

Unruly Bodies: Figurative Violence and the State's Responses to the Black Panther Party 

Randolph Hohle

The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Body and Embodiment

Edited by Natalie Boero and Katherine Mason

Subject: Sociology, Political Sociology, Race and Ethnicity Online Publication Date: Aug 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190842475.013.22

Abstract and Keywords

This chapter outlines a methodological approach to studying the body and embodiment in political and historical sociology. The advantage of incorporating the body into the study of political and historical sociology is that it captures how the body exerts causal effects on political outcomes. In particular, it will show how embodiment explains (1) the importance of affect on the formation of political knowledge, (2) how bodies produce meanings independent of their original construct and persist after the social group dissolves, and (3) a specific connection point between mobilization and the state response to the social movement. To illustrate, this chapter shows how the racially threatening embodied performance was both vital to the Black Panther Party's success and served as the focal point for elite white and state actors to mobilize against racial equality in the post-civil rights era.

Keywords: embodiment, methodology, Black Panthers, social movement, political sociology

In 1959, Mike Wallace and Louis Lomax introduced the Nation of Islam to the five boroughs that make up New York City via a television documentary titled *The Hate That Produced Hate*. It was produced by the show *Newsbeat* and originally aired as a five-part series on Channel 13. Wallace introduced the Nation of Islam as a group dedicated to black supremacy and proponents of black racism. Images of a large congregation of black men and women listening to Louis Farrakhan, then known as Louis X, perform his play *The Trial*, flashed across the screen. The play put whites on trial and condemned them as murderers, adulterers, and thieves. Whites were the cause of many social problems that disproportionately affected the black community in the mid-twentieth century. The actors in Farrakhan's play were involved in a dual performance. They performed for the audience sitting in the chairs in the theater, and they performed for the audience sitting in front of the television set at home, many of whom were whites who felt racially threatened by the Nation of Islam.

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This example indicates how bodies carry meanings into different interpretative contexts. Social movements cannot control how dominant groups and state actors recast their embodied performances as a threat to their existing moral order. This chapter explains the importance of the body in shaping the state's responses to social movements. More specifically, it explains how the embodied struggle for equality and civic inclusion inadvertently creates the conditions for a state backlash. Embodied performances, defined as "how the presentation of the body is a key variable in any form of protest and highlights how the body serves as a form of symbolic communication independent from its action" (Hohle 2013, 60), are a key part of every social movement. The same embodied performance necessary for recruitment and establishing a collective identity also serves as the point of state resistance to the social movement. Thus, a paradox that social movements face is that the logic of success and state opposition results from the same embodied phenomenon.

Social movements consciously and purposively present the body to help create a political community and communicate to others who they are and what they want. While some aspects of a social movement emphasize racially nonthreatening or gender conventional bodies to facilitate civic inclusion (Hohle 2009a; Seidman 2002), other movements use threatening bodies to challenge the status quo and empower members of a marginalized group (Hohle 2013; Klawiter 2008). I use the concept of *figurative violence* to refer to how social movements make threatening bodies to inspire their allies and instill fear in their adversaries (Hohle 2013, 83). Figurative violence includes two aspects of embodied violence: actual violence and symbolic violence. The latter refers to committing acts of aggression while the former refers to how the body is embedded with symbolic meanings associated with a threat to the dominant group's moral framework. A body can be threatening without having to commit an act of violence by its association with a political movement. Figurative violence illustrates when members of a political group exercise power over the self, it will activate resistance from the state that is different from a nonthreatening embodied performance. As Foucault argued, the body is the site where the state inscribes power on the body, and where there is power there is resistance (Foucault 1979, 1990). Social movements also inscribe power on the body, so there is a relational aspect of power that culminates in either the state response to eliminate the threatening group or the dissolution of the group after it achieves some objective. In this regard, the interpretative context of state actors and the state's response is the effect of a specific embodied performance.

Figurative violence is embodied through specific practices, like gestures and postures, appearance, as well as through the use of emotions. Bodies emote, and the emotions of others trigger an emotional response in us. We love, cry, and feel empathy. But we also yell, scream, shout, and feel anger. The latter emotions are associated with figurative violence. Bodies can reject or exaggerate gender conventional gestures and postures. The body can be fashioned in cultural threatening colors. A mask can cover the face. Specific types of facial hair, like the prisoner's mustache, or tattoos and facial piercings, can make a body threatening via its links to a subculture or gang. Social movements use bodies to occupy spaces socially reserved for another group. The state also uses figurative vio-

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lence. We can observe this through how state actors respond to social movement or protest. The state uses disciplinary power to train the military and police by making muscular bodies with the capacity to deploy violence, as well as arming and outfitting the military and riot police in uniforms, masks, and armor. What makes a body threatening depends on the assemblage of threatening embodied practices.

