THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PREPARING A DEFEAT: HOW THE NEOLIBERAL ORDER AFFECTS THE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-DETERMINATION AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

THROUGH NON-EVENTS AND AUTONOMY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

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I thank you for all the love that has kept me in hopes that we love each other forever

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of political decision-making as a reflection of self-determination. I provide quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical interventions that highlight the impact of dominant power on everyday decision making in the U.S., seen in contexts where respondents' agendas run contrary to that of the state but where there is no observable conflict to indicate the disagreement. This form of invisible power is producing and reproducing inhibited autonomy - that is, people lacking a sense of choice - as respondents are representing agendas the contradict their own values and interests in what I call "non-events".

My theoretical intervention is set around responses to three citizens who have been murdered by police - Freddie Gray, Korryn Gaines, and Akai Gurley. I explore the decision-making responsiveness in these scenarios in order to better understand how respondents' engagement or lack thereof is indicative of their relationships to dominant power. Even when respondents are overtly resisting dominant power in these cases, I show how dominant agendas are continually reinforced when responsiveness is not addressing both subjectivity constraints and structural boundaries. When engagement fails to challenge, contest, and critique the dominant agenda in these ways, then we must couch successes and failures of engagement within the context of non-events and structural defeats.

Using data from in-depth interviews with long-term unemployed food stamp recipients from Chicago, I point to autonomy as the key factor differentiating non-events - advocating an agenda that contradicts ones own - from paradigm-shifting responsiveness - addressing both subjectivity constraints and structural boundaries. Autonomy helps distinguish between respondents'

interactions in SNAP with unresponsive case workers, responding to unexpected cuts in benefits, etc. as compared to these same respondents interactions during job seeking with unresponsive employers, responding to unexpected cuts in jobs and wages. While not guaranteeing anything, autonomy provides the necessary context for paradigm-shifting responsiveness to exist. People need autonomy to imagine resisting invisible power that specializes in convincing people that without access to power - in this case, through decision-making and agenda-setting authority - they should avoid observable conflict and find more productive outlets for expressing themselves. While respondents maintain their concerns, they express a false consensus (indicative of non-events) in spaces like the aid office – that is, where access to power is ostensibly non-existent. Furthermore, the comparison to behaviors during job-seeking suggests that the false consensus shown in SNAP interactions is not solely tied to financial security; rather, this is a reflection of dominant power being organized in a way that diminishes autonomy and reproduces non-events.

Lastly, I conduct a nationally representative survey with a Black and Latino/a oversample. I use this survey to construct two scenarios highlighting non-events in contradictory behaviors, attitudes, and actions surrounding government job creation, self and collective efficacy, financial security, and hard-work beliefs. I use a principal components analysis and OLS regressions to identify which respondents are most likely to hold these contradictory beliefs and fit in one of these scenarios, and I find that these non-events disproportionately include women, people of color, and women of color. I point to these findings as evidence of invisible power reproducing the ontological orders of white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy towards the exclusion of these historically marginalized groups. Moreover, I categorize neoliberalism as a form of invisible power inhibiting autonomy and produce non-events among women, POC, and women of color in

the absence of observable conflict. This project gives scholars multiple methods of identifying, interpreting, and translating neoliberalism, and helps identify boundaries to engagement and research that can be addressed and possibly overcome with these tools.

INTRODUCTION

"When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it."

Carter G. Woodson, <u>The Mis-Education of the Negro</u> (1933)

This project is both theoretical intervention and empirical analysis. I am developing a theory of change through an analysis of the U.S.' intertwined social, political, economic, and racial inequities. Changing the current and future proliferation of these inequities is inhibited in many ways by complicated legacies of oppression that span across a diverse citizenry. Although transformations, transitions, and evolutions are changing methods of domination and resistance regularly, my questions on change are less about progressions and more about the U.S. as a society and its ability as a state to move beyond these impediments. How do we operationalize our creative capacities towards establishing methods, institutions, and infrastructures that will displace longstanding inequities? And just as importantly, what impediments are limiting our ability to adequately displace longstanding inequities?

If consensus is an indicator of overcoming, a glance at public opinion research tells us how far we have to reach to bring people together. Consider the 30-40% opinion gaps between Black and white respondents that Michael Dawson finds in <u>Not In Our Lifetimes</u> (2011) in their interpretations of the great tragedy that unfolded in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. While academic research moves further into quantitative and experimental methodologies that aim to prove or disprove causality in narrow contexts, Dawson is able to address broader societal trends by weaving a theoretical analysis into his empirical frameworks. However, Dawson's work moves beyond an impetus for consensus. Instead, he emphasizes the ways that a lack of consensus evidences the importance of social positioning, particularly its affect on worldview.

Therefore, the lack of consensus is due in large part to worldviews that diverge across racial lines.

Scholarship in Black feminist theory similarly emphasizes the development of perspectives based on societal positioning. Whether we are considering bell hooks' Feminist Theory (1984), Kimberle Crenshaw in "Mapping the Margins" (1991), or Patricia Hill-Collins' work on standpoint theory in Fighting Words (1998), a wide range of researchers are explaining how the experiences and perspectives that undergird worldviews are altered by hierarchies of race, gender, and sexuality. Therefore, whereas worldview in Black public opinion scholarship is used to help us diagnose manifestations of inequality, through Black feminist theory we can look at overlapping systems of oppression as precursors to societal positioning and worldview. In the end, both Black feminist scholarship and Black public opinion research are inseparable from the causes and effects of the U.S.' longstanding inequities.

I follow these scholarly trajectories in this project, as I explore the ways that people's awareness of oppressions affects their likelihood of identifying and utilizing methods that are intended to address and help overcome longstanding inequities. More specifically, I investigate the affects of dominant state power on the individual and group decision-making processes that produce responses to grievances, help express critiques and criticisms, and are at the core of both reactionary and non-reactionary engagement. The overarching goal of the project is to better understand and interpret political engagement, how it is affected by neoliberalism, and the

deleterious implications for American democracy when participation is inhibited, even when done in less observable ways.[1]

In order to understand questions of change through political engagement, neoliberalism and democracy, I am engaging in broader discussions of justice and revolution. And while these notions are as susceptible to conjecture as any other, I use justice and revolution to channel a particular idea of change that is distinct from familiar alternatives offered by partisan politics or the evolutionary progress of neoliberalism. In lieu of familiar alternatives and progressions, I engage in discussions of justice and revolution through an emphasis on aspects of change rooted in accountability and reconciliation. I am especially interested in instances where respondents' decision-making is consistent with neoliberal agendas and contrary to their own grievances. When respondents prioritize reconciliation with dominant state power – in this case, accomplished when they fail to express their grievances, aligning them with neoliberal agendas in key ways – they forgo seeking accountability for a range of personal and collective grievances that include longstanding inequities and legacies of oppression.

While forgoing accountability might falsely convey a pathological deficiency of disadvantaged people – in classic victim blaming fashion – I show how dominant power is structured in ways that facilitates the avoidance and transfer of blame. Through a structural analysis I show how emphasizing notions of justice rooted in progressive changes, insofar as this prioritizes reconciliation as a precondition for change, helps dominant power avoid facing accountability by inhibiting the likelihood of being called to account. These structural processes are particularly

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[1] Interpreting neoliberalism is at the core of the project, and thus will be defined through the work itself. I am particularly interested in the elusiveness of this form of power, and make the ways this is accomplished clearer. For the time being, I use neoliberalism to signify this powerful elusiveness that is operationalized by agendas that push for classic Downsian cost/benefit rationalizations throughout civil society, yet still benefitting capitalism and dominant power.

detrimental to disadvantaged groups and benefit dominant power. I argue a notion of justice that prioritizes accountability above reconciliation, a configuration that I believe makes it possible to establish methods, institutions, and infrastructures that displace longstanding inequities. This argument is based in a structural analysis and reconfiguration of power, with a particular emphasis on neoliberalism and one of its key tenets: the avoidance of observable conflict.

Decision-Making

Martin Luther King, Jr. regularly theorized change with a particular consideration of the practical limitations of an increasingly diverse American context. He knew that it was hard to convince people to agree to change their lives and country when they held wildly different and sometimes fundamentally opposed worldviews. In his famous letter from Birmingham Jail (1963), King says "It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me but it can keep him from lynching me." Stopping lynch mobs is the first priority, and to do so King prioritized the establishment of contexts where would-be targets are protected by the law. These protections represent a critical foundation for accountability, creating contexts where the targets of lynch mobs have their grievances heard and addressed. Although seeking an end to lynching is a decidedly low bar today, when we consider that no white person had been convicted in nearly one hundred years in 1963, King may have been reasonable to doubt if allaying these practices would be possible.

This example demonstrates the necessity of acknowledging grievances, particularly in cases where structural power must be used to facilitate contexts where protections and change are necessary. And while the lynch mob might seem to be a more grave concern than neoliberalism, I show the importance of structural power in facilitating contexts where these types of overtly oppressive actions thrive. In this project I am distinguishing between the source of power, the

structure of power, and the agenda that power facilitates.[2] In doing this, we are better able to connect the lynch mob to police shootings today through power moves in line with white supremacist agendas.

Although eradicating these behaviors is necessary, change must also include addressing the form of power that facilitates the behaviors as well. I highlight the significance of structure on the ability of power to facilitate contexts where people are less likely to express grievances. Moreover, I show how consent is being structurally coerced by dominant power and that these power processes are so effective that even those who are targeted by dominant power are expressing consent in line with dominant agendas.

While establishing protective contexts helps facilitate change, these contexts are often catalyzed when grievances are expressed in scenarios where the state is not addressing problems. I argue that oppressive norms are at the core of the failure to create contexts that acknowledge these grievances. Furthermore, I provide empirical evidence supporting my claim that the dissonant decision-making demonstrated by those who refuse to express their grievances has been both produced by these oppressive norms and is also reproducing structures that facilitating these norms.

I interpret decision-making so that I can uncover the ways that people's awareness of state power is affecting what they imagine, accept and support as it pertains to democracy, justice, and change. Through this approach I use decision-making as an indicator for inequity. Beyond

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[2] Think of this like a bookshelf – the material that the bookshelf is made from represents the source of power, its shape represents the structure, and the books represent the agenda. So if we have a bookshelf created by a dominant power, and several of its shelves are shaped in such a way that only those books with white supremacist and hetero-patriarchal agendas can fit. Whether we update, revise, or throw those texts away, the shelf is unsuited to fit other texts.

assessing the differential accumulation of goods, capital, and other resources between groups, I show how inequality and inequity are indicated by of and also produced in decision-making that avoids the expression of grievances. In this sense, decision-making among people who have no expectation of being heard and then stop talking about their issues indicates exposure to prolonged inequality and inequity.

When decision-making reflects inequality and inequity, it has two particularly concerning implications: 1) the norms that undergird these issues persist; and 2) targeted people begin integrating the biased norms into their own decision-making. These implications are especially problematic when we consider that neoliberalism's affinity for avoiding observable conflict, a strategy that coincides with people being less likely to react and resist and more likely to conform when faced with these destructive norms. For example, consider how we might interpret the 2016 presidential election in light of this decision-making critique. How should we compare the 94% of Black women who voted for Hillary Clinton to the 58% of white women? While there are arguments to make about policies and platforms, we should also think about what it means for Black women voters to find the 2016 Republican candidate irreconcilable with their agendas in ways that Clinton was sufficiently reconcilable.[3] We should also consider this in conjunction with Paul Frymer's work (2010), which talks about Black voters as captured minorities bound to the Democratic Party. So what does it mean for our understanding of Black versus white women's voting when the former group might be bound to the Democratic Party in ways that are consistent with their voting?

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[3] There is clear evidence of hetero-patriarchy and white supremacy, but I want to understand the less obvious ways that goals and possibilities are being interpreted in these and other less conflict inducing scenarios.

In this project I show how these observable behaviors can tell a misleading story. A deeper interpretation of the decision-making that facilitated Black women's votes might show an affinity for elected officials and parties that share their beliefs. These same Black women might also have an affinity for elected officials and parties that avoid particular types of conflict. What I find most important, however, is both parties' adherence to neoliberalism beyond their candidates. In this sense, we can use an analysis of voters' decision-making to couch these electoral behaviors within a conversation of structural defeats by way of neoliberalism. We can interpret beliefs and strategies not only based on observable behavior and overarching context, but we must also consider the unobservable behaviors. Decision-making analyses allow us to consider unobservable behaviors, and push us towards a better understanding of the relationship between individuals, groups, and civil society.

Although observable and readily quantifiable data is valuable, we must conduct decision-making analyses to uncover some of the hidden boundaries that are affecting behaviors. Both decision-making and more observable action-centered approaches can be used to discern observable successes in action and failures of inaction,[4] as is the case of voter turnout analyses with pre and post election surveys that help diagnose electoral victories and defeats. However, the decision-making approach also allows us to extend beyond observable boundaries and to account for the contexts in which actions are situated. For example, how can we interpret the majority of the residents in Flint, Michigan not voting in local elections in 2012? While this failure to vote is related to who becomes elected, and the decisions of those elected officials caused the poisoning of local waters, these residents are still not responsible for the abusive negligence of their elected

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[4] I discuss action-centered analyses more thoroughly in the next chapter. These are about more than observable data, and rooted in the idea that observable actions are evidence of participatory democracy. I challenge this with my decision-making approach, which shows how observable actions can actually represent constricted engagement that inhibits participation in spite of observable action.

officials. It is negligence – the form of abuse that occurs by a failure to act – that encapsulates the behaviors of under and unequal representation. And as is the case for negligence, evidence is found in the affects it produces more so than observable actions causing those affects. Like the actions of the negligent elected officials in Flint affect the decision-making of resident's in Flint, I am identifying these power-induced framing processes by the shaping of attitudes and belief systems. The influence of these power processes on the individual and collective ability to address inequity is evident when we see overlap in the decision-making of dominant power, particularly when we find this overlap within targeted constituencies. In this project, I emphasize women, people of color, and women of color.

We are left to ask how prolonged inequality, inequity and resistance are affecting efficacy, agency, and self-determination, particularly in cases where the overlap with dominant framing is being unknowingly coerced? Moreover, what affect is all this having on American democracy and participatory democratic engagement? Because decision-making analyses help us identify agendas, we can identify how the successes and failures of people are affected by dominant power and how inequalities are perpetuated through overlap with these dominant agenda frames.

Capturing Neoliberalism: New Framing, New Boundaries

Whereas enslavement, segregation, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration are boundaries set in stone through written law, statute, and cultural norm, today we deal with unwritten boundaries much more often. As longstanding historical oppressions have generally evolved beyond staggeringly overt boundaries in the U.S., their threat remains at the core of my findings, affecting what people are capable of imagining, accepting, and supporting as it pertains to democracy, justice, and real change. Unwritten structural boundaries are nothing new, evident in de facto state

sanctioned practices such as redlining, standardized testing, etc. Moreover, we have also seen those standards infecting the very groups of people who they target through respectability politics, the bootstrap mentality, and neoliberalism. I contend that these unwritten boundaries have found their ultimate form to date in the social order and system of oppression that we call neoliberalism.

While there are several interpretations of neoliberalism, it is generally understood as establishing of economic standards throughout society, including areas that were not considered to be particularly fungible.[5] This arguably includes the trend towards quantitative and experimental research, a move that incidentally makes a neoliberal social order more difficult for some to understand and identify. Identifying ways that a neoliberal order reinforces systematic biases and discrimination remains notably difficult for some scholars. Therefore, while I use the current project to reimagine our understanding of inequality and oppression, I am also establishing a quantitative method that allows us to identify neoliberalism and particularly the targeted harm it causes people of color, women, and women of color. The key to this identification is the conceptualization and measurement of one of neoliberalism's most prevalent characteristics: the ability to function fully in the absence of observable conflict.

While this characteristic is not unique to neoliberalism, the ability to elude observation is a characteristic that neoliberalism does especially embrace. Michael-Rolph Trouillot (1995) shows how this skill is facilitated by what he calls "formulas of erasure" and "formulas of

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[5] In may ways this reminds me of the now infamous question for the current Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, who was asked her position on proficiency versus growth in schools. While school choice and standardized testing continue to be questionable practices for many, the fungibility of student ability is used as a lever to measure the success or failure of the school system rather than job placement, college matriculation rates, neighborhood poverty rates, or other measures that might help indicate the relationship between school proficiency and desirable outcomes.

banalization". Formulas of erasure come from the "generalists and the popularizers – textbook authors, for example" – this is where the ability to come to an understanding is lost in the complexities of an explanation. Formulas of banalization describe "the favorite tropes of the specialists" – this is where the ability to come to an understanding is lost in the universality of an explanation. (Pg. 96) The combined affect of these formulas is "a powerful silencing: whatever has not been cancelled out in the generalities dies in the cumulative irrelevance of a heap of details." (Pg. 97) I use Trouillot's formulas to define invisible power and, more importantly, to its key indicator: coerced decision-making, what I call "non-events". When dominant power inhibits resistance from adequately targeting sources of oppression, it produces non-events. I argue that more non-events are produced when dominant power functions invisibly.

This brings us back to the original question – is real change possible? To answer this question, we must consider individual or collective efforts within the context of structural framing. I show how change is made more difficult when people lack the opportunity to express their grievances and get just recompense for their troubles. When we consider people's awareness of oppression in conjunction with their attitudes and behaviors, we can identify boundaries that prevent their imagining, accepting, and supporting key tenets of democracy, justice, and, in many ways, a revolutionary politics. Non-events and invisible power are therefore considered as evidence of boundaries that are inhibiting resistance. It is important to know when people find resistance too time consuming, resource draining, and complex, and it is also important to know if these opinions are the result of prioritizing reconciliation above accountability and justice. My work uncovers the degree to which these beliefs are being facilitated and perpetuated.

Chapter Overview

In this project I show how change is impeded by oppressive dominant power. This is particularly

evident in decision-making that detrimentally avoids individually and collectively self-interested

advocacy. In chapter one, "Invisible Power and Marginalized Publics", I identify decision-

making as the key to understanding how people are affected by their relationship with and

orientation towards the state. At its core, the chapter is about identifying the harmful interactions

and intangible boundaries that exemplify the relationship between decision-making and power. I

look to the Baltimore Uprising as an example of engagement that, when interpreted from an

action-centered approach, appears to be a success for democratic political engagement. I

compare the shooting of Freddie Gray that prompted the Baltimore Uprising to the shooting of

Korryn Gaines – a homicide perpetrated by police in a nearby community. From an action-

centered approach, the relative non-response to Gaines's shooting appears to be a failure of

political engagement in a participatory democracy – that is, if this situation is evidence of a

longstanding issue then people should have responded. However, what I demonstrate in chapter

one is that the responsiveness to both of these scenarios can be categorized as non-events. When

we consider these incidents together we can see how decision-making responsiveness aligns with

acceptable norms of gender and politics. While protesters acknowledge the overlapping systems

of oppression when faced with the shooting of Freddie Gray, we see no similar acknowledgment

when faced with the shooting of Korryn Gaines. I argue that these differences are rooted in

Gaines' gender and politics.[6] When invisible power affects decision-making by eliminating the

possibility of responding to Gaines' homicide in a framework that is consistent with the response

to Gray's homicide, this makes both incidents non-events. A decision-making analysis allows us

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[6] Gaines' politics were a key component of her public portrayal, particularly her multiple contentious interactions with police. Gaines expressed a refusal to accept the authority of police officers and an expectation that would seek to end both her and her child's life as a result of Gaines' outspokenness in advocating her worldview.

to show the perceived unsustainability and unfeasibility of responses that rationalize, defend, and otherwise advocate for democratic rights regardless of criminality, gender, race, or political beliefs. And beyond feasibility, these responses have become unimaginable, unsupportable, and essentially unacceptable.

I also look to a third case – two distinct Asian American responses to Akai Gurley's shooting in New York by NYPD Officer Peter Liang. Gurley's shooting was met with a large response from Chinese-Americans from across the nation in defense of the rookie officer Liang, who is also Chinese-American. This response explicitly acknowledged that Gurley's death was a tragedy while also considering Liang's indictment an injustice insofar as he was criminally charged and white NYPD officers are overwhelmingly likely to not be charged. These 30,000 or more Chinese-Americans around the country demonstrate the ways that invisible power facilitates oppression and how non-events are inseparable from inequity. We see this in the response, which acknowledges but refuses to resist white privilege, instead only challenging in order share its protections. This example demonstrates how responsiveness can simultaneously address an incident and power, but still be considered a non-event. We also see responsiveness addressing the same incident and power from a diverse group of Asian Americans who, rather than advocating for Liang, demanded police accountability and an indictment while marching together with the movement for Black lives. Afterwards there was a letter that circulated until it was translated into at least eight languages native to East Asia and the Pacific Islands, and given to community elders in an attempt to explain, justify, and galvanize support for the movement for Black lives. These efforts exemplify the imaginativeness that makes resistance difficult to predict, as it is in many ways the creation of something new. What I attempt to show in this project is how constraints to imaginativeness are much easier to predict.

While the first chapter emphasizes interpretive and theoretical analyses, the two chapters after it are utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods to empirically demonstrate the impact of invisible power and perpetuation of non-events. The second chapter is titled "Predicting Contradictory Contortions: Non-Events as Non-Strategic Decision-Making". I use data from in-depth interviews I conducted on the South and West sides of Chicago to demonstrate how long-term unemployed SNAP recipients (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps) understand their employment situation and employability in relation to the state. I chose to interview this population as both a targeted group, and to better understand why we saw no mass response to the $40 Billion cuts to SNAP. These discussions uncover respondents' deep understanding of the interrelated social, economic, political, and racial oppressions that they face. Nevertheless, they demonstrate very distinct differences in the way they respond to perceived injustices in job seeking versus perceived injustices in their dealings with SNAP. These compartmentalized responses are at opposite extremes, as respondents show a willingness to fail at procuring a job rather than to sacrifice their individuality alongside an extreme unwillingness to resist or advocate for themselves in their SNAP interactions. The key difference between these scenarios that I find is autonomy – feeling a sense of choice.

What makes this finding special is that it contradicts the suggestion that there is a rational choice to be made that would encourage respondents to sacrifice their beliefs, desires, and attitudes in order to prioritize their need to eat and live. These respondents showed a clear willingness to struggle to make ends meet in order to advocate for their beliefs and fight for some sense of a greater good. This powerful belief, however, is almost completely turned around in their SNAP interactions because there they lack autonomy. I argue that this is importantly related to our understanding of invisible power insofar as power operating in the absence of observable

conflict, which is also a staple of U.S. bureaucracy, makes critique and the allaying of grievances difficult to convey for lack of a reasonable expectation that they will be heard. Overall, this speaks to the effectiveness of invisible power in facilitating a coerced non-response. These findings help inform the survey data that I analyze in chapter three, "Neoliberalism and False Consciousness".[7]

I created a nationally representative survey called the "Political Activity and Self-Determination Study" to explore inhibited autonomy on a national scale between select racial and gender groups. This survey includes a Black and Latino/a oversample and I use it to uncover what people know about labor markets and politics, and how that knowledge affects what they accept and support. I focus on two undesirable scenarios – No Power and No Reward – that help me identify respondents whose awareness and preferences stand in contradiction with their financial circumstances. Although I discuss the specifics of the two scenarios in the chapter, the most important thing of note is that these contradictory circumstances are set to benefit the labor market and politics in spite of their detriment to the individual. I find that these contradictory scenarios are disproportionately comprised of people of color, women, and women of color. I argue that invisible power has produced these marginalized publics – that is, communities targeted by invisible power that is normalizing non-events. This is an indictment of neoliberalism insofar as the responsiveness is consistent with and beneficial towards a neoliberal political and economic agenda – that which is unimaginable, unsupportable, and unacceptable is restricted to the benefit of neoliberalism.

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[7] This speaks a bit to Exit, Voice, and Loyalty (1970), where Albert Hirschman discusses the "unconcern" of economists in a competitive economy. While this is very much related to the current project in finding significance in individual's interactions with agencies and the state, where Hirschman's work deals with the political "how" this work deals with the why in my reinterpretation of inequality and oppression alongside inequity and power.

The Neglect of a Negative Peace

This project is not about identifying a revolutionary politics that produces the best path to real change. I am showing how self-advocacy, particularly among those who intend to address inequity and oppression, is being inhibited when revolutionary politics are rejected. The data shows that race and gender based targeting continues to prevail, even as the methods have changed from de jure efforts intended to enforce exclusion and eradication to more de facto efforts that avoid observable conflict in order to convince people that their exclusion and eradication is justifiable. This is a critique often levied against white liberals and moderates, perhaps most famously by King in his Letter from Birmingham Jail. King pointed out those who are:

> "more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action;" who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season."

If we consider the possibility that the white moderate, whom King and many others continually push to be accountable for their complicity, is trapped by structural boundaries on a moderate's imagination, then it is just as possible for Black, Latina, and Latino moderates to succumb to these traps. While this project focuses on the experiences of the most vulnerable populations, their circumstances are sufficient indicators of these destructive practices broadly. The ability to convince historically disadvantaged people to contribute to their own future disadvantage is a significant threat to democracy.

CHAPTER ONE

INVISIBLE POWER AND MARGINALIZED PUBLICS

Introduction

In this chapter I use decision-making to show how unobservable forms of power are affecting political engagement. I work through three key relationships while making this claim. First is the relationship between decision-making and political engagement. I look to Cristina Beltrán's study of the 2006 U.S. immigration marches as a model for explaining this connection, where she is using an action-centered analysis to explain how ideas make their way into civil society. Second is the relationship between non-decisions and unobservable conflict. Steven Lukes (1973) frames a three-dimensional view of power that explains why we must consider internal decision-making when interpreting observable non-decisions. When people sense inhibiting constraints, some will respond like those who participated in the immigration marches – incorporating a new idea into civil society as an act of resistance and self-expression. Others under similar conditions will concede, accept the constraints, and avoid resistance through observable non-decisions, among other methods. The significance here is in the possibility that both the workings of power and collective responsiveness to it might both occur in the absence of observable conflict. The major problem at the core of this project is when unobservable conflicts mask the affects of power, particularly the steering of engagement away from personal interests, beliefs, and values in order to be more complicit with the dominant order. This is a betrayal of people's sense of self, a point that I confront in the relationship between autonomy and power, the third and final relationship I work through. Autonomy is defined here through the psychology literature as a person's feeling of a sense of choice.[8] Research shows that autonomy

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[8] Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. 2010. Self Determination. *Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*. 1-2

can be intrinsic, but that these emanations can also originate extrinsically before being

internalized, integrated, and becoming consistent with a person's sense of self.[9]

In the wider project I am investigating the role of autonomy in decision-making to determine to

what extent (extrinsic) power is being internalized and integrated. However, identifying the

impact of power is difficult when focusing on people who maintain a robust sense of autonomy.

When a person holds that strong sense of choice, then we cannot know if their changes in beliefs

or behaviors are a result of coercion or a sincere consensus. Therefore, the extent to which their

decision-making is being affected by power is either unknown to them or inconsequential. For

this reason I argue for the significance of awareness, as it can reveal the extent to which

decision-making and autonomy are consciously operating in response to power. With this

understanding we might be able to answer why some ideas seem to never take hold in the public

sphere. We can identify the boundaries that hold these ideas back, even when they operate in the

absence of observable conflict. In this chapter I explain how the failure to integrate select ideas is

affecting decision-making, autonomy, and American democracy in general.[10] These affects are

used as proof that these intangible boundaries exist and operate at the mercy of dominant power.

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[9] This is not an uncommon phenomenon. The literature points to seeking a sense of competence or a desire to be relatable as examples of intrinsically motivated goals. Likewise, when people experience some external phenomena that connects with competence, relatability, or autonomy then they are likely candidates to become internalized and integrated (Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions." *Contemporary educational psychology* 25.1 (2000): pg. 14). Later I will argue that there notions of equality, freedom, and justice are intrinsically motivated goals that have been internalized and now emanate from people's sense of self. The significance here is that power has the ability to reorient those goals and replace them if integrated. This project is about showing how unobservable power is especially good at this, as the inclination to resist these changes is not triggered.

[10] The language throughout the chapter and project are indebted to Foucault's body of work, particularly that in "The Subject and Power" (1982). While I do not engage Foucault explicitly, I am following Foucault suggestion that we must be "approaching the theme of power by an analysis of 'how'," in order to "give oneself as the object of analysis *power relations* and not power itself." (Pg. 339, emphasis in original). While his work frames my understanding of this project, my lack of explicit engagement with Foucault, while unsettling, is a sacrifice made for the sake of discovery. The

In the subsequent two chapters I show how these boundaries not only inhibit different forms of democratic engagement, but that they are also disproportionately prevalent among people of color, women, and women of color. However, I begin this chapter by exploring the Freddie Gray killing and the 2015 Baltimore Uprising as examples of engagement rooted in an awareness of dominant power that has incorporated resistant ideas into civil society. By analyzing decision-making and autonomy, I show how opposition is being accompanied by, reproducing, and reinforcing the same power that is being resisted.

Chapter Framework and Methodology

The Baltimore Uprising is an example of observable political action with significant implications for American democracy. I interpret the uprising and its surrounding circumstances using the action-centered approach that Cristina Beltrán applies to the 2006 U.S. immigration marches in The Trouble with Unity (2010).[11] The action-centered approach is rooted in an Arendtian framework that Beltrán traces through Linda Zerilli's work in processes of incorporation into the political sphere. Zerilli describes these processes in saying, "any physical space can be transformed into a political one".[12] In a similarly spatial contextualization, Beltrán notes Patchen Markell's description of what he calls the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity, "the loss of responsiveness to events: the erosion of contexts in which action makes

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intricacies of this project are undergirded by a sense of exploration – they need room to be understood on their own before we consider how they are interconnected with other frameworks.

[11] I look to Beltrán's work for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that her work explores the creation and expansion of subjectivities and political engagement in liminal spaces through her interpretation of Deleuze's logic of the rhizome. I begin by reading these frames into the Baltimore Uprising, and move further into Beltrán's work to show how her research is much more expansive than observable actions, as she investigates the ways that imagination is bound and, in the case of the immigrant marches, can be overcome.

[12] Linda Zerilli, Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom (2005) Pg. 20, cited in Beltrán (2010) Pg. 136.

sense."[13] While these transformative processes help us track the creation and erosion of avenues for societal change through the political sphere and civil society, their framing is easily confounded with a event-based and a particularly physical spatial imperative that cannot account for the intangible barriers surrounding our collective consciousness. For example, events like the 2006 U.S. immigration marches and the Baltimore Uprising exemplify transformations towards freedom in many valuable ways, but they can simultaneously reinforce intangible boundaries that are beset by dominant power.[14] I view these happenings as separate processes – the uprising as either a failure or success of democratic engagement and the reinforcing of power as a defeat or overcoming of dominant power. In this project I provide an alternative interpretation of democratic successes and failures that are couched within these powerful defeats. In doing this, I give a deeper interpretation of the beliefs trapped behind these boundaries and how the barriers affect the decision-making that undergirds engagement. For example, the final two chapters focus on beliefs surrounding job creation, political accountability and efficacy in order to better understand how these beliefs reflect the relationship between autonomy and power. And while the action-centered approach can help us interpret events that make it into the public sphere, I am more interested in the ways that these transformative spaces can teach us how these gateways into and out of civil society are formed, maintained, and reinforced.

