The Background and repercussions of the George Floyd case

László Christián, Ákos Erdős & Gergő Háló

Published online: 09 Jun 2022.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

*Corresponding author: Gergő Háló,
National University of Public Service:
Nemzeti Kozszolgalati Egyetem,
HUNGARY
Email: halo.gergo@gmail.com

Reviewing editor:
Heng Choon (Oliver) Chan,
Department of Social and Behavioral
Sciences, City University of
Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Additional information is available at
the end of the article

SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Background and repercussions of the George Floyd case

László Christián[1], Ákos Erdős[2] and Gergő Háló[3]*

Abstract: After the violent death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, demonstrations and riots against police brutality started in numerous cities of the United States under the banner of Black Lives Matter demanding a thorough reform of law enforcement. Several studies examined factors of police violence and discrimination related to the incident. However, we are still short on comprehensive frameworks to adequately explicate the complexity of the events following. Amongst hundreds of similar cases annually, the question arises: what makes the George Floyd incident exceptionally prone to motivate collective social actions of such scale? Applying a framework of collective action theory, we argue for a detailed interpretation of the emerging circumstances, accounting for both traditional conflict theoretical perspectives, as well as the individual, highly situated characteristics of the focal

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

László Christián, Vice-Rector for Education of Ludovika-University of Public Service since 1st January 2020, he is a police brigadier general and lawyer. He has been the Head of the Department of Private Security and Local Governmental Law Enforcement of the Faculty of Law Enforcement of Ludovika-UPS since 2013. He is a habilitated associate professor and has been teaching in higher education since 2002. He started his professional career at the Customs and Finance Guard in 2002, then continued at the National Tax and Customs Office in various management positions. Since 2016 he has been a regular member of the Police. He is the Editor-in-Chief of Magyar Rendészet (Hungarian Law Enforcement) and the author of 130 publications.

Ákos Erdős is a customs major and an assistant lecturer at the University of Public Service, Hungary, Faculty of Law Enforcement Department of Customs and Finance Gurads. He is also a PhD student at Doctoral School of Law Enrecoment. His main research interests are in law enforcement and addiction, with a special focus on psychological and addiction problems affecting law enforcement personnel.

Gergő Háló is an assistant lecturer at the University of Public Service, Budapest and a PhD student at Corvinus University of Budapest specializing in social communication research and sociology of science.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The primary aim of our study is to highlight social, economic, police professional, and political aspects that have most probably influenced the course of events following the death of George Floyd. During our research we have encountered diverse narratives on the 2020 US events with a political, economic, or minority-based focus, and each revealed a unique assessment of the facts, some true and other distorted. Based on our results, we argue that law enforcement cannot exist in a social, political, and economic vacuum. Changes occurring at various levels of a given community necessarily impact the operation of law enforcement as well.

incident—with a special attention towards the COVID-19 pandemic as not only social, but also psychological, economical, and political context.

Subjects: Sociology; Social Movements; Racial & Ethnic Politics; Law & Society; Sociology & Social Policy; Police

Keywords: George Floyd's death; US police; police violence; trust in police; social dissatisfaction

1. Introduction

On 25 May 2020, in Minneapolis, an African American citizen, George Floyd, lost his life following police action taken against him. According to an independent expert investigation, his death was caused by a heart failure and pressure on his neck (Knopf, 2020). After the event, demonstrations and riots against police violence held under the banner of Black Lives Matter started in numerous cities of the United States. As an indication of the scale of these demonstrations, similar movements were seen in a number of European countries, for instance, the United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark (Smith-Spark, 2020).

The radicalization of the occurrences connected to the George Floyd case is presumably not justified only by the fact that a person was killed because of police violence. Compared with data from other Western-type democracies, measures taken by US police officers are more likely to result in a lethal outcome. In fact, the annual number of lethal use of firearms or law enforcement measures by police as a ratio per million inhabitants is significantly higher in the US (2.9) compared to, for instance, Canada (0.7), Germany (0.1), or the United Kingdom (0.04), resulting in an average of 930 casualties per year, whereas the same number is 25 in Canada, eight in Germany, and only two in the UK (Baird, 2015). Hirschfield (2015) writes, "Police in England—where modern policing and many American cultural and legal traditions originated—are rarely compelled to use deadly force. US police killed more people in the first 24 days of 2015 than British and Welsh police have killed in the last 24 years" (Hirschfield, 2015, p. 1111). In some estimates, over 25 years around the turn of the millennium (1980–2005) as many as 9,500 people lost their lives due to police action in the United States (Lowenstein, 2007). In addition, numerous deaths marked the mid-2010s and received much publicity (e.g., Eric Garner, John Crawford, Michael Brown, Tanisha Anderson, Tamir Rice and Anthony Hill, among others; Marcus, 2016).

Considering the above, the question arises as to why the events of 25 May 2020, led to social incidents with such serious consequences and broad international impact. Notwithstanding, mapping the totality of causal relationships in this case would be an exercise reaching way beyond the scope of this study. However, what we seek to identify are the most significant social, political, economic and law enforcement related factors which were most likely to have influenced the occurrences.

2. Relevant circumstances of the unfolding events

Referenced by other international studies (Langa & Philip, 2019; Rodenberg, 2020), the Mapping Police Violence website (MPV (Mapping Police Violence), 2020) database shows that 598 US citizens lost their lives due to police action between 1 January 2020, and 30 June 2020. Nevertheless, it was only after the May 25 Minneapolis case that demonstrations and riots broke out nationwide and internationally, protesting against police violence and racial discrimination. It is thus assumed that, apart from the death in this incident, many other—social, political, and economic—factors prompted the occurrence and the unfolding of the following events and contributed to their internationalization and radicalization. In fact, numerous aspects may have caused the demonstrations after the death of George Floyd to turn criminal and extremist. Earlier research suggests that the participants in mass movements that turn violent are motivated by situational, individual,

family, community, and social factors (Morrell et al., 2011), and so these factors most likely played an important role in the escalation and criminalization of the American demonstrations (Table 3).

The behaviorist theory of collective action holds that social phenomena such as panic, mass hysteria, strikes, demonstrations or even some social movements (Black Lives Matter can be considered one of these) only appear to be different, but all involve collective action and are rooted in the same logic: "At the same time, these forms of collective action indicate the abnormal functioning of the social system; occur as an outcome of some social tension or disturbance", states Mikecz (2010, p. 111). Collective actions, such as demonstrations and riots, are thus indicative on the background of social tensions (Parsons, 1960). Notwithstanding, the processes and aspects behind these tensions can be extremely heterogeneous. In our study, based on the relevant literature, we examine the factors that could have contributed to the outbreak and escalation of open and mass protests against the police and its practices, including police brutality, following the misconduct that led to the death of George Floyd. First, we take traditional conflict theoretical perspectives on policing and discrimination into account. Second, we examine the individual characteristics of the incident that made it especially prompt to serve as basis for collective actions—with a special attention towards the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its social, health-related, political, and economic consequences—as well as factors leading to the criminal escalation of events.

3. Conflict theoretical perspectives on policing

A bulk of relevant research is of *conflict theory* that aims to highlight and examine certain differences in power, threat, and subordination between groups, racial and ethnic groups, in particular (Graham et al., 2020; Hawkins, 1987; Liska et al., 1985; Walker et al., 2012). These differences are especially accented along the Black-White racial divide, and in perceptions of the criminal justice system, specifically perceptions of injustice (Brooks, 2000; Hagan & Albonetti, 1982; Weitzer, 2000; Wortley et al., 1997). In fact, there seem to be a significant racial discrimination in the US police practice (Glover, 2009; Strickler & Lawson, 2020), that—amplified by a general distrust in the police (James et al., 2020; Worden, 1995), the lenient legal regulations on firearms (Sheats et al., 2018; Stinson, 2020; Szabó, 2020), and a low rate of legal accountability among police officers using lethal enforcement methods (MPV (Mapping Police Violence), 2020)—prompt serious social tensions.

