ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Suspicious places make people suspicious: Officers' perceptions of place-based conditions in racialized drug enforcement

Shytierra Gaston[1] | **Rod K. Brunson**[2] | **David O. Ayeni**[1]

[1]Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

[2]Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA

Direct correspondence to Shytierra Gaston, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Georgia State University, PO Box 3992, Atlanta, GA 30302, USA (Email: sgaston9@gsu.edu).

Abstract

Research Summary: Place-based conditions are well-established predictors of police behavior, but the literature lacks nuanced examinations of how place-based factors influence officer decision making, especially by citizen race/ethnicity and from officers' perspectives. We investigate officers' accounts regarding how they weigh place-based factors into their arrest decisions of Black, Hispanic, and White drug suspects in Newark, New Jersey from 2011 to 2016. Our analysis of 438 filed drug arrest reports revealed that most arrestees, especially Black Americans, became susceptible to heightened police scrutiny because of their presence in stigmatized, criminalized areas. Although place-based stigma and individualized prohibited behavior coalesced to guide police contacts with Hispanic and White residents, officers made contacts with Black Americans based on a lower legal basis, often irrespective of their individualized behavior in stigmatized places.

Policy Implications: Officers' differential, racialized reliance on place-based conditions supports the need for effective, evidence-based, community-centered social services that reduce crime, overreliance on police, and opportunities for discriminatory policing.

KEYWORDS
crime, drug enforcement, neighborhoods, police discretion, race and policing, racial disparities

---

There is mounting public sentiment that an effective strategy for reducing fatal encounters between police and civilians is to minimize involuntary contact for nonviolent offenses. For example, officers have killed citizens while investigating a wide range of nonurgent, public safety matters (e.g., hanging air fresheners, selling loose cigarettes, not using sidewalks). Heavy-handed policing strategies are disproportionately underway in areas that law-enforcement personnel define as "high crime" places where historically marginalized people reside and persistent social problems tend to cluster. Police executives and city leaders typically rely on the high crime designation in defense of dubious, crime control strategies. Aggressive policing tactics have been shown to erode police–community relations, even when routine encounters do not result in tragic deaths. Sensibly lessening officers' footprints in overly policed places might also reduce long-standing racial disparities in criminal justice system outcomes and improve police legitimacy.

An abundant body of research has examined how race, place, and policing converge, finding that the most dubious crime control tactics are underway in distressed, inner-city communities. Within these urban areas, particular microgeographic units, or "hot spots," such as certain street blocks and ecological structures (e.g., alleys, abandoned buildings), appear to be magnets for crime and subsequently, heightened police suspicion and scrutiny (Block & Block, 1995; McGahey, 1986; Spelman, 1993). Periodically, the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has entered into consent decrees with local law-enforcement agencies (e.g., Baltimore, Chicago, Ferguson, Newark, New Orleans, Oakland) after finding credible evidence of a "pattern or practice" of unconstitutional conduct. Furthermore, since 2016, the Newark Police Department (NPD) has operated under a court-ordered reform agreement after federal investigators determined that officers routinely engaged in a wide range of unconstitutional behaviors (i.e., unlawful search/seizures, improper handling of evidence, excessive use of force). As a condition of the negotiated settlement, city leaders agreed to overhaul various training and supervision policies concerning stops, searches, and arrests. Recent journalistic examinations of the NPD, however, reveal that disconcerting civil rights violations persist, especially regarding racially biased policing (Policing the Police, 2020; Ross, 2019).

Social scientists have routinely shown that place-based factors, such as crime and decaying social conditions, help to shape law-enforcement strategies, often exacerbating racial disparities in criminal justice outcomes (Braga et al., 2019; Gaston, 2019a; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001). Furthermore, some observers have expressed concern about public safety initiatives rooted in the belief that serious crime might be curtailed if officers were steadfast in focusing on nonviolent offending (e.g., open-air drug markets) (Gau & Brunson, 2010). As a consequence, residents of, and visitors to, distressed areas are more likely to find themselves the targets of specialized units' crime control efforts (Klinger, 1997; Kane, 2005). Moreover, researchers examining racial disparities in arrests often struggle to separate suspect race from the place-based context (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009). Therefore, widespread claims of officers' racial animus might arguably result from their tendency to behave more forcefully in ecological settings that supervisors have labeled unsafe (e.g., public housing, nuisance businesses, and the garden-variety, "known drug locations").

Racially biased policing occurs when officers make enforcement decisions in part or wholly based on race/ethnicity or when enforcement practices have a racialized impact. Several police leaders have justified the continued use of proactive policing strategies, citing their crime-reduction benefits. Critics argue, however, that celebrated crime declines attributed to order maintenance policing are potentially unconstitutional and worsen already shaky police–minority citizen relations. Furthermore, the vast majority of police crackdowns and sweeps usually fail to produce substantial caches of illegal firearms and drugs (Epp et al., 2014; Fagan et al., 2010; Gould & Mastrofski, 2004; Jones-Brown et al., 2013; White & Fradella, 2016).

Although the ability to detain suspects is integral to officers' public safety mission, if applied unfairly, it has the potential to seriously threaten police legitimacy. In fact, the unrestrained use of stop-and-frisk campaigns has consistently thwarted citizen confidence in the police and residents' willingness to cooperate with criminal investigations (Brunson & Wade, 2019). Prior studies consistently demonstrate that individuals on the receiving end of oppressive enforcement strategies question whether officers are fairly exercising their law-enforcement duties. Research investigating the widespread use of aggressive policing strategies reveals that such initiatives undercut officers' moral authority in citizens' eyes (Braga et al., 2019; Boehme et al., 2022; Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Gau & Brunson, 2010).

In public spaces, investigative stops merely require police being able to form reasonable suspicion that "criminal activity may be afoot" (Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1 [1968]). A higher legal standard, probable cause, however, is required before an officer is justified in making arrests. Thus, reasonable suspicion provides officers legal standing to momentarily impede individuals' movements and if deemed necessary, perform "pat-down" searches, that can lead to probable cause and then, an arrest. Irrespective of whether an agency's overreliance on intrusive stops as an enforcement strategy is legally permissible, the resulting racially disparate outcomes are problematic for improving police legitimacy.

There is a considerable body of scholarly knowledge regarding race, place, and ensuing arrest disparities. Additional research is needed, however, to thoughtfully investigate how the interplay of places and people influences officers' decision-making calculus. In particular, scholarship can be extended by examining "how" individual suspect and community-level conditions influence aggressive policing tactics. We explore these matters using NPD officers' assertions (i.e., submitted official police reports) regarding the factors that led to their misgivings about target areas and specific suspects (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) that criminal activity was occurring.

1 | LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial/ethnic disparities abound in the U.S. criminal justice system and generally stem from dubious police–citizen encounters. These disparate patterns are largely a function of involuntary police contacts, heightened surveillance, intrusive stops (vehicle and pedestrian), and frisks (Browning et al., 1994; Brunson & Miller, 2006a; Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Boehme et al., 2022; Fagan & Davies, 2000; Fagan et al., 2016; Gaston, 2019b; Gaston & Brunson, 2020; Gelman et al., 2007; Goel et al., 2016; Stewart et al., 2009; Rojek et al., 2012). Residents of disadvantaged community settings routinely bear the brunt of troubling police tactics, fueling citizen distrust of, and dissatisfaction with, officers. Specifically, residents of urban, Black communities have a greater risk of experiencing frequent, unwelcome police contact (Brunson & Miller, 2006b; Brunson, 2007; Boehme et al., 2022; Weitzer & Tuch, 1999, 2002).

Intense police surveillance of distressed communities has produced racially disparate outcomes (Gaston, 2019a; Fagan et al, 2016; Stoudt et al., 2011; Terrill & Reisig, 2003; Tyler et al., 2015). Black neighborhood residents report being watched more frequently and intently than inhabitants of more affluent places (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Gaston, 2019a; Gaston, 2019b; Meehan & Ponder, 2002; Weitzer, 2000). Involuntary police encounters are possible due to constitutional provisions allowing officers to stop and question citizens based on reasonable suspicion rather than the higher probable cause standard (Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1 [1968]). Research consistently shows, however, that aggressive police encounters are disproportionately

carried out in socioeconomically disadvantaged places, even after controlling for crime rates (Fagan & Davies, 2000; Fagan et al., 2016; Gelman et al., 2007; Gaston, 2019a).

Arrests represent the first official entry point into the criminal justice system. Moreover, as previously noted, there are well-documented racial imbalances regarding arrest rates in the United States (Mitchell & Caudy, 2015; Mitchell & Lynch, 2011; Travis et al., 2014). Although White citizens comprise a majority of the nation's arrestees (69%), Black Americans who comprise 27% of arrests are overrepresented relative to their makeup of 13% of the U.S. population (Uniform Crime Report, 2019). This inequality is also seen across arrest types. For example, Black Americans comprise 26% of drug arrestees compared to their White counterparts (71%) (Uniform Crime Report, 2019). Black citizens are 11 times as likely as Whites to be arrested for simple drug possession (Human Rights Watch, 2021), although Whites self-report using drugs at a higher rate (Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell & Lynch, 2011).

Racial disparities in drug arrests reflect historical, political, organizational, and socioeconomic dynamics (Beckett et al., 2005; Beckett et al., 2006; Engel et al., 2012; Gaston, 2019a; Gaston, 2019b; Gaston & Brunson, 2020; Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell & Lynch, 2011; Lynch et al., 2013). Scholars have offered a wide range of explanations for drug arrests disparities. For instance, Mitchell and colleagues argue that Black citizens' disproportionate representation among drug arrestees originated "before" the War on Drugs propaganda and cannot be explained by their overrepresentation in violent crime (Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell & Caudy, 2015). Rather, scholars underscore a constellation of alternate factors as explaining the racial disparity in drug enforcement (e.g., deployment hypothesis, organizational factors, neighborhood composition, police bias) (Beckett et al., 2005, 2006; Eitle & Monahan, 2009; Engel et al., 2012; Gaston, 2019a; Gaston, 2019b; Gaston & Brunson, 2020; Mitchell & Caudy, 2015).

The deployment hypothesis, also known as differential scrutiny, asserts that law-enforcement patterns are ecological. The argument contends that police presence is greater in disadvantaged neighborhoods characterized by high crime (Engel et al., 2012). Policing in distressed areas tends to be proactive, affording officers abundant opportunities to make arrests. These disadvantaged contexts are often micro places that serve as avenues for police to concentrate their enforcement and arrest activities. Scholars have argued that the deployment hypothesis contributes to drug arrest disparities. For example, Engel et al. (2012) found that race disparities in drug arrests can be explained by local crime figures and citizen complaints.

Beckett et al. (2006) argue that the overrepresentation of Black Americans in drug arrests stems from policing tactics that negatively affect communities of color. Using a case study in Seattle, researchers assert that drug arrest disparities result from the Seattle Police Department's enforcement strategies (e.g., focused on open-air, crack markets). Further, Eitle and Monahan (2009) found that departments' written rules, policies, and directives yielded greater arrests rates for Black residents. Mitchell and Caudy (2015) contend that drug disparities can be explained by racial bias in law-enforcement practices. Similarly, Gaston (2019a, 2019b) offers that unevenness in drug arrests is attributable to racially biased policing tactics underway in crime-ridden places.

1.1 | Sources of racialized policing

An abundant body of literature attributes racialized policing to individual, structural, and organizational factors. In particular, studies find that officer characteristics (e.g., race, gender, education), attitudes, and perceptions help to shape police–citizen encounters (Brown & Frank, 2006; Sherman, 1980; Sun et al., 2008; Fyfe, 1988; Sobol et al., 2013). Arrestee race, gender, and demeanor

are also reliable predictors of police behavior (Black, 1970; Friedrich, 1977; Smith & Visher, 1981). Police are more apt to arrest individuals who display what officers consider negative demeanor (Sun et al, 2008; Sobol et al, 2013). In terms of structural factors, prior research consistently demonstrates that place-based characteristics shape police behavior (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Klinger, 1997; Terrill & Reisig, 2003; Gaston, 2019a; Gaston, 2019b; Gaston & Brunson, 2020; Lersch et al., 2008; Sobol et al., 2013; Weitzer, 2010). That is, police tend to view affluent, low crime places—and their inhabitants—more favorably than they do residents encountered in disadvantaged settings. Officers perceive the concentration of persistent social problems (e.g., poverty, unemployment, poor housing stock, and street crime) as legitimate public safety risks and sometimes respond with overly aggressive policing (Weitzer, 2010).

In addition to structural place-based features, crime rates and calls for service shape police practices. Similar to crime rates, police agencies often rely on citizen requests to determine how, when, and where officers are deployed (Coe and Wiesel, 2001; Vera Sanchez & Rosenbaum, 2011). Distressed, urban communities where Black people disproportionately live are often besieged by long-standing crime and disorder problems, increasing the likelihood of citizen calls for service and involuntary citizen–police contacts. Police routinely saturate distressed areas with officers dispatched to address a wide range of problem behaviors (Engel et al., 2012). For example, Beckett et al.'s (2006) study on drug delivery disparities in Seattle found that deployment strategies contributed to arrest disparities between Black (66%) and White (51%) residents. Beckett and colleagues attributed observed arrest differences to the Department's decision to focus on outdoor crack markets instead of targeting more clandestine drug operations (i.e., indoor markets involving other types of drugs). Black residents, however, were still overrepresented among indoor drug arrestees (25% vs. 15%). Also, despite the diverse nature of drug markets in downtown Seattle, crime rates and citizen complaints did not correspond with enforcement tactics.

Analyzing officers' accounts of drug arrests across 78 St. Louis, Missouri neighborhoods, Gaston (2019a) found evidence of racially discriminatory policing strategies. Officers' official reports uncovered disproportionate proactive strategies in Black and racially mixed neighborhoods based on a lower legal standard. St. Louis officers reported using proactive strategies in Black and racially mixed neighborhoods as a result of criminogenic neighborhood conditions and demeanor, often irrespective of individual suspect behavior. On the other hand, in White neighborhoods, officers reported using reactive strategies stemming from nonviolent offenses such as burglary and prostitution (see also Brunson & Weitzer, 2009). In sum, place-based factors, such as crime, disadvantage, racial/ethnic composition, and physical disorder, routinely impact officers' arrest decisions.

2 | CURRENT STUDY

Although the literature—albeit mostly quantitative—underscores place-based conditions as critical to shaping policing patterns, more research is needed to better illuminate "how" officers weigh place-based conditions into their on-the-ground decision making and behavior, especially by citizen race/ethnicity. A contextualized and nuanced examination can improve understandings of why some places (and persons) are policed differently than others. This interplay can be potentially illuminated by including officers' perspectives, an important but understudied vantage point. Only a handful of studies have benefitted from officers' perspectives regarding the people and places they monitor, including interviews with police (Vera Sanchez &

Rosenbaum, 2011; Peterson, 2022) and systematic analyses of officers' filed arrest reports (Fagan & Geller, 2015; Gaston, 2019b; Gaston & Brunson, 2020).

The current study contributes to the literature by investigating officers' notions of place preceding arrests of Black, White, and Hispanic drug suspects. Given this focus, we investigate how place-based context influences officers' crime control efforts. Our goal is to advance research regarding the race and place policing nexus. We aim to accomplish our objectives by investigating officers' accounts of suspicious places and persons in drug arrest incidents in Newark, New Jersey between 2011 and 2016.

3 | RESEARCH SETTING

Newark, New Jersey has long been a majority–minority city among both the resident population "and" police department personnel. During the 2011–2016 study period, Newark had more than 277,000 residents, 51% of whom were Black and 36% Hispanic. With people of color comprising more than 87% of the city's population, White Americans were the racial/ethnic minority. The Newark Police Department (hereafter NPD) is the city's primary law-enforcement agency. During our conversation with an NPD data analyst, we gathered that the NPD employed roughly 1000 sworn officers with approximately 400 officers assigned to patrol duties. NPD officers were 33% Black, 42% Hispanic, and 23% White, with officers of color constituting approximately three quarters of Newark's police force.

Newark's socioeconomic and crime conditions are more disadvantaged than those at the national level. Although 15% of U.S. citizens live below the poverty line according to federal standards, this rate nearly doubles to 29% in Newark (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The city's economic disadvantage compounds along racial/ethnic lines. White households have a median income of $46,022 compared to $33,270 for Hispanic and $30,429 for Black households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The unemployment rate for Black residents almost triples the unemployment rate for Whites (23% vs. 9%, respectively) and nearly doubles the rate for Hispanic residents (23% vs. 13%, respectively) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Newark's violent crime rate in 2014 was three times higher than the U.S. average, at 1078 versus 366 violent incidents per 100,000 residents, respectively (FBI, 2014).

Newark has a long history of strained relations between Black residents and the police. In 1967, a police beating of a Black taxi driver led to 6 days of rioting that resulted in 26 deaths and hundreds of civilian injuries (Ross, 2019; Tuttle, 2009), fostering enduring police–community animosity. Black Newark residents complained of injustices and abuse by NPD officers for several decades thereafter, culminating in an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice (hereafter DOJ). In its 2014 investigation report, the DOJ detailed patterns of unconstitutional stops, arrests, excessive use of force, and theft by NPD officers (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). The ensuing consent decree was instituted on May 5, 2016 with a mandate to reform internal affairs, accountability, training, policy, and community engagement. Most of these reforms did not start until 2017, well after the current study period. However, the drug arrests under study predated the consent decree and provide insight into NPD's enforcement activity that was part of NPD's system of unconstitutional, illegal policing.

During the 2011–2016 study period, NPD made 18,745 drug arrests for which the primary charge was a drug offense. The vast majority of drug arrestees were Black (77%) despite them constituting only half of the resident population. Hispanic and White Americans each comprised 11% of drug arrests, indicating that Hispanic arrestees were underrepresented relative to their 36% makeup of

Newark's population and White arrestees were representative of their percentage of the resident population. Thus, despite Newark being a majority–minority city, Black Americans were grossly overrepresented in drug arrests to a degree similar to that in other contexts. In contrast, although Hispanics were overrepresented in drug enforcement in other cities such as New York City (Geller & Fagan, 2010; Harcourt & Ludwig, 2007), they were underrepresented in Newark. Our study of variations in officer perspectives of neighborhood conditions might help to illuminate Newark's racially disparate drug-enforcement practices.

4 | DATA

To understand officers' perceptions of neighborhoods, the current study involves systematic analyses of narratives contained in drug arrest reports from 2011 to 2016 for which the primary charge was a drug offense. The 18,745 drug arrests during this period are accompanied by reports detailing officers' accounts of the sequence of events that culminated in the arrest. An NPD data analyst provided us access to 480 drug arrest reports. Since these reports did not exist in an electronic format downloadable and useable to researchers, the NPD data analyst used a random number generator to randomly select 160 reports each from Black, Hispanic, and White arrests, totaling 480 drug arrest reports. Then, the analyst manually culled and compiled the 480 arrest reports and pasted them into a Microsoft Excel document. We carefully examined the data quality prior to analysis and omitted duplicate and incomplete reports. As a result, our final sample contains 438 drug reports: 157 Black arrests, 138 Hispanic arrests, and 143 White arrests. Prior to undertaking data collection, we submitted our research protocol to the lead author's university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received an exempt determination.

Although drawing upon officer narratives helps to shed light on police perspectives, the degree to which the narratives reflect officers' true perceptions and the actual unfolding of arrest incidents remains unknown. Arrest reports are official documents officers construct to justify the legality of their decisions and actions for subsequent prosecution, and police supervisors, prosecutors, and judges are privy to these reports (Gaston, 2019b; Gonzalez Van Cleve, 2016, p. 114; Moskos, 2008, pp. 50–55; Smith, 2005, 2006). Because of the institutional function of the narratives, they likely reflect social desirability bias that inflates officers' compliance with legal, organizational, and normative expectations, overstating citizens' culpability and downplaying unethical or illegal conduct that has been revealed in NPD's enforcement practices (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Given this validity constraint, findings from these data must be interpreted with these cautions in mind.

5 | ANALYSIS

The analysis consisted of multistage inductive coding that aimed to illuminate how officers described place-based conditions that may have influenced their enforcement decisions. We used Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word to facilitate data analysis. Three coders—including two principal researchers and one research assistant—began the analysis with an initial read of officers' narratives to gain a sense of the data quality and content and to identify preliminary themes. This was followed by a focused analysis to address the research objectives. The narratives were blinded by hiding arrestee demographic characteristics, including race/ethnicity, using Microsoft Excel features. They were then randomized and evenly divided among the three coders for

analysis. We reread the narratives, focusing on two analytic topics: (1) officers' stated and implied characterizations of target areas and (2) their notions of suspicion. We compiled excerpts into a single document and reread and analyzed them for recurrent themes. Then, when possible, we quantified recurrent patterns by developing coding criteria and using them to categorize arrest incidents. To ensure accuracy and consistency, each coder undertook an additional iteration of re-coding a different set of narratives, resulting in each narrative being analyzed by a minimum of two coders. Although interrater reliability was initially high (0.87), we resolved discrepant cases by refining the coding criteria and recoding all the narratives to reach complete consensus. As a final step, we unhid arrestee demographic characteristics and compared codes and themes within and between Black, Hispanic, and White arrestees to investigate racial/ethnic differences in officers' descriptions of place-based conditions.

In the following section, we describe findings that emerged from the analysis across drug arrests overall and by arrestee race/ethnicity. We summarize officers' descriptions of settings and indicators of suspicion they report as influencing their decisions and behaviors that culminated in the arrest. In the interest of anonymity, we omitted identifiers such as dates, names, streets, businesses, vehicle types, and landmarks from the reported findings. We additionally assigned each arrest incident a random number between 1 and 438 and refer to the incidents accordingly. Representative excerpts from the narratives accompany the findings for the purpose of illustrating emergent, recurrent themes in the data.

6 | FINDINGS

Findings from our analysis revealed place-based factors, such as perceived crime and social problems, as shaping officers' enforcement practices, especially in ways that were racialized. The dominant way in which officers characterized target locations was through a criminalized lens, citing the area's high or increasing recorded crime rates, anonymous citizen complaints, and disparaging reputation based on officers' prior knowledge and experience. Officers also criminalized specific microgeographic locations (e.g., addresses, street blocks, street intersections) and ecological features within broader areas, such as abandoned buildings, known drug houses, public housing projects, and alleys. We captured and quantified officers' criminalized characterizations with the analytic code "high-crime area," finding that in most instances (67%), officers characterized areas as high crime based on information they received from supervisors (e.g., at roll call prior to beginning their shifts), prior knowledge and experience with the area, and recent recorded crime spikes. However, this high-crime characterization was more prevalent in arrests of Black (80%) than Hispanic (51%) or White (69%) citizens. Designating areas as high crime justified officers' presence and hyper-surveillance of the area, prompting them to engage in directed patrol, per their supervisors' instructions, as well as in self-initiated proactive patrol. Approximately 34% of arrests stemmed from directed patrol but were greater among Black (40%) than Hispanic (29%) or White (31%) arrestees. In addition to justifying police deployment and patrol priorities, labeling areas as high crime guided officers' suspicions of the people frequenting the area as well as their discretionary decisions to monitor, stop, question, search, and eventually arrest citizens. In many instances, the area's characteristics alone prompted officers' suspicions of and contacts with frequenters irrespective of their individualized behaviors. A concept known as ecological contamination (Sykes & Clark, 1975; Terrill & Reisig, 2003; Werthman & Piliavin, 1967), the suspicion and stigma officers ascribed to certain areas also extended to visitors, leading officers to perceive civilians as embracing the area's moral liabilities. We coded and quantified

whether an arrest stemmed from ecological contamination by which report narratives indicated that officers suspected, surveilled, or stopped citizens based on the area's characteristics "before" detecting suspected drugs or other criminal activity. Study findings indicated ecological contamination influenced 56% of the arrests, more commonly among Black (62%) than Hispanic (53%) or White (53%) arrestees. The following subsections describe our findings by arrestee race/ethnicity to further demonstrate how place-based conditions influence officers' perceptions, decisions, and behaviors in ways that appear to be racialized.

6.1 | Black arrestees

Despite Newark being a city where people of color comprise most of the city's residents "and" police force, Black Americans were disproportionately arrested for drug offenses relative to Hispanic and White residents. Black Americans made up 51% of the city population but 77% of drug arrests during the study period. Our analysis revealed that most Black drug arrests stemmed from a greater presence of officers in areas with Black residents coupled with officers' disproportionate suspicion of certain places. This finding is consistent with prior research asserting that agencies heavily deploy officers to Black neighborhoods because of high official crime rates (Engel et al., 2012; Gaston, 2019a; Mitchell & Lynch, 2011; Warren et al., 2006). However, official crime indicators do not only drive police presence in the area, they also prime officers' preconceived notions of people in such places. In 80% of Black arrests, officers characterized the area as high crime, justifying their strong presence in and patrol of the area. For example, an officer on self-initiated patrol described that:

> This area is well known to these officers due to its high volume of both narcotics sales and use along with its high concentration of violence which includes shootings and homicides. Both officers have made numerous arrests in this area in the past which have resulted in convictions, and both officers are aware of the open-air narcotics trafficking that takes place in this area all hours of the day and night. -#16, Black arrestee

Officers commonly prefaced their reports similarly, especially in arrests of Black Americans. Although the data do not allow us to validate officers' beliefs of high or increasing crime in the microgeographic locations in question, it is through this lens of criminality that officers reportedly conducted enforcement activities. Stated differently, branding places as "dangerously violent" provides officers' legal standing for not only their presence but their subsequent decision making and behaviors, irrespective of whether such justifications are valid or whether the eventual arrestee was in fact responsible for the claimed macrolevel surges in violence. Indeed, none of the drug arrests under study resulted in weapon seizures or was accompanied by a violent crime charge. Moreover, as shown in incident #16, the area's reputation and officers' prior knowledge of it formed their suspicion of places and individuals. To illustrate, in another incident, officers were reportedly instructed by their sergeant to conduct directed patrol in a specific precinct "to suppress the recent influx in violence and the lucrative open air narcotic trafficking networks" (#269, Black arrestee). While driving their marked patrol car, the officers' "attention was drawn by an unknown female who was observed wandering around the location." The officers subsequently stopped and questioned the woman because "based on prior investigations and arrests, this location and the immediate area is known for its heavy drug trafficking. In fact, detectives assigned to

this division have effected numerous prior arrests within the area for narcotics related offenses." Although the woman's stated behavior did not reflect criminality nor was it legally prohibited, her mere presence in a criminalized area was enough to attract officers' gaze and prompt the stop that led to her arrest, an example of ecological contamination. Similarly, while patrolling, officers in incident #19 recounted:

> [our] attention was drawn to the suspect who was exiting said address with another male. The two males looked in our direction at which time, both males turned around and began to re-enter the location. Officers are familiar with the location due to making numerous arrests for illegal narcotics in the past that stemmed from said address.
> -#19, Black arrestee

Due to the officers' familiarity with the location, they deemed the men's presence at the address and their reaction upon seeing the officers suspicious. The officers stopped and questioned the men, subsequently "observing a small green item fall from his persons onto the street" that was found to be a bag of cocaine. Although the officers did not report observing the men engaged in criminal or prohibited behavior before forming suspicion, stopping, and questioning them, simply frequenting a suspicious area exposed them to police scrutiny and an arrest. As this incident also highlights, officers commonly described Black citizens' benign or ambiguous behavior as furtive, a reason used to inform suspicion and justify stops that led to arrests. An officer recounted being on self-initiated patrol with his partner in an area "due to a recent rash of violence which has included shootings and homicides in recent weeks" (#163, Black arrestee). They described observing a "young Black male wearing a black hoody and blue pants who was standing on the intersection digging into his waist band area when noticing our unmarked unit." The officers deemed this action suspicious and chose to conduct an investigatory stop "due to the actions he took when observing these officers, along with the violence which has occurred recently." Thus, officers' knowledge of the neighborhood's criminal reputation coalesced with suspecting the male's action to be furtive. Similarly, officers conceived Black Americans as suspicious when observing them change their demeanor or behavior upon noticing police presence, especially in areas they described as high crime. Excerpts from the following three incidents illustrate officers' perceived furtiveness among Black Americans:

> Upon observing our police presence, he immediately turned his back and began reaching into his right pants pocket. Deeming criminal activity afoot, we decided to further investigate. -#21, Black arrestee

> He observed our marked police vehicle, and he became startled, specifically by stopping abruptly causing him to stagger. "Believing that criminal activity may be afoot…" -#24, Black arrestee

> We observed a Black male enter said address (known for high narcotic traffic) and exit. He saw us in our marked patrol unit and had a shocked look on his face. He then began to fumble around with his hands in his pockets. The other Black male then put his head down and walked at a fast pace. We followed him and approached him to investigate why he was in the area. -#127, Black arrestee

In addition to ecological contamination driving a disproportionate share (62%) of officers' suspicion, surveillance, stops, questioning, and arrests of Black Americans, they also repeatedly reported observing signs of open-air drug activity among Black arrestees. This pattern might be a function of a few factors. Urban drug markets are more likely to operate in public spaces compared to suburban drug markets that are often private (Coker, 2003; Dunlap et al., 1997; Goode, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2008, 2009; Ramchand et al., 2006; Tonry, 1995), creating a racialized macrolevel disparity in drug detection. Further, NPD's prioritization of narcotics enforcement might have motivated officers' hypervigilance in contrast to other police departments that have deemphasized drug offenses (Gaston, 2019a, 2019b). In some instances, officers' discovery of suspected drugs was inadvertent, occurring only "after" choosing to approach Black citizens due to place-based stigma or for nonurgent public safety matters, such as traffic or vehicle equipment violations. In other instances, officers described observing evidence of suspected drug activity "prior to" choosing to initiate stops, having sufficient legal basis to do so. For example, a group of officers targeted an area due to "numerous narcotic complaints and aggravated assault with weapons complaints (namely handguns/shootings) stemming at this said location" (#77, Black arrestee). While operating an unmarked vehicle, the officers "observed a male handed an unknown amount of paper currency to another male in exchange for unknown object(s) inside a medium size black plastic bag" that was later determined to be heroin, resulting in a drug arrest. Similarly, another group of officers described their attention being drawn to a parking lot where they had previously recovered stolen vehicles and observed "numerous individuals standing in the rear. Officers pulled into the parking lot to observe three unknown males standing against the wall smoking. Officers opened our windows to our unit to smell a strong odor of marijuana burning" (#275, Black arrestee), which gave them sufficient legal basis for the stop and arrest. In another incident, the officers wrote:

> [our] attention was gathered to a Black male as he was walking toward the detectives' direction with his attention diverted to the items in his hand. The detectives knowing the area to contain a high amount of narcotic activity decided to proceed toward his direction and conduct a field inquiry to gain information on recent violence. -#147, Black arrestee

Thus, although officers' negative views of certain places and ecological contamination shaped most Black drug arrests, some were also attributable to officers' reported observation of open-air drug activity and witnessing drugs in plain view, which might be disproportionately featured in certain areas within Newark's Black neighborhoods.

6.2 | Hispanic arrestees

In contrast to the disproportionate arrests of Black Americans within Newark's majority–minority racial/ethnic context, Hispanic Americans were underrepresented and matched White Americans in constituting the smallest share of arrestees. For example, Hispanic Americans comprised 36% of Newark residents but only 11% of drug arrestees during the study period. Among Hispanic drug arrests, officers characterized the area as high crime in only 51% of incidents compared to 80% of Black arrests, and they relied less on place-based conditions and more on individualized behavior to inform suspicion, surveillance, stops, questioning, and arrests of Hispanic Americans. In addition to officers' less frequent high-crime characterization in Hispanic arrests, the nature of

such characterization and arrests varied in comparison to those of Black arrestees. Officers predominantly described violence and drug activity as prompting their presence and behavior in areas of Black arrests while using a broader spectrum of social problems to characterize areas in which they arrested Hispanic Americans, such as prostitution and calls for service. Unlike in Black arrests, officers seldom stopped Hispanic Americans in high-crime areas solely because of their presence or deeming their benign or ambiguous behavior suspicious. Rather, the interaction of both place-based conditions and overtly suspicious behavior drove a large share of Hispanic arrests. For example, officers on self-initiated patrol observed:

> a male looking southbound away from us. As we got closer, he looked toward our direction and quickly looked into the side alley saying something to someone as if he was alerting of police presence. As this happened, we were passing the location and observed another male quickly exit the side alley with a visibly nervous look. This location being known to us to be vacant, known for open air narcotics trafficking as well as finding both males actions to be suspicious, we decided to make a U-turn and stop both males to investigate their actions. -#11, Hispanic arrestee

The most common individualized suspicion of Hispanic citizens derived from vehicle violations and open-air drug activity. To illustrate the former, officers described observing "a male driving through the posted stop sign without his seatbelt on" (#231, Hispanic arrestee), "a vehicle idling with no lights on" (#63, Hispanic arrestee), "all the vehicle's windows were heavily tinted and decided to conduct a motor vehicle stop to address the violation" (#214, Hispanic arrestee), and "a double parked vehicle" (#184, Hispanic arrestee) before inadvertently detecting drug possession and making an arrest during these vehicle stops. As an example of open-air drug activity, while patrolling a "high-narcotics location," an officer detailed noticing that "a male handed another male currency. The male in return handed him an unknown item from his front right jean pocket. At this time the male started walking toward our direction and noticed our police presence and proceeded to run," ending in an arrest for cocaine (#203, Hispanic arrestee). Thus, officers were more likely to describe overtly prohibitive behaviors as prompting their suspicion and subsequent contacts with Hispanic Americans than with Black Americans, articulating a stronger legal basis for their decisions and relying less prominently on place-based conditions.

In contrast to Black drug arrests, officers relied more heavily on alleged citizen complaints to investigate and arrest Hispanics, a more reactive and less discretionary policing strategy than the overwhelming proactive enforcement of Black Americans. For example, officers reportedly received information from "a concerned citizen, who wishes to remain anonymous, about a possible narcotics operation being conducted at the said location" (#3, Hispanic arrestee). The officers then used this reported information to surveil the suspects at the site before approaching them by foot for questioning and conducting the arrest. In another incident, officers conducted directed patrol "to suppress a recent influx in gun violence and open-air narcotics distribution schemes" (#223, Hispanic arrestee). They were "flagged down by a concerned citizen who reported a group of Hispanic males peering into vehicles and appeared to be trying to break into vehicles in the area." Using the detailed description that the citizen provided, the officers located, surveilled, and then made contact with the men. The officers stated that one of the males "appeared extremely startled and began taking steps backward as if he wanted to flee. He then reached into his pocket and discarded a plastic zip lock baggie onto the ground" that was discovered to be cocaine, resulting in the drug arrest. Overall, Hispanic arrests appear to stem from officers' higher standard for

suspicion, even when place-based conditions shaped their enforcement, which help to explain Hispanic Americans' underrepresentation in Newark's drug arrests.

6.3 | White arrestees

In most prior studies of racial/ethnic police disparities, White Americans face the lowest risk of involuntary police contact. In Newark, however, White Americans' drug arrest rate per capita is intermediate to that of Black and Hispanic Americans. During the study period, White Americans made up 11% of the city's residents and 11% of drug arrestees, being exactly represented in drug arrests relative to their resident population. Officers characterized the areas in which they arrested White Americans as high crime in most incidents (69%), albeit to a lesser degree than for Black arrests (80%) but higher than for Hispanic arrests (51%). Similar to Hispanic arrests but unlike Black arrests, place-based conditions alone were not described as prompting suspicion, stops, questioning, and arrests of Whites. A smaller share of White arrests stemmed from ecological contamination (53%) in comparison to Black arrests (62%). In White arrests, officers justified stops based on observing overtly suspicious or criminal individualized behavior, mostly open-air drug activity. For example, a pair of officers proactively patrolled an area adjacent to a public housing project due to narcotic complaints and "being known to [them] as a high-narcotic area based on previous arrests" (#325, White arrestee). The officers described observing "a male facing toward a building with his back to the street and looking down toward both of his hands for approximately 15–20 seconds" and observed "a hypodermic needle with an orange cap in his right hand," resulting in an arrest for cocaine. In a sizeable share of White arrests, White citizens were described as drug buyers during officers' surveillance of "high-crime" areas and of suspected Black drug dealers. This recurrent pattern is illustrated in the following two incidents:

> While scanning the area with my binoculars, I noticed and saw a Black male walking toward the vehicle. That's when the front passenger exited the vehicle and met with the Black male. The White male handed the unknown male some U.S. currency. The Black male then took the money, placed it into his pocket, then retrieved some white objects from his pocket and handed it to the White male who took the items and counted them in his hand before placing them into his pocket and returning to his vehicle. Due to our training and experience, we believed a drug transaction just occurred. We ran back to our vehicle parked a few feet away and drove after the vehicle. -#431, White arrestee

> My attention was drawn to an unknown Black male who was standing next to the passenger side door of the vehicle. This Black male had just retrieved an unknown amount of paper currency from one of the occupants in the vehicle. At this time I then observed the Black male reach into his pocket and hand the occupants of the vehicle unknown items. Due to my training and experience in the field of narcotics and also knowledge of the area, we decided to further investigate. Once we activated our lights and sirens the unknown Black male ran east while simultaneously the driver of the vehicle proceeded to drive off. A decision was made to stay with the vehicle and conduct a motor vehicle stop to further investigate. -#340, White arrestee

As officers in incident #431 described elsewhere in the narrative, they had been surveilling the area due to "the numerous complaints of narcotic sales...and [were] familiar with the area from past narcotics arrests." Surveillance operations of this type yielded a greater portion of White (17%) than Hispanic (11%) and Black (7%) arrests. Moreover, officers recounted interracial open-air drug activity in nearly one quarter of White arrests, although this interracial pattern is not recurrent among Black arrests. Thus, White citizens appear to be vulnerable to officer arrest decisions due to ecological contamination as well as the taint of suspicion officers routinely assign to Black citizens (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Brunson & Miller, 2006a). This finding corroborates prior research regarding the pervasive and unilateral suspicion of Black males as symbolic assailants (Quillian & Pager, 2001).

7 | CONCLUSION

7.1 | Discussion

Intense concerns about racialized policing have dominated public discourse in recent years, ushering in unprecedented opportunities for police reform. This momentous occasion should be guided by in-depth, nuanced understandings of officer decision making, perceptions, and behaviors to better inform policies that can advance equitable policing services. Although a largely quantitative literature indicates that place-based factors—local crime rates, citizen complaints, and economic disadvantage—shape police behavior, "how" these place-based factors inform officers' perceptions and enforcement practices has not received adequate scholarly attention, especially along racial/ethnic lines.

To address this knowledge gap, our study systematically examined how the interplay of place-based conditions and arrestee race influenced officers' reported decision-making calculus when encountering Black, Hispanic, and White suspects. We found considerable evidence that place-based characteristics shaped police decision-making and behavior in ways that varied by suspect race/ethnicity. According to officers' own accounts, most citizen contacts were driven by their responses to areas labeled and stigmatized as criminalized, "high-crime," problem locations, which prompted not just their increased visibility but also their discretionary decisions to suspect, surveil, stop, question, and search individuals they eventually arrested. However, these geographic-driven decisions varied by arrestee race/ethnicity. Recall that among Hispanic and White arrestees, officers described place-based conditions "and" individualized prohibited behavior as combining to shape their suspicions, surveillance, stops, questioning, and searches that led to their arrest. In contrast, Black Americans were alone in being consistently approached by police based on a lower legal standard, due to their presence in stigmatized locations irrespective of their individual behaviors. Thus, our findings underscore officers' racialized, differential use of place-based conditions to justify enforcement actions. Importantly, our findings start to illuminate "how" place-based factors matter in policing. They show that macrolevel crime and disadvantage might be a pretext for profiling Black Americans and are not merely a setting that increases officers' sense of victimization risk stemming from contacts with dangerous individuals. Place-based conditions serve as a proxy for Black criminality for officers. Finally, our discovery of racialized policing patterns and officers' dubious legal standards for police contacts dovetail with the DOJ's investigative findings of NPD (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

Our study findings contribute to the body of research demonstrating how ecological contamination influences officer decision making (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967; Sykes & Clark, 1975; Terrill

& Reisig, 2003). The purpose of the current study was to cast light on key factors that patrol officers routinely use in forming suspicion of certain kinds of environments and people. Our rich results highlight officers' questionable, repeated claims of addressing episodic, local violence as a pretext for engaging in aggressive policing tactics, resulting in the disproportionate arrest of Black drug suspects.

An emerging body of criminological research has consistently shown variation in law-enforcement responses stemming from the convergence of race and place. Furthermore, police executives often invoke growing community concern about violent crime in defense of Black citizens' complaints about dubious, heavy-handed crime control tactics underway in particular areas of a city. Although violence is a real concern for many residents of distressed, urban contexts, these citizens should not be expected to forgo their constitutional protections in the hope of receiving effective policing strategies. The over-policing of ostensibly dangerous places under the guise of improved public safety disproportionately renders law abiding Black citizens simultaneously defenseless against overzealous officers and chronic, violent offenders.

Although our study offers the literature a nuanced understanding of the convergence of place and race in policing, it is not without limitations. As we previously discussed, arrest reports serve institutional functions, such as defending the legality of officers' decisions and actions to justify arrests and subsequent prosecutions. Thus, social desirability bias might be reflected in the data, raising concern about officers' portrayals of themselves and suspects. Nevertheless, even if the reports indeed exaggerate officers' conformity to organizational, legal, and normative expectations while also simultaneously inflating suspects' culpability, our rigorous analysis of hundreds of narratives across multiple years, settings, actors, and circumstances reveals recurrent patterns about the place–race–policing nexus that are likely downplayed in this study and that echo those found using similar data in other cities, such as St. Louis, Missouri (Gaston, 2019b; Gaston & Brunson, 2020) and New York (Fagan & Geller, 2015). Moreover, because our data were limited to arrest reports, we were not able to determine whether original charges were eventually amended or dropped, whether prosecutors issued indictments, or the final disposition of cases. We were also unable to probe arresting officers for deeper understanding or challenge their inconsistent or unsupported official statements.

7.2 | Policy implications

The racialized neighborhood patterns found in Newark's policing can help to inform city officials' reform efforts as well as those in other similarly distressed urban cities. Our findings point to the need for NPD to reform its organizational culture and reward structure so as to deemphasize drug enforcement, reduce involuntary police–citizen contacts, and prioritize effective, evidence-based violence-reduction strategies. NPD raising the legal basis for and strengthening the quality of involuntary police contacts is one avenue for reducing unwarranted police stops. Moreover, these goals can also be accomplished by relying less on the police and instead developing effective, evidence-based grassroots social services that decrease deeply entrenched social problems and associated violence (John Jay College, 2020). Newark city officials would be prudent to reallocate their budgets and invest more heavily in community-based antiviolence programming that promotes sustainable public safety while reducing opportunities for racially disparate, unconstitutional policing. Crime control benefits derived from unfocused, heavy-handed enforcement tactics are often short-lived. The resulting erosion of citizen trust in police, however, has proven enduring.

7.3 | Future research

The current study reveals additional avenues for future research. Because our study was based on officer narratives in arrest reports, the full situational context surrounding officer–citizen interactions is unknown. Future research should consider a comprehensive perspective using systematic observations that include the point of view of both officers and citizens. Furthermore, given technological advancements and police departments' increased implementation of dashboard-mounted and body-worn cameras, future studies should use the resulting audio and video recordings to systematically examine police officer conduct and decision making against their written testimony. The aforementioned scholarly investigations have potential for informing policy regarding officer training and accountability. Finally, as community-based antiviolence interventions are increasingly implemented in several U.S. cities, a fruitful research program would evaluate the efficacy of these solutions and the degree to which they improve equitable public safety. Such a scholarly focus would move beyond the trend of solely identifying policing problems by helping to also reimagine, rebuild, and refine standards and models for effective public safety beyond the police.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

ORCID
Shytierra Gaston https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5226-9907

REFERENCES
Beckett, K., Nyrop, K., Pfingst, L., & Bowen, M. (2005). Drug use, drug possession arrests, and the question of race: Lessons from Seattle. *Social Problems*, *52*(3), 419–441.

Beckett, K., Nyrop, K., & Pfingst, L. (2006). Race, drugs, and policing: Understanding disparities in drug delivery arrests. *Criminology*, *44*(1), 105–137.

Boehme, H. M., Cann, D., & Isom, D. A. (2022). Citizens' perceptions of over-and under-policing: A look at race, ethnicity, and community characteristics. *Crime & Delinquency*, *68*(1), 123–154.

Black, D. J. (1970). The social organization of arrest. *Stanford Law Review*, *23*, 1087–1111.

Block, R. L., & Block, C. R. (1995). Space, place and crime: Hot spot areas and hot places of liquor-related crime. *Crime and Place*, *4*(2), 145–184.

Braga, A. A., Brunson, R. K., & Drakulich, K. M. (2019). Race, place, and effective policing. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *45*(1), 535–555.

Brown, R. A., & Frank, J. (2006). Race and officer decision making: Examining differences in arrest outcomes between black and white officers. *Justice Quarterly*, *23*(1), 96–126.

Browning, S. L., Cullen, F. T., Cao, L., & Kopache, R. (1994). Race and getting hassled by the police: A research note. *Police Studies: International Review of Police Development*, *17*(1), 1–12.

Brunson, R. K., & Miller, J. (2006a). Gender, race, and urban policing: The experience of African American youths. *Gender & Society*, *20*(4), 531–552.

Brunson, R. K., & Miller, J. (2006b). Young black men and urban policing in the United States. *British Journal of Criminology*, *46*(4), 613–640.

Brunson, R. K. (2007). "Police don't like black people": African-American young men's accumulated police experiences. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *6*(1), 71–101.

Brunson, R. K., & Wade, B. (2019). "Oh hell no, we don't talk to police": Improved police relations with high-risk shooting victims and perpetrators. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *18*, 623–648.

Brunson, R. K., & Weitzer, R. (2009). Police relations with black and white youths in different urban neighborhoods. *Urban Affairs Review*, *44*(6), 858–885.

Coe, C. K., & Wiesel, D. L. (2001). Police budgeting: Winning strategies. *Public Administration Review*, *61*(6), 718–727.

Coker, D. (2003). Foreword: Addressing the real world of racial injustice in the criminal justice system. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, *93*(4), 827–880. https://doi.org/10.2307/3491312

Dunlap, E., Johnson, B. D., & Manwar, A. (1997). A successful female crack dealer: Case study of a deviant career. In L. K. Gaines & P. B. Kraska (Eds.), *Drugs, crime, & justice: Contemporary perspectives* (pp. 205–226). Waveland Pr Inc.

Eitle, D., & Monahan, S. (2009). Revisiting the racial threat thesis: The role of police organizational characteristics in predicting race-specific drug arrest rates. *Justice Quarterly*, *26*(3), 528–561.

Engel, R. S., Smith, M. R., & Cullen, F. T. (2012). Race, place, and drug enforcement. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *11*(4), 603–635. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2012.00841.x

Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. The University of Chicago Press.

Fagan, J., & Davies, G. (2000). Street stops and broken windows: Terry, race, and disorder in New York City. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, *28*, 457–504.

Fagan, J., Geller, A., Davies, G., & West, V. (2010). Street stops and broken windows revisited: The demography and logic of proactive policing in a safe and changing city. In S. K. Rice & M. D. White (Eds.), *Race, ethnicity, and policing: New and essential readings* (pp. 309–348). New York University Press. https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1399073

Fagan, J., & Geller, A. (2015). Following the script: Narratives of suspicion in "terry" stops in street policing. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, *82*(1), 51–88.

Fagan, J., Braga, A. A., Brunson, R. K., & Pattavina, A. (2016). Stops and stares: Street stops, surveillance, and race in the new policing. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, *43*, 539–614.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). (2014). *FBI Uniform Crime Reports 2014*. Author.

Friedrich, R. J. (1977). *The impact of organizational, individual, and situational factors on police behavior* (Volumes I and II) (Doctoral dissertation). University of Michigan.

Fyfe, J. J. (1988). Police use of deadly force: Research and reform. *Justice Quarterly*, *5*(2), 165–205.

Gaston, S. (2019a). Enforcing race: A neighborhood-level explanation of Black–White differences in drug arrests. *Crime & Delinquency*, *65*(4), 499–526. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128718798566

Gaston, S. (2019b). Producing race disparities: A study of drug arrests across place and race. *Criminology*, *57*(3), 424–451. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12207

Gaston, S., & Brunson, R. K. (2020). Reasonable suspicion in the eye of the beholder: Routine policing in racially different disadvantaged neighborhoods. *Urban Affairs Review*, *56*(1), 188–227.

Gau, J., & Brunson, R. K. (2010). Procedural justice and order maintenance policing: A study of inner-city young men's perceptions of police legitimacy. *Justice Quarterly*, *27*, 255–279.

Geller, A., & Fagan, J. (2010). Pot as pretext: Marijuana, race, and the new disorder in New York City street policing. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, *7*(4), 591–633.

Gelman, A., Fagan, J., & Kiss, A. (2007). An analysis of the New York City police department's "stop-and-frisk" policy in the context of claims of racial bias. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *102*(479), 813–823.

Goel, S., Rao, J. M., & Shroff, R. (2016). Precinct or prejudice? Understanding racial disparities in New York City's stop-and-frisk policy. *The Annals of Applied Statistics*, *10*(1), 365–394.

Gonzalez Van Cleve, N. (2016). *Crook County: Racism and injustice in America's largest criminal court* (1st ed.). Stanford Law Books.

Goode, E. (2002). Drug arrests at the millennium. *Society*, *39*(5), 41–45. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02717543

Gould, J. B., & Mastrofski, S. D. (2004). Suspect searches: Assessing police behavior under the U.S. constitution. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *3*(3), 315–362. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2004.tb00046.x

Harcourt, B. E., & Ludwig, J. (2007). Reefer madness: Broken windows policing and misdemeanor marijuana arrests in New York City, 1989–2000. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *6*(1), 165–181.

Human Rights Watch. (2008). Targeting Blacks: Drug law enforcement and race in the United States. http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/us0508_1.pdf

Human Rights Watch. (2009). Decades of disparity: Drug arrests and race in the United States. http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/us0309web_1.pdf

Human Rights Watch. (2021). Controlled substances: Federal polices and enforcement. https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/11/controlled-

John Jay College. (2020). *Reducing violence without police: A review of research evidence*. John Jay College Research Advisory Group on Preventing and Reducing Community Violence. https://doi.org/10.21428/cb6ab371.637c2b44

Jones-Brown, D. D., Stoudt, B. G., Johnson, B., & Moran, K. (2013). *Stop, question, and frisk policing practices in New York City: A primer (Revised)*. Center on Race, Crime, and Justice. http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/app/uploads/2015/09/SQF_Primer_July_2013.pdf

Kane, R. J. (2005). Compromised police legitimacy as a predictor of violent crime in structurally disadvantaged communities. *Criminology*, *43*(2), 469–498.

Klinger, D. A. (1997). Negotiating order in patrol work: An ecological theory of police response to deviance. *Criminology*, *35*(2), 277–306.

Lersch, K. M., Bazley, T., Mieczkowski, T., & Childs, K. (2008). Police use of force and neighbourhood characteristics: An examination of structural disadvantage, crime, and resistance. *Policing & Society*, *18*(3), 282–300.

Lynch, M., Omori, M., Roussell, A., & Valasik, M. (2013). Policing the 'progressive' city: The racialized geography of drug law enforcement. *Theoretical Criminology*, *17*(3), 335–357.

McGahey, R. M. (1986). Economic conditions, neighborhood organization, and urban crime. *Crime and Justice*, *8*, 231–270.

Meehan, A. J., & Ponder, M. C. (2002). Race and place: The ecology of racial profiling African American motorists. *Justice Quarterly*, *19*(3), 399–430.

Mitchell, O. (2009). Is the war on drugs racially biased? *Journal of Crime and Justice*, *32*(2), 49–75.

Mitchell, O., & Lynch, M. J. (2011). Criminal justice, race and the war on drugs. In N. Parsons-Pollard (Ed.), *Disproportionate minority contact* (pp. 139–155). Carolina Academic Press.

Mitchell, O., & Caudy, M. S. (2015). Examining racial disparities in drug arrests. *Justice Quarterly*, *32*(2), 1–26.

Moskos, P. (2008). *Cop in the hood: My year policing Baltimore's eastern district*. Princeton University Press.

Peterson, J. R. (2022). 'We handle it, I guess you'd say, the East Texas way': Place-based effects on the police decision-making process and non-arrest outcomes. *Police Practice and Research*. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2022.2067158

Policing the Police. (2020, September 15). *Season 2020: Episode 4*. Frontline. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/policing-the-police-2020/

Quillian, L., & Pager, D. (2001). Black neighbors, higher crime? The role of racial stereotypes in evaluations of neighborhood crime. *American Journal of Sociology*, *107*, 717–767.

Ramchand, R., Pacula, R. L., & Iguchi, M. Y. (2006). Racial differences in marijuana-users' risk of arrest in the United States. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *84*(3), 264–272. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2006.02.010

Rojek, J., Rosenfeld, R., & Decker, S. (2012). Policing race: The racial stratification of searches in police traffic stops. *Criminology*, *50*(4), 993–1024.

Ross, D. - D. (2019, December 4). The Obama administration ordered Newark to fix its police force. Here's what has—and hasn't—happened. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2019/12/04/obama-administration-ordered-newark-fix-its-police-force-heres-what-has-hasnt-happened/

Sampson, R. J., & Raudenbush, S. W. (2001). *Disorder in urban neighborhoods: Does it lead to crime*. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Sherman, L. W. (1980). Causes of police behavior: The current state of quantitative research. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *17*(1), 69–100.

Stewart, E. A., Baumer, E. P., Brunson, R. K., & Simons, R. L. (2009). Neighborhood racial context and perceptions of police-based racial discrimination among black youth. *Criminology*, *47*(3), 847–887.

Stoudt, B. G., Fine, M., & Fox, M. (2011). Growing up policed in the age of aggressive policing policies. *New York Law School Law Review*, *56*(4), 1331–1370.

Sobol, J. J., Wu, Y., & Sun, I. Y. (2013). Neighborhood context and police vigor: A multilevel analysis. *Crime & Delinquency*, *59*(3), 344–368.

Sun, I. Y., Payne, B. K., & Wu, Y. (2008). The impact of situational factors, officer characteristics, and neighborhood context on police behavior: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of criminal justice*, *36*(1), 22–32.

Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. AltaMira Press.

Smith, D. E. (2006). *Institutional ethnography as practice*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Smith, D. A., & Visher, C. A. (1981). Street-level justice: Situational determinants of police arrest decisions. *Social Problems*, *29*(2), 167–177.

Spelman, W. (1993). Abandoned buildings: Magnets for crime? *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *21*(5), 481–495.

Sykes, R. E., & Clark, J. P. (1975). A theory of deference exchange in police-civilian encounters. *American Journal of Sociology*, *81*(3), 584–600. https://doi.org/10.1086/226109

Terrill, W., & Reisig, M. D. (2003). Neighborhood context and police use of force. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *40*(3), 291–321. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427803253800

Tonry, M. H. (1995). *Malign neglect: Race, crime, and punishment in America*. Oxford University Press.

Travis, J., Western, B., & Redburn, F. S. (2014). *The growth of incarceration in the United States: Exploring causes and consequences*. National Research Council of the National Academies.

Tuttle, B. R. (2009). *How Newark became Newark: The rise, fall, and rebirth of an American city* (1st ed.). Rutgers University Press.

Tyler, T. R., Jackson, J., & Mentovich, A. (2015). The consequences of being an object of suspicion: Potential pitfalls of proactive police contact. *Journal of Empirical Lega Studies*, *12*(4), 602–636.

Uniform Crime Reports. (2019). *Crime in the United States, 2019, persons arrested by race and ethnicity*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019

U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). *2012–2016, American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

U.S. Department of Justice. (2014). *Investigation of the Newark Police Department*. https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/07/22/newark_findings_7-22-14.pdf

Vera Sanchez, C. G., & Rosenbaum, D. P. (2011). Racialized policing: Officers' voices on policing Latino and African American neighborhoods. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, *9*(2), 152–178.

Warren, P., Tomaskovic-Devey, D., Smith, W., Zingraff, M., & Mason, M. (2006). Driving while Black: Bias processes and racial disparity in police stops. *Criminology*, *44*(3), 709–738. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2006.00061.x

Weitzer, R. (2000). White, black, or blue cops? Race and citizen assessments of police officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *28*(4), 313–324.

Weitzer, R. (2010). Race and policing in different ecological contexts. In S. K. Rice & M. D., White (Eds.), *Race, ethnicity, and policing: New and essential readings* (pp. 118—139). NYU Press.

Weitzer, R., & Brunson, R. K. (2015). Policing different racial groups in the United States. *Cahiers Politiestudies*, *6*(35), 129–145.

Weitzer, R., & Tuch, S. A. (1999). Race, class, and perceptions of discrimination by the police. *Crime & Delinquency*, *45*(4), 494–507.

Weitzer, R., & Tuch, S. A. (2002). Perceptions of racial profiling: Race, class, and personal experience. *Criminology*, *40*(2), 435–456.

Werthman, C., & Piliavin, I. (1967). Gang members and the police. In D. J. Bordua (Ed.), *The police: Six sociological essays* (pp. 56–98). Wiley.

White, M. D., & Fradella, H. F. (2016). *Stop and frisk: The use and abuse of a controversial policing tactic*. NYU Press.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Shytierra Gaston is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia State University. She uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate issues related to race, crime, and criminal (in)justice as well as corrections, prisoner reentry, and collateral consequences of criminal justice contact. Recent scholarship can be found in *Criminology*, *Criminology & Public Policy*, *Crime & Delinquency*, *Criminal Justice & Behavior*, *Urban Affairs Review*, and *Homicide Studies*.

Rod K. Brunson is a professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, College Park. His expertise centers on police–community relations, youth violence, and evidence-based criminal justice policy. He has consistently called for effective crime reduction strategies that do not result in racially disparate treatment of minority citizens and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Dr. Brunson's scholarship appears in the *Annual Review of Sociology*, *British Journal of Criminology*, *City & Community*, *Criminology*,

Evaluation Review, the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *Justice Quarterly*, *Urban Affairs Review*, and *Urban Health*.

David O. Ayeni is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia State University. His current research focuses on police leadership and performance outcomes and racial differences in arrests among mid-level and upper level leadership. He is also interested in terrorism and political violence, specifically that which involves Boko Haram of Nigeria.