WATCHING AND SEEING

Recovering Abolitionist Possibilities in Black Community Practices of Safety and Security

Amaka Okechukwu
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University

Abstract

This article explores grassroots practices of community safety and security in Brooklyn, New York through a framework that centers the abolitionist practices imbedded in Black neighborhood collective action. Literature on safety and security often conflates the two concepts, not considering how grounded applications of the two may produce different outcomes and approaches to community well-being. Additionally, we know little about how Black communities build safety and security from the ground up. And while academic scholarship on abolition provides a robust theoretical foundation, more examples of how communities could and do employ police abolition are needed. Utilizing archival research and oral history interviews, I argue that a crisis of police legitimacy compelled alternatives to formal policing in New York City during the urban crisis, or the postwar period of massive urban divestment and hyper-ghettoization. These efforts included masculinized security practices such as neighborhood patrols and protests, while community safety practices included forms of neighborhood sociality grounded in feminized and queer relationships of care and concern. These efforts, which critiqued institutional racism and neglect and emerged from the indigenous knowledge base and social networks of community members, provide considerations for recovering abolitionist practices in Black neighborhood collective action and implications for building alternatives to policing. This article contributes to literature on Black communities, collective action, and abolition by offering an intersectional analysis of the various ways Black social and political engagement centers on practices of safety and security and does not always fixate on conscripting a police response.

Keywords: Safety, Security, Abolition, Agency, Collective Action, Resistance, Crime, Black Community

INTRODUCTION

"Defund the Police!" ascended out of the uprisings of 2020, a clarion call from activists that fully registered an exhaustion with police reform in the face of relentless police killings and abuse of Black people. Though Black radicals and fellow collaborators have

Du Bois Review. 18:1 (2021) 153–180.

doi:10.1017/S1742058X21000035

made abolitionist demands for decades (Abu-Jamal 1996; Berger and Losier, 2017; Burton forthcoming; Davis 2011b; Jackson [1970]1994; James 2005; Rodriguez 2006; Vitale 2017), identifying imprisonment and policing as not only oppressive, but also ineffective in resolving social problems, for the first time a broader public began to engage with the prospect of significantly reducing police budgets and in turn, investing more public resources into social services that had been defunded in the neoliberal period, particularly healthcare, public education, housing, and employment. Modern abolitionists pursue defunding police departments as a way towards abolition, that is defunding them out of existence and building robust systems of care that foster accountability and meet social needs (Kaba 2020; McHarris and McHarris, 2020). Though a broader public has not necessarily abandoned policing (see Bell 2019, 2020b), the resonance of Defund the Police makes clear that enough people recognize the failures of policing to demand that their local governments redirect police funding to community initiatives in places like Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Austin (Garofoli 2020; Karma 2020; Romo 2020; Venkataramanan 2020), and for school boards to remove police from the public school system in places like Minneapolis, Oakland, Denver, Portland, and Milwaukee (Associated Press 2020; Campuzano 2020; Johnson 2020; Reilly 2020; Retta 2020). Activists have successfully framed police brutality as an insistent social problem.

As more become curious about the modern abolition movement, there is a necessity to explore and consider how communities build systems of community safety that are not dependent on professional policing. In pursuit of empirical examples of communities developing their own grassroots systems of safety, security, and accountability, these practices should be examined with an abolitionist framework, that is, a consideration of practices that do not extend the legitimacy and power of police and that emerge from grassroots collective action in pursuit of community well-being. The contemporary crisis of policing, and the response of communities most impacted by it, demands a serious engagement with how people aim to address issues such as crime without the police. Beyond an intervention in crime and punishment, abolition provides a framework for building more equitable social relations. Social scientists should draw attention to abolition and grassroots community safety efforts in order to better contribute to scholarship on social organization, collective action and social movements, and critical approaches to crime and deviance.

As a result of increasing crime, documented police brutality and corruption, and other forms of anti-Black violence, there emerged a crisis of police legitimacy that compelled alternatives to formal police in Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn during the 1970s and 1980s. Drawing on archives of newspapers, Black community organizations, and oral histories of Black residents of these neighborhoods, this article identifies several forms of grassroots security and safety practices that appeared during the urban crisis, or the postwar period of massive urban divestment and hyper-ghettoization. I argue that these grassroots efforts included masculinized security practices such as neighborhood patrols and protests, while community safety practices included forms of neighborhood sociality grounded in feminized and queer relationships of care and concern. These efforts provide considerations for locating abolitionist tendencies in neighborhood collective action and implications for building alternatives to policing.

This article first considers scholarship on safety and security in Black and urban communities, then literature on abolition. Following a discussion of the data and qualitative methodology, I discuss the conditions that undermined police legitimacy in New York City. I then consider neighborhood security and safety endeavors, such as masculinized security efforts including protest and two forms of patrols, and feminized

social guardianship, including a queer and women run neighborhood bar and the role of older neighborhood women in ensuring block safety through informal observational practice. I conclude by discussing the possibilities and limitations of these practices for abolition. This article contributes to literature on collective action, Black communities, and abolition by offering an intersectional analysis of the various ways Black social and political engagement centers on practices of safety and security and does not always fixate on conscripting a police response.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Safety and Security

As this article explores practices of safety and security in a Black community, I distinguish the two concepts in that security is primarily focused on protection from physical violence and property crime, while safety indicates protection from a broader category of harm (encompassing crime, social and economic vulnerability, and even intimacy). While security operates within a context in which state violence is normalized and the social order is organized around the protection of capital (McQuade 2018), safety centers the well-being of community members. These concepts are closely related, and many scholars use them interchangeably, but I distinguish between the two because an application of these concepts on the ground often produces different kinds of approaches to achieving a condition of community vitality.

Utilizing these definitions, much study on safety (at micro, meso, and macro levels) is actually concerned with security, and security scholarship is often concentrated in fields such as international relations (security studies) in the examination of national risk to foreign attack, practices of surveillance and defense, histories of colonial expansion, and other aspects of war-making apparatuses (Bajc 2013; Berda 2013; Hanson 2018). While work on the "sociology of security" aims to explore the concept more broadly, its concerns often mirror that of security studies, but at the smaller scale of collective, community, or nation (Bajc 2013; Stampnitzky 2013). Much social science exploration of security and safety is found in study of crime and deviance; study of crime and deviance tends to emerge from, or collapse into, criminology, which is often concerned with improving policing and imprisonment (Hanson 2018; Wellford 2007). For example, while scholars wrote about the increase of volunteer citizen patrols during the urban crisis, most frame these patrols in relationship to improving professional policing, and asses the outcomes of patrols against the statistical instruments of policing (Cattelino 2004; Dubow and Podolefsky, 1982; Einstadter 1984; Garofalo and McLeod, 1989; Lavrakas and Herz, 1982; Marx and Archer, 1976; Marx 1989; Pennell et al., 1989; Rosenbaum 1988). This article takes a different approach by examining efforts that do not re-assert the authority of professional police or the criminal justice system.

How do these understandings of safety and security relate to Black and/or urban communities? Monica C. Bell (2020a, b) argues that social scientists are likely misreading data on what safety and security means to Black communities by focusing on respondents' calls for more or better policing in their analysis, rather than considering the environment that policing is embedded in and respondents' related commentary about the state of employment, food quality, residential segregation, economic conditions, and community building. Bell (2019) also complicates the literature on Black communities' distrust of police (Anderson 2000, 2013; Muller and Schrage, 2010; Ray et al., 2017; Shedd 2015; Venkatesh 2000) by showing the multiple and situated relationships that exist—with Black people as both subjects of subordination and agents in their engagement with different aspects of the criminal justice system. Robert

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000035 Published online by Cambridge University Press

J. Sampson and Dawn J. Bartusch's (1998) work on legal cynicism conveys the lack of confidence that residents of Black and poor communities have in the police's ability to ensure safety, and others have further developed this concept (Carr et al., 2007; Hagan et al., 2020; Hitchens et al., 2018; Kirk and Papachristos, 2011). Perceptions and experiences of safety and security, in and outside of the criminal justice system, are also gendered (Hitchens et al., 2018; Johansson et al., 2012; Jones 2009; Perry 2013) and shaped by membership in other marginalized ethnic, gender, and sexuality groups (Bailey 2011; Ben Daniel and Berwick, 2020; Gee and Cooc, 2019; Hagan et al., 2005; Hanhardt 2013).

While more research is needed on the efforts that marginalized communities develop in order to build safety and/or security, there has been some qualitative attention to volunteer citizen patrols, accompanying discourses, and their situatedness in a broader urban landscape. Christina Hanhardt (2013) considers the gay (primarily White cisgender male) community's call for "safe streets" (and the emergence of accompanying community patrols) during urban decline, as caught between the need to physically protect LGBTQ people and space in response to rampant homophobia (and a careless police force), and the municipal government's support of gay-led gentrification at a time of depopulation and capital flight from New York City. Other work points to the ways that volunteer patrols intersect with dominant discourses, such as that of law-and-order politics which expanded the reach of the carceral state, and an extension of the "responsibilizing" discourse of neoliberalism—the State encouraging volunteer forms of security and surveillance without the economic responsibility of expanding state agencies (Hillyer 2017; Super 2016). This work also suggests that volunteer patrols, in doing the work of policing, may also exist as vigilante groups, engaging in forms of racial profiling and xenophobia without institutional accountability (Bénit-Gbaffou et al., 2012; Hillyer 2017; Super 2016).

This article intervenes in literature on collective action and community safety by examining grassroots public safety and security efforts that were not reliant on professional policing. In this way, the article explores how community members demanded safety from the state and each other, and how they practiced safety in formal and quotidian ways, contributing to literature on the collective action of Black communities.

Abolition

The broad field of abolition studies sharply critiques the systems and processes that structure unfreedom, linking historical developments of dispossession and premature death to the contemporary period. Abolition—a critique, a radical demand, a creative endeavor—forces a reckoning with the need to dismantle systems of oppression, while also calling for the development of more humane ways of governing and organizing social life. Thus, abolition is necessarily concerned with freedom—how people get free, where they build freedom, and what new worlds could look like.

