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Down By Law: A Demographic and Geographic Analysis of Those Killed by Police

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A Demographic and Geographic Analysis of Those Killed by Police

Partial fulfillment statement: A thesis/dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of Master of Sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

DOWN BY LAW: A DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THOSE KILLED BY POLICE

By Scott Wayne Murrah, BS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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Major Director: Dr. Julie Honnold, Associate Professor, Sociology

After the rebellion over the killing of Michael Brown, the US Justice Department reported that over-policing for the sake of monetary extraction was taking place in Ferguson, MO, with non-White and people in poverty being disproportionately targeted at the hands of the police. And while it has been shown to be present within the Ferguson community, this extraction and targeting by police is not a geographically isolated occurrence. Based on previous research, a racialized, economic-based system of oppression goes hand-in-hand with policing. But how do the qualities of these geographies affect the prominence and location of police violence on a systemic level? Through a process of identity creation and reification informed through the interaction of racial capitalism and the state, specific geographies are identified with different groups within society as a function of housing segregation. These areas are then targeted by police based on their identity and the existing social hierarchy. By using data from Fatal Encounters, an independent organization which catalogs who has been killed by police, coupled with demographic descriptors of place, I show that zip codes with higher levels of Black and Hispanic populations as well as worse-off economic measures were positively associated with an increased odds of more people being killed by police. By shedding light on the drivers of this cycle of violence, I hope to contribute to the establishment of a more just society by redefining who shall be protected from what and whose interests shall be served.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The power of capital comes to form through the state, and through this expression comes racialized violence. The high-profile killing of Michael Brown and the resulting rebellion in Ferguson demonstrated the state's role in this identity-based violence. A report by the Department of Justice (2015) found that, "Ferguson police officers routinely violate the Fourth Amendment in stopping people without reasonable suspicion, arresting them without probable cause, and using unreasonable force against them", and that "Ferguson's harmful court and police practices are due, at least in part, to intentional discrimination, as demonstrated by direct evidence of racial bias and stereotyping about African Americans." Additionally, an economic component of police harassment was revealed: the police were "focusing on revenue over public safety, leading to court practices that violate the 14th Amendment's due process and equal protection requirements," resulting in "court practices exacerbating the harm of Ferguson's unconstitutional police practices and imposing particular hardship upon Ferguson's most vulnerable residents, especially upon those living in or near poverty." While this racialized and economic targeting has been shown to be present within the Ferguson community, extraction and violence by police is not a geographically isolated occurrence. But how do the qualities of these geographies affect the prominence and location of policing on a systemic level? In this paper I argue that we can only understand the policing institution through the interactions of identity creation and geographical space as a result of the racial capitalist order. While much research has expressed the necessity of accounting for class and race in explaining police violence, specifically violence that results in the killing of citizens by police (Nicholson-Crotty et. al., 2017; Lawson, 2018; Jacobs, 1998; Ross, 2015), these studies largely fail to account for space and identity creation at the more local level at which these instances of police violence occur as well as the role the state plays in this process.

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By forcing unwanted segments of society into specific geographical locations, economic segregation both sequesters individuals as well as stigmatizes them with a detrimental social identity. One of the most apparent results of racial capitalism is seen by looking at housing segregation. While economic segregation exists on nearly any geographical level due to the features of globalized capitalism, it is within more micro-geographies where the effects of housing segregation can truly be felt. Block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, this segregation requires a more micro level analysis to be made in order to achieve a well-developed picture of crime and policing (Anderson, 2000). These micro-geographies are the targets for police presence and violence, helping to reinforce the boundaries set by housing discrimination. This boundary enforcement then becomes the crux of the policing system and a constant reification process, both justifying the levels of police violence as well as the aforementioned economic segregation through its appearance as natural. This appearance of the natural also extends to the most heinous actions of police violence within these geographies, the killing of a citizen.

By touching on a wide variety of literature, I hope to trace a state-originating model of police killing citizens. This system of segregation is anything but natural and these geographies are the result of an explicit creation process. But what is it about these geographies that ties them to gratuitous police violence in greater numbers? Drawing from Cedric Robinson and Jackie Wang's theories of racial capitalism as well as Katherine McKittrick's theories relating to Black geography, I hope to show the critical role that geographies and the societal identities they create play in the instigation of police violence directed against citizens. Through the use of racial capitalism, I argue that race and class are inseparable. Through the influence of racial capitalism on the state, the legal framework of the United States is of a racialized nature via critical race theory and that the police are the enforcers of these racialized laws. This racial capital legal system then creates a system of housing segregation built upon race and class lines. These geographies act as a force for creating identities both for the areas themselves and

the individuals within them. It is these identities that signal to police which geographies require an increased presence, this increased presence leads to violence, and this violence serves to reify that identity creation. Finally, I will argue that these identities likewise hold the key to overturning the racial capitalist system at the root of these issues as a means of stopping this violence once and for all.

The Measurement and Prevalence of Police Violence

To get a sense of police violence within the United States, information must be culled together from a variety of sources. Historically, some of the only information we have on the killings of citizens by police are simple descriptions pulled from newspapers, like the statement in a 1869 article that "a policeman killed a Chinaman" (Segrave, 2016, p. 19), or in a 1868 article that said, "a St. Louis police officer killed a young man who refused to tell him where he was going late at night" (Segrave, 2016, 18). Even now, there is little information to size the scope of police killing citizens from government sources, despite ample measures on the dangers of being killed on the job as an officer (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). So while we have a sense of the dangers of being a police officer, we only have access to estimates of the dangers of being a citizen relative to the institution of policing.

It is important to reference counts of police killing citizens as estimates because no such official statistics on citizens killed by police currently exist in the United States as well as most countries. While methodologically precarious due to the estimated nature of these numbers, we can compare rates internationally to get a better sense of police violence within the US. While the US dwarfs the rate of people killed by police per million citizens of Brazil, 239 in 2017 (Velasco et. al., 2018), the rate of 30.4 for the US for 2017 (Fatal Encounters, 2019) is 14 times the rate of France (Halissat, 2018**)**, 17 times the rate of Germany (Pearson, 2018), and incomparable to the one person in the history of Iceland who has been killed by police (BBC News, 2013). There have been over 25,500 people in the US estimated to be killed by police between 2000 and 2018 (Fatal Encounters, 2019), coming to an average of 1,329 per year. To provide context, this is a greater national cause of death than the "585 deaths (all ages) due to pneumonia and influenza, and likewise exceeded the national totals for several diseases of considerable concern: measles (188 cases), malaria (786 cases), and mumps (436 cases), and

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was on par with the national number of cases of Hepatitis A" (Krieger et. al.,2015), which makes it arguably a public health crisis. This violence has repercussions outside of the individual killed as well, with publicized incidents of police violence being directly correlated with lower rates of calling the police and thus further eroding community trust in the institution (Desmond et. al., 2016). Thus, it is not only the victim of police violence that is hurt, to put it lightly, but those within the community that are not measured with these statistics as well, forced to live in a greater fear of those who are supposed to protect them. With that in mind, what do we know about those killed by police?

Police violence disproportionately affects non-White communities, though it is still important to regard police violence as affecting all members of society. By mapping unofficial statistics onto official ones, Edwards et. al. estimated that killings by police represented about 8% of all adult male homicides between 2012 and 2018, with the mortality risk of Black individuals being more than double of White and Hispanic people when looking at the deaths per 100,000 (2018). While methodologically precarious, the lack of official reporting makes these sorts of processes a necessity to understanding how and where police kill citizens. It is important here to recognize that White people represent 46% of those killed by police between 2000 and 2018, totaling to at least 7,775 people now dead (Fatal Encounters, 2019). This leads to one of the main arguments of my work: police violence is not just a non-White people problem despite disproportionately affecting these communities. Rather, it is an all-encompassing systemic issue within the institution of policing itself that sets it at odds with the citizens it is purported to protect. When it comes to the use of this violence, there is a dynamic of space involved such that, through economic segregation, there is a geographical concentration of police within specific neighborhoods (Smith & Holmes, 2014). So rather than the cause being reducible to simply police hate Black people, there is a greater interaction of societal forces at work than the targeting of perceived minority threats when it comes to the taking of a life by a police officer. In order to better understand the interactions of police and the

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communities they engage with, I argue that a greater relationship between the state, the police, the identity of those policed, and the geographies they reside in must be acknowledged that previous research has failed to account for.

The State and Critical Race Theory

To address the function of the police in identity creation through geographies and the police violence which occurs because of this process, I will first define the state and its functioning since it is the state which has ultimate control over the police. A Marxist view of the state is necessary to understand the workings of police within the United States along with their relationship to private property. Likewise, I seek to explicitly ground my research in a liberatory framework rather than one of reform by proposing a radical reimagination of policing as we know it. First, the state exists in its current form as something separate from society and only exists as it stands now because of the consolidation of private property within the empowered class (Marx & Engels, 1976). From this private property comes power, and thus the bourgeoisie are defined not only through their relationship to property but their power of being, "who constructs the rules of inclusion and exclusion in institutional and social life; who tells the story of past and present, what Antonio Gramsci calls common sense; and who has the power to define the future" (Aronowitz, 2004, pg. 53). So the bourgeoisie are then characterized by their proximal relationship to the means of production as well as their ease of using that relationship for shaping identity via exclusion, both statically and temporally, to their advantage. While capitalism has detrimental effects, to put it lightly, across many social identities such as gender (Federici, 2004), ethnicity (Steinberg, 1981), and indigenous status (Cariou, 2018; Park, 2016), due to the limits in scope of this research I will be focusing exclusively on the intersections of race and economic class as examples of identity. While Marxist thought provides the theoretical architecture for the interrelations of economic position and power, critical race theory offers a way for integrating race into this analysis.

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In order to address institutionalized racism, critical race theory can be employed to create a counter-narrative of present and persistent race-based discrimination by reimagining property relations. At the root of critical race theory (CRT) is the belief that racism pervades United States society, specifically its legal framework as well as institutions, and that the liberal, meritocratic reforms through colorblind means will never disassemble the system of racism because to do so necessitates destroying the liberal ideas of property (Delgado & Stefanic, 1993; Aleinikoff, 1991; Bell, 1985). Cheryl I. Harris argues that Whiteness can be regarded as a form of property: something to be possessed and protected which yields societal benefits (Harris, 1993). "Whiteness - the right to White identity as embraced by the law - is property if by property one means all of a person's legal rights" (Harris, 1993, p. 1726). While race is not explicitly addressed in Marx's theory of private property, the results of the system he described display the Whiteness inherent in it through the results of it. For example, the median White household wealth being twelve times higher than median Black household wealth (Thompson & Suarez, 2015) acts as an operationalization for means of production proximity as well as the permissibility of this racial gap through the legal system. Whiteness as property can also be the codification of customs over time, established over centuries, entered into law, and thus becoming a "property interest" (Haris, 1993, p. 1728). Whiteness becomes encoded law, either overtly or covertly, and the expectations of White people who benefit from it become its continuation.

Attacks against this legally codified Whiteness appear as attacks against White people's existence, because their place of power within the social hierarchy encourages the belief that social segregation is a natural process. "When the law recognizes, either implicitly or explicitly, the settled expectations of Whites built on the privileges and benefits produced by White supremacy, it acknowledges and reinforces a property interest in Whiteness that reproduces Black subordination" (Harris, 1993, p. 1731). White supremacy then becomes further entrenched within the law as time goes on and, combined with the color-blind racism of

