

From Broken Windows to Broken Homes: Homebreaking as Racialized and Gendered Poverty Governance

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Broken windows policing is traditionally understood as a tactic of governing public space, but in this essay, we show how this mode of policing also constitutes a war on domestic space. We take up Joy James's call to investigate how the domestic of domestic warfare necessitates an understanding of the home and household, and we ask how the state leverages broken windows-style policing to govern the home. Drawing from three different cases in Los Angeles County—gang injunctions, post-release supervision, and housing vouchers—we use ethnographic data, interviews, and court filings to show how the state treats the homes of people of color as broken sites of disorder. We contend that it is the state that engages in homebreaking, not the residents. Contextualized within Black feminist scholarship, we identify homebreaking as the state's attempt to break the home as a site of social reproduction and refuge from oppression, one of many state practices that fracture families of color and their homes, and we identify and examine two such stages of homebreaking: spying—surveillance of the home in ways that mark everyday behaviors and conditions as disordered and punishable; and raiding—punitive state intrusion that forces changes on the home or leads to punishment for perceived disorder.

Keywords: Carceral / gang injunction / gender / home / poverty / race / reentry / surveillance / voucher

They wait and they watch. . . . They're not seeing you.
 They're watching you. There's a difference. . . .
 I know they're just trying to get me for something someday.
 It could be taking out the trash wrong, coming home too late
 one day, smoking a cigarette, but they think it's something
 else . . . who knows. But don't they think they do?

—Mary, a formerly incarcerated Black woman
 on probation living in Los Angeles

Mary's characterization of life while on post-release supervision (i.e., probation and parole) in Los Angeles as being watched and not seen illustrates how state surveillance under the conditions of white supremacy disrupts the everyday lives of people of color, particularly through the logics of anti-Blackness, settler colonialism, poverty, patriarchy, and xenophobia. When Mary says, "don't they think they do?" she references parole and probation officers who believe that everyday actions conceal criminality for people like her. She suggests that the state does not aim to recognize the humanity of the people it surveils or how circumstances shape their everyday actions, but rather it subjects her and others to arbitrary criminalization of everyday behaviors.

As a form of white governance and social control that shapes how people of color experience public spaces like sidewalks, public transit, and crosswalks (Ritchie 2017), broken windows policing has typically been understood in connection to the public domain.¹ However, Mary raises how the same tactics impact the way she experiences life in the supposedly private domain of her home, noting that her behavior at home is subject to the same types of surveillance and criminalization. In this paper, we take up her observation as a point of departure to ask an important question: how might broken windows-style policing also be governing the home?

We answer this question by examining multiple cases of surveillance, policing, and criminalization within the space of the home. Drawing from three Los Angeles-based cases—suburban recipients of federal rental assistance, urban participants in reentry programs, and residents of once-redlined neighborhoods experiencing gang injunctions (a civil process by which law enforcement can restrict the constitutional rights of those it deems to be gang members)—we investigate how the state implements broken windows tactics in the homes of people of color.² We argue that hegemonic discourses about poor people of color coming from broken homes (Moynihan 1965) provide a justification for the state to surveil and criminalize people of color in their domestic spaces (Roberts 2003). By positioning the homes of poor people of color as sites of possible criminal activity, the state is able to justify its policing practices as protective against the threat posed by poor Black, Latinx, and Indigenous peoples to the imagined national polity.

Inverting this white supremacist premise, we contend that the state engages in a practice that we call *homebreaking*, which we situate within a long historical trajectory of the state fracturing families of color, breaking and entering into their homes, and targeting people (Davis 2011; James 1997; Ritchie 2017; Roberts 1997). We identify two stages in the homebreaking process: *spying*—surveillance and monitoring of the home in ways that mark everyday behaviors, conditions, and community presence as suspicious and potentially criminal; and *raiding*—punitive state intrusion that, through various pathways, either forces changes on the home or leads to formal punishment for perceived disorder within it. While private property is bound up in exclusion and scarcity (particularly in Los Angeles, a site of enormous and persistent houselessness), these two processes amount to the state's attempt to break the home as, in the words of bell hooks (1990), a place of refuge from and resistance to racial oppression. We contextualize homebreaking within Black feminist and feminism of color scholarship that challenges constructions of the home and domestic as private, intimate, and distinct from the public sphere (Bridges 2017; Collins 1990; Haley 2016; Nadasen 2016; McKittrick 2006).

We specifically focus on three Los Angeles–based sites as exemplary, relational cases. Los Angeles is a carceral region (Richards-Calathes 2019); the city incarcerates more people than any other in the world (Hernández 2017), and Los Angeles County receives the greatest proportion of people on parole and probation in the state of California (Krimetz et al. 2011). Los Angeles is a historic and contemporary leader in developing and deploying gang injunctions targeting predominantly Black and Latinx neighborhoods, a practice that has spread across California and to other states as well (Arnold 2011; Barajas 2007; Muñoz 2014, 2015). Gang injunctions were first initiated in the 1980s; as of 2016, the city of Los Angeles was enforcing forty-six active injunctions that applied to seventy-nine gangs and roughly 9,000 people across seventy-five square miles of the city, though these numbers have since dropped significantly due to litigation (Queally 2016; Stoltze 2016). Los Angeles is also one of the most important sites in the country for studying housing precarity. At last count, there were roughly 66,436 unhoused county residents—a crisis exacerbated by the region's low level of public housing stock.³ The Housing Choice Voucher program (colloquially referred to as Section 8), which has largely supplanted public housing, now serves roughly 170,000 tenants in the county, but often works to disperse them from metropolitan areas toward suburbs with lower rental costs (Covington et al. 2011). Given the high level of precarity associated with low-income and subsidized housing in Los Angeles, how these programs are governed and regulated is a question of elevated significance.

The social and cultural geography of Los Angeles is intimately shaped by its carceral context, which includes a heavily militarized police force (Costa Varas 2006), a complex web of state and state-adjacent institutions that surveil formerly incarcerated people and their families (Gurusami 2019), and a deep

concentration of these forces in low-income neighborhoods of color (Felker-Kantor 2018). We articulate the impact of the carceral gaze on homes outside the formal boundaries of the prison precisely to illustrate the omnipresent nature of state punishment practices, particularly as it is visible in what Kelly Lytle Hernández (2017) dubs “the city of inmates.” Drawing from Dylan Rodríguez’s (2006) concept of the prison regime, we present homebreaking not as evidence of aberrant or excessive state pathologies, but rather as normative manifestations of state power exacted through brutality and torture (James 1999). By showing how the prison regime exacts its power beyond the prison by breaking and entering into the homes of people of color, we reveal how the state’s targeting of the home across multiple sites within the same geographic region is evidence of the prison regime’s expansiveness.

We primarily draw on and are indebted to Black, Black Latinx, and non-Black Latinx feminist knowledges and scholarship to build our homebreaking framework. As we are both second-generation South Asian scholars with US citizenship who lived in Los Angeles but are not from the region and do not have carceral histories, our engagement with these literatures is part of a purposeful attempt to center the experiences and knowledges of those historically and contemporarily more racially and legally proximate to the conditions of homebreaking in Los Angeles. Our engagement and analysis in this article reflect efforts toward “messy solidarities” (García, forthcoming) between coalitions of people of color as scholars and activists; we attribute our insights to the work of political communities that we are a part of and adjacent to. We attribute any problematic logics and claims to our own oversights.

