Staying out of Sight: Concentrated Policing and Local Political Action

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In some urban neighborhoods, encounters with police have become one of the primary points of contact between disadvantaged citizens and their government. Yet extant scholarship has only just begun to explore how criminal justice interventions help to shape the political lives of the urban poor. In this article, we ask: What are the consequences of the increased use of stop-and-frisks (Terry stops) in disadvantaged neighborhoods for communities' engagement with the state? Relying on a novel measure of local citizen engagement (311 calls for service) and more than one million police stops, we find that it is not concentrated police surveillance per se that matters but, rather, the character of police contact. The concentration of police stops overall is associated with higher levels of community engagement, while at the same time, a high degree of stops that feature searches or the use of force, especially when they do not result in an arrest, have a chilling effect on neighborhood-level outreach to local government. Our article marks a first step toward understanding what concentrated policing means for the democratic life and political agency of American communities.

Keywords: police; stop-and-frisk; legitimacy; spatial concentration; civic engagement; political participation; NYPD

Men are not corrupted by the exercise of power . . . but by the exercise of power which they believe to be illegitimate.

—Alexis de Tocqueville,
Democracy in America (1835)

In America's urban communities, neighborhoods are marked by vastly different policing regimes. In some areas, interactions between citizens and police are rare, and when they occur it is generally in response to a clear and anomalous threat, or a request for assistance from individuals seeking aid. In other neighborhoods, though, the infrastructure of surveillance—from police substations to squad cars to policemen descending through residents'

buildings in vertical patrols—is a pervasive part of the architecture of community life. In these neighborhoods, citizens regularly encounter the police in their daily routines, through involuntary and largely unwelcome interactions.

Recently described as a "tale of two cities" (Weichselbaum 2012), these disparate patterns of policing have been shown to produce important consequences for citizens' orientations toward law enforcement (Weitzer and Tuch 2006; Fagan, Tyler, and Meares 2011). Our concern in this article, however, is somewhat broader: we examine the consequences of aggressive policing for the willingness of citizens to call on government to help resolve problems in their homes and neighborhoods. Specifically, we ask: What are the consequences of the increased use of stop and frisk by police, and their concentration in disadvantaged neighborhoods, for patterns of civic engagement? How have the greater provision of police surveillance and the changing practice of street policing in some communities altered these spaces as sites of collective agency?

To assess these questions, we rely on a novel measure of local citizen engagement: nonemergency calls for service or information, or "311" requests, from 2010 to 2011. Based on a unique dataset of about 1.2 million police stops in New York City and more than 3 million service requests to 311, we find that the character of policing in communities has significant consequences for levels of local civic engagement. Our basic argument is simple: When police are experienced as helpful and responsive, these characteristics may be generalized to the political system as a whole, encouraging civic engagement (Lerman and Weaver forthcoming; Soss 2005). When residents instead see police as hostile, invasive, or untrustworthy, these less benign traits may become the dominant view about the state, breeding political alienation, distrust, and withdrawal (Lerman and Weaver forthcoming).

The dominant emphasis in extant research has been the crude extent of contact with criminal justice witnessed by some communities. Yet this obscures an equally important dimension—the character of these interactions. The effects of policing (like other forms of criminal justice intervention) (Lerman 2013) are not simply a matter of concentration—too much or too little—but also a matter of the kinds of interactions to which citizens are exposed. Witnessing many stops in

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one's neighborhood can mean that people feel protected and empowered. In these communities, police are "streetcorner politicians" (Muir 1979) and the local embodiment of "street-level bureaucracy" (Lipsky 2010). By maintaining order and providing a means of negotiating and regulating disputes, police can provide a necessary building block for community peace and well-being. Indeed, classic political theory tells us that establishing the rule of law is the core function of government, enabling civic life to grow (Hobbes 1651; Locke 1690).

In contrast, witnessing stops that occur with little justification and that feature physical force can make people feel occupied and powerless, and can incentivize disengagement with government. Our findings suggest that concentrated policing can have beneficial effects for the likelihood that citizens reach out to government to address problems in their neighborhoods. However, when a large share of these encounters feature the use of force or searches of a person's body, especially when the person is not found to be engaged in illicit activity, they have decidedly negative effects for civic engagement.

