



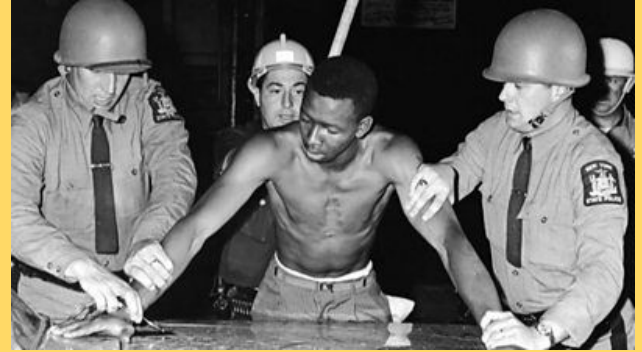
# BLACK LIVES MATTER

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# Police Brutality

The violence and brutality have consistently defined the relationship of the police to the black community. Indeed, there has been no specific time that politicians can address this issue, and there are few reasons to be optimistic about authentic reform of the U.S. police.

Police brutality has been a constant marker of inferiority in the second class population. When the police mishandle the law and become an agent of illegality and disorder, it becomes a concrete demonstration of the limits of formal equality. There is no real freedom when the police are able to attack someone for no particular reason. This is a warning of the gap between freedom and non freedom, in which the disputed black community remains.



# Racism in the Police



The racism of the police is not the product of a venom, but rather flows from its role as an armed agent of the government. The police operate to enforce the laws of politically and economically powerful elites, for this reason poor communities and working people are subject to tight law enforcement. But the police also reflect and reinforce the dominant ideology of the government that uses them, and this also explains why they are inherently racist and resistant to substantial reforms. In other words, if the task of the police is to maintain law and order, then that role takes on specific meaning in a fundamentally racist society.

# Change in the Police

While police control has been changed over time, as a result of the changing needs and demands of the American government, it has also been remarkably consistent as an institution that is openly racist focused against black communities. Technically, the racism of the police has been placed on the economic needs of the companies and the government to eventually create a racialized economic policy that is particularly harmful to black communities.





# Change in the Police

The control of the U.S. police has been transformed as the police have been professionalized and given more resources, but these changes have not resulted in better or fairer police control. There has also been a frightening continuity of racism, exploitation and abuse, even as police forces have become more diverse, reflecting the communities they are patrolling.

The police function primarily as an agent of social control in a fundamentally unequal society, meaning that they operate largely in poor communities. Because African Americans have historically been overrepresented in these neighborhoods, they are often targets of police control. This is even more true now, when the consequences of law enforcement include hundreds of deaths, hundreds of thousands of arrests, millions of futures ruined by clashes with police forces that lead to unemployment and all the disorder that results. Not surprisingly, police control is always a central point of the black community's protest.



# Protests in America

2020 has shown a lot of people the injustices that still go on today towards people of color. But this wasn't the first time people of color have been fighting for equality in America. Just take a look at the Civil Rights Movement. The infamous Birmingham Campaign in 1963 is something that eerily replicates what took place during the Black Lives Matter protests.

It also reminds me of the 1992 L.A. Riots, due to the brutal police beating of Rodney King and the death of 15 year old Latasha Harlins, and the 2014 Ferguson Unrest, due to the police shooting of Michael Brown.

All of these patterns continue to happen, so in the next few slides we will take a look to see why they continue, and what could be done.



# Birmingham Campaign 1963

Led by, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., James Bevel and Fred Shuttlesworth, this movement was sparked to bring attention to integration in Birmingham, Alabama, also known as the the most racist city in America. Because this was during the segregation period, many adults were afraid to participate in protests out of fear of losing their jobs. This prompted many youth to take their parents place instead. There was a plan for these students to cut school to join the protests, knowing that they would likely be arrested for their participation. Not only were they arrested, but they were brutally attacked with water hoses and police dogs. Over 2,500 people were arrested as a result, including Martin Luther King Jr., which prompted his infamous letter, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”. It talks about people having the right to break laws and take action, instead of waiting around patiently for justice to come. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s arrest gained national attention, and even got the attention of the then President, John F. Kennedy. This is when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President John F. Kennedy began to work together, thus starting the beginning stages of the Civil Rights Act.