In what follows, we consider punishment and domestic warfare as racialized governance, then trace the genealogy of broken windows policing, its internal logic, and its race, class, and gender contours. We then examine punitive surveillance’s crucial role in this form of policing, and trace how this surveillance—through what we call spying and raiding—has brought broken windows from public space into the home. We argue that this move is only possible because of the state power supporting white narratives of disorder, broken families and homes, and a culture of poverty that undergird broken windows policies. These narratives imply that the family unit itself in the home is the site and source of social disorder. Introducing Los Angeles as a critical site of examination, we review the data and methods used to survey homebreaking in the city and reveal how, across three cases, punitive surveillance is used to rupture the privacy of the home and punish its inhabitants. We close by extending the possibilities of homebreaking beyond these cases and beyond Los Angeles.

Broken Windows as Domestic Warfare

One way of contextualizing broken windows policing is to understand it as an agenda of domestic warfare against people of color. Joy James (2007) and Dylan

Rodríguez (2020) characterize domestic warfare as anti-Black and settler colonial tactics of warfare applied to populations within the nation's borders, though with tools and strategies (like the use of military weaponry and surveillance) normatively deployed against external international enemies. They argue that this is because Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and people of color populations are imagined as dangers to white dominance and control, and therefore are framed as enemies of the nation.

Carcerality is critical to this project of domestic warfare. The power of carceral logics to shape foundational conditions of statecraft, global capital flows, and the gender-racialized global order signals what Rodríguez (2006) calls the prison regime and Beth Richie (2012) calls a prison nation. This form of governmentality describes “a dynamic state-mediated practice of domination and control, rather than a reified ‘institution’ or ‘apparatus’” (Rodríguez 2006, 40). Rodríguez argues that the prison regime structures more than our experiences and ideas of race, gender, and criminality, or traditionally conceptualized carceral spaces of prisons, jails, and post-release supervision; instead, carcerality and its possibilities underpin fundamental notions of liberal democracy and governmentality that dictate everyday life around the world (Davis 2011; Haley 2016; James 2007; Jung et al. 2011; Richie 2012; Rodríguez 2006).

Carceral punishment logically emerges as part of domestic warfare in the state's racialized biopolitical project (Rodríguez 2006): prisons and state punishment practices against people of color function as normative white supremacist modes of warehousing and extermination under the veneer of state legitimacy (Gilmore 2007; James 2007; Rodríguez 2006; Rodríguez 2016). The United States government therefore positions itself as a defender of white homeland against people of color—Black, brown, Indigenous, nonwhite immigrants—and leverages punishment power in service of this agenda (James 2007).

We contextualize broken windows-style policing as emergent from the historical trajectory described above. Notable uses of military force against Black populations in the United States include the FBI's infamous series of projects under its COINTELPRO (short for counterintelligence program) to surveil and disrupt the Black liberation movement from the 1950s to the 1970s (Bin Wahad 2007); the deployment of the Michigan Army National Guard—armed with machine guns and tanks—to violently quell the Detroit race riots in 1967 (Jay and Conklin 2017); and the more recent use of military tanks and rubber bullets against Black protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 (Boyles 2019). Self-described political prisoner Dhoruba Al Mujahid Bin Wahad contextualizes these types of events as

program[s] of war waged by a government against a people, against its own citizens. It was a program of domestic warfare . . . one of the things that involved the militarization of the police in the United States was racism. They really believed that black people and national minorities, people of

color, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos represented a serious threat to the internal security of the United States (Bin Wahad 2007, 80–81).

Yet James cautions that an understanding of domestic warfare requires an interrogation of the domestic not simply as racialized nation-making but as also *gendered* nation-making; the *domestic* as home and homeland compels serious inquiry into the gendered terrain of the household (James 1999, 2007). Radical feminist theorists of color argue that white feminist conceptions of “home” as private domestic space characterized by self-determination, privacy, and intimacy fail to account for how these features are contingent on race and gender (Bridges 2017) and thus how the home is situated within projects of gendered, state, interpersonal, and colonial violence (Collins 1990; Hartman 2008; Isoke 2013; James 2007). The home is simultaneously the domestic, the site of the family and social and cultural reproduction, and a core space of life for Black, Indigenous, and people of color across queer and heteronormative formations (McKittrick 2011; Muñoz 2019).

Discourses that deride the spaces—and by extension the homes—of people of color as dirty, excessive, and sexually deviant are used to justify state invasion of these spaces (Acosta 2013; Bridges 2017; Vargas 2014). Deborah Vargas raises how both homonormative and heteronormative racial-sexual projects are funneled through the controlling image of *lo sucio*, in which racist discourses ascribe filthiness and excess to queer Latinxs and operate “through the racialized references of the smells and otherness in residential spatialities like ‘el barrio’ or ‘the ghetto’” (Vargas 2014, 716).

Other long-standing discourses mark the living spaces of disabled people of color as sites of public danger without state management or institutionalization. Building from queer, crip, and feminist of color abolitionist critiques, Liat Ben-Moshe articulates this intersection as *race-ability*, noting that “understanding the ways in which criminalizing entails the construction of both race (especially Blackness) and disability (especially mental difference) as dangerous” (2020, 24). The home therefore becomes a central historical and contemporary space of contestation, especially between the state and people of color, in the gendered, racialized, and ableist nation-making project (Brown 2018; Hartman 2008; Isoke 2013; James 2007; Vargas 2014). hooks’s (1990) characterization of the home as a place of refuge from racial oppression and a site of resistance to it is particularly instructive.

If *home* for people of color is, as hooks (1990) writes, a place of refuge from racial oppression, including, as Vargas (2014) adds, from discursive racism, then the white, anti-Black, settler colonial empire that is the United States must destabilize the homes of people of color in order to justify its legitimacy. The state has a long history of targeting and disordering the homes of people of color—especially Black and Indigenous families—as a tactic of racializing and gendering social control (Collins 1991; Child 1998; Hartman 2019; Isoke

2013; Ritchie 2017). For example, one of the enduring legacies of settler violence against Indigenous peoples is that of so-called Indian boarding schools, which legally required Indigenous children to attend off-reservation schools away from their homes, families, and tribal communities to be *educated* in the ways of whiteness.⁴ Like its Canadian Indian Residential School System (IRSS) counterpart, the US Indian boarding school system profoundly violated Indigenous children and their families, subjecting them to sexual harassment and assault, denying them adequate food and water, punishing Indigenous cultural and linguistic expression, and refusing to allow children to return home to their families during breaks (Brasfield 2001; Child 1998; Gray 2011; Quinn 2007).

Saidiya Hartman (2019) also traces instances of the gender-racialized policing of Black women and girls in New York City to the implementation of the Tenement House Law in 1909 and subsequent expansion of the provisions of the Criminal Code. (Hartman notes that the law targeted “disorderly homes” and “disorderly persons.”) She finds that Black women were the largest single group prosecuted under this rubric “in the guise of housing reform” (282). Hartman also uncovers how “jump raids” became one mechanism of violating the homes of these women: “plainclothes officers, having identified a suspicious person and place, knocked at the door of a private residence, and when it opened, they forced their way across the threshold or they followed behind a woman as she entered her apartment” (282).

