The Language of the Unheard: Legal Services and the 1960s Race Riots

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Abstract

This paper uses newly collected data on communities who received legal services grants between 1965 and 1975 to evaluate the effectiveness of the federal anti-rioting program. Results indicate a 22 percent reduction in the number of riots and a 22 percent reduction in the duration of riots due to legal services programs. Additional analysis identifies a positive relationship between riot propensity and legal services funding. Therefore, the estimates provide a lower bound for the possible causal relationship between the legal service program and riot propensities. Further analysis reveal communities implementing legal services programs earlier report better community-police relations in 1970 as well as a positive relationship between Neighborhood Legal Services Program and black-owned property value. These results are consistent with the historical narrative that legal service lawyers' involvement in community empowerment and advocacy mitigated the damage of riots that occurred in the 1960s.

Keywords

War on Poverty, legal services, riots, poverty lawyers

"And I feel that we must always work with an effective, powerful weapon and method that brings about tangible results. But it is not enough for me to stand before you tonight and condemn riots. It would be morally irresponsible for me to do that without, at the same time, condemning the contingent, intolerable conditions that exist in our society. These conditions are the things that cause individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard."

– Martin Luther King Jr., "The Other America" - March 14, 1968

1. Introduction

Violent demonstrations surrounding alleged police misconduct has a long-standing history in the United States. The first major race riot surrounding the excessive use of force by the police occurred in Harlem in 1935 (Flamm 2017).[1] Additional civil disorders occurred in Harlem and Detroit in 1943, and the frequency of violent demonstrations peaked in 1968.[2] Still, years later, race riots have presented a major dilemma for policymakers concerned with maintaining law and order. Police strategies to deal with racialized civil disorders have largely been unsuccessful (Rahtz, 2016). For instance, the 1992 Los Angeles Riot intensified due to the lack of police presence while a militarized police force may have escalated the violence during the 2014 Ferguson Uprising (Serrano & Pearce, 2015; Rahtz, 2016; Los Angeles Times Staff 2017).

A special commission issued by President Lyndon Johnson investigated the underlying causes of racialized civil disorders in the 1960s and provided a series of policy recommendations to prevent future riots. The Kerner Commission Report called for the expansion of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP), highlighting the program's ability to serve as intermediaries between the African American community and government institutions (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). Despite numerous studies on riots, the effectiveness of the NLSP as an anti-riot policy has never been explored.

The Neighborhood Legal Services Program was implemented under the umbrella of the War on Poverty (WOP) in 1965.[3] The goal of the program was to equip the poor with additional resources

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[1] Race riot in this context refers to the destruction of property in response to a perceived injustice, typically involving the police. Lieberson and Silverman (1965) highlights the frequency of race riots - violent directed towards African Americans by whites as well as violent demonstrations initiated by African Americans between 1913 and 1963.

[2] Disputes with the police was not the direct cause of the Detroit riot but was a contributing factor to the volatile environment (Taylor, 2016).

[3] A war against poverty was declared by President Lyndon B. Johnson on January 8th, 1964, during his State of the Union address. This declaration of war initiated a series of experimental antipoverty programs funded by the federal government such as Head Start, the VISTA program, and community health centers. Many social scientists have also included legislative acts such as Medicare and Medicaid (Goodman-Bacon, 2016), the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, and many others (Bailey and Danziger, 2013) as part of the War on Poverty. This era is also referred to as America's Great Society.

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to remediate grievances, especially those concerning local police, via the judicial system. Under the program, lawyers redressed grievances of the poor by bringing civil cases against local police departments and other government institutions (Bernstein, 1967; Greenwood, 1968; "6 Sue Police" 1969; "Neighborhood Legal Services to Monitor" 1970; "Legal Services: Challenging" 1971).[4] Advocates of legal services credited the program with reducing the likelihood and the severity of riots (Loftus, 1966; "Legal Services for the Poor Hailed" 1967). The program was deemed influential in ending the 1967 Detroit riot and stopping additional riots in Cleveland (Gillette, 1996; U.S. Senate 1969). Legal services lawyers were also credited with reducing police brutality and illegal police behavior, as well as securing proper police investigations when victims requested the assistance of the police (Finman, 1971; U.S. Senate 1969). While several argued that the NLSP reduced race riots, there were others who believed the opposite. The NLSP was often viewed as an anti-establishment government program that created civil unrest and prompted more demonstrations and riots (Herbers, 1967; Pious, 1971; "Subsidizing Violence and Subversion" 1970).

More recently, economists have evaluated social programs from the Great Society, drawing new conclusions about the War on Poverty's effectiveness in improving the quality of life for the poor (Hoynes and Schanzebach 2009; Ludwig and Miller 2007; Almond, Hoynes, and Schanzenbach 2011; Baily 2012; Bailey and Goodman-Bacon 2015; Goodman-Bacon 2016). Specifically, Cunningham (2016) evaluated the NLSP and found that it increased the demand for law enforcement services and changed law enforcement behavior. Likewise, Johnson (2014) provided an in-depth historical analysis of the NLSP, citing the impact of the program in improving the quality of life for those living in poverty as well as highlighting NLSP lawyers' ability to prevent riots on numerous occasions.

This paper is the first to quantitatively evaluate the impact of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program on the likelihood of race riots in the 1960s. Following previous literature (Spilerman, 1970; Carter, 1986; Collins and Margo, 2007), I examine newly collected data on communities that received legal services grants between 1965-1975. The analysis relies on the differential timing of NLSP's implementation in cities across the United States as well as the variation in the location and intensity of treatment to identify a relationship between the NLSP and the number and severity of riots that occurred in a city in a given year. The results indicate a reduction in the number of riots and the severity of riots after NLSP grants were received. The baseline results imply a 22 percent reduction in riot propensities due to legal services, a 22 percent reduction in the duration

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[4] Litigation and the threat of litigation coerced policy-makers within city governments and decision makers within police departments to meet with community leaders to resolve differences between the community and police.

of riots, as well as a reduction in the severity of riots. In addition, heterogeneous treatment effects indicate the results are driven by large cities containing nearby law students, and greater populations of African Americans. The inverse relationship between NLSP funding and rioting remains despite a variety of specification checks and scaling of the dependent variable. Cumulative funding or years of funding is an important explanatory variable and per capita measures of funding highlight the negative relationship between NLSP and the duration of riots.

The majority of the literature on riots, riot outcomes, and anti-riot policies suffer from endogeneity problems, making it difficult to interpret results. Previous literature suggests that the War on Poverty (WOP) targeted funding to volatile communities, creating positive bias, making it less likely to find a negative effect. Gillezeau (2015) provides evidence that WOP funding may have been directed towards volatile communities. I identify this positive relationship with several empirical tests. Using an event-study design, I show that riot propensities and severities are positively correlated with NLSP funding. Given this relationship, ordinary least squares (OLS) estimate understates the impact of legal services on riot related outcomes. Therefore, in the absence of a credible instrument, OLS estimates should provide a lower bound for the true effect of NLSP funding on riot related outcomes.

Further, I show that the NLSP influenced other riot related outcomes, providing additional evidence that the NLSP was an effective anti-rioting program. I present suggestive evidence that the NLSP improved the relationship between the police and the African American community. According to OLS results, cities that received NLSP grants earlier are likely to have a relatively supportive relationship between the police and the minority community in 1970. Moreover, I show that NLSPs are associated with a 1.8 percent increase in black-owned property values. In an attempt to address the endogeneity concerns, I use law schools as an instrumental variable for the NLSP. The NLSP was designed to be affiliated with nearby law schools. Many of the law schools associated with NLSP were established well before the 1960s thus creating a potential instrument for the treatment. Following Collins and Margo (2007) analysis, two stage least squares estimates show a positive relationship between NLSP and property values. Altogether, these findings are consistent with the historical narrative that the NLSP created access to social justice by providing additional channels for African Americans in urban communities to settle disputes.

2. Legal Services, the War on Poverty, and Riots

Incorporation of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program into the War on Poverty was motivated by Jean and Edgar Cahn in the *Yale Law Review* in 1964. The Cahns proposed the establishment of neighborhood law firms, affiliated with local university law schools, to serve as intermediaries between the poor community and antipoverty bureaucracies. The university law schools would serve as a resource of expertise and human capital, as well as provide volunteers and cheap labor to neighborhood law firms. Legal representation would be available for cases involving divorce, eviction, welfare fraud, coerced confessions, arrests, police brutality, installment buying, and the destroying of momentum in militant community efforts.[5] According to the Cahns' proposal, the advent of free legal representation would incorporate the civilian perspective into the War on Poverty and give voice to those who were previously unheard.

