Policing the Anticommunity: Race, Deterritorialization, and Labor Market Reorganization in South Los Angeles

Aaron Roussell

Recent decades have seen the rise of both community partnerships and the carceral state. Community policing in Los Angeles arose after the 1992 uprisings and was built on two conceptual building blocks—the territorial imperative and community partnership—which remain central more than 20 years later. At the same time, LA has undergone a significant black-to-Latino demographic shift linked with its restructured economy. This article discusses these changes using archival analysis and 5 years of participant observation in one South LA precinct. Police help to reshape the demography of South LA in ways conducive to post-Fordist economic shifts. The “community” concept appropriated by urban governance initiatives is composed against the unwanted “anticommunity,” which serves to heighten territorial control over black and Latino residents. Rather than encourage community cogovernance over the institution of policing, community rhetoric facilitates racial preference in neighborhood transition under the auspices of an increasingly bifurcated labor market.

The rise of community partnerships in urban governance has increasingly dominated the discussion on crime, law, social services, and institutional initiatives (Brown 2010; Herbert and Brown 2006; Hughes and Edwards 2002; Myers and Goddard 2013; Rose 1996). A parallel trend, referred to by such phrases as the carceral state, the prison nation, and the new social control, has seen the rise of mass incarceration, as well as the increased regulation and surveillance of public space and black and brown populations (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Foucault 1995; Gelman, Fagan, and Kiss 2007; Richie 2012; Stuart 2011). Implicated in both of these currents has been the adoption of...
community policing by nearly every major urban police force in the country (Johnson and Roth 2003), a tactical and philosophical shift which purports to reconnect urban populations with those agents the state has assigned to protect citizens and maintain order. Focusing on the shifting demographic and economic terrain of Los Angeles, this article describes ways in which community policing helps remake urban neighborhoods. The community in community policing, rather than reflecting organic notions of residents, conforms to police notions of territorial control.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) began implementing community policing in 1992, in tandem with the national push for such initiatives. This effort was not a spontaneous desire to engage more closely with LA residents, but rather a political response to the 1991 police beating of motorist Rodney King and the 1992 uprisings that followed the acquittal of his assailants by a white jury in Ventura County. Residents, particularly in majority black and Latino South LA where the uprisings began, exerted collective pressure to combat police racism and brutality (Costa Vargas 2006; Davis 1993a; Loyd 2012). The independent Christopher Commission Report generated in the interim recommended community policing as one way to make police “accountable to all segments of the community” and create a more “positive relationship” with the community (1991: 105–106). The LAPD’s resulting community policing approach remains the official response to calls for police accountability in LA.

Although the popular image of South Los Angeles is that of an African-American ghetto—a “spatially segregated and contiguous Black community” (Patillo 2003: 1046)—black residence began to decline in the early 1980s from a height of about 85 percent. By 2007, South LA was over half Latino and nearly one-third immigrant, a number which certainly undercounts the undocumented population (Hipp et al. 2010). Families with means of all ethnoracial groups have left South LA for the LA Harbor, Long Beach, and the suburbs (Davis 1993b; Soja 2014). As Costa Vargas (2006) suggests, South LA “is quickly becoming the exclusive home of the brown and black California version of the lumpenproletariat, and as such has become the site for an unprecedented volume of imprisonment and deaths” (28)—a broad statement supported by other LA researchers (Davis 2006; Stuart 2011; Valle and Torres 2000). Linking demographic transition to urban governance, he suggests that up to 14 percent of black outmigration from LA in the 1980s and 1990s was due solely to the forced migration of incarceration.
These demographic shifts are also linked to the vast urban restructuring that LA has undergone since the 1970s (Soja 2014; Soja, Morales, and Wolff 1983). The rise of LA's bifurcated service and information economy in place of its postwar manufacturing dominance has provided the area with limited job growth, swelling the Latino population of South LA by pulling immigrants from Mexico and Central America (Ibarra and Carlos 2015; Valle and Torres 2000). Such a post-Fordist arrangement allows for both investment in high status, high income technology and entertainment industries on the one hand and a supportive economy of workers carrying out low-status, labor-intensive tasks on the other. By the end of the 1990s, LA remained the largest industrial city in the United States, but its “industries [were] based on nonunionized low-wage workers … drawn increasingly from the ranks of immigrants, legal and undocumented” (Valle and Torres 2000: 4). Many service employers, such as hotels and cleaning services, explicitly prefer immigrant and undocumented Latinos over native-born black citizens. One ostensible reason for this is their “soft skills”: Zamudio and Lichter (2008) argue that this is code for tractable immigrant labor, as undocumented migrants can be paid substandard wages, collect no benefits or worker’s compensation, and are unlikely to sue over workplace violations. Yet the preference against black labor has long been a historical trend in LA (Sides 2003). As Marcelli, Pastor, and Jossart (1999) remind us, this economic arrangement also swells the ranks of the informal economy of both visible and invisible, citizen and noncitizen labor, including day labor, prostitution, street food vending, and drug selling. Meanwhile, the homeless population has expanded significantly in LA’s “skid row,” about three-fourths of whom are black, particularly since the 2008 housing market crash (Stuart 2011).

To expand on the relationship between the turn to community on the one hand and the growing prison nation on the other, this article situates both trends within a framework that emphasizes the responsivity of each to the racial/capitalist state. It contributes to a developing, place-based literature that considers together political economy, law enforcement, and the racialized social forces that shape urban space. For example, Lynch and her colleagues (2013) identified economic and political pressures from gentrification and tourism as driving differential drug law enforcement in San Francisco. These policies subjected black residents in different neighborhoods to coercive containment or expulsion depending on the political/economic development goals for each neighborhood. In LA, Stuart (2011) finds that special law enforcement task forces sweep homeless populations in “Skid Row” into subpoverty
positions using initiatives underwritten by businesses that profit from this labor. He discusses in other work the rehabilitation-oriented policing of the homeless in Skid Row compared to their expulsion from “prime” commodified urban spaces (Stuart 2014). These authors explicitly connect patterns of racialized law enforcement to neoliberal economic policy, yet such logics are not simply economic, using cultural understandings of racial inferiority to enable policies that would not pass muster if the affected populations were middle-class whites (Alexander 2010; Katznelson 2006).

Germane to this community-governmentality nexus, Brown (2010) considers the failure of federal community-building initiatives in Seattle. She charts the irreconcilable views of those who envision community improvement as an enhancement of law enforcement and black residents who insisted on investing in the community’s residents directly and policing the police. Also in Seattle, Herbert (2005) suggests that community policing devolves responsibility from the state to local residents. He finds that residents involved in these community-government efforts resent the offloading of government responsibility. These studies contend that urban police practices implicate a larger consideration of neoliberal governance (Yarwood 2007). Rather than addressing police tactics or backgrounding police as automatons enforcing unjust law, this article extends these analyses by highlighting the dynamic role of police in reshaping urban environments.

The Los Angeles Police Department in South LA provides a case study through which to examine community policing as a political project located at the intersection of these trends. This article argues that police are helping to reshape the demography of urban territory in ways that are conducive to post-Fordist economic shifts. The document analysis and ethnographic methods brought to bear here trace the contours of the LAPD’s community concept as one particular mechanism through which is occurs. “Community,” in this incarnation, is composed in opposition to an “anticommunity” animated by racial preference and labor utility. The category of anticommmunity is instrumental, providing the means to punish and exclude South LA’s black community while controlling the influx of Latinos as low-wage and informal labor.

