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RACE, RISKS, AND RESPONSES: MAPPING BLACK AMERICANS' REACTIONS TO GROUP THREAT

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For my forebearers -- Clara, Lucille, Cynthia, Ato, and Jackie

For my lifelines -- Daren, Logan, Camryn, and Jaelen

For my comrades, my people, my co-strugglers.

For all of us.

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Acknowledgements

This is the hardest and easiest thing I have ever had to write. So, here goes.

I often joke that I "fell backwards into Academia." I started off at the University of Southern California (USC) in 2002 after several tumultuous years of uncertainty, homelessness, and abuse. When I got to USC, I fell back on what teachers like Parker Merrill, Marietta Joe, and Elizabeth Haugen at Oakland Technical High School had instilled in me and majored in Industrial Engineering. I had always carried with me an intense love for the hard sciences like Physics and Calculus. I knew little other fields that would give me the opportunity to pursue them. But, I also carried with me my experiences growing up on the Eastside of Oakland, California. A place where I learned quickly about the streets and violence, a place where neighborhood lessons were just as valuable (if not more so) than the ones I acquired in the classroom. I remembered when Darrick Smith, my instructor of the TryUMF program or "Trying to Uplift My Folks" first handed us excerpts of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in tenth grade. Even as I pursued studies in STEM, I brought with me the lessons my streets, my community, and my comrades taught me. And, after attempting to contort my Black, queer, genderbending body to the rules of Corporate America for seven years, I stopped playing around and took my deep commitment to the study of Black Politics seriously, returning to school at California State University, Fullerton to pursue a masters degree in Political Science. It was there that mentors like Matt Jarvis and Stephen Stambough encouraged me to continue my education and push toward the PhD. I'm so grateful they did.

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Abstract

My dissertation is concerned with socialization in American Politics and the role of group threat in Black Americans' political behavior. In it, I analyze both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the forms of threat that instigate political action among young Black Americans between the ages of 18 and 35. Through survey experiments and questionnaires, I find that young Black Americans are more likely to express concerns about threat than non-Black groups. Additionally, when considering the role of gender, Black women are most like to express concerns regarding sexual and state-based threat when compared to other groups. Through my in-depth interviews, I show that young Black people find themselves situated in dual position of threat, where they are simultaneously threatened by outsiders and also seen as threatening by outsiders. This ubiquitousness of threat results in innovative forms of coping strategies which include repression and respectability. For some young Black people, these intersecting forms of threat also induce anxiety about political participation and efficacy.

Existing threat literature has been primarily concerned with threat insofar as it impacts political attitudes among white Americans. Comparatively, my dissertation fills the gap in the existing threat literature while also analyzing the after effects of group threat for non-white groups. I ask: *how do young Black Americans respond to group threat?* This question and project are significant because a) gentrification in major cities across the country puts racially-segregated groups in close proximity to one another, b) policing in the United States remains a critical concern facing Black Americans, and c) mass migrations of Black Americans westward and, recently, southward suggest that racial threats may influence residency choices in the aggregate. The opening chapter of the project is dedicated to grounding the dissertation in the core approach and guiding the reader through the chapters that will follow.

In the second chapter, I first synthesize the scholarly work on racial threat, resentment, implicit bias, symbolic racism, and white vulnerability since 1949. I use this literature to lay the foundation for my contemporary work at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Second, I work through Black Politics literature on social consciousness theory and intragroup threat to frame out my theoretical claims about the relationships between race and other marginalized identities . Next, I examine scholarship on social movements, and collective action to draw connections between threat and political action. Finally, I analyze existing work on threat (especially when it is considered a political motivator), socialization, and affect to highlight the gap in the literature concerning the racial history of Black Americans and their limited agency in navigating the public sphere. These lingering norms, I argue, pose invisible threats for young Black Americans today.

In the third chapter "Theoretical Foundations of Group Threat", I define group threat as public language, actions, messages, and events orchestrated by political (e.g. politicians, police officers, or local government officials) or non-political actors (e.g. civilians) that explicitly or implicitly identify a social group as the target for physical harm, discrimination, or policy-based mistreatment. In this way, group threat should be understood as a complex webbing of perceived stimuli that register with groups of individuals, who share a common racial, gender, class, status, or other identifier, as possibly detrimental. Fundamentally, this chapter lays the framework and foundation of the dissertation by connecting young Black people's experiences

with parental and communal socialization with their political engagement. From this framework, I develop four hypotheses: 1) young Black people are more likely to perceive threat than non-Black people, 2) for young Black Americans, proximity or neighborhood-based threat will be closely linked to political attitudes and behaviors, 3) young Black women and LGBTQI+ Black Americans are more likely to respond to group threat than other Black Americans, and 4) young Black women will be more likely to directly engage the state when confronted with this threat than Black men.

The fourth chapter called "Seeing Risk: Measuring Disparities in Young People's Beliefs about Economic, Proximity-based, and Stereotype Threat" relies on national survey questionnaires with approximately 1,850 respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 that are disseminated virtually and via telephone. This chapter investigates respondent attitudes regarding economic, proximity-based, and stereotype threat. I also performed a survey-based experiment which tested responses to threats against differing racial groups. From these analyses, I find that Black Americans are more likely to perceive threats than other groups. Moreover, Black women are more likely, even when compared to Black men, to exhibit responses to group threat.

The fifth chapter, "Speaking Truth to Power: Navigating Group Threat, Socialization, and Activating Black Communities," I performed 50 in-depth interviews to draw deeper conclusions about the direct responses young Black Americans have to threat. Through these interviews, I found that young Black women were primarily concerned with sexual and police (state-based) threat while men were primarily concerned with economic and stereotype threat. In terms of response and political engagement, Black women were more likely to report engagement in direct protest or other forms of resistance against the status quo. Conversely, men were less likely to directly engage in open rebuke of the state.

In the sixth chapter, "Gendering Threat: Young People's Perceptions of the Seriousness of Police Killings of Black Americans," I examine both survey and interview data to understand how race and gender influence opinions regarding the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. Using two-sample t tests and ordered logistic regressions, I find that women respondents across all racial groups are more likely than their male counterparts to see police killings of Black Americans as a serious issue. My interview analyses show that young Black Americans express anxiety and fear regarding potential police interactions. These concerns about potential state-based threats vary across gender and act as a form of socialization thus affecting how young Black Americans navigate their daily lives.

The final chapter reflects on the findings from the empirical chapters with an emphasis on future implications for greater investigation of group threat and Black Americans across the United States. This project is significant because it seeks to show that threat may be experienced in different and significant ways across race, gender, and sexuality. It also shows that Black Americans' political actions and behaviors can be explained by a number of factors including intergenerational socialization practices and efforts to avert threats they experience in their everyday lives.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"A developing consciousness on the woman question today, therefore, must not fail to recognize that the Negro question in the United States is *prior*[1] to, and not equal to, the woman question; that only to the extent that we fight all chauvinist expressions and actions as regards the Negro people and fight for the full equality of the Negro people, can women as a whole advance their struggle for equal rights."

- Claudia Jones[2]

"Negroes in this country—and Negroes do not, strictly or legally speaking, exist in any other—are taught really to despise themselves from the moment their eyes open on the world. This world is white and they are black. White people hold the power, which means that they are superior to blacks (intrinsically, that is: God decreed it so), and the world has innumerable ways of making this difference known and felt and feared."

- James Baldwin[3]

Today, roughly a century after the Great Migration first began, questions remain regarding how the current political moment — which rests on the heels of the first Black President's two terms in office, the galvanizing of a major international Movement for Black Lives, and the election of President Donald Trump, a man whose first year in office has included efforts to deny funding from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, a resurgence in the public expression of white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, and instate restrictive tax policies that will have massive negative impacts on low- and working-class families — might stimulate new forms of political activity beyond geographical shifts. President Obama's history-making election in 2008 signaled, for many of all racial and class backgrounds, that the era of

[1] Emphasis is the author's.
[2] Claudia Jones, 1995, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!" in Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought," edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall. New York: The New Press, 108-127 (pp. 120).
[3] James Baldwin, 1993 [1963]. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Vintage House, pp. 25-26.

Black Americans as "outsiders" was drawing to an end (Tesler and Sears 2010). His eight years in office, while largely representative of his policy platform and the goals he articulated while running for office, have been criticized by scholars and activists alike (Taylor 2016). During his second term, the Black Lives Matter Movement was founded by three queer Black women: Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi. Each of them are long time activists (Taylor 2016; Khan-Cullors and Bandele 2018). The origins of this movement raise questions about the role of not only race in shaping political attitudes and behavior but gender, sexuality, orientation, and embodiment as organizing features for young Black Americans, in particular. As women, queer women most importantly, continue to emerge as political leaders and challengers of the existing status quo, what are the frameworks at hand to best understand their motivations, needs, concerns, and behaviors?

Now, in the post-Obama moment, as new policies on immigration (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Albertson and Gadarian 2015), education (Ewing 2018), and the environment (Fleischman and Franklin 2017) draw questions of citizenship and democracy for working-class, Americans of color, it is critical to assess the frameworks through which the social and political lives of young Black Americans are understood. Moreover, this political moment requires that we revisit traditional theoretical frameworks of affect and emotion in politics, how those phenomena shape attitudes and behaviors, and what the implications are for American Politics.

In the past three to four decades, scores of political scientists have taken up the threat explanation for intergroup conflict and political change, finding that such phenomenon as white Americans' defection from the Democratic Party (Giles and Hertz 1994), their propensity not to vote for Black political candidates (Kinder and Sears 1981), and their implicit understanding of race and politics (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000) can be reasonably explained by the threat

hypothesis or its new-fangled installments "symbolic racism" and "implicit bias." However, this body of literature, like Key's, focuses on the measurable and politically significant responses to "racial threat" as experienced by white Americans alone. To date, little work has investigated the role of threat in the lives of Black Americans and how those responses might 1) be distinct from other racial groups and 2) differ across gender and sexuality. Therefore, the core question underlying this dissertation is: *how do young Black Americans respond to group threat?* Several questions which stem from this inquiry are: *how do these responses vary by gender, class, sexual orientation, and other heuristics?* And, *what are the methodological interventions political scientists may take up to best ascertain these variations in responses and attitudes?*

As such, I argue that, at this particular political moment, threat remains a critical mechanism through which young Black Americans' political attitudes and behavior should be investigated. Furthermore, threat is a central organizing feature for young Black Americans and affects this group differently depending on their social location within the group. In this project, I focus on four types of traditional forms of threat in the social sciences: economic threat, state-based threat, proximity-based threat, and stereotype threat. My unique contribution to the literature is what I call "intersectional threat," which denotes how threat operates differently both within and across groups based on power. It is through the lens of intersectional threat that I seek to show that young Black Americans' experiences within the political process are much more dynamic than the existing social science literature suggests. My focus on three methodological approaches (surveys, experiments, and in-depth interviews) allows for both broad and deep engagement with the questions above. What's more, it positions this project not only as a theoretical and empirical critique of existing threat literature. It also stands as a methodological

critique of the use of surveys alone in investigating the role of threat in the lives of young Black Americans.

Historical Contexts of Black Americans and Threat in the United States

The Great Migration, which has been dated from roughly 1915 to 1970, is one of the clearest representations of Black Americans' response to spatial-racial threat (Wilkerson 2010). Major cities like Chicago, Illinois, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, St. Louis, Missouri, and Detroit, Michigan saw hundreds of thousands of Blacks migrate to northern and midwestern cities in response to racialized terror and aggression from formal racist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and other white vigilantes seeking to protect "their" America (Wells-Barnett [1892] 2002). The terror these Black Americans encountered didn't only influence their choices of where to live and start families, it also fundamentally shaped how they engaged in public life and politics (Key 1949; Dawson 1994). Moreover, these mass migrations had an undeniable effect on the landscape and cultural evolution of northern and western metropolitan areas of the United States. The effects of mass migrations of Black Americans into predominantly white cities has long been an animating feature of the political science literature (Key 1949). And the effects of these phenomena remain critical in understanding today's political landscape (Enos 2017; Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2018). For many white Americans living in highly segregated cities and neighborhoods, the mobility and autonomy of Black American residents has represented, and still represents, a significant perceived threat to their own financial, political, and social standing (Rothstein 2017). These historical frameworks form the basis for this project.

Why Study Young Black Americans?

There are many reasons to study young Black Americans and their relationship to group threat. First, young Black Americans between the ages of 18 and 35 today are the most likely to interact with police officers (Eith and Durose 2011). They are also members of the largest generation since the Baby Boomers (Fry 2018a). These young people are the predominant group entering the country's institutions like universities, workplaces, and hospitals (Fry 2018b). For these reasons, young Black Americans are a powerful social and political group. Second, exist scholarship has shown that we know little about this social demographic. In *Democracy Remixed*, Cathy J. Cohen situated the experiences of young Black Americans through a lens of alienation (2010). She shows that this group is too often excluded from mainstream electoral politics and conceptions of participation which may render their concerns, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes illegible or invisible to the mass public (2010). This project seeks to make their experiences legible and perceptible within the political science discipline with the hopes that these theoretical, empirical, and methodological interventions then spawn a larger body of research which centers this underexamined social group. Third, young Black Americans today are the recipients of several generations of social change that lie in direct contradiction with one another. One on hand, they are one to two generations out from the Great Migration, no longer living in neighborhoods and communities ruled by de jure segregation like Jim Crow and Black Codes. However, on the other hand, they are frequently confronted with hypersurveilled communities, closing schools, strained economic conditions, and tenuous social amenities at their disposal (Cohen 2010; Taylor 2016; Ewing 2018). As Carla Shedd explains in seminal study of Illinois public high schools, *Unequal City: Race, Schools, and Perceptions of Injustice*, "Youth are highly attuned to the distribution of opportunity and the presence of social inequality" (2015, 5). These young people, while rarely the central subjects of social science

research, are highly experienced in navigating and surviving the conditions of their environments. These unique characteristics and political possibilities are worth investigating. More importantly, they have major implications for how we study American Politics moving forward.

Chapter Outline and Method

In this dissertation, I employ a multi-methodological approach to best understand how threat shapes the political behavior of young Black Americans. In the following section, I break down my approach by chapter.

Existing Literature on Racial Resentment, Group Consciousness, and Affect in Politics

In Chapter 2, I examine the various scholarly works on threat with a particular emphasis on V.O. Key's seminal text *Southern Politics* (1949). I focus on the gamut of work on racial resentment, implicit bias, and stereotypes in political attitude formation which has predominated the study of Race and Ethnic Politics since the 1980s. These works are critical in helping elucidate how Key's seminal work has grown and extended into the contemporary moment. I also examine the extant literature on threat in the immigration, electoral, and economic contexts to draw out important differences between these projects and my own. In particular, I emphasize that these texts, while empirically robust and vital to understanding the role of affect and emotion in political behavior and participation, narrowly focus on white Americans' experiences with threat. This limited focus, I argue, represents a vital gap in the literature on threat and the political process.

Theorizing Group Threat

In Chapter 3, I lay out my theory of group threat while paying special attention to the unique factors which inform this process for Black Americans. Additionally, I map what I refer to as the *threat-to-response process*, which identifies the various stages by which individuals experience threat stimuli, how their perceive and receive those threats, what factors influence their assessments of risks associated with that threat, and how they, eventually, respond. This chapter lays the theoretical foundation for the empirical portions of the dissertation. Moreover, I provide a theoretical framework for what I refer to as the "inherited threat cognition" process. Within this framework, individuals are socialized to perceive and register threats to their social group based on a number of factors which I enumerate in the later chapters. This framework is critical because it illustrates how all people, at various social locations and orientations to power, may perceive and respond to threat differently depending on their experiential knowledge and positionality.

Group Threat and Political Attitudes among Young Americans

In Chapter 4, I rely on survey data and experiments to examine young Americans' ideas about economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threat. These three traditional forms of threat have long been investigated in the social sciences. However, few studies have centered the experiences of diverse groups of young Americans. In this chapter, I focus on the experiences of Black men and women to show that they are more sensitive to threat than other groups of young Americans. Specifically, through my survey experiment, I show that Black women are more sensitive to threat against Black communities than even Black men. Yet, these sensitivities do not necessarily correlate with traditional forms of political action, a phenomenon which I explore more in in chapter five.

In-Depth Interviews with Young Black Americans

In Chapter 5, I provide an analysis of 50 in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with young Black Americans ages 18 to 35 in the Chicago-area during March 2018 to July 2018. These interviews focused on three core thematic areas: 1) defining and identifying threat, 2) connecting threats to one's personal life, and 3) exploring how threat contributes to various forms of political behavior and action. The evidence in this chapter is critical in providing support for the theoretical claims in Chapter three insofar as they underscore how young Black Americans navigate various forms of threat in their daily lives as a means of survival and to participate in politics.

Risks to Reponses: Examining Young People's Experiences with Threat

In Chapter 6, I present both quantitative and qualitative analyses of responses to state-based threat among young Americans. The survey analyses I provide show that young Black Americans, both men and women, are more sensitive to state-based threat or police violence, than other young Americans. However, these sensitivities are not homogenous based on gender. They are also vary based on class, sexual orientation, and embodiment. For young Black Americans, their individual experiences with and knowledge of police violence and surveillance has a strong influence on how they perceive police in general.

The Role of My Identity In Shaping the Project

My race, gender, age, and class were all significant in the development of this dissertation. In terms of conceiving of the project, my personal experiences growing up in the inner city of Oakland, California in the nineties provided me with foreknowledge of the types threats young Black Americans encounter in their daily lives. As a queer Black woman, my experiences with gender- and sexuality-based threats were also informative of the research question and framing. While these characteristics led me to a project rooted in Black Politics, critical race studies, and

gender studies, it is also reflective of the larger structures and frameworks within which many young people negotiate and navigate political institutions and the public sphere today. As a millennial, these varied experiences were fundamental in developing this project.

In terms of the research method, my personal identity was critical in performing in-depth interviews with young Black Americans. I found that participants were very comfortable with me from the outset of the interviews and repeatedly expressed their esteem at being included in the project. Participants were very willing to share my work with their peers and colleagues and remained in contact with me following the initial interview for validation checks and other questions.

Limitations of the Study

The research design chosen for this project ameliorates a great deal of potential limitations. First, because the survey questionnaires feature a nationally representative sample with an oversample of Black, Latinx, and Asian Americans, those responses are both reliable and valid. They are also generalizable to the broader population. The limitations presented by using survey data to measure emotion and affect among marginalized populations is actually a theoretical intervention this projects seeks to make (Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi 2008). Fundamentally, this project makes the claim that quantitative measurement alone does not sufficiently account for the heterogeneity of experiences Black Americans have with group that. While this heterogeneity is a potential limitation of the chose method, the use of in-depth interviews is an effort to mitigate that issue.

Second, in the cases of the interviews, I focused on young Black Americans ages 18 to 35 from a range of economic, sexual, and embodiment backgrounds. While this project is limited in that the interviews were only conducted in the Chicago area, many of the interview participants

were actually non-native Chicagoans. Some respondents were of Afro-Latinx descent and were first generation Americans. Others were transplants to the area for work or school. I elaborate on these sample variations in chapters five and six. Thus, the differences of personal characteristics of those individuals who were included in the sample are significant and meaningful.

Overall, the methodological approach for this project should help to reduce potential limitations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

"When we dare to speak in a liberatory voice, we threaten even those who may initially claim to want our words. In the act of overcoming our fear of speech, of being seen as threatening, in the process of learning to speak as subjects, we participate in the global struggle to end domination."

- bell hooks, *Talking back: thinking feminist, thinking black*[1]

"Power doesn't back up in the face of a smile, or in the face of a threat of some kind of nonviolent loving action. It's not the nature of power to back up in the face of anything but some more power."

- Malcolm X

The roles of emotion and affect in shaping political attitudes and behavior of the myriad political actors in the United States remains a critical area of inquiry for today's social scientists. While much of that work has been fundamental in developing new theoretical interventions into the role of threat in the lives of American people writ large, political scientists remain at a crucial standpoint of analysis to ensure that this growing body of literature fully accounts for the intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and a host of other identity markers that contribute to this complex subject. To that end, this project focuses on the ways that threat, as an emotional trigger, stimulates both political ideas and action among young Black Americans. This project focuses not only on the unidirectional threats which originate via external sources of threat stimuli, like members of other racial demographics, but also on intragroup threats which emerge within Black communities. I elaborate on my theoretical frameworks which detail these various forms of threat in Chapter Three. However, before theorizing the forms of threat most

[1] bell hooks. 1988. *Talking back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. Toronto: Between the Lines, pp. 18.

salient to this social group, I will examine the extant literature on the ways threat has been examined in the social sciences thus far.

In the remaining portions of this chapter, I will discuss the historical work on racial threat in the discipline. I will briefly review the gamut of scholarly literature that has been generated in response to the "racial threat hypothesis" and its fundamental theoretical precepts. I will briefly examine literature on political socialization in relation to responses to threats. Then, I will examine the work of race theorists and scholars whose work challenges the existing frameworks of the racial threat literature, with a specific focus on group consciousness theories. In closing, I will highlight the role of group threat in collective action and social movement organizing of Black Americans.

The Origins of Racial Threat in Political Science

One of most consistent explanations for political mobilization, partisanship, and engagement among whites in the mid-twentieth century is the "racial threat hypothesis." While the term is not explicitly stated in the work, this theory originates from V.O. Key, Jr.'s *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, originally published in 1949. Early in the text, Key explains that it was "whites of the black belts who have the deepest and most immediate concern about the maintenance of white supremacy" (1949, 5). Thusly, Key found that as the proportions of Black American populations varied throughout the South, so would the attitudes of whites who gave the black belts their "dominant political tone" (1949, 5). Fundamentally, Key finds racial animus to be the underlying motivation in the factionalism and strict machine politics of the American South. In his combination of ethnographic and empirical analysis of eleven southern states, Key found great variation in the party organizations and voting demographics, variations that he

attributes to the dispersion of Black American residents throughout the South. This is true even for what he calls "one-party states", states where "a single party...dominates" (1949, 16). At this political moment, the American South was often referred to as the "Democratic South" because of its strict association with the Democratic Party, the party which opposed Republican Reconstruction legislation following the Civil War. Key reminds readers that "[f]rom Reconstruction until Franklin D. Roosevelt, most southern Negroes insofar as they had been partisan inclinations, were habitually Republican in the tradition fixed when they had a taste of political power" (1949, 286). This combination of Republican Party loyalty and the modicum of political power experienced by Black Americans in the post-bellum period garnered the party the trope of the "Negro party" (1949, 286). While these party divisions utilized the organizational structures and mechanisms of the national and local political system, they were deeply rooted in the long historical arc of racial aggression between whites and Black Americans in the United States.

While factionalism and the preservation of white supremacy are animating components of Key's argumentation, his most influential finding lies in his assertion that "the persistent strain of southern unity" originated in areas of the South where "the economic system is most dependent upon black workers, and that the white-black socio-economic system, commonly thought to be a characteristic of the entire South, is most highly developed" (1949, 315). In this way, Key asserts that racial animus and aggression in areas with higher proportions of Black American populations persists, at least in part, due to the perceived threat those Black residents pose to the modus operandi. Their potential shifts in political power, demands for greater access to public amenities, and pressures on the status quo operations of the existing economic system pose uncertainties for rural whites who lives and livelihoods rely on uninterrupted continuity in

the state of order. Key explicitly links this status quo preservation work to the political process and racial tensions when he says,

> The maintenance of southern Democratic solidarity has depended fundamentally on a willingness to subordinate to the race question all great social and economic issues that tend to divide people into opposing parties. Contrariwise, solidarity is threatened as these other questions come to outweigh in the public mind the race issue (1949, 315-316).

At the heart of Key's project is the tension between white racial solidarity and perceived from threat from a growing Black American population whose increased size raised questions about how their political and economic and political concerns might threaten the political and economic conditions of white Americans.

Yet, what is largely under-investigated in Key's project is the role threat played in the lives of Black Americans. He paints of picture of the American South, in a moment rife with racial and political upheaval, that was mostly one-party by fiat rather than by happenstance. In areas with large Black American populations, voter suppression efforts were the strongest and nonvoting rates among these populations were rarely the result of apolitical affect (Key 1949). Key explains that "[i]n those limited areas in which the Negro votes as a matter of course politicians demonstrate a profoundly different attitude toward him than in areas where the race issue is bitter, and where voting, if it occurs at all, takes place in an atmosphere of conflict" (Key 1949, 527). In effect, some Black Americans faced with the threat of physical violence, political exclusion, and/or "discriminatory public policy" still worked to participate in the political process (Key 1949, 528). While not a central focus on Key's work, he ends up highlighting the forms of resistance taken up by Black Americans in the face of restrictive and exclusionary voting policies like literacy tests and poll taxes. Rather than simply foregoing participation altogether, some Black Americans joined together in social organizations and community-based

groups to help raise awareness and funds to overcome the high costs associated with voting (Key 1949). These reactions to disenfranchisement are just a few of the modes of threat response with which this dissertation is concerned. While likely many more Black Americans in the American South moved away, unwilling to go on risking their lives to fight white Democratic political machines and residential aggression from rural whites, it is important to unearth the varying responses to racial group that Black Americans experienced and continue to experience and how those responses remain critical to understanding the full picture of today's political landscape.

An Accounting for Racial Resentment, Symbolic Racism, and Social Norms

A fundamental contribution of this dissertation is the expansion of the conception of threat to include groups that have previously been theorized as only aggressors in the threat equation rather than receivers of threat stimuli. Since Key's canonical text, the disciplinary focus has drawn much of its guiding logics from the white-black binary nature of his racial threat hypothesis, a hypothesis that precludes Black Americans from experiencing group threat. But, over the past seventy years, since Key's findings were first published, race scholars concerned about the relevance of racial threat for white Americans have increasingly found that feelings of threat are collapsible onto a number of other sentiments. Much of the existing literature on white Americans' feelings of racial threat has come to the conclusion that the threat narrative does not hold true for this racial group mainly because racial threat and racial resentment are virtually indiscernible from one another in their case (Kinder and Sears 1981; Schuman et al. 1985; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Weber et al. 2014). In fact, Don Kinder and Lynn Sanders note in *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* that, "[t]hreat is not so much a clear-eyed perception as it is an

emotion-laden attitude. Whites feel racially threatened because they are predisposed to look at the world that way; they see danger and risk when others, more sympathetic in their racial sentiments, do not" (1996, 90). Kinder and Sanders suggest here that others who are "more sympathetic in their racial sentiments" may have less likelihood of possessing racial resentment. In particular, they root contemporary racial resentment in slavery and the Civil Rights Era. They say, "Race prejudice survived slavery's disappearance no doubt for more than one reason, but not least was the persistence of pervasive racism among American elites" (1996, 94). Accounting for the overt racism expressed during enslavement and it's vestiges, Kinder and Sanders suggest that feelings of animus toward black Americans stemmed not only from their diminished situatedness after slavery but from the meaning attached to their position by those in power. Would black Americans be able to transcend the condition of past enslavement to achieve true equality? Was the end of slavery and forced segregation the answer to the "Negro Problem"[2]? Many of these concerns were rooted in "biological racism[3]" or the belief that there were fundamental differences in intellectual and physical abilities between white and black Americans (Kinder and Sanders 1996). But, as more liberal ideas about race and equality developed around the civil rights era, beliefs about the role of institutions, like schools and governmental agencies, changed mainstream white racial attitudes about the fundamental reasons for the persistence of

[2] This term was addressed by many scholars at the turn of the 20th century. One of the earliest scholars to address this problem from a social sciences standpoint was W.E.B. Du Bois in his detailed study, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (University of Pennsylvania Press, originally published in 1899). Gunnar Myrdal revisited the "Negro Problem" in 1944 in *An American Dilemma: Volume 1: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

[3] Walter Johnson enumerates the ways that medical science was used to justify the system of slavery when discussion the work of slave doctor and racial theorist Samuel Cartwright in *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). Specifically, doctors used tools and methods of examining the bodies of living and deceased slaves to find physiological differences in lung capacity, mental ability, and brain development between whites and blacks. According to Johnson, Cartwright's work of "inductive racism" suggested that "slavery was necessary—indeed, it was the stuff of liberty. The plantation was the motor of human history" (203).

disparity between racial groups. Due to the wins of the Civil Rights Movement, like the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, many white Americans believed that "the problem of race was solved" (1996, 103). From this point, all that was left to address, for many white Americans, was the need for social order in American inner cities where many black Americans lived and worked. These shifts in focus did not signal an end to beliefs in biological racism. However, according to Kinder and Sanders, they did represent a different focus for many white Americans. One where, "discussion centered on the threat that inner-city blacks posed to social order and public safety" (1996, 103). This shift underlies their measure of racial resentment. Not only that, it is foundational in much of the research today regarding the role of threat in social and political life. This new focus of the "race problem," after the civil rights era and just as the First Great Migration came to end, was not on securing legal rights to public movement, freedom in home buying, or the right to vote. Instead, it hinged on whether or not black Americans would exhibit the fortitude, in the eyes of many white Americans, to overcome the impacts of two hundred years of slavery, nearly one hundred years of legal segregation, and another decade of delimited citizenship in the United States. For Kinder and Sanders, this notion of racial resentment is rooted in American individualism (1996). It takes roots in several other important ways as well.

Given that the particular racial and political histories of the United States did not simply occur in a vacuum and have had ripple effects on all racial groups, this move toward understanding white feelings of racial threat as rooted in racial resentment is a critical contribution in the literature. However, there are three aspects of this literature that can be built upon in this dissertation. First, Kinder and Sanders introduce the idea that those who are sympathetic in their racial sentiments might be less likely to express racial resentment. This

suggests that those who possess more liberal ideas about race and race relations should score lower on the racial resentment scale. To that effect, Michael Tesler and David O. Sears found in *Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America* that Black Americans' scores on the racial resentment scale were well below the midpoint, especially when compared to whites and Latinos (2010). Therefore, they classify this group as "racially sympathetic" (2010, 97). This is an important finding because it suggests that Black Americans' experiences with racial threat might vary drastically from Latino/a Americans even though both groups face certain racial hostilities in the United States. One critical flaw of this method is, however, that Black Americans were asked the traditional battery of racial resentment questions[4] which are framed such that Black Americans are the primary subjects of the racial resentment measure as posed to white respondents. Thus, this method does not properly account for whether or not Black respondents possess racial resentment toward non-Black outsiders who might be perceived as posing threats to their community. Likewise, where Tesler and Sears provide some insight into the variations of feelings of racial resentment among non-Black social groups, there is little indication of how those sentiments show up in the political process. To this point, Claudine Gay found evidence which suggests that Black Americans in close residential proximity to more economically affluent Latinos/as express greater feelings of fear and hostility toward them (2006). Because her primary focus was non-white group members, she was able to test whether or not fear is a dominant emotion in determining racial and political attitudes. These findings suggest that deeper investigation of feelings of racial threat among Black Americans might yield disparity between them and other minority groups despite their mutual subordination

[4] The racial resentment battery was created by Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders and includes six questions from the 1986 National Election Study Survey. See *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), pp. 106.

to white Americans. This work also highlights the ways that materials interests and racial group consciousness intersect with feelings of threat.

Second, like the "racial threat hypothesis," racial resentment has correlates with other forms of white racial anxiety, making it empirically muddy. One primary contribution to the racial attitudes literature, which is closely related to racial resentment, is "symbolic racism." In 1981, Don R. Kinder and David O. Sears defined this term as "a form of resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline" (1981, 416). In their study, they found that white anti-black sentiment was less pronounced when confronted with personal racial threat. Instead, symbolic risks of uprooting social norms of individuality, authoritarianism, and morality were more predictive of white anti-black sentiment. Schuman et al. call this term "mysterious" (1997, 293). But, a particularly important contribution of both the racial resentment and the symbolic racism literature is that it white racial attitudes toward Black Americans were rarely rooted on personal feelings of threat. In effect, white Americans were more concerned with controlling the status quo than preserving their personal material interests. Given that there has never been a moment in history where white Americans were not sufficiently affirmed in their position in the racial hierarchy (Omi and Winant 1994), this finding does not provide substantive engagement with the role of threat in the political process across racial groups. Thus, threat remains significant in American Politics, just not for many white Americans.

Third, while Kinder's and Sanders's racial resentment scale has been taken up by many American Politics scholars, their focus on the experiences of white Americans limits the extent to which their theoretical interventions may be generalized to other groups. A gap presented by

their framework lies in the fact that threat is embedded within a power structure wherein certain actors are *allowed* to feel threatened while others are not. In this conception, white Americans possess predispositions toward Black Americans which increase the chances that they will perceive outsiders, especially Black Americans, as threatening. Meanwhile, Black Americans, while they may perceive outsiders as potentially threatening, may not have the political, economic, and social power to express their responses in the same ways (Mills 2017). Arlie Hochschild refers to this phenomenon as "feeling rules", these delineate,

> ...a zone within which one has permission to be free of worry, guilt, or shame with regard to the situated feeling. Such zoning ordinances describe a metaphoric floor and ceiling, there being room for motion and play between the two. Like other rules, feeling rules can be obeyed halfheartedly or boldly broken, the latter at varying costs. A feeling rule can be in varying proportions external or internal. Feeling rules differ curiously from other types of rules in that they do not apply to action but to what is often taken as a precursor to action. (565-566).

Feelings rules mediate responses to threat and are, thus, linked to the forms of socialization experienced by those individuals who are exposed to threat stimuli. These rules are the social norms which condition individual actors into and out of expressions of affect like anger, fear, sadness, or anxiety regulate. While members of any racial group may be exposed to varying forms of "rules" regarding public morality and comportment with expected social norms, these expectations, for Black Americans, are rooted in inter-generational experiences with racial violence, discrimination, anti-black sentiment, and legal exclusion from the political process. Thus, in this political moment, historical experiences with racial aggression remain influential in how young Black Americans navigate today's social terrain.

Scholars have long investigated the role of racial group identity in the formation of American public opinion (Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000, Kinder and Kam 2009). These race scholars have done much to explain the forms of racial resentment and

implicit bias possessed by some white Americans against Black Americans while accounting for ways these racial attitudes inform political beliefs and actions (Blumer 1958; Schuman et al. 1997; Mendelberg 2001). Likewise, Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman show that negative racial attitudes about Black Americans are greatly influential in shaping policy attitudes on issues like crime and welfare, even when stereotyping happens subconsciously (1997). In his sequence of news media-based crime experiments, Shanto Iyengar found that,

> [n]ews coverage of black crime not only diverted attention from societal responsibility, but also attracted attention to individual responsibility. More than 60 percent of all causal attributions were directed at individuals when the news reported on black violent crime. This was *double*[5] the comparable percentage in the White Crime condition (1991, 43)

These frameworks suggest that many white Americans' racial attitudes on violence, crime, and policing will be directly connected to feelings of resentment toward Black Americans. Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki note that, "[e]ven if the proportion of Black victims and criminals were to reflect defensibly 'accurate' readings of actual crime patterns, i*n the absence of contextual explanations*[6], the heavy prominence of a racial minority in these stories of violence may worsen negative stereotyping" (2000, 81). Under these conditions, media acts as a form of socialization, imputing notions of increased violence among Black Americans and, therefore, increasing the likelihood that white Americans will support punitive criminal justice policies and initiatives (Entman and Rojecki 2000).

Examining Political Socialization and Young Black Americans

The literature on political socialization remains pertinent to this project. Specifically, in assessing how Black Americans perceive and respond to group threat, political orientations and narratives

[5] Emphasis is the author's.
[6] Emphasis is the author's.

adopted in childhood may have significant impacts on adult political behavior. One place we might turn to begin making the connection between socialization and responses to group threat is the work of Richard Niemi and Barbara I. Sobieszek who sought to locate the process of political socialization in the initial activity of "politicization" (1977). They refer to this term as meaning,

> ...that young children learn early that there is an authority above and beyond family and school figures. This politicization might come about in rather simplistic ways, for instance, when a father obeys traffic laws so as not to run afoul of the police, but it is effective nonetheless. By the time children are seven or eight years old, then, they are aware of the external force demanding some support, obedience, and (usually) respect. Their understanding of this external force is only sketchy, but awareness of such a power makes possible the development of other political ideas from an early age (1977, 212).

These early forms of politicization work to teach children and adolescents the cultural norms, feeling rules, and social behaviors that are expected of their racial, gender, and class group. Niemi and Sobieszek identify three core agents of socialization: family, school, and mass media (1977). In the case of young Black Americans, those whose parents were likely born during the Great Migration or whose families can be traced back to black American ancestors who migrated from the Jim Crow South, these early childhood socialization processes are critical in ascertaining how these political actors will respond to threat in their adult lives. However, to-date, much of the political socialization literature has been primarily focused on parental influence in the realm of partisanship and policy attitudes (Tedin 1974; Niemi and Jennings 1991; Achen 2002). To this end, Searing et al. note that,

> [p]arents cannot possibly socialize their children to deal with the specific political issues which will confront them during their adulthood: such issues simply cannot be foreseen or anticipated. Parents can and do, however, transmit strong loyalty to a political party. And, since parties will continue to take stands on emergent political issues, the loyal Democrat or Republican can fall back on these issue stances as surrogate parental cues (1973, 416).

