OPPOSING AND POLICING RACIAL INTEGRATION

Evidence from the Housing Choice Voucher Program

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Abstract

Over fifty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, how have mechanisms of residential segregation changed? Using a case study of a Los Angeles suburb's reaction to Black movement through the federal Housing Choice Voucher program, I argue that policing should be considered among the contemporary forces of residential segregation. Through interviews with forty-three local residents, I show how one community's reaction to voucher movement spans from attitudes to actions. First, I document widespread hostility towards Black voucher holders on the basis of their race, gender, and participation in the voucher program. Second, I trace how the city's municipal code changes have responded to public sentiment and created an incentive to participate in policing. By attaching fines and incentives for landlords to evict tenants to broadly written and subjective nuisance codes, the city has created a pathway by which local residents can pressure unwanted neighbors out of the community. Third, I illustrate how some residents engage in participatory policing by surveilling neighbors they believe are using vouchers and dispatching city and police agencies to inspect, fine, and possibly evict these targets. These findings illustrate how communities can use policing to racially segregate space, how eviction might be communally produced, and how local opposition to Black movement breaks the pathway between residential mobility and socioeconomic gains that underlies the voucher program.

Keywords: Race, Mobility, Housing Voucher, Policing, Eviction, Segregation, Suburb

INTRODUCTION

Through a case study of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, this paper argues that opposition to racial integration may be operationalized through policing. Based in part on the prediction that movement to middle class neighborhoods would improve the socioeconomic outcomes of poor households, federal housing assistance to low-income renters has shifted its focus from the construction of public housing to the movement of poor Black residents from segregated and poor urban areas to less

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segregated and less disadvantaged neighborhoods. As a result, the Housing Choice Voucher program has come to dominate federal rental assistance to low-income households, replacing many of the units lost to public housing demolition and accounting for much of the additional growth in the size of federal subsidized housing (Vale and Freemark, 2012).

Existing literature on the results of this policy change makes three key findings about the relationship between residential and socioeconomic mobility: first, recipients of vouchers tend not to move to significantly different neighborhoods; second, adult movers see little change to their economic status; and third, children fare much better than adults over the long term (Chetty et al., 2016; Clampet-Lundquist and Massey, 2008; Sampson 2008). These findings suggest that evaluations of the program should account for the program's limited spatial mobility effect and for the longer than expected period over which mobility's benefits begin to show. But an additional explanation that has received less attention might be the role of neighborhoods not just as economic contexts of reception but as social ones. To the degree that neighborhoods receiving voucher renters deny them meaningful integration, they may stifle the economic progress the program was designed to produce.

I examine this issue through a case study of Black voucher holders moving to the historically White region of Los Angeles known as the Antelope Valley in the wake of the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession. Drawing on interviews with forty-three local residents, I find both hostility towards voucher renters and evidence that these attitudes are mobilized through policing.

First, I find that a majority of respondents are hostile to Black movement. Their opposition is rooted in a historical understanding of the valley as a White suburb and incorporates stereotypes based on race, class, and gender in order to further a narrative that legitimizes and even necessitates the policing and eviction of Black residents.

Second, I illustrate the ways that a re-structured local municipal code facilitates individual engagement in policing activities. By expanding municipal codes and increasing fines and penalties (including eviction) for their violation, the city created a pathway for determined residents to evict their neighbors. This pathway is all the more robust because it translates segregatory and racist behavior to norm-preserving and law-enforcing.

Third, I show how a subset of respondents act on the attitudes found in the broader sample, through the municipally structured pathway of what I call *participatory policing*. This involves surveillance of suspected voucher renters, sharing information between local residents about voucher renters, and complaint-making to police, code enforcement, and the local housing authority, which are expected to inspect, fine, intimidate, and ultimately evict voucher renters.

These findings have important implications for understanding policing's role in racial segregation. Because the structure of racial segregation has been so durable over time (Logan 2013; Massey and Rugh, 2014), to study how Whites react to Black movement into neighborhoods they live in is to study a relatively rare occurrence, even rarer in the context of the voucher program and Black movement to suburbs (Lacy 2016). Nevertheless, the use of policing to resist integration suggests broader implications for the study of racial segregation. Explanations for the persistence of segregation focus on how public policy, institutional practices, social-structural sorting, and individual actions prevent or slow integration (Boustan 2011; Charles 2003; Krysan and Crowder, 2017). But these findings suggest policing's place in that list of segregatory mechanisms, providing a case study of what Monica Bell (2020) calls the "mutually constitutive" relationship between policing and segregation (p. 655).

As in other instances of resistance to integration (Bell 2013; Rieder 1985), only a minority of residents take the most extreme actions. And while this study does not assess whether they were successful in evicting voucher renters or meaningfully changing neighborhood demography, there is strong evidence that even the attempt to do so has significant social effects on its targets (Kurwa 2015, 2020). These effects may help explain the limits of residential mobility programs (Sampson 2008; Sharkey 2015), and illustrate the potential disconnect between integration in a numerical sense and as it is socially experienced. These findings complement recent studies about the roles of nuisance and crime-free housing ordinances around the country (Archer 2019), and illuminate the ways that these policies enable and incentivize Whites to make frivolous and exaggerated calls to police in reaction to the sight of Black people engaged in everyday activities in public spaces (McNamarah 2018).

SITUATING POLICING IN THE RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION PROCESS

Research on stated preferences shows that Whites prefer to live in neighborhoods with less than 30% Black residency and would leave a neighborhood if more than one of three neighbors were Black (Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996; Farley et al., 1978). Whites tend to overestimate the size of minority groups and grow more hostile toward both Black people and policy seen as benefitting them as their share of the local population grows (Alba et al., 2005; Pickett et al., 2012; Quillian 1996; Taylor 1998). Racial animosity is often twinned with opposition to social safety net programs and coded in discourses of culture and fraud (Gilens 2009; Hancock 2004; Seccombe 2007). In housing, Norrinda Brown Hayat (2016) argues that opposition to vouchers is a key example of the evolution of segregatory preferences from relying on overtly racist to racially coded language.

Suburban communities often define their neighborhood's virtuous characteristics as inclusive of cultural and social practices that in-migrants may be unaware of or unable to easily assimilate into, or associate Black residents with crime and declining property values (Farley et al., 1994; Kefalas 2003). These views turn racial integration into a threat to the neighborhood in its entirety and make the defense against demographic change a necessary fight to preserve an idealized way of life. Social institutions legitimize or reproduce these attitudes in their structuring of the housing market. Real estate agents, property owners, mortgage lenders, and even renters seeking roommates steer and discriminate against Black renters and buyers (Boehm et al., 2006; Ghoshal and Gaddis, 2015; Korver-Glenn 2018; Squires and Velez, 1987; Turner and Ross, 2005). Focusing on how these processes affect voucher renters, research finds that landlords and property owners sort voucher renters, and those with high vacancies and low demand see tenants with guaranteed rental support and few options as a solution to their problems (Rosen 2014). These patterns of landlord choice within the housing market suggest one way that the foreclosure crisis changed the landscape of the voucher program (Pfeiffer and Lucio, 2015).