Through his analyses of the social forces that produced the abolition of American slavery in *Black Reconstruction in America*, W. E. B. Du Bois ([1935]2013) put forth the concept of "abolition-democracy" which he describes as both the movement to end slavery (the enslaved leading a coalition of various northern elite and southern White working-class interests) *and* the efforts to create a true participatory democracy in the South during Reconstruction. Angela Davis (2011a), in her engagement with Du Bois, describes abolition as both, "a negative process of tearing down…[and] also about building up, about creating new institutions" (p. 73). As Savannah Shange (2019) specifies, "Abolition is a messy break up with the state—rending, not reparation" and so radical demands for abolition do not rest simply in ending or reforming oppressive

practices, but rather, reshaping the world that produces oppressive acts, requiring the formation of new social systems and social relationships (p. 4). Brendan McQuade (2018) suggests that we should be able to identify "abolitionist tendencies, abolitionist demands, abolitionist practices, and abolitionist institutions in most emancipatory movements," and this allows us to consider a broad field of scholarship concerned with eradication of oppressive systems including, but not limited to, the abolition of prisons, immigration detention, policing, and other forms of state violence (p. 17; Brown and Schept, 2016; Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Davis 2011b; Gilmore 2007; James 1996; James 2005; Law 2011; McLeod 2015; Richie and Martensen, 2020; Ybarra 2020). I argue that these "abolitionist tendencies" may also be present outside of formal social movements, in the quotidian social organization of racially marginalized communities, in how they "make a way out of no way." And so, this study investigates how Black community experiments in building community safety during a period of rising crime have implications for police abolition.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2017) reminds us that "freedom is a place" and thus our abolition theorizing and organizing emerges out of bounded geographies, the spatialization of unequal power relations, the places that people make and carve out (p. 227). Growing attention to scholarship on Black geographies (Bledsoe et al., 2018; Bledsoe and Wright, 2019; Hunter and Robinson, 2018; McKittrick 2006; McKittrick and Woods, 2007; Reese 2019; Summers 2019; Wilson 2000; Woods 1998) provides insight into the environmental, social, political, and economic forces shaping Black communities, and the resistance of Black communities against racial oppression. Carceral geographies have particularly shaped Black communities along with the American landscape more generally, disappearing community members, while surveilling and controlling the movement of those that remain. Policing has been integral to the expansion of carceral geographies, and thus should be an important concern of abolition, investigating the ways that communities organize to divest from policing, organize for non-reformist reforms that lessen the power of police, and build community-centered processes for public safety, harm reduction, and accountability.

Unfortunately, modern abolitionist movements and concerns have been largely overlooked by sociologists. Some sociological efforts have used the language of abolition as a stand in for critique of state practices, without attention to an established body of literature on abolition as a framework of analysis (Chukhray 2018). Luis A. Fernandez, in his 2019 presidential address to the Society for the Study of Social Problems, titled "Abolitionist Approaches to Social Problems" rightfully centers the negative process of ending oppressive systems, yet does not engage the creative process to imagine what it could look like to build anew. Other sociologists have troubled and engaged abolitionist ideas in the context of Black people's complicated relationship to the police (Bell 2019, 2020b), have provided an extensive abolitionist critique of policing (Vitale 2017), and have used abolition as a foil of security (McQuade 2018). As abolition centers an analysis of racial capitalism and its expression in specific forms of containment, captivity, and exploitation, sociologists should be attuned to the discourse, theories, and struggles that emerge out of organizing on the ground as well as scholarship in the ivory tower.

In order to locate and evaluate seeds of abolition practice in the following cases, I utilize a framework developed by the grassroots abolitionist organization Critical Resistance (n.d. a). A component of their abolitionist analysis argues that "abolitionist reforms" aim to decrease the power of the police with the ultimate goal to abolish the police and create alternative systems to ensure community health and well-being (Critical Resistance n.d. b). Here, we consider whether these grassroots efforts lessen the reach or influence of the police and whether efforts delegitimize the idea that police are needed to ensure safety. By considering the reach or influence of the police, I

examine whether community efforts required calling or consulting with the police, invited police-community interaction, or whether the presence of these efforts demanded police involvement. By considering the ideological reliance on police, I assess whether community efforts included a critique of policing (or "one bad apple" discourse) or if their approaches did not reproduce the act of policing by civilians (i.e., patrolling, surveilling, harassment, justified violence). I categorize the projects that reassert the authority and legitimacy of policing as security efforts, while projects that resemble abolitionist practices are community safety efforts. The point is not to identify purely abolitionist projects, but rather to consider a range of practices that lend themselves to abolition.

DATA AND METHODS

This article draws from evidence of Black social life in the neighborhoods of Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, as well as the larger city of New York, focusing on the 1970s and 1980s. New York City had the largest number of Black people of any American city through this time period (growing from about 1.6 million in 1970 to 2.1 million in 1990), and Brooklyn had the largest share of this Black population—about 40% of the Black population of all five boroughs (U.S. Census n.d a, b, c). Most of this population was concentrated in Central Brooklyn, an area that included the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights. Many residents colloquially referred to this area as the Black cultural center of New York City, contending with beloved Harlem. I focus on this time period because it was the height of the urban crisis, or the postwar period of massive urban divestment and hyper-ghettoization in New York City—the fiscal crisis began in 1975 and the crack epidemic and war on drugs shaped the 1980s. This was a period of high crime, massive divestment from inner cities, and social instability of the urban landscape. Accounts of collective action during this period often miss how people organized specifically around safety and policing in ways that did not call for more police.

I use evidence from archival, oral history, and newspaper sources. This includes paper ephemera from neighborhood organization records and grassroots community newspapers and newsletters from collections at Brooklyn Historical Society and Brooklyn Public Library. I also examined newspaper articles from publications such as *New York Amsterdam News*, *The New York Times*, and *New York Daily News.*

I utilized sixty-four oral histories from neighborhood residents (conducted by myself and other interviewers) which are publicly archived at Brooklyn Historical Society and Weeksville Heritage Center. All oral histories, except for one which occurred over the phone, were conducted in-person and lasted between one and two hours. Some oral histories required more than one interview session. Each institution communicated interest in finding volunteers for oral histories through e-mail mailing lists, events, personal relationships, snowball sampling, and social media. Oral history subjects were determined according to long-time presence in the neighborhoods of Crown Heights or Bedford-Stuyvesant (including living or working in the neighborhood). Some interview subjects were targeted specifically due to their role in historical events or insight into certain subject matter. Oral history is fruitful for providing an open ended, long form interview format in which narrators can speak affectively about events and memories in the context of their lives. Limitations include the use of different interviewers (and thus a lack of consistency in the line of questioning) and the fallibility of memory for data reliability. I supplement the data concerning one specific case with a documentary film, *We Came to Sweat: The Legend of the Starlite* (2014) made available by the director and producer Kate Kunath.

These different kinds of sources allow for data triangulation, providing historical validity and insight into collective action. Utilizing qualitative data analysis software, I coded the data according to specific organizations and historical events, as well as themes related to crime, feelings about safety, and policing, as a means of categorizing the kinds of efforts that emerged and determining why collective action emerged when it did and how residents felt about community safety.

FINDINGS

As a consequence of mounting crime, public attention to police brutality and corruption, as well as other forms of anti-Black violence, a crisis of police legitimacy emerged, compelling alternatives to formal police in Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn during the 1970s and 1980s. These grassroots alternatives included masculinized security practices, such as neighborhood patrols and protests, and community safety practices, including forms of neighborhood sociality grounded in feminized relationships of care and concern. These efforts provide considerations for locating abolitionist tendencies in neighborhood collective action and implications for building alternatives to policing.

A Crisis of Police Legitimacy

The larger socio-political environment of New York City, and Central Brooklyn, shaped the context in which community members responded to crime. Some scholars posit that volunteer and vigilante groups do not garner the same kind of legitimacy as professional police (Einstadter 1984; Marx and Archer, 1976; Super 2016), focusing more on micro-interactional processes rather than the social meaning of police (Bell 2019). In this context, scholars tend to define legitimacy in police-citizen interactions as a willingness to comply with police authority (Tyler and Fagan, 2008; Tyler and Wakslak, 2004) rather than belief in the police as guardians of public safety. In this section, I identify factors that shape the experience of distrust and ultimately undermine a belief in the effectiveness of police. For communities of color, then and now, many question police authority, doubting their effectiveness, reliability, and moral grounding, due to extensive experiences of abuse, manipulation, and neglect (Kirk and Papachristos, 2011; Sampson and Bartusch, 1998).

Police are tasked with crime prevention and social control, yet in interviews community members noted the frequency of crime during the 1970s and 1980s. Though homicide rates began to take a slight dip in the mid 1970s, rape and property crime rates increased (*New York Amsterdam News* 1978a; Phillips-Fein 2017) and the emergence of the unregulated underground crack cocaine economy contributed to violent crime in the 1980s (Blumstein and Rosenfeld, 1998). Municipal government met the New York City Fiscal Crisis of the 1970s with deep austerity cuts that impacted all city agencies—the city laid off 4211 police officers between 1974 and 1976; no new police officers were hired or trained between July of 1975 and November 1979 (Clines 1976; Oreskes 1985). Brooklyn residents regularly drew connections between the rise in crime and the absence of police officers, demanding a neighborhood police presence at community board and precinct council meetings.

Community patrols affiliated with the NYPD developed as a result of the municipal government's austerity strategy—the city would attempt to operate public services through volunteers. Stephen Berger, executive director of the Emergency Financial Control Board (the committee of politicians and financiers tasked with saving the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000035 Published online by Cambridge University Press

economy through early neoliberal experimentation) argued that "The city should be asking its citizens to assume more responsibility for their own well-being," and these privatization attempts extended from volunteer librarians and street sweepers to the recruitment of auxiliary police and neighborhood patrols to make up for the lack of city funded services (Phillips-Fein 2017, p. 218). Yet, perhaps communities were more open to neighborhood patrols due to their existing suspicion of police, particularly in response to mounting attention to police corruption and brutality in the 1970s and 1980s.

By 1972, the Knapp Commission revealed rampant, systemic corruption in the New York Police Department, featuring the star testimony by whistleblower officers (famously dramatized by Al Pacino in the feature film *Serpico*). The Commission found that the majority of the police force engaged in corruption, while those that did not complicitly protected a code of silence (Knapp Commission Report on Police Corruption 1973). Police reform did not eradicate corruption or brutality from the department. In 1976, the United Church of Christ's New York Anti-Crime Task Force blamed rising crime rates on "the growing dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system…and widespread police corruption and brutality," also disclosing that of those they surveyed, only 16.9% thought they received sufficient police protection and 70% approved establishing "vigilante patrols" in their communities (*New York Amsterdam News* 1976a).

In Crown Heights alone, June 1978 was particularly devastating: a Black community leader, Arthur Miller, was killed by police chokehold (some, including a state senator, alleged his refusal to payoff police prompted his murder); a Black liquor store owner, Charles King, was badly beaten by the police; and Black teenager, Victor Rhodes, was beaten into a coma, not by police, but by a band of Hassidic men (Kihss 1978a).[1] Many Black community members argued that the superior treatment and protection that the Hassidic community in Crown Heights received from the police made them complicit and active agents of anti-Black violence in the neighborhood. Protestors marched both to police precincts, and the Chassidic-Lubavitcher world headquarters (located on the neighborhood's main thoroughfare Eastern Parkway) to challenge this violence (Browne and Todd, 1978; Kihss 1978b). In 1986, the 77th precinct (located in Crown Heights) became the epicenter for another NYPD scandal—officers were found to regularly rob drug dealers, keep confiscated drug evidence, and re-sell it (Anekwe 1986; Purdum 1986a, b, c; Tatum 1986). While police officials blamed this criminal behavior on the drug environment, claiming that it produced more drug addicted officers that threatened the reputation of the department (Purdum 1988), an entrenched pattern of corruption and abuse in the NYPD over decades is evident. Together, the rising crime, ineffective policing, police corruption, and brutality created an environment of doubt in the police and produced a crisis of police legitimacy in Brooklyn. In response, community members developed their own structures and experimentations in protecting community safety, including neighborhood patrols, protests, and older forms of community sociality.

