

The background image is a blurred photograph of a protest or riot scene. In the foreground, a person wearing a bright blue t-shirt is seen from behind, facing a line of police officers. The police officers are wearing riot gear, including helmets and shields, and are holding batons. To the right, there is a blue mailbox with the words "Fuck the Blice" written on it in white marker. The mailbox also has a sign that says "LAST COLLECTION" and "UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE".

The “War on Cops,” Retaliatory Violence, & the Murder of George Floyd

Michael Sierra-Arévalo

Justin Nix

Scott Mourtgos

ASC 2022

Ferguson, MO (2014)



THE WAR

"This is a book that can save lives."
—THOMAS SOWELL

ON **HOW THE NEW ATTACK ON LAW AND ORDER
MAKES EVERYONE LESS SAFE**



HEATHER
MAC DONALD

\$1.25 - NYDailyNews.com

SPORTS EXTRA

Sunday, December 21, 2014

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

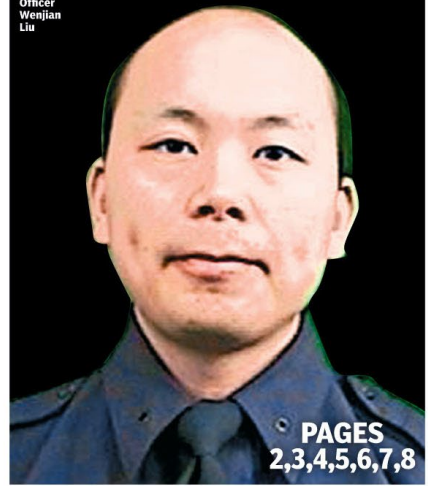
2 cops gunned down in squad car

EXECUTED

Officer
Rafael
Ramos



Officer
Wenjian
Liu



PAGES
2,3,4,5,6,7,8

- Coward vowed to 'put wings on pigs'
- Twisted revenge for Garner, Ferguson
- PBA boss: Blood is on mayor's hands

The “War on Cops”: Theory

**Police
Violence**



**Criticism
of Police**



**Reduced
Police
Legitimacy**



**Violence
Against
Police**



The “War on Cops”: Research

Zero studies find significant increase in violence against police after Michael Brown killed by police.

Maguire, Nix, & Campbell (2017): felonious deaths, ODMP

White, Dario, & Shjarback (2019): felonious deaths, ODMP

White (2020): fatal ambushes, ODMP

Shjarback & Maguire (2021): non-fatal assaults, LEOKA



DEFUND
NYPD

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

TOO
MANY NAMES

COPS
ARE
NOT

HECK'S
CASHED

BLACK IRON

SUGARCANE

Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History

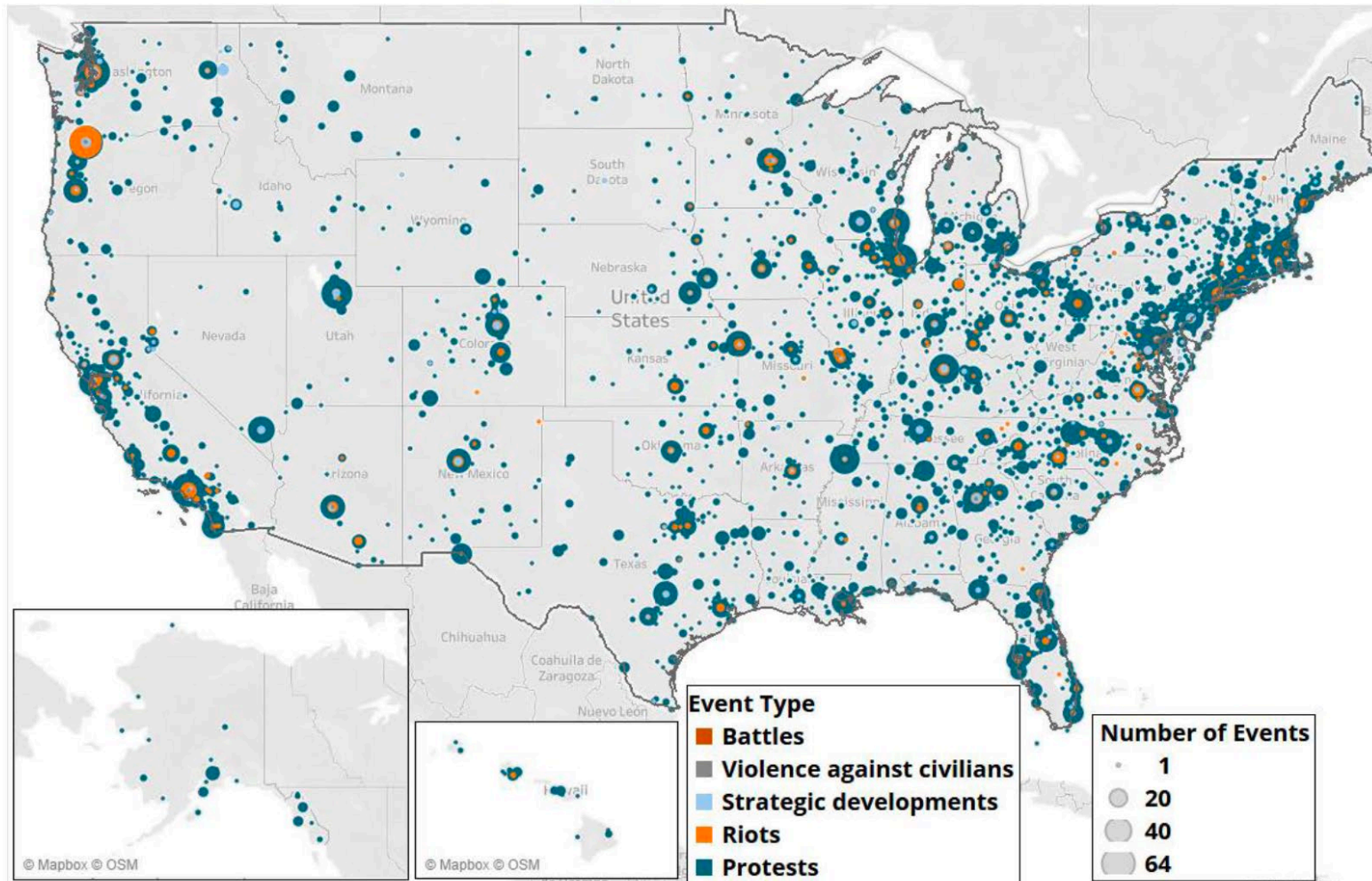
By [Larry Buchanan](#), [Quoctrung Bui](#) and [Jugal K. Patel](#) July 3, 2020