3.1. Ethnic discrimination

In law enforcement, a pure form of discrimination is the so-called racial profiling. "This form of discrimination is founded on the mistaken presumption that there is a correlation between ethnic, racial, religious or national minority status and criminal behavior [...]" (Uszkiewicz, 2012, p. 382). Researchers began examining these cases of discrimination of various ethnic minorities by the police as early as the 1990s (Glover, 2009). An affective outcome of prevalent ethnic profiling is that even the sight of a police patrol car creates a defensive attitude in members of the minority group, and the possibility of interaction with a police officer creates anxiety and tension (Birzer, 2013). Thus, police action placed in negative context may easily result in a conflict between the participants.

George Floyd was an African American citizen. In cases like the Minneapolis one, the criticism expressed by society is often targeted at the discriminative behavior of certain members of the police force. One of the stated reasons for the mass protests after the event we are examining was also the statistically proven conclusion that the risk of death resulting directly from police violence is extremely high among non-white citizens (Edwards et al., 2019). A survey of data on the period between 2009 and 2012 found that the rate of police action with a lethal outcome was 2.8 times higher among African Americans than for white citizens. Besides, although the majority (83%) of the people who died due to police action were armed, in the time frame under scrutiny there were significantly more unarmed casualties among African Americans (14.8%) than among unarmed whites (9.4%) or Hispanic Americans (5.8%; Sarah et al., 2016). From 2013 to 2017 African

American citizens were 3.23 times more likely to lose their lives due to police action than whites were (Schwartz & Jahn, 2020).

Notwithstanding, Reiner (2010) found that police officers are only slightly more prejudiced than the community environments in which they serve. Police prejudice is partly a reflection of the general bias of mainstream society. Consequently, a discriminative and prejudiced attitude on the part of the police is not the only explanation for a greater implication of an ethnic minority in police use of a weapon. Nevertheless, and independently of the strength of a causal relationship, the disproportion in the rate of involvement of the various ethnicities in the application of lethal force may fuel social tension on its own.

3.2. General distrust

The above-mentioned social tensions arising in line with serious racial discrimination in police practice is worsened by the fact, that in the US, social trust in the police has, in general, significantly decreased in comparison with the early 2000s (2003). According to recent surveys (James et al., 2020), less than half of US citizens trust the police authorities. For our inquiry, it is even more notable that responses of white and non-white citizens show a marked difference. According to the same source, in 2019, 59% of white citizens trusted the police, while this rate was only 40% among other ethnicities.

Some studies suggest that the lack of confidence in the police is extremely important because it is one of the motives behind armed violence in the major US urban centers (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2020a). The extremely high rate of violent behavior may lead to a reinforcement of the image of the "opponent civilian" among members of the police force, which may make them more likely to use force (Worden, 1995). Accordingly, an indirect causal relationship may be established between social distrust and police violence through armed violent criminal acts.

3.3. Lenient legal regulations

As Szabó says in his recent study, "[t]he individual right to possessing and carrying a firearm for the purpose of self-defense is unquestionable in the US legal system" (2020). Regarding the constitutionally entrenched right to bear, many states find that even the rare restrictions upon this right are too permissive compared with European regulations. As an inevitable consequence, the legal framework governing the right to use a weapon and force is also less restrictive than in most European countries.

The issue of possessing and using weapons easily drifts into the focus point of social tensions, since the rate of involvement in homicide is highest among the African American population (Sheats et al., 2018), and their likelihood of being victims of armed crime is approximately twelve times higher than in the case of white citizens (Szondi, 2018). Data published on Giffords Law Center's website—drawn from WISQARS's "Fatal Injury Reports"—indicates that black Americans are 10 times more likely than white Americans to be murdered with a gun (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2020b). Moreover, regarding their proportion in the population, black Americans also have a greater chance of being involved with police use of firearms (Edwards et al., 2019). In the 1970s and 1980s, several cases were publicized across the United States when the police used firearms against unarmed African American men or youths. At that time state laws left it up to police officers' situation awareness and discretion to decide whether the use of deadly force was warranted. A more limited scope of discretion in the use of weapons by police was established only after two precedent rulings by the Supreme Court of the United States *(Tennessee v. Garner, 471 U.S. 1, 1985; Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386, 1989;* Stinson, 2020).

Following the events in Minneapolis, the necessity of enacting more restrictive laws on police activities repeatedly emerged in the social discourse. The more so because the casualty was, once again, an African American citizen. Moreover, independently of the details of this specific case,

there is remarkable difference between non-white and white citizens in the assessment of police use of weapons and their general practice (Strickler & Lawson, 2020). As a consequence of police action causing the death of George Floyd, a law enforcement related regulation amendment passed by Congress in June 2020 ordered the restriction of no-knock warrants used in cases of drug abuse, of various suffocation techniques applied by police as well as the militarization of law enforcement procedures, including the use of military methods for law enforcement purposes. Apart from these limitations, the amendment also addressed police training concerning the issue of ethnic profiling (A Bill).[1]

This point takes us to the most sensitive issue of law enforcement: police discretion or discretionary law enforcement. Here we are not referring to the full consideration, which is routine in state administration, but to unforeseeable situations in which a police officer is unable to participate impersonally, as required by their profession, because they are under double pressure to comply with expectations about efficiency and service interests on one hand, and law enforcement, procedural requirements, and respect for human rights on the other. These two aspects rarely coincide, so a police officer must decide whether to place emphasis on legitimacy or efficiency (Finszter, 2018). As a result of the 2020 events, the problem of discretionary law enforcement, which generally characterizes law enforcement, has come to the spotlight again. Researchers usually agree that it would be impossible to root out cases from the practice of law enforcement in which a member of the police decides based on their own discretion. However, a requirement of discretionary law enforcement is that it should be used exceptionally, taking certain considerations into account, and in a verifiable way (Balla, 2015; Christián, 2011). Considering the content of the police reforms referred to above, a need for clearer requirements for discretionary decision making by the police seems to arise.

3.4. Low rate of legal accountability

Tension between civil society, especially ethnic minorities, and the police is further exacerbated by the extremely low rate of accountability for the use of lethal force by the police. The Mapping Police Violence website data cited earlier show that, in the US, there was no indictment in 99% of the cases of use of lethal police force between 2013 and 2019 (MPV (Mapping Police Violence), 2020). From January 1 to 30 June 2020, police officers were held liable for their actions in only six cases out of 598 deaths resulting from police action. In two of the cases, physical coercion led to the death of the victim (MPV (Mapping Police Violence), 2020), and one was the Minneapolis case discussed in this study.

As it is known, a finding of legal liability is based on the examination and evaluation of the facts. Consequently, the low number of cases of legal accountability implies positive results indicating that police practice was lawful. However, the minimal rate of accountable lethal cases may still fuel social tensions because of the underlying conflict between the fact-based application of the law by judges and the subjective assessment by society. The factual state of affairs stated by the court is already under legal control in which the inseparable nature of law and fact is represented (Varga, 2001). In contrast to this, the process of social judgment is influenced by emotions and beliefs rather than a rational and objective evaluation of facts.

4. The individual characteristics of the incident

Besides the above-mentioned systematic problems, specific—and situated—characteristics of the events emphasized in the literature may explain the fact that significant mass movements were organized after the death of George Floyd, unlike after other police actions with a lethal outcome.

