Social Identity and Support for Defunding the Police in the Aftermath of George Floyd's Murder

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Abstract
In the spring and summer of 2020, police in the United States killed Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other unarmed people of color. In one of the largest social movements in the nation's history, thousands engaged in public protests and called to defund or abolish the police. Debate about police racism and the need for reform intensified, with public opinion polls showing how polarised public attitudes were along traditional political lines. Analyzing data from a cross-sectional quota sample survey of 1,500 U.S. residents conducted in summer 2020, our findings confirm the proposition that opposition and support for defunding the police was related to not only political views and superordinate identification with the group that the police prototypically represent, but also polarized intergroup identification with the police and the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as people's perceptions of police procedural justice and systemic racism.

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Introduction
In the United States, the idea of defunding the police came to the forefront of public consciousness as a movement and debate in the wake of the police killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) in 2020. Advocates of defunding called for the movement of police resources towards public services that are better placed to deal with chronic social problems that generate crime (Buchanan et al., 2020). Conservative commentators pushed back at the idea of 'defunding the police' that they often took to mean abolition, rather than the reallocation of resources that some advocates meant— a call from the left to reduce the violent excesses of systemically racist police forces through reform rather than elimination.

In this paper, we examine public attitudes towards defunding the police through a social identity lens. The past few years have seen divergent public attitudes towards police reform that map onto opposing positions on each side of the political divide (Chudy & Jefferson, 2021; Horowitz & Livingston, 2016; Parker et al., 2020; Updegrove et al., 2020). Polarization can be observed in various intergroup tensions, perhaps best exemplified by Black Lives Matter (BLM, a social and political movement that campaigns, among other things, against violence and discrimination towards Black people, particularly in the form of police brutality, see, Bonilla & Tillery, 2020; Garza, 2014; Hunter, 2020; Vaughan et al., 2022; Worthman, 2016;) versus Blue Lives Matter (a pro-police counter-movement that advocates, among other things, for the sentencing of the murderers of police officers under hate law statues, see, Blue Lives Matter, 2017; Mason, 2022; Shanahan & Wall, 2021; Solomon & Martin, 2019).

Yet, while the public's support for defending or defunding the police—and calls for police reform more generally—warrants examination from a group processes perspective, to date this has not been attempted. Scholars *are* beginning to study the roles of racial threat and racial resentment in public attitudes towards the BLM movement (Baranauskas, 2022; Miller et al. 2021; Morris & LeCount, 2020; Silver et al., 2022; Updegove et al., 2020). Work exploring support for different forms of reshaping the police is also emerging, for example, Vaughn et al.'s (2022) investigation of people's support for, or opposition to, abolition, defunding and reform. But despite the fact that social identity dynamics seem important in understanding the political divide in attitudes towards the reform and reshaping of the police in the US, we lack empirical data.

We aim to fill this gap in the literature. According to social identity theory, people are motivated to behave in ways that are consistent with the norms of, and to express support for, groups with which they identify (Giles et al., 2021). Blader and Tyler's (2009) group engagement model (see also, Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003) holds that people in hierarchical group settings are especially sensitive to fairness concerns, both in terms of how group authorities treat people and make decisions (i.e., procedural justice) and how finite group resources are allocated across aggregate groups (i.e., distributive justice). To the degree that individuals feel their group (especially authority figures in the group) is fair toward them, especially in terms of procedural justice, they are more likely to feel that their standing and status within the group has been recognized and enhanced. Recognition of standing encourages the adoption of group goals and values via social identification, and to the extent that individuals have adopted group norms, people are more likely to cooperate to realize group goals. Integrating the group into their self-definition means they are concerned about its welfare and viability, with cooperation with group authorities being one way to help produce and sustain such outcomes.

While the group engagement model was developed within the context of organizational settings, its basic principles can be used to understand the relationship between police and those policed (Bradford, 2014; Bradford et al., 2014). How might such thinking apply to public attitudes towards defunding the police? First, as a prototypical group authority, the police represent a superordinate group that we define here as 'law-abiding U.S. citizenry'. They also represent an *enmeshed* subordinate group, a social category in and of itself that exemplifies law-abiding U.S. society, crime-control, and institutional status quo. Second, when people identify with the 'group(s)' that the police represent, they see group success as individual success—they are motivated to meet group needs and advance group goals (Giles et al., 2021).

Identifying as a law-abiding member of U.S. society and, therefore perhaps, identifying with the police, motivates people to defend the welfare, values and viability *of the police* as an important group authority (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Bradford et al., 2014, 2017). They believe that police are 'good', appropriate, and well-intentioned, precisely because the police are powerful prototypical representatives of the group and the superordinate group is itself seen in these terms. So, as a proposal to reshape policing, defunding the police is viewed as a threat, in part because it seeks to disempower an institution that exemplifies "law-abiding" societal values. Because of their identification with police as a representative of law-abidingness, people with such deep-seated group connections may be more likely to define 'defunding' as elimination rather than reform, and more likely to oppose the movement because of its threat to the institution and therefore to their identity.

Moreover, membership of groups implies differentiation, even exclusivity (Kelly, 1998; Taşdemir, 2011). Those that identify with a group are motivated to differentiate themselves from those in other groups in a manner that puts their own group in a positive light. This feature of group identification may help explain the strength of the partisan divide over the police and the BLM movement that scholars have found (Silver et al., 2022; cf. Riley & Peterson, 2020). Those that identify with the police and see themselves and the police as exemplars of the law-abiding community may be motivated to interpret BLM's calls for defunding in abolition terms and reject the movement's goals and ethos. Conversely, identification with BLM may motivate individuals to interpret defunding calls as reforms to restore and repair societal and community values.

Given the plausibility of the above ideas, it is surprising that a social identity perspective has not yet been leveraged to explore public attitudes towards defunding the police. Similar to some core tenets of the group engagement model (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003), social identity theory argues that one's identification with a superordinate group motivates one to behave in ways that support the group and/or are consistent with its norms (Giles et al., 2021; Radburn et al., 2018). Analyzing the issue through this theoretical framework could help explain polarized opinions across the political divide. Our goal in this paper is to do just that. Drawing on a large sample of U.S. residents, we document views on the defund issue, including how people define "defunding the police". We also examine the roles played by political views, social identity, and perceptions of police activity, specifically procedural justice, distributive justice, bounded authority, and the under- and over-policing of Black communities.

In part to try to explain divergent views across the political spectrum, we first explore the links between superordinate identification with the group that the police, as a prototypical authority, represents (which we operationalize as "law-abiding U.S. citizen", see, Bradford et al. 2014, 2017), definitions of defunding the police, and support for—or opposition to—the idea of defunding. We then consider the relevance of identification with the police versus identification with the BLM movement. A starting assumption is that police and BLM represent two fundamentally oppositional groups, *both* of which are subsumed under the superordinate group. Building on this premise, we test whether identification with these two groups have divergent effects on attitudes towards defunding, and account for some of the statistical effects of superordinate identification on attitudes towards defunding the police. For instance, people who strongly identify as a member of the law-abiding U.S. citizen group may tend to identify with the police as *the exemplification* of law-abidingness and crime-control, and by extension may tend to push back (e.g., construe defunding as abolition rather than reform) against a social movement (BLM) that represents a fundamental threat to the police and the identity-relevant social categories the police represent. Such subordinate identification with one group versus the other may partly be the route through which superordinate identification shapes attitudes towards defunding the police.

