

Race and State in City Police Spending Growth: 1980 to 2010

Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
2017, Vol. 3(1) 96–112
© American Sociological Association 2016
DOI: 10.1177/2332649216650692
sre.sagepub.com



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Abstract

What has driven city police spending growth in large cities? Studies show that racial threat is an important predictor, but scholars overlook how cities can afford spending increases during hard financial times. Research suggests that federal grants through the 1994 Clinton crime bill and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security play important roles. In this article, the authors ask whether racial threat and federal aid had an interrelated role in city police spending from 1980 to 2010. Using a unique data set on 88 large cities, the authors find that Clinton crime bill grants were associated with city police spending, especially in cities with growing Black populations. The authors also find that from 2000 to 2010, overall federal aid was associated with city police spending, especially in cities with growing foreign-born populations. This study shows that the state, through relationships between federal and local government, has been a critical missing component in the process whereby racial threat shapes local police spending.

Keywords

racial politics, immigration, enforcement, government, ethnic minorities

The United States has the third largest police force in the world, behind only India and China (Khan 2015). This massive growth in policing has contributed to both mass incarceration and the disproportionate use of force against young racial minorities. Scholars have sought to identify the forces behind this unprecedented growth in law enforcement, and racial threat theory has been prominent in this research. Local increases in racial minority populations are thought to pose threats to the political standing, economic power, and physical safety of white citizens, who respond by lobbying local government for increased social control (Blalock 1967).

Despite considerable evidence supporting racial threat theory (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Kent and Jacobs 2005; Sever 2003), very few studies have explained how cities financially afford police spending increases. Since the Reagan administration, overall federal aid to cities has significantly decreased, resulting in cities having to downsize their social services. Despite this overall decline,

federal grants from the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (or Clinton crime bill) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have played an enormous role in funding the expansion of urban police forces (Koper, Moore, and Roth 2003; Roth et al. 2000). Yet to our knowledge, no study has examined whether racial threat and federal aid play an interrelated role in contributing to city police spending growth.

Through a longitudinal analysis, we examine the interplay of race and federal aid in the growth of city police spending from 1980 to 2010. Using a unique data set of large cities with populations of 100,000 or more, we examine the relationship

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among these variables in two ways. First, we model the period from 1980 to 2010 with measures of federal community policing grants from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and percentage foreign-born in each city. Second, we model the period from 2000 to 2010 with previously unexplored measures, such as federal grants from the DHS and separate measures for U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos. The results show that from 1980 to 2010, federal COPS grants were associated with city police spending increases, especially in cities with growing Black populations. Similarly, our 2000 to 2010 analyses showed a positive interaction between overall federal aid and percentage foreign-born. In the 2000s, overall federal aid to cities was positively associated with police spending, especially in cities with growing foreign-born populations. Together, findings show that racial threat and federal aid have an interrelated role in shaping city police spending increases.

This study makes several important contributions. First, our findings suggest the need for research on racial threat to incorporate the role of the state or, more specifically, intergovernmental relations. In the study of city police spending, racial threat has been theorized as an interpersonal process whereby growth in minority populations threatens majority-group citizens into lobbying local government to suppress minorities (Blalock 1967; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). Our results suggest that intergovernmental relationships between local and federal government are another key component in the process whereby racial threat invokes city police spending. Our study illuminates how relations between federal security agencies and local law enforcement may be an ideal case for future researchers to advance theory on the interrelated social structures of race and the state in generating urban conditions (Fox 2012; Goldberg 2002). Second, our study contributes to research on city police spending by showing that scholars need to look beyond factors sparking spending increases and also investigate how city governments can afford them. To date, the literature has assumed that cities have had the fiscal capacity to consistently increase police spending over decades. Our study illuminates how unpacking city government revenue sources may illuminate some indirect ways that racial threat shapes cities.

We begin by elaborating on the theoretical background and previous empirical research motivating this study.

RACIAL THREAT AND CITY POLICE SPENDING

In the tradition of conflict theory, scholars have incorporated race into studies of city police spending. Specifically, Blalock's (1967) theory of minority threat has guided many empirical inquiries. Building on Blumer's (1958) classic work on group position, Blalock contended that as racial minority populations grow, whites will perceive this population change as a threat to their interests and will respond by pressing for additional crime controls. For Blalock, threats to the economic or political interests of majority groups are most critical. Blalock argued that as the majority becomes increasingly concerned about competition from minorities over jobs and other economic resources, efforts geared toward maintaining economic dominance will increase.

A large body of literature has found consistent support for racial threat in studies of police force spending and police force size, with only 5 percent of 28 empirical studies failing to support the racial threat perspective (Sever 2003). Studies using cross-sectional data from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s found that increases in Black populations were associated with increases in police spending (Jackson 1989; Jackson and Carroll 1981) and the number of sworn police officers per capita (Jacobs 1979; Liska, Lawrence, and Benson 1981; McCarty and Ren 2012; Sever 2003; Zhao et al. 2008). Studies using longitudinal designs have found evidence for racial threat while controlling for alternative factors such as crime (Liska and Yu 1992), economic inequality (Jacobs 1979), city revenues (Chamlin 1990; Jackson 1985; Stucky 2005), and residential segregation (Kent and Jacobs 2005; Stults and Baumer 2008).

Cities in the 1990s and 2000s, however, underwent important demographic changes. Black concentrated poverty greatly decreased in large cities and moved to smaller cities and suburbs (Jargowsky 2003). In addition, urban sociologists have shown that Black population growth in large cities has slowed considerably as many have returned to the U.S. South (Pendergrass 2013; Robinson 2014). This is not to say that the Black population is no longer perceived as a racial threat; instead, these changes have likely led to Black populations becoming a racial threat in new locations.

