

12. Accidental Discovery and the Pragmatist Theory of Action

THE EMERGENCE OF A BOSTON POLICE AND BLACK MINISTERS PARTNERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

It is a Tuesday afternoon in July 2019. A crowd of more than fifty individuals is gathered in front of the East Boston Police Precinct Station for the weekly Tuesday night Neighborhood Walk for Peace. The walks, which started with the good weather in June, will last until the cold weather arrives in October. They are organized by the Reverend Mark Scott, associate pastor at the Azusa Christian Church in North Dorchester, in conjunction with the Boston Police Department (BPD).

Several ministers and priests from local churches are present. Today, as is often the case, Boston Police Commissioner William Evans is here, along with half a dozen members of his command staff and officers from the precinct. Several times over the summer, Mayor Walsh will join the group, resulting in the march being covered by local TV stations.

The most commanding presence, however, are the local residents. Several dozen are here, holding signs that read “Peace,” “Peace Now,” or “No More Guns.” They range in age from young children to the elderly. There is much excited banter. They talk among themselves, and with the police and clergy. The walk tonight will proceed like a parade.

After a prayer, a procession winds through the East Boston neighborhood. Members of the group, particularly BPD officers and the clergy, stop and talk with residents standing in their yards in front of their houses. A little more than an hour later, the group stops in a small square for a concluding prayer. Local junior high

school students present a dance performance from different Latin American countries. Thirty minutes later, the crowd disperses and the police commissioner is off to another engagement.

I have been and will go on many of these walks over multiple summers. There is a ritual quality to their performance. They occur weekly in East Boston and in three other neighborhoods where gang violence is common. The predominantly Latinx East Boston has less violence than the other three neighborhoods (which are majority Black), but it is also home to Boston's most violent gang, MS-13. In other neighborhoods, fewer residents attend. In Mattapan, a neighborhood with few nonprofit organizations (Levine 2016), a Peace Walk may involve only police and clergy.

The weekly Peace Walks in Boston's neighborhoods are one manifestation of an informal partnership that has existed between Boston's communities of color and the Boston Police Department since the mid-1990s. Besides the Peace Walks, there are meetings every Wednesday morning at the Ella J. Baker House, home of the Azusa Christian Church, involving clergy, various police officers—precinct captains, the gang unit, mass transit police, the school police, and community residents—along with staff from the government and nonprofit social service organizations. These meetings have been going on since 1998; similar meetings occur regularly in other neighborhoods. As part of the several decades-old Home-Front program (<https://bpdnews.com/operation-homefront>), clergy and police officers spend Thursday nights visiting the homes of youth whom schools have identified as being in trouble and at risk of becoming gang involved. On a less regular basis, there are basketball games with police and youth, neighborhood barbecues, and “flashlight walks,” which occur later at night.

From late 1996 through the mid-2000s, the BPD and the Ten Point Coalition, which is comprised of inner-city Black ministers, have worked together to address youth violence across Boston (Braga and Winship 2006). Today, the Ten Point Coalition exists mostly in name only, its initial founders engaged fully in other agendas (Braga, Hureau, and Winship 2008). Numerous other churches and nonprofits have taken up the coalition's original aim, working with the BPD to reduce violence in their neighborhoods.

Although the idea of a partnership between inner-city ministers and the police may seem unusual, it is particularly surprising given Boston's long history of racial turmoil. During the 1970s and early 1980s in particular, Boston's school busing crisis rendered the city a national symbol of northern racism. The partnership is equally unexpected given the prior animosity between the Ten Point ministers and the Boston police. As I detail below, during this earlier period, the BPD was under constant and vehement criticism by both the local press and community activists. Among the most vehement critics of the Boston police was Reverend Eugene Rivers, one of the founders of Boston's Ten Point Coalition.

How did two groups who were figuratively at each other's throats at the beginning of the 1990s form a partnership just a few years later—a partnership that has been recognized internationally for effectively addressing youth violence? No leadership

from above demanded that the two parties negotiate a more constructive relationship for the public good. The two groups never met to develop any sort of master plan. And there was no attempt to follow the example of other cities or other groups. In short, there was no formal deliberative process that produced this collaboration. Putting it figuratively, in this story there was no table around which ministers and police discussed how to form a partnership. Yet, after a few short years, these groups had institutionalized a relationship that relied on a complex set of mutual understandings.

The goal of this chapter is to explain this surprising Boston story. My purpose in doing so is twofold. First, I show that pragmatist ideas can at least partly explain the curious emergence of this police-ministerial partnership. Second, I use this case to argue that the pragmatist concept of periods of indeterminacy and problem-solving based on creative intelligence needs to be expanded to include what I call *wandering* and the possibility of unintended or accidental discovery. This expansion would more accurately recognize instances of effective problem solving that do not originate from individual agents actively experimenting with alternatives.

Consider a mundane example. I have left my wallet at home and have no money for lunch. I find it too embarrassing to ask my colleagues for a loan. As I am walking (wandering) with no idea how to solve my problem, I look down and see (discover) a ten-dollar bill, which I pick up. My problem is solved. There is discovery, but no specific intentionality or creativity.

The problem to be solved with respect to lunch is minor. The Boston story shows that an analogous process may take place in the context of problems that are far more serious and even existential. A central pragmatist argument is that changes in the environment can create problems (Dewey 1910). Conversely, I suggest that solutions may simply appear, though they are solutions only if they are recognized as such.

In my analysis I rely on two key components of pragmatist theory. First and foremost is the theory's focus on habits, problems, problem-solving, and creativity as found principally in Dewey (1910) and discussed at length by Joas (1996, 126–27). I use these elements of the theory to explain how change became necessary and how it came about. Second, I use Mead's analysis of the central importance of intersubjectivity for establishing meaning and for the coordination of human behavior. As I argue here, it is the breakdown of the police and ministers' separate intersubjectivities and the establishment of a new, shared one that forms the core of the Boston story.

Although Karl Weick was not explicitly recognized as a pragmatist, his work touches on many pragmatist themes.¹ Weick's concept of retrospective sensemaking is an essential part of my explanation of the emergence of the police-minister partnership. Most important, as I describe in this chapter, I use his notion of sensemaking as a way to delineate the different stages of the Boston story.

As will be clear in the telling, events of different types are critical elements in moving the story forward. Although events are components in Mead's (1932) theory,

his discussion of events is abstract and complicated (Joas 1997). A more relevant and contemporary discussion of events is that by Sewell (2005), who points out the importance of events as creating demands for cultural change. Within a pragmatist framework, events potentially create problems that need to be solved, but, as I will argue, they also can provide solutions. In the Boston story, it is events of various types that propel the story forward and, as such, are the critical factor in causing the BPD and the Ten Point ministers to change their understanding of themselves, each other, and inner-city violence.

This chapter contributes to the sociological literature in two ways. First, I show that a pragmatist theory of action can explain change at the meso level. A number of authors of both classic pragmatism and neopragmatism have primarily provided theories of change at an individual or micro level (Dewey 1930, 1938; Putnam 1989; Anderson 2006; Gross 2009, 2018). Second, in explaining the partnering of police and ministers in Boston, a precursor to the Ten Point Coalition's full institutionalization, I contribute to the nascent sociological literature on institutional emergence (Stark 1996; Sawyer 2005, Padgett and Powell 2012).

