Barnard College

Laidlaw Scholars

Community Reaction to Increasing Police Presence and Surveillance in Columbia University's Morningside Heights Campus

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Abstract:

Surveillance technologies have expanded in recent years across New York City despite numerous studies that demonstrate their ineffectiveness and legal cases questioning their constitutionality and infringement on privacy. Historically over-policed neighborhoods bear the brunt of both private and public surveillance measures. Utilizing the Broken Windows Theory, the NYPD targets low-level crimes in these neighborhoods, establishing a continuous surveillance presence that influences community perceptions of safety and trust (Wilson). Since October 2023, the city has witnessed a sharp increase in NYPD surveillance including in neighborhoods often exempt from these measures. One such site has been Columbia University's campus in Morningside Heights following a rise in pro-Palestinian protests, which offers an opportunity to examine these intrusions as they are first introduced to a neighborhood. The presence of various police forces has been well-documented, but what is less known is how community members, especially students, perceive the increase in surveillance technologies in and around their campus ("'An Intimidation Tactic;'" Huddleston and Stahl; Stack; Yu). To understand the impact of such surveillance, this study examines the attitudes of Columbia and Barnard students towards the spontaneous and significant police presence. Online surveys were the main mode of data collection with sampling from Columbia and Barnard student groups. Surveys were collected over the summer months yielding a sample of 67 individuals.

The questions motivating this study were based on previous studies on surveillance in low income and marginalized communities in New York City including how a community reacts to a sudden upsurge in police surveillance? And how do spaces of privilege such as Columbia and Barnard react to increased surveillance? In other words, does privilege ward off the effects documented in other communities? Using Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism and Edwin

Lemert's Labeling theory to analyze the survey results, this paper argues that in the case of Morningside Heights, we see how quickly an empowered, privileged, and private space quickly becomes disempowered once it is labeled as deviant. Our findings further suggest that a sudden influx in surveillance measures can disrupt community dynamics, instilling a sense of distrust and fear among residents. Additionally, these surveillance measures can affect personal identity-expression, altering the ways community members outwardly express themselves. Analyzing Morningside Heights allows us to examine the moment when a neighborhood becomes a focal point for surveillance measures. We must consider that if such negative effects can exist in a privileged space, the ramifications in less privileged areas could be substantially more profound.

Introduction:

As technology advances, a recurring cycle emerges in which older surveillance measures are deemed invasive and become more regulated, only to be replaced by new, unregulated surveillance technologies (Lukens; "The Fight to Stop Face Recognition Technology;" U.S. District Court). New technologies are often introduced and justified by establishing a moral panic, coercing citizens into accepting new surveillance measures to protect themselves and their community. However, the same surveillance technologies that are promoted as necessary and protective resources may prove to be detrimental to community dynamics and individuals' perceptions of trust.

Government officials and others who hold a position of power justify their application of invasive technologies by establishing a moral panic. In "From Convenience to Compliance," David Lyon argues that "according to the shock doctrine, exploiting some natural or constructed crisis to introduce some new or controversial government measure is a deliberate strategy

practiced by many around the world" (61). Lyon emphasizes how governments and powerful entities exploit crises, whether real or fabricated, to justify the deployment of invasive technologies. By generating or amplifying a sense of moral panic, they create a climate in which citizens are more likely to accept or even demand measures that would otherwise be seen as intrusive or unacceptable. This strategy, as Lyon points out, aligns with the principles of the shock doctrine, where fear and uncertainty are manipulated to introduce and normalize controversial policies. In this way, the application of invasive technologies becomes not just a matter of convenience or necessity but a tool of control, ensuring compliance through the engineered consent of the public.

While invasive technologies are often initially criticized, once they become normalized and compared against more extreme technology, people are less likely to contest the invasion. As Lyon expresses in "The Search for Surveillance Theories," a rigorous panoptic regime generates active resistance, while subtle panoptic strategies produce docile bodies (4). Therefore, Lyon expresses that the "less extreme" panoptic strategies are also alarming because they are often more easily accepted. By normalizing invasive practices through comparison with more overt forms of surveillance, governments can incrementally erode personal freedoms without triggering significant opposition.