The state does not respond to all racially threatening groups the same way. This is where the intersection of race and a normative embodied performance explains the form and degree of the state's response and the absence of a state response. For example, white nationalists and white power groups, such as neo-Nazis or member of the Ku Klux Klan, make their white bodies threatening to others via shaved heads, swastika and iron cross tattoos, openly carrying weapons, displaying confederate symbols, or wearing white hoods. They use their bodies to communicate white solidarity with other racist whites and try to instill fear in racial minorities and immigrants. White supremacist groups used figurative violence as a method of social control over racial minorities. This differs from white "color-blind" and "respectable racism" that is based on the avoidance of direct racial statements and observable embodied links with white nationalism (Bonilla-Silva 2015). Although elite whites and state actors are not synonymous, there is significant overlap through shared white discursive structures and white frames (Feagin 2013; Hohle 2018). In turn, the state does not criminalize or use police violence toward white nationalists as it has historically done to black groups.

This chapter explains how figurative violence was vital to the Black Panther Party's (BPP) success and was the focal point for elite white and state actors to mobilize against racial equality in the post-civil rights era. There is not a uniform state response to black social movements, nor is there a uniform ideological white response to black protest (Hohle 2009b). The state's response to blacks claims for equality is assembled by the links between the specific embodied performances, actual instances of racial integration, and threats to elite white power. Sociological analyses of the body and embodiment have to show that embodiment is important in of itself and avoid either substituting the body for identity or conflating an embodied analysis with textual and discursive analysis. Therefore, the next section specifically outlines a methodology and analytical strategy of how to study the body in historical and political sociology.

How to Study the Body in Historical and Political Sociology

How do we study bodies and embodiment within political sociology and historical sociology? This chapter uses comparative-historical methods that is standard practice within historical sociology (Lachmann 2013). The comparative part of the methodology looks for commonalities and differences between at least two entities under study. The historical part of the methodology analyzes change over time. Comparative historical methods allow one to analyze how black nationalist groups organized around the logic of figurative violence as a way to distinguish themselves from other aspects of the civil rights move-

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ment. It also allows one to analyze the various state responses to the BPP, including how the state response came about, which captures change over time, and the relations between the movement and the state. Data for this chapter come from primary sources and secondary sources. I use primary sources, such as published interviews, first-hand accounts of events, speeches, and memoirs, and materials produced by the different organizations. Primary source data are valuable because they allow one to analyze how the actors under study made sense of an event or situation at the time. Manuals, which include things like rules of conduct, capture how they did things and wanted the group to do things. I also use secondary sources, other historical accounts, to capture the structural forces at play and as a way to verify that groups did what they said they did.

Studying embodiment within historical and political sociology means incorporating the body into the methodological framework noted earlier. Embodiment captures how actors and groups internalize cultural structures, and through practice or performativity, have some degree of agency. Whereas the body has been used to explain the social reproduction of power and how identities are stabilized (Bourdieu 1990; Butler 1993). I want to understand how the body exerts effects on other social actors. For our purposes here, bodies are not only the objects of state control or state violence but are also a contributing factor that causes the state to act. The analysis of the body within comparative-historical methods requires multiple analytical steps, as the body should be analyzed relationally with other cultural, noncultural, and even nonhuman entities to capture the construction of the body and the body's impact on a given political outcome (Latour 2005).

The first step involves mapping the historical context. Historical sociology uses historical context to explain the emergence of large-scale social phenomenon, such as the rise of capitalism, nation-state formation, or social movement mobilization (Lachmann 2013). Defining the historical context means tracing how social structure makes social action possible as well as providing the limits of social action. The formation of either a specific or general social structure is understood to be salient and enduring into the present day, and relevant to explaining current social problems. Social structure should include the spatial location of bodies as well as the social location of bodies. The spatial location is important because resources are invested and concentrated in specific places and, in turn, this creates social isolation and shapes regional cultures (Gottdiener 2019). The social location emphasizes the intersections of social group membership and socioeconomic status, such as race and class. This explains how specific groups, such as white men, acquire privilege relative to multiple marginalized groups (Crenshaw 2016; Feagin and Ducey 2017; Hill Collins 1990).

