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## BUDGETARY OBSTACLES TO POLICE REFORM: THE CASE OF SAN FRANCISCO

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BUDGETARY OBSTACLES TO POLICE REFORM:  
THE CASE OF SAN FRANCISCO

A Capstone Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the College of Arts & Sciences  
University of San Francisco

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN URBAN & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

By

Hayden Anderson

July 2021

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THE CASE OF SAN FRANCISCO

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

July 2021

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this  
Capstone thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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## **Abstract**

In response to the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement issued a statement calling on cities to Defund the Police. The event sparked a nationwide reckoning that has reshaped the narratives and strategies for remedying the racial bias and police brutality apparent in the criminal justice system. The shift in police reform efforts embraces notions guiding police budgeting decisions. Today's advocates are transforming their approach to police reform to include budgeting decisions by promoting a municipal practice known as police budget reform. This Capstone explores the feasibility of successful police budget reform under current administrative structures by asking, what influences municipal capacity to reform police budgets? Using San Francisco and its police department's budget as a case study, this thesis demonstrates how informal perceptions and binding agreements create barriers to reallocating police funds. Four significant factors—San Francisco's pro-labor sentiment, a city's perception of police budget reform, collective bargaining for public safety, and the role of the mayor—most influence a city's ability to alter the status quo of police budgeting practices and outcomes. The findings are presented here in hopes that police budget reform may be better understood by policing academics and Defund the Police advocates navigating the new landscape of police reform and avenues for success.

## Introduction

In May 2020, a video went viral exposing the murder of George Floyd, a 46-year-old unarmed Black man, by a Minneapolis police officer who knelt on Floyd's neck to the point of suffocation. Despite hearing Floyd say that he could not breathe, the White police officer ignored his pleas and continued excessive restraint for nearly ten minutes.<sup>1</sup> Floyd's death marked the 182<sup>nd</sup> police killing of a Black individual in 2020 up to that point and is said to be symbolic of the systemic racial bias present in past and modern policing.<sup>2</sup> Racial justice and police reform advocates, who increasingly associate themselves with the interests of Black Lives Matter, argue that Floyd's death was a 'breaking point' between law enforcement and Black communities moving forward.<sup>3</sup>

The United States has done little to resolve the racist and harmful policies in policing that have consistently put Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) at a high risk of over-policing, prejudice, and violence.<sup>4</sup> The problem lies in the way policing was conceived. After the U.S. abolished slavery in 1865, certain states, predominately in the south, found the means to subject Black individuals to harsh criminal sanctions for laws not applicable to Whites (e.g., Jim

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<sup>1</sup> Asia News Monitor, "George Floyd Died from Lack of Oxygen, Doctor Testifies," *Asia News Monitor*, April 12, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> FatalEncounters.org, *Fatal Encounters: African American/Black, January 1, 2020 - May 26, 2020*. Fatal Encounters, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Patrisse Cullors, *#DefundThePolice*, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Munmun De Choudhury et al., "Social Media Participation in an Activist Movement for Racial Equality," *Proceedings of the ... International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media 2016* (May, 2016), 92-101.

Crow laws).<sup>5</sup> Police officers upheld these racially biased laws and were even charged themselves for inciting mob violence against BIPOC communities.<sup>6</sup>

Census data from the late 19th and early 20th centuries worsened discriminatory practices in the criminal justice system. Data from these eras revealed that police incarcerated Black individuals at disproportionate rates than Whites. This statistic became a foundational aspect for the perception of BIPOC communities and individuals being more dangerous than White Americans. The racial bias in policing continued throughout the 20th century but is especially apparent in instances such as in the Midwest after the Great Migration, the 1960's civil rights movement, and the broken windows philosophy in the 1990s.<sup>7</sup> The perception that Black individuals, in particular, posed a threatening presence was a reason for cities choosing to adopt racially biased policing policies that remain destructive to BIPOC communities to this day.

Overwhelming amounts of data suggest that Black individuals who suffer from mental illness are more likely to be confronted by police officers than the average citizen.<sup>8</sup> In 2015 data also showed that the risk of being stopped by law enforcement is x16 times higher for people with untreated mental illnesses; as a result, a quarter of fatal law enforcement shootings involve an individual with a mental health illness.<sup>9</sup> Police reformists and academics find that relying on police to perform duties outside their scope of expertise, like responding to mental illness complications, exacerbates police-communal relations.

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<sup>5</sup> Anna North, "How Racist Policing Took Over American Cities, Explained by a Historian," *Vox.Com*, June 6, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> North, "How Racist Policing Took Over American Cities, Explained by a Historian," 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Doris A. Fuller et al., *Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters*, 2016.

For decades, there have been attempts at changing harmful policing practices through methods known as police reforms. Police reforms aim to transform police culture, policies, and procedures—emphasizing officer accountability and communal oversight.<sup>10</sup> For example, police departments invest in implicit bias training courses for their officers to remove racial prejudice.<sup>11</sup> Some cities have also funded reform initiatives such as civilian oversight boards and body-worn cameras to increase officer accountability while on patrol.<sup>12</sup> Yet even though 21st-century reforms are some of the most extensive police reforms in history, Black individuals are still killed by police officers at disproportionate rates while officers are rarely held accountable for the murders.<sup>13</sup> These facts have encouraged advocates for police reform and racial justice to merge efforts and build coalitions that uplift BIPOC communities away from police violence.

Leading the national call for contemporary police reform and racial justice is the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM). This decentralized social-justice movement aims to protect and prevent Black Americans from discrimination and violence inflicted on their communities.<sup>14</sup> Since its inception, BLM has played a crucial role in bringing national attention to police killings and advocating for policymakers to enact new police reform measures.<sup>15</sup> Most notably, Black Lives Matter advocates have responded to dozens of high-profile murders by hosting large

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<sup>10</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance. *Police Reform*. SR Backgrounder Series. Geneva: DCAF, 2019. 1-9.

<sup>11</sup> Scott Briscoe, "Is Implicit Bias Training in Law Enforcement Successful?" *ASIS International*, September 15, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Ben Miller, "Just how Common are Body Cameras in Police Departments?" *Knight-Ridder/Tribune Business News*, Jun 28, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Mapping Police Violence, *Police Violence Map*. Mapping Police Violence, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Black Lives Matter. "About," 2020

<sup>15</sup> Munmun De Choudhury et al., "Social Media Participation in an Activist Movement for Racial Equality," 2016.

demonstrations against police violence and in support of various police reform initiatives.<sup>16</sup>

Despite successfully implementing police reforms and increasing media attention, Black Lives Matter advocates still find that police violence is a significant cause of injury and death for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.<sup>17</sup> Black individuals, for instance, are three times more likely to be killed by police, even though they are less likely to be armed or engaging in a violent act at the time of their initial interaction with the police.<sup>18</sup> These observations demonstrate that there has been little progress in removing racial bias and police violence regardless of the investment in police reform.

Compounding systemic racism in the criminal justice system is disinvestment in social services in communities affected by over-policing, recidivism, and lethal encounters with police.<sup>19</sup> In the absence of social services, cities often choose to fund police departments to increase their role in overseeing problems in mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, this action translates to fewer dollars available for community-led services with on-staff specialists able to respond to these distinct crises.<sup>21</sup>

The lack of investment into BIPOC communities and the failure of reforms to remove the racial bias and violence in law enforcement increasingly frustrated the Black Lives Matter movement over the past seven years. The 'breaking point' between police departments and Black

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<sup>16</sup> Jackie Menjivar, "Black Lives Matter Protests: What's been Achieved so Far," *DoSomething.Org*, August 3, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Penn Medicine News, "Fatal Police Shootings among Black Americans Remain High, Unchanged since 2015," *PennMedicine.Org*, (October 28, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> Mapping Police Violence, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Nazgol Ghandnoosh, *Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial Inequity in the Criminal Justice System*. The Sentencing Project The Sentencing Project (Washington, DC): 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Watch, *A Roadmap for Re-Imagining Public Safety in the United States: 14 Recommendations on Policing, Community Investment, and Accountability*. 1-29.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

communities occurred after the murder of George Floyd in May 2020; afterward, the BLM movement stating,

George Floyd's violent death was a breaking point — an all too familiar reminder that, for Black people, law enforcement doesn't protect or save our lives. They often threaten and take them... We call for a national defunding of police. We demand investment in our communities and the resources to ensure Black people not only survive, but thrive.<sup>22</sup>

This statement marked a shift from traditional routes of implementing police reform to a campaign demanding reallocation of funds and discretion for community-led organizations. This campaign adopted the slogan #DefundthePolice (i.e., Defund the Police), whose mission includes informing the country about the harmful effects of budgeting for police departments.<sup>23</sup> The Defund the Police campaign has effectively joined conversations about police spending and failures in reform into a movement for advocating "police budget reform."

Police budget reform is a strategy that reduces funds meant for a police department's budget and reallocates those dollars to support community-based alternatives. This shift in approach to police reform maintains components of contemporary methods of police reform (e.g., homelessness services; local restorative justice programs). However, it does so with an equal, if not more, emphasis on divesting in police department operations. As a result, defund the Police advocates face a new set of obstacles found in municipal structures by transitioning to advocacy for budget reform.

The nationwide efforts to implement police budget reform have merged into municipal

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<sup>22</sup> Cullors, *#DefundThePolice*, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Black Lives Matter Canada. "Defund the Police Website," 2021.

settings because a city's general fund is responsible for most department budget allocations.<sup>24</sup> A transition towards city hall implies that national and statewide coalitions have become increasingly fractured and now face unique circumstances based on their own city's policing concerns. Nonetheless, the goals motivating all police budget reform advocates remain the same, that is, influencing their city officials to consider reallocating funds away from police departments.

Police reform has recently focused on adding programs and initiatives that combat police officers' discriminatory and often violent practices. The critical difference in police budget reform is that reform initiatives involve *removing* programs that have proven harmful or ineffective. Local campaigns to Defund the Police in cities across the United States share the sentiment that removing policing through budgetary divestment is a better alternative than fixing systemic problems in policing policies and culture. However, there has been little discussion in policing scholarship and advocacy groups about the feasibility of this practice.

This Capstone explores the potential of a city to enact police budget reform under current administrative structures and relationships guiding police budgeting practices. During the research sections, I suspend conversations on the virtues and strategies for police budget reform to analyze the probability that a city can entertain future Defund the Police proposals during police budgeting. Measuring the achievability of police budget reform is crucial for police reform scholars and advocates before defining alternatives for removed police services. However, certain obstacles or opportunities may affect the ability of these reforms to obtain funding, and without available funds to implement new programs, attempts at reform will

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<sup>24</sup> Urban Institute. "Police and Corrections Expenditures," 2011 to Present.

expectedly fail.