Looking beyond attitudes, White society has found ways to resist integration through vigilante and communal violence, policy making, and increased policing and incarceration (Derenoncourt 2018; Gotham, 2000; Troeskin and Walsh, 2019). White backlash also focused on stopping the construction of public housing and ending attempts to racially integrate educational institutions (Delmont 2016; Hirsch 2009; Sugrue 2014). These attitudes also found their expression in physical violence as a means to stop Black residents from moving into historically White neighborhoods (Massey and Denton, 1993). But more recent scholarship on White resistance to Black movement

suggests that backlash remains persistent and now takes at least three forms: political mobilization, violence, and policing.

Taking political mobilization first, in a long-term study of affordable housing construction, Douglas S. Massey and colleagues (2013) illustrate the suburban public's opposition to the placement of affordable housing units in their neighborhoods, vocalized through coded language targeted at tenants on the basis of race. Ryan D. Enos' (2016) study of responses to the temporary relocation of public housing tenants in Chicago demonstrates that Whites living in neighborhoods where Black people were relocated to tended to increase their political participation through voter turnout in the election following such movement. Karyn R. Lacy (2002) documents participation in homeowner associations as responsive to integration, and Jessica Trounstine (2018) documents the role of local government in segregation through policies like zoning.

Second, the use of physical violence to terrorize, halt, and reverse Black movement has remained persistent through recent decades. Research by Jeannine Bell (2013) suggests that this type of illegal activity may be an interpersonal substitute for tools of segregation rendered illegal by fair housing law. Using an analysis of newspaper stories reporting on episodes of move-in violence, Bell finds 455 such incidents that took place between 1990 and 2010, noting that, "Frequently, the incidents directed at the integrating family occur within days, weeks, or a few months of their move to a predominantly or all-White neighborhood" (p. 68). Ryken Grattet (2009) extends these findings to show that the effect of non-White migration on the rate of bias crimes is greater in Whiter neighborhoods than in those with fewer Whites.

Third, there is also evidence that individuals police members of proximate racial groups they may feel threatened by. Neighborhood conflict measured by complaints made to a city hotline is found to be more frequent at "fuzzy" neighborhood racial boundaries than at boundaries with informal but clear racial lines, suggesting the mobilization of the state as a defense against demographic change (Legewie and Schaeffer, 2016). The deployment of various government agencies to regulate others is often referred to as third party policing and can also operate through pressure on rental property managers and landlords (Buerger and Mazerolle, 1998; Desmond and Valdez, 2012; Koehle 2013). Finally, research shows that private renters in mixed-income redevelopments engage in informal policing of the building's former public housing tenants, and that private renters and homeowners living near public housing redevelopments also display heightened animus and preferences for policing (Fraser et al., 2013; McCormick et al., 2012).

Following Bell (2020) and Hayat (2016), I argue that these responses to Black movement are legible within a framework of policing as segregatory. While prior work has illustrated the ways that policing takes advantage of racial segregation to exert extreme measures over minority populations (Rios 2011), here I focus on the possibility that White residents may turn to policing as a means of blocking the entry of, asserting power over, or removing Black residents (Hayat 2016). This participatory form of policing is especially powerful given the ubiquity of policing tools available to citizens (applications like Nextdoor, municipal codes, and police service calls), as well as the way policing re-encodes racial bias into the language of safety, protection, and social order (Kurwa 2019). And participatory policing may also operate alongside actions by police themselves which shape the racial landscape of neighborhoods. Daanika Gordon (2020) finds that police interpret and consolidate the racialized meanings of neighborhoods through boundary drawing and strategy development, while Ayobami Laniyonu (2018) and Brenden Beck (2020) find positive relationships between gentrification and order maintenance policing.

SETTING

The Antelope Valley

Data in this paper come from a case study of Los Angeles County's Antelope Valley suburb. The valley is over sixty miles north of the Los Angeles area's main cities and serves as a destination for aspiring homeowners looking for affordable homes, for industries that cannot easily operate in the county, for elevated prison construction and incarceration-related employment, and, more recently, for low-income renters using the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program (Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance 2017). The valley is principally composed of the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale which, as of the end of this study in 2016, had a combined population of roughly 319,454 people. Despite accounting for only 3.14% of the county's population, as of 2015 the Antelope Valley was home to 7.8% of the county's voucher renters, or 14,398 (HUD 2016). That figure represents significant growth in voucher usage since the Great Recession—in 2006 the voucher population was 10,156. The regional imbalance in voucher usage means that while in Los Angeles County only 1.81% of the population is using a voucher, in the valley more than double that fraction, 4.51%, is using a voucher.

One explanation for this imbalance might be that the Antelope Valley's employment and housing difficulties have made it both a magnet for voucher openings and a poor destination for voucher movers. For example, the average foreclosure rate in Lancaster's census tracts during the Great Recession was 10.2%, placing it among the top three cities hit by foreclosures in the Los Angeles\Long Beach metropolitan area, and 9.3% of its housing units were vacant during the 2010 Census (City of Lancaster 2009). It lost nearly 10% of its workforce during the recession, and its unemployment rate has remained higher than that of the City of Los Angeles through the end of 2016. As of 2013, average weekly wages and yearly salaries in the Antelope Valley were $211 and $4,050 less than in Los Angeles County, respectively, a disparity that may help explain why 71,000 people— fully 44.5% of the Valley's 159,615-person workforce— commute into Los Angeles proper for work (Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance 2016).

But these unfavorable economic trends also form a favorable set of circumstances for voucher movement to the region. Building on earlier findings about voucher mobility, the Urban Institute finds that in 76% of audit tests in Los Angeles, landlords choose not to rent to voucher holders, but that voucher denials were less frequent in high-poverty areas (Cunningham et al., 2018). Particularly in areas like the Antelope Valley without protections against discrimination based on one's course of rental income, landlord choices have the capacity to distort the landscape of voucher usage and push tenants to less-preferred locations and units.

The high rate of voucher movement into the valley has occurred in the context of broader demographic changes in the city. In both Lancaster and Palmdale, the proportion of residents identifying as White alone has dropped from roughly 85% in both cities in 1980 to 33% in Lancaster and 22% in Palmdale as of the start of data collection in 2015. Other racial groups have grown during that time, as has the fraction of Whites who identify as Hispanic or Latino. In Lancaster, for example, the proportion of residents identifying as White of any ethnicity still remains high, at 57%.

With this context in mind, it is important to note that the voucher program, while large in the context of housing assistance, is small in the context of national rental market. The voucher program assists roughly 5.25 million people in nearly 2.3 million households, 48% of which are headed by Black heads of households. This case therefore

represents only one of a variety of possible contexts of neighborhood demographic change, and additional research in those permutations could better establish whether and how widely policing may be used to resist integration.

Study Area

Between 2015 and 2016, I interviewed local residents in a neighborhood identified by the City of Lancaster's 2008 Housing Needs Assessment as having a high rate of voucher usage (City of Lancaster 2008). I chose this strategy to obtain a more holistic understanding of one neighborhood, and to gauge the uniformity of opinions and synchronicity or coordination of actions among members of the same neighborhood, and to interpret statements and actions within the context of the neighborhood and its other respondents. One disadvantage of this strategy is that it restricts an understanding of the region's response to that of one high-voucher density neighborhood, rather than including low-density neighborhoods or high-density neighborhoods with different economic and demographic characteristics.