The history of surveillance in the United States, more specifically in New York City, provides several examples of how these strategies have been implemented and later scrutinized. Post-September 11th policies further expanded the scope of surveillance, with the NYPD engaging in extensive monitoring of Muslim communities under the pretext of national security. This mirrors earlier tactics used by the FBI's COINTELPRO program, which sought to surveil and disrupt civil rights organizations, again using the justification of national security. For

instance, the Handschu Guidelines, originally established to limit the New York Police Department's surveillance of political activities, have been repeatedly challenged and weakened over the years, especially after 9/11. These changes were justified by invoking the threat of terrorism, creating a moral panic that led to the expansion of police surveillance powers. In 2003, the Handschu Court approved NYPD's proposals to significantly modify the guidelines to allow for increased surveillance measures (U.S. District Court). Throughout the case, NYPD's Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence, David Cohen, argues that "'[t]he continued enforcement of the Guidelines is no longer consistent with the public interest because they limit the effective investigation of terrorism and prevent cooperation with federal and state law enforcement agencies in the development of intelligence'" (U.S. District Court). David Cohen's statement highlights how public fear is strategically manipulated to justify expanding surveillance powers. By framing the enforcement of the Handschu Guidelines as a hindrance to effective counter-terrorism, he leverages a shock doctrine to convince the public of the need for increased surveillance. Despite the absence of evidence that these measures have prevented terrorist attacks, the argument maintains that such surveillance is essential for public safety, thereby coercing acceptance of more intrusive practices.

In New York City post 9/11, Muslim neighborhoods became one of NYPD's most significantly surveilled communities. However, in 2012, Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo of the Associated Press report that "In more than six years of spying on Muslim neighborhoods, eavesdropping on conversations and cataloguing mosques, the New York Police Department's secret Demographics Unit never generated a lead or triggered a terrorism investigation, the department acknowledged in court testimony unsealed late Monday." The NYPD urged courts to modify the Handschu Guidelines by arguing that increased surveillance was necessary for

counterterrorism efforts to keep their citizens safe. These surveillance measures did not have substantive results towards counterterrorism; however, they did have a significant negative impact on Muslim communities, including increasing stigma regarding Muslims, "interference with religious practices," perpetuating community fear, restricting free speech, and "damaging law enforcement relationships" ("Factsheet: The NYPD Muslim Surveillance Program"). There is an evident pattern of ineffective surveillance and its detrimental effects on targeted communities, which has continued despite increasing scrutiny.

The controversial Stop and Frisk policy, which disproportionately targets minorities, was initially defended as a necessary tool for crime prevention but was later deemed unconstitutional due to its invasive and discriminatory nature. Utilizing this policy, the NYPD stopped 685,000 people in 2011, and 88% of these individuals were innocent (Bridge Initiative Team). After numerous reports of racial profiling and discrimination, Stop and Frisk was found to be unconstitutional in 2013; however, it continues to be utilized by the NYPD (Bridge Initiative Team). Despite significant evidence of the negative effects of such practices ("NYCLU Releases Report Analyzing NYPD Stop-and-Frisk Data"), the persistence of surveillance measures such as Stop and Frisk emphasize how deeply entrenched these tactics are within law enforcement strategies. These practices are continuously justified by a vague narrative of public safety that neglect the blatant civil rights violations and racial discrimination which they perpetuate[1].

When considering invasive and discriminatory surveillance measures, academic research often focuses on communities that have experienced long-standing surveillance. This research

[1] Additionally, Baltimore's aerial surveillance program, which was intended to aid in criminal investigations is criticized for violating the Fourth Amendment by invading privacy ("Federal Appeals Court). The surveillance program is controversial as it "put the daytime movements of virtually all Baltimore residents under surveillance for 12 hours a day over six months" ("Federal Appeals Court"). The court emphasizes that "allowing the police to wield this power unchecked is anathema to the values enshrined in our Fourth Amendment" ("Federal Appeals Court). This case reflects the ongoing pattern of justifying invasive surveillance measures under the guise of public safety; however these measures often negatively impact the community by violating residents' civil rights.