San Francisco is an example of a city willing to entertain the notion and possibilities of police budget reform.<sup>25</sup> City leaders hear the calls of the Defund the Police movement scrutinizing the \$670 million police budget for FY2020-21.<sup>26</sup> In response to massive and prolonged demonstrations against these budget allocations, Mayor London Breed announced, "The Dream Keeper Initiative." This program reallocates \$120 million from law enforcement over the next two years (from the police and sheriff's department combined) towards Black communities impacted by disinvestment and problematic policing.<sup>27</sup> This shift in the direction towards police budget reform signals support from city leaders while demonstrating that the city can reform the police budget's status quo.

Nevertheless, local activists in San Francisco argue that the city can take more drastic measures in reforming the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD) budget. Defund SFPD Now, the local police budget reform coalition, identifies the harmful effects of each line item expenditure in the police budget and recommends removing most, if not all of these costs.<sup>28</sup> Defund SFPD Now, and even the San Francisco police commissioner claims these cuts insignificantly affect current operations.<sup>29</sup> The affirmation from both advocates and the police

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<sup>25</sup> Cornell Barnard and Alix Martichoux, *San Francisco Mayor London Breed Announces Cuts to Police in New City Budget*, ABC7News.com, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> Megan Cassidy and Joaquin Palomino, "SF's Spending and Hiring Spree on Police Comes to an End, but Where Will Cuts Come from?" *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 13, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Green, *SF Mayor Breed Unveils Plan for Reinvesting \$120 Million from Police into Black Communities*, KQED.com, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Afrosocialist Caucus SF and DSA SF Justice Committee, *DEFUND SFPD NOW. A Policy Proposal to Defund, Disband, and Disarm the San Francisco Police Department*. Defund SFPD Now (San Francisco, CA): 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Green, *SF Mayor Breed Unveils Plan for Reinvesting \$120 Million from Police into Black Communities*, 2021.

suggests that The Dream Keeper Initiative does not remove enough funding to reform policing practices.

This Capstone attempts to define the factors that influence the capacity of San Francisco to remove police funding in favor of community-based alternatives. San Francisco provides an ideal setting because the city has already implemented a police budget reform through The Dream Keeper Initiative and openly provides information regarding police spending and budgeting practices. In addition, as a graduate student researcher, I have access to many city officials involved in police reform and police budgeting processes, which also contributed to the reasoning for this location of study. This ideal environment provides my research with a more comprehensive understanding of what factors prevent, maintain, and allow San Francisco to reform the SFPD's budget further.

Using San Francisco and its police department as a case study, my thesis asks what influences municipal capacity to reform police budgets? Throughout this project, I find that the most influential factors affecting the city's ability to implement police budget reform are informal perceptions and binding agreements that illustrate obstacles to reallocating police funds. An analysis of budget documents, administrative practices, and labor agreements involving the San Francisco Police Department demonstrates that contemporary municipal budgeting practices prevent reforming the majority of the police department's budget. City officials claim that these formal barriers to budget reform are frequently the result of relationships and unofficial budgeting practices that inherently affect police department budgeting decisions. Defund the Police advocates and policing scholars must acknowledge the obstacles to including municipal budgeting policies in reform efforts; otherwise, future attempts at reform may be subject to failure once the municipality takes part in the process. This thesis identifies the four most

influential factors affecting a municipality's capacity to reform its police department's budget and what these factors imply about the feasibility of implementing this type of reform. While data in this study suggests multiple barriers to police budget reform implementation, these findings also provide academics and Defund the Police advocates with considerations on overcoming these obstacles in municipal settings.

This thesis defines the most significant influences on a city's ability to reform police budgets throughout five stages. Starting with a review of the scholarship on contemporary police reform and police spending, this Capstone explains how my inquiry into municipal capacity extends the conversation on how police budget reform implementation would occur under current conditions. The following section outlines the mixed methods approach I used during this case study involving San Francisco and its police department. Next, I provide a brief history of San Francisco Police Department budgeting and what a shift in budgeting authority over time means for attempts at police budget divestment.

In the fourth section of this Capstone, I analyze data from budget documents and labor agreements and compare this information with information and insight from city officials to measure certain factors' influence on budgeting outcomes. In the final portion of this case study, I discuss the significance of defining these obstacles for police reform advocates and scholars navigating the future of police budget reform. Before providing insight into each factor affecting police budget reform, I will review previous discussions regarding police reform, budgeting decisions, and how unions affect the potential for these two concepts to merge.

## **II. Literature Review**

This section reviews policing literature written about the most recommended approaches to police reform over the past four decades: community-oriented and problem-oriented policing. This section will illustrate how police reform scholars who offer research and recommendations on these types of reform oftentimes do so without regard to the climate surrounding police-communal relations during the implementation stage.

This literature review then lays out the two competing theories on what most influences police budgeting decisions: the demands of citizens or preference for using an incremental formula. After defining these two budgeting models, I describe how both approaches are limited in explaining police budget outcomes. Still, the most considerable constraint in this body of literature is that neither provides evidence of how calls for police reform can shape budgeting outcomes.

The last section of this review discusses how police unions and labor agreements influence decisions regarding police budget reform. This final body of literature is significant because it is the first sign of conversations considering police reform and budgeting decisions. With that said, scholarship has yet to analyze whether other factors outside of police unions would affect the feasibility of implementing police budget reform.

During this literature review, each body of literature represents a stage in a timeline that describes how initial attempts at police reform have evolved to consider a municipality's role in police budget reform. I detail relevant findings to demonstrate the current understanding of police budget reform in today's environment, providing a starting point for future research on the

topic. While the literature on police budget reform is slim, there is no lack of scholarship on the foundational aspects of police reform, which I examine in the following subsection.

### *Police Reform*

Community-oriented and problem-oriented policing are frequently cited as the most effective means for reform in contemporary policing scholarship. Problem-oriented policing is a strategy involving individual officer accountability when solving problems unique to their community.<sup>30</sup> Over time, scholars recommended reform strategies that complimented problem-oriented policing but emphasized a high level of community participation. Community-oriented policing is a municipal policing practice that offers citizens an active role in improving their neighborhood's public safety.<sup>31</sup> These policing strategies would provide the foundation for modern-day police reform initiatives; however, the implementation and outcomes of these reforms are also why today's police reform advocates are shifting focus to budgetary reallocations.

The basis for modern-day police reform strategy was introduced in the late 1970s-1980s by police reform scholars who shared public dissatisfaction with corrupt and ineffective policing.<sup>32</sup> As a result, municipal police departments adopted various practices developed by community and problem-oriented policing scholars to remedy these concerns.<sup>33</sup> Problem-oriented policing is a strategy for improving the quality of policing by training officers to focus

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<sup>30</sup> Herman Goldstein, "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach," *Crime and Delinquency* 25, no. 2 (1979), 236-258.

<sup>31</sup> Michael D. Reisig, "Community and Problem-Oriented Policing," *Crime & Justice* 39 (2010), 1-53.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>33</sup> David H. Bayley, "Police Reform: Who done it?" *Policing & Society* 18, no. 1 (2008), 7-17.

on achieving tangible results. In Herman Goldstein's (1979) article "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach," Goldstein argues that law enforcement should implement a process that concentrates on defining problems and finding solutions unique to each police department's jurisdiction. Thus, problem-oriented policing serves as an internal policing mechanism that places accountability on individual police officers to consider their actions and what kind of actions will produce the broadest impact on public safety.<sup>34</sup>

Over time, problem-oriented policing became more inclusive of communities and individuals about creating new methods for public safety. The growing inclusion of community members in reform strategies built atop the foundational aspects of problem-oriented policing. Eventually, problem-oriented policing became the steppingstone and just one component of a more comprehensive policing system known as community-oriented policing.

Community-oriented policing is a cumulation of police reform strategies, including aspects of problem-oriented policing.<sup>35</sup> The literature on police reform describes community-oriented policing as a widescale approach involving how citizens can interact with the police to promote public safety. For instance, some authors argue that a strategy for community-oriented policing consists of a police department creating a universal and safe setting for community members to communicate with officers.<sup>36</sup> Like this holistic alternative, community-oriented policing strategies are not prescriptive and allow interpretation based on a specific individual or collective need. Scholars who support community-oriented policing do not prescribe a strict set

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<sup>34</sup> Reisig, "Community and Problem-Oriented Policing," 1-53, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Herman Goldstein, "Toward Community-Oriented Policing: Potential, Basic Requirements, and Threshold Questions," *Crime & Delinquency* 33 (1987), 6-30.

<sup>36</sup> Valentina Petrova, "The Future of our Freedom," *Journal of Integral Theory & Practice* 9, no. 2 (2014), 153-161.

of approaches because this alternative policing strategy is not about the ways to reform police but about reaching a goal of improving community and police relations.

However, reaching this goal is dependent on the participation of all parties involved. Community and problem-oriented policing scholar Wesley Skogan writes that police reforms encounter limitations if both community members and a police department do not agree about the methods involved in police reform strategies. Skogan (2008) writes:

Organizations representing the interests of community members may not have a tradition of cooperating with police. Because their constituents often fear the police, groups representing low-income and minority areas may be more interested in monitoring police misconduct and pressing for greater police accountability to civilians than in becoming closely identified with them.<sup>37</sup>

Skogan suggests that the methods to achieving community-oriented policing are complicated when there is a history of police-communal mistrust. As described in Skogan's study, the lack of confidence between parties reveals that the barriers to police reform are not in their design but rather their implementation. Scholarship on police reform over the past 40 years has focused on building strategies for remedying police-communal relations. In doing so, scholarship on the topic frequently overlooks the societal conditions preventing reform from implementation and acceptance.

In addition to lack of trust by communities, participatory resistance within police departments disrupts the implementation of problem-oriented and community-oriented policing.<sup>38</sup> When faced with adopting new police reform initiatives, scholars report that police management (generally consisting of senior-level officers) are skeptical about reforms crafted by

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<sup>37</sup> Wesley G. Skogan, "Why Reforms Fail," *Policing & Society* 18, no. 1 (2008), 23-34.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*

civilians who have little-to-no experience in law enforcement.<sup>39</sup> Hence, when the police put reforms to practice, they may disingenuously involve community members. I found that much of the literature I reviewed relied implicitly on the condition that police officers would embrace reform methods after adopting policing alternatives. However, in Skogan's critique, he described that there was little evidence suggesting that policing problems, such as racial bias, public safety, and community relations, were improved even after implementing police reform strategies.<sup>40</sup>

This literature on contemporary police reform demonstrates that without regard to the existing levels of trust and participation between communities and their police, problem-oriented and community-oriented policing are promising solutions to problems in law enforcement practices. The problem is that disregarding the amount of trust and participation in police reform implementation ignores how these alternatives will be agreed upon and consistently practiced. After decades of police violence and failed attempts at reform, disadvantaged communities have little reason to trust the police to implement and participate wholeheartedly.<sup>41</sup>

These considerations lend support as to why current police reform efforts have shifted focus to resource allocation advocacy. The narrative of individuals living in communities negatively impacted by policing is that reforms will be more successful if they have discretion over implementation. However, even well-resourced community-led organizations are unlikely to afford the time, but more importantly, the funds necessary to implement reforms without a police department's resources.<sup>42</sup> So, many modern-day police reformists have reorganized their

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<sup>39</sup> Bayley, "Police Reform: Who done it?" (2008), 7-17.

