

Resisting Racist Police Violence

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The Ferguson Rebellion

After police killed Michael Brown in Ferguson in 2014, sustained rebellion led to Presidential action, Federal Consent Decree, Black representation in local police and government, election of Tishaura Jones as mayor of St. Louis, election of Cori Bush to the US Congress, and reinvigorate national debates on race. We seek to uncover the inside perspectives and actions that transformed Ferguson and catalyzed the national movement against racist police violence.

Oral History

We plan to conduct immersive interviews with more than 50 Ferguson rebels – the leaders, key activists, and allies of the Ferguson rebellion, including Michael Brown, Sr., St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones, and Congresswoman Cori Bush.



How Ferguson Rebels resisted police violence, transforming St Louis, and catalyzing a national movement.



Inside Perspective

Despite the attention the Ferguson uprising has garnered, accounts of rebels who built the movement have been marginalized. This project illuminates the rebellion from the perspectives those most intimately involved. Through immersive interviews with recent participants, this project breaks new ground, capturing the life stories of those who made the movement, how their subjective experiences shaped movement practices, and how movement practices, in turn, shaped their lives. Such insights have been inaccessible in document-based analyses.

Deliverables

The momentum grant will directly fund collection of preliminary interviews with rebels. It will support development of external funding proposals to the NEH, the National Park Service, and in collaboration with the St. Louis Public Library. Over the next several years, we expect to produce a wide circulation narrative book about the Ferguson Rebellion based on these interviews. A public digital archive of oral history and historical video materials will serve as a complement to the book.

Potential Impact

This project refines and extends ascendant practice centered social movement theory, unpacking the efficacy of on the ground practices in Ferguson. It also makes a public contribution. The struggle against racism is far from won. Uncovering the stories and perspectives of those who transformed Ferguson and reignited Black Freedom Struggle, this project offers new insights about how to effectively challenge racism.