emphasizes how policing tactics and surveillance measures disproportionately affect underprivileged communities, often targeting populations primarily composed of people of color (Chu). However, the recent influx of surveillance in Morningside Heights, particularly on Columbia University's campus, presents a unique opportunity to explore the initial stages of heavy policing and surveillance in a neighborhood. For example, since October 2023, the NYPD has expanded its surveillance efforts to include the use of drones over Morningside Heights and Columbia University's campus. This significant increase in monitoring has sparked concerns about privacy and over-policing. In a recent press release, Mayor Eric Adams boasts about the NYPD's use of drones to surveil Hamilton Hall before officers conducted their "operation" on Columbia's campus ("Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Briefs Media on Recent Protests at Columbia University"). Additionally, Chief of Patrol John Chell describes how the NYPD utilizes drones to monitor protests, aiding in making arrests (Evers and Flanagan). Chell advocates for the use of drones further: "'These drones are a game changer. We have used this drone, these drones over 480% more than last year'" (Evers and Flanagan). Unlike the typical focus on marginalized communities, Columbia University represents an empowered and privileged space. Yet, even in this context, the introduction of intensified surveillance can lead to a sense of disempowerment. By examining these early moments, this research will offer new insights into how communities initially respond to an influx of police presence and surveillance measures.

Theory and its Application:

For a neighborhood to become a focal point for police and surveillance measures, those in power must first construct and then continually reinforce a narrative that frames the community as deviant. This process can be analyzed through the lens of criminological theories,

particularly Edwin Lemert's labeling theory and James Wilson and George Kelling's broken windows theory. Lemert first makes a distinction between primary and secondary deviance, emphasizing how secondary deviance results from "a realignment of an individual's self-concept either with the deviance itself or with a subgroup that is considered deviant" (Cullen 551). He makes this distinction to argue that once an individual is labeled as deviant, the label itself can lead to further deviant behavior once an individual internalizes and begins to identify with said label (Matsueda 14). In "The Natural History of Labeling Theory," sociologist Ross Matsueda explains that labeling theory argues that "Regardless of whether a person is objectively deviant or not, if that person is defined as deviant, negative consequences will result" (14). This theoretical framework is essential to understanding how communities, once labeled as deviant, can become entrenched in an endless cycle of increased policing and surveillance. The community's constructed identity as a hotspot for deviance justifies and further perpetuates extreme enforcement measures, as both authorities and the general public begin to view the neighborhood through the lens of this deviant label. Matsueda also emphasizes that "social control institutions disproportionately label the disadvantaged and powerless as deviant, regardless of their actual behavior (e.g., Paternoster and Iovanni, 1989)" (23). Through the lens of labeling theory, it becomes clear how the NYPD can justify an increased presence in certain communities by labeling them as deviant. This labeling not only rationalizes but also normalizes the heightened police presence and surveillance in these areas, creating a feedback loop where the very existence of increased policing reinforces the perception of the community as inherently deviant. As law enforcement concentrates their efforts in these neighborhoods, they are more likely to encounter or even provoke incidents of deviance, which in turn provides further justification for their presence.

James Wilson and George Kelling's broken windows theory provides insight on how the NYPD and other law enforcement agencies initially claim deviant behavior to justify the need for a more significant presence in a certain community. In a March 1982 issue of *The Atlantic*, Wilson and Kelling argue that low level crimes or physical displays of disorder within a neighborhood signify that the area is at risk for higher level crime and disorder. Throughout their article, they emphasize that it is essential for police to take proactive measures in neighborhoods because if minor disorder is not effectively handled, it can lead to an increase in more serious criminal behavior. Wilson and Kelling argue that it is essential for law enforcement to address disorder within communities because even "though citizens can do a great deal, the police are plainly the key to order-maintenance" (Wilson 37). However, in the same article, when describing the effects of increased foot patrolling in neighborhoods, Wilson and Kelling report that "foot patrol had not reduced crime rates. But the residents of the foot-patrolled neighborhoods seemed to feel more secure than persons in other areas, tended to believe that crime had been reduced, and seemed to take fewer steps to protect themselves from crime" (29). While the theory argues that increased police presence and proactive measures are necessary to prevent serious crime, the actual reduction in crime may not be as significant as perceived. Instead, the presence of law enforcement primarily alters the perception of safety rather than actually affecting crime rates. This focus on perception can be problematic, as it allows law enforcement agencies like the NYPD to justify ongoing and increased surveillance and policing in certain communities based more on the need to maintain a sense of order than on concrete reductions in crime.