I expand below on the multiple methods used to investigate these concerns and then present the data and analysis over two sections. The first section comprises an analysis of more than two decades of LA’s community policing efforts, examining the LAPD vision for community directly. The second section illustrates how the LAPD has operationalized its definitions of community, territory, and partnership to tighten coercive and regulatory control.
over its impoverished and working class racial geography. These sections build toward a final discussion where these threads draw together into a larger discussion of race, class, territorial policing, and the use of community by the neoliberal state.

**Methods**

Exploring both the roots and the contemporary fruit of community policing over multiple decades requires multiple methods and data sources. First, archival documents generated by LA municipal government beginning in 1991 provide much of the historical context. These documents outline the collective thought processes that went into the creation of the program. Several are large, well-defined plans for community policing, exchanged between LA’s Commission for Public Safety, City Council, and Police Department, while others are Departmental memoranda intended for officers of all ranks to read, understand, and incorporate into practice. Yet others comprise official and independent assessments of the LAPD after scandals and uprisings. Together they describe the plans for incorporating residents and other stakeholders into the community policing process. They also provide a window into the meanings that the LAPD ascribes to the concept of community—as well as places of silence (see Smith 2005).

The second portion of this article analyzes LA’s contemporary community policing approach. This analysis is drawn from ethnographic data collected over 5 years (beginning in August 2008 and ending in May 2013) in the LAPD precinct referred to pseudonymously as “South Division.” The hundreds of hours of participant observation undertaken in South Division mainly comprised attendance at community-police meetings, neighborhood events with a strong police presence, and ridealongs with community policing officers (Senior Lead Officers, or “SLOs”). These investigations also produced more than 50 interviews with residents, neighborhood stakeholders, officers, and police administrators. South Division’s SLOs are divided evenly between black, white, and Latino, but I was able to negotiate ridealongs only with the majority Latino and white SLOs during my fieldwork, although I was able to observe them all in other ways. Latino and white SLOs get along well and support each other’s efforts, but undermine the integrity and work ethic of the Division’s black SLOs behind their backs. As a white man co-conducting research

---

1 Special thanks to Cheryl Maxson at the University of California, Irvine, for providing many of these documents from her studies of community policing in LA in the 1990s.
Policing the Anticommunity

with a Latino partner, I was quickly associated with this dynamic, and consequently was unable to access those networks. Such an addition would deepen the analysis and must be left for future work, but the larger dynamics are unmistakable.

During these sessions, I always carried a notebook and jotted down as much as I could about the scene unfolding before me. Meetings and ridealongs were ideal situations in which to take detailed notes, enabling the recording of entire conversations with key words, phrases, and exchanges largely intact. As soon as possible after these events, I wrote up these jottings into organized sets of fieldnotes, reconstructing observation sessions and situating them with respect to prior events and my own reactions (Atkinson 2001). An hour of observation was equivalent to five or six single spaced pages, and I reproduce some of these below. All names of people, places, and locations are pseudonyms (excluding political figures). All data were entered into MaxQDA qualitative data analysis software for sorting and coding. I used an open coding procedure, noting and memoing while conducting close readings of each piece of text. Themes and subthemes emerged and cohered into the sets of ideas presented here in dialogue with larger theoretical understandings (Emerson 2001; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995).

Partnership and the Territorial Community: Policing in the 1990s

Definitions of community policing tend to cohere around four major themes (e.g., Goldstein 1987; Skogan and Hartnett 1997; Skolnick and Bayley 1988). First is community crime prevention, which necessitates a public, visible police presence that must be seen as accessible and caring. Second, police patrol must reorient to enhance nonemergency service to render police available and unremarkable. Third is the idea that police must be accountable to the public, engaging not only with supportive residents but also those residents who may level negative feedback. Skolnick and Bayley (1988) suggest that “getting to know people will not work if police insist on one-way communication. Unless police are willing, at the very least, to tolerate public feedback, community policing will be perceived as public relations, and the chasm between police and public will grow wider once again.” (10) Finally, police command structure must decentralize to become more adaptable and idiosyncratic to the constituent area. The promises of accountability and partnership in particular make community policing attractive to municipalities undergoing spikes in unrest and dissatisfaction with police (Independent
Los Angeles’ community policing approach remains the ongoing governmental response to calls for police accountability. It has weathered the tempests of the Rampart Scandal (1998–2000), May Day protests (2007), Occupy LA (2010), and ex-LAPD officer Chris Dorner’s private war with law enforcement (2013), to name a few. Police presented as governing crime, disorder, and public safety in a different way than they had in the past; a way more in tune with community needs and desires. To effect this, the LAPD had to answer the questions “What is community?” and “What is community’s place within police governance?” Rather than tapping indigenous notions of community in ways relevant to the uprisings (Costa Vargas 2006; Loyd 2012), the Department opted to reanimate discarded partnership strategies and reassert control of the city through a rigid territoriality. This section first describes how the LAPD arrogated to itself the task of defining community, and proceeded to position geographic compartmentalization and sociobiological theories of conflict, predation, and ownership as the cornerstone of its community project. It continues by demonstrating how police defined the partnership relationship as community information harvesting and perception management.

The Territorial Imperative

The LAPD has always seen itself as understaffed and outnumbered, using heightened aggression to make up for its perceived manpower deficiencies (Greene 2000; Herbert 1997). Police administrators adopted the “territorial imperative” to remedy this problem in the early 1970s (Los Angeles Police Department 1992, 1999; Parks 1999; Williams 1995). According to LA’s Community Policing Implementation Plan (1997): “[Officers will emphasize] the ‘territorial imperative,’ where police officers and the people they serve take ownership of a Basic Car Area bringing them closer together. This is a key ingredient of Community Policing.” The territorial imperative was de-emphasized in the 1980s, but returned with the 1992 community policing mandate.

In 1966, amateur anthropologist Robert Ardrey published *The Territorial Imperative*, an influential book among social Darwinists. Ardrey described humans and other animals as genetically encoded for territorial dominance, impelling them to violent conflict over geography. Applying crude evolutionary biological reasoning, he argued that if territorial conflict is biologically predetermined, there is little use in attempting to rein in this impulse—instead, better to win and control the territory. In the world of human geography,
this reasoning naturalizes oppression as a necessary feature of the contemporary race and class order. After its publication, the LAPD adopted the territorial imperative as organizational ideology, predating the contemporary community policing movement by several decades. As former LAPD administrator Jeff O’Malley suggests in his interview:

If you want [officers] to become proactive and you want them to take ownership then you have to give them a piece of real estate. That’s when the territorial imperative came in. Today I believe, firmly believe, in that if people have ownership, they treat it differently than they would if they don’t.

The technology behind the LAPD’s territorial imperative is that of division and enumeration. Community, consequently, is overlaid onto a grid designed for territorial control. In the eyes of police, LA comprises increasingly granulated and hierarchical levels of space, beginning with “reporting districts” used for fixing crime locations, aggregating up to “Basic Car Areas” (BCAs; e.g., “18SLO0029”), which aggregate again to precincts run by Captains (known as Policing Areas or Divisions), and again to LA’s four Bureaus, each headed by a Deputy Chief. In explaining the territorial imperative, one 1990s-era LAPD administrator discussed the Senior Lead Officers (SLOs) in charge of BCAs as “lone predators,” in their responsibility to their “real estate.” Another used the metaphor of “mountain lions” jealously patrolling their turf and disallowing other officers from jurisdiction except in moments of crisis. Community policing reinforced rather than challenged the LAPD’s geographic formulation of its mission, drawing its concern for community directly from the territorial imperative.