Security Efforts: Protests and Patrols

Protests and neighborhood patrols existed as masculinized security practices, and thus alternatives to policing. These efforts critiqued institutional racism and neglect, while others focused on enforcing behavioral discipline in the face of rising crime and drug addiction. While these efforts provide an opportunity to consider the role of protest, institutional critique, and community derived alternatives for abolition, the sometimes exclusionary and hostile practices that accompanied these efforts suggest that these alternatives were flawed in the context of abolition.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000035 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Black United Front and the Arthur Miller Black Community Citizens Patrol

The most common form of neighborhood patrols during this period developed out of block associations before and after the New York Fiscal Crisis. Neighborhood residents, tiring of muggings, home burglaries, and violent crime, came together as "window watchers," and walking patrols (Edwards 1971; Matthews 1970; *New York Amsterdam News* 1965, 1973, 1977a, b). Some patrols formed independently and due to their size and effectiveness, were later recruited to be affiliated or "supervised" by local police precincts, and others formed out of precinct council meetings (Ortiz 1976). While most patrols began in order to fill in the gaps left by inferior social services, other patrols emerged as a form of protest and political self-defense.

In July 1978, after the police murder of Black community leader Arthur Miller and the Hassidic attack on teenager Victor Rhodes in Crown Heights, the Black United Front established the Arthur Miller Black Community Citizens Patrol, formed to protect Black community members from anti-Black violence. The patrol's existence alongside marches, demonstrations, and demands affirms that its creation did not only aim to serve a social need for protection, but also existed as a form of protest—a critique of police failure and the many modes of systemic violence experienced by the Black community.

The Black United Front[2] (BUF) developed in direct response to police violence against the Black community in New York City. In 1976, NYPD officer Robert Torsney shot unarmed Brooklyn teenager Randolph Evans at point blank range on Thanksgiving Day (Seigel 1976). Though indicted, the jury found Torsney not guilty by reason of insanity—he was released after serving a year in a psychiatric hospital (*New York Times* 1979). First called the Coalition of Concerned Leaders and Citizens to Save Our Youth, the coalition led rallies that condemned police terror, ran a "people's tribunal" of Black jurors that convicted Torsney of murder (in the face of court failure), and ran successful boycotts of Downtown Brooklyn businesses—targeted for their complicity in economic and social practices that upheld racial inequality (Cooper and Patrick, 1978; Lang 1978; *New York Amsterdam News* 1976b; Tapley 1978). Downtown Brooklyn businesses conceded to the coalition's ten demands, establishing the Randolph Evans Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Randolph Evans Memorial Crisis Fund, among other calls (Cooper and Patrick, 1978; Tapley 1978). After the murder of Arthur Miller, the Arthur Miller Community Defense Committee joined with the Coalition, along with other Black organizations, and they renamed themselves the Black United Front (Tapley 1978). Led by Reverend Herbert Daughtry of the House of the Lord Church, key organizations that composed the coalition included: Black Community Congress of Brooklyn, The East, Black Community Council of Crown Heights, Brooklyn CORE, New York Urban League, Sisterhood of Single Mothers, Ramza Associates, and an assortment of churches including the First Baptist Church of Crown Heights.[3] Assemblyman Al Vann, veteran of the movements of the 1960s and a co-founder of the African American Teachers Association, also joined the coalition, along with people such as activist Viola Plummer and radio journalist Bob Law (Law 2017; Tapley 1978).

BUF's patrol, sometimes referred to the Arthur Miller Black Community Citizen's Patrol, or the Brooklyn Black Civilian Patrol, began in June 1978—their first meeting drew "500 men," with between 250 to 300 men immediately registering for "active duty" (*New York Amsterdam News* 1978b; Thomas 1978). The patrol's aim was to "defend the community, its dignity and respect, and…provide, a visible masculine presence in the face of attacks by unscrupulous people and the police" (*New York Amsterdam News* 1978b, p. B1). The patrol would also escort the elderly, women, and children to their destinations. Interested men would undergo two weeks of training before beginning their participation, and as the gendered language suggests, there did not appear to be a

role for women in patrol activity. Importantly, the patrol occurred alongside demands for a federal investigation into the violation of the rights of Black Crown Heights residents by the police and the Hasidic community (*New York Amsterdam News* 1978b).[4] The creation of this Black patrol makes sense alongside the smaller kinds of block patrols mentioned earlier, but also the presence of Hasidic private security patrols, such as The Maccabees and Shomrim, which the Black community experienced as another police force surveilling and harassing Black movement in the community. The Maccabees (named after a group of ancient Jewish warriors) were an older neighborhood patrol that began in the 1960s and grew to include participation from other faiths and races, but eventually disbanded in the 1970s. Shomrim (Hebrew for "watchers"), which has a presence in Hasidic communities across the globe, entered Crown Heights in the 1970s and persists to the present day. Both patrols utilized vehicles outfitted as police cars, equipped with two-way radios; Shomrim also utilizes a 24-hour hotline, dispatcher, mobile command centers, and maintains records of criminal activity (Buckley 1965; Heller 2009; Stern 1966).The NYPD, municipal government, and state leadership consented, and in many cases contributed public funding, to both Hasidic groups' acquisition of police equipment, further intensifying the Black experience of victimization, and producing a political association between the police and the Hasidic patrols (Pinto 2011).

The Black United Front organized many actions prior to the establishment of the patrol, including a demonstration and march of several hundred people to the 77th police precinct and a rally at the Brooklyn Criminal Court, all protesting the police murder of Arthur Miller, the police harassment of his younger brother Samuel, and calls for police arrests, indictments, and federal investigations (Seigel 1978; Treaster 1978; Weusi 1978). However, soon the patrol, adorned in their green jackets with Arthur Miller's face emblazoned on the back, visually underlined their protest actions. As a *New York Times* reporter wrote about the massive march (reports on attendance vary from 2000–7000 people) to the 77th police precinct and the Hassidic world headquarters in July 1978, "The 60 green-jacketed members of the new black citizen patrol first appeared in a double line marching past the 77th Police Precinct station house on Utica Avenue at Bergen Street. A leader repeatedly shouted 'What time is it?' and each patrol member, banging his left chest, responded, 'It's nation time'" (Kihss 1978b, p. B3; Browne and Todd, 1978).[5]

The "green-jacketed men" led and surrounded other marches, rallies, and demonstrations over the next year, including a press conference at City Hall in response to the grand jury clearing of police officers in the murder of Arthur Miller, a November march to Wall Street on Black Solidarity Day,[6] and a November 18 rally at the United Nations Headquarters, seeking support in indicting the United States of crimes against humanity (Anekwe 1979; Browne 1978a; Quindlen 1978; Todd 1978).[7] Consistent were demands that included federal indictments of officers involved in the murders of Arthur Miller and Randolph Evans, a federal investigation into the violation of the rights of Black Crown Heights residents, and a reorganization of the police department.[8] However, their demands escalated over the year, including attention to issues beyond the specificity of the Crown Heights neighborhood, but to the experience of structural racism that shaped the lives of Black New Yorkers, Black people across the nation, and even beyond—articulating international solidarity with Palestine, and with Black-led nations in Africa and the Caribbean (Browne 1978b; Daughtry 1979; *New York Amsterdam News* 1979). These efforts undoubtedly influenced the founding of the National Black United Front in 1980, and a Congressional hearing on police brutality, held in Harlem in 1983 (Report on Hearings in New York City on Police Misconduct 1984; Worrill 2013).

Through the patrol, the Black United Front critiqued the violence of the State, and those they saw complicit in that violence. The patrol physically intervened in the urban landscape, asserting that Black collective action was required to ensure protection against anti-Black violence. Beyond a form of protection, the patrol itself existed as a form of protest. As a critique, protest, and form of protection, the patrol embodied the Black nationalist principle of self-determination. Beyond the patrol, BUF's efforts force us to consider the act of protest itself as a practice of safety. Protest against police brutality and anti-Black violence asserted community safety by demanding the end to violent attacks on the Black community.

The Black Community Citizens Patrol drew upon a masculine model of physical force that aimed to defend community members from physical attack (and intimidate onlookers); this model reflected a practice of security traditionally found in professional police and private security forces. In the patrol's male embodiment of protest action, it also represented a political coalition that had little space for women's leadership or significant participation. While Black women's committees and organizations participated in the coalition, they are rarely named as representatives, delegates, or spokespersons in media or archival documents. This patrol, and the greater political project, proposes a version of security rather than community safety that is primarily constructed by men. Though the patrol does not replicate the form and structure of a police department, it does re-assert the act of policing—that is patrolling, surveilling, and asserting physical force.

Additionally, in BUF's demands is an underlying assumption of police reform, rather than the necessity for alternative structures of community safety and social control. Along with calls for the re-organization of the police department, BUF invited the Guardians Association (a fraternal organization of Black police officers) for support in creating their patrol, though it is unclear if the Guardians actually assisted.[9] In subsequent attempts to develop a Black political agenda, BUF (in coalition with other organizations) also invited the Guardians to sponsor and participate in the Black Platform Convention (*New York Amsterdam News* 1980). Herbert Daughtry said of the Guardians, "Their situation is one of delicacy and dilemma. On the one side they're paid to be policemen and on the other they've had to deal with racism. But I think they should speak out more on police brutality and other issues. There have always been individuals to come forward and testify but as an organization they have been very cautious" (Terry 1988, p. 31). While Daughtry appeared to push The Guardians organization to do more, he approached their lack of action or outspokenness quite gingerly, assuming that the Guardians did not share an investment in the values and practices of the greater police department. As abolition is forged in efforts to dismantle policing and prisons, the reproduction of policing through the patrol and BUF's assumption of police reform, suggests that central aspects of the patrol and BUF's work are incompatible with abolition.

In this way, BUF both critiqued and reified the authority of police, and framed their own efforts to establish a patrol as a temporary intervention, disrupting an understanding of their practice as abolitionist. Their critique of police and establishment of a counter-patrol represent both the rejection of oppressive practices and the creation of new ones, yet their focus on police reform (that reproduces and extends the authority of the police) negates the potential for their approach to be the basis of a capacious and emancipatory public safety system.