We need a framework that helps us process how and why some ideas make it into the public sphere while others are rejected. For this I look to Steven Lukes' (1973) three-dimensional view,

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[13] Patchen Markell, "The Rule of the People" (2006) Pg. 12, cited in Beltrán (2010) Pg. 156.

[14] We can use a plethora of examples here. Consider intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), for example – which embodies a critique of both civil society and also forms of resistance that do not and cannot account for the overlapping forms of oppression experienced by women of color in particular. In this, while some forms of feminism might be resisting patriarchal domination, they simultaneously reproduce it when reinforcing these boundaries against women of color. This argument was recently levied against those who supported and attended the women's march in Washington, D.C. but have not supported the push to expand coverage for missing Black and Latino/a girls in the district.

a framework that helps to interpret how power uses structures, procedures, and agendas to manage intangible boundaries. This approach extends beyond the action-centered view, while not entirely discarding it, in distinguishing between the ideas that are welcomed into the public sphere and those that have overcome barriers. In identifying these transformational differences, I conduct a deeper examination of the overcoming process with a particular emphasis on the residual affects of these transformative contortions. For example, in reassessing the constraints on the subjectivity of undocumented laborers in Beltrán's analysis I identify the impact of decision-making and autonomy, particularly the expanding sense of choice that is necessary to facilitate the establishment of immigrant counterpublics and thus the immigrant marches as well. That is to say, the emergence of immigrant or any other counterpublic requires decision-making that reflects sufficient levels of autonomy. Without this degree of autonomy, the residual affect of a pseudo-transformative process can include reinforcing insufficient autonomy, especially when these processes are considered a success. When we are able to properly frame structural defeats, then these residual affects are likely to be less consequential.

Lukes' framework helps us identify the unobservable interactions between intangible boundaries and engagement. The major problem at the core of this project is when these interactions – both the maintenance of the barriers and the engagement that meets these barriers – occur in the absence of observable conflict. This masks the deleterious affects of power, particularly the steering of engagement away from personal interests, beliefs, and values in order to be more complicit with the dominant order. I refer to the maintenance of these non-response inducing barriers as "invisible power" – that is, scenario where power maintains boundaries in the absence of observable conflict. We recognize invisible power through its production of what I call "non-events".

Non-events blur the boundaries between framework and methodology, denoting expressions of coerced decision-making. Michel-Rolph Trouillot's work (1995) shows us how non-events can be structurally reproduced without consensus or conspiracy – meaning that coerced decision-making can be context specific within particular structures, procedures, and agendas. This overlap makes it more difficult to distinguish personal agency or self-determination from the realities of context and circumstance. The primary benefit of non-events is to help us identify who is being coerced by invisible power, a key step towards identifying how invisible-power is affecting individual decision-making and autonomy.[15] In this chapter I show how we can diagnose autonomy when non-events coincide with an awareness of structural power constraints. In these scenarios non-events and awareness indicate diminished autonomy that has altered decision-making towards the agenda of the dominant power. Eventually we will identify the ways that power disproportionately targets the decision-making of women, people of color, and women of color (Chapter 3), as well as the effectiveness of invisible power on facilitating a coerced non-response (Chapter 2).

While this framework is key, there are still important methodological questions to answer regarding the identification of non-events. For example, if we assume that participants in the Baltimore Uprising are demonstrating a general awareness of structural power constraints, at what point can we say that an individual being coerced? Was it only those who non-violently protested early in the week? Or was it those who participated in property damage? Maybe it was both or maybe neither? What these questions demonstrate is that diagramming how these gateways into and out of civil society are formed, maintained, and reinforced needs to start on a

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[15] This becomes most important in Chapter 3, which shows empirically how invisible power is disproportionately affecting people of color, women, and women of color. Chapter 3 shows us more about the relationship between autonomy and decision-making.

broader scale than the individual person or event. When we conduct comparisons between scenarios that are bound by similar ontological constraints, then we can begin generating productive inferences. The comparison to the Baltimore Uprising comes from the police shooting of Korryn Gaines, another victim of homicide at the hands of police in the Baltimore area with similar if not more overtly consequential democratic implications.

Because there is no actual mass participatory event to analyze in the non-response to Korryn Gaines' killing, we cannot use the action-centered approach to determine if a gender and ideological bias prevented a second coming of the Baltimore Uprising.[16] However, we can point to the barriers that were overcome through the Baltimore Uprising and those that persisted. It is frankly unsurprising that the ideas of rallying around a woman, unconventional politics, and a woman with unconventional politics are rejected, even while the Baltimore Uprising is overcoming the boundaries of police and state sanctioned violence. However, it is perhaps more surprising that we must categorize the Baltimore Uprising as a non-event insofar as the state is upholding its relative monopoly on violence while reinforcing anti-Blackness uncontested when the targets are women, political radicals, or both. In this case, channeling to the suggestion that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, people are simultaneously acting with both conviction *and* conformity.[17] The state, as a key arbiter of power and violence, is being allowed to maintain these standards when they are not held to account for police actions in Korryn Gaines' case. This non-response is a tragedy in and of itself. The non-response also undermines the efforts of the Baltimore Uprising. However, when we fail to recognize the role of invisible power, then we make the mistake of targeting the integrity of those who participated in the

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[16] Gaines politics were overly contentions in a way that Gray's were not. It is a notable difference between the two.

[17] This notion is discussed more in the subsequent chapter through in-depth interviews with SNAP recipients centered around their job-seeking behaviors.

Baltimore Uprising. While hetero-patriarchy, sexism, misogynoir, and a whole host of

problematic factors play a role, we cannot miss the significance of invisible power.

Recognizing invisible power allows us to acknowledge the collective non-response as a non-

event, which is possibly induced without consensus or conspiracy, but is nevertheless reflecting

diminished autonomy that has altered decision-making towards the agenda of the dominant

power. If we consider that invisible power facilitates these lapses, then future efforts can

emphasize overcoming these contextual defeats while also seeking to transcend the difficulties

inherent to collective action. And, when we assess the autonomy and power relationship through

decision-making, we can also recognize these transformative approaches in the 2006

immigration marches and immigrant counterpublics.

The significant democratic implications of these transformative processes and forms of

resistance lead to a discussion of neoliberalism. In arguing that non-events are disproportionately

present among women, people of color, and women of color, I also argue that neoliberalism is a

type of invisible power that is facilitating oppressive orders and ontologies. Therefore, as a form

of invisible power, neoliberalism targets women, people of color, and women of color in efforts

to bias their decision-making in its favor and against their own. The disproportionate prevalence

of non-events among these groups speaks to invisible power deliberately targeting select groups

or the inability of invisible power to protect groups from being targeted. Either way, invisible

power and in this case neoliberalism facilitate these outcomes. I uncover these dynamics in a

discussion of the responses towards NYPD Officer Peter Liang after he shot and killed Akai

Gurley. Responses in Liang's favor highlight the hopelessness undergirding the decision-making

of those who recognize the shooting as an injustice, but who advocate for Liang's release on the

grounds that he is being scapegoated by the same unjust system. This sentiment shows how the idea of demanding police accountability is prevented from becoming public or actionable even during times when similarly resisted agendas, like the challenging of white supremacy, are being engaged.

I reflect on these behaviors with the help Joy James' work (1999) as she connects state power and corporate domination to show how normalizing consent, which coincides with the coerced decision-making that defines non-events, includes making ideas seem impossible and unimaginable, which coincides with the powerful boundaries that prevent ideas from entering the public sphere. James' work buttresses my arguments about neoliberalism as invisible power and non-events being facilitated by structural power. I then turn briefly to Wendy Brown (2015), as she also discusses how neoliberal and corporate power come together in ways that have a meaningful impact on political imagination and possibilities, particularly when there is an absence of observable conflict. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of marginalized publics – communities that consciously reinforce non-events – and I use this frame to reinterpret responsiveness to Freddie Gray, Korryn Gaines, and Akai Gurley.

Chapter Overview

Freddie Gray suffered a severe injury to his spinal cord after being detained and improperly secured in a police van by Baltimore City Police. After spending seven days in a coma, Gray died as a result of his spinal cord injuries. On April 18, 2015, the day before Gray passed, protests began in his name.[18] These began a series of local and national protests that many refer

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[18] This based on media coverage and the website "elephrame.com" that has compiled dates, locations, reported sizes and inciting incident behind protests around the country.

to as the Baltimore Uprising.[19] I breakdown the circumstances surrounding the killing of Freddie

Gray and the political engagement of the Baltimore Uprising in the next section in order to

account for three factors that have significant implications: 1) responsiveness – what it means to

be engaged on behalf of cis-het men as compared to the abundant lack of observable engagement

in support of women and members of the LGBTQ community who are targeted, abused, and

killed at higher rates; 2) descriptive representation – when high, we expect this to produce a

measure of trust in government enough to mitigate the inciting tensions that lead to uprisings;

and 3) political agendas – expected to significantly diverge from dominant power in the case of

an uprising. Upon further investigation, the only significantly diverging political agenda that

came out of the Baltimore Uprising arose from a subset of the city's Black youth. The political

agendas of many adult protesters, importantly including a handful of the city's gang-members,

remained in line with elected officials' insofar as order is prioritized above justice and

representation.[20]

I diagram the relationships between subjectivity and power through the decision-making and

autonomy conveyed during the Baltimore Uprising, the 2006 U.S. immigration marches, the

relative non-response to the 2015 police shooting of Korryn Gaines in a Baltimore suburb, and

diverse Asian-American responses to the police shooting of Akai Gurley shooting in 2014. In the

earlier parts of this chapter I focus on the affects of unobservable power, beginning with a

comparison of the Baltimore Uprisings and the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn

Gaines. Several important variables distinguish these scenarios. For example, Gaines inciting

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[19] The last of these protests within the timeframe was in London, England on May 2, 2015. This is reported to have hundreds of demonstrators outside of the U.S. embassy holding a solidarity vigil.

[20] In the Letter from Birmingham Jail, Rev. Dr. King pointed to the "white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice." In this case, I note the extension of that white moderate sensibility to Black elected officials and members of Black communities even amidst this powerful uprising.

incident (police serving a warrant for traffic violations) occurred privately in her home, but Gray's arrest occurred in a public space with video. Portions of Gaines' standoff were public via an online video stream that was cut off by police with the approval of Facebook before Gaines and her son were shot, but Gray was seen in photographs of him on life support in his hospital bed. Gaines politics were public in a way that Gray's were not. Gaines was openly antagonistic towards police on multiple occasions as evidenced in videos she posted of multiple encounters where she was being arrested and telling officers that she did not accept or acknowledge their authority to fine, censure, or detain her or her property, and that they are going to and would have to kill her and her son. To date, no such videos of Gray exist. Gaines was shot, but Gray was incapacitated and comatose. Gaines died immediately with her son watching, but Gray died in the hospital of his wounds. There was a very limited local response for Gaines, but a large national response for Gray in spite of the fact that these incidents occurred within miles of each other. Hundreds protested in very organized responses for Gaines' life, but hundreds and thousands of people nationwide protested – some organized, others unorganized and spontaneous responses – for Gray's life. The Baltimore Uprising was a full fifteen months before Gaines was murdered, meaning time and experiences from very recent past could also be a factor in the differing responses.

While these differences are consequential in several ways, I focus on those that are most important for clarifying the relationship between decision-making and power. Beltrán's work helps establish the relationship between subjectivity and power, but rather than using decision-making she uses action-centered approach. Beltrán's work is about the political engagement surrounding the 2006 U.S. immigration marches, developing what Beltrán calls an immigrant counterpublic. An immigrant counterpublic is the manifestation of a liminal space where

subjectivity is transformed – that is, where people come together to reimagine their understanding of self. Beltrán centers the creation of immigrant counterpublics in "action-centered" political engagement (Pg. 136)[21] that in turn shaped subjectivities and politics. Immigrant counterpublics are presented as a counter to what Patchen Markell (2006) calls, "the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity which lies in the loss of responsiveness to events: the erosion of contexts in which action makes sense." (Markell, Pg. 12) Markell and Beltrán argue that this threat is subdued through Arendtian world building, which Beltrán says is happening in immigrant counterpublics. We are left to wonder about how this fundamental threat to democratic political activity is produced and reproduced. I account for the affects of structural power – outlined in the processes shaping understandings and relations of subjectivity and power – in order to add depth to Beltrán's explanation of immigrant counterpublics. I extend beyond the action-centered approach towards a decision-making approach to political engagement, helping us to identify the impact structural power through non-decisions. These unobservable decisions reflect the loss of a sense of choice, which I argue is the catalyst for "the loss of responsiveness to events: the erosion of contexts where actions make sense."

The connection between structural power and decision-making is being negotiated within forcible processes of normalizing consent that affect people's sense of choice. These processes coerce people into believing that non-conforming responsiveness to events is incapable of producing their desired outcome. This inhibits democratic political activity by inhibiting autonomy. Immigrant counterpublics, however, stand as a legitimate counterattack in favor of democratic political activity. We see this in the 2006 immigration marches, which are predicated

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[21] This is pulled from Linda Zerilli's work in Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom (2005). Zerilli is describing an Arendtian approach to understanding behaviors.

on a decision not to conform to structural power. I categorize this type of engagement that overcomes structural boundaries as "paradigm-shifting responsiveness".

Paradigm-shifting responsiveness is embedded in decision-making that contests structural power through a rejection of normalizing consent and opposing the accompanying constraints to subjectivity. While an action-centered approach might lead us to believe that the Baltimore Uprising is significantly different from the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines, the decision-making approach allows us to see how subjectivity constraints remain intact in both situations. This finding has significant ramifications for democratic political activity, particularly considering that power is benefitting dominant power in ways that work against responsiveness to events insofar as limited autonomy reflects limited opportunities to respond in contexts where action makes sense.

Lastly, I am diagnosing the prolonged affects of oppressive structural power – that is, when the relationship between subjectivity and power is structured in ways that diminish decision-making and agency in political engagement. This leads to what I call "marginalized publics" – liminal space where subjectivities are preserved through constrained decision-making. The responsiveness that emanates from marginalized publics is the opposite of paradigm-shifting responsiveness in its consistencies with oppressive structural power. Paradigm-shifting responsiveness works to transform subjectivities, creating more potential for responsiveness. Marginalized publics, on the other hand, are the embodiment of the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity. I explore marginalized publics further in the subsequent chapters, but in this chapter I work to frame the connections between marginalized publics, paradigm shifting responsiveness, and the threat to democratic political activity.

Part 1. Questioning Responsiveness

> "That is what right or justice is and how it came into existence; it stands half-way between the best thing of all – to do wrong with impunity – and the worst, which is to suffer wrong without the power to retaliate … Surely this would be strong proof that men do right only under compulsion; no individual thinks of it as good for him personally, since he does wrong whenever he finds he has the power."

<div align="right">Plato, <u>The Republic</u> Book II: Chapter 5</div>

<u>Freddie Gray and the Baltimore Uprising</u>

In Baltimore, Maryland on April 12, 2015 Baltimore Police arrested 25-year-old Freddie Carlos Gray, Jr. near the Gilmor Homes housing project. During his ride to the police station Gray suffered an injury that significantly severed his spine. Gray succumbed to his injuries after being in a coma for seven days. Medical examiners ruled his death a homicide. While police regulations stipulate that prisoners be buckled into their seats before the rough ride back to the station, a statement from Baltimore Police Commissioner Anthony Batts acknowledged that Gray's buckle was not fastened. Gray's legs and hands, however, were shackled.

Protests in Freddie Gray's name began as early as April 18th, the day before he would succumb to his injuries. These protests acts of non-violent civil disobedience, but decidedly not peaceful.[22] Thousands of demonstrators marched throughout the month of April in Baltimore, with similar turnout throughout the country in related protests. On April 25th a large group of students from multiple high schools were let out of school early and stranded at a local mall in west Baltimore because city officials stopped bus services.[23] Unspecified city officials also ordered armored police forces to the area. A conflict arose between the police forces and stranded students for

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[22] Non-violent protests are distinct from peaceful protests insofar as peaceful protests are not disruptive. Non-violent protest, on the other hand, can be peacefully non-disruptive or disruptively non-peaceful. This is an important distinction to make considering the theme of this project – uncovering the ways that discourse conveys power invisibly to coerce non-response without observable conflict.

[23] There is still no clear response as to who ordered the bus stop. The only information available says that it was city officials and even they are unsure of who made the call.

unknown reasons. Students throwing stones eventually turned into the liberating of small goods and the destruction of property - most notably, a nearby CVS burned down and at least two police cars were destroyed.

Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake received heavy criticism for her comments during these events for saying that the strategy was to give protestors "the space to destroy", and then later "Too many people have spent generations building up this city for it to be destroyed by thugs who, in a very senseless way, are trying to tear down what so many have fought for." Allegations of political infighting arose between Maryland's governor Larry Hogan and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake on the night of the 25th. Rawlings-Blake is alleged to have disagreed with Hogan's desire to declare a state of emergency and activate the National Guard. At different times, both Rawlings-Blake and Hogan have either publicly refuted or not responded to. Hogan did declare a state of emergency and activate the National Guard.

After receiving the medical examiners report in early May, states attorney Mosby delivered an impassioned speech against police brutality and notified the public that her office would pursue criminal charges against the officers responsible for murdering Freddie Gray. Caesar R. Goodson, Jr. was charged with second-degree depraved-heart murder; William G. Porter, Brian W. Rice, Edward M. Nero, Garrett Miller, and Alicia D. White were all charged with involuntary manslaughter, second-degree assault, manslaughter by vehicle, misconduct in office, and false imprisonment. All six officers posted bail the same day they were booked. In December 2015, Porter's case was declared a mistrial – the jury could not reach a verdict. In May 2016 Nero was declared not guilty after a bench trial. In June 2016, a circuit judge acquitted Goodson. The city is no longer pursuing charges against these officers in this case.

Photographers captured what would become viral images of 19-year-old Allen Bullock, one of the high school students stranded at the mall on April 25th, standing on top multiple police cars while he and several others shattered the car windows and forcibly unhinged the doors. Members of the press helped circulate these images that same day during the ongoing live coverage of the event. Bullock, who allegedly knew Gray, was charged and convicted of rioting, destruction of property, and disorderly conduct. Allen received a twelve year sentence with all but six months suspended, probation for five years, 400 hours of community service, he must earn his GED, and he must write an apology letter to the Baltimore Police Department.

How should we understand the impact of Gray's murder and the Baltimore Uprising? [24] How do these spontaneous acts of resistance affect and reflect the political consciousness of demonstrators and onlookers? Why are these spontaneous acts of mass resistance happening when cis-het men are violated, attacked, or killed, but not for women and/or LGBTQ people are harassed, killed, and otherwise terrorized? I begin to find the answers to these differences in political activity by looking at Cristina Beltrán's work as an example of paradigm-shifting responsiveness that transforms subjectivities. Understanding why people are less likely to engage in spontaneous acts of resistance when Korryn Gaines is killed is contingent on our understanding of whether and how subjectivities are preserved or transformed by political engagement.

Immigrant Counterpublics and Paradigm-Shifting Responsiveness

Beltrán looks to the 2006 U.S. immigration marches as a telling example of "action-centered"

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[24] Murder is used here and throughout in the sense that it is synonymous with homicide, for which Gray's death was declared by the medical examiner and the state's attorney filed charges on the same day. This is a very deliberate choice of words and is considered distinct from the language of a death, being killed, or killing. These latter terms simply connote that the person is no longer alive and there is another party responsible.

politics.[25] She argues that this spontaneous political engagement was indicative of immigrant counterpublics, which constituted liminal spaces where subjectivity was being transformed in significant ways. (Pg. 156) Beltrán offers the following:

> "Drawing on Michael Warner's notion of "counterpublics," I show how the embodied action of Latinos does not simply reflect but actively *constructs* communities and solidarities within the public realm. Performance and the physical claiming of public space is capable of producing a shared sense of membership, particularly for those who have historically found the public realm to be a site of silence, alienation, and invisibility. In other words, embodied performance is a particularly powerful practice when seeking to challenge prevailing discourses and/or engender new political possibilities."
>
> Cristina Beltrán, <u>The Trouble with Unity</u>, Pg. 17

Beltrán is doing three important things with counterpublics: 1) centering an action-centered politics rooted in embodied action and performance; 2) identifying a process that transforms subjectivities – the constructing, producing, and engendering of new communities and solidarities – which in turn generates new political possibilities; and 3) prioritizing marginalization – it is "those who have historically found the public realm to be a site of silence, alienation, and invisibility" who are "seeking to challenge prevailing discourses and/or engender new political possibilities." ." Each of these components come together during the immigration marches and create what Beltrán calls immigrant counterpublics.

Beltrán says,

> "… while publics are always plural, a counterpublic can be distinguished as a particular *type* of public. What makes counterpublics distinct is that they are 'defined by their tension with the larger public.' Chambers notes that counterpublics not only produce alternative discourses, but they do so with the awareness 'that those discourses will be rejected or denigrated by the dominant public.' A counterpublic is *aware* of its subordinate status."
>
> Cristina Beltrán, <u>The Trouble with Unity</u>, Pg. 145

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[25] This is pulled from Linda Zerilli's work in <u>Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom</u> (2005).

Immigrant counterpublics are generated in "scenes of public disclosure and self-making akin to Arendt's language of world-building." Beltrán describes the immigrant counterpublics from the 2006 marches as "a crowd witnessing itself through shared physical space … a relation of strangers defined by active participation rather than ascriptive belonging." (Pg. 132) Beltrán rejects what she calls a "common perception", that the 2006 demonstrators were already a "political community waiting to come out of the shadows." (Pg. 132) To explain how this community was otherwise spontaneously generated, Beltrán points to *Latinidad* – "the sociohistorical process whereby various Latin American national-origin groups are understood as sharing a sense of collective identity and cultural consciousness" (Pg. 4) [26] coming together with "logic of the rhizome".[27] Originally a botany term, rhizomes refer to a "continuously growing horizontal underground stem that puts out lateral shoots and adventitious roots at intervals." (Pg. 165) While it generally moves away from politics, a rhizomatic reading of *Latinidad* "imagines transformational multiplicities, offshoots, and unexpected alliances." (Pg. 168)

Latinidad and rhizomes come together to produce both immigrant counterpublics and the 2006 immigration marches. Beltrán notes the ways that these processes helped to contest the enforced subjectivities for the undocumented, which initially showed similarities with Arendt's notion of the animal laborans.[28] The prevailing discourses surrounding the undocumented connect to this derogatory view and structural power through the suggestion that the undocumented represent a "willingness to break the law in order to live and work in the United States both unsettles

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[26] The quote is from page 4 with an accompanying footnote that reads: According to Juana Rodriguez, the term *Latinidad* 'serves to define a particular geopolitical experience' while also containing within it 'complexities and contradictions of immigration, (post) (neo) colonialism, race, color, legal status, class, nation, language, and the politics of location.

[27] Deleuze and Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus", 1987.

[28] Beltrán says, "to be undocumented is to be a subject *made* for arduous labor, a subject whose very existence is understood in terms of his or her willingness to engage in toilsome practices that allow for the maintenance of life itself." (Pg. 135)

Americans and confirms our status as a choice-worthy regime." (Pg. 138) Both awareness of and resistance to these tensions enable immigrant counterpublics to "engender new political possibilities" (Pg. 17) beyond "the dehumanizing effects of anonymity and illegality." (Pg. 133)

Beltrán's concerns about "undertheorized notions of identity" (Pg. 162) are addressed by her emphasis on "self-defining". The emergence of an immigrant counterpublic is only possible if restrictive public spaces and subjectivities can be subverted through self-defining. Beltrán therefore urges immigrant counterpublics to alleviate these restrictions, saying, "Latino immigrant action would be better served by emphasizing counterpublic practices of freedom, initiation, individuation, and transformation." (Pg. 135) She envisions subjects who are "better able to speak in terms of meaningful cultural and ideological specificity." (Pg. 162)

Beltrán's work shows that these processes of self-making have significant consequences for political engagement. However, whereas an emphasis on "practices of freedom, initiation, individuation, and transformation" can help alleviate restrictive subjectivities, a different emphasis can develop subjects who are *less* able to "speak in terms of meaningful cultural and ideological specificity." Just as self-defining transformation can alleviate restrictions, they can also maintain restrictions and tensions and even develop processes that reproduce these constraints for others. What does responding to constraints by reproducing them say about the effectiveness of the initial constraints? What does it say about the role of agency among those who decide to reproduce the constraints they are limited by? The answers to these questions are best understood by investigating what Patchen Markell calls "the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity." (Markell, Pg. 12)

Markell (2006) says that "the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity lies in the loss of responsiveness to events: the erosion of contexts in which action makes sense." Beltrán connects this threat to subjectivities restricting notions of labor, citizenship, and possibilities for political engagement. Immigrant counterpublics "challenge the dichotomous logic of immigrants as either grateful subjects or dangerous lawbreakers" (Beltrán, Pg. 133). Beltrán describes the 2006 marches as "taking to the streets and claiming space and rights" through processes where "immigrants and their allies created relational spaces of freedom and common appearance where none existed previously." (Pg. 132) Immigrant counterpublics are shown as an example of democratic political activity that generates new contexts where action makes sense.

Considering that the 2006 marches represented the creation of new political possibilities and subjectivities, what happens when we use the same rhizomatic approach to interpret the Baltimore Uprising? While these spontaneous acts of resistance may not have been creating "new political possibilities", the Baltimore Uprising does "challenge prevailing discourses" through "embodied action" – but which prevailing discourses and embodied actions? How will we know if these efforts are reproducing constraints? Even though the Baltimore Uprising consists of marginalized peoples engaging in action-centered politics, aware of tensions, very possibly constituting a counterpublic, and transforming subjectivities, we must still ask to what ends are these subjectivities transformed? This is a part of what makes the Baltimore Uprising such a compelling case. When we look deeper into the subjectivities targeted by both the prevailing discourses and embodied actions we begin to see how, in spite of the deeply uplifting and unifying results of the Baltimore Uprising, the political engagement and responsiveness were reproducing significant constraints.

For example, from an electoral politics standpoint, the prevailing political discourse in Baltimore

has been established through descriptive representation and the Democratic Party. At the time of

Gray's murder a Black woman – Stephanie Rawlings- Blake – is the mayor. The mayor's seat in

Baltimore has been a democrat since 1947,[29] and since 2007 Black women have held

Baltimore's mayors' office.[30] At the time of Gray's murder a Black man – Anthony Batts – is the

police chief and a Black woman – Marilyn Mosby – the prosecuting attorney.[31] Moreover, three

of the six officers charged with Gray's murder are Black – Goodson, Porter, and White. Despite

this descriptive representation, Baltimore City has also paid over $12 million in police

misconduct cases between 2010 and 2014. In a more interesting case of constrained subjectivities

and embodied action, consider that gang members were accused of colluding to target and kill

white police officers during the uprising.[32] Several self-identified gang members responded that

the allegations were without foundation, and were an active force for non-violence in may ways

including helping to enforce the citywide curfew.[33]

While the Baltimore Uprising represents a wide reaching, spontaneous, action-centered response,

I contend that it is not paradigm-shifting responsiveness as compared to the 2006 immigration

marches. We see prevailing subjectivities and discourses that constrain political engagement

being preserved in Baltimore. The clearest example is gang members cooperating with and

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[29] This is excluding a four-year stint from 1963-1967.

[30] Sheila Dixon until 2010, followed by the current mayor, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

[31] And, of course, at the time of Gray's murder the office of the president was held by a Black man – Barack Obama.

[32] Capt. Eric Kowalczyk, the BPDs chief spokesman, gave a statement saying that "various gangs" have "entered into a partnership" to harm police. Justin Fenton reports of The Baltimore Sun newspaper reported a police memo circulating among officers considered a credible threat to police safety. This story ran on The Baltimore Sun's website online on April 27, 2015.

http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/crime/bs-md-ci-freddie-gray-gang-threat-20150427-story.html

[33] Multiple sites ran this story on April 28, 2015, including Colleen Curry with Vice News, Ron Nixon with the NY Times, and Tom Porter with the IB Times.

facilitating the city's efforts to maintain an order that includes maligning themselves as gang-members in ways that rarely happen to the abusive police force and members of the descriptively representative political apparatus. While Marilyn Mosby has been very critical of the police department throughout her investigation,[34] Baltimore's elected officials rarely if ever admonished police officers for targeting the poor and Black people who are disproportionately the victims of police shootings and attacks. Moreover, these gang-members moved on to advocate for a politics that stands in line with their elected officials, including the chiding and berating of the high school students and other young people who appeared to be challenging their captors.[35]

This represents a failure to "engender new political possibilities" (Beltrán, Pg. 17), and helps explain why we see little to no response when Allen Bullock is convicted or when the six officers are exoneration with no future charges pending. If the Baltimore Uprising was in fact an example of paradigm-shifting responsiveness – that is, if it is challenging and not reproducing a priori subjectivity constraints – then it stands to reason that we would see a similar response in Bullock's conviction, in the police exonerations, and especially in future violent incidents involving the police. This is why the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines speaks so clearly to the relationship between subjectivity, political engagement, and power – particularly the ways that responsiveness can be both a symptom and a cause of constraints. But if the response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines is so different, then why is there a similar non-response to the conviction of Allen Bullock and the exoneration of the officers? And if the responses are consistent with one another, than what catalyst ignited the Baltimore Uprising but

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[34] Mosby has noted the lack of police cooperation as a key factor in her inability to secure convictions in the cases.

[35] This was especially clear in the case of the parent who was seen scolding and slapping her son in the midst of the incident near Mondawmin Mall. She was given interviews on nationally televised TV and talk shows and called the parent of the year by some in the press.

not the other events? Lastly, how do we know when subjectivities are constrained, when these constraints are known, and when transformations are refused? To answer these questions I consider the politics of respectability as articulated by Evelyn Higginbotham.

Respectability politics are comparable to the Baltimore Uprising in that they represent action-centered political engagement emanating from a tension-aware counterpublic. Respectability politics also operate within the constraints of structural power to transform subjects rather than transforming constraints. Therefore, respectability politics embody a type of responsiveness that preserves preexisting constraints. This type of responsiveness helps us to understand why we rarely see spontaneous, unorganized, and national responses in support of women, the LGBTQ, or people expressing a politics that seek to "engender new political possibilities" (Pg. 17), and why we instead see secondary marginalization in the reproduction of prevailing discourses and constrained subjectivities.[36]

In counterpublics and respectability politics we see that the motivating meaning behind decisions and non-decisions matters, and the meaning is significantly affected by two things: awareness and malleability. In instances where responsiveness in political engagement reinforces constraints, the potential to impact constraints and discourses (malleability) is affected by which constraints and discourses people are conscious of (awareness). While the relationship between awareness and malleability cannot negate the impact of responsiveness, it can help differentiate between types of responsiveness. The importance of making these distinctions becomes clearer in the discussion of revolutionary politics in the next section where I compare the action-centered respectability politics to the responsiveness produced in the wake of the police shooting of

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[36] Cathy Cohen, Boundaries of Blackness, 1999.