The language of “broken homes” and “broken families” as a logic for racialized state surveillance, intervention, and punishment was given an even more prominent national platform as part of the postwar contestation over social policy and civil rights. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1965) infamously vilified the figure of the Black matriarch and urged punitive state intervention to “fix” what he characterized as the dysfunctions of the Black family. Similarly, Oscar Lewis’s (1966) culture of poverty thesis was used to justify the socioeconomic circumstances of Puerto Ricans in “El Barrio” and weigh against redistributive welfare policies. These cultural arguments presumed criminality and justified punitive interventions rather than ones that sought to solve material inequalities.

The narratives of broken homes and broken families were further amplified from the 1980s to the present through the war on drugs and the War on Poverty, which criminalized Black people and removed them from their homes and communities to carceral facilities. Rather than identifying the white supremacist state as a breaker of homes and families, the state and hegemonic discourses—aided by racist scholarship and perspectives on Black families (Hancock 2004)—mobilized culture of poverty arguments and presumptions of Black criminality to explain the fracturing of Black families. These tactics allowed the state to continue formalizing policies that used white supremacist logics and governance tactics to police Black families in their homes and subject them to continued punitive interventions, which ranged from surveillance by

the child welfare system to formal and informal carceral punishment (Gans 2011; Graebner 2002; Richards-Calathes 2019). Finally, it is worth noting that the cultural arguments that Lewis developed in reference to Puerto Rican families were also used to inveigh against Black families, including Black Puerto Ricans. As we suggest below, this fluidity persists when broken windows arguments developed in an anti-Black logic are weaponized against Latinx people (including Black Latinx, AfroLatinx, and AfroIndigenous people identified by colonial governments as “from” Latin America).

Immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America are also subject to punitive interventions in the home, particularly in the contemporary moment of deportations that target undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families (García Hernández 2013; Macías-Rojas 2016). Martha Escobar (2016) argues that the experiences of Black women under racial-chattel slavery provided foundational logics and practices for the contemporary criminalization of Latinx (im)migrants. Indeed, the state’s investment in *crimmigration* (García Hernández 2013)—the merging of immigration and criminal law enforcement—has provided US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other state policing structures with legal justification to separate parents from their children through deportation proceedings, raids, and other forms of immigration policing (Enriquez 2017). Beyond fracturing the physical configurations of the home, state violence against undocumented people has also made many fearful of state surveillance and intervention in their homes. The forced movement of captured undocumented immigrants into concentration camp–style detention centers, often separating children from their parents by placing them in different facilities, speaks to the ways that the state operates as a breaker of homes and families through racialized surveillance, criminalization, and policing.

These accounts of how families and homes are policed demonstrate the home as a site of contestation. When these homes come under the purview of police or other agencies implementing broken windows logics, they compel us to consider how broken windows operates in the domestic realm.

Broken Windows

Broken windows policing (Wilson and Kelling 1982) is built on the assumption that signs of neighborhood disorder abet crime by signaling that a community is not concerned about its condition or is not monitoring its surroundings. James Wilson and George Kelling’s assumption leads to two policy conclusions. First, it means that minor issues, including minor noncriminal activities, are treated as much more serious offenses precisely because they contribute to an environment that might encourage more serious crimes. Second, widespread police patrols and observation of public space are necessary in order to stop the diffuse and myriad offenses that broken windows policing allows police to criminalize.

Unspoken in Wilson and Kelling's assumption is that a neighborhood might be historically divested from by the state, and thus might lack the resources to repair a broken window, abandoned car, or other items read by the authors as a sign of indifference to crime. Further unspoken is the racialized logic that determines what objects (such as graffiti) are seen as signals of social disorder and what are not. They do not argue, for example, that the presence of a Morton's Steakhouse is an indicator that high income tax fraud is likely to be occurring in nearby homes and offices. Christina Heatherton (2018) argues that "the concept of order maintenance policing expanded [the police's] discretionary powers to stop, question, cite, or arrest any person they deemed to be a source of disorder." And as Bernard Harcourt (2009) and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) remind us, order and disorder are unfixed, subjective, and socially produced categories themselves, mutable to fit the social mores of the powerful in any given place and time. Putting the two conditions together reveals that broken windows policing is in practice the impetus for the mass policing of what Clare Sears (2008) has called "problem bodies in public spaces" (174). Not only does broken windows allow "nearly unlimited discretion when determining who and what conduct is deemed disorderly," but many specific regulations given heightened status in this paradigm "criminalize activities so common they can't be enforced at all times against all people" (Ritchie 2007).

The broad and subjective nature of this style of policing is essential to understanding how it is weaponized against poor people of color, particularly through anti-Black, settler colonial, and racist xenophobic logics. Not only is much of public life criminalized, but action to enforce that criminalization is taken based on the subjective gaze of the officer. What the officer sees, how the officer interprets it, and what the officer chooses to do about it are all mediated by the larger discourses of race, class, and gender in American society. As Andrea Ritchie (2017) argues, the scripts that police metaphorically rely on are those that peddle notions of the culture of poverty, welfare queens, urban jungles, broken families, and superpredators. Ritchie emphasizes how cis and trans women of color and nonbinary people of color also experience broken windows policing with life-altering and sometimes deadly consequences.

To understand how observation functions in racialized surveillance practices, we draw from Simone Browne (2015), who defines racialized surveillance as "a technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race." Browne adds that it is used to define deviation from social norms (16). Contextualized within Black feminist theorizing that inextricably links race, gender, sexuality, and class (Bridges 2017; Browne 2015; Richie 2012; Roberts 1997; Winder 2017), this surveillance appears ubiquitous across state policies and programs. Terrell Roberts (1997) reveals the role of state surveillance in the raced and gendered child welfare system; Khiara Bridges (2017) illustrates it in the operation of pregnancy support programs in Medicaid; Carla Shedd (2015) identifies it in schools;

and Spencer Headworth (2019) and Virginia Eubanks (2018) demonstrate its practice in welfare and other state assistance programs. In many cases, these surveillance regimes are not just adjacent to punishment but are themselves used to further punishment, as Kaaryn Gustafson (2011) demonstrates in her work on welfare reform, and they are increasingly seen in cases of subsidized housing surveillance and private networks of neighborhood surveillance and regulation (Hughes 2020; Kurwa 2019; Kurwa 2020).

Our broader argument is that broken windows operates not just in the public space but also in the home, and it does so through punitive surveillance. Just as broken windows draws on narratives of disorder from the perspective of the state while disrupting the order of those it polices, so too does the process of homebreaking detailed below rely on presumptions about disordered homes while in fact producing disorder through its punitive surveillance practices.

Theoretical Framework: Homebreaking

The logic behind the extension of broken windows policing from the street to the home is laid out in Wilson and Kelling's 1982 article, which includes the following text:

We suggest that "untended" behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other's children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle (Wilson and Kelling 1982).

The home appears throughout their essay as the normative good in the neighborhood that is threatened by and must be protected from public disorder. The racial, colonial undertones of the jungle metaphor suggests that moral whites are the stable families who care for their homes, but when the neighborhood devolves into the *jungle*—a dog whistle for Blackness and the perceived savagery of the colonial subject—then by implication it will be populated by those who do not care for their homes. In this manner, the home is always in the shadow of the broken windows argument. After all, it is broken windows policing that will protect the stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes. So what happens when the *unwanted intruders* are precisely the people and families living in the neighborhood's homes?

