

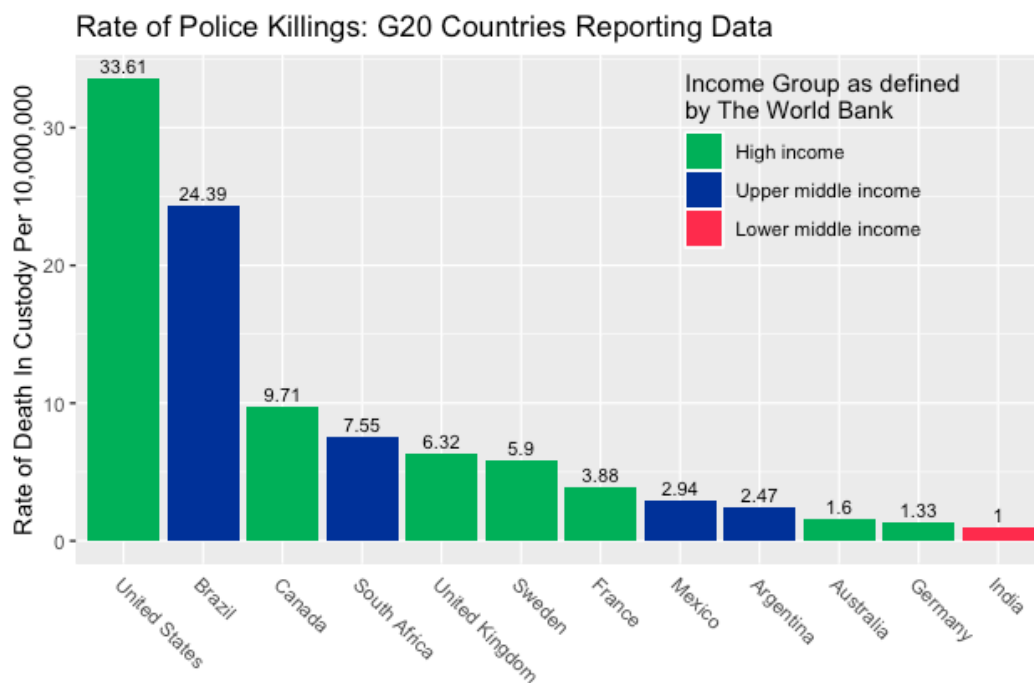
**No Justice, No Peace:**  
An Analysis of Domestic Police Policy and the History of Civil Unrest in the United States

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## I. The Moral Imperative of Policing

The legitimacy of governance is inherently derived from its constituents, the people who are served by that government. Trust and obligation are foundational tenets of the social contract between a people and their government.<sup>1</sup> Police power, an extension of government and that same social contract, is legitimized by working towards social harmony and organization.<sup>2</sup> In a just state, a police force maintains its legitimacy by building community welfare and wellbeing.

The American police and the American police system do not make America a better place. Policing in this country is intrinsically broken, in large part due to the infrastructure that drives the abstract ideas of “justice” and “freedom.” The American police repeatedly violate the terms of the social contract that obligate it to encourage and promote the welfare of its people and society. Police in the United States are neither incentivized nor trained to be forces for good in the communities they serve.<sup>3,4</sup> Because of these policies, an American citizen is at a significantly greater risk of being harmed by police than his or her counterparts in other countries:



