

# Black \_\_\_\_\_ Lives Matter: How Black Americans Fill in the Blank

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## Abstract

The Summer of 2020, for many, was a racial reckoning; people from all walks of life were forced to come to grips with the reality that Black Americans are killed at overwhelming rates by police. One of the narratives that resurfaced amid Summer 2020 protests was that Black people will mobilize to a greater effect for Black cisgender male victims of police shootings, but not Black cisgender woman or Black transgender victims of police shootings; recall, cities across the nation turned out in large numbers following George Floyd's death but not Breonna Taylor's death. Among other ideas, this project theorizes that marginalization theory and the frequency at which Black cisgender men are victims of police shootings are plausible explanations for observed differences in responses to police shooting victims. By running an experiment that near-equally distributed attention to police shootings victims of different genders, I was able to test marginalization theory in the context of police killings which is an innovative and original idea. Upon extensive analyses and in the context of this sample, I find insufficient support for the claim that gender bias affects responses to police killings of Black Americans. That is not to say that misogyny and transphobia do not exist in Black communities, but rather to say that I do not find that those things consistently affect how this sample of Black Americans responds in emotional and advocacy-oriented ways. I also analyze attitudes about transgender people as a potential countervailing force and do not find that more favorable attitudes about transgender people consistently increase support for transgender victims of police killings – sometimes that support seems limited to Black transgender men. Future research should explore the effects of misogyny and transphobia on reactions to police brutality with a nationally representative sample.

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## Introduction

On Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kneeled on George Floyd's neck for seven minutes and 46 seconds directly resulting in Floyd's subsequent death (Walsh 2020). In the following days, weeks, and months, individuals from all walks of life took to the streets in Minneapolis, Atlanta, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco and so many other cities to protest the blatant disregard for a man's life – a Black man's life – caught on cell phone (Reuters 2020). As hashtags started to appear and protests expanded to nearly every major city in the U.S., activists were quick to note that just two months prior, Kentucky police officers shot and killed Breonna Taylor in her own home. One of the narratives that resurfaced was that people, especially Black people, will engage in activism when a Black man is killed by the police but not when a Black woman is killed by police (Gupta 2020).

I use the word resurfaced because this same criticism was lodged after the death of Sandra Bland. People noted that while Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown received sizeable support and attention from activists, Black women in previous years had not. For example, Rekia Boyd was an unarmed Black woman killed by police just weeks after Trayvon Martin, yet she never became a rallying cry for an emerging #BlackLivesMatter movement. Likewise, Tanisha Anderson was an unarmed Black woman killed by police just 10 days before Tamir Rice; she too never became a rallying cry for the year-old #BlackLivesMatter movement despite making some national headlines and receiving media attention in Cleveland (Dean 2015).

In 2020, Breonna Taylor was killed in March, but people were not taking to cities across the nation yelling "Justice for Breonna" until May. While the deaths of Martin, Rice, Boyd, Anderson, Floyd, and Taylor all had different circumstances, the difference in response to their

deaths warrants investigation. Perhaps gender explains the differences in the responses to police killings of Black men relative to Black women.

Potential gender bias in the mobilization of Black Lives Matter activists is undoubtedly important. However, no analysis of gender would be complete without also considering Black transgender men and women. While Tony McDade's death was a high-profile instance of a Black trans man dying at the hands of police, neither Black women nor transgender folks are killed in large numbers by police in the same way that Black cisgender men have been killed. Nevertheless, Black transgender folks, especially Black trans women, are killed by other Black people oftentimes due to their gender identity. For example, in 2013 Islan Nettles was killed in Harlem by James Dixon, a Black man, because he attempted to flirt with Nettles and "became enraged and attacked her when his friends began mocking him for trying to pick up a transgender woman"(McKinley Jr. 2016). While many killers of transgender folks may not openly admit to committing a hate crime, it is not far-fetched to suggest that transphobia plays a large role in the death of many transgender people. It follows then that transphobia might also mitigate support for a Black, trans victim of police brutality just as gender biases might also diminish enthusiasm for protests following the killing of Black women. This example warrants an inclusive understanding of gender that not only analyzes differences in response to the deaths of Black men and women but also Black transgender men and women. Thus, my research question is: Does the gender of a police brutality victim influence Black Americans' decision to engage in activism?

I want to examine this question in a quantitative and experimental way because I want to see if differences in the gender of the target of police violence can explain differences in subsequent protest activity. And to be clear, I am not interested in disproving or debunking any

claims about misogyny or transphobia within Black communities; there is little doubt that as with other populations, Black communities have their fair share of intolerant individuals (Pew Research Center 2012). Instead, I am more interested in investigating the possibility of misogyny and transphobia affecting when and how Black people choose to participate in activism after hearing about the death of a Black person at the hands of police. Additionally, I want to contribute to the larger literature base on Black Americans' political attitudes, outside of voting behavior, and including the often-neglected subject of transphobia.

In the experiment, respondents are exposed to an ostensibly genuine, but in fact fictitious, news article that details an instance of police brutality. In the story, motorist Tracy Williams is pulled over by Officer James Miller for failing to use a turn signal at an intersection. After a brief, one-sided interaction, Miller shoots and kills Williams. As the article complicates the shooting a bit, for example it remains unclear whether Williams was reaching for a weapon, the only thing that changes across conditions is Tracy's gender. Apart from the control group, in all conditions, Tracy is Black and either a cisgender man, cisgender woman, a transgender man, or transgender woman. In the control, the story is devoid of information about race and gender. Keeping with the primary forms of activism today, respondents then answer questions about their recommended time at which community members should protest, whether they would sign a petition calling for the arrest and termination of Miller, and whether they would donate to an online fundraiser to help Williams' family cover funeral expenses and legal fees. Along with other dependent variables, this design mirrors a familiar interaction between the police officer and the victim and the potential responses to such a fatal interaction. To preview my results, I find that, contrary to my hypothesis, there is no relationship between Tracy Williams' gender and

respondents' willingness to protest, willingness to sign a petition, and willingness to donate to a fundraiser across conditions.

This research matters for various reasons. First, it explores an understudied area of Black America. Frankly, transphobia and misogyny in Black communities are not studied in the same way that other aspects of Black political behavior, such as voting, are studied. Granted, misogyny and transphobia are not unique to Black people, and this project does not seek to pathologize or stigmatize Black people. The project is important because it builds on a small body of research without making normative statements and passing judgement. Building on existing literature about Black Americans is important because a lack of literature on internal dynamics within Black communities undermines our understanding of Black political attitudes and ideas – failure to study the very human dynamics within Black communities ignores an important aspect of Black people. It is understandable that some Black researchers may not want to air Black folks “dirty laundry,” especially for predominantly white audiences. However, studying the attitudes that some Black folks have about other Black folks is important because, in the process, it can reveal harmful opinions that may warrant attention in our communities and consequently result in moving us on a path towards greater inclusivity.

Regardless, Black Americans are understudied in Political Science. In addition to understanding voting behavior, the discipline should also study social movements and protest activity since they are an equally important and historical aspect of Black American democracy. From Nat Turner's Rebellion (Larson n.d.) to the Freedom Rides (History.com 2010) to the Ferguson protests (Lopez 2015), violent and non-violent protest has shaped the direction of our country and the lives of Black Americans. Yet, the way in which average Black people choose to, or not to, participate in these movements has not been given sufficient attention in the



literature. Given the events that transpired in the Summer of 2020, it is important to rigorously analyze Black intra-group dynamics and social movements – support for police brutality victims is but one of the many ways to engage in that analysis.

## Literature Review

The previous literature has explored the questions at the heart of this thesis from multiple perspectives. That is, on one level this project is an exploration of the factors that lead to protest activity following an allegation that police unjustifiably used deadly force in an encounter with a Black civilian. However, on another level this thesis investigates the influence of misogyny and transphobia within Black communities – and whether these forces might undermine the propensity to engage in demonstrations against police brutality. Given the multiple aims of this project, the literature I draw from is equally broad involving research from political science, social psychology, and sociology.

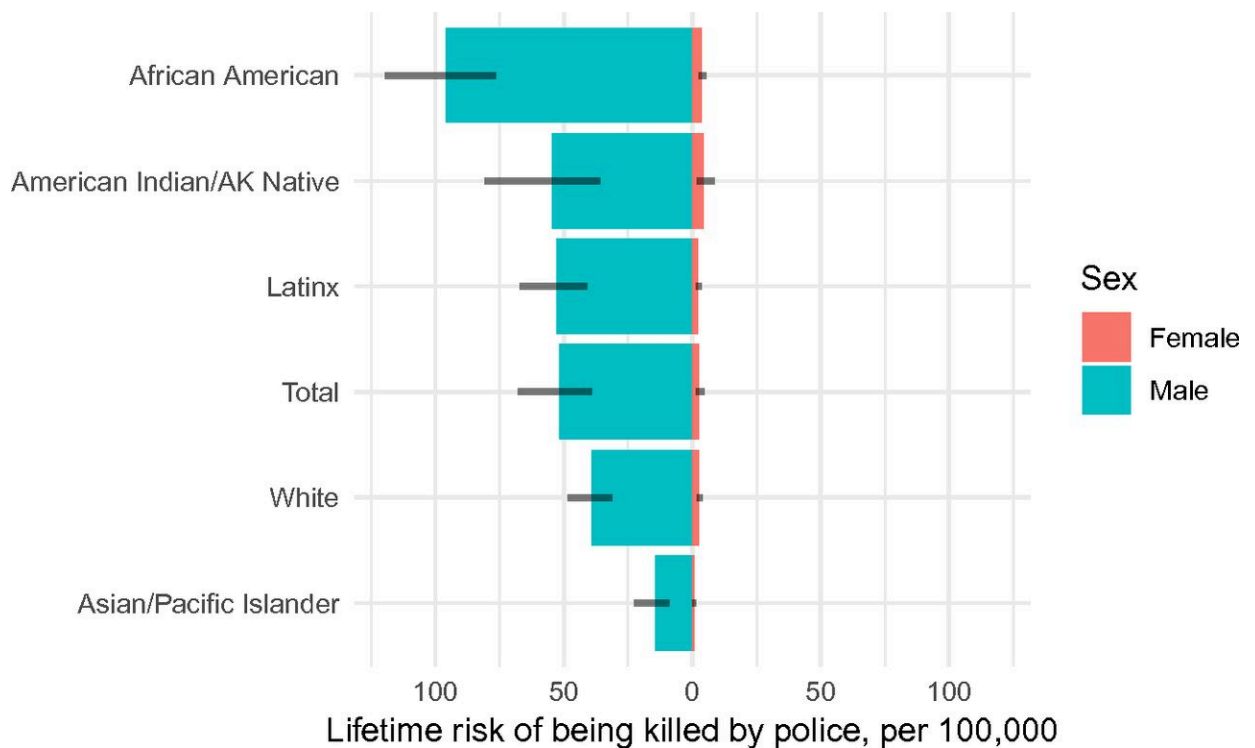


Figure 1 – Lifetime Risk of being killed by police, per 100,000(Edwards, Lee, and Esposito 2019)

It is no secret that Black people are killed by police at higher rates than any other racial group. While no perfect database exists to substantiate the claim, Mapping Police Violence is one database that allows for cross-racial and cross-gender comparison.<sup>1</sup> According to Mapping Police Violence, Black Americans are three times more likely to be killed by police than white people (Mapping Police Violence 2021). More specifically, Black men are killed by police at higher rates than both Black women and Black trans people; between 2016 and 2020, somewhere between 208 and 267 Black men were killed each year by police. During that same period, about 9 to 11 Black women were killed each year and about 1 Black trans person was killed each year (Mapping Police Violence n.d.). Additionally, Black men face the highest risk of being killed by police compared to any other group; figure one underscores this point. Edwards et al. (2019) use data on officer-involved killings to estimate that 1 in 1,000 Black men face a chance of being killed by police during their lifetime. While those odds seem small, the odds are much smaller for Black women; only 2.4 – 5.4 in 100,000 Black women face a chance of being killed by police during their lifetime (Edwards, Lee, and Esposito 2019). Thus, one possible explanation for the alleged disparity in police brutality victim advocacy could be that there are simply many more opportunities to organize around Black male victims. For Black people, especially Black men, police brutality can be framed as a public health crisis, and something that needs to be addressed. Therefore, when a Black woman or Black transgender person is killed by police, Black people may have a strong emotional response but may be less inclined to mobilize since those groups are not killed by police at the same rate or in the same numbers as Black men. But what if the numbers *were* the same? Or rather, what if Black Americans had the same chance of hearing

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<sup>1</sup> Mapping Police Violence is a “research collaborative collecting comprehensive data on police killings nationwide to quantify the impact of police violence in communities” (Mapping Police Violence 2021). Information is sourced from the three largest, impartial crowdsourced datasets on police killings as well as a litany of other sources like social media, obituaries, and criminal record databases.

about the death of a Black man as they did a Black woman or a Black transgender person?  
Would they respond in the same ways?

## **Marginalization Theory**

According to Cohen (1999), Black Americans might not respond in the same way due to processes of marginalization. In *The Boundaries of Blackness*, Cohen provides a theoretically rich explanation detailing the processes and patterns of marginalization. Since these patterns and processes are fundamental in understanding how Black folks might respond to the death of a Black trans woman, I will briefly outline them here.

