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“I Don’t Believe in a Fun City; I Believe in a Safe City”: Fear of Crime and the Crisis of Expertise in New York City

In September 1970, New York City Mayor John Lindsay received an angry letter from Peter Szanton, president of the New York City Rand Institute. Both Szanton and his fledgling institute, the “first organization . . . devoted to the application of scientific methods of analysis to major problems of urban life,” typified a contemporary faith in the ability of professional expertise to solve urban problems.¹ But against the backdrop of critical investigative press reports into institute practices and the decision of city Comptroller Abe Beame to veto payment of consultants’ fees, Szanton expressed his frustration at a lack of support for the institute’s efforts from Lindsay, and an “inadequate,” “defensive and unconvincing” mayoral response to public criticism of its work.² In a little over eighteen months of operation, the institute had carried out more than one hundred studies of eight City agencies, delivering recommendations on increasing efficiency and improving service delivery and saving the city $20 million, according to Szanton’s estimate.³ Yet where, he asked, was the credit?

Szanton sought to answer this himself. “[Our] efforts . . . are intended to provide continuous analytic assistance, not single-shot studies . . . [Our] goals are not the production of impressive public reports, but the actual introduction of

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useful change. Perhaps two hundred people in the City understand why this should be. The rest do not,” he declared, hinting at the fact that expertise was an elite construct, suitable perhaps for those “major problems” and abstractions but ineffective in the arena of public opinion or political campaigns. To resolve the institute’s growing legitimacy crisis, Szanton demanded “a clear reaffirmation of Mayoral approval and support” that would restate to the public “the special role [the institute] will continue to play in City government.” Such a statement, he concluded, “must be carried forward if the application of analysis to public problems is to be understood and supported.”4 Yet while Lindsay had quickly established a relationship between Rand and the city in 1967—proclaiming their partnership “the most important development in the search for effectiveness in city government for many, many years”—and committed considerable resources to the institute’s creation two years later, in this instance he remained silent.5 Hit hard by Lindsay’s rejection, Szanton was forced to look to federal and nongovernmental sources for funding before the institute was wound up by Lindsay’s successor—Abe Beame, ironically—in 1975.6

This vignette is illustrative of a broader transformation in American public policy norms during the late 1960s and early 1970s, an era in which long-standing intellectual assumptions and centers of authority were called into question and, in many cases, rejected. Urban “experts” such as Szanton had enjoyed considerable power and autonomy in the two and a half decades following 1945, legitimized by a political and intellectual milieu that downplayed ideological conflict and anticipated the resolution of social problems through the “rational” application of knowledge and technocratic expertise. But having for most of the 1960s identified his administration and his city with expertise, why was Lindsay unwilling to do so by 1970? Why did the optimistic proclamations of urban experts such as Szanton and their political sponsors run aground so quickly? And what can this process tell us about the changing fortunes of this brand of liberalism, its policy preferences and adherents, and the new regime that emerged as its alternative?

While scholars have explored equivalent crises of expertise in overseas nation-building, poverty, or urban planning, few policy areas illustrate these changes more effectively than that of crime control.7 First, and contrary to the historiographical orthodoxy, Lindsay, like many other urban liberals during the 1960s, did not want for ideas in his attempts to fight crime. Experts provided liberals with a variety of weapons, from civil rights and social welfare programs to administrative techniques and new technologies, with which not
only to wage war on crime, but also, they predicted, to defeat it. In return, liberals such as Lindsay initially granted experts great agency and capital, figuratively and substantively, in devising policy responses and solutions to crime. Second, crime—and in particular fear of crime—exposed the failings of expertise: not only an inherent elitism and incompatibility with public opinion, as Szanton suggested, but the limits, even hollowness, of its core claims, its insensitivity to local interests, its inability to address the personal, emotional experience of crime and its ineffectiveness in the political arena. The interaction between these failings and the politicization of crime in New York—something expertise itself contributed to and often exacerbated—expedited a broader crisis of expertise from which it was unable to recover. The case of the Lindsay administration thus offers a window onto a wider process of ideological and policy transformation; not simply a transition from a liberal era to a conservative one, but a shift in questions of who should hold authority, what constitutes “expertise,” and the broader purpose and possibilities of public policy.

It is only recently that historians have begun to probe the importance of crime—and public fear of crime—to the decline of the postwar liberal order during the 1960s and 1970s. Recent works by Michael Flamm, Heather Thompson, Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, and Jonathan Simon, among others, have done much to demonstrate the centrality of crime to the transformation of American political and cultural life since the 1960s: be it in its stalling of the drive for racial equality; its reconfiguration of redistributive social programs and the American welfare state; its destructive impact on labor unions or the nation’s cities; or its construction of a new conservative national political majority.

Yet while conservative actors are the key players in the vast majority of this work, dynamic and ingenious in their construction of a new discourse of “law and order,” liberals often appear as passive or vacillating in their acquiescence to the new agenda. For Flamm, “Liberals never found their voice on this issue [of crime];” for Vesla Weaver, liberals were the victims of “political traps” that forced them “to forgo their ideal outcomes and [move] closer to the conservative position.” Trapped in a “liberal quagmire” on crime, their war in Vietnam inhibiting the political or fiscal commitment required to confront the “root causes” of crime they identified, their devotion to racial justice translated by their opponents into a tacit endorsement of civil unrest and urban disorder, national liberals struggled to present alternatives to—and in some cases blindly joined—the conservative insurgency. Focusing primarily on national developments, historians have largely maintained this narrative
of liberal weakness and failure. Few, it seems, credit postwar liberals with much agency or ingenuity on crime: a factor, they argue, crucial to their subsequent national political travails.

This article, in shifting the focus from national politics in Washington to local governance in New York City, argues differently; that postwar urban liberals, especially at the local level, were in fact highly attentive toward issues of crime and criminality. Scholars’ emphasis on national rather than local politics obscures important local dynamics, especially the efforts of municipal officials politically accountable on issues of crime and law enforcement to grapple with the politics of crime and present coherent responses to it.¹¹ Not only this, but rather than offering “self-righteous indignation” or “leap[ing] upon the “law and order” bandwagon” in response to rising crime, as some have argued, many liberal officials also possessed a powerful, sophisticated intellectual toolkit with which to confront it: expertise.¹²

By “expertise,” I mean two things. First, a body of professional “experts” ennobled by, and embedded within, the institutions of the postwar state. Identifying themselves as reformers, modernizers, even technicians, these experts were based initially in universities, then in Washington’s burgeoning apparatus of federal agencies, before arriving in city halls with the expansion of federal aid to cities during the 1960s. Second, I mean an ideology of “expertise”: an optimistic, even hubristic belief, held largely by liberal political elites, in the perfectibility of human society and the power of academic endeavor and public policy, with experts working as agents of the state, to achieve that goal. For the advocates of expertise, social conditions such as crime were complex but soluble academic problems, not political ones, to be confronted by ostensibly rational solutions. Yet despite such claims, the ideology of expertise was a political project, its identification of what was “efficient” or “rational” designed to extend the authority of its “experts”, its ambitions, values, and fortunes tied to those of postwar programmatic liberalism.¹³ While not the only liberal solution to crime on offer in the 1960s, the adoption of expertise by many local political elites queries historical narratives that presume the hesitancy of many liberals on rising crime, or their failure to offer alternatives to the conservative “law and order” agenda adopted in their stead.

Of course, this is not to argue that expertise and, by extension, liberalism succeeded in the fight against crime during the 1960s and 1970s. The rise in violent crime in American cities during this period underlines that they did not, and the postwar faith in expertise endured a considerable crisis, even collapse, during these years. But by acknowledging the presence of a coherent
set of policy assumptions—a liberal “expert politics”—for urban problems such as crime, and the fierce local struggles over these problems’ resolution, we can perhaps better understand what replaced it; in particular, the concurrent rise of atavistic, pessimistic, and performative solutions to crime and disorder in the latter part of the twentieth century. These ideas would perhaps not have gained traction so easily were it not for the presence of an alternative, previously dominant, worldview to rebuke, a worldview that reified a very different set of values. Acknowledging this point finesses our understanding of an important shift in American public policy that is of continuing relevance to this day.