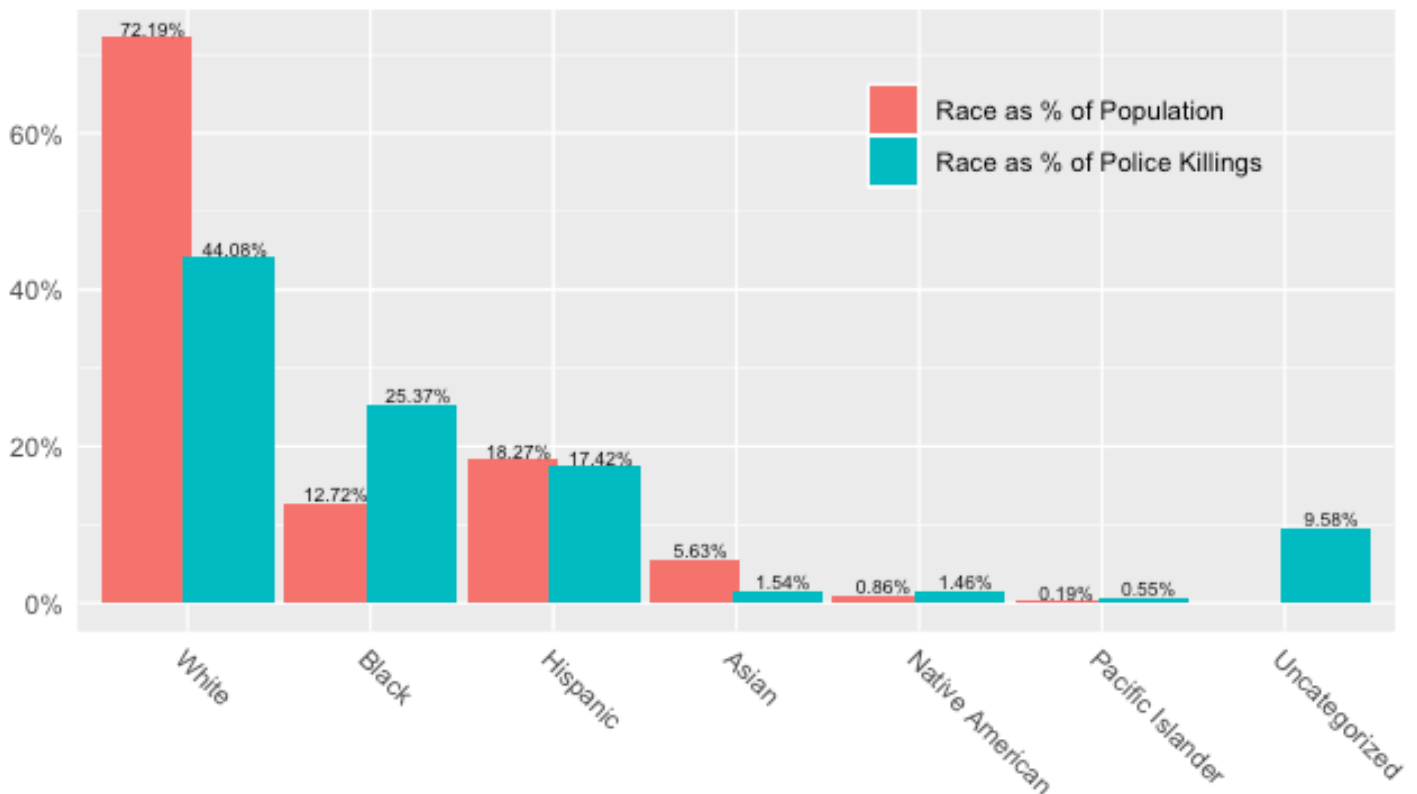
Police in America are violent, both on and off the job, and are too often not held accountable for their actions. Of the 7,663 police killings that occurred from 2013 to 2019 as measured by the Mapping Police Violence project, 99% (n=7,562) have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime.<sup>5</sup> Police officers are also more likely to be violent at home than the general public. Two separate studies have concluded that at least 40% of police households experience domestic violence, four times higher than the national average of 10%.<sup>6-8</sup>

Domestic violence is just the tip of the iceberg: a 2014 examination of police sexual violence found 548 cases in which American police officers were arrested for sexual violence in a three year span, an average of one arrest every two days.<sup>9</sup> This study does not begin to capture the true scope of police sexual violence, as it only considered cases in which arrests were made and could not account for unreported cases, an inherent obstacle in sexual violence data reporting magnified by the power dynamic between police officer and his victim.

In the United States, police exist and have always existed as a tool of authoritarian command for driving inequality and controlling those at the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum – a tool that is used disproportionately to exacerbate racial injustice. The first organized police force in the US was established in Boston in 1838, and other cities across the country quickly followed. Early American policing found a consistent thread in suppression: in northern cities, that meant quashing workers and labor movements, and in the South, they existed for slavery enforcement.<sup>10</sup> In a 2006 meta-analysis of criminal justice and policing texts, researchers found “law enforcement existed in America before the Civil War for the express purpose of controlling the slave population and protecting the interests of slave owners.”<sup>11</sup>

American police continue today to serve their historical political function.<sup>12</sup> According to the 2010 United States Census, only 13.4% of the nearly 330 million people living in America are Black.<sup>13</sup> There are six times as many white Americans as there are Black, but Black Americans disparately make up 25.4% of all police killings.<sup>5</sup> Black Americans are shot by police at a rate 3.1 times higher than white Americans, and unarmed Black Americans are shot at a rate 4.5 times higher than their unarmed white counterparts.<sup>14</sup> Black men face the risk of being killed by the police more than twice greater the relative risk faced by white men.<sup>15</sup>

### Police Killings in the United States by Race, 2013-2019



#### Sources:

Population Data, 2018 American Community Survey, the United States Census Bureau  
 Police Killings Data, Mapping Police Violence Project

## II. Systemic Racism Through Policy & Policing in the United States

To speak about policing, justice, and justness in the United States without mention of the deliberate targeting of Black lives is fundamentally impossible. The first article of the United States Constitution includes a clause that reduces Black persons to three fifths of a human being. The 1865 ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment marked the end of slavery in the midst of the Civil War, a war fought specifically over the right of white men to own Black bodies. Reconstruction ushered in a period of 100 years fraught with disparities in educational and infrastructural investment, voter disenfranchisement, and domestic terrorism through lynching, convict leasing, and outright murder.<sup>16</sup>

After the Johnson presidency and the Civil Rights Era, the Nixon, Reagan and Clinton administrations set forth specific policy goals that disparately affected Black people, specifically in mass incarceration and education disparities.