<sup>40</sup> Goldstein, "Toward Community-Oriented Policing: Potential, Basic Requirements, and Threshold Questions," (1987) 6-30; Skogan, "Why Reforms Fail," (2008), 23-34.

<sup>41</sup> Skogan, "Why Reforms Fail," (2008), 23-34.

<sup>42</sup> Russell L. Smith and Thomas M. Uhlman, "Police Policy and Citizen Satisfaction: Evidence from Urban Areas," *Policy Studies Journal* 7 (1978), 480-486.

campaign strategies to advocate for reallocating police funds towards community-led organizations. This shift in narrative demonstrates how conversations about police reform are now considering the effects of police department funding.

### *Police Budgeting*

Determining the number of police reforms available is the department's budget. A police department's budget decides the composition of the police force and often guides the policies within. However, what determines the department's total budget allocations is a matter of debate. Literature on police budgeting shows that there two major conflicting theories as to what influences police budgeting decisions. One group of policing scholars suggest that public opinion, measured by citizens' demands for certain levels of police spending, plays a significant role in shaping budgeting decisions. On the other hand, some argue that police budgeting is entirely unaffected by exogenous factors and instead decided upon by incremental adjustments based on the previous year's budget.

Policing scholars who recognize that public opinion most influences police budgeting decisions argue in favor of what is known as the "demands model" of police budgeting.<sup>43</sup> For example, authors Brenden Beck and Adam Goldstein found that as Americans became increasingly reliant on their real estate investments in the 1990s, police strength and spending grew according to citizens' demands to have their property safeguarded.<sup>44</sup> Although, their

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<sup>43</sup> Rick Ruddell and Matthew O Thomas, "Minority Threat and Police Strength: An Examination of the Golden State," *Police Practice & Research* 11, no. 3 (2010), 256-273.

<sup>44</sup> Brenden Beck and Adam Goldstein, "Governing through Police? Housing Market Reliance, Welfare Retrenchment, and Police Budgeting in an Era of Declining Crime," *Social Forces* 96, no. 3 (2018), 1183-1210.

research found that citizen-demands, like those regarding real estate, often held racial undertones. Beck and Goldstein claim that publicized fear among white voters who perceived minority populations as encroaching upon and jeopardizing their communities was the reason for police department growth.<sup>45</sup> It is this finding that best described what police budgeting scholars refer to as “racial threat.”

One concern by authors who discuss the demands-model of budgeting is that citizens demand increased police services in areas with growing minority populations—otherwise known as budgeting for racial threat. For example, policing scholars Rick Ruddell and Matthew O. Thomas (2010) use California as a case study to compare the demand for increased police services in predominately white versus more racially diverse areas. Their research found that the demand for police services was higher in regions of the state that were becoming more racially mixed, which spurred increased police department spending.<sup>46</sup> Authors Robert Vargas and Phillip McHarris (2017) bolstered Thomas's and Ruddell's claims through their research that found that the rising Latino and immigrant population increased the demands for police services in some cities.

There is another group of scholars, however, who claim that police department budgeting decisions are unaffected by exogenous factors or perceptions, such as racial threat. Instead, these authors argue that the strongest determinant for police budgeting decisions is the budget's composition, or organization, in the years prior. In the "organizational model" of police budgeting, the previous year's budget influences how much a police department will receive for

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ruddell, "Minority Threat and Police Strength: An Examination of the Golden State," (2010), 256-273.

the upcoming year.<sup>47</sup> Quantitative data in this body of literature demonstrates that for the first half of the 20th century, budgetary allocations for municipal police departments grew at slow and incremental rates.<sup>48</sup> More recent studies have produced similar findings, including how sociopolitical conditions barely affect the gradual nature of police budgeting outcomes.<sup>49</sup> And, for instance, when the financial demands of the city are stressed, policymakers still decide to model the police budget based on the previous year's allocations rather than involve themselves in detailing a new one.<sup>50</sup> Thus, for scholars who support the theories behind the organizational model, it stands that racial threat does not factor into policymakers' final police budgeting decisions.

Although, in my review of this body of literature I found limitations to accepting that either model is the primary determinant for police budgeting outcomes. The concern I raise is with the lack of evidence that these factors can affect budgeting decisions inversely. In the scholarship supporting the demands model, scarce quantitative data demonstrates that police budget allocations react to citizen demands inversely (i.e., showing decreased spending in areas absent of racial threat). The absence of evidence showing noticeable fluctuations in budgetary allocations suggests that the demands model does not determine all police budgeting decisions; instead, it only affects the decisions that increase budget allocations.

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<sup>47</sup> Beck, "Governing through Police? Housing Market Reliance, Welfare Retrenchment, and Police Budgeting in an Era of Declining Crime," (2018), 1183-1210.

<sup>48</sup> David J. Bordu and Edward W. Haurek, "The Police Budget's Lot: Components of the Increase in Local Police Expenditures, 1902-1960," *Amer Behav Sci* 13, 1970.

<sup>49</sup> Jihong Zhao, Ling Ren and Nicholas P. Lovrich, "Budgetary Support for Police Services in US Municipalities: Comparing Political Culture, Socioeconomic Characteristics and Incrementalism as Rival Explanations for Budget Share Allocation to Police," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 38, no. 3 (May, 2010), 266-275.

<sup>50</sup> Gregory B. Lewis, "Municipal Expenditures through Thick and Thin," *Publius* 14, no. 2 (Apr 1, 1984), 31-39.

Police budgeting scholars who support the theory that police budgeting decisions are organizational, on the other hand, do not entertain the idea that the reason for incremental budgeting is due to citizens demanding gradual budgeting practices. Moreover, a modest amount of qualitative evidence in this body of literature suggests that citizens' demands do not affect the outcome of budgetary increases. This lack of evidence leaves a gap in understanding why police spending rises in some areas beyond what could be considered gradual.

Another reservation I maintain in accepting that police budgeting is purely organizational or demands-based is that these budgeting models do not consider the effects of police reform. Demands-based modeling is rooted in the notions of racial threat, while recent police reform efforts carry sentiments opposite of this racial stratification. Thus, the current narrative concerning the demands model counters the goals of contemporary police budget reformists. Organizational budgeting decisions host limited capacity for a police department to increase costs to implement new reforms. However, a body of literature in policing scholarship can synthesize these two budgeting theories while considering police reform—and that is the scholarship on police labor organizations.

### *Police Unions & Labor Agreements*

Police unions, until recently, have been overlooked as a significant factor for what determines police reform from entering budgeting decisions. Collective bargaining agreements (i.e., labor contracts or labor agreements) are a prime example of how police unions influence their department's budget outcome. These are legally binding documents that ensure funding and high-quality working conditions for their union's members. Police labor contracts promote the livelihood of union members, yet they are also often used to defend against reforming the status

quo.

According to recent scholarship on police unions, labor agreements prevent police reform by protecting certain practices and procedures. For example, legal scholars Catherine Fisk and L.S. Richardson (2017) argue that when unions secure collective bargaining agreements with their respective cities regarding "working conditions," the definition of these conditions is vast and inclusive of protections against disciplinary procedures.<sup>51</sup> In some cases, according to Fisk and Richardson, labor contracts involve amendments that give the police union the right to define the time and structure of officer misconduct hearings.<sup>52</sup> Thus, implementing reform aimed at officer accountability, like problem-oriented policing practices, stands at odds with largely inaccessible municipal contracts.

Collective bargaining expert Stephen Rushin (2017) explains that municipalities negotiate authority over officer disciplinary procedures via trade-offs with budgetary allocations. This process is often absent of high-ranking government officials, rank-and-file officers, and members of the public. Rushin argues that increasing transparency and participation in the collective bargaining process, for instance, will expose whether the current nature of budgeting in exchange for police reform has proven effective.<sup>53</sup> While the level of transparency Rushin is calling for has yet to be seen in recent labor negotiations, the author suggests that police reform influences budgeting decisions during the collective bargaining process.

The collective bargaining process strengthens the police union's ability to protect their members and their organization's budget. An article on police union contracts published by the

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<sup>51</sup> Catherine L. Fisk and L. S. Richardson, "Police Unions," *George Washington Law Review Arguendo* 85, no. 3 (2017), 712-799.

<sup>52</sup> Fisk, "Police Unions," (2017), 712-799.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen Rushin, "Police Union Contracts," *Duke Law Journal* 66, no. 6 (2017), 1191-1266.

*Administrative Science Quarterly* states that when unions secure contracts with their city, police departments maintain a larger share of the city's budget than before their agreement was in place.<sup>54</sup> An additional study published by authors Ann Bartel and David Lewin (1981) states that police unions who enter into collective bargaining agreements with their respective cities can continuously offer higher wages and fringe benefits. Like protections set for officer working conditions, these budgeting decisions consider a vast number of financial interests. These findings suggest that the demands of police unions frequently translate into protections against reductions to budgetary growth.

A collective bargaining specialist, Harry Katz, researched how police unions can maintain budgetary growth through protections codified in collective bargaining agreements. Katz finds that the financial arrangements in police union contracts can support what police budget scholars see as utilizing organizational-model budgeting.<sup>55</sup> His research demonstrates that police labor contracts significantly affect budgetary decision-making because they protect their members' wages and benefits from reductions. This claim means that, at the very least, some portion of the budget will remain fixed from year to year. Katz's research also gives reason to consider that gradual increases in budgeting are due to labor contracts demanding annual and steady growth for their members' compensation rates.

These police union scholars exhibit how unions influence both police reform and budgeting outcomes. Thus, this body of literature is currently central to explaining how police reform can enter conversations about police budgeting. However, labor agreements, in this case,

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<sup>54</sup> Susan Schwochau, Peter Feuille and John Thomas Delaney, "The Resource Allocation Effects of Mandated Relationships," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1988), 418-437.

<sup>55</sup> Harry C. Katz, "The Municipal Budgetary Response to Changing Labor Costs: The Case of San Francisco," *ILR Review* 32, no. 4 (1979), 506-519.

are barriers to synthesizing these two concepts. Yet, the word "agreement" connotes that other parties are involved in reaching a binding arrangement; in this case, the municipality represents the other party involved. In all three of these bodies of policing literature, a city's role is seemingly monolithic, leaving little room for understanding how the municipality factors into the decision-making process. I find this lack of representation—by a party so integral to collective bargaining agreements—in policing scholarship questionable because a municipality takes part in approving police budgets and reforms.

### *Conclusion*

These three bodies of policing literature—police reform, police budgeting, and police unions & labor agreements—demonstrate that the concept of police budget reform in urban and public affairs scholarship is in its earliest phases. Police reform experts and scholars offer promising alternatives to policing but underestimate the difficulties of implementation. With the problems in communal discretion over resources and trust in police, further consideration of police reform will include more community-based control and funding.