In developing a theoretical framework of homebreaking, which we broadly articulate as the application of broken windows-style policing to the homes of people of color, we situate our analysis within Joy James's (1999, 2007) larger theory of racialized and gendered domestic warfare. Homebreaking strikes at the assumptions of home as spaces of privacy, intimacy, and self-determination. Our critique joins broader anti-racist efforts to dismantle broken windows-style

policing by exposing that it focuses on the home *by design*, though most scholarship focuses on its use in public spaces.

Broadly, we identify two parts to homebreaking: spying and raiding. We identify spying as the state's surveillance of the home and the people inside it. It is intrusive because people in the home know that they are being watched, or that their access to the home and who they invite into the home could be subjectively interpreted as indicators of punishable activity. Building from Hartman's (2019) analysis of jump raids in the early 1900s, we identify raiding as punitive state intrusion into the home. Jump raids reveal the historical precedence of the state literally breaking into the home—broken apartment doors served as a visual marker of the state as the homebreaker. In the contemporary moment, we see the punitiveness of homebreaking in three ways: the looming intrusion may force the person to change their home to avoid punishment; an intrusion may result in a person being coded as in violation of a regulation or law; or state agents may forcibly alter or disorder the home through the search. In any case, it becomes clear that the intrusion is state punishment in and of itself.

Homebreaking is a paradox of state policing emergent from the construction of nonwhite life as inherently deviant and disordered. Like broken windows policing, it casts aspects of everyday life as potential or actual indicators of criminal activity. In simply stepping into the homes of people of color, the state both literally and symbolically breaks into and breaks the home. In doing so, the state is creating disorder rather than responding to it. As such, we invert the state's perception of people of color as deviant, criminal, and suspicious and instead cast the state as the intruder and agent of disorder.

Data and Methods

We did not start out searching for how broken windows policing operated in the home. This finding emerged from organic discussions about policing practices in sites across Los Angeles County. The labels of *spying* and *raiding* arose inductively from the testimonies of residents of color in these examinations. Modeling our approach after Cecilia Menjivar and Leisy Abrego (2012), we draw on multiple sources of data that show the homes of people of color under threat by the state.

Case one illustrates the impact of gang injunctions on the home by drawing from Youth Justice Coalition et al. v. City of Los Angeles (2016), a lawsuit filed against the city of Los Angeles over its gang injunction program; an interview conducted by YouthCineMedia (2015), titled "Echo Park Gang Injunction Defendant," about the effects of the injunctions on impacted people; and news media about the issue. Because the litigation was on behalf of a broader class of impacted Los Angeles residents, the circumstances described in the complainants' examples are understood to reflect the experiences of many people to whom the gang injunction had been applied.

Case two draws from Susila Gurusami's eighteen-month ethnography at a reentry home (pseudonymously referenced as "New Beginnings"), a Los Angeles-based organization that provides housing, case management, and rehabilitation services for formerly incarcerated, predominantly Black women and their children. The majority of women at the reentry home self-identified as Black, African American, or part Black. The organization designated Gurusami an unpaid social work intern, allowing her to drive formerly incarcerated women to medical appointments, attend court hearings as an advocate, and help with job applications. She spent time with women in their homes, met with them over meals, took walks with them in their neighborhoods, had extensive conversations by phone, text, and e-mail, and sometimes babysat children upon request. See Gurusami (2019) for more details about methodology, positionality, and other study characteristics.

Case three draws from Rahim Kurwa's interviews of forty-one Housing Choice Voucher renters in the Antelope Valley region of Los Angeles County, part of a larger study that also includes forty-two non-voucher holding local residents as well as multiple city officials, activists, and civil rights lawyers. Although nearly seventy miles from downtown Los Angeles, the valley is a crucial site of study as its lower rents and higher vacancy rates make it one of the key destinations for people being pushed out of the Los Angeles metro area by gentrification and other pressures. Voucher renters in the valley are also predominantly Black and often are women raising children. The author collected interviews with voucher tenants through visits to the Los Angeles County Housing Authority's branch office in the Antelope Valley, asking individuals if they would like to participate in the interview as they left the office. (Two interviews were also collected by referral.) The interviews covered a range of socioeconomic questions related to how tenants' lives had changed after moving to the valley through the voucher program, how they had been received by their neighbors upon their arrival, and how they experienced policing in their new communities. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission, and tenant names were anonymized. See Kurwa (2015) for more on this case.

We both self-identify as cisgender, class-privileged South Asian Americans not originally from Los Angeles and without carceral histories. Gurusami, author of the post-release supervision study, identifies as a woman, and Kurwa, the author of the voucher renter study, identifies as a man. The interactive nature of our data collection coupled with our raced, classed, gendered, and carceral history differences in positionality undoubtedly impacted the extent to which the people at our respective sites were willing to share with us, and they also impact our analysis of the data. Whereas some residents were eager to share their stories, others were wary about our presence and expressed fear that what they shared might create further precarity in their lives or the lives of their loved ones. We believe that our positionalities made most people inclined to share less of their lives with us. Therefore, the findings in this paper likely reflect a diluted

perspective of the challenges that Black residents of Los Angeles face around policing in the home. The use of multiple data sources for the gang injunction case—although secondary data that we did not collect ourselves—signals how men of color impacted by gang injunctions in Los Angeles self-characterize their experiences. Both as a moral centering and to counterbalance our own oversights whenever possible, we draw from Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and third world feminist theory (Arvin et al. 2013; Meyer 2008; Vargas 2014), feminist ethnography (Davis and Craven 2011; Ray and Tillman 2019), and other forms of methodological construction and analysis that prioritize subjugated forms of knowledge and challenge traditional ways of knowing that are normative to hegemonic academic practices and epistemologies (Collins 1990; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008).

Los Angeles as a Site of Homebreaking

In what follows, we illustrate the state's attempt at homebreaking in the three sites across Los Angeles County described in the section above. Reading each of these three cases relationally reveals important commonalities across the state's homebreaking strategies, as well as the specific differences in homebreaking shaped by race and gender in the same county. In each case, we outline the dual-pronged approach of homebreaking: spying (again, surveillance of the home in ways that mark everyday behaviors and conditions as disordered and punishable) and raiding (again, punitive state intrusion that forces changes on the home or leads to punishment for perceived disorder). The cases illustrate how the state weaponizes normative and pro-social dimensions of everyday domestic life, like cultivating multigenerational family cohabitation and prioritizing cleanliness, by marking families' behaviors and indicators of self-determination as deviant, suspicious, and signs of disorder. We treat each of these cases—Latinx men's experiences with gang injunctions, Black women on probation or parole, and Black women's experiences with housing vouchers—as constellations of homebreaking in which different state agencies, agents, and practices are used to disrupt the homes of people of color. By highlighting these manifestations in concert, we show how the state's production of racial order produces disorder in the homes of people of color by design.