Simultaneously, immigrants have been settling outside traditional gateway cities at increasing rates

(Massey 2008; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2006) and instead are settling in urban areas in states such as North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. Several ethnographies have observed the consequences of this transformation for social service delivery (Marrow 2009) and relations between Black and immigrant communities (Jones 2014; McDermott 2011). Studies also show variation in how city governments respond to immigrants. Some cities have passed sanctuary laws prohibiting local police from cooperating with immigration authorities (Grey and Woodrick 2005; Medrano 2013). Other cities have passed hostile and punitive measures (Flores 2015). For example, cities in Georgia, Kentucky, and Minnesota have adopted anti-immigrant ordinances such as requiring landlords to verify tenants' citizenship status or denying licenses to businesses that hire undocumented immigrants (Leerkes, Leach, and Bachmeier 2012; Lewis et al. 2013; Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010).

Despite these changes, to our knowledge, no study of city policing has incorporated measures of foreign-born populations into their models, an omission that has likely led to mixed results across studies. For example, some studies show no association between Latino population change and city police spending or size (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Stults and Baumer 2008), while others do in southwestern cities (Holmes et al. 2008) and in national samples (Kent and Jacobs 2005; Sever 2003; Stucky 2005). Similarly, some studies show that Black population growth now has a nonlinear effect on police force size (Stults and Baumer 2008), meaning that once a Black population reaches 25 percent in a city, it no longer has an association. In contrast, other studies show that the effect of Black population growth on city police force size strengthens over time (Carmichael and Kent 2014).

With respect to immigrants, scholars have been unable to use a clean measure of city foreign-born populations, because census data from before 2000 do not separate U.S.-born Latinos from foreign-born Latinos.¹ Several studies have simply acknowledged this data limitation (Holmes et al. 2008; Kent and Jacobs 2005) and used Latinos as a pseudo-measure of the foreign-born population. This pseudo-measure, however, is not ideal, as not all immigrants are of Latino origin, nor do citizens feel threatened by immigrant Latinos and U.S.-born Latinos in the same way (Armenta 2015; Eagly 2013; Varsanyi 2008). For example, Wang's (2012) research showed ordinary U.S. citizens perceiving immigrants as a criminal threat distinct

from U.S.-born Latinos or Blacks. Similarly, Light, Massoglia, and King (2014) showed that Latino immigrants receive harsher sentences than U.S.-born Latinos. The absence of any measure of the foreign-born population has prevented the possibility of investigating whether other immigrant subgroups, such as African or Middle Eastern immigrants, might also be perceived as threats and, in turn, spark increases in city police spending.

Together, the current state of the racial threat literature on city police spending demonstrates the importance of Black population change, mixed support for Latino population change, and (to our knowledge) no clean test for immigrants. In this article, we advance the existing literature by (1) incorporating the intermediating role of federal aid to cities and (2) using separate measures for U.S.-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos.

FEDERAL AID AND RACIAL THREAT

Political sociologists have established the importance of relationships between federal and local governments in shaping the criminal justice system and social safety net for racial minorities (Brown 2013; Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013; Fox 2012; Quadagno 1996). Such intergovernmental relationships, however, have remained outside the scope of the city police spending literature. Although some studies found that growth in overall city revenue is positively associated with police spending (Chamlin 1990; Jackson 1985, 1986; Jackson and Carroll 1981; Kent and Jacobs 2005; McDowall and Loftin 1986; Stucky 2005), scholars have not unpacked the sources of city revenue increases or explored how they might interact with racial threat to shape city police spending. This omission is glaring because in the past two decades, two federal interventions infused money to cities specifically for policing: (1) the Clinton crime bill and (2) emergency preparedness funding from the DHS. Although federal aid provides just 5.4 percent of the average city's overall revenue (down from 17.5 percent in 1977), these two federal interventions are credited with keeping city police departments on an upward growth trajectory during hard financial times for cities (Wallin 2005).

The Clinton crime bill was the largest criminal justice bill in U.S. history. Spurred in part by competition between Democrats and Republicans over which party was toughest on crime, the legislation authorized \$8.8 billion for hiring more police

officers (Beckett 1999). In addition, the legislation established COPS, which allocated federal grants to cities for community policing programs, a policing strategy centered on building positive police-community relations. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) allocated three types of COPS grants to municipalities: small grants (less than \$500,000), medium grants (\$500,000 to \$4 million), and large grants (\$4 million or more) (Office of Inspector General 1999). Aside from hiring more police officers, cities used these funds to purchase equipment and hire clerical employees to move sworn police officers working behind desks to the street (U.S. Department of Justice 2000).

Established after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the DHS also increased federal aid to local police departments for “emergency preparedness” by 10-fold (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2008). Prior to 9/11, the federal government was spending approximately \$350 million on police preparedness. That grew to \$3.5 billion in 2002 (Dilger 2015). These funds helped cities centralize their emergency response systems to terrorist attacks, improve communication among law enforcement agencies across jurisdictions, increased security personnel in mass transit systems, and trained police on how to respond to terror attacks (Posner 2007).

Both DHS and the DOJ provide federal grant opportunities for local law enforcement. Two of the largest are the DHS’s Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grants and DOJ’s Byrne grants program. The UASI grants aim to “enhance security and overall preparedness to prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism” (Willis 2007:597). The Byrne grant program supports all components of the criminal justice system and is aimed at helping local governments address “their most pressing public safety challenges,” such as domestic violence, gangs, and witness protection (NCJA Center for Justice Planning 2016).