In addition to assessing whether identification with police versus BLM partially explains the statistical effect of identification with the superordinate group on attitudes towards defunding the police, we also address people's perceptions of the fairness of police activity. Part of the reason why social identity may be important in explaining divergent attitudes towards police reform is that people who identify with certain groups may take opposing views on whether police are fair in general (in terms of procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and respecting the limits of their own rightful authority) as well as whether they are fair when policing Black communities. A key goal of defunding the police is to reduce some of the

violent excesses of the police, especially those directed towards Black communities, and it follows that if people believe the police are fair (in general and in particular towards Black communities), they are more likely to both oppose the movement and define 'defunding' as abolition rather than reform (see also, Fine & Del Toro, 2022). They reject the idea that police need to be reformed in the ways that BLM supporters proposed, and they see the movement as a threat to their conception of the police and their identity as a law-abiding U.S. citizen who respects, and feels solidarity with, police.

Breaking down perceptions of police activity into procedural justice, distributive justice, boundaries, and the under-and over-policing of Black communities is an important feature of our study. There is a good deal of evidence (e.g., Jackson et al., 2022a) that public perceptions of police activity can be divided into, among other things, procedural justice (perceptions of how police interact with, and make decisions regarding, citizens on a one-to-one, or few-to-one, or one-to-few basis, specifically the quality of interaction and decision-making in terms of neutrality, voice, participation, respect, and so forth), distributive justice (perceptions of the fair allocation of scarce resources across aggregate social groups, i.e., the appropriate allocation of the goods and burdens of policing across groups) and bounded authority (perceptions of whether officers act in ways that signal to citizens a respect for the limits of their rightful authority). For instance, tests of procedural justice theory find that they are distinct (albeit correlated) constructs and show the utility of estimating whether perceptions of procedural justice, distributive justice and bounded authority (alongside perceptions of effectiveness and lawfulness) each explain unique variance in perceived police legitimacy (see, for example, Huq et al., 2017; Murphy, 2021; Trinkner et al., 2018; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Williamson et al., 2022). In line with a key prediction of the group engagement model (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003), such studies typically find that procedural justice is the most important source of legitimation (for an overview of the literature, see, Jackson, 2018).

We also focus on perceptions of the under- and over-policing of Black communities. As is typical in tests of procedural justice theory, our measures of procedural justice, distributive justice and bounded authority do not mention specific social groups that the police interact with. But as Jackson et al. (2022b) argue, one cannot directly assess the role that perceived systemic racism among general population samples if one does not ask about the policing of racial groups.[1] To integrate perceptions of systemic racism into procedural justice theory, they added perceptions of the under- and over-policing of Black communities to the framework. Building on the premise that the under- and over-policing of Black communities is a key manifestation of systemic racism (Dixon et al. 2008; **Prowse et al., 2020; Rios, 2011; Rios et al., 2020**), their findings were consistent with the idea that over- and under-policing tap into the racially-inflected, identity-relevant signals (of neglect, under-protection, stigmatization and control) that the *racially-targeted* application of procedural and distributive injustice and the unrestrained use of authority produce and transmit towards Black communities (through under- and over-policing).[2] We use the same indicators of perceived under- and over-policing of Black communities in our study. This allows U.S. to examine the potential role that this conception of perceived systemic racism plays in explaining variation in attitudes toward defunding.

Finally, we assess whether social identity and perceptions of police activity help explain any identified differences in views about defunding the police between liberals and conservatives. Building on the idea that identification with salient social groups shapes how people experience, understand, and react to policing (Radburn et al., 2018; Radburn & Stott, 2019; Tyler, 1997), we argue that in the US, and specifically in the context of the BLM movement, these groups are in an important sense defined by two dichotomous categorizations – conservative vs. liberal; Blue Lives Matter vs. Black Lives Matter – that are themselves strongly inter-related. Conservatives are more likely to identify with the police, we reason, while liberals are more likely to identify with BLM. Such identification may both mark and motivate oppositional stances to the relevant outgroup. For example, conservatives may be more likely to feel threatened by BLM and the defund movement precisely because they believe that police act fairly and see the movement as threatening their two connected ingroups (law-abiding U.S. citizenry and, subsumed within this, the police as an embodiment of the law-abiding nation). This, in turn, implies that conservatives may be more likely to attribute to the defund movement what—to them—is the radical aim of abolition. It also implies that liberals are more likely than conservatives to view the police as unfair in general (in terms of procedural

justice, distributive justice, and bounded authority) and unfair in particular towards Black communities (in terms of under- and over-policing).

Current Study
We first examine differences according to political views (liberal versus conservative) in (a) levels of support or opposition to defunding the police as an idea and (b) people's definition of defunding.[3] It was hypothesized that:

> **H1a**: Liberals are more likely to support defunding the police and conservatives are more likely to oppose defunding the police.
> **H1b**: Liberals are more likely to define defunding the police as some kind of reform, while conservatives are more likely to define defunding as some form of abolition.

Second, we assess the bivariate correlations between political views and three types of group identification: superordinate (law-abiding U.S. citizen), police, and BLM. We predict that people who identify as a law-abiding U.S .citizen are also likely to identify with the subordinate group of the police; seeing oneself first and foremost as a law-abiding U.S. citizen motivates one to also identify with the police, precisely because the police represent law-abidingness in U.S. society to these people. We also predict that people with conservatives are more likely than liberals to identify with the superordinate group and the police, and less likely to identify with BLM, and that liberals are more likely to identify with a social justice movement that questions traditional formal social control practices and institutions. It was hypothesized that:

> **H2a:** Conservative political views will be positively correlated with superordinate identification and identification with the police, and negatively correlated with identification with BLM.
> **H2b:** Superordinate and police identification will be positively correlated with one another, and BLM identification with be negatively correlated with superordinate and police identification.

Turning to the potential predictors of attitudes towards defunding the police, the next set of hypotheses relates to the idea that police are prototypical representatives of wider 'superordinate' social categories, and that identification with this category motivates support for police (Bradford et al., 2017) and their empowerment and use of force (Jackson et al., 2013; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). We also investigate whether superordinate identification helps explain different views of defunding across the political spectrum. It was hypothesized that:

> **H3a:** People who strongly identify as a law-abiding U.S. citizen will be more likely to define defunding as elimination/abolition, and would be less likely to support the movement, compared to people who do not identify strongly with the superordinate group.
> **H3b:** Superordinate identification will explain some of the statistical effects of political views on attitudes towards defunding the police.

Fourth, we test whether variation in subordinate group identification helps to explain some of the observed pattern of associations between political views, superordinate identification and attitudes towards defunding the police. Building on the premise that the Summer of 2020 saw increased polarization between Black Lives Matter versus Blue Lives Matter, we predict that more conservative people who also identify strongly as a law-abiding U.S .citizen are more likely to identify with the police, less likely to identify with BLM, and that this is a key dynamic in understanding their attitudes towards defunding the police. Conversely, people with liberal views who also identify less strongly as a law-abiding U.S .citizen may be more likely to identify with BLM, less likely to identify with the police, and that this too may be important in explaining divergent political views.

Part of the assumed rationale here is that identifying with U.S. law enforcement flows from identifying as a law-abiding U.S. citizen, and that identifying with BLM is to merge into one's self-definition a movement that calls for the reduction of some of the violent excesses of police. Given the intensity of the debate, it seems almost axiomatic to suggest that, for people who identify strongly with BLM, the excesses of policing symbolize a systemically racist state's utilization of force and control, and that this partly explains liberal views on defunding the police. Conversely, for people who identify strongly with police, the notion of 'defunding the police' represents a fundamental threat to a key value-bearing institution in society, which may partly explain conservative views on defunding the police (including defining it as abolition). For this latter group, being against a call for fundamental reform may be consistent with their identity and the motivations to support the group that flow from identification.