The LAPD reinforced this geographic interpretation of community by using crime and U.S. census data to conduct a territorial analysis in 1997 through “work load, demographics, natural boundaries, and the identified natural service communities” (Los Angeles Police Department 1992, 1997). This analysis “result[ed] in the creation of an additional 16 Basic Cars in 1995; and an additional 3 Basic Cars in 1996, Citywide, to meet community needs” (Los Angeles Police Department 1997). Further assessments subdivided the original 18 policing Divisions into the current 21. “Community needs,” thus, comprise the statistical assessment of police territorial coverage and are coterminous with workload needs—if officers feel overworked in an area or mark the area as

requiring special attention, this is what the community needs (Greene 2000). This data-driven territoriality was extended further during the tenure of William Bratton as Police Chief (2000–2009), who introduced the geographic crime-mapping program Compstat to which each area commander was responsible. In sum, we can meaningfully refer to the “18SLO029” community, map the streets, and pull up years of demographic and crime statistics, imputing through these measures community desires, needs, problems, and progress.

Two things are important to highlight. First, whatever else community might be, in an operational sense, it is grounded in the territorial imperative. That residents might constitute alternative conceptions of community—or advance alternative conceptions of space (see Herbert 1997)—is not relevant. Resident-centric notions of community are backgrounded or adjunctive to this schema. Second, while geography and community are not necessarily oppositional, this nexus has not been generated from, or in partnership with, residents. Rather it was revitalized from sociobiological theories and strategies of conflict and predation concerned explicitly with spatial control. The notion of community within community policing is mobilized less to serve “the community,” however that might be defined, and more toward a territoriality that arrogates geopolitical power to police. The ways that power can be used to determine the content of those spaces is taken up in the contemporary analysis below.

**Problem Solving Partnerships**

Despite marking community-as-territory, in the political foment of 1992, administrators had to articulate how they would make police accountable to residents—a key component of community policing (Goldstein 1987; Skolnick and Bayley 1988). Proposals outlining strategies for community-police cogovernance and more general community-oriented rebuilding were rejected out of hand (Costa Vargas 2006; Davis 1993b). The first step was to fix the Department’s Chief to a renewable contract subject to approval by City Council. The second was community partnership, intended to keep police “accountable to all segments of the community” (Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department 1991: 106). Obliquely referencing the uprisings, the LAPD immediately penned *Building Public Safety* (1992),

---

3 For example, see Costa Vargas (2006), which details the Coalition Against Police Abuse plan to independently elect a community review board with the power to subpoena and fire officers. This plan is still sometimes referenced at Police Commission meetings during the two minute “community comment” block.
describing the steps the department would take to “institute a ‘new beginning’ to build public safety confidence between the people of Los Angeles and their Police Department.” The document asserts that the “community has a legitimate right to participate in the design, implementation, and assessment of public safety services,” hinting at a robust and ongoing role for the community in reshaping the institution of policing.

Community-Police Advisory Boards (CPABs) are the only unit replicated within every Division specifically demarcated as a place for community-police strategic cogovernance. The main mechanism for realizing community partnership, CPABs are the direct descendants of the community meeting groups from the 1960s that characterized police efforts toward community under the original territorial imperative. Chief Bernard Parks pays homage to those groups in his Strategic Plan on Community Policing (1999), in which he declares that CPABs were established for ensuring a “continuing transmittal of information between the community and the police.” CPABs “advise and inform the Los Angeles Police Department’s Area Commanding Officers of quality-of-life problems and concerns in the community . . . to share information and develop problem-solving strategies.” This language, from a 2009 brochure entitled Celebrating the Community-Police Partnership, demonstrates the ongoing information provision element of CPABs overlaid with the cogovernance rhetoric from 1992: “The CPABs serve as advisory and problem-solving groups predicated on a community government philosophy” (Los Angeles Police Department 2009).

In reading community through CPABs, several roles for this unit are noted, none of which fit the description of “full partner” (Parks 1999) or “designer” of policy (Los Angeles Police Department 1992). First, police see community as a strategic resource while positioning itself as the problem solving actor at all geographic levels. The information that informs these solutions is partially, though not exclusively, from local participants. Soon after taking over command of the LAPD, Chief Williams made this clear: “The role of Community-Police Advisory Boards is to advise and inform Area commanding officers of community problems and concerns” (Williams 1993). Williams (1995) touts the “SARA” approach (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment), which emphasizes a consideration of patterns, causes, consequences, and results in solving crime problems and sets officers as the locus of problem solving and data analysis (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing 2013). In contrast, the role of the community is that of complainant and data source.

Second, the informational relationship also comprises absorption and dissemination. CPAB members in 1992 were required to learn from the LAPD in a training program that continues (albeit
unevenly) two decades later (Los Angeles Police Department 1992).

The ethnographic data gathered for this study suggests that this is an opportunity to reorient community members into supporting police efforts, which they are expected to represent in their own neighborhoods (see Roussell and Gascón 2014). The community-police relationship can be summarized as follows: residents present police with complaints and information; the LAPD explains to residents how it polices and self regulates; residents represent these views locally. The core of this approach is largely unchanged from the 1960s and provides no mechanism of accountability for police nor any serious engagement with cogovernance, regardless of the community’s “legitimate right to participate in the design, implementation and assessment of public safety services” (Los Angeles Police Department 1992). This contradiction between community political rhetoric and operational reality is perhaps best expressed by the public comments of Chief Parks regarding CPAB:

> Those community panels [CPABs], matched up with LAPD’s geographic service divisions, “were never perceived to be a citywide political force that can out-vote captains, the chief of police, the commission,” he said. Those advisory panels “are one of thousands of inputs” the Police Department uses in relating with citizens.

(Pool 1999)

Despite the rhetoric of community empowerment marketed to LA residents after the violence of 1992, much of the community policing vision is a throwback to prior tactics and concepts developed in the 1960s. After a moment of crisis, the LAPD presented itself as a remade organization by highlighting the larger tropes of community policing within the threads of its past, notably the territorial imperative. Yet this vision for community policing had to pass public muster to maintain legitimacy after the uprisings and includes strong language on community cogovernance to preempt claims of a lack of accountability. To officers, community means territory; for residents, community is defined as CPABs. The word “community” is used liberally, but power is not returned to community residents. Instead, echoing Seattle, the concept is appropriated and residents are made responsible to the LAPD (Herbert 2005).

**Anticommunity Policing: RACE AND LABOR**

Conceiving of community as territory enables a de-emphasis of the needs of residents in demarcated spaces, particularly when
residents have little power to effect institutional change through partnership. The focus shifts from people to place. Those whose presence is coveted, useful, or simply tolerated can be discussed as “the community” against individuals and groups seen as problematic. Residents who come together with police to create community in CPAB meetings participate directly in this effort. This articulation of who is (and who should be) considered community is complicated by the presence of multiple meetings in South Division segregated by race and language. While the English meeting, composed mainly of black residents, is officially celebrated, the Spanish meeting of Latino residents is relegated to “outreach”; yet the Spanish meeting closely tracks the demographic changes occurring in South LA. This section uses the community/anticommunity framework to understand the logics of South Division’s segregated meeting dynamic. It proceeds through three subsections, explaining first the themes that emerge from the English meeting and then those of the Spanish meeting. The final section details how LAPD uses its territorial prerogative to remake community by picking and choosing among these themes under its community mandate.

In “The Death of the Social,” Rose (1996) argues that the “turn to community” is an emergent governance practice which legitimates the shift toward state disinvestment in the public welfare. He suggests that the state uses communities as repositories through which state power can be exercised while simultaneously absolved of its supportive responsibilities—the idea of community becomes a discursive tool to make palatable neoliberal social policy. Tactically, he indexes the rise of this community approach to the articulation of an “anticommunity,” grounding claims to community against undesired populations. The appeal is intuitive: references to community conjure up notions of solidarity, togetherness, and nostalgia overlaid with a sense of consequence for the basic social fabric (e.g., Putnam 2000). In establishing CPAB, with a mandate to partner over neighborhood concerns, police have provided a symbolic platform for residents to participate in constructing community in a way that encourages such bifurcations. It is against such anticommunities that community itself is constituted.

