

Policing the California Outercity: Drivers of Police Spending in a Changing Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the intersection of two major trends in the United States over the last forty years: a substantial investment in local law enforcement and the diversification of suburbia. While previous research on police spending has focused almost exclusively on large central cities, this study broadens this perspective to assess how these dynamics play out in outer-ring suburbs. I construct a unique panel dataset of over 200 California municipalities and find that the drivers of police spending vary across the metropolis in significant ways. Fixed-effects models that control for unobserved heterogeneity across place suggest that suburbs with growing shares of renters spend more on police. Elaborating on the concept of renter threat, I show how increases in renter households are associated with increases in police expenditures across a range of model specifications in suburbia. I point to suburban homeowner concerns about crime and property values as well as the history of racial exclusion in suburbia that is often couched in economic terms as potential explanations for these findings. Results point to the enduring role of police as a contemporary mechanism of both social control and inequality in California suburbs.

KEYWORDS: policing; suburban sociology; inequality; housing; social threat.

Over the past forty years, state and local spending on police nearly tripled to a total of \$115 billion in 2017—outpacing population growth roughly sixfold (Auxier 2020). This massive investment in policing, that originated with federal investments in the 1960s (Hinton 2016), coupled with a shift in police strategies towards more proactive and aggressive enforcement of low-level offenses, has contributed to an unprecedented expansion in both correctional control and the regulation of significant populations even without conviction or formal punishment (Fagan and Ash 2017; Kohler-Hausmann 2018). Frequent criminal justice contact results in collateral social, economic, and health-related consequences that restrict job access and opportunities, create considerable disruption for families, and limit residential mobility (Bell 2020; Comfort 2016; Pager 2003). Scholars have also increasingly called attention to how the institution of policing serves as a contemporary mechanism of residential segregation (Bell 2020; Kurwa 2020).

Existing research suggests three primary explanations for rising police budgets. Conventional wisdom and crime control theory contend that cities increase police spending in response to rising crime. A second prominent explanation, racial threat theory, contends that large or growing minority

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populations generate social, political, and/or economic threats among the White majority that lead to increases in police spending (Blalock 1973; Blumer 1958; Liska 1992). The third explanation—put forward by Beck and Goldstein (2018)—highlights the role of housing. They argue that the shift toward an economy increasingly organized around residential real estate, or “housing market capitalism,” helps explain the expansion of municipal police budgets.

While scholarship focuses almost exclusively on policing in big cities, the history of suburbia and recent shifts in suburban demographics call for more research on how these theories translate to suburban contexts. Today, there are more poor people, immigrants, and people of color residing in the suburbs than in central cities (Allard 2017; Kneebone and Berube 2014; Lacy 2016). Yet the diversification of suburbia has not eliminated racial segregation. In outer-ring suburbs in California with growing Black populations, scholars document a rise in “suburban revanchism”—a punitive assault on those deemed responsible for the “theft” of the suburbs (Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013; Kneebone and Berube 2014; Kurwa 2015). An investment in policing, fundamentally a mechanism of social control, is one response to changing suburban demographics. In fact, quality-of-life (or “broken windows”) arrests are more common and more racially disproportionate in suburbs than in cities (Beck 2019). While the number of people killed by police dropped in the nation’s largest cities since 2013, it increased in suburban and rural areas (Bauer 2020). Broader demographic shifts thus raise critical questions for sociologists, urbanists, and criminologists: Are the factors responsible for expanding municipal police budgets in the suburbs similar to those in the urban core? And, as gentrification pushes residents farther out from central cities, is there evidence of social threats in the suburban periphery?

Drawing on a unique dataset of over 200 California municipalities, I deploy a series of fixed effect models and find that determinants of police spending differ between outer-ring suburbs and cities in the urban core. Results provide limited support for racial threat theory, but cities in the suburban periphery that saw increases in renter households spend more on police—what I refer to as *renter threat*. I do not, however, find consistent evidence of renter threat among cities in the urban core. I point to suburban homeowner concerns about the perceived link between renters and crime, safety, and property values—concerns driven by an ideology of homeownership that is especially salient in the suburban periphery (Krueckeberg 1999; Rollwagen 2015)—as an explanation for this finding. Renter threat results are largely consistent across a range of model specifications, including after controlling for total revenues.

This study makes several contributions linking literatures on racial threat and policing with the growing sociological literature on suburban inequality. Specifically, I show how renter threat, a measure largely excluded from previous research on the topic, drives police spending in outer-ring suburbs. Suburban homeowners, still reeling from the threat and devastation of the Great Recession, turned to police to perform one of their extra-penal functions: to help structure and maintain geographies of opportunity and disadvantage across the metropolis. Ultimately these findings, alongside qualitative studies detailing the fraught interactions between police and Black suburbanites, especially Black renters, call into question the taken-for-granted assumption that suburbs offer low-income people of color greater opportunities and safety than the inner city (Boyles 2015; Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013; Kurwa 2020).

DETERMINANTS OF U.S. POLICE SPENDING

As the entry point to the penal chain in the United States, a large body of literature explores the drivers of policing. Two of the most prominent explanations are crime control and racial threat.

Crime control theory contends that changes in police budgets are explained largely by variations in crime rates and population size—factors that reflect demand for police services. Municipal leaders, under this framework, make budget decisions based on the demands of voters as expressed through the electoral process. Empirical evidence supporting crime control theories, however, is mixed. Koper et al. (2001) review 55 empirical studies on the determinants of police size and find that 48 percent show the expected positive association between violent crime and police strength; 45 percent find no statistically meaningful relationship, and a handful of studies find a negative relationship. Hinton (2016:25) further documents how President Johnson’s Great Society programs

began a policing policy path that has “escalated violence and imprisonment and *failed to prevent crime and improve public safety*” (emphasis added). Still, most analyses incorporate a measure of crime as a control variable.

A second explanation, racial threat theory, maintains that investments in police aim to control subordinate groups perceived as threats to the existing socio-economic and/or political arrangements that benefit those in power (Blalock 1973; Blumer 1958). Blalock (1973) argues that police serve as a tool for the White majority to maintain their dominance and control of growing minority populations that pose economic or political threats. Since Blalock’s seminal piece, numerous other studies document significant associations between increases in the percentage of nonwhite residents and police force strength (e.g., Jackson and Carroll 1981; Liska, Lawrence, and Benson 1981; Sever 2003). More recent studies call attention to the specific mechanisms underlying racial threat by incorporating survey measures of public opinion. Stults and Baumer (2007), for example, find that Black economic threat and Whites’ fear of crime explain more than a third of the relationship between the share of Black residents and police force size.

Racial residential segregation also matters. In Blalock’s original formulation, racial segregation operated to reduce minority threat by reducing intergroup contact and preserving the dominant group’s interests. His hypothesis was that more segregated places spend less on police. Recent research, however, finds the opposite: more segregated places invest more in police (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Stults and Baumer 2007). Scholars suggest that reduced contact enlarges social distance, leading to negative stereotypes and higher levels of antiblack prejudice, and ultimately, greater support for police spending. Police bureaucrats in highly segregated areas may also be more likely to fear Black residents and advocate for additional resources (Sever 2001). The mere awareness or proximity of predominantly Black neighborhoods in a jurisdiction is enough to prompt white residents to call for more police to address a perceived “crime problem” (Stults and Baumer 2007). Racial integration, on the other hand, may generate collective efficacy, rendering formal social control agents such as the police less necessary (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997).