Number of people in U.S. who said they protested, according to polls

POLL	PCT. WHO PROTESTED	IMPLIED POPULATION	POLLING PERIOD
Kaiser Family Foundation (n = 1296)	10%	26 million	June 8-14
Civis Analytics (4446)	9%	23 million	June 12-22
N.O.R.C. (1310)	7%	18 million	June 11-15
Pew (9654)	6%	15 million	June 4-10

Note: Surveys are of the adult population in the United States

**Political Violence, Demonstrations, & Strategic Developments in the US
(24 May - 22 August 2020)**



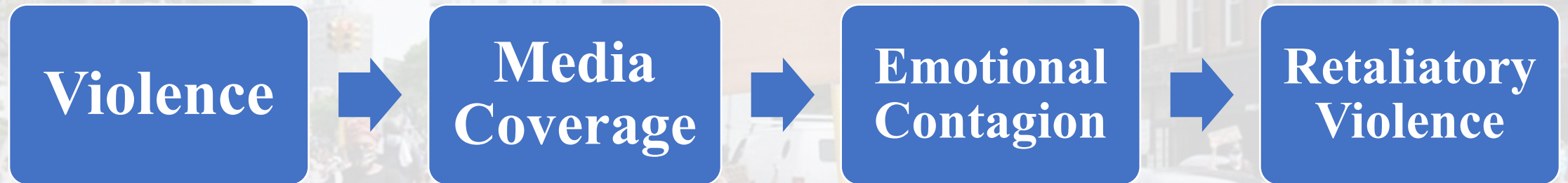
May 26, 2020
to August 22, 2020:

7,750+ protests
2,440 locations
50 states

ACLED (2020)

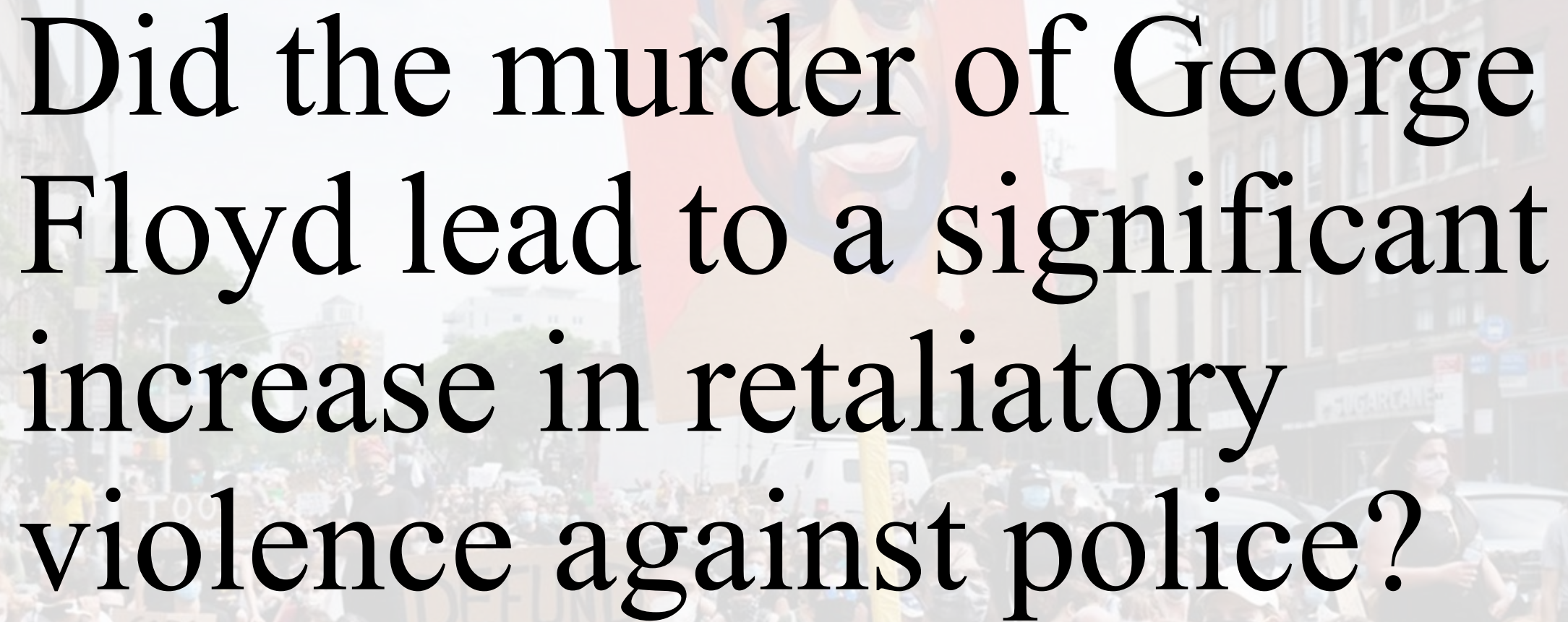
Retaliatory Violence (Bejan et al., 2020)