Indeed, one could view intergroup differentiation to be partly expressed *through* views on defunding, a rallying call for change in policing. If people are motivated to differentiate between groups, generating positive identity from positive distinctiveness vis a vis an outgroup, then they are more likely to define defunding in opposing ways and be strongly for or against the idea according to their group positions (Fine & Del Toro, 2022). If stances on the defund issue become caught up in intergroup dynamics, a site of contestation used to help define in- and out-group categories, then aiming for a positive sense of in-group distinctiveness (intergroup differentiation that enhances self-esteem) may lead people who identify with the police to 'push back' against BLM (and consistent with this, oppose defunding the police) while people who identify with BLM may 'push back' against police (and consistent with this, support defunding), with these stances taken at least in part because conflicting viewpoints represent conflicting groups (Sherif, 1966; Taşdemir, 2011). It was hypothesized that:

> **H4a:** People who identify with BLM are less likely to define defunding as elimination/abolition (i.e., more likely to define defunding as reform) and more likely to support defunding the police, adjusting for other forms of identity.
> **H4b:** People who identify with the police should be more likely to define defunding as elimination/abolition (i.e., less likely to define defunding as reform) and less likely to support defunding the police, adjusting for other forms of identity.
> **H4c:** Some of the statistical effects of superordinate identification on attitudes towards defunding the police will be explained by identification with police and identification with BLM.
> **H4d:** More of the statistical effects of political views on attitudes towards defunding the police will be explained, when the second and third forms of social identity are added.

Finally, we consider people's perceptions of police activity, i.e., the degree to which people believe officers are procedurally just, distributively just, recognize the boundaries of their authority, and under- and over-police Black communities. There are two goals here. On the one hand, we want to assess the extent to which the statistical effects on attitudes towards defunding the police of political views *and* social identification can be explained by perceptions of police activity. It may be, for instance, that liberals who identify strongly with BLM (and at best only weakly identify with the police and as a law-abiding U.S. citizen) also tend to believe that the police generally act in unfair ways (procedural injustice, distributive injustice, and failing to respect the limits of their rightful authority) and believe that they under- and over-police Black communities. People with such views may thus respond more favorably to a movement that seeks to reduce police unfairness, in part because the movement aligns with their views of the police.

On the other hand, we want to assess which dimensions of police activity are uppermost in people's minds when it comes to their positions on the question of defunding, and which particular perceptions of police activity help explain some of the variation across different political ideologies and identities. We predict that people who believe that the police are procedurally just, distributively just, and respect the limits of their rightful authority (boundaries), and who also believe that Black communities are not under- and over-policed, are more likely to define defunding as abolition rather than reform and therefore, partly, to oppose defunding the police. People who believe that officers act in fair and appropriate ways may not only push back against the idea of defunding, they may also define the idea as especially threatening to the

institution and all it represents (the converse also applies, of course). We acknowledge, however, that our hypotheses are speculative and exploratory, given the lack of prior research (Vaughn et al. 2022 addressed perceptions of police effectiveness and safety but did not look at police fairness). It was hypothesized that:

> **H5a:** People who believe that the police generally act in procedurally just ways are more likely to define defunding the police as abolition rather than reform, and more likely to oppose defunding the police.
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> **H5b:** People who believe that the police generally act in distributively just ways are more likely to define defunding the police as abolition rather than reform, and more likely to oppose defunding the police.
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> **H5c:** People who believe that the police generally respect the limits of their rightful authority are more likely to define defunding the police as abolition rather than reform, and more likely to oppose defunding the police.
>
> **H5d:** People who believe that the police do not under-police Black communities are more likely to define defunding the police as abolition rather than reform, and more likely to oppose defunding the police.
>
> **H5e:** People who believe that the police do not over-police Black communities are more likely to define defunding the police as abolition rather than reform, and more likely to oppose defunding the police.
>
> **H5f:** Some of the statistical effects of political views and the three forms of social identification on attitudes towards defunding the police will be explained by perceived police fairness.

Method

Sample

The ability to quickly and relatively cheaply collect data often involves a trade-off, with the representativeness of the sample typically being a function not just of cost but also time. We interviewed a broad section of the U.S. population just after the policing killing of George Floyd as the BLM debate was heightening. We used the online platform Prolific Academic (Prolific.co) to recruit 1,500 research participants via a non-probability convenience quota sample stratified to resemble the country based on age, gender, and race. Prolific Academic drew the sample from an online panel. They screened participant eligibility using self-reported age, gender and race, where participants were invited to take part in the survey to fill each stratification level. They calculated the age by gender by racial group proportions using the 2015 population group estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Studies are advertised on their platform where users can decide whether they want to participate. All users are paid for their participation with Prolific requiring a minimum payment of the equivalent of $6.50 per hour. The study was published on June 15th, 2020, three weeks after George Floyd was killed. Participants were paid the equivalent of $8.42 per hour (on average).

Research is still emerging, but there is some evidence that Prolific Academic participants are more engaged and attentive and less dishonest than participants in Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and may produce relatively high quality data (Adams et al., 2020; Peer et al., 2017). For example, Peer et al. (2021) found that Prolific produced better quality data than other online data platforms, here MTurk, CloudResearch, Qualtrics and Dynata. It is important to use attention checks when using online data collection methods (Arechar & Rand, 2020; Aronow et al., 2020; Aronow et al., 2019). We dropped 37 people from the final analytical sample (*n*=1,463) because they failed at least one of the four attention checks we included in the survey.

Measures

Table 1 details the measures used in this study.

Attitudes towards defunding the police. To capture levels of support for, or opposition to, the notion of defunding the police, we asked study participants the extent to which they agreed or disagreed (on a five-point scale) with the idea that the police should be defunded. We also measured participant's definition of

defunding the police by asking 'What does defunding the police mean to you?' (see Table 1 for response alternatives). Respondents were asked to choose just one definition.

Political views. We measured political views by asking "Please rate your political views on the following scale" with a 7-point scale ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. We collapsed the variable into three categories: liberal ("extremely liberal" and "liberal"); centrist ("sort of liberal", centrist, and "sort of conservative"); and conservative ("extremely conservative" and "conservative").

Social identity. Measures of social identity focused on solidarity and value alignment with three plausibly related groups. The indicators of identification with the superordinate group that the police represent (adapted from Bradford et al., 2014, 2017) addressed the importance of seeing oneself, and being seen by others, as a law-abiding U.S. citizen. Indicators of identification with the police focused on the sense that one feels a sense of solidarity and value alignment with officers (were adapted from Kyprianides et al., 2021). Similar measures of identification with BLM, which were also based on solidarity and value alignment, were taken from Bradford and Jackson (2022).

Perceptions of police activity. We fielded measures of perceptions of procedural justice, distributive justice, and bounded authority (e.g., Posch et al., 2021; Trinkner et al., 2018). Measures of procedural justice were adapted from Round 5 of the European Social Survey (Jackson & Bradford, 2019). Drawn from Tyler and Jackson (2014), the measures of distributive justice focused on the degree to which people thought police forces generally allocate finite resources (that determine who receives the benefits and burdens of policing) fairly across aggregate social groups (see also, Fine et al., 2022). Measures of bounded authority were adapted from Huq et al. (2017) and Trinkner et al. (2018) ; they captured the extent to which people believe that the police respect the boundaries of their rightful authority and therefore people's sense of autonomy.

We also fielded measures of under-policing and over-policing of Black communities, aimed to operationalize perceptions of systemic racism in policing. Measures of under-policing were adapted from prior measures of effectiveness to focus on police activity, but here the sentiments concern how the police deal with Black communities. Measures of over-policing of Black communities built upon prior work by Tyler et al. (2015) and covered the belief that police tend to treat Black community members as objects of suspicion and people to regulate, as well as perceptions of aggressive policing.

Controls. Finally, we also measured gender, race, education, age, income, and prior experience of arrest.