The politics of expertise retains a long history in American political culture. The historian Brian Balogh has illustrated the growing prominence of expertise in the first half of the twentieth century, beginning with the Progressive Era’s “quest for order” and the dramatic expansion of federal regulation and state planning during the Roosevelt years of depression, recovery, and war. The result, Balogh has written, was a “proministrative state” by the 1950s, in which professional, nonpartisan experts staffed a new network of federal agencies, task forces, and commissions and became an “essential political resource” to government.¹⁴

However, it was the early 1960s that marked the apex of the postwar faith in expertise. Legitimised by two decades of economic growth and a Cold War political culture that valorized science and distrusted ideology, this was an era of general bipartisan agreement about the utility of professional expertise, aligned with the power and largesse of the state, to the nation’s affairs. Contemporary observers noted the development of a “New Class” of technocrats, intellectuals and planners for a new postideological age. For Daniel Bell, these were “‘the new men’ . . . the scientists, the mathematicians, the economists and the engineers,” in whose “research corporation[s] . . . industrial laboratories . . . experimental stations and . . . universities’ public authority now resided.” Daniel Moynihan wrote of “the professionalization of reform,” in which the impetus for policy innovation came not from voters, political parties or local interests, but from a new body of organised professional experts empowered by Balogh’s “proministrative state” and operating almost above the political sphere.¹⁵

However, despite its claims to objectivity, expertise remained an ideology dependent upon the sponsorship of political elites—as Bell noted, “It is not the technocrat who ultimately holds power, but the politician”—and the existence, in Washington at least, of political consensus.¹⁶ Expertise thus found its purest expression during the Great Society administrations of Kennedy and Johnson, where public policy, Arthur Schlesinger observed, had become
“no longer a matter of ideology but of technocratic management.” Kennedy’s rhetoric heralded the triumph of expertise: “The central domestic issues of our time,” he declared in 1962, “relate not to basic clashes of philosophy or ideology but to ways and means of reaching common goals—to research for sophisticated solutions to complex issues . . . challenges for which technical answers, not political answers, must be provided.” Likewise, the impetus for much of Johnson’s Great Society came not from public demand but from the legion of experts and technocrats appointed to more than one hundred White House task forces and commissions.\textsuperscript{18} Social scientists such as Columbia’s Lloyd Ohlin and Richard Cloward, whose research on juvenile delinquency and “opportunity theory” underpinned the War on Poverty, and the sociologist James Coleman, author of the 1966 Coleman Report on educational inequality, played a major role in the shaping of Great Society programs, believing public policy to be the medium by which social problems, previously seen as intractable social conditions, could now be identified, evaluated, and resolved.\textsuperscript{19} Such initiatives also required the design of complex technologies to manage them, from real-time computer simulations offering “objective” predictive scenarios to the Planning Programming Budgeting System pioneered by original “Whiz Kid” Robert McNamara at Ford and then the Pentagon.\textsuperscript{20}

Almost every major area of public policy was affected by this embrace of expertise, and crime and law enforcement—growing concerns as the nation’s crime rates spiked alarmingly during the 1960s—were no exception.\textsuperscript{21} Johnson, declaring a federal “War on Crime” in 1966, typified the postwar faith in the power of expertise to confront crime. His Presidential Crime Commission, packed with sociologists and legal scholars from Yale, Harvard, and Columbia, would “replace the crutches of slogans, habits and reflex with the firm support of knowledge and fact.”\textsuperscript{22} The commission’s final report, \textit{The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society}, further reflected the ideology of expertise. Professionalization, modernization, and “efficiency” were identified as necessary attributes of modern crime prevention; “knowledge” and “expertise” were essential traits in the recruitment of criminal justice personnel; police departments “should welcome the efforts of scholars and . . . experts to understand their problems and operations.” To extend its authority, it demanded further “advice and studies by expert groups” into crime and its causes, including the creation of two White House commissions to serve as “instrument[s] for reform.” “If America is to meet the challenge of crime,” the commission concluded, “it must welcome new ideas. . . . It must spend time and money. It must resist those who point to scapegoats, who use facile slogans about crime. . . . \textit{It must seek knowledge.”}\textsuperscript{23}
Although its findings were endorsed by both political parties, underscoring the powerful consensus underpinning the politics of expertise, the report was not without its critics. “The Commission’s staff talked with too many sociologists, and not nearly enough cops,” railed the conservative columnist James J. Kilpatrick. “What matters to the average citizen is not...the abstract of statistical problems or the sociologists’ long range solution.” The political scientist James Q. Wilson agreed, concluding that crime was “not amenable to “solutions” and asking, “What do we do tomorrow morning that will reduce the chance of my wife having her purse snatched by some punk on the way to the supermarket?” However, despite illustrating the urgency of urban crime and its intensely personal, felt quality, Kilpatrick and Wilson were lonely voices. The commission’s promise that “America can control crime if it will,” the proliferation of research institutes working on domestic policy issues, and Johnson’s appropriation of millions of federal dollars for local law-enforcement studies, adding monetary incentives to research aimed at crime’s abatement, institutionalized the War on Crime and ensured that it would be fought primarily by the forces of expertise.

Local officials, especially in the nation’s cities, found this expert politics equally seductive. Anxieties over an escalating “urban crisis,” plus the infusion of federal funds into urban areas, saw cities reimagined as giant “laboratories” for the nation’s experts. Private consultancies such as the Rand Corporation diversified their operations to tackle urban as well as military dilemmas—by 1969, 20 percent of Rand research was dedicated to urban issues, compared to zero in 1960—and mayors recruited ideas and personnel from academia and the research industries in their attempts to confront the crisis, institutionalizing a wider consensus about the utility of expertise to urban governance. And as in Washington, expertise contributed to local efforts to combat crime. Police in Chicago trialed systems analysis and an IBM computer program to map crime hotspots in the city, initiating a record four thousand arrests in 1964. In Los Angeles, the maiden project of the Los Angeles Technical Services Corporation [TSC], the nation’s first “urban think factory,” unveiled by Mayor Sam Yorty in 1967, used Department of Defense computer technology to enable LAPD officers to process crime reports from any patrol car in the city. The high stakes, especially in the wake of the recent Watts riots underlining the immediacy of the urban crisis, justified the cost of such initiatives: “Properly applied modern technology and systems development can prevent urban areas from becoming the living nightmares so many predict,” the TSC declared.

Perhaps more than any other city, New York City exemplified both the promise of American cities and the “living nightmare” they threatened to become.
While on the surface it maintained its status as E. B. White’s glittering “capital of the world,” it was also evident that by the mid-1960s New York had become the exemplar of the urban crisis. Structural economic changes and deindustrialization locked many recent black and Puerto Rican migrants to the city into cycles of unemployment and poverty. Political corruption within the local party system and civil service inhibited mobility for these new arrivals while encouraging an atmosphere of inertia within the administration of Mayor Robert Wagner, a leader whose vision, the *New York Herald Tribune* averred, “ends at the wall of a political clubhouse.” Racial unrest and polarization was on the increase: while eight hundred thousand middle-class whites flocked to the suburbs during the Wagner years, the city was rocked by racial rioting and disorder in 1964 after a black youth was killed by an off-duty white policeman. And crime in New York was rising fast: violent crime increased by over 7 percent year-on-year during the early 1960s and New York ranked well above the national average for crimes committed against persons. High-profile cases, such as the brutal 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese or the shooting of a Columbia University physics professor in Central Park, established an image of New York City as violent, lawless, even out of control: a *New York Times* editorial described “a city where crime and violence are on the rampage.” This perception was underlined by a series of 1965 articles in the *Herald Tribune* entitled “New York City in Crisis”: in its issue on crime, the newspaper described New York as “a city where no one is a complete stranger to violence” and “people are afraid to go out at night.”

The Republican John Lindsay would be the executive charged with confronting these issues. Rather than a flailing advocate of an exhausted Great Society liberalism, unable to tame the “ungovernable city” and ultimately responsible for New York’s fiscal decline, Lindsay was an innovative chief executive, committed to the application of modern management techniques and outside expertise to urban problems. In his recent study of city sanitation policy, Themis Chronopoulos describes Lindsay as developing a “new standard of urban governance” in New York, identifying inadequate service delivery and seeking to improve city life via expert-led technocratic solutions. The efforts of the Lindsay administration in the areas of crime control and policing—initiating cultural change in entrenched bureaucracies; pursuing improved administrative performance through scientific management, rational planning and the use of external experts; deploying new technologies to reduce crime—reflected similar impulses. Yet while Chronopoulos credits Lindsay with rebuilding the Department of Sanitation, Lindsay’s attempts to combat crime were less successful. The administration’s objectives were undermined by the
resistance of local actors and bureaucracies, sectional and ideological conflict, and the rapid politicization of crime in the city: trends that expertise had promised to transcend but that it itself often initiated, invalidating many of its core claims and crudely exposing its limitations. Most fundamentally, in failing to translate policy innovations into visible results observed and felt by New Yorkers, expertise proved incapable of addressing not simply crime but the increasingly politicized fears and anxieties attached to it, establishing a popular perception of policy failure that would be fully exploited during Lindsay’s 1969 reelection campaign. Thus even as his expert solutions began to deliver some programmatic results, the discourse of expertise was abandoned in favor of performative, “common sense” policy preferences, anticipating a wider crisis of expertise and process of ideological transformation that would define the 1970s.