4.1. Severe police misconduct

Regarding the death of George Floyd, the unprofessionalism of police action taken was noticeable. The police officer in action was kneeling for 8 minutes and 46 seconds on the person being arrested, who died consequently (Dreyer et al., 2020). The case of Eric Garner mentioned earlier

is quite different from the one we are examining, because there, the person involved was alive when taken to hospital, the cause of his death was never thoroughly investigated, and it is not clear how much the law enforcement subdual applied by the police had to do with his death (Costello, 2018). Contrary to this, Floyd lost his life on the spot, and a connection between restraint and death was proven (Knopf, 2020). To underpin illegitimacy, the policeman involved was taken into custody almost immediately, in only four days. Never had proceedings been launched in such a short time because of a police officer taking illegitimate action and causing death.

Other circumstances, especially the nature of the offence by the casualty and his behavior provoking police violence cannot be ignored. In Floyd's case, the offence provoking police action was a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill, with which the victim tried to pay in a store. Therefore, the police action taken was not in response to a severe, violent crime. This aspect was emphasized in reports by most media outlets—presumably not by chance (e.g., the *New York Post*, the *Daily Mail* and the BBC). As to behavior provoking police violence, it is an important fact that the person involved was unarmed.

From a legal viewpoint, the severity of the offence or dealing with an unarmed offender do not exclude the use of legitimate violence. The legitimacy of police violence can only be evaluated based on the behavior of the person subject to police proceedings, at the time of these proceedings, which is often perceived only by the participants in the situation. Therefore, most circumstances are assessed rather subjectively. On the other hand, the fact of an offender being unarmed, and the commission of a low-risk offence are objective factors in the events, which, without knowledge of the subjective factors mentioned before, are enough in themselves for members of the community to doubt the need for, and the proportion of, police violence. In other words, they raise anxiety in citizens about the very principles followed by members of the law enforcement authorities when using legitimate physical violence, and which are the basis of the rule of law in a state (Hautzinger, 2002).

4.2. The availability of footage

Nowadays, there seems to be a vast amount of video footage available on the internet recording the details of the given measures, either through the body camera of the police officer in action or from the angle of onlookers (Table 1). However, actual footage of police action is very limited. Only 15% of US urban police staff wear a body camera while on duty, with some exceptions (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2018), while footage recorded by passers-by is unreliable by nature.

Nevertheless, making video footage of lethal police action and sharing it on the internet may strongly impact the extent to which the attention of society is attracted (Marcus, 2016; Snyder et al., 2017). Video footage of the arrest of George Floyd was immediately presented on the front pages of American media. The footage shows that the person being arrested indicated to the police officers in action more than twenty times: "I can't breathe" (Singh, 2020). Eric Garner, who also lost his life during police action in 2014 used exactly the same words trying to ask the police officers for help (Marcus, 2016; Snyder et al., 2017).

The events following the death of George Floyd repeatedly highlighted the direct influence of video devices on law enforcement practice. In the United States, nearly 90% of the population have a mobile phone (Wigginton, 2017), that is, nowadays almost all citizens have the equipment to film events around them. At the same time, since online social platforms have gained ground, these videos can become immediately accessible to large audiences. As a result, activities of members of the law enforcement authorities come under greater scrutiny, while the secrecy which used to characterize law enforcement activities no longer provides shelter anymore (Finszter, 2018), while the community assesses perceived or actual legality and professionalism almost immediately. In fact, along with more traditional media outlets, several studies emphasized the role the internet (Barrie, 2020) and especially social media (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; Thelwall & Thelwall, 2021) played in the following collective actions, where the dissemination of

Table 1. *Availability of body cameras to police officers in major cities of the United State (%)* (source: Information taken from US Commission on **U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2018)**	
Police station	**Proportion of police officers wearing a body camera**
Austin	1%
Baltimore	5%
Chicago	< 1%
Dallas	2%
Denver	14%
Los Angeles	8%
Milwaukee	11%
New York City	< 1%
Phoenix	5%
San Jose	2%
Seattle	1%
Washington D.C	13%
Charlotte	100%
Fort Worth	40%
Louisville	51%
Memphis	23%
San Diego	50%

videos is already highly aided and automated. These circumstances influence law enforcement culture, the priorities of law enforcement action (for instance, it has become important that a member of the law enforcement authority should also record the circumstances they experience), and the practical use of the tactics of police action.

4.3. An untypical place of police brutality
Another condition made these events unusual is the fact that lethal police actions are not at all common in Minneapolis. It can be concluded from published data that the use of violence was not characteristic of the Minneapolis Police either before the millennium (Sherman & Langworthy, 1979), or in recent years. Between 1 January 2013, and 31 December 2019, only eight people died during police action in Minneapolis, placing the city significantly behind the twenty cities where the number of lethal police actions was the highest (Figure 1).

5. The COVID-19 pandemic
Arguably, significant factors motivating the collective actions that followed the death of George Floyd were deeply rooted in the context of the surrounding COVID-19 pandemic and its health-related, social, economic, and political consequences (e.g., Abbasi, 2020; Barbot, 2020; Eichstaedt et al., 2021; Gibson et al., 2020; Oriola & Andy Knight, 2020; Thelwall & Thelwall, 2021; Toure et al., 2021).

5.1. High health risks
First, the mass escalation of the movements for the protection of the basic rights of the African American community is underpinned by healthcare and social circumstances (Abbasi, 2020; Barbot, 2020; Toure et al., 2021). On 23 January 2020, the first American patient was diagnosed with the 2019-nCoV (COVID-19) human virus identified by Chinese researchers on 7 January 2020 (Kumar, 2020).

Figure 1. The twenty cities with the highest number of police actions with lethal outcomes and Minneapolis (2013–2019, persons).
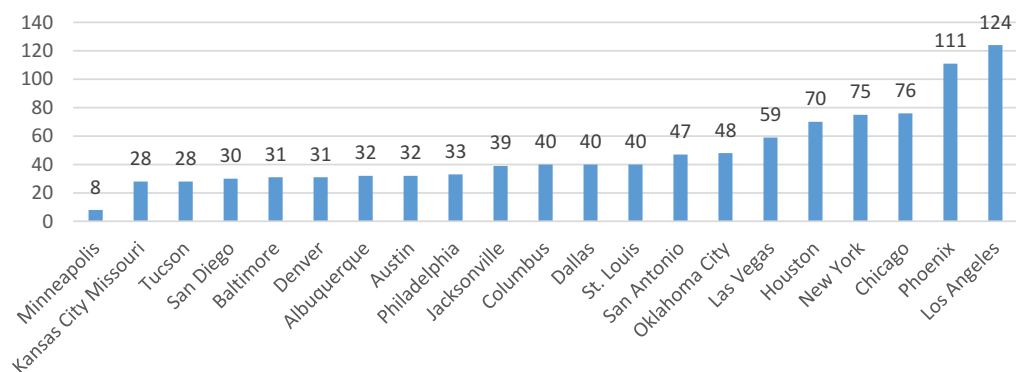
With the spread of the pandemic, it became clearer and clearer, as confirmed by much research, that viral infection rates were much higher among members of certain ethnic minorities than others (Ferdinand & Nasser, 2020; Millett et al., 2020; Price-Haywood et al., 2020; Stokes et al., 2020). Social tension might have been increased by the fact that the COVID-19 epidemic exacted a disproportionately higher toll on the African American community, which might be partly blamed on racial discrimination and its manifestations (Poteat et al., 2020). Furthermore, members of this ethnic minority are more likely to be employed in "frontline" jobs, where they are more exposed to infection, and are more likely to live in crowded accommodations where appropriate social distance cannot be maintained (DevaKumar, 2020). Additionally, members of the ethnic minority groups living in the US have less opportunities to take sick leave from their jobs or even time off to be tested (Institute of Medicine (US), 2002). Finally, the rate of people without health insurance is higher in comparison with white citizens (2016: 8.4%; 2017: 8.5%), both among African Americans (2016: 10.5%; 2017: 10.6%), and Hispanic Americans (2016: 16.0%; 2017: 16.1%; Berchick et al., 2018, p. 16). Historical experience proves that if a part of the population lacks access to medical care, this can generate considerable social tension (Antal 2016).

