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## BIO-SPATIAL POLICING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: EXAMINING IMPACTS AND RESISTANCE THROUGH MOBILITIES AND CHILDREN'S EVERYDAY LIFE

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BIO-SPATIAL POLICING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE:  
EXAMINING IMPACTS AND RESISTANCE THROUGH MOBILITIES AND  
CHILDREN'S EVERYDAY LIFE

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
College of Arts and Sciences  
at the University of Kentucky

By  
Emily C. Kaufman  
Lexington, Kentucky  
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2021

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### BIO-SPATIAL POLICING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: EXAMINING IMPACTS AND RESISTANCE THROUGH MOBILITIES AND CHILDREN'S EVERYDAY LIFE

Despite decades of reforms and technological innovations, increasing evidence shows that state securitization disproportionately harms already racially, spatially, and socio-economically marginalized communities. My research investigates uneven impacts of state securitization, from punitive welfare programs to school surveillance to policing. Across sites, I focus on scales, voices and the everyday lived experiences often left out of scholarly discourse and sensational media. In the current climate of growing awareness and scholarship on police violence, my dissertation addresses three less-studied areas: 1) the interplay between racial, gendered, spatial, and technified police practices; 2) how these practices impact the everyday lives of those racially and socioeconomically marginalized; and 3) how children adapt practically and imaginatively to such impacts. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in New York City and Cincinnati (with police and children), policy analysis, and textual analysis of media articles, I explore the practices, experiences and perceptions of what I call bio-spatial policing, as well as reworkings and refusals of securitizing regimes. This dissertation makes four main contributions.

Chapter two introduces the analytic framework of bio-spatial policing through an examination of the policing of everyday mobilities in targeted New York City zones. These police hot-spots are sites of mobility constrained by racial, social, biometric, bio-political, and spatial police tactics. Because this technified policing is enacted spatially and governs residents' mobility, I use the conceptual apparatus of bio-spatial profiling. I argue that its lived experience is one of pervasive fear governing mobilities.

Based in the more generalizable mid-sized, Mid-West city, Cincinnati provides a counterpoint to New York's exceptionalism for chapter three, which makes the second contribution. Building on chapter two, it examines the everyday life of bio-spatial policing, simultaneously researching police and children's lived experiences. Its first contribution is in conceptualizing constellations of surveillance and policing following children through their daily lives, spaces, and imaginations. I argue that where policing and surveillance converge, specific fears arise. Constellations map out the ways these technologies and practices connect across space, time, and lived experience. Yet the chapter moves beyond this fear-based narrative, using constellations to map children's networks of care as well.

It examines their practiced and imagined reworkings and refusals to what I call regimes of securitization—both the constellations of policing and surveillance and the victim/criminal narratives attempting to define children.

Chapter four surveys the subfield of police geographies which my work draws from and contributes to. I analyze the claim of the subfield's marginality, arguing that there is a wealth of minor (not marginal) feminist, queer, and BIPOC police geographies. I highlight the ways scholars conceptualize policing's spatiality, from spatial tactics, effects and impacts to spatialized resistance, noting the trend in recent works that envisions a world without police.

Across the dissertation, I highlight ways technology and police converge in a practice of bio-spatial policing that is greater than the sum of its parts. Throughout, I examine bio-spatial policing's impacts on everyday lives, in two very different U.S. cities and in police geographies literature. Yet in each chapter I also move beyond this important focus on fear and harm to explore reworkings, resistance, and refusal in literature and on the ground. I argue that both narratives are necessary, and the concept of constellations provides both a map of bio-spatial profiling's harms, weaknesses, and the potential for another world resting in the space between its stars.

KEYWORDS: Children's Geography, Policing, Surveillance, Resistance, Participatory Methods, Police Abolition

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Emily C. Kaufman

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07/21/2021

Date

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The irony of dissertations is that while they are notoriously isolating, they could not exist without community. I'll start with the acknowledgement usually saved for last because the person in question has waited long enough. This is The One who enabled my necessary solitude, joyfully taking on more than his share of parenting. The one with weirdly perfect handwriting who never gets shampoo in our kid's eyes. The one who makes our apartment smell like cinnamon rolls then brings them to my desk. The one who followed me to Syracuse, Spain, Kentucky, Cincinnati, and Baltimore (I know, the scales aren't consistent), and helped make each place Home. The one with whom I can talk for hours about the problems with resilience and resistance in our respective work, or readings and students we're inspired by. With whom else could I share conferences, union work, bike-camping trips, and this hardcore parenting adventure? And thanks also to that old college friend who left notes on my bike, showed up to my every defense and countless presentations, and when I was on the fence about grad school vs. having-a-backup-plan, told me that sometimes putting all your eggs in one basket is the only way to get them to hatch.

In the spirit of flipping the personal-comes-last convention, I have to thank the small person (I stand corrected—the Big Kid) who taught me more than I could learn anywhere else about creating boundaries between “life” and “work” even when they feel inextricable, the superpower of getting enough sleep, and regenerative effects of playing hard. There was no greater encouragement than her unconditional, intuitive affection. She was also an invaluable research assistant, helping build rapport with my child-participants and insisting on rigorous playground participant observation.

In addition to being grateful for the care they showed my own kid, I am grateful to my afterschool research participants who shared their time, art, stories, insights, jokes, and hugs. Some of the time they spent with me came at the expense of their scheduled playtime, but if my kid taught me about boundaries between work and life, these participants taught me that research and play were often one in the same. They also reminded me implicitly that solving the problems of policing should not be the responsibility of those most impacted, and helped complicate my analysis of resistance and abolition. Thanks too to their guardians who consented to the research, and to the program staff for not only enabling the research but fully welcoming me into the loving community they had spent decades building.

It was not only children who taught me that research and academia can be full of play: from day one there were the Horties (Jess Linz, Dugan Meyer, Christine Woodward, Myung-in Ji, Curtis Pomillia, Eric Huntley) and eating pie in trees at night, reading 1000 Plateaus out loud from atop a play structure, and having spent enough time at Al's porch to have our own name for the mangy bar cat. Then there was the Speeding Vaginas Ladies Cycling Club, animal-costumed backyard dance parties, and midnight fried chicken at Indi's. I thought I wouldn't miss Lexington, but on second thought... To the co-organizers of the two UK Crit-Minor conferences: is conference planning always filled with laughter, pancakes, and fun-rooms? And thanks to the many Kentucky Geographers who taught me in seminars and reading groups that theory, too, can be a form of play.

On a less playful note, thanks to the tireless (or probably very tired, actually) union organizers and departmental rabble rousers (who I'm not sure I should 'out') to whom I am grateful for inspiring my advocacy and always having my back. I'm particularly



inspired by those who bravely jumped out of this sinking ship for their physical and mental health, created awesome careers, and continued to support those of us still mired within academia. Lindsey Funke gave emotional support, perspective, and enough seeds to feed our family for two seasons. Jonghee Lee: leaving you (and yours) is the hardest part of leaving UK. You've been there for me through everything for the past seven years, caring for and challenging me both, on intellectual, advocacy, and personal planes. I see in you what beloved friend Steph Hyde once said about me: you are "soft spoken but outspoken," sometimes underestimated, often surprising. I can't wait for the next surprise.

Kentucky faculty have taught me that there are many ways to support a student, from teaching to joining our protests to holding our babies (Anna Secor, Andy Wood, Michael Samers) when we need a break or standing outside the department-event bar that bans children with us in solidarity (Tad Mutersbaugh, Nick Lally, Natalie Oswin). Andy Wood set a rare example among DGS's of treating graduate students with respect (no all-caps shouting emails or chastising us for not understanding arcane graduate school rules). Alice Turkington and Patricia Ehrkamp granted me a semester of post-partum leave that made all the difference in my graduating versus having given up. Rich Schein gave formative guidance as I taught my first class, demanding rationale for each risk I took but acknowledging when they paid off. It was a pleasure to R.A. for Tad Mutersbaugh as he grew the Social Theory program. I am grateful to fellow police geographer Nick Lally for thoughtfully commenting on paper drafts, suggesting readings and organizations, bringing me on as a session co-organizer, showing up at my talks, and giving invaluable job market guidance. Thanks to Jack Giesecking who, while not identifying as a police or children's

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In the spirit of serendipity, I am grateful to my high school Spanish teacher, Nancy Hiemstra, whose footsteps I literally followed: first through the backcountry, then to Oregon, then to the class she TA'd for Lise Nelson where I fell into geography, then to Syracuse to work with Alison Mountz. Nancy's scholarship and mentorship from high school through PhD parenting through landing my first faculty job has been invaluable.

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I am indebted to my official advisors too; without Lise Nelson's encouragement and co-authorship, I would never have turned my undergraduate thesis into an article that became the seed of my long-term focus on the securitization of poverty. A PhD involves so many chances to give up and so many tiny turning points. The first came in my first semester when I sat mute in Alison Mountz's seminar, willing my brain to catch up with the smart women surrounding me. Pulling me aside, she reassured instead of chastised me, telling me she could 'see the gears turning'; I've since learned to look for and appreciate this in my own students. Another moment of being pulled back from the brink of quitting came when I read her (2016) "Women on the Edge" and (2015) "For Slow Scholarship" (co-authored with Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu, Risa Whitson, Roberta Hawkins, Trina Hamilton, Winifred Curran). With courage, these scholars melded personal and political (a false dichotomy if there ever was one), validated my growing rage, and set forth a vision of what the academy could be.

Lastly, I will be forever-indebted to the fateful beer koozie and haunted fork that led me to my forever-advisor, Anna Secor. She accepted me even though I don't understand

affect or psychoanalysis. She guided me towards my own voice, repeatedly refusing to tell me who to read, where to publish, or which conference sessions to attend. When other faculty told me to forgo opportunities that would ‘distract’ from the PhD, Anna asked the right questions to help me figure out whether they would drain or recharge me. She was fully committed to helping her advisees turn into our own selves on our own terms and timelines. And I think we have; I’m honored to be among the eclectic group of Anna-advisees, with their different writing, research, and life paths, but shared appreciation for feminist ethics, rhizomes, reading groups, laughter, loud leggings, and care.

This advising style must take more work than tightly scripting a student’s path. Having someone believe in you when you don’t yet trust yourself is terrifying, and Anna invested a lot of emotional labor in reassuring and buoying up her students. For a critical thinker, she always knew when not to overthink. She read multiple drafts, getting into the weeds of a single sentence, and teaching me about writing up until the end—but would tell me when to strive for “good enough.” When common sense would have suggested panicking before a deadline, she sent messages of “I’m not worried at all.” She reminded me not to stress over getting my ducks in a row because ducks naturally row themselves. And in case another struggling grad student reads this, I’ll pass on a piece of her advice that pulled me back from a few precipices: “you don’t HAVE to be superhuman. Human is really more than good enough.”

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

*It's all about where you're at.*

*-Matrice, Brownsville, NY 2011*

### **Trajectory**

I stood at the crossroads of socio-legal studies and geography. I had completed a master's in each and seen the benefits of viewing the securitization of poverty through both disciplines. As I wandered a campus that was not mine, gazing from darkened evening courtyards into lit seminar rooms looking for answers, a bell tolled and I looked up to see "Geography" written in mosaic tile over a huge wood door. But that would be a terrible reason to choose a career. No, the deciding factor was an overlooked moment in a revisited transcript. From my master's work in New York City, a Black mother talking about stop-and-frisk, racial profiling, and a conditional cash transfer. And then Matrice's words, "It's all about where you're at."

Indeed, law and law enforcement are all about where you're at, beyond a legal breakdown of jurisdiction. There is the play of space, place, scale, and sphere that only geography truly takes seriously (Braverman et al. 2014; Delaney et al. 2001; Valverde 2009). There are the ways geographic concepts, such as local and territorially bounded, shape the mythology of police without confining their reach (Seigel 2018). Meanwhile the public/private divide can justify police refusal of service (Cuomo 2020a), but disintegrate when public police choose to violate private space (Akarsu 2020). And as I realized in the course of my dissertation, there are the ways places are profiled and targeted (Kaufman 2016) and how such spatial profiling is used to conceal other less palatable forms.



We see all of this in Matrice's experience. Her life was shaped by a city-level pilot program imported from Mexico's national program, open to enrollment in select neighborhoods, within which it was available only to low-income parents and children. This pilot conditional cash transfer (CCT) overlapped with the neighborhoods chosen (again by the city's police department which sanctioned city-wide racial profiling) for an experimental hot spots police program. Within these neighborhoods, particular intersections or housing projects were chosen for intense surveillance. Within those zones, any person of color of any age was a target. It was the latter fact, of racial profiling, that was of immediate notice; the same individuals elected for the welfare pilot program were being stopped and often ticketed or frisked by police, thus doubly targeted by behavior modification and police suspicion, or soft and hard power.

While racial profiling was statistically evident, admitted by the NYPD, and described as a dominant experience among BIPOC New Yorkers, as Matrice noted, this power was inherently spatial. It was a question of jurisdiction, location mobility; it shaped the routes participants traveled to avoid police suspicion, shaped their mode of transit and even destination. State securitization structured the built environment and slipped into the domestic sphere. It was felt deep within the body, whether through birth control visits incentivized by the CCT or invasive searches by police. And this scale was linked directly to the international level of fast-policy-transfer (Mountz and Curran 2009; Peck 2011; Theodore and Peck 2015). Meanwhile New York's CCT was being copied in Memphis, while its stop-and-frisk policy was praised in post-uprising Milwaukee's Public Safety Action Plan (Bonds 2018). Needless to say (you're reading this Geography dissertation, after all), I concluded that state-securitization of poverty, could only be fully

understood through a geographic lens: one that traverses scales of policy and experience; public, private, and liminal spaces; public and domestic spheres; and sites from a heavily policed street corner to a less often studied yet fairly typical American city.

The introduction that follows chronicles my path through a geography PhD with a focus on securitizing poverty, particularly the everyday embodied effects of racial, spatial, biometric, and biopolitical policing. These common threads weave the research together. Yet because I began dissertation work early and ended late (in other words, the chapters below cover a span of six years), there is significant variance, or perhaps growth, from one to the next. I will address those changes and the reasons behind them, in chronological order which mirrors the order of the chapters. As this dissertation follows the three-article format, chapters two through four comprise the article manuscripts, followed by a methods appendix and conclusion. They also represent three distinct sites and stages (in chronological order) in the dissertation research. In describing each chapter or stage below, I also share how it connects to the larger dissertation project, and what growth emerged from each preceding stage. After laying out the chapters to come, I review key themes. More information on the research process and ethics is not only included in Chapters 2 and 3 but in the methods appendix as well, which also contains a detailed explanation of the progression of sites.

### **About Chapter 2: On Seeking the Spatial in Policing and its Impacts**

Once in a geography program, I revisited the data from my masters more fully. I approached this almost like archival work. I listened to my previous interviews with a new concern for the spatial undertones, and surveyed new police policies and literature to

the same ends. In addition to the policy scales, hot spot locations, and tangling of public and private discussed above, I found that the spatial took shape most clearly in the form of mobilities, particularly as they were policed through fear. and in the relationship between spatial police practices and spatial impacts. For instance, uneven securitization was not only experienced racially, but spatially. A young Black male participant living in a police hot-spot in Northeast Brooklyn said that police and cameras made him feel “unsafe... like being watched by somebody that’s trying to stalk you.” Yet in answering the question on what would make him feel safer, he said, “In the nicer neighborhood, everywhere you go, you know that nothing won't happen, because you know that there's a camera or there's a police station on the watch, on standby.” His observation was born out by disproportionate crime rates and rates of police stops, frisks, invasive searches, and use-of-force between his neighborhood and more affluent White areas.

Building on Ronan Shamir’s concept of biosocial profiling, in which he focuses on biometric and social profiling international travelers in a global mobility regime, I argued police profiling was spatial in three key ways: First, it works to demarcate risky populations *and* places, largely through spatially-targeted data gathering through intense police presence and police stops and searches. Next, police policy is nominally based on this selectively gathered biometric, racial, and spatial data. Police then use uses space as a justificatory narrative to strategically obscure racial profiling. Ultimately, police practices play out in these targeted spaces, where hyper-policing leads fuels the police databanks, which in turn further influences spatial policing, in what I called a technocratic feedback loop. In addition to the spatial nature of police practices, impacts are felt spatially as well;

bio-spatial policing in the it shapes space by constraining mobilities through fear of police targeting.

While the spatial aspect of this intervention is central, the concept of bio-spatial profiling also broadened the focus on biometrics from Shamir's analysis of passport-fingerprinting as "an emergent technology" to a wider understanding that encompassed the physiological and behavioral, analog and digital, and longstanding and emergent. Since the article was submitted to *Political Geography* in 2015 (and published in 2016 as "Policing mobilities through bio-spatial profiling in New York City") there has been an explosion in critical work on biometrics, which I have and will incorporate into future writing. For an Oxford Bibliography in Geography entry on "Biometric Technologies" (2019) Nicole Nguyen and I created the section "Biometric Histories" in which scholars trace long histories of non-automated means of tracking human bodies.

My (2016) article used a crime encyclopedia's definition of biometrics as "the use of *automated* technology to identify individual persons via specific physiological or behavioral characteristics" (Newton, 2008: 23, italics added); this did not encompass the range of tactics addressed in the article, such as passive gait analysis: police identification of "furtive movement," one of the most common reasons recorded for a stop (Bloch, Fessenden & Roberts 2010). In contrast, Browne (2015: 25) defines biometrics by the word's composite parts: simply 'pertaining to measurements of the body.' This allows her to chronicle the technology's long history in surveilling black mobilities and stabilities, rooted in technologies of slavery (2015: 26). This history, which parallels that of policing, is not the focus of my work. Instead, it was a conceptual turning point from

having conceptualized 9/11 as a turning point in surveillance and police technologies, to recognizing their much longer histories.

Finally, bio-spatial profiling aimed to expand the ‘bio’ to point not only to biometrics but also biopolitics—for Foucault (2003), a focus less on individual bodies than the species-body, through statistics and constant data gathering to drive governance. The push towards data driven, or at least data-justified policing is a global trend (Akarsu 2018; Lally 2021; Kaufman 2017). Yet the shift from a more individualized and discipline-oriented community policing to a widespread technified approach was particularly pronounced in New York City in the 2010s as Stop-and-Frisk policies enabled mass targeting of BIPOC civilians with a plummeting ‘hit rate’ or rate of finding any reason for the stop. Thus, Foucault’s concept of biopolitics was useful in theorizing the role of biometrics in New York City’s increasingly technified policing.

Though biopolitics helped formulate the concept of bio-spatial policing that has continued to inform my work, I have not found it as useful in theorizing policing outside that exceptional time and place. Simone Browne (2015: 42) notes that Foucault’s schemas of power fall short in theorizing state power over black bodies. For instance, despite Foucault’s interpretation of a decline in public torture that marked a loosening hold on the body, Browne argues that “when that body is black, the grip hardly loosened” (2015: 38). Furthermore, Foucault’s schemas do not fully account for “the role of trauma, vulnerability, and violence” in state racism (ibid: 42). This question arises in Chapter 3’s discussion of the collective trauma children face as a result of policing that is outside either discipline, biopolitics, or spectacles of state violence. For these reasons, Foucault traveled with me during the dissertation through the concept of bio-spatial profiling,

while his centrality was supplanted by scholars better able to theorize (in addition to Foucault's understanding of state-racism) anti-Black racism, intersectional oppression, and embodied experiences of difference.

As I began my dissertation work, I thought it was important that I too name the analytic, thus bio-spatial profiling was born, and grew into bio-spatial policing. I also coined the term *technocratic feedback loop* to describe the phenomenon of hyper-policing in targeted spaces leading to disproportionate data on criminality and justifying further policing. Both concepts have continued to inform my research questions and analysis, while neither term has remained central.

Since submitting my article, Ana Muñiz (2015: 10) published a participatory study of the police production of racial boundaries, in which she wrote, "I did not want to trademark any new terms. There were already too many. I was trying to figure out how this riot of words could be made useful to something other than the electronic archive of dissertations." This is not to negate the use of finding, and explaining, phrases made of existing words that more succinctly describe a phenomenon, such as *technocratic feedback loop*, Seigel's (2018) definition of police as *violence workers* (an accessible phrase encompassing pages of analysis), Correia and Wall's (2018) *copspeak* (see Chapter 4), Katz's (2004) *counter-topographies*, or Simpson's (2017) *constellations of co-resistance* (see Chapter 3). There is use, too, in editing an existing term to more fully reflect the phenomena you find, such as bio-spatial, or *synopticon* and *banopticon* (in Browne 2015). I have not found a clear-cut distinction between branding terms that simply add to the 'riot of words,' and using language to efficiently convey complex meanings. With these cautions in mind, I brought my research questions—on both the

practices and everyday embodied and spatial impacts of bio-spatial policing—into my next field site, as I will describe below.

### **About Chapter 3: On Metaphors, Theory, and No New Terms**

I carried the same research questions into the world of socio-economically marginalized children in Cincinnati, to investigate parameters of (in)direct youth-police interactions and children’s experiences, perceptions, and adaptations or resistance. For two years I used a mixed-methods approach of participant observation and interviews with children, informal conversations with parents and afterschool program staff, and research with police and on public schools. I tried not to coin any new terms but sought an existing one that would make sense of the contradictions and unexpected findings on children’s perceptions of policing and surveillance.

Enter constellations: neither a new term, nor a proprietary theoretical construction of any one scholar, though it has been deployed by many. It is often used as a “visual metaphor” or “spatial diagram” (Vale 2018: ix) more than a theory, to portray both points of data and the connections between them. It also encompasses both oppression and alternative possibilities as individuals create places of meaning and draw lines between them (Giesecking 2020) or connect with others in constellations of co-resistance (Simpson 2017). In one word, space, places, mobilities, connections, and spatial imaginaries could be not only described but visualized, and even conceptually mapped. This was a concept for geographers.

I had used the term from the beginning of the dissertation, describing (2016) “the explosive constellation of profiling metrics embodied in bio-spatial policing.”

Researching in Cincinnati, then, I searched for constellations of state securitization. I found them—and others I had not sought out. Though I intentionally interviewed children young enough to be less likely police targets, I learned that police and surveillance impacted children’s lives in many ways, such as parents in jail, children in foster care, fear of police targeting, frustration with their perceived inefficacy. Mapping policing and surveillance in children’s lives showed tiny points of state securitization scattered across their space-times. Like stars, some points were fleeting. Others were observed but no longer really there: we still see the light from stars long vanished, and children perceive surveillance where it is either no longer working or never was a camera. My research initially centered children’s fear and oppression in an abolitionist tradition discussed in the following section, with the goal of bypassing tired reform discourse towards the elimination of police.

Yet, as I explain in Chapter 3, my participants, encouraged by the participatory play-and-arts-based methods we used, refused any one-dimensional depiction of them as either oppressed or protected by pervasive securitization. Instead of dwelling on police and surveillance, there were two main patterns children exhibited when our conversations veered into that territory. They asserted their child-ness, their wholeness, and articulated complex alternative networks of protection in place of turning to police. Constellations-as-theory and not merely as a visual metaphor helped describe these alternative networks, which I call “constellations of care.”

On the risks of using academic terms Muñiz brings up, the theories that inspired my reworking of constellations were originally written to describe their own indigenous and queer research and not to be co-opted. For Giesecking (2020: xix), the choice of



“constellations” was intimately connected with his participants with whom it resonated; astrology and its melding of physical, mythical, and imaginary is prevalent in lesbian-queer discourse. An essential facet of constellations for Simpson (2017) is their illegibility to the colonizer. It is not a far cry from that claim to the possibility that constellations-as-theory are not universally readable, and certainly not uniformly understood. I am a White cis-hetero-passing settler woman who is not particularly well versed in astrology and has a fear of outer space. For these reasons, I aim not to adopt or co-opt their constellation theories but pay homage to the ways that both were able to use the metaphor to depict both oppression and either “co-resistance” (Simpson 2017: 228) or “creating space otherwise” (Giesecking 2020: xviii).

As I discuss in Chapter 3, theory works best when it is not rigidly confining findings but is used rather as a lens that can spark a new way of seeing data even if it cannot fully contain them. In the case of constellations, the metaphor described expansive networks of bio-spatial policing in Chapters 2 and 3, and grew to encompass points of resilience, resistance, and care and the paths traveled among them. In Chapter 3, the latter use also reaches its descriptive limit, but was no less useful in bringing us to that point. Balancing the use and limits of constellations discussed above, for publication Chapter 3 breaks down into two separate articles. The first, “Picturing Power: The Ethics and Risks of Participatory Visual Research with Children,” will be submitted to *Children’s Geography*. It was a more extensive discussion of the history and debates around my arts-based research than is included in the chapter and does not rely on constellations. Some of its discussion is included in the methods appendix. The second shares a title with the

chapter and has been accepted into a special issue on “Abolition in Digital Geography” for *Digital Geography and Society*. Neither coins any new terms.

#### **About Chapter 4: On the Importance of Curating Existing Voices and the Evolution of Abolitionist Ideas**

In the spirit of ‘no new terms’ I began to question the constant influx of new data into the academic bloodstream, while neoliberal university pressures squeeze out time to read and think. Undeniably, there is much research still to be done in the field of police geographies, and new concepts will be needed to frame the data in newly illuminating ways, often towards abolitionist ends. I question only the ratio of producing to consuming or absorbing knowledge. That is, there is, first of all, an uneven ratio of writing to reading. Having participated in several university “dissertation boot camps,” the focus has been entirely on writing, to the exclusion of reading as an essential part of the process. Among graduate students, the disconnect was a frequent topic of discussion. As a camp group leader, Jess Linz (2021) encouraged us to make time to read and count this time on our mandatory tracking spreadsheets. Many critiques of the neoliberal university have noted that “time emerges as a significant terrain for struggle with work-life balance” (Mountz 2016: 208); I contest that neoliberal-university-time is also a terrain of struggle with reading-writing balance. Simply requiring large amounts of reading in seminars or qualitative exam bibliographies does not create the time needed to read these sources, particularly as students are required to *write* their own perspectives on these works.

Second, in critical social sciences, there seems a disproportionate focus on research, writing, and peer-reviewed articles hidden behind a paywall, compared to the

many other ways of sharing knowledge that exist. These include citation practices in publications (Mott and Cockayne 2017), conferences (Domosh 2014), and academic spaces (Joshi, McCutcheon and Sweet 2015; see also Mott and Cockayne 2017). Sharing knowledge outside scholarly publications can also happen by member-checking findings; community, stakeholder, policy, activist, and popular media dissemination—as well as curating existing voices through syllabi and by organizing conference sessions, workshops, and forums. Taking these points into account, it was important to me that one of my three articles curated existing voices, uncovered under-cited scholars in the subfield and theorized the disconnect between competing perceptions of a dearth or wealth of police studies in geography.

Thus, my field moved from New York City to Cincinnati to the subfield of police geographies or more broadly, the discipline itself as site. It also built on the growing abolitionist angle of each stage. While my findings in the field pointed towards abolition, it was reading, listening, learning—from articles to conferences to books and blogs—that helped articulate my position. For *Political Geography*, I acknowledged but pushed back against targeted participants' expressions of desire for more of the very securitization they felt constrained by. Such calls have been used by police proponents to justify the extension of the very policing which targets those who are said to call for it. I acknowledged factors such as internalized racism, misinformation, hopelessness, and lack of alternatives as influencing these conflicted calls: my aim was to honestly report but not amplify “these bleak drivers of desire for policing” (2016: 80).

However, I worry that the final line—that in its perverse turn towards bio-spatial policing's technocratic allure, the police rejected a critical opportunity to rebuild

community relations—could be misread as belief in police reform. Rather, these two beliefs can coexist: that the police have historically turned their backs on opportunities for repair even as civilians seem to desire their presence, *and* that policing has always existed alongside reforms, none of which have solved its inherent role of protecting class interests and white supremacy (Browne 2015; Murakawa 2014; Ritchie 2017; Kaba 2021; Correia and Wall 2018). As Alex Vitale argues in *The End of Policing* (2017: 33) “The police are not here to protect you;” they do not prevent crime, a fact known to police and experts alike (see also Bayley 1996).

I went into my next field of Cincinnati with an understanding of police abolition based largely on important works whose main focus was the unreformable problems with police and the need to eliminating them entirely (Vitale 2017; Correia and Wall 2018). This approach (such works were described to me on separate occasions by two senior female senior faculty members as “abolitionist-bros”) did not help theorize the conflicting attitudes I found in New York or Cincinnati. There were claims of police inefficacy, racism, and violence—contrasted with everyday fears and dangers that participants needed addressed. Women, girls, and gender nonconforming participants in particular described sexual harassment, targeting, and witnessing domestic abuse. Some thought that in theory, police or surveillance should be able to protect them. As Cuomo (2020a: n.p.) has found in her five years working as an advocate for domestic violence survivors, some survivors felt that “incarceration provides the only guarantee for their short or long-term safety.” Regardless of whether police in any form are, can, or should be the answer, “Abolitionism cannot advance until the movement meaningfully centers the issue of domestic violence” and “the problem of patriarchy” (ibid). Dismantling

intersectional patriarchy, Cuomo (ibid) writes, “might also be a way forward for achieving a world without criminal law enforcement.” Feminist and BIPOC abolitionists move beyond eliminating police to envisioning—and actively working towards—alternative modes of safety for all.

If Chapter 2 introduced conflicting feelings about police, among them hopelessness and fear, Chapter 3 discusses these different strains of abolition in the context of children’s experiences of bio-spatial policing in Cincinnati. It argues that the children in my study did not express explicit resistance or abolitionist views, but far from desiring further securitization or believing in reform, they practiced everyday acts of refusal of securitizing regimes. Chapter 4 centers abolitionist literature in police geographies as well as works on explicit resistance (e.g. LeBrón 2018; Williams 2020; Wall and Correia 2018; Muñiz 2015).

Once again, I sought a not-new-term that would more succinctly describe these feminist, anti-racist, intersectional, BIPOC, queer, abolitionist police geographies—which engaged space, place, and scale—whose authors base their work in ethnographic and participatory methods, disseminated beyond academia, and envisioned otherwise. Enter Katz’s (1996) minor theory. Chapter 4 thus pushes back against the (often White, male) view that the subfield of police geographies is marginal, lacking, or only now beginning to emerge. Rather, it is rich with *minor*, not marginal, scholarship, often by scholars who are not entirely ‘at home’ (Katz 1996) in the ‘toxically white’ discipline of geography (Hamilton 2020a; 2020b; BGSF 2020; Muñoz and Ybarra 2019; Pulido 2002; Kobayashi 2006), the particularly masculinist subfield of police scholarship (Kaufman

2020), or the neoliberal university (Mountz et al. 2015; Bono et al. 2019; Puawai Collective 2019; Lawson 2007; Smyth et al. 2019).

To add a different set of citations, an abolitionist angle, and to push back against the longstanding assertion of lack, this chapter has been submitted to *Progress in Human Geography*. Adding to the admittedly short list of *Progress* reports on the topic, from Fyfe's (1991) "The police, space and society: the geography of policing," to Yarwood's (2007) "The geographies of policing," my article is entitled simply, "Police Geographies." A version of its section II has been published under that name in *Society and Space* as the introductory essay to a forum I organized and edited, of feminist BIPOC abolitionist scholars writing on these themes.

The threads running through each chapter include spatial police practices, everyday embodied and spatial effects, and alternative visions of safety and security. I have also shown the progression from a critique of policing not yet articulated as abolition, to an abolitionist critique that centered civilian fear, to one that encompassed alternative visions of safety and everyday refusals of securitizing regimes. The rest of the dissertation comprises the three chapters described above, followed by a methods appendix that includes a more detailed discussion of the progression of sites.