The official South Division CPAB meetings are usually attended by English-speaking CPAB members, other residents, neighborhood activists, business owners, and an ever-rotating cast of guests and speakers. Members are mostly older black residents, a very small contingency of middle-aged Latino residents with typically limited English abilities, and several local business owners (black, Korean, South Asian, and Latino). Division Captains and Senior Lead Officers take a direct hand in shaping the...
content of CPAB meetings. Agendas sometimes incorporate presentations from outside organizations, but more frequently highlight the work of special police units. Detectives from Vice discuss prostitution, juvenile kidnapping/smuggling, *casitas* (houses of prostitution and gambling), and abatement issues. One detective came to discuss domestic violence, but ended up explaining the realities of DNA evidence collection and processing compared to popular depictions. Gang Unit officers also sometimes present. These informative police presentations incorporate a certain level of marketing and attendees are directed to take their new knowledge back to their neighbors. Residents walk away with sharable information about the LAPD shaped by the presentations from affable officials.

South Division’s official CPAB meeting, conducted entirely in English, serves to give a voice to middle-aged and elderly black middle and working class residents. Many are local property owners who see a place for police in the ordering of their neighborhoods and simply want to engage in that process, regardless of their past or present neighborhood activism. Some members are strongly loyal to LAPD and are unaware of challenges to police hegemony. This group lends police legitimacy within and outside of South LA, serves the two-way information transmission function by communicating messages from police to their neighbors, and provides a source for disorder complaints. These complaints are frequently lodged against illegal vending and day laboring, issues that impact the Latino community directly. Sometimes called “English CPAB,” the meeting is loosely parliamentary with a resident co-chair and the Division Captain as permanent chair.4

The rising Latino majority in South Division also has a voice, but one that differs sharply from that of the English CPAB. The few Latino attendees at the English meeting are tokenized and largely excluded from collective discussions. Rather than hosting a single meeting invested with translation services or fashioning a systematic method of representation, police have opted to hold a separate Spanish-speaking meeting. Originally called “Spanish CPAB,” in 2009 Captain Patton determined that there could be only one CPAB per Division, and the meeting became the ungainly “Spanish Speaking Community-Police Meeting,” divesting it of official CPAB status. In 2010, under Captain Saitou, the meeting morphed into “Hispanic Outreach,” where it has morphed into “Hispanic Outreach,” where it has

---

4 The resident co-chair and Division Captain positions changed twice and thrice respectively over the five-year observation period. Although co-chairs are nominally in charge, I have never witnessed a co-chair successfully introduce action contrary to police directive.
remained, going from a loose partnership meeting style to a more presentation-oriented style heavily regulated by police administrators. Hispanic Outreach is led by Hector Mendoza, an infrequent English meeting attendee, who exerts more direct control over the content and flow of his meeting than the resident co-chair does over CPAB. Moreover, in deference to the undocumented status of some of its attendees, the Spanish language meeting is largely anonymous, as opposed to the English meeting, which features background checks, membership badges, and fingerprinting for its members.

The two-meeting dynamic, coupled with the constant reshuffling of the Spanish meeting, provides insight into the interlocking issues of race, language, and citizenship underlying CPAB’s community representation. Spanish-speaking Latinos are outsiders to CPAB in terms of language, but this outsider status carries over into the entire ethnic category as well. Latino residents not only lack leadership in the “official” CPAB meeting, but those who do attend are seldom consulted or speak up. Much of this is a byproduct of the LAPD’s strategic move to maximize Latino leadership talent in the name of outreach. Those Latino leaders responsibilized through this structure have all been used outside the formal structure of CPAB to increase turnout at Hispanic Outreach—which in turn lacks the status of the English CPAB meeting. As of 2013, no Latino resident had ever been appointed to any parliamentary position within the English meeting.

The roles of Latino and black residents within their respective meetings are defined differently. Black CPAB members are an important part of police image maintenance in the post-1992 era. In a world where gangs, violence, and crime are seen as primarily “black problems,” the 1992 uprisings were seen largely as a black phenomenon, and black citizens remain outspoken critics of police brutality, it is symbolically important that the CPAB community of South LA remain primarily a body of black residents. Black CPAB members are agentive and legally aware individuals who can officially lay claim to a full set of citizenship rights. Although they share information and discuss with their neighbors, members seldom declare that they are speaking for the larger community, but rather that they are a part of a deliberative community body. They tend to arrive with the expectation of active participation in the CPAB process. As in any organization, there is a range of participation, but black residents stand ready to volunteer and make their presence known in an official capacity. They do not bring, for example, their children or other family members, since meeting time is devoted to official public business rather than the private realm of parenting. Having visible support from black residents remains crucial for maintaining
police legitimacy after 1992; this, together with official markers such as background checks, contribute to elevating the community status of black CPAB members.

The increasing immigrant Latino majority in South Division, however, means that outreach is required in a way unnecessary for a population composed primarily of American citizens. The normative understanding of citizenship implies the ability to manipulate legal and civic process. Noncitizens have a harder time, and bringing Latinos “out from the shadows” (a commonly heard phrase), is a different process than placating citizens demanding their rights. Latino residents attend Hispanic Outreach because of the direct benefits of learning about services, civic process, and immigration and to complain about crime and disorder, rather than because of any belief in the efficacy of the body itself. Hispanic Outreach, thus, encourages the broadest possible participation, including family members and holding a potluck supper afterward. Attendees at this meeting seem mainlyuninterested in the business of cogovernance, no doubt because of the precarious relationship with citizenship that many experience. This is not to suggest that South Division’s Latino population has no inclination to public service, but only that it may not be possible to express such an inclination within the police institution.

Consequently, Captains can shift the status of the Spanish language meeting without regard, because the population the meetings represent has no stake in the meeting as an institution. Although the idea of merging meetings is broached periodically, absorbing Latinos directly in the English meeting structure is functionally impossible, due to the different orientations, processes, and membership requirements. The function of Latino leaders like Mendoza is not to deliberate police engagement strategies, disseminate information to residents, or even to perpetuate the meeting itself, but to advise police on how best to encourage Latino governmental cooperation in ways that are accessible to immigrant families. In 2009, Mendoza had a private list of 300 names of prior meeting attendees, which comprised a strong portion of his value to police. Mendoza remains a power broker in a way that English co-chairs are not, but this status is just as precarious as the residents in whose name he advocates.

On the surface, the arrangements of CPAB and Hispanic Outreach suggest that black residents are feted by police for their image control potential, while Latino residents are largely marginalized. Yet the story is more complicated than this. The next section nuances the analysis by analyzing meeting content, engagement with community officers (SLOs), and the enforcement strategies discussed at CPAB. In hearing complaints of each
group, police can pick and choose among the claims made in the name of community, retaining the ultimate authority in determining the demographic contents of their territory. These next sections demonstrate the fluid and relational nature of community and the ways in which the anticommunity is a product of racial perceptions and economic forces.