Following the proposal, the Neighborhood Legal Services Program was launched as part of the War on Poverty. Neighborhood law firms were financed by grants from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and operated under the Community Action Program. The community-based approach created wide variation on how federal grants were not only used but received. The OEO grants avoided local and state authorities and went directly to community organizations and programs, allowing federal funds to be spent rapidly with wide variation in intended purpose (Johnson 1974; Gillette 1996). With no funding precedent, capitalizing on the political support of the American Bar Association (ABA) led to a hasty rollout of the program with vague guidelines for grant applications. According to Earl Johnson Jr., former director of the NLSP, "We were committed to building a national institution overnight and could not afford to screen grantees through a fine mesh" (Johnson, 2014 p.102). The hurried rollout accompanied with political backlash from local bar associations created variation the timing and locations of the establishment of NLSP across the country.

Over the first year, the legal services program issued over 155 grants. By 1968, the program was funding 250 projects and providing legal assistance in 48 states. Figure 1 maps the geographical variation in NLSP establishments over time. The typical NLSP firm was staffed with five attorneys, one R.H. Smith Fellow, six clerical support personnel, and three law students.[6] With a budget slightly above $200 thousand, each law firm expected to serve over 1900 potential clients.[7] Eligibility

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[5] The deterrence of "militant community effort" refers to the availability of LSP lawyers to provide avenues for the poor to use political and judicial establishments to resolve problems between themselves and various entities, peacefully.
[6] R.H. Smith Fellowship is a prestigious fellowship created to attract highly qualified attorneys to practice in legal aid for the poor.
[7] Source: Legal Service Agency Survey which is publicly available at the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research *(*ICPSR).

for legal services was determined by income and local cost of living—serving low-income individuals with annual income near or below the poverty threshold.

Legal services attorneys typically spent 20% of their time working on caseloads related to criminal and juvenile issues (Levitan, 1969). At the core of many of these cases were complaints of illegal police behavior or the use of excessive force by the police. NLSP lawyers often handled these cases by filing lawsuits against local police departments on behalf of clients and community organizations to change police behavior and practices (Greenwood, 1968; Silver, 1969; "Legal Aid Assured of Federal Support," 1970). Many of these cases were resolved out of court, with chiefs of police and other decision makers negotiating new police strategies, implementing community review boards, hiring additional police officers, and providing more police training related to diverse communities.

Several individuals criticized the NLSP and felt the program incited riots (Hollingsworth, 1977). Police officers in Newark and Southern California accused NLSP lawyers of organizing violent demonstrations (Johnson 2014; Pious 1971). NLSPs in California were accused of "supporting anti-police militants" and organizing citizens into "revolutionary forces" ("Subsidizing Violence and Subversion" 1970). In Chicago, program attorneys petitioned for pardons for citizens involved in riots in 1968 ("Pardon for Rioters?" 1968; Katz 1982, 87). This led to attempts by public officials to dismantle the program. Members of Congress from Kentucky, Missouri, Florida, and California led a charge to strip the NLSP of its ability to represent alleged rioters and were almost successful at placing a ban on all litigation by NLSP firms against local, state, and federal agencies (Johnson 2014). According to opponents of the program, its lawyers were the cause of civil unrest and violent demonstrations (Herbers 1967). Neither the discussion at the time nor more recent analyses have resolved the quantitative question: Was the NLSP an effective anti-rioting program?

3. Descriptive Analysis

Data on the recipients of federal legal services grants funded by the OEO is compiled from National Archives Community Action Program (NACAP) files. NACAP provides information on the city, county, and state for which funds were received. Also provided is the date the grant was issued, the amount of the grant, and a brief description of the intended purpose of the grant. Figure 2 illustrates the city-level rollout of NLSP programs based on the month and year the grant was issued. The solid line indicates the number of newly funded cities while the dashed line provides a summary of all the cities funded to that date.[8] The NLSP was implemented in 1965, but initial

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[8] Grants with no information on the month issued, were coded with January of the year issued.

funding of the program primarily began in the 1966 fiscal year. According to Figure 2, there was a ramped buildup of NLSP programs over the first three years of its existence. By 1969 over 220 cities received NLSP grants, with many cities having multiple NLSP firms in different neighborhoods. Additionally, there was a steady increase of newly established NLSP firms in cities until 1974. Many of these were implemented in more rural areas. However, as political support for the War on Poverty and the NLSP waned in the 1970s, the rollout of NLSP projects slowed dramatically; this is reflected in the solid line.[9]

The typical NLSP firm established in the 1960s received subsequent support from the OEO which is reflected in Figure 3. Figure 3 plots the estimated probability of receiving a NLSP grant for those cities that were treated relative to those that never received a legal services grant. As expected, the probability of receiving a grant is equal to 1, the year the first grant was issued, but there is a high probability (85 percent) of receiving additional NLSP grants after a law firm is established. According to the data, the typical grantee received larger grants over time. Subsequent funding was not just to bolster established NLSPs; it was also used to open new law firms in other communities, especially in larger cities. This is reflected in Figure 4, which reports the average NLSP funding for a city after treatment. The average size of the initial grant was $106,713 (measured in 1960s dollars). The next grant is slightly smaller but subsequent funding increases over time. Federal funds for legal services after five years is 63 percent larger than the initial allocation. It is important to note that in larger cities, additional funding typically supported more than one grantee.[10]

The riot data in this analysis was provided courtesy of Collins and Margo (2007).[11] Data includes the location and duration of race riots between 1964 and 1971. It also includes the number of people killed, injured, or arrested, as well as the number of arsons reported or discovered by police during a race riot.[12] The data also records the number of days the riot occurred. Between 1964 and 1971, more than 700 riots were recorded across the lower 48 contiguous states.[13] Figure 5 maps the

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[9] This is also reflected in the total funding of Neighborhood Legal Services Programs between 1965 and 1975, where there was a steady increase of funding for the NLSP until 1971. Afterwards, spending slowly declined and most funding was used to sustain NLSP implementations that were already operating. Programs that were established in the 1960s received subsequent support from the OEO. The estimated probability of receiving additional NLSP grants is about 90 percent after the initial treatment. Subsequent funding, however, was not just to bolster established programs but also to open new NLSP firms in other communities, especially in larger cities. See appendix for figures related to funding propensities.

[10] For example, five grantees received NLSP funding in Chicago, between 1965 and 1971, while two grantees established NLSPs in Phoenix during this time period.

[11] Originally collected by Greg Lee Carter (1986).

[12] A race riot is defined as a demonstration involving at least 30 participants (some have to be black) that result in some property damage or violence. Further, the event has to occur outside of a school setting or an organized civil rights demonstration.

[13] Despite the wide variation in the geographical locations of these violent demonstrations, there exist evidence of riot contagion exhibited by the clustering of riots around large cities where major riots occurred. There were clusters of riots in Michigan, New Jersey, and the Los Angeles areas (Spilerman 1970). These clusters reflect the national attention that

geographical variation in the location and the timing of when a city experienced its first riot. Similar to previous studies, I focus on the occurrence of violent demonstrations in a given year as well as the severity of riots in a year (Carter 1986; DiPasquale and Glaeser 1998; Gillezeau 2015). The riot severity measure is the total number of arrests, arsons, injuries, and number of people killed due to rioting in a city in a given year relative to the total share of arrests, arsons, injuries, and peopled killed due to rioting between 1964 and 1971.[14]

Figure 6 highlights riot occurrence and riot severity by month and year from 1964 to 1971. Both occurrence and severity lines spike in July 1967 and April 1968. The first spike reflects a cluster of riots that occurred surrounding the Detroit and Newark riots, both of which occurred in July 1967. The second was a response to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968. Also, the Watts riot of 1965 displays a sizable increase in the riot severity measure, but the cluster of riots surrounding this event is smaller than that of the summer of 1967. Although the severity of riots decreases after April of 1968, the following three years display a widespread occurrence of riots across the United States that slowly decreases.[15]

As Collins and Margo (2007) highlighted, the severity measure is highly skewed, with a few cities having extremely deadly riots (Newark, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.) and many cities having less severe or minor riots. Similar to Collins and Margo, the analysis will measure severity by grouping riots based on their relative severity. The riot severity group separates the severity measure into four distinct categories; zero severity (no riots), low severity, medium severity, and high severity. The low severity group includes all riots below the 50th percentile, the medium severity group includes all riots between the 50th percentile and the 88th percentile, the high severity group includes all riots with riot severities above the 88th percentile, and the zero severity group includes all cities in which a riot did not occur in a given year. In addition, the analysis will use the relative duration of riots as a dependent variable of interest.[16] This measure deal with the fact that smaller cities can riot for many days without having nearly as many arrest, arsons, or injuries.

I use data provided by Collins and Margo to match NLSP grants to city-level observations on riot occurrences and severity. I use the size of the grant to measure the intensity of the treatment

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such riots garnered and comprise the most severe riots that occurred over the sample period. The inclusion of state-by-year fixed effects is motivated by clustering due to unobserved heterogeneity.

