

Who Protests, What Do They Protest, and Why?*

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ABSTRACT: We examine individuals' decisions to attend Black Lives Matter protests and demonstrations calling for less stringent COVID-19 public health measures (e.g., for swifter reopening of businesses) during the summer of 2020 in the U.S. We find that attending one type of protest strongly predicts attending the other, which does not align with narratives suggesting these movements were diametrically opposed. Protesters appear broadly representative of the population and the decision to protest reflects a deliberate thought process. Our findings contradict the notion that abhorring police violence and worrying about the economic consequences of stringent public health measures are mutually exclusive social preferences. These views were pitted against one another and did not fit into often dichotomous political options presented by political parties. We conclude that even in well-functioning democracies, protests can reflect potentially widely-held combinations of social preferences that might be overlooked by prevailing political narratives, party platforms, and policy options.

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*All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie*

W. H. Auden, September 1, 1939

1 Introduction

Non-violent protests in democratic countries attract significant attention from scholars in many disciplines. Previous research has examined how protest behavior interacts with a range of social and political processes, including how protests influence policy and what incentivizes participation. A key theme of this earlier work is that protests play a critical role within societies—not only when traditional modes of civic engagement are unavailable (e.g., when voting seems unlikely to have any perceived effect, election outcomes seem pre-determined, etc.), but also in reasonably well-functioning democracies (see e.g., Tarrow, 1989; Putnam, 1997; Madestam et al., 2013; Gillion, 2020; Gause, 2022). For example, as noted by Meyer and Staggenborg (1996), protests can reflect minority views outside the mainstream (e.g., cigarette smokers’ rights) or to issues that are of great interest to small or specialized groups (e.g., local environmental issues).

Protests can also serve as a vehicle for individuals to reveal combinations of social preferences that depart from options available through more traditional forms of engagement like voting (Goldstone, 2004). Given the vast array of policies, issues, and concerns citizens in democracies face, it is possible that many combinations of policy preferences exist, which may not neatly fit into limited—often dichotomous—choices for parties or politicians. For example, an individual may be pro-life but also favor gay marriage rights, a combination that, in many countries, leaves them without an obvious political home. Earlier work suggests that some individuals may reveal their social preferences by turning to protests (see e.g., Battaglini, 2017; Passarelli and Tabellini, 2017). A natural question is whether protests can reveal or reflect potentially widespread combinations of preferences that are not available to voters because of the divided partisan politics of a limited two

party system, each with a single party platform. Empirically evaluating this question is difficult, as it requires data on individuals' decisions to protest during a period when there are multiple protest options available and thus multiple potential social preference combinations that protest behavior can help identify.

In this paper, we investigate who protests, what they protest, and why. In particular, we ask if protest behavior reveals novel combinations of social preferences. Our analysis relies on data collected at a unique moment in American history—the summer of 2020. At this time, there were two large social movements underway—Black Lives Matter (henceforth: *BLM*) and protests seeking a swifter reopening of the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic (henceforth: *Reopening*). Our key empirical finding is that there is significant overlap between the individuals who attended BLM and Reopening demonstrations—among respondents that attended a BLM protest, 49% also attended a Reopening demonstration. This overlap is particularly surprising as the popular understanding of these two movements—as perpetuated by the media and politicians—cast them as fundamentally opposed to one another (see e.g., Diamond, 2020; Cotton, 2020). Our key finding provides a counterexample to the idea that the U.S. population is hopelessly polarized. This is not to say that prior work studying polarization is incorrect or flawed. However, it may be incomplete if it fails to recognize that there are instances of unexpected agreement (despite party affiliations or views on other matters). Acknowledging and recognizing unexpected moments of agreement measured through an investigation of protest behavior offers a more nuanced understanding of polarization. Doing so may also offer clues for how to construct policy. For example, both Reopening and BLM protests provided individuals with an opportunity to express a shared distrust of government institutions due to perceived overreach or failures to do what they claim or aim to. Policymakers, candidates, and activists could presumably offer better policy solutions, more aligned to nuanced social preferences, if they took heed of what protesters are trying to express.

A hypothesis we maintain throughout the paper is that the overlap we find is indeed evidence that individuals supported two social movements that were widely understood to be in opposition, in which case an examination of behavior can reveal novel insights into social preferences. Much

of the work of the paper is designed to interrogate our maintained hypothesis from several angles. In the process, we demonstrate that the typical protester in our sample is broadly representative of the American population; protest behavior in our sample appears to be consistent with deliberate and intentional decision making; and participation in these protests appears to complement voting. Moreover, we find little evidence for alternative hypotheses, such as counter protesting or learning, which could also rationalize the overlap.

To examine protest behavior, we use a novel data set—The Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 Study, collected between April 2020 and June 2021. There are two features of the data critical for our purposes. First, the data were collected at a unique moment in history (summer of 2020) when the large-scale mobilizations of BLM and Reopening movements were underway. We can thus directly examine the possibility of participation in both protests. Remarkably, we find that roughly 13% of the approximately 3,500 respondents in our analytic sample attended protests, which aligns with numerous contemporary estimates. That is, our data matches out-of-sample population-level estimates of protest participation, even though protest behavior was not part of the sampling protocol.¹ Second, the data set contains explicit variables measuring protest attendance and stated motivations behind it along with information about socio-demographic characteristics, income, work arrangements, family structure, and political views. This design allows us to relate protest attendance not only to stated views, but also to individual characteristics and other behaviors, such as labor supply.

Moreover, since we construct our analytic sample from a representative survey of the U.S. on important demographics like race, income, age, and gender, our findings allow us to draw broader conclusions about protesters versus non-protesters. We compare this design to other studies in the literature, which often collect and analyze data on participants at specific demonstrations, thereby omitting non-participants. This procedure amounts to sampling on an outcome variable, which precludes a comparison between participants and non-participants, undermining the ability to identify factors that predict attendance (see e.g., Cantoni et al., 2022). We supplement these

¹The designers of the survey data decided to collect information about protesting as part of an existing panel study. We provide more details about data collection, response rates, and the addition of protest information in Section 3.

data with several other sources that allow us to capture protester representativeness, the supply of protests over time and space, the incidence of local police shootings (which speaks to the salience of BLM for different localities), and the prevalence of COVID-19 (which shifts the expected costs of attending protests). These data enable us to further relate participation decisions to various factors that prior work has suggested could be relevant (see e.g., Saunders et al., 2012; DiGrazia, 2014; Passarelli and Tabellini, 2017).

The main finding of our analysis is the novel overlap between the two movements we study. Attendance at a BLM protest strongly predicts attendance at a Reopening protest, even when conditioning on a rich set of individual and community controls. When viewing protest attendance as a form of revealed preference, our findings suggest there may be more consensus in the population than previously thought. Because this pattern runs against priors about the supporters of these two social movements and polarization more broadly, we interrogate the finding from multiple angles.

We assess whether correlation in protest attendance can be explained by other factors. To do so, we examine which characteristics predict protest attendance. We document that protesters tend to be young, have children at home, and are continuing to work in-person at jobs that earn relatively low incomes. These factors predict attendance at both BLM and Reopening protests. It may seem surprising that individuals with lower income or children to care for would join protests more frequently than people with greater income or with no children. However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to economic insecurity and limited access to schools and childcare arrangements, which may have prompted some people, including those sympathetic to or supportive of BLM, to also join Reopening protests. This pattern speaks to why it is important to adjust raw correlations for omitted controls that may separately predict lower levels of protest participation.

Next, we examine the extent to which protesters are representative of the broader population on observable characteristics. While representativeness is not a necessary condition for a protest to carry informative signals about social preferences, we argue this feature is important in our context, as the two movements we studied were subject to extreme caricatures with the typical participant cast as out of touch with the typical citizen. In the case of BLM, participants were

cast by media pundits and politicians as Antifa radicals; in the case of Reopening, they were cast as gun-toting right-wing extremist vigilantes. We find that protesters constitute a diverse set of individuals along racial, economic, and familial dimensions that is broadly representative of the American population. We show that protesters more closely reflect the population than politicians. When looking at demographic dimensions such as gender, race, and ethnicity, protesters more closely reflect the population than voters. The differences between the typical protester and typical American are relatively small. While we cannot rule out unobservable differences between protesters and the typical U.S. citizen, this baseline representativeness on observables establishes a link between protesters and the wider population and gives us a basis to interpret overlapping protest attendance as potentially carrying signals about broader social preferences.

We also investigate the extent to which protesting appears to be a deliberate decision. Assessing whether protest participation varies with perceived benefits and costs allows us to differentiate protesting as an activity somebody engages in frivolously (i.e., the “protests are the new brunch” narrative of 2017, see e.g., Doll (2017) and Yglesias (2017, 2019)) from something done intentionally to signal preferences and advocate for policy change. We find that protesting not only aligns with stated views, but also with expected costs (e.g., attendance consistent with risk of COVID-19 exposure) and the local salience of an issue (for most control sets BLM protesting is more likely in places where police violence recently occurred). For social scientists this finding may not be surprising since rational choice and utility maximization are workhorse frameworks for studying individual decision making.² While many different models of preferences could rationalize these choices (including protesting for fun), we show evidence that protesting appears to be a deliberate choice that responds to measurable incentives (like issue salience), which is important for establishing how the overlap in BLM and Reopening protest attendance may contain information about widely held preferences.

Finally, we study the relationship between protesting and voting. If attending a protest substitutes for voting, this correlation may suggest individuals are pessimistic about elections as a vehicle for

²Indeed, work dating back to at least Cicchetti et al. (1971) and Coleman (1994) have used rational choice frameworks to study the decision to protest.

delivering policy change. Alternatively, if these two activities are complements, this pattern may be consistent with the interpretation that individuals use protests a tool for signaling their policy preferences between elections (Goldstone, 2004). We present evidence that supports the latter interpretation where voting and protesting are complementary actions. Since many of the individuals that attended BLM and Reopening protests also voted, this is further evidence that this overlap may contain novel information about social preferences.

To interpret our results, we highlight three implications for how our findings contribute to our understanding of the role of protests. First, even in a functioning democracy, protests are able to reflect nuanced combinations of social preferences. In our context—during the summer of 2020—protesters seem to express concern about their economic well-being during pandemic-induced lockdowns and simultaneously abhor excessive police violence. This perspective is consistent with individuals expressing dissatisfaction with public institutions that have failed to deliver on their promises of personal and economic security.

Second, our case study underscores how political leaders and pundits can shape and frame events in relatively polarizing ways, focusing on what divides people versus what connects them. The summer 2020 protests were often cast by media narratives and politicians as being driven by extremists whose views were wholly incompatible with one another. Our results studying protest behavior suggest that this characterization was not only inaccurate but also reductive in a way that aligns with *affective polarization* (defined as inter-party animosity and distrust) among the public. These inaccurate portrayals pervade media discussions about the social preferences of various populations, especially more economically disadvantaged ones. Such views are often informed by misleading stereotypes that warp public perceptions of the group's preferences, beliefs, and behaviors. As a result, media and political figures may find it convenient to pigeon-hole these people by ignoring their actual nuanced and competing needs that can be expressed through acts of civic engagement like protests.

Third, we view our findings as a counterexample to the narrative of seemingly endlessly increasing and universal polarization. Instead, our findings support the existence of a group of

individuals with preferences that are more nuanced, with room for agreement—sometimes recently called the “exhausted majority” (Hawkins et al., 2018). This group demonstrates preferences that, currently, the binary signal of voting inadequately represents. Indeed, voting may perpetuate partisanship by forcing individuals to choose between two incomplete representations of their preferences. A conclusion is that protest behavior can provide helpful information about social preferences to inform policy options more representative of a richer set of potentially broadly-held social preferences.

2 Literature

This study contributes to the broad and well-developed literature on protests and social movements across several fields (e.g., sociology, political science, and economics). The literature includes work that is theoretical; empirical; or focuses on specific case studies, interviews, and policy outcomes. To organize our discussion, we focus on three broad categories. First, we follow the terminology of Klandermans (2004) to discuss research related to the supply and demand factors driving protest attendance (i.e., factors about individuals versus factors about movements and the broader environment). Second, we highlight work that has focused on specific case studies of protest episodes. Third, we consider prior work focused on polarization. Our paper makes contributions to each of these themes. We present an analysis informed by data collected during a unique moment in time when two distinct protest movements were ongoing. As a result, we are able to characterize which individual or institutional factors influence participation. Moreover, the sampling design did not stratify or select people based on protest attendance, which allows us to make statements comparing protesters to non-protesters. Finally, the overlap in attendance among BLM and Reopening protest attendees we document introduces important nuance into discussions about the implications and interpretation of rising levels of political polarization.