The neighborhood I chose spans two census tracts but is itself somewhat clearly defined. It is bounded to the west by a major street and nearby highway, to the south by a large boulevard, and to the north by non-residentially zoned space. Like much of the Antelope Valley's oldest areas, the study neighborhood contains two- and three-bedroom single family homes mostly built in the 1950s, today valued in the low to mid $200,000s, per estimates on Zillow.com. Streets in this neighborhood are mostly gridded, making homes more visible and accessible to one another and increasing interaction relative to suburban communities with cul-de-sac or other non-gridded layouts. Homes generally have garages, but residents often park in driveways and along the streets. Homes also have moderately sized front yards, occasionally enclosed by fencing.

The long-term effects of the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession were visible in the neighborhood as several houses on each block appeared vacant with no cars or residents visible, flyers long-since stuck into doors and gates, and other signs of housing in disrepair or disuse. Yards were frequently left un-watered, either due to vacancy, foreclosure, water costs, or the region's drought conditions during the time of the study.

To get a sense of the study neighborhood's demography, I use a weighted average of both census tracts' characteristics. As shown in Table 1, the population in this area at the time of the study was 10,848, the median age of residents 28.7, and the rate of high school graduation was just over 75% while the rate of college completion stood at just 6.56%. Across the 3445 housing units in both tracts the mean household income is $44,456, substantially lower than the county or country, but much higher than comparable income levels of voucher renters (the median income in Lancaster's voucher households is $14,317).

The racial makeup of these census tracts reflects the broader trend of diversification since 1980 that has characterized the whole of the Antelope Valley. As of 2016, only 22% of residents identified as White alone, though 57.75% identified as White of any ethnic background. The proportion of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino of any race was 43.62% and the Black population had grown to nearly 30%. Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) suggest that roughly 1025 (or one in every ten) residents in these two census tracts were supported by the voucher program. This rate of voucher usage placed the area far above the city-wide (5.65%), regional (4.51%), or county-wide (1.81%) rate of voucher usage.

Table 1. Demographic Data for Study Neighborhood (2012–2016 American Community Survey Estimates)

Population	
2016 ACS 5-Year Population Estimate	10,848
Age	
Median Age	28.7
Education	
Percent high school graduate or higher	75.07%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	6.56%
Housing and Income	
Total housing units	3445
Mean Household Income	$44,456
Individuals below poverty level	32.62%
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White (of any ethnicity)	57.75%
White alone	22.18%
Black or African American alone	29.31%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	43.62%

Data for study neighborhood comes from weighted average of data from two adjacent census tracts which the neighborhood extends over.
Source: American Community Survey, 2016 Estimates

DATA AND METHODS

To conduct this study, I went door to door one street at a time soliciting interviews with adults who were not currently using the voucher program. I canvassed the neighborhood on weekends so as to maximize chances of an adult being home during daytime hours. I attempted contact at each home only once and gained informed consent from roughly one in five households on whose doors I knocked. Interviews were audio recorded, with informed consent, and subsequently transcribed and analyzed using MaxQDA. Interviews varied in length from fifteen minutes to over forty-five minutes. Some short interviews were the product of respondents providing short but clear answers, four interviews were short because respondents had no opinion on most or all questions and topics (possibly due to low-information). All names presented in this paper are pseudonyms. Before providing descriptive statistics about these residents and discussing findings emergent from their interviews, I describe the limitations of this method and the data.

A number of factors affected why I did not gain interviews from every home I visited, including no one being home at the time I visited, a home being unoccupied, an adult not being present, my inability to communicate with a resident speaking Spanish, or a resident declining to participate. These conditions may plausibly affect the shape of the sample relative to the true population of the neighborhood. If no one was home, this could suggest that those who worked on weekends were less likely to be included in the sample, or that those with leisure activities on weekends were under-represented. My language limitation suggests that Spanish speakers might be under-represented in the study. Finally, residents might have declined to participate for a variety of reasons. Residents might have been unfamiliar with the voucher program and chose not to participate for that reason, or they might have declined because they were not interested

or knew they had no strong opinions about the topic. Finally, residents with precarious legal status or residents who were using the voucher program may also have declined to participate out of an abundance of caution regarding their privacy. Generally, I believe it is possible that the study over-represents strongly opinionated local residents and under-represents some population groups such as Hispanic or Latino residents and non-English speakers.

My own identity also shaped interview participation and content. As a middle class South Asian man whose self-presentation did not fit the neighborhood, I was easily identified as coming from "down-below," the tongue-in-cheek pejorative used to describe the rest of Los Angeles County. Local residents may have been hesitant to participate in an interview or guarded about their comments because I was an outsider.

One key area where this resistance emerged was when asking respondents demographic background questions. I found that local residents were put off by baseline demographic questions—asking why I needed to know their racial identification if I was concerned with their opinions about the voucher program. To mitigate hostile reactions to my questions about their racial and ethnic identification, I chose to accommodate their privacy concerns in order to increase survey participation and maintain trust with respondents. Thus, unless respondents stated their racial identification in the interview, I used my subjective assessment to categorize them. While this meant that data on respondent racial and ethnic identification (and, to a lesser degree age, occupation, and other characteristics) was incomplete or subject to researcher error, it also provided a more open interview environment for respondents and opened additional fruitful lines of inquiry that may not have been available otherwise. The lack of precise demographic data, however, limits the ability to identify respondents by race and ethnicity with certainty. While this was less difficult when speaking to Black respondents who clearly identified as such and whose responses touched on questions of racism, the main area of concern is in the researcher's subjective coding of respondents who may identify as White and\or as Hispanic or Latino. This could introduce error into any assessment of whether opinions varied between these groups. Thus, researcher error in the subjective coding of respondent's demography is a very real possibility in this paper. Yet this concern should be mitigated by the fact that the paper documents anti-Black attitudes held by private renters and homeowners. It is well documented that non-White racial and ethnic groups—potentially including people classified in this study as White—also hold anti-Black attitudes. These attitudes fundamentally operate within and reinforce a social structure that benefits Whites.

As shown in Table 2, local residents in the sample are evenly split by gender but have a wide range of occupational outcomes. Only a small number were still employed in what was once the region's biggest industry—aerospace, while nearly a quarter self-reported as unemployed or retired. However, based on incomplete self-reports and my subjective attempt at categorization, I estimate that my sample of local resident respondents is roughly 65% White. This suggests that the sample is more heavily White than the composition of residents in the tracts in which interviews were conducted (58% White of any ethnicity, 22% White only, 29% Black, and 44% Hispanic or Latino of any race). This mismatch might arise from language barriers described earlier, miscoding on the part of the author, or variation in areas of residency by race and ethnicity within the tracts in question. The relative lack of non-White Hispanic and Latino respondents limits the scope of the findings to the Black-White relationship in Lancaster. But the fact that respondents rarely discussed Hispanic or Latino residents and instead focused their hostility towards Black residents also suggests that the Black-White relationship might be the most salient cleavage in the study area. Finally, residents who left the area (through White flight, for example), are not included in the sample.