Black Revolutionary Goon Squads

While the Arthur Miller Black Community Citizens Patrol safeguarded against external threats to the Black community, there were other masculinized security endeavors that

explicitly drew attention to intracommunity crime and framed it as genocidal and counter-revolutionary. These efforts solicited and identified the location of crime (typically prostitution and drug dealing) and physically attacked and intimidated people engaged in criminal activity (mostly pimps and drug dealers). I refer to these patrols as goon squads, not in a derogatory manner, but in reference to a tradition of the physical enforcement of a political line, particularly in pro-union labor organizing. These often informally organized Black revolutionary goon squads aimed to assert community responsibility, physical and mental discipline, and a critique of the Black community's preparedness for revolution and self-determination more broadly. In order to discuss this form of a patrol, I turn to the pages of *Black News*, a newspaper of the Brooklyn cultural nationalist organization The East, because this publication more clearly reflects an internal community conversation about crime than do mainstream publications, and as the propaganda arm of a political organization, *Black News* represents a Black nationalist perspective of how to address crime and govern community activity. Additionally, as Black revolutionary goon squads essentially engaged in activity considered illegal by the state (assaulting, threatening, and identifying the location of presumed criminals), mainstream publications did not cover this kind of underground intervention.

The East was a Black social movement organization that established community institutions and was at the center of Black grassroots cultural and political life in Brooklyn. It was a cultural nationalist organization founded in 1969 in the wake of Black teacher and student organizing that emerged out of the movement for Black community control over schools in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn and the resultant teacher's strike by the United Federation of Teachers in 1968 (Konadu 2009). In 1970, The East joined the Congress of African People (CAP), a national umbrella association of Black nationalist organizations, under the leadership of activist, playwright, and poet Amiri Baraka.[10] CAP organizations adopted Kawaida (loosely translated from Swahili to mean "tradition and reason"), the name for a set of Pan-Africanist, Black Nationalist, and socialist ideologies and practices developed by Maulana Karenga (founder of the U.S. Organization) (Konadu 2009). This philosophy pushed for the transformation of consciousness and behavior in the Black community, particularly in the reclamation of what they saw as "traditional" African belief systems and practices, to ready the community for revolution and ultimately self-determination. A disciplined mind and body were part of this process. The East rejected alcohol and drug use, and *Black News* regularly featured articles on martial arts and other forms of physical conditioning, and for a time included healthy recipes and a "natural food" column.[11] The East, which introduced Brooklyn to Kwanzaa celebrations in 1968, also established a food cooperative and a catering company, which along with providing food for community events also catered breakfast and lunch meals for Black independent schools in Brooklyn, including their own school Uhuru Sasa Shule (Konadu 2009; Rickford 2016).

Black News featured references to a variety of goon squads, most prominently the Black Ass Kickin Brigade. In a short, likely fictional account demonstrating the need for an aggressive response to crime, the writer summarizes a fight in which a small short man knocks out a "big, big man." In reaction to the fight, two observers begin a conversation. While one begins railing against intracommunity crime, the other says:

> …you're right brother, that's why I think we need a Black Ass Kickin Brigade…we need 1,000 Black, mean and tough militants to take care of those winos, those crooks, all these rape artists, these murderers, these wife beaters, these jokers who cuss around our women, these pushers…things like that. Anytime trouble starts, BAM! You got the Ass Kickin Brigade ready to kick ass. No mercy…kill this mother-father.[12]

Here, the speaker suggests that "mean and tough militants," or those who may be physically tough but are more importantly politically sophisticated, should violently enforce correct, respectable behavior—rejecting not just acts legally classified as crime, but also culturally offensive behavior under patriarchy such as cursing in the presence of women. Though this specific parable was likely used as propaganda for "cleaning up" the community, there are multiple references throughout *Black News* to actual bands of men (organized under the name Black Ass Kickin Brigade) that are called on to respond to drug dealing and prostitution at specific addresses and locations. In a column that lists local events: "Black Ass Kickin Brigade needed to clean up a drug mess on Albany Avenue—Apt 23, 25, and 54. This is the same Albany Avenue that has been claiming victims for years. Time to clean up Albany Avenue."[13] Also: "The BlackAss Kickin Brigade requests that any reader of *Black News* who knows of any drug pusher operating in our proud Black community to call them a 636-9401 and give the pusher's name and where he operates. Please Call anonymously."[14] In an article called "The Pusher," the author lists street intersections and the names of drug dealers known to service those areas, concluding with, "This list shall continue to grow in *Black News* as the Black Nation draws a map of just who and where the dispensers of death to Black people can be found.[15] *Black News* also published at least one retraction in response to publishing an incorrect address of drug dealers.[16]

An article titled "On the Struggle Against Dope" features the account of a group of men in Queens called "The United Brothers of Queens." The article details how these six men confronted prostitution by first warning the prostitutes to leave the Queensbridge housing projects area, then violently running after them (and assaulting at least one of the sex workers), and later trying to talk "sense" into the prostitutes and pimps. When these tactics did not stop the prostitution, the original six men recruited at least thirty additional men and attacked the cars of their customers; the police arrested a few of the United Brothers for assault. The author (whose name is intentionally absent from the article) states, "We, the Black men of the community, are your new police. If we fail in our duties to protect the women and children of the community, then dismiss us as being irrelevant, as we have dismissed 'New York's Finest [New York Police Department]'."[17] While the United Brothers patrolled Queens and not Brooklyn, the inclusion of this story, which displayed over four pages of the newspaper, suggests that The East included the United Brothers as a model that should be replicated in Brooklyn. Though most of these goon squad references are found in issues from the late 1960s and early 1970s, a later reference in 1982 asks for young men to join the M'Sha (or Warriors), a patrol that would "provide the necessary moral and ethical structure" for the Black community and would "correct the negative patterns of those of our mighty people who have gone astray."[18] The M'Sha aimed to recruit men between the ages of sixteen and thirty, who had jobs or were enrolled in school, had some knowledge of martial arts and "some understanding of the nature of the struggle (ongoing) of the people."[19] Many *Black News* cover illustrations also visually depict members of goon squads violently confronting drug dealers.[20]

These goon squads, rooted in revolutionary ideas of Black self-governance, did not cooperate with or rely on the local police force. Importantly, they existed within a political context of Black radicalism, in which violence was understood as legitimate and necessary for revolutionary struggle. Not only did *Black News* chronicle racist violence perpetuated against Black people and the need for self-defense, but the newspaper also followed (and supported) the struggles, trials, and incarcerations of members of the Black Liberation Army, an underground organization that considered Black people to be at war with the U.S. government and thus directed violence towards police officers and their supporters, expropriated money from banks, and orchestrated prison breaks of

political prisoners.[21] Many members of the BLA were falsely accused and convicted of crimes with little evidence (such as in the case of Assata Shakur, for example), however the BLA along with White radical organizations such as the Weather Underground, embraced a doctrine of revolutionary violence which emphasized armed struggle. The Black revolutionary goon squads emerged out of this premise—if community members engaged in crime among themselves, it would not be possible to effectively engage in warfare against White supremacy and American imperialism. Thus, goon squads aimed to root out, correct, and expel this counter revolutionary behavior. Goon squads, and larger Black nationalist organizations, operated with an understanding that Black forms of organization and social control were the only ways liberation could be realized.

Black revolutionary goon squads, agents of collective action, employed masculinized security practices that did not rely on police, but instead deputized Black nationalist men as informal police officers. By embracing the behavior of policing, these squads emphasized a masculine aggressive response to community issues, emphasizing violence over care. Additionally, what the goon squads characterized as crime not only aligned with state definitions, but went beyond them; because the squads' notions of social control emerged out of Kawaida, which originally put forth a minor position for Black women (Farmer 2014), it is likely that a wide array of behavior that could be constructed as violating gender norms or cultural civility would make people targets under this form of grassroots policing. Consider that while the need to combat prostitution was often referenced in *Black News*, there are few to no references to goon squads being called to intervene in gendered marital violence or other forms of domestic abuse. And while it is likely that some of the prostitutes they encountered were trans or queer people, there is no reference to their specific vulnerability to intracommunity violence, or the broader violence directed towards sex workers.

These Black nationalist revolutionary goon squads embraced an abolitionist critique of state violence, while also engaging in physical violence to combat crime and enforce social control. On one hand, this interpersonal violence aimed to combat the impact of the greater structural violence of resource extraction and labor exploitation that Black communities experienced collectively. By all accounts, there was a deep feeling of desperation watching your community become deeply entrenched in poverty, addiction, violence, and despondency. On the other hand, this expression of grassroots policing enforces its own oppressive dynamics and does not effectively challenge an ideological commitment to policing. Goon squads' use of violence may have also made their members and other community residents more vulnerable to police interaction (as in when a victim or witness calls the police to respond to goon squad violence). And the mix of anonymous reporting and incorrect addresses likely make even "innocent" people vulnerable to goon squad violence. Thus, while these grassroots efforts did not engage the professional police, the reproduction of policing practices suggests that these efforts were limited in their ability to cultivate abolitionism.

Safety Practices: Building Cultures of Care

Patrols were a prominent grassroots intervention developed to address rising crime and state violence. However, residents also worked to cultivate a sense of safety in the community by developing environments that fostered inclusion, acceptance, and care. It is notable and perhaps unsurprising that these environments of care were developed and maintained by women and queer residents, as social reproduction has been central to women's labor and the survival of queer people. Rather than centering force, efforts that concentrated on a broader atmosphere of care provide insight into the social worlds that abolition aims to build.

Starlite Lounge

While deindustrialization meant that the factories and warehouses in urban neighborhoods, including Crown Heights, began to shut their doors by the late 1960s, prior to their closure, bars, delis, and restaurants fed workers in the neighborhood, and bars served as leisure spaces for workers and neighborhood residents. At first glance, Starlite Lounge was a small neighborhood bar on Bergen Street at Nostrand Avenue in Crown Heights. Neighbors grabbed drinks after work, played the numbers, and socialized at the Starlite, as in any other neighborhood bar.[22] However, when Mackie Harris purchased the bar in 1959 he made sure that the Starlite would be a welcoming space for community members, including people like him—an openly gay Black man (Durkin 2011).[23] Starlite staff and old-timers always called it the oldest Black-owned "non-discriminating" bar in Brooklyn—in part to highlight that straight, queer, and gender non-confirming people all patronized the bar (Cuthbert 2017; Smith 2014). As former Starlite bartender Al Johnson said, "The Starlite had waves of people that would come in. And they could be anything from politicians to preachers to female impersonators to prostitutes. You name it, they came in there. And so, you couldn't pigeonhole any one thing because everybody felt welcomed to be in there" (Johnson 2017).

Donna Cuthbert, a middle-aged cisgender Black woman who grew up around the corner from the Starlite in the 1970s, was a close friend of William "Butch" King (Starlite's subsequent owner after Harris), and later worked at the bar. As a child she remembered witnessing masculine presenting women working as numbers writers at Starlite, and that she would sneak into the Starlite through the back door as a teenager and could dance, unbothered by the adults (2017). She would sometimes be accompanied by her gay male and gender non-conforming friends. While literature on Stonewall-era and post-Stonewall era gay life in New York City typically centers Manhattan, this focus may overlook Black queer spaces embedded in Black neighborhoods in the 1970s and 1980s. The existence of spaces like the Starlight pushes against the idea that Black queer people had to flee their neighborhoods to be accepted (Gieseking 2020).