While most studies of racial threat and policing focus on the Black or broader nonwhite population, the evidence of a “Latino threat” in research on policing is mixed. Beck and Goldstein (2018) find that cities with growing shares of young Latino men spend more on police. Unlike most studies, they operationalize Latino threat by focusing only on the share of Latino men between the ages of 16 and 29, arguing that this demographic is the typical object of White fears. Holmes and colleagues (2008), however, find that cities with larger Latino populations overall spend less on police. The authors point to class and ethnic division as a possible explanation for this finding, as police spending may be associated with a desire to control poor Latinos specifically. Still others find that percent Latino was not significantly related to police force size or police spending (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Stults and Baumer 2007).

The local and national political context may also moderate racial threat. Early studies used Latinos as a pseudo-measure of immigrants, but Vargas and McHarris (2017) employ a direct measure of immigrant threat. They emphasize the importance of both federal aid and the decade, concluding that increases in the Black population were more salient to police spending in the 1990s, whereas increases in the immigrant population matter more following 9/11 and the rise of the Department of Homeland Security. While national policy may set the stage, policing is a highly localized institution in the United States. Other studies find that racial threat was greater in the South, and it may also depend on the level of regional racial/ethnic tensions (Greenberg, Kessler, and Loftin 1985; Liska et al. 1981).

While studies identify regional variation in racial threat, few compare central cities and suburbs. In fact, the only previous investigation of police force strength that explored differences between cities and suburbs was published in 1983 using data from 1960 and 1970 when suburban demographics looked vastly different from those of today (Greenberg, Kessler, and Loftin 1983). Vargas and McHarris (2017) hint at how a focus on only the largest cities may miss the way these dynamics play out in the new suburban destinations of Black residents. They do not find evidence of a Black racial threat in the post-2000 models; but, they advise: “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” (Vargas and McHarris 2017:97). The relatively conservative

political environment of many suburban jurisdictions, the place biases that contribute to popular perceptions about who belongs in suburban communities, and their exclusionary history give reason to suspect that racial threat may be just as, if not more, powerful in outer-ring suburbs than it is in the urban core (Baldassare 1992; Boyles 2015; Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013). I, therefore, expect that determinants of police spending differ in the suburban periphery compared to the urban core (Hypothesis #1) but that racial threat (specifically the share of Black residents and Black-White segregation) is a significant predictor of police spending in both types of municipalities (Hypothesis #2).

Housing Market Capitalism and Renter Threat

A third body of research points to the influence of housing on policing. While recognizing the continued salience of racial threat, Beck and Goldstein (2018) emphasize “housing market capitalism.” They build on legal scholar Jonathan Simon’s (2009:17) work on “governing through crime”—the theory that the criminal justice system has become the lens through which we “interpret and frame all forms of social action.” Hinton (2016) also describes how the punitive shift in urban social programs following the Civil Rights Movement created an environment in which police officers provided the primary (if not only) public social services to residents. Beck and Goldstein (2018) argue that the increasing economic significance of residential real estate, particularly in the lead up to the Great Recession, heightened residents’ impulse to protect and raise property values through expanded policing. Their empirical analysis reveals that both housing price growth and mortgage originations in a city are associated with significant but modest growth in a city’s police expenditures, net of total taxes and revenues.

Despite tectonic shifts in the housing market due to the Great Recession, one social dimension relatively unexamined in the policing literature is housing tenure. Though not the focus of their study, Beck and Goldstein (2018) are one of the few to include the share of owner-occupied households in their analysis of police spending. When it reaches significance, the homeownership rate is negative, suggesting that places with more homeowners spend less on policing. Yet Simon (2010:167) argues that the movement of the American middle class to the suburbs, characterized by detached single-family homes and the anchoring of the American economy with real estate growth “helped to create a distinctive risk sensibility about violent crime as a threat to the home (and home prices) that drove the war on crime to a far greater influence than it might otherwise have had.” From this perspective, we might expect that suburbs with more homeowners spend more on police to appease this risk sensibility and to protect their home values.

Homes materially tie individuals to neighborhoods. Indeed, the home is the most valuable asset for many American families—more common than retirement accounts (McCabe 2016). Yet housing tenure is as much a social and even psychological experience as a financial one (Rollwagen 2015). Renting is marginalized in the United States, especially in suburbs, as national housing policy has consistently privileged homeownership as the bearer of social stability and the cornerstone of the American Dream (Taylor 2019). Krueckeberg (1999:25), for example, points to both colloquial and official language of renters as “tenants” and homeowners as “residents” as evidence of an ideology of homeownership that goes back to colonial times: “The suggestion of the court is that tenants do not have the character of residents. They have the character of nonresidents. They do not belong.” Construction of new rental units, particularly affordable housing, is often the subject of fervent opposition by homeowners in both cities and suburbs (Massey et al. 2013). Opponents cite concerns about crime, poverty, parking, and, ultimately, the decreased value of their homes. Importantly, unlike racial threat, class and renter threat is felt similarly by White, Black, Asian, and Latino homeowners. Indeed, concerns of encroaching renters and the perceived threat of crime and instability that they bring are well documented among Black homeowners (Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013; Rosen 2020). These narratives contribute to the construction of renters as an economic, social, and even moral threat.

Read together, these arguments suggest an entanglement between race, suburban location, tenure, and policing that existing literature has largely overlooked. If suburban homeowners view renters as a threat, then increases in the share of renters (relative to homeowners) could lead to greater support for police spending. Though not common in policing research, urban scholars point to evidence of a renter threat in other domains. In a city-level analysis of racial zoning laws in first half of the twentieth century, Trounstein (2018) finds that cities with more renters were more likely to adopt racial zoning

ordinances. Place stratification theory also suggests that desires to preserve advantage in the hierarchy of places may activate social control responses among White homeowners (Alba and Logan 1993; Faber 2020; Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015).

I identify at least three potential pathways whereby an increase in renters leads to greater police spending. First, homeowners may advocate for expanded policing in response to a rise in the share of renters because increased class diversity of a neighborhood may trigger a fear of an impending property value decline. Beck and Goldstein (2018) mention how police departments welcomed these new responsibilities, even using property values as performance metrics. Second, homeowners may associate a rise in renters with an increase in criminal activity, which may also negatively impact home values. A third possible pathway adds a node: homeowners may believe that an increase in renters leads to an increase in crime and, therefore, a fear of personal victimization which also translates into greater demands for police protection. In each of these examples, an increase in the share of renter households leads to support for increased police spending. I, therefore, anticipate that renter threat is a key driver of police spending in California municipalities in the suburban periphery, even after controlling for racial threat (Hypothesis #3).