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the neoliberal ideology, the face-value appearance becomes one of failing via meritocracy for the non-Whites rather than a life being stymied by racism. Without the deniability of perceived fairness by those who are not negatively affected by the racial capitalist state, the system itself would collapse under a lack of legitimacy.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model
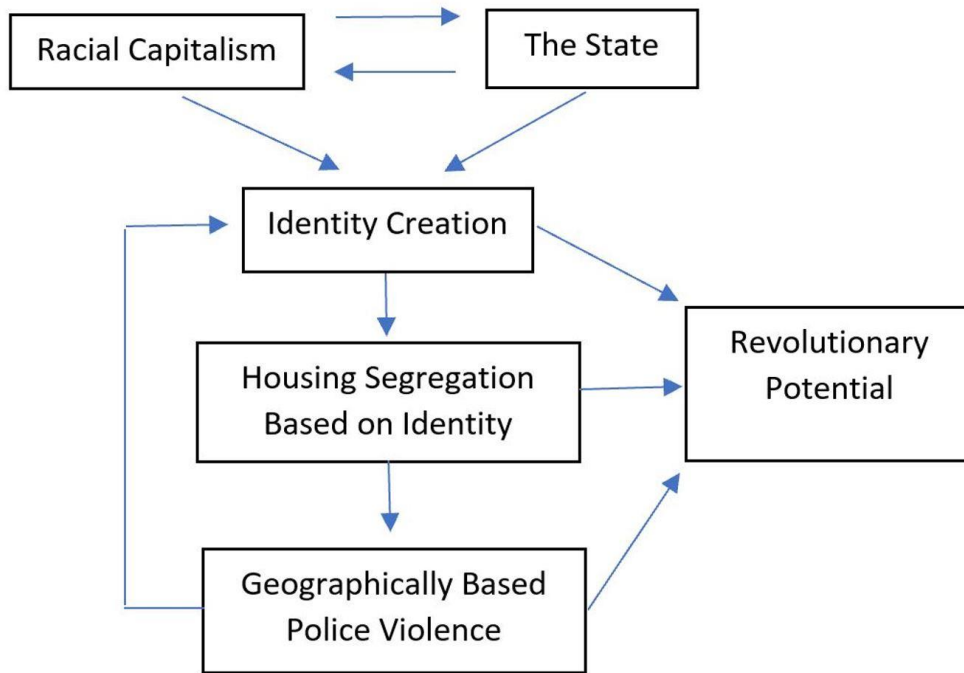
It is this perceived-to-be existing and functional meritocracy which represents the greatest continuing critique to CRT. Some claim that CRT is calling for a system of "naked racial subordination" (Barlow, 2016), resulting from the inability to see through the veneer of the current system's fairness to perceive the already existing racial subordination in effect. Other critiques include that those who embrace CRT are "eschewing traditional legal scholarship in favor of an avowedly politicized stance" (Litowitz, 1996, pg. 510), or that the movement is an overreaction to natural and acceptable market forces (Subotnik, 1997), both of which miss the intentions of CRT. CRT functions at a level of analysis above societal institutions and criticizes those institutions for the lack of reflexive thinking. CRT eschews traditional scholarship,

because traditional scholarship is filled with racist ideology. CRT is a criticism of market forces, which are not natural but rather the result of codified, legal racism, and thus require a complete reimagining of property relations to remedy. Likewise, while some reconcile a recent perception of an unresponsive or ineffective government through the growth of neoliberalism (Brown, 2015), they miss the point that state power, short of acts such as the Freedmen's Bureau and the like, has rarely been responsive to the wishes and wills of those who are not White, or largely middle class and above among other statuses, showing the colorblindness of their critique - a symptom of that same neoliberal growth (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). While White people of modest means tend to have positive association with these institutions due to their distance from the negative racial effects, those who are lower in the status hierarchy tend to have more negative views of institutions; they know they are being discriminated against yet are forced to feel the weight of their powerlessness to it due to the imperceptibility of discrimination by those in power. Thus, if the law is based in a racist ideology regarding property and the police exist to uphold the law, then we can assume police are a force for upholding the propertied, racialized status quo. I have argued state power serves both capital and the Whiteness embedded within it, thus a unifying theory of economic and racial discrimination must be employed to completely understand this intersection.

Racial Capitalism

Due to the history of racial politics in America as well as the current economic arrangement, a unified theory of racism and capitalism must be enacted to make sense of these two forces acting as one rather than separate entities. In an attempt to end this false dualism, I employ Cedric J. Robinson's theory of racial capitalism: that the development and foundation of capitalism was and continues to be intertwined with racialized subordination and exploitation (Robinson, 1983). In combination with critical race theory, this racialized economic system is embedded within the laws of the United States. For example, Black people are

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routinely denied access to homes in higher socioeconomic areas through a lack of capital via generations of denied wealth as well as overt racial discrimination via inability to receive loans or predatory lending, the latter being one of the prime causes of the 2008 financial crash. This led to a localized wealth destruction among those already within society's lowest socioeconomic tier (Mahmud, 2012). It is both of these identities, race and class among others, coming together which created this great wave of wealth destruction in non-White communities, as well being the driving force behind the uncovered racial capital targeting actions of the Ferguson, MO Police Department (Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, 2015) and historic events like the "Black Wall Street" riots (Hirsh, 2003). While the traditional neoliberal response to these mass destructions of wealth among precariously situated populations is traditionally "a narrative where evolution and/or 'spontaneous order' brings the market to ever more complex states of self-realization, which may escape the ken of mere humans" (Mirowski, 2014, pg. 62), these events are rather more overtly planned than an act of nature beyond human comprehension: the most vulnerable in society are sacrificed for profits through this system of racial capitalism for the sake of those with power.

This idea of the inseparability of racism and economic exploitation has been built on over time, currently culminating in Wang's (2018) five-point definition of the racial capital state. Wang contends that the aforementioned taking of wealth from vulnerable communities is only one aspect of the modern racial capital state. This "extraction and looting", Wang believes, done via the financial sector as well as municipal governments, is one of the five modalities of modern racial capitalism within the neoliberal age along with "financial states of exception...automated processing, confinement, [and] gratuitous violence (with execution as an extreme manifestation of this technique)" (2018, pg. 72). All of these directly affect both the United States' populations as well as those most vulnerable all over the world. At an international level, while the state is able to accrue billions of dollars in debt, those countries under economic control, most often the victims of colonial imperialism and falling under the

same racialized identities, are required to pay their debts under threat of force and economic restructuring (Kim, 2018). Automation, that is the removal of human involvement within various systems, leads to events such as when the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, "failed to properly set and implement utility allowances as required by federal law, resulting in unlawful excessive charges" (Legal Aid Justice Center, 2017, pg. 1). This led to the systematic overcharging of the primarily Black and impoverished housing project residents of a settled $2.5 million dollars: a figure lower than the total overcharging (Legal Aid Justice Center, 2018). We see this same racialized effect within the confinement aspect, in that private, for-profit prisons have an even greater Black population than the already well-researched, State-based system of incarceration (Petrella, 2013), showing that the introduction of profit incentives leads to greater racialized outcomes. Finally, the gratuitous violence of the state towards the non-White and people in poverty among others is one of the key cornerstones of my arguments. The racial capital state must engage in violence, and it does so at the expense of specific groups.

I have argued how the other aspects of racial capitalism's current form affects oppressed groups, but how does the racial capital state systematically target these groups for this violence? To do so, and after the passage of numerous civil rights legislation pieces, there must be a way to clearly identify those groups without explicit mentioning. In line with CRT, since racially explicit laws are no longer possible in the United States as they once were, a new system must be developed to target the same historic victims of state violence in less overt ways for the sake of maintaining legitimacy. This process did not go away with the passage of the civil rights legislation, as I have argued, since racialized violence and economic extraction are core parts of modern racial capitalism's functioning. I argue that the state engages in a process of identity creation both for individuals it wishes to target as well as the areas in which they live as a result of housing segregation. In order to achieve these ends of economic extraction and social subjugation, these identities ("Black", "poor", etc) are partly formed

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through their assignment to different neighborhoods via economic means. These identities are then regarded as threats, specifically to the racial capital status quo, and dealt with through police violence to both quell those threats as well as reifying the identities of these spaces and people as deserving of this violence.

Group Threat Theory

Threats to order come from the boundaries of order, where groups are able to perceive the illegitimacy of state power systems, thus we can expect the enforcers of that order to have a greater, more violent presence within these more threatening areas. The status of oppressed not only grants a second sight (DuBois & Marable, 2015), an added layer of oppression perception via direct experience of its social functioning, but that sight allows for revolutionary potential (Freire, 1972; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) through the development of what's been termed "class consciousness " (Wright, 2006; Borland, 2008) among other things. It is important to recognize that the concept of class in this sense is still a living debate and a category in conflict. Some believing it needs to be subdivided further and further (Wright, 2015) while others may believe in a greater delinking from Western ontologies rather than their expansion (Mignolo, 2007), though it still provides an adequate foundation for thoughts on the menace identity can possess to the racial capitalist order. Living examples pose a threat to the assumption that racial capital inequality is natural, which the current social arrangement depends on for its legitimacy, and that threat is rooted in a shared and lived perception that the current system exists to disenfranchise. However, it is worth noting that while social organization may differ from the prime capitalist methods and perceptions of illegitimacy can be strong, societies can still reproduce similar social relations functioning more as a shelter from the storm with revolutionary potential rather than a completely reimagined form of non-capitalist life (Gago, 2017; Huron, 2018). Nonetheless, the potential for threat is there, which leads to the perception of these groups as threatening to those in power. This is in line with group or social threat theory, which

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implies that, "the greater the number of acts and people threatening to the interests of the powerful, the greater the level of deviance and crime control" (Liska, 1992, pg. 18) necessary in those areas. But what is it about these targeted identities that are so threatening? Those belonging to these identities are more easily able to perceive the exploitative functioning of the racial capital state through their lived experiences rather than the veneer put forth of meritocracy, and thus they possess a great amount of revolutionary potential which the state seeks to suppress through Wang's five modalities of racial capitalism.

Oppressed identity represents a threat to the social order though the increased ability of those possessing these identities to perceive the state as illegitimate, despite the state's role in their creation and continuation. As Haider (2018) discusses, identity alone will not save oppressed people, but rather it must be a sense of identity coupled with an awareness of power relations. It is through identity that we must become what Quan refers to as "ungovernable": a state where, "free men and women negotiated their own terms of living, and in the process, negated the terms of order" (2017, pg. 175). In this case, the terms of order are that of racial capitalism: the domination and extraction enacted upon sites and people of "waste" (Goldstein, 2013). Coupled with one's position within Patricia Hill Collins' Matrix of Domination (Collins, 1993), the awareness of one's location within these interlocking systems of oppression can help or hinder the recognizing of the current rules of order. This potential enables a rejection of those rules in the hope of a new form of living. Castells has referred to these identities created in relation to oppression as "resistance identities", formed by "building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society" (Castells, 2011, p. 8). While some believe the state to be a potential solution to the rampant discrimination it perpetuates, wishing to transform it into a "compassionate actor" (Heintz & Balakrishnan, 2014, pg. 403), this misses the current and historical role of the state as the perpetrator of oppression and the dismantler of any existing economic compassion under capitalism (McNally, 2011). The racial capital powers that be will combat this drive for systemic

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reimagination in multiple ways. Specifically, through the police, this revolutionary potential is fought with two methods. First, via subsumption, the absorption and subsequent morphing of revolutionary potential into something more benign, in this case through the enactment of the Black Cop, and second via Wang's gratuitous violence endemic to the racial capital state.

<u>Policing via Subsumption</u>

Policing as a means of suppressing revolutionary potential takes the overt from of violence, yes, but the co-option of certain identities against policing in order to disarm them should be addressed as well. It is important to recognize that policing not only occurs at the end of a nightstick but culturally too, through the subsumption of identity by allowing a chosen few members into the current system of social power relations. In this case, I am using subsumption to mean the absorption of threatening or revolutionary practices into the racial capital status quo by morphing their functioning to no longer be threatening while still possessing the trappings of that threat. This process is done through replacing the revolutionary potential of class consciousness with an, "Ideology that emerged to appropriate this emancipatory legacy in service of the advancement of political and economic elites" (Haider, 2018, p. 12). By pacifying identity, through commodification for broad consumption (Balaji, 2009; Wearing et. al., 2013) or the fool's trap of gaining a seat at the table (Eisenstein, 2015), identities are subsumed by capital and thus stripped of their revolutionary potential while the ghost of said potential still remains to be further commodified. While some believe this co-option is not necessarily negative (Jackson, 2009), the process ultimately leaves the initial power relations of oppression unchanged. This system of co-option is demonstrated no better than through the example of the Black Cop, the admittance of few from the oppressed to seats of power in order to maintain the status quo.

Some research takes the idea of the Black Cop to its extreme, suggesting that a "critical mass" of Black police officers must be reached (Nicholson-Crotty et. al., 2017), but this

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suggestion disregards the wider systemic issues and contexts of policing. Other findings regarding a police officer's race have been that of a non-significant means of reducing police violence (Smith, 2003) or an inconclusive factor (McElvain & Kposowa, 2008). "The most glaring cause for skepticism is that policing is a heavily contextualized phenomenon rooted in historical racial tensions and contemporary settings of geographically concentrated, non-randomly distributed pockets of poverty and crime" (Brunson & Gau, 2015, pg. 214). Without a fundamental disruption in the racial capitalist order, the police will continue to enforce the argued racist legal system, regardless of that officer's race, just draped in a more legitimate veneer (Forman Jr., 2017). All of this must also be analyzed adjacent to the fact that these officers are often called "Black Cops," showing that it is their identity which is most important to the state, serving as a wink and a nod to dissuade that they are like other officers. Thus, Black Cops are used to disperse some of the implicit violence within the term "cops," reducing suspicion by co-opting oppressed identities, while leaving the roots of oppression unchanged. While fighting the radical potential of identity via subsumption is one method employed, the tried and true method of violent repression and confinement is the more overt of the two.

Using violence as part of maintaining the racial capital status quo is how the state defines itself and reifies its legitimacy, as well as being the modus operandi for police. In order to maintain the aforementioned societal divides favorable to those in power, the state uses what Max Weber refers to as, "the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force" (Waters & Waters, 2015, p. 136), with this use of force helping to define both the power and geography of that state. Finally, it is the police who act as the domestic hand of violence of the state, able to use force as part of their job description as a means of violently combating threats to the current social order (Reiner, 2010; Williams, 2007). Likewise, since the social order is one of the propertied/empowered and non-propertied/disempowered, as well as one with a vested interest in identity production/reification, the police are therefore enforcers and perpetrators of this racial capital distinction. They serve to divide the people by enforcing these identities through unequal

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applications of violence. This process, in conjunction with grander societal narratives, enforces these established identity divides by creating a rift in opinions on police thus limiting the creation of a potentially revolutionary and cross-class social formation.

