures to adopt organizational practices that condone this behavior (Nicholson- Crotty et al. 2017).

2. *Psychological Examinations*

Police officers find themselves in difficult and delicate encounters that often cause physical, emotional, and mental stress. Participants often feel that the officers they interact with currently lack the capacity to handle the mental aspects of the job. Participants shared that they would want officers to undergo intense psychological screening before they begin service on the police force. The police application process already has a psychological examination component, but participants would prefer that the hiring process screen potential officers particularly for racial bias and various complexes that could cause them to abuse their power.

Michelle acknowledges the stress that serving as a police officer causes for people because of the intense physical, mental, and emotional demands embedded in policing. She states, “You do have to screen people and it has to be thorough because like I said, this job is terribly wracking on your physical, mental, and emotional [health]. It is. You have to be a strong type of person be you male or female and it should be equal.” Thorough screening of police officer candidates would not only protect the public from harm, but also help those serving on the police force in that ill prepared people would not be subject to the stresses that policing produces upon one’s psyche.

Leila, 35, proposes screening for officers who might potentially abuse their power. She notes that those people would not make good community partners. She advocates, “Some serious rigorous testing as far as psychological testing and things of that nature. Some people want to be police officers because they want to be the boss and I think that’s a power thing. That’s not conducive to being a community partner.” Leila’s conception of the police as community partners requires officers who want to work collaboratively with those they patrol. However, officers who use the power bestowed upon them to enact personal agendas cannot be collaborators to address crime and restore law and order to communities. These sorts of police officers contribute to the lack of legitimacy police have in over-policed but under-protected poor communities of color.

James, 28, acknowledges the mental strength required to serve as an effective police officer. He believes that current medical screenings can help with detecting those best fit to serve the community. Specifically, he wants to find officers who are not fearful on the job and who use alternative ways to manage conflict other than having their first instinct be to use or threaten lethal force:

James: I think the hiring process needs to change, but maybe they need to do mental evaluations to see whether you are stable enough mentally to be a police officer, whether you are strong enough mentally to be a police officer. There are people who can kill an animal and not be traumatized from that, but it is also people who can kill a human and not be traumatized from that. So, you need to have a mental evaluation. It’s 2016, so, they got mental evaluations where they can track you down to the fact that they know who is going to be a serial killer. So, they can run the same tests on police officers during the hiring process and say, you know, you’re not qualified to be an officer. If you’re scary and you are an officer, you know, your first reaction is to grab your gun. I don’t know you, you don’t know me. They’re an officer, but they’re human. So, they’re like, you know, just like in the streets, if I don’t know you, I’m not going to get too close to you. But as an officer you shouldn’t think like that. You should have a mental state that’s different from a regular human being, and that’s what qualifies you to be an officer. So, I think the hiring process should change.

James’ comments reveal his high expectations for police officers to possess “extra-human” qualities when managing their stress and fear. In his opinion, these skills are what separate police officers in dangerous situations from everyday people. An average person may act defensively

when interacting with strangers, but for a law enforcement officer whose job primarily requires intervening in situations with people he or she does not know, the encounter must be approached differently. It is unclear from James' statements whether the ability to possess above average mental capacity should already be detected or developed during training, but nonetheless, this requirement in his estimation would drastically increase the quality of police officers and decrease the frequency of officer involved shootings.

Alexis, 26, wants police screening procedures to weed out officers with deviant behavior patterns. She uses examples of officers who were involved in child pornography and sexual assault to make her case that rigorous psychological screenings could potentially identify people prone to these behaviors before they enact harm upon others:

Alexis: Well, I would say that my critiques to local police actually mirror my critiques to how I feel nationally about police. I think that there are obviously police officers who have deviant behaviors and all that good stuff as far as being racist and being predators. Those things could be nipped in the bud at training. They should have a psychological exam. They should have all of these things to make sure that they are all being police officers for the right reason and not to abuse power. I think just in very, very recent news with the police department, we are seeing the effects of when that doesn't happen and what can transpire. It was a police officer who was involved in child porn, it's a police officer that was on camera raping people, and he also just recently killed somebody. So, those things I feel like with the right examinations and the right tools in place, we can probably cut some of those people out to begin with instead of after they hurt people.

Alexis believes that the instances of police misconduct she highlights are a direct consequence of insufficient psychological police screenings. Participants' suggestions to increase the rigor of psychological screening for potential police officers could improve the quality of those selected to serve on police forces. Taking steps to identify potential harms proactively could result in reduced incidents of police abuse in the community. Not only could this weed out unfit officers, but the increased quality of police forces coupled with reduced harmful incidents could increase police legitimacy in communities exposed to poor policing. Although psychological screenings cannot guarantee that police officers would not express racial bias, engage in sexual misconduct, or abuse power, it could indeed lower the current rate of these actions.

B. Changes to Police Training Processes

Focus group participants expressed the view that changing police training procedures could improve the Milwaukee Police Department. Specifically, they believe the Milwaukee Police Department would greatly benefit from: 1) extended training requirements; and 2) diversity training.

1. Extended Training Requirements

To become a Milwaukee Police Officer, applicants must meet several requirements. They must be a US citizen, be at least 21 years old, have a high school diploma or GED certification, and possess a valid Wisconsin driver's license. They must be physically fit and pass a background check. Once hired, recruits must complete 60 hours of college credit within five years. Preference is given to those with a record of military service and residency within the city. One can be disqualified for employment because of a dishonorable military discharge or a past domestic violence or felony conviction. Once applicants pass a written and psychological exam, they are then eligible for full consideration. If selected, hires must complete a 23-week paid basic training course at the police academy (MPD).

Participants were not familiar with the exact training process for a Milwaukee police officer, but they still believed it was too short. Imani, 33, states, "I feel they need to make it where they have to take longer training to be a police officer." Similarly, Megan, 24, believed that the current police academy training is not long enough to prepare an officer for the difficult people and situations they may encounter on the job:

Megan: Even though they have classes, it is not long that you have to go to school to be a police officer. Not everybody's equipped to be a police officer. Like you have all types and all kinds of people to deal with. You're not trained to deal with each and every one of them. You may react and be scary because this is your life. You really don't know if you're going to come home or not. It's a very dangerous job.

Megan's concerns regarding the length of police academy training come from a place of compassion. She understands the danger of the job of a police officer and states it would be in the officer's best interest to be equipped to deal with the difficulties that arise routinely on the job. Her comments indicate she believes that the fear police officers experience comes from a lack of preparedness and training.

Michelle is also unsure about the length of training that police officers complete, but she uses law school as a comparison to make her point. She speaks about "the training, because it doesn't take that long to be a police officer, but it takes like 12 years to be a lawyer. Nothing is longer than that. It takes so much time to learn the law. How can you serve and protect the law when you don't know it?" Imani, Megan, and Michelle all acknowledge the intensely pressured working conditions under which police officers toil. They believe that police officers should spend more time in training before interacting with the public. Instead of blaming individual officers for their failure to interact positively with the community, they hold the current structure of training accountable for this negative relationship. Michelle makes a keen and critical observation when she compares the requirements to become lawyers to those for police officers. To enter law school, one must possess a Bachelor's degree and successfully pass the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Then after at least three years of law school where one must earn a Juris Doctor degree, lawyers must pass state bar exams before they can practice. Officers who potentially can use lethal force to enforce the law are required to undergo far less training than lawyers who make and argue the law in court settings. The six-month police academy training and 60 college credit hours over five years equates to at most an associate's degree, yet officers can act as agents of the law utilizing great discretion and making life or death choices. Although the roles of a lawyer and police officer are extremely different, Michelle finds police officers

who have the power of life and death with the full backing of the State behind them to be more critically in need of training than lawyers who do not possess daily access to lethal force.

Therefore, officers should be well equipped and prepared to take on such a critical role.

Alexis makes a similar comparison to Michelle when she considers the requirements licensed barbers must meet relative to those of police officers, “If you want to cut hair, then you have to get a state license to do that. I’m not sure why you can just be a police officer with 6 weeks [or] 9 weeks in training and have a gun out in the community. That I don’t get.” Although Alexis is incorrect in her assessment of the length of the police academy training period, she is accurate that barbers must complete a state license program to operate legally. To become a licensed barber in Wisconsin, one must graduate from a 1,000-hour Barber Training program or complete 2,000 hours of documented apprentice training. Candidates must submit applications and complete exams which contain both theoretical and practical portions. After receiving the license, one must renew it on odd-numbered years (License).