# L.A. Riots 1992

In 1991 many people saw the brutal police beating of an unarmed black man named Rodney King. The beating was caught on camera, but yet on April 29, 1992 a jury acquitted all four of the police officers connected to the beating. This caused outrage amongst many black people in South Central L.A., and they took it to the streets. There was already rising racial tensions happening in the city of L.A. due to the murder of 15 year old Latasha Harlins by a Korean store-owner lady Soon Ja Du on March 16, 1991. Harlins was shot in the back of the head by Du, because Du believed that Harlins was stealing a \$1.79 bottle of orange juice. Harlins' body was still holding the money she was going to use to pay Du. Then, as a result Du was arrested, but she pleaded not guilty and used self-defense as her reasoning to why she shot Harlins. Du was convicted of voluntary manslaughter, but the judge only gave her 5 years of probation, 400 hours of community service, and a \$500 fine. So, with both Du not getting jail time, and the police officers involved in the Rodney Kings case getting acquitted, many black people have had enough and started to riot. There was a widespread of looting, arson, and assault on people who were white or Korean. Many Korean owned stores were actually burned down, as revenge for Latasha Harlins. The riots lasted 6 days, and the military, National Guard, and many law agencies were called in to try and end the riots.





# Ferguson Unrest 2014

On August 10, 2014, the day after Michael Brown was fatally shot by a police officer, protests erupted in Ferguson, Missouri. Michael Brown, who was 18, and his friend were walking home and they were caught jaywalking by officer Darren Wilson. When officer Wilson told them to walk on the sidewalk instead, he realized that Brown and his friend matched the description of a previous robbery call. It was said that Brown attacked officer Wilson, but when Brown got injured during the scuffle he ran away. As Brown ran away officer Wilson chased after him and fired at him, which ultimately killed him. A grand jury decided not to indict officer Wilson for the killing. Tensions were already rising between the Ferguson police department and the black and brown community, so this was the tipping point. Just like the L.A. Riots, there was looting, vandalism, and arson. The police responded by using tear gas, rubber bullets, helicopters, and SWAT teams to disperse the crowds of protesters. This was met with much criticism over the militarization of the police. After the outcry from the citizens of Ferguson, the Department of Justice launched an investigation into the police practices of the Ferguson Police Department. They determined that the FPD “disproportionately harms Ferguson’s African-American residents and are driven in part by racial bias.”

The full DOJ report could be found here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/04/us/ferguson-police-department-report.html>



# Black Lives Matter 2020

Now we have the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. These murders ignited international protests, but many of what happened during these protests are eerily similar to the previous protests mentioned, but the message has always remained the same. The fight for equality and wanting black and brown people to be treated fairly by police and the justice system. These protests will continue to happen, with the same unrest / rioting, until things change within the system.

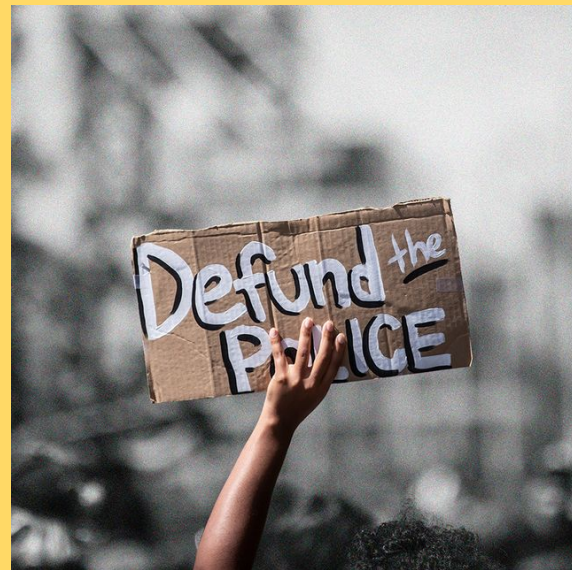
Now that we know the history between POC and protesting, we will take a deeper look into the many components from the BLM protests of 2020 like:

- Defund the Police
- Say Her Name
- Trans Black Lives Matter



# Defund the Police

The movement to defund the police stems from a particular understanding of how the police operate and if it aligns with their initial development. From the viewpoint of a racialized hierarchy, also known as a racial caste system (Michelle Alexander) we can see that police protect the status quo externally and reproduce the status quo internally. The concept of law and order acts as an instrument of oppression for people of color. It's principles act against collective actions taken to bring justice and liberate communities from the system. Such as in the Birmingham Campaign, there is an intersection of Jim Crow laws of segregation, Black youth, the media, and our criminal justice system to force exposure nationwide of police brutality and the ways it is racialized.