The notion of resource reallocation in policing scholarship merges with the concepts identified in the literature discussing police budgeting decisions. According to academics of police budgeting, if the demands-model of budgeting holds, exogenous factors, such as police reform efforts, might reshape the distribution of police department funds. However, others argue that police budgeting decisions are only affected by incremental adjustments based on the previous year's budget. Thus, for organizational budgeting theorists, calls for police reform cannot effectively change the outcome of budgeting decisions.

Literature on police unions and labor agreements explain how exogenous factors can

influence police budgeting decisions as the demands-model suggests. Still, only police unions and labor agreements have evidenced this as a possibility. Budgetary and reform protections affected by police unions and collective bargaining agreements secure incremental growth while simultaneously lessening the opportunity for police reform to enter conversations. Although significant, the scholarship on police reform has yet to address factors outside of unions and labor agreements that affect the possibility of police budget reform.

The first area of needed discovery is whether unions are the *only* factor relevant to the future of police budget reform. The term "agreement" alone assumes an understanding between the union and another party. A city is responsible for agreeing to certain labor agreements, including those that affect budgeting and reform decisions. Thus, there are undoubtedly other influences that play into police budgeting decisions. In this case, these influences come from the municipality.

Yet, in these three bodies of literature, a city's role is seemingly monolithic. To date, a city's capability and significance in determining the outcomes and possibilities of police budget reform are concepts understated in literature. Knowing how police budget reform can be implemented and operate within a city are essential considerations for the recent shift in police reform efforts; however, this knowledge bears no use if this type of reform is not possible for the city to enact. These concerns guided my line of questioning into one asking whether a city's capacity to enact police budget reform is fixed or flexible? More specifically, I ask: what influences municipal capacity to reform police budgets?"

### III. Methods

The previous section stresses the importance of defining the city's capacity to affect police reform through budgetary changes. This section explains how to measure the city's capacity through using a multi-methods approach. In this section of the Capstone, I explain the process of my methodology and rationale for identifying budgeting trends and then speaking with relevant city officials. This section draws upon Galleta and Cross's 2013 book, *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond*, to define how I utilize archival research and interviews to collect quantitative and qualitative information on police budgeting. While a global pandemic saturates the information regarding collective bargaining agreements, police budgets, responses from city officials, my project focuses exclusively on the conditions outside pandemic-related concerns.

A multi-method approach using documents and interviews is the most appropriate way to answer what influences a municipality's capacity to reform their police departments' budget. This project compiles police budget documents to illustrate when police budgeting outcomes have fluctuated over time. With this information in mind, my Capstone can answer what factors influenced the city's decision-making ability after comparing answers from city officials who explain why police spending has changed.

The complementary nature of archival research and semi-structured interviews allows for a comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative outcomes affecting the capacity for police budget reform. The first step of this case study is obtaining archival data that provides information on police budgeting trends and factors that define how the city collectively bargains with the San Francisco Police Officer's Association (i.e., the city's police union). The following

step is to reach out to city officials to comment on their experiences' helping determine police budgeting outcomes and trends. During these interviews, the line of questioning is based on archival budgetary data, while interviewees were encouraged to suggest further documentation on police budgeting and reform practices. This way, my Capstone achieves a complete analysis of the decisions and thoughts of decision-makers during police budgeting.

This case study's multi-method approach utilizing archival data and semi-structured interviews uses Galletta and Cross's definition of these types of methodology. The authors describe archival research as a method of data collection then analysis of historical and contemporary documentation.<sup>56</sup> A tangible record can then offer insight into socioeconomic trends and political conditions that give history lessons on the topic, provide chronologies of events and identify trends over time. Especially important to this thesis is that archival research methods provide information on relevant actors (i.e., city officials who were or are involved in collective bargaining, police budgeting, or both) that I can reach out to for an interview.

An alternative research method is semi-structured interviews—a technique designed to elicit data from relevant actors, often nonidentifiable in archival material. According to Galletta and Cross, semi-structured interviews offer narratives from relevant actors about experiences, relationships, and conceptualizations about a topic.<sup>57</sup> This type of interviewing addresses research topics by structuring conversations with relevant actors; however, doing so by allowing for open-ended questions. Galletta and Cross further define semi-structured interviews as a method of obtaining information on personal experiences or working conditions that might affect

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<sup>56</sup> Anne Galletta and William E. Cross, *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond*, NYU Press; (2013), 9-449.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

their perspective. Gaining perceptions of relevant actors is essential to this case study because it prompts participants to expand on their professional experience related to their respective city departments.

To identify trends that contribute to the city's capacity to affect police budget reform, I utilized four types of archival material: San Francisco budget documents, memoranda of understanding (i.e., MOUs; collective bargaining agreements; labor contracts), the San Francisco City Charter, and Bay area newspapers. My research starts with collecting budget documents from the San Francisco Office of the Controller, including both mayoral proposed budgets and annual consolidated budgets spanning the last 30 years. Next, I extracted information on police general fund expenditures (i.e., the number of funds the city can allocate to police departments) from both budget documents and placed it on a timeline showing the rate of change over thirty years. Finally, for a comparative analysis with labor contracts, I highlighted any noticeable changes I found in police budget allocations (i.e., fiscal years where police budgets exceed the average percentage of growth during the period studied). The final step in archival data analysis compares amendments in SFPOA MOUs acquired through the Department of Human Resources via the Sunshine Ordinance in the City charter that might explain the reasoning for noticeable growth.

After extracting data from the budget documents and MOUs, I compared spending trends with the city charter and news articles during the same fiscal year. Through their web page archives, I obtained information on the city charter online, provided by the City and County of San Francisco and newspapers—specifically the POA Journal, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the San Francisco Examiner. The purpose of exploring City charter ordinances is to identify which collective bargaining agreements affect police budgeting and are codified by law.

News articles are significant resources to conceptualize the socioeconomic or political climate during the era when the MOUs and police budgets show noticeable change. Therefore, the use of news articles and other sources of archival material in this project is to identify trends and observations about police budgeting and pinpoint relevant actors who can potentially serve as interviewees for comparative analysis.

I based my selection of participants on two primary criteria: 1.) their name or department appearing in MOUs or other budget-related documents, and 2.) past or current involvement in the police budgeting process. I ensured full representation of experiences and insights by interviewing at least one representative per relevant city department (i.e., city departments involved in police budgeting or collective bargaining). These departments included the mayor's office, the board of supervisors, department of human resources, police department, department of police accountability, and the controller's office. Most participants opted to remain anonymous during this research, so for uniformity's sake, all participants' identifying factors (e.g., names, titles, years they worked in a relevant capacity) are omitted. Based on this criteria, eight city officials were chosen and participated in my research to provide their unique experience and perspective on their involvement.

Each interview was structured so that participants could narrate their experience when taking part in municipal budgeting or SFPOA negotiations in city hall. Based on their expertise, my line of questioning focused on the archival material they have personal experience or intimate knowledge. However, addressing these documents did not restrict participants from speaking on other factors contributing to the city's capacity to affect police budget reform. Lastly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing practices, these interviews took place over a webcam and lasted 45 to 90 minutes each.

To measure the city's capacity to enact budgetary changes in the police department, I began my line of questioning by asking participants to describe their role in determining police budgeting decisions and collective bargaining agreements. The first portion of each interview aimed to get participants to describe their experience and understanding of trends found in budget documents, MOU, news articles, and the city charter. Based on each response, I shifted the interview's focus to whether they felt they or their department influenced the outcome of these budget and reform decisions. This strategy included adding questions about their relationship with the SFPOA, municipal budgeting responsibilities, and the political climate in San Francisco. The latter end of each interview is driven by theoretical questions, asking participants to elaborate on factors and administrative nuances they perceived as influencing the outcome of the SFPD budget but might not be readily available in public documents. The concluding questions were designed to elicit new data and allow participants to challenge and comment on observations found in my archival research on budget documents and labor agreements. Because questioning during my interviews was designed to extract any information on the topic, my interview protocol remained fluid, flexible, and ever-changing based on the answers received.

It is important to note that many open-ended questions led to city officials answering with consideration of the detrimental impacts of COVID-19. At the time of this writing, a global pandemic is affecting the lives of millions worldwide, with San Franciscans being no exception. The city is currently managing a county-wide health crisis that now demands the attention of nearly all city staff. Some participants experienced in police budgeting were also facing other municipal budgeting obstacles because of a \$1.7 billion budget deficit projected over the next two fiscal years. These conditions would oftentimes convolute participants' answers while

considering factors outside police budgeting and reform decisions, though, understandably so. To focus the interview and avoid lengthy discussion of participants' experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, I would transfer the line of questioning into one asking how their experience dealing with COVID-19 affected police budgeting and reform decisions. I then follow-up asking if *that* experience, in particular, is representative of previous years. If it differed, then the responses considering the pandemic were not used in this research. This strategy saved time and kept the interview semi-structured enough to gather only information relevant to my research question.

My research design's hybrid approach of analyzing budget documents, MOUs, the city charter, and news articles, followed by comparing the narratives of those involved in these processes, provides a much more comprehensive approach to measuring San Francisco's capacity to reform its police department's budget. In this project, obtaining qualitative information from actors involved in collective bargaining corrects, verifies, and challenges the assumptions about the roles, trends, and factors identifiable in archival documentation.

Given the opportunity to extend the time spent on archival research and interviews, I would include the perspectives of actors outside the city, specifically local police budget reformists and SFPOA representatives. In an expanded version of this thesis, I would address two significant limitations that arise from the absent perspective of these two parties. The first is that not enough time was available to speak with actors outside the city government who might offer a valuable perspective on how San Franciscans see the city's ability to affect police budget reform. Responses from these actors in semi-structured interviews could lend evidence to the reasoning for noticeable fluctuating budgeting outcomes and provide a new line of questioning for city officials.

However, observations from outside actors can also be subject to the current political climate, which leads to the second limitation of my research. The political climate between law enforcement and communities of color has reached extreme heights, meaning some actors might be more inclined to speak than others. Those less willing might be SFPOA representatives who are currently negotiating a new contract with the city. Additional research could be conducted after the finalization of the SFPOA MOU when budgetary concerns are less politicized. This strategy would keep participants from recounting experiences solely based on social and financial issues within the last year. More specifically, given more time I would expect less subjective answers about specific roles, trends, and observations of actors outside the municipal government.

In the past, the relationship between the police and the city and county of San Francisco contained long-running agreements on working conditions and growing compensation rates that constricted budget reform flexibility. While notably uncontroversial at the time, police reform advocates now see these inflexible agreements as means to misuse funds. The perception among advocates that funds were poorly used in the past, effectively steering police reform initiatives away from success, is the foundation of why police reformists have considered budget reform in place of traditional methods. However, San Francisco's healthy relationship with its police dates back over 100 years. Based on the history presented below, this relationship will need a considerable transformation to change the police budget's status quo.