Though bars could be characterized as sites of vice, patrons and staff did not experience the Starlite in this way. Donna Cuthbert (2017) said:

> There was never really any incident there. The numbers; everybody got closed down for numbers from time to time, you know? …No real drug dealing going on in there. And you never heard anybody getting mugged, harassed. And there was some very, very feminine guys leaving there, you know, and walking to the train station. I be looking at them and saying, "Oh, Lord, I hope they get down the block all right," you know? But never any incident. The cops would come by, and they'd slow down and say, "All right, everybody all right?" And that's it.

She continued: "It was a neighborhood staple for people. You know how many people would run in there because they thought they were being followed or mugged or, you know, or something was happening, and they would run into the Starlite, you know?" (Cuthbert 2017).

Here, Cuthbert describes the safety of the Starlite in two ways—as a space of refuge that those outside of the building could seek out and enter, and also, that the safety of the Starlite extended beyond its walls, accompanying patrons to public transportation. Safety here is not defined as the absence of illegal activity—playing numbers, an illegal lottery, was technically against the law, hence why the Starlite was occasionally shut down for this practice. Instead, Cuthbert focuses on the physical safety of patrons—an absence of mugging, harassment, and physical violence from other patrons or the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000035 Published online by Cambridge University Press

police—and the presence of protection, a refuge from violence. Rather than aiming to build security here, Starlite staff focused on cultivating a welcoming environment and, in turn, this allowed people to feel safe. For abolition, this suggests that in addition to resisting oppressive practices and institutions, it is important to build the spaces that nurture social connection, as a form of harm-reduction in the context of an unequal society, but also a space of possibility for collective action and more just social relations.

Though Cuthbert characterized the Starlite as a bar for mostly gay men (and I would extend this to men in drag, masculine gender non-conforming, and trans women), she talked about cis women's presence there, saying: "And all through the years you'd have a few [women]…some were just from the neighborhood, [it was] someplace safe to sit and drink and not be bothered" (2017). Part of what she suggests here is the presence of lesbian and queer women, but also straight women who could patronize the bar without being harassed and pursued by straight men.

Starlite Lounge persisted long after its heyday of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Though Starlite was the oldest gay bar in Brooklyn, gentrification forced the Starlite to close its doors in 2010. The new building owner wanted a more profitable tenant and evicted the Starlite (Durkin 2011). When the new landlord threatened the Starlite with closure, a middle-aged cisgender Black woman and longtime patron who had been going to Starlite for decades testified at a Community Board meeting, emphasizing the role that Starlite played for neighborhood safety:

> Starlite Lounge has been a safe haven. If you coming from work at night, ten, eleven o' clock at night, the 99 cent store is closed, the nail salons are closed, the beauty parlors are closed…Anyone is welcome at the Starlite. Day, evening, night. It's open at 12 [pm] to whatever time at night. We protect our community and we're trying to keep it together. And that's what it's all about (Kunath and Wortzel, 2014).

This resident speaks specifically here about a practice of grassroots security, in which community members ensure each other's safety while walking down the street past the Starlite late at night, at a time when people feel vulnerable to violence.

Marcus Sylvester, a young Black gay male who worked at Starlite in the 2000s, decades after its founding, also talked about how Starlite's long-time staff contributed to his overall safety:

> I was still promoting for the bar [while working at Target]. Then I lost my job [at Target]. Then I lost my home. They opened their arms to me. Ms. Mildred. Dot. Theresa. They're like my mamas. They will not let me get assaulted in the street. They will not let me be disrespected in the street. They will stand up for me. They will be there for me. And I feel that if this bar leaves the neighborhood, that comfort level will be gone (Kunath and Wortzel, 2014).

Importantly, here we see a more expansive understanding of personal and community safety. Job loss and homelessness serve as central threats to well-being, and the staff of Starlite (Ms. Mildred, Dot, and Theresa) showed up as Marcus' safety-net—supporting him through this hard time and defending him from physical and verbal homophobic violence in the street.

Marcus Anthony Hunter and colleagues (2016) speak about the "urban commons of Black gay and lesbian nightlife" where club patrons engage in the pleasure of nightlife while also building networks of support, sharing resources and information as a means of navigating the difficulties of life at many social intersections (p. 36). This is true for the

Starlite and its role in the community, serving as a refuge for queer, gender variant, and straight people. The Starlite is a small example of how, by attending to the needs of hyper-marginalized people, a wide swath of others also receive community benefits. The community-building capacity of the Starlite, as a bar, is limited though—not everyone can feel at home in a place where alcohol is consumed and spending money on drinks is how the doors stay open. Still, the Starlite represents how one place can serve a multiplicity of functions.

Significantly, gay patron Lenny Bryant describes a geography of gay bars within a three- to four-block radius of the Starlite in the 1970s and 1980s that declined with the onset of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s (Kunath and Wortzel, 2014). Considering the historical geographical isolation of vice into Black neighborhoods (Shabazz 2015), and that places associated with vice were also spaces in which gender and sexuality variant communities could congregate, this reveals a geography of queer spaces in Black communities. Thus, while the Starlite is notable, particularly for its decades-long history, it is important to consider how a more concentrated presence of queer nightlife may have shaped the neighborhood.

Ultimately, the Starlite Lounge conveys how a practice of care and acceptance builds environments of safety and well-being. Centered in the social practices of women and queer people, both staff and patrons of the Starlite built a community in which people felt safe. This safety extended from the joy and excitement that came from dancing in the bar, to feeling protected from physical violence, and the resources extended to those vulnerable to homelessness and other precarious social and economic conditions. This version of community safety is broad and holistic, and not solely concerned with protection from crime and violence. This small environment has implications for abolition, namely how building communities of care is central to how community safety can be envisioned and practiced independent of police involvement.

Othermothering in Public

A final example of how Black communities build community safety through cultures of care highlights the quotidian presence of older Black women in public spaces. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs ([1961] 1992) emphasizes the importance of "eyes on the street," or the presence of people in public space watching the street, as a hallmark of a "successful" or safe and vibrant neighborhood. Written in opposition to urban renewal's destruction of public space and urban density, she argued that sidewalks, and by extension robust public spaces, keep peace through an "intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves and enforced by the people themselves" and did not require concentrated police presence (Jacobs [1961] 1992, p. 32). Ever important during a period in which neoliberalism upheld private space as safe, and the premise of the public good as a responsibility of citizenship was no longer salient, the continuing presence of Black people, and Black women specifically, in public space served as an important feature of community building. In *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins (2002) speaks about the significance of community othermothers, or the women that engage in the care work of mothering without blood-relation, in working-class and poor Black neighborhoods. Observing the street served as important othermother activity that cultivated a sense of safety in the neighborhood during the 1970s and 1980s.

A lifelong resident of Crown Heights, Sharon Wedderburn (2016) grew up in the Albany Houses, the largest housing project in the neighborhood. She said about the ladies in the neighborhood:

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000035 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> There were these two old ladies on the block growing up, right…one was Ms. Jiminez and one was Ms. Foster, right. You didn't need police, you didn't need block watch, those two women knew all the news, and I have to throw in a couple of people, Ms. Brown who kept the eye out, "Oh Mrs. Wedderburn, you're looking for Sharon and Joan?… about two hours ago they were on the corner with so and so," so the accountability, right, making sure the neighbors are taken care of…I guess the old ladies knew what's what.

Sharon highlights the role that women in the neighborhood played in watching over children in public space and communicating with their parents. She contrasts policing and block watch activities with the everyday observational responsibility that these Black and Latinx women took on as membership in community. Another resident, Sharon "Ife" Charles (2016), adds:

> When I was young…as a kid the block was where we hung out, right… you can't go around the corner, you could probably go to the candy store, but you've got to come back, because… your parents [are] looking through the window, that was my mom. And if she wasn't looking through the window, Ms. May was looking through the window or Ms. Gloria was looking through the window.

Many interviews reveal that this observational activity was a key aspect of neighborhood safety during this time. The older women, respected community members, served as informal enforcers of social control by their mere presence. Beyond children behaving obediently, as adults, the interview subjects spoke about this practice as community care and shared responsibility for each other. These relationships were central to community safety in their accounts.

After the police killed her husband in 1978, Florence Miller was left with four children to raise. Navigating her grief and the economic constraints of sudden single parenthood, she eventually decided to move back to her native Florida to be closer to her father and other family members. Not wanting to pull her daughter Valerie out of high school during her senior year, she decided that she would pay for her to live in a small efficiency apartment in a neighborhood brownstone owned by an older woman, supervised by her remaining family members in Brooklyn and the landlord. Florence (2017) said:

> I can't remember the lady's name, but she's a very nice old lady, and I knew, if I could get Val in one of her rooms in her brownstone, she would be safe. But the lady did not play. And I tell you, God was just there every step of the way… She says, "Now, tell me what you want me to do." I said, "Okay, wonderful. This is my daughter Valerie. She'll be working"—I told her [Valerie's] hours for work. "She has to attend school." And [the landlord] says, "Now, you know, I don't have any people running in and out." I said, "Okay, I want you to meet her aunt…she will be coming here to check on her." …[It] was no problem…. It was wonderful. Believe it or not, she graduated with honors…. She worked. She did not miss a day. When we went up for her to move down, the lady says, "You know, I hate to see her go, because she's the best tenant I ever had; no loud noise, she don't have people—she don't even try to sneak nobody in. She'd sit on the stoop and talk with her aunt and her cousin… and then she goes in the house and that's it." She says, "You sure you want to go? You could stay up here as long as you like" [laughter]. So, I said, "No, I'm going" [laughter]. So, it was—it was good. It was always good. All turned out okay.

Here, a network of support including her daughter's aunt, cousin, and this older woman in the neighborhood ensured that her underage daughter would be safe living alone, while maintaining continuity with school. Alongside the "eyes on the street" that other women neighbors offered Valerie Miller (the same neighbors that offered daily social and emotional support to Florence Miller following the murder of her husband), this older woman offered Florence care and attention by offering her daughter a place to live and by supervising her, taking some responsibility for her well-being. This sense of individual and communal responsibility should be central to understandings of abolition. Collective action does not emerge solely out of sheer will but, oftentimes, through established relationships among community members. In the context of abolition, relationships based in trust and care provide opportunities for the establishment of spaces and environments where more of these relationships can emerge. These spaces can sprout collective action and more equitable social relations.

As the community organization Justice for Families argues, "watching" neighbors can reinforce a surveillance impulse that is complicit with the violence of policing; however, "seeing" neighbors can emphasize shared interests and communal membership which uphold community safety (Goodyear 2013). In interviews, all who mentioned the neighborhood women who sat perched in windows and on stoops spoke about the women's relationship to their families and their observation coming from a sense of shared responsibility for the community. I would characterize this observational activity as seeing rather than watching.