The second step is analyzing how a social movement or political group constructs the body from their standpoint, being mindful of the political and interpretive context shaping group praxis. I use insights from semiotics. In its most basic use, semiotics is the study of how symbols acquire meaning (Barthes 1977). However, the body is more than a symbol, so we have to make a slight adjustment on how we analyze the body versus how we analyze text. Within semiotics, the sign is the meaning of the word or object, or for our cases here, the body. The sign is comprised of the signified and a signifier. The signifi-

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er is the actual social practice. The signified is the culturally ascribed meanings attributed to the embodied practice. Therefore, the units of analysis include the body's actual movements (or nonmovements) such as postures, walking, speech, dialect, health and well-being, styles of dress and appearance, eating habits, sexual practices, and basically anything that would fall under the category of self-care. The emphasis should be on the *how* bodies are made because that is where we locate the exercise of power. For example, the *how* can be found by analyzing training or instruction manuals or the lessons transmitted in the backstage of embodied performances. To say that a body is socially constructed means analyzing how signifieds are linked with various corporeal practices.

Social movements create idealized and normative categories to define group membership. Social movements will make and organize bodies into categories of good and bad. The normative category will not necessarily be constructed relationally between groups, such as black/white or bourgeoisie/proletariat. The category can be constructed in relation to an idealized concept like citizenship (Hohle 2013). Therefore, the coding of embodied practices should have at minimum two categories, good/bad, for each social actor under study. I have included a sample contingency table (see Table 1) to analyze how body captures connections and specific sites of resistance between the state and the social movement under study.

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Table 1 Sample Contingency Table to Analyze Embodiment in a Historical Context

Historical Context						
Social Actor	Interpretive Context		Knowledge Formation		Outcome	
	Objective, goal, or grievance	Normative claim	Body	Frame/dis-course	Intended political outcome	Actual political outcome
A. Social movement		Good:				
		Bad:				
B. State actor		Good:				
		Bad:				

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Although the body has been conspicuously absent from the study of the state, embodiment imposes the contextual and interpretative conditions for state actors to interpret social movements (Hohle 2010). State actors, including political office holders, bureaucrats and administrators, and the police, as well as social groups that make up the polity, including ordinary citizens and elites, read bodies as they draw from cultural frames, narratives, and the discourse of civil society. Social actors draw from the various interpretive contexts to judge others as good and bad, worthy or unworthy, or threatening and non-threatening (Alexander 1992; Katz 1996). However, the socially situated body within a given field can alter the meaning, desirability, and administration of social welfare programs. In particular, my work has emphasized how various racialized bodies, which includes white and black bodies, as well as important intersections between race and gender, shape and stabilize how state officials, historically elite white men, created a segregated welfare state to unfairly distribute means-tested benefits to exclude black women with children in rural areas from AFDC (Hohle 2013, 108–137). The elite white business class constructed a racially nonthreatening white body, expressed through embodied practices of moderation, and contrasted it to black bodies, which they defined as naturally inferior on the basis of physical differences, to draw ordinary white support for early neoliberal policy on the basis of good white workers (Hohle 2012; 2015, 59–62).

Black Authenticity and the Civil Rights Era

Local black nationalist groups began to appear in northern cities in the 1930s. Seven different black nationalist groups existed in Detroit, including the Nation of Islam. Sociologist Erdman Beynon called them “voodoo cults” in 1938 (Doane Beynon 1938; Lincoln 1961). Although none of the groups approached the membership levels, geographical footprint, legal victories, or political influence of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), they were the originators of using black authenticity to carve out a race-first political identity. At the time the NAACP was advancing racial equality primarily through legal challenges against segregation, the black nationalists were embodying a form of black authenticity as a direct challenge to white racism and status differences within the black community.

Black authenticity refers to the embodiment of an idealized “racially pure” black political agent. The logic of black authenticity is that whites cannot understand the lived experience of black people and thus are not equipped to lead and, in some cases, participate in black struggles for equality. Black authenticity switched the political struggle away from acquiring new rights to forcing the state to uphold its end of the deal and enforce existing rights. It switched the political focus away from integrating into existing social institutions that reproduce racism to creating new institutions designed to address the needs of the black community. Therefore, black authenticity included rebuilding black communities from the ground up, creating a black-owned labor market and electing black politicians to represent black people.