Incorporating federal aid into research on city police spending would broaden the lens of racial threat theory beyond a focus on individuals and toward a focus on the state. As Hopkins argued (2010:40), racial threat theory was developed in the pre-civil rights era to explain Black-white relations, which has made it difficult to apply the theory to immigrants and Latinos. A focus on federal aid introduces other processes whereby racial threat may shape city police spending, such as local citizens’ lobbying of the federal government, local governments’ lobbying of federal agencies, or federal government’s decision making on which cities to fund. The interplay of race and federal

intervention is not unprecedented in U.S. history. In the aftermath of the New Deal, welfare agencies in cities successfully lobbied the federal government into deporting 40,000 Mexicans who were seen as abusing the new social safety net (Fox 2004). After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the federal government spent resources to detain and intern Japanese Americans across U.S. cities (Reeves 2015).

Hopkins’s (2010) research on “politicized places” further motivates the need to incorporate the federal government into research on racial threat, as he demonstrates that rhetoric from politicians at the national level can trigger local feelings of threat in the majority population. Although Hopkins focused on federal political rhetoric surrounding the 2006 immigration marches, President Clinton and proponents of the 1994 crime bill skillfully used racially coded language to garner support for the bill (Hurwitz and Peffley 2005). Debate over the Clinton crime bill included references to fear of Black crime in the wake of racially motivated riots in Los Angeles (Hunt 1997), Chicago (Rosenfeld 1997), and New York (Shapiro 2006). Each of these events heightened fear of Black people and incited politicians in the federal government to declare a need to “restore order in society” (Beckett 1999). Similarly, 9/11 brought increased scrutiny and fear over Muslim Americans and immigrants more broadly (Selod 2012). Thus, analyzing shifting urban demographics alongside change in levels of federal aid to cities might reveal a more accurate picture of the forces shaping city police spending. We advance these perspectives in our statistical analyses.

DATA AND METHODS

To conduct this unique analysis of city police spending, we constructed a data set with a national sample of large cities with populations of 100,000 or more from nine sources: the U.S. decennial census, the U.S. census of governments, the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Uniform Crime Reports, the U.S. County and City Data Book, the DHS, the DOJ, the Council for Community and Economic Research, the U.S. 2010 data set compiled by researchers at Brown University, and www.USAspending.gov (a government Web site storing data on the sizes and allocation of federal grants). Data were used at four time points: 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. To be clear, we define cities as municipalities, not metropolitan statistical areas. We measure cities this way because police

departments typically operate only within their city limits.

The decennial census data provided measures of city population, unemployment, poverty, and income levels, while the census of governments provided measures of city police spending, overall revenue, and overall federal aid. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports provided city crime rates for homicide, robbery, aggravated assault, and burglary. The County and City Data Book provided a measure for whether the head of city government was a city manager or mayor. The U.S. 2010 data set provided measures of city Black-white and Latino-white segregation, and the Council for Community and Economic Research provided a cost-of-living index for each city at each time point.

These data were combined to create a data set of 88 cities nested within three change periods (1980–1990, 1990–2000, and 2000–2010) leaving a sample size of 264 city-decades. A handful of cities had to be dropped because of missing data. In addition, our analysis omits New York, because after 9/11, it received \$4 billion in federal aid and thus was too extreme an outlier to include in our analysis.

Outcome Measure: Police Spending

The outcome variable of interest is city police spending per 1,000 citizens adjusted for inflation and in natural logarithm form to reduce heteroscedasticity. The U.S. census of governments defined city police expenditures as “funds allocated toward the preservation of law and order and traffic safety, [which includes] police patrols and communications, crime prevention activities, detention and custody of persons awaiting trial, traffic safety, vehicular inspection, and the like.” The police spending data, however, provided no details on what exactly cities spent money on. The census of governments had only three categories of police expenditures: direct expenditures (personnel), capital expenditures (purchasing equipment), and construction expenditures (site improvement, building or renovating police stations). For this analysis, we used the measure for total police expenditures, which combined these three spending categories.

Because our study examines police spending, it is important to distinguish it from studies of city police force size, another dependent variable typically studied in the literature (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Kent and Jacobs 2005). Researchers typically measure police force size as the number of sworn police officers in a city per capita, while police spending has been measured as dollars spent per

capita. Although police force size represents the number of officers on foot in a given city, police spending not only includes the salaries of those sworn officers but also spending on facilities, special enforcement operations, equipment, emergency preparedness, training, antiterrorism, and overtime pay. For example, since 2000, Chicago has experienced a decline in the number of sworn police officers but continued to increase its spending on police (Joravsky 2010). Thus, police force size and city police spending are very different measures of local social control and likely have different independent variables driving their growth. Despite these differences, we believe the infusion of federal funding to cities for policing would also likely shape police force size, although in ways that probably differ from the results in our study. Thus, it is more appropriate to generalize our findings to the study of police spending in large cities while suggesting that federal aid and race may also be important for understanding growth in police force size.

Independent Variables of Interest

In our analysis of 1980 to 2010, we measure racial threat as the percentage Latino, Black, and foreign-born of each city's total population. We also include dummy variables indicating whether the city obtained a large, medium, or small COPS grant from the Clinton crime bill. Although in this analysis we cannot distinguish U.S.-born Latinos from foreign-born Latinos, we include a measure for the overall foreign-born population in the model, as it was only mildly correlated with the Latino population measure (.57).

Our analysis of 2000 to 2010, however, enables us to distinguish between U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos. In this model, the independent variables of interest were change in U.S.-born Latino subgroups (e.g., Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican) and foreign-born subgroups (by national origin). We also included measures for federal grant programs created by DHS and the DOJ in the wake of 9/11, measured in dollars per citizen. Our measure for UASI and Byrne grants is the sum of dollars allocated to a city for all years between 2000 and 2010 divided by the city's population. We measure grant money allotted to cities per capita to account for the possibility that the federal government gave more money to cities with larger populations. Finally, we include measures of overall federal aid to cities from the U.S. census of governments. This measure of federal aid does not include federal grants specifically earmarked for police. Rather,

according to the census of governments, they reflect the sum of federal aid to cities for education, public welfare, housing, hospitals, and “general” expenses. This measure is important because of the possibility that an increase in overall federal might free up a city’s funds that can be reallocated toward police.