Regulating Latinos: Illegal Vendors and Day Labor

Hot button issues for the English meeting include vending, which is illegal in the City of Los Angeles, and the congregation of day laborers. Throughout English meetings, black residents use these issues to demarcate what they see as a growing Latino anticommunity. Although blacks and Latinos in South Division sell all kinds of things on the streets (e.g., counterfeit jerseys, bootlegged movies, clothes), discussions of illegal street vending refer almost exclusively to immigrant Latinos selling cooked and uncooked food items. Moreover, while there are some independent food carts, many vendors are franchisees of centralized organizations—vending is big, under-the-table business. Police expend little effort investigating the layers of capital investment involved in producing the thousands of food carts located around the city. Instead, the vendors themselves, the most visible exponents, bear the brunt of legal attention.

Street vendors’ customers include many day laborers, and carts often orient around day laborer sites for customer convenience. Day laborers congregate in visible places, often near home improvement warehouses or parks, waiting for hourly employment. As well as attracting vendors, this creates nuisances and congestion for passersby, due to the large groups of Spanish-speaking men who engage in loud conversation, games, and gambling to pass the time between jobs. Food consumption and waste management become concerns. Many black residents see this as both a nuisance and a double standard, insofar as police do not hesitate to enforce anti-loitering ordinances at laundromats and other semi-public locations against black youth they presume to be unemployed. Day laborers are cited more commonly for their actual behavior rather than simply their presence.

The general feeling of the English CPAB is that illegal vending is a health hazard as well as a nuisance for traffic and noise. The disgust with vending is not just a feature of the practices themselves, but relates to the presence of Latino vendors in public space who serve as visible reminders of the changing face of the community. Vending becomes the entre for complaints about Latinos’ labor market position more generally, as criticisms of vending’s illegality are looped into the perceived legal and
citizenship status of vendors. As Ms. Carter, a prominent CPAB member in her 80s, commented: “It really bothers me when they come down the street ringing that bell. This is illegal, they are felons just by being here.” Apart from the health concerns and nuisance complaints, the issue is framed at the nexus of political economy and racial community politics:

After the meeting breaks up, I talk to co-chair Vera Fisher for a bit. She is still furious about the vending issue—or perhaps just venting about Latinos in general, it’s hard to tell. Her main concern, she says, is that they don’t pay taxes. Of course they pay sales taxes on their own purchases, which is a conversation she has apparently had with Linda and Hector Mendez of Spanish CPAB, but there are taxes that legitimate businesses have to pay too.

Vera has a huge problem with remittances. She describes the local economy as a circle, with money circulating through consumers to local businesses to employees who become, or somehow pass on that money back to, consumers. Major corporations like Walgreens and El Pollo Loco centrally process their earnings and don’t really put much money back into the community either, but Vera somehow manages to agree with that statement and make it support her argument as well. Remittances, in her eyes, are sucking money right out of the community and putting it into the places they [the vendors] came from.

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 2/11/10)

Vending comes to stand in for the labor market shift in South LA since the 1970s (Costa Vargas 2006; Sides 2003). Local small businesses, many of them black-owned, are seen to suffer as the result of the transitioning market and the degradation of black labor, while the proceeds of illegitimate businesses are funneled back to Mexico and Central America. Because vending is seen as ubiquitous (even police sometimes patronize mobile taquerías), Vera Fisher sees illegal vending as extracting money from the black community to support foreign economies, even as the labor market for black American citizens deteriorates. Cynthia Stacy, a former professor and vocal CPAB member, describes the difficulty in watching opportunities for black youth dwindle:

[The janitors] became unionized and then have been undermined by the Latino workers and there is tension there—it’s economic. Now our kids—there are no Black kids working at McDonalds or even many younger kids, high school age kids working in the service industry, in the food industry, around
our area because the adults [Latinos] who are more obtainable, are more employable. And they are working in fast food, so our kids have fewer opportunities for employment. I could go down the street [when I was younger] and there were my classmates working at the store, the drug store, the grocery store, whatever, it doesn’t happen anymore.

The police response to vending complaints is enforcement, education, and accommodation. In keeping with the ethos of the territorial imperative, enforcement is a method favored by SLOs. Their enthusiasm is diminished only by the frustration over coordinating with the county Health Department in disposing of the carts. Ticketing is seen by vendors as “the cost of doing business” and many SLOs issue citations infrequently due to their lack of impact. The realities of time constraints, interagency organizing, and more pressing crime issues limit the frequency and scope of these sweeps. Perhaps recognizing these limitations, Captains and other LAPD administrators have begun to look toward education and accommodation. SLOs hand out flyers in Spanish to vendors before returning and those who speak Spanish sometimes warn vendors about upcoming sweeps. This makes some officers unhappy but is largely accepted with only minor grumbling.

Alongside the enforcement and grudging education by SLOs on specific issues are significant efforts to make Latino immigrants feel supported. In wrestling with the issues of vending and day labor, Captains have investigated different methods of compromise. One Captain publically supported creating a centralized farmer’s market for vendors in South Division, while another Captain began efforts to collaborate in the building of a day laborer shelter with waste management facilities at the local home improvement retailer. More generally, police-sponsored presentations and events held through the U.S. Center for Immigration Services, the nonenforcement arm of federal immigration law, allow for information exchange and the beginnings of the citizenship application process for residents—another method of population regulation.

Police administrators argue this approach is necessary to engage immigrant Latinos in the criminal legal reporting process as witnesses and victims. LA is considered a “sanctuary city” due to Special Order 40 (enacted in 1979), which specifies that police ignore citizenship status in the performance of their duties, except in circumstances of serious felony law violation. During this fieldwork, police held or participated in several public discussions and explanations of immigration law and Special Order 40 (several in concert with the consulates of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras) to put noncitizen Latinos at ease in
interacting with police. Despite this, many Latino residents continue to be skittish of police contact and their concerns are not groundless. Operations such as mid-day DUI checkpoints are suspected of camouflaging racist motives. Indeed, undocumented status is a tool that officers can use when convenient:

As the SLO reports wind down, Captain Patton mentions that he has gotten recent complaints from local businesses about illegal vending. The SLOs all attempt to address this simultaneously by speaking over one another, which is chaotic to record, but ultimately produces the following points: SLOs have made many arrests using bike cops, sweeping several areas, and turning all the names of “illegals” over to ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement]. Previously, only felons and gang members warranted a tip off to ICE, but they made an exception this time. Patton jumps in to justify this based on its effectiveness, although he says there was an uproar from members of the Latino community.

“Often though,” Patton continues thoughtfully, “vendors are victims too, so maybe this is part of a broader issue.”

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 4/9/2009)

Notably, although ICE was called in this case—illegally, under Special Order 40—the Latino community resisted this move and Captain Patton was induced to see vendors as victims, paving the way for the farmer’s market and day labor facility initiatives that followed.

Indeed, after the violent beating of protestors at a May Day immigration rally in 2007, Latino participation at community policing events in South Division declined precipitously. Perhaps in part because of this loss of political potency in the Latino community, police administration—including South Division Captains, Chief Charlie Beck, and the LA Police Commission—has urged the reconciliation and accommodation that undergird South Division’s efforts with Latinos. In sum, black CPAB members are partially successful in invoking their claims to community by denouncing the Latino-driven underground economy. Although these claims are grounded around the declining economy for black labor, this seems like a rearguard action in light of LA’s structural adjustments. Enforcement, supported by the black CPAB community, is indeed used to regulate Latinos, but despite the lesser status of their community meeting, they are encouraged as the rising community. This enables Captain Patton to expand his definition of community to include vending Latinos as victims—and, thus, part of the larger Latino labor force.
Black Banishment: Pandillas, Drogas, and the Lumpenproletariat

If the attitude of police toward disorder crimes by Latinos can be characterized as grudgingly accommodating, the treatment of South Division’s black population is not similarly ambiguous. Police use tips, information, and complaints from Latinos to connect gangs and drugs to South LA’s black population, but in truth they do not need these things to continue such a campaign. Enforcement against gangs, drugs, and other offences continues apace—the problems that community policing was supposed to help ameliorate. Latinos stress blacks as a dangerous and disordered anticommunity, while reinforcing their own claims to community by defending vendors and day laborers as resourceful people who just want to work hard and earn an honest living. But the punishing of prostitution, homelessness, and those on parole and probation closely connects to the much larger tradition of punishing blacks in South LA.