The conclusion shares what might be seen as introductory material but which felt important to end on: the wider context of police history and racialized, gendered violence in the U.S., a discussion of how the dissertation is relevant to this context, and openings for future work. Its final note is on the state of the discipline and the neoliberal university and why we might want to save this sinking ship. It is followed by a methods appendix,

and a brief coda on positionality, the pitfalls of White allyship, and how and whom we might be in constellation-with.

## CHAPTER 2. POLICING MOBILITIES THROUGH BIO-SPATIAL PROFILING IN NEW YORK CITY

### **Introduction**

New York has long been a city of contradictions. Despite its recent ranking as the tenth safest city in the world, New York contains zones with high crime rates designated as hot-spots and subject to intense surveillance and militarized policing. Militarization refers not only the number of officers flooding hot-spots (Rivera, Baker & Roberts 2010), but to the “extension of military ideas of tracking, identification and targeting into the quotidian spaces and circulations of everyday life” (Graham 2010: xi). These police hot-spots—labeled Impact Zones—were introduced by the Bloomberg administration in 2003 as part of the targeted crime-fighting program Operation Impact. Although the administration commissioned a study on the program’s efficacy (Smith & Purtell 2007), there has been little research on the lived experiences of residents of Impact Zones. I argue that these zones, described by residents as “war zones”, as “militarized”, and as “occupied territory” (CCR 2012 19-20), induce a constant fear that disciplines residents’ mobility.

Although the 9/11 attacks have been frequently invoked as a justification for new modes of policing, long before 2001 the US had been waging “de-territorialized wars of public safety” in the form of the war on drugs, campaigns to exclude asylum seekers and immigrants, and zero-tolerance policing targeting Black and Latino inner-city residents (Feldman 2004: 331). Michel Foucault (2003: 62) calls this racialized government repression “state racism: a racism that society will direct against itself.” This pervasive racism is not confined to ideology, but is a technique of power (Foucault 2003: 258). For Ruth Wilson Gilmore, the meaning of racism is bound up with “the state-sanctioned or



extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (2007: 28). Gilmore’s powerful definition highlights state racism’s everyday violence; she reminds us of its fatal consequences. As this article will address, *vulnerability* to premature death has pervasive effects.

The discourse of state racism has evolved to obscure its racist nature. Race has ceased to be a socially or legally accepted justification for discrimination (Alexander 2012: 2). Instead, writes Michelle Alexander, “we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’” against whom “it is perfectly legal to discriminate...in nearly all the ways it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans” (2012: 2). This systematic state discrimination achieves an internal coherence and domination in the US through an interweaving of fear of the enemy within, and calculated aggression directed at ‘the other’ (Feldman 2004: 331). Cities, as sites of unscripted interactions with ‘the other,’ are the stage on which this symbiosis plays out.

New York in particular, as a global city, is marked both by cosmopolitanism and great diversity as well as racialized tropes of the ‘other’ and a Janus-faced city government that has “vacillated between celebrating and enhancing such diversity, on the one hand, and repressing it, on the other” (Jacobs & Fincher 1998: 1). While New York was hardly new to contact with ‘the other,’ the 9/11 attacks mobilized the construction of a vulnerable nation embarking on uncharted ground. Pre-existing conditions of hyper-mobility and connectivity were depicted as new threats and longstanding processes of ‘othering’ were drawn upon, embodied in statement by former US Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge: “as the world community has become more connected through the globalization of technology, transportation, commerce and communication, the benefits of

globalization available to peace loving, freedom loving people are available to terrorists as well” (in Amoore 2006: 339). This perceived risk arising from proximity has been hugely influential in securitizing policy in the city. The attacks led not only to violent retaliation in the form of war, but to the justification of heightened policies of containment and control at home.

Emblematic of these internal mobility-controlling policies is Operation Impact, which identified high-crime neighborhoods and flooded these Impact Zones with what the *New York Times* called “a small army” of new graduates of the NYPD’s training academy (Rivera, Baker, and Roberts 2010). In its first year it deployed around 800 officers per day to 19 zones. New York’s longest-serving Police Commissioner, Raymond Kelly, called the program “an all-out blitz on crime: by carefully analyzing where crimes are located, we are able to strategically target areas with the greatest propensity for crime” (Kelly in [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov) 2003). Current<sup>1</sup> Police Commissioner William Bratton (appointed by Mayor de Blasio in 2014) expressed hope to expand Operation Impact, calling it an “extraordinarily good program” (in Parascandola 2014).

Besides the rare celebratory comment, Zones are invisibilized in various ways. Information on the number and location of zones is not publicly available, and NYPD officials have declined my inquiries, refusing to acknowledge the program’s existence. Impact Zones are also hidden by Saskia Sassen’s (2000: 82) “new geography of centers and margins,” which allows zones *within* cities to “become increasingly peripheral, increasingly excluded from the major economic processes that are seen as fueling economic growth in the new global economy.” Thus Impact Zones are hidden not only by

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<sup>1</sup> This article was published in 2016. As of August 2021, the current police commissioner is Dermot Shea, appointed by Mayor de Blasio in 2019.

topography (physical distance, rivers separating boroughs), but topology as well, in the sense that “class confrontation is diffused through urban fragmentation and segregation” (Secor 2013: 432). Some topological boundaries, even while physically permeable—an industrial park, above-ground train tracks, highways, a busy avenue—enhance the perception of segregated urban fragments.

Impact Zones can hide even from those who find themselves within one. As Mat Coleman and Angela Stuesse (2016) observed researching mobile checkpoints, what is felt as a constant state for its targets may be experienced as a disappearing state for researchers in search of it. When militarized policing becomes part of everyday life, life goes on around it, which can mask its deep-seated effects from the casual observer. This masking can be temporal: because most officers arrive at night, it is possible to pass through an Impact Zone by day and not see many police officers. A visitor to the Zone might not notice the ubiquitous surveillance cameras affixed to apartment buildings, stores, and telephone poles, and may not recognize crane-carrying NYPD vans as mobile surveillance stations.

Militarized policing can also be obscured by its increasing banality. Katz (2007) builds upon Billig’s (1995) ‘banal nationalism’ to highlight what she calls ‘banal terrorism’: “everyday, routinized, barely noticed reminders of terror or the threat of an always already presence of terrorism in our midst” (Katz 2007: 350). Impact Zones display a melding of ‘banal terrorism’ and ‘banal criminality’; a militarized post-9/11 police presence has become part of residents’ everyday life. Yet banality is not synonymous with invisibility, even to those whose view is already obscured by various markers of privilege. As Nyers (2010: 250) points out, “Acts of security seek to provide

protection from danger, freedom from doubt, and relief of anxiety,” *for some*, while they simultaneously “encourage fear, foster apprehension, and feed off of nervousness in the population.” This “double movement to security” (Nyers 2010: 250) can at once reassure and worry an individual, but it can also work simultaneously to reassure one subset of the population, while encouraging fear in others. That is, privilege does not always obscure acts of security, but can bring them into view. Nonetheless, as a white woman in my mid-twenties, I could not see or experience militarized policing the same way as its targets.

Thus the militarized urbanism (Graham 2010) of these zones is masked by space, time, and privilege—and additionally obscured by its banality. It is under-reported in the media, and largely ignored by the social sciences (Coleman 2016). This paper analyzes the city's advanced police profiling technologies, which, despite their partial obscurity, are part of thousands of New Yorkers’ everyday lives, particularly in Impact Zones. The profiling is racial, social, biometric, and spatial, and works to demarcate not only dangerous people but dangerous *places* as well. At the neighborhood scale, the practices also mark ‘dangerous’ mobilities, for the ways residents move through their neighborhood, from the transportation they take to the times and routes they travel, are marked as differentially suspect by police. In turn, this profiling of dangerous people, places, and mobilities shapes residents’ mobility, policing it through fear. While profiling is often described using a single attribute, such as “racial profiling,” the multiple intertwined layers of the NYPD’s profiling can further obfuscate its practices, making them less visible, less clear, and more difficult to contest. This complexity calls for a new conceptual apparatus to challenge the NYPD’s simultaneously violent and elusive tactics. Here, I introduce an analytic called bio-spatial profiling to refer to the police practices of

biometric, biopolitical, and spatial profiling—and to help identify how these enhance or obscure each other. The analytic also calls attention to the lived experience of those profiled. While no single analytic could encapsulate a population’s everyday lives, the term does highlight the interplay of forces shaping the lives of those targeted within Zones.

This paper documents the methods used to analyze experiences and practices of profiling, before reviewing the literature informing the analytic. Findings are organized into two sections: first, I argue that bio-spatial profiling results in lived experiences of pervasive fear which governs mobilities in Impact Zones. Second, I investigate the causes of this fear and find three bio-spatial practices: both biometric and spatial data collection, and police street-stops. These symbiotic practices inform and strengthen each other, congealing to produce fear and immobility for those they target. The paper concludes with a discussion of the wider implications of the analytic of bio-spatial profiling for academia and activism. Drawing out its implications in this paper, I broaden the discussion from mobility to conflicting understandings of (in)security in Impact Zones, in order to better understand the human costs of militarized securitization of domestic urban life.

### Using Bio-Spatial Profiling to Analyze Mobilities

This article draws on field research conducted in two adjacent police precincts out of New York City’s 123: the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup>, both housing Impact Zones. The 73<sup>rd</sup> is mainly considered Brownsville, and 75<sup>th</sup> district is largely East New York, while both are part of the larger area known as Northeast Brooklyn. I conducted participant observation in

Northeast Brooklyn for several months, traversing Impact Zones at different times and on different modes of transportation, including walking, riding subways and busses, driving, and cycling. In addition to informal, unrecorded interactions with current and former residents, I conducted eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews with residents—men and women in their 20s through 60s—which were recorded and transcribed, as well as follow-up phone calls and emails. In addition to interviews with administrators of Groundwork Community Center and the local branch of a Conditional Cash Transfer program, participant-recruitment entailed flyers in Northeast Brooklyn public spaces advertising paid interviews at a local community center or public library. One moved into the street as participants walked me around the neighborhood narrating their experiences, while others identified locations on maps, both highlighting constraints on mobilities.

I asked all participants about their understandings of security; because most brought up policing, the project focused on how participants experienced police practices. Questions also included experiences and views of racial profiling, for as Coleman notes, political geographers interested in state power have paid little attention to either police power or race—and fewer still have analyzing policing through a racial lens (Coleman 2016: 2-3). While I initially used explicit terms such as “racial profiling” in interviews, interviewees largely favored descriptions over labels: most avoided the term “racial profiling” yet experienced policing as a racial act—for instance, “if you’re black, you get stopped.”

Fieldwork was supplemented with textual analysis of relevant local periodical articles, Bloomberg's and Kelly's speeches on policing published during the period of research, and cultural ‘texts’ including graffiti, murals, music, and documentaries.

Diverse qualitative methods granted a range of insights into life in Impact Zones which no single source would have been able to generate. Still, through multiple sources—cultural texts, mainstream media, participant observation, and interviews—residents expressed pervasive fear of police profiling—of their mobilities, self-expression, race, and place—that had infiltrated their everyday life.

The complexity of participants' experiences of profiling, and their own refusal to encapsulate it in any one label, led to the development of the analytic of bio-spatial profiling. Residents' emphasis on time, speed, mode, and style of travel through their neighborhood pointed to a causal connection between bio-spatial profiling and mobilities. Below, I engage the literature the analytic of bio-spatial profiling builds upon, before turning to relevant theories of mobility.

Bio-spatial profiling is an analytic that emphasizes the biometric, biopolitical, and spatial tactics by which individuals are profiled, as well as the spatial effects of such targeting. The term builds on Shamir's biosocial profiling, but refocuses attention to spatial practices and experiences. My shift from 'social' to 'spatial' moves away from suggesting that profiling is based on behavior of suspects. I focus instead on how police practices racialize crime and criminalize everyday life within demarcated zones. Ultimately, this will open space for understanding the (im)mobilizing fear bio-spatial profiling induces.

The analytic of spatial profiling is not itself new; Kim Rossmo developed the idea in 1995, building on psychological-profiling of criminals (Crampton 2003: 128). For Rossmo, geo-profiling was an investigative methodology used to track an offender's residence. In contrast to psychological-profiling's individualized techniques, the NYPD's

use of computerized crime-mapping to profile dangerous neighborhoods does not seek to understand individuals so much as to designate dangerous places. I have replaced ‘geo’ with ‘spatial’ to reflect this shift, and to avoid the connotations of ‘geo’ with earth sciences (as in geology) and the global (as in geo-politics).

The ‘bio’ of bio-spatial profiling refers first to biometric data. Shamir divides profiling into two levels: the *social* involves collection of “demographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic data”, and the ‘bio’ involves “the collection of data that directly refers to the individual body, such as color of skin, facial characteristics, tissues, irises, fingerprints, and DNA” (2005: 211). The prefix ‘bio’ allows Shamir to pinpoint the contradictions of mobility and containment facilitated by governmental collection of biometric data on identification documents. He reflects on the regimes of social distance maintained by “the transformation of mobility into a moment of utmost exposure” that occurs when a border guard scans a passport fingerprint (Shamir 2005: 213). Shamir limits his discussion of biometrics to fingerprints burned into passports for those seeking international travel. By contrast, I devote a section to biometric data collection, for in Impact Zones, profiling actively seeks out residents. Additionally, while there is a wealth of critical literature on ‘the biometric border’ (Walter 2004; Shamir 2005; Amoore 2006; Amoore 2013; Sparke 2006; Cowen & Gilbert 2008), it tends to focus on international borders. This paper seeks to redress the dearth of writing on biometric borders and practices *within* cities themselves.

‘Bio’ also references Foucault's biopolitics, which focuses on the species-body, or population, through statistics and the calculation of norms and deviations. Technological knowledge is privileged over other ways of knowing, and there is a constant push to



develop new technologies to gather data, upon which populations are governed. With biopolitics, there could be “no question relating to an individual body, in the way that discipline does” (Foucault 2003: 246). This focus resonates with policing in Impact Zones. For one thing, Zones are populated by ‘an army’ of novice police officers rather than detectives investigating and preventing specific crimes. As Feldman writes, “local policing ceases to focus on apprehending individual transgressors but rather on proactive geographical surveillance, occupation and the clamping down of entire communities” (2004: 334).

To be clear, biopolitics has not superseded discipline, but works with it as a “great bipolar technology—anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life” (1978: 139). Thus biopolitics, as the governance of the species body, cannot function without governance of individuals. But the disorderly state violence wrought on Black and brown bodies in Northeast Brooklyn today is hardly comparable to Foucault’s bastions of discipline—workshop, school, prison, army—devoted to order and machinic efficiency. Here I heed Herbert’s caution against “an unnuanced Foucauldian interpretation of modern discipline”, for Foucault himself advised finding the “ruptures and inconsistencies” within a seemingly disciplined network (Herbert 1996: 50). Thus my use of ‘bio’ emphasizes the prevalence in Northeast Brooklyn of often undisciplined, laissez-faire governance by technology, metrics, and population. Bio-spatial profiling is therefore a useful analytic because it acknowledges from the outset that there are multiple symbiotic ways profiling occurs. ‘Bio’ and ‘spatial’ are both already imbued with racial

and social overtones, and these tactics work in tandem to create a highly technocratic practice that is more than the sum of its biometric, biopolitical, and spatial parts.

Scholarship on mobility can either illuminate or mask the effects of this technocratic securitization of Impact Zones. Prevalent theories of flows, hyper-mobility, and the annihilation of space risk obscuring immobility and forced mobility. As Sassen writes, such “master images...emphasize hyper-mobility, global communications, and neutralization of place and distance” (2000: 79). Ronen Shamir writes that “regardless of the attention given to the widening mobility gap in the present era, globalization is predominately theorized in terms of social openness and social fluidity” (2005: 197). The dominant narrative of hyper-mobility and openness obscures the realities of forced and constrained mobilities in Northeast Brooklyn.

Writing against this narrative, Kevin Hannam, Mimi Sheller, and John Urry (2006) outline an agenda for mobilities research in which they critique theories of hyper-mobility and call for work on mobility governance and forced mobility. Granted, “There is still much work to be done in developing more considered and multidimensional analyses of stasis [sic] and/or immobility” (Conlon 2010: 355). Yet scholars address mobility’s complexity in several ways that illuminate everyday life in Impact Zones, particularly through the analytic of a “global mobility regime, oriented to closure and to the blocking of access” (Shamir 2005: 199). In line with Foucault’s notion of a utilitarian state racism, the mobility regime is “constructed to maintain high levels of inequality in a relatively normatively homogenized world” (2005: 199). Inequality is constructed and maintained through “classification of individuals and groups according to principles of perceived threats and risks” (2005: 200), a risk-management technique which translates

into processes of containment. Responding to these processes is a developing field of ‘criminology of mobilities’ (Aas 2007).

Beyond criminology, a similar focus exists in the analysis of the “injurious implications of limited mobility” across borders (Nevins 2012: 23); studies of the biometric border (Amoore 2006; 2008; 2013; de Goede 2008); and geographies of spaces of containment from prisons and detention centers (Mountz 2011), to ‘the camp’ (Minca 2015). Though these scales and sites differ from my focus on micro-powers within Impact Zones, they remain relevant; as Claudio Minca writes, mechanisms are in place which allow “the camp to be normalized, to operate in some cases just next door to where we live” (2015: 2). Answering the call to uncover militarized processes of containment hidden within plain sight, Nicole Nguyen (2015) analyzes biometric regulation of mobility in US public schools. Nguyen sees the “schools’ algorithmic turn to militarized biometrics as a colonizing and spatial securing strategy,” arguing that this lens can reveal “how biometric technologies unfold at other sites of mobility beyond state (smart) borders” to enclose and divide (2015: 2). I argue that New York City’s Impact Zones exemplify such sites of mobility constrained and structured by biometric technologies used in policing.

Despite emerging scholarship on the ways *forced* mobility is facilitated in a post 9/11 world of advanced transportation and identity technology, there remains work to be done on the involuntary movement of marginalized populations. Mobility regimes, for instance, can entail deportation as well as confinement (Shamir 2005). Nguyen (2015) notes that students’ RFID tags limit their stay in particular locations and set a required speed of transit from one place to the next. Matthew Sparke (2006) juxtaposes

extraordinary rendition and expedited removal with the experiences of an elite class of travelers who also pass smoothly through borders. Sparke does the important work of recognizing that technologies which facilitate access for some lead to insecurity for others. However, he places elite and mobile travelers with Nexus passes in the primary class, and lumps together low-risk travelers without the pass and perceived high-risk travelers subject to extraordinary rendition. This work demonstrates how even a revealing exposé of forced mobility within hyper-mobility discourse can obfuscate the vast differences within marginalized groups. Therefore, to address experiences within Impact Zones, mobility studies must continue to explore the connections among voluntary mobility, immobility, and forced mobility and the differential experiences within each process.

### **Bio-spatial Profiling in Everyday Life: Criminalized Mobilities**

When I first entered Brownsville and East New York to post flyers, the prevalence of officers was impossible to miss, particularly as night fell. On Sutter Avenue, one of the area's few shopping streets, and home of the 73rd precinct office, there were rows of police cars, undercover cars, and police vans and trucks, including several parked illegally in front of bus stops. Officers stood on nearly every corner. I watched a white officer stop a middle-aged black man exiting a bodega and search his shopping bag. Describing his own experience of this commonplace occurrence, Ray, a 29-year-old African American father, laughed, "What they think I'ma buy drugs at the store? Like 'yo, can I have a soda and some crack?'" Ray and the shopper I witnessed seemed to treat the events as routine indignities. As a Center for Constitutional Rights

(CCR) report concluded, in these neighborhoods, “being mistreated by police is an expected part of daily life...simply going to the store or coming home from school is a dangerous activity” (2012: 3). As this section will show, such frequent police stops and fear of stops inhibit residents’ mobilities, influencing the times and routes they travel, how long they linger, mode of transportation, and what they wear to leave the house. Further, bio-spatial profiling not only influences when, where, and how residents move throughout their neighborhoods, but can also determine whether or not they reach their destination.

Ray posited that the NYPD *intends* to limit residents' mobility and engagement with public space. He summarized their strategy: “Let’s put a thousand police over there, and a thousand police over here. Maybe won’t nobody come stand outside.” He believed the tactic was intended to “scare people into doing things right,” which amounted to “bullying, that’s all it is.” Maria, an African American grandmother, social worker, and community leader in East New York, said, “Where I live the police are always hanging on the corner; it makes me feel that I’m being watched all the time. The fact is we’re being watched all the time and it’s sad because everyone shouldn’t have to be feeling like they are a criminal.” As a result of crime *and* policing, Maria added, “I don’t go outside a lot.” Ray also complained that there were certain routes he could not take home at night, though these were unpredictable and based upon changing locations of officers. He feared police suspicion more than crime. “You can't walk through parks after a certain time of night,” he said; “What if I live through the park, and there's construction over here and something’ happening over here – they’ll stop you and give you a ticket!”

Mobility is also constricted by the fear of being stopped by an officer while driving or bicycling. Maria had been stopped multiple times in her car. Several participants had given up cycling. I witnessed multiple cyclists ticketed during my months in Brownsville and East New York; some for riding on the sidewalk, others for riding without a light. Anthony, a 20-year-old African American man in Brownsville complained, “somebody walking, somebody roll they bike on the sidewalk, they lock them up.” He added,

They should change that. I think people *should* ride a bike on the sidewalk. A lot of people don't want to ride they bike on the streets because – it's dangerous! You see cars coming non-stop, there's no space, no bike lane – you gotta ride on the sidewalk, right? You ride on the sidewalk, you get in trouble. I don't think it should be like that.

Ray made similar comments: “I don’t ride bikes anymore. ‘Cause they stopping everybody on bikes these days. The cars is more worse than anybody, but still you’re gonna stop me...They running kids over, nobody say nothing. I’m just riding minding my business.”

Despite the dangers of street-riding, police prevent even children from riding on sidewalks. While two officers began to ticket me for sidewalk-riding, a young Black boy rode by. The officers let me go and converged to ticket the boy as cars, trucks, taxis, and busses flew by. Not only was the experience racially uneven, but dangerous to the child mandated to ride through traffic. It was not uncommon for officers to stop Ray and his wife Matrice’s children for riding bicycles on the sidewalk, and when Matrice (also 29

and African American) once refused to tell her 6-year-old daughter to ride in the street, the officer threatened to ticket her instead.

Mobility-by-bicycle affects the safety of others besides cyclists. Ray recounted: “My daughter has an illness, I gotta get her medicine, the cops stop me from goin’ to the *pharmacy*— the cops tell me I was riding my bike *up* the wrong street! *After* I just seen 12 people do it!” He laughed and shook his head, adding, “I tell ‘em I gotta go get medicine. That didn’t matter to him.” Then in a stern voice he imitated the officer saying, “You look like you did something.” And in his own voice: “I *look* like I *did* something?” Here the parents’ anxiety is compounded by worry for a sick child, the selective restriction of means and route of travel, and the palpable injustice of bio-spatial profiling.

Frustration was heightened too by the inaccuracy of police attention. Several participants complained that while ticketing a child bicycling on the sidewalk, police turned a blind eye to more serious crimes. Matrice explained, “you could be standing over here selling drugs, and I ride my bike on the sidewalk, and you’ll stop me, but not the person that’s...” Ray interjected: “destroying your community, you know?” When I asked why the police would do this, Ray postulated that it could be “just the time of convenience. You’re standing there at the time, why not mess with you?” He added, “No matter how you look, how old you are, they just stop you. I don’t understand it. I never understood that. We’re not doing anything, why would you just run up and jump out?” Thus policing’s unpredictability and inexplicability added to residents’ insecurity.

Being stopped without probable cause suggested to participants that there was something about them, whether location, gait, style of dress, skin color, or a combination of many factors, that conveyed criminality. While some believed it futile, others modified

their styles to avoid ‘looking like they did something.’ Ray had given up his preferred colors for ones less likely to be associated with gangs: “I love to wear the color black [but] I’ve stopped wearing the color black.” Matrice added, “If you wear red, you’re a Blood. If you wear blue, you’re a Crip.” Even those who were not frequent targets were conscious of changing public behaviors so as not to be targeted. Frank, a 30-year-old Latino man, had less sympathy for people like Ray who were the frequent targets of stop-and-searches. Frank claimed that the police rarely bothered him anymore. Clean cut in a crisp flannel shirt, loose khakis, and impeccable Timberland boots, he was offended that I asked if he was a police target. He countered, “What, dressed like this?” Frank admitted that he used to dress in “street clothes” and when I asked why he’d changed, he laughed, “I grew up!” I pushed back, “growing up doesn’t mean changing styles for lots of people – so why did it for you?” Frank grew thoughtful and explained, “In the projects, it’s not an easy lifestyle. You constantly gotta hold up an image, act tough, defend yourself. Know how to carry yourself in rough neighborhoods.” He added that on the other side of the equation, “The police have a power over you. Because they have a badge, they think they’re superior.”

Eventually Frank tired of being stopped and harassed, of being caught between the image demanded by the community and the way police interpreted it. He made it his goal to “get out the hood” by changing his style, focusing on school, and working his way into real estate and professional boxing. He managed to move away from the projects for a time, but returned to Brownsville when it was the only neighborhood where his family could afford to buy an apartment. It did strike him as notable that to avoid harassment by the police, he had to change his style and leave his community. It struck *me* as interesting



that he equated this change with “growing up.” With Frank and several other interviewees, practices that could be construed as self-discipline were so deeply ingrained as to appear natural. Some framed these habits of police-avoidance as resistance; they were ‘outsmarting’ the police, deciphering when, where, and for what they were likely to be targeted, and escaping the net. This savviness did not, however, diminish the material changes these practices wrought on their lives, from self-expression to mode, route, and time of transit—nor did it diminish the frustration these practices invoked.

In addition to altering mobilities, police stops could determine destinations. For Maria, crime and feeling criminalized confined her to her house more than she would have liked. For Frank, leaving Brownsville became his long-term destination. Ray and Matrice claimed that aggressive policing actually prevented children from getting to school if they left late. Officers would stop, question, and detain children they labeled as “truant” when these children may have been on their way to school. “If they’da gave you a couple minutes,” Matrice said, “you’da made it to school—they didn’t give you a chance! Some parents know their child walked out the house a little late. Not all children are cutting school.” Ray explained, “Even if this kid was like ‘I don’t like school I’m not going to school I don’t wanna do school,’ and then there’s this one day ‘I’m gonna go to school,’ then you get stopped! And for no reason!” “And you’re saying to yourself,” added Matrice, “you see what happens when I decide I’m goin’ to school!” These parents understood that it was preferable for their child to stay home rather than leave home a few minutes late and risk police custody.

These accounts show that bio-spatial profiling disciplined residents’ mobilities, though not always in predictable, logical or intended ways. Children were prevented from

going to school and were encouraged to ride bicycles through dangerous traffic. A parent was prevented from getting medicine for his sick daughter. A grandmother felt unsafe leaving her house, despite her many responsibilities and desire to help her community. And when a young real estate agent catered his style to avoid police suspicion, he framed this as a natural part of growing up. But for some, like Ray, their modifications never fully succeeded; while bio-spatial profiling governed his means and routes of transportation, leading him to give up his bicycle, avoid parks or certain streets at night, and forgo his favorite colors, he still felt like he was always potentially a target of the police. Thus constant anxiety about police profiling restricted mobilities and pervaded everyday lives in Impact Zones.

### **Practicing Bio-spatial Profiling**

Having examined the constricted mobilities of Impact Zone residents, the analytic of bio-spatial profiling will elucidate the practices generating such effects. This section examines the history and current state of what I identify as three key bio-spatial practices. First, biometric, then spatial, data collection practices are examined. Third, a focus on police street-stops demonstrates how biometric and spatial tactics converge in embodied encounters between police and civilians in Impact Zones. Although practices are divided into three categories, I will show how they are intertwined, symbiotic and cyclical, becoming what I call a continuous *technocratic feedback loop*. The concept relates to Bernard Harcourt's (2007) "ratchet effect" or the "circular, compounding effect of policing as a practice and the biopolitical specificity of the data that this practice produces, which in turn hails additional rounds of policing" (Coleman 2016: 9). I

emphasize its *technocratic* dimensions for decisions are informed and justified by technological knowledge. Real-time biometric and crime data is uploaded into a massive digital databank, which justifies more officers, data-gathering devices, and hot-spots, all of which generate more data.

Impact Zone policing also echoes military technologies, in “reproducing the war-like relations of power seen in the overtly militarized spaces... They target individual bodies, designate communities as dangerous or risky, [and] delineate safe zones from targeted locations” (Amoore 2009: 50). Residents made this connection themselves, noting that the NYPD “have borrowed from military tactics, because when they patrol the streets, they don’t patrol in a community-friendly way. They do it like [they’re] on a search-and-destroy mission” (in CCR 2012: 19). Matrice explained that on 9/11, “[New York] got bombed. They felt like they needed more cops.” Yet this supposed police response to terrorism resulted in what Matrice described as “cops on *every* corner,” causing residents to feel more criminalized than protected. The concept of bio-spatial profiling is important because it reminds us that post-9/11 technocratic policing is not likely to diminish; it continues to feed into itself, becoming ever more data-driven and data-rich, which helps justify its spread.

### Biometric Profiling

The *Encyclopedia of Crime Scene Investigation* (2008) defines biometrics as “the use of automated technology to identify individual persons via specific physiological or behavioral characteristics” (Newton 2008: 23). *Physiological* biometrics measure the body and include fingerprint, palm, iris, retina, and face scans, while *behavioral*

biometrics measure actions including speech patterns and handwriting (2008: 23). Gait analysis is another frequent form of behavioral biometrics: “furtive movement” is one of the most commonly recorded reasons that police stop and question 'suspects' (Bloch, Fessenden & Roberts 2009). Such *passive* biometrics do not require a subject’s knowledge or consent.

If New York epitomizes the global city, biometric data collection epitomizes the global mobility regime. It enables mobility for some, while constraining and trapping others—particularly those it incarcerates. In contrast to fingerprinting, no law requires iris scans for arrestees, despite a 2010 policy advising the scans after an inmate was wrongly released (Pinto 2010). Yet inmates are not always given a choice. During the Occupy Wall Street movement, NYPD officers delayed release and increased bail of arrested protesters who refused to have their irises scanned (Pinto 2012). As executive director of the NYCLU said,

It’s really distressing that the Police Department is once again undertaking a new regime of personal data collection without any public discourse, and we don’t know the reason for it, whether this is a necessary program, whether it’s effective to address the concerns that it’s designed to address, and whether in this day and age it’s even cost-effective, not to mention whether there are any protections in place against the misuse of the data that’s collected. (Lieberman in Rivera & Baker 2010: A24)

Furthermore, the differential use of biometric data collection exemplifies the trend of using poor populations and places as testing grounds. Because Black and Latino New Yorkers are disproportionately incarcerated (Alexander 2012) and comprise the main

population of New York State prisons ([www.docs.ny.gov](http://www.docs.ny.gov) 2014), they comprise the main test-subjects for new security technologies. Regarding testing technologies in prisons, president of the Electronic Privacy Information Center said, “What might make sense behind barbed wire could be seen as intrusive in the free world, and it is hard to foresee what those problems could be” (Rotenberg in Associated Press 2010: A24).