Building a culture of care is key to an abolitionist vision of decarceration and a world absent of police. These everyday examples show that building a culture of care looks like creating spaces dense with caring relationships, communal responsibility, acceptance, and community knowledge. As longtime resident Alonzo Davis (2017) says about welcoming his newborn into the neighborhood:

> I really feel like neighbors kind of control the safety, or residents control the safety of a neighborhood, rather. So, I want to do my best to introduce my new addition to the people I grew up with, so they know who he is, the new face on the block …that's the kind of safety I'm more focused on…him feeling familiar to the neighborhood. I think it does a lot to kind of keep you out of trouble and…defuse situations when you are in trouble by knowing the people in the neighborhood.

An abolitionist vision for community safety centers the presence of structures of care. From the relationships that emerge from a longtime queer neighborhood bar, to the everyday activity of older women watching the neighborhood, these quotidian activities produced feelings of community safety among residents and may have been more effective than organized crime-fighting patrols.

CONCLUSION

Community-built alternatives to policing are not limited to the urban crisis. In Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant (as well as other neighborhoods in New York City and across the country) community-led violence interruption has worked to de-escalate community conflict and interrupt gun violence in particular. Save Our Streets Brooklyn (based in Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant) trains people in the community, many of whom are formerly incarcerated men, in conflict mediation (Save Our Streets Brooklyn, n.d.). Key to conflict mediation is grounded knowledge—a sense of shared experience, knowledge of the community, and deep relationships with people who might

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000035 Published online by Cambridge University Press

engage in gun violence (Suggs 2017). As Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2017) says, in talking about the grassroots work of INCITE! Women of Color against Violence, people "end violence by changing the social relationship in which it occurs" (p. 232). While violence interrupters do not have the power to change the structural conditions of the people experiencing the impact of race and class inequality, their ability to operate from the basis of a familiar relationship with fellow community members does shape the conditions under which conflict arises and is resolved. This is a form of harm reduction that is not dependent upon formal policing.

The lack of police legitimacy that necessitated grassroots forms of community safety during the urban crisis obviously persists to the present day. These endeavors from the past stressed a critique of anti-Black violence and police, criticism of Black crime and drug addiction, and promoted a culture of care among neighborhood residents. However, masculinized security practices often erred in reproducing the act of policing, making those efforts incompatible with abolition. On the other hand, feminized and queer practices of community safety emphasized cultivating a broader environment of care, rather than rooting out crime. These efforts provide implications for abolitionist projects, namely that community safety is a broader, more holistic container than security, and that people do not need to feel "policed" in order to feel safe. These forms of care allowed people to not only feel safe, but to understand themselves as members of a community. Thus, forms of community membership and mutual-aid appear to be important aspects of abolitionist community safety efforts.

This article contributes to literature on collective action, Black communities, and abolition by offering an intersectional analysis of the various ways Black social and political engagement centers on practices of safety and security and does not always fixate on conscripting a police response. It also emphasizes the need to identify the kinds of resources that already exist in communities that can be further supported and highlighted in the face of dominant institutions that continue to harm Black people. Additionally, I provide an understanding of how abolition shapes the possibilities (and limitations) of community safety alternatives. Future research could explore practices of safety and community in Black spaces, particularly those developed by women, queer, and gender variant people, as a means of deepening an understanding of experiences of violence, community safety, and abolition.

Corresponding author: Amaka Okechukwu, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, MS 3G5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030. E-mail: aokechuk@gmu.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I completed this article with the support of the Career Enhancement Fellowship of the Institute for Citizens and Scholars (formerly the Woodrow Wilson Foundation). Much gratitude to my research assistant, Sarah Ochs, as well as the following people for offering comments at various iterations of the manuscript: Mary Pattillo, Zawadi Rucks-Ahidiana, Victoria Reyes, Antonia Randolph, Saida Grundy, SunAh M. Laybourn, LaToya Trotter, and Elva Orozco Mendoza.

NOTES

1. "Arthur Miller, Victor Rhodes: Who Will be Next?" *Black News*, Fall 1978, Vol. 3 (Special Edition) (Box 10, Folder 5) Civil Rights in Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, NY.
2. The Black United Front is sometimes called the New York Black United Front in order to distinguish it from the National Black United Front, a national organization that came after, its national iteration materializing at a Brooklyn convening of 1000 activists representing thirty-four states and five foreign countries in 1980 (Worrill 2013). However, the concept of

the Black United Front, drawing from revolutionary "united fronts" in socialist and anti-imperialist struggles, meant that many organizations and coalitions called the "Black United Front" have emerged over time and across the globe.

3. "Black United Front: Report to the Community." *Black News*, August 1978, Vol. 3, No. 24 (Box 10, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
4. "Black Community Council of Crown Heights List of Items for Investigation, sent to the Department of Justice, Endorsed by the Black United Front." *Black News*, August 1978, Vol. 3, No. 24 (Box 10, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
5. "Black United Front: Report to the Community." *Black News*, August 1978, Vol. 3, No. 24 (Box 10, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
6. Black New Yorkers celebrated Black Solidarity Day, a Pan-African holiday created in 1969 by activist and playwright Carlos Russell, by halting shopping and other forms of economic consumption in order to draw attention to racial inequality and highlight Black collective power. Black Solidarity Day occurred annually on the day before election day in November.
7. "Black United Front Announces Protests." *Black News*, November 1978 Vol. 4 No. 2 (Box 11, Folder 1) CRBC, BC, BPL.
8. "Letter sent to President of the United States by Herbert Daughtry on behalf of the Black United Front."; "Black Community Council of Crown Heights List of Items for Investigation, sent to the Department of Justice, Endorsed by the Black United Front." *Black News*, August 1978, Vol 3, No 24 (Box 10, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
9. "Black Police: Which Way?" by Adeyemi Bandele. *Black News* Fall 1978, Vol. 3 (Special Edition) (Box 10, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
10. The East left CAP in 1974 when Amiri Baraka called for the inclusion of the work of Karl Marx and Mao Zedong into a revolutionary Kawaida (Konadu 2009); "Around Our Way" by Jitu Weusi. *Black News*, May 1974, Vol. 2, No. 17 (Box 9, Folder 1) CRBC, BC, BPL.
11. "Self Defense Part One." *Black News* June 2, 1973, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Box 9, Folder 1) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Black Martial Arts: Which Direction?" *Black News*, July 1975, Vol. 3, No. 5 (Box 10, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL; "The Black Man and Martial Arts." *Black News*, July 1975, Vol. 3, No. 5 (Box 10, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Cartoon of a Black Woman Defending Herself against Attackers with Martial Arts." *Black News*, July 1975, Vol. 3, No. 5 (Box 10, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Natural Food for Survival." *Black News*, January 14, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 27 (Box 7, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Recipes for the Black Family." *Black News*, February 15, 1970, Vol. 1, No. 9 (Box 7, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Natural Food Column." *Black News*, February 25, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 29 (Box 7, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
12. "The Black Ass Kickin Brigade (the following account was real)." *Black News*, October 1969, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Box 7, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL.
13. "Around Our Way" by Jitu Weusi. *Black News*, May 7, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 31 (Box 8, Folder 1) CRBC, BC, BPL.
14. "THE BLACKASS KICKIN BRIGADE…" *Black News*, December 27, 1970, Vol. 1, No. 26 (Box 7, Folder 5) CRBC, BC, BPL.
15. "The Pusher." *Black News*, December 10, 1970, Vol. 1 No. 25 (Box 7, Folder 4) CRBC, BC, BPL.
16. "Correction." *Black News*, December 1, 1969, Vol. 1, No. 5 (Box 7, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL.
17. "On The Struggle Against Dope." *Black News*, July 17, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 33 (Box 8, Folder 1) CRBC, BC, BPL.
18. "Where are the Warriors?" *Black News*, November-December 1982, Vol. 4, No. 23 (Box 11, Folder 4) CRBC, BC, BPL.
19. Ibid.
20. "Dope is Death." (cover) *Black News*, May 7, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 31 (Box 8, Folder 1) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Death to the Pusher." (cover) *Black News*, May 1972, Vol. 1, No. 40 (Box 8, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL.
21. "Message to the Black Liberation Army." *Black News*, January 28, 1974, Vol. 2, No. 13 (Box 9, Folder 4) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Around Our Way" by Jitu Weusi. *Black News*, February 1974, Vol. 2, No. 14 (Box 9, Folder 4) CRBC, BC, BPL; "Assata (Joan Chesimard) Escapes." *Black*

News, December 1979, Vol. 4, No. 11 (Box 11, Folder 2), CRBC, BC, BPL; "Support for Sister Assata." *Black News*, March-April 1980, Vol. 4, No. 12 (Box 11, Folder 2) CRBC, BC, BPL.

22. The numbers game, or policy racket, is an underground form of gambling. The person placing the bet aims to match the numbers that are randomly selected at the numbers "bank" or headquarters. The numbers industry was a significant part of the underground, informal economy in urban working-class communities in the early to mid-twentieth century. For more on numbers and the informal economy, see Harris (2016).
23. It is also reported that Mackie Harris purchased the bar in 1962 (Smith 2014).

REFERENCES

Abu-Jamal, Mumia (1996). *Live from Death Row*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Anderson, Elijah (2000). *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Anderson, Elijah (2013). *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Anekwe, Simon (1979). Arthur Miller Cover-Up. *New York Amsterdam News*, August 18, 49.

Anekwe, Simon (1986). Precinct Scandal Probe is Prompted by its Chief. *New York Amsterdam News*, October 4, 3, 18.

Associated Press (2020). Denver School Board Votes to Remove Cops from Schools. *US News & World Report*, July 8. https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/colorado/articles/2020-06-12/denver-school-board-votes-to-remove-cops-from-schools (accessed February 10, 2021).

Bailey, Marlon M. (2011). Gender/Racial Realness: Theorizing the Gender System in Ballroom Culture. *Feminist Studies*, 37(2): 365–386.

Bajc, Vida (2013). Sociological Reflections on Security Through Surveillance. *Sociological Forum*, 28(3): 615–623. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12040

Bell, Monica C. (2019). The Community in Criminal Justice: Subordination, Consumption, Resistance, and Transformation. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 16(1): 197–220. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X1900016X

Bell, Monica C. (2020a). Located Institutions: Neighborhood Frames, Residential Preferences, and the Case of Policing. *American Journal of Sociology*, 125(4), 917–973. https://doi.org/10.1086/708004

Bell, Monica C. (2020b). Black Security and the Conundrum of Policing. *Just Security*, July 15. https://www.justsecurity.org/71418/black-security-and-the-conundrum-of-policing/ (accessed August 19, 2020).

Ben Daniel, Tallie, and Hilary Berwick (2020). Queer In/Security: An Introduction. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 26(1): 129–140. https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-7929157

Bénit-Gbaffou, Claire, Laurent Fourchard, and Alex Wafer (2012). Local Politics and the Circulation of Community Security Initiatives in Johannesburg. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36(5): 936–957. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01137.x

Berda, Yael (2013). Managing Dangerous Populations: Colonial Legacies of Security and Surveillance. *Sociological Forum*, 28(3): 627–630.