Davis (1993a, 2006) describes various racist LAPD initiatives including Operation Hammer, where law enforcement mass-arrested black and Latino youth based on nothing more than their presence, and the LA Battering Ram, an armored tank used to break into the homes of suspected drug dealers. Costa Vargas (2006) describes the continuing indignities and beatings suffered by impoverished black men and women in South LA by police and other municipal authorities. The massive expansion in the scale of these control methods can be linked to the beginnings of LA’s post-Fordism of the 1970s where black labor became seen as increasingly redundant and was shed in LA’s structural readjustment (Sides 2003; Soja 2014). More recently, the subprime mortgage and foreclosure crisis of 2008 made a portion of LA’s black population even more vulnerable by swelling the ranks of the homeless (Stuart 2011).

There are tens of thousands of gang members in Los Angeles, although estimates vary depending on definition and motivation. In South Division, there are black gangs, Latino gangs, and gangs without ethnoracial preference; some gangs are territorial, some sell drugs, and some participate in other types of crime, or fail to come to the attention of law enforcement at all. In Spanish, the word pandilla means simply “gang.” Among the Hispanic Outreach attendees, however, pandilla stands in directly for black gangs and the gang violence and drug selling committed by black gangs. Supporting stereotypical narratives of black men as criminal, Latino attendees position themselves as crime

---

5 CalGangs, the California system of recording gang affiliation, is not publicly available. Names are difficult to purge and the definitions of a gang member are somewhat loose. The Guardian puts the number of gang members in LA around 120,000 and this is general consistent with the LAPD’s public presentations (Harris 2007).
victims and black *pandilleros* (gang members) that sell *drogas* (drugs) as the major source of fear in their communities.

Whereas black residents typically couch their concerns in discussions of language and legal status, Latinos tend to identify the objects of their complaints by race directly. *Afro-Americano* is used when speaking formally, but *moreno* and *negro* can be heard in side conversations, sometimes during Hispanic Outreach sessions, and in interviews. Latino residents describe both as impolite depending on the audience (i.e., acceptable around other Latinos, not around blacks). In general, Latino residents live and work alongside black residents (as well as the handful of white and Asian residents) and often maintain friendships and working relationships with them. Antipathy in meetings comes out most strongly in generalized references to gangs, gang members, and drug activity, nearly all of which are directed explicitly or implicitly at blacks as a group. Latino gangs are almost never the focus (even within the English CPAB). Below, Hector Mendoza guides Sgt. Sanchez, a temporary meeting host, and Tomás De La Garza in a stereotypical description of *pandilla* activity:

Sgt. Sanchez throws out the statement that most crime is gang-related and that the rest is mainly domestic disputes of some kind or other. Gangs, he reminds us, operate through fear. They attempt to intimidate the community by writing on walls, getting tattoos on their necks, and forcing street vendors to pay “rent” or protection money. Somewhat contradictorily, he pushes us to “get involved” if we see a gang member engaging in these behaviors. Gangs pick on those who are afraid, he says, those who don’t call the police.

In the wake of this, Hector Mendoza reminds everyone of the taco vendors on Culver and Jeffery St. who actually have little stickers given to them by the local gangs to advertise the fact that they pay rent. Angry at this protection scheme, Mendoza reminds us that “These people want to work!” Vendors have to fear the *pandilleros* as well as the police. Because the work is not strictly legal, vendors don’t report the intimidation—so there is double fear for these people, he says, of both gangs and of arrest. If people come together and come forward, there would be more ability to move against gang intimidation. Tomás De La Garza takes the opportunity to speak as well, strongly and clearly informing us that gangs comprise *morenos*, and, as an afterthought, Latinos, who extort money from the community and sell drugs.

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 6/25/10)

South Division’s transitioning demography ensures that local schools are strongly Latino—Vernon High School, where Abril
Solis works, is more than 80 percent Latino. Although the school’s constituency overlaps the territory of several gangs, both black and Latino, in discussing ethnoracial tension, Solis explains black *pandilleros* as directly responsible for school violence and the consequent dress code shift that enabled the identification and expulsion of black students:

Interviewer: The two get along well? The two groups? [Latinos and blacks]

Solis: There’s been a lot of change, I don’t know.

Interviewer: How was it before?

Solis: Well, we had a lot of fights because we had a lot of African American gangs.

Interviewer: And now that you have changed to uniforms, has this helped?

Solis: It’s helped a lot because students can be identified ... before it looked like it might be a student but was not.

Interviewer: And they come in to do what? To sell drugs or start stuff?

Solis: Sometimes they came in grabbing and assaulting people, walking around with little bags [of drugs]...

While vending, for black residents, gathers together many cultural and labor market complaints against Latinos, Latino residents see the issue quite differently. For Latino residents, the illegal nature of vending is an issue only because it deters the reporting of other crimes. Vendors are understood as people attempting to earn a living through hard work rather than nuisances and threats to public safety. Vending easily slides into fear of labor market redundancy for black residents, while drugs and gangs stand in for Latinos’ fear of blacks and crime, a fear that dovetails with the larger white polity. The outcome is a generalized fear of blacks, particular young black men, within neighborhoods that have only recently achieved majority Latino representation. Latino residents, although skittish of official engagement, decry black criminality as an anticommunity opposed to their own hardworking ethos.

**Black Deterritorialization, Latino In-Migration**

Both meetings operate around community/anticommunity demarcations, but as territorial enforcers police retain the ultimate prerogative in deploying the rhetoric of community. The meetings provide a space for the venting of complaints and the consolidation of community, but officers are under no obligation ...
to adopt directly the perspectives of the attendees. Instead, they filter the complaints through institutional mandates and their own prejudices in regulating their territories. Observations suggest that, in the reverse of the accommodation of vending and day laboring, police support and even encourage Latino characterizations of blacks as a criminalized anticommunity. Working within the territorial imperative, officers deploy community rhetoric to deterritorialize what they see as black anticommunities.

Because concerns regarding *pandillas y drogas* are so ubiquitous and characterized as violent and dangerous, the ameliorating push for education and accommodation that tempers vending and day labor enforcement gains no traction. SLOs, the community policing officers-*cum*-mountain lions of the territorial imperative, play a strong role in organizing the deterritorialization of blacks within their territory. On ridealongs, SLOs spend most of their enforcement time targeting blacks, while openly lionizing the Latino work ethic. Black residents also comprise the general face of anti-police sentiment:

After driving past [Section 8 housing unit], SLO Liz Fairbanks slows, stops, and points to what she calls a “rude house,” full of Black folks who don’t respect the police. They are not “police friendly.” Worse, they teach their kids not to talk to police and that they are the enemy. “Hispanics,” she says, aren’t hostile like that. There are three people in plain sight as we roll by and they hold stock still and fix the car with a stare until we depart. Liz announces that she is offended by the fact that they don’t wave to her.

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 7/28/11)

Given a relatively free hand in determining the content of community within the borders of her BCA, Fairbanks uses the discretion granted to her under the auspices of community protection to play the role of “watchman” as specified under Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) broken windows paradigm. The authors imagine their archetypical Officer Kelly like so:

Sometimes what Kelly did could be described as “enforcing the law,” but just as often it involved taking informal or extralegal steps to help protect what the neighborhood had decided was the appropriate level of public order. Some of the things he did probably would not withstand a legal challenge.