The latest advancement in biometric data collection takes practices once relegated to the prison into the street. Where Lieberman and Rotenberg expressed concerns about biometric data collection being absent from public discourse, it may become hidden in plain sight. Thanks to a \$160 million initiative procured by New York City's District Attorney, Mayor de Blasio, and Police Commissioner Bratton, the NYPD promised to provide “41,000 Tablets and Hand-held Mobile Devices for Every NYPD Officer and Patrol Car” ([www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov) 2014). Both de Blasio and Bratton praised the initiative as critical in advancing the NYPD into “21st Century” policing through fast access to information. The program will enhance not only the speed at which data travels, and the number of people it can move to or from, but the amount and type of data gathered. Among the devices to be distributed will be hand-held fingerprint scanners for “in-field checks” ([www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov) 2014). Thus, Impact Zones can be likened not only to militarized conflict areas but to low-security prisons, not least because prison technologies are taking to the streets. While all New York police may have fingerprint scanners, the augmented police presence and stop-and-frisk tactics in Impact Zones—even *without* accounting for officers’ racial bias—ensure that biometric data collection disproportionately affects poor communities of color.

## Spatial Profiling

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Bloomberg adjusted his first mayoral campaign to reflect the burgeoning conceptual link between crime and terrorism, vowing to make the city safe from both. In the Mayor's first State of the City Address in 2002, he declared, "To meet the new reality of post-9/11, Commissioner Kelly has put a new emphasis on keeping our City safe from terrorism. In today's world, *we must deal with both crime prevention and terrorism*" (Bloomberg 2002 *italics added*). At the core of the three bio-spatial practices justified by this "new reality" is spatial profiling, and specifically, crime-mapping.

NYPD crime-maps record reports of New York State's seven major penal law felonies, along with the time, age range, sex, and race of both victim and offender. Crime-mapping technology exemplifies the bio-spatial profiling tools that existed before the 9/11 attacks, yet were re-branded, additionally funded, and justified by the discursive conflation of immigration, crime, and acts of terror (Shamir 2005).

When Bratton became Mayor Giuliani's police commissioner in 1994, he introduced CompStat, a real-time crime tracking database Giuliani hailed as "a system that could detect patterns in crime" (Giuliani 2012 n.p.). CompStat signaled the dawn of a new technocratic era of policing which paid more attention to surveilling, monitoring, and predicting crime than understanding either its causes or the psychology of those involved. Based on CompStat data, the NYPD made predictions, and by necessity, generalizations, about who was most likely to be or become a criminal, and where and when criminals would strike.

Bloomberg and Kelly employed CompStat heavily from the start, but in 2005 they unveiled its re-branded incarnation, the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC). The Center houses an “integrated data management and data mining system that can access billions of records— from individual criminal histories and probation files to aid in the rapid, algorithmic analytics of emergent crime scenes” (Orr 2013: 4). Drawing from decades of crime data stored in CompStat, the RTCC can also “process 120 million crime complaints as far as ten years back, send pictures of suspects to officers' handheld devices or police car laptops, and use GIS to map ‘hot-spots’ of crime” (D’Amico 2006 n.p.). It holds more than 33 billion public records at the level of the city, state, and nation. The data includes more than 20 million New York City criminal complaints, arrests, 911 and 311 calls, and summonses from five years back (Government Technology 2005). According to Bloomberg, the Center would “become the new tech nerve center for the NYPD” (in Greenemeier 2005 n.p.). It processes massive amounts of real time data to show what kind of crime is occurring throughout the city at every moment, who is allegedly committing it, and how many officers are on the street. Its physical office centers around a “ten feet tall, twenty–seven feet wide data wall, with over fourteen million pixels of resolution” comprised of 18 cubes capable of simultaneously “displaying multiple data sources for correlation and analysis” (Mitsubishi 2014 n.p.).

The Center opened just three years after a panel of commercial information technology experts advised a United States House subcommittee on using risk-profiling techniques to fight the war on terror (Amoore 2006). The subcommittee concluded that “technologies designed to classify populations according to their degree of threat – long available in the private commercial sector – should be deployed at the service of border

security” despite risk-profiling's unabashed alter ego as “racial and ethnic targeting” (Amoore 2006: 337 & 346). The fanfare and branding the RTCC received might not have been necessary to its operation, but they did highlight the increasing reliance on real time crime statistics that would allow the NYPD to make predictions about who would strike next, where, when, and how. The RTCC’s “state-of-the-art crime-fighting technology” (Bloomberg 2005 n.p.), gilded the reality of the racial and spatial profiling it justified.

The RTCC’s crime-mapping facilitated the implementation of Impact Zones, which concentrate police in areas perceived as particularly difficult to control. Hot-spots policing was also the Bloomberg administration’s first major security initiative. Like CompStat, it was ceremoniously re-branded; in 2003 it was introduced as Operation Impact and deployed all new graduates of the NYPD’s training academy to areas CompStat statistics declared were most dangerous. Zones were determined by “a virtual mountain of analysis, prepared at all levels of the Department” (Smith & Purtell 2007: 8). The deployment of inexperienced officers was justified as a training opportunity; a Wagner School report on Operation Impact states, “it is difficult to imagine a more productive post-Academy training environment for ‘rookie’ police officers than their closely-supervised crime ‘hot-spots’” (Smith & Purtell 2007: 15).

In fact, in 2014 Commissioner Bratton suggested that releasing new graduates into the highest-crime areas was *not* an ideal training practice (Parascandola 2014), and began to phase out the practice in 2016 (Weiss 2016: n.p.). While Bratton and the Wagner report disagreed on what constituted optimal training opportunities, they shared a myopic concern for ‘efficient’ training and policing, without considering the lived experience of Zone residents. Frank said of the policy, “Anyone with a gun, you don’t know how



they're gonna react. Anytime you bring more guns into an area, the safety level goes down. But with a rookie, a nervous cop's more likely to shoot someone." The 2014 shooting of Akai Gurley by rookie officer Peter Liang supports Frank's assessment. While Liang's inexperience and fear factored into his light sentence (without jail-time), Brooklyn Borough President (and future New York City Mayoral candidate) Eric Adams saw these factors as strikes against Operation Impact, which he argued was dangerous to officers and civilians alike (WNYC 2014). Thus flooding a neighborhood with newly minted officers renders these areas testing grounds for policies that can threaten residents' security and survival.

Furthermore, not only does Operation Impact rely on CompStat data, it helps fill the databank. While occupying a Zone, the NYPD continues to monitor and compile data. As a result, Zones are frequently created or terminated, while program policy is simultaneously adjusted. Therefore the technology of bio-spatial profiling facilitates bio-spatial policy implementation, which feeds back into the RTCC's gathering of bio-spatial data. Like sending 'rookie cops' into rough neighborhoods, this technocratic feedback loop itself has powerful lived effects: when asked about changes in the neighborhood since 9/11, Frank replied, "There's more security." I asked him if this meant the neighborhood was safer; he shook his head and said, "No, I wanna change my word. What I mean is there's more cops on the street. But [laughing] I feel more afraid of the cops than the people!" This statement was striking coming from someone who took pride in having 'cleaned up' his image and successfully avoided police harassment. Participants' pervasive fear of police did not directly correlate with the frequency of their own negative encounters. Rather, the spatially-targeted increase in police *presence*,

spurred by continuous data-gathering, had wide-reaching effects. Harcourt notes that racial and spatial targeting not only “reduces work opportunities, breaks down families and communities, and disrupts education” (2007: L356) but also delegitimizes the criminal justice system, which may lead profiled groups to disregard criminal law (2007: L372). Delegitimization poses a threat to police, who must “justify their existence through crime reduction because they must secure themselves a solid bureaucratic position, in large part through legitimating themselves, and the broader state they represent” (Herbert 1999: 164). Harcourt (2007: L356) argues these multiple factors set the stage for increased criminality. Whether crime increases within the profiled population *or not*, disproportionate policing of profiled groups itself will lead to disproportionate data on their criminality, giving rise to further policing (Coleman 2016; Harcourt 2007); thus the technocratic feedback loop continues.

### Police Street-Stops

A significant amount of both biometric and spatial data that feeds the RTCC’s databank is collected from police officers who stop suspects on the street. The stop is the embodied encounter of profiling technology and daily life. Officers are permitted to stop anyone they consider they have ‘reasonable suspicion’ of, based on bio-spatial risk profiles—though there is no concrete level of suspicion considered ‘reasonable.’ The officer may request identification, ask questions to help determine the suspect’s guilt or innocence, and search their belongings, clothing, within the clothing, or within the body (a cavity search). While most stops do not result in arrest, as the CCR found, “everyone subject to a stop-and-frisk must cope with the emotional, psychological, social, and

economic impact on their lives” (CCR 2012: 5). Residents of Impact Zones speak of the humiliation and violation derived from any stop, particularly those marred by sexual harassment (CCR 2012: 5). Elaborating on repercussions for speaking out against inappropriate touching, one target said that the frisk “made me feel violated, humiliated, harassed, shameful, and of course very scared” (in CCR 2012: 5).

The police stop not only generates these immediate effects, but also furthers the technocratic feedback loop. For the officer must record the details of the stop, including the suspect's identifying information, any suspicious item found, whether force was used, and the alleged reason for the stop. This data is transmitted immediately to the RTCC and stored there, even if the suspect is only questioned and let go—which one young male participant called ‘catch and release policing.’ If such an individual is stopped again, s/he appears in the databank, possibly furthering suspicion. These stops, according to the CCR (2012: 7), “are often the first encounter that people have with law enforcement, and they can be a dangerous – and often unjustified – point of entry into ongoing involvement with the criminal legal system.” This correlates with participants’ perceptions that having been previously stopped and/or arrested was itself a suggestion of guilt in future encounters. Anthony imitated a police officer saying, “you been locked up before, ok, we're gonna take you in.” He explained, “That’s how people get locked up for most little things.” Additionally, Impact Zone boundaries are drawn using this data, and higher rates of stops could make a neighborhood appear to be more volatile. If these areas then become Impact Zones, the rates of stops may rise. Both the data collected by the RTCC (and instantaneously sent to police officers), and the policy of militarizing consolidated spaces facilitate stop-and-frisks of Zone residents simply moving through public space.

Contrary to the objective guise technocratic policing confers, there is no exact science to determining or recording causes of stops. With images and descriptions of physical features sent instantly to officers on the street, the NYPD could be seen as using physiological biometric data in their profiling—yet fewer than 9% of stops city-wide are recorded as “fits description” (Rivera et al. 2010). The NYPD also uses behavioral biometrics to profile bodily movements in order to initiate a stop—yet this dubious category is exemplified by Ray’s claim that officers stopped him because he ‘looked like he did something.’ The main reason entered for stops is “furtive movement,” “a catch-all category that critics say can mean anything” (Rivera et al. 2010). In the same vein, there is a category listed simply as “clothing, disguise.” Despite the scientificity of the data-recording process, police are not held accountable for their reasons for making stops: “other” accounted for over 20% of all stops made in 2009 and 2010 (Rivera et al. 2010). And although police stops are illegal without reasonable suspicion of a crime, and frisks are illegal without reasonable suspicion of a weapon, only 7.4 % of stops are because of “violent crime indication” (Rivera et al. 2010). Furthermore, 88 % of those stopped city-wide in 2011 were not arrested or ticketed (Martinez 2011), and contraband and weapons were found in only 1.14% of stops, comparable to rates found at random check points (CCR 2013: 4). These statistics call into question the multitudes of officers flooding Northeast Brooklyn armed with racial, social, and biometric profiles upon which they may justify their stops. The vague documentation practices discussed above cast further doubt on the accuracy of police-stop data, while the *amount* of police data on profiled populations is ‘ratcheted up’ by the technocratic feedback loop.

This laissez-faire profiling can further insecurity for residents not engaged in criminality, who express a desire for the police to be more scientific in their profiling. As one Brownsville teen stated, “When you’re young and you’re black, no matter how you look, you fit the description” (Brehon in Martinez 2011). As Ray said, “If you’re black, you get stopped.” Anthony, who did not complain that he himself was a target, pointed to surveillance technology as the answer to imprecise profiling. In his opinion, cameras could see what officers missed, and police should rely more on this technology than on their own biases. He referenced mobile surveillance stations—“they put...this big thing where a cop thing’s hanging up”—but worried that their gaze was limited. While Anthony had little faith in police officers, he concluded that the surveillance stations were “the only thing I see would make that exact area safe.” These comments spoke to a widespread frustration with profiling that targeted race and place over what some residents imagined could be more egalitarian, data-derived evidence of criminal behavior, such as surveillance cameras. This view was not unanimous, nor does it suggest that residents enjoyed the experience of being surveilled or believed data and surveillant technology to be panaceas. Rather, it spoke to a concern with targeting and lack of protection received from officers. As Anthony added, “my experience with the cops, I still think, even if the cops around, things still gonna happen, regardless.” For many in Zones, these ‘things’ included not only crime, but violence and humiliation at the hands of police.

The efficacy of the above three bio-spatial techniques is contested. Bio-spatial profiling advocates regularly confuse correlation with causality. An NYC public-private partnership report claims, “Operation Impact had an immediate positive effect on crime rates in the Impact Zones,” based on a 3.26% reduction in major felony crimes within

Impact Zones in 2010 compared with 2009 (NYC Global Partners 2010), yet the program had been in effect since 2003. Comparing Zone crime rates with non-Zone rates, we find that crime has declined *city-wide*, and at steady, modest rates, while police stops have skyrocketed. This calls into question even the *correlation* of high stops with reduced crime. Further, crime has declined drastically nation-wide over the past 25 years (Ford 2016). Ultimately, “Law enforcement experts say that it is very hard, perhaps even impossible, to draw direct connections between the stop-and-frisk tactic and significant long-term crime reduction” (Baker 2010).

## **Conclusion**

I have shown that post-9/11 policing in New York City combines biometric, biopolitical, racial, social, and spatial profiling technologies which converge with particular force in Impact Zones. A focus on the everyday lived experiences in Impact Zones, and an analysis of the concrete practices of militarized policing technology, illuminate the explosive constellation of profiling metrics embodied in bio-spatial policing. Technologies of intervention gather data on the race, face, gait, and *place* of crime; one of several possible reasons an officer may provide for a street-stop is “high-crime area” (CCR 2012: 4). This was cited in more than half of all stops from 2004-2009, *regardless of the actual crime rate of the precinct* (CCR 2012: 4). Police policy is devised based on this biometric, racial, social and spatial data, implemented in targeted neighborhoods, and reliant on bio-spatial tactics. In turn, the tactic of profiled street-stops fuels the CompStat data bank, which then re-shapes the spatial implementation of policing policies. This is the technocratic feedback loop at work.

Thus the experience of living within an Impact Zone is one of data-driven, racialized and criminalized mobility. Moving through, staying still, or simply *being* in public space as a person of color profiles residents as suspects. As Katherine Beckett and Steve Herbert (2009) discuss, increasing place-based restrictions that make simply being in particular public spaces a punishable offence result in unemployment, anguish, alienation, and perception of banishment. Though New York has no such banishment *laws*, Beckett and Herbert's claims resonate with participants' assertion that law *enforcement* made Northeast Brooklyn residents feel that their presence in public space was criminal, even when legally permitted. As Matrice summarized, "it's all about *where you're at*." During my fieldwork, I missed Matrice's spatial analysis. In my focus on racial profiling, complications to this narrative slipped through the cracks. The analytic of bio-spatial profiling highlights the ways that profiling metrics and tactics work together, reinforce, and hide behind each other.

The analytic can be applied to situations other than the three NYPD tactics identified here. Nguyen's work highlights the proliferation of biometric profiling technologies in public schools, as well as the ways these war-derived practices infiltrate neighborhoods and schools "through biopolitical modes of governance" (2015: 4). Yet she notes that "scholars have yet to interrogate, at length, the *spatial nature* of biometric technologies and their regulation of micro-forms of mobility" (2015: 2). The analytic of bio-spatial profiling captures these spatial-securing and biometric tactics, their spatial-effects, and the broader biopolitical governance these tactics embody. The analytic contests a singular focus on biometrics, biopolitics, or spatialized security measures, by suggesting that where there is one, others are likely present.

The analytic has utility beyond academia as well. Anti-racist, anti-police activism has swelled in recent years in response to the deaths of unarmed black men, women, and children at the hands of police. While protests often isolate race, other actants in these deaths were space, biometrics, and biopolitical governance. Movements against both everyday and spectacle police violence strategically construct concise targets (such as racial profiling) and rallying cries or hashtags (such as #blacklivesmatter). Without sacrificing this brevity, movements may be able to address the symbiotic violence at play using the paradigm of bio-spatial profiling.

For activism *and* academia, further implications of the analytic include a focus not only on practices but lived experience as well. If the *practice* highlighted is targeting-by-behavioral-biometrics (such as gait), residents' *lived experience* includes preemptively altering their mobilities, from routes chosen to the ways they move their bodies. Yet here too the bio-spatial framework can be applied to experiences beyond mobilities. While this article has focused on the ways bio-spatial profiling polices mobilities in Impact Zones, the practice reaches even deeper into residents' everyday lives. I will conclude by expanding the discussion to the general insecurity Northeast Brooklyn residents experienced, and their conceptualizations of more desirable alternatives.

Overall, experiences of criminalized mobility add to a prevalent ontological insecurity, which for Nancy Hiemstra is “the sense of instability and perhaps even fear provoked by feelings of uncertainty and the perception of disorder” (Hiemstra 2014: 578; see also Katz 2008: 6). For Peter Marcuse, existential insecurity is “worry about conditions which are threatening to the basic underpinnings of one’s life: one’s health, income, physical safety, sustainability of housing, possibility of growth, and which are



perceived as out of one's control" (Marcuse 2006: 925). While my research has focused on bio-spatial profiling as one cause of insecurity, it does not play out in a vacuum, but instead exacerbates existing political economic struggles. Decrying budget cuts to social services, Matrice said, "You're cutting the schools, you're cutting housing, what else is next? Cut the welfare!" "Open more jails," added Ray, shaking his head.

Emerging from such a climate of generalized insecurity, residents of Impact Zones expressed desire for *security* in many different forms. Though this perception is rarely mentioned in news articles about deteriorating relations between police and civilians, many residents wanted police and cameras on the street. Greg Jackson, the director of the Brownsville Recreation Center, described the feelings of many of my interviewees in a *New York Times* article, which reported that "the rising tide of stops had left many who wanted a strong police presence here feeling conflicted" (Rivera et al. 2010). Jackson asserted that "Ninety-nine percent of the people in the area [welcome the police]. But they also fear the police because you can get stopped at any time" (Rivera et al. 2010).

Everyone I spoke to recognized that the neighborhood was being wrenched apart by violent crime, drugs, and territorial gang activity. "The guns and young people who are carrying them need a change in direction," said Maria. Kiera, a 31-year-old African American woman lived in neighboring Bedford-Stuyvesant, which had been similar demographically to the rest of Northeast Brooklyn but is undergoing a gentrification that Brownsville and East New York are not. She noted that the police seemed to have proliferated her neighborhood along with the gentrifiers. "Even though [the police] seem sort of out of place whenever I see them," she said, "I wish they were there the whole

time, not just to coincide with gentrification. That, to me, seems fair, as I feel like not everyone in the ‘bad’ neighborhoods are bad, and they—we—need protection just as much as the new faces do.” Echoing Kiera’s perception, Anthony mused that in “the nicer neighborhood, everywhere you go, you know that nothing won't happen, because you know that there's a camera or there's a police station on the watch, on standby.” In the ‘nicer neighborhoods’ he referred to, such as Brooklyn Heights or Park Slope, cameras, officers, and precinct stations are less prevalent than in Brownsville. But Anthony’s and Keira’s perception spoke to a larger sense that in ‘nicer neighborhoods’ police technology and officers are there to protect residents, unlike in Brownsville.

When I asked Anthony what would make him feel safe, he answered, “having the security by your side.” He explained that he was referring to security forces and technologies—both officers and cameras. Yet later, after he condemned zero-tolerance policing, I asked again how officers and cameras made him feel. He answered simply, “unsafe.” Likewise, despite Anthony’s view that cameras were the only way to make an area safe, when I admitted I found them eerie, he was quick to add, “I know what you mean. That's like being watched by somebody that's trying to stalk you, but you really can't see that person. You can feel it, you can feel you being watched, but who's watching you?”

Thus Anthony’s understanding of *security* was at times synonymous with policing, which made him feel both safe and unsafe. Yet when asked to define security, he answered, “It’s like safety.” This differs from Marcuse’s definition of security as the *perception* of safety, or the “perceived protection from danger” (2006: 924). Melding these two, Matrice defined security as “a stronghold,” encompassing both freedom from

danger and freedom from fear. And when Ray said that “police presence don’t do nothing on security,” he was articulating security as protection from both danger and fear. When residents of Impact Zones expressed a desire for increased security in their neighborhoods, these rich and conflicting meanings must be taken into account.

Residents’ conflicted call for the dubious ‘security’ of police and cameras may derive from myriad factors that merge and diverge. In my research, these have included internalized racism, self-policing, misperceptions about what goes on in ‘the nicer neighborhood,’ the increasing banality of militarization (Katz 2007) or hopelessness and lack of exposure to alternatives. Yet these bleak drivers of desire for policing do not change one underlying fact—to alienate and abuse civilians who seek police protection is perverse. In the turn toward the technocratic allure of bio-spatial profiling, the NYPD turns its back on a critical opportunity to rebuild relations on the ground.

## CHAPTER 3. FROM A DISCOURSE OF FEAR TO CONSTELLATIONS OF CARE: CHILDREN'S REFUSALS OF SECURITIZING REGIMES

### Introduction

*Ramírez, Black, age-nine: "The Black man was trying to, like, get the handcuffs off of him, and then they started tasing him, and I was like, he was doin' a good deed, why you tasing him? Like, I wanna live somewhere where there's not many cops."*

*Me: "Tell me more about that."*

*Ramírez: "Me [and two friends], we're all gonna live together in Texas somewhere, and we're gonna find a house... We agreed to live in Hawaii, but I watched a video of the tornado... and how stuff was gonna burn down from the volcano, yeah so like, we change our minds and said like, either Paris or Texas."*

*Me: "Are there fewer cops in Hawaii, Paris, or Texas?"*

*Ramírez: "I think Hawaii, yeah. 'Cause I only know like Cincinnati cops, that's all I know of."*

In this brief interview segment, Ramírez shares stories of racist police violence, inherently childlike fantasies from friendship to freedom, and imaginings of a world outside policing. Paralleling the interview's complexity, this paper tells three stories woven together. First, it shares stories like this one of socio-economically marginalized children's experiences of policing and surveillance in Cincinnati. But inextricable from their everyday securitization by police and surveillance are the ways children refuse securitization and any narrative that defines them solely along these lines. Finally, there is the metanarrative: the evolution of how their experiences can be framed. I share the story of how participants themselves pushed my analysis beyond fear-and-oppression to a narrative one that makes space for their everyday refusals of securitizing regimes. Yet as Ramírez's geographically and climatologically questionable longings remind us, just as children's perceptions of policing cannot be constrained by a fear-based narrative, they do not map on to reformist or abolitionist views, nor fetishized notions of resistance.

Instead, what they most consistently reveal of participants is their child-ness. Asserting their belonging in a category that poor and BIPOC children are multifariously pushed out of is not resistance—but it moves us gently, persistently, in that direction.

I began my research by investigating the everyday embodied violence of racial, spatial, technified policing—what I refer to as bio-spatial policing (Kaufman 2016)—that is often left out of sensationalized media and dominant scholarly discourse. To do so, I conducted two years of simultaneous ethnographic fieldwork with children and police in the relatively generalizable mid-sized, Middle American city of Cincinnati, OH. I chose to live and base my fieldwork in a neighborhood I will call Coalrain, because it is central, representative of the city demographics: primarily Black and White, which was helpful in studying the specific anti-black racism of policing. And it housed a daily afterschool program for children in Coalrain and surrounding neighborhood living at or below the poverty line, which agreed to host my research.

Before recruiting participants, I spent three months volunteering at the program tutoring, serving meals, playing; all of which I continued to do throughout and after the research process. This helped build rapport and trust. Open to children of any race and gender, ages five to 15, I recruited 30 child-participants, and conducted 64 semi-structured drawing-and-talking interviews and 10 focus groups. I also did participant observation at the afterschool program and summer camp run by the same organization, as well as in children's spaces in Coalrain and surrounding neighborhoods including playgrounds and libraries.

To research police, I requested public records requests to obtain body-cam data and audio from police calls for service and attended police recruitment events and

graduated from the six-week Citizens Police Academy. I interviewed an officer, a lieutenant, and a crime analyst, and joined an officer for an 11-hour shift and visited the juvenile detention center. Monthly neighborhood community council meetings were held at the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD)'s Youth Services Unit and each meeting began with a report from the Neighborhood Liaison Officer. I also joined the American Society of Evidence Based Policing and attended two annual meetings, four workshops, and two social events. This lent a further inside perspective and making connections with police interested in what Gilmore calls 'non-reformist reforms' that actually shrink the carceral system.

Although I set out to study policing, pervasive surveillance kept coming to the fore during my fieldwork. And yet, there were barriers to researching the surveillance of children. Much surveillance of children took place behind heavily securitized public-school doors. My requests to interview or even email with school staff were denied. Instead, I walked routes my participants would take to their school bus stops and around their schools and neighborhoods, noting the presence of visible surveillance cameras. I scanned Cincinnati Public School (CPS) board meeting minutes, budgets, and job postings looking for evidence of securitization. And when my own child was old enough to register for public school, I asked many of my research questions under the guise of a concerned parent. Some of them were answered.

Researching the three topics above was an iterative and integrated process. While children's experiences are the focus of this paper, their refusals to policing and surveillance cannot be understood without surveying this securitization, which is where the paper begins. After providing this background, I introduce two guiding theoretical

frameworks. First, I survey children's studies, anthropology, and legal sociology to assert the importance of researching with children. Second, I introduce a concept I refer to as *refusal* of securitizing regimes. Guided by an abolitionist framework, refusal encompasses Cindi Katz's 'three R's' of resilience, reworking, and resistance.

The remainder of the paper will cover the evolution from the fear-based narrative to a framing of my findings that documents both fear and nonchalant, even subconscious resistance to securitizing regimes. Constellations will be the guiding concept through this material. Constellations appear in this paper first as a metaphor to describe networks of surveillance and police in children's lives. Later they emerge as networks of alternatives to policing. This view is informed by the way Jack Gieseck visualizes the embodied paths urban queers draw among fragmented places, while for Leanne Betahsosome Simpson, constellations are about connecting places *and* communities of co-resistors to state violence. I share how these queer and indigenous theories prompted new ways of viewing my data, asking what a theory of constellations can do for the stories and images that have been shared with me. The paper concludes with a call to recognize without romanticizing the way children imagine otherwise. Like resilience, recognition is only a starting point that helps lay the groundwork for the worlds children envision.

### **Background: Policing and Surveillance of Cincinnati Children**

For four days in April 2001, Cincinnati saw the second largest uprisings in the country after Los Angeles in 1992. Most broadly, they were a reaction to racial injustice, gentrification, unemployment among African Americans after the loss of manufacturing jobs, and disinvestment in both the neighborhoods they were consolidated in and in youth

programming. The catalyst was the police killing of Thomas, the 15th black man killed by the CPD in six years, and the fifth since 2000, during which time no white suspects had been killed and no officers had been convicted of a crime. The city's refusal to reveal the results of the investigation escalated the protests which culminated in police firing beanbags, rubber bullets, and teargas into crowds injuring at least two children, and arresting roughly 800 civilians for violating the temporary 8:00 PM curfew.

In response to the uprisings, the city instituted the Collaborative Agreement with the ACLU, the Cincinnati Black United Front, the city and the police union, to address police-community relations, and have held periodic 'refreshes' to the agreement. A Memorandum of Understanding signed with the U.S. Department of Justice mandated



Figure 1: Photos of ride-along with CPD

reforms and oversight, including a federal monitor for six years. Reforms included a Citizens Complaint Authority to review allegations of excessive force, and officer training on low-light conditions and identifying mental health conditions in suspects. Technology-driven reforms included equipping patrol cars with laptops for accessing criminal records (see figure 1); updating tasers after police beat a Black man to death



with their batons; outfitting the entire force with new dashboard cameras and body-worn cameras (henceforth dash- and body-cams); and nominally mandating their use (Predergrast 2011).

Yet even in the 2020s, allegations of racism persist. Two officers were suspended in two months for using racial slurs; one tased an 11-year-old Black girl whom he suspected of stealing some candy from a grocery store; and another tased a 14-year-old Black boy who was running from them, causing him to fall and break his collar bone and cease playing all of his team sports because of residual pain and PTSD. During the racial justice uprisings of June 2020, Cincinnati once again implemented an 8:00 PM curfew, at which point the city busses switched from providing voluntary to coercive mobility as they were used to transport curfew-violators to the Hamilton County Justice Center. In one night, police arrested roughly 100 civilians on charges relating to curfew violations (labeled alternately misconduct at an emergency, failure to disperse, disorderly conduct and obstruction of official business) (McKenzie and Horn 2020). One estimate showed 307 arrests in one night, most of which related to the curfew. As the justice center was not equipped to intake so many at once, over 100 were held overnight in an outdoor enclosure, and some claimed they were denied water for 10 hours, left with their wrists zip-tied for 12 hours (Suro 2020). Meanwhile, an officer on the steps of city hall was also seen giving a hand symbol that was been added to Anti-Defamation League's Hate Symbol Database in 2019 as signifying "white power."

In my participant observation with police, I found a culture in which civilian privacy and rights were treated flippantly. One morning the sergeant in charge of the first shift opened the roll call meeting with the announcement that "Today is national indij...

indij... whatever that word is, Indians Day." In prepping his officers for an upcoming parade, he complained that the event invited "too many bums. Or," he said with a laugh, "*homeless people*, whatever the *politically correct* term is these days." Dutiful chuckles spat out across the room. Humorless jokes were the conduit for sexism as well. At a police recruitment event, male sergeants dominated the discussion after an audience member asked about sexism within the force. Finally, a black female officer interjected, "Sarge, I'm just gonna start speaking up out loud, my hand has been up—" before the White male sergeant cut her off to joke that he couldn't see her behind the larger officers. The officer whose small stature was now the butt of a joke narrowed her eyes and smiled while the chuckles subsided.

Discrimination also played out in ways that well-meaning officers seemed oblivious to. A sergeant leading a class at the Citizens Police Academy (CPA) told a story about a heroic female officer who was paralyzed in combat. Yet to drive home the injustice of her fate, he described her as "the cutest little girl you ever saw, if you had a little brother you'd want him to date her." The White male president of Cincinnati's Police Fraternal Organization, Daniel Hils, is consistently more blatant in his masculinist White supremacist views. Of a Black female superior, he said, "[She] was able to manage working her way up and became a lieutenant only because she will kick, scream, bitch and yell it was race, sexism, or whatever," and encouraged officers under her command to record her with their bodycams, which is against CPD policy (in Curnette 2017 n.p.). Everyday sexism floated more readily to the surface than racism, but its undercurrents were everywhere. In a CPA weapons demonstration, a black female officer (in a full body bullet-proof suit) played a deranged woman with a knife. A higher-ranking white male

sergeant tased then shot her until she fell to the ground. The most jarring part of the display was its aftermath; while the sergeant lectured us on the use of force continuum, the officer raised herself to hands and knees behind him to clean up the taser barbs of her own theatrical murder.