The Argument

The character of concentrated policing

Like incarceration rates, the frequency of police stop-and-frisks (called "Terry stops" after *Terry v. Ohio*) has mushroomed in recent years.[1] For instance, in New York City from 2002 to 2011, police stops of citizens for questioning saw a spectacular increase from just 90,000 to almost 700,000, a whopping 603 percent increase. Importantly, the steady increases in the frequency and concentration of citizen contact with police have not substantially raised the "hit rate"; the proportion of stops resulting in arrest has remained fairly stable over time at about 5 percent. According to the New York Police Department (NYPD) data obtained by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU), almost nine out of ten individuals stopped and frisked in the city were "completely innocent."[2] And as we describe later, stop-and-frisk practices unfolded in a spatial pattern.

In fact, previous scholarship has provided evidence that police contact at higher levels implies different styles of police behavior. Studies have shown that police patrol differently in different neighborhood contexts (Smith 1986; Roh and Robinson 2009) and view residents with greater suspicion when they reside in communities that have higher incidences of crime (Weitzer and Tuch 2006). In disadvantaged, higher-crime areas, police are more likely to use obtrusive patrolling styles, employ physical force, and engage in misconduct (Fagan and Davies 2000; Terrill and Reisig 2003; Kane 2002; Smith 1986). Other studies have suggested that disadvantaged areas are both overpoliced and underpoliced; in other words, police tend to be visible and aggressive in their police-initiated contacts but slow to respond in citizen-initiated contact (Kennedy 1997). Thus, a higher level of police stops may not only mean more of the same but also more antagonistic and less supportive contacts.

In addition, increased policing may result in a greater proportion of what we term "surplus stops," in which individuals are stopped and questioned based on little or flimsy evidence of suspicious behavior. For instance, individuals may be stopped solely because they were walking in high-crime areas, were thought to be making "furtive movements," or were wearing clothes of a particular kind. In New York City, where "broken windows" policing has long been practiced,[3] an extraordinarily high proportion of police stops in some areas do not lead to arrests, citations, summonses, or the finding of contraband. Compared to the city-wide average of 6 percent of stops that led to an arrest, less than 1 percent of stops in the low-income and largely minority area of Brownesville resulted in arrest (Rivera, Baker, and Roberts 2010). Most troublingly, a greater share of police stops in some neighborhoods has been shown to be of questionable constitutionality (Fagan and Davies 2000).

Because citizens derive evaluations of authorities from their personal and vicarious contact, both the concentration and character of policing can have a powerful influence on resulting attitudes about law enforcement. Even when encounters are brief and do not lead to a poor outcome for the suspect, they can and do have a psychological impact that continues to exert its effect long after the encounter. Fagan, Tyler, and Meares (2011, 9) describe why: "being stopped by the government in a public space also suggests public discounting of worth. It appears to the person stopped to be a form of public shaming that derives from the feeling that the state has no problem displaying its power and control over the citizen on a public stage." Tom Tyler's seminal work on procedural justice has spurred a cottage industry of studies that find that evaluations of the police and compliance with the law hinge on whether people perceive the police as having treated them fairly and respectfully, neutrally, and with consistency (Tyler 1990; Tyler and Huo 2002; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; McCluskey 2003).

Moreover, not all contacts carry the same weight. As Tyler and Fagan note, "it is not the fact of being stopped. . . . Rather, people focus upon police disrespect or rudeness, on unneeded harassment" (Tyler and Fagan 2012, 35). Moreover, the effects of police encounters are asymmetrical, such that bad encounters weigh more heavily on behavior and confidence in the police than positive experiences. In a study of eight cities, Wesley Skogan (2006, 106) finds that negative experiences loomed four to fourteen times as large as positive ones. Nor are the effects of negative police contact confined to those who experience it personally. Rather, neighborhoods where police contact is concentrated may experience policing as a community event: "These are severe moments of contact and are felt not only by the individual young person, but also by the onlookers in the community and family and friends who linger after the police have moved on" (Stoudt, Fine, and Fox 2011, 1341). Indeed, vicarious experiences with police can influence attitudes more strongly than personal dealings with police (Rosenbaum et al. 2005).

Avoidance and withdrawal

The concentration and quality of police contacts shape citizens' behavior toward law enforcement. Most directly, police-initiated contacts are strongly and

negatively related to the probability that an individual will later call the police in times of need (Gibson et al. 2010). Due to having repeated, and often hostile, confrontations with police, residents of some communities "placed a premium on avoiding officers whom they observed on the street. . . . Youths rarely spoke to an officer unless he or she initiated an encounter or when it was absolutely necessary" (Weitzer and Brunson 2009, 241). In one survey of youths in New York, only a quarter of respondents (and even less among those who had experienced negative contacts) reported that they would turn to police when they had a problem (Stoudt, Fine, and Fox 2011, 1361).