[14] Specifically, $severity_{it} = (\frac{arrests_{it}}{\sum_i \sum_t arrests_{it}} + \frac{arsons_{it}}{\sum_i \sum_t arsons_{it}} + \frac{injuries_{it}}{\sum_i \sum_t injuries_{it}} + \frac{deaths_{it}}{\sum_i \sum_t deaths_{it}})$.

[15] Many of these cities were prone to rioting. Over 161 cities experienced more than one riot over the sample period. Many of the cities where riots occurred in 1967 and 1968 experienced riots prior to 1967. However, there was also an increase in the number of cities that experienced riots for the first time in 1967 and 1968. See appendix Figure A4.

[16] $duration_{i,t} = \frac{\# \ of \ days \ rioting_{i,t}}{total \ days \ of \ rioting \ between \ 1964 \ and 1971} \times 1000$

(having an NLSP firm).[17] City characteristics in this analysis were taken from 1960, 1970, and 1980 Census City and County Data Books. The city-level demographic information was constructed by linearly interpolating between 1960, 1970, and 1980 data. The demographic variables are the proportion of the nonwhite population, the percentage of population with more than 12 years of education, population per square mile, median age, and family median income. According to Spilerman (1970), the only variable correlated with riot propensities and severity is the percentage of the population that is nonwhite. This claim is supported by Collins and Margo (2007) which highlights that rain in April of 1968 is also an important factor, while other variables have little explanatory power, conditional on controlling for the share of black residents and the region in which the city resides.[18]

The analysis consists of city-level observations with riot and census demographic information from 1964 to 1971 for 616 cities. All cities in this sample had a population of over 25,000 residents in each census year. Table 1 reports summary statistics for these cities from the 1960 census. The average population in the sample is 119,893 residents, with a median income of $6,192 ($45,615 in 2010 dollars).[19] The final sample contained 211 cities that received NLSP grants (treatment group) and 405 non-grant cities (comparison group). Cities that received legal services grants had a larger proportion of residents who were nonwhite and a smaller proportion of residents with more than 12 years of schooling and display lower median incomes. Treated cities were more prone to rioting between 1964 and 1971 than unfunded cities; this is also reflected in the measure of riot severity. The empirical strategy will account for these key cross-sectional differences. However, untreated cities may not provide a plausible control group; therefore, a specification without the control group is estimated as well.[20]

4. Empirical Strategy

The baseline empirical strategy to analyze the effectiveness of the NLSP as an anti-rioting policy begins with a simple panel regression model. I account for key cross-sectional differences

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[17] NACAP files do not provide information for grants received in 1969. Data from Federal Outlays was used to supplement NACAP data to provide grants in 1969.

[18] The literature on riots has reached a consensus on strong predictors of riots: the region of the city and the percentage of the population that is black in a particular city (Spilerman 1970; Carter 1986; DiPasquale and Glaeser 1998; and Collins and Margo 2007). The two predictors reflect (1) cultural and political norms that exist in the South, and (2) resources available to sustain an uprising.

[19] NLSP programs were located in larger cities; however, 103 of the 211 cities that received NLSP grants had a population of less than 100,000 residents in 1960, and 45 cities had a population of less than 50,000. Every city with a population greater than 500,000 residents in 1960 received a NLSP grant.

[20] The control group is also aiding in the identification of the instrument. Dropping the control group would lead to issues related to consistency due to selection when using the instrumental variable approach. The preferred approach will use the full sample.

between funded and unfunded cities by controlling for observable demographic characteristics. I also control for cross-sectional differences due to unobserved heterogeneity by using city fixed effects to capture differences that are unobservable but constant over time. The analysis uses state-by-year fixed effects to account for riot contagion due to unobserved heterogeneity that varies across states or regions over time.[21] The untreated cities in this analysis help estimate how riot propensities *evolve* over time and provide a *control* group for how riot propensities are expected to *evolve* without treatment.

The treatment variable of interest is NLSP funding in millions of dollars measured in 1960 dollars, which captures the intensity of the treatment. The baseline empirical strategy treats the variation in the timing and location of the NLSP as exogenous. The key identifying assumption is that the establishment and the funding of the NLSP are uncorrelated with determinants of rioting.[22] This is a tenuous assumption since the legal services program was promoted as an anti-riot program. It is likely that OEO officials had information about local volatility at the time the grants were issued. If so, the availability of legal services is possibly positively correlated with unobserved characteristics that initiated riots. Under this scenario, least squares estimates will be smaller in absolute terms when endogeneity is not properly addressed.

To isolate the relationship between NLSP and riot propensities and severity, I attempt to control for endogeneity by accounting for past rioting. I estimate the following regression:

$$(1) \qquad Y_{i,t} = \gamma_i + \alpha_{s(t)} + \pi LSP_{Funding_{i,t}} + R'_{i,t}\delta + X'_{i,t}\beta + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

where $Y_{i,t}$ is the number of riots, the riot severity group, or the days of rioting in city i in year t.[23] The parameter γ_i is city fixed effects and $\alpha_{s(t)}$ refers to state-by-year fixed effects. The row vector $X_{i,t}$ consists of demographic variables from the census. The row vector $R_{i,t}$ consists of indicator variables that capture past rioting. These variables account for the feedback effect of riots in an attempt to deal with the endogeneity problem.[24] This row vector includes $R^1_{i,t}$ and $R^2_{i,t}$ which are

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[21] Contagion is an important phenomenon in rioting literature. Spilerman (1970) documented how the Newark and Detroit riots in July 1967, ignited riots across New Jersey, Michigan, and Ohio. However, contagion is not just regional. The Los Angeles riots of 1992 sparked riots in Atlanta, New York, Oakland, Detroit and many other cities (DiPasquale and Glaeser 1998).

[22] Riots have been defined as spontaneous events, once the size of the black population and geographical region are accounted for (Spilerman 1970; Spilerman 1976; Carter 1986; Collins and Margo 2007).

[23] The low severity group ($Y_{i,t} = 1$) includes all riots below the 50th percentile, the medium severity group ($Y_{i,t} = 2$) includes all riots between the 50th percentile and the 88th percentile, the high severity group ($Y_{i,t} = 3$) includes all riots with riot severities above the 88th percentile, and the zero severity group ($Y_{i,t} = 0$) includes all cities in which a riot did not occur in year t.

[24] Spilerman argues the possibility of positive and negative feedback but is unable to distinguish feedback from predictors of riots. Positive feedback refers to an increase in the probability of a future riot if a riot takes place, while negative feedback refers to a decrease in the probability of future riots once a riot occurs.

equal to 1 if a riot occurred in the previous year $(t-1)$ or two years ago $(t-2)$; and zero otherwise. The independent variable of interest, $LSP_{Funding_{i,t}}$, measures the size of the federal grant that legal services received in the previous year.[25]

5. Results

5.1 Main Results

Table 2 reports estimates of π from Equation 1 for the effects of NLSP funding on the number of riots, riot severity group, and days of rioting. Equation 1 estimates are produced from a WLS regression using the city population in 1960 as weights. The standard errors are constructed from heteroskedastic robust standard errors clustered by city. Columns 1 report estimates from the baseline specification, and use NLSP funding in millions of dollars as the treatment variable. With regards to the occurrences of riots in panel A, the treatment effect is negative and statistically significant. The average treatment effect on the treated implies a 22 percent (-0.21/0.94) reduction in riot propensity. Panel B reports estimates of NLSP influence on riot severity group. Similar to Panel A, the coefficient on NLSP funding is negative and statistically significant. According to the data, the high severity group typically had 852 arrests, 218 arsons, 152 injuries and 3 deaths compared to the medium severity group which typically had 70 arrest, 11 arsons, 11 injuries, and 1 deaths. The low severity group on average had 8 arrest, 1 arson, 1 injury, and no deaths. NLSP ability to abate the severity riots likely had huge influences on the cost of arresting and detaining individuals, and damages related to arson or physical injury. This is confirm in panel C, which shows that NLSP funding reduced the duration or number of days of riots. The ATET implies an additional million dollars in NLSP funding reduce the duration of riots by (-0.289/1.31) by 22 percent.