Supply and Demand Factors: Why People Protest

The literature that focuses on the supply-side factors of protesting examines actions taken by social movement organizations that facilitate individual participation. How social movements frame their beliefs and actions plays an important role in attracting participants and building legitimacy. For instance, Snow et al. (1986) argue that a necessary condition for individuals to participate in a movement is alignment of how a movement is framed across various dimensions (e.g., the nature of the problem, who is the responsible party, and alternatives).³ Tarrow (1989) introduces the concept of “spillover” to the supply-side of social movements, where established movements create an infrastructure that facilitates easier entry for new movements to gain traction. Chang and Lee (2021) empirically supports these mechanisms by identifying the characteristics of demonstrations that facilitate subsequent mobilizations. The idea of spillover relates to our setting, which features two distinct types of protest movements that began nearly concurrently. Spillover can also affect the tactics social movements employ. As Wang and Soule (2012, 2016) identify, collaboration between movements serves as a channel for tactical diffusion and innovation. Mobilization—defined as the conversion of movement sympathizers to participants (see e.g., Klandermans, 2004)—is among the most important supply-side factors, as widespread participation is necessary for the success of movements. Theoretical work has highlighted the links between mobilization and the tactical choices of social movements. Among the implications of the model presented in Bueno de Mesquita (2013), for example, is that social movements recognize mobilization as a function of the opportunity cost of participation.⁴ Social movements are not always successful at mobilization, which prior work has attributed to mechanisms such as non-conversion of sympathizers or erosion of support (Oegema and Klandermans, 1994). Our findings are relevant to research on mobilization because we distinguish between movement sympathizers and protest attendees and analyze factors predicting attendance after adjusting for movement support, including factors that potentially shift

³For an extensive review of the literature on frames, see Benford and Snow (2000).

⁴Other work has considered mobilization as a collective action problem. Enikolopov et al. (2020) find social media facilitates mobilization by reducing the costs of collective action by improving information exchange as opposed to increasing polarization. Karell et al. (2023) note social media can also increase movement participation by shifting perceptions of norms, which make mobilization less costly.

costs of attendance.

Prior research on protest demand generally focuses on individual-level attributes and can be categorized into four themes relevant to our study. The first theme addresses the factors driving protest participation, with main predictors like social networks, biographic availability, financial and time resources, low levels of political trust, and political engagement (Petrie, 2004; Schussman and Soule, 2005). Other studies have documented heterogeneity in protest attendance (Saunders et al., 2012; Ong and Han, 2019; DiGrazia, 2014), including Bosi and Zamponi (2020) who develop a framework based on qualitative and quantitative data to rationalize heterogeneous participation in common demonstrations. Some of these studies face the challenge of their reliance on selected samples (i.e., they can only observe who attended a protest), which makes it difficult to directly analyze what distinguishes protesters from non-protesters. Since our survey data are a representative sample including non-protesters and protesters at a unique point in time when two large movements were underway, we can directly examine whether and to what degree these mechanisms or their heterogeneity help to explain the decision to attend different types of protests. Cantoni et al. (2022) is an influential and closely related study to ours in this area. The authors examine individual characteristics associated with participation in anti-authoritarian protests in Hong Kong, finding that economic preferences strongly predict participation across protests of different sizes. While our study also delves into the profile of protest attendees, our focus is distinct. By analyzing multiple seemingly contradictory movements, we assess whether protests carry information about social preferences that would otherwise remain unknown.

The second theme explores the motivations and rationality of protesters. Examples include the types of change and its associated beneficiaries (Walgrave et al., 2011), social pressure (McClendon, 2014), political preferences (Kostelka and Rovny, 2019), and the overlap between individual and movement identities (Klandermans and de Weerd, 2000).⁵ The concept of intersectional solidarity (i.e., a recognition among activists of oppression or issues affecting multiple and interacting social structures) introduced by Tormos (2017) is also related to our study, as we present evidence of

⁵More generally, prior work has documented how social pressure can act as a mechanism to influence individuals to engage in personally costly actions (Huck and Kübler, 2000).

intersecting interests among participants at different social movements.⁶ Prior work has supported protesting as rational behavior (see e.g., Kim and Bearman, 1997; Matsueda et al., 2020) while others have noted the role of emotions in protesting (Bandelj, 2009).⁷ In terms of expressed views, Ujhelyi et al. (2021) provide empirical evidence that many people—not just those on the political fringe—engage with protesting and may use it as a substitute for voting.⁸ Another study closely related to ours is Passarelli and Tabellini (2017), which examines the mechanisms behind protest attendance and its influence on government policy. While they develop a formal model and test its predictions, our analysis leverages unique data to precisely characterize how the decision to protest responds to different incentives and costs. We are able to extend their analysis by studying the determinants of participation in different types of protests. Our paper not only corroborates some of their findings but also extends them by examining a larger set of factors predicting who protests and why.

The third theme from the demand for protest literature concerns protests related to policing. Olzak (2021) documents how cities with more episodes of police violence are more likely to establish civilian review boards and reduce officer-involved fatalities for Black and Hispanic individuals. We also find that individuals respond to salient issues like police violence in their communities by mobilizing into activities like protesting. Issue salience can be heterogeneous within a community, as noted by Phelps et al. (2021) in their interviews with residents of Minneapolis, Minnesota about the BLM movement and the extent of police reform efforts. How protests are policed has also attracted research interest. Cunningham (2022) finds alignment between police and protesters is a mechanism for rationalizing asymmetries in how different types of social movements interact with the police and their subsequent treatment by law enforcement officers. These differences can be important in determining whether violence may occur around protest events. For instance,

⁶For a survey on research about boundary-spanning protests and their influence on outcomes such as mobilization, see Wang et al. (2018).

⁷It is important to note other studies on the role of emotions in social movements tend to attribute deviations from rational behavior as strategic errors. For a review, see Goodwin et al. (2004).

⁸Indeed, Ortiz et al. (2022) note the number of grassroots protests, organized predominantly by young, female, or middle-class non-partisans, rose substantially from 2006 to 2020 to rival the number of protests driven by political partisans, unions, and traditional interest groups. Chen and Suen (2017) and della Porta (2017) document similar increases in middle class protest participation in high-income and developing countries.

Nassauer (2021) demonstrates how physical space plays an important role in creating a comfort zone and power relationship during a protest. Entry into these spaces by police officers can alter these dynamics, leading to mistrust and increased tensions, which form the foundation for violent outbreaks.

Case Studies and Policy Outcomes

A substantial body of work has studied specific social movements.⁹ Bursztyn et al. (2021) study which factors have a causal effect on participation in the Hong Kong protests against the Chinese Communist Party. Among the results of their RCT, the authors find that individual incentives directly increase protest turnout and prior attendance has a persistent effect on future protest engagement. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many papers studied the extent to which large gatherings, political rallies, and protests such as Black Lives Matter, the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, and the January 6 Capitol Insurrection impacted COVID-19 transmission and risk avoidance behaviors (see e.g., Dave et al., 2020, 2021a,b,c). A theme from these studies finds events which are not paired with or do not induce some risk mitigation behaviors tend to increase COVID-19 transmission. These papers rely on individual mobility data, which are valuable but lack other details about individuals. Furthermore, these analyses tend to take protest participation as an input rather than attempt to understand what factors, including individual characteristics, lead to the observed composition of protesters. This is a focus of our analysis.

Other work has studied the effects of protests on policy and political participation in the

⁹Prominent examples from sociology, political science, and economics include the 1964 Freedom Summer project (McAdam, 1986, low and high risk activism); peace, gender, and labor demonstrations in the Netherlands (Klandermans, 1993, comparative analysis of motivation); student activism in the 1960s in the United States (Sherkat and Blocker, 1994, individual factors influencing activist behaviors among the 1965 high school cohort); riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (Collins and Margo, 2004, 2007, impacts on African American income, labor, and housing outcomes); the 2011 and 2013 protests in Egypt (Jumet, 2015, what factors inform individual protest decisions against authoritarian regimes); immigrant responses to nativist legislation in the United States (Zepeda-Millán, 2016, cognitive mechanisms that convert groups of unconventional protesters into activists); mobilization to participate in the early 1960s civil rights movement in Nashville (Isaac et al., 2019, heterogeneous mobilization pathways); and the women's liberation movement of the 1960s (Nelson, 2021, influence of place on within movement discourse heterogeneity). These fields have also examined the protests that arose in the years following the election of Donald Trump in 2016, including the protests from the summer of 2020 (see e.g., Fisher et al., 2018; Meyer and Tarrow, 2018; McAdam, 2020; McCabe and Brannen, 2021).

United States. Agnone (2007) finds evidence of an amplification mechanism between protest and public opinion on the enactment of environmental policy. This empirical evidence supports the conclusions by Goldstone (2004) on the dual functions of social movements in democratic societies to both seek greater justice for marginalized groups and call attention to key issues and place them on the political agenda between elections. Our own analysis provides further support for these functions of social movements. Madestam et al. (2013) establish causal relationships between protesting and policy and electoral outcomes using evidence from the Tea Party movement of 2009. The authors find that in districts with larger protests, representatives voted more conservatively and increased the likelihood that a Democratic incumbent would retire before the next election. These protests also drove higher turnout at the next election, favoring Republican candidates.¹⁰ Gause (2022) notes legislators running for re-election are more likely to support the preferences of protesters than non-protesters and those of racial minorities, low-income, and grassroots protesters over better resourced protesters. While we do not directly address impacts of protests, our analysis is motivated by the premise that understanding who protests and why is important for policymakers as these events provide further insight into societal preferences. Moreover, we examine questions related to how protest behavior relates to other forms of civic engagement, such as voting. We also document a surprising overlap between BLM and Reopening protesters, suggesting a greater degree of policy consensus between participants in these movements than prevailing narratives suggest, which may be informative to policymakers.

Polarization

Finally, our analysis contributes to empirical studies of polarization. Previous research has documented the rise, growth, and impact of polarization on democratic functioning. For example, polarization has been shown to increase legislative gridlock, political violence (Iyengar et al., 2019), the mainstreaming of extremist positions (Bursztyn et al., 2022a), and gaps in where citizens

¹⁰Gillion (2020) documents similar patterns between protest activity, voter turnout, and campaign contributions to politicians sympathetic to the protest movements.

seek basic information (Bursztyn et al., 2022b).¹¹ Kwon and Martin (2023) examine the micro-foundations of polarization growth by focusing on a measure of “subjective polarization,” which is based on how individuals perceive their political positions relative to the two major political parties. Their study finds that subjective polarization is a robust predictor of partisan animus—what they term affective polarization. This type of polarization has implications for policy. Iversen and Goplerud (2018) show how redistributive policies are frequently overlooked or unimplemented in two-party political systems despite broad popular support because individuals are forced to vote for bundles of policies that do not wholly align with their personal preferences. While our study does not dispute any of these findings, we present our results as an important addition to the conceptualization of growing polarization. The overlap between BLM and Reopening protest attendees suggests that there are instances where individuals may unexpectedly agree. Investigating such non-trivial occurrences can offer a more comprehensive view of social preferences and the limits of policy to align with them. More broadly, the overlap we investigate underscores the value of studying who protests, what they protest, and why, as it can reveal insights into other social concepts, such as social preferences and polarization.

3 Data and Summary Statistics

In this section we describe the seven data sources we compiled to create the data set we use in our analysis, which provides information on individual demographics, beliefs, and behaviors—including protest participation. Our primary data source is linked to other sources that speak to heterogeneity in political participation, the supply of protests, the prevalence of COVID-19, and the incidence of police violence across counties in the United States. We also use information on other sub-populations of Americans to compare them with protesters we observe to draw conclusions about the representativeness of protest participants. After describing the collection and features of

¹¹In addition to showing that Americans across the ideological spectrum view opinion programming as a source of objective facts, Bursztyn et al. (2022b) provide evidence that areas with relatively higher viewership of an opinion program skeptical of COVID-19 experienced worse health outcomes from the disease.

these data, we provide summary statistics and highlight key patterns that inform our main analysis of who protests, what they protest, and why.