Korryn Gaines. Given the potential to enforce norms through responsiveness in the absence of observable conflict, as seen in respectability politics, I show why political engagement must be explained by responsiveness to both events and constraints. A notion of revolutionary politics helps us understand how structural power mitigates the relationship between awareness and malleability and prevent responsiveness that addresses events and constraints from being imaginable.

Korryn Gaines and Revolutionary Politics

While serving a warrant for a traffic violation, Baltimore County Police shot and killed 23-year-old Korryn Shandawn Gaines inside her home in Randallstown, Maryland on August 1, 2016. Throughout this ordeal, Gaines was armed and accompanied by her 5-year-old son who was also shot, although not gravely. Gaines attempted to broadcast what became an hours-long standoff through her social media accounts.[37] In the midst of the ordeal, police used a "law enforcement portal" to suspend Gaines accounts.[38] Because officers were not wearing body cameras, there is no public video of the actual shooting to date.

Randallstown is considered a suburb of Baltimore City. Located in Baltimore County, it is fewer than seven miles outside of the city with public transportation routes connecting them. As they are not in the same county, Randallstown has its own city government and is patrolled by the Baltimore County Police force (BCPD).[39] We have no current physical description of the officer or officers who shot Gaines. There is no sign of pending prosecution at this point.

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[37] Facebook and Instagram.

[38] Reported by Baynard Woods at the Guardian online August 3, 2016.

[39] Baltimore City is patrolled by the Baltimore Police Department (BPD)

Protests in Korryn Gaines name are sparse. A handful of activist organizations held rally's a week or so after Gaines was killed by the BCPD. There is little evidence that this killing resulted in offline protests much larger than a few hundred people across the nation. What then are the most important factors that made responses so different in the Baltimore Uprisings from the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines?

Whereas Gaines inciting incident (police serving a warrant for traffic violations) occurred privately in her home, Gray's arrest occurred in a public space with video. Portions of Gaines' standoff were public via an online video stream that was cut off by police with the approval of Facebook before Gaines and her son were shot, and Gray was only seen in photographs of him in his hospital bed. Gaines politics were also public in a way that Gray's were not. Gaines was openly antagonistic towards police on multiple occasions as evidenced in videos she posted of multiple encounters where she was being arrested and telling officers that she did not accept or acknowledge their authority to fine, censure, or detain her or her property, and that they are going to and would have to kill her and her son. To date, no such videos of Gray exist in public venues. Gray died in the hospital of his wounds and Gaines died immediately with her son watching. Gray was incapacitated and comatose, and Gaines was shot. Although the locations of these incidents are in the same area, there was a national response in Gray's name versus a very limited local response for Gaines. Hundreds and thousands of people nationwide protested in relatively unorganized and spontaneous response for Gray's life whereas hundreds protested in very organized responses for Gaines' life. The Baltimore Uprising was a full fifteen months before Gaines was murdered, meaning time and experiences from very recent past could also be a factor in the differing responses. While these differences are important, they tell us little about

awareness, malleability, and the relationship between them. This information is necessary to identify and distinguish between the decisions and non-decisions at the core of responsiveness.

I investigate the role that constrained subjectivities – particularly those surrounding gender and politics – played in Korryn Gaines' case, beginning with an analysis of the politics of respectability. Respectability politics serves as a similar example of constrained subjectivity, reinforcing and constraining prevailing discourses in spite of the action-centered approach. Through respectability, we are able to see why we must interpret responsiveness and political engagement through decision-making rather than the action-centered approach.

In Righteous Discontent (1993), Evelyn Higginbotham grounds the politics of respectability in the efforts of southern women from the Black Baptist church hoping to educate, teach hard work, and "earn their people a measure of esteem from white America." These women "strove to win the black lower class's psychological allegiance to temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners, and Victorian sexual morals." (Pg. 14) The politics of respectability " emphasized reform of individual behavior and attitudes both as a goal in itself and as a strategy for reform of the entire structural system of American race relations." (Pg. 186)

The emphasis in respectability politics on earning esteem from white America by consciously reinforcing its oppressive cultural and individualistic values is an example of systematic oppressions working towards normalizing consent – that is, forcefully suppressing action through a neglectful disregard of both individual and group agendas.[40] Normalizing consent in this context consciously reproduces prevailing discourses and reinforces subjectivities (awareness) in

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[40] Neglectful in that suppressed agendas are unequally likely to be heard.

line with racial, gendered, and sexual hierarchies for lack of other ways to change them (malleability). The context of these behaviors – Higginbotham's work is based in the Jim Crow era – cannot be understated. And yet, in spite of this context, the impact of awareness and malleability are made very clear through the politics of respectability.

Respectability politics speak to a political agenda that Joy James (1999) expounds on in Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics. James' conceptual framework disaggregates anti-racist, residually oppressive Black feminisms from liberatory revolutionary Black feminisms. James says:

> "Black feminisms that accept the political legitimacy of corporate-state institutional and police power but posit the need for humanistic reform are considered *liberal*. Black feminisms that view female and black oppression as stemming from capitalism, neocolonialism, and the corporate state are generally understood to be *radical*. Some black feminisms explicitly challenge state and corporate dominance and critique the privileged status of bourgeois elites among the "left"; those that do so by connecting political theory for radical transformation with political acts to abolish corporate-state and elite dominance are *revolutionary*." [Emphasis in original]

Joy James, Shadowboxing, Pg. 79

James' work describes how groups facing and responding to intersecting sites of marginalization are perpetuating tensions by inducing domination and subordination through corporate political agendas. Her explication of the differences between liberal, radical, and revolutionary Black feminisms, while illuminating, carries an additional revelation: it is not in the nature of all resistance politics to be comprehensively liberatory. While radical politics include an awareness of oppressive power, James tells us that only revolutionary Black feminisms are fully resisting state domination governed by "white supremacy, corporate capitalism, patriarchy, and homophobia" (Pg. 9). These revolutionary Black feminisms "explicitly challenge state and corporate dominance and critique the privileged status of bourgeois elites among the 'left' … by

connecting political theory for radical transformation with political acts to abolish corporate-state

and elite dominance". James goes on to say:

> "… liberalism competes with and censures radicalism while radicalism competes with
> and censures revolutionary action. Both forms of censorship seem to be guided by an
> amorphous framework of what constitutes responsible 'left' politics delineated within a
> rapacious corporate world that funds the political integration of 'radicals' on terms that
> follow, as a prime directive, the maintenance of stability and the accumulation of
> capital."
>
> <div align="right">Joy James, Pg. 86</div>

An ostensibly anti-oppressive politics (like respectability politics) can replicate the same

agendas, values, and, most importantly, constraints, that we see when power is used to dominate.

While white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, and respectability politics have been refashioned

since the Jim Crow era that Higginbotham's work is rooted in, James shows that many

contemporary versions of these oppressions are still sites of domination that blur the lines

between structural power and culture today.[41] We can see how subjectivity constraints

surrounding gender, sexuality, and class operate similarly in Higginbotham's respectability

politics as they do in the prevailing discourses surrounding undocumented laborers, particularly

in the interests of making America look like a choice-worthy regime.

The prevailing discourse surrounding the subjectivity of undocumented laborers reinforces U.S.

choice-worthiness in their supposed "willingness to break the law in order to live and work in the

United States" (Pg. 138). Choice-worthiness in respectability politics is similarly reinforced by

the supposed willingness to endure (and in many ways reproduce) oppressions. Therefore,

politics that support these notions of choice-worthiness (e.g., liberal and radical) are in many

ways legitimizing the ingrained subjectivity constraints *when they fail to address those*

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[41] Consider debates about the so-called "alt-right" and the infatuation with their clothing since the 2016 presidential election.

constraints. It is in this sense that the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines can be seen as an argument for American exceptionalism and an adherence to the ingrained subjectivity constraints.

Adhering to subjectivity constraints is what led to a loss of responsiveness, and points to a context where action does not make sense. The action-centered approach is a crucial part of explaining *how* people address these constraints. But when we are explaining *why* people fail to address constraints, which we are in this project, the decision-making approach can explain processes that are caused and causing the normalizing of consent beyond what an action-centered approach can show. James' categorization of the cultural versus the revolutionary helps us understand the importance of decision-making for identifying responsiveness engaging in processes of normalizing consent.

Cultural black feminism is "a hybrid heavily invested in political *appearances* of revolutionary symbolism and representations shaped by ludic feminism"[42] [emphasis added]. James distinguishes this cultural and liberal black feminism from actual "political organizing with nonelites for revolutionary action". She contends:

> "As it is more assimilable, liberal black feminism remains more likely to be promoted
> into the political mainstream as normative among gender-progressive African Americans.
> Like the general society, mainstream feminism allows scant political space for
> revolutionary antiracists, even if they are white feminists, whose militant critiques of
> state power contest the assumptions (and funding) of liberal feminism."

> Joy James, Pg. 88

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[42] Joy James on "ludic feminism: "… according to feminist theorist Teresa Ebert, '[ludic feminism] substitutes a politics of representation for radical social transformation.' Ludic feminism has a curious relationship to black feminisms because the latter has been shaped and contextualized by radical movements." Pg. 86

Revolutionary politics are deradicalized and conventional politics are radicalized (in word but not deed) for the benefit of prevailing discourses, subjectivity constraints, and corporate funding. By this measure, the non-response to Korryn Gaines is akin to "forms of censorship seem to be guided by an amorphous framework of what constitutes responsible 'left' politics" (Pg. 86). Insofar as the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines can be seen as an argument for American exceptionalism and an adherence to the ingrained subjectivity constraints, several examples from within the Baltimore Uprising also begin to look like a demand that the U.S. live up to its choice-worthiness. Consider that the majority of protests, with the strong exception of the Black youth, were intent on receiving a measure of justice that is consistent with the political agenda of the state.

This attempt to unify mainstream politics and agendas is explicitly counteracted by revolutionary politics, which represent a "radical transformation with political acts to abolish corporate-state and elite dominance" (Pg. 79). From a revolutionary politics perspective, the Baltimore Uprising should have been explicitly challenging America's choice-worthiness in the same way that Gaines, an armed woman embracing a revolutionary politics, was explicitly challenging the "political legitimacy of corporate-state institutional and police power" (Pg. 79). We are better able to differentiate between the preserving or transforming of subjectivities with this notion of revolutionary politics, allowing us to more fully understand the decision-making at the core of the responsiveness towards Gray, Gaines, the immigration marches, respectability politics, and the other spontaneous political engagement.

Beltrán notes that while the rhizomatic interpretation of Latinidad helps us identify the liminal boundary between preserving and transforming subjectivity, it is just as likely to move towards

the consolidation of corporate power. (Pg. 162) With such a wide range of political possibilities it begs the question, at what point does an agenda stop reinforcing democratic political activity and begin a process of normalizing consent? This is why it is so important to add James' notions of revolutionary politics to Beltrán's work, so that we are better able to account for the ways that anti-oppressive political engagement is still capable of reinforcing oppressive power structures, agendas and values. If not fully reinforcing the threat, transformative self-making is at best substantially diminished in its ability to alleviate the threat to democratic political activity when it is not challenging processes of normalizing consent.

As we will see in the Akai Gurley case, political engagement is sometimes explicitly couched in a discourse of supporting America's choice-worthiness by reinforcing constraints to subjectivity. James distinguishes revolutionary politics from the advocacy of mainstream agendas or failing to organize with non-elites to challenge these assumptions. What James is pointing to is a notion of complicity, a third characteristic next to awareness and malleability that we must account for. Complicity with structural power is seen in the failure challenge to assumptions, prevailing discourses, and subjectivities. This failure cannot be disassociated with awareness and malleability – that is, complicity can include the unaware but is most significant in cases where people are aware and complicit for lack of malleability.

I use the second half of this chapter to deconstruct neoliberalism in order to establish its complicity with dominant structural power. I focus on differentiating ostensibly anti-oppressive political engagement by whether or not it challenges normalized consent. When political engagement fails to challenge normalized consent or is otherwise constrained by subjectivity, then it is considered a "non-event". As a product of structural power that facilitates a

fundamental threat to democratic political activity, non-events represent a counterweight to

paradigm-shifting responsiveness and revolutionary politics. We identify non-events by

distinguishing between decisions and non-decisions, taking into account awareness, malleability,

and complicity with structural power. Steven Lukes' three-dimensional view of power helps

explain when people who would otherwise not be complicit with structural power are still

reproducing non-events. This process leads to what I call "marginalized publics" – populated by

people whose decision-making knowingly reinforces structural power.

Part 2. The Case for Revolutionary Politics
Three-Dimensional View of Power

In Power: A Radical View (1973), Steven Lukes is moving away from Dahl's work in "The

Concept of Power" and beyond Bachrach and Baratz' claim that power has "two faces". Lukes'

critiques Dahl's "one dimensional" view for its overemphasis on individual behaviors. He

critiques Bachrach and Baratz' "two-dimensional" view for also overemphasizing individual

behaviors, as well as its reliance on observable conflict. He extends the critique of observable

conflict to include their "insistence that nondecision-making power only exists where there are

grievances which are denied entry into the political process in the form of issues." (Pg. 28) Of

this, Lukes says:

> "… it is here assumed that if people feel no grievances, then they have no
> interests that are harmed by the use of power … is it not the most extreme and
> most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from
> having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in
> such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either
> because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as
> natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and
> beneficial? To assume that the absence of grievance equals genuine consensus is
> simply to rule out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus by
> definitional fiat."

> Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View, Pg. 28

Power can inhibit the decision-making at the core of political engagement by shaping perceptions and grievances, preferences and roles, until people "accept their role in the existing order of things". This project is about distinguishing between people who believe that there is no alternative to their role in the existing order from those who believe that these limited roles are unchangeable and also from those for whom their false or manipulated consensus is indistinguishable from the overarching constraints. Lukes' three-dimensional view of power provides a framework to diagnose and trace these transformations.

The three-dimensional view of power says that Party-A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests. (Pg. 30) The three-dimensional view focuses on "decision-making and control over political agenda (not necessarily through decisions)", "issues and potential issues", "observable (overt or covert) and latent conflict", and "subjective and real interests". (Pg. 29) When Lukes notes the "decision-making and control over the political agenda (not necessarily through decisions)", we are reminded that a political agenda can contradict self-determined interests even in the absence of a grievance, as is the case in the "false or manipulated consensus" discussed above. According to John Gaventa in Power and Powerlessness (1980), who also engages Lukes' work, false consensus reflects a constraint on political possibilities that requires both systemic analyses and more "personalized explanation[s]". He notes that systemic analyses of false consensuses are particularly useful in determining how demands are prevented "from becoming political issues or even from being made." (Pg. 12) False or manipulated consensus describes scenarios where "*potential issues* are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions." (Pg. 12)

False or manipulated consensuses, however, are necessarily generated through a process where alternative (non-dominant) discourses are subverted and subjectivity is constrained. When a liberal or radical political agenda frames revolutionary politics, independent women, or both as unacceptable, censurable, and unworthy of response, it is still necessary to process events like the police shooting of Korryn Gaines. This includes those who have bought in to these political constraints through false consensus and those who are being forced to tolerate these constraints through manipulated consensus. This processing, whether it happens with a decision or a non-decision, becomes observable and therefore interpretable when we know 1) that they are aware of Gaines' (revolutionary) politics or gender; 2) their response; and 3) how that response acknowledges structural power, if at all. A non-response indicates a false or manipulated consensus in Korryn Gaines case because it fails to address structural power. When processes induce the type of responsiveness to events that fails to address structural power, then these processes are normalizing consent.

According to Gaventa, the three-dimensional view is useful for "locating the power processes behind the social construction of meanings and patterns that serve to get B to act and believe in a manner in which B otherwise might not, to A's benefit and B's detriment." (Pg. 16) The process of normalizing consent is one of these power processes, shaping the social construction of meanings and patters by forcefully suppressing actions through a neglectful disregard of both individual and group agendas. We identified this process in our previous discussion of the politics of respectability in Higginbotham's work. These politics, emanating from an oppressed group of Black Baptist women, were intended to earn esteem from white America by consciously reinforcing the social construction of meaning and patterns found in subjectivity constraints and dominant discourses. This is why respectability politics are so important here, as

they are reproducing the social *and* political construction of meaning and patterns. Respectability politics, as an example of either a false or manipulated consensus, are reproducing structural power precisely because they are also produced by structural power to begin with. The non-response to Korryn Gaines is also the result of processes normalizing consent, as individual and group agendas are being subverted, undermined, and constrained in favor of prevailing discourses and constrained subjectivities surrounding race, gender, sexuality and politics.

Although power processes work "to A's benefit and B's detriment", it is not always detrimental when responsiveness reinforces preexisting race, gender, sexuality, or political ontologies and subjectivities. Paradigm shifting responsiveness is about moving away from structural power that is neglectful of alternative discourses and that are constraining subjectivities. A failure to engage in paradigm-shifting responsiveness in the midst of these constraints is therefore always detrimental, whether it advances those constraints as we see in respectability politics or if it allows power to advance constraints uninhibited as we see in the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines.

There are people who have yet to completely buy in to these constraints, but who also believe constraints are unchangeable. Lukes refers to the "contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the *real interests* of those they exclude" as "latent conflict". (Pg. 29) Considering the non-response to the police shooting of Korryn Gaines, which allows power to advance constraints uninhibited, we can see that structural power and latent conflict are not necessarily mutually exclusive. James is also speaking to the relationship between structural power and latent conflict when she says, "liberalism competes with and censures radicalism while radicalism competes with and censures revolutionary action." (Pg. 86) Because they inhibit

paradigm-shifting responsiveness, this measure of censuring and competition are complicit with structural power even when rooted in ostensibly anti-oppressive political engagement or resistance politics. With this in mind we might better understand the responsiveness in the Baltimore Uprising and what has inhibited the engendering of "new political possibilities." (Beltrán, Pg. 17)

The powerful political responsiveness seen in the Baltimore Uprising was challenging prevailing discourses through embodied action. However, the competitive approach to dominating discourse meant neglecting alternatives, which censured non-liberal responsiveness even before the high school students were being corralled. Being neglectful of alternative discourses is able to constrain subjectivities and also requires paradigm-shifting responsiveness. This is not to conflate revolutionary politics with the so-called "rioting" by the high school students at Mondawmin Mall; rather, revolutionary politics is about resisting subjectivity constraints and challenging structural power. Whether or not this resistance was happening during the Baltimore Uprising, we know that censuring and competing was occurring, reinforcing prevailing discourses, and constraining subjectivities.

The immigrant counterpublics seen in the 2006 immigration marches were able to engender new political possibilities precisely because their responsiveness resisted multiple subjectivity constraints, and did so in a way that also challenged the choice-worthiness of the American regime. This is not an indictment of spontaneous political engagement nor an endorsement of elite crafted narratives and political agendas. Rather, from the perspective of alleviating the threat to democratic political activity, I am suggesting that paradigm-shifting responsiveness is

transformative when it is rooted in a revolutionary politics because it is the only approach that can expand the contexts where action makes sense and increase responsiveness to events.

Moving forward I show how non-events perpetuate the fundamental threat to democratic political activity. Understanding this connection requires us to remember that processes of normalizing consent can successfully produce false and manipulated consensuses through disregard and neglect. Because power can sometimes operate unobservably, we must investigate non-events by highlighting the impact of decision-making and non-decisions. This allows us to account for the demands that are prevented "from becoming political issues or even from being made." (Pg. 12) More importantly, we must also investigate "invisible power" – this is when unobservable power causes the loss of responsiveness to events and the erosion of contexts where action makes sense. In these investigations I make clear that the apparent political expediency non-events is complicit with structural power and false or manipulated consensuses.

I begin this conversation with a discussion of the protests for and against NYPD Officer Peter Liang after his murder of Akai Gurley. I point to the contradictory messages of two groups of protesters as an example of invisible power inhibiting paradigm-shifting responsiveness. Using Michel-Rolph Trouillot's work in <u>Silencing the Past</u> (1995), I explain how imposing constrained subjectivity can also make paradigm-shifting responsiveness incomprehensible. I return to Joy James work and connect neoliberalism to corporate power and then move briefly through Wendy Brown's work (2015) to show how this combination of neoliberalism and corporate power embodies invisible power and proliferates non-events. I conclude with marginalized publics, which I use to interpret responsiveness for Akai Gurley, Korryn Gaines, and Freddie Gray and towards a future where democratic political activity can flourish.

Akai Gurley, a 28 year-old living with his girlfriend and 2-year-old daughter, was murdered on

November 20, 2014. Rookie police officer Peter Liang was patrolling the New York City

Housing Authority's Louis H. Pink Houses in Brooklyn with his firearm drawn. Liang shot into a

dark stairwell, striking Gurley in the chest. The shooting was declared an accidental discharge.

Liang was indicted by a grand jury for manslaughter and criminal assault on February 10, 2015

with the charges carrying a sentence of up to fifteen years. One year and one day later, February

11, 2016, Liang was found guilty of manslaughter and official misconduct. This made Liang the

first NYPD officer to be convicted in a fatal shooting in the line of duty in over a decade. Before

sentencing the prosecuting DA Ken Thompson wrote a letter to Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice

Danny Chun that read: "Because the incarceration of the defendant is not necessary to protect the

public, and because of the unique circumstances of this case, the People do not believe that a

prison sentence is warranted." On April 19, 2016 Justice Chun sentenced Liang to five years

probation and 800 hours of community service.[43]

Protests began after Peter Liang's indictment and prosecution, continuing through his eventual

conviction and sentencing. However, many of these protests were on the behalf of Peter Liang –

the police shooter. Thousands of Chinese-American's across the nation were protesting on behalf

of Liang, arguing that he was used as a scapegoat for widespread and longstanding history of

police misconduct and brutality against Black people. Many of these rallies began with a

moment of silence for Akai Gurley's life, an acknowledgement of the injustice of police

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[43] As an aside, this sentence is comparable to the one given to Allen Bullock – the 19-year-old convicted of rioting, destruction of property and disorderly conduct in Baltimore. Allen received a 12-year sentenced sentence with all but six months suspended, with five years probation, and 400 hours of community service. He was also ordered to complete his GED and write an apology letter to the Baltimore Police Department.

misconduct and brutality. In over thirty rallies across the country, these demonstrators protested against a system that they claim failed both Gurley and Liang. Those advocating for Liang correctly cite the fact that white officers are seldom indicted let alone convicted when they kill in the line of duty. According to a Daily News investigation, on-duty NYPD officers killed at least 179 people over the previous 15 years. Only three of the deaths leading to an indictment, and one of these led to a conviction in 1999 with no jail time sentenced.[44] 27% of these known victims were unarmed, 86% Black or Latino/a. While we might question the accuracy of the 3 indictments, we must acknowledge that the fidelity of the alleged 179 killings is highly disputable. None of the over 17,000 police agencies in the U.S. are required to report officer-involved shootings to the FBI, where the 179 number is derived. Moreover, the NYPD has not submitted its internal statistics on officer-involved deaths since 2006.

Protests in support of Akai Gurley occurred over this same period of time. Large groups of Asian Americans supportive of the movement for Black lives protested under banners that read: "#ASIANS4BLACKLIVES", "END THE WAR ON BLACK PEOPLE", and "YOU CAN'T HAVE CAPITALISM WITHOUT RACISM – MALCOLM X". Unlike Liang's supporters seeking his exoneration, this group sought to convict Liang, police tactics, and racial capitalism. Siyu Qian, a reporter for the New York City Lens, wrote an article on March 11, 2015 called "Is Police Officer Peter Liang a Scapegoat?"[45] Qian reports:

> "The Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence, an advocacy group promoting racial equality, has said it agrees with the indictment against Liang "I am not going to comment on the rally," said Cathy Dang, the executive director of the anti-violence committee. "For the past 36 years since our committee was founded, we've supported every single family that lost their family members due

[44] http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/179-nypd-involved-deaths-3-indicted-exclusive-article-1.2037357

[45] http://nycitylens.com/2015/03/is-police-officer-peter-liang-a-scapegoat/

to police actions. If someone takes away a human life, he should be accountable no matter who he is.""

<div style="text-align: center">Siyu Qian, "Is Police Officer Peter Liang a Scapegoat?" March 2015</div>

In July 2016, three months after Liang's sentencing, a co-authored, open letter circulated to "Mom, Dad, Uncle, Auntie, Grandfather, Grandmother". This letter is a call to action in support of #BlackLivesMatter, and it was crowdsourced and written by hundreds of Asian Americans for their families, particularly the older generations. This letter was translated into at several languages in order to reach as many people as possible.[46]

There are key differences that distinguish Liang's supporters from DA Ken Thompson and Justice Danny Chun, and from these protestors who openly support the movement for Black lives. On one hand, Liang supporters had a fundamentally different agenda than DA Ken Thompson insofar as they critique a broken system in which Thompson, Chun, and Liang are participants. On the other hand, those who openly support the movement for Black lives supported the prosecution and conviction of Liang, which was carried out by Thompson and Chun. Meanwhile, Thompson and Chun combine both of these agendas, likely satisfying neither by prosecuting and convicting Liang and then agreeing to significantly diminish his sentence. Interestingly enough, each of these parties claims a commitment to equality and justice.

Gurley's murder also occurred four months after Eric Garner was killed on July 17, 2014. Unlike Freddie Gray's killers, Eric Garner's death was videotaped and the officers who caused his death – Daniel Pantaleo and Justin Damico – were not prosecuted nor indicted by a grand jury. In a

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[46] While I was unable to confirm all of these languages for lack of speaking proficiency, the following languages are alleged to have functional translations: Arabic, Bahasa, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Khmer/Cambodian, Portuguese-Brazilian, Punjabi, Sinhala, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

post-sentencing statement after the Peter Liang conviction, the prosecuting DA Thompson said, "This case is about what happened in Brooklyn, not Ferguson [referring to Michael Brown, Jr.] or Staten Island [referring to Eric Garner], and the jury convicted on the basis of these unique and tragic facts. My office will continue to pursue equal justice for all of Brooklyn." The only person who was charged or convicted in the aftermath of Garner's murder was a civilian Ramsey Orta, the man who filmed the murder. Orta was sentenced to four years on unrelated charges.[47]

The important differences between these parties point us to the same conclusion: understanding individual and group interests and agendas requires a deeper understanding of people's knowledge of, their perceived malleability of, and their complicity with structural power. A key characteristic of counterpublics is that people know their preferred discourses will be rejected or denigrated by the dominant public. How people respond to this awareness is crucial in determining if anti-oppressive political engagement and resistance politics will be comprehensively liberatory. This awareness manifests in the latent conflicts characterizing the space between the interests of those exercising power and the interests of those that power excludes. While both openly condemn the systematic oppressions that routinely exonerate officers in the name of equality and justice, Liang's supporters are distinct from supporters of the movement for Black lives in that they reinforce these subjectivity constraints and dominant discourses by seeking his exoneration. With their goal being his exoneration, Liang's supporters exemplify the non-event. Whether they are unaware of alternative responses or if normalized consent led them to a de facto competition with, censuring, and denouncing of revolutionary

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[47]Let us also remember that stop-and-frisk drudged on with widespread support for over twenty years in spite of decades of protest, abundant claims of discrimination, and having been shown to have little to no actual success at deterring crime well before it was declared unconstitutional and discriminatory in 2013. (Harcourt 2009; Bowling 1999; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999)

politics, Liang's supporters are neglectfully disregarding of their own and others' political interests. Their responsiveness is in a context where action makes sense, but the actions constitute a detrimental non-event.

The Asian-American supporters of the movement for Black lives on the other hand are resisting subjectivity constraints in a way that challenges the choice-worthiness of the American regime. While their politics may not be comprehensively liberatory, the politics of Liang's supporters who acknowledge injustice and ostensibly advocate equality are undoubtedly not. As is true in the non-response to Korryn Gaines, the detrimental non-event from Liang's supporters is not predicated on responsiveness that reinforces preexisting race, gender, sexuality, and political subjectivities; rather, it is because the subjectivities and prevailing discourses that they reinforce are constrained by structural power. The failure to engage in paradigm-shifting responsiveness is detrimental when it advances constraints (e.g., respectability politics) or when power is allowed to maintain problematic constraints uninhibited (e.g., Liang's supporters). Liang's supporters are not benefitted by his exoneration, conviction, or indictment when it comes at the expense of invisible power. They must challenge structural power; thus, they must engage in paradigm-shifting responsiveness.

If the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity is the loss of responsiveness and the erosion of contexts where action makes sense, then invisible power is a catalyst that greatly facilitates the growth of this threat. Michel-Rolph Trouillot's work on the Haitian Revolution (1995) helps us unpack the deeper dangers of invisible power, particularly its ability to prevent revolutionary politics and paradigm-shifting responsiveness from being practiced. Invisible

power normalizes consent by making paradigm-shifting responsiveness – the path to expanding contexts and increasing responsiveness – impossible to carry out and interpret.

The Haitian Revolution and Invisible Power

> "Effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural. Beyond a stated – and most often sincere – political generosity, best described in U.S. parlance within a liberal continuum, the narrative structures of Western historiography have not broken with the ontological order of the Renaissance. This exercise of power is much more important than the alleged conservative or liberal adherence of the historians involved."

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past, Pg. 106

Trouillot says the Haitian Revolution became "unthinkable in the West not only because it changed slavery and racism but because of the way it did so." (Pg. 87) This process "does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus", only people unable to "reconcile their perception of blacks with the idea of large-scale black rebellion." (Pg. 90) Ontological orders like these have constrained the imagination of new political possibilities in both prevailing discourses and in the work of trained historians since the revolution and before it as well.

Of historians, Trouillot asks, "to what extent has modern historiography of the Haitian Revolution – as part of a continuous Western discourse on slavery, race, and colonization – broken the iron bonds of the philosophical milieu in which it was born?" (Pg. 74) He is referencing the "various philosophical, ideological, and practical schemes" that "recognized degrees of humanity." Trouillot answers his question, saying, "Whether these connecting ladders ranked chunks of humanity on ontological, ethical, political, scientific, cultural, or simply pragmatic grounds, the fact is that all assumed and reasserted that, ultimately, some humans were more so than others." (Pg. 76) Forms of scientific racism "gained a much wider audience, further

legitimizing the ontological nomenclature inherited from the Renaissance."[48] Before the Haitian Revolution perceptions of Black people were firmly rooted in "internalized white racial prejudice" that accompanied "objective reasons to argue for the maintenance of slavery" (Pg. 171). Trouillot says, "Legitimate as it was, the slaves' natural desire for freedom could not be satisfied, lest it threaten France's interests." (92) Indeed, in the beginning these internalized racial prejudices and interests made the Haitian Revolution unacceptable. However, instead of reckoning with the new reality "after that impossible had become fact", Trouillot says, "even then, the facts were not always accepted as such." (Pg. 89) Lastly, Trouillot says, "discourse always lagged behind practice." (Pg. 89) While internalized prejudices and oppressive interests made the revolution unacceptable, it was the combination of denying facts and the natural lagging of discourse that eventually made the Haitian revolution unthinkable and unknowable even to trained historians.

