YOUNG ACADEMICS

American Studies
1

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Fighting against AtroCITIES

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Tectum

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With a Foreword by Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gerhard

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Foreword

Leo Kempe has developed a very strong argument in his thesis why black lives matter on a socio-spatial scale. By using the case studies of Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis he analyzes three different spaces of injustice in cities (racism, police violence and injustice, accessibility) to reflect upon the importance of the Black Lives Matter Movement as an urban social movement. With this he hypothesizes that racism is strongly related to urban space and urban development, while cities also open up new frameworks or pathways to overcome such discriminations in order to contribute to American democracy, best described in the theoretical concept of the Right to the City. With this strong argument, Leo Kempe has developed a very ambitious and sophisticated Bachelor thesis topic that lies at the crossroad of Urban Geography and American Studies.

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gerhard
Supervisor and First Reader

Abstract

Black lives are connected to geography and politics, particularly in the United States, its cities and neighborhoods. Often initiated by Whites, detrimental practices of racialization, alienation and opportunity deprivation can be observed on various scales. Importantly, these realities are connected to human rights and thus a fundament for democracy. This thesis uses a triangulation of the three variables Black lives, geography and democracy to answer the question of how the first two influence democratic stability in the United States. In the context of the Black Lives Matter Movement, it focuses on racism, police violence and accessibility problems for Black people, taking the cities of Minneapolis, Minnesota and Washington, D.C. as illustrations. These proved to be relevant because of the murder of George Floyd and the anti-discrimination White House protests, respectively. Theoretical orientations from Black Geographies and social justice activism facilitated assessing the two cities' contribution to democracy, and it is concluded that through relational analysis we can better understand the significance of the three interdependent variables for the country.

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List of Abbreviations

(Information: Only those used more than once are included).

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AJPH	American Journal of Public Health
AP	Associated Press
BLM	Black Lives Matter
BOP	Body/Bodies Out of Place
BWC	Body-Worn Camera
CRM	Civil Rights Movement
DC	District of Columbia
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
EIS	Early Intervention System
HBC	Historically Black Church
HCME	Hennepin County Medical Examiner
HCSP	Healthy Corner Store Program
LEO	Law Enforcement Officer/Official
MHD	Minneapolis Health Department
MPD	Minneapolis Police Department
MSP	Minnesota State Patrol
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NHS	School of Nursing and Health Studies (Georgetown University)
NYU	New York University
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
UMN	University of Minnesota
US	United States
WMPD	Washington Metropolitan Police Department

1 Introduction: Topic and Methodology

> "[B]lack lives are necessarily geographic, but also struggle with discourses that erase and despatialize their sense of place" (McKittrick 2006, cited in Hawthorne 2019, p. 1).

This quote by Katherine McKittrick (2006) highlights the importance of considering geographical aspects in thoughts of and opinions on Black people in regions and cities. This holds particularly for the United States. In the second part of her quote, McKittrick (2006) admits a reality: Black people must also counteract, and engage in, conversations about topics that geographically speaking have a negative impact on their lives, often initiated by Whites. She implicitly refers to issues that deprive Blacks of their historical, emotional, and locational connectedness to cities and neighborhoods. Empirically observable examples are processes of racialization, blatant racism, and exclusion, as well as gentrification efforts.

Thus, McKittrick (2006) further says, it is imperative to "take the language and the physicality of geography seriously, that is as an 'imbrication of material and metaphorical space', so that Black lives and Black histories can be conceptualized and talked about in new ways" (McKittrick 2006, cited in Combs 2018, p. 41). She argues that it is impossible to view space as "simply metaphorical, cognitive, or imaginary, as this risks undermining those underlying experiences that are…critical of *real* spatial inequalities" (McKittrick 2006, cited in Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, emphasis mine).

Hence, only looking at thoughts, perceptions, principles, or discourse is not enough. Instead, it must be considered how and where Black peo-

ple live, and under what conditions. In other words, there must be a certain materiality to the academic process (see Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1012). Humans and living conditions are connected to spatial spheres, especially in the case of Blacks, so problems become visible in space (see Bathelt & Glückler 2018, p. 43). Douglas Allen and his colleagues Mary Lawhon and Joseph Pierce (2018/2019) argue that "relational place-making" (Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1012) is a strategy to provide a platform for this nuanced way of analysis. It emphasizes the inherent hybridity, plurality, and commonality of places: They are defined through what different people, situations, and emotions make of them. This brings about a common sense of belonging.

The described inclusive academic discipline is called Black Geographies. As sub-discipline, it explicitly serves to understand societal dynamics and processes shaping Blacks' behaviors, needs, worries, and hopes, or as stated in the article *Placing race*, "black spatial experiences and visions" (Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1002). Camilla Hawthorne asserts that "[t]he complex spatialities of Black life, oppression, resistance, and radical imagination" (Hawthorne 2019, p. 2) are fairly new to Geography.

However, incorporating African Americans and other Blacks into geographic research is an "ontological subject of study and an epistemological way of interpreting and interacting with the world" (Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1002). It encourages perspectives transcending boundaries to combat inequalities of social, systemic, and political nature – such as inaccessibility and limited representation. Thus, it focuses on "affirmative black identities and affirmative black geographies" (Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1004). Nevertheless, Black Geographies is not operationally separated from the white, more Western counterpart. They are rather in a vice-versa relationship to grasp the views, motivations, and practices of Whites and Blacks. Understanding both parts facilitates knowledge acquisition regarding submissive dynamics and the influence of counterreactions on the conception and making of space (see Hawthorne 2019, p. 4).

Moreover, it must be acknowledged that Black Geographies do not simply look at or describe Black people according to phenotype or other characteristics. Nor, Hawthorne (2019) says, should the discipline be a tool to designate a particular space as "Black space" (Hawthorne 2019,

p. 8) without notable exterior connections. Its inclusion into academia must be viewed as a comprehensive explanation of "subjects, voices, and experiences" (Hawthorne 2019, p. 8), not as a mere diversification of institutionalized academic teaching and discourse (see Hawthorne 2019, p. 9). For these reasons, the conceptions of the discipline proved helpful in writing this thesis.

Reading McKittrick's (2006) initial quote with this theoretical background, a dualistic observation can be detected. The first part is rather general, whereas the second part describes special dynamics linked to inequality, injustice, and hostility. Thus, her opinion as well as the description of the sub-discipline of Black Geographies naturally involve the dimension of human rights and democracy, a fundamental concept of socio-political analysis.

Simultaneously considering the three variables Black lives, geography, and democracy might appear as new at first. However, a closer look at the individual variables provides a better understanding of the reasons for their inextricable linkage. Practices routinely cutting off Black people from interactive patterns, isolating them politically, and making life especially in cities difficult have been around for decades. Further, the current situation of Blacks in the United States and its development have brought severe disparities and irregularities to the surface, perhaps more clearly than before. Therefore, the title of the thesis contains a pun of the word 'cities' and the 'atrocities' committed against Blacks. Writing the 'cities' part in capital letters should both allude to the disgraceful practices as well as to urban areas. The mentioned elements decisively threaten the democratic quality and stability of the United States. The activists of the *Black Lives Matter Movement* have thus gained substantial support and significance in the overall political and societal discourse. This is because they succeeded in incorporating the three variables into a broader agenda.

Arguably, many scholars and specialists in the academic fields of Black and African American Studies, Politics, and Geography seem to be focused on clear-cut, yet rather limited conceptions of their individual research realms. They indeed construct fruitful equations and relations of elements, but their analyses are often confined to stay within a single topical thread, without much visible transcendence or interdependence.

Nevertheless, there were several scholarly and other expert works that have proven helpful in both establishing an argument and writing the thesis, since they mention crucial aspects for further elaboration. It was necessary to find a combination between texts published in books or academic journals and texts written by scholars but published in magazines. Concerning the characteristics of *Black Lives Matter*, Juliet Hooker's (2016) *Black Lives Matter and the Paradoxes of U.S. Black Politics: From Democratic Sacrifice to Democratic Repair* was crucial, as were Charles P. Linscott's (2017) *Introduction: #BlackLivesMatter and the Mediatic Lives of a Movement*, and Alondra Nelson's (2016) *The Longue Durée of Black Lives Matter* (see also e. g., Rickford 2016; Hogan 2019). Moreover, articles in popular American newspapers such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times,* as well as published reports from news channels proved enriching. This was because they employ a socio-political and citizen-based rather than a pure academic lens – a dimension that should, of course, not be underestimated.

This thesis paper will discuss the question of how two distinct cities in the United States – Washington, D.C. and Minneapolis, Minnesota – can actively contribute to improving American democracy amid all hardships Black people face there; how Blacks can counteract detrimental practices, and what relevance the three variables have for the troubled United States. It will first introduce *Black Lives Matter* (BLM), people joining to achieve the end of anti-Black brutality and the subsequent rise of a strong, equal America without Black suffering and the "story of black inferiority" (Lawrence III. 2015, p. 392). Congruently, it will present the idea of a social movement and its characteristics (Domaradzka 2018; Miller & Nicholls 2013; Nicholls 2008). Thus, it wishes to make the point that BLM is an indispensable factor in today's American social dynamics. Moreover, it will explain those topics making America a place of sheer hopelessness for Blacks, which are racism, police violence, and inaccessibility in various instances (e. g., Combs 2018; Dunham & Petersen 2017, Smith 2017). This provides a general understanding of the difficulties many African Americans and other Black Americans face. These three elements will be outlined by considering the omnipresent geographical implications. In the next step, the thesis will look more closely

at the two example cities to demonstrate those realities and local counteraction strategies, meaning a link to BLM and social justice activism (e. g., Helmuth 2019; Summers 2019). A last key component, then, is to describe the chances that BLM and their geographically motivated efforts offer the American democratic enterprise (e. g., Ransby 2017). The thesis will mention the possibilities the country has for repairing damage done by racism and marginalization of African Americans, and finally summarize the core findings in a conclusion, which also gives a short outlook.

The thesis aims to argue that the three elements BLM – and Black lives in general – geography, and democracy are everything but mutually exclusive, as they have been intertwined for a long time. This is especially true when looking at cities such as Washington and Minneapolis. Therefore, they need to be integrated into what will be called a concise relational triangle of socio-geo-political analysis. The triangular model should ascribe equal relevance to all components, subsequently facilitating a correct assessment of the influential and exemplary role of these two cities for the American democracy.

2 #BLM: A Movement Conquers the Web and the Country

Black Lives Matter, or in short BLM, was founded by activists Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Cullors – its "Holy Trinity" (Williams 2015, p. 510) – in 2013/14 as a reaction to the high number of deaths of Black people at the hands of police in the US (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 342). It is, by its own description, a "decentralized network, enhanced by social media, with no formal or designated hierarchy, elected leaders or prescribed structure" (Howard 2016, p. 101). The second-last characteristic echoes both an observation by Barbara Ransby (2017) and statements by Ella Baker, member of the famous activist organizations or events *Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (SCLC), *Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee* (SNCC), and *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (NAACP). Ransby notes that the movement does not have a leader like the CRM of the 1960s, but Baker holds that if people show strength and determination themselves, strong leadership might not be quite as necessary (Ransby 2017).

Different academic works dealing with BLM mention the names of those Black people who have died in the founding year and the following ones, such as *Black Lives Matter and the Paradoxes of U.S. Black Politics*, written by Juliet Hooker (Hooker 2016). When listing several names, she asserts that the US are unfortunately no way near a "discernible end of the tragic parade of the unarmed black dead" (Hooker 2016, p. 449). Russell Rickford explains how BLM has emerged: as a hashtag, #BLM respectively #blm, on the social network and messenger platform Twitter (Rickford 2016, p. 35), but also on Facebook (for person, see The Department of

History n. d.). Garza had written an emotionally charged, appealing letter, posted by Cullors with '#BlackLivesMatter' (Hogan 2019, pp. 130, 131). Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson has emphasized the defining impact of this letter on the Black community and its identity (Hogan 2019, p. 131; All American Entertainment Speakers Bureau n. d.).

The concrete case leading to the movement's founding was the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in the town of Sanford, Florida on February 26, 2012 (Munro 2015) by George Zimmerman, a "self-appointed neighborhood watch 'leader'" (Salter & Adams 2019, p. 299) with mixed heritage of Peru and Germany (Munro 2015). He had a biased view of Martin, assuming he would be about to commit a serious crime. This preconception led him to call law enforcement. Despite the assigned dispatcher clearly telling him not to pursue the teenager on foot, Zimmerman did – allegedly to verify his location (Munro 2015; Salter & Adams 2019, p. 299). This was followed by a violent confrontation in which Martin was killed by Zimmerman's gun. When officers got to the scene, Zimmerman described the boy as his aggressor, even if he only held "a bag of skittles and a can of iced tea" (Salter & Adams 2019, p. 299) in his hand. Wesley Hogan says this very situation reveals a reality: It is that "if you happen to be Black, the most basic of activities can get you killed in today's America" (Hogan 2019, p. 125; for person, see Center for Documentary Studies n. d.).

The confrontation was a moment in which Zimmerman used his gun to defend himself. Defense by force is legal in Florida according to a law referenced in the debate: the 'Stand Your Ground Law', solidified in a Statute. However, the law only becomes valid "when and to the extent that the person reasonably believes that such conduct is necessary to defend himself or herself or another against the other's imminent use of unlawful force" (Sidley Dolman Gipe n. d.; Online Sunshine 2021). Moreover, the deadly force that occurred here is only legal when wishing "to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony" (Sidley Dolman Gipe n. d.; Online Sunshine 2021). Both cases clearly do not seem to apply here, as Martin did not threaten force. Some people might claim that the so-called "castle doctrine" – the defense against outside

threat from inside a home – can now be applied anywhere via the Statute, which is technically true. However, the rights under the law were not put into effect in Zimmerman's case, because he did not wish to participate in a hearing before the actual trial (Munro 2015; Sidley Dolman Gipe n. d.). Ultimately, no proof was presented that showed other facts or realities, and Zimmerman was released. After initial charges, search for further evidence, and a long trial, Zimmerman was proven not guilty by the jury (Munro 2015; Rickford 2016, p. 35; Hogan 2019, pp. 125, 126).

People who support the BLM Movement wish to underline a variety of issues. They seek to bring systemic racism, police brutality – in Rickford's (2016) words "state violence" (Rickford 2016, p. 36) – and the general situation of African Americans and other Black Americans onto the public and political stages. More strategically, they strive to resolve the urban-periphery, rich-poor, equal-unequal, and several other societal cleavages (derived from the cleavage theory by Lipset & Rokkan 1967). A prominent topic inside these broader ones is the American prison system and the disproportionate share of African American inmates. BLM supporters believe that each Black life matters, regardless of the existence of any prior criminal history, or even conviction evidence (Hooker 2016, p. 465). In other words, the movement aims at "reshap[ing] the dialogue about race, class, and the criminal justice system" (Franklin 2016, p. 10).

The paragraph's last sentence underlines that adherents believe in the social concept of intersectionality, meaning that they are willing to include people of all genders, backgrounds, sexual orientations, or religions (Kramer, Remster & Charles 2017, p. 23; Hogan 2019, p. 133; see also Linscott 2017). With this approach, BLM could "redraw geographic, demographic, and conceptual lines of anti-racism advocacy" (Smith 2020). Intersectionality, then, automatically accounts for diversity (see Rickford 2016, p. 35). Among supporters, one finds not only students, but also "fast food workers, civil rights organizations, religious groups, celebrity recording artists and athletes" (Lawrence III. 2015, p. 386; see Burch et al. 2020). The most prominent example of this latter group is Colin Kaepernick, a Black American Football player who knelt first in 2016 during the US National Anthem to protest the brutal killings of Blacks in the US by police (Jenkins 2020). His repeated posture sparked, or rather

re-energized, what is worldwide known as the 'Take a Knee Movement' (see BBC 2020). People have recognized, BLM founder Opal Tometi says, that "it's happening to black women and black men" (Teuscher 2015) in many different daily life situations. She and her fellow founders Alicia Garza and Patrisse Cullors "can't imagine that we live in a day and age where our progressive community isn't taking on these issues of racial justice" (Teuscher 2015).

To show this progressivism, and to voice their anger and discontent, people engage in country-wide protests. These should make others, thus Whites, recognize and stop the "dehumanization of black life" (Hooker 2016, p. 463). More specific is the observation by Charles R. Lawrence III. (2015) in *The Fire This Time: Abolitionist Pedagogy and the Law*. He writes they employ their chants, signs, and specially designed clothing to express "their hurt, rage, sorrow, deep sense of loss, and shared injury" (Lawrence III. 2015, p. 386). These feelings underline the emotional appeal included in the actions. Further, the protests are an obvious manifestation of what Rickford (2016) terms "creative disturbance" (Rickford 2016, p. 36): Everything BLM organizes has the intention to disrupt daily life to a certain degree to gain attention, such as the so-called die-ins, where people lay on the street without bodily movement. Those actions, much like protests, do "dramatize the killings of Blacks by law enforcement officials" (Franklin 2016, p. 10), used in a metaphorical way to illustrate the pervasive brutality. Hence, it is about sending a common message to institutions, to politics, and ultimately to society about how they wish to be treated. In Civil Rights Era 1960 parlance, which still can be adequately used today, the hashtag and the protests are part of "consciousness raising" (Hogan 2019, p. 132). Importantly, when the title of Beer's (2018) article asks: 'Do Black lives increasingly matter?' he says that "the greatest outrage and protest mobilization" (Beer 2018, p. 90) were caused by incidents in which Black citizens who did *not* carry arms were killed by law enforcement, as seen with Trayvon Martin. Therefore, supporters speak of police brutality.

Hooker (2016) mentions that subsequent "racialized politics of solidarity" (Hooker 2016, p. 449) bring about opinion differences, as will be shown further in this thesis. She says some dismiss protest as vio-

lence-driven riots, whereas the protesters themselves speak of uprisings. These views continuously clash, because the opponents are appalled by the violence, by burning and stealing things, while many participants claim violence happens out of enormous desperation (Hooker 2016, p. 449). What thus becomes evident is, on many Whites' part, a criminalization of protesters based on race and skin color (see Hooker 2016, p. 463). However, these were by far not the only critiques, as Hooker (2016) states. On page 456 of her work, she demonstrates some aspects in opposition to BLM. These are an unpromised pledge to non-violence, showing (quite ironically) a degree of disrespect to Black identity characteristics, not having a clearly organized structure or leadership, and not bringing forward in policy terms what they would like to achieve. Especially the first aspect convinced many Whites that racial injustice condemned by BLM was virtually non-existent, and thus the protests were not an issue to take too seriously (Hooker 2016, p. 456).

From these explanations, important contextual and analytically fruitful information can be extracted: The mechanisms BLM concentrates on were summarized by Charles 'Chip' P. Linscott in 2017 (see McClure School n. d.). In his *Introduction: #BlackLivesMatter and the Mediatic Lives of a Movement*, he writes that BLM's characteristics are "purposely disruptive protests, peaceful civil disobedience, mainstream political activism, and mass demonstrations" (Linscott 2017, p. 76).