Estimates in column 1 imply a reduction in the number of riots and provide evidence that NLSP successfully abated riots that did occur. However, the estimated relationship between NLSP funding and rioting outcomes are sensitive to the scaling of the treatment variable. More precisely, the results may be driven by the fact that larger cities receive larger grants and a per capita measure of funding may be more appropriate. In columns 2 and 3, the treatment variable is NLSP funding

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[25] A lag measure of NLSP funding is used for two reasons. First, the National Archives Community Action Program (NACAP) files provide the date the grant was issued, not received. Grants issued early in the year may not have been received until later in the year, and the effect of NLSP programs could have been attenuated. Therefore, variation in the timing of the grant within a year could have attenuated any contemporaneous effect that NLSP grants had on riot propensities. Secondly, Cunningham (2016) as well as Bailey and Goodman-Bacon (2015) highlighted that the utilization of services funded by War on Poverty grants increased over time. The increase in utilization is consistent with the buildup of legal services within a community. After a grant was received, the neighborhood legal services grantee would have had to find a location, hire staff, build community support, while also accumulating exposure.

per 1960 population and NLSP funding per 1960 poor population. In both columns, NLSP funding is negatively related to the number of riots, severity group, and duration of riots. However, the coefficients are not measured precisely and are statistically insignificant. Relatedly, using funding for one period does not highlight the increase in social and human capital from previous years of receiving legal service grants. It is plausible that years of funding or cumulative funding are more important than funding for one year. This issue is addressed in columns 4 through 6 where the treatment variable is cumulative NLSP funding, cumulative funding per capita, and cumulative funding per poor person. In panel A, the estimates in columns 3-6 are negative but not statistically significant. Marginal effects in panel B are negative but only statistically significant in column 4. However, the estimate are negative and statistically significant in Panel C.

5.2 Robustness Checks

Despite the various measurement of funding, NLSP is negatively related to the number of riots and the severity of riots. This relationship is statistically significant in many cases despite the positive bias that may exist. In addition, the relationship between NLSP funding and riot behavior is robust to several modifications to the sample and equation 1. These specification checks are explored in Table 3.

Estimates of Equation 1 are produced using demographic information interpolated between census years as covariates. This is problematic because both rioting and NLSP may influence local demographic characteristics. Previous research highlight how rioting influence neighborhood characteristic. Riots are associated with lower property values, deteriorating labor market opportunities, and white flight (Collin and Margo, 2004; Collin and Margo, 2007; Collin and Smith, 2007; Boustan, 2010). Rioting is also associated with more officer-involved shootings of civilians after the initial occurrence (Cunningham and Gillezeau 2018). Additionally, the NLSP has been linked to changes in family structure and access to public assistance (Cunningham and Goodman-Bacon, 2018). Column 1 of Table 3 estimates Equation 1 but excludes, $X_{i,t}$, the demographic characteristics from the analysis. The estimates in column 1 are larger (in absolute terms) than the marginal effects reported in column 1 of Table 2. Similar to the baseline specification, the treatment effects are statistically significant in all three panels, providing evidence that the results are not driven by demographic characteristics or the interpolation of demographic factors between census years.

The identification strategy in the baseline model exploits the variation in timing, location, and intensity of the treatment. However, non-treated cities are drastically different from treated cities and may not serve as the appropriate control group. This is problematic if OEO officials are

targeting volatile locations most prone to rioting. Column 2 report estimates from equation 1 when the sample is limited to the 211 cities in the sample that received NLSP grants. Marginal effects are slightly larger when the identification strategy only exploits the variation in the timing and the intensity of the treatment. Although the estimates are qualitatively similar to the baseline specification, the timing and the size of the grants are likely influenced by local volatility, biasing estimates in column 2.

Just under 40% of riots in the sample occurs in 1968 and accounts for 40% of the total riot severity measure.[26] It is reasonable to assume that the negative coefficients just capture a reduction in riot propensities after 1968 and is a result of the panel. However, removing 1968 from the sample results in larger marginal effects that are statistically significant. According to column 3, the marginal effect of NLSP funding on the number of riots is 4 percent larger than estimates in the baseline model but 68 percent larger for severity group and 47 percent larger for days of rioting. These estimates are driven by the removal of the riots associated with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. It is plausible NLSP lawyers were ineffective in preventing riots triggered by national events. This is reflected in column 4, which shows a positive but not statistically significant relationship between cumulative NLSP funding and rioting in 1968. Overall, cities with NLSPs experience more riots and more severe riots following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The 1968 cross sectional analysis reported in column 4 includes a measure of precipitation in April of 1968 as an independent variable. Rain has been shown to be a major deterrent of violent protest that typically occur outdoors, especially those occurring in April of 1968 (Collins and Margo 2007). Adding a measure of annual precipitation, summer precipitation, or precipitation in April does not influence the results. Column 5 report estimates of Equation 1 when April rainfall is included as an explanatory variable. These estimates are slightly larger than estimates from the baseline specification. However, accounting for rainfall does not drastically change the results.

The estimates reported in Table 2 and the previous specification checks are produced by weighted least square regressions. Population weights are used to gain efficiency when the error term has heteroskedasticity related to city size. However, weighted least squares (WLS) often lead to estimates that are less efficient than ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates (Haider, Solon, and Wooldridge, 2013). Column 6 report estimates from an OLS regression. In this analysis, WLS regression produced more precise estimates than OLS without changing the sign of the coefficients. However, OLS estimates are not statistically significant.

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[26] Half of the riots that occurred in 1968 took place in April.

Lastly, the War on Poverty, in general, could influence rioting behavior. It would be difficult to disentangle NLSP funding from War on Poverty spending. As with the NLSP, funding and expansion of experimental programs occurred rapidly before 1969 with a slowdown in expansion and funding across the board afterward. Gillezeau (2015) links War on Poverty spending to riot behavior and shows that War on Poverty spending is negatively correlated with rioting. Similar results in the column 7 shows that this relationship is true for spending on Community Action Agencies. Including a measurement of WOP spending reduces the point estimates but the marginal effects are still statistically significant.

5.3 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

The interactions between poor blacks and law enforcement in which African American citizens reported excessive force frequently occurred without riots. Once the size of the black population and geographical region are accounted for, researchers view riots as a spontaneous event. The main analysis includes both urban and rural areas as well as cities with a very small black population. The effects of the NLSP may be exacerbated by the lack of riots or small riots in rural areas or communities with small black populations.

Table 4 examines the heterogeneous treatment effects of the NLSP. Column 1 includes cities where the proportion of the residents that are nonwhite in 1964 is larger than the median proportion of residents that are nonwhite. The sample contains 310 cities of which 144 received a NLSP grant. The marginal effects reported in column 1 are similar to marginal effects reported in column 2 of Table 2. The NLSP is negatively related to the number of riots, severity group, and days of rioting in cities with a larger share of black residents. An additional million dollars in NLSP funding reduces the number of riots by 0.208 or 22 percent. Similarly, restricting the sample to 129 cities that have the population greater than 100,000 residents in 1960 produce similar marginal effects as in column 1 of Table 2. The marginal effect for the effect of NLSP funding on riot severity group is 10 percent smaller but the estimate is still marginally statistically significant.

The NLSP was designed to be affiliated with university law programs; so, *ex-ante*, one would predict that legal services would be established in cities that have nearby law schools. Column 3 compare treated cities without a law school to non-treated cities, and column 4 compare treated cities with at least one nearby law school to non-treated cities. The estimates in column 3 are generally positive and not statistically significant but the marginal effects in column 4 are negative and statistically significant. There may be several factors that explain the law school results. First, treated cities without a law school may lack sufficient support to deal with grievances that typically

lead to riots. Secondly, law schools are generally in larger cities due to economies of scales, therefore column 6 is capturing the same effect as column 2 and not the presence of law schools. Lastly, it is possible that cities with law schools have trained enough lawyers to staff local offices, allowing NLSP to be implemented relatively smoothly and efficiently.

6. Discussion

So far, results have shown that the Neighborhood Legal Services Program reduced riot propensities and severities. The estimates imply that an additional million dollars in legal services funding will result in a 22 percent reduction in riot propensity and days of rioting as well as reduce the likelihood of a severe riot by 20 percent. By 1970, the typical NLSP received a grant of $200,000. According to the results, the typical grant reduced the number of riots and days of rioting by 4.4 percent. The initial NLSP grant of approximately $100,000 reduced number of riots and the days of rioting by 2.2 percent the following year. Taking the estimates in column 1 of Table 2, we can estimate the number of riots the NLSP prevented and the reduction in the duration in riots. Figure 7 plots, the number of riots prevented and the days of rioting prevented due to NLSP by year. The number of riots prevented increases every year while the number of days of rioting prevent by NLSP peak in 1968. According to this figure, NLSP prevented 25 riots and reduce the duration of riots by 19 days.

It is important to note, the measurement of the number of riots takes on a limited number of non-negative values and using a semi-parametric estimation by OLS will produce estimates that are biased, inconsistent, and inefficient. Similarly, the riot severity group takes on non-negative values which rank the likely outcome, assuming that no riot is better than a severe riot. Column 5 of Table 4 estimates the influence of NLSP on rioting behavior using a Poisson regression for riot frequency and an order logit for riot severity group. The Poisson estimator implies the initial NLSP grant reduced riot propensities by 9.6 percent. The ordered logit estimates indicate that NLSP increases the likelihood of zero riots occurring as well as reduces the likelihood of experience a medium or high severity riot.[27]

6.1 Threat to Internal Validity

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[27] The marginal effect for the no riot group, low severity riot group, medium severity riot group, and high severity riot group is 0.115, -0.028, -0.033, and -0.054 respectively.

