

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Nielsen

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White women. Further, 14 percent of Black women have annual incomes of \$50,000 or higher with ages 35–49 enjoying the highest income within the Black female cohort. For millennial women, 81 percent have never been married, up from 71 percent in 2005 and, with an average household size of 2.47, 29 percent of total Black American households contain a married couple. Black women also have embraced the social media movement #BlackGirlMagic, a term that describes a cross-platform gathering of empowered Black women who uplift each other and shine a light on the impressive accomplishments of Black women. According to the report, Black women “over-index by 29 percent for spending three to four hours each day on social networking sites and by 86 percent for spending five or more hours each day on social networking sites.” Especially adept at using technology and social media to trade opinions and offer recommendations, Black women 18 and

older, more than any other demographic group, have taken social media and adopted it for higher purposes, the report found. Whether they are buying cars, jewelry, smartphones or beauty products, the advice, referrals and feedback they receive from friends and community play an important role in Black women’s purchases, the report said. Forty-three percent of Black women say they like to share their opinions about products and services by posting reviews and ratings online; 47 percent agree that people often come to them for advice before making a purchase. “The trend of Black women becoming increasingly educated and driving the buying power of Black households, means that they are making purchase decisions that historically they didn’t make,” said Bianca Blake, a marketing specialist. “Couple that with trends of the millennial generation marrying and starting families later, the Black woman becomes an independent decision maker for much more of her journey through life, as opposed to abiding by decisions made by her parents, husband or heavily influenced by her children.”

Chicago Police Shooting Data May Reveal New Ways to Reduce Deaths and Racial Disparity

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(THE CONVERSATION) The Department of Justice (DOJ) is currently investigating the Chicago Police Department. The high-profile police shooting of teen Laquan McDonald — combined with the city’s efforts to prevent the public from learning about it — prompted the investigation. Given that the Justice Department is playing hardball with Ferguson, Missouri — suing the city following its refusal to voluntarily enter into an agreement to reform its police department and courts — advocates in Chicago may also expect something important to change as a result of DOJ involvement. In a recent paper, I analyzed 259 Chicago police shootings that occurred between 2006 and 2014. These are all of the incidents for which Chicago’s Independent Police Review Authority had made a completed report of investigation publicly available as of last month. My analysis of these incidents suggests that police reform in Chicago, like that in Ferguson, must include a critical examination of the enforcement tactics that police departments use in poor, minority communities. Better discipline and training are part of the solution, but they are unlikely to make dramatic difference by themselves. To create meaningful change, we must look beyond officer shooters in high-profile cases like that of McDonald and Michael Brown.

We shouldn’t just ask how officers might best manage suspects during an encounter, but why certain police-civilian encounters occur at all.

Police Shootings in Chicago

There is no such thing as a “typical” police shooting, but many share common features. For example, in nearly 50 percent of the 259 incidents I reviewed, police officers shot during or immediately following a foot chase. In my view, not all of these chases were necessary. We expect officers to chase and subdue a murder

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suspect who fires shots at officers as was described in one of the reports I read. But we ought to feel differently when officers chase and shoot a young Black man whose only offense was “looking in the officers’ direction” or “grabbing his...waistband and turning away.” Egregious high-profile shootings like McDonald’s too quickly lead us to the conclusion that the problem is “bad apples” — cops who use their badges as cover for racist aggression. The implication is that there are relatively few “bad apples” as compared to “good cops.” And that those “good cops,” with the right

training, will only shoot when necessary. Discipline and training are not enough. In reality, it is hard to know how many bad apples there are in any given department because neither police departments nor unions are keen on divulging that information. This is just one of many obstacles to punishing police officers for misconduct. The public was rightly frustrated, for example, when it emerged that Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke, who shot Laquan McDonald, had a long history of civilian complaints for excessive force and racist slurs. Had Van Dyke been appropriately disciplined for any of his earlier brutality and racism, perhaps McDonald would be alive today. But in a city like Chicago where there are tens of police shootings every year, it is hard to argue that every cop involved with a shooting is a “bad apple.” My review of the available cases reveals that it’s not just racist cops who shoot. In the shootings I examined, the demographic profile of officer-shooters looks much like the demographic profile of the department as a whole. Police shootings cannot be reduced to a simple story about White-on-Black racism because many of the police officers doing the shooting are Black. Most police shootings in Chicago are unlike the Laquan McDonald case in that officers typically claim a firearm threat prompted them to shoot. In nearly 80 percent of the

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— Martin Luther King, Jr.

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