5.2. The psychological effects of the quarantine

The World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted in its earlier specific recommendations that isolation is the most efficient means of preventing and containing human epidemics. To this end, health authorities must compel citizens with legal regulations to abide by quarantine rules imposed by authorities (WHO, 2007, 2017). Thus, with the spread of the 2020 COVID-19 epidemic, in most countries of the world, including the United States, various restrictions on basic rights were imposed in the interest of public health: state quarantine, restrictions on movement and travel and many others.

These restrictions, with special regard to quarantine, may have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of affected persons. Brooks et al. (2020) proved in their comprehensive study that, among the negative psychological effects of quarantine, post-traumatic stress syndrome, mental confusion and irritability may occur. Studies analyzed by the authors pointed out that people in quarantine may experience stressors such as the fear of getting ill, frustration, boredom, lack of information and lack of satisfaction of basic needs, all of which create anxiety.

Considering the social tensions, and especially of the events examined, the fact that most of the American society were subject to the unfavorable psychological effects caused by the public health restrictions may be of great importance. While factual support is not yet available, we hypothesize that the rapid escalation of mass movements after the Minneapolis case was because they offered a "legitimate" way out of the stressful quarantine environment.

cogent •• social sciences

5.3. Economic recession

The financial situation of the social group in question is closely related to, and significantly impacts the health conditions mentioned above. Indeed, the economic situation of citizens is crucial for their survival. The COVID-19 pandemic brought dramatic changes compared with the favorable employment data of the period 2014–2018 (Anuj & Bowen Garrett, 2020). In the first week of April, as many as 6.6 million people lost their jobs in the United States. In some experts' estimates, the rate of unemployment may reach twice that seen in the 2008 global crisis (Lord, 2020).

Unemployment struck members of the ethnic minorities most severely. In April 2020, the rate of unemployment doubled among African American citizens, and tripled among Hispanic Americans in contrast with the previous month (Table 2).

5.4. Political interests

The economic and healthcare challenges of the past months also impacted the political domain. As shown by a specific European example, the management of the pandemic situation has created a great opportunity for the political opposition to act against the ruling power (Németh, 2020).

Due to the economic recession, the dramatic increase in the rate of unemployment (Jackson et al., 2020), and the extremely high number of deceased (WHO, 2020) the US is undoubtedly the primary victim of the pandemic, which prompts criticism against the country's government. Moreover, according to a political news report by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the opponents of President Donald Trump instantly exploited the events following George Floyd's death in their own political interests (Wildermuth, 2020). It was of crucial importance because of the presidential elections. As stated by surveys of the American media company RealClearPolitics (RCP), after 25 May 2020, the popularity of the opponent presidential candidate, Joe Biden, substantially increased in comparison with the incumbent president, Donald Trump. (Figure 2).

Biden's support was steadily increasing from the end of May 2020. Between June 23 and 25 the difference between the two presidential candidates' polling data occasionally exceeded ten points Figure 3).

Other factors may certainly have improved the popularity rating of the opponent presidential candidate, however, it seems likely that statements by the US president concerning the Minneapolis case and the following demonstrations further heightened social tension and, on the whole, proved beneficial for Biden. According to a representative survey by the Pew Research Center (n = 9654), the majority of adult Americans (60%) found Donald Trump's statements about the death of George Floyd and the ensuing demonstrations "not at all appropriate" (39%) or "mostly" inappropriate (21%). The overwhelming majority of African American citizens (85%) had the same opinion, and even among white citizens, the majority (51%) thought that the president's statements were unacceptable. The survey also highlights that the overwhelming majority (94%)

Table 2. *Rate of unemployment in the United States per month (%)* (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020)**)

Month	Ethnic group			
	White	**African American**	**Asian**	**Hispanic American**
December 2019	3.2	5.9	2.5	4.2
January 2020	3.1	6.0	3.0	4.3
February 2020	3.1	5.8	2.5	4.4
March 2020	4.0	6.7	4.1	6.0
April 2020s	14.2	16.7	14.5	18.9

Figure 2. General elections: Biden vs. Trump (1 May 2020– 1 July 2020).
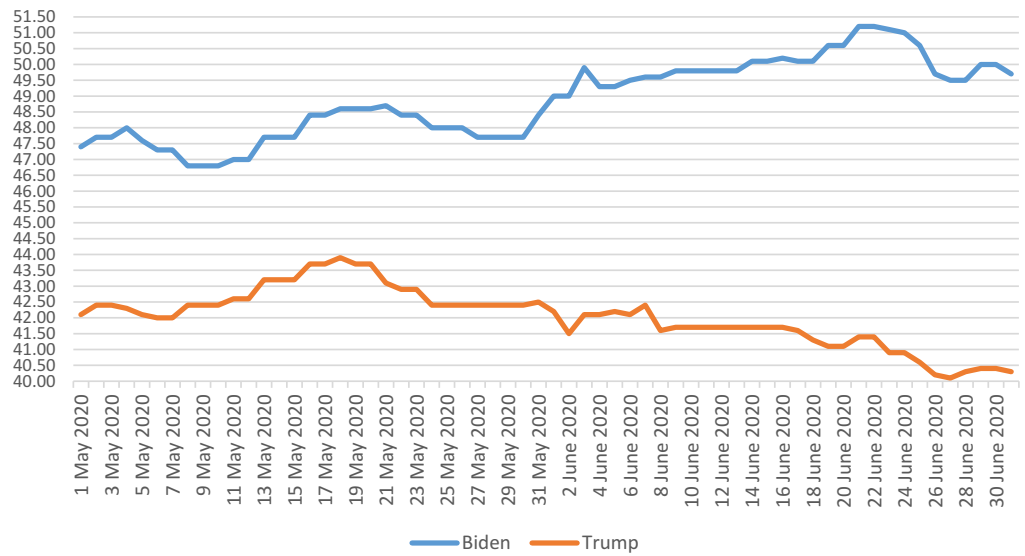
Figure 3. General elections: Biden vs. Trump, differences in points (1 May 2020– 1 July 2020).
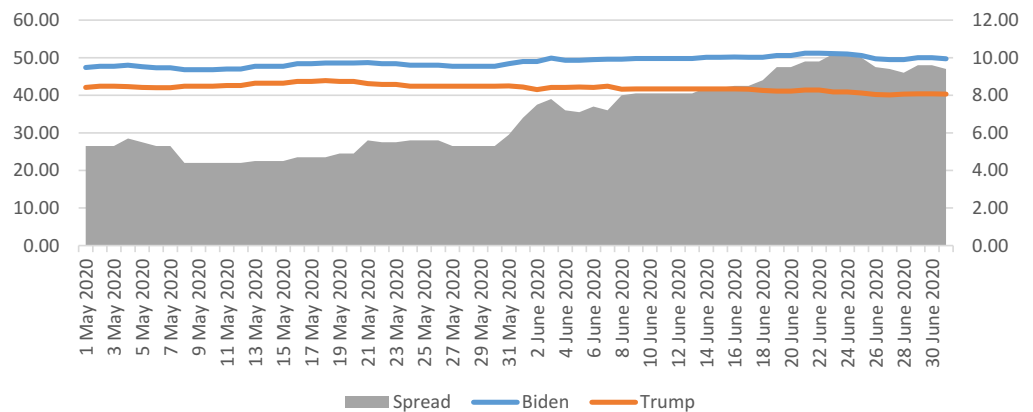
of Democrats as well as one-fifth (20%) of the supporters of the Republican Party believed that Donald Trump sent the wrong message about the case (Pew Research Center, 2020).

