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No Justice, No Peace: An Examination of the Conditions of the George Floyd Protests to Determine How to Facilitate Successful State Legislative Outcomes

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No Justice, No Peace: An Examination of the Conditions of the George Floyd Protests to

Determine How to Facilitate Successful State Legislative Outcomes

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ABSTRACT:

This thesis examines the relationship between the conditions of the George Floyd protests from May to August of 2020 to the impact they had state on policing reforms within state legislatures. I examine protests in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, looking at those protests' size, media coverage, and violence and compare that to the degree of policy change achieved within each state. I find that, contrary to expectations, protest size was not associated with policy change, but that the party control of the state government was a strong predictor of how states responded to protests. Within some state subgroups, the presence of violence and media coverage of violence had a statistically significant effect in shaping policy change. These findings help us understand what conditions are needed to create a successful protest

<div align="center">INTRODUCTION</div>

The rallying cry "no justice, no peace" boomed through downtown Minneapolis streets the day after George Floyd was brutally murdered in late May 2020.[1] This chant was heard around the world after the death of George Floyd and at the ensuing protests that reached global proportions. Floyd was killed on Chicago Avenue and East 38th Street on Monday May 25, 2020 and the next day after the release of the video of his death, thousands of people flooded that same intersection.[2] It was considered by the local media to be a mostly peaceful protest during the afternoon, but starting at about 6 p.m., things took a different turn. The protestors began marching towards the 3rd Precinct Police Station, where it was believed the officers who killed

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[1]RuptlyTV. "LIVE: Protests over George Floyd's Death Continue in Minneapolis." *YouTube*, YouTube, 30 May 2020, m.youtube.com/watch?v=T1aHOqAUniY.

[2]Wagner, Jeff. "'It's Real Ugly': Protesters Clash With Minneapolis Police After George Floyd's Death." *FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul*, FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul, 7 May 2021, 11:32 pm, www.fox9.com/.

Floyd worked. During that time, a smaller group of the protestors started to vandalize buildings,

shatter windows, and spray-paint squad cars. Officers then showed up in riot gear and started to

fire tear gas and flash grenades. Protestors responded by hurling rocks, water bottles, and

whatever they could find towards the police officers. A local article written at the time called

"It's Real Ugly" by Jeff Wagner, published on May 26, 2020 at 11:32 p.m., ended by saying,

"The unruly crowd measured in the hundreds, a far cry from the peaceful group at the start of the

protest."[2] While the peaceful protest was larger in the afternoon, the smaller protest later on the

evening became more violent as the night went on.

This chant would spread like wildfire across the United States and even beyond. One

week later in central London, the chant "No justice, no peace, no racist police," could be heard in

solidarity with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests.[3] It is estimated that over 40 countries

around the world and every continent with the exception of Antarctica saw protests in support of

justice for the death of George Floyd.[4] To say that this movement had support would be an

understatement. People were not only outraged about another killing of a black man by the police

in the US, but they were also clamoring for change.

Even with this overwhelming global and domestic support, it seemed, at least in the

beginning, that nothing was going to change the system. After all, George Floyd was just another

name in a long list of people, particularly black men, who were killed by the police force. The

BLM movement itself was created in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's

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[3] Holden, Michael, et al. "'No Justice, No Peace': Thousands in London Protest the Death of Floyd." *The World from PRX*, 3 June 2020, 9:00 AM EDT, www.pri.org/stories/2020-06-03/no-justice-no-peace-thousands-london-protest-death-floyd.

[4] Smith, Savannah, et al. "Map: George Floyd Protests around the World." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 9 June 2020, 10:34 AM MDT, www.nbcnews.com/news/world/map-george-floyd-protests-countries-worldwide-n1228391.

murderer George Zimmerman.[5] It was created by three black women named Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. They wanted to create a "Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter."[5] This project now has more than 40 chapters globally and their members "organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes."[5] On their official website, they state that their "goal is to support the development of new Black leaders, as well as create a network where Black people feel empowered to determine our destinies in our communities."[5] They accomplish this through the creation of the Black Lives Matter Global Network that is both "adaptive and decentralized, with a set of guiding principles."[5]

Even with all this great activism work going on, police brutality still exists. However, the Floyd protests were unlike previous protests seen before. There were more protests that lasted for a longer period of time, with some protests lasting even till August of 2020.[6] They also got a lot of media and press coverage, and there was immense pressure from the public to do something. The protests reached a peak and scale that far few protests could ever dream to achieve in the US.

Additionally, all of this was happening under the backdrop of a global pandemic that was quickly taking the lives of millions with the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. People had been self-isolating in their houses for months at this time as the pandemic lockdowns started in the beginning of March 2020. Up until that point, people rarely left their houses except to go to necessary places like grocery stores or the hospital unless they were essential workers. Many

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[5]Black Lives Matter. "Herstory." *Black Lives Matter*, 7 Sept. 2019, blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/.

[6] McLaughlin, Eliott C. "How George Floyd's Death Ignited a Racial Reckoning That Shows No Signs of Slowing Down." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 9 Aug. 2020, www.cnn.com/2020/08/09/us/george-floyd-protests-different-why/index.html.

people were also unemployed or worked exclusively from home. People were on high-alert and so, in a way, this became the perfect storm. With nothing else to do but stay at home, people were glued to their technological devices and on edge, waiting for the next catastrophe to happen.

On May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a convenience store owner called 911 and told police that George Floyd was allegedly buying cigarettes with a counterfeit $20 bill.[7] Police arrived on the scene and arrested the 46-year-old black man. Floyd was detained by four officers: Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Keung, Tou Thao and Derek Chauvin.[6] Even though Floyd was handcuffed and lying down, police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck until he ultimately died. Floyd can be heard in a video crying out to his mom and repeating "I can't breathe."[6] Floyd was killed by this action, even as onlookers begged for the police to stop.

The following days sparked outrage as protests and riots spread like wildfire in response to this tragedy. Many found it unacceptable to remain at home, even during a viral pandemic, in the face of such a blatant and brutal abuse of power by law enforcement. The demands of the protestors varied from abolishing the police, defunding the police, and reforming the system. BLM released their #DefundThePolice statement on May 30, 2020 in response to the ensuing protests. [8] This statement called for "acknowledgement" and "accountability" of the police force in the US.[8] It said in bold, "**We call for an end to the systemic racism that allows this culture of corruption to go unchecked and our lives to be taken,"** and "**We call for a national defunding of police.**"[8] It also called for a "radical, sustainable solutions that affirm the

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[7]Hill, Evan, et al. "How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 1 June 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html.

[8]Black Lives Matter. "#DefundThePolice." *Black Lives Matter*, 31 May 2020, blacklivesmatter.com/defundthepolice/.

prosperity of Black lives" as "George Floyd's violent death was a breaking point."[8] The

nonprofit organization The Society Library also created a living document on June 2, 2020

entitled, "Collecting a List of Demands from the George Floyd Protests" that went into greater

detail the demands of protestors.[9] Now, this list was very extensive and varied from national to

local demands, but some of the more notable demands were the following:

> "charge all officers involved in the incident; convict Derek Chauvin with murder; help
>
> clean-up the impact of vandalism, looting, and destruction related to the protests;
>
> implement police reform (improved training, increased oversight, ban chokeholds and
>
> shooting at moving vehicles, stricter punishments, train police officers to use non-
>
> violence, zero-tolerance for racially-based policing, limit force etc.); establish non-police
>
> alternatives to 911; end racially-biased policing policies like Stop and Frisk and Brown
>
> Windows Policing; and along with many other demands."[9]

These demands could be seen on posters and heard in chants in all fifty states and the District of

Columbia by June 1, 2020.

　However, protests happen every year with only some change to show for it. For example,

the largest anti-war protests in world history were the protests against the Iraq war. Starting on

February 15, 2003, between 10 to 15 million people marched in over 600 cities across the world

with at least 500,000 people protesting in American cities.[10] However, the Iraq war continued on

for many years after and the US still has troops there today. Still, the protest could be considered

[9] Joyce, Jamie, and Society Library volunteer archival team. "List of Demands and Sentiments of the George Floyd Protests." *Collecting a List of Demands from the George Floyd Protests*, Medium, 6 Nov. 2020, societylibrary.medium.com/list-of-demands-and-sentiments-of-the-george-floyd-protests-3c2a8e6e6003

[10] Garfield, Leanna, and Zoë Ettinger. "14 Of the Biggest Marches and Protests in American History." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 1 June 2020, 4:00 pm, www.businessinsider.com/largest-marches-us-history-2017-1.

"successful" according to a Huffington Post article entitled "The Largest Protest Ever Was 15 Years Ago. The Iraq War Isn't Over. What Happened?" by Paul Blumenthal.[11] Blumenthal wrote this article while using data found by Indiana University Professor Fabio Rojas and University of Michigan political science Professor Michael Heaney and found that the protest was successful in knocking Republicans out of power but not in stopping the war. Part of this was because a huge catalyst of the movement getting so large was their core peace group activists and Democrats joining forces together to protest the war that they deemed President Bush's fault. However, once Obama was elected to office, the movement lost a large percentage of its Democratic support. However, Blumenthal goes on to write that "the protests surely had an effect on policy here in the United States, where the public has been far less interested in starting new wars since Iraq."[8] The movement's protest helped change the narrative that war should not have automatic support from the public. This is a "success" story in a way, even though the protest did not have the desired goal of ending US interventionism immediately or entirely.