Across police environments, racist, sexist jokes, comments, casting choices, and hand-gestures abounded. So too did jokes and derisive comments about civilian privacy and rights. These pervaded the physical police space I spent time in: district offices, squad cars, crime scenes, and the training academy. They were reported frequently in mainstream media. And they were rampant in the virtual space of police's own social media accounts to which they post with apparent impunity. For instance, Hils's Facebook page is full of racist posts which incite racist comments that proliferate unchecked. Posting a video of a Juneteenth celebration in which Black women twerked on an ambulance, seemingly of the violence the ambulance was responding to, Hils wrote, "Explain this please!" In response, other police and members of the Facebook group "Support the Blue in Cincy" called the women "Animals," "Savages," "Trash," and evidence of "the fall of western civilization," and described the ways that they would have killed the women had they been at the scene. In response to a "Support the Blue in Cincy" post about a slain officer, group members called for the death of anyone who kills an officer. Referencing the death penalty for those suspected of killing officers, presumably without due process first, one Cincinnati police-officer-turned-security-guard and member of "Support the Blue" responded "Needle and next. Should be like the deli, serving number 243, next" (Posted 6/26/2021). The Collaborative Agreement reforms are frequent targets as well, particularly the CCA which is depicted as "micromanaging" and

“preventing proactive policing” thus leading to more violence and death. It is inevitable that such a hierarchy and culture within the force would play out in police interactions with civilians. What is notable, then, is not simply that police-community relations have not significantly improved, but that they have failed to improve after decades of reforms and technological interventions.

To provide a brief background on the landscape of policing and surveillance for socio-economically marginalized children in Cincinnati, in addition to the ‘indirect’ or collective impacts, there are several child-oriented police programs. These comprise Summer Cadets, Police Explorers, Children in Trauma Intervention Camp, Reading with a Cop (Right to Read program), and informal yet state-sanctioned police interactions with children such as bicycle patrols riding past playgrounds and handing out stickers and candy. According to my participants whose perceptions of police were powerfully swayed by these measures, police also hand out candy and gifts in public schools, and visit with McGruff the crime fighting dog. School-specific policing comprises fifteen School Resource Officers who rotate through the public school system with 90 security assistants. According to a 2021 job post by CPS, a security assistant “Patrols and supervises hallways, restrooms, entranceways, and other areas...Circulates among visitors, patrons, or employees to preserve order and protect property,” transports “school rule offenders to school authorities,” and “evict[s] violators from premises.” These roles hinge on mobility and presence; patrol, supervise, transport, circulate, evict. The assistants also “assist” “law enforcement officers as directed by the principal” including “in stopping disturbances and undue distractions in the school and on school grounds.” They are also authorized in “using force when necessary” (lensa.com 2021).

Digital surveillance is widespread in public schools, though rarely analyzed in children's geographies (even those on digital technologies), or digital geographies (even those on surveillance). Neither Lydia Plowman's (2015) article on "Digital technologies and children's everyday lives" nor the *Children's Geography* (2016) editorial on digital practices in children's geographies mention school surveillance, surveillance cameras of any kind, or police. Notable exceptions include Nicole Nguyen's work on homeland security schools (2015; 2017; 2018), Katz's work on both private surveillance and public policing of children (2004; 2008; 2016; Donovan and Katz 2009), and Researchers for Fair Policing, co-directed by geographer Caitlin Cahill (Stoudt et al n.d.). One reason for this absence could be the added challenges, from obtaining IRB approval to parental consent and children's assent, of researching with children, exacerbated when attempting to research within public institutions. I based my research at a non-profit afterschool program in part because the public library and public schools made clear that they would not allow me to recruit children in their spaces, despite having obtained IRB approval. While I conducted participant observation in libraries, I found no legal way to breach the doors of the public schools. Thus my knowledge of the surveillance within is currently limited to participants' accounts, surveys of board meeting minutes, budgets, and restrained emails from CPS staff—who did not write back for the first two years of my research, but were slightly more forthcoming when I contacted them with questions about my own child's future enrollment.

CPS board meeting minutes and a budget revealed contracts with Beacon Technology for CCTV cameras, though it is unclear how many, which type, or in which schools. The company aims to become "the premier security team in the region,"

providing “advanced security solutions for healthcare, education, and commercial facilities.” This lack of focus on education might explain the company’s claim to provide security solutions “that protect your assets, business, and employees,” with no mention of students. That is, though education *facilities* are listed among their sites of security solutions, those within are not listed as a priority for protection. Students posited a similar list of priorities for the cameras as I will discuss, and reported them throughout school grounds, just as this Beacon advertises. In fact, my participants could not remember a time before school surveillance, alleging that they were in preschool classrooms too.

In the afterschool program I volunteered at and based my fieldwork with children, there were cameras in every room. In the office where I conducted some interviews, a monitor affixed to the wall and positioned to be viewed from the single shared desk played the live footage. I live in an apartment building several blocks away and walk past three cameras to reach my apartment door, whose footage is shared to police after each break in. Public and private apartment complexes throughout the city have cameras inside and out. In 2008 the city purchased a Genetec Omnicast video surveillance system that now manages over 200 cameras in Cincinnati, which provide live video to the CPD’s Real Time Crime Center (RTCC). The city also partners with private spaces who manage their own cameras, and in 2020, partnered with Amazon’s surveillance company Ring to access the company’s Neighbors app to which users post video footage. Thus, children in Cincinnati are used to being surveilled and policed in some fashion across time and space, public and private spheres, and from a variety of actors and technologies. Such securitization is so prevalent that child-participants often appeared largely desensitized,

articulating it as a (often annoying) fact of life, rather than a source of fear, anger, *or* protection.

### **Why Research with Children**

While my research engaged both police and civilians, I center children's experiences for three reasons. First, talking with young children also addresses everyday and sometimes mundane embodied effects of policing, even for those not yet directly caught up in the criminal justice system. While sensational media addresses police violence against children, and in a different register, youth research is a growing field, there remains a lack of research on children's everyday lives from their perspective (Cahill 2007). I included children as young as five precisely because they were less likely to have been directly targeted by police, thus their experiences reveal more about the everyday impacts of policing than do those of youth who have had had direct contact. This paper examines how policing impacts children in 'indirect' ways—though a better framing might be collective trauma—through family members in jail, media exposure, neighborhood police presence, presence in schools, how parents and teachers talk about them. In these ways, policing, including surveillance, pervaded children's everyday life, following them into homes, dreams, games, and imaginations.

Second, researching *with* children living in targeted areas *about* policing will add new voices to both children's and policing geographies, as well as policy and activist realms. Despite a relatively recent commitment in geography to studying childhood and youth, "Children's voices continue to be excluded from research within political geography" (Marshall 2013: 23). In a discipline that has historically paid relatively less

attention to policing than adjacent fields (see Kaufman 2020 for an overview of this widespread claim), there is indeed a lack of research on children’s experiences of police. And just as geographers have claimed that police are “worthy of studying in their own right,” so too are children “agential social actors worthy of study in their own right” (Marshall 2013: 23).

Granted, critical police scholars have scorned the trend of focusing on those impacted by policing, rather than studying the institution of police itself and the ways police demarcate dangerous people and places (Muñiz 2015). Sarah Brayne (2020) posits that the relative ease of accessing oppressed populations compared to police influences the decision. Yet Brayne’s theory that ease of access influences scholarly focus applies not only to police, but to children, who are in an IRB-protected category. Not only can obtaining IRB approval to work with children dissuade a researcher, but approval is only the starting point for a complicated process of being approved by a research site and gaining parental consent, children’s assent, and children’s trust. This may partially explain the relatively greater numbers of studies with youth (compared to young children), such as Caitlin Cahill’s work (2007) and that of the Researchers for Fair Policing which she co-directs.

Among studies with younger children and technology, the focus tends towards middle-income children’s often voluntary interactions with technology (see Bond 2004; Donovan and Katz 2009; Plowman 2016; Ergler et al. 2016; Wilson 2016), though Katz (2001) also discusses the securitization of wealthier White children in relation to the question of what—or whom—they are being secured against. As Katz (2001: 51) writes, while ‘certain children’s’ well-being is fetishized, poor and BIPOC children are exposed



“homelessness, poor schools, lack of health care, and unsafe and understimulating public environments,” *all* of which my participants experienced. These conditions “not only go largely unremarked but are also largely made invisible by the resolutely narrow focus of hypervigilance, as if individual issues of children’s safety are the only ones that matter” (ibid). For this reason as well, my research intervenes in these ‘unremarked’ issues of ‘other’ children’s well-being, aiming to do so as much as possible on my participants own terms. In sum, socio-economically marginalized children, many of whom are BIPOC and some of whom are queer, trans, or gender non-conforming, are at the intersections of multiple oppressions, and there is room in children’s, digital, and political geography for their concerns to be heard. Likewise, their voices are rarely heard in policy or organizing realms; there is some discourse about them but less *by* them despite youth organizing efforts.

The third reason for focusing on children in this police research is that they are a powerful political category, as political actors and symbols (Tilton 2010). I aim to capitalize on the power of both. I follow trends in children’s geographies that increasingly consider children’s own views and political agency (Katz 2004, 2008; Pain 2008; Tilton 2010; Kallio and Hakli 2011), particularly their creativity, resilience, and resistance (Bosco 2010; Milstein 2010; Marshall 2014, 2015; Nguyen 2015; 2016). Doing participatory research *with* children as a political commitment not merely a set of techniques (Cahill 2007) is a critical step towards recognizing children’s agency in political change and thus being able to support it.

In contrast to children’s political power, their symbolic power is often used against them. Police project their anxieties onto poor BIPOC children, which plays out

through both “the sharp end of power” (Dixon and Marston 2011) and the ‘softer side of policing’ (Correia and Wall 2018). The latter includes the almost frenzied plethora of youth-specific-programming, candy-tossing, basketball-playing, and mascot-visiting mentioned above. The former includes police’s frequent overestimation of Black children’s age and racialized assumptions of innocence. An *American Psychological Association* (APA) study with police and civilians found that both overestimated Black boys’ age in felony situations by over 4 years, with police being farther off than the general public, and both groups judged Black boys less innocent than White or unspecified children when they were 10 or older (Bump 2014).



Figure 2: Photo of a ride-along with CPD

This scholarship resonated with my own participant observation with civilians and police.

New York City piloted the nation’s first conditional cash transfer—which are behavior modifying conditional welfare programs—and geared it towards poor BIPOC children and parents. A Black father I interviewed in Brooklyn posited that the

program, which incentivized school attendance, was located in high-crime neighborhoods “because everybody blames it on the kids.” While I accompanied an officer on his shift, he arrested two Black boys for stealing a White woman’s wallet left unattended on a gas station table. Officers separated the boys and three officers assisted a compliant child into the back of our patrol SUV, one with hand-on-gun (see figure 2). The boy refused to tell the officer his age. The arresting officers, both White and Black men, conferred and assessed the boys to be about 17. They told the boys that if they did not reveal their ages,

they would be booked in an adult jail. After several hours parked at the gas station in question and then outside juvenile detention center, during which the boy alternated between silence, kicking the dividing wall, and shouting to open the door, he was found to be 13. This was the permission the officer needed to drive through the double metal doors into the youth detention center and book the handcuffed child into a cell where he awaited his fate alone (see figure 3). I will note that this White officer took no pleasure in making the arrest, which extended his shift by an hour not counting the mountains of paperwork he would complete afterwards. As an individual, he treated each suspect we encountered in that 11-hour shift with as much respect as was possible given his role. He was awkward and apologetic with the boy, offering him ways to defend himself which the boy refused. Nonetheless, he overestimated his suspect's age by three years, and, grudgingly, would have booked him into an adult detention center had his age not been discovered.

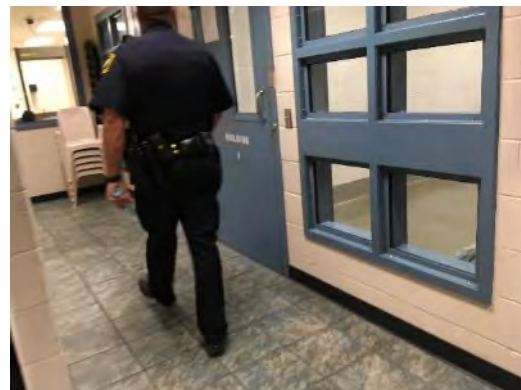


Figure 3: Photo of ride-along with CPD

While police frequently mis-age Black children, it is not a question of individual mean-spirited police, but a wider societal and institutional problem relating to the symbolic societal construction of the ‘unchildlike child’ (Brown 2011; Tilton 2010). This racialized and classed child is cast out of the protected category in policing and court proceedings (Aitken 2001). Society’s political anxieties are “projected onto their bodies and they get blamed for emergent social problems,” particularly “poor, working class, young people of color, whose challenges in achieving ‘success’ implicitly expose the

failures of our society” (Cahill 2007: 297; see also Katz 2008). Yet most writing on the unchildlike child focuses on youth and not younger children, just as the APA study found that when Black boys turn 10, their innocence is misjudged by police and civilians.

If the above examples are evidence of childhood’s symbolic power as a potential means of reclaiming childhood’s symbolic power, there is nonetheless one caveat. Tilton writes of “reclaiming childhood *for* Black children” (2010: 143, emphasis added); this paper veers more towards recognition of BIPOC and low-income children reclaiming childhood for themselves. Part of the power in this reclamation is politically strategic; within contemporary U.S. frameworks of childhood, even with their raced, gendered, classed differences, it becomes more difficult to construct *younger* children as ‘unchildlike.’ Thus, while police injustices against Black youth and adults are met with a mix of public outcry and victim-blaming justification, the proportion of outcry to justification may shift when young children’s experiences are at the fore, and when all participants’ child-ness is emphasized. Furthermore, while policing’s racialized harms are inherent to the institution (Browne 2015; Vitale 2017; Corriea and Wall 2018; Ritchie 2017; Kaba 2014), it is possible that not all harms to young children are intentional or understood by police. I am not proposing reform over abolition. However, there could be short term non-reformist improvements to policing on the path towards a more abolitionist vision of safety not predicated on the threat of state violence.

### **Abolition and the Four R’s**

Since the racial justice movement of 2020, it has become widely understood what abolitionist geographers and activists have long argued: that racism is part of the fabric of

policing and that reforms had been around as long as policing and tended to funnel more money, power, bodies back into the system they were purportedly designed to reform (Gilmore 2002; Gilmore and Gilmore 2008; Kaba 2014; Ritchie 2017). I knew that to do abolitionist scholarship meant being accountable to my participants, and that abolitionist methods had to be grounded in their material experiences. One such method, accompaniment, “signifies a commitment to actively engaging, however clumsily, with racism’s contradictions in the service of its abolition” (Mei-Sing 2019: 9) As a White woman from a middle-income background researching with low-income White and BIPOC children, I was keen to avoid the identity inherent to ‘allyship’ “that may unwittingly reify the sociospatial partitions that the term endeavours to undo” (ibid: 2). In contrast, accompaniment “offers an active, relational verb, an action that one can partake” (ibid). These were the tenets of abolition with which I began.

Yet abolition is hardly a singular framework. Although there are complexities within the categories and both share the goal of a world entirely without police, they differ in their focus on that which must be abolished vs. that which must replace it. The former often centers fear or and anger at police, both legitimate and important feelings to acknowledge. The latter group, though, moves beyond this acknowledgement and invites both visions and strategies towards a better future. For Tyler Wall and David Corriea in *Police: A Field Guide*, abolition is about deconstructing justificatory narratives that allow much of society to take for granted that we need police. It is defined by what must be overcome: “the police and prison industrial complex, that vast overlapping set of institutions that shape politics and society through the constant expansion of jails, prisons, parole, and police. “The only way to improve police,” they write, “is to abolish

it.” But many feminist abolitionist geographers envision abolition more expansively—in addition to abolishing slavery, prisons, and police, for Mei-Singh (drawing from Ruth Wilson Gilmore) abolition is “also about worldmaking towards the total transformation of socio-environmental relations... predicated on dynamic, expansive practices of interdependence” (Mei-Singh 2020).

These tensions within police abolition parallel children’s experiences of securitizing regimes which initially seemed to fit into, but ultimately resisted, a framework centering children’s fear. By securitizing regimes I refer not only to the concrete processes of securitization such as CCTV cameras or school police, but also to totalizing narratives that force children into a binary of either criminal or victim, dangerous or endangered. In other words, children resist not only policing and surveillance, but also these restrictive narratives. I use the verb ‘resist’ because its definition of withstanding an action or effect often describes children’s reported and observed behaviors. Yet withstanding is not ‘resistance,’ a term so fetishized and overused that it loses meaning (Katz 2004). Similarly, David Marshall cautions us against “over-romanticiz[ing] the revolutionary character of children’s political agency, downplaying the extent to which children are already enrolled, however imperfectly and incompletely, within social hierarchies” (2014: 25). In other words, the children in my study withstood state oppression but they neither conceived of their behaviors as resistance nor did they necessarily have the political agency resistance requires.

In contrast to Foucauldian notions of a ubiquitous “plurality of resistances” (1976: 7), Katz’s sharpening of the term highlights crucial differences among acts labeled as ‘resistance.’ Furthermore as I felt in my research, it Katz’s formulation of the ‘three R’s’

provided labels more true to children’s actual intents (or lack thereof), despite my desire to find resistance “present everywhere in the power network” (Foucault 1976: 96). Thus, in this paper, “resistance requires oppositional consciousness to confront “conditions of oppression and exploitation at various scales” (Katz 2004: 251). There are many instances of children’s resistance to the kinds of surveillance and policing I found; a student sued her school for requiring students to wear RFID tags, made gummy fingers to touch on fingerprint scanners and register their absent friends and published an internet guide so other students could as well (Nguyen 2015). Cincinnati public school students, members of the Young Activists Coalition, engaged in visible resistance by organizing protests after data showed SROs to disproportionately discipline Black students (Sharber 2021). Yet most children in my study lacked this oppositional consciousness.

Additionally, the actors of state securitization whom children resisted, such as SROs, police, of child protective services, were rarely aware of my participants’ potentially-resistant actions or thoughts. Rather than resistance, then, children’s everyday practices and imaginings tended towards *resilience*—fraught and contradictory negotiations of the oppressions of everyday life (Katz 2004: 244-247). Crucially, this understanding of resilience recognizes its limits and does not promote resilience as a solution. It does not play into the resilience-discourse many have critiqued for its promotion of individualized, technocratic solutions and individual adaptation over structural change (Bonds 2018; see also MacKinnon and Derickson 2013).

Thus, while not centering the term due to its problematic connotations, it is useful here particularly in its relation to, and distinction from, the other R’s. The three R’s “work off of and in response to each other,” resilience merging with *reworking*—

practices that enable more workable lives—and conscious resistance (ibid: 241). Introducing a fourth ‘R,’ *Refusals* of securitizing regimes encompass this spectrum, recognizing the differences within and acknowledging that small acts of resilience can pave the way for resistance when they are treated as starting and not end points (Katz 2004: 242). Easing us away from the romance with resistance (Katz 2004), the metaphor of constellations highlights an endless combination of practices, alternatives, and scales of refusal. Furthermore, constellations can help visualize *both* oppressive policing and surveillance networks as well as alternative networks of safety children envision and build.

### **Constellations of Surveillance and Policing**

I did not immediately conceive of police power as a constellation, yet after



Figure 4: Cody drawing

identifying constellations of surveillance, it became clear that children experienced policing in similar networks of power and technology spanning space and time. I will begin this section with surveillance, then policing, and conclude with children’s fears where the two intersect. Constellations are an apt metaphor for the surveillant technology following children; it appears as multiple scattered points, and often even looks like tiny stars: that white dot of light beaming from a recording screen, the

individual starlike bulbs glowing within a camera, or the round lens of cameras strewn across school hallways, playgrounds, afterschool programs, and busses. Like a



constellation, these are not simply separate points, but are linked by lines of data. These lines have the potential to track children’s movement, connecting the places they visit across time, yet even when the cameras are not on, or one is not networked with the next, they nonetheless create a consistent *experience* of being surveilled across space and time. Specifically, the experience is one of fear of punishment, lack of protection, and an invasion of privacy.

A six-year-old Black boy, Cody<sup>2</sup>, described the cameras as circles that were “everywhere,” a claim he asserted three times in one interview. When I encouraged him to tell me where specifically he listed the hallway, lunchroom, and on the ceiling of his classroom. Far from protection, he viewed their purpose as to “let you know if you’re making bad choices... if you’re making bad choices, you have to sit in the time out chair.” Figure 4 shows his



Figure 5: Cardi drawing

illustration of the ubiquitous round cameras. In figure 5, an eight-year-old Black girl who chose the alias Cardi B<sup>3</sup> has drawn a map of her school in pink marker. Each square represents a classroom, and the circles within are cameras. She drew four in her little brother’s kindergarten classroom alone. Her two other younger brothers attended the school as well, and her drawing was in part informed by the stories they told. While Cardi did not travel among the classrooms and thus the cameras in this drawing do not appear

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<sup>2</sup> All names are pseudonyms. Participants provided lists of preferred ‘aliases’ and I chose from those and edited them slightly so as not to be identifiable lest children had shared those alter-ego names before.

<sup>3</sup> I am not concerned that this participant’s identity will be revealed by her choice of alias as during the study period, Cardi B was a popular pseudonym choice, and this one happened to be the first to choose it, and agreed to Cardi for short.



Figure 6: Martel drawing

to track her movement, what the cameras connect are the experiences of the four siblings attending this school. Cardi's younger brother Martel drew his kindergarten classroom in figure 6. While several participants eight and older drew evidence of securitization without being prompted, this six-year-old began with the building's outline. He added the

black rectangle with the circle near the top when I asked whether there were any cameras in the school, stating that there was one in his classroom. When I asked how he felt about that, he wrote "angrey" and added verbally, "at being watched." He drew himself in the middle and the two heads represent the school's two security guards.

Several children drew multiple cameras in their school busses and as with other parts of the school, articulated the cameras' purpose as not to protect the children from external dangers, but in Sylvie, a five-year-old Latina girl's words, "to see if anybody be bad." Cardi describe their purpose as, "to see if anybody get into a fight." If so, she said, "they catch the person and call the police!" Dierdre, an eight-year-old white girl, had the most positive interpretation

of the bus cameras: "If the big kids are being mean to us little kids, on the bus, we can tell the principals and then they'll look at the cameras."

While all the children

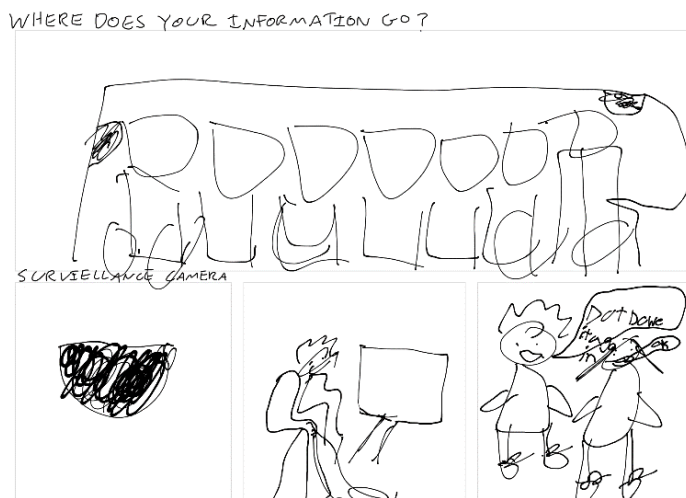


Figure 7: Dierdre tablet drawing

attended public school, Dierdre was among a handful who went to a Montessori charter school. The school's discipline policies and presence of SROs combined with the child's race may explain the difference in the repercussions children reported. Dierdre drew the principal calling an older girl into his office and saying simply, "Don't do it again [dot dow it again]" and the child saying "OK" (see figure 7). One area for further research would be a comparative study between children's experiences of surveillance and policing in low-income and majority BIPOC schools vs. wealthier and whiter schools. My study makes no such comparisons—all participants were low-income—and their experiences of surveillance did not differ significantly. Even Dierdre said later that cameras were "basically all over the school. They're outside, inside, like when we're playing at recess we'll have them recording, in case there's somebody bullying somebody else." Though on the bus she had identified as a "littler kid" seeking protection from bullies, when I asked how she felt around the cameras at recess, she identified with those the cameras are in place to punish. "If I'm doing something bad, and I look at the camera, I'll probably be scared." "What if you're not doing anything wrong," I asked, "but you know the cameras are watching you?" Dierdre drew a smiling face and I asked how she felt in that picture. "Happy," she replied, "that I'm not doing anything wrong." Then she asked, "How do you draw a scared face?" (see figure 8).

Despite Dierdre’s claim that the bus cameras were in place to catch bullies, there was an element of inefficacy in her account. According to her, the cameras did not

*prevent* bullying, and when I asked how she felt around them, her answers ranged from fear of—to relief at avoiding—punishment. For other students who drew cameras in their schools, these cameras

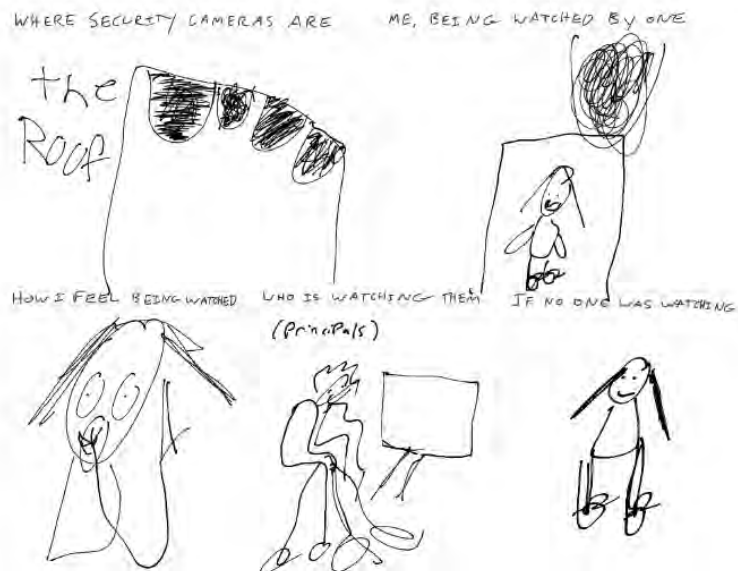


Figure 8: Dierdre tablet drawing

were absent from their discussion of protection or justice. Ramírez was a quiet, often sullen, but deeply caring nine-year-old Black boy, who was suspended for two weeks at the time of the interview quoted here. The cause of his suspension was an older boy who tried to instigate a fight between Ramírez and a girl, neither of whom wanted to fight.

“Then the guy, he punched me first, so, my friend came over there, he was like, ‘why you punching him’, and he was like, ‘because, the girl made me,’ and I was like, then my friend punched him, and I punched the guy then when I punched him and we both got [suspended.]” Nothing happened to the instigator of the fight, “‘cause they didn’t catch him.” Ramírez expressed neither surprise nor anger at this fact; it was as if he never expected surveillance to work in his favor.

For all of Cardi, Dierdre, and Sylvie’s beliefs that the cameras were there to catch bullies, here they failed to do so, with massive ramifications for children like Ramírez.

He reported being lonely without his siblings who all went to the same school and was sleeping in his aunt's car because he had to leave the house early to go to work. Some children connected the cameras to the prevention of active shooters, but none could imagine how they would work to prevent a shooting. Ramírez came the closest, saying that the armed SRO would hide behind a table until the principal said, "The shooter's on level four," at which point the security guard would "move quietly." We might surmise that in this story, the principal knew of the shooter's location from video footage, but Ramírez did not make this connection explicit. His story of the SRO's role did not go any further before he returned to what the students had been instructed to do. "The girls go by the cubbies, and they get their binders, and the boys get like these boxes, hard boxes, plastic ones and pencils," which they throw at any shooters who intrude. In an interview with two nine-year-old girls, neither mentioned cameras in the context of lockdown drills. "I was under the table last time," mused Cardi; "We go at separate places but they was telling us where to go at *this* time." "Do y'all stay in y'all classroom?" asked Luna nonchalantly, "with the doors locked and the shades down?" Instead of relying on cameras, all participants who mentioned lockdowns had been trained through recurring elaborate drills.

In addition to the cameras' threat of punishment and failure to protect, they invade

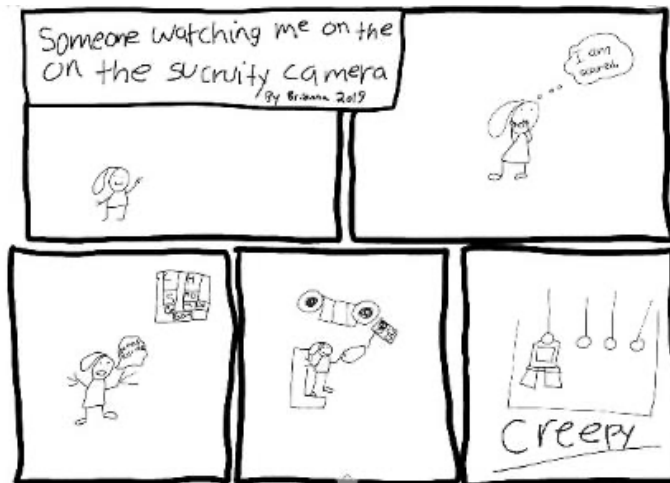


Figure 9: Luna tablet drawing

or at least alter children's sense of privacy. Cardi said that she used to dance when she was alone in the hallways of her school before cameras were installed. She reported that the cameras were a topic of conversation among her friends: "We talk about how the

cameras look at us when we be doin' our dances." Fox, an 11-year-old biracial girl, claimed not to mind the cameras so much except when they were in the bathrooms "which is creepy" (see figure 9 and 10 for two children's drawings of "creepy" surveillance). When I asked a staff member of her school about the claim, she said only, "We do have cameras but they are not very obvious to students. They are a good safety feature to have to keep us all safe" (personal correspondence 2021). What Fox described could have be a smoke detector. The ubiquity of cameras in children's lives made it possible for her to imagine such a thing as bathroom cameras, and that became part of her experience of being surveilled. Likewise, Cardi's assumption that surveillance footage would lead to police response, and Dierdre's assumption that the principal was the only person watching surveillance footage, impacted their experience of the cameras. Just as the stars may no longer exist by the time their light reaches our eyes, the vision or stars or round lenses can "excite the most profound and varied of feelings, can change, dispel, or

deepen our moods” (Smith et al. 2009). Thus, in astronomy and surveillance both, constellations are not only conglomerations of actual stars and cameras but equally a map of experience and perception.

As with surveillance, after children bring up police on their own, I asked follow-up questions, including what weapons they carry. Children draw and identify guns, tasers, nightsticks, dogs, handcuffs, and flashlights—all of which police do have. Notably even these last three are on their list of ‘weapons,’ for my participants recognized their intent and ability to harm. Though I had asked only what weapons police carried, not what they were for, 12-year-old Dyamond (who is Black) said, “Sometimes they use their gun, and sometimes the knife, taser, and sometimes the dog just chase the person down.” Despite visits from McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog, children knew that “police weaponize the dog and literally animalize police violence” (Correia and Wall 2018: 27). This understanding of the organized violence of the police dog explains the frequent fear of them that children brought up.

Participants were equally savvy about police flashlights. When I asked 11-year-old Londyn (who is White) why she had listed flashlights as a weapon, she answered, “because you could hit ’em with it!” as she swung her arms to illustrate her point. Echoing children’s explanations, Correia and Wall (2018: 58) write, “The flashlight doubles as a multi-use police weapon, not merely an ad hoc, impromptu baton



Figure 10: Fox drawing

but an organized component of police power.” It is used like a baton to beat civilians, as a “tactical strobe light...to psychologically disorient and visually confuse,” and some flashlights double as Taser stun guns. A 12-year-old White girl, Clea, accurately added another use: “If they’re in a dark room situation, if they actually put the light over the gun to hold the gun so it’s like, you don’t know if someone comes so they hold it like this, so it’s like a two-job thing.” Wall and Correia (ibid: 58) label this use—helping officers illuminate their targets—the clearest evidence of “the organized nature of the flashlight as weapon.”