Recently, the use of the Floyd case by President Trump's party members for political purposes was not unprecedented either. CNN reported that in Arizona the Republican Guy Phillips recalled the last words of George Floyd at a local demonstration against wearing masks ("I can't breathe!"; Cole, 2020). As to the evaluation of the events, profound differences arose between the representatives of the two political sides. Whereas the representatives and senators of the Democrats set police reforms as a priority, the president's discourse focused on the management of the demonstrations, a responsibility which he chiefly entrusted to local mayors.

The offices of the municipal governments (local governments) were another decisive domain of the evaluation of the case. In several places, including Minneapolis, local leaders blamed the police and prevalent law enforcement procedures for the situation. Consequently, police budgets were reduced in many cities, for instance, in Los Angeles and New York City. As it is known, the per capita rate of police expenditure is rather high in these cities, amounting to $381 per resident in Los Angeles, and $581 in New York City. Recent data show that in Minneapolis police expenditure per resident is $408 (CPD et al.

cogent ·· social sciences

Table 3. Situational, individual, family, community and social factors of violent mass movements		
Situational	*Group processes*: Disinhibition deriving from the force of the group; a feeling of being unstoppable; anonymity.	According to Killian and Turner's (1972) group norm theory, individuals are inclined to follow the behavioral patterns of their peers in a crowd in order to eliminate their own uncertainty. This may be true even when this results in challenging the generally accepted legal norms (Killian & Turner, 1972). There is no reason to assume that this general statement did not apply in the 2020 series of demonstrations.
	Information: Permanent media coverage and news consumption regarding the events (TV, Facebook, internet etc.).	Research by the Pew Research Center (2020) states that 84% of American adults continuously followed news coverage of the demonstrations (Pew Research Center, 2020).
	Circumstances: an individual finds it easy to join and is not busy during the events.	Joining the demonstrations was physically possible in many places right after the death of George Floyd, since, apart from Minneapolis, demonstrations began in 140 US cities (Wicks, 2020). Moreover, as it was said above, due to compulsory quarantine and loss of jobs, being occupied did not impede participation.
Individual	*Former involvement in crime*: in the environment of an individual crime is routinely committed.	Currently, accurate socio-demographic data on violent demonstrators are not available. However, it can be concluded from data available so far that in each of the cities with a high crime rate,[2] such as Portland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Seattle, Washington D.C., Nashville (Grawert & Kimble, 2019) disturbances and clashes with the police occurred.
	Attitudes towards power: fury, resistance to power, negative experiences with the police	At present, the attitudes of the violent demonstrators are not yet known. But it seems obvious from recent surveys that the trust of most of the society in political power has been eroded: • in the opinion of 62% of the citizens, demonstrations nation-wide are justifiable; • 67% of the population think that Donald Trump's statements about the demonstrations only increased tension; • the majority (52%) believe that Biden could manage ethnic problems better than Trump (34%) (Marist Poll, 2020). At the same time, some polls have found that a significant part of citizens (41%) are still satisfied with local police work—compared with data from 2015 (40%). The number of citizens who are dissatisfied has only slightly grown by June 2020 (13%), compared with 2015 (10%) (Monmouth University (2020).
	Prospects: unemployment, low incomes, lack of prospects	At the time of the demonstrations, a high proportion of the US population was directly hit by unemployment and economic recession, with the African American community being disproportionately affected (see above). Nevertheless, it must be underlined that no data are available on the ethnic identity of the violent demonstrators.
Family or Community	*Family attitudes*: relatives do not condemn the action.	-
Societal	*Poverty and materialism*: a desire for material wealth which can be gained without payment.	Accounts claim that some of the demonstrations transformed into organized riot, which was used by many for committing crimes exploiting the lack of police manpower. According to data by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) the number of homicides increased by 250% between May 31 and June 6. According to New York Police Department (NYPD) data, 909 burglaries were reported between June 1 and June 7, more than in the entire past year and a 402.2% increase over 2019 data (n = 181; Pagones, 2020).

CPD (Center for Popular Democracy), 2020). Meanwhile, in the latter city, the local opposition urged more drastic changes because of the direct involvement. Many local politicians suggested the dissolution of the police department and a full reconsideration of law enforcement.

As regards furthering political interests, the role of the media in shaping public thinking and behavior must also be taken into consideration. A frequent allegation in the literature is that the media is the fourth branch of power in a state system of distribution of power (Koltay, 2009). Albeit constitutionally controversial, there is nevertheless some truth in this view since the media can exert significant influence on the system of power and politics (Cservák, 2015). "The issue of the impact of the media on the public and on public behavior has long been in the centre of interest of both the public and researchers. [...] Research can be divided into two trends slightly schematically: effect models which presume a great and direct impact by the media, and consumption models which presume a negligible and indirect impact by the media", writes Bajomi-Lázár (2017, pp. 73–74). A shared feature of both academic trends is the conclusion that, to a greater or lesser extent, directly or indirectly, media outlets can influence public opinion. The death of George Floyd and the following demonstrations received enormous publicity both at the national and international levels. Jack Thomson concluded from his research that the selective coverage of the events by certain media outlets was conducive to considerably influencing the public judgment of the statements on the demonstrations by the president of the United States in a manner that was practically independent of the examined socio-demographic aspects (Thomson, 2020).

In light of the above, it appears can be hypothesized that the escalation of the disturbances following the tragic event in Minneapolis was at least partly facilitated by the statements and emotional attitudes of local and national political actors concerning the affair, and the information broadcast through specific media channels.

6. Factors promoting criminality

The demonstrations after the death of George Floyd were mostly peaceful, but some turned into severe disturbances, with assaults on police officers and looting. The severity of the clashes in Minneapolis is proved by the fact that the damage caused was valued at over half a billion dollars (Johnson, 2020). The violent escalation of demonstrations occurred in several other cities, including New York and Los Angeles.

Apart from the aspects above (Table 3), in some places, police reaction arguably played a major role in the demonstrations turning violent. In relation to an earlier case, studies drew attention to the fact that the militarization of the police as well as their violent actions against demonstrators can easily exacerbate tensions, which may ultimately result in clashes (Less, 2014). Reicher's (1996) concluded that often it is the nature of police action that transforms an initially peaceful demonstration into a violent one (Reicher, 1996).

Table 4. Chronic and acute factors leading to outbreak of demonstrations and to the escalation and violent turn of demonstrations

Outbreak of demonstrations		Escalation and violent turn of demonstrations	
Chronic factors	**Acute factors**	**Chronic factors**	**Acute factors**
general social distrust in the police	health risk related to the COVID-19 pandemic	discrimination	economic recession
discrimination	economic recession	insufficient legal regulation	psychological impacts of quarantine
insufficient legal regulation	psychological impacts of quarantine	other factors facilitating criminality (in part)	political interests
low rate of accountability among police	characteristics of the specific event		other factors facilitating criminality (in part)

7. Conclusions

After a study of the 2 April 1980, disturbances in Bristol's St. Paul Quarter, England, Reicher (1984) found that the underlying factors were, on one hand, the racial and cultural identity of the Black residents of the quarter, and, on the other hand, an effort to eliminate the police action against their community. Thanks to this, the disturbances did not escalate beyond St. Paul Quarter and violence was focused against the police-attacks directed at outsiders, such as damaging cars or buses were not typical (Reicher, 1984). Nevertheless, all forms of the demonstrations (peaceful and violent) following George Floyd's death escalated well beyond the boundaries of Minneapolis and of the African American community. Demonstrations were organized even in towns where 91% of the population are white, and that have historical ties with the racist extremist Ku Klux Klan (Hooks, 2020).

