

The background image is a blurred photograph of a street scene. On the left, a person wearing a bright blue t-shirt is seen from the back, facing a line of police officers. The police officers are wearing helmets, shields, and riot gear. To the right, there is a dark blue mailbox with the words "Fuck the Blice" written in white chalk. Below the chalk, it says "LAST COLLECTION" and "UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE".

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

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Justin Nix

Scott Mourtgos

ASC 2022



Ferguson, MO (2014)





# THE WAR ON COPS

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

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



HEATHER  
MAC DONALD

\$1.25 - NYDailyNews.com

SPORTS EXTRA

Sunday, December 21, 2014

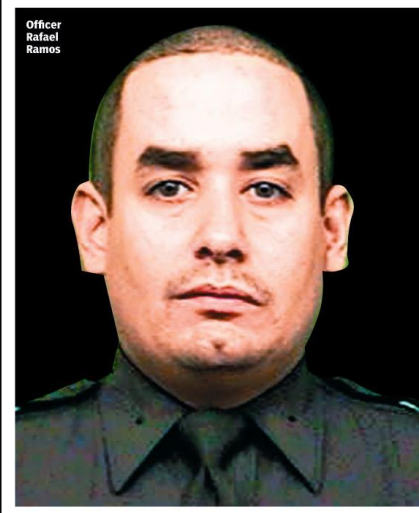
# DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

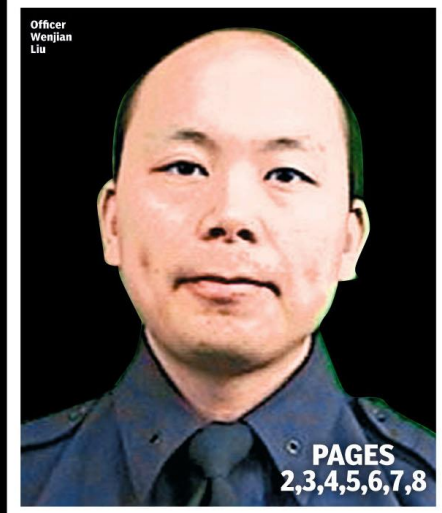
## 2 cops gunned down in squad car

# EXECUTED

Officer  
Rafael  
Ramos



Officer  
Wenjian  
Liu



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

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

# The “War on Cops”: Theory

**Police  
Violence**



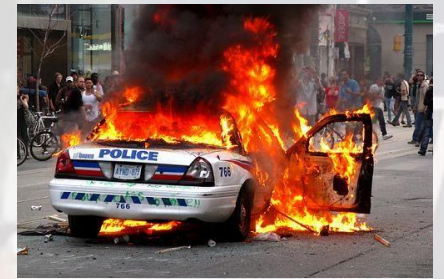
**Criticism  
of Police**



**Reduced  
Police  
Legitimacy**



**Violence  
Against  
Police**



# The “War on Cops”: Research

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

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

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

White (2020): fatal ambushes, ODMP

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





DEFUND  
NYPD

BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER

TOO  
MANY NAMES

COPS  
ARE  
NIGGERS

HECK'S  
CASHED

BLACK IRON

SUGARCANE



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

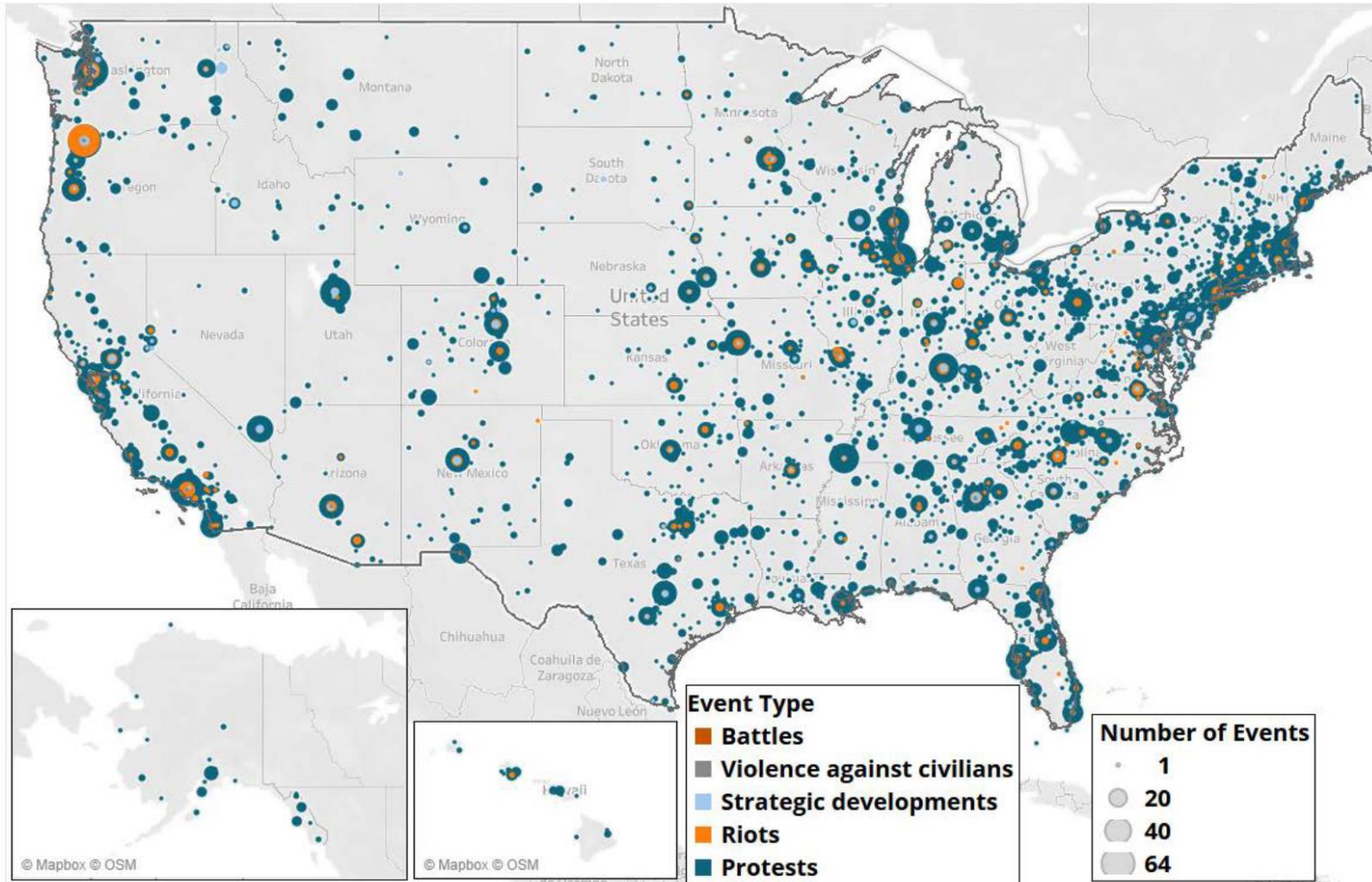
By [Larry Buchanan](#), [Quoctrung Bui](#) and [Jugal K. Patel](#) July 3, 2020