Additionally, it can be recognized that BLM from the start has three important functions: ''an affirmation, a declaration, and an exclamation" (Nelson 2016, p. 1734). This important categorization was used by Alondra Nelson (2016) in her article *The Longue Durée of Black Lives Matter*, published in the American Journal of Public Health, or AJPH (see Nelson n. d.; SSRC n. d.). Even if she did not explain her differentiation in the AJPH article, it is useful to think about the elements: The slogan *Black Lives Matter* is an affirmation as it emphasizes the importance of Black people in today's American society, a declaration because it is a statement or an exigency, and an exclamation because people use it as a chant during protests. As a repetitively used slogan, it is "an act of self-affirmation" (Wayne 2014, p. 126) and a "political demand" (Wayne 2014, p. 126) at the same time, comparable to the historical 'Black Power!' by the Black Pan-

ther Party. Furthermore, the described characteristics and motivations of BLM offer the possibility for two important considerations.

First, BLM has a clearly discernible geographic dimension, and second, it can be regarded as a social movement. The geographic nature of BLM is manifested through its very emergence on social media. An important work here is the article *Social Movements in Urban Society: The City as A Space of Politicization* by Byron Miller and Walter Nicholls (2013). As it explains, social media is sometimes termed one of a few "geographically extensive networks" (Miller & Nicholls 2013, p. 464). Self-proclaimed *Affrilachian* (Black Appalachian) Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson sees social media as *the* defining factor besides protests: She says social media "gives us a space to tell our truths in our own voices. It gives us a space to actually practice what it is to center the most marginalized voices" (Woodard Henderson 2018, cited in Hogan 2019, p. 144; further, Hogan 2019, p. 131; All American Entertainment Speakers Bureau n. d.). Nevertheless, digital organizing, Henderson (2018) warns, should not be a complete substitution for real-life organizing (see Hogan 2019, p. 144). Further, geography can be found in the way BLM conducts its actions. Protests are dispersed all over the country, they do not only take place in metropolitan areas (see Hogan 2019, p. 131). People, like alluded to earlier, disrupt daily practices by occupying or blocking streets and facilities, denying the movement in space to others – cars, public transport, and pedestrians. All actions, but especially the protests, are "powerful collective spatial expressions" (Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1004). Additionally, Alicia Garza asserts that what BLM did after emergence was to "[open] up space for new organizing" (Hogan 2019, p. 134), making possible new solutions and new approaches. Furthermore, different realities in different parts of the US, as well as demographic diversity, have over time constructed a "world with multiple senses of place and multiple geographies within the same space" (Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019, p. 1003). This is especially true if we look at African Americans and their relations with Whites and other races. Those people feel differently about certain places, but in one space – such as a city – there can be more than one trend of socio-geographical imagination and identification. However, there is another important aspect.

BLM is often seen as a social movement. In the article *The Urban Question Revisited: The Importance of Cities for Social Movements*, Walter J. Nicholls (2008) defines social movements as follows: They are characterized by actions of many people coming together to counteract and change current politics "through non-traditional means" (Nicholls 2008, p. 841). In this sense, BLM is a social movement as it seeks to impact national socio-political decisions and behaviors through protest. Thereby, it hopes to reach a change in power relations and variables connected to it, such as the economy, politics, and – indeed – geography. Further, there is another important factor for movement formation: a significant impact of psychological elements, as the quote by Linscott (2017) about issues such as "shared injury" indicated earlier.

A concept explained in *The Urban Question Revisited* is "'soft' infrastructure such as trust, norms, symbols, identities and emotions" (Nicholls 2008, p. 844). Besides those, Nicholls (2008) speaks of so-called "relational qualities" (Nicholls 2008, p. 845), which are essentially the same as soft infrastructure, but complemented by "interpretive frameworks" (Nicholls 2008, pp. 845, 846). For BLM's adherents, these patterns are crucially important. It could be termed the 'psychologization' of geo-political, societal processes and dynamics. Black people in the US were triggered – though not only – by the brutal killings of Trayvon Martin and countless others. They responded with those substantial protests already described, based on shared tragedy and together with people they can trust. They extended their reach and drew national support, particularly in urban spaces (for explanations, see Nicholls 2008, p. 846).

BLM matches alternative explanations of the term social movement, too. The one by Turner and Killian (1987) is adequate, albeit a bit too generalistic. It contends that a social movement is "a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or group of which it is a part" (Turner & Killian 1987, cited in Scotch 1989, p. 381). BLM is a collectivity or collective with continuity as it has been around since 2014; it wishes to promote a change in American society because the negative aspects of Black life should be eradicated. A more nuanced, detailed definition is provided by the website 'Guide 2 Social Work': Movements are a "voluntary association of people engaged in concerted

efforts to change, attitudes [sic!], behavior and social relationships in a larger society" (Guide 2 Social Work n. d.). People join in demonstrations and other actions to attempt cognitive reorientations and systemic reconfigurations. This helps fighting the cleavages and negative social development tendencies apparent in today's American society. As will be outlined further, principles of economic development, resource distribution, and particularly Whiteness and resulting injustice are important. These have proven defining instigators of social movements in history as well as today.

If people's lives – in this case Blacks' – are dominated by unease, insecurity, frustration, or disappointment, they are likely to join in movements. The short article of the network cited in the previous paragraph lists several types of movements: According to this list, BLM would most certainly classify as a reform movement. It strives to change some individual conditions in society and does not aim at toppling and replacing the entire social order (Guide 2 Social Work n. d.).

3 Spaces of Injustice, Discrimination, Disparity: Marginalization of Blacks in the United States

In American cities as well as rural areas, Black people suffer from significant difficulties in their daily lives. The three most prominent topics that receive national and even international news coverage are (systemic) racism, police violence, and inaccessibility in a varied set of areas. The following subchapters will introduce these three aspects and provide an understanding of their significance. An introduction can facilitate comprehending more points throughout this thesis, including socio-political counterinitiatives and the relationship to the urban context in Washington and Minneapolis.

3.1 Racism: A Haunting Social, Political, Geographic Reality

Racism as "the expression of individual negative attitudes, beliefs, and acts against minorities" (Okazaki 2009, p. 103) is a complex, extraordinarily prevalent aspect with which Blacks are confronted regularly in the US. It can transcend many boundaries of public life and arises in several types that all have their respective implications and dire consequences. Therefore, the following sub- and main chapters integrate the topic as basis, while presenting different central realities and explanations.

Broadly, racism can be classified in three categories, developed by English philosopher Antony Flew and outlined in Anthony Skillen's (1993) *Flew's Three Concepts of Racism*: unjustified discrimination, heretical belief, and institutionalized racism. In the first case, the basis for the argu-

ment is race, and people are discriminated against or in favor of others. The social or cultural situation and status is unimportant, simply phenotypical characteristics, the physical appearance, are determinant (Skillen 1993, p. 73). As Skillen (1993) warns, this conception is highly problematic and does neither fit societal nor scientific perceptions about the notion of race (Skillen 1993, pp. 75, 76).

The second case focuses on emphasizing differences believed to exist among races, based on people's lives and actions (Skillen 1993, p. 73). As the label 'heretical' indicates, the conceptions are passed on from generation to generation. Flew mentions sensory and behavioral characteristics, or in other words psychological instead of phenotypical ones, as determinant. Interestingly, Flew says that if this concept is not used to disguise an actively visible practice – which is case one – then condemning those people is wrong. This is of course a problematic view when cultural modifications and today's different belief systems are considered. Flew tries to repudiate the argument when he says people adhering to his second concept are receptive regarding criticism and correction. However, the text by Skillen (1993) states that morality would not be an issue (Skillen 1993, p. 73).

The third and final concept is, just like concept one, the one BLM and others try to attack: Racist institutions (Skillen 1993, p. 74). Institutional members themselves claim the motivation for the effect of exclusion and the denial of certain advantages to racial groups, despite not spoken about explicitly. The affected individuals could be at a lower societal position, which leads them to say that institutions are to blame because of racist behavior. Flew, however, argues that institutions cannot be morally blamed here as they do not have intentions. Of course, this is far from true as institutions have agendas and goals which members formulate to advance their work, and something can happen to the detriment of a particular race in the process. Skillen (1993) himself utters this criticism, saying that "[I]f it is the case that individuals, not institutions, have intentions or goals, we need to say that institutions operate through individuals, that our intentions are structured by institutions" (Skillen 1993, p. 80). Thus, to avoid contentiousness and confusion, the text states that Flew has said this *a priori* – a judgment *a priori* is possible without

experience. Those people wanting to do away with institutionalized racism, Flew holds, reach back to discrimination starting at the other end, which of course would be redrawing to Flew's concept one. Importantly, Skillen (1993) says, 'institutionalized racism' is not "a function" (Skillen 1993, p. 74) of the practice of 'unjustified discrimination', but 'heretical belief' is termed "a legitimating smokescreen" (Skillen 1993, p. 74) for this. The Swann Committee Report cited here corroborates this assumption: It states that "routine practices, customs, and procedures" (Swann Committee 1985, cited in Skillen 1993, p. 79) not considering Blacks or other minorities are reiterated through "relations and structures of power" (Swann Committee 1985, cited in Skillen 1993, p. 79). Further, they are claimed as right because of "centuries-old beliefs and attitudes" (Swann Committee 1985, cited in Skillen 1993, p. 79). Here, the relational dimension of racism is underlined.

For Flew, however, it is central to stress that striving towards equality is critically different from treating a racial minority group in a preferable manner. Certainly, some people who criticize BLM might think members aim at "discriminating in [favor] of a racially defined subset out of the total set of all those worse off than the majority" (Skillen 1993, p. 74). They might see this movement as trying to put Blacks at a higher position than for instance Latinos. However, there are two reasons to question this: First, the notion of race is knowingly broad, and many can identify as Black, while also 'being part' of another race. Thus, the critique is not applicable, as members of other groups, including Whites, are not excluded from the movement. Second, the movement emphasizes equality of opportunity in different areas, which is by no means an intention of 'Black superiority,' but simply a message that Black lives and livelihoods are important to consider in society and politics.

As becomes clear, like several others Flew sees racism connected to certain beliefs and ideology, and beliefs can often not be freed from racist content (see Skillen 1993, pp. 75, 79). Racism modifies constantly and goes hand in hand with societal and personal changes, induced by beliefs. Thus, external influence on individuals through their surroundings plays a substantial role (see Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, p. 167). While Flew leaves out these contexts in the 'unjustified discrimination'

concept, Skillen (1993) thinks racism is decisively influenced by culture and an individual's cognitive assessment of social situations, processes, and developments. Therefore, racism quite often becomes "an object of individual moral condemnation" (Skillen 1993, pp. 75, 80). However, Skillen (1993) says racism should be made visible and understood on a more substantial scale than mere individual people. What can thus be seen in the BLM Movement is that many people wish to counteract several kinds of racism or address several instances in which racist behavior can be detected. Naturally, Flew observes, people who position themselves against racism struggle with the very concept of race. It calls for fundamental differentiation, the belief known as *othering* and the *us versus them* mentality (see Skillen 1993, p. 78). These conceptions regard people of another race, particularly Blacks, as different in many aspects. This includes that a dominant racial group feels eligible to have better opportunities (see Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, pp. 164, 166).

Blumer (1958) explains this by naming the term prejudice. He departs from the rather traditional psychological approach – feelings and opinions – to define it differently. He says it has arisen within society and serves as explanation for these different positions of different groups. A dominant group, Whites, finds definitions for the group below them, which are Blacks in this case. In so doing, Whites can claim what their "group position and group identity" (Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, p. 166) is. They do that by adhering to two orientation pillars, as Ross L. Matsueda and Kevin Drakulich (2009) explain: "domination-subordination and inclusion-exlusion" (Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, p. 166). As an illustration, they elaborate Blumer's (1958) recognition of different feelings, which can be summarized as follows: alienation of others, superiority, claim of better position, and fear of challenge (Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, p. 166). Thus, Whites construct a binary respectively bipolar and especially hierarchized narrative of society (see Skillen 1993, p. 78). As a reaction, Flew says, people rather forget about the concept of race and try to eradicate it from people's minds. In some ways, however, it is necessary to think about this, and what a racial identity encompasses, to have a better understanding (see Skillen 1993, p. 76). Skillen (1993) believes that racial identity can be a reason why racism itself is perceived as ideological.

Racism is thus a deep-rooted concept characterized by definition-fluidity and transcendence: People think and speak incongruently about how to approach the issue, and racism itself can cross formally clear-cut separational lines between different areas. Whenever in this case anti-Black racism is challenged, it is at first quite difficult to generate White solidarity in the US. Either there is a fundamental resentment by many Whites, or they doubt whether race plays a role in the country at all. They continuously practice scape-goating – finding a guilty Black person for any situation – in order not to fear their societal position. Moreover, many Whites express more solidarity when Blacks have not done anything wrong, making assessment and focus substantially more difficult because of this special condition (see Hooker 2016, pp. 460, 461).

Besides outlining this argument, Hooker (2016) further has the intention to politicize the issue of racism, and to connect it to the American democracy, explaining why the subchapter's title involves politics. Incorporating opinions of other scholars like Melvin Rogers, she explains why racism is present and visible despite democratic political organization. Rogers (2014) says the motivations for the protests in Ferguson (Missouri), as well as other cities like the two examples, are twofold: First, it is about "[political] reciprocity" (Rogers 2014, cited in Hooker 2016, p. 449). This means the inclusion of Black people into both the political framework and process, a guarantee of representation. The second aspect is the "disposability of Black lives" (Rogers 2014, cited in Hooker 2016, p. 449). Put differently, Blacks today cannot – because of those obstacles in their way – participate fully in the American democratic enterprise anymore (Hooker 2016, p. 449). Other American citizens and most prominently institutions try to invoke negativity and hostility toward Blacks on a regular basis. This is an inhibiting force that many Blacks cannot overcome easily (Hooker 2016, p. 449).

The author holds that people not supporting BLM's protests for more equality are allegedly not a reason for Americans to talk about a democratic crisis in the country. She links this to two important questions: one is whether people wish to pursue the endeavor of inclusion. The other is whether one should look at historical happenings and see "loss as a form of democratic exemplarity" (Hooker 2016, p. 450), while the loss-

es are not fixable because of shifted political beliefs and frameworks in our days. Consequently, she wonders whether "undue democratic sacrifice" (Hooker 2016, p. 450) – because of Blacks' limited possibilities – is an overall example for democracy.

However, she doubts that all these aspects hold true, explaining why these assumptions prove to be problematic. First, there is a historically motivated reductionism to them: Black people in the US have long been politically active and rich in thought, not just during the historical era of the CRM. Second, "white moral psychology" (Hooker 2016, pp. 450, 458) is interpreted in a wrong way: Simply consenting loss to more dominant fractions of society, in this case Whites, would not cause any difference. It would not have an impact on the social situation, much less though on "ethical orientations" (Hooker 2016, p. 450) of Whites. People supporting this claim, Hooker (2016) states, hold that if political activists set an example, the "dominant racial group" (Hooker 2016, p. 458) will switch to more positive conceptions, will even feel ashamed (see Hooker 2016, p. 460). Blacks peacefully accepting violence could ostensibly cause at least some Whites to think about this violence, and perhaps to reject or disapprove both that and racial injustice as a whole reality (Hooker 2016, p. 458). Hooker (2016), however, does not support this perception.

Third, and most evidently seen in the case of the BLM Movement, if Blacks are not using violence to make their voices heard, it is by no means accepting the situation or a mere act of victimization. This position, Hooker (2016) says, fails to acknowledge the definition of themselves as "engaging in acts of defiance" (Hooker 2016, p. 450, see also p. 456). Thus, she asks what could be expected of Black people as the (American) democratic system cannot properly counteract all racially motivated forms of injustice. A possible solution for her is a redefinition of some theoretical elements in politics, because the current thinking does not "accept black anger as a legitimate response to racial terror and violence" (Hooker 2016, p. 451). This is important as it is precisely the anger that is seen in violent altercations during protests in several American cities. However, it is interesting to consider the opinion of Steven Johnston here: Johnston (2014) says that indeed, those altercations can be "democratically contributive…Citizens who have no official outlet for redress of grievances need

to be self-reliant" (Johnston 2014, cited in Hooker 2016, p. 454; Hooker 2016 p. 464; for person, Department of Political Science n. d.). Congruently, Hooker (2016) writes about Brandon Terry's observation that thinking about disagreements and radical tendencies in civil and social justice movements is important but lacking. This is because of a certain public opinion: By assuming non-violence would increase socio-political efficacy, and make the path for inclusion, more harsh types of resistant activism – i. e., violence – would not be deemed acceptable and useful. It would simply not be regarded as an effective approach (Hooker 2016, pp. 457, 458).

Danielle Allen explicitly challenges Hooker's (2016) opinion about distributional irregularities in experiencing loss of Blacks and Whites. She thinks democracies – because of different views and aspirations – have by necessity those who gain and those who lose something when decisions are made. (for person, see Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics n. d.). Thus, these citizens are automatically challenged to make a sacrifice (Hooker 2016, p. 453). Further, they are motivated to strive for sovereignty, but the reality is often different. Additionally, even democratic theory says some people rightfully lose as debating an issue is about individual preferences, capacities, and capabilities (Hooker 2016, p. 451).

Importantly, the theory holds that everyone can profit from decisions or not, and in advance there are no inherently organized considerations – only the outcome can be a different and perhaps undesirable one. Further, Hooker (2016) agrees with Allen in an important point: Both women state that those who lose and *acknowledge* to be losers of a decision or an endeavor, and therefore make their sacrifice, are important for a democracy and its institutions to survive, to continue in the future (Hooker 2016, pp. 451, 452, 453). To be clear, Allen admits the component of sacrifice has of course not affected everyone equally in the past (Hooker 2016, p. 453). Likewise, she says racial divides into sovereigns and the disadvantaged prove fertile soil for further decreasing credibility (Hooker 2019, p. 454). Thus, for Allen, legitimate sacrifice is linked to absence of coercion, distributional alternation (i. e., no group can be continuously expected to make the sacrifice), and honor by those who benefit (see Hooker 2016, p. 454).

Taking a positive note, Hooker (2016) says it is "seductive" (Hooker 2016, p. 454) to think about African American socio-political activism as "as heroic form of democratic sacrifice" (Hooker 2016, p. 454). This is because it is – at least *mostly* – non-violent and "within the parameters of the rule of law and the norms of liberal politics" (Hooker 2016, p. 454). In one aspect, however, Hooker (2016) contradicts Allen's point of connecting non-violent acknowledgment and being an exemplary democratic citizen. She says Allen does not consider who is to what extent affected by loss, which is often caused by racist beliefs and attitudes. Blacks in the US are disproportionately affected by that loss since it is as fluid as racism itself, and able to surface on different levels (see Hooker 2016, p. 453). This becomes evident when looking at political representation. Therefore, she insists that Allen cannot, on an ethical or moral basis, take African Americans and other People of Color as a primary example to explain her theoretical approach of "democratic loss" (Hooker 2016, p. 451, see also p. 455).