Also, the Women's March in January of 2017 is considered one of the largest single-day demonstrations in US history, with up to 5.2 million participants, but its exact impact is still debatable.[9] This protest is criticized as having accomplished little more than solidarity and visibility. However, the University of California Press Blog uses L.A. Kauffman's book *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance* to find that "In just two years, the Women's Marches have inspired hundreds of women to run for office, millions more to vote, and dozens to win elected positions."[12] The article goes on to write about how 2018 was a year

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[11]Blumenthal, Paul. "The Largest Protest Ever Was 15 Years Ago. The Iraq War Isn't Over. What Happened?" *HuffPost*, HuffPost, 17 Mar. 2018, 07:24 pm ET, www.huffpost.com/entry/what-happened-to-the-antiwar-movement_n_5a860940e4b00bc49f424ecb.

[12] "The Women's Marches Have Changed Everything." *UC Press Blog*, 19 Jan. 2019, www.ucpress.edu/blog/41186/the-womens-marches-have-changed-everything

of an unprecedented number of electoral victories for women in midterm elections, and that for

the first time ever, more than 100 women have been sworn into the House of Representatives.

The Women's March was an important catalyst for political change and got many women

interested in running for office which can be considered a "success" of the movement.

It is hard to quantify the exact number of people who protest in the US each year and

there needs to be more research in this area of US politics. However, one of the more comparable

racial justice protests was the Rodney King riots in 1992 that happened after four Los Angeles

policemen were acquitted for beating up Rodney King. The incident was caught on camera and

after the trial, riots lasted for five days. The video was seen nationally, and people were outraged.

There ended up being over 50 riot related deaths, more than 2000 people were injured, 6,000

people were arrested, and 10 people were shot and killed by the police and the National Guard as

a result of these riots.[13] Rioters set fires, looted, and destroyed private property like liquor stores,

grocery stores, and retail restaurants. It would take ten years after Rodney King was savagely

beaten for real police reform to start as the riots led to the creation of the Christopher Report in

July of 1991, which was an immense police reform plan that did not really start getting

implemented until much later as the city did not want to finance it.[14] However, this is comparable

to the Floyd protests because it was the video that showcased police brutality that was a driving

catalyst of the protests. Not much reform happened immediately because of these riots, but it still

could be considered "successful" as substantial reform happened as soon as five years later from

[13]Sastry, Anjuli, and Karen Grigsby Bates. "When LA Erupted In Anger: A Look Back At The Rodney King Riots." *NPR*, NPR, 26 Apr. 2017, 1:21 PM ET, www.npr.org/2017/04/26/524744989/when-la-erupted-in-anger-a-look-back-at-the-rodney-king-riots.

[14]Wells, Rachel. "Lessons from the LA Riots: How a Consent Decree Helped a Troubled Police Department Change." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 1 May 2017, 7:17 PM EDT, , www.cnn.com/2017/04/28/us/lapd-change-since-la-riots.

when the initial report was made. In 1996, an inspector general was finally appointed that would review the operations of the LAPD's Internal Affairs Division which was one of the most important provisions of the report.[15] By 2001, more of the Christopher Report had been implemented which could be considered a "success." However, the reform was still minimal and there are still issues with police violence in LA to this day. The reform notably also only focused on the LAPD rather than national police reform. The Floyd protests were unique because they were not a singular event in one location, and they lasted much longer than five days and had much more police reform come after them compared to what happened in LA in 1991.

The BLM protests in the summer of 2020 were historic in both the number of people who participated and the long-lasting duration of the protests that occurred all across the country and the world. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey of 9,654 US adults from June 4-10, 2020 that found about 6% of US adults said that they had attended a protest or rally focused on issues relating to race or racial equality in the past month.[16] Statistically, this represents an extremely high participation rate from the general public. Not only that, but these protests ended up lasting much longer than the Rodney King riots. With so much participation in every state, I sought to determine whether there was any correlation between the conditions of the protests and state legislative results. Throughout this thesis, I will try to answer the following research question: *What conditions of a protest are associated with the passage of state legislation?*

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[15]Human Rights Watch. *Shielded from Justice: Los Angeles: Progress Since the Christopher Commission*, www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/police/uspo74.htm.

[16]Parker, Kim, et al. "Majorities Across Racial, Ethnic Groups Express Support for the Black Lives Matter Movement." *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*, Pew Research Center, 12 June 2020, www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/06/12/amid-protests-majorities-across-racial-and-ethnic-groups-express-support-for-the-black-lives-matter-movement/#most-americans-say-theyve-had-conversations-about-race-or-racial-equality-in-the-last-month.

Recent research by Erica Chenoweth, Vicky Osterweil, Zeynep Tufekci' and many others offers insights into this question about the link between protest and policy change. There are a lot of other factors that go into ideas becoming laws besides protests, but I wanted to see if any particular condition of the protests had an impact on whether or not police reform legislation was passed in each state. My case study is from May to August of 2020 as that is when the greatest number of protests related to Floyd's death occurred, and I also limited my case study to the 50 states and the District of Columbia because this is where a majority of the protests took place. My final variables that I compare with each other throughout this paper are the percentage of the state's population who protested, the tone of media coverage, the degree of violence at protests, the party that controlled the state legislature, and the party that won the state's presidential contest in 2020. By measuring these five variables, my case study will help shed some light on effective ways to protest in either liberal or conservative states, and it will try to answer just how exactly the US saw so much police reform occur after the George Floyd rallies.

I found that that there were 25 states that did not enact any type of police reform in 2020, even after the tremendous show of support from the general public. However, I did find that 25 states plus the District of Columbia did pass some type of police reform directly after the George Floyd protests, but the extent and effectiveness of these reforms varies considerably from state to state. I explore the relationship between liberal and conservative states in how the legislatures reacted to the protests by looking at the bills they either proposed or did not propose. Additionally, this study will look at why some states passed police reform while others did not. This information is valuable because it will help show organizers in the future what the most effective way to create policy change is by looking at tangible legislative responses to protesting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous academic work ranges from renown political scientists like Erica Chenoweth's *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*[17] to activists on the ground like Zeynep Tufekci's *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*.[18] Protests are an understudied field in political science and the few studies on them are often contentious with each other. Scholars disagree on how to have a successful protest as variables such as participation size, media coverage, violence and nonviolence, and the signaling effect of protests are all variables that scholars disagree with on their importance and efficacy to produce change. However, all the scholars that I mention agree that resiliency is an important factor in having a successful protest. Previous academic work also relies on metrics such as federal election outcomes or specific federal policies enacted to define "success." However, I define success by looking at the police reform policies enacted by state legislatures instead of the policies the federal government enacted. My thesis will strengthen existing academic work by looking directly at state-by-state legislative outcomes, which is an understudied field of study in the world of protest academic literature. By looking at previous academic sources and the various writings associated with them, I will set up the rest of my paper by exploring the conditions needed to have a "successful" protest.

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan study nonviolent and violent resistance in their book *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*.[19] They found that

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[17] Chenoweth, Erica. *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

[18] Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

[19] Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press, 2013.

nonviolent campaigns are more successful in their outcomes than violent campaigns.[20] This happens for a plethora of reasons, but the biggest reason is that more people can participate in nonviolent campaigns than violent campaigns. The success of a nonviolent campaign is determined by the number of people who participate as participation is the greatest factor in determining a favorable outcome. People can participate more in nonviolent campaigns than violent campaigns because of three reasons outlined by Chenoweth and Stephan. These three reasons are the following: the public usually sees nonviolent campaigns as more moral, there is more public information out in the open for them, and they are less physically taxing which means you have a broader range of people who can participate. When each of these reasons are more applicable to a nonviolent campaign, you will see more participation which will increase the chance of a favorable outcome, according to Chenoweth and Stephan.

Nonviolent campaigns are large and large campaigns are more likely to induce change. In a Ted Talk entitled "The Success of Nonviolent Civil Resistance,"[21] Chenoweth coined the term the "3.5% rule." This meant basically that no government could withstand a challenge of 3.5% of its population without either collapsing or accommodating the movement. This is an important number Chenoweth found because if more than 3.5% of the population protests, the existing political regime loses legitimacy, potentially costing political leaders their jobs or even possibly their lives. Politics is ever changing, and it is contingent on the fact that the people will accept

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[20] (Page 220) Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press, 2013.

[21] TEDxTalks, and Erica Chenoweth. "The Success of Nonviolent Civil Resistance: Erica Chenoweth at TEDxBoulder." *YouTube*, YouTube, 4 Nov. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJSehRlU34w.

the rule of those governing them. Protests disrupt the daily ebb and flow of the economy and stability of a country, and Chenoweth has found that if enough people protest, lawmakers have to listen as they fear the entire system collapsing in civil unrest.

While Kaufman agrees with Chenoweth that nonviolent protests have more support from the public, Kauffman also disagrees with Chenoweth's argument that participation matters in the book *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance*. [22]. Kauffman writes, "Short of bringing about regime change, size and impact don't necessarily correlate," as "small protests have often achieved more in the way of immediate results that big ones, and the lasting significance of the largest ones has not always been easy to see."[23] The example Kauffman brings into this discussion is the Iraq war protests of 2003 where millions marched globally and with a million marching in the US and still, Bush continued the Iraq war. In Zeynep Tufekci's *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Tufekci also disagrees with Chenoweth's participation theory as Tufekci argues that a large number of participants alone is not enough to create change because there are always also large numbers of people who are not protesting as well.

Unlike Chenoweth and Stephan, Osterweil explicitly advocated for violent resistance as a method for achieving policy change in the book *In Defense of Looting: A Riotous History of Uncivil Action.*[24] Osterweil goes into great detail how violence in the form of property damage has historical roots in black liberation as she writes, "the self-looting fugitive was the spark for the genesis of the earliest policing forces-the slave patrol- and enforcing federal fugitive slave

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[22] L.A. Kauffman. *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance*. University of California Press, 2019.