Data Collection and Sources

Protesting and individual characteristics. The primary data source for our analysis is the Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 Study (SEICS), conducted by researchers at Washington University in St. Louis.¹² This data set is a balanced panel composed of five waves that tracks a subset of respondents across waves. Each wave consists of roughly 5,000 individuals located throughout the United States. The sample is representative of the country along race, household income, age, and gender dimensions. The study collected detailed demographic and financial information about respondents and their families, including their home ZIP codes (an important inclusion given the growing body of research showing the geographic bases of partisanship and opportunity for civic engagement, see Brown and Enos, 2021; de Vries et al., 2024). Pandemic-specific factors such as work arrangements, stimulus payment spending, and beliefs about infections and life quality were also captured. The research team contracted Qualtrics to collect data online at quarterly intervals between April 2020 and June 2021. They recruited respondents from pre-existing panels with incentives to complete the survey. While these data are the central feature of our analysis, we augment them with other sources, described below, that enable us to capture additional demographics, the supply of protests, the prevalence of COVID-19, the incidence of police violence, and voting behavior at the county level.

Several moments of social unrest broke out during the data collection for Wave 1 that attracted significant media attention. On April 15 one of the first protests against COVID-19 restrictions happened in Lansing, Michigan. Dubbed “Operation Gridlock,” attendees in cars blocked traffic

¹²For a detailed write up on the SEICS and its methodology, see Roll et al. (2021). Increasing amounts of research in the social sciences—including economics—rely on survey data. While such data are valuable assets, immense care needs to be devoted to their design and implementation before proceeding with any analysis. Stantcheva (2022) contains a helpful guide and references on the best practices for conducting surveys for academic research. Many of the details in this section about the design and data collection procedures used for the SEICS align with the recommendations in her article.

and sounded horns in and around the state Capitol for over eight hours (LeBlanc and Mauger, 2020). Michigan experienced two more Reopening protests in rapid succession: first on April 30 and then on May 15, both of which were noted for the large number of attendees carrying assault weapons on the grounds and into the viewing galleries of the Capitol building (Mauger, 2020; Beckett, 2020; Censky, 2020). The events in Michigan were not isolated incidents. By May 1, similar Reopening protests had occurred in more than half of U.S. states and continued to occur over the summer. On May 25—near the end of the Wave 1 collection period—former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin murdered George Floyd in the presence of three other Minneapolis police officers. A lone passerby, Black high school student Darnella Frazier, recorded the murder on her cell phone and shared the video with the world via social media—an intervention for which she later won an honorary Pulitzer Prize (Haines, 2021). Outrage over Mr. Floyd’s murder led to widespread protests against police brutality and racial inequality under the rallying cry of “Black Lives Matter.” On June 6, shortly after the Wave 1 data were collected, over half a million people attended BLM demonstrations in nearly 550 places throughout the United States, in a wave of protests that continued over the summer (Buchanan et al., 2020).

In response to these extraordinary events, the SEICS included several additional questions ahead of data collection for Wave 2, which occurred between July 30 and September 9 of 2020. The first set of added questions pertained to individual perceptions of discrimination in their lives. Another new question gauged whether the respondent was supportive of the BLM protests. The addition of this question reflects the mixture of BLM protests that were occurring. For example, a small number of BLM protests (roughly 3.7%) included property damage or vandalism, leading local authorities to invoke emergency declarations (e.g., Hennepin County, Minnesota; Washington D.C.; and Portland, Oregon) and provoking strong criticism, especially from right-wing commentators. The vast majority of protests were peaceful and saw participation from across the political spectrum, such as when Senator Mitt Romney and a large group of evangelicals marched alongside liberal activists in Washington D.C. (Boorstein and Natanson, 2020). Notably, the perception of BLM protests as violent appears to have been largely driven by media coverage as 96.3% of demonstrations involved

no property damage or injury and 97.7% of these demonstrations reported no injuries among participants, bystanders, or police (Chenoweth and Pressman, 2020).¹³ Third, the new survey questions collected information about protest attendance. Questions were designed to capture not only attendance at BLM and Reopening protests but also whether the respondent had gone to protests previously. These additions to the SEICS connect protest attendance and support to individual socio-demographics and the COVID-19 pandemic.

While multiple waves of the SEICS also contain protest information, our analysis focuses primarily on data from Wave 2. We made the decision to focus in on summer 2020 protests because of their unique moment in time. Our goal in this paper is to test the hypothesis that there is little overlap between BLM and Reopening protesters, which occurred in large part during the summer of 2020. Moreover, focusing on this time period allows us to measure attitudes and sentiments among respondents before the effects of polarization induced by dominant narratives. Studying the influence of these narratives on support for these protests over time is a promising area for future work that the SEICS can facilitate.

Representativeness and county characteristics. As mentioned previously, we supplement the SEICS data with information from other sources, which we can map using respondents' ZIP codes. This additional information facilitates different aspects of our analysis. To gauge how representative protesters are to other players in the political process, we gather information on the demographics of voters and members of Congress. Voter demographics come from Edison Research and the MIT Election Data + Science Lab. Edison Research conducts exit polls for four major news networks: ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC. These exit polls are intended to provide demographic breakdowns of the overall population that participated in an election. While the underlying data for these polls are not readily available to the public, many cross-tabulations are part of the public record. For our analysis we rely on the exit polls from the 2016 presidential election.¹⁴ The MIT Election Data + Science Lab creates several data sets on voting returns in a variety of American elections.

¹³The data used by Chenoweth and Pressman (2020) are the same we use to measure the supply of available protests.

¹⁴Results using the 2018 midterm election exit polls are similar.

From these materials, we get information about county-level voter participation, which we use as a measure of political engagement. Information about the demographics of members of Congress come from the Congressional Research Service, which releases a profile on the membership of each Congress.¹⁵

We also use information on environmental factors that could affect a decision to join a protest. From the Crowd Counting Consortium (CCC; see Crowd Counting Consortium, 2021) we obtain information about the political demonstrations that occurred in the United States from 2017–2021, which we aggregate to the county level. These records are detailed, including information about the issue motivating the protest, its location, size, and type. The CCC data also capture whether the protest was associated with participant injury, property destruction, police injury, and whether the police arrested or deployed tear gas or pepper spray against demonstrators. We use these data as a measure of protest supply within a respondent’s community that we can relate to protesting behaviors and socio-demographic characteristics during the data collection period. Next, we gather information about the incidence of shootings in local communities involving police from Fatal Encounters. This organization updates and maintains a database of the people killed during any interaction with a law enforcement officer (e.g., on-duty, off-duty, local, state, or federal). We use this information to gain insights about an individual’s motivation to protest or their familiarity with debates about police violence. Finally, we gather historical information about COVID-19 case counts and deaths from *The New York Times* (2021). The *Times* collected these data based on reports from state and local health agencies, providing us with a measure of the relative “riskiness” of engaging in protests during the sample period.

Summary Statistics

The first column of Table 1 summarizes the demographics of respondents in the analytic sample, which is composed of all Wave 2 respondents with information about protest attendance and who

¹⁵We specifically rely on the profiles for the 115th and 116th Congresses (Congressional Research Service, 2018, 2020).

were linked to our other data sources, 3,526 respondents in total.¹⁶ The average respondent is about 48 years old with a median income of \$68,000. About 13% of the analytic sample is Black. A majority of the sample is male. About 26% of respondents have a child under the age of 18 at home. Close to 60% of the sample has at least a college degree (associates or higher). Approximately 39% of the sample lives in the southern U.S., while other regions of the country are equally represented. In terms of work arrangements, 40% of respondents were continuing to work in person while a slightly smaller share was not observed working during the data collection period (i.e., there is no information to suggest these individuals were working previously and stopped). Nearly 20% of the sample transitioned to telework and less than 5% reported they had stopped working altogether due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents' political ideologies and beliefs vary. Roughly 49% identified with the Democratic party, 35% with the Republican party, and the remaining 16% as Independents. Recent polling suggests that registered voters who identify as partisan are approximately split evenly among Democratic, Republican, and Independent (Pew Research Center, 2024). More than half indicated they supported the BLM protests.¹⁷ According to the Cantril Ladder—a numeric measure of perceived well-being—the average respondent felt their lives ranged between “just okay” and “doing well.” COVID-19 remained a large concern for 62% of respondents. Along with a high average fear of COVID-19, the typical respondent believed they faced a 34% chance of infection and a 30% chance of death from the disease if they became infected.

For some analyses related to voting, we analyze a subset of the analytic sample that appeared in Wave 3 of the SEICS, which captured information about voting behaviors. Data about these individuals is reported in the second column of Table 1, where they are labeled as “Repeats.” Generally, this grouping of respondents is similar to the overall analytic sample. The respondents who appeared in Wave 3 tended to be slightly older with higher incomes. This group also had more males and college graduates and fewer Black respondents and people with young children at home.

¹⁶Observations that could not be linked to the other data sets due to incomplete geographic or protest information are dropped from the analytic sample.

¹⁷Our data do not contain a similar measure for support for Reopening protests.

We observe distinct protesting behaviors among Wave 2 respondents. Not protesting was the most common behavior, as only 13% of respondents attended any demonstration. BLM protesters were the most common in the sample, consistent with media reports from the summer of 2020. About 2% of respondents attended some other protest during this time period. Based on the CCC data, the most frequent non-BLM or non-Reopening protests concerned the 2020 elections or other issues that were less widespread than the BLM and Reopening movements.¹⁸ These levels of protest attendance generally align with contemporaneous reporting on the demonstrations. For example, surveys conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, Civis Analytics, N.O.R.C., and Pew noted BLM protest attendance rates between 6–10%, inclusive of the 8% attendance rate we observe in the SEICS data. We note there is a non-trivial overlap between BLM and Reopening protest attendees. Roughly 49% of those that attended a BLM protest also attended a Reopening protest, while 63% of those that attended a Reopening protest also attended a BLM protest. Unpacking this overlap is an important feature of our empirical analysis in Section 4.

The remaining columns of Table 1 summarize the characteristics of individuals based on their protesting behaviors. Column (3) features respondents in our analytic sample that did not protest, column (4) summarizes individuals that attended a BLM protest, and column (5) contains individuals that attended Reopening protests. Non-protesters tends to be older and have a higher income than the overall sample and those who attended protests. Non-protesters were more likely to have transitioned to telework or to have been observed not working. Black individuals were over represented among protest attendees (15% of BLM protesters and 16% of Reopening protesters relative to 13% in the overall sample). Perhaps surprisingly given the emphasis on racism raised by the BLM movement, the share of Black protesters is similar across each type of protesting activity. Females accounted for a majority of the respondents that attended a BLM protest, while Reopening protesters were majority male. About two thirds of respondents who attended a Reopening protest had young children at home, as did a majority of BLM protesters, while less than a quarter of

¹⁸Specific examples of these demonstrations include the “Boat Parades” and other rallies in support of President Trump, actions calling for the resignation of Louis DeJoy as Postmaster General following announcements of mail service cutbacks ahead of the 2020 election, calls for justice on behalf of victims of sexual violence following the murder of Vanessa Guillen, and promoting the abolishment of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

non-protesters had young children at home. These patterns are consistent with the lower average age of protesters. While a majority of respondents in all categories had college degrees, the highest share of individuals with college degrees was among BLM protest attendees.

We see divergent work arrangements and beliefs across protest activities. As noted above, protesters were mostly continuing to work in-person, while non-protesters had another work arrangement like telework. These socio-demographic work arrangement patterns are consistent with studies of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a different survey data set collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, Papageorge et al. (2021) find that individuals with lower incomes were less likely to transition to telework, which partially reflects the types of jobs these individuals had which made the adoption of self-protective behaviors such as social distancing more costly. In the SEICS data, protesters tend to have higher fears of COVID-19 and believe they are at greater risk of infection and death, consistent with the risks of continuing to work in person or attending protests. It is interesting to note the large differences in these beliefs across these behaviors. Some of this may be attributable to respondents reporting implausibly small and large values for these fields, which could reflect several factors, including misinformation about the spread of illness; difficulties with probabilistic thinking, which is well-documented in the literature (see e.g., Barth et al. (2020), Lillard and Willis (2001), Delavande et al. (2006), etc.); fatalistic beliefs (e.g., Akesson et al. (2020)); or optimism about herd immunity.