Gang Injunctions

Gang injunctions are civil court orders targeting suspected members of a gang, as defined by the city attorney and police. The process of placing an injunction on a gang is briefly summarized as follows. The city sues a gang as if it were a formal, legal entity. Because the gang is not such an entity, charges are usually not defended, resulting in the city winning the case and obtaining an injunction against the gang. The police department is then empowered to enforce the terms of the injunction against individuals it categorizes as gang

members. Not only are individuals not informed that they are seen by the city as gang members, but they also do not have a reasonable chance to remove the designation, or to have challenged the city when it was seeking the injunction now being applied to them. Effectively, gang injunctions render their targets formally subject to criminal-legal sanctions similar to the conditions of probation or parole, though without foreknowledge, a conviction, indictment, or any measures of due process that might attach to those steps. The criteria used by the city to determine who to include in an injunction or who to identify as a gang member is extraordinarily expansive.⁵ Once covered by a gang injunction, an individual is subject to severe civil liberties violations, including restrictions on activities, speech, and association. People are made aware of the injunction and its effect on them by being served with papers binding them to its terms: police often stop an individual or visit their home to deliver hundreds of pages of legal paperwork covering the court case against the gang and the terms of the injunction placed on it—and by extension anyone deemed a member of the gang—by the court. This can be the first time a person is made aware of the gang, the injunction against it, and the city's presumption that they are members of the gang. An important element of these injunctions is that they cover specific geographic zones, often called "safety zones," inside which those included in the injunction have restricted rights and increased exposure to policing. As the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) describes it, "gang injunctions make otherwise legal, everyday activities—such as riding the bus with a friend or picking a spouse up from work late at night—illegal for people they target." The conditions of the injunction dictate who they can associate with, where they can be seen, and what objects they can have on their person.

Gang injunctions are a critical example of homebreaking, as the state attempts to transform the home into a site of surveillance and carcerality. The impact of spying and raiding on men of color in Los Angeles—living in neighborhoods that are predominantly Black, immigrant, and Latinx—create conditions of carceral confinement in their homes. In this case, homebreaking functions to carcally confine people in their homes because the restrictions on their existence in public space are so extensive. In Los Angeles, many of the injunction's "safety zones" cover the same areas of the city that had once been formally redlined as no-go zones for real estate capital and white families. In this manner, gang injunctions sit on an historical trajectory of spatially policing the city's Black and Latinx neighborhoods.

To demonstrate how gang injunctions operate as homebreaking, we focus on the testimonial of Peter Arellano, one of the plaintiffs in *Youth Justice Coalition v. City of Los Angeles*, the aforementioned 2016 class action lawsuit challenging the injunctions. Peter, then a 21-year-old resident of Echo Park, lived with his parents within the boundaries of the Echo Park gang injunction. He was served with the injunction outside of his home after police stopped him, his father, and

Table 1: Gang Injunction Prohibitions

People	Actions	Spaces	Objects
Do not associate: standing, sitting, walking, driving, gathering, or appearing anywhere in public view, in a public place, or any place accessible to the public, with any other known member of a defendant gang.	No intimidation: in any manner confronting, intimidating, annoying, harassing, threatening, challenging, provoking, assaulting and/or battering any residents, patrons of, or visitors to the safety zone.	Do not associate in common areas: standing, sitting, walking, driving, gathering, or appearing, with any known member of any defendant gang, in a common area, courtyard, or carport of any apartment complex, condominium, or townhome.	No graffiti or vandalism tools, including aerosol paint container, felt-tip marker, paint marker, spray paint tip, slap tag, etc. No drugs, no alcohol in public. No firearms.
		No trespassing: being present in or on the property of another person that is not open to the general public except with the prior written consent of the owner, or in the presence of and with the voluntary consent of the owner.	

his friends in order to investigate a purported vandalism complaint. That they had brought the injunction with them ahead of time suggests that the initial stop for “investigating vandalism” was fictitious.

Once served with the injunction, Peter was subject to expansive restraints on his public and private life. The terms of the injunction echo broken windows logics (see table 1 for some of these terms). Under the injunction’s terms, Peter contended with the breadth of its stipulations, the subjectiveness with which they could be enforced, and the breadth of individuals to whom the injunction applied. He raised how spying impacted his ability to experience life outside his home, saying that he felt like he was “under house arrest” because of the pervasive presence of police surveillance in his neighborhood and community and the reality that the injunction forbade him from appearing in public with others on the injunction. However, without knowing who else was on the list, meeting the criteria was impossible. Police surveillance of him in public and in private could lead to his incarceration for violating the charge.

Despite effectively being under house arrest, Peter was also made to feel like he could not be safe at home through raiding. He could not safely sit or stand “in his own front yard or porch with his father, brother, uncle, cousin, or friends,

because such space is within ‘public view’ and associating there is therefore prohibited by the terms of the injunction” (YJC v. City of Los Angeles 2016). He therefore experienced raiding as the state transforming the private exterior domain of his home into public space that he was not permitted to occupy with members of his family and community. These dynamics echo findings of other policing tactics that make even the immediate area outside the home a policed space (Payne, Hitchens, and Chambers 2017).

Peter’s life was dramatically changed in response to the gang injunction in ways that created disorder not only in his life but in the lives of the people who traditionally circulated in his life and home. Peter’s observation that he was effectively under house arrest comes to bear in multiple capacities: he was being constantly surveilled; his everyday behavior was subject to arbitrary punishment and criminalization; he could not freely associate with those he wished to; and he could not leave the interior of his home without fear of state punishment. The state therefore tried to break his home as a space of refuge and safety from racism by transforming it into a space governed by racist policies, procedures, and perceptions.

The experience of raiding also extended into Peter’s home. In the video “Echo Park Gang Injunction Defendant” (YouthCineMedia 2015), Peter introduced the viewer to his home life. Pointing to his Los Angeles Dodgers gear, he said, “I grew up liking the Dodgers, my dad, he likes the Dodgers, my family we like the Dodgers.” But, he added, “I’m not able to wear the Dodger gear because the police will arrest me.” (The injunction labeled Dodgers clothing as evidence of gang affiliation.) As Peter indicated, the raiding continued in his home even when the police were not physically present. He was forced to change his sartorial self-presentation and potentially even the items in his closet. This also demonstrates the role of raiding in transforming Peter’s home life: if his home was searched by police, the presence of Dodgers-related items could be seen as sufficient to consider him in violation of the terms of the injunction.

Like broken windows policing, the spying and raiding that the state subjected Peter to reveals how they transform everyday conditions of the home and being at home into suspicious, criminally punishable behavior. Peter experienced homebreaking not simply through the state’s governance of his behavior at home, but in how that governance also made it carceral punishable for his family, friends, and community members to be in his home with him. They might also have been covered by the injunction, or one of the seventy-eight other injunctions the city obtained, covering nearly 8,000 city residents. Or by mere association with Peter, they might have been at greater risk of police scrutiny. Homebreaking therefore attempted to turn his home into a site of carceral confinement. Peter’s naming of these conditions as “house arrest” is telling. Peter was denied the right to free movement beyond his home, but his behavior within his home was also subject to arbitrary, subjective, and punitive judgement by the state with carceral consequences.