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

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

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

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



May 26, 2020  
to August 22, 2020:

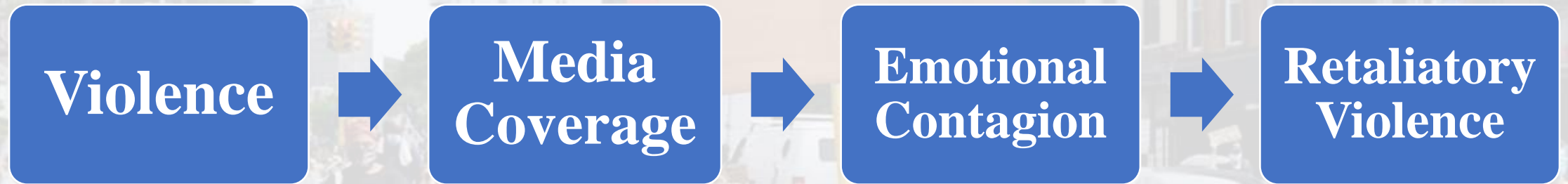
7,750+ protests  
2,440 locations  
50 states

ACLED (2020)



# Retaliatory Violence (Bejan et al., 2020)

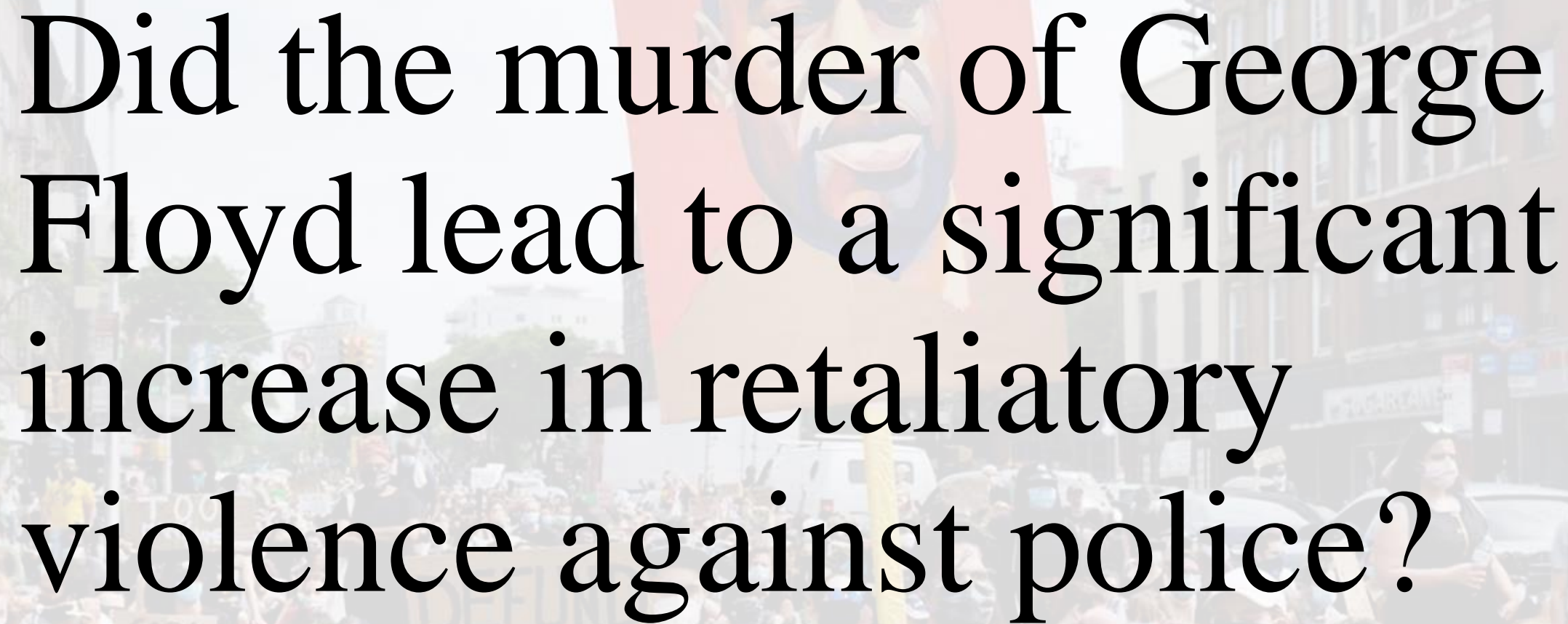
- ~ “war on cops” legitimacy mechanism.
- Not focused on any single incident of violence.