Controls

In both analyses, we include as many measures of alternative explanations as possible. These included city crime rates for homicide, robbery, burglary, and aggravated assault; income inequality; population change; unemployment rates; the presence of a city manager; Black-white segregation; Latino-white segregation; and city revenue. We included income inequality because previous studies show that cities with large gaps between the rich and poor may spend more on policing to protect elites’ property and interests (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Jacobs 1979). We also included measures for population change and percentage unemployed. Residential segregation is measured using the index of dissimilarity, or the odds that any Black or Latino will come into contact with a white resident. City manager presence was captured with a dummy variable coded 1 for cities with managers as opposed to mayors. Finally, we included a measure for overall city revenue (adjusted for inflation) from the U.S. census of governments.

We also included two additional control measures previously unaccounted for in studies of city police spending: a city cost-of-living index and a measure for sanctuary cities. Our measure for sanctuary cities comes from lists provided by the DHS and the Center for Immigration Studies. It is measured as a dummy variable, with 1 indicating a city that passed a sanctuary law in that decade. For our 2000 to 2010 analysis, we also include additional control measures for the average salary of each police department, as well as each department’s contribution to individual officer’s health care, pension, and retirement benefits. These measures come from www.salary.com, a database with listings of salaries for public officials across the nation. We did not include these variables in the 1980 to 2010 models, because these data were unavailable for years prior to 2000.

Model Specification

We use first-difference regression models with city and year fixed effects. First-difference models assess change in the independent and dependent

variables over time. Using city fixed effects allows us to hold constant any unchanging city attributes by entering separate dummy variables for each city. This provides a stronger check for omitted variables than a random-effects approach (Johnston and DiNardo 1997; Wooldridge 2010). By also including time period fixed effects, we control for otherwise unmeasured period shocks that may have influenced police spending in many cities. The models also include a lagged dependent variable as changes in police spending over time depend heavily on the level of police spending in the previous time period. We estimate the relationship as follows:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_1 (Fborn_{it}) + \beta_2 (Controls_{it}) + \beta_3 (Spending_{it-1}) + \delta_i + \lambda_t + e_{it}$$

where Y is the change in police expenditure for city i in decade change t ; $Fborn$ is the change in the percentage foreign-born in city i in decade change t ; $Spending_{it-1}$ represents the lagged dependent variable, which is the level of city police spending at the start of each decade; γ_i represents the city-level fixed effect; and δ_t represents the period fixed effect.

With these model specifications, we provide the most conservative test possible for examining the association of federal aid and racial threat with city police spending. Because of the lack of random assignment and the fact that dependent and independent variables are measured at the same time periods, our models cannot establish a causal relationship. Our descriptive results, however, provide strong evidence for a previously unexplored link among racial threat, federal aid, and city police spending.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics indicate several interesting time trends consistent with conventional knowledge on economic and social change in cities since 1980. Figure 1 presents box plots of the log of police spending for each time period, showing that police spending on average has been rising every decade since 1980. The plots illustrate considerable variation in city police spending growth over time.

The descriptive statistics for the 1980 to 2010 analysis, shown in Table 1, show police spending rising at a rate of \$4,760 per 1,000 citizens each decade. Populations are declining at a rate of 15,055 citizens per decade, while income inequality, city revenue, and unemployment are all increasing. In relation to city demographics, the Black

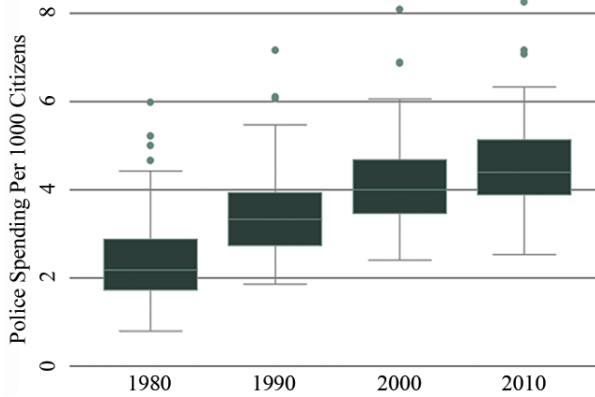


Figure 1. Box plot of logged police expenditures, 1980 to 2010.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for 1980 to 2010 Analysis.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation
Police Spending per Capita (Ln)	264	4.764	0.616
Income inequality	264	0.006	0.524
Unemployed (%)	264	0.370	0.493
Total population	264	0.050	0.151
Black-white segregation	264	-4.871	4.160
Latino-white segregation	264	0.610	6.240
Cost of living	264	7.921	58.816
Sanctuary city	264	0.080	0.310
Homicide rate	264	-0.072	0.570
Robbery rate	264	-0.133	0.531
Aggravated assault rate	264	0.018	0.623
Burglary rate	264	-0.289	0.422
Black (%)	264	0.039	0.159
Latino (%)	264	0.386	0.311
Foreign-born (%)	264	0.257	0.331
Revenue	264	0.739	2.142
Overall federal aid	264	0.010	0.108

population in cities is increasing slightly at a rate of .81 percent per decade, but Latinos and immigrants make up the fastest growing minority groups in cities growing at rates of 3.85 percent and 2.50 percent respectively. Eleven percent of cities in the sample received either medium or large COPS grants through the Clinton crime bill. Each crime measure has decreased since 1980, which is consistent with research documenting the great post-1990 crime drop (LaFree 1999).