The comparisons made by Michelle and Alexis aim to illuminate the rigorous expectations and standards one must meet in fields with much lower stakes than those of police officers. They find irony in that officers of the law who hold great power and discretion when interacting with the public seem to have less rigorous training expectations than state licensed professionals of other occupations with much lower stakes.

2. *Diversity Training*

Among participants in this study there were competing views regarding training police officers to interact with Black communities. Raven believed that it would be impossible to train officers who have anti-Black biases to police Black communities with respect. She explicitly

stated, “No amount of training is going to train you how to be really a human being and treat me as a human being, because there is no training that exists like that.” White and Black officers who hold anti-Black sentiments cannot be “trained” to see Black people in the community as equals worthy of life, therefore, to her, efforts to conduct diversity training would be futile.

In focus group five, however, participants discussed including diversity training in the current police officer training program. They contended that such efforts would ideally help officers to work collaboratively in Black communities and curb anti-Black bias. Jayla, 52, argues that both Black and white officers should undergo diversity training. She says, “Oh my God a whole bunch of diversity classes. And the Black ones too, all they need to go through the same class together, because they won’t make it down here in the public.” From Jayla’s perspective, requiring that all officers regardless of race undergo diversity training would potentially change the way the officers approach and interact with Black communities in Milwaukee. Cory, 38, in the same group, agrees. He advocates, “Much training, and more, where they have to learn how to deal with different races, like some diversity.” He believes that including diversity training in the police academy curriculum is essential to being a police officer especially in North Side neighborhoods of Milwaukee where most of the residents are Black.

C. Community Relationship Building

Participants encourage police officers to partake in community building activities outside of the formal roles of policing to promote positive relationships with residents. One of the major complaints participants have is that police officers are disconnected from their communities and police them with a lack of empathy and respect. To combat this, focus group participants emphasized that police officers should: 1) offer community workshops; 2) spend time with the

community informally; and 3) be required to live in the communities they police if the city reinstated the residency rule.

1. Police-Community Workshops

Participants envision ways that police officers can interact with community members outside of formal policing that might help build trust and understanding between the two groups. Dante, 55, described an instance where the police came to his church and held a workshop for the youth regarding routine police-citizen encounters. In this workshop, officers advised young people to refrain from escalating the encounter and to ask for an adult while remaining silent:

Dante: At my church, one of the police officers gave a workshop to some of the kids. He talked to them about that kind of stuff. He said, 'This is what's gonna happen during a police encounter,' he told them 'This is gonna happen.' They need to do more of that. Let the kids know 'This is going to happen, and this is gonna happen,' because it's like what she said, it is the shock, and we're just like... Even if you didn't do the crime he is an officer you have to shut your mouth. The main thing, he talked for an hour, the biggest thing I got out of the whole talk was he said 'Do not escalate the situation, don't escalate it. It doesn't matter how tough you are, don't escalate it.' He told the kids one of two things, don't escalate it, and ask for your parents. If they start asking questions before they come they can take you down. He said 'Don't say a word even though you're a kid, don't say a word to the police, just go downtown and have a parent sit next to you or a lawyer and do not say a word. Do not say one word.'

Although this workshop with a police officer was designed for the youth, Dante took valuable information from the meeting that he told the group he later passed along to his daughter. Dante mentions the shock people experience when interacting with the police, but believes that if people are informed about what they should and should not do during an interaction, they may successfully complete the encounter without incident. Workshops held on neutral grounds like churches might serve as a means of communication between the police and communities in a non-threatening environment. More than likely, when Black youth interact with the police it is during some sort of formal policing encounter where the power dynamic is uneven which places the youth at a disadvantage. Combined with the negative relationship that already exists between law enforcement and Black communities, it is unlikely that constructive conversations and advice would be given or accepted during a police-citizen interaction. Therefore, developing

methods for the police to communicate instructions about behavior during policing encounters in arenas where freedom is not threatened may work to facilitate smoother interactions.

Gabrielle, 28, offers ideas similar to Dante's. She believes informal interactions with police officers and the youth would positively impact the upcoming generations:

Gabrielle: I feel like if we had more physical police officers that weren't doing the job, but still like in uniforms we would know that they're our officers. Just hanging out with the kids maybe just talking to them, showing them the car, getting more of a positive vibe. If you have cops who are like that, that would change things. Even if it doesn't change the 20, 30, or 40 [year olds], at least they'll be given a model of what police officers are for the upcoming generations.

Gabrielle gives examples of police officers hanging out with the youth in non-confrontational encounters to increase positive interactions between the youth and police officers. It is in these low-stakes encounters that police officers can build trust with Black youth in the communities. She also echoes Dante's idea of police officers' increased community engagement and involvement, but extends it to mentorship of the young men:

Gabrielle: So, being present, more diversity, more officers, more community engagement, yeah, being involved. Then I would also say maybe even like mentoring some of our young people, especially the young men. I know the fatherhood initiative is really big on reaching out to young fathers, and young men in the community. But if we get a lot of those police officers involved, you know, men of color, I think that can help to see some positive from police.

The Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative (MFI) began in 2005 at the request of Mayor Tom Barrett in efforts "to combat fatherlessness, poor graduation rates for African American Boys, and increased juvenile delinquency referrals for boys of color" (MFI). In its inception, the mayor acknowledged that the marginalization and stigmatization of boys and men of color in economic and educational arenas combined with adverse childhood experiences aid in pushing them into the criminal justice system. The program offers resources such as case management, employment training, driver's license recovery, child support assistance, and legal assistance. Although the MFI offers a structural critique of the causes of fatherlessness in Black communities in the United States where according to 2011 census data, two-third of homes are without a father

present, the resources offered and initiatives enacted do not address ameliorating these contributing factors (Milwaukee). While the mayor names “father absence directly associated with criminal justice,” as a chief factor impacting fatherlessness, none of the MFI initiatives aim to reduce Black men’s involvement in said system (Milwaukee). Instead, the MFI focus is on collecting over \$6 million in child support payments and reinstating driving privileges. These serve as the paramount victories for the organization. While encouraging positive father involvement is an identified goal of the initiative, it is unclear how to achieve this daunting task.

2. *Spend Time with the Community*

Community members find it imperative that police officers spend time with the residents they will police before officially beginning work. Mercedes, 27, expresses this idea simply when she said, “to police, you should know the community.” Participants complained about the lack of police officer connection with the communities they patrol. They contended this lack of connection was responsible for police officers engaging in unreasonable, aggressive, and racist behaviors. Participants believe that because officers come from areas beyond their neighborhoods and do not identify with them, it is necessary for both parties to build relationships with one another outside the typical police encounter. Jayla expresses that white officers’ places of origins and lack of everyday interaction with Black populations contributed to the negative policing approaches seen in Milwaukee. Although she would not require a change in residency, she believes that officers could be trained to interact with Black communities:

Jayla: They need to redo the police force here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin because we are the most segregated town, and the police here with the last name “ipski” or “lipscomb,” all of them do not like us. And a lot of them that have come from little hick towns like Tomah to come down here to be a police officer has never interacted with a Black person ever in his life, until they got on our police force. So, when they put a white officer in these Black communities, they don’t know nothing about relating.

Mod: So, you would change the residency requirement?

Jayla: I don’t care about the residency requirements, I feel they need to make it where they have to take longer training to be a police officer.

Mod: So, you wouldn't mind if the officer from Tomah came down here...

Jayla: I don't care where he came from, as long as he got trained to interact, he has to interact with some Black people further.

Jayla is not specific about what sort of training police officers would undergo to be trained to interact with Black people, but she insists that there needs to be a greater understanding among officers of the communities they police. One way to build this greater understanding of Black people in the inner-city is for police officers to introduce themselves before taking a patrol assignment and to attempt to get to know the communities they will interact with in a human manner. Michael, 25, suggests that the police should get to know the people they will later protect and serve to gain a fuller perspective on the lives they lead which might promote better relationships in general:

Michael: So, I think what they need to do is before they get that gun and that shield or whatever, they need to be in the community actively meeting and greeting who they are going to be over. Because that way, when I see officers such and such, I'm like, 'Oh! Hey, how is your kid doing?' That way we can have a communication and that way we can, you can police a little bit better than you know, you're coming from somewhere up North, down here in Milwaukee, the most segregated city in the country. Now you already have a perception of Black people or whomever. Now you're treating us aggressively, you don't know if I got kids, I got to know whatever the case maybe. So, they need to be actively in the community before they get that gun and that shield and they need to be shaking hands and meeting people, and talking to people.