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

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



A large crowd of people is gathered for a protest on a city street. In the background, a large portrait of George Floyd is visible. Protesters are holding various signs, including one that says "DEFUND NYPD" and another that says "BLACK LIVES MATTER". Many people are wearing face masks.

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



One small wrinkle...





**CORONAVIRUS**

# COVID, Violence, and Policing

Any “Floyd effect” potentially confounded by ...

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



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

# Data

Gun Violence Archive (GVA)

2014 to 2020

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



# Data

## Gun Violence Archive (GVA)

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

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

# **Data: Denominators**

1. Police Employee Data, 2014-2020

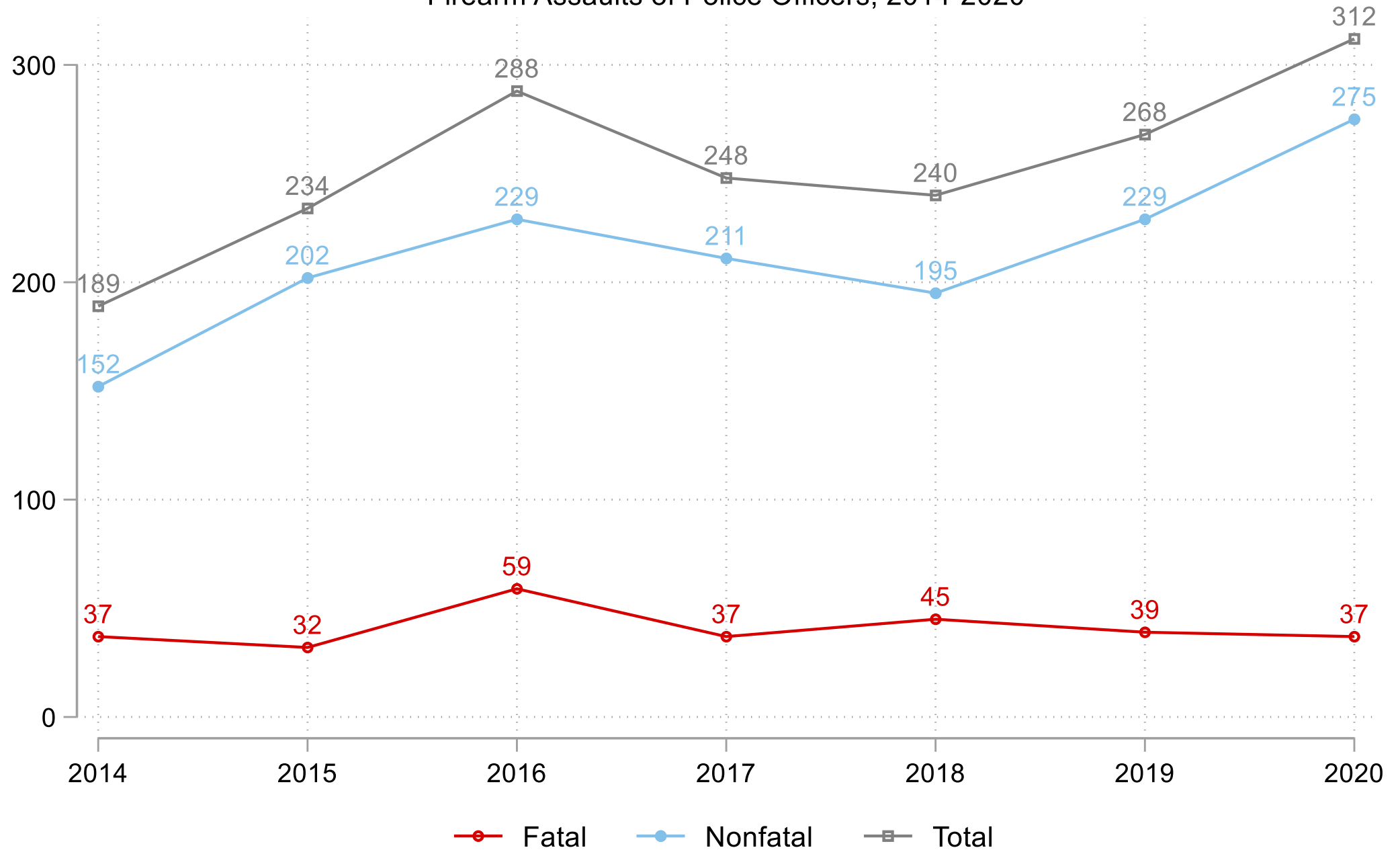
UCR Arrest Data, 2014-2020

2. All arrests

3. Violence and firearm-related offenses



Firearm Assaults of Police Officers, 2014-2020



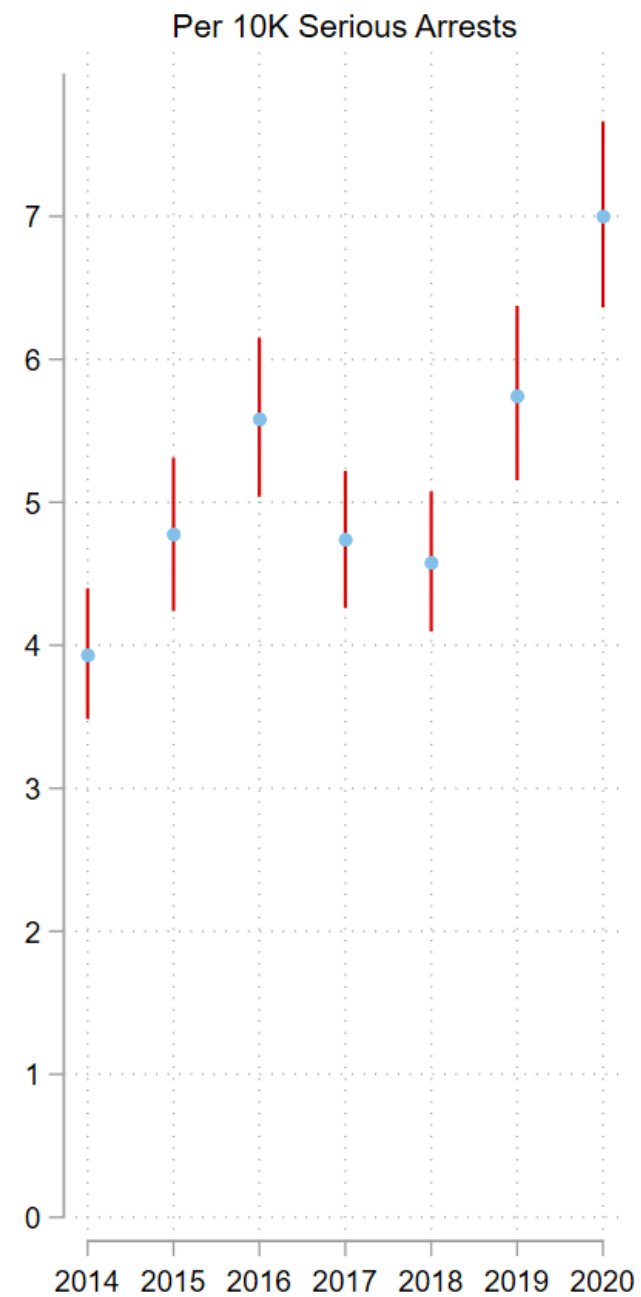
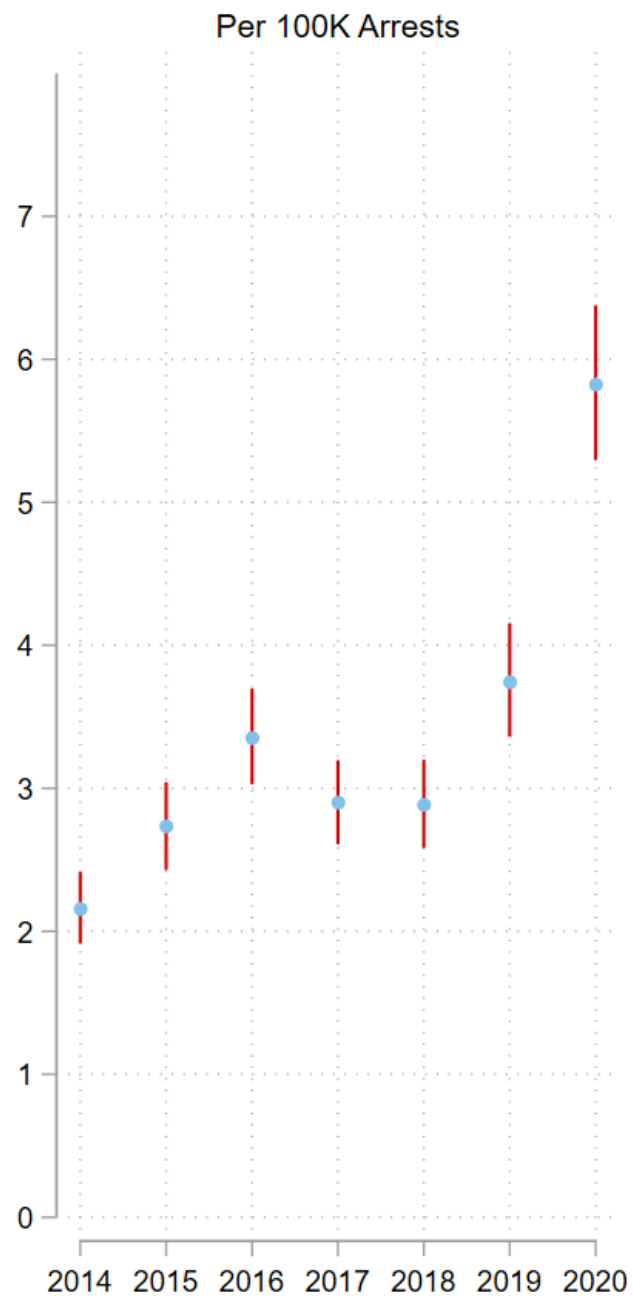
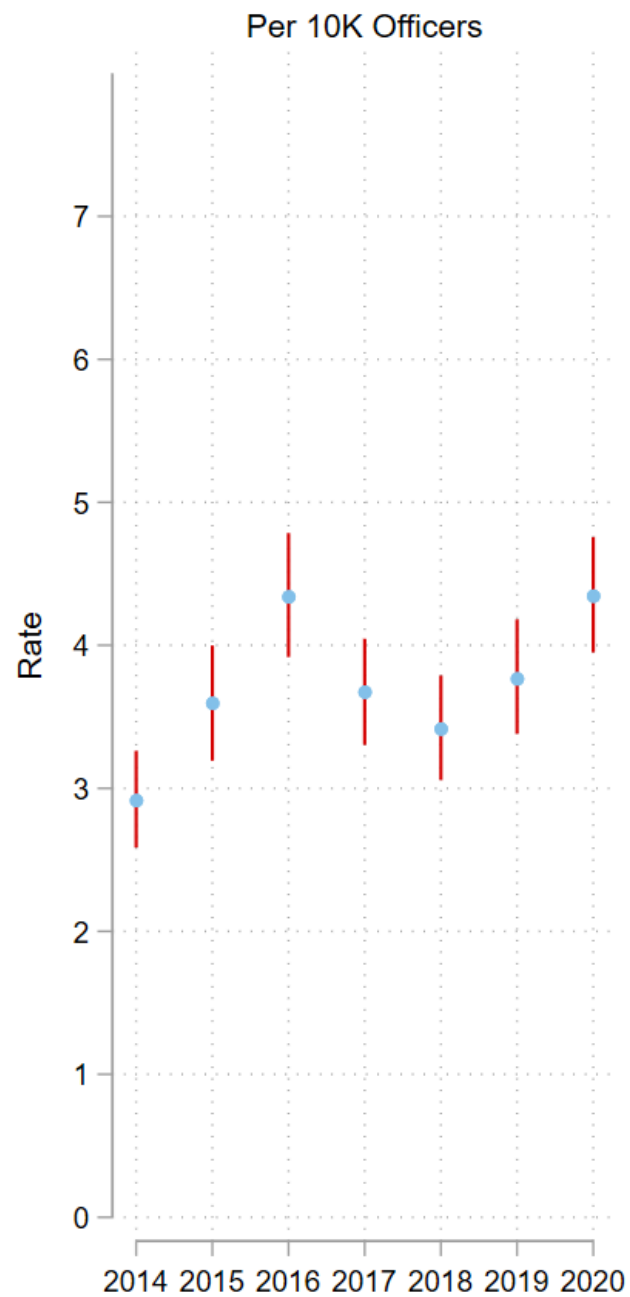
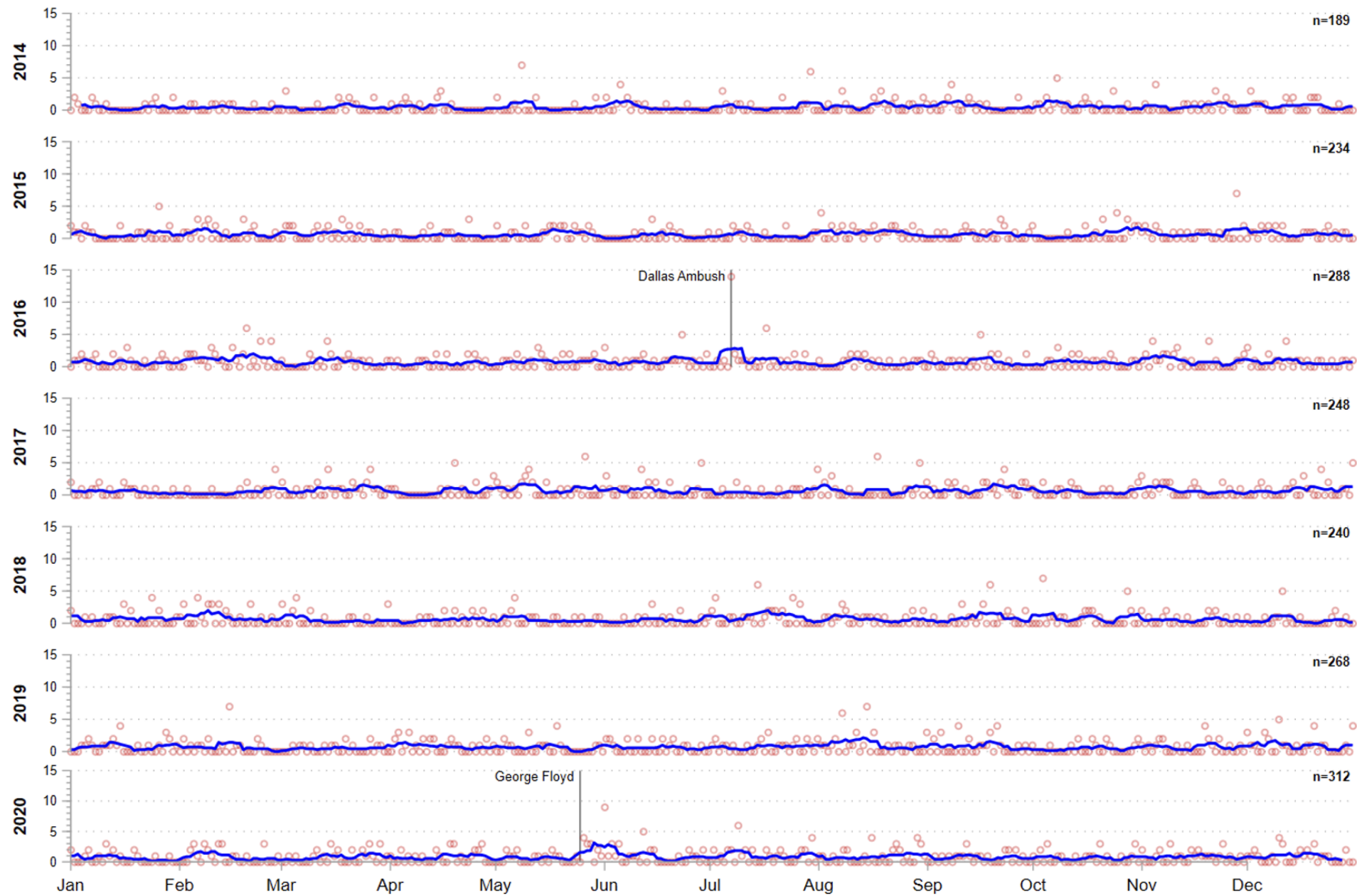