Lindsay, despite his Republican affiliation, personified the liberal faith in the politics of expertise. His background, as leader of the progressive Republican faction in New York and then congressional representative for Manhattan’s “Silk Stocking” district during the Kennedy-Johnson years, sharpened his beliefs in the virtues of modernization, reform and efficiency, and the power of government when aligned with expertise to achieve these goals. Though a native New Yorker, his Ivy League education and WASP patrician image meant he often mixed more easily with academic technocrats than he did the city’s police officers, union leaders, or political bosses. Allied to his personal charisma, energy, and zeal, Lindsay radiated the optimism and self-confidence of postwar liberalism: “People say that New York cannot be governed, that it is doomed to stay a city where you cannot walk the streets safely. . . . [But] we can build the kind of city that will capture the best this town has within it. We can turn the enormous energy and intelligence of this city’s people into a powerful force for change. . . . That is not a dream. . . . It is something that can be done.”

Throughout his 1965 campaign for mayor, Lindsay reiterated similar themes. Shunning partisan labels, he identified himself as the candidate of change, a crusading figure promising activist, “good government” to rectify the problems of the city and the torpor and parochial partisanship he identified with his predecessor. His New York would be “Fun City,” a vibrant center of culture and enterprise. The challenges facing it were great, he acknowledged, but not insurmountable: “The city,” he wrote in classically rationalist tones, was “[not] a condition to be avoided, [but] a problem to be solved.” Technical expertise and scientific management, Lindsay proclaimed, would confront the city’s problems more effectively than the “power brokers” and political bosses who
dominated the city’s bureaucracy, and circumvent “the irrelevant dictates of party politics,” which, he charged, inhibited efficiency and reform. His advisers warned of a “wholesale housecleaning” in City Hall, with incumbent officials—often, it should be acknowledged, those hostile to Lindsay’s objectives—removed and clubhouse leaders denied access to city jobs. Instead, Lindsay promised a government of “men of conscience and conviction,” who would “reject ignoble partisan intrigue and join in a massive effort to make real our dreams for New York.”

Thus even before assuming office, Lindsay began to actively create a new culture of expertise in city politics, establishing task forces in the areas of crime, education, housing, poverty, and transportation, each staffed by “top experts in urban affairs” from outside the city bureaucracy. This process of what Charles Morris calls “technocratic expansion” continued as the new mayor commissioned efficiency studies of city services by external consultants and consulted California’s Systems Development Corporation on new computer technologies. The consulting firm McKinsey implemented McNamara’s PPBS across all city departments, while government records in all city agencies were computerized. And consciously reversing the personnel policies of his predecessors, Lindsay recruited more than 250 policy analysts, many of them with graduate degrees in city planning or public administration, to fill city posts previously reserved for political appointees. Budget Director Frederick Hayes, a Harvard economist poached from Johnson’s Bureau of the Budget; twenty-six-year-old Harvard law graduate Jay Kriegel, responsible for criminal justice matters—these would be what Lindsay called his “urbanists,” his “best and the brightest.” The mayor referred to them as “modern men”: technocratic experts attuned to what he defined as, “a whole new world, a world of Washington, of large and complicated programs, of science, design and planning . . . a world almost wholly foreign to the precinct power dealer.”

Few policy areas received greater attention from the new mayor and his “urbanists” than that of crime control. A keynote campaign speech on law enforcement in June 1965, in which Lindsay identified a “crisis in crime” in New York that “we must, can and will correct,” serves as an early indicator of his faith in expertise. Criticizing police department inefficiency and rejecting calls for additional police numbers, Lindsay declared the need for “new tools, fresh efforts and bold innovations” to confront crime, including professionalization of the police department, adoption of “the resources offered by planning and modern technology,” and the enlistment of expertise to “help policemen step out of the age of paper files, manual searches and unscientific manpower allocations.” “We cannot afford to fear analysis, planning techniques or
technology,” he concluded, “we must encourage and utilize them.”

Lindsay’s six-page white paper on crime, “Operation Safe City,” made expertise and its ability to resolve crime major themes: “At this time in the destiny of our city, all of man’s creative genius—the genius which has reached to the stars and the bottom of the oceans—must now be harnessed to battle crime in the streets,” Lindsay wrote. “I am supremely confident that we can win that battle.” Revealing that “experts have long recognized that automobile police patrol increases efficiency, coverage and effectiveness,” he promised increased mobile patrols and new computer systems for predicting crime patterns. And speaking in October in Crown Heights, where local residents fearful of crime had organized a patrol to deter criminal activity, Lindsay heralded the ability of government to provide for public safety. “Safety is the job of the City, not the individual,” he affirmed, promising new police technologies and “modern communications” that would respond to emergency calls “in seconds.”

Lindsay’s crime-control initiatives as mayor reflected many of these impulses. In the style of his Progressive antecedents, he sought to reform—and at times aggressively confront—entrenched bureaucracies and institutions, notably the city’s Police Department (NYPD). An independent Law Enforcement Task Force, led by former federal judge Lawrence Walsh, was commissioned to investigate departmental practices. Its report, published in early 1966 and written by Kriegel, was a classic statement of liberal expertise applied to policing; as one Lindsay biographer has noted, the report “brimmed with reform rhetoric. Modernization was its catchword.” It called for an overhaul of police operations, from the centralization of communications and the motorization of patrol to the rational organization of manpower resources and improved statistical reporting on police response times and case clearances. It condemned a police organizational structure that had evolved “not from scientific planning but rather from convenience, political expediency and pressure groups.” Most controversially, the report endorsed calls from civil rights organizations in the city for an independent Civilian Complaint Review Board, separate from the department’s own internal panel, which would consider allegations of police misconduct and increase opportunities for racial minorities. While the review board aimed to deliver racial justice and improve community relations, it can also be viewed through this prism of institutional reformism: underlining the administration’s “good government” credentials, restoring public confidence in a major city bureaucracy, and reforming “outmoded, inefficient” police practices.

Nonetheless, such expert-led reformism was not without a political edge. When Police Commissioner Vincent Broderick publicly voiced his opposition
to the independent review board, he was swiftly replaced by an outsider, Howard Leary, who as commissioner in Philadelphia had already worked alongside such a board. The administration's promotion of Jewish Sanford Garelik and African American Lloyd Sealy to two senior uniformed positions immediately after Broderick's replacement, conjoined with the resignation of three high-profile Irish American officers, led to speculation of an administration assault on an “Irish mafia” in the department deemed hostile to Lindsay.\(^49\) The following year another outside agency, the Vera Institute, was recruited—for $300,000—to implement the major findings of the Law Enforcement Task Force. Lindsay heralded the new arrivals as “a team of highly skilled professionals” who would target “sensitive areas in the system amenable to change.”\(^50\) Such rapid administrative reorganizations, publicly heralded as apolitical drives toward “modernization,” “efficiency,” and “reform,” hinted at the political goals that lay behind Lindsay’s—and expertise’s—attempts at institutional reform.\(^51\)

Despite its bruising encounters over the Task Force report and the review board, the administration stubbornly continued to call upon external agencies in its attempts to reform the NYPD. In 1968, the Rand Corporation was commissioned at a cost of nearly $1 million to conduct analyses of departmental practices, from recruitment and training to plainclothes policing and detective work. “I can think of nothing of more interest or excitement or important in New York than this association with Rand,” the mayor informed Leary. Other external experts from McKinsey, MIT’s Urban Systems Lab and Stony Brook University’s Urban Science department were drafted in to advise the department on management and budgeting techniques. “The redesign of crime prevention and law enforcement efforts could achieve major advances in effectiveness [by] following pure McNamara-Hitch approaches [PPBS],” Hayes noted in early 1967.\(^52\) While offering Lindsay the possibility of savings in police efficiency, again the political objectives of such external experts were not exactly unclear. Using outside agencies and consultants offered Lindsay a potential means of circumventing institutions such as the City Council or Board of Estimate—as well as the NYPD itself—which might themselves prove resistant to the mayor’s agenda.