- ~ “war on cops” legitimacy mechanism.
- Not focused on any single incident of violence.



Note: Retaliatory violence can be [police → public] OR [public → police].

1-day increase in retaliatory violence *by* police; no evidence of retaliatory violence *against* police.

The background of the image is a faded photograph of a large crowd of people at a protest. In the center of the crowd, a large portrait of George Floyd is being held up on a red banner. The text is overlaid on this image.

Did the murder of George
Floyd lead to a significant
increase in retaliatory
violence against police?

One small wrinkle...

CORONAVIRUS

COVID, Violence, and Policing

Any “Floyd effect” potentially confounded by ...

1. Less police-public contact
2. More firearm violence during 2020
3. COVID-related “strain” on public and police

Did the murder of George Floyd lead to a significant increase in retaliatory violence against police, given the COVID-19 pandemic?

Data

Gun Violence Archive (GVA)

2014 to 2020

Fatal and non-fatal firearm assaults on sworn local and state law enforcement officers

Data

Gun Violence Archive (GVA)

Daily fatal & non-fatal firearm assaults (FAs) on sworn local and state law enforcement officers, 2014-2020

- Officer was struck by gunfire or shrapnel
- Excludes federal agencies, “blue on blue” shootings and accidental shootings

Data: Denominators

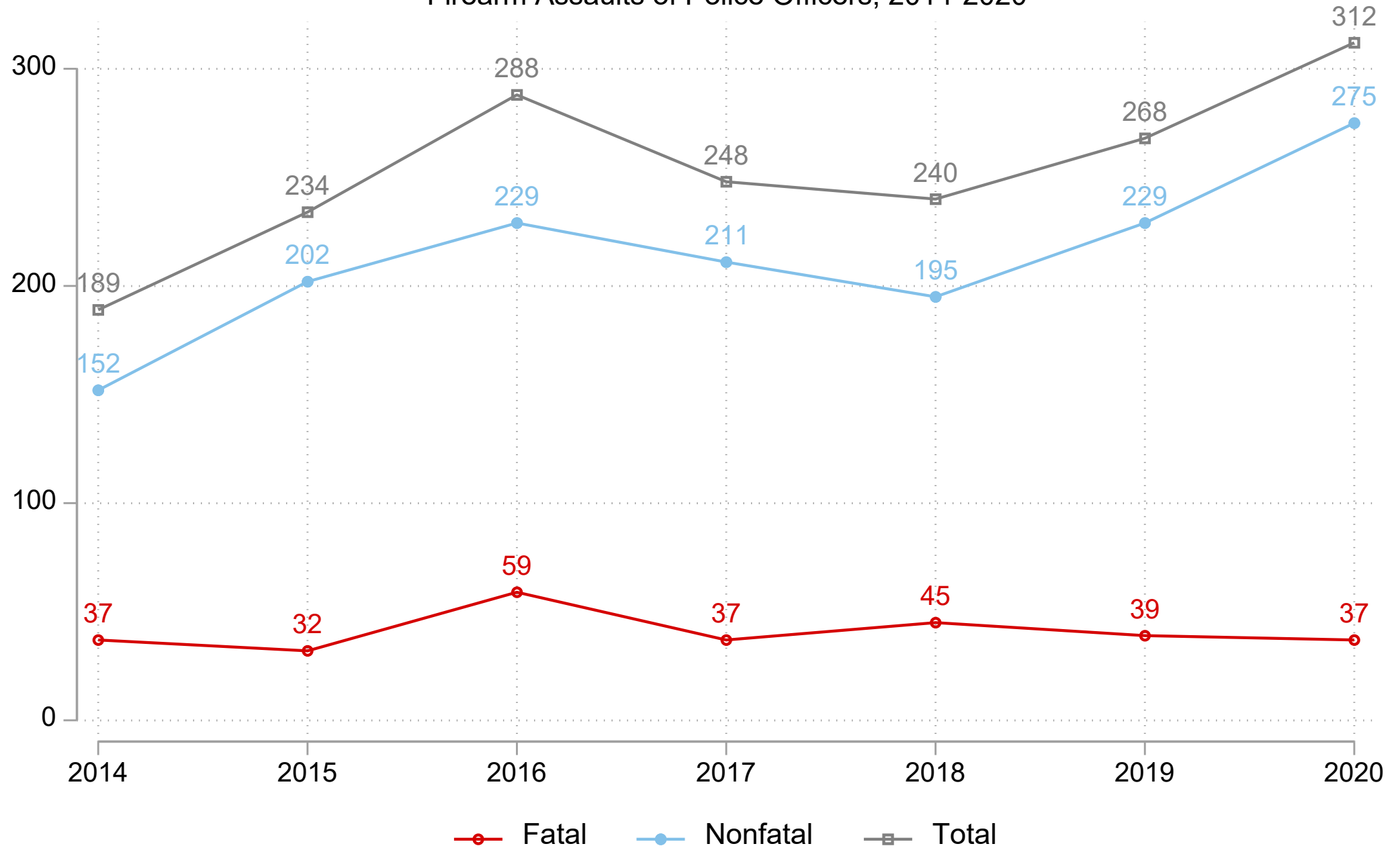
1. Police Employee Data, 2014-2020

UCR Arrest Data, 2014-2020

2. All arrests

3. Violence and firearm-related offenses

Firearm Assaults of Police Officers, 2014-2020



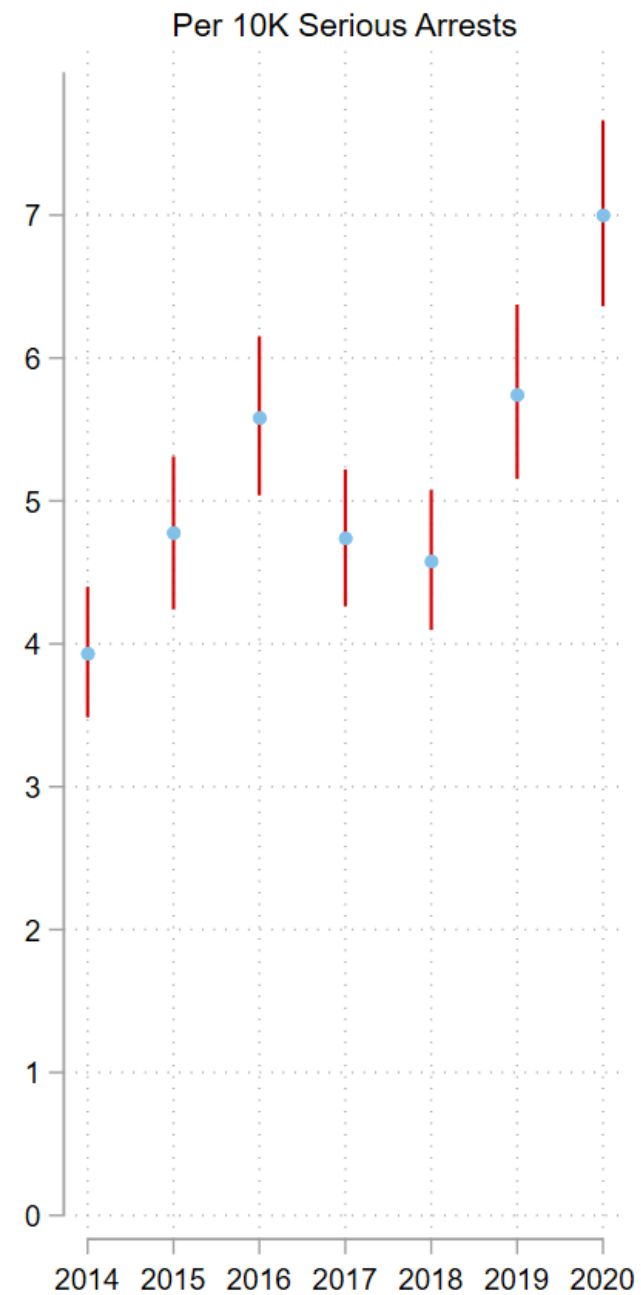
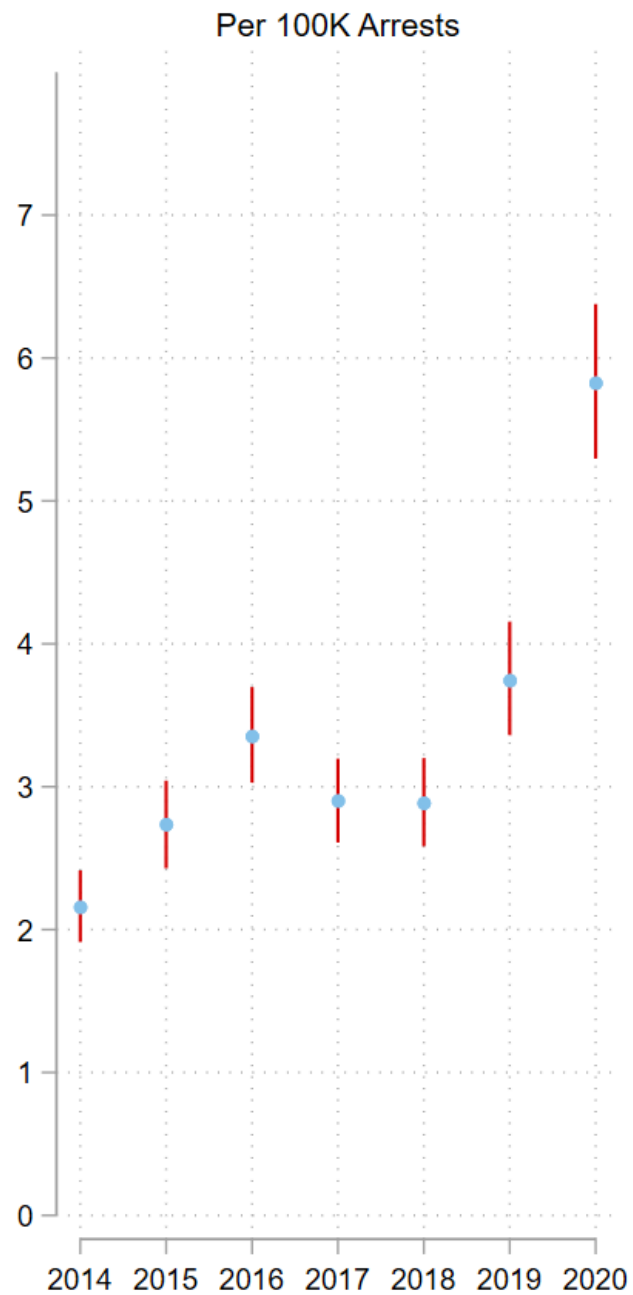
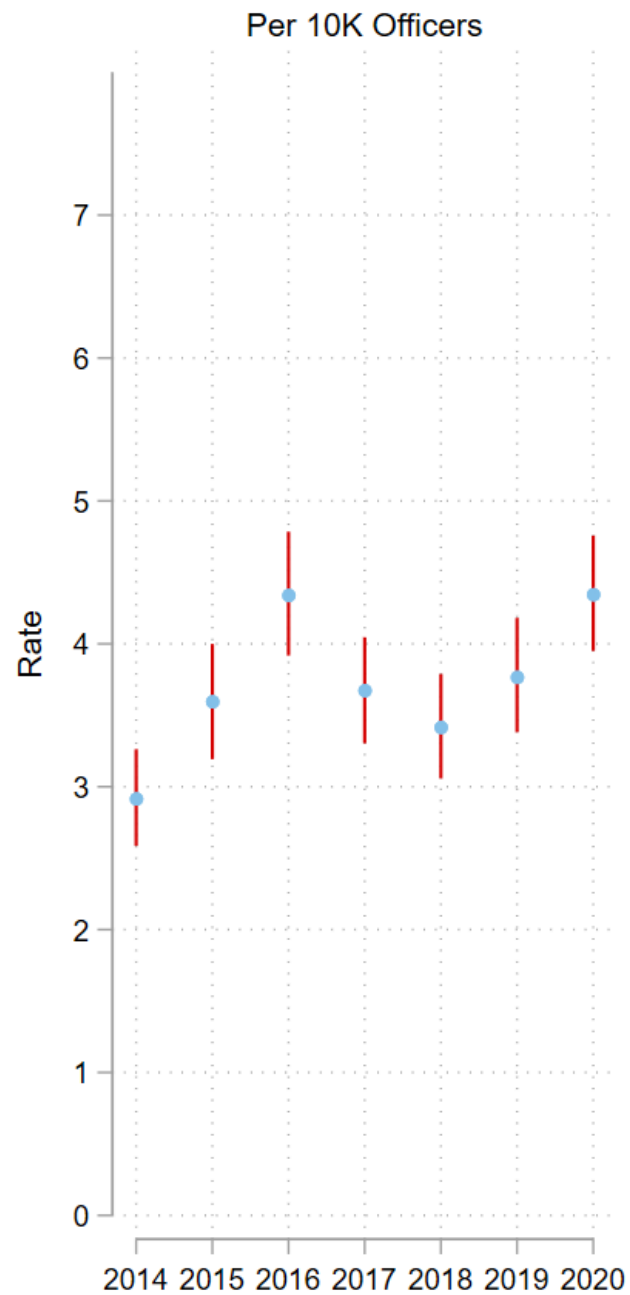
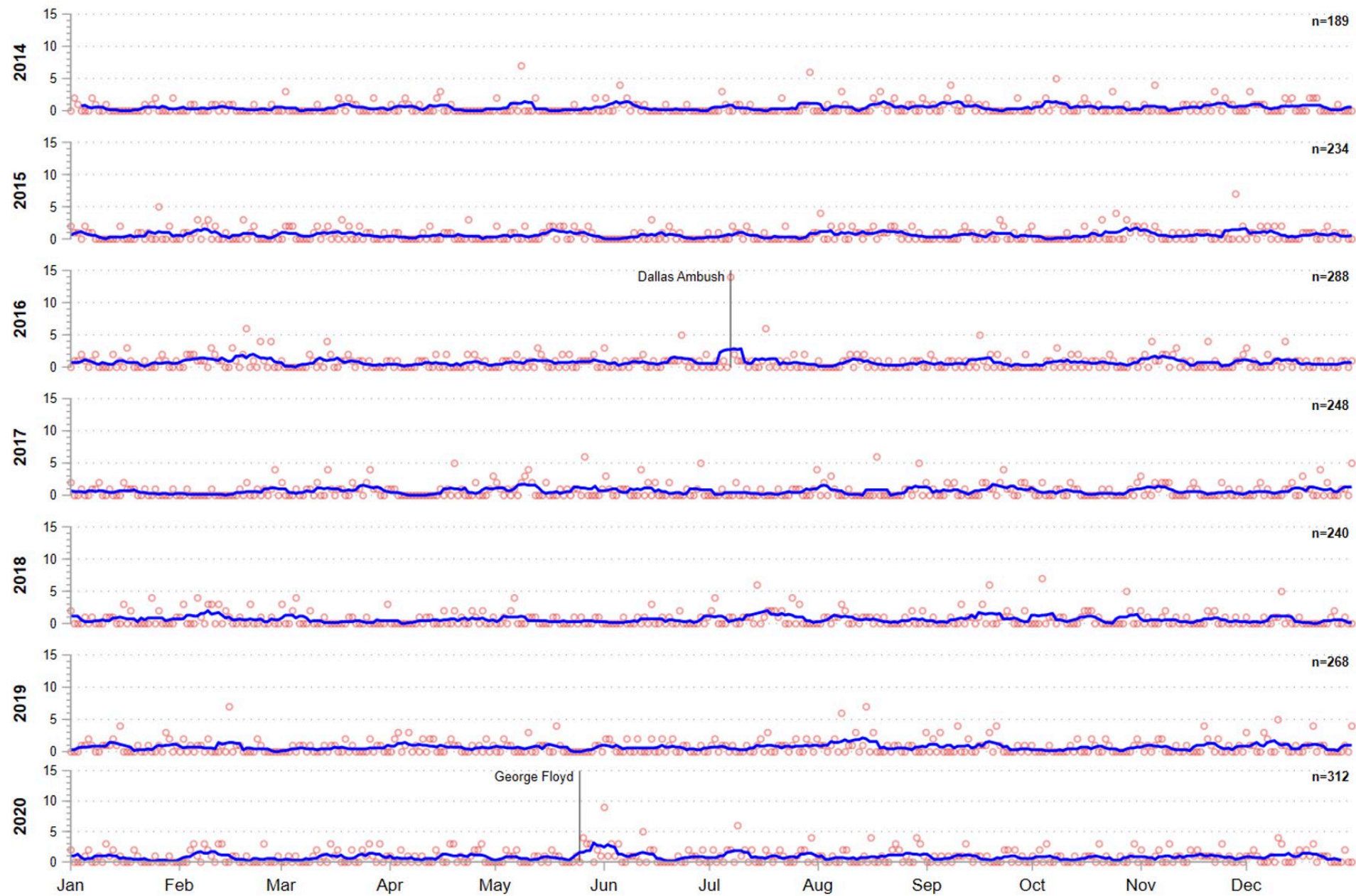