There are four processes of marginalization or four tactics that dominant or more privileged groups use to make other groups feel inferior: norms, ideology, institutions, and social relationships. Dominant groups construct norms that define “certain behavior, beliefs, or physical characteristics as abnormal or deficient” (Cohen 1999, 38). Norms are created and maintained by ideologies, formal and informal institutions, and social relationships – all of these things further stigmatize a group of people. Ideologies, belief systems that shape understandings and interactions with the world, are used to determine what people classify as right and wrong, normal and abnormal; as Cohen states, “ideologies confer legitimacy and authority” (Cohen 1999, 41). Formal institutional practices like legal segregation and informal practices like the creation of hostile work environments can limit the inclusion and participation of marginal groups in dominant structures – an example of the former might include grandfather clauses that limited Black voter participation, while an example of the latter might include voicing negative critiques of Black people in the workplace that then drive them from coveted position in the labor market. Social relationships reinforce marginalization even after institutional barriers of

exclusion disappear. To distinguish it from ideology, social interactions are a vehicle for people to relay their belief systems – calling someone a racial slur in conversation or requiring Black people to use a backdoor entrance are two examples of how social relationships can buoy marginalization.

Processes of marginalization happen within particular patterns of marginalization, and Cohen identifies four patterns: categorical marginalization, integrative marginalization, advanced marginalization, and secondary marginalization.

Categorical marginalization refers to a set of practices that attempt to “exclude an entire class or groups of people from any central control over dominant resources and institutions” (Cohen 1999, 55). For example, American slavery stripped enslaved Africans of their basic human rights as well as various civil rights such as the right to vote, own property, or earn substantive wages. Moreover, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) established that – prior to the passage of the Civil War amendments to the constitution – Black people, based on their ancestry, could never be American citizens (Oyez 2021). While categorical marginalization is about absolute exclusion, integrative marginalization is about highly selective access-granting. Here, most of the marginal community is still excluded from accessing dominant resources and institutions while a chosen few are allowed to access these resources. However, those with limited access and decision-making power are not viewed as equals. The removal of legal and institutionalized segregation makes way for advanced marginalization. As far more marginal group members have access to dominant resources, leaders within marginal group communities push to maintain and expand inclusion. To do that, they are forced to prove their worth through their class privilege, behaviors, attitudes, and through the institutions in which they choose to operate. Cohen argues that part of their strategy may be working to prove that the communities

they lead adhere to dominant norms and values and thus are worthy of access to dominant resources (Cohen 1999, 64). While the decision to prove group worth may involve conversations with members of the dominant group to change their opinions on all members of the marginal group, Cohen argues that it also involves the creation and regulation of marginal group members by other – typically more privileged – marginal group members. Thus, members of the indigenous group (the marginalized group) engage in secondary marginalization wherein they attempt to manage the public image of the marginalized group by further marginalizing indigenous group members that they view as deviating from the values or the norms set by the dominant group. Cohen explores secondary marginalization in the context of the AIDS epidemic and the ways in which leaders in Black communities de-emphasized AIDS and to maintain a certain image of their community and racial group.

Secondary marginalization relies on the idea that marginalized groups can maintain an upstanding, respectable image of their community and retain access to dominant group resources – a subscription to the politics of respectability. Higginbotham (1993) first coined the term “politics of respectability” regarding the way that Black Baptist women carried out their work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Higginbotham argues that Black Baptist women, tasked with teaching values like hard work, subscribed to a politics of respectability that “equated public behavior with individual self-respect and with the advancement of African Americans as a group” (Higginbotham 1993, 14). They believed that respectable behavior would earn respect from White America, so they tried to instill a sense of “temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners, and Victorian sexual morals” in the Black lower class.

Thus, a significant difference in responses to the death of a Black cisgender man compared to a Black transgender woman may indicate a desire to focus on Black men because

they, without any other information, are more respectable; they do not deviate from dominant ideas about gender. That is, Black cisgender men are just men, whereas some may perceive a Black transgender woman as a man who made the choice to become a woman. For some, that divergence is classified as deviance and thus could alter responses to reading a story about police brutality.

Recent scholarship using marginalization theory provides evidence that identifies who some Black people choose to prioritize. In asking Black people how important it is to address challenges specific to various Black groups (e.g. Black women, Black undocumented immigrants, Black transgender people, etc.),<sup>2</sup> Lopez Bunyasi and Smith (2019) find that across groups, their sample of Black individuals think it is most important to address the issues that Black women face while it is least important to address the issues that Black gay, lesbian, and transgender people face.<sup>3</sup> Since the authors draw on data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey, their sample consists of 3,102 self-identified Black Americans; this sample of Black Americans is not nationally representative.<sup>4</sup> However, the authors find that Black people who believe in the politics of respectability are 20 percentage points less likely to support addressing issues faced by Black lesbian, gay, and transgender people. This analysis highlights the effect that holding a stigmatized identity has on how others perceive the importance of addressing issues unique to that identity. While respondents were asked about general challenges and not police brutality specifically, the large, predicted moderating effect of subscription to

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<sup>2</sup> Black men are not an included group.

<sup>3</sup> While Black gay and lesbian people were a separate group from Black transgender people, levels of importance in each category (very important, somewhat important, not important) differed by no more than two percentage points.

<sup>4</sup> Lopez Bunyasi and Smith do not claim to have a nationally representative sample of Black Americans in their study. Additionally, the CMPS website does not claim a nationally representative sample.

respectability politics suggests that some Black folks may have feelings about “deviant” groups that implicate any response to a member of that “deviant” group.

## **Discourse, Attention, and Programs**

While Lopez Bunyasi and Smith’s work gets at the explicit priorities of some Black people, Besch’s critical discourse analysis (2018) gets at the implicit priorities of Black people. Analyzing tweets from three different weeks in 2014 and 2015, Besch finds that tweets about Black Lives Matter primarily center on boys and men. Citing a tweet that thanks #BLM for bringing much-needed attention to the deaths of Black boys, Besch writes: “In this instance and several others, a gender-neutral subject would have been just as appropriate, such as “Black people” or “Black folks” (Besch 2018, 33). Additionally, Besch finds that tweets during the study period placed a high focus on the relationship between Black mothers and their sons. While a positive representation of Black mothers, Besch argues that Black women have to place the needs of others, especially their sons, before their own needs to maintain this perception. Even though it is not obvious why Black mothers would have to do that, it makes sense. If Black mothers were not as caring for their communities and supportive of their sons, they would not receive support from members of Black communities. For example, Moynihan’s influential, and controversial, study on the Black family (1965) demonized Black woman run households and accused them of not instilling proper values in their sons. As a result, Black community leaders placed emphasis on keeping fathers with their families and having fathers run the household instead of supporting single-Black mothers. Thus, as Black mothers deprioritize their individual concerns in order to focus on the concerns of others, they contribute to a narrative that the issues of Black women come second to those of Black men (Besch 2018, 36). While Besch discusses

tweets that question other systems of power (capitalism, patriarchy, etc.) and highlight the importance of centering all Black lives, Besch finds that “the dialogue on Black Lives Matter during the study period is focused on transforming the status quo as it pertains to racial relations, but is less focused on transforming gendered power relations” (Besch 2018, 43). Besch’s study suggests that supporters and followers of the Black Lives Matter movement associate the movement with Black male lives instead of all Black lives. Given the rate at which Black men are killed by the police, this association is understandable. It is precisely this association that may impact how Black people respond to a victim of police brutality who is Black but not a man. That is, Black Americans may have stronger desires to protest when reading about a Black man killed by police because they might associate #BLM with ending police violence against Black men. Alternatively, they may view the police killing of a Black transgender woman as an anomaly and/or a sad event that is not as pressing as the police killing of Black men.

Perhaps this strong association between #BLM and Black men stems from disparate media attention. In the Say Her Name brief, African American Policy Forum<sup>5</sup> (2015) writes that “the media’s exclusive focus on police violence against Black men makes finding information about Black women of all gender identities and sexualities much more difficult” (Crenshaw et al. 2015, 4). Recall Figure one. On one hand, Black men are killed at higher rates than Black women and Black transgender individuals. However, a lack of media coverage makes it harder to find the stories of Black women and transgender people which complicates data compilation, visibility, and proactive initiatives.

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<sup>5</sup> The African American Policy Forum (AAPF) is a think tank working to promote initiatives that dismantle structural inequality by connecting activists, academics, and policymakers. Founded in 1996, the organization is focused on “advancing and expanding racial justice, gender equality, and the indivisibility of all human rights, both in the US and internationally”(African American Policy Forum).



One example of a proactive initiative that excludes Black women and transgender individuals is My Brother's Keeper (MBK). Launched in February of 2014, MBK is a program focused on connecting young men and boys of color to mentors, support networks, college-readiness, and career readiness skills to “work their way into the middle class” (“My Brother's Keeper | The White House” 2021). As indicated by its name and focus, MBK is focused exclusively on men while no similar women-, girl-, or trans-centered organization exists. According to Mendez (2016), the Obama White House Office on Women and Girls did not host any initiatives for women and girls nor did it receive the same resources or have the same reach as MBK. While the merits and motives of MBK could be debated for quite some time, the resource disparity and exclusion of non-male individuals in state-run programs seems to be an example of the myopic focus on men and boys of color which “illustrates the extent to which women of color's lives continue to be marginalization and devalued” (Mendez 2016, 100). The example that federal government provides may influence how some Black people prioritize support. That is, if President Obama, a Black man at the highest level of elected office in the United States, launches a program that works with cities, towns, foundations, and businesses across the country to support young men of color, Black Americans may perceive that as a sign that they too should primarily focus on supporting young men of color. Zaller (1992) argues that ordinary citizens tend to follow opinion leaders (often elite co-partisans) when crafting public opinion. Thus, this explanation seems plausible.

## **Social Movements**

In the broader context of Black social movements, a similar focus on men seems to appear. For example, women were often excluded from leadership roles, not formally recognized

for their labor, and relegated to bridge building roles during the Civil Rights Movements. In a study of gender dynamics during the Civil Rights Movement, Van Delinder (2009) points to the relationship between the Black Church as a pillar in organizing efforts and the focus on Black men: “By maintaining the categorical unity of civil rights leaders as male ‘as a movement for African American men’ (Ferree and Roth 1998, 627), its underlying masculine logic emphasizes successful outcomes employing a ‘militaristic language’ that concentrates on goals and targets” (Van Delinder 2009, 990). As men were placed in leadership positions, they could make demands on institutions, negotiate, and report back to their communities. As they accumulated a track record of success, they could continue to advocate on behalf of their communities with the support of their communities. The visible success of men in the movement and dominant cultural meanings of gender arguably obstructed women’s leadership. Elaine Brown, former Black Panther Party Chairman writes, “If a black woman assumed the role of leadership, she was said to be eroding black man-hood, to be hindering the progress of the black race” (Van Delinder 2009, 990).

While the Black Lives Matter movement was founded by three Black women (two of whom identify as queer), the history of pro-Black social movements may contribute to the emphasis on Black men as opposed to all Black people. That is, if Black Americans are used to or learn about Black men in leadership roles focusing on the needs of Black men, they may associate any Black social movement with Black men. To illustrate this point, Besch (2018) discusses a tweet that suggests that Malcolm X is the grandfather of #BLM: “It is unexpected to cite Malcom X as inspiring this movement instead of any number of female activists who did similar work” (Besch 2018, 34).

## Adding to Previous Research

While previous literature suggests a variety of explanations for the focus on Black male victims of police brutality, it does not seem that previous research situates possible explanations in the context of policing.

The deaths of unarmed Black people by police officers have only become more visible and more public since Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown in 2012 and 2014, respectively. As a result, Black Americans have watched countless videos and read innumerable stories about a police officer killing a Black person. While it is difficult to quantify the individual impact of one incident, there is evidence that may quantify a cumulative effect of police brutality. According to Gallup, in between the years 2010 and 2013, 36% of Black respondents indicated a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in police. Between 2014 and 2019, that number decreased to 30%. In 2020, that number has fallen to 19%. Granted, 2020 telephone interviews were conducted from June 8<sup>th</sup> to July 24<sup>th</sup> amid nationwide protests for Black lives (Jones 2020). However, it is not far-fetched to say that a drop in police confidence may reflect an increase in instances of police brutality and killings of Black individuals; not only can police killings of Black people reduce confidence in police but police violence is an issue that can have similar psychological effects on Black Americans – the PTSD-like trauma from watching bodycam footage, the sadness and despair from reading about a “routine traffic stop” gone wrong, the desire to change structures to ones that affirms and celebrates Black life.

All of this is to say that police brutality is something that most Black people might find abhorrent and very unpopular. If that is true, then, all else equal, the gender of a Black victim of police brutality should *not* matter. While marginalization theory might predict that whatever happens to Black women, and perhaps especially to Black trans women, will be deemed less

important than what happens to Black men, this question has not been analyzed in regard to policing; there is a lack of researching differences in police killing reactions among Black Americans.

Additionally, this question has rarely, if at all, been answered with an experiment; previous research seems to be largely based on observational data or historical analysis. The research that is experimental (Bonilla and Tillery 2020) tests different framings of #BLM on Black American mobilization. However, such an experiment does not focus on the catalyst for protest –oftentimes, a victim- which probably shapes how a movement or protest is framed.

While researchers can conduct multivariate analyses and make strong predictions, researchers are unable to identify casual mechanisms without experiments. In an experiment, a researcher can randomly assign people to a control group and treatment groups. By making minor and intentional modifications across treatments and observing results, a researcher can determine whether those changes in treatments drive observed results. When analyzing observational data, there is immense value in testing predictors like adherence to respectability politics, a belief in linked fate, and demographic markers. However, researchers are unable to say with absolute certainty whether any of those variables are responsible for different outcomes since there was no randomized trial. Thus, this project uses an experiment to test whether the gender of a police brutality victim influences willingness and desire to engage in protest activity.