Michael's suggestions are rooted in promoting positive relationships between police officers and citizens. He surmises that if he could get to know the officers who will later patrol his neighborhood, this would set up a friendlier relationship because instead of the first interaction being one where he is the subject of police attention, he is acknowledged as another human being. Michael believes that when police officers get to know Black residents better, it breaks the racist perceptions they might hold and use to police these communities aggressively. Suggesting that police learn whether the residents have children and inquire about other aspects of their lives would humanize Black people to the officers and make them aware that those they police have complex personal lives.

Geoffrey, 28, from the same group echoed Michael's ideas. He asserts that if the police officers could meet residents up to six months in advance, it might dissuade them from assuming that whomever they encounter was a "thug":

Geoffrey: Before you get that badge, you can introduce yourself and say, 'Hey, my name is officer Geoff and I'm going to be policing your neighborhood within the next 6 months. I just want to come down and meet you and say who I am, blah, blah, blah.' Then 6 months later, 'Oh! Hey, how is it going officer,' you know, it might not go that way but you know what I mean. Maybe you get pulled over and he knows, 'Oh! That's that one guy from wherever, you know, you are a good person, I met his family,' you know what I'm saying? It's not that initial, he's Black and yeah so, he's a thug. It's like, I know he's not a thug.

Like Michael, Geoffrey wants police officers to try to get to know the communities they will interact with so that they do not negatively stereotype Black people and treat them accordingly.

Community members believe that police officers must work to unlearn racist anti-Black thought. They state the best way to do so is by getting to know Black people personally. Rather than mandating that racist officers check their biases and treat all citizens equally regardless of race, it seems that participants believe that they bear the onus of changing the hearts and minds of individual officers on a case by case basis. This seems to be an overwhelming task considering the sheer numbers of police officers who would need to be reached on an individual level. Perhaps if changes like detecting racist ideology through psychological screenings, hiring more Black people from the city to serve as officers, or incorporating an anti-racist component in the police academy curriculum were implemented, the structure of police force itself would change so that everyone who goes through the application and training process would be equipped to deal fairly with Black communities.

3. *Reinstate Residency Rule*

Participants across many focus groups shared their discontent with the 2016 revised residency rule that allows city of Milwaukee employees to live up to fifteen miles outside of the

city's limits. They charged that a lack of personal connection and investment in inner city Black neighborhoods emanates from police officers' lack of familiarity with the areas they police and with the people who live there. Inner city north side neighborhoods are stereotyped as crime ridden and unredeemable by many sources, chief among them being the news media. This stereotyping became evident during the last week of 2017 when the American Red Cross implemented a policy that disallowed its on-site volunteers to respond to fire victims in 10 inner city zip codes, almost all of which were in Black neighborhoods on the city's north side (Lutheran 2018). Although a week later in 2018 the policy was rescinded due to public backlash, Red Cross CEO Patty Flower denied the policy was implemented due to fears for the volunteers' safety. She contended it stemmed from a shortage of volunteers available and the concomitant need to reduce on-site responses (Wainscott 2018). Critics of the policy, however, viewed it as racist and reflective of the perceived danger that characterizes these areas in the minds of whites, so much so that those in need of assistance in emergencies could be deemed unworthy of services. This policy showed a devaluing of the lives of those who would be in the greatest need because the American Red Cross attempted to use its discretion to render direct services on a preferential basis to people who lived in primarily white neighborhoods.

Some participants believe that hiring officers from the communities they police would be the best way to increase the numbers of officers who are familiar with and invested in north side neighborhoods. Michelle states, "You would definitely hire people from the communities" when asked what she imagined would improve the relationship between Black communities and the Milwaukee Police Department. Alexis similarly remarked, "I mean also maybe making sure that they are representatives of the community" when asked the same question. These suggestions imply that the job of policing attracts people from inner-city and Black communities and they

apply, but do not get selected. However, changing the recruiting efforts to target community members might be a better strategy to impact police community relationships positively. The logic follows that officers from inner city neighborhoods would have a better cultural awareness and more local knowledge of the residents and of the informal rules that pattern life in those spaces. Chante echoes this sentiment when she offers her critique of the current recruitment efforts for MPD:

Chantae: We would have to have extreme recruiting like how the navy recruits people. We have to have extreme recruiting in neighborhoods for people to be police officers. This is almost like you serving your community, this is your neighborhood it has to be that serious in order for it to change. That's huge, very huge and it's a lot more.

Chantae draws upon the latent military ideology that underpins policing as a service to your community like serving one's country. If the MPD went out and actively recruited Black people from the city to service their communities, there would arguably be a larger presence of those on the police force who participants desire to police their neighborhoods. Currently, the elements for disqualification for employment on the Milwaukee police force disadvantage an already over-policed, mass incarcerated, and undereducated potential pool of Black applicants like those who live in Milwaukee. Past convictions and a required written exam disallow potentially effective Black officers from the job before they get a chance to enter the academy.

Other participants express the opinion that officers did not have to come from the communities they police, but once placed on patrol in the city, they should be required to live there. Leila expresses the common complaint that there is a lack of connection between police officers and the communities they patrol because of residential distance. The extreme racial segregation present in Milwaukee makes it highly likely that white citizens who later become police officers can live most of their lives without interacting with Black people intimately. Leila

contends that if these white officers do not feel comfortable enough to live around Black people then they would not be the best individuals to police these communities as partners:

Leila: If they start having Waukesha people come here, who don't like us, people that, they don't like us enough to live around us, but they can come here and start telling us [what to do] and policing us then that's not conducive to community partners. Why would they need to be? Because this is just a job. This has not shit to do with that their living situation. If you live in the community you want the community to be safe because you live here.

Leila questions the ability of police officers who do not feel comfortable in Black communities to serve as community partners and to ensure safety because there is no personal investment from the officers' position. Perhaps requiring officers to be a part of the communities they police could positively impact the relationship they have with the residents they patrol and encourage them to treat police work as something greater than just a paycheck.

Participants differ in opinion about the appropriate requirements for residency rules.

Alexis says, "I really think that they need to live in the community. I know the state governor Walker changed that law, where you don't have to be a resident to be a police officer in the city, but I think that's bogus, they need to." Jasmine agrees with reinstating residency requirements because relationships beyond policing are important, "Yes they need to live there. They need to have some interaction with that community outside of 'I'm just doing my job, then I go to my home in the suburbs.'" Similarly, Michelle generally states that officers must live in the area, but also adds that they must have familiarity with Black people in their personal life to work in Black communities:

Michelle: You cannot be in this area if you do not live in this area. If you are white you need at least six Black friends and you have to know where they live. You gotta have six of them, not one. It's always the one who says, 'Oh I got a Black friend' you need six of them and you have to know at least one of them for at least half of your life. Seriously.

Although Michelle seems to find humor in her comments, her perspective is rooted in real concerns. She does not find superficial relationships with Black people to be enough to fulfill this requirement, but wants white officers to have meaningful connections with Black people in

their personal lives. She hopes this would lead officers who do not identify as Black to have empathy and find humanity in Black lives while policing in communities of color.

Some focus group participants were more specific about their preferred residential requirements for police officers serving in the city. Kevin, 27, stated plainly, “Live in a community you’re policing, like so, the police of 53206, you need to live there.” DeShawn, 20, supports the idea of placing police officers in the zip codes they police as well:

DeShawn: [What] I want to change about it is like putting like the workers or the cops in these certain parts of the neighborhood, inside of neighborhoods.

Mod: Okay, so residency requirement? Would you make it like we talked about the difference from the county and city limits or even neighborhood? Does that matter to you? On what scale like does that have to be? In a zip code? Do they have to be in the city? On the side of the city?

DeShawn: That has to be in the zip code.

Mod: So, zip code?

DeShawn: So that they know everybody like their actual neighbors. I feel like that would be the best way for the entire humanity to be okay... Oh this guy is Black, boom, he scared me. That’s the only time they do it, because they don’t know anybody from that area.