Ethnographic, community-level studies have similarly found that residents in areas of high police-initiated contact practice "systematic evasion" of the police and "engage in a variety of tactics to minimize the chances of contact with the police" because those interactions are more acrimonious (Weitzer and Brunson 2009, 251). Notably, residents of high-policing areas report feeling less safe both because they reside in high-crime areas and because they see interactions with police as unsafe (Stoudt, Fine, and Fox 2011; Weitzer and Brunson 2009). As one study describes, "The formal authorities are often a last resort for safety, despite their obvious presence in these neighborhoods" (Carr, Napolitano, and Keating 2007, 456–57).

Yet patterns of policing do not shape only residents' norms and behaviors vis-à-vis the police or other authorities within the criminal justice system; rather, we argue here that police activity also shapes how communities interact with the state more broadly. Citizens learn about how government works and whether government officials value them (and people like them) through their contact with government agencies (Soss 2005). If citizens experience government as unresponsive, arbitrary, unfair, and authoritarian, as they often do in these forceful encounters, these perceptions may come to inform broader perceptions of government and shape resulting behavior vis-à-vis the state. Residents may become less likely to make claims with local government and more likely to stay below the radar. As Cathy Cohen (2010) argues: "Young people have chosen a politics of invisibility, disengaging from all forms of politics and trying to remain invisible to officials who possibly could provide assistance but were more likely to impose greater surveillance and regulations on their lives" (pp. 195–96).

Our research supports this claim among individuals (Weaver and Lerman 2010; Lerman and Weaver forthcoming). In our study of more than 15,000 young adults, we found that being stopped and questioned by the police is associated with a 4 percent decrease in trust in the government, being incarcerated is associated with a decline of 10 percent, and having been incarcerated for more than a year was associated with a decline of fully 22 percent, net of other factors. Importantly, we have also shown that encounters with criminal justice not only reduced trust, but incentivized active avoidance of government. As one man with whom we spoke put it, "I feel like if I contact a senator or governor, they'll probably want to put me in jail and leave me as a troublemaker. I'm serious. That's how I actually feel: 'I better stay below the radar.'" Another of our interviewees put it even more succinctly. When asked if he would consider seeking out assistance from public agencies or public officials, he replied: "I try to basically stay away from [government]" (Lerman and Weaver forthcoming).

Data and Methods

We combine spatial information on the frequency and character of 1.2 million police stops in New York City and 3.1 million nonemergency calls for city services from 2010 to 2011. For our analyses, we geocoded data on both service requests and stops and aggregated each to the census block group level. Block groups are small areas, usually just a few neighborhood blocks, averaging about 1,000 residents. The analyses we present below are based on 148,728 observations, consisting of 6,197 block groups for each of the 24 months.

Our data on police stops come from the public files of the NYPD. We successfully matched 92 percent of individual police stops to their census block group location. Our analyses rely on only those census block groups that have a residential population of more than 100, which excludes block groups located in central business districts, parks, cemeteries, and industrial areas.

Police made at least 1.2 million stops during the 2010–2011 period.[4] However, we are not only concerned with the concentration of police stops, but also the characteristics of these stops. Thus, in the these analyses, we calculate the share of stops that are "surplus," defined as a stop that did not result in an arrest, summons, or finding of contraband; and the share of stops that are "surplus" use of force, search, or frisk, in which a stop that included a frisk, search, or deployed force did not yield an arrest or other formal sanction.[5]

Though not typical in studies of citizen engagement and civic life, we use 311 service requests as our primary dependent variable. Popular among those in public administration who advanced the concept of constituent-focused management, 311 has long been viewed as a way of connecting citizens to their municipal government, increasing government responsiveness and accountability, and fostering citizens' confidence in the public sector. By 2008, almost a hundred counties and cities in the United States were operating call systems, and the system in New York City was the largest (Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia Research Initiative 2010). In New York City, surveys have shown that citizens are widely aware of the system and are generally satisfied with it (Johnson 2010).

Unlike more traditional measures of political participation, engagement through 311 is very low cost; it is easy, fast, and anonymous for citizens across the socioeconomic spectrum. Not surprisingly, citizens therefore use the system frequently to register their demands, make claims, and communicate their needs to government. In a given month, residents of the city make 50,000 calls on average, adding up to 18.7 million calls a year, or about 224 calls per 100 residents (Johnson 2010). This stands starkly at odds with the single-digit percentages of people who report in political surveys that they write or call a public official, or contribute to a political campaign.