<u>Policing via Geography and Gratuitous Violence</u>

Through the unequal application of force, police seek to instill fear within some geographies/populations as well as reassurance of legitimacy in others, resulting in mixed perceptions of their functioning. The concept of a divide between Blacks and Whites on their views of the power enacted by law enforcement over their lives has been widely studied and is largely agreed upon as a social fact of life in the United States. From within the criminal justice literature, Weitzer and Tuch (2006) used group-positioning theory, that people experience the world as a reflection of their reference group i.e. race, class or a combination of others in this situation, as an explanation for why this divide exists and then elaborated upon this by exploring various issues which may be at the root of the matter. They believe that since Black people are currently and have historically been discriminated against, they will socially adopt the identity of a persecuted group, similar to group threat theory. The results of this identity adoption is a general distrust of police, since police have traditionally been the enforcers of the racial capital order.

Much research has been done on the racial divide in opinions on police. This divide has shown to be present via in-depth interviews with Black youth (Brunson and Weitzer, 2009), indicating that this difference in police opinion is not strictly within adults. Here again, Black youth are more likely to have negative views of the police as compared to White youth so, building upon this, the divide in opinions must be something which is shaped earlier on in life. Additionally, this divide has also been shown when exploring perceptions between races of how police are expected to act and how they actually act in the field as well as the negative reactions to the police crossing the line of acceptability set by the public (Seron et. al., 2004). Seron et.

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al. constructed narratives based on actual police encounters recorded in official police reports, varying what topics were present in each narrative, then asked phone survey respondents to rate on a one to ten scale whether there was no misconduct or serious misconduct. They found that Blacks are more likely than Whites to view any police misconduct much more seriously and that physical violence against a citizen is the most serious issue among both races. Additionally, some of this variance in perception may be due to the intersection of being non-White and being economically poor - a social location which many non-White people inhabit within the United States.

Socioeconomic status has been a key factor in the frequency and outcomes of police interactions within the United States due to the role geographies via housing segregation play in concentrations of policing. Some have tied housing discrimination and the resulting racial and economic enclaves it forms to perceptions of crime by the police (Quillian & Pager, 2001). By mapping survey results to Census level data at a Census tract level, It was shown that the percentage of Black males within a neighborhood was positively associated with the perception of crime in said area, namely because Blacks are more likely to live in more poverty-stricken areas than Whites are. This aligns with group threat theory via distinct geographic placement resulting in a greater police presence. Therefore, Blacks are generally more likely to be living in poorer, more dangerous neighborhoods, and this tying of Blacks and poverty has led to the perception among police officers that a high concentration of Blacks in an area correlates to higher levels of crime and thus warrants greater numbers of police. This system then works to reinforce the prejudice of Black and poor people representing a latent or overt criminal element rather than everyday citizens via the policing institution through an increased police presence within those communities. While it has been argued that this increased amount of policing is a necessary feature for the sake of crime prevention (Cozens et. al., 2005), that is a temporally backwards claim. The geographical sequestering of poor and non-White populations formed

into high crime localities is instead the cause of these issues to be combatted rather than the outcomes of which being the object of focus.

It is within and because of these isolated geographies containing deemed socially maligned groups that abusive police power is allowed to flourish. Some have taken the stance that due to this greater presence in the area, police misconduct will rise (Kane, 2002). By analyzing the changes in demographics of a police precinct area in relation to reports of police misconduct over a 21-year period, and framed within social disorganization theory, it was shown that structural disadvantage as well as changes in the Latino population were positively associated with increased levels of police misconduct. Because of the disadvantaged nature of those being policed in more unsafe neighborhoods, officers have more leeway to act as they see fit without fear of being held responsible for their actions. Members of these communities lack access to the same legal channels as others in higher SES brackets by definition through their reduced access to economic and social capital. Additionally, along the same lines, it has been shown that these acts of increased police misconduct in poorer and less safe neighborhoods tend to be violent in nature (Terrill and Reisig, 2003). Since greater numbers of police officers in an area often result in a greater level of police misconduct, increasing encounters with police officers are negatively linked to support for police.

Poorer and more unsafe neighborhoods are more likely to have unfavorable views of the police due to the sheer frequency of police encounters within individuals' lives and the often-perceived unethical actions taken by police within these areas, again linking back to the geographical components and consequences of policing. Weitzer and Tuch conducted a national survey, including demographic information and how individuals had interacted with police, then used those via regression to see how they influenced perceptions of police misconduct via a created index of survey questions. In general, non-Whites are "more likely than Whites to report having negative interactions with police, to be exposed to media reports of police misconduct, and to live in high-crime neighborhoods where policing may be

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contentious—each of which increases perceptions of police misconduct" (Weitzer and Tuch, 2004). Because of this, views on the criminal justice system as a whole are affected negatively for minority respondents due to the frequency of bad interactions with law enforcement officials. This stresses even further the negative ramifications of police transgression and the reality of this being a systemic and institutional issue rather than one on an individual level. And while race and neighborhood has been shown to be a prime determinant in one's opinions on police transgression, it also affects one's ability to fight back against police violence.

Due to the lower levels of cultural and economic capital, those who are often targeted by police are generally unable to fight back. Greater levels of violent actions by police officers are said to be for two main reasons: the opportunity structure and the lack of constraints on police within these neighborhoods. Opportunity structure, in this case, refers to the greater chance of situations resulting in violence within lower socioeconomic status communities because "opportunities for misconduct are simply greater in disadvantaged communities than others" (Weizer & Tuch, 2006, p. 22). This is likely a result of the lack of economic capital, combined with the need for people to eat, as well as the nature of law being based in the defense of private property as discussed earlier. Lack of constraints refers to a lack of ability for people in poverty to fight back against police abusing their power. "Residents of poor neighborhoods are typically powerless in the face of abusive police practices, whereas residents of more affluent communities have greater resources and connections to elites which can be mobilized to hold police accountable" (Weizer and Tuch, 2006, p. 23). This means that not only is there a greater police presence in these worse-off neighborhoods which increasingly acts with unwarranted violence towards the local population, but those who are more often victims of this violence lack the means to hold the police accountable when compared to citizens of a higher socioeconomic status. While the cited research does come to the same conclusion, the racialization of police violence and the centering of this violence in impoverished areas, it is the unification of this work with a lens critical of the state that makes

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my research unique. The same applies to my theories on racial capitalism as a force in this process. While much of this literature speaks to specific geographies being targeted by police, there is little discussion on how these geographies are created or maintained.

Other Spatial Theories of Policing

There are many geographically-based theories of crime and police violence, however they lack the critique of the state's role in this system that I have argued is fundamental to the process. I address them here to explicitly show where my work stands in relation to them. Studies have shown that about half of all crime committed within a city occurs at or around only 5% of a city's addresses (Weisburd & Eck, 2004) and that the concentration of violence within these geographies have remained stable over time (Braga et. al., 2010). Micro-geographies known as hot spots have been linked to high concentrations of crime within a neighborhood (Sherman et. al., 1989). Here the drivers of crime are believed to be a deviation from routine activities on the part of the individual making them a target, the presence of a committed offender, and the lack of capable guardians within these specific geographies (Weisburd et. al, 2009; Sherman & Weisburd, 1995). However, these studies position the police as the solution to crime rather than a contributing factor in the cause of it through identity creation, thus I believe they miss the larger social context in which the policing institution exists. While police presence may lower official crime statistics in a targeted geography, I have argued that police presence results in greater levels of violence on members of that neighborhood which often, along with the structures causing crime, goes unchallenged. So while there is a cross-theory-and-discipline agreement on the spatial dimension of crime, the distinction between my work and more traditional geography based criminology is what one is trying to explain: street level crime or the systemic causes of that crime.

Instead of working towards correcting the society which caused the instigating problems, Broken Window theory adherents sought instead to criminalize the incorrectly

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identified perpetrators. Broken Window theory is the idea that if a perceived indicator of crime occurring or having previously occurred is seen, then that perception will lead to the occurrence of more crime (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). As such, an intense criminalization process was undertaken on those committing quality of life crimes, those crimes which are not criminal but more-so in violation of the dominant culture's aesthetic beliefs, as a means of preventing decay into an area of high crime (Chronopoulos, 2012). Via a system of "zero-tolerance" policing (Greene, 1999; Harcourt, 1998; Dixon, 1998), an attempt was made to improve society through rampant criminalization. The results of this policy are still felt today through the use of "stop and frisk" tactics (Collins, 2007; Goel et. al., 2016; White & Fradella, 2016). It is important to recognize that this process functioned through the perception of social disorganization rather than the actual presence of criminal acts, and it is this dynamic which drove the policing system through this theory. "Social disorganization emphasizes the role of sub criminal but antisocial activities in the local environment, and of evidence of neglect and decay, in the genesis of fear of crime" (Lorenc et al., 2012). By combating these sub-criminal activities and incivilities, policing sought to both reduce the fear of crime in the targeted neighborhoods as well as restrict socially perceived crime actions to the geographies in which they were preordained to occur. This serves as an easy, reactionary response to poverty rather than an attempt to correct it. By attacking easy to diagnose, street level, perceived infractions, victories against the concept of crime as a whole can be claimed and the identity/geography dialectic can be upheld.

Since the perception of criminality by other citizens functions similarly to the perception of criminality by law enforcement, Broken Window theory explains the criminalization of identity on the social level. It is important to recognize that the perception of crime varies significantly from the perception of disorder yet are often confounded, meaning police often get called to respond to legal activities (Gau & Pratt, 2008). These perceived criminal acts are more often called in reporting non-White or lower SES individuals (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). Thus

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not only are police perceiving lower SES and non-White individuals as criminals but the local population as well, showing that the identity formation coupled with geography is all encompassing and does not reside exclusively within the legal system. Finally, since the police are responding to incivil and not criminal acts, this process seeks to further criminalize already disadvantaged populations as well as increasing the extra-legal powers of police. In addition to its application being racist and classist in nature, there has been little to no support found for its founding premise or the occurrence of positive results (Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006; Fagan & Davies, 2000; Harcourt, 2009). It is thus that this dominating theory of policing, rooted in the same micro-level geography identity formation process, used these same geographies to their own advantage in maintaining the dominant social order. Another prominent theory regarding crime and subsequent policing is social disorganization theory (Sampson et. al., 1997), where the eroding of social bonds among the community in a specific area is thought to be the cause of crime and subsequent policing.

Rooted in the functionalist theories of Durkheim, social disorganization states that lower levels of social bonds and informal social controls lead to the occurrence of crime. Formed by Shaw and McKay (1942) through their work in mapping male, juvenile delinquency convictions over time throughout Chicago, and engaging in the first crime mapping exercise within the United States, they found crime to be concentrated within specific geographies, and that these geographies were likewise tied to poverty, negative health outcomes, ethno-heterogeneity, and transient populations. It is important to recognize that they did not actually test the influence of social bonds, but instead became accidental Marxists through their tying of concentrated poverty to crime occurrence. Where social bonds became more empirically part of this theory is with the work of Sampson who introduced empirically measured forms of social bonds through the operationalization of this concept into two facets: informal social control via collective efficacy and neighborhood cohesion (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson, 2012; Sampson et. al., 1997). Collective efficacy was a measure of how much the community was accepting of

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crime occurring in their surroundings, and likewise a measure of how well those communities can control the behavior of individuals within them. Neighborhood cohesion sought to measure the perception of trust between individuals within that community, arguing increased trust would lead to decreased crime. A third dimension, concentrated disadvantage, was later added to this theory (Sampson & Wilson, 1995) as a way to account for the overt and covert racial discrimination enacted both culturally and politically which further maligned these communities. While these studies did find significant relations between their measures of informal social bonds and the occurrence of crime, the functional nature of this theory and thus the belief of social order being one of consensus leaves the theory unable to contend with issues questioning the role of institutions in creating high crime geographies. Since all of society is organized via consensus of the population, the assumptions of this theory cannot allow for a critical analysis of the state and legal system. This is where my work differs, by directly pointing to state and systemic forces as the causes of the concentration of crime within these geographies rather than aspects of their residents.

By putting faith in the social consensus nature of the state, social disorganization theory is centered on the system of property law I have argued is discriminatory in nature. The Likert scale index used by Sampson et. al. (1997) assumes the legitimacy of state power, and that not responding to or respecting state institutions is that of a lower nature. For example, one of their measures is whether an individual would report truancy or break up a fight within their neighborhood. This assumes that the institution of education is not subjected to the same institutional racism via CRT that comprises other institutions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) as well as a culturally-relative assumption of using outside entities to remedy disagreements. By centering their research on the assumption of the nature of institutions as one of consensus rather than that of the racial capitalist status quo I have argued exists, they miss that the true driver of crime is the material conditions individuals are subjected to as a means of suppression and oppression through their geographically-based social identities. Likewise, by putting the

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emphasis on the lack of social bonds within that community as the driver of crime, and even

with the acknowledgement of the collective disadvantage they face, it places an inequitable

burden on those geographies facing that disadvantage to hold themselves together rather than

blame being put on the institutions which I have argued are driving this process.

<u>Police Killing Citizens</u>

There is no shortage of research on the racist and classist nature of police violence

(Cooper, 2015; Kerrison et. al., 2018; Zohny, 2015; Campesi, 2010) but there is comparatively

little dealing explicitly with when police officers kill citizens. Additionally, among that literature

dealing with police killing citizens, researchers often fail to take into account my theorized

spatial and identity dimensions of these incidents. Jacobs (1998) correctly addressed the racial

aspect, identifying that both the Black population as well as the relative increase in the Black

population over the past 10 years were both significant and the strongest predictors of police

killing civilians. Jacobs performed a multiple linear regression predicting the rate of police

killings per 100,000 residents at a city level over the course of seven years. Data on people

killed by police were taken from the FBI supplementary homicide report and descriptors of the

city were taken from Census data. There are a few issues with this study. First, their only

economic predictor of the Gini coefficient was not a significant predictor in final model, and I

contend it was because they carried out their analysis at a city level rather than the smaller

geographies I intend to use. Second, official statistics on people killed by police have historically

had an approximately 70% accuracy rate (Banks, et. al., 2016) which could weaken their

findings, thus I hope to improve upon these findings using independent data.