A final related explanation for growing police budgets is class-based segregation, which is not included in extant research on policing. The closest exceptions are a handful of studies that include income inequality as an independent variable, though this measure does not necessarily capture segregation. While neighborhood-level racial segregation declined steadily since 1970, class segregation increased (Massey, Rothwell, and Domina 2009; Trounstein 2018). Several measures of class segregation exist, but I follow Trounstein's (2018) focus on renter segregation, which more directly relates to the concept of renter threat and follows a similar trend as wealth segregation. Like the case of early zoning adoption, homeowners in cities separated into more class- and tenure-distinct neighborhoods, especially those in the suburban periphery, may feel more threatened and eager to protect their neighborhoods (and home values) via increased policing than those in more integrated cities.

Alternatively, reductions in renter segregation may be associated with increases in police spending if it signifies boundary encroachment. In the Bay Area outer-ring suburb of Antioch, the main catalyst of suburban backlash was not the penetration of the city's boundaries overall but of specific neighborhoods within the city that had been previously out of reach for low-income renters (Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013). The breach of intrasuburban boundaries that "traditionally separated the 'deserving' middle class from the 'undeserving' poor" (Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013:38) prompted the backlash. Importantly, an infringement of cleanly defined boundaries presupposes the existence of a high level of renter segregation. Following this reasoning, I suspect that renter segregation is positively associated with police spending in California suburbs (Hypothesis #4).

Intersection of Race and Class Threats in California

I explore the links between racial threat, renter threat, and police spending through an empirical analysis of cities and suburbs in California, which is home to nearly 40 million people. Latinos comprise the single largest race/ethnic group in the state (39 percent), and there is a growing and diverse population of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. African Americans make up just five percent of the state's population (compared with 12 percent nationwide), but there have been significant shifts over the last three decades: around 275,000 Black Californians left high-cost coastal cities, and a substantial share relocated to a subset of inland suburbs (Hepler 2020). Scholars term this outward migration and concentration "resegregation": while historic patterns of racial residential segregation persist in the urban core and racial integration was never achieved, new patterns of racial and class segregation have emerged in the outer-ring suburbs to which low-income people of color moved (Samara 2016; Schafran 2018; Verma et al. 2019). While I focus on California and deploy a classification schema specific to Black residential location in the state, Black suburbanization trends are well documented across the country. A recent analysis found over 400 majority-Black suburbs in the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas in 2018 (Douds, Lewis-McCoy, and Johnson 2021). The current study adds to conventional understandings about the maintenance of inequality in these new suburban destinations beyond land use policies.

The outward migration of Black Californians was driven in part by an increase in housing supply throughout the early 2000s that was disproportionately located in the suburban fringes of the state's major metropolitan areas where land was less expensive and more plentiful. Householders of color, many of whom were previously excluded from suburban homeownership opportunities throughout the twentieth century due to redlining, racially restrictive covenants, racial steering by real estate agents, and White vigilante violence (Jackson 1987; Rothstein 2017; Taylor 2019), took advantage of this relatively affordable housing. While some scholars document Black suburbanization to newer “post-civil rights suburbs” in “less racially marked” farmland and open space areas as a symbol of integration and greater racial equity (Pfeiffer 2016:800), Taylor (2019) terms this process “predatory inclusion,” as new practices by lending institutions that were intended to facilitate inclusion reinforced existing patterns of inequality and exploitation. Black and Latino borrowers in inland California suburbs were disproportionately targeted by predatory lenders and experienced higher rates of foreclosure as a result (Faber 2013; Reid et al. 2017; Schafran 2018). In fact, the epicenters of the foreclosure crisis in California were precisely those outer-ring suburbs where Black families bought homes in large numbers—erasing previous gains in Black homeownership (Hepler 2020; Pfeiffer 2012; Schafran 2013).

A skeptic may rightfully object that increases in the number of renters are not perceptible to existing homeowners in the same way that increases in Black or Latino residents may be. The rise in suburban renters was not simply the result of contentious new multifamily construction. It was also driven by the foreclosure crisis, which was so pervasive in some suburbs that it was all but impossible to ignore. Nearly three-fourths of subprime loans and foreclosures were in suburban communities (Kneebone 2017). Institutional investors capitalized on foreclosed single-family homes and turned many into rental properties (Colburn, Walter, and Pfeiffer 2020). In fact, single-family rentals comprise the fastest growing segment of the housing market today (Reid, Sanchez-Moyano, and Galante 2018). Many suburban homeowners were made aware of these shifts through their own observations of the changes in their neighborhoods. Suburban homeowner concerns about changing demographics surfaced in local newspapers throughout the 2000s even if they spoke about them in colorblind terms. In places with growing Black populations, for example, concerns were particularly fixed on “Section 8”—a policy used as a racial dog whistle for Black households that allows residents to express their discontent with growing Black populations without explicitly stating racial animus. But perhaps the most illuminating examples of renter threat (and its potential interaction with racial threat) come from a set of policies and practices targeting renters in suburban communities that led me to this research question.

Case studies of outer-ring California suburbs that experienced disproportionate increases in the share of both Black residents and renters suggest that municipalities responded to these changes with punitive policies that attempted to restrict Black people, particularly Black renters, from locating in their city. During a 2008 city council meeting in a suburb over 70 miles north of Los Angeles, the mayor publicly declared that it was time to “go to war” against Section 8 (Kurwa 2015). For three years, Lancaster partnered with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, with whom they contract for police services, on an enforcement program that directed additional investigatory power toward *perceived* Section 8 households (Kneebone and Berube 2014; Kurwa 2015). Following a similar rise in Housing Choice voucher holders in Antioch, an outer-ring Bay Area suburb, the police department set up a Community Action Team with the purpose of surveilling, controlling, and criminalizing voucher holders (Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013). The police are one of the institutional mechanisms of exclusion identified by Kirkpatrick and Gallagher (2013) to construct and maintain suburban boundaries and opportunities. Both cases ended in class action lawsuits that the cities eventually settled.

The targeting, however, does not end with voucher holders and includes Black and Latino renters more broadly. In December 2022, the sheriff’s department and the City of Hesperia, a majority Latino suburb northeast of Los Angeles with an all-White city council, settled a federal civil rights lawsuit for nearly \$1 million (Dillon and Poston 2022). The lawsuit alleged that the city and sheriff’s department enacted a mandatory “crime-free” rental housing ordinance to address a perceived “demographical problem”: the growing population of Black and Latino renters in city (U.S. Department of Justice 2019). During a hearing on the ordinance, the city council was especially fixated on the places where the newcomers were allegedly coming from, including parts of Los Angeles with the large Black

populations, even as city staff shared data showing that most incoming residents moved from other parts of San Bernardino County. In each of these three cases, suburbs targeted Black renters specifically, which leads to my final hypothesis: the interaction of percent Black and percent renter is significantly associated with police spending in California suburbs (Hypothesis #5).

DATA AND METHODS

To test these hypotheses, I constructed a panel dataset of California municipalities from seven sources: the California State Controller's Office, the California Local Government Finance Almanac, the California Secretary of State's Elections Division, the U.S. decennial census and the American Community Survey, Zillow, Inc., and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports. Annual data were compiled for California municipalities located within the state's metropolitan areas from 2000 to 2018 to create a statewide balanced panel dataset of 282 cities with complete covariate information for all years between 2000 and 2018, producing a sample of 5,358 city-years. Municipal revenue data were available only for cities beginning in 2003, so models that control for total revenues are restricted to 2003 to 2018.