#### IV. History of San Francisco Police Budgeting

San Francisco's police budgeting history is a story of budgeting authority moving away from city residents into the hands of the police department itself. In the early 20th century, San Francisco voters were shaping police department budgets through city-approved measures. Over time, budget decision-making authority transitioned out of the hands of the people and into more localized settings involving members of city hall and the police department. The most significant change in police budgeting practices occurred in the 1990s after the police department gained newfound popularity and bargaining authority with the city. The last thirty years are especially significant to police budgeting authority because it is during this time that these decisions became largely unaffected by the interests of voters.

Since the start of the 20th century, San Francisco residents have played a substantial role in deciding police budgets. In 1898 San Francisco was granted "home rule" after the city adopted its first charter. Home rule meant that a city charter, through approval of most resident voters in San Francisco, gave citizens the right to oversee municipal affairs.<sup>58</sup> On November 5, 1907, voters used home rule to approve an ordinance defining officer wages and working conditions—marking the city's first time implementing some form of police budgeting policy.<sup>59</sup>

From then until the mid-1970s, San Francisco voters decided most police budgeting policies. Between 1907-1975, San Franciscans frequently voted to approve police pension plans and set wages for police officers, in total having voted for pension plans 45 times and 28 times

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<sup>58</sup> San Francisco History Center. *San Francisco Charter Commission Records (SFH 25)* San Francisco Public Library, 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

for wage adjustments.<sup>60</sup> Most elections yielded positive gains for the police department, but their successes were still out of the department's control and depended on citizen approval.

A significant amount of the police budget decision-making power left the hands of San Franciscans in 1975 when voters approved Proposition H. This city ordinance set the pay rates for officers to equal the average wages paid to their counterparts in California cities with populations over 350,000.<sup>61</sup> The city's voters favored this measure to attract high-quality officers who might consider elsewhere higher paying in the state to apply and retain currently employed SFPD officers. By approving Proposition H, budget allocations for officer wages were set and protected by a formula based on counterpart cities' data. Proposition H also meant that San Franciscans no longer had the authority to reshape wage formulas. Nonetheless, budgetary matters city residents *could* vote on supported the police department's budget growth.

While police wage adjustments no longer appeared on the electoral ballot, San Francisco residents could vote on other aspects of the police department's budget. For instance, increasing overtime rates, night pay differentials, premium pays, and facilities bonds were all police budgeting policies that required voter approval. Most of the propositions regarding these costs passed successfully throughout the 1980s. These budgetary victories were attributable to the growing popularity of police on a local and nationwide scale.

By the 1990s, police officers were the most respected public employees in the country.<sup>62</sup> Over half of the country consistently polled that they had confidence in their police departments

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<sup>60</sup> San Francisco History Center. *San Francisco Charter Commission Records (SFH 25)*, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>62</sup> Justin McCarthy, "Americans' Respect for Police Surges," *Gallup Poll News Service*, Oct 24, 2016.

during this time.<sup>63</sup> Up until the end of the 1990s, 87% of Californians reported having some level of confidence in their local police departments.<sup>64</sup> Shortly after the statewide confidence poll, the Public Policy Institute found that public sentiment in San Franciscans was no exception. Only 5% of residents in the San Francisco area rated their police department poorly in 1998.<sup>65</sup> The high levels of confidence made police officers and their departments exceedingly admired. The SFPD would capitalize on their public image by introducing a proposition that moves budget decision-making authority to their ranks.

Proposition D was approved in 1990 to allow the police union to negotiate the majority of budgetary allocations (e.g., wages, benefits, working conditions for their members.)<sup>66</sup> Police employee representatives took this opportunity to become affiliated with Service Employees International Union, the city's largest and most influential union in San Francisco, and consolidate into a single union and bargaining unit for the city's officers (i.e., Local 911).<sup>67</sup> An excerpt from a 1992 edition of the San Francisco Police Officer's Association Journal stated, "the POA's new status will not only enhance the Association's bargaining powers but strengthen the collective bargaining power of all SEIU members."<sup>68</sup> After the SFPOA and SEIU merged, the police union representatives were able to negotiate a contract with the city, void of voter

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<sup>63</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, "In U.S., Confidence in Police Lowest in 22 Years," *Gallup Poll News Service*, June 19, 2015.

<sup>64</sup> The Field Poll, *Cal Poll 9703: Q32J - Confidence in Local Police Department*. The Field Poll Berkeley D-Lab, 1997.

<sup>65</sup> Public Policy Institute of California, *Crime Still Tops List of Policy Problems in California, but Majority Believe State Headed in Right Direction*, 1998.

<sup>66</sup> *1990 San Francisco Voter Information Pamphlet & Sample Ballot*, November 6, 1990.

<sup>67</sup> Al Triguero, "Winds of Change," *POA Journal*, November, 1992.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*

approval, that increased wages by 5% over three years.<sup>69</sup>

However, the SFPOA's relationship with SEIU was short-lived. In 1997, members of the San Francisco Police Officer's Association argued a conflict of interest over resolving labor disputes among members, in addition to believing membership in the SEIU was a financial burden.<sup>70</sup> The SFPOA questioned SEIU membership fees when they did not support many of the union's needs (e.g., arbitration, printing privileges, attorneys). The following year SFPOA disaffiliated with SEIU and quickly shifted their strategy to gaining autonomy over their budget through political means.

Popularity and bargaining independence made the San Francisco Police Department a formidable political player during the 1990s. In 1991, San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos was upset during his re-election campaign by former Chief of San Francisco Police Frank Jordan.<sup>71</sup> Just two years earlier, Agnos has a 70% approval rating, and up until the election, was projected to serve another four-year term.<sup>72</sup> While Agnos was a highly esteemed leader, it was not enough to overcome a candidate with police affiliations and a mission to "clean up the streets" of San Francisco through increased law enforcement presence. This platform earned Jordan the position as mayor from 1991-1995, and in doing so, highlighted the importance of a police department endorsement—via the SFPOA—for municipal elections.

The significance of their political endorsement and newfound authority to bargain most matters regarding compensation set a precedent for how SFPOA can influence budgetary

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<sup>69</sup> Susan Sward, "S.F. Police Officers Vote Overwhelmingly for Labor Contract / Pact is First to be Negotiated Under City's New Collective Bargaining System," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jul 3, 1992.

<sup>70</sup> Ben Spiteri, "The Members Speak - it's Your POA...Pay Attention," *POA Journal*, March, 1997.

<sup>71</sup> Lou Cannon, "San Francisco Race Makes Gays an Issue," *The Washington Post (1974-Current File)* Nov 29, 1991.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*

outcomes in the modern-day. The influence of their political support was evident when the union endorsed police-friendly Willie Brown for mayor in 1995. After winning the election, Mayor Brown would support a collective bargaining agreement proposed by the union to increase officer pay by 15% over the next four years.<sup>73</sup> Having realized the benefit of having a political ally in office, the SFPOA preceded to endorse him in the next election in hopes of continuing to make strides in their budgetary growth and autonomy.<sup>74</sup> Over the next two decades this practice would continue in tandem with less and less involvement of the voters, signifying that the influence to shape police budgeting matters had shifted almost entirely to the police and its city leaders.

Bargaining authority, societal popularity, and political influence are immensely different from those that defined the San Francisco Police Department in the early 20th century. For nearly 70 years, the only factor influencing police budgeting decisions was the will of San Franciscans. Without the shift in the 1970s, marked by Proposition H, budgeting decisions might still operate in that manner. However, by transferring the authority of deciding wage rates for officers to a statewide formula, followed by police unions and their city leaders—factors influencing budgeting decisions have become more localized and inaccessible to the public.

The missing element in this timeline is how the city, as an independent actor, influences police budgeting outcomes in accordance with its residents and police department. San Francisco's history demonstrates that voters, mandated budgeting formulas, and the police department have primarily decided budgeting decisions. Yet, as its own entity, the city takes

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<sup>73</sup> Phillip Matier and Phillip Ross, "Cops Repay Brown Largesse with Re-Election Endorsement," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 5, 1999.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*

some responsibility for this shift in decision-making authority by granting home rule to its citizens. The municipality also oversees the city charter, where budgeting formulas are implemented and maintained. For the past three decades, the police department influences budgeting decisions through collective bargaining agreements but only by interacting with the city and its budgeting officials. Under these circumstances, it appears the city plays a significant, albeit underrecognized role in factors shaping police budgeting decisions.

Attempts at police budget reform may have been a more straightforward task for San Francisco during the first seventy years of the 20th century due to budgeting authority lying in the hands of the people. However, new evidence suggests that a police department and its union can restrict budget cuts advocated for by citizens. Thus, the future of police budget reform depends on defining whether the city can act as an intermediary between citizens and a police department and what they are currently capable of doing to begin that process.

## **V. Data Analysis**

To understand the municipality's ability to implement reform by divesting in a police department, I return to my research question and ask, what influences municipal capacity to reform police budgets? I find that the most influential factors affecting a city's ability to implement police budget reform are informal perceptions and binding agreements—both comprising inherent obstacles to reallocating police funds. Budgeting practices and labor agreements prevent reforming significant portions of a police department's budget. City officials claim that these formal barriers are frequently the result of political relationships and views

towards the police.

There are four factors that most influence the city's capacity to reform the police budget: San Francisco's sentiment towards labor, city officials' perception of police budget reform, the involvement of the fire department during collective bargaining, and the role of the mayor. The analysis I provide separates each of these findings into subsections, beginning with a study on the city's sentiment towards labor, and concludes with a subsection presenting some key observations linking all four of these factors.

### *Pro-Labor Sentiment*

San Francisco city officials support a steady growth of funding for the police department because they inherently value labor. As one city official stated, "the budget, as they say, is a statement of values."<sup>75</sup> San Francisco police officers are city employees, meaning the city categorizes them as a classification of labor.<sup>76</sup> In this case, labor can also refer to employee-representative organizations, also known as unions. Thus, when a city or elected officials declare they are pro-labor, they indicate that their values align with their city employees' interests.

One characteristic of being pro-labor is protecting employees from layoffs. One interviewee said, "for a pro-labor Board, it is not popular to lay people off—it is never going to be popular."<sup>77</sup> Downsizing through employee firings is an unattractive option for city officials because losing one's job is perceived as impacting the human component of labor. In response to how the city approaches budgetary concerns brought on by stressful economic conditions, one

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Participant A, 2021.

<sup>76</sup> San Francisco Police Commission. *General Information and Qualifications* City and County of San Francisco, 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant E, 2021.

participant stated, "Laying people off in order to balance our budget was one of our biggest concerns...it was a very real possibility that we'd have to lay off thousands of people. We didn't want to have to do that...people were terrified that they were going to lose their livelihood and ability to support their families along with it."<sup>78</sup>

City officials express their pro-labor sentiment by negotiating and enacting labor contracts that protect and secure large portions of the police department's budget. For instance, police officer benefits, such as retirement plans, are labor agreements that maintain steady levels of budgetary growth. Spending on pension plans is codified in the City charter (A8.605-3) for police officers that match 3% of an officer's salary for each year worked.<sup>79</sup> This retirement guarantee is just one of many legally binding financial agreements that protect the police department's budget from significant reductions.