Another important point included by Hooker (2016) about racist influence in the political realm is raised by Joel Olson (see Joel Olson Archive 2019): He states that White people's political imagination was crucially influenced by history and their own societal perceptions. As they were mostly both the beneficiaries and winners in the American democracy – while maintaining a privileged position – they have set up a particular thought about some variables of democracy. The definition of being a citizen, citizenship, is reduced to a mere status and not regarded as one of many vital elements of democracy. Freedom, a democratic virtue as well as human right, is increasingly understood in negative terms, and equality even receives an opportunistic note (Hooker 2016, p. 455). What is important to see here is that Whites' political imagination was not influenced by loss, but by a space of liberty. Thus, they should recognize, Hooker (2016) says, that they as a person or their position and status were rarely influenced. However, precisely this circumstance leads to White fear, and sacrifice will not be properly respected (see Hooker 2016, p. 455).

Being democratic citizens thus expects something of Blacks and other minorities. They should strive to make "the political community more just and free" (Hooker 2016, p. 454) as well as "do the work of demo-

cratic repair" by continuing to act non-violently "on behalf of the polity" (Hooker 2016, p. 456). Hence, everything not connected to "submission, respectability, and non-violence" (Hooker 2016, p. 464) is not regarded as a correct argument. To adopt this submissive position, however, might have consequences for what they themselves would like to achieve for their community (see Hooker 2016, p. 454). Analytically approaching this from the other end, which Hooker (2016) does not consider, would have implications on freedom of expression, as they are constrained by white imagination. Thus, it would be a danger for the American democracy.

In these quotes and explanations, a social and a political dimension of racism can evidently be noted. However, even more importantly, racism has a third sphere of influence that has become relevant in writing this thesis: geography, and especially urban areas. Geography might not, in contrast to society and politics, be the first area to think about when considering racism. However, it is one that needs to be looked at. There are two defining concepts which are useful to explain here, while 4. talks about those a in contextual manner. The first is Bodies Out of Place (BOP), the second is racialized spaces.

BOP connects material, social, and verbal levels for a clear analytical framework, or an explanation for racist practices and ideology (see Combs 2018, pp. 42, 43). This is interesting when looking at the situation of Blacks in the US: Many Whites believe racism is not an omnipresent phenomenon, rather occurs away from the spotlight of societal discourse in isolated fashion (Combs 2018, p. 42). They do not see the perceived multifaceted inequ(al)ity and injustice as a problem, but as a situation to be maintained, as it benefits them. They indeed claim it is favorable for society. A problem though is that even when Blacks are physically integrated, or in proximity to other races in a city or neighborhood, it does not mean they are socially integrated (Combs 2018, p. 42). However, it can also happen that the physical integration does not unfold, that Blacks are portrayed as "placeless" (Hawthorne 2019, p. 5). This could be termed one module of exclusionary geographies. To better understand the concept of BOP, Barbara Harris Combs (2018) divided it into five different named typologies, providing the linkage between geography, society, black lives, and racism.

The first is 'Massah Has Spoken.' Whites are allegedly morally superior, can thus decide "what is right, reasonable, and or necessary [sic!]" (Combs 2018, p. 45). This grants them the power to give orders and thus expectedly force a certain BOP into full compliance, while disrespect or non-adherence will accordingly be sanctioned (Combs 2018, p. 45). Verbalized orders disconnect a body from the place it tries to enter, resulting in its physical re-installation in a "position of subjugation" (Combs 2018, p. 45).

The second typology is the 'Historical Fear Response': It is an emotionally motivated justification of violence against Black people, or the mere announcement of it, by the state. Whites fear that Blacks might challenge resources and positions that once only they had, which automatically includes neighborhoods – geographical spaces. Thus, the adjective is not there to imply that this fear has stopped, quite the contrary. A quote by writer Nanette D. Massey shows a clear correlation between the three characteristics of skin color, preconception, and emotion, being applicable to this very day: "It is impossible to be unarmed when our blackness is the weapon they fear" (Combs 2018, p. 45). Corey Robin (2004) recognizes that the feeling of fear has always been there in (white) American society. It becomes problematic though as it enters the political, and more specifically the policy realm: It can "create an overturn laws [sic!]" (Combs 2018, p. 46) Thinking about the statement, those potentially overturned could be the very laws of which Blacks and other ethnic minorities are and were beneficiaries, those which paved the way toward equality. However, as Meacham (2018, p. 47) observes: "The forces of fear had [for some time] kept equality at bay" (Meacham 2018, cited in Combs 2018, p. 46; brackets in original). Equality is a defining factor of democracy. Thus, fear – an emotion and a powerful psychological trigger for (in) action – could have a serious impact on maintaining democratic quality.

A third typology discussed in more detail in 3.2. is the 'Presumed Criminal' (Combs 2018, p. 46). It is emphasized that Black people are assumed to be guilty of something until there appears contradictory evidence making them innocent. The perception can not only be seen in interactions between people of two different races, but especially in interactions between African Americans and American law enforcement.

While these variants present the more socio-political side of the concept, the fourth typology – 'You Don't Belong Here!' – is the geographical or rather spatial side of it (Combs 2018, p. 46): Where do people belong when and with whom? These are (often White) preconceptions that cannot be silenced since they change over time (Combs 2018, p. 46). Under this frame, one can find something often termed racial slurs – words and phrases usually involving graphic and disgraceful language toward Blacks (Combs 2018, p. 46). However, there are manifold ways of intimidating and excluding Black people in urban areas: They encompass, for instance, gentrification (i. e., developmental practices to the detriment of Blacks and their livelihoods) or evictions (i. e., that a renter is thrown out of his or her home). These racism-induced threats can seriously affect the psyche of a person, or the general state of life and the societal positioning (see Combs 2018, pp. 39, 46). To the extreme, there is the possibility of death in racially charged, violent altercations (Combs 2018, p. 46). Obvious examples are the countless shootings of many unarmed Black American citizens, which happened while they were moving through an urban, hence geographical, space. Thus, it can be noted that this category employs both space and place as two fundamental variables (Combs 2018, p. 46; Hooker 2016).

The fifth typology claims 'It's All White Space!' This frame is clearly indicative of White supremacist thinking, as they claim that every space, regardless of what nature, is freely available to Whites (see Combs 2018, p. 47). It can be space in the common geographical sense, but it can extend to spaces of religion, culture, and the personal environment. What can be said about this is Whites expose Blacks to a "systemic displacement and dispossession from the spaces of everyday life" (Miller & Nicholls 2013, p. 454). Sometimes, they even commit an infringement on Blacks' private spaces because they deem it necessary (Combs 2018, p. 47) – a phenomenon commonly referred to as "space-claiming" (Helmuth 2019, p. 747). As Combs (2018) accordingly notes, referencing Sullivan (2006, p. 10), there is a spatial expansionism performed by Whites, a notion that sounds all too familiar from historical accounts (Combs 2018, p. 47)

What becomes apparent is that racism rests on a dualism of the socio-political landscape and geography. This forms the two respective

oppositional pairs already explained by Matsueda and Drakulich (2009), and to a less concrete extent by Hawthorne (2019) and in Skillen's (1993) article *Flew's Three Concepts*. The first is societal and embedded in a hierarchized notion of it: domination versus subordination. The second then – where geography comes in – is partly societal and partly related to space and place: inclusion versus exclusion. It is societal as it refers to groups of people. More importantly, it relates to both space and place as it alludes to BOP (i. e., sense of belonging) and the right to be in certain spaces which is denied by the dominant group (see Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, p. 166; Combs 2018, p. 45).

Another approach in the literature about racism is called "racialized spaces" (Summers 2019, p. 151). Racialization means "the process by which meaning and value are ascribed to socially determined racial categories, and each racial category occupies a different position in the social hierarchy" (García & Sharif 2015, p. e28). Geographically then, this relates to the melting of societal beliefs and practices into how people operate in and move through a geographical space. Drawing on Parks (2016, p. 292), this approach "links the discourses of race and mobility" (Parks 2016, cited in Combs 2018, p. 40). The fact that "the dynamics of politics and power" (Parks 2016, cited in Combs 2018, p. 40) are involved in this correlation could be and is a real threat to achieving racial justice. Like any manifestation of *in*justice, then, it also threatens democracy. Because what comes with it, Combs (2018) emphasizes, are "containment and subordination" (Combs 2018, p. 41). As already alluded, these two are intimidation strategies used against minorities like Blacks. They should never be part of the identity of a country that calls itself a democracy, like the US do.

What could be seen is that racism is a topic of many levels not easy to grasp, since it is comprised of this substantial set of variables. However, to include space and place in the discussion is certainly useful because these are prominent spheres of influence. Space, Lipsitz (2011) argues, is both a mirror of and a machine for racism. Thus, it not only makes racism visible, but it also acts as a producing tool for it (see Hawthorne 2019, p. 5). Further, Combs (2018) explains the role of place with observations of Natalie Byfield (2014), while not using her exact words. Combs (2018) writes that "state and local jurisdictions (including police) and media play

a key role in the construction and maintenance of racial group categories and separateness through mechanisms that employ place as a proxy for race and belonging" (Combs 2018, p. 48). In other words, the three components of space, place, and race are inseparable. As following sub- and main chapters will show, racism has penetrated many areas in the US, extending to its cities where it continues to be a haunting reality on a full scale of sections.

3.2 Police Violence in the US: Law Enforcement Immoralities

For a long time, the US have been marked by a tense relationship between African Americans and law enforcement. Hooker (2016) mentions important points the BLM Movement wishes to address, which are "racial terror, state depredation of poor black communities, mass incarceration, racial profiling, excessive use of force by the police, disparities in sentencing, and lack of accountability of law enforcement" (Hooker 2016, p. 462).

Many African Americans and other Black people in the US perceive to be treated "more harshly than whites" (Weitzer 2000, p. 129) by law enforcement officers (LEOs) on a regular basis. Therefore, already back in 1995, nine out of ten Blacks have agreed that police should not incorporate racial(ized) considerations into their practices, and the federal government should intervene against inequality (Weitzer 2000, p. 129). In other words, it should be a guarantor of democracy. In the following two decades, however, many Blacks have even been killed by police. As mentioned earlier, these "acts of blatant, unwarranted brutality" (Johnson & Russell 2019, p. 34) were the main reason why the BLM Movement emerged, and subsequently spread throughout the US (see Burch et al. 2020). Policing, supporters as well as the mentioned authors argue, must be viewed both in societal and historical contexts (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 341).

Jerome Skolnick (2007) explains that based on historical evidence, police activity in the US could be regarded as "racialized social control" (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 341; further p. 347): It serves to keep Blacks in a certain space and/or position. Officers developed "consider-

able" (Skolnick 2007, cited in Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 341) prejudice that could even evolve to be more severe over time. This resulted in the substantial deterioration of the relationship between various police departments and the Black communities they served. The opinions and pictures both LEOs and Blacks have of each other is an additional thing, Ronald Weitzer (2000) says: They each bring a package of certain things they associate with one another: Police looks suspiciously at Blacks, and they in turn expect to be treated in an unfair way. Thus, they avoid showing obedience and respect, which provokes reactionary behavior by officers (Weitzer 2000, p. 138). Moreover, the appearance of police is an issue: The sincere posture, the "often brusque and authoritarian" (Weitzer 2000, p. 138) disposition, and actions are immediately connected to racial discrimination of someone of color (Weitzer 2000, p. 138). The same goes for the heavily equipped and showy patrol cars as well as the gun, two important elements Weitzer (2000) does not mention here. This dynamic of fear and racialization is one that continues through the 1980s and 1990s right into our days.

A study about police killings in 2015 by Nix and colleagues (2017) examines different factors in policing and different jurisdictions (Dunham & Petersen 2017). Looking at confrontations, it shows African Americans (along with Latinos) are those more affected by deadly force compared to their white counterparts. This holds even *after* looking at ostensibly mitigating factors of policing, something depending on the respective situation. Activists, politicians, and scholars have therefore called to create an easily accessible database, giving an overview about how many members of racial minorities were killed. *The Washington Post* has established the 'Fatal Force' database, compiling evidence collected by journalists and societal observants, as well as several other physical and digital data sources. This should provide information on police use of deadly force (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 342). There is a certain bias, however, since only fatal shootings and shootings with more and likewise more detailed news coverage appear. The important situational circumstances leading to the shootings were often only described by the news. Further, governmentally provided data are sometimes incomplete and less detailed. Thus, critics could say this might pose serious reliability issues (see Dun-

ham & Petersen 2017, p. 342). This critical position about the sources and the limited scope is also shared by the authors, Roger G. Dunham and Nick Petersen (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 348).

More useful would be a national database, they argue, since police violence is perceived to be a national problem in the US (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 343). They outline it should include information about the officer and the suspect, like demographics and job information in case of the former. Further, it should be noted where a particular altercation happens, that is in which city, county, state, or legal and administrative sphere. Thus, it can be noted that geography plays an important role for analyzing police violence, and for combatting it. A third characteristic that is most important to consider is what happens in the given situation, meaning what the suspect/s or officer/s does/do. When anything before and during the situation should be included, it is logical to also present what the outcome is. Based on this 'idol,' subsequent data collections should make visible every situation in which a LEO uses a weapon against a citizen (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 343).

Obviously, pure numbers and statistics do not change real-life conditions. They are observations of a situation, but the incentives for improvement must be provided otherwise. Wheller, Quinton, Fildes, and Mills (2013), as well as other authors, suggest what can be called a 'professionalization of the profession': By including the topics of shootings and aggression into policy and bureaucracy within police departments, several practices can be reassessed (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 343, further p. 348). This helps to change police-community relations for the better. It does so by promoting reliability, confidence, and institutional fairness and legitimacy (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 343; further Bathelt & Glückler 2018, p. 47). The latter two are obviously key characteristics of democratic and institutional stability. Derived from the text's thoughts, police departments could think about special trainings and especially rhetorical seminars teaching officers how to adequately behave, and converse, in a tense situation. An important strategy mentioned by Dunham and Petersen (2017) is inspired by Alison V. Hall, Erika V. Hall, and Jamie L. Perry (2016). The strategy they mention is about three types: "perspective taking, stereotype replacement, and stereotype countering" (Dun-

ham & Petersen 2017, p. 344, further p. 346). This would be particularly effective considering the widely present opinion of Blacks as "presumed criminals," mentioned before. Often, LEOs conflate the mere physical appearance of Black people and the notion of threat, Oona Hathaway and Daniel Markovits recognize (Hathaway & Markovits 2020). In other words, they criminalize the very citizens they are inclined to 'protect and serve,' as the prominent slogan on their patrol cars goes (although sometimes in local variants). The strategies to counteract such awful preconceptions have been employed in some departments, and already proven effective (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344). Violent behavior of any kind is strongly linked to psychological motivations and imaginations, which is why these three types are undoubtedly important (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344).

Further, there are more technically oriented approaches. One is a so-called Early Intervention System (EIS), to locate officers within a certain department who are most likely to cause a suspect's harm or even death by force. People should ask which practices could be useful to find these officers and agree on a selective basis, thus a set of criteria (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344). When those responsible are found, it would be ideal to provide professional psychological aid, to raise awareness through more intense and detailed training, and to look at and analyze finished interventions (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344). Additionally, a department's supervisor can engage in talks to find out about behavioral patterns, practices, or problems. Samuel Walker (2015) is convinced that a combination of this EIS strategy with other deeper systemic modifications can be beneficial (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344, further p. 348).

The other possibility are body-worn cameras (BWCs), or colloquially known as body cams. A debate about them has already been around for many years in the US. Proponents say they are effective in preventing unwanted, negative, and violent interactions between the police and citizens (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 345). Although BWCs have overtime been implemented in some American and worldwide police departments, obstacles remain. They range from costs over technological-processual knowledge to a specific training to administrative and legal capacities for

ruling out usage violations. The most pressing issue in the latter case of capacities is by far individual data protection and privacy (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 345). A report by the NAACP lists some recommendations on how to balance the elements law enforcement video-taping and civil rights and liberties on page 36. This includes proposals for specifying operationalization, usage, and video material availability (see Johnson & Russell 2019, p. 36). Since these recommendations prove extensive, they cannot be a topic of this thesis in detail.

Besides these possible technical and organizational solutions, a social approach could be especially promising: A diversification of the entire body of law enforcement agencies. Not only does this create trust, but it opens possible areas of department-internal conversation and strategic exchange. An important observation by Joscha Legewie and Jeffrey Fagan (2016) needs to be considered: Once a police department has been filled with more officers of ethnic minorities, a shooting with an officer that turns fatal is less likely (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344, further p. 347). This holds especially if the diversification takes the example of the area or community they are assigned to, in terms of which minorities are represented. Nick A. Theobald and Donald P. Haider-Markel (2009) mention another important point, connected to racial composition: When minority citizens are served by minority police officers, they have a common "sense of values and experiences" (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344). In other words, there is a culture-induced empathy. What it means is that cultural benchmarks each group knows create a vice-versa understanding and make help in difficult situations easier. With this kind of empathy, there is a more visible physical and psychological proximity of officers and communities (e. g., see Schuck 2014, referenced in Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344). Linked to earlier aspects, this would reduce the intense fear present among Black residents and would draw the two parties closer together. Therefore, this approach is widely known as "community-policing" (Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344).

Thinking more about the cultural empathy strategy, Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp (2006) observe a promising point: that it could also be used in cross-racial interactions. They say White officers need to be more in contact with people belonging to minorities (Dunham &

Petersen 2017, p. 344). When they exchange values, experiences, fears and other emotions and contents, the risk for painting stereotypical pictures is lower. That is perhaps a more significant reason why it would be beneficial for overall interactions between the community and police (see Dunham & Petersen 2017, p. 344, further p. 347).

Hence, police violence and deteriorated police-community relations apparently rely substantially on racist paradigms and imaginations. The overall criminal justice system is an influential institution in the US to sanction grave transgressional acts. It is comprised of the several municipal, city, state, and tribal police departments, community patrols, sheriff's offices, courts, and departments of corrections. To avoid negative influence on society, and to provide democratic legitimacy and stability should be their most honorary tasks – tasks they frequently do not live up to. If police tactics and approaches are considered closely, then, it can be noted that many of them are regarded as "almost exclusively American brands" (Hogan 2019, p. 123): They are used for marketing purposes of the film industry, while not routinely part of daily life "in democracies outside US borders" (Hogan 2019, p. 123). Whereas this is certainly true, Hogan's (2019) point that out of officers in other countries, "[m]any are unarmed on patrol" (Hogan 2019, p. 123) is not, particularly in one example: German Federal and State Police are most often equipped with small handguns while out in their cruisers checking city streets, train stations or other relevant locations.