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Black authenticity is embodied. The Nation of Islam was the lone survivor of the Detroit-based black nationalist groups, in part, because their organizational structure extended beyond the temple and religious instruction and focused on retraining and remolding the black body. The Nation of Islam formed two institutions of note, the University of Islam and the Muslim Girl Training Classes. The Muslim Girl Training Class trained black women on the Nation of Islam's way to clean a house, sew, cook a Muslim meal, and take care of children. Black women were responsible for teaching everyday self-care and dietary practices that defined one as a member of the Nation of Islam. The University of Islam taught black history, Arabic, and trained black men in martial arts and bodybuilding to prepare black men to be a part of the Fruit of Islam, the Nation of Islam's internal police force. The bodies of black men were made muscular to be physically intimidating. They were made to reflect, even emphasize, the black stereotypes whites feared the most. The Fruit of Islam was responsible for enforcing the organization's moral codes, and it doled out punishments to members who misused temple funds, used narcotics, fell asleep during meetings, ate or sold pork, were overweight, or disrespected Muslim women (Lincoln 1961, 201). The punishment ranged from doing manual labor at a local Muslim temple to banishment from the group. Black authenticity was an achieved identity, accomplished through abstaining from embodied practices associated with whiteness and slavery.

Malcolm X positioned black authenticity as an alternative to the ideal of good black citizenship associated with Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) used citizenship schools to make racially non-threatening bodies. They accomplished this through role-playing and simulated demonstrations to train young black men and women to refrain from emotional outbursts associated with negative black stereotypes (Hohle 2009a). SCLC's Citizenship Schools provided lessons on hand writing and word pronunciation. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) trained leaders how to use their bodies to protect fellow protesters from white and police violence. Ideally, racially nonthreatening bodies would pave the way to desegregate neighborhoods, the workplace, schools, and public parks by creating alliances with sympathetic and anti-racist whites. Northern blacks remained suspicious. They could already vote and still endured discrimination in the housing and job market despite reflecting good black citizenship.

Figurative violence includes the expression of emotions. Bodies emote and are moved by affective stimulations. Emotions are natural, but they are something we learn to control. Malcolm X argued that blacks should freely express emotions because it was the most natural and, in turn, the most honest response to racial discrimination. Here is Malcolm X directly addressing the value of expressing emotions in relation to remaining racially non-threatening:

Here the man has got a rope around his neck and because he screams, you know, the cracker that's putting the rope around his neck accuses him of being emotional. You're supposed to have the rope around your neck and holler politely, you know. You're supposed to watch your diction, not shout and wake other people up

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—this is how you're supposed to holler. You're supposed to be respectable and responsible when you holler against what they're doing to you... . He dies with a responsible image, he dies with a polite image, but he dies. The man who is irresponsible and impolite, he keeps his life.

(Malcolm X 1990, 21–22)

Malcolm X isolated black suppression of emotions as a performativity of white power. A system of racist black codes and economic sanctions enforced by the state compelled blacks to accept their inferior social position relative to whites. For Malcolm X, training blacks to not hate or lash out was preparing them to remain compliant with the white power structure. Although the expression of emotion was a rejection of white power, it also amplifies the degree that the black body is threatening to whites.

Malcolm X and The Nation of Islam were not involved in electoral politics or the civil rights movement. They did not vote or participate in any marches or demonstrations. Their few real political acts targeted black imprisonment and police brutality. Nevertheless, they had a real impact on black political mobilization in the mid-1960s, as members of SNCC began organizing around the principles of black authenticity in Atlanta and Chicago. It is important to emphasize that these black nationalist groups were all *nonviolent*. What made the various civil rights era black nationalist groups threatening to elite whites and the state was the practice of figurative violence as they rejected Jim Crow customs and racist institutions.