Political scientists have referred to the social and economic policies of Nixon's Southern strategy and the Reagan Revolution as a "U-turn" regarding racism and social inequality. Reagan-era education reform focused on eliminating the American public school system by cutting funds for urban school districts while working with "segregation academies and schools affiliated with white fundamentalist churches."<sup>17</sup> One such scholar, Jonathan Kozol, wrote in 1991 that, "In public schooling, [the Reagan administration's] social policy has been turned back almost one hundred years," a turnback that is especially egregious when considering the relationship between education, poverty, and crime.<sup>18,19</sup> With regards to the Reagan-era "crack" down on the drugs that the federal government ensured came into this country along with the systematic privatization of prisons, Michelle Alexander explains succinctly in *The New Jim Crow*:<sup>20</sup>

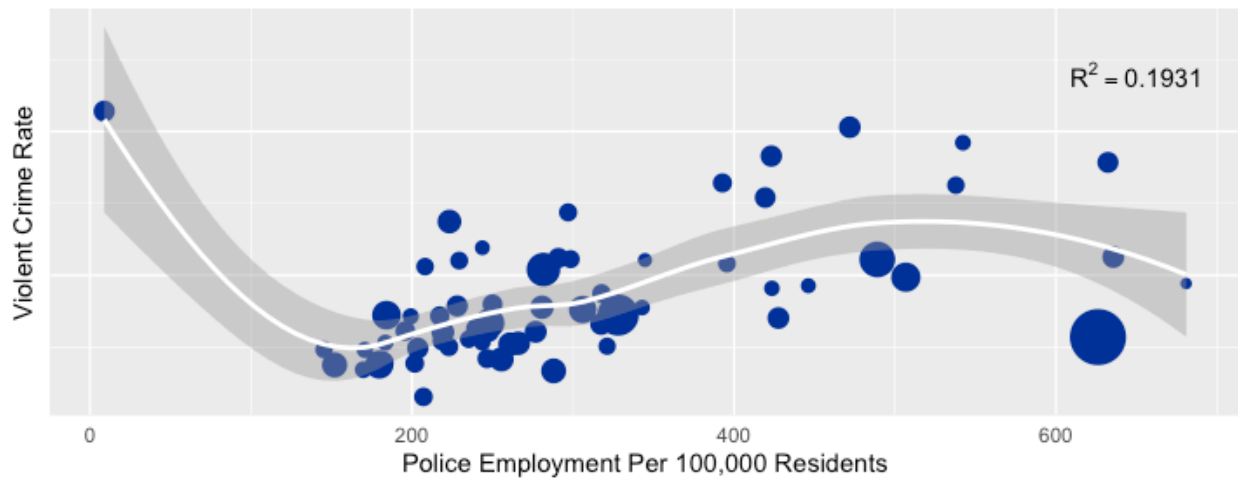
"Saying mass incarceration is an abysmal failure makes sense, though only if one assumes that the criminal justice system is designed to prevent and control crime. But if mass incarceration is understood as a system of social control—specifically, racial control—then the system is a fantastic success."

The scope and scale of policing in the United States has expanded significantly since the 1980s. The Clinton administration saw a political ideology convergence between conservatives and liberals regarding criminal justice theory. The progressive presidencies of the 1960s focused on rehabilitation gave way to Democrats in the 1990s aligning with Republicans on the retroactive punishment and control end of the criminal justice spectrum.<sup>21</sup> This led to the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, better known as the Clinton Crime Bill. Not only did this bill see the expansion of the federal death penalty by over fifty additional offenses, it provided for 100,000 new police officers on American streets and nearly \$10B for prison funding.<sup>22</sup>

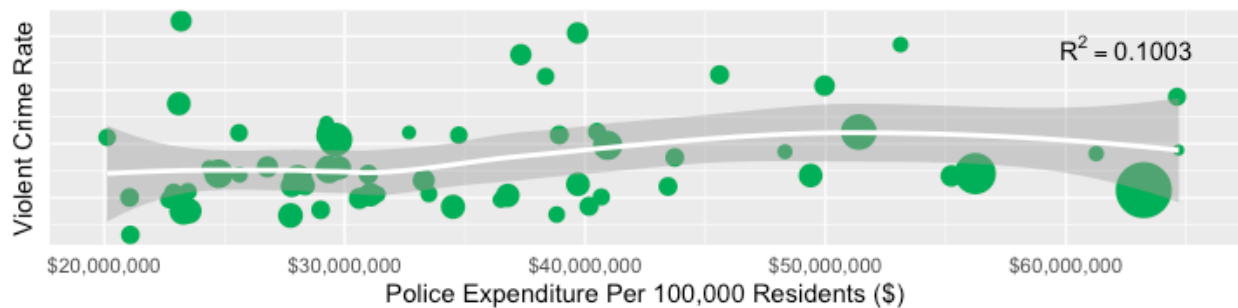
Police forces and "law and order" politicians incessantly call for increased personnel and equipment resources in bad faith with the knowledge that police do not prevent crime.<sup>23</sup> There is no significant correlation at the municipal level between either an increased number of police or an increased police expenditure on decreasing violent crime. In a regression analysis of violent crime rate against the number of police employed per capita in 66 major American cities, the coefficient of determination is just 19%. When comparing police expenditure by city to violent crime rate, the relationship is even weaker, with the level of police expenditure accounting for only 10% of the variance in a city's violent crime rate.