While important, this emphasis on expressly electoral issues leaves room for greater investigation of the role of socialization in determining how adults will engage in everyday political actions. What if parents, family and other community members can foresee interactions with police that may be risky to the lives of Black Americans? What if, through knowledge of historical trends and previous experiences, these agents of political socialization can orient young Black Americans away from potential social threats? This theoretical opportunity remains under-addressed by the existing political socialization literature.

Like political socialization, the role of racial predispositions in determining later political behavior and attitudes presents an opportunity for greater theorization. In the context of public opinion formation, Tali Mendelberg refers to this process as "racial priming" (2001). She says, "these racial feelings and mental representations form a set of negative racial predispositions: sentiments such as fear, resentment, and anger; stereotypes that detail flawed character traits for blacks (particularly those relating to work, violence, and sexual immorality); and attributions for racial inequality that rest on blacks' dispositional faults" (2001, 118). In lockstep with Kinder and Sanders (1981), Mendelberg here articulates the role of pre-existing orientations in predicting political ideas about Black Americans. More importantly, she shows how racial resentment works in tandem with racial messaging to influence political decision-making. Specifically, Mendelberg finds that high resentment individuals are at the greatest risk of susceptibility to negative racial messaging (2001). Low resentment individuals, on the other hand, are more conscious of expressing racial stereotypes and can suppress their negative racial sentiments (2001). These contributions suggest that socialization has the potentiality to shape political attitudes into adulthood. Further, these influences are most influential for those

individuals who hold the strongest negative ideas about outgroup members. Yet, this literature does not engage with the types of predispositions, racial or political, that Black Americans hold when moving into adulthood. Rather, they focus solely on predispositions toward Black Americans and how those attitudes stem from feelings of racial resentment. This project addresses this gap in the literature by theorizing responses to threat as inherently linked socialization and the cumulative effect of predispositions.

Varying Forms of Threat in Political Science

An important component of the existing group threat literature, as instantiated by Key, has been its rootedness in the geopolitics of state and place. Key's analysis of racial threat was, in part, crucial because of its emphasis on life in the American South. In a contemporary sense, divisions across not only state-lines but within states has become central to the political process. In *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*, Katherine J. Cramer found that even studies of geographically urban-rural differences in public opinion have deep racial undertones. She says, "given the way arguments against government redistribution in the United States have historically been made by equating deservingness with whiteness, these conversations are about race even when race is not mentioned" (2016, 86). This suggests that, regardless of physical location in the United States, white racial sentiment remains colored by resentment against Black Americans, immigrants, or urbanites or other "others." These predispositions make racial resentment a key measure for white Americans but leave much to be investigated for Black Americans. Cramer's interview-based qualitative study is significant because she focuses on differences in political attitudes and resentments between urban and rural people rather than an explicit focus on race alone. She explains that "[m]any of

the people I listened to in rural areas identified strongly as rural people and took it as a given that rural areas do not get their fair share of political attention or decision-making power or public resources and have a fundamentally different set of values and lifestyles, which are neither understood nor respected by city dwellers" (2016, 209). These resentments, while rooted in geographical difference, are significant because of the ways they have been adopted as personal identity markers by many white rural Americans (2016). For Cramer, contemporary politics are marked by blaming fellow citizens when disappointments in the political system occur. She defines the "politics of resentment as "a political culture in which political divides are rooted in our most basic understandings of ourselves, infuse our everyday relationships, and are used for electoral advantage by our political leaders" (2016, 211). While Cramer's conception of the "politics of resentment" is helpful in understanding feelings of animus across geographical terrain, it does little to help explain the ways that Black Americans, especially those who find themselves living in urban centers, experience regional or racial consciousness.

In particular, recent work on the role of emotions in politics shows increasing evidence that anxiety towards perceived "others" facilitates much of white Americans' political attitudes and participation. In their experiment-based study of the role of anxiety in the democratic process, *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*, Bethany Albertson and Shana Kushner Gadarian refer to "framed" and "unframed" threats (2015). "Unframed" threats are those threatening issues which emerge during states of emergency, like a public health issue. "Framed" threats are those social and political phenomena that emerge from more complex conditions, "where some see risks and costs and others see gains and benefits" (2015, 23). The language of framing aligns closely with the logic of predispositions and priming. Likewise, it serves a similar purpose: guiding affect toward a set of political attitudes or decisions. As such,

Albertson and Gadarian note that, "anxious people were more likely to read and remember threatening information, and they were more likely to agree with threatening information" (2015, 71). Essentially, anxious people's predispositions towards anxiety-inducing messaging are central to their political outlooks. Further, using responses to immigration policy as a threat stimuli, they found that the levels of anxiety possessed by individuals in their study regulated how news stories were consumed, what messages were accepted as truth, and what policies positions were deemed hostile or acceptable to reduce potential harm (2015). Like Cramer, Albertson and Gadarian find deep connections between feelings of anxiety and individuals' political decision-making. Though, like Cramer, Albertson and Gadarian focus only on white racial sentiment, their framework offers a great potential starting point for understanding some of the myriad emotions that stem from perceived threat. In the context of Black Americans, anxiety might be just one of the many emotions experienced.

Pushing a bit further on the role of emotions in the political process is Antoine Banks who makes a convincing case for using anger as the dominant emotional characteristic in white Americans' racial politics. Assessing Key's original threat hypothesis as one inherently about resource competition and group position[7], Banks finds that, while fear is present in contemporary debates on race, it "will have a difficult time bringing negative thoughts about race to mind in the contemporary period" (2014, 36). Through experiment-based tests, Banks finds that with respondents with high levels of "old-fashioned racism", racial appeals that rely upon both symbolic racism and race-neutral appeals trigger anger more than other affective responses

[7] Henry Blumer provides a thorough analysis of racial prejudice as rooted in a sense of group position theory. Therein, he suggests that racial prejudice relies on four key components: 1) a feeling of superiority, 2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, 3) a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and 4) a fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position," in *Pacific Sociological Review*, pp. 4.

(2014). He concludes, anger presents a more salient primer for understanding racial attitudes. A critical shortcoming of this assertion, however, is that Banks' assessment relies on the traditional white-black binary of race relations wherein whites are capable of feeling threatened as the perpetual dominant group and blacks are only capable of being threatening as the perpetual subordinate class. Because of this framing, fear and threat stimuli might not effectively trigger political attitudes namely because Black Americans do not pose a legitimate threat to White Americans. Conversely, Black Americans may experience threat stimuli and fear at higher levels with varying effects primarily because White Americans pose a significant and legitimate threat to their social and political longevity.

The role of threat in the political process applies in a number of contexts. Specifically, threat has become increasingly critical in examining immigration policy preferences and racial attitudes toward Latino/a immigrants writ large. Taking up the concept of the "immigrant threat narrative," Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan L. Hajnal found that much of the political decision-making concerning immigrants in the United States stems from fear and anxiety. They root many of these affective reactions in "scripts" that suggest that immigrants are more prone to crime, illegality, social welfare abuse, and other forms of institutional exploitation (2015). Through a sequence of empirical tests, they find that white Americans are willing to pay higher taxes to for basic public services and support "more punitive policy choices" (2015, 37). What is of particular interest in this case is the role of messaging and media. According to Abrajano and Hajnal,

> A pervasive immigrant threat narrative in the media and politics, the widespread concerns of immigrants and immigration expressed by individual Americans in surveys, and the negative stereotypes of Latinos held by many Americans all suggest that the immigrant population does represent a real threat to many white Americans—one that is likely to be sharper in contexts where the immigrant population is larger or growing more rapidly (117-118).

Here, Abrajano and Hajnal not only discuss the role of perceptions of immigrant threat in the political process, they also locate the phenomenon within a geographical context. Because Latinx populations across the country are increasing, though growth patterns have slowed since 2007[8], questions regarding intergroup relations and perceptions of threat across minority groups are critical. As a partial answer to this puzzle, this work seeks to understand how Black-Latinx threat responses vary across threat stimuli. To this end, unlike the previous literature, Abrajano and Hajnal also investigate white sentiment toward Asian Americans, as opposed to a singular focus on the white-black divide. They say, "[w]hites react extremely differently to Latino context than they do to Asian American context. Asian Americans, it appears, may be more of a model minority and ally, whereas Latinos seem to be a real threat that whites counter with more restrictive and more punitive policy making" (2015, 152). In effect, white racial resentment does not hold constant across all racial groups. Rather it is attenuated in the case of Asian Americans even though they constitute an out-group. This is significant in the context of this study because young Black Americans' responses to threat should also vary based on the perceived urgency and legitimacy of the threat stimuli. These literatures highlights the central role threat occupies in the political process. Simultaneously, they illustrate what additional work must be done to write the experiences of young Black Americans into that story.

"Group Consciousness" Theories and Varying Intragroup Dynamics in Black Politics

[8] Krogstad, Jens Manuel. "Key facts about how the U.S. Hispanic population is changing." Pew Research Center, published September 8, 2016 (retrieved on May 27th, 2018 from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/08/key-facts-about-how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/)

Group threat is critical to understanding the political actions and choices of groups and individuals in the United States. In particular, Black Americans, because of the history of enslavement in the Americas and the continued impacts to their economic, economic, and social opportunities, are a racial group whose political participation and actions necessitate an analysis of intergroup and intragroup pressures. Using group threat as a lens for understanding the political actions of Black Americans offers a mechanism present in a number social conditions that remain undertheorized. Essentially, this work builds on existing race scholarship that highlights the primacy of racial solidarity among Black Americans as a central influence in their political decision-making. In particular, when investigating the political behavior and actions of Black Americans, most scholarly work has been concerned with the "group consciousness" oriented frame (Miller et al. 1981; Dawson 1994; Tate 1994). The group consciousness narrative presupposes that Black Americans, in this case, have a stronger likelihood of supporting policies and social agendas that, they believe, will benefit their own racial group in comparison to others. It also presupposes that those who possess an inclination toward group consciousness motivations for political decision-making will act on that sentiment in similar ways. For example, in *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics,* Michael C. Dawson introduces the concept of *linked fate*, a measure which assesses the "degree to which African Americans believe that their own self-interests are linked to the interests of the race" (1994, 77). Theorized in this way, the concept of linked fate is critical important because it operates as a latent variable underlying racial and political solidarity among Black Americans. Further, Dawson found that perceptions of linked fate persisted across class categories and education status (1994). For many Black Americans, Dawson argues, linked fate explains a host of political decision-making processes, even those that seemingly contradict class-based political

evaluations. Unlike linked fate, however, group threat, seeks to show that, in addition to feelings of linked fate, Black Americans may be motivated to act in particular ways, ways that vary according to the types of stimuli they are exposed to, based on the types of threat they experience.

Like Dawson, Katherine Tate links Black group consciousness to Black public opinion and behavior but, unlike Dawson, she explicitly links "common identity" to electoral politics and group empowerment (1994). This is an important intervention because it provides clarity for the ways that identity within Black American communities not only creates consciousness but also may influence their political actions. Tate's findings also offer a first step toward drawing a thread between Black Americans' experiences with racial group identity formation, threat, and political action. Considering both Dawson and Tate, these group consciousness theories are critically important in understanding how the unique cultural and lived histories of Blacks and Africans in the Americas informs their recognition of identity as a formative feature in their politics today. And, while these findings are important in explaining Black Americans' thinking on political concerns and matters of the day, they do not fully frame out or predict how Black Americans will mobilize or act in response to external threat or other political stimuli. This is primarily because group consciousness theories do not provide ample empirical evidence to predict how in-group actors will respond to threat stimuli. Thus, while linked fate is convincing for larger, macro behaviors like voting, partisanship, or ideology, it is less clear how a concept so broad may be applied to the everyday lives of Black Americans as they embark upon social and political interactions. In this dissertation, I seek to address not only the ingrained commonality inherent to Black communities and individuals, but, also, to investigate the ways that external

motivations catalyze political actions from Black political actors and how those actions may take multiple forms.

A central issue for group consciousness theories of Black political action is that they run the risk flattening political thought, participation and engagement, tactics and mobilization, and many other facets of the political process for all members of the racial group. Cathy J. Cohen highlights this issue when she defines the term "secondary marginalization," the process wherein "by accepting the dominant discourse that defines what is good, normal, and acceptable, stratification among marginal group members is transformed into an indigenous process of marginalization targeting the most vulnerable in the group" (1999, 64). Essentially, group consciousness explanations for political behavior, while an effective political motivator for some political actors, does not tell the whole story especially when considering more marginalized group members within Black communities who may have less access and fewer political resources with which to engage in the political process. To this effect, gender and sexual orientation are important indicators of Black Americans' opinions on a number of political issues including their orientation toward the government, their voting behavior, and other forms of civic engagement (Schussman and Soule 2005; Cohen 2010). Further, group threats might originate from sources within one's own racial group, as Cohen's theory depicts. Because one's identity group may be constituted by many groups including not just race but also class, gender, sexuality, ability, or a host of other factors, it is critical to to generate a theory of group threat that allows for dynamic forms of both intergroup and intragroup stimuli on political actors.

The heterogeneity of Black Americans' political actions and behaviors is substantiated when considering the body of literature on political organizing across race, gender, age, and class. In particular, These differences become empirically tangible when measured through the

lens of the current Black Lives Matter Movement which, as Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor points out, "is largely queer and female" (2014, 165). The queer and female nature of today's movement is significant because of its deviation from earlier movements that were largely male and heterosexual, due to their linkages to the Black church (Carby 1987; Ransby 2003). Further, Alan Schussman and Sarah A. Soule found that those who were younger were more likely to participate in protest regardless of their prior organizational affiliation or civic skills (2005). While these characteristics are generally personal and deemed non-political, they also have linkages to beliefs about sexual and health policies that diverge from previous generations (Cohen 2010). These points of divergence are important not just for understanding the types of political attitudes young Black Americans espouse in this moment but also the intended outcomes of their mobilization efforts and collective action. Shelby refers to these forms of dissent as "sharply opposed reactions" (2016, 253) that are often misunderstood by older generations of Black people. However, group consciousness theories of Black political behavior do not account for the ways that gender and sexuality intervene in race-based assessments of politically-valuable work. This is an imperative intervention when considering how gender and sexuality and even youth often re-marginalize Black Americans who are already greatly disadvantaged in the political process.

Group Threat as a Mobilizing Affect for Young Black People

There remains a question as to whether or not threat is a motivational affect for young Black Americans. Underlying this question is a tension between perceived threat and the accessible responses available to in-group members who are weighing the risks of responding to threat stimuli. This tension emerges between these positions because differing responses to threat may

seem more viable or appropriate depending on the risks assessments made by the in-group member. Thus, Miller and Krosnick found that political responses to threat varied by the degree to which respondents believed their actions might successfully avert threat. They note, "

> Citizens may believe that the most effective strategy is to contribute money to an organization that has the resources to launch a multi-pronged counterattack, involving grassroots mobilizing, lobbying, and the like. That is, when it is time for a legislative battle, citizens may see lobbying groups as the best means to avert a threat. In contrast, sending a postcard registering one's views to the president may seem less potent because a president's veto can be overridden by Congress. So when presented with both options side by side, individuals who perceive a policy change threat may choose to contribute money to an interest group to avert the threat because it is most likely to have an effect. In contrast, when told that politically powerful individuals in Congress are already gearing up to change a policy in a wanted direction, lobbying groups may seem irrelevant because they may not be viewed as effective at helping policies to be passed in the abortion arena (2004, 516).

Here, responses to threat are conceived of as dynamic and laden with a number of political and social choices which must be considered prior to political action. In the case of Black Americans—especially those with limited social resources, mobilization, agency, and access to the political process may be constrained (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; Cohen 1999; Cohen 2010; Taylor 2014). The structure of some Black Americans' lives might, therefore, be highly influential of the structures of their responses to threat. Huddy et al. intervene in this literature with their findings that threat and anxiety "have distinct psychological and political effects" (2005, 595). Specifically, in their study of support for anti-terrorism policies, they find that feelings of anxiety are more likely to be brought on by personal experiences with or close proximity to terrorism (2005). In these cases, more anxious individuals were more risk averse and were more likely to support isolationist measures which would help the US to avoid future terrorism incidents (2005). This study is important because shows that threat and anxiety are very closely linked. In particular, anxiety stems from intimate and personal contact with a threat stimuli. Anxiety also works to mediate responses to threats, even after those threats have been

experienced first-hand. So, while threat might mobilize young Black Americans toward political action, extreme cases of threat that result in anxiety about future occurrences might actually demobilize young Black Americans.

Fundamental to the group threat narrative tested in this dissertation is the goal of deeper engagement with current models of collective behavior and group mobilization. Aldon D. Morris states that "collective behavior occurs during periods of rapid social change or crises… [i]n short, collective behavior is that activity in which people engage when attempting to repair and reconstitute a ruptured social structure" (1984, 275). Large-scale, public group threats — especially when levied by powerful political elites and leaders — typify ruptures in the political status quo if fulfilled. Still, there has yet to be substantial quantitative investigation regarding how that collective behavior manifests for young Black Americans in direct response to group threat.

It is important to note that there is long-established literature that links young Black people's collective action and social movements to external group threats. In his political history *Freedom Summer*, an in-depth examination of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and their activism in the South, Doug McAdam shows how young Black people's political organizing and demonstrations often function as direct responses to the anti-Black sentiment and threats from racial and political actors (1988). This political moment, in the summer of 1964, represents a time of great political change and upheaval across Black communities. Not only that, many young Black people were becoming politically active for the first time (McAdam 1988). From an institutions perspective, Eric Schickler suggests in *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932 - 1965* that bottom-up activism and work from Black communities has long been a catalyst for policy and agenda-setting

changes on the democratic left (2016). These on-the-ground activists and organizers were critical in putting pressure on political leadership as it pertained to legislation that was potentially harmful to Black communities (2016). Effectively, Black collective action and movement-making has long operated in response to larger, political decision-making and cultural shifts that negatively impact Black communities. However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the specific forms of political action taken up after Black Americans experience group threat as well as how those decisions differ when compared to other racial groups. In addition, these works do not provide an empirical model for understanding the relationship between threat and the variations of young Black Americans' political responses and actions.

Conclusion

This dissertation starts by questioning Key's seminal work which was one of the most thorough accounts of white Americans' political beliefs and processes in southern states following the end of institutional slavery and Reconstruction, and during the era of de jure — by law — and de facto — by prerogative — Jim Crow segregation. Key's work illustrates the social and political landscape in southern states preceding the major civil rights wins of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that formally ended segregation in public schools and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 that codified the legal end of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, or national origin in public spaces and in home financing, respectively.

In contrast with Key, the central argument of this dissertation is that Black Americans experience group threat in important ways and those experiences are critical in understanding how they engage in the political process. As I will illustrate in the remaining chapters, feelings of threat vary by racial group in strength and frequency. Not only that, women and LGBTQI

respondents mobilize after receiving threat stimuli in ways that vary significantly from men and heterosexual/cisgender respondents. By focusing on the political behaviors of young Black Americans in comparison to their peers, this work seeks to provide some context for the precipitous drop in Black millennial voting to 49.4% in 2016 from 55% in 2012 even as turnout increased among young people (Krogstad and Lopez 2017). Further, it seeks to elucidate the unique forms of political responses and actions — that have yet to be theorized — among Black Americans as a result of group threat.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Foundations of Group Threat

"It occurred to me that no matter where I lived, geography could not save me."

- Jacqueline Joan Johnson[1]

"If anyone should ask a Negro woman in America what has been her greatest achievement, her honest answer would be, 'I survived!'"

- Pauli Murray[2]

Introduction

Social scientists and other academic practitioners have long worked to understand how ideas and attitudes are formed and maintained. In particular, the factors which contribute to variations in political beliefs and behaviors among the United States electorate have gained renewed interest in recent years as issues of immigration, citizenship, belonging, and geography bubble to the surface of many political debates (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Enos 2017). A consistent finding across these works is that one primary reason citizens, regardless of their racial background, participate in the political process is to reduce or prevent perceived harm. Potential harms might be manifested in closures of local schools, the raising of property taxes, or increased county-wide investment in expanding police departments instead of reallocating funds toward community-based initiatives like greenspaces and recreational centers. Those harms might also take the form of national policy changes like bans on travel for certain immigrant populations, federal statutes that limit public access for LGBTQI citizens, or uncertain funding outlooks for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. What is certain is that these

[1] Jacqueline Joan Johnson, *Rememory: What There Is For Us*, cited in Malaika Adero *Up South* (New York: New Press, 1993), p. 108.
[2] Pauli Murray, "The Liberation of Black Women," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall. (New York: The New Press), p. 186.

harms take on many forms and are interpreted differently based on the perceiver's race, gender, class, and orientation to power. But, *how do those potential harms translate into action*? This question lies at the heart of this project.

I argue that, for young Black Americans, threat is a significant influence of political behavior. The daily politics of being Black in the United States, and the political choices therein, mean that this social group frequently encounters social choices concerned with threat aversion and survival. However, much of the existing literature on threat, rather than examine the ways that this social group has had to navigate their political world despite being more susceptible to threats like economic and educational deprivation (Dawson 1994; Oliver and Shapiro 2006), political marginalization and alienation (Cohen 1999), and persistent struggles against police surveillance and harassment (Lerman and Weaver 2014), has focused on the ways that white Americans perceive and experience threat in the United States. My project calls for a revisiting of both the theoretical underpinnings and empirical analysis of responses to potential political harm or "threat." I look to also disaggregate threats within Black communities to better understand how personal beliefs and characteristics influence perceptions and reactions to threat stimuli. Fundamentally, I seek to resituate the existing emphasis on threat as phenomenon that best explains political behaviors and beliefs within white communities. This notion frequently poses Black Americans as the quintessential threat (Key 1949; Gilens 1999; Mendelberg 2011; Banks 2014). Instead, I put forth, the unique racial history of the United States—which is predominated by the logics that substantiated institutions of slavery and legal segregation—requires that social science fully grapples with the complex nature of threat for young Black Americans today. Specifically, we must reckon with the particular nature of being both *seen as*

and *vulnerable to* threat that many young Black Americans experience in their day-to-day lives. To-date, social science has done little to fully examine both phenomena simultaneously.

In the following chapter, I first provide contextual definitions of threat, leaning heavily on social movements literature. Next, I frame out how my conception of threat intervenes in existing threat literature. Then, I detail the *threat-to-response* process wherein citizens connect their perceptions of threat to social and political action. At this point, I outline how this process intersects with traditional forms of threat like economic, proximity, state-based, and stereotype threat. I contribute to this theoretical tradition with what I call "intersectional threat." Finally, I examine the implications of this process in the lives of young Black Americans.

Defining Threat

Building out a framework for threat requires that the term be first broken into its disparate parts: risks and costs. These concepts are not unique to Black Americans. They are inherent in the political process and shape the ways that citizens make judgements about how and when they will participate in the political system. To this end, in *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Sidney G. Tarrow defines threat as "the risks and costs of action or inaction, rather than the prospect of success" (1994, 160). Tarrow's definition is instrumental as it clearly connects perception of threat to correspondent action. In this way, threats should be understood as events, discourses, and/or policies that necessarily carry perceived stakes, stakes which individuals and groups assess when making judgements about how to best proceed in making future political decisions. These phenomenon might occur within communities or outside of them. They may be initiated for expressly political motives, like passing legislation or pandering to constituents. However, these events might also stem from implicitly political

origins, like longstanding racial tension between enclave-style communities or expressions of outrage after the death of an unarmed Black teen. Threat is stochastic rather than discrete and may operate in differing forms especially for groups and individuals who possess multiple marginalizations from power[3].

Further situating threat, I define *group threat* as language, actions, messages, and events orchestrated by political (e.g. politicians, police officers, or local government officials) or non-political actors (e.g. civilians) that explicitly or implicitly identify a social group as the target for physical harm, discrimination, or policy-based mistreatment. Put simply: *these are threats that are linked to one's membership in a particular group or class.* Group membership orients threat namely because it is through group position that individuals locate themselves within racial frameworks (Blumer 1958; Omi and Winant 1994; King and Wheelock 2007). In this way, group threat should be understood as a complex webbing of perceived stimuli that register with groups of individuals, who share a common racial, gender, class, status, or other identifier, as possibly detrimental. For this operational definition to be both reliable and valid, it requires that individuals: 1) self-identify as members of a targeted group, 2) believe that others affirm their group membership, 3) perceive messages or actions about their group as threatening, and 4) identify those potential harms as legitimate. This is not a normative definition meant to validate some experiences of threat versus others. However, in the context of Black Americans, perceptions of threat like those associated with economic disparity, racial discrimination, and police-related intimidation are frequently linked to empirical realities that confirm those perceptions. Thus, these perceptions are deeply rooted in experience and the specter of truth.

[3] "Multiply marginalized" is a term coined by Jennifer Nash in "Re-thinking Intersectionality." *Feminist Review* 89:1-15, 2008. It works to define the long-term exclusions and essentialisms that necessitated the move toward "intersectional" study of subjects.

Not Taking Threat For Granted

Theoretically, my framework of threat depends on history as history is deeply formative of the empirical world today. Starting with V. O. Key's canonical analysis of southern race relations, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, political science has long been concerned with how the empirical realities of threat in the social world shape political attitudes and actions. In this work, first published in 1949, Key examined how increasing numbers of freed Blacks moving into southern states affected white racial and political attitudes. Key noted, "[i]t is the whites of the black belts who have the deepest and most immediate concern about the maintenance of white supremacy" (1949, 5). The maintenance of the status quo, white supremacy, is then the baseline from which Key's research originates. This framework situated Black Americans as a threat to the status quo. This framing of racial threat along a black-white binary wherein Black Americans are a threat to the modus operandi and white Americans are situated in preservation of the existing system has shaped our work on threat for the past seven decades (Enos 2017; Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2018). Rather than challenging this framework, much of social science has continued in Key's tradition situating Black Americans in the position of the threat and white Americans as the perpetually threatened. But, this approach does not sufficiently explain the political world or the ways that these actors show up in it.

Dating back to the work of Black journalist and archivist of American lynching, Ida B. Wells, Black Americans have long known what it means to feel threatened in the United States. Wells archived the lynchings of Black Americans, many that she identified as part and parcel of "the old threadbare lie that Negro men rape white women" (1892, 29). Wells wrote these words in an African American Memphis paper called the *Free Speech* on May 21, 1892. In response,

local mobs formed, demolishing her paper and running her out of town under the threat of lynching (1892). While most of those Black Americans who were lynched were Black men accused of rape, women and children were not spared from this horrible fate (Equal Justice Initiative 2017; Wells 1892). Wells' work also shows how sexual violence against Black women and girls was usually not criminalized especially when the perpetrators were white men. She tells of an eight-year-old Black girl named Maggie Reese who was raped by a white man but there was "no avenging in this case; she was black" (1892, 37). The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) has documented 4,084 "terror lynchings" between 1880 and 1940 in the twelve most active lynching states[4]. These lynchings and Jim Crow segregation were critical factors in motivating millions of Black Americans to migrate from the South to the North and West between 1915 and 1970 (Wilkerson 2010; Equal Justice Initiative 2017; Rothstein 2017). Many of these murders were rooted in economic and political threat some white Americans felt as Black Americans migrated into communities that were previously all-white, bringing with them needs for public services and jobs (Olzak 1990). The vestiges of our racial past remain present in today's political landscape. Thus, any conception of threat in the contemporary moment must take stock of that history.

Key Theoretical Interventions

The theory of threat I develop in this chapter builds upon traditional theories regarding the role of affect and emotion in political behavior. Those theories lay important groundwork in

[4] Over six years between 2011 and 2017, the EJI researched lynchings in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. (Equal Justice Initiative, "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror" (Third Edition), 2017, See here: https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/drupal/sites/default/files/2017-07/lynching-in-america-3d-edition-spread.pdf on September 15, 2018, page 3-4).

establishing the critical differences between political anxiety, fear, anger, opportunity, and threat as motivating factors in individual decision-making (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Banks 2014). They also distinguish these emotional and psychological impacts on the political process from traditional ideological beliefs that can often mask themselves as affect-based responses (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015). However, my theory of threat differs from these more traditional theories of threat in three fundamental ways.

First, my theory of threat works to take full account of the role of history, specifically, racial history in the United States by focusing on the experiences of Black Americans and threat. This approach orients the literature towards shifts on Black Politics that can be traced to the Post-Reconstruction era. For example, W.E.B. Du Bois contextualizes social and political conditions facing Black Americans, both newly freed Blacks in the South and those who were entering domestic and industrial labor in the North, as rooted in racial antagonism with poor whites (Du Bois 1899; Du Bois 1935). In *Behind the Mule,* Michael Dawson accounts for the connections between present socio-economic conditions and political ideology using the "Black utility heuristic" (1994). Comparative, in *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections*, Katherine Tate shows how electoral shifts within Black communities are linked specifically to community-based resources and "strategic voting" (1993, 122). Likewise, Cathy Cohen expands these notions of Black consciousness and "linked fate" through her examination of marginalization in *Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (1999). In each of these instances, the centering of Black Americans and their experiences within the existing political system has provided unearthed new theoretical approaches and frameworks and expanded our knowledge of the social world. This is a departure from extant literature on

threat which is mostly concerned with the experiences of white Americans and their feelings of threat by Black Americans.

Second, my theory of threat also reckons with the ways that varying orientation to power (eg. racial, sexual, gender, or class-based difference) alter the manner by which threats are received and interpreted. Patricia Hill Collins describes varying group orientations toward power as "standpoints" which she describes as "similar angles of vision leading to a group knowledge" (2000, 28). Standpoint theory remains a critical development in Black Feminist Thought as it sought to connect Black women's personal experiences in the empirical world with the theoretical frameworks of feminism. Hill Collins says that these standpoints are influenced by "recurring patterns of experiences" encountered by group members (2000, 29). To this end, intersectionality, an analytical and theoretical tool meant to account for the myriad manifestations of power in the lives of those most marginalized, accounts for these experiences (Moraga and Anzaldua 1981). Moreover, it is central in my theoretical framing throughout this project.

Third, and finally, threat, in this context, is theorized not as a uni-directional device that orients individual group members toward or away from certain actions. Rather, this theory of threat tries to account for the ways that Black Americans often oscillate between both being perceived as threats and threatened by those perceiving them. In his discussion of "white ignorance," Charles Mills explains that, "[o]ften for their very survival, blacks have been forced to become lay anthropologists, studying the strange culture, customs, and mind-set of the 'white tribe' that has such frightening power over them, that in certain time periods can even determine their life or death on a whim" (2006, 17-18). For some Black Americans, their position as both threatened and threat acts as a compound dilemma. The precarity associated with the dualistic

nature of threat for this social group has social and political implications that have to be fully investigated. However, social psychologists have done a great deal to show how this position toward power complicates affectual and emotion-based responses to the larger world. Arlie Hochschild describes the consequences of this duality when she outlines how "feeling rules"regulate both internal and external emotions like anger, fear, and sadness for some social group members (1979). These rules are a part of the socialization practices within families, communities, and other networks. More importantly, they are fundamental in measuring the impacts of threat on marginalized group members who have been potential conditioned to alter their emotional responses based on these norms and rules.

Affect, Expectancy, and Group Threat

As a theoretical basis, in 1981, Don Kinder and David Sears, found that white Americans' racial attitudes and political responses to issues like busing and neighborhood integration was not linked to actual threat of black Americans moving into white neighborhoods. Specifically, for white Americans, Kinder and Sears find that feelings of racial threat are linked to two critical factors: affect and expectancy. They say,

> [t]he magnitude of racial threat to an individual white should be the product of *affect* about some end state and *expectancy* that it may materialize (or, as it is perhaps better described in the racial threat context, *vulnerability* to it.) For example, the threat posed by blacks' possibly moving into a white person's own neighborhood is the product of (a) the white person's evaluation of blacks' living in the neighborhood and (b) the probability that blacks actually will move in. Maximum threat is posed by a very probable and intensely disliked end state. Threat is obviously much reduced if the end state either is not much disliked or is improbable (1981, 414).

Instead, they found that white Americans' negative responses to Black Americans were more linked to "symbolic racism" or "moral and symbolic challenges to the racial status quo in society

generally rather than on any direct, tangible challenge to their own personal lives" (1981, 429). The disruption of a racial status quo poses a significant threat to those white Americans who benefit from the existing social and racial order as they connect systemic changes to personal changes in their own lives. The relationship between affect and expectancy that Kinder and Sanders define here is critically important in measuring the ways that

In Figure 1, I expand the relationship outlined by Kinder and Sears into a set of considerations in assessing potential threats. While these considerations are not exhaustive, they provide a relational framework for understanding how one's personal characteristics, orientations to power, and experiences shape one's responses to threat. These questions were derived from my conversations with young Black Americans in Chicago while collecting in-depth interviews. I used grounded theoretical methods, which are rooted in processes of constant comparison and generating and elaborating theoretical frameworks as they emerge from the data (Strauss and Corbin 1994). During this process, I asked participants to describe the sorts of considerations and concerns that came to mind when they were confronted with threat.

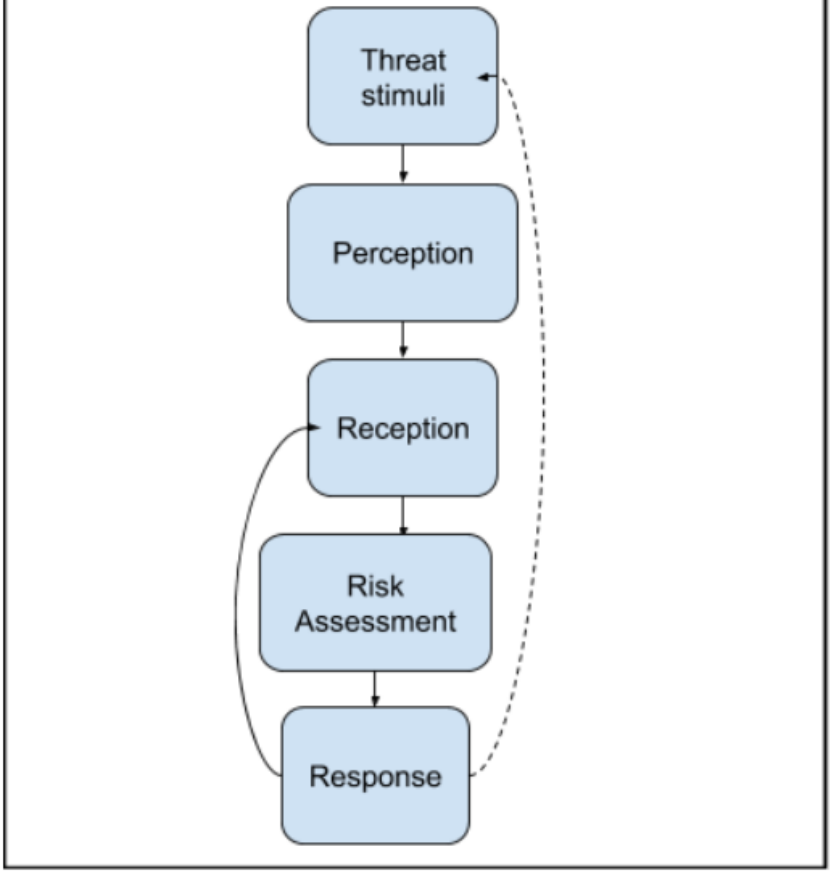
Figure 3.1: Affect and Expectancy in Threat Assessment	
Deservingness	Do I deserve to be threatened? Do others like me deserve to be threatened? Is it fair or unfair?
Efficacy	How much power do I have to avert the threat? Will I be believed? Who will those in power think is the "real victim"?
Frequency	How often am I experiencing this threat? How often do others like me experience this threat?
Group Membership	Do others like me face similar treatment? Have I learned of this threat from someone in my circle or community? What do I know about this threat based on the groups I am a member of?
History	Has this happened to me before? Has this happened to someone I know before? Has this happened to someone like me before?
Imminence	How soon will this threat affect me? Do I have time to avert this threat?
Legitimacy	Is this a "real" threat? What are the stakes of encountering this threat?
Relationship	How will my response affect others around me? Will my response negatively impact my close friends and/or family?
Severity	How much danger does this threat pose? Is this threat going to cause physical harm? Is this threat going to cause lasting harm?
Stigma	What will others think of me if they learn about my experience with this threat? What will others think of me if they find out about my response?

During theory generation and elaboration, key questions emerged along ten primary dimensions: deservingness, efficacy, frequency, group membership, history, imminence, legitimacy, relationship, severity, and stigma. I will expand on these in chapter 5, my detailed analysis of in-depth interviews.

Threat-to-Response Process

From my conversations with young Black Americans, I developed a theoretical model to understand how those who feel threatened analyze the risks associated with their potential response. Figure 2 (below) provides a schema for what I refer to as the *threat-to-response* process.