The ideological breakdown across protesting behaviors is sensible; majorities of non-protesters and protesters supported the BLM protests, and, unsurprisingly, BLM attendees overwhelmingly supported these demonstrations. Reopening protesters were also highly supportive of BLM protests. A majority of BLM protesters identified as Democrats, while the majority of Reopening protesters identified as Republicans. However, a greater share of Reopening protesters identified as Democrats (36%) than BLM protesters identified as Republicans (33%). Current media narratives about these activities seemingly rule out such ideological nuances among participants, which we view as one of the motivations for further analysis to determine whether protests provide novel information about societal preferences (Simon, 2020). As mentioned previously, Wave 3 of the SEICS data

gathered information about participation in the 2020 presidential election, which we use as part of our analysis on the relationship between protesting and voting (i.e., the “Repeats” from column 2 of Table 1).

While respondents in the sample are located throughout the United States, many are clustered in major cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Unsurprisingly, the number of protests, prevalence of COVID-19, and incidence of police shootings were positively correlated with but these factors were present in smaller ones as well. For instance, smaller counties had an average of ten protests over the relevant data collection period and an average of three police shootings. Voter participation displays greater variation across geographies, with the highest rates in competitive swing states such as Arizona and Florida and lower rates in safe states like Texas and New York.¹⁹

4 Who Protests, What Do They Protest, and Why?

Overlapping Protest Behaviors

Nearly 30% of protesters attended both BLM and Reopening demonstrations. Table 2 reports linear probability model estimates for attending a BLM and Reopening protest as a function of attendance at the other type of protest with heteroskedastic robust standard errors. Absent other controls, the probability of attending a BLM (Reopening) protest is associated with a 58 (46) percentage-point increase if the respondent reported participating in a Reopening (BLM) protest.

To examine overlap, we introduce a series of individual- and community-level controls that capture individual demographics, work arrangements, ideology and beliefs, protest supply and views, perceptions about and exposure to COVID-19, salience of police violence within a county, and county political engagement. We discuss these controls in more detail as part of the next section. As an example, we might find that adjusting for work status or age eliminates the overlap, which does not mean the overlap does not exist, but rather that it is explained by other factors,

¹⁹A detailed comparison of the top 12 counties with the most respondents and all other counties in the sample is available upon request.

suggesting it is limited to specific groups (e.g., people who are very young or people with fewer professional obligations). We find that the overlap survives adjusting for rich sets of controls. The estimated correlations decrease slightly in magnitude after introducing these factors but remain large and statistically significant. To capture any correlation between unobservable determinants of BLM and Reopening protest attendance, we also estimate a seemingly unrelated regression model. These estimates are also statistically significant and have the largest magnitudes of all the specifications in Table 2. These regressions indicate that even when controlling for a battery of individual- and community-factors, the overlap in BLM and Reopening protest attendance robustly predicts participation and is not driven by other observables.

Factors Related to Protest Behavior and Overlap

We now conduct a series of analyses to better understand protest behavior and, in particular, the overlap between BLM and Reopening protest attendance.

Factors that Predict Protesting. As a first pass, we examine which demographic characteristics predict protesting in general. This examination also enables us to determine whether the overlap comes from reasonable predictions of protest attendance per se and is not an idiosyncratic pattern. To that end, we evaluated which factors predict protest attendance using a regression framework. We examine three protesting behaviors: attending either a BLM or Reopening protest, attending a BLM protest, and attending a Reopening protest.²⁰ For each protest action, we estimate linear probability models with different sets of individual and county characteristics. Detailed results are presented in Tables B1, B2, and B3 in Appendix B.²¹

Our baseline specification is presented in column (1) of these tables and contains a set of covariates that capture a respondent's age, income, whether they have young children at home, and their work arrangements. These factors significantly predict protest attendance. Coefficients on age,

²⁰Our results are consistent if we include attendance at Other Protests in the first behavior.

²¹In addition to linear probability models, we also estimated probit versions. Those results are similar to the ones presented here and are available upon request.

children at home, and work arrangements are the largest. Each factor was associated with a 6–11 percentage point increase in protest participation. The coefficient on low income also indicated a positive correlation with protest attendance, but the estimate was smaller (2–4 percentage points). These patterns were robust to the inclusion of other individual characteristics (i.e., race, gender, education, region) and beliefs which we present in column (2).

With some exceptions, most other demographic factors do not have significant associations with attendance. Demographic attributes that were significant (e.g., Black and Reopening, female and either BLM or Reopening and Reopening, college degree and Reopening) have relatively small coefficient estimates compared to those in the baseline model. A respondent's belief about their perceived quality of life was significant in predicting all three protest behaviors and robust to the inclusion of controls. Our results also suggest that protesters were more satisfied with their lives than non-protesters. One interpretation for this pattern is that protesters believe their actions may have some sway on the status quo, which gives them hope for the future.²² Protesting may also have cathartic effects by giving people an outlet to express themselves and improve perceived quality of life. Finally, partisan identity also tends to predict protest attendance relative to Independent voters. Consistent with common perceptions about these movements, Republicans are more likely to attend any protest and Reopening protests while Democrats are more likely to attend BLM protests.

These baseline regressions highlight how individuals with a similar set of characteristics engage in these protest activities. Specifically, people for whom protesting would presumably be more costly are more likely to protest. For instance, protesters were significantly more likely to be working in-person than non-protesters, which is especially striking considering the state of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time (i.e., pre-vaccine and during the “second wave” of deaths and cases). Under these circumstances, an individual likely would continue working in-person only if they were an essential worker, an interpretation that is also consistent with our finding that protesters had significantly lower incomes than non-protesters.²³ Protesters also appear to face

²²Boehnke and Wong (2011), Drury and Reicher (2005), Gilster (2012), Klar and Kasser (2009), and Cherniss (1972) document patterns consistent with this finding.

²³This pattern is also consistent with earnings for essential workers. According to data from the BLS National Occupation Employment and Wage Estimates report, professions that are classified as non-healthcare essential

domestic constraints in the form of young children at home. The pandemic limited access to schools and other childcare arrangements, which presented additional logistic and economic burdens on parents. Undoubtedly, these burdens fell the hardest on those without flexible work arrangements such as telework. We return to this point later when examining whether these patterns are consistent with decision making that responds to different incentives and costs.²⁴

Representativeness of Protesters. Next, we evaluate the extent to which protesters reflect the broader U.S. population. The goal is to assess whether the protesters in our analytical sample reflect a sub-population that is distinct from the broader population and may have idiosyncratic views. While representativeness is an important factor in this study as it directly addresses the perception that participants in the summer 2020 protests were extremists, we do not claim that it is a necessary condition for establishing the legitimacy of other protest movements.²⁵ Rather we argue that similarities between protesters and the broader population—even on observables—establish a connection that many presume does not exist.

We perform a series of difference of means tests between protesters and the overall American population using the Wave 2 analytic sample. Results are presented in Table B4. Since the SEICS data are representative of the U.S. population on age, gender, race, and household income, we focus on these characteristics. Consistent with our regression analysis, protesters tend to be younger, more racially diverse, and lower income than the broader population. Similar shares of men and women attended protests to those present in population.

While the differences between protesters and the population are large, the differences for other sub-groups are even larger. The aim of these additional comparisons is to contextualize

workers (e.g., retail workers, postal service mail carriers, truck drivers, cashiers, janitors, cleaners, etc.) have an average national salary of approximately \$32,000 (McQuarrie, 2020). These earnings levels are toward the lower end of the second income quintile and fall within our definition of low income.

²⁴In subsequent analyses, we adjust for additional variables, many of which are introduced in following paragraphs. We find that doing so does materially change the conclusions we draw. In particular, overlap holds, and young, low income, children at home, and working in-person continue to predict protest participation. Estimates for other factors change marginally and are discussed in Appendix A, and the relevant results are in the final columns of Tables B1, B2, and B3.

²⁵For instance, student protests over school debt or miners protesting over safety regulations likely do not represent the broader population but have clear connections between the protesting population and issue at hand.

the differences between protesters and the broader population. Figure 1 compares the average characteristics of protesters to all Americans, voters and to members of the 115th Congress.²⁶ Despite these data limitations, comparing the magnitude of the absolute differences across these groups is informative about relative representativeness. Since we do not have access to the underlying exit poll data, it is not possible to do a formal difference in means test. BLM and Reopening protesters have larger absolute differences relative to voters in the 2016 election than they do to the broader American population. While we cannot comment on the statistical significance of these differences, the level of difference supports the broader point that protesters share more observable similarities with the general population that one may expect.

We next ask whether BLM and Reopening protesters are more or less representative of the population than those that vote in elections. In terms of age and income, protesters are further away from the population than voters as substantially larger shares of protesters are young and low income. About 72% of protesters were under the age of 40, relative to 36% of voters and 38% in the population. Over 51% of protesters had an annual income below \$50,000, while 36% and 40% of voters and Americans respectively fell into this category. Demographically, protesters are more similar to the American population on observables. A higher proportion of voters are female and White relative to the population. Over 53% of voters are female relative to 51% in the population, and 70% of voters are White despite making up 61% of the population. The makeup of male and female protesters matches that within the American population, while the racial diversity of protesters exceeds that of the general population (roughly 44% of protesters are non-White while 39% of the general population is non-White). These patterns suggest protesters and voters both send signals about preferences in the population. While much attention has been paid to voters and how their behaviors can help us gauge public opinion, there has been less of a focus on how the

²⁶Voter demographics come from Edison's exit polls of the 2016 presidential election. We also focus on the demographics of members of Congress and do not examine age or income differences since it is well established these elected officials are older and more well-off financially. Setting aside fringe benefits and other sources of income, the salary for a member of Congress alone is 185% (287%) greater than the median household income of Americans (protesters) in our sample. Since 2009, the annual salary for members of Congress not in a leadership position is \$174,000. The median annual household income of Americans (protesters) in our sample is approximately \$61,000 (\$45,000).

motivations of protesters may serve as an accurate representation of the public's preferences.

We also examine the relationship between the typical person who attended both BLM and Reopening protests and the broader American population. Figure 2 plots the average characteristics of respondents from these groups in our analytic sample. The average individual in both groups is White with a middle class income, although the protester falls on the lower end of the middle class spectrum. The average protester is about 14 years younger than the average American (47) and, as a result, is more likely to have young children at home. The vast majority of protesters are continuing to work in-person, while the majority of Americans are either teleworking or not working during the pandemic. Ideologically, both individuals support BLM and hold diverse political beliefs.

These results illustrate how protesters fit within the American population and relate to other groups more than one may expect. Protesters are clearly closer to the population on certain demographic dimensions than their elected officials who are overwhelmingly White and male. Protesters also more closely reflect the gender and racial diversity of the population than the subset of people in the United States who vote. This commonality makes it easier to understand which type of person may be using protests to convey social preferences. While Americans with higher incomes are more likely to vote and not protest, lower income Americans rely on a mixture of protesting and voting. As part of our subsequent analysis, we more formally examine how protesting and voting behaviors interact.

Deliberate or Intentional Protesting Decisions. Next, we evaluate the extent to which the decision to protest responds to incentives. If individual choices respond to changes in perceived costs and benefits, that suggests the decision to protest comes from a thoughtful and deliberate process. This intentional thought process supports the notion that protesting is a tool for expressing policy views. Conversely, if certain people always attend protests regardless of their perceived benefits or costs, then protests may not carry much information about social preferences on policy. It is not readily obvious how to measure benefits to individuals in this context, but it is reasonable to assume they are related to an expression of preferences and an opportunity to influence or change

policy. Viewing protesting as a choice coming from an intentional process contrasts with the notion that protesters are so extreme in their views that they ignore any costs of their actions or participate solely for affective reasons (i.e., enjoyment or releasing frustrations).

We start by examining whether broad relationships between individual and community factors and protest attendance are consistent with a deliberate thought process. Two natural questions are whether people attended protests for causes they support and if they attended when the cost of participation was relatively lower. Both circumstances are consistent with thoughtful decision-making. Individuals that always protested regardless of the cause or difficulty of attendance display behaviors less aligned with this framework. Column (3) in Tables B1, B2, and B3 add protest factors including support for BLM protests and measures for the number of BLM and Reopening protests in a respondent's home county. These factors significantly predict protest attendance. These high-level patterns suggest protesting is consistent with intentional decision-making, but individuals face other personal and community factors that influence the decision to protest.