Table 2. Selected Demographic Data for Local Resident Respondents

Gender	
Female	51%
Male	49%
*Race\Ethnicity**	
White	65%
Black	14%
Hispanic or Latino	21%
Occupation	
Construction, Manufacturing, or Maintenance	21%
Health Care	9%
Education	9%
Aerospace	7%
Unemployed	12%
Retired	12%
Other or Unknown	30%
Total	43

* *Rough estimates based on incomplete reports by respondents and author's observation. Should be treated as suggestive, but not definitive.*

FINDINGS

In what follows, I show how the reactions of White local residents span hostile attitudes to hostile actions. First, I document local resident respondents' hostility towards Black voucher renters, which functions as a social basis for policing. Second, I detail changes in municipal codes that encourage and incentivize participation in policing. Third, I illustrate how local residents surveil presumed voucher renters, share information amongst other like-minded local residents, and dispatch city, housing, and police agencies against Black neighbors. While these categorizations overlap—for example, respondents' explanations of their hostile attitudes reveal their heavy surveillance of presumed voucher renters—they nevertheless take a pyramid shape: the base of hostility is relatively large compared to the number of residents who report taking the most extreme forms of action, a finding consistent with past scholarship on the varieties and intensities of resistance to neighborhood demographic change (Rieder 1985).

Public Hostility to Voucher Renters: A Social Basis for Policing
Local residents' identification of neighborhood change and voucher renters

While most respondents expressed in general terms their sense that their neighborhood had changed in negative ways over the past several years, a handful of residents explicitly framed these changes as a matter of negative racial change. Linda, one of the oldest respondents, traced the neighborhood's decline to the passage of the Fair Housing Act and the eventual movement of Black families to Lancaster in the decades that followed:

> Well, I can just tell you that for the first time a Black family moved into this neighborhood, there went the neighborhood. And that was about 1988 I think… I

think it was a law passed that there had to be a Black family in every block… That started during the '60s. This was the NAACP. And they did it.

In this way, Linda suggests that no Black resident of her neighborhood—voucher renter or private—lives there in a legitimate manner, rather that Black presence in any form is a product of government intervention. Even younger local residents placed the voucher program (often referred to as Section 8) in a larger context of racialized urban restructuring. Craig explained how he understood the voucher program in the larger context of federal and local housing policy:

Oh, they cleaned up LA. Not the whole—I mean you go to South Central it's still South Central, but…there was sections that they moved up here…they tore down their projects and they moved them up here into Section 8 housing and then they tore down the projects and built condos.

These sentiments were broadly shared. Eighteen respondents (42%) used language that referenced invasion, threat, or racial change. And although voucher holders account for just over 5% of Lancaster's population, nineteen local resident respondents (44%) believed that fraction was over 50% and just six respondents (14%) estimated the voucher population as 25% or less of the total Lancaster population. As Lacy (2002) shows, while Whites moving to predominantly Black suburbs see their Black neighbors as middle class, Whites seeing middle class Black movement to predominantly White suburbs see those new neighbors in primarily racial terms. This suggests that class differences between Black residents (HCV renters and private renters and homeowners) are secondary to their racial status in the eyes of White residents.

Despite these broad feelings of threat and invasion, less than half of the local residents I spoke to said they knew any voucher renters. Instead, respondents based their assumptions on shorthand indicators of who might be using a voucher and ideas gleaned from observations of those individuals.

When asked who in the neighborhood was using a voucher, or how one could tell who was using a voucher, some respondents suggested that race was a signal of voucher usage. Examples include, "I never see anybody but African Americans getting Section 8," or "I don't want to sound racist, but there's more Black people [here]." Whether or not they were voucher renters, all Black residents were subject to being considered a voucher holder by many of their neighbors. The common practice of referring to voucher renters as Black worked to racialize a group defined by economic status while also "voucheriz- ing" private Black residents. None of the respondents whose comments fit these categories later spoke of a difference between race and voucher status or indicated that they knew some number of their Black neighbors were not using vouchers. The common overestimates of the voucher population may be understandable not just in the context of racial threat, but also as products of a conflation or deliberate substitution of voucher status and race (Hayat 2016). Some tenants used "Section 8" as an identity category, in other words, "so and so is a Section 8," rather than using a race, class, or other descriptive label.

But in other cases, respondents used indicators of social disorder (e.g., abandoned cars, unmaintained property, loitering, homes in disrepair) to explain who they thought used a voucher (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004). Shirley, a middle-aged interviewee employed by the local school district, focused on daytime activity, "A lot of them I see just—every morning we leave and I see people just hanging out, sitting on their front porch not going to work. Just hanging out." Helen, a former Caltrans employee who

moved to Lancaster for more affordable housing after a workplace injury, based her identification on signs of poverty and uncleanliness, saying, "You can just tell. They usually don't have a car. Their lawn really looks bad. Not just because of the drought. It's really dirty. It's a lot of trash." Respondents used these observations to make classifications between voucher and non-voucher residents in their vicinity and to indict perceived voucher renters and validate themselves (being clean, working, being able to afford a car).

But these logics of categorization were demonstrably inconsistent. While Helen complained that voucher renters did not have cars, other tenants complained that voucher renters had cars that were too nice. Dorothy said, "I see some of these people got their Humvees sitting in their yard and not in their garage at the Section 8 houses over there." Yet others linked voucher tenants to having too many cars. Jean, an older resident who had moved to the neighborhood in 1974, explained her heuristic: "Oh yeah. We have a lot of Section 8 on the street…The way you know them is they move in and one car comes and then all of a sudden they have four and five cars." This range of indicators of the presence of voucher renters suggests that this type of profiling might be a poor replacement for race and class indicators that respondents may really be relying on.

The race, class, and gender dimensions of local hostility towards voucher renters

Two-thirds of respondents expressed significant hostility towards the voucher program or voucher renters, roughly 20% could be characterized as maintaining a neutral stance despite some negativity, and just a handful were clearly welcoming towards vouchers. Those who estimated the voucher population to be significantly higher than it was, or who used words and phrases indicating racial threat in their interviews, also tended to express more overall hostility towards the program. A third of those who made a small overestimation of the size of the voucher population had a negative view of the program, while just over half of those who made large overestimations of the voucher population had a negative view of the program. Although data on the racial makeup of the interview pool is based on author estimates, no differences were found between those respondents coded as White or coded as Hispanic or Latino.

Respondents were also offered a battery of statements to which they could assert agreement, neutrality, or dissent. Thirty-one respondents participated in this portion of the interview, with the remaining twelve deviating from the formal interview plan due to the respondent's subject interests or time. As illustrated in Table 3, majorities agreed that voucher renters abused the program and were lazy, and pluralities agreed that they brought problems to the neighborhood, committed crime at higher rates, and did not fit in. Statements about crime are already established proxies for opposition to racial integration (Farley et al., 1994). When it came to policy questions, a plurality wanted the government to stop the voucher program (a de-facto end to Black voucher movement to the neighborhood), while few tenants disagreed with the statement that the government should take additional steps to monitor voucher renters. In total, between those who responded affirmatively to a question about their support for monitoring and those who made comments in other parts of the interview endorsing or admitting to engaging in some form of active monitoring, just over half could be considered supportive of some form of surveillance of voucher renters. In their interviews, significant numbers of respondents went further than expressing general opposition to the program, and revealed racial, gendered, and economic resentments that served as a basis for further action.