Elsewhere, Lindsay also introduced a strategic planning operation to New York’s criminal justice system, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The CJCC responded to the Crime Commission’s call, echoing Lindsay’s vision for city administration, for state and local governments to establish “formal machinery for planning,” for “significant reform is not to be achieved overnight. . . . It is the product of thought and preparation.”\(^53\) Lindsay’s new
“superagency,” uniting the city’s law enforcement, correctional, and judicial offices, as well as the Vera Institute and academic experts, followed a similarly functionalist logic. The CJCC represented “a total effort . . . a total mobilization of the resources of the city . . . a total system of crime-fighting machinery,” Lindsay explained. Appealing to the federal Office of Law Enforcement Assistance for funds, Lindsay predicted that coordinating “independent and polarized agencies . . . could be a major step in a realistic attack on crime. Only by viewing these six functions as parts of a single integrated system can we begin to make each function effective [and] efficient.” Once operational, the CJCC focused largely on the establishment of “program priorities” and “standards and goals” for the city’s criminal justice agencies, the coordination of pilot projects designed to improve agency efficiency, and the establishment of a central information bureau for data collection and analysis. Each reflected similar managerialist initiatives implemented across city agencies during the Lindsay years, and each reflected efforts by the administration to further centralize authority within City Hall.

The administration heavily promoted modernization and efficiency wherever possible. During the 1965 campaign, Lindsay had affirmed that “with proper management skills and the use of advanced technological techniques, we can increase the impact and efficiency of the police force by up to 20 percent,” and once in office, he continued to attack “archaic concepts of law enforcement” and herald the novel and the new. The Law Enforcement Task Force, praised by the Times for its vision of “modern law enforcement,” pledged a “war on paperwork” to free officers from clerical duties and put them on the streets, streets that they would patrol in new one-man cars rather than on foot to maximize efficiency. Both innovations were recommended by Rand. Unveiling a new police communications center in 1968, Lindsay paid tribute to the experts who “provided technical skills . . . [and] modern management techniques [that] can slice through bureaucratic red tape,” and praised the new systems for “moving our City from an outmoded and cumbersome police system to the most modern and efficient in the world.” Likewise new police “super-precincts,” consolidating seventy-nine local precincts into fifty-five, promised to streamline law-enforcement activities, rationalize the allocation of resources according to crime patterns, and increase police coverage.

Finally, Lindsay delivered new technological innovations in the fight against crime. New computerized systems and models designed by Rand and IBM (Emanuel Savas, head of urban systems at IBM, was appointed to the Mayor’s Office of Administration in 1967) were introduced to the Police Department to replace two thousand administrative forms and to monitor police response
times, clearance rates, and manpower allocations. Such systems—and the empirical data they provided—would dramatically improve crime reporting, if not crime rates, in the city. Lindsay also introduced the 911 telephone number and SPRINT communications system—described by Leary as “a pioneering effort in this era of scientific and professional law enforcement”—with similar aims in mind. Deputy Police Commissioner John F. Walsh, exhibiting the modernist fascination with technology, declared that SPRINT would “do the work of the human brain with the speed and accuracy which is far beyond human capability.” Other innovations, from mobile scooters and Bronco jeeps to walkie-talkies, CCTV cameras, and a police “electronics war room” (many funded by federal monies via the 1965 Law Enforcement Assistance Act), were introduced to increase the police’s mobility and efficiency and restore public faith in the city.

However, despite the fanfare, Lindsay’s crime control policies encountered a series of obstacles in their implementation. Not only did these obstacles frustrate the administration’s objectives, but they brought into sharp relief the failings of expertise. Having pledged to keep crime in the hands of disinterested experts, Lindsay contributed to its increasing politicization as he became further embroiled, even after Broderick’s dismissal, in a series of bitter conflicts with powerful local bureaucracies and interests—the very “irrelevant dictates” expertise had promised to transcend. For example, in 1966 the administration lost a public referendum on its civilian review board, after a successful political campaign by the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association [PBA] warned that law enforcement would be “virtually paralyzed” by civilian review in a city in which “crime and violence are the terrifying realities of our time.” On occasion the campaign, in which civil rights groups and a largely white police department lined up on opposite sides, threatened to escalate into overt racial conflict, disputing expertise’s rationalist expectation that it would displace such divisions: the PBA ran a controversial advertisement showing a white woman alone on a dark subway platform under the heading, “The Civilian Review Board must be stopped! Her life . . . may depend on it,” and white assembly districts voted overwhelmingly to abolish the review board while minority districts voted to retain it. The campaign was thus trebly damaging for the politics of expertise: it constituted an embarrassing defeat for Lindsay, expertise’s political sponsor; it served to further politicize crime in the city, pushing the experts onto unfamiliar, uncomfortable terrain; and in doing both it confounded expertise’s own logic and rationale.

Even after 1966, Lindsay was forced into further protracted disputes with the PBA over his attempts to reform police operations, notably Rand’s
recommendation of a “fourth platoon” that would increase patrols in the high-crime hours from 6 PM to 2 AM. Lindsay, who brandished “six sheets of statistics” gathered by his experts to publicly promote and explain the initiative, refused to compromise with the PBA, describing the platoon as nonnegotiable—based as it was on months of research and reams of quantitative data—and an “issue [that] transcends politics.” Yet on this occasion Lindsay possibly needed to be political and compromise—perhaps renegotiating collective-bargaining agreements with the PBA in light of likely new night-work requirements for officers—to ensure necessary support from a major interest group for his proposals. Such recurring conflict further undermined expertise, illustrating that its claims to objectivity and political or sectional transcendence could often be illusory, or worse, hollow, and often self-defeating.

Elsewhere, the Rand studies’ critiques of existing police practices had the unintended impact of producing further resentment and alienation within the department they sought to reform. Police rank-and-file newsletters were sharply critical of the increased involvement of private agencies and experts with limited law-enforcement experience in their work, while interest groups such as the PBA, dismissing Lindsay’s claims to objectivity, condemned increased City Hall interference in police work and organized to resist the recommendations through work slowdowns and public protests. Rand analysts even encountered hostility from senior officers who had been appointed by Lindsay or were broadly supportive of the mayor’s efforts, but now found themselves forced to implement unpopular policies. Leary later recalled that he had “expected Rand to supply experts,” but instead encountered “young MIT graduates” with little knowledge of policing and little patience with police officials; Garelik testified that the Rand analyses were “a failure” and their studies “tossed out.” By early 1970, a frustrated Peter Szanton informed the administration, after a communication breakdown between the NYC Rand Institute and Leary, that “a relationship with the Police forced on them from above would [not] be productive enough to justify the trouble in establishing it.” Such developments again illustrated expertise’s role, intentional or not, in politicizing crime and law enforcement in New York, and proved a chastening experience for many of Lindsay’s experts. “Officials who expect to use consultants to force innovation on subordinate agencies,” Szanton later concluded ruefully, “should think twice before proceeding.”

Beyond police relations, other reforms created as many problems as they had promised to solve. Kriegel wrote to Leary on several occasions in 1967–68 to express Lindsay’s disquiet at the delays encountered by callers to the new 911 line, while the PBA condemned one-man patrol cars for putting officers at
risk after a number of widely publicized attacks on patrolmen, threatening strike action if the cars were not withdrawn. Furthermore, as crime rose, the administration’s attempts at precinct consolidation were undermined—and eventually postponed—after community protests against the closure of local police stations, betraying an inherent insensitivity to local concerns within the centralizing politics of expertise. Finally, the sheer cost of expert-led solutions—city spending on consultants’ fees mushroomed from $8 million to $70 million between 1965 and 1969—also engendered a backlash from Lindsay’s opponents and the public. Such solutions were largely shelved from 1970 onward after Comptroller Beame’s veto and as an impending fiscal crisis began to bite.

Crime’s increasing politicization in New York during the Lindsay years would also have negative political consequences for the administration in other areas. In 1967, Kriegel informed Lindsay that while the work of the CJCC had delivered some operational improvements, it offered little political value to the administration—perhaps the natural result of an institution staffed by purportedly apolitical experts. “We must develop some bold programs for crime prevention which will reach down into the neighbourhoods of the city where they will be seen and felt,” Kriegel declared. Indeed, Lindsay consistently struggled to translate the programmatic innovations of expertise into political windfalls, thus attaching a public perception of failure to his programs. The mayor was all too aware of this tension, scribbling on the notes of a meeting detailing achievements in police administrative procedures, “Where are the big, visible breakthroughs?”