Next, we assess how individuals respond to the potential costs and benefits of protest attendance. Figure 3 presents average protest attendance behaviors within groupings of counties based on quantiles of different community-level factors. The left panel of Figure 3 examines the correlation between protest attendance and COVID-19 cases. Somewhat surprisingly, counties with higher amounts of new COVID-19 cases see higher levels of protest participation, roughly a 4-percentage point increase (43% change) from the first quantile to the fourth quantile.²⁷ One potential interpretation is that more protests contributed to this increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases. The center panel focuses on protest attendance and the incidence of police shootings in a county. We document a positive relationship between the number of police shootings in a county and the level of protest attendance. In unreported results, we also document that support for BLM protests increases by over 30% from counties with the lowest incidence of police shootings to counties with the highest.

²⁷We find similar trends for protest attendance and COVID-19 concern when using quantiles based on cumulative COVID-19 deaths, average daily new cases, and average daily new deaths. Concerns about COVID-19 (i.e., fear of the disease and beliefs about infection and death) increase along these dimensions as well, which is intuitive.

These correlations speak to the deliberateness of the decision to protest. The positive association with attendance and COVID-19 metrics provide mixed evidence. On the one hand, greater risks of COVID-19 increase the costs of attending a protest, which, all else equal, would lower participation. At the same time, higher levels of protest attendance may contribute to the spread of COVID-19. The positive association between protest attendance (BLM support) and police shootings may reflect how communities that are more familiar with these incidents have a motivation to advocate for change. We can make a similar point about Reopening protests. The positive association between exposure to COVID-19 and the probability of Reopening protest attendance suggests these communities were more burdened by COVID restrictions and as a result are motivated to advocate for swifter reopening. To draw stronger conclusions about these relationships and the deliberateness of protesting decisions, we broaden our analysis to consider these community-level factors alongside individual characteristics.

We further examine these patterns by including additional controls to our baseline regression model to capture these associations in Tables B1, B2, and B3. Column (4) adds county-level COVID-19 factors to the baseline controls. Individual beliefs about COVID-19 infection had a large, positive, and statistically significant relationship with each protesting behavior (i.e., a 1% increase in this belief of infection is associated with a 20–24 percentage point increase in the probability of attendance). Other county-specific COVID-19 metrics (i.e., cumulative case counts, average new cases, and average new deaths) did not have a significant relationship with any protesting behaviors. Some of these findings may be explained by reverse causality—respondents that attended protests believe they are more likely to contract COVID-19. A limitation of our analysis is that the SEICS data did not collect data on a respondent’s perceived COVID-19 infection risk if they solely stayed at home. Thus, we are careful in interpreting these particular correlations.

We also explore the influence of police shootings on attending any protest and BLM protests. As shown in Column (5) of Tables B1 and B2, alongside the baseline factors, police shootings significantly predict an increase in participation, which is consistent with patterns in Figure 3. The correlation and regression results generally support how individuals respond to community-based

factors that sway the incentive to protest. When protests are readily available, the cost of attendance is lower, and people are significantly more likely to attend. Similarly, when issues are more salient due to higher levels of police violence, attendance increases.

Together, we argue that it is reasonable to cast protest participation in summer 2020 as a deliberate decision, which responds to potential costs and benefits. The additional regression specifications support this interpretation. For instance, issue salience predicts protest attendance. We see this through the positive and significant associations between support for BLM protests and the number of fatal police shootings within a community, controlling for other individual factors. We also continue to robustly predict that protesters have lower incomes. This pattern suggests retaining employment may be a greater priority for low income respondent and acts as a motivation to attend a Reopening protest. We view these patterns as evidence of the benefits individuals perceive from attending a protest. The extent to which these benefits outweigh the perceived costs of attendance casts protesting as a decision that responds to incentives.

We also examine some factors expected to raise the costs of attendance have the opposite association, namely the presence of young children at home, work arrangements, and COVID-19 risk. Children are a notable cost facing protesters. Across each regression specification we examine, the presence of children at home had a positive and significant association with the protest behaviors we study. One interpretation of this pattern is that having children at home raises the cost of attending a protest given the severe health risks and consequences of COVID-19. Through this lens, protest attendance does not appear to respond to costs. Another interpretation is that people with young children are attending protests despite these higher costs, which speaks to additional individual motivations and perceived benefits from attendance. Perhaps these parents do not want to lose their jobs and childcare and see schools closed, or wish to invest in a future for their children where innocent people are not killed by the police (or both). Indeed, in unreported difference of means tests, we find that respondents who attended BLM or Reopening protests were significantly more likely to report higher levels of concern about being able to afford food for their families, obtaining childcare for their children, and losing productivity at work due to childcare, which all

speak to the insecurities that may have driven them to protest. These economic concerns may be the missing link that could rationalize an alignment of views between BLM and Reopening protest attendees and may reflect concerns distinct from those related to government overreach.

Another notable cost of protest attendance in our setting is the individual risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19. The correlation and regression results indicate that a larger belief of COVID-19 infection predicts protest attendance. A closer examination of this pattern suggests it is driven by differences in behavior as opposed to underlying age patterns that may drive COVID-19 risk. Table 1 shows that perceived risks of COVID-19 infection and death are higher among protesters than non-protesters. In unreported results, we also document that these perceptions are notably higher among young protesters than older ones. While this finding does not diminish COVID-19 as a potential cost influencing protest attendance, it does illustrate that individuals who protest recognize the risks associated with their behaviors. Our results suggest that the marginal health risk from COVID-19 is likely low for protesters, which implies protest attendance responds to lower costs. We robustly predict higher protest attendance among respondents working in person relative to those in other work arrangements. This group is already exposed to COVID-19 through work, so the marginal cost of attending a protest is relatively lower than that for people working from home or not working. The economics literature has documented similar decreased marginal health risks in the context of other risky health behaviors such as sexual activity and HIV infection (Kremer and Morcom, 1998; Auld, 2006). Such a weighing of risks reflects a deliberate thought process about the decision to protest.

Relationship Between Protesting and Voting. Voting is the most well-established means of signaling social preferences, but how is it related to protesting? This relationship can provide insights into the motivations for why individuals may choose to protest. For instance, if protesting and voting are substitutes, this pattern could suggest individuals are pessimistic that voting will be able to deliver the policy changes aligned with their preferences. Conversely, if protesting and voting are complements, this pattern may suggest individuals use protests as an additional means

of expressing their policy preferences.

We examine this relationship in two ways. The most direct method is to use SEICS data from Wave 3, which contain information on participation in the 2020 presidential election. We observe about 30% of Wave 2 protesters in Wave 3, which collected information about participation in the 2020 presidential election. About 93% of these protesters voted in that election.²⁸ More generally, participation in the 2020 presidential election was monotonically increasing with income. Approximately 72% of respondents in the first income quintile voted in the election. Participation jumped to 81% in the second quintile and steadily rose to over 95% in the fifth-income quintile.

Using data on protesters and non-protesters from our analytic sample that appear in Wave 3, we estimate whether protest participation predicts voting in the 2020 election. Estimates are presented in Table 3.²⁹ Column (1) suggests there is a positive—albeit insignificant—correlation between protesting and voting. This pattern suggests that we cannot reject the hypothesis that these two forms of civic engagement are unrelated. However, we know there are other factors that predict both of these behaviors. To probe this point further, we add in our baseline controls and show results in column (2) of Table 3. The coefficient between protesting and voting has grown larger in magnitude and is highly significant, which suggests that the non-correlation absent controls is consistent with omitted factors predicting low rates of voting and higher rates of protesting (i.e., youth and low income). Once we adjust for these factors, our results suggest that protesting is, if anything, a complement to voting. This could be the case if protesting increases people’s civic engagement in ways that lead them to perceive voting as more valuable. This association could also hold if organizations that mobilize people to protest also attempt to increase voter registration and turnout or recruit party members at such protests. The latter of these seems to have occurred with some frequency during the summer of 2020, based on the CCC data. Nevertheless, there may still be omitted factors that predict more of one of these actions and less of the other, which may flip the sign of the coefficient on protest participation or cause a loss in significance. Thus, we are cautious in drawing conclusions. The SEICS data provide suggestive evidence to support

²⁸ Approximately 90% of the non-protesters from Wave 2 that are also observed in Wave 3 voted in the election.

²⁹ We find similar results if both types of protests we study are included as separate controls.

the claim that many factors that predict protesting also predict a lower likelihood of voting and, moreover, that voting and protesting are complementary in that doing one raises the utility of the doing the other, holding these factors equal. Higher quality data in the spirit of the SEICS that gathers information on both protesting and voting behaviors is likely required to make stronger claims about the relationship between these forms of civic engagement.

Next, we replicate this finding using another data source. A potential concern is that reliance on the subset of Wave 2 participants observed in Wave 3 reduces sample size too much. Moreover, it is possible that 2020 protests were unique to the point that any relationship between protesting and future voting cannot be generalized. Thus, we consider past voting. In particular, we use data on county-level voter participation in the 2016 presidential election as a measure of voting. The right panel of Figure 3 highlights a negative correlation between protest attendance and voter participation, similar to the estimate from column (1) in Table 3. Column (6) of Tables B1 and B2 and column (5) of Table B3 adds this measure of voter participation to our baseline regression specifications. Similar to our previous result, we find that once we control for factors that predict non-voting, the correlation becomes positive, suggesting a complementary relationship between protesting and voting.³⁰

Additional Alternative Hypotheses: Counter-Protesting, Learning versus Anti-Government Sentiment. A natural question is whether overlapping protest attendance can be explained by something other than aligned social preferences. Possibilities include counter-protesting, learning, or broader anti-government sentiments. These alternative explanations have important implications for how we interpret the overlapping protest attendance behaviors and thus warrant investigation.

We find little empirical support for the counter-protesting interpretation. First, respondents that attended a Reopening protest largely supported BLM protests. As shown in Table 1, nearly 70% of Reopening protesters supported BLM protests. This value approaches 80% when looking at the set of Reopening protesters that also reported attending a BLM protest. These overwhelming

³⁰While the point estimates for voter participation in Tables B1, B2, and B3 are insignificant, once we control for all individual and community factors the estimates is significant. These results are discussed as part of the next section.

levels of support for BLM among Reopening protesters seem inconsistent with a counter-protesting interpretation. To further get at the possibility of counter-protesting, in Table 4 we examine the breakdown of BLM protest attendees by their support for BLM. About 19% of those who attended a BLM protest indicated they did not support these protests.³¹ Demographically, these individuals (opposed BLM and attended a BLM protest) more closely align with the protester profile we established in our main analysis than other BLM opponents. Learning is another interpretation to rationalize this observed pattern—these people may have attended BLM protests out of curiosity and came to oppose BLM after attending. Unfortunately our data do not allow us to investigate this interpretation empirically beyond the demographic and ideological overlaps we highlighted. This pattern could also be consistent with turning to partisan news sources after attending such a protest and changing one’s mind about the movement.³² Our data do not permit us to do the analogous comparisons among BLM protesters that attended Reopening protests as the survey did not collect respondents’ views about the appropriate level of COVID-19 restrictions.

Anti-government sentiment could also explain why the same person may attend BLM and Reopening protests. This interpretation also has limited empirical support from the SEICS. For example, respondents were asked about their views on mask efficacy at preventing or reducing the spread of COVID-19. Over 90% felt masks were effective. It is reasonable to expect this number to be lower if there were a strong anti-government sentiment among the protesters, as governments were among those promoting the importance of mask wearing. Moreover, we document sizable attendance of Republicans at BLM protests and Democrats at Reopening protests in Table 1. While Republicans are historically more skeptical of government interventions, Democrats tend to hold the opposite view, which is not readily consistent with the anti-government interpretation. A more plausible explanation for this overlap from our perspective is that these behaviors are the responses of individuals frustrated by their governments failing to deliver policies that guarantee their economic and physical well-being. This failure in turns motivates them to participate in these

³¹The majority of respondents that fall into this category also attended Reopening protests.