[23] (Page 101) L.A. Kauffman. *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance*. University of California Press, 2019.

[24] Osterweil, Vicky. *In Defense of Looting: a Riotous History of Uncivil Action*. Bold Type Books, 2020.

law was one of the earliest tasks of the American police forces."[25] Osterweil's thesis is that

violent tactics that can be used to overturn "white supremacy, anti-Blackness,

cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, empire, and property" must be defended and argued for.[26] This

would include tactics used by the protestors such as breaking curfew laws, property damage, and

any other tactic seen as "violent."

Daniel Q. Gillion's *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in*

Public Policy goes into detail about how minorities use protest to make politicians listen to their

concerns. [27] Gillion found that, "Protest actions that involve property damage, arrests, violence,

injury, and even death convey the ardor that citizens feel toward an issue."[28] By doing these

actions, protestors can actually make their movement more salient in getting what they want

because it alerts government officials the severity of the problem when other institutionalized

actions of political engagement like voting have failed. In that way, Gillion would agree with

Osterweil that violent resistance can actually be more successful as it gets the attention of the

government in a way peaceful protest does not.

The tone of the media coverage is also another important factor of protests to consider.

While black people have used these and other tactics to "loot" themselves from white

supremacy, popular media often paints them in a negative light as a way to delegitimize their

efforts.[29] Osterweil argues that the press has historically not always favored black civil resistance

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[25] (Page 86) Osterweil, Vicky. *In Defense of Looting: a Riotous History of Uncivil Action*. Bold Type Books, 2020
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[26] (Page 249) Osterweil, Vicky. *In Defense of Looting: a Riotous History of Uncivil Action*. Bold Type Books, 2020.

[27] Gillion, Daniel Q. *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[28] (Page 26) Gillion, Daniel Q. *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[29] (Page 9) Osterweil, Vicky. *In Defense of Looting: a Riotous History of Uncivil Action*. Bold Type Books, 2020.

and usually times paints them in an unfriendly narrative. Osterweil argues that there will always be negative media attention associated with black civil resistance and therefore, tactics like looting and property damage are justified because the media will discredit protestors actions regardless of how peaceful they are.

However, Tufekci warns against disruptive tactics as they risk the media focusing on sensationalized events like property damage instead of focusing on the larger messages of the movement.[30] These tactics also risk angering people if the disruption is perceived as counterproductive or needlessly violent and can overall have a lot of backlash associated to it. Tufekci argues that this negative backlash hurts the movement by discrediting their legitimacy and diminishes support from likely sympathetic supporters. Movements need these outside supporters, and without them, it is a lot harder pass the movement's agenda.

On the other hand, César Jiménez-Martínez's *Media and the Image of the Nation during Brazil's2013 Protests* found that the media's attention to violence is not necessarily damaging to the agenda of protestors and instead, argues how the sensationalism of mediated violence can be used to either help or hurt the protestors.[31] Violence surrounding the portrayal of protests in the media can reinforce the narrative that the authorities are justified in their actions, but it can also show that the protestors have legitimate concerns that questions the status quo.[32] This is a more nuanced approach than Tufekci gives; however, Jiménez- Martínez agrees with Tufekci that the

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[30] (Page 198) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

[31] Jiménez-Martínez, César. *Media and the Image of the Nation during Brazil's 2013 Protests by César Jiménez-Martínez.* 1st ed. 2020. ed., 2020.

[32] (Page 168) Jiménez-Martínez, César. *Media and the Image of the Nation during Brazil's 2013 Protests by César Jiménez-Martínez.* 1st ed. 2020. ed., 2020.

increase of violence in the media also means that larger messages of the movement are secondary to the sensationalized violence seen on screen.

Still, many other scholars such as Summer Harlow, Danielle K. Kilgo, Ramón Salaverría and Víctor García Perdomo have found in their article "Is the Whole World Watching? Building a Typology of Protest Coverage on Social Media from Around the World" that protests have an "asymmetrical relationship between the mainstream news media and protestors."[33] J. M. Chan and C. C. Lee called this the *protest paradigm* in their article "The Journalistic Paradigm on Civil Protests: A Case Study of Hong Kong."[34] The *protest paradigm* means that the media will usually only cover protests if they are violent, and the more violent the protest is covered, the more delegitimized it is. On the other hand, peaceful protests are often under covered or not covered at all by the media because they are not sensational enough.

This supports more of Osterweil's line of argumentation that if the media is already going to cover black civil resistance as violent, violent resistance is justified with tactics like lootings and rioting to ensure that coverage of the event takes place. Osterweil writes, "Nonviolence emerges to put a break on Black resistance, to discipline and silence people rising up, while providing cover for the intense violence of the state."[35] This is because even if the protests achieved peaceability, peaceful protests are covered less which ultimately limits their exposure and ultimate success, according to Chan and Lee. Under the *protest paradigm* framework,

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[33]Harlow, Summer, et al. "Is the Whole World Watching? Building a Typology of Protest Coverage on Social Media From Around the World." *Journalism Studies*, vol. 21, no. 11, 2020, pp. 1590–1608., doi:10.1080/1461670x.2020.1776144.

[34]Chan, J. M., and C. C. Lee. 1984. "The Journalistic Paradigm on Civil Protests: A Case Study of Hong Kong." In The News Media in National and International Conflict, edited by A. Arno, and W. Dissanayake, 183–202. Boulder, CO: Westview.

[35] (Page 248) Osterweil, Vicky. *In Defense of Looting: a Riotous History of Uncivil Action*. Bold Type Books, 2020.

protests are either so "peaceful" that no one hears about them, or they are so "violent" they risk being delegitimized in the eyes of everyone.

However, Tufekci does agree with Osterweil that black civil resistance has been left out from the positive narrative of mainstream media in the past. Tufekci states that the BLM movement has been able to compensate this lack of attention from mainstream media with their own social media as a way to organize and communicate.[36] This is because the BLM movement uses things like Twitter and the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter to get their narrative out to the public without the aid of mass media. Tufekci argues that the mass media will usually only provide protests with attention when there is a "confrontation or violence, or when conflict with the police is involved."[37] Tufekci brings into the conversation how the national media would not cover the Ferguson protests that started after Michael Brown's murder, even though there were acts of police brutality against protestors. Tufekci found that about "three million tweets related to #Ferguson were sent before TV stations started covering the events."[38]

Protests are also ever changing with the increase of technology as found by Aidan McGarry, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Olu Jenzen and Umut Korkut in *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture Communication.*[39] For example, it stated, "The mobile phone and the smartphone have played a vital part in protest and, to a large extent, new media platforms

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[36] (Page 206) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

[37] (Page 212) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

[38] (Page 208) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

[39] McGarry, Aidan, et al. *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020.

have replaced print media."[40] Social media with its capacity to document events and live-stream

protests allow local movements to become nationally and even internationally salient.[41] This can

be seen as the George Floyd video was watched over 1.4 billion time in the first 12 days of

unrest.[42] Effectively, his tragic death became "viral" which helped spark the outage seen around

the world. While my thesis examines how print media portrays the tone of protests as either

violent or peaceful, I did not account for how new media platforms like Twitter affected police

reform legislation in each state. This is a variable which should be studied further.

      Kauffman and Gillion also believe that the signaling effect of protests is very important.

However, Gillion argues that the signaling effect is more important to send to politicians while

Kauffman argues this signaling effect is more important to send to the masses. Gillion's

continuum of information theory states that, "the unique characteristics of minority political

protest provide valuable cues to political officials regarding concerns present in racial and ethnic

minority communities," and that, "these cues, in turn, engender greater information that afford

politicians opportunities to take confident action."[43] Gillion argues that political protests signal to

politicians which issues are important to the public, thusly, informing them of their policy-

making decisions. Gillion found that racial and ethnic minorities protest less than non-minorities

and this effectively places their issues on the backburner of politicians' minds. Protest paired

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[40] (Page 285) McGarry, Aidan, et al. *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020.

[41] (Page 209) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

[42] Blake, Sam. "Why the George Floyd Protests Feel Different - Lots and Lots of Mobile Video." *Why the George Floyd Protests Feel Different — Lots and Lots of Mobile Video*, Dot.LA, 12 June 2020, 03:48 PM, dot.la/george-floyd-video-2646171522.html.

[43] (Page 23) Gillion, Daniel Q. *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

with voting are the best way for minority concerns to renter the conversation, according to Gillion.

On the other hand, Kauffman argues that mass mobilization is not the most important factor for leveraging power, "but for building movements, solidifying the commitment of participants and helping movements gain the followers and recognition they need to create change in the longer term."[44] In that sense, protests are highly effective. Kauffman argues that while mass protests do send a signaling effect to legislators and policymakers, it also sends a more important signal to participants and sympathetic or interested observers. Kauffman argues that the most important work comes not from the demonstration itself, but its ability to galvanize support and the long-term impact is the action it inspires later on. Kauffman uses the example of a person, who after going to the protest, told their friends about the big march they went to and spreading that moment's message. Kauffman argues that this is one way in which societal and cultural change occur, not by sweeping legislation but through interpersonal communication.

What causes a "successful" protest? This is also a contentious question in the world of political science. Chenoweth further examines the causes of protest success in *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know.*[45] "The four features of a successful campaign," Chenoweth writes, are "large-scale participation, loyalty shifts, tactical innovation, and resilience in the face of repression."[46] Protests fail if they do not achieve these features, and one of the biggest reasons they fail is when they fail to have loyalty shifts. Loyalty shifts are when the protests push the opponents' key groups of supporters to defect and demand change. An example of this would

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[44] (Page 86) L.A. Kauffman. *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance*. University of California Press, 2019.