Figure 3.2: Threat Assessment and Response Diagram



Threat stimuli, perception, and reception

Beginning the threat-to-response process is the threat stimuli. Stimuli may manifest in the form of the sight of a police officer patrolling a neighborhood or it may be related to navigating a dark street at night. These interactions and experiences carry potential risks that shape individual choices. What is critical here is that threat stimuli will be interpreted differently by those perceiving it. For some, the sight of a police officer may instill feelings of safety, not threat. For some, policies that redistribute income from schools into securing the border or increasing the local police force may not evoke concern. Thus, perception remains a critical factor in the threat-to-response process as many threats may be averted simply because they go unnoticed. Once an issue or occurrence is perceived as a threat, it may then be received by the threatened individual.

Risk Assessment

I theorize that risk assessment, as it pertains to group threat, is rooted in socialization. This means that when individuals encounter a particular threat stimuli, they rely on shorthand cues which help them to analyze the potential outcomes. These cues may come from previous experiences, stories they have heard, or media messaging to which they have been exposed.

Threat Response

In the context of this work, responses to threat are non-uniform. For some individuals, response to threat may be undetectable (like crossing the street to avoid a police officer or opting out of voting due to feelings of in-efficacy). Responses to threat are related to threat reception because they are shaped by how threatened individuals believe they will be judged based on their potential response. For some individuals, the risks associated with responding to threat outweigh the risks associated with quietly enduring the threat. This is especially important when considering the contours of this process *within* Black communities. Therefore, threat response also has a dotted line relationship to threat stimuli namely because responding to threat, like street harassment or strict neighborhood curfews, might instigate new threats thereby starting the process all over again.

In the following sections, I will discuss the theoretical frameworks for threat that guide this project. Specifically, I will focus on how traditional notions of threat have not fully engaged with race, gender, sexuality, and class in examining the role of threat in the lives of Black Americans.

Theoretical Frameworks: Intersectional Threat

The primary theoretical contribution this project makes to American Politics is the concept of *intersectional threat*. I define intersectional threat as threat that occurs within racial groups across gender, sexuality, ability, and class lines. I theorize that all threat is experienced intersectionally based on differing orientations to power, disparate positions within communities, and shifting conceptions of what and who constitutes a threat in what social and political contexts. While Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the phrase "intersectionality" to denote the "various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women" (1991, 1244), the Combahee River Collective[5]—along with other Third Wave and Black Feminists—had been working to articulate the ways that interlocking forms of systemic oppression shape the lives of women of color, specifically Black, queer, poor women (Moraga and Anzaldua 1981; Hill Collins 2000). As Black women are more susceptible to threat than other racial and gender groups, I expect that Black women will express greater concern about threats facing Black communities. Likewise, I expect that they will be more apt to engage in direct response to threat than Black men.

Traditional Threat Frameworks

To illustrate how all threat is inherently intersectional, I will analyze four traditional concepts of threat that have long been the subjects of social science research: economic, proximity-based, state-based, and stereotype threat.

Economic Threat

[5] In Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Watertown, Mass: Persephone Press, 1981, page 212.

Economic threat refers to the risks associated with subordinate group membership in an environment where there is competition between groups for economic resources. According to, Eitle et al. "workers become cognizant of their potential replacement by employers when the niches of blacks and whites increasingly overlap, serving to increase the perception by whites of economic threat. Potential competition and threat is intensified when a split labor market exists" (2002, 560). Persistent inequalities in wealth, home ownership, and credit markets between white and Black Americans show that economic threat is not just about the daily realities of paying bills and buying groceries (Dawson 1994; Oliver and Shapiro 2006). Rather, economic inequality and racial wealth disparity is linked to government responsiveness and interest group involvement as well (Gilens 2012). In chapters 4 and 5, I detail how young Black Americans understand and experience economic threat in today's political world.

Proximity-based Threat

Proximity-based threat refers to the perceived risks of changing group demographics in neighborhoods and communities. This threat stems from Key's work examining the southern cities with high Black populations in the mid-twentieth century. Key noted that "whites of the regions with few Negroes have a less direct concern over the maintenance of white rule, whereas the whites of the black belts operate an economic and social system based on subordinate, black labor" (1949, 9). Threat, in this instance, is concerned with neighborhood closeness, racial proximity, and competition over community-based resources. Ryan Enos illustrates the role of spatial location in the socialization of ideas about race and political issues in *The Space Between Us: Social Geography and Politics*. In his analysis of geographical disparities in Chicago, Enos notes how the demolition of Stateway Gardens, a large predominantly Black public housing area,

shifted the social and political behaviors of those living nearby (2017). He says, "[t]he concentration of poverty in public housing will usually mean the concentration of race or ethnicity, too, and we can see how this concentration serves to change the way we view these already disadvantaged groups—making the space between them and higher-status groups even greater" (2017, 159). In the context of policing, this social and psychological distance between poorer Black communities and other non-Black communities exacerbates isolation, stokes fears about outgroup members, and leaves Black communities at greater risk of punitive social policies (Enos 2017). In chapters 4 and 5, I examine how proximity-based threat is inflected by race and gender.

State-based Threat

State-based threat refers to the potential risks associated with interacting with local, state, and federal authorities. For many Americans, local and national governmental forces show up in myriad ways. For some, the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program, which provides food aid to families is their primary mode of interaction with the government (Hacker 2002). While for many others, incarceration and police forces are an ever-present reality in their daily lives (Burch 2010; Weaver and Lerman 2014). In chapters 5 and 6, I analyze how experiences with the state, as seen through police interactions, vary based on gender, sexual orientation and embodiment, and class.

Stereotype Threat

Social psychologists have long studied the role of stereotypes in the lives of individuals. I refer to their work to define this term. Stereotype threat is "[w]hen a negative stereotype about a group

that one is part of becomes personally relevant, usually as an interpretation of one's behavior or an experience one is having, stereotype threat is the resulting sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it" (Steele, Spencer, and Aronson 2002, 389).[6] Fundamentally, stereotype threat may operate on individuals even when no overt action has been made. In chapters 4 and 5, I examine how Black Americans are susceptible to the consequences of stereotype threat as a result of both historical and contemporary social and political factors.

Political Outcomes of Intersectional Threat and the Threat-to-Response Process

The threat-to-response process provides a general framework for understanding how individuals may assess the potential risks of engaging with threat stimuli they encounter. Intersectional threat contextualizes that process for Black Americans, especially for those whose identities are at the margins of multiple, intersecting characteristics and forms of embodiment.

Political Action and Resistance

Underlying this project is a tension between political action that originates for the preservation of self-interests versus the preservation of group interests. This tension arises specifically because threats to groups can only register as requiring collective responses from groups of individuals if those individuals a) self-identify as members of the threatened group, b) believe the threatening party has sufficient power to carry out harms against their group, and c) feels significant solidarity with the threatened group such that their individual actions should be considered a part of a larger group response to threat. To this effect, it must be determined to what degree

[6] Steele, Claude M., Steven J. Spencer, and Joshua Aronson. "Contending with group image: The psychology of stereotype and social identity threat." In *Advances in experimental social psychology*, vol. 34, pp. 379-440. Academic Press, 2002.

collective actions by intragroup coalitions of Black Americans can be considered responses to specific threat stimuli as opposed to general actions under the guise of Black Politics writ large. To frame out these differences, I turn to Tommie Shelby's work on "thin" and "thick" blackness. Shelby argues that a thin conception of blackness is one that "is a vague and socially imposed category of 'racial difference that serves to distinguish groups on the basis of their members having certain visible, inherited physical characteristics and a particular biological ancestry" (2005, 207). He suggests that this form of blackness is all that is needed for Black solidarity politics essentially because racialization in the United States, especially for Black Americans, happens as the result of generations of chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and societal stigma that has little to do with personal choice (Omi and Winant 1994; Shelby 2005). In many ways, this "thin" blackness creates inborn solidarity between individuals who are mutually identified with the shared characteristics of "blackness." And, by possessing solidarity with the larger group of Black Americans, in this thin sense, one should register group threats against the interests and political concerns of Black people as also threatening one's own interests and political concerns. But, what if, although one shares "thin" Black characteristics that rest in phenotypic markers like hair and skin tone but diverge in traditionally held political and cultural belief systems? How do those ideological variations dampen the effects of threat stimuli? These questions remain unanswered under Shelby's framework.

What is critical about Shelby's theoretical framework, though, is that it provides us with an ample definition of what should be required of those individuals, regardless of their racial identities, who choose to fight against anti-Black racism. According to Shelby, he leaves, "open the question of whether a commitment to black political solidarity is strictly obligatory, for answering it would require resolving the difficult empirical question of whether such solidarity is

absolutely necessary to achieve racial justice" (2005, 214). By leaving this question open, Shelby's framework focuses less on the inherent goodness-of-fit of certain political actors under the banner of "Black Solidarity" but rather on whether or not their resultant actions are sufficient in rebuking anti-Black racism. In terms of the latter, he finds evidence in the affirmative. In this dissertation, however, the central focus is not understanding responses to group threat in general. Rather, I am particularly concerned with the sorts of political activities that follow as a result of racial group threats against Black Americans, performed by Black Americans. Though this process may necessarily involve feelings of solidarity, they are only imperative insofar as those responding to threat believe that they will be targeted by potential hams. Their individual level commitments to notions of racial consciousness, Black Nationalism, radical politics, or any other ideological stance, therefore, do not come into play in order to register as a response to racial group threat.

While Shelby's conception of solidarity may be sufficient in surmising the particularities of racial solidarity as it pertains to what constitutes Black Politics, it does not properly frame out the sorts of ideological commitments necessary to measure certain political actions as directly related to racial group threat. Effectively, for political actions to register as responses to group threat, there must be not only a shallow association with the targeted group but a sense that threats against the group are unjust and necessitate action. Adolph Reed underscores this crucial point when he notes that "people respond by organizing themselves when offered concrete visions that connect with their lives as they experience them, not to ideological abstractions or generic agendas that perfume narrow class programs" (1999, 51). Fundamentally, solidarity is bound up in both phenotypic categories of identity but also in the day-to-day experiences individuals carry with them as they navigate public spaces. In terms of understanding solidarity

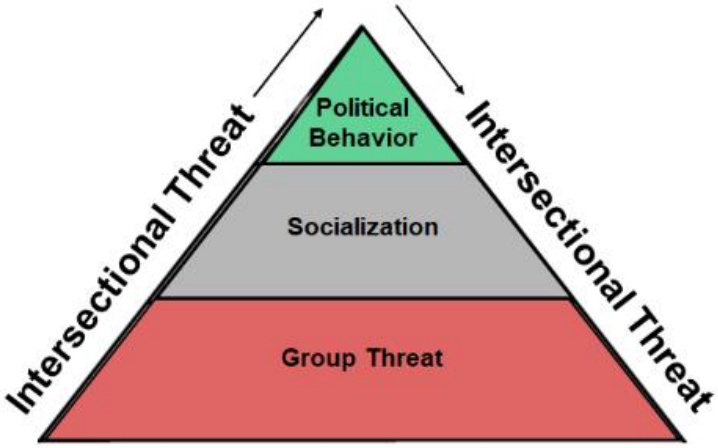
and its relationship to racial group threat, it is impossible to recognize threats to one's social group without some shared experiences of mutual subordination, oppression, or inconvenience one perceives as a result of group membership. Therefore, being "thinly" connected isn't enough to trigger responses to threat stimuli. Shatema Threadcraft shines light on this theoretical imperative in *Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body and the Body Politic* when she critiques Shelby's conception of the "dark ghetto" which does not adequately account for the ways that solidarity is often encumbered my intragroup harm like sexual intimidation and gender-based intimate violence. She says that, "[i]ntimate racial justice demands that men never add to the undue burdens black women face, and requires them to refrain from sexualizing and objectifying women in ways that constrain their self-determination" (Threadcraft 2016, 132). In effect, solidarity then means an understanding that racial kinship cannot act as a stand-in for sexual deviance and harm. This point echoes the general notion that threats can and do originate within marginalized communities. Thus, more complex theorizations of both threat and solidarity make room for deeper investigation of the roles each plays in the lives of young Black people today. Taken together, Shelby's, Reed's, and Threadcraft's works emphasize the need for deeper connections to racial consciousness building, group uplift, and collective justice as necessary in responding to group threat. I examine threat as a political mobilizer and motivator toward resistance and political action throughout this project.

Inherited threat cognition and socialization

The core argument of this project is that more generalized conceptions of threat do not properly grapple with the multiple and complex ways that individuals and groups move throughout the social world. Moreover, these theoretical frames do not assist social scientists in fully

ascertaining how threat influences political attitudes and behaviors. When it comes to threat, many considerations inform how those who feel threatened will respond. Therefore, I argue, that for Black Americans, especially those who are women and LGBTQI, responding to threat results from generations of socialization and behavioral modification as a result of a long history of racial, gender, and sexual oppression. I refer to this process as *inherited threat cognition* (Figure 3). This term refers to the process by which in-group members transmit knowledge regarding potential threats to other in-group members.

Figure 3.3: Inherited Threat Cognition Process



This theoretical framework builds from the cognitive and psychological sciences which have long found that threat produces a cognitive load on those who feel targeted by the threatening stimuli (Steele and Aronson 1995; Steele, Spencer, and Aronson 2002). I theorize here that the cognitive load produced under threatening conditions translates into political knowledge for young Black Americans. This is especially so, I argue, because of the particular demands required when encountering economic, stereotype, proximity-based, and state-based threats. The intergenerational nature of "Being Black in America", then, functions as a site of knowledge production. It socializes young Black Americans into new forms of navigation and disposition which are meant to help them survive. In figure three, I show how this process functions in a

cyclical motion. As threat is encountered, it socializes young Black Americans into new forms of political ideas and behaviors. Those ideas and behaviors are animated by social position like gender, sexual orientation, embodiment, and class.

Rather than a one-time process of political socialization, I theorize that inherited threat cognition is ongoing. It builds from repeated moments of racial and emotional trauma. I will elaborate on this process via empirical analysis in Chapter 4 through 6.

Alternative Explanations for Young Black Americans Political Responses

Threat is just one of many factors which shapes the political attitudes and behaviors of young Black Americans. For example, among the myriad factors that have long been accepted as fundamental in shaping political ideas and behaviors are a) parties, and b) socio-economic status. There is no question that partisanship is an enduring feature of the American political system which deeply regulates how many citizens organize and execute their political beliefs (Frank 2004; Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Party affiliation endures over an individual citizens' lifetime and links directly to the ways that voters develop their political values (Goren 2005). Likewise, the roles of wealth and access in the United States political system is clearly established (Gilens 2012; Bartels 2008). In this project, I do not seek to dislodge the pervasiveness of either of these persistent features of the American political system. Rather, I seek to show, first, that, even after considering and controlling for the effects of party affiliation, there are significant relationships between threat and political beliefs and actions. Furthermore, these relationships are complex and informed via an intersectional lens. And, secondly, I seek to show that arguments that center class alone (much like those which focus on race or gender

alone) do not fully explain the ways that threat affects young Black Americans today. For this reason, greater investigation must move beyond these paradigms.

Conclusion

The underlying premise and animating theory of this project lie in the Black Feminist tradition of centering those narratives, experiences, concerns, and individuals whose identities frequently place them outside the barrier of traditional knowledge production. By reorienting our conception of threat toward a more generalizable and nuanced framework, I seek to make space for those political actors who are most marginalized and least accounted for in our existing work on this subject. This matters primarily because our existing measure of threat, both quantitative and qualitative, cannot accurately measure the full political impetuses or outcomes associated with threat without a firm theoretical basis from which to begin. Moreover, without fully accounting the lived, day-to-day experiences of those most vulnerable in society, our work as social scientists rings incomplete.

With this reframed theoretical framework, I highlight the multiple methods of political socialization and knowledge formation that develops from exposure to threat. Thus, threat, in this project, operates as a site of political possibility and potentiality rather than a site of foreclosure. In the following chapters, I will rely on empirical tests and in-depth interviews to provide evidence for my theoretical claims. What's more, though, I will lay the groundwork and justification for greater investigation of the role of threat in the lives of marginalized citizens.

Chapter 4: Seeing Risk: Measuring Disparities in Young People's Beliefs about Economic, Proximity-based, and Stereotype Threat

"Discrimination against women in politics is particularly unjust, because no political organization I have seen could function without women. They do the work that the men won't do. I know, because I have done it all. For years I stayed in the wings and worked to put men in office, even writing their speeches and cueing them on how to answer questions. They would still be exploiting my abilities if I had not rebelled. Increasingly, other women are reaching the same conclusion."

- Shirley Chisholm[1]

"Race is not about an individual's skin color. Race is about an individual's relationship to other people within the society…When we make slight of this point, social science becomes the justification for racial stratification."

- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tukufu Zuberi[2]

Introduction

There are rarely consistent ideas about race and inequality in the United States. Following the election of President Obama, young Americans were split on their perceptions of the prospect of racial equality for Black, Asian, and Latinx Americans with whites most likely to report that Black, Asian, and Latinx Americans had either already achieved racial equality or would achieve it soon (Cohen 2010). Conversely, of this age cohort, marginalized group members believed there was still work to be done to reach racial equality with other groups (Cohen 2010). More recently, issues of immigration, police brutality, economic disparity, and the threats associated with those social phenomena have predominated social dialogue and caused rifts in young Americans' political attitudes and beliefs (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Banks 2014). Here, again, white Americans drastically differ from marginalized group

[1] Shirley Chisholm. 1970. *Unbought and Unbossed*, Washington, DC: Take Root Media, p. 92.
[2] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tukufu Zuberi, 2008, "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods, " in *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology* edited by Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva.New York: Rowman and Littlefield, (3-27) p. 7.

members in their opinions about the role of race in today's politics and voting choices in the contemporary political moment (Medenica 2018). These differences across racial groups frequently focus not on general variations across all group members but on how different white Americans' ideas are from everyone else. Thus, many analyses of race and threat, though inherently concerned with the circumstances facing minority group members, have centered the experiences of mainly white Americans.

Yet, research centering the perceptions and ideas of young Americans remains critical in this contemporary moment. According to Pew Research, millennials, those ages 21 to 26 in 2017, have surpassed the Baby Boomer generation as the largest generation alive and in the U.S. labor force at more than a third of those working or looking for work (Fry 2018a; Fry 2018b). Because millennials constitute the largest generation, they also makeup the greatest voting-eligible cohort in the country, while this potential is conditional upon turnout and actually casting ballots (Fry 2018b). Furthermore, millennials are more likely to be in poverty, more likely to live in households headed by single mothers, and more like to identify as multiracial than any other generation (Fry 2017). This diverse and growing cohort of Americans, bolstered in part by growing immigrant populations, represents a significant and under-studied population in the social sciences. Many millennials of color, who first became politicized during President Barack Obama's tenure in office, are working through questions of race, immigration, voting rights, policing, and incarceration (Ransby 2018). Thus, existing differences and attitudes within this age cohort hold major implications for American Politics.

An immediate concern regarding the ongoing disparities between diverse racial groups is the potential for differing group members to see outgroup members as economic or political threats (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Eitle et al. 2002; Gay 2006). To this effect, social science

literature has long regarded racial animus and resentment as key primers for intergroup threat and conflict (Blumer 1958; Mendelberg 2001). However, what is conspicuously absent from much of the literature on racial threat is an accounting for varying political attitudes and behaviors both *across* and *within* these social groups. For minority group members, like Black Americans, their social and political choices may be shaped by the risks associated with responding to these threats. Therefore, greater attention should be paid not only to minority group members' attitudes and beliefs about potential threats but how those attitudes and beliefs are formed, how they may vary, and what might be the political implications associated with acting on those concerns. Thus, in this chapter, I ask a simple question: *what are the differences in young Americans' perceptions of economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threat across and within race and gender? Moreover, how do varying perceptions of proximity-based threat influence motivations toward political action?* For some social group members, economic conditions may seem more risky than for others. Likewise, shifts in neighborhood politics or demographics may have little impact on some individuals' perceptions of local threat while, for others, these changes might spur deep anxieties about personal and familial safety, long-term impacts to schools and other local institutions, and even one's ability to remain in the neighborhood. I posit that these differences in perceptions of potential threats are linked to the intersections of broader heuristics like race, gender, and class. I argue that young Black Americans, especially Black women, are more likely than other minority group members to perceive negative ramifications for economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threats targeting their social group.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the key terms guiding the theoretical claims of this project. In that section, I also examine the extant literature regarding economic, stereotype,

and proximity-based threat in the social sciences, thus providing some background context for this analysis. I then outline my theoretical expectations and hypotheses framing the chapter. After that, I describe the data and methods I employ. Then, I discuss the key findings from my ordered regression models and experimental analyses. I close the chapter with a discussion of current and future research agendas that will deepen and extend this project.

Theoretical Frameworks and Background

In this chapter, I focus on three traditional forms of threat typically investigated in the social sciences: economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threat. First, *economic threat* refers to risks associated with subordinate group membership in an environment where there is competition between groups for economic resources. The traditional framing of economic threat posits that white Americans who are in competition with Black Americans for a finite set of material resources will feel threatened (Key 1949; Olzak 1990). These threats emerge mainly from the social and structural contexts that force white and Black Americans into compressed labor markets where economic opportunity appears limited (Conley 1999). In these instances, white Americans, who typically occupy a dominant economic position in these markets, may support greater social control or punitive policies which restrict Black Americans' full access to the economic system (Eitle 2002; King and Wheelock 2007). However, in this study, I seek to reorient the study of threat to decenter dominant group narratives and investigate the role of threat in the lives of marginalized group members, namely, Black Americans.

As my study is concerned with a multiracial environment, this theoretical framework applies specifically to competition for material resources like housing, jobs, social welfare access, and other public goods. Competition in these environments may be worsened depending

on the conditions of the communities and the neighborhoods citizens call home. Claudine Gay explains that, "[w]here significant economic disparities exist, members of the disadvantaged group, fearing further displacement and loss of resources and influence, may harbor more hostility toward the economically dominant group in their community" (2006, 8). Economic threat, then, does not only exist along a white-Black binary which controverts prevailing theoretical scholarship (Eitle et al.2002; Oliver and Shapiro 2006). Rather, economic threat can also occur laterally, among mutually subordinated minority groups in Black-Latinx, Latinx-Asian, and Asian-Black communities as well. These distinctions are critical in ascertaining the degree to which economic threat shapes the lives of young Black Americans.

Second, *stereotype threat* refers to "a threat in the air--that, in general form, can affect the members of any group about whom a negative stereotype exists (e.g., skateboarders, older adults, White men, gang members). Where bad stereotypes about these groups apply, members of these groups can fear being reduced to that stereotype. And for those who identify with the domain to which the stereotype is relevant, this predicament can be self-threatening" (Steele 1997). Thus, stereotype threat is not unique to Black Americans. Moreover, the effects of being associated with the group being stereotyped (e.g. women or Black people) and the domain that has been stigmatized (e.g. school or work), can have powerful effects on the ways that individuals form attitudes about themselves and others.

Stereotypes remain important in the formation of political attitudes and ideas. In her study of racial priming and implicit messaging, Tali Mendelberg showed how political actors can use pre-existing racial ideas, especially negative ideas about Black Americans, to shape campaigns (2001). Expanding on this work, scholars have shown how negative stereotypes can become more accessible when cued using specific implicit racial language (Valentino,

Hutchings, and White 2002). What remains unanswered by this research is how Black Americans, who are often the subjects of these stereotypes, form attitudes in such an environment or how these stereotypes influence their political behavior.

Third, *proximity-based threat* refers to the perceived risks of varying group demographics in neighborhoods and communities. Political Scientist V. O. Key was of the first to establish a basis of study regarding the racial components of neighborhood residence (1949). This concept is frequently called the "racial threat hypothesis" or the "black concentration hypothesis" as, in many instances, this concept is framed through lens of the dominant group, white Americans, and their perceptions of potential risks associated with growing numbers of minorities like immigrants, Muslims, and Black Americans in their neighborhoods (Key 1949; Eitle 2002; Enos 2017; Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2018). By designating a more general definition, one that is not tethered to subordinate or dominant group membership, I seek to provide a framework that also accounts for the experiences of those individuals who are often seen as the threat, specifically Black Americans.

In a contemporary sense, Ryan Enos illustrates the role of spatial location in the socialization of ideas about race and political attitudes in *The Space Between Us: Social Geography and Politics*. In his analysis of geographical disparities in Chicago, Enos notes how the demolition of Stateway Gardens, a large predominantly Black public housing area, shifted the social and political behaviors of those living nearby (2017). He says, "[t]he concentration of poverty in public housing will usually mean the concentration of race or ethnicity, too, and we can see how this concentration serves to change the way we view these already disadvantaged groups—making the space between them and higher-status groups even greater" (2017, 159). In the context of policing, this social and psychological distance between poorer Black

communities and other non-Black communities exacerbates isolation, stokes fears about outgroup members, and leaves Black communities at greater risk of punitive social policies (Enos 2017). Black Americans continue to live in the highest segregated neighborhoods in the United States as white Americans frequently leave neighborhoods when Black families move in (Quillian and Pager 2001; Rothstein 2017). These high rates of segregation are often linked to perceptions of increased crime, poverty, and other race-based assessments and attitudes. To this point, neighborhood threat is a fundamental influencer of political attitudes and behaviors.

In what follows, I examine how young Americans' attitudes and experiences concerning these three traditional forms of threat are fundamentally linked to their varying identities and social positions within their communities.

Theoretical expectations and hypotheses

The primary theoretical claim here is that race *and* gender shape perceptions of and attitudes about threat for young Americans. Thus, I follow traditional critical race and feminist theories which assert that women are more concerned about proximal issues like home, family, and community while men will be concerned about broader issues affecting the race (Crenshaw 1989; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997). Black women, in particular, derive social and political knowledge from their social position through what some scholars have called "standpoint theory" (Hill Collins 2000). Knowledge production as connected to social position is critical in understanding how these social groups form attitudes about threat.

Where communities are concerned, scholars have challenged theories of Black self-segregation to show that white Americans are more likely to oppose black-white integrated neighborhoods than Black Americans (Farley et al. 1994). This issue affects all genders of Black

Americans and may be influential of attitudes across these social groups. Given these theoretical contributions, I expect that young Black Americans will be more concerned about macro-level issues like financial stability than other young Americans. Specifically, I expect that Black women will be more concerned with micro-level concerns regarding communities and families than other racial and gender groups.

> ***H_1:*** *Young Black men are more concerned about economic threat than other men and young Black women are more concerned about economic threat that other women.*

Scholars have also found that group threat theory, which underlies this project, best explains the prevalence of anti-Black stereotypes (Dixon and Rosenbaum 2004). Further, existing stereotype theory suggests that negative ideas about race and crime in neighborhoods are associated with young Black men's presence in the community (Quillian and Pager 2001). Considering these theoretical frameworks, I expect that Black men will express greater concern about stereotype threat when compared to other racial and gender groups.

> ***H_2:*** *Young Black men are more sensitive to stereotype threat than other men and young Black women are more sensitive to stereotype threat than all other groups.*

Just as there are varying theoretical explanations for differences in political attitudes regarding threat, there are also disparate theoretical frameworks for explaining political behavior among young Americans. In this political moment, much of the notable political activism and organizing of the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), which emerged after the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012, has been helmed by young Black (and queer) women (Carruthers 2018; Ransby 2018). This work is an extension of the intersectional vision, both theoretical and a form of praxis, set forth by the Combahee River Collective in response to the racialized and gendered discrimination they faced as Black, queer, working class women[3]. Thus, I expect that young

[3] In Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Watertown, Mass: Persephone Press, 1981, page 212.

Black women, in this study, will be the most likely to respond to threat when compared with other racial and gender groups. This theoretical and intersectional work lays a basis for what I call *experiential proximity*, or, rather, proximity to other group members that does not require mutual neighborhood or regional residence. I expect to see that proximity for Black Americans, Black women in particular, is less about physical land attachment and more connected to shared racial and gender experiences, evaluations of similar risks, and extensions of existing connections to Black communities.

> ***H_3:*** *Young Black Americans are more likely to express concerns about proximity-based threat than other racial groups.*
>
> ***H_4:*** *Young Black women are more likely than young Black men to feel threatened by racial violence.*

I test these four hypotheses through analysis of both survey and experimental data in the forthcoming sections of this study.

Alternative explanations for variations in young Americans' perceptions of threat

In reviewing the extant literature on threat, it is pertinent to address the role of racial resentment in perceptions of threat. Scholars have long investigated the role of racial group identity in the formation of American public opinion, political decision-making, and attitude formation (Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000, Kinder and Kam 2009). These scholars have done much to explain the forms of racial resentment and implicit bias possessed by some white Americans against Black Americans while accounting for ways these racial attitudes inform political beliefs and actions. Other scholars have shown how feelings of animus and resentment prime social groups toward negative political attitudes about outgroup members (Schuman et al. 1997; Mendelberg 2001). But, racial resentment and its contribution to perceptions of group

position, whether subordinate or dominant in placement, is formative of perceptions of threat but does not fully explain variations thereof (Blumer 1958). Further, when examining those theoretical frameworks of threat that have been well-established in social science literature, like economic, proximity-based, and stereotype threat, it is evident that racial resentment does not fully explain the variations in attitudes across and within racial and gender groups.

Data and Methodology

In this chapter, for my quantitative analysis, I use data from the GenForward survey at the University of Chicago. The GenForward Survey is a nationally representative sample of millennials, ages 18-34, with oversamples of African American, Asian American, and Latinx young adults. I am using the April 2017, July 2017, and March 2019 surveys. The April 2017[4] survey includes a battery of questions on young Americans and economic risk. The July 2017[5] survey includes in-depth questions on education and school policy. In the March 2019[6] survey, I created a set of questions which asked specifically about neighborhood safety and race to measure proximity-based threat. In this chapter, I analyze the variation in perceptions of economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threat across racial groups. Specifically, I focus on the ways that young Black Americans perceive these threats as compared to other groups. Fundamentally, this chapter is concerned with both examining the deviations in perceptions of threat across racial and gender groups and deciphering the modes of political behavior associated with those perceptions. In April, the study was comprised of 1,853 total respondents between the

[4] The April survey was collected between April 14, 2017 and May 1, 2017.
[5] The July survey was collected between June 23, 2017 and July 10, 2017.
[6] The March survey was collected between February 8, 2019 and February 25, 2019. The survey experiment was also performed at this time.

ages of 18 and 34. Of those, 528 were Black, 262 were Asian, 518 were Latinx, and 504 were white American[7]. The survey also included 41 respondents who identified as "other." In July, the dataset included 1,836 total respondents. Within that group, 506 were Black, 521 were Latinx, 510 were white, and 251 were Asian American. The remaining 48 respondents identified as "other." In the March 2019 survey, a total of 2,134 respondents were surveyed. Of those, 704 identified as white, 502 as Black, 515 as Hispanic/Latinx, and 222 as Asian American. Approximately 33 respondents identified as "other."

Table 4.1: Summary Statistics - April 2017

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Race Identification					
White	1853	0.56	0.5	0	1
Black	1853	0.15	0.35	0	1
Latinx	1853	0.21	0.41	0	1
Asian	1853	0.07	0.26	0	1
Other	1853	0.01	0.09	0	1
Partisanship					
Democrat	1853	0.34	0.47	0	1
Independent	1853	0.26	0.44	0	1
Republican	1853	0.19	0.39	0	1
Demographics					
Education	1853	3.16	1.47	1	7
Male	1853	0.5	0.5	0	1
Female	1853	0.5	0.5	0	1
Income	1853	2.31	1.68	1	7
Prediction Variables					
Harder Succeed	1853	0.15	0.36	0	1
Difficulty	1853	2.88	1.1	1	4
Layoffs	1456	2.45	1.36	1	5
Hours	1465	2.48	1.4	1	5

Outcome Variables

Economic Threat

To assess the mechanisms which contribute to young Americans' concerns about economic threat, I am using the dependent variable which asks "Overall, do you think your race or ethnicity has made it harder or made it easier for you to succeed economically in life, or has it not made much difference?"[8]. In the original survey, respondents selected

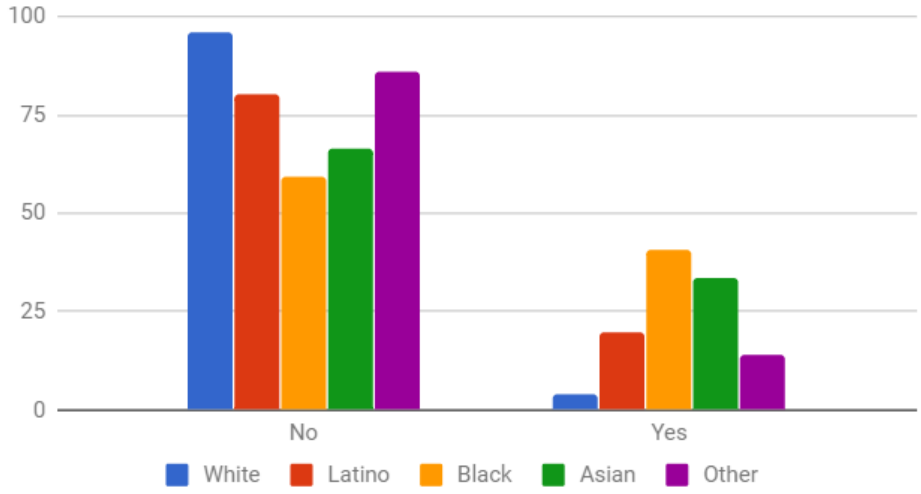
[7] The survey was offered in both English and Spanish and via telephone or web modes. There are limitations in using these data they were not offered in-person or in any other languages besides English and Spanish. While these data are nationally-representative and good estimators for minority group members between the ages of 18 and 34, they do not sufficiently account for those who may be non-Native English speakers or from countries for who Spanish is not a primary language.

[8] Full and original question wording is listed in Appendix A.

one the following: “Made it easier”, “Made it harder”, “Not made much difference”, and “Both.” I have recoded the variable into a binary choice variable for whether or not respondent’s believe that their race has made it harder for them to succeed economically where a response of 1 is “Yes” and 0 is “No” (N=1,853). This question is particularly helpful for this analysis because it entails both the components of racial group membership and the perceived economic implications associated with that identification. Summary statistics for the April 2017 survey data may be found in Table 4.1 (above).

Figure 4.1 (below) shows the dispersion of observations of the dependent variable by racial group. Most notably, it is clear that young Black Americans are the most concerned that their race has made it harder for them to succeed economically when compared to other racial groups (41%). Asian Americans are the second highest group to express concerns that their race has made it harder for them to succeed (33%) while only 20% and 4% of Latinx and white Americans express similar responses, respectively.

Figure 4.1: Race made it harder to succeed (by Race)



These descriptive differences in political attitudes are more interesting when broken down by gender group. Figure 4.2 shows that men, overall, are more concerned about their race having

negative impacts on their economic success than women (shown in Figure 3). However, Black women show the most concern about their race making it harder for them to succeed economically than any other group at a rate of 43%. Following Black women is Asian men at 40% with Black men following them at 38%.

Figure 4.2: Race made it harder to succeed (Men)

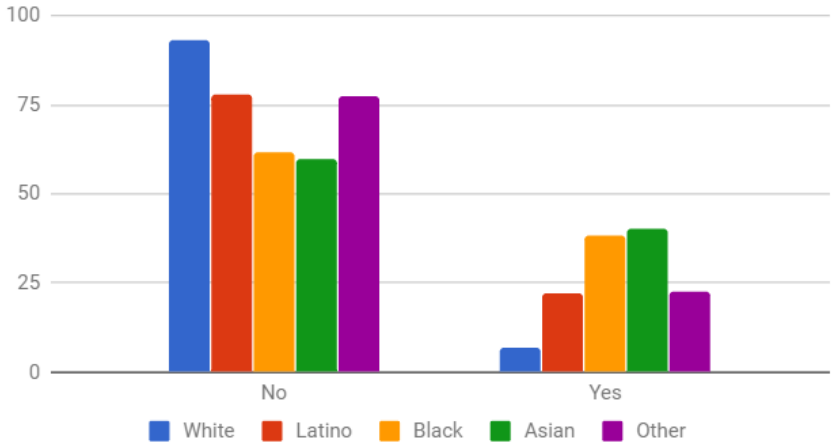
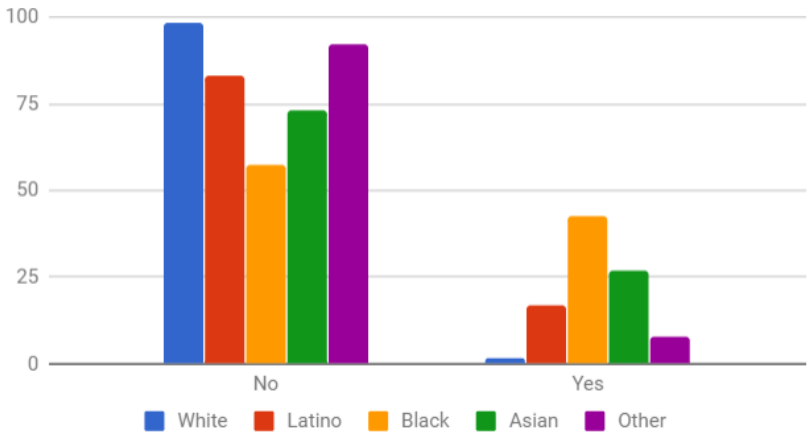


Figure 4.3: Race made it harder to succeed (Women)



These data are interesting because they highlight an under-researched phenomenon wherein Black women are more concerned about economic threat than other women and groups of men, even those with whom they share a racial identifier. These variations might be explained using a lens of intersectionality which asserts that those furthest from political, economic, and social

power, like poor and working-class Black women, are most equipped to identify and challenge the systems which oppress them (Crenshaw 1989; Crenshaw 1991; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Hill Collins and Bilge 2016). Later, in the discussion portion of this study, I will further investigate the role of intersectionality in threat perception.

