



## “I Will Be Out There Every Day Strong!” Protest Policing and Future Activism Among Ferguson and Baltimore Protesters

Jennifer E. Cobbina,<sup>1</sup> Soma Chaudhuri,<sup>2</sup> Victor M. Rios,<sup>3</sup> and Michael Conteh<sup>4</sup>

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*An established body of literature shows that people engage in protest events for a number of reasons, including grievances, collective identity, increased efficacy, and emotions. However, it is unclear what happens to individuals' motivation toward protest participation as they experience the reality of repressive policing. This study contributes to the theoretical body of knowledge of protest policing and social movements by investigating the microlevel processes that affect protest participation. Specifically, we build from the insights of previous research by examining how 102 Ferguson and Baltimore protesters with varying levels of commitment—revolutionary, intermittent, tourist—experienced repressive policing and how such tactics affected their subsequent decision to engage in future activism. Our findings suggest that those with the strongest commitment toward protest goals experienced the most repressive tactics, and yet did not seem to be deterred in their motivation to be engaged in future protests. In contrast, while repressive tactics appeared to deter the less committed individuals from street protests, they remained motivated to engage in other forms of civic engagement.*

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**KEY WORDS:** Black Lives Matter; police brutality; policing; protest; race; social movements.

### INTRODUCTION

On August 9, 2014, Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old black male, was fatally shot by Darren Wilson, a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, who was not charged for the shooting. Following the death of Brown, the city of Ferguson went through civil unrest and countless protests over what many in that community perceived as another unjustified homicide of an unarmed black male at the hands of a police officer. Public demonstrations, along with riots and angry encounters with the police, occurred following the shooting. Police handling of protests received strong criticism by the public, due to its militarized response and excessive use of force (Institute for Intergovernmental Research 2015). Eight months following the death of Michael Brown, on April 12, 2015, officers from the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) arrested Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old black man, for possessing what the police alleged was an illegal switchblade (Barajas 2015). He died of severe spine and neck injuries suffered in the back of a police

<sup>1</sup> School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, 655 Auditorium Road, 536 Baker, East Lansing, Michigan 48824; e-mail: cobbina@msu.edu

<sup>2</sup> Department of Sociology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824; e-mail: Chaudh30@msu.edu

<sup>3</sup> Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106; e-mail: vrios@soc.ucsb.edu

<sup>4</sup> Division of Global Affairs, Rutgers University, Newark, New Jersey 07102; e-mail: linsobob@gmail.com

van. Peaceful protests initially arose in Baltimore, but rioting, looting, and arson broke out on the day of Gray's funeral. Although the BPD displayed initial force restraint at the onset of the protests, police response was militarized as protests became violent.

The deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray gave rise to Black Lives Matter (BLM), a larger movement that emerged in 2013 after the murder acquittal of George Zimmerman in the death of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African American boy. Tired of the extrajudicial killings of blacks by police and self-declared vigilantes, the movement unfolded as a call for action against the many forms of state violence in the United States (<http://blacklivesmatter.com/>). Brown's death in Ferguson became the tipping point of BLM that demanded change with how police deal with minorities and an end to systemic racism that exists in this country. Born out of disappointment and grief over the persistence of police violence against black people and racial backlash following Barack Obama's presidency, BLM represents a new era in the struggle for racial justice. The deaths of Gray in Baltimore along with Brown in Ferguson were two of several high-profile police killings that gave impetus to the BLM movement (Lowery 2016). The protests at each site (also the location for the current study) brought out decades of pent-up intense emotions of anger, outrage, and frustration from the black community against continued racism and discrimination. The response of the state through repressive police tactics against protesters<sup>5</sup> at each location confirmed the continued racism, unequal treatment, and discrimination that many blacks in the United States experience and still suffer at the hands of various state institutions.<sup>6</sup>

There are a number of reasons people engage in protests, including grievances, collective identity, and emotions (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007). State repression against political protests can influence individual participation in social movement activities. Such studies have examined large, formal social movement organizations (Cress and Snow 2000), and emphasized the macrocontext in which they are embedded. However, fewer studies focus on protesters with their varying degrees of commitment to a social movement, and fewer explain the impact that repressive policing tactics have on participant's motivation to engage in current and future high-risk social movements. That is, it remains unclear what happens to individuals' motivation toward protest participation as they experience the reality of intense pressure and harassment of repressive policing. This study fills in the gap by examining how negative police tactics and strategies influence individual protesters' continued commitment to future activism. Our concern is not in explaining the complex interplay of repression and protest rates at the macrolevel but on understanding the microlevel processes that affect protest participation. Using rich qualitative data collected during the height of protests in Ferguson and Baltimore, this study examines a group of protesters who made a conscious decision to join a high-risk protest, explores their response to repressive tactics as they experienced it during their participation, and analyzes the effect police repression has on their motivation to continue protest participation.

<sup>5</sup> We use the words *protesters*, *demonstrators*, and *activists* interchangeably.

<sup>6</sup> Repression is defined as any attempt by the "state or private action that prevents, controls, or constrains protests, including its initiation" (Earl 2011:262).

## EMOTIONS, MOTIVATION, IDENTITY, AND PROTEST POLICING

Three bodies of literature are relevant to our research. First, the scholarship on what draws individuals into social movements; second, research on protest policing tactics; and third, we draw from the literature on state oppression and its racial impact to consider responses and reactions during protest movements.

### *Why People Protest*

While feelings of discontentment and anger are often present among members of the aggrieved group against what they perceive to be discriminatory treatment responsible for the group's suffering, these emotions may not always automatically channel into protests due to lack of resources, fear of repression, and/or the lack of confidence in group efficacy toward achieving change (van Zomeren et al. 2004). During instances when collective action does take place, motivation among individual participants plays a significant role in channeling emotions of anger and frustration toward protest goals. But emotions also have the power to demobilize a movement, leading to its decline, particularly when anger and despair of participants exacerbates fear of violence, isolation, and repercussion from powerful institutions (Jasper 2014).

Participants in movements engage with varying degrees of motivation. While some are more motivated to participate than others, most attend with the expectation of achieving some positive outcome despite considerable risks (Jasper 2014). However, protest participation does not always lead to positive experiences, and can impact protester motivation as they interact with repressive police tactics. For decades, social movement scholars have debated as to why individuals choose to participate in protests, and explored the role that emotions play in fostering a collective social identity against a common external enemy. Some assert that emotions, such as anger, experienced by individuals who perceive the in-group to be strong are related to their desire to partake in collective action compared to others who perceive the in-group as weak (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). Others see "group-based emotions of anger" and "group efficacy toward problem-focused coping" as two distinct pathways to collective action (van Zomeren et al. 2004).

Other factors that motivate individuals to engage in protests include grievances, increased efficacy, and collective identity. Grievances arise when individuals or group experiencing inequality and feelings of relative deprivation become victims of injustice or have a sense of moral indignation about some state of affairs (Klandermans 1997). When citizens perceive that they have been unjustly deprived compared to that of other groups, protest behavior becomes likely (Van Zomeren et al. 2004). In particular, individuals who experience both personal *and* group relative deprivation are particularly motivated to take to the streets.