Indeed, even when Rand and other expert-led initiatives did produce tangible results, they did not provide the visible solutions that many anxious New Yorkers were looking for. As Kriegel and Lindsay’s concerns revealed, many of these initiatives had transformed policing into a largely reactive process, responding to crimes already committed rather than actively seeking to preempt and reduce crime. Administrative initiatives such as the super-precincts, 911, or one-man patrol cars gradually improved departmental efficiency—especially arrest rates, response times, and case clearances—but typically removed officers from the streets and made them less visible to the public. That did not sit well with city residents, who, against the backdrop of rising crime, took little comfort from efficiency statistics and response data: a 1967 memo to the mayor warned that the placement of patrolmen in patrol cars had increased rather than reduced citizens’ fear of crime. By 1969, the year of Lindsay’s reelection campaign, the politicization of rising crime and its fusion with unquantifiable emotions of fear and vengefulness meant many
New Yorkers craved affirmative anticrime strategies that delivered immediate, emotional impacts rather than the rationalist solutions of expertise. “I am not a political leftist or rightist, but when people are afraid to walk the streets, when merchants can no longer keep businesses open without fear . . . I would rather live where the streets are patrolled by troops than in fear,” an insurance broker confessed in “An Open Letter to the Mayor” published in the *Times*. The newspaper also reported on the increased number of city residents forming anticrime block associations or hiring their own private security guards and patrols to actively deter crime, with more immediate results. In this new exogenous environment expertise appeared increasingly aloof and out of touch.

The new environment reflected the fact that despite its efforts, expertise could do little to stem a rapidly spiraling crime rate in the city. The rate of violent crime had quadrupled in New York during the second half of the 1960s, and by early summer 1969 it ranked fourth among American cities for crimes per capita. Ironically, the fact that such trends could be recorded was due to expertise and its rationalist commitment to empirical evidence, notably the innovations in crime reporting that Lindsay introduced. Yet by 1969 that evidence served to defy the expectations of expertise and unravel the consensus behind it. In March, Richard Aurelio, manager of Lindsay’s reelection campaign, noted the “great concern on the issue of crime” evident among all groups in a voting-intentions study commissioned by the administration, and that the prospects for the mayor’s reelection were “not optimistic.” In June, the *Times’s* David Burnham reported on the universally deleterious effect of fear of crime on city life, as “black and white, rich and poor, young and old, have become preoccupied with crime.” And the following month Kriegel informed an exasperated Lindsay that “our comparative position [on crime] is not very good,” and overriding the more sanguine counsel of other aides, he advised the mayor to “avoid any discussion of our crime rate” in the campaign. Lindsay, he feared, could not win an election in which crime had become a political concern rather than the rational or technical issue the administration’s experts had envisaged it to be.

These problems came to a head during the tempestuous mayoral election campaign of 1969, which moved crime—by now identified by New Yorkers as the year’s number-one campaign issue—into the realm of partisan politics, just as Kriegel had feared. Lindsay—running as a third-party candidate—faced two socially conservative Italian American opponents for the mayoralty; the Republican John Marchi and Democrat Mario Procaccino. Both men were, in their style, demeanor, and political upbringings, far removed from the
rational, technocratic “urbanists” that Lindsay favored. Both owed their political success to the city’s bureaucracy and political clubhouses. And both men’s positions on crime reflected a conservative, populist “law and order” discourse, privileging emotion over rationality, which threatened to overwhelm the politics of expertise. On the campaign trail, Procaccino outlined his support for the restoration of the death penalty and mandatory imprisonment for all drug addicts. “I don’t believe in a “Fun City”; I believe in a safe city,” he exhorted. “As mayor my first priority will be safety in our streets and security in our homes.” Equally, Marchi accused a passive Lindsay of “coddling the criminals” and confessed to be “very, very hawkish” on crime and civil disorder: “I would give the Police Commissioner full authority to . . . send in the police with clubs swinging,” he affirmed. Throughout the campaign, both Marchi and Procaccino reiterated their commitment to “law and order,” which, the Times observed, they “served up red hot.” “It’s safer to be in Vietnam than in New York at 3 o’clock in the morning,” Procaccino quipped.  

Yet despite acknowledging in an interview with the Times that crime was “the single most important problem of concern to New Yorkers,” the mayor continued to frame his crime strategy as one of “reshaping failing institutions,” increasing efficiency, and bringing “the twentieth century to the Police Department” through improved technology and communications. He criticized his opponents for practicing a “politics of hysteria,” instead preferring to focus on his efforts—led by experts from public health agencies, Rand, and IBM—in improving drug rehabilitation, maximizing police efficiency, and computerizing police communications. “New York City no longer need look at what strides other cities are making in police science,” declared a Lindsay ally in a speech promoting the administration’s record on crime, “[for] other cities now look to New York.” A preelection Times endorsement of Lindsay praised his attentiveness to the complexity of crime and its prevention and criticized his opponents for their “simplistic” and “backlash” approach to the problem. Procaccino’s alternative vision of the politics of crime was populist in the extreme: “The only thing I care about is whether you’re a good guy or a bad guy,” he declared emphatically. But Procaccino and Marchi had exposed a significant fissure between the politics of expertise and the attitudes of the New York electorate. It was their prescriptions, not Lindsay’s, that struck a chord among a besieged NYPD and fearful voters increasingly amenable to populist explanations of crime and punitive, visible solutions to it.

Procaccino and Marchi took enough votes from each other to allow Lindsay to scrape to victory with a meager 42 percent of the vote. Yet Lindsay suffered greatly, especially among white voters in the outer boroughs who
were fearful of racial change and, with it, crime. In Brooklyn’s working-class Irish and Italian districts of Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, and Sunset Park, home to many police officers, Lindsay polled only 1,583 votes of 7,330 votes cast, compared to 3,641 for Marchi and 2,106 for Procaccino. These were areas where, four years earlier, he had won over 60 percent of the vote. Even in traditionally liberal Jewish areas, such as Sheepshead Bay and Coney Island, Lindsay won only 8,387 votes to Procaccino’s 10,929. Underlying racial resentments, including the perception that Lindsay was in thrall to racial minorities, certainly influenced voting in these communities: “What the hell does Lindsay care about me?” asked one white Brooklynite of journalist Pete Hamill, “All they worry about is the niggers.” But as Hamill himself concluded, these sentiments were as much a reflection of the perceived ineffectiveness of Lindsay’s approach to crime and other urban problems as they were of the city’s fractured racial politics: “The white working class will probably never relate to John Lindsay . . . [but] they would tolerate him, if the machine he runs would only function. Unfortunately, in his hands, it has functioned only sporadically.”

It should be noted that during Lindsay’s second term, under the leadership of a new commissioner, the NYPD quietly implemented the precinct consolidation program, the one-man patrol car and the fourth platoon, making savings in efficiency, further rationalizing manpower and patrol deployments and overseeing a leveling-off in crime rates. These results received little publicity, however, as expertise struggled to overcome a public perception—one increasingly common within City Hall—that it had failed. Shortly after the election, Kriegel publicly declared that in its second term the administration would “provide a more visible service” to communities to “convey an image of concern.” In private, he vetoed a proposed narcotics “taskforce” of experts, illuminating his own personal crisis of expertise: “The main value of such an effort is that we would find out what they [experts] know, rather than what we need. I do not think at this time we need publicity about experts and studies. . . . We need action.” Thus Lindsay came to endorse populist measures such as increases in police manpower (overriding his previous attempts, encouraged by PPBS budgeting experts, to apply a “cost-effectiveness policy” to police budgets), reclassifying previously minor offenses, and flooding the city’s subway with plainclothes officers. Policing strategies that delivered immediate, symbolic impacts, such as high-profile “wars” on the visible signs of crime and disorder, including graffiti and prostitution, would be favored over longer-term administrative advances. Technological innovations were now deployed not simply to rationalize police practices or improve efficiency, but for the
surveillance and regulation of public space. Contracts with consultants and universities were cancelled. No longer would technocratic drives toward efficiency and modernization predominate over street-level fears over crime, as Lindsay himself acknowledged: “No set of statistics, no program, however impressive, can resolve the grievance of a man whose home has been burglarized, whose property was stolen, whose wife was assaulted,” he wrote.