## **Theory**

Building on the previous literature and insights drawn from marginalization theory, my experiment explores the relationship between the gender of the victim and reactions to a potentially unjustified police shooting. To reiterate, my research question is: Does the gender of a police brutality victim influence Black Americans' decision to engage in activism?

As stated before, Black Americans are three times more likely than White Americans to be killed by police. As the stories and images of Black individuals killed by police saturate the minds of Black people, policing and police brutality become increasingly unpopular issues. However, the Black Lives Matter movement only centers the Black victims of police brutality, not all victims. Even outside of the broader moment, the mere phrase “Black lives matter” rhetorically centers Black individuals. Therefore, even though police brutality generally grows more unpopular, police brutality against Black people is what likely motivates action. Not only are fatal encounters between police and Black people seemingly frequent occurrences, but some Black people may view police killings as a continuation of racial oppression, building on the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration. Thus, our first hypothesis:

*H1: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have a stronger desire to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is Black than when the race of the victim is not specified.*

In the same vein, Black people reading another story about a “routine traffic stop” gone wrong should prompt desires to protest in response, regardless of gender. As mentioned, one possible explanation for the focus on Black male victims of police brutality is based on frequency. That is, since Black men are killed by police more often, there are both more opportunities to protest after their deaths and police brutality morphs into a Black male issue, not just a Black issue. However, this experiment allows us to control frequency to some extent. While I cannot change whether a respondent recalls or draws parallels to a non-fictitious fatal interaction between a Black person and police officer, I can control how frequently the sample

hears about a fatal interaction between a Black man, Black woman, Black transgender man, and Black transgender woman. If the frequency hypothesis has merit, controlling for the attention that each victim receives<sup>6</sup> should yield no discrepancies in desire to protest. Therefore:

*H2: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have similar desires to engage in protest activity irrespective of the gender of the police shooting victim.*

While I can manipulate how much attention each fictitious police brutality victim receives, I cannot manipulate how respondents think about members of their own racial group in relation to police brutality. That is, if respondents already believe that police brutality is more of a Black male issue rather than a Black people issue, then they may be more likely to engage in protest if the victim of the police shooting is a Black male rather than a Black woman or Black transgender person. As scholars of intersectionality have long argued, the concerns of Black men are too often prioritized in Black communities, particularly at the expense of Black women (Crenshaw et al. 2015). Rhetorically, Black people frame police brutality as a Black male issue (Besch 2018). Thus:

*H3: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black man than when the police shooting victim is a Black woman or Black transgender person.*

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<sup>6</sup> I used a Qualtrics feature to randomly assign exposure to each treatment.

Marginalization theory holds that more privileged members of the indigenous group (Black people) seek to maintain a positive public image of their group by marginalizing other members of the indigenous group that are perceived as deviating from dominant norms and values. Recalling the processes of marginalization, intentionally downplaying something that happens to a marginalized group member to avoid drawing attention to that person's identity within the indigenous group seems to occur at the intersection of ideology and informal institutional practices. For example, Claudette Colvin was not the first Black person to refuse to surrender her seat to a white person in Montgomery, AL. She was however the first dark-skinned, unmarried, teenage mother to refuse to surrender her seat. Since she was darker-skinned and had a child outside of marriage, civil rights leaders, who maintained conservative religious beliefs, did not want to form a movement around Colvin. Hence, Rosa Parks, an older, lighter-skinned woman who engaged in a similar act of civil disobedience several months *after* Colvin, is celebrated and remembered as the woman who refused to give up her seat and as the impetus for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. While respondents may not be 21<sup>st</sup> century civil rights leaders, they may make similar decisions to downplay a police shooting of a transgender person based on their own conceptions of "normal" and "deviant." Therefore:

*H4: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is cisgender than when the police shooting victim is transgender.*

In the same vein, respondents may have positive attitudes about transgender people and thus may not deem them as deviating from dominant gender norms. Thus, I expect attitudes about transgender people to function as a moderating variable:

*H5: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people with more positive attitudes about transgender people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is transgender compared to Black people with less positive attitudes about transgender people.*

One theoretical precursor to marginalization theory is intersectionality. Marginalization theory outlines processes for and patterns of marginalization. Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding the various ways that people are marginalized based on the combination of their identities. Coined by Crenshaw (1989), the concept was used to “denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s employment experiences”(Crenshaw 1991, 1989). By focusing on the unique challenges that Black women face in the context of their race and their gender, Crenshaw argues that this mode of analysis better captures the effects of racism and sexism than just focusing on race or gender in isolation. Since then, this framework has been used to analyze the compounding effects of various identity-based biases and phobias. For example, when discussing the challenges that Black transgender people face, the challenges of transgender women are likely worse than those of transgender men. While transgender men likely deal with transphobia, transgender women likely deal with transphobia and sexism, given their status as women. Additionally, transphobia operates in a different way for transgender women. As discussed in the



introduction, Black transgender women are oftentimes killed by other Black people based on their gender identity. Like Islan Nettles' case, some Black men feel a sense of shame or a threat to their masculinity for being sexually attracted to a transgender woman. Sometimes, that feeling of being "tricked" can lead to physical violence (Rector 2020). Within Black communities, similar levels of and justifications for violence are not as prevalent for Black transgender men. This leads to my final hypothesis:

*H6: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black transgender man than when the police shooting victim is a Black transgender woman.*

To be clear, I believe that support for protest activity will be strongest to weakest for victims of police shootings in the following order: Black cisgender man, Black cisgender woman, Black transgender man, Black transgender woman. While this order is reflected in the hypotheses above, I wanted to establish absolute clarity of expectations before proceeding.

## **Methods**

I fielded a Qualtrics survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk from December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 until December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (N = 503). Prior to the treatments, described in more detail below, respondents were asked a series of demographic questions about racial salience, linked fate, and Black Nationalism. Then, respondents were asked to indicate attitudes about various groups (NAACP, police, trans people, etc.) and prominent figures (Joe Biden, Dr. Anthony Fauci, etc.). Respondents were also asked about their religious denomination, religious practices, and the

importance of religion in their lives. While it may seem tedious, I asked these questions to allow for a nuanced analysis of my findings. That is, if respondents have similar responses to all treatment groups, then I could see if any of the more common variables (linked fate, racial salience, Black nationalism, attitudes towards Black organizations) moderated the relationship between the police shooting victim's gender and the respondents' desires to engage in protest activity. Since my sample consists of experienced survey takers, I asked eight questions about prominent figures and groups unrelated to the project (Jewish people, Muslim people, the National Rifle Association, etc.) as well as six questions about COVID-19, for a total of 14 distractor questions. That way, it was harder for respondents to discern the project's main theme from pre-treatment questions.

After all of those questions, respondents were randomly assigned to read one of five versions of an article detailing an instance of police brutality; the differences between articles are outlined in Table 1. The article was doctored in Adobe Photoshop to look like a real online article from the Butler Collegian, a student-run newspaper at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. The decision to use a University-officer and a member of the broader Indianapolis community came after reading the story of Sam Dubose (Coolidge and Horn 2015), a Black Ohioan killed by a University of Cincinnati police officer as he tried to speed off from a traffic stop. After getting pulled over, Sam and the officer engaged in back-and-forth conversation, during which the officer tried to get Sam to get out of his vehicle. Presumably fearing for his life, Sam tried to pull off, only to get shot at point-blank range by the police officer and crash into a utility pole down the street. While I used the general college-campus area setting in my article, many of important details are altered to better mirror elements from previous fatal encounters between Black Americans and the police.

Condition	Headline	Photo Used	First Sentence	Name of Family Attorney
Control	“Officer shoots <b>Indianapolis local</b> after traffic encounter”	Side profile of a Butler University police car	“Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams the night of August 1 <sup>st</sup> during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.”	Ben Sullivan
Black Cisgender Man Treatment	“Officer shoots <b>Black man</b> after traffic encounter”	Black woman crying with her hands on her jaw	“Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams, <b>a Black male</b> , the night of August 1 <sup>st</sup> during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.”	Ben Crump
Black Cisgender Woman Treatment	“Officer shoots <b>Black woman</b> after traffic encounter”	Black woman crying with her hands on her jaw	“Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams, <b>a Black woman</b> , the night of August 1 <sup>st</sup> during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.”	Ben Crump
Black Transgender Man Treatment	“Officer shoots <b>Black transgender man</b> after traffic encounter”	Black woman crying with her hands on her jaw	“Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams, <b>a Black transgender man</b> , the night of August 1 <sup>st</sup> during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.”	Ben Crump
Black Transgender Woman Treatment	“Officer shoots <b>Black transgender woman</b> after traffic encounter”	Black woman crying with her hands on her jaw	“Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams, <b>a Black transgender woman</b> , the night of August 1 <sup>st</sup> during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.”	Ben Crump

*Notes:* Table 1 – Differences in wording changes in the article indicated by bold text.

The differences across conditions are extremely subtle. To mask the race of the police killing victim in the control group, I used the attorney Ben Sullivan instead of Ben Crump since

Ben Crump is known nationally for representing victims in high-profile, police brutality cases between police officers and Black people (Heller 2020).

The baseline or control article is devoid of any references to race and gender. Across treatment groups, the only things that change are the headline and the first sentence of the article – both of which are the only references to gender. By using first and last names, the article never references Tracy Williams by way of pronouns – only “Tracy Williams” or “Williams.”

Additionally, the name Tracy sounds like a gender-neutral name and thus can be associated with both men and women. Black figures like former basketball player Tracy McGrady or comedian Tracy Morgan are well-known examples of men named Tracy. At the same time, actress Tracee Ellis Ross and singer Tracy Chapman are well-known examples of women named Tracy. While the headline was large and bold enough for respondents to quickly identify the police shooting victim’s gender, using a gender-neutral name provided a check back against the possibility of respondents reading the story as if Tracy had a different gender than the one given. Essentially, a gender-neutral name makes it easier to assign a gender to the police killing victim, rather than have to work against a respondent’s urge to associate a name with a specific gender. The gender-neutral name also allowed me to hold more things constant across conditions which is important for the experimental method – the more things I hold constant, the more certain I can be that the subtle changes I made are responsible for any differences in responses.

In each of the treatments, the article provides information about the race and gender of the police shooting victim. Underneath the headline lies a photo of a darker-skinned Black woman with braids, crying with her hands on jaw (Burford 2015). While the photo was taken after Hurricane Katrina, – the 2006 superstorm that displaced thousands of Black Americans – the photo conveys a sense of grief from a woman who does not look upper-class. While it may

seem trivial, conveying class status makes the story more believable; police are not killing upper class, high-income Black people or their children. They are killing middle to low-income Black people and their children.

The rest of the story is as follows: Tracy Williams is pulled over by a Butler University police officer at nighttime for failing to use a turn signal at an intersection. Officer Miller approaches Tracy's vehicle and sees Williams slowly reach for an object on the right side of the vehicle. Miller shouts to Tracy to stop moving. Tracy continues to reach for the object. Miller shoots and kills Tracy. Butler University launches an investigation and places Miller on administrative leave.

What was Tracy reaching for? Why didn't he listen to Officer Miller's instructions? The story is written to evoke these questions in the minds of respondents. The story is designed to generate a similar level of uncertainty that is quite common in other accounts of police shootings of Black people. It is unclear what Tracy was reaching for – it could have been a license and vehicle registration, an attorney's business card, or even a pocket-size Constitution. Officer Miller adds the option of gun to the mix as he says, "At night, gun owners often keep their firearms on top of the passenger's seat." Miller asserts he had to make a decision.

Following Miller's retelling of the event, attorney Ben Crump (or Sullivan) and Ruth Williams, Tracy's mother, challenge Miller's claims. Crump (or Sullivan) directly states that he does not believe Miller's account of the event while Ruth Williams states that Tracy did not own a gun and was raised to comply with the police. Including a minor reference to Tracy's upbringing and Ruth's parenting was important for authenticity purposes. There seems to be an increasing awareness of "the talk" that Black parents have with their children. What used to serve as coded language for a conversation about sex now refers to a conversation about the risk

of being killed by police and the need to comply for survival. Not only does including this idea make Ruth seem like a typical Black mother, but it also further complicates the story by implying that Tracy was “raised right.”

The last important part of the story is that it explicitly states that, “it is unclear as to whether Tracy Williams was in possession of a gun.” In addition to previously mentioned story complication tools, this short sentence forces respondents to decide internally whether they think Williams had a gun in the car or was reaching for a gun, thereby making the police shooting potentially justifiable for many members of the public.

After the article, respondents are asked a series of questions about the story, their reactions to the story, and what they think should happen next. There are 20 dependent variables, with 6 measuring emotional responses to the article in general, and 4 measuring emotional responses to Officer Miller’s actions. The other 10 outcome measures assess a respondent’s belief in the justification for certain forms of advocacy and their willingness to engage in said advocacy. In the immediate aftermath of a police killing of a Black American, it seems like protests, petitions, and fundraisers are the primary, embodied forms of activism. Thus, respondents are asked when they think it would be appropriate for community activists to protest, how justified protesting at that time would be, and how likely they are to engage in said protest. Then, they are asked how justified a petition calling for the termination of Officer Miller would be and how likely they are to sign this petition. Similarly, respondents are asked how justified a fundraiser to help cover Tracy’s funeral expenses would be and how likely they are to donate to this fundraiser. For protest, petition signing, and donating to a fundraiser, all questions evaluating justification for each action and willingness to partake in each action were

unidirectional, with 5-point scale response options including extremely, very, moderately, slightly, and not at all (all question wordings will be provided in the appendix).