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics from our analysis of change in police spending from 2000 to 2010. These statistics mirror the trends from 1980 to 2010, but with a few important

differences. Change in percentage foreign-born population slowed (down to 1.89 percent), while change in percentage U.S.-born Mexican population remained stagnant. On average, cities received \$100 per citizen for policing from UASI grants, \$3.36 per citizen from DOJ Byrne grants (which is a smaller grant program), and \$6.25 per citizen for all other federal aid to cities. The large size of UASI grants is not a statistical error. For example, Chicago alone received \$145 million through the UASI grant program (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2012). The UASI grant program has been a major source of federal aid for city police since 9/11.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for 2000 to 2010 Analysis.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation
Police Spending per Capita (Ln)	88	4.764	0.660
Income inequality	88	-0.006	0.406
Total population	88	0.037	0.199
Black-white segregation	88	-4.420	3.621
Latino-white segregation	88	0.009	4.719
Cost of living	88	8.791	51.567
Sanctuary city	88	0.273	0.448
Homicide rate	88	0.185	0.503
Robbery rate	88	-0.220	0.347
Black (%)	88	-0.018	0.154
Mexican (%)	88	0.027	0.030
Cuban (%)	88	0.030	0.197
Puerto Rican (%)	88	0.200	0.983
Foreign-born (%)	88	0.189	0.342
Revenue	88	2.910	2.563
City manager	88	0.466	0.502
City pension contribution	88	\$2,884.648	\$1,122.097
City health care contribution	88	\$5,768.000	\$2,192.593
City retirement contribution	88	\$1,648.318	\$641.185
Salary	88	\$45,787.570	\$17,810.690
UASI grant	88	\$100.750	\$261.947
Byrne grant	88	\$3.360	\$6.521
Overall federal aid	88	0.063	0.218

RESULTS

Table 3 presents the multivariate regression results of change in city police spending from 1980 to 2010 across four models. Model 1 is a baseline that includes only control variables, model 2 adds the lagged dependent variable, model 3 adds fixed effects and measures of federal COPS grants, and model 4 incorporates interaction terms. The baseline model indicates that city police spending tends to be higher in cities experiencing increases in their foreign-born populations and increases in overall federal aid, while police spending is lower in cities with growing total populations, unemployment, and Black populations. Overall, the baseline results differ significantly from previous studies of similar time periods, thus showing the importance of previously omitted variables such as foreign-born population and federal aid.

But do these results hold after including fixed effects and a lagged dependent variable? Models 2 and 3 address this question. Model 2 indicates that the effect of overall federal aid dissipates after including the lagged dependent variable, but

change in percentage foreign-born remains statistically significant. Incorporating fixed effects and COPS grants in model 3, however, significantly alters the results. Change in percentage foreign-born is no longer significant, and instead, change in percentage Latino becomes statistically significant. This result, however, is still difficult to interpret because the U.S. census counts U.S.-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos in the same category (a problem we resolve in the 2000–2010 analysis).

Results from models 3 and 4 show the interplay between racial threat and federal aid. In model 3, receiving a large COPS grant through the 1994 Clinton crime bill was positively and significantly associated with city police spending net of all controls. Cities with COPS grants of more than \$4 million experienced higher increases in police spending than cities that received no grants. We interacted the large COPS grant measure by region, level of segregation, and change in minority populations.² Change in percentage Black was the only variable that produced a significant interaction (shown in model 4), and this interaction was large (2.174). This significant interaction indicates that

Table 3. Models of Change in Logged per Capita City Police Spending, 1980 to 2010.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Income inequality	0.037 (0.061)	0.029 (0.058)	-0.064 (0.066)	-0.034 (0.066)
Population	-1.390*** (0.247)	-1.167*** (0.241)	-0.706* (0.32)	-0.650* (0.324)
Revenue	0.009 (0.023)	-0.070** (0.025)	-0.036 (0.031)	-0.037 (0.029)
Unemployment	-0.530*** (0.095)	-0.629*** (0.093)	-0.552*** (0.099)	-0.529*** (0.099)
Black (%)	-0.728** (0.23)	-0.476* (0.227)	-0.539 (0.321)	-0.640* (0.32)
Latino (%)	0.034 (0.153)	0.096 (0.147)	0.758*** (0.178)	0.744*** (0.175)
Foreign-born (%)	0.295* (0.123)	0.301* (0.118)	0.236 (0.126)	0.198 (0.126)
Homicide	-0.013 (0.058)	-0.012 (0.055)	-0.058 (0.059)	-0.078 (0.059)
Robbery	-0.023 (0.098)	0.089 (0.097)	-0.013 (0.102)	0.031 (0.102)
Aggravated assault	-0.069 (0.066)	0.003 (0.065)	-0.155* (0.065)	-0.156* (0.064)
Burglary	-0.256 (0.131)	-0.337** (0.127)	0.028 (0.142)	0.005 (0.139)
Black segregation	0.005 (0.007)	0.001 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.009)	0.001 (0.009)
Latino segregation	0.0121 (0.006)	0.00729 (0.006)	-0.0181* (0.007)	-0.0148 (0.007)
Overall federal aid	0.855* (0.337)	0.53 (0.329)	0.285 (0.511)	0.297 (0.501)
Cost of living	-0.00016 (0.000509)	-0.000318 (0.000488)	-0.000505 (0.000474)	-0.000542 (0.000468)
Sanctuary city	-0.076 (0.108)	-0.156 (0.105)	-0.092 (0.109)	-0.099 (0.111)
City manager	0.091 (0.065)	0.101 (0.062)		
Police lag		3.272*** (0.681)	0.277 (0.808)	0.267 (0.793)
Small grant			-0.089 (0.515)	-0.073 (0.504)
Medium grant			0.184 (0.143)	0.264 (0.143)
Large grant			0.353* (0.14)	1.014** (0.311)
Large Grant × Black				2.174* (1.03)
Large Grant × Latino				0.509 (0.869)
Large Grant × Foreign-born				-2.31 (1.149)
Lag		Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed effects			Yes	Yes
Constant	4.871*** (0.0903)	4.496*** (0.116)	4.651*** (0.128)	4.664*** (0.126)
<i>n</i>	264	264	264	264

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

receiving a large COPS grant was positively associated with police spending, especially in cities where Blacks were accounting for a larger percentage of the city population.