In America, through the criminal justice system, those who negate advancements in social justice can rise to a powerful position within national politics (see Williamson, Trump & Einstein 2018, p. 401). One could call it a criminalization of democracy. This is even to be understood literally when closely considering the article by Vanessa Williamson, Kris-Stella Trump – who is not related to the former President – and Katherine Levine Einstein (2018). Thus, if the institution itself depicts the very brutality and immorality it wishes to counteract, it is a serious threat not only to Blacks but to the American democracy.

3.3 Accessibility Problems: Health, Food, Housing

Besides racism and police violence, Black people in the US struggle with another substantial problem that affects and, indeed, threatens their livelihoods: accessibility. Three elements, power relations and the processes of vital resource distribution and allocation, systematically neglect them. This is visible for healthcare, housing, and even food. Instead, the three mentioned dynamics often favor those in a different societal position. Mostly, these people are white. Thus, it is at first glance not only a problem on a social, but also on a political level: The denial of basic human rights and most importantly dignity of life to minorities and People of Color (PoC) bluntly disregards the characteristics of a healthy democracy.

Taking a closer look at the issue of accessibility quickly highlights the additional dominant variable beyond black lives and politics: geography. Thus, the triangular model specified in the introduction becomes applicable. Questions about getting from A to B are always connected to distance and mobility, two of many geographical determinants. Thus, American scholars and city politicians must interpret the problem in spatial contexts to find adequate, reliable information and plan accordingly. However, what often happens with African Americans is that they live rather disconnected from alleged possibilities, and certainly from providers.

The first issue where this becomes apparent is healthcare. Effective and reliable treatment is difficult to get for Black people in America as they often lack financial capacity or legal advice to be protected against inequality. This inequality arises from the "societal epidemic" (García & Sharif 2015, p. e28) of racism. It is one that spreads through telecommunications and social media, thus through a digital space (compare 2.). The "self-perpetuating, reinforcing systems" (n. a., The Lancet 2020, p. 1813) produced by social transmission have fundamentally impacted the psychological state and overall health of Blacks. Consequently, disruptions in corporeal systems occur, resulting in partly severe sickness or diseases (see García & Sharif 2015; Combs 2018, p. 39). People from the outside can more readily take an exclusionist stance against minorities and

hamper participation in social endeavors and accessibility to basic services (see Allen, Lawhon & Pierce 2018/2019).

Unfortunately, as seen in the previous paragraph, those strong racist systems have also reached the healthcare sector, posing severe obstacles to Blacks and other minorities. For instance, as *The Lancet* (2020) Editorial article *Medicine and medical science: Black lives must matter more* shows, there is a substantial racial gap in sick and dead people when comparing Blacks and Whites (see n. a., The Lancet 2020, p. 1813). Analyzing a list of common death causes in the US, the article shows that African Americans from the ages of 18 to 34 even die more often than their white counterparts, considering the first eight of the causes. They involve nervous system and cerebrovascular diseases, as well as issues like homicide.

Providing equal services and achieving overall equity in this social area is important, and not a new demand among African Americans. Back in 1970, the Black Panther Party has already brought it up, and so-called People's Free Medical Clinics (PFMCs) were established (Nelson 2016, p. 1735). To guarantee this provision, Jennifer Jee-Lyn García and Mienah Zulfacar Sharif (2015) hold in their *Commentary on Racism and Public Health*, is about the "responsibility to directly confront, analyze, and dismantle racism" (García & Sharif 2015, p. e28). To understand racism as a "powerful, structural force that restricts the attainment of optimal health for all" (García & Sharif 2015, p. e28) is crucial to meet the challenges. This is particularly true as many (fatal) diseases disproportionately affect Black people (García & Sharif 2015, p. e28). If inequalities, injustices, and disparities caused by racism can be properly addressed, the achievements will be more significant. Thus, García and Sharif (2015) say people in the public health sector, no matter in which position, should recognize the presence and importance of the whole topic (García & Sharif 2015, p. e28).

Certainly, *The Lancet* Editorial article warns, it is not enough if intra-sectoral institutions like the American Medical and the American Public Health Associations (AMA; APHA) voice opposition against this situation. They must do something to eliminate it, for instance with the initiative 'White Coats for Black Lives': American medical students formed this organization to not only introduce Blacks to the profession, but to

recognize, uncover, and prevent racism in the sector. Moreover, journals like the famous Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) should continue to provide scientific insight, a set of beliefs, and core values to develop an anti-racism strategy (see n. a., The Lancet 2020, p. 1813). This is indispensable, and as health care is an issue of "justice and rights" (n. a., The Lancet 2020, p. 1813), highlighting the democratic responsibility is important to the branch. To say it with Alondra Nelson's (2016) phrase, the "democratization of medical practice and knowledge" (Nelson 2016, p. 1736) must be brought forward. As evidently demonstrated in the last paragraph of the article, *The Lancet* actively and eagerly supports this mission (n. a., The Lancet 2020, p. 1813).

The second area in which accessibility becomes important is nutrition. Many African Americans, especially in cities, do not have adequate access to food providing the necessary substances for a healthy lifestyle. This is particularly because many of them live in poverty. They are then often dependent on small stores only selling a limited number of foodstuffs, which are in many cases heavily processed, so-called convenience stores (see 4.). Thus, people must consume food that in the long run could be disease-inducing, reconnecting to the first aspect of accessibility – health.

The reasons for low food accessibility can be found, as outlined, in the geographical components distance and mobility. Blacks often cannot get to grocery stores with a more varied selection, and many do not own a car because they cannot afford to buy one (see Smith 2017). Often, they live spatially disconnected from urban centers or from accumulated service-providing facilities, and transportation in many urban areas cannot meet the demands. A good description of these characteristics is the one by Armstrong et al. (2009, p. 7), referenced by Nunzia Borrelli (2018). She writes that the "primary determinants" (Borrelli 2018, p. 110) for food accessibility are "geographic distance, transportation choices, and variations of urban form such as terrain and the quality of transportation infrastructure" (Borrelli 2018, p. 110). Although her article is about Portland, Oregon, this also applies to countless other American cities. The chapter about Washington and Minneapolis will more adequately demonstrate the topic, as here the situation is the same for Black residents in their neighborhoods. To address the problem of food *in*accessibility, urban plan-

ners and politicians must review scientific evidence to imagine, inform and plan according to (Black) people's needs. Useful pieces of evidence would certainly include Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory, hard and soft location factors as well as transport and transaction cost theories (see Bathelt & Glückler 2018, pp. 127-129, p. 171, pp. 224-230).

The last important sphere is housing, also a topic among many appearing in BLM's exigencies. In substantial parts of the country, African Americans and other minorities face problems getting a decent place to live. As the chapter about the two cities will clarify, there is widespread discrimination in this sector, based on race. This also explains the "spatial mismatch" (Stoll 1999, p. 78) that exists when looking at where jobs are available and where Black people live, showing a severe incongruence (Stoll 1999). This also manifests, Stoll (1999) shows, when looking at Washington DC and neighboring counties. More importantly, this discrimination has historic roots, as unfair housing practices were around for many years before any legislation could outlaw them. And still today, despite legal efforts, realities such as residential segregation in neighborhoods are still prominent in American cities. Society has to this day not succeeded in completely abolishing these practices, which is a severe social and political problem. Often, financial, and overall economic interests lead to the racialization of the housing market and deprive Black residents of the possibility of living in dignity. This is especially relevant because a disproportionate number do not own their homes but are temporary renters (e.g., see Ingraham 2020).

Housing is, as much as the other areas, a fundamental human right enshrined in the state and federal levels of constitutional and other types of special law. Thus, these elements are manifestations of a substantial impact on democratic quality and stability. The pervasive logic of racism and separation is still enormously persistent, and some people seek to challenge the benevolence of equal opportunity. They try to undermine efforts of for instance BLM to detect vulnerable sectors, dynamics, and processes, consequently threatening the American democracy to an extent that is truly worrying.

At the end of describing these sensitive elements, a question remains: Why is the explanation so detailed, difficult, and important at the same

time? It is difficult because the presented elements all come with their own level of complexity, making the explanation especially detailed. It is not merely additional information in a process that can be forgotten right after acquiring it. Instead, the subchapters about racism, police violence, and accessibility problems illustrate fundamental components for an understanding of social, political, and geographic realities of Black American citizens. Once a general, national understanding is established, their explanatory power can be accordingly projected onto a smaller space: cities like Washington and Minneapolis.

4 Washington and Minneapolis: Spatial Catalysts for Active Resistance

Washington, DC and Minneapolis have gained infamous attention because of the "concrete challenges" (Domaradzka 2018, p. 609) described until this chapter. However, in the last few months, it was precisely those two cities to which the world's focus shifted because of widely reported happenings linked to this thesis paper's topics. Both cases not only lay bare the persistence of racism and violence, but more so how vulnerable and sensitive the American democracy has become over time. Earlier in history, Americans were rather convinced racism and racial violence were an issue prevalent in the Southern part of the nation, or in specific areas. The two cities and suburbs, however, show that it extended to be "an American problem" (Combs 2018, p. 49), and is by no means confined to the Southern states.

4.1 The Case of George Floyd

First, it was Minneapolis in Minnesota's Hennepin County where another case of deadly police force has unfolded. More exactly, it was the South Minneapolis Powderhorn Park neighborhood, at the corner of East 38th Street and Chicago Avenue (Milner 2020; Appendix, Image 5): George Floyd, an unemployed African American man native of Houston, Texas's Third Ward, died after a Minneapolis Police officer pressed a knee on his neck for nearly nine minutes (see Richmond 2020). In his hometown, forty-six-year-old Floyd had lost his restaurant job and has come to Minneapolis with friend Christopher Harris back in 2014 (Richmond 2020).

On this day of tragedy for the city and the country, Floyd had used an allegedly counterfeit twenty-dollar-bill to pay for a pack of cigarettes, which is why the employee called law enforcement. Floyd, as *The New York Times* later explains, did not get in the patrol car because he was afraid of tight places (Hill et al. 2020). That was when Derek Chauvin put his knee down to cut off the man's adequate blood and oxygen flows, all the while Floyd cried out 'I can't breathe!' and even 'Mama!' multiple times. The action resulted in him dying of "asphyxiation from sustained pressure" (Vera 2020). At least, the country and the world learn, this is what the autopsy presented by the Floyd family says.

According to Hennepin County Chief Medical Examiner (HCME) Andrew M. Baker, however, the story is different – albeit not at first glance. Mister Floyd "became unresponsive while being restrained by law enforcement officers" (Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office 2020, p. 1), suffering several "cutaneous blunt force injuries" (Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office 2020, p. 1) of both face and extremities. Further, Floyd allegedly suffered from previous artery problems, hypertension, and heart disease. The cause of death, the HCME determined, was "cardiopulmonary arrest complicating law enforcement subdual, restraint, and neck compression" (Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office 2020, p. 1) – in other words, his heart and lungs ceased working properly. Moreover, as an *ABC News* article about HCME's report explains, Floyd tested positive for the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV RNA) – but remained without symptoms – and had taken in substances, more exactly fentanyl and methamphetamines, among others (Haworth, Torres & Pereira 2020; Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office 2020, p. 3). All of these are aspects not found in the other autopsy, which caused confusion and more reason for questioning the case (see also Navratil & Walsh 2020).

Officer Derek Chauvin and fellow officers Tou Thao, Thomas K. Lane and J. Alexander Kueng were dismissed from the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). Then, a criminal complaint was filed against Chauvin by the District Court of the Fourth Judicial District, as CNN writes (see Ries 2020). The officers were all charged, Chauvin first with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter, later the first was reassessed to

be second-degree murder (see Campbell, Sidner & Levenson 2020). Many said the action by Chauvin was so brutal only first-degree murder and thus a long prison sentence would be justifiable. However, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison explains,

> "[a]ccording to Minnesota law, you have to have premeditation and deliberation to charge first-degree murder. Second-degree murder, you have to intend for death to be the result. For second-degree felony murder, you have to intend the felony and then death be the result – without necessarily having it be the intent" (Chappell 2020).

The others were accused of aiding and abetting the felony (see Andone et al. 2020).

4.2 Effects on Black Social Activism in the City

Connected to the protests following what was widely perceived as an atrocious action, the BLM chapter in Minnesota became decisively active, and rose in local and national significance. Interestingly, their commitment was fueled by many Minneapolis-based activists, one reason why the city was chosen as an example. Floyd was killed in a neighborhood of whose residents many are members of the city's Somali community. Hence, it is full of "Somali businesses, stores, restaurants and all of that" (Farooq 2020), as resident Anisa Mohamad says. Young Somalis, having a historic tradition of vigorous anti-racism fight, engaged in BLM protests. This was because they share the phenotypical characteristic of skin color, activist Asma Jama asserts (Farooq 2020). Further, Miski Noor of the city's Muslim African Immigrant Community says:

> "Our city has served as one of the major battlegrounds for the sanctity of Black life over the last four years…Like other cities in the US, poor and young Black women and femme activists in Minneapolis have created space over the years for people to take action, organize their

> communities and change the material conditions of Black folks. Their work has created a national platform for Minneapolis…" (Smith 2020).

Thus, one could think of the concept of "social capital" which "describes the potential of chances and opportunities that an actor or an organization can realize through relations to others" (Bathelt & Glückler 2018, transl., p. 62).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, from this day forward people engaged in substantial city- and country-wide protests, many of them turning violent in Minneapolis. Thus, the *New York Times* accordingly described the reaction as "one of the most explosive trials of American racism in modern times" (Burch et al. 2020). The Third Precinct Station of the Minneapolis Police Department had to be evacuated, while out on the streets some people set fires and began looting stores. A prompt reaction by now former President Donald Trump on the social media platform Twitter generated outrage, as he insisted that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts" (Sullivan & Forliti 2020) and called protesters "thugs" (Sullivan & Forliti 2020). This aggressive, incendiary rhetoric is an evident threat to democratic quality and stability in the US. Trump also complained that no one in the city had the situation under control, and that he would bring back normalcy again. Minneapolis's Mayor Jacob Frey has clearly emphasized that both the National Guard and Minnesota State Patrol (MSP) were on scene to take responsibility (Sullivan & Forliti 2020). However, the MSP also proceeded to arrest a widely known CNN Reporter – Omar Jimenez. This sparked outrage and an eventual apology by Minnesota Governor Tim Walz (Sullivan & Forliti 2020; see also Cherney 2020).

4.3 Black Exigencies: The Relation to Minneapolis Law Enforcement

Minneapolis residents did not trust this entire situation, and certainly not law enforcement actions and management. They continued to be furious because the case of George Floyd once again showed police violence is among the most pressing issues in the city. Many repetitively called out

to 'Defund the Police!' while for some, defunding is only the beginning of matters (see Andrew 2020). People aim to negate the *Pentagon 1033* program transferring surplus weapons and other equipment usually used on battlegrounds in warzones to civilian police departments (Hathaway & Markovits 2020). This makes the geographical connection apparent again, as both distributing and allocating resources is an economic process influenced by geographical variables.

The Pentagon program was authorized by the US Congress in 1990/91 under the *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA), a reason for the numbers in the name. In June 2020, about 8,200 agencies from different jurisdictions in mainland US and overseas territories were enlisted, according to the *Defense Logistics Agency*, or DLA (Defense Logistics Agency n. d.). The details on the DLA website make quite clear why some people oppose the program: There is the impression that its mission to only let agencies "acquire property for bona fide law enforcement purposes" (Defense Logistics Agency n. d.) is not fulfilled. Thus, the Minneapolis initiative MPD150, for instance, would like to completely abolish the department. They say that "reimagining what public safety looks like" (Andrew 2020) should have a high priority in local and national policymaking. Nevertheless, although one might do so, Hathaway and Markovits (2020) assert it is important not to categorically negate it as inappropriate or straightforward dumb. Instead, they encourage deeper insight: The slogan calls for some distributional modifications regarding financial resources, away from police departments and to "government or nonprofit community-based programs" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020). The programs can then account for a better social climate as they provide a range of services. Patrisse Cullors, one of BLM's founders, confirms this position, holding that "it's not just about taking away money from the police, it's about reinvesting those dollars into black communities. Communities that have been deeply divested from" (Andrew 2020).

The wish of the city's Black residents has become political shortly after the first demands. As of June 2020, Minneapolis has planned to cut $200 million from an annually available city budget of 1.3 billion US dollars (Searcey 2020). Later, Ward five Councilmember Jeremiah Ellison tweeted: "We are going to dismantle the Minneapolis Police Department. And

when we're done, we're not simply gonna glue it back together. We are going to dramatically rethink how we approach public safety and emergency response" (Andone, Maxouris & Campbell 2020). The alternative, the City Council has proposed, is a specialized unit for the public's safety and security (Kelley 2020). Mayor Jacob Frey pleaded for a more limited approach than purely disbanding Minneapolis Police. He said better training would change the situation. Additionally, there are also many officers wearing their uniform or gear and driving their patrol cars who genuinely believe in their responsibility of protection and service to the people (Kelley 2020).

Over the course of the summer and fall of 2020, the rather heated debate about financial resource allocation questions continued to be relevant: On December 7, the City of Minneapolis Budget Committee presented a codified collection of modifications for the Mayor's Recommended 2021 Budget (Budget Committee 2020; Nesterak 2020). The Committee aims at driving down "the expense budget in the Police Department by a total of $5,690,000" (Budget Committee 2020, p. 1), including some special units like the Mounted one. Instead, it wishes to strengthen the public health sector, particularly the Minneapolis Health Department (MHD), and several institutions for mitigation strategies: These are the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), the Office of Performance and Innovation (OPI), and the Regulatory Services Department, or RSD (Budget Committee 2020, p. 1). A definition change proposal brought forward by the Chair failed in the debate (Budget Committee 2020, pp. 2, 3). As subsequent pages until the final page indicate, there was considerable disagreement on further going about the budget reorganization. Also, members were of different opinions on the total number of officers, as many consider leaving the department because of the George Floyd case (Nesterak 2020). However, there was strong motivation that the amount of money should be allocated to building the bridge between the city's law enforcement and the public health sector. For instance, dispatchers should be trained to handle a call involving mental health issues, and professionals should assist 911 operations with the many mental health patients (Budget Committee 2020, p. 1 ff.; Nesterak 2020). Most importantly, members emphasized what is known as the promising "co-respond-

er program": Specially trained mental health experts assist police in calls involving people who are in psychotic, distressed, and/or suicidal conditions – and provide help via discursive tools (Lee 2019). A final City Council vote a few days later was set to divert eight million dollars from the police budget yet provided 11.4 million "in a reserve fund intended for hiring and overtime" (Gross & Eligon 2020).