Individual efficacy refers to the belief that individual actions have the potential to shape and alter the social structure (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). Group efficacy refers to the belief that collective protest efforts will shape the outcome of a problem positively (Bandura 1997). People are more likely to participate

in protest movements when they perceive that it will assist them in redressing their grievances at affordable costs (Klandermans 1997) and, thereby, potentially change policies.

Relatedly, collective identity is tied to grievances and reinforces distinctions that exacerbate feelings of relative deprivation (Van Zomeren et al. 2004). Identity refers to understanding who we are, who other people are, and other people's understanding of themselves or others. It reflects a sense of "we-ness" or "one-ness" based on shared characteristics or experiences among group members and fosters action (Klandermans and de Weerd 2000). When these identities become politicized, they not only lead to shared grievances but also link feelings of inequality and unfairness with an external enemy (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). When people identify with a group (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.), they are more inclined to protest on behalf of that group (Van Zomeren et al. 2004).

### *Policing Protests*

While emotions, motivation, grievances, and identity are important factors that lead individuals to join protests, such factors are tested when protesters come into contact with aggressive policing. Given that most high-risk protests involve action against the state, the police are often called upon to suppress protests (della Porta and Fillieule 2007:217). In the 1960s and 1970s, protest policing was based on the philosophy of "escalated force" in which increasing violence on the part of protesters was met with increasing force from police. This approach was primarily aggressive and confrontational in nature.

The brutality of 1960s policing led to an alternative approach, "negotiated management," in the mid-1970s through 1990s. This permit- and negotiation-based approach is focused on the underlying philosophy toward protection of free speech, tolerance for some disruption, deescalation, and the avoidance of police force unless necessary (della Porta and Fillieule 2007; Earl 2011). The protesters and police negotiated the use of protest permits that defined the nature and particulars of the protest in order to decrease disruptiveness from protesters and limit (the need for) police violence (King 2017).

However, as negotiations became less likely, protest policing shifted to "strategic incapacitation," where militarized policing was used to defuse (potential) threats to public order (Noakes and Gillham 2006). Said to be a more sophisticated application of the escalated force approach (King 2017), the strategic incapacitation approach incorporates numerous policing tactics aimed at neutralizing "unruly" protesters through the control of physical space, deployment of new weaponry, increased use of less-lethal weapons, establishment of no-protest zones, strategic use of arrests, and an intensified use of surveillance and infiltration of movement organizations (Gillham and Noakes 2007; Noakes and Gillham 2006).

The degree of repression used by the police (escalated force, negotiated management, strategic incapacitation) varies depending on the level of threat protesters pose to those in power (Earl 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003). Protests that

aim to seize or dismantle state power are often recipients of extreme repressive police action (e.g., Arab Spring Protest in Egypt) compared to those protests that seek reform within an existing sociopolitical order (e.g., protests against sexual assaults on campus). At times, extreme repression has been observed to provoke *greater* levels of protests among the organizations (Earl 2011), as seen in the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War protests in the 1960s. Repressive police action can strengthen commitment among protesters and push them toward radical action (Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005). This kind of police intervention may actually influence the movement: the tolerant and selective styles<sup>7</sup> of protest policing may facilitate the integration of the protest within a complex structure of political bargaining, while repressive protest police tactics may shift the objective of the protest itself to one that focuses on the issue of policing (Escobar 1993).

Others argue that the effects of protest policing on social movements depend on the timing of when repression is applied: the impact of repression during the initial stages of protests strengthens the commitment of individuals already engaged in the movement and motivates future protesters toward participation, while repression that takes place during later parts of demonstrations often hastens its decline (Sullivan 2011). Finally, the effect of protest policing on movements is contingent on the structure of the movement. Hierarchical and strictly structured protests tend to be more susceptible to repression (coercive force becomes more effective with the dismantling of the few people in power), while leaderless, nonhierarchical protests tend to be more resilient to repression, which was the case regarding Occupy Wall Street and rape protests in India (Chaudhuri and Fitzgerald 2015; Sullivan 2011).

Although there is an abundance of literature on police protesting and its effect on social movement organizations (macro), fewer studies focus on individual protesters. Earl (2011:267–268) identifies uneven research on microlevel (impact on individual activists) effects of repression. Presenting a detailed discussion on the effects of repression, Earl (2011) found that whether or not individual protesters are deterred by repression is dependent on the kind of repression and its (il)legitimacy (Opp and Roehl 1990). Regarding the relationship between repression and escalation of protests, Hirsch (1990) found that participants with strong political solidarity may become radicalized with increased repression. Moreover, Opp and Roehl (1990) found that individual protesters become radicalized only when the repression is viewed as unjustified and they are integrated into networks that encourage protests. Furthermore, Earl and colleagues (2003) argue that literature on protest policing and individual protesters has not suggested likely responses beyond deterrence or escalation.

### *Police Repression and Racism*

Across the nation, police force has become increasingly militarized. During the height of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, the first prominent Special

<sup>7</sup> The “softer” policing style implies “the tolerance of a large number of protest groups and a wide range of protest activities, with low reliance upon the use of force and illegal tactics, and the development instead of prevention and negotiation with a flexible implementation of the law” (della porta and Filieule 2007:218).

Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team occurred in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in response to the Watts Riots in 1965 (in which many black and Latino communities rioted after a white officer's reaction during a traffic stop) (Hughey 2015). The use of SWAT teams expanded rapidly as the result of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror, as local police forces became intertwined with efforts from the federal government to combat drugs and terror (Coyne and Hall-Blanco 2016; Dansky 2016). The federal legislation (beginning with section 1208 of the 1990 National Defense Authorization Act and then section 1033 of the 1997 National Defense Authorization Act) authorized the transfer of military-grade equipment (e.g., grenade launchers, fully automatic weapons, armored vehicles, and aircraft) to state and local law enforcement agencies (Coyne and Hall-Blanco 2016; Hughey 2015). Since 1990, more than \$5 billion worth of military equipment has been given to local law enforcement agencies (Musgrave, Meagher, and Dance 2014).

Police militarization is linked disproportionately to disadvantaged racial groups. An examination of thousands of SWAT deployment found that blacks and Latinos were much more likely to be impacted by SWAT deployments than whites, and that the disparity was even greater in drug-related search warrants (ACLU 2014). Additionally, in their examination of more than 15,000 protest events that occurred from 1960 to 1990 in the United States, Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong (2011) found that black protesters were more likely than white protesters to draw police presence and that once at events, police were more likely to take action at black protest events. In fact, they found that police were more likely to use force/violence coupled with arrests at black protest events prior to early 1970s, evidencing a "Protesting While Black" phenomenon. Although the authors found that this phenomenon only occurred in some years when subject's demeanor was taken into account, they conclude that white protesters enjoyed a greater privilege of protests than black demonstrators. Taken together, racial minority groups are often the least able to avoid the unfavorable consequences of aggressive policing.

### *Current Study*

In this article, we explore the following questions on high-risk protests:

- 1 How does protest policing compare among demonstrators with varying degrees of commitment to protests?
- 2 How do experiences with protest policing change across varying degrees of repression?
- 3 How do police tactics and strategies influence protesters' continued commitment to future activism?