Another item not conventionally considered a ‘weapon’ was the “the machine where they check your ID and see who you are so they can take you to jail.” Through probable cause, police have discretion to stop and demand identification without a warrant *for the purposes of checking for outstanding warrants*. Finding one authorizes police to search someone they had no initial reason to suspect, and even without an outstanding warrant, many jurisdictions require all stops to be recorded, thus ensuring that the identity of the person stopped is now on record with the police, which will appear in any future stops (Correia and Wall 2018: 221). While ID scanners are not included in Correia and Wall’s encyclopedia of weaponology, these participants astutely recognized the violence set in motion by the device: the initial intrusion of the search followed by coercive and then contained mobilities. For Cody, the scanner’s hypothetical violence would not only be enacted on the person stopped but on those left behind in their absence. He told me that his mother had been stopped by police and that the next time she got a ticket she was going to jail. Unprompted, he continued, “and then nobody else is gonna be home with me. Nobody’s gonna open no pop, and nobody’s gonna take me to



my grandma house, and nobody gonna take me home.” He clarified that if his mother went to jail, he would be left alone with their two brown and white dogs, a scenario he had spent time worrying about before we talked (see figure 11 in which he has added his mother back in (top left) to the lonely drawing).



Figure 11: Cody drawing

Weapons children perceive police to carry that they generally do not include “a second taser,” “a lot of guns,” and “pepper spray but just the girl cops”—though the CPD is reissuing mace to all officers. Cardi drew “the thing that you throw and blows up;” while most officers do not carry explosives, SWAT teams use hand grenades and flash-

bangs. Fox’s drawing included a “big big big belt” carrying “a buncha buncha buncha different weapons, they’re knives, like, guns, and, stuff, stuff like that.” Cardi talked as she drew, “this is a knife, this is a gun, and this is... oh yeah, that’s the taser. This is the uh...the stick that hit the people.” I asked about the size of the knife she had drawn, and she replied, “they be having big ole knives... like to stab somebody if they doin’ something.” Perhaps influenced by his older sister’s answer, Martel, who had wandered in and been welcomed by Cardi began his drawing of police weapons with a knife as

well. Londyn answered, “Guns, tasers, knives, they have knives don’t they?” Most children thought police carried knives (see figure 12).



Figure 12: Research participant drawings

At the time, I assumed that the knives were figments of children’s imaginations, influenced by TV and video games. By conducting simultaneous ethnographic research with children and police, I was able to ground truth the claim and learned that knives are not officially issued. But after riding-out with an officer for nine hours and building rapport, he confirmed that “yeah, we almost all carry our own knives.” He claimed they were more for practical purposes than as a weapon, such as cutting zip ties—an allegation which does change how children perceive what they see in front of them. We can see constellations here too; any one weapon might seem insignificant, as would one single drawing of many weapons. But the multitude of weapons police carry as well as those children imagine, and the ubiquity of surveillance cameras, again both real and perceived, create an experience that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In sum, children did not seem particularly afraid of police or surveillance, both of which many of them could not remember a time without. As Taylor (2012: 225) found, students will emerge from schools “desensitized to, and expectant of, intense scrutiny and

objectification. They will have no experience or comprehension of a world without invasive surveillance for even the most mundane of activities” (p. 225). Yet where surveillance and policing converged, many children had misgivings. They saw dash- and bodycams as threatening because police could post their videos online for their own personal gain. Ramírez asked, “What if they put my video on their facebook?”

Figure 13 shows the bodycam docking station in Coalrain’s district office, where officers dock their cameras at the end of their shifts. From there, the data feeds into a network that officers can access from their own personal devices, outside the district office. This officer pictured told me that he did not know of specific



Figure 13: Photo of ride-along with CPD

examples in which police posted bodycam videos, but that the technology certainly enabled it. He agreed with civilians’ emerging concerns about privacy, though in a mocking way, because CPD had raised the same issues when they were resisting the adoption of bodycams and allegedly the same civilians were not concerned about privacy then. Further validating my child-participants’ fears, the officer added, “We go inside people’s homes with these things on. Sometimes people are naked. And now that’s floating around on the internet” (interview 2019). Thus, a central fear children expressed of policing related to being surveilled *by police*.

Working in the opposite direction towards the same convergence, children’s main anxiety around school cameras was that the footage would lead to punishment and ultimately police intervention as Cardi and Martel both alleged. I have discussed

constellations of surveillance and policing, argued that both are experienced as threatening, invasions of privacy, annoying, or ineffective, and argued that particular fears arise where the two converge. But my participatory visual research with children pushed the analysis beyond children’s discomfort, annoyance, and fear.

### Pointing to New Stars

Researching with young children leads to a great deal of each transcript that appears to be off topic. Below is one such excerpt I initially disregarded:

Me: Is that... could you tell me about your drawing?

R: Oh that’s my cat.

Me: Cool! Do you like cats?

R: No, I hate cats. No I lied. I do, I do like cats.

ME: What’s her name?

R: Tic Tac Toe. But she died 2 days before her birthday.

Me: if you could have any animal as a pet, what would it be?

R: A wolf named Alex.

It would have been possible to fit my findings into a fear and victim-based narrative if I had done interviews without the drawing component, or even assigned drawings as homework and analyzed them on my own. But by inviting children to draw and converse simultaneously and tell me what their drawings meant, a sort of ‘third space’ opened up “as art and inquiry, or image and word meet” (Leavy 2015: 245). In this third space, children directed the flow of interviews through the images they produced. They begin by



Figure 14: Research participant drawing

drawing whatever they want, and I let them tell me about these drawings first—family pets, video game characters, or a new way of writing their name—things that mattered to them. Later in the conversation I asked them to draw certain phenomena they brought up, such as police officers or a time they felt unsafe in public—but I always let participants redirect the conversation by continuing to draw whatever they chose.

The redirection happened often. Londyn had been identified to me by program staff as difficult, sassy, and disrespectful of authority, or as one of her friends told me, “She think she baaaad.” She was an active participant in our interviews, or I would have cut them short, but she rarely removed her signature scowl and incredulous eyebrow raises. After answering my question about why she had listed flashlights as weapons, Londyn’s face lit up as she said, “We was at school today, we did this one thing” and proceeded to describe a science class experiment in which they shone flashlights on wet CDs and illuminated rainbows. Initially this was an ethical consideration; drawing a pet instead of police might be their way of moving the conversation into safer territory. But I began to wonder whether children were also repeatedly insisting, if subconsciously, on their wholeness, their child-ness, in a world in which both were under attack.

It could seem a stretch to frame a drawing of a cat or a story about water on CDs as refusal of securitizing regimes. Again, the term using *regimes* rather than simply ‘securitization’ points to moments when children lacked the oppositional consciousness or ability to resist security measures themselves, yet simply refused to being defined by them. Such a refusal is hardly unique to this study; children from Howa to New York City have “resisted the identifications offered by the larger society by constructing identities outside the normative trajectory” (Katz 2004: 256). Aleut scholar Eve Tuck

uses the language of refusal in her participatory work with youth, declaring that “the time has come for our communities to refuse to be complicit in our further categorization as only damaged, as only broken” (2009: 422). While I label these subtle identity-asserting acts as casual refusals and not resistance, activist, public educator, and professor Ericka Hart notes the expectation that what Black people do for others “is more important than what we do for ourselves, for our own indulgence, frivolity, or for no other reason at all” (Hart 2021). In a social media series called “Black People Tell Black history with a segment on “Black people doing mundane things,” Hart reminds us that “Black queer and trans folks doing regular mundane things is a radical act” (Hart 2021). Thus, the casual refusals of securitizing regimes embodied in children’s mundane assertions of their identities beyond their oppression are worth recognition. But if constellations showed points of children’s oppression, how could these small refusals be framed?

Because the data gently resisted any totalizing fear-based narratives, I looked for alternate framings of constellations beyond their ability to depict networks of surveillance and police. Jack Giesecking’s *A Queer New York* describes the “lesbian-queer role in producing New York City by creating space otherwise in constellations as a political response to the limitations and constraints in the urban political economic conditions revealed by [his] research” (2020: xviii). A focus on limitations and constraints lent itself to my research that had uncovered children’s daily risks and anxieties which I did not want to leave behind in a new theorization. While Geisecking’s constellations are hopeful, they not only acknowledge but are born out constraints. These constraints require his participants “to innovate and produce space otherwise: like stars that come and go in the sky, contemporary urban lesbians and queers often create and rely on fragmented places

and fleeting experiences” (2020: 4). The fleeting nature of stars was crucial too in being able to analyze fleeting refusals or shifting alternative paths towards safety.

In a different register, though influential to Giesecking, are Simpson’s “Constellations of co-resistance” (2017) which are “visible to everyone all night and unreadable theory and imagery to the colonizer or those who aren’t embedded in grounded normativity.” Though as Smith et al. (2009) note, constellations have multiple origins, from the Greek Pleiades to the Navajo’s Dilyehe. In this sense, the problem of interpretation is not only one of colonizer and colonized—or researcher and subject—but anyone standing outside a culturally constructed set of stories and practices, attempting to appropriate their understandings. There are many ways to interpret from outside even when certain key identities are shared with participants. We might understand this simultaneous inside/outside status through Gillian Rose’s claim that the two are in “dynamic tension” creating a “paradoxical space” (1993: 140). Highlighting the ways constellations of meaning are not visible to outsiders and colonizers, Giesecking (2020: 99) shares how within a queer focus group, white participants were unaware of key sites in BIPOC participants constellations of queer spaces, just as they were unaware of their own role in the reproduction of white privilege that threatened and pushed out these other stars. Priscilla McCutcheon has written of the ways she occupied this space as a Black woman academic gaining trust among Black women farmers who saw her as Other (2019). The Black male police sergeant whom I watched arrest two Black boys code-switched to indicate some insider status, yet the boys rejected his performance and were reluctant to speak to him. The officer, though of the same race and sex as the boys, could

only interpret their explanations and silences through the lens of a state violence worker (Seigel 2018).

My own positionality rested on the intersections of multiple differences from my participants including race, class, researcher vs. researched. There were a few small areas in which I stood inside enough to lend a glimpse of understanding of their experiences, such as by living in an apartment in the neighborhood; never having owned a car and traversing the city the same way they did; and being a mother who, like some of theirs, often had to bring her child to work. This is by no means to assert an insider status. Rather, I emphasize not only Simpson's point that outsider status makes reading constellations difficult, but also that there are many ways to stand inside and outside. As Oswin writes, rejecting desires to bring the outside in and intentionally writing from outside the theory she critiques, "[T]here are outsides – constitutive ones – all over the place." Each of these insides and outsides from which I interacted with, listened to, and analyzed children's stories and drawings, revealed different meanings of their constellations.

Given these intersections of positionality that would never render children's constellations fully readable to me, I return to the significance of a methodology that allowed children to explain their drawings to me. Any one of their constellations would have been unreadable to me, positioned outside their world. I would not have identified the knives in their constellations of weapons because I did not then think police carried knives. I may, however, have interpreted the four-legged animal in figure 14 as a member of the K9 unit as it resulted from the prompt "draw the police." Even with family members labeled in children's constellations of care, I would not have known who the



central figure was, the child's North Star, as they were so rarely the largest figure on the page. So too might I have interpreted eight-year-old Leisha's drawing of her family lying on their bedroom floor when gunshots sounded outside. I projected terror onto the image, while Leisha was nonchalant. She described it as a drawing of the person she would turn to for protection—her mother, who had always kept her safe. This was a reality familiar to her, unreadable in some ways by me. Thus, I relied on subjects embedded in their realities to translate, to the degree that this is ever possible, their constellations of policing, surveillance, and care.

Neither Geiseking nor Simpson's use of constellations map precisely on to my findings. In fact, both authors raise concerns about the way the metaphor might be used by others. Giesecking urges caution when generalizing the theory, even as work toward social justice requires "provocative generalizability" or the movement of findings towards "that which is not yet imagined" (Fine in Giesecking 2020: 229). As the constellation theory is extrapolated out, then, it must retain its goal of encouraging "radical geographical imaginations determined from and by the marginalized" (Giesecking 2020: 229). This *goal* did map precisely onto mine. For what these constellation theories showed me was that the heavy lifting *my* metaphor was doing was in showing oppression, while those experiencing it did not want to be defined by such oppression. Giesecking and Simpson, conversely, were using queer and indigenous frameworks in different ways towards the similar end of illuminating the ways people resist, produce space, imagine otherwise. After all, the children in my study were constantly imagining otherwise, drawing alternate realities, and acting out these alternatives in their imaginative play. There remains a risk, though, of romanticizing tiny points of resistance, and downplaying

the trauma also associated with constellations of policing and surveillance.

Complementing these constellation theories, Black ecologies provide a framework that, in Teonna Williams's words, "enable us to name these painful histories of anti-Black violence and the co-optation of environmental conservation in order to become critical to these conversations, thereby providing us clearer pathways to abolition." To do just that, in my work, I suggest that constellations can both draw embodied lines among connecting systems of oppression *and* illuminate networks of everyday resistance and alternative imaginings.

### **Constellations of Care**

Just as securitization's reach into socio-economically marginalized children's lives is expansive, constellations of care are one of children's many everyday casual refusals to securitizing regimes. They appeared through participant observation of children's caring actions and most often in response to the interview question, "Who do you turn to when you feel scared or need help?" When children report being bullied or scared in school, I ask to whom they turn there too. In consultation with the university's Office of Research Integrity (ORI), I had decided not to bring up police or surveillance until children did so on their own. As an indirect way to invite discussion of policing and surveillance, then, an ORI staff member suggested I ask variants of whom children would turn to when in danger. Yet In 64 interviews each with 30 children, not one child listed guards, SROs, police, or surveillance cameras. They interpreted the open-ended question differently, largely based on age: when I asked, "Who do you turn to for protection?", children eight and older brought up fights, stalkers, sexual harassers, bullies, shootings,

and armed home invasions. The youngest children in the study had much simpler



Figure 15: Fox drawing

interpretations, such as five-year-old Martel who asked, “You mean like when I’m afraid in the dark?”, but the list of characters was similar. The most common answer across all participants was their mother, followed by siblings, stepparents, grandparents, friends, occasionally fathers, and themselves.

Though the lists were similar among participants, the reasons given were different for each character they chose, often along gendered lines. Martel answered “my mommy” because she would comfort him in the dark. Eight-year-old Alicia had chosen her mother because she kept her children safe by making them lie down in her bedroom when there was shooting outside. Eight-year-old Dierdre and her 10-year-old sister lived with their mother and her boyfriend listed only their mother. Fox, who was bullied by both White and Black children at school for being biracial, listed her mother first. When I asked why, she answered with a shrug, as if it was obvious, “Because my mom will stand up for me before anybody!” Her sister came next because “Same thing.” Also included in her drawn response were her stepfather and sister’s boyfriend (see figure 15). The reason for listing her stepfather was that “He has a big sword... He doesn’t carry it around because that

would be weird,” and her sister’s boyfriend because “He has a gun,” which made her feel “weird, because it’s a gun, but makes me feel safe.” Ramírez’s long list included mother, grandmother, and aunt, with love being a key factor for each, while his brother had knives, his stepfather had a gun, and he drew his father with what he explained were “turbo boost shoes” that would blast him onto the scene in time to kill an intruder (see figure 16). Thus, most children listed women because of their courage and care, and men because of their weapons, which were also described as “creepy” and “weird.” Even weapons their family members owned for protection made children feel, in Londyn’s words, “scared because I hate knives” and “I feel scared when I see people around [guns]

because, like, because people when they play around with it, they could actually, like, pull the trigger.” Children’s ambivalence towards weapons could help explain their mistrust of police; for them, weapons offered *potential*

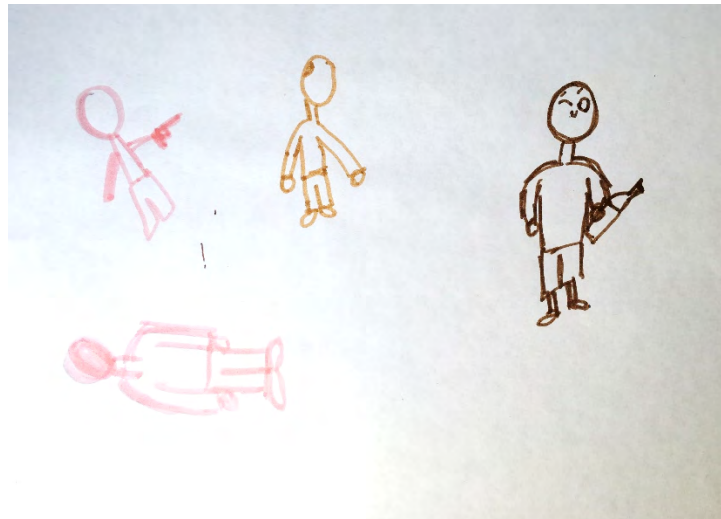


Figure 16: Ramírez drawing

protection only when accompanied by love and care.

Several children who included their mothers in their list were not in their custody, and others feared this loss, adding a layer to their reluctance to call on state. Two sets of siblings lived with their grandmothers after their mothers had been taken to jail—according to the children, both on drug-related charges. In the children’s accounts, these mothers had no history of violence, and their addictions were met with prison and the loss

of their families rather than rehabilitation. A third set of siblings said only that they had lived in foster care until their mother ‘got her feet back under her.’ They shared stories about their mother’s current or ex-boyfriend (this seemed unclear to them), who would enter their home against their will and frighten them and their mother. I had the sense that they shared with me about these incidents was guarded, perhaps because I had stated my role as a mandatory reporter. For a similar reason yet more troublingly, they expressed reluctance to involve police—because they did not want to return to foster care.<sup>4</sup> Children who had not been in foster care envisioned the consequences of their mothers losing custody differently but also feared its effects. Cody, the 6-year-old who was afraid his mother would go to jail the next time she got a speeding ticket also viewed police as potential threats to a network of care that included his grandmother and dogs—because if his mother was in jail no one could take him to his grandma’s house, and he would be unable to care for the dogs.

Not only did children imagine turning to their parents and older siblings in place of police, but they saw themselves as capable of both defending themselves. In answering whom they would turn to in times of need, several children included “myself” on their list. Dyanmond, who said she would turn to her big brother if she was on the street and saw a kidnapper (a scenario she invented when I asked whom she would turn to), did not hesitate in answering my question, “and what if you were alone?” She said, “I would just

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<sup>4</sup> The Institutional Review Board’s reporting policies demand prompt reporting of any instance in which the research may cause additional risk or harm. It is less clear cut when it is not the research that is causing harm, yet the researcher is aware of harm. However, no child in the study expressed being a victim of abuse while in the study. When children shared stories involving possible abuse they might witness in their homes, I talked with the afterschool program directors. Without revealing what the children had told me, I asked the directors to tell me what they already knew. In each case, they were aware of the situation and together we monitored as best we could.

have to hit them and run!” When I asked simply, “who would be the first person you would turn to for help,” Ramírez answered, “Well, basically my mom, *or* myself, cause like if I’m getting shot, and it’s a, a home invasion, like, I always keep ready ‘cause you never know what’s gonna happen.” Though he later clarified that none of this had ever happened, he elaborated, “like if I hear somebody coming up the stairs like, with like a mask on, if I see a gun pointing it at me, I *might* stab ‘em. ‘Cause I get like so scared, I end up trying to stab people.” Again, there was no indication that this thoughtful nine-year-old had ever hurt anyone. But he had imagined scenarios in which adult authorities from parents to police were absent and he might have no other choice but to enact violence to save himself and his family.

Initially I interpreted children’s expressions of self-reliance through my view that children should not *have* to protect themselves from danger, and thus should not *have* to imagine a scenario in which there was no one else to call upon for help. I wondered whether they were being robbed of their childhood in having to imagine taking on such adult roles. Then my own toddler led me to question this assumption. As we played with sidewalk pebbles at the edge of a pit in the neighborhood, I warned her not to get any closer, to an onslaught of “why’s.” If she fell in, she thought I would rescue her. I explained that if I went in, we would both be stuck. She said, “we’d just have to ask someone to help us out.” “And if there’s no one around,” I asked? “Then,” she mused, “we’d just have to help ourselves out!” Irrefutably, children should not have cause to imagine having to protect themselves from life-threatening violence. However, their readiness to list themselves as a source of protection is as likely an indication of childlike innocence as it is the loss of it.

While most of their assertions of self-defense were hypothetical, children reported instances in which they had protected younger *and* older siblings, friends, and parents, completing a caring cycle. Unrelated to our interview, Ramírez proudly showed me a prescription pill bottle half full of small change that he and Cardi were collecting. “We help, we try to give some money to our friend and stuff,” he said, explaining the difference between wants and needs that he had learned in school: “Like you need clothes, you need water you need food... and you *want* like a, like a TV, a brand-new house.” His coin bottle, he explained, was for things that his family and his friend *needed*.

Responding to emotional rather than material needs, Fox shared a time when her mother arrived home from a friend’s house party distraught after a man at the house attempted to rape her. She had not called the cops because drugs were involved, and “because she was scared... she didn’t, she didn’t wanna have to go to court and all that stuff.” Instead, she said, “My mom wanted me to sleep with her to make her feel better,” Fox said, “and I didn’t go to school the next day to make her feel better. And everyone was like ‘why didn’t you go to school yesterday,’ I mean, and I didn’t tell ‘em. I said I overslept.” After a separate attempted assault, her mother did call the police because “she said she just needed someone to talk to,” but “They didn’t come they just talked on the phone.” When the two got home, Fox got in bed and said her mother “just sat there and talked to me until like 1 in the morning.” Fox’s final takeaway was that “it felt *so* bad, it felt so bad for me ‘cause that’s my *mom*.” Resilience becomes a problematic concept when it glosses over harm and its structural causes to center one’s ability to recover from

such harm. Fox's words remind us of the collateral damage—to the children of those directly harmed—of a failed criminal justice system.

The metaphor of constellations holds space for these harms to children, perhaps envisioned as fainter stars connected to the brighter indications of direct physical violence Fox's mother experienced, while also acknowledging the space between these points of harm. This space is not captured by the written quotes above; what they cannot convey is the ease and confidence with which participants often spoke, and the inherently childlike ebullience peppering each interview. Together these traits constitute a refusal to be defined by the securitizing regimes they spoke of. Even Fox's painful story was interspersed with giggles, over the way her drawings were turning out, a distraction outside the door that IRB protocol required we keep open, or a silly aspect of her story. This 11-year-old sat straighter and met my eyes when sharing how she had cared for her mother. And then, hearing an announcement from the main room she jumped up saying, "It's my turn to read to the group today! Oh, I almost forgot my teddy bear!" and Fox scooped up her bear with a grin.

None of this—Fox's mother's refusal to call the police after an attempted rape, the child's ability to provide the care her mother needed in lieu of police, nor Fox's prioritization of her mother over the state requirement to attend school—constitute resistance. While Fox had previously expressed disappointment in police, she did not articulate an oppositional consciousness. The material conditions—that led to her lost sleep, sadness, and school absence—including a state that her mother feared would criminalize rather than protect her—were not altered by Fox or her mother's acts of care. In Katz's 'three R's' Fox and her mother's actions fit best within resilience: ways to get



by each day that sustain oneself, family, and community, while not significantly altering the material conditions of oppression. Katz acknowledges that the three are interwoven and not clearly bounded. Thus, this paper's fourth R, the concept of *refusal*, leaves room for participants to stretch the bounds of resilience and dip their toes in resistance. In addition to the seemingly subconscious insistence on their whole child-ness—i.e. refusal to be cast into the criminalized 'unchildlike' or innocent victim categories—participants revealed a consciousness of the conditions of their oppression and of their negotiations of these conditions. If not explicitly oppositional, there is a crucial consciousness to resilience. Fox and her mother displayed an embodied and emplaced knowledge that recognized the futility *for them* as a woman, as a biracial child, living near the poverty line in a Middle-American red-state city, in turning to the state.

### **How Constellations Stretch and Come Apart**

Above I have discussed how and why police were absent from children's constellations of care. Imagined repercussions for connections with police included a lack of help, a return to foster care, a parent's criminalization, abandonment when a single parent is arrested, and the dangers children would face if they were recruited to become officers. This section will explore how much complexity the metaphor of constellations can hold. I will discuss children's contradictory views of police, lines of support drawn across family members by different interviewees, and a single child's elaborate network of care that may stretch the metaphor to its limits.

One potential challenge to the idea of constellations of care were the conflicting, sometimes positive, feelings children expressed towards police. Yet even their positive

views were tinged with danger and did not alter the ways they constructed constellations in response to the dangers inherent to policing. For instance, some children expressed appreciation for police who initiated friendly greetings in the street, gave out candy on the street and in schools, and in theory, protected people—even though no participant mentioned actual or imagined examples of this. Policing’s very appeal, however, could lead to danger. For Londyn, police efforts to win children over and recruit young ‘cadets’ was a threat to her family’s safety. “I don’t want my brothers to be [police],” she said, “cause they always wanna become a police officer,” to which she would respond, “don’t become a police officer.” Londyn had two explanations for this advice. First, she said softly, gently, “Because, I feel like, because I don’t like police officers for real, because they be hurtin’ people.” I asked if there was anything else. Her usually boisterous voice was almost inaudible as she said, with head down, “Because I don’t want them to get hurt.” In all of these cases, not only were police *not* part of children’s conceptualized constellations of care but they were impediments to it that must be avoided as they navigated risks and dangers in everyday life.

In a larger and more complex constellation of family and friends in place of state protection, a group of half-siblings, White and biracial, from seven to 12, all said in individual interviews that they turn to each other for help. Each interpreted the hypothetical danger differently. The 13-year-old White genderqueer sibling felt safest around their younger siblings. That was supported by their eight-year-old biracial sister, Alicia, who listed the times she had stood up for them when they were being bullied, because in her words, “the bully was irritating.” Clea, the 12-year-old White sister told of being followed on walks by “men that creeps and watches you. Men in bushes and trees,

looking,” including ones she claimed were known criminals in the neighborhood yet did not say she would call the police for help. Londyn and her 11-year-old friend (who is Black), separately listed each other as their first source of protection in public space. When I asked if there was anywhere in her neighborhood she avoided because she didn’t feel safe, Londyn answered, “Ummm, no. cause usually where I go is with my friend.” “We argue,” she added, “but the thing is that we both know how to fight.” Drawing another line between the stars in this family’s constellation, Londyn told of one such fight in which she defended her little sister Alicia who was being bullied by a white girl for “having her ‘fro out.” Recall that Alicia had defended her 13-year-old sibling just as her 12-year-old sister defended her. Notable too was Londyn’s unprompted justification: “My momma said defend yourself.” Yet in this fight she had not distinguished that it was not ‘herself’ that she was defending, but her sister.

In the final constellation I will share, Ramírez took the longest of any participant to mention police at all, and when he did, the threats to his constellation of care were the most severe. As was common in interviews, Ramírez came to the subject of whom he would turn to for protection on his own. The interview was near the Fourth of July and Ramírez mentioned that his oldest brother was scared of fireworks because they sound like gunfire and his brother knows that if something happened to his siblings... Here he trailed off and began to ponder the complexities of risk and protection.

Though he lived in his grandmother’s custody, Ramírez, who I mentioned had listed his mother or himself, reflected that he would turn to his dad for protection instead. Of his father, who lives an hour away and “has guns under his couch,” he said, “he’s gonna like go super speed like sort of like he’s Flash.” In contrast to police weapons, his

father's represented safety because "he's gonna protect us for real for real," even Ramírez's half-siblings whom his father thinks of as his own. After a thoughtful pause, Ramírez decided he would call on his grandmother because "she loves me more than anybody," but on second thought, his mother could walk to their house faster than his grandmother could move within it. Though, he mused, his mother would have trouble protecting all eight children at once. So perhaps his father after all, since his father is "crazy, I mean, you know, crazy about his kids." *Except*, Ramírez realized, if he called his dad when in danger—at this point the story he had constructed was of armed home invasion—his dad would end up going to jail "just for protecting like his kids and stuff."

After assessing the possibility of his father being imprisoned for protecting them, this young child said, "If the robber has a gun and he's pointing it at my grandma, *I'm* gonna be in jail. Because if somebody kills her that would be like so sad, and I'm really just gonna kill the guy." He mumbled this with his head down, seeming to feel the sadness of the shooting he imagined. He made the claim of revenge without the swagger I had seen in other children as they promised to kill villains and save their families. It was clear that Ramírez was genuinely worried for his grandmother, father, and self. To reach this point, Ramírez likely lacked faith that the criminal justice system would either avenge his grandmother's hypothetical death or spare him a prison sentence if he killed the armed intruder who had just murdered his grandmother. I make no claims to the likelihood of either, except to note that as elaborate and unlikely as much of Ramírez's scenarios were, the idea of a just justice system lay beyond the bounds of imagination.

But Ramírez was not done. Having decided against calling his father, he suggested he might turn to his aunt because she lives with him. I finally asked if he would

ever consider calling the police. “Wait...” he said, “I’m gonna have to call the cops because I don’t have minutes on my phone, and you don’t need minutes to call the cops.” This was the only reason he could imagine calling them, and even so, the reasons not to outweighed this single logistical consideration. Immediately realizing an equally logistical barrier, he gasped, “But I don’t know my address... I would get *scared* in that situation, if like, ‘what’s your address,’ I’m like, ‘it’s just somewhere in Westwood.’” More pressingly, he worried police would not respond fast enough to save his grandmother, and when they arrived, would arrest his father or himself. In the end he settled on his older brother Keyrenté, a shy 14-year-old, rounded at the edges, who told me he “expressed himself” through video games. Ramírez’s reasoning was that “he keeps dishes in his room, so he has like knives in there I think, ‘cause you know how you like cut steak?” The mundane everyday wholeness of this young teen who Ramírez ultimately chose as the final guiding star in his constellation did not escape me. It was not super-hero speed, hidden guns, or willingness to sacrifice his freedom for his family, but rather Keyrenté’s typical teenage behavior of eating in his room and forgetting to take out the dishes.



Figure 17: Conceptual diagrams

As I drew lines from one node of support to another on Ramírez's digitized drawing, it began to look more like a child's clumsy attempt at a spirograph, never landing on any one point, but weaving around and around in a web of composite care. The image (see figure 17) reminds us that constellations are one cut through the material and that theory is not only a tool but a toy. A theory can be picked up and played with, and even if it is eventually put down, it has served a purpose if it sparks a new way of seeing the data. The findings could alternately have been arrayed on a typology of resilience to resistance, or in an anthropological lens of kinship networks, each of which would contribute its own value. It is true that even constellations, which map the messy complexity of each child's stories and caring acts, sometimes struggle to contain the contradictions. Yet they illuminate small acts or figures of protection, map the connections between them, and link an array of state oppression to tiny points of resilience and potential future resistance.

### **Conclusion: Imagining Otherwise**

One motivation for researching with children was to tap into their capacities for imagination in asking them to envision a world without police. In some ways, children's constellations of care already envisioned such a world with little imagination needed, because police protection was already absent from their lives. Yet in other ways, police were central to these maps, such as Fox's mother's choice not to call on police after an attempted rape, or Ramírez's strategy in not calling his father for protection from intruders because the police would arrest him. To this end, I asked children explicitly what a world without police would look like. The two drawings in figure 18, both by

Black girls ages 11 and 12, invoke Gilmore’s “homely premise” of abolitionist geographies that “freedom is a place.” When asked if a world without police was possible, most children quickly answered no, we need police—but nor did they think



Figure 18: Mikailah (left) and Dyamon (right) drawings

policing was capable of reform, and they struggled to articulate what they needed police *for*. Cardi said she wanted to be a cop when she grew up so she could protect people. When asked if she had seen police doing that, she said, “no, but the other morning I was seeing they was taking a teenager to jail.” Thus, there were limits to children’s verbal expression of alternatives, to the worlds they could put into words.