Overall, results from the 1980 to 2010 analysis support previous research, but with several important advances. Our results support the finding that increases in Black populations are associated with increases in police spending (Jackson and Carroll 1981; Stults and Baumer 2007), but we find that federal COPS grants mediate this relationship. Previous studies assumed that cities have the fiscal capacity to increase police spending when, in fact, federal aid has played an important role in financing city police departments (Koper, Moore, and Roth 2003; Roth et al. 2000). Our results suggest that racial threat operates not only through how local governments socially control racial minorities but also through relationships between local and federal government that help cities afford such social control efforts.

Our results also support studies showing the salience of percentage change in Latinos for city police spending (Holmes et al. 2008), but it should be interpreted cautiously. Our 1980 to 2010 analysis cannot separate the distinct roles of U.S.-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos in shaping city police spending. Nevertheless, our analysis demonstrates the salience of both groups for city police spending even after including several control measures unaccounted for in previous studies, such as cost of living, federal aid, and sanctuary cities. It is possible that previous studies' omission of these variables (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Stults and Baumer 2007) may have suppressed the association of percentage Latino with growth in city policing.

To distinguish between U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos, we conducted an additional analysis of city police spending from 2000 to 2010 using estimates of U.S.-born Mexicans and Cubans as well as immigrants by national origin group (e.g. Mexico, Canada, China). To begin, we ran basic multivariate regression models of city police spending using measures of all U.S.-born Latino subgroups and immigrants' nations of origin with all controls. The results revealed no significant relationship or large coefficients between any of the Latino or foreign-born subgroups and city police spending. Because the sample size is small (88), and because most Latino and foreign-born subgroups constitute less than 3 percent of a city's population, it is possible that these null findings may stem from a lack of statistical power. Thus, we would caution anyone from interpreting our results

as ruling out the possibility of a Latino or foreign-born subgroup association with police spending. For the purposes of conserving space, we do not present the null findings from these large statistical models (although they are available upon request).

In light of these results, we reran our 2000 to 2010 models using measures of the overall foreign-born population and the U.S.-born Mexican population (the largest Latino subgroup). Table 4 reports the model results. Model 1 is a baseline model with controls, model 2 includes the lagged dependent variable, and model 3 includes interaction effects.³ The baseline model indicates that city police spending increased in cities where (1) city percentage foreign-born increased, (2) city managers instead of mayors made budgeting decisions, (3) cities received UASI grants from DHS, and (4) local governments experienced increases in overall federal aid. These results remain the same after including a lagged dependent variable (shown in model 2), but the statistical significance of receiving a UASI grant diminishes slightly from .05 to the .10 level. Interestingly, variables such as change in percentage Black, U.S.-born Mexicans, city health and retirement contributions to police officers, cost of living, and being a sanctuary city were not statistically significant, nor did they produce large coefficients.

Model 3 shows overlap between racial threat and federal aid.⁴ Results show a large (4.087), positive, and significant (at the .10 level) interaction between percentage foreign-born and overall federal aid on city police spending, but no significant interaction for foreign-born with UASI grants. This finding indicates that after 9/11, measures of racial threat interact with overall federal aid to cities and do not interact with any of the single federal grant programs in our model.

Together, results from both analyses illuminate two ways in which racial threat and federal aid interacted to shape city police spending. Change in percentage Black interacted with the large COPS grant measure in our model of police spending from 1980 to 2010. Our 2000 to 2010 results show a positive interaction between percentage foreign-born and overall federal aid to cities. These findings suggest that the relationship between racial threat and city police spending interacts with federal aid and that this interaction looks different depending on the time period. Increases in Black populations seemed to matter during the era of the Clinton crime bill, whereas increases in foreign-born populations seemed to matter during the rise of DHS after 9/11.

In addition, our results advance the debate on the salience of the Latino population for city police