I analyzed data in Stata. To be clear, my independent variable is Tracy's gender and race, as captured by the control and four experimental treatments. Each condition was recoded into a dummy variable for ease of analysis. Additionally, all variables were recoded onto a 0 to 1 scale for ease of interpretation. That is, any means or coefficients produced fall on a 0 to 1 scale, which means they can be interpreted as percentages. I used ordinary least squares regressions to understand statistically significant differences across conditions for all dependent variables. After checking for the direct effect of Tracy's gender and race on various outcome variables, I checked for any moderating effects with variables that obtain information on attitudes about trans people, levels of education, gender, and age.

## **Analysis**

Before I get into the data, I want to provide some demographic information on the sample. My sample (N=503) identifies as African-American or Black; approximately 95% of the sample only identifies as Black while the other 5% identify as Black and some other racial/ethnic group. Roughly 70% of the sample identifies as men while the other 30% identify as women. This gender imbalance obviously does not reflect the true demographic composition of the national Black community. If, however, Black men are more likely to show bias in favor of their race/gender group then these percentages should make it more likely that I uncover differential effects across my treatment groups. Additionally, the sample ranges in age from 20 to 65, with the median age at about 31 years old. The sample is highly educated; 81% of the sample has obtained a 4-year college or postgraduate degree. Additionally, about 52% of respondents own

their home – either with no payments due or with monthly mortgage payments. Another 39% rent their home, and the other 9% lives with friends and family. Clearly, this sample is not nationally representative of Black Americans (Goodman, Zhu, and Pendall 2017; National Center for Education Statistics 2019). Given the lack of a nationally representative sample, I cannot map my findings onto Black Americans more broadly – the project has little external validity. However, the experimental nature of the project lends itself to stronger internal validity. That is, I can be confident that any differences in responses to police shooting victims are based on gender because that is what changes across treatments.

### **Emotional Responses to the Article**

After a handful of questions to check how closely respondents paid attention to the article, respondents were asked how strongly they felt angry, happy, sad, peaceful, helpless, and disgusted. Response options included extremely, very, moderately, slightly, and not at all. For ease of interpretation, all response options were recoded onto a 0 to 1 scale, with 0 representing “not at all”, .25 representing “slightly”, .5 representing “moderately”, .75 representing “very”, and 1 representing “extremely.”



Table 2 *Strength of emotional response after reading the article*

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	<b>Helpless</b>	<b>Disgusted</b>
<i>Control</i>	.54	.32	.57	.35	.51	.52
<i>Black Cisgender Man</i>	.57	.36	.58	.40	.53	.53
<i>Black Cisgender Woman</i>	.66	.28	.64	.39	.59	.57
<i>Black Transgender Man</i>	.61	.31	.59	.32	.53	.56
<i>Black Transgender Woman</i>	.58	.36	.57	.35	.49	.55

Table 2 provides averages for how strongly respondents felt each emotion after reading the fictitious news article about Tracy Williams' death. Column 2 (angry) indicates that respondents felt four to sixteen percentage points above "moderately angry" after reading the story. While there appears to be some variation in anger levels across conditions, the only statistically significant difference in means is between the control group and the Black cisgender woman group. Compared to the control group, respondents were about 12 percentage points angrier after reading the article in which Tracy Williams is a Black cisgender woman ( $p = .006$ ). Even though all hypotheses are specific to protest activity, it is still difficult to interpret this finding. Since the difference between the Black woman condition and control condition is the inclusion of race and gender information, this finding could reveal the importance of race in emotional responses and/or the importance of gender. If it revealed the importance of race alone, I would expect to see statistically significant differences in levels of anger for all treatments relative to the control. If it revealed the importance of gender alone, I would expect to see similar levels of anger in the Black transgender woman condition, but I do not. If it revealed the importance of being cisgender alone, I would expect to see statistically significant differences in levels of anger for the Black cisgender woman and Black cisgender man condition. This finding might reveal an ideological leaning in this sample that lends itself to supporting Black

(cisgender) women. Perhaps respondents are more sympathetic to Black women because they view them as a more vulnerable or increasingly “worthy” of support and attention. Regardless, this finding seems to challenge the third hypothesis. Since some desires to protest may be rooted in anger, a significant difference in anger levels between the Black cisgender woman group and the control group instead of between the Black cisgender man group and the control group suggests that Black cisgender men do not always receive the bulk of the support based on their status as Black cisgender men. However, this is only one finding and is insufficient to refute the third hypothesis.<sup>7</sup>

Column 3 (happy) indicates that respondents felt six to eleven percentage points above “slightly happy” after reading the article. As expected, a minority of respondents indicated they were “extremely happy” after reading the story. Column 4 (sad) indicates that respondents felt seven to fourteen points above “moderately sad.” Column 5 (peaceful) indicates that respondents felt seven to fifteen points above “slightly peaceful.” While there is minor variation in columns 3, 4, and 5, there are no statistically significant differences between treatments and relative to the control. Column 6 (helpless) indicates that respondents felt zero to nine percentage points above “moderately helpless.” Respondents who read the article in which Tracy Williams was a Black transgender woman felt one percentage point below “moderately helpless.” While there are no statistically significant differences relative to the control, respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender woman condition felt ten percentage points more helpless than respondents randomly assigned to the Black transgender woman condition ( $p = .026$ ). This finding reveals the

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<sup>7</sup> H3: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black man than when the police shooting victim is a Black woman or Black transgender person.

importance of being cisgender in one emotional response to the article. Since the only difference between the conditions is information about transgender status, this is evidence that being trans can moderate strength of emotional responses. While this finding does not confirm the fourth hypothesis<sup>8</sup>, it is evidence in support of the hypothesis – protest can be motivated by feelings of helplessness and a sense of running out of “conventional” options to change the system. Lower feelings of helplessness could stifle protest activity.

Column 7 (disgusted) indicates that respondents felt two to seven percentage points above “moderately disgusted” after reading the article. Again, minor variations in disgust levels do not equate to statistically significant differences across conditions or relative to the control.

### **Emotional Responses to Miller’s Actions**

Next, respondents were asked how strongly they felt pride, sadness, happiness, and anger in response to Officer Miller’s actions. While these questions seem to overlap with the previous ones, these questions are asked to elicit emotional responses to the specific event. For example, a respondent could feel sad after reading the article because they feel bad for Ruth Williams, Tracy’s mother. However, when asked how sad they felt about Officer Miller’s actions, they are prompted to think about their emotions in the context of the shooting and Miller’s justification. These questions are meant to gauge respondents’ feelings about the shooting itself.<sup>9</sup> Like the previous emotional response questions, response options included extremely, very, moderately, slightly, and not at all. For ease of interpretation, all response options were recoded onto a 0 to 1

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<sup>8</sup> H4: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is cisgender than when the police shooting victim is transgender.

<sup>9</sup> The question reads: In the story just read about the killing of Tracy Williams by Officer James Miller, how [proud/sad/happy/angry] did you feel about Officer Miller’s actions?

scale, with 0 representing “not at all”, .25 representing “slightly”, .5 representing “moderately”, .75 representing “very”, and 1 representing “extremely.”

*Table 3 Strength of emotional response to Officer Miller’s actions*

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Proud</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Angry</b>
<i>Control</i>	.42	.65	.37	.63
<i>Black Cisgender Man</i>	.47	.66	.43	.64
<i>Black Cisgender Woman</i>	.42	.65	.33	.68
<i>Black Transgender Man</i>	.35	.65	.32	.65
<i>Black Transgender Woman</i>	.42	.61	.39	.61

Table 3 provides averages for how strongly respondents felt each emotion in relation to Officer Miller’s actions. Column 2 (proud) indicates that respondents felt three to fifteen points below “moderately proud” regarding Officer Miller’s actions. While there are no statistically significant mean differences in relation to the control group, there is a statistically significant

difference between treatments. Respondents who received the Black cisgender man treatment were about 12 percentage points prouder of Officer Miller's actions than those who received the Black transgender man treatment ( $p = .015$ ). Even though all the hypotheses are about willingness to engage in protest, this finding challenges my fourth<sup>10</sup> and third<sup>11</sup> hypotheses. I predicted that the Black cisgender treatment groups would have the strongest desires to protest due to the existing focus on Black men as police brutality victims and the lack of a transgender identity. This finding challenges the theoretical basis of those predictions because it is evidence that being transgender does not always result in less support – in the broadest sense of the word. That is, if my predictions are correct, respondents who received the Black transgender man treatment would be prouder of Officer Miller's actions, not less proud. It is important to note though that this finding only challenges hypotheses four and three, but it is insufficient to refute them outright.

Column 3 (sad) indicates that respondents felt eleven to sixteen percentage points above “moderately sad” about Officer Miller's actions. Despite minimal variation, none of the mean differences are statistically significant. Column 4 (happy) indicates that respondents felt eight to eighteen percentage points above “slightly happy” regarding Officer Miller's actions; that range is a bit larger than previous ranges. While none of the differences are statistically significant in relation to the control group, there are statistically significant differences between treatments. Compared to the Black cisgender man treatment, respondents who received the Black cisgender woman treatment were about 10 percentage points less happy about Officer Miller's actions, and

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<sup>10</sup> H4: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is cisgender than when the police shooting victim is transgender.

<sup>11</sup> H3: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black man than when the police shooting victim is a Black woman or Black transgender person.

respondents who received the Black trans man treatment were about 11 percentage points less happy about Officer Miller's actions ( $p = .038$  and  $p = .017$ , respectively). These findings are interesting because they further complicate the hypothesis that Black cisgender men would receive the most support (H3). While these findings do not refute the hypothesis, they challenge the notion that possessing a stigmatized or non-centered identity will translate into a lack of support (in the broadest sense of the term).

Finally, column 5 (angry) indicates that respondents felt eleven to eighteen points above "moderately angry." There is some variation in averages, but none of the differences are statistically significant in relation to the control or between treatments.

Regarding emotional responses to the article and Officer Miller's actions, there are two findings that suggest that being transgender might *negatively* impact emotional responses. At the same time, there are two findings that suggest that holding a stigmatized (transgender) or non-centered (cisgender woman) identity might *positively* impact emotional responses. Since these findings alone are insufficient to confirm or refute any hypotheses, I will now turn to my main outcome variables: protesting, petitioning, and fundraising.

## **Protest**

First, respondents were asked whether community activists should organize a protest rally immediately to pressure authorities to bring criminal charges against Officer Miller, whether they should wait for an investigation to conclude before organizing a protest, or whether they should never protest. Responses were recoded onto a 0 – 1 scale for ease of interpretation wherein 0 represents "community activists should not organize a protest at all," .5 represents "Wait for police investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally," and 1 represents "organize protest rally now to pressure authorities."

Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated that community activists should protest now, 46% of the sample indicated that community activists should wait to protest, and 6% of the sample indicated that community activists should never protest. This near 50-50 split in protesting now and protesting later is also reflected across conditions with minimal variation. Across conditions, average answers ranged from .69 (Black transgender man condition) to .74 (Black cisgender man condition). Relative to the control and between treatments, there are no statistically significant mean differences.

Once respondents selected the protest timeline (now, later, or never) they deemed most appropriate, they were asked to indicate the importance of that protest timeline and their likelihood of participating in said protest (except for the people that responded with “community activists should not organize a protest at all”). Both the questions about importance and willingness were unidirectional, 5-point scales with response options including “extremely,” “very,” “moderately,” “slightly,” and “not at all.”<sup>12</sup> For ease of analysis, responses were recoded onto a 0 – 1 scale wherein 0 represents “not at all,” .25 represents “slightly,” .5 represents “moderately,” .75 represents “very,” and 1 represents “extremely.”

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<sup>12</sup> One example importance question reads: “How important is it that community activists organize a protest rally now?” One example of the willingness question reads: “If a protest rally to pressure authorities to criminally charge officer James Miller was organized in your city, how likely are YOU to participate?”