However, there is a new development in city politics now, surfacing in mid-February of 2021: The City Council, despite emphasizing the financial problems induced by the pandemic (Nesterak 2020), has now consented to making available some 6.4 million dollars for a new hiring process (Lee 2021). As Michael Lee of *The Washington Examiner* outlines, the protests and outrage over George Floyd's death have caused plummeting officer numbers, and some residents fear for their safety amid the increasing Minneapolis crime rate (Lee 2021; Gross & Eligon 2020). New hiring also means new application requirements: Those willing to be an officer are now asked if they have attained "degrees in criminology, social work, psychology, or counseling" (Lee 2021). While the development in Minneapolis remains uncertain at this point, it was another incident, this time in the nation's capital, that sparked a country- and worldwide outcry.

4.4 Washington, D.C. White House Protests and the 'Trump Effect'

As if the George Floyd case was not demanding enough to witness for Americans, a situation unfolded in front of shocked passers-by and people following the news out of Washington. At first, however, it showed no potential of escalation: On June 22, 2020, a substantial number of protesters assembled in front of the White House to send a message to the federal government about the situation and treatment of African Americans in the US. The peaceful event was organized by the BLM Movement and other organizations, and several people wishing to clearly raise their voices joined. However, this very government believed participants were too many who on top openly, actively displayed violent behavior, and that escalation was imminent. Therefore, it brutalized and criminalized the present persons. Former President Donald Trump, hence the subchap-

ter's title, decisively added tinder to the flames of the verbal anger and felt despair when he talked about the handling of protesters. His threat about "ominous weapons" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020) of the military and "vicious dogs" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020) used by Washington Metropolitan Police, US Park Police, and other law enforcement agencies increased the potential for a tense situation. Thus, it was an outward "militari[z]ation of the administration's response to mass protests" (Borger 2020).

While it is imperative to protect the White House, a symbol of American democracy, the federal government sent so many law enforcement agencies that protesters were nothing but intimidated: It was at least six of them, according to *Associated Press* (AP) *News* (Woodward 2020). Officers arrived in their full riot gear comprised of helmets, shields, and guns, as well as several vehicles – ready to impede a potential overrun by protesters. However, the latter simply stood in place, holding up their posters while shouting in the direction of the White House. There was no sign whatsoever they would try to go through or evade the police line. Nevertheless, the American military police force in Washington has apparently planned to employ "some controversial crowd control devices" (Associated Press 2020), according to an article published in *The Guardian*. As it indicates, there was mail communication between the Washington, DC National Guard (NG-DC), the Defense Department, and its military police responsible for the national capital. One of the officers inquired the existence of special devices, such as a "long-range acoustic device used to transmit loud noises or an Active Denial System (ADS)" (Associated Press 2020). Particularly in case of the latter, there is substantial uncertainty about both use and function. The only facts the article presents are that it leads to a "burning sensation" (Associated Press 2020) and was coded as "non-lethal" (Associated Press 2020) in attempting to lower crowd temperament. *National Public Radio* (NPR) as well as *The Washington Post* wrote about a denial statement by National Guard Major Adam DeMarco, the article says.

The use of such a device, the AP article continues, would contribute to "significant escalation of crowd control" (Associated Press 2020). On top of that, there was an order for some unarmed troops – in con-

trast to the city's police. Those troops were indeed sent but did not all transcend the area's boundaries. Through the police using military-style equipment, and the presence of active-duty soldiers, the protest situation became increasingly tense. Hathaway and Markovits (2020) say that this was "deeply undemocratic and corrodes the most basic principles of collective self-government" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020). Hence, the authors imply it should not be regarded as a manifestation of what the US allegedly stand for.

While it was hoped the situation would remain calm, at some point everyone saw on live television that the police line broke apart to charge at the assembled. Officers "clubbed and punched" (Associated Press 2020) not only protesters, but also the mentioned members of the press from different countries. Those people tried to provide adequate information and evidence of what was unfolding, a normal process in a democracy when such things happen. The heated reaction by police led the *Guardian* to call the incident "one of the most controversial confrontations" (Associated Press 2020) at the peak of the anti-black violence protest activities in 2020.

Because this has happened, and because Donald Trump has falsely condemned protesters' behavior, the incident has important implications for American politics. More precisely even, it has implications for democratic quality. The sheer irony that it took place in Washington – the capital and spatial center of political power – then directly in front of a governmental building is nothing but appalling for Americans and, indeed, for the entire world. However, the reason why it happened is yet more confusing: The American President wished to take a photograph in front of the historic St. John's Church located nearby (see Pengelly 2020). This strategic political portrayal and the preceding immense brutalization combined led to the violation of four varieties of a constitutional principle: freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom from bodily harm, and freedom of the press and their unhindered reporting (for the last one, see Hazard Owen 2020). These rights are – and should be – granted to citizens of a democracy, and their absence on this day prompted a lawsuit brought forward by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other groups. Martin Pengelly (2020) mentions *The Washington Lawyers' Com-*

mittee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, the *Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law*, and the law firm of *Arnold & Porter* (Pengelly 2020).

In the following days, the event brought up divided opinions in Washington: Attorney General (AG) William 'Bill' Barr not only defended the taken actions on protection grounds, but denied political let alone democratic significance, while Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said he did not even know what Trump had planned to do (see Pengelly 2020). Therefore, the event triggered further enormous opposition in society, politics, and the military. April Goggans of BLM DC stated that "[w]hat happened to our members Monday evening, here in the nation's capital, was an affront to all our rights" (Pengelly 2020). And further:

> "The death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police officers has reignited the rage, pain and deep sadness our community has suffered for generations. We won't be silenced by teargas and rubber bullets. Now is our time to be heard" (Pengelly 2020).

The legal director for the ACLU of the DC, Scott Michaelman, said that "[t]he president's shameless, unconstitutional, unprovoked and frankly criminal attack on protesters because he disagreed with their views shakes the foundation of our nation's constitutional order" (Pengelly 2020). Or said differently – as Ben Wizner, the director of the ACLU's Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project, specified – the right written down in the first amendment (Pengelly 2020). The former Defense Secretary and Marine Corps General James Mattis implies there is a crisis of leadership and a societal crisis caused by infringement on democratic values and principles (Borger 2020). Voicing his disappointment, he stated:

> "Never did I dream that troops taking that same oath [as him] would be ordered under any circumstance to violate the constitutional rights of their fellow citizens – much less to provide a bizarre photo op for the elected commander-in-chief, with military leadership standing alongside" (Borger 2020, modification brackets mine).

Thus, this militarization is yet another dimension of why this incident is a threat to American democracy, as alluded to earlier. There is an evident connection, as seen by this statement, between the military and characteristics of the American democratic order.

Several utterances by the President and law enforcement also indicate the threat that mis- or disinformation poses to democracy: The administration and its supporters insisted that teargas usage was not apparent. US Park Police, according to the AP, only said a "pepper compound" was used, but no teargas. However, this is precisely what the several Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCs), and science in general, do classify as teargas (Woodward 2020). People indeed showed several indicators "of exposure to tear gas" (Woodward 2020). Hence, information availability, and reliability, are two additional dimensions to look at when analyzing the topic of democracy – also in further research.

5 Why Are the Two Cities Important to Consider in This Context?

These most recent events in the cities of Washington and Minneapolis and their characteristics show the importance of the two cities within the triangle of BLM/black lives, geography, and democracy in the US. Both cases are multidimensional, and much information can be extracted about implications and direct impact on the three variables. However, despite their current relevance, the events are far from the only reason why especially these cities prove helpful for further analysis and demonstration. The aspects mentioned in the preceding chapters are clearly visible in both Washington and Minneapolis. They might not differ from other cities in the US at first sight, but deeper consideration is strongly encouraged.

5.1 Washington, D.C. – Black Lives, Police, and H Street Corner

First, it can be said that Washington in a way has what seems to be a different history of police violence based on race, although it certainly exists. When the city was majority black, Ronald Weitzer (2000) conducted a study showing that the Washington Metropolitan Police Department (WMPD) had the highest percentage of black officers in the US, with 69 % at the time of study. This number was provided by statistics of the Bureau of Justice in the late 1990s (Weitzer 2000, p. 132). It should evoke thoughts of the cultural empathy argument in 3.2. of this thesis. Further, Black chiefs were at the administrative forefront for many years until the study, more exactly since the late 1970s (Weitzer 2000, p. 132): On January 13, 1978,

Chief Burtell Morris Jefferson became the first African American chief of WMPD and one of the founders of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, or NOBLE (Williams & Kellough 2006, pp. 813, 815; see NOBLE online presence). Through his impactful career and leadership, he wanted to connect the police force and society in Washington to "fairness, openness, and equality of opportunity" (Williams & Kellough 2006, p. 813). His "deep resolve, dedication, and sheer determination" (Williams & Kellough 2006, p. 815) granted him two other offices for which he was the first African American, prior to becoming Chief of Police: the chief of detectives of the Criminal Investigation Division in 1974, and the assistant chief of field operations two years later. During that time, Washington, DC was named among the safest big cities in the country (Williams & Kellough 2006, p. 815).

In the period from Jefferson's ascendence to the Weitzer (2000) study, WMPD did not have too many issues with intra-institutional "corruption, racism, or brutality" (Weitzer 2000, p. 133), the author asserts, rather with its formation and training practices. This is shown by several ratings of residents: As shown on page 133, polls in 1993 and 1997 by *The Washington Post* with non-specific questions brought about mostly positive answers. Being asked about honesty and integrity, about half of each race responded with good or even excellent – 53 % of Whites and 45 % of Blacks. Police assigned to their neighborhood were credited with satisfactory work by 81% of white and three quarters of black residents. Additional overwhelming numbers appeared in the ratings of how they did their job in the city: An astounding 67 % of Whites and even 70% of Blacks affirmed with the same attributes as in the previous question (Weitzer 2000, p. 133). However, this should not disguise that police brutality is an issue in Washington and was back in the mid-20th century: Available data from 1966 reveal this historical connection. Many Blacks (54 %), but only 27 % of Whites said that race is the reason for a different treatment. Black respondents also said that there is a high probability for rude rhetoric as well as more search and control practices. The most striking numerical disparity manifested itself regarding police brutality: 45 % of the Blacks stating race as a reason for different interactions with police also thought their race is more likely to encounter police brutality. Only

a mere 15 % of Whites said so back then (Weitzer 2000, p. 133). Moreover, Leen et al. (1998) observe that Washington's number of police shootings turning fatal was highest of other urban spaces in the country at the time (Weitzer 2000, p. 133).

The Weitzer (2000) study reveals the omnipresent Black/White cleavage and explains the relationship of police treatment, skin color, and class level in a certain neighborhood. It lacks geographical accuracy as it uses census tracts approximated to neighborhoods, and precision as actual neighborhood names are not used – a circumstance the author himself has not further specified in the introduction or elsewhere in his work. However, he makes clear that class plays a role in police treatment, and many white Washingtonians continuously describe skin color as going along with criminality: Even if one is Black and from a neighborhood with more well-being, it is not guaranteed one will not also be treated differently by police, as it is all determined by one's race – Black (Weitzer 2000, p. 140). What rather happens is police can probably not connect a luxurious car to Black people, while some jewelry and specific clothes are associated with criminality. This perception clearly poses credibility issues (Weitzer 2000, pp. 139, 140).

Moreover, a substantial number of crime suspects constitutes of Blacks; thus, many Whites claim bad police treatment is undoubtedly explained as skin color for them serves "as a proxy for criminal propensity" (Weitzer 2000, p. 136). The process of "naturalizing discriminatory treatment" (Weitzer 2000, p. 137) by assuming how likely it was that Blacks committed a crime was, still is a strategy of many Whites. They think police would act in a justifiable manner if officers would treat Blacks in a certain way. Police officers seeing a person run away from a place in the city might assume he or she has just committed a crime there (Weitzer 2000, p. 137). Whether this is the case or not is usually prompted by generalization, commonly decided by skin color at first glance. Further, many Whites say it is a natural thing for police to stop a Black citizen who does not look like being from around the area, a BOP – so-called "*rational discrimination*" (Weitzer 2000, p. 137, italics in original). This effect is recognized among African Americans in Washington as well: They say because of things like gang violence and several types of crime, it is

obvious police treats them differently – and indeed worse – than Whites. What worse treatment means is clear, although Weitzer (2000) does not explicitly mention it here: Police do not drive through the neighborhood as much, they arrive late after emergency dial, they treat people unfairly, and/or they verbally and physically harass them (see Weitzer 2000, p. 139). More exactly, officers would regard whatever Black person as a suspect to be held accountable, until accusation is cleared because of contradictory proof (Weitzer 2000, p. 137).

Respondents were clear on police treatment issues in Washington, emphasizing that racially motivated detrimental practices deeply penetrated neighborhoods in the last few years. In one case specified by a resident, police treated two women on the opposite side of the street differently than a Black man living on one side (see Weitzer 2000, p. 141). This happens frequently, causing black Washingtonians' frustration and desperation. Speaking about emotions, they said, is important as psychology plays a substantial role in police-citizens relations in Washington (see Weitzer 2000, p. 139) – something seen in 3.2. in a general context. People's cooperation and respectful behavior is crucial to avoiding conflicts between the two parties. Furthermore, listening to the orders of officers is another factor favorable for de-escalation (see Weitzer 2000, p. 139). Especially after the attack by officers in front of the White House, however, de-escalation seems to be a substantial challenge to Washington's law enforcement and supportive out-of-district agencies.

The other factor that strongly manifests itself in the American capital is disparities in healthcare. A 2016 report about the issue has been put together by Christopher King, Maurice Jackson, and several NHS students (King 2016, introduction/acknowledgments). The report indicates that African Americans in Washington are six times more likely to die because of irregularities for diabetics, and three times more likely to die of prostate cancer (Georgetown University 2016; King 2016). Further, male life expectancy among them is 15 years lower than for Whites, and African American families are three and a half times more likely to live below the poverty line. The greatest disparity prevalence, meaning the most substantial geographic concentration of disparities, can be found in the Southeastern part of the city (Georgetown University 2016; King 2016; Appendix, Images 13, 14).

Besides these basic needs, African Americans in Washington differ substantially in issues concerning later life: higher education, work, and income. In the African American majority Ward seven, the unemployment rate is at a high 19 percent, whereas in Ward three – a majority-White area – this rate is as low as 3.4 percent. This already indicates what the report shows in the beginning, that Washington is "noticeably segregated by ward" (King 2016, p. 5). Blacks in Washington only earned 40,000 dollars as median household income at the time, whereas the value was at 115,000 dollars for Whites. This segregation along ward boundaries could already be observed one year earlier (see Appendix, Image 6). Concerning higher education, then, the report says that less than a quarter of Blacks 25 years or older have a Bachelor's degree (Georgetown University 2016; King 2016). It is maintained, however, that higher education is crucial to "have health insurance coverage, higher paying jobs, and greater freedom to make choices for social advancement and healthy living" (King 2016, p. 9). Obviously, this is a critical indicator for democratic quality in Washington.

King laments that the focus in the past was more on systemic or system-related issues than on society and its multifaceted nature. Much less, however, city officials and organizations have considered the health effects on African Americans. Therefore, he explains, "[w]e need to change the conversation and view policies, practices and resource appropriations across the city through a health equity lens" (Georgetown University 2016). The report King and his associates published goes beyond this, however, but keeps the relation to health. It contains several important policy recommendations such as economic incentives, racial equity analyses, affordable housing provisions, training, and strategies for developing skilled jobs (Georgetown University 2016). These are what could be called intersectional adaptive policies. In other words, social dynamics and the needs of residents must be considered more deeply. To achieve this goal, these policies and connections must be enforced rigorously (see King 2016, p. 1). It is evident that groups occupied with designing the city must be incorporated here, for instance those planning the city's overall appearance or those who specialize in the respective areas.

The report, as indicated, also mentions how to combat other issues: Black people in Washington do not earn much but must pay much at the

same time for their housing, which creates little income or money they can use to make a living. One issue here is that they cannot make sure to consume healthy food, as seen in 3.3. This results in dietary irregularities and can lead to severe nutrition-related diseases. Income is a substantial factor when considering areas labeled 'food deserts,' such as Wards seven and eight (see Appendix, Images 6, 13-15). Those areas are a problem, as food accessibility is strongly impaired or not present at all (King 2016, p. 9). An important analysis by Randy Smith (2017) of the DC Policy Center in mid-March 2017 tries to congregate several factors linked to this problem, found on the Center's website with an interactive map (Smith 2017). He contends that previous studies focused too much on accessibility to specific grocery stores, while excluding supermarkets. This is a spatial explanation, but for Smith, factors such as income and possession of vehicles constitute the more important variables as they address the consumer's side. Money means purchasing power and ability to meet consumption needs, while a car decreases time and effort (see Appendix, Image 14). In the analysis, which quite obviously consists of a conglomerate of geographical determinants, Smith (2017) finds that "about 11 percent of D.C.'s total area" (Smith 2017) could be termed a food desert. Among the areas are "Historic Anacostia, Barry Farms, Mayfair, and Ivy City" (Smith 2017; Appendix, Images 9-12). Thus, many say that policies must be developed that focus on food provision particularly for Black residents, automatically contributing not only to people's well-being, but to improving an undignified situation – another step toward a more democratic and equal Washington.

Further, to return to the affordable housing debate, it surfaces as natural that home ownership means a secure financial situation, the possibility of being wealthier and getting involved in general discourse and neighborhood projects. However, in Washington's Wards seven and eight, not many African Americans own their homes. Thinking about the mentioned elements, they are inextricably linked to a democratic understanding – especially in the American context of the Constitution's 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' The circumstances described in the last paragraph, however, limit these very characteristics of a functioning democracy, most poignantly the possibility of and right to political and societal

participation. To improve the situation for African Americans and, more importantly, to be an example for the American democracy, Washington city officials must draw on King (2016) and put together an "explicit and cross-sectoral agenda" (King 2016, p. 10). By taking various areas and scenarios into account, and by formulating clear goals, they can perform an important task for enhancing the city's and the national democratic quality and stability.

A specific area in which all these realities are easy to observe is the H Street neighborhood, as Brandi Thompson Summers (2019) illustrates in her book *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Chocolate City* (Summers 2019, p. 144; Appendix, Image 8). Given the scope and scale of this thesis, not every topic of this book can be described in its adequate detail. Nevertheless, Summers (2019) provides a useful look into the racial, historical, and political dynamics of this area.

In the 1970s and 1980s, H Street was an area being there for its predominantly Black residents, because the "now demolished H Street Connection strip mall" (Summers 2019, p. 143) still existed. Therefore, Washington's nickname the *Chocolate City* was so popular in these days, "a name conferred by a popular funk song […] and proudly embraced by Washingtonians" (NYU Washington D.C. n. d.). Today, Summers (2019) says, it is mostly considered a post-Chocolate City, where amenities are there. However, these are places that do not or cannot adequately fulfill the duty of caring for citizens (Summers 2019, pp. 143, 144). The H Street Connection mall was pushed away by a PPP-inspired building named *Avec*, a substantial development project benefitting residents and visitors, but not all people (see Summers 2019, p. 147). Thus, the City of Washington largely has incorporated what earlier in this thesis was termed exclusionary geographies into its social situation and appearance. Rashad Shabazz (2015) describes Summers's term *spatialized blackness* as follows: It is about how "mechanisms of constraint [are] built into architecture, urban planning, and systems of control that functioned through policing and the establishment of borders [that] literally and figuratively created a prison-like environment" (Shabazz 2015, cited in Summers 2019, p. 144). Put differently, characteristics of Washington actively confine Blacks to certain areas and thus limit geographic mobility. Shabazz (2015) implies

that particularly strong WMPD presence and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance cameras all over the city are two important pillars of this (see Summers 2019, pp. 154, 155).