In the following section, I briefly summarize the pragmatist theories of action, creativity, and intersubjectivity. In the subsequent sections, I describe the Boston story at length, pausing at critical points to introduce pragmatist interpretations of the events that I describe. In the discussion section, I more thoroughly develop the pragmatist themes that emerge from this story. In the appendix, I discuss my methodology. I conclude by articulating the importance of the Boston story for pragmatist-based sociological theory.

PRAGMATISM'S THEORETICAL MODEL

The pragmatist theory of action is perhaps pragmatist's theory of action most important contribution to sociology. Numerous authors—including the classic pragmatists Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead—all described key components of this theory (Peirce 1931–58; Dewey 1922, 1925; James 1890, 1909; Mead 1932, 1938) as have contemporary scholars, such as Joas (1996), Kilpinen (2008), Whitford (2002), Gross (2009), Anderson (2010), and Wehrwein and Winship (2018). The effort here is to move beyond a purely instrumental understanding of action (Joas 1990, 1996; Gross 2009; Whitford 2002). To quote Joas,

My claim is not, therefore, that sociology must be opened up to these currents of thought. Rather, I am saying the conception of action which is so crucial to how sociology understands itself needs to be reconstructed in such a way that this conception is no longer confined to the alternative of a model of rational action versus normatively oriented action, but is able to incorporate the creative dimension of human action into its conceptual structure and thus also take adequate account of the intellectual currents which hinge on this dimension. (Joas 1996, 72)

Creativity is central, as it allows pragmatists to move beyond more traditional sociological theories of action. Pragmatists believe that action can be instrumental, but generally only in a highly localized way (Whitford 2002). This assumption is captured by Dewey's famous phrase that individuals have "ends-in-view" in contrast to long-range goals (Dewey 1922, 223–37).

The key sequence in the pragmatist theory of action is as follows: current habits, problems that undermine habits, creative/intelligent problem-solving, new habits. To quote Joas again,

According to this model, all perception of the world and all action in the world is anchored in an unreflected belief in self-evident given facts and successful habits. However, this belief, and the routines of action based upon it, are repeatedly shattered; what has previously been habitual, apparently automatic procedure of action is interrupted. The world reveals itself to have shattered our unreflected expectations. . . . And the only way out of this phase is a reconstruction of the interpreted context. . . . This reconstruction is a creative achievement on the part of the actor. (Joas 1996, 128–29)

"Habits" here are to be understood broadly as "regular behavior" and may be conscious or unconscious (Kilpinen 2009). Joas's "shattering" is change that results from the inapplicability of our current habits and the necessity of finding new ones. As we formulate these new habits, problem-solving in the form of creative intelligence comes into play. Thus, the central sequence in the pragmatist theory of action is: current habits, problem creativity/problem-solving, new habits.

My analysis will point to a tension between the facts of the Boston story and the creativity/problem-solving stage within this pragmatist sequence. According to Joas (1990, 1770), creative solutions are found through "experimenting intelligence." The emphasis here on "intelligence" possibly, though not necessarily, suggests that the individual is the critical agent in problem-solving. The notion of "experimenting" suggests the active trial of different possible solutions to the current problem.

Neither individual intelligence nor the active, conscious pursuit of alternatives fits the Boston story. Rather, much of the story is closer to directionless wandering, or Lindblom's (1959) "muddling through," a concept that Joas explicitly rejects as representing a type of intelligence (Joas 1996, 127).² As such, muddling is not, in Kilpinen's (2008) terms, a "mind-first" theory that creativity would seem to imply. The Boston story thus calls into question the claim that problem-solving is *always* a function of creativity. By putting so much emphasis on creativity, the pragmatist theory of action implies a limited type of instrumentality. As I argue in this chapter, it is possible for action to be both noninstrumental and nonhabitual (also see Winship 2017).

One of the most important contributions of Mead to pragmatist thought is his focus on intersubjectivity.³ As Joas states, Mead is concerned implicitly with "practical intersubjectivity" (Joas 1990, 1996, 1997). For Mead, social order is established not in normative agreement but, rather, in the ability of a group to coordinate its action in order to solve problems and achieve common goals (Joas

1990, 172, 185).⁴ A key implication is that creativity is found in the transformation of a past set of intersubjective understandings to a new set. As Joas notes in critiquing Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, their theories of creativity fail in that they see creativity as isolated from “the intersubjective and objective context of human action” (Joas 1996, 124).

Over several decades, Weick has analyzed the problem of intersubjectivity, theorizing about how individuals, groups, and organizations engage in sensemaking in order to coordinate their behavior. For Weick, a central “question for scholars of organizations” is, “How do people produce and acquire a sense of order that allows them to coordinate their actions in ways that have mutual relevance?” (Weick 2001, 26). Weick’s answer is that this occurs through the creation of intersubjectivity.

Weick’s work is theoretically rich but complicated. Rather than attempt to address his theory as a whole, my analysis of the Boston story relies on specific theoretical insights that he has developed over the years. In particular, I draw on his claim that sensemaking is often retrospective (Weick, 2001), an idea that is fully consistent with Mead:⁵

It is idle, at least for the purposes of experience, to have recourse to a ‘real’ past within which we are making constant discoveries; for that past must be set over against a present within which the emergent appears, and the past, which must then be looked at from the standpoint of the emergent, becomes a different past. The emergent when it appears is always found to follow from the past, but before it appears it does not, by definition, follow from the past (Mead 1932, 2).

As already noted, I use Weick’s notion of sensemaking to describe the Boston story as one of “changing senses.” I posit this in terms of understandings—that is, types of senses—that constitute the three stages to the Boston story. First, in the late 1980s and early 1990s (and almost certainly earlier), groups had *established senses* of who they were and their relationships with one another. For police officers and ministers—and the Black and white communities more generally—these established senses of self stood in opposition to one another. Second came a period characterized by ambiguity and confusion, or, in Dewey’s (1938) terms, a period of inter-determinancy. In this period, roughly 1992–96, the problem was that there was a *lack of sense*. Police officers and ministers had limited (if any) understanding of themselves, their goals, and one another. They did, however, find themselves interacting unintentionally, bumping into one another on the streets at night or dealing with the same specific events. On several occasions, they discovered a need to depend on one another. Finally, we see a period of *shared sense*, whereby police officers and ministers—at least at some minimal level—have a common understanding of the problem of youth violence and the mutual goal of “keeping the next kid from being killed.” In this period, cooperation and coordination become possible, and a formal, institutionalized relationship develops.

Besides positing a set of stages, my analysis needs to explain why and how these groups move from one stage to the next. With regard to the transition from a

TABLE 12.1
Changing Senses

Stage	Period	Description
Established senses	< 1992	Fixed but disconnected or conflicted understandings, identities
Collapse of sense	1992–93	Collapse of previous understandings and identity
Lack of sense	1991–1995	Liminality, ambiguity, confusion
Sensemaking	1995	Coordinated sensemaking, retrospect interpretation
Shared sense	> 1995	Coordination activities, cooperation, formal partnership

situation of established senses to lack of sense, I argue that a series of exogenous events that police and ministers cannot understand within their extant frameworks come to undermine their senses of who they are. In Weick's (2001) terms, there is a collapse of sensemaking. Subsequently, a shared sense emerges through a process of joint sensemaking based on retrospective interpretation (Weick 2001). In pragmatist terms, interaction leads to intersubjectivity. Table 12.1 provides an outline of the hypothesized process.