**Figure 2 – Average Scores for Protest Now**

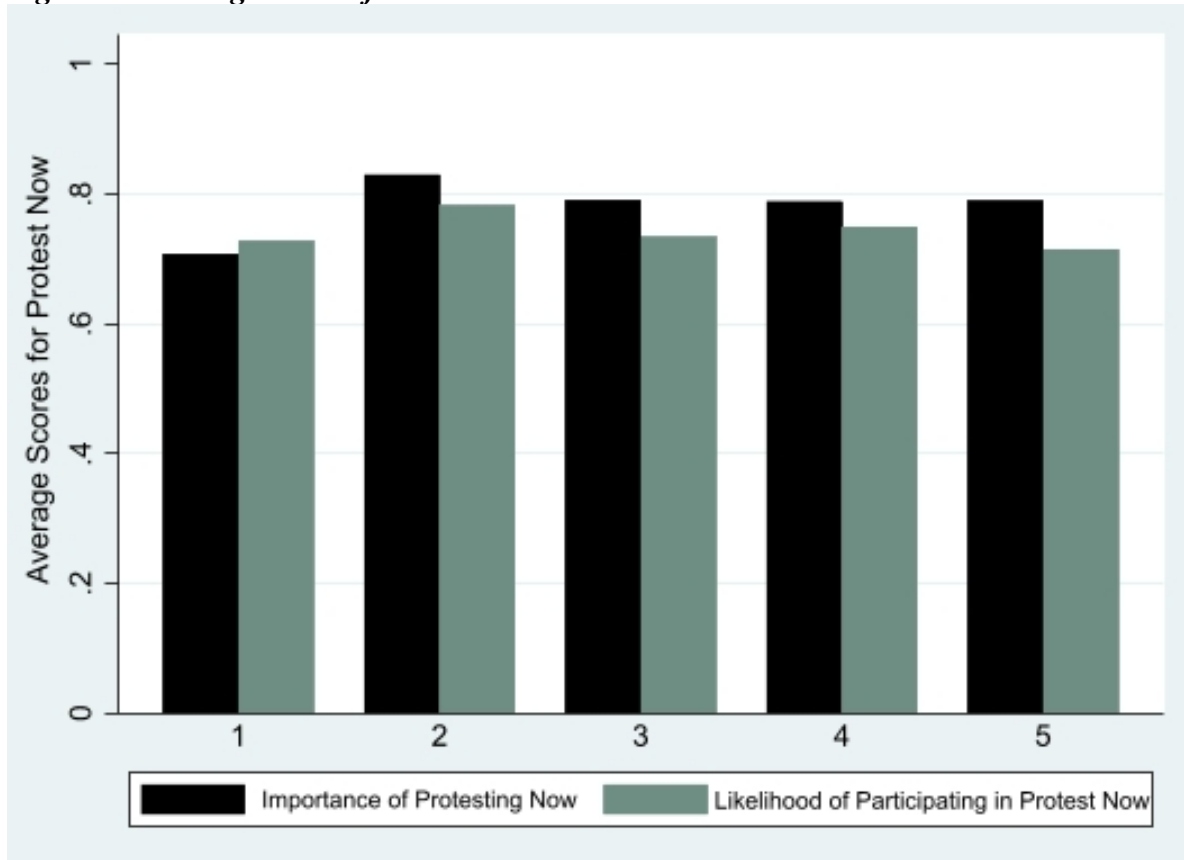


Figure 2 provides mean scores for responses to importance and willingness questions for those who indicated that community activists should organize a protest rally now. The y-axis corresponds to above response options and the x-axis corresponds to each group (1 – Control, 2 – Black Cisgender Man Treatment, 3 – Black Cisgender Woman Treatment, 4 – Black Transgender Man Treatment, 5 – Black Transgender Woman Treatment). Regarding the importance of protesting now, across groups, respondents indicated relatively high levels of importance. While there are no statistically significant means differences between treatment groups, there is a statistically significant difference between the control group and the Black



cisgender man treatment group. Relative to the control, respondents in the Black man treatment group indicated that protesting now to pressure authorities is about 12 percentage points more important ( $p = .007$ ). This finding provides partial support for the third hypothesis.<sup>13</sup> Since the control group reads a story without any information regarding Tracy Williams' race and gender, this finding could signify the importance of race and/or the importance of gender. If it only signified the importance of race, I would expect statistically significant differences in mean scores of all treatment groups relative to the control group, but I do not even though those differences are on the verge of statistical significance ( $p = .07$  and  $p = .08$ ). If this finding only signified the importance of gender, I would expect to see statistically significant mean differences in both the Black cisgender and transgender man treatment groups. Thus, it seems that this finding speaks to the importance of being a Black cisgender man in receiving more support for protest activity now. While it is not enough to confirm the third hypothesis, it is evidence in support of the third hypothesis.

Regarding a respondent's likelihood of participating in a protest now, across conditions, respondents indicated that they are "very likely" or close to "very likely" to participate in a protest. Relative to the control and between treatments, there are no statistically significant mean differences, which makes sense. It is reasonable to predict that respondents who think a protest

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<sup>13</sup> H3: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black man than when the police shooting victim is a Black woman or Black transgender person.

should happen now to pressure authorities might be invested and engaged enough to participate in said protest.

**Figure 3 – Average Scores for Wait to Protest**

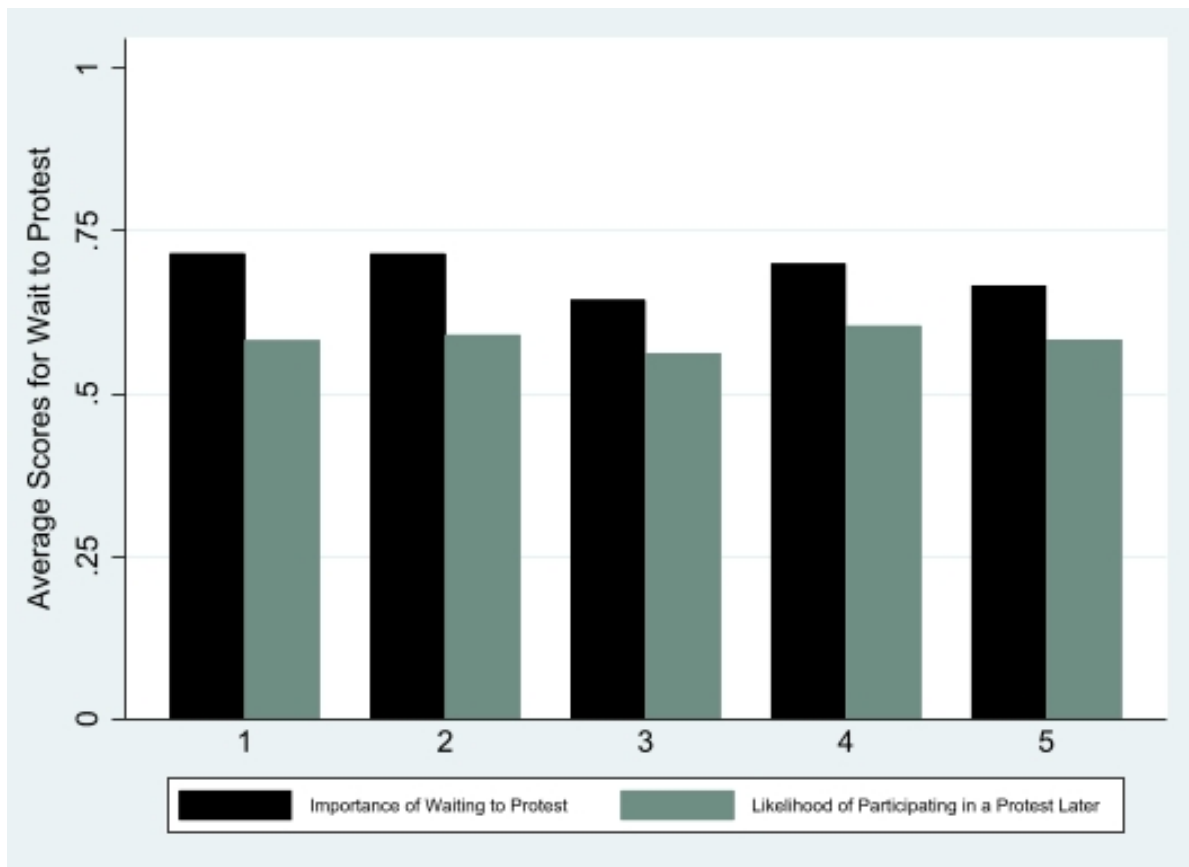


Figure 3 provides mean scores for responses to importance and willingness questions for those who indicated that community activists should wait for the investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally. Just like Figure 1, the y-axis corresponds to the 0 – 1 recode scale mentioned above, and the x-axis corresponds to each group. For this group of respondents, waiting for the investigation to conclude before organizing a protest is between moderately and very important with most conditions leaning towards very important to wait. Additionally, these respondents were much less willing to participate in a protest after the conclusion of the

investigation; averages ranges from six to ten points above “moderately likely.” For both importance and willingness questions, there are no statistically significant mean differences relative to the control and across treatments.

Finally, 6% of the sample (N = 30) indicated that community activists should never organize a protest rally. Unlike the other respondents, they were only asked about the importance of community activists not organizing a protest rally at all instead of also being asked about the likelihood of engaging in a protest rally. While there is a fair amount of variation relative to the control and between treatments, the quite low number of respondents mean that none of that variation rises to the level of statistical significance (all p values ranged from .4 to .7).

### **Petition Signing and Fundraising**

Next, respondents were asked how justified they thought it was for community activists to circulate a petition calling for the termination and arrest of Officer James Miller,<sup>14</sup> and how likely they were to sign such a petition.<sup>15</sup> Respondents were also asked how justified they thought it was for the family of Tracy Williams to start an online fundraiser to cover funeral expenses and legal fees<sup>16</sup> and how likely they were to donate to said fundraiser.<sup>17</sup> Like the protest questions, all questions were unidirectional, 5-point scales with response options including “extremely,” “very,” “moderately,” “slightly,” and “not at all.”<sup>18</sup> For ease of analysis, responses

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<sup>14</sup> Question wording: “How justified would it be for community activists to circulate a petition that calls for the termination and arrest of Officer James Miller?”

<sup>15</sup> Question wording: “How likely are YOU to sign a petition that calls for the termination and arrest of Officer James Miller?”

<sup>16</sup> Question Wording: “How justified would it be for the family of Tracy Williams to start an online fundraiser to cover funeral expenses and legal fees?”

<sup>17</sup> Question Wording: “How likely are YOU to donate to an online fundraiser to help the family of Tracy Williams cover funeral expenses and legal fees?”

<sup>18</sup> An example of the importance question reads: “How important is it that community activists organize a protest rally now?” An example of the likelihood question reads: “If a protest rally to pressure authorities to criminally charge officer James Miller was organized in your city, how likely are YOU to participate?”

were recoded onto a 0 – 1 scale wherein 0 represents “not at all,” .25 represents “slightly,” .5 represents “moderately,” .75 represents “very,” and 1 represents “extremely.”

Table 4 *Average Scores for Petition and Fundraiser Questions*

<i>Condition</i>	<b>Justification for Petition</b>	<b>Likelihood of Signing Petition</b>	<b>Justification for Fundraiser</b>	<b>Likelihood of Donating to Fundraiser</b>
<i>Control</i>	.66	.66	.66	.64
<i>Black Cisgender Man</i>	.70	.70	.69	.67
<i>Black Cisgender Woman</i>	.71	.67	.66	.65
<i>Black Transgender Man</i>	.71	.69	.66	.66
<i>Black Transgender Woman</i>	.66	.64	.67	.62

Table 4 provides average scores for responses to justification and likelihood questions for both the petition and the fundraiser sections. Column 1 (justification for petition) indicates that respondents felt that a petition would be four to nine points below “very justified.” Column 2 (likelihood of signing petition) indicates that respondents were between “moderately likely” and “very likely” to sign the petition calling for Miller’s termination and arrest. Column 3 (justification for fundraiser) reflects lower justification levels for an online fundraiser compared to circulating a petition, but respondents scored sixteen to nineteen points higher than “moderately justified.” Finally, column 4 (likelihood of donating to fundraiser) reflects lower levels of likelihood for donating to a fundraiser than signing a petition, but respondents scored twelve to seventeen points above “moderately likely.” For all questions, across all conditions, relative to the control and between treatments, there are no statistically significant mean differences.

## Main Effects Summary

The previous sections outline my main effects, or the average effects across treatments for all study participants. After analyzing emotional responses to the article and Officer Miller's actions and responses to engaging in protest, a petition, and a fundraiser, I find no pattern of evidence that suggests that Black people within this sample routinely treat Black victims of police shooting differently based on gender. To recap, I found five statistically significant mean differences: two were rooted in emotional responses to the article; two were rooted in Officer Miller's actions, and one was rooted in the importance of protesting now. While three of findings (anger levels, pride levels, happiness levels in relation to Miller's actions) provided evidence contrary to the hypothesis that the Black cisgender man treatment group would have stronger desires to protest, none of these emotional responses were reflected in decisions to protest by respondents. In fact, compared to the control, respondents thought it was more important to protest now to pressure authorities to bring criminal charges against Officer Miller in the Black cisgender man treatment group. While the fifth finding (helplessness) provided some evidence in support of the prediction that being cisgender can yield greater support for protest activity, this sentiment is also not reflected in questions about protest, petitioning, and fundraising.

More importantly, the *lack* of statistically significant findings implicates many hypotheses in this project. One hypothesis not mentioned above is the first one – I predicted that race would matter, and that respondents would have stronger desires to engage in protest activity for Black people rather than race-not-specified people. While the anger levels and protest now findings are partial evidence (more support for Black people compared to the control), they are not part of a larger pattern. In fact, it seems like race does not matter to these respondents; they have similar emotional responses and similar thoughts about protest, petitioning, and fundraising

whether they are assigned to the treatment groups or to the control. Another, more plausible explanation is that respondents in the control group assumed that Tracy Williams was Black given the familiar nature of the story. In fact, when asked about the racial background of the individual killed, 70% of those assigned to the control group selected “Black or African American” even though no information about race was provided. However, there is slim to no evidence to support hypothesis one.

Additionally, the lack of statistically significant findings is inconsistent with hypotheses three (the Black man receives the most support), four (cisgender people receive more support than transgender people), and six (the transgender man will receive more support than the transgender woman). Considering that only one of the five findings is about advocacy steps – protest, petition, fundraiser – there is no evidence supporting these hypotheses. However, the lack of findings is consistent with hypothesis two (gender does not matter). Given the very similar average scores on each outcome variable, it seems that, for this sample, Tracy Williams’ gender did not change their emotional or advocacy responses. Yes, each of the five findings highlights gender differences. However, statistically significant findings for 25% of outcome variables is insufficient to establish a pattern of gender bias (in any direction) or function as evidence that gender matters. If gender matter, it seems largely limited to emotional responses and not advocacy responses.