Researchers imbued with the legacy of these prejudices and lagging discourses have since produced "formulas of erasure" and "formulas of banalization". Formulas of erasure come from the "generalists and the popularizers – textbook authors, for example"; formulas of banalization describes "the favorite tropes of the specialists." (Pg. 96) The combined affect of these formulas is "a powerful silencing: whatever has not been cancelled out in the generalities dies in the cumulative irrelevance of a heap of details." (Pg. 97) This is how "the revolution that was unthinkable became a non-event." (Pg. 98)

By walking us through the development of this non-event, Trouillot shows us the true danger of invisible power. Without producing sufficiently observable conflict arising in the process of

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[48] "The carving up of Asia and above all of Africa reinforced both colonial practice and ideology. Thus, in most places outside of Haiti, more than a century after it happened, the revolution was still largely unthinkable history." Pg. 95

exercising power or in resistance to the exercise of power we risk losing the ability to accurately and adequately interpret events. New political possibilities become unthinkable when people are incapable of imagining or even understanding the purpose of challenging prevailing discourses and subjectivity constraints. Trouillot shows that non-events are not necessarily the product of partisanship, ideology, or unintelligence, but rather this structurally facilitated deterioration of political imagination and possibility. In spite of the absence of observable conflict, these structures are not absent oppressive ontological orders. Paradigm-shifting responsiveness and revolutionary politics address both the structural power and constrained subjectivity in oppressive ontologies. These are the keys to alleviating the threat to democratic political activity that invisible power poses.

In the next section I show how neoliberal politics is a major driver of invisible power. I focus on "marginalized publics" – populated by people whose decision-making knowingly reinforce structured subjectivities – are reproducing structural power in ways that 1) get people to do what they would rather not do (e.g., three dimensional power); 2) compete with and censure revolutionary politics; and 3) are normalizing consent by subverting, undermining, and otherwise constraining individual and group agendas and subjectivities, particularly those surrounding race, gender, sexuality and politics. The people who populate marginalized publics have knowledge of structural power, but because they believe that it is not malleable they then become complicit. Because neoliberal power operates in the absence of observable conflict, paradigm-shifting responsiveness and revolutionary politics are necessary for people to even imagine the possibility that dominant power can be challenged.

Neoliberalism and Marginalized Publics

"Corporate culture oils radicalism's slide into neoradicalism. According to consumer advocate Ralph Nader, being raised in American culture often means "growing up corporate." (For those raised "black," growing up corporate in America means training for the Talented Tenth.) A person need not be affluent to grow up corporate; he or she need only adopt a managerial style. When merged with radicalism, the managerial ethos produces a "neoradicalism" that as a form of commercial "left" politics emulates corporate structures and behavior. As corporate funders finance "radical" conferences and "lecture movements," democratic power-sharing diminishes. Radical rhetoricians supplant grass-roots organizers and political managers replace vanguard activists. Within this context, feminist "radicals" are discouraged from effective oppositional politics to social and state dominance and organic links to nonelite communities."

<div align="right">Joy James, <u>Shadowboxing</u>, Pg. 86</div>

The oily slide that James describes is less about an ethical or moral dilemma and more about invisible power - when unobservable power causes the loss of responsiveness to events and the erosion of contexts where action makes sense. Through the managerial style and ethos, corporate culture diminishes democratic power sharing, supplants grass-roots organizers, replaces vanguard activists, and discourages people from practicing "effective oppositional politics to social and state dominance and [from developing] organic links to nonelite communities." These links are essential to revolutionary politics, and only an act of paradigm-shifting responsiveness can supplant this non-event from happening.

In Wendy Brown's <u>Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution</u> (2015) we see a similar assessment of the managerial style of corporate culture working towards normalizing consent. While James focuses on the political after-effects of normalizing consent, Brown emphasizes the strategy and structure of power, particularly its visibility or lack thereof. Brown says:

Most definitions of good governance include the following elements: participation, consensus, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, equitability, inclusiveness, and following the rule of law. Thus, while governance analytically

describes decentered and devolved power, as a policy term, governance aims to substitute consensus-oriented policy formation and implementation for the overt exercise of authority and power through law and policing. It is a short step from this reorientation of democracy into problem solving and consensus to a set of additional replacements fundamental to the meaning and operation of governance today: "stakeholders" replace interest groups or classes, "guidelines" replace law, "facilitation" replaces regulation, "standards" and "codes of conduct" disseminated by a range of agencies and institutions replace overt policing and other forms of coercion. Together, these replacements also vanquish a vocabulary of power, and hence power's visibility, from the lives and venues that governance organizes and directs."

Wendy Brown, <u>Undoing the Demos</u>, Pg. 129

For Brown, the absence of observable conflict produced through neoliberalism is a move that also avoids more overt forms of coercion. This is not to be confused with a replacement of coercion itself, as this lack of conflict is a part of normalizing consent towards false of manipulated consensuses. The language Brown uses to describe the changing "meaning and operation of governance today" – stakeholders, guidelines, facilitation, standards and codes of conduct – align with James' concerns about corporate culture and the managerial style of politics. Both are describing processes of normalizing consent that "also vanquish a vocabulary of power" and reproduce the potential issues, real issues, and latent conflicts that arise from Lukes' three-dimensional power framework.

Neoliberal power is used to make the actions of the state appear fiscally efficient while also limiting critiques of political violence, militarism, monopoly capital, and labor exploitation. (James, Pg. 182) The consolidation of neoliberal and corporate power is therefore facilitating and perpetuating its prevailing discourses, logics, and orders in the absence of observable conflict. Consider the murder of Eric Garner in New York again. Garner was arrested upwards of thirty times since 1980, and was arrested repeatedly for selling loose cigarettes – the offense he was being arrested for at the time of his death. While his video recorded murder can hardly be considered the absence of observable conflict, widespread protests and marches in Garner's

name generally emphasize police brutality and overlook the connection of this brutality to labor exploitation, monopoly capital, and militarism – each playing a significant role in Garner's life and death.[49] And while these critiques are included in the official agendas of several prominent social justice organizations – the #BlackLivesMatter organization, the BYP 100, the Dream Defenders, etc. – there is still a marked difference in our collective ability to galvanize support when the victim is not a cis-het man. Although these and other liberation oriented organizations are working to alter prevailing discourses and constrained subjectivity, we see neoliberalism rising in both dominant and counterpublics.

The rise of neoliberalism means the decline of paradigm-shifting responsiveness and revolutionary politics, which is detrimental broadly but especially to those most maligned and constrained by prevailing discourses and subjectivity. We can see this clearly in the way neoliberal politics connect President Barack Obama and mogul and rapper Shawn Carter (Hov) in Michael Dawson and Megan Ming-Francis' work in "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order" (2016). Dawson and Ming-Francis theorize the significance of neoliberalism being reinforced in contemporary Black politics, particularly evident in prevailing discourses. Among the deeper implications of reinforcing neoliberal orders is that adopting a managerial style means that some people are managers leading these discourses – the Obama's, the Carter's, etc. As we move forward in this chapter and for the rest of this project my focus is on the people who are not neoliberalism's corporate managers through the study of "marginalized publics".

Marginalized publics consist of people who have knowledge of structural power, but because they believe that it is not malleable they then become complicit. Given the absence of paradigm

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[49] http://www.wsj.com/articles/new-york-city-police-officer-wont-face-criminal-charges-in-eric-garner-death-1417635275?mod=WSJ_hpp_LEFTTopStories

shifting responsiveness, marginalized publics are the embodiment of "the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity" in that they span across dominant and counterpublics. While the Knowles-Carter family might serve as an example of counterpublic managers in that they have a impact on prevailing discourses that is hardly matched by many revolutionary political organizations, we can see marginalized publics in dominant publics as well. Consider that the most recent presidential election saw scores of white voters, whose jobs are threatened by neoliberalism, choosing to vote for a billionaire. The presidential competition was between a candidate built on neoliberal politics and a candidate built on neoliberal capitalism. Larry Bartel's work (2007) speaks directly to the connections between neoliberal capitalism, politics and marginalized publics, albeit not in those terms.

Bartels addresses the "general tendency to think of the economy as a natural system existing prior to, and largely separate from, the political sphere." With these beliefs establishing the nature of the economy as predetermined, this "discourages systematic critical scrutiny of their causes and consequences." Bartels concludes, "If escalating inequality is 'simply an economic reality,' it seems pointless to spend too much energy worrying about how and why it arises." (Pgs. 29-30) Similarly, people in marginalized publics are consciously consenting to the managerial style of neoliberalism on the grounds that neoliberal politics, like the economic systems they imitate, are not producing observable conflict. This is what makes neoliberalism, as an example of invisible power, and the marginalized publics that neoliberalism facilitates, the embodiment of the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity. Responsiveness in marginalized publics is defined by non-events because the power and the outcomes are either not considered malleable or there are insufficient alternatives. This is why paradigm-shifting responsiveness and revolutionary politics are so vital, as they generate conflicts that in turn

produce opportunities to develop the imagination and political possibilities. This lack of conflict is why we are able to overlook neoliberal constraints on race, gender, sexuality, and politics in favor of more narrow economic and capitalist critiques. Like Trouillot's claim that "the revolution that was unthinkable became a non-event" and historians playing a role there, the connection that neoliberalism shares with white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy cannot become a casualty of invisible power. Just as it helped the Haitian Revolution become unimaginable, the absence of observable conflict today does not negate the impact of subjectivity constraints and ontological orders. Consider as an example the push for marriage equality.

Marriage equality is based on a heteronormative nuclear family structure that is particularly disconnected from the lived experiences and agenda's of many LGBTQ people of color. The push for marriage equality does little to nothing policy wise in relation to the crosscutting epidemic crises of health, homelessness, unemployment, and violence that LGBTQ people of color are disproportionately more likely to experience.[50] Of note here is that the decision-making that thrust marriage equality into the prevailing discourse came through ostensibly anti-oppressive political engagement. The important question is if the push for marriage equality represents paradigm-shifting responsiveness and a revolutionary politics. Does marriage equality challenge prevailing discourses? Some, yes. Does it engender new political possibilities? Some, yes. Does it "challenge state and corporate dominance and critique the privileged status of bourgeois elites among the 'left'"? (James, Pg. 79) Absolutely not.

Marginalized publics in this scenario would include the people who are aware that LGBTQ people of color are disproportionately harmed, have their awareness manifest in tensions and

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[50] Provisions to allow spousal health insurance notwithstanding. These are significant, but not particularly wide reaching and still predicated on encouraging a family structure rather than encouraging health and bodily security.

latent conflicts as a result of this agenda being subordinated by a dominant discourses, and suppress the inclination to seek agenda-setting authority and act on tensions and latent conflicts because of a belief that neoliberalism has an unbiased or otherwise unchangeable nature that fairly selects political agendas. These are the ways that neoliberalism works in the absence of observable conflict towards normalizing consent in the neglectful disregard of individuals' and groups' real interests. It is in this ability to avoid observable conflict that neoliberal power is ostensibly distinct from white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy, which are more often predicated on conflict. The agendas, logics, and orders of white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy are also predominately and more explicitly rooted in ontological hierarchies, neoliberalism pledges allegiance to an unbiased system governed by market-oriented principles of efficiency, productivity, and a corporate managerial culture. The growth of marginalized publics coincides with neoliberalism's unique ability to conceal dominating structural relationships through agreeable political interests, thus mitigating inclinations to act when facing the tensions and latent conflicts that undergird counterpublics.

Conclusion: The Most Fundamental Threat to Democracy

I agree with Beltrán that spontaneous, liminal, and action-centered rhizomatic politics emerging in contexts where self-determined action makes sense are key in the fight against the most fundamental threat to democracy – the erosion of contexts where even co-determined action makes sense. Rhizomatic politics, however, are preceded by a decision-making context that is connected to structural power. While all structural power is not made the same, acknowledging and differentiating one another's experiences is an important step for establishing cohesive revolutionary resistance. Joy James (1999) sets the standard for these revolutionary actions as "political organizing with nonelites" (pg. 88), which distinguishing it from radicalism,

liberalism, neoradicalism, and neoliberalism insofar as it is disconnected from institutional logics and corporate structures. The refusal to unify is a product of neoliberal structural politics as, according to James, "liberalism competes with and censures radicalism while radicalism competes with and censures revolutionary action. Both forms of censorship seem to be guided by an amorphous framework of what constitutes responsible 'left' politics delineated within a rapacious corporate world that funds the political integration of 'radicals' on terms that follow, as a prime directive, the maintenance of stability and the accumulation of capital." (Pg. 86). This is what Michael Dawson and Megan Ming Francis (2016) point to in President Obama and Jay-Z, examples of neoliberal proponents who are active in counterpublics and advocating counterrevolutionary political agendas. Dawson and Francis ask, "what happens when the realities of race in America do not map neatly onto this optimistic [neoliberal] perspective?" (24) I too wonder how preferences are sabotaged by diminished autonomy, as people are structurally prevented from decision-making that precedes self-determined responsiveness.

In this context, political activity is undermined in such a way that spontaneous, liminal political actions – including but not limited to the rhizomatic – are among the few methods for political actors to incidentally overcome structural limitations, but not necessarily the overarching oppressions. For this reason, we must consider the rhizomatic, analyze power structures in relation to political agendas, and continue to account for the important roles that salient ontologies like race, gender, and sexuality play in the production of political action. As we saw in New York and Baltimore, these agendas and corresponding ideologies are intimately tied to the awareness undergirding marginalized publics and non-events, neglectful and counterrevolutionary non-responses, and the imagining of new relationships between subjectivities and power.

In the next chapter I explore marginalized publics further, focusing in American labor and political markets. My focus is to show how decision-making can be differentiated from within the individual – meaning that a person can express high levels of decision-making in one context and convert to non-decisions in another. I focus on labor and political markets because of the important overlap between them. This overlap increases the likelihood that respondents have informed and developed beliefs, which helps to identify the impact of awareness, malleability, and complicity. I begin with a quantitative survey data analysis of the Current Population Survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. I use this attitudinal data to explore the dynamic range of the theories discussed in this chapter by investigating the political agendas of food stamp recipients as it relates to work. I conclude with interviews with SNAP recipients in Chicago and discuss the ways that they interact with the job-seeking process as compared to their behaviors inside the aid offices. This is towards a broader discussion of agenda-setting behaviors and decision-making at the core of the relationship between subjectivities and power.

CHAPTER TWO

PREDICTING CONTRADICTORY CONTORTIONS: NON-EVENTS AS NON-STRATEGIC

DECISION-MAKING

<u>Introduction</u>

While decision-making responsiveness gives us a place to focus, this chapter continues to speak to the underlying question: how are inequalities perpetuated in a neoliberal state? Can we identify the affects of invisible power? How can we differentiate an individual failure from a structural defeat? My method in this project is to look at the affects of invisible power such that, as discussed in the previous chapter, it becomes largely irrelevant whether a person intends to cause a negative outcome – what is important is who that outcome benefits or, in this case, who it harms. By emphasizing decision-making responsiveness, particularly when it is burdened by false or manipulated consensus, I am broadening the discussion of these apparent individual failures and extending our discussion to the ways that these failures are being facilitated as a form of inequality. It is in this way that these failures simultaneously represent defeats. This chapter contributes to this perspective by answering the following questions: what are factors like efficacy, autonomy, and self-determination telling us about the affects of prolonged inequality and resistance? If change is unrealistic, is it worth conceding to domination? Is resistance too time consuming, resource draining, and complex? Lauren Berlant speaks about this in her book <u>Cruel Optimism</u> (2011) through her notion of lateral agency. Lateral agency suggests that quotidian politics and in fact every day life more generally can be likened to a slow death as some changes are never-ending processes that for the quality of an individual's life might be better being accepted than resisted. While linked fate contradicts this among Black Americans, it is still a notion that I wrestle with in this chapter by exploring responsiveness at the margins of both the economy and social services in the biases – implicit and explicit – that motivate relatively powerless actors being shaped by institutions.

In the previous chapter I make the case for analyzing the decision-making responsiveness of political engagement in political engagement surrounding police shootings. In this chapter I am similarly focused on decision-making responsiveness, but in the political engagement found in job seeking and within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as interactions with institutional expressions of power in U.S. labor markets. SNAP provides assistance for food purchasing to individuals and families based on their income levels and household size. In September 2013 the U.S. House of Representatives voted to cut funding to SNAP by $40 billion over the next ten years. Unlike local and federal police forces in the U.S., the federal Department of Aid – the bureaucratic agency that administers the SNAP program – has no authority to use physical force in carrying out its mandates. Therefore, unlike in the previous chapter where engagement is catalyzed by observable physical violence, in this chapter I analyze the decision-making responsiveness that addresses a type of power that is fully operational even in the absence of these public observable conflicts. The overarching goal in this project and in this chapter is to better understand how this type of invisible structural power affects political imagination and possibilities. This notably extends beyond partisanship, ideology, or informedness in order to establish a deeper notion of politics and political engagement rooted in decision-making.

In the last chapter we considered several ways that political possibilities are limited by invisible power, particularly as it works towards normalizing consent in the absence of observable conflict. In this chapter we see how invisible power moves decision-making towards non-events by engendering false consensuses and inhibiting autonomy – that is, restricting the sense of

choice.[51] I argue that people are encouraged to be inactive or otherwise not advocate on their

own behalf, in spite of contradictory beliefs and preferences, when autonomy is inhibited. The

data in this chapter supports this argument and are used to develop a survey instrument that I use

to speak further to my argument in the next chapter. With my survey instrument, I identify and

investigate marginalized publics in order to revisit and confirm my arguments from previous

chapters – that while lacking an overt commitment, oppressive ontological orders are being

reproduced through invisible power. The survey data suggests that this is in fact the case, but in

order to adequately interpret the survey data we must first we must understand the mechanisms

that facilitate marginalized publics. The survey is necessary but insufficient without the

qualitative data in this chapter and the theoretical analysis in the preceding chapter. These

chapters provide the context and conceptual depth needed to investigate autonomy and non-

events empirically. In the end, the overall project teaches us how institutions are fostering

inequality by structurally limiting possibility, reinforcing ontological orders, and inhibiting

autonomy.

Chapter Overview

I investigate the affects of invisible power on decision-making and political engagement through

in-depth interviews that I conducted with long-term unemployed SNAP recipients in Chicago. I

make three important findings: 1) Compartmentalization – responsiveness fluctuates in these

different yet closely related contexts, as respondents demonstrate paradigm-shifting

responsiveness in labor markets versus demonstrating non-events in SNAP while interacting

with the Department of Aid; 2) False consensus – non-events, which are difficult to identify in

the absence of observable conflict, are distinguishable when people refuse to advocate for

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[51] Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions." *Contemporary educational psychology* 25.1 (2000): pg. 14

themselves in spite of their deeply held and consequential grievances; and 3) Marginalized

publics – respondents are aware of the constraints on theirs and others' discourse and

subjectivity, and yet they still perpetuate false consensus because their autonomy is inhibited.

The most insidious affects of invisible power on decision-making and political engagement

resides in this consciously neglectful disregard of individual and group agendas in the non-events

of marginalized publics, as the possibility of overcoming these constraints has become so

unimaginable that people have decided that it is more reasonable to reproduce rather than resist

oppressions. As we see in the next chapter, they reproduce this logic so much that in many ways

they begin to believe it themselves.

Part 1. Exhibiting Self-Determination through Critique

"Exploited and oppressed groups of women are usually encouraged by those in power to feel that
their situation is hopeless, that they can do nothing to break the pattern of domination … They
prefer us to be silent, passively accepting their ideas."

bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Chapter 2

The oppressively influenced silence and passivity preferred by "those in power" is not always the

same as the strategic silence or calculated passivity emanating from oppressed peoples. That is to

say, a person can strategically contradict their own preferences without contradicting their

worldview as long as the contradiction reflects their preferred response in a particular context.

We see an example of this in Peter St. Jean's Pockets of Crime (2007), as residents in high crime

neighborhoods who want law and order to be more present will refuse to call the police because

they believe their neighborhood's destruction is the result of oppression from the police and the

government. Similarly, in the last chapter we saw how a person's worldview can heavily

influence both preferences and actions, but that relationship shifts in oppressive contexts. In this

chapter I show how a person's awareness of oppressive influences affects their worldviews,

preferences, actions, and the relationships between them.[52] My findings suggest that people are more likely to adjust their preferences and actions in contradiction to their worldviews during their interactions with government institutions, systems, and structures. Invisible power is at the core of oppressive influences from those in power towards silence and passivity that hooks notes, which we can see in constraints on expressions of grievances and critiques.

Levying critiques are a vital component of responsiveness, as allowing for and incorporating feedback is necessary for developing more collaborative and inclusive agendas. The decision to constrain critique – to disallow or refuse to consider grievances, particularly when the refusal is based on discriminatory standards – reflects a non-inclusive agenda. In order to resisting non-inclusive agendas people must exercise paradigm-shifting responsiveness – exemplified by efforts to steer, control, or otherwise direct systems, structures, or institutions, at least to the extent that they can have their feedback incorporated into agendas.[53] I analyze the strategic political calculations in the decision-making responsiveness of SNAP recipients, a group that is relatively unique among general welfare recipients (e.g., social security, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.) in the level of racialization, pathologizing, and polarization that their need-based participation in this program has sparked in America for several decades.[54] I also consider the unemployed – people who are actively looking for a job.[55] Black and Latino/a unemployment levels have been at least five percentage points above the national average for over thirty years.

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[52] Consider people with worldviews that reinforce a sense of civic duty, political awareness, and individual accountability who accept free-rider rationality, but lie and say that they voted. Free-riders shirking their own beliefs for rational calculations, but still espousing their beliefs, is a common enough occurrence (Verba, Brady, Schlozman 1995; Brehm and Gates 1999). However, when elected officials are engaging in these behaviors they have significant implications along the lines of oppression by negligent representation.

[53] "Steering" is borrowed from Habermas, but applied differently. Whereas Habermas emphasized control over capital surplus, I am referring to an institution or individual's control over the self and/or another in the Foucauldian dynamic power relational sense.

[54] Besides Gilens' work (Why American's Hate Welfare, 1999), consider that the General Social Survey was first administered in 1972, and has been asking respondents about government spending on welfare programs since 1973.

[55] As designated by the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted through the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

To me this suggests persistent hard work beliefs in spite of indefatigable oppression in labor markets.[56]

I expect Black and Latino/a SNAP recipients who are also unemployed or inconsistently employed to show a high awareness and insight into the effects of oppression on worldviews, preferences, actions, and the relationships between them. I am investigating whether or not their hard work beliefs in labor markets has translated into political hard work and engagement. How, if at all, are they responding to the SNAP cuts? Do they relate their welfare participation to their job seeking? What is their connection to the "fight for 15"? What is the relationship between their political worldview, their critiques of oppressive influences, and their preferred responsiveness in oppressive contexts? The data shows an abundant silencing of critique, which indicates non-events.

A quick look at preexisting survey data, conducted prior to my in-depth interviews, shows that SNAP recipients have abundant criticisms of the program, its implementation, and their benefits. Each interviewee showed significant internal conflicts rooted in their being recipients of welfare benefits who also rely on an oppressive government that consistently attempts to commandeer or impose an embargo on both critique and advocacy (of norms, values, and practices). Respondents are connecting their difficulty finding jobs to political under and unequal representation, and to them being encouraged to depend on insufficient and unreliable government aid. Therefore, their disengagement from resistance politics in the aid office is not for unawareness or agreement, but rather it indicates an avoidance of consequences and

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[56] "Hard work" connotes a belief that when all things are considered, relative success – whether for ones self or for others in general – is and generally should be the result of effort and due diligence.

perceived inefficacy of critiquing street-level bureaucrats.[57] Diminished autonomy and non-events are being normalized through these types of interactions with invisible power, particularly those that explicitly connect to the state. This refusal to engage in paradigm-shifting responsiveness when dealing with SNAP, however, turns into hyper-engagement when facing unemployment.

Unemployed SNAP recipients hold abundant criticisms of hiring and firing practices, wages, and general job opportunities, critiques that they express in the most creative ways imaginable during the job seeking process. Their worldviews, self-determination, and critical political engagement are generally overflowing during job seeking. In spite of their generally inefficacious methods and the possibility that their joblessness is a direct consequence of their imaginative approaches, they saw these behaviors as emanating from their sense of self and actively resist the suggestion to conform.

Having critiques, including acknowledgement of agendas that disallow critique, but still engaging in non-events necessarily means one of three things: 1) the person de facto agrees with the status quo agenda; 2) the person disagrees and chooses not to resist of her own volition; or 3) the person disagrees and lacks sufficient autonomy. These actions, preferences, and worldviews could incorrectly be considered inconsistent because of measurement error – an imprecise conceptual understanding, framing, or quantitative measure of the person's worldview, or an improper accounting of surrounding context, or the person may have just accidentally done something contradictory. While external indications might suggest political co-optation or disengagement, we must remember that oppression can force people into compromising

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[57] Lipsky (1980) looks at public defenders, police officers, and social workers – bureaucrats with a measure of authority but not the power or information necessary to change circumstances. These bureaucratic figures are largely equivalent to caseworkers in the aid office.

positions. Attempting to escape those positions can lead to, and likely even encourages, contradictory contortions. This is why I conduct in-depth interviews in addition to survey data analysis. Survey data provides excellent foundational information about political engagement, preferences, and actions. Open-ended, semi-structured in-depth interviews help identify these unanticipated contortions.

I agree with what bell hooks said in the introductory quote. Oppressive institutions foster inequality by preventing individuals from being active or advocating on their own behalf. And while this oppression thrives in structural, systemic, and institutional barriers, it also manifests through encouragement, suggestion, and innuendo that coerces people towards establishing similarly non-inclusive and autonomy inhibiting norms, values, and practices. All of this is why the decision-making approach is so important for understanding political engagement and the impact of oppression, particularly when it emanates from invisible power.

The findings in this chapter cannot be explained away as necessary behavior to continue receiving the means to purchase food. Because aid benefits are so insufficient and inconsistent, as well as it contradicting their deeply held hard work beliefs, interviewees repeatedly say that they would much rather find a job to guarantee their basic needs. However, before exploring these in-depth interviews, I analyzed three datasets to gather some surface level information about SNAP recipients general political behaviors and attitudes, including their opinions about job seeking and the government's role in the labor market. This data demonstrates significant levels of political engagement, strong opinions about the oppressive tactics that inhibit job seeking, and high levels of coercion and duress experienced while job seeking and in interactions with SNAP.

Pre-Existing Survey Data

I use August 2012 Pew Civic Engagement Survey to get a general idea of the political preferences of SNAP recipients. Overall, in-group political participation of all types is low. 19% report having encouraged other people to vote, and 20% encouraged other people to take action on a political or social issue that was important. Fewer than 7% attended a political rally or attended an organized protest. Participation seems to jump up around more community based collectively addressed issues. 28.2% report working with fellow citizens to solve a problem in their community, while 21.7% report attending meetings on local, town, or school affairs. My main interest in analyzing this dataset was to check online participation. The frequency distributions seldom vary when I account for race or gender. In every measure where respondents were asked about offline versus online participation, the latter showed less engagement. I suspect that the diminished affect is different today given the rise in digital activism, organizing, and political advocacy. I am unable to make any substantive conclusions about the political participation of SNAP recipients except to say that the rise in participation in community issues that were more locally determined than electorally determined is interesting.

The more useful survey data comes from the National Election Study (NES) and the Current Population Survey (CPS) data. The CPS founds my substantiating claim that people who receive government aid through SNAP express a significant desire to have a job. This was anticipated, but I sought more information to ground my subsequent in-depth interviews. Therefore, I conduct a two-stage auxiliary instrumental variable analysis (2SAIV, Franklin 1989), whereby I combine the CPS and the NES data through relevant bridging variables so that I can conduct statistical analyses with both datasets. The CPS has the indicator for SNAP, and the NES has political worldviews and engagement seen in values, attitudes, beliefs, and preferences.

Table 1. SNAP Recipients Adjusted 2SAIV Results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value
Want a job	**0.069125 *****	**0.014**	**4.9375**
Number of Children	**0.080927***	**0.0057**	**14.198**
Government seems complicated	0.157408	0.391	0.403
People like me have no say	-0.498436	0.358	1.392
Not a big problem if some have more chance in life than others	0.051865	0.115	0.451
Government should see to a job & good standard of living	**0.242410***	**0.120**	**2.02**
Government should provide fewer services	0.040595	0.095	0.427
Increase public expenditure on welfare benefits	0.132924	0.125	1.063

The NES data contributes data on egalitarianism, efficacy, and perceptions of the national labor and workforce agenda, seen in questions on the role of government in job creation and public spending including welfare benefits. While it is important that SNAP recipients report a significant desire to have a job, the result that extends this research is SNAP recipients saying that the government should see to a job and a good standard of living. The full question reads: Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? ? Respondents are then shown a seven point scale, where the one end of the scale reads "Government should see to a job and good standard of living," and the other end of the scale reads "Government should let each person get ahead on own." This contradicts the undercurrent for hard work beliefs, as they avoid the hard work end of the scale by a sizeable margin. Coming from separate surveys eliminates the possibility of respondents being confused by similar questions because these were different sets of respondents.

Initially, I intended to use in-depth interviews to investigate the political behaviors of SNAP recipients. However, these survey data findings raised questions about hard work beliefs – a commonly identified factor used to justify resistance to programs like affirmative action or tax increases for the wealthy because these policies are allegedly disincentivizing. Therefore, I include perspectives on hard work while engaging SNAP, welfare programs, and the government broadly in the interviews, as well as job seeking preferences and actions. I also investigate the possibility of diminished engagement when dealing with more overtly political behaviors and issues as compared to more community-controlled agendas as suggested by the Pew data. This includes me asking respondents to explain their preferred methods of engagement when they have strong concerns. I want to know how they deal with problems, what their preconceived notions are about who and what they are facing, and how the answers to these two questions are related. My initial expectation was that SNAP recipients were largely disengaged from and uninformed about traditional mainstream politics primarily because they lacked the time necessary to build a sufficient frame of reference. I expected hard work to be at the core of diligent job seeking, and for their beliefs about the economy to be separate from their issues with the government.[58] Lastly, I expected respondents to be engaged in thorough non-traditional political activities – advocating neighborhood causes on local school councils and at CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) beat meetings, participating in protests, marches, boycotts, and buycotts, etc. The interviewees far exceeded my expectations in any number of ways. In order to understand the findings, however, I must first explain the how invisible power affects the relationship between self-determination and decision-making responsiveness.