DeShawn speaks about the logic that police officers use to escape accountability in instances of lethal force used against Black citizens for an on duty killing. Invariably, they claim they feared for their lives. He finds that this defense is rooted in a general fear of Black people rather than an actually life-threatening police-citizen interaction. Furthermore, this irrational fear of Black people, in DeShawn’s estimation, emerges from a lack of familiarity with Black people and Black neighborhoods in general. From this place, DeShawn offers a possible solution to increase white police officers’ familiarity with Black people while reducing the instances of lethal force used against Black residents. Curtis, 41, supports DeShawn’s suggestion to require police officers to live in the zip codes where they work. His logic is rooted in efforts to increase police accountability:

Mod: So, you are on zip code level too?

Curtis: For the simple fact that if you do something to this brother when you are on your time, when you are off the time and his people want to make you pay for that excessive force that you did on him, that's your fault. Or if your family pays that it is your fault. Now I'm saying that that's what should happen, but that is the world that we live in today. I'm telling you right now, if he come tell me, 'Oh so and so attacked me,' or my parents tell me that so and so attacked my little brother. I'm not going to let that go. If somebody attacks any of my family I'm not going to let that go. Best believe there's other people out there like this. So, if you live in these areas, will you be excessively forcing your way around when you are on your job? When you walk to the park, or even when you are on your job, your family is liable, because you got people out here who aren't nice.

Mod: It sounds like there should be more accountability to the neighborhood?

Curtis: Yes, because the system is not doing it, so if you live in this area where you are messing about, your neighbors are going to know who you are.

Curtis's proposals would require police officers to live in the zip codes where they work to make them accountable for their actions. By his logic, if police officers act unjustly, they will have to face the people they've harmed and possibly jeopardize the safety of their families. The anonymity provided for police officers allowed to live outside the communities they police would be completely removed and they would be vulnerable to retaliation for their actions.

Michelle holds sentiments about neighborhood accountability as well. She believes officers should be required to live in the areas they police "Because you got to know that community for real. You got to have a bond with some people in that community and feel like this is home. I have to make sure that everything around here is okay and everybody is comfortable because if not, you know where I stay at."

DeShawn and Curtis support zip code residency requirements as ways of curbing police misconduct, but with opposing motivations. While DeShawn finds this requirement would humanize Black people and incite empathy and humanity within officers to police humanely, Curtis contends that fear of retribution for abuse of power would be a more compelling incentive as officers would want to ensure the safety of themselves and their families. James offers an opposite reading of the zip code requirement than Curtis does, arguing that if a police officer

who was a part of the community was doing his or her job well, residents would protect them and their families from harm and retribution:

James: What if that cop was protecting your neighborhood? You don't want that cop to have trouble. 'You better leave him alone,' like 'This is my security, this is like what's protecting my neighborhood' and you won't have to worry about that trouble coming to your door step because you are a good cop.

While Curtis focuses on the accountability police officers would have for misconduct, James finds that police officers who do their jobs to the best of their abilities would not have to worry about the issues Curtis' presents because the community would be invested in the wellbeing of the police officer who they would view as an ally and community partner insuring their safety and security.

Requiring officers to live in specific neighborhoods or zip codes becomes complicated when considering the likelihood that police personnel can be transferred by their commanding officers to work in different districts and different squads in the department. These mandates would require that police officers uproot their families every time they were transferred which would disrupt their personal lives. Furthermore, moving in and out of neighborhoods temporarily may prevent officers from making the deep connections with community members that participants seek. It is possible that officers could make positive strides in a community, but due to the transfers would have to cut those ties and try to re-establish relationships in new areas. Perhaps requiring officers to live within the city limits would eliminate this concern, but the extreme racial residential segregation and income disparities present in Milwaukee might still pose a barrier to officers connecting with communities they police. Unless officers elect to live in poor Black neighborhoods on the north side, a disconnect between these communities and city based police officers would still exist. Police officers who make a livable wage would likely opt to live in areas with high property values and quality school districts for the safety and benefit of

their families instead of the poorer communities that have an extreme police presence and high levels of criminal activity.

Participants' ideas that police officers should engage in community building efforts and that officers should be required to spend time in Black communities getting to know Black residents resonate with ideas that coalesce in scholarship around the concept of Contact Theory. Gordon Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis states that prejudice and stereotypes may be reduced by increasing the opportunity for social contact between majority and minority group members. For social contact to reduce prejudice, certain conditions must be met. The interaction must be between groups that have equal status, mutual goals, no competition, support from authorities, and opportunities for friendships. Allport argues that if people first change the antipathy they have toward other groups, then the stereotypes would diminish. Empirical support for the contact hypothesis exists with positive effects in many domains including attitudes toward the elderly, gays and lesbians, children with disabilities, and racial and ethnic groups. Yet still questions emerge that critique the relevance of contact theory in this case. For example, does the contact itself lead to lower prejudice or does lowered prejudice lead to contact? How do necessary conditions occur? What is the actual process through which contact operates? Lastly, how long must contact last? (Allport 1954) Although much support for contact theory exists, empirical research finds mixed results when testing the hypothesis, suggesting that contact is not a universal principle (Dixon and Rosenbaum 2004, Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair et al. 2005). As a result, we cannot say with full confidence that contact theory would support the suggestions participants made to improve the relationships between Black communities and the Milwaukee police department. Not only are results of contact theory investigations mixed, but the two groups in this case do not meet the necessary conditions for egalitarian contact to be possible in

the first place. Black citizens of Milwaukee and the officers who police them do not enjoy equal group status, possess mutual goals, live free from competition, or have opportunities for friendships, even in those rare instances when there is support from authorities to support increased contacts and interactions between the groups.

Using practices based on contact theory as the basis to improve relationships between Black communities and the Milwaukee Police Department would not work within the current structure of policing. Contact theory relies heavily upon individual agency and ignores the role that structure plays in enforcing and replicating racism and racist attitudes. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) finds many limitations within both mainstream and idealist alternative frameworks, like contact theory. His ideas raise doubts about the likelihood of improving negative relationships between Black residents and the MPD through mere contact. Bonilla-Silva finds that in the research done on contact theory, racism is excluded from the foundation or structure of the social system. Instead, racism is viewed as a psychological phenomenon studied at the individual level. It is treated as a static phenomenon, while racism and racist behavior are labeled as irrational. In this research racism is understood only as overt behavior and contemporary racism is viewed largely as an outdated remnant of past racist systems. Insisting that contact between the police officers and Black residents could reduce anti-Black biases and improve relationships removes racism as from its true status as an entity embedded in the foundations of the policing and property systems. It views racism as an irrational and overt psychological phenomenon generated at the individual level.

Bonilla-Silva instead champions looking at racialized social systems (Bonilla-Silva 1997) as an alternative framework for understanding racism. In his ideation, racially inflected hostility is regarded as the expected and normal outcome of the racial structure of society. His approach

allows for studying both overt and covert explanations of racism. From his perspective, racially motivated behavior is understood as rational based upon interests and contemporary iterations of racism are understood in relation to contemporary structures rather than simply as remnants of the past. The framework Bonilla-Silva presents accounts for the ways in which racial and ethnic stereotypes emerge, transform, and perhaps might disappear (Bonilla-Silva 1997).

As Chantae's earlier comment explained, police departments have roots in the slave patrols which worked to uphold the slavery system and subjugate Black people. Using Bonilla-Silva's radicalized social systems theory, we can see how simply working within the system of policing without acknowledging or addressing its racist roots and the changes made to keep up with contemporary structures as they reproduce intentional and rational racist outcomes could lead to little or no change for improved relationships with Black communities. Therefore, the "radical" ideas made by the minority group members of restructuring the police system and creating separate forces seem to have greater possibilities for creating a collaborative and effective relationship with Black communities and law enforcement agencies, however we may envision them.

D. Changes to Police Procedures and Processes

Participants mirror the critiques of many in the nation at large when they discuss officer involved shootings as excessive uses of force. As an alternative to officers' use of lethal force, participants offer ideas that would potentially decrease the number of officer involved fatalities. They propose gun free policing and alternatives to "shoot to kill" policies.

1. *Gun Free Policing*

Gun free policing refers to a system of community policing where officers patrol unarmed. Sydney and Curtis draw upon England as a point of comparison as they advocate for gun free policing:

Sydney: I think the police in England don't have guns.

Curtis: They don't. The fact is that people are rarely murdered and killed up there, but that kind of make sense there. Those nations that don't have guns, kind of don't have murders.