Despite various model specifications and scaling of the dependent variable, NLSP funding is negatively related to rioting. This is important because the implementation and funding of the NLSP is likely positively correlated with rioting and riot severity. Consequently, OLS estimates will understate the relationship between rioting and legal services as well as reduce the likelihood of uncovering a negative relationship. I attempt to highlight the correlation between the implementation of NLSP and NLSP funding with riot related outcomes by exploiting the variation in timing and location within an event-study framework (Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan 1993). The event of interest is "the year the first NLSP grant" is received in city i. The dependent variable of interest is the probability a city experienced a riot, the number of riots, and the severity of riots the city experienced. I estimate the following equation:

$$(2) \qquad Y_{i,t} = \gamma_i + \alpha_{t,s(i)} + \sum_{\tau=1}^{q} \theta_{-\tau} D_i 1(t - T^* = -\tau) + \sum_{\tau=1}^{p} \delta_\tau D_i 1(t - T^* = \tau) + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

where $Y_{i,t}$ is a measurement of rioting in city i in year t. D_i is an indicator variable equal to one if the city ever received a legal service grant. $1(t - T^* = -\tau)$ is an indicator variable equal to one if the observation year is $-\tau$ years from the date that the grant or $1(t - T^* = \tau)$ is equal to one if the observation year is τ years after the grant is received in city i. $1(t - T^* = -1)$ is omitted due to collinearity where T^* is the year of the first grant is received in the sample; q refers to the number of lags or years before the first grant, and p is the lead or years after the first grant is received. To ensure the coefficients are well estimated, event time for $\tau > 3$ and $\tau < $ -3 are grouped into endpoints, $q = 4$ and $p = 4$. The coefficients of interest are $\theta_{-\tau}$, which are pre-treatment effects, and post-treatment effects δ_τ. These estimates describe the dynamics of riot behavior in cities before and after treatment. Figure 8 plot pre-treatment effects and post-treatment effects from Equation 2. Confidence intervals are constructed from heteroscedasticity robust standard errors clustered by city and are presented by dashed lines.

According to panel A, the probability of a riot increases greatly when a city receives the initial NLSP grant. The probability that a riot occurs in the year the NLSP is established is 9 percent. This probability increase to 25 percent and 24 percent for the years immediately following treatment. Similarly, the number of riots and the severity of riots increases greatly after treatment. Interestingly, panel C, provides clear evidence of a trend break for riot severity when NLSP is established. Given these results, it is clear that NLSP is positively correlated with riot propensities and severity. However, the baseline analysis is the influence of NLSP funding on riot propensity and severity. Panel D highlights the relationship between NLSP funding and rioting. Using Equation 2, the event-study uses the date of the "first riot" as the event and compare how NLSP funding

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evolves before and after the first riot. The pre-treatment effects in this analysis are statistically indistinguishable from zero and the post-treatment effects are positive and statistically significant. This provide evidence that NLSP was an initiative targeted towards volatile communities. Given these results, there is a clear positive relationship between NLSP and rioting as well as NLSP funding and riot propensities.

6.2 NLSP Impact on Policing

Despite the positive bias, NLSP ability to abate riots should be reflected in other riot related outcomes. Cunningham (2016) showed that the NLSP is associated with changes in police practices or usages. Proponents of the program argued that NLSP lawyers altered police behavior. According to advocates of the program, NLSP programs were successful at changing institutional behavior through two channels, direct consultation and anticipatory responses (Katz, 1978). Individual or group consultation informed clients of their legal rights and prevented conflicts from occurring. Likewise, legal challenges brought against local agencies by NLSP lawyers often resulted in changes in policies and practices that were more suitable to the poor. Regarding policing, access to legal services could have deterred illegal police behavior. This may have resulted in changes to policies, police practices, or disciplinary responses even without litigation or long after litigation was resolved. These changes could have also improved the relationship between the police and the African American community by increasing the number of positive interactions.

To test whether NLSP programs influenced the relationship between the African American community and local police departments, I used the Legal Service Agency Survey (LSAS) which is publicly available at the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research *(*ICPSR*)* to evaluate the relationship between the poor and law enforcement.[28] I estimated the following regression:

(3) $\qquad Y_i = \gamma + \delta NLSP_i + X_i'\beta + \varepsilon_i$

NLSP is the length of time the NLSP has been operating. For example, a new program in 1970 will have the age of 0, a program that was started in 1965 would have the age of 5. The LSAS contains geographic information at the county level. Therefore, the covariates *X* are 1960 census county

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[28] The Legal Service Agency Survey (LSAS) was conducted in 1970 and 1971 to evaluate the effectiveness of the legal services projects and to make recommendations on whether to expand, cut back, or eliminate certain agencies. The LSAS included roughly two thirds of all the NLSP agencies operating at that time. The purposes of the evaluations were to: provide individual reports on legal services projects (which provided a history of the program), study the types of issues in which agencies were involved, evaluate the environment and climate in which the projects operated, evaluate the directors and attorneys in the agencies, and provide a systematic way to evaluate legal services project performances.

characteristics. The covariates of interest are the proportion of residence with 12 or more years of education, proportion of residence with fewer than four years of education, proportion of nonwhite residents, proportion of residents living in urban areas, the percentage of households with annual income below $3,000, and the percentage of households with annual income above $10,000.

I used variables that describe the perception of law enforcement as dependent variable Y. The law enforcement climate variables indicate if the police are perceived to have a hostile or supportive relationship with the poor, minorities, or the NLSP. The variables that describe the climate are labeled 1 to 3, with 1 being not supportive or hostile, and 3 being cooperative or supportive. The survey questions are in response to the perceived legal climate by evaluators with regards to law enforcement. The dependent variable is the *average* score from three to five evaluators of the local legal services project. In column 1, the responses were the following: (1) Law enforcement agencies tend to bring pressure on NLSP to curtail activities; (2) Neutral or no interaction; (3) Cooperative relationships. In column 2, the responses were the following: (1) Law enforcement agencies are generally hostile to poverty community residents; (2) Agencies neutral; (3) Agencies support efforts for equal services. In column 3, the responses were the following: (1) Law enforcement agency generally hostile to and abusive of minority group persons; (2) No significant minority population or neutral disposition to minorities; (3) Generally supportive of efforts to increase cooperation.

Table 5 displays the results from the LSAS regressions on the legal climate as it relates to law enforcement. Coefficients from Equation 3 suggest that law enforcement agencies in places that received legal services earlier are correlated with having better relationships with poor communities as well as with minorities in 1970. Also, the interaction between NLSP firms and law enforcement agencies are considered more supportive in locations where firms were established earlier; however, this result is marginally statistically significant. Although the estimates in Table 5 do not imply causality, they provide suggestive evidence that older NLSP implementations are associated with better relationships with the police. This is important because the primary motivation for endogeneity is that the timing, location, and intensity of the treatment are related to local volatility—mainly due to the conflict between the African American community and the police.

6.3 NLSP Impact on Black-Owned Property Values

The reduction in riot propensities due to legal services also should have a large implication on community welfare and social capital. Collins and Margo (2007) highlighted the negative impact severe riots can have on property values. The impact of riots decreased property values citywide

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but had a more adverse effect on black-owned property. In attempt to link the NLSP to property values, I estimate the following difference-in-difference regression:

$$(4) \qquad Y_{i,t} = \gamma_i + \alpha_t + \delta LSP_{i,t} + \lambda Riot_{i,t} + X'_{i,t}\beta + \varepsilon_{i,t}.$$

The dependent variable is the log of the median residential property value for all homeowners or black owned homes in city i in year t from 1960, 1970, and 1980 Decennial Census. LSP is equal to the cumulative funding in city i before census year t in one specification. In the second specification, LSP is equal to $D_i 1(t - T^* > 0)$, which is an indicator variable that is equal to one if a legal services project is operating in city i before census year t in one specification. The row vector $X_{i,t}$, consists of covariates from the 1960, 1970, and the 1980 census. Also included is two indicator variable equal to one if a high severity riot or a medium severity riot has occurred in city i before census year t.[29]

Table 6 displays the results from Equation 4. The dependent variable in column 1 through 3 is the log of median property value for all homes. Estimates in column 1 show that rioting did not influence the median property value in cities that experience a high severity or medium severity riot. However, when NLSP funding is included the high severity riot group become statistically significant indicating that a high severity riot reduced property values by 8.4 percent. NLSP funding is also positive and statistically significant. According to column 2, an additional million dollars in NLSP funding increases property values by 3.3 percent. This is substantiated by column 3, which shows treatment alone is positively associated with property values. When focusing on black-owned homes, the effects of riots are much larger and the impact of NLSP is much smaller. According to column 5, NLSP increased the median black-owned property value by 1.8 percent while high severity riots reduce black owned property values by 12.9 percent. In addition, treatment alone has little effect on property values. Although the effect of NLSP on black-owned property values is much smaller than all homes, the positive relationship provides support to the claim that NLSP ameliorated or abated riots and the effects of rioting. However, NLSP measurement in this analysis stills suffers from endogeneity.