### Standardized Rate of Police Employment against Violent Crime (2016)

Data reflects 66 Large American Cities Identified by the USDOJ



### Standardized Rate of US Municipal Police Expenditure against Violent Crime (2016)



Notes:  
 Dot size represents city population.  
 Shaded area indicates 95% confidence interval.

Sources:  
 2016 Justice Expenditure and Employment Extracts Series, US Bureau of Justice Statistics  
 Violent Crime Data, Mapping Police Violence Project

In *The End of Policing*, Alex Vitale writes that, “more police than ever before are engaged in more enforcement of more laws, resulting in astronomical levels of incarceration, economic exploitation, and abuse.”<sup>10</sup> Public response to police abuses of power has repeatedly been civil disorder in the United States, both historically and today. However, the driver of widespread civil unrest is not solely indiscriminate police violence but rather social marginality and inequity in a political system that does not provide a voice or any legitimate channels through which grievances can be adequately addressed.<sup>24</sup> The ballot box is not the only way to effect change- direct civil action through protest spurs a quantifiable increase in political participation.<sup>25</sup> The energy and momentum delivered by widespread civil action combined with electing policymakers with a vested interest in building equitable communities is a foundational aspect of structural change.

### III. The History of Civil Unrest in the United States

Frederick Douglass, in an 1866 piece published in *The Atlantic*, posited the following: “There is cause to be thankful, even for rebellion. It is an impressive teacher, though a stern and terrible one.”<sup>26</sup> History is intentionally written without the ugly truths that have driven change. From revolutions for independence to labor movements to the fight towards racial equality and equity, civil direct action has repeatedly proven to effect change in deeply entrenched systems. The sanitization of the fight for justice and equity only serves those with an express interest in maintaining a status quo of inequality.

Civil unrest as a tool for fighting injustice in the United States has its origins in the events leading up to the American Revolution. Perhaps the most famous act of civil disobedience in American history is the Boston Tea Party, a destruction of 90,000 pounds of British tea on the night of December 16, 1773, in response to unjust taxation principles delivered by Crown policy.<sup>27</sup> The Boston Tea Party forced the British to reexamine its colonial policies, resulting in the passage of the Coercive Acts in March 1774.<sup>28</sup> The Coercive Acts, also known as “The Intolerable Acts,” had an immediate domino effect – by February 1775, Parliament declared that the state of Massachusetts was in a state of rebellion, and in April, the first shots of the American Revolutionary War were fired in Lexington.<sup>27</sup>

Given the history of the American foundation and the injustices committed against the American people on a uniquely consistent basis by its own police force, it is unsurprising that civil unrest and disobedience are woven into the fabric of American resistance. The John Stuart Mill utilitarian principle of participation “requires that the participation of each citizen be as great as possible to promote both the protective and educative goals of government.”<sup>29</sup> The Founders, despite their active complicity in the subjugation of Black lives, so intrinsically believed in the self-evident truth of direct civil action that “the right of the people peaceably to assemble” is written explicitly into the First Amendment of the Constitution.

#### The Civil Rights Era

With regards to the aforementioned sanitization of history, nonviolence and passivity are typically championed as the driver of public policy during the Civil Rights Era. The 1960s actually marked the greatest period of domestic unrest in post-Civil War American history. The unprecedented civil disorder of the 1960s was unique in both that it was primarily led by Black Americans for the first time and was directed at the federal government for not instituting more equitable policy to combat injustice at the state and local levels.<sup>30</sup> The Civil Rights Era saw widescale national riots, with incidents documented in 257 cities across a five year stretch spanning from 1964 to 1968.<sup>31</sup>

Police violence in response to the civil unrest of the 1960s was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans.<sup>32</sup> The combination of police brutality and the widespread nature of the unrest spurred the federal government to substantive action for the first time in decades. The riot response that erupted during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations stimulated “a reactive pattern of favorable federal action across a wide range of policy areas of interest to Blacks.”<sup>33</sup>

Every year of the Civil Rights Era saw at least one significant incident of civil unrest. In spring 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, was at a boiling point. Bull Connor, the city’s commissioner of public safety, had repeatedly used municipal resources such as fire hoses and police dogs to terrorize a Black population of Birmingham that was resolute in its march to independence.<sup>34</sup> On May 11, the Ku Klux Klan conducted a coordinated bombing of a black-owned motel and the home of Dr. King’s

brother.<sup>35</sup> Thousands of Black people took to the streets that night and were met by law enforcement officials armed with submachine guns, armored vehicles, and tear gas. The 1963 Birmingham riot was marked as a paradigm shift in the Kennedy Administration, both by the national press and by leaders in the civil rights movement.<sup>34</sup> Malcolm X, one of history's staunchest believers in civil unrest, noted in his "Message to the Grass Roots" speech that, "After [the Birmingham riots], Kennedy got on the television and said, 'this is a moral issue.' That's when he said he was going to put out a civil rights bill."<sup>36</sup>