[45] Chenoweth, Erica. *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

[46] (Page 127) Chenoweth, Erica. *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

be conservatives defecting from their political ideology and exchanging their "All Lives Matter" flags for "Black Lives Matter" flags. Chenoweth concludes that many other methods besides protesting are more effective in producing change and protesting must be paired with other forms of resistance to be considered "successful."

Kauffman argues that protests are "successful" when the "character of the action, the vulnerability of the target, and the ability of the underlying movement to persist and build beyond a single mobilization," occur.[47] Kauffman agree with Chenoweth that loyalty shifts must occur, and that people must be resilient in the face of change. Kauffman, unlike Chenoweth, argues that it is less important how many people attend because as with the creation of the internet, it has become almost commonplace to mobilize large crowds. It is more important what they do or do not do afterwards according to Kauffman. Kauffman's example for this is the Women's March in 2017. While the Iraq war protests failed in a sense to do what they set out to accomplish, the Women's March was successful because those who marched were galvanized into action afterwards by doing things like donating money to progressive organizations and by making thousands of calls to elected representatives. They also went to politician's town hall meetings, registered people to vote, went to subsequent protests, canvassed for progressive candidates, and thousands decided to run for office across the political landscape. In this sense, Kauffman agrees with Chenoweth that resiliency must occur for a movement to be "successful."

Gillion also argues that protests are "successful" when they are backed from prominent organizations like the NAACP, drew a large number of protestors, persisted over a longer period of time, and "involved contentious behavior" that served to capture attention from the public and

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[47] (Page 102) L.A. Kauffman. *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance*. University of California Press, 2019.

politicians for their causes.[48] This sort of attention paired with protests that "overshadowed voices from the other side,"[49] force politicians to contend with their rhetoric and enact change. This is because politicians want to keep their jobs and mass protests pressure politicians to either acquiesce with their demands or find a new job. Gillion disagrees with Kauffman and says that protest size does matter, but Gillion agrees with Kauffman and Chenoweth that loyalty shifts are also an important factor.

Piven argues in *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America* [50] that after protests occur, few new reforms are initiated. However, Piven argues that protests "mobilize disruptive power"[51] and that this disruptive power is responsible for primary reform to the status quo. Piven argues that this is because when movements decline, there are few new reforms and the existing reforms won during the disruption are often rolled back. This is because Piven argues that the protest's movement stops because of an "exhaustion" and that the movement stops its momentum because the "protest subsides when the protesters 'win,' when they achieve some amelioration of their grievances."[52] In this sense, Kauffman, Chenoweth, Gillion, and Piven would all agree that resiliency is a key factor in a "successful" protest.

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[48] (Page 159) Gillion, Daniel Q. *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[49] (Page 159) Gillion, Daniel Q. *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[50] Frances Fax Piven. Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008. EBSCOhost, search-ebscohost-com.du.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=234587&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[51] (Page 20) Frances Fax Piven. Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008. EBSCOhost, search-ebscohost-com.du.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=234587&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[52] (Page 110) Frances Fax Piven. Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008. EBSCOhost, search-ebscohost-com.du.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=234587&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

However, Piven found that these "wins" are always less than what the movement initially wanted and coincide with "measures to reintegrate the movement or its leaders into normal politics," like when "civil rights activists were absorbed into local, state, and national electoral politics, whether as mayors, state legislators, congressional representatives, or as bureaucrats."[53] Piven would disagree with Kauffman in the sense of what a "successful" protest would be because Piven would not agree that running for office is a sign of a "successful" protest like Kauffman's example of women running for office after the Women's March. While Kauffman argues that this level of political integration actually shows a level of "success," Piven argues that this absorption of the leaders in the movement to normal politics actually curtails the movement and deenergizes the disruptors into complacency as the movement and its supporters are also reintegrated into normal politics. However, Kauffman does agree with Piven that there are many set-backs to protests and that victories are often fragile or incomplete as structures of existing power are entrenched and resilient, and that it might take many years to combat them.

Tufekci, on the other hand, is a little more optimistic then Piven as Tufekci argues that movements "can also force or nudge institutions to behave in ways aligned with its goals—convincing leaders or bureaucrats, threatening them with replacement, or even joining them and fighting for change from the inside."[54] Thusly, Tufekci and Kauffman disagree with Piven as both argue that a movement's leader, once elected to office, can still fight for change on the inside which is a sign of a "successful" movement. Tufekci argues further that "successful" protests occur when the "strength of social movements lie in their capacities: to set the narrative,

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[53] (Page 111) Frances Fax Piven. Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008. EBSCOhost, search-ebscohost-com.du.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=234587&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[54] (Page 197) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

to affect electoral or institutional changes, and to disrupt the status quo."[55] It is through these

three capacities (narrative capacity, disruptive capacity, and electoral and/or institutional

capacity) that a movement's collective ability should be evaluated.

The BLM protests fell under all three of Tufekci's categories as the protests were able to

spread its narrative worldwide, the long duration of protests disrupted daily life in affected cities,

and it pushed politicians to enact police reform both nationally and locally. My research does not

go Chenoweth's tactical innovation or Kauffman's vulnerability of the target as it is limited to

the conditions of the protest and not the organization that went into lobbying politicians or any

other method of resistance besides protests. I also did not measure loyalty shifts of reform-

resistant populations such as conservative citizens now advocating for police reform or police

unions supporting the BLM movement. These are all excellent areas of study that should be

looked into further.

My research does look into participation, the tone of the media coverage, state party

composition, and violence of the protests as variables. While these are variables that scholars

disagree with in their effect and importance to the "success" of protests, my paper will help to

clarify some of these contentions by finding which of these variables are statistically significant.

There is also a missing link in research between protests and their effect on state legislative

policies. Other research focuses on their effect on elections and specific outcomes like ending the

Iraq war. Other research shows protests having an effect that is less quantifiable like when

Kauffman says protests can "galvanize support" or when Gillion's says protests can "force

politicians to contend with their rhetoric." What does that mean or look like exactly? How can

that be quantified? My research will help fill in some of these gaps by quantifying "success" the

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[55] (Page 191) Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, Yale University Press, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

BLM protests had in the summer of 2020 by looking at police reform policies all across the

country and comparing that to the conditions of the protests in each state.

METHODS

Based on my review of the literature, I am examining the influence of protest size, media

coverage, protest violence, presidential party winner, and state partisanship on policy change. All

of these variables are compared to the state legislative response to determine which combination

of these variables best determine legislative outcomes.

For the dependent variable, I constructed a three-point scale of legislative action on

police reform. To do this, I compiled information from the National Conference of State

Legislatures' (NCSL) database "Legislative Responses for Policing- State Bill Tracking

Database," where I went to their archived bills of 2020.[56] I then manually searched every state

and took note of all the bills that were enacted that related to police reform. I recorded every bill

that was enacted starting after the BLM protests on May 28, 2020 all the way to the end of 2020.

I then recorded what type of bill was passed. Some bills included banning things like chokeholds

and others were creating task forces to look into how to reform the police. After looking up all

50 states and the District of Columbia and recording how many police reform bills were passed, I

then devised a system on how to rate the police reform bills. States could receive a score between

0-2 depending on how much police reform was introduced.

A state received a score of 0 if there was no reform whatsoever enacted or introduced.

This included states where bills had been introduced but were never signed into law. An example

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[56]Widgery, Amber. *Legislative Responses for Policing-State Bill Tracking Database*, www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/legislative-responses-for-policing.aspx.

of this is Kansas, where two police reform bills were introduced, but both bills failed, earning the state a score of 0. This also included states that didn't consider any police reform bills, such as South Dakota and Idaho. States that also had introduced bills in 2020 that were still pending before the year was over also received a 0 if no other bills were enacted. This is because the protests did not have a profound enough impact to make legislators vote on the bills directly after the protests, which means that the protest failed in a way because there was no direct action from legislators. Illinois is one of those states because while they had 20 police reform bills pending, none were enacted during the year 2020 as the protests did not have a large enough impact to call for immediate legislative action. States that fell under these two categories of either no police reform bills introduced, or no police reform bills enacted, received a score of 0. This means that no reform happened, and the efforts of protestors did not lead to any legislative response.

A state that received a score of 1 meant that that state had enacted some police reform bills, but they were not extensive. This refers to bills that were largely symbolic or fact-finding in nature, neither changing the actual day-to-day lives of police officers nor transforming the institution of policing in any substantial way. Rhode Island is an example of this, as their bill RI S 2867 Law Enforcement Task "Creates a special legislative study task force whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations on policies pertaining to the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights." This means that it failed to change the actual institution of policing, but it is still differentiated from a 0 because at least some reform of the status quo was done, even though it only modestly meets any of the actual demands of the protestors. Also, besides creating a task force, if a state only did a commemorative bill relating to the BLM protest, it also received a score of 1. Tennessee is an example of this as on June 8, 2020 they enacted TN HJR: 1212 which is a memorial bill that honors the memory of George Floyd. While this is a legislative

response, it gets a 1 because it was ineffective in creating any substantial change in the policing institution.