Table 3. Characteristics of Interviews with Local Residents

Sense of Group Threat	
Used words or phrases suggesting a sense of threat	42%
Used racial shorthand to identify voucher users	21%
Used indicators of social disorder to identify voucher users	21%
Attitudes toward Voucher Tenants	
Generally welcoming	14%
Generally neutral	19%
Generally hostile	67%
Voiced negative racial stereotypes	33%
Voiced negative gender stereotypes	16%
Voiced economic resentment	37%
Responses to Opinion Statements (N=31)	
Voucher Tenants are Lazy	58%
Voucher Tenants Commit More Crime	45%
Voucher Tenants Don't Fit In	35%
Voucher Tenants Abuse the System	52%
Voucher Tenants Bring Problems	39%
Stop Sending Voucher Tenants Here	29%
Agitations about Vouchers and Social Disorder	
Cited noise	23%
Cited cleanliness	21%
Cited cars	19%
Total	43

In keeping with the pattern that many respondents assumed that their Black neighbors were voucher renters, a third made comments about voucher renters that employed negative racial stereotypes. The subjects of these comments included sexual behavior, laziness, intentional attempts to gain government benefits, crime, and drug use. The extended comments by Michael, a middle-aged man in the real estate business, illustrate how attitudes about the voucher program were intertwined with ideas about race, gender, sexuality, culture, and practices of surveillance of voucher renters:

Michael: …it's not the Section 8 woman that lives there. That's fine and all that. But it's all the fucking riff-raff they bring with them. All the 98s that come up here from LA and hang out in the yard and fucking barbecue, couches, all that shit in the front yard.

Author: What's a 98?

Michael: Ninety-eight is security code for Blacks…it's not like saying Black. You know what I mean? …It's a neutral term.

Author: So you're saying that the tenants can be good but there's other people that come in with them…

Michael: Tenants can be okay, like it's just the momma and the little couple of kids or whatever, that's fine. But that's not what you get. You get all the cousins staying overnight, you get the drug dealing, all the bullshit. I've seen them. Go down to the Section fucking 8 office and watch them…Watch it. Watch what happens. You can see them all. They're all the same size. They all eat the same. Go ahead.

Author: And this is based on your personal experience…

Michael: It is the fucking reality! My experience is reality.

Although Michael proved to be among the most vitriolic respondents, roughly one in three respondents made comments about the voucher program or tenants that included one or more racial stereotype, and many became similarly agitated when voicing their frustrations. In his interview, Michael repeatedly spoke about voucher renters assuming they were Black. But his opinion of the voucher program was also bound up with his views of Black women. In order, he cited Black women's living arrangements, Black visibility (the front lawn comment), and stereotypes about drugs and criminality. Later, Michael issued similar comments about Black cooking and dietary practices, asserted that Black voucher renters are "professional" welfare recipients, and claimed that voucher holders (who he assumes are Black women) simply "wait about four years and then squeak out another one, so they can always stay on the program." His comments exemplify the racial stereotypes and obsessive monitoring of Black women in the Antelope Valley.

Jim, a retiree who had moved to Lancaster after leaving the Navy in the mid 1970s, provided another example of local resident anxiety over reproduction, saying, "I don't want to bring race into it, but certain racial entities have a lot of kids and they do it because welfare, Section 8, give them everything free. They don't have to work." These attitudes were not confined to men either, with Linda explaining, "If a woman gets pregnant and has a child she has everything paid for. Her boyfriend lives in the house. They get free house. Free rent. If she goes to college, they get more money, and they have another child, more money and they get this, that, and the other." Others commented about voucher renters' sexual practices, number of partners, parenting practices, and manipulation of pregnancy or disability to qualify for welfare or housing support.

Finally, economic resentments motivated hostility towards voucher users among sixteen respondents. Some expressed concern that tenants themselves did not genuinely need the voucher program and were abusing the system. Susan, a widow, exemplified this common suspicion, explaining, "Oh, there's some that need it in the worst way and that's ones that I would like to see get it…But we have it just taken advantage of. They live on it." In many cases, respondents appended to these comparisons a divination of the attitudes of voucher renters. One example included a resident adding, "They're just kinda—I don't know. They feel entitled I think." Declarations about the attitudes, morals, or values of voucher renters were common—as seen in Table 3, a clear majority of respondents agreed with the statement "voucher tenants are lazy."

But while comments about program abuse were common, respondents also resented the program based on comparisons between their own lives and those of voucher renters. Dorothy, an elderly widow who moved to Lancaster in the late 1950s, drew a common comparison:

I'm here fifty-ish years, tried to make [a] home and how do you think I feel when I see some of these people got their Humvees sitting in their yard and not in their

garage at the Section 8 houses over there, and [paying] $300.00 - $400.00 for a $2,500.00 a month house? To me, that is a problem.

Dorothy's resentment was based on a perception that voucher holders received a level of support that made their lives easier than hers. She stated her belief that voucher holders were intentionally leaving their expensive cars outside, rather than in the garage—suggesting that they were flaunting their means and that her having to see these cars regularly was an affront. Later, Dorothy made the comparison more explicit, stating, "They're living in better houses than we are," while Ashley, a young mother, explained that she was upset "because when you see someone who's able to buy a lobster because they don't have to pay rent…I don't get lobster."

While these ideas were based on unspoken assumptions about race and economics, some tenants had more clearly articulated ideas about how the program created incentives for landlords that disfavored them. Craig, a respondent who had trouble keeping steady construction work since the recession, explained that landlords would prefer a voucher renter to him because a majority of their rent was guaranteed, and his shaky employment made him a risk of not paying on time or fulfilling his lease. Echoing Arlie Hochschild (2016), these findings suggest that some respondents saw their own economic positions as roughly equal to those of voucher renters and were not just judging voucher holders' deservingness, but also resenting the perception that they as local residents were not receiving equal help.

Local residents associate voucher renters with social disorder

Watching the actions of those who they believed to be on vouchers was linked to negative attitudes among fifteen (35%) local resident respondents. As Maria Kefalas (2003) has documented, that voucher renters were not conforming on their own to expectations and norms of local residents was a significant source of agitation for respondents. Aggravations included noise, dirtiness, and a myriad of indicators of social activity and leisure. These items serve as grist for complaints that these respondents can file to local agencies.

Noise from voucher renters (or their children) was cited as a frustration by ten respondents (23%). Respondents complained of neighbors arguing, playing music too loudly, making too much noise when returning home at night, or their children playing too loudly in the yard or street. Russell provides an illustrative example. He spoke of a voucher renting neighbor who had recently vacated her unit:

Like the lady who just left here she was here three months. She was on Section 8. She bought a basketball hoop for the three kids. My wife ain't feeling good, a sinus attack, they're going boom, boom, boom. Don't they have any respect for anyone? I mean back in the old days you might have said something. Oh sure, I'm sorry. We didn't know she was ill. Now they don't give hell…

Ultimately, Russell ties excessive noise to a lack of respect and deference on the part of voucher renters and their families. Another respondent tied noise to moral deficiencies around work, saying, "you have a lot of noise at night, people not letting you sleep because, again, some of them don't work and they're up all night, sleeping all day, when you want to be sleeping 'cause you work."