Another employee benefit that affects the capacity to reform police budgets is overtime costs. Three respondents verified that overtime was one of the most discussed issues while making decisions regarding police budgeting. When unforeseen events such as parades or demonstrations, for example, require an increase in municipal oversight, the city will frequently send police officers to patrol even if that means working beyond their regular hours. In collective bargaining agreements, overtime costs guarantee officers' pay be x1.5 their standard wage rate.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant A, 2021.

<sup>79</sup> City and County of San Francisco Charter, *Service Retirement*, Municipal Code A8. § 605-3. (approved June 8, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> City and County of San Francisco Department of Human Resources. *Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County of San Francisco and San Francisco Police Officer's Association Units P-1 and P 2A July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023, Revised Per Amendment #1, 2020.*

Due to overtime costs, the funding for operational purposes increases to accommodate for unexpected pay scales.

Yet overtime costs and pension plans only make up a fraction of the total composition of the police department's budget. As Figure 1 displays, officer salaries represent the majority of budget allocations during the thirty years studied. Annual Appropriation Ordinances and Consolidated Budgets used for Figure 1 reveal that the police budget composition remains essentially unchanged year-to-year (the average net change representing officer salaries as a total police budget was 0.55%).

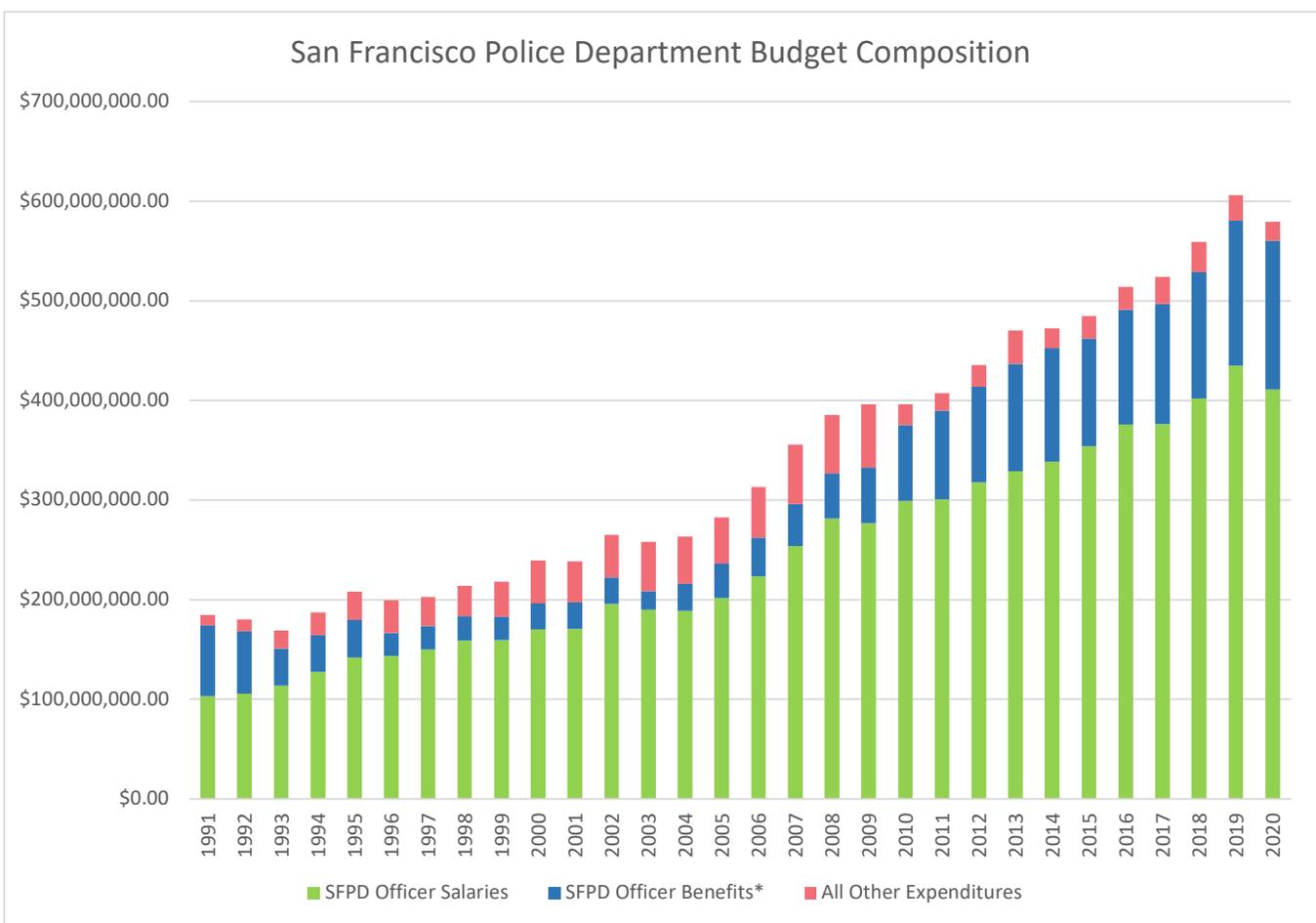


Figure 1

Based on the budget composition and labor agreements, altering the police budget would likely decrease salaries, benefits or result in layoffs. As one participant described, "And like when [they] say Defund the Police? Do you realize that 90% of the police department's budget is people?... So, you know, if it gets right down to it, do you keep the super expensive stuff? Or do you let people go?"<sup>81</sup> This participant indicates that if the city reforms police funding, they would harm job conditions or cut small portions that make up non-personnel costs. One participant described those non-personnel costs as "funding for contracts and materials and supplies, which is very small."<sup>82</sup> Therefore if a city cuts police funding while avoiding reducing officer compensations, only an insignificant amount of the budget's total can be removed.

The enactment of labor agreements and wage protections suggests that the city values the police for their role as city employees—enough to make budgeting decisions that inhibit the capacity to reform the police budget beyond small, non-personnel costs. Thus, ingrained in city hall is the sentiment towards protecting labor from budgetary reductions. The attitude towards labor has made it so that when city officials see the movement for budget reform, the lens in which they see the merits of the reform differs from advocates and some police reform scholars. While not discounting the notion of police reform through budgetary reallocations, the perception among city officials is that police budget reform is not only labor-invasive but also challenges the status quo of practices many city officials prefer.

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\* SFPD Officer Benefits in Figure 1 represent: overtime, holidays, special pays, court appearances, uniform and clothing allowances, health insurance, wellness programs, paid sick leave, retirement, and other legally binding wage agreements define in the active MOU. Data for this graph was obtained from the City and County of San Francisco Office of the Controller's Consolidated Budget and Annual Appropriation Ordinances for Fiscal Years 1990 to 2021.

<sup>81</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant B, 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant C, 2021.

### *Perception of Police Budget Reform*

San Francisco city officials view police budget reform implementation as interfering with current public safety and budgeting methods. Like local Defund the Police organizations, police budget reformists argue that eliminating spending in the police department's budget will reduce the harmful effect policing has brought to San Francisco's BIPOC communities.<sup>83</sup> City officials do not deny the merits of this type of reform but do question the complicated restructuring process to enact these reforms. According to city officials, implementation complications come from replacing the means for public safety and restructuring the formula deciding the police budget expenditures.

The first difference in perception of police budget reform is how it affects public safety. Most participants who took part in my research believe that certain policing services are necessary because the risk of their absence is too dangerous for city residents. As one city official responded,

We have not set ourselves up for community policing or another type of policing or other safety measures. I understand that. So, to cut them severely on their budget without a backup on how to respond to certain incidents. I think that it is not the right thing to do, and it is very unsafe too because we don't even have another mechanism.<sup>84</sup>

As is currently proposed by San Francisco and national advocates, this interviewee suggests that police budget reform is a process too rapid for the city to find decisive policing alternatives. Instead, city officials perceive police budget reform as an avenue that will require proof that other policing services can substitute the current policing methods used for public safety.

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<sup>83</sup> Defund SFPD Now. *A Policy Proposal to Defund, Disband, and Disarm the San Francisco Police Department.*

<sup>84</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant G, 2021.

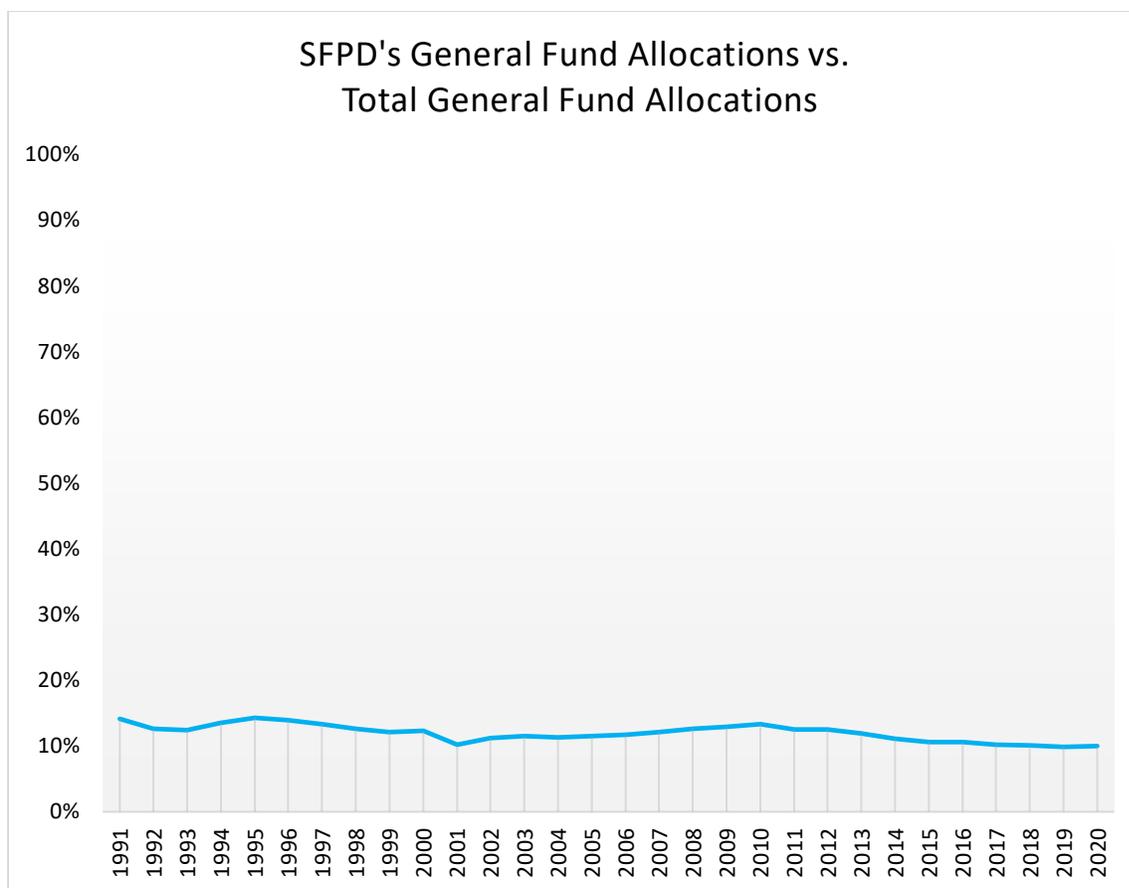
Administrative restructuring, specifically through the budget, is the second perception about police budget reform that proves problematic for city officials. This observation exists because the notion of budget reform signifies to city officials a massive change in budgeting practices. San Francisco city hall has 52 departments that require annual general fund expenditures.<sup>85</sup> Addressing the budgetary needs of each department over the course of a year is a lengthy process, so for the sake of time, police budgeting practices are formulaic and only allow for minor adjustments in allocations.