Lindsay’s apparent rejection of the politics of expertise reflected—perhaps even anticipated—a wider national orthodoxy by the 1970s. Many urban liberals and technocratic reformers were replaced in city halls by conservative “law and order” mayors, including Frank Rizzo in Philadelphia and Charles Stenvig in Minneapolis, often in cities where anxieties over crime were palpable. Many of these mayors were former police officers, even self-styled “super-cops,” underscoring the merger of public safety with effective urban governance in the public mind and the newly performative nature of anticrime strategies, as “crime control” became “crime-fighting.” Best-selling publications such as James Q. Wilson’s Thinking About Crime, and its mantra, “Wicked people exist. Nothing avails except to set them apart from ordinary people”; Hollywood films such as Dirty Harry and Death Wish, which glorified punishment and vigilantism; even scholarly studies such as Robert Martinson’s “Nothing Works” thesis, which queried the value of expert-led rehabilitative approaches to criminal recidivism: each scorned expertise and focused attention on the populist, punitive solutions recommended by Marchi and Procaccino. Even though the new regime had its own stable of experts—Wilson, the criminologist Ernest van den Haag, the political philosopher Sidney Hook—each espoused a more pessimistic, “common sense” vision of crime than their predecessors.

And when Ed Koch ascended to the mayoralty of New York in 1977, his campaign was notable for its vocal, if largely symbolic, support for the death penalty and mandatory sentencing, its attacks on judicial leniency, its calls for police officers to be on the streets rather than in patrol cars or behind computers. “After eight years of charisma, why not try competence?” was one of Koch’s most successful campaign lines: a pointed reference to Lindsay’s failings. Considering the ambitious goals of the former mayor and his team of “urbanists” just a decade earlier, a more damning indictment of expertise is hard to find.

John Lindsay’s failures in controlling crime and reforming law enforcement represented not just a personal or policy failure but the failure of an ideology. By the mid-1970s, expertise and knowledge, the sociologist Robert Nisbet observed, had been “dethroned.” The journal American Scholar observed “a vast deflation of prestige and concomitant loss of public confidence in
The reasons for this crisis of expertise were manifold, including the limited impact of Great Society programming, a post-Vietnam disillusionment with government, an increasing recognition of the importance of citizen involvement in public policy and individual experience rather than academic knowledge as an arbiter of expertise (thus the popular adage, “a conservative is a liberal who’s been mugged”), and the popularity of rival neoconservative interpretations of social policy, radiating skepticism rather than optimism, in journals such as *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* or think tanks such as the Manhattan Institute.

In New York the reasons were similar but perhaps even simpler: expertise failed. It failed to woo the local bureaucracies and interests necessary to wage war on crime. It failed to confront the root causes of crime—poverty, discrimination, the juxtaposition of private affluence and public squalor—that still dogged the city. Most fundamentally, expertise failed to realize its grand claims and overcome its fallibilities, both laid bare by the politicization of crime in New York. Having pledged to circumvent local political interests, expertise typically proved ignorant of them—perhaps betraying its own political objectives—and helped to politicize crime and policing. Having envisaged that it could erase sectional conflict, expertise was undermined by both the conflation of crime with racial tensions and its own ideological rigidity. Having pledged to reduce, even defeat, crime via the medium of public policy, expertise was undone both by the nature of its innovations, more implicit rather than explicit, and by its own epistemology—its empirical data publicly defying its expectations—both of which failed to address the public fears and emotions intertwined with crime and entrenched a perception of policy failure. Such fallibilities, exposed further in the political arena of the 1969 election campaign, initiated a crisis of expertise and legitimized a set of prescriptions almost its polar opposite—visible, not covert; emotional, not objective; populist, not expert-led—which remain in vogue to this day.

However, this does not mean that historians should dismiss liberal responses to crime during the late 1960s, or overwrite them with terms such as “ambivalence” or “silence.” For this is to ignore the existence of a powerful worldview—expertise—that decisively shaped much liberal thought, action and public policy, particularly in the nation’s cities, until the end of the decade. Even if it was perhaps as much discourse as ideology, evidenced by the rapid nature of its unraveling in Lindsay’s New York, expertise was not insignificant for our understanding of the politics of crime control. It enthralled political elites, ennobled new cadres of political actors, and entrenched authority
in the state at a time of considerable faith in government. It generated a political climate where innovation and reform, rendered possible by new technologies, could prosper. It defined new public policy goals, many of which are still resonant in the productivity drives, rational planning, and computerized systems central to contemporary law enforcement, and delivered, over time, meaningful outcomes for urban policing. And we cannot fully explain the emergence and character of its successor—the discourse of “law and order,” still largely hegemonic—without acknowledging the existence of this distinctive and almost oppositional set of solutions.

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NOTES

1. New York City, The New York City—Rand Institute Annual Report (New York, 1970), 1–2. The Harvard-educated Szanton was a former “whiz kid” on Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s Policy Planning Staff.

2. Letter, Szanton to Lindsay, 30 September 1970, Reel 8, Records of the John V. Lindsay Administration, Subject Files—Confidential, 1966–73, New York City Municipal Archives (NYCMA), New York.

3. Letter, Szanton to Lindsay, 26 October 1970, in ibid.

4. Szanton to Lindsay, 30 September 1970, Reel 8, Records of Lindsay Administration, in ibid.

5. “City Hires Rand Corp to Study Four Agencies,” New York Times, 9 January 1968, 31.

6. Szanton to Lindsay, 13 January 1971, Reel 8, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files—Confidential, 1966–73, NYCMA; “City-Rand Consultant Institute Ending Because of Tight Budget,” New York Times, 18 April 1975, 36.

7. Michael Latham, Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation-Building in the Kennedy Era (Chapel Hill, 2000); Alice O’Connor, Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History (Princeton, 2001); Christopher Klemek, The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Urbanism from New York to Berlin (Chicago, 2011).

8. Michael Flamm, Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s (New York, 2005); Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” Journal of American History 97 (December 2010): 703–34; Julily Kohler-Hausmann, “ ‘The Attila the Hun Law’: New York’s Rockefeller Drug Laws and the Making of the Punitive State,” Journal of Social History 44 (Fall 2010): 71–95; Jonathan Simon, Governing Through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear (New York, 2007). See also David Garland, The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society (Oxford, 2001); Katherine Beckett, Making Crime Pay: Law and Order in Contemporary American Politics (New York, 1997); Vesla Weaver, “Frontlash: Race and
the Development of a Punitiv[e Crime Policy],” Studies in American Political Development 21 (Fall 2007): 230–65.

9. Flamm, Law and Order, 124; Weaver, “Frontlash,” 250, 237.

10. Flamm, Law and Order, 104. Some new scholarship has even illustrated the specifically liberal origins of “law and order” politics and the War on Crime. See Naomi Murakawa, The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America (New York, 2014), and Elizabeth Hinton, “A War Within Our Own Boundaries”: Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State,” Journal of American History 102 (June 2015): 100–112. In a similar vein, Kohler-Hausmann argues that many liberals’ eventual submission to the new orthodoxy further “facilitated the rightward shift . . . adding further legitimacy to a punitive logic instrumental in discrediting liberalism.” See Kohler-Hausmann, “The Attila the Hun Law,” 73.

11. In a recent article, Michael Javen Fortner argues for the importance of localized experiences of crime, calling for historians to “interrogate the space in which increasing crime rates were initially felt, understood and negotiated and explore how local institutions and political processes influenced the framing of these concerns and subsequent policy responses.” See Fortner, “The ‘Silent Majority’ in Black and White: Invisibility and Imprecision in the Historiography of Mass Incarceration,” Journal of Urban History 40 (2014): 276.

12. For “self-righteous indignation,” see Jim Sleeper, The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York (New York, 1990), 33; for the “law and order’ bandwagon,” see Beckett, Making Crime Pay, 38.

13. Alice O’Connor makes a similar argument in her study of twentieth-century “poverty knowledge,” and like poverty research, expertise’s faith in the perfectibility of society, the benevolence of the state, and the power of public policy and scientific or technological solutions reflected core liberal values. See O’Connor, Poverty Knowledge, 8–12.

14. Brian Balogh, Chain Reaction: Expert Debate and Public Participation in American Commercial Nuclear Power, 1945–1975 (Cambridge, 1991), 1–14; Robert Wood, Whatever Possessed the President? Academic Experts and Presidential Policy, 1960–1988 (Amherst, Mass., 1993), 43–45.

15. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The Professionalization of Reform,” Public Interest 1 (Fall 1965): 6–10; Daniel Bell, “Notes on the Post-Industrial Society,” Public Interest 7 (Spring 1967): 24–35. The American philosopher James Burnham preempted many of these ideas in his 1941 work The Managerial Revolution, which illustrated the emergence of a new group of managers and technocrats, who threatened to reassign power and authority from individuals and private enterprise to the New Deal state. See Burnham, The Managerial Revolution: What Is Happening in the World (New York, 1941). For a more recent sociological perspective, see Steven Brint, In an Age of Experts: The Declining Public Voice of Professionalism in America (Princeton, 1994), esp. chap. 7.