Sydney and Curtis use England's police force as proof that local police can successfully patrol citizens without lethal arms. This argument proceeds logically from the premise that if police officers do not have guns, they are then unable to use them which would thus reduce the occurrence of officer involved shootings. This solution might not work in Milwaukee, however, because of the different ethnic and racial composition of the U.S., its history of gun use, and its systems of economic inequality that contribute to crime and draconian responses to it.

James and Kevin also discussed gun free policing options. However, they suggested police officers rely upon a Taser, a less lethal electroshock weapon that temporarily incapacitates an individual:

James: Maybe Tasing.

Kevin: Oh! Or Tasing. I was going to go say something like gun free policing depending on the neighborhood. Like if we could move towards that, because I think that will lessen a lot of it, because people they're losing their lives, they're losing their family members, they're losing people close to them. So, it's creating that bad taste of policing.

Taser use has reduced officer injuries by 76% and has saved 75,000 lives (Roberts 2011). Using a Taser to apprehend someone who is uncooperative with officer directives or fleeing from the scene of a crime would be preferable than using a bullet to accomplish the same goal.

Gun free policing occurs in Britain, Ireland, Norway, Iceland, and New Zealand. In these places, not only are there few to no occurrences of police involved shootings every year, but the

crime rates are extremely low. According to sociologist Guðmundur Oddssonm, in places like Iceland, there exists a tightly knit homogeneous, and egalitarian society that engenders lower crime. Low levels of social and economic inequality and a strong welfare system keep Iceland's crime rate low and reduce the need for police to arm themselves while patrolling. In Britain, the long history of unarmed officers lends itself to the idea that those on patrol are guardians meant to be easily approachable (Noack 2016).

It would seem ineffective to disarm police officers in the United States without addressing the root causes of crime. Unlike other countries that practice gun free policing, the United States has a long history of racial and economic inequality that contributes to the conflict and crime the nation experiences. Furthermore, the American public remains highly armed which contributes to the presence of crimes commissioned with a gun. It would be unrealistic to disarm the United States police without addressing gun laws and the guns its citizens possess.

2. *Shoot to Kill*

Most police officers can go through an entire career without using a firearm. In some cases, police officers use deadly force in efforts to stop a perceived threat. When this happens, officers use their training which tells them to aim for the torso (center mass) of a suspect because the shot will most likely hit its mark reducing the risk to others around who may accidentally take a bullet. The focus group participants, like many others in the general public, find this practice to be an excessive use of force and an abuse of power. These practices are especially scrutinized and criticized in cases where unarmed suspects are killed by police. In focus group three, participants collectively discussed alternatives to the "shoot to kill" practices that officers use when attempting to subdue a suspect:

Geoffrey: Maybe they need to change their shooting.

James: Or [shoot] below the waistline.

Michael: Yeah.

Kevin: You shoot somebody at the leg, they are going down, they at least kneeling.

Geoffrey: You said it was like multiple polices, why shoot to kill him? You know, shoot him in the leg, what is he going to do? He can't kill all of them.

Focus group three participants all agree that the police could use more discretion and exercise less lethal force. Many times, the police outnumber the suspect they are dealing with and they are armed with more weapons placing them at an advantage. Therefore, using alternatives like the Taser or overpowering the person might eliminate the frequency of officer involved shootings. Kevin further explains his position regarding alternatives to the lethal force police use when subduing suspects. He cites police academy gun training as a resource that officers should rely upon to take wounding shots instead of aiming at the center mass of a suspect:

Kevin: Yeah, I'm not sure what the policy is just on when you can take a killer shot, when you can't. But if I think about all these instances that keep happening in the news, if he just needs to slow somebody down, shoot them in the leg. If you have to stop him, because I mean these people they never get their day in court. Then their past comes up and whatever, but like the police they need to-- I don't know. I mean we see it on TV, right, like oh! Hey, they don't take the killer shot, they can just shoot somebody in the leg. They have to go, I mean they take shooting classes at shooting ranges, so, they can, right? ... But can we just take a wounding shot, right, if somebody misbehaving?

Cedric Alexander, a policing expert, states that when shooting a suspect, police officers are trained to aim for the chest area of a person's body because it is most likely to hit and subdue them. According to Alexander, participant driven ideas like shooting suspects in the leg are unrealistic especially if the suspect has a weapon. David Klinger, a policing expert and professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Missouri in St. Louis agrees with Alexander and adds that shooting an armed suspect in a non-lethal manner does not neutralize the threat of harm which is the right and duty of officers who must protect themselves and the public. Klinger also acknowledges, however, that police officers should try to use dialogue and find ways to verbally reduce tension and calm a person down (Narayan 2017).

3. *Increased Police Accountability*

One of the primary complaints participants have regards the lack of police officer accountability for misconduct and abuse of power. The opportunity structure theory states that residents of disadvantaged communities lack the social resources to resist police domination (Weitzer and Tuch 2006). In line with conflict and social disorganization theory, a group's greater socioeconomic status is directly related to its ability to influence elites and the institutions they control like the police. Residents in poor neighborhoods lack access to resources that would enable them to hold the police accountable for their actions, rendering them virtually powerless in the face of abusive police practices (Kane 2002, Kubrin and Weitzer 2003, Weitzer 2000). It is no surprise that participants call for greater protocols to hold officers accountable for their behavior on the job. While almost every focus group discussed increased accountability, participant ideas varied in their conceptions of how to achieve this goal. Some called for general consequences for police misconduct, while others proposed more specific remedies such as mandating legal and financial repercussions.

In focus group four, Ryan, 67, gives police officers the benefit of the doubt by stating that he understands they might make mistakes in their roles. He just wants officers to be held accountable for those mistakes like anyone else would be in any other profession:

Ryan: When they do make mistakes they actually have to pay for them, just like everybody else and nothing is going to get better until we get to that point where police would understand that. Like, I got a job and doing this hard job, it's chosen though. If they ain't up to it, then maybe they shouldn't do it, but if they make some mistakes you have to pay for them.

Ryan's comments characterize the general theme all participants shared about police officer accountability. Some participants resent the way officers can get away with poor behavior as if they are above the law. When police officers can infringe upon the freedoms of the public and go unpunished for egregious acts like killing unarmed citizens, the legitimacy of law enforcement is

threatened. Leila uses her profession as a licensed social worker and the consequences she would encounter for misconduct as a point of comparison. If she was reported for abusing her power, she would lose her license and could no longer work in her field:

Leila: If I have sex with a client and I cannot be a social worker any more, I have thrown away tens of thousands of dollars. So, I can't see why they don't have the same, that's just me being held accountable with my profession and I don't know why they don't have the same thing.

Leila sees no difference between her and police officers when considering the duty they both have to behave in an upright manner and respect those they serve. She expects police officers to be held accountable for their behavior, just as she would be for violating the rules of her profession.

Jayla seeks to strengthen protocols already in place to hold officers accountable. She has little faith that law enforcement agents will genuinely work to hold one another accountable.

Jayla: But they need stronger consequences because allegedly there are structures in place. Whatever, there's supervisors, reviews, and internal investigations.

Mod: It sounds like it is not enough?

Jayla: There is a blue line and we already talked about it. It's a blue line, and they are going to stick together.

Jayla's lack of faith in the system to catch problem officers stems from the solidarity law enforcement shows in what she calls the "blue line." The Department of Justice review of the Milwaukee Police Department reveals that supervisors can exercise great discretion regarding the documentation and investigation of community complaints (Justice 2016:13). The discretion granted to supervisors allows for reported instances of police officer misconduct to go unchecked and the lack of documentation makes it so that there is no record of complaints to hold officers accountable for their actions.

Other participants who have lost faith in the current system of police oversight suggest new ideas to hold officers accountable for their actions. As mentioned previously, Chantae

proposes that new laws be created that trigger automatic charges for any officer involved in a civilian death:

Chantae: It [police involved fatalities] has to be something that we say— so like these officers are charged with manslaughter or first degree murder and they get off because you have to pre-meditate in order to get first degree murder. We know that's not the case and we know that's how these officers get off right? So there has to be something created to where there is a policy or something on the lines of murder by enforcement. We have to create that totally new policy and what that looks like. So that's why we are losing. We don't have that so it's like we have to create what that looks like.

Malik had ideas like Chantae's. He believes that if police kill unarmed civilians, they should be automatically charged with a felony.

Malik: You should at least put some type of bill in order to, okay look, if police keep killing these folks, look, here is the bill that if this police killed this unarmed man he will automatically be brought up on a felony.