Answering these research questions fill several gaps in the literature. First, most studies on protest policing tend to focus on the group of protesters who are making the most impact on the social movements: the leaders and the activists who are so committed that they become radicalized or are deterred with increased repression. However, this study takes into account a wide array of individuals

who engage in protest movements with various levels of commitment, allowing us to consider diverse experiences with protest policing. Second, it is necessary to recognize that not all protest policing is repressive; that is, within the same movement one can observe several styles of protest policing. This study explores varied forms of protest policing within the same movement, giving us an opportunity to observe interaction effects that go beyond the deterrence-escalation predictions and to analyze how these interaction effects impact protesters' motivation toward future activism.

## METHODS

### *Sample*

Data for this article come from a broader study of Ferguson and Baltimore protests. The study draws on in-depth interviews with 102 respondents (65 from Ferguson and 37 from Baltimore) engaged in some form of street protest in Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland, following the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray.<sup>8</sup> In Ferguson, initial and follow-up interviews were conducted in October 2014 and November 2014, respectively, in several locations across the Greater St. Louis metropolitan area, including in a conference room at a local university, in fast food restaurants, coffee shops, and a public library.<sup>9</sup> In Baltimore, interviews were conducted in June 2015 in a local public library and a private office in a church. Interviews in Ferguson and Baltimore occurred two to three months after the deaths of Brown and Gray and during the height of the protests.

Individuals were initially recruited to participate in the project if they engaged in some form of protest (e.g., marches, rallies, demonstrations) following Michael Brown's and Freddie Gray's deaths. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 102 protesters using flyers posted on social media as well as at a local community college, library, and university campus; networks from an editor of a minority newspaper; and by placing an ad in a local minority newspaper.

### *Data and Analytical Strategy*

Data collection involved semistructured interviews, which lasted approximately 45–60 minutes. Respondents were asked to describe the chain of events occurring in Ferguson and Baltimore and their encounters with police following the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Additional questions were asked regarding participants' experiences during protests, and the effect such experiences

<sup>8</sup> Pseudonyms are used throughout.

<sup>9</sup> Follow-up interviews were conducted very close together due to the anticipation of heightened unrest in the city following the upcoming grand jury indictment decision. During the first interview, many protesters believed that Wilson would not be indicted and some speculated that violence and riots would erupt as a result.

<sup>10</sup> Ferguson protesters were asked to detail events occurring in Ferguson and interactions with law enforcement following Michael Brown's death. Baltimore protesters were asked to describe events that emerged in Baltimore and encounters with Baltimore police following Gray's death.

had on protesters' commitment and decision to continue participation.<sup>11</sup> Our goal was to gather data that could provide a relatively holistic assessment of the nature of the social movement and how police handling of protest events affected participants.

Audio recordings of the interview were transcribed, and analyzed using qualitative research software. To begin the analysis, the first author sorted all relevant data into a data set, which included respondents' perceptions of and experiences with police during street demonstrations. We then used inductive analysis techniques to identify common themes. To achieve inter-rater reliability, the first and third author independently coded five cases for each data set, and then conferred to discuss, compare, and refine the codes. Each identified strong patterns tied to respondents' accounts regarding community action, and a codebook was generated for this study. Once the categories were agreed upon, we then independently coded an additional 10 cases to assess and resolve any discrepancies between coders. Cohen's kappa was established at .849, which signifies substantial agreement (Cohen 1960).<sup>12</sup> The first author coded the remaining cases independently.

In our analysis, we identified three original and distinct characteristics that protesters manifested depending on their current commitment to the goals of protest. *Revolutionary protesters* were individuals who participated in some form of collective action every day or every other day. They may have stopped working or going to school, slept outside on multiple occasions following protest events, and/or believed their purpose in life was to facilitate collective action. Overall, they expressed a deep level of commitment to the protest movement.<sup>13</sup> *Intermittent protesters* were those who engaged in some form of collective action at least four or more times, went to work or school but still engaged in collective action efforts because they were committed to the cause. In general, they held a middle-ground commitment to collective action efforts.<sup>14</sup> *Tourist protesters* were classified as people who took part in collective action less than three times, or expressed more curiosity than commitment about the social movement. Overall, their level of commitment was characterized as being in and out.<sup>15</sup>

The data are limited to protesters' accounts of their encounters with protest policing in Ferguson and Baltimore. Our analysis does not assume that protesters have provided full accounts in all instances. However, for the current study what matters is *how* protesters describe their experiences with the police, as activists' understanding of events is likely tied to their future engagement in protests. We attempted to enhance the validity and reliability of the data by questioning protesters about their experiences at multiple points across the interview, by asking about

<sup>11</sup> In Ferguson, the question regarding future commitment to engage in activism was asked in the initial and follow-up interviews that were conducted in October and November 2014, respectively. Questions pertaining to subsequent future activism were asked in the initial interviews in Baltimore.

<sup>12</sup> Cohen's kappa coefficient is a statistic, which measures inter-rater agreement for qualitative (categorical) items.

<sup>13</sup> An example of a revolutionary is Marie, a Latina activist, who stated, "It's my human duty [to protest] ... to not act is a slight on my humanity ... in the first two weeks of the protest, I think I slept four hours in seven days. ... Because there was so much going on."

<sup>14</sup> An example of an intermittent activist is Raymond, a black protester, who asserted "[I] protested a few times ... putting myself out there [to be] supportive enough. ... [I will] keep voicing my opinion."

<sup>15</sup> An example of a tourist protest is Deja, a black activist, who said she got involved initially because "[I was] just being nosy [and wanted] to see what was going on."

protest officers' actions that they witnessed and personally experienced, and by probing for detailed, concrete description of events.

We also began the analysis with a constant comparative approach, which entailed systematic comparisons to search for similar and distinct patterns between types of protesters. This allowed for the refinement or rejection of initially identified analytic patterns (Glaser and Strauss 1967). We also used grounded theory methods, which included the search for and examination of deviant cases (Strauss 1987).

Respondents were also asked about their anticipated involvement in future activism three to six months from the time of the interview on issues surrounding the deaths of Brown and Gray.<sup>16</sup> Responses to anticipated subsequent activism efforts were coded into the following categories: yes, will engage in protest; no, will not engage in protest; or yes, will engage in some other form of community action. Although we are cautious of the generalizability of our findings, this study provides significant insights that may guide future inquiries into the role that protest policing has on protesters' motivation.

## FINDINGS

### *Sample Characteristics*

In Ferguson, the sample included 32 males and 33 females. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 54 with a mean age of 32 years. Among these, there were 60 black, 4 white, and 1 Latina protesters. In terms of educational status, most had some college education, with respondents reporting that they were either currently in college or had attended/taken some college courses. As it relates to economic standing, 34 were currently working part time or full time at the time of the interview and the remainder was unemployed. A total of 39 of the protesters included in the sample lived in the city of Ferguson for an average of more than seven years, while the rest resided in the broader St. Louis area for an average of 17 years. Among the 65 participants, 22 are described as revolutionary, 22 as intermittent, and 21 as tourist protesters.