Table 4.2: Summary Statistics - July 2017

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Race Identification					
White	1836	0.56	0.5	0	1
Black	1836	0.15	0.35	0	1
Latinx	1836	0.21	0.41	0	1
Asian	1836	0.07	0.26	0	1
Partisanship					
Democrat	1836	0.37	0.48	0	1
Independent	1836	0.23	0.42	0	1
Republican	1836	0.22	0.42	0	1
Demographics					
Education	1836	3.22	1.51	1	7
Male	1836	0.5	0.5	0	1
Female	1836	0.5	0.5	0	1
Income	1836	2.31	1.66	1	7
Prediction Variables					
Problems	1836	0.24	0.37	0	1
Bad Behavior	1836	0.16	0.36	0	1

Stereotype Threat

To examine attitudes on stereotypes, I use the question which asks, " Research has found that Black and Hispanic students are suspended at higher rates than other students. Why do you think this is the case?" I recoded the responses into two binary variables based on respondents' answers to the first and fourth prompts: "Black and Hispanic students have more behavioral problems." I also used the response which states: "Bad behavior of white students is ignored because of their privilege." For each of these prompts, a response of 1 means "Yes" and 0 means "No" (N=1,836). I selected this question on the topic of education and school policy to represent stereotype threat as women and African Americans are frequently stereotyped in the context of intellect, academic achievement, and school success (Steele 1997; Steele, Spencer, and Aronson 2002). This question is also appropriate in the context of this study

because it captures the racialized components of stigma that follow traditional stereotype theory. Summary statistics for the July 2017 survey data may be found in Table 4.2 (above).

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 (below) show respondents' spread of responses, by gender, to the prompt which asserts that young Black and Hispanic students are suspended from schools at higher rates because they have more behavioral problems. Women, overall, were less likely than men to agree with this sentiment. Black and Latina women hold nearly identical ideas on this matter at only 9% and 10% agreement with this statement. Similarly, Black and Latinx men hold very similar views at 17% and 20% agreement. Conversely, 40% of white men and 30% of Asian men agreed with this prompt.

Figure 4.4: Black and Hispanic students have more behavioral problems (Men)

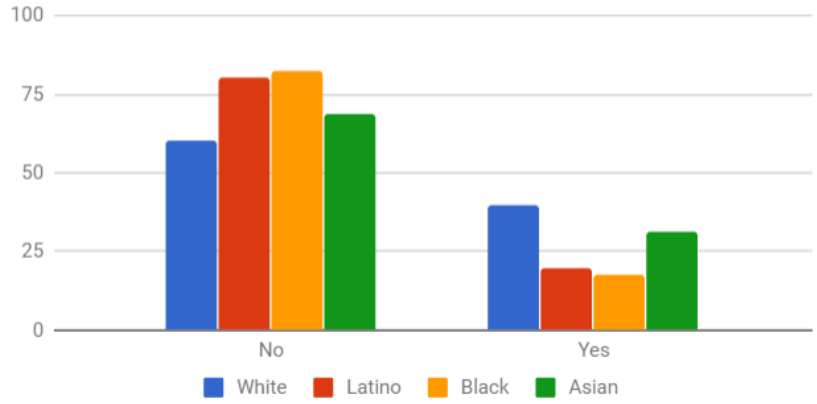
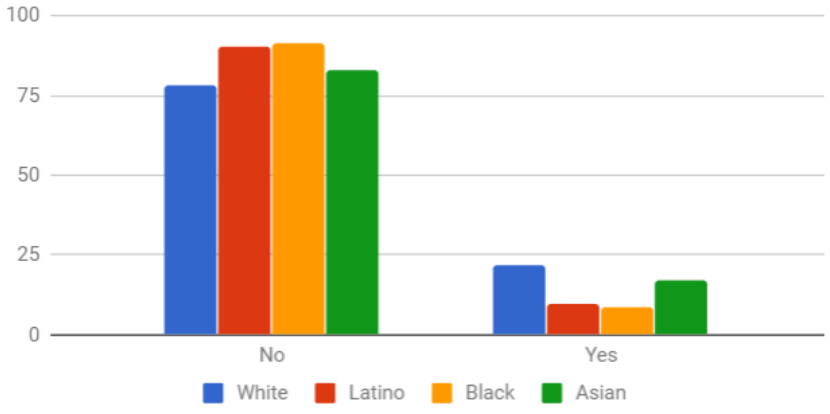


Figure 4.5: Black and Hispanic students have more behavioral problems (Women)



Figures 4.6 and 4.7 display responses regarding whether or not Black Hispanic student suspensions are attributable to bad behavior of white students being ignored due to their privilege. What stands out about these data is that Black and Latinx respondents hold very similar opinions regarding this issue. Roughly 25% of Black women and men agreed with this prompt. Latinx respondents were further split on the matter with 16% of men and 30% of women agreeing with this prompt. Only 7% of white and Asian men agreed.

Figure 4.6: Bad behavior of white students is ignored because of privilege (Men)

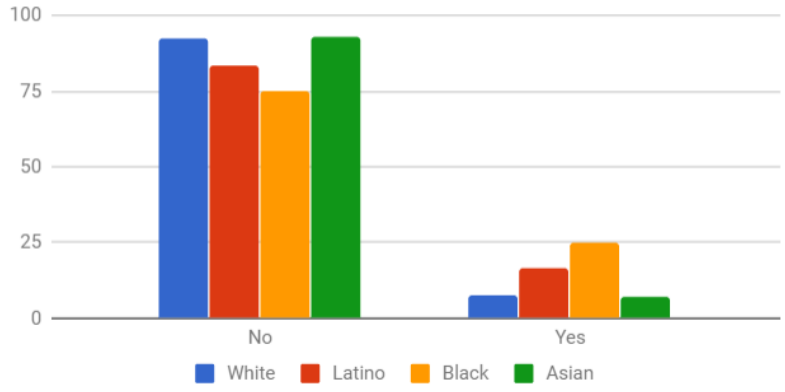
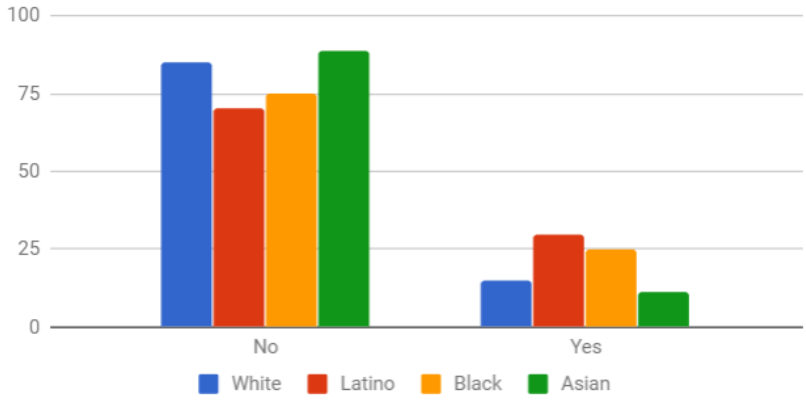


Figure 4.7: Bad behavior of white students is ignored because of privilege (Women)



In these figures, it is clear that each racial group is most sensitive to stereotypes about their own racial group. And, while there is no explicit measure in this analysis to examine stereotypes of Asian Americans, their responses seem to mirror that of white Americans.

Table 4.3: Summary Statistics - March 2019

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Race Identification					
White	2,134	0.56	0.5	0	1
Black	2,134	0.15	0.35	0	1
Latinx	2,134	0.21	0.41	0	1
Asian	2,134	0.07	0.26	0	1
Partisanship					
Democrat	2,134	0.37	0.48	0	1
Independent	2,134	0.29	0.45	0	1
Republican	2,134	0.2	0.4	0	1
Demographics					
Education	2,134	3.28	1.52	1	7
Male	2,134	0.5	0.5	0	1
Female	2,134	0.5	0.5	0	1
Income	2,134	2.51	1.71	1	7
Prediction Variables					
Skin Color	2,116	4.06	1.14	1	5
Safety	2,104	3.56	1.28	1	5

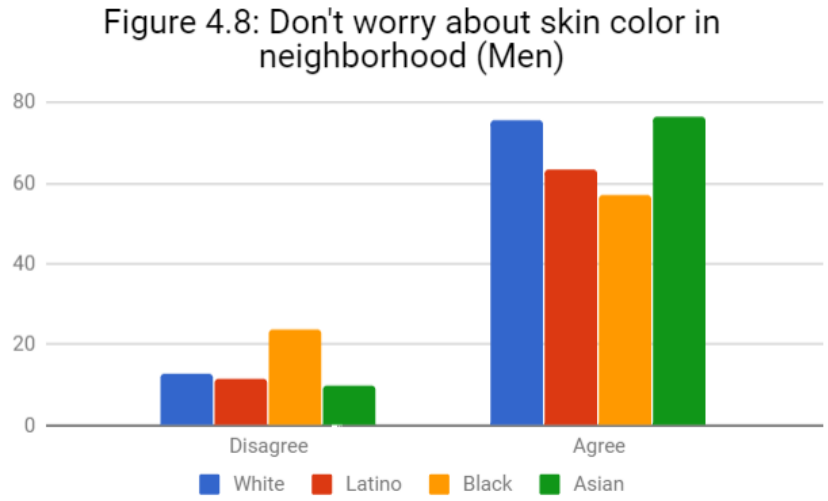
Proximity-based Threat

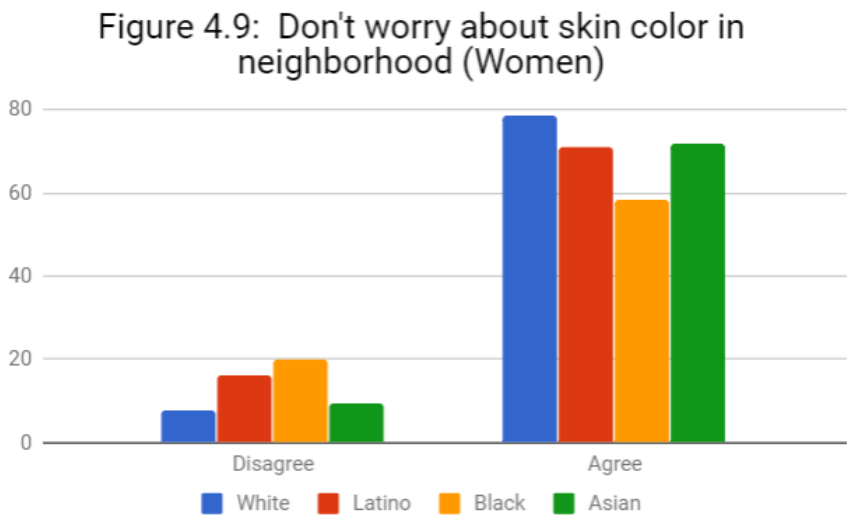
To analyze proximity-based threat, I relied on two original survey questions (N=2,134). Both questions provided respondents a 5-point Likert scale style response option where a response of "1" corresponds to "Strongly disagree" and a response of "5" corresponds to "Strongly agree."

The two questions were formatted as statements. The first said "My neighborhood is a place where I don't worry about the color of my skin." The second statement that respondents provided responses to was "My neighborhood is a place where I feel safe when walking alone at night." These questions were intended to measure the effects of neighborhood and community proximity and its relation to race and gender. Summary statistics for the March 2019 survey and experiment data may be found in Table 4.3 (above).

In Figures 4.8 and 4.9 below, I show the breakdown of responses to the skin color prompt by gender. The "Agree" category includes both strongly and somewhat agree responses. Likewise, the "Disagree" category includes both strongly and somewhat disagree. What is immediately interesting is that Black and Latinx men report the lowest responses of not worrying about the color of their skin in their neighborhoods at 57% and 63%, respectively.. Conversely,

white and Asian men report the highest agreement with the statement that their neighborhood is a place where they do not have to worry about the color of their skin at 76% for each group. On the other hand, 24% of Black male respondents disagreed with the statement that their neighborhood was a place where they did not have to worry about the color of their skin. This rate greatly outstrips that of respondents of color at 10 to 13% for all other groups. Figure 9 shows that Black women converge with Black men where this prompt is concerned. Only 58% of Black women agreed with the prompt that they do not have to worry about the color of their skin in their neighborhood. Roughly 71% of Latinas reported that they do not have to worry about the color of their skin in their neighborhood. And, like white and Asian men men, 79% of white women and 72% of Asian women report that they do not have to worry about the color of their skin in their neighborhood. Similarly to Black men, 20% of Black women disagreed with the prompt, suggesting that their neighborhood is a place where they have to worry about the color of their skin.





This is especially important when considering existing findings regarding white Americans' propensity to avoid neighborhoods that have Black populations (Quillian and Pager 2001; Rothstein 2017). Taken together, these data suggest that there may be complex relationships not only between race and gender but also where geography is concerned.

Figures 4.10 and 4.11 (below), illustrate responses to the safety prompts by gender. White men were the most likely to respond that they felt safe walking alone in their neighborhoods at night at 71%. Latinx and Asian American men were less affirmative in their response at 57% and 59%, respectively. Black men reported being the least likely to feel safe when walking in their neighborhood alone at night at 51%. Interestingly, nearly a quarter of Black, Latinx, and Asian American men disagreed with the prompt altogether while only 13% of white men disagreed with the prompt.

Figure 4.10: Feel safe walking alone at night (Men)

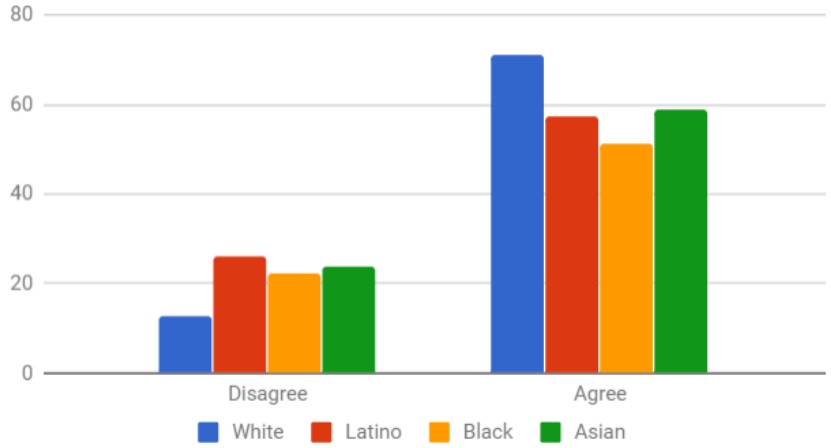
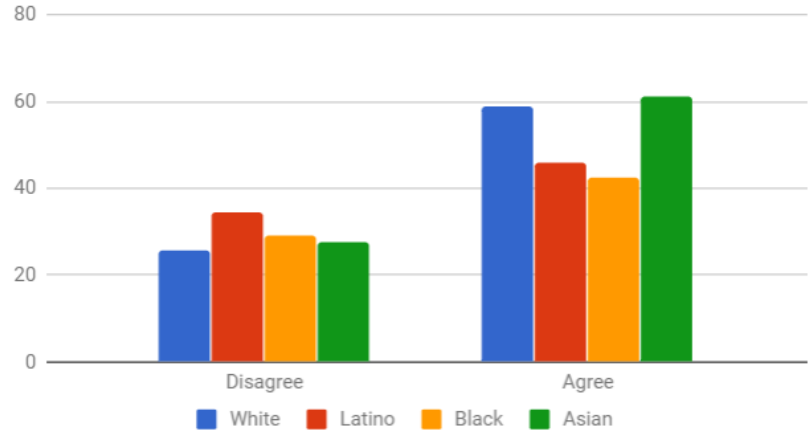


Figure 4.11: Feel safe walking alone at night (Women)



Women respondents differed greatly from men on this prompt. Black and Latina women reported the lowest rate of feeling safe when walking alone at night in their neighborhoods at 42% and 46%, respectively. Conversely, roughly 60% of Asian and white women reported that they felt safe walking in their neighborhood alone at night. However, across the board, between 26 to 34% of women in each racial group reported that they disagreed with the prompt suggesting that they did not feel safe walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. These data suggest that there may be significant differences between men and women regarding neighborhood safety and their ability to navigate their communities without risk of harm. Moreover, these data highlight the

need for further analysis of proximity-based threat and it's connection to a variety of personal characteristics.

Independent Variables

In addition to the selected outcome variables in this study, I have included an independent "control" variables in each of the corresponding models[9]. Gender has been recoded into binary "dummy" variables for male and female. I also created interaction terms, which are the pairwise products of both gender and race for each race, to account for the specific variations in attitudes by racial and gender group. Education was recoded into an ordinal variable with a 7-point scale for "Less than high school," "High school graduate," "Some college," "Associate's Degree," "Bachelor's Degree," "Master's Degree," and "Professional or Doctorate." Income was recoded into an ordinal 7-point scale reflecting the following: 1 refers to "Less than $5,000 to 39,999," 2 refers to "$40,000 to 59,999," 3 refers to "$60,000 to 74,999," 4 refers to "$75,000 to 99,999," 5 denotes "$100,000 to 149,999," 6 identifies income "$150,000 to 199,999" and a choice of 7 refers to incomes of "$200,000 or more." Race was recoded into binary variables for Black, Latinx, Asian, white, and "other." Party ID was recoded into binary variables for "Democrat," "Republican," "Independent," and "Other."

In the economic threat model, I also included three economic variables which indicate the concerns young Americans may have about their economic and job security. Two of the variables are concerned with the structural components of the workplace and ask whether young Americans are concerned about being laid off from work or losing hours. Responses to these variables were recoded so that 1 refers to "Not concerned at all" and 5 refers to "Extremely

[9] Detailed summary statistics for all variables can be found in Appendix B (Tables 1-3).

concerned." The third variable asked respondents "How much financial difficulty would you have if you had to pay an unexpected bill of $1,000 right away?" Responses were recoded so that 1 refers to "None at all" and 4 refers to "A lot." I included these variables in the model to control for potential confounding effects of explicit economic concerns that were not associated with racial background.

Survey Findings

Economic Threat

Table 4.4: Ordered Logistic Regression
"Race made it harder to succeed economically"

	Model
	Coeff. (std. error)
Race Identification	
Black women	.73 (.36) *
Asian women	-.41 (.34)
Latina women	-.72 (.37)
White women	-3.72 (.56) ***
Black men	.15 (.37)
White men	-1.49 (.33) ***
Latinx men	-.32 (.35)
Partisanship	
Democrat	1.27 (2.07)
Independent	1.15 (2.07
Republican	-.19 (2.09)
Demographics	
Education	.14 (.06) *
Income	.11 (.06)
Prediction Vars	
Difficulty	-.08 (.09)
Layoffs	.15 (.09)
Hours	.31 (.09) ***
Observations (N)	1425
Likelihood Ratio	323.48
Prob> chi2	0.0000
Log Likelihood	-439.29
Significance: p<.05, p<.01**, p<.001 ****	

In Table 4.4 (left), I show the ordered log-odds (ordinal logit) regression coefficients for the economic threat model. Five variables reach significance in this model. As expected, the variable reflecting concerns about having ones hours cut at work reaches statistical significance (.31, p<.001). Education also reaches significance (.14, p<.05). As expected, Black women are the only racial minority group to reach significance with a log-odds coefficient of .73. This suggests the Black women, of all racial minority groups, are the most likely to assert that their race has made it harder for them to succeed economically. In this analysis,

Asian men are excluded from the model therefore they are the reference group. The only other racial identifiers to reach statistical significance were for white women (-3.72, p<.001) and white men (-1.49, p<.001). These coefficients are substantively large and in the direction expected. These findings at least partially confirm hypothesis 1 in that Black women are the most concerned about economic threat even after controlling for personal characteristics and explicit economic risks like layoffs and unexpected financial difficulties. Therefore, I reject the null hypothesis in this instance.

Table 4.5: Ordered Logistic Regression "Black and Hispanic students have more behavioral problems"

	Model
	Coeff. (std. error)
Race Identification	
Black women	-1.85(.5) ***
Asian women	-.86 (.53)
Latina women	-1.32 (.4) ***
White women	-.76 (.3) *
Black men	-1.46 (.48) **
White men	.5 (.29)
Latinx men	-1.01 (.36) **
Partisanship	
Democrat	12.97 (466.25)
Independent	13.63 (466.25)
Republican	13.51 (466.25)
Other party	13.16 (466.25)
Demographics	
Ideology	.39 (.06) ***
Education	-.02 (.05)
Income	.05 (.04)
Observations (N)	1265
Likelihood Ratio	221.88
Prob> chi2	0.0000
Log Likelihood	-585.28
Significance: p<.05, p<.01**, p<.001* ***	

Stereotype Threat

I have generated two separate models to examine political attitudes about stereotype threat. The first examines how Black and Latinx respondents express concerns about stereotypes. The second examines how white Americans express concerns about stereotypes of their group members. In Table 4.5 (left), I report the log-odds coefficients for the model measuring respondent ideas regarding whether Black and Hispanic students are suspended from school at higher rates due to their own behavior problems. The only non-racial variable to reach significance is ideology (.39, p<.001). Because this measure stigmatizes both Black and Latinx students, it is not surprising that

respondents in both of these groups strongly oppose this sentiment. Latinx men and Latina women reflect negative log-odds concerning this prompt with coefficients of -1.01 (p<.01) and -1.32 (p<.001). The magnitude and direction of the coefficients are in the expected direction given the language of the prompt. A similar pattern emerges with Black American respondents in that Black men reflect a coefficient of -1.46 (p<.01) and Black women reflect a coefficient of -1.85 (p<.001). As expected in hypothesis 3, Black women express the greatest concern about stereotypes of their social group. Therefore, I must fail to reject the null in this case.

Table 4.6: Ordered Logistic Regression "Bad behavior of white students is ignored because of their privilege"

	Model	
	Coeff. (std. error)	
Race Identification		
Black women	1.16 (.49)	*
Asian women	.33 (.62)	
Latina women	1.73 (.47)	***
White women	.44 (.45)	
Black men	1.31 (.51)	**
White men	.06 (.46)	
Latinx men	.55 (.5)	
Partisanship		
Democrat	12.9 (660.51)	
Independent	12.65 (660.51)	
Republican	12.59 (660.51)	
Other party	12.89 (660.51)	
Demographics		
Ideology	-.29 (.07)	***
Education	.13 (.06)	*
Income	-.098 (.06)	
Observations (N)	1265	
Likelihood Ratio	101.37	
Prob> chi2	0.0000	
Log Likelihood	-472.39668	
Significance: p<.05, p<.01**, p<.001*		***

In my next model (Table 4.6), I depict the outcomes of model testing stereotypes of white Americans. As outlined earlier, I expected Black women to be the most concerned about stereotypes about their racial group. Thus, I do not expect white Americans to have strong concerns about stereotypes about white students. And, as expected, neither white women or men possess log-odds that are significant in this model. Instead, Black women (1.16, p<.05), Black men (1.31, p<.01), and Latina women (1.73, p<.001) have statistically and substantively significant log-odds of supporting the idea that white students' bad behavior in school is ignored due to their privilege. Taken together, the findings in tables 4.5 and 4.6 are interesting as they

show that the stigma of stereotypes does not affect racial groups in uniform ways. For white Americans, whose group is not stigmatized in schools, the label of bad behavior does not affix itself to their attitudes in the same manner as it does for Black and Latinx respondents who are often stigmatized in education spaces (Steele 1997; Steele, Spencer, and Aronson 2002). As expected, Black women express the greatest concerns about economic and stereotype threats of Black Americans while Latina women mirrored much of their concerns. These findings also follow along with existing literature.

Table 4.7: Ordered Logistic Regression "My neighborhood is a place where I don't worry about my skincolor"

	Model	
	Coeff. (std. error)	
Race Identification		
Black women	-.81 (.19)	***
Asian women	-.86 (.23)	**
Latina women	-.48 (.17)	***
White women	-.06 (.12)	
Black men	-1.00 (.20)	***
Asian men	-.53 (.23)	**
Latinx men	-.59 (.16)	***
Partisanship		
Democrat	-.25 (.18)	
Independent	-.14 (.18)	
Republican	-.34 (.20)	
Ideology	.04 (.04)	
Demographics		
Education	-.03 (.03)	*
Income	.08 (.03)	**
Observations (N)	1,773	
Likelihood Ratio	83.61	
Prob> chi2	0.0000	
Log Likelihood	-2228.68	
Significance: p<.05, p<.01**, p<.001 ****		

Proximity-based Threat

I created two models to measure the effects of proximity-based threat across race and gender. Each model uses a ordered logistic regression model with a binary choice dependent variable as described in the prior section. Importantly, white men are the reference group in each model. In Table 4.7 (left), we see that race and gender are significant predictors of whether or not respondents believe their neighborhood is a place where they have to worry about their skin color. As expected, Black men's log-odds (-1.00, $p<.001$) and Black women's log-odds (-.81, $p<.001$) suggests that these groups have lower log odds of expressing comfort with their skin color in their own neighborhoods when compared with

white men, holding all other variables at a fixed value. Interestingly, all other minority groups also reach statistical significance. Only white women remain statistically insignificant in this model.

Table 4.8: Ordered Logistic Regression "My neighborhood is a place where I feel safe walking alone at night"

	Model
	Coeff. (std. error)
Race Identification	
Black women	-.89 (.18) ***
Asian women	-.83 (.24) ***
Latina women	-.85 (.16) ***
White women	-.56 (.12) ***
Black men	-.69 (.19) ***
Asian men	-.75 (.23) **
Latinx men	-.56 (.15) ***
Partisanship	
Democrat	-.30 (.17)
Independent	.15 (.17)
Republican	-.04 (.18)
Ideology	.07 (.03) *
Demographics	
Education	.07 (.03) *
Income	.11 (.03) ***
Observations (N)	1,763
Likelihood Ratio	142.44
Prob> chi2	0.0000
Log Likelihood	-2597.17
Significance: p<.05, p<.01**, p<.001 ****	

Table 4.8 (left) underscores variations in experiences with and perceptions of proximity-based threat as all races of women reported a higher and statistically significant log odds of not feeling safe to walk alone in their neighborhoods alone at night. Black women have the highest log odds, among all groups, of reporting that they do not feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night (-.89, p<.001). Black men have the highest log odds, among men, of reporting that they do not feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood alone at night (-.69, p<.001). These findings confirm hypothesis 3. Furthermore, they support additional investigation of proximity-based threat and how it motivates young Americans toward responses like political action.

Threat Experiment

As a final evaluation of young Americans' experiences with proximity-based threat, and in an effort to extend our knowledge of how this phenomenon operates in a contemporary context, I performed a survey experiment in March 2019[10]. The experiment consisted of one control, two treatments, and ta simple post-test. Participants in the survey-based experiment were selected using the GenForward panel data described above. The first vignette, or the control, featured a short summary regarding an upcoming protest event to be held at a local forestry preserve which would be let by an environmental organization. The second vignette focused on a protest to protect a Confederate statue which would be led by a white supremacist organization. The third and final vignette discussed a local protest by an anti-immigration group in support of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. After each vignette, participants were asked if a) they felt threatened by the event itself, and b) if they would like to write something to local officials about the event. The survey provided space for them to provide long-form, open-ended responses based on their reactions to the vignette in their experimental condition. Brief summaries of cumulative responses to the two post-test questions by experiment group and race/gender are included in Tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 below.

Table 4.9: Threat Survey Experiment Summary Statistics

	Control		Group 1		Group 2	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Do you feel threatened by this event?	15%	85%	28%	72%	17%	83%
Would you like to contact local officials	15%	85%	27%	73%	12%	88%

[10] Full experiment details and write-up may be found in Appendix C.

Table 4.10: Do you feel threatened by this event?

	Control		Group 1		Group 2	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Black women	15%	85%	**42%**	58%	15%	85%
Latina women	12%	88%	35%	65%	**34%**	66%
Asian women	22%	78%	**64%**	36%	17%	83%
White women	19%	81%	28%	72%	13%	87%
Black men	**30%**	70%	**29%**	71%	23%	77%
Latinx men	18%	82%	25%	75%	26%	74%
Asian men	10%	90%	**40%**	60%	**37%**	63%
White men	5%	95%	19%	81%	7%	93%

Table 4.11: Would you like to contact local officials?

	Control		Group 1		Group 2	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Black women	14%	86%	26%	74%	10%	90%
Latina women	13%	87%	**36%**	64%	17%	83%
Asian women	6%	94%	**54%**	46%	**20%**	80%
White women	12%	88%	20%	80%	11%	89%
Black men	11%	89%	25%	75%	17%	83%
Latinx men	20%	80%	**29%**	71%	12%	88%
Asian men	23%	77%	18%	82%	**32%**	68%
White men	21%	79%	28%	72%	8%	92%

Experiment Demographics

The samples for each experimental frame were generated randomly from the existing GenForward sample frame. Thus, each group was roughly the same size and distributed similarly across race and gender. In the control condition, there were 696 participants. In this case, there were 120 Black women, 104 Latinas, 45 Asian women, and 146 white women. There were 66 Black men, 64 Latinx men, 40 Asian men, and 92 white men as well. In the first experimental condition (the white supremacist treatment), there were 703 participants. In this condition, there

were 106 Black women, 90 Latinas, 33 Asian women, and 156 white women. Further, there were 62 Black men, 75 Latinx men, 50 Asian men, and 111 white men. In the second experimental condition (the immigration treatment), there were 735 participants. There were 130 Black women, 99 Latinas, 42 Asian women, and 146 white women. Likewise, there were 63 Black men, 83 Latinx men, 41 Asian men, and 112 white men.

Experiment Results

Fundamentally, this analysis sets out to challenge long-standing theoretical and empirical frameworks measuring threat in the social sciences. To do that, I posit that V.O. Key's traditional model of the "racial threat hypothesis" does not adequately capture the ways that threat affects the lives of many Americans, namely Black women. To illustrate this point further, I find that, given responses to the first treatment (the white supremacist treatment), there are statistically significant differences between Black men and Black women in terms of whether or not they feel threatened by the event. Table 4.12 (below) shows that Black women are *more* threatened by this event than Black men within this condition.

Table 4.12: Treatment Group 1 - Two-Sample t-test (Black men vs. Black women)

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err	Std. Dev	[95% conf interval]
Black men * Threat	703	0.027	0.006	0.16	.015, .039
Black women * Threat	703	0.067	0.009	0.25	.048, .085
combined	1,406	0.047	0.006	0.21	.036, .058
difference		**-0.04**	**0.011**		**-.062, -.018**
	t = -3.54	*dof=1404*		*Pr(|T|>|t|) = 0.0004***	

When coupled with the findings above on proximity-based threat, neighborhood cautiousness, and risks associated with being alone at night, these findings suggest that Keys' traditional theory about proximity and the effects of changing demographics may function differently when

considering variations in race, gender, class, and other heuristics. What's more, these findings underscore the need for moving beyond a paradigm of geopolitical proximity as it relates to threat toward what I call experiential proximity which accounts for connectedness to communities across the Black Diaspora.

Discussion: Implications for the Study of Threat, Affect, and Emotion in Political Science

Much of the scholarship on threat in Political Science remains tethered to some of the discipline's earliest conceptions of the term. For example, rather than generalizable definitions of group threat, racialized notions of subordinate group membership and minority-status inflect our operationalization of the term. When considering who gets to experience threat, and how they might experience it, we seldom consider the variations of attitude formation and experiences within groups. This study has sought to do some of that work. Specifically, this study has set out to provide evidence that threat is a multidimensional component of the contemporary political process. Economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threat, while fundamental to our modern political system, have changed with the changes in our population. And, these shifts are fundamental in shaping how those within groups who sit at differing social positions, navigate the social and political world. I have shown that, just as young Americans differ in their judgements of political candidates for office or policies affecting their communities, they too vary in their assessments of and attitudes about economic, stereotype, and proximity-based threat. Not only that, these differences lie along racial and gender lines that have yet to be fully investigated.

Future research on threat in the social sciences should dig deeper into the causal mechanisms which trigger responses to risks and threats present in the political world. This

analysis has done some of that work. However, because this area of study has primarily focused on the experiences and behaviors of white Americans, there remains many unanswered questions regarding how these responses vary, operate within or outside traditional political systems, or wane based on risks assessments. I pick up some of that work in my larger research agenda.

In my larger research project, I use these findings to extend this work as I examine what I refer to as *intersectional threat* or the threat that occurs within racial groups across gender, sexuality, ability, and class lines. This study lays the groundwork to interrogate the ways that social location, especially concerning gender and sexuality, shift one's perceptions and attitudes about threat. This is particularly important in the context of communities where racial distribution is relatively uniform but class, gender, and sexuality vary drastically.

Appendix 4A: Survey Questions

April 2017 Survey Questions

Economic Threat Battery

[Q43 - difficulty] How much financial difficulty would you have if you had to pay an unexpected bill of $1,000 right away?

1. A lot
2. A little
3. Not much
4. None at all

[Q46A - layoffs] How concerned are you about being laid off from work?

1. Extremely concerned
2. Very concerned
3. Somewhat concerned
4. Not very concerned
5. Not concerned at all
6. I am currently not working [recoded to exclude]

[Q46B - hours] How concerned are you about being forced to work reduced hours or take a cut in pay?

1. Extremely concerned
2. Very concerned
3. Somewhat concerned
4. Not very concerned
5. Not concerned at all
6. I am currently not working [recoded to exclude]

[Q48 - succeed] Overall, do you think your race or ethnicity has made it harder or made it easier for you to succeed economically in life, or has it not made much difference?

1. Made it easier **[easiersucceed]**
2. Made it harder **[hardersucceed]**
3. Not made much difference
4. Both

July 2017 Survey Questions

Stereotype Threat Battery

[Q31 - highrates] Research has found that Black and Hispanic students are suspended at higher rates than other students. Why do you think this is the case?

1. Black and Hispanic students have more behavioral problems **[problems]**
2. Most of the teachers and administrators are white and lack sensitivity to the issues confronting Black and Hispanic students
3. They are in schools with fewer resources that have to rely on strict discipline
4. Bad behavior of white students is ignored because of their privilege **[badbehavior]**

March 2019 Survey Questions

Proximity-based Threat Battery

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Scale:

My neighborhood is a place where:

1. ...I do not worry about the color of my skin. **[skincolor]**
2. ...I feel safe when walking alone at night. **[safety]**

Appendix 4B: Threat (Survey) Experiment

Control Group:
Vignette: Yesterday, a local environmentally-conscious group announced their upcoming protest in support of keeping a regional forestry preserve area protected from potential developers seeking to build single-family homes and attached condominiums on the land. The environmental group believes, "if we do not start taking the environment more seriously, we are going to look up and have no trees, animals, or water left," according to the group's leader. The community group has scheduled their protest for Saturday morning at 10am.

Treatment Group 1:
Vignette: Yesterday, a local known white supremacist group announced their upcoming protest in support of keeping a Confederate statue erected in front of the City Hall building. The group wants the statue protected from potential removal by people who claim that the statue is offensive. The white supremacist group believes that, "these statues are a part of history whether Blacks like it or not. It is our history. They can move to Canada if they don't like it, or Africa," according to the group's leader. The white supremacist group has scheduled their protest for 10am on Saturday morning.

Treatment Group 2:
Vignette: Yesterday, a local anti-immigration group announced their upcoming protest in support of strengthening deportation laws and enforcing fines on suspected illegal immigration activities in the state. The group supports laws which state that those who have been previously deported may be found guilty of a felony and sentenced to up to 20 years in prison. The anti-immigration group believes, "a crime is a crime. These are the risks these illegals take when they break our laws," the group's leader reportedly told news reporters. The anti-immigration group's protest is scheduled for Saturday at 10am.

Post-test:
1. Do you feel threatened by this event? (Yes/No)
2. Would you like to contact local officials about this issue? (Yes/No)
a. If yes, use this space to provide a comment or concern to local officials (open-ended response)

Chapter 5: Speaking Truth to Power: Navigating Group Threat, Socialization, and Activating Black Communities

"When I liberate myself, I liberate others. If you don't speak out ain't nobody going to speak out for you."

- Fannie Lou Hamer

"Audre Lorde teaches us that our silence will not provide protection. Speaking our truths helps us imagine and create the world we want to live in, despite systems of oppression that tell us that we are not enough."