This situation is partly the outcome of a demographic and economic dynamic in the H Street neighborhood: While professionals possessing substantial knowledge came into the city, people who have lived in the area for a long time began to leave. Those who came were mostly Whites, those who left mostly Blacks. What happened was that new residents had new needs that planners and others wanted to address. Rather elegant, high-price consumption options opened, while the basic services were on the road to decline. Ironically, those basic services were precisely those many Blacks heavily relied on (Summers 2019, p. 148). At the Corner, two markedly different "spatial imaginaries" (Summers 2019, p. 148) not only come together, as the author herself says, but clash: That of Whites is predominantly connected to positive perceptions – well-being, glamor, experience, innovation, and the economy – while that of Blacks is associated with poverty and other stereotypical elements discussed before. Thus, once again, not only segregation but the ethical and economically motivated cleavage of inclusion versus exclusion is referenced (see Matsueda & Drakulich 2009, p. 166).

The entire corridor of H Street, Northeast is synonymous with transportation. Trains that operate both inside and outside city limits, the Metro, several buses, and cars are on the streets here every day. Streetcars in Washington, apart from enormous implementation and maintenance costs, have serious implications for the living of Black people in the city (Summers 2019, p. 149). While free of charge, most residents only describe it as a non-beneficial marketing issue (Summers 2019, p. 150). And on top, it mostly benefits white residents because of convenience, while the bus is there for black residents (Summers 2019, p. 152). This Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) has many positive aspects, among them transportation development, financial benefits, and environmental sustainability (Summers 2019, pp. 150, 151). However, there is the described economic and market-driven motivation to the detriment of lower-class people, many of whom black. By establishing more and more opportunities for those who can afford it – Whites – Black people face economic and soci-

etal discrimination. Moreover, since Blacks depend on seamless transportation networks, it is an attack on their freedom of movement (Summers 2019, pp. 151, 152). The text says that the public transit sector is "not more segregated than neighborhoods, jobs, or schools, but in a society where race is coterminous with space, transit vehicles are sites where segregated worlds collide" (Summers 2019, p. 151). This pressure for extensive developmental projects, Summers (2019) says, is driven by the wish to connect creativity to the city, automatically evoking thoughts about the 'creative class' thesis by Richard Florida in his 2003 book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Summers 2019, p. 151).

Moreover, what can be observed at the Corner is that Blacks are actively visible, but not for an extended time. The Corner already since 2013 is a "space of transition" (Summers 2019, p. 152): Blacks are intentionally made more visible in this short span than in previous times (Summers 2019, p. 153). Much like numerous service providers, those agencies Blacks depended on ceased to exist on the corridor, namely the D.C. Economic Security Administration (DC-ESA) and the Family Services Administration (FSA). Thus, the corridor is now a place where Black people are no longer staying, but only transiting. Those residents become BOPs through transit, eliciting a tendency toward *othering*. What transportation of people and the entire sector do to Blacks in Washington is to render their bodies "ephemeral" (Summers 2019, p. 152).

Being especially visible, the author explains, serves as a legitimating reason for "spatial containment and regulation" (Summers 2019, p. 153) as well as several control mechanisms. The author spoke to Washington city officials and they frankly told her spatial contain- or confinement lets people stay where they are. Poor people and Blacks should rather not interfere with the routines of business owners and other (richer) people at the Corner (Summers 2019, p. 159). Not only does this invoke the principle of segregation and reinforce the rich/poor and Black/White cleavages. It most poignantly demonstrates political and social inability of city officials and institutions to deal with the problems of crime and poverty – the very elements that in people's eyes seem to render Blackness itself a crime.

Further, the entirety of buildings in a city like Washington, and its characteristics, became a variable "to privilege white freedom and mobil-

ity while controlling and containing blackness" (Summers 2019, p. 154). Processes that caused this mismatch were "social and physical transformation, and neoliberal restructuring" (Summers 2019, p. 154), in other words gentrification. Connected to this, the author stresses that limiting black mobility is linked to professional tracking, or surveillance – an element of White "politics of fear" (Summers 2019, p. 146), as Sharon Zukin calls it. Several mechanisms serve to negatively impact how and where Blacks move around in an area (see Summers 2019, p. 154). Being black, and intense White fear of that, is the reason for surveillance in Washington, whereas the deeper motivation is "racism and antiblackness" (Summers 2019, pp. 155, 157). This technology inevitably creates a sentiment of power (Summers 2019, pp. 155, 156). As this signifies intrusion by authorities of any kind, Black people's right to privacy and individualism is seriously limited (see Summers 2019, p. 146). George Lipsitz (2011) further notes that the "desire to move freely across space formed an important part of the Black spatial imaginary, but it has rarely been easy to translate hopes of moving freely into the ability actually to do so for African Americans" (Lipsitz 2011, cited in Summers 2019, p. 153). This quote alludes to both social exclusion and the absence of political representation. The denial of those rights to African Americans has caused a powerlessness hampering inclusion and progress toward a free, democratic society in Washington. Further, the correlation between race and space becomes apparent, a vice-versa one: Race is spatialized, and space is racialized (Summers 2019, pp. 148, 154). The undertakings of sectors dealing with residential mobility thus actively undermine basic human rights, and therefore are a threat to democratic quality in the city of Washington.

A problem Summers (2019) identifies in Washington is that despite being visible, Black people are rather not actively recognized by others. She includes an important observation by science fiction, fantasy, and non-fiction writer China Miéville (British Council n. d.). In *The City and the City,* the work referenced by Summers (2019), he brings up the metaphorical approach of "unseeing": two elements in geographical space are not separated in a physical sense, but through norms, the legal sphere and traditional conceptions of life and society (Summers 2019, p. 161). Consciousness of differences in a positive way though would be

important to encourage a social climate favorable for democratic inclusion. However, many people walking on the streets are often not willing to see those differences, because they link negativity and fear to them. Elijah Anderson says people see others, but they tend to let the mind be dominated by the mere fact of difference in skin color: white and black. This results in building psychological blockades (Summers 2019, p. 161; for person, see Yale University n. d.). If the former group is afraid and unaware through this unwillingness to see difference, then interaction between those people is limited to nonexistent (Summers 2019, p. 161).

Thus, to go a step further, a central mechanism can be detected here: For a societal climate, especially in a country as polarized as the US, unwillingness to see difference has a clear impact, as it disrupts an important equation: Active recognition drives interaction, and interaction drives commitment, for example to achieve political and social change. Unseeing, then, is a substantial problem for this endeavor, especially in Washington. The trend of non-recognition is pervasive and perpetuated through contemporary beliefs and structures. Further, it prioritizes Whites and neglects Blacks with regards to providing services and other resources. Thus, this has a far-reaching impact on democratic quality, as the fight for justice is undermined by those blind and unwilling to see the facts (see Summers 2019, pp. 161, 162).

Residents, Summers (2019) observes, are not willing to see color, "or in some cases, people" (Summers 2019, p. 163). What this means, the author clearly notes, is that the most favorable condition for people willing to unsee Blacks is that they do not see them. According to the author, actively noting the presence of poverty and hardship "disrupts the narrative of urban progress" (Summers 2019, p. 163). This economic thinking challenges the mission for equality in cities like Washington, as emphasizing economy and amenities is a common practice to make them appealing for others, not for disadvantaged residents. Thus, it bluntly devalues the very citizens who face continuous discrimination in different sectors, and struggle to find their place in urban society. Ironically, those people others wish not to see are certainly visible (see Summers 2019, p. 162). The most uncomfortable reality, however, is that people exist in the same space, in the same very city of Washington. Whites though tend to actively over-

look even bare displays of inequality, such as homeless people sitting on the streets (see Summers 2019, p. 163). Therefore, the BLM Movement has taken to the streets to voice discontent about ever-present economic opportunism and oppression, as outlined earlier in the thesis.

Urban progress in Washington, as mentioned above, is a threatening reality to Black people in the city. Christopher Mele observes that Blacks are not considered when talking about urban development. Rather, they are individualized and somewhat integrated into the greater economic context, either as sole participants or as obstacles for further growth and restructuring (Summers 2019, p. 158). There is a framework that is centered on development and progress, and it clearly goes to the detriment of Black people and their well-being. Those that plan the appearance of cities like Washington selectively choose what parts of Blackness they wish to portray, which are most often rather celebratory characteristics and instances (see Summers 2019, p. 165). Within this developmental process, there are simply rather vague attributions to Blacks, but effectively, 'Black Lives Matter' in the economy, too. Policymakers in the economic realm must acknowledge that isolating Blacks from those possibilities is morally and ethically insupportable. When Blacks do not have access to public services – or even grocery stores for food – a fundamental human and constitutional right is hurt (see Summers 2019, p. 158).

Besides extensive surveillance, spatial and social confinement of Black people in Washington, some people are actively celebrating diversity by putting up pictures of African American figures, as shown in the previous paragraph. This creates a sense of authenticity regarding Blackness. Summers (2019) says such depictions of diversity "fill the void" (Summers 2019, p. 165) left by not recognizing the unequal character of the city. By portraying this as being linked to authenticity, the author repaints the common unclear picture in societal beliefs: People see images or other elements as representational, and often do not think about deeper meanings and implications. However, those portrayals are not properly contextualized. Much less though, Summers (2019) implies, they are a warning to eager developers and others that the very inequalities fought against in the decades before are pervasive and persistent. Merely including those black bodies into the cityscape is not adequate, as this does not change

anything. This is the same discrepancy as explained in 3.2.: Just as mere statistics about police brutality do not change reality, neither do these acts of trying to aestheticize Blackness while completely ignoring "mundane Black life" (Summers 2019, p. 165).

A process mentioned in previous paragraphs, found in Washington, is gentrification. This is a social dynamic resting on income-based residential mobility, starting in the 1990s out of political motivation. Several policies were implemented to draw high(er) income residents to the different neighborhoods (see Summers 2019, p. 154). Putting those policies into effect encouraged a professionalization and improved infrastructure for people with resources (see Helmuth 2019, p. 747). Thus, it arguably relates to the Black/White cleavage observable in the city, as Blacks with lower incomes must make way for wealthier residents (see Helmuth 2019, pp. 746, 747).

Historically, Washington has been a *Chocolate City*, but now it has rather moved beyond that time. Therefore, the article by Allison Suppan Helmuth (2019) is entitled *Chocolate City Rest in Peace* – the name of a photograph put up in a coffee shop in one of the city's neighborhoods. This shows congruence with Summers's (2019) articulation of 'post-Chocolate.' The article illustrates the phenomenon of space-claiming described earlier. This is the action of making certain areas a "white space," to say it with the words of sociologist Elijah Anderson (Anderson 2015, cited in Helmuth 2019, p. 749), and therefore "exclusive space" (Helmuth 2019, p. 750). Here, the triangle of spaces by Lefebvre (1991) and Gottdiener (1993) proves helpful not only for understanding the process, also certain individual variables. If it is known what elements, perceptions/concepts, relations, and actions bring about this "exclusive space," people can more easily counteract the phenomenon. The triangle links "the *physical*, *mental*, and *social* dimensions of space" (Helmuth 2019, p. 750, italics in original), all resting on cultural influence as well as perception capability (see Helmuth 2019, p. 750). Therefore, it is an important piece of evidence to consider when talking about urban planning and the inclusion of black residents.

The transitional development over time, brought about by gentrification, was so severe that nine years ago, Washington's share of African Americans dropped below 50 percent – for the first time in five decades

(see Helmuth 2019, p. 748). However, some neighborhoods with minority residents could integrate into the broader city framework. Integration is a fundamental principle when thinking about racial justice, and there needs to be more equity in city services that historically suffered – and still today suffer – from segregation. If neighborhoods are "income-diverse and racially integrated" (Helmuth 2019, p. 748), there is a higher potential of beneficial outcomes for those with lower income, and a possibility to transcend societal boundaries spurred by difference. Hence, such neighborhoods cannot only improve the social climate in Washington but are an important contributor to guaranteeing rights and therefore a democratic order. However, authors warn that sociological scholarship in the post-CRM Era has shifted its focus to people in certain neighborhoods. They lament that this could direct attention away from deeper and multifaceted meanings of soci(et)al inequality. To take this worry a step further, it has a threatening impact on democratizing a racialized society in urban spaces. If one does not look at the complexity of lived experiences and daily realities of Black people in American cities like Washington, the mission of upholding human rights and a healthy democracy becomes more demanding. This holds for Washington as city, and on a national level.

5.2 The Capital's Bloomingdale Neighborhood

Gentrification and exclusion processes were particularly visible in the Bloomingdale neighborhood examined in *Chocolate City Rest in Peace*, located in the Northwest quadrant of the city (Appendix, Image 7). At the beginning of the 2000s, it was mostly African American while in the 2010s, White people began moving into the city, making the population share of African Americans dwindle. African Americans in the middle-class could indeed make money by selling property, but the majority of African Americans, in general, could not achieve that (Helmuth 2019, p. 751). The problem with this exclusionary social behavior on the Whites' part is that the more structural nature often remains covered by reassuring rhetoric and other mechanisms to disguise difficult realities

(Helmuth 2019, p. 752). Participating in many social activities and trying to integrate into the neighborhood's network, the author spent four months in observation of social practices. She understands herself not only as a researcher, but also as a Bloomingdale resident (Helmuth 2019, p. 753). This gives the work and the experiences a substantial degree of authenticity and reliability.

The author notes the attachment to the neighborhood among both races, White and Black, and both types of resident, gentry and long-term, is significant. If the financial situation permits it, they would like to continue spending their lives here. However, there is evidence of serious tensions between the two, for example in facial expressions or hand gestures. It is what Helmuth (2019) calls the effects of "social friction" (Helmuth 2019, p. 755), describing a society that suffers from breaking foundations. The irony is that in general, these neighborhoods are integrated, but this pattern nonetheless persists (Helmuth 2019, p. 755). What is difficult is that often this behavior by Whites is not adopted because of a certain person, but because of this person's race and class. The author describes that a Black man would "feel ignored, unrecognized, and presumed to be up to no good" (Helmuth 2019, p. 756) when interacting with racial counterparts. The alleged problem, a white woman says, is not that they have actively done something wrong or horrible, but that they are there, in a *particular location* (see Helmuth 2019, p. 757). The problem proves extensive in scope for Whites, and they tend to include a growing space into this reasoning.

What this means is Whites employ what one could call a hyperbolic generalization: When they are in a situation in which their assumption was true, they extend the frame of meaning to every individual, every spatial setting, and every social situation. An important term in this regard is used by Sophie Trawalter and Andrew R. Todd and their co-authors Abigail A. Baird and Jennifer A. Richeson (2008): They name this process "selective perception" or "selective attention" (Trawalter et al. 2008, cited in Helmuth 2019, p. 757, further p. 769). This is a case example that stereotyping, and racism, aggressively penetrate society in Washington. Residents feel uneasy and try to find variables to base their arguments on, however 'outlandish' those may be. The problem alluded to here is that

such perceptions, through participation, can enter the political realm. This puts a healthy social environment and the democratic order in general at risk. If decisions are made to the detriment of poor Blacks, the systemic nature of anti-black resentment and racial inequality is difficult to combat.

As Helmuth (2019) shows on page 760 of her article, not only communication, movement, or other rather abstract socio-geographic variables are a factor in race relations in Washington: Interestingly, even design and materials have implications. Some shops and restaurants have transitioned to use "rural and rustic elements" (Helmuth 2019, p. 757), letting them appear less 'urbanized' or 'city-like.' Race comes in here because the city is often correlated with Blacks who are financially powerless (see Helmuth 2019, p. 760). The inclusivity of space in Washington and elsewhere depends on people's own conceptions and experiences. Notably, a coffee shop that the author attended has changed its design and social framework, attracting more African American customers. Thus, how the physical space is constructed dramatically impacts people's perceptions, especially in a racialized context. The walls of the coffee shop were indeed painted white, but the pictures were no longer of Whites, but of Blacks and other *non*-Whites. Hence, the concept of whiteness has lost a prominent share of its uneasy significance for some people, resulting in changing thought patterns, and reducing potential for prejudice (see Helmuth 2019, p. 761).

Yet another example the author presents here is parking for Sunday church service in a Historically Black Church (HBC). In an essentially white space, but with black institutions, disputes around parking were apparently fueled by racial considerations (see Helmuth 2019, p. 762). Thus, racialized conflicts about the right to space unfold among visitors and residents of the neighborhood. For Whites, it is not only about legal issues, that only residents are granted access to the HBC, but about public safety – leading back to stereotyping and hyperbolic generalization (see Helmuth 2019, p. 763). However, some people in Bloomingdale frame the issue as if it would not at all be connected to race, but it is – at least, a resident says, in parts. Many believe the real motivation is that those people are not from Bloomingdale or even from the District, but from suburbs which are knowingly located in other states: Virginia and Maryland. How-

ever, if parking opportunities are extended – to the benefit of both shoppers and residents – those Blacks only visiting might face limited access (see Helmuth 2019, p. 763). Another resident talks about racial tension, but in a more detailed explanation, race suddenly does not appear anymore. He refers to the legal issue again, but does not mention Blacks or Whites: Rather, he describes who he thinks abides by the rules and who does not, automatically invoking a racially motivated stereotype of 'good and bad.' The author reminds the reader that this can be called – according to Mica Pollock (2005) – "'color-mute'" (see Helmuth 2019, p. 765).

5.3 Minneapolis – Yet Another Example of Multifaceted Racial Tensions

As it was indicated in the beginning of this chapter, Washington is not the only American city in which threats to social well-being, racial equity/equality and most certainly democracy can be observed. Minneapolis in the state of Minnesota also has a deep-rooted history of racialized disparities it tries to combat. Much like Washington, it has faced and still faces problems in the housing market and service provision for its Black population, a circumstance making it a center for contemporary BLM activism. However, the reasons and origins are to be detected in its developmental process over the last decades.

The first major sector important to consider in Minneapolis is the housing market and its significance for Black people. Combs (2018) mentions the three types "exclusionary zoning, restrictive covenants [and] redlining" (Combs 2018, p. 51), which methodically all had the aim of denying housing opportunities to Blacks in Minneapolis. They resembled rules and informal statutes explicitly stating where Blacks could live and where they could not, marking those areas which were accessible. Through this mechanism, it was made sure Whites and their families were placed higher in the social hierarchy, offering them a whole set of additional opportunities systemically denied to Black residents.