Their drawings showed something different from their constrained verbal answers. In explaining her drawn response to the idea of a world without police (figure 18), Dyamon said, “Nobody would not have to worry about payin’ they bills. Everybody would have jobs but housing would be free and you would not have to worry about having clean clothes for your kids, yourself.” This set of siblings lived with their

grandmother and aunt, and I learned from Cardi later that their mother had been arrested for stealing. While Cardi expressed allegiance with police in that case (with the childlike logic of “Why would I be mad at the police when she be yelling at me?”), her older sister’s alternative world took her mother’s struggles into account. Because everyone had what they needed to survive in this world, no one stole or hurt each other, thus there was no need for police, and as Dyamond explained, this left room for flowers to bloom. In addition to the podium from which she, as president of the world, would speak, she drew children playing: “here that’s my friend, running chasing after my other friend. And that’s the sun.” Effortlessly, she had both asserted the importance of childhood and drawn a version of Black Ecologies, which for Teonna Williams “articulat[es] dreams of a world without policing, where the care of community is in the hands of the people” (2020: np). Like constellations, Black ecologies are one example of a framework that helps “name these painful histories of anti-Black violence and the co-optation of environmental conservation in order to become critical to these conversations, thereby providing us clearer pathways to abolition” (Williams 2020: np).

Even as constellations name racist, classist, and sexist everyday violence to provide a clearer pathway towards abolition, there remains a risk of romanticizing tiny points of resistance found in a side-stepped question or a colored pencil drawing. Forcing my participants into abolitionist narratives they did not identify with may be no better than previous caricatures of BIPOC and low-income children as either criminal or victim. They did not identify as abolitionists. Dyamond, who drew the world without police, also said that prison does not work because “people still been hurt,” and “people did that to them so they gonna do it to them, to other people;” in other words, prison is not



restorative justice, and both convicts and victims will perpetuate a violent cycle. She also spoke of recidivism: “They tryna go back to what they was doing but then they get caught again and go back,” and double jeopardy: after being in jail, “It’s hard for him to find another girlfriend, and it’s hard for people to gain their trust on him.” However, her alternative to prison was essentially state-mandated lobotomies. “People who was bein’ bad” she said, could go to “a crazy hospital” “so they could get their mind replaced, and they could start over.” Dyamond’s suggestion of incarceration in a mental hospital and involuntary ‘mind-replacement’ is hardly evidence of her abolitionist or reformist views, but rather, typical of a child’s creative, hopeful, and strange imaginings.

Like Dyamond, most participants had contradictory views of police and alternative suggestions. I have discussed how Ramírez satirized the police for their failure to catch criminals and anticipated their failure to protect his family and their criminalization of those who stepped in instead. In our third interview, after he had brought up police but not race, I asked what he thought about allegations of racism among police. He said he hadn’t noticed it in his neighborhood. Later he mentioned, unprompted, “Some people call them ‘bops.’ You know how you said something about racism? They call them bops ‘cause they take most Black people to jail than White people.” Later he mentioned that the “cops are killing Black people for no reason,” in the same sentence as a description of holiday celebrations. Keyrenté, one of the oldest participants, was one of the few others to mention racism: “You can tell if they racist. Like if they come up walk like this without they hand on their gun, you know it’s gonna be OK.” Ramírez was used to making a similar calculation, reading the face and tone of approaching police.

Neither boy expressed resentment at having to make this calculation though, and Keyrenté denied fear of police because he doesn't "encounter the police" since he doesn't "do anything bad." In an earlier interview than the one in which he casually alleged anti-Black racism in policing, Ramírez had said that "police are good people" and that he and his friends' approach when they see police in their neighborhood because the police "say hi every time... and they'll give us, like, candy." Cardi, who said she had seen the police arrest family members and youth but never seen them protect anyone, said of the police who visit her school, "They be nice polices; they give us things." Ramírez had a less favorable attitude towards SROs because it falls to them to check children's backpacks for contraband including cell phones, and one such routine check interfered with gummy bear math. Thus, while children shared concerns about the dangers that police and surveillance either failed to protect them from or amplified, the role of securitizing regimes had in their access to candy was significant to them as well. Their conflicting views made sense giving their officer's inconsistent behaviors: alternately hailing children with hellos or hand-on-gun, either doling out candy or preventing children from accessing it.

Responding to the prompt of a world without police, children's answers were equally contradictory. They often ranged from the reformist trope of police civility to something closer but not quite in the abolitionist realm: the geographic fix of moving away from police. Ramírez told me, "I want to live somewhere there's not many cops." He and his two friends had already made plans; they were saving up coins to share a house in Hawaii, but after seeing "the tornado" spewing lava, they were deciding between Texas and Paris, where they imagined there were "not as many cops."

In a group interview with Ramírez and his eight-year-old younger brother, I asked if a world without police was possible, and if so, how could people be safe. Completing each other's sentences, they posited that the world "could be safe if no cops if everyone in the world got along... People would get along who don't like each other. Instead of fighting, people should start asking questions." Then Ramírez said, "Cops could do that" and his brother added, "anyone could do that" with Ramírez replying, "Like how was your day that you look good and stuff." Ultimately abandoning the question of how to stay safe *without* police and echoing reformist calls for civility with a nine-year-old's twist, Ramírez concluded: "Police should act calm and try not to lose their temperature."

It is not enough, then, to replace a narrative of fear and victimhood with one of uplifting resistance and abolition. Beyond urging researchers and communities to refuse complicity in damage-based narratives, Tuck claimed that "It is crucial to recognize that our communities hold the power to begin shifting the discourse away from damage and toward *desire and complexity*" (2009: 422). These Cincinnati children were bursting with complexity and desire. Their views on policing were contradictory. They desired to live in their mother's custody, to attend school when suspended, to be teachers, models, and "president of the world." They desired to live in worlds without police and they desired candy, and sometimes police were the means toward that end. They expressed pro-police, reformist, and abolitionist views, sometimes within a single interview, but did not

identify *as* any of those labels. What they did identify as was children<sup>5</sup> with uncertain and exciting futures.

The responsibility to propose actionable alternatives to policing and surveillance should not rest on children's shoulders. Some children downright refused this responsibility in interviews. Even after decrying their inefficacy, when I asked what she thought police *should* be doing, Fox shrugged, "Stuff that they're supposed to do." "Like what?" I asked: "Stuff they're supposed to do!" I explained that there was no right or wrong answer and I was merely curious what she thought they were supposed to do. "Whatever they're supposed to do, I don't know *what* they do, so, whatever they're supposed to do." In her exasperated answer was a reminder that solving problems with policing should not be a child's job. Yet there is space between the stars of children's constellations of securitization and care to imagine otherwise, while honoring desires, complexity, and childness above all.

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<sup>5</sup> With the possible exception of Keyrenté, age-14, boy who said that he was too old for "kids' video games," most marked themselves as children through phrases such as "us little kids," "I mean, I'm just a kid," "when I grow up," and distinctions between grown-ups' and kids' bathrooms at school.

## CHAPTER 4. POLICE GEOGRAPHIES: ENVISIONING OTHERWISE THROUGH FEMINIST, ABOLITIONIST, AND MINOR WORKS

### **Part I: Introduction**

The scene is an annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers within the past five years. Police are discussed in sessions on security technologies, the right to the city, political ecology, and new directions in legal geography, and those dedicated to police such as *Racialized State Power and the Problem of Reform; Power, Police, and Dissent; and New Directions in Geographies of Policing, Detention, and Mass Incarceration*. Early career scholars share as-yet unpublished work. Audience sit on the floors of overflowing rooms, asking questions, exchanging email and brainstorming next year's sessions. They share articles ranging from ethnographies (Ríos 2011) to etymologies (Seigel 2018) to geospatial analyses (Bloch and Martínez 2020), all examining the spatiality of police. Panelists discuss Gouldhawke's (2019) framing of police as settler colonial, or as producing borders within gentrifying cities (Ramírez 2020). Treva Ellison presents on LGBTQ activism and sensitivity policing (AAG 2014), arguing that the "spatial network of the prison industrial complex" encompasses not only the built environment and the labor of policing it, but also environment, capital, human capacity," and appropriated "representational forms and modes" (Ellison, 2016: 326). Like Ellison, Laurel Mei-Sing's talk demonstrates the futility of trying to analyze police as an independent agency, given their collaboration with other state agencies to discipline populations deemed dangerous through the "making of territorially bound—carceral—spaces" (Mei-Singh 2016). In a room built for 200, Steve Herbert speaks about whale-watching, while next door his prolific police-scholarship is cited. Dugan Meyer invokes Herbert and Beckett's (2012) geographies of gang injunctions examining policing's reach

through this inherently spatial ban. Sitting next to Stefano Bloch on a panel that would lead to fruitful co-authorship, Meyer argues that police regulations like gang injunctions both deploy territoriality by keeping individuals out of gentrifying spaces and, by producing conceptual and material (in)security, become practices of “place-making” and “place-taking” (Meyer 2020: 15). Authors grab drinks with their critics after panels for *Police: A Field Guide* (Correia and Wall 2018), *Violence Work: State Power and the Limits of Police* (Seigel 2018), and *Policing Life and Death: Race, Violence, and Resistance in Puerto Rico* (LeBrón 2018). From the audience, Louise Amoore challenges Police Technologies panelists to reconsider the significance of algorithms in policing. The interdisciplinary panel includes scholars from criminal justice, education, and digital storytelling, while one on Studying the Police represents scholars from six disciplines. In all these sessions, too-small rooms, buzzing post-session hallways and bars, there is an energy around critical research on police palpable to those in search of it. Yet in another session in a larger room, the claim is made that “no one in geography is studying police.”

There are good reasons for this dizzying disjuncture. Part II posits three explanations for the competing perceptions of a dearth or wealth of police scholarship in human geography, revolving around how we define police, dearth, and geography. While partially substantiating the claim, I argue that such an allegation disproportionately impacts women, gender nonconforming people (GNCP), and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and hurts our discipline by foreclosing the inclusion of groundbreaking work. With each explanation, I offer ways to see beyond the claim.

Part III begins the work of seeing-beyond, highlighting recent trends in police geographies. The uniting theme is what geography has to offer to police scholarship and

why policing is relevant to geography—i.e. the geographic nature of policing. While Yarwood’s (2007) *Progress* report on “The Geographies of Policing” urged convergence towards a single theoretical framework for understanding policing (governance), I argue that the emerging multiplicity of themes more accurately reflects the complex spatialities of police and policing today. What unites current police geographies is not a singular framework, but instead their innovative and transparent methods, accountability, and dedicated reflexivity. Most importantly, these works retain intellectual rigor and theoretical complexity while sharing a commitment to material and abolitionist goals.

These ways of producing and disseminating knowledge resonate with Katz’s theorization of the minor, which is “not a theory of the margins, but a different way of working with material” (489). In its distinction between minor and marginal, minor theory helps explain the *marginalized* status of many pathbreaking police geographies. It also aids in conceptualizing the ever-shifting relations between what I attempt to distinguish as two distinct ways of doing theory. And it provides a succinct, if imperfect, umbrella term to encompass the longer list of traits describing the works I highlight. We will return to this discussion, but first we turn to how this minor work may be marginalized but not marginal.

## **Part II: Explaining the Disjuncture**

### Police or Policing?

In investigating the dissonance between the array of police-related scholarship and the critique that few geographers study police, competing definitions of police/ing may be in part to blame; work on what one scholar considers policing could stand outside

another's narrow definition of 'the police.' Fyfe described the difficulty of defining the terms, noting that most of us have acted as police in some capacity, and helpfully defined police *for the purpose of his paper*. He settled, after discussing its imperfections, with Klockars's (1965: 12) statement that "Police are institutions or individuals given the general right to use coercive force by the state within the state's domestic territory." Yet Seigel (2018: 14) debunks this 'myth' of police as fundamentally local, noting that it is so taken for granted that their travel does not "trouble the notion of policing's minor scale and geographic ambit." If police cannot be defined by the "trio of mythic ideas characterize[ing] a general understanding of police"—that they are civilian, public, and local—then who or what are police? This question is a call for more work; as Seigel writes, "'Police' is one of the least theorized, most neglected concepts in the lexicon of reformers and activists today" and academia has been of little help (2018: 14).

The narrowest definition of police is those officers in recognizable uniforms who nominally adhere to Seigel's three myths. By this narrow definition, the subset of human geographers devoted to researching police is indeed smaller than in adjacent disciplines. This relative lack is indeed troubling due to police's outsized role in shaping space, politics, and identities. Correia and Wall (2018) have criticized work that focuses only on these officers, and Yarwood (2007) has called for a shift from uniformed departments to the many other agencies doing violence work: from police to *policing*. Yet theorizing a move to *policing* does not reflect the experience of many living in targeted bodies and zones. It fails to acknowledge the pervasive 'softer side' of policing such as cadet camps and 'coffee with a cop.' It does not directly address the problem of squad cars from racing through neighborhood streets, SWAT teams from banging down doors, street stops



and frisks, or the expanding authority of local police to enforce federal law (Coleman 2012; Coleman and Stuesse 2016). Whether on the soft or sharp end of power, many urban residents are indeed deeply impacted by policing most broadly and the many agencies that enact it—including, acutely, by police most narrowly defined. More research on uniformed local police departments could benefit both human geography and those targeted by police.

A turn to the broadest definition of police could help explain the competing perception that a wealth of police scholarship is emerging from geography. Speaking about police, Correia and Wall write, “we’re talking about capitalism” and “we’re talking about settler colonialism” (2018: 5, 6). For Mark Neocleous (2011) and Correia and Wall (2018), police are inseparable from soldiers, war, capitalism, and colonialism, and neither exclusively public nor private. Andrea Miller (2019: 87) likewise deploys an “expansive understanding” of policing to address both the everyday and speculative practices of threat management that produce or foreclose life. Rashad Shabazz understands police both specifically and broadly, writing about the uniformed officers who remove Black residents from their communities to prison thus creating a destabilizing circulation among carceral terrains—and the police power absorbed into the architecture of kitchenettes and high-rise housing projects in Chicago’s South Side where covenants contained African Americans (2015). Brian Jordan Jefferson (2019) argues for expanding the definition of police to include carcerality to invite scholarship that can aid our understanding of the more narrowly defined police. For instance, Gilmore’s theory of incapacitation as a central prison logic illuminates the inherent spatiality of policing (2007). If prison acts as a spatial solution to social problems by (re)moving humans, police initiate that spatial

work; detainment is the first incapacitation while arrest and transport to the precinct station is the first removal. We may see police, then, as *practitioners* of these spatial ‘solutions.’ While not explicitly about police, Gilmore’s work in seeing beyond carceral justificatory logics directly aids in seeing past “copspeak,” or the constructed imaginary that police are an essential guarantor of civilization (Correia and Wall 2018: 2).

Such an expansive understanding of police aids our understanding of uniformed officers while also highlighting symbiotic relationships among agencies and modes of violence —military, borders, prisons, prison guards, ICE agents, carceral architecture, humanitarian aid and predictive technologies to name a few. Yet an all-encompassing definition makes it difficult to focus on any object of study; if ‘police’ is everything, it is meaningless to critique. A third position sees beyond the trio of mythic ideas (that they are civilian, public, and local) yet recognizes that their constitutive power “exert[s] tremendous force even as all sorts of crossings and mixtures show them to be far more fluid than traditional political definitions assume” (Seigel 2020: n.p.). Such a perspective helps us to understand policing as a “a site-specific undertaking” and set of concrete spatial practices (Coleman 2016: 3). The agency known as ‘the police’ is *enmeshed* with other realms of governance, rather than a discrete entity ‘intersecting’ with them (Loyd 2020; Seigel 2018). Seigel’s theory of police as violence workers draws a flexible boundary around the expansive concept, focusing attention on the central components of police. Through violence, “which their labor rests upon and therefore conveys into the material world,” police actualize an essence of state power that Gilmore explains as the cyclical application of violence to produce political power (Seigel 2018: 10). A focus on the labor of *applying* and *enacting* violence sharpens the definition of police, excluding

those who use violence independently of the state, for there is labor required “to represent and distribute state violence” (11).

If the centrality of labor to police begins to rein in an otherwise runaway term, insisting on the centrality of violence productively further sharpens out conception of policing. Unlike the many whose jobs may deploy but do not hinge on violence, such as librarians and kindergarten teachers, police are “people whose labors are enabled by the fact that at some point they are entitled to bring out the handcuffs” (2018: 11). In contrast to Yarwood’s (2007) report which included voluntary police organizations in the section “Who is Policing,” Joshua Reeves (2017) notes that while Neighborhood Watches are state-sanctioned, their violence is not. Furthermore, while violence, sanctioned or not, may be central to what they do, what they do is not labor (Seigel 2018).

To conclude, for the purposes of *this* paper, I understand police as state-sanctioned violence workers whose labor is symbiotic with carcerality more generally, while retaining focus on their material and spatial practices and impacts. Bounding the concept thus not only helps bring an expansive concept back into focus, but also enables “a focus on the everyday nuances and insidious violence of policing and being policed which may otherwise be unwittingly glossed over in favor of larger-scale structural critiques of state violence” (Bloch 2021: 8). That said, police is a term that will require continued theorization as practices and societal understandings change.

### Geographers or Geographies?

A second way that the claim that there is a lack of police work in geography operates is by embedding assumptions about who is ‘doing geography.’ While a political

geographic perspective based upon the recognition of the entanglement of power, space, and place might invite broad inclusion into the category of ‘geographies’ of policing, some works that could otherwise be seen as geographies of policing are not counted when a scholar resides in a different disciplinary home. Some potentially uncounted works are produced by scholars with neither degree nor position in geography yet are by all accounts geographers. Clyde Woods analyzed broken windows policing as ‘asset stripping’, policing from New Orleans to L.A. (1998; 2005; [2009](#)), and with Katherine McKittrick, co-edited *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* (2007). His obituary in the *AAG Newsletter* notes how he “actively encouraged and mentored black geographers in order to diversify the discipline.” Additionally, many scholars of policing-related topics have PhDs in Geography yet landed elsewhere. Mei-Singh who attends AAGs and writes about policing indigeneity in Hawai’i ([2016](#)) took the position offered by Ethnic Studies. Dana Cuomo, who worked in police departments as an advocate for domestic violence survivors, and writes about the contradictions of policing domestic violence, teaches in Women’s and Gender Studies. Lindsey Dillon, who conducts research with Julie Sze on urban policing and environmental justice (2016), is a professor of Sociology. Yet the first line in her biography is “I am a geographer.” Thus, among others, the police geographers above may not always be counted as evidence of the thriving subfield.

Regardless of each individual reason geographers take positions outside the field or outside academia, the pattern cannot be understood outside the context of the discipline’s toxic, intentional, and persistent whiteness (Hamilton 2020a; 2020b; BGSB 2020; UKY Geography 2020). The prevalence of scholars who produce police

geographies from outside suggests that even when scholars are trained, seen, and self-identified as geographers, the aggressively white field of geography (Muñoz and Ybarra 2019; Pulido 2002; Kobayashi 2006; Joshi, McCutcheon and Sweet 2015; Hawthorne and Heitz 2018) may not have offered them a long-term home. This is not to allege that these particular scholars' placement is related to discrimination against them or their work, but merely to offer one explanation for the competing perception of wealth and dearth of *police geographies*.

With the consequences of not doing so in mind, the discipline has a chance to redress “the material inequalities that persist along multiple axes of social power in our everyday worlds of home, department, and institution” (Winders and Schein 2014: 227). Doing so will help draw and retain scholars whose work and identities have been deemed marginal. In the meantime, a scholar's technical appointment need not preclude citing their work among *police geographies*. Building on one of geography's strengths—its embrace of interdisciplinarity— inclusive citation practice will enrich the subfield of *police geographies* to include scholars working from other fields, particularly those who have been pivotal in shaping ours.

### Defining Dearth

Claims of a dearth of *police geographies* have emerged from the field since 1991 when Nicholas Fyfe called *police research* “conspicuously absent from the landscapes of human geography” (249). Richard Yarwood alleged 15 years later that “interest in this topic remain[ed] on the margins of human geography's research agenda” (2007: 447). Even ten years later, Mat Coleman found geographers to “have remained curiously quiet

about the cops” (2016: 1). Coleman and Austin Kocher referred to that silence as ‘remarkable’ three years after that (2019). In 2020 Coleman lamented, “there are still depressingly few geographers writing about the cops” and the same year Bloch described the emergence of research on everyday manifestations of police power as slow and not yet fully recognizable as a geographic. While not endorsing it, Don Mitchell concurred that the frequent critique of the subfield has been, “It’s all Steve and Mat” (personal correspondence 2020). We have thus heard for three decades of the ‘surprising’ dearth and marginality of geographic police research.

Compared to law, criminal justice, and even the more closely aligned social sciences such as political science, sociology and anthropology—in which Maguire complains of a “current obsession with policing encounters in urban ethnography” (2018: 154)—geography produces far less police research. Defined in relation to other fields, and focusing on a narrow definition of ‘police,’ Bloch, Coleman, Fyfe, Kocher, and Yarwood’s claims of dearth are justified. As Fyfe noted in 1991, it also remains true that geographies of criminal justice focus more on crime than on the role of police. These relative shortages preclude the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between geography and police scholarship: our discipline is enriched by understanding policing, while police scholarship gains from our understanding of space. First, “it is a subject which is particularly suited to study from a geographical perspective” given that police work is inherently territorial and co-constitutive of the socio-political “contexts in which it, quite literally, takes place” (Fyfe 1991: 265). As Yarwood (2007: 244) notes, “An understanding of space... provides important perspectives on policing.” Second, knowledge on policing’s spatial impacts can inform discourse on spatial governance, for

police both enforce and extra-legally enact spatial regulations. In other words, “A better understanding of policing contributes to a better understanding of the ways in which power shapes space” (Yarwood 2007: 447).

While this relative dearth is consequential, so too is the way it is depicted; allegations that geographers have ignored policing unintentionally ignore those who study it. I will describe three ways that the allegation is made, its impacts, and ways it could be made more productively. First, offhand remarks in conferences and talks can add up, and there is an experiential difference between casual comments about ‘no one’ versus ‘not as many geographers as sociologists.’ When a white male scholar portrayed his research as novel, his BIPOC female co-panelist—who had infiltrated security spaces, interviewed spies, and published prolifically on policing—felt invisible. She thought, “I have been here on panels with you for years now and you still think you’re the only one” (Interview 2020). Another BIPOC scholar reflected on her ample “experiences where I’m discussing pretty much whatever the dude-bros are discussing but then they are saying with me next to them that no one else is doing it” (Interview 2020). Katz (a white woman) also “felt invisible” when a major theorist left out an element of the “theoretical landscape that [she] was certain was there” because *she was in it* (1996: 488). Derickson (2020: 557) writes that to be “rendered invisible by ‘scopic regimes’ that imagine themselves complete,” is to “intuitively understand the limits of such a project.” Thus, those rendered invisible are able to see absences in ‘major’ scholarship while their own contributions go unseen. One small way around this pitfall is for scholars presenting in sessions to look into their co-presenters’ backgrounds, or ask them if they have done such work, and frame their allegations of lack as relative not absolute.

Second, faculty act as gatekeepers to the field when evaluating PhD projects. When Geographer Camilla Hawthorne's inherently geographical PhD research—on sense of place and how Black youth challenged symbolic and material boundaries—was deemed “marginal to geography,” she experienced “a distinct sense of alienation” (Hawthorne and Heitz 2018: 149). Advisors help shape the field through their support or dismissal of student work and Hawthorne's reflections show how the label ‘marginal’ helps to constitute a topic's marginality and marginalize the scholars who work on it. Conversely, a growing awareness of the importance of research on race and the carceral state bodes well for these gates' opening. Mentors would do well to recognize the increase of journal and conference calls-for-papers as well as academic job descriptions seeking feminist, abolitionist, community-engaged, and social-justice oriented work.

Third, the way we portray exceptions makes a difference. For one thing, as Laura Pulido (2002: 46) writes, as few as 15 scholars can create a critical mass capable of impacting how the discipline addresses a topic. Relatedly, when listing ‘notable exceptions,’ it matters whether we list 20 or 40, and not simply the quantity but the identities of those cited. Summing up the experience of being left out of the count, Muñoz and Ybarra (2019) write that despite Latinx human geographers' significant contributions, the discipline of geography continues “to tell our stories while burying our voices.” Scholars who cite exceptions to the lack of police scholarship in geography include Coleman (2016) who lists 19 (such as Fyfe 1992; Herbert 1997; Tyner and Inwood 2014). Bloch (2020) lists 15, (among them Kaufman 2016; Loyd and Bonds 2018; Ramírez 2019). It is time to follow their lead and move beyond merely describing ‘conspicuous absences’ and policing's ‘marginal’ position in our field.



We have seen, then, that while calling for more work in an area is itself harmless, this particular critique is longstanding and appears impervious to emergent scholarship. It might be helpful to see this as a ‘major’ critique in three ways: First there is the positionality of those alleging a lack of police geographies—most often white male senior faculty—to the exclusion of other demographics conducting much of the work. Second, the allegation often resides in major journals such as Fyfe (1991) and Yarwood’s (2007) *Progress* reports. Meanwhile, rebuttals to the critique (self-citation removed from view) and evidence of the wealth of police geographies often exists in open access journals, toolkits to accessibly reframe thinking (Nguyen and Zahzah 2020), community research reports (Nguyen and Southorn 2019), media articles and even blogs, such as the Métis & Cree author M. Gouldhawke who writes from outside academia but is influential in it (see Gouldhawke 2020 on settler colonial policing, listed in The Yellowhead Institute’s “An Indigenous Abolitionist Study Guide” 2020). Third, the critique of lack could be seen as an invalidation of the ways minor police geographies are produced. While grand theory and the view from nowhere still dominate the major, minor theory is “relentlessly material—embodied, positioned, sensual” and recognizes the “alternative material conditions under which knowledge is produced and shared” (488). The ‘major critiques’ I have discussed in this section have merit, as does major scholarship on police. As Katz writes, “minor and major both must be joined to oppose inequality, injustice, impoverishment, and oppression effectively” (1996: 489). Yet if we want to mitigate the absences and marginality major theorists allege, there are only benefits to naming, publicizing, and centering those exceptional geographies of policing. The rest of the paper does just that.

### **Part III: Answering the Geographers' Call**

Thirty years ago, Fyfe (1991) warned geographers against leaving the study of police to other disciplines given policing's inherent territoriality and emplacement. Sixteen years later, Yarwood (2007: 460-1) echoed his call "to pay closer attention to the geographies of policing" which are "central to progress in social and political geography." These were important calls, and to a large extent, they have been answered. My call, then, is for scholars to pay closer attention to existing police geographies, particularly those conducted in a minor register or by scholars who are not fully 'at home' in academia or their discipline, as is a condition of the minor (Katz 1996). My task here is not to be the gatekeeper of the minor realm nor to usher everyone in. When critiques of this paper arise, I hope they are not on whether a theorist is major or minor; these positions are only-relational and ever-shifting. More important than whether a scholarly work counts as 'minor' is what it can do for us as we 'refuse to be at home' (Katz 1996) and reside instead in the impasse. The impasse offers "new configurations, new connections"; for "generative, creative space that offers us tools and politics" (Secor and Linz 2017: 568). What works will we take with us?

While Part II posited that there are more 'police geographies' than are recognized, this section includes geographic work on police that might not be labeled as a standalone 'police geography,' because, I argue, there is a wealth of geographic scholarship *on* police that the subfield can learn from, regardless of the primary focus of that work. In contrast to Fyfe's (1991) call for more research on policing in its own right, I argue that policing does not exist as such. Therefore, it is equally valuable to turn to works that

engage police as part of a broader focus on scale (intimate, global, and entangled), space (public, private, liminal, carceral, and queer), and the processes that transcend or invade those scales and spaces (gentrification, surveillance of Blackness, containment or coercive mobilities). Focusing on their minor elements, this section examines research that has answered geographers' calls to further our understanding of policing's spatiality. I discuss police reach within and across scales; its pervasion through public space; intrusion into private space; and disregard for the public/private divide with a focus on policing in liminal space such as cars, schools, prisons, and borders. I conclude by highlighting the ways these minor works do theory and how they mobilize that theory towards dismantling an unfixable system and envisioning otherwise.

### Complicating Space

Geographies of policing have the potential to complicate how we understand space—public space, private space, and the constructed divides between them. This section highlights a diverse array of scholarship that simultaneously furthers our understanding of police sites and spheres, and the way policing moves among them, not always acknowledged in major police geographies. Toward this end, after surveying key geographies of policing in nominally public space, I focus on the minor and largely feminist trend to study various modes of policing in home space and intimate relationships while troubling the public/private divide. These minor works hold space for troubling contradictions and alternatives. They examine everyday policing; its role in shaping public space; and its intrusions into private space; and how policing both violates

and reifies the construction of public and private. In each of these foci, minor works pay attention to raced, classed, and gendered impacts.

Geography has long been on the forefront of research and theory of state control over, and state violence in, public space, through legal, historical, and ethnographic inquiries (Mitchell 2012; Staeheli and Mitchell 2008). These crucial contributions are not always considered police geographies, particularly when we consider Fyfe's (1996: 265) suggestion that "the police and policing provide potentially fruitful fields of geographical research *in their own right*." But policing does not exist 'in its own right;' it is always in relation to its subjects and spaces. Therefore, I argue, policing is central to these studies of public space, publicity, and property, and such studies are central to our understanding of police. After all, as Mitchell writes, law, regulation, and policing of public space come together "at every bloody level" (2020: loc 197).

While some engage policing by theorizing public space itself in relation to the maintenance of order, others examine particular ways policing plays out in public space. Place-based restrictions, from gang injunctions to (prostitution) render simply being in public space a punishable offence, resulting in lived experiences of banishment (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Mitchell 2020). Another well-studied process of policing public space is gentrification, which is both the investment of capital into disinvested areas that transform the built environment and "struggles over land use — how people use space and create place" (Summers 2019: 16). Police are symbiotic with the aesthetic infrastructure of gentrification, one tool in the commodification and containment of blackness (Summers 2019) and white wealthy homonormative neighborhood rebranding (Gieseeking 2020). While nominally opposed to gang injunctions, White liberals in

gentrifying neighborhoods directly contribute to such processes of exclusion by calling on police to take action against marginalized groups in an ‘implicit revanchism’ (Bloch and Meyer 2020). Irrefutably, more explicit policing remains an integral part of gentrification, through physical presence, violence, daylighting night hang-outs, and surveillance (Mitchell 2020). Yet these scholars point to the ‘implicit’ ways policing is woven into public space too. By examining the myriad ways police are enmeshed with public space US cities, we see that not only can public space not be understood without examining police, but the role of police cannot be understood ‘in its own right.’

A key component to policing public space is technology. This includes weapons (Akarsu 2018; Correia and Wall 2018), data collection, predictive policing, and crime mapping (Lally 2021, Jefferson 2018; Crampton et al. 2017), and surveillance such as facial recognition (Crampton et al. 2019; Benjamin 2019) and body-worn-cameras (Brayne 2020; Newell 2020, 2021; Wall and Linnemann 2014), and even lighting of public gathering spaces and spaces of survival for the unhoused (Mitchell 2020; Giesekeing 2020). While much technified-policing research focuses on public space, the terrain of digital and human surveillance adheres to no fixed boundaries, nor is it confined to physical or cartesian space. Virtual space is a growing target of police surveillance, as emphasized in the Citizen’s Police Academy I attended, and geographers are beginning to examine the policing of such space (CPA).