- Charlene Carruthers

Much of the scholarship on threat in the social sciences hinges on the outcomes of quantitative analysis. Political scientists have developed sophisticated methods of measurement and assessment to better understand threat in the aggregate, meaning threat as it affects mainstream, white Americans citizens. By focusing on threat and its relationship to voting and other traditional forms of political participation, the discipline has successfully theorized affect and emotion as a critical part of the American political system. In this chapter, I answer three core questions. First, what threats do young Black Americans encounter in their daily lives? Second, how do these encounters vary by race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and embodiment? And, lastly, how do these encounters shape young Americans' beliefs about American Politics and their role in it? I argue that it is critical to ascertain the role of threat in the daily social lives of young Black Americans as it has a direct impact on their political beliefs, attitudes, and actions.

In the preceding chapters, I employed empirical analysis in order to better understand what social conditions impact young Black Americans' response to threat. More importantly, I have examined how those young people's responses fit within a larger framework of threat in the United States with special attention to variations across race, gender, sexuality, and class. In addition to the quantitative methods employed in this dissertation, I also performed qualitative

research analysis to gain greater depth and context surrounding the conditions which promote, sustain, or repress political activity among young Black Americans in response to group threat.

Why Qualitative Interviews?

A common refrain regarding the role of the researcher in studying and struggling along with communities at the margins is that these scholars are attempting, at least in some instances, to "give a voice to the voiceless." The euphemism is a tricky one in that it masquerades as a potentially positive outcome of the researcher, as outsider, engaging in community-based, participatory, and/or ethnographic study while simultaneously suggesting that those people who are the subjects of that study have no voice unless an outsider is present to listen and document it. These types of analyses are often referred to as "engaged scholarship" or "activist-oriented" research. Unfortunately, these terms also work to further reproduce and solidify artificial boundaries between the academy and the "community." This is a byproduct of formal researcher logics that has innumerable consequences for those living outside of the Ivory Tower. It also has immeasurable consequences for those within the Academy in the form of delimited research agendas, underdeveloped theoretical interventions, and potentially invalid findings of the employed research methodology. Pushing back against this logic, this project aims to not only provide a theoretical and empirical framework for understanding the general conditions within which young Black Americans encounter, process, and mitigate potential social and political threats, I also seek to elucidate, magnify, and center specific explanations and illustrations of their contextual experiences with threat based on their own words, experiences, and sentiments. Rather than aiming to provide young Black Americans with a voice, I use Feminist Interview methods, which situate the participants as knowledge producers with full agency and expertise

on their life world, to facilitate and honor opportunities for young Black Americans to share their experiences and knowledge with me. These are exercises in "speaking truth to power." In this respect, I am not working to "give them a voice." Instead, I am seeking only to be graciously and respectfully educated in how they already use their voice to engage in their daily lives.

Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Model

The empirical evidence I present in this chapter will fall within three primary domains: identity, performance, and engagement. These three domains are the theoretical frameworks which guided the interview questions and course of investigation. More importantly, for young Black Americans who participated in my interviews, the pressure to conform to certain norms and expectations, tailor their presentation and movement in public based on others' perceptions of their identities, and find new, non-traditional ways to participate in the political process were chief concerns in their daily lives. These concerns were directly linked to their perceptions of threat and the likelihood that others would perceive them as threatening.

Identity: Gender, Sexuality, and Class Variation

Black Feminists and other feminists of color have long written about the disparate treatment that women, especially women of color, receive both by other citizens and at the hands of the State (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Crenshaw 1991; Sheftall 1995; Hill Collins 2000). Due to these ongoing and historical exclusions, harms, and stereotypes, Black women, in particular, have developed forms of coping and awareness meant to protect and shield them from potential harms and threats (Hill Collins 2000). In *Reconstructing Womanhood*, Hazel Carby discusses the notion of the "cult of domesticity." It is the notion that women are supposed to comport themselves to

certain norms of femininity and subordination to men that are rooted in middle-class, Victorian lifestyles (Carby 1987). Moreover, with this theoretical framework, Carby explains that Black women have not typically been allowed to participate in femininity in the same manner as white women due to a long history of racial discrimination against Black Americans and requirements that Black women work outside of the home to provide for their families (1987). Writing against the force of these sorts of tropes and ideals about Black women, Darlene Clark Hine explains that rape and the threat of rape of Black women has created a "culture of dissemblance," which denotes "the behavior and attitudes of Black women that created the appearance of openness and disclosure but actually shielded the truth of their inner lives and selves from their oppressors" (1989, 912). The culture of dissemblance is a form of coping that Black women have taken up to thwart the potential threat of sexual violence. It is also a way that Black women shield themselves from experiences the effects of discrimination and harm from those around them. This is critical in understanding how young Black women navigate group threat today.

Just like Black women, Black men, too, have taken up innovative strategies to manage their encounters with discrimination and racist treatment in their daily lives. According to Majors and Billson, "the black male's psychological stance, then, is protective, cautious, and secretive in the face of overwhelming power and advantage of white people and white institutions. The animosity he feels whenever he travels in white worlds is translated into the cue for donning the mask, playing to the crowd, and erecting the invisible wall" (1992, 61). Much like the culture of dissemblance, this theory suggests that Black men too don a "mask." Using this theoretical framework helps to elucidate the dissonance between Black men's personal identities and desire to navigate the public sphere amidst the threat of misrecognition, stereotypes, and other forms of racial animus. Anderson Franklin refers to reactions to this threatening environment a

"invisibility syndrome." He says, "[m]en experiencing the invisibility syndrome live as if they were under siege. They have a hard time distinguishing racial slights from other kinds of problems" (2004, 11). Because of this "siege," Franklin suggests that young Black men espouse a number of coping strategies like putting up protective shields, using their machismo and attitudes to thwart attacks, and relying on solidarity with other young Black men who share their experiences (2004). McClure also found that many young Black men in college sought membership in historically Black fraternities because they were looking for a place to share their feelings and express emotions that they were unable to express elsewhere (2006). The expression of emotion and vulnerability typically run counter to what is considered "manly" or masculine (Majors and Billson 1992; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). The comportment with behaviors that are seen as masculine, and acceptable based on mainstream social norms are critical in understanding how young Black men perceive, recognize, and respond to potential threats.

Much like social norms and expectations associated with masculinity and femininity, sexual orientation and forms of sexual embodiment are critical in shaping how individuals navigate the social world. Specifically, the perception that others misperceive or stereotype certain social groups or members of those groups regulates behavior. This is especially true for those individuals who hold non-normative identity markers like non-heteronormative, non-cisgender, non-abled, and non-middle class identities. C. Riley Snorton explains that

> *Misrecognition*[1], therefore, is as important as recognition in the production of self, as the quality of feeling misrecognized/unseen/wrongly viewed serves as a context for the emergence of selfhood. The sense of feeling misrecognized also serves as a site for resistance in forms of identification governed by the politics of recognition, as the possibility of misrecognition carries with it the opportunity for deliberation and the potential rejection of social scripts, which get mapped onto one's body (2009, 82-83).

[1] Emphasis is the author's.

Essentially, stereotypes of non-normative individuals is regulator of behaviors both because it encourages assimilation, normativity, and other coping strategies but also because it may inspire these group members to resist the threat of misrecognition. In speaking about his experiences as a transsexual adult, Dean Spade explains that the mere existence of binary gender categories and the powerful enforcement of gender rigidity by medical professionals and structures makes it difficult for transgender people to experience their gender and sexuality in an uncomplicated way (2006). For both Snorton and Spade, their experiences ae further complicated by class expectations and social norms around masculinity, embodiment, and gender normativity. These frameworks are imperative in situating the experiences of young Black Americans' when faced with various social threats. This is especially important for young Black Americans whose identities fall outside of normative expectations.

Performance: Social Norms, Respectability, Passing, and Coping

There is a vast body of literature which investigates the role of social norms, comportment, and respectability in shaping public opinion, attitudes, and behavior. Within the Black Feminist tradition, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham is credited with creating the term "the politics of respectability," which, she says, "emphasized reform of individual behavior and attitudes both as a goal in itself and as a strategy for reform of the entire structural system of American race relations" (Higginbotham 1993, 187). Effectively, Higginbotham's theoretical concept helps to elucidate forms of physical behavioral adjustments that have been historically linked to racial cues and ideas. For example, when Ida B. Wells ([1892] 2002, 44) explained that many Black Americans after Emancipation took up "the idea that boorish insolence is independence, and the exercise of a decent degree of breeding toward white people is identical with servile

submission," she is highlighting the ways that, for their survival, many Black Americans focused on changing their own behaviors with respect to the threats of white violence. Rather than taking up the often onerous and burdensome work of attempting to change the social and political conditions through structural or electoral reform, these Black Americans frequently adapted to the conditions around them, behaving in ways that might keep them safe from the racist violence and mob terror which befell so many during this time.

Legal scholar Cheryl I. Harris provides an empirical case of respectability and coping with power differentials between racial groups when she discusses her grandmother who, in the 1930s, entered "the white world" for employment (1993). In so doing, she also took up the identity of a white woman, never telling her colleagues and other white people she encountered in her daily life that she was, in fact, a Black woman. Harris explains how this process of "passing," while not unique to her family or to Black people in general, was rooted in gaining closer proximity to whiteness and, therefore, to normativity. According to Harris, "Becoming white increased the possibility of controlling critical aspects of one's life rather than being the object of others' domination" (1993, 1713). More contemporaneously, Cathy Cohen takes up respectability politics by examining the role of deviance in shaping not only the lives of Black Americans but also the study of Black Politics and Queer Theory. She says,

> A focus, for example, on poor single Black women, with children whose intimate relationships and sexual behavior are often portrayed as directly in conflict with the normative assumptions of heterosexism and the nuclear family, but who also often live under the constant surveillance of the state through regulatory agencies such as welfare offices, courts, jails, prisons, child protective services and public housing authorities, might do much to advance the work of both those who locate themselves exclusively in African American Studies or queer theory. In contrast to many privileged gay, lesbian, and queer folks, poor single Black women with children, structurally unable to control an exclusive "ghetto" or area of a city where their dealings with the state are often chosen and from an empowered position, are reminded daily of their distance from the promise of full citizenship (2004, 29).

For Cohen, the traditional focus on normative ways of being – found through race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and other social markers – represents an area which requires deeper investigation if there is to be any transformative possibilities in this scholarship.

These concepts also extend into how young Black Americans are socialized into coping strategies with racial discrimination. Majors and Billson connect Black Americans' propensity to hide their emotions to cope with racial discrimination to a history of slavery. They say that "[o]ne result of pervasive and prolonged oppression is that blacks have developed an exquisite sensibility to white cues. Many have become proficient at concealing their emotions" (1992, 59). This form of coping was handed down through generations. According to Majors and Billson, "[c]hildren learned early to suppress their natural feelings of fear, hatred, or confusion. Fitting on the mask was a part of growing up black and an extension of the instinct to survive" (1992, 60). In this way, it becomes clear that, for many Black people, Black men in particular, suppressing and hiding emotion and affect became part and parcel with moving through public spaces. This is critical when considering how young Black men might respond to potential social and political threats. Focusing specifically on Black men, Majors and Billson say,

> The black male develops game plans to maintain his front. The mask or front, which is fused from an amalgam of verbal, physical, and psychological elements, changes according to what the audience wants. This is the safest mask of all. The chameleon-like recasting of masks according to audience expectations marks the black actor's most heroic – and circumspect performance (1992, 61).

The roles of respectability, passing, and social norms in shaping young Black Americans' perceptions of and reactions to group threat are imperative especially when considering differences in social location *within* this group.

Engagement: Political Behaviors, and Community Mobilization

Political engagement and action among young Black Americans is a dynamic and complex process which is predicated on a host of interlocking factors. These processes are undeniably political. And, as the members of the Combahee River Collective[2] taught us, the realities that motivate marginalized communities to act in resistance against harm and oppression are usually tethered to their identities and social positions. Charlene Carruthers formalizes this framework as a motivator for political engagement when she identifies the "Black Queer Feminist" lens or BQF (2018). She says, it "is a political praxis (practice and theory) based in Black feminist and LGBTQ tradition and knowledge, through which people and groups seek to bring their full selves into the process of dismantling all systems of oppression" (2018, 10). Carruthers explains that the BQF is a framework for understanding both political organizing techniques and ideas as well as a set of personal identifiers and principles for some young Black people who engage in social movements.

A primary factor which acts as the connective tissue between youth-led and Black-led social movement organizations is social media (Ransby 2018). For many of these disparate groups, especially those which have emerged as a part of the Movement for Black Lives, virtual organizing based in local communities has been critical to formulating foundational connections to larger organizing communities across the country and globe (Khan-Cullors 2018; Carruthers 2018; Ransby 2018). In this way, many young organizers are situated to enact political change both within their respective communities and within larger movement organizations. These frameworks are paramount in helping analyze the political actions and engagement of young Black Americans today.

[2] The Combahee River Collective discussed how "major systems of oppression are interlocking "in their mandate entitled "A Black Feminist Statement" originally written in April 1977 (Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Watertown, Mass: Persephone Press, 1981, pages 210-218).

Methodological Approach

By using qualitative methods, I am able to ascertain the deeper meanings behind the quantitative findings I have presented in chapters four and five. In particular, I employ both critical race theoretical and mixed methods approaches. According to Carol Grbich, the former helps to "bring about change through an active process of emancipation through knowledge-sharing or the transformation of society"[3] while the latter helps to "drive research under an encompassing but loose paradigm such as *pragmatism* or *transformative action*"[4]. Specifically, while I have already shown that there are variations in both the forms of threat reported by young Black Americans when compared to their peers of other races, this chapter works to examine how those varying experiences are interpreted, what assessment processes are triggered, and how young Black Americans choose to react to them.

Data Collection

The study population is defined as young, Black Americans ages 18 to 35 years old. Inclusion criteria was only limited to these parameters (race and age). A total of 50 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted over four months. Interviews were performed in the greater Chicago-area from March 23rd, 2018 to July 24th, 2018. An IRB application was completed and received expedited approval with the University of Chicago AURA-IRB Social Sciences Division in December 2017.

Recruitment

At the start of the project, I recruited interview participants via social media using Twitter and Facebook, direct email, and print flyers. Recruitment prompts are included in Appendix {}. I

[3] Carol Grbich, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction* (Los Angeles, Sage Publications, 2013), 7
[4] Ibid., 26

created a unique email address to facilitate all communication and scheduling of interviews. Thus, each interview participant had to have a working email address in order to participate in the study.

In addition to relying on the reach of social media, I utilized a number of local organizations and institutions that serve young Black people in an effort to reach my target population. In particular, I used convenience sampling of young Black Americans in the Chicago area on the University of Chicago and Chicago State University campuses. Because these institutions are easily accessible to me, I used them as hubs for getting the word out about the project. I posted flyers, shared my project information with student groups, and canvassed potential participants directly. I also relied on existing organizations to help recruit young people for my interviews. By contacting existing student-based organizations on these campuses like the Organization of Black Students and Blacks in Public Policy at the University of Chicago, the African American Male Resource Center at Chicago State University, and local Chicago chapters of BYP100 and Black Lives Matter, I was able to leverage their networks of young Black Americans in the Chicago-area in order to facilitate the recruitment process. I also reached out to the 100 Black Men of Chicago organization as well as the UIC and greater Chicago chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi fraternities, two historically-Black organizations. These connections were made later in the recruitment timeline to help with increasing the number of Black men participants in the study. After meeting several young people on the South Side of Chicago who were affiliated with Trinity United Church of Christ, I reached out to the young adult department to inquire about speaking with additional young people there. One additional organization I connected with was a Free Spirit Media (FSM), a media literacy and training organization that serves teens and young people on Chicago's West

and South sides. I have already cultivated a relationship with FSM that helps to facilitate collaboration. From that point, snowball sampling was used to gather additional interested, potential participants from those who had already been interviewed.

In addition to my list of organizations and institutions, I relied heavily on my own networks and efforts to recruit participants for this project. For example, I have been teaching young Black and Latinx students in the city of Chicago since 2015 through a partnership between the Black Youth Project and Chicago Public Schools. Since that first summer, I have kept in touch with many of my students. For this project, I used purposive sampling of students who had reached the age of 18 years old for this study. I also encouraged them to suggest friends, family, and peers who might be a good fit for the project. Lastly, I canvassed in the South Loop (Downtown Chicago) with a focus on the corridor between Harold Washington Library, Columbia College, Roosevelt University, DePaul University, and John Marshall Law School. While I am aware that this area has a higher concentration of college-educated young Black people, I also understand that this section of the Loop are high transit areas for local eateries, movie theaters, parks, and public museums.

Context and Access

I chose to conduct this study in the Chicago area due to the long history of Black activism and uprising in the region. In recent years, Chicago has been a primary location for young people's activism around issues of policing, school closures, minimum wages, housing policy, employment access, and a host of other social and political concerns. With respect to the issue of threat, young Black Americans in the city of Chicago are constituents of the second largest police force in the world. Meanwhile, those who are raised within the South Side of the city's limits often face school closures, varying forms of housing instability, and police hyper-

surveillance (Shedd 2015; Ewing 2018). These conditions make the Chicago area an extreme example of the various threats facing young Black Americans in the United States.

Another critical component of this site selection is its connection to mass migrations of Black Americans between 1915 and 1970. During this time period, more than six million Black Americans migrated from the rural South to cities in the North, West, and Midwest (Equal Justice Initiative 2018). Their movements signaled a new stage in racial conflict and proximity-based threats in the United States (Key 1949). Not only that, they gave way to new generations of Black Americans in northern and western regions whose presence in those areas reverberated for generations. Thus, the young Black Americans in my study are roughly one to two generations out from the Great Migration. For those whose great grandparents and grandparents were born or naturalized in the United States, they share stories of family members who have integrated schools, who were the first Black Americans to win selected political offices, and who can vividly recount the decision to pick up the family, move to the North, and hope for a better life up there. These intergenerational tales and experiences are handed down to children and to children's children. They shape the ways young Black Americans view the world around them, and, more specifically, the threats they might face because of their race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, or otherwise.

I gained access to the social organizations and movement members included in this phase of the research via several means. First, having lived and worked in the Chicago-area for the past four years as an instructor, writer, and activist has helped me to build independent networks with young Black Americans in the city. Second, I am a member of BYP100, a Black liberation organizations established in 2013. This connection has allowed me to embed myself in several movement communities in the Chicago-area as a movement participant. Finally, as a professional

writer whose work focuses on political issues facing young Black Americans including anti-blackness, school closures, police violence, and the like, I have built community with young Chicago writers whose work, too, focuses on these intersections. For these reasons, I opted to conduct all of my own interviews, firsthand and in-person.

Incentives

All interview participants received a $10.00 (USD) gift card for Amazon.com upon concluding their interview. Gift cards were disseminated electronically, via email. This amount was determined based on average hourly wage estimates and typical rates for in-person interview incentives (Grbich 2013).

Interviewer Characteristics

I chose to conduct each interview alone. I am a thirty-three-year-old queer Black American woman from a working-class background. I grew up with a single mother in the inner-city of Oakland, California. And, I am a first-generation college student. Thus, I found that my phenotypical and professional characteristics were in close alignment with my participants. The close proximity of my identity to that of my participants should help to mitigate any potential negative interviewer effects on the participant responses. Additionally, I chose to do each of the interviews so that the identity of the interviewer is held constant across all cases and does not act as a latent variable in the respondent data.

Interview Format and Method

Each interview consisted of roughly ten to fifteen open-ended questions. Interviews were performed one-on-one in public and private locations like coffee shops, libraries, office buildings, and campus classrooms. Several interviews were conducted in private residences to account for accessibility needs. During the interviews, I employed relaxed and familial speaking

tones and language rather than relying on academic jargon. I also encouraged interview participants to speak in a whatever tone and language was most comfortable for them.

The interview guide was organized around three core domains: 1) defining threat, 2) examining personal experiences with and responses to threat, and 3) connecting social and political activism to threat stimuli. The full interview guide is provided in Appendix {}. The first part of the interview asked participants to provide their own conception of threat. This section also asked participants about how their definition of threat relates to their own beliefs about how groups should respond to threat. The second section asked for specific examples of participant experiences with threat and their responses in those instances. In the final section of the interview guide, participants were asked to detail their political engagement activities. These activities were then linked to the forms of threat they would most like to eliminate if given the opportunity. After the first two interviews, the interview guide was revised slightly to account for wording issues and participant confusion. In this instance, I added a question at the outset which collected more detail about place of origin, race, background, gender, occupation, and family demographics. Although sexuality is pertinent to this project, I chose not to explicitly ask any questions about sexual orientation without the participant first volunteering this information. This was a conscious decision so as not to alienate the participant or potentially "out" them during the interview. Thus, my collection of responses about gender and sexual identity and expression rely purely on what was volunteered by the participant. Subsequently, after the thirteenth interview, the interview guide was adjusted again to ensure the questions were effective and to also grapple with the developing theory around risk that had emerged in the earlier interviews. One final revision to the interview guide was made after interview twenty-five to include an explicit question about the connections between personal experiences and

political/social engagement. These revisions to the interview guide helped to sharpen my instrument and provide more reliable and accurate responses from interview participants.

Researchers used two forms of audio recording devices for each interview: 1) laptop-based recording app and 2) Android phone recording app. These two methods were used to ensure quality of sound and accuracy of the recording in case one device malfunctioned during the interviews. After each interview, detailed field notes were written to capture the theoretical, methodological, and reflective aspects of the interview that would not be reflected in the recorded tape. These notes were also used to capture any key points about the participants' demeanor during the interview (e.g. were they crying? Where were there long pauses? What questions seemed to have been the hardest to answer?). These notes were used to help improve the interview guide during future interviews as well as ensure that all aspects of the interview were fully captured.

Recorded interviews were stored on a password-protected server on Google Drive. Interviews were narratively transcribed into Google Documents for each interview using the Voice feature on Google Docs, using the English language. Each interview was audited for accuracy before beginning the coding process.

Interviews were coded using both hand-coding and the import feature on the MAXQDA software. Transcripts were first coded using *Initial* or *Summative Coding*. This method allows for synthesis of the general themes in each of the conversations. This also greatly reduces the amount of generated text down into blocks of content that apply directly to the research question. Next, I used *Descriptive Coding* which provides categorical identification for each section of text that refers to a particular topic or family of topics. This method allows for codes to be reconciled across multiple interviews for the purpose of drawing evidence together to form a cogent

argument. Finally, I used *Structural Coding* which helps to identify the frequency with which certain reactions and experiences were reported by respondents. This coding method generates hierarchical responses by specific research question and operates in a quantitative way. At the end of this tri-layer coding process, I am left with three textual layers: summary codes, categorical labels, and annotated responses to my specific research questions[5]. As such, the analysis and finding below detail both the quantitative characteristics of the interviews and the qualitative responses from respondents[6].

Analysis

The average age of interview participants was 26 years old with a minimum of 19 years old and a maximum of 34. Of the 50 interviews, 25 were men[7], 23 were women, and 2were gender non-conforming (GNC) or of non-binary gender (NB). Of those GNC/NB individuals, one was assigned male at birth and one was assigned female at birth. Of those who mentioned their sexual orientation, 11 identified as "queer", "gay", "lesbian," or "bisexual." Respondents were not outright asked their sexual orientation as a matter of ethicality and to avoid outing those respondents who have not outwardly expressed their sexual orientation to others.

Findings

Identity

Throughout my interview process, the role of identity remained central to each conversation. For many participants, they were keenly aware both of how others perceived their identity markers, like race, gender, sexual orientation, sexual embodiment, etc., and how they intended to embody

[5] More detail on my coding methodology may be found in Appendix 5C.
[6] To ensure anonymity, all respondents have been given a pseudonym. All proper names have been changed. All identifying information has been removed.
[7] These categories of "men" and "women" include both cisgender and transgender men and women.

their identity on their own terms. Many of them expressed that, from a very early age, they had learned that their skin color was going to be problem for them when navigating the social world. They articulated that, because they were Black, people would see them as a threat. For some participants, threat was actually embodied in their physical bodies. In conversation with "Elon," a 24-year Black man from the Southside of Chicago, he compared being Black in a predominantly white space to carrying a knife in a crowded room.

> **I:** So this does not have to be overly academic or overly technical. Um, but when I say the word threat to you, what does it mean to you? How do you define it?
>
> **R:** Threat means to me usually what I'm considered in society…You know what I mean? So you constantly feel that that's all that's a, that's like a, a background noise, that's the wallpaper. **And so in terms of our double consciousness and um, yeah, I just think of how we're considered, how being black is being considered a threat as like, you know, that a knife in a crowded room and somebody's hand is a threat. Like that' s apparent and as physical as that is. That is what it is, just to be black in these all white spaces in just taking up space in general in a lot of ways.**

Like the thematic framework set forth by Majors and Billson, we see here that, for this young Black man, he sees clear connections between his physical identity and the fears of others. When defining threat as a term, he simply used himself, a Black man, for the definition. This shows that, for this social group, racial and gender identity is paramount in their understanding of potential threats and opportunities to respond to it. For other participants, their socialization processes with race were such that it shaped they understandings of their own identity for the remainder of their lives. When speaking with a gender-nonconforming person I call "Quinton," I found that some of the earliest experiences with socialization into identity were still very influential in how they traversed interactions in the public sphere. Quinton explained to me that there were some threats that were worth responding to while others might not be worth the effort.

I asked a follow-up question to understand how Quinton[8] made those estimations:

> **I:** I'm hoping you can help me understand, what are some of those situations where you don't say anything at all or say "it's not that serious" kind of thing?
>
> **R:** I guess I'll start with, you know, my grandmother... They had people make videos like that the kids made with the little original songs and some of the songs I can kind of like remember were these type of songs or we were watching a movie that day and I was kind of singing a little bit about how the policeman is always your friend. She looked at me and said, "Baby," she said, "they don't see what I see. You go to school. You stay out of trouble. You're a sweet young child. They see a nigga." And I didn't know how to process that at 6 years old.

Like the experiences of Elon, Quinton was socialized into the understanding that their mere existence in a Black body was a negative trait. Because Quinton is also gender-nonconforming and was assigned male at birth, Quinton indicated that society frequently sees them as male and hypermasculine. This misrecognition is a threat to Quinton as they navigate the public sphere because, as they explained, others frequently see them as a danger.

In other instances, young Black Americans in my study explained that they sometimes acted in ways which aligned with certain identity markers so as not to appear out of step with societal expectations. During one particular interview with a 28-year-old man who I call "Alex", we discussed an instance when, even though confronted by threat, Alex felt compelled to respond in a way that was not necessarily life-preserving. Instead, he chose to respond differently because of expectations about his responsibilities as a man.

> **I:** So can you, can you share with me a time where you felt threatened and you did respond and kind of what the outcome was of that situation?
>
> **R:** So I'm trying to. I don't know. That's a good question. I can't even think.

[8] Quinton uses they/them pronouns

I: So even if your response was not something that looks like a response. So if your response was to walk away or your response was to do something different. Um, and what the kind of outcome was for you.

R: {long pause} Hmm.

R: {deep breathing} Threatened another time. I'm trying to think.

I: And it could be something where someone close to you felt threatened or somebody else was being threatened and you intervened or.

R: {long pause} I feel like that's happened. Um. Okay. Yeah. Actually. So one year at the taste of Chicago, uh {pause}, me and my siblings, we were, me and my siblings and a friend. We were like sitting out eating under like one of those, the, is it not a tent? It was a wooden structure where people sat.

I: Oh, like a canopy thing?

R: Yeah. Yeah. And um I got up to do something and I was walking towards Buckingham Fountain and as I was walking there, um all of a sudden the crowd just started running like in, in another like running...I'm trying to remember it correctly. So it's like a crowd of people started running one direction away from a direction where my, my sister and my friend was and at that moment I got scared for my sister and my reaction was like, I don't want to be a punk. And I ran the opposite direction to where they were.

Alex explains that he is concerned about being considered a “punk” or someone who is afraid to act in the face of confrontation. He also described himself as risk-avoidant. For Alex, masculine socialization took over instinctually causing him to run toward danger rather than running away. Alex, the oldest male child five daughters and three sons born to Haitian immigrants, explained in his interview that he feels the need to watch over his siblings constantly. Because he is the oldest male sibling, he finds that it is his responsibility to ensure that they are all safe even when they are not in the same county or state.

I: Yeah.

R: And so I ran into that direction to keep an eye on them, like to see if they were okay. But they had run too {laughter}. I tried to save them and they had run

> away! {laughter} So that moment when I felt threatened, my thought was even if I die, I have to save my sibling. I'd rather I don't want. I wouldn't want to live knowing that I ran away when I could have protected my sibling or my friends. So I remembered that. Yeah.

For Alex, it is clear here that he sees his role as protector of his family members. Coupled with his concerns about being deemed a "punk," he asserts that he would rather be dead than have to live knowing that he did not try and save his family members from potential harm. Other Black men in the study echoed this point saying that, as Black men, they were responsible to take care of others in their families and communities. These types of socialization and beliefs meant that, in some cases, they were confronting threat head-on, rather than avoiding it altogether.

In the cases of Elon, Quinton, and Alex, thee is evidence which shows that socialization into identity for young Black Americans has a significant impact on how they perceived and respond to threat. Specifically, the perceptions of others who deem young Black Americans, especially Black men, to be threatening, wield a great deal of power in determining how those young Black people respond to threat stimuli.

Performance

For many of the young Black Americans I interviewed, performing coping strategies, respectability, passing, and other ways of comportment in public spaces was integral to their beliefs that they would survive navigating predominantly white spaces. Many participants indicated that they frequently experienced fear and anxiety in neighborhoods that they had not previously or usually frequented for fear that someone might call the police or harass them. In other instances, participants explained that they felt they "didn't belong" in certain areas of the city. When those concerns arose, they would often attempt to perform social norms which

aligned with the norms of the area they were in. A recurrent theme in the interviews was that, when asked about confronting threats in their personal lives, participants explained to me that they had special ways to "navigate" or "get around" potential threats. While saying this, they would hold up on hand, all fingers pointed directly forward, then gesture as if they were snaking around potential obstacles. For these young Black Americans, they were actively finding strategies to thwart potential threats. As it turns out, many of those strategies included manipulating their own behavior to conform to expectations of others.

While speaking to a 19-year-old man, queer man who I call "Thomas," we discussed how he frequently alters his form of dress depending on which parts of the city he will be navigating for the day and how he will be traveling. If taking public transportation, he explained that he often tries to look more masculine and perform in line with more heteronormative gender expectations so as not to draw attention to himself. As someone who, as he described, "shops from all clothing racks," this frequently means that he does not feel comfortable wearing more feminine-of-center clothing in public spaces for fear that he may be harassed or attacked. Thomas told me, "sometimes I just feel like my femininity is too loud in certain contexts. That's what I feel like when I feel like I need to change." I asked about his relationship to clothing and moving in public spaces. Thomas told me about the first time he was called a faggot for wearing "fruity" clothes when he was in high school and was still closeted:

> **R:** You know that changed how I decided to dress the next day and the next year or whatever...I was like, "Oh my god, I'm actually communicating something about me that I don't want to be communicating right now…" My clothing then became even more than it already was for like me being a Black male. Like, being something that I also need to protect myself from the homophobia that I would experience from the way that I dress...I feel threatened you know?

Thomas explained that the salmon colored shorts he was wearing that day, though they were one of his favorite pairs of shorts, were "marked." They were the shorts he was wearing when he was called a faggot. This narrative is indicative of the types of social normativity and strategies for passing that young Black Americans engage in when confronting threats in the public sphere.

For some young Black men I interviewed, their primary concerns about performing respectability stemmed from the belief that they were "brutish," "dumb," or "violent." They indicated that, in many public spaces, they felt that they needed to comport themselves to a subdued emotional affect in order to be respected and seen as less threatening. However, for Black women, their struggled with a host of emotions concerning public comportment. Namely, when traversing both their personal communities and professional spaces (where they frequently encountered white Americans), they felt as though they had to manage perceptions of their intelligence in an effort to fit in or "get along."

When speaking to an 28-year-old Afro-Latina woman of Dominican heritage who I call "Theresa, we discussed how others' perceptions of her influenced her behaviors in the public spaces she navigated. Specifically, Theresa grew up in a Spanish-speaking household. She described herself as "pale" in comparison to her other family members. She told me that, depending on where she was in the United States, people often struggled with identifying her race and/or ethnicity. Many people assumed she was biracial, white and Black. She personally identifies as Latina. For Theresa, she explains that she finds it difficult to fit in to both her personal neighborhood environment and in professional, predominantly white spaces.

> **I:** So then thinking about those forms of threat, um, and you're talking about both as kind of a threat that you're experiencing physical in your community environment.

R: Yeah.

I: But then also this kind of more mental kind of feelings that you're getting from interacting with white folks in these more professional environments. So what are some common types of threats you think that people like you face, so maybe not just you personally but people like you across the board?

R: So I think for me as an American, right, because I was like born here with parents who are different culture trying to fit into my neighborhood where like they would tell me like I was like a white girl because I spoke differently or also I'm like so pale compared to like [others]... I was always a smart kid. And so I think like trying to balance being smart in a neighborhood where being smart wasn't cool. Right. And then on top of that, then I go into a workplace and sometimes I'm like too smart for them, right?

R: They don't expect me to be as vocal as I am. I think I, I, it's, {pause} it's kind of like …I don't know where to fit in and everything. That's why I kinda, it kind of comes through a little bit, like the, what I considered a threat as experiencing is like my intelligence. Sometimes they see me and then I'll understand like where it's all coming from in both environments.

As we talked about Theresa's professional life, she explained that she sometimes feels compelled to speak in different tones at work to seem less confrontational or intimidating. Other Black women participants echoed Theresa's concerns explaining that they would frequently try to wear less Afro-centric clothing or hairstyles and would work to limit emotional responses at work because they did not want to be perceived as "angry" or "mean." For these young women, perceptions of their identities and the threat of harassment or stereotyping influenced them toward changing their own behaviors and performances to reduce the risks associated with their perceived threats.

In the cases of both Thomas and Theresa, it shows that perceptions of young Black Americans do not only have emotional and affectual impacts. They also influence the behaviors of young Black Americans and how they navigate public spaces.

Engagement

Most of the young Black Americans I interviewed were deeply committed to working within their communities rather than engaging in more traditional forms of politics like voting. For those who were not actively participating in the electoral process, they reported that they felt they did not have enough political education, that they needed to learn more first, or that they simply had not had the time to commit to getting handle on all of the political issues which were ensuing at the time. However, there were some participants who believed that voting was one tool amongst many in reducing the threats they faced and solving issues in their communities. When speaking to a 29-year-old, working-class Black woman I call "Keisha," we discussed how she approached community-based action and engagement. She explained that she and her family frequently worked with youth in the community at the local park and recreation centers to create afterschool activities and provide safe spaces for young people. She also felt strongly that it was the responsibility of those in the community to take care of their neighbors and comrades.

> **I:** So what does that speaking up look like for those communities?
>
> **R:** It's definitely a tougher fight. It's definitely a tougher fight but I don't think it's still not worth not speaking up. We should always speak up and speak out. And then too you have to vote out these elected officials who give these people the power. Just like how Trump just gave people more police power. So it'll definitely help us if we vote these people out or if we see people who have commonalities with ourselves. That'll make us feel a little bit more at ease versus having some rich white man running the state currently here in Illinois {laughter}.

Unlike Keisha, a 24-year-old woman I call "Janelle" explained that we were living in a revolutionary moment.

> **I:** So I guess then I'm wondering when we think about people in your age group, people like you young, 18-35 year olds, black folks, black Americans who are getting involved with political stuff, social justice, Movement for black lives, community organizing, all these different issues that are going on. What do you

think are some of the reasons why young people are so active in these kind of modern social and political issues?

R: I think we've just had enough and I think there's going to come a time where this, the anger stage it's going to really, really start showing. And uh, I forgot who said it, but I feel like a revolution is upon us now. I think this generation has really pushed it a little bit, but I think like it may become more physical {long pause} and like, I don't want to say wars will start or whatever, but um, I feel like a revolution is upon us.

I probed Janelle on the question to get an understanding as to why she felt a revolution was "upon us."

I: Why do you feel that way?

R: I feel like we just not taking no more shit no more. It's little. It's little stages, but it's there. It's like I see it and it's going to start growing and growing and growing until we have this big population that is all on one accord.

Janelle's response was very common among interview participants. Nearly every interview participant indicated that young Black Americans were becoming more politically and socially engaged because they were "fed up," "tired," or "sick" of the current state of the country. What is interesting is that Keisha also said that young people were tired and that they would be taking the situation into their own hands. However, her vision for how that looks differed immensely from Janelle. These findings suggest that young Black Americans are not only heterogeneous in their experiences with and responses to threat, they are also varied in the ways they exhibit and imagine political behavior.