At various points in this narrative, I pause to underscore pragmatist insights. In the discussion section, I examine how the Boston story does and does not fit the multistage pragmatist theory of action.

In presenting this story, I have decided to separate its telling from the analysis. Specifically, I describe a portion of the story and then analyze it. I do this for two reasons. First, much of the narrative can be found in earlier papers, many coauthored with Jenny Berrien (Berrien and Winship 1999, 2002, 2003), and is, in part, based on the interviews that she conducted for her senior thesis (Berrien 1998).⁶ As such, I think it is appropriate to keep this descriptive work separate from the novel theoretical analysis done in this chapter. Second, I aim to provide readers with every opportunity to interpret the data as they see fit. Separating the narrative from the analysis seemed like the best way to accomplish this. The appendix provides a detailed description of the methodology behind this work.

THE BOSTON STORY

Established Senses

Boston Police Department. During the 1980s, the BPD resembled most other departments across the country in taking a reactive approach to law enforcement. Police activity typically consisted of patrolling streets in squad cars and responding to 911 calls. Police saw their charge as solving crimes, not preventing them from occurring (Goldstein 1990). Crime was going to be reduced by locking people up.

Crack cocaine hit Boston between 1987 and 1988, later than in many other cities. As the crack market developed in Boston, so did turf-based youth gangs. Gangs that previously engaged primarily in low-level criminal activity, such as stealing down jackets, became more active and violent; they engaged in fist and occasionally knife fighting as they realized that there was significant money to be made through the sale of crack. Gang colors and geographically based gang names such as “Corbett Street Posse” indicated strong, almost familial, levels of loyalty toward and respect for one’s gang affiliation (see Irons 2011).

Since Boston law enforcement agencies had little experience with turf-based gang activity, their initial response was limited. Until 1990, a department-based policy directed police officers and the administration to publicly deny the existence of a “gang problem.” Throughout this period of public denial, the department’s focus on the traditional *reactive* policing was evident. In terms of enforcing gang violence, the BPD responded to youth homicides on a case-by-case basis, focusing on who killed each individual. Police focused aggressively on individuals and specific incidents rather than pursuing crime management through preventive strategies.

In 1988, the City Wide Anti-Crime Unit (CWACU), traditionally responsible for providing intense, targeted support across district boundaries of the city, was permanently assigned to the most violent neighborhoods of Boston’s inner city. In 1989, the BPD issued a policy statement indicating that any individual involved in a gang would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. In this way, the Boston police acknowledged the existence of a gang problem. However, it still had no targeted plan for tackling the specific challenges of turf-based gang violence. According to one police captain, in order to make the “big hit,” the CWACU was expected to “go in, kick butts, and crack heads.” The BPD adopted the mentality that “they could do anything to these kids” in order to put an end to their violent activity, which resulted in highly aggressive and reportedly discriminatory policing tactics.

Black ministerial community. Historically, Boston’s Black churches have served the Black middle and working classes. As McRoberts (2005) has described, churches saw themselves as “safe houses” where “decent” people could meet, away from the violence of the inner city. More important, as McRoberts (2004) has documented, the congregants of many inner-city churches do not live in the neighborhoods where their churches are located. Rather, churches are often located where they are because ample size is available at very low rent. As a result, few of Boston’s Black churches had programs focused on youth violence. Instead, mainstream Black clergy responded to the increased violence in Boston’s neighborhoods by offering a sanctuary from the “war.” They avoided taking on any activist role that would bring attention to and combat the so-called inner-city problem. They worked to build their congregations from the inside out and hoped to strengthen the broader community as a positive side-effect. Churches viewed outreach to youth in their neighborhoods as not only dangerous but also incredibly difficult. Youth who were connected to drugs, gangs, and violence maintained a different set of values, which hindered traditional ministry. As the following quote suggests, there was a strong

sentiment among Black clergy that youth were not equipped with an understanding of basic faith-based traditions and convictions:

Many ministers agree that there is a great distance today between the teenagers in the streets and the pastors in neighborhood churches. 'It is so far removed,' said Reverend Wall, who works with many street youths, 'that they don't even understand the sanctity of the church and the role of the preacher' (Jordan 1992).

This perceived gap in values, traditions, and basic beliefs posed a significant hurdle for traditional Black ministers to confront if they were to reach out to youthful offenders in their communities. There was no accessible or familiar method to approach or influence these youth; they could not count on an ingrained sensibility about church and faith. Ministers did not know how to reach them and were reluctant to try.

Reverend Eugene Rivers' ministry was a notable exception at that time. Rivers was born in Chicago. As a youth, he had been a gang member and had fathered a child out of wedlock. In his late twenties, he decided to go to college, crashing courses at Yale and receiving a perfect A average. Yale was not willing to admit him as a regular student, but Harvard was. In the early 1980s, he founded the Seymour Society, a Black Christian student group. In his junior year, he dropped out, and then a few years later, he and his wife—a Jamaican native who had graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard—together with their two young children, moved to the Four Corners neighborhood of North Dorchester, at that time one of the most violent neighborhoods in Boston. It was there that he established his first ministry.

Throughout his early career, Rivers was very vocal in criticizing other Black ministers and prominent Black figures in Boston for their lack of response to the violence and drug crises in their communities:

It was another audacious volley in Gene Rivers' holy war. Since establishing an outpost in the gritty Four Corners neighborhood of Dorchester in 1988, he has conducted an unconventional ministry, challenging the criminal element among his own people and criticizing the Black establishment (Wilkie 1993).

Rivers's "holy war" left him essentially partnerless. Boston's Black clergy was not only struggling to respond to violence on the street but also grappling with its own internal conflicts.

Throughout the late 1980s and early 90s, members of Boston's Black religious community were among the most vocal and public critics of the BPD's policing tactics. Reverend Rivers levied particularly harsh criticism of Boston's law enforcement agencies. There was little potential for cooperative work because their relationships to the so-called culprits of inner-city youth violence were entirely in conflict. On the clergy side, many Black ministers were highly aware of the intense level of police attention directed toward the youth of their community, especially young Black males.

Rivers's close contact with youth and especially youthful offenders provided him with unique insight into how police officers treated these individuals. He heard stories of the officers who had notorious reputations for their hard-hitting, "no joke" treatment of young Black males. According to Rivers, police abuse was not rampant, but cases of abuse were substantial. These stories and incidents placed Rivers on the attack and led to him to fiercely protect the youth of his neighborhood. In addition to supporting youth during court hearings, much of Rivers's advocacy centered on direct criticism of and confrontation with the BPD. According to one police lieutenant, Rivers intentionally criticized police in order to make waves within the city and bring attention to the needs of his community. As a result, Rivers received the reputation of being a "cop basher."

ANALYSIS

In this initial period, both police officers and ministers have established set habits. The police are committed to reactive policing, a common model at the time (Goldstein 1990). They respond to 911 calls and attempt to solve crimes after they have been committed.

The inner-city ministers' strategy for dealing with inner-city violence was similarly reactive. They saw their job as keeping street matters out of the churches and providing safe houses for "decent folk" (McRoberts 2005). Reverend Rivers, who worked with youth in inner-city neighborhoods, was the exception.