Citizens may use 311 not just to register their problems with local authorities but also to become involved in community life. As one writer notes: "By giving New Yorkers an easy way to report broken streetlights or graffiti or after-hours construction, the service helps them play a role in solving the problems they see in their own neighborhoods" (Johnson 2010). By voicing their complaints,

however mundane, citizens interact with government at the local level and obtain a response. Call systems such as 311 are, as one report puts it, the "front door" for citizen access to government (Fleming 2008); another describes "potholes as the gateway drug for civic engagement" (Johnson 2010).

Finally, studies have suggested that 311 is not only a way for citizens to keep government accountable, but it is a key tool for helping elected officials understand citizens' concerns; local politicians report using 311 data to monitor what goes on in their district and assess constituents' needs. One local politician noted that it was nice to have 311 data "at [his] fingertips, as an elected official, when I'm trying to decide where I'm going to spend dollars within my district" (Fleming 2008, 12).

Our data on service requests to 311 are taken from the NYC Open Data site, which provides information on the location of each request for service and categorizes the nature of the issue and the responsible city agency. Using the latitude and longitude of each complaint, we assigned each call to its census block group. We then aggregated calls for service to their respective month across the two-year study period.[6]

Analyses

During the two-year period we examine, police stopped New York City residents at a rate of 170 per 1,000 residents. However, the average obscures substantial variation across the City. Figure 1 shows the spatial pattern of stops across neighborhoods. While a quarter of New York City block groups had a stop rate under 35 per 1,000 residents, some 25 percent of block groups had a stop rate of more than 185 per 1,000. At the most extreme, 111 areas had a stop rate of more than one per resident. This spatial clustering is statistically significant based on the Moran's Index of .15 (z-score = 65.02), indicating that there is less than a 1 percent chance that the pattern could have been the result of random chance. Descriptively, police stops have their greatest incidence in high-poverty, high-minority block groups. For instance, the mean stop rate in block groups where more than half of the residents are black or Latino is 253 per 1,000. By comparison, the mean rate in majority-white areas is strikingly lower at 92 per 1,000 residents.

Of all stops, 56 percent involved a frisk, 9 percent led to a search; and in 22 percent of stops, police used force. Like the overall concentration of Terry stops, however, the character of policing varies significantly by neighborhood; to illustrate, the map in Figure 2 displays a significant clustering in surplus frisks (a frisk that did not lead to arrest or contraband finding conditional as a share of all stops) across the urban landscape. When the police stop and frisk someone in large areas of Manhattan and Staten Island, they find evidence to make an arrest more than half of the time; in comparison, for the dark cluster in the Bronx, the neighborhoods of Astoria and Elmhurst in Queens, and Jackson Heights in Brooklyn, the vast majority of stop-and-frisks do not result in arrest.

FIGURE 1
Terry Stops (per 1,000 population) by Block Group in New York City, 2010–2011

Multivariate analyses

That both police activity and surplus frisks are geographically clustered in low-income and minority neighborhoods conforms to our expectations. However, a neighborhood's willingness to reach out to local government may hinge on a variety of factors that are not related to how densely concentrated police activities are in the area. That is to say, these communities may be less likely to submit nonemergency claims for the same reasons that some individuals are less likely to participate in government in other ways—because they have less income or education. Heavily minority communities may also have more noncitizen or new immigrant residents that are not English proficient or who are newcomers to American politics. Conversely, it may be that communities with more homeowners are more likely to call 311 because they are more vested in keeping up their streets and homes than those who do not own their own home.

FIGURE 2
Share of Frisks (of All Stops) that Do Not Lead to Arrest

Quantile: BADFRISKST
[0:0.3188] (1237)
[0.3191:0.4303] (1242)
[0.4303:0.516] (1239)
[0.516:0.6154] (1247)
[0.6155:1] (1232)

   To account for these differences, we employ multivariate models where we control for racial and ethnic demographics, population density, age distributions, share of males, share of households that own their home, and measures of median household income and education level, all derived from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2006–2010 five-year averages. In addition, highly disadvantaged communities are likely to register a greater incidence of criminal offenses, which could drive both a higher rate of police stops per capita and a reduced likelihood of calling 311. Therefore, we include in our models several measures of disadvantage and spatial inequality from the ACS 2006–2010 five-year: share of families in poverty, high school dropout rates, unemployment, share of families receiving public assistance, and the percent of vacant units. For the same reason, we control for crime by using precinct-level data on serious crime rates (murder, rape, assault, robbery, burglary, grand larceny).[7] If, as we expect, the spatial concentration of police stops is related to reaching out

to government net of the social disadvantage observed within neighborhoods, multivariate models can help us to be more confident that we are not simply picking up the dynamic relationship between disorganization, collective efficacy, and crime.

First, we leverage the fact that our data capture spatial variation in policing across block groups but also variation over time within block groups. Here, we estimate total per capita 311 calls for service as a function of several factors: per capita police stops, percentage of stops that result in arrest, percentage of stops where an individual is frisked, and percentage of stops where force is employed. We also include the full set of controls. Finally, we include fixed effects for year and for block group. These measures help to account for unmeasured factors unique to the year and control for block-group level factors that might affect the likelihood of 311 call use, including stable demographic characteristics of residents and their relative need for assistance. We then employ this same model with a second dependent variable: per capita 311 calls related specifically to NYPD issues. Following our broader theoretical argument, the logic here is that a community's willingness to make service requests related to crime should be particularly susceptible to the concentration of police stops, frisks, searches, and use of force.

In Table 1, we present the results of these models. The analyses show a positive relationship between per capita stops and use of 311. However, we do find a negative relationship between per capita stop rates and the use of 311 calls for service when they are specifically related to issues of crime and safety. Specifically, a one unit increase in the per capita stop rate is associated with roughly a 6 percent decline in per capita calls to 311 that are referred to the NYPD.

In addition, these models support our contention that the quality of policing activities is predictive of local community engagement. Specifically, we find that a one unit increase in the proportion of all stops that involve the use of force is associated with a .05 percent decrease in total 311 service requests per capita. Similarly, an increase in the proportion of stops that use force but do not result in arrest is associated with lower rates of 311 requests concerning crime and safety (by about .03 percent) and lower per capita rates of 311 calls for service overall (by about .05 percent).

These regressions assume that units are independent and that police stops and other dynamics in one block group are unaffected by the characteristics of neighboring areas. Police activity in one block group may affect service requests not just in that neighborhood but in the spatially proximate neighborhoods as well. However, our descriptive results indicate a high degree of spatial autocorrelation. To address this issue, we constructed a contiguity-based spatial weight. Next, we estimate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression; in a Lagrange multiplier test, we find that the LM-Error statistic is positive and significant, indicating spatial dependence in the error term. Based on this test, we deem the spatial error regression model most appropriate (as opposed to the spatial lag model) (Anselin, Syabri, and Kho 2005). We estimate a spatial error regression model using maximum likelihood where the dependent variable is logged 311 service requests (Table 2).

TABLE 1
Multivariate Models with Year and Block Group Fixed Effects

	Per Capita Calls re: NYPD (logged)	Total per Capita Calls (logged)
Model 1. All Stops		
Per capita stops	−0.0616**	0.0718**
Proportion stops that involve frisks	0.0000	0.0001
Proportion stops that involve search	−0.0001	0.0001
Proportion stops that involve force	−0.0002	−0.0005**
Proportion stops that lead to arrest	0.0000	−0.0004
Proportion stops that lead to summons	0.0014	0.0009
Constant	−130.7629***	119.2047***
Model 2. "Surplus" Stops		
Per capita stops	−0.0616**	0.0718**
Proportion frisks that do not lead to arrest	0.0000	0.0001
Proportion search that does not lead to arrest	−0.0001	0.0001
Proportion force that does not lead to arrest	−0.0003*	−0.0005**
Proportion stops that lead to arrest	−0.0001	−0.0005*
Proportion stops that lead to summons	0.0014	0.0009
Constant	−130.5988***	118.8825***

NOTE: Models control for characteristics of the block group, including share of the population that is male, median age, racial composition, education, median income, public assistance receipt, renter occupied housing, vacancy, housing value, poverty, and serious crime (precinct). *$p < .05.$ **$p < .01.$ ***$p < .001.$

TABLE 2
Spatial Error Regression Model Results

	Total per Capita Calls (logged)
Per capita stops	0.000198***
Searches per capita	−0.0003**
Proportion of force that does not lead to arrest	−0.00029**

NOTE: Models control for characteristics of the block group, including share of the population that is male, median age, racial composition, education, median income, public assistance receipt, renter occupied housing, vacancy, housing value, poverty, and serious crime (precinct). **$p < .01.$ ***$p < .001.$

The results again suggest divergent effects of the quantity and character of policing. First, we find a positive and significant relationship between police stops per 1,000 in the population and the frequency of requests to 311 (per 1,000 in the population) across block groups; controlling for other factors, use of 311 increases somewhat as the frequency of police activity increases. The magnitude

of the effect is small but statistically significant, and remains so in various speci-fications of the regression model. The model fit improves from the standard OLS model. Second, the effect of more police stops is highly dependent on other characteristics of the stops, such as physical searchers and the surplus use of force. Conditional on the frequency of stops, as the use of searches and surplus force increases, service requests diminish substantially.

We then analyze whether the relationship between stops and service requests differs across different neighborhood types. In particular, we suspect that low-income and high-minority neighborhoods may be less positively affected by police surveillance, given the degree to which police patterns in these areas are substantively distinct. To assess this idea, we estimate the same models with the addition of a term that interacts per capita stops with the proportion of nonwhite residents in the block group (results available from authors).

In both fixed effects and spatial models, the interaction terms are negative and highly significant. This suggests that the positive effect of stops on 311 requests is significantly attenuated in minority neighborhoods. In fact, when we divide block groups by whether they fall above or below the mean proportion of white residents, we see a clear difference in the strength of the relationship between stops and calls for service; in high-minority block groups relative to more homo-geneously white block groups, the magnitude of the effect of per capita stops on per capita requests is halved.

We replicate this analysis to look at heterogeneity across neighborhoods by income. When we include an interaction between median household income and per capita stops in the multivariate models, they are again significant and nega-tive. The interpretation is the same and the magnitude of the difference is simi-lar. In both high- and lower-income block groups, there is a positive relationship between per capita stops and per capita calls for service. However, the relation-ship is sizably smaller in lower-income block groups relative to wealthier neighborhoods.

Additional analyses

The most significant hurdle in our analysis is that variation in stops across neighborhoods covaries with other features of the spatial context. As a final way of assessing the relationship between policing and 311, we exploit an additional source of variation: the organization of the NYPD into different precincts across the city. While stops are highly concentrated in disadvantaged blocks, these areas may fall into different police precincts, where policing styles and approach, train-ing, force strength, leadership, and community relationships differ. In addition, studies have shown that extremely high stop rates can be attributed to just a handful of officers; one study found that a mere 7 percent of police officers were responsible for more than half (54 percent) of stops of city residents (Baker 2007). Because officers' patrols are confined within the geographic boundaries of a single precinct (and most often a smaller "beat" within the precinct), this may result in different precincts having disparate stop rates.

To illustrate, we examine the difference between census block groups that are directly adjacent to each other and thus have similar demographic and crime profiles but are located in distinct police precincts. One such area is the set of block groups that are on the border of Precincts 83 and 81 in Brooklyn (the Bushwick and Bed-Sty areas). For the block groups along the border but within the 83rd precinct, stop rates are in the range of 100 to 300 per 1,000. But directly across the border from them, in the same neighborhood but falling across precinct lines, are block groups that have stop rates that are much higher—more than 500 per 1,000. This difference is striking and supports the idea that precinct boundaries matter for how policing occurs.

We use precinct designations to gain additional leverage over whether differences in police stop activity predict different frequencies of 311 service requests. To account for the fact that individuals may be exposed not only to policing on their own block but also on those directly adjacent—thus exposing them to the policing patterns of the neighboring precinct—we exclude from analysis all block groups that fall within 100 feet to either side of a precinct boundary. We also exclude blocks that report no police stops during the time period for which we have data.

To identify precincts as either high or low in their frequency of police stops, we divide the sample in two different ways. First, we create indicators for each precinct representing whether the precinct falls above or below the mean number of stops per capita and the mean number of surplus force stops per capita. Second, we estimate a predicted stop rate for each precinct given the gender, age, education, and income distributions of its residents and its reported crime rate. Precincts whose policing rates fall above the mean or their predicted value are considered "high stop," and those whose policing rates fall below the mean or their predicted value are considered "low stop" precincts. Using GenMatch, we match census block groups that fall in high stop precincts to those that fall in low stop precincts on all available covariates, including the full set of controls employed in the multivariate models that we have already described.

As shown in Figure 3, these analyses yield the expected results. When we match blocks in precincts with stops above the mean with those in precincts below the mean, we find a positive and significant effect on total 311 service requests per capita. The effect of being in a low stop precinct is an increase of roughly two requests per 1,000 residents. However, we find a negative and significant effect on the number of per capita requests referred to the NYPD, about −.5 requests per 1,000. The pattern is the same using our other indicator of high and low stop precincts—those above or below the predicted value—but results are not statistically significant with this measure.

Also as expected, the effect of surplus force stops is reversed. Blocks that fall in precincts above the mean in surplus force stops make roughly 1 less call per 1,000 overall. Somewhat surprisingly, there is no equivalent negative effect on requests pertaining to crime and safety. Using our second measure, however, we see a negative effect on both total service requests and NYPD-related calls of roughly −1 call per 1,000 and −1/5 of a call per 1,000, respectively.

FIGURE 3
Effect of Precinct Policing on Matched Block 311 Call Rates
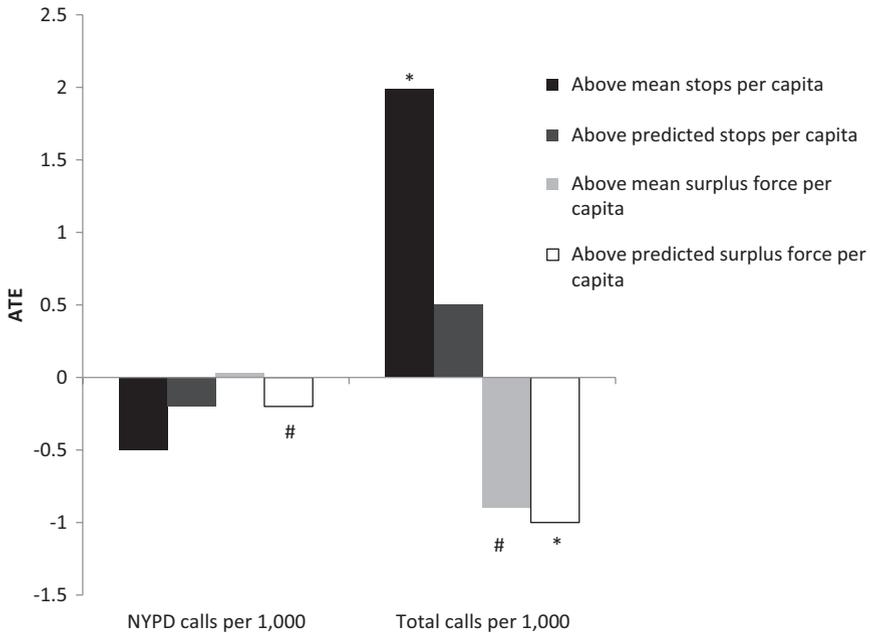
#*p* < .10. **p* < .05.

Discussion

Our analyses suggest that the character of policing matters to civic engagement in urban communities. At the block group level, police stops have a strongly positive relationship with 311 service requests; as citizens encounter more police, they call 311 more, not less. However, we find a significant attenuating effect of this relationship when a greater proportion of stops involve searches or the use of force and do not result in arrest. Still, though, we cannot disprove the counterfactual—how much areas of high police activity would have called 311 if stops had not been as high. It is therefore still quite possible that the positive relationships we see result from the fact that both stops and service requests are proxies for disadvantage; the same communities where police stops cluster are places characterized by high concentrations of poverty and blight and physical decay that may result in more citizen reports to 311.

To address the counterfactual, future work might incorporate some objective measure of demand for local government service, which could serve as a baseline against which to measure 311 service requests. Along the lines of Robert Sampson's measures of objective disorder (e.g., Sampson and Raudenbush 2004), having some gauge of how often communities "should" be initiating service

requests would aid us in seeing how much they diverge from expectation. In addition, we see other avenues for future research. First, police stops in New York City decreased by half from 2011 to the first quarter of 2012 due to a class-action lawsuit. When the 2012 data on stops are released, we hope to examine the effect of this "shock" on requests for service. Second, in the future we might further disaggregate the 311 service request data to explore not just frequency but also types of 311 requests across communities. Finally, we are eager to see whether the patterns that we found here are evident in other cities that have turned to order maintenance policing in recent years; a grand jury in Baltimore recently found officers in that city were making many stops without justification, and a class-action lawsuit was successfully pursued against police in Philadelphia for its aggressive stop-and-frisk practice.

This article makes several inroads to scholarly debates about the role of criminal justice institutions in shaping American political life. At the basic level, we hope that this exploration is the first of many that go beyond the typically limited set of ways scholars have imagined and measured both criminal justice interventions and their effects. The participation literature has largely depicted American political life as "electoral spectacle" (Hacker and Pierson 2010) and, as such, has measured engagement with government as individual behaviors centered on electing representatives to office. But citizens are connected to government on the many nonelection days of the year, and they make their needs and wants known in myriad ways other than simply the selection of lawmakers. By limiting their focus, they miss a vital aspect of the citizen-government relationship and overlook a far more common form of engagement at the local level—seeking out municipal government to solve immediate problems in one's neighborhood.

We believe studies of American politics and criminal justice would therefore benefit greatly from broadening their focus to measure these dynamics in new and more encompassing ways. Participation in political life need not just be confined to how citizens behave in the voting booth or local civic groups but can and should include the daily, mundane, and more direct way that citizens connect with their governing institutions. Students of American politics may learn a great deal about political life through indicators like 311 that allow us to go beyond what preferences the public holds at election time or whether individuals turn out to vote, instead tapping into how residents seek government aid for pressing problems in their neighborhoods and communities.

Expanding the scope of analysis is even more important for those who are concerned with the impact of criminal justice interventions on the attitudes and behavior of individuals and communities. Aggressive policing has long raised alarms among legal theorists and sociologists concerned with police legitimacy and "legal cynicism"—the belief that legal institutions are arbitrary, unjust, and unfair—and the resultant behaviors of noncooperation. Yet we still know little about the consequences of policing for broader patterns of social and political engagement. If people in neighborhoods acquire a legal socialization from inhabiting areas where they encounter unwanted police attention, it stands to reason that they may also acquire a political socialization, reducing their willingness to seek out public authorities when in need. Our purpose here was to go beyond

measuring legal cynicism to examine whether concentrated and "surplus" police stops shape not just attitudes in the legal, but also in the political, sphere.

In our previous work, we suggested that criminal justice contact can have potentially perilous effects for citizen trust, efficacy, and engagement in political life (Weaver and Lerman 2010). The results presented here paint a somewhat more optimistic picture. The data suggest that rates of policing are not in and of themselves detrimental to engagement at the community level. Indeed, the prevalence of police activity may be associated with higher rates of local engagement, or at least need not profoundly diminish it. But when police search a higher number of citizens or deploy more force in their stops of community members, people become much less likely to make claims on local government. Thus, the relationship turns on the quality of policing, not merely the quantity.

In this contribution, we echo our earlier work and that of others who have suggested that the character of criminal justice interventions is likely to be salient to how they are understood by citizens and the role they play in communities. Good policing can be critical to reducing crime, enabling neighborhoods to construct strong and stable civic organizations. However, overly aggressive police tactics that criminalize routine behaviors and forcibly detain residents as they move through the public space are likely to deter citizen engagement with police, as well as with other institutions of local government. This is particularly troubling given that these institutions might otherwise be a valuable resource for resolving issues and concerns at the community level.

Finally, nearly all the extant literature that has focused anew on criminal justice and communities has underestimated the scope of punitive interventions, taking incarceration as the central (and often sole) starting point, overlooking the more frequent and routine ways that punitive interactions take place in urban areas through citizen contact with police. By affecting citizens' likelihood of making claims on government, police stops have become an important aspect of neighborhood political ecology.

This article focuses on only one city, on one measure of engagement and, one type of surveillance intervention. Yet we hope it will be part of a broader research agenda that can begin to unearth whether and how policing and punishment influence American democracy on the ground. As part of this effort, we urge scholars to think not only about incarceration but about the many ways that citizens encounter the punitive "hand" of state power. As scholars, we have not even scratched the surface of how criminal justice interventions may shape the political spaces people inhabit, particularly the urban poor.

Notes

1. In *Terry v. Ohio*, the Court ruled that police can constitutionally stop and frisk a suspect as long as there is reasonable suspicion that the individual has committed or is committing a crime or is going to commit a crime.

2. New York Civil Liberties Union. Stop-and-frisk data. Available from www.nyclu.org.

3. The criminological theory of "broken windows" holds that policing of low-level disorders, such as vandalism and loitering, can help to deter more serious crimes by signaling that antisocial behavior is not tolerated.

4. Police are mandated to document stops only in the event that a stop involves frisk, force, search, or the "person refuses to identify him or herself"; outside this mandate, police can voluntarily complete the UF-250 form. We cannot know how many stops were not recorded because they did not meet the conditions for a required documentation; however, prior analyses have found this underreporting not to bias results (Gelman, Fagan, and Kiss 2007).

5. We do not claim that all stops should result in an arrest or finding to be justified. However, we argue that when a large share of residents are stopped or frisked and only a tiny share are found to be engaged in wrongdoing, this may indicate adversarial policing styles that register negatively with community members. See also Gelman, Fagan, and Kiss (2007) and Roh and Robinson (2009).

6. We removed service requests that were entered not by residents themselves but by the Street Conditions Observation Unit (SCOUT), a team of inspectors in the mayor's office.

7. Crime data at lower levels of aggregation are not available. However, we replicated our results at the census tract level, where we are able to include a control for homicide.

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