

# Further Reading on the Politics of Policing, Protest, and Criminal Justice

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Over 800,000 police officers serve citizens living in cities across the United States today<sup>1</sup>. Officers have extensive contact with civilians. In 2015, more than 20% of Americans over the age of 16 (over 53 million people) reported having had some form of contact with police in the last year<sup>2</sup>. The police are a unique government agency in that, unlike most other government agencies, interactions with police carry a unique risk of emotional, psychological, and physical harm. For Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and thousands<sup>3</sup> of other minority civilians this contact has been deadly. While there is no comprehensive, reliable record to tell us exactly how often officers use excessive force against civilians, a growing body of evidence from across the social sciences suggests that aggressive policing disproportionately targets citizens who belong to racial minority groups (Richard and Gamio, 2020; Baumgartner and Shoub, 2018; Voigt et al., 2017; Edwards, Lee and Esposito, 2019; Goel, Rao and Shroff, 2016; Legewie, 2016; Gelman, Kiss and Fagan, 2007; Alpert and Dunham, 2000).

To acknowledge this body of work and to inform the growing debate over reform, the Department of Political Science has compiled a guide to recent research about policing in the discipline. Our aims are to share what we know about policing and criminal justice, highlight research by scholars currently working on these issues, and provide resources for members of our community looking to learn more.

## What Do We Know about Policing?

For more information about racial inequality in police practices, take a look at the references mentioned in the first paragraph above. You may also want to check out:

- Mummolo, Jonathan. “Militarization Fails to Enhance Police Safety or Reduce Crime but May Harm Police Reputation.” (Mummolo, 2018)
  - You may also be interested in Jonathan Mummolo’s 2018 article about limited data on police behavior.

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<sup>1</sup>Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Occupational Outlook Handbook.” 2018. Available here

<sup>2</sup>Davis, Elizabeth, Anthony Whyde and Lynn Langton. “Contacts between Police and the Public, 2015.” Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report NCJ 251145. Available here

<sup>3</sup>Berman, Mark, John Sullivan, Julie Tate and Jennifer Jenkins. “Protests spread over police shootings. Police promised reforms. Every year, they still shoot and kill nearly 1,000 people.” *The Washington Post*. June 8, 2020. Available here

- Knox, Dean and Jonathan Mummolo. “Making Inferences about Racial Disparities in Police Violence” (Knox and Mummolo, 2020)

## **How Did We Get Here?**

- Weaver, Vesla. “Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy.” (Weaver, 2007)
- Soss, Joe and Vesla Weaver. “Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race-Class Subjugated Communities.” (Soss and Weaver, 2017)
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. (Alexander, 2012)
- Gottschalk, Marie. *The Prison and the Gallows*. (Gottschalk, 2006)

## **What are the Consequences?**

- Lerman, Amy E. and Vesla Weaver. “Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control.” (Lerman and Weaver, 2014)
- Lerman, Amy E. and Vesla Weaver. “Political Consequences of the Carceral State.” (Weaver and Lerman, 2010)
- Lanியonu, Ayobami. “The Political Consequences of Policing: Evidence from New York City.” (Lanியonu, 2019)
- White, Ariel. “Misdemeanor Disenfranchisement? The Demobilizing Effects of Brief Jail Spells on Potential Voters.” (White, 2019*b*)
- White, Ariel. “Family Matters? Voting Behavior in Households with Criminal Justice Contact.” (White, 2019*a*)
- Walker, Hannah L. “Targeted: The Mobilizing Effect of Perceptions of Unfair Policing Practices.” (Walker, 2019)

## **What Role do Budget Constraints Play?**

- Elliott Ash, Jeffrey Fagan and Allison P. Harris. “Local Public Finance and Discriminatory Policing: Evidence from Traffic Stops in Missouri.” (Ash and Harris, 2020)

- Goldstein, Rebecca, Michael W. Sances, and Hye Young You. “Exploitative Revenues, Law Enforcement, and the Quality of Government Service.” (Goldstein, Sances and You, 2018)

## **How Do We Get Unrepresentative Criminal Justice Policy?**

- Eckhouse, Laurel. “Race, Party, and Representation in Criminal Justice Politics.” (Eckhouse, 2019)
- For views on policing and reform by age, you may want to read Rebecca Goldstein’s working paper *The Age of Police Reform*

## **What Role Do Public Perceptions Play?**

- Jackson, Jenn M. “Black Americans and the ‘Crime Narrative’: Comments on the Use of News Frames and Their Impacts on Public Opinion Formation.” (Jackson, 2019)

## **Do Protests Help?**

- Gillion, Daniel Q. *The Political Power of Protest : Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy* (Gillion, 2013)
- Williamson, Vanessa, Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstein. “Black Lives Matter: Evidence that Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity.” (Williamson and Einstein, 2018)
- Wasow, Omar. “Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting.” (Wasow, 2020)
- For more information on how media frames protests, you may want to check out Michelle Torres’ work on visual framing [here](#).

## **Is Reform Possible?**

- Mummolo, Jonathan. “Modern Police Tactics, Police-Citizen Interactions, and the Prospects for Reform.” (Mummolo, 2017)

## Are There Online Resources with More Information?

- Yes! Stanford hosted a virtual series featuring many of the researchers cited above. The first conversation is recorded here.
- If you're on Twitter, follow the hashtag #raceandjusticeconvo

## Who Works on This? Can I Find Them on Twitter?

- Yes! Here's who you should follow:
  - Hakeem Jefferson, Dept. of Political Science, Stanford, @hakeemjefferson
  - Vesla Weaver, Dept. of Political Science, Johns Hopkins, @VeslaWeaver
  - Laurel Eckhouse, Dept. of Political Science, University of Denver, @Leckhouse
  - Jenn Jackson, Dept. of Political Science, Maxwell School, Syracuse University @JennMJacksonPhD
  - Michelle Torres, Dept. of Political Science, Rice University, @michtorresp
  - Ayobami Laniyonu, Dept. of Political Science, University of Toronto, @Ayo\_Laniyonu
  - Megan Ming Francis, Dept. of Political Science, University of Washington, @meganfrancis
  - Jonathan Mummolo, Dept. of Political Science, Princeton University, @jonmummolo
  - Ariel White, Dept. of Political Science, MIT, @ArielRWhite
  - Allison Harris, Dept. of Political Science, Yale, @AlliPatter

## References

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- Gelman, Andrew, Alex Kiss and Jeffrey Fagan. 2007. "An Analysis of the New York City Police Department's 'Stop and Frisk' Policy in the Context of Claims of Racial Bias." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 102(479):813–823.
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