Particularly the second practice in Combs's (2018) quote, the University of Minnesota (UMN) reveals, was prominent in Minneapolis, but also in

the other example city of Washington (University of Minnesota n. d.). As an alternative termed "racist property clauses" (Miller 2020), covenants forbade houses to "be sold, conveyed, leased, or sublet, or occupied by any person or persons who are not full bloods of the so-called Caucasian or White race" (Ingraham 2020; University of Minnesota n. d.). The first of these covenants in Minneapolis came as early as 1910 – a time when the city was "not particularly segregated" (University of Minnesota n. d.). It occurred what one could call a residential and ethnic distortion: While the number of African American residents rose steadily, more Minneapolis areas would become *entirely white*. Thus, covenants propelled "sequestering entire communities into neighborhoods that were disinvested, policed and segregated" (Milner 2020). The argument and its rhetoric quickly transcended boundaries and found their way to become markers of economic and financial motivation. People selling homes as well as managing officials saw the benefits for their endeavors, proceeding to accept the practice (University of Minnesota n. d.). Later, the American Veterans' Committee (AVC) dismissed the covenants as "unnecessary, undemocratic and un-American" (Delegard 2015), having recognized the imminent threat to American democracy. However, despite the Shelley v. Kramer case in 1948 ruling covenants unconstitutional, and the prohibition of racialized housing practices in Minnesota in 1953, it lasted until 1968 that covenants were made illegal by the Fair Housing Act (University of Minnesota n. d.).

The ironic reality which troubles city and country is that historical covenants might have disappeared, but they have simply changed their appearance to live on in Minneapolis through so-called single-family zoning (Grabar 2018; Rosalsky 2020). This model consents to "residential structures with up to three dwelling units" (Mervosh 2018). Like in the early and mid-20th century, it is a way of legalizing to preserve the presence of Whites and *Whiteness* in certain neighborhoods in the Southern, Southwestern, and other parts of the city: It can be found in Nokomis, Longfellow, Northeast, and Southwest Minneapolis (Kaul 2019; Appendix, Images 1-4). To make this past and continuous existence visible, some geographers and policymakers in Minneapolis have engaged in projects and processes to show the importance of the practice.

Mapping Prejudice, for example, is a project co-founded Kirsten Delegard, wishing to provide cartographic visualization of covenants (Miller 2020). Ryan Mattke, Penny Peterson, and Kevin Ehrman-Solberg started the endeavor in 2016 with a software that could scan digitized records of Minneapolis homes. Deed scans revealed much rhetoric associated with covenants, and according to Nathan Connolly, "[i]t's very powerful to show these deed restrictions creeping out across the landscape of Minneapolis, like an organism or disease" (Miller 2020). Similarly, the Prologue DC research group identified some 15,000 restrictive covenants in the American capital (Miller 2020).

Another is that the Minneapolis City Council has by 12-1 ruled out the practice of single-family zoning, albeit met by some public contestation (see Mervosh 2018). Policymakers constructed a tool named *Minneapolis 2040* that could help addressing affordable housing and the disproportionate rate of Blacks who are not homeowners, but renters (see Ingraham 2020). If the visualization of the gap between black and white homeownership rates in Ingraham's (2020) article is considered, it is at a percentage of 50. More concisely, the rate for Blacks is around 25%, whereas it is significantly higher for Whites – 76% (Ingraham 2020). Further, Uptown Minneapolis resident Peggy Reinhardt observes young people unable to buy houses costing some $400,000, and elderly people with housing but no financial security. These are the two extremes found in Minneapolis (Mervosh 2018).

5.4 Minneapolis 2040 Plan and Other Policy Guidelines

Minneapolis 2040 as a concise and comprehensive policy collection not only incorporates housing. According to the website, it is a set of 100 policies in different areas for improving the quality of life in the city, especially for Black residents. The areas include housing, politics, food, and transportation (Welcome to Minneapolis 2040, n. d.). Besides the actual planning process, the website gives detailed information on the plan's topics, goals, and policies as well as its implementation. It is hoped the plan will resolve, or at least contribute to resolve, what some people might

call a paradox, and *The Washington Post* a "long-simmering disconnect" (Ingraham 2020). It is not only a reality in Minneapolis but in the entire state of Minnesota (see Johnson & Russell 2019): While Minneapolis is credited for its high-score livability, the city is also an epitome for a tense and racialized social situation.

Put differently, it sticks out among the country's cities because of a high prevalence of racial disparities. As the article *The Miracle of Minneapolis* by Derek Thompson (2015) shows, considering residents under 35 at the time, the city is in the Top Ten in college education, high income, and low poverty – from residents' ages 18 to 34 it has the highest employment rate *in the nation* (Thompson 2015). Thus, it can be noted that there is prosperity in Minneapolis. However, it is almost entirely reserved for Whites because of these exclusionary circumstances, most prominently income. Three years ago, in 2018, a black family's median income was 36,000 US dollars, whereas a white's one was placed at 83,000 dollars. The gap is an astonishing 47,000 US dollars, which makes Minneapolis rank top in the nation for this kind of disparity (Ingraham 2020).

Since the steps and recommendations are written down, the necessity of codified steps in the political process is underlined. Plans that exist on paper are much more useful than mere words for bringing forward concerns and desires. Hence, it would be best to motivate urban organizations and institutions – including the federal government – to clearly document policy objectives that might be brought up, and to include them into their agenda. As Sarah Mervosh (2018) underlines, this is crucial as the city itself and its institutions emphasize their own strategy of commitment to an issue. Thus, they actively support steps toward a more democratic urban environment in Minneapolis. Further, looking at the website highlights the eminently central relationship between geography and democracy: The former contributes to the latter. Policies are oriented toward residents in urban space – which undoubtedly includes African Americans – and their human rights. Thereby, the plan echoes the demands of BLM and other social and environmental justice organizations. Hence, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* is an accurate example of the relational triangle black lives, geography, and democracy in the city.

As outlined, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* includes a wide range of adaptive food policies. This is because there still is a similar reality found here as in Washington: Residents of certain neighborhoods, particularly Blacks, do not earn sufficient money. This scarcity or even absence of financial resources complicates acquiring foodstuffs as transportation and grocery store accessibility are substantially limited. Thus, many people are constrained to purchase their food in the convenience stores (or bodegas) found in many cities, including Minneapolis – typically small stores that do not offer a meaningful selection, let alone one of healthy products (Union of Concerned Scientists 2016, p. 11).

However, in the last few years, city politics in Minneapolis have increasingly addressed the issue of food inaccessibility through decision-making and initiatives. In 2008, the Minneapolis City Council made important food provision guidelines a city-wide law, which became known as the *Minneapolis Staple Food Ordinance*. This law requires a food categorization in those convenience stores, ensuring the availability of basic products like "eggs, grains [and] milk" (Union of Concerned Scientists 2016, p. 11). Moreover, the offer must include "five types of fresh produce" (Union of Concerned Scientists 2016, p. 11) to fight possible health problems. Thereby, the 'City of Lakes,' as Minneapolis is also known, became "the first city to regulate food stocking requirements in food stores" (Union of Concerned Scientists 2016, p. 11).

The city's health department (MHD) assessed the program in 2009, and as resource scarcity for the convenience stores became apparent, the *Healthy Corner Store Program* (HCSP), a support and assistance program, was launched a year after this initial assessment. HCSP is a public-private-partnership (PPP), comprised of the MHD, several community organizations, and owners of the city's convenience stores. The program wishes to make fresh food provision a beneficial market concept for the city, which is why it addresses both the customer's and the owner's perspective. One the one hand, it equips owners with sufficient knowledge about fresh food and related market techniques like selling (Union of Concerned Scientists 2016, pp. 11, 12). More specifically, the mentioned market techniques include adequate positioning within the building, advertisement, and better visual orientation (Union of Concerned

Scientists 2016, pp. 11, 12). This makes the owners more comfortable and aware, thus serves to create incentives to make products appealing to customers. They, on the other hand, actively perceive a change in product availability, and therefore might be more motivated to change dietary routines (Union of Concerned Scientists 2016, pp. 11, 12).

5.5 Chapter Summary

In the presentation of these elements, it becomes clear that both Washington and Minneapolis are eager to improve the lives and daily situations of their Black residents. Administrative, economic, and political organs have recognized that to recreate and maintain a democratic order, these pervasive, multidimensional problems need to be handled accordingly. Cities like Washington and Minneapolis are important not only for social and geographic, but also for political reasons: They are "the right level of government for making a meaningful change" (Benjamin 2020), says Andrea Benjamin. The strength of city governments can be measured in a sense: If the mayor is the "executive of the city" (Benjamin 2020), the decision-making powers are with him or her and the city council – which is the case in both cities. Mayor Muriel Bowser (Washington) and Mayor Jacob Frey (Minneapolis) are heads of their cities, while Bowser is also the governor and county executive, since the District of Columbia has not received state status, or not yet if public debates are considered (Government of the District of Columbia n. d.). Not only do both mayors have some overlapping goals and policies, but their duties show they have the responsibility to lead their cities toward more visible racial equality. This is evidenced by the separation into official and customary duties, for instance. Official concerns the governing side, such as review, approval, signatures, or appointments. Customary is rather representative, connected to the city's people and their needs as well as recommendations (City of Minneapolis n. d.). Hence, for Washington and Minneapolis, responsible mayors taking customary duties seriously are indispensable when they wish to put democracy first. In other words, mayors take a crucial position in the triangle black lives, geography, and democracy in both cities.

Considering these facts and strategies now leads to call both cities catalysts for active resistance, as the chapter's heading states. Alternatively, it can be rephrased to become catalysts of social justice activism, to be more precise. After the killing of George Floyd and the attack on protesters by police in front of the White House, the US and the two cities were shaken yet again. Those people engaging in the urban protests seek to change the situation not only for them as Washingtonians and Minneapolitans, but for the whole country. This was evidenced by initiatives in the Bloomingdale neighborhood and the work of organizations and the government. Residents and politicians in both cities have during the last few years started developing plans to cope with difficult realities for Black residents. These included, as this chapter has shown, the visualization of restrictive covenants, recommendations for police officers in tense situations, as well as city policy strategies like *Minneapolis 2040* and the *HCSP*. All these approaches address the very topics all Black Americans would like to see improved and corrected as soon as possible: law enforcement relations and the criminal justice system, racist thought patterns, and accessibility problems.

6 Socio-Spatial Chances for Democracy: BLM's Contribution to Saving It

The previous chapter and its subchapters have provided a detailed account of the most demanding issues in Washington and Minneapolis, among which are housing, food, and police brutality. It was emphasized that non-existence or limitation of rights and liberties can have decisive implications for the quality of American democracy. Further, BLM was also mentioned since the movement has gained prominence over time in both cities. However, two questions need to be asked now: How can BLM in these two distinctive cities contribute geographically and politically to saving the American democracy? Are there perhaps theoretical approaches that can facilitate the process?

BLM protesters wish to change the situation for Black residents both in cities and on a national level. Among other works, the article by Anna Domaradzka-Widła proves particularly important here (Domaradzka 2018; Robert Zajonc Institute for Social Studies n. d.). Referencing Bitusíková (2015), she explains why the role of local activists has gained increasing importance for cities, which is for two reasons: On the one hand, they actively participate in the political arena 'city,' playing a managerial role. On the other, they can use different elements offered to them, for instance voting and meeting, to influence the decisions made (see Domaradzka 2018, p. 607). If urban spaces are improved by development, this comes with multilayered benefits and changes. However, as Domaradzka (2018) notes, "nowhere is the rise of negative social processes clearer than in urban areas" (Domaradzka 2018, p. 608). This is precisely the motivation for BLM adherents: to underline the disproportionate existence of these processes.

Hence, in the case of Washington and Minneapolis, protesters have evidently provoked thoughts about a concept known as the right to the city, or in this situation: the right to the equal and livable city. Schein (2009), who is referenced on pages 1006/1007 in Allen, Lawhon and Pierce (2018/2019), says this is connected to social justice. However, if taken a step further, there are links to BLM as well. The right to the city is about demanding equality in resource access, distribution, and allocation for every person, as well as about the possibility to join others in influencing present and future city development (see Domaradzka 2018, p. 612). This position, Domaradzka (2018) notes, has brought several critical urban theorists to remark that the right to the city – if understood as ability of resource control – has a multifaceted elitism to it: It is associated with people in higher economic, social, and political positions. Those people tend to weaken, or completely inhibit, the possibility of activists to voice their concerns, and most poignantly develop ideologically charged opinion constructs (see Domaradzka 2018, p. 613). If linked to BLM, racial inequality, and particularly the racialization of space, this dynamic can also be observed: White people claim precisely urban space through gentrification, while deeming Blacks BOPs (see Helmuth 2019).

Henri Lefebvre (1991, p. 34, referenced in Domaradzka 2018, p. 612) answers these critics insisting that the right to the city includes a collection of rights – those rights important to urban residents. Thus, the poor and the various ethnic minorities must be mentioned explicitly. Further, it is a "cry" (Lefebvre 1968, cited in Domaradzka 2018, p. 612), as these groups engage in protests countering immoral behaviors and disadvantageous policies. Harvey (2008) and Mayer (2009) say the concept is "both a political ideal and a mobilization frame" (Domaradzka 2018, p. 613). Even though Domaradzka (2018) does not explain this, it is obvious if considered closely: It is a political ideal because it emphasizes necessary rights: participation and representation. Moreover, it is a mobilization frame as social movements like BLM address continuous urban and societal problems to shape life in the city, claiming this right themselves.

Thus, the right to the city is a democratic concept to be considered when looking at movements such as BLM, and the broader context of inequality in the US. It is the framework whose existence guarantees societal

and political stability, starting in cities like Washington and Minneapolis – with potential to extend to rural places. Edward Soja (2010) provides corroborating evidence for the assertion that the right to the city is a democratic concept, as Domaradzka (2018) hints to: He mentions "human rights" in general and "social and spatial justice" (both Domaradzka 2018, p. 613) in particular. Though he classifies this as related to ethics and morality, it clearly evokes thought about the relationship between the two (for person, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs & Sharpe 2015). Characterizing what one could call the 'ideal city,' Marcuse (2009) mentions the properties of "justice, the rule of law, democracy, capacity development, as well as balance and diversity" (Marcuse 2009, p. 193, cited in Domaradzka 2018, p. 613). These are the very elements that movements such as BLM and the affiliated groups demand in their urban protests. They realize that inequalities are prevalent and would like to achieve large-scale change in cities across the country, including the two examples.

However, there is another dimension that makes the approach useful as both an argumentative and an analytical tool considering American race relations, the BLM Movement, and geo-political implications: In 2005, the concept was formally codified in the World Charter on the Right to the City, after an event known as the Second World Urban Forum in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre (see Domaradzka 2018, p. 613). This institutionalization, apart from being a democratic process *per se*, makes the concept widely accessible and creates transparency. Hence, the concept can be adopted in many cases, among which are the clear demands of BLM supporters and the general situation of Black residents in Washington and Minneapolis. The right to the city should thus be important for urban scholars, analysts, (political) geographers, and evidently for residents. For the latter, it is a form of identity-politics and self-affirmation as they connect to the city they live in and their respective social environment.

Since the demands of the BLM Movement show a clear similarity and are indeed part of the right to the city, an indispensable relation to space and place can be observed. Black residents in Washington and Minneapolis strongly identify with the neighborhood they live in and thus link geographical space to emotions and feelings. Yi-Fu Tuan (2001, p. 3) says "place is security, space is freedom" (Tuan 2001, cited in Combs 2018, p. 49).

These are two human and social needs that form part of a collection of rights for individual people. A place is rather fixed, for example a home. Typically, it is associated with close social relations, family, and friends – people that support, comfort, and inspire one another. Thus, it is something that makes one feel secure, away from external harm. Space is, it might be said, an extension of place: It is combined of many places one can go to. One is – and should be – *free* to travel, walk or drive through this space, which automatically establishes the connection to a human right: freedom of movement. Moreover, it connects to all the (positive) freedoms, for instance freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. However, saying one's opinion freely, moving through and congregating in a space for special purposes such as church service is often difficult for many Black residents. Evidently, this is also true in Washington and Minneapolis. It leads back to the earlier explanation of racialized spaces – spaces in which race, and obviously skin color, overwhelm and thus block manifestations of the rule of the people.

Arguably then, the notion of space and its variations described by Edward William Soja cannot be left out when analyzing BLM's responsibility in fighting against injustice and for the American democracy (see Combs 2018, p. 41). This is particularly true in the two example cities. Marcuse (2009, p. 195) asserts that in cities and more generally, "most problems have a spatial aspect, but their origins lie in economic, social, political arenas, the spatial being a partial cause and an aggravation, but only partial" (Marcuse 2009, cited in Domaradzka 2018, p. 613). It is true that the spatial dimension is not the root of problems. Rather, the "arenas," hence systems or sectors, are responsible for arising inequalities because of mismanagement as well as wrong resource allocation and distribution. Further, it is also fair to say that the spatial dimension is an exacerbating factor: Multifaceted problems can transcend several boundaries, like neighborhood or class, extending into geographical space and leaving more and more people exposed to them over time.

However, to only describe the effect of space as "partial" – a word without clear quantification – is a blatant disregard of its actual significance. This is especially the case for Blacks in cities like Washington and Minneapolis. An extreme racialization of space, as well as the practice of White

space-claiming described before, demonstrate the pervasiveness of concepts and ideologies in different parts of cities. Moreover, if the effects of space are dismissed and relativized, it is an obstacle to the "democratization of cities" (Domaradzka 2018, p. 613) like Washington and Minneapolis, essential for a large-scale modification of the socio-political order. This would have serious methodical and operational implications for movements like BLM, for their mission toward democracy.

Rather, then, a middle path should be aspired: This means neither to overstate the explanatory power of space, but nor to completely disregard it. Economic geography becomes important here, because like the general, triangular approach in this thesis, this sub-discipline also looks at social factors. Geography in general was for a long time criticized under the impression that researchers had "an obsession with the identification of spatial regularities and an urge to explain them by spatial factors" (Massey 1985, cited in Bathelt & Glückler 2018, p. 38). However, Massey (1985) says, this is not true, as "[t]here are no such things as purely spatial processes; there are only particular social processes operating over space" (Massey 1985, cited in Bathelt & Glückler 2018, p. 38).

Moreover, there is simple evidence to discourage, or at least question, Marcuse's earlier statement, most prominently when looking at the cities' black residents: McKittrick (2006) says "Black matters are spatial matters" (McKittrick 2006, cited in Combs 2018, p. 52), and despite differing interpretations and perceptions of space, for Blacks it is always a connection back to past experiences and their horrifying legacy today. Further, BLM adherents marched and still march through an urban space during their protests in Washington and Minneapolis, addressing issues and calling for political modifications being inextricably linked to spatial considerations. Among them are those described in earlier chapters. Therefore, the movement is not only *Democracy in Action* – as the title of a 2017 article by Barbara Ransby suggests – but also democracy in motion.