Police and ministers have well-established senses of their situation and how they see themselves and others. There is intersubjectivity within each group and what might be called complementary intersubjective understandings. As in war, each side has a firm understanding of the other and a different perception of who are the "good" and who are the "bad" guys. In addition, each side understands how the other side understands them. In general, the ministers saw the police, who were disproportionately white and predominantly Irish, as racist. Police saw inner-city residents as immoral and prone to crime.

The Collapse of Sense

In important respects, the situations of both the police and the ministers were unstable. Violent crime was soaring in Boston's inner-city neighborhoods, and neither group had a strategy to deal with it. A series of exogenous events independently undermined the situation of both groups, shifting them into a situation that I have labeled *lack of sense*.

Boston Police Department. Two events in 1989, the Carol Stuart murder investigation and the "stop and frisk" scandal, brought fierce, widespread attention to and evaluation of the BPD's initial approach to the violence crisis. Carol Stuart, a pregnant white woman, was murdered in the primarily Black neighborhood of Mission Hill. Her husband Charles was with her at the time of her death and reported that a Black male had committed the crime. Relying on Charles Stuart's account, the

Boston Police Department scoured Mission Hill for suspects. There were widespread reports of police abuse as well as a coerced statement that implicated a Black male suspect, William Bennett. Charles Stuart himself was later identified as the alleged murderer, though he committed suicide before an investigation could be completed. The mishandling of the Stuart murder investigation and Charles Stuart's dishonesty created an atmosphere within the Black community of extreme distrust of and disillusionment with the Boston Police Department. As Rivers has since described, the Black community came to feel that it was "open season on Black males."

Later in 1989, the stop-and-frisk scandal intensified the tension. A precinct commander initiated this scandal by describing the Department's approach to preventing gun-related violence as a policy of stop and frisk en masse. This outraged the Black community and solidified the Boston public's suspicion of the police. There is some dissension within the BPD about the extent to which its policy truly was to indiscriminately stop and frisk all Black males within high-crime areas, an approach that police describe as "tipping kids upside down." Several officers related that they targeted individuals who were either previously spotted performing some illegal activity or known gang members. However, officers also acknowledged that this approach was critically flawed because it was often difficult to "distinguish the good guys from the bad guys." Officers also agree that there were "bad seed" cops who acted far too aggressively and indiscriminately. In any case, the community did not view such activity as fair or justified. Accusations of stop-and-frisk tactics led to a court case in the fall of 1989 in which a judge threw out evidence acquired in what he viewed as an unconstitutional search and seizure (Globe Staff 1992).

These two scandals, combined with smaller-scale, less visible incidents, eventually led the Boston press to question BPD's capacity to effectively handle even basic policing activities. In 1991, the *Boston Globe* published a harshly critical four-part series, "Bungling the Basics," which detailed a succession of police foul-ups during the previous few years (Locy 1991a–d). The misguided investigations and questionable policing exposed by the press eventually led to the appointment of the St. Clair Commission, which was assigned the task of thoroughly reviewing the BPD and its policies.

The CWACU took the rap for much of the questionable policing tactics during this time and was consequently disbanded in 1990. "Bad-seed" cops were weeded out. A new unit—the Anti-Gang Violence Unit (AGVU)—which espoused a "softer approach" to violence prevention, was established. The aggressive and indiscriminate street tactics of the past were sharply curtailed. Possibly as a result, the decrease in homicides from 1991 to 1992 was followed by a sharp increase in 1993.

The release of the St. Clair Commission's report in 1992 spurred further administrative changes at the highest level (St. Clair Commission 1992). The report cited extensive corruption within the department and recommended major changes. In 1993, Mayor Flynn resigned, and the New York Transit Police's Bill Bratton replaced Police Commissioner Mickey Roache. Bratton brought a new philosophy—community policing—to the BPD (Bratton and Knobler, 2009).

Ministers. It was not until the violence on the streets literally entered the confines of a Mattapan church that Black clergy as an entity began to address the

violence oppressing much of their community. In May 1992, the Morning Star Baptist Church held a service for a youth murdered in a drive-by gang shooting. During the service, a shootout and stabbing occurred among several of the gang members. A melee ensued within the sanctuary, shots were fired, and nearly four hundred people stampeded out of the church. Fortunately, no one died.

The Morning Star Church tragedy was a clear challenge to the sanctity of the church and its status within the Black community. The message was clear: if the church was not going to deal with the problems of the streets, those problems would enter the church. For approximately six months, established and more marginal ministers came together in a series of meetings. Eventually, these meetings met an impasse; the ministers were divided on whether or not to work directly with youth. It was out of this division that the Ten Point Coalition was founded. “After the Morning Star Baptist Church incident, dozens of ministers met to determine a course of action, Rivers invited those who wanted to make a direct intervention to meet at his home the next Friday night.” As the Reverend Jeffrey L. Brown, another prominent Ten Point Coalition leader, told the *Boston Globe*: “We started going out every Friday night, walking in the streets, talking to whoever would talk to us” (Wilkie 1993).

ANALYSIS

Neither the police nor the ministers had an effective way of dealing with increasing levels of youth violence in Boston. More important, the violence itself resulted in specific events that destabilized their existing modes of operation—that is, their habits. In the language of the philosopher Rahel Jaeggi (2018), the police’s and minister’s “forms of life” in pragmatist terms no longer “worked” for them. Their problems were not a matter of fixing past mistakes but, rather, in Jaeggi’s terms, were of a second order; they needed to find a new way of doing things. In true pragmatist fashion, events shattered the routine activities of both the police and ministers.

Lack of Sense

During the first half of the 1990s, neither the police nor the ministers had a clear definition of their goals or purposes. This was true both of their own activities and their relationship to each other. Speaking about the police, one captain stated: “The police department had no plan of how to deal with the drug problems that the districts and neighborhoods were having. Their idea was a city wide, centralized unit that was really locked into the big hit, the big score with drugs.” What was killing the neighborhoods was the kids on the corner, the drug houses, etc. Both groups, however, were committed to dealing with the problem of youth violence, even though they had no idea how they were going to do it. This commitment was parallel, not shared, as there was no agreement to collaborate.

The fact that they had the same concern—youth violence in general, and gangs in particular—did have an important implication: they often found themselves in

the same social space. They literally bumped into each other at night in the streets. There was thus a great deal of unstructured social interaction between the two groups. To understand the underlying dynamics of this period, I discuss it in terms of three concepts: purposeless engagement, ambiguous relationship, and accidental dependence.

Purposeless engagement. After the founding of the Ten Point Coalition, the ministers would meet every Friday night in collar to walk the streets of Boston's inner-city neighborhoods as Reverend Brown put it, "talking to whoever would talk to us." In these walks the ministers would often run into gang members. After the first few months, gang members would chat with them. Sometimes these conversations would get very serious. As Berrien's interviews with the ministers revealed, they did not know what they were trying to accomplish with their walks. All they knew was that they were called by God to be present (Berrien 1999).

In 1993, Commissioner Roache was replaced by Superintendent William Bratton, who had been brought from the New York City Transit Authority the previous year to help professionalize the BPD. Bratton spoke of a particular interest in community policing, the new buzzword in policing circles across the country. Bratton held a single meeting with the ministers in 1993 to discuss working together. At that meeting there was discussion of the "one in ten rule"—that out of every ten gang members and wannabes, perhaps one was sufficiently dangerous that they needed to be incarcerated; the other nine needed help and services. This is the first evidence of a possible emerging intersubjectivity based on a shared understanding of gangs.