16. Bell, “Post-Industrial Society,” 34.

17. Arthur Schlesinger, quoted in Balogh, Chain Reaction, 14; John F. Kennedy, Commencement Address at Yale University, 11 June 1962, from The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29661&st=8&st1=#axzz1fBjA3clK (accessed 4 September 2014).

18. Brian Balogh, “Making Pluralism Great,” in The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism, ed. Sidney Milkis and Jerome Mileur (Amherst, Mass., 2005), 147–48; Lyndon
B. Johnson, Remarks at the University of Michigan, 22 May 1964, from The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=26262&st=&st1= (accessed 4 September 2014).

19. Flamm, *Law and Order*, 23–27; Henry Aaron, *Politics and the Professors: The Great Society in Perspective* (Washington, D.C., 1978), 8–9; Hugh Heclo, “Sixties Civics,” in *The Great Society*, ed. Milkis and Mileur, 53–82. Heclo defines this dominant worldview as “policymindedness,” in which “public authority became . . . the presumptive agent to which one should turn for securing the most vital purposes of personal and national life.” See Heclo, “Sixties Civics,” 54, 60.

20. Jennifer Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (Baltimore, 2003), 41–43.

21. Between 1963 and 1970, the total number of violent crimes each at least doubled, and total instances of violent crime increased by 129.7 percent between 1960 and 1969. At the same time, public fear of crime also increased: 62 percent of Gallup poll respondents in 1970 felt there was more crime in their neighborhood than a year ago, compared to 50 percent five years earlier. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstracts of the United States Series*, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/time-series/statistical_abstracts.html (accessed 22 September 2016); Gallup Poll (AIPO), April 1965, and Harris survey, October 1970, both from iPOll Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, http://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll-database/ (accessed 22 September 2016).

22. Lyndon Johnson, remarks to the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 8 September 1965, from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=27242&st=crime&st1= (accessed 8 January 2015); Johnson, Special Message to Congress on Crime and Law Enforcement, 9 March 1966, from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=27478&st=war+on+crime&st1= (accessed 13 January 2015).

23. Johnson, remarks to the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 8 September 1965; President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society: A Report* (Washington, D.C., 1967) (emphasis in original).

24. *Washington Evening Star*, 21 February 1967, 23; James Q. Wilson, “The Crime Commission Reports,” *Public Interest* 9 (Fall 1967): 65, 81.

25. *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, 291.

26. Federal appropriations for the nation’s cities grew from $3.9 billion in 1960 to $14 billion by the start of 1969, and in 1968 the Johnson administration created the Urban Institute, a government-backed think tank designed, in Johnson’s words, to “give us the power through knowledge to help solve the problems . . . of the American city and its people . . . bridging the gulf between the lonely scholar in search of truth and the decision-maker in search of progress through effective programs.” The *New York Times* envisaged that it “would do for the cities what the Rand Corporation and other “think-tanks” have done for the nation’s defense establishment.” See Jon Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 1993), 137; “Institute Set Up to Aid the Cities,” *New York Times*, 27 April 1968, 1; “Johnson Chooses ‘Think Tank’ Panel on Urban Issues,” *New York Times*, 7 December 1967, 1.

27. “Who Thinks in a Think Tank?,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1967, SM15.

28. “Computers Widen Government Role,” *New York Times*, 7 November 1965, F1; “Think Tank” Zeros in on Domestic Crises,” *Los Angeles Times*, 2 November 1969, 1;
“Think Factory’ to Help L.A. Solve Problems,” Los Angeles Times, 22 October 1967, B1. Jennifer Light has also demonstrated how city officials in Pittsburgh during the 1960s used computer simulations designed by expert “technicians” from Rand and the aerospace contractor Lockheed to define public policy goals. See Light, From Warfare to Welfare, 57–62.

29. Joanne Reitano, The Restless City: A Short History of New York from Colonial Times to the Present (New York, 2006), 155.

30. Charles Morris, The Cost of Good Intentions: New York City and the Liberal Experiment, 1960–1975 (New York, 1980), 22; George Lankevich, American Metropolis: A History of New York City (New York, 1998), 181–98.

31. “Crime Rate in NY Shows Rise for ’62,” New York Times, 18 February 1963, 10; “New York First in Manslaughter,” New York Times, 29 May 1962, 18.

32. “Wagner Agrees: More Policing,” New York Times, 4 June 1964, 36.

33. “New York City in Crisis,” New York Herald Tribune, 25 January 1965; “The Fear: The Impact of Rising Crime on New Yorkers,” New York Herald Tribune, 4 March 1965, 1, 8.

34. For this conventional portrayal of Lindsay’s record as mayor, see Vincent Cannato, The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York (New York, 2001); Fred Siegel, The Future Once Happened Here: New York, D.C., L.A., and the Fate of America’s Big Cities (New York, 2007); Morris, Cost of Good Intentions; Douglas Yates, The Ungovernable City: The Politics of Urban Problems and Policymaking (Cambridge, 1978). For more recent attempts to resurrect Lindsay’s historical reputation, see Sam Roberts, ed., America’s Mayor: John V. Lindsay and the Reinvention of New York (New York, 2010); Joseph Viteritti, ed., Summer in the City: John Lindsay, New York, and the American Dream (Baltimore, 2014).

35. Themis Chronopoulos, “The Lindsay Administration and the Sanitation Crisis of New York City, 1966–1973,” Journal of Urban History 40 (November 2014): 1140. For a similar account, see also David Rogers, “Management Versus Bureaucracy,” in Summer in the City, ed. Viteritti, 107–36.

36. On Lindsay as an ideological “Progressive,” see Geoffrey Kabaservice, “On Principle: A Progressive Republican,” Summer in the City, ed. Viteritti, 27–58.

37. John Lindsay, The City (New York, 1969), 18–19.

38. “Lindsay Stresses ’Time for Change,’” New York Times, 2 November 1965, 1; Lindsay, The City, 51.

39. “Text of Lindsay’s Inaugural Address at City Hall,” New York Times, 2 January 1966, 56; “Lindsay Advised to Sweep Clean,” New York Times, 4 November 1965, 50; John Lindsay, Journey Into Politics: Some Informal Observations (London, 1968), 136.

40. “Lindsay to Name Experts to Study City Problems,” New York Times, 9 November 1965, 1.

41. Morris, Cost of Good Intentions, 37; Rogers, “Management Versus Bureaucracy,” 128; “Lindsay Considers Use of Computers on City’s Problems,” New York Times, 13 November 1965, 17.

42. Lindsay, The City, 118–19; Lindsay, Journey into Politics, 136.

43. John Lindsay, remarks on law enforcement to Idlewild Lions Club, JFK International Airport, New York City, 17 June 1965, Box 103, Folder 196, “Crime, Police, Narcotics,” John V. Lindsay [JVL] Papers (hereafter JVL Papers), Yale University, New Haven [emphasis added].
44. John V. Lindsay, “White Paper on Crime and Safety,” n.d. [September 1965], Box 91, Folder 76, “Position Papers—Crime and Law Enforcement: Operation Safe City,” JVL Papers [emphasis added].

45. Lindsay for Mayor press release, 21 October 1965, Box 104, Folder 249, “Operation Safe City,” JVL Papers.

46. Cannato, Ungovernable City, 160.

47. “Excerpts from Law Enforcement Task Force Report,” Reel 43, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA.

48. Ibid., Lindsay, The City, 87–89.

49. Letter, Police Commissioner Vincent Broderick to Lindsay, 8 February 1966, Reel 43, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA; Chris McNickle, To Be Mayor of New York: Ethnic Politics in the City (New York, 1993), 214–15. For more on the Lindsay administration’s clashes over civilian review, see Cannato, Ungovernable City, 155–88.

50. “City Hires Agency for Study of Crime,” New York Times, 2 July 1967, 20.

51. Indeed, Jay Kriegel later confessed that “the [Police] department was old and tired, and badly in need of modernization,” and Lindsay’s “1965 campaign in a real sense was run against the police force.” See Morris, Cost of Good Intentions, 92.

52. Letter, Lindsay to Leary, 2 January 1968, Reel 44, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA; “Sweeping Change in Police Powers Urged on Lindsay, New York Times, 7 February 1966, 1; Letter, Hayes to Winnick, 24 February 1967, Box 361, Folder 418, “Urban Institute,” JVL Papers.