Since the introduction of broken windows theory and its application through law enforcement practices, it has faced harsh criticism from academics and community members

alike. In “Broken Windows Ideology and the (Mis)Reading of Graffiti,” Stefano Bloch explores how broken windows theory shapes the public perception of “what breeds and constitutes crime and predation in an effort to increase support for the eradication of alternative urban aesthetics” (6). Bloch critiques broken windows theory for characterizing urban aesthetics as innately deviant and gang related. Additionally, Sam Roberts reports that controversy regarding broken windows theory heightened again “after Eric Garner, a Staten Island man, died of a chokehold last month while being taken into custody for illegally selling cigarettes.” This incident portrays how broken windows theory can be utilized in an extreme manner. Critics argue that such practices not only exacerbate tensions between law enforcement and communities but also disproportionately impact marginalized groups. The application of broken windows theory can lead to over-policing and a focus on minor offenses, which often escalates conflicts and strains community relations. Despite these critiques, broken windows theory continues to be utilized by the NYPD to justify their presence in certain communities. Professor Kelling even served as a consultant for the NYPD (Roberts).

In fall 2023 and spring 2024, Columbia University Administration and the NYPD framed peaceful Pro-Palestinian protests as the “broken window,” or the initial signifier of minor deviance within the community, that must be addressed by an increased police presence in order to prevent more extreme deviance. Following protests in late November 2023, university spokesperson Samantha Slater reports, “‘While there have been no credible threats impacting safety at Morningside or any of Columbia’s campuses since the start of the terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7, over the past few weeks, we have increased our public safety presence across all our campuses, including an increase in both the frequency of mobile and foot patrols with additional guard services and staffing at campus access points’” (“‘An Intimidation

Tactic’”). The university’s statements emphasize the preventative measures taken despite the absence of credible threats. This suggests that heightened security measures are not necessarily based on concrete evidence of danger, but rather on the perception of potential disorder. Additionally, University President Minouche Shafik and Barnard President Laura Rosenbury state that they are in regular communication with the NYPD in regards to security concerns “amid campus activism, protests, and doxxing” (“‘An Intimidation Tactic’”). By portraying these peaceful demonstrations as a potential precursor to more severe forms of disorder, both the university and law enforcement justify the significant increase in police presence on campus. This response is framed as a necessary measure to maintain order and prevent the escalation of perceived deviance, aligning with Wilson and Kelling's argument that unchecked minor disorder can lead to more serious criminal behavior. In response to a “‘peaceful protest art installation’ as part of ‘Shut it Down For Palestine’” that took place in early November, university administration restricted access to Columbia’s Morningside campus to Columbia ID holders (Mendell). Halla Anderson, a student at Columbia School of Social Work, argues that “‘They're using this as a tactic, in my opinion, to scare people from organizing and keeping things silent’” (Mendell). By limiting who can enter the campus, the university is effectively controlling the space and attempting to manage the potential spread of protest activities. Anderson’s critique of the administration reflects that the university’s actions may be less about genuine safety concerns and more about stifling political activism, especially activism that is critical of established power structures. In response to future protests, university administration not only restricted campus access but brought in additional public safety officers and the NYPD (“‘An Intimidation Tactic’”). Nonvionlent incidents, such as the art installation and student protests, are framed as significant enough to warrant campus restrictions and police intervention, reinforcing the

narrative that the campus is at risk of further disorder. By invoking the logic of broken windows theory, university administration and the NYPD can justify the escalation of surveillance and policing in response to what might otherwise be considered minor infractions. This approach not only alters the campus atmosphere by increasing the visible presence of law enforcement but also signals to the student body that dissent or protest, even when peaceful, could lead to severe repercussions.

Once those in power justify their presence through the framing of minor deviance, the mechanisms of surveillance and control become deeply ingrained within a community. This echoes Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism, where the mere possibility of being watched influences behavior and maintains order. Michel Foucault's "Panopticism" explores the subtle, yet pervasive mechanisms used to control peoples' behavior, specifically in the context of a prison. In the panopticon, a clearly defined person (or illusion of a person) stands at a central location to watch the prisoners. This constant visibility ensures that individuals regulate their own action, internalizing the control exerted over them: "he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power;… he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault 7). The mere possibility of being watched influences behavior and maintains order. When a neighborhood experiences heightened policing, community members are likely to internalize this surveillance, significantly affecting their behavior.