In Baltimore, the sample of 37 protesters included 15 males and 22 females. Respondents were between 19 and 65 years with an average age of 40 years. Regarding racial/ethnic status, 28 were black, 6 were white, 2 mixed, and 1 Asian. Respondents had varying educational experience with most having a graduate degree,

<sup>16</sup> We chose to focus on short-term involvement in collective action efforts because arguably individuals would have a better idea if they would continue activism efforts in the short term than years down the line. In Ferguson the question about subsequent protest participation was asked during both the initial and follow-up interviews. Of the 65 respondents who reported having engaged in some form of community action, follow-up interviews were conducted with 45 participants (69%). Among these 45 respondents, we relied on their response from the follow-up interviews as to whether they would engage future community action. Among the remaining respondents with whom we did not follow-up, we relied on their response from the initial interview. Respondents gave consistent responses regarding their involvement in subsequent community action with the exception of five cases. In these cases, during the initial interview three stated that they would engage in other community action efforts, one had an unclear response, and one was uncertain in the initial interview; however, in the follow-up interview, all five stated they would continue protesting efforts. In Baltimore, the question about anticipated involvement in future activism was asked during the initial interviews, and follow-up interviews were not conducted.

followed by having a high school diploma/GED, and some having gone to college/university. In terms of economic standing, 21 worked part time or full time and the remainder was unemployed. The vast majority lived in Baltimore for 10 years and the remainder lived in the Baltimore area for an average of 15 years. Among the 37 protesters in Baltimore, 3 were categorized as revolutionary, 13 were intermittent, and 21 were tourist.<sup>17</sup>

In all, protesters in the study reported having had both negative and positive experiences with police in Ferguson and Baltimore prior to the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. Specifically, in Ferguson, 18 revolutionary, 13 intermittent, and 7 tourist protesters experienced negative police encounters; in Baltimore two revolutionary, eight intermittent, and nine tourist protesters reported such encounters. Regarding positive encounters, in Ferguson, six revolutionary, four intermittent, and three tourist protesters experienced positive police interactions, while in Baltimore, three revolutionary, seven intermittent, and six tourist protesters described having experienced positive encounters with local police. Although most activists in the study described experiencing unfavorable encounters with police, some acknowledged favorable police interactions.

### *Protester Perceptions on Repressive Protest Policing Tactics*

We asked protesters in our sample a series of questions to examine their experiences with and perceptions of protest policing during protest events in Ferguson and Baltimore. First, we asked respondents to discuss their perceptions of how police handled the outcry from community members following the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. Second, respondents were questioned whether they had contact with police after Brown's and Gray's deaths, and to describe the encounter(s). Below, we provide in-depth descriptions of the three most common themes in our data regarding how officers handled protesters. This entailed acts of intimidation (arrests, surveillance, perceived hostility, and verbal assault); escalated use of force and selective incapacitation, including violent repressive tactics (use of tear gas and rubber bullets, and physical force), which was most commonly reported among Ferguson protesters; and negotiated management strategies coupled with strategic incapacitation, which was common among Baltimore street protesters.

#### *Acts of Intimidation*

*Surveillance* Some Ferguson protesters in our study emphasized the risk of being targets of police surveillance (N = 8). Describing protesters who engage in confrontational tactics, Luke, a white revolutionary protester, questioned the wisdom of such an approach: “[Do you think] they [the police are] gonna forget that you threw bottles at them? That you got in their face? That you cursed them out? That you didn’t listen to what they say? . . . [The police are] identifying people [and] profiling even

<sup>17</sup> There were a larger number of revolutionary activists in Ferguson than Baltimore. During the interviews, the first author learned that recruitment flyers were made and distributed to protesters at a demonstration by an activist. This resulted in a larger number of revolutionaries in Ferguson than Baltimore.

protesters, and doing whatever type of surveillance.” Many black revolutionary activists acknowledged that they were in fact surveilled by law enforcement as they engaged in public demonstrations. DeShawn, a black demonstrator, stated that the Ferguson Police Department “take[s] picture[s] of everybody that’s out there every single day. Every rally. Every protest. . . . They taking pictures of license plates. . . . I’ve been followed to my home.” Several other revolutionary protesters asserted that police followed them home. Donte, a black protester, explained:

The sheriff went to my mom’s house three times trying to find me. . . . [T]he only reason I can think of is because I’m out here protesting and the cops are trying to target who they feel is a threat to them. I’m not standing out there saying, “F\*ck you, I’m going to shoot you.” But they got their cameras out. . . . [The police target me and] other men and women that be out there.

Overall, protesters who were vocal in challenging police violence against unarmed men placed themselves at risk of being targeted by police. While some identified surveillance tactics as the state’s attempt to subdue the voices of those heavily involved in activism and suppress the social movement, for revolutionary activists such acts only served to intensify their resolve to continue with their collective action efforts and push for change (see Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005). We discuss this in more detail in the next section.

*Perceived Hostility* In the study, nine Ferguson protesters noted many hostile actions that law enforcement took, which left them feeling dehumanized. Rachel, a black intermittent protester, recounted an incident illustrating the actual launching of a dog in a mass crowd:

I had my two little girls. And everybody was talking about a peaceful protest. This was the night that the riots broke out. And we were up there. Our protest was in the middle of the street. The police came out across the street up near Ferguson. They had dogs. They were in riot gear with the shields up and their sticks and their helmet on. . . . That just felt so intimidating. . . . And then somebody had a soda. . . . took the soda, and threw it over the crowd and hit the police cars. When they did that, the police launched the dogs. They didn’t let them go, but they launched it. And the crowd started running back. And there was a lot of people out there. So my little girls. . . . I grabbed them. I put them between my legs like this and I held them like this because I didn’t want them to get trampled and fall.

The use of canines against protesters evoked memories of demonstrators who protested against racial inequality in Birmingham, Alabama, during the 1960s civil rights movement where dogs were unleashed and fire hoses were used on peaceful demonstrators. Tyrone, a black revolutionary activist, summed up that officers’ action during the Ferguson protest was “their modern way of spraying water and siccing dogs on you.”

Others noted the racial nature of some officers that further exacerbated tensions between the two groups. Several described the police smiling and laughing at them as they demonstrated. Dyshelle, a black revolutionary activist, described that officers “smirk in your face, walk up on you with the dog, [and] I’ll hear little whispers.” Others believed the behavior of protest officers was intentional. Javon, a black revolutionary protester, noted, “When I’m on the front lines. . . . all I get is winks, smiles, kisses, and racial slurs. . . . Like ‘we just waiting on the right moment’—type sh\*t. Like ‘I got you’ . . . it’s to agitate.”

*Verbal Assault* The use of racist language by police toward demonstrators was also reported. In particular, 11 Ferguson protesters, all of whom were black, described experiencing verbal assaults. However, such sentiments were more commonly reported among black revolutionary activists' (N = 6) who were on the front lines. According to revolutionary respondents, officers spoke to them in a belligerent manner, calling them names and using racial slurs. Donte, for example, lamented, cops will yell, "Get the f\*ck off the street, ni\*ger. B\*tch move. F\*ck you." Monique reported that officers who policed protests were disrespectful because "[they] called us monkeys and ni\*gers." This sentiment was caught on YouTube, as a Ferguson officer is video recorded saying to protesters, "Bring it, all you f\*\*king animals bring it" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQuo5-ewDR8>). This led Monique, along with many others, to conclude that Ferguson officers "[t]hey're racist."