Figure 2. Daily firearm assaults on police officers, 2014-2020.



NOTE: Blue line is the rolling 7-day mean number of firearm assaults.

Method

Bayesian Structural Time Series (BSTS)

Daily FA *count* from January 1, 2014, to May 25, 2020, captures unobserved predictors of FA pre-Floyd (including COVID-19 SAHO onset)

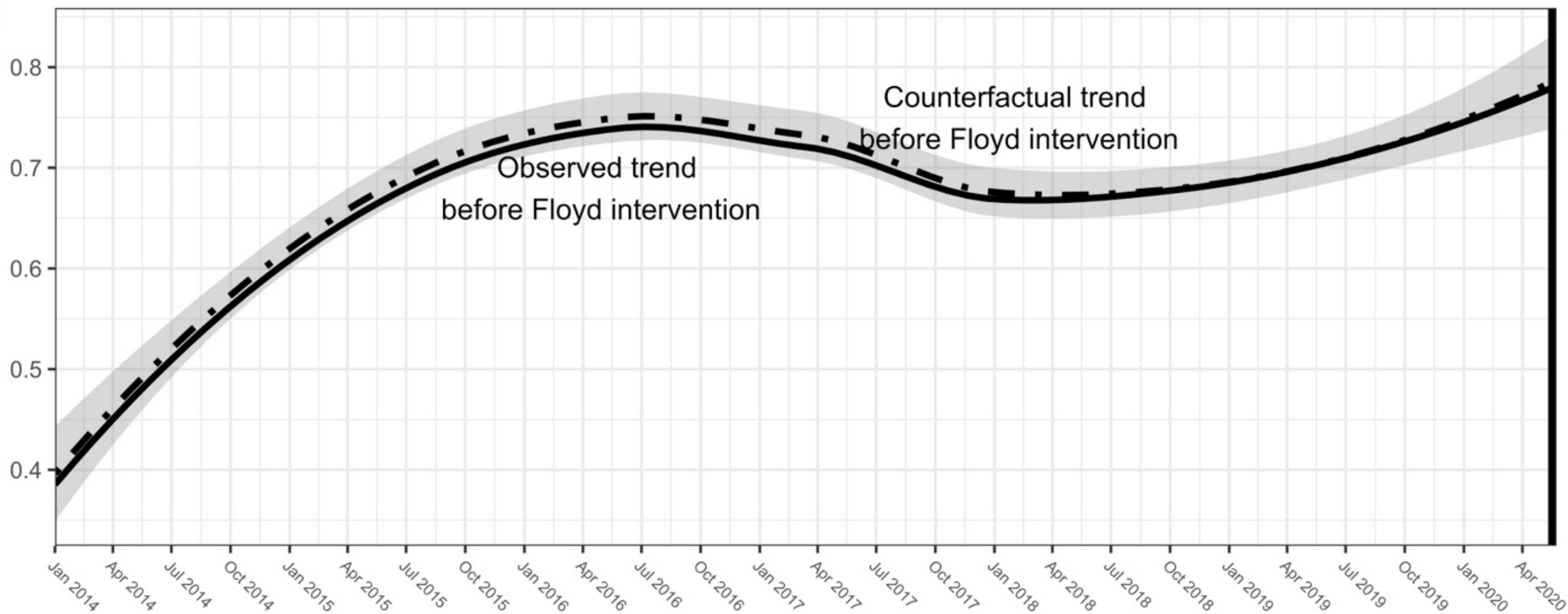
Compare **observed** post-Floyd FAs to **counterfactual** post-Floyd FAs.

Results



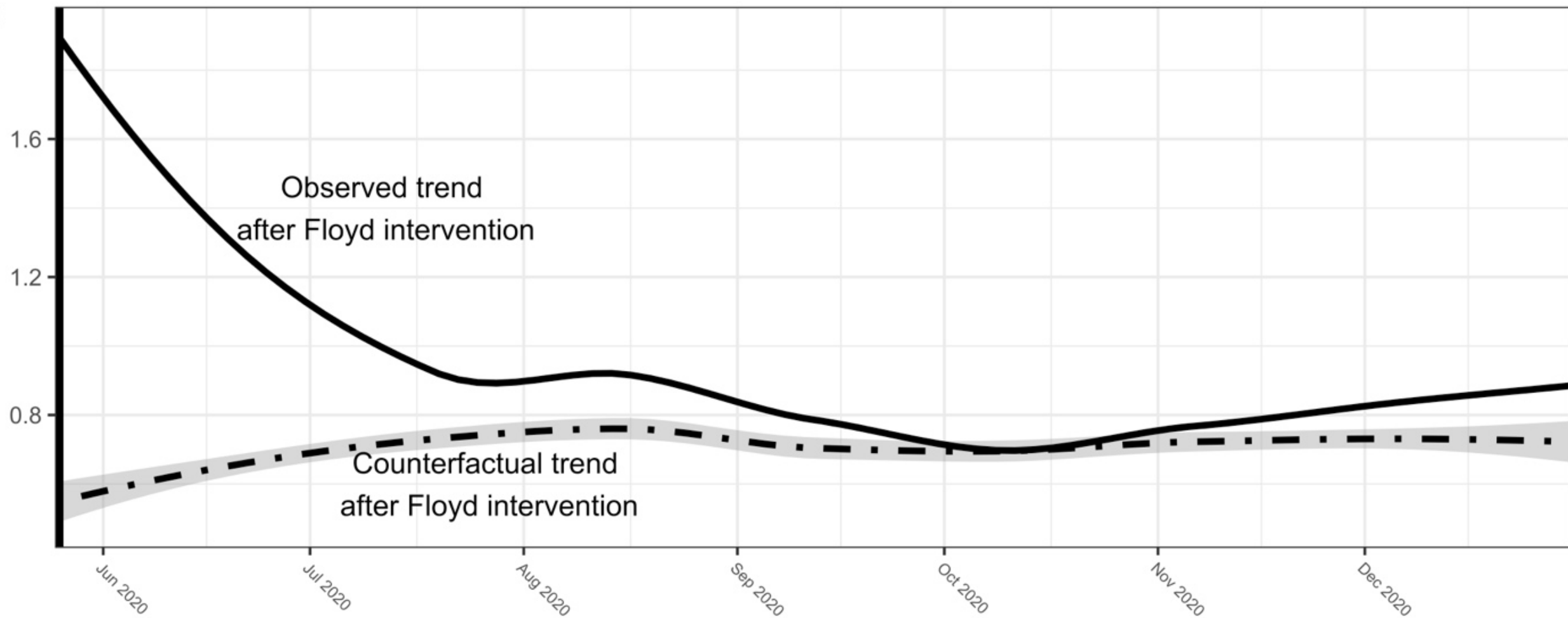
■ ■ Floyd Counterfactual Trend — Observed Trend

B



■ ■ Floyd Counterfactual Trend ■ ■ Observed Trend

C



C



Table 2. BSTS Model of Floyd Murder on Firearm Assaults on Police – Weekly Estimates

	Mean	SD	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
<i>Parameter</i>				
μ_{obs}	6.078	.586	4.965	7.258
μ_{syn}	4.900	.127	4.652	5.152
σ_{obs}	2.840	.583	1.712	3.994
σ_{syn}	.655	.103	.464	.863
ν	20.976	23.559	1.265	67.502

Mean Difference = 1.178 [.017, 2.380]

Probability of Different Means = .98

Counterfactual Post-Floyd weekly average: **4.3 FAs**

Observed Post-Floyd weekly average: **13.3 FAs**

~26 more FAs observed than expected.