Conclusion

Much of the literature on emotion and affect in Political Science relies on quantitative analyses that are ill-equipped to analyze complex variations in experiences and ideas both across and within groups. Also, the almost unilateral focus on white Americans has limited the conceptual

depth of threat in the discipline and the theoretical applicability of the topic to non-white groups. This study has sought to show how a more dynamic, and qualitative framework of group threat allows for a fuller picture of the myriad ways that threat manifests in the daily lives of Americans, specifically young Black Americans. Several critical findings emerge from this analysis. First, for young Black Americans of differing gender, sexual orientation, and embodiment backgrounds, they relationships to threat and power to thwart it is vastly different. Moreover, when they do possess power to thwart potential threats, they may engage in coping strategies and other mechanisms to ameliorate the effects of threats. Second, identity alone does not shape experiences with threat. In the case of young Black Americans, both identity and socialization, in concert, influence their behaviors and ways of being in public spaces. Third, young Black Americans do not have singular motivations for participating in the political process nor does their participation remain consistent even when the motivations are constant. This finding is especially critical given that the Movement for Black Lives remains a primary organizing structure for young Black Americans in the United States.

Future research on the role of threat in the lives of young Black Americans should first seek to map experiences by region. Do young Black Americans in cities with historical linkages to slavery have greater sensitivity to or experiences with racial threat? How do young Black Americans in other metropolitan areas compare to one another when considering the role of threat in their daily lives? These are critical questions that should be explored as this work continues.

Appendix 5A: Semi-structured Interview Guide (Script)

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. The interview should last for roughly an hour. Your data will remain confidential and will not be shared outside of the research team. In terms of reporting, the aggregate findings may be published in journal articles or books in the future but no names will be used to protect your identity. If at any time you feel uncomfortable and would like to skip a question or end the interview, feel free to let me know.

Let's start by getting to know you a bit.

1. Tell me about yourself as if you were describing yourself to a stranger.
    a. Where from?
    b. How old?
    c. Occupation?
    d. Gender?
    e. Family?

Now, I want to talk about threat. It doesn't have to be overly technical or academic.

2. How would you define 'threat'?
    a. Good?
    b. Bad?
3. What are some common threats that you think people like you face?
    a. How often?
    b. Examples?
4. What are some reasons one group of people might feel more threatened than another group of people?
    a. Race?
    b. Sexuality?
    c. Gender?
    d. Age?
    e. Class?
    f. Examples?
5. In your opinion, how should people like you respond to threat?
    a. Examples?

Okay, next I would like to talk a bit about how your personal identity informs your experiences with threat.

6. Share with me the types of threats that you have personally encountered in your life.
    a. Frequency?
    b. Where? (like at home or work?)
7. Please describe an instance where you felt threatened and you responded. What was the outcome?

    a. Expand if needed.
8. How do you decide when/how to respond to threat?
    a. Risk?
    b. Caution?
    c. Consequences?
    d. Safety?
    e. Time?
9. What does the list of potential consequences look like for you?
    a. Death?
    b. Violence?

Let's talk about your social activism and community involvement.

10. What are some types of community-based activities you regularly engage in?
    a. Frequency?
    b. Faith-based?
11. What are some of the types of political activities you regularly engage in?
    a. Frequency?
12. Tell me about the events, issues, or experiences that motivated you to get socially and politically active.
    a. Local?
    b. National?
13. Why do young people like you engage in social activism?
    a. Politics?
    b. Influence of friends?
    c. News stories?
    d. injustices/against Black people?
    e. History of racism?
    f. Most important?

Okay, now for one final question.

14. If you could eliminate one form of threat you face regularly, which would it be? Why?

Appendix 5B: Recruitment Scripts

Invitation to participate - Script 1
Example text/verbal script for recruiting respondents via announcements in class, tabling at commons, student body email, and/or posts shared on social media websites

Greetings all,

I am a PhD student at the University of Chicago. I am conducting interviews in the Chicago area for my dissertation about the impacts of threat on the social and political actions of young people.

Eligible participants are minority group members (especially Black Americans) between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age currently living in the Chicago area. Participation takes approximately 1 hour. All participants will earn a $10 giftcard to Amazon. All collected data will be used in publications on the subject and participants' contributions will be 100% anonymous.

To learn more about how you can participate, I can be contacted at ThreatStudyUChicago@gmail.com.

Please feel free to share this post with your various networks.

Thank you!

Principal Investigator: Cathy J. Cohen
IRB17-1566

Invitation to participate - Script 2
For people you already know, and will be circulated via Facebook and email

Hello,

I'm conducting interviews focusing on the forms of threat that influence social and political action among young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Eligible participants are minority group members (especially Black Americans) between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age currently living in the Chicago area.

Participation takes approximately 1 hour and participants will earn a $10 giftcard to Amazon upon interview completion. Would you be interested in participating? If so, I can set up time to meet you in a location that is convenient for you. It should be reasonably quiet as the interview will require audio recording.

Let me know if you're interested or have any questions by emailing me at ThreatStudyUChicago@gmail.com.

Invitation to participate - Script 3
For people recommended by friends and acquaintances

Hello,

My name is Jenn M. Jackson and I am a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Chicago. I'm conducting interviews focusing on the forms of threat that influence political action among young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Eligible participants are minority group members (especially Black Americans) between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age currently living in the Chicago area.

Participation takes approximately 1 hour. All participants will earn a $10 gift card to Amazon upon interview completion. Would you be interested in participating? Let me know if you're interested or have any questions by emailing me at ThreatStudyUChicago@gmail.com.

Best,
Jenn M. Jackson

Principal Investigator: Cathy J. Cohen
IRB17-1566

Appendix 5C: Interview Recruitment and Coding Method

In addition to relying on the reach of social media, I utilized a number of local organizations and institutions that serve young Black people in an effort to reach my target population[9]. In particular, I used convenience sampling of young Black Americans in the Chicago area on the University of Chicago and Chicago State University campuses. Because these institutions are easily accessible to me, I used them as hubs for getting the word out about the project. I posted flyers, shared my project information with student groups, and canvassed potential participants directly. I also relied on existing organizations to help recruit young people for my interviews.

By contacting existing student-based organizations on these campuses like the Organization of Black Students and Blacks in Public Policy at the University of Chicago, the African American Male Resource Center at Chicago State University, and local Chicago chapters of BYP100 and Black Lives Matter, I was able to leverage their networks of young Black Americans in the Chicago-area in order to facilitate the recruitment process. I also reached out to the 100 Black Men of Chicago organization as well as the UIC and greater Chicago chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi fraternities, two historically-Black organizations. These connections were made later in the recruitment timeline to help with increasing the number of Black men participants in the study. After meeting several young people on the South Side of Chicago who were affiliated with Trinity United Church of Christ, I reached out to the young adult department to inquire about speaking with additional young people there. One additional organization I connected with was a Free Spirit Media (FSM), a media literacy and training organization that serves teens and young people on Chicago's West and South sides. I have already cultivated a relationship with FSM that helps to facilitate collaboration. From that point, snowball sampling was used to gather additional interested, potential participants from those who had already been interviewed.

In addition to my list of organizations and institutions, I relied heavily on my own networks and efforts to recruit participants for this project. For example, I have been teaching young Black and Latinx students in the city of Chicago since 2015 through a partnership between the Black Youth Project and Chicago Public Schools. Since that first summer, I have kept in touch with many of my students. For this project, I used purposive sampling of students who had reached the age of 18 years old for this study. I also encouraged them to suggest friends, family, and peers who might be a good fit for the project. Lastly, I canvassed in the South Loop (Downtown Chicago) with a focus on the corridor between Harold Washington Library, Columbia College, Roosevelt University, DePaul University, and John Marshall Law School. While I am aware that this area has a higher concentration of college-educated young Black

[9] Ruthellen Josselson calls this method of recruiting "networked recruitment" (2013, 20) It is essentially a form of snowball recruitment but focuses on the particular type of participant and encourages them to recommend others with whom they share similar characteristics. This method was especially helpful for me in reaching Black men for this study.

people, I also understand that this section of the Loop are high transit areas for local eateries, movie theaters, parks, and public museums.

Context and Access

I chose to conduct this study in the Chicago area due to the long history of Black activism and uprising in the region. In recent years, Chicago has been a primary location for young people's activism around issues of policing, school closures, minimum wages, housing policy, employment access, and a host of other social and political concerns. With respect to the issue of threat, young Black Americans in the city of Chicago are constituents of the second largest police force in the world [need citation]. Meanwhile, those who are raised within the South Side of the city's limits often face school closures, varying forms of housing instability, and police hyper-surveillance. These conditions make the Chicago area an extreme example of the various threats facing young Black Americans in the United States.

Another critical component of this site selection is its connection to mass migrations of Black Americans between 1915 and 1970. During this time period, more than six million Black Americans migrated from the rural South to cities in the North, West, and Midwest. Their movements signaled a new stage in racial conflict and proximity-based threats in the United States (Key 1949). Not only that, they gave way to new generations of Black Americans in northern and western regions whose presence in those areas reverberated for generations. Thus, the young Black Americans in my study are roughly one to two generations out from the Great Migration. For those whose great grandparents and grandparents were born or naturalized in the United States, they share stories of family members who have integrated schools, who were the first Black Americans to win selected political offices, and who can vividly recount the decision to pick up the family, move to the North, and hope for a better life up there. These intergenerational tales and experiences are handed down to children and to children's children. They shape the ways young Black Americans view the world around them, and, more specifically, the threats they might face because of their race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, or otherwise.

I gained access to the social organizations and movement members included in this phase of the research via several means. First, having lived and worked in the Chicago-area for the past four years as an instructor, writer, and activist has helped me to build independent networks with young Black Americans in the city. Second, I am a member of BYP100, a Black liberation organizations established in 2013. This connection has allowed me to embed myself in several movement communities in the Chicago-area as a movement participant. Finally, as a professional writer whose work focuses on political issues facing young Black Americans including anti-blackness, school closures, police violence, and the like, I have built community with young Chicago writers whose work, too, focuses on these intersections. For these reasons, I opted to conduct all of my own interviews, firsthand and in-person.

Coding and Analysis

Interviews were coded using both hand-coding and the import feature on the MAXQDA software. Transcripts were first coded using *Initial* or *Summative Coding*. This method allows for synthesis of the general themes in each of the conversations. This also greatly reduces the amount of generated text down into blocks of content that apply directly to the research question. Next, I used *Descriptive Coding* which provides categorical identification for each section of text that refers to a particular topic or family of topics. This method allows for codes to be reconciled across multiple interviews for the purpose of drawing evidence together to form a cogent argument. Finally, I used *Structural Coding* which helps to identify the frequency with which certain reactions and experiences were reported by respondents. This coding method generates hierarchical responses by specific research question and operates in a quantitative way. At the end of this tri-layer coding process, I am left with three textual layers: summary codes, categorical labels, and annotated responses to my specific research questions. As such, the analysis and findings below detail both the quantitative characteristics of the interviews and the qualitative responses from respondents[10].

[10] To ensure anonymity, all respondents have been given a pseudonym. All proper names have been changed. All identifying information has been removed.

Chapter 6: Gendering Threat: Young People's Perceptions of the Seriousness of Police Killings of Black Americans

"...we are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our body, which is doomed to decay..., from the external world which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless force of destruction, and finally from our relations with other men... This last source is perhaps more painful to use than any other."

- Sigmund Freud[1]

"We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression. In the case of Black women this is a particularly repugnant, dangerous, threatening, and therefore revolutionary concept because it is obvious from looking at all the political movements that have preceded us that anyone is more worthy of liberation than ourselves. "

- Combahee River Collective[2]

Introduction

In May 2015, the African American Policy Forum (AAPF), led by co-founder, executive director, and Columbia Law School Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw[3], created the online hashtag and awareness campaign #SayHerName to draw attention to the disproportionate numbers of killings of Black women at the hands of police officers[4]. In July of the same year, Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old Black woman from Naperville, Illinois was arrested in Waller County, Texas

[1] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1962), page 77.
[2] In Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Watertown, Mass: Persephone Press, 1981, page 212.
[3] Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to describe the intersecting ways that women of color experience oppression at the hands of state power. See: "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), p.1241 (1991). Crenshaw was not the first to articulate this notion of multiple oppressions occurring simultaneously. The Combahee River Collective discussed how "major systems of oppression are interlocking "in their mandate entitled "A Black Feminist Statement" originally written in April 1977 (Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Watertown, Mass: Persephone Press, 1981, pages 210-218).
[4] Crenshaw's comments on the need for #SayHerName can be found at http://www.aapf.org/sayhername/.

during a routine traffic stop. Three days later, she was found dead in her jail cell[5]. In an op-ed for *The Guardian*, Crenshaw explained that, "[m]ore black people [in total] are killed – disproportionately to their rate in the population – and although the numbers are hard to assess, the reality is that black women are vulnerable to the same justifications used for killing black men."[6] Using data from the Fatal Interactions with Police Study (FIPS), researchers found that the likelihood that Black Americans killed by police were unarmed at the time of their death increased two-fold when women were included in the sample (Johnson et al. 2018). This means that Black women are disproportionately represented in the number of Black Americans who are unarmed during fatal interactions with police officers (Johnson et al. 2018). Yet, while these threats of fatal police encounters are reflected in the daily experiences and behaviors of Black women like Rekia Boyd who was killed by Chicago Police Officer Dante Servin in a North Lawndale neighborhood park, Charleena Lyles—a pregnant Black woman who was killed by Seattle Police officers in her own home, and Korryn Gaines who was shot to death by Baltimore Police in front of her small child, mainstream narratives around police violence remain largely male-centered (Bennett 2018)[7]. The centering of Black men in narratives around police-related violence both affects the ways this political issue is assessed in the public sphere and reframes

[5] The African American Policy Forum issued a full policy brief following the death of Sandra Bland which can be found here: http://www.aapf.org/sayhernamereport/

[6] Crenshaw details how and why she and lawyer Andrea Ritchie released a report as a comprehensive report of police violence against Black women at this link: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/may/30/sayhername-why-kimberle-crenshaw-is-fighting-for-forgotten-women

[7] Rekia Boyd was killed during a shouting match in March 2012 while she was standing outside with friends on Chicago's West Side. Servin shot five shots into the crowd, killing Boyd. See here: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-cop-verdict-servin-edit-0423-20150422-story.html. Charleena Lyles was killed after calling police to her home to respond to a potential burglary. She was wielding a knife when police shot her. Her three children were present in the home. See here: https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/officer-involved-shooting-in-magnuson-park-leaves-3-children-in-protective-custody/. Korryn Gaines was killed after a six hour stand-off with Baltimore police. They forced themselves into her home after pursuing her for a warrant related to a traffic stop. She had a permitted shotgun and child with her when she was killed. Her son, who survived the incident, was also shot in the crossfire. See here: http://data.baltimoresun.com/news/korryn-gaines/.

this potential threat to exclude the experiences of Black women and other gender minorities. Thus, in this manuscript, I seek to examine not only the variations in young people's public opinion on the issue of policing but how their personal experiences with police shape those attitudes.

According to the United States Department of Justice *Bureau of Justice Statistics* (BJS), U.S. residents of all races between the ages of 18 and 24 are the most likely to encounter contact with police while 25 to 34 year olds are the second most likely (Eith and Durose 2011). For young Black Americans, the likelihood that those interactions will be life-threatening are disproportionately steep (Johnson et al. 2018). Though these conditions have gained attention in recent years, young people's attitudes about and experiences with issues of policing[8] and the role of state authorities in their daily lives has yet to be fully examined. While some scholarly work suggests that young people perceive differences in police treatment by race based on their experiences (Cohen 2010; Hutchings 2015), other research suggests that attitudes about crime and policing are closely related to coded language devices used in predominantly white subject groups and mainstream media coverage (Iyengar 1991; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). These variations in attitudes across demographic groups make the issue of policing a political concern that is fraught with racial tension, stereotyping, gender-based disagreements, and negative character judgements that frequently detrimentally impact Black Americans of all backgrounds (Muhammad 2010; Ritchie 2017). Thus, this manuscript seeks to understand, specifically, how race and gender shape both attitudes about and experiences with policing and police violence among the group most likely to encounter police in their daily lives, young Black Americans.

[8] I will use the terms "policing," "police violence," and "police" together or interchangeably throughout this manuscript.

To address this gap in the literature, this work asks: *how do race and gender influence young people's attitudes about police killings of Black Americans? Further, how does heterogeneity within young Black American communities shape attitudes about the threat of police violence?* In the following manuscript, I argue that the perceived threat of police interactions, even for simple traffic stops and seemingly innocuous encounters, are highly influential of young Black Americans' attitudes about policing in general more than previous arrests or stops. To this end, I posit that young Black Americans are more likely to take police killings of Black Americans seriously than any other group. With regards to Black communities, I argue that young Black women, whose identities rest at the intersections of race, gender and, at times, class, will exhibit increased concerns about police killings of Black Americans when compared to other groups, including Black men.

This work provides evidence regarding how the threat of police interactions shapes how young people navigate the social terrain like what neighborhood areas they may avoid or frequent, how they avert police for any reason, and how the sight of police officers affects their psychological state. Studying threat is important for a number of reasons. First, understanding threat at this political moment matters because of the role threat plays in the development and maintenance of political knowledge (Prior 2002) and its impact on political participation (Weaver and Lerman 2010). Theoretically, this work pushes back on the concept of threat as a one-way mechanism and suggests that those who are often deemed threatening navigate the world aware of that perception. Being perceived as such becomes a threat too. Fundamentally, examining the role of threat in the daily lives of young Black Americans helps to paint a fuller narrative around a number of political behaviors that are not fully captured by voting turnout rates and polling data.

To begin, I provide a theoretical framework for understanding the role of police violence in the daily lives of Black Americans. Building on that theory, I, then, examine the literature on racial resentment and policing with a particular emphasis on Latinx and Asian Americans' attitudes toward Black Americans and police. Following this analysis, I review the extant literature examining the role of gender in political decision-making and public opinion of police brutality. I pay special attention to contemporary political manifestations of women's resistance to police violence like the Movement for Black Lives. After discussing these movements, their motivations, and their implications for larger notions of resistance against police brutality, I move into the empirical portion of the manuscript. Specifically, to provide a descriptive picture of the conditions facing young Americans, I start by synthesizing responses to quantitative survey questions concerning the seriousness of police violence against Black Americans. Of particular import here is the variation of responses across racial and gender groups. I then make inferences about the significance of these deviations. I conclude this portion of the paper by surveying interview responses regarding the role of police interactions in the daily lives of young Black Americans. In closing, I will draw together the core findings of the project, paying critical attention to the role of police violence in shaping the future of Black political behavior and American Politics, in general.

Defining Group-based, State-based and Intersectional Threat

I will begin by defining key terms. In *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics,* Sidney G. Tarrow defines threat as "the risks and costs of action or inaction, rather than the prospect of success" (1994, 160). In this way, threats should be understood as events, actions, discourses, and/or policies that carry perceived stakes, stakes which individuals and groups must

assess in order to best proceed in making future political decisions. Group-based threat refers to threats that are linked to one's membership in a particular group or class. For individual citizens, group membership shapes much of their social and political reality including where they are likely to live, who they are likely work and consort with, and how often they encounter state authorities (Cohen and Dawson 1993; Weaver and Lerman 2010; Enos 2017). For these reasons, while individual experiences are critical in the theoretical framing of this project, group membership remains an outward social marker that affects how individuals interact with the world.

The first theoretical contribution of this project is a conception of police violence as linked to the central functions and mechanisms of public political life in the United States. I define state-based threat as the potential risks associated with interacting with local, state, and federal authorities. This brief conceptual framework will serve as a definitional guide of state-based threat in this manuscript. Essentially, the development and maintenance of criminal justice systems work to frame out and validate social norms about proper public behavior and citizenship. These processes help to make up what Americans rely on to guarantee democratic freedom. As Amy E. Lerman and Vesla M. Weaver explain, "[i]nteractions between citizen and state help form ideas about how government functions—its competence, for instance—but more important, about the democratic values, practices, and norms it embodies" (2014, 10). Police authorities are critical to this system. They are embedded in social fabrics of notions of "safety" and "comfort" that redound to the quality of life of American citizens. Michael Lipsky refers to these types of professionals as "street-level bureaucrats" who "often work in situations too complicated to reduce to programmatic formats. Policemen cannot carry around instructions on how to intervene with citizens, particularly in potentially hostile encounters" (1980, 15). By

interacting with civilians under these circumstances, police officers may employ their own discretion regarding how they should respond (Lipsky 1980). And, though local police precincts typically city or township based, they are often deemed state actors by lay citizens. This is mainly because of their primacy in the development of the "carceral state," an invention which Marie Gottschalk says constitutes, "a major milestone in American political development that arguably rivals in significance the expansion and contraction of the welfare state in the postwar period" (2008, 236). Thus, state actors may be locally-based. Some local police departments work with federal agencies like the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency to provide personal information of suspected undocumented persons in their jurisdictions[9]. In other instances, local police work on behalf of state welfare agencies to pursue alleged welfare fraud[10]. In these cases, the lines between local police precincts, state agencies, and federal actors blur. For those citizens who interact with police, their experiences with local police authorities often carry much the same risk as state and federal interactions.

The second theoretical contribution of this paper comes from Black Feminist and critical race literature. It has been well-established in political science that heterogeneity within Black American populations has varying impacts on political attitudes and behaviors. Michael C. Dawson, in *Behind the Mule*, found that while differences in class influenced partisanship and political behavior, "linked fate" or the belief "that [one's] own self-interests are linked to the interests of the race" transcended class distinction for Black Americans in their views of the economy, racial attitudes, and the government's role in the lives of Americans (1994, 77).

[9] While many police departments have worked to discontinue any potential connections to ICE, local gang and crime databases still supply vital information and statistics to this federal agency. See: https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/05/12/479070535/where-ice-already-has-direct-lines-to-law-enforcement-databases-with-immigrant-d).

[10] See https://boston.cbslocal.com/2013/04/11/local-police-departments-state-cracking-down-on-welfare-fraud/.

Similarly, Cathy J. Cohen has shown, within Black communities, certain demographic groups experience a process of "secondary marginalization" wherein marginal group leaders "[accept] dominant discourse that defines what is good, normal, and acceptable" (1999, 64). When this occurs, "stratification among marginal group members in transformed into an indigenous process of marginalization targeting the most vulnerable in the group" (1999, 64). These differences within Black American communities have implications for political attitudes, behaviors, and responses to social concerns, like threat.

Thus, state-based threat, as other forms of threat, is not experienced homogeneously within Black communities. Rather, all threat must be understood as applying to varying racial, gender, sexual orientation, and class groups at different frequencies and with greater or lesser magnitude depending on their proximity to power. This is the what Kimberlé Crenshaw describes when she explores "the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women" (1991, 1244). Thus, I define *intersectional threat* as threat that occurs within racial groups across gender, sexuality, ability, and class lines. Perpetrators of intersectional threat might be in-group or out-group members. What is most significant about understanding threat as an intersectional phenomenon is its emphasis on the varying power dynamics *within* groups, even within minority groups. Black Americans' heterogeneity of experiences and personal characteristics requires new theoretical approaches to examining the role of threat in the lives of Black Americans. The term "intersectionality" refers to a phenomenon that has long existed though the word has only been in our lexicon for roughly three decades (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins and Bilge 2016). When describing Crenshaw's coining of the term "intersectionality" and its connectedness to the work of the Combahee River Collective, Patricia Hill Collins and

Sirma Birge write that, "[m]utually constructing systems of power produce distinctive social locations for individuals and groups within them. In this case, women of color's multiple identities position them differently within complex social inequalities than white men or white women" (2016, 82). These "distinctive social locations" and relationships to power within Black American communities affect the ways that individuals experience social phenomena like threat. In some instances, it pushes those closer to the margins, like women and members of LGBTQI+ communities, toward solidarity with cisgender[11] and heterosexual men who reproduce harm against more marginalized community members. Using intersectionality as an analytical tool or heuristic helps us to understand how women of color, Black women in particular, might struggle against both racial and gender-based political concerns, often simultaneously. The lens of intersectionality also accounts for class, ability, and other characteristics which impact social location.

Crime Stereotypes and Interracial Attitudes on Policing

To best understand the variations in beliefs about the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans, I look to scholarly work on minority group citizenship and belonging. These literatures do much by way of grappling with the role of group position in the formation of perceptions and attitudes about policing (Wietzer and Tuch 2005). For instance, immigration scholars have pushed the social sciences to reorient racial hierarchy theories towards a greater understanding of intergroup relations especially where racial minorities are concerned. In her study of the Black-Korean Conflict in New York City, specifically the 1990 The Red Apple Boycott, Claire Jean Kim details the precarity of solidarity between mutually subordinated racial

[11] The term cisgender refers to those individuals whose gender identity matches that of the gender they were assigned at birth. I will use "cis" and "cisgender" interchangeably.

group vying for proximity to white Americans (2000). The boycott began when native- and foreign-born Black Americans in the Flatbush area of New York City's Brooklyn neighborhood rallied around a Haitian-American woman named Ghiselaine Felissant, who was allegedly assaulted by Korean merchants (Kim 2000). The altercation called into question the already tense relationships between Black and Korean Americans. However, because the issue occurred as Black Americans were fighting for recognition of ongoing police violence in their communities, the altercation also challenged norms around minority solidarity on issues of policing, punitive violence, and racial resentment. To explain this phenomenon, Natalie Masuoka and Jane Junn found in *The Politics of Belonging: Race, Public Opinion, and Immigration* that racial group identity for Black, Latinx, and Asian Americans was predictive of group solidarity and support for racially redistributive policies in general (2013). However, they also found that stereotypes about racial out-group *and* in-group members were shaped by a racial hierarchy wherein Black Americans were at the bottom, white Americans were at the top, and Asian and Latinx Americans were second and third, respectively (2013). Asian Americans were most likely to diminish those characteristics that made them appear "less American" while Blacks and Latinx Americans were most likely to assign negative attributions to their own racial groups regarding involvement in gangs and drug use (2013). Masuoka and Junn say, "[h]ow groups are stereotyped is an indicator of how others in society see individuals classified by race, and this categorization creates a context of contingent expectations based on group identity" (2013, 87). Thus, perceptions of criminality and negative racial sentiment about Black Americans among minority groups is closely linked with group location and social distance from other racial groups. In the context of Asian and Latinx Americans, their attitudes about Black Americans diverge just as their positions in the racial order diverge.

Gender, Politics, and Police

For many years, much of the work on the roles of women in political life focused on the family and marital home life (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997, Okin 2007). Theoretically, Susan Moller Okin has argued that gender and the configuration of the nuclear family represents a specific way that women are denied full citizenship and democratic justice (2007). She says, "[n]o account is taken of the fact that the socialization and role expectations of women mean that they are generally more inclined than men not to claim their fair share, and more inclined to order their priorities in accordance with the needs of their families" (2007, 31). The preeminence of families in the lives of middle-aged, cisgender, heterosexual women is not to be denied. Beyond the focus on household priorities, many women's attitudes about politics continue to be more progressive than their male counterparts on issues of women candidates for office, gay and lesbian rights, and racial stereotyping of Black Americans (Welch and Sigelman 1982; Dolan 1997; Herek 2002; Burns and Gimpel 2000). However, the experiences of women in this literature does not completely map onto the lived experiences and concerns of many young women of color in the contemporary moment.

While these life experiences are critical in understanding the political decision-making tactics and constraints some higher socioeconomic status (SES), mostly white, women face, many other women — especially young Black women — do not possess traditional attitudes about and experiences with family-building, childrearing, sexuality, and civic life (Hicks 2010; Cohen 2013; Ritchie 2017). But, there is a dearth of literature examining the attitudes of women toward policing and police killings of Black people. This is a particularly salient area of opportunity given the fact that the Black Lives Matter Network — which was started to combat

anti-Black police and community violence and gained prominence following the death of Michael Brown in August 2014 at the hands of then-Officer Darren Wilson — was started by three Black women, Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors (Khan-Cullors and Bandele 2017). These women frequently cite highly publicized instances of Black death at the hands of state authorities and private citizens as the motivation behind their collective work (Khan-Cullors and Bandele 2017). To that end, the authors explain that they knew the threat of police surveillance and monitoring was constant when they started the movement. It was their specific positions, as Black queer women organizers who were already living in and working with marginalized communities, that gave them insight into the severity of policing in Black neighborhoods (Khan-Cullors and Bandele 2017). This orientation to power, one situated between race, gender, class, and politics is fundamental for understanding how state-based threat functions along multiple valences simultaneously.

Race, Gender, Class, and Space as Socializers of Threat

Fundamentally, this manuscript is concerned not only with the role of gender in influencing political attitudes and behaviors, but also how the interactions between both race and gender further affect young Black Americans' daily experiences and concerns about police interactions. Given that both race and gender shape political attitudes about policing, it is pertinent to this study to understand how ongoing interactions with police, or the threat of repeated interactions with police, socializes young people into developing particular attitudes and ideas about the role of police in society (Weitzer and Tuch 2004; Weitzer and Tuch 2005). Fundamentally, that investigation must begin in the most proximate locale wherein police authorities interact with civilians: the neighborhood. In their study of social isolation in Black Detroit neighborhoods,

Cathy J. Cohen and Michael C. Dawson found that higher levels of poverty were linked to greater social isolation among Black Americans (1993). These increased levels of social isolation were also influential in shaping beliefs about the prevalence of crime in these neighborhoods and the likelihood that one might become a victim of crime (1993). Similarly, Black women who experience domestic violence at the hands of intimate partners are more likely to become more isolated over time. And, in their isolation, they have higher chances of police interactions through what Beth Richie calls being "compelled to crime" like sex work, drug use, and other illegal activities (Richie 1996). This work highlights how not only race and gender but also class and place create unique social contexts which shape the lives of Black Americans. Moreover, those social contexts influence the types of political behaviors individuals engage in. In neighborhoods already impacted by poverty or housing displacement, these increasing rates of proximity to crime, and police, teach civilians how to comport themselves in the presence of officers. Further, they impart ways of navigating the social terrain which help to avert potential risks associated with police interactions.

The intimacy with which some citizens encounter police, in neighborhoods, schools, and at publicly-run facilities, has significant impacts for women of color, specifically Black women. Andrea Ritchie explains that, "[k]ey to implementation of broken windows policing is the proliferation of 'quality of life' regulations criminalizing an ever-expanding range of activities in public spaces, including standing or walking (recast as 'loitering'), sitting, lying down, sleeping eating, drinking, urinating, making noise, and approaching strangers, as well as a number of vagrant offenses such as engaging in 'disorderly' or 'lewd' conduct" (2017, 54) In fact, she explains that one of the most prevalent "sites of police sexual violence" was actually during routine traffic stops (2017, 113). These conditions create *patterns of socialization* that work to

criminalize Black Americans for a number of daily activities not typically seen as menacing when performed by other racial group members (Sampson and Wilson 1995; Entman and Rojecki 2000). On the other hand, these patterns of police interaction frame out the state-based threats encountered in the daily lives of Black Americans. Moreover, interactions with police throughout one's life acts as a form of political socialization which can be deterrents to later political activity (Weaver and Lerman 2010; Burch 2013). To this point, neighborhood socialization is a fundamental influencer of political attitudes regarding policing and police violence. Furthermore, to understand how and why attitudes differ across race and gender groups requires a thorough examination of the daily manifestations of state-based threat in the lives of young Black Americans.

Theoretical Expectations and Hypotheses

There are two fundamental goals of this manuscript. First, it is to examine the role of lived experiences in influencing attitudes about police violence. Second, it is to demonstrate how experiences with police vary by social location, including race, gender, and class. To that end, I first evaluate the attitudes about policing and police violence based on racial group membership. The theory of group position suggests that Latinx and Black Americans are less likely to express animus toward one another when considering social location, racial prejudice, and perceived threat as compared with their perceptions of white and Asian Americans (Omi and Winant 1994; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Masuoka and Junn 2013). Likewise, Black and Latinx Americans frequently live in close proximity to one another which makes Latinx Americans susceptible to similar experiences with state-based threat as Black Americans especially considering heightened focus on immigration enforcement in urban communities (Green, Strolovitch, and

Wong 1998; Nichols, LeBrón, and Pedraza 2018). It can be safely assumed that these shared experiences with social location and state-based threat influence how Latinx Americans develop attitudes about the role of the state in the lives of everyday citizens. For these reasons, I expect to see similar disposition among Black and Latinx Americans regarding the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans.

> **H1:** *Black and Latinx American respondents are more likely to see the killing of Black people by police as a serious issue than white American respondents.*

The concept of intersectionality functions both as a theoretical framework and an analytical mechanism for evaluating the asymmetrical ways that power is dispersed and experienced. Thus, in this manuscript, the notion of intersectional threat functions as a grand theory to frame out Black women's and other gender minorities' orientations toward both outgroup members, like state authorities, and in-group members, like Black men. To this end, in her study of African American battered women incarcerated at Rikers Island Correctional Facility, Beth Richie found that women in her study who had been assaulted by male intimate partners frequently linked their concerns about racial solidarity with their concerns about Black men, specifically. Black women in this study frequently situated racial subordination and struggle specifically with the lived experiences of Black men (Richie 1996). She notes, "[h]istorically based loyalty to family, therefore, got constructed as contemporary loyalty to *men*[12]" (1996, 62). Black men typically wield more power in Black communities. Yet, socialization to orient their social and political concerns toward the family and community shapes how many Black women experience state-based threat and form attitudes about it. Moreover, seeing violence against themselves *and* others as serious concerns may make Black women more sensitive to the risk of ongoing interactions with police officers.

[12] Emphasis belongs to the author.

H2: *Black women are more likely to see the killing of Black people by police as a serious issue than Black men respondents.*

A fundamental component of state-based threat is the chronic nature it takes on. This aspect of threat is critical to examine namely because of the psychological effects that ongoing exposure to threat may cause (Entman and Rojecki 2000; Richie 2012; Enos 2017). Feelings of fear and anxiety may be associated with police presence as a result of repeated exposure to police violence either via mainstream media or the daily social world. These patterns, I expect, are influential of perceived seriousness of police killings of Black Americans.

H3: *Young Americans who see police killings of Black Americans as part of a larger pattern will be more likely to see police killings of Black Americans as serious issues.*

I expect these relationships to remain significant even after controlling for traditionally influential indicators of political beliefs like ideology, partisanship, age, education, and income.

This final hypothesis is also the guiding impetus for my qualitative research in that I am associating lived experiences with policing with the greater likelihood to see police violence as a part of a larger pattern. I expect that young people who frequently and intimately encounter police will connect those experiences in a larger pattern of policing that enters their daily lives. Likewise, I expect to see that their responses to the omnipresence of police will vary based on their gender, sexuality, and class.

Alternative explanations for variations in attitudes towards policing and police violence

As most phenomena, there are other potentially plausible explanations for young people's attitudes about the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. Fundamentally, policing and attitudes about the role of the state in the daily lives of citizens remain highly partisan issues (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Lerman and Weaver 2014; Enos 2017). Thus, long-held ideological

beliefs about law and order, criminality, and deviance have focused on Black Americans as the subjects of such policies and political agendas (Cohen 1999; Cohen 2004). These attitudes can be learned from parents and other community members and act as socialization processes for young Americans. However, even in accounting for the variation in attitudes about policing that may be related to party affiliation, there remains room to explore how these various individual experiences and characteristics shape the social world. Thus, this project is not concerned just that these variations exist but with understanding how they impact the daily lives of young Black Americans.

The current political era is one which frequently features the highly publicized police-related deaths of Black Americans like Eric Garner, John Crawford, and Michael Brown, as well as the women mentioned above. These deaths have been catalysts for major political movements and protests as well as police reform efforts in major cities like Oakland, New York City, Baltimore, and Chicago. The ever presence of police violence in some communities has translated to an ever presence of police violence on social and popular media. What is known about news media is that framing choices deeply impact how constituents form opinions on a number of issues including crime, poverty, and terror (Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Iyengar 1991; Druckman 2001). Thus, it is reasonable to believe that social media and the 24-hour news cycle are highly influential of attitude formation on such a ubiquitous concern. In other research, I find that social media acts as a significant socialization tool for young Black Americans specifically on the issue of policing and police violence (Jackson n. d.). The role of social media in the daily lives of young people, specifically Black Americans, is not a shortcoming of this analysis. Instead, it provides further justification for such

a research agenda to understand the effects of growing presence of police in the lives of young people.

Given that these existing literatures and theoretical frameworks do not fully account for the daily experiences of young Black Americans with state-threat and policing, I argue that there are further variations, specifically within races across gender lines, that remain untethered to these alternative explanations. Therefore, this analysis is concerned with fully understanding how young Black Americans' variations in attitudes about policing and police violence relate specifically to their concerns about threat and risks to themselves and communities.