Passing new laws that carry an automatic consequence for certain offenses is not unheard of in the American justice system. Mandatory minimum sentencing requires that offenders serve a certain predetermined amount of time term for certain crimes. Although one would have to be convicted of a crime for the sentencing to apply, the logic to have certain predefined consequences is already at use in a form within the current system. Chantae and Malik's ideas would only charge officers for crimes, but still presume they are innocent until proven guilty and would ensure the sixth amendment right to a fair and speedy trial by jury. Grand juries that fail to indict officers for their roles in citizen killings serve as one of the sites of frustration for the public who criticize the justice system for not holding law enforcement agents accountable for these acts. Automatic charges would eliminate prosecutor discretion and the role of the grand jury and could possibly restore some faith in the system in terms of accountability.

Curtis takes an economic approach to holding police officers accountable. He believes there should be an automatic financial cost associated with officer involved deaths. He believes this high cost would dissuade officers from acting poorly because they don't want to have to pay for it later:

Curtis: So, a lot of these situations could be alleviated from that economical standpoint, but then you would have no reason for the enforcers. So, I mean if you really want to look at that from that perspective as far as far as like changing what could be changed. Like you said, holding them accountable, actually banning them for doing wrong shit, and actually holding them accountable. If you went out there and violated like somebody's rights, and you burn them \$10,000. When you dab came for pay, no matter how he felt at home, his racial standpoint and how he feels about black people, he isn't going to be willing to risk his household, or his livelihood, holding them accountable, burning up at the state, hold him accountable for all his actions from time he clock in, to the time he clocked out.

The economic punishment approach assumes police officers would weigh the consequences of firing their weapons and act in their best interest. However, when these instances of police shootings occur, there is often a matter of seconds to make these decisions and often they come from a place of fear whether rational or not.

VII. Chapter Seven- Summary and Conclusion

My analysis is based on eight focus group interviews with thirty Black Milwaukee residents. Focusing specifically on Black Milwaukee residents ages 18-70, I investigated how they experience and manage their relationships with law enforcement. I initially set out to answer two questions: How do Black Milwaukee residents experience policing by the Milwaukee Police Department? What possibilities exist to repair the fractured relationship between the Milwaukee Police Department and the city's Black communities? Asking these questions generated answers that focused on gender specific experiences of policing in the city, citizen complaints about the Milwaukee Police Department, and participant driven ideas to reinstate police legitimacy in Black communities. These findings uncover the complex relationship that over-policed, but under-protected communities have with law enforcement as participants reveal that they desire the police services, but demand to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect. Focus group discussions highlighted the gendered nature of experiences of policing directly related to Black women's subjugated social position.

In chapter one, I introduced the project and provided an in-depth overview of Milwaukee social institutions. Specifically, I examined the emergence and conditions of Black people in Milwaukee. In chapter two, I reviewed relevant literatures that situate the project in the fields of studying race, place, and policing, through the lens of Black Feminist Theory. In keeping with a critical criminological approach, this study relies on literature and theories that draw upon the ideas and experiences of marginalized peoples.

Current policing literature reveals that Black citizens hold negative attitudes toward law enforcement (Taylor et al. 2001). The vast majority of this literature however relies upon quantitative methods such as surveys and official data on citizen complaints (Hurst and Frank

2000, Taylor et al. 2001). Few researchers use qualitative methods to examine how and why poor attitudes develop toward law enforcement (Brunson and Miller 2006, Brunson 2007). Little research exists from the perspective of over policed communities in regards to police-citizen encounters (Anderson 1990, Brunson and Miller 2006, Brunson 2007, Jones-Brown 2000, Weitzer 2000). This study is generative in that it relies upon focus group interviews with Black community members to examine their experiences with law enforcement and provide possible solutions to repair community trust with the police.

In chapter three, I explained the significance of focus group research and how this method can contextualize the quantitative and attitudinal studies conducted in prior policing research. I find it imperative to use group interviewing techniques to inquire about how communities understand local policing as these interactions are not only experienced by individuals but by Black people as a collective group.

In chapter four, I explored the gender specific dynamics of policing in the city of Milwaukee. Participants in this study revealed gendered experiences with the Milwaukee Police Department, reporting harsher punishment doled out to men compared to women for traffic offenses. They explained that women receive warnings for offenses that men would receive tickets for, or face arrest. This difference results in heightened anxiety for Black men when they interact with the police.

Black women have a distinct experience when interacting the police. They find themselves serving as advocates for Black men when these men are removed from the community by arrest, prison, or death, forcing their interactions with the police to be ones where they are tangentially involved in the initial cause for interaction. The police can misunderstand and misinterpret the communication style of Black women as aggressive, combative, and

disorderly during these uninvited interactions with law enforcement. This gap in understanding and lack of desire to close it patterns the negative relationship that Black women have with the Milwaukee Police Department.

Black women in this study find themselves over-policed, but under-protected in domestic violence encounters. They bear the burden of interacting with the police at a high rate when they might not wish to, yet when they reach out for assistance, the available police resources fall short of protecting them. Women who find themselves involved in domestic disputes face a hard choice: they can either risk their freedom and safety by handling the issue themselves, or they can contact law enforcement and run the risk of the police not showing up in time, if at all. Considering the serious nature of domestic violence encounters, women have very little time to make decisions that will improve their chances of living to see another day. Women therefore do not have confidence that the police will protect them in some of the most urgent and deadly encounters they experience. Even when women make their case to dispatchers and the police, they may receive a court protective order, but still run the risk of it not being enough to protect them if the attacker violates it. Although women prefer to use the police as a resource for managing intimate partner violence, they remain unconvinced that this is the best resource at their disposal.

In chapter five, I explored the complaints participants shared regarding their experiences with the Milwaukee Police Department. Prior to 2013, city of Milwaukee employees adhered to strict residency rule requirements that required them to live within the city limits. The state legislature abolished that law and established that cities could require certain employees to live as much as 15 miles outside the city. Milwaukee did not enforce the 15-mile zone until 2016. City officials gave employees six months to comply or face termination (Lutheran 2017) . The

police officers' union unsuccessfully appealed the decision stating the rule violated officers' rights to due process (Diedrich 2017).

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett disagreed with the 2013 ruling that allowed city employees to reside outside of the city and commends the upheld 2016 revised ruling for enforcing the 15-mile zone requirement. He said, "I still believe that it's important and appropriate to have them within the community because I want them to be part of this community. The farther away they get, the less likely they are to be part of the community" (Lutheran 2017). Barrett's words echo the sentiments expressed by participants in the study who find the disconnect officers have with communities to be a result of their non-residency in the city.

Although focus group participants agree about the problems exacerbated by the residency rule, their attitudes toward diversity and racial representation on the police force are more complicated. Many Black Milwaukee residents complain that white officers who patrol their neighborhoods do not understand the Black lived experience and act out anti-Black attitudes against those they patrol by treating them disrespectfully, aggressively, and as suspects even when they are victims of crimes. Participants believe the police do not interact with Black people on a regular basis off the job and consequently form impressions about Blackness through media portrayals which show Black culture in a negative light. Instead of getting to know Black people and neighborhoods for themselves by living in them, the officers come to rely upon racist ideas conveyed by television and news outlets and enact their biases against the citizens on the North Side while working.

Participants desire that the city increase minority representation and the number of city residents on the police force so that those who patrol them reflect their interests and experiences.

At the same time, the Black officers who currently serve on the force have an overwhelming reputation of policing more harshly than their white counterparts. Multiple participants recount instances where Black officers expressed anti-Blackness. They also share times where white officers must intervene on a Black citizen's behalf to protect them from the aggression shown by Black officers.

Many participants regard issues of racial profiling and police harassment as factors contributing to the negative relationship they have with the Milwaukee Police Department. Most stories of racial profiling concern incidences while participants were driving. Participants shared stories where the police pulled them over without reasonable suspicion, but after running names in the database, found outstanding unpaid tickets for which to arrest them. There are also police districts that have notorious reputations for aggressive policing practices that rely on racial harassment.