Lawson (2018) built a significant model for predicting violence by police however neither

economic indicators nor race indicators proved significant. Unlike Jacobs, Lawson used the

Fatal Encounters dataset as the basis for their analysis. However, unlike my research, they

used police precincts as their geographic unit of measurement. In order to account for the large

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numbers of police precincts which did not have anyone killed by police, they transformed their response variable using a zero-inflated negative binomial transformation as a means of modeling variables with excessive zeroes. While their primary independent variable of interest was police militarization, which was found to be significant, their results did not find Hispanic population percentage, Black population percentage, or any measure of economic inequality to be significant predictors of either the number of people killed by police or the zero-inflation model response. By using precincts as the geography of analysis, Lawson is attempting to show that people killed by police is a department level issue rather than one of a more systemic nature, plus misses the segregationist aspect of geographies targeted by police. That is why I believe a non-police-associated geography is necessary for analysis as well as one which is smaller than a police precinct. Likewise, a model without Blackness as a significant predictor of police killing citizens cannot be considered a valid model.

Nicholson-Crotty & Nicholson-Crotty (2017) built a model using the top 100 cities in terms of population size in the US as their geography but tested the relationship of the percentage of Black Cops in that city's police force as a predictor of police killing citizens. What they found was that the percentage of Black police was insignificant as a predictor in 2014 and concluded that increasing the percentage of Black officers was not a valid solution for decreasing levels of police killing citizens. They likewise found that, in 2015, the number of Black police officers was positively associated, though weakly, with the number of people killed by police. However, using cities as the base unit of geographical analysis misses much of the racial and economic segregation which occurs within a city's limits that I argue is fundamental to understanding where police kill citizens. Likewise, they do not offer a critique of the state as part of their analysis as I have, and instead seek to place the issue at the department demographic level.

Ross (2016) built a Bayesian model predicting the likelihood of being killed by police, finding that Black people had a 3.5 times higher rate of being killed unarmed by the police than

White people. They likewise found median income to be a significant predictor at the county level but stated that county level economic measures were "far too coarse to use" (Ross, 2016, p. 6). This has been the most accurate model of police killing citizens which I have found so far, however it lacks much of the theoretical background that I seek to introduce into the conversation regarding racial capitalism and identity. There is no critique of the process which creates racialization or these impoverished areas that are shown to be significant predictors of police violence, and instead these results are analyzed at face value. With all of this in mind, I wish to account for the greater influence local geographies and their perceived identities have over their inhabitants in relation to police violence. To test this, I used a zip code level data to perform a binary logistic regression modeling the occurrence of people killed by police as a way of accounting for the spatial dynamics of this act as well as rooting my work in theories critical of racial capitalism and the state, but more specifically in the identities these forces create for individuals and the spaces they inhabit.

Identity and Geography

With the basis of society being that of private property, and the already discussed relations to that property/power shaping our class positions, it is not a far leap to suggest that these property relationships likewise shape any other identities we may possess. One's geographical placement is not just a matter of the distance to the grocery store or basic geolocation but can be a totalizing and shaping force in one's life based on the flows and rhythms of racial capitalism. We rely on space to inform our sense of selves and to learn our positionality based on this sense of self in relation to the world around us (Shabazz, 2015), so what does this world around us teach? Foucault famously wrote that, "space is fundamental to any exercise of power," (During, 1999, pg. 144), and that "discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed upon itself" (Foucault, 1995, pg. 141). Thus, we can assume power is enacted through the restriction of

space, that restriction helps to define the social identity of those restricted, and the meaning of that space must be multi-dimensional or multi-universal rather than possessing a static social definition. This identity production through geography is "accomplished through economic, ideological, social, and political processes that see and position the racial-sexual body within what seem like predetermined, or appropriate, places and assume that this arrangement is commonsensical" (McKittrick , 2006, pg. xv). These seemingly natural forces coalesce to form seemingly natural identity groups via racial capitalism through the codification of spaces and the people within them. These created geographies are not equal, but rather this process creates areas of "disempowerment and dispossession" (McKittrick, 2006, pg. 3), ensuring a hierarchical arrangement in this spatiality as a means of perpetuating a separation of these identities via haves and have-nots in terms of access to societal resources.

At a concrete level, much research has been done highlighting the reality of housing discrimination within the United States. As further evidence, many studies have shown that a large segregationist influence still exists within housing, race and income in America (Darity & Myers, 1998; Wilson, 1959; Massey & Denton, 1988; Sampson et. al., 2002; Sampson & Wilson, 1995) in addition to housing segregation in general currently reaching levels more severe than before the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (Reardon & Owens, 2014) indicating how strong this process of identity making via segregation has become. It is because of this that CRT as well as McKittrick's theories call for a radical reimagination of what property is and could be, since "prevailing spatial organization gives a coherence and rationality to uneven geographic process and arrangements…(and often does) reiterate social class distinctions" (pg. 6). It is this process of reiteration, which occurs on multiple fronts, that forms one of the core processes of identity creation relative to place.

Through a constant reification process, the spaces we inhabit serve to define who society believes us to be. Identity is formed through a social performance rather than completely inert values present within those identities (Goffman, 1959; Butler, 1990; Fields & Fields, 2014;

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Omni & Winant, 1994). An individual lives in a neighborhood with less access to resources, but the totality of what living in that neighborhood means about the quality of that individual via their perceived failure in the meritocratic marketplace is partly at the root of their identity. It is through conversation and interaction with geographies and who geographies are meant for that help to shape inward and outward perceptions of individuals and groups. These identities, and subsequently the oppressions connected to them, are not a singular dualism (un/oppressed), but rather, "the major systems of oppression are interlocking" (Combahee River Collective, 1983, p. 264) and thus oppressions morph based on one's social position via their combination of social identities. Identities are used as a means of restricting space within society to targeted groups, but they also represent threats to the racial capital system through increased perceptions of the illegitimate nature of said system.

The resulting rebellions in Ferguson, Baltimore, and many other cities in response to a history of egregious police violence and extraction were not isolated incidents or sparks into a solitary fire but rather the results of systematic disenfranchisement and societal oppression. The state is a racializing force which, through its laws and the police who enforce them, seeks to oppress through the restriction of geographical access while appearing meritocratic. This spatial restriction thus forms a reifying identity creation process tied to the people within as well as the spaces themselves, with both becoming stigmatized in the eyes of dominant social groups. It is this stigmatization and identity creation that leads to the increased presence of police and police violence within these geographies as a means of enforcing the racial capital status quo and aiding in the continued division of all oppressed peoples. This status quo must continually be enforced both physically through violence and culturally through subsumption in order to combat the perceptions of illegitimacy and the revolutionary potential associated with these identities as a result of their creation and subsequent policing. To show this spatial dynamic quantitatively, all the while recognizing that this work is what oppressed people have known and said for generations, a binary logistic regression model will be built at a smaller

geography when compared to previous research for modeling the number of people killed by

police.

Chapter 3: Statement of the Problem

While there has been much research regarding police killing citizens, it has largely not focused heavily on the state's role in this process as well as the identity and spatial aspects of these events. As a result, bias has been introduced into the findings which not only distorts them quantitatively but does not provide as full of a picture as could be shown had they made the requisite changes. By focusing on the zip code level as well as carrying out descriptive data analysis, I hope to build a more explanatory model which shows that:

(H1) There is a racial bias in who are the victims of police violence and

(H2) Black people will be disproportionately victims relative to their percentage of the population, explaining how H1 will manifest such that, for example, if 90% of victims killed by police were White that would still be a racial bias.

(H3) The zip codes in which people are killed by police contain higher percentages of poverty and unemployment, as well as household median incomes lower than the national averages.

(H4) Measures of demographics by zip code will be related to dichotomized number of police killings in that zip code (1 killing vs. more than one killing.)

(H5) Concentration of non-White populations as well as greater levels of economic disparity within a zip code will be positively associated with increased odds when measuring against the dichotomized number of police killings in zip codes (1 killing vs. more than one killing.)

Chapter 4: Data Source

The primary data sources for this analysis will be twofold: the U.S. Census for economic and demographic indicators as well as that culled together by the organization Fatal Encounters (FE) for information on those killed by police. As publicly available government information that is used frequently in academic research, the US Census Bureau provides an unmatched, nationwide, longitudinal view of the United States. As previous research has failed to account for the nature of policing occurring on more local geographies, I intend to analyze citizens killed by the police at the zip code level. Because of this, Census data will be pulled at the Census tract level by year and aggregated to the zip code level. Because Census tract level information is only available from 2010 onward, the range of data analyzed for my final analysis will be from January 1, 2010 to December 31st, 2016. 2016 was chosen as it was the last available year for Census 5-year estimates at the time of this research. For my analysis, I used population size, median household income, percentage of houses owned, percentage of houses rented, poverty rate, unemployment rate, percentage of the population that is Black, and percentage of the population that is Hispanic as my preliminary independent variables from the Census. While the U.S. Census data is familiar territory for researchers, the FE data provides a wealth of new information ripe for analysis.

Fatal Encounters is one of many recently available, independent sources for data on those killed by police. Other organizations such as Killed By Police, Mapping Police Violence, and "The Counted" project from *The Guardian* were also considered, but FE was the most aligned with my planned analysis. Killed by Police, now defunct, did not have the geographical information available in each record which would allow me to match to Census data. "The Counted" project only covered 2015-2016 which would severely limit my analysis. Additionally, their data are not available for download. Finally, Mapping Police Violence was not chosen for a similar reason as "The Counted". While their data are available for download, it only goes back

to 2013 which would limit my final analysis. It is worth noting the excellent visualization work done by Mapping Police Violence on where and who is killed by police. Fatal Encounters were also cited in the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) updated methodology report as a point of reference for accuracy, as the BJS is beginning to track the number of people killed by police again, which further adds to FE's credibility (Banks, et. al., 2016). Since Fatal Encounters had geographical variables in their data, the furthest backlog of data, was publicly available, and used these other sources to triangulate their own results, they were chosen as the data source for my research.

Fatal Encounters is an independent collective focused on collecting data on those killed by police. The Bureau of Justice Statistics stopped collecting data on people killed by police in 2012, has not reported on people being killed by police since 2009, and, when they did report, only estimated a 70% accuracy rate (Banks, et. al., 2016). Due to the lack of recording and reporting by the federal government on such an important topic, Fatal Encounters began to record this information themselves and made the data available for all. Since the aim of the organization is to remain neutral in the situation and collect the information, rather than the information being collected by more action-oriented, anti-police organization, it lends more credibility to the lack of biases within the data. And while referring to their database as, "…not a finished product" (Fatal Encounters, 2019), Fatal Encounters still represents the most up-to-date, information rich, relatively untouched, publicly available source data on citizens killed by police. While relatively new, it has already been used in previous research including verifying police killing reports put out by the media (Feldman et. al., 2017) and measuring the relationship between specific police departments and rates of officer-involved deaths (Jennings & Rubado, 2017). Data from January 1st, 2010 to December 31st, 2016 will be used for examining variables associated with police killings since this is the same date range available for the tract level Census information used for data aggregation. FE data from January 1st, 2000 to

December 31st, 2018 will also be used to verify the accuracy of my subsample when compared to the whole of the FE data.

The Fatal Encounters data collection process has two forms: paid researchers and/or crowd-sourcing. The main method of data collection is that of paid researchers funded through donations. Around 85% of the information on the site was retrieved, verified, and organized using this method. Since Fatal Encounters is not alone in the field of independent data verification, they use other organization's work to help verify their own. These researchers aggregate data from other sources such as Killed By Police, *The Guardian's* "The Counted" project, Mapping Police Violence, or various newspapers to complete a record or verify information in as many ways as possible. From Fatal Encounters:

> "Our paid researchers have several methods of getting information into the verification queue. First we aggregate data from other large sets like KilledByPolice.net or the Los Angeles Times' The Homicide Report and individuals like Carla DeCeros who have contributed their data to FE. They then research the missing information and double-check the information that's included. When the record is complete, it's moved over to the verification queue, where it is again checked against published sources yet again by the Principal Investigator of FE" (Fatal Encounters, 2019).

While a single researcher is responsible for putting a record together, a Principal Investigator for Fatal Encounters is charged with overseeing all work done as an extra level of data integrity. Compensation for paid researchers is $3.50 per each completed and cross verified record. FOIA requests have also been used to verify existing information and aggregate counts. When implemented and used to check existing data at an aggregate level, FE reports a 97% accuracy rate for the information within the 11 states this process was used.

Fatal Encounters also gathers information through crowd-sourcing methods, or from information sent to the organization by volunteers. Fatal Encounters reports the methodology used to verify these reports:

> "When an incident is reported by a volunteer—the crowd—every fact presented is compared to published media reports or public records to verify its accuracy. This information from any source–a hometown newspaper, for example–and submitted it

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through our form. Once submitted, it goes to a separate spreadsheet, where we verify its information against media sources" (Fatal Encounters, 2019).