Limitations

FAs underestimate *total* violence.

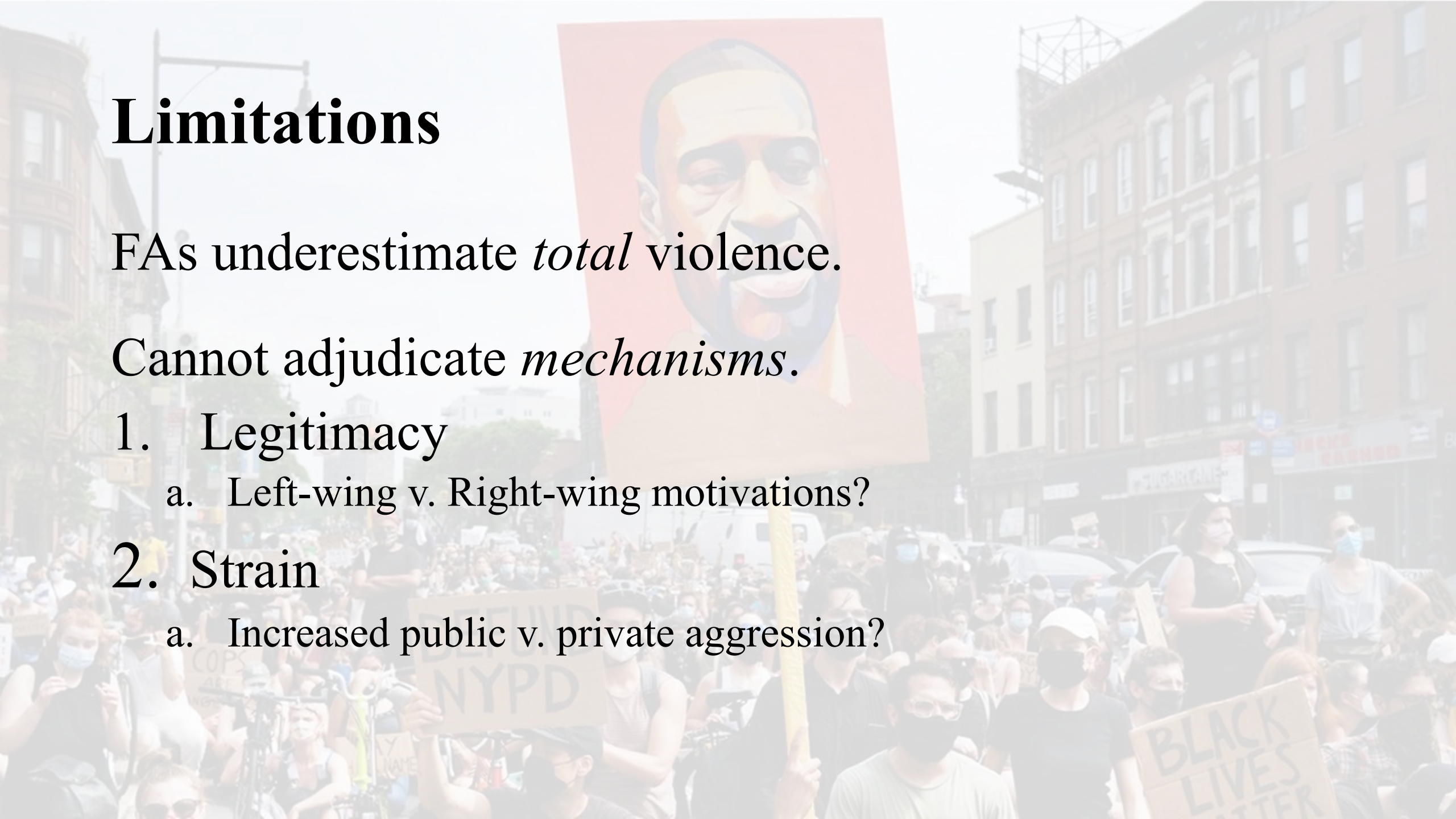
Cannot adjudicate *mechanisms*.

1. Legitimacy

- a. Left-wing v. Right-wing motivations?

2. Strain

- a. Increased public v. private aggression?



Conclusion

Floyd's murder associated with a sharp, short-term increase in firearm assault of police.

Largest social movement in history → +26 FAs.

FA of police remains exceedingly rare.

Retaliatory violence is not a “war.”

msa@utexas.edu

 @michaelsierra

sierraarevalo.com

jnix@unomaha.edu

 @jnixy

jnix.netlify.app

smourtgos@gmail.com

 @smourtgos

smourtgos.netlify.app