Figure 2. Daily firearm assaults on police officers, 2014-2020.



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

# Method

Bayesian Structural Time Series (BSTS)

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

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

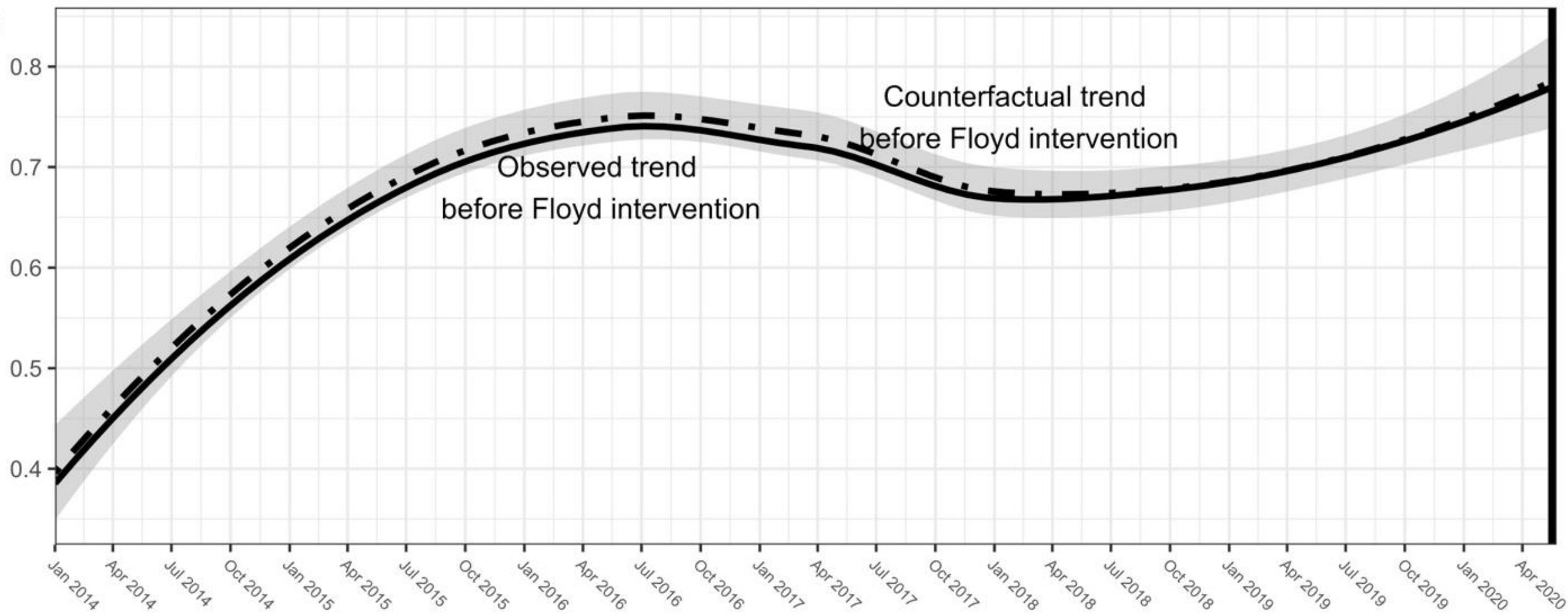


# Results



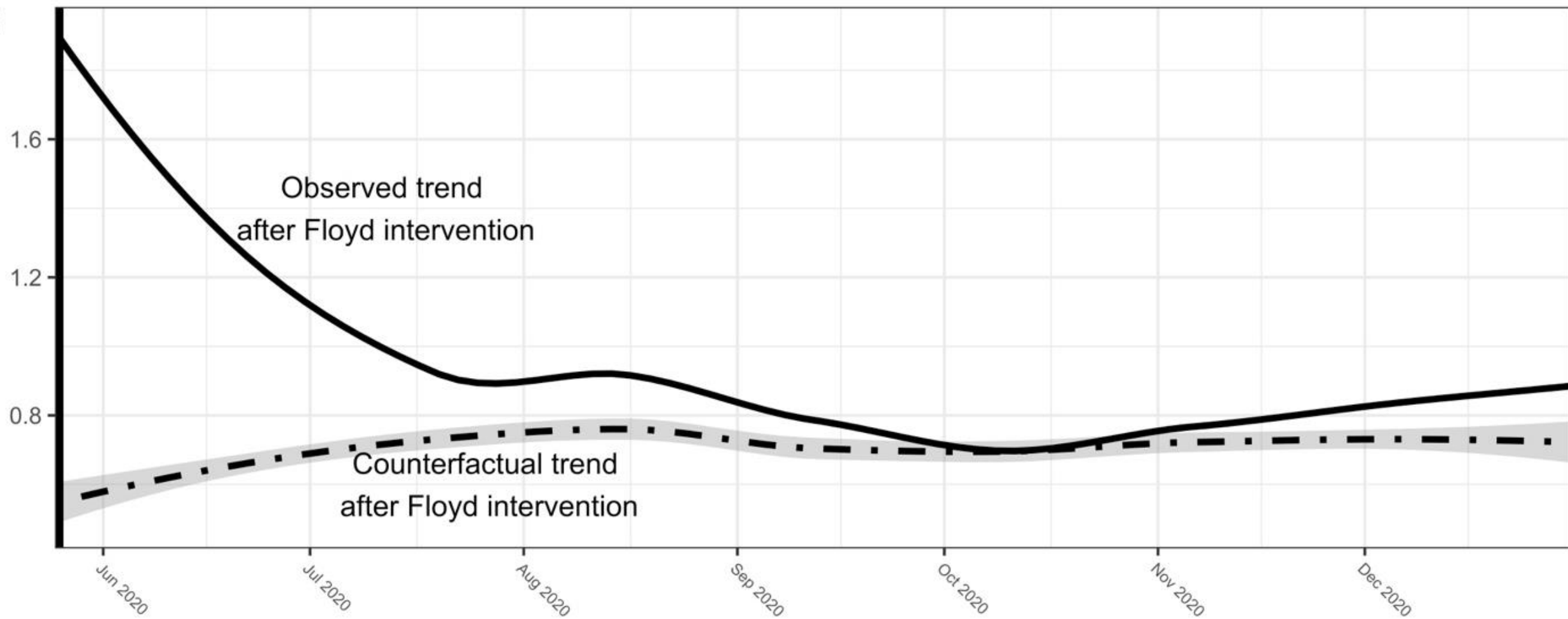
■ ■ Floyd Counterfactual Trend    — Observed Trend

**B**



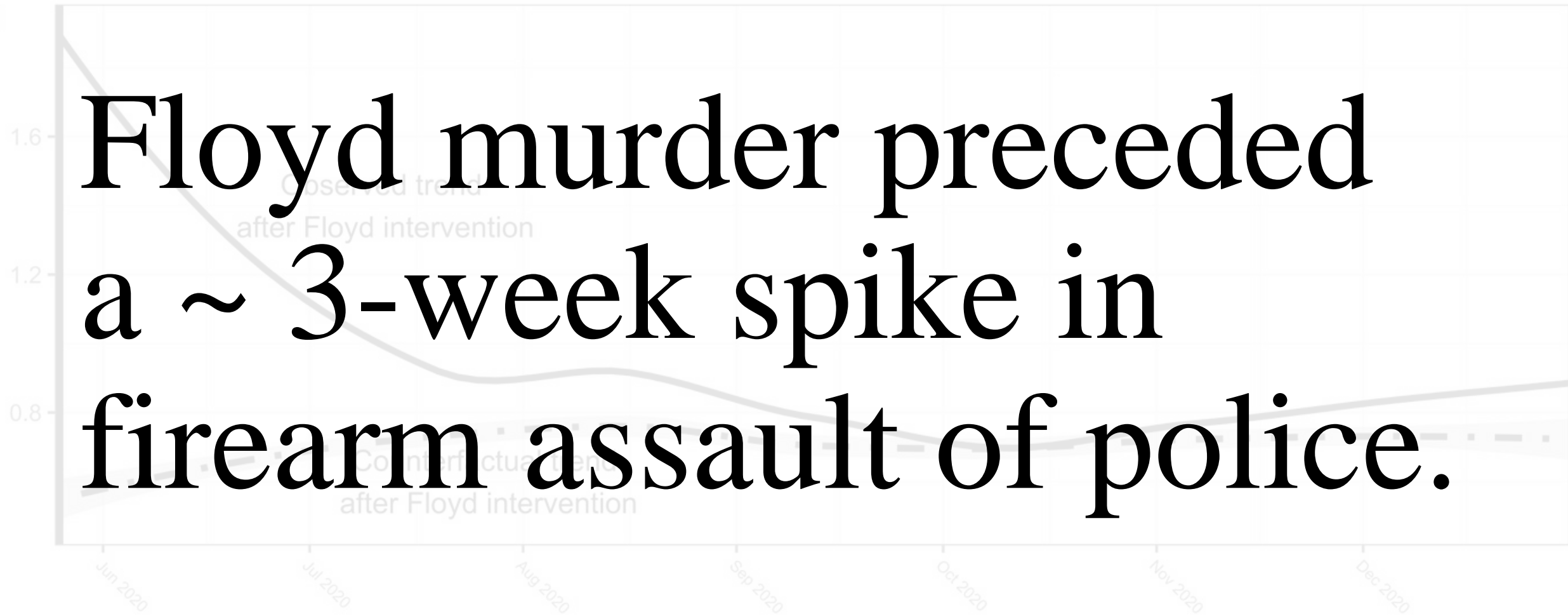
■ ■ Floyd Counterfactual Trend   ■ ■ Observed Trend