Demeaning police behavior could lead individuals to respond in kind (see also Terrill 2003). For instance, a few protesters acknowledged that they countered back by verbally insulting officers in these situations. Donte, a revolutionary protester, detailed being dragged out of his car by an officer after leaving a demonstration, asserting the cop told him to "[s]hut the f\*ck up, ni\*ger." After the officer "talked crazy to me," Donte retorted, "[w]ho the f\*ck you talking to?" Such exchange of insults has the potential to escalate to serious forms of abuse, as the officer subsequently beat Donte with a weapon. Prior studies have shown that citizens' demeanor is often shaped by police officers' actions toward them (Gau and Brunson 2010; Payne, Hitchens, and Chambers 2017); thus, belligerent or demoralizing police behavior has the potential to exacerbate a situation and subject citizens to more serious kinds of misbehavior.

*Arrests* Another act of intimidation reported by 25 protesters was the threat of (or actual) arrest during protest events. Specifically, 21 Ferguson protesters made such remarks compared to only 4 in Baltimore. Among Ferguson protesters, Deja, a black tourist activist, mentioned that the drawback of protesting was the "risk of being arrested. . . . During all of it, they [the police] were just arresting people to get them off the street. I've heard of them arresting people for crossing the street, saying that they were in the street." Derrell, a black intermittent, concurred, stating the police were "telling protesters to stay off the street, or if they don't, they getting grabbed up and locked up." As a consequence, Leonetta, a black revolutionary protester, acknowledged that "I'm normally to the back. . . . I'm never on the front line [protesting]. . . [because] I, for one, am not willing to go to jail."

Protesters in Baltimore also reported having witnessed demonstrators' arrest following Gray's death. However, mass arrests were said to occur after looting and rioting took place in the city of Baltimore, which resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency and the deployment of the National Guard by Governor Hogan on the evening of April 27, 2015 (Police Executive Research Forum 2015). Demarco, a black Baltimore intermittent protester, stated during that period of time "[j]ust being with a group of people meant you was going in cuffs. . . . [The police] would straight stop you, jump out, get out the van [with] zip ties, throw everybody in the van." Others asserted that police arrested people who violated

curfew. More than 200 people were arrested for curfew violation during this time period in Baltimore (Police Executive Research Forum 2015).

Demonstrators who protested on the front lines and engaged in confrontations with the police were more likely to be arrested. In particular, eight protesters (seven protesters from Ferguson and one from Baltimore) reported having been arrested while protesting, all of whom were revolutionary activists with the exception of one.<sup>18</sup> Carlos, a black relative of Michael Brown, admitted, “I got arrested four times.” Likewise, Tyrone, a black young activist, explained that while protesting, he and other protesters “linked up and held arms together. [But] they [the police] singled me out. . . . They just caught me off guard while I was protesting. Grabbed me and like a couple of other people.” Admittedly, several revolutionary protesters acknowledged engaging in civil acts of disobedience or orchestrating takeovers of public spaces; thus, they faced greater repression. Other revolutionary activists on the front lines, like Tyrone, became recipients of strategic incapacitation, or targeted policing, as they were viewed as disruptive protesters who attempt to disrupt the social order.

The incidents described in this section—surveillance, perceived hostility, verbal assault, and arrests—represent common practices of protest policing. While a sizable proportion of our sample included revolutionary demonstrators who had personal experiences of this kind, these police tactics further undermined their legitimacy in the eyes of activists. Moreover, such coercive police action also served to erode the legitimacy of governing authorities among tourist and intermittent protesters, as they observed how more vocal activists were treated and/or personally experienced repressive actions even amid peaceful demonstrators.

### *Violent Repressive Tactics*

*Tear Gas and Rubber Bullets* In Ferguson, 32 protesters reported that law enforcement relied on less lethal, yet extreme, measures to manage protests, including the deployment of tear gas and shooting rubber bullets at demonstrators and other chemical weapons during protest events. Only one Baltimore protester reported this theme. Such accounts were common across race/ethnicity and different types of protesters. Clayton, a black tourist explained:

That tear gas burned and they [the police] was just throwing it. . . throwing it at everything and they blocked both sides so you can't run anywhere. . . . And the tear gas hurt and they just, you know, was throwing the tear gas for no reason. That was the only time where I felt like, “OK, they don't care, they don't care who they hurting, they don't care if its kids or they don't care if you out here to protest in a positive way.”. . . They against us, they want to hurt us. . . . That day, that was the worst I ever felt about the police. It was like “OK, this what you get.” They was treating us like we're animals.

Clayton was clearly distraught that officers would use repressive tactics to control a crowd that was comprised of men, women, and children. According to the After Action report in Ferguson, some law enforcement representatives stated that the

<sup>18</sup> The only exception was Dylan, a white male intermittent protester, who was a legal observer. After leaving a demonstration and walking toward his car, an officer told him to cross the street. When Dylan tried to explain that he was going toward his car, the officer insisted. Dylan disregarded the officer's command and was subsequently arrested and charged for obstructing traffic on the sidewalk.

use of tear gas and pepper spray by the police was an attempt to control dissident protesters and disperse demonstrators (see Institute for Intergovernmental Research 2015). However, protesters found such actions troubling particularly when used during peaceful demonstrations, which reaffirmed some of their beliefs that the police are biased against blacks. For instance, Yolanda, a black tourist, claimed, “I thought this was a democracy. So we don’t have a right to walk down the streets and protest peacefully?” For some, law enforcement’s use of military weapons, which are designed for combat, only served to undermine police legitimacy. This has a wide range of policy implications because if civilians who are policed feel as if they are treated as a military enemy, public trust is weakened (Dansky 2016). Research has shown that trust is vital in maintaining public safety and controlling crime (Tyler and Fagan 2008). Dansky (2016:62) reported that “[w]hen police respond with an unnecessary degree of force or a military appearance, they risk turning what might otherwise be a peaceful encounter into a violent attack.” For many protesters, the use of tear gas and rubber bullets represented police militarization. Such tactics were largely viewed as extreme, dangerous, and unacceptable, as it not only incited fear among crowds but also placed demonstrators’ safety at risk.

Such repressive tactics from the police also fueled further anger among some black protesters, resulting in animosity against police. For example, Rueben, an intermittent protester, asserted, “It made people want to basically attack them [the police]. That’s what their reaction was when people was throwing tear gas back at them.” Willie, a tourist activist, explained, “I understand you have to maintain control, I understand that. But I think that force against force never works. It’s just gonna erupt. For every action there is an equally or better, greater reaction.” Thus, the use of tear gas and rubber bullets were viewed by many demonstrators as a heavy-handed, unjust police response, and incited legitimate emotions of anger and animosity directed at law enforcement.