# Defund the Police

Police Unions are some of the most powerful unions still standing in the United States. They act as a source of protection for members who are accused of misconduct as well as use their political influence and power to prohibit significant changes to police departments. They also prevent legal accountability and repercussions for departments and officers actions. The power these police unions hold over the political and social sphere suggests that this country could be classified as a police state within a socially racialized hierarchy. This is due to the fact that the police act in a way to suppress people of color in order to maintain POC's specific place in the social stratosphere. This is represented through incidences of police brutality towards an individual and to collective response taken by black communities - whether it's by protests and/or riots.





# Defund the Police

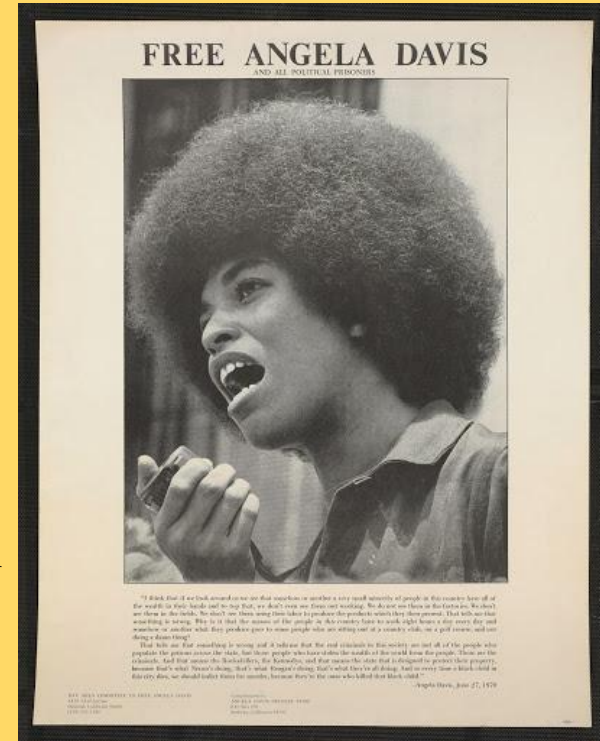
Due to the police force controlling immense amounts of power through political means and social legitimacy, the movement to defund the police is an imminent threat. By decreasing their funds across cities and towns, this will inevitably decrease the power they hold since it is from their monetary value. However, by decreasing the police forces budget cities will now have money to reallocate towards building up communities by funding education, housing, healthcare and social services. This will also develop forms of public safety that use community solutions, removing the police force that creates the oppressive hostility towards communities of color.