A couple of participants explained that San Francisco is able to meet the budgetary needs of departments annually partly due to the process's avoidance of zero-based budgeting policies. One respondent explained, "a lot of the [budgeting] process remains the same. We don't have to remember, zero-based budgeting—you know, where we start entirely from scratch."<sup>86</sup> As a result, the police department's budget allocations have remained consistent. For example, data provided in Figure 2 finds that over the past thirty years, the police department's allocations as a percentage of total general fund allocations have fluctuated modestly between 10% to 14% (averaging a net change of total general fund expenditures of 0.45% from 1991-2020).

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<sup>85</sup> City and County of San Francisco Office of the Controller, *Consolidated Budget and Annual Appropriation Ordinance Fiscal Year Ending June 30th, 2021, 2020*.

<sup>86</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant E, 2021.



*Figure 2\**

A reallocation of departmental funds would mean adjusting budgeting formulas that account for the other 86-90% of total general fund allocations. The city then has to decide how to reallocate those funds (e.g., direct all funding towards community-based alternatives, disperse among other departments) on time with the budget cycle calendar. The process of restructuring the budgeting formula for the police department, thus, involves consideration of how to distribute funds, if any, to other departments. Although, city officials have a somewhat

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\* Data for Figure 2 was obtained from the City and County of San Francisco Office of the Controller - Consolidated Budget and Annual Appropriation Ordinances for fiscal years 1990 through 2021.

obstructed view of which city departments deserve a portion of these reallocated funds because of the relationship between the police and fire department.

### *Collective Bargaining for Public Safety*

The San Francisco firefighter's union, Local 798, affects the capacity of the city to reform police budgets during collective bargaining. For nearly 100 years the police and fire departments in San Francisco have negotiated labor agreements with the city, albeit separate contracts, alongside one another.<sup>87</sup> This unofficial practice that began a century ago now contributes to a deep-seated belief that both departments deserve identical settings and compromises during the bargaining process.

Collective bargaining with police and firefighters' unions in a similar fashion is hardly unique to San Francisco. The Public Safety Employer-Employee Act (2007) grouped police and fire department unions into federal legislation granting rights to fair collective bargaining processes. The law set minimum criteria for states and municipalities to bargain in good faith with organizations representing public safety officers, including "[any] employee of a public agency who is a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or emergency medical services personnel."<sup>88</sup> The influence of this act is just one reason why San Francisco city leaders have preserved the similarity of bargaining practices with both unions in recent years.

However, the formal process of negotiating labor contracts at the same time and fashion first started developing in the early 2000s. After obtaining collective bargaining rights in 1990,

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<sup>87</sup> San Francisco Public Library, *San Francisco Ballot Propositions Database*. San Francisco Public Library (San Francisco, CA): 2021.

<sup>88</sup> *Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007*, 3, 1st sess., (July 18, 2007).

both the San Francisco Police Officer's Association and the firefighter's union, Local 798, signed their first legally binding memoranda of understanding (i.e., labor contract) in 2001.<sup>89</sup> After September 11, 2001, the appearance of local police officers and firefighters during collective bargaining merged into a single image of "public safety." This image of public safety—one combining both members of fire and police departments—makes police budget reform difficult to appear non-invasive of the overall interests of the city's well-being.

The labor-based interests of both departments convolute the perception that police budget reform is invasive to the fire department's budgetary concerns. When asked about the relationship between the police and firefighter's union, one city official stated, "In negotiations, they tried to work in tandem and be in alignment...I think they [SFPOA & Local 798] see their interests aligned."<sup>90</sup> How police budget reform affects the interests of the police department, then, is perceived to affect the interests of the fire department. For instance, reallocating funds from the police department without reallocating fire department funds no longer handles both unions' interests in a similar fashion. On the other hand, removing funds from both departments is not a goal for police budget reformists or in the interests of city officials.

Disagreeing with a party's concerns that appear to represent public safety is not a popular or advantageous stance for city officials during collective bargaining or budgeting decisions. The notion that police budget reform might interfere with another department's resources, especially those of the fire department, makes city officials hesitant to engage in discussions of police

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<sup>89</sup> San Francisco Department of Human Resources, *Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County of San Francisco and San Francisco Fire Fighters Union Local 798, AFL-CIO July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2003 Unit 1*, 2001; San Francisco Department of Human Resources, *Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County of San Francisco and San Francisco Police Officers Association 2001-2003*, 2001.

<sup>90</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant E, 2021.

budget reform. While separating their interests may be difficult for city officials with limited police budgeting authority, the influence and discretion of the mayor exceed limitations identified in other departments.

### *Role of the Mayor*

Mayoral influence on budgeting practices directly impacts the city's ability to reform the police budget in two correlating ways: the political relationship with the police department and the outcome of the mayor's proposed budget.

Over the past thirty years, mayors tend to maintain healthy relationships with the police department for political gain. This relationship develops during election years when mayoral candidates seek the endorsement of the police union. Over half of the participants in this study claimed that in San Francisco, the police department's support is politically advantageous for candidates. On the topic of the relationship between the police unions and the mayor during elections, one of the respondents stated: "[mayors and candidates] have to consider upcoming elections, you know, their reelection, or if they are running for higher office."<sup>91</sup> Table 1 demonstrates the validity of these statements, showing that of the six of seven past mayoral elections, the winning candidate received an endorsement from the police department's union.

The winning mayor responds to this endorsement by making budgetary decisions favorable to the police department the following year when they have discretion over the annual proposed budget. The timing of mayoral elections is an essential factor in police budgeting decisions because election years have fallen in line with collective bargaining negotiations. Since

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<sup>91</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant E, 2021.

1995, collective bargaining agreements follow a mayoral election year. Thus, the timing of the election and negotiations is no coincidence and has prompted informal quid-pro-quo between the mayors and the police department regarding budgetary arrangements.

Table 1 illustrates that of the seven elections since 1995, 5 police-endorsed mayors proposed and approved an increase in general fund support based predominately on labor agreements (as discussed in the first observation in this analysis section). In this case, the increase in general fund allocations one fiscal year after an election reflects the political relationship between the winning mayor and the police department.

Election Years	SFPOA Endorsement	Winning Mayor	Police GFS 1-FY after election
1995	Willie Brown	Willie Brown	-4.12%
1999	Willie Brown	Willie Brown	8.48%
2003	Gavin Newsom	Gavin Newsom	2.28%
2007	Gavin Newsom	Gavin Newsom	10.56%
2011	Ed Lee	Ed Lee	6.06%
2015	Ed Lee	Ed Lee	5.39%
2018	Angela Alioto	London Breed / Mark Farrell	8.23%

*Table 1*

The mayor can make these informal agreements due to San Francisco's structure of governance. One participant succinctly defined the city's government structure by stating, "San

<sup>92</sup> Martin Halloran, "June 5, 2018 is Election Day, the SFPOA Recommends the Following," *POA Journal*, May, 2018.; Gary Delangnes, "Key Political Endorsements Decided by Board of Directors," *POA Journal*, September, 2011. ; Tony Montoya, "Minutes of August 15, 2007 Board of Directors Meeting," *POA Journal*, September, 2007. ; San Francisco Police Officer's Association, "POA Endorses Gavin Newsom for Mayor of San Francisco," *POA Journal*, April, 2003. ; San Francisco Police Officer's Association, "The San Francisco Police Officer's Association Encourages San Franciscans to Vote Tuesday 2, 1999," *POA Journal*, October, 1999. ; Al Triguero, "POA Endorses Willie Brown for Mayor," *POA Journal*, September, 1995. ; San Francisco Police Officer's Association, "POA Endorsements — November 3, 2015 Election," *POA Journal*, October, 2015.

Francisco is a city and county with a strong mayor and relatively weak board of supervisors."<sup>93</sup> Thus, this respondent refers to San Francisco's administrative structure operating under a "strong mayoral-council government."<sup>94</sup> In this system of governance, the mayor and city council (i.e., board of supervisors) work in tandem to balance a budget; however, as the city's chief executive, the mayor drafts and proposes the budgets while maintaining authority to veto changes made by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.<sup>95</sup> When asked about the influence of the mayor compared to other city officials on police budgeting outcomes, one participant added, "This is how the budget works. I would say the person who has the most power over the police budget is the mayor. The mayor controls all the budgets; she gets first dibs at it."<sup>96</sup>

The mayor gets first "dibs" at budgeting decisions due to the administrative structures guiding the city's budget cycle and collective bargaining process. San Francisco mayors can use the Department of Human Resources as a proxy during collective bargaining agreements to negotiate police budgeting matters that affect the capacity for other city officials to consider reform. According to the San Francisco City charter,

Agreements reached pursuant to this part by the authorized representatives for the City and County of San Francisco, on behalf of its departments, boards, and commissions, and the authorized representatives of recognized employee organizations, once adopted by ordinance of the Board of Supervisors, shall be binding on the City and County of San Francisco, and on its departments, boards, commissions, officers and employees and on the recognized employee organizations and their successors, and all employees in classifications they represent.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant D, 2021.

<sup>94</sup> San Francisco Bay Times Staff. "San Francisco is a Strong-Mayor City." *San Francisco Bay Times*, December 21, 2017.

<sup>95</sup> Ballotpedia. *Mayor-Council Government*, Ballotpedia.org, 2014.

<sup>96</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant G, 2021.

<sup>97</sup> San Francisco City Charter, *Obligation to Bargain in Good Faith*, Public Law A8, 2004.

Participants in this study identified the Department of Human Resources (DHR) as the authorized representatives for the city and county of San Francisco, but only under the guidance and influence of the mayor. Other departments, boards, and commissions are primarily influenced by the mayor as well. As one participant explained,

The head of HR works at the pleasure of the mayor, and every [other] department head works at the pleasure of the mayor. The mayor can fire any department head except the ones who are elected. So, she can fire everyone [involved]. As for department heads that are elected...she can cut their budget like crazy and chose not to give them any money. So, she controls everything.<sup>98</sup>

This participant's response demonstrates the immense capacity the mayor has to affect police budgetary change on a multitude of scales. I found that when speaking to this participant and others, the mayor's role and influence was also an important factor due to the city's budget calendar.