To deal with the endogeneity, I follow Collins and Margo (2007) and estimate the following regression model:

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[29] The link between property values and NLSP was explored in Cunningham (2016). The key difference between this analysis and Cunningham (2016) is the focus on black owned property value. Additionally, the key dependent variable in this analysis is NLSP funding instead of a binary indicator variable capturing the presence of an NLSP. Relatedly, Cunningham and Gillezeau (2018) explore the relationship between NLSP and black owned property building on the analysis developed in Equation 4 and Collins and Margo (2007).

(5) $\Delta Y_i = \lambda_1 LSP_i + \lambda_2 R_i + r_i + Z_i'\beta + \varepsilon_{i,t}.$

Similar to Equation 4, the dependent variable is the change in the log median residential property value for all homes and black-owned homes. *LSP* reflects the presence or the funding of a NLSP and R_i describes the severity of riots 0-2, where no riot or low severity are coded as zero, medium severity riots as 1, and high severity riots as 2. This specification also includes region fixed effects, r, and the total population, percentage of the African American population, proportion of workers in manufacturing, change in property value between 1950 and 1960, the crime rate in 1962, and a measure of residential segregation as covariates. In addition, the analysis will instrument for riot severity using total rainfall in April of 1968 and for NSLP funding using the age of the oldest law school.

The first key identifying assumption for a two-stage least squares approach (2SLS), is that the location and founding date of law schools are unrelated to changes in property values between 1960 and 1980. The American Bar Association (ABA) provides a list of accredited schools, their location, founding date, and closing date. A majority of these schools were founded before black migration patterns from the rural south to urban areas were established (Cutler et al. 1999). The second key identifying assumption for the instrumental variable approach is that there must exist a relationship between the instrument and the endogenous variable. The NLSP was designed to be affiliated with university law programs; so, *ex-ante*, one would predict that legal services would be established in cities that have nearby law schools. Older law schools (i.e., prestigious law schools) were vital to the introduction of the program as well as the expansion of the program for a variety of reasons. Older law schools were more likely to have trained enough lawyers to staff neighborhood law firms, allowing for the immediate creation of NLSP firms or the expansion of services if these lawyers provided pro bono services. Also, the program was brokered through closed-door meetings between government officials—many were alumni of top law programs—and officers and representatives of the ABA (usually highly credentialed individuals with ties to top law schools), a condition which possibly created a network effect in issuing the first grants (Johnson 1974; Johnson 2014).[30] Additionally, law schools were also instrumental in lobbying and obtaining NLSP funds. The first NLSP backup center was at Columbia University Law School and assisted many of the law reform cases that reached the Supreme Court. In fact, the OEO issued over $2,000,000 in grants to law schools between 1965 and 1967 to establish curricula related to poverty law (Levitan, 1969).

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[30] This is evident with the creation of the staff in charge of issuing first grants. The first director, Clinton Bamberger, and the deputy director, Earl Johnson, graduated from Georgetown University Law School and University of Chicago Law School respectively. The OEO NLSP Headquarters and regional offices were staffed with 11 lawyers. Of these 11, four graduated from Harvard Law and another from DePaul University Law School (Johnson 2014).

The relationship between law schools and NLSP is highlighted in Appendix Table 1 which shows that law schools are an important predictor of timing, location, and the size of the first grant. Appendix Figure 1 also shows places with a law school received more funding over time relative to treated cities without a law school.

Table 7 report estimates from Equation 5 for the effects of riots and NLSP on the change in the log of median property values. Panel A focus on the change in property values of all homes will panel B focus on the change for black-owned homes. All columns use rainfall in April of 1968 as an instrument for riot severity. Column 1 reproduce estimates from Collins and Margo (2007) and column 2 add cumulative NLSP funding to the analysis. According to column 2, NLSP increased property values by 4.7 percent and black-owned property values by 4.5 percent. In addition, the presence of a NLSP is positively related with changes in property values but is only statistically significant in panel A. Columns 4 and 5 use the age of the oldest law school as an instrument for NLSP funding and the presence of an NLSP firm. The 2SLS estimates are less precise, but the marginal effects are larger than OLS estimates. The positive relationship between NLSP and property values is only marginally statistically significant form the presence of a NLSP firm. The effects reported in column 4 and 5 are large and should be interpreted with caution. Nonetheless, the analysis does highlight the positive relationship between NLSP and property values providing additional evidence that the NLSP influence riot related outcomes.

7. Conclusion

The Neighborhood Legal Services Program was implemented to provide the poor a voice in court. Those who advocated for the existence of the NLSP believed that the poor were often victimized by the judicial system. From their viewpoint, the poor were not able to defend themselves against unfair treatment from public officials in welfare offices, landlords in their community, creditors and local businesses, and local police officers. The lack of access to justice created an explosive environment. However, the 1960s riots were not the first racial uprisings to have occurred in the United States. There were a series of riots in the 1940s as well as riots recorded pre-1940 in African American communities (Cook, 2011; Downes, 1968, Lieberson and Silverman 1965). The uniqueness of the 1960s events was the frequency of these community uprisings over a short time-span. Over 700 riots were recorded from 1964 to 1971. This period of widespread violent demonstrations is followed by a period with fewer major incidents. The most notable of these was the 1980 Miami Riot and the 1992 Los Angeles Riot.

As the number of riots declined in the 1970s, so did the support of the NLSP. By 1976, the NLSP had been supplanted by a new entity with more structure, less autonomy, and less federal funding. The newly created Legal Service Corporation (LSC) shifted focus away from community organizing, community advocacy, and law reform to focus more on individual representation that would result in more civil cases. Legal services lawyers' caseload changed from crime and divorce proceedings to housing and tenant-landlord disputes. Even as the LSC handled cases for the poor that were less controversial, the lack of federal funding for legal aid still restricts access to social justice.

In the 1960s, the NLSP was used as a vehicle for those without voices to express their grievances. Although the program did not prevent riots, it did work to redress the grievances that sparked them. According to the results presented, legal services decreased the number of riots by 22% and greatly reduced their severity. The results are sensitive to rescaling the treatment variable of interest, but a negative relationship persists through various specifications. Event-study estimates provide evidence of a positive relationship between NLSP and rioting. Therefore, even in the absence of a credible instrument, OLS estimates provides a lower bound. Further, results indicate cities that received NLSP grants earlier have a better relationship with the police by 1970 compared to cities that received later NLSP grants. In addition, OLS and 2SLS results show that NLSP is positively associated with black-owned property values. These findings are consistent with the historical narrative of legal services lawyers' involvement in community empowerment and advocacy, as well as the program's effectiveness in mitigating the damage of riots that occurred in the 1960s. Access to lawyers as well as social justice has greatly decreased since the 1960s and 1970s. A reexamination of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program provides policymakers an additional tool to ameliorate grievances that lead to violent demonstrations.

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Figure 1. The City Level Roll-Out of Federal Grants for Legal Services by Date, 1965-1975

Legend:
- ○ 1965-1967 (166)
- ◆ 1968-1970 (25)
- ▲ 1971-1972 (8)
- ■ 1973-1975 (8)