Thus, any record obtained through crowd sourcing means first must be submitted through a specific form through Fatal Encounters rather than an email or another medium of communication. On the form, the required fields are the name of the individual killed, the date they were killed and, most importantly, a link to a published news article or official document regarding the individual killed. There are also fields for other information tracked within the Fatal Encounters database, but it is the verification based on a published document which is the most important for data validity reasons. This form was implemented after the incidents in Ferguson, which lead to the previously used, largely editable Google spreadsheet being overrun by internet trolls to the point of ineffectiveness. By triangulating data submitted through crowdsourced means, it aids in both the verification of these data as well as increasing the credibility of the FE organization.

<u>Issues & Operationalization</u>

Part of using a large, semi crowd sourced database is the acknowledgement that the data will not be the cleanest. Since there is a team of individuals who are responsible for coding the data, there arises a question of intercoder reliability. However, FE accounts for this. "Since nearly all of our data is an analysis of media sources, a random sample of the data will be intercoded, and we will apply a Krippendorff's intercoder reliability test to ensure that the observed differences between coders are caused by chance and not through systemic researcher bias" (Fatal Encounters, 2019). Krippendorff's Alpha is a reliability test used for content analysis as a method of ensuring individual biases between coders are not affecting results due to human error and was designed to be the standard reliability measure for such a situation (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). Fatal Encounters does not report the results of this test or their testing criteria, only that they use it to verify results internally thus I cannot be sure of its

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reliability via this statistical test. It is important to discuss the other issues within the FE data which require attention in order to get a full scope of the data's limitations.

Due to the lack of infrastructure behind the organization supporting data verification and clean-up, as well as the lack of official reporting by the state and police, there are some shortcomings which must be confronted. One of the major issues is that the demographic data is based on appearance to the news reporter who wrote the news article submitted via crowdsourcing or the police officer who filled out paperwork regarding the killing of the individual. Through the use of FOIA requests, FE uses official documentation to verify their results which is where this bias can creep in. What this potentially means is that demographic qualities that are not readily apparent or that are subjective, such as a passing Black person or a transgender individual, are not included. Regarding missing data, the zip code field is not completely populated, which would result in the loss of some data when performing the merging of census data. However, the missing zip codes are relatively sparse such that they represent only .7% of the total FE dataset and .3% of the records used for my analyses. Likewise, there are missing values within every variable used in this analysis to varying degrees which will limit the power of analysis. For the subsample used in the final analysis, about 16% of the race variable was unspecified or missing, about 2.5% of the gender variable was unspecified or missing, and about 2% of the age variable was unspecified or missing. Other decisions were likewise made as to what variables to include.

While not containing that many variables when compared to other datasets in this Big Data world, many of the variables were not included in the analysis due to a lack of use or recommendations from Fatal Encounters. First, I excluded any images, news article links, or news article texts since a text analysis of news reports is outside the proposed scope of this work. I likewise omitted Latitude and Longitude from my final analysis as I used zip codes to merge in demographic information about the geographies where people are killed. As the goal of my research is to point to systemic issues, I excluded the specific police departments from

my analysis. I do not wish to focus on the differences within the policing institution, which the various agencies represent, but on the concept of policing as a whole. I also dropped the address field after my attempt to base the analysis on a Census tract level, which will be discussed later, was unsuccessful. Finally, I removed both the legal result of the killing and whether or not the victim had mental health issues which police knew about before the encounter at the advisement of Fatal Encounters who intend those fields for internal use and not outside research. With the data selected, the final step to preparing for an analysis of people killed by police is to provide an operationalization for what it means for someone to have been killed by police.

In order to measure how many people are killed by police, I must first settle upon a definition of what it means to be killed by police. For example, one record within the FE data is that of a police officer who pulled over a car and the driver suddenly shot and killed themselves. With the few details available, one would be skeptical about its inclusion within Fatal Encounters as it is not a situation traditionally thought of as an officer directly killing a citizen. In order to operationalize this event, the BJS uses the term Arrest-Related Death or ARD. An ARD is a "person(s) who died either during the process of arrest or while in the custody of state or local law enforcement personnel... caused by any use of force by state or local law enforcement personnel as well as those not directly related to actions of law enforcement, such as deaths attributed to suicide, intoxication, accidental injury, illness, or natural causes" (Banks et. al., 2016). This would theoretically include neglect during captivity, committing "suicide by cop" (Patton & Fremouw, 2016), or a drunk driving accident in which the police officer was not at fault per say but none the less involved. Fatal Encounters provides a less specific definition, when describing their goal to create a "national database of people killed during interactions with law enforcement" (Fatal Encounters, 2019). The FE data seemingly includes all the extra circumstances that the BJS seeks to track. Some could consider this a broad definition of being killed by police, which is how I chose to operationalize these events. However, the FE definition

includes instances fitting with the BJS definitions of ARDs, and the BJS has used FE data to verify their own. Though the data I am working with is not the most perfect measure of those killed by police, it is beyond the scope of this research to check every entry within the dataset. Further, with the aforementioned triangulation of data, it nonetheless provides a wealth of untapped information that is not available anywhere else. FE contains over 15 years' worth of relatively untouched information from an organization that holds itself to a rigorous data collection methodology.

Data Cleaning & Recoding

In order for the Census data to be usable for this analysis, a series of manipulations were performed. First, I pulled data from the American Communities Survey database on a Census tract level, as zip codes are not available. Since not all counties for all states could fit in a single data request, I created multiple data requests in order to obtain all of the necessary data. I then pulled each census tract per state for every year between 2010 and 2016, as 2010 is the earliest year which Census tract level information is available, and the 2016 data was the latest available when the data analysis aspect of this project was underway. This resulted in 56 separate flat flies which I read in and aggregated to the zip code level using a crosswalk of Census tracts to zip codes obtained from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (2019) for each year within the analysis and matched to the Census data. I then aggregated to an average zip code level per year for 2010 through 2016. For zip codes containing more than one census tract, I aggregated and weighted each value by that tract's share of the total population within the zip code.

The original intention of this research was to perform this analysis on the census tract level; however, restrictions of the data in its current state made that impractical. In order to get the Fatal Encounters data onto a Census tract level, I batch uploaded the address field to the Census Geocoder to obtain the corresponding Census tract for each FE record. The process

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resulted in the loss of about 50% of my data due to no match on the address being found, likely due to inaccuracy in the address field. Second, when I created an indicator variable with this Census tract data, it led to about 90% of all census tracts having no one killed within them which made the attempted models incredibly weak. To counter this, I tried to restrict my analysis to just those census tracts within the top 50 cities in terms of the number of people killed, but that likewise produced the same result. There was still not enough of a range in the number of people killed per census tract to make for a strong model. Part of this is due to the limitations on publicly available Census data, since I only had access to the years 2010-2016 and partly from the data attrition as a result of the match to the Census Geocoder.

Before merging with the Census data, the FE database required cleaning and recoding. All records were uploaded, cleaned, recoded, and analyzed with SAS. I filtered for the years in question, 2010 through 2016, then aggregated the FE police database to zip code level for matching to Census data on an inner join. The dispersion for a binary indicator of the presence of anyone being killed by police if using all zip codes as my data set rather than just those zip codes which have had at least one killing in them was too low to create a meaningful model. This is displayed in Figure 2 and was even more pronounced on a Census tract level. I also transformed the dependent variable of the sum of people killed by police into a binary variable indicating whether one person was killed by police in that zip code or more than one person for ease of interpretation. At this point, I recorded the dependent percentile variables as well as median income into ordinal predictors using the quartiles of their distribution within the matched data set to form the boundaries of their four values. This was done as a way of recognizing and accounting for the skew in these predictors, likely caused by the same housing discrimination effects discussed earlier. Demographic variable values were likewise collapsed for descriptive purposes. Races of Black, White and Hispanic were kept as values due to the number of records they had, while all other values for race were collapsed into an "Other" category. Due to a large number of values including "Chemicals" and "Asphyxiation" which had low cell counts,

the cause of death variable was likewise collapsed into "Gunshot", "Vehicle" and "Other", with Vehicle being included due to it being the second most frequent cause of death.

<u>Human Subjects Approval</u>

VCU IRB approval is required for any project which involves "research" and "human subjects". While my project met the criteria for the "research" definition, it did not meet that for the "human subjects" definition. A human subject is defined as:

> "A living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains information or biospecimens through an intervention or interaction with the individual and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens, or obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens" (Virginia Commonwealth University Office of Research and Innovation, 2019)

Since my work does involve research, but the records represent humans which are no longer living, I do not need IRB approval for this research.   Since the subjects of this research are not living individuals, they do not meet the requirement for IRB approval. This was confirmed by the VCU IRB.

Figure 2 – Number of Zip Codes by Number of People Killed by Police In That Zip Code for all US Zip codes, 2010-2016

Number of Zip Codes by Number of People Killed by Police In That Zip Code for all US Zip codes, 2010-2016
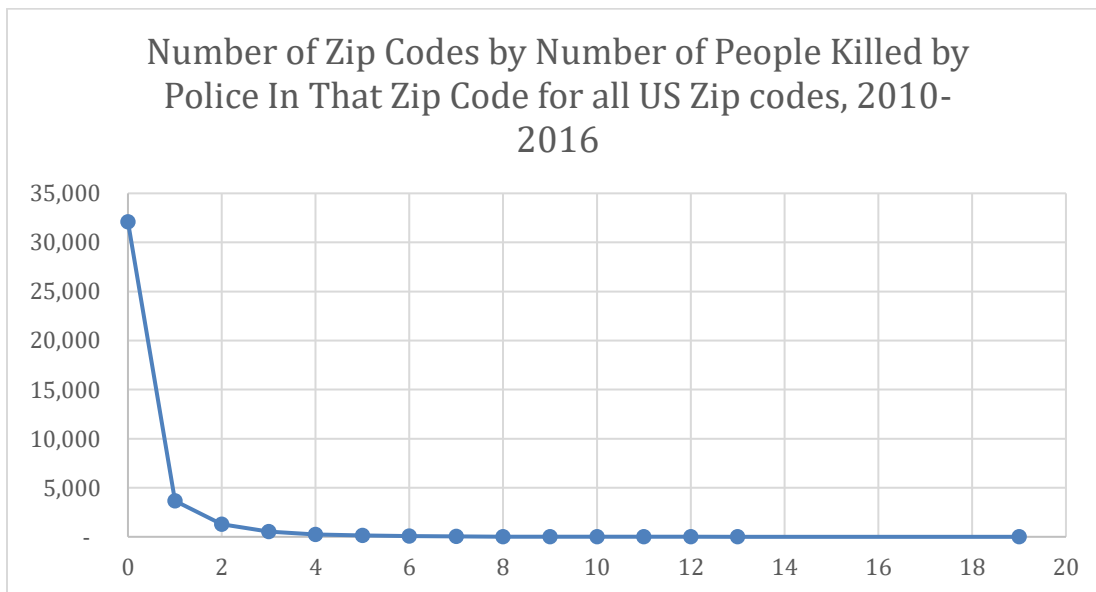
Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

My analysis will begin with descriptive statistics for the Fatal Encounters dataset. Due to the final analysis functionally splitting the Fatal Encounters data in half, I present initial descriptive statistics for the two separate time periods in order to examine the similarities of the two. The first set in Table 1 contains all FE data between 2000 and 2018 while the second set contains the FE data for only the years I am using for my final analysis. Overall this table speaks to a strong similarity, with both time periods having similar distributions for the available demographic variables and thus I will continue using the 2010-2016 analytic sample for consistency with my final analysis. It is important to mention that different variables had different levels of missing data, hence the totals for each variable not being equal. First and foremost, there is a disparity by race relative to population size for the percent of both Black and White victims. As shown in Figure 3, we see that 31% of all people killed by police were Black, which is more than double their percentage of the US population and is supportive of both H1 and H2. It is important to recognize here the mismatch in methodology for measuring Hispanic population sizes, as the Census considers this an ethnic group while FE considers Hispanic a race. The FE dataset is predominantly male with about 90% of all those killed by police being identified as such. About 70% of those killed by police have been killed by gunshots. Interestingly, about 20% of those killed by police have been killed by vehicles though those are colloquially the least discussed in popular media. Finally, age tends to cluster around the mid-30s showing a small skew based on the comparison between the mean and the median. For the full distribution, Figure 4 is a histogram of the ages of individuals when they were killed by police. The uptick in people being killed seems to happen around age 17-18 and that peak continues till the individual is in their early 40s, with the mode being 22.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Those Killed by Police by Time Period

		2000-2018		2010-2016	
		N	%	N	%
Race	Black	5,203	31.0%	2,794	30.6%
	Hispanic	3,183	18.9%	1,597	17.5%
	Other	638	3.8%	305	3.3%
	White	7,775	46.3%	4,427	48.5%
	Total	16,799		9,123	
Gender	Female	2,390	9.4%	957	8.8%
	Male	22,975	90.3%	9,881	90.9%
	Other	87	0.3%	33	0.3%
	Total	25,452		10,871	
Cause	Gunshot	18,022	70.8%	7,799	71.7%
	Vehicle	5,166	20.3%	2,125	19.6%
	Other	2,264	8.9%	947	8.7%
	Total	25,452		10,871	
Age	N	24,586		8,887	
	M	34.9		35.9	
	Median	33.0		33.0	
	SD	13.7		13.9	