The Black Panthers and Figurative Violence

The 1965 Voting Rights Act was both the high point of the civil rights movement and the beginning of its decline. On the one hand, King and other civil rights leaders became vocal critics of the war in Vietnam. In response, Lyndon Johnson wavered on his support for civil rights. On the other hand, other factions of the civil rights movement switched its focus from new rights to substantive issues of rising urban poverty, including residential segregation, growing inner-city slums, continued workplace discrimination, and police brutality. The shift from rights to urban issues reflected the change in where blacks lived, where they were allowed to live, and the growing problem of urban black poverty. The second great black migration, which began after World War II, and saw blacks migrate from southern rural areas to cities, included about one-third of the entire black population. By 1960, 73 percent of the black population lived in urban areas. That proportion rose to 80 percent by 1970. Cities concentrate people and resources, and thus, social problems like poverty and unemployment, crime and police brutality, and inadequate health care, are amplified in spatially concentrated areas (Massey and Denton 1998). Urban renewal strategies in the 1960s simply retraced the old racial zoning lines of the early twentieth century. A combination of legal restrictions on where blacks could live and banks redlining neighborhoods to deny loans to black homeowners created the black ghetto. Police violence and brutality was an undercurrent of everyday black life that came to the surface during the “ghetto revolts” of the mid-1960s (Feagin and Hahn 1973). The

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political and cultural landscape of the post-civil rights era posed new problems that could not be solved with new rights.

Huey Newton and Bobby Seal formed the BPP in 1966 in relation to the emerging urban social problems in the black community, specifically police brutality. Indeed, the BPP's original name was the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Although the national and urban political landscapes were in transition, the two embodied representations of good black citizenship and black authenticity continued to shape how Newton and Seal would mobilize the black community. The BPP had a direct relationship with SNCC, who wanted the Oakland activists to be the military wing of SNCC. The Oakland activists declined. The Oakland Panthers took their name from SNCC's Lowndes County Black Panther Party. Located in Alabama's black belt, SNCC's Black Panther Party created a tent city in 1965 after a white landlord evicted forty black families, who worked as sharecroppers, when he found out that they registered to vote. Each tent had two beds, a fire, and a gun (Tent Cities, n.d.). Thus, Newton and Seal drew from the embodied performances of black authenticity because their goal was to rebuild the black community by replacing white-centered social structures with black-centered ones.

The Panthers' embodied performance was organized around figurative violence. It was an assemblage of existing black authenticity and an expression of masculinity that exaggerated toughness and military-like disciplined bodies. The Panthers used a uniform of black leather jackets, sunglasses, rigid postures, and openly and legally carried guns. Similar to the civil rights groups that preceded them, the Panthers held training classes and produced rules of conduct for members to follow. Some aspects of the training classes included political lessons in black nationalism and socialism. They established a minimum reading time of "two hours per day" for leaders so they would remain informed of the changing political climate. However, much of the training focused on the normative embodied practices that defined the BPP. The Panthers held training sessions on how to clean a gun, load a gun, and shoot a gun. (To the best of my knowledge, the Panthers did not produce any printed manuals on how to handle a gun, as they did for their rules of conduct. Primarily because learning how to use a gun requires a few simple movements, it is information that is transmitted through hands-on lessons.) The rules of conduct were called "The 8 Points of Attention" and outlined how Panthers should "speak politely" and "not hit or swear at people" or "take liberties with women" (Austin and Howard 2006). The SCLC's citizenship schools also held lessons on the speaking styles, include pace and decibel levels, as well as how to interact with other blacks and with whites in public settings. The difference is found in the logic of racial integration embedded in good black citizenship versus the logic of autonomy embedded in black authenticity. The embodiment of good black citizenship communicated a singular racially nonthreatening black political agency to blacks and whites. The Panthers explicitly rejected good black citizenship, summing up King's political project as: "So black people may protest, but not protect. They can complain, but not cut and shoot. In short, black people must at all costs remain non-violent" (Austin and Howard 2006). The Panthers ensured that their members were good to one another to create and strengthen ingroup bonds around the ideals of black authen-

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ticity. This necessitated retracing and hardening outgroup boundaries between the black community and whites, and the black community and the state.