# Defund the Police

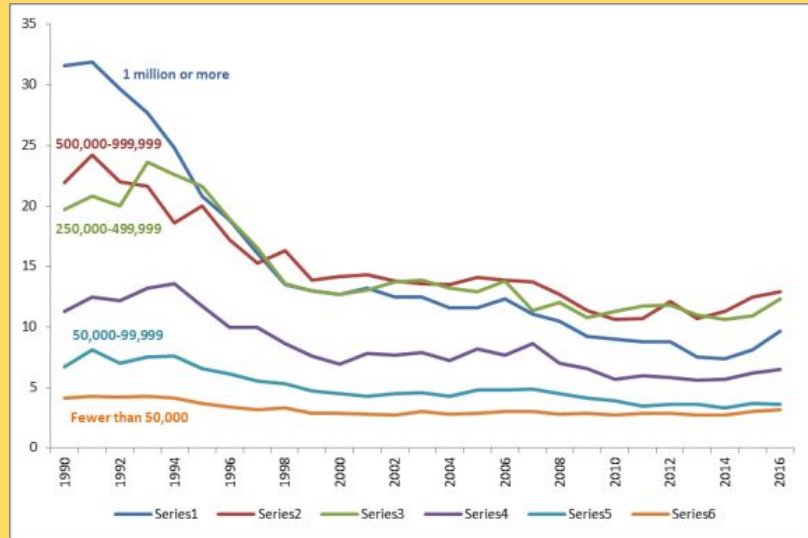
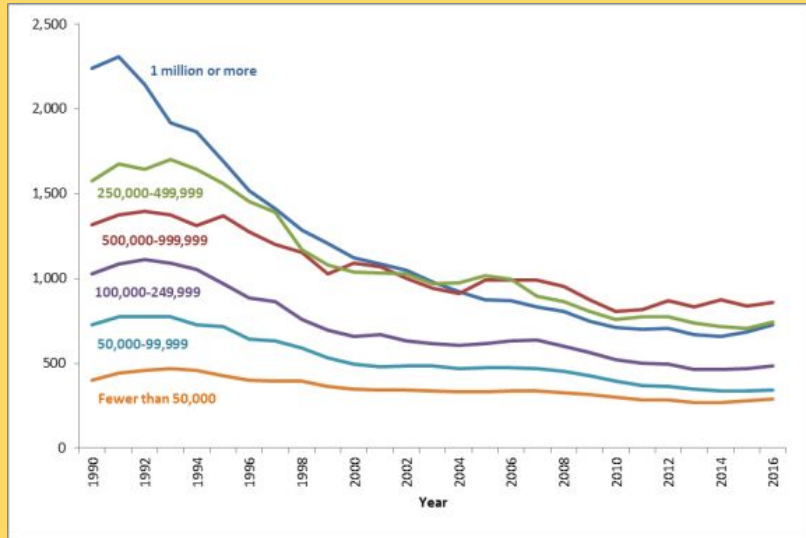
The theory is by rebuilding communities through social services, educational, and financial support, society will be taking a preventative approach to crime. This overall would reduce criminal activity, cut costs and operations of criminal justice. A preventative approach is in opposition with support for the police. Support for law and order takes a reactive approach to crime, whereas one would first have to commit a crime in order for repercussions to occur.

The movement to defund the police is not new. This theory can be traced back to figures such as Angela Davis, a political activist and scholar, who advocated for the abolition of police departments where she extended upon her ideas in her book, *Are Prison Systems Obsolete?* Published in 2003. The abolitionist movement is also rooted in a marxist point of view. Where the capitalists use the means of the police to suppress the lower classes and maintain the social stratification.



# Defund the Police

Many scholars has also argued that that trends of crime have been steadily decreasing while investment into the police, our criminal justice system, and mass incarceration have been rapidly increasing.