Plan of Analysis

We used Stata 16.1 to analyze the data. We first used principal component analysis to assess the scale properties for the three social identification constructs and the five perceived police activity constructs (the other constructs were measured using single indicators). Having found reasonably good scale properties[4], we then calculated principal component scores from each separate model to create the various indices.

Second, we fitted a series of binary logit models with the dependent variable being a dichotomous transformation of people's answers to the question "what does defunding the police mean to you?" (0=one of the two types of reform and 1=one of the four types of elimination). Third, we fitted a series of ordinal logit models with the dependent variable being the level of support or opposition to defunding the police (five-point scale). In addition to the controls, independent variables were added in the following sequential steps for each of the two sets of models:

1. Political beliefs;
2. Social identification: superordinate, police and BLM movement, one at a time, then all together; and,
3. Perceptions of police activities: procedural justice, distributive justice, bounded authority, under-policing of Black communities, and over-policing of Black communities.

For the ordinal logit models we tested the parallel odds assumptions using the Brant test[5] and we compared relevant substantive results with those from multi-nominal models. We found that the results from the ordinal regression were reasonably robust.[6]

Results

Starting with some basic descriptive statistics, we found that just under 45% of research participants agreed that the police should be defunded and just under 45% disagreed with the proposition (Table 2). Reflecting the bias of online samples drawn by platforms such as Prolific and MTurk (Clifford et al., 2015; Levay et al., 2016), a majority of respondents said they were liberal (just less than 60% saying they were 'extremely liberal' or 'liberal'), just under 25% said they were 'extremely conservative' or 'conservative', and the remaining 17% said they were 'sort of liberal', 'centrist' or 'sort of conservative'. Liberals were more likely to agree that the police should be defunded than conservatives (66% compared to 7%). We saw an even bigger contrast when looking at the ideological extremes, with 78% of people who said they were extremely liberal also saying that they agreed or strongly agreed that the police should be defunded, and 92% of people who said they were extremely conservative also saying that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that the police should be defunded. This provides support for hypothesis 1a.

When asked "what does defunding mean to you?" (Table 3), 12% of the total sample chose the "eliminate police departments and have no institution of law enforcement" definition, 13% said "eliminate police departments and create new small, community-based police groups to take on the role of law enforcement", 10% said "eliminate police departments and allow local communities to decide how to enforce the law in those communities", 5% said "eliminate police departments and rebuild new police departments (of the same size) from scratch", 21% said "do not eliminate police departments but fundamentally reform them", and 39% said "do not eliminate police departments but some of police funding should be shifted to other agencies to prioritize things like housing, employment, community health, and education". Overall, liberals (68%) were more likely than conservatives (36%) to say that defunding meant reform to them (collapsing the two reform categories into one), and conservatives (64%) were more likely than liberals (32%) to say that defunding means elimination to them (collapsing the four elimination options into one).

A Chi-square test of independence indicated that the association between political views and definition of defunding the police (Table 3) was statistically significant (χ^2 223, $p<.001$, df 30). As with support for defunding, the contrast was even stronger when one compared people who said they were extremely liberal with people who said they are extremely conservative. For example, of those who said they were extremely liberal, 41% said that defunding the police means "do not eliminate police departments but some of police funding should be shifted to other agencies to prioritize things like housing, employment, community health, and education". This compares to the 41% of people who said they were extremely conservative who also said that defunding the police means "eliminate police departments and have no institution of law enforcement." The findings provide support for hypothesis 1b.

Next, and by way of preparation for the regression modelling, we examined the bivariate associations between political views and the three forms of identification. The correlations (all were statistically significant) among the three forms of identification were positive for superordinate and police (r=0.45) and negative for superordinate and BLM (r=-0.24) and for police and BLM (r=-0.46): people who identified strongly with the superordinate group were more likely to identify with the police than those who did not identify with the superordinate group, and less likely to identify with BLM, and people who identified strongly with BLM were less likely to identify with the police than those who did not identify with BLM. Political views was positively correlated with superordinate identification (r=0.39) and identification with police (r=0.50), and negatively correlated with identification with BLM (r=-0.61). This provides support for hypotheses 2a and 2b.

The next step of analysis focused on the potential predictors of people's definitions of defunding (Table 4). We fitted a series of binary logit models, with the dependent variable being defining defunding as elimination (1) versus reform (0). Table 4 shows that adjusting for various controls (i.e., gender, race, education, age, income, and prior experience of arrest), liberals were less likely than centrists and even less likely than conservatives to define defunding as elimination. Models 2, 3 and 4 dropped political views and added each of the three social identification factors one at a time. We found that people who identified with the superordinate group and who identified with the police were more likely to define defunding as elimination, adjusting for the other factors in the model, and people who identified with BLM were less likely to define defunding as elimination (i.e., more likely to define it as reform). Model 5 included political

views and all three social identification factors. The liberal versus centrist contrast shrunk towards one once the social identity factors were added, and the conservative versus centrist adjusted odds ratio moved from just less than 2.7 to around two (i.e., a movement from an increase of 170% in the expected odds to an increase of 100% in the expected odds). Identification with BLM was the only social identity factor that was statistically significant once all three were included in the same fitted model.

Model 6 added perceptions of police activity. We found that distributive justice, bounded authority, and over-policing of Black communities were significant predictors: people who believed the police generally distributed their finite resources fairly and respected the limits of their rightful authority were more likely to define defunding as elimination, and people who believed that the police did not over-police Black communities were also more likely to define defunding as elimination.

The final step focused on predicting support or opposition to defunding the police (Table 5). Model 1 included political views and controls, and models 2, 3 and 4 put in the three social identification factors one at a time. We found a negative conditional correlation (model 2) between superordinate identification and support for defunding the police, a negative conditional correlation (model 3) between police identification and support for defunding the police, and a positive conditional correlation (model 4) between BLM identification and support for defunding the police. When all three were included in model 5, all the identification group factors were statistically significant. Model 6 added procedural justice, distributive justice, bounded authority, and perceptions of the under- and over-policing of Black communities. We found that procedural justice was a negative predictor of support for defunding the police, and under- and over-policing of Black communities were both positive predictors of support for defunding the police.

Looking across the various fitted models (Tables 4 and 5), we found that the strong liberal-conservative contrast (where liberals were much more likely to support defunding the police than conservatives) got weaker as social identity was taken into account, especially when BLM identification was included. Notably, the statistical effect of political views did not change much when perceptions of police activity were included. Overall, our findings largely support hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d. For definitions of defunding the police, we found support for hypotheses 5b, 5c and 5e and only weak support for hypothesis 5f. For support/opposition to defunding the police, we found support for hypotheses 5a, 5d and 5e and only weak support for hypothesis 5f.

Discussion

In the U.S., the police killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other unarmed people from the BIPOC community in 2020 spurred one of the largest social movements in the nation's history. Of particular focus was the defund the police movement, which in addition to discussion over the existence and extent of systemic racism in police, became a semantic debate over what 'defund' meant (eliminate vs. reform police departments).[7] Yet, despite the social, political, and historical significance, little research has been devoted to applying a social identity and group-processes perspective to understand divergent attitudes towards police reform in the U.S.

Drawing upon a large sample of U.S. residents just weeks after the police killing of George Floyd, our study's descriptive statistics should be useful for social scientists interested in understanding police–community relations. While the sample as a whole was equally split on the issue of defund the police (45% agreed and 45% disagreed), clear political differences emerged. Strikingly, 66% of liberals agreed that the police should be defunded compared to just 7% of conservatives, and there were stark differences in how the political groups actually interpreted the meaning of defunding the police. Liberals were far more likely than conservatives to say that defunding meant reform, whereas conservatives typically believed that defunding meant elimination—almost half of those who identified as extremely conservative reported that to them, defunding the police meant "eliminate police departments and have no institution of law enforcement." To our knowledge, this is the first study to provide such descriptive statistics, though it must be noted that this is within a single non-probability sample (even if it is a national quota-panel sample).