Data and Methods

In this manuscript, for my quantitative analysis, I use data from the GenForward survey, a project of Professor Cathy J. Cohen at the University of Chicago. The GenForward Survey is a nationally representative sample of millennials, ages 18-34, with oversamples of African American, Asian American and Latinx young adults. For my analysis, I am using the August 2016 survey which includes a battery of questions on the killing of Black people by the police. I analyze the variation in opinions regarding the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans to best understand how heterogeneity across and within racial groups affects political attitudes and ideas about the threat of policing. A primary goal of this manuscript is to explore the racial and gender contexts which inform perceptions of the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. Thus, I seek to show that, statistically, a) more women on average and b) more racial minority group members on average see police killings of Black Americans as a serious problem. In August, the study was comprised of 1958 total respondents between the ages of 18

and 30. Of those, 572 were Black, 309 were Asian, 520 were Latinx, and 507 were white American[13]. The survey also included 50 respondents who identified as "other."

To ensure that this analysis accounts for potential confounding variables, seven control variables were also included in this analysis[14]. Education is an ordinal level variable which is comprised of 13 categories ranging from "no formal education" to "professional or doctorate degree". Income is an 18 category interval level variable which starts at "less than $5,000" and ends at a maximum case of "$200,000 or more."[15] Age is an interval level measure that is constrained to 18 to 30 given the parameters of the sampling frame. Party identification was recoded into three dichotomous "dummy" variables for Republican, Democrat and Independent. Ideology was recoded where 1 = "Extremely liberal" and 7 ="Extremely Conservative." The demographic variables provide additional validity and context for the models produced. Race was recoded into four dummy variables for White, Black, Latinx, Asian American, and "other" respondents. Gender was also recoded into binary categorical variables for "male" and "female."[16] In addition, to account for the specific variation in attitudes on policing that can be explained by both race and gender, I created interaction terms for each racial category and female gender[17].

Outcome Variable

[13] The survey was offered in both English and Spanish and via telephone or web modes. There are limitations in using these data they were not offered in-person or in any other languages besides English and Spanish. While these data are nationally-representative and good estimators for minority group members between the ages of 18 and 34, they do not sufficiently account for those who may be non-Native English speakers or from countries for who Spanish is not a primary language.

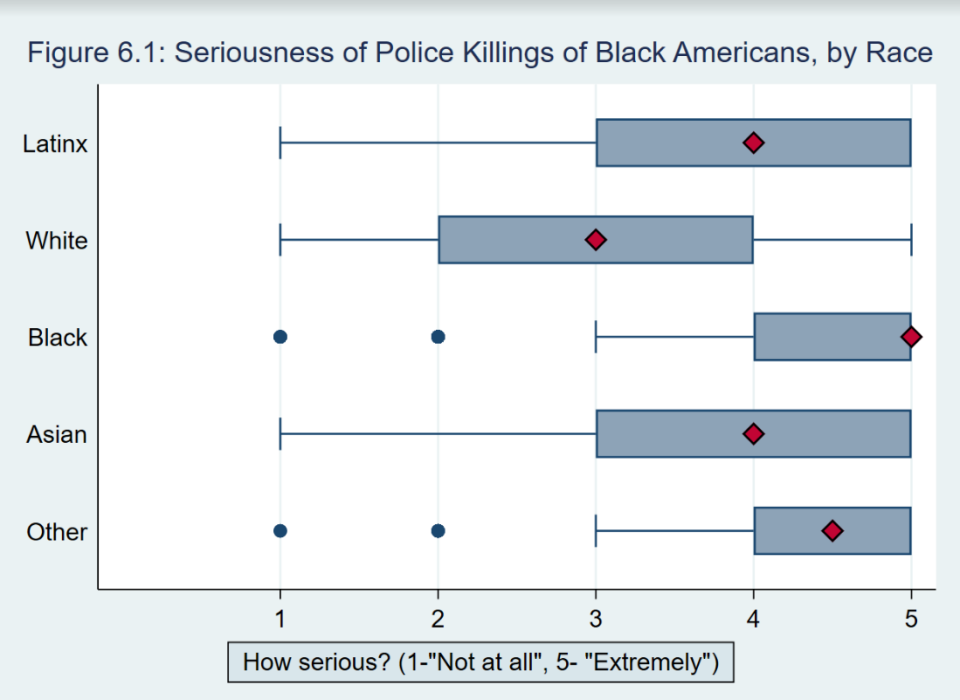
[14] Summary statistics for the August 2016 data are also in Appendix A (Table 6.3).

[15] Both income and education were left to function as continuous measures since thing age group is compressed into such a small age range. I made this choice rather than risk losing statistical power.

[16] This method does not properly account for gender non-conforming people. This is a shortcoming of the quantitative portion of this analysis. However, the qualitative interviews do provide insight into the lived experiences of non-binary participants.

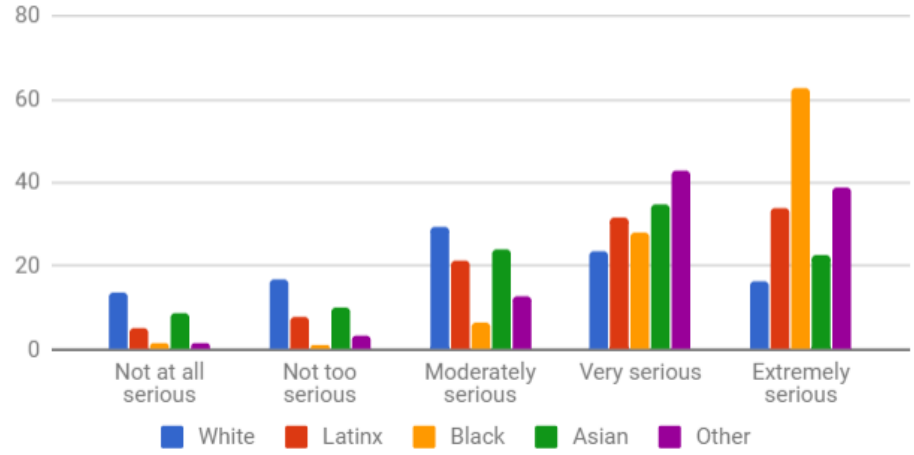
[17] These were created by hand and cross-checked with results from STATA's factor variables command for validity.

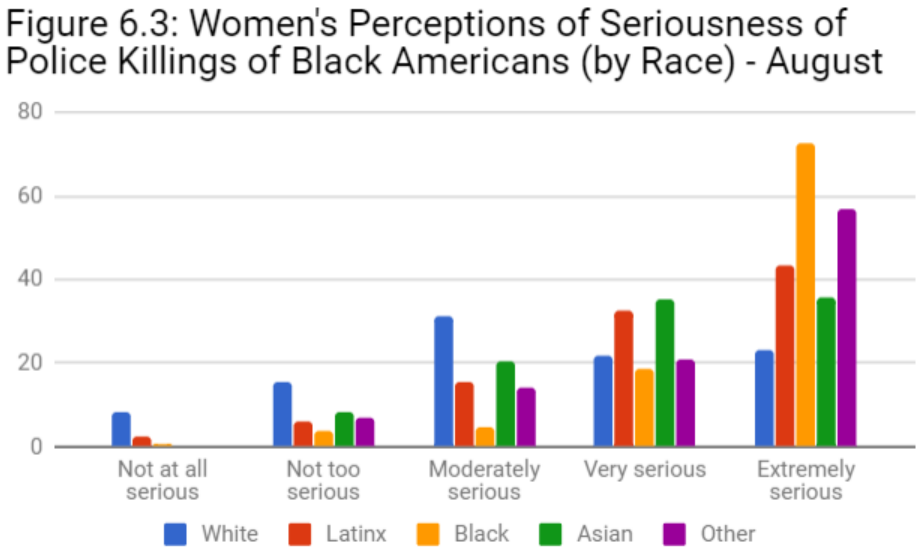
The dependent variable in this study is an ordinal level variable which assesses the degree to which respondents believe that police killing Black people is a serious problem. Specifically, the question asks: *"How serious a problem do you think the killing of Black people by the police is in the United States?"* The variable has been recoded so that a response of 1 denotes that police killing Black people is "not at all serious," a 2 denotes that the issue is "not too serious," a response of 3 suggests that the issue is "moderately serious," a 4 denotes that the issue is "very serious," and a response of 5 states that the issue is "extremely serious." I chose this dependent variable because it captures the effects of exposure to police killings violence, whether directly or indirectly. It also considers racial sentiment and how attitudes about policing and police violence may be linked to attitudes about Black Americans. For Black Americans, this question centers their experiences with police violence but does not reflect gendered or class variations that characterize this study. For these reasons, this is an optimal variable to assess the effects of lived experiences with policing and variations in attitudes regarding state-based threat.



In terms of the data, Figure 6.1 shows the dispersion of survey responses by racial group. What is important to note here is that the data is skewed right for every group except white Americans. This phenomenon is especially pronounced for Black and "Other" respondents. Figure 6.2 illustrates the variation of responses regarding the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans from men of all races. What stands out is the heavy right-tail of the data wherein 63% Black men responded that police killings of Black Americans are an "extremely serious" issue. Roughly 28% of Black men responded that it is a "very serious" issue so approximately 90% of Black men's responses were in two highest response categories for the question.

Figure 6.2: Men's Perceptions of Seriousness of Police Killings of Black Americans (by Race) - August





In Figure 6.3, Black women show a similar monotonic increase along the scale with 73% saying police killings of Black Americans is an "extremely serious" issue and 19% saying it is "very serious." While Black women, too, have nearly 90% of their responses in the right tail of the data, they are more heavily weighted at the extreme than Black men, as expected. Latinx men and women show more moderate levels of support for this measure with 34% of men and 44% of women saying police killings of Black Americans are an "extremely serious" issue. For both Latinx men and women, 33% reported than this issue is a "very serious" concern. Thus, Latinx respondents are more heavily weighted in the right tail of the data with 77% of men and 87% of women in the highest two categories. Asian Americans reflect a similar pattern as Latinx Americans with 68% of men and 71% of women responding that police killings of Black Americans are either "very serious" or "extremely serious." White Americans are the only group for whom less than half of their respondents, for both men (40%) and women (45%), responded that this issue is "very serious" or "extremely serious." For each gender, white American respondents were most likely to reply that this issue is "moderately serious" at 29% for men and 31% for women. For both men (N=14) and women (N=36) who identified as racially other,

nearly 80% believed that police killings of Black Americans were either “very serious” or “extremely serious.” Considering that white Americans have the lowest average response to this question, they will be used as the reference category for the OLS regression model.

As expected, these descriptive indicators suggest that Black Americans are the most concerned about police killings of their social group. Latinx and Asian Americans, while more moderate, agree with this concern more than half of the time. Meanwhile, white American responses are spread more evenly regarding this concern.

Survey Results

To better understand the relationship between attitudes about the seriousness of police violence against Black Americans and beliefs about the patterns of policing in the aggregate, I performed OLS regression analysis on the August 2016 iteration of the GenForward Data. Specifically, I focused on questions regarding respondents’ experiences with being stopped, arrested, or harassed by police. I also focused on questions regarding their trust in police and how often they believe police in their neighborhoods are there to protect them. Most importantly, I focused on a question regarding whether recent police killings are a part of a larger trend or isolated set of cases. Full question wording is included in Appendix B.

Table 6.1: OLS Regression of Seriousness of Police Killings of Black Americans

	Coefficient	Std. Error	
Constant	*3.4*	*0.31*	***
Attitudes on Policing			
Stopped by police	0.01	0.06	
Arrested by police	-0.08	0.09	
Harassed (Self)	0.24	0.09	**
Harassed (Know)	0.19	0.06	***
Trust police			
Rarely	-0.18	0.14	
Sometimes	-0.24	0.14	
Often	-0.44	0.15	**
Always	-0.53	0.2	**
Protected by police	0.01	0.1	
Pattern of police killings	1.1	0.09	***
Race Identification			
Black	0.51	0.21	***
Latinx	0.16	0.21	
Asian	0.1	0.2	
Other	1.33	0.21	***
Partisanship			
Democrat	0.21	0.09	*
Independent	0.08	0.1	
Republican	0.04	0.14	
Ideology	-0.13	0.02	***
Demographics			
Education	0.02	0.02	
Income	-0.004	0.01	
Age	-0.006	0.01	
Female (Gender)	0.25	0.11	*
Race/Gender Interaction Terms			
BlackxWomen	-0.07	0.36	
LatinxxWomen	-0.02	0.37	
AsianxWomen	-0.14	0.37	
OtherxWomen	-1.19	0.37	***
Observations (N)	990		
F(26, 963)	36.47		
Prob > F	0		
R-squared	0.5		

Significance: p<.05, p<.01**, p<.001 ****

I also performed a simulation using Clarify to estimate the mean of the distribution for each racial and gender pair. To perform this analysis, I set all other variables at their mean. To better understand the role of patterns of socialization with policing in respondent attitudes, I varied the simulation on whether or not respondents saw police killings as part of a larger pattern for comparison purposes.

Ordinary Least Squares

In Table 6.1, we see the results of the OLS regression model. What stands out about this table is the strong substantive and statistical significance of the race and gender as well as the measure for those respondents who see police killings of Black Americans as a part of a larger pattern. As indicated in the table, a one unit increase in the belief that police killings are larger patterns reflects a 1.1 unit increase in support for the serious of police killings of Black Americans. Two other variables related to policing are also significant: experiences with police harassment and trust in police. Being personally harassed corresponds to a .24 unit increase in support for the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. Likewise, knowing someone who has been harassed corresponds to

a .19 unit increase. Those who "often" trust the police reflect a .44 unit decrease in support for the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans while those who "always" trust police reflect a .53 unit decrease in support. These measures are related to the notion of personal experience with policing and police violence. Likewise, these measures confirm the role of ongoing police exposure in shaping attitudes about state-based threat. Overall, this supports the expectations set out for this analysis.

Ideology is significant at the $p<.001$ level but has low substantive significance (-.15). Similarly, identifying as a Democrat increases one's support for the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans by .21 units. In all, these partisan and ideological findings align with existing theories about the role of political beliefs in shaping ideas about policies like policing. Since they are included as controls in this analysis, my findings still suggest that something above and beyond ideology and partisanship accounts for variations on attitudes about police violence. I argue that those variations are the results of lived experiences and social location.

Racial and gender variations are a bit more complex. The model is built so that white men are the reference group. Thus, the coefficients represent deviations from white men and the constant (3.40) represents the mean response for white male respondents. The coefficient for Black racial identity is significant at $p<.001$ level which suggests that, on average, Black male respondents are .51 units higher on the measure of seriousness of police killings of Black Americans than white men. The coefficient for female gender is also significant (0.25, $p<.05$). This suggests that both gender and race remain critical in shaping attitudes about policing and police violence. In the next section, I will use simulation to more clearly illustrate the effects of these predictors on the outcome variable.

These findings confirm that those who see police killings of Black Americans as a larger pattern are much more likely to see police killings as a serious issue. This is important since Black Americans are more likely than other groups to encounter police in their daily lives and to see others like them harmed by police (Muhammad 2010; Lerman and Weaver 2014; Johnson 2018). These findings also confirm that, even after controlling for the effects of poverty/income, education, ideological differences, and other attitudes about the role of police in society, gender remains an important predictor about beliefs regarding the seriousness of police killings of black Americans. In the next section, I show the results of my simulation model which help to extract all available information from the OLS model performed.

Simulation

Table 6.2: Parameter estimates E(Y) for Seriousness of Police Killings

	Isolated Incidents		***Larger Pattern***	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Racial Group				
Latinx	2.89 (.15)	3.12 (.12)	3.98 (.14)	4.21 (.11)
Black	3.24 (.16)	3.41 (.13)	4.34 (.14)	4.51 (.11)
Asian	2.83 (.14)	2.94 (.14)	3.93 (.13)	4.04 (.12)
Other	4.03 (.21)	3.11 (.29)	5.13 (.21)	4.2 (.28)

**means are reported with estimated standard errors

Simulations are helpful in that they estimate parameters of interest for fitted models when researchers are seeking clearer answers regarding the implications of their predictions. In this case, I simulated the OLS model to better understand how race and gender variations are also colored by shifts in beliefs that police killings of Black Americans are a part of a larger pattern (Table 6.2). What stands out from this simulation is the consistently high support from Black women regarding the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. Where Black women see police killings as an isolated incidence, their mean response on the dependent variable is 3.41

(between “moderately serious” and “very serious”). Where they see these instances as part of a larger pattern, Black women’s mean response is 4.51 (within the “extremely serious” category). For Black men, those expected values are 3.24 and 4.34, respectively. Though this issue is typically gendered as concerning Black men, they were less likely, though slightly so, to express concern about the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. Survey data do not provide the context needed to understand why this difference exists and what it can be attributed to. It is this variation that I seek to better understand through the use of qualitative interviews with young Black Americans.

In the following section, I examine narratives from in-depth interviews with young Black Americans to help understand how daily and ongoing experiences with police shape attitudes about police and the state. Specifically, this section seeks to capture the ways that Black Americans, across gender, sexuality, and class, experience state and intersectional threat and how those experiences affect their behaviors and beliefs about police.

In-Depth Interviews

In the survey analysis, Black women consistently show strong support for the idea that police killings of Black Americans are a serious issue. While Black men are also likely to support the idea that police killings of Black Americans are a serious issue, they do not share the magnitude of concern reflected in the responses of Black women. But, the survey does not fully examine how young Black Americans experience policing and police violence. I seek to do that here.

Interview Collection

The study population is defined as young, Black Americans ages 18 to 35 years old. Inclusion criteria was only limited to these parameters (race and age). A total of 50 in-depth,

semi-structured interviews were conducted over four months. Interviews were performed in the greater Chicago-area from March 23rd, 2018 to July 24th, 2018. An IRB application was completed and received expedited approval with the University of Chicago AURA-IRB Social Sciences Division in December 2017.

Recruitment

At the start of the project, I recruited interview participants via social media using Twitter and Facebook, direct email, and print flyers. I created a unique email address to facilitate all communication and scheduling of interviews. Thus, each interview participant had to have a working email address in order to participate in the study. Recruitment prompts are included in Appendix D. A full description of the recruitment method and approach is listed in Appendix E.

Incentives

All interview participants received a $10.00 (USD) gift card for Amazon.com upon concluding their interview. Gift cards were disseminated electronically, via email. I chose to offer electronic gift cards to streamline tracking. Because my interview participants were from a group that is typically technologically accessible and active on web-based platforms, I believe that this incentive amount adequately compensated interview participants for their time and projected legitimacy of the project (Josselson 2013). In fact, many informants indicated that they would have liked to participate in the study regardless of the presence of the incentive.

Interviewer Characteristics

I chose to conduct each interview alone. I am a thirty-three-year-old queer Black American woman from a working-class background. I grew up with a single mother in the inner-city of Oakland, California. And, I am a first-generation college student. Thus, I found that my phenotypical, socio-economic, and familial characteristics were in close alignment with many of

my participants. The close proximity of my identity to that of many of my participants helped to mitigate any potential negative interviewer effects on participant responses. Additionally, I chose to do each of the interviews so that the identity of the interviewer is held constant across all cases and does not act as a latent or confounding variable in the respondent data as it does not vary.

Interview Format and Method

Each interview consisted of roughly ten to fifteen open-ended questions (Appendix C). Interviews were performed one-on-one in public and private locations like coffee shops, libraries, office buildings, and campus classrooms. Several interviews were conducted in private residences to account for accessibility needs. During the interviews, I employed relaxed and familial speaking tones and language rather than relying on academic jargon. I also encouraged interview participants to speak in a whatever tone and language was most comfortable for them.

The interview guide was organized around three core domains: 1) defining threat, 2) examining personal experiences with and responses to threat, and 3) connecting social and political activism to threat stimuli. The full interview guide is provided in Appendix C. The first part of the interview asked participants to provide their own conception of threat. This section also asked participants about how their definition of threat relates to their own beliefs about how groups should respond to threat. The second section asked for specific examples of participant experiences with threat and their responses in those instances. In the final section of the interview guide, participants were asked to detail their political engagement activities. These activities were then linked to the forms of threat they would most like to eliminate if given the opportunity. After the first two interviews, the interview guide was revised slightly to account for wording issues and participant confusion. Most confusion up until that point stemmed from not having enough clarity around the terms “social and political engagement.” In this instance, I

added a question at the outset which collected more detail about place of origin, race, background, gender, occupation, and family demographics. Although sexuality is pertinent to this project, I chose not to explicitly ask any questions about sexual orientation without the participant first volunteering this information. This was a conscious decision so as not to alienate the participant or potentially "out" them during the interview. Thus, my collection of responses about gender and sexual identity and expression rely purely on what was volunteered by the participant. Subsequently, after the thirteenth interview, the interview guide was adjusted again to ensure the questions were effective and to also grapple with the developing theory around risk that had emerged in the earlier interviews. Specifically, I added questions 8 and 9 which ask participants about the risks and consequences of responding to threat. These questions were added based on feedback in the preceding interviews. One final revision to the interview guide was made after interview twenty-five to include an explicit question about the connections between personal experiences and political/social engagement. This question was then removed after interview 30 as a structural question and only used as a follow-up or probe if prompted by the participant. These revisions to the interview guide helped to sharpen my instrument and provide more reliable and accurate responses from interview participants.

Interviews were facilitated using two forms of audio recording devices for each interview: 1) laptop-based recording app and 2) Android phone recording app. These two methods were used to ensure quality of sound and accuracy of the recording in case one device malfunctioned during the interviews. After each interview, detailed field notes were written to capture the theoretical, methodological, and reflective aspects of the interview that would not be reflected in the recorded tape. These notes were also used to capture any key points about the participants' demeanor during the interview (e.g. Were they crying? Where were there long

pauses? What questions seemed to have been the hardest to answer?). These notes were used to help improve the interview guide during future interviews as well as ensure that all aspects of the interview were fully captured. These notes were transferred into memos during the coding process.

Recorded interviews were stored on a password-protected server on UChicago Box and backed up on Google Drive. Interviews were transcribed using Temi, Rev, and hand-transcription[18]. Each interview was audited for accuracy before beginning the coding process.

Interview Demographics

The average age of interview participants was 26 years old with a minimum of 19 years old and a maximum of 34. Of the 50 interviews, 25 (50%) were men[19], 23 (46%) were women, and 2(4%) were gender non-conforming (GNC) or of non-binary gender (NB). Of those GNC/NB individuals, one was assigned male at birth and one was assigned female at birth. Of those who mentioned their sexual orientation, 11 identified as "queer", "gay", "lesbian," or "bisexual." Respondents were not outright asked their sexual orientation as a matter of ethicality and to avoid outing those respondents who have not outwardly expressed their sexual orientation to others. The average interview length was 62 minutes with a maximum length of 116 minutes and minimum length of 24 minutes. Educational background of participants ranged from high school diploma to PhD student. Most participants had attended some college.

Interview Findings

Daily Experiences with State-based Police Threats

[18] Temi is an online-based voice-recognition transcription tool. Rev is a human transcriptions service.
[19] These categories of "men" and "women" include cisgender and transgender men and women.

When we use the term policing, we rarely specify what the term means and how it materializes in the actual lives of citizens. Policing for young Black Americans in this study, especially those living on the south side of Chicago, included regular confrontations with officers. Some interactions involved car searches, handcuffing, and even raised weapons. Frequently, when discussing seeing police, participants explained that they sought ways to avert state-based threat, looking for opportunities to walk a different way down the street, avoid a certain corner, or camouflage themselves with bookbags and college related paraphernalia when confronted with officers. For cisgender Black men in this study, police interactions had become weekly, even daily, occurrences. Malcolm, a 32-year-old native Chicagoan and father of three, explained that he was frequently stopped, harassed, and, sometimes, handcuffed.

> **I:** So. So when you think about like personal threats, you encounter daily, what are some of those?
>
> **R:** Examples? The police stop me regularly. Like the police stop me regularly. The police stopped me recently when I was leaving a police reform meeting.
>
> **I:** While you were walking?
>
> **R:** I was in an Uber. They stopped my Uber after my Uber picked me up at a police reform meeting at South Shore, South Shore Cultural. So what they claimed it was because of my uber driver is a....What they say? they say the light over his license plate on the left side was out. Look, man, look. I'm just. I'm just telling you what happened. I'm just telling you this story. I got stopped again by the cops on 75th and Cottage Grove. I made a left turn. They claimed I didn't have my seatbelt on. They pulled me out the car, handcuffed me.
>
> **R:**Yes, yes, yes.
>
> **I:** For a seatbelt?
>
> **R:** For a seatbelt.

Malcolm told this story while smiling and laughing. He talked about how these interactions happen so frequently that they aren't even surprising anymore. In most of these interactions, he

was concerned about “survival” more than anything else. As a military veteran, he said he’d been harassed in street clothes, suit and tie, or even in his military uniform. Sometimes, he said he would intentionally wear the uniform into the precinct when seeking redress for his mistreatment hoping that the officers would “respect” his position and service. But, he expressed little confidence that his attire would affect the treatment he received. “I mean, it don't matter though. That's the thing. It don't, it don't f*cking stop in suits. It didn't stop with a bookbag on. It didn't stop with a book in my hand. I have been stopped. You know what I'm saying? They gonna stop me whether I’m being reckless or not. You feel me?” Malcolm explained. In this case, we see that Malcolm is working through ways to cope with state-based threat. The book, the suit and tie, the bookbag all represent ways that he, as a young Black American man, tries to navigate the social world to avert the threat of police interaction.

For Black women in the study, concerns about police interactions were primarily about looking out for Black men and family members. Specifically, Black women situated themselves as secondary targets of police, especially if they encountered officers while in the presence of male partners, friends, and colleagues. A 28-year-old woman from Chicago named London said she had few interactions with police personally. Like many Black women in the study, she did not see policing as a direct concern that she had to personally navigate each day. Rather, she saw state-based threat as a community concern based on her group membership. When asked about any form of threat she would get rid of, she linked the threat of policing directly to her race and the race of others in her community, specifically, her boyfriend.

> **I:** So if there's one form of threat that you could get rid of, you talked about, um, being black and woman, we talked about kind of how that's different, but how they are both important for you. If there's one form of threat you could get rid of that would ideally make all the others either go away or be easier.

R: It'd be better? Jesus.

I: Which one would it be?

R: I don't know because I guess my heart says being black because it's, it's a threat to not just women. I mean women have threats, period. Uh, what I had just thought about, I had a boyfriend and he walked me to my car down in Calumet City and he was walking back to his house and a cop pulled up. The cops wasn't bothering us at all. He was a couple of houses down and they both got out the car and was just like, looking around with a flashlight. But I remember thinking, "oh my gosh, now I have to wait in my car and make sure he gets in the house." I say that, because here he is, just a black guy in sweatpants, so he was, we were in his home and he probably is a threat to these white cops in the city and I'm nervous. I never told my boyfriend that.

Like the accounts of many participants in this study, police officers were racialized as white. The difference in race, here, is significant to London. She calls her boyfriend "just a black guy in sweatpants" echoing concerns from Malcolm about attire and presentation can heighten the threat of police interaction. London explains that she feels "nervous" not because the officers are a direct threat but because her boyfriend is "probably a threat to these white cops" who were "in his home." Though the police officers are not acting confrontational or aggressive in this instance, their presence in the neighborhood alone causes her to pause, reconsider how she will navigate the social situation, and watch cautiously until her boyfriend returns safely to his home.

London continues by explaining how she responded to police in the neighborhood instinctually.

R: It was just like an instinct. Like it was like, what are you doing? This was before all of the cop killings were just ramping up on social media, sort of thing. So I guess I would definitely get that, get that away for sure. Uh, because it's, it affects so many people on so different, on so many different levels.

Fundamentally, what London describes here is the psychological effects of repeated interactions and exposure to police threat. This event occurred in 2012, before many of the highly publicized incidents of police-related shootings of Black Americans across the country. Yet, London was

still at heightened awareness and fear about what their presence in a Black neighborhood might mean for someone she loved.

Like London, many interview participants expressed latent fears, anxiety, and concerns about potential interactions with police. For example, participants expressed anxiety about remembering where to place their hands, how to speak to officers, and what behaviors to exhibit in order to reduce potentially negative outcomes when pulled over by police. In one such conversation, Quinton, a 29-year-old non-binary/gender nonconforming person from the south side of Chicago described how simply seeing police officers in the rear-view mirror changed how they[20] proceeded on their drive home.

> **I:** Yeah. So, so what are some common things, some common issues or people or places or experiences that make you feel that kind of feeling of fear or kind of out of your standard, your normal or your, your kind of baseline.
>
> **R:** I'm sorry. You said what kinds of things?
>
> **I:** So like, yeah, what are some common like moments when you're feeling that way?
>
> **R:** When I'm driving out of a predominantly white neighborhood and more suburb and police are not that far behind, I can see my rear view mirror. I immediately go alright. Is this going to be a normal drive home or am I going to have to put on the cheesy high voice? {changes voice}"So what can I do for you officer?" type of routine.

Quinton exhibits here how the mere presence of police, and the potential threat of interacting with them, calls into question what sort of "drive home" it will be. They consider how they should comport themselves through codeswitching, or altering their speaking voice to sound more welcoming, less Black, and less threatening to officers. Quinton also described them self by saying that people see them as an "imposing figure." They are six foot two inches tall and said that some family members have warned them that their size and facial hair might make them

[20] Quinton's pronouns are they/them/theirs.

seem more intimidating to officers. “Other people see me as a liability,” Quinton says. This sentiment was echoed in many of the interviews, specifically with cisgender Black men. They often reported that they were fearful that they would meet the same fate as Michael Brown, John Crawford, and other Black men who had been killed by police. They would say, “that could be me.” And, the risk of a police interaction turning fatal was an ever present concern. Though Quinton is gender non-conforming, they were keenly aware of how they would be perceived by police regardless of their gender identity or expression and sexuality.

Like Quinton, other participants explained how even small interactions with police triggered anxiety about the risks of state-based threat. At times, they recounted thoughts about privilege, proximity, and position for many of the participants in my study. One such individual was James, a 25-year-old, Black, cisgender, heterosexual man from the Midwest. During a trip to a neighboring state with a friend, James, who was riding in the passenger seat, was pulled over by police. When recalling the interaction, he situated himself differently with respect to his friend who is white-passing, biracial woman.

> **I:** You said that you experienced certain types of threat? You said police.
>
> **R:** Yeah.
>
> **I:** You said police, guns, and white people.
>
> **R:** Yes {laughter}.
>
> **I:** So is that, what you would say is representative of the type of threats that someone like you experiences? Like, how does that, is it, is that special just to you or why are you experiencing those types of threats?
>
> **R:** Oh, I think it's, it's me, my being like a 25 year old Black man. Uh, in this time and just being very like hyper aware of everything and kind of uh, {pause} being put in situations where it's like, because I am very, I like, I try to be very thoughtful and try to like try make like no fast moves. Like for example, I got pulled over. Uh, we were, I was going to a festival in Minnesota and we were

> driving up there. And uh, I was in the passenger seat and there was this lady, uh, or, she's a teammate of mine and half Asian, half white.
>
> **I:** Yeah.
>
> **R:** She's especially presents, as like a Asian, but then it's like kind of like, Oh yeah, she could be perceived as white too. So there's like that kind of a white presenting like privilege or confidence that comes in, like talking to the police officer that I don't know if, like, if she's aware of that, she probably is aware of that. But it's something where it's like, I'm aware of like how I come off and then what that, what my presence brings to a situation or altercation or whatever and what that does for other people.

In this situation, though James was not the driver of the vehicle, he believed that his mere presence, as a "25 year old Black man" in the vehicle affected how the officer interacted with him and his friend. He also saw himself as having less privilege than his biracial friend who interchanged with police differently from his approach of "making no fast moves." This, James explained, is because police officers are "regular people" who would probably be afraid of him if they saw him walking down the street.

> **R:** Especially like now that I'm an adult and like I see police officers in a different light. Like I see them as not police officers and just like regular people and being like, oh, they saw me on the street. They would probably be like, this is just, I'm just scared. Like I'm like, like, so seeing them in that light now and then being like, oh, they have this like gun, you know.

Here we see that James, like London's fears about her boyfriend's safety, understands that officers may see him as a threat merely because of his race and gender. For James, the risk associated with their fear is that they have a gun and state power. Recalling the interaction, James remained silent during the conversation. Again, concerned that his presence might escalate the routine traffic stop.

> **R:** So then, like the cop came up and he came up on my side because it was like a highway.

I: Oh.

R: He came down that side and I rolled down the window or whatever and we were talking. And uh, she's in a hybrid so the hybrid like cuts off.

I: Yeah.

R: And so it turns off and she's having a conversation and he's like, "did you, you know how fast you're going?" And then it turned out she was like going like maybe 20 over, 19, something like that. We were like trying to get there. And uh, he's like, he's talking to her and it's going back and forth to the point where it's like, wow, this is a, like, I will nev-, like I felt uncomfortable too because I'm like, this is, yeah, like I don't think you're going to be able to talk him out this ticket {laughter}. Like, take the ticket and let's go, but it's kind of like, oh, there's nothing I can do. Like a lot of like back and forth.

I: Yeah.

R: And then uh, the car, uh, no, he like goes back and then comes back and then he has his hand on his hip or whatever, and the car like cuts on and he was talking and he like stopped. And there's just like this silence, this kind of like him, like his focus on continually just like very much like {looks sternly and intently at me}, kind of, you know? and it was just like I was right there and it was like, I didn't say anything the whole time, but it just felt very like, like I don't know if he just got really ready at a point where just, oooh, if anything went down, like, like I felt like I would have been the first one right there and like kind of like if he was. Yeah. So it was just like little stuff like that where it's like um, {long pause} yeah, I think that my presence brings, and maybe it's just a mental thing...but sometimes I'm just like my presence definitely like has people like change the way they talk to me.

The cutting on and off of a hybrid vehicle may seem like an harmless common occurrence. But, in this situation, for James, it instigated feelings of fear and anxiousness about what the officer's reaction might be. In this instance, James connects the police officer's behavior not to the duties of the position but to James' physical presence in the car. The threat of what the police officer might do, beyond issue a speeding ticket, becomes the operating mechanism for how James navigates the altercation. This example illustrates specifically how state-based threat operates in subtle, implicit, and sometimes invisible ways to shape the ways young Black Americans navigate and interact with the social world around them. Through the experiences of London,

Quinton, and James, we see clearly how the mere presence of Black men, and those who may be misgendered[21] as male, in the vicinity of officers generates deep concerns about how officers will treat those young Black people. As each narrative shows, to cope with these fears, these young people consider their clothing, speech, and physical movements as potential ways to avert state-based threat.

Policing as Intersectional Threat

Even though Black women in this study reported having fewer personal interactions with police, they frequently discussed the police as a potential threat in their daily lives in addition to the potential risks associated with navigating the social world as women. In some instances, Black women expressed that they recoiled from seeking help from police officers even in situations when they did not feel safe in their surroundings because they neither trusted men who were threatening them nor police officers who were also a potential threat. Brianna, a 23-year-old Black woman from the suburbs of Chicago, describes one such incident. While walking in the South Loop area of Chicago's Downtown, she encounters a man who yells at her on the street in the presence of a police officer but she chose not to engage the officer.

> **I:** Ok, So, then, if we think about that um, what types of like common threats do people like you, that you would say in general like you, experience?
>
> **R:** I guess, the first thing I can think of that is kinda something that I thought about on my way over here was just every time I walk past a certain spot across umm, when I go in front of John Marshall Law School here, there's always like a group of men who are usually sitting there. And, I kinda do not necessarily feel threatened that they will harm me but they always {emphasis here} catcall and like that's so annoying. Like, in the daytime I usually don't feel necessarily threatened threatened especially since there are other people around but I've had at night like this guy like come up to me and just like start screaming in my face. And, I'm just like, what do I do in that situation? Cause there are people walking by who aren't doing anything and if I, if I speak back maybe he will get

[21] Misgendering is the use of incorrect gender markers or pronouns.

> aggressive physically so I just kind of walked and ignored him. But, I definitely felt threatened in that situation. But, then I also see, like there's a police car also parked in that same area and I'm just like, "Wow, like, I don't feel safe with him either." So it's just like, I don't know. So, I kind of just walk and kind of just live my own life, I don't know.

In this instance, Brianna highlights how being alone at night changes her level of fear around the group of men who frequently commune in the area. Brianna saw both the man screaming at her *and* the police officer as potential threats. As a young woman, she expresses concern that if she responds to the man screaming at her, he may become "aggressive physically." Likewise, engaging with police officers as a form of protection amidst the risk of street violence was not an option because she did not "feel safe with him." Here we see how Black women's position with respect to men and police presents multiple forms of threat that work in tandem to shape the social world around them. This intersectional threat is fundamental in understanding how many Black Americans, especially women, encounter the state in their daily lives.

Like Brianna, other young women in my study expressed concern about navigating the social world where men might approach them and police officers might threaten their safety. These two actors, one from a racial in-group and one from a powerful out-group, men and police in these communities represented potential risks for women in their daily lives. A 22-year-old Black queer woman from the South Side of Chicago named Danielle elaborated on how her efforts to navigate public transportation were closely impacted by her goals of avoiding the potential threats of male strangers and police officers.