(Wilson and Kelling 1982: 2)

Like Officer Kelly, Fairbanks appropriates the mantle of community in challenging those she thinks do not belong by “ped
stopping” them, all of whom, over the course of this same observation period, are black.

SLO Fairbanks tells me several times that we can pull over and or “ped stop” anyone that I’d like. I’m fairly horrified by this and politely refuse several times. For example, we pass by a Black male youth casually riding a bicycle. She interprets his look—which I miss completely—as furtive, and seriously considers turning around and stopping him. I ask her why she would do this and she refers to her “spidey sense,” saying that he looked “shifty-eyed.” I gently push back without actually using the words “probable cause,” but she baldly brings it up anyway. With a good knowledge of the rules of search and seizure and probable cause, she says, if she feels someone is suspicious, she can pull them over for any reason—biking on the wrong side of the road in this case—and having done that, she can then do whatever she wants.

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 7/28/11)

Although Fairbanks gripes about vending throughout the day, over the course of that observation period, we “ped stop” three more people, all of them black and either homeless or appearing so, and have aggressive conversations with several more. This is not an unusual observation period. The constant refrain from SLOs in these instances is that they are simply enforcing community norms. Just before forcing an 18-year-old black woman out of his BCA for suspected prostitution, SLO Phil Hackett tells her this directly:

SLO Hackett fixes her with a stare and says “Why am I unhappy?”

“Because I’m not paying taxes?” she offers.

“No,” he says, “it’s because you’re on my street and the kids and parents around here don’t want to see this.”

He finally allows her to leave Jeffrey Avenue and head down a side street. In turning around, we pass her again, and he stops her again and quizzes her on where she’s going—her uncle’s house, which he ascertains is outside of his BCA. We speed away.

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 4/19/11)

Many white and Latino SLOs display clear anti-black attitudes or more subtle degradations toward black individuals seen as perpetrating disorder. Moreover, the dynamic is institutional: officers, for example, publicly answer simple questions like how best to capture the visual identity of a criminal suspect by illustrating through a generalized black subject.
Homeless individuals, prostitutes, and probationers/parolees especially are vulnerable to territorial policing. In revitalizing the Basic Car Plan and the territorial imperative, the LAPD built the NIMBY (“Not In My Back Yard”) ethos right into its policing plan. On one level, this means that LAPD Divisions compete for crime decreases. On another level, individual SLOs acquire the incentive to chivvy their problems off onto other BCAs, particularly those in other Divisions. As Officer Hackett demonstrates, the presence of prostitutes can be addressed by physically relocating them outside of a BCA or Division boundary. Arrest is not uncommon, but the hassle of paperwork and processing time for a few nights in jail is often too much compared with the ease of ordering them one block over. Community improvement takes on the feel of a zero-sum game.

Further, while community members with jobs and property can be victims—indeed, this is officially constituted through typical CPAB complaints (Roussell and Gascón 2014)—the idea of the anticommmunity itself is incommensurate with the idea of victimhood. Prostitutes were the targets of South LA’s Grim Sleeper serial killer (active 1985–2007), but police made clear that, despite their residence and official victim status, they were not to be considered part of the community. The excerpt below depicts this dynamic in a freeform information session organized to collect resident knowledge for the Grim Sleeper investigation. Tensions run high, fear is palpable, and police hold the meeting because they are frustrated by a lack of investigative progress:

The next question comes from a black man in his mid-30s. His voice is a little high, as though he is a little frightened or perhaps a bit hostile. “There are a lot of people here—old, young—what message do you want us to take back to the community? Some people maybe are thinking about vigilante squads ... we’ve got to protect the sisters, because we’re on edge. There’s a lot of fear.”

A cool answer comes from the officer in charge of the investigation. “No disrespect to the vics or their families, but the majority have been in compromising positions. Somebody knows something ... but no, no vigilante squads.” I am taken aback by the callousness of this response. Some of the victims’ family members are in the audience, have made themselves known, and are visibly distraught by the casual victim-blaming.

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 10/9/08)

The automatic response of the resident above is to fold the murder victims into a broad conception of the community, particularly given the presence of their family members. Yet the officer...
evinces disbelief that the community should be frightened, because the Sleeper only kills those found in “compromising positions.” The community, in other words, cannot contain prostitutes.

Homeless individuals are also deterritorialized and discursively separated from the community, although as with vending these task forces must coordinate with the Health Department to dispose of possessions and encampments. Unlike vending, however, attempts at accommodation of the homeless by the English CPAB are met with stiff police resistance. Rather, Captain Patton induces CPAB to aid in deterritorialization by denying homeless people—or “cockroaches” in the parlance of one SLO—food and clothing in the hopes that they will migrate out of South Division, despite the co-chair’s public observation that many are “from the neighborhood” and “just want to get it together.” To foreclose community solidarity, Patton reminds the group of their class differences, emphasizing that “transients” enjoy their predicament and cannot thus be part of a partnership premised on normative community ideals. He refers to the police approach to homelessness, which comprises some service linkage together with conscripted labor, confinement, or banishment, as “tough love” (see also Beckett and Herbert 2009; Stuart 2011).

The LAPD’s anti-black deterritorialization occurs not only under the purview of enforcement, but also as a direct function of their role as community expert and arbiter of territorial content. Incarceration is an obvious element of LA’s black outmigration in the 1980s and 1990s (Costa Vargas 2006) and these trends continue; however, in the community policing era, police have the opportunity to play a larger role in composing community infrastructure. Within the territorial imperative, SLOs become experts to be consulted when larger governance issues impact their BCA. Officer Hackett outlines how his professional involvement in a municipal planning matter enabled him to operationalize a racial hierarchy of desirability:

SLO Phil Hackett laughs as we drive past where the new school is being built. “This,” he says, pointing towards a dilapidated housing complex, “is where the ‘I Hate Phil Hackett Club’ lives.” Due to his long tenure in his BCA, Hackett tells me that city planners consulted him on where they ought to put the new middle school. Since they were going to “eminent domain” the site and the housing therein regardless of location, they asked him which of three locations would have the best impact on crime. Hackett didn’t hesitate to pick the multidwelling, low-income, predominantly Black housing complex. The city has since razed it, relocated many of the residents to the dilapidated complex that we drive past, and is building the school, as well as some new housing, where
“many Mexicans have moved in,” which he likes. The people he helped displace, however, aren’t fond of him, he chuckles.

As if to illustrate his dislike of Black people by comparison, we immediately drive past another housing complex, which he informs me is home to a 23-year-old Latina immigrant of his acquaintance who owns her own hamburger stand and just opened another one. He uses this opportunity to compare Black people generally with the specific woman in the house—or, as he puts it, “200 years of oppression” vs. “one generation over the border.”

(Roussell, fieldnotes, 4/19/2011)

Hackett’s view, while blunt, is hardly rare. The discourse over Latino in-immigration constructs Latinos as victims of black crime, as deserving and hard workers (regardless of the legality of their work), and as necessary for the maintenance of LA’s restructured economy. This leads to negotiations over how to “practice tolerance” toward the new arrivals—that is, how to regulate rather than banish. Latinos in South Division are seen as comprising a distinct group of laborers whose purpose is clear and necessary, if often unruly and sometimes necessitating sharp rebuke and selective deportation. Moreover, officers’ racial biases regarding divergent Latino and black work ethics and crime propensities translate directly into accommodation or expulsion.