Post-Release Supervision

The impact of spying and raiding on the home lives of formerly incarcerated Black women in Los Angeles serves to continually tie them to the punitive and carceral practices of the prison within the supposedly private domain of the home. In this way, the state uses homebreaking to destabilize the very meaning of home even as it further surveils and criminalizes Black women and their families (Gurusami 2019; Roberts 2003). Homebreaking signals how respectability politics operates as a double-edged sword for Black women on post-release supervision. They must endeavor to satisfy the conditions of white femininity and domesticity that are used to measure women's criminal rehabilitation (Davis 2011; Haley 2016; Gurusami 2019; Lawston and Meiners 2014), yet they are also subject to suspicion if their material conditions encroach on what many state actors assume to be the provenance of whiteness and white womanhood. The state regulates how the home has to look and be arranged and uses the subjective conditions of the home to threaten child custody arrangements.

Nikki, who is in her 40s and provides housing for her daughter and grandchild, explains the conditions of spying that she lives under as a result of being on post-release supervision. "My PO [parole officer], he stops by sometimes real early, like 6 a.m." The possibility that a parole officer can inspect one's home early in the morning means that from the beginning of the day, she is subjected to the threat of being found in violation of the terms of her parole. Whereas any parolee is technically subject to an early-morning visit, Nikki believes that her parole officer makes a point to make her visits early. "I don't always know when he's going to stop by, I'm usually the first one he sees for the day."

Nikki finds herself compelled to reorder her home in anticipation of the parole officer's visits, and in so doing, her adaptations illustrate the effects of raiding. She explains her strategy and actions: "It's real important to me to look clean. I take care of this apartment. . . . My daughter and grandson live with me right now . . . they sleep in the living room. . . . My grandson, he's not real good yet at picking up after himself." This quote reveals the disconnect between the order of one's home and the state's seeing that order as disorder. There is nothing unusual or surprising about a young child being messy, but Nikki feels compelled to make any mess disappear by 6 a.m. in order to prevent her parole officer from using it as an excuse to find her in violation of the terms of her parole. "So I have to be really careful and always on top of it," she explains, to "make sure I don't give him the wrong impression." Nikki worries that a messy home could be read by the parole officer as a violation because of the vast discretionary power that these officials wield, or that a visible mess could trigger the parole officer to believe that her home is disordered and therefore meets the criteria to be further searched, probed, or otherwise investigated for other violations.

What happens when raiding occurs—that is, when a parole officer enters the home and inspects it with the intent, real or perceived, to force changes on the home and potentially punish perceived disorder? Nikki describes how

the officer's subjective interpretation of her home's order or disorder can lead to punishment. She gives the following example: "I got this picture of Black Jesus right when people come into my room. . . . [M]y PO commented on it, wondering why I got Black Jesus here." The presence or absence of a religious icon in a home would seemingly be a flagrant abuse of legal power if claimed as a parole violation or any other criminal offense. But as Nikki reveals, during raiding, anything questionable—whether legitimately or not—becomes enfolded into the process of homebreaking. She explains the picture's provenance: "It's so they know I'm a woman of God . . . but my PO, sometimes I worry that's why he looks so hard through my stuff. If that's why he doesn't like me or something." Even this attempt to fulfill perceived religious expectations cannot overcome the racialized and punitive lens through which she and the picture are seen.

Homebreaking also disrupts family reunification after incarceration. Janet, who is reunited with her young daughter after being released from prison, shares her experience of trying to build a stable home. Her account reveals the racialized and gendered contours of homebreaking for Black women with carceral histories, who are particularly vulnerable to family separation because of overlapping and sometimes oppositional intervention from multiple state agencies and actors (Gurusami 2019). Janet describes how child welfare agents spy by surveilling the interior of her apartment, saying "and then they gotta roll through and check for all other kinds of stuff with the apartment. . . . Do I have the right stuff? [. . .] Is there milk in the fridge? Am I gonna raise her right? . . . It just seems like what they really want is for her not to live with me, you know what I mean?" She identifies spying as an adversarial process, especially because she believes that its goal is to remove her daughter from her home.

Janet's experience of raiding also disrupts her home by forcing her and her daughter to move. "First, they tell me I got to have another bedroom for it to be safe for me and my daughter," she says. "So ok, I find another apartment. But then they tell me that apartment is too close to where I committed my crime. . . . So ok, I find another place." Her account reveals that raiding creates disorder in the home by forcing people out of their homes multiple times—contending with displacement and lost time and money—despite and as a result of unclear stipulations about what an acceptable living situation looks like from the perspective of the state.

An elderly woman on parole, Zora, also describes how raiding interferes with self-determination in her residence, saying, "Ooh, I can't wait until I get my own apartment. Over a decade, I been told I can't smoke where I sleep. In jail, in prison, here [in the reentry home]. . . . I'm old. I just want to smoke my own cigarettes where I lay my head at night. That's not too much to ask. . . . I'm tired of all these people telling me what's allowed and what I can't do in my own home. . . . I need my own home." Zora's account differentiates between a place where she "lay[s] her] head at night" and a home. Her analysis reveals

how the policing of behaviors associated with homebreaking becomes especially confining and insulting for someone in the later stages of life.

A particularly illustrative example of the way in which formerly incarcerated Black women are subject to homebreaking is apparent from the standardized procedures for people designated as “AB 109” under California’s realignment policies. Under AB 109 guidelines, formerly incarcerated people on parole or probation are subject to random compliance checks in their homes. During these compliance checks, officers arrive at where AB 109-designated people on post-release supervision live—the reentry home, in this case—and require that residents come outside and remain handcuffed on the sidewalk while officers search their private belongings for contraband. Women report having their bedrooms torn apart and thrown into disarray, their cosmetics opened, tampered with, and left unusable or hygienically compromised, and their private letters and photos strewn in common spaces. Officers claim that it is simply policy to handcuff AB 109-designated clients outside their homes during these compliance checks, but those subject to the practice experience this form of raiding as normalized public shaming by being handcuffed outside their homes in front of their neighbors and children. They are subject to further humiliation and disorder by having their personal belongings treated simultaneously as suspicious and valueless by state agents.

Together, spying and raiding produce homebreaking for formerly incarcerated Black women not simply by evoking the conditions of carceral violence, but by resubjecting these newly released women to state punishment and control after they serve their formal time. In these instances, resubjection to the arbitrary rules of the prison—surprise compliance checks that leave a carefully arranged living space in chaos, the ever-present possibility of family separation during the precious but difficult process of reunification, and the marking of everyday indicators of self-determination like religious symbols as potential objects of deviance—serves as the state’s reminder to Black women that they do not leave the prison behind when they are released. These processes subject Black women to conditions that are retraumatizing and reinscribe white state governance over Black domestic life, both through individual experience and long historical evocation.

Subsidized Housing

In the final case, we move from punitive surveillance by formally carceral actors—police and parole officers—to the punitive surveillance of private actors mobilizing public services like the police and other municipal bodies. This analysis shows the breadth of spying and raiding as processes that can be deployed in the context of policing social safety net programs like housing assistance. We reveal how homebreaking occurs when punitive surveillance is used to turn Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) tenants’ homes into sites of

disorder and program violation, forcing tenants to reorder their homes or even give them up to avoid punishment.

Shirley is a late middle-aged Black former Section 8 tenant. She moved to Palmdale, California, when her Housing Authority caseworker suggested that she could find a better home for her family there than in Los Angeles. Her life was initially unremarkable by most measures; she was enrolled in a professional school and otherwise described her life with her children as a peaceful one. But as a Black woman moving to once nearly all-white Palmdale, her peace was never guaranteed. The mix of racism and opposition to welfare (Gilens 2009; Nadasen 2007)—in this case, the federal government's Housing Choice Voucher program that has defined poverty governance in the twentieth century and into the twenty-first—manifests in a burgeoning regime of surveillance and policing that eventually drove Shirley and her family from their home.