Police technologies not only extend police reach into virtual space, such as surveying civilian Facebook pages (CPA) but entangle virtual, public, and private space. For instance, police scour civilian’s social media for tips of terrorism in public space, increasing their physical presence there, or for evidence of criminality that justifies

warrants to search private space. In turn, they post surveillance of public and private space in virtual space, the mere potential of which causes anxiety in civilians. Two officers I interviewed in Cincinnati noted that after initially resisting the camera mandate, the force had embraced them due to impunity. They mused that cameras neither aided in misconduct convictions nor significantly decreased police violence, but did present privacy concerns for civilians caught on publicly accessible video footage. The permeability of private space by public police who generate this publicly searchable footage complicates the public/private divide. “We go inside people’s homes with these things on,” the officer said: “Sometimes people are naked. And now that’s floating around on the internet” (interview 2019). This example also demonstrates how digital forms of policing are tied to bodies and spaces; police surveillance is not always/only digital, having “a long history in the technologies of slavery that sought to govern black people on the move” (Browne 2015: 26). Humans can function both *as* surveillance technology and *with* such technology worn on their bodies; superior to most cameras, people can gather, process, and transmit data, and are mobile (Reeves 2019: 10). Linking human and digital surveillance, either ingrained or trained into algorithms of facial recognition, is racial bias. Just as police surveillance weaves together public and private space, so too are human and digital connected through origins and impacts.

Given the rich work on public space and policing, there is an understandable perception that “many academics and policy-makers have given attention to public space,” while “far less attention has been given to crimes, and the policing of, private space” (Yarwood 2007: 460; see also Cuomo 2017). I agree, but with three caveats. First, the nature of Yarwood’s call perpetuates the false binary of not only public and private

space but also police. By alleging that public police could not enter private space, and that therefore the only policing worth studying in private space was done by security guards, Yarwood reifies both public and private space. This public/private police divide is one of the three myths clouding our understanding of police (Siegel 2018). Seeing beyond it—recognizing how different guards, agents, and officers work together—brings into view the extent of policing’s territorial reach (Corriea and Wall 2017; Mei-Singh 2016).

Second, Yarwood’s claim that ‘public’ police cannot enter private space ignores police calls for service, the intrusion of police bodies or bullets into homes, and police home-surveillance. In this sense, private space is a crucial site of analysis of ‘public policing’ but one that is understudied in part because of this alleged divide. Thus, the third caveat: while there is room for more theorizations of policing in private space, I argue Yarwood’s call has been answered. In the subsequent 14 years, scholars have analyzed fatal police intrusions into private property, police response to calls to intervene in private space, and the creep of policing, both human and technified, into homes.

Recent years have seen increased public outcry over police shootings of civilians-at-home. Before police woke Breonna Taylor from her bed and killed her, an off-duty officer killed Botham Jean while he was eating ice cream at home. Linking Jean’s death to another ‘accidental’ home shooting in Istanbul, Hayal Akarsu (2020: n.p.) examines how public policing lethally violates private space across the globe. Even indirect intrusions have embodied effects. For Shabazz, the insufficiently private home-space of the kitchenette “absorbed the exercise of police power that functioned in the general space of the Black Belt and brought it closer to the skin” (2015: 33). In Chicago, he

writes, “modern policing emerged as a system of control to respond to interracial socializing and sex” (2015: 30) and continued to control sexuality in different ways. For instance, in a show of “coercive mobility,” during the AIDS epidemic police transported Black men to prison and back into their communities, furthering the spread of HIV just as tuberculosis had spread through crowded kitchenettes. Thus, policing private space and lives has destructive effects on public health—a spatial analysis showing once again how policing both links and transcends public and private spaces and lives.

Policing not only intrudes but is *called* into home-space. Turkish National Police’s “On-site Fulfillment of Police Services,” with its mobile statement-taking kit, became desirable among citizens who saw such programs as “affective regime[s] of state-care” (2020a: np). In the U.S., residents install home-surveillance devices that can feed footage to police; the smart-doorbell company Ring has forged partnerships with more than 400 police departments nation-wide (Harwell 2019). While Ring may be the first company to directly partner with police, residents with home-surveillance have always had the option of sharing it with police, without consent from those caught on tape. Geographers have explored the raced, classed, and gendered unevenness in who invites in home surveillance and whom they imagine they are protecting themselves against (Katz 2016). Still, in contrast to the smart city, the smart home needs more attention and there is room for work that explores how public policing pervades private space through *invited* technologies (Donovan and Katz 2009).

While the above examples show how ‘public’ police often disregard the public/private binary to intrude on ‘private’ space and draw private lives into public view, police also use the constructed binary to their advantage, likewise with lethal effects. The



neoliberal state has responded to domestic violence by casting it as a private problem thus reducing welfare funding, individualizing responsibility, and allowing police to avoid answering one of their most dangerous calls for service (Cuomo 2017; 2020). Yet the mainstream White feminist call for more policing in the private sphere—leading to mandatory arrest policies across the U.S.—has had uneven and dangerous effects (Cuomo 2020b; Richie 2012; Law 2014).

Uniting critiques of such calls and their disproportionate impacts is the term ‘carceral feminism.’ Coined by Elizabeth Bernstein, it depicts criminal justice as women’s primary protection against violence. This funnels money into criminal justice and away from programs that promote safety—shelters, housing, welfare—and discourages alternate community interventions (Law 2014). Carceral feminism ignores intersectional vulnerabilities to violence and the fact that “greater criminalization often places these same women at risk of state violence” (Law 2014: n.p.), thus disproportionately abandoning BIPOC women and criminalizes BIPOC of all genders (Richie 2012; 2017; Law 2014; Kim 2018). It also “fails to address the myriad forms of violence faced by women, including police violence and mass incarceration” (Law 2014); in fact, police are more likely than civilians to use violence *in their own homes* and intimate partnerships (Cuomo 2020b). It is important to make this critique of carceral feminism broadly, and mandatory arrest specifically, without reasserting the public/private binary in attempts to limit policing’s territorial reach and thus recasting domestic violence as a private problem. Some survivors, of all races, assert that “incarceration provides the only guarantee for their short or long-term safety,” a fact which abolitionists “must be prepared to encounter” (Cuomo 2020: n.p.). However,

policies such as mandatory arrest which extend police power across public and private space do not ensure police involvement when desired; officers still respond intentionally slowly to domestic violence calls or find ways to avoid arrest, revealing a symbiotic tension between criminalization and neglect (Cuomo 2020b).

Minor police geographies of domestic violence grapple with the complexity of solutions. While ‘major’ abolitionists call for immediate disbanding of police, these scholars acknowledge the real dangers of domestic violence, and the failures of both policing *and* alternative justice. The latter consistently fails to protect women because it is often structured by the same forces shaping police and prisons—both patriarchy *and* a constructed binary that casts domestic violence as a private problem (Cuomo 2020; Lebrón 2019). Thus, by examining the lived experiences of the constructed public/private divide, these anti-racist feminist police geographies show the multiple uneven implications of *either* limiting or extending the “spatial reach of the state into private space and intimate relationships” (Cuomo 2020: 2). Recognizing the violent impacts of these dual failings is foundational to a minor abolitionist project of equitable safety.

Just as police neglect and violence are more imbricated than they seem, so too are these two forms of police entry—forced or invited—into private space. Akarsu (2020a: np) connects in-home services and killing civilians in their homes by juxtaposing police propaganda advertising “On-site Fulfillment of Police Services,” with a viral meme that read, “You no longer need to go out, because the police will come to your house to kill you.” These different modes of entering ‘restricted’ private space work together to bolster police’s power that has been colloquially referred to as ‘an iron fist in a velvet glove’ in multiple languages. The velvet glove manifests as Officer Friendly who visits elementary

schools with a holstered gun to read to children. “This too is force,” write Correia and Wall (2018: 110): “the “speak softly but carry a big stick” version.” Concealed within this glove lies the iron fist, or the sharp end of power (Dixon and Marston 2011).

In a minor register, through police geographies of home space and intimate relationships, scholars warn against positivist attempts to simply uncover the iron fist (Akarsu 2020a), or letting it distract us from everyday policing that is “the linchpin of today’s urban governance regimes” (Pelot-Hobbs 2020: n.p.). Rather, Officer Friendly’s Glock 22 and soft voice, iron and velvet, are equally “constitutive of the *force* of police” (Akarsu 2020a: np). Police scholarship on the various modes in which nominally *public* police pervade spaces perceived as private illuminate complexities and contradictions in policing that might otherwise go unseen. We have seen the tensions between containment and coercive mobility; intrusion and invitation; disregard and reification of the false binary; neglect and criminalization; police and community violence; and soft and hard power. Thus, not only have scholars made inroads in policing’s implicit and explicit role in public space and filled the Yarwood’s alleged gap, but they have also shown the dangers of the public/private space or police divide and looked beyond it towards abolitionist visions of safety.

Though I have loosely organized this section into policing in public then private space, certain sites confound that boundary more than others. Of home and prison, Hamlin (2020: 590) writes, “The connections between the two systems transcended their built environment.” This takes place through the cramped architecture of kitchenettes, the carceral circuitry between home and prison (Shabazz 2015), police budgets increasing

while housing budgets decrease (Bonds 2018), the heightened policing of subsidized apartment complexes, or the policies that funnel residents into prison (Hamlin 2020).

Bloch (2020) and Stuesse and Coleman (2014) take a critical spatial analysis to the legal liminality of car-space as a public/private hybrid, examining ways this liminality authorizes a further reach of police power. Public schools are another often overlooked liminal space of policing (Nguyen 2015). “Much like territorial borders,” writes Nguyen (2015: 2), the school border physically presents itself at the entrance and perimeter of schools, but also burrows its way into the interior spaces of these sites: hallways, classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, disciplinary rooms, principals' offices.” As Nguyen suggests, geographies of borders and bordering have demonstrated nation-state borders as inherently liminal spaces, complicated by geographies of “offshore border policing, remote detention, antiterrorist legislation, and legally ambiguous zones of interception and detention between states” (Mountz 2015; 185; Mountz et al. 2012; Mountz 2011). The liminality of spaces such as homes, cars, schools, and borders not only complicates our understanding of policing in zones with no clear jurisdiction, but also invisibilizes policing’s harms within these often-overlooked spaces (ibid; Loyd and Mountz 2018; Hiemstra 2019).

Such scholarship on liminal spaces discusses the role of police in blurring the lines between public and private space through carceral circuitry, the extension of prison technologies into schools and other ambiguously public spaces, or the invasion of home-space. But there are many more works that do not—thus I conclude this section by shifting the call-for-more-work. In Correia and Wall’s critique, “In many valuable texts on prisons and punishment, the police are present, lurking on the page, arresting,

harassing, and confining poor people of color. But all too often, the connection between police power and state violence is not directly articulated, and police—as idea, institution and process—remains elusive” (Corriea and Wall 2018: 7). The field of carceral geography is flourishing—there have been five *Progress* reports in as many years (Martin 2020; Moran et al. 2017; Gill et al. 2016; Bonds 2018; Cassidy et al. 2019) -- but geographers have paid relatively less attention to police. Therefore, there is room for more work at the nexus of police and prison. Further research could examine police’s role in carcerality’s spatial reach, as agents of forced mobility and containment, and, given the black-boxing of prisons, as the most consistently visible human form of carcerality shaping everyday life.

### Complicating Scale

Fyfe’s (1991) call for more attention to policing at different scales included a scalar trichotomy of local, regional, and national; he argued the last was least studied. Indeed, the city-scale dominates police scholarship given police’s construction as fundamentally local (Seigel 2018). Yet as Yarwood (2007) began to address, scale is not a neatly nested hierarchy; police were more influenced by governmental than local priorities, and an increase in intra-agency policing impacted the policing of local space. A trend among minor police geographies is linking disparate scales and places. Those I describe as minor Cuomo terms “feminist” (most in this paper are), but her observation is the same: these works “demonstrate much broader perspectives because they’re able to theorize across scales. Major theorists have trouble doing that because they’re stuck at the

same scale, the scale of the state. Feminist geographers show how patriarchy extends across scale, intimate-local-global” (personal correspondence 2021).

It is less productive to analyze the home as an isolated scale of analysis or as subsumed within the “local” of Fyfe’s scalar trichotomy. Home is connected to public space: take feminist groups claiming public space to protest misogynistic violence condoned by the public but often occurring in private space (LeBrón 2020). Domestic violence is also connected to national trends in police reluctance-to-respond to domestic violence calls and more recent mandatory arrest policies—equally widespread yet implemented piecemeal at department scales (Cuomo 2020b). Within any department, there remain uneven implementations of these reforms; unstably housed low-income women disproportionately risk losing their children to Child Protective Services when police respond to their calls (ibid). Young BIPOC, trans, and queer women make up most victims of police sexual abuse, even when they call on police for protection (Ritchie 2017).

The examples above relate to calls-for-protection, but scales of policing tangle in other ways. Shabazz describes how Black migrants to Chicago were constricted at multiple scales; their movement was difficult within the overcrowded space of the kitchenettes they were forced to live in, and they were unable to move to other neighborhoods because of racialized housing restrictions (ibid). Such covenants “were the tactical and sociospatial tool that carved up the city’s geography along racial lines, fostering deep and profound unequal distribution of resources based on color” (Shabazz 2015: 41). Thus, Shabazz’s multi-scalar historical analysis helps explain Chicago’s contemporary landscape—its uneven development and urban planning— and its police

patterns. National police campaigns in Turkey bring ‘service,’ surveillance, and violence into civilians’ homes (Akarsu 2020a). Akarsu not only triangulates between home, housing complex, and nation (2020b), but also links policing in Turkey and the US, Istanbul, and Dallas. Her own call is for scholars to “develop much-needed cross-regional discussions on policing, pointing to the constitutive contradictions of police forces globally” (2020a: np).

Such foldings of space could be seen as “topologies of policing” (Akarsu 2020a), implying relationality not only between contradictory forms of police power, but in Secor’s conception of spatial topologies, between the subject and its lived space, and between the two cities that are folded into simultaneous view (2012). These global connections can also be conceived of as counter-topographies that uncover parallels and trace lines between sites (Katz 2004). These lines are at times directional; we can trace flows of police policy and technology from the private sphere to the public, from prisons to streets, from state to state, nation to nation, or city to globe. Former New York City mayor Giuliani exported his ‘Zero-Tolerance’ policing to Mexico City (Mountz and Curran 2009), while the city’s police commissioner Bratton went on to lead a global policing advisory firm (Weichselbaum 2016). The US government develops police technologies and policies overseas and brings them back before Europe imports them; those that Britain or Israel invent flow to the US; and partnerships are built across allied states (Kundnani 2016). More than tracing flows or police power, though, counter-topographies challenge scalar trichotomies and dismantle dichotomies of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ opening space for “political projects that confront what it means to live—everywhere—in the shards of capitalist modernity,” which police have helped shape and continue to

serve. “If capitalism is anything,” write Correia and Wall (2018: 5), “it is a well-ordered police state.”

‘Major’ theory might stop at a critique of global capitalism and policing’s role in it, using international parallels to prove the inescapable reach of capitalism’s police state. But minor police geographies reach to the smallest scales to find points of resistance or exception and use counter-topographies to “imagin[e] and mak[e] change across scale, space, and setting” (Katz 2004: 259). It stretches “locally situated analyses” of policing in all its forms to view multiple sites at once and better understand the whole, which, crucially, allows us to ‘transform and redefine “the meanings of the world we are collectively making” *across scales and sites* (Mei-Singh 2021: 15). Thus, through the play of scale and site, we can find cracks in the totalizing portrayal of police today. These cracks can be viewed as “the impasse, the space of betweenness,” which is both the condition and the aim of becoming minor” (Secor and Linz 2017: 568). While dangerous and liable to close, the impasse, in line with Katz’s hope for counter-topographies, offers “the decomposition of structures, new configurations, new connections” (ibid). Police geographies need such minor theories of space so that we might identify cracks in the seeming totality of police and forge connections that allow us to split those cracks wide open.

#### **Part IV: Conclusion**

This paper has taken seriously various calls for more attention to police geographies, emphasizing, in agreement, geography’s well-suitedness to police scholarship, and policing’s role in shaping, complicating, and entangling spaces and



scales. Yet I have argued that the discipline stands to gain more from acknowledging the ways these calls have been answered than from continuing to insist on scholarly gaps. I have posited the intersectional positionality of those alleging a gap and those writing under-cited police geographies as one reason for the competing perceptions of dearth and wealth—and have pointed to some of the many more BIPOC, queer, trans, feminist scholars conducting innovative police geographies today. Furthermore, these works employ tenets of Katz’s (1996) minor theory that Secor and Linz (2017: 568) summarize so well as “engaged, feminist, political geography that would emanate from the very place where feminist contributions had been erased, from the ‘space of betweenness’ ... lodged in the midst of major theory.”

Minor police geographies reject simplified ‘solutions,’ staying with the troubles discussed above. They complicate our understanding of space and scale and policing’s role in shaping them, yet they do not leave us mired in contradictions, paralyzed into inaction by masculinist depictions of policing as globally unified, singular, and total (Leszczynski 2019). They accomplish these feats in three ways. First, they hold space for violence, grief, and anger, while pointing to the opportunity police crises presents to bring attention to sensational racist police violence *and* its routinized forms, “which must be undone if we are to build a more livable, just, and free world” (Pelot-Hobbs 2020: n.p.). The framework of Black ecologies has been used in police geographies to map “Black people’s seemingly endless proximity to disaster”—such as police protection of White property at the expense of Black lives—*and* see beyond historic violence to concrete examples of abolitionist futurity, such as the movement #carenotcops (Williams 2020: n.p.)

Second, minor police geographies involve participants in both gathering data and research framing. For Nguyen (2020a; 2021), this has meant ‘studying up’ because participants did not want to be the subject of more ‘state ethnographies’ (Muñiz 2015) but wanted information on the state antiterrorism programs creeping into their communities. Community needs shape minor dissemination too; Muñiz (2015) used her community research “to challenge the use of gang injunctions” while Nguyen produced not only scholarly articles, but interviews, letters to congress, community reports, and toolkits (see Nguyen and Zahzah 2020; Nguyen 2020b; Nguyen and Southorn 2019; Nguyen and Krueger 2016). There is a need for more scholarly work that recognizes and cites alternative modes of knowing. Here, I have aimed to show the wealth of specifically scholarly work. But if my call has been for geographers to recognize the existing wealth of police *scholarship*, I anticipate a future call for geographers to learn from art, creative practice, and social media and contribute to conversations on police through practice, organizing, and teaching.

Third, in addition to research shaped by community members, minor police geographies contribute to understanding of what community can mean. Cuomo, who provided years of advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, calls for “a collective sense of responsibility among all community members for supporting survivors and holding abusers accountable” (2020b: 18). Adding an intersectional focus, Crenshaw et al. write: “In order to ensure safe and healthy Black communities, we must address police violence against Black women with equal outrage and commitment” as state-violence against cis-Black men (or, I would add, White women) receives. Lebrón writes of what such “empowered communities” might look like, sharing a Puerto Rican feminist

collective's demands for necessary steps towards "a true sense of safety" for women and other marginalized populations in Puerto Rico, which "create new geographies of freedom" (2020: n.p.). Another way to support communities that provide safety in place of police is through pedagogy. Making space for students to explore their own accountability, Loyd (2020: n.p.) suggests thinking of those who inspire us and asking, "What are their daily or regular practices of community-building?" Such questions, teaching, advocacy, and scholarship on community accountability are essential to moving beyond problem-centered abolitionist visions (e.g., Correia and Wall's (2018) "Fuck the Police") towards solutions. Thus, this paper has shown that many of the calls for police geographies have been answered: in innovative, feminist, participatory, activist, abolitionist—or minor—ways. We are closer, then, to not only imagining (Geiseking 2020), but enacting otherwise.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: RELEVANT RESEARCH FROM A SINKING SHIP

### **Relevance**

Because of a lack of record-keeping even of trackable police violence, the lack of media coverage of the police killings and abuse of BIPOC women and tgnpc, and the difficulty in quantifying the everyday constrained mobilities, fears, senses of neglect and lack of protection that civilians face, it is difficult to say whether policing is any more ‘in crisis’ than it has been since its inception. Just what that inception should be traced to is debated among police scholars—they range from the enclosure movement to urbanization to capitalism and protecting class interests to slave patrols (Fyfe 1991; Correia and Wall 2018; Murakawa 2014; Browne 2015). Regardless, there can exist no police without the construction of who deserves to be protected from whom.

In spring of 2020 during the national uprisings against racialized police violence, when calls to defund police departments were normalized and the concept of police abolition became more widely understood, it seemed that the institution of police faced a newly pressing crisis. But police have weathered the storm. Many departments including Cincinnati’s even gained funding, as they often do in moments of crisis, thanks to reform efforts that funnel money into more trainings, oversight, cameras, predictive policing technology, and less-lethal weapons (Correia and Wall 2018, Gilmore 2007, Murakawa 2014).

This longstanding pattern somewhat belies the response commonly received when I have given my dissertation elevator pitch for the last six years: widened eyes, a knowing nod, and “oh that is *so* relevant right now!” They said this in 2014 when I began the dissertation and the federal class-action lawsuit against NYPD’s stop-and-frisk practices

closed with a landmark ruling against the department leading to federal oversight. The trial revealed that 5 million people had been stopped in the last decade, mostly Black and Latino, 90% of whom were released without even a ticket. In other words, this was a remarkably low ‘hit rate’ or rate of accurate stops (Goel et al. 2016). As Federal Judge Shira Scheindlin noted in her landmark ruling on New York’s Stop and Frisk policies, unlike their more accurate assessment of White criminality, the police were wrong about their suspicions of Black and Latino civilians 90% of the time (Devareaux 2013).

“How relevant,” was said the same year, after the chokehold killing of Eric Garner, and a month later when 18-year-old Michael Brown was shot, both unarmed and nonviolent, which is not to say that their killings would be justified had they been armed. It was said that fall, when unarmed 17-year-old Laquan McDonald was killed and 12-year-old Tamir Rice was shot while playing with a toy gun. In 2015, Freddie Gray did not survive the ‘rough ride’ police took him on, Sam DuBose was pulled over in Cincinnati for a missing license plate and was shot in the head, then Walter Scott was killed after being pulled over for having a defective light and Sandra Bland was found dead in a jail cell under suspicious circumstances after failing to signal before a lane change.

“How *timely*” was said in summer 2016 when Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and Terence Crutcher were killed. That year, a *Vanity Fair* article began with a line that could have been written in 2020: “As the nation reels from a series of high-profile fatal shootings of black men by police officers...” (Makarechi 2016). In 2018, Stephon Clark was shot 20 times while unarmed and alone in his grandmother’s backyard garnered brief attention, before Botham Jean was killed in his own apartment ‘accidentally’ by an off-duty officer. In 2020, Ahmaud Arbery was shot while out jogging, Breonna Taylor was

killed in her own home, and an officer killed George Floyd pinning his knee to Floyd's neck, at which point the world erupted in protest.

Clearly some questions around this repeated claim of relevance are warranted. First, is research relating to these killings automatically relevant? I would argue that *relevant* research on racialized police violence must be attentive to gender as well. In all those years, there were many more deaths—of (largely unarmed) Black women, both cis and trans, and trans men, that garnered far less attention. Between the deaths of Jean and Taylor in their own apartments, Atatiana Jefferson was playing video games and watching her nephew at home, though she grabbed a handgun when she heard noises outside and was then shot by police. Cynthia Fields, 60, was shot by a stray police bullet. Police shot Alteria Woods, a pregnant 21-year-old, when their actual suspect used her as a human shield. Sandra Bland is a rare exception to the trend of Black women's killings receiving little attention; yet the day after she died, 18-year-old Kindra Chapman was also found dead in her cell, after being arrested for stealing a cell phone, as was 18-year-old Sheneque Proctor a year earlier, after telling police she was ill and receiving no medical attention.

George Floyd's name rang throughout the racial justice uprisings, but less heard was that of Black trans-man Tony McDade who was killed only two days after Floyd. Weeks before Freddie Gray was killed, Mya Hall, an unarmed Black trans woman, was shot in her car when she made a wrong turn into NSA property. Typical of the limited mainstream media coverage of her death, the *Baltimore Sun* headline read: "Driver killed at NSA had history of robbery, prostitution" (see Duncan and Rector 2015). Yes, research

on the parameters and impacts of racial, spatial, and technified policing is relevant: after the killings of both Black men *and* women and tgnpcp.

Above are only a minority of the many relatively unremarked police killings of Black women. While my research focuses on the impacts of policing behind the scenes, there is a need for more critical scholarship that considers the spatiality and gender of these killings. For instance, Taylor and Woods were women killed at home, a sphere often considered and even constructed by police as private, protected from public attention, as I discuss in Chapter 4. Jean was killed at home by a female officer allegedly believing Jean to be in *her* home. Her defense was that she thought he violated her private sphere and was justified in shooting him to protect herself and home. How are constructions of gender and private space used to justify murder or provoke outrage at such killings? So many legal defenses are spatial and rely on this distinction: ‘stand your ground,’ ‘the castle doctrine,’ and the assessment of threat by determining whether one looked ‘out of place.’ As Chapter 4 argues, geography is well-positioned to research the ways policing transcends space and spheres while also using the constructed public/private binary to strategically refuse service.

Another question arises: given that is not even about the events that precipitate the “how timely” phrase, is it timely in the context of these deaths? Yes, because as Chapter 4 argued, everyday ‘indirect’ impacts and sensational killings are two sides of the same coin, soft and hard power, the iron fist in the velvet glove. Research on racial, spatial, and technified policing (including surveillance) is relevant every day that its impacts are felt, which is every day. Yes, we need the #sayhername, #sayhisname, and #saytheirname movements to memorialize the names of those killed and tortured by police or left to die

in custody or misgendered and deadnamed by police after their deaths. But in addition to these names, bio-spatial policing impacts Ray, the Black father who was stopped by police for riding his bike the wrong way up a street when trying to get medicine for his sick child and stopped often leaving the local market, and Matrice, the Black mother who has a ticket on her record because she told an officer that she would not allow him to ticket her young daughter for riding her bike on the sidewalk instead of in a four-lane street. And Maria, the grandmother and school bus driver who no longer drives or even leaves the house, or Frank who moved out of his neighborhood, both to avoid police harassment.

From Chapter 3, we could add to the list of commemorated names every child in the study, all of whom mentioned an awareness that policing *could* be fatal, racist, or tear their families apart, many of whose it had. There was Martel, the Black 5-year-old whose father had been in jail his whole life; Cardi, the 9-year-old whose mother had been arrested and lost custody, who alleged that police were good people because they gave children gifts, but said she had never seen them protect anyone, only arrest; or Ramírez who wanted to “live somewhere where there’s not a lot of cops” and feared calling the either his father or police during an armed home invasion because the police would not get there in time to protect him, but would arrest his father or himself for their acts of self-and-family-defense. All three of them had seen family members arrested and said it was “scary.”

In addition to those examples from Chapter 3, we could add some of the many other examples from Cincinnati fieldwork: Aiden, the 6-year-old biracial boy who often initiated a game in which he directed others to “run away! The police are coming!” and



had in fact been arrested and institutionalized (see Coda). Or Kailah, the biracial 5-year-old girl who told me that she had been arrested for stealing a candy bar because her mother smelled it on her breath and called the police to teach her a lesson. According to her, the police obliged, transporting her and detaining her in the district station for several hours before she was picked up. My ability to fact-check her story was limited; I could not violate Kailah's privacy by asking anyone else if this has happened. But from casual conversations with her mother, as we wrangled our children, about discipline and the challenges of raising girls; and equally off-record conversations with Cincinnati police officers on the trouble with 'kids these days,' Kailah's story seemed plausible.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, we could add to the list of those impacted by policing all those common targets of what Ana Muñoz calls 'state ethnography' and Nicole Nguyen's participants explicitly asked her not to perform: further research on the behaviors of those impacted by state securitization, which can be, and is, used by the state. We could even add the low income and BIPOC children in my study who spent time answering (or deflecting) my questions about policing (while their more affluent peers were less likely to be included in such studies) and had to insist on their right *not* to be responsible for solving the problems with police. When we think about who is impacted by police violence, we could think about every woman and man, cis or trans, gender nonconforming person, and child whose everyday lives—mobilities, homes, sense of security, self-expression, and constellations of care—are affected. In this way, research on policing's everyday impacts is indeed relevant and related to more attention-grabbing contexts.

Given this extended timeline of police killings and everyday ‘indirect’ impacts, more questions arise: is this research still *timely*? Will it continue to be? Will it always be? Yes, yes, and no. The goal of the work is to find alternate modes of safety while simultaneously pushing to defund police departments, leading towards their eventual replacement with structural and communal measures to address the root causes of violence and protect those who still suffer it. The whole point of the work is that one day research on police violence will no longer be relevant. But this will be long, slow work, and much of it ‘behind the scenes’ of the spectacles of violence against Black men sensationalized by media. Relevant work will focus on women, trans, and gender nonconforming people of all races—with attention toward anti-Black racism, often hidden violence against Indigenous people, the role of immigrant-status in police targeting.

The focus across this dissertation on gender grew from each article to the next. It was lacking in the first article, but I entered my second field site with the goal of recruiting roughly equal numbers of girls and boys and opening space for them to talk about the ways their experiences of policing might be gendered, influenced by their own or the officer’s gender. I found no significant difference between how girls and boys viewed police—after all, this was never meant to be a comparative study and the sample size would not have borne it out. Yet girls and boys interpreted the question of whom they needed protecting *from* differently. Girls often described “creepy men,” real or as a perceived threat, to them or other women in their families. They also more commonly shared stories about harassment and violence against women in their families. In some cases, their brothers were research participants as well and present in the stories their

sisters shared, but did not share these stories with me themselves. I expected that girls would be aware of facing different dangers—they were—and express greater desire for police and surveillance even if conflicted—they did not. I also expected, given the common push for more women officers by police and reformers alike, that children would feel more favorable towards female police. I was wrong.

Recall Frank from Chapter 2 who said, “a nervous cop’s more likely to shoot someone” (in Kaufman 2016: 78). While he was referring to “rookie cops,” the same logic was applied by participants to “girl police.” Londyn, from Chapter 3, drew a smiling figure with pigtails and a skirt when prompted to draw police, because she saw a lot of “girl police officers.” When I asked if she felt different around ‘girl or boy’ police, she said, “I feel scared when girls are around, because girls are more like, they don’t like to be scared.” Prompted to say more, she continued, “Because when they scared they like, because what I do when ppl scare me, I just, I go like this”—here she punched the air behind her shoulder without turning around—“cause if they come at me I just go like this, and cause when police officers get scared they go head n grab they gun.” Future research could expand on this finding and add to critical scholarship pushing back against the dominant political narrative that adding women will improve policing (see LeBrón 2018; 2020 for examples of this critique). There is also more to be learned about the intersection of domestic violence and carceral feminism, as discussed in Chapter 4, not only for survivors but their family members.

To remain relevant, police research must also transcend income-classes, but not treat race or socio-economic status only as variables to be compared to a ‘control.’ That is, U.S. policing targets low-income and BIPOC civilians, whose experiences are worthy in

their own right, not only as compared to White or affluent groups. This was a critique my fieldwork received in both sites' IRB processes: where was the comparison with wealthier and White civilians? As mentioned in Chapter 3, there is a great deal of research on 'children's'—an unqualified noun—experiences of and with technology and securitization. Yet most of it centers White and wealthier children and their voluntary interactions with technology (e.g., Plowman 2016; Ergler et al. 2016; Wilson 2016) or their White parents' fear of the classed and racialized Other from whom their children must be protected (Katz 2001). The subjects of these works are treated as inherently worth learning about. Thus, it has been my intentional choice to center low-income children's (many of whom are BIPOC) experiences as worth studying in their own right, while also allowing race and poverty to come to emerge naturally as factors influencing the nexus of policing, children's lives, fears, imaginaries, and networks of care.