Agenda Setting and Self-Determination

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[58] Bartels (2007) talks about Americans believing the economy ebbs and flows naturally, and that large differences in wealth are good for overall national wealth.

Injustice, inequality, and marginalization are not unique to the U.S. However, the U.S. represents a case that is particularly germane to investigations of capitalism, neoliberalism, and white supremacy. I examine how dominant power is normalizing consent by coercing people away from self-determined advocacy and towards institutional agendas. I am particularly interested in people who undermine their own worldviews through non-events. In the previous chapter non-events describe scenario where "political engagement fails to challenge normalized consent or is otherwise constrained by subjectivity." This is a form of disengagement that is imperceptible from an action-centered approach, instead requiring a decision-making analysis to interpret the "why" of political actions and inactions.

I argue that the decision to advocate ones worldview is contingent on autonomy – the sense of choice. The conceptual framing of autonomy begins in psychology with Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's work on self-determination. Their work is based heavily on experimental research, wherein they investigate individuals' capacity to express a concept, belief, or behavior "so that it will emanate from their sense of self."[59] When ideas or actions that were once foreign to a person begin to emanate from their sense of self, then the person is said to have fully internalized what was once external through a process of integration. This process occurs in stages along a continuum where "one's motivation for behavior can range from amotivation or unwillingness, to passive compliance, to active personal commitment."[60] The need for resisting non-inclusive agendas begins with the "situationist perspective". Deci and Ryan use the situationist perspective to describe how individuals modify their behaviors in response to

[59] Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions." *Contemporary educational psychology* 25.1 (2000): pg. 14
[60] Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. 2010. Self-Determination. Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology. 1–2.

environmental stimuli.[61] However, while the situationist perspective primarily accounts for the affects of external stimuli, assessing relationships between self-determination and worldviews requires an additional accounting for internal stimuli. It is with this additional accounting in mind that I am arguing that, when autonomy is diminished, active personal commitments will reflect overarching institutional agendas and priorities in spite of internal contradictions. Moreover, personal priorities will be dominated by amotivation and unwillingness.

Non-events reinforce oppressions, as preferences and actions are less reflective of self-advocacy and are more likely to undermine a person's worldview. Identifying non-events is crucial for understanding engagement, particularly as people are expressing worldviews that incorporate false consensus and facilitate marginalized publics without significantly unsettling their own consciousness. This is why an inconsistency between a person's desires and autonomy tells us so much more about the substance of a person's engagement than their observable (action-centered) behaviors indicate – because dominant power threatening their worldview is less likely to trigger alarms and reactions without autonomy.

In <u>Power and Powerlessness</u>, John Gaventa is modeling processes of domination. He says,

> "It may involve a focus upon the means by which social legitimations are
> developed around the dominant, and instilled as beliefs or roles in the dominated.
> It may involve, in short, locating the power processes behind the social
> construction of meanings and patterns that serve to get B to act and believe in a
> manner in which B otherwise might not, to A's benefit and B's detriment." (Pgs.
> 15-16)

Invisible power is seen in this ability to affect "social constructions of meanings and patterns" such that actions and beliefs contradict a person's needs. While the domination of A is the focus, the unobservable element at play in this scenario is the decision-making rationale of B. B's

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[61] Mischel, Walter. *Personality and Assessment*, London, Wiley, 1968.

decision-making rationale can change things inside the scenario. Consider the basic premise of losing a battle but winning the war – where the scenario describes a battle, B's decision-making rationale can be about the larger war beyond the scenario. Oppression is beyond the scenario. Oppression is a war. And in that war there are innumerable instances where the battles look like the scenario above. For some, oppressive forces might even position a person who is usually B as A. Consider hetero-patriarchy and white supremacy. While white supremacist standards drive Black people to be B's, hetero-patriarchy would encourage cis-het Black men to be A's. While Black men cannot avoid being sexist, according to bell hooks, they can "lead life affirming, meaningful lives without exploiting and oppressing women."[62] A person's decision-making rationale can result in them adjusting their actions and beliefs about the battle inside the scenario without necessarily changing the parameters beyond the scenario. This describes decision-makers being capable of contextually differentiating actions and beliefs.

Because decision-making can change beliefs and actions within and beyond situations, these changes can be seen choices to act and not to act. Gaventa provides two examples of how these differences in decision-making can affect behavior in unobservable ways:

> "The first of these, 'decisionless decisions', grows from institutional inaction, or the unforeseen sum effect of incremental decisions. A second process has to do with the 'rule of anticipated reactions', 'situations where B, confronted by A who has greater power resources decides not to make a demand upon A, for fear that the latter will invoke sanctions against him'. In both cases, the power process involves a non-event rather than an observable non-decision." (Pg. 15)

This second process acknowledges B's decision-making authority and ability to consider implications beyond the scenario itself. This is why we must know a persons preferred method of response in the specific context in order to identify non-events when they believe that their struggle in that scenario is the result of oppression. When a person is promoting actions and

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[62] hooks, bell, <u>Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center</u>, 1984. Pg. 72.

beliefs that work against them and for an oppressor, they may be expressing a set of actions and beliefs that are particular to that specific context. Nevertheless, because effective oppression necessarily means coerced changes, we can find a trail of non-events in its wake. Identifying these non-events requires in-depth interviews to differentiate the strategy in the aforementioned 'rule of anticipated reactions' from the deleterious affects of invisible power normalizing consent in the absence of observable conflict.[63] In a broader investigation of self-determination, I explore the ways that invisible power affects political engagement through non-events rather than contextual differentiation.

The first component of self-determination – grasping the meaning of a regulation and behavior for ones own self – aligns with broader research surrounding political informedness. In more traditional operationalizations of informedness, respondents have been asked to identify their state representative or how many seats the Supreme Court holds. Converse's initial assessment of citizens as ideologues, issue publics, or myopic largely followed this standard.[64] However, non-traditional political informedness is also important, as is discussed in Martin Lipsky's work _Street Level Bureaucrats_ (1980). Lipsky looks at the ways relationships with bureaucratic agents (police officers, social workers, and public defenders, among others) affect perspectives on politics more broadly. The value of non-traditional informedness and competence is rooted in race and class based differences that reflect more distinct and frequent interactions with street-level bureaucrats that require unique aptitudes. This produces qualitative differences in people who require the ability to identify their state representative as compared to those who must know how to communicate with a police officer who intends to stop-and-frisk them, a potentially

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[63] There is likely less research on non-events because of the difficulty identifying them and interpreting their meaning. Paradoxically, the nonexistence of empirical projects on non-events that researchers decided against is an example of a non-event.
[64] Converse, Philip E. "The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964)." _Critical Review_ 18.1-3 (2006): 1-74.

innocuous situation that has led to grave consequences. Along with informedness, Deci and Ryan also include a consideration of competence.[65] Competence conceptually aligns with research on efficacy, which has also produced research along traditional and non-traditional lines. Collective efficacy is a measure of collective cohesion, mutual trust, and shared expectations for intervening in support of neighborhood control,[66] whereas self-efficacy is a general indication of an individuals belief that they have the information and skill necessary to engage in processes intended to make specific changes. While many authors highlighted the importance of collective and self-efficacy on more traditional political participation (e.g., voting, campaigning, donating, etc.), [67] Cathy Cohen's work in _Democracy Remixed_ (2010) expands efficacy research by incorporating opinions and experiences surrounding reproductive rights, sexual identity, activism and organizing, among many other forms of engagement. Cohen demonstrates why efficacy alone is insufficient for certifying self-determined engagement, as she identifies circumstances where respondents are engaging in non-traditional ways at non-institutionally sanctioned sites precisely because of the diminished sense of choice elsewhere. Imagine a person with high efficacy who is disillusioned and disengaged for fear that their worldview is unrealistic and unrelatable.

The second component of self-determination – having ones perspective acknowledged – also includes "a sense of personal relatedness with others who value that behavior." [68] Michael Dawson's Black utility heuristic, or "linked fate," operationalizes relatedness, showing us how

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[65] Edward L. Deci & Richard M. Ryan (2000) The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory, 11:4, 227-268, DOI: 10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
[66] Sampson and Morenoff, 1997
[67] Rosenstone & Hansen (1993), Verba, Brady, Schlozman (1995), "Voice and Equality", Soss (1999), Sampson & Raudenbush (1999)
[68] Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. 2010.

racial identity, historical context, and spatial recognition affect political attitudes and behaviors.[69]

Linked fate demonstrates a practical relatedness embodied in a non-institutional worldview that is generally available among perpetually marginalized groups. The depth and import of linked fate continues in the Dawson's more recent work that, among other things, connects a capitalist critique to white supremacy through racialized exploitation and expropriation in multiple areas but particularly in labor markets.[70] Dawson's collected works are most useful in this project through linked fate as a demonstration of contextually compartmentalized standards, and connecting the unjust affects of capitalism, neoliberalism, and white supremacy to the development of information networks and safe-spaces for non-institutional worldviews. As Dawson breaks down the neoliberal prioritization of efficiency and privatization – desires that commonly manifest through fragmentation and specialization – we can see the inherent contradiction between this isolation and the relatedness aspect of self-determination. Divisiveness and alienation truncate opportunities for relationships, and thereby relatedness, which then inhibits self-determination among those whose are excluded *even if their politics agree*. This means that in order for people with or without institutional worldviews to be self-determined in a white supremacist, neoliberal, capitalist system, then they must overcome the structural isolation that inhibits relatedness.

I build on the third component, autonomy, which indicates feeling a sense of choice. Deci and Ryan say that autonomy reflects "the organismic desire to self-organize experience and behavior and to have activity be concordant with one's integrated sense of self."[71] Autonomy refers to volition and deals with "the experience of integration and freedom." Somewhat unlike

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[69] Dawson, Michael (1994) Behind the Mule, Princeton University Press.
[70] Michael Dawson & Megan Ming Francis, "*Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order*", 2016; Dawson, Michael C. *Not in our lifetimes: The future of black politics*. University of Chicago Press, 2011; Dawson, Michael C. *Blacks in and Out of the Left*. Harvard University Press, 2013.
[71] Deci and Ryan 2000, pg. 231.

informedness and relatedness, autonomy taps into core desires to have engagement that reflects a relationship between the self and expressions of freedom. While the psychological research emphasizes the effects of autonomy on intrinsic motivation, satisfaction, and wellbeing, I am most interested in the effects of autonomy on political engagement. I use self-determination to interpret the interaction of extrinsic and intrinsic stimuli towards the expressions of political attitudes, preferences, worldviews and engagement.

Part 2. Silencing Critique by Inhibiting Autonomy

The in-depth interviews demonstrate the impact of invisible power on autonomy. These eight interviews took place in Chicago over two weeks in majority Black and Latino/a neighborhoods. My intention was to solicit participation from Black and Latino/a SNAP recipients with diverse experiences regarding their job histories, duration of benefits, and various political preferences broadly related to the U.S. labor market. I found this diversity and more, as respondents also exhibited a wide range of techniques and strategies in attempts to secure employment.[72] In spite of this diversity, the group expressed amazing uniformity in their engagement with SNAP specifically and towards the aid office in general. Even more telling is the near unanimous acknowledgment and critique of oppressions that connect the broader government, their difficulty finding work, and their inconsistent interactions in the aid office. Nevertheless, they expressed no interest in reacting in any way to the frequent, sporadic, and unexplained cuts to their welfare benefits from SNAP.

Interview Structure

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[72] The sample includes respondents who were signing up for benefits for the first time that day and others who reported participation in variations of the program for twenty years; people who had worked multiple careers and others who had yet to work a paid job with benefits; ages ranged from twenty-three to fifty-two years-old.

I use in-depth interviews to explore contextual differences in decision-making through responsiveness in the aid office and during job seeking, particularly when respondents have significant grievances. My goal is to understand their perceived level of autonomy – feeling a sense of choice – in order to explain why they either express or hold back their grievances. While autonomy and the overarching notion of self-determination are commonly considered within individuals, in these interviews I am able to consider them as they are institutionally influenced by invisible power. Respondents' position on the self-determination continuum – amotivation or unwillingness, passive compliance, or active commitment – is being determined by their sense of choice and their responsiveness in their decisions to levy or silence critiques and criticisms.

The interview itself is divided by the two spaces: experiences with SNAP and experiences job seeking. I begin by assessing respondents' preconceived notions about the SNAP program– including the type of people they think rely on the program, what types of things they heard about the program itself, and what they think the purpose of the program is. With this I determine two things: 1) the level of critique – that is, to what degree respondents despise or are supportive of such programming; and 2) specific limitations – that is, the programmatic shortcomings respondents recognize. I engage these critiques and limitations and proceed to determine what amount of effort is required for their participation in the program, asking if they rely on public transportation, require a babysitter or if their children come with them to the aid office and during job seeking.

Next, I ask how comfortable they are with the level of effort needed. Once we have established an understanding about the degree of difficulty, I ask how these difficulties relate to their needs. Are their needs are being met and, if not, are there opportunities to express their concerns? Have

you ever tried to address your concerns? Are there avenues to express concerns? Do they believe

that their concerns are sufficiently acknowledged? Throughout these questions, interviewees are

asked how they think their experiences compare to others.

I use these questions with the self-determination in mind – informedness and competence,

relatedness, and autonomy. Informedness and competence among SNAP recipients tells us

whether recipients feel capable of making the aid office consider changes. Relatedness tells us

how respondents compare their own experiences with others. We also see relatedness in the

preexisting notions respondents have regarding the program and the way that those notions have

changed over time. Autonomy is having the choice to convey both personal needs and pointed

critiques of program shortcomings to a capable liaison. These lines of questioning parallel those

for political preferences and attitudes.

Attitudinal data is reflected in the degree of comfort with SNAP programming overall.

Preferences are reflected in identifying program shortcomings, limitations, and ideas for change.

These lines of questioning are essentially duplicated for job seeking, albeit relying on a different

foundation. SNAP is an overtly governmental program – the Illinois Department of Human

Services, for example, are covered in city and state government graphics, logos, and names of

elected officials. Job seeking, however, does not necessarily overtly convey the same submission

to governmental authorities, agendas, or oversight. Therefore, the questions engage multiple

dimensions of individuals' identities in those spaces. A good example of this is in questions on

limitations or shortcomings. While it might be clear who to interact with to have issues addressed

immediately in the DHS, the same clarity may not be so apparent while job seeking. How can

they be sure when there is a slight to report? Should they speak with human resources or maybe

the Better Business Bureau? Will that affect their opportunities to work there in the future? Do they have time to engage in a protracted effort to establish fair hiring practices? Should they have to be responsible for establishing fairness and order in labor markets that they are either excluded from or exploited in? With all these possibilities it is important to identify a relationship between peoples difficulty finding work and the government's influence on financial markets.[73]

To do this, I ask respondents what or who, if anyone, they believe is responsible for unemployment. To better understand the expectations and shortcomings of both SNAP and job seeking I ask if they are seeking employment that will cover their financial needs. Understanding their political attitudes and preferences is necessary to interpret their responses. Consider, for example, a person who says that individuals are responsible for unemployment and underemployment, and that they also are looking for jobs that wont necessarily cover their financial needs. Are they blaming their self for not looking for sufficient pay? Do they think that jobs are unavailable for their level of skill? Do they have a criminal record and identify that as the reason why they are responsible? Now consider that they identify global capitalism as the reason why they are unemployed – by way of NAFTA or the TPP, for example. Interpreting these broad sentiments requires an understanding of political attitudes and preferences in order to determine the level of self-determination, particularly their autonomy. Autonomy speaks to the details about their decision-making and responsiveness – what do they think their available options are? Why do they choose what they choose? When are they seeking alternative resources versus resisting through disengagement or disengaging because of exhaustion?

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[73] Bartels (2007) and Harcourt (2009) engage the relationship between the state and financial markets, albeit in very different ways. Harcourt discusses the American economic order and the deliberate impact of de- and non- regulation on fiscal markets. His general premise was that non-regulation was as consequential as regulation itself for the ordering of markets, which affects winners and losers in market outcomes. Bartels discusses the explicitly political policy directed impact on the economy, using partisanship to highlight the ways the economy rises and falls based on fiscal agendas rather than the widespread American myth that the economy is akin to an uncontrollable force of nature.

These responses teach us how respondents compartmentalize their self-determination and decision-making in different contexts, between SNAP and while job seeking in this case. The ways individuals rationalize the relationships between these two sites helps explain the role of self-determination at the intersection of their personal needs and government responsibilities. I utilize a post interview survey to identify some competing explanations for these various attitudes and behaviors – namely social, fiscal, and human capital influences. These details add a bit more nuance to responses, including political attitudes, preferences, self- and collective efficacy.

Diversity was a priority as far as the interview sample is concerned. Wide ranging experiences are reported – lengths of unemployment, interactions in offices, and varying lengths of time receiving benefits, occasionally stretching through different eras of welfare policy. Participating in the SNAP program requires signing up and returning every six-months for a consultation of sorts. My interviews came from centers that served Black and Latino/a constituents heavily. Rarely if ever did I see a white or Asian non-employee going in or coming out of the offices. Employees were very distinct, wearing business casual attire, visibly displaying work badges and moving in and out of the office throughout the course of a given day. Because white residents in Chicago segregate themselves both spatially and socioeconomically, it is no surprise that the community of people seeking state aid is heavily non-white in these areas.

I conducted interviews and observations with participants visiting offices on the South and West sides of Chicago. Interviews ranged from thirty-five minutes to one hour and fifty minutes. I spent an average of six hours per day over three days at each site. Each set of three days would include a day where I arrived early enough to catch the opening of the office, where I arrived

after opening and left before closing, and where I arrived after opening and stayed until closing.

All observations and interviews were conducted over a two and a half week time period in public

areas. Respondents were paid by the hour and each respondent consented to be interviewed

before they were told they would be paid for their contribution. The sample was predominantly

African American, with a relatively even split between self identified men and women.

In-Depth Interviews

> "I would rather work."
> Patrice

Respondents confirmed my observation that the order of operations at aid offices was consistent

between locations. While each office held one to two uniformed security officers, these officers

most often remained indoors. There was no major policing going on regarding loitering, at least

not while I stood outside the offices. I was never approached or addressed for loitering or

engaging individuals leaving the premises, but the company that set up outside of each aid office

that I visited to sell cell phones was always set up half a block away from the doors. These were

very public places, and participants were free to explore the outdoor space while waiting to be

seen. If I arrived early enough I would see a line of anywhere from twenty to fifty people. Time

spent in the aid office is not particularly brief, and so many people attempt to come in early

enough to get on with their day.

While people are required to return once every six months, multiple interviewees alerted me to

the fact that payment amounts could and occasionally would change without their

foreknowledge. While I expected incidents like this to immediately require their attention, they

unanimously accepted these changes as standard operating procedure. When I say accepted, I

mean that these sporadic decreases in benefits were not sufficient cause for them schedule an

immediate appointment, file a complaint, or show some concern for the diminishing of their bottom line. Mateo, a 58-year-old Puerto Rican man, was returning for his very first six-month check in, and yet he had already received "two surprise letters where it says they were cutting the benefits." Each and every respondent (except the one visiting the office for the very first time) highlighted the limited funds as a shortcoming of the program, with over half of the respondents experiencing surprise cuts. When it came time to address the financial limitations at the six-month check-in, none of the respondents addressed the issue further than asking their caseworkers, all of whom were said to have responded by citing program guidelines – that is, saying that neither caseworkers nor anyone else in the office is in charge of those decisions. Respondents seem to mentally disengage from these consistent inconsistencies.

Joe is a 31-year-old father of three who completed three years of college for graphic design before having to leave for financial reasons. When I asked Joe if he ever has opportunities to express his concerns, his response was:

> Joe: Whenever I get the chance to go to a interview for my stamps or anything like that I try to let them know as much as possible. This way that we got an understanding and I don't want to be asked a question about why this and that.

> Me: What types of questions?

> Joe: Dates, when I'll be receiving my stamps, or what type of interviews will I have to go to. Will it be phone interviews, personal interviews do I have to talk to somebody else as far as getting information on certain things. As far as, uh, like if I might need help medically or if something don't cover something [then] am I able to come back [and] talk to the people that I need to talk to, will they give me the right answers, or at least direct me to somebody that will give me a better answer?

Joe concludes his inquiries with persistence, saying "Sometimes they haven't heard anybody ask them that question before. So they have to go to somebody else, until they find somebody that really know what I'm asking." Joe is incredibly thorough and organized when it comes to his engagement with the administrative personnel and caseworkers at the aid office. When Joe's

benefits were cut, he was told that it was in response to him landing a job through the unemployment office, which in turn informed the aid office. Joe's direct inquiry here paralleled that of each of the other interviewees, in spite of Joe's apparent insistence to gather thorough details from aid office employees. Getting responses, however, have yet to satisfy his belief that he is receiving too few benefits.

What appears to be a point of emphasis for the interviewees is money – namely that they are appreciative and grateful, albeit unsatisfied, with what they can get without working for it. Bar, a 29-year-old father of two who has been a part of the program for around eleven years, describes the program as something of a godsend. He says that the program puts food on the table "until [people] can help their self." To the question of effort needed to travel to the aid office, Bar says that with the exception of those people who are differently abled, everyone else needs to walk because the program is "already helping you out." He concludes on an even more personal note, saying, "I don't really complain about that, because you know, at the end of the day … I ain't workin' … I'm definitely not workin' for that [i.e., the benefits]." He spoke about benefits like a debt he owed an old friend, or a favor he received gratefully.

Almost all respondents were simultaneously grateful for their benefits and needed an increase in their benefits. They were split, however, in their opinions about job prospects. Joe has been unemployed for a significant amount of that time over the past ten years, including one stretch of a full year. He received SNAP benefits during seven of those ten years, and he was pulling a four month unemployment stretch when I spoke with him. Joe has been employed on and off for six years as a warehouse worker – driving forklifts, unloading trucks, etc. – with various certifications. In spite of his credentials and experience, Joe says it was easier before now

because now there are "a lot of people looking for work." He adds that after working with certain people for what is apparently too long, then employers start "trying to get as many new people as they can in." Bar, who says he has been out of work for ten years, adds the issue of chronic joblessness to this employer hiring fatigue, saying,

> "They want people that's fresh, that's, they want people that's fresh out of school or fresh
> in school – they don't want nobody like me … cause they gon' look at my history 'and
> you say you ain't been working since how long?"

Joe agrees, adding "they mostly want to get new people that they can get in and keep on other than people that they been working with …" To the question of expecting to find a job that covers one's financial needs, Mateo covered his bases, asking "… what is your 'needs'? … Your needs get higher … There's never enough money." As far as expecting to find a job that covers his financial needs, Mateo says "Sure. This is America, nothing's impossible."

In the same way interviewees spanned the spectrum as far as experience with the welfare program, they also varied in their experiences job seeking. Consider Laura, a 52-year-old mother of twelve with children between the ages of 12 and 35-years-old. She describes herself as an unpaid in-home childcare provider for "the family" for as long as she can remember. Laura began receiving benefits when her first child was born, but has very limited recollection of actually engaging the job market. She acknowledges that over the past few decades she has sought to earn enough to cover the gap between her various aid benefits and her overhead costs (rent, other bills), considering that food stamps inevitably come up short each month. Regarding the job seeking process, she says that she wants to try and do volunteer work while she looks for a part-time job that will help her out more.

On the flip side, Jared, a 24-year-old father of two young children, had no experience with the SNAP program. He came because some family members told him he "can go get $200 worth of stamps" a month ago. Still, Jared had the day's experiences, as well as work and job seeking experience to contribute as well. For beginners, Jared had been in the office long enough to know that his three-hour wait was ridiculous, and he still needed to return immediately following the interview. Jared explained that he has a brother who has been working in construction for twenty years. This brother helped Jared take a three-month long class to earn the necessary certifications and licenses to begin working. Like several of the interviewees, Jared's method of seeking work was well outside of the standard application submission. He spoke instead about relationship building with his alderman. He says, "I go around, I talk to a lot of aldermen, just cause they're working an area. And to see can I get on site, you know." Jared stressed the importance of going to meet with his alderman face to face, so "you can know how they feel. You can use your body language. So before you leave, you'll know something before they do, like 'no, no, no, I can see he wasn't really feelin' that.' I could, you know?" After developing this groundwork, Jared says of his alderman:

> "He hits me on the phone. 'Hi, Jared, how you doing? I have four listings in your area. Can you make it to one? I expect you to be here at this time … Tell them I sent you and here's my paperwork I'm sending you with.' So aldermen can get you in there … He'll even do it personally and take you to the job site, make sure you get in."

Networking is no new phenomenon when it comes to job seeking, but not everyone used networking in such a direct way as Jared. Bar also mentioned the benefits of networking, saying, "you gotta know somebody. If you like 'Oh yeah, I talked to what's his name – he said come in and work tomorrow,' you know you got your job." Bar also mentioned the related limitations in his job seeking, describing his experience as "goin' in there, you know tryna' get [hired], you know what I'm sayin? [Networking] It's all … it's all the difference."

Whereas Jared spoke about experiencing networking, and Bar about the importance of it, Joe spoke about the indirect benefits. He tells me about a pastor who helped young men in the area by giving advice and money for transportation. Kelly, a 47-year-old mother of five, however, highlights how lacking even this indirect networking advantage has left transportation as one of her biggest hurdles when it comes to job seeking. She has been five consecutive years out of work during one stretch, which she explains as the result of her personal shortcomings. Kelly says that she has limited skills, that she does not meet most qualifications, has trouble composing a résumé, and lacks the financial means to travel to job sites and interviews.

Personal responsibility was a very common response from interviewees. In fact, aside from their tempered responses to the complications and shortcomings of the SNAP program conferring benefits, personal responsibility is the only other factor that was consistent among all but one of the interviewees who answered the question. Personal responsibility largely arose in explanations for why people in general are unemployed. Respondents cited employee tardiness and unprofessionalism, laziness, poor life choices, people being too picky about doing available work (told in the context of cleaning a sewer for $100), lack of education, misinformation and not voting – all of which allegedly contributed to a person being unemployed. The one respondent who rejected these explanations, Patrice, did so explicitly, repeatedly, and for a host of reasons. Patrice is a 33-year-old first time mother who has been involved with the program for over fifteen years. She spoke about scams, like applying for a job and instead of the organization calling back a for-profit university calls you – "twice," she said. Among the more systematic reasons Patrice discusses is the power of employers. She says of employers, they

> "… got the upper hand and a lot of people with power take advantage of they power and they hire who they wanna hire. I seen a professional business like person come into the office and another person who's not so fortunate, and that [first] person got the job but the other [second] person was more capable of working."

In this same vein, Patrice also cites discouragement in job applicants. "You get discouraged after you done applied so many times, you been filled out so many applications, no response? It takes a lot of effort to even get out the bed and say 'well I'm gon' go and look for this job.'" She highlights local businesses that refused to hire local Black residents, saying, "We need some jobs. It's jobs over here but they not hiring us, people who live over here, who spend money in these places. We spend our money for y'all to pay somebody who don't even live over here."

Patrice points to the government, broadly understood, to explain why she sees the things she sees. "Who else in the neighborhood could help somebody in the neighborhood but the alderman," she asks? "They want you to have to get SNAP and depend on the government. And that way they got you wrapped around they hands, 'cause you depend on that money, depend on them food stamps." Patrice includes Chicago as an example in her wider critique, saying the city is "overpopulated" and "always saying Illinois don't have no money but they steady building all of this unnecessary stuff downtown trying to make our city into a showplace. This is not Las Vegas," she says, "When we over here struggling, y'all down there building casinos. It, it's just ridiculous." Lastly, Patrice discusses veiled taxation scams, saying "you can't park on your own block without paying $100 a year for a sticker. It's where you live," she says "in front of your own house … I don't understand that, that you got to pay to park in front of your house." She wraps up after implicating her former alderwoman in the veiled taxation, saying she "just came and put boots on peoples cars to get money. [She's] scamming on the wrong people because we ain't got nothing over here – we just really making it, barely making it."

Patrice was the only respondent who did not attribute joblessness to personal responsibility, but she was not the only respondent who identified mitigating factors. Mateo, while he was aligned

with the personal responsibility narrative, added much more through the relationship between government agendas and under and unemployment. He begins with taxation, saying, "The taxes go up every six months. Every time you walk to the store … there's a new tax on something." He reiterated several times the theme of "the capitalists against the poor people," saying " [the capitalists] want to keep people at a certain level in society so they could live off those people." He also mentions racially divided unions that prevent other groups from joining. He speaks from his own union experience and his current non-union engagement as a "scab," taking odd jobs to earn money at construction sites under the table. He talks about scamming as well, saying, "a lot of these trades are scams. You go to the trade school, you pay, [suddenly] you on the list for the next job." He continues, "I have known people went trade schools, the year later they're still askin' 'hey, when you gonna hire me?' … [jobs] were guaranteed." Mateo expands past his community into larger issues of gentrification ("when they move everybody out, not by races, [but] by income," calling these new places "Starbuck area"), partisan budgets ("Budget cuts is when Republicans don't fund the Farm Bill … when you hear that the Farm Bill has been cut that means all nutritious programs have been cut – that means LINK's being cut, that means all the schools … lunches are being cut"), and a war agenda ("They need more money for their programs. Their program is war … what the Republicans are, is the one-percenters of our corporations and they need money for war – war is power."). Mateo comes full circle back to Chicago, discussing the prison industrial complex and police militarization. He says, "The Sherriff gets a budget … they clean up the streets a week before election." "Cook County Jail's a business. In a free society … Cook County's full every day of the week. It's a business." Regarding policing he cited two problems. The first is financial – "it's like they been retrained. They're trained to kill you, it's cheaper than lawsuit." The second was PTSD – "… these

trainees, they're comin' straight from the battlefield … they're trained to kill people, they're not police officers. They, you're – they think you're the enemy. They look at you as the enemy, not as a person."

Bar also discusses the relationship between the government and the funding of programs like SNAP. Initially, seemingly sympathetic about his benefits being cut, Bar says, "it all depends on how much money they got in they budget too for them people to be giving up money like that, see now you gotta understand money don't grow on trees." However, his tone took a sharp turn when discussing the reasons for unemployment. Bar says, "I wanna say the government [is responsible for unemployment] because, at first, they wasn't funding the small businesses and the banks." Later, after discussing ISIS, the Taliban, and Al Qaeda, he reconciled foreign policy with unemployment, saying:

> "See if you putting all this money into the army, you putting all this money into what's
> goin' on out in fuckin china, you still owe them – they say we owe them all type of
> money, the Chinese, so we owe them all type of money of course it's gon, hell yeah …
> just yesterday they, yesterday, day before yesterday they was having the umm the uh, a
> rally, they want $15 an hour that's what I was telling you about, they [the protesters,
> activists, and organizers] sayin now 'y'all done put too much money in all this other shit,
> now y'all gotta start putting this money into us now.' you know what I'm sayin. But you
> know what they gon do though. They gon say 'Fuck y'all, and we gon put these million
> dollars in these machines and have these machines do the work that y'all said y'all was
> gon do and the machines gon do it for these millions of dollars and we gon get that back
> after 2, 3 years and then we gonna kill you for the next 10, 12 years,' you know what I'm
> sayin', when I'm talkin' about kill you I mean kill your pockets."