What Bratton meant by community policing is unclear. Within less than a year, he left Boston to head up New York City's Police Department. There, he, along with Mayor Rudolph Guliani, pursued a repressive style of policing that both distressed New York's communities of color and stood in sharp contrast to the policies that Boston would later become famous for (Patterson and Winship 1999).

Throughout 1994 and 1995, gang violence in Boston continued unabated. The Boston police were joined by two Harvard researchers, David Kennedy and Anthony Braga, with the goal of designing initiatives to reduce violence under a program called the Boston Gun Project. They worked full-time with the police for the entirety of 1995. The question of what they might do was unclear. As Kennedy and Braga described it, "we had essentially moved in with the Working Group, spending day after day at Warren Street, riding with YVSF [Youth Violence Strike Force] and probation officers, and holding one-on-one conversations with Working Group members to probe more deeply into what they did and could do, what they thought was going on, and what might be done about it. It was an intense and a deeply disturbing time, with no clear way forward" (Kennedy, Braga, and Piehl 2001, 26).

The police appeared to have been successful in at least one geographic area. The Wendover Street area and its associated gang was inactive for a period of more than nine months during 1995. Less clear was why the policing in this area

had been successful, and the BPD's own theory—that they had been “honest with them”—was just as vague. The Harvard team eventually revealed what had happened. In many respects, Wendover Street had experienced a classic crackdown.

YVSF officers enforced every law they could against gang members, shutting down street drug sales and making arrests for trespassing, public drinking, overt drug use, and disorder offenses,” but what was different was that gang members were told “why the crackdown was occurring and what it would take to make it stop (Kennedy et al. 2001, 27).

To the Harvard researchers, this seemed like an innovative approach to dealing with gang violence. Thus, the seed of Operation Ceasefire was planted.

Ambiguous relations. Throughout the first half of the 1990s, the relationship between the police and the Ten Point ministers was complicated and ambiguous. At the most general level, the police simply did not understand what the ministers were doing. The ministers' understanding of the police was also complicated. In 1992, Reverend Rivers initiated what he called the People's Police Tribunal. The Tribunal provided a forum for community members (particularly young Black males) who thought that they had been mistreated by the police to present their cases. Although the tribunal had no legal authority, there was the possibility that it was likely to receive considerable press, something Rivers was generally quite good at attracting, although the initiative did not get much attention.

After the tribunal was established, Reverends Brown and Ray Hammond, the other two core members besides Rivers of the Ten Point leadership, began to worry that it might send the police the wrong message—that cops were generally bad and should be presumed to be racist. To counter this, they developed a program that they named the Community Youth Service Awards: awards to police deemed to have been exemplary in the work they had done in the community and with youth in particular.

Accidental dependence. By being in the same space at the same time, the police and ministers could potentially find that they needed to depend on each other. This was particularly true given how dangerous the space was. For ministers, there was the possibility that they would have to deal with violence directly. For the police, there was the danger that their actions might lead to charges of racism and discrimination. I describe two illustrative events.

One night in 1991, a group of drug dealers shot at Reverend Rivers's home; a bullet passed within inches of his six-year-old son's head.⁷ Rivers had a choice. He could move his family out of the neighborhood into safer quarters, be seen as a coward, and have to give up on his efforts in the neighborhood. Alternatively, he could work with police. He chose the latter. The two officers with whom he had the most tense relationships volunteered to investigate. This was an opportunity for them to discover what Reverend Rivers was truly about. Was he for real or a drug dealer, as they thought? Six months later, a local drug dealer was arrested for the shooting. It turned out that he had not even been aiming at Rivers's house but the house next door. He was simply a bad shot.

Just as the ministers—and in particular Rivers—found that they had to rely on the police, so, too, did the police find that they needed the ministers. Two incidents occurred in 1994 in which police misconduct had the potential to be highly racially explosive. I discuss one here.⁸

On March 24, 1994, police carried out a full-force SWAT-style drug bust, complete with battering rams, M-16s, tear gas, and much yelling and confusion. Unfortunately, the information that a “snitch” had passed on to them was wrong. The police had not broken into a drug dealer’s apartment but, rather, into the apartment of Accelynne Williams, a retired Black minister. In the melee that followed, the Reverend Williams was thrown to the ground and handcuffed, suffered a heart attack, and died.

Given Boston’s tense racial past, Police Commissioner Paul Evans realized that there was enormous potential for racial unrest, even riots. Not knowing what to do, he consulted Reverend Rivers and asked for advice. Rivers told him that he needed to hold a press conference immediately, acknowledge that the BPD had made a terrible mistake, apologize, and indicate that there would be a full investigation of Williams’s death and that those responsible would be held accountable. The commissioner took Rivers’s advice. In subsequent weeks, BPD leadership met with various community groups. At their side were several Ten Point ministers, providing the implicit message that although what had occurred was horrendous, the BPD was responding in a responsible way.

ANALYSIS

I have described the first half of the 1990s as a period of lack of sense, with neither the police nor the ministers possessing an overall sense of themselves and their relationship. More specifically, (a) each party had little to no understanding of what they wanted to accomplish, and (b) each party was unclear about the other’s disposition and goals. This second point is particularly apparent from the incongruous efforts of the People’s Tribunal and the Youth Service Awards. In the sense of Mead, there was no intersubjectivity across the two groups.

Both groups, however, had limited, immediate goals in the sense of Dewey’s concept of “ends-in-view” (1922, 223–37). The Wendover Street intervention, with its immediate purpose of disrupting the gang’s current violence, illustrates this point for the police. The ministers’ street walks provide a parallel example. There was not, however, a longer-term or global strategy. Weick speaks directly to this point:

In turbulent periods, orderliness is limited to short-lived transactions, intelligence is reduced to local expertise, and determinacy covers only those events close together in time and space. While no one questions that it would be desirable to have grand and stable designs in times of turbulence, the organization is not sufficiently homogenous to support concerted action, nor is the environment sufficiently determinant to encourage accurate, long-term prediction. Instead, the way out of turbulence may lie in continuous improvisation in response to continuous change in local details (Weick 2001, 88).

This “lack of sense” phase is similar to Dewey’s notion of a period of indeterminacy (1938). It does not, however, fit neatly the pragmatist theory of how such a period is responded to. This should be a time of “creative intelligence,” where both groups are imagining new options for future habits. Although each group has particular ends-in-view in the context of specific situations, I never saw any evidence of either group considering different options involving an overall plan.

As I have described, the lack of sense period is a time of purposeless engagement, ambiguous relations, and accidental dependence. At a general level, one might describe this stage of the Boston story as “undirected wandering” or “muddling through.” As noted earlier, Joas (1996, 127) explicitly rejected this latter phrase as an example of creative intelligence.

Even though this period of lack of sense seems to be one of undirected wandering, it is not a period of “blind” wandering. Both the ministers and the police are open to new experiences and trying new initiatives, even when the goals of those initiatives are no more than ends-in-view. As such, a common history of events is being constructed over time, even if both parties—at least at the moment—fail to recognize this.