It is democracy in action, she says in *The New York Times*, because the power of the movement lies in the "cultivation of skilled local organizers who take up many issues beyond police violence" (Ransby 2017). When many areas crippled by injustice are addressed, planning strategies and the development of combative concepts is more promising for the Move-

ment, all Blacks in the two cities, and those throughout the country. Not only, however, does Ransby (2017) mention that BLM and the affiliated organizations are "radical democracy in action" (Ransby 2017). She also sees, acknowledges, and highlights the importance of the right to effective political participation: It is crucial for the movement that "people on the ground make decisions, articulate problems and come up with answers" (Ransby 2017), she notes. This should increase both efficacy and effectiveness over a longer time. Additionally, then, it must be emphasized that this drives confidence that change is indeed achievable by working on a local level. For Ransby, "[taking] ownership of the political struggles" (Ransby 2017) by local engagement is something crucial in the fight for a better life – and a better democracy, apparently. Some other authors are also willing to take such a holistic approach to the situation.

Hathaway and Markovits (2020), for instance, point at the necessity for BLM to attack the whole discriminatory system: The problem they find is that what now discriminates against Black Americans and other minorities has been made by voting and educating the country's citizens to abide by certain laws. Nevertheless, city policies must "[p]rotect and enhance voting rights and fair representation" (Johnson & Russell 2019, p. 6), as "electoral and institutionalized politics" (Franklin 2016, p. 10) are one way to demand social justice. As the name law *enforcement* indicates, the socio-political system of the US has selected officers to represent an institution that can oversee citizens – and sanction transgressions of norms (Hathaway & Markovits 2020). Monica Bell, the authors highlight, has referred to a mechanism among several police departments as "pro-segregation policing" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020), obviously highlighting the spatial dimension. If Black citizens are now confronted with a police force showing increasing racial bias and brutality, they might refrain from political support and participation opportunities, an essential to democracy that BLM must fight for.

Moreover, the authors insist that "resuscitating […] institutions as true tools of justice" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020) is among the most pressing tasks for the movement, holding particularly true for Washington and Minneapolis where several institutions were rendered almost powerless over the last few months and years. Therefore, it can be said BLM

must signal to people a responsibility to protect institutional integrity and persistence. The movement must contribute to establishing a framework based on "checking state institutions that control people through violence and boosting institutions that empower democratic citizenship" (Hathaway & Markovits 2020). This is an important point as these institutions are also responsible for structuring the spatial sphere for all citizens, such as the placing of stores and facilities. Thus, there is another link forming the triangle of BLM/black lives, geography, and democracy.

Besides these two authors, there are others who find important strategic approaches for BLM in the fight for the American democracy. Russell Rickford (2016) says the success already achieved by BLM is substantial. Not only did it give a new chance to more radicalism in the overall political discourse through "reinvigorated confrontation politics" (Rickford 2016, p. 35). More so, it started "providing a vibrant model of democratic participation" (Rickford 2016, p. 36), giving Blacks a voice in political decision-making. Its intersectionality creates transparency and opportunity over time – and most importantly, over space. It aims to end the "paralysis and isolation" (Rickford 2016, p. 35) of Blacks that is certainly not only political, but inherently spatial. Young activists engaging in these "confrontation politics" can make their voices heard and formulate exigencies from the grass-roots level. By holding up a mirror to politicians and society in general, the movement can give new energy and hope to societal progress regarding racial justice.

However, observations by Frank Roberts are notably the most evident manifestations of why BLM's activism is and continues to be important for the American democracy: He is convinced that among other practices and realities, "[r]acism arrests the development of American democracy" (NYU Gallatin 2016). However, those who support and engage in BLM, he explains, are "young people who are saying that the millennial generation will be the generation to finally dismantle this hurdle to realizing the uniqueness and potential grandness of the democratic experiment" (NYU Gallatin 2016). The national process instigated by BLM is a "profound democratic reawakening in the United States" (NYU Gallatin 2016), Roberts insists. This holds especially true as the events in the two example cities, and the whole Trump presidency, have contributed to

the US sliding into the category of "uneven democracies" (Hooker 2016, p. 463) in the last years. Roberts implicitly warns that the socio-spatial possibilities of the BLM Movement should never and nowhere be underestimated, as Black activism has always built on "forcing the American democratic project to actually reach its ideal" (NYU Gallatin 2016). So far, however, it can be noted that, to use Amy Gutmann's (1996) words, America has made an "unfulfilled promise of a constitutional democracy with liberty and justice for all" (Gutmann 1996, p. 108). Thus, for both example cities, indeed the whole country, BLM could be the most successful social, political, and geographic contributor to reinvigorate and literally save the American democracy.

7 Conclusion: Relational Analysis, Democracy Promotion as Crucial Points

Black Lives Matter, initiated by three women, has over time made substantial contributions to better conditions for Black people in the United States. The thesis explained the particularities of the movement by specifying its origin, commitment, most prominent topics, and effect on American society. It was made clear that during the numerous urban protests, people have emphasized several aspects of daily life that haunt them: racism, police violence, and accessibility issues.

These three then, along with political representation, invoke thoughts simultaneously about geography and democracy. To highlight the elements and their linkages, this thesis first explained them in a general, yet detailed way to provide information about distinctive characteristics. The extensive elucidation showed that injustices, particularly if they are geographically significant, are most prominently observable in cities.

Thus, to apply the three elements actively, the thesis selected two example cities: Washington, DC and Minneapolis. Blacks are spatially confined in many neighborhoods of these two cities, with resulting limitations of their mobility and dignity of life. The neighborhoods are frequently marked by heavy police presence, and many officers strongly tend to meet Black residents with preconceived assumptions, disdain, and often violence. Further, Black local political representation opportunities are hampered by racialized thinking and stereotypes. Adequate healthcare acquisition still proves difficult – not only in the two example cities. Many Whites in both cities are not willing to pay close attention, out of fear for their powerful societal and political positions they allegedly occupy. However, to

fight against these circumstances constitutes an important task, since purposely depriving residents of a wide range of rights undermines a healthy democracy. Several programs and decisions constituted the topics in all subchapters, showing city governments and residents try to eradicate the detrimental practices. Besides demonstrating the elements in an empirical example, it was emphasized why exactly Washington and Minneapolis were selected as illustrations. In the case of Minneapolis, it was the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police, regarded as openly brutal and tragic, in Washington the criminalization and militarization of peaceful protesters in front of the White House. Out of these accounts and evidence, the two cities have been identified as catalysts for active resistance, a way to enhance democracy and to fight for equality.

Consequently, it was first asked how the BLM Movement can actively play a part in safeguarding, or even rescuing, a thoroughly troubled and apparently uneven American democracy – starting in cities like Washington and Minneapolis. The second question about supportive approaches was then also considered: The concept of the right to the city by Henri Lefebvre helped to group the aspects that BLM stands for into a significant assumption, although adherents themselves do not necessarily address their agenda in this explicit and typified way. However, the concept is generally useful, as some authors indeed present corroborating points that it could encourage thinking about democratic initiatives and promotion. Considering this, it became evident that both example cities play a significant role for the American democracy: Not only do the respective BLM chapters constitute a loud voice for social justice and human rights. More importantly, the events described drove up national and even international news coverage, sparking a wave of resistance and rejection of anti-Black brutality, racism, and systemic opportunity deprivation.

Hence, adequately addressing the threat of several actors willing to undermine democracy by racist attitudes demands broad evaluation and (re)consideration. American policymakers, scientists of different areas, and researchers alike must count on a relational approach to the three components integrated into this thesis. The introduction termed this the relational triangle of socio-geo-political analysis. While looking at a separate part of one topic might provide space for large-scale enriching elabora-

tion, resorting to purely 'fragmented' or 'isolationist' research and explanation does not prove helpful here, quite the contrary: It denies contextualization and explanatory interdependence, meaning that the several variables are all related to one another in different ways. Instead, looking at vice-versa-connections is a good strategy which supports developing plans to counteract injustices and other irregularities. It incorporates more possibilities that may not have been considered in advance. In so doing, researchers can contribute to societal, political, and economic discourses evolving around the three topics, and be the driving force for further projects and initiatives.

The described considerations and active academic contributions in this area certainly become relevant now that there is a political transition unfolding in the American capital. Joseph Robinette 'Joe' Biden Junior has been elected the 46th President of the US in November of 2020 and sworn in on January 20 of 2021. Kamala Harris simultaneously became the first female Vice President – notably the first woman of color, African American and South Asian American to hold that office. The two have from the start emphasized that their administration will be shaped by diversity, made visible in the announced office nominations. More prominently, however, Biden-Harris have underlined to reinvigorate American values, among which are not only life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but also democracy. They seek to strengthen a variable set of institutions, relationships, and political initiatives. Thereby, they wish to drive the democratic enterprise, operating from Washington – one of the example cities and a geographical space. This mission goes for the national, as well as the international level. It is about restoring trust, commitment, and empathy on both stages.

Thus, while Minneapolis is also still on the news in the US because of George Floyd's death, Washington will at the same time gain significance for the American democracy during the new administration. This continuity does not only apply to these cities, however, but also goes for the BLM Movement: It will not disappear from the streets, the news, or social media platforms anytime soon, as the fight for a united and democratic America will be a task of perseverance. Because of this evident and undeniable future influence, not only Washington and Minneapolis but

each of the three variables black lives, geography, and democracy should certainly matter to America.

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Appendix

Mentioned Minneapolis Neighborhoods

Image 1: Nokomis Neighborhood Boundary

Image 2: Longfellow Neighborhood Boundary

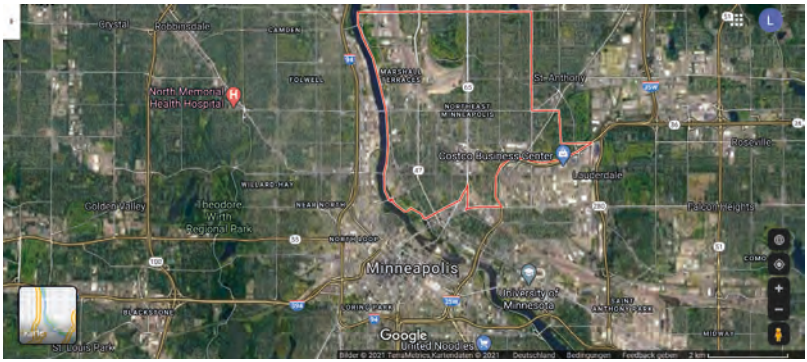

Image 3: Northeast Minneapolis Neighborhood Boundary

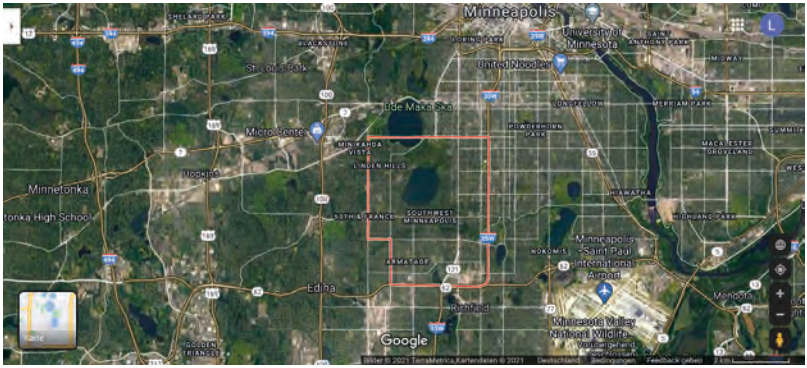

Image 4: Southwest Minneapolis Neighborhood Boundary

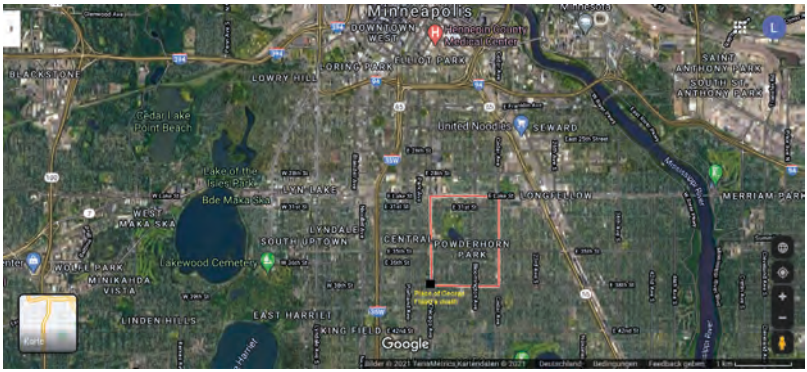

Image 5: Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Boundary; indication of where George Floyd died (East 38th Street/Chicago Avenue)

Washington Wards and Mentioned Neighborhoods

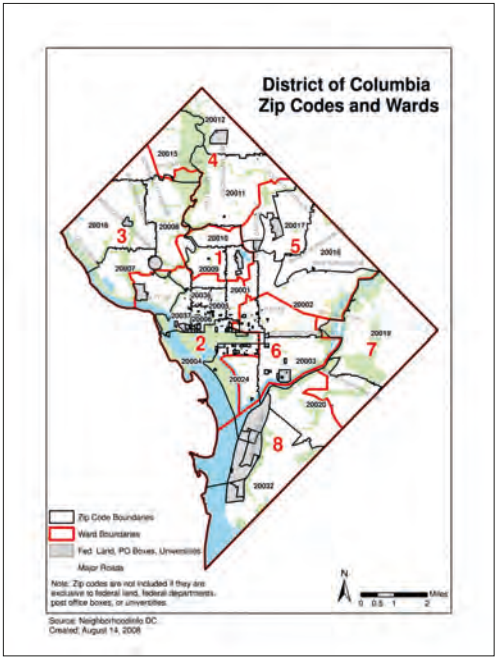

Image 6: Wards and Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP)-Code Boundaries (Source: https://www.pdffiller.com/preview/6/298/6298575/large.png)

Image 7: Bloomingdale Neighborhood Boundary

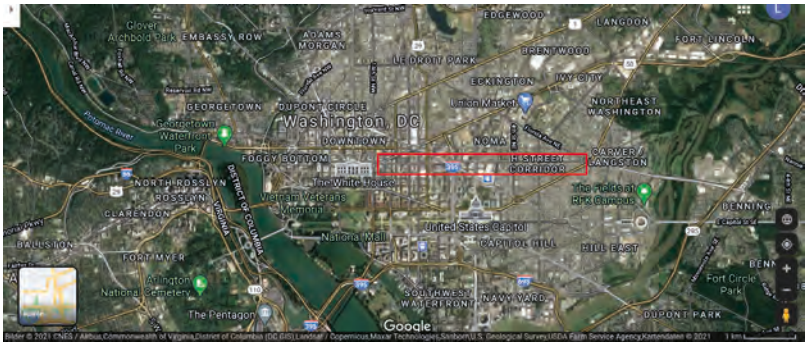

Image 8: H Street complete visualization

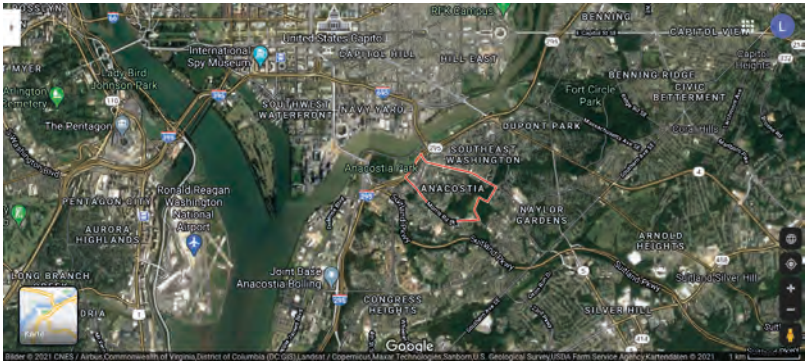

Image 9: Anacostia Neighborhood Boundary

Image 10: Barry Farms Neighborhood Boundary

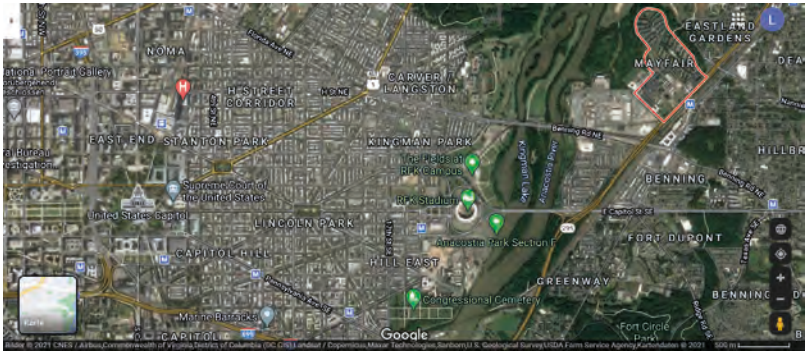

Image 11: Mayfair Neighborhood Boundary

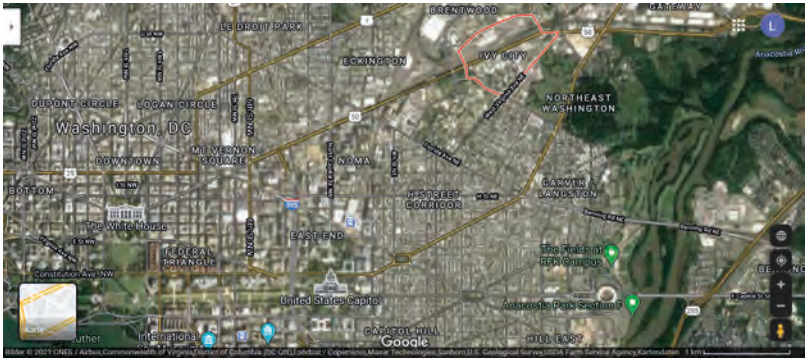

Image 12: Ivy City Neighborhood Boundary

Image 13: Median Household Income per Census Tract, 2015 Estimates (Source: https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/food-access-dc-deeply-connected-poverty-transportation/)

Image 14: Carless Households, 2015 Estimates (Source: see Im. 13)

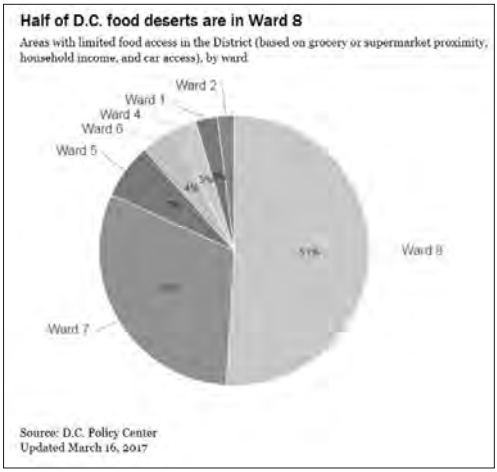

Image 15: Food Deserts by Ward (Source: see Ims. 13, 14)