Table 4. Models of Change in Logged per Capita City Police Spending, 2000 to 2010.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Income inequality	-0.129 (0.193)	-0.141 (0.192)	-0.16 (0.19)
Total population	-0.718 (0.461)	-0.586 (0.472)	-0.18 (0.494)
Black-white segregation	0.00584 (0.0217)	0.00563 (0.0216)	-0.00209 (0.021)
Latino-white segregation	0.00501 (0.0173)	0.00603 (0.0172)	0.00298 (0.0166)
Cost of living	-0.00272 (0.00141)	-0.00271 (0.0014)	-0.00246 (0.00134)
Sanctuary city	0.31 (0.191)	0.269 (0.194)	0.16 (0.197)
Homicide	0.124 (0.169)	0.0749 (0.173)	0.115 (0.169)
Robbery	-0.39 (0.269)	-0.315 (0.275)	-0.163 (0.245)
Aggravated assault	0.0832 (0.099)	0.0786 (0.0978)	0.0786 (0.0978)
Black (%)	-0.52 (0.637)	-0.491 (0.634)	-0.062 (0.626)
Mexican (%)	0.00612 (0.0297)	0.0104 (0.0298)	-0.00212 (0.0285)
Cuban (%)	0.222 (0.365)	0.236 (0.364)	0.161 (0.342)
Puerto Rican (%)	-0.135 (0.071)	-0.138 (0.0708)	-0.135 (0.0675)
Foreign-born (%)	1.056* (0.428)	1.090* (0.428)	0.693 (0.559)
Revenue	-0.00361 (0.0403)	-0.0192 (0.0421)	0.0203 (0.043)
City manager	0.381* (0.162)	0.342* (0.165)	0.414 (0.251)
Pension contribution	-0.152 (0.247)	-0.157 (0.246)	-0.153 (0.236)
Health care contribution	-0.000321 (0.000205)	-0.000236 (0.000215)	-0.000143 (0.000202)
Retirement contribution	0.315 (0.268)	0.293 (0.267)	0.196 (0.256)
Salary	-0.00176 (0.0186)	-0.000618 (0.0186)	0.00258 (0.0181)
UASI grant	.005* (0.002)	.005+ (0.003)	.005+ (0.003)
Byrne grant	0.016 (0.011)	0.016 (0.01)	0.014 (0.01)
Overall federal aid	1.356** (0.393)	1.252** (0.4)	0.189 (0.629)
Police spending lag		3.236 (2.665)	3.983 (2.669)
Foreign-born × Federal Aid			4.898* (2.407)
Foreign-born × UASI Grant			-0.001 (0.004)
Constant	3.806*** (0.349)	3.562*** (0.402)	3.578*** (0.404)
<i>n</i>	88	88	88

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.
 +*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

spending. Results from our 2000 to 2010 analysis indicate that in the post-9/11 context, immigrants overall (not any one particular immigrant subgroup or U.S.-born Latino subgroup) have become the racial threat associated with city police spending increases. This is an important finding, as it suggests that racial threat has taken on the form of immigrants becoming a larger share of a city's overall population. To be clear, this does not exclude the possibility of Latinos being perceived as a racial threat. Rather, our results show that Latino immigrants, along with immigrants from other parts of the world, appear to have become the racial threat associated with police spending in large cities.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of our analysis was to test the association of two factors overlooked in previous studies of city police spending: federal aid and foreign-born populations. Our finding that racial threat and federal aid work together in shaping city police spending indicate the need for scholars to rethink the processes whereby racial threat influences local social control. Theorists have envisioned racial threat as operating through the perceptions and actions of individual citizens who, upon recognizing increases in minority population size or share of the population, lobby their local governments to increase policing (Blalock 1967). Our findings demonstrate that with respect to city police spending, scholars need to unpack the federal government's role as an important actor in racial threat theory. On the basis of our results, there are several ways to interpret the interplay between racial threat and federal aid.

In accordance with Hopkins's (2010) politicized places theory, federal aid may play an important role in city police spending increases by triggering local feelings of racial threat. For example, the creation of the UASI grants could have signaled to local governments that funding was available to address their perceived local criminal threats. In a context in which cities have become increasingly strapped for cash, increases in racial minority populations alone is not enough to spur an increase in police spending. Learning about the availability of federal funds to address local perceived threats, however, might provide cities with the means to do so.

Federal aid and rhetoric may also incentivize local governments to increase police spending. For example, the Clinton crime bill provided local

governments with financial assistance for costs incurred from incarcerating undocumented immigrants (Public Law 103-322 1994). Local governments under financial constraints, regardless of their stances toward immigrants, might apply for such grants as a means to obtain any kind of financial assistance for their local police force. In contexts outside city police spending, federal financial incentives have been shown to contribute to local governments adopting policies that facilitated mass incarceration (Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013). Thus, future research should investigate the possibility that racial threat may operate through federal incentives for local governments.

The role of the federal government in racial threat might also work from the bottom up. As Blalock (1967) argued, increases in minority populations might incite the local majority population to lobby local government into increasing police spending, and in turn, local governments may then advocate for federal aid to meet their citizens' demands. For example, in 2002, 100 mayors from cities across the country gathered on Capitol Hill in Washington to lobby Congress for federal aid to improve their police and fire departments' emergency preparedness (U.S. Conference of Mayors 2002). Similarly, anti-immigration activists in Arizona and New Mexico lobbied the federal government for increased border control over concern about increases in the undocumented immigrant population (Douzet 2009). The federal government responded by doubling the number of border patrol agents (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2015).

Another alternative explanation of the interplay between racial threat and federal aid is selection bias. Although it is unlikely that immigrants and racial minorities choose to move to cities with more police given the rise of deportations (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; King, Massoglia, and Uggen 2013) and police killings of Blacks (Gilbert and Ray 2016), federal agencies may intentionally aid cities with larger minority populations. This might be because cities with high immigrant and racial minority populations need more services or crime control. For example, immigrants often require translation services. Cities such as Nashville and Tulsa are spending more resources to better serve their non-English-speaking communities (Saint-Fort, Yasso, and Shah 2012). Securing federal aid for social services to assist immigrants or low-income racial minorities might help city governments free up funding that could be redirected toward policing.

Although it is unlikely that federal aid for policing goes to cities with the most crime, as both our results and findings from the literature show crime rates are not associated with police resource allocation (Brandl, Chamlin, and Frank 1995; Greenberg, Kessler, and Loftin 1985; Jackson and Carroll 1981; Liska et al. 1981; McDowall and Loftin 1986), our model specifications cannot rule out selection bias. Thus, researchers should take selection seriously as a potential alternative explanation for the links among racial threat, federal aid, and city police spending.