Similarly, a fifth of respondents expressed hostility to the voucher program or its tenants based on their perceived lack of cleanliness. These assessments betrayed a level of surveillance or monitoring of neighbors assumed to be voucher recipients: "I try to keep my house clean and organized…and you can see through your backyard to the

neighbors, how they live, is not clean." These assessments often focused on the exterior of the house, but sometimes included inferences about the interiors as well, despite no respondent indicating having been inside a voucher renter's home.

In a similar fashion, many respondents made comments that indicated their displeasure at what they saw as indicators of tenant excesses. Eight interviewees, or about one fifth, were aggrieved by the presence of additional cars, or the parking of additional cars in front of other homes. One respondent explained, "Yes, it's affecting me…I like all the people on the neighbor's side fine— but I think that that's a [voucher] family right there. That car is not supposed to be there. That bothers me." The presence of additional cars was read as a sign that voucher renters were socializing when, as a beneficiary of government support, they should have a more ascetic lifestyle. Another respondent explained, "They always seem to have a lot of traffic in and out. Not a good thing." Similarly, complaints about lights being on at night, or other indicators of being awake and active at late hours, were issues of agitation for several respondents.

These examples demonstrate the circular logic of first identifying voucher renters as whoever is noisy or dirty and then criticizing the program because the people presumed to be on it were noisy or dirty. But they also demonstrate how everyday issues between neighbors can be read as an indicator of the character of voucher renters. Actions interpreted as evidence of living an ascetic lifestyle demonstrated to local residents that voucher renters truly deserved and appreciated their support, but actions subjectively interpreted as having fun, being lazy, not working, staying up late, or having too nice a car meant abuse of the program, and by extension, abuse of themselves as taxpayers. In many interviews, respondents provided answers that conveyed frustration about their inability to exert control over the neighborhood, to stop changes, or to make voucher renters behave in ways they wish. For example, Jim's explanation of what "good" voucher tenants were like suggests that beneath concerns about noise, cars, and cleanliness lies a desire for voucher renters' deference, "Well, the ones that fit in are the ones that keep their places clean and they talk to you and they explain to you that we're trying to get out of this. You tell them and they stay with the program. They follow the rules."

A Policy Framework for Participatory Policing

Some respondents found a productive outlet for their frustrations through participation in the structure of policing created by the local government. Beginning around 2007, the city government in Lancaster explored and attempted a variety of measures to reduce, undo, and exert control over voucher movement to the city. Detailed in court filings by individuals and groups affected by the policies as well as in settlement agreements ending some practices, the city is alleged to have worked with the Los Angeles County Sherriff's department to create a policing program directed at the predominantly Black voucher renting population, attempted to cap rentals to voucher renters, and explored ways to discourage voucher renters from moving to the city.[1] While some of these measures were effective and others were not, perhaps the most effective strategy has been the city's revision of its municipal codes and adoption of a nuisance ordinance. Pricilla A. Ocen (2012) refers to legal changes like these as a new type of racially restrictive covenant.

The nuisance ordinance is alleged to have originated "[a]fter Lancaster's mayor specifically asked the City Council to —[l]ook into a means for making it very easy for neighbors to file nuisance lawsuits with the assistance of the City against…Section 8 housing." The resulting ordinance defined a nuisance as: "[a]nything which is injurious to health, or is indecent, or offensive to the senses, or is an obstruction to the free use of

property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property by an entire community or neighborhood, or by any considerable number of persons." The ordinance also provided "enhanced penalties where there are multiple calls to the police or public safety entities for service—even where there is no actual criminal activity."[2] If a rental unit was the subject of five nuisance complaints in one year, both the tenant and the landlord would be subject to fines and other penalties, which the landlord could avoid by evicting the tenant. In addition to this change, in 2015 the city also revised its municipal codes to expand fineable offenses, grant law enforcement the power to issue code violation fines, and increase the financial penalties for violations (City of Lancaster 2015).

These changes to the municipal codes did not occur in a vacuum. Information about these new ways to police neighbors was diffused through the city's Good Neighbor Guide, spread by word of mouth, and posted on popular online message boards including a Facebook group named "I hate Section 8" and threads for the Lancaster and Palmdale neighborhoods on websites like City-Data.com (2008). While I cannot assess exactly who this information reached, there is some evidence that local residents were aware of otherwise obscure municipal codes. Russell, a retired (by layoff) former aerospace employee who had been transferred to Lancaster by his former employer in the 1990s, explained these changes in municipal codes and traced his understanding of them to social network diffusion, "yeah, well I heard someone tell me that if you rent to someone and there's five complaints about them then they're evicted and you can't rent no more." Beyond the transmission of information about how to police neighbors, other residents felt a political and attitudinal change that empowered them in their fight against voucher renters. Jim explained,

> When we got [Mayor] R. Rex Parris in office that was the change up time because he stood up to the mongrels. He stands up for what the believes—he's against Section 8 himself and bottom line is he's got the Sheriff's department working with him where—I got a Deputy Sheriff on speed dial on my phone. I call him every time I've got a problem on the block. I don't put up with no crap.

Jim not only felt empowered by the city leaders' public hostility against the program—Parris famously said the city was at war with the voucher program—but also gained practical access to its policing leadership, whom he felt empowered to contact whenever he needed to. As this paper will show, Jim acted on this empowerment to significant effect throughout the neighborhood. But more broadly, twenty-two (51%) local residents I spoke to supported or engaged in at least one action that could be coded as participatory policing. These included answering questions about the voucher program by indicating support for increased monitoring of voucher renters; surveilling neighbors they believed held vouchers; sharing information about suspected voucher renters with other local residents; filing a complaint with a municipal, housing, or police authority; or directly confronting a voucher renter. Although many of these individuals supported or engaged in surveillance but did not self-report making calls to city authorities, their surveillance is critically important because it is the basis for further action and because it can contribute to a climate of fear for voucher tenants. Because the revision of municipal codes had opened space for individual complaints and made evictions a potential consequence of those complaints, local residents opposed to the presence of Black voucher renters had a strong reason to watch their neighbors and file complaints. In this manner, hostility towards the voucher program and its Black residents could be expressed through participatory policing.

Participatory Policing in Action

Local residents surveil their voucher renting neighbors

As described earlier, there was a gradient of responses that local residents had towards voucher renters. Many in the sample held negative attitudes towards voucher renters, and from this relatively wide base was a narrowing number of respondents who engaged in more extreme reactions. This section focuses on the ways that local residents surveilled presumed voucher renters in their neighborhood. Twenty-two respondents were either supportive of or engaged in some form of surveillance of voucher renters, and a majority of this group fell into the latter category. While their mention of surveillance could vary in intensity and consequence, this category nevertheless reveals the attention on voucher tenants and suggests a base from which some who surveil may act in more punitive ways.

In multiple cases, respondents I interviewed at their front doors would point out the homes on their block which they knew were rented to voucher tenants and describe something about the tenants who lived there—whether they were noisy, how recently they had moved in, why a rental unit might be vacant, and so on. Jim explained in detail the various strategies he employed to identify voucher renters:

Author: And how do you know when a house is Section 8?