Undoubtedly, the outbreak and escalation of the 2020 American demonstrations was determined by significantly more factors than police violence and discrimination against African American citizens only. In our study based on research available, we have attempted to identify the social processes and aspects which contributed to the outbreak of nationwide demonstrations on one hand, and to the escalation and violence of these mass movements on the other.

We have concluded from the findings of earlier and recent research that, in the background of the occurrence and of the escalation of mass protests, old and long-standing (chronic) as well as recently developing (acute) social processes can be detected (Table 4).

The primary aim of our study was to highlight social, economic, police professional, and political aspects that may have influenced the course of events following the death of George Floyd. During our research we have encountered diverse narratives on the 2020 US events with a political, economic, or minority-based focus, and each revealed a unique assessment of the facts, some true and other distorted. However, our goal was only the identification of background motives impacting the circumstances and not the evaluation or judgment of the argumentation or opinions of the opposing sides.

Based on the literature, and via the application of a collective action theoretical framework, we argued for a detailed interpretation of the emerging circumstances, accounting for both traditional conflict theoretical perspectives, as well as the individual, highly situated characteristics of the focal incident—with a special attention towards the COVID-19 pandemic as not only social, but also psychological, economical, and political context. We also argue for that law enforcement cannot exist in a social, political, and economic vacuum. Changes occurring at various levels of a given community necessarily impact the operation of law enforcement as well (Rogers & Gravelle, 2012).

Author details
László Christián[1]
E-mail: christian.laszlo@uni-nke.hu
Ákos Erdős[2]
E-mail: erdos.akos@uni-nke.hu
Gergő Háló[3]
E-mail: halo.gergo@gmail.com
[1] Private Security and Municipal Policing, Nemzeti Kozszolgalati Egyetem, Budapest, Hungary.
[2] Faculty of Law Enforcement, Nemzeti Kozszolgalati Egyetem, Hungary.
[3] Department of Communication and Media, Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest, Hungary.

Citation information
Cite this article as: The Background and repercussions of the George Floyd case, László Christián, Ákos Erdős & Gergő Háló, *Cogent Social Sciences* (2022), 8: 2082094.

Notes
1. A Bill: To hold law enforcement accountable in court for misconduct, improve transparency through data collection, and reform police training and policies https://judiciary.house.gov/uploadedfiles/justice_in_policing_act_of_2020.pdf (accessed 28 July 2020.)
2. Number of crimes per 100,000 residents.

References
Abbasi, J. (2020). Taking a closer look at COVID-19, health inequities, and racism. *JAMA, 324*(5), 427–429. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.11672
Antal, Z. L. (2017). *A gyógyítás társadalmi beágyazottsága*. Argumentum. The social embeddedness of healing.

Anuj, G., & Bowen Garrett, A. (2020). Unemployment, health insurance, and the COVID-19 recession. *SSRN Electronic Journal.* https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3568489

Baird, T. 2015. *"Stop the killing: Fatal police shootings in Canada." The Independent,* April 14. https://theindependent.ca/2015/04/14/stop-the-killing-fatal-police-shootings-in-canada/

Bajomi-Lázár, P. (2017). Manipulál-e a média? *Médiakutató, 18* (4), 61–79. [Does the media manipulate?]https://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2006_02_nyar/04_manipulal-e_a_media/

Balla, Z. (2015). *A rendészet.* Rejtjel Kiadó. Law Enforcement.

Barbot, O. (2020). George Floyd and our collective moral injury. *American Journal of Public Health, 110*(9), 1253. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305850

Barrie, C. (2020). Searching racism after George Floyd. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World, 6* 1 , 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023120971507

Berchick, E. R., Hood, E., & Barnett, J. C. (2018). *Health insurance coverage in the United States: 2017.* U.S Government Printing Office.

Birzer, M. L. (2013). *Racial Profiling: They Stopped Me Because I'm–.* CRC Press.

Brooks, R. 2000 (Yale Law School). *"Fear and fairness in the city: criminal enforcement and community perceptions of fairness." Faculty Scholarship Series.*

Brooks, S. K., Webster, R. K., Smith, L. E., Woodland, L., Wessely, S., Greenberg, N., & James Rubin, G. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: Rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet, 395*(10227), 912–920. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8

Christián, L. (2011). *A rendészet alapvonalai, önkormányzati rendőrség [The main lines of law enforcement and municipal policing].* Universitas-Győr Nonprofit Kft.

Cole, D. 2020. *Arizona city councilman apologizes for mocking "I can't breathe" during face mask protest. CNN,* June 25. www.breathe-trnd/index.html

Costello, A. J. (2018). A closer look at the Eric Garner incident: The New York police department should review its policy instead of trying its police officer. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Law, 2*(2), 122–135. https://doi.org/10.21428/b6e95092.b9012c5f

CPD (Center for Popular Democracy), *Law for black lives, and black youth project 100.* 2020. *Freedom to thrive. Reimagining safety & security in our communities.* https://populardemocracy.app.box.com/v/FreedomtoThrive

Cservák, C. A hatalmi ágak megosztásának XXI. századi kérdései az Alaptörvényt követően. (2015). *Pro Futuro, 5*(2), 24–37. [The questions of separation of powers in the 21. century after the Basic Law of Hungary]. https://doi.org/10.26521/Profuturo/2015/2/5359

Dixon, P. J., & Dundes, L. (2020). Exceptional injustice: Facebook as a reflection of race- and gender-based narratives following the death of George Floyd. *Social Sciences, 9*(12), 231. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9120231

Dreyer, B. P., Trent, M., Anderson, A. T., Askew, G. L., Boyd, R., Coker, T. R., Coyne-Beasley, T., Fuentes-Afflick, E., Johnson, T., Mendoza, F., Montoya-Williams, D., Oyeku, S. O., Poitevien, P., Spinks-Franklin, A. A. I., Thomas, O. W., Walker-Harding, L., Willis, E., Wright, J. L., Berman, S.,and Stein, F. (2020). The death of George Floyd: Bending the arc of history toward justice for generations of children. *Pediatrics, 146*(3), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-009639

Edwards, F., Lee, H., & Esposito, M. (2019). Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race–ethnicity, and sex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116*(34), 16793–16798. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821204116

Eichstaedt, J. C., Sherman, G. T., Giorgi, S., Roberts, S. O., Reynolds, M. E., Ungar, L. H., & Chandra Guntuku, S. (2021). The emotional and mental health impact of the murder of George Floyd on the US population. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 118* (39), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2109139118

Ferdinand, K. C., & Nasser, S. A. (2020). African-American COVID-19 mortality. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology, 75*(21), 2746–2748. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacc.2020.04.040

Finszter, G. (2018). *Rendészettan.* Dialóg Campus Kiadó. Doctrines of law enforcement.