53. The commission had recommended that “all of a State or city’s actions against crime should be planned together, by a single body. The police, the courts, the correctional system and the noncriminal agencies of the community must plan their actions against crime jointly if they are to make real headway.” See The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society, 279–80.

54. Lindsay, The City, 175; Letter, Lindsay to Courtney Evans, Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, 27 January 1966, Reel 54, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA; Criminal Justice Coordinating Council briefing notes, n.d., Reel 2, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files—Confidential, 1966–73, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA.

55. “Modern Law Enforcement,” New York Times, 10 February 1966, 36; Report, n.d., “John V. Lindsay: A Record of Performance: Police,” Box 138, Folder 166, “Police—Law Enforcement,” JVL Papers; Press release, 1 July 1968, Box 377, Folder 636, “Communications: Police Communications Center,” JVL Papers [emphasis added]; “Precinct Mergers to Free Police for Street Duty,” New York Times, 31 January 1968, 1.

56. Memo, Commissioner Leary to All Commands, 15 August 1969, Box 378, Folder 643, “Communications: Police: SPRINT,” JVL Papers; New York City Police Department press release, 1 October 1969, JVL Papers.

57. “City Opens Electronics ‘War Room’ for Police,” New York Times, 14 October 1969, 1.

58. Quotes from Independent Citizens’ Committee against Civilian Review Boards advertisements, New York Times, 3 November 1966, 28, and 1 October 1966, 11. For more on the review-board campaign, see Cannato, Ungovernable City, 155–88.

59. “Lindsay to Raise Number of Police on Patrol by 40%;” New York Times, 26 December 1967, 1; Letter, Lindsay to Hon. Francis Smith, 24 March 1969, Reel 8, Records of Lindsay
Administration, Subject Files—Confidential, 1966–73, NYCMA; Morris, Cost of Good Intentions, 94–95. Only in March 1969 did the mayor finally succeed in instituting the platoon, having been forced to appeal to the state legislature to intervene in the dispute.

60. “Patrolmen’s Rank and File” newsletter, no. 7, September 1970, Box 354, Folder 303, “Labor Relations—Police, Fire, Sanitation,” JVL Papers; Transcript of WABC-TV interview with PBAs John Cassese and Norman Frank, 17 August 1968, Box 372, Folder 570, “Police: PBA,” JVL Papers.

61. “Garelik Calls Rand Study of City’s Police a Failure,” New York Times, 7 October 1970, 55; Szanton to Hayes, 13 February 1970, Box 358, Folder 353, “Rand,” JVL Papers.

62. Peter Szanton, Not Well Advised (New York, 1981), 91–92, 145–46.

63. Memo, Kriegel to Leary, 29 May 1967, and Memo, Kriegel to Leary, 19 September 1968, both in Box 377, Folder 656, “Communications: Police Communications Center,” JVL Papers; Letter, John Cassese, Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, to Leary, 18 September 1968, Reel 7, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files—Confidential, 1966–73, NYCMA.

64. “1,000 Protest Plans in Bronx to Merge 2 Police Precincts,” New York Times, 3 March 1968, 78; “Chinatown Is Told That Police Station Will Stay,” New York Times, 24 February 1968, 19; “Mayor Delays Cuts in Police Precincts,” New York Times, 30 April 1968, 1.

65. Martin Shefter, Political Crisis/Fiscal Crisis: The Collapse and Revival of New York City (New York, 1985), 89. By contrast, Los Angeles, which did enjoy economic growth during the 1970s, continued to invest in consultants’ projects, including a $28 million Emergency Command Control Communications System devised by Systems Development Corporation. See “Police Radio System Contract Awarded,” Los Angeles Times, 15 February 1978, E1.

66. Memo, Kriegel to Lindsay, Sweet, O’Donnell, and Dontzin, 31 March 1967, Reel 14, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA.

67. Notes to Mayor Lindsay on police meeting, n.d., Reel 43, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA (emphasis in original).

68. Memo, Davidoff to Lindsay, 1 February 1967, Box 247, Folder 121, JVL Papers.

69. “An Open Letter to the Mayor,” New York Times, 7 January 1969, 2; “Private Guards are Enlisted by Tenants to Combat Crime,” New York Times, 3 March 1969, 37.

70. Cannato, Ungovernable City, 526.

71. In April 1967, Lindsay admonished City Council President Frank O’Connor for criticizing the city’s sharp increases in crime, instead attributing the increase to his own “reforms in crime reporting.” “That these reforms in our crime reporting system have taken place should be a matter for praise by public officials rather than a source for raising public doubt and suspicion,” he wrote. See Lindsay to O’Connor, 24 April 1967, Reel 14, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA.

72. Richard Aurelio, “Lindsay Diary,” 20 March 1969, Box 226, Folder 35; “Campaign in New York City,” JVL Papers; “The Changing City,” New York Times, 3 June 1969, 1; Memo, Kriegel to Lindsay, 16 July 1969, Box 398, Folder 26, “Crime Rates,” JVL Papers; Memo, Goldsmark to Lindsay, n.d., Box 398, Folder 27, “Election Statistics,” JVL Papers.

73. “Voter Surveys in City Rate Crime No. 1,” New York Times, 22 September 1969, 27.

74. “Crime and Civil Disorder Are Chief Issues in Elections in Cities,” New York Times, 4 November 1969, 37; “The One-Issue Primaries,” New York Times, 7 June 1969, 34; “Procaccino Enters Contest for Mayor,” New York Times, 19 February 1969, 1; “Answering November’s Big Question: What Is a Mario Procaccino?,” New York Times, 10 August 1969, SM7.
75. “Lindsay Declares Crime Is Key Problem Here,” New York Times, 16 May 1969, 34; “Mayor Says Foes Make Crime Politics of Hysteria,” New York Times, 15 May 1969, 36; Perrotta statement on crime, n.d., Box 134, Folder 56, “Campaign Press Releases (2),” JVL Papers; “The Mayorality: Crime,” New York Times, 31 October 1969, 44; “Answering November’s Big Question,” New York Times, SM7.

76. “Analysis of Recent Voting Patterns,” New York Times, 6 October 1969, 38; “Lindsay, Garelik, and Beame Victors,” New York Times, 5 November 1969, 1.

77. Pete Hamill, “The Revolt of the White Lower-Middle Class,” in The White Majority: Between Poverty and Affluence, ed. Louise Kapp Howe (New York, 1970), 12; Hamill, “Looking at Lindsay,” Village Voice, 27 March 1969. Indeed, Michael Javen Fortner’s work underlines the persistence of strong black support, especially in working- and middle-class communities, for increased police protection and punitive policies and high levels of anxiety toward crime in 1960s and 1970s New York. See Fortner, “The ‘Silent Majority’ in Black and White,” 261–68, 273–75.

78. Morris, Cost of Good Intentions, 167–68. Indeed, by the time Lindsay left office in 1973, New York had fallen from second among American cities for violent crime, where it stood in 1966, to nineteenth.

79. “Lindsay Steps Up City Services to Soothe Working-Class Anger,” New York Times, 30 November 1969, 1; Memo, Kriegel to Steve Manos and Diane Lacey, 4 January 1970, Reel 2, Records of Lindsay Administration, Subject Files 1966–73, NYCMA (emphasis in original).

80. “Besieged City,” New York Times, 19 October 1968, 36; “Crime Monitoring TV Goes on in Times Sq.,” New York Times, 26 September 1973, 43.

81. Lindsay, The City, 164–65.

82. In Los Angeles, former police officer Tom Bradley was elected mayor in 1973, and LAPD chief Edward Davis was regularly slated as a potential mayoral candidate until his run for governor of California in 1978.

83. James Q. Wilson, Thinking About Crime (New York, 1975); Robert Martinson, “What Works? Questions and Answers about Prison Reform,” Public Interest 35 (Spring 1974): 22. See also Nathan Glazer, “The Limits of Social Policy,” Commentary 52 (September 1971), 51–58.

84. For example, see Wilson, Thinking About Crime; Ernest van den Haag, Punishing Criminals: Concerning a Very Old and Painful Question (New York, 1975); Sidney Hook, “The Rights of the Victims: Thoughts on Crime and Compassion,” Encounter (April 1972): 11–14.

85. “Excerpts from Debate between Cuomo and Koch,” New York Times, 16 September 1977, 31.

86. “Knowledge Dethroned,” New York Times, 28 September 1975, 239; “Social Science: The Public Disenchantment,” American Scholar 45, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 335–59.