This study also contributes to the literature by applying social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) and the group engagement model (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003) to understand people's attitudes towards defunding the police. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974), people's

identification with superordinate groups motivate them to behave in ways that are either consistent with the norms of the group or in support of the group (Giles et al., 2021; Radburn et al., 2018). Blader and Tyler's (2009) group engagement model positions fair policing as a means to promote solidarity and cohesion among community members and encourage identification with the law-abiding sectors of society, which the police ostensibly represent. Stronger ties and identification with both police and society motivates the legitimation of the law via the acquisition of conventional legal norms (Bradford et al., 2014, 2017; Kyprianides et al. 2021, 2022; Tyler & Huo, 2002). That is, people who identify with the group that the police represent (i.e., society) are likely to believe that police are fair and appropriate because they represent society (the superordinate group). As expected, we found that political views were associated positively with superordinate identification and identification with the police, and as some have argued (Bradford et al., 2014; Murphy et al., 2022), identifying as a law-abiding national citizen appears to motivate people to defend the welfare and viability of the police as an important group authority.

Further extending the contribution to the literature (see also, Kyprianides et al., 2021, and Radburn & Stott, 2019), our study builds on the premise that individuals hold multiple identities simultaneously, each of which comprises various social views (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). We tested whether the association between superordinate identification and attitudes towards defunding the police were reduced once we accounted for other aspects of one's social identity and social views. We proposed that police and BLM plausibly represent two fundamentally oppositional (both subordinate to the superordinate category of the law-abiding citizen) groups with which people may identify. In particular, people who strongly identify as a member of the law-abiding U.S. community group should also identify with the police as they exemplify law-abidingness and crime-control. By extension, they should not identify with a social movement like BLM that they plausibly see as representing a fundamental threat to the police and the social categories the police represent. Indeed, we found that subordinate identification partly explained how superordinate identification shapes attitudes towards defunding the police.

In terms of how people defined defunding the police, we found that identification with the BLM movement was the only social identity factor that was statistically significant once all social identity factors were included. When we added perceptions of police activity to the model, we found that defining defunding as elimination was associated with believing that the police generally distribute their finite resources fairly and equally, and respect the limits of their authority, and believe that the police do not over-police Black communities. How one treats out-group members communicates their status and standing with respect to in-group membership and identification (Taşdemir, 2011), and to the extent that people perceived police to engage in distributive injustice, not respect the boundaries of their rightful authority, and over-police Black communities, they were more likely to identify with Black Lives Matter and more likely to think of defunding the institution as reforming that institution (Fine & Tom, 2022; Giles et al., 2021; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

When it came to support for, or opposition to, defunding the police, we found that all three social identity factors explained unique variance in public attitudes. Some of the statistical effects of political views and a smaller amount of the statistical effects of superordinate identification were explained by subordinate identification (i.e., police and BLM identification). A fair amount of the statistical effect of BLM identification was also explained by perceptions of police activity, particularly procedural justice and the under- and over-policing of Black communities. Defunding the police in part aims to respond to what advocates see as violent excesses of the police and police inability to protect and serve communities, especially Black communities, so it makes sense that perceptions of procedural justice and systemic racism (i.e., under- and over-policing) were important.

Some limitations to the study should of course be acknowledged. First, the data were correlational, so no causal claims can be made. Second, the sample was not nationally representative—there is often a trade-off between speed and representativeness, and we wanted to quickly capture the moments of Spring and Summer 2020. Third, our defunding attitudes measures were single items rather than scales. Fourth, a qualitative component to the study would have allowed U.S. to drill into the issues in more detail, potentially drawing out issues of racial resentment and intergroup perceptions for instance.

What, then, are some future lines of empirical enquiry? Prior work has shown correlations between racial resentment and threat, racialized policing beliefs, and support for BLM (Baranauskas, 2022; Drakulich et al., 2021; Miller et al. 2021; Morris & LeCount, 2020; Silver et al., 2022; Updegove et al. 2020). These scholars measured racialized policing beliefs by asking questions like 'to what extent do you think racism is a problem in policing?'. We drew upon existing work into under- and over-policing (Bell, 2017; Prowse et al., 2020) to operationalize racialized policing beliefs via indicators that tapped into the under- and over-policing of Black communities. It is for future research to extend the current study to explore the risks that racial threat and resentment may play.

Future developments of a social identity approach to public attitudes towards police reform could also draw from aspects of Vaughn et al.'s (2022) study. They examined people's attitudes towards the supporters in society of each of these ideas (e.g., do people believe that supporters of abolition view the destruction of property a valid form of protest?). They found, among other things, that Republicans tended to attribute to the supporters of abolition, defunding and reform the desire to reduce the number of police on the street and reduce spending on police services. They also found that Republicans *and* Democrats tended to believe that reducing the number of police on the street would increase crime levels and make them feel personally less safe. Vaughn et al.'s (2022: 128) argue that: "…it is possible that the resource reductions or reallocations explicit in politically salient proposals to reshape policing were perceived as too extreme and potentially threatening to the roles police play in crime control and order maintenance." Extensions of our study could include public perceptions of police effectiveness and ability to manage crime and secure safety, alongside perceptions of police fairness. They could also capture people's construal of the 'other side' of the polarized divide. This might involve capturing people's attitudes towards protestors/supporters and the movements associated with them—potentially in terms of potential out-group denigration in the context of violence, disruption and unrest on the one side, and the maintenance of an unjust and racist status quo on the other side.

Finally, we should acknowledge that the magnitude of some of the statistical effects and group differences in findings may be somewhat to do with the fact that the fieldwork took place just after the police killing of George Floyd. Feelings and intergroup tensions were running high at this time. Parker et al. (2020) reported that around two-thirds of Americans supported BLM in June 2020, which was more than the levels of support found in 2016 and 2017 polls. But there are clear indications that this effect was relatively short-lived. Chudy and Jefferson (2021) found that support for BLM was just under 50% (see also, Jones, 2021). It is for future work to examine the plausible idea that high-profile police killings are one part stimulus to the mobilization of social movements, the resulting heightening of debate and feeling, and potential shifts in policing policy and practice. Taking a longitudinal approach would be especially powerful, because by following people's attitudes over time, one could see not only how sentiment ebbs and flows in the context of before, during and after landmark events, but also the role that group identity processes play in varying levels of polarization in public opinion.

Notes

[1] When thinking about the police using aggressive and controlling styles when interacting with Black and other racial communities, one can apply Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT, see, Dixon et al., 2008; Giles et al., 2007; and Hill et al., forthcoming) to good effect. According to Hill et al. (forthcoming: 8): "The interactions between police and the public can be considered intergroup par excellence for several reasons. The group identity of police is emblazoned on the vehicles driven by patrol officers, and clearly apparent on the uniforms and insignia that police officers wear. Even among officers not wearing uniforms, the badge and gun worn on the waist serve as unambiguous markers of group identity. The group identity of police is also evident in the unique rights granted to police officers, to deprive others of their liberty or even their life." CAT focuses on the ways in which people adjust their communication styles across different contexts. CAT defines accommodative communication as the adjusting of speech styles in a way that communicates "a sense of respect or thoughtfulness", while nonaccommodation involves the signalling of "a sense of disrespect, insensitive, or group differentiation". Dixon et al. (2008) and Viogt et al. (2017) found that Black drivers were more likely to experience "extensive policing" (akin to procedurally unjust "over-policing") than White drivers. As Hill et al. (forthcoming: 14) put it when discussing these findings: "this intergroup communication climate was characterized by officers listening less, being more indifferent and dismissive, less approachable, and less polite than in intra-ethnic situations."