Participants perceive that the police lack accountability in many ways. Most common complaints mentioned forms of blatant disrespect and lack of professionalism. Participants accuse MPD officers of teasing and mocking the communities during difficult arrest encounters, approaching encounters with overly aggressive and condescending attitudes, and enacting anti-Black attitudes and biases upon community members. Additionally, participants shared multiple incidents where police personnel approached routine encounters with a physical symbol of aggression by placing their hands upon their weapons without cause. Lack of accountability takes the form of excused and unpunished instances of excessive force and the existence of "dirty cops" who routinely break the law while policing. These officers who do not uphold the rules and expectations of the police department taint participants' perceptions of the police as an

organization. Furthermore, officers and investigation processes permit and protect misbehaving officers, especially those involved in violent and even fatal encounters with citizens.

In chapter five I also discussed how the complaints participants share result in their decisions to find alternative methods to manage policeable affairs and for them to avoid interaction with law enforcement altogether. Overall, Milwaukee residents have a complicated relationship with law enforcement. In some cases, they desire the police to address their problems like domestic abuse, but in others such as traffic encounters they would rather manage affairs on their own and avoid police contact outright. Participants believe the police lack effectiveness to resolve issues when called. They also feel that calling the police produces more disorder than it resolves, manifested in citizen harassment, arrests, and sometimes fatalities. Furthermore, calling upon the police in some cases challenges the allegiance community members have toward one another.

Although participants do not want to use the police to manage certain affairs, they must still resolve issues that arise. As a result, they find alternative methods to accomplish their goals. Some participants call upon the Nation of Islam or rely on themselves to address the problems they might encounter. This move could signal a turn back toward alternative methods of policing that do not require police presence. Although the Nation of Islam and other community groups do not have state recognized legitimacy to resolve issues of public disorder, neighborhoods that acknowledge and abide by their interventions informally legitimize their operations.

If law enforcement wants to change citizens' inclination to use alternative methods to manage policeable matters and encourage community collaboration, their efforts would need to focus on repairing community trust. One way would be to work with communities to identify goals jointly that the police could assist in meeting. Currently, many participants express the

view that the police work in direct opposition to their wellbeing and survival. Changing this reality could then change the perceptions and alter the behaviors to which citizens object.

In chapter six, I explored the community's idealized proposals to fix the problems they identified in chapter five. Participants offered five main strategies to impact positively the relationship the Milwaukee Police Department has with Black communities in the city. Chief among them were to reinstate the residency requirements and for officers to participate in relationship building activities. These efforts would work towards restoring faith in the police as agents of help, and alter their roles to be community partners rather than outside occupiers. Participants suggested changes to police officer selection processes to increase the degree of rigor in psychological screening requirements that might ensure that officers on the job are mentally fit. Additionally, they recommend the inclusion of racial and gender diversity efforts in hopes to increase community representation and consequently reflect the interests of Black communities in policing. Similarly, suggestions emerged to implement diversity training and extend general training requirements so that police officers would be better prepared to interact with the diverse population they encounter while on patrol. Changes to police use of lethal force resonated with community members as well, for example they suggest gun free policing methods and elimination of shoot to kill practices. When considering the abundance of officer involved fatalities many of which occur during routine interactions with unarmed victims, reevaluating lethal force and police officer discretion in using it would seem plausible for repairing police legitimacy. Similarly, participants call for increase accountability within law enforcement. If and when officer involved fatalities happen, citizens want to believe the system will take the loss of life seriously and hold officers accountable and dole out appropriate punishments.

Not all participants envisioned strategies within the current system of policing to improve the relationship Black communities have with law enforcement. They did not see the system as broken or dysfunctional, but rather believed it operated just as it was intended. Acknowledging the police force's roots in slave patrols, these few participants rejected the entire institution of the police and suggested that nothing short of a complete overhaul of policing would suffice in improving relations with Black communities. These participants view the sole function of the police as a mechanism to subjugate poor and minority populations while protecting white property and interests. Efforts to re-train law enforcement personnel or to have them to engage the public activities would still fail in the judgement of these respondents to address the fundamental issue that the police are diametrically opposed to the freedom and liberties of Black people.

A. Contribution to the Literature and Study Implications

This research goes beyond statistics and surface attitudinal measures of Black citizens' relationship with law enforcement to offer a qualitative explanation as to why these dynamics exist. Contextualized in Milwaukee, this research has the ability to be generalizable to other segregated, economically depressed, Black communities in the United States. These findings contribute to policing research by illuminating specific causes that negatively impact Black people's low opinion of law enforcement policies and practices. These findings reinforce and elaborate upon previously discovered sources of poor attitudes toward law enforcement like violations of procedural justice and negative vicarious experiences. These specific revelations illuminate new possible lines of inquiry that can inquire about and identify police practices that most threaten police legitimacy.

This research also challenges contact theory and reinforces Bonilla- Silva's racialized social systems theory in a police context. The repeated interactions law enforcement agents have with Black Milwaukee residents do not lower anti-Blackness. Instead, as suggested by Bonilla-Silva, policing reproduces the racial positions and structures that protect white property owners and disadvantage Black citizens as an intentional outcome.

This study contributes to Black feminist literature on Black women's vulnerability by elucidating the distinct experiences they face while interacting with law enforcement themselves and on behalf of Black men. Additionally, Black women who already prove most vulnerable to unattended violence face extreme barriers to accessing police recourses in moments of domestic and intimate partner violence (Richie 1996, Richie 2012). In a 1962 speech, Malcolm X said "The most disrespected woman in America is the Black woman. The most un-protected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman" (X 1962). Black women who participated in this study reveal that they are constantly burdened by the police due to over policing, but also because they become responsible when Black men interact with law enforcement. This study further highlights the distinct vulnerability experienced by Black women as they encounter barriers to access police resources specifically in the face of intimate partner violence. Black women's communication style, respectability politics, and lower location in the social schema make it so that they do not receive speedy and quality police assistance in some of the most crucial life or death moments which they find themselves.

Participants revealed that a linked fate experienced through negative encounters with the police helps to create what it means to be Black in Milwaukee and builds a solidarity based on that community. Participants identify and side with local and national victims fatal police interactions as they construct meanings of Blackness and understand its relationship to law

enforcement. These dynamics aid in creating a crisis of legitimacy of law enforcement in Milwaukee and communities alike as participants view themselves in opposition to law enforcement. Additionally, Repeated interactions with law enforcement officers give Black Milwaukeeans a linked fate that helps form a collective social and political consciousness

This research illuminates the value of focus group interviews as a prime methodology for studying police-community relations. As previously stated, focus group interviews were used with the intention of assessing community experiences of policing. Therefore, asking questions and holding discussion in community settings provided new insights that individualized methods cannot assess.

This study underscores what is at stake for Black people who have poor relationships with law enforcement. Their access to police resources becomes narrowed as they face discrimination from non-residential police officers who inflict anti-Black attitudes upon Black citizens. Cumulatively the demeaning and difficult interactions citizens have with law enforcement result in Black people electing to avoid police protections for policeable matters to instead find alternative measures to manage their affairs. This resistance to police outreach reflects how little citizens trust law enforcement to perform their jobs effectively. These findings can help explain why Black people refuse to cooperate with police officers and experience fear when they interact with law enforcement.

Findings reveal community driven possibilities for repair that aid in imagining ways to mend the broken relationship that exists between Black communities and law enforcement. Although untested, these ideas provide an insight into how communities imagine what the real threats are to police legitimacy in Black neighborhoods. These ideas might not work to directly

impact policing or public policy, but they can be used as a backdrop to critique current efforts that aim to better community-police relations.

B. Future Research

This project shows that Black residents of Milwaukee have a complicated relationship with the police department. They do not reject police presence outright, but want officers to show up when called and when they arrive to treat them and others like them with dignity and respect. The experience of being over-policed and under-protected makes it so that burgeoning community issues like violent crime go unaddressed as the police and community members fail to work collaboratively to meet goals that ensure the wellbeing of citizens. Community leader Willie Brisco, president of Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH), argues that a comprehensive approach is needed to address issues like gun violence. He states, “You can’t police your way out of this. More police does not reduce hopelessness; more police does not reduce disparities” (Faraj 2016). Nonetheless, police officers are a part of the solution to addressing violence in the city and in order for successful solutions to take place, they must work collaboratively with community members. The current crisis of legitimacy for law enforcement in Black communities makes it difficult for collaborative partnerships to form that might address community needs. This study explores the barriers to communities forming partnerships with the police and possibilities to overcome them. Further research needs to consider the same issues from a law enforcement perspective. How do Milwaukee Police Department officers experience policing in the city during the current crisis of legitimacy? How do MPD officers envision repairing the fraught relationships they have with Black communities in Milwaukee? Exploring community driven problems and solutions to police-community mistrust is only one aspect of reinstating police legitimacy in Black communities. As I discovered in this study, residents have

limited interactions with law enforcement officers outside of formal encounters and know little of the policing experience. For my next project, I plan to continue to research issues of police-community mistrust with a particular focus on the law enforcement perspective. To do so, I intend to collect interviews with law enforcement personnel centered on the experience of policing in the city of Milwaukee and the issue of police legitimacy in Black communities. This study will seek to broaden the scope of understanding the landscape of police relationships in Black communities in Milwaukee as well as better envision the benefits and challenges to this relationship.