As public awareness of Housing Choice Voucher tenants moving to the region grew, so too did the boldness with which the white public expressed its opposition. One crucial development in this trajectory was the role of neighbors in spying, which we saw conducted by public agents in earlier cases. Shirley explains, “they had a sign on [a prominent street] saying ‘We don’t want Section 8 here, we don’t want Blacks in this area again,’ saying all types of stuff for a long time before they took that sign down.” The length of time between the sign’s appearance and removal suggests some level of public or local government indifference toward—or even tacit acceptance of—its messages.

The role of neighbors as private agents in taking on public functions like spying was not limited to threatening signs. Shirley found herself experiencing the ire of a white neighbor who was convinced that her family was responsible for his car having its side view mirror broken by a passing car. He began calling the city and housing authority to complain about her. By triggering investigations by public agencies, he as a private individual both participated in and instigated punitive public action. These dynamics are not unlike those that Ana Muñoz (2012) documents, in which community members use the logic of broken windows to appeal to police to criminalize street vendors. In this instance, the city responded by sending a fraud investigator to do checks of Shirley’s home for program compliance. She describes raiding in the following manner:

They kept coming back and kept coming back. And they’d come in there and raid your house and all of this and then he’s going to say, he’s going to tell me. . . . “Well, how’ve you been living like this, like you’re living out of a magazine?” Because I had everything so neatly and clean and . . . what am I supposed to do? Have stuff all over the house? Then that would have been a problem. Then that would have been a problem because now, oh, the new thing is your house can’t be dirty. If your house is dirty, I think two times or three times, you lose your voucher.

As Shirley reveals, having a home that is too dirty can be a violation of voucher regulations in terms of maintaining the landlord's property in a clean manner, but having a home *too* nice could also raise the eyebrows of a fraud investigator who believes that she could never have a nice home without cheating the program somehow. Her home can be neither "disordered" nor dirty (Vargas 2014), nor can it be too ordered, lest she risk being seen by neighbors or by the state as the voucher program's version of the welfare queen (the untrue race- and gender-based trope that beneficiaries of public assistance enjoy an undeserved and fraudulently obtained standard of living that is higher than that enjoyed by people not benefiting from public assistance programs). This could lead to her voucher being questioned or terminated, the technical term for an eviction from the voucher program. Her experiences attempting to calibrate the appearance of her home to avoid punishment closely resemble those of Nikki, despite the women being in two very different sets of circumstances. Raiding thus appears to lead to escalated spying. "They even was in the empty house across the street spying on us like we really do want something," she adds.

But surveillance of the home extends beyond racialized and gendered interpretations of its cleanliness to its contents as well. The objects in Shirley's home, like in Nikki's, become fodder for scrutiny and possible punishment through raiding. Shirley says she learned from a friend that she should not have a designer bag in the home, because it would suggest that she might have defrauded the program by having enough income to afford it. Shirley explains how this dynamic could affect romantic relationships in which one partner might give another a gift:

So I'm dating a guy, and he bought me a designer bag, that's my business. I say, yeah. I'm not going to go trade [it in]. Is you stupid? Come on now, that's stupid. . . . Any purse a woman gets . . . she get a bag, last year, a year from last, and it's a designer bag—guess what . . . she's going to continue to use it. Why would she just throw it away? That's stupid.

Shirley's account here reveals two critical dynamics. First, she illustrates that voucher tenants like her might be inclined to return, exchange, or sell a gift in order to avoid the mere perception of voucher fraud. Second, she reveals the homebreaking work that such perceptions can perpetuate—disrupting the romantic life of a couple in ways that are specifically tied to voucher status and the looming threat of eviction. As she concludes her explanation, her daughter interrupts to summarize: "They say that being on Section 8, you're not supposed to be able to afford nothing and live nicer than anybody."

If ensuring that tenants appear sufficiently deserving is a central function of raiding, then homebreaking is its key outcome. Shirley explains,

it did affect a lot of our friends. It affected, like we quit school, stopping in the middle of school. And all of this because they kept messing with us. You

couldn't get nothing done because every other day or so they're knocking at the door. They're coming and they're handcuffing everybody. And you couldn't do nothing.

The disruption of everyday life, including school, eventually disrupted her ability to be in her home at all:

Everything became jeopardized. Because then you've got to pack up and you've got to move because if not they're still messing with you, they want to make sure you get up out of there. . . . We had to go stay at a friend's house, you know? It got to the point where they kept messing with me and my daughter, we had to just leave.

In earlier cases, we described raiding as both a process of inspecting the home for evidence of violations and of forcing the reordering of the home, whether state-imposed or done by residents for their own security. But Shirley says she eventually gave up her home as a result of the constancy of punitive surveillance. When asked if she believes that she has a right to privacy, Shirley replies: "No. No. The only way you have a right to privacy, you hit the lottery and get up out of here. And buy you some bodyguards, that's it."

Further illuminating the state's intention in advancing domestic warfare against Black voucher renters via homebreaking is a statement by Lancaster Mayor R. Rex Parris during a June 2008 city council meeting, in which he stated: "This City wants to limit the number of Section 8 units that are placed in this community. . . . It is a problem that is crushing the community . . . and it is time to go to war."

This case therefore illustrates the expansion of the carceral categories of spying and raiding into the lives of Los Angeles residents who are not formally being punished or policed. Just as welfare began to merge with the criminal legal system in the 1990s, so too has housing assistance. Like the Black Jesus picture in Nikki's home and the Dodgers gear in Peter's, Shirley faces the reality that a designer bag in her home could lead to her eviction. Like the experiences recounted by Nikki and others on parole, the threat of punishment and the omnipresence of punitive surveillance force residents to reorder their homes to fit the narrow criteria of acceptability imposed by the state—not too dirty but not too clean either and nothing on the premises that might even suggest noncompliance. This echoes the Janus-faced conditions of respectability politics that Black women on probation and parole experience (Hunter and Cuenca 2017; Kelley 2017; Welch 2015). In this way, homebreaking functions as a state tool to reinforce hegemonic narratives of Black womanhood as illegible and punishable (Haley 2016). Other cases of tenants policed for the purposes of eviction include examples of queer tenants whose choice of clothing or other items in the home is read as indicative of an additional (and unauthorized) tenant's presence rather than merely personal clothing preference (Kurwa 2020). This

dynamic suggests the continuing role of heteronormativity that Ferguson (2004) documents in the allocation and exclusion of state benefits during the New Deal. It also indicates how states and empires advance homonormative agendas by policing and surveilling the homes of poor people of color, both as perceived evidence of and looking for signs of racial-sexual deviation that may “contaminate” the aesthetic of white settler nuclear family space (Cohen 1997; Ferguson 2004; Morgensen 2012; Robinson 2020; Stanley and Smith 2015; Vargas 2014).

State Poverty Governance: Broken and Working

“None of this is easily reconciled with any conception of due process or fair treatment.”