Given the dearth of evidence to support my hypotheses, perhaps I have two extremes represented in my sample – a group of people who absolutely hate transgender people, and a group of people who love them. In other words, there may be countervailing forces at work within my subject pool such that some participants are supportive or marginalized Black subgroups and others are not, thereby cancelling out any main effects. To explore this possibility,

I now will test for moderating effects with the same variables focusing first on participants who rate trans people negatively versus those who rate them positively.

### **Attitudes about Trans People as a Moderator**

It is important to note that the participants in my study had fairly positive attitudes about trans people. About half the sample rates trans people above 69 on a feeling thermometer. I have recoded this variable so that those about the median are coded as “1,” and those below are coded as “0.” As a result, one should interpret this variable such that those scoring low have *less* favorable attitudes towards trans people while those scoring high have *more* favorable attitudes towards trans people.

First, there are only five variables in which less favorable attitudes about trans people show evidence of moderating the relationship between Tracy Williams’ gender and responses (emotional and advocacy) to the article; two are emotional response to the general article variables, and the other three are related to protest variables. Since there are so few statistically significant effects, they are all combined and displayed in Table 5.

Table 5 *Experimental Effects among Respondents with Less Favorable Attitudes about Transgender People*

<i>Condition</i>	Emotional Responses		When to Protest	Protest	
	Helpless	Disgusted		Importance of Protesting Now	Likelihood of Participating in Protest Now
<i>Control</i>	.50	.53	.70	.64	.66
<i>Black Cisgender Man</i>	.51	.47	.71	.85	.81
<i>Black Cisgender Woman</i>	.58	.60	.68	.76	.65
<i>Black Transgender Man</i>	.41	.48	.56	.72	.73
<i>Black Transgender Woman</i>	.54	.59	.71	.79	.69

Column 2 (Helpless) indicates that respondents who rated trans people at 69 or below felt, on average, approximately “moderately helpless” after reading the story. While there are no statistically significant mean differences relative to the control group, there are noticeable differences between treatments. Compared to the Black trans man condition, respondents who received the Black cisgender woman treatment felt almost 17 percentage points more helpless; respondents who received the Black transgender woman treatment felt almost 13 percentage points more helpless ( $p = .01$  and  $p = .04$ , respectively). Understandably, this finding can be difficult to interpret. The Black cisgender woman finding seems to reflect main effects findings – you may recall that respondents who received the Black cisgender woman treatment felt most helpless, about 10 percentage points more helpless than those who received the Black transgender woman treatment. However, those who rank trans people less favorably should not then feel more helpless after reading a story about a Black trans woman getting killed by police;



the idea is that being transgender would decrease levels in a potentially sympathetic emotional response, not increase it. At best, this finding challenges hypothesis five because it is evidence that less positive attitudes about transgender people do not always reduce support for transgender people even though the baseline condition used for comparison is the Black transgender man condition<sup>19</sup> However, the finding is insufficient to refute the hypothesis out right.

Column 3 (Disgusted) indicates that respondents who rated trans people at 69 or below felt, on average, near or above “moderately disgusted.” Again, while there are no statistically significant mean differences relative to the control, there are some between treatments. Compared to the Black cisgender man treatment group, respondents who received the Black cisgender woman treatment were more than 13 percentage points more disgusted after reading the article ( $p = .031$ ). Also, respondents who received the Black transgender woman treatment were about 12.5 percentage points more disgusted after reading the article ( $p = .044$ ). While this Black cisgender woman finding is not a reflection of main effects, the Black transgender woman finding seems to provide more evidence contesting the fifth hypothesis (footnoted).

Turning to activist/advocacy responses to the article, column 4 (When to Protest) indicates that respondents with less favorable attitudes about trans people, on average, six to twenty-one points above “wait for police investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally.” Most noticeably is the average score of respondents randomly assigned to the Black transgender man condition. In fact, compared to the Black transgender man condition, all other conditions, including the control, have statistically significant higher means ( $p$  values range from .014 to .049). On face, this may look like more support for hypothesis five. However, in this

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<sup>19</sup> H5: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people with more positive attitudes about transgender people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is transgender compared to Black people with less positive attitudes about transgender people.

analysis, the baseline condition is the Black transgender man treatment group. Therefore, it is hard to explain, in the context of hypothesis five, why less favorable attitudes about transgender people increase support for Black transgender women compared to Black transgender men. Or, why less favorable attitudes about transgender people lower support for Black transgender men compared to Black transgender women. Especially considering that transphobia in Black communities seems largely directed at transgender women, this finding does not fit neatly into any hypotheses.

Column 5 (Importance of Protesting Now) indicates that respondents across treatments deemed it near or above “very important” for community activists to organize a protest rally now to pressure authorities to bring criminal charges against Officer Miller, with the exception of the control group. Compared to the control group, respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender man treatment deemed it 21 percentage points more important to protest now ( $p = .005$ ). Additionally, respondents randomly assigned to the Black transgender woman treatment deemed it about 15.5 percentage points more important to protest now ( $p = .025$ ). Again, the transgender woman finding is contrary to what I would expect and is thus more evidence that challenges hypothesis five.

Finally, column 6 (Likelihood of Participating in Protest Now) indicates that respondents were between “moderately likely” and a little over “very likely” to participate in a protest now. Compared to the Black cisgender man treatment group, respondents in the control group were about 15.6 percentage points less likely to participate in a protest now, and respondents in the Black cisgender woman treatment group were about 15.8 percentage points less likely to participate in a protest now ( $p = .034$  and  $p = .038$ , respectively). While interesting, it is not

apparent why less favorable attitudes about transgender people would reduce likelihood of protesting in the Black cisgender woman condition, let alone the control.

I have thus far only presented the variables in which there was some statistically significant finding. After analyzing answers for those respondents who rank trans people at 69/100 or below, three of the five statistically significant findings contest hypothesis five; zero of the five findings support hypothesis five. Before I rule out hypothesis five, I will look at the same variables for the other half of the sample that rank transgender people at or *above* 70/100.

Table 6 *Experimental Effects on Emotional Responses among Respondents with More Favorable Attitudes about Transgender People*

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	<b>Helpless</b>	<b>Disgusted</b>
<i>Control</i>	.52	.32	.58	.35	.51	.49
<i>Black Cisgender Man</i>	.57	.40	.57	.43	.55	.58
<i>Black Cisgender Woman</i>	.69	.27	.66	.40	.59	.57
<i>Black Transgender Man</i>	.67	.28	.62	.29	.63	.63
<i>Black Transgender Woman</i>	.53	.41	.53	.36	.43	.51

Table 6 provides averages for how strongly respondents who scored transgender people at 70/100 or above felt each emotion after reading the fictitious article. Column 2 (angry) indicates that respondents with more favorable attitudes about trans people felt two to nineteen percentage points above “moderately angry.” There is some variation across treatments and relative to the control, but only two results are statistically significant. Relative to the control, respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender woman treatment were nearly 17

percentage points angrier, and respondents randomly assigned to the Black transgender man treatment were nearly 15 percentage points angrier ( $p = .010$  and  $p = .020$ , respectively). While the Black cisgender woman finding seems to be consistent with our main effect finding, the Black transgender man finding seems new. It does provide partial support for hypothesis five in that it is partial evidence that respondents with more favorable attitudes about trans people will support them more. However, the lack of a similar finding for the Black transgender woman condition challenges this interpretation, especially considering that there is a nearly 15 percentage point difference between the Black transgender conditions ( $p = .015$ ).

Column 3 (Happy) indicates that respondents felt two to sixteen percentage points more than “slightly happy.” There are no statistically significant differences relative to the control, but there are a few between treatments. Compared to the Black cisgender woman condition, respondents in the Black cisgender man treatment group were, on average, more than 13 percentage points happier while respondents in the Black transgender woman treatment group were a little more than 14 percentage points happier ( $p = .025$  and  $p = .026$ , respectively). While both findings are odd, the Black transgender woman finding is in the opposite direction of hypothesis five – this finding indicates that more favorable attitude about transgender people do not always translate to more support. This may also reveal the differences that transgender men and transgender women face in support considering respondents in the Black transgender woman treatment were 13 percentage points happier than those in the Black transgender man treatment ( $p = .034$ ).

Column 4 (Sad) indicates that respondents, on average, felt three to sixteen percentage points above “moderately sad.” There are no statistically significant mean differences relative to the control, but there is one between treatments. Compared to the Black woman treatment,

respondents randomly assigned to the Black transgender woman treatment were nearly 14 percentage points less sad ( $p = .041$ ). While there is no statistically significant difference between scores of the two transgender treatment groups, this finding is still odd because more favorable attitudes about transgender people should not result in lower levels of support, especially compared to Black cisgender women – the idea is that those who have more favorable attitudes about transgender women view transgender women as no different than cisgender women. Although, that assumption may reveal the inadequacy of solely relying on a feeling thermometer to measure attitudes about transgender people. Regardless, this finding challenges hypothesis five.

Column 5 (Peaceful) indicates that respondents felt four to eighteen percentage points above “slightly peaceful.” None of the mean differences are statistically significant relative to the control, but they are significant relative to the Black cisgender man condition. That is, respondents in the Black transgender man treatment group were over 13 percentage less peaceful after reading the article ( $p = .015$ ). Given a lack of a statistically significant difference between the transgender treatments, this finding supports hypothesis five because it is evidence that more favorable attitudes about transgender people could raise support for them by lowering a more “positive” reaction to a graphic shooting.

Column 6 (Helpless) indicates that respondents felt one to thirteen percentage points more than “moderately helpless” (except for the Black transgender woman condition). While there are no statistically significant differences relative to the control group, there are some relative to the Black transgender woman treatment. That is, respondents assigned to the Black transgender man treatment felt 20 percentage points more helpless, respondents assigned to the Black cisgender woman treatment felt 16 percentage points more helpless, and respondents

assigned to the Black cisgender man treatment felt 12 percentage points more helpless ( $p = .001$ ,  $p = .012$  and  $p = .044$ , respectively). Given the statistically significant difference between the two transgender treatment groups and between the Black transgender and cisgender woman treatment groups, this finding challenges hypothesis five; it is evidence that more favorable attitudes about transgender people do not always result in more support for transgender people.

Finally, column 7 (Disgusted) indicates that respondents felt about one to thirteen percentage points more than “moderately disgusted,” relative to respondents in the control group. Using the Black transgender man condition as a baseline, respondents in the control group felt almost 14 percentage points less disgusted ( $p = .027$ ), and respondents in the Black transgender woman condition felt close to 13 percentage points less disgusted ( $p = .033$ ). While the difference between the Black transgender man condition and the control group seems to speak to the effect that more favorable attitudes about transgender people can have on support for transgender police shooting victims, the difference between the Black transgender man and Black transgender woman treatments quantifies how that support gets distributed, and who that support goes to – this is further evidence that complicates hypothesis five.

Finally, I will report three more variables that relate to hypothesis five – these three are the only other three variables where there are statistically significant differences in respondents with more favorable attitudes about trans people. Average scores are listed in Table 7.

Table 7 *Experimental Effects on Emotions and Advocacy for Respondents with More Favorable Attitudes about Transgender People*

<i>Condition</i>	Emotional Response to Miller's Actions		Advocacy Responses
	<b>Pride</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Likelihood of Donating to Fundraiser</b>
<i>Control</i>	.43	.40	.68
<i>Black Cisgender Man</i>	.54	.49	.69
<i>Black Cisgender Woman</i>	.51	.37	.67
<i>Black Transgender Man</i>	.36	.32	.73
<i>Black Transgender Woman</i>	.49	.45	.60

Column 2 (Pride) indicates that most respondents felt near or above “moderately proud” of Officer Miller’s actions (apart from two treatment groups). While there are no statistically significant differences relative to the control, there are some between treatments. Relative to the Black transgender man treatment, respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender woman treatment felt about 15 percentage points prouder of Officer Miller’s actions ( $p = .036$ ), and respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender man treatment group felt almost 18 percentage points prouder of Officer Miller’s actions ( $p = .009$ ). Given the lack of a statistically significant difference between the transgender treatment groups, this finding seems to support hypothesis five – those with more favorable attitudes towards transgender people are less proud of a police officer for violently shooting and/or justifying his actions when the police shooting victim is a transgender man.

Column 3 (Happy) indicates that respondents felt seven to twenty-four percentage points more than “slightly happy” about Officer Miller’s actions. There are no statistically significant differences relative to the control, but there are statistically significant differences between

treatments. Using the Black transgender man condition as a baseline, respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender man condition were almost 17 percentage points happier about Officer Miller's actions ( $p = .012$ ). Given the lack of a statistically significant difference between the transgender treatments ( $p = .06$ ), this finding also seems to support hypothesis five – those with more favorable attitudes about transgender people have weaker positive feelings in response to a graphic shooting of a transgender man.