³²Indeed, the panel aspect of the SEICS allows us to track support for BLM over time. BLM support fell from 54% in Wave 2 to 48% in Wave 3. This decline may be attributable to increasingly negative coverage these protests received from partisan news sources and Republican elected officials in the run up to the 2020 presidential elections.

demonstration. While the SEICS limits our ability to validate this interpretation empirically, it remains a plausible interpretation.

Limitations and Future Work. While the data sources we have assembled are valuable and informative about these protest behaviors and the COVID-19 pandemic, there are noteworthy limitations. We would prefer to use data from an ongoing study consisting of a large and representative sample with information collected at regular intervals from the same individuals. However, given the unique nature of these protests and the COVID-19 pandemic more generally, such data do not exist. The SEICS endeavored to collect this additional protesting information but omitted some aspects. For example, the SEICS data capture detailed information about the motives of protesters but did not capture information about why non-protesters opted not to participate. Collecting data like this at a large scale will enable future work that aims to intentionally understand nuanced social preferences about policy and how these opinions are expressed.

Second, while the SEICS is designed to be representative along demographic characteristics such as race, gender, and income, it is not a random sample of people in the United States. Moreover, Wave 2 of the SEICS had a response rate of approximately 10%, which raises concerns that there may be unobservable variables that jointly predict survey participation and protest attendance.³³ As such our estimates should be interpreted carefully. Fortunately, the SEICS has demonstrated attractive features that assuage these concerns. For instance, the SEICS documents similar patterns and responses to other probability-based surveys such as the Current Population Survey, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s 2017 Financial Well-Being in America Study, and the Federal Reserve’s Survey of Household Economics and Decision Making. Additionally, the protest participation rates we observe in the data are consistent with contemporaneous media reports (see e.g., Buchanan et al., 2020). Additionally, the SEICS took extra steps beyond the usual screening procedures implemented by Qualtrics to remove inattentive or mischievous respondents that may bias results. These screens included tests for the logical consistency of responses, timing

³³Response rates were calculated using the RR2 measure presented in The American Association for Public Opinion Research (2016).

of survey completion, and quality of text responses, among others.³⁴ Despite these measures that enhance the quality of the SEICS data, future work that relies on larger-scale random samples with higher responses rates may be better positioned to draw stronger conclusions about social preferences across sub-populations.

Some may also be concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic influenced selection into the survey. While we cannot say much about this issue if the selection is on unobservable factors, the fact that the data are representative of the population on several dimensions and they replicate behavioral responses from multiple other surveys should mitigate these concerns. Finally, as in settings with large representative data sets, it is difficult to make causal claims. We hope that the analyses and data presented in this paper inform data collection efforts across disciplines such as economics, political science, and sociology to better understand any causal mechanisms rationalizing protest attendance.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we examine who protests, what they protest, and why. We find that many of the people who attended a BLM protest also attended a Reopening protest. Next, we interrogate this finding to assess whether it is some kind of fluke or, instead, is an empirical pattern to be taken seriously, one that provides novel and important information about social preferences. We find that protesters are a diverse set of individuals that broadly represent the population. Decisions to attend protests seem to follow a deliberate thought process, as individuals are responsive to the costs (e.g., COVID-19 risks) and benefits of participation, as measured by issue salience. Finally, even though there are factors that predict less voting and more protesting (e.g., youth), once we adjust for these

³⁴Litman et al. (2021) and Cimpian and Timmer (2020) document the influence of spurious correlations that may arise from the bias introduced from “mischievous” respondents and recommend survey design protocols to identify and screen out these individuals. The procedures used by Qualtrics and the SEICS are similar to the ones recommended by these authors. A small number of responses were removed by these actions, which further bolsters our confidence in the quality of the SEICS. We also performed our own tests to identify other potential mischievous respondents in our analytic sample based on reported income, industry, and receipt of social benefits such as SNAP or TANF and found our results are robust to the exclusion of these observations. Our results were also robust to additional data quality checks based on response patterns to questions about government benefits and gig employment.

factors, protesting emerges as a complement to voting. Together these points support the notion that protesting is an intentional decision undertaken to communicate social preferences. Finally, we found limited evidence to support alternative theories that could also rationalize the overlap in protest attendance, like counter-protesting. While the overlap itself is novel, the underlying mixture of preferences it represents are perhaps not very difficult to rationalize. Individuals can simultaneously abhor excessive police violence and also worry that they will lose their jobs or childcare arrangements due to what they perceive to be overly stringent or long-enduring public health measures.

Our analysis of protesting behavior carries several potential insights about social preferences. First, the overlap calls into question the practice of using support for one issue as a sufficient statistic to characterize an individual's full set of political views. Second, overlap also represents an important counterexample to the idea of a relentlessly growing trend of political polarization and suggests social preferences are more nuanced than what is broadly understood about the American polity. Third, protesters can be broadly representative of the population and carry signals about social preferences. If these preferences are widely shared, do party platforms adequately reflect these views? If they do not, are they extreme and out of touch? Could platforms shift to better reflect these views? These questions are not so far-fetched and many steps could be taken to learn from these findings. For instance, policymakers could facilitate formal opportunities to address with demonstrators in the midst of mobilization, and provide staff resources to serve as interlocutors between community organizers and elected officials. Existing forms of civic engagement, such as voting, could also adapt to better capture views expressed by protesters and the voting electorate. For example, given that the demographic profile of the average protester is a lower-middle-class working parent, making election day a national holiday may increase the likelihood of getting these protesters out to the polls. Other voting systems such as ranked choice voting, which was recently adopted by Maine and Alaska,³⁵ are designed to permit candidates with more nuanced views greater chances of success in general elections and may platform politicians better positioned to represent

³⁵Cities such as New York, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Oakland also use rank choice voting for their elections.

the nuanced societal preferences expressed by voters and protesters. Together these actions may provide additional sources of information for newsrooms and pundits to more accurately reflect the nature of future social movements.

Our findings also call into question the assumed homogeneity in political thought and action that are often used in media portrayals to characterize populations, especially economically disadvantaged populations. Such media portrayals are particularly harmful because they reify misleading stereotypes and warp public perceptions of population subgroup preferences, beliefs, and behaviors, which can influence broader political outcomes. Many examples of these misperceptions exist. For example, prior research suggests that although many people do support efforts to drastically reform policing and community safety, community members in highly policed, racially segregated areas do not unanimously support efforts to reduce police budgets (Parker and Hurst, 2021). In fact, some people support additional government funding to improve community outcomes along with maintaining an improved police presence when needed (see e.g., Goff, 2021a,b). Media framing reinforcing policing and removal of police as a singular issue in these communities ignores important and often overlapping economic concerns that also need to be addressed to improve well-being. These are particularly insidious forms of political scapegoating that not only serve political agendas but also allow populations of higher socioeconomic status, often the consumers of news media (see e.g., Martin and Yurukoglu, 2017), to be blameless in the face of extreme inequality. For example, data from the survey used for this analysis reveal that economically disadvantaged populations have been faced with multiple challenges spanning from lack of childcare and job insecurity to mistreatment by the police during the COVID-19 pandemic. Setting these up as opposing issues allows for the mis-recognition of the shared experiences these populations face and inaction to address the fundamental factors driving these experiences (e.g., economic inequality, racial residential segregation, Metzl, 2019)—factors that also constrain the ability for these same populations to vote. Protests can highlight misperceptions propagated by political elites and the media and clarify the diverse composition of political parties, which can potentially reduce *affective polarization*—the dislike and distrust of members of one party by the members of an other party

(Iyengar et al., 2019). This type of polarization has been documented with growing frequency in the American public and is often based on misconceptions about the extent of the differences between the views and preferences of the groups in question. Such a pattern is consistent with our findings about two seemingly opposed protest movements.

More broadly, civic engagement provides signals about societal preferences and barriers that limit their attainment (e.g., lack of job flexibility, limited transportation, systemic discrimination, etc.). Our analysis raises questions about the different forms this engagement may take. While voting is most prominent and well understood, protest is another. However, protesting tends to be seen as a representation of fringe or extreme views, out of step with a silent majority that does not participate in this form of civic engagement. This perception created by dominant narratives about these demonstrations undermines any urgency to take their views seriously. Our analysis does not support this conclusion. Rather, our findings suggest that protest is a form of civic engagement that contains possible novel information about preferences from a less extremely partisan set of individuals (sometimes recently called the “exhausted majority”) (Hawkins et al., 2018). This group has nuanced preferences inadequately represented by the binary signal of voting, leading them to participate in protests to amplify their preferences. Understanding and appreciating these nuances increases the likelihood policy will address them. Failure to do so may lead to ignoring the needs of this exhausted majority and perpetuating a status quo that mobilized protesters in the first place.

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Tables and Figures

TABLE 1: Variable Means for Different Protesting Groups

	Overall	Repeats	None	BLM	Reopen
Demographics					
Age	48.31	53.09	50.28	34.70	33.94
Median Income (\$)	68,000	75,000	70,000	50,000	45,000
Black	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.15	0.16
Female	0.47	0.44	0.47	0.51	0.40
Child < 18	0.26	0.20	0.22	0.55	0.66
College Degree or Higher	0.57	0.62	0.57	0.59	0.57
Northeast	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.21	0.18
Midwest	0.20	0.20	0.21	0.17	0.16
South	0.39	0.36	0.39	0.43	0.43
West	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.19	0.22
Work Arrangements					
Working In-Person	0.40	0.34	0.35	0.73	0.84
Stopped Working	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.02
Began teleworking	0.19	0.21	0.21	0.10	0.04
Not Obs. Working	0.38	0.43	0.41	0.13	0.10
Partisan Identity and Beliefs					
Support BLM Protest	0.54	0.51	0.51	0.81	0.68
Cantril Ladder (Now)	6.74	6.90	6.70	7.19	7.47
Republican	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.52
Democrat	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.53	0.36
Independent	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.13	0.12
COVID-19					
COVID-19 Fear	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.71	0.70
Belief COVID-19 Inf.	0.34	0.31	0.31	0.58	0.65
Belief COVID-19 Death	0.30	0.29	0.27	0.54	0.65
Protest Attendance					
Any Protest	0.13	0.08	0.00	1.00	1.00
BLM Protest	0.08	0.05	0.00	1.00	0.63
Reopening Protest	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.49	1.00
Other Protest	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Observations	3,526	1,874	3,069	294	228

Notes: This table reports the mean value of different variables for members of the Wave 2 survey sample. The means are broken out for different groups: the Wave 2 analytic sample, those who appeared in the Wave 2 analytic sample and Wave 3 (Repeats), those who attended no protests (None), those who attended a BLM protest (BLM), and those who attended a Reopening protest (Reopen). The sum of non-protester and protester observations do not match the overall sample because some protesters attended both BLM and Reopening protests. “College Degree” is defined as at least an associate’s degree. “COVID-19 Fear” measures the percent of respondents that report fearing COVID-19, while “Belief COVID-19 Inf.” and “Belief COVID-19 Death” are self-reported probabilities from individuals about their odds of getting infected with COVID-19 and dying from COVID-19 if they get infected respectively.

TABLE 2: Overlapping Participation in BLM and Reopening Protests

	(1) BLM	(2) BLM	(3) Reopening	(4) Reopening	(5) SUR
Attend Reopening	0.58*** (0.03)	0.48*** (0.03)			0.82*** (0.02)
Attend BLM			0.46*** (0.03)	0.37*** (0.03)	0.62*** (0.02)
Full Controls		✓		✓	✓
Observations	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526
R^2	0.268	0.316	0.268	0.348	0.243

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a BLM or Reopening protest as a function of their attendance at the other type of protest. Attendance is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Columns (1)–(2) consider whether an individual attended a BLM protest, and columns (3)–(4) consider attendance at a Reopening protest. These columns are estimated with OLS, while column (5) is estimated using a seemingly unrelated regression (“SUR”). “Full Controls” refers to the complete set of individual and community factors used in Tables B2 and B3.

TABLE 3: Factors Associated with Participation in the 2020 Presidential Election

	(1)	(2)
Either Protest	0.03 (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)
Demographics:		
Less than 40		-0.09*** (0.02)
Low Income		-0.10*** (0.01)
Child Under 18		-0.05*** (0.02)
Work Arrangements:		
Stopped Working		-0.12 (0.08)
Began teleworking		0.03** (0.02)
Not Observed Working		0.02 (0.02)
Observations	2,472	2,472
R^2	0.001	0.056

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual voted in the 2020 presidential election. The sample is composed of Wave 2 respondents that were also present in Wave 3. Wave 2 of the data contains information about protest attendance and Wave 3 tracks participation in the 2020 election. Column (1) examines whether the respondent participated in any protest, and column (2) adds in baseline specification controls.