The BPP's embodied performance was a way of communicating a new political identity to other blacks and as a means of recruiting them into the movement. The Panthers were aware that their embodied performances were played out to two audiences. Bobby Seale noted that in the early days, Newton knew that the state and whites would call the Panthers "'Thugs and Hoodlums' but the brothers on the block ... they're gonna say, 'Them's some out-of-sight thugs and hoodlums up there'" (Austin and Howard 2006, 10). In part, the Panthers' figurative violent body filled the masculinity gap created in the black community, a gap that was traditionally filled by dignity acquired through participation in the labor market, which began abandoning urban areas in the 1960s. Figurative violence also transformed the victim into the hero, as it was incorporated in Panther narrative accounts of their encounters with the police. For example, stories of Newton's confrontation with the police circulated between party members and the local black community. One story recounted a planned rally to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X. The police showed up at the building that housed *Ramparts*, a former literary magazine, where Newton and other BPP members gathered. The police arrived with a television camera crew. Newton walked out of the building, past *Ramparts'* editor Warren Hinckle, placed an index card on the camera's lens, and told the cameraman to turn off the camera. When the cameraman attempted to grab Newton's arm, Newton threw him up against a wall and punched him. A police officer reached for his gun as he approached Newton. Newton taunted the officer, telling the officer to "draw it, you cowardly dog" while he pumped a cartridge into his own shotgun. The officer backed down. This prompted Cleaver to mutter that Newton was "the baddest motherfucker to shit between two shoes" (Hillard 2009). On another occasion when the police pulled over Newton while he was driving his father's car, Newton informed the police officer that he only had to give his identification, and then refused to hand over his or any of the other passengers' guns to the police. As the situation escalated, Newton stepped out of the car and dropped a round of ammunition into his M-1 shotgun. The police shouted at black onlookers to walk away, but Newton shouted back. He told the black onlookers that they did not have to go anywhere as long as they remained at a reasonable distance. Seale watched in awe as Newton called the police swines, sharecroppers, and dogs, prompting him to famously describe Newton as "the baddest motherfucker that ever set foot in history" (Newton 1973; Seale 1996). It was not just that Newton stood up to the police. All black civil rights groups stood up to the police. It was *how* he did it. By being racially threatening to the police and causing the police to back down, it established a link between figurative violence and a desired outcome. When Newton was arrested and convicted of involuntary manslaughter for killing a police officer in October 1967, instead of hurting the movement, local chapters of the BPP rallied around the "Free Huey" campaigns to increase membership (Bloom and Martin 2013).

The Panthers' embodied performances against police brutality were a direct challenge to state power. The police are an important nexus between the prison and the state, whose primary role is conducting surveillance over dangerous and unruly bodies. However, po-

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lice brutality represents the power of the sovereign. (This reading of Foucault's account of the police reflects a reading of Foucault's analytics of power as shifting forms of power—sovereign, discipline, and biopower—rather than as linear and competing paradigms of power [Foucault 2014]). Police brutality is not rational or calculating, nor does it take place in private. Police brutality is a spectacle: it targets the body, it is done in public, has witnesses, is ritualized, and is designed to reproduce state power through fear and intimidation. However, police brutality is also an intimate form of violence that typically occurs between men. Therefore, police brutality blurred the lines between public and private as it retraced the lines between white and black men. The physical pain from the billy club was paired with humiliation, “emasculatation, criminalization, and death” (Curry 2017, 4). The mythos of figurative violence is that it resists power on multiple fronts, targeting abstract state power and concrete relations between black citizens and police.

The Panthers' practice of figurative violence became the point of state opposition to the movement. The state opposition to the BPP came from the federal government and the state of California. The reason was that the BPP challenged two key state monopolies: the monopoly of violence and the monopoly of social welfare. The BPP challenged the state's monopoly of violence by conducting surveillance on the police. Armed with guns, they followed police cars on patrol and organized defense patrols to protect black neighborhoods from white police. This prompted local Oakland Representative Don Mulford to propose a change in laws that made it illegal to carry a loaded handgun in public. The California State Legislature passed the Mulford Act in 1967. It was a direct response to the Panthers' practice of openly carrying guns. Members of the BPP, twenty-four men and four women, traveled south to the California State House in Sacramento to protest the bill. They entered the state assembly building armed with guns and were promptly escorted to a small room. They did not do anything illegal and adhered to the Panthers' code of conduct designed to create a protective shield between them and the police. The lasting image was of Bobby Seale, armed and wearing his black beret, black leather jacket, and black pants, standing in front of the capitol building. According to Austin, this was how the Panthers were introduced to America (Austin and Howard 2006).