[2] Jackson et al. (2022) found that perceptions of under- and over-policing of Black communities predicted legitimacy, alongside procedural justice, distributive justice and bounded authority, and that when people identified with BLM, the relationships between legitimacy and perceptions of the under- and over-policing of Black communities were stronger compared to when people did not identify with BLM. This was the case for Black and White research participants alike. On this basis, they argued that: "the under- and over-policing of Black communities carries racially-directed messages of diminishment, domination and neglect as well as general messages of unfairness and exclusion that delegitimize the police themselves and the state they represent" (p. 2), and that this was not just case for Black communities.

[3] In a similar study to our own, Vaughn et al. (2022) presented research participants with the following connected slogans and substance: (1) "abolishing the police" and "eliminate police and reallocate funds to other activities"; (2) "defunding the police" and "reduce police budgets and reallocate funds to social services"; and (3) "reforming the police" and "keep the police on the streets, but make sure they are well-trained and carefully monitored". They found little support for the slogan and substance associated with "abolishing the police"; a bit more support for the slogan and substance associated with "defunding the police", particularly among Democrats who expressed more positive attitudes towards the "reform" substance compared to the "reform" slogan; and still more support for the slogan and substance associated with "reforming the police", particularly among Democrats. Interestingly, Republicans expressed a fair amount more support for the reform substance than for the reform slogan, which according to Vaughn and colleagues (p. 127), suggests opposition to the "reforming the police" slogan among Republicans that stems from "…misperceptions about the true underlying goals behind these movements, or the 'imaginative limitations' of the mass public". Our approach to measurement strategy is a little different: (a) we ask the degree to which people support or oppose "defunding the police"; (b) we present research participants with six different definitions of "defunding the police" and ask them to choose a definition that they agree with; (c) we estimate differences in support and definition across political views; and (d) we assess whether observed differences in political views are partly explained by social identity and perceptions of police activities (hypotheses 2a to 5f).

[4] For superordinate identification, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 3.0 and 1.3 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.42, 0.34, 0.42, 0.46, 0.36 and 0.44. For police identification, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 2.7 and 0.2 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.58, 0.57 and 0.57. For BLM identification, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 2.8 and 0.1 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.58, 0.57 and 0.58. For procedural justice, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 2.4 and 0.4 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.58, 0.56 and 0.59. For distributive justice, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 4.3 and 0.2 respectively, and the loadings

on the first component were 0.45, 0.46, 0.45, 0.44 and 0.45. For bounded authority, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 5.1 and 0.7 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.40, 0.38, 0.38, 0.40, 0.40, 0.35 and 0.33. For over-policing of Black communities, the eigenvalues on the first and second components were 5.2 and 0.2 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.40, 0.41, 0.41, 0.41, 0.41 and 0.41. For under-policing of Black communities, the eigenvalue on the first and second components were 4.6 and 0.8 respectively, and the loadings on the first component were 0.44, 0.43, 0.42, 0.44, 0.43 and 0.26.

[5] The Brant tests of parallel regression assumptions for the theoretically important constructs in Model 6 of Table 4 were: superordinate identification (χ^2 9.32, p=.025, df 3), police identification (χ^2 1.97, p=.578, df 3), BLM identification (χ^2 9.39, p=.025, df 3), procedural justice (χ^2 0.72, p=.868, df 3), distributive justice (χ^2 1.98, p=.576, df 3), bounded authority (χ^2 0.55, p=.908, df 3), over-policing of Black communities (χ^2 0.85, p=.838, df 3), and under-policing of Black communities (χ^2 1.20, p=.752, df 3).

[6] A fitted multinomial logit model for Model 6 of Table 4, with strongly disagree as the reference category, produced the following coefficients for superordinate identification: somewhat disagree -.195 (p=.208); neither agree nor disagree -.625 (p<.001); somewhat agree -.623 (p<.001); and strongly agree -.695 (p<.001). For BLM identification, the coefficients were: somewhat disagree .667 (<.001); neither agree nor disagree .923 (p<.001); somewhat agree 1.140 (p<.001); and strongly agree 1.222 (p<.001). For superordinate identification, there was a difference between disagreeing (strongly or somewhat) and the rest, and for BLM identification, there was a difference between strongly disagreeing, somewhat disagreeing, and the rest (adjusting for the other factors in the model). As such, the jumps between contrasts were in the hypothesized directions, even if for superordinate and BLM identification they were not monotonic across the five categories. Because the findings from the ordinal and multinomial logit models were very similar, we stick to interpreting the fitted ordinal regression models for the sake of simplicity.

[7] While some activists from BLM and elsewhere were clear that that did mean 'abolish' in a literal sense, it is equally clear that in the wider debate the meaning of the word 'defund' was unclear and contested, perhaps precisely because some used it as a synonym for abolition while others did not.

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Political orientation, superordinate and inter-group identification and (un)just use of police power

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Tables

Table 1. Wording of measures

Construct	Indicators
Support for defunding the police *(strongly disagree-strongly agree, 5-point scale)*	How much do you agree/disagree that police in the U.S. should be defunded?

Meaning of defunding the police
 (6 options, respondents choose just one)
	To you, defunding the police means:
	     Eliminate police departments and have no institution of law enforcement
	     Eliminate police departments and create new small, community-based police groups to take on the role of law enforcement
	     Eliminate police departments and allow local communities to decide how to enforce the law in those communities
	     Eliminate police departments and rebuild new police departments (of the same size) from scratch
	     Do not eliminate police departments but fundamentally reform them
	     Do not eliminate police departments but some of police funding should be shifted to other agencies to prioritize things like housing, employment, community health, and education

Political views *(extremely liberal-extremely conservative, 7-point scale)*	Please rate your political ideology on the following scale.
Superordinate identification *(strongly disagree-strongly agree, 5-point scale)*	I see myself first and foremost as a member of the U.S.A. community I see myself first and foremost as a law-abiding citizen It is important to me to be seen by others to be a member of the U.S.A. community It is important to me to be seen by others as a law-abiding citizen
Identification with police *(strongly disagree-strongly agree, 5-point scale)*	In general, I identify with the police In general, I feel similar to the police In general, I feel a sense of solidarity with the police
Identification with Black Lives Matter movement *(strongly disagree/strongly agree, 5-point scale)*	In general, I identify with the BLM movement/cause In general, I feel similar to the people in the BLM movement/cause In general, I feel a sense of solidarity with the BLM movement/cause

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Procedural justice
(never-always, 5-point scale)

How often (if ever) do you think the police in your neighbourhood make fair and impartial decisions in the cases they deal with?

How often (if ever) do you think the police in your neighbourhood explain their decisions to the people they deal with?

How often (if ever) do you think the police in your neighbourhood treat people with respect?

Distributive justice
(strongly disagree-strongly agree, 5-point scale)

The police provide the same level of security to all community members.

The police provide the same quality of service to all community members.

The police enforce the law consistently when dealing with all community members.

The police deploy their resources in this city in an equitable manner.

The police ensure that everyone has equal access to the services they provide.

Bounded authority
(always-never, 5-point scale)

How often do you think the police exceed their authority?

How often do you think the police get involved in situations that they have no right to be in?

How often do you think the police bother people for no good reason?

How often do you think the police overstep the boundaries of their authority?

How often do you think the police abuse their power?

How often do you think the police violate your personal sense of freedom?

How often do you think the police restrict your right to determine you own path in life?