Literature Review:

Due to the contentious nature of many of the NYPD's surveillance measures, they are a frequent topic for academic scholars to consider. Two scholars in particular, Jeffrey Fagan and Alex Vitale, frequently explore how the NYPD's protocols disproportionately target "the City's

poorest areas" (Fagan 311). In his journal article, "Street Stops and Broken Windows Revisited: The Demography and Logic of Proactive Policing in a Safe and Changing City," Fagan studies how different neighborhoods experience different policing stop rates. Although he does not come to a definitive conclusion regarding neighborhood differences due to a modeling issue, he does confirm that the majority of stops are excessive, claiming "the costs of this regime lie in the harm to the 95 percent who are innocent in these excess stops" (Fagan 336). While Fagan studies the effect of a significant police presence on various communities in New York City, he primarily focuses on neighborhoods that have a deep history with over policing and surveillance measures. By studying how community members of Morningside Heights react to the sudden influx in surveillance and police in their neighborhood, this research works to understand how individuals react to these initial invasions.

While Jeffrey Fagan examines the varying impacts of proactive policing across New York City's neighborhoods, Alex Vitale takes this critique further by exploring the broader consequences of the NYPD's strategies on marginalized communities. In *The End of Policing*, Vitale argues that the over-reliance on police to address social issues like poverty and mental illness fails to effectively address the root cause of these issues and often further exacerbates these issues by criminalizing the vulnerable populations. Vitale critiques broken windows theory as an ineffective approach to aiding homelessness and other social issues. He emphasizes that these policing strategies disproportionately target the city's poorest and most vulnerable areas, resulting in a cycle of surveillance, criminalization, and community disenfranchisement (Vitale). While much of the existing research, including Vitale's, focuses on how these strategies impact marginalized and impoverished communities, a gap remains in understanding how similar tactics affect privileged spaces that have not historically been overpoliced.

My research aims to fill this gap by examining how Morningside Heights has shifted from being largely overlooked by the NYPD to becoming a focal point of increased surveillance and policing and how this change affects community members. Given the historical significance of surveillance on New Yorkers and the implementation of broken windows and labeling theories, it is necessary to examine how these trends are applied to a private institution and privileged community. This shift raises important questions about the broader implications of policing strategies that have traditionally targeted marginalized groups but are not being extended to affluent and educational spaces. By exploring this change, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how these social control mechanisms affect community dynamics.

Methods:

To understand the impact of such surveillance, this study examines the attitudes of Columbia and Barnard students towards the spontaneous and significant police presence. Online surveys were the main mode of data collection with sampling from Columbia and Barnard student groups. The survey employed a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions to assess students' understanding of surveillance technologies, their feelings about the police presence, their level of community involvement, and their perceptions of community dynamics.

While the survey provides valuable insights, there are several limitations to consider. First, the sample, while informative, is not a comprehensive representation of the entire student body. To ensure the most representative sample possible, a systematic sampling method was initially employed. I contacted every fourth student group listed on the Columbia University Student Organization Directory, requesting that they distribute the survey to their members (https://undergrad.admissions.columbia.edu/life/here/clubs/listings). This approach aimed to

capture a diverse range of student perspectives by reaching a variety of organizations across different interests and affiliations. In addition to the systematic sampling, surveys were made available in person at Butler Library, a central university building, to reach students who may not have been part of any student groups or who might have been missed in the online distribution. This dual approach aims to enhance the sample's diversity and increase the likelihood of capturing a broad spectrum of student opinions on the issue of surveillance and police presence on campus.

Additionally, sample size is often considered a limitation of survey based research. The limited sample size may be due to the timing of the survey distribution, which coincided with the summer break. During this period, many students may not be actively checking their university email or engaging with campus-related activities, leading to a lower response rate. The timing of the survey may have resulted in a smaller sample size; however, in “Sense and Nonsense about Surveys,” Howard Schuman argues that “the size of a sample needed to accurately estimate a value for a population depends very little on the size of the population” (41). This perspective challenges the assumption that a larger population necessarily requires a proportionally larger sample for accurate representation. Although the 67 responses received may not constitute an extensive sample, they provide valuable insights into campus sentiments. Schuman's argument suggests that these responses are not only adequate but also crucial for capturing the attitudes within the community. Therefore, despite the modest sample size, the data collected offers an important understanding of the Morningside Heights/Columbia University community.

