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POLICE AND RIOTS, 1967-1969

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This article investigates the role of policing in both the genesis and develop-
ment of racial rioting. In particular, the authors focus on several riots that
occurred in two cities, Boston and San Francisco, which experienced dif-
ferent overall levels of rioting during the peak period of racial violence in
the late 1960s. The amount and type of rioting that occurred in each city is
consistent with the paradoxical yet frequent pattern in which direct repres-
sion, particularly when characterized by excessive or selective use of force,
fails to subdue rioting and often escalates conflict. Despite this consistency,
however, there are substantial differences between the two cities concern-
ing the amount and severity of rioting that occurred. These differences are
connected to variation in three primary characteristics of the civil authori-
ties in the two cities: (a) police preparedness and training, (b) racial polar-
ization in attitudes toward the police, and (c) underlying police-community
relations. Implications are then discussed for further research on racial riot-
ing and for policing practices.

  Keywords: *urban riots; repression; police-community relations; police
            training; racial attitudes*

Many scholars of protest, riots, and social movements have noted
the importance of the role of civil or military authorities for under-
standing the trajectories of both individual collective violence

153

events and waves of protest (e.g., Bergesen, 1982; Guigni & Wisler, 1998; Koopmans, 1993; Marx, 1979; McCarthy & McPhail, 1998; McPhail, Schweingruber, & McCarthy, 1998; Rasler, 1996; Salert & Sprague, 1980). Although the recent resurgence in riot research has not directly addressed issues of policing or repression (e.g., Bergesen & Herman, 1997; Myers, 1997; Olzak & Shanahan, 1996; Olzak, Shanahan, & McEneaney, 1996), the results of some of these studies imply that repression is an important force in understanding riot patterns.

Nevertheless, the bulk of studies that examine repression are primarily concerned with the role repression plays in terminating the riot or protest cycle (e.g., Carter, 1997; McAdam, 1982; Myers, 1996, 1999, 2000; Tilly, 1978). With few exceptions (e.g., Bergesen, 1982), the ways in which authorities initiate and escalate collective conflict is a relatively neglected topic.[1] It has been generally recognized that different types of repression under certain conditions can incite protest (Francisco, 1995, 1996, 1997; Mason & Krane, 1989; Moore, 1995; Olivier, 1990, 1991; Rasler, 1996). Specifically, many have recognized that the police contributed to many of the racial riots in the United States (National Advisory Commission, 1968; Useem, 1997), but this relationship is not well specified and further study is necessary to uncover what kinds of police behavior most often result in a riotous response and what social contexts are most likely to foster this reaction.

Even in those few studies that have been conducted, analysts usually focused only on the most extreme riots, which often involved the most egregious police conduct. For example, the two riots detailed by Bergesen (1982), the Newark and Detroit riots of 1967, accounted for 84% of riot fatalities for 1967 as well as a large fraction of the property damage for that year. Although clearly significant, these extraordinary riots should hardly be considered characteristic of the more typical riot event. Given that hundreds of riots occurred between 1966 and 1971, these limited studies of police behavior may not provide an adequate or even reasonable portrayal of riot-related police behaviors and their outcomes. In this study, we contribute to a more thorough understanding of this

relationship by examining a series of riots that occurred in San Francisco and Boston. Furthermore, rather than focusing exclusively on outcomes (deaths, property damage, arrests, etc.), we explore the preriot conditions, attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes that correspond to more typical riot events. Understanding the behavior of police across a variety of conflict situations and within the context of underlying police-community relations provides a more informed illustration of policing practices and the role they play in escalating and de-escalating collective violence.

To examine these patterns, we analyze several riots that took place in San Francisco and Boston from 1967 to 1969. A sizeable body of scholarship has provided evidence that suggests the effectiveness of high levels of repression in suppressing protest and collective action (Feierabend & Feierabend, 1972; Hibbs, 1973; Muller, 1985; Tilly, 1978). We diverge from this conventional wisdom, however, and argue that certain applications of high levels of direct repression will not only be ineffective at quelling riots but may in fact be escalatory, worsening an already volatile situation. The key point of departure we undertake lies in the specification of the criteria under which this counterproductive inflammatory effect seems most likely to occur, namely (a) when repression is excessive and/ or racially selective, (b) when police have poor training in crowd control, and (c) when police-community relations are strained or lacking in formal connections and channels for feedback. In exploring these criteria, we begin with a brief presentation of the magnitude and character of the racial rioting in our two cities. Next, we attempt to connect these outcomes to various facets of the preriot[2] conditions, particularly (a) levels of police preparedness, (b) preexisting relationships between authorities and city residents, and (c) racial differences (polarization) between both cities' populations concerning opinions and attitudes about police behavior and effectiveness. We hypothesize that the city that fairs better on measures of preparedness and police-community relations will experience a lower incidence of racial violence. Similarly, we expect the city with lower racial polarization of attitudes toward police to experience less rioting.

DATA AND METHODS

We examine data from four distinct sources, providing a triangu-lated view of the effect that police had on riot activity in Boston and San Francisco during the riot years. Three of the data sources were archived in the records of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Vio-lence. The Lemberg Center operated at Brandeis University from 1966 to 1974 and was arguably the premier site for research on the urban riots of the 1960s. Although the center generated a wealth of data on rioting and race relations, only a fraction of the material was ever analyzed. We extract several germane elements from the re- cently rediscovered archive that we combine to recreate a detailed picture of the police-community/disorder interactions in our target cities during the late 1960s.