Bar also discussed the influence of money on political change. Bar implicates political processes, saying "… politics? You gotta talk to somebody that be having some kinda – that can get some kind of money and make some, some kind of moves." In a prior portion of this conversation, he acknowledged that nobody in power – specifically his alderman – ever asks his opinion on circumstances. He says that he would need to use a bullhorn and chant "we need jobs now" for people to follow and to get things done. However, he emphasizes that the issue is less about the

inability to get people to follow, and more about the abilities of different communities to invoke

change. Bar says that while those chants must be directed at "the aldermen, mayor," and political

figures in general, all of that action would be unnecessary if he were among a socioeconomic

community like the one at the University of Chicago as opposed to "the people goin' to Kennedy

King," because "they ain't got it like that."

Mateo shared similar sentiments in a story about his experiences at a rally connected to the fight

for 15 ($15 an hour minimum wage; an effort that more than half of the respondents mentioned).

After noting police being at the rally for crowd control – "or really to scare people away with

their, with the control …" – Mateo noted a contradiction with one of the officers. He asks,

> "… ain't you guys ready to strike for high-, for more money too? Ain't you guys on a old
> contract? He looked at me like I was nuts, then he turned around and says 'You know
> something man, we do the same thing … Only thing, we have lawyers to do it for us.
> That's the difference where, what you people are doin' and what our people do … We
> don't have to march."

Mateo spoke of attending protests about twice a year, whereas Patrice recently attended her first

protest at the behest of a local businesswoman who owns a construction business. Community

members rallied when a fast food restaurant built the establishment with their own contractors

and refused to hire community members, allegedly paying nearly $20 an hour. Patrice says, "We

had signs saying uh 'GIVE US JOBS'," showing me a video of her and others at the protest on

her smartphone. She says the march lasted somewhere between two and three hours, but

concluded "I don't know what difference it made, because I haven't heard anything else about

it." She participated because "I need a job … it's right in the neighborhood, and we used to go up

there and fill out an application – why can't we get a chance to even get an interview, you know?

It's not fair, it's just not."

If there were an award for most creative job seeking practices, Patrice would be the winner. She shared a memorable story about her and her girlfriends traveling in a group to different establishments looking for work. They would each go to different places in the same area and then meet back up with descriptions of how they were treated, available positions, and what the application process entailed. From there they would essentially apply in bulk to different places and then compare results. At multiple points, Patrice's exasperation from the efforts and experiences of participation culminated in a simple response: "I would rather work."

Between Patrice's creative job seeking, Mateo's take anything approach, and Bar's internet application oversaturation, why do they think they have trouble finding work? "Blue tape." This is how Mateo explains the affect of having a criminal record on anyone's ability to get and keep a job. "It's hard to find a job when you got a background," Patrice says. Both Bar and Jared mention background, with Bar adding that "as soon as they see your name they probly already got you on the list of they background that they can't do nothing with you." Patrice adds "I been working since I was 15, payroll job. But when you get a background … they look into that real hard." In the end, Patrice says "Everybody deserve a chance or a second chance, sometimes even a third – especially when you trying to make it out here. 'Cause it's hard. Like I say, you can't do nothing without money. You need money to survive."

Discussion
These in-depth interviews demonstrate the importance of understanding political engagement through self-determination. We see a diverse group of respondents who each have diverging responses between the two distinct contexts. Interviewees are disengaged when faced with a cut to their SNAP benefits in the first context. This happens in spite of the unanimous agreement that

the purpose of the program is to address financial needs and that they all needed more financial support. Interviewees in the second context are fully engaged and resistant to joblessness, underemployment and unemployment. This is happening in spite their persistent joblessness and the unanimous perception of unjust impediments to their likelihood of being hired. Both contexts are understood through the lens of government and politics, including specific references to government officials and policies as well as their support of or participation in protests for livable wages.

While the impetus for engagement is so similar, the role that self-determination plays – particularly variations in autonomy – is the key factor that differentiates responsiveness. While respondents ostensibly exhibit paradigm-shifting responsiveness in the face of perceived social, political, economic, and racial injustices, they exhibit non-events in their interactions within the aid office in spite of the similar perceptions of injustices there. They are convinced that as welfare beneficiaries they have no other choice but to comply, and do so gratefully. Respondents point out employers preference determining hiring, differentiated between those willing to give unknown people a chance versus people who only help people they know. They point out caseworkers' determining how, if, and when a person received his or her benefits. One respondent explained, "They act like it's their money."

There are several competing interpretations that can explain the diverging responsiveness in these scenarios. Respondents may believe that because it is employer's money then it is the employer's prerogative to hire whomever they choose. Thus, their paradigm-shifting responsiveness is rooted in a belief that they can convince employers to change. Another interpretation is that respondents accept that an interconnected government apparatus means that

keeping their welfare benefits requires high levels of informedness and competence with bureaucrats. Thus, their non-events are rooted in a belief that they need to get better within the system, not change it. This may also be interpreted as hopelessness or simply having too much on their plates to express the same type of responsiveness in the aid office as they demonstrate while job seeking.

However, the data tells a different story. According to respondents, job seeking is an act of political engagement. Respondents see a connection between their SNAP benefits and their difficulty finding work through the government, where welfare benefits and joblessness are considered an incentive for the government to keep people "wrapped around they hands." Job seeking is not about avoiding stereotypes of laziness, notions that none of the respondents claim to have ever heard or considered; rather, job seeking is a part of their political agenda. The respondents continue to apply for jobs to no avail in the same way they continually accept what is being given to them at the aid. Those with criminal records have added trouble finding work and the same debts to cover – yet they are disengaged from, but aware of, movements to remove the "blue tape." They seek work because they believe that as Americans they have the right to expect a good life when they are willing to work hard for it.

Respondents express a clear distinction between hoping they finding "work" – described as short-term, part-time, and not enough to cover financial needs – but not expecting find a "job" – described as payroll, where you pay taxes and get benefits. Respondents demonstrate the importance of autonomy in paradigm-shifting engagement while job seeking in such creative ways, including stockpiling political information in recognition of politics affecting their job attainment potential. Patrice participates in job search parties, Mateo shows up to construction

sites in gentrifying neighborhoods, and Jared chases down his alderman and uses his smartphone to correspond for work opportunities. Paradigm-shifting responsiveness is a tool for survival and a reflection of political imagination and possibilities.

Respondents are taking responsibility for every hardship they face. They demonstrate an awareness of structural and institutional processes, gleaned in part while looking for job listings on the internet and in newspapers. However their creativity, politics, and resourcefulness are not being used in the aid office. The question is, can the data tell us why paradigm-shifting responsiveness not being used in the aid office? A commonsense response is that people must find *jobs* or they wont be able to afford a satisfying life. People who rely on *work* must cooperate in the aid office because they need those supplemental benefits for basic survival. This explanation, however, does not match the data. Interviewees unanimously reported needing more benefits because what they receive is not enough for their survival. A more developed but still incorrect response is that the benefits are helpful, and respondents are grateful for that help. This response misses the fact that interviewees express a clear distinction between being grateful for the help that SNAP benefits provide but coming up short because the help that SNAP benefits provide is not enough in every month, while also acknowledging how the government is the tie that binds their insufficient SNAP benefits and their persistent joblessness.

Without paradigm-shifting responsiveness, respondents are unlikely to simultaneously express their gratefulness and critiques. This is why critique must be acknowledged and encouraged at the forefront of policy development. Any explanation that fails to account for this need is constraining critique, inhibiting autonomy, detaining self-determination, and halting the progress of political development in individuals and in policy. When asking why creativity, politics, and

resourcefulness are abandoned in the aid office, we must also ask who is neglecting whom. A willingness to critique an institution, policy, or street-level bureaucrat is highly contingent on the degree to which interactions are institutionally constrained. The aid office is constrained on multiple levels: spatially within an office, physically with security guards, and functionally through standard operating procedures and budgets. Respondents see this dead end to self-determination as built and maintained by the state for exactly those constraining purposes. While I am yet unable to say why, respondents' compliance indicates non-events – static self-determination in the aid office that has been stalled as a result of oppressive external and related internal influences. Whether this is strategic or the result of disillusionment is unclear.

Conclusion: The Deep Defeat of Oppression

What are factors like efficacy, autonomy, and self-determination telling us about the affects of prolonged inequality and resistance? Is change unrealistic? If so, is it worth conceding to domination? Is resistance too time consuming, resource draining, and complex? The data tells us that the prolonged affect of inequality and resistance is that autonomy is diminished. This is evidence of change being considered unrealistic and a concession to domination. Autonomy, and thus self-determination, is contextually compartmentalized and operationalized. Job seeking reflects high levels of self-determined engagement compared to limited self-determination when engaging SNAP. Institutionally constrained choices inhibit political imagination and possibilities among individuals, as seen in their refusal to seek authoritative representation in agendas. While action-centered participation can indicate political engagement, it fails to hold up as a measure when self-determination is considered.

Returning to the question of failures versus defeats, what we find in this chapter is that they coexist within people in the same way that non-events and paradigm-shifting responsiveness do. While the false and manipulated consensus of the non-event is evidence of the deleterious affects of neoliberalism, it does not fully excuse the individuals themselves from accountability. While victim blaming is prevalent, especially before concretely identifying invisible power, there is still a measure of personal responsibility involved. Conceding to domination is always a failure, no matter how time consuming, resource draining, and complex resistance is. Therefore, the answer to the question of how we differentiate an individual failure from a structural defeat is that we do no such thing – they stay together. While we may see false or manipulated consensus as somewhat of an individual failure when people refuse to advocate for Korryn Gaines, for example, that we can understand this failure in the context of a structural defeat speaks volumes to our approaches to addressing these dilemma.

It remains important to convince a person to recognize their biases when they refuse to advocate for Korryn Gaines, just as it is important to convince a person to recognize how their refusal to levy critiques does a disservice to themselves and others in their situation. However, knowing that this change in thought might be as unthinkable to them as the Haitian Revolution was for years, decades, and now centuries since it concluded might help us understand that convincing people requires an approach that can explicitly target the areas where invisible power has its greatest impact. We must seek to increase people's autonomy – they must feel a sense of choice.

Think about Paul Frymer's work in Uneasy Alliances (2010). He talks there about the negligence of the Democratic Party towards eligible Black voters, describing us as a "captured minority". It is in this sense of hopelessness that questions of voting – who to vote for and how to compel

them to act – has been a topic of debate since DuBois challenged it in "I Won't Vote" (1956).

Now certainly I'm not suggesting that traditional forms of political engagement are all hollow all

because the two-party system continues to fail Black voters. But rather, considering that

marginalized publics describe people who are aware that they face constraints and yet refuse to

acknowledge these grievances through their engagement, it is precisely because invisible power

is able to numb the point of contact that it becomes more likely to receive this type of

responsiveness. That is how inequality is perpetuated in a neoliberal state.

I spoke earlier of Lauren Berlant and her notion of lateral agency, which suggests that quotidian

politics and in fact every day life more generally can be likened to a slow death. Some changes

are never-ending processes that, for quality of life, might be better being accepted than resisted.

Putting this failure in the context of structural defeats explains why conceding to domination is

always a failure, no matter how time consuming, resource draining, and complex resistance is.

Any other response has the same affect as calling hetero-patriarchy a reasonable option in order

to develop autonomy. Remember Trouillot, who said, "Legitimate as it was, the slaves' natural

desire for freedom could not be satisfied, lest it threaten France's interests." (92) It is through

these imperial interests that we can adequately identify the foundations of oppression and

inequality through invisible power, neoliberalism, decision-making responsiveness, non-events,

and diminished autonomy. With this framework I have developed a method for more explicitly

and quantitatively demonstrating the oppressive biases of neoliberalism.

CHAPTER THREE

NEOLIBERALISM AND FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

Introduction

The final overarching question that has yet to be answered asks: Can a contemporary democracy actually be responsive to a diverse citizenry? As far as these larger questions are concerned, we have seen that inequalities are being perpetuated through non-events and normalized in marginalized publics – where people reproduce false and manipulated consensuses that neglect the agendas of themselves and others. In showing that the neoliberal democracy disproportionately targets women, Latino/a's and Black people while favoring white people, then the question of democracy's decision-making responsiveness in the face of a diverse citizenry becomes clear. This is what I test in this chapter.

In the previous two chapters I develop the concept of invisible power, which describes scenarios where power operates in the absence of observable conflict and encourages people to work with the status quo rather than to protest, resist, or otherwise seek reform through extra-systemic means. Even those holding deep disagreements and with gravely consequential needs are encouraged to use sanctioned channels (e.g., traditional participation) even when those channels have proven to be unproductive and discriminatory. Invisible power produces false consensus when this limited sense of choice (autonomy) is internalized. This process is discernible via analyses of decision-making responsiveness that then demonstrate non-events, which are exemplified by false consensus, inhibited autonomy, and constrained political imagination and possibilities.

In the last chapter I show how non-events are evident in the responsiveness of food stamp recipients in the Department of Aid, as interviewees refuse to levy their abundant critiques and criticisms of the program in spite of their unanimously reporting that the program does not meet their needs. Their silence and passivity is hardly strategic, as respondents demonstrate a clear willingness and ability to utilize paradigm-shifting responsiveness to contest structural power, reject attempts at normalizing consent, and oppose constraints to their subjectivity. They exhibit the ability to utilize paradigm-shifting responsiveness in their discourse and actions aimed at reforming labor markets, particularly in their imaginative job-seeking methods. Their expanded sense of possibility is evident in their conscious unwillingness to accept what are seen as oppressively unjust hiring practices, choosing instead to navigate the job seeking process without regard for many commonsense job-seeking staples. For example, one respondent reports traveling with a group of friends and all applying for the same position in hopes that one of them will be hired. She also discussed choosing where to apply based on comfort with the employer that is determined when asking if they are hiring and when requesting an application. These speak to the decision-making responsiveness that is unique in respondents' deliberate prioritizing of comfort and community above earnings potential. And in this paradigm-shifting responsiveness, respondents strike a sharp contrast from the non-events exhibited in interactions with SNAP. These are characterized by their collective unwillingness to reach out to others for support in addressing grievances or to even attempt to make demands on how they will be treated, especially in the face of never-ending and often unexpected cuts to financial benefits. The main contribution of this research is uncovering the ramifications of invisible power, particularly when these non-events become normalized in what I call "marginalized publics".

I use marginalized publics to describe the liminal spaces where subjectivities are preserved beyond partisanship, ideology, or informedness. Rather, in marginalized publics constrained subjectivities are preserved through non-events. This is evident in the preceding analyses, as diverging responsiveness – non-events engaging SNAP and paradigm-shifting when engaging labor markets – demonstrate the wide variation of political imagination and indeed possibilities that exist within individual subjects.

In order to move beyond more individualistic assessments, including the claim that decision-making responsiveness is predominately under the purview of the individual apart from structural power, I investigate two questions in this chapter. First, does false consensus become false consciousness? And second, does invisible power target or otherwise disproportionately affect historically marginalized communities? With these two questions, in addition to the work in the preceding chapters, we can fully address Patchen Markell's suggestion: that the most fundamental threat to democratic political activity is the loss of responsiveness to events and the erosion of contexts where action makes sense. The counter-argument to Markell's suggestion is that invisible power might be either post-democratic or supremely democratic, being so sufficient that people are uniting around its myriad ideals, agendas, and strategies. The argument is that if invisible power is agreeable, then the change in consciousness is not false but merely new. Moreover, in this case the change in autonomy is more about decisiveness than constraints, as people have no need for additional choices. The suggestion, then, is that the findings in the previous chapters are limited to groups who are trapped in a politics of resistance that facilitate their own discontent; they could avoid conflict and struggle if they concede to invisible power.

These conclusions might seem reasonable when they are based solely in an action-centered approach. However, I emphasize the decision-making approach precisely because political action belies a consideration of agency, but sufficient agency must be grounded in self-determination. Political engagement, self-determination, and democracy must align the political "how" of actions with the political "why" of decision-making responsiveness.[74] In this chapter I show that invisible power is disproportionately affecting the decision-making responsiveness of historically marginalized racial and gender groups. This means that their political discourse, action, and possibilities are constrained at the decision-making level, which is not readily apparent at the level of action. Even if these constraints were facilitating a smoothly functioning government, they come at the expense of these groups ability to advocate for their livelihoods and, as we see in many of the preceding work, their very lives.

The data in this chapter comes from a survey with a nationally representative sample and a Black and Latino/a oversample (n=1000). With these data I am able to show a decline in efficacy among people with labor market desires that deviate from the norm in their hopes that the government would provide a job and a good standard of living. This speaks to normalized consent and false consensus, as their divergence from the more common narrative of hard work coincides with low self and collective efficacy. I then look to those who believe that hard work is the key to success in politics and labor markets while remaining financially unstable themselves. While these findings might only suggest that amidst diverse political worldviews there are more common strategies that contradict political commonsense, we are forced to reconsider upon the realization that both of these groups are disproportionately Blacks, Latino/as, and women. Therefore, while the ability to use power in the absence of observable conflict distinguishes

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[74] This how/why distinction is from Robin D.G. Kelley, discussed later in the introduction.

neoliberalism from other structural powers that rely more heavily on conflict and physical violence (e.g., white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy), the decision-making logics and orders remain consistent with oppressive orders and hierarchies. Moreover, the evidence suggests that this disproportionate targeting of historically marginalized groups is reflecting the transition from false consensus to false consciousness.

The two primary contributions I make in this project are: 1) I demonstrate an empirical route to understanding the construction of subjectivities and can also account for coercion through invisible power therein; and 2) I demonstrate how a decision-making approach can make invisible power and its influence on both subjectivities and engagement discernible. Given that this chapter is building on the theoretical and qualitative framing of the preceding chapters, I briefly revisit those findings during my overview of the current chapter.

Chapter Reviews and Overview

Respondents from the SNAP program are acutely aware of the short and long term oppressions and injustices that they face in both the job market and the Department of Aid. The respondents point to the U.S. government as a common factor in these oppressions, suggesting that the state is at the very least complicit if not bearing the bulk of responsibility particularly for the economic inequality, inequity, and injustices that the respondents are experiencing. This awareness is stymied in the face of neoliberalism, the managerial style of politics that as Wendy Brown says, "vanquish a vocabulary of power, and hence power's visibility, from the lives and venues that governance organizes and directs." (Pg. 129) This is the case when street-level bureaucrats like those in the Department of Aid are able to facilitate invisible power and distinguishing themselves from the police force, for example. For the respondents, their

awareness of power serves more as a pacifier than panacea, inhibiting responsiveness through the

lack of transparency and a decentralized locus of power but not alleviating their grievances. For

this reason, I point to autonomy – feeling a sense of choice – as the psychological aspect

undergirding their decision-making that is inhibited by invisible power.

Autonomy is situated within a broader framework of self-determination.[75] In the previous chapter

I use in-depth interviews to demonstrate the ways and scenarios where autonomy is being rigidly

compartmentalized. Respondents living under long-term financial duress and instability express

highly autonomous self-determination while job seeking, which contrasts with very low levels of

autonomy and self-determination when interacting with SNAP. Respondents are generally aware

that the limitations of SNAP have significant social, political, and economic implications. These

implications are seen as stemming from broader systematic discrimination that prevents them

from functioning as fully autonomous social, economic, and political subjects.[76] In spite of

respondents' perceptions of a multitude of injustices, oppressive norms and agendas in both

contexts, there is a unanimous refusal to resist structural and interpersonal mistreatment when

engaging SNAP and a clear willingness to engage in resistance in job markets.[77] This is not,

however, the first time quantitative analysis has been used to interpret perceptions of oppression

affecting political engagement.

In Not In Our Lifetimes (2011), Michael Dawson analyzes a persistent belief among select Black

Americans that their desires for racial equality and justice will not be realized in their lifetime. In

this and several of Dawson's other texts, particularly Black Visions (2001), he demonstrates the

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[75] Self-determination is composed of three parts: autonomy, informedness, and relatedness. See the previous chapter and Edward Deci & Richard Ryan's work in psychology.

[76] Oppressions are defined as contexts where a desire for freedom is refused and punishable in favor of imperial interests. See the discussion in Chapter 2 on Michel Rolph-Trouillot's work in Silencing the Past (1995).

[77] SNAP is a government assistance program that is facilitated in the offices of the federal Department of Aid.

breadth of ideologies and methods of political engagement that advocate a similar commitment to resisting and eliminating these oppressions. Of particular significance in this project is the ideology of disillusioned liberalism, which describes those people who have lost their hope in the possibility that incremental changes rooted in principled objections are an effective sociopolitical strategy for change in the U.S. This is especially important in this project, as Dawson uses these ideologies as a bridge that connects ends to means. In the case of disillusioned liberals, for example, the end goals of racial justice and equality are intimately tied to the means of accomplishing those goals through principled objections by way of a liberal ideology. This describes processes explaining the connection between the political "how" and the ideological "why".

Also important is that disillusioned liberals are facing contexts where action makes sense while simultaneously facing the distinct possibility that their actions are futile, dangerous, or both. Robin Kelley's research in Race Rebels (1994) talks about the internalized conflicts that arise when an awareness of oppressions and desires to resist collide with the potential futility or harm of acting on out the ideological "why" and the political "how". Kelley shows that resistance and non-cooperation can in fact be grounded in the workplace even when income is desperately needed. One of his more pointed examples discusses acts of resistance from fast-food employees who take what they need – food, time off, slower work pace, etc. These actions occur with the understanding that they want to keep their jobs and that the employer has more than enough to compensate for their deviations. Kelley shows that the workplace and labor force can be a site of high levels of political activity and resistance in spite of the fact that having that job is so necessary.

Cristina Beltrán similarly engages this connection between necessity and freedom in her analyses, particularly when engaging undocumented workers. Beltrán's contention is that contemporary depictions of undocumented labor lack the imagination to see the undocumented individual as "engaged in acts of political freedom." (Pg. 135) She goes on to say:

> "The depiction of the undocumented as subjects whose value lies in their willingness to pick crops, clean houses, mow lawns, care for children, cook food, and so on, produces subjects whose value lies not in their distinctiveness but, rather, in their collective existence as an always-available mass. Individuality, intellect, judgment, reason, and insight remain invisible, as the discourse of labor tends to overshadow acts of freedom performed in the political realm. Arendt's account of labor is symptomatic of the dangerous logic that emerges when one's humanity is conflated with necessity. Yet this dynamic – whereby efforts to honor the contributions of noncitizens lead to the conflation of *who* they are with *what* they do – is the double bind of immigrant action. In making labor visible, immigrants and their allies seek to invest it with political significance. Yet such visibility runs the risk of simultaneously mobilizing the more problematic accounts of labor, those that emphasize necessity over freedom. Such are the contradictions of all publics – including the immigrant counterpublic."

> Cristina Beltrán, The Trouble With Unity, Pg. 152

In describing the creation of an immigrant counterpublic, Beltrán discusses the complex natures within people seeking freedom not only from social, political and economic constraints but also from the threat to diverse subjectivities – that is, to a diverse understanding of who they are as subjects beyond being laborers. Beltrán highlights the significant affects of invisibility and unimaginativeness on these subjectivities, which is similar to Trouillot's argument that non-events are couched in the unimaginable, to Dawson's recognition that disillusioned liberals are stultified in the face of futility, and to Wendy Brown's emphasis on the special ability of neoliberal power to make itself invisible. Like Beltrán, Kelley, and Dawson, I recognize that acts of resistance are chosen through imaginative and often visible methods. I am investigating the

uniquely neoliberal threat to this measure of resistance that is reflected in a devotion to necessity above freedom.[78]

While I emphasized the contradictions between resistance and necessity within the individual in the previous chapter, my theory of marginalized publics is not limited to the individual as a unit of analysis. In this chapter I am determining the fit of marginalized publics at the group level with an emphasis on racial and gender group differentiation. I show that the drastic fluctuations in autonomy that we saw in the previous chapter reflect circumstances that are visible at both the individual and the group level. And while marginalized publics are discernible through an examination of individual autonomy, I am also investigating the ways that invisible power can systematically target groups.

The survey data in this chapter shows a disproportionate representation of Black, Latino/a, and women respondents among those who express political and economic beliefs that coincide with neoliberalism. I argue that this decline in autonomy is rooted in respondent's awareness of enduring government oppressions and not ideological inconsistency or uninformedness. The false consensus that neoliberalism facilitates is not in lieu of individual or collective awareness of oppressions, but rather in lieu of alternatives to oppressions, particularly those that are enforced in the absence of observable conflict. The connection between respondents' logic and constraints on their subjectivity is made clear when these historically marginalized groups are disproportionately represented. Neoliberalism is an active force encouraging these groups in

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[78] Besides those already mentioned, other authors also speak indirectly to these types of concessions. Paul Frymer's (2010) accounts for Black voters as a "captured minority" and Larry Bartels' (2007) notes prevailing American economic myths that have led many Americans to support politics that subvert their group interests. In this study I identify a similar pushback against freedom and justice oriented resistance that manifests as a refusal to seek a self-determined agenda. I am particularly interested in understanding how people with limited opportunities, options, and resources are interpreting the connection between their engagement and the government broadly understood.

particular to neglectfully disregard theirs and others' political interests and align with a neoliberal agenda. Neoliberalism is not facilitating plurality or justice that the absence of observable quotidian resistance from historically marginalized groups might imply. Instead, the silence surrounding the absence of observable conflict is facilitating neglectful and counter-revolutionary non-events. The underlying suggestion is not that observable conflict is necessary to incite anti-oppressive responsiveness or that revolutionary politics are preferable. What I demonstrate is that neoliberal oppression inhibits anti-oppressive responsiveness and is therefore a threat to pluralism and justice.

Part 1. Neoliberalism, Labor Markets, and Public Opinion

In this chapter I explore the relationship between neoliberal economic norms and autonomy. I analyze two scenarios. In the first scenario respondents are expressing a belief that the government should provide jobs, and yet they report low levels of self and collective efficacy. In the second scenario respondents are expressing a belief that hard work is the key to success in the economy and government, and yet they are struggling financially themselves. I test the salience of race and gender in these scenarios. That we find Black people, Latino/a people, and women are more significantly likely to fit within these scenarios reflects the impact of neoliberalism operating as invisible power towards the entrenchment of marginalized publics.

I focus on scenarios that embody a contradiction between the preferred role of government in the labor market and personal perspective towards political engagement. The role of government in the labor market reflects the preferred agenda for U.S. labor market. The perspectives towards political engagement refer to perceptions of the government and its priorities. Therefore, in the first scenario respondents belief that the government should provide jobs is the preferred role of

government in the labor market and the political engagement demonstrates low efficacy. In the second scenario, respondents' belief that hard work is the key to economic success is the preferred role of government in the labor market and that hard work is the key to political success is the perspective towards political engagement.

These scenarios also identify respondents who expressing false consensus, false consciousness, or are otherwise lacking self-determination. This is based on the assumption that the low efficacy in the first scenario and the financial struggles in the second make the preferred role of government and perspective towards political engagement incompatible. For example, a person who strongly believes that hard work leads to success economically and politically who is unsuccessful financially is either lying to themselves about the benefits of hard work, sees themselves as a lazy worker undeserving of financial success, or is blaming some other group or people for why their hard work is not translating into success.[79] Moreover, a person who believes that the government should provide a job and a good standard of living, stating so in explicit contrast to hard work beliefs, who lacks efficacy is either disillusioned, disengaged, or otherwise incapable self-determined, paradigm-shifting responsiveness.

These contradictions are exactly why finding that Black people, Latino/a people, and women are more significantly likely to fit within these scenarios reflects the impact of neoliberalism operating as invisible power towards the entrenchment of marginalized publics. Aside from heightened levels of awareness of contemporary discrimination and oppression, the historical

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[79] 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney says that there are 47% of people "who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it." He concludes by saying, "my job is not to worry about those people—I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives." This rhetoric and discourse came into play during the 2016 election, as well as in the now infamous Brexit vote in the UK, among other prominent cases.

awareness of more overt systems of oppression at the collective level makes these beliefs even less likely. The assumption here is that in order to have the beliefs depicted in these scenarios one would need to expect to be the beneficiary at some point – but neither scenario depicts responsiveness that would make these historically marginalized groups beneficiaries beyond a lottery's chance. That is what makes these findings that much more compelling.

These scenarios are also centered on the role of government in the labor market. There are three reasons why this emphasis is important. First, while we might argue that select political goods are more important to some than others, the government's role in the labor force cannot be understated. Larry Bartels (2007) work similarly addresses the "general tendency to think of the economy as a natural system existing prior to, and largely separate from, the political sphere." With these beliefs establishing the nature of the economy as predetermined, this "discourages systematic critical scrutiny of their causes and consequences." Bartels concludes, "If escalating inequality is 'simply an economic reality,' it seems pointless to spend too much energy worrying about how and why it arises." (Pgs. 29-30) Whether or not we attempt to disassociate the impact that politics has on the economy or on labor force opportunities, inequities, and justice – doing so is a reflection of decision-making responsiveness, particularly for those who are financially unstable.

The second reason why these scenarios are centered on the government's role in labor markets is because of the political connections between labor market participation, income, and oppression. Consider Saskia Sassen's Expulsions (2014), wherein neoliberal efforts to streamline institutions and organizations are facilitated by cuts to the labor force that include making large swaths of applicants ineligible to begin with. In the U.S. this is most evident in efforts to ban the box –

when people are asked if they have ever been convicted of a crime (usually a felony crime) on employment applications.[80] Michelle Alexander's work in The New Jim Crow (2012) similarly illuminates and explicates mass incarceration and the prison-industrial complex as it parallels U.S. labor markets. Whereas these expulsions from the labor force are rooted in criminality and incarceration, Nancy Fraser's work in "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode" (NLR, 2014) talks about labor force expropriation on the basis of gender. Michael Dawson does similar work in "Hidden in Plain Sight" (2016) in his discussion about labor exploitation on the basis of race. The relationships between capitalism, neoliberalism, and labor force expropriation cannot be understated. This speaks further to why, considering the discriminatory impact of expulsions, expropriation, and exploitation from labor markets, these two scenarios should never be expected to produce significant numbers of respondents who are Black, Latino/a, and women. And yet per the relationship between invisible power and marginalized publics, their awareness of oppressions coincides with the absence of observable conflict increases the likelihood of Black people, Latino/a's, and women fitting in these scenario.[81]

The last reason to focus on labor market participation is because neoliberalism is largely rooted in economic principles most commonly identified with labor markets. These logics have become so quintessential that they epitomize intuitiveness in a wide range of arenas. It is precisely this intuitiveness that results in the diminishing of autonomy and observable conflicts that we see in non-events and marginalized publics. This is not to debate whether market-based principles

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[80] We saw this discussion in the previous chapter in discussions with Bar, who suggested that there are lists of names of those who will not be hired. Recent work from Jennifer L. Doleac and Benjamin Hansen in the National Bureau of Economic Research (2016) discusses the detrimental impact of banning the box, particularly that "when an applicant's criminal history is unavailable, employers statistically discriminate against demographic groups that are likely to have a criminal record."