*Gun Threats* In Ferguson, 12 revolutionary, 7 intermittent, and 4 tourist protesters mentioned threats of gun use by police.<sup>19</sup> Evelyn, a black tourist protester, stated that she chose to protest during the day because she knew police “wouldn’t have the rifles pointed at you.” Other revolutionary activists recalled having guns pointed right at them while protesting in the evening. Consider the account of Javon, a black activist, regarding his experience with protest policing:

They was saying that we had to leave. . . and as we was leaving they stood in front of the car, pulled out [an] AK-47, put it to my head, told me don’t move, got me out the car, and said we had a Molotov bomb on us. . . [A]ll of them [the police] had they guns drawn. We had a pickup truck, so we had people on the back of the truck and people on the inside. . . I was on the passenger side, my cousin was driving. And he [the officer] put his gun to me, was like, “Don’t move. Let me see your hands.” But I already had my hands up, though, because it’s “hands up, don’t shoot” anyway. . . He told me to get out, gun still drawn to my head, and I’m like, “Why is you got the gun out for? I’m only peaceful protesting.” And he put me in the [hand]cuff and. . . they had me to the ground for like two hours.

Luke, a white revolutionary activist, further explained, “I just don’t think when predominantly a peaceful protest with men, women, grandmothers, grandfathers, [and]

<sup>19</sup> Only one diligent protester reported this as a theme in Baltimore.

children [are] in the crowd, that they should be subject to loaded live M16s raised in their face.” Luke cites a controversial tactic used in the military, which was the use of “overwatch,” a “technique intended to provide a layer of security for officers and citizens by having a sniper monitor armed threats from a higher position that provides the sniper a better view” (Institute for Intergovernmental Research 2015:56). While such an approach is used as an active-shooter defense tactic in mass gatherings, it is deemed an ineffective and inappropriate strategy for crowd control (Institute for Intergovernmental Research 2015). Not only does such behavior instill fear and alarm among those peacefully protesting, but this approach further increased the perception among protesters that police were reacting in a militaristic manner.

*Physical Violence* In addition to the threat of gun use by police, 14 activists in the study reported having witnessed or endured physical assault from law enforcement. However, revolutionary activists (N = 11) were more likely to report having witnessed or experienced physical force from officers than the other types of protesters (N = 3), as detailed in the accounts below. For instance, Donte, a black protester, describes a personal encounter he had with an officer *after* protesting:

I’m assuming he [the officer] had to be watching me because when I left [the demonstration], he flagged me over [pulled me over]. . . . He walked up to my car. He dragged me out of the car and he threw me on the ground. He searched my car. He threw all my clothes and the poster is outside the car or whatever. . . . And then he threw me on the ground. So I ask him why? What’s the cause for? He told me, “Shut the f\*ck up, ni\*ger.” . . . As a man—Donte Smith, as a man, I’m not going to lie to nobody. He talked crazy to me, so I said something to him. . . . [I said] who the f\*ck you talking to? . . . He took out his night club, stick, or whatever and hit me with it. Now, this is at eleven o’clock at night.

Women were not exempt from enduring such physical assault. Asia, a black revolutionary activist, recalled that she and her daughter witnessed a young activist “get hog-tied. . . . They [the police] choked her and hog-tied her.” Darius, a black protester, recounted the same incident, stating officers “knocked one of my organizational members. . . . knocked her out. . . . They hog-tied her and everything.” Several demonstrators in Ferguson described the escalated force approach with which police responded: a dramatic show of force, pointing sniper rifles at peaceful protesters, flooding demonstrators with tear gas, shooting rubber bullets to disperse the crowd, and, at times, using excessive force against demonstrators.

Overall, protesters in all three categories described and complained about aggressive police force. However, revolutionary activists were more likely to explain repressive actions they witnessed or experienced multiple times firsthand during their active participation in protest events. Perhaps this is not surprising, as revolutionary protesters who were on the front lines were more vocal about denouncing police brutality compared to other types of protesters in the study and, thus, more likely to challenge the authority of law enforcement.

### *Negotiated Management and Selective Incapacitation Policing Tactics*

While all protesters expressed feelings of fear and anger toward the repressive and militarized tactics that police used during demonstrations, Baltimore protesters

responded in very distinct ways. During the onset of protests in Baltimore, the police department initially responded with force restraint. In fact, there was no deployment of lethal force and minimal to no deployment of less lethal force when protests initially began (Links et al. 2015). As a result, Baltimore protesters ( $N = 7$ ) had more favorable impressions of protest police than protesters in Ferguson. Jonathan, a black tourist protester, stated that during one protest that he attended, the “police was talking to [demonstrators]. . . and the police wasn’t aggressive at all that day.” Breeann, a black intermittent, agreed, asserting that “the police handled things very well. . . . They stood their ground, but they were very peaceful.” Even those who did not have favorable perceptions of the police acknowledged that police responded appropriately. In her discussion of police in Baltimore, Deanna a black tourist protester, admitted, “I think they did all right. . . . I think probably [they did] all right [because] they could have done a lot of killing, which would have only made thing worst.” Deanna’s statement is in line with a report prepared by the Johns Hopkins University Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response, which stated that “force restraint likely prevented further escalation of crowd activity and damage to community, as well as preventing longer-term damage to BPD-community relationships” (Link et al. 2015:14).

Nevertheless, the tactical strategies used by the BPD were not without problems, as the soft approach eventually became militarized. The city leadership in Baltimore suggested a “de facto strategy of negotiated management and mass demonstration force restraint” (Links et al. 2015). This “soft approach” strategy required officers not to engage protesters, avoid arrests, and wear regular uniform without helmets and gloves so as not to provoke an incident (Baltimore City Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #3 2015). Police initially used this approach during the onset of protests; however, the BPD did not operate with a formal plan to handle mass demonstrations. In fact, the after-action analysis of Baltimore City’s response to the unrest declared that a lack of a strategy to address mass demonstrations coupled with overlapping chains of command, and poor communication internally and with the public, created a host of problems (Links et al. 2015).

Consequently, as protests turned violent, police took on a more militarized response. The soft approach soon turned aggressive when the BPD gathered intelligence that demonstrations would take place at the Mondawmin Mall, a transit hub for Maryland Transit Administration buses and Baltimore Public School (BPS) students. When the BPD learned that some BPS students called for a “purge” (a reference to a 2013 movie in which any crime could be committed without punishment during a 12-hour period, once a year), dozens of police with riot gear, helmets, and shields confronted students. Some students responded angrily by throwing debris, bricks, and rocks at them, and a SWAT armored response vehicle deployed a chemical agent and smoke to disperse the crowd. As looting and rioting took place, the police response became more militarized. Police not only donned riot gears, helmets, and shields, but they also resorted to armored response vehicles and pepper spray balls to disperse crowds (Police Executive Research Forum 2015). The initial strategy of force restraint quickly evolved into a militarized response from law enforcement similar to that of Ferguson, Missouri.

Nevertheless, in the current study, Baltimore protesters had more favorable perceptions of how police handled events than Ferguson protesters. Perhaps the initial use of force restraint appeased protesters' views that police gave them the opportunity to exercise their right to protest. But with the increasing militarization of police tactics, such opinions changed quickly.

### *Type of Protester and Future Community Action*

In addition to street protesters' experiences with and perceptions of protest policing, we asked whether protesters would participate in collective action three to six months from the time of interview. Of the 102 respondents, 85 participants described subsequent involvement in future protests.<sup>20</sup> A fairly even distribution of response to this question was found, but responses varied by the type of protester. Specifically, revolutionary activists remained wholly committed to continuing participation in future protests, as most were willing to sacrifice individual interests in favor of the collective cause. However, intermittent demonstrators were willing to engage in subsequent activism as long as it remained peaceful or partake in other forms of community action. Tourist protesters were less likely to report future involvement in demonstrations given the risks; however, they reported various ways they would continue to engage in community efforts. Table I summarizes the extent of negative protest policing for each group of protesters, and their responses in relation to the questions on future participation in protests and community action.