Finally, column 4 (Likelihood of Donating to Fundraiser) indicates that respondents were ten to twenty-three points above “moderately likely” to donate to an online fundraiser from Tracy Williams' family to cover funeral expenses and legal fees. There are no statistically significant mean differences relative to the control, but relative to the Black transgender woman treatment, respondents in the Black transgender men treatment group were 13 percentage points more likely to donate to an online fundraiser ( $p = .014$ ). Like previous findings, this is evidence that more favorable attitudes about transgender people can increase support for transgender people (hypothesis five), but that support may only go towards transgender men.

Whereas analyzing less favorable attitudes about trans people uncovered three findings that negate hypothesis five, analyzing more favorable attitudes about trans people uncovered one finding that negate hypothesis five (sadness levels). Alternatively, three findings – peacefulness after reading the article, pride in Miller's actions, happiness in Miller's actions – support hypothesis five very clearly; these are findings where one or both transgender treatment groups received more support in the appropriate direction. For example, respondents assigned to the Black transgender man treatment felt less proud of Officer Miller's actions compared to respondents randomly assigned to the Black cisgender man and cisgender woman conditions. Feeling less proud of Officer Miller's actions is the more appropriate response to the shooting



considering that there is no actual evidence that indicates Tracy possessed a gun or posed a threat. That is what I mean by more support in the appropriate direction. However, there are five findings that complicate hypothesis five. In analyzing the moderating effect of more favorable attitudes on post-reading anger, happiness, helplessness and disgust levels as well as likelihood of donating to a fundraiser, a story emerges in which favorable attitudes about transgender people are directed towards the transgender man and not the transgender woman. Thus, there is not enough support to confirm hypothesis five considering that the hypothesis predicts that more favorable attitudes about transgender people will generate more support for transgender people irrespective of gender identity (i.e. man or woman).

## **Conclusion**

The Summer of 2020, for many, was a racial reckoning; people from all walks of life were forced to come to grips with the reality that Black Americans are killed at overwhelming rates by police. While this realization or wake-up call was long overdue, considering that state violence against Black Americans has been an issue for centuries, it is something that more and more people are now privy to. One of the narratives that resurfaced amid Summer 2020 protests was that Black people will mobilize to a greater effect for Black cisgender male victims of police shootings, but not Black cisgender woman or Black transgender victims of police shootings; recall, cities across the nation turned out in large numbers following George Floyd's death but not Breonna Taylor's death. Among other ideas, this project theorizes that marginalization theory and the frequency at which Black cisgender men are victims of police shootings are plausible explanations for observed differences in responses to police shooting victims. By running an

experiment that near-equally distributed attention to police shootings victims of different genders, I was able to test marginalization theory in the context of police killings which is an innovative and original idea. Upon extensive analyses and in the context of this sample, I find insufficient support for the claim that gender bias affects responses to police killings of Black Americans. That is not to say that misogyny and transphobia do not exist in Black communities, but rather to say that I do not find that those things consistently affect how this sample of Black Americans responds in emotional and advocacy-oriented ways. In the absence of main effects, I analyzed a potential countervailing force that may have caused the lack of main effects: attitudes about transgender people. Even after moderating for attitudes about transgender people, I do not find that more favorable attitudes about transgender people consistently increase support for transgender victims of police killings – sometimes that support seems limited to Black transgender men. Other times, those with less favorable attitudes support Black transgender victims *more* than Black cisgender victims. Though, most of the time, there are no effects, and attitudes about transgender people do not moderate the bulk of my outcome variables. Table 8 provides a breakdown of which hypotheses are supported and which hypotheses are not supported.

Table 8

Hypothesis Support Table

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Is it Supported?</b>
<i>H1: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have a stronger desire to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is Black than when the race of the victim is not specified.</i>	No
<i>H2 (null hypothesis): In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have similar desires to engage in protest activity irrespective of the gender of the police shooting victim.</i>	Yes
<i>H3: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black man than when the police shooting victim is a Black woman or Black transgender person.</i>	No
<i>H4: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is cisgender than when the police shooting victim is transgender.</i>	No
<i>H5: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people with more positive attitudes about transgender people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is transgender compared to Black people with less positive attitudes about transgender people.</i>	No
<i>H6: In response to news of a potentially unjustified shooting, Black people will have stronger desires to engage in protest activity when the police shooting victim is a Black transgender man than when the police shooting victim is a Black transgender woman.</i>	No

Even though the only confirmed hypothesis is hypothesis two (null hypothesis) this finding is still interesting; it suggests that the frequency hypothesis has merit. That is, Black people may mobilize to a greater effect for Black cisgender men than Black cisgender women or Black transgender people because there are more opportunities to organize around Black male victims. Of course, more research must be done in this area to confirm the frequency hypothesis, but this research indicates that that is a good next area of study.

This study does have a few major limitations. First, the sample is not nationally representative. Given gender, education, and class imbalances, it is probable that re-running this study on a nationally representative sample would produce different results. Due to time constraints, I did not have time to fully test the effects of education as a moderator, but preliminary analysis suggests that non-college graduates have significantly different views than college educated respondents. Second, emotional responses to an article or someone's actions may not map on neatly to protest activists and other forms of advocacy. For example, a respondent could be "proud" of Officer Miller for shooting Tracy Williams because they respondent thought Tracy Williams had a gun and believed Officer Miller did his job in "neutralizing" a threat. At the same time, the respondent may decide that community activists should protest immediately because they believe that Tracy Williams should not have died, and Officer Miller killed him without rigorously pursuing other alternatives to "neutralizing" the perceived threat. While this logic chain might not be true, the data shows that people can be "proud" of Officer Miller and still have strong desires to protest immediately. Of the 90 respondents who indicated they were more than "moderately proud" of Miller's actions and indicated that community activists should organize a protest rally now, compared to the control group, respondents who received the Black cisgender man treatment indicated that it was more

important to organize a protest rally immediately by nearly 20 percentage points (coefficient = .88,  $p = .01$ ). While this is a sub-sample of a sub-sample, it is an example of how emotional responses to a story may not spur protest activity in assumed ways. Third, the story of Tracy Williams is not always the story of police violence against Black Americans. To truly test my hypotheses, I needed to create a story with plenty of grey area – forcing respondents to make their own decisions about innocence, fault, and “doing the right thing.” That way, I could see whether gender was to blame for differences in reactions to the police shooting of Tracy Williams. However, I could have made the story absent of any grey area; I could have told a modified version of George Floyd’s story, Eric Garner’s story, Walter Scott’s story – all of which were captured on video and all of which show the defenseless nature the victims. If another researcher exposed respondents to a story like that, I imagine that responses would be different. Fourth, this study was conducted almost seven months after the beginning of the Summer 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. While seven months seems like quite some time, the protests continued well into the summer. Thus, maybe respondents remembered the protests and the messaging around them. That is, maybe they internalized or answered these questions with the phrases “All Black Lives Matter,” “Say Her Name,” or “Black Trans Lives Matter” in mind; re-running this study during a time that does not follow nationwide protests for Black lives might produce different results. Finally, the only measure of attitudes about transgender people was based on a feeling thermometer. While feeling thermometers can be good measures, they are a simpler measure and thus mask nuance. For example, some respondents may rate transgender people above 70 because they have no outspoken, anti-trans beliefs. However, they may find transgender people to be less deserving of a protest movement or funeral expense funds

compared to a Black man. Future research should consider asking more questions to better understand respondent attitudes about transgender individuals.

To be clear, this project should not be used to absolve Black communities of perpetuating misogyny and transphobia. This project should be used to warrant further study of how those things operate in Black communities, especially in the context of police shootings. Because it is the firm belief of the author of this project that, unequivocally, all Black lives matter.

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## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Q1 What is your race? Please mark all that apply

- Black or African-American (1)
- White (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (5)

Q47 What is your gender?

- Man (1)
  - Woman (2)
  - Other (Please Specify) (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q48 What year were you born in?

\_\_\_\_\_

---

Q49 What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- Did not graduate from high school (1)
  - High school graduate (2)
  - Some college, but no degree (3)
  - 2-year college degree (4)
  - 4-year college degree (5)
  - Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.) (6)
- 

Q50 Do you pay rent for your home, make monthly mortgage payments for your home, own your home outright with no payments due, or live with friends and/or family? Please indicate which one best describes your living arrangement.

- I pay rent for my home (1)
  - I make monthly mortgage payments for my home (2)
  - I own my home with no payments due (3)
  - Living with friends and/or family (4)
  - Other (Please specify) (5) \_\_\_\_\_
-

Q51 Are you married now and living with your spouse, or are you living with your partner, or are you widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never married? Please indicate which one best describes your relationship status.

- Married and living with spouse (1)
  - Living with partner (2)
  - Widowed (3)
  - Divorced (4)
  - Separated (5)
  - Never married (6)
- 

Q92 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?

- Democrat (1)
  - Republican (2)
  - Independent (3)
  - Other (Please Specify) (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q93 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong (1)
  - Not very strong (2)
-

Q94 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong (1)
  - Not very strong (2)
- 

Q95 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

- Closer to Republican (1)
  - Neither (2)
  - Closer to Democratic (3)
- 

Q2 Next, I would like to ask you a few questions about the structure of the government and funding in Black communities.

Q3 How much control do you think Blacks should have over the government in mostly Black communities?

- A great deal of control (1)
  - A lot of control (2)
  - A moderate amount of control (3)
  - A little control (4)
  - No control (5)
-

Q4 How important is being Black or African-American to your identity?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

Q6 How important is it that cities drastically reduce funding for the local police and reallocate these funds toward social services in the Black community focusing on such issues as mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse counseling, homelessness, and public education?

- Extremely important (1)
  - Very important (2)
  - Moderately important (3)
  - Slightly important (4)
  - Not at all important (5)
-

Q96 How much do you think that what happens generally to Black people in this country will affect what happens in your life?

- A lot (1)
- Some (3)
- Not very much (4)
- Not at all (5)

Q76 Now, I would like to get your feelings towards some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. You will read the name of the group and rate them using something we call the feeling thermometer.

Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you do not feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50-degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

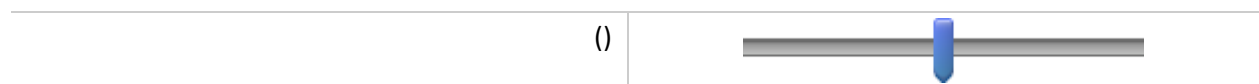
Q64 How would you rate **trans people**? That is, people who identify themselves as the sex or gender different from the one they were born as

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



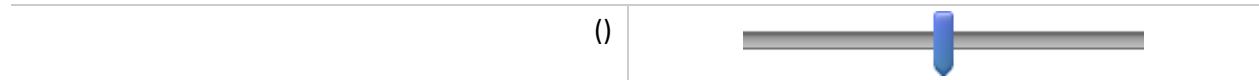
Q63 How would you rate **Muslim people**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



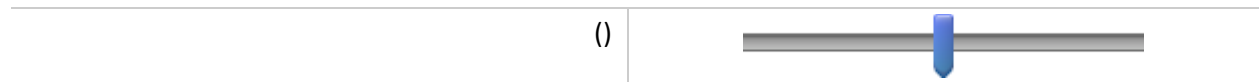
Q62 How would you rate **police officers**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



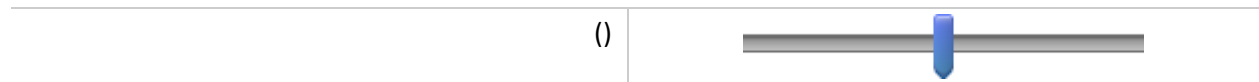
Q61 How would you rate **President Donald Trump**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q60  
How would you rate **the Black Lives Matter movement**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q59 How would you rate **the National Rifle Association**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

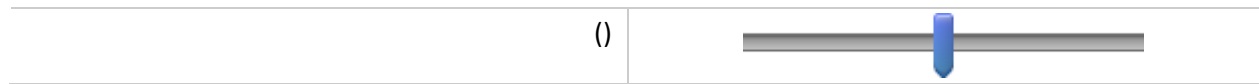




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Q58 How would you rate **President-Elect Joe Biden**?

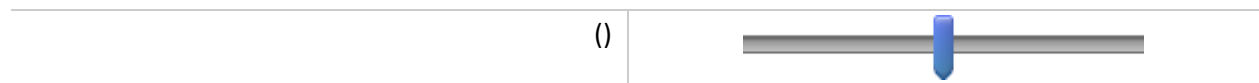
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



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Q57 How would you rate **Dr. Anthony Fauci**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



---

Q56 How would you rate **the Supreme Court**?

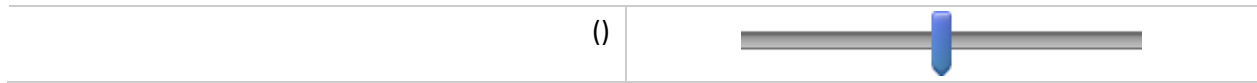
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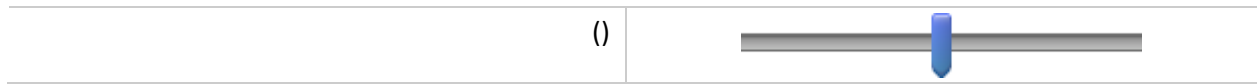
Q55 How would you rate **Antifa**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q54 How would you rate **the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q53 How would you rate **gay and lesbian people**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q52 How would you rate **Jewish people**?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q11 What is your present religion, if any?

- Roman Catholic (1)
  - Protestant (for example Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, or other Christian denomination) (2)
  - Jewish (3)
  - Muslim (4)
  - Agnostic (5)
  - Atheist (6)
  - Other (Please Specify) (7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q8 In your life, how important is religion?