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IX. Appendix

FOCUS GROUP DATA

Focus Groups Info Chart						
FG	Participant #	Pseudonym	M/F	Age at interview	Education	Zip Code
1	1	Dante	Male	55	Associates	53206
	2	Janet	Female	23	Some College	53206
	3	Robyn	Female	37	High School	53209
	4	Kelly	Female	25	Some College	53206
	5	Megan	Female	24	Some College	53206
2	6	Mercedes	Female	27	Bachelors	53218
	7	Chantae	Female	29	No High School	53206
	8	Michelle	Female	26	High School	53209
	9	Jasmine	Female	26	Post Bachelors	53233
3	10	Michael	Male	25	Bachelors	53211
	11	Geoffrey	Male	28	Bachelors	53225
	12	Kevin	Male	27	Bachelors	53208
	13	James	Male	28	Some College	53205
4	15	Ryan	Male	67	Bachelors	53224
	16	Kiara	Female	65	Post Bachelors	53224
	17	Leila	Female	35	Post Bachelors	53216
	18	Alexis	Female	26	Post Bachelors	53212
5	20	Jayla	Female	52	Associates	53216
	21	Imani	Female	33	Associates	53205
	22	Cory	Male	38	High School	53205
6	23	Kayla	Female	31	Bachelors	53212
	24	Gabrielle	Female	28	Post Bachelors	53233
	25	Ebony	Female	45	Bachelors	53212
7	26	Raven	Female	27	Some College	53206
	27	Malik	Male	43	High School	53202
	28	Cameron	Male	N/A	High School	53212
8	29	DeShawn	Male	20	Some College	53233
	30	Curtis	Male	41	Bachelors	53216
	31	Sydney	Female	36	Bachelors	53222
	32	Martin	Male	18	No High School	53222

FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

Participant Deomgraphics

Category	Count	%
Total Participants	30	
Men	12	40%
Women	18	60%
Youngest	18	
Oldest	67	
Average Age	33.96551724	
No High School	2	7%
High School	5	17%
Some College	6	20%
Bachelors	9	30%
Associates	3	10%
Post Bachelors	5	17%
53202	1	3%
53205	3	10%
53206	6	20%
53208	1	3%
53209	2	7%
53211	1	3%
53212	4	13%
53216	3	10%
53218	1	3%
53222	2	7%
54224	2	7%
53225	1	3%
53233	3	10%

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

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Consent to Participate in Research

Title of Research: Policing in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Investigator: Katherine Matthews, Sociology PhD Candidate

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read the following explanation. This statement describes the purpose, procedures, benefits, risks, discomforts, and precautions of the program. Also described are the alternative procedures available to you, as well as your right to withdraw from the study at any time. No guarantees or assurances can be made as to the results of the study.

Explanation of Procedures

You are being asked to participate in the research project to explore the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of adults, between the ages of 18-70 years, towards and with the Milwaukee Police Department. The Milwaukee Police Department operates within seven districts throughout the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The approach of the research is exploratory focus groups. A focus group is a small group of people (about 6) who meet together and provide answers plus opinions to some questions asked by a group leader. You will be asked some questions about your experiences with employees of the Milwaukee Police Department. You will also complete a short survey that has 10 questions about yourself. Your focus group will meet at a predetermined local public library on an agreed upon date and time. The focus group will be audio-taped and/or video-taped, and transcribed. The focus group will last approximately 1-1 ½ hours.

Risks and Discomforts

You will not be at physical or psychological risk and should experience no discomfort resulting from the research procedures.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits by participating in this focus group. However, this research is expected to yield knowledge about policing and resistance in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Alternative Procedures

If a person chooses not to participate, an alternative procedure is not necessary.

Confidentiality

All information gathered from the study will remain confidential. Your identity as a participant will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons; only the researchers will have access to the research materials, which will be kept in a locked drawer. Any references to your identity that would compromise your anonymity will be removed or disguised prior to transcription and the preparation of the research reports and publications. Audiotapes/videotapes will be stored in a password protected computer file in the researcher's locked office. Video will be used for observational purposes only by the PI and research associates. Your name will not be used in the transcripts of the recording.

Withdrawal Without Prejudice

Participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. Each participant is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time without prejudice from this institution.

Participant's initials: _____

Costs and/or Payments to Subject for Participation in Research

There will be no costs for participating in the research. Participants will receive \$10 remuneration for participation in this research project. However, complimentary lunch and refreshments will be available to you during the focus group time.

Payment for Research Related Injuries

Although there are no risks of injury involved with this study, the University of California Santa Barbara has made no provision for monetary compensation in the event of injury resulting from the research. In the event of such injury, the researcher will provide assistance in locating and accessing appropriate health care services. The cost of health care services is the responsibility of the participant.

Questions

Any questions concerning the research project and/or in the case of injury due to the project, participants can call Dr. George Lipsitz at 805-893-4735. Questions regarding rights as a person in this research project should be directed to the University of California Santa Barbara Institutional Review Board Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, Tim Sherwood at 805-893-4188.

Agreement

This agreement states that you have received a copy of this informed consent. Your signature below indicates that you agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject

Date

Subject name (printed)

Signature of Researcher

Date

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How do you do you describe MPD?
 - a. What does the Milwaukee Police Department mean to you?
2. In what ways do you interact with MPD? Describe
 - a. Describe your most recent interaction with MPD
3. What do you do when you see the police interact with others?
4. What do others do while you interact with the police?
5. How do the police interact your day to day life?
6. What benefits does MPD have in your city/neighborhood?
7. What challenges do you face while interacting with MPD?
8. What would you change about MPD?
9. Have you seen videos of the police interacting with civilians?
 - a. Describe the nature of these videos
 - b. What do they make you think?
 - c. How do they make you feel?

FOCUS GROUP PRE-TEST

Participant ID: _____

1. How often do you encounter the police (pick the best answer)
 - a. once a day
 - b. once a week
 - c. once a month
 - d. once every six months
 - e. once a year
 - f. never

2. Rate your attitude toward law enforcement on a scale from 1-10

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

(I hate the police)

(neutral)

(I love the police)

Answer: _____

3. Rate how safe you feel in your neighborhood

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

(extremely fearful)

(neutral)

(doors unlocked)

Answer: _____

4. Would you call the police in case of an emergency?

- a. Yes
- b. No

5. Do you think you need the police?

- a. Yes
- b. Neutral
- c. No

FOCUS GROUP POST TEST

Participant ID: _____

6. Rate your attitude toward law enforcement

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

(I hate the police)

(neutral)

(I love the police)

7. Would you call the police in case of an emergency?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. Have you witnessed police brutality?

9. Have you been a victim of police brutality?

10. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

11. Birth year

- a. _____

12. Race (circle all that apply)

- a. Black
- b. White
- c. Latin@
- d. Asian
- e. Native American
- f. Other: _____

13. Zip Code

- a. _____

14. Highest education completed

- a. No high school
- b. High school/GED
- c. Some college

- d. AA (associates Degree)
- e. BA/BS (college degree)
- f. Post bachelors

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**OPINIONS
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**RECEIVE A \$10 VISA GIFT
CARD FOR PARTICIPATION**

**COMMUNITY POLICING
RESEARCH STUDY**

**DO YOU HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT THE
MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT?**
**DO YOU FEEL SOME TYPE OF WAY
ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CITY?**

☆☆☆

**CRIMINOLOGIST KATHERINE MATTHEWS IS SEEKING
AFRICAN AMERICAN MILWAUKEE RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS DISCUSSING POLICING IN MILWAUKEE.
THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS
AND ALL PERSPECTIVES ARE WANTED.**

☆☆☆

SIGN UP HERE!

**HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/CHNZF95
EMAIL: MKEPOLICERESARCH@GMAIL.COM PHONE: 262-373-8389**