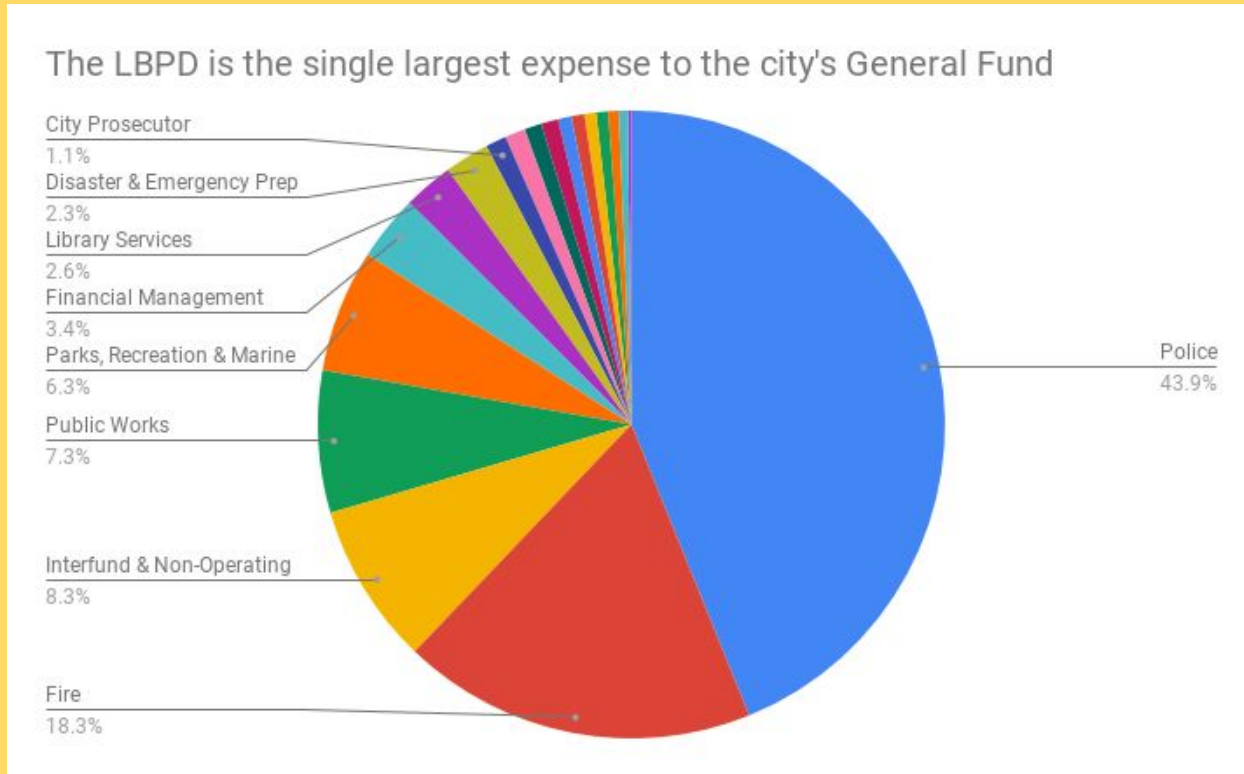


Violent crime rates in the last 20 years.

Homicide crime rates of the last 20 years.

**Source:** Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1990 - 2016*

# Defund the Police



(Data Source: City of Long Beach Department of Financial Management) California



# Defund the Police

There is a divide within the Black Lives Matter Movement, whereas some activists are abolitionists who believe we need to abolish the police in order to create true equality in society and there are people who are skeptical of this and would rather defund a portion of the police budget. Either view is widely seen as radical and threatening to the status quo. Despite much of the theories, media attention in 2020, and the growing popularity among left leaning and liberal youth, it remains a largely unpopular view by whites and blacks alike.

Along with the defund the police and abolitionist movements that were either propellers or sideliners within the Black Lives Matter movement, there have been complementary sub-movements which have grown, such as Say Her Name and Trans Black Lives Matter.



# Reinvesting Funds

Many often argue that defunding the police will not necessarily change the social problems which the police exacerbate not problems they caused. Issues such as poverty that lead to homelessness and mental health are inextricably linked to the BLM movement because police are often called to deal with homeless people and those suffering mental health crisis. The money that comes from defunding the police should be reallocated to provide resources to those most vulnerable members of society particularly in Black communities where such resources are already scarce and underfunded.



# What Reinvesting Fund Would Look Like

In an NBC new article titled “What Would It Mean To ‘Defund The Police’? These Cities offer ideas. BLM co-founder Alicia Garza was quoted by NBC saying that “So much of policing right now is generated and directed towards quality-of-life issues, homelessness, drug addiction, domestic violence. ... But what we do need is increased funding for housing, we need increased funding for education, we need increased funding for quality of life for communities who are over-policed and over-surveilled.” She agrees that we should focus less on quality of life policing and more on ensuring that all persons regardless of race or economic class have a quality life.



The Black Panther party similarly invested into the community, creating and funding their own schools and the “Free Food Program”

# What Reinvesting Fund Would Look Like

Bill de Blasio's approach to defunding the police in NYC is not completely comprehensive but it's a start. His plan includes four proposals which:

1. Shift funding from NYPD to youth and social services
2. Reform 50-a, the law used to prevent police misconduct records from being released to the public
3. NYPD will no longer be responsible for vendor enforcement
4. Bring community voices into senior level of NYPD

It's a step in the right direction!