—(Wilson and Kelling 1982)

Broken windows—style policing clearly manifests in the homes of economically marginalized people of color in Los Angeles. Across the cases of gang injunctions, post-release supervision, and housing subsidies, we show how the home becomes a targeted site of state attack through the homebreaking process. This process both relies on and amplifies racialized and gendered discourses on broken homes as shorthand for referencing perspectives about the home as an originating site of disorder in neighborhoods of color (Wilson and Kelling 1982). The state attempts to do the work of breaking the homes of people of color through spying and raiding, and this work is made possible through Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) originating logic of broken windows policing. Importantly, the quote opening this section also exposes that the arbitrary, subjective, and fundamentally violent processes of broken windows policing cannot be “reconciled with any conception of due process or fair treatment”—by *Wilson and Kelling’s own admission*—further revealing that broken windows policing is itself a generative source of social and moral disorder.

Homebreaking also reveals that the home is core to practices of domestic warfare against people of color. What better place should the state strike to undermine or eliminate the spaces that people of color turn to for renewal and refuge in a racist state? If we look to the murder of Black people in their homes by state agents—from seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones to Botham Jean to Atatiana Jefferson to Eleanor Bumpers to Korryn Gaines to Breonna Taylor—we can also see that raiding has deadly, anti-Black consequences. The state makes Black people especially vulnerable to intrusion, violation, and physical violence through carceral logics, and the home does not offer neat escape from these assaults. Still, people of color resist these practices through homemaking (Isoke 2013), community-building (Hunter et al. 2016), and challenging racist state violence (Boyles 2019).

Whereas we examined three contemporary cases within Los Angeles County, it is clear that the patterns we observe are historically rooted. Los

Angeles is shaped by both settler colonialism and carcerality (Hernández 2017), and we see these cases as situated on a trajectory of racialized state governance that traces from early settler colonial processes through the post-Reconstruction mechanisms of redlining, white violence, and spatial policing (Escobar 1999; Gibbons 2018; Herbert 1997).

Further, we recognize that other cases currently occurring in Los Angeles are worthy of study through the framework of homebreaking. The city's long-standing practice of sweeps of unhoused people's property has been the subject of litigation that reveals the role of property in nontraditional living arrangements. In 2011, the city responded to legal challenges by unhoused residents by arguing that they did not have a constitutionally protected right to property. It then passed municipal codes systemizing this position in 2016, further entrenching its practices of sweeps that target unhoused people's belongings and homes—"tents, sleeping bags, carts, clothing, medication, important documents, and other items"—whether on city streets and blocks or in encampments (Legal Aid Foundation v. Los Angeles 2019). The state process of confiscating shelter and property from unhoused people continues to be challenged. In 2019, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles filed a lawsuit on behalf of unhoused residents of Los Angeles attacking these practices, asserting houseless people's right to property and attempting to prohibit the city from arbitrarily confiscating and disposing of their belongings (Legal Aid Foundation v. Los Angeles 2019).

Legal Aid Foundation v. Los Angeles suggests further questions about how homes are governed when their physical structures do not fit the normative public expectation of a home, or are on sidewalks, in empty lots, and other precarious venues to which the state claims oversight. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of the intersection between broken windows policing of the street and of the home. Although we have focused on Los Angeles, homebreaking practices are also readily apparent in other US cities, part of the structural violence to which Brooklyn Hitchens draws attention (2017). Deborah Archer (2019) documents how crime-free housing and nuisance ordinances are weaponized by residents against the perceived disorder of people of color and their homes, and the Policy Surveillance Program (2019) documents how widespread they are across the country.

A more explicit vector of homebreaking growing in popularity with the state and in the general public's perception—especially in the wave of COVID-19—is the trend of e-carceration. Commonly referenced as "house arrest," proponents of e-carceration claim that it is a less costly and more humane form of carceral supervision because it allows people to live outside the formal bounds of the prison or jail and with their families. However, activists and authors like Maya Schenwar and Victoria Law (2020) and projects like #NoDigitalPrisons (MediaJustice n.d.) caution that this trend represents the mutability of carceral power rather than its erosion, and that it further extends the asymmetrical application of carceral power to invade the home. For example, MediaJustice

highlights the case of Rashanti Mcshane, a Black transgender woman who was placed on electronic monitoring after being criminalized for a transphobic attack against her in 2017. While under house arrest, Mcshane sought legal aid from the Transformative Justice Law Project in Chicago following abuse from the state actors charged with supervising her case. Mcshane recounted how she believed authorities were trying to make her home a space of torture by “denying her access to [HIV] meds, cutting off her food supply, and by plunging her into a deep depression” (MediaJustice 2019). Mcshane’s case illustrates how e-carceration represents an expansion of the state’s homebreaking efforts through formally claiming the homes of people of color—especially those who are queer and impoverished—as carceral space. If we name e-carceration as homebreaking rather than a more humane form of carceral punishment, then the state’s vicious agenda is more plainly obvious.

Finally, the framework of homebreaking suggests the relevance and expansiveness of policing as governance (Soss and Weaver 2017). In the cases we have discussed, policing governs the lives of poor people of color, including vectors of domestic life such as cleanliness, presentation, gender, and family. This then suggests the breadth of policing as governance and its implications for understanding contemporary social control, especially as it is weaponized across spatial terrains to uphold and normalize anti-Black, xenophobic, settler colonial, and hetero- and homonormative conditions (Ferguson 2004; García 2018; Gilmore 2007; Guzman 2020; McKittrick 2006; Moore 2011; Morgensen 2012; Robinson 2020). If we take seriously that policing is a form of governance, then we must also consider the corollaries of that premise—that knowledge of carcerality is a form of political knowledge (Cohen and Luttig 2020) and that resistance to policing is a form of political action often unseen by traditional scholarship.

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policing of subsidized housing. He is currently writing a manuscript titled Apartheid's Afterlives: Policing Black Life in the Antelope Valley.

Notes

1. Broken windows policing is shorthand for subjectively criminalizing people of color for minor infractions and even legal behaviors to prevent major crimes and social disorder (Wilson and Kelling 1982). Scholars and activists have extensively documented how broken windows policing subjects its targets to this kind of arbitrary surveillance and criminalization while they navigate public space as a form of racialized and gendered poverty governance (Harcourt 2009; McCurn 2018; Ritchie 2017; Sampson and Raudenbush 2004).

2. For more, see ACLU Northern California 2010. The city's definition includes both people who lack a formal nighttime residence and who are in temporary shelters. See also Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2020.

3. In this paper, we focus on Black, Latinx, Central American, and Indigenous people—including those who are Black Latinx/Afro-Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, and Black Indigenous, as well as those who are otherwise often erased or collapsed in broader discourse about “Black and Brown” people (Garcia Hallett, forthcoming).

4. We use the term *Indian* here to reflect the language used by the US and Canadian governments in their references to Indigenous peoples who were the original stewards of land in North America, but were genocidally and systematically displaced by white settlers. The settler colonial governance of Indigenous life in the United States was explicitly taken up by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1824. In the 1860s, BIA began establishing and coercing Indigenous families to send their children to boarding schools, which were meant to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children into white settlers' social values and break Indigenous cultural and familial ties. Indigenous children were tortured, brutalized, and killed through these explicitly violent, carceral institutions.

5. The injunction's inclusion criteria are included in *YJC v. City of Los Angeles* (2016).

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