The statewide sample was divided into the coastal urban core and the suburban periphery, comprised of 104 and 112 cities, respectively. Cities classified as part of the coastal urban core (shown in blue on [Figure 1](#)) include the namesake of major metropolitan areas near the coast (e.g., Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland) as well as any cities within 10 miles of the central city's city hall (black dots on the map). If part of a city's boundary fell within this 10-mile buffer, the city was included. The coastal urban core sample thus contains several inner-ring suburbs such as Berkeley, West Hollywood, and Glendale. The suburban periphery sample (shown in red on the map below), on the other hand, includes suburbs in metropolitan areas at least 20 miles from the coastal urban core (e.g., Santa Clarita, Fairfield, and Fontana), places far removed from the core, inner-ring suburbs, and even some richer edge cities. Cities shown in gray are second-ring suburbs and edge cities—those located between 10 and 20 miles from the urban core—and are excluded from the analysis to highlight the distinctions between the urban core and suburban periphery. Cities outside of the state's major metropolitan areas were also excluded because suburbs are typically defined as part of metropolitan areas.

This classification of “suburb” and “urban core” differs from conventional approaches and is responsive to the political economy of California. The Census Bureau does not provide a standard definition of suburbs, and the Office of Management and Budget identifies only metropolitan areas and principal cities. As a result, there is no consistent definition of “suburb” across the academic literature ([Forsyth 2012](#)). Perhaps the most common way scholars define suburbs is what [Airgood-Obyrcki and Rieger \(2019\)](#) refer to as “census-convenient.” This definition classifies all places that fall within metropolitan areas but are not central cities as suburban. Another way that scholars define suburbs relates to typologies of suburban places, which typically highlight similarities and differences within suburbs as they relate to their built form, history, or location within the region ([Airgood-Obyrcki and Rieger 2019](#)). [Forsyth \(2012\)](#) identifies five key dimensions for defining suburbs from the physical to transportation or activity-based functions, and sociocultural characteristics. The way I operationalize suburbs, given my focus on the suburban periphery, relates most closely to studies that define suburbs based on their location within the metropolitan area and specifically, their distance from the urban core. While somewhat unconventional, my classification schema heeds [Forsyth's \(2012\)](#) recommendation that scholars better distinguish between types of suburbs by always qualifying them with an adjective.

I build directly on [Schafran's \(2018\)](#) typology of the San Francisco Bay Area and apply it to the entire state. [Schafran \(2018\)](#) divides the Bay Area mega-region (which includes separate inland metropolitan areas) into four zones based on real estate sales data over a 20-year period. Zone 1 is characterized as the increasingly bourgeois West/coastal Bay Area, what I refer to as the “coastal urban core.” A similar dynamic plays out in the Western/coastal Los Angeles and Orange County region. As you move farther away from this core, or further inland in the California context, you pass through Zone 2 (the industrial garden, including cities such as Commerce), Zone 3 (“edge cities” such as Monrovia or Yorba Linda), and finally Zone 4 (the periphery of fastest-growing communities). Given gentrification and displacement of poor people of color in the urban core, [Schafran \(2018:46\)](#) asserts that “Zone 4 replaces Zone 1 as the second most important center of African American life, and

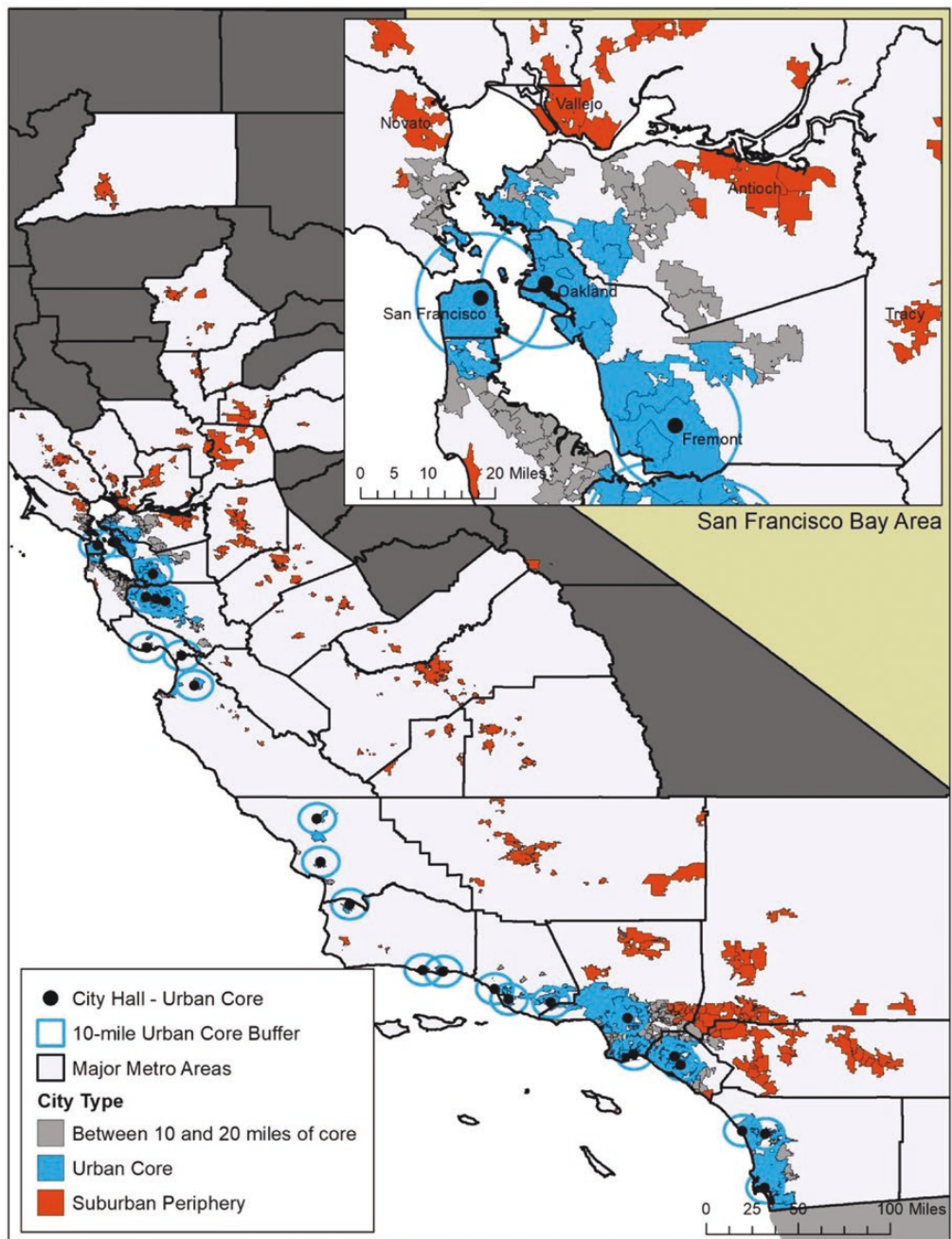


Figure 1. Coastal Urban Core and Suburban Periphery Classifications.