The San Francisco budget cycle begins with the mayor issuing budget instructions to city departments, followed by departments sending their proposed budget to the controller's office.<sup>99</sup> After the controller's analysis and recommendations, it returns to the mayor's office so that the mayor can draft a proposed budget.<sup>100</sup> Next, the mayor proposes her budget to the SF Board of Supervisors, which the board must then approve, where it finally returns to the mayor's desk for additional approval and passage.<sup>101</sup> This style of budgeting, coupled with the consensus among city officials that San Francisco is a strong-mayor governed city, signifies that reforming the

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<sup>98</sup> Anderson, Interview with Participant G, 2021.

<sup>99</sup> City and County of San Francisco Office of the Mayor. *The Budget Cycle*. San Francisco, CA: City and County of San Francisco, 2020.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

police department's budget requires the involvement of the mayor in some capacity.

While the mayor's involvement during the collective bargaining process and budget cycle are formal practices ingrained in city hall, the relationship between the mayor and the police that influences the outcomes is not a feature that prevents the capacity for police budget reform. Instead, the formal processes (e.g., proposed budgets) and informal practices (e.g., political endorsements in exchange for budgetary increases) represent two sides of the same obstacle to implementing police budget reform.

### *Informal Perceptions & Formal Barriers*

This analysis demonstrates that all factors identified as most influencing the ability of the city to implement police budget reform are also obstacles to reallocating police funds. These factors separate into two general categories—informal perceptions and formal barriers. Informal perceptions are factors that influence police budgeting decisions but do not inherently bind the city to specific financial arrangements. For instance, the mayoral relationship with the police and their union, collective bargaining practices with the fire department, and a widespread pro-labor sentiment discourage San Francisco city officials from considering police budget reform. While these influences have shaped the way the city prefers budgeting for police, they are unofficial practices that do not entirely prevent the ability of the city to enact budgetary reform.

On the other hand, formal barriers are factors that strictly *limit* the capacity of the city to change police department budget outcomes. Once there are: formulas established for allocating all city department budgets, labor contracts activated, and proposed mayoral budgets in effect—reforming the police department's budget becomes a process of administrative restructuring. According to city officials and budget documents, the reformation of these factors is a lengthy

and challenging process too extensive for the city to address currently.

Informal perceptions are also often responsible for the creation of formal barriers to police budget reform. For example, a mayor's quid-pro-quo agreement with the police department's union during elections are *binding* budgetary arrangements made during the collective bargaining process. The city's pro-labor sentiment is another example of how the perception of police budget reform affects budgetary allocations in terms of labor agreements that protect wages from decreasing. Therefore, it is vital that policing scholars and advocates recognize and classify these obstacles when navigating the future understanding and attempts at police budget reform.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Recognizing informal and formal obstacles in a municipality's capacity to reform police budgets is essential to understanding the future implications of police budget reform. The recent shift in police reform strategy to consider divestment in police budgets is a response to years of police brutality, racial bias, and reforms that have failed to remedy these harms. However, it is also important to recognize that the notion of police budget reform is not rooted in desperation. On the contrary, this reorganization in police reform advocacy is a strategic move by determined advocates to fix problems in policing by *removing* the investment in the problems (i.e., police) altogether. According to current police budget reform narratives, removing officer presence and reallocating resources to community-based alternatives will better resolve some of the recent and systemic issues in law enforcement practices.

This project finds that reforming the police through municipal budgeting practices bears a multitude of difficulties. City officials did not question the reasons for police budget reform during interviews; instead, the concern was regarding implementation methods under current administrative structures, relationships, and legal boundaries. A key aspect to these arising difficulties, in this case, is that the San Francisco municipal structure is strong mayor-council based. Strong-mayoral council government structures effectively limit the number of avenues for police budget reform to enter negotiations by a handful of actors that can decide budgetary reallocations. Simply put, this government structure constrains city officials' and departments' decision-making capability regarding budget reform compared to the mayor.

Another constraint for a city to consider police budget reform is that the current conceptualization of public safety remains popular among voters and city officials. San Franciscans have voted for mayors who have been given the San Francisco Police Officer's Association endorsement in most elections over the past thirty years. These endorsements originate from the police department's image representing public safety; thus, the endorsement suggests the mayoral candidate represents the interests of public safety. Under these circumstances, campaigning for police budget reform might be perceived as a movement against an aspect of general security. This sentiment is also present within the ranks of city hall. During labor agreements, the firefighter's union has tied its financial interests to the police unions and vice versa. For the city to reform the police budget, officials are concerned about how reform could affect the well-being of labor and the fire department's interests. This Capstone suggests that to receive a more receptive audience to the calls for police budget reform, advocates—specifically the Defund the Police campaign—must keep in mind a few considerations about these significant obstacles.

Defund the Police advocates are integrating campaign strategies that force city officials and residents alike to take a serious look at the racism and violence fueled by funding police departments. Although, the demand for this transition from established police department funding is a shift in reform appearing too suddenly for city officials. City officials hear calls for defunding the police as a demand for restructuring policing and citywide budgeting formulas. Campaigning against municipal police budgeting practices is challenging for the Defund the Police campaign because it requires undoing preferred and pre-determined methods cities currently use to decide police budgets.

Police budget reform efforts will face difficulties when attempting to cut police departments' budgets while presenting a narrative that their respective fire department's budgets will remain unaffected. The symbiotic relationship between the police and firefighter unions' interests is a relationship deeply ingrained in San Francisco for nearly one hundred years. The starting methods for undoing this relationship may seem simple by negotiating under different circumstances and years; however, the perception is still that reforming one department's budget implicitly affects the other. Isolating the perception of the police department during collective bargaining more than the practice itself is a key feature for the success of police budget reform implementation. Although, removing the police budget from the general conception of labor is complicated due to a police departments' budget composition codified by labor agreements. Police budget reform demands reallocating police funds, but for the city, that means transferring personnel costs away from the livelihood of their officers. From this perspective, there is little incentive for a pro-labor city to consider these reform efforts.

Based on the findings in this thesis, I recommend that Defund the Police advocates consider a few strategies to overcome some of these obstacles to increase a municipality's

capacity to reshape the outcome of police budgets. Rather than try and restructure administrative roles and labor contracts, for instance, advocates should attempt to overcome the informal perceptions identified in this thesis. Overcoming informal perceptions is an appropriate strategy because they are processes that do not require large-scale administrative changes. Defund the Police advocates could identify spending issues, such as the reasons for overtime costs, and offer alternatives that perform similar officer duties without leading to unexpected expenditures. This narrative does not interfere with the processes behind police budget allocations but does give a reason to allocate fewer dollars towards police overtime costs.

I also propose transforming the concept of public safety by removing a police department's informal relationship with the fire department as another strategy to increase police budget reform capacity. Defining the differences of needs and wants between police and firefighter's unions could reveal an imbalance or inconsistency in departmental spending for public safety. Providing these facts to city officials engaged in police union negotiations may discourage these officials from convoluting the needs of firefighters in budgetary arrangements.

Lastly, I recommend the Defund the Police campaign advocate for narrowing the lens through which the city views a police department's budget composition. Perceiving the police budget as representing all of labor's interests is preventative to seeing the police department's funding as a harmful practice in city governance. For example, suppose police budget reform highlights detrimental effects of funding certain aspects of labor; in that case, a city might identify and reduce pay given to officers who have a disciplinary record due to their demonstrating prejudice or violence. However, advocates should caution this recommendation because policing scholars have yet to analyze the implications and relationships between pro-police budget reform and anti-labor sentiments.

Perhaps the most noteworthy finding is that the methods behind police budget reform might be considered anti-union in nature—thus anti-labor because unions represent the interests of the city's labor force. Data on San Francisco's budget composition (Figure 1) and allocation amounts (Figure 2) reveals that reallocating police funds means altering a well-practiced formula designed to support healthy compensation for police officers. Thus, advocating for reallocations can be translated as reducing labor costs, or in other words, advocating for a particular type of labor reform.

Data in this Capstone suggests that labor reform, via budgetary reallocations, is innately against the financial interests of unions. This confounding relationship partially occurs because the concerns of unions are representative of labor-based interests. However, the Defund the Police movement has the possibility to reframe the differences between anti-union and anti-labor reforms by focusing on reducing future budget allocations. Reforming large portions of the police budget, such as reallocating compensation expenditures, is impossible due to labor agreements as well as a route most city officials would rather avoid trying to circumvent legally. Reducing funding for future police budgets by freezing incoming police academy classes and long-term hiring expenditures, on the other hand, is non-invasive to the interests of currently employed or pensioned officers. Thus, Defund the Police advocates might benefit from campaigning with a message that denotes police budget reform does not affect the current labor interests, which may be more palatable to pro-labor city officials.

The Defund the Police movement can also benefit from a vigorous campaign against future budgetary growth by potentially impeding the political clout of police unions. The San Francisco Police Officer's Association's endorsement is a good representation of how unions have become a formidable political player during mayoral elections. In return for their backing in

this case study, the SFPOA benefits financially from a police-friendly mayor in the following year. However, if police budget reform reduces or freezes the number of incoming officers, the police union will have a smaller physical presence and fewer officers paying union fees. With fewer police officers and reduced funding from decreasing membership, police unions will have less capacity to donate and campaign for mayoral candidates. In this situation, a candidate for mayor would less likely seek cooperation with a party unable to raise funds and participate in grassroots efforts. Even with a police union's endorsement, the winning mayors might now be less inclined to make a quid-pro-quo agreement with a police union because their backing did not significantly contribute to the mayor's campaign victory. Then, there might be more room for conversations with the mayor about police budget reform.

Although, discussions with city officials about police budget reform may be absent for some time due to policing scholars just recently starting merging theories, research, and practices in police reform and police budgeting literature. Recently, research has demonstrated that police unions prevent police budget reforms. The data provided in this thesis support research on the effects of unions by showing that labor agreements maintain incremental budgetary growth over each year. This finding extends conversations regarding police unions and police budget reform because it reinforces the notion that unions block budgetary reforms and further suggests that a city enables labor organizations to find the means to protect their budgets from changes. These police budget reform considerations also bring to light concerns that policing scholars should consider moving forward.

There is no lack of information on police reform and police budgeting as separate bodies of scholarship; although, policing scholars should consider asking the following questions when merging the two. Firstly scholars should ask, can an organization or individual simultaneously be

pro-police budget reform and pro-police union? If police budget reform dips into personnel costs established by unions, is it inevitable that this type of reform is anti-labor? Also, scholars should explore previous or existing labor reforms that include divesting funds away from a department to fund other departments or programs outside their traditional jurisdictions. If there are examples scholars can draw from, there might be a better understanding of the connection between these two sentiments.

However, identifying binding agreements and informal perceptions as obstacles to police budget reform is one of the initial steps towards finding solutions to successful implementation. The methods involved in reaching the goals of movements like Defund the Police are just as important as the possibility of achieving them. I hope that identifying factors that influence municipal capacity to reform police budgets in this thesis contributes to moving police budget reform conversations forward towards remedying the systemic problems in modern policing.

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