C





■ ■ Floyd Counterfactual Trend — Observed Trend



Floyd murder preceded  
a ~ 3-week spike in  
firearm assault of police.

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

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

Mean Difference = 1.178 [.017, 2.380]

Probability of Different Means = .98

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

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

**~26 more FAs observed than expected.**

# Limitations

FAs underestimate *total* violence.

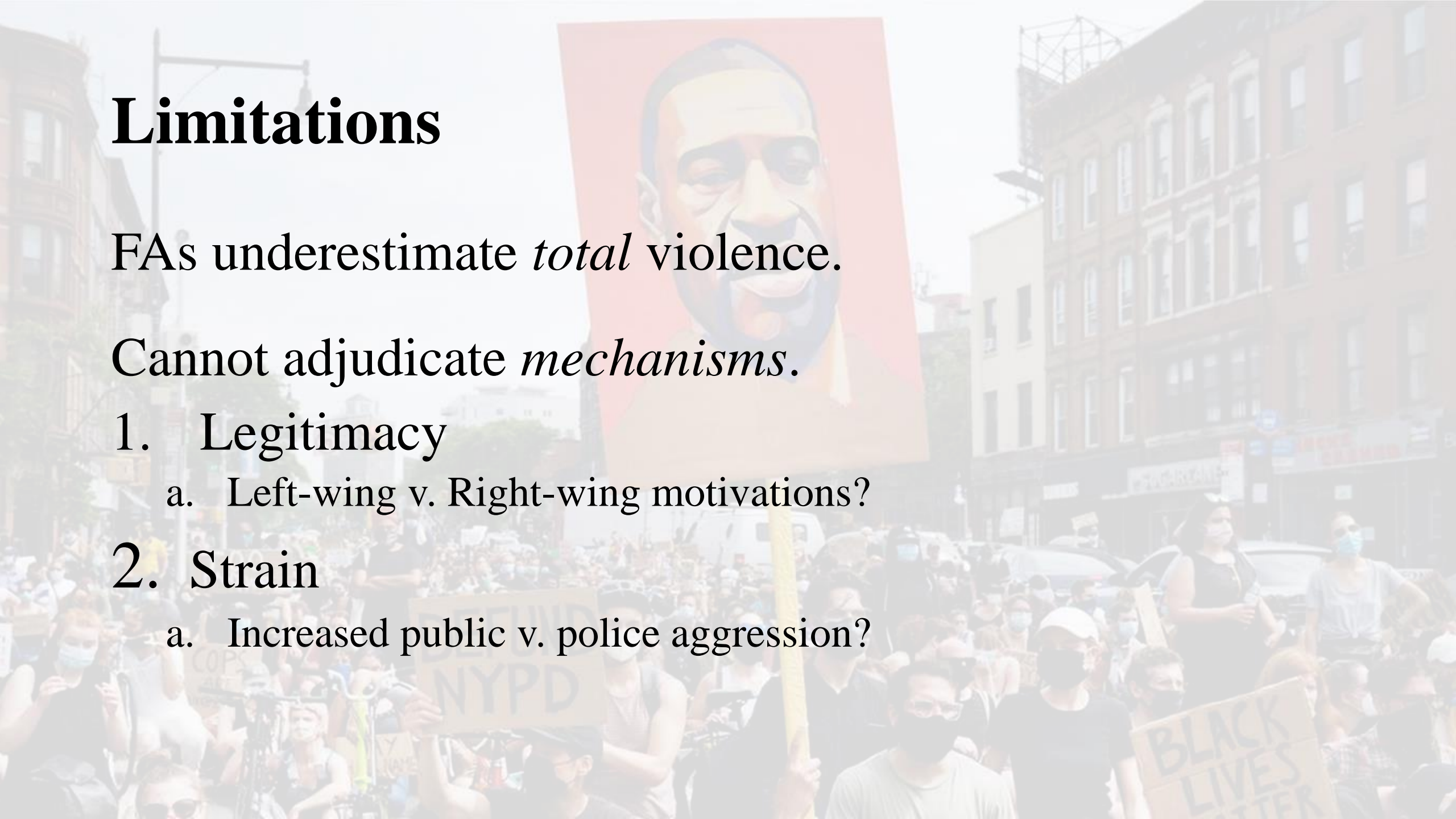
Cannot adjudicate *mechanisms*.

## 1. Legitimacy

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

## 2. Strain

- a. Increased public v. police aggression?





# Conclusion

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

Largest social movement in history → +26 FAs.

FA of police remains exceedingly rare.

Retaliatory violence is not a “war.”

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