Birmingham 1963 was followed by major civil unrest throughout the country: Harlem 1964, Watts 1965, and Chicago 1966 were all directly instigated by police behavior.<sup>37-39</sup> The final breaking point was the "Long Hot Summer" of 1967, which saw over 150 incidents of civil disorder.<sup>40</sup> The resulting damage was significant- thousands injured, 83 dead, thousands more arrested, and tens of millions of dollars' worth of property damage.<sup>41</sup>

In response, President Johnson enacted Executive Order 11365: "Establishing a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders" on July 29, 1967.<sup>42</sup> A year later, that Commission published what is colloquially known as the Kerner Report, described by Martin Luther King as a "physician's warning of approaching death, with a prescription for life."

The Kerner Report identified police behavior both as a primary driver in causing protestor assembly and as the central factor in protest violence escalation.<sup>43</sup> One of the legacy pieces of Civil Rights Era legislation is the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (FHA). A critical recommendation of the Kerner Report was "a comprehensive and enforceable federal open housing law" to decrease rampant discrimination in housing practices – the FHA was borne directly out of this section of the report.<sup>44</sup> April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1968, marks both the day that Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis and also the day that the Senate was to vote on the FHA. Nationwide riots in over 100 cities in the ensuing days served as the catalyst for President Johnson to whip the necessary votes – a conservative-majority House of Representatives approved the bill in under a week.

The foundational determination of the Kerner Report: "What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."<sup>45</sup> Due to the systems through which America was founded, economic disparities are amplified in their effects on Black communities, which are forced to participate in a system built on their bodies and intentionally designed to lessen it.

### **The Post-Civil Rights Era**

The period between the Civil Rights Era and the 2010s had its share of unrest and violence, most notably the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Violence engulfed Los Angeles after four LAPD officers were acquitted despite video evidence of their brutalization of a prostrate Black man named Rodney King. The LA riots served as the basis for the Enos study through the Harvard Department of Government which found that violent civil unrest increased both voter turnout and voter support for progressive referenda.<sup>25</sup>

The 2010s marked the next significant period of civil unrest in the United States after high-profile police killings in multiple major cities. A consistent theme of the direct action of the 2010s is policy response from key stakeholders focused on harm reduction within the scope of policework.

In Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014, officer Darren Wilson shot and killed an unarmed Black teenager named Michael Brown after he stopped Brown for allegedly stealing cigarillos from a liquor store.<sup>46</sup> Ferguson, a predominantly black St. Louis suburb, broke out into violence, and buildings were burned after a 12-man jury made up of nine white people decided not to charge and indict Officer Wilson.<sup>47</sup>

Following the killing of Michael Brown, a report issued by the Department of Justice to investigate the state of community relations in Ferguson found consistent and systematic racism carried out by their police department. 67% of Ferguson was Black at the time of the report, which found that Black people made up 85% of vehicle stops, 88% of use of force incidents, 93% of arrests, and 95% of multiple-day detentions.<sup>48</sup> The report also found that Ferguson PD routinely used tasers and dogs on unarmed Black suspects. In addition, the report uncovered a systematically predatory focus from city and police officials on driving revenue through policing fines and forfeitures.<sup>49</sup>

In Baltimore on April 12, 2015, a man named Freddie Gray was pursued by three police officers, with the probable cause cited in the charging document that Gray “fled unprovoked upon noticing police presence and was apprehended after a brief footchase.” The charge levied against Gray was “unlawful carry” of “a switch blade knife,” which carries a penalty of up to \$500 according to the official statement of charges.<sup>50</sup> Gray was then beaten, handcuffed, shackled, and put into the back of a police van without a seatbelt.<sup>51</sup> Multiple eyewitness accounts state that Gray was already unresponsive while the police officers shackled him.<sup>52</sup> Within an hour of being arrested, Gray had suffered what would be a fatal spinal cord injury in the back of the police van after the police officers involved repeatedly refused to give or seek medical attention.<sup>51</sup>

The killing of Freddie Gray ignited thousands of Baltimoreans to take to the streets in a protest that eventually turned violent.<sup>53</sup> The protests were met with thousands of police officers and troops who were brought in from outside of Baltimore.<sup>54</sup> Freddie Gray’s death was ruled a homicide by the City of Baltimore’s medical examiner’s report.<sup>55</sup> The six police officers involved would eventually be indicted on charges ranging from reckless endangerment to involuntary manslaughter to “second-degree depraved-heart murder.” None were convicted.<sup>56</sup>