Jim: How do I know? First place, I know every owner of every house in this block and I've got their number. And when someone rents a house and moves in, I ask them.

Author: Okay. You ask the renter or the—

Jim: I ask the owner. Is this Section 8 or are you just renting it out?

Author: Oh, okay.

Jim: And you can always go to the courthouse and find out if it's a Section 8 rental or not.

Jim's reference to the courthouse is likely an indication of his intention to check which properties in the area have received rental licenses from the city, a reform implemented to give the city more oversight of property owners renting to voucher renters (no other respondent volunteered that they engaged in this type of investigation) (City of Lancaster 2007). Jim later explained that he not only worked hard to know when and where voucher renters were living in his neighborhood, but that he actively worked to organize his community to be aware of and assist in monitoring these tenants. Jim's practice of figuring out who was a voucher renter and sharing that information with others not uncommon. Russell explained how he benefitted from such networks:

Russell: …We have a neighborhood watch here, one guy, and he always knows what's going on all hours of the night.

Author: Oh, okay. So he kind of keeps an eye on things?

Russell: Yeah. Makes the complaints.

Russell may have been speaking about Jim, or another local resident who behaved in a similar manner. Regardless, what is notable about his comments is that he did not need

to go to the same lengths as Jim to discover voucher renters because he actively benefitted from one of his neighbor's efforts to collect that information and share it amongst local residents. In this way, residents like Jim may have had an outsized effect on the neighborhood, as their information is diffused through pre-existing friendships between long-time residents or organizations like the neighborhood watch. These networks provided Russell with enough information to allow him to stand at his doorway and point out the homes within eyesight he claimed to know were rented by voucher renters—adding the tidbits of information he knew about the homes' current and past renters as well. Russell's earlier comments about knowing how to get a tenant evicted suggest he could easily alert his compatriot and ensure complaints are filed.

In some cases, this surveillance and coordination operated through the local neighborhood watch. Four respondents spoke openly about this program, which seemed to be more of a tool of intimidation than a consistently effective mode of organizing. Although he was frustrated by the scope of territory that required surveillance and disappointed that public participation was not as high as he expected, Jim remained adamant about doing his part for the neighborhood watch, saying "I walk my block once a day or twice a day." He added that he would always watch the houses of those who made a good effort to participate in the neighborhood watch. Another older resident on the block, Jean explained, "Well, the neighborhood watch has gone down the tubes. So many people are—you know. They're not very nice." But she nevertheless credited her neighbors for monitoring the neighborhood, "Thank goodness we have good people right here and we've lived in this house since '76, so we know the comings, the goings," and added that she had previously called code enforcement on "things that are going on in the area that aren't proper." This communication between residents as well as their ability to dispatch code enforcement on their own suggested that they may not need the program in order to effectively police their community. Despite these misgivings about neighborhood watch, Jim valued its symbolic function, saying "I'll do anything I can to keep the signs up because that's a good preventative."

Local residents file complaints that can lead to eviction and re-segregation

Local residents did not engage in surveillance simply to know who was using a voucher. Rather, surveillance was used to assert control over and police their surroundings. By watching supposed voucher homes, local residents could then call the local office of the Los Angeles County Housing Authority (which could investigate or evict voucher holders for violation of program rules), the city's code enforcement hotline (which could investigate or fine the property owners renting to voucher holders for violating city rules), and the police (who could make arrests and issue citations). Even if no formal punishment occurred, the inspection or police visit itself was a form of punishment for the tenant and could also intimidate them into leaving. Deploying these agencies constituted an important part of fighting back and provided a sense of agency to local residents.

As shown in Table 4, just five local resident respondents (12%) offered that they made these calls, but they indicated that they made the calls in high volume and often on behalf of others on their block. Calls on the basis of seemingly minor transgressions—if even municipal or housing authority infractions—function as multiple forms of policing. They could lead to formal punishment by the housing authority or city, either in the form of fines or voucher termination. They could signal to tenants that they were being constantly monitored, and that they should live their lives in the neighborhood with this surveillance at top of mind (Kurwa 2015). They could pressure landlords to evict tenants

Table 4. Local Resident Actions

Expressed powerlessness	37%
Negative opinion tied to observation	35%
Supportive of or engaged in monitoring	51%
Shared information about voucher renters with neighbors	9%
Volunteered that they called police or city agencies	12%
Had a confrontation with a voucher renter	21%
Total	43

or cease participation in the voucher program. And they could simply wear down voucher tenants and push them to leave.

Later in his interview Jim detailed one incident in which he called the code enforcement hotline to inform the city that a neighbor had violated housing code when fixing part of her home. The tenant begged him not to file a complaint, but he said he did so anyway to send a message to others in the area. When confronted by others about his harshness, he recounted saying, "Take your neighborhood watch and shove it. Next time you see somebody messing with your mailbox, call a sheriff. Don't call me to call the sheriff." Here, Jim revealed his role as a local resident who made complaints on behalf of many of his neighbors. When other respondents in the neighborhood said they were glad someone was making complaints or that they knew someone was keeping an eye on things, they may have been referring to Jim or people like him.

Most importantly, Jim told me that he had successfully used the code enforcement hotline to evict voucher renters from his neighborhood. "I got the Section 8 people thrown out because I was calling Code Enforcement every day. Every day Code Enforcement was over at that Section 8 house." He admitted that this took significant effort in terms of watching these homes and making repeat calls, but by routinely dispatching code enforcement to the home, he was eventually successful. Jim's case illustrates how the city's codes could be successfully weaponized as an eviction mechanism, connecting the dots from public attitudes, to a participatory policing structure, to the punitive consequences attached to those complaints. In using these codes Jim contributed to the re-segregation of his neighborhood by evicting his proximate Black neighbors.

Early in my conversation with Jim he estimated that in the past there had been four voucher renting families on his block. At present, he confidently explained that there was only one left, "Yeah, we got one. Anna's house, second one from the corner. A Black family's living there." Contrasting Anna's house with another one nearby, he explained, "I can tell you that Anna's house will always be a [Section 8 house, just with a] different Anna. Hers will always be a Section 8. But this one here isn't a Section 8 unless they're working it behind my back 'cause I haven't found out anything yet. I've had to call Code Enforcement twice on them." Jim's earlier statement taking credit for evicting voucher renters can be read alongside these comments as suggestive of his successful use of participatory policing to evict his neighbors, even though he appeared resigned to the idea that even if Anna sold the home, its next owner would likely rent it to a voucher holder as well.

While a smaller percentage of respondents engaged in some form of participatory policing, scholarship on resistance to neighborhood change suggests that this is not uncommon. For example, in Jonathan Rieder's (1985) study of Canarsie, Brooklyn,

although "a larger minority of the community approved of, or tolerated, vigilante-style actions, many residents, probably a majority, were only vaguely aware of them" (p.171). Rieder argues that the actions of these vigilantes had an outsized effect on the neighborhood because they intimidated Black families who rightly suspected they could be next, and because they shaped the broader public's perception that anti-integration violence was representative of the neighborhood's character. I argue that the same dynamic may apply to this case, and that despite the most extreme actions being taken by a small minority, their effects on the larger community may be significant in the same ways Rieder documents. But in addition to these dynamics, the small size of the voucher population provides more reason to believe that a handful of committed local residents could have significant effects. The eviction of a handful of voucher tenants is more significant when considering that the total number of voucher renters in the neighborhood was likely less than two dozen. Evidence exists from the same setting (Hayat 2016, Kurwa 2015, 2020; Ocen 2012) as well as from other subsidized housing programs (McCormick et al., 2012) that tenants are substantially negatively affected by these actions.