Sensemaking

On September 25, 1995, Paul McLaughlin, a local assistant district attorney, took the subway home to West Roxbury. For the past several years, McLaughlin had been prosecuting various gang-related drug cases. As he started his car, which was parked at the commuter train stop, a Black male approached, put a gun to McLaughlin’s head, and pulled the trigger. Boston’s gangs were letting everyone know who was in control of the city (McGrory and Dowdy 1995).

The BPD, the Ten Point ministers, and the *Boston Globe* immediately recognized the potential for McLaughlin to become another Carol Stuart. The *Globe* is said to have assigned twenty reporters to follow the cops who were investigating the case. Realizing the potential enormity of the situation, the police and the ministers held a joint press conference. The message from the ministers was clear: this was an outrageous crime and needed to be investigated aggressively, but there would be no “open season” on young Black males (Anand 1995). The *Globe* withdrew the vast majority of their reporters. It took two years to arrest a suspect; one year later, he was convicted (Kahn 1999).

The media, particularly the news media, contributed to sensemaking in important ways during this period. In May 1996, Operation Ceasefire began its gang forums, with the Ten Point ministers joining six months later. Almost immediately, the youth homicide rate dropped. This positive outcome became of enormous interest to the press. Of particular interest was the fact that cops and Black inner-city ministers were working together. This unusual mixture appeared to have produced magic, what the press called the “Boston Miracle”: a sharp 80 percent drop in homicides along with substantially improved police-community relations,

indicated by a 60 percent drop in complaints against police. The provocative and colorful Reverend Rivers captured special media attention, culminating in *Newsweek's* June 1, 1998, cover story on the role of religion in fighting crime. The magazine's cover featured a photo of Reverend Rivers with the caption, "God vs. Gangs."

Whether the ministers had in fact contributed to the Boston Miracle has been hotly contested (Kleiman 2002; Kennedy 2002b). Skeptics argue that because the ministers joined Operation Ceasefire after crime rates had fallen, their involvement could not have had a causal effect. I, however, contend that the police's partnership with the ministers created a political environment in which it was possible for the police to innovate. In addition, it appears that the BPD's anticipation of the ministers' criticism caused them to drop various policy options in designing Operation Ceasefire (Braga and Winship 2006).

ANALYSIS

The fact that the police and ministers decided to hold a joint press conference is critical. Their intent was to send a single unified message, one that their understandably cynical audience might perceive as internally inconsistent: McLaughlin's murder was going to be investigated vigorously, but the rights of young Black males were going to be respected. Arguably, this message is believable only if it comes simultaneously from both parties. There had been some coordination in the past with one party helping the other. In response to the McLaughlin murder, however, coordination was oriented toward supporting both parties' needs. Key players used the past (Carol Stuart) to understand the present (McLaughlin) and to shape current actions. Past joint events provide evidence that coordination could be successful.

If there is any creative intelligence in the Boston story, it comes at this stage. What is critical about the McLaughlin case is that both sides were intelligent enough to recognize that they needed each other in order to convince the public that the murder investigation would be both aggressive and fair. This is distinct from previous incidents in which one party needed the other.

As I discuss in more detail later, the previous two stages of the Boston story, lack of sense and sensemaking, suggest that the pragmatist concept of creativity should be expanded. During the lack-of-sense component of the story, the openness of both the police and ministers to different events and experiences is essential to their common, though yet unrecognized, history. In the sensemaking component, the creative intelligence is for the parties to recognize their joint need to work together.

Shared Sense

After the McLaughlin murder, the BPD and the Ten Point Coalition began to formalize their joint ventures and develop a shared language; in short, they institutionalized their relationship. Precisely how this occurred is beyond the scope of

this chapter, though various descriptions exist (Winship 2004b; Braga et al. 2008). Instead, I discuss this period and its legacy from three angles: joint activities, shared language, and collaborative problem-solving.

Joint activities. In December 1996, three months after Assistant District Attorney Paul McLaughlin's murder, the Ten Point ministers joined Operation Ceasefire as formal participants. In subsequent years, the BPD and ministers, along with others, started various other programs—including school visits and prisoner reentry—with a parallel structure. Beginning in 1998, as part of Operation Homefront, the police and ministers conducted home visits on Thursday nights. During these visits, two officers and one minister would arrive (uninvited and unannounced) at the home of a young person whom the schools had identified as high risk. There, they would talk to the youth and their family about specific challenges that they were facing and how minister and police might be of support.

How tenuous was the BPD-minister relationship was crystallized for me during a meeting with Reverend Rivers in the spring of 2000. Over breakfast that day—four years into the coalition's active partnership with the BPD—Rivers reported with great excitement that he had worked out a formal agreement with the police: he could criticize them in the press as long as he gave them a “heads-up” first.

Through the late 1990s and beyond, the police officers and ministers negotiated about a variety of matters. Prior to each gang forum, the BPD and the Ten Point Coalition would discuss what exactly should be required of gang members in order to avoid a police crackdown. There were also frequent negotiations about the appropriate outcome for individuals who had been arrested.

Shared language. Throughout his work, Mead emphasizes the importance of language—in the form of gestures and actual speech—as a basis of intersubjectivity (Joas 1997). For individuals to work together, they must have not only a common vision of their mutual goals but a language with which to relate to each other (Hirsch 1986). Except in the trivial sense that they both speak English, cops and ministers do not generally share a common language: one group's language can often be highly militaristic; the other's obviously has strong religious themes.

By 1997, it became clear that the police officers and ministers had developed a common language, at least to a minimal degree, which supported a shared sense of their cooperation in tackling youth violence. After the 1991 shooting at his home, Rivers began to talk about how “some kids were so out of control that they needed to be put in jail, both for their own good and for the good of the community.” By the mid- and late 1990s, this phrase was being frequently repeated by the core ministers. It also became the basis for a message they jointly used in gang, school, and prison reentry forums. By the late 1990s, both police officers and ministers were talking about how some kids needed a “prison ministry.” I also began to hear more frequently about the “one in ten” deal. At the most general level, police officers and ministers started describing their shared goal as “keeping the next kid from getting killed.”

Although the language that the officers and ministers shared is simple, behind it lay a complex set of latent understandings. From what I can determine, these

agreements have never been made explicit. Rather, they are a set of implicit principles that guide the actions of both groups. I have identified and confirmed through interviews three shared principles: (1) although poverty, singleparent households, poor schools, and other conditions may be factors in youth violence, any short-term effort to reduce violence needs to treat it as a criminal problem; (2) only a small number of youths are responsible for most of the violence;⁹ and (3) the ministers would have an informal role in determining the justice system outcomes for specific individuals.

Collaborative problem-solving. On January 1, 2003, two police officers were shot and wounded after responding to a call involving a man named Jermaine Berry (Dade and Daley 2003). It was said that the police and the media planned to present this case as an example of the moral decay and danger of the inner city. This theme seemed particularly relevant given the sharp rise in crime and homicide rates over the prior year.

Reverend Rivers intervened immediately. Jermaine Berry had a long history of mental illness; his parents had immigrated from Haiti and were illiterate. Rivers helped them write a note of apology to the police officers' families. He then worked to reframe the incident, efforts that resulted in newspaper stories describing the failure of state social services and the inadequate treatment that Berry had received for his illness (Barry and Stockman 2003).