[81] The subtleties of neoliberal power that I am investigating require a focus on those groups most likely to be targeted and affected by them. This is the same logic that we see in Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres' The Miner's Canary (2002).

should be held as a universal standard that requires a connection to formal labor markets, but rather to highlight the importance of the many pre-existing and unresolved biases within these principles that shape the evolution of multiple markets including labor. A major contribution of this project is demonstrating an empirical route to account for coercion through invisible power. This is what makes the emphasis on historically marginalized groups so significant in this study.

The No Power and No Reward Scenarios

I investigate two scenarios with in this analysis that are based around a fundamental contradiction. The first scenario is "No Power". This is when respondents believe 1) that the government should provide jobs and a good standard of living and 2) that they lack the ability to affect political change. The contradiction in this scenario comes from my assumption that people who are seeking paradigm-shifting responsiveness – that is, their intentions span beyond the scope of the current institutional agenda – must also have high levels of self or collective efficacy to advocate these changes, let alone accomplish them. A paradigm shift is necessary for the government to begin providing jobs and a good standard of living – a notion rooted in radical egalitarianism if not socialism – particularly when the measure is set opposite to hard-work beliefs. As measured, "jobs and a good standard of living" represent a solution to labor market inequities. Therefore, it is contradictory for respondents to believe that the government should provide jobs and a good standard of and who report high levels of inefficacy. Inefficacy here is evidence of circumscribed autonomy.[82]

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[82] There are many ways to measure and indicate efficacy. Cathy Cohen's work in <u>Democracy Remixed</u> (2010). In the previous chapter I note how Cohen's notions of efficacy incorporates opinions and experiences surrounding reproductive rights, sexual identity, activism and organizing, among many other forms of engagement. Efficacy, however, is insufficient as a measure of self-determination. I give the example of a person exhibiting high levels of efficacy, but who is a disillusioned liberal who has disengaged from politics for fear of futility or punishment. This

I refer to the second scenario as "No Reward". This is when respondents believe strongly that

labor market outcomes are determined by individual effort (laboring), believe strongly that

accepted political ideas are the result of effort (politicking), and who experience financial

instability. I make two assumptions: 1) that financial stability is a desired labor market outcome

that respondents lack and 2) that respondents believe that they are hard workers. Therefore, it is

contradictory for respondents who believe that laboring and politicking are the keys to labor

market and political success, yet they lack financial stability. They must be rationalizing their

financial instability in a way that manages to absolve the market, the government, and their self.

These rationalizations necessarily come at the expense of autonomy.

The contradictions in each scenario are based on the role of government in the labor market and

perspective towards political engagement. The role of government in the labor market reflects

the perceived or desired government agenda in regards to American labor. These perspectives are

divided into the following two categories:

1) *Providing Jobs* – respondents in this category believe that the government needs to provide a job and a good standard of living in order to account for those facing undesirable labor market outcomes to no fault of their own. In this scenario, the primary emphasis is on the government providing opportunities for laborers; and

2) *Laboring* –respondents in this category express a belief that labor market outcomes are determined by individual effort. In this scenario, the primary emphasis is on the laborers providing for themselves and not the government.

It is important to note that these perspectives can be held simultaneously. However, the

measurements of "providing jobs" and "laboring" are situated opposite one another. Because

analysis engages those aspects of self-determination, and specifically autonomy, towards an understanding of when and why people are engaging politics that includes both intrinsic and extrinsic influences.

they are set at opposite ends of the same spectrum, identifying respondents with strongly held

feelings in one direction or the other is possible in this analysis. Both "laboring" and "providing

jobs" are considered in conjunction with respondents' perspectives towards political

engagement. These perspectives reflect perceptions of the government's agenda-setting

authority. These perspectives are divided into the following two categories:

1) *Inefficacy* – respondents in this category express a belief that they lack
   ability to affect political change for general lack of knowledge or technical
   expertise, and also because of government unresponsiveness; and

2) *Politicking* –respondents in this category express a belief that when
   political ideas are accepted it is the result of hard work;

It is important to note that these perspectives can be held simultaneously. Each measurement

represents a unique orientation towards the state, dictating very particular behaviors in different

contexts. I measure financial instability, for example, as having an income below $35K/year,

being unemployed, or being underemployed. When we pair a belief about the role of government

in the labor market and a perspective towards political engagement, then we begin to develop the

contradictory scenarios necessary for this analysis.

Each contradiction in these scenarios is in line with my arguments in the previous chapter about

invisible power, non-events, and marginalized publics. We hope that respondents in a democracy

will use self-determination in response to events. However, these scenarios represent extreme

instances of non-events. Respondents are refusing self-determination while also adopting

preferences and perspectives that advocate an institutional agenda that exacerbates their

oppression. I deliberately chose these more extreme scenarios in order to increase the likelihood

that respondents are not utilizing self-determination, that their decision-making is firmly established as a non-event.

It could be argued that these scenarios still are not definitive of non-events. However, my hope is that demographic representation in the findings makes my argument more convincing. These scenarios whittle the population down to the most extreme believers, and so supportive findings in such constrained scenarios add credence to my overarching theory of marginalized publics and non-events.

I test three interrelated hypotheses in both the "No Power" and the "No Reward" scenarios. The first hypothesis is about the impact of race, specifically that Black respondents and Latino/a respondents are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the scenarios than white respondents. The second hypothesis is that women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Power" scenario than men, and men more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Reward" scenario than women. The third hypothesis is that Black women and Latina women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the aforementioned scenarios than Black men, Latino men, and white women. Each of these hypotheses is based on my theories surrounding non-events and marginalized publics. Specifically, I argue that neoliberalism follows the historical precedent of white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy targeting women and persons of color, with increasing furor aimed at those who exist at the intersections of these groups. This neoliberal trajectory undergirds the systematic use of power to coerce consent without observable conflict.

My data comes from the "Political Activity and Self-Determination study", a self-designed survey instrument with data collected by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. Funding was provided by grants from the University of Chicago's Social Sciences Division, the Center for the Study of Race Politics and Culture, Cathy Cohen and the Black Youth Project. The sample source was NORC's AmeriSpeak panel, with the main focus of surveying the adult U.S. population on topics including opinions of entitlement, politics, political cynicism, and social and economic inequality. The data was collected over a 3-week period between September 30, 2015 and October 19, 2015. The 2015 AmeriSpeak panel sample consists of nationally representative housing units drawn from the 2010 NORC National Sample Frame. The panel sample of households includes an oversample of housing units in segments (Census tracts or block groups) higher in young adults and/or Latino/a's and non-Hispanic Blacks. The data is composed of 1008 responses, with two sampling weights. The first weight is for a nationally representative sample of adults 18 years old and above. The second weight, with demographics controlled within Black, Latino/a, and white people, is appropriate for describing analyses made within and between these groups.

Part 2. Data Analysis
No Power
I am analyzing the respondents who feel inefficacious in regards to engaging government, politics, and change and who also believe that the government should provide jobs and a good standard of living in order to account for those facing undesirable labor market outcomes to no fault of their own. This variable that measures respondent's belief that the government should provide jobs is measured on a seven-point scale with "provide jobs" on one end and "hard work" on the other. I rely on this contrast to demonstrate the change in the relationships that race,

gender and their intersection have with inefficacy. I use the "No Power" scenario to represent the circumstances surrounding respondents who believe that the government should provide jobs and a good standard of living (providing jobs) and that they lack the ability to affect political change (inefficacy). With "inefficacy" I am identifying people who feel unequipped and invisible as far as their political participation is concerned. This scenario is indicative of non-events as responsiveness to threats to self-determination.

To analyze the "No Power" scenario, I conduct a principal components analysis to create the component variable "inefficacy". A principal components analysis (PCA) is a statistical technique that helps with data reduction. Through a PCA we are able to condense multiple variables into a few, and identify which variables among the larger group contain most of the variance in the new variables and what direction the data is moving in. The component for "inefficacy" comes from the four-variable analysis of the following variable responses:

1) *Neighborhood Inefficacy* – In my neighborhood we are not able to get the government to respond to our needs.

2) *Self-Inefficacy* – I cannot make a difference by participating in politics.

3) *Incapability* – I lack the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in politics.

4) *No Say* – People like me have no say about what the government does.[83]

"Inefficacy" is strongly informed by all four constituting variables. While "inefficacy" indicates respondent's degree of agreement with the constitutive constructs, variation makes it is impossible to determine exactly where the boundary lines should be drawn to distinguish casual

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[83] These variables are originally measured on a five point likert scale. They are then condensed into a three point scale from 0 to 2 where the highest score (2) represents the highest level of agreement (strongly agree) with the prompt, the intermediate score (1) represents general agreement (agree), and the lowest score (0) represents all other cases.

from strong agreement. For example, a person who scores high on the "incapability" scale and average on "no say" and "neighborhood inefficacy" ranks differently on the "inefficacy" component as a person who scores high on "no say" and average on "incapability" and "self-inefficacy". As a continuous variable, the differences between these responses are not as easily interpretable as they would be if the variables were ordinal, as they were prior to the PCA. In order to maximize interpretability I split "inefficacy" into quartiles. While this limits some of the finer details of the analysis, it increases interpretability between quartiles and sets a clear high and low point for reference.

My first hypothesis is about the impact of race – specifically that Black respondents and Latino/a respondents are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Power" scenario than white respondents. I address the "Race" hypothesis by comparing the proportions of each racial group – Black, Latino/a, and white people. My second hypothesis is that women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Power" scenario than men. I test the "Gender" hypothesis by comparing men to women. My third hypothesis is that Black women and Latina women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Power" scenario than Black or Latino men, and white women. I test the "Race and Gender" hypothesis by comparing within and between racial groups by gender. I use two-tailed t-tests to determine if there are statistically significant differences in relative means of respondents when they are differentiated by race, by gender, and by the intersection of race and gender. Weighted tables and figures allow for comparisons within and between racial groups.

Table 1.P Inefficacy by the desired role of Government in U.S. Labor Markets

Inefficacy	Provide Jobs	-Centered-	Laboring	Quartile %
1st Q	33.77 (9.51)	34.46 (9.71)	31.77 (8.94)	**(28.17)**
2nd Q	35.46 (7.20)	38.09 (7.73)	26.46 (5.37)	**(20.31)**
3rd Q	32.21 (8.94)	36.07 (10.01)	31.71 (8.80)	**(27.76)**
4th Q	40.37 (9.60)	29.97 (7.12)	29.96 (7.05)	**(23.77)**
Category %	**(35.25)**	**(34.58)**	**(30.17)**	**(100)**

Note: Percentages by row; Relative cell percentages in parentheses.

Table 1.P shows the weighted frequency distribution in the two key independent variables in the "No Power" scenario – "Inefficacy" and "Provide Jobs". Each quartile and job category is split relatively evenly. This tells us that when all people are considered, they are just as likely to feel inefficacious as they are to not feel inefficacious and people are just as likely to have strong feelings either direction or centered feelings about the role of government in U.S. labor markets. This means that when we disaggregate these data by race and gender and find a disproportionate distribution, that the disproportionality is more attributable to these demographic factors than any latent data quirks. Conceptually speaking, this also means that people are just as likely to believe that the government should provide jobs and a good standard of living and that there is no immediate reason to believe that these people should be more inefficacious than any other group.
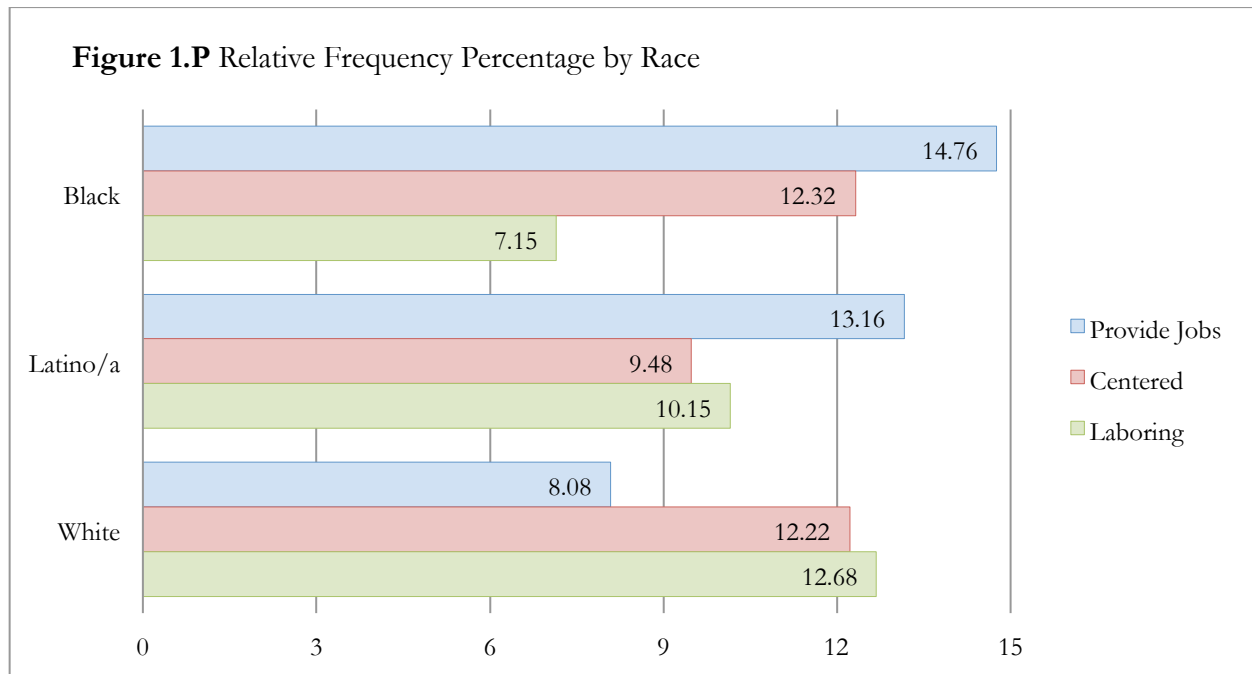
Figure 1.P Relative Frequency Percentage by Race

Figure 1.P shows the racial breakdown in the "Provide Jobs" category among respondents who report inefficacy at levels above the mean. The differences are substantial both within and between groups. Although the "Provide Jobs" category already represents the highest proportion of respondents, of that group includes 43% of Black people and 40% of Latino/a's compared to less than 25% of whites. When comparing between each of the races, Black people and Latino/a people are disproportionately represented in the "Provide Jobs" category compared to whites. Blacks are 1.8 times and Latino/a's 1.6 times more likely to be in the "Provide Jobs" category than whites. Black respondents are represented in the "Centered" category at a similar rate as the "Provide Jobs" category, and least likely to be in the "Laboring" category. Latino/a's are equally less represented in both the "Centered" or "Laboring" category. White respondents, on the other hand, are most represented in the "Laboring" category and similarly represented in "Centered" category.

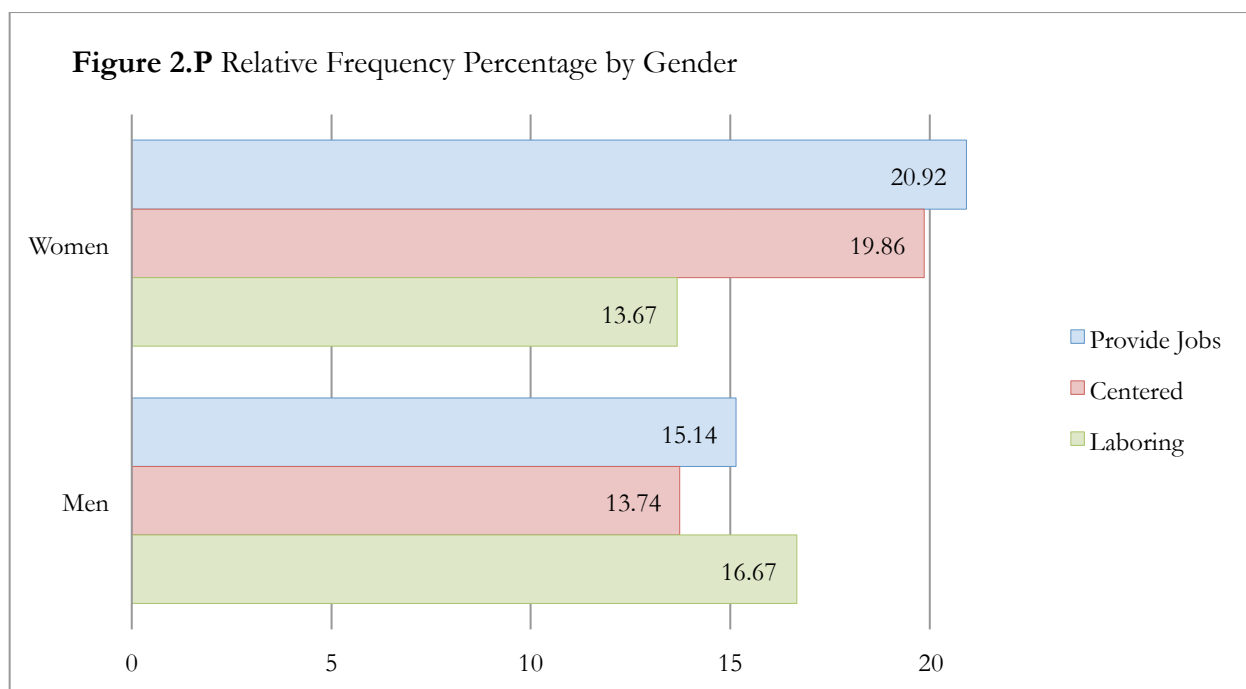**Figure 2.P** Relative Frequency Percentage by Gender

Figure 2.P shows the gender breakdown in the "Provide Jobs" category among respondents who report inefficacy at levels above the mean. 38% of women align with "Providing Jobs" beliefs compared to 33% of men. The relative percentages show us that women are 1.4 times more likely to be in the "Provide Jobs" category than men. Women are represented in the "Centered" category at a similar rate as the "Provide Jobs" category, and least likely to be in the "Laboring" category – a breakdown similar to Black people in Figure 1. Men, on the other hand, are split relatively evenly between the three groups, but still most represented in the "Laboring" group followed by "Provide Jobs" and least represented in the "Centered" category.

The two figures indicate that Black respondents, Latino/a respondents, and women are disproportionately represented among those who believe that the government providing jobs and a good standard of living should be the primary determinant of success while also reporting high levels of inefficacy. Next I investigate how these gender and race based findings overlap.
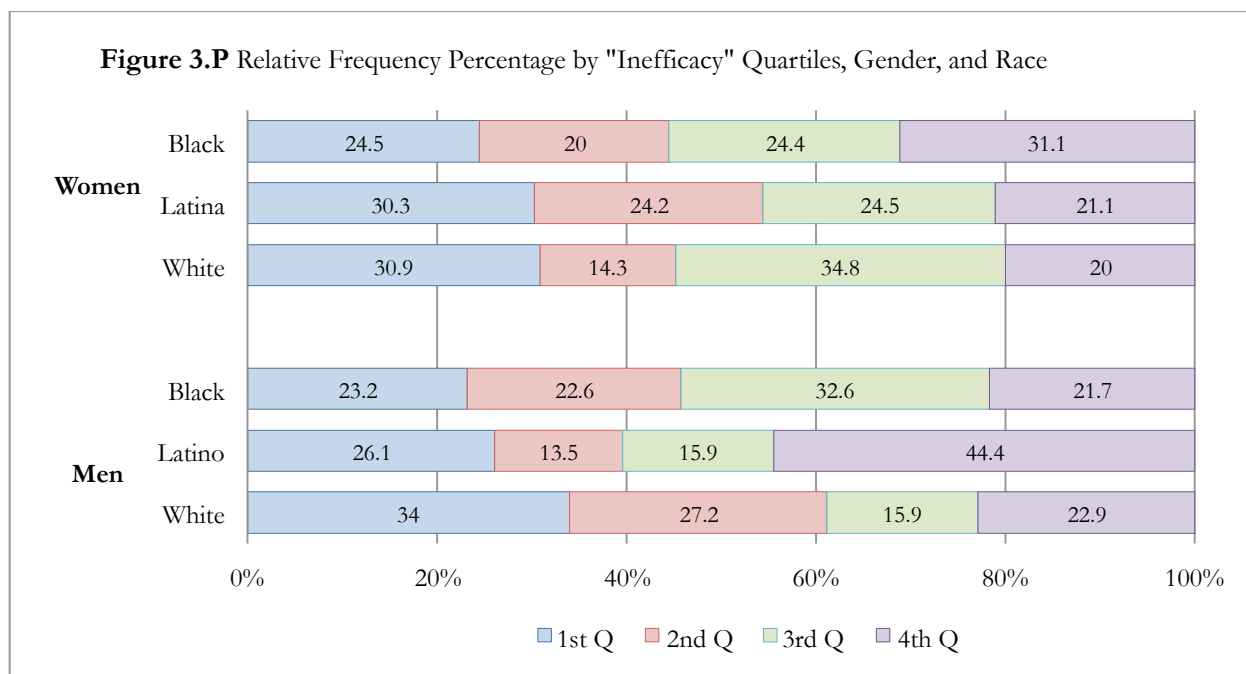
Figure 3.P Relative Frequency Percentage by "Inefficacy" Quartiles, Gender, and Race

		1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q
Women	Black	24.5	20	24.4	31.1
	Latina	30.3	24.2	24.5	21.1
	White	30.9	14.3	34.8	20
Men	Black	23.2	22.6	32.6	21.7
	Latino	26.1	13.5	15.9	44.4
	White	34	27.2	15.9	22.9

Figure 3.P shows the frequency distribution from the "Provide Jobs" category distinguished by "Inefficacy" in quartiles split by gender and then race. Among the women, 55% of Black women and white women are in the upper two quartiles of inefficacy – that is, relative to other women in their racial group over half report high levels of inefficacy. Black women stand apart from Latina's and white women in the 4th quartile, with 31% of respondents being represented. This is a full 10% higher than Latina's and white women, with 21% and 20% reporting the highest levels of inefficacy. When we limit the distribution to only very strongest supporters in the "Provide Jobs" category, 56% of white women in the top two quartiles of inefficacy compared to 55% of Black women and 42 % of Latina women. However, when we focus solely on the top quartile of inefficacy, 29% of Black women are represented. This compares to 26% of Latina women and not quite 20% of white women.

While over 55% of Black women and white women are in the upper two quartiles reporting higher levels of inefficacy, over 60% of Latino men are represented in these same two categories

with 44% of those men being in the highest quartile of inefficacy. This is a full 22% point increase above the next closest group. While 54% of Black men are represented in the highest two quartiles, fewer than 22% are in the highest quartile. Only 39% of white men in the highest two quartiles, with 23% also being in the highest quartile. While a little over half of the cases are in the upper two quartiles, a full 30% of cases are represented in the 4th quartile of inefficacy. This further exacerbates the disparity between Latino men and the other two racial groups.

When we limit the distribution to only the strongest supporters in the "Provide Jobs" category, 56% of white women in the top two quartiles of inefficacy compared to 55% of Black women and 42 % of Latina women. However, when we focus solely on the respondents who report the highest levels of inefficacy (the 4th quartile), we find 29% of Black women and 26% of Latina's compared to not quite 20% of white women. We also see drastic changes with both Latino and white men. Latino men rise from 60% up to 68% in the top two quartiles reporting higher levels of inefficacy, with 49% being represented in the top quartile. White men drop from 39% to 30% in the same span, with only 18% being represented in the group reporting the highest levels of inefficacy (4th quartile). Meanwhile, Black men remain consistent with 54% in the top two quartiles of respondents reporting higher levels of inefficacy. Black men do see an increase in the 4th quartile, rising from nearly 22% up to a full 26%. And again, while a little over half of the cases by frequency are represented in the upper two quartiles, a full 30% of cases are represented in the 4th quartile at the highest levels of inefficacy. This further demonstrates the disparity between racial groups, with the heights of Latino men and the depths of white men being even more impactful.

Figure 4.P Relative* Frequency Percentage by Gender and Race
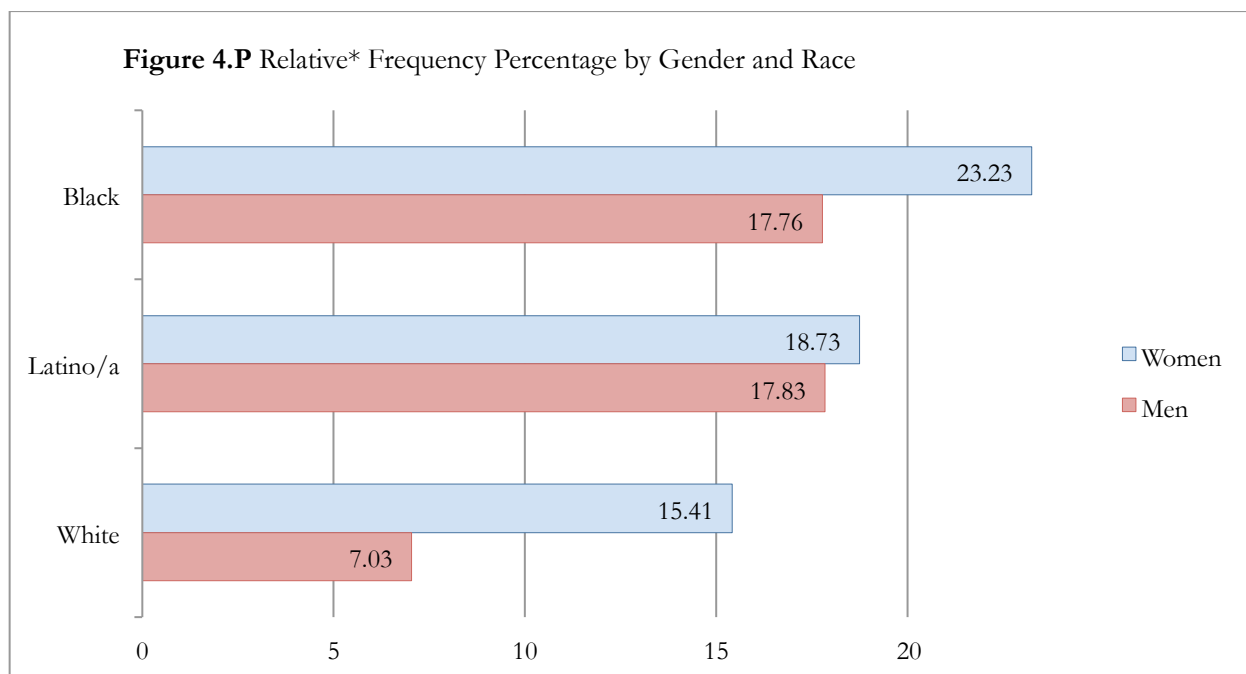
* Relative frequency is the frequency within and between each category, allowing for cross category comparisons.

Figure 4.P shows the breakdown in the "Provide Jobs" category by race and gender among respondents who report inefficacy at levels above the mean. Here we see Black women as the most highly represented demographic in the group, closely followed by Latina's, then Latino men and Black men. White respondents on the whole are lagging behind Black women, but white men are lagging behind the rest of the field. Among white respondents, white women are 2.2 times more likely to be present than white men (15.4% vs. 7%). Among men, Black men and Latino men are a bit more than 2.5 times more likely to be present in this group than white men (17+% vs. 7%). Latina's are just under 2.7 times more likely, and Black women are 3.3 times more likely to be in the "Provide Jobs" category while also reporting inefficacy levels above the mean (18+ and 23+% vs. 7%). Latina's and Latino men are the group least differentiated by gender (>1% difference).

Overall this evidence speaks directly to my expectations for the "No Power" scenario. While the distinctions within racial groups occasionally appear similar, the data shows that a majority of

respondents who are women, are Latino/a's or are Black find themselves in the compromised

position of simultaneously believing in a system of governance where the government is

responsible for providing jobs and a good standard of living rather than people being expected to

get ahead on their own, while expressing high levels of inefficacy – a measure that accounts for

self- and collective inefficacy. The men and the white respondents who are included among

those in this compromised position are similarly distributed across inefficacy quartiles, but there

are significantly fewer men and fewer white respondents that fit these criteria.

No Reward

The "No Reward" scenario is when respondents believe strongly that labor market outcomes are

determined by individual effort (laboring), believe strongly that accepted political ideas are the

result of effort (politicking), and who suffer from financial instability. To analyze the "No

Reward" scenario, I conduct two principal components analyses to create the variables

"laboring" and "politicking". For the "laboring" PCA I begin with five survey response

variables:

1) *Get Ahead* – The government should let each person get ahead on their own, rather than provide jobs and a good standard of living.

2) *Welfare Hindrance* – Welfare programs make people work less than they would otherwise.

3) *Unequal Opportunity* – It's not a big problem if some people have more opportunities in life than others.

4) *Encouraged by Inequality* – People are encouraged to work harder when differences in income and social standing are large enough.

5) *Just Work* – In America, a person's opportunities in life are not determined by the national economy, job opportunities, and government social services.

These variables combine to create the component "Laboring", which is most strongly informed by "Get Ahead" and "Welfare Hindrance", somewhat informed by "Unequal Opportunity" and less informed by "Encouraged by Inequality" and "Just Work". Therefore, the "Laboring" component identifies people who believe that opportunities to get ahead in life should be doled out based on work ethic and not government support.[84] For these respondents, if the government must have a role in the labor market then it should be limited.

For the "politicking" PCA I use three survey response variables:

1) *Persuasion* – Getting political ideas accepted requires influencing and persuading large numbers of people.

2) *Out Work* – Getting political ideas accepted requires working harder than opponents.

3) *Status Quo* – Political ideas that are accepted are usually the better ideas.

These variables combine to create the component "Politicking", which is most strongly informed by "Persuasion" and "Out Work" and is somewhat informed by "Status Quo". Therefore, the "Politicking" component identifies people who believe that political persuasion is the result of diligent effort that is more easily accepted when ideas are better. For these respondents, politics and political engagement are processes of identifying the best ideas represented by the hardest working political figures.

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[84] This of course assesses the perspective that people who are successful are getting ahead without government support. This sentiment reflects a general unawareness of the abundance of social services and government programs – things like highways, public education, farming subsidies, federal loans and bank bailouts, Medicare and Medicaid, defense spending and of course the number one expenditure, social security – that make everyday life in America what it is for many. This also says nothing to the use of federal funding and legislation contributing to the systematic disenfranchisement of select groups. This point, however, is the purpose of this project.