Berger, Dan, and Toussaint Losier (2017). *Rethinking the American Prison Movement*. New York: Routledge.

Bledsoe, Adam, LaToya Eaves, Brian Williams, and Willie Jamal Wright (2018). Enacting Black Geographies: An Introduction to the Southeastern Geographer Digital Special Issue. *Southeastern Geographer*, 900(2): 1–18.

Bledsoe, Adam, and Willie Jamal Wright (2019). The Pluralities of Black Geographies. *Antipode*, 51(2): 419–437. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12467

Blumstein, Alfred, and Richard Rosenfeld (1998). Explaining Recent Trends in U.S. Homicide Rates. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 88(4): 1175–1216.

Brown, Michelle, and Judah Schept (2016). New Abolition, Criminology, and a Critical Carceral Studies. *Punishment & Society*, 19(4): 440–462. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474516666281

Browne, J. Zamgba (1978a). Arthur Miller Ruling Angers Brooklyn Blacks. *New York Amsterdam News*, November 4, A1.

Browne, J. Zamgba (1978b). Miller Protest Sparks Black Solidarity Day. *New York Amsterdam News*, November 11, A1.

Browne, J. Zamgba, and George Todd (1978). B'klyn Blacks Warn Jews: 3,000 March in Unity. *New York Amsterdam News*, July 22, A1.

Buckley, Thomas (1965). Maccabees Finish Year of Patrols; Anticrime Group Proud of Its Help to Brooklyn Police in Crown Heights Area. *The New York Times*, May 15.
Burton, Orisanmi (Forthcoming). *Tip of the Spear: Black Revolutionary Consciousness and Prison Pacification in the Empire State*. Unpublished Manuscript.
Camp, Jordan T., and Christina Heatherton (2016). *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter*. New York: Verso Books.
Campuzano, Eder (2020). Portland Superintendent Says He's 'Discontinuing' Presence of Armed Police Officers in Schools. *The Oregonian*, June 4. https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2020/06/portland-superintendent-says-hes-discontinuing-school-resource-officer-program.html (accessed June 4, 2020).
Carr, Patrick J., Laura Napolitano, and Jessica Keating (2007). We Never Call the Cops and Here is Why: A Qualitative Examination of Legal Cynicism in Three Philadelphia Neighborhoods. *Criminology*, 45(2): 445–480.
Cattelino, Jessica R. (2004). The Difference that Citizenship Makes: Civilian Crime Prevention on the Lower East Side. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 27(1): 114–137. https://doi.org/10.1525/pol.2004.27.1.114
Charles, Sharon Ife (2016). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Amaka Okechukwu* (2016.01.10). 2016 Oral History Series; Weeksville Heritage Center.
Chukhray, Irina (Ed.) (2018). Modern Abolitionist Struggle. [Virtual Issue]. *Social Problems*, https://academic.oup.com/socpro/pages/abolitionist_vi (accessed February 10, 2020).
Clines, Francis X. (1976). 994 More Job Cuts Offered By Police. *The New York Times*, January 6, 1.
Collins, Patricia Hill (2002). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
Cooper, Andrew W., and Gabrielle Patrick (1978). Bklyn Boycott May Resume. *New York Amsterdam News*, April 8, B1.
Critical Resistance (n.d.a). *Abolish Policing*. http://criticalresistance.org/abolish-policing/ (Accessed March 4, 2020)
Critical Resistance (n.d.b). *Reformist Reforms vs. Abolitionist Steps in Policing*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59ead8f9692ebee25b72f17f/t/5b65cd58758d46d34254f22c/1533398363539/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_CRside.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)
Cuthbert, Donna (2017). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Svetlana Kitto (2016.027.1.23)*. Voices of Crown Heights Collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.
Daughtry, Herbert (1979). Black Leadership at the Crossroads. *New York Amsterdam News*, November 3, 15.
Davis, Angela Y. (2011a). *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
Davis, Angela Y. (2011b). *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press.
Davis, Alonzo (2017). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Mark Winston Griffith* (2016.027.2.01). Voices of Crown Heights Collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.
Du Bois, W. E. B. ([1935] 2013). *Black Reconstruction in America: Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
Dubow, Fred, and Aaron Podolefsky (1982). Citizen Participation in Community Crime Prevention. *Human Organization*, 41(4): 307–314.
Durkin, E. (2011). Crown Heights' Shuttered Starlite Lounge to Star in New Documentary. *New York Daily News*, December 21.
Edwards, Dick (1971). Crown Heights Starts 24-Hour Crime Vigil. *New York Amsterdam News*, April 10, 25.
Einstadter, Werner J. (1984). Citizen Patrols: Prevention or Control? *Crime and Social Justice*, 21/22: 200–212.
Farmer, Ashley D. (2014). Renegotiating the "African Woman": Women's Cultural Nationalist Theorizing in the Us Organization and the Congress of African People, 1965–1975. *Black Diaspora Review*, 4(1): 76–112.
Fernandez, Luis A. (2019). Presidential Address: Abolitionist Approaches to Social Problems. *Social Problems*, 66(3): 321–331. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spz012
Garofalo, James, and Maureen McLeod (1989). The Structure and Operations of Neighborhood Watch Programs in the United States. *Crime & Delinquency*, 35(3): 326–344. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128789035003002
Garofoli, Joe (2020). How San Francisco Inspired the "Defund the Police" Movement. *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 2. https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/How-San-Francisco-inspired-the-defund-the-police-15380942.php (accessed November 1, 2020).

Gee, Kevin A., and North Cooc (2019). Will I be Victimized at School Today?: How Schools Influence the Victimization Experiences of Asian American Teenagers. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 10(4): 316–325. https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000155

Gieseking, Jen Jack (2020). *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*. New York: NYU Press.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (2007). *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (2017). Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence. In G. T. Johnson & A. Lubin (Eds.), *Futures of Black Radicalism*, pp. 223–240. New York: Verso Books.

Goodyear, Sarah (2013). A New Way of Understanding "Eyes on the Street." *Bloomberg CityLab*, July 22. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-07-22/a-new-way-of-understanding-eyes-on-the-street (accessed on September 5, 2020).

Hagan, John, Carla Shedd, and Monique R. Payne (2005). Race, Ethnicity, and Youth Perceptions of Criminal Injustice: *American Sociological Review*, 70(3): 381–407. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000302

Hagan, John, Bill McCarthy, and Daniel Herda (2020). What the Study of Legal Cynicism and Crime Can Tell Us About Reliability, Validity, and Versatility in Law and Social Science Research. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 16(1): 1–20.

Hanhardt, Christina (2013). *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hanson, Rebecca (2018). Ethnographies of Security: Pushing Security Studies Beyond the Bounds of International Relations. *Qualitative Sociology*, 41(2): 135–144. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9384-0

Harris, LaShawn (2016). *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Heller, Jordan (2009). Jewish Street Patrols Curb Crime—and Generate Controversy. *Christian Science Monitor*, February 10. https://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/2009/0210/jewish-street-patrols-curb-crime-and-generate-controversy (accessed April 5, 2020).

Hitchens, Brooklyn K., Patrick J. Carr, and Susan Clampet-Lundquist (2018). The Context for Legal Cynicism: Urban Young Women's Experiences with Policing in Low-Income, High-Crime Neighborhoods. *Race and Justice*, 8(1): 27–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368717724506

Hillyer, Reiko (2017). The Guardian Angels: Law and Order and Citizen Policing in New York City. *Journal of Urban History*, 43(6): 886–914. https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144217714761

Hunter, Marcus Anthony, Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016). Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry. *Theory, Culture, & Society*, 33(7-8): 31–56. https://doi10.1177/0263276416635259

Hunter, Marcus Anthony, and Zandria F. Robinson (2018). *Chocolate Cities: The Black Map of American Life*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Jackson, George (1994). *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.

Jacobs, Jane ([1961]1992). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books.

James, Joy (1996). *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, and Race in U.S. Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

James, Joy (2005). *The New Abolitionists: (Neo)slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Johansson, Klara, Lucie Laflamme, and Miriam Eliasson (2012). Adolescents' Perceived Safety and Security in Public Space—A Swedish Focus Group Study with a Gender Perspective. *YOUNG*, 20(1): 69–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/110330881102000104

Johnson, Albert (2017). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Svetlana Kitto (2016.027.1.26)*. Voices of Crown Heights Collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.

Johnson, Annysa (2020). MPS Board Votes to End Contracts for Police Outside Buildings and at Events. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, June 18. https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2020/06/18/mps-end-use-police-officers-outside-their-schools-athletic-and-other-events/3216902001/ (accessed November 18, 2020).

Jones, Nikki (2009). *Between Good and Ghetto: African American Girls and Inner-City Violence*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Kaba, Mariame (2020). Opinion | Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police. *The New York Times*, June 12. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html (accessed June 12, 2020).

Karma, Roge (2020). Los Angeles Voters Just Delivered a Huge Win for the Defund the Police Movement. *Vox*, November 4. https://www.vox.com/2020/11/4/21549019/measure-j-police-abolition-defund-reform-black-lives-matter-protest-2020-election-george-floyd (accessed November 10, 2020).
Kihss, Peter (1978a). Officer Arrested in Crown Heights Beating of a Black. *The New York Times*, June 23.
Kihss, Peter (1978b). 2,000 Assail Police at Black Rally as Off-Duty Officers Meet Nearby. *The New York Times*, July 17.
Kirk, David S., and Andrew V. Papachristos (2011). Cultural Mechanisms and the Persistence of Neighborhood Violence. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(4): 1190–1233. https://doi.org/10.1086/655754
Knapp Commission Report on Police Corruption, The (1973). New York: G. Braziller.
Konadu, Kwasi (2009). *A View from the East: Black Cultural Nationalism and Education in New York City*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
Kunath, Kate, and Sasha Wortzel, dirs. (2014) *We Came to Sweat: The Legend of the Starlite*. New York, NY.
Lang, Perry (1978). Black United Front a New Voice. *New York Amsterdam News*, November 4, B1.
Lavrakas, Paul J., and Elicia J. Herz (1982). Citizen Participation in Neighborhood Crime Prevention. *Criminology*, 20(3–4): 479–498. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1982.tb00473.x
Law, Bob (2017). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Amaka Okechukwu* (2016.027.1.06). Brooklyn Historical Society.
Law, Vikki (2011). Where Abolition Meets Action: Women Organizing against Gender Violence. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 14(1): 85–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2011.541081
Marx, Gary T., and Dane Archer (1976). Community Self-Defense. *Society*, 13(3): 38–43.
Marx, Gary T. (1989). Commentary: Some Trends and Issues in Citizen Involvement in the Law Enforcement Process. *Crime & Delinquency*, 35(3): 500–519. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128789035003011
Matthews, Les (1970). Armless Citizens on Patrol. *New York Amsterdam News*, December 5, 1.
McHarris, Philip V., and Thenjiwe McHarris (2020). Opinion | No More Money for the Police. *The New York Times*, May 30. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/opinion/george-floyd-police-funding.html (accessed May 30, 2020).
McKittrick, Katherine (2006). *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
McKittrick, Katherine, and Clyde Woods (2007). *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*. Toronto: Between the Lines Press.
McLeod, Allegra (2015). Prison Abolition and Grounded Justice. *UCLA Law Review*, 62: 1156–1239.
McQuade, Brendan (2018). Histories of Abolition, Critiques of Security. *Social Justice*, 45(2–3): 1–23.
Miller, Florence (2017). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Amaka Okechukwu (2016.027.1.22)*. Voices of Crown Heights Collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.
Muller, Christopher, and Daniel Schrage (2010). Mass Imprisonment and Trust in the Law. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 651(1): 139–158.
New York Amsterdam News (1965). In Bedford Stuyvesant: Safety Teams On Guard With Dogs. April 17, 27.
New York Amsterdam News (1973). City's Block Security Program Is Nation's 1st. September 15, D9.
New York Amsterdam News (1976a). Report Blames Crime on Police Brutality. February 14, A6.
New York Amsterdam News (1976b). A "People's Tribunal" Will Try Torsney In Mock Ceremony. December 11, B4.
New York Amsterdam News (1977a). The Rapid Growth of Housing Crime Patrol Unit In Brooklyn. May 21, B2.
New York Amsterdam News (1977b). Community Keynoters. June 11, D17.
New York Amsterdam News (1978a). Black on Black Crime Rising. January 28, 1.
New York Amsterdam News (1978b). Ask Federal Probe of Brooklyn Bias. July 15, A1.
New York Amsterdam News (1979). United Front's First Anniversary. July 7, 20.
New York Amsterdam News (1980). Convention Planned in Brooklyn. February 23, 5.
New York Times, The (1979). Cold Comfort in the Torsney Case. July 12. https://www.nytimes.com/1979/07/12/archives/cold-comfort-in-the-torsney-case.html (accessed February 10, 2021).