Under-policing of Black communities
(never/always, 5-point scale)

The police do not protect African American communities

The police do not care about solving problems in African Americans communities

The police do not keep African American neighbourhoods safe

The police do not care about effectively solving crimes in African American communities

The police do not care about responding quickly to emergencies in African American communities

The police do not put enough officers in African American communities to effectively stop crime

Over-policing of Black communities
(never/always, 5-point scale)

The police are generally suspicious of African Americans

The police tend to treat African Americans as if they were probably doing something wrong

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The police tend to treat African Americans as if they might be dangerous or violent

Police officers tend to escalate to violence more easily when dealing with African Americans

Police enforce the law more strictly when dealing with African Americans

The police tend to stop, question, and frisk African Americans more than they should.

Political orientation, superordinate and inter-group identification and (un)just use of police power

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of political ideology and support/opposition to defunding the police

Political ideology	How much do you disagree/agree that police in the U.S. should be defunded?					
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Extremely liberal	11	18	19	50	123	221 (15.0%)
	5.0%	8.1%	8.6%	22.6%	55.7%	100%
Liberal	43	58	71	157	94	423 (28.9%)
	10.2%	13.7%	16.8%	37.1%	22.2	100%
Sort of liberal	38	39	43	71	31	222 (15.2%)
	17.1%	17.6%	19.4%	32.0%	14.0%	100%
Centrist	95	38	41	59	20	253 (17.3%)
	37.6%	15.0%	16.2%	23.3%	7.9%	100%
Sort of conservative	81	30	14	9	2	136 (9.3%)
	59.6%	22.1%	10.3%	6.6%	1.5%	100%
Conservative	122	13	11	7	5	158 (10.9%)
	77.2%	8.2%	7.0%	4.4%	3.2%	100%
Extremely conservative	43	2	2	0	2	49 (3.4%)
	87.8%	4.1%	4.1%	0.0%	4.1%	100%
Total	433	198	201	353	277	1,462
	29.6%	13.5%	13.8%	24.2%	19.0%	100%

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Table 3. Cross-tabulation of political ideology and definition of defunding the police

Political ideology	What does defunding the police mean to you?						Total
	Eliminate police departments and have no institution of law enforcement	Eliminate police departments and create new small, community-based police groups to take on the role of law enforcement	Eliminate police departments and allow local communities to decide how to enforce the law in those communities	Eliminate police departments and rebuild new police departments (of the same size) from scratch	Do not eliminate police departments but fundamentally reform them	Do not eliminate police departments but some of police funding should be shifted to other agencies to prioritize things like housing, employment, community health, and education	
Extremely liberal	13	38	24	16	40	89	220 (15.0%)
	5.9%	17.3%	10.9%	7.3%	18.2%	40.5%	100%
Liberal	23	42	25	25	91	217	423 (28.9%)
	5.4%	9.9%	5.9%	5.9%	21.5%	51.3%	100%
Sort of liberal	12	23	20	10	65	93	222 (15.2%)
	5.4%	10.3%	9.0%	4.5%	29.2%	41.7%	100%
Centrist	32	32	30	12	68	79	253 (17.3%)
	12.7%	12.7%	11.9%	4.7%	26.9%	31.2%	100%
Sort of conservative	29	19	23	5	15	45	136 (9.3%)
	21.3%	14.0%	16.9%	3.7%	11.0%	33.1%	100%
Conservative	51	33	15	5	23	32	158 (10.9%)
	32.1%	20.8%	9.4%	3.1%	14.5%	20.1%	100%
Extremely conservative	20	3	4	2	9	11	49 (3.4%)
	40.8%	6.1%	8.2%	4.1%	18.4%	22.5%	100%
Total	180	190	141	75	311	566	1,462
	12.3%	13.0%	9.6%	5.1%	21.3%	38.7%	100%

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Table 4. Logistic regression modeling of assigned definition of defunding the police (0=reform, 1=elimination)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Female	0.72**	0.69**	0.71**	0.77*	0.76*	0.78*
	[0.58, 0.91]	[0.56, 0.86]	[0.57, 0.89]	[0.61, 0.97]	[0.61, 0.96]	[0.61, 0.98]
Age	1	1	1	1	1	1
	[0.99, 1.01]	[0.99, 1.01]	[0.99, 1.01]	[0.99, 1.00]	[0.99, 1.00]	[0.99, 1.01]
Black (ref: White)	0.92	0.88	0.97	1.39	1.27	1.24
	[0.64, 1.30]	[0.62, 1.25]	[0.68, 1.37]	[0.96, 2.00]	[0.87, 1.86]	[0.84, 1.81]
Other racial group (ref: White)	1.08	1.03	1.05	1.07	1.11	1.05
	[0.80, 1.47]	[0.76, 1.39]	[0.78, 1.41]	[0.78, 1.45]	[0.81, 1.51]	[0.77, 1.45]
Education: High school or equivalent, some college (ref: Less than high school)	0.25	0.26	0.26	0.24	0.26	0.25
	[0.04, 1.49]	[0.04, 1.48]	[0.04, 1.49]	[0.04, 1.58]	[0.04, 1.67]	[0.04, 1.64]
Education: Bachelor's degree (ref: Less than high school)	0.2	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.21	0.2
	[0.03, 1.19]	[0.03, 1.12]	[0.03, 1.13]	[0.03, 1.27]	[0.03, 1.37]	[0.03, 1.34]
Education: Master's, professor, doctoral degree (ref: Less than high school)	0.29	0.25	0.25	0.28	0.32	0.31
	[0.05, 1.75]	[0.04, 1.48]	[0.04, 1.49]	[0.04, 1.89]	[0.05, 2.12]	[0.05, 2.12]
Income: $15k-$34,999 (ref: less than $15k)	0.97	1.07	1.05	1.12	1.06	1.08
	[0.63, 1.50]	[0.70, 1.64]	[0.68, 1.60]	[0.72, 1.74]	[0.68, 1.64]	[0.69, 1.69]
Income: $35k-$49,999 (ref: less than $15k)	1.12	1.22	1.21	1.23	1.17	1.17
	[0.71, 1.76]	[0.78, 1.90]	[0.78, 1.90]	[0.78, 1.94]	[0.74, 1.85]	[0.74, 1.86]
Income: $50k-$74,999 (ref: less than $15k)	1.01	1.12	1.09	1.1	1.05	1.03
	[0.66, 1.54]	[0.74, 1.70]	[0.72, 1.67]	[0.72, 1.69]	[0.68, 1.62]	[0.66, 1.59]
Income: $75k and above (ref: less than $15k)	0.92	1.05	1.02	1.07	1.01	1.06
	[0.61, 1.40]	[0.69, 1.57]	[0.68, 1.54]	[0.71, 1.63]	[0.66, 1.54]	[0.69, 1.62]
Liberal (ref: centrist)	0.68**				0.88	0.92
	[0.53, 0.87]				[0.67, 1.16]	[0.70, 1.22]
Conservative (ref: centrist)	2.65***				2.06***	1.82**
	[1.88, 3.75]				[1.43, 2.98]	[1.25, 2.65]
Arrest: been arrested once (ref: never)	1.01	1.04	1.06	1.08	1.05	0.99
	[0.70, 1.45]	[0.73, 1.48]	[0.74, 1.51]	[0.75, 1.56]	[0.73, 1.52]	[0.68, 1.44]
Arrest: been arrested twice (ref: never)	0.75	0.83	0.83	0.77	0.72	0.68
	[0.40, 1.40]	[0.45, 1.52]	[0.45, 1.53]	[0.41, 1.44]	[0.38, 1.37]	[0.36, 1.30]
Arrest: been arrested three times (ref: never)	1.31	1.26	1.43	1.31	1.27	1.24
	[0.62, 2.74]	[0.61, 2.61]	[0.69, 2.98]	[0.62, 2.79]	[0.59, 2.71]	[0.57, 2.70]