Gibson, A. N., Chancellor, R. L., Cooke, N. A., Park Dahlen, S., Patin, B., & Shorish, Y. L. (2020). Struggling to breathe: COVID-19, protest and the LIS response. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 40*(1), 74–82. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-07-2020-0178

Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. (2020a). *In pursuit of peace. Building police-community trust to break the cycle of violence.* https://lawcenter.giffords.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/01/Giffords-Law-Center-In-Pursuit-of-Peace.pdf

Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. 2020b. *Gun laws save lives.* https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/

Glover, K. S. (2009). *Racial profiling: research, racism, and resistance.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Graham, A., Haner, M., Sloan, M. M., Cullen, F. T., Kulig, T. C., & Lero Jonson, C. (2020). Race and worrying about police brutality: The hidden injuries of minority status in America. *Victims & Offenders, 15* (5), 549–573. https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2020.1767252

Grawert, C. A., & Kimble, C. (2019). *Crime in 2018: Final analysis.* Brennan Center for Justice at New York University of Law.

Hagan, J., & Albonetti, C. (1982). Race, class, and the perception of criminal injustice in America. *American Journal of Sociology, 88*(2), 329–355. https://doi.org/10.1086/227674

Hautzinger, Z. 2002. "A rendészeti kényszerítő eszközök alkalmazásának alapelvei." [Principles of use of coercive means in Law Enforcement] in *Tanulmányok a „Határőrség és rendészet" című tudományos konferenciáról [Conference on studies regarding border patroling and policing]* edited by Z. Hautzinger. Pécs: Hungarian Association of Military Studies, Department of Border Patroling, Pécs Division.

Hawkins, D. F. (1987). Beyond anomalies: Rethinking the conflict perspective on race and criminal punishment. *Social Forces, 65*(3), 719–745. https://doi.org/10.2307/2578525

Hirschfield, P. J. (2015). Lethal policing: Making sense of American exceptionalism. *Sociological Forum, 30*(4), 1109–1117. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12200

Hooks, ca. 2020. *Black lives matter comes to vidor – yes, vidor. Texas Monthly,* June 6. https://www.texasmonthly.com/news/black-lives-matter-vidor/

Institute of Medicine (US). (2002). *Care without coverage: too little, too late.* National Academies Press (US). Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance.

Jackson, J. K., Weiss, M. A., Schwarzenberg, A. B., Nelson, R. M., Stuter, K. M., & Sutherland, M. D. (2020).

Global economic effects of COVID-19. Congressional Research Service.

James, N., Finklea, K., Novak, W. K., Lampe, J. R., Anderson, A. J., & Sekar, K. (2020). *Public trust and law enforcement - A discussion for policymakers*. Congressional Research Service.

Johnson, S. W. 2020. *Minnesota madness. The failure of the state's leadership means recovery is a long way off in Minneapolis. City Journal*, July 3. https://www.cityjournal.org/minneapolis-disorder-failure-of-state-leadership

Killian, L. M., & Turner, R. H. (1972). *Collective behavior*. Englewood Cliffs.

Knopf, A. (2020). TMZ shifts blame from police to drugs in Floyd death coverage. *Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly*, *32*(23), 5–6. https://doi.org/10.1002/adaw.32745

Koltay, A. (2009). *A szólásszabadság alapvonalai – Magyar, angol, amerikai és európai összehasonlításban [The main lines of freedom of speech: Hungarián, English, American and European comparisons]*. Századvég Kiadó.

Kumar, D. (2020). Corona virus: A review of COVID-19. *Eurasian Journal of Medicine and Oncology*, *4*(1), 8–25. https://doi.org/10.14744/ejmo.2020.51418

Langa, M., & Philip, K. C. (2019). Aligned with the dead: Representations of victimhood and the dead in anti-police violence activism online. In T. Holmberg, A. Johnson, & F. Palm (Eds.), *Death Matters* (pp. 199–220). Palgrave Macmillan.

Less, F. (2014). A militarizált rendőrség problémái az Egyesült Államokban. Mitől vált harci övezetté egy amerikai kisváros. *Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle*, *2* (4), 59–78. [The problem of militarized police in the United States. Why did an American town become a war zone?]https://tudasportal.uni-nke.hu/xmlui/handle/20.500.12944/10216

Liska, A. E., Chamlin, M. B., & Reed, M. D. (1985). Testing the economic production and conflict models of crime control. *Social Forces*, *64*(1), 119–138. https://doi.org/10.2307/2578975

Lord, P. (2020). Incentivising Employment during the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020). *Theory and Practice of Legislation*, *8*1, 355–372. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3573176

Lowenstein, J. K. 2007. *Killed by the cops. Colorlines*, November 4. https://www.colorlines.com/articles/killed-cops

Marcus, N. C. (2016). From Edward to Eric Garner and beyond: The importance of constitutional limitations on lethal use of force in police reform. *Duke Journal of Constitutional Law & Public Policy*, *12*(1), 53–106.

Mikecz, D. (2010). Az ellenállás kultúrája. Kultúra, identitás a mozgalomkutatás irodalmában. *Politikatudományi Szemle*, *19* (2), 110–126. [The culture of opposition. Culture and identity in the literature of movement research]http://real.mtak.hu/id/eprint/112145

Millett, G. A., Jones, A. T., Benkeser, D., Baral, S., Mercer, L., Beyrer, C., Honermann, B., Lankiewicz, E., Mena, L., Crowley, J. S., Sherwood, J., & Sullivan, P. S. (2020). Assessing differential impacts of COVID-19 on black communities. *Annals of Epidemiology*, *47*(1), 37–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2020.05.003

Morrell, G., Scott, S., McNeish, D., & Webster, S. (2011). *The August riots in England. Understanding the involvement of young people*. National Centre for Social Research.

MPV (Mapping Police Violence). 2020. *MPV Database, 2013-2020*. https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/

Németh, F. (2020). *A koronavírus okozta a koszovói kormány bukását? [Did the coronavirus cause the fall of the Kosovan government?]*. Institute of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

Oriola, T. B., & Andy Knight, W. (2020). COVID-19, George Floyd and human security. *African Security*, *13*(2), 111–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2020.1783760

Pagones, S. 2020. *Crime surged amid George Floyd protests in parts of US. Fox Business*, June 11. https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/crime-protests-cities-george-floyd

Parsons, T. (1960). *Structure and process in modern societies*. Free Press.

Poll, M. (2020). *Race relations in the United States*.

Poteat, T., Millett, G. A., Nelson, L. E., & Beyrer, C. (2020). Understanding COVID-19 risks and vulnerabilities among black communities in America: the lethal force of syndemics. *Annals of Epidemiology*, *47*(1), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2020.05.004

Price-Haywood, E. G., Burton, J., Fort, D., & Seoane, L. (2020). Hospitalization and mortality among black patients and white patients with Covid-19. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *382*(26), 2534–2543. https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMsa2011686

RealClearPolitics. 2020. *General election: Trump vs. Biden*. https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/general_election_trump_vs_biden-6247.html

Reicher, S. D. (1984). The St. Pauls' riot: An explanation of the limits of crowd action in terms of a social identity model. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *14*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420140102

Reicher, S. D. (1996). the battle of Westminster': developing the social identity model of crowd behaviour in order to explain the initiation and development of collective conflict. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *26*(1), 115–134. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199601)26:1<115::AID-EJSP740>3.0.CO;2-Z

Reiner, R. (2010). *Politics of the police* (*Fourth edition* ed.). Oxford University Press.