Oreskes, Michael (1985). Fiscal Crisis Still Haunts The Police. *The New York Times*, July 6, 23.
Ortiz, Carlos (1976). Brooklynites Declare War on Street Crime: Crime Running Wild Not Only in Harlem. *New York Amsterdam News*, January 3.
Pennell, Susan, Christine Curtis, Joel Henderson, and Jeff Tayman (1989). Guardian Angels: A Unique Approach to Crime Prevention. *Crime & Delinquency*, 35(3): 378–400. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128789035003005
Perry, Keisha-Khan Y. (2013). *Black Women Against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Phillips-Fein, Kim (2017). *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
Pinto, Nick (2011). The Shomrim: Gotham's Crusaders. *The Village Voice*. September 7. https://www.villagevoice.com/2011/09/07/the-shomrim-gothams-crusaders/ (accessed March 7, 2020).
Purdum, Todd S. (1986a). 12 from 77th Precinct Arraigned; Ward Outlines Integrity Measures. *The New York Times*, November 7. https://www.nytimes.com/1986/11/07/nyregion/12-from-77th-precinct-arraigned-ward-outlines-integrity-measures.html (accessed March 7, 2020).
Purdum, Todd S. (1986b). Missing Indicted Officer Found Dead in Motel. *The New York Times*, November 8. https://www.nytimes.com/1986/11/08/nyregion/missing-idicted-officer-found-dead-in-motel.html (accessed March 30, 2020).
Purdum, Todd S. (1986c). 90 Patrol Officers in 77th Precinct Are Shifted Elsewhere in Brooklyn. *The New York Times*, December 10. https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/10/nyregion/90-patrol-officers-in-77th-precinct-are-shifted-elsewhere-in-brooklyn.html (accessed February 7, 2020).
Purdum, Todd S. (1988). Drugs Seen as an Increasing Threat to Police Integrity. *The New York Times*, November 12, 29.
Quindlen, Anna (1978). Blacks Mourning Death of Miller; March to Wall Street in a Protest. *The New York Times*, November 1, 49.
Ray, Rashawn, Kris Marsh, and Conner Powelson (2017). Can Cameras Stop the Killings?: Racial Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Body-Worn Cameras in Police Encounters. *Sociological Forum*, 32(S1): 1032–1050.
Reese, Ashanté M. (2019). *Black Food Geographies: Race, Self-Reliance, and Food Access in Washington, D.C.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press Books.
Reilly, Katie (2020). Oakland is Disbanding Its School Police Force After Years of Activism. How The Push for Police-Free Schools is Gaining Momentum. *Time*, June 25. https://time.com/5859452/oakland-school-police/ (accessed June 30, 2020).
Report on Hearings in New York City on Police Misconduct (1984). Subcommittee on Criminal Justice No. 97576. United States House of Representatives, 98th Congress.
Retta, Mary (2020). Minneapolis Public Schools Abolished Their Police First. *The Nation*, June 19. https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/minneapolis-public-schools/ (accessed June 30, 2020).
Richie, Beth E., and Kayla M. Martensen (2020). Resisting Carcerality, Embracing Abolition: Implications for Feminist Social Work Practice. *Affilia*, 35(1): 12–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109919897576
Rickford, Russell (2016). *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Rodriguez, Dylan (2006). *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime*. Minneaplois, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Romo, Vanessa (2020). Minneapolis Council Moves to Defund Police, Establish "Holistic" Public Safety Force. *NPR (National Public Radio)*, June 26. https://www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-protests-for-racial-justice/2020/06/26/884149659/minneapolis-council-moves-to-defund-police-establish-holistic-public-safety-forc (accessed July 30, 2020).
Rosenbaum, Dennis P. (1988). Community Crime Prevention: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature. *Justice Quarterly*, 5(3): 323–395. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418828800089781
Sampson, Robert J., and Dawn Jeglum Bartusch (1998). Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences. *Law & Society Review*, 32(4): 777–804. https://doi.org/10.2307/827739
Save Our Streets Brooklyn (n.d.). *Neighbors in Action* (Formerly *Crown Heights Mediation Center*). http://neighborsinaction.org/sos/ (accessed September 3, 2020).
Seigel, Max H. (1976). Boy, 15, Shot to Death Point-Blank; Officer Arrested in East New York. *The New York Times*, November 27. https://www.nytimes.com/1976/11/27/archives/boy-15-shot-to-death-pointblank-officer-arrested-in-east-new-york.html (accessed March 15, 2020).

Seigel, Max H. (1978). Payoff Issue Raised After Killing by Police. *The New York Times*, June 20, B2.
Shabazz, Rashad (2015). *Spatializing Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
Shange, Savannah (2019). *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, and Schooling in San Francisco*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Shedd, Carla (2015). *Unequal City: Race, Schools, and Perceptions of Injustice* (1st edition). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Smith, Rachel Holliday (2014). Brooklyn Gay Bar That Opened in 1962 Highlighted in Documentary. *DNA INFO*, July 24. https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20140724/crown-heights/brooklyn-gay-bar-that-opened-1962-highlighted-documentary/ (accessed January 20, 2020).
Stampnitzky, Lisa (2013). Toward a Sociology of "Security." *Sociological Forum*, 28(3): 631–633.
Stern, Michael (1966). Youth Body Picks Maccabee Leader; Organizer of Crime Patrol to Be Sworn Tomorrow. *The New York Times*, June 26. https://www.nytimes.com/1966/06/26/archives/youth-body-picks-maccabee-leader-organizer-of-crime-patrol-to-be.html (accessed March 30, 2020).
Suggs, Rudy (2017). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Amaka Okechukwu (2016.027.1.07)*. Voices of Crown Heights Collection; Brooklyn Historical Society.
Summers, Brandi Thompson (2019). *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Chocolate City*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press Books.
Super, Gail (2016). Volatile Sovereignty: Governing Crime through the Community in Khayelitsha. *Law & Society Review*, 50(2): 450–483. https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12198
Tapley, Mel (1978). $500,000 Agreement, Good News in Brooklyn. *New York Amsterdam News*, December 9, B1.
Tatum, Wilbert A. (1986). While Corruption Investigation Continues: Koch Must Resign. *New York Amsterdam News*, October 4, 1–2.
Terry, Don (1988). Blacks Fight for a Place Among the 'Finest'. *The New York Times*, November 19, 29, 31.
Thomas, Jr., Robert Mcg. (1978). 200 Blacks Enlist in New Patrol. *The New York Times*, June 28. https://www.nytimes.com/1978/06/28/archives/200-blacks-enlist-in-new-patrol-fbi-inquiry-ordered.html (accessed March 30, 2020).
Todd, George (1978). Black United Front Meets with Koch. *New York Amsterdam News*, July 29, B1.
Treaster, Joseph B. (1978). Brooklyn Businessman Strangled in a Struggle with Police Officers. *The New York Times*, June 17, 25.
Tyler, Tom R., and Jeffrey Fagan (2008). Legitimacy and Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in Their Communities Symposium - Legitimacy and Criminal Justice. *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law*, 6(1): 231–276.
Tyler, Tom R., and Cheryl J. Wakslak (2004). Profiling and Police Legitimacy: Procedural Justice, Attributions of Motive, and Acceptance of Police Authority. *Criminology*, 42(2): 253–282. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2004.tb00520.x
U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer. (n.d. a). Census 1970, SE: T12 Race. https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C1970 (accessed November 19, 2020).
U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer (n.d. b). Census 1980, SE: T12 Race. https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C1980/R12683919 (accessed November 19, 2020).
U.S. Census Bureau, and Social Explorer. (n.d. c). Census 1990, SE: T12 Race. https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C1990/R12683923 (accessed November 19, 2020).
Venkataramanan, Meena (2020). Austin City Council Cuts Police Department Budget by One-third, Mainly Through Reorganizing Some Duties Out from Law Enforcement Oversight. *The Texas Tribune*, August 13. https://www.texastribune.org/2020/08/13/austin-city-council-cut-police-budget-defund/ (accessed September 5, 2020).
Venkatesh, Sudhir (2000). *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Vitale, Alex S. (2017). *The End of Policing*. New York: Verso.
Wedderburn, Sharon (2016). *Oral History Interview Conducted by Amaka Okechukwu* (2016.01.08). 2016 Oral History Series; Weeksville Heritage Center.
Wellford, Charles (2007). Crime, Justice, and Criminology Education: The Importance of Disciplinary Foundations*: Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 18(1): 2-5,186.
Weusi, Jitu (1978). Arthur Miller. *New York Amsterdam News*, June 24, A4.

Wilson, Bobby M. (2000). *America's Johannesburg: Industrialization and Racial Transformation in Birmingham*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Woods, Clyde A. (1998). *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*. New York: Verso.
Worrill, Conrad (2013). Remembering Jitu K. Weusi. *The Chicago Crusader*, June 7.
Ybarra, Megan (2020). Site Fight!: Toward the Abolition of Immigrant Detention on Tacoma's Tar Pits (and Everywhere Else). *Antipode*, 53: 36–55. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12610