Black residents, on the other hand, span the sharp division between the poles of community and anticommunity. CPAB members—mainly elderly, middle-class politically moderate activists—are feted for their political symbolism, consulted regarding disorder, and responsibilized to carry official messages to their neighborhoods. By articulating community standards within this governance framework, black CPAB members can induce certain forms of this anticommunity regulation against Latino disorder nuisances and confirm themselves as community. Police use this discourse to help shape a regulatory framework for Latino labor. Meanwhile, South LA’s declining black population, disenfranchised in many arenas including employment and housing, constitute the main anticommunity. The unfolding logic of the territorial imperative allows the deterritorialization of black residents left behind by political economic restructuring and workplace discrimination.

**Conclusion: Political Economy, Race, and Urban Governance**

The past few decades have been characterized not only by the rise of mass incarceration, but also the expansion of its...
enabling processes—the increased surveillance, regulation, policing, and demarcation of urban space and impoverished black and brown populations. During that same period, urban governance has become dominated by themes of community partnership. Precisely because these trends seem antithetical, this article has attempted to explicate this relationship through the Los Angeles Police Department’s community policing efforts in South LA. Policing is increasingly recognized as an important interlocutor within the framework of urban governance. Debates over how precisely to consider police within this matrix swirl between police as agents of the state and police action on the ground (Herbert 2006; Stuart 2011; Yarwood 2007). The purpose here is not to settle these debates, but rather to highlight the role of police in the urban demographic and social transformations required by the LA post-Fordist economy. Further, it is to situate the use of community rhetoric within such governance efforts as an important—and counterintuitive—means by which this occurs.

To make sense of the LAPD’s community policing efforts, they must be emplaced within the broader economic and demographic trajectory of South LA. The past three decades of South LA’s black-to-Latino demographic changes relate to LA’s shift from a national manufacturing powerhouse to a bifurcated labor market. This move valorizes entertainment and technology industries on the one hand and on the other requires tractable undocumented immigrant labor. Black citizens, the last hired and first fired in LA’s postwar boom, have seen unemployment rates reach 30–40 percent in the areas examined here (Marcelli, Pastor, and Jossart 1999; Sides 2003; Soja 2014; Soja, Morales, and Wolff 1983). Such economic alterations have historically produced state welfare rescue for poor white populations (Katznelson 2006), but here have produced deterritorialization and replacement. To think about the policing of race and labor market position is to see police as helping to process these economic shifts by encouraging and effectuating black-to-Latino demographic shift in South LA.

Community policing, the same initiative recommended to ease the racial tensions of LA’s post-uprising era, is an important mechanism by which this occurs. Feelings of nostalgia and empowerment produced by the word “community” cover over a racial and economic project of control and exclusion extending from the larger neoliberal architecture of urban renewal, gentrification, and the staffing of a restructured economy. The violence of 1991–1992 may have laid the groundwork for such a governance shift, but the efforts of the state to restructure urban space have been the story of the past several decades irrespective of urban pacification (Lynch et al. 2013; Smith 1996). As numerous...
scholars have suggested, the drawing of community boundaries is a political act bound up in racial preference and concern for the needs of capital (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Davis 2006; Herbert and Brown 2006; Stuart 2014). Indeed, although Rose (1996) sees community as a vehicle for disinvestment, LA instead seems to be experiencing a shift in control mechanisms.

It is clear that we must consider urban economic utility and racial preference in discussing how threats to society are conceived and disposed of. As Brown (2010) has argued, the crucial question of who can be allowed to comprise “society”—or “community”—has animated these efforts toward reconfiguring urban space. The LAPD’s decision to construct its community policing ethos around the socially Darwinistic territorial imperative seems entirely congruent with these dynamics. The operationalization of the territorial imperative in a partnership framework describes an informational process whereby residents in community meetings learn what police want and transmit that information back to them. In creating community partnership with residents, police retain the prerogative to regulate and expel in the name of community, picking and choosing among the complaints registered by black and Latino meeting attendees. Community is constituted in these meetings in a narrow sense, but is also relegated to these spaces when it comes to police deterritorialization of the anticomunity. Captains can thus consider reserving urban space for a liberal market for Latino day labor while SLOs simultaneously authorize the razing of affordable housing units occupied predominantly by black residents—the result of which is to construct a public school attended mainly by the children of the Latino working poor. Community rhetoric, rather than a unifying force of resistance, identity, or creativity, contributes to demographic shift, not simply by accommodating Latino in-migration, but through black exclusion and removal. Community—reformulated through the territorial imperative—becomes a tool of governance corresponding to economies of race and labor desirability.

Although the role of community in state governance is an expanding subfield (Edwards and Hughes 2002; Herbert 2005; Rose 1996), it is important not to read these trends as entirely novel, but rather as a historical iteration of exploiting Latin American migrants and erasing black community self-determination (Ibarra and Carlos 2015; Muhammad 2010; Wilderson 2003). The focus on LA’s economy here should not be taken as a challenge to more culturalist analyses of race, but rather as a supplement to them. The anti-blackness behind the civil death of the black subject, as Wilderson (2003) suggests, is "vital to civil society’s political economy: s/he kick-starts capital at its genesis and rescues it from its over-accumulation crisis at its..."
end” (238). Racial demographic shift has surely been a foundational part of LA’s rescue from postindustrial crisis, accommodating Latino concerns, however grudgingly, at the expense of black residents. South LA’s black residents, interpreted as unsuitable for a restructured service economy predicated on subpoverty wages and informal employment, are an anticommunity removed to make room for a vulnerable Latino proletariat. Deterioralization is consistent with anti-black racism, while Ibarra and Carlos (2015) remind us that the exploitation of Latino labor made desperate by U.S. trade and investment policy is an old story. Put another way, governmental rhetoric on community is made necessary by structural adjustment, but made possible by degrading urban black populations as the ultimate anticommunity.

The literature interrogating the logic of urban police governmentality is growing at precisely a moment when it is needed to provide insight on policing operations within poor neighborhoods of color. The strengths of the present analysis include its long-term duration, its naturalistic setting, and its location at the nexus of community discourse, racialized political economy, and law enforcement practice. Its limitations, including the localized scope and lack of black SLOs in the analysis, suggest directions for future research, as researchers address calls to diversify police forces and for national policing strategies (indeed, the isolation and scorn directed toward black SLOs only underlines some of these findings). While an impoverished section of Los Angeles is not universally generalizable, every geopolitical unit is vulnerable to the externalities of capital movement and its labor requirements, and these things are shaped by racial preference. Rising Latino labor power in cities beyond LA suggest that the social control mechanisms examined here may be worth considering in other urban locations as well. Empirical, on-the-ground examinations of the ways in which these structural shifts manifest themselves in different geographic settings can help frame and inform public debates on the uses, history, and present application of the law and its enforcement.

References


Policing the Anticommunity


Aaron Roussell is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology at Washington State University. His research focuses on conceptions of race, class, and social danger specifically with respect to community policing, disorder, and drug law. He is also interested in problems of method and how they fit into a larger discourse on law and science.
AUTHOR QUERY FORM

Dear Author,
During the preparation of your manuscript for publication, the questions listed below have arisen. Please attend to these matters and return this form with your proof.
Many thanks for your assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Query References</th>
<th>Query</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AQ1</td>
<td>Please check whether the inserted running head is OK as typeset.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQ2</td>
<td>Please confirm whether heads and subheads are OK as typeset.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQ3</td>
<td>Please provide complete publication details for the Refs. “Davis 1993b” and “Los Angeles Police Department 2009.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQ4</td>
<td>Please confirm that given names (red) and surnames/family names (green) have been identified correctly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>