Zone 4 will soon surpass all other zones as the center of Latinx life.” This article compares how drivers of police spending vary between Zone 1 (the [coastal] urban core) and Zone 4 (the suburban periphery). In the California context, many of these suburbs are also inland (east of the Pacific Ocean). This classification schema has clear limitations in terms of portability to other states and contexts, but I opt to trade generalizability for internal validity. Research in other states should engage critically with the history, politics, and spatial organization of those places.

California’s cultural and economic divides offer a prime context to study the influence of demographic change and racial threat because of the range of demographic and political environments—including

both conservative and liberal jurisdictions as well as densely populated urban environments and more rural communities. Because of the chasm between coastal and inland California, I classify inland “central cities” as part of the suburban periphery rather than the urban core. These inland cities are significantly more affordable, and as a result, have incorporated a growing number of residents priced out of the coastal urban core. To ensure that these inland California “central cities,” such as Fresno, Sacramento, and Riverside, do not drive the suburban results, I run robustness checks on my classification schema, including removing inland principal cities from the suburban periphery sample.

Outcome Measure: Police Spending

The outcome measure of interest is inflation-adjusted municipal police spending per 1,000 people in logarithm form. Annual data are drawn from the California State Controller’s Office and the California Local Government Finance Almanac from 2000 to 2018. While these sources report total expenditures on police protection for a given city, they do not specify the type of spending (e.g., personnel, equipment, etc.). Some California cities, even relatively large and older cities like Victorville and Palmdale, continue to contract out law enforcement services with the county sheriff’s department. While contract cities do not exert the same control over police expenditures as those with their own police force (for example, the county sets the law enforcement officer pay rate rather than the city), the city must ultimately reach an agreement with the county on how much to pay for law enforcement services. Importantly, by excluding the handful of cities that disbanded their police force during the study period from the analysis, fixed effects models control for differences between contract cities and cities with their own police force because they are time-invariant characteristics (Allison 2009).

The analysis is distinct from previous studies of racial threat that use the number of police employees or sworn officers as the primary dependent variable. I use overall police spending, because some cities may reduce the number of sworn officers while overall police spending continues to climb because police departments are investing in new technologies, vehicles, or other equipment. Average police officer and sheriff’s deputy pay also varies across the state and total police expenditures provide a better estimate of the overall investment in police services.

Explanatory Variables

I measure racial, immigrant, and renter threat as the percent Black, percent Latino, percent foreign-born, and percent renter of each city’s total population (or occupied households). All demographic data come from the decennial census and American Community Survey. Following previous studies, I linearly interpolated Census data from the 2000 Census to the 2005 American Community Survey five-year estimates to have demographic data for all years from 2000 to 2018. I also take the quadratic of each of these terms to account for the inverted U-shape of racial threat documented in earlier research (e.g., Jackson and Carroll 1981; Sever 2001; Stults and Baumer 2007). This curvilinear relationship suggests that racial threat increases as the percent of the minority group increases, but at a decelerating rate until it reaches a “tipping point” whereby the relationship turns negative because the group achieves political power and is no longer perceived as a threat.

I also used census block group-level data to construct racial and renter segregation measures for each city. To capture data on small- and medium-sized cities, I opted to use block group data rather than the more commonly used census tract data. Segregation measures, however, are sensitive to scale (Reardon et al. 2008). I computed the Black-White, Latino-White, and renter-homeowner segregation measures using the index of dissimilarity, the most common measure of segregation in the literature—though not without its critics (Massey and Denton 1988; Reardon et al. 2008). This index is calculated based on the following formula: $\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(t_i | p_i - P|)}{2TP(1-P)}$, where t_i is the total population of block group i , p_i is the ratio of block group i ’s population that is Black, P is the ratio of the city’s population that is Black, and T is the total population of the city. In words, it reflects the percentage of one group that would have to move across neighborhoods to be distributed the same way as the second group.

Control Variables

In all models, I include measures of alternative explanations. Drawing on data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports, I control for the violent crime rate as well as total population and population density. I

also control for the poverty rate. It is plausible that suburban homeowners feel threatened not by people of color or renters but by poverty. While scholars such as Hinton (2016) point out that crime control is the one domestic policy issue where Democrats and Republicans are most thoroughly aligned, I control for the share of votes for the Republican presidential candidate in the most recent president election because of Republicans' embrace of a law-and-order agenda and disproportionate police union support. This also ensures that any differences between the urban core and suburbs are not driven mainly by differences in partisanship. In line with housing market capitalism perspectives, I also control for home values using the Zillow Home Value Index. Finally, I control for the total revenues of a given municipality as this captures their budgetary constraints. All dollar values were adjusted for inflation.

Model Specification

I estimate a series of fixed effects regression models predicting inflation-adjusted police spending per 1,000 residents in California cities and suburbs from 2000 to 2018. All independent variables were lagged one year relative to the dependent variable to account for the fact that budgets are generally approved in the year prior (for example, police spending in 2018 is examined in relation to the independent variables of 2017). I specify the following regression model:

$$y_{it} = \beta_1(Black_{(it-1)}) + \beta_2(Black_{(it-1)})^2 + \beta_3(Latino_{(it-1)}) + \beta_4(Latino_{(it-1)})^2 \\ + \beta_5(Immig_{(it-1)}) \\ + \beta_6(Immig_{(it-1)})^2 + \beta_7(Renter_{(it-1)}) + \beta_8(Renter_{(it-1)})^2 + \beta_9(Black * Renter_{(it-1)}) \\ + \beta_{10}(Black * Renter_{(it-1)})^2 + \beta_{11}(RenterSeg_{(it-1)}) + \beta_{12}(BlackSeg_{(it-1)}) \\ + \beta_{13}(LatinoSeg_{(it-1)}) \\ + \alpha_1(Controls_{(it-1)}) + v_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where y_{it} is the dependent variable (the log of municipal spending on police per 1,000 residents in municipality i in year t); Black, Latino, and Immig are time-lagged measure of the Black, Latino, and immigrant shares of the population; renter is a time-lagged measure of the share of renter-occupied households; Black*renter threat is the time-lagged interaction term of percent Black and percent renter; RenterSeg, BlackSeg, and LatinoSeg are time-lagged measures of the segregation of renter households relative to homeowner households, Black residents relative to Whites, and Latinos relative to Whites; controls is a vector of time-lagged covariates; v_i is a city-specific fixed effect; λ_t is a year fixed effect, and ε_{it} is the idiosyncratic error.

Descriptive Statistics

The average inflation-adjusted police spending per 1,000 residents among California cities in my sample is \$327,000. While per capita police spending is higher on average in the urban core (\$366,200) than in the suburban periphery (\$270,000), increases in police spending have been modestly higher in California suburbs. Police spending per 1,000 residents ranged from \$13,600 in the city of Hawaiian Gardens to over \$2.2 million in Beverly Hills (both located in Los Angeles County). But not all variation is cross-sectional. Within-city heterogeneity is also evident: during the 19-year study period, inflation-adjusted police spending per 1,000 residents ranged from \$211,300 to \$441,600 in the city of Chula Vista and from \$139,300 to \$433,000 in the city of Delano.