To prepare the survey data for statistical analysis, responses are enumerated according to predefined categories for each variable. Frequency-related responses were coded using three distinct schemes: Frequency 1 is scaled from 0 (Never) to 4 (Always), with intermediate values

of 2 (Sometimes) and 3 (Often); Frequency 2 ranges from 1 (Rarely) to 4 (Always), including 2 (Occasionally) and 3 (Often); and Frequency 3 is coded as 0 (No), 1 (Yes, sometimes), and 2 (Yes, always). For measures of comfort level and general feeling, a 5-point scale is utilized, with responses ranging from 1 (Uncomfortable) to 5 (Comfortable), including intermediate points such as 2 (Slightly Uncomfortable) and 4 (Slightly Comfortable). Opinion-related responses are numerated on a 4-point scale, from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree), to gauge the strength of sentiment. Neighborhood-specific data, including years living in Morningside Heights and time spent there, are numerated to reflect the length and extent of the respondent's involvement with the area. Questions related to the sense of surveillance and public space are coded to assess perceptions of privacy and awareness of surveillance technologies. Safety-related responses are coded to reflect strategies and perceptions regarding safety in different contexts, while law enforcement variables are enumerated to understand the frequency, perception, and impact of police presence. This coding was checked by the researcher, my advisor, and one additional research assistant, and this coding approach allows for statistical tests to analyze patterns and relationships within the data.

Results:

The survey results reveal significant insights into how increased surveillance and police presence impact the dynamics of community life. The data highlights how heightened enforcement measures can have significant effects on residents' perceptions of trust, both towards law enforcement and within the community itself. The survey results also indicate changes in residents' feelings of safety. While one might expect that increased policing would universally enhance feelings of security, the results suggest a more complex relationship. For some, the presence of law enforcement may indeed provide a sense of protection, yet for others,

it can evoke anxiety, particularly when surveillance feels excessive or targeted. Moreover, the survey results suggest that law enforcement strategies affect residents' relationships with their physical environment. Increased surveillance can lead to a more controlled and monitored experience of public spaces, which may deter certain behaviors, creating a sense of alienation among residents. When people feel constantly observed, their connection to and comfort within their neighborhood can erode, leading to potential shifts in how they use and engage with communal spaces.

While the initial protests in Morningside Heights were aimed at Columbia University's stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict, the administration's response—marked by increased surveillance and policing—led to subsequent protests that also voiced frustrations with these new policing measures. As members of an institution which claims to prioritize teaching global issues (*About Columbia)*, students are used to voicing their opinions in numerous ways and spaces; however the administration's reactions challenge the very notion of voice that these students were accustomed to. In her chapter "Voice and Vote in Democratic Politics," Elisabeth Clemens emphasizes how the contradiction of voice in democracy creates tension between individuals' expectations of their right to voice their opinion with their lived reality. Columbia student protesters' reaction and redirection of resistance indicates community members' feelings towards the heightened surveillance and policing, revealing how these measures not only amplify tensions but also broaden the scope of their concerns. Frustrated by their unmet expectations of having the right to voice their opinions, the protests evolve to address the broader implications of increased surveillance measures within their neighborhood. In "The Power of Protest on Policing: Black Lives Matter Protest and Civilian Evaluation of the Police," James E. Wright II, Dongfang Gaozhao, Kenneth Dukes, and Da'Shay Templeton provide insight into how protests

affect residents' evaluations of police and their perceptions of safety within their neighborhoods. Protests of the Black Lives Matter movement focused on the flagrant mistreatment of Black individuals by law enforcements, caused by systemic racism; however, law enforcements' reactions to these protests sparked further contention with policing strategies. Utilizing an online survey experience, Wright et al. determine that "the presence of a general protest has negative impacts on people's perception of the police department, police trustworthiness, and safety of living in the city" (131). Additionally, these findings indicate that "only White individuals significantly change their levels of trust in police and perceived living safety" in a negative manner within neighborhoods with BLM protests (Wright et al. 138). These results suggest that law enforcement's response to protests heightens residents' awareness of police misconduct and over-policing, leading to a more critical evaluation of policing strategies within their communities. Individuals engaging in initial protests are likely already critical of invasive and prejudiced policing strategies, and their activism can make residents of the neighborhood aware of these civil rights infringements.

Safety:

From the survey of Columbia students, 76% of respondents indicate that they participate in protests to some extent, and of those who responded that they do not participate in protests, 31.25% of respondents do not participate due to fear of getting arrested or in trouble with work, school, or family. When comparing individuals' participation in protests with their perception of safety when police are present, there is a moderately negative correlation of -0.365, suggesting that as participation in protests increases, feelings of safety in the presence of police tend to decrease. Additionally, when comparing individuals' participation in protests with the belief that police cameras are used to target communities of color, a moderate positive correlation of 0.492

suggests that individuals who are more actively involved in protests are more likely to believe that police surveillance disproportionately targets communities of color. These findings indicate that members of the community who participate in protests are aware of discriminatory practices of policing, and therefore, they will likely be more cynical of increased policing in their neighborhood.