Aside from those directly engaged in policing, some respondents engaged in White flight, selling their homes or moving to a nearby city and renting out their original properties. Although I do not have an estimate of the size of this population, several local residents I spoke to referenced neighbors who had left in recent years. Rather than resent those neighbors whose departure created the possibility of new renters moving in, I found that respondents wished to emulate them. Others resigned themselves to demographic change. Sixteen respondents (37%) fit this category, either stating that they opposed the program but could not stop it, taking defensive steps to protect themselves by leaving the house less often or installing fences and security systems for their properties, or simply by staying put as an act of resistance. Linda explained, "I'm last of the originals here in this neighborhood, and so for a long time I said well, they're not gonna run me out. I'm gonna stay."

Further, among those who engaged in policing, not all of it occurred through government channels. As Table 4 documents, nine local resident respondents (20%) indicated that they had confronted a voucher renter. These confrontations ranged from incidents in which a local resident told a voucher renter to change their behavior to verbal arguments or threats of violence. Jean described her unsuccessful attempts to give them directions as solidifying her perception that they were part of the problem. Another respondent recounted an instance in which he threatened violence against the children of a voucher user. Jim boasted of carrying a weapon and once using it. Notably, he said that the police had asked him to stop, but he simply switched to walking with a cane, which he considered a legal way to carry a weapon. On a separate occasion, I witnessed a man chase and berate a young Black boy riding a bicycle down the sidewalk in front of his home. These episodes suggest the everyday ways that local residents policed their neighbors and illuminate the difficult conditions in which Black residents live.

In all, the findings outlined here suggest a widespread hostility to voucher renters and Black residents that belies the presumed pathway of racial integration for residential mobility programs. Voucher tenants moving to this neighborhood might not benefit from its economic opportunities or resources without the assistance of neighbors and local social networks, which are assumed parts of the residential mobility process. Beyond the level of attitudes, this study has documented a concerted effort on the part of some respondents to police and evict voucher renters—tactics that, if successful, might forestall or reverse its demographic change.

DISCUSSION

While social science research provides a thorough account of how racial integration is prevented, this case suggests that policing functions as a mechanism by which integration is reversed once Black residents move to historically White neighborhoods. A hostile context of reception for voucher movers can deny them meaningful social and economic integration in new neighborhoods. Paired with a legal framework that encourages it, these attitudes can be mobilized into participatory policing—the surveillance of Black voucher tenants, sharing of information about them with other local residents, and dispatching of the police, housing authority, or municipal code enforcement. The consequences of this policing may include fines, evictions, or informal pressure on tenants to leave, trends that may aggregate to stymie or reverse racial integration.

This paper also suggests that the power to deploy forces that can fine or evict a voucher renter elevates those who can use that power to a state of authority over those they police. That unequal relationship is exacerbated by the reality that voucher renters are more precarious than private neighbors along a number of axes: diminished privacy, exposure to rental discrimination, significant program regulation and enforcement, and smaller personal incomes and assets. While only a minority of respondents in this study volunteered that they engaged in the most extreme forms of policing in this study, majority engagement in the most extreme actions is not necessary for these actions to have significant impact on the neighborhood (majority involvement in such extreme acts might be better characterized as communal violence). And given the small number of voucher renters in the area, a small number of local residents engaged in the most extreme policing may still have significant effects.

More broadly, this case contributes to theorizing a two-way street between policing and segregation (Bell 2020). While existing literature shows policing taking advantage of patterns of racial segregation, this paper shows how policing may itself be segregatory. Similarly, fines based on violations of municipal codes shift from being an extractive tool of city government to a tool of punishment and eviction, and eviction expands from a financial relationship between landlords and tenants to a communal process driven by neighbors to further racial segregation.

To the degree that these dynamics are present in other settings, this case may have significant implications for theory and policy on segregation. Because the data emerge from a case of Black movement specifically through the Housing Choice Voucher program, the reaction to that movement also speaks to the fate and logic of that program. Proponents of residential mobility as an anti-poverty strategy expected that by moving from a poor to a less poor neighborhood, poor households may see socio-economic progress over time because they are no longer exposed to an array of neighborhood disadvantages and will enjoy the advantages of a new neighborhood. But if the social context of reception that greets these movers is one of hostility, and local residents simply refuse to welcome these movers, then not only is integration not meaningfully occurring, but the expectations underlying residential mobility are being broken. That would suggest that a hostile social context of reception is an important issue to consider when evaluating the outcome of residential mobility programs aimed at reducing poverty. When we consider implications for the Moving to Opportunity experiment, we should remember that so-called opportunity neighborhoods are often so because of the structure of racial residential inequality, that mobility programs threaten those privileges, and that beneficiaries of unequally distributed opportunity have always reacted to protect them. Finally, while some policy makers have responded to the incidents of frivolous White police calls targeting Black people by contemplating

legislation that would make such calls themselves a crime, this case suggests that removing the thicket of municipal codes that encourage these calls and ending their punitive consequences may be a more effective response.

While this article has aimed to demonstrate the existence of participatory policing as a process by which antagonistic White residents of a community might seek to undo Black voucher movement, it nevertheless is limited in important ways. The methods used in this study cannot assess the prevalence of such a process across a more complete sample of residents or a wider geographic area. The views of other racial groups in the area would shed more light on the processes detailed here, and long-term research on the neighborhood can better assess whether or not these policing strategies successfully beat back demographic change. And quantitative analysis of code enforcement complaints in the city, as well as their spatial and temporal relationship to Black movement in the Antelope Valley, could help quantify the scale and effects of this phenomenon.

Beyond this research setting, comparison cases of reactions to Black movement in other settings and at different levels of intensity, with and without the voucher program's involvement, would also lend clarity. And comparisons of the effects of nuisance code adoption (along with other similar municipal codes) in other cities would also lend clarity to our understanding of their role in racial segregation and inequality (Center for Public Health Law Research 2018).

These caveats aside, I argue that the local response to Black voucher movement in the Antelope Valley reflects Kenneth Clark's (1965) warnings about the limitations of residential mobility:

> Suburban communities can only be temporary havens for Whites who desire racial homogeneity…It would indeed be a pathetic repetition of social, economic, and political folly if Whites respond by techniques of exclusion that "worked" in the past, by developing suburban ghettos. But such a routine, unimaginative, and fearful response is all too likely—people tend to follow familiar patterns of behavior unless interrupted (pp. 61–62).

Although the Antelope Valley was historically just such a White haven within the greater Los Angeles area, as Clark predicted, that status has proven temporary. Here, at least, massive resistance has given way to participatory policing as a means of maintaining the old status quo.

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NOTES

1. *The Community Actison League et al. v. City of Lancaster and City of Palmdale* (2011) (California Central District Court).
2. ibid.

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