While the components "Laboring" and "Politicking" each indicate respondent's level of agreement, because each is composed of multiple variables it is impossible to determine exactly where the boundary lines should be drawn to distinguish casual from strong agreement. For example, a person who scores high on the "Status Quo" scale and average on "Persuasion" and "Out Work" ranks differently on the "Politicking" component as a person who scores average on all three. As a continuous variable, the differences between these responses are not as easily interpretable as they would be if the variables were ordinal, as they were prior to the PCA.

To create the interaction variable for "Hard Work", which combines beliefs that hard work should be and is the deciding factor in labor markets and in politics, I combine these variables while shifting their distributions so that each has a minimum value of zero.[85] The "No Reward" scenario isolates those respondents that advocate and perceive "Hard Work" that are also experiencing financial instability. To assess financial instability I conduct each analysis in incomes below $50K/year and incomes below $35K/year.

My first hypothesis is about the impact of race – specifically that Black respondents and Latino/a respondents are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Reward" scenario than white respondents. I test the "Race" hypothesis by comparing each racial group – Black people, Latino/a's, and whites – to one another. My second hypothesis is that women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Reward" scenario than men. I test the "Gender" hypothesis by comparing men to women. My third hypothesis is that Black women and Latina women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the "No Reward"

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[85] I make this transformation in particular because alternatives would take away from the interpretability of the component. We cannot begin by multiplying the two, as the resulting distribution would misrepresent respondent's positions. We also cannot begin by adding the two, as the two components are not measured on the same scale and thus addition would inhibit the interpretability of the output. In other words, a 1-unit change in "Laboring" is not equal to a 1-unit change in "Politicking".

scenario than Black men and Latino men, and white women. I test the "Race and Gender" hypothesis by comparing within and between racial groups by gender. I use two-tailed t-tests to determine if there are statistically significant differences in relative means of respondents when they are differentiated by race, by gender, and by the intersection of race and gender.

Table 1.R	Support for Hard Work by Income and Race	
	Black	Latino/a
Incomes < $50K	**3.68*** (.271)	**3.76*** (.310)
Incomes < $35K	**3.94*** (.343)	3.61 (.368)

Note: Two-sample t-test of "Hard Work" means. Results are for comparison to white means. Black & Latino/a differences not reported (insignificant differences). Std. error in parentheses; asterisks denote significance (.05 = *, .01 = **, .001 = ***).

Table 1.R shows the significant differences in means (two-sample t-test) for "Hard Work" beliefs – that is, the belief that hard work should be and is the deciding factor in labor markets and politics – by comparing the mean "Hard Work" beliefs of white respondents to the mean "Hard Work" beliefs of Black and Latino/a respondents separately. Therefore, the comparisons are between white and Black respondents' means, and then between white and Latino/a respondent's means. When incomes are held below $50K/year, both groups show significant differences from white respondents' means. Black respondent's mean "Hard Work" increases significantly income decreases below $35K/year, whereas Latino/a means do the opposite – increasing enough to no longer be significantly different from white "Hard Work" means.[86]

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[86] This table originally included columns for Incomes above $50K/year and for all income groups. These columns were removed for ease of interpretation and for lacking theoretical grounding in the "No Reward" scenario. This table also included Black and Latino/a differences and women and men. Black and Latino/a means showed no significant

Table 2.R does the same work – showing the significant differences in means (two-sample t-test) for "Hard Work" beliefs by comparing the means of white respondents to Black and Latino/a respondents – except in this table respondents are differentiated by gender rather than income, which is held below $35K/year. Here we see a striking asymmetry between gender groups. Among men, both groups show significant differences from white respondents' means. Among women, however, neither group shows significant differences from white respondents' means.[87]

Table 2.R	Support for Hard Work by Gender (Income < $35K)		
	White	Black	Latino/a
Men	**2.88**	**4.62****	**4.71****
	(.461)	**(.581)**	**(.709)**
Women	3.11	3.56	3.09
	(.462)	(.422)	(.416)

Note: Two-sample t-test of "Hard Work" means. Results are for comparison to white means. Black & Latino/a differences not reported (insignificant differences). Std. error in parentheses; asterisks denote significance (.05 = *, .01 = **, .001 = ***).

Table 3.R shows significant differences in means for "Hard Work" beliefs by comparing the means of respondents who are women to respondents who are men, except in this table respondents are differentiated by race while income is again held below $35K/year. Here we see a distinct asymmetry between racial groups. Among Black and Latino/a groups, respondents report significant differences in means when differentiated by gender. Among white respondents, however, there are no significant differences in means. Another interesting finding is that the

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differences in any of the four income categories. Women and men showed significant differences only in the income groups that were discarded. Further testing within and between gender categories can be found in subsequent tables.

[87] This table originally included columns for Incomes above $50K/year, Incomes below $50K/year, and for all income groups. These columns were removed for ease of interpretation and for lacking theoretical grounding in the "No Reward" scenario. This table also included Black and Latino/a differences. Black and Latino/a means showed no significant differences in any of the four income categories. Further testing within race and between gender categories can be found in subsequent tables.

mean "Hard Work" value for both Black men and Latino men are significantly higher than the means of Black women and Latina's. While Black women and Latina's mean's are higher than white women's, there are no significant differences (not shown).[88]

Table 3.R   Within Race by Gender (Incomes < $35K)

	Men	Women
Black	4.63 (.581)	3.56 (.422)
Latino/a	**4.71*** (**.709**)	**3.08*** (**.416**)
White	2.88 (.461)	3.11 (.462)

Note: Two-sample t-test of "Hard Work" means. Results are for comparison to white means. Black & Latino/a differences not reported (insignificant differences). Std. error in parentheses; asterisks denote significance (.05 = *, .01 = **, .001 = ***).

Overall, the two-sample t-tests suggest four important things for respondents in the "No Reward" scenario: 1) the average Black respondent and Latino/a respondent has a relationship with "Hard Work" that is significantly different than white respondents'; 2) the average Latino/a respondent reports very high levels of "Hard Work" throughout income levels; 3) the average Black respondent levels of "Hard Work" increases as income decreases; and 4) Black men and Latino men report significantly higher levels of "Hard Work" than women.

To corroborate these insights, I conduct OLS regressions that measure the impact of race and gender on the relationship between "Hard Work" and income. With these regressions I am able to 1) incorporate weights that allow for inferences to be made within and between races and

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[88] This table originally included columns for Incomes above $50K/year, Incomes below $50K/year, and for all income groups. These columns were removed for ease of interpretation and for lacking theoretical grounding in the "No Reward" scenario.

gender; 2) consider the statistical impact of various control variables – namely those factors that have been shown to impact labor force and political participation; and 3) to generate a more general understanding of how these factors are related beyond the "No Reward" scenario. The dependent variable in these analyses is "Hard Work" – the belief that hard work should be and is the deciding factor in labor markets and politics. For control variables I use age, highest level of education, household size, and region. I create a category that combines Black respondents and non-white Latino/a respondents in order to make more general inferences about historically marginalized populations. Lastly, I use four dummy variables: 1) one for Black respondents that omits Latino/a's (therefore, Black =1, white = 0); 2) one for Latino/a's that omits Black respondents (therefore, Latino/a = 1, white = 0); 3) one for white respondents with no omissions (therefore, white = 1, Black *and* Latino/a = 0); and 4) one for gender (therefore, women = 1, men = 0). I begin by conducting OLS regressions with each of these variables in the "No Reward" scenario.

Table 4.R Within Race (Incomes < $35K)

	Race/Gender (Indep. Var.)	Hard Work
Model 1 (Omits Latino/a)	Black	.904 (.490)
Model 2 (Omits Black)	Latino/a	**1.18*** **(.514)**
Model 3 (Omits none)	White	**-1.04*** **(.461)**
Model 4	Gender	**-1.01**** **(.400)**

Note: OLS Regressions in the "No Reward" scenario. Std. error in parentheses; asterisks denote significance (.05 = *, .01 = **, .001 = ***).

Table 4.R shows significant difference's when comparing Latino/a's to white respondents, Black and Latino/a respondents to white respondents, and women to men. As hard work beliefs increase a person is more likely to be Latino/a, more likely to be Black and Latino, and less likely to be white. On the opposite end, when hard work beliefs decrease a person is more likely to be white and less likely to be Latino/a or Black. Lastly, as hard work beliefs increase people in the "No Reward" scenario are much more likely to identify as men than women.

Table 5.R Within Race w/Controls (Incomes < $35K)

	Hard Work			
	Model 1 (Omits Latino/a)	**Model 2** (Omits Black)	**Model 3** (Omits none)	**Model 4**
Black	.662 (.492)			
Latino/a		**1.42**** **(.561)**		
White			**-0.941*** **(.464)**	
Gender*	-0.674 (.497)	-0.578 (.499)	-0.689 (.408)	-0.665 (.390)
Age	0.262 (.150)	**0.619***** **(.139)**	**0.479***** **(.118)**	**0.454***** **(.117)**
Education	**-0.671*** **(.284)**	-0.308 (.277)	**-0.531**** **(.224)**	**-0.576***** **(.204)**
HH-Size	0.040 (.177)	-0.268* (.162)	-0.158 (.136)	-0.165 (.129)
Region	-0.251 (.265)	-0.194 (.231)	-0.327 (.202)	-0.308 (.192)

Note: OLS Regressions in the "No Reward" scenario. Std. error in parentheses; asterisks denote significance (.05 = *, .01 = **, .001 = ***). Each model is tested within gender groups as well. Latina women & white women show significant differences (p=.057), with a coefficient of 1.33 and standard error .690.Also, Model 4 is tested within racial groups.

Table 5.R includes relevant control variables including age, education, household size, and region. The findings reiterate the preceding table insofar as race is concerned, with Latino/a's having a significant positive relationship with hard work beliefs, Latino/a and Black respondents

having a significant positive relationship with hard work beliefs, and white respondents having a significant negative relationship with hard work beliefs. Age is significant and positively correlated with hard work in Models 2, 3, and 4 (Latino/a-White model; White-Latino/a, Black model; and gender model). Education is significant and negatively correlated in Models 1, 3, and 4 (Black-White model; White-Latino/a, Black model; and gender model). Gender, household size, region are insignificant throughout. Not shown are two additional tests: 1) Models 1, 2, and 3 are tested within gender groups and 2) Model 4 is tested within racial groups. The latter yield no significant results. The former produces significant results only in Model 2 between Latina women and white women.

Table 6.R Comparison w/White Women
(Incomes < $35K)

	Hard Work		
	Model 5	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
Black Men	**1.43*** **(.741)**		
Latino Men		**2.03**** **(.845)**	
Latina Women			**1.33*** **(.690)**
Age	0.329 (.222)	**0.803***** **(.197)**	**0.502**** **(.183)**
Education	-0.615* (.414)	-0.325 (.424)	-0.291 (.322)
HH-Size	0.348 (.257)	-0.141 (.250)	-0.283 (.187)
Region	-0.601 (.414)	-0.069 (.345)	-0.496 (.298)

Note: OLS Regressions in the "No Reward" scenario. Std. error in parentheses; asterisks denote significance (.05 = *, .01 = **, .001 = ***).

Overall, Tables 4.R and 5.R suggest that Latino/a's positive relationship with hard work beliefs is distinct from white respondent's that the significant differences remain even when we include the Black respondents in the "No Reward" scenario. Latino/a's having higher median values and fewer outliers than Black respondents is likely the reason why although Black respondent's show a mean "Hard Work" value that is significantly different from whites where Latino/a respondents do not, in regressions the Black-white dummy is insignificant and the Latino/a-white dummy is significant.

While models in Table 5.R are intraracial, we can still make inferences between both race and gender. Table 6.R also includes control variables for age, education, household size, and region.[89] These findings further demonstrate the powerful impact of race and gender together on hard work beliefs. In Table 6.R we see Black men, Latino men, and Latina women each having positive relationships with hard work that are significantly differentiated from white women's relationship with hard work. Age is significant and positively correlated with hard work in Models 6 and 7 (Latino/a-White women models. Education, household size, and region are insignificant throughout.

Part 3.
Results

I test three interrelated hypotheses in both the "No Power" and the "No Reward" scenarios. The first hypothesis is about the impact of race, specifically that Black and Latino/a respondents are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the aforementioned scenarios than white respondents. The second hypothesis is that women are significantly more likely to satisfy the

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[89] For ease of interpretation, models comparing Black respondents with Latino/a respondents, and white men with Black women and Latina women respondents are omitted. The included models are those with significant values in the key independent variables of race and gender.

conditions of the "No Power" scenario than men, and men more likely to satisfy the conditions

of the "No Reward" scenario than women. The third hypothesis is that Black women and Latina

women are significantly more likely to satisfy the conditions of the aforementioned scenarios

than Black or Latino men, or white women.

The impact of race is apparent from the beginning of the analysis. In the "No Power" scenario

we find that 40% of Black and Latino/a respondents believe that the government should provide

good jobs and a good standard of living as compared to only 25% of white respondents. From

there forward, the racial group disparities for respondents who report a preference for the

government to provide jobs rather than for people to get ahead on their own are heightened by

this 15% point gap at the core of the racial analysis. This gap is even more important considering

that the "Provide Jobs" category has 35% of respondents, the highest percentage in the three

categories.

We see similar interracial differences in the "No Reward" scenario, with significant differences

in "Hard Work" means between whites and Latino/a's for incomes below $50K and between

white and Black people with incomes below both $50K and below $35K. When incomes are held

below $35K, we see significant interracial differences in means only among men. When we look

intra-racially, however, we only see significant differences between Latino men and Latina

women. Latino/a respondents have a significant and strongly positive relationship while white

respondents have a significant and strongly negative relationship in regressions predicting hard

work beliefs.

The importance of gender is also apparent early on in the analysis. In the "No Power" scenario we find that 40% of women believe that the government should provide good jobs and a good standard of living compared to 30% of men. From hereon, all gender disparities for respondents who report a preference for the government to provide jobs rather than for people to get ahead on their own are heightened by this 10% point gap at the core of the gender analysis. And again, this gap is even more important considering that the "Provide Jobs" category has 35% of respondents, the highest percentage in the three categories. We see similar differences in the "No Reward" scenario, with significant findings in regressions with gender that point to men occupying the higher levels of hard work beliefs.

These findings carry into the intersection of race and gender. Among women, Black women and white women appear to walk the same line in the "No Power" scenario until we look to the highest levels of "Inefficacy" and "Provide Jobs" beliefs. From there we see 29% of Black women being represented at this extreme. This 29% is not accounting for the Black and Latino/a people being 15% more likely to be in the "Provide Jobs" category to begin with. Considering this, even the 6% gap between Latina and white women takes on a much greater importance. Among men, 49% Latino men are represented at the highest levels of "Inefficacy" and "Provide Jobs" beliefs. This is nearly double Black men's 26% and a full 30% higher than white men at 18% at this high level. These differences, again, are exacerbated by the 15% gap in representation for Black and Latino/a people. 32% of all men are in this largest group as compared to 26% of women.

In the "No Reward" scenario, we see Black men, Latino men, and Latina women reporting positive relationships with hard work that are significantly different from white women. While

the differences among Black men and Latino men is consistent with the means testing, the differences between Latina women and white women were unexpected. These results deviate from my two hypotheses that include gender, but do so in a way that is still consistent. The gender (second) and the race and gender (third) hypotheses are based on an assumption that the targeting of marginalized populations would manifest as a disproportionate presence in the "No Reward" scenario just as it did in the "No Power" scenario. However, in the "No Reward" scenario, we see that this affect is more connected to the historical role of gender and race in labor markets. Specifically, white women were held apart from the workforce in ways that Black and Latina women have not been. This is a likely explanation for why men were more likely to be significantly different from women, and also Black men and Latino men were significantly different from white women especially. This is a perfect example of why thorough and in-depth theoretical work must undergird quantitative research. Lastly from the "No Reward" scenario, Black men and Latino men are significantly and positively related to "Hard Work", although this significance is largely carried by Latino men who report "Hard Work" beliefs at rates higher than any other group of men or women in the data.

Overall, the "No Power" scenario tells us that Black respondents and Latino/a respondents – especially the women – are disproportionately likely to believe that the government should provide jobs and a good standard of living and report the highest levels of inefficacy. The impact of race and gender are so significant here that Black women are in this category over three times more than white men. In fact, Black women are in this category more than white men and women combined. Latino/a respondents, on the other hand, are much closer to Black respondents. The "No Reward" scenario provides similar feedback. Black respondents an Latino/a respondents – especially the men – are disproportionately likely to strongly believe that

hard work is tied to success in politics and labor in spite of their lack of financial success. The impact of race and gender are so apparent here that Latino men's relationship with hard work is twice that of white women's. In sum, there are major differences in the "No Power" and "No Reward" scenario based on race and gender. These differences disproportionately disadvantage Latino/a respondents and Black respondents. These differences are the most pronounced when we differentiate by gender.

Conclusion

These results are consistent with my expectations. Non-events as decision-making responsiveness in the contexts of labor and politics are significantly present among marginalized groups. How then should we interpret non-events, the loss or absence of (paradigm-shifting) responsiveness to events? Answering this question begins by identifying the foundation of non-events. While others point to individual agency, what this work shows is that understanding agency must first understand the context that agency is operating in. In the "No Power" scenario we find respondents who have been politically defeated. Low efficacy – the belief that they are unable to change their neighborhood, their government, and even their selves – is the basis of non-events and a lack of self-determination. These limitations, however, are not imagined or some intrinsic pathology. In Peter St. Jean's Pockets of Crime (2007), respondents in neighborhoods with high levels of drugs, gangs, violence and crime said that their neighborhood social disorder "does not suggest that no one cares, but rather that the city's government does not care about the neighborhood." (Pg. 40) That these limitations are exogenously imposed through invisible power, in the absence of observable conflict, has a significant affect on historically marginalized groups and the likelihood that they cooperate with this type of power.

The "No Reward" scenario consists of respondents who are committed to the value of hard work and believe that politics are meritocratic, all while enduring sincere financial limitations. Their responsiveness is rooted in diligence and an expectation that other people, particularly those who are financially successful, are similarly committed. In this scenario, non-events are rooted in their hard work beliefs insofar as they lack self-determination due to inhibited autonomy. These beliefs push these respondents away from collective action and towards individualism. This is what Sandra Susan Smith (2007) calls "defensive individualism" – the choice to avoid support for fear of ridicule and to avoid the possibility of others being compromising while trying to help you with your struggles. At a time when austerity politics legitimizes the dismantling of protections for disadvantaged and under resourced groups, I argue that this type of neglect sans ostensible conflict facilitates and reproduces non-events. That these affects are distinguishable by race and gender is evidence that these communities are so inadequately represented that their non-events have yet to be addressed in the only true way it can be – through intentionally inclusive representation that follows from paradigm-shifting responsiveness.

The concept " lateral agency" in Lauren Berlant's <u>Cruel Optimism</u> (2011), is in its most basic form a discussion of the ways that quotidian politics and in fact every day life can be a slow death. We might thereby understand the thought process of respondents who are facing the options of living resistance or accepting that, as one of the survey questions asks, "it's not a big problem if some people have more opportunities in life than others." This chapter demonstrates the need for a fundamental reconsideration of political engagement through decision-making, as the burden of understanding actual political preferences are likely indiscernible through an action-centered approach. Our understanding of human behavior must translate into these more nuanced and considerate attitudinal and behavioral models.

The bigger picture of this chapter is that there is a systematic and interpersonal silencing happening. To borrow from Trouillot: legitimate as it is, the natural desire for justice cannot be satisfied, lest it threaten U.S. interests. Justice is what is needed here, it is how we account for the legacy of white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy that courses through neoliberalism's veins. The disproportionate harm evidenced in the No Power and No Reward scenarios require a disproportionate response. The neoliberal's avoidance of avoidable conflict, the overt commitment to equality, it all guarantees that the disproportionate and targeted response necessary to provide recompense remains impossible.

This is not to say that only institutional accountability can overcome the affects of prolonged inequality and resistance, but it would be a fantastic start. We see the importance of discourse and imagination through Cristina Beltrán's work and throughout this project, so it is reasonable to challenge the language of even the most beloved political figures. And for those who remain in marginalized publics, who are devoted to non-events, we must also support them by reigniting their sense of choice. This is what freedom, justice, and democracy look like.

CONCLUSION

Inequality and inequity are being facilitated by neoliberalism in many ways. In this project I show how imaginative possibilities can be limited structurally by inhibiting autonomy. This helps facilitate discriminatory ontological orders and many of their effects in ways that avoid observable conflict. Whether the perpetuation of non-events is strategic or caused by disillusionment is unclear. However, it is clear that marginalized groups are facing paradoxical crises both structurally and in everyday scenarios: their grievances, particularly those rooted in longstanding systems of oppression, have no official pathway to a just resolution. These critiques and criticisms are disregarded by a society that is committed to reinforcing and reproducing the system of oppressions from which they are generated.

Through an analysis of the structuring of power, particularly neoliberal power, I show how the emphasis on notions of justice that are rooted in progressive changes – which prioritize reconciliation as a precondition for change – help dominant power avoid facing accountability by inhibiting the likelihood of being called to account. That is to say, a key tenet is the avoidance of observable conflict. The long-term effects of these structural processes are particularly detrimental to disadvantaged groups and benefit dominant power. The data in this project confirms my argument that the prolonged exposure to this neglect will seep into decision-making and facilitate the avoidance of expressing grievances. While this is particularly problematic for those groups who are targeted by these systems of disadvantage, this also represents a considerable threat to participatory democracy. After a brief overview of the data, I will discuss the implications of the findings.

Project Overview

In this project I explore the impediments that limit the U.S.' ability to adequately displace

longstanding inequities. In addressing this dilemma, I ask what roles individuals play within and beyond the social order? More specifically, how are prolonged inequality, inequity, and resistance interacting with and affecting efficacy, agency, and self-determination? Finally, considering that these interactions are capable of eluding observational analyses, what affects are they having on American democracy and participatory democratic engagement? I began answering these questions with a theoretical intervention exploring the importance of non-events. Non-events blur the boundaries between framework and methodology, denoting expressions of coerced decision-making. When political engagement fails to challenge normalized consent or is otherwise constrained by subjectivity, then it is categorized as a non-event. The exploration of non-events begins with the comparison of the Baltimore Uprising and the non-response to Korryn Gaines killing. In spite of the participatory democratic benefits of the former, I categorize the Baltimore Uprising as a non-event along with the non-response to Korryn Gaines. We see similar evidence of non-events in the Chinese-American response to the police shooting of Akai Gurley, as they explicitly acknowledge that Gurley is dead because of an unjust system while simultaneously advocating for Gurley's shooter. A counter-response came from a diverse group of Asian Americans who stood with the movement for Black lives and called for the dismantling of police and support for Black futures. There was also a letter written in many languages to elders explaining why the commitment to the movement for Black lives is so vital. These examples of paradigm-shifting responsiveness, in contrast with non-events, challenge both subjectivity and structural constraints in expressions of critique and criticism.

The notion of paradigm-shifting responsiveness comes from a reinterpretation of Cristina Beltrán's analysis of the 2006 U.S. immigration marches. Beltrán's work shows, although not explicitly identifying, that there is a decision-making component to observable actions. This

became evident in Beltrán's analysis of protesters in the 2006 immigration marches, who overcame the constraints to their identity as undocumented workers and restraints to their self-advocacy in having few or no opportunities to have their critique and criticism heard. Paradigm-shifting responsiveness is not necessarily isolated to historically disadvantaged groups. It does however recognize those groups who have critiques that are structurally constrained, especially those for whom these constraints are in favor of the dominant power. Because these behaviors are most identifiable among those who are expressing themselves through overcoming boundaries, it is all the more likely that we would be identifying historically marginalized groups.

After this theoretical intervention, I analyze empirical data to explore the importance of invisible power. Invisible power describes implementations of power and corresponding responses that interact in the absence of observable conflict. I use in-depth interview data to show 1) how invisible power contributes to non-events by inhibiting autonomy – a person's sense of choice; and 2) how invisible power disproportionately targets women, people of color, and women of color. These interviews were conducted with participants in the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), focusing on experiences within SNAP compared to experiences during job seeking. I make three key findings, starting with compartmentalization. Although respondents identify the state at the core of their grievances in both scenarios, their behaviors deviate in very glaring ways. Job seeking behaviors reflect a profound confidence, imaginativeness, and resistance while interactions with SNAP are subdued, deferential, and exceedingly tolerant of grievances. In sum, respondents demonstrate paradigm-shifting responsiveness in labor market interactions and non-events in SNAP interactions. While

examinations of the American bureaucracy might still predict these types of subdued responses, I have been able to identify the core mechanism in autonomy.

The second key finding is false consensus, which describes the characteristic of non-events indicated when people refuse to advocate for themselves in spite of their deeply held and consequential grievances. It is through false consensus that we can identify select types of non-events, namely those that arise in contexts where action makes sense. The final finding from this analysis is marginalized publics, which describe respondents who are aware of the constraints on theirs and others' discourse and subjectivity, and yet they still perpetuate false consensus because their autonomy is inhibited. I expand on these analyses of dominant power, particularly its capacity to regulate autonomy, in an analysis of invisible power as operationalized in neoliberalism.

I explore neoliberalism through one of its agenda items, the prioritization of economic markets. With the help of a nationally representative survey, I test two scenario: the first for those who reinforce the neoliberal agenda through hard work beliefs in politics and the economy, all in spite of their own low income; and the second scenario for those who disagree with the neoliberal agenda insofar as they want the government to provide jobs and a good standard of living, but who also report low efficacy levels indicating their disbelief in their ability to have their concerns addressed by the state. Both of these scenarios indicate a non-event insofar as they disadvantage the believer to the benefit of the state – in short, there are no avenues to advocate collective or self-interests in either of these scenarios. The non-event, the coerced decision-making, is in aligning with the priorities of a state agenda that disadvantages their selves. The data includes a Black and Latino/a oversample, and thus I am able to make comparisons across

race and gender to support several of my claims: 1) that invisible power is disproportionately targeting people of color, women, and women of color; 2) that invisible power reinforces ontological hierarchies, with similar racial and gender based targets and benefactors; and 3) that invisible power is a fundamental threat to democratic political activity, causing the loss of responsiveness to events and eroding contexts where action makes sense.

The project itself contributes a methodological approach to identifying the affects of neoliberalism, an interpretive framework that incorporates decision-making and autonomy to be able to better diagnose the significance of political engagement, and, by identifying significant contrast that exists within individuals who are facing structural constraints, demonstrating the value in comparative analyses that approach events and behaviors from multiple angles. Beyond the project we are now better able to consider the significance of non-response, structural silencing, and marginalized group politics much more in depth. Rather than being forced to rely on our understanding of observable data, we can now consider the significance of decision-making in the absence of observable conflict. This project has shown how even our actions are dependent on surrounding contexts. Therefore, while comparing action and inaction is still relevant, it has become even more important to consider the development of contexts where action makes sense. Beltrán does this in her discussion of immigrant counterpublics, which then facilitated the marches. These counterpublics are generated in explicit contrast to preexisting boundaries, and create a space where action like the marches can have room to be expressed. In the end, considering decision-making contexts provides an important layer on our understanding of public opinion, political behavior, efficacy, agency, and self-determination, among other things.

Challenging a Neglectful State

The overarching goal of the project is to better understand and interpret political engagement, how it is affected by neoliberalism, and the deleterious implications for American democracy when participation is inhibited by neglect. We are left to wonder how we can operationalize our creative capacities towards establishing methods, institutions, and infrastructures that will displace longstanding inequities? How do we structurally and interpersonally increase and sustain autonomy? This project helps answer this question by identifying impediments that limit our ability to do exactly this.

The failure to be accountable is constraining critique, inhibiting autonomy, detaining self-determination, and halting the progress of political development in individuals and in policy. I argue for a notion of justice that prioritizes accountability above reconciliation, a configuration that I believe makes it possible to establish methods, institutions, and infrastructures that are capable of hearing and addressing grievances without conceding to a politics of reconciliation. Critique must be acknowledged and encouraged at the forefront of policy development, it must be facilitated within policy, and these mechanisms must incorporate feedback in perpetuity.

Considering that this lack of accountability is foundational in U.S. governance, liberalism, and democracy, I also consider what justice emphasizing accountability looks like from the people's perspective. Joy James (1999) provides a rubric through her discussion of revolutionary Black feminisms. These "explicitly challenge state and corporate dominance and critique the privileged status of bourgeois elites among the 'left' … by connecting political theory for radical transformation with political acts to abolish corporate-state and elite dominance". (Pg. 86) We are seeing the application of this strategy across Twitter, Facebook, and other social media

platforms today. Moreover, the efforts of Mara Jacqueline Willaford and Marissa Johnson from the Seattle branch of the #BlackLivesMatter organization and Ashley Williams in Charleston, South Carolina also demonstrate the value of justice with accountability and without avoiding observable conflict. We saw important changes in Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton's agendas as a result of the efforts in Seattle and Charleston, actions that targeted candidates with platforms that avoid observable conflict but have significant negative implications for historically marginalized groups. These actions pushed these candidates to reconcile with the disadvantaged, rather than the other way around. To be clear, the significance of these efforts as examples of justice that emphasizes accountability to historically marginalized groups is not found in their targeting presidential or national politics, nor candidates during campaigning or primaries, nor because they were somewhat successful. The significance is in targeting neoliberalism and including forcing these candidates to address the same limitations that republican candidates face *because they share many of the same limitations*.

While these efforts may seem trivial, their effects coincidental, and the methods unsustainable – I argue that they have a decidedly more impactful effect than the group of activists and organizers who sat with President Barack Obama at his forum on policing. The difference is less about scheduling a meeting to be heard, and more about prioritizing accountability above reconciliation. The meeting with Obama is a textbook example of requiring reconciliation before accountability, in a faux granting of legitimacy to the grievances and platforms of these organizations instead of justice. Obama is quoted as saying that these groups "Can't just keep on yelling", but I argue that his response is reflective of his unwillingness to be accountable to constituencies to whom he owes both of his elections. The great lie is that ceding power to these authority figures is an effective method of change, in spite of the fact that resisting these same

figures may similarly result in more of the same. Nevertheless, the value of the resistance is also found in transforming subjectivities and challenging structural domination. These efforts are the key to restoring autonomy, to expanding self-determination, and exploring new political possibilities. Most important is recognizing that succumbing to structural defeats has their own consequences beyond failing to overcome them. My hope is that this project makes these consequences clearer and that efforts to resist domination might better consider these entanglements. And while these findings are valuable, in no way does this negate the fact that the value is rooted in a constant struggle against systematic, institutional, and ontological oppressions. While it is easy to critique different strategies and methods intending to combat oppression, most important is that those efforts are targeting dominant power and not neglecting marginalized groups.

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