Figure 3: Percentage of Those Killed by Police By Population Percentage By Race

Percentage of Those Killed by Police by Population Percentage by Race, 2010-2016
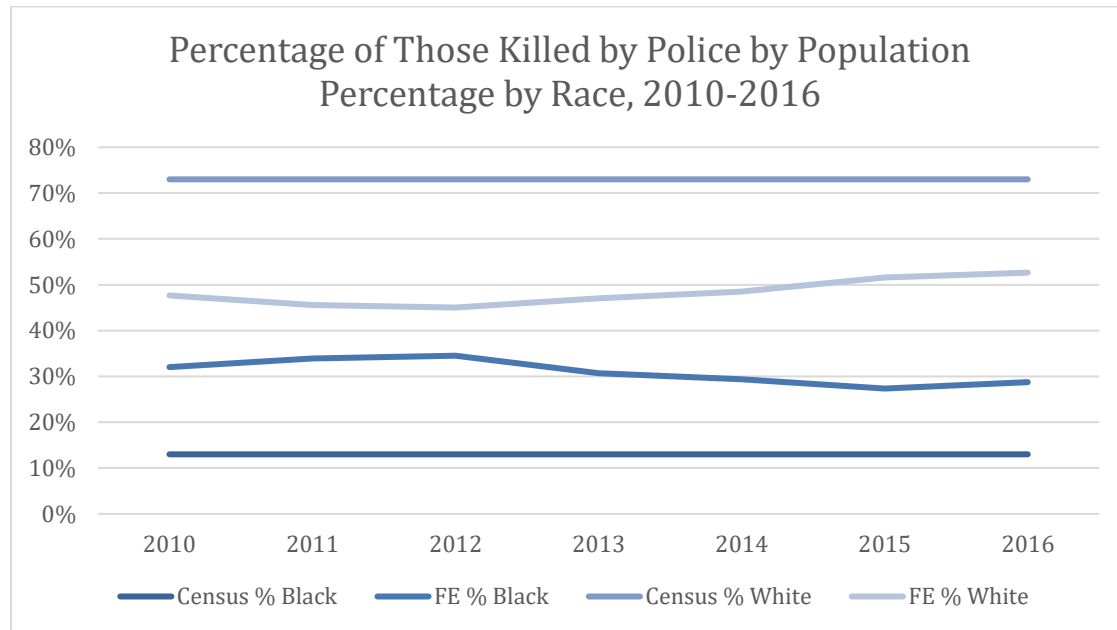
Figure 4 - Histogram of Age When Killed by Police, 2010-2016
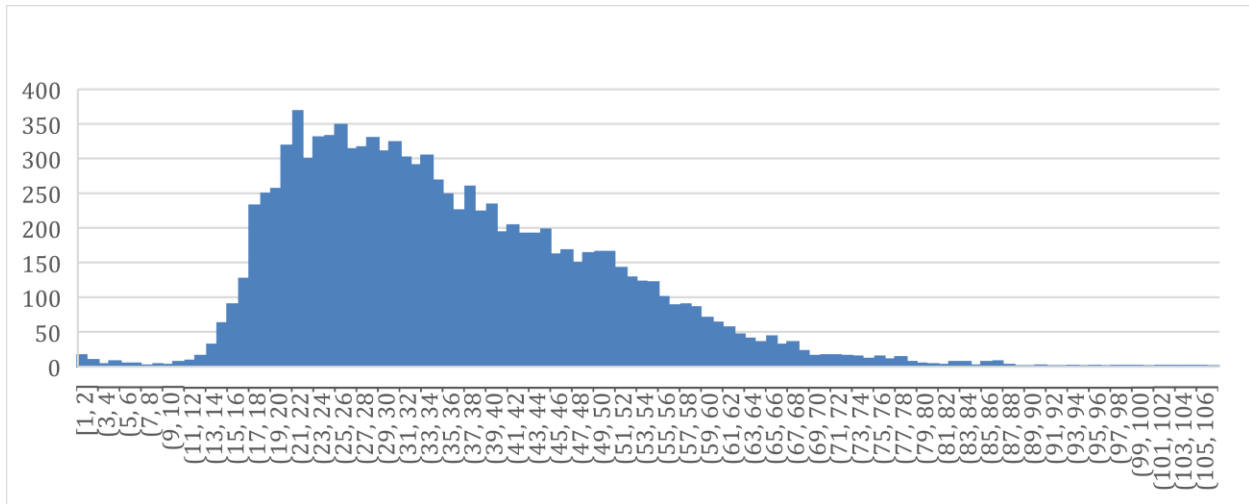
With geographies playing an important role in the theory driving who is the victim of police violence, a top-level analysis of where people are killed by police is necessary. Figure 5 displays a heat map by zip code of the number of people killed by police between 2010 and 2016. This map shows a few things. First, at a national level, there is a concentration of those killed by police on the west coast, the south east, and the north east between New York City and Philadelphia. The area west of mid-Texas and east of the western coast sees relatively few people killed by police. Second, larger numbers of killings by zip codes occur in more densely populated areas. Other than these observations, there is little variation in the number of police killings by zip code, with most having experienced few or none over the time period. To display this, Figure 6 contains a heat map by zip code of the number of people killed by police between 2010 and 2016 for Chicago as well as the surrounding areas. Chicago is interesting because the work of Sampson and many other urban sociologists traditionally focuses on the city and it contained the zip code with the highest number of people killed by police for this time period. It is this zip code which provides a much-needed looking glass.

Figure 5 - Heat Map by Zip Code of People Killed by Police In United States 2010-2016
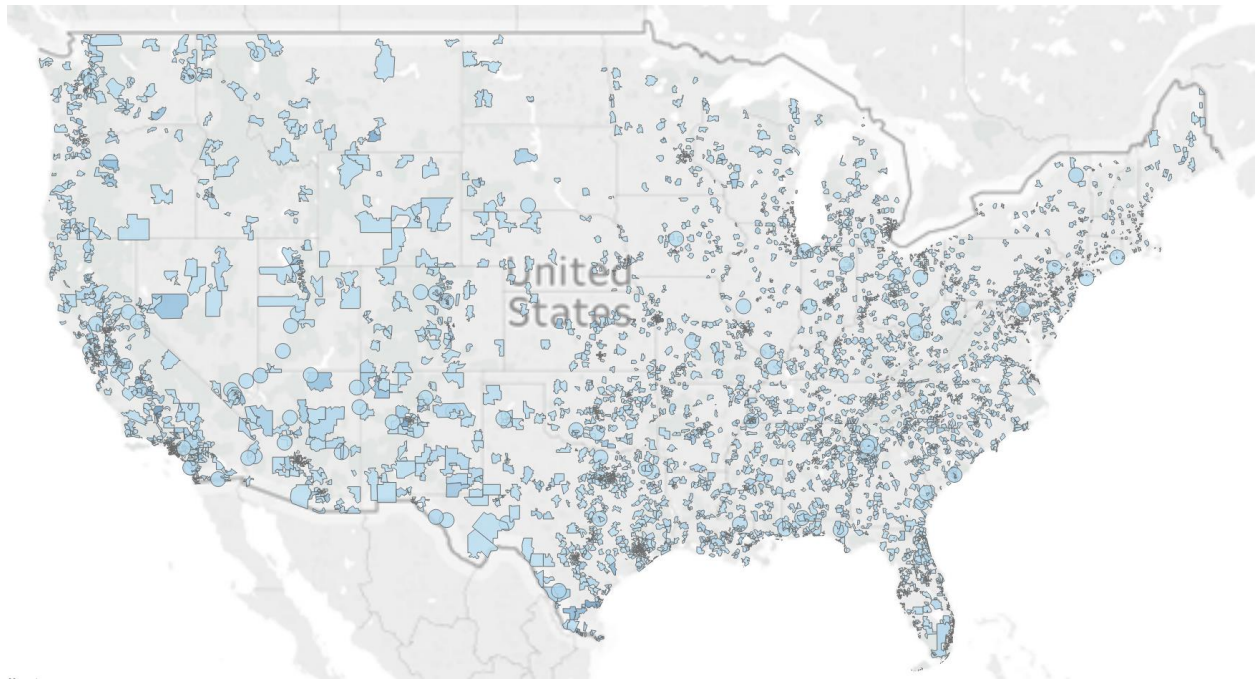
The map of killings in Chicago shows us that the concentration of those killed by police typically occurs in urban settings rather than the surrounding areas and, even then, only within a few zip codes. If we look at zip code 60616, with 19 people killed by police between 2010 and 2016, we can learn a few things. First, from the 2017 Census Estimates, White people represent only 28% of the population and Black people are 25%, with Asians representing a majority of the remainder. Likewise, the median income is more than $10,000 below the national average, and the zip code has an unemployment and poverty rate greater than the national average. The public-school system serving that zip code is over 65% Black and about 15% Hispanic. About 85% percent of students qualify for free lunches in those schools and 83% of schools serving the zip code qualify for Title 1 due to high levels of poverty (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). At an institutional level, this geography could be seen as both Black (or at the very least non-White) and impoverished. Because of this, it could represent the Black Geography of McKittrick's theorization and become targeted for increase police activity. This level of detail would be aggregated away looking at the county level, let alone the state,

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adding to the argument that it is these smaller geographies which are the needed unit of analysis for studying police violence. With general descriptive statistics covered, I will move onto bivariate demographic tables to uncover any potential relationships within the Fatal Encounters data.

Figure 6 - Heat Map by Zip Code of People Killed by Police in Chicago, IL
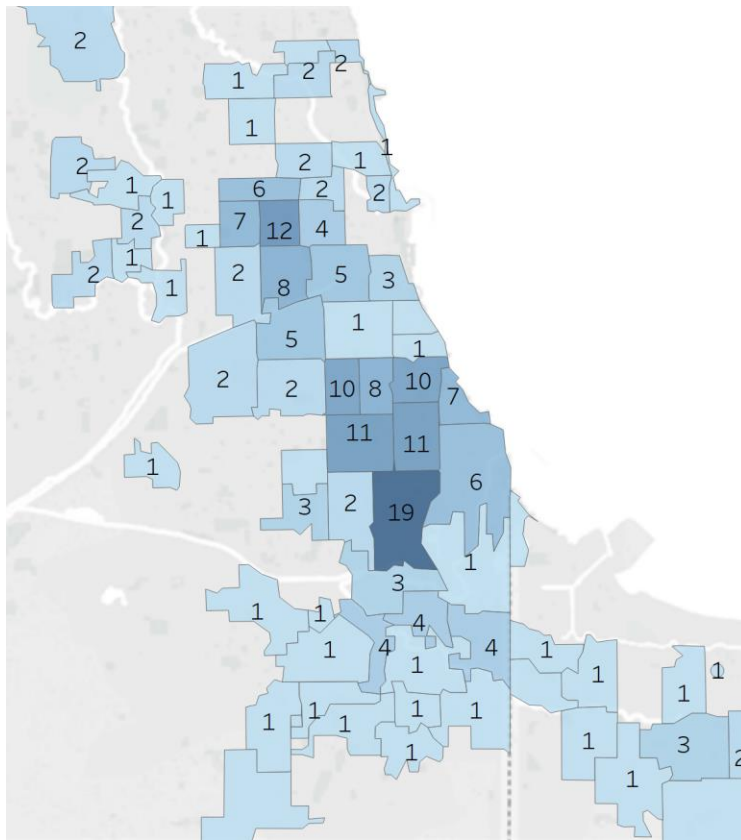
Bivariate Relationships

It is important to state at the outset of analyzing these bivariate tables that many of these relationships will be statistically significant due to the thousands of records involved in each of them. For that reason, I will be relying more on the measures of association and the percentages within the tables rather than the *p* values for my conclusions. Additionally, for the same reason, the alpha for bivariate tables and fall further analyses will be set at .001 for

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significance due to this high record count. In Table 2 is the relationship between race and gender of those killed by police between 2010-2016. With a *p* value less than .001 and Cramer's V of .05, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between the race and gender of those killed by police within the FE data however it a definitively weak one. The range of difference in gender by race is only about four percentage points. Moving on, there is likewise a lack of relationship in Table 3 between the race of the victim and how they were killed by police. With a *p* value less than .001 and a Cramer's V of .06, again we see a statistically significant relationship but, due to the low level presented by the measure of association, we can conclude that the weakness of the relationship within the Fatal Encounters data makes it generally inconsequential. While there is about a ten percentage point range by race when it comes to gunshot deaths, and they do represent a higher percentage of those killed by Other methods, the largest differentials are made up between the Black and Other racial groups. The comparatively low sample size of the Other group is likely what is driving the level of association and, without them, the level would likely be lower.

Table 2 - Race by Gender of Those Killed by Police 2010-2016

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black	211	7.6%	2,574	92%	2,785	100%
Hispanic	117	7.4%	1,469	93%	1,586	100%
Other	36	11.7%	271	88%	307	100%
White	437	9.9%	3,974	90%	4,411	100%

p < .001, V = .05

There is a relationship between recorded gender and how an individual was killed by police. Table 4 contains the bivariate table for gender and how that individual was killed. As previously mentioned, the measure of gender within this context is potentially biased due to its reliance on official and/or subjective measures of gender - e.g. there is no non-binary, transgender, etc. options on state IDs, and police are generally hostility towards transgender

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individuals (Wolff and Cokely, 2007). The relationship is statistically significant, with a *p* value <

.001, and a moderately weak relationship but interpretably present with a Cramer's V of .27.