- Extremely important (1)
  - Very important (2)
  - Moderately important (3)
  - Slightly important (4)
  - Not at all important (5)
-

Q9 In your daily life, how much guidance does your religion provide?

- A great deal of guidance (1)
  - A lot of guidance (2)
  - A moderate amount of guidance (3)
  - A little guidance (4)
  - No guidance at all (5)
- 

Q10 How often do you pray?

- Several times a day (1)
  - Once a day (2)
  - A few times a week (3)
  - Once a week (4)
  - Never (5)
-

Q12 In a typical month, how many times have you attended a religious service either in-person or virtually?

- More than four times (1)
- Four times (2)
- Three times (3)
- Two times (4)
- One time (5)
- Zero times (6)

Q13 Now, I would like to ask you some questions about the coronavirus and its impact on our country.

---

Q14

How many months do you think it will take for all Americans to receive a coronavirus vaccine?

- 1 - 3 months (1)
  - 4 - 6 months (2)
  - 7 - 9 months (3)
  - 10 - 12 months (4)
  - More than 12 months (5)
-

Q16 Who do you know that has contracted coronavirus? Please select all that apply.

- A family member (1)
  - A close friend (2)
  - A neighbor (3)
  - A co-worker (4)
  - I do not know anyone who has contracted coronavirus (5)
- 

Q17 How safe do you feel when you wear a mask in public?

- Extremely safe (1)
  - Very safe (2)
  - Moderately safe (3)
  - Slightly safe (4)
  - Not at all safe (5)
- 

Q18 How safe do you feel when you see someone **NOT** wearing a mask in public?

- Extremely safe (1)
- Very safe (2)
- Moderately safe (3)
- Slightly safe (4)
- Not at all safe (5)

Q19 How many more Americans do you think will die from coronavirus?

- 10,000 - 30,000 (1)
  - 30,001 - 50,000 (2)
  - 50,001 - 70,000 (3)
  - 70,001 - 90,000 (4)
  - 90,000+ (5)
- 

Q20 Some Americans believe that the government should be able to require you to wear a mask. How strongly do you agree with that statement?

- Strongly agree (1)
- Moderately agree (2)
- Slightly agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Slightly disagree (5)
- Moderately disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q79 Next, I would like you to read a news article from the Butler Collegian, the school newspaper of Butler University.

---

Q23 What is the racial background of the individual who was killed?

- White (1)
  - Black or African American (2)
  - Hispanic (3)
  - Asian (4)
  - Information on race was not provided (5)
- 

Q24 What is the gender of the individual who was killed?

- Man (1)
  - Woman (2)
  - Transgender Man (3)
  - Transgender Woman (4)
  - Information on gender was not provided (5)
- 

Q25

What is the name of the police officer who shot and killed Tracy Williams?

- Aaron Hotchner (1)
  - John Conley (2)
  - James Miller (3)
  - Brett Hankison (4)
-



Q26 What is the name of the Williams' family attorney?

- Johnnie Cochran (1)
  - Ben Sullivan (2)
  - Anthony Gray (5)
  - Ben Crump (3)
- 

Q27 In the article that you just read, how likely do you think it is that the individual killed was carrying a weapon in their car?

- Extremely likely (1)
  - Very likely (2)
  - Moderately likely (3)
  - Slightly likely (4)
  - Not likely at all (5)
-

Q28 In the article you just read, how likely do you think it is that the individual killed had a criminal record?

- Extremely likely (1)
  - Very likely (2)
  - Moderately likely (3)
  - Slightly likely (4)
  - Not likely at all (5)
- 

Q29 In the article you just read about the killing of Tracy Williams, how justified was the shooting?

- Extremely justified (1)
- Very justified (2)
- Moderately justified (3)
- Slightly justified (4)
- Not justified at all (5)

Q30 Next, I would like you to answer a few questions about how you felt when you read the article about Tracy Williams.

Q31 Below, you will find a list of emotions in the left column and a list of response options in the top row. Please select the option that best describes how strongly you felt each emotion after reading the article.

	Extremely (1)	Very (2)	Moderately (3)	Slightly (4)	Not at all (5)
Angry (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happy (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sad (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peaceful (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpless (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disgusted (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 In the story you just read about the killing of Tracy Williams by Officer James Miller, how **proud** did you feel **about Officer Miller's actions**?

- Extremely proud (1)
  - Very proud (2)
  - Moderately proud (3)
  - Slightly proud (4)
  - Not at all proud (5)
-

Q81 In the story you just read about the killing of Tracy Williams by Officer James Miller, how **sad** did you feel **about Officer Miller's actions**?

- Extremely sad (1)
  - Very sad (2)
  - Moderately sad (3)
  - Slightly sad (4)
  - Not at all sad (5)
- 

Q80 In the story you just read about the killing of Tracy Williams by Officer James Miller, how **happy** did you feel **about Officer Miller's actions**?

- Extremely happy (1)
  - Very happy (2)
  - Moderately happy (3)
  - Slightly happy (4)
  - Not at all happy (5)
-

Q82 In the story you just read about the killing of Tracy Williams by Officer James Miller, how **angry** did you feel **about Officer Miller's actions**?

- Extremely angry (1)
- Very angry (2)
- Moderately angry (3)
- Slightly angry (4)
- Not at all angry (5)

End of Block: Emotional Response Questions

---

Start of Block: Action Questions

Q33 Next, I would like to know what you think should happen in the aftermath of Tracy Williams' death.

---

Q34 Do you think community activists should organize a protest rally to pressure the authorities to criminally charge Officer James Miller OR do you think that community activists should wait for the police investigation to conclude before they organize a protest rally?

- Organize protest rally now to pressure authorities (1)
  - Wait for police investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally (2)
  - Community activists should not organize a protest at all (3)
- 

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you think community activists should organize a protest rally to pressure the authorities to c... = Organize protest rally now to pressure authorities*

34-a-1 How important is it that community activists organize a protest rally now?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you think community activists should organize a protest rally to pressure the authorities to c... = Organize protest rally now to pressure authorities*

34-a-2 If a protest rally to pressure authorities to criminally charge officer James Miller was organized in your city, how likely are YOU to participate?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Very likely (2)
- Moderately likely (3)
- Slightly likely (4)
- Not at all likely (5)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you think community activists should organize a protest rally to pressure the authorities to c... = Wait for police investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally*

34-b-1 How important is it that community activists wait for the police investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you think community activists should organize a protest rally to pressure the authorities to c... = Wait for police investigation to conclude before organizing a protest rally*

34-b-2 If a protest rally was organized in your city at the conclusion of the police investigation of Officer James Miller, how likely are YOU to participate?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Very likely (2)
- Moderately likely (3)
- Slightly likely (4)
- Not at all likely (5)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you think community activists should organize a protest rally to pressure the authorities to c... = Community activists should not organize a protest at all*

34-c-1 How important is it that community activists NOT organize a protest rally?

- Extremely important (1)
  - Very important (2)
  - Moderately important (3)
  - Slightly important (4)
  - Not at all important (5)
- 

Q40 How justified would it be for community activists to **circulate a petition** that calls for the termination and arrest of Officer James Miller?

- Extremely justified (1)
  - Very justified (2)
  - Moderately justified (3)
  - Slightly justified (4)
  - Not at all justified (5)
-



Q41 How likely are **YOU to sign** a petition that calls for the termination and arrest of Officer James Miller?

- Extremely likely (1)
  - Very likely (2)
  - Moderately likely (3)
  - Slightly likely (4)
  - Not at all likely (5)
- 

Q42 How justified would it be for the family of Tracy Williams to **start an online fundraiser** to cover funeral expenses and legal fees?

- Extremely justified (1)
  - Very justified (2)
  - Moderately justified (3)
  - Slightly justified (4)
  - Not at all justified (5)
-

Q43 How likely are **YOU to donate** to an online fundraiser to help the family of Tracy Williams cover funeral expenses and legal fees?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Very likely (2)
- Moderately likely (3)
- Slightly likely (4)
- Not at all likely (5)

End of Block: Action Questions

---

Start of Block: Post-Test FT Preamble

Q78 Finally, I would like to get your feelings towards some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. You will read the name of the group and rate them using the feeling thermometer as you did earlier in the survey.

End of Block: Post-Test FT Preamble

---

Start of Block: Post-Test Feeling Thermometers

Q68 How would you rate **trans people**? That is, people who identify themselves as the sex or gender different from the one they were born as

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

( )



Q69 How would you rate police officers?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q70

How would you rate the Black Lives Matter movement?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Q71 How would you rate the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



## **Appendix B: Treatments**

# THE BUTLER COLLEGIAN

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## Officer shoots Indianapolis local after traffic encounter

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The BUPD has launched an internal investigation. Collegian file photo.

KATIE DEAN | STAFF REPORTER | kidean@butler.edu

Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams the night of August 1st during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.

At around 9:45 p.m., officer James Miller pulled over Tracy Williams, 22, in an Indianapolis neighborhood not far from the university's campus because the 45-year-old officer said Williams failed to use a turn signal at an intersection. As Miller approached Williams' car, Miller saw Williams slowly reach for an object on the right side of the vehicle. After a brief exchange, Miller discharged his firearm.

"When I saw Williams reach for something on the right side of the vehicle, I told Williams to stop moving," Miller said during a Butler University press conference. "Williams continued to reach for the object. At night, gun owners often keep their firearm on top of the passenger's seat. I had to make a decision."

Family attorney Ben Sullivan called a press conference at a memorial site for Williams. "Tracy should not have died that night," the renowned civil rights attorney said. "I do not believe Officer Miller's account of that night's events."

Williams' mother, Ruth Williams, said a few words at the press conference as well. "I raised my child to listen to and comply with the police. As far as I am concerned, Tracy did not own a gun," a visibly distraught Williams said. She also contends that Miller's account of the event is untrue.

At the time of writing, it is unclear as to whether Tracy Williams was in possession of a gun.

Butler University has launched an investigation and has placed Miller on paid administrative leave.

"We will conduct a thorough investigation into Tracy Williams' death," Miller's supervisor, John Conley, said during a press conference. He pledged to publicly release the results of the investigation.

The Collegian will continue to update this story as more information becomes available.

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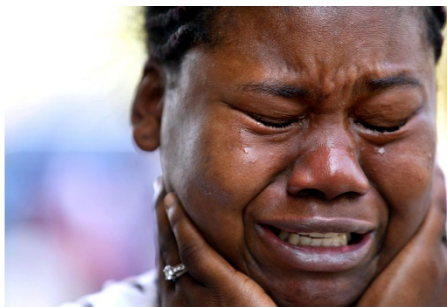
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### Officer shoots Black transgender woman after traffic encounter

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Ruth Williams grieves Sunday, August 2nd, at a family press conference about her child's death. Photo courtesy of the Indianapolis Star.

KATIE DEAN | STAFF REPORTER | kidean@butler.edu

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Ruth Williams grieves Sunday, August 2nd, at a family press conference about her child's death. Photo courtesy of the Indianapolis Star.

KATIE DEAN | STAFF REPORTER | kidean@butler.edu

Butler University police officer shot and killed Tracy Williams, a Black transgender man, the night of August 1st during a routine traffic stop, Chief of Public Safety John Conley said.

At around 9:45 p.m., officer James Miller pulled over Tracy Williams, 22, in an Indianapolis neighborhood not far from the university's campus because the 45-year-old officer said Williams failed to use a turn signal at an intersection. As Miller approached Williams' car, Miller saw Williams slowly reach for an object on the right side of the vehicle. After a brief exchange, Miller discharged his firearm.

"When I saw Williams reach for something on the right side of the vehicle, I told Williams to stop moving," Miller said during a Butler University press conference. "Williams continued to reach for the object. At night, gun owners often keep their firearm on top of the passenger's seat. I had to make a decision."

Family attorney Ben Crump called a press conference at a memorial site for Williams. "Tracy should not have died that night," the renowned civil rights attorney said. "I do not believe Officer Miller's account of that night's events."

Williams' mother, Ruth Williams, said a few words at the press conference as well. "I raised my child to listen to and comply with the police. As far as I am concerned, Tracy did not own a gun," a visibly distraught Williams said. She also contends that Miller's account of the event is untrue.

At the time of writing, it is unclear as to whether Tracy Williams was in possession of a gun.

Butler University has launched an investigation and has placed Miller on paid administrative leave.

"We will conduct a thorough investigation into Tracy Williams' death," Miller's supervisor, John Conley, said during a press conference. He pledged to publicly release the results of the investigation.

The Collegian will continue to update this story as more information becomes available.

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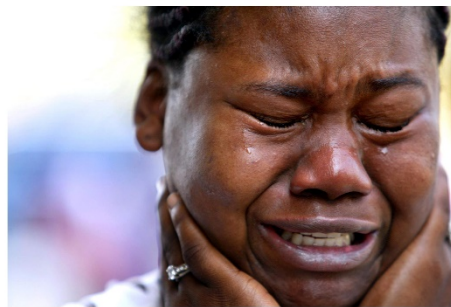
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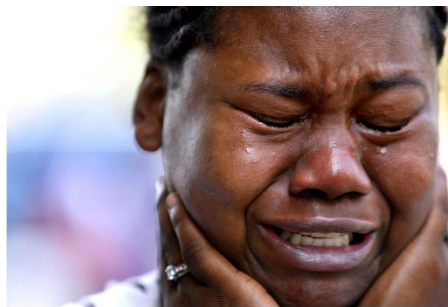
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