We chose Boston and San Francisco as our primary cases for several reasons, both practical and substantive. First, these two cit-ies were two of a small number of cities for which all four data sources had complete information (see below for details on sources). Of those that had complete sets of data, Boston and San Francisco were specifically designated by the Lemberg Center for study as a "matched pair" (see Lieberson & Silverman, 1965, for more detail on the matched-pair design for riot cities). Of course, no two cities selected by the Lemberg Center or any other research organization could ever score identically on every characteristic, so thinking in terms of strict statistical controls would be an unreason-able extension of the matched-pair design. Nonetheless, myriad similarities did exist between the two cities at the time, and we believe that these congruities help to minimize various demo-graphic, economic, and cultural explanations that might otherwise account for the variation in observed riot rates. To note just a few examples, both Boston and San Francisco are coastal cities and both are far removed from the southern border. Both are predomi-nantly cultural and educational centers relative to the minor pres-ence of heavy industry and both are considered relatively progres-sive with respect to race relations (see Roper Research Associates, 1967, for more detail on the selection mechanisms). These similari-ties and others help to isolate the policing dynamic from other

regional, economic, and cultural factors that might account for the difference in rioting across the two cities.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

One of the main data collection foci of the Lemberg Center was their newspaper archive. Starting in 1967, the center contracted a national newspaper clipping service to monitor all of the daily newspapers in the United States for accounts of race-related civil disorders. We identified all events that occurred in the target cities from 1967 to 1969 and extracted the articles that covered those events. In sum, 6 riots occurred in Boston and 20 occurred in San Francisco during that 3-year time span.

ROPER SURVEY

The second major data collection effort conducted by the Lemberg Center was a public opinion survey commissioned via Roper Research Associates that asked broadly about city conditions, race relations, and civil disorder. The survey also included important information about public attitudes toward the police and police practices prior to the riots. Accordingly, we extracted and analyzed data on all questionnaire items that made any reference to the police. We draw on the information from the Roper Survey as our first of three explanatory data sources to inform our portrayal of the preriot conditions in each city.

The Roper Survey was conducted in six major U.S. cities including Boston and San Francisco. In each city, a probability sample of approximately 500 Blacks and 500 Whites aged 18 and older was selected. The sampling frame was restricted to the city limits. To minimize bias due to interviewer effects and social desirability, interviewers were race-matched with the respondents (Roper Research Associates, 1967). Of particular relevance to our study, the poll was conducted at the end of 1966 and the beginning of 1967, prior to the onset of the most serious rioting in the United States. Thus, the Roper data provide telling background informa-

tion about conditions in our cities during the early parts of the riot wave rather than reacting to the "long, hot summer" of 1967.

LEMBERG INTERVIEWS

To supplement the Roper Survey, the Lemberg Center also conducted its own in-depth interviews with approximately 40 to 60 community leaders, city officials, religious leaders, and other prominent figures from each city. The racial breakdown was split almost evenly between Black respondents and White. The interviews explored a variety of issues, including race relations, civil disorders and policing, economic and social conditions, and a variety of other topics. Although the interviews were not entirely completed before each city had experienced rioting, they provide an insightful glimpse into the state of affairs in each city, and we draw specifically from those portions of the transcripts that detail the respondents' attitudes concerning civil disorder, police-community relations, and police behavior. The Lemberg Center interviews were particularly compelling in that many of the respondents (e.g., police chiefs, protest leaders, city officials, and members of police-community relations boards) had specific insights into the policing situation in their cities.

ICMA DATA

The International City Managers Association (ICMA) Police Survey details a variety of internal characteristics of police departments throughout the country. Conducted throughout the 60s, the ICMA Survey gathered both general information about each police department (personnel, expenditures, etc.) as well as detailed information about riot preparedness and procedures. The ICMA data used in this study were collected in 1966 (again, prior to the dramatic surge in the riot cycle), and the survey includes information about riot personnel, action policies, crowd control strategies, and hardware (e.g., quantities of tear gas, shielding armor, clubs, etc.). We extracted all relevant information for Boston and San Francisco

to help establish a profile of the riot preparedness of each city prior to the period under study.

RESULTS

Our analysis examines each of the data sets discussed above, with the tabulation and summary of rioting (based on the Lemberg Center news clippings) as the primary dependent variable. The three explanatory data sources help connect the preriot conditions discussed above (riot preparedness, police-community relations, and racial polarization) to the levels of rioting that occurred in these two cities.

CIVIL DISORDER IN BOSTON AND SAN FRANCISCO, 1967-1969

In the Lemberg Center's original paired-city design, San Francisco was designated as a "riot city" and Boston as a "non-riot city" because Boston had not experienced a major race-related civil disorder prior to 1967. As the riot wave progressed, however, both cities experienced substantial yet varying rates of rioting, so it is perhaps more useful to think of San Francisco as a high-riot city and Boston as a low-riot city. This distinction held through the 1967-1969 period, as Boston experienced only 6 disorders during that time, 2 of which occurred in high schools and did not involve police. San Francisco, by contrast, experienced 20 disorders with 11 characterized as having substantial inflammatory involvement by police.[3] Thus, in addition to having more disorders in total, San Francisco had nearly three times as many riots in which the police were directly involved.

The articles' descriptions of the events suggest that the actions taken by police during the riots in both cities were quite often inflammatory. Of San Francisco's 11 police-involved riots, 7 were either directly instigated or clearly escalated by the police. Among Boston's 4 police-involved riots, all were instigated and/or escalated by the police. In summary, San Francisco experienced a higher degree of racial disturbances relative to Boston, and in raw

frequencies, San Francisco's police played a more inflammatory role in the violence than did Boston's police. Before we delve into the arguments that we propose to account for these differences, we first illustrate the character and influence of such police actions with an example from San Francisco.