In response to the civil unrest in Baltimore from citizens exhausted by injustices committed by police, the US Department of Justice released another report in 2016 focused on the institutional culture of racism and use of force within the Baltimore Police Department.<sup>57</sup> The 164-page report found that the Baltimore police were guilty of systematically engaging in “unconstitutional stops, searches, and arrests lacking reasonable suspicion or probable cause that were disproportionately aimed at African-Americans. ... These encounters were often characterized by excessive violence, at times aimed at the mentally ill or youth.”<sup>58</sup> While Baltimore still struggles with crime and violence at large, positive policy outcomes resulted from the widespread civil action. New initiatives such as a training program that pairs BPD officers with local middle school and high school students offer promise for improved community relationships moving forward.<sup>59</sup>

The Obama administration finally began a long-awaited policy reexamination and restructure, with much of its work focused on consent decrees, open-access police data, and demilitarizing the police coming into public view in May 2015. However, the Obama-era policies landed closer to suggestions than effecting any real progress.<sup>60</sup> There was no significant difference in the number of police killings at any point from 2013 through 2019:<sup>5</sup>



Year	Police Killings
2013	1,106
2014	1,050
2015	1,103
2016	1,071
2017	1,093
2018	1,142
2019	1,098

Politically moderate action to reform police has not effectively improved American policing in three decades. The primary win of the Obama administration was not policy-related at all but rather the blossoming of Black Lives Matter, a grassroots movement that has found a significant foothold by driving direct civil action across the country and across the world.

While Ferguson and Baltimore mark the two largest instances of civil unrest of the 2010s, other American cities have also had policy successes with the aim of reducing police violence. In 2012, a Dallas police officer fatally shot a fleeing, unarmed black man named James Harper multiple times.<sup>61</sup> As a direct response to both the killing and the subsequent protests that broke out across the city, the Dallas Police Department instituted progressive policing policies that included lethal force training every two months instead of every two years, a wealth of public access police data, increased body camera usage, and firings of police officers who were considered underperforming.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the Dallas PD saw a 64% decrease in excessive force complaints from 2009 to 2014, a decrease which was attributed directly to these policy changes.<sup>63</sup>

Another quantifiable policy success was seen in Los Angeles, where 2019 saw a 30-year low in all shootings by LAPD officers coinciding with a decline in fatal shootings for four consecutive years.<sup>64</sup> Officials have attributed the performance improvement to new de-escalation tactics prioritizing the preservation of life. Los Angeles has concurrently seen an overall decrease in crime, with the number of public-police contacts decreasing by 4% and arrests down 11.3%.

#### IV. Policy Goals

The American police system, specifically in the way it targets Black people – specifically in the way it targets Black men – is foundationally broken as currently constructed. Despite the policy gains made by the Civil Rights Era, high-level programs that intentionally built racial inequity have resulted in considerable damage in the intervening years. The Reagan-era mass incarceration through the War on Drugs with the movement towards prison privatization starting in 1984 as well as the 1994 Clinton crime bill have cemented a deepened divide along lines of racial injustice.<sup>20,65</sup>

The elements that drive inequity in this country go far deeper than addressing the scope of police violence and civil unrest. Even during the peak of the Civil Rights Era and the Long Hot Summer of 1967, research conducted by the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University found that Black residents of major cities across the country thought that discriminatory employment practices and systematically poor living conditions bore greater responsibility for driving the riots than police brutality.<sup>66</sup>

The deeply rooted inequality in the United States must be addressed through concrete policies focused on social investment through public education built on equitable funding practices, infrastructural spending without gentrification in Black and other minority neighborhoods, and political justice that includes equitable district redrawing and the assurance of every American's Constitutional right to vote.

In the meantime, there are tangible policy goals that cities and their police departments can strive towards in order to make policing more equitable. The first is the consistent implementation of de-escalation and a use of force continuum. From 2013 through 2019, the Mapping Police Violence project documented 7,663 extrajudicial killings committed by American police officers, an average of 1,094 per year and three per day.<sup>5</sup> The United States Constitution supposedly assures “the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury of the state and district” in the Sixth Amendment as well as the guarantee of lawful imprisonment through the writ of habeas corpus. The death of over 1,000 Americans per year at the hands of police who choose to be the judge, jury, and executioner prior to any due process of the law is unacceptable regardless of justification.

In Sinyangwe's 2016 quantitative analysis of “use-of-force” restrictions, the prohibition of chokeholds and strangleholds along with the requirement of de-escalation until absolutely necessary proved to have the greatest impact on reducing police killings among the specific policies focused on public-police interaction.<sup>67</sup> Stringent requirement of exhausting all other means prior to shooting is associated with a 25% decrease in police killings per capita in implementing cities, and banning chokeholds correlates to a 19% decrease.