Source: The National Archives Community Action Program (NACAP) provided information on the recipients of legal service grants funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity from 1964 to 1975.
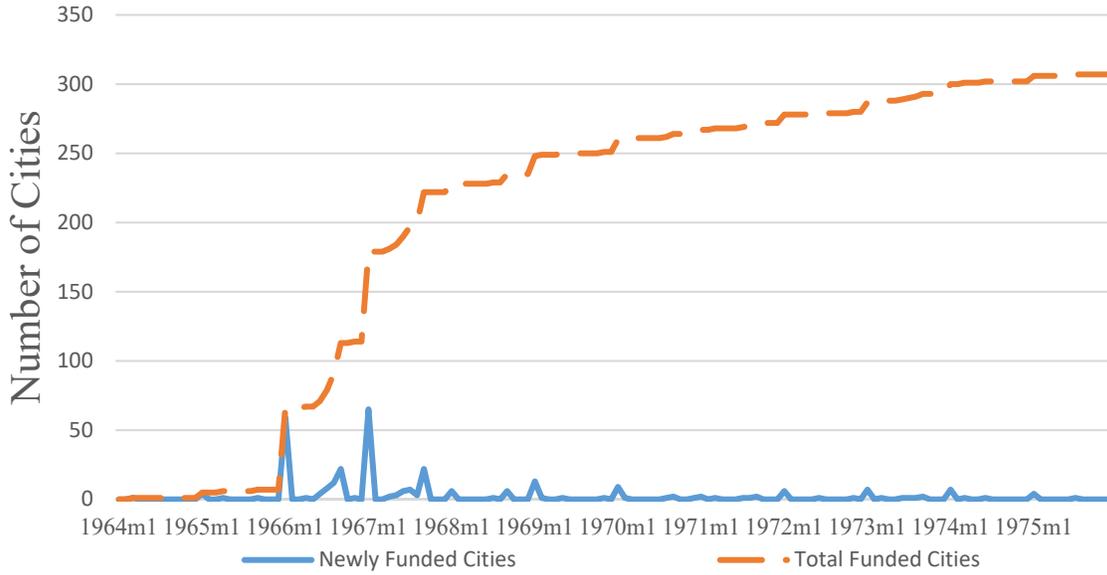
Figure 2. The City Level Roll-Out of Federal Grants for Legal Services by Date, 1965-1975
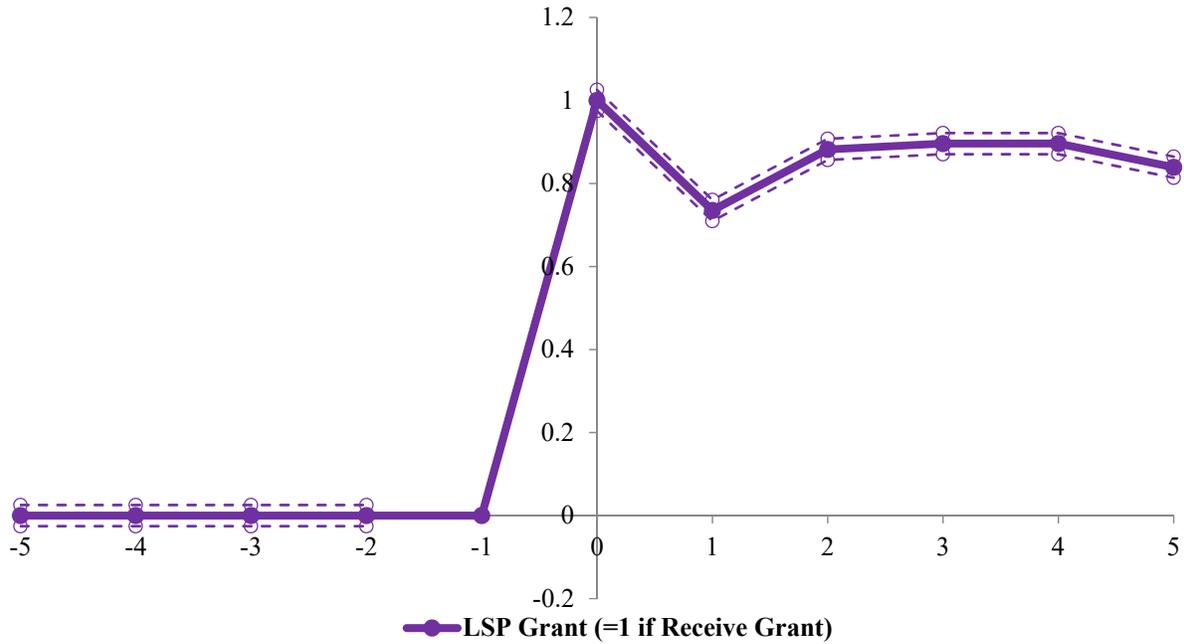

Source: The National Archives Community Action Program (NACAP) provided information on the recipients of legal service grants funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity from 1964 to 1975.

Figure 3. Estimated NLSP Funding Propensities

Notes: Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered by city are presented. Dependent variable is an indicator equal to 1 if the city received a NLSP Grant. The horizontal axis corresponds the years before and after the first NLSP grant is received. Zero is the year the grant is received.

Figure 4. Estimated Average NLSP Funding (In Millions)
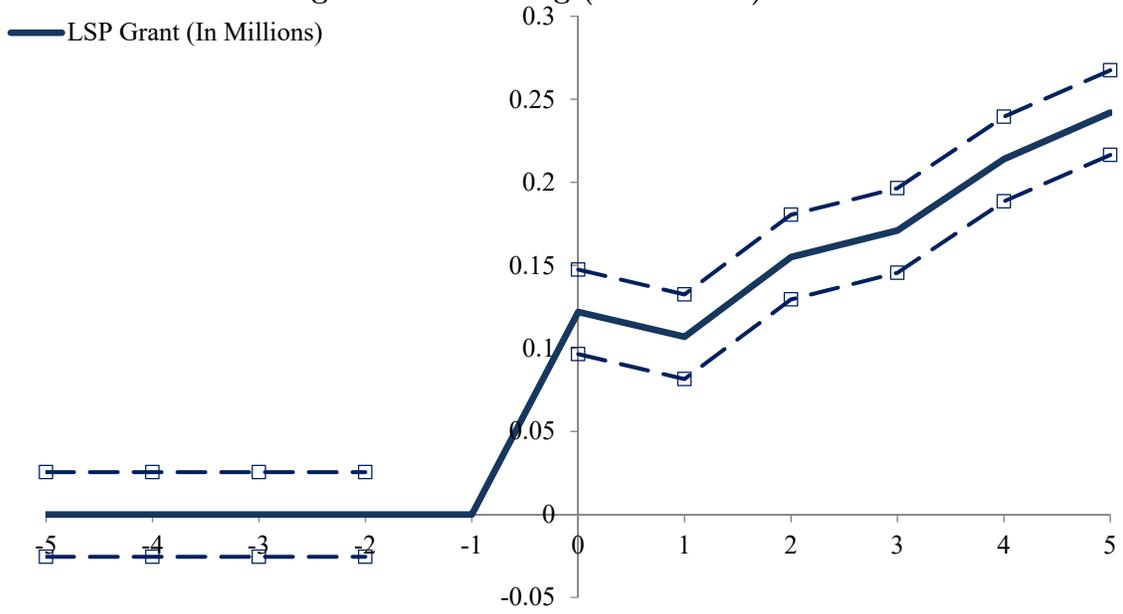
Note: Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered by city are presented. Dependent variable is size of a NLSP Grant in millions. The horizontal axis corresponds the years before and after the first NLSP grant is received. Zero is the year the grant is received.

Figure 5. Cities Experiencing an Uprising by Date of first Uprising, 1964-1971
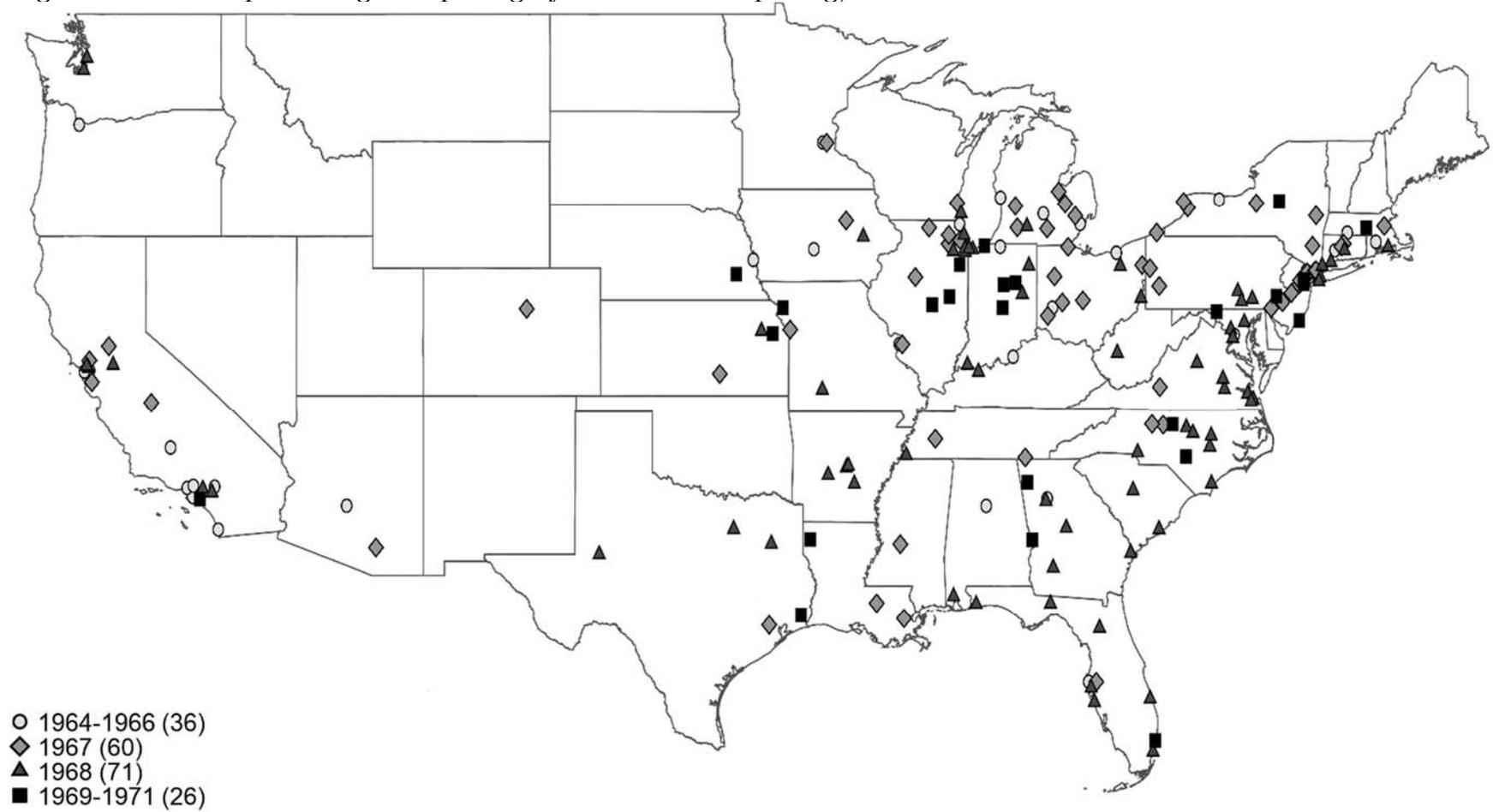
○ 1964-1966 (36)
◇ 1967 (60)
▲ 1968 (71)
■ 1969-1971 (26)

Source: Riot data comes courtesy of Carter and Margo (2007). Carter (1986) original source of race riots from 1964 to 1971.