Another important point of discussion involves the role of U.S.-born Latinos versus foreign-born Latinos in racial threat theory. Although our analysis of city police spending from 1980 to 2010 showed the importance of change in percentage Latino, this measure conflates Latinos with immigrants. Our analysis of police spending after 2000 used separate measures of U.S.-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos, but our findings show no effect for either. Instead, our measure for change in the overall foreign-born population was significantly associated with increases in city police spending. Although Latinos constitute a large proportion of the U.S. immigrant population, our results indicate that immigrants of Latino origin are not the only group driving increases in city police spending. Despite being smaller in population, our results open the possibility that increases in Asian, African, or Middle Eastern immigrants might also play an important role, alongside Latino immigrants, in generating local feelings of racial threat. This may be especially the case for African immigrants who have been shown to receive similar discriminatory treatment from whites as African-Americans (Waters 2006) and Muslim immigrants who have been victims of hate crimes and subjected to increased surveillance since 9/11 (Selod 2012). Given that our findings show that racial threat is a contextual phenomenon varying by time and place, future research should incorporate racial minority groups that have typically been left out of research on growth in policing and the criminal justice system more broadly.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the literature on city police spending by demonstrating the interrelated role of federal aid and racial threat. The study also incorporates several measures previously unaccounted for in previous studies. Overall, the findings are consistent with the previous literature, but with some important advances. Specifically, our research underscores the importance of incorporating federal

aid from the Clinton crime bill and the DHS, as well as separate measures for U.S.-born and foreign-born Latino populations, when assessing the relationship between racial threat and police spending. These findings make several contributions.

First, our findings suggest the need for research on racial threat to incorporate the role of the state. To date, racial threat has been theorized as an interpersonal process where increases in minority populations shapes individuals' perceptions, invoking feelings of threat, and inciting majority-group citizens to lobby local government to act (Blalock 1967). Our evidence shows that the link between racial threat and city police spending involves intergovernmental relations. Federal aid interacted with local racial demographics in ways that were correlated with city police spending. For racial threat theory to advance, it must examine and theorize the links between individual citizens, local governments, and federal agencies. Research on the state in the sociology of punishment provides some insight on how to conduct such analyses. For example, Campbell and Schoenfeld (2013) used the concept of political field to incorporate the role of relationships between state and federal government in explaining the rise of mass incarceration. Future studies of racial threat may want to use the field concept to examine how relationships between local and federal government might produce feelings of racial threat in localities. In addition, studies might also evaluate variation in how cities respond to federal financial incentives to increase police spending. As race scholars like Goldberg (2002) and Omi and Winant (1994) have argued, race is heavily interwoven into the workings of the state. This article suggests that the role of intergovernmental relations in the growth of city police spending may be a good case study for further theorizing linkages between race and state.

Second, our study contributes to research on city police spending by showing that scholars need to additionally consider how cities afford such spending increases at a time when local governments are increasingly in financial hardship. Besides identifying the threats spurring police spending increases, researchers also need to identify the revenue sources providing cities with the fiscal capacity to increase spending. This study indicates that federal aid played an important role, but in the future, will cities have to go into further debt to continue funding police? Where else might cities get the revenue to maintain their large law enforcement systems? Political scientists show that race and machine politics play a large role in how cities allocate resources (Stone 1989). In cities such as Baltimore and

Chicago, cuts to education and social services have helped pay to maintain spending levels for police and fire departments (Ferman 1999; Orr 2000). To more fully understand the significance of race for city police spending, researchers must also investigate the politics of city government budget-making decisions, as well as racially biased systems of city revenue generation such as the issuance of fines and fees (U.S. Department of Justice 2015; Kohler-Hausmann 2013).

Our study was not without limitations. Despite including fixed effects, the research design cannot entirely do away with omitted variable bias. The study also does not fully measure all sources of federal funding for police. Specifically, city-level data on other grant programs through DHS and the Clinton crime bill are not publicly available for analysis for our time points of interest. In addition, the study cannot fully account for simultaneity bias or reverse causality. In addition, although we distinguish between U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos, our study cannot provide insight on the degree to which racial threat is grounded in anti-immigrant versus anti-racial minority sentiment. Future research ought to determine whether racial status and immigrant status operate in distinct ways (Quillian 1995) or in an intersectional manner (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1998).

Finally, with respect to policy implications, this article identifies another important arena in which citizens and groups can take action to try and slow down the growth of the U.S. criminal justice system: city politics. The findings show that organizers and policy makers working to end mass incarceration and overpolicing may be particularly effective by organizing at the city level of government. Such movements could cite the fact that these enormous police spending increases have not had effects on crime (Worrall and Kovandzic 2007). Cities with participatory budgeting structures, where citizens can directly weigh in on how local politicians allocate resources, might be a fruitful site for such action (Fung and Wright 2003). Although policy advocacy at the federal level is more difficult for ordinary people who cannot regularly travel to and from Washington to lobby Congress, policy advocacy at the local level might help disrupt the massive growth of the criminal justice system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article was greatly improved by feedback and suggestions from Bruce Western, Chaeyoon Lim, Dan Gillion, Rashawn Ray, and René Flores, as well as audiences at Boston College and Harvard University.

NOTES

1. We discuss immigrants as a form of racial threat because the majority of immigrants in the United States are people of color. According to the Pew Research Center, just 14 percent of U.S. immigrants are white or of European national origin. Thus, it is not inaccurate to refer to our results with regard to the foreign-born as a form of racial threat. The degree to which threat is grounded in anti-immigrant versus anti-racial minority sentiment, however, is an important question that should be the object of analysis in future research.
2. We also tested for nonlinear effects, but none were statistically significant.
3. We did not include fixed effects, because the main variables of interest do not vary over time and thus get dropped from the model when conducting a fixed-effects analysis.
4. We also conducted interactions by region, but none were statistically significant.

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