### *Revolutionary Protesters and Future Activism*

The majority (N = 17) of revolutionary activists in our sample reported commitment to continue future protests. Revolutionary protesters were insistent in remaining active in subsequent protest movements even though they had experienced repressive tactics from police. For example, despite being locked up for protesting, Darius, a black Ferguson demonstrator, claimed that he would continue to engage in protest activity because "we want to see a change." Marie, a Latina Ferguson activist, vowed to continue protest efforts "as long as it takes." She acknowledged that after police were "throwing tear gas canisters. . . [and] pointing me out in a protest. . . [it] solidified that I would [continue to] be active."

In fact, some Ferguson protesters were adamant to see change even if it cost them their lives. Carlos, a relative of Brown's, declared that "I will not stop protesting because it's my family, and if you want me to stop protesting, you have to put a bullet in my head to do that because I will be out here every day strong." Notwithstanding reports of having been assaulted, targeted, and arrested by the police, Carlos remained resolute in engaging in protest events. Despite being recorded by police while on the front lines, Asia, a black activist, insisted that she would continue to demonstrate on the streets asserting, "I'm doing this for a reason. [I would]

<sup>20</sup> Data were missing for 6 participants, and 11 were uncertain about future protest involvement or their response was unclear.

**Table I.** Summary of Responses Related to Protest Policing and Participation in Future Activism or Community Action Among Ferguson and Baltimore Protesters\*

	Repressive Protest Policing Tactics					Future Participation in Protests		Future Participation in Community Action		
	Rubber bullets and tear gas	Physical force	Arrests	Surveillance	Perceived hostility	Verbal assault	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Revolutionaries</b>	11	13	11	8	4	6	17	0	4	4
<b>Intermittent</b>	15	7	8	0	3	2	16	0	16	16
<b>Tourists</b>	7	4	6	1	2	3	6	8	6	18
<b>Total</b>	33	24	25	9	9	11	40	8	37	37

\*Respondents reported more than one subcategory of repressive policing tactics. What we have in Table I is a summary of all responses to each subcategory. Thus, the responses are not mutually exclusive.

rather die out of the outcome or I'm in a history book. . . . I'm doing it for a purpose."

Others remained reluctant to put their lives on the line; yet, they remained wholly committed to engaging in demonstrations. In response to where she would be in three to six months as it relates to community action, Devanta, a black revolutionary Ferguson demonstrator, acknowledged the risk of protesting, stating, "I don't want to see myself in jail or. . . dead or nothing like that [for protesting]." Nevertheless, Devanta had every intention of continuing to protest against police violence. Rather than retreating fearfully back into their homes, revolutionary activists remained committed to taking to the streets to demonstrate and responded to threats by developing a greater resolve to continued protest participation.

Four revolutionary demonstrators, all of whom are persons of color, reported that while they did not plan on continuing on with subsequent protests, they intended to engage in various community efforts to affect change. Dyshelle, a black Ferguson activist, stated in the next three to six months "[I will be doing] less protesting but getting more into the community." She said she planned to work with different organizations, "to be an advocate [against] police brutality." Consider Amber's strong commitment to continue to bring about change in Baltimore:

I'm still here on the front line, I'm still doing the work with. . . programs that are geared towards disadvantaged or disenfranchised young people. . . . I'm connected with a lot of different city leaders.

Amber, a black protester, emphasized the need to build political power and determine the direction of her city and state by voting. She was not alone in her efforts to foster political power. Jason, a mixed-race black Baltimorean, described his plans to work with politicians:

I'm working currently with the House Majority Whip Dwayne Haynes. . . and Antonio Hanes who's the delegate for my neighborhood and I can see myself working on either one of their campaigns and whoever is running for mayor. I hope to work on one of their campaigns so that we can have someone inside of these positions of power. Someone that's going to work for the people. . . because it's broken.

Overall, threats and actual repression by authorities, particularly in Ferguson, created internal solidarity among the vast majority of revolutionary protesters to either continue participation in protest movements or engage in community action efforts to bring about change.

### *Intermittent Protesters and Future Activism*

Similar to revolutionary activists, many intermittent protesters indicated that they would continue to engage in future protest demonstrations. Specifically, 16 intermittent demonstrators, all of whom were black, reported plans to remain active in protest movements. Brittany, a black Ferguson activist, proclaimed, "I followed this the first day, the exact first day that it happened, and I have continued and I will continue." Others, particularly Ferguson protesters, emphasized they would continue to be involved as long as street protests remained nonviolent. Rachel, a black Ferguson protester, explained, "I'm not getting involved in anything that's

going to threaten me to have to go to jail. I don't want to go to jail as a protester. When they're out with that tear gas and all of that I don't come out." Although intermittent protesters reported plans to engage in future protest, as Rachel described, involvement remained contingent on demonstrations being free of violence.

Many intermittent demonstrators asserted that they would get more involved in the community. In particular, 16 intermittent protesters, across race/ethnicity made such assertions.<sup>21</sup> Brown's and Gray's deaths shed light on problems within the community, such as unemployment, underemployment, poverty, and lack of resources. As a result, intermittent protesters chose to become more engaged in the neighborhood. Specifically, several demonstrators anticipated taking a more hands-on approach to assist neighborhood youth. Asked about her short-term plans with community action, Ebony, a black Ferguson activist, asserted, "My number one thing is I'm volunteering working with young people." Jack, a white Baltimore protester, planned to engage with a specific organization "that's youth-led."

Others were committed to connecting with others to have difficult conversations about race. As a white Baltimore activist, Emma said,

Trying to undo racism. . . . One group is not going to [do] it, but I think like having these difficult conversions as a start and really critically analyzing like how our institutions operate and how our society operates and like what could have like organizing can do to change these systems for the better.

In general, contrary to revolutionary protesters, most intermittent demonstrators were not willing to endure the threat of arrest or personal safety to engage in collective street action; however, they were motivated to engage in protest movements if they remained peaceful and also participate in other forms of action within the community.

### *Tourist Protesters and Future Activism*

Eighteen tourist activists, regardless of race, planned to participate in some level of community action. In Ferguson, some sought to avoid protest events given its risks. Kent, a white demonstrator who loathed the aggressive manner in which officers responded to Ferguson protesters, said that he was recently asked to "join a committee to archive people's narratives on their experiences of Ferguson and in St. Louis." Since he "thought that would be a good way to honor people's experiences," he planned to serve on this committee. Like intermittent protesters, other tourist activists anticipated that they would become politically engaged. For instance, after being involved in a street demonstration, Diamond and her husband, both black Ferguson protesters, agreed that she should cease protest involvement after police launched tear gas and shot rubber bullets at protesters. But she vowed to stay politically engaged, "mak[ing] sure that I'm vot[ing]. . . [to] make a difference." The desire to build political power was not just reported by Ferguson demonstrators but also Baltimore protesters. While Helen,

<sup>21</sup> Two reported being uncertain if they would continue with future activism efforts and one respondent's reply was unclear.

a black demonstrator, reported that protest police in Baltimore were “quiet” when she protested, she desired to “teach about the political process [and] the political system.” She planned to create a blog so that community residents “know who your politicians are and what they’ve done.” As evidenced in these accounts, some chose to engage the community in ways that would effect positive change.