A state that received a score of 2 meant that there was a substantive legislative response that went well beyond commemorative bills or task forces, either changing the day-to-day lives of police officers or changing the institution of policing in a substantial way. Also, receiving a 2 meant that the bill was enacted and not pending. This is during the time frame of 2020 and does not account for bills that were passed in 2021. This means that the bill was signed into law between May and December of 2020. Even though the case study is the conditions of the protest between May through August, many of the bills were produced early in the protests but took the legislatures a little more time to consider and pass. This category of reform may include a range from just one substantial bill being passed to many bills being passed. For example, Connecticut's legislators only enacted one police reform bill on July 31, 2020 called CT H 6004, which requires police officers to have periodic behavioral health assessments, submit to urinary drug tests, and have new officers be certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council under section 7-294d within one year of appointment. The state that enacted the most bills was Virginia, which passed 16 bills relating to police reform. One such bill was Virginia's VA S 5014 that passed on August 7, 2020. This bill updated the minimum training standards for law-enforcement officers and made it a requirement for all law-enforcement officers to complete crisis intervention training. Both of these bills are used as an example to show how either the day-today life of a police officer is changed or how the institution itself was changed. Those are the minimum standards required to receive a scoring of a 2.

I compiled several different independent variables to explain change in police reform. One of these variables was protest size. Erica Chenoweth has compiled a database which collects

data on the amount of people who attend protests and the number of protests in the US. Chenoweth has databases for each month regarding the number of protestors who participated in the BLM protests.[57] I used the files *May 2020 Crowd Data, June 2020 Crowd Data, July 2020 Crowd Data,* and *August 2020 Crowd Data* and went under the "Antiracism" tab in each data set which had the complete number of people who protested each of those months. These databases have the approximate number of people who attended each BLM protest and categorizes them by "estimate low" and "estimate high." It also has the number of events that occurred. For my research, I used the peak months of May through August and added up each approximately how many people were at the protests in total for those four months. The "estimate low" and "estimate high" were very similar in numbers, so I added up the total number of people at those protests using the "estimate low" number for continuity. I then looked up the government census bureau documents to see how many people lived in each of those states. The census document, entitled *NST-EST 2019-1*, included the official census from April 1, 2010.[58] I used those numbers and recorded the number of people in each state. I then divided the total number of people who attended from May through August from the total number of people living in each state to find the approximate percentage of the population of people who protested at that time. This number is used in my thesis to determine the size of the protests by giving the percentage of the population in each state who protested.

Media coverage was also another important variable that I measured. My method for that was finding out the largest newspaper in each capital city that was publishing not just

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[57]May 2020 Crowd Data, et al. "View / Download the Data." *CCC*, sites.google.com/view/crowdcountingconsortium/view-download-the-data?authuser=0.

[58]Bureau, US Census. "State Population Totals: 2010-2019." *The United States Census Bureau*, 20 Apr. 2021, www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-total.html#par_textimage_1574439295.

electronically but in actual physical newspapers. I choose to use the largest newspaper from each capital city because that paper would be the most visible, local newspaper to legislators. I used the dataset Access World News to look up the newspapers that were posted from May 28, 2020 through June 4, 2020. I decided to just use the first week of news coverage because it set the tone for legislators on how the public was reacting to the protests. That was also my method because many of the bills I found that were either enacted or published at this time were first introduced in the first week or so of the start of the protests. The first protest was on May 28, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and within another day or two, every state had protests. Legislators were also quickly pushing bills at this time. Then, in Access World News, I recorded how many articles each newspaper published about the protests by looking up the key words "Black Lives Matter" and "George Floyd." I then recorded how many articles were published at this time to get the variable of total BLM articles published during the first week of protests. I also recorded the number of articles that mentioned either the word "peace" or "violence" or some form of those words like "violent" or "peaceful" in their headlines. This did not count if those were mentioned in the actual text of the article, I only counted the headlines with those words because headlines are the most visible and they set the tone for the rest of the article. This was also done to get a sense of the narrative the media was trying to portray of the protests at this time. I combed through each newspaper to make sure there were no duplicates or articles that were not relating to the BLM protests and just happened to pop up by mistake. After meticulously combing through each state capital's main newspaper, I recorded the number of articles and recorded their overall tone, either "peaceful" or "violent". I then divided the total number of violent articles by the total number of BLM articles to get the variable of "Violent Articles". I then divided the total number of peaceful articles by the total number of BLM articles to get the

variable of "Peaceful Articles". Those two variables are important because the media response is one factor contributing to the legislative response.[59]

I was also interested in the makeup of each state legislature. Again, I used NCSL as a tool to determine the partisan makeup of each state legislature, the governor's office, and the winning presidential party in each state.[60] For states that were completely controlled by the Democrats -- a Democratic House and Senate, as well as a Democratic governor -- I recorded that as a 1. For example, Colorado's State House and State Senate are controlled by the Democrats and there is a Democratic governor, so Colorado received a score of 1. The District of Columbia also has a different government set-up with just a city council which is controlled by the Democrats and a Democratic mayor, so they also received a score of 1. I recorded states as a 2 if there was not a partisan trifecta going on. This means that one party controlled at least the governorship or one chamber of the statehouse and another party controlled another. Kansas is an example of this as both the State Senate and State House are controlled by the Republicans, but they have a Democratic governor which earns them a score of 2. I also recorded states that were completely controlled by the Republicans as a 3. Nebraska was coded as a 3 because even though it has a unicameral and nonpartisan legislature, both the governorship and a majority of state legislators are registered Republicans. Another example of this is Ohio, as Republicans control both the state house and state senate as well as the governorship. Overall, there were 16 governments that were Democratically-controlled, 13 governments that were split-controlled, and 22 governments that were Republican-controlled.

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[59] Also, on the dataset Access World News, it did not contain the capitol's major newspapers for Iowa (Republican-Controlled Government), Alabama (Republican-Controlled Government), and Vermont (Split-Controlled Government) which limited the number of variables for my regression of those variables.

[60] I used their document entitled "2020 State & Legislative Partisan Composition" found here: https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/Elections/Legis_Control_2020_April%201.pdf

I also wanted to see the voter makeup of each state. This variable I obtained by seeing what percentage of voters voted for Biden and what percentage of voters voted for Trump. I obtained this information from *The Cook Political Report.*[61] I downloaded the data file "Popular Vote Backend" which had what percentage of the vote share either Trump or Biden got in each state. I then matched each of those states up with their legislative response number and found if there was any statistical significance of the voter makeup to passing a legislative response.

Lastly, I wanted to code violence as one of my variables. At the time of this paper, there was no research done on the total amount of property damage done in each state because the police had not released property damage in full in each state. So, I wanted to see how many people died as a result of the BLM protests. I used the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) to see how many deaths occurred because of the protests.[62] ACLED is a "disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project" that "collects the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of reported political violence" around the world. I downloaded their data file entitled "United States of America" (March 26, 2021) which contained all types of deaths associated with political violence in the US. I limited my research into deaths that occurred from May through August of 2020 that were associated with the BLM protests. The deaths I recorded range from police deaths, protestor deaths, counter protestor deaths, and bystander deaths. I then used the total number killed during this time to measure my violence variable. There were 23 people killed in total in the BLM protests in 13 unique states.

[61] Andrews, Sophie, et al. "2020 Popular Vote Tracker." *The Cook Political Report*, 2020, cookpolitical.com/2020-national-popular-vote-tracker.

[62] ACLED. "US Crisis Monitor." *US CRISIS MONITOR*, 23 Feb. 2021, acleddata.com/special-projects/us-crisis-monitor/.

FINDINGS

I used the variables described in the previous section to predict the legislative response score (0,1, or 2) in a series of regression equations using the statistical program R. I found that out of all my variables, one of the strongest predictors of state legislative police reform was the composition of the state legislature's political party. For example, most Democratic-controlled governments had a reform score of 2 while most Republican-controlled governments had a reform score of 0. Mixed state legislatures also saw mixed results as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Breakdown of Policy Reform Scores by State Legislature's Political Party

	Policy Reform Score		
	0	1	2
Democratic-Controlled Governments	3	1	12
Split-Controlled Governments	6	3	4
Republican-Controlled Governments	16	3	3

Fifteen states plus the District of Columbia had Democratic-controlled state governments. Out of those 16 places, 12 had a reform score of 2. This meant that almost all of the Democratic-controlled governments saw some police reform passed - by far the biggest variable linking them together. Only three of the Democratic-controlled governments received a reform score of 0 which were Maine, Washington, and Illinois, and only one Democratic-controlled governments received a score of 1 which was Rhode Island. The legislative demands of the BLM protests

were liberal in nature, so it makes sense that places with liberal legislations set up would be more willing to acquiesce to their demands.

Interestingly, out of the three Democratic-controlled states that had zero reform, two of those states, Maine and Washington, saw no police reform even introduced at all. Illinois, on the other hand, saw 20 bills introduced, but it received a score of 0 because none of them were enacted. This also might be due to the fact that Illinois's legislative session ends on May 31 and the protests in that city started in the end of May and carried throughout the summer. However, unlike other states that went into a special legislative session like Colorado, Illinois did not go into a special legislative session and instead, we see that they introduced police reform bills at this time but did not enact any.

The only state with a complete Democratic-controlled government to receive a score of 1 was Rhode Island. This is an interesting case because the only bill they enacted was Senate Bill 2867, which was for "creating a special legislative task force to review and provide recommendations on policies pertaining to the Rhode Island Law enforcement officer's bill of rights," which was enacted on June 18, 2020.[63] This is arguably still some change, so overall, Democratic controlled legislations a majority of the time passed police reform bills after the BLM protests.

Of the 13 state governments with split party control, six had 0 reform points, three had 1 reform point, and four had 2 reform points. Also, Minnesota, the state in which Floyd's death occurred and the protests began, had 2 reform points. However, there is still a slight trend that split governments enacted fewer reforms than Democratic-controlled governments did.

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[63]Metts, Senator, et al. "Bill Resource." *2020 -- S 2867*, 12 June 2020, custom.statenet.com/public/resources.cgi?id=ID%3Abill%3ARI2019000S2867&ciq=ncsl&client_md=e7bd8c1099e 78d7878e3135fdef40f05&mode=current_text.