Why the abrupt change in gun law? When legal gun ownership was linked with black authenticity, guns became threatening and changed the meaning of guns and the image of the gun owner. While black figurative violence was intended to frighten whites and keep the police away and out of the black community, it inadvertently created a contextual and interpretative framework for white state officials to change policy and criminalize black protest. Then governor of California Ronald Reagan stated that the Mulford Law would “work no hardship on the honest citizen” (Winkler 2011). Reagan used black figurative violence to distinguish the “honest citizen,” meaning white citizen, from blacks. Like his political counterparts in the Deep South at this time, Reagan and other conservatives figured out that it was easy to deregulate unwanted laws and liberal social policy as long as they could conjure up a bad and dangerous black body.

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The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 changed the political climate of the post-civil rights era. Nixon openly used a southern strategy to attract whites to the Republican Party. The racist southern strategy troupe originated with George Wallace's presidential run in the 1964 Democratic primary elections. Wallace ran on a racist platform and managed to take a small but noticeable number of white voters from Johnson in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Gary, Indiana. The Panthers' racially threatening body provided an optimal embodied image of criminality that Nixon capitalized on. Nixon's rhetoric of law and order was a racist nod to the ghetto revolts of the mid-1960s, and his feigned support for the renewal of the Voting Rights Act in 1970 was because it drew whites from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party (Hohle 2018, 60).

Within this new political climate, the state's response was to rally the criminal justice system against the BPP and criminalize black poverty, the politics of black authenticity, and black protests in general. J. Edgar Hoover called the Black Panthers the "greatest threat to internal security." The FBI directed their COINTELPRO counterintelligence program to eliminate the BPP. Of the 295 COINTELPRO programs that the FBI admitted to conducting, 233 were aimed at the BPP (Churchill 2005). The FBI created the Ghetto Informant Program (GIP), which ran from 1967 to 1973, to collect information on urban black communities (Weiner 2012). Indeed, the state's response to the BPP was more severe than its response to any of the groups involved in the civil rights movement. Although the FBI defined white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan as terrorist groups, the FBI did not target them nor did the state criminalize racist white organizations or white poverty.

Biopolitics and the People's Free Medical Clinics

The second and perhaps more significant threat to state power was the BPP's People's Free Medical Clinics (PFMCs). The PFMCs were the BPP's primary political project starting in 1972. The PFMCs provided free health care, free breakfast to children, and other social services to the black community. In the early 1970s, the US health care system was organized around private hospitals and doctors, who charged fees higher than what poor blacks could afford and were located outside of black neighborhoods. A black nationalist group that provided social welfare and health care services further shifted black loyalties away from the state to the group making the immediate impact on the community.

The PFMCs ironically connected the bodies of ordinary black citizens to the BPP and the state. In contrast to their cop watch programs and collective housing endeavors that emphasized autonomy, the Panthers' PFMCs were part of a long-term strategy to rebuild the black community working with the state. Or at least, working with available public funds for medical care. This arrangement was not without risk. As Brown noted, working with the state meant "the risk of cooptation by the very medical institutions that it criticized and confronted" (Brown 2016, 1757). In part, the PFMCs were part of a longer history of black civil rights groups providing health care services to the black community. The PFMCs were also part of the development of community health centers made possible by LBJ's

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War on Poverty and the 1965 Social Security Act that gave Americans Medicaid and Medicare (Nelson 2011). Whereas Johnson turned a cold cheek to the civil rights movement, his Great Society Program created an infrastructure for groups like the Panthers to organize community health centers.

It was in the PFMC's examination room, where guns rested on the walls next to the examination tables and political posters hung on the walls, where we find how the BPP exercised biopower. One exercise of biopower was between patient and doctor during the medical inspection. The doctor provided direct observation over the body through pediatric screening and testing for sickle cell anemia. Another exercise of biopower was how the physician's body linked the black community with the medical profession and the state. The medical volunteers were also activists. The BPP instructed their volunteer physicians to always wear white coats to link the black community with mainstream medicine. The Panthers insisted that physicians look like physicians because it enhanced the legitimacy of the PFMCs. Making doctors look like doctors weakened boundaries between the black community and medicine. It replaced feelings of mistrust with trust. In this sense, the Panthers used the embodied physician-patient relations to establish the legitimacy of the PFMCs in the black community while also creating a legitimacy crisis for the state.