On the morning of February 13, 2002 Willie Murray, a Black thirty-seven-year-old, while sitting in the driver's seat of his car, was shot and killed by a Black BPD officer, Shawn West. This was the sixth police killing of a civilian in Boston in fifteen months—an anomaly in a city which on average sees about one police killing each year. As in the case of many police shootings, the circumstances of the Murray killing were unclear. The only witness to the shooting was an individual who was in the backseat of Murray's car. West claimed that his life was threatened by Murray's actions and thus that the shooting was justified.¹⁰

The *Boston Globe* immediately posed a question that was almost certainly on the minds of many community members: did the Murray killing indicate excessive use of force by the BPD more broadly?¹¹ The day after the shooting, BPD Commissioner Evans responded to these charges by attending a joint meeting of the Ten Point Coalition and the Black Ministerial Alliance, Boston's more traditional organization of Black churches. At this meeting, he explained what he knew about the circumstances of the shooting, indicated that the shooting was being thoroughly examined by internal investigators, suggested that there well might be problems with the shooting (i.e., that it was not justified), and recognized the clergy's, as well as the broader city's, concern about the number of recent killings by police. He also promised to consider the appropriateness of current police policy on the use of firearms. The approximately thirty-five Black clergy in attendance had no questions for the commissioner.¹²

Shortly thereafter, the BPD had the local District Attorney's Office send the case to a grant jury, essentially admitting that they believe that the shooting was

not justified. The police commissioner also followed through with his promise to review departmental policy. A disproportionate share of problematic shootings by police occurred when police used firearms and a suspect was in a car. Particularly egregious was the fatal shooting of Eveline Barros-Cepeda, an unarmed passenger. The commissioner issued a new policy prohibiting the use of a firearms by police to protect themselves from suspects in cars. The rationale was that a firearm was of little use in these circumstances and the risk of a problematic shooting was much too high. The police union went into an immediate uproar. It demanded that the commissioner resign. The sole group to publicly support the commissioner and his new policy was the Ten Point ministers. The commissioner stayed, and the policy remains in place today.

ANALYSIS

After the McLaughlin murder, the police and the Ten Point ministers jointly developed a new set of habits—gang forums, strategy meetings, Homefront visits, Peace Walks—which, in one form or another, continue to this day. A new intersubjectivity allowed for this coordination and development of shared activities. Most important, their partnership allowed them to deal with potential crises, whether the shooting of two police officers or the fatal shooting of a citizen by the police.

As Mead has argued at length, intersubjectivity is based in great part on shared language. At least as important to the Boston story have been shared activities, both in the present and in the past. To quote Weick, “People commit to and coordinate instrumental acts (means) before they worry about shared goals. . . . But shared goals do emerge as people search for reasons that justify the earlier interdependent means to which they have become bound” (2001, 17).

DISCUSSION

The Boston story is consistent with some aspects of the pragmatist theory of action but requires other aspects to be expanded. Certainly, the period of established senses exemplifies the pragmatist concept of habitual action. The events involved in the collapse of sense also seem consistent with pragmatist theory. In Joas’s language, this collapse involves a series of events that shatter existing intersubjectivity and habits. The lack-of-sense stage, however, seems hard to reconcile with pragmatist theory, which focuses narrowly on this as a period of creative intelligence. This time more closely resembles aimless or undirected wandering. What creates the opportunity for change is not the deliberate consideration of different options but, rather, a continual flow of events that forces people to change how they act and how they interact. That said, the police and ministers do act in a way that is consistent with Dewey’s notion of ends-in-view. Rivers calls the cops when his house is shot

up. The police ask the ministers for advice when a retired Black minister dies in a botched drug raid.

In Winship (2017), I discuss situations in which rational action in the narrow sense of economists is not possible: people don't understand their situation, don't know their options, or are unaware of particular constraints on their actions. In the terminology of Kilpinen (2009), these are situations in which "mind-first" behavior often is not possible. I label these *inchoate situations*. In such situations, even localized instrumental action (i.e., ends-in-view) may not be feasible. I describe a wide variety of *extrarational behaviors*, ways in which individuals may act in inchoate situations and which may lead to accidental discoveries. Wandering is one type of extrarational behavior.

The Boston story suggests that we need to expand pragmatist problem-solving to include the concepts of wandering and accidental discovery, in addition to that of creativity. Certainly, there are cases in which individuals and groups consciously go about creatively considering options for solving some problem. But there are also situations in which a solution may simply present itself. Thus, events and general environmental change may not only create problems for actors but also provide solutions.

What discovery does require is recognition. I need to notice the ten-dollar bill and recognize that it is a solution to my lunch problem. This brings us to the next moment in the Boston story" sensemaking. After the McLaughlin murder, the police and ministers independently and then together recognized the potential for a repeat of the past—the disastrous Carol Stuart investigation. They further recognized that it was necessary for them to hold a joint press conference. Arguably, these moments of recognition are creative in some sense. If one is going to discover solutions to a problem, one certainly needs to be able to recognize a solution when it presents itself.

What is important here is not just that the police and ministers independently developed a understanding of their situation, but that their their understanding was shared. In this way, the Boston story shows that a history of shared events and history, as well as common actions, provide the "grist" needed to establish intersubjectivity. What the Boston story shows is that such a shared understanding may result from common discovery.

The final stage in the Boston story, shared senses, certainly fits the pragmatist theory of action. We are back to the world of habits in the broadest sense of unreflective action. The police and ministers initiated myriad joint activities, most of which continue to this day.

My foregoing analysis suggests that the pragmatist theory of action needs to go further in recognizing the importance of noninstrumental action—action that is not "mind first"—in the context of problem-solving, one of its key intellectual agendas. In particular, as the Boston story exemplifies, action can take place in the absence of understanding, even if that action then becomes the basis for future understandings (for a related argument, see Bearman, Faris, and Moody 1999). To

underscore this point, we might contrast the idea of action in a lack-of-sense period with how symbolic interactionism (SI), the subfield of sociology most influenced by pragmatism, understands action. To quote Blumer from his program-defining book, *Symbolic Interactionism*, “In order to act the individual has to identify what he wants, establish an objective or goal, map out a prospective line of behavior, note and interpret the actions of others, size up his situation” (Blumer, 1986, 64). This is clearly a mind-first theory of action. This mind-first approach is also apparent in the importance that SI places on the process of negotiation. A key maxim of SI most closely associated with Strauss (1978) but repeated by many (e.g., Farberman 1979; Fine 1984) is that “there is no order without negotiation.” Unless we interpret negotiation *very* broadly as social interaction, then negotiation requires a chaotic situation with defined preferences and choices.

It is nearly impossible to see formal negotiation in the Boston story. Yet, it is a story about the emergence of order. The notion that negotiation is not possible necessarily precedes order is problematic in that it assumes that negotiation is possible without individual goals and a shared understanding of what is to be negotiated—that is, without intersubjectivity. Negotiation is simply not possible in a chaotic situation that “lacks sense.” Although the specifics of a social order may be negotiated, this is only possible if there are already understood terms of negotiation, a type of order. In the Boston story, once there was a degree of intersubjectivity between police and ministers, it was possible to negotiate how they would work together and when things would be done (e.g., whether an individual would have their probation revoked). Prior to this, coordination of activities was possible only in the most limited, ends-in-view sort of way.