Figure 6. City Level–Number of Riots and Riot Severity
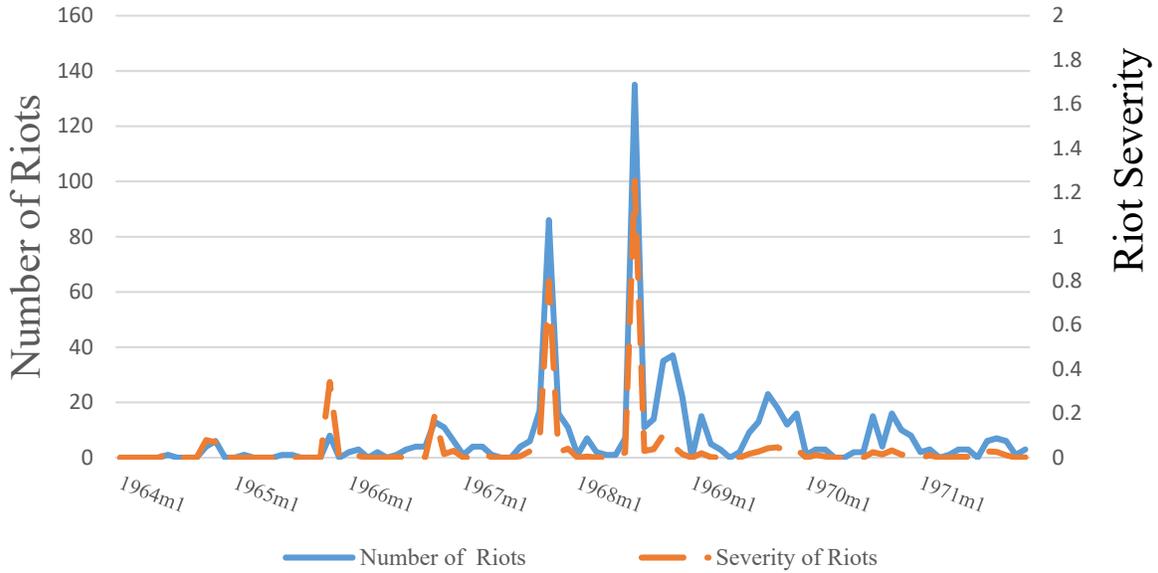
Source: Riot data comes courtesy of Carter and Margo (2007). Carter (1986) original source of race riots from 1964 to 1971.

Figure 7. Number of Riots and Days of Rioting Avoided

Source: Authors Calculations.

Figure 8. Event-Study Estimates

A. Event – NLSP Funding – DV: Probability of a Riot

B. Event: NLSP Funding – DV: Number of Riots
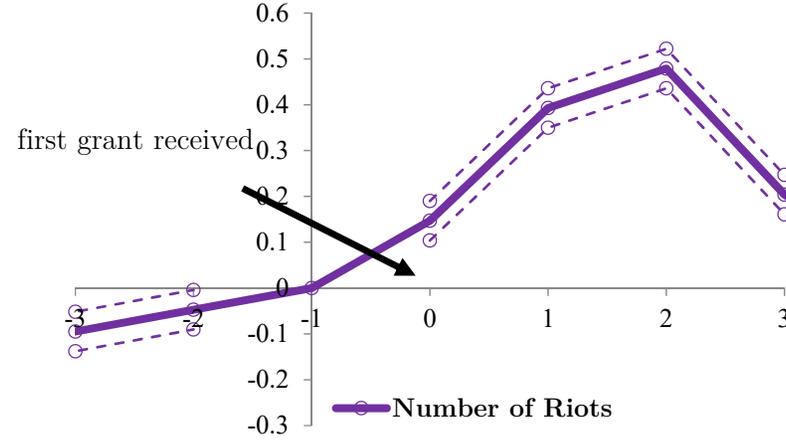
C. Event: NLSP Funding – DV: Riot Severity
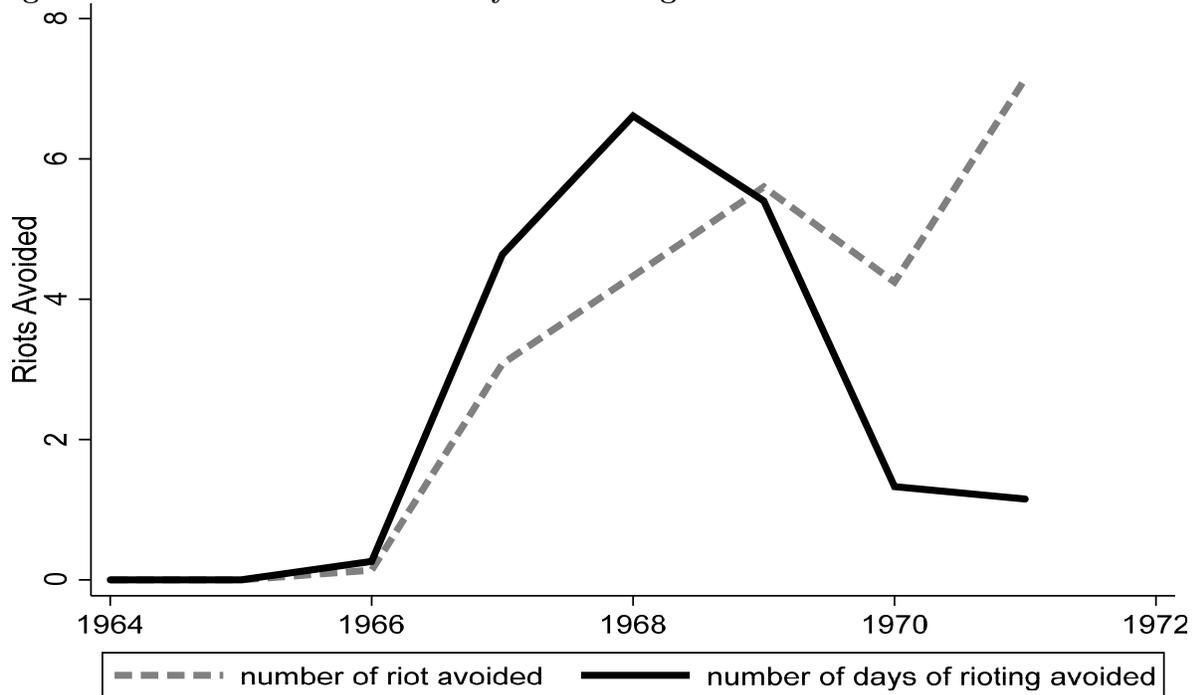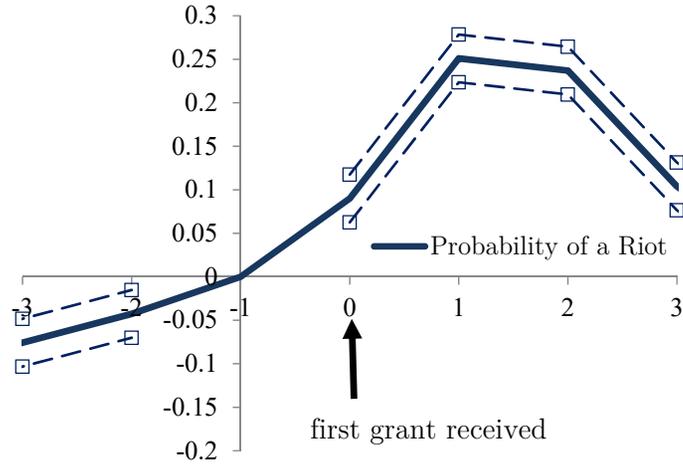