TABLE 4: Variable Means by Support for BLM Protests and BLM Protest Attendance

	Oppose		Support	
	No Attend	Attend	No Attend	Attend
Protest Attendance				
Reopening Protest	0.03	0.52	0.03	0.47
BLM Protest Only	0.00	0.48	0.00	0.53
Reopening Protest Only	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.00
Demographics				
Less than 40	0.27	0.83	0.40	0.69
Low Income	0.38	0.59	0.42	0.53
Child < 18	0.24	0.49	0.24	0.54
Black	0.05	0.12	0.21	0.16
Female	0.42	0.63	0.54	0.50
College Degree or Higher	0.52	0.41	0.59	0.59
Northeast	0.18	0.20	0.20	0.22
Midwest	0.21	0.09	0.19	0.19
South	0.38	0.43	0.40	0.40
West	0.23	0.28	0.21	0.18
Work Arrangements				
Working In-Person	0.40	0.76	0.34	0.71
Stopped Working	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.04
Began teleworking	0.17	0.04	0.23	0.11
Not Obs. Working	0.41	0.13	0.39	0.14
Partisan Identity and Beliefs				
Cantril Ladder (Now)	6.83	6.86	6.44	7.12
Republican	0.61	0.42	0.10	0.30
Democrat	0.20	0.36	0.75	0.59
Independent	0.18	0.22	0.14	0.11
COVID-19				
COVID-19 Fear	0.51	0.65	0.70	0.70
Belief COVID-19 Inf.	0.29	0.61	0.35	0.56
Belief COVID-19 Death	0.25	0.56	0.32	0.52
Observations	1,835	69	1,911	289

Notes: This table provides the means of variables broken out by support for BLM protests and whether the respondent attended a BLM protest. “Oppose” denotes a respondent who does not support BLM protests and “Support” denotes a respondent that does support BLM protests. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. “COVID-19 Fear” measures the percent of respondents that report fearing COVID-19, while “Belief COVID-19 Inf.” and “Belief COVID-19 Death” are self-reported probabilities from individuals about their odds of getting infected with COVID-19 and dying from COVID-19 if they get infected respectively.

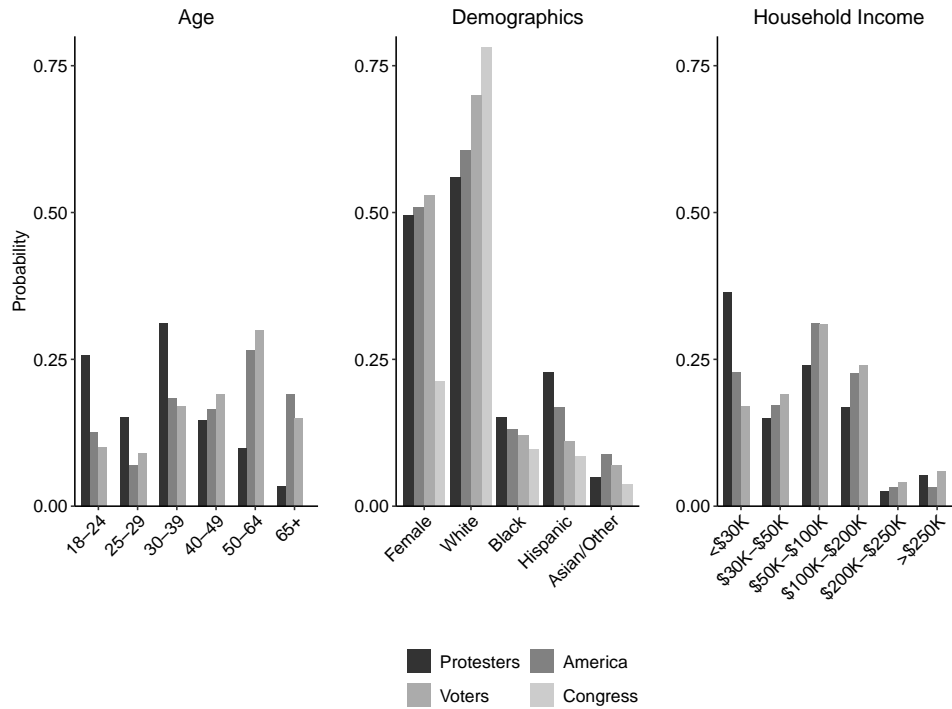


FIGURE 1: Individual Characteristics of Protesters, Americans, Voters, and Members of Congress.

Notes: This figure reports average characteristics for different populations. These characteristics are the ones the survey data targeted to match the overall population. Voter information comes from the exit polls of the 2016 presidential election conducted by Edison Research. Information on members of Congress comes from the Congressional Research Service profile of the 115th Congress and only appears in the center panel. Protesters are Wave 2 respondents that attended either a BLM or Reopening protest.

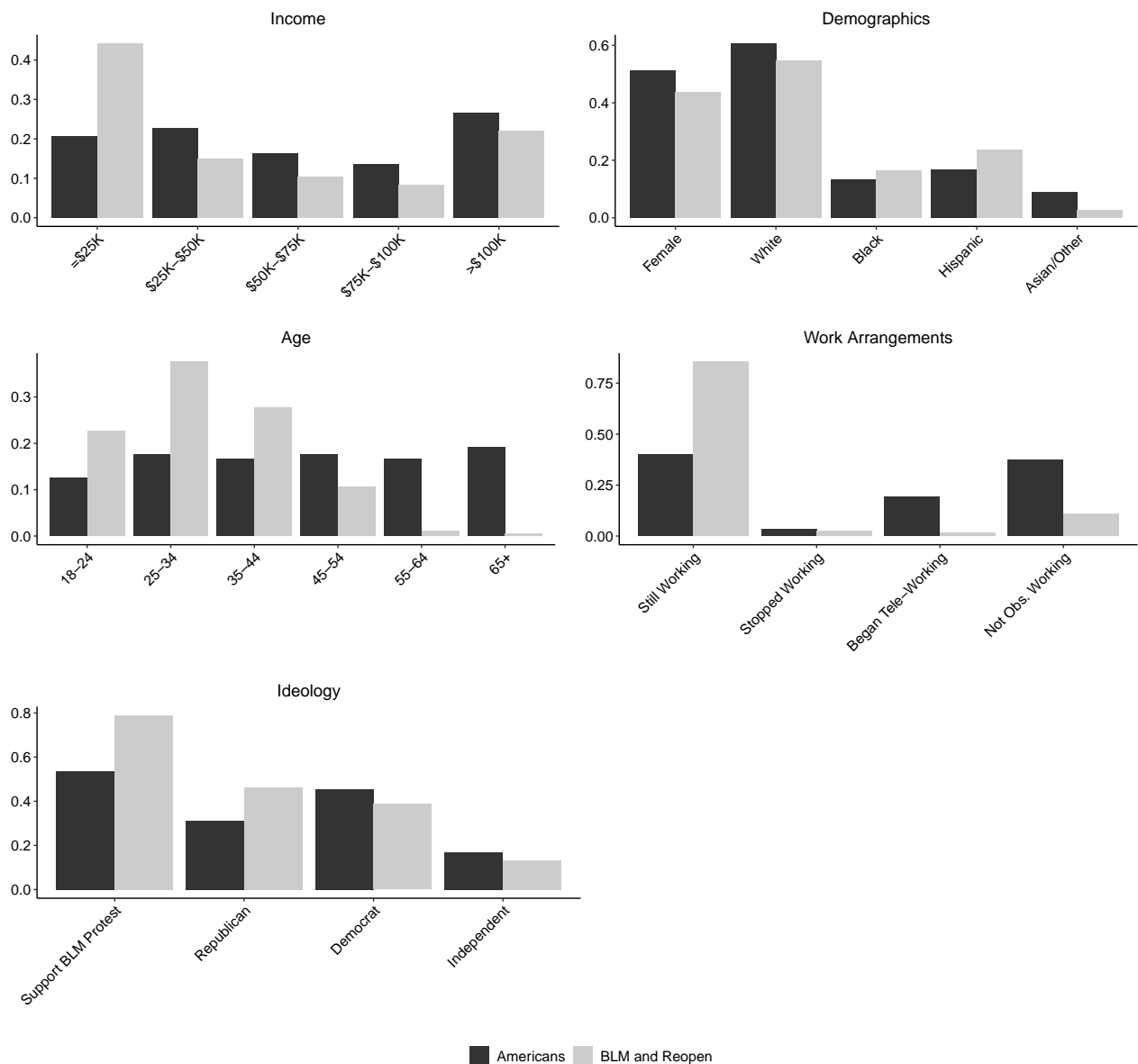


FIGURE 2: Average Characteristics of BLM and Reopening Protesters and Americans.

Notes: This figure reports the probability respondents have the listed characteristics. “Americans” refers to full sample, which was targeted to represent full population along the “Income”, “Demographics”, and “Age” dimensions. “BLM and Reopen” refers to the subset of respondents that attended both BLM and Reopening protests.

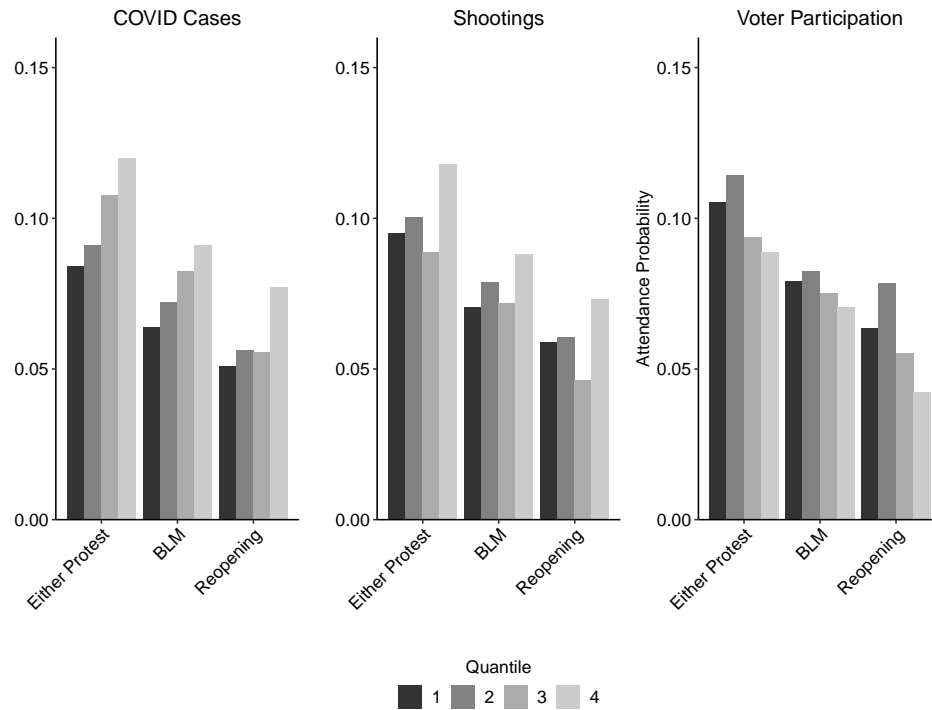


FIGURE 3: Average Protest Attendance by Quantiles of Voter Participation, Cumulative COVID-19 Cases, and Police Shootings.

Notes: This figure reports average protest attendance in counties within quantiles based on different county-level metrics. Quantiles increase in size from 1 to 4. Cumulative COVID-19 cases come from *The New York Times* for the period April 30, 2020–September 9, 2020. This period corresponds to the time period the survey data asks about protest participation. Police shootings come from Fatal Encounters for the period January 1, 2018–September 9, 2020. Voter participation is measured from the 2016 presidential election using data from the MIT Election Data + Science Lab.