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Arrest: been arrested four times or more (ref: never)	0.42*	0.41*	0.42*	0.36*	0.38*	0.32**
	[0.19, 0.93]	[0.19, 0.89]	[0.19, 0.93]	[0.16, 0.81]	[0.17, 0.84]	[0.14, 0.72]
Superordinate identification		1.15*			0.97	0.97
		[1.01, 1.31]			[0.84, 1.13]	[0.83, 1.12]
Identification with police			1.23***		0.91	0.89
			[1.09, 1.40]		[0.78, 1.07]	[0.73, 1.08]
Identification with BLM				0.58***	0.64***	0.71***
				[0.51, 0.66]	[0.55, 0.74]	[0.59, 0.85]
Procedural justice						0.86
						[0.69, 1.08]
Distributive justice						1.34**
						[1.08, 1.68]
Bounded authority						1.24*
						[1.01, 1.52]
Over-policing of Black communities						0.68***
						[0.55, 0.84]
Under-policing of Black communities						1.22
						[0.97, 1.52]
N	1394	1394	1394	1394	1394	1394

Note: adjusted odds ratios (exponentiated coefficients) and 95% CIs given. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

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Table 5. Ordinal regression modeling of assigned definition of support for defunding the police (0=reform, 1=elimination)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Female	1.28*	1.26*	1.18	1.09	1.05	1.02
	[1.05, 1.57]	[1.03, 1.55]	[0.96, 1.45]	[0.88, 1.34]	[0.85, 1.30]	[0.82, 1.26]
Age	0.97***	0.97***	0.98***	0.97***	0.99***	0.99**
	[0.96, 0.97]	[0.97, 0.98]	[0.97, 0.99]	[0.97, 0.98]	[0.98, 0.99]	[0.98, 1.00]
Black (ref: White)	1.91***	2.35***	1.67**	0.81	0.9	0.78
	[1.39, 2.61]	[1.70, 3.24]	[1.21, 2.30]	[0.58, 1.12]	[0.64, 1.27]	[0.55, 1.10]
Other racial group (ref: White)	1.24	1.38*	1.34*	1.27	1.45*	1.37*
	[0.95, 1.62]	[1.05, 1.81]	[1.02, 1.76]	[0.96, 1.67]	[1.09, 1.92]	[1.03, 1.82]
Education: High school or equivalent, some college (ref: Less than high school)	0.89	1.05	1.13	0.92	1.65	1.45
	[0.17, 4.63]	[0.19, 5.69]	[0.18, 6.93]	[0.17, 4.96]	[0.27, 10.06]	[0.23, 9.04]
Education: Bachelor's degree (ref: Less than high school)	0.85	1.03	1.11	0.84	1.56	1.46
	[0.16, 4.45]	[0.19, 5.60]	[0.18, 6.87]	[0.15, 4.57]	[0.25, 9.56]	[0.23, 9.16]
Education: Master's, professor, doctoral degree (ref: Less than high school)	1.17	1.38	1.65	1.05	2.05	1.77
	[0.22, 6.19]	[0.25, 7.60]	[0.26, 10.27]	[0.19, 5.77]	[0.33, 12.75]	[0.28, 11.24]
Income: $15k-$34,999 (ref: less than $15k)	0.9	0.94	0.94	0.77	0.82	0.8
	[0.61, 1.32]	[0.64, 1.40]	[0.63, 1.41]	[0.52, 1.16]	[0.55, 1.24]	[0.53, 1.21]
Income: $35k-$49,999 (ref: less than $15k)	0.97	0.97	0.92	0.92	0.86	0.83
	[0.65, 1.46]	[0.64, 1.47]	[0.61, 1.40]	[0.61, 1.40]	[0.56, 1.32]	[0.54, 1.29]
Income: $50k-$74,999 (ref: less than $15k)	0.78	0.84	0.86	0.71	0.79	0.86
	[0.53, 1.14]	[0.57, 1.24]	[0.58, 1.28]	[0.48, 1.06]	[0.53, 1.19]	[0.57, 1.29]
Income: $75k and above (ref: less than $15k)	1.01	1.1	1.14	0.87	0.99	1
	[0.69, 1.46]	[0.76, 1.60]	[0.78, 1.67]	[0.59, 1.28]	[0.67, 1.46]	[0.67, 1.48]
Liberal (ref: centrist)	5.44***	4.65***	3.75***	3.05***	2.25***	2.18***
	[4.35, 6.80]	[3.71, 5.83]	[2.98, 4.72]	[2.41, 3.85]	[1.77, 2.87]	[1.70, 2.78]
Conservative (ref: centrist)	0.16***	0.20***	0.24***	0.33***	0.48***	0.51**
	[0.11, 0.24]	[0.13, 0.29]	[0.16, 0.36]	[0.21, 0.51]	[0.31, 0.74]	[0.33, 0.80]
Arrest: been arrested once (ref: never)	1.11	1.15	1.04	1	1.01	0.95
	[0.80, 1.54]	[0.82, 1.60]	[0.75, 1.46]	[0.71, 1.41]	[0.72, 1.44]	[0.67, 1.35]
Arrest: been arrested twice (ref: never)	2.15**	1.93*	1.85*	2.33**	1.91*	1.65
	[1.23, 3.77]	[1.09, 3.40]	[1.03, 3.31]	[1.30, 4.17]	[1.06, 3.47]	[0.90, 3.05]
Arrest: been arrested three times (ref: never)	2.02*	2.06*	1.13	1.87	1.34	1.23
	[1.05, 3.89]	[1.06, 4.01]	[0.57, 2.24]	[0.94, 3.73]	[0.67, 2.70]	[0.61, 2.50]
Arrest: been arrested four times or more (ref: never)	0.99	0.84	0.75	1.23	0.94	0.86

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	[0.53, 1.85]	[0.45, 1.59]	[0.39, 1.42]	[0.63, 2.39]	[0.48, 1.86]	[0.44, 1.68]
Superordinate identification		0.56***			0.68***	0.73***
		[0.49, 0.63]			[0.59, 0.78]	[0.64, 0.84]
Identification with police			0.36***		0.47***	0.76**
			[0.31, 0.41]		[0.40, 0.54]	[0.64, 0.92]
Identification with BLM				3.49***	3.08***	2.04***
				[3.00, 4.05]	[2.64, 3.60]	[1.71, 2.44]
Procedural justice						0.79*
						[0.64, 0.97]
Distributive justice						0.99
						[0.81, 1.21]
Bounded authority						1.2
						[0.99, 1.45]
Over-policing of Black communities						1.56***
						[1.26, 1.94]
Under-policing of Black communities						1.59***
						[1.30, 1.94]
/						
cut1	0.13*	0.22	0.25	0.09**	0.28	0.23
	[0.02, 0.70]	[0.04, 1.23]	[0.04, 1.62]	[0.02, 0.49]	[0.04, 1.78]	[0.04, 1.47]
cut2	0.3	0.52	0.65	0.25	0.86	0.75
	[0.06, 1.63]	[0.09, 2.98]	[0.10, 4.14]	[0.04, 1.39]	[0.14, 5.40]	[0.12, 4.83]
cut3	0.65	1.17	1.55	0.61	2.31	2.14
	[0.12, 3.53]	[0.21, 6.66]	[0.24, 9.85]	[0.11, 3.42]	[0.36, 14.57]	[0.33, 13.90]
cut4	2.88	5.54	8.29*	3.21	14.55**	14.79**
	[0.53, 15.56]	[0.98, 31.44]	[1.30, 52.77]	[0.58, 17.80]	[2.30, 92.09]	[2.27, 96.12]
N	1395	1395	1395	1395	1395	1395

Note: adjusted odds ratios (exponentiated coefficients) and 95% CIs given. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.