NYPD's arrests of students during peaceful Pro-Palestine protests on campus inspire further resistance against the increased police presence among student groups and faculty alike. Columbia University Apartheid Divest, a student organization, lists "no policing on campus" as one of their main demands, urging administration to "end the targeted repression of Palestinian students and their allies on and off campus, including through university disciplinary processes. Defund Public safety and disclose and sever all ties with the NYPD" (Cuapartheiddivest). Additionally, hundreds of faculty and staff members pledged to strike until NYPD was removed from campus ("Hundreds of Faculty, Staff Pledge to Strike"). The results of the survey as well as vocal contestation from student groups and faculty emphasize a growing grievance within the Columbia community regarding increased surveillance and police presence. The negative correlation between protest participation and perceived safety suggests that heightened police visibility contributes to a sense of insecurity among those actively protesting. Furthermore, the positive correlation between protest participation and the belief that police surveillance targets communities of color highlights an awareness of and sensitivity to systemic biases in policing practices. The intensified resistance and demands for reduced police involvement reflect a broader critique of how surveillance and enforcement strategies are perceived to exacerbate issues of racial and social injustice. In the early moments of increased policing in a neighborhood, active protesters and residents will likely be some of the first individuals to

outwardly fight these new policies.

Trust, erosion, and community:

Survey results additionally indicate that increased police presence and surveillance may erode community trust, by making residents feel more negatively perceived by the police as well as other members of the community. When asked which members of the community that they feel like they can trust, over 50% of respondents indicate that they trust their immediate community, while less than 5% of respondents feel they can trust their community leaders, including their college administrators (Figure A). The significant increase in policing and surveillance not only erodes trust between community members and law enforcement, but also between their institutional leaders. The minimal trust in community leaders indicates a broader disillusionment with those in positions of authority, likely exacerbated by the perception that increased surveillance is a tool for control rather than protection.

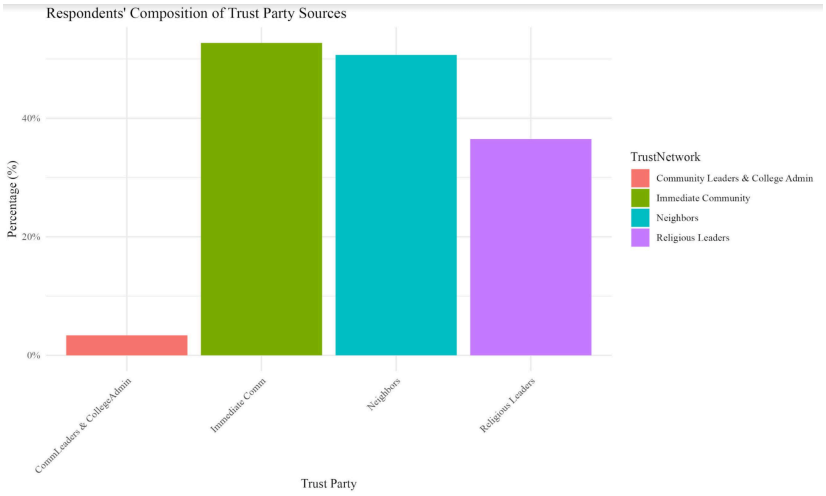

Figure A

Survey results regarding safety techniques and removal of religious clothing also indicate a recent erosion of trust within the community. Approximately 39% of individuals respond that they know of someone in the community who has taken off their headscarf, shaved their beard or

stopped wearing religious clothes in the past year. Additionally, four respondents mention taking safety measures that include covering their face with a mask or removing articles of symbolic clothing, specifically a keffiyeh which often symbolizes Palestinians (Mohammad). The removal of religious and symbolic clothing underscores the erosion of trust within the community, as individuals feel compelled to alter their appearance to avoid drawing attention or becoming targets of surveillance or discrimination. The fact that 39% of respondents are aware of someone who has made such changes further highlights the widespread impact of these pressures, suggesting that the community is experiencing a palpable fear that has led to significant precautionary measures. Although other communities in New York have historically felt these threats, Columbia University is a private space with privilege and protections that is often far removed from their neighboring communities. The experiences in this privileged setting emphasize the pervasive nature of these issues, extending even into spaces typically shielded from such threats.