Research Center, P. (2020). *Majorities of Americans say news coverage of George Floyd protests has been good, Trump's public message wrong*. https://www.journalism.org/2020/06/12/majorities-of-americans-say-news-coverage-of-george-floyd-protests-has-been-good-trumps-public-message-wrong/

Rodenberg, H. (2020). Understanding police violence as a mutual problem. *American Journal of Public Health*, *110*(4), 456–457. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305585

Rogers, C., & Gravelle, J. (2012). UK policing and change: reflections for policing worldwide. *Review of European Studies*, *4*(1), 42–51. https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v4n1p42

Sarah, D., Fowler, K. A., & Calkins, C. (2016). Deaths due to use of lethal force by law enforcement: Findings from the national violent death reporting system, 17 U.S. States, 2009–2012. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *51*(5, Suppl. 3), S173–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2016.08.027

Schwartz, G. L., & Jahn, J. L. (2020). Mapping fatal police violence across U.S. Metropolitan areas: overall rates and racial/ethnic inequities, 2013-2017. *PLOS ONE*, *15*(6), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229686

Sheats, K. J., Irving, S. M., Mercy, J. A., Simon, T. R., Crosby, A. E., Ford, D. C., Merrick, M. T., Annor, F. B., & Morgan, R. E. (2018). Violence-related disparities experienced by black youth and young adults: opportunities for prevention. *American Journal of*

cogent •• social sciences

Preventive Medicine, 55(4), 462–469. https://doi.org/
10.1016/j.amepre.2018.05.017

Sherman, L. W., & Langworthy, R. H. (1979). Readings on
police use of deadly force. *Journal of Criminal Law
and Criminology, 70*(4), 546–561. https://scholarly
commons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?
article=6148&context=jclc

Singh, M. 2020. "George Floyd told officers "I can't
breathe" more than 20 times, transcripts show." *The
Guardian*, July 9. https://www.theguardian.com/us-
news/2020/jul/08/george-floyd-police-killing-
transcript-i-cant-breathe.

Smith-Spark, L. 2020. *Demonstrators rally in Europe in
solidarity with US protesters. CNN*, May 31. https://
edition.cnn.com/us/live-news/george-floyd-protests
-05-3120/h_9efd5a6cf813599c718ccca9aa1ee8ed

Snyder, S. A., Rahman, S., Hamilton, J. K., Hamdi, H. T.,
Anand, A., Andel, A., Barlet, L., Bennington, J. L.,
Bennouna, C., Boyer, C. B., Cato, M., Cioe-Pena, E.,
Clark, C. A., Crippen, M., Dowden, J., Fearon, J. B.,
Fei, L., Hamouie, A., Kurashige, I. R., ... Roberts, L.
(2017). The Eric Garner case: Statewide survey of
New York voters' response to proposed police
accountability legislation. *Journal of Social Service
Research, 43*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/
01488376.2016.1239598

Stinson, P. M. (2020). *Criminology explains police violence*.
University of California Press.

Stokes, E. K., Zambrano, L. D., Anderson, K. N.,
Marder, E. P., Raz, K. M., El Burai Felix, S., Tie, Y., &
Fullerton, K. E. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 case
surveillance — United States, **January** 22–May 30,
2020. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report,
69*(24), 759–765. https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.
mm6924e2

Strickler, R., & Lawson, E. (2020). Racial conservatism,
self-monitoring, and perceptions of police violence.
Politics, Groups, and Identities, 1–22. https://doi.org/
10.1080/21565503.2020.1782234

Szabó, C. (2020). Az Egyesült Államok
lőfegyverszabályozására vonatkozó egyes kérdések
vizsgálata." [Examination of certain issues relating to
the regulation of firearms in the United States.
Belügyi Szemle, 68(1), 83–99. https://doi.org/10.
38146/BSZ.2020.1.5

Szondi, I. (2018). Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok
lőfegyvertartási szokásai az összehasonlító adatok
tükrében. *[Firearm Possession Trends in the United
States in the Light of Comparative Data] Acta
Universitatis Szegediensis: Acta Juridica Et Politica, 81*
(1), 923–935. http://acta.bibl.u-szeged.hu/54030/

Thelwall, M., & Thelwall, S. 2021. *Twitter during
COVID-19: George Floyd opening a space to address
systematic and institutionalized racism? SSRN scho-
larly paper*. 3764867. Rochester, NY: Social Science
Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.
3764867.

Thomson, J. *Cable news, partisan consumption behaviour,
and public opinion towards Trump's message on the
George Floyd demonstrations*. https://www.research
gate.net/profile/Jack_Thompson27/publication/
343651309_Cable_News_Partisan_Consumption_
Behaviour_ and_Public_Opinion_Towards_Trump's_
Message_on_the_George_Floyd_Demonstrations/

links/5f36707892851cd302f43c66/Cable-News-
Partisan-Consumption-Behaviour-and-PublicOpinion-
Towards-Trumps-Message-on-the-George-Floyd-
Demonstrations.pdf

Toure, K., Langlois, E. V., Shah, M., McDougall, L., &
Fogstad, H. (2021). How George Floyd and COVID-19
are highlighting structural inequities for vulnerable
women, children and adolescents. *International
Journal for Equity in Health, 20*(1), 193. https://doi.
org/10.1186/s12939-021-01540-0

University, M. (2020). *National: Protestors' anger justified even
if actions may not be*. https://www.monmouth.edu/pol
linginstitute/documents/monmouthpoll_us_060220.
pdf/

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020. *The economics daily,
unemployment rate rises to record high 14.7 percent
in April*. https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/unem
ployment-rate-rises-to-record-high-14-point-7-per
cent-in-april-2020.htm

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2018). *Police use of force:
An examination of modern policing practices*.

Uszkiewicz, E. (2012). A rendőri diszkrimináció társadalmi
következményei. *Jogi Tanulmányok, 16* (1), 377–387.
[The social consequences of police discrimination]
https://edit.elte.hu/xmlui/handle/10831/35620

Varga, C. (2001). *A bírói ténymegállapítási folyamat
természete [The nature of judicial findings]*.
Akadémiai Kiadó.

Walker, S., Spohn, C., & DeLone, M. (2012). *The color of justice:
race, ethnicity, and crime in America*. Cengage Learning.

Weitzer, R. (2000). Racialized policing: residents' percep-
tions in three neighborhoods. *Law & Society Review,
34*(1), 129. https://doi.org/10.2307/3115118

WHO. (2007). *Infection prevention and control of epi-
demic- and pandemic-prone acute respiratory dis-
eases in health care. WHO Interim guidelines*. World
Health Organization.

WHO. (2017). *Advancing the right to health: The vital role
of law*. World Health Organization.

WHO. 2020. *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Dashboard*.
https://covid19.who.int/

Wicks, S. (2020). ISIS and al-Qaeda's commentary on
American protests. International Centre for Counter-
terrorism. https://icct.nl/publication/isis-and-al-
qaedas-commentary-on-american-protests/

Wigginton, ca. 2017. *Global mobile consumer trends, 2nd
edition. Deloitte*. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/
dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/technology-media-
telecommunications/us-global-mobile-consumer-
survey-second-edition.pdf

Wildermuth, J. 2020. *How George Floyd's death, anti-
racism protests are changing 2020 politics. San
Francisco Chronicle*, June 8. https://www.sfchronicle.
com/politics/article/How-George-Floyd-s-death-
antiracism-protests-15325688.php

Worden, R. E. (1995). The causes of police brutality:
Theory and evidence on police use of force. In
W. A. Geller & H. Toch (Eds.), *And justice for all:
Understanding and controlling police abuse of force*,
31–60. Police Executive Research Forum.

Wortley, S., Hagan, J., & Macmillan, R. (1997). Just Des(s)
Erts? The racial polarization of perceptions of criminal
injustice. *Law & Society Review, 31*(4), 637. https://
doi.org/10.2307/3053983

cogent •• social sciences

Cogent Social Sciences (ISSN: 2331-1886) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com