In addition to emphasis on conflict resolution and de-escalation, removing lethal and less-than-lethal options from the hands of police officers can work towards harm reduction. American police have utilized so-called “less-than-lethal” crowd control weapons such as rubber bullets and tear gas for decades. A 2017 systematic review studied 1,984 reported injuries from the use of rubber bullets as crowd control and found that 17.7% of all injuries resulted in either permanent injury or death.<sup>68</sup> With regards to tear gas, the 1993 United Nations Chemical Weapons Convention prohibited the use of chemical incapacitants such as tear gas as a method of warfare.<sup>69</sup> In May 2015, President Obama announced a policy preventing the Department of Defense from transferring military equipment including tanks, weaponized aircraft, firearms measuring .50-

caliber or larger, and grenade launchers to police departments across the country.<sup>70</sup> These restrictions were rolled back by the Trump Administration in its first year in office, with then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions calling such weaponry “lifesaving gear” for police.<sup>71</sup>

While point-of-contact improvements play a necessary role in reducing police killings, increased transparency and accountability are critical as well. The 2016 Sinyangwe study referenced previously found that the policy with the greatest impact on harm reduction is comprehensive incident reporting, both on actual uses of force as well as threats and attempted uses of force.<sup>67</sup> Following the killings of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray, President Obama launched the Police Data Initiative (PDI) in May 2015 with the goal of standardizing data practices across police jurisdictions to provide open access transparency. In 2016, the White House reported that 53 police departments covering 41 million Americans had joined the initiative to further that effort—continued incentivization to join the PDI would be a positive step towards transparency and immunity.<sup>72</sup>

Improved data transparency could play a role in advancing the lack of accountability in personnel practices for police departments. Despite the fact that nearly 1,100 Americans are killed by police officers each year, cases are very rarely brought against officers: from 2005 through 2019, an average of just 7.2 cases per year were brought against police officers and only 2.8 per year ended in conviction.<sup>73</sup> A legal doctrine known as “qualified immunity” established by the Supreme Court in the 1982 decision of *Harlow v. Fitzgerald* requires that lawsuits filed against public officials are only allowed if a “clearly established” violation occurs.<sup>74</sup> This creates a cyclical problem of precedence: police officers guilty of misconduct are not subject to trial unless legal precedent already exists, but legal precedent too often does *not* exist due to similar previous cases of misconduct not being brought to trial for qualified immunity.

## V. Conclusion

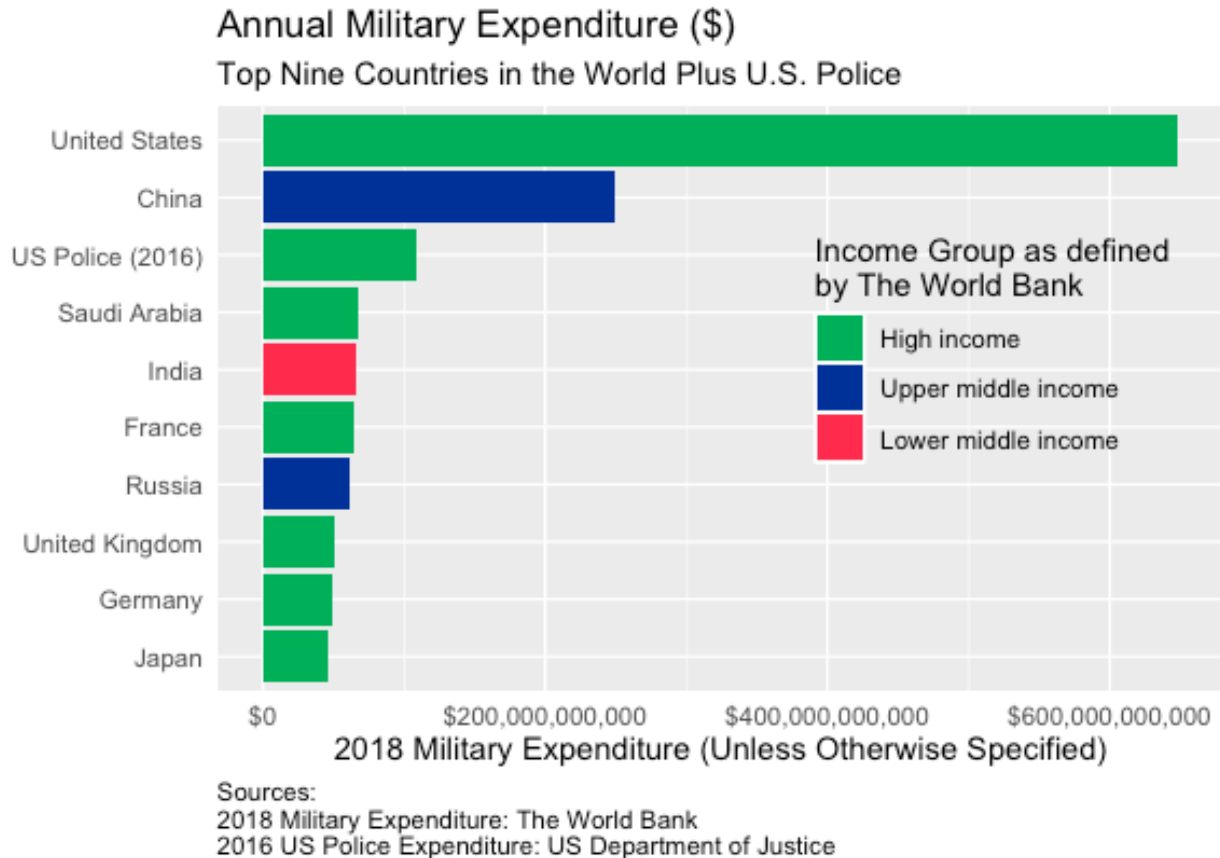
Challenges to police department legitimacy are most effectively mounted by prominent stakeholders such as political leaders and the court system.<sup>1</sup> The most consistent call to action for those entrenched in the intentionally inert American political system is a degree of civil unrest that challenges civic order and status quo.