A Additional Linear Probability Model Specifications

We run a final regression specification that combines all of the individual and community-level factors we considered to assess which robustly predict the protest participation behaviors we examine. These results appear in the final columns of Tables B1, B2, and B3. While most correlations remain the same when all controls are included like the baseline factors, some estimates are different. For instance, having a college degree no longer predicts protest attendance. Indicators for the South and West now significantly predict Reopening attendance, which is unsurprising given that relatively more of these protests occurred in those regions compared to the Midwest and Northeast. Political participation goes from an insignificant factor to a significant and positive one after all controls are included and police shootings become insignificant. The former finding is notable as it reverses the correlation pattern presented in Figure 3, suggesting that the union of the individual and community-based factors in the final specification explain some of the variation that drives protesting in areas with lower voter participation. Moreover, this result casts voting and protesting as complementary, consistent with the voting patterns observed in other waves of the data. Partisan controls also shift somewhat. Identifying as a Republican has a positive and significant association with each behavior, while identifying as a Democrat becomes insignificant. The latter is unsurprising given the approximately equal share of Democrats among protesters and non-protesters.

The relative influence these factors have on protest attendance are substantial. Across all three outcomes, being young and having children at home had the largest sway on protest participation with changes in participation probabilities ranging from 8 to 11 percentage points and 7 to 8 percentage points, respectively. Low income had large influence as well but was generally smaller than these two factors with the largest magnitude for Reopening protests—5 percentage point increase in participation versus 3 percentage points for BLM protest attendance. Work arrangements also had sizable correlation with participation. Across all three behaviors, arrangements such as telework were associated with a 7 to 9 percentage point decrease in protest participation. The magnitude of Republican partisan identification was quite substantial, ranging from 4 to 7 percentage points. Protest factors also have sizable associations with participation. A one unit increase in support for BLM increased participation 9 percentage points, while for every 100 protests in a respondent's county, protest participation increased between 3 and 19 percentage points. Counties with higher political participation in the 2016 presidential election also saw protest attendance increase around 13 percentage points.

A review of the regression results highlights that many of the same factors predict attendance at BLM and Reopening protests. In particular, respondents who are young; low income; have young children at home; work in-person; have positive beliefs about life; and reflect higher levels

of partisanship, beliefs of COVID-19 infection, and available protest and voter participation predict attendance at these demonstrations. These findings are suggestive of the type of individual that attends these protests and their motivations. The overall profile of the protester we described earlier is robust to the full set of controls: protesters are individuals navigating economic and personal constraints that are satisfied with their lives or are optimistic about their ability to change them. These factors speak to motivations to protest. Unsurprisingly, protesters are highly engaged politically. While some results related to partisan identification are no longer significant in the presence of all controls, we find that individuals are more likely to protest in counties where voter participation is higher. One interpretation of this result is that individuals in these counties are more attuned to political issues and willing to express their opinions (either through voting, protesting, or both), which is also consistent with our findings about higher protest attendance in counties with more protests and that protesters tend to vote. Alternatively, higher voter participation is found in battleground states which attract political activists who establish the infrastructure necessary to mobilize citizens to protest. This interpretation is also consistent with higher attendance in counties with more protests. Finally, our finding about COVID-19 infection beliefs is consistent with activities such as attending a protest and working in-person. These findings indicate that similarities in terms of demographics and motivations between BLM and Reopening protesters are greater than most commonly held notions about these individuals would suggest.

B Additional Tables

TABLE B1: Factors Associated with Attending Either a BLM or Reopening Protest

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Demographics:							
Less than 40	0.11*** (0.01)	0.13*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)
Low Income	0.04*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Child Under 18	0.10*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
Black		0.02 (0.02)					-0.01 (0.02)
Female		-0.02* (0.01)					-0.02** (0.01)
College Degree or Higher		0.03*** (0.01)					0.02 (0.01)
Midwest		-0.04** (0.02)					-0.01 (0.02)
South		-0.02 (0.01)					0.01 (0.02)
West		-0.00 (0.02)					0.01 (0.02)

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended either a BLM or Reopening protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending a protest is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) includes historic information about the number of police shootings in a respondent's county from January 2018 to September 2020. Column (6) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. *This table continues onto the next page.*

TABLE B1: Factors Associated with Attending Either a BLM or Reopening Protest (continued)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Work Arrangements:							
Stopped Working	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.03)	-0.06** (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Began teleworking	-0.11*** (0.01)	-0.11*** (0.01)	-0.12*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.11*** (0.01)	-0.11*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)
Not Observed Working	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)
Ideology and Beliefs:							
Cantril ladder, now		0.02*** (0.00)					0.02*** (0.00)
Republican		0.05*** (0.01)					0.07*** (0.01)
Democrat		0.04*** (0.01)					-0.00 (0.01)
Protests:							
Support BLM Protests			0.07*** (0.01)				0.09*** (0.01)
N BLM Protests (100s)			0.05*** (0.02)				0.04** (0.02)
N Reopening Protests (100s)			-0.05 (0.08)				0.01 (0.11)

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended either a BLM or Reopening protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending a protest is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) includes historic information about the number of police shootings in a respondent's county from January 2018 to September 2020. Column (6) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. *This table continues onto the next page.*

TABLE B1: Factors Associated with Attending Either a BLM or Reopening Protest (continued)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
COVID-19:							
Belief COVID Inf. (%)				0.24***			0.22***
				(0.02)			(0.02)
Total Cases (100,000s)				0.00			-0.03
				(0.06)			(0.07)
Avg New Cases (100s)				-0.00			-0.00
				(0.00)			(0.01)
Avg New Deaths (100s)				0.20			0.23
				(0.28)			(0.31)
Police Violence:							
Police Shootings (100s)					0.04**		0.02
					(0.02)		(0.05)
Political Engagement:							
Voter Part. Rate (2016 Pres)						0.07	0.15**
						(0.06)	(0.07)
Observations	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526
R^2	0.125	0.145	0.146	0.171	0.126	0.125	0.209

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended either a BLM or Reopening protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending a protest is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) includes historic information about the number of police shootings in a respondent's county from January 2018 to September 2020. Column (6) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution.

TABLE B2: Factors Associated with Attending a BLM Protest

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Demographics:							
Less than 40	0.09*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)
Low Income	0.02** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Child Under 18	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Black		0.00 (0.02)					-0.02 (0.02)
Female		-0.00 (0.01)					-0.00 (0.01)
College Degree or Higher		0.02** (0.01)					0.01 (0.01)
Midwest		-0.03** (0.01)					-0.01 (0.01)
South		-0.01 (0.01)					0.01 (0.01)
West		-0.01 (0.01)					0.01 (0.02)

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a BLM protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending these protests is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) includes historic information about the number of police shootings in a respondent's county from January 2018 to September 2020. Column (6) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. *This table continues onto the next page.*

TABLE B2: Factors Associated with Attending a BLM Protest (continued)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Work Arrangements:							
Stopped Working	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.05* (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.05* (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Began teleworking	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)
Not Observed Working	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Ideology and Beliefs:							
Cantril ladder, now		0.02*** (0.00)					0.02*** (0.00)
Republican		0.02 (0.01)					0.04*** (0.01)
Democrat		0.04*** (0.01)					-0.00 (0.01)
Protests:							
Support BLM Protests			0.08*** (0.01)				0.09*** (0.01)
N BLM Protests (100s)			0.03*** (0.01)				0.03** (0.01)

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a BLM protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending these protests is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) includes historic information about the number of police shootings in a respondent's county from January 2018 to September 2020. Column (6) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. *This table continues onto the next page.*

TABLE B2: Factors Associated with Attending a BLM Protest (continued)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
COVID-19							
Belief COVID Inf. (%)				0.20***			0.19***
				(0.02)			(0.02)
Total Cases (100,000s)				0.03			0.01
				(0.06)			(0.07)
Avg New Cases (100s)				-0.00			-0.00
				(0.00)			(0.01)
Avg New Deaths (100s)				0.03			0.07
				(0.25)			(0.28)
Police Violence:							
Police Shootings (100s)					0.03*		0.02
					(0.02)		(0.05)
Political Engagement:							
Voter Part. Rate (2016 Pres)						0.07	0.13**
						(0.05)	(0.06)
Observations	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526
R^2	0.092	0.110	0.118	0.134	0.093	0.092	0.170

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a BLM protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending these protests is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) includes historic information about the number of police shootings in a respondent's county from January 2018 to September 2020. Column (6) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution.

TABLE B3: Factors Associated with Attending a Reopening Protest

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Demographics:						
Less than 40	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
Low Income	0.04*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Child Under 18	0.09*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
Black		0.03** (0.01)				0.02* (0.01)
Female		-0.03*** (0.01)				-0.03*** (0.01)
College Degree or Higher		0.02** (0.01)				0.01 (0.01)
Midwest		-0.02* (0.01)				0.00 (0.01)
South		-0.01 (0.01)				0.03** (0.01)
West		0.02 (0.01)				0.04*** (0.01)

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a reopening protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending these protests is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. *This table continues onto the next page.*

TABLE B3: Factors Associated with Attending a Reopening Protest (continued)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Work Arrangements:						
Stopped Working	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.05*** (0.02)
Began teleworking	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)
Not Observed Working	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
Ideology and Beliefs:						
Cantril ladder, now		0.02*** (0.00)				0.02*** (0.00)
Republican		0.05*** (0.01)				0.06*** (0.01)
Democrat		0.01 (0.01)				-0.00 (0.01)
Protests:						
N Reopening Protests (100s)			0.15*** (0.04)			0.19*** (0.07)

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a reopening protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending these protests is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution. *This table continues onto the next page.*

TABLE B3: Factors Associated with Attending a Reopening Protest (continued)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
COVID-19						
Belief COVID Inf. (%)				0.20***		0.20***
				(0.02)		(0.02)
Total Cases (100,000s)				-0.02		-0.03
				(0.05)		(0.05)
Avg New Cases (100s)				0.00		-0.01
				(0.00)		(0.00)
Avg New Deaths (100s)				0.22		0.40*
				(0.22)		(0.22)
Political Engagement:						
Voter Part. Rate (2016 Pres)					0.03	0.13***
					(0.05)	(0.05)
Observations	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526	3,526
R^2	0.112	0.147	0.117	0.161	0.112	0.203

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Heteroskedastic standard errors in parentheses. This table reports estimates from regressions of whether an individual attended a reopening protest and various individual and county characteristics. Attending these protests is measured as a binary (i.e., yes or no). Column (1) includes baseline demographics of respondents. Column (2) includes other individual characteristics and ideological beliefs. Column (3) adds information about the number of protesters in the respondent's county and their opinion about BLM protests. Column (4) considers factors specific to COVID-19 such as the respondent's perceived risk of infection and county-specific trends. Column (5) adds political engagement as measured by the county voter participation rate from the 2016 presidential election. Low income is defined as an income in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution.

TABLE B4: Difference in Means Between Protesters and Americans

	Protesters		Americans		Diff	t-stat	p-value
	Mean	N	Mean	N			
Age							
18–24	0.24	379	0.11	3,526	0.13	7.38	0.00
25–34	0.34	379	0.17	3,526	0.18	8.47	0.00
35–44	0.23	379	0.15	3,526	0.08	4.04	0.00
45–54	0.09	379	0.17	3,526	-0.09	-4.38	0.00
55–64	0.06	379	0.18	3,526	-0.12	-5.85	0.00
≥65	0.04	379	0.22	3,526	-0.18	-8.35	0.00
Demographics							
Female	0.47	379	0.47	3,526	0.00	0.10	0.92
White	0.58	379	0.62	3,526	-0.04	-1.60	0.11
Black	0.15	379	0.13	3,526	0.03	1.45	0.15
Hispanic	0.22	379	0.17	3,526	0.06	2.75	0.01
Asian/Other	0.04	379	0.09	3,526	-0.04	-2.73	0.01
Household Income							
≤\$25K	0.34	379	0.18	3,526	0.16	7.49	0.00
\$25K–\$50K	0.20	379	0.22	3,526	-0.02	-1.11	0.27
\$50K–\$75K	0.12	379	0.17	3,526	-0.06	-2.90	0.00
\$75K–\$100K	0.12	379	0.14	3,526	-0.03	-1.37	0.17
>\$100K	0.24	379	0.29	3,526	-0.05	-2.03	0.04

Notes: This table summarizes the means of variables the Socioeconomic Impacts of Covid-19 Study used to target the representative of the American population. The means are broken out between the respondents that attended either a BLM or Reopening protest and the overall Wave 2 analytic survey sample. Results are similar if the entire Wave 2 sample is used. The final three columns perform a difference of means test between these two groups.