Others were motivated to reach out to the youth. Toby, a black Ferguson demonstrator who attended a protest and rally, said as a pastor, he “may not be marching... [but he would start] mentoring... and really focus[ing] on young people... to make sure our young people are well informed [so] they don’t have to suffer.” In a similar vein, Reginald, a black demonstrator in Ferguson, said that despite the fact that police operated in a “very militaristic, threatening way” toward protesters,” he saw himself “being more involved in some of the... community organizations for young people.”

Nevertheless, six tourist protesters, all of whom were black, did report that they would engage in future protests; yet, this was contingent on several factors. A couple surmised that they would be involved if their schedule permitted. When asked about subsequent activism efforts in the next few months, Daniella, a black Baltimore protester, stated she would participate “if it works around like my kids’ schedule... [and] it doesn’t interfere with anything I have to do being a mom.” Javonte, a black Ferguson activist noted, “If they have another protest or two, if it’s near me and if I have time, I’ll go to it.”

However, eight tourist demonstrators refused to continue with subsequent protests. In particular, the use of such repressive tactics used by police served to deter Ferguson demonstrators from continuing efforts with street protests. Latoya, a black demonstrator, admitted, “After my experiences and things that I’ve seen... I’m not afraid to admit that I’m a little scared to get involved.” Crystal, a black tourist protester, had similar sentiments, asserting, “I’m scared of how they’re [police are] going to react to the people protesting.” And Isabelle expressed that after police were “throwing tear gas bombs... [and some] started looting, I backed down... I was scared, you know, because I don’t want to get killed.” For these reasons, several made a conscious decision to avoid participation in subsequent demonstrations all together, as they felt officers’ actions engendered fear (see also Boykoff 2006).

Overall, our study findings show that revolutionary protesters, who had deep emotional commitment to activism efforts and believed in the goal of systemic reform of the criminal justice system, were more likely than tourist and intermittent demonstrators to remain motivated to engage in subsequent street protests. While some intermittent protesters also intended to partake in activism efforts on the streets, this was contingent on demonstrations remaining nonviolent. However, tourist and intermittent activists remained wholly committed to involvement in subsequent community action efforts rather than protesting in the streets. Even though some were deterred from engaging in street protests because of police tactics, most remained determined to engage the community through other means, such as mentoring youth or encouraging residents to vote during elections.

## CONCLUSION

The question of why people protest has garnered substantial attention in the scholarly literature. Scholars have identified numerous factors that play a role in the initiation and escalation of protest events (see Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013) by examining the macrocontext in which social movement organizations are embedded (Cress and Snow 2000). However, research on microlevel repercussions of repression are limited (Earl 2011) and fewer studies have explored how repressive tactics impact individual protesters' motivation to engage in future activism.

The current study extends previous research through our comparative analysis of the perceptions of and experiences with protest policing among protesters in Ferguson and Baltimore in several ways. First, we distinguish protesters with varying levels of commitment and create a typology to determine whether such a framework explains how protesters experience protest policing. Through this categorization our study findings highlight the significance of protesters' degree of commitment—both as a schema through which protesters understood repressive police actions and as a feature affecting involvement in subsequent protest events and mobilization. Moreover, our research confirms the utility of examining different styles of protest policing (e.g., escalated force, negotiated management, selective incapacitation). It suggests that examining varying degrees of police repression and responses to state officials—beyond deterrence and escalation predications—is an important avenue to better understand its effect on future activism (Earl 2011).

Our findings indicated that all groups experienced violent repressive policing through direct or indirect encounters, which is an expected outcome in a high-risk movement. There was consensus in how protesters with varying degrees of commitment viewed the violence: as illegitimate, racially motivated, and one that targeted innocent protesters. Experience with repressive examples of protest policing was concentrated heavily among the revolutionary protesters due perhaps to their being more vocal and demonstrative in their challenges to police. For example, almost all participants in the revolutionary group of protesters directly experienced being tear gassed, shot at with rubber bullets, physical force, arrests, surveillance, perceived hostility and/or verbal abuse from the police. In contrast, though intermittent and tourist protesters observed or had some interactions with such tactics from the police, their experience with other forms of repressive procedures was limited, as they were less likely to be on the front lines challenging the authority of law enforcement. In fact, some tourist protesters limited their activism efforts to the day where police tactics were less repressive.

We also found that the stronger the commitment toward demonstrations, the more likely protesters were to engage in future street protests, as they were not affected by repressive protest policing. In fact, the vast majority of revolutionary activists, which comprised largely of blacks, vowed to engage in future activism efforts even after experiencing high levels of aggressive police action. Consistent with extant studies, we found that repression strengthened commitment among revolutionary activists, as they remained dedicated to engaging in subsequent collective action (Hirsch 1990; Opp and Roehl 1990). Hence, this group remained resilient and undeterred by police action. In contrast, for both tourist and intermittent

protesters, which included black and white activists, oppressive tactics by protest police appeared to serve as a deterrent to street protests. Although both tourist and intermittent activists were not willing to risk their personal safety by participating in street protests, they were motivated to engage in other forms of action within the community, such as mentoring youths or encouraging community members to vote.

So what do the above findings imply regarding the impact of repressive tactics on protesters motivation? We found some but limited evidence on the impact of protest policing on deescalation or deterrence of protests. On the contrary, individuals who were already very committed to the movement continued to be actively engaged. While protest policing had some influence on the tourist protesters' participation in street protests, they adapted different ways to engage in the overall ideological goals of the BLM movement through community action. In other words, while some groups of protesters may have felt intimidated by directly experiencing repressive tactics, their motivation to become involved in ways to change the racially biased institutions and policies within society at large was not impacted, reaffirming their commitment to the overall ideological goals of the protests.

Notwithstanding there are some limitations to the present study. First, our sample is limited to a modest sample of protesters in Ferguson and Baltimore, which does not permit conclusive generalizations to the larger population of protesters. Second, the data do not include officers' accounts of interactions. Individuals may misconstrue the actions of police, and some may act in a confrontational or aggressive manner toward officers, which may result in forceful behavior toward such individuals. In other words, the current data do not allow us to weigh the veracity of respondents' reported experiences. However, the after-action review and analyses of regional police response to mass demonstrations in the aftermath of Michael Brown's and Freddie Gray's deaths was used to corroborate the data.

Third, there were two different methodological protocols that were used between the Ferguson and Baltimore sample. While the Ferguson sample had both an original and follow-up interview one month later, the Baltimore sample was interviewed only once. Since Ferguson activists were interviewed twice, they may have a better sense for their continued protest commitment than Baltimore activists who were interviewed once.

Despite these limitations, our research highlights the insights to be gained by examining how activists with differing commitment levels experience protest policing across varying degrees of police repression, and how that subsequently affects their future collective action. Our findings provide strong evidence that increased police repression motivates some toward stronger collective action while deterring others. Yet, even among those who are deterred from future protests, extreme police tactics motivate many to engage in subsequent forms of civic engagement and community action.

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