At the heart of my point about the limitations of the concepts of creativity and negotiation is that people may not always be aware of the options available to solve a problem. They may not even be able to imagine them (Winship 2017). Even in these situations, problem-solving does not stop. One can wander aimlessly and still hope to stumble on discover a solution—whether by discovering a ten-dollar bill or a way to productively coordinate with a former adversary. Of course, one needs the intelligence to recognize that solution for what it is.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued for a broader conception of the role of action in problem-solving than what is found in standard instrumental models or in pragmatist models of creative experimentation. Although both of these models may describe a large subset of human behavior (Weick 2001; Whitford 2002; Winship 2017), they assume a mind-first model of action (Kilpinen 2009). Here I argue for the importance of aimless wandering and discovery as types of action that fall outside of mind-first models. To support this position, I examine how the Ten Point Coalition—a group of Black ministers in Boston—developed a partnership with

the Boston Police Department in order to reduce youth violence. There is no table in this story; that is, the ministers and the police never met formally to figure out (negotiate) how to work together. Rather, they discovered their partnership when an assistant district attorney was murdered by a drug dealer. Key to the story is a period of lack of sense, several years in which neither the police nor the ministers were sure of their goals. There were multiple instances of joint action, but goals were limited, as in Dewey's famous phrase, to "ends-in-view." There is a deep-seated pragmatist assumption that external change disrupts habits, creating a situation that requires deliberate problem-solving. The Boston story demonstrates that external change can also provide solutions to existing problems, though actors need the intelligence to recognize when a solution arrives.

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APPENDIX

Methodology

Most research on the emergence of new social forms—whether partnerships, organizations or institutions—is carried out *ex post*. The researcher chooses a particular structure to analyze and then uses interviews and archival materials to reconstruct its history. There are at least two major limitations to this approach. First, it is difficult to reconstruct evidence of what actually happened, particularly at the level of interactions between individuals. Second, interviewees may share *post hoc* rationalizations for what has occurred, rather than an accurate description of the causal process that took place, though the *post hoc* rationalizations can be interesting in themselves (Jerolmack and Kahn 2014). Individuals are quite likely to present activities of the past in a far more coherent and rational fashion than likely occurred, with inconsistent events dropped and supportive material invented.

Fortunately, but also problematically, the analysis reported here is the result of my unknowingly finding myself in a research project. In the summer of 1994, I worked regularly with the Ten Point ministers in an evaluation of a program they were running called "Boston Freedom Summer." During the summers of 1994, 1995, and 1996, I visited the Four Corners neighborhood of North Dorchester, the principal site for the camp, between one and three times a week. During these visits I almost always spent time with the key Ten Point ministers and their staff. In this regard, I was a participant observer. The only problem was that, at the time, neither the ministers nor I had any idea that they were in the process of creating a

partnership with the BPD. In the many days I spent with individuals in Ten Point, I never once heard the ministers or their staff discuss the Boston police. In late 1996, the Ten Point ministers first accepted the BPD's invitation to participate in gang forums. Just as the ministers did not realize that they were forming a partnership with the police, I did not realize that I was a participant observer in what would become a research study. This serendipitous research project allowed me to watch a partnership materialize in real time. Unfortunately, as I was not aware that I was doing research, I was not collecting field notes.

In order to bolster my informal observations, my undergraduate advisee, Jenny Berrien, carried out a series of interviews as part of her senior thesis research (Berrien 1998). All interviews took place during 1997 and 1998. They represent key players' recollections of events that occurred between approximately 1990 and the end of 1996. There is certainly some degree of bias in these recollections. How serious this is not clear, particularly given the theoretical interest here is in understanding how a set of individuals came to understand a common situation. In this regard, retrospective reports most importantly provide evidence of the shared understanding of what emerged.

An additional source of evidence is newspaper articles. From the late 1980s to the present, there has been intense local interest in youth violence, first because of its sharp increase and then later because of the nation-leading drop of 80 percent in the homicide rates during the 1990s, the so-called Boston Miracle. Both locally and nationally, Boston was seen as a city that had succeeded in simultaneously reducing crime rates and improving police/community relations.¹³ Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of stories on this topic have been published in the local, national, and international press.

Although newspaper stories may or may not accurately report all of the facts, they do represent a form of public discourse. As such, they can be analyzed for the content of the messages they contain. Various actors, most importantly the ministers, have been quoted frequently in these stories and have written numerous Op-Eds in the *Boston Globe* and other local newspapers. These Op-Eds contain strong statements about how to think about and tackle the issues of youth violence and race. Thus, articles and Op-Eds are a texts worthy of direct analysis.

All three data sources have their limitations: my direct observations were informal rather than systematically documented; interviews are not always accurate; and newspapers present a very select set of voices. Thus, for this analysis I regularly triangulate on sources. In addition, because I have and have had ready access to key players in the story, I have been able to quickly check any questionable facts. Furthermore, I have solicited factual corrections from the individuals involved after they have read earlier related papers, this paper, and attended talks that I have given on the Boston story.

NOTES

1. Weick acknowledges this. "Most obvious is the affinity with several ideas in pragmatism. To depict impermanent organizing is to presume that people have agency, that there is

- an ongoing dialectic between continuity and discontinuity from which events emerge, that humans shape their circumstances, and that minds and selves emerge from action (Maines 1991, 1532). Frequent citations to the work of William James and John Dewey will attest to the pragmatic grounding of this line of argument” (Weick 2009, 5–6).
2. Merton and Barber’s (2011) concept of serendipity is related to my concept of wandering. In both cases, there is a chance finding. The difference is that in the case of serendipity, one is not consciously looking for a solution; in fact, there may be no immediate, recognized problem. As I describe later, wandering involves consciously looking for a solution, though with no idea of where to look.
 3. Scholars have posed many definitions of intersubjectivity (Gillespie and Cornish 2010). For my purposes, intersubjectivity is a basic shared understanding of a situation. A shared understanding may not mean that the parties involved agree on how something is understood, merely that they know what each other’s understanding is. See Winship (2004a) for a discussion of Goffman’s (1959) concept of a surface agreement, one possible definition of intersubjectivity.
 4. An extreme example of intersubjectivity in Mead’s sense is Hutchins’s (1995) detailed discussion of how a battleship is brought to dock. Here, no one actor has a full picture of what needs to be done. Rather, myriad actors know what they need to do and how to coordinate their actions with those of immediate relevance to them. Hutchins suggests that failure in this coordination would result in a battleship’s stopping many miles inland.
 5. Also see MacIntyre (2013) for the importance of history—particularly tradition—as a basis for formulating a new future.
 6. Previous accounts of the Boston story that primarily focus on its policy implications for policing can be found in Berrien and Winship (1999, 2000); Winship and Berrien (2000); Winship, Berrien, and McRoberts (2000); and Winship and Berrien (1999).
 7. In 1994, Rivers’s house was shot up for a second time.
 8. A incident that had a parallel structure and outcome was the 1994 beating of a Black undercover police officer by four uniformed officers, both white and Black, who thought he was the suspect they were pursuing. See Lehr and Attersley (2009) for a detailed discussion of this event.
 9. David Kennedy suggests that this is the case, at least in Boston, with approximately 1 percent of the youth constituting the real problem (Kennedy 1997; Kennedy, Piehl, and Braga 1996).
 10. Informant interview; also see *Globe* Staff (2002a).
 11. *Globe* Staff (2002b, 2002d).
 12. See *Globe* Staff (2002c).
 13. Since 2003, homicide rates have varied from year to year, but have remained at approximately half or less of what they were at the worst point in the 1990s.