The ideologically conservative viewpoint towards civil unrest has always been inherently antagonistic. Such viewpoints rely on societal norms that stress stability, consensus, and the “rationality, orderliness, and predictability of social and political change.”<sup>75</sup> According to conservative scholar Edward Banfield, collective violence is “rare, needless, without purposes, and irrational.”<sup>30</sup> Banfield served as an advisor to both Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.<sup>76</sup> He was also the mentor of the founder of “broken windows” policing, a central tenet of policework since 1980 that combines highly punitive policy with overtly aggressive enforcement for low-level violations.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, Dr. Martin Luther King spoke to the dangers of the crutches of inertia and societal norms in his 1963 “Letter from the Birmingham Jail”:<sup>77</sup>

“The Negro’s great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can’t agree with your methods of direct action.’”

While steps taken to reduce the systematic and consistent police violence against Black lives across the country can make real improvements in the short run, long-term equity and justice cannot exist without a structural paradigm shift in defunding police. Such a shift requires reallocating those expenditures into dedicated community investment across the spectrum from education to healthcare to economic development.

In a country where 94 percent of public school teachers are forced to spend their own money on school supplies for children, police departments are routinely the most significant portion of municipal budgets.<sup>78,79</sup> The 2016 Justice Expenditure and Employments Extracts report published by the US Department of Justice determined that the direct police expenditure in the United States is \$109B.<sup>80</sup> Compared to 2018 military expenditure data, police in the United States would rank third in military expenditure, behind only the actual U.S. military and China.<sup>81</sup>



In its proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-2021, the city of Los Angeles' greatest single line item cost is its police department.<sup>82</sup> At \$3.14B, police spending makes up 30% of the city's proposed budget, far outstripping community investment such as public works (\$1.43B), transportation (\$301.1M), economic development (\$30.5M), and the city's Civil and Human Rights Commission (\$700K).

Research has consistently shown that public investment in communities correlates with better crime outcomes. A 2017 study found that states choosing to expand Medicaid saw a 3.3% overall decrease in all crimes and a 5.6% decrease in violent crimes, an improvement associated with an estimated annual cost savings of over \$13B compared to states without Medicaid expansion.<sup>83</sup> Another study focused on the benefits of public substance treatment facilities at the county level found that one additional facility reduces crime costs in that county by \$4.2M annually, an investment return of 281.8% based on the \$1.1M annual cost of operation.<sup>84</sup> The seminal 2004 Lochner study on the effect of education on crime concluded that better and more effective schooling significantly reduces criminal activity.<sup>19</sup> This study found that just a one percent increase in male high school completion rate is associated with a national cost saving of \$1.4B, amounting to a 20% return on investment in education spending.

In May 2020, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd were wrongfully killed by the Louisville and Minneapolis police departments, respectively, within a span of less than two weeks. Public protests and rioting came to a head on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, with people across the country and around the world taking to the streets to protest the violence of American police against its own citizens.

The public reaction realized an instant policy impact. By June 1<sup>st</sup>, the mayor of Louisville had fired the city's police chief, citing an "institutional failure" to serve and protect the people.<sup>85</sup> Cities across the country – Los Angeles, Atlanta, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Las Vegas, to name a few – announced programs for revising their use of force and de-escalation practices in the first week succeeding widespread protests.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, Minnesota attorney general Keith Ellison upgraded the charges against Derek Chauvin and filed charges against the three other associated officers for aiding and abetting second-degree murder.<sup>86</sup> By June 7<sup>th</sup>, the Minneapolis City Council pledged to entirely dismantle the city's police department in order to redesign it from scratch.<sup>87</sup>

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Colorado passed State Bill 217 "Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity" to end qualified immunity, mandate body cameras with public footage, and ban the shooting of fleeing suspects to ensure accountability for its police officers.<sup>88</sup> State legislators directly referenced the widespread protests of police practices as the catalyst for driving this legislation, which took only 16 days from introduction to approval.<sup>89</sup>

Direct action as an agent of change has repeatedly proven to be successful throughout history and throughout the world. Individual voices matter, and voices collectively amplified in righteous unity will always make a difference.

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#### **Note to Reader:**

All data visualizations were created by the author for the purpose of this project and can be reused with attributed credit.

The associated GitHub repository (<https://github.com/rohitborah1/NJNP>) contains the full source datasets (NJNP Dataset.xlsx; original sources in the Data folder), original code for the data visualizations (NJNP Data Viz Code.R), and all available references (NJNP References.enlx).

For any additional information or requests, please contact the author via email through the following link: <https://www.rohitborah.com/contact-me>.

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