There are 22 states with Republican-controlled governments. Out of those 22 states, only three states had a reform score of 2, three states had a reform score of 1, and the remaining sixteen states had a reform score of 0. This means that most of the Republican-controlled governments had no police reform occur. It is interesting to note that the three states that received a score of 2 were Iowa, Nebraska, and Utah and the three states that received a score of 1 were Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia. The remaining 16 states received a reform score of 0 which suggests that most Republican-controlled governments would not enact police reform legislation, regardless of the conditions of the protests.

The rest of my findings are about how the other variables made an impact on police reform legislation by comparing the variables in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Regression Table of the Protest Variables

	Across All State Governments	Democratic-Controlled Governments	Split-Controlled Governments	Republican-Controlled Governments
Intercept	-0.956* (0.562)	-2.018 (2.098)	-0.778 (1.655)	-0.382 (1.019)
Percentage of the Population	0.01 (0.151)	-0.405 (0.242)	0.995 (0.877)	1.222 (0.805)
Violence	-0.018 (0.133)	-0.346* (0.164)	0.248 (0.311)	0.033 (0.292)
Peaceful Media	0.389 (0.724)	-0.962 (0.84)	2.826 (2.376)	-1.457 (1.802)
Violence Media	2.435* (1.217)	1.21 (1.549)	-1.016 (3.291)	4.382** (1.981)
Biden Voter Percentage	0.033** (0.013)	0.075* (0.041)	0.008 (0.032)	0.001 (0.023)
Adjusted R-Squared	0.227	0.212	-0.067	0.09
Number of Cases	51	16	13	22

Note: Dependent variable is policy change in state legislature. Cell entries are regression coefficients. Standard errors appear in parentheses. Asterisks indicate statistical significance: **$p \leq .05$, *$p \leq 0.1$

Table 3: Standardized Coefficients of Protest Variables

	Across All State Governments	Democratic-Controlled Governments	Split-Controlled Governments	Republican-Controlled Governments
Intercept	0.000*	0.000	0.000	0.000
Percentage of the Population	0.012	-0.83	0.406	0.35
Violence	-0.018	-0.508*	0.258	0.027
Peaceful Media	0.074	-0.313	0.462	-0.188
Violence Media	0.270*	0.191	-0.129	0.494**
Biden Voter Percentage	0.436**	0.86*	0.09	0.013

Note: Dependent variable is policy change in state legislature. Cell entries are the standardized coefficients. Asterisks indicate statistical significance: **$p \le .05$, *$p \le 0.1$

Democratic-Controlled Governments

For a Democratic-controlled government, there were two factors of statistical significance which can be found in Table 2. Those factors were the variables "Violence" and "Biden Voter Percentages." Both of these variables were of modest statistical significance as their p value was less than 0.1 but greater than 0.05.

The violence variable had a negative coefficient of -0.35 which means that for every additional three deaths at a BLM rally; the state's reform drops by a point. This is important to note because this is a trend not seen in split-controlled governments or Republican-controlled governments. Only in Democratically-controlled governments the presence of more violence hurts the chances of protest success in police reform legislation. There were 23 deaths total. In

Democratic-controlled governments there were five different states that had protest-related

deaths, with Nevada having 1, Oregon having 1, Illinois having 3, Washington having 3, and

California having 3, totaling 11 protest-related deaths in Democratic-controlled state

governments. In split-controlled governments, there were four different states that had protested-

related deaths with Pennsylvania having 1, Kentucky having 2, Wisconsin having 2, and

Minnesota having 2, totaling 7 protest-related deaths. In Republican-controlled governments,

there were four different states that that had protested-related deaths, with Indiana having 1,

Texas having 1, Nebraska having 1, and Missouri having 2, totaling 5 protested-related deaths.

There were more deaths in Democratic-controlled governments which could explain why the

"Violence" variable was statistically significant there and not in the other columns. Democratic-

controlled governments also only had 16 cases while Republican-controlled governments had 22

cases, making it so those deaths in Democratic-controlled governments had more impact because

there was a smaller sample size to compare to.

The other partially significant variable was "Biden Voter Percentage" variable. This

variable had a positive coefficient of 0.075, which means that the more people who voted for

Biden in Democratic controlled states, the more likely that there would be a favorable reform

outcome. Even within Democratic states, it was the more liberal states that were more likely to

enact reform.

It is also interesting to note the other variables that did not have statistical significance on

reform in Democratic-controlled governments. One such variable is the number of people who

protested. While reform at this scale would have been unlikely to have happened at the rate it did

without the numerous protests and amounts of people who attended, it did not have a huge

impact on policy reform in Democratic-controlled governments.[64] This suggests that there could have been significantly more or less people at these protests in Democratic-controlled governments and it would not have really made an impact on if the legislators were going to listen to their requests.

The other variable that did not seem to have statistical significance on reform was local newspaper coverage tone. For example, neither did the total number of articles with "peace" in their headline nor the total number of articles with "violence" in their headline have any statistical significance in generating a legislative response. Another reason for this apparent lack of correlation could be because national headlines were saturating the news-cycle at this time and if a Democratic-controlled government were already leaning liberal, then it might be unlikely that local news coverage sways legislative response as much as other factors. Also, this was far from the only news source in each state, and a more holistic approach might be to capture other state newspapers as well as TV news programs

However, looking to the standardized coefficient table, we can compare which variables had the largest overall impact on the dependent variable. When looking to Table 3, we see that "Biden Voter Percentages" had the largest standardized coefficient of 0.86, which means that out of all the variables, that had the largest impact on reform in Democratic-controlled states. The next largest variable was "Percentage of the Population," which had a standardized coefficient of -0.83. This is a very large coefficient, and it is curiously negative. However, given its lack of statistical significance, it is difficult to say that it had any real effect on policy reform.

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[64] This conclusion is found because most of the police reform that was introduced/based occurred after the BLM protests or there was reform that was basically dead in legislation and was "resurrected" after the protested started as seen by NCSL's database.

Comparing the rest of the variables, the only other one that stood out in Table 3 was the "Violence" variable. It had a standardized coefficient of -0.508 which means that it was less predictive of legislative outcome compared to the variables "Biden Voter Percentage" and "Percentage of the Population." However, it was more predictive of reform outcome than the variables "Peaceful Media" and "Violence Media." This suggests that the overall tone of the media coverage was not really indicative of legislative outcome as compared to the other variables and that violence was indicative of legislative outcomes, but not as much as votes for Biden was in Democratic controlled legislatures.

Split-Controlled Governments

As seen in Table 2, there are no variables with statistically significant coefficients. This suggests that for split-controlled governments, there may be explanatory variables that I did not account for in my research. The relatively small number of cases here makes it difficult to identify statistically significant effects. It also necessitates that states be looked at by a case-to-case basis.

For example, Vermont had the highest protest turnout at 2.79% of the population, while Louisiana had the lowest amount of turnout at 0.29% of the population. However, Vermont received a reform score of 2 while Louisiana received a score of 1. The state with the lowest turnout, receiving a policy score of zero, was Kansas, which had 0.34% of the population that protested. It is intuitive to think that the more people who show up to protest must mean that there is more likely a chance of a favorable legislative outcome; however, this data shows that that is not always necessarily the case and there may be many other factors impacting legislative outcomes than protest size.

Violence was also inconclusive in determining legislative outcomes, as there were 7 total deaths split between four states. For example, Kentucky had two protest related deaths with a reform score of 0. On the other hand, Minnesota had two protest related deaths with a reform score of 2 and Pennsylvania who had one death had a reform score of 2 as well. Also, Wisconsin had one protest related death and had a reform score of 1. All of the other states with split-controlled governments had no protest related deaths. This suggests that the level of violence shown at protests also was not a marginally important factor in determining legislative outcomes in split-controlled governments.

Lastly, the tone of media coverage had no statistical significance either in determining legislative outcomes in split-controlled governments. Out of the 12 states whose media coverage I could examine here, only 5 states had articles that mentioned "peace" in their headline articles and only 3 states that mentioned "violence" somewhere in their headlines. Massachusetts, which received a score of 0, mentioned the word "violence" in one article's headline and the word "peace" in zero article's headline. North Carolina, who received a score of 0, mentioned both "peace" and "violence" each one time in their article's headlines. Louisiana and Michigan, who both received a score of 1, mentioned "peace" in one article's headline once while having not mentioned the word "violence" anywhere in their article's headlines. Wisconsin, who received a score of 1, mentioned "peace" in three article's headlines and did not mention the word "violence" in any article's headline. Pennsylvania, who received a score of 2, mentioned "peace" and "violence" in three article's headlines. The other six states had no mention of the word "peace" or "violence" in their headlines. Four of those states, which were Kansas, Maryland, Montana, and Kentucky, received a score of 0. Two of those states, which were New Hampshire and Minnesota, received a score of 2. While not a statistically significant variable, there is a

slight trend that the more the word "peace" is mentioned in an article's headline, the more likely the state had at a reform score of a 1 or 2 as North Carolina was the only state to have a newspaper article mention the word "peace" and still receive a score of 0. The other states either did not mention the word "peace" in any article or they did and received a score of 1 (Louisiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin) or a 2 (Pennsylvania). Also, out of the 3 total states in split-controlled governments that received a reform score of 1, which were Louisiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, none of these states had newspapers that mentioned the word "violence" in any of their article's headlines, but all three mentioned the word "peace" in their article's headlines at least once. The word "violence" only appears in states that received a reform score of 0 (Michigan and North Carolina) or 2 (Pennsylvania).