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics across the two samples. Notably, the percentage of Latino residents is higher in the suburban periphery than the urban core, while the percentage of immigrants is lower. Average home prices in the urban core are more than double those in the suburban periphery while the poverty rate is lower. The violent crime rate is higher in the suburban periphery, contesting popular narratives of urban crime. The average share of renter-occupied households is six percentage points higher in the urban core than in the suburban periphery, while the share of Republican voters is more than 10 percentage points higher in the suburban periphery. Differences between the urban core and suburban periphery sample are statistically significant for all variables except Black-White segregation.

RESULTS

Results support my first hypothesis that determinants of police spending are different in the suburban periphery compared with the coastal urban core, especially when it comes to renter threat and the

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Samples

Variable	Urban Core N=1,976 city-years		Suburban Periphery N=2,128 city-years	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Police Spending per 1,000*	\$366,207	\$197,881	\$269,861	\$93,064
Percent renter*	45%	15%	39%	10%
Poverty Rate*	12%	7%	16%	7%
Percent Black*	5%	7%	6%	5%
Percent Latino*	32%	25%	40%	21%
Percent immigrant*	31%	12%	21%	9%
Total Population*	127,833	380,167	71,539	79,723
Population Density*	6,886	4,097	3,251	1,595
Black-white Segregation	0.27	0.15	0.27	0.14
Latino-white Segregation*	0.29	0.12	0.27	0.10
Renter Segregation*	0.39	0.09	0.36	0.09
Violent Crime Rate*	391	311	450	282
Median Household Income*	\$71,073	\$29,296	\$54,155	\$17,188
Percent Republican Votes*	33%	15%	45%	14%
Zillow Housing Value Index*	\$784,867	\$496,253	\$356,599	\$188,305
Total Revenue*	\$366,232,857	\$1,634,940,977	\$128,474,229	\$180,924,582

Note: * denotes statistical significance in the difference between the two samples at the $p < 0.05$ level.

interaction between racial and renter threats. Column one of [Table 2](#) displays the fixed effect regression results for the urban core, column two shows the results for the suburban periphery, and column three combines both samples into a single model that tests the difference in the coefficients between them. In both the urban core and suburban periphery, the only significant racial threat variable (other than a quadratic term) is Black-White segregation: as segregation increases, police spending increases, providing some support for Hypothesis #2. Importantly, none of the other racial threat coefficients reach significance. The percentage of Black residents, while in the predicted direction, is not significant at conventional levels. Interestingly, I also do not find evidence of a Latino or immigrant threat, even as the vast majority of municipalities in the suburban periphery sample saw increases in the Latino population.

None of the renter threat variables reach significance in the urban core, but I find evidence of a renter threat in suburbia consistent with Hypothesis #3. The significance of the percent renter quadratic term suggests that police spending increases in suburbs as the share of renters increases but at a declining rate until roughly 45 percent renter when the curve reaches its maximum and starts to decline. As a suburb nears majority renter, renter households are either no longer perceived as a threat or they gain enough political power to stave off social control responses. I do not, however, find evidence to support my fourth hypothesis: renter segregation is not significant. The third column of [Table 2](#) shows that the differences in the renter threat coefficients are statistically significant between the two samples.

Even though percent Black is not significant in the suburban periphery in these models, an interaction exists between racial and renter threat in line with Hypothesis #5. Renter threat is most pronounced in suburbs with few Black residents. As illustrated in [Figure 2](#), in a hypothetical suburb with no Black residents, predicted spending on police increases exponentially as the share of renters increases but at a declining rate until roughly 50 percent renter. Yet this renter threat curve flattens as the share of Black residents increases. The solid line shows a suburb where 14 percent of residents are Black, or the 90th percentile of the distribution in the suburban periphery sample. In other words, the relationship between the share of renters and police spending weakens as the proportion of the Black population increases. Most suburbs with growing Black populations also saw increases in the share of renter households, though the reverse is not true. This interaction also appears unique to the suburban periphery as it fails to reach significance in the urban core model.

Table 2. Urban Core and Suburban Periphery Regression Results, 2000–2018

	Dependent variable:		
	Police Spending per 1,000 Residents (logged)		
	Urban Core	Suburban Periphery	Difference
Percent Black	-2.329 (2.939)	6.019 (3.209)	9.700* (4.423)
Percent Black (squared)	0.339 (3.841)	-10.947 (8.883)	-12.488 (9.63)
Percent Latino	0.512 (0.607)	0.018 (0.877)	-0.642 (0.903)
Percent Latino (squared)	-1.48* (0.647)	0.173 (0.737)	1.919* (0.930)
Percent Immigrant	0.211 (1.113)	0.641 (1.018)	0.959 (1.505)
Percent Immigrant (squared)	0.250 (1.525)	-1.143 (1.41)	-1.808 (2.109)
Poverty Rate	0.319 (0.509)	-0.306 (0.378)	-0.658 (0.642)
Percent Renter	-1.286 (0.800)	2.917* (1.261)	3.760* (1.512)
Percent Renter (squared)	1.443 (1.049)	-3.208* (1.356)	-4.611** (1.747)
Renter Segregation	-0.036 (0.166)	0.236 (0.203)	0.423 (0.253)
Black-White Segregation	0.156** (0.051)	0.168* (0.085)	0.169 (0.094)
Latino-White Segregation	-0.212 (0.264)	0.205 (0.249)	0.325 (0.349)
Violent Crime Rate [†]	-0.003 (0.021)	0.032* (0.016)	0.032 (0.025)
Total Population [†]	-0.817** (0.122)	-0.152 (0.145)	0.663** (0.174)
Population Density [†]	-0.084 (0.071)	-0.087 (0.126)	-0.033 (0.142)
Percent Republican Votes	0.156 (0.190)	-0.613 (0.359)	-0.246 (0.266)
Zillow Housing Values [†]	-0.010 (0.075)	0.077 (0.052)	0.099* (0.041)
Percent Black x Percent Renter	-0.174 (6.088)	-16.51* (8.188)	-18.719 (10.369)
Percent Black x Percent Renter (squared)	23.964 (16.636)	96.766 (52.498)	77.036 (54.832)
City-years	1872	2016	3888

* p<0.05; **p<0.01.
Note: Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors clustered at the city-level.
[†] Denotes that the covariate was logged.