> **I:** So can you help me understand the, anytime you're on public transportation and. anytime you can encounter police officers?
>
> **R:** Yeah. So anytime I'm on public transportation, um, it's because, well, again there's just like a lot of people usually. Um, and I would say like basically like {pause} I just don't know what anyone is like about to do. Like you never know

> where like what people's mental states are, you never know what people's intentions are. And I guess the more people like the more worried I am about that. And then also there's the added thing about like being on public transportation. Like public transportation is easy enough to get on with like a weapon or if you're like, if you're in need of money and you want to rob somebody, like it's easy enough to get on public transportation. There's not really any, there's no, um, there's no {pause} like barriers you have to pass really. Like because even, even though you have to pay 2.25, theoretically, it's still easy enough to even sneak to sneak on. And once you're on, you're on. So, there's no check at the door to see like, you know, who's going to be riding. But then also when there's nobody on the train or something like that, that's also just another fear because there, there is a feeling of, um like a little more feeling of safety if there are people on the train who seemed like they might like um intervene or like call somebody if something seems like it's going wrong or like somebody was like, um robbing somebody or trying to attack somebody. Um, so when there's nobody, then it's like there's nobody to watch out for you.

Here, Danielle mentions that public transportation is a potential space where others may harm her through physical violence or robbery. Her concerns about safety on the train should be contextualized given that a Black woman named Jessica Hampton was killed on CTA Red Line in 2016 after rebuffing a man's advances[22].

> **R:** But that said, if there's like a few people, but for me at least, if they're all men then I don't feel as comfortable in that car. Um, and if they're all like, well no, if there was going to say because if they're older I still don't feel comfortable. If they're younger, I still don't feel comfortable. So, um so I very intentionally choose like the cars that I'm going, like I'm specifically thinking about the train because I don't usually take the bus. So, I choose my cars very like intentionally. But then also public transportation. There's just like the hubs where people get on. So, like for example, that Howard terminal, there's like a lot of buses that go in there and the train and so there's always people around there.
>
> **R:** And so even when I just walk into that area before I even get on the train or even go through, I always encounter somebody who's saying something to me. And probably the last thing about public transportation is that the actual, like transit workers provide no sense of security whatsoever and are not uncommonly the ones who are making inappropriate comments or staring at me. So. So yeah, that's public transportation
>
> **I:** Mmmhmm

[22] See here: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-red-line-stabbing-20160623-story.html

What Danielle details here is how she chooses to navigate public transportation based on her assessment of the potential risks associated with her presence in that space. She says that even those individuals who have power (like train attendants and staff), do not provide safety for her. Instead, they, too, represent intersectional threats which emerge from within her community based on her social locations as a woman.

> **R:** And then police officers. Well, I mean it's no secret that some police officers are prone to violence and that, that violence inordinately affects black people. In Chicago, police officers for me at least, specifically, I really don't trust because why should I, when there has been plenty of like documentation that a lot of them don't do what they like should be doing. Um, but yeah, so I, I'm hyper aware of their presence in a space because I know that anything I feel like I, I assume that I'm being scrutinized by them and so, and I've, and I feel that anything that I do that they don't jive with or that they don't like understand or if I look suspicious according to them, that could lead to an escalation on a situation. So usually if there's like, um, officers in a space, I just tried to like get out of that space, um, to avoid any, to avoid any potential escalation, like to avoid them observing me or um like potentially questioning me or whatever.

Both Danielle and Brianna, express a distrust in police officers or their ability to keep these young Black women safe. Looking back to previous accounts, Danielle also echoes the sentiments of Quinton who believed that police officers might see them as a threat so the best response was to simply avoid officers altogether.

In other instances, male participants reported that police officers used their power to not only intimidate but to use their position to sexually violate and harm others. Elon, a 24-year-old whose family has lived in Chicago for at least four generations explained one specific instance when he was pulled over by Black police officers. It was Thanksgiving Day.

> **R:** The cop opened up my door, black cops, two black cops. Cop puts his gun to my head, to the back of my head, pulls me out of the car. They take the blunts from us, they joke with us, blah blah blah blah. They ask, “you have any more weed?”. We said no, they take the two blunts. But, we **did** have more weed. So,

> after they left, we rolled up some more blunts and then we went to another spot. But long story short is that that happened on Thanksgiving. We get high. I still go eat dinner that same night.
>
> **I:** Help me understand this, so it's just that normal?
>
> **R:** It's that normal.
>
> **I:** It's that normal that you're like, it's Thanksgiving. I'm kicking it with my friends. Get pulled over by a cop. Gun to my head. Let's go eat food.
>
> **R:** Yes. It's that normal.

This wasn't the first time Elon had a police officer pull a gun on him. As he described, this experience wasn't nearly as bad as the police interactions that involved "public shaming."

> **R:** And I and I haven't even got to the public, um, public shaming in ways which is other than like getting handcuffed and stuff.
>
> **I:** Public shaming?
>
> **R:** What I mean by that is cops come up to you, you have sweats on or shorts and they just pull down your pants and search right there on the street right there on a busy street. I've seen it happen to friends of mine. It, it happens. Yeah. Just pull down your pants right there on the street.

These forms of police intimidation are also sexual violence. Removing the pants of civilians in their neighborhoods, exposing their genitals to passersby, establishes deeper psychological fears associated with potential police interactions. In this way, the threat of state violence takes on the dual effect of sexualizing Black people's bodies (Richie 1996; Ritchie 2017). Elon explained that he witnessed sexualized searching of Black women. He said, "But what they will do is that they will completely sexualize a woman in terms of whether the flashlight is going through the crevices of her dress, whether they're searching her very, very, uh, getting way too personal, a way too touchy, flirty. All of those things, which is another way to emasculate men as well, you know, but all of that is there. All that I noticed is fully present, you know?" Elon explained.

"Um, and you know, also men are supposed to get a woman officer that comes down to search women. It doesn't always happen, you know." Through Elon's account, we see evidence of Danielle's concerns that police officers may "scrutinize" or "question" her. Though, as these narratives show, these terms don't fully capture the invasion of privacy and the asymmetry of power that contextualizes police state and intersectional threat.

For other Black Americans in my study, police interactions have resulted in sexual violence. Lamar, a 21-year-old trans man from a small southern city explained that, after a public demonstration where organizers were arrested, police officers, rather than asking him his gender, used excessive touching and invasive public body searches to decide where to place him with other arrested demonstrators.

> **R:** At that point I had just started transitioning, so I guess I didn't pass, maybe I passed. I don't really know, I think I was binding that day too, so I don't really know, but it got to the point where like they was putting like the women in one paddy wagon and in the other one was men and they had [looked at me], they stopped for a minute and while they were still like putting everybody else into the vans and they waited for a female officer to come and she came and she basically groped me and then they threw me in the wagon with the women. Yeah. And like I was just like, are you serious right now? Because like it was just like out in public, like she wasn't making it a secret or anything. She literally groped me.
>
> **I:** They didn't simply ask you your gender?
>
> **R:** No, they patted me down and she grabbed me. She rubbed my chest and she grabbed me between the legs.

Lamar shows how state-based threat functions differently, intersectionally, based on one's perceived social location. He recounts an experience much like what Elon reports witnessing in his own community. Like Elon's friends, Lamar's inability to avoid the unlawful search of his genitals represents one of the ways that potential risks associated with police interaction manifest into actual abuses of Black people's bodies. These interactions shape perceptions of policing and

police violence. Likewise, they affect how these young people experience the world around them.

Though participants, in most cases, were not directly asked about their experiences with police violence, many recalled negative interactions with police that made them believe that their race colored the ways that officers administered justice in their communities. For cisgender male participants, their concerns were largely around surviving police interactions because of race alone. However, for non-cisgender men in this study (including women, trans men, and gender non-conforming people), police encounters and daily interactions with other citizens carried the added concerns of sexual harassment and trauma. These concerns represent the intersectional threats experienced by those individuals who are situated further from power.

Socialization of Repeated Police Interactions

A critical component of this analysis, which is reflected in the survey findings, is the role of persistent exposure to state-based threat and how that shapes one attitudes and behaviors. Further, continual exposure to policing and police violence influences thinking about one's self, one's community, and how to survive. For some young women in my study, they saw their positionality within their neighborhood as uniquely linked to their risk of negative police interactions. Annetta, a queer 22-year-old woman from the deep South Side, explained how her community's dearth of economic and social resources made the risk of threat from community members and police likely each day.

> **I:** So, then what do you think, it sounds like you're, then you're kind of standing at multiple intersections and you're seeing like a lot of different forms of potential threat on a daily basis. So, what do you think are some reasons why some groups of people, including groups that you're a part of, might experience more threat than others? Because it sounds like you have specific experiences but they may

not be shared with other groups. So, what do you think might be some reasons for those differences?

R: Um, I guess I will start at before college to explain. I think that in my before, in my pre-college experience, um, I feel like threat was the most frequented because I was Black or a woman or at [school], namely I will say Black because um {pause} just because the majority of, the majority of people that live in that community are Black and also like the majority of people that live in that community are low income, don't have access to the resources they need. Like uh, it was a food desert. It doesn't have any mental health centers in the area. There are no recreation centers in the area. So anytime you want to walk outside or go to a park, there's the potential for some police officer checking in your bag and asking you where you going and bothering you. Um, especially if you walk in like late at night when it's like 8:00 'cause they have enforced in this unreal curfew.

For Annetta, she associates the conditions of the neighborhood with the presence of police officers. In this context, being both Black *and* living in a community that is not adequately supported by state and business entities, creates a pattern of socialization with police. These repeated interactions are formative in how young Black Americans assess the role of the state in the lives of citizens. But, more importantly, they impact how these young people navigate their communities.

As Annetta's narrative shows, police interactions act as learning experiences for future behavior. Dionne, a 30-year-old woman from Chicago discussed an interaction with police where she and a group of friends needed help. A friend was bleeding after being cut by an unknown object. At the same time, a white couple stumbled out of a vehicle, appearing intoxicated or under the influence of a controlling substance. When police approached, Dionne expected them to assist her group and, perhaps, stop the white couple. Instead, Dionne felt as though the police ignored her concerns. She felt that it was the officer's job to listen.

I: So, is that kind of thinking about how you interact with police or like how you feel about police? Is that normal or is that or did you think, Oh, if I speak up he's going to listen. Like did you think that?

> **R:** Not from my own experience, just from [other] people's experiences. Sometimes they just don't. They're not all bad. My dad's a cop, he just retired. So, I have [conflicted feelings] about law enforcement in general, but I know good cops. I know very good cops. But I also know very shady guys.

Dionne, the daughter of a retired officer, explained that her personal experiences with police officers, though mainly positive, have been affected by the exposure she has had to negative police interactions through the media and other people's experiences.

> **R:** Um, and this was before police units were being broadcast as much as they are now, so that wasn't necessarily in the back of my mind that it could escalate to that point, but in my mind, you're law enforcement and you should be able to take a unbiased objective assessment of the situation, move from there. So, and I don't know if that's my thought process anymore, but it was at that point.
>
> **I:** So why wouldn't it be anymore?
>
> **R:** They're using, you know, their badge and their privilege obsessively. They are not gauging any situation. Many are coming out guns blazing and asking questions afterwards. And again, I don't know if it's, my perspective is changed because that's being documented, this is happening all the time and we just weren't documenting and on Facebook and Snapchat and Instagram as prevalent.

Here Dionne highlights the role of social and news media in shaping how young people think about policing and police violence. She isn't alone in this sentiment. In this study, nearly every participant mentioned social media and the prevalence of police-related violence on the Internet as a potential point of exposure to police interactions. Dionne also mentions that, as these occurrences have increased, she has become more wary of police interactions even though her own father is a retired officer.

For others in the study, direct, personal interactions have impacted their likelihood of engaging with police officers in the future. Angela, a 29-year-woman from a deep southern city

detailed one such experience in her childhood when police officers stopped her family during a road trip.

> **I:** Okay. So, thinking about situations like that and also others that you've experienced maybe before your work life, college, high school, back when you lived in [redacted] growing up, can you share with me an experience where you felt personally threatened? It, it doesn't have to be physical, but just personally it's something about that you experienced personally, um, and you responding and what the outcome was of that situation?
>
> **R:** Um, so that was an experience and then I remember being pulled over with my family when I was [young]. This was before we moved to [redacted], so I think I was either 9 or 10. Um, we used to drive to [redacted] for the summers and so we were driving from South Bend and we were right outside of Atlanta and it was really late at night. My dad had been driving all day and so I was half asleep in the backseat. I'm half asleep but I do remember him pulling the car over and the cop approached us and he made my dad get out the car and he was questioning him. It's like, you know why I'm pulling you over? And my dad's like, no, not really. He says, "Well, you were swaying the lines, have you been drinking?" And my dad's like, "no, I'm traveling with my family. I'm going to see some more family. I've been driving all day. I'm exhausted. I just want to get to where I'm going." And so, he says, "Well, I'm afraid I'm going to have to search your vehicle. I need you to take everything out of your car." Now mind you, we have clothes. We've got food coolers, like suitcases, all that stuff. And my dad was like, no.
>
> **R:** Um, so then he was like, he wouldn't.

Angela explained that her father refused to allow officers to search the vehicle.

> **I:** What do you mean?
>
> **R:** Now he's saying, I'm refusing you searching my vehicle. You have no reason to do so. I'm not going to do that so. I could hear all of this because the windows are down and I'm lucky in that I'm trying to see what's happening. And so, it took a minute. Um, but the cop called for some backup to get the canines, to get the dogs to sniff around the car since he refused the search. So, they're waiting for the dogs to come. And so, the cop is continuing to question my dad.

> **R:** He asks my dad, “So, uh, uh, what do you do, what brings you to [the state]? What are you going there for? what is it that you do for a living?” And my dad tells him and he says, Oh, you, you teach at [redacted] as a professor, that's unheard of. So even then I knew that that wasn't, that wasn't right. And I think at that time that's when I developed my distrust for police. Um, fortunately I haven't had an experience with police like that since, but that always stuck with me because that was really, really scary.

In this instance, though Angela was only an adolescent, she saw the connections between the police officer’s behavior and the racial background of her father when she sensed that something “wasn’t right.” This interaction, a traffic stop, escalated quickly to canines and backup. This was frequently reported in my study as well. Participants reported speeding tickets that resulted in two to four police vehicles called to the scene. For Angela, this turned into distrust of police. It also impacted her likelihood of voluntarily interacting with police in future instances when she encountered intersectional threat.

> **R:** Um, another time when I've been threatened. I mean I've had like some relationship stuff, um, with my ex where he would get drunk and be belligerent and throwing things. So that was scary because I, there have been times when I really wanted to call the police, um, but a part of me just wouldn't, I wouldn't allow myself to do that. But I did feel really, really scared in those moments.

For Angela, like many other participants in this study, calling the police was a last resort. Though she experienced fear and felt she might need protection from another Black person, she was unwilling to risk introducing police authorities into her personal life, unsure how that action might have long-term consequences.

In the accounts of these three women, we see how personal interactions, social media narratives, and indirect confrontations with police officers throughout one’s life shape their decisions regarding how to navigate the social world. For Annetta, she concerns herself with avoiding police searches. For Dionne, though her father is a retired officer, she now thinks

differently about the role of the state in the daily lives of Black Americans. And, for Angela, an encounter her father had with police in her adolescence remains a primary referent regarding her willingness to call police when facing intersectional threat. Taken together, these narratives underscore how policing and police violence influence young Black Americans' daily lives and how that influence varies by gender and class.

Discussion

In this manuscript, I have demonstrated that a) young people's opinions about the seriousness of that violence varies by gender and race, and b) the threat of state violence is not experienced identically within Black communities. Fundamentally, my quantitative analyses show that variations in beliefs about the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans remain significant even after controlling for the effects of beliefs about policing, ideology, education, income, age, and partisanship. By analyzing interviews with young Black Americans, I found that personal experiences with police interactions as well as close proximity to others who have been affected by frequent police interactions or violence greatly impacts one's concern about state-based threat. These personal experiences are greatly influenced by gender and gender expression, sexuality, and sexual orientation. Because these variation experiences with state-based threat are affected by social location and proximity to power, I refer to this phenomena as *intersectional threat*. This theoretical intervention helps to frame out a new approach to understanding the role of threat in the daily lives of citizens and how those threats might impact political attitudes and behavior.

There are many implications of these theoretical findings. First, this analysis adds depth regarding how police killings of Black Americans are understood in the general public. As

mentioned at the outset of the manuscript, though data shows that this issue impacts women as well, media often focuses on men (Ritchie 2017; Johnson 2018). Thus, the framing of police killings of Black Americans as an issue that primarily affects men may affect how citizens develop attitudes about state-based threat. These framing choices prime citizens to rely on mental shortcuts about gender, race, and stereotypes to understand the severity of police interactions with Black Americans. Not only that, these shortcuts, though reliable in some instances, frequently reinscribe existing biases and resentments against this racial group (Entman and Rojecki 2000). Several questions remain: *What if police killings of Black Americans were reframed as affecting all genders? How might a greater emphasis on the impacts of police violence against women encourage greater social movement and organizing around violence against women?* Future research should take up these questions.

Second, these analyses highlight the ways that ongoing or repeated interactions and exposure to police affect psychological and behavioral outcomes for young Black Americans. Through both quantitative and qualitative analyses, I have shown that regular interactions with police increase one's sense that police killings are a serious concern. Further, day-to-day exposure to policing through neighborhood surveillance, curfew enforcement, simple traffic stops, and basic searches trigger group-based experiences with police killings, harassment, and violence. For political scientists, these topics are of utmost import as they not only affect opinions and attitudes, they also shape the ways that individual citizens make social and political decision about how to engage with state and local authorities and other private citizens. To this end, future research should consider how these repeated experiences of police interaction might impact beliefs in institutions, the role of the government in the lives of Americans, and support for public policies supporting marginalized groups (Weitzer and Tuch 2004). My larger body of

research seeks to address how these interactions with police alter linked fate and patterns of political participation, two critical issues facing American Politics today.

Third, methodologically, this work pushes back on the use of surveys alone in measuring affect, emotion, and other psychological correlates of today's social and political world. Specifically, this multi-methodological work suggests that even slight variations in attitudes within social groups may be linked to deeper contextual cues about the experiences citizens have with the political world. Though I am certainly not the first to do so, this project's focus on the daily lives of young Black Americans illustrates how aggregate level data is greatly enhanced when coupled with narratives of those individuals who are the most intimately affected by the phenomena of interest. It is my hope that future studies of threat, which has historically centered on the experiences of white Americans, follow this framework.

In closing, this manuscript intervenes in existing theoretical projects on the role of threat in the lives of Americans specifically regarding race and gender. However, these findings also present a grand theory of threat that can be used as a lens for understanding the role of threat in the lives of all U.S. citizens. This project provides evidence that threat, though seemingly static within racial groups and neighborhoods, is quite dynamic. For American Politics, these analyses lay the groundwork for a gamut of future work on the psychological and behavioral outcomes associated with group threat.

Appendix 6A: Tables

Table 6.3: Summary Statistics (August 2016)

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Seriousness Killing Blacks	*1956*	3.97	*1.15*	*1*	*5*
Attitudes on Policing					
Stopped by police	1949	0.69	0.46	0	1
Arrested by police	1951	0.16	0.36	0	1
Harassed (Self)	1958	0.13	0.33	0	1
Harassed (Know)	1958	0.37	0.48	0	1
Trust police	1916	3.38	0.92	1	5
Protected by police	1584	0.81	0.39	0	1
Pattern of police killings	1704	1.71	0.45	0	1
Race Identification					
White	1958	0.26	0.44	0	1
Black	1958	0.29	0.45	0	1
Latinx	1958	0.27	0.44	0	1
Asian	1958	0.16	0.36	0	1
Other	1958	0.03	0.16	0	1
Partisanship					
Democrat	1958	0.49	0.5	0	1
Independent	1958	0.26	0.44	0	1
Republican	1958	0.12	0.33	0	1
Ideology	1,381	3.4	1.51	1	7
Demographics					
Education	1958	10.33	1.49	2	14
Age	1958	23.7	3.5	18	30
Income	1958	8.05	4.47	1	18

Appendix 6B: Question Wording for August 2016 Data

[Stopped by police] Have you ever been stopped by the police?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Skip/refused

[Arrested by police] Have you ever been arrested?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Skip/refused

[Self Harassed & Know harassed] Have you or anyone you know experienced harassment or violence at the hands of police? (Select all that apply)

1. Yes, me.
2. Yes, someone I know.
3. No.
4. Don't know
5. Skip/refused

[Trust police] Thinking about the police in general, how often do you think you can trust them to do what is right?

1. Always
2. Often
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never
6. Don't know
7. Skip/refused

[Police protect us] Now thinking about the police in your neighborhood, do you believe that they are there to protect you?

1. Yes

2. No
3. Don’t know
4. Skip/refused

[Seriousness of police killings] How serious a problem do you think the killing of Black people by the police is in the United States?

1. Extremely serious
2. Very serious
3. Moderately serious
4. Not too serious
5. Not at all serious
6. Don’t know
7. Skip/refused

[Larger pattern] Do you think recent killings of Black Americans by police are isolated incidents or part of a larger pattern in the police’s treatment of Black Americans?

1. Isolated incidents
2. Part of a larger pattern
3. Don’t know
4. Skip/refused

Appendix 6C: Semi-structured Interview Guide (Script)

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. The interview should last for roughly an hour. Your data will remain confidential and will not be shared outside of the research team. In terms of reporting, the aggregate findings may be published in journal articles or books in the future but no names will be used to protect your identity. If at any time you feel uncomfortable and would like to skip a question or end the interview, feel free to let me know.

Let's start by getting to know you a bit.

3. Tell me about yourself as if you were describing yourself to a stranger.
    a. Where from?
    b. How old?
    c. Occupation?
    d. Gender?
    e. Family?

Now, I want to talk about threat. It doesn't have to be overly technical or academic.

4. How would you define 'threat'?
    a. Good?
    b. Bad?
15. What are some common threats that you think people like you face?
    a. How often?
    b. Examples?
16. What are some reasons one group of people might feel more threatened than another group of people?
    a. Race?
    b. Sexuality?
    c. Gender?
    d. Age?
    e. Class?
    f. Examples?
17. In your opinion, how should people like you respond to threat?
    a. Examples?

Okay, next I would like to talk a bit about how your personal identity informs your experiences with threat.

18. Share with me the types of threats that you have personally encountered in your life.
    a. Frequency?
    b. Where? (like at home or work?)
19. Please describe an instance where you felt threatened and you responded. What was the outcome?

    a. Expand if needed.
20. How do you decide when/how to respond to threat?
    a. Risk?
    b. Caution?
    c. Consequences?
    d. Safety?
    e. Time?
21. What does the list of potential consequences look like for you?
    a. Death?
    b. Violence?

Let's talk about your social activism and community involvement.

22. What are some types of community-based activities you regularly engage in?
    a. Frequency?
    b. Faith-based?
23. What are some of the types of political activities you regularly engage in?
    a. Frequency?
24. Tell me about the events, issues, or experiences that motivated you to get socially and politically active.
    a. Local?
    b. National?
25. Why do young people like you engage in social activism?
    a. Politics?
    b. Influence of friends?
    c. News stories?
    d. injustices/against Black people?
    e. History of racism?
    f. Most important?

Okay, now for one final question.

26. If you could eliminate one form of threat you face regularly, which would it be? Why?

Appendix 6D: Recruitment Scripts

Invitation to participate - Script 1
Example text/verbal script for recruiting respondents via announcements in class, tabling at commons, student body email, and/or posts shared on social media websites

Greetings all,

I am a PhD student at the University of Chicago. I am conducting interviews in the Chicago area for my dissertation about the impacts of threat on the social and political actions of young people.

Eligible participants are minority group members (especially Black Americans) between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age currently living in the Chicago area. Participation takes approximately 1 hour. All participants will earn a $10 giftcard to Amazon. All collected data will be used in publications on the subject and participants' contributions will be 100% anonymous.

To learn more about how you can participate, I can be contacted at ThreatStudyUChicago@gmail.com.

Please feel free to share this post with your various networks.

Thank you!

Principal Investigator: Cathy J. Cohen
IRB17-1566

Invitation to participate - Script 2
For people you already know, and will be circulated via Facebook and email

Hello,

I'm conducting interviews focusing on the forms of threat that influence social and political action among young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Eligible participants are minority group members (especially Black Americans) between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age currently living in the Chicago area.

Participation takes approximately 1 hour and participants will earn a $10 giftcard to Amazon upon interview completion. Would you be interested in participating? If so, I can set up time to meet you in a location that is convenient for you. It should be reasonably quiet as the interview will require audio recording.

Let me know if you're interested or have any questions by emailing me at ThreatStudyUChicago@gmail.com.

Invitation to participate - Script 3
For people recommended by friends and acquaintances

Hello,

My name is Jenn M. Jackson and I am a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Chicago. I'm conducting interviews focusing on the forms of threat that influence political action among young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Eligible participants are minority group members (especially Black Americans) between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age currently living in the Chicago area.

Participation takes approximately 1 hour. All participants will earn a $10 gift card to Amazon upon interview completion. Would you be interested in participating? Let me know if you're interested or have any questions by emailing me at ThreatStudyUChicago@gmail.com.

Best,
Jenn M. Jackson

Principal Investigator: Cathy J. Cohen
IRB17-1566

Appendix 6E: Interview Recruitment and Coding Method

In addition to relying on the reach of social media, I utilized a number of local organizations and institutions that serve young Black people in an effort to reach my target population[23]. In particular, I used convenience sampling of young Black Americans in the Chicago area on the University of Chicago and Chicago State University campuses. Because these institutions are easily accessible to me, I used them as hubs for getting the word out about the project. I posted flyers, shared my project information with student groups, and canvassed potential participants directly. I also relied on existing organizations to help recruit young people for my interviews.

By contacting existing student-based organizations on these campuses like the Organization of Black Students and Blacks in Public Policy at the University of Chicago, the African American Male Resource Center at Chicago State University, and local Chicago chapters of BYP100 and Black Lives Matter, I was able to leverage their networks of young Black Americans in the Chicago-area in order to facilitate the recruitment process. I also reached out to the 100 Black Men of Chicago organization as well as the UIC and greater Chicago chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi fraternities, two historically-Black organizations. These connections were made later in the recruitment timeline to help with increasing the number of Black men participants in the study. After meeting several young people on the South Side of Chicago who were affiliated with Trinity United Church of Christ, I reached out to the young adult department to inquire about speaking with additional young people there. One additional organization I connected with was a Free Spirit Media (FSM), a media literacy and training organization that serves teens and young people on Chicago's West and South sides. I have already cultivated a relationship with FSM that helps to facilitate collaboration. From that point, snowball sampling was used to gather additional interested, potential participants from those who had already been interviewed.

In addition to my list of organizations and institutions, I relied heavily on my own networks and efforts to recruit participants for this project. For example, I have been teaching young Black and Latinx students in the city of Chicago since 2015 through a partnership between the Black Youth Project and Chicago Public Schools. Since that first summer, I have kept in touch with many of my students. For this project, I used purposive sampling of students who had reached the age of 18 years old for this study. I also encouraged them to suggest friends, family, and peers who might be a good fit for the project. Lastly, I canvassed in the South Loop (Downtown Chicago) with a focus on the corridor between Harold Washington Library, Columbia College, Roosevelt University, DePaul University, and John Marshall Law School. While I am aware that this area has a higher concentration of college-educated young Black

[23] Ruthellen Josselson calls this method of recruiting "networked recruitment" (2013, 20) It is essentially a form of snowball recruitment but focuses on the particular type of participant and encourages them to recommend others with whom they share similar characteristics. This method was especially helpful for me in reaching Black men for this study.

people, I also understand that this section of the Loop are high transit areas for local eateries, movie theaters, parks, and public museums.

Context and Access

I chose to conduct this study in the Chicago area due to the long history of Black activism and uprising in the region. In recent years, Chicago has been a primary location for young people's activism around issues of policing, school closures, minimum wages, housing policy, employment access, and a host of other social and political concerns. With respect to the issue of threat, young Black Americans in the city of Chicago are constituents of the second largest police force in the world [need citation]. Meanwhile, those who are raised within the South Side of the city's limits often face school closures, varying forms of housing instability, and police hyper-surveillance. These conditions make the Chicago area an extreme example of the various threats facing young Black Americans in the United States.

Another critical component of this site selection is its connection to mass migrations of Black Americans between 1915 and 1970. During this time period, more than six million Black Americans migrated from the rural South to cities in the North, West, and Midwest. Their movements signaled a new stage in racial conflict and proximity-based threats in the United States (Key 1949). Not only that, they gave way to new generations of Black Americans in northern and western regions whose presence in those areas reverberated for generations. Thus, the young Black Americans in my study are roughly one to two generations out from the Great Migration. For those whose great grandparents and grandparents were born or naturalized in the United States, they share stories of family members who have integrated schools, who were the first Black Americans to win selected political offices, and who can vividly recount the decision to pick up the family, move to the North, and hope for a better life up there. These intergenerational tales and experiences are handed down to children and to children's children. They shape the ways young Black Americans view the world around them, and, more specifically, the threats they might face because of their race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, or otherwise.

I gained access to the social organizations and movement members included in this phase of the research via several means. First, having lived and worked in the Chicago-area for the past four years as an instructor, writer, and activist has helped me to build independent networks with young Black Americans in the city. Second, I am a member of BYP100, a Black liberation organizations established in 2013. This connection has allowed me to embed myself in several movement communities in the Chicago-area as a movement participant. Finally, as a professional writer whose work focuses on political issues facing young Black Americans including anti-blackness, school closures, police violence, and the like, I have built community with young Chicago writers whose work, too, focuses on these intersections. For these reasons, I opted to conduct all of my own interviews, firsthand and in-person.

Coding and Analysis

Interviews were coded using both hand-coding and the import feature on the MAXQDA software. Transcripts were first coded using *Initial* or *Summative Coding*. This method allows for synthesis of the general themes in each of the conversations. This also greatly reduces the amount of generated text down into blocks of content that apply directly to the research question. Next, I used *Descriptive Coding* which provides categorical identification for each section of text that refers to a particular topic or family of topics. This method allows for codes to be reconciled across multiple interviews for the purpose of drawing evidence together to form a cogent argument. Finally, I used *Structural Coding* which helps to identify the frequency with which certain reactions and experiences were reported by respondents. This coding method generates hierarchical responses by specific research question and operates in a quantitative way. At the end of this tri-layer coding process, I am left with three textual layers: summary codes, categorical labels, and annotated responses to my specific research questions. As such, the analysis and findings below detail both the quantitative characteristics of the interviews and the qualitative responses from respondents[24].

[24] To ensure anonymity, all respondents have been given a pseudonym. All proper names have been changed. All identifying information has been removed.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

"To ensure human survival everywhere in the world, females and males organize themselves into communities. Communities sustain life – not nuclear families, or the "couple," and certainly not the rugged individualist. There is no better place to learn the art of loving than in community."

- bell hooks[1]

"Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public."

- Cornel West

The underlying ethos of this dissertation is that what young Black Americans feel, think, and experience in their everyday lives is information and influential for their political attitudes and behavior. Not only that, this project sets forth a theoretical framework which centers the experiences of young Black Americans as a potential way to understand how marginalized groups navigate and participate in politics. Through both nationally representative data from young Americans across the United States and in-depth interviews with young Black Americans living in the Chicago area, I have provided deeper contextual evidence showing that emotion and affect among non-white group members is both dynamic and complex. This intervention is imperative given that the existing scholarship on emotion and affect in the social sciences frequently focuses on white Americans (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Banks 2014). When I set out to better understand how threat affects young Black Americans today, I expected to find that this social group was more aware of and more sensitive to social and political risk than non-Black group members. What I also found was that Black women's experiences with and responses to threat differ greatly from Black men. Once we begin considering how these differences vary based on sexual orientation, class, and other markers of social location, we begin to see the immense heterogeneity with this social group when it comes to the role of threat

[1] bell hooks, 2001*, all about love: new visions*, (New York: HarperCollins), pp.129.

in politics. This project is a jumping off point for investigating that heterogeneity and how its presence shapes the lives of Black people and Americans, more generally.

In chapter three, I provided a theoretical framework for examining the role of threat in the political process. This necessitated defining a new term, group threat. This moves our conception of threat away from a white, heteronormative point of view to one that keys into the complex and potentially detrimental dynamics of perceived stimuli that register with groups of individuals who share a common racial, gender, class, status, or other identifier. My empirical findings in this dissertation provide an in-depth analysis of the role of threat in the lives of young Black Americans today. In chapter four, I reported the findings from both a nationally-representative survey and experiment, investigating respondent attitudes regarding economic, proximity-based, and stereotype threat. Amongst those findings, I proved that Black Americans are more likely to perceive threats than other groups, while Black women are more likely, when compared to Black men, to exhibit responses to group threat. In chapter five, I summarize the responses from 50 in-depth interviews to further explore the direct responses young Black Americans have to threat. The interviews shared a common takeaway that young Black women were primarily concerned with how threat shapes perceptions of their identities in public spaces while men were primarily concerned with controlling stereotypes that others held about them. For queer Black Americans, they exhibited concerns that they might encounter physical violence in public spaces if they did not comport themselves to larger normative ideas about gender and sexuality. For all young Black Americans, they expressed that their social group had grown increasingly tired of the status quo in politics which was driving them to take control of the political process for themselves. In chapter six, I examined both survey and interview data to understand how race and gender influence opinions regarding the seriousness of police killings of Black Americans. I

showed that women respondents across all racial groups are more likely than their male counterparts to see police killings of Black Americans as a serious issue. My interview analyses show that young Black Americans express anxiety and fear regarding potential police interactions even when those interactions are for routine or other mundane reasons. In all, this data illuminates our understanding of group threat and its implications for Black Americans across the United States. It shows that threat may be experienced in different and significant ways across race, gender, and sexuality, and specifically, Black Americans' political actions and behaviors can be explained by a number of factors including intergenerational socialization practices and efforts to avert threats they experience in their everyday lives.

This project has made two primary contributions to the scholarship on emotion and affect in the political process. First, the emphasis on young Black Americans provides a sample that differs dramatically from the canonical focus on white Americans and their experiences with threat (Key 1949). These traditional models of threat frequently position Black Americans as the threat stimuli for white Americans which neglects their experiences and agency. Second, the multi-methodological approach of this project makes a case for using more diverse methods in examining emotion and affect in Political Science. There are existing methodological critiques of the over-reliance on quantitative study of such issues that suggest that these methods tend to normalize whiteness and re-establish racial hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi 2008; Gallagher 2008). In an effort to correct for these critical issues in measurement and validity, I have taken up a research approach meant to examine the effects of racial disparity and threat without reinscribing those very processes. These two interventions lay the groundwork for future studies of emotion and affect that center the experiences of marginalized groups like Latinx,

Asian, and Muslim Americans rather than positioning them solely as the threat to white Americans.

Implications for the Academy

Within the social sciences, we typically build and expand upon previous literature in our respective subfields. In the Race and Ethnic Politics subfield, V.O. Key's "racial threat hypothesis" has predominated the study of threat. Likewise, across disciplines, Key's theoretical framework has laid the groundwork for existing scholarship for nearly seven decades. Beyond the term and its precepts being dated, the theory has situated the Academy at odds with the manner in which threat operates in the real-world. While I do not intend to reify or reproduce a superficial boundary between the Academy and the real-world, I do intend to say that the failure of our scholarship to accurately and fully portray the American political process is a major shortcoming. This work strives to bring the Academy in closer alignment with the lived experiences of American people who have to confront and navigate threat in their everyday lives. My deliberate contribution here is to, perhaps, reduce the distance that the Academy often produces from those people who are most impacted by the work we produce and the theoretical frameworks we develop.

Implications of this Work Outside of the Academy

This project provides significant findings for groups outside of the Academy. For social movement organizations who focus on potential risks to Black Americans, this project provides empirical support and evidence for the myriad social concerns Black Americans experiences in their daily lives. It also confirms that Black Americans suffer disparate effects of the status quo

when compared to other social groups. For policy professionals, this project provides a thorough set of policy initiatives that might be effective starting points for education, economic, housing, policing, and other reforms. This study is especially helpful when considering the effects of gentrification and mass migrations in the United States as it shows that interracial interactions remain primary points of anxiety and fear for young Black Americans. Furthermore, as predominantly white institutions like private universities continue to encroach into poorer, Blacker and Browner neighborhoods across the US, this study shows how those encroachments might negatively impact the daily lives of young Black American residents.

Where do we go from here?

I set out to complete this project with the hopes that scholars entering graduate school after me would no longer have to cite V.O. Key (1949) when seeking to determine how threat functioned in the lives of non-white people. As an extension of that goal, I also hoped that future scholars would expend and build upon this work to dive deeper into the mechanisms that shape the experiences of other marginalized groups and threat. While I have done much here to get us started on that journey, it is impossible to answer every question with the first project. In the future, I hope to see that scholars of Latinx and Asian American politics have take up similar frameworks to better understand the role of threat in the lives those social groups. Further, I hope to see that more diverse notions of gender and sexuality become the norm in Political Science. It's time we do a much better job of studying and analyzing the world as it truly is.

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