One of San Francisco's most severe late-1960s riots revolved around a 5-month strike by the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College. In all, more than a dozen violent confrontations occurred over the 5-month period of the strike. A net total of 15 days of violence resulted in nearly 3 weeks of school closings, 600 arrests, the resignation of the school president, and the deployment of police and National Guard forces in excess of 500. Throughout the duration of the disturbance, nearly every violent confrontation was initiated by police repression rather than student aggression. Over the course of several months, the student/police clashes led to the hospitalization of dozens of students—some with critical injuries.

Unlike more recent riots (e.g., Seattle, 1999, and Cincinnati, 2001) in which police aggression prompted a heated and often negative reaction in both scholarly and media outlets, the general public and university officials in the San Francisco case seemed remarkably open to the blatant police brutality that occurred during the San Francisco State riot. A quote from *The New York Times* of a statement made by acting president Samuel Hayakawa grimly characterizes the role the police often played throughout the 5-month ordeal. While demanding that the students disperse from a gathering in the quad, Hayakawa issued the following admonition over the loudspeaker (Turner, 1968):

> Do not form crowds. Do not join crowds that already exist. There are no innocent bystanders in this situation . . . even of innocent intent. There is nothing a troublemaker wants less than to be left alone with the police . . . . If you want the police off campus, please disperse . . . . If some of you want to make trouble, stay right there. The police will see that you get it. (p. 26)

Clearly, the combative imagery depicted in the president's words suggests a rather inauspicious role played by the police—to con-

front and forcefully repress both protestors and innocent onlookers alike.

Although the San Francisco State riot was just one of the many disorders that broke out in San Francisco during the late 1960s, the general patterns detailed above were apparent in the characteriza- tions of several other riots. Numerous accounts from local, regional, and national newspapers detail openly hostile actions taken by city police when responding to protests, rallies, or existing disorders. Likewise, events involving severe and often adverse engagements of police also occurred in Boston, although the fre- quency of such occurrences was lower. When weighted by popula- tion, Boston experienced just one riot per 112,000 residents versus one riot per 37,250 San Francisco residents. The question now becomes why San Francisco might have been more susceptible to higher levels of rioting in the first place. For our analysis, we turn to the influence of the police-related preriot conditions and the effects these factors might have had on the riot rates.

OPINIONS ON THE LOCAL POLICING

Our general expectations with respect to policing are that higher levels of excessive force will fail to subdue riots in our target cities. Furthermore, this relationship may be conditioned by a deeper his- tory of preexisting relations and attitudes between the community and the police force. Thus, because San Francisco suffered more serious outbreaks of racial conflict vis-à-vis Boston, we would expect that city to exhibit higher levels of excessive force and poorer police-community relations relative to Boston. The interac- tion of these two effects induces rioting both by generating a key grievance (concerns about police brutality) and by inflaming the development of existing riot events as they occurred.

Table 1 gives results from the Roper Survey that inform these issues and establish the background for our preriot themes. From these results, three general patterns emerge. First, we find a consis- tent and simple race effect for the vast majority of the questions. Whites in both cities generally had better opinions of police policy and practice than did Blacks (see also Campbell & Schuman, 1968;

TABLE 1
Roper Survey Results (in percentages)

	Boston		San Francisco	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
1. Listed police brutality as riot cause	3.17	1.38	37.27†	25.22*†
2. Good policing responsible for lack				
of riots over past summer	1.27	5.10*	4.9†	10.38*†
3. Treatment of Blacks by police				
Too brutal	37.34	1.78*	55.35†	7.67*†
Too soft	6.02	8.91	0.82†	9.53*
Generally fair	39.00	81.07*	36.42	70.93*†
4. Is softness by police a major cause				
of rioting?				
Major cause	10.74	14.03	3.47†	17.02*
Contributing cause	31.61	22.94*	12.65†	21.21*
Does not contribute	41.53	53.67*	74.49†	55.24*
5. Future riot prevention				
Listed stronger police	1.89	5.82*	0.70	7.87*
6. Give police more power to				
prevent riots				
Favor	48.74	73.74*	27.54†	62.00*†
Oppose	44.12	16.67*	62.53†	29.93*†
7. Civilian review boards				
Favor	79.37	49.43*	87.45†	47.06*
Oppose	9.47	39.64*	8.85	45.18*
8. Black neighborhoods need better				
police protection				
Needed	94.77	52.16*	65.08†	54.59*
Not needed	1.05	20.27*	17.77†	21.65

* Difference between Blacks and Whites within the same city is significant at $p < .05$.
† Difference between cities within same racial group is significant at $p < .05$.

Feagin & Hahn, 1973; Gamson & McEvoy, 1970). Not only did Whites feel that police were doing a good job relative to Blacks, but they also felt that the police needed even more power to enforce the law—a view that Blacks did not share. Considering the racial composition of the police forces in each city (both predominantly white), these results are hardly surprising.

Second, we find evidence that supports the predicted relationship suggested by our second preriot theme, the preexisting police-community relations. Recall that we anticipate more favorable

relations to lead to a lower incidence of rioting. Accordingly, Boston residents generally had more favorable opinions of police policy and practice than did San Francisco residents, lending support to our expectations. Finally, we find additional support for the relationship predicted by the racial polarization theme,[4] the notion that greater attitudinal differences between Blacks and Whites will lead to greater conflict as predominantly Black protestors confront a White-majority police force. The differential between Black and White opinion was indeed greater in San Francisco than in Boston, and this city-level difference appears consistently throughout our data. Thus, based solely on these initial patterns, we find (a) poorer police-community relations and (b) greater racial polarization of opinion in San Francisco relative to Boston. Given these data, San Francisco's higher riot rate seems more than plausible.

In the survey data, Blacks in both cities cited police brutality as a primary cause of riots more often than Whites (Table 1, Question 1). However, the difference in responses to this item between San Francisco and Boston was also significant at the .05 level, supporting the police-community relations effect. Indeed, more than one third of Blacks and one fourth of Whites credited poor police behavior as a primary riot cause in San Francisco, whereas in Boston only 3% of Blacks and 1 in 100 Whites believed poor police behavior could cause riots.

These patterns are reflected further in the responses to Question 3 in which the survey asked respondents to rate the treatment of Blacks by police within each city. In both cities, significantly more Blacks than Whites rated the treatment of Blacks as too brutal; conversely, more Whites than Blacks rated the treatment of Blacks as too soft. In both cities, a significant percentage from both races rated the treatment of Blacks as generally fair, although a higher percentage of Whites did so than Blacks. Across races, Bostonians once again held a much more positive opinion of police than did residents of San Francisco.

Question 4 allows us to consider the conventional repression effect argued by many protest scholars. This view suggests that the primary function of civil authorities is to maintain order and lawfulness in a community. Because rioting represents a clear break-

down in the state of order, perhaps rioting is the result of too little or too lax policing. Accordingly, previous works have found that high levels of repression do reduce protest and collective protest (Feierabend & Feierabend, 1972; Hibbs, 1973; Muller, 1985; Tilly, 1978). Under these assumptions, we would expect to connect the harshness of policing to lower riot rates rather than the higher rates that our arguments suggest. Question 4 tests a variant of this relationship by asking if police "softness" could cause rioting. If the conventional theory is robust, we would expect to find more riots in the city that lists police softness as a bigger problem. The results do not support the conventional view. Although the results for Whites are equivalent, Boston Blacks were much more likely to list police softness as a potential riot cause, and yet Boston suffered a much lower incidence of rioting. In addition, consistent with previous questions and with the polarization argument, we find once again considerably more racial polarization on this issue in San Francisco where the large majority of Blacks did not think police softness contributed to rioting and many Whites considered it a major cause of disorder. This differential was not nearly as great in Boston, where far fewer riots occurred.

With respect to preventing future riots, two items on the survey tap respondents' attitudes toward the police. One open-ended question asked what could be done to prevent future riots, and some respondents listed strengthening the police (Table 1, Question 5). Another asked if police should be given more power to prevent riots (Table 1, Question 6). In both cities, far more Whites than Blacks approved of increased police powers. Again, however, we see less overall support for giving more power to police and greater race polarization in San Francisco.

Civilian review boards that provide citizens with an outlet for grievances against police have long been cited as a potential means of improving police-community relations. These boards often reviewed and addressed cases in which arresting police subjected Blacks to brutality. When asked about civilian review boards, the overall distribution of responses was similar across the cities. A large number of both races favored the review boards, but many

more Blacks than Whites favored them in both cities. Clearly, Blacks were much more desirous of the means to redress their grievances against the police and this desire was again somewhat stronger in San Francisco.

Finally, with respect to the future role of police in Black neighborhoods, respondents were asked if these areas needed better police protection. In large part, the respondents of both cities advocated for police protection. However, the question presents an interpretive conundrum because it is not completely clear what respondents visualized as "police protection." It is fairly plain at this point that Blacks in Boston perceived the police more positively than Blacks in San Francisco. Thus, it is not particularly surprising that they desire more police presence in their neighborhoods. San Francisco Blacks, on the other hand, had a much more negative view of the police and thus their desire for law and order in their neighborhoods was probably tempered by their critical feelings toward the police. Thus, although they may have wanted more police protection in their neighborhoods, they did not want police presence of the kind they had come to expect.

In summary, the survey data from Boston and San Francisco reinforce the well-known differences between Whites and Blacks with respect to attitudes toward the police. In addition, there are substantial differences between the cities with respect to the two preriot conditions informed by these data, general attitudes toward the police, and the differential between Black and White opinion, respectively. The Roper data indicate that the relationship between the Black community and the police department was considerably less strained in Boston than in San Francisco and that racial differences in opinions about police matters were less polarized in Boston. In summary, given these results and the predominant character of the 1960s riots as confrontations between members of the Black community and the White authorities, it is a reasonable supposition that poor police-community relations and higher racial tension (epitomized by the racial polarization) laid the groundwork for the higher rate of rioting in San Francisco.

LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

The in-depth interview data collected by the Lemberg Center reveal several additional insights that help to connect our themes about preriot conditions with the observed levels of collective conflict. First, we observe the same race effect seen so frequently in the Roper data. Even among civic leaders and governmental officials, Blacks and Whites did not see eye-to-eye on the police. Only a few Blacks in either city expressed positive opinions about the police. Whites were more likely to express positive or mixed opinions about the police, although a substantial proportion of Whites also had negative views of police behavior in riots. In addition, the racial polarization theme re-emerges, suggesting that racial differences existed even among community leaders. Consistent with the Roper results, San Francisco residents were more likely to polarize by race.

By the time the interviews were conducted, San Francisco had experienced a few riots, many of which involved poor police behavior. Racial strife and discontent with policing had been made apparent through these riots and had not been ameliorated by the time of the interviews. As the executive director of the Human Rights Commission observed, "Frustration is still there . . . police are still beating people over the head and this type of thing, so how do we solve some of these things. Usually they end up solving themselves."

Others were more specific in associating poor policing with riot outbreaks. In an interview with the west coast regional director of the NAACP, the interviewer asked about police behavior.

Interviewer: Is there any concern expressed here about police practices?
Respondent: Yes, and there have been workshops here dealing with community tensions and the role of the police and steps that can be taken by the NAACP to cope with or to seek to deal with this problem . . . . It's no secret that many of the riots that do occur are triggered by some form of police action . . . . Riots last year in Hunter's Point and in the Fillmore District of San Francisco could be directly traced to the shooting of a Negro boy by a police officer.

Indeed, the Hunter's Point riot of 1966 typifies both the brutalities committed by the San Francisco police and the subsequent police actions that further escalated the ensuing riot. One summer night in 1966, a Black youth was pulled over for speeding through a ghetto neighborhood. The youth, who allegedly borrowed the car from a neighbor, fled from the vehicle to escape the police officer. The officer pursued the boy down the street and ordered him to halt immediately before firing two "warning shots," one of which struck the youth in the back of the head. The boy of 15 years died instantly and in plain view of his community. Within minutes, the Hunter's Point area became a riot zone.

The depth and detail of the interviews produces a multifaceted understanding of both preriot and during-riot conditions and police behaviors. Clearly, San Francisco had been experiencing racial tension between the Black community and the police force well before the riots ever broke out. Several respondents provide detailed histories of isolated incidents concerning police transgressions on individuals. Yet, the time frame in which the interviews were conducted also permits firsthand accounts of the actions taken by police after the riots had started, allowing us to analyze the role of police not just in the genesis of conflict but also in the trajectory and course of the riots once they had begun. Many who observed the riot remarked on the callous behavior of the police both in the precipitating incident and during the riot itself. In a Lemberg Center summary of an interview with a pharmacology professor at the University of California Medical Center, the staff member wrote, "Dr. [name] feels that most of the damage resulting from the Hunter's Point riot was done by police."

Whereas the Hunter's Point incident and the ensuing riot provided a prototypical example of police brutality and the clearly selective, excessive use of force, there were also occasions of political maneuvering within the San Francisco Police Department that escalated the strain in police-community relations. One example stems from the removal of Dante Andriotte, the former head of the Police-Community Relations division. In summarizing the session with the director of a city planning firm, the interviewer wrote, "He likes Lt. Andriotte of the Police-Community Relations Depart-

ment. He commented that San Francisco could use more like him."
Several other community leaders had even more passionate views
toward Lt. Andriotte, who was regarded by many as the single posi-
tive element in an otherwise racist and abusive police force. The
following excerpt is taken from an interview summary with the
director of a youth service agency in San Francisco, who was inter-
viewed after Andriotte's removal:

> [Name] began to talk very loud and almost looked as though he
> wanted to cry when he talked about Dante Andriotte, the former
> Director of Police-Community Relations, "I believe to the bottom
> of my heart that he was taken from San Francisco because he exhib-
> ited too much humanity toward Black youth. He was so far real that
> the power structure wanted him off the scene."

San Francisco had deep-seeded and recurring problems with its
police department that did not abate as the riots progressed. Ten-
sion increased with each disorder, making subsequent confronta-
tions between the police and Black citizens more incendiary. Black
community leaders seemed familiar and highly vocal about such
problems and were quick to identify connections between police
brutality and riot outbreaks and perpetuation. These same associa-
tions were not shared by Whites, as the issues so often raised by
Black leaders were rarely discussed by the majority of San Fran-
cisco's White leadership.

The interviews conducted in Boston demonstrate the effects that
one badly handled incident can have on public opinions about the
police. Respondents were interviewed just a few months after
Boston's first serious race riot (Roxbury). Because this was the first
major challenge to the riot-containment capacities of the Boston
police—and by most accounts, it did not go well—it had a major
effect of Bostonians' views of how well their police department
could handle collective disruption. The previously positive view of
the police force observed in the Roper Survey was strongly negated
by the time the interviews were held.

The Roxbury riot was rather severe, resulting in several injuries,
arrests, and a significant degree of property damage. More impor-
tant, the police played a detrimental and inflammatory role in the

escalation of the protest into a riot. Below is an excerpt from the Lemberg summary of an interview with the leader of a group called the Mothers for Adequate Welfare (MAW).

> MAW is the group that sat in at the Roxbury office of the Department of Welfare and was forcibly ejected from the building . . . approximately 25 women and some men picketed the office . . . approximately forty policemen came into the building and tried to forcibly eject them. [Name] said that Deputy Sayre issued the order "Beat 'em, kill 'em, just get 'em out of here." She said that mothers were corralled and beaten by police and that she and other mothers threw their children to safety out of the windows of the building to people who had gathered around the building on the street. She said that many of the mothers were dragged, kicked, and pulled down the halls out of the door.

Clearly, the police played a central role in the escalation of the violence in Roxbury (a poor, predominantly Black Boston district). As the police were assailing the women, a large crowd began to amass outside the welfare building. The riot itself began when the agitated crowd reacted against the "arresting" officers. When questioned as to why the riot, once under way, had not spiraled even further, the respondent asserted "that a lot of the young adults and militants had demanded that the police be taken off the streets." In this scenario, the withdrawal of the police was crucial in de-escalating the conflict.

The Roxbury riot severely damaged police-community relations and although racial disturbances in Boston never paralleled San Francisco's riot rate, the Roxbury riot marked the beginning of an increased level of collective conflict on the streets of Boston. Prior to the riot, the police force made no secret of their deterrent capabilities (the riot squad was heavily endorsed by the mayor), yet they had until then exercised restraint in the way they policed protest. As the story of the police behavior at Roxbury spread throughout Boston, the once respectable police force came to be perceived as abusive and illegitimate. It is, therefore, of little surprise that Black leaders developed a more unfavorable stance toward police when interviewed soon after.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PROFILES

Past research on the riot frequency has investigated the role of the police by including a measure of the size of the police force. Two competing and antithetical notions drove the hypotheses in such tests. One reasoned that with increased repressive power, the authorities would be better able to maintain control, so increases in the size and fire-power of the police force would decrease rates of collective contention. The other recognized the character of the riots of the 1960s as products of confrontation between police and members of the Black community and reasoned that the stronger and more present the police were, the more likely these confrontations would be, and in turn, the more likely riots would be (Lieske, 1978).

Three considerations complicate these simple relationships, however. First, it is not at all clear how general policing practice translates into the policing of riots. Having more police officers for general policing purposes does not necessarily mean that more are either available or competently trained for the policing of riots. In other words, raw counts of police officers or the ratio of police to population is a crude and uninformative representation of repressive potential. Furthermore, larger numbers of police do not necessarily increase the incidents of unsavory confrontation between Blacks and the police. This assertion stems from two factors, the first of which concerns the distribution of police across various parts of the city, and the second of which concerns the actual behavior in which police engage while patrolling Black neighborhoods and when confronting Black citizens. Clearly, all of these factors can vary greatly, irrespective of the density of police officers.

Finally, having repressive potential does not necessarily mean that this potential will be realized through action. In fact, there is little evidence in the literature that suggests that the ability of social control agents to forcefully suppress protest equates to a willingness to do so. Clearly, the riot police that confronted protesters during the anti-apartheid demonstrations that swept U.S. campuses in the mid-1980s had more sophisticated and powerful repressive technology at their disposal than did police in the 1960s, yet inju-

ries, property damage, and incidents of police brutality were nearly nonexistent despite the highly disruptive tactics employed by the demonstrators (McPhail et al., 1998). Contrast these outcomes with the massacre at Kent State in 1970, when heavily armed national guardsmen fired on protesting students, killing four (Adamek & Lewis, 1973). Taken alone, neither willingness to employ force nor the ability to do so offers sufficient means of predicting the effects of repression on collective protest. The examples highlighted above point out the gross oversimplifications that derive from theories that address only the effects of blanket changes in levels of repressive force on the trajectory of collective action cycles. The full story in any protest wave is far more dynamic, thus our analysis pays particular attention to conditions under which varying levels of repression are employed. All other factors being equal, however, a well-prepared yet less impulsive police force optimizes its chances of minimizing violent clashes.

The ICMA survey of police departments in 1966 provides a detailed catalogue of the repressive potential of the Boston and San Francisco police departments. Table 2 details the pertinent items from the ICMA data for both cities including general information about the personnel in each department and the preparedness for crowd control and riot response. These data show that in many respects, the two police departments were quite similar. For example, in both cities, the standard workweek for patrol officers was 40 hours and this number was not reduced in 1965 as it had been in other cities. No patrol officers in either city were involved in a nationally affiliated labor union or employee association (which may have increased the diffusion of policing techniques or departmental changes in response to rioting). With respect to riot control, both cities had formal plans for dealing with riots and demonstrations, both had mutual aid programs with other local law enforcement agencies through which assistance could be offered or requested when needed, and both cities had formal in-service training exercises including techniques of riot and crowd control.

There are important differences as well, however. To begin, the police department in San Francisco was considerably smaller than Boston's. At the time of the study, there were about 670,000 people

TABLE 2
International City Managers Association
Police Department Comparison Data, 1966

		Boston	San Francisco
1.	Actual number of full-time paid employees in department (including civilians)	2,705	1,993
2.	Civilian full-time employees	203	249
3.	Regular work week for patrol officers	40	40
4. a)	Are any patrol officers in nationally affiliated labor union or employee association?	–	–
b)	Does city prohibit belonging to nationally affiliated labor union or employee association?	+	+
5.	Are any patrol officers members of local union or association that has no national affiliation?	–	+
6.	Specially trained riot and crowd control unit	+	–
7.	Police dogs used in crowd control	–	–
8.	Formal plan of riot control and demonstration control	+	+
9.	Trained auxiliary police	–	+
	Are they trained in crowd and riot control?	–	+
10.	Mutual aid programs with other local law enforcement agencies by which assistance may be sent/received	+	+
11.	Items city has for riot and crowd control situations		
	Tear gas devices	+	–
	Riot batons	+	–
	Hard hats	+	–
	Gas masks	+	–
	Arrest identification forms (to be used in field)	+	–
	Stretchers	+	–
	Portable fingerprinting kits	+	–
	Mobile communication systems (walkie talkies, etc.)	+	–
	Blockade materials (wooden horses to seal off an area, etc.)	+	–
	Special vehicles for transporting arrested	+	–
	Fire hoses		–
	Cameras	+	–
	Ambulance	+	–
	Bayonets	+	–
	Mobile public address systems	+	–
	Mobile floodlights	+	–
	Smoke-producing apparatus	+	–
	Portable tape recorders	+	–
12.	Written procedures dealing with crowd and riot situation	+	+
13.	Formal in-service training exercises	+	+
14.	Is the "techniques of riot and crowd control" included in your training program?	+	+

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

	Boston	San Francisco
15. Items discussed as part of crowd and riot control training sessions		
Use of tear gas	+	+
Crowd motivation	+	+
Arrest procedure	+	+
Crowd psychology	+	+
Camera surveillance	+	+
Characteristics of riot situations	+	+
Role of police officer in riot situations	+	+
Looting	+	+
Use of smoke-producing equipment (such as smoke grenades)	+	+
Relationship with on-the-scene news reporters	+	+
Police discipline in crowd control and riot situations	+	+
Laws limiting police authority	+	+
Evidence collection for courtroom prosecution	+	+
Prediction and prevention of possible riot situations	+	+
Actual observance of riots through use of motion pictures	+	+
Development of on-the-scene command posts	+	+

living in Boston and 2,502 full-time police officers—roughly 1 police officer for every 268 residents. The population of San Francisco was significantly larger at about 745,000, yet the number of police in San Francisco was actually smaller—just 1,744 full-time officers or 1 officer for every 427 residents. Contrary to previous research that shows blanket increases in the amount of police directly increasing the amount of rioting (Lieske, 1978), the greater repressive capacity here is related to the lower number of riots.

This contradiction is even more apparent when the remainder of the police department profiles are examined. Beyond simply having more officers, Boston had both a riot squad and an array of designated riot-response hardware that San Francisco did not have. Boston's specially trained riot and crowd control unit contrasts with San Francisco's use of auxiliary officers who had been trained in crowd control. Unlike Boston's unit, San Francisco's auxiliary police were not a special unit specifically focused on riots and crowds and were not full-time officers. Combined with the differences in riot and crowd control hardware, it is apparent that Boston

was more prepared and better staffed for riot and crowd control. This difference in orientation stands in contrast to each city's experience with riots up until the time the ICMA survey was conducted. By this point in time, San Francisco had experienced a serious riot but did not respond by increasing police readiness. Boston had not had any similar experiences and yet was better prepared to confront problems that might arise.

How then, should we interpret the differences between the two cities and their eventual riot rates? One simple conclusion would be that notions of repressive force increasing confrontation and rioting are simply wrong and that repression theorists are correct—more repressive power reduces collective conflict. But as indicated above, we find such a view oversimplified, and inappropriate given the precise positioning of our arguments. Our hypotheses diverge from the classical repression theorists by specifying the conditions under which excessive repression may or may not fail to suppress collective conflict. Thus, our claims are not necessarily incompatible with conventional repression theory, they simply require further specification beyond blanket increases or decreases in the levels of repressive capacity. Even though Boston had considerably more fire power to combat and potentially inflame rioters than San Francisco, the cities were not equal in their willingness to deploy their forces on the community. The history of rioting in Boston supports this claim—until the Roxbury riot of 1967, Boston residents maintained a relatively favorable attitude toward the police and police confrontations with individuals did not explode into mass rioting. Once Boston police decided to direct their violent apparatus against protesters, attitudes changed abruptly.

In the end, the ICMA data show a substantial difference between the two cities in terms of preparedness but not necessarily willingness to use repression. These results seem consistent with the hypothesis that stems from the third and final preriot theme (preparedness). Perhaps the mere presence of Boston's advanced riot control resources served as a deterrent to would-be rioters, suggesting that preparation alone could reduce collective conflict. Yet, the hostility at Roxbury suggested that even the most advanced forces might not be effective at quelling collective conflict, so it is clear

that the previously shown restraint exercised by the Boston police department in not using (or perhaps not misusing) their resources also played a role in minimizing conflicts. This pattern denotes a dynamic interplay between riot preparedness, police tactics, and crowd response. Put simply, although no single response or level of preparation can ensure de-escalation of every collective conflict, it would seem that the presence of sizable, well-trained control agents has a deterrent effect on riot escalation, whereas the violent deployment of those same agents has the opposite effect.

DISCUSSION

In this article, we set out to examine the role of policing in the development of the riots of the 1960s. In documenting three areas of preriot conditions concerning police, we find that the data generally emphasize the importance of public attitudes toward the police, preparedness of the police department, and racial tension (measured by divergence of opinion) between Blacks and Whites. We draw several conclusions with regard to the role of police in civil disorders in Boston and San Francisco based on these data. Preriot conditions in both cities show strong divisions along racial lines concerning police appraisal, with Blacks holding a considerably more negative view. Across races, preriot conditions show similarly strong divisions between cities, with San Francisco residents holding the more negative opinions. In addition, we observed important differences in racial polarization of opinion about the policing of riots and policing in general. Whites were consistently more supportive of the police and more in favor of heavy-handedness than Blacks, but the divergence between the races on these issues was considerably larger in San Francisco than in Boston. This polarization likely exacerbated conflict in San Francisco, making the interactions between the largely White police and the Black population more hostile and incendiary. In addition, we find that the polarization issue corresponds not only to the higher riot frequency for San Francisco but also to a higher incidence of police involvement in riots. The accounts of riots in newspaper articles

and in interviews suggest a racially selective and often abusive sys-
tem of law enforcement during the late 1960s, particularly in San
Francisco, where the consistent failures by police to confront pro-
test in an even-handed and impartial manner ultimately bore much
of the responsibility for the riots in both cities.

Although our work enhances the understanding of the role of
law enforcement in individual riots and riot waves, considerably
more work must be done to verify the patterns we have identified in
these two case studies. First, our study was limited in scope to only
two cities, and although it represents an advance on prior work by
examining series of riots rather than just one or two extreme cases,
an even broader approach is necessary to understand how these pat-
terns may have manifested themselves across the United States
during the 1960s. Other extensions might examine rioting in differ-
ent time periods or in a cross-national perspective to determine if
the relationship between policing and rioting exhibits systematic
differences over time or across different political systems. In any
case, future riot research must expand the consideration of the role
of social control agents beyond the oversimplified "measures of
strength" so commonly used in the literature. Our research has
highlighted some of the ways in which specific, ill-conditioned
forms of repression can exacerbate rather than reduce the amount
of rioting and future research could easily expand on these
findings.

Finally, this research has implications beyond its contribution to
the scholarly literature on rioting as well. Police-community rela-
tions are critical to controlling collective violence and if we wish to
reduce the likelihood of future rioting, police and city leaders must
be ever vigilant in monitoring and ameliorating law enforcement
abuses that might damage relationships between the authorities and
those whom they serve and protect. Furthermore, police that focus
training on appropriate methods of riot and crowd control might
similarly train in cross-cultural sensitivity to allow them to better
develop positive relationships with the diversity of people they
encounter in the execution of their duties. This training and pre-
paredness, moreover, seems most effective when accompanied by
the thoughtful and fair deployment of repressive resources. Our

research highlights the potentially disastrous outcomes that may stem from a single officer's transgressions toward undeserving citizens, suggesting that law enforcement might also focus on training officers to manage their own emotions as well as the crowds they confront. The Watts riot of 1965 might well have been averted had the officers ignored taunts and insults from an angry yet relatively innocuous crowd. This kind of restraint can be difficult to achieve, but professional policing calls for it.

Racially selective policing often exacerbates protest situations, especially in areas with preexisting racial tensions. In some instances (such as peaceful protests, rallies, parades, etc.), it is often better for control agents to withhold direct repression and bear the cost of a limited event than to escalate the riot to something that no one can control. We are not suggesting that control agents abandon the policing of riots and protest altogether, as the complete absence of social control would clearly compromise innocent lives in a riot situation. Indeed, the purpose of this study is not to find a ready and simple solution to the complex and dynamic interactions between police, civilians, and the outbreak of violence. Rather, the aim is to call attention to a prevalence of observations that we feel accurately represents general patterns of police behavior, frequently observed consequences, and the conditions under which these consequences are likely to be observed.

Nor are the findings a particularistic artifact of the 1960s. In Los Angeles in 1992, members of a police department infamous not only for its abuses and brutality, but also for its poor relationships with Black residents, were responsible for the severe beating of a reckless motorist, Rodney King. The ensuing acquittal of the aggressing officers simply verified the long-standing beliefs that a discriminatory justice system would protect White police officers and allow them an even freer hand to abuse and brutalize Blacks. Faced with an unjust authority, Blacks responded with rioting, just as they did in the 1960s. Other factors such as poor communication and disorganization among police further contributed to the excessive length and severity of the riot (Webster & Williams, 1992).

Events in Seattle in 1999 reinforce the preparation/mobilization dynamic observed in our two-city comparison. Boston's widely

publicized array of riot-deterring hardware and personnel was fairly effective in minimizing the amount of rioting up to the point when police overreacted during the Roxbury incident. One might argue that an openly publicized mechanism for quick and effective repression could successfully deter riots by raising the cost of conflict. A September 1999 edition of the *Seattle Times* titled "Police Silent on Their Training for WTO Protests" (Santana, 1999) discusses what may have been a critical error of judgment on the part of the Seattle Police Department. The large number of highly organized protesters were unaware of the specialized training and hardware being put in place by police in anticipation of the WTO protests. The protestors expected to confront large-scale crowd control, but in the facilitated management school of policing (McPhail et al., 1998). When they were instead confronted by tear gas and rubber-bullet-firing riot squads, the November 31 protest quickly escalated into violence. The police, in choosing not to publicize their extensive preparations, may have withheld their strongest deterrent by bowing to FBI suggestions that the preparations be kept secret for security measures.

Most recently, Cincinnati in 2001 revisited many of the themes that characterized the racial violence that we observed in the 1960s. One need merely replace the date, city, and name of the victim from the Hunter's Point Riot of 1966, and the articles that covered that event would nearly mirror the press coverage of the riot that followed the shooting death of 19-year-old Timothy Thomas in Cincinnati. Not unlike his counterpart 35 years earlier, Timothy Thomas was a young Black man wanted for traffic violations, and like his counterpart, he made the fatal decision to flee from pursuing White police officers. The unarmed Thomas was shot and killed as he fled from police down a dark alley. At the time of Thomas's shooting death, the Cincinnati Police Department was under FBI investigation for the deaths of five other Black men in a 6-month period in which no Whites were killed by police. The riot that followed Thomas's murder lasted for 3 days and resulted in more than 800 arrests and hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage.

The preceding examples and several others both in the United States and abroad suggest that although considerable progress has been made (San Francisco now champions one of the most progressive police forces in the nation), it is also apparent that many of the issues that contributed to the riots in the 1960s have not disappeared. The abuse of authority and the persistence of racial discrimination in our systems of law enforcement continue to trouble the waters across the United States. Further efforts must be made for greater oversight of police training and strategies and for a justice system that does not tolerate police brutality. Blacks have yet to find assurance in a justice system that consistently confronts brutality rather than tolerating it. Without substantial progress in this arena, Blacks and other ill-treated groups will continue to view rioting as a justifiable means of expressing their opposition to injustice.

NOTES

1. The neglect of police conduct within the crowd/protest/riot situation stands in stark contrast to the behavior of police that often forms the grievance or catalyst for a riot. The commentary on the police behavior that motivated the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, for example, is voluminous.

2. The data we use were not entirely collected before any rioting occurred (San Francisco had experienced some rioting in 1966). It was, however, collected early in the riot cycle and thus represents the best information available on conditions in these cities prior to the onset of the most serious rioting of the era.

3. We designate "substantial inflammatory involvement" to include only those riots in which the police were specifically mentioned as agitators, combatants, or instigators within the article text. Thus, a roving band of vandals that was merely dispersed by police would not count as a police riot by our criteria.

4. The polarization assessment measures the differences between Black and White opinions about the police and overall levels of satisfaction with the quality of the police work. It thus serves as a proxy for existing Black/White racial tension within the cities.

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