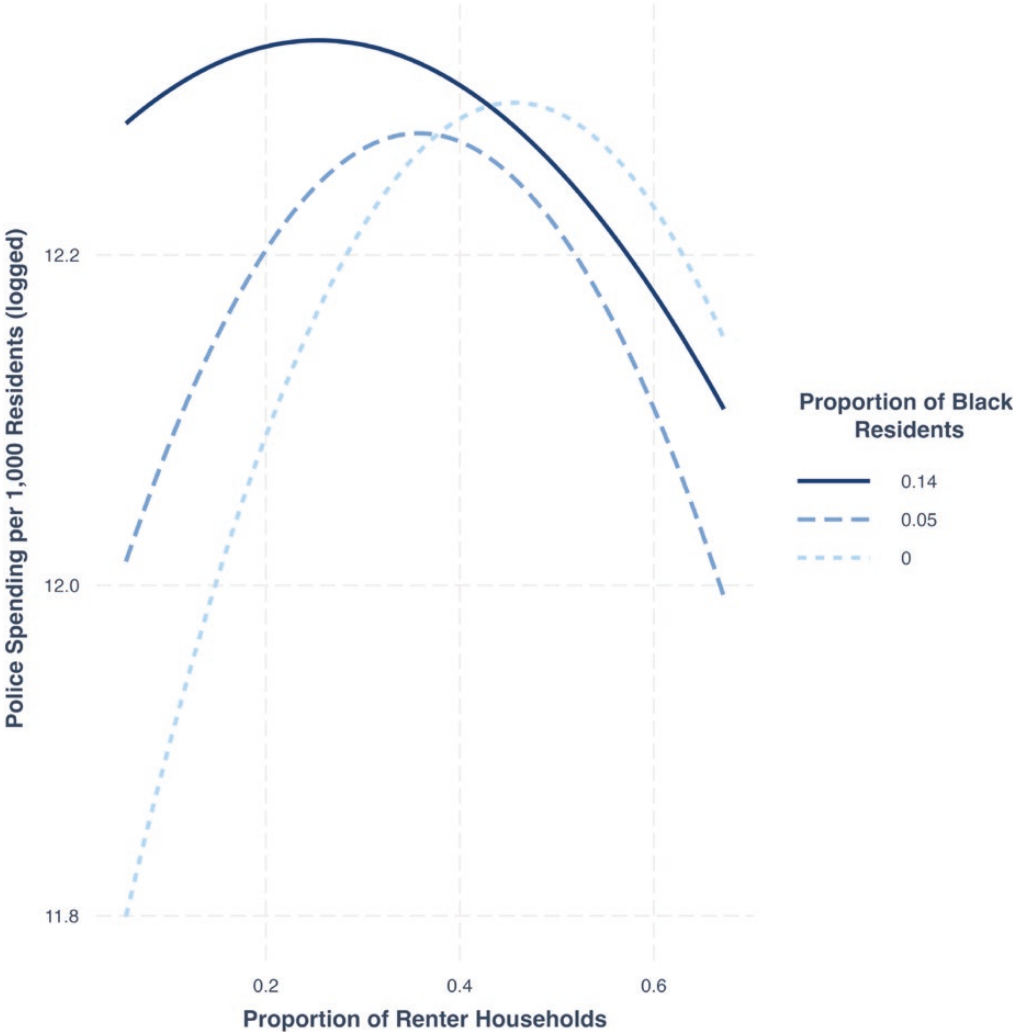


Figure 2. Interaction between Renter and Racial Threat in California Suburbs.

Controlling for Total Revenues and Removing Inland Central Cities

I then rerun the models adding total revenues. Because these data are available for cities beginning only in 2003, the sample is slightly smaller. I also remove total population because it is highly correlated with total revenues ($r=0.98$ in the urban core). A city’s total revenues exert an outsized influence on how much they can devote to policing. While most cities opt to cut into social programs rather than police budgets, the greater the overall funding coming into the city, the more resources the city has to devote to law enforcement. Results from these models are shown in the first two columns of Table 3. In models not shown, I add a control for federal transfers because scholars such as Hinton (2016) and Vargas and McHarris (2017) document the important role federal investment plays in local spending on police. But federal transfers are highly correlated with total revenues and results do not differ substantively.

I then rerun the suburban periphery models excluding all inland “central cities” because of my unconventional classification of the suburban periphery. This removes large inland cities like Fresno, Sacramento, and Stockton and smaller ones such as Corcoran and El Centro from the suburban sample. Excluding them ensures that results are not driven disproportionately by these inland “central cities.”

After controlling for total revenues, differences between the two samples remain: the Republican share of the electorate is significant and positive in the urban core but not the suburban periphery.

Table 3. Regression Models Adjusting for Total Revenues and Restricting Suburban Sample, 2003–2018

	Dependent variable:		
	Police Spending per 1,000 Residents (logged)		
	Adding Total Revenues		Removing Inland “Central City” Suburbs
	Urban Core	Suburban Periphery	Suburban Periphery
Percent Black	2.504 (2.899)	3.274 (3.598)	5.160 (3.930)
Percent Black (squared)	-15.389** (5.882)	-5.581 (10.318)	-12.360 (11.252)
Percent Latino	0.281 (0.603)	0.810 (0.796)	0.957 (0.905)
Percent Latino (squared)	-1.657 (0.831)	-0.695 (0.682)	-0.866 (0.804)
Percent Immigrant	-0.437 (1.238)	-0.710 (1.107)	-0.779 (1.198)
Percent Immigrant (squared)	0.792 (1.817)	0.450 (1.68)	0.629 (1.757)
Poverty Rate	0.675 (0.492)	-0.189 (0.373)	-0.113 (0.401)
Percent Renter	-0.168 (0.839)	2.241 (1.216)	2.769* (1.305)
Percent Renter (squared)	0.330 (1.108)	-2.927* (1.315)	-3.809** (1.41)
Renter Segregation	0.388* (0.182)	0.407 (0.219)	0.309 (0.234)
Black-White Segregation	0.125 (0.07)	0.071 (0.092)	0.085 (0.096)
Latino-White Segregation	-0.016 (0.259)	0.358 (0.255)	0.399 (0.278)
Violent Crime Rate [†]	-0.029 (0.025)	0.038* (0.018)	0.046* (0.019)
Population Density [†]	-0.367* (0.148)	-0.230** (0.088)	-0.257** (0.088)
Zillow Housing Values [†]	-0.018 (0.086)	0.104 (0.062)	0.071 (0.075)
Percent Republican Votes	0.47* (0.201)	-0.720 (0.400)	-0.741 (0.457)
Total Revenues [†]	0.009 (0.033)	0.109** (0.028)	0.125** (0.029)
Percent Black x Percent Renter	-8.974 (6.391)	-8.552 (8.808)	-13.562 (9.661)
Percent Black x Percent Renter (squared)	62.907 (28.242)	72.595 (55.294)	111.447 (61.75)
City-years	1560	1680	1380

* p<0.05; **p<0.01.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors clustered at the city-level.

[†] Denotes that the covariate was logged.

Interestingly, none of the racial threat variables attain significance in either sample. In the urban core, the renter segregation coefficient is significant. As segregation between renters and homeowners increases among cities in the urban core, per capita police spending rises. In the suburban periphery, the renter threat coefficients are in the predicted direction, but only the quadratic term is significant at conventional levels. The third column of [Table 3](#) shows results from the suburban periphery after excluding inland “central cities.” In these models, I do find evidence of renter threat (Hypothesis #3). As the share of renters increases in a suburb from zero, police spending is projected to increase exponentially (but at a declining rate) until the renter threat curve reaches its maximum of 36 percent renter. I do not, however, find support for Hypothesis #4 (renter segregation) or Hypothesis #5 (an interaction between renter threat and racial threat).