The Panthers' self-defense projects' embodied expressions of violence and masculinity have a tendency to mask the work and contributions of black women in the BPP. For sure, black men were the public faces of the movement, served in almost all the leadership positions, and made and enforced rules that prohibited black women from dating outside the organization. Nevertheless, black women still made important contributions to the BPP. As Farmer noted, black women "reimagined the roles and responsibilities" of black women in the community health centers as work that was not traditional woman's work (Farmer 2017). To put black women's work in context, 42 percent of black women were still employed as domestic workers in the homes of elite whites in 1970s (Branch 2011). Spencer showed that it was black women who "experimented with truly collective organizational structures for health, childcare, and education" (Spencer 2016, 4). Black women organized feminist community centers that challenged the intersection of racism and patriarchy embodied by the white male physician. The BPP's community centers offered rape counseling, access to birth control, including abortions, and lessons in midwifery and gynecology. Black women taught these skills as a form of self-inspection: a care of the self that was mobile, private, and done outside of the medical gaze of racist-patriarchal medicine.

The state's response to the Panthers' PFMC project differed from its response to the Panthers' self-defense projects. For one, the embodiment of the medical workers and patients was not wholly racially threatening. Physicians and nurses and hungry black children were not necessarily threatening, so police raids placed state legitimacy at risk. Because of the increases in local and federal police surveillance designed to break up the group and discredit the black nationalist project, the BPP deemphasized the expressions of figurative violence in favor of using the collective benefits of the community health centers to

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attract new members. The PFMC's only link to being racially threatening was that it was part of the BPP. It was all the state needed. So instead of using police raids, local state, county, and municipal governments used public health agencies to perform random health checks at the clinics. They used regulatory agencies to deny licenses or make constant demands on the clinics to prove that they were in regulatory compliance, which was a very expensive and time-consuming process. They also persuaded local landlords to evict clinics (Nelson 2011, 111–113).

Secondly, the state shifted its own biopolitical strategy from one that sought to incorporate challenges to the health care system to one that deregulated health care in order to stop the establishment of grassroots public health clinics. To illustrate, Nixon responded to the Panthers' demands for more testing for sickle cell anemia by calling for more money directing toward sickle cell research in his 1971 health address to Congress. By 1973, after the Panthers' PFMCs were operating in select cities across America, Nixon and other conservatives supported and helped to pass the Health Maintenance Organization Act. Whereas conservatives once viewed health maintenance organizations (HMOs) as the equivalent of socialized medicine, the BPP's use of public funds to establish their community health centers prompted a change in how white politicians and elites viewed HMOs. HMOs further privatized medicine and provided elite white men more control over the administration of health care.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the unique contribution of an embodied approach to sociology's subfields of political sociology and historical sociology. Embodiment captures how political actors' and ordinary citizens' understanding of politics is mediated through a myriad of embodied experiences with state institutions, including the police, social welfare, education, and medicine. If our understandings of politics and social policy were disembodied, charts, empirical studies, math, and logic would suffice to fix social problems and usher in the good society. Instead, the embodied attributes of any given performance can also produce sensations of attraction, repulsion, disgust, and fear. The struggle for equality is a corporeal one more than an ideological one.

The body captures the point of a real connection between mobilization and the state's response to a social movement. As shown in this chapter, the BPP's use of figurative violence did two things: it challenged the basis for inclusion/exclusion, *and* it communicated a normative political project to multiple audiences. The connection point (the body) is the site of the political struggle, and each body provides a new connection point between a social movement and the state and thus produces distinct state responses. While it is obvious that the bodies of black women project different political meanings than the bodies of black men or white women or white men, the normative aspects of black authenticity made black bodies threatening to the state. To draw a larger logical inference, if the goal of a social movement is civic inclusion, the social movement will project a nonthreatening body to weaken ingroup/outgroup boundaries to try and create a sympathetic state re-

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sponse. If the goal is structural change, the movement will project a threatening body to harden ingroup/outgroup boundaries, but it will also increase the probability of repressive state responses to the movement. There is a high probability that any given social movement will contain competing factions struggling for inclusion or autonomy.

Scholars and students interested in embodiment can draw from my approach to study how the body effects social and economic policy. The advantage is that it takes into account historical context, the normative aspects of group struggles, knowledge formation, and political outcomes. The types of research questions one could pursue include the following: How have states historically used the intersection of racial and gendered bodies to deregulate and administer social welfare policy? How has the historical variability of the embodiment of whiteness led to changes in immigration policy? How did medical movements historically use the sick body to change or deregulate public health and health care policy?

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Randolph Hohle

Department of Sociology, SUNY Fredonia