Republican-Controlled Governments

The only variable that had any statistical significance was the "Violence Media" variable, which was significant at the $p \leq .05$ level. Interestingly, it was media coverage of the violence, rather than the presence of violence itself, that seemed to have an important effect on policy change. Media violence had a positive coefficient of 4.382, which suggests that for every one-point increase in the violence variable, reform would increase by 4 points. The media violence variable is the percentage of the BLM protest stories that include the word "violence" in their headlines. This is huge because reform was calculated on a 0,1,2 scale which suggests that there would be an increase in reform when Republican-controlled governments had violent news articles written about the protests. Also, the "Peaceful Media" variable was not statistically significant which suggests that those newspaper articles did not have as much of an impact as the violent newspaper articles did.

Looking at media tone on a broader scale overall, in Democratic-controlled governments there were 17 total "peaceful" media articles and 12 "violent" media articles out of 304 total articles. This means that 5.59% of all articles in Democratic-controlled governments mentioned some configuration of the word "peace" in their headlines while 4.61% all articles mentioned some configuration of the word "violent" in their headlines. In split-controlled governments there were 9 total "peaceful" media articles and 5 total "violent" media articles out of 76 total articles. This means that 11.84% all articles in split-controlled governments mentioned some configuration of the word "peace" in their headlines while only 6.58% all articles mentioned some configuration of the word "violent" in their headlines. Lastly, in Republican-controlled governments there were 14 total "peaceful" media articles and 11 total "violent" media articles out of 158 total articles. This means that 8.86% all articles in split-controlled governments mentioned some configuration of the word "peace" in their headlines while only 6.96% all articles mentioned some configuration of the word "violent" in their headlines. For overall media tone, split-controlled governments mentioned "peace" in their headlines 6.25% more than Democratic-controlled governments did and 2.98% more than Republican-controlled governments did. On the other hand, Republican-controlled governments mentioned "violence" in their headline 2.35% more than Democratic-controlled governments did and only 0.38% more than split-controlled governments did. This means that the word "violence" was mentioned as a percentage of the total BLM news article headlines more consistently than the word "peace" was throughout all state governments. Additionally, out of the 538 news articles written, "peace" made up 37 articles at 6.88% of total articles written while "violence" made up 5.58% of total articles written. This suggests that all across the country, local capital newspapers were covering the protests as more "peaceful" than "violent" on average, but by only by 1.3% more of the time.

While the "Violence Media" variable was statistically significant, it is interesting to note the 21 states that had more or less "violence" observable in their media tone. For example, there were four states (Alabama, South Dakota, Texas, and West Virginia) that mentioned "violence" in their headline at least once that received a reform score of 0 and ten other states that had no mention of "violence" in their headlines which also received a score of 0. There were two states (Arizona and Georgia) that received a reform score of 1 that mentioned "violence" in at least one of their headlines and only one other state (Tennessee) which had no mention of "violence" in their headline that also received a score of 1. Lastly, there were two states that received a reform score of 2 that mentioned "violence" in at least one of their headlines. Those states were Nebraska and Utah. While the "Violence Media" variable is still statistically significant, it is interesting to note that every Republican-controlled government that received a score of a 1 or 2 had at least some mention of "violence" in their headlines, except for Tennessee.

It is also interesting to note the other variables that failed to reach statistical significance. For example, the "Percentage of the Population" variable seemed not to matter, which suggests that there could have been more or fewer people protesting, and it would not have made much of a difference. However, this variable is only statistically significant across the "Across All State Legislatures" column which suggests there may be important effects that are just failing to achieve statistical significance in the smaller subgroups.

The "Biden Voter Share" variable also was not statistically significant. Again, this might have to do with the fact that the "Republican-Controlled Governments" column was not big enough of a sample size to see its effect. It also suggests that even if some states voted more so for Biden marginally, having a conservative legislature overrode votes for Biden. Only overall

and in the "Democratic-Controlled Governments" column did we see the "Biden Voter Share" variable have any statistical significance.

Also, in Table 3 we can see that the "Violence Media" variable had a standardized coefficient of 0.494. This is much larger than the standardized coefficient for the "Violence Media" variable in other governments. For example, the standardized coefficient for the "Violence Variable" in the "Across All State Governments" column is 0.27 and it is not statistically significant which suggests that it is not statistically significant across all different kinds of governments. Additionally, the "Violence Media" variable had a standardized coefficient of 0.191 in the "Democratic-Controlled Governments" column and it had a standardized coefficient of 0.129 in the "Split-Control Governments" column. This suggests that the "Violence Media" variable had the biggest impact on police reform in Republican-controlled governments while it did not really matter in split-controlled governments or Democratic-controlled governments. Also, the "Violence Media" variable in Republican-controlled governments also had the largest standardized coefficient as compared to the other variables in that column. This suggests that the "Violence Media" variable was the largest indicator of favorable police reform for Republican-controlled governments.

The two most statistically significant variables that had $p \leq .05$ were the "Biden Voter Percentage" variable in the "Across All States Government" column and the "Violence Media" variable in the "Republican-Controlled Governments" column. Out of those two variables, "Violence Media" had a larger standardized coefficient of 0.494 while "Biden Voter Percentage" had a slightly smaller standardized coefficient of 0.436. This suggests that the most impactful variable on police reform in my whole dataset was the "Violence Media" variable in the "Republican-Controlled Governments" column. This data shows that the best way to have your

protest matter in achieving favorable legislative outcomes is to have the media portray your protest as violent in Republican-controlled governments. No other variable mattered as much or was as statistically significant.

The statistically significant variables where $p \leq 0.1$ were the "Violence Media" Variable in the "Across All State Governments" column, the "Violence" variable in the "Democratic-Controlled Governments" column, and the "Biden Voter Percentage" variable in the "Democratic-Controlled Governments" column. Out of those variables, the largest standardized coefficient was 0.86 in the "Biden Voter Share" variable found in the "Democratic-Controlled Governments" column. This suggests that out of all standardized coefficients that were statistically significant when $p \leq 0.1$ and $p \geq .05$, the largest impact on legislative reform was the increase of vote share to Biden in Democratic-controlled governments. The more people who voted for Biden in liberal states, the more likely police reform would happen after the protests. Also, the standardized coefficient of the "Violence" variable in the "Democratic-Controlled Governments" column was only -0.508. This suggests that the more people killed in Democratic-controlled governments did have a negative impact on police reform; however, by comparing the standardized coefficients of these two variables, the impact was lesser than the "Biden Voter Percentage" variable.

DISCUSSION

I have come to the conclusion that the BLM protests did have an effect on police reforms in state legislatures. 25 states and the District of Columbia passed at least some type of legislative reform after the protests while 25 states did not. Half the country at least having some type of reform suggests that these protests were at least partially successful.

However, these results are not necessarily indicative of what will happen in future protests. No variables held statistical significance across all four columns, suggesting that the results here are somewhat unstable and cannot be expected to work in all other protest environments. It may be that there are other important variables that I am not accounting for, or that each state is truly idiosyncratic in its approach to protesting. For example, whether a state government was under Democratic or Republican control was usually the best indicator that the protest was going to be "successful"; protests are far more likely to translate into policy change in Democratic-controlled states. It is also hard to say whether or not that reform would have happened if the protests had taken place or if organic changes in the status quo were leading up to reform.

Also, part of the reason why these protests were able to last so long was because BLM had the infrastructure to organize and sustain efforts. Also, these protests happened during the COVID-19 pandemic where many people were either unemployed or stuck at home, and thusly, had time open to protest. Kauffman explains how new leadership emerged from the Ferguson street protests, and these activists eventually joined forces with long-standing local groups and the nationwide Black Lives Matter network.[65] It was with their combined forces that helped to build a long-lasting movement for police accountability. The Black Lives Matter movement had the bandwidth to sustain movements like they did in Ferguson, which may be one reason they were able to sustain the Floyd protests for such a long time. Other movements need to build infrastructure that expands beyond local municipalities to be able to have an effect on the national stage.

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[65] (Page 100) L.A. Kauffman. *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance*. University of California Press, 2019.

Police reform had been introduced in the past in many states; however, that did not mean that it was enacted. Some legislation was "dead" meaning that it was sitting in the inactive files, sometimes for months or even years. However, after the protest occurred, these "dead" legislation was revived and brought back into the active docket. Also, a whole bunch of new bills were introduced after the start of the protests. In my analysis, any police reform bill that was enacted after the start of the protests in May 2020 counted as the state passing police reform. This included bills that were introduced. before or after May of 2020. I then stopped counting bills that were enacted starting on January 1, 2021. For example, on September 30, 2020, California enacted 2019 CA A 846 which was a bill that required the following:

> "Requires the evaluation of peace officers by a physician and surgeon, or psychologist, to include bias against race or ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Requires every department or agency that employs peace officers to review the job descriptions used in the recruitment and hiring of those peace officers and to make changes that deemphasize the paramilitary aspects of the job and place more emphasis on community interaction and collaborative problem solving."[66]

However, this bill was first introduced on February 20, 2019 and was placed on the inactive senate file on September 12, 2019. It seemed like it would stay there permanently. That was until after a little more than one month of protesting as on June 24, 2020, it was moved from the inactive senate file into the second reading on the senate floor. It was then signed into law by the governor about three months later. Without the protests occurring, it is very likely that this bill and many others would have stayed inactive indefinitely. This leads me to conclude that the

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[66]Widgery, Amber. *Legislative Responses for Policing-State Bill Tracking Database*, www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/legislative-responses-for-policing.aspx.

protests expedited the process of police reform in each state. Many state legislators used the

protests as a catalyst in passing their agenda, which neatly comports with Kauffman's argument

that protests function to gather power, not wield it. I am inclined to believe that the scale in

which reform happened would not be the same if the protests never took place.