### **Saving a Sinking Ship—and Not with New Calls for Research**

By way of conclusion, I will note that in some ways I have entered and exited the dissertation backwards. The conclusion with its wider context of police violence could be seen to 'set the stage' for my research on bio-spatial policing. Conversely, the introduction drew connections among chapters, particularly among the theoretical constructions guiding each, from bio-spatial policing and technocratic feedback loops to constellations of care to competing strains of police abolition and minor police geographies. It reflexively noted shortcomings and areas of future work, and in the style of conclusions, made something of a call—for both participatory research and widespread dissemination of knowledge, not only that which we produce but that which we read, through publications, conferences, community-engagement, and pedagogy.

Each chapter avoids making an explicit ‘call for more work’ but ends with its own suggestion. Chapter 2 urged scholars and activists to take up the analytic of bio-spatial profiling to analyze how racial and spatial police technologies and tactics strategically play off of or conceal each other, and to focus on both spatial police practices and lived experiences. In my research design for Chapter 3, I followed the latter goal in particular, researching police and children simultaneously: practices and effects. The paper advocates moving beyond a fear-centered framework in police geographies towards one which frames participants more holistically and allows us together to envision otherwise. Rather than making another call for *more* scholarship, Chapter 4 argues that longstanding calls in police geographies have already been answered, and it is time to read, engage, listen, and cite before making any more allegations of lack. This *suggestion* likely extends to other subfields as well: before claiming on a panel that you are the only one doing the work, or justifying your work with an alleged gap in the literature, do some extra research to see whether women, BIPOC, neurodivergent, disabled, or junior scholars (including graduate students), activists and organizers, or others variably marginalized by the neoliberal university, have already shared knowledge in some format on the topic.

I organized the beginning and the end this way because I did not want to end on the theoretical contributions. I do not want my contribution to be a new analytic framework or an advance in theorizing constellations (I did note, after all, that I am afraid of outer space.) Nor do I want to put out yet another imperative-tense demand or call for the production of more knowledge, regardless of its citation practices. Why? Because nearly everyone is tired. We were tired before the pandemic, and we are living in it still,

in ways that have exacerbated nearly every academic inequality for students, faculty, and staff. A *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2020: 9) research brief found that compared to 32% in fall 2019, a year later 69% felt “very” or “extremely” stressed, experiencing “a mental exhaustion.” But we are not evenly tired.

Marginalized scholars—including BIPOC, first generation, low-income, disabled, neuro-divergent, immigrant, queer, trans, and gender nonconforming, and non-white-cis-male parents—have long been asked to do more with fewer rewards, less security, and often more competing demands. But this group seems to be a growing percentage as even within the past pandemic years, the universities have created more visiting assistant professorships, including those *unpaid*, adjunct positions, and non-tenure-track assistant professorships (Caterine 2020); and made efforts to recruit more minoritized students and faculty without changing the structures that oppress them once inside.

Mothers in the pandemic lost childcare, sleep, and mental and physical health, yet were held to the same standards as child-free colleagues. Of course, before and during the pandemic, we don’t want to be held to lower standards; we want affordable childcare that does not have two-year waitlists. We want to be able to bring a child to work when there is no other option, and we want the choice of whether or not to breast/chestfeed to be between our bodies, babies, and selves, rather than determined by lack of lactation rooms or supportive policies. We want paid parental leave, loss-leave, sick leave. We do not want more self-care tips nor even necessarily more mental health resources though we will take them; we want *time* to care for ourselves and others. We want not to experience humiliations, microaggressions, and stresses that we (students and faculty) are overburdening the mental health systems. And if resources are to be offered, we want

them to protect our students, rather than coming in response to our students' deaths (see Childress 2019 on two UKY student suicides in one semester). We are not asking for these gains to drop down from above; we are fighting for them tooth and nail and would prefer not to lose our jobs over this fight. Among other things, to put it lightly.

Many are jumping ship. The *Chronicle* report found that since the start of 2020, 73% of their respondents across faculty ranks had seriously considered leaving academia. An *Inside Higher Ed* article aptly titled "Mass Exodus" states that "The COVID-19 crisis stands to drive more Ph.D.s from academia than any event in living memory" (Caterine 2020: n.p.). Before the pandemic, universities were closing; more still will be forced to permanently shut down during Covid, and many others faced hiring freezes and cancelled searches (ibid). In fall 2020, a one-year postdoctoral fellowship in Missouri received 477 applications, "a record number," the quality of which was "very high" (personal correspondence). *Leaving Academia: A Practical Guide* by Christopher Caterine was published that same fall.

I cannot divorce my positionality (for instance, White, able-bodied, not-always-noticeably neuro-divergent, 3<sup>rd</sup>-generation academic, middle-income background, English-as-first-language and U.S. citizen) from my view that academia is worth saving. Whatever your view on the matter though, if we continue to do our work from within academia we'll need all hands on deck. And we will need to reorganize distribution of effort to reward time spent patching holes for our collective survival as well as that of the work that geographers do—*teaching*, mentoring, researching, theory building, writing, mapping, *reading*, activism, organizing, community-engagement, creative dissemination, collaboration, and opening paths for imagining and enacting otherwise.

## CODA: In Constellation With

One area where the metaphor of constellations shines is in helping map the role of those who aim to accompany children as they negotiate their well-being in the face of targeted state securitization. Simpson warns against ‘being in constellation with’ white liberal allies for “whiteness is not to be centered in resurgence” (2017: 228). She is not warning white people away from solidarity, but rather warns against any radical movement seeking white ‘friends’ and allies as ‘the promised land.’ Her caution encourages skepticism of the (typical) way this non-profit afterschool program and summer camp of my field site was run, which is as much a critique of the state neglect that placed responsibility for poor children’s well-being and survival on the shoulders of a White few retired teachers, a radical White pastor with debilitating mental health concerns, and a rotating cast of volunteers. These volunteers were mainly white as well; college students during the school year and mission groups who would come for a week at a time of summer camp. Well-dressed white donors who would drop down one time with their children in tow and serve a meal, occasionally giving a speech about how good it felt to help.

I attended volunteer meetings as an observer and my fieldnotes document frustration at the repetition of themes among each new group. During summer camp, mission groups provided free and untrained labor as camp counselors labeled ‘mentors.’ Of the mentors’ second day, I wrote, “They’re at the point in their learning curve where they think they can solve problems the long-term staff can’t, have bonded with the kids,



have revelations about their lives that are valuable and new. Tropes include not only dissecting behavioral problems and justifying them with difficult home-lives, but almost over-compensating or being unduly impressed (e.g. in the line of a white person calling a black person 'articulate'), wanting to talk all about how inspiring these children are.” One evening the mentors were raving about a 15-year-old Black girl, Chenoa, and the goals she had expressed to them. They said they believed it, she would be a surgeon, and they (they each reported with pride), encouraged, and believed in her. The mentors said with admiration that they had all thought she was much older than 15, framing their statistically typical mis-aging of Black children as a sign of respect for her maturity. In the previous week’s volunteer group, the focus had also been on a teenage Black girl, directed at her much-scorned false lashes, “inappropriate for a girl so young.” In volunteer and staff meetings, higher-income white ‘allies’ centered themselves. They simultaneously fetishized and patronized poor and BIPOC children, and paid lip service to individual support such as encouraging Chenoa’s dreams, while neither acknowledging nor challenging the structural barriers Chenoa would have to overcome.

My fieldnotes reveal my desire to differentiate myself from the Other volunteers. There were many genuine differences, including my commitment to alter the structural oppressions children faced. In response to Chenoa’s pedestal and the scorn of her friend, I had written, “It's not fair to put all this hope and judgement on the shoulders of a child.” But I hid behind my role as researcher and did not speak up in either girl’s defense. It was one of many instances in which, despite disidentifying with the other middle-income White volunteers, my role there was not radically different.

Ultimately, children in the study were already savvy about with whom they were in constellation. The paper has focused on children's choice to be in constellation with family rather than police. Yet I read Simpson's caution about white allies as directed at my participants as well, warning them against trusting any of the want-to-be white allies dropping uninvited into their lives—a caution that reflects and honors children's existing wariness. Much to volunteers' dismay, children did not gravitate towards them as mentors, nor did children remember mentors returning from the summer before.

When each fresh batch of mentors arrived, some of the children hung closer to me. One day I approached Ramírez who was sulking alone on the outskirts of the playground. He shared that his new mentor was 'annoying him' because "he keeps shushing me when I'm not even making any noise." I watched other young children display impressive emotional intelligence as they quickly read each new mentor and played on their particular desires for connection. I knew what they were doing not only because I saw the same behaviors play out cyclically each week, but also because they had done the same with me.

On my first day, I had a chance to play a board game with a six-year-old biracial boy and had fallen for his humor and hugs. When I requested to be paired with Aiden next time, the director warned me that they did not pair new volunteers with him because he could be too difficult to handle. I read this as the over-disciplining and early criminalization of Black children and requested to be paired with Aiden anyway. Yet my immediate assessment that I knew more about this child than the director—a retired elementary school teacher who had known and loved Aiden for most of his life—was not unlike the other volunteers' assumptions that they knew more and could swoop in and

turn children's lives around. I watched them fall for Aiden each week, only to spend meetings ranting about how impossible he was and strategizing about what he needed—therapy, medication, more discipline, more love.

In the mentors' desire to feel like allies, it did not occur to them that Aiden was already in constellation with those who were fighting for his access to those very things, with little help from the state. He had a mother who loved him, but Child Protective Services had separated the family and placed the children in a rotating set of foster homes. He had a therapist at school whom he could not access while suspended. And if he was lacking in discipline at home, there was no shortage of it from the school or state. Left unattended by a likely exasperated volunteer, he had wandered out of the main summer camp room and into the sanctuary where he was playing with matches and candles. Aiden fled when a fire started but was later caught on video footage. He was taken into police custody and detained for a week, though I heard competing accounts of whether he was in the juvenile detention center or a psychiatric ward. Either way, combined with his frequent suspensions, Aiden did not lack discipline any more than he lacked the other entities the volunteers suggested he could use. He had care from his siblings, mother, and the program director who was a constant in his life unlike the rest of us who came and went. Though I stayed two years instead of a week or semester and enjoyed the affection and trust built in this time, I left too, taking their drawings, stories, and secrets with me, and giving nothing concrete back.

The institutional review board was concerned about the emotional impact of my eventual separation. While extractive relationships are harmful when working with any population, I believe they overstated the importance of an adult researcher in children's

lives and underestimated the constellations of care low-income BIPOC children already had in place. Smith et al. note that constellations are “differently composed across times and cultures with different storied associations that include and exclude specific stars.” With this in mind, researchers need not assert themselves into the constellations of support children articulate, yet may envision themselves as minor and fleeting stars in an overlapping constellation.

## APPENDIX. METHODS

This appendix will first explain the choice of my main fieldsite of Cincinnati, with reference to its relation to the other two sites as well, then cover research questions and methods used in this site. I focus on the methods for Chapter 3, which will be submitted as two separate articles, because this project comprised the bulk of my dissertation research.

### **Site Selection**

The dissertation began with a focus on New York City policing. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, when I revisited unused and differently-analyzed transcripts from my Master's thesis on the convergence of experimental state policies from welfare to policing, I found spatial overtones worth pursuing, particularly the ways mobilities were policed through fear in targeted neighborhoods. That project focused on two high-crime, heavily policed neighborhoods of Northeast Brooklyn. I initially chose the neighborhoods—Brownsville and East New York—because they were not only high-crime, majority-minoritized, and low-income, but happened to be two areas in which an experimental welfare pilot program coincided with a pilot hot-spots police program. This provided a rich site of analysis of bio-spatial policing's impacts in 2011-2012, and residual effects are likely still felt. However, both programs dissipated or shifted form and site, rendering these particular neighborhoods no longer as crucial. Meanwhile, they were difficult to reside in for fieldwork; even in low-income neighborhoods, New York rent is difficult on a graduate student stipend, and much of the housing stock was taken up by government-subsidized housing projects. Thus I developed the analytical

framework of bio-spatial policing that informed the dissertation using policy and media analysis and treating the transcripts similarly to archival resources.

My decision to switch field-sites—before submitting my dissertation proposal—mainly came down to two factors. First, in contrast with New York’s exceptionalism, the mid-sized, middle American city of Cincinnati provides a generalizable case study in its typical history of racialized police violence, “place-based policing strategy” (CPD 2016: 8) and child-oriented programs. Cincinnati’s racial composition (roughly equal black and white populations (Census Data 2015)) is conducive to a project focusing specifically on anti-black racism. Furthermore, unlike New York whose reputation for police brutality and excess force can be countered with arguments for police reform, Cincinnati is a model of police reform and community policing. To show the ways policing impacts children even here will resist the simplistic reform narrative and call for deeper, more complex examinations of policing itself. Second, it was important to me to live in my field-site, and for more than a summer at that. This would facilitate regular and consistent participant observation, some contextual understanding of participants’ experiences, some credibility among police and public-school staff I researched with, and greater rapport with my neighbor-participants.

The study was based in Cincinnati’s Police District 5, central among districts, and having median crime and arrest rates. It comprises 10 neighborhoods, representing, “rich economic and social diversity...and residential communities ranging from public housing to million dollar homes” (CPD 2017a). Of these, my home and primary focus was a neighborhood I have renamed Coalrain, which I further anonymize in the stories shared by children in the neighborhood. Running north-south between train lines and I-75, it is

racially diverse, and has a lower income than 79.9% of U.S. neighborhoods. With 32.2% of the children living below the federal poverty line, it has a higher rate of childhood poverty than 75.0% of U.S. neighborhoods (neighborhoodscout 2017). While this number is skewed by the presence of a small correctional center in Coalrain, “[T]here are more incarcerated people living here than 99.1% of neighborhoods in the U.S.” (neighborhoodscout 2017). It also houses the CPD Youth Services Unit. Thus, while District 5 represents a varied and generalizable portion of Cincinnati, Coalrain allowed for a focused investigation into the prevalent presence of criminal justice institutions and the lived experiences of poor children of color.

### **Research Questions**

I began with two main questions: First, what are the parameters of police interactions with young Black children in Cincinnati? In the U.S., young Black children are disproportionately targeted by the criminal justice system. There is no federal minimum age at which children can be arrested and tried for juvenile delinquency. Of states with a minimum, the youngest is six (NJDC 2017). Black and Latino children and youth make up 70% of children arrested, and 80% of those convicted (Rovner 2016). Between 2003 and 2013, while there was a drop in total youths committed to juvenile facilities, “the racial gap between black and white youth in secure commitment increased by 15%<sup>6</sup>” (ibid: n.p.). Likewise, Black residents of Cincinnati are disproportionate subjects of traffic stops (Rosemeyer 2017). Troublingly, an early warning system to detect racial bias in the CPD, developed in the early 2000s, fell out of use by 2012,

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<sup>6</sup> According to *The Sentencing Project*, In 2013, the rate of committed White youth was 69 per 100,000, for Black youth, 294 per 100,000, and for American Indian youth, 254 per 100,000 (Rovner 2016)

despite continued allegations of profiling (ibid). The *objective* of RQ1 is to uncover the ways law enforcement in Cincinnati interacts with young Black children either as suspects or those in need of protection. My driving concern was how even young children can be caught up in the criminal justice system, and how they come to be portrayed as potential criminals within the official parameters of policy, law, and neighborhood police programs for children.

The second question initially asked, what are the impacts of bio-spatial policing on young Black children in Cincinnati? Blacks and Latinos are disproportionately stopped in relation to their involvement in crime and their share of the city's population (Baker 2010), and non-white victims of racial encounters are more likely to experience emotional trauma (Abu-Ras and Suarez 2009). Yet few studies have asked how children in particular are affected, or what they think about racialized policing. This question examined the impacts of bio-spatial policing on young Black children and involved them in the research process. I expected that children would have varying levels of fear and mistrust of police, which would impact their sense of security in different spaces, the choices they made, as well as their games and stories. I also expected that young Black children would have adapted in different ways to fear and mistrust of police, engaging in secret or overt subversions or conceptualize alternatives.

This second question shifted and expanded. While I remained attentive to children's racialized experiences of racialized policing, among my participants, all of whom were living at or below the poverty line, race did not appear to be a variable in their experiences and perceptions of policing. That is, while anti-Black racism is prevalent in Cincinnati policing, and likely in the lives of my participants, none had



positive experiences with police regardless of race. Furthermore, despite findings of blatant, rampant, and at times lethal racism within the police department, the dominant everyday lived experience of my participants seemed to be poverty. That is, their families did not have secure sources of food and housing, and children experienced hardships from multiple angles in addition to policing. Thus the question was broadened to focus on all child-participants' experiences of policing. It was also sharpened to address their everyday refusals of securitizing regimes, as discussed in Chapter 3.

## **Data Collection**

### Research with Police

My participant observation with police came not only through everyday life in Cincinnati but attendance at officer recruitment events, community meetings, and graduation from the six-week Citizen Police Academy. Because this took place at the police training academy, I was able to observe new recruits and seasoned officers in training. Our curriculum was taught by a different member of the force for each class, and covered topics from SWAT teams to terrorism to arrest laws to domestic violence. I also joined the American Society of Evidence Based Policing, of which I remain a member, and attended their 2019 annual meeting and the 2020 virtual annual meeting. Because the former was in Cincinnati that year, many attendees and presenters were members of the Cincinnati Police Department or police researchers at University of Cincinnati. This gave me the opportunity to observe discourse on Cincinnati policing and to 'schmooze' with officers after hours, conducting what might be considered 'informal interviews' that I took notes on privately between conversations. After making contacts

with officers, I engaged in email correspondence with officers and one commander, and was given permission to quote them in publications. I conducted a semi-structured in-person informational interview with a captain and a data analyst. I also did an audio-recorded 'ride-along' with a Cincinnati police officer for an 11-hour shift. During this time, I attended the district roll-call meeting, observed officers on breaks and together at crime scenes, and interviewed the officer I was riding with, with his permission. We also visited the juvenile justice center where I observed the booking of two young teenage Black boys.

### Research with Children

Although I conducted research with police simultaneously throughout the study years, my main focus was on children. I began with participant observation (Allsop et al. 2010), which took several forms: I lived in Coalrain within District 5 and within walking distance of the afterschool program and summer camp in which I based my research with children: Washington United Church of Christ (WUCC). I volunteered during afterschool and summer programs for two months before beginning interviews and continued to volunteer throughout my two years of research. Several days per week, I tutored, served community meals, played with children, and served as additional camp staff. After leaving the program each day, I took detailed fieldnotes. I also participated in daily life and mobilities in the neighborhood, spending time in the two playgrounds, the neighborhood diner, dollar store, bus stops and busses, and community events. I conducted routine walks, noting the presence of police and children at different times and spaces. These scheduled observations did not reveal as much as did everyday life. At

times it was difficult at times to separate my own life from my fieldwork, but perhaps this separation is somewhat constructed anyway. I have always carried a notebook with me constantly and recorded anything I wish to remember. These years in Coalrain were no different, besides the content of my recordings being more heavily shaped by the research questions that brought me there in the first place.

After building rapport, while continuing to volunteer, I used *non-representative sample recruitment* to solicit individual interviews with 30 children from ages five to 15 of all races and genders. While I aimed for roughly equal numbers of girls and boys, divided mainly between Black and White as the city and neighborhood's demographics show, the study was open to all program participants. This ensured that children did not feel excluded by not being invited to participate, nor did children in the study feel singled-out. It would have been difficult to select by race as not all children were aware of the concept, nor did all children fit within the gender binary. Slightly more girls than boys enrolled, with a racial mix of Black, White, Latinx, and biracial children.

We began with unstructured and child-friendly interviews, with trusted adults nearby. Play was encouraged; the interior-windowed interview room will hold familiar toys and books provided by the church, as well as art supplies I brought for the first year, and in the second year, an iPad and pencil for them to draw with. On the iPad, I used an app called Paper, which allowed each child to have their own digital notebook; they drew their self-portrait on the cover and I labeled it with their chosen alias. Each time we met, they could pick up where they left off, or simply doodle. No child ever tried to open a different program; the iPads were not distracting in that sense. They all had familiarity with the operating system and the way a touch screen works. Some distraction arose from

the many drawing options introduced; in addition to an endless array of colors as I had offered physically before, they now had the choice of utensils and utensil sizes. Unlike marker and paper drawing, they could now undo and erase, which took an unexpected amount of time. The ability to erase also meant that I lost a few useful drawings before I began to screen record, at which point even if they undid their drawing in order to have a fresh page (before they learned how to add a new one), I could screen-shot the recording. I did, however, check with each child to see if they stood by the image I captured. The screen-recording function also allowed me to analyze their process, and create videos for future dissemination, matched with the audio-recorded interview. More importantly, once I began screen-recording, I stopped video-recording the interviews. Despite IRB-approval, parental consent, and children's assent to video-record them, it did not seem ethical to me to introduce one more camera into their heavily-surveilled lives, particularly as I was asking how they felt about being on camera.

There are fewer iPad drawings than paper ones in the dissertation for two related reasons. First, I created templates in their notebooks to provide some standardization in otherwise largely unstructured interviews. For instance, where I had previously asked a set of questions about their everyday lives, both to build rapport and to see if police or surveillance would come up naturally, with the iPad I now had these questions written into the templates: prompts in each child's notebook would read: "a place I feel safe" or "a place I feel scared," or "who I turn to for protection." It took much longer to get past this question group when children were given the opportunity to draw each of these answers; they took much longer than I had expected. Combined with the pandemic cutting the research short, there were not as many images of policing in the iPads as on

paper. However, there are rich recorded clips of drawing-in-action, which I will edit into videos and submit for web-based publication, as well as disseminate more widely to organizers and in police-community meetings or public-school meetings.

Across all interviews, I invited breaks and companionable silences as they played or drew, and was cognizant of the importance of not speaking *for* children. Interviews were at first recorded on a digital video recorded in order to capture non-verbal communication, as all adult guardians and children provided consent/assent. However, despite IRB, parental, and child approval, this began to feel intrusive to me, particularly as the interview topics veered towards their feelings about being on camera. I switched, then, to audio-recording while screen recording their drawing process. This allowed me to match the audio and video and edit clips to make movies for disseminating in the future. It was also a helpful way to analyze the data, as I could watch the drawings take place alongside the audio.

As advised by the IRB, I did not initially mention police; interviews will begin with a question group entitled *typical day*, with subgroups of *family structure and dynamics, mobility* (including modes, times, and routes of various commutes), *style* (and how they might adapt it dependent on place and circumstance), and *play*. These guides were useful in initial interviews but were soon supplanted by more natural human conversation. Their goal was always to learn about children's lives, and open space for them to bring up policing if they wanted to.

Once discussion of police began, a new set of question groups loosely guided me. These included *encounters with police*, which comprises the same sub-categories as the non-police-oriented question group above, but included non-leading, open-ended

questions about police. For instance, the *family structure* subcategory will address whether the child has family in prison or who have been arrested. *Mobility* will ask whether children see police in the neighborhood, then when, where, and how that makes them feel. To avoid unduly influencing responses, I did not ask questions such as, “does that make you feel afraid.” *Style* would press them to consider times they may have adjusted their style for any reason, including to feel safer. *Play* would ask informational questions, such as whether there are more officers in some places of play than others, whether police have ever stopped them while playing, whether their play is affected by police presence, and how police might figure in imaginative play. Had I attempted to conduct structured interviews, this would have been at odds with participants’ pace and direction. Instead, I followed the children. This generated data, albeit through circuitous routes, on police interactions, whether direct or indirect, and how they feel about those interactions as well as imagined future ones. In initial interviews, children were invited to draw from prompts I gave throughout the conversation or to draw whatever they wanted. In follow-up interviews, children were invited to draw cartoons within pre-made templates. I walked them through methods for conveying emotion through visual storytelling.

Focus groups built on interviews, working with same subjects. The IRB urged me to protect children with favorable views of law enforcement from exposure to fear of police; interestingly, this was their main concern. Thus, I intended to conduct two sets of focus groups: subjects who report negative interactions with or perceptions of police during interviews, and those who do not. There were several fatal flaws to this plan. First, logistics: also in accordance with IRB advice, I interviewed children in a room with

interior windows onto the main program space, and open doors on both ends. It was impossible to control the flow of children. If a child joined us who had not given parental consent and assent to participate, or if my participants appeared not to want them there, I asked them to leave. But most children were friends with each other or related and requested to do interviews together, tried to recruit others, and excitedly invited their friends or siblings to join. Second, children in the program had more pressing things to do than be interviewed, as much as they requested that option. They had homework to finish, food to eat that would not necessarily be served at home, and games to play in an otherwise regimented day. Most of the interviews I conducted began with tutoring and ended with play. When assigned multiple children to tutor, if both were in the study and both finished their homework in time, that would become a group interview. Prioritizing children's other needs (and that day's desires for particular companionship) over my need to enforce separate focus groups (by perception, age, race, or gender) seemed more ethical than working with program staff to single out children I selected for a focus group.

The third and most important barrier to separate focus groups by police-perception was that children's views did not divide along that binary, nor had I expected them to. It struck me as interesting once again that the IRB office had not considered the possibility that children would have conflicting views of police. For my part, I had not expected *all* children to express conflicting views as they did. However, the IRB office need not have worried about protecting children from negative perceptions of police. There was no child in the study or the program or any race or age who had not been exposed to the idea that policing can be racist, violent, ineffective, and tear families apart.

I had also planned to separate focus groups sequentially into those based on play, drawing-and-comics, and mapping. Why did I think play and drawing were separate activities? Why did I think that I could tell children when to play and when to stop? Play was part of nearly every interview and focus group, even with some of the 14 and 15-year-olds, with whom I played or observed them play video games of their choice, usually Jailbreak by Roblox.

As for mapping, I miscalculated on two accounts. First, the church's 'computer lab' could not even support the web-based, free and/or open-source programs I intended to use (Esri StoryMaps and QGIS). Second, children would have been hard-pressed to identify locations on a map when their answer to "what neighborhood do you live in" was often some version of, "the one next to the Dunkin Donuts, by the big road," and one reason given for not calling the police in crises was that "I don't know my address." I now plan to use an open-source story map program such as Story Map JS to interactively illustrate their images and stories. A story map does not have to have locations in space, but can be a user-friendly way to move through data. I was unable to complete this step collaboratively with children because the pandemic cut the dissemination phase of this research short, but they have given assent for me to use their anonymized stories and images this way. There is potential for these story maps to reach a different audience than the published articles.



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- Woods, C. A. (1998). *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*. Verso.
- Yarwood, R. (2007). The geographies of policing. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(4), 447–465.

## VITA

### **EMILY C. KAUFMAN**

#### **Education**

2014-Present: Ph.D Candidate, Geography. University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

2012-2013: M.A. Socio-Legal Studies. The International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Oñati, Spain

2010-2012: M.A. Geography. Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse, NY “How Governmentality Haunts Northeast Brooklyn: The Convergence of Experimental State Policies from Welfare to Policing”

2008: B.A. Geography; B.A. Women’s and Gender Studies. University of Oregon, Clark Honors College, Eugene, OR

#### **Awards and Fellowships**

2021: Barnhardt-Withington-Block Summer Fellowship: \$800

2019: National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (NSF-DDRI): \$17,950

2019: University of Kentucky Graduate Student Incentive Award: \$895

2019: Barnhardt-Withington-Block Summer Fellowship: \$1230

2019: Glenda Laws Student Paper Award: \$150

2019: Political Geography Specialty Group Alexander B. Murphy Dissertation Enhancement Award: \$1000

2019: Urban Geography Specialty Group Graduate Student Fellowship: \$500

2019: Graduate Student Affinity Group Travel Award: \$250

2019: Urban Geography Specialty Group Travel Award: \$100

2018: Barnhardt-Withington-Block Summer Fellowship: \$700

2017: College of Arts and Sciences Certificate in Outstanding Teaching Award, \$500

2017: Jennifer Fluri and Amy Trauger Student Essay Award: \$100

2016: Graduate Fellow in Multimodal Communication, Division of Undergraduate Education, \$500

2015-Present: University of Kentucky Teaching Assistantship: tuition + \$15,000/year  
2014-Present: Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Fellowship Award: \$3,000/year  
2014-2016: T. Marshall Hahn Graduate Fellowship: \$2,500/year  
2015, 2016: University of Kentucky Travel Grant: \$400/year  
2014-2015: Kentucky Opportunity Fellowship: tuition + \$15,000  
2012: Sopher Award for “Whose right to the secure city? The underside of American Homeland Security:” \$1,800  
2012: Conference Travel Award, Maxwell School, Syracuse University: \$400  
2011: Summer Research Grant, Maxwell School, Syracuse University: \$3,500  
2011: Conference Travel Award, Maxwell School, Syracuse University: \$400  
2010-2012: Graduate Assistantship and Scholarship, Maxwell School, Syracuse University: tuition + \$16,000 per year  
2008: Trussel Scholarship for Geography Students Committed to Social Justice: \$2,000  
2008: University of Oregon President’s Award for Distinguished Thesis and Academic Record: \$500

## **Publications**

### Peer-Reviewed Publications

Kaufman, E. (2021) Staying with the trouble of professionalism, collegiality and care. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. Themed issue on “The Fertility Genre” edited by Kate Coddington

Kaufman, E. (2020) “Police Geographies.” Introductory Essay to the forum “Police Geographies.” Society and Space Open Site, edited by Emily Kaufman.

Nguyen, N. and Kaufman, E. (2019) “Biometric Technologies.” Oxford Bibliographies in "Geography". Ed. Barney Warf. New York: Oxford University Press

Crampton, J.C., Huntley E.M., Kaufman E.C. (2017) “Societal Impacts and Ethics of GIS“ in *GIS Principles and Technical Designs of GIS*. Edited by Thomas J. Cova and Ming-Hsiang Tsou. Oxford: Elsevier.

Kaufman, E. “Whose Right to the Secure City? The Right to the City as a Legal Right against Racialized Policing in New York City.” Accepted with Revisions by *Antipode*

Kaufman, E. (2016) “Policing Mobilities Through Bio-Spatial Profiling In New York City.” *Political Geography* 55, 72-81

Kaufman, E. (2015) "Bryant Park and the Production of Social Control." *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 5.5

Kaufman, E., and L. Nelson (2012) "Malthus, Gender and the Demarcation of 'Dangerous' Bodies in 1996 US Welfare Reform." *Gender, Place & Culture* 19.4: 429–448

Invited Book Reviews, Book Review Forums, and Interventions

Kaufman, E. (2020) Editor and contributor to the Forum in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space: Police Geographies*

Kaufman, E. (2020) Review of *Bodies as Evidence: Security, Knowledge, and Power*. Maguire, M., Rao, U., Zurawski, N. (Eds.) for *Social and Cultural Geography*

Kaufman, E. (2018) Fragmented and Debilitatingly Total. Review Forum organized by Mat Coleman: Correia, D. and Wall, T. (2018) *Police: A Field Guide. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*

Kaufman, E. (2017) Data-Driven or Data-Justified? *Antipode Intervention Symposium: "Algorithmic Governance"* Organized by Jeremy Crampton and Andrea Miller.

Kaufman, Emily. "The Dangers of Desiring the Law's Discipline." *States of Passion: Law, Identity, and the Social Construction of Desire*, by Yvonne Zylan. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*. 26.4 (2013): 963-968

### **Relevant Professional Experience**

2020-2021: Microteaching Group Leader, Graduate School

2018-2019: Research Assistant for The Committee on Social Theory

2018 - 2019: Instructor, GEO172: Human Geography, online

2016 and 2017: Instructor, GEO311: Qualitative Methods in Geography

2015-2017: Lead Teaching Assistant, GEO109: Digital Mapping

2013-2014: Outreach Trainer at Next Step Living, New Haven, CT

2010-2012: Editorial Assistant at the Maxwell School, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY