

11-18-2016

Learning From Ferguson: African American Attitudes Towards Community Policing in Saint Louis

David Graham

University of Missouri-St. Louis, grahamdave123@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://irl.umsl.edu/thesis>

Recommended Citation

Graham, David, "Learning From Ferguson: African American Attitudes Towards Community Policing in Saint Louis" (2016). *Theses*. 282.

<http://irl.umsl.edu/thesis/282>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Works at IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact marvinh@umsl.edu.

Learning From Ferguson:
African American Attitudes Towards Community Policing in Saint Louis

David Graham
B.A.S. Political Science, University of Missouri- Saint Louis, 2006

A Thesis Submitted for the degree Master of Arts in Political Science

December 2016

Advisory Committee

David Kimball, Ph.D.

Todd Swanstrom, Ph.D.

Adriano Udani, Ph.D.

Abstract: This study combines an American Political Development approach to researching the history of racial segregation in Saint Louis with quantitative data focusing on African American attitudes related to politics, police and social prejudice following the civil unrest in Ferguson and Saint Louis City. The research I present emphasizes that decades of race-based municipal segregation in the Saint Louis area has combined with recent events and caused a majority of African American residents to become more suspicious of white police officers patrolling their neighborhoods.

I. Introduction

As a student of political science and a Saint Louisan, I was filled with a strange mixture of fascination and disappointment at the civil unrest in Ferguson, Missouri resulting from the 2014 shooting death of Michael Brown Jr. and the Grand Jury decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson. My preoccupation was typical of anyone engaged in studying the social sciences. As I watched the broadcasts with the rest of America, I considered the possibility I was witnessing a “dialectical moment” that would contribute to increased calls for socio-economic equality. The sense of wonder I have recalling memories of watching President Obama urge restraint while tear gas was being sent airborne and police cars destroyed on the same television screen is twofold. Objectively speaking, I remain in awe that the inequality present in Saint Louis was allowed to get so bad that the events of Ferguson were practically inevitable. As a resident of Saint Louis City, I am subjectively astonished by the long history of racial conflict present in the area and interested in discovering how events like the Ferguson incident can be prevented in the future.

In the following examination, I analyze valuable lessons about racial politics in Saint Louis that can be gleaned from events preceding and following the protesting in Ferguson and Saint Louis City. My thesis argues that despite the

highly publicized civil unrest that washed over the area in late 2014, little has been done to address the fundamental problems that led to the Ferguson protests or remedy the practices that have bred intense socio-economic disparities between communities. The research I present emphasizes that decades of race-based municipal segregation in the Saint Louis area have combined with recent events and caused a majority of African American residents to become more suspicious of white police officers patrolling their neighborhoods.

My thesis is supported by the arguments and observations summarized below:

- Considering the extent to which the exodus of white residents into the County contributed to the decay and poverty now common throughout many parts of Saint Louis City, it is understandable that many African American residents harbor contempt for white authority figures they view as complacent in their socio-economic and political marginalization.
- That African American communities in Saint Louis are confined to living in neighborhoods that white society “left behind” fosters feelings of inferiority further enhancing their alienation and antipathy for representatives, like white police officers, of the group responsible for their material deprivation.
- Important judicial rulings and civil rights laws forced de jure segregation of neighborhoods in Saint Louis to shift to a model favoring the use of municipal fragmentation to contain the perceived threat of urban poverty.

II. **Research Methodology**

This study combines an American Political Development (APD) approach to researching the history of racial segregation in Saint Louis with quantitative data focusing on African American attitudes related to politics, police and social

prejudice following the civil unrest in Ferguson and Saint Louis City. In the next section, I examine the legacy of racial divisions in Saint Louis and discuss local events that played a significant role in shaping a conflict which continues to challenge the metropolitan area. The goal of this section is to review the pathology of racial segregation present in Saint Louis as a way of connecting the Ferguson incident to a much larger story of failed policies and discriminatory practices.

In Section IV, I present data collected from a survey answered by one hundred middle school students at Elite Academy, a Saint Louis City charter school operating in downtown Saint Louis. The survey was created to assess the opinions of local African American adolescents growing up in the wake of the Ferguson incident and determine how they feel about politics and police in Saint Louis. Assuming many of the students attending this charter school will remain residents of the area following graduation, their views are important factors to consider when drawing conclusions about the future of community relations in Saint Louis.

In Section V, I analyze the data presented in the previous section and reconcile these findings with the APD study of Saint Louis outlined in the Section III. I examine participant responses to each of the nine statements to inform a thorough understanding of the perceptions. My analysis of the survey delivers a number of salient observations which allow this research to impart a “post-Ferguson” emphasis on the findings discussed in the conclusion.

In the final section, I focus on what the results of my analysis say about the future of racial injustice, community policing and politics in the Saint Louis area. I offer feasible policy recommendations with the potential to restore faith in local authority. My findings offer a window into the attitudes of African American residents of the Saint Louis area and how the unrest in Ferguson impacted their opinions of local police and urban governance.

III. **Saint Louis in the Twentieth Century: A Tale of Two Cities**

Colin Gordon's study of Saint Louis, *Mapping Decline* (2009), explains how Missouri state law allowing cities home rule permitted the City to seal its borders by charter in 1876. Ever since, Saint Louis City and County have persisted in, "A particularly longstanding and direct confrontation with each other". He argues that, "Municipal fragmentation in Saint Louis exists expressly to avoid the problems of urban governance or offer well-to-do citizens a haven from them" (Gordon 2009, 10). That Saint Louis County remains independent from the City as a spatial-economic barrier to low-income families becomes clear the further west one goes on Highway 44. Anyone who has spent enough time in the area of the University of Missouri campus in North County can see years of urban abandonment mixed with more recent low-income housing developments. South Saint Louis County remains dominated by municipalities zoned almost exclusively with suburban homes on large enough tracts of land to effectively prohibit low-income families from moving into the area. Local streets are used as landmarks and given alliterative labels, like the "Lindbergh Line" or

the “Delmar Divide,”¹ to demarcate neighborhoods where white residents dare not purchase a home if they hope to maintain their investment.

Since first moving into the area with my family in the late 1980s, I became increasingly aware of the existence of “two cities”, or more accurately, one city divided largely along racial lines. Spending my youth growing up first in unincorporated Saint Louis County (in a municipality now known as Wildwood) and then in Webster Groves where I attended the local public high school exposed me to the existence of two distinct groups sharing the same city. It was not until after high school, however, that I began to realize that Saint Louis had a long history of using both de facto and de jure practices to promote a racially divided metropolis.

The early years of the Great Migration of Southern African Americans to Northern cities led to a violent race-riot in the nearby city of East Saint Louis. Angered that black migrants were replacing striking white workers at the city’s Aluminum Ore Company, residents of East Saint Louis went on a rampage in the summer of 1917 which led to national outrage at the area’s propensity for race-based inequality. The lack of an earnest response by local authorities to end the violence that had begun with the beatings of African American trolley riders led to calls for an inquiry. A federal investigation into the actions of the National Guard and local law enforcement resulted in the indictment of East Saint Louis mayor Fred Mollman and members of the police force, but the charges were eventually dropped and the indictments against these public officials were

¹ The phrase was popularized in a BBC documentary of Saint Louis. See: Strassner, Franz. (2012) *Crossing a St Louis street that divides communities*. BBC News.

conveniently “lost” (O’Neill 2014). Although this conflict occurred almost a century before the Ferguson incident, it created an enduring public perception that the law enforcement practices of white police officers in the Saint Louis area were racially biased.

In their book, *Justice in the American Metropolis* (2011), Clarissa Hayward and Professor Swanstrom begin their essay, “Thick Injustice,” with the retelling of the landmark *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) Supreme Court decision that originated in Saint Louis City. In 1948, J.D. Shelley was an African American man that was being barred from purchasing the modest row-house he rented at 4600 Labadie by a racially restrictive deed covenant reserving the property for ownership by whites only. The ruling effectively stated that the court was not able to enforce racially restrictive covenants because they violated the fourteenth amendment rights of African American citizens to “Equal protection under the laws”.² Hayward and Professor Swanstrom note that while the decision was important in legal terms, it had little perceptible impact on the lives of African Americans living in Saint Louis who continued to face discrimination on a daily basis. Describing how social equality always seems to lag well-behind expectations, the authors argue that, “African Americans gained access to areas from which they had previously been excluded, but this access proved a weak foundation for equalizing resources and opportunities” (Hayward and Swanstrom 2011, 2). Put differently, new rights to reside in a wider range of neighborhoods were limited by the prospects now available to them. *Shelley v. Kraemer*

² See *Shelley v. Kraemer*. (1948). United States Supreme Court.

triggered a dual movement of urban whites out of the City and African Americans into the neighborhoods that were being abandoned. The flight of white residents took jobs and commerce out of the City and left behind limited chances for low-income residents to rise out of poverty.

In Saint Louis, racial integration of the City failed largely due to the proximity of the County, which became a haven for urban whites seeking to remove themselves from the rise of urban African American populations. While African American Saint Louisans were now allowed to move into new areas following *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the approach used to isolate and confine them was able to take on new forms. Despite the Saint Louis origins of the *Shelley* Supreme Court ruling, Gordon points out that, “A tangle of private practices and public policies overlapped and outlasted the legal life of the restrictive deed covenant while maintaining the system of racial discrimination in public housing the covenants had been designed to produce” (2009, 83). The rise of suburbanization throughout Saint Louis County created exclusively middle-class neighborhoods that prevented the movement of low-income residents beyond the borders of the City. New laws aimed at shifting the problems posed by poverty and low-income communities manifested themselves in the policy of eminent domain and the concept of urban renewal. At the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, these practices became symbolic of an unsustainable approach used by the leaders of American cities to eject African Americans from urban areas deemed fit for investment by wealthy development interests.

A year after the historic *Shelley* verdict, the Fairgrounds Park incident revealed the bitterness many white Saint Louisans still harbored towards sharing space with African Americans. On the first day the swimming pool was desegregated a group of African American children were encircled by a large group of whites. What resulted was a race riot that sent a number of citizens to the hospital and caused the pool to be temporarily re-segregated for white use only. Regarding the causes of the incident, a report prepared for the Saint Louis Council of Human Relations by a neutral Detroit bureaucrat makes a number of objective conclusions. Finished soon after the incident took place, the document summarizes the problem by arguing that, "St. Louis is psychologically unprepared to undertake the adjustments which changing population, economic and social conditions are forcing upon the community. It is not a case of some people wanting to move too fast, but of a large majority wanting to move too slowly" (Schermer 1949, 7). While often forgotten in discussions of local race relations, the Fairgrounds Park incident showed that the *Shelley* verdict had done little to curb racist sentiments that challenged the desegregation of shared public spaces in Saint Louis. Regardless, the conclusions of the report are illustrative of the mentality which has led to a status quo of spatial-based racial divisions in the metropolitan area.

Evidence of the extent to which Saint Louisans were mentally unprepared for the *Shelley* verdict, as well as the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), can be seen in the crafting of new methods of social exclusion. What began in Saint Louis during the 1950s is typical of how city planners across

America dismissed the potential for problems, and instead, chose to focus on creative ways of annexing urban areas occupied primarily by black residents while putting-off the discussion of impoverishment and social justice for future generations to confront. The practice of urban renewal was quickly recognized by contemporary observers as a euphemism for “negro removal.”³

In his study, *Mill Creek Valley* (2000), Ron Fagerstrom reveals how eminent domain policies and the pursuit of urban renewal were employed in Saint Louis to eject African Americans from an urban corridor deemed desirable for development. Fagerstrom’s account of the events precipitating the demise of the predominantly African American Mill Creek Valley neighborhood (that once stood near downtown Saint Louis) indicates that selective enforcement of utility codes was the basis for declaring it a blighted community. He notes that, “In 1953, an ordinance requiring indoor lavatories in private homes allowed white residents of South City to upgrade their facilities at their own expense. Meanwhile the same code was used as criteria for demolition in Mill Creek Valley” (Fagerstrom 2000, 54). Bank “redlining” or refusals to grant loans to homeowners in the area had spread rumors of a likely tear-down and had discouraged upgrades and improvements by residents. The coordination of institutional lending practices, like redlining, with policies like eminent domain suggests private-public collusion to increase the money-making potential of urban spaces at the expense of politically underrepresented residents. Like a

³ See author James Baldwin’s interview with Kenneth Clark, 1963.

dandelion scattered in the wind, the poverty problem in Saint Louis seeded itself upon new areas and former residents were forced to confront the reality that, “They had no role in local decision making in their own neighborhoods” (Fagerstrom 2000, 75).

Jane Jacobs' study entitled, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), criticized the en vogue policies of urban renewal and restrictive zoning for causing a decline in the diversity of American cities. Regarding the nature by which eminent domain practices only relocate the problem of poverty Jacobs asserted that, “At best it merely shifts slums from here to there, adding its own tincture of hardship and disruption. At worst, it destroys neighborhoods where constructive and improving communities exist and where the situation calls for encouragement rather than destruction” (Jacobs 1961, 270-271). In lieu of creating communities united in a common cause, policies aimed at replacing impoverished Saint Louis neighborhoods with businesses and industrial districts merely forced low-income residents into smaller areas where their dissatisfaction with circumstances was allowed to incubate. It should, therefore, come as little surprise that several generations of accumulated frustration caused inhabitants of the most troubled areas to develop unfavorable opinions of people, like white police, they perceived to be agents of their oppression. From civil rights movement footage to the Ferguson protests; police in the United States remain locked in the middle of a conflict between residents of African American neighborhoods and a government many perceive to be indifferent to their plight.

Following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, urban renewal continued in a new guise with a federal government policy designed to eliminate urban poverty. In 1966, President Johnson announced the criteria for the “Model Cities” program offering federal funding to assist cities with the relocation of large populations of low-income residents. The Mayor of Saint Louis at the time, Alfonso Cervantes, submitted an application for the program on behalf of the City soon after. In his book, *Black Liberation in the Midwest* (2006), Kenneth Jolly argues that tensions between the federal authorities overseeing the Model Cities program and the Saint Louis City Agency charged with its local administration led to confusion regarding the specific objectives of each organization. Jolly argues that, “Despite federal government clarification regarding the roles of each agency this tension led to strained relations between entities that should have been working in tandem rather than competition” (Jolly 2006, 129). His observation here suggests that differing opinions regarding the objectives of the program led to a strained partnership preventing a better outcome for the residents it was intended to help. While the Model Cities program indicates a greater awareness on the part of the national government that low-income housing must be created for residents displaced by new developments, the effort was a continuance of earlier policies that sought to move slums out of inner cities without addressing the economic factors which first led to their creation.

The 1968 *Jones v. Mayer Co.* Supreme Court ruling originated in Saint Louis and showed local developers were not above attempting to market their homes and rentals for “whites only”. In *Jones*, the Court held that private real

estate companies were prevented by the thirteenth amendment from racially discriminatory practices. The local origins of the case underscores the extent to which segregation was imbedded within private interests operating in the Saint Louis area. In the years following the *Jones* verdict North Saint Louis County became something of a destination for African Americans seeking to leave behind the overcrowding and poverty of the inner city. As a result, racial segregation that was carried out openly was simply forced to transform itself into a de facto set of policies meant to isolate African American communities from neighborhoods claimed by white Saint Louisans.

The *Civil Rights Act* (1964) and the *Fair Housing Act* (1968) helped to set the stage for Federal Court decisions with Saint Louis origins. In turn, these historic rulings led to increased federally subsidized Section 8 Housing developments in areas of unincorporated North Saint Louis County. The ability of federal legislation to discourage the poverty containment strategy at work in Saint Louis was intermittent at best. Moreover, making it illegal to discriminate in housing and the workplace did nothing to change local perceptions associating African Americans with poverty. The demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe buildings, which had stood in North City for less than twenty years⁴ showed the flaws of high density, low income housing and furthered the spread of urban poverty throughout the City and County. Eager to save themselves from living next to another “Pruitt-Igoe” development, parts of North County were soon evacuated by whites who took their wealth with them and left behind the problems of urban

⁴ The residential buildings in Pruitt-Igoe were demolished between 1972 and 1976. See: Montgomery, Roger. (1985). Pruitt-Igoe. *The Metropolitan Midwest*.

areas that had, once again, hemorrhaged into their neighborhoods. As a means towards preventing what they perceived to be the spread of urban poverty, some residents of the County began the process of incorporating themselves into distinct municipalities to block the creation of low-income housing units in their neighborhoods.

Municipal segregation in Saint Louis became a de facto means of isolating undesirable members of a community to peripheries where their perceived ill-effects could be contained. The extent to which municipal fragmentation in Saint Louis became motivated by the fear of urban poverty is exemplified in the origin story of Black Jack, a community that sought incorporation as a way of separating itself from a low-income housing project supported by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The decision in *United States v. Black Jack* (1974) invalidated the town's ordinance banning low-income housing developments.

In, *Fragmented By Design* (2000), Professor Jones recounts the historical reasons why Saint Louis is comprised of so many municipalities. Although the annexation of unincorporated County lands was once a viable solution for residents seeking public services, Professor Jones recalls that, "In 1953, new legislation established that cities seeking to acquire new territory must prove the proposed annexation necessary for municipal growth and demonstrate in court their ability to provide services to residents of the area" (2000, 32). This criteria ensured that municipalities seeking to expand would have to devote resources to legal representation and accountant fees which may have ultimately proved

fruitless. With larger cities now hindered from annexing new territory, residents of unincorporated Saint Louis County were free to incorporate small districts piecemeal as circumstances dictated. The story of racial segregation in Saint Louis is, therefore, one that cannot be fully understood without also considering the use of municipal fragmentation as a means of providing a spatial buffer between middle-class and low-income Saint Louisans.

Andrew Morton's documentary, *Spanish Lake* (2014), showcases the white flight phenomenon using interviews with current and former residents of one Saint Louis County suburb. His work recalls exactly how federal government programs that facilitated the relocation of low-income residents out of blighted urban areas and into "Section 8 Housing" in unincorporated sections of Saint Louis County failed on a number of levels. Motivated primarily with revenue generating opportunities, Section 8 developers seeking federal funding had little concern that they would be enticing low-income residents into unincorporated areas of Saint Louis County that were ill-equipped to tackle the myriad problems posed by poverty. Morton (2014) alludes to real estate agent practices of moving in one African American family before walking next-door to inform their white neighbors that home prices in the area would begin to decline and they should sell. The snowballing effect allowed middle class whites to be ushered out and replaced with a low-income, predominantly urban African American population seeking to flee poverty and poor schools in the City.

The problem that manifested in Ferguson and other parts of North County, was representative of how changes in the community were not reflected in the

composition of local governing institutions. In a short period of time, racial demographics shifted and the area became majority African American as fearful whites resettled further West or South into the County. An even greater number of Saint Louisans fled the region altogether. From a high of over 856,000 in the 1950s, the area's population experienced a loss of approximately two-thirds in the past sixty-five years.⁵ As buildings became vacant and property values and homes slipped into decay a multiplying effect caused residents to “vote with their feet” and relocate elsewhere. The flight of many middle-class whites from unincorporated areas of the County, however, did little to augment their control over local government or the police force. At the time of the Michael Brown Jr. shooting only three of Ferguson's fifty three police officers were black.⁶ Thus the situation in Ferguson remains highly illustrative of problems created by the “white flight” phenomenon and the relocation of African Americans into Saint Louis County.

By the 1980s, the larger economic context Saint Louis found itself embedded within was changing. In the late twentieth century, declining manufacturing jobs and the rise of digital technologies and information systems sparked an economic shift to a service-based economy that produced less desirable and stable careers for Saint Louis residents. More retail jobs came with a greater competition between municipalities for the sales tax large outlet stores provide. Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) used throughout Saint Louis focused investment in prosperous areas at the expense of neighborhoods badly

⁵ See *U.S. Census Data*, 2014.

⁶ See U.S. Census, QuikFacts. (2014). *Ferguson, Missouri*

in need of investment. The *Community Reinvestment Act* (1992) mandated that government sponsored lenders must devote 30% of their loans to low-income borrowers (Wallison and Pinto 2009). With the availability of decent manufacturing jobs declining, increasingly available credit and the promise of better schools enticed low-income residents into traditionally white neighborhoods (like Ferguson) in Saint Louis County.

This problem was further compounded by the 2008 mortgage crisis that hit the weak housing market in Saint Louis especially hard. Large amounts of foreclosures in some neighborhoods had the side-effect of concentrating poverty into increasingly smaller spaces and limiting the ability of communities to respond due to decreased revenues. Predatory lending practices also played a role in robbing low-income borrowers of what little equity they had accumulated. Thus the years leading up to the 2014 civil unrest in Ferguson were not unlike a perfect storm that allowed local dissatisfaction with circumstances to reach a state of desperation.

In a time in which little property was changing hands and home values were stagnant, Ferguson was among a number of area municipalities that turned to inequitable policing practices to supplement the city's operating budget. While the role this played in the incident that left Michael Brown Jr. dead from at least six gunshots and Officer Wilson facing grand jury charges is irrelevant, it does speak to high levels of distrust residents felt towards area police at that time. Among the more serious conclusions presented in the 2015 Federal Department of Justice Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department were

that, “Local law enforcement practices are motivated by racial bias, disproportionately affected African American residents and undermined both community trust and public safety” (DOJ 2015, 62-81). In other words, there was much more going wrong with the Ferguson Police Department than just the shooting death of unarmed Michael Brown Jr.

The handling of the Brown case by Saint Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCullough in the aftermath of the shooting suggested a lack of awareness that the situation in Ferguson necessitated public transparency rather than the appearance of further impropriety. Instead of opting to file charges against Wilson directly and leave the decision in the hands of a judge, McCullough’s choice to convene a Grand Jury ensured that the examination of evidence would take place behind closed doors. Leaving the decision to indict Wilson in the hands of a Grand Jury also allowed McCullough to be shielded from any political fallout resulting from the verdict. The jury was composed of a cross-section of Saint Louis County residents and only three of the twelve were African American (Bell 2014). When compared to the demographics of Ferguson’s population, the resulting civil unrest is hardly surprising. Moreover, the Ferguson Police Department did itself few favors in the court of public opinion by making use of armored tactical vehicles (acquired through its participation in the U.S. Department of Defense Program 1033)⁷ in its response to the rioting.

Highly involved in the community discussion following the civil unrest in Ferguson was the University of Missouri-Saint Louis campus which Chancellor

⁷ See Mastio, David and Kelly Rupp. (2015). Pentagon Weaponry. *USA Today*

Tom George offered as a meeting place for local residents seeking to dialogue about the problems facing the area as well as the Ferguson Commission meetings. Rather than chosen randomly, UMSL was selected as a location for press conferences by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon due to the school's reputation for inclusion and community enrichment.⁸ Following these discussions and others happening throughout the United States, cities started equipping more officers with "body cameras" to provide a digital record of their interactions with members of the community they encounter on patrols. One promising sign of change happening in Ferguson is the election of two more African Americans to the City Council.⁹ Over the last two years, however, much of the progress made towards easing community tensions has faded along with the increased visibility of police shootings of African American men throughout the U.S.

IV. **Research Data**

My survey of African American Saint Louisans was limited to seventh and eighth grade students attending Elite Academy Middle School which is a part of the Confluence Charter School system sponsored by the University of Missouri-Columbia. As a City charter school, nearly all of the one hundred students surveyed also reside within Saint Louis city limits. All respondents were members of the Current Events class I teach which is comprised of approximately 50% male and 50% female students. Several weeks prior to administering the survey, I used the 2014 Ferguson incident to engage students

⁸ See Heinz, Ryan. (2014) Message from UMSL Chancellor Tom George. *UMSL Daily*. August 15, 2014.

⁹ See Basu, Moni. (2015). Ferguson Election Makes History, Adds More Blacks to City Council. *CNN News*. April 8, 2015

in a discussion about race in America and, more specifically, to get them to confront their own feelings. Many of the written responses I received were predictable indictments of white police officers overreaching their authority, but I was surprised to see that a fair number of students had comparatively dispassionate views regarding the death of Michael Brown Jr. One student even summarized that, "Michael Brown [Jr.] tried to steal the cigars, the police [were] called and noticed he was walking in the street. After [he] attacked the officer he got shot and died."

One potential criticism of the data presented below is that all respondents are younger than fifteen and not currently of voting-age. My refutation here is twofold: 1) There is a strong foundation of research suggesting that one's political socialization is often highly correlated with that of their parents and elder relatives (See Hyman 1959; Jennings and Niemi 1968; Urbatsch 2014). The age of the respondents then becomes irrelevant because my students are essentially mirroring the opinions of their voting-age family members. 2) All policy that is debated, approved and executed seeks to improve the future rather than the immediate present. Since the wheels of American bureaucracy frequently turn slowly, it is important to occasionally "check-in" with the next generation if we seek a crystal ball into what the future holds. Put differently, the unrest in Ferguson was a large enough trauma to the collective psyche of the Saint Louis area that a look at its impact on school-aged children is warranted to determine what policies may be needed to improve the City they will one day inherit.

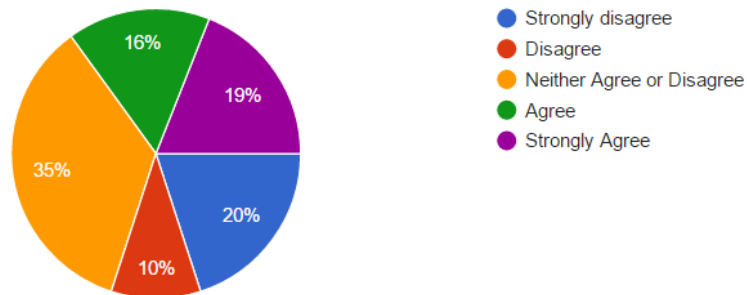
Other critics will assert that this study overemphasizes the views of African Americans living in Saint Louis City over those residing in Saint Louis County. To those arguing that a random sample of local African Americans must automatically include an equivalent number of residents from Saint Louis County, I suggest instead that the presence of similar protesting in Saint Louis City renders any attitudinal distinctions between the two districts negligible. Moreover, the close proximity of Ferguson to Saint Louis City and the aforementioned history of African American migration from the City into the County indicates that that municipal borders cannot prevent the movement of people possessing similar means and mindsets.

The survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with nine statements on a scale from 1 (indicating strong disagreement), to 5 (which conferred strong agreement). The questions were created with the objective of determining how, if it all, the events surrounding the civil unrest in Ferguson affected the attitudes that African American Saint Louisans hold toward local police and politicians. Particular attention was given to determining respondent attitudes to law enforcement and how they were impacted by the civil unrest that occurred in late 2014. Below are each of the nine questions along with the corresponding percentages they received.

Statement 1

My family and I have never trusted or befriended the police officers that patrol our block.

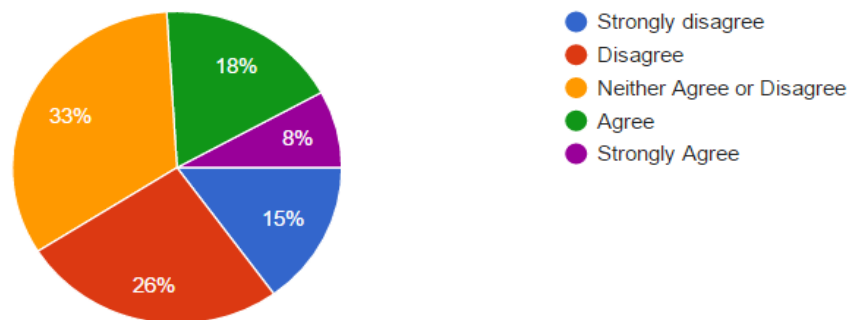
(100 responses)



Statement 2

My family members and/or friends became more involved in my local church or community center following the Ferguson protests in 2014.

(100 responses)



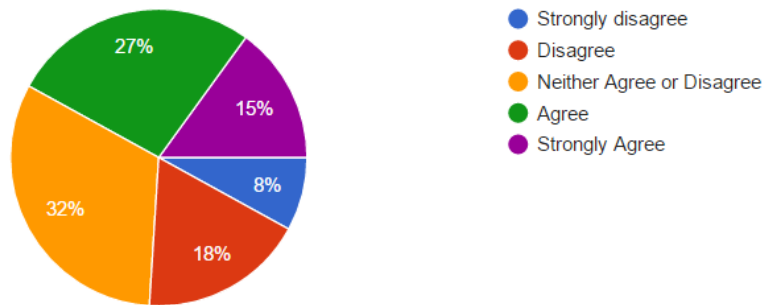
Statements 1 and 2 attempt to establish a baseline for interpreting the rest of the survey data. While a majority of respondents remained neutral on many of the questions, the presence of this neutrality can be symbolic of factors worthy of

analysis in the next section. The distribution of responses in Statement 1 is fairly uniform between those who agree, disagree and remain undecided. Since a majority disagreed with Statement 2, this indicates that the protesting and rioting in Ferguson has only motivated a small percentage of respondents and their families into greater civic participation.

Statement 3

My family and I have become less trusting of the police that patrol our community and politicians following the protests that happened in Ferguson and parts of Saint Louis city.

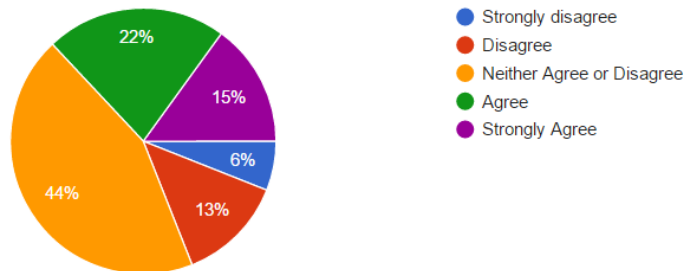
(100 responses)



Statement 4

Our government leaders in Saint Louis should always make sure that the police patrolling African American communities are also African Americans.

(100 responses)



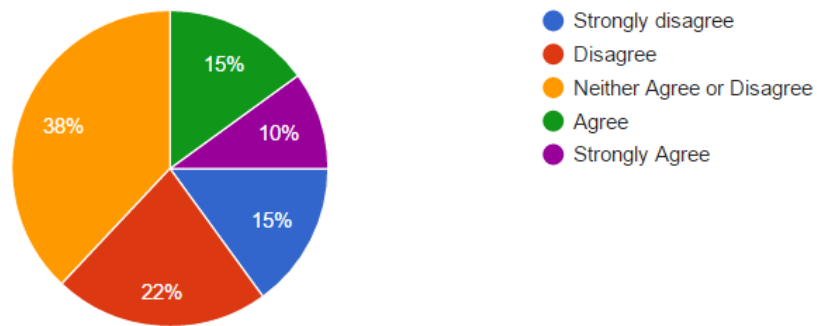
Statements 3 and 4 center on respondent attitudes to police and politicians. A majority of those surveyed agreed with Statement 3, thus showing that the 2014 civil unrest in Ferguson has led to local residents possessing

greater levels of distrust towards police and politicians. While 44% responded to Statement 4 as undecided, the mere 19% that disagreed shows an observable dissatisfaction among respondents with non-African American officers patrolling their neighborhoods.

Statement 5

My family members and/or I do not believe either Clinton or Trump are good candidates for president.

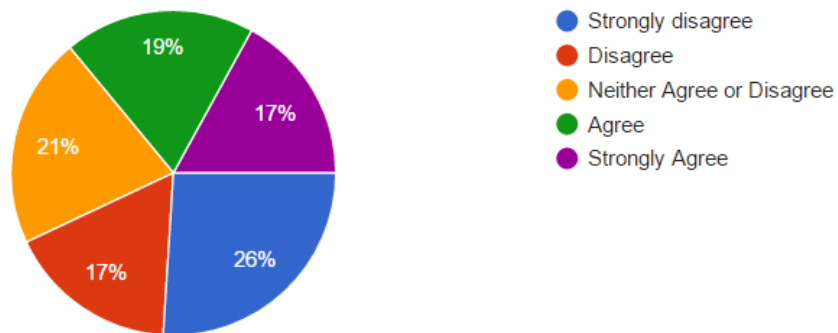
(100 responses)



Statement 6

Although Barack Obama was America's first African American president, he has done little to improve the lives of African Americans living in Saint Louis.

(100 responses)



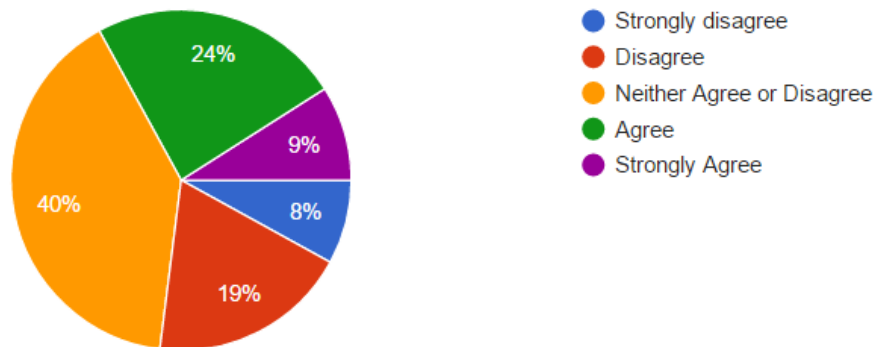
Statements 5 and 6 were included in the survey as measures of political dissatisfaction or alienation. Close to a majority of respondents reporting disagreement with Statement 5 was not unexpected since many survey

participants previously expressed enthusiastic support for Clinton in their writing assignments on the topic of partisanship. A high percentage (38%) of neutrality to Statement 5 can be interpreted as an indifference towards current Democrat and Republican candidates for president. Statement 6 had the greatest amount of strong disagreement (26%) amongst respondents and the second smallest percentage of neutrality (21%) out of all nine questions. Although a majority hold a favorable view of President Obama, the observable dispersion here betrays a lack of consensus on Obama and his commitment to helping African American residents of Saint Louis.

Statement 7

Local leaders in my community are often ignored by white politicians that make the important decisions in Saint Louis.

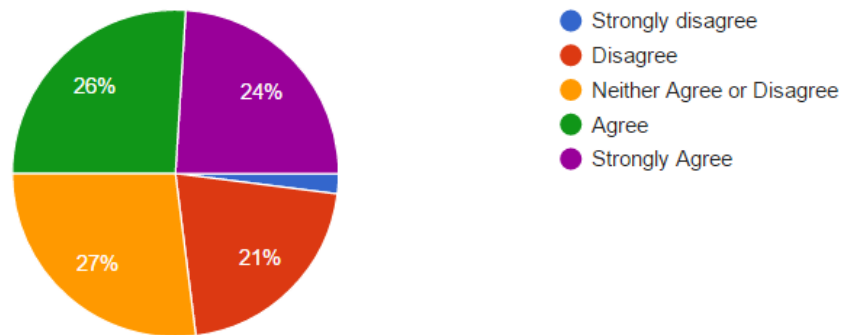
(100 responses)



Statement 8

That police shootings of African Americans are constantly in the headlines shows that the protests in Ferguson did little to improve the situation for the African American community.

(100 responses)

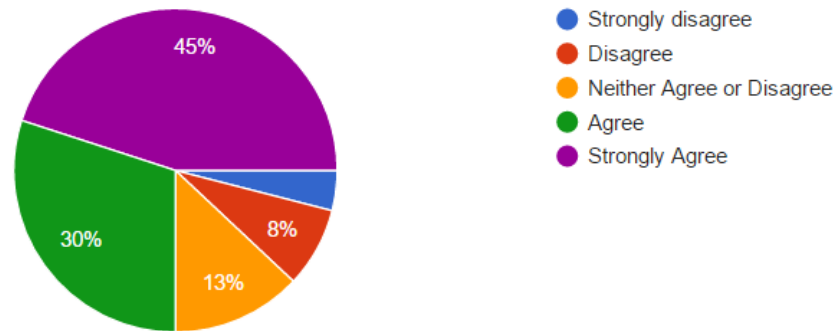


Statement 7 manifests a high degree of indecision with 40% of respondents selecting the neutral option. A percentage this high shows respondents lack awareness of local leaders and how they interact. Approximately one-third (33%) of those surveyed agreed that the leaders of African American communities are, “Being ignored by white politicians that make important decisions in Saint Louis.” The lack of meaningful disagreement with Statement 8 (23%) betrays local African American perceptions that the protesting and disorder occurring in late 2014 has done little to curb police shootings or improve their treatment by authorities. A level of agreement as high as 50% on Statement 8 supports the conclusion that most survey participants are aware that protesting and rioting were not effective methods of calling attention to the plight of Saint Louis area African Americans.

Statement 9

White police officers are never held accountable when they abuse their power in racist ways.

(100 responses)



The relatively small amount of disagreement or neutrality with Statement 9 is illustrative of a perceived asymmetry, or double-standard, in local authority amongst police. An overwhelming 75% of survey respondents believe that white officers are “above the law” and not held to the same standards as other police. Nearly half (45%) of all respondents reported strong agreement with Statement 9 suggesting they perceive the racial bias of white officers in Saint Louis to be carried out overtly.

V. Data Analysis

The overall picture conveyed by the data suggests many African Americans living in Saint Louis City are uncomfortable with the presence of white police officers in their communities. Table 1 below compares the responses to Statements 1, 3, 4 and 9.

Table 1. Responses to Statements 1, 3, 4 and 9 on Local Police and Politicians

Statements	Agreement (combined)	Disagreement (combined)	Undecided
Statement 1	35%	30%	35%
Statement 3	42%	26%	32%
Statement 4	37%	19%	44%
Statement 9	75%	12%	13%

Responses to Statement 1 (“My family and I have never trusted or befriended the police officers that patrol our block”) are split fairly evenly suggesting that most respondents do not harbor a preexisting or chronic aversion to local police. High levels of agreement with Statement 3 (“My family and I have become less trusting of the police that patrol our community and politicians following the protests that happened in Ferguson and parts of Saint Louis city”) indicates a high level of dissatisfaction with law enforcement. Statement 3 responses were consistent with 2013 exit poll data (shown in Table 2) which implies that attitudes towards the police have not improved. Over 40% of survey participants reported feeling alienated from local police and politicians following the unrest in Ferguson. The incident continues to symbolize the extent of a community’s distrust towards its own police force. Moreover, The Department of Justice investigation into the Ferguson Police Department revealed residents

were justified in their outrage. The responses generated to Statement 4 (“Our government leaders in Saint Louis should always make sure that the police patrolling African American communities are also African Americans”) are similar to Statement 3 with higher levels (+12%) of participants undecided. While 44% expressed neutrality to Statement 4, that only 19% disagreed indicates a pronounced dissatisfaction among respondents with non-African American officers patrolling their neighborhoods.

Exit polling completed just a year before the Ferguson incident shows that many area residents were already at odds with local police before the death of Michael Brown Jr. Between 2009 and 2013, non-white voters reported a 6% decline in their evaluations of the Saint Louis Police Department. Table 2 below depicts local voter views of Saint Louis police.

Table 2.

Favorable Evaluation of St. Louis Police Department

Race	2009	2013	Change
White	68%	78%	+10
Non-white	47%	41%	-6
Total	58%	62%	+4
	(N=235)	(N=252)	

Source:

Summary of UMSL Exit Polls of St. Louis Voters (March 2009 and March 2013)

Responses to Statement 9 (“White police officers are never held accountable when they abuse their power in racist ways”) further underscores the lack of faith most City residents possess towards white police. According to Statement 4, less than half (37%) of respondents believed that having only African American officers in their communities would help. Regardless, the 2013

exit poll data combined with respondent reactions to Statement 9 suggests African American residents, at minimum, continue to distrust white law enforcement officials patrolling their communities.

Given the long history of African American social marginalization, economic disenfranchisement and relegation to deteriorating neighborhoods explored in Section III, these opinions are difficult to argue against. After generations of being consigned to impoverished neighborhoods, it makes sense that many African American Saint Louisans are not trusting of white police, who they regard as a party to social injustice. While politicians come and go through the years, local police are “silent watchmen” that continuously and indifferently enforce rules. While officers play a vital public safety role in all communities, their daily presence in some of the most decaying areas of the City breeds resentment and questions regarding why they have been unable to speak up on behalf of residents living in the districts they patrol. They are regarded as complacent in the decline of the neighborhoods they work in since the resultant crime rates provide police officers a sense of job security.

In recognition of the factors which led to the conditions currently challenging African American residents of Saint Louis, Statements 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 attempted to discern feelings of political alienation present in the opinions of respondents. Table 3 below depicts the percentages reported for each of these statements.

Table 3. Responses to Statements 2, 5-8 on Measures of Political Dissatisfaction

Statements	Agreement (combined)	Disagreement (combined)	Undecided
Statement 2	26%	41%	33%
Statement 5	25%	37%	38%
Statement 6	36%	43%	21%
Statement 7	33%	27%	40%
Statement 8	50%	23%	27%

In his study, *Bowling Alone* (1995), Robert Putnam operationalizes civic engagement in terms of evenings spent out with neighbors at the local church or community center and, ultimately, concludes that social capital in America is declining. This logic forms the framework for Statement 2 and its attempt to detect any increase the Ferguson incident has had on local efforts towards greater social organization within Saint Louis neighborhoods. Majority disagreement with Statement 2 (“My family members and/or friends became more involved in my local church or community center following the Ferguson protests in 2014”) shows how events in Ferguson have failed to increase the civic engagement of respondents and their families. In Saint Louis, the extreme economic disturbances associated with the move away from domestic manufacturing to a service-based economy has forced many residents to work longer hours for less pay and they currently lack the free time needed for neighborly socialization.

Statements 5 and 6 were included in the survey as measures of political dissatisfaction. A majority of respondents (38%) reporting neutrality with Statement 5 (“My family members and/or I do not believe either Clinton or Trump are good candidates for president”) is indicative of their political apathy or disbelief that either current presidential candidate genuinely represents the interests of African Americans. Statement 6 (“Although Barack Obama was America’s first African American president, he has done little to improve the lives of African Americans living in Saint Louis”) also shows a lack of consensus on how the presidency of Barack Obama has impacted African American residents. Regardless, Statement 6 had the greatest level of strong (26%) disagreement recorded out of all nine survey statements which means that local residents were generally accepting of President Obama and his attempts to improve their lives.

Approximately one-third (33%) of those surveyed agreed with Statement 7 that the leaders of African American communities are, “Being ignored by white politicians that make important decisions in Saint Louis.” A high percentage of indecision (40%) this large shows participants lack awareness of local politics. That many respondents were neutral also suggests an ingrained acceptance that politicians are not adequately representing their community. The absence of meaningful disagreement with Statement 8 (“That police shootings of African Americans are constantly in the headlines shows that the protests in Ferguson did little to improve the situation for the African American community”) means that many area residents are aware that efforts to call attention to the plight of

African Americans in Saint Louis in late 2014 were ineffective. A level of agreement as high as 50% on Statement 8 confirms that many participants believe protesting and rioting are not legitimate methods of calling attention to the problems faced by African Americans living in Saint Louis.

The data recorded by this survey supports my claim that little has been done to address the fundamental conditions that created the civil unrest in Ferguson or remedy the private and public practices that have bred intense socio-economic disparities between black and white communities. High levels of animosity towards white police officers showcases how strong undercurrents of dissatisfaction are creating barriers to inter-community partnerships. Opinions and beliefs captured by this survey suggest that many African American residents of the area are politically aloof, distrusting of white police and generally lacking faith in the ability of local leaders to facilitate needed changes.

The tradition of unchecked municipal proliferation in Saint Louis not only allowed the existence of two very different versions of one city, but also incubated an atmosphere of collective action problems and civil unrest. Years of state miscegenation laws allowed racial issues to fester rather than naturally abate through generations of intermarriage. As the populations of municipalities became more racially homogenous, the constituents came to expect those who ran their institutions to physically resemble themselves. While this was unproblematic for most of suburban Saint Louis County, the failure in Ferguson was that power within the City Council and Police Department was held disproportionately by whites who represented a minority of the community's

population. Such a situation is very much at odds with the pluralist political thought of Robert Dahl who argued that, "Inequalities in political resources among groups are non-cumulative or dispersed"(2005, 85). The case of Ferguson provides an example in which a majority was disenfranchised from control of their community due to accumulated deficits in social equality. Rather than the reciprocal arrangement described by Dahl in which leaders use their influence to help constituents achieve goals in return for votes, the situation in Ferguson and most of Saint Louis resembles the elite model of local power proposed by Floyd Hunter (1963) in which the primary interest white leaders have in the black community involves the reactionary function of "quieting unrest". In his study of Atlanta, Hunter argued that that leaders, "Treated the black community as a non-entity until this negligence threatened to have an impact on the white community" (1963, 142). While hardly a sustainable approach, it appears to closely resemble the one that has managed to endure in Saint Louis well into the twenty-first century.

VI. **Conclusion**

Both historically and at present, the story of Saint Louis is one of asymmetrical power-sharing and an unwillingness by white community leaders to recognize that shifting demographics must be addressed with policies designed to co-opt new groups rather than isolate them. In the third section (Saint Louis in the Twentieth Century), I developed an APD timeline of how municipal segregation and other racially discriminatory policies were allowed to take root locally. I argued that a long history of socio-economic marginalization has put

relations between white and black communities onto a trajectory fraught with tension. While the political institutions giving shape and definition to the area were largely created in the late nineteenth century, the Great Migration of Southern blacks into Saint Louis failed to raise red-flags that an effort to incorporate these new residents was needed to prevent the existence of a metropolis divided along racial lines. What resulted is a region devoid of the social cohesion imperative for fostering inter-neighborhood partnerships built upon mutual trust and respect. African American communities blame whites for abandoning urban communities while residing close enough to enjoy the benefits offered by access to the City. Members of white communities often remain fearful of what having African American neighbors says about their own social status. Discrimination against local African Americans and people of low-income is often one in the same since “white flight” and suburbanization have been motivated as much by the fear of living in an impoverished neighborhood as they have been by racial considerations.

Decades of municipal segregation set the stage upon which the events of Ferguson unfolded in 2014. The Saint Louis example presents itself as a case-study of how metropolitan areas complacent with large numbers of small municipalities can forestall the assimilation of groups perceived to be associated with urban blight and decay. In Section IV (Research Data), the way these problems have manifested themselves locally is depicted in numerical terms using the survey data I collected. Respondents rated their agreement with a set of nine statements designed to assess their perceptions of local police and

politicians. In section five (Data Analysis), the survey data was analyzed and reviewed. While the results contained in the data are far from definitive, the research shows African American residents of Saint Louis do not enjoy interacting with white police in their neighborhoods. Three out of every four respondents believe that white police are, “Not held accountable when they abuse their power in racist ways.” Realizations such as these are important for understanding why residents of some neighborhoods hold contempt for authority and were willing to go to great lengths to let their dissatisfaction be known during the civil unrest in late 2014.

The situation in Ferguson manifested itself in ways suggesting a high level of emotional frustration and anger directed at law enforcement among African American residents of the area. While tensions have cooled in the past two years, strong undercurrents of opposition towards local police remain intact. Latent civic unrest in the area has yet to produce a viable political movement that incorporates the realities of Saint Louis into a more inclusive approach to local governance. The bi-state region, therefore, must collectively take a greater role in addressing problems not easily resolved by municipal governments. To prevent another Ferguson incident, leaders must begin doing away with outdated methods of compartmentalizing land and sorting people into space based on income and race. Prosperous municipalities must accept greater responsibility for creating housing for low-income residents that work in retail and industrial districts within their city borders. Improved regional leadership is needed to incentivize the relocation of African American police

officers to majority black districts. Regarding municipal government, areas that have undergone substantial demographic shifts need to be held accountable for ensuring that those who oversee their public institutions are also representatives of the populations they serve.

In terms of law enforcement and its relationship to the community, my data suggests that white police officers should ideally be accompanied by an African American partner when patrolling black neighborhoods. It is clear that high levels of distrust towards white officers must be challenged by publicly showcasing the potential for cooperation between races. When local institutions begin to reflect society, it will go a long way towards repairing relationships between members of different communities and the legitimacy of law and order.

Works Cited

Basu, Moni. (2015). Ferguson election makes history, adds more blacks to City Council. *CNN News*. April 8, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/08/us/ferguson-election/>. Accessed October 15, 2016.

Bell, Kim. (2014). Grand jury works in secret but its methods are no mystery. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Aug 20, 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/grand-jury-works-in-secret-but-its-methods-are-no/article_f0c885c8-0e6b-532f-a6b6-0dc663b85d96.html. Accessed October 10, 2016.

Department of Justice. *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*. United States Civil Rights Division. March 4, 2015.

Dahl, Robert. (2005). *Who Governs?: Democracy and power in an American city*. Yale University Press.

Fagerstrom, Ron. (2000). *Mill Creek Valley: A Soul of St. Louis*. The Missouri Historical Society.

Gordon, Colin. (2009). *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American city*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hayward, Clarrisa and Todd Swanstrom (Eds.). (2011). *Justice and the American Metropolis* (Vol. 18). U of Minnesota Press.

Heinz, Ryan. (2014) Message from UMSL Chancellor Tom George. *UMSL Daily*. August 15, 2014. Retrieved from <http://blogs.umsl.edu/news/2014/08/15/george-letter/>. Accessed October 11, 2016.

Hunter, Floyd. (1963). *Community Power Structure: A study of Decision Makers*. Doubleday.

Hyman, Herbert. (1959). *Political Socialization*.

Jacobs, Jane. (1961). *The Death and Life of American cities*.

Jennings, M. Kent and Richard Niemi. (1968). The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child. *American Political Science Review*, 62(01), 169-184.

Jolly, Kenneth. (2006). *Black Liberation in the Midwest: The Struggle in St. Louis, Missouri, 1964-1970*. Taylor & Francis.

Jones, E. Terrence. (2000). *Fragmented by Design: Why St. Louis Has So Many Governments*. Palmerston & Reed Publishing.

Mastio, David and Kelly Rupp. (2015) Pentagon Weaponry in St. Louis County. *USA Today*. May 20, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/08/13/ferguson-police-michael-brown-militarization-column/14006383/>. Accessed October 2, 2016.

Montgomery, Roger. (1985). Pruitt-Igoe: Policy Failure or Societal Symptom. *The Metropolitan Midwest: Policy problems and prospects for change*, 229-243.

Morton, Andrew. (2014). *Spanish Lake*.

O'Neill, Tim. (2014) "Look Back 250 • Race hatred, workforce tensions explode in East St. Louis in 1917". *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Sep 21, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/illinois/look-back-race-hatred-workforce-tensions-explode-in-east-st/article_9bfa1b5d-c627-5dc7-b1da-6d58993f3ecb.html. Accessed October 1, 2016.

Putnam, Robert. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-78.

Schermer, George. (1949). The Fairgrounds Park Incident. Conducted for the Saint Louis Council on Human Relations. July 27, 1949. *The Missouri Historical Society*. Retrieved From: http://collections.mohistory.org/bookreader/br/?item_id=http%3A%2F%2Fcollections.mohistory.org%2Fresource%2F230996#page/1/mode/1up. Accessed October 11, 2016.

Strassner, Franz. (2012). *Crossing a St Louis Street that Divides Communities*. BBC News.

Urbatsch, Robert. (2014). *Families' Values: How Parents, Siblings, and Children Affect Political Attitudes*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Wallison, Peter and Edward Pinto. (2009). A Government Mandated Housing Bubble. *Forbes*. February 16, 2009. Retrieved from: http://www.forbes.com/2009/02/13/housing-bubble-subprime-opinions-contributors_0216_peter_wallison_edward_pinto.html. Accessed October 3, 2016.