Use, claim, and reconfiguration of space:

Finally, the increase in police presence and surveillance in Morningside Heights seems to alter the way community members engage with and perceive their physical community. There is a moderately positive correlation of 0.377 between individuals' participation in protest and their increased likelihood of using campus space since the events of October 7th, 2023. In one way, this correlation may indicate that those who are more politically active or engaged in protests feel a heightened need to assert their presence in these spaces, potentially as a form of resistance or solidarity. However, many of the protests were on campus, so one may expect a higher correlation between individuals' engagement in protests and their likelihood to utilize space on campus. This moderate, not strong correlation could reflect a growing tension between the desire

to engage with the community and the fear of being surveilled, targeted, or punished for their involvement.

Additionally, in response to an open ended question, many respondents indicate that if they had the opportunity to move out of Morningside Heights, they would choose to do so because of the recent increase in police as well as the treatment of certain community members. One respondent want to move out of the neighborhood because they feel generally unsafe and "that certain students are unwelcome here (SWANA/MENA students, visibly pro-Palestinian students, etc.)." Another respondent mentions they would consider moving because they "don't like contributing to gentrification or being subjected to the heavy surveillance." Additionally, a student responds they would leave because there is "too much police presence," and they feel "uncomfortable in the Columbia area." The desire among many residents to leave Morningside Heights due to the increased police presence illustrates the deepening sense of discomfort and alienation within the neighborhood. Additionally, one respondent associates "much of this place with traumatic experiences," specifically, "the NYPD closing all the roads on the night of the sweep of Hind's Hall." Law enforcement's presence in Morningside Heights not only alters the physical landscape of the neighborhood, but also leaves a lasting emotional and psychological impact on residents.

Discussion:

The findings of this research shed light on how increased surveillance and policing at Columbia University and Barnard College have affected students' perceptions and emotional states. While protests have subsided, underlying tensions persist, with many students expressing concerns about their safety and the intrusive nature of surveillance. For instance, several students indicated a desire to leave Morningside Heights due to the heightened police presence, reflecting

ongoing discomfort within the community.

Foucault's concept of the panopticon helps explain how surveillance, initially framed as a measure for campus safety, can become repressive. The mere possibility of being watched leads individuals to self-regulate their behavior. At Columbia, the increased surveillance creates a modern-day panopticon, where students feel constantly observed and alter their behavior to avoid attention. This monitoring fosters vulnerability and erodes trust, both towards law enforcement and within the community.

Foucault's ideas intersect with Lemert's labeling theory, where being labeled as deviant, or perceived as a potential threat, leads to the internalization of that label. Students who feel targeted by surveillance may view themselves as outsiders and take steps to avoid scrutiny, from wearing facemasks to engaging in further protests. The labeling process does not only affect those being labeled as deviant, but also the community as a whole. The administration and law enforcement, by intensifying their surveillance and policing methods, may come to view the student body and Morningside Heights community as inherently suspicious, leading to a lack of trust in the very community they are meant to serve. This dynamic creates a cycle of distrust, where increased surveillance produces further labeling, which in turn justifies even more surveillance. When students feel that their community leaders, such as university administrators, view them as threats rather than as members of the academic community, the relationship between the students and administrators deteriorates. The presence of guards for university presidents and the increased police patrols can be seen as a physical manifestation of this distrust.

Conclusion:

This study examines the initial impact of increased surveillance and policing in

Morningside Heights, a community surrounding Columbia University that has historically been overlooked by the NYPD. Through the analysis of survey data, the research reveals that heightened enforcement measures can erode trust within the community, alter perceptions of safety, and compel residents to change their behaviors, including modifying their appearance and reconsidering their engagement with public spaces. The findings also indicate that those who actively participate in protests are more likely to view police presence as threatening rather than protective. While much of the existing scholarship focuses on marginalized and impoverished neighborhoods that have a deep history with over policing, this study contributes to the literature by exploring how a community reacts when initially faced with an increase in surveillance and policing. Future research will continue to explore how the Morningside Heights community relates to increased surveillance, while also comparing their reactions against residents in neighborhoods that have been historically overpoliced and surveilled.

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