These results further support a relationship between renter threat and police spending. In the urban core, I find that the places where renters became more segregated from homeowners spend more on police. This relationship, however, appears to be driven largely by more exclusive and whiter inner-ring suburbs like Burbank and Seal Beach—those cities close to the urban core where renters make up a smaller share of total households. In models run only on the Office of Management and Budget-defined central cities (not shown but available by request), renter segregation is not significant. Among places in the suburban periphery, renter threat remains even after controlling for total revenues. In the city of Tracy, a distant suburb of San Francisco, the share of renters grew from 28 percent in 2000 to 37 percent in 2018. Over the same period, police spending per 1,000 residents grew by 72 percent to \$295,000 (up from \$172,000 in 2000). Antioch saw a double-digit increase in the share of renter households and police spending per capita grew by 54 percent. While the interaction terms between percent renter and percent Black were not significant in these final models, many of the suburbs with largest increases in Black residents were the same as those with the largest increases in renters. Homeowners in rapidly growing suburbs, particularly those with relatively few renters, may support additional police spending due to a desire to protect their neighborhoods from encroachment and property value declines.

DISCUSSION

Drawing on a newly assembled panel dataset of over 200 California municipalities from 2000 to 2018, this article analyzed and contrasted the determinants of police spending in the coastal urban core compared to the suburban periphery. In a context of the “penal turn” of the post-civil rights United States, the suburbanization of poor people and people of color, and the Great Recession and foreclosure crisis that turned many suburban borrowers into renters, I systematically assess whether these shifts led to social control responses in suburban California. My conclusions stem from two main findings.

First, the determinants of police spending in California differ in important ways across the metropolis. I find more consistent evidence of crime control theory, for example, in the suburban periphery than in the urban core. Even though average crime rates are higher in the suburban sample, there is reason to suspect that suburban voters may be more sensitive to increases in crime and subsequently more demanding of greater investment in law enforcement. Importantly, voter perceptions of crime are often out of step with reported crime rates, and crime rates themselves are subjective measures created by the very agencies tasked to ameliorate crime. Still, this finding underscores the value of studying suburbs in their own right as dynamics and patterns identified in urban research will not necessarily map onto suburban locales.

Yet police do more than simply respond to crime. They also reinforce and maintain social and geographical boundaries ([Bell 2020](#)). Given extensive empirical evidence of racial threat theory across the United States, I expected to find racial threat operating in both cities and suburbs. Ultimately, I did not find evidence of my second hypothesis as neither percent Black, percent Latino, nor percent immigrant reaches significance in any of the models and Black-White segregation is significant only in the models that do not control for total revenues. I focused on the suburban periphery because of the shifts in the Black population in California, but unlike other states, there are no majority-Black suburbs. The relatively small share of Black residents in California may weaken the statistical power of conventional measures of racial threat, which may be more prominent in states with larger

Black populations. California does have a large Latino population, but this study did not disaggregate Latinos by class or nativity. Future studies should test for evidence of the [Holmes et al. \(2008\)](#) proposition that racial threat is driven by desires to control poor Latinos specifically.

Second, my results suggest that renter threat is the more consistent dynamic playing out in California suburbs. Across most models, I find evidence of my third hypothesis: as the share of renters increases in outer-ring suburbs, so does police spending, all else equal. A few mechanisms likely underpin the relationship between increasing renter households and police spending. First, the long held and popular belief about renters in the United States is that they hurt property values. The perception is that renters, especially rental housing, increases congestion, complicates parking, and leads to greater resident turnover, all of which depress surrounding home values. Many homeowners, therefore, view an influx of renters as a threat to their home values. Some homeowners may also associate a rise in renter households with increased criminal activity. [Simon \(2010\)](#) even credits the suburbanization of the middle class and the binding of the U.S. economy to real estate growth for creating a distinctive “risk sensibility” about violent crime that propelled the war on crime. Yet influencing property values requires collective action, so threats of rising crime or depressing home values may lead homeowners to advocate for greater police spending. Indeed, research shows that homeowners are more civically engaged than renters, but they often participate in politics as a way to protect their property values, further entrenching segregation and social exclusion ([McCabe 2016](#)).

Renter threat also appears somewhat unique to outer-ring suburbs. Research suggests that the more homeownership serves as a primary symbol of place identity, the more threatened homeowners will be by increases in the share of renters ([Kremer 2010](#)). The history of suburbia and the interplay between homeownership, suburbs, and the American Dream give reason to believe that homeownership is a more fundamental symbol of suburban rather than urban identity. Cities, on the other hand, may be more tolerant of renters for two key reasons. First, renters and rental housing have long been part of the urban imaginary. Many central cities and inner-ring suburbs are made up primarily of renter households. And second, recent increases in urban renters is driven more by high-income “renters-by-choice” ([Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University 2020](#)) who are not likely to illicit the same threat response to existing homeowners. In fact, these higher-income renters are the very gentrifiers contributing to rising housing costs.

The mechanism driving renter threat may be a concern over property values, rising crime, anti-Black bias, anti-poor bias, or some combination of these factors, and this paper sought to illuminate and disentangle the effects of both race and class. However, I find limited support for my final hypothesis of an interaction between racial threat and renter threat. In models that omit total revenues, renter threat is most pronounced in suburbs with no Black residents, but this relationship weakens as the share of Black residents increases. Measuring the specific mechanisms behind renter threat in the suburbs is beyond the scope of this analysis but is important for understanding these processes. In some places, for example, renter threat may serve solely as a dog whistle for racial threat or, more specifically, anti-Black bias. This is most probable in smaller, predominantly white suburbs. In other cities, it may serve as a form of class-based exclusion within racial/ethnic groups. The primary spokesperson and several leaders of the anti-Section 8 movement in Antioch, for example, were middle-class Black homeowners ([Kirkpatrick and Gallagher 2013](#)). The foreclosure crisis may have further exacerbated sentiments of renter threat, particularly in the Black and Latino communities that were hardest hit. Identifying these mechanisms is especially timely as the lasting economic influence of the pandemic and rising real estate prices continue to threaten housing security across the country.

While this analysis shows that suburbs with growing renter populations devoted additional money to police, I am not able to discern how police departments spent this money. It is possible that some departments invested in reform measures while others pursued more punitive policies that criminalize marginalized populations or some combination of the two approaches. Analyzing local debates and reactions to the summer protests of 2020 that called for the diversion of public spending away from police departments may uncover how cities and police departments build public support for their policies and budgets. The long-term impact of these protests is yet to be seen, but public concern extends far beyond the nation’s largest cities. In at least one outer-ring California suburb where the police department and its union wield considerable power, the reform process initiated by the city in 2020 ultimately granted more power to the police ([Cantú 2021](#)).

Future research should also extend these questions to suburbs across the country, which may differ in important ways from California suburbs. This study focuses on dynamics in the suburban periphery, which in California, has absorbed a disproportionate share of low-income Black and Latino people pushed out of the urban core. Lower-cost metros, however, may look more like regions in California's Central Valley, where it may not be necessary for people to move more than 50 miles away from the central city to find affordable homes. It is an open empirical question as to whether dynamics like racial and renter threat are playing out in suburbs across the nation. I would hypothesize that they are, particularly in fast-growing regions in the Sunbelt, experiencing extensive new housing development. Future work on policing should incorporate suburbs, not only because it is where the majority of metro area residents of all race/ethnic groups live, but also because understanding the dynamics and drivers of policing in suburbs informs urban theories more broadly.

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