Looking back to the literature, Chenoweth says that the more people who participate in

protests, the more likely reform will happen. I did not find this result in my analysis. This could

be for a few reasons. Chenoweth writes about how a protest needs to get to at least 3.5% of the

population to protest in order to force results on the protests. This did not happen in any of the

states except DC, which had 6.94% of its population protest, although some of those people

could have been from neighboring states. While DC did have a reform score of 2, this is only

anecdotal evidence to support Chenoweth's claim. Because none of the states hit the 3.5% rule,

this could be why protest participation had no statistical significance. It also leads me to believe

Kauffman's claim that participation does not matter as much, but it does matter what the people

do when they go home from the protest. I did not measure how many phone calls to state

representatives occurred or the impact lobbyist groups had in passing legislation which are

important variables to consider in the future.

Looking to the influence of the media, some conservative popular media voices at this

time condemned the rioters and looters as "thugs" and "thieves," scaring parts of white

America.[67] Conservative media also warned that the rioters and looters would be making their

way into white suburbia, which was propagated by tweets from a fake Antifa Twitter account

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[67]Frank, Joshua. "It's a Class War Now Too." *CounterPunch.org*, 1 June 2020,
www.counterpunch.org/2020/06/01/its-a-class-war-now-too/.

that was actually created by the white nationalist group Identity Evropa.[68] There were also false rumors that Antifa organized bus rides to take protestors into white neighborhoods to loot homes and riot. These were scare tactics used by the right to persuade people that the BLM protests were dangerous and not legistimate. However, as seen by my data, conservative states that had violent media coverage actually got more police reform legislation passed compared to conservative states that had less violent media coverage. So, these scare tactics used by the right might have actually helped the BLM movement gain some traction.

It is worth asking here whether the dependent variable I have used is the best way to examine the "success" of a protest. While policy reform was one of the goals of the protest, it was not its entire purpose. For example, the protests also focused on getting justice for George Floyd in terms of convictions of the officers who killed him. This recently happened as Derek Chauvin was found guilty on all three accounts: second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter on April 20, 2021.[69] While this is not police reform, it is still a change in our justice system. Police officers are very rarely held legally accountable for wrongful deaths of unarmed civilians.[70] According to experts, this is because of several factors including laws that protect an officer's right to use of force, powerful police unions, stacked juries, and other factors. Because Chauvin was convicted of murder charges, this

[68]Zadrozny, Brandy, and Ben Collins. "Antifa Rumors Spread on Local Social Media with No Evidence." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 2 June 2020, www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/antifa-rumors-spread-local-social-media-no-evidence-n1222486.

[69]Levenson, Eric, and Aaron Cooper. "Derek Chauvin Found Guilty of All Three Charges for Killing George Floyd." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 21 Apr. 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/04/20/us/derek-chauvin-trial-george-floyd-deliberations/index.html.

[70]Krishnakumar, Priya, et al. "Why It's Rare for Police Officers to Be Convicted of Murder." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 21 Apr. 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/04/20/us/police-convicted-murder-rare-chauvin/index.html.

leads me to speculate that the protest had at least some impact because Chauvin wasn't even originally arrested until the protests were well underway.[71]

Additionally, protests provide people with other, intangible things outside of legislative reform. Osterweil found that protests are not just for reform but are also tools for black liberation against white supremacy in the United States. Protests are communal activities that use community participation to achieve a goal. Things like solidarity and grassroots initiatives are important to improving the realities of racism that plague the US. However, I did not try to quantify how these protests made people feel or how they impacted individual grassroot activism as I looked at the larger scale of legislative reform. If Kauffman's research is any indicator, I am sure these protests will have a long-term effect of creating new activists, inspiring others to run for office, and increasing donations to the BLM organization and other progressive causes.

The BLM protests are a phenomenon of history that will probably have research and more data come out in the following years and academic protest literature in general should be expanded. For example, looking at case studies of just specific states' protests would provide more depth into why and how these protests were successful. This thesis lacks taking into consideration how these protests affected legislation on a city level and a national level. It also does not consider how these protests affected police reform in other countries which would be interesting to learn more about. This thesis also lacks calculating how the protests affect things

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[71]Miller, Ryan W., et al. "Former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin Arrested, Charged with Murder in George Floyd's Death: Updates." *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 29 May 2020, 5:59 am ET, www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/05/29/minneapolis-death-george-floyd-protests-escalate-police-precinct-fire/5279830002/.

like racism and police violence. Obviously, these still exist as seen by recent tragedies like the Duante Wright shooting.[72]

Additionally, it would be interesting to do more research into what happened with the areas that had statistical significance. For example, my data suggests that the more violent the media tone was in a Republican-controlled legislature, the more favorable the outcome in police reform. Additionally, more research could be done by examining more news sources in those states besides just the most read local newspaper in the capital state. This would broaden the scope into the impact the media has in protest outcomes in conservative states.

Also, I did not account for the social media and digital activism impact on reform in my research. Digital activism can include things such as "email and social-media campaigning, virtual sit-ins, 'hacktivism'… etc."[73] I am not exactly sure how to measure this, but it would be an interesting case-study in the future. Also, with technology changing every year, this suggests that the way protests operate will change. For example, there was no Instagram or Facebook during the Rodney King riots in the 90's. On the flip side, the BLM protests did not just happen in the streets, there was also an aggressive digital campaign that pursued in tandem. For example, #BlackOutTuesday occurred on June 2, 2020 which was basically when people posted black squares on social media to show solidarity for the movement.[74] This had tremendous social media participation as there were more than 14.6 million posts with the hashtag

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[72]Alfonseca, Kiara. "Daunte Wright Shooting: Other Officers Have Mistaken Their Guns for Stun Guns." *ABC News*, ABC News Network, 15 Apr. 2021, abcnews.go.com/US/daunte-wright-shooting-officers-mistaken-guns-stun-guns/story?id=77049415.

[73]Fuentes, Marcela A. "Digital Activism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/digital-activism.

[74]Coscarelli, Joe. "#BlackoutTuesday: A Music Industry Protest Becomes a Social Media Moment." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 2 June 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/arts/music/what-blackout-tuesday.html.

#BlackOutTuesday.[75] This, combined with protests in the street, puts participation far above the 3.5%-mark Chenoweth writes about. *What is the impact of digital activism?* This question should be researched further.

This research also does not account for conservative protests as the BLM protests were more liberal in nature or the effect counterprotests had. I am not sure whether or not these conditions of protests are applicable if the protests themselves are directed to a more conservative cause. This research is just a study of how the BLM impacted legislation and it might not be completely indicative of protests with different causes. Because this thesis is limited to this one protest phenomenon, it is hard to say whether a protest of similar scale and conditions would produce similar results in the future.

Also, this case study only studies the impact on police reform up until the end of 2020. Perhaps more police reform will happen in 2021, but this thesis does not account for that. The protests still have a lasting effect on reform, but this paper fails to account for the long-lasting, historical impacts. For example, police reform did not seriously start happening in the city of Los Angeles until about 5 years after the Rodney King riots, so perhaps we need to wait a little while before historians can truly calculate the impact of these protests.

CONCLUSION

It is hard to completely quantify the impact of the BLM protests in the summer of 2020. There are so many variables that I did not even consider when doing this project. However, it is interesting to note how different variables mattered depending on the political landscape of each

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[75]Bursztynsky, Jessica, and Sarah Whitten. "Instagram Users Flood the App with Millions of Blackout Tuesday Posts." *CNBC*, CNBC, 2 June 2020, www.cnbc.com/2020/06/02/instagram-users-flood-the-app-with-millions-of-blackout-tuesday-posts.html.

state legislature. Whatever the true impact of the BLM protests, they did do something to shape

our world and will be remembered in history as one of the largest, global protests this modern era

has ever seen.

While the protests ultimately helped in passing things like police reform and showing

solidarity to people affected by racial violence, racism still exists, and the murdering of people

by police continues to this day. These problems are not cured by any measure and are still an

ongoing crisis. Even while writing this paper, the news has been saturated with police violence

with cases like the killing of Daunte Wright, who was killed by a police officer who allegedly

mistook their gun for their taser.[76] However, Kim Potter, the officer who shot him, has since

resigned and has been charged with second-degree manslaughter with the charge still pending.

However, if the chant "No justice, no peace" is any indicator, there will still be political

unrest until police violence is solved. In fact, I believe that it is very likely that the BLM protests

will continue in the future as seen by how there were protests in recent news regarding police

violence. However, whether these protests will ever reach the size and scale of the summer of the

2020 protests is doubtful. This is because that phenomenon occurred in the backdrop of a global

pandemic where unemployment was high and there really was not many other things going on at

the time which freed up people in order to protest. It was also an unusually blatant and objective

case of wrongful death that was caught from start to finish on camera by a bystander and

broadcast repeatedly by local and national media.

However, I hope that future activists will be able to use my research in order to have

more productive protests against police violence. At the very least, it can be used as a jumping

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[76]Reality Check Team. "Daunte Wright Shooting: How Can You Mistake a Gun for a Taser?" *BBC News*, BBC, 15 Apr. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/56734989.

off point into more research about the most effective way to protest police brutality. One of the biggest takeaways is that more violence hurts the cause in liberal states, but the appearance of violence actually helps in conservative states. Also, the size of the protests is less important as it is more important what the protestors do after the protest is done which actually helps create change. While protests are a great way to start a conversation and gain more supporters, more action must be taken afterwards if they are really to be deemed "successful."

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