Primarily, we see a large difference between how Male and Female citizens are killed relative to

gunshots and vehicles. While there is a 34 percentage point difference by gender for death by

gunshots, with males having the greater number, there is a 38 percentage point difference in

Vehicle caused deaths but the Females have the higher percentage. It is likewise important to

state again that there are almost ten times the number of males killed by police within this data

set than females.

Table 3 - Race of Victim by How They Were Killed by Police 2010-2016

	Gunshot		Vehicle		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black	1959	70.3%	514	18%	314	11%	2787	100%
Hispanic	1149	71.9%	296	19%	154	10%	1599	100%
Other	240	78.2%	48	16%	19	6%	307	100%
White	3326	75.4%	775	18%	331	8%	4412	100%

p < .001, V = .05

Table 4 - Gender of Victim by How They Were Killed by Police

	Gunshot		Vehicle		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	409	43.2%	498	52.6%	40	4%	947	100%
Male	7,393	74.8%	1,598	16.2%	892	9%	9,883	100%

p < .001, V = .27

Since there is less than a year difference in the average age by gender for those killed

by police, shown in Figure 7, my next analysis is an ANOVA by race of the victim's age. Table 5

contains the results of this ANOVA. First, through Levene's test, there is not homogenous

variance within the age variable by race and thus the post-hoc testing was done using the

Games-Howell test. In Table 6 one can see that all racial groups besides Whites tend to cluster

together in the low 30s while White people tend to have about five to seven extra years of life

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before they are killed by police. The relationship between race and age at time of being killed is statistically significant. In the post-hoc testing, while there is a significant difference between Other and Black people, it is at a .05 level and not at the alpha I have set for this research. Thus, the only significant differences between races for the age at which someone is killed by police is that of White people compared to all racial groups.

Figure 7 – Average Age When Killed by Police by Gender

Average Age When Killed By Police by Gender

	Female	Male
	36.4	35.8
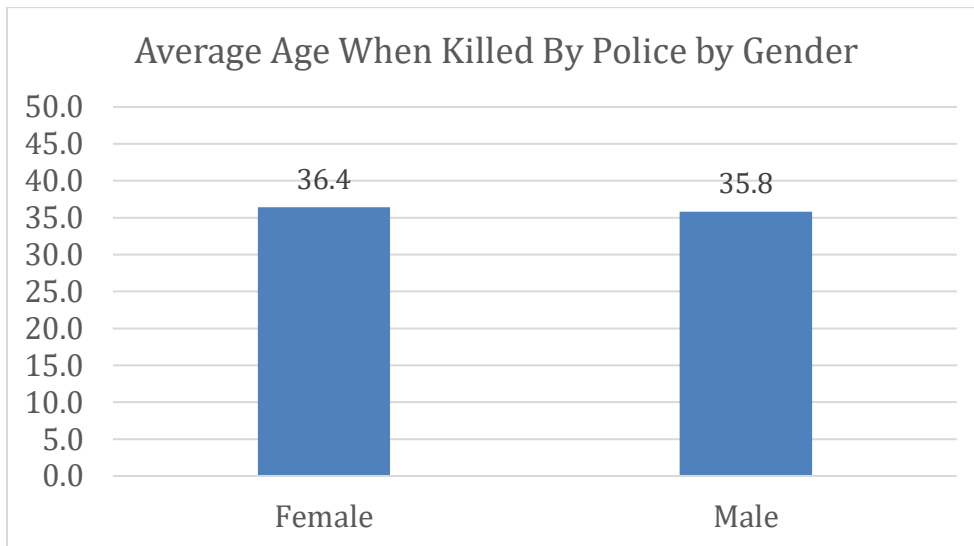
Table 5 - ANOVA of Age When Killed by Police by Race

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	105,484	3	35161.50	200.33	<.001
Within Groups	1,587,240	9,043	175.52		
Total	1,692,725	9,046			

Table 6 – Games-Howell Post Hoc Test for ANOVA of Age When Killed by Police by Race

	M	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
Black	31.65	.	0.75	1.80	***7.16
Hispanic	32.40	-0.75	.	1.05	***6.41
Other	33.45	*-1.8	1.05	.	***5.36
White	38.81	***-7.16	***-6.41	***-5.36	.

* = $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

<u>Logistic Regression</u>

A summary of the model inputs is presented in Table 7. This model input summary is representative of all valid records which I entered into the final logistic regression and thus is at a zip code level, for all zip codes in which at least one person was killed by police between 2010 and 2016. While there are over 40,000 total zip codes, Census data was obtained for 38,106 distinct zip codes and, after merging with the FE data, this was reduced to 5,996 zip codes in which people have been killed. Thus about 16% of all inhabited zip codes have had at least one person within them killed by police between 2010 and 2016. The first variable presented, number of people killed by police, represents the raw version of my response variable. When transformed into a 0/1 indicator, with 1 representing a zip code in which more than one person was killed, we see a leveling out of this skew showing that about half of valid zip codes have had more than one person killed by police within them. The median income of zip codes in which a person was killed by police is lower than that of the national average of $57,018. Poverty and unemployment rates were included since they are widely utilized and more traditional measures of economic disparity. Both are higher than the national average over this time period (US Census Bureau, 2019). Houses owned and rented were included as measures of wealth as opposed to income, since wealthier neighborhoods would have higher concentration of home ownership. Also, wealth is an important inclusion due to popular discourse around wealth over income as the driver of inequality (Piketty, 2014). Finally, percent of the population which is Black as well as the same measure for Hispanics was included to address the racialized nature of geographies. It is also worth noting that, while the Hispanic population percent in this data set is lower than the national average for 2017, which could be a result of the aforementioned discrepancy in measurement, the average percentage of Black population is greater than the national average for 2017 (US Census Bureau, 2019). Finally, region of the country was accounted for through the use of three dummy variables: NE, SE, SW.

I used multiple methods of model selection to taper down the initial list of variables to those used in the final model. First, I used basic measures of multicollinearity. Table 8 contains the correlation matrix for all variables within the analysis set. It is important to note that nearly all relationships are significant at the .001 level which speaks to my earlier point about high record counts. Poverty and median household income have an *r* value of -.75 thus, due to this strong relationship, I opted to remove median household income. If poverty is associated with people being killed by police, it will be positively associated rather than negatively associated which would make interpreting the results of the logistic regression more intuitive. Likewise, house ownership percentages and percentage of renters within a zip code were also highly correlated and thus I chose to use renting percentage for a similar reason. It is important to note that there is a fair amount of correlation between the remaining variables, but that is to be expected due to racial capital structure of the US rather than it stemming from an unknown issue of multicolinearily. For the remaining variables, a stepwise model selection procedure was used. All variables except for SE and SW were found to be significant at the .001 level and thus those were the final variables removed.

Table 7 - Model Input Summary

Zip Code Level Descriptive Statistics				
	$\bar{x}$	Med.	*SD*	National Average
# Of People Killed By Police	2.4	1	2.3	-
Binomial # of People Killed By Police	0.49	0	0.5	-
Population	175,151	78,249	272,864	90,830
Median Household Income	53,727	49,271	20,376	57,018
% Of Houses Rented	34.7%	31.6%	17.5%	31.10%
% Of Houses Owned	65.2%	68.4%	16.5%	68.9%
% Poverty	12.9%	11.1%	8.4%	12.4%
% Unemployment	15.7%	15.7%	4.4%	7.2%
% Black	14.9%	6.4%	19.9%	11.1%
% Hispanic	14.9%	6.9%	18.9%	11.0%

N = 5,996

Table 9 displays the final model results for the logistic regression of one person killed by police in a zip code compared to more than one. Before analyzing the model, it is worth noting that I originally performed this process with an ordinal response variable. However, due to the skewness of the data limiting the size of the categories as well as the comparability of the binary and ordinal results, I opted to use the binary logistic regression for the ease of interpretation. The final model converges indicating the validity of the predictors. Finally, the Wald test for the final model has a *p* value of <.001 indicating that the model coefficients were greater than zero and that there is a significant relationship between the demographics of a zip code and the density of police violence.

With all remaining predictors being either of the racial, economic, or geographical variety, this data suggests that killings of citizens by police are influenced by the combination of race and economics as well as location. For example, with every tier increase in the quartile of Black population a zip code has, there is an increasing 1.26:1 odds that there will be more than one person killed by police within that zip code. The same can be said of renter density, seeing a 1.23:1 odds increase for every quartile of the percentage of renters within that zip code. It is the percentage of the population that is Hispanic which has the greatest, above one odds ratio, followed by the black percentage, unemployment, percentage renting and then poverty. However, it is important to note that there is not much difference between these values. Finally, being within the north east United States was the only significant predictor which resulted in lower odds of being killed by police but none the less speaks to the geographic nature of these occurrences. Thus, not living in the north east is associated with greater odds of more than one person being killed within a zip code. It likewise was the predictor with the greatest odds difference compared to one.

Table 8- Model Input Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Population	1							
2. Med. Income	***.06	1						
3. % Of Houses Rented	***.29	***-.33	1					
4. % Of Houses Owned	***-.28	***.34	***-.87	1				
5. % Poverty	***.11	***-.75	***.53	***-.44	1			
6. % Unemployment	***.19	***-.32	***.42	***-.30	***.50	1		
7. % Black	***.13	***-.25	***.40	***-.30	***.43	***.40	1	
8. % Hispanic	***.30	.01	***.38	***-.28	***.24	***.27	***.07	1

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$

N = 5,996

Table 9 - Logistic Regression of One or More Than One Person Killed by Police

	B	*SE*	Wald	Odds Ratio
Population	<-.0001	<-.0001	203.76	***1.00
% Renter	0.204	0.033	38.44	***1.23
% Poverty	0.161	0.034	22.53	***1.12
% Unemployment	0.207	0.041	25.78	***1.23
% Black	0.234	0.036	42.04	***1.26
% Hispanic	0.267	0.036	54.00	***1.30
North East	-0.765	0.106	52.11	***0.47

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$

N = 5,996

Note: Model Successfully Converged

Note: Wald test $p < .001$

Findings

My findings support both H1 and H2: that there is a racial bias among those who are killed by police and that it is non-White people who bare the brunt of that violence. Black people are killed at twice the rate as their percentage of the population. Continuing on, the results also showed that non-white individuals were killed at younger ages than White people. One way to interpret this is the criminalization of youth among Black, Hispanic, and Other racial groups, which has been shown to be a function of the criminal justice system (Rios, 2011). Non-White people are killed at younger ages potentially due to their perception of being a threat at younger ages. This could be caused by the social identity created around being young, male, living generally in more impoverished areas, and not being White, all of which speaks to group threat theory and the compounding of oppressions related to identity. This threat from identity supports my use of both Black Geographies as well as group threat theory. It also speaks to the imbedded racism of the legal system put forth by CRT and the police being the domestic hand of the racial-capitalist state's legitimate use of violence. It is worth noting that previous research has made this specific point almost a forgone conclusion, that police target black people and people perceive them doing such (Chaney & Robertson, 2013; Embrick, 2015, Alang et. al., 2017; Tonry, 2010) however I found it important to show using the FE data.

My research not only supports the racialized aspect of police violence but the economic dimension as well, both of which increasingly should be thought of as one in the same. The zip codes in which people were killed by police contained both higher levels of poverty and unemployment as well as lower levels of household income when compared to national averages (H3). Again, here we have well covered ground within the literature, but it is reassuring that these same trends appear within the data as a display of external validity. There has been much research on how the intersection of race and poverty leads to negative health

outcomes (Chow et. al., 2003; Griffith, 2012; Braveman, et. al., 2010), low education outcomes (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Owens, 2018), and heavier policing (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999; Schuck et. al., 2008; Wu et. al., 2009). Not only that, but these maligned areas are likewise subjected to increased odds of being killed by police as shown in the results of my logistic regression. I believe my work adds to the knowledge of the compounding oppressions faced by those in poverty as well as through race as described in the previous paragraph.

Through my logistic regression, I was able to find evidence for these smaller geographies being significant predictors of police killing citizens in greater numbers. First, I did find a significant relationship between zip code level demographics and the dichotomized number of police killings (H4). Additionally, my model supported that a concentration of non-White populations as well as greater levels of economic disparity within a zip code will be positively associated with increased odds when measuring against the dichotomized number of police killings in zip codes (H5). Interestingly, there is evidence showing through ethnographic means that police are aware of this discrimination and it has negative consequences for them as well (Fassin, 2013), speaking to the totalizing oppression of racial capitalism. It is important to note that the intersection of race and poverty within small areas being tied to police violence is well tread ground through qualitative research (Rios, 2011; Tyler et. al., 2014; Lai & Zhao, 2010). The tying of Blackness to space has also been well covered too (Anderson, 2015; Browne, 2015; McKittrick, 2011). However, due to the recent availability of data at a smaller geographical level than ever before, I hope this work can unite the results of qualitative researchers with our new quantitative abilities as well as inform future research on police violence on the importance of space and identity within the dynamic.

While not within the scope of this research, there was a gender related finding which should be addressed. Gender and the way an individual was killed by police provides an entryway into touching on the role of gender in policing. I showed that victims of police violence

were overwhelmingly male, and that those males were more often killed by guns rather than vehicles or other methods. This is likely a function of masculinity and its role within the criminalizing process. In an analysis of St. Louis youth, Brunson and Miller (2006) found that while young men were often stopped under the pretense of being suspected offenders, young women were more often stopped in relationship to curfews as opposed to being directly criminalized. The relationship within Table 4 could be a result of the belief that males represent a greater threat to be stopped, in line with group threat theory and the compounding nature of identities, rather than females as masculinity can be thought of as the embodiment of violence (Nolasco, 2017; O'dea et. al, 2018). These males, the embodiments of violence, could be thought to be deserving of an equally violent means of being stopped. Additionally, since more than 80% of police and sheriffs are male (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), this male embodiment of violence can not only explain why males are killed more often than females, but why police excessively resort to means of violence as well.

Issues & Future Research

Many of the shortcomings of this research involve the data I both have and do not have access to. First and foremost, much of the FE data was not usable due to the lack of available Census data before 2010 as well as after 2016 at the time of this research. Likewise, the research could likely be strengthened through the use of even smaller geographies such as Census tract or, ideally, Census block. However, due to the data loss from matching Fatal Encounters addresses to the Census Geocoder, that would likely not be possible without much time and effort put into cleaning the address field which was not in scope. 90% of the U.S. Census tracts did not have any police killings during the time period of the study. This limited the kinds of analysis techniques I could use due to the rarity of the predicted event which limits the power of both multiple linear regressions as well as logistic regressions. Continuing with data issues, largely the only data available for use for these smaller geographies on a nation-

wide level is that of the Census. As I have spent this research discussing the state's complicity in the cycle of police violence, the bias and resulting Whiteness of Census measures could be an issue. Via their choice of what to and what not to capture or other factors, this potential bias must be mentioned even if it cannot be measured (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Additionally, though many will not see this as an issue, there was no qualitative aspect of this research. Institutionally-created numbers will not tell us the lived experiences of those subjected to police violence and can only partially illuminate the underlying structures of these highlighted dynamics. Numbers alone will not paint the entire picture, no matter what one is studying.

I want to take this time to address my use of quantitative methods while using theory largely based within qualitative methodology. Critical race theory emphasizes the importance of counter-story-telling, as well as ideas of space and identity providing hard concepts to measure. McKittrick does not address numbers or measures and the idea of carrying out hypothesis testing in order to measure structure is opposed by Bourdieu (2013). Here, I did no interviews and attempted to tell no one's story. Instead, in the words of quantitative researchers, I tried to let the data tell the story. There is some value in using state-based demographic metrics as a measure for state-based, identity and geographic violence. These are the same measures that are likely in every police precinct as they are widely available and just as widely used. Much like how the creation of identities for oppression creates an avenue for the delegitimization of that system, the creation of these official statistics helps to show both the overt and covert discriminations when it comes to police violence. I am not attempting to claim that the master's tools will ever dismantle the master's house (Lorde, 2018) but rather that this work provides a window and a platform through and from which the real work or inter-personal and community organization can begin. Speaking to predominantly quantitative researchers as one myself, we must not lose sight that there are real people with hopes, dreams, and fears behind each one of the numbers we collect. We also must acknowledge that the totality of a human experience cannot be captured on an integer scale. In the age of digitization, quantification, and

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increasingly complex algorithms, any and all effort to put a face and a story to the issues we discuss is a worthwhile pursuit. With all this in mind, there are many avenues down which future researchers may travel.

Future research would likely take the form of analyzing a specific metropolitan geography and surrounding areas similar to my discussion of Chicago in Figure 6. With the focus on a single municipality, the ease of acquiring more model inputs outside of collected Census figures would likely be increased. If focused on a single, urban geography and the smaller geographies contained within it, there may a higher ratio of people killed by police relative to the number of geographies to allow for other methodologies. It is worth mentioning that a Rare Events Logit model could be built (King & Zeng, 2001) to account for the rarity of police killing citizens relative to all geographies, but these models suffer when used with large numbers of observations as well as large numbers of independent variables. A subset of the total FE data could be used with this technique if restricted to a specific area. Second, an interesting approach to take could be a text analysis of the linked news articles within the FE data for those killed by police. Classification models could be built to see if the words used in the discussion of police killing citizens would provide predictors of the demographic qualities of the victim. Likewise, a sentiment analysis could be performed on these news articles to see what underlying opinions or attitudes were present in the discussion of people killed by police and, like the previous suggestion, if this had any correlation with the demographics of the victim. As discussed earlier, a qualitative component to accompany any quantitative study of police violence would also be helpful to explain how the lived experiences of those whom this process affects the most translates into official statistics. Studies of police bureaucracy regarding how incidents of police killing citizens are handled internally could also be incredibly worthwhile though likely hard to pursue due to the "code of silence" (Westmarland, 2005) among police officers. That study would provide an excellent companion piece to inform the lack of official data on police killing citizens.

<u>Proposed Solutions</u>

The issue of police violence is pervasive and, rather than residing within an individual 'bad apple' officer or even a series physical bodies, it rests within the very institution of policing. Both my research as well as much of the cited research supports this conclusion. In order to correct for a systemic issue, a systemic remedy must be taken rather than one of reform within small sections of the institution. I quote from Vitale's *The End of Policing* (2017) in full to illustrate this point:

> "The culture of the police must be changed so that it is no longer obsessed with the use of threats and violence to control the poor and socially marginal...Powerful political forces benefit from this abusive, aggressive, and invasive policing and they are not going to be won over or driven from power by technical arguments or heartfelt approaches to do the right thing. They may adopt a language of reform and fund a few pilot programs, but mostly they will continue to reproduce their political power by fanning fear of the poor, non-White, disabled, and disposed and empowering police to be the thin blue line between the haves and have nots" (p. 221).

As Vitale points out, it is the culture of the policing institution, informed by powerful elites and dominant systems, which drive the violence we have witnessed. It is important to note that all of this is occurring at a national level rather than a series of police precincts or counties in a state. While sensitivity, racial awareness, and de-escalation training is plainly better than nothing, they do not seek to counter this issue of police behavior at the correct level of analysis which I and many others have shown it to exist. As such, discussions of proposed solutions and policies for this issue will remain at a systemic level.

I propose a four-tier solution to the institutional violence of the police: we must restore, replace, remove, then reimagine. My suggestions are tiered such that we must achieve them in succession, as the latter ideas would not be possible without the former. First, by restore I mean restoring our tangential institutions to their state before overlap with the criminal justice system. For example, within education, the presence of school resource officers has produced numerous oppressive outcomes. The first being the establishment of what's known as the "school to prison pipeline" (Owens, 2017; Wald & Losen, 2003), which effectively funnels

children from one institution to the other with racialized and economically discriminatory outcomes. Black girls are criminalized in schools at higher rates that White girls (Morris, 2016), school resource officers tend to be placed is more impoverished areas (Ruddy et. al, 2010) and their presence leads to increased criminalization. This same need for a general delinking can be seen within Oakland community centers, in which effective programs for gang intervention among youths have been gradually defunded to the point of ineffectiveness, then replaced with criminal justice adjacent programs which are no longer effective due to the lack of trust from the community (Rios, 2011). With this is mind, we must first restore our communities to a time before the ever-increasing reach of mass incarceration had infiltrated many corners of our lives. To do this is where my second suggestion arises: the replacement of the over-extension of the criminal justice system with a more restorative rather than punishment-based method of conflict resolution.

Second, we must seek to replace the vacuum created by this restoration process with a more restorative and community-based solution to deviant behavior. I specifically say deviant here to avoid the use of "crime", a politically charged word defined by the ruling class (Quinney, 1980; Ruggiero & South 2013). With the goal of removing the state apparatus from the process of community management, we should look at dealing with these behaviors in a more compassionate and restorative way rather than one of violence and suffering (Pepinski & Quinney, 1991; Pepinski, 2013). With this in mind, I would recommend the replacement of these removed overlaps of the criminal justice system in our everyday lives with a process of restorative justice. Restorative justice can be thought of as an approach to replace interventions of the state for handling issues of delinquency by bringing together all those affected in a power-balanced way in hopes of resolution and reintegration (Gonzalez, 2012; Morrison & Vaadering, 2012). Derived from more indigenous practices, it represents a direct opposition to the structural power inherent in the Western, centralized, decontextualized, criminal justice system, which traditionally limits attempts at more community-based,

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relationship-focused, and participatory methods of resolving conflict (Ginty, 2008). Sometimes dubbed 'peacemaking circles' (Pranis et. al, 2003), much work has been done using this method for resolving conflict among urban youth (Boyes-Watson, 2013), people in primary care (Mehl-Madrona & Mainguy, 2014), and within the educational institution (Vaandering, 2014) as a method of avoiding institutionalization as well as increasing a sense of community among participants. By seeking to replace criminal justice intervention within our lives through a return of power to communities, we can work to limit the presence of police violence by empowering collectives with contextual knowledge of the issues at hand to be the arbiters of their own lives. It is this desire to remove the criminal justice system and all its biased, negative outcomes from our lives which brings me to my third suggestion.

With the shown systemic nature of police violence, I believe we must look towards more radical solutions for truly liberating the population from police violence. When I speak of the word radical, I mean it as Angela Davis meant it: that "radical simply means grasping at the root" (2006). DuBois famously lamented in *Black Reconstruction in America* (2017) of how the dreams of freedom from the abolition of slavery were inhibited by the very foundations of the United States' structure and that, dubbing the process 'abolition democracy', without the abolition of these power arrangements, the White supremacist logic which props them up will always find new ways to flourish. As I have spent this research and much ink addressing the systemic oppression caused by the policing institution, a solution must be presented which deals with the issue of police violence institutionally. That is why my third suggestion, that of removal, is for police abolition. The institution of policing has been shown to be filled with a racial, economic, and gendered bias that cannot be linked to a single individual, but rather exists within the very nature of the institution (Vitale, 2017; Williams, 2007). The institution of policing within the United States evolved from runaway slave patrols, a process situated in between race and capital, so it is not inconceivable those racist practices and beliefs have made themselves at home within police culture (Balko, 2014). Police abolition revolves around the call to

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"disband, disempower, and disarm" (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018) policing institutions. Rather than the complete lack of any formal method of rectifying social transgressions, police abolition is the admission of the discussed systemic issues and the belief that the policing system must be rebuilt rather than iteratively reformed if we are to see any worthwhile changes in its functioning. This same call likewise extends to the penal system, an extension of policing, an inhumane practice which is rife with the same discriminatory, systemic problems which I have spent this research discussing (Brown & Schept, 2017; Coyle & Shept, 2018; Ben-Moshe, 2018). Penal abolition is of rising popularity, warranting a recent and supportive article within the New York Times Magazine (Kushner, 2019). If we are able to restore our institutions by delinking them from the criminal justice system, and successfully replace that gap with a more community-based, restorative approach, then logic would imply that the next step would be the removal of policing as we know it. Assuming this step can be achieved, my results point to the necessity for another type of radical reimagination.

As I have theorized and traced the role which geographies play in police violence, as well as the role racial capitalism plays as one of the core drivers behind the creation of those geographies, a radical reimagination of economic relations beyond a system of private ownership and accumulation would be necessary to truly resolve the issue of structural violence. Both the call for a reimagination of property relations as well as the enactment of this process is not new either internationally (Ciccariello-Maher, 2016; Hancox, 2013; Federici, 2015) or within the United States (Cooperation Jackson, 2019). Robinson and Wang both point towards the inseparability of race and capitalist exploitation. Harris points towards the inseparability of liberal definitions of property and systemic racism. McKittrick points to the inseparability of Black Geographies and systemic dispossession. It is these arguments which I have made the cornerstones of my research into police violence and it is these arguments upon which my final suggestion is built. My research suggests that across the nation and over a large number of years, the drivers of police violence are race and class, both of which result from the

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prevalence of a racialized property system predicated on accumulation, extraction, and dispossession. To not engage with that would be a disservice to both the writers whom I cite and the systemic findings I present. The system of racial capitalism which, for as long as it is present and as long as we have not reimagined a different method of social organization, will continue to contribute to structural violence against society's most vulnerable until it is replaced.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

While the visibility of rebellions in Ferguson, Baltimore, and other cities in response to police violence have helped to usher in a new awareness, the harms caused through policing are much older and occur at a level deeper than the barrel of a gun or the end of a nightstick. I have made the case that through the perpetuation of racial capitalism, geographic, racial, and economic enclaves are formed, and these enclaves are then systematically targeted for extraction and looting, incarceration, and gratuitous violence. Through this process, residents of these geographies are both assigned and adopt the identity of oppressed people which, ironically through their oppression, helps them to see the illegitimacy of the status quo. It is because of this that these geographies and residents are then targeted for further police violence as a means of protecting said status quo through the legitimate use of violence by the state via the police. It is these theories of space and identity, as well as theories originating from the state level which are critically lacking in the study of police killing citizens that I hope contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of police violence. The systemic violence required of police officers as a result of property distribution and the legal system not only affects those whom they target, and more specifically who they kill, but transforms the officers into tools of violence as well. We must not lose sight of the totalizing oppression of capitalist property relations. By shedding light on the drivers of this cycle of violence, I hope to contribute to breaking that cycle and releasing all those oppressed under its weight through the establishment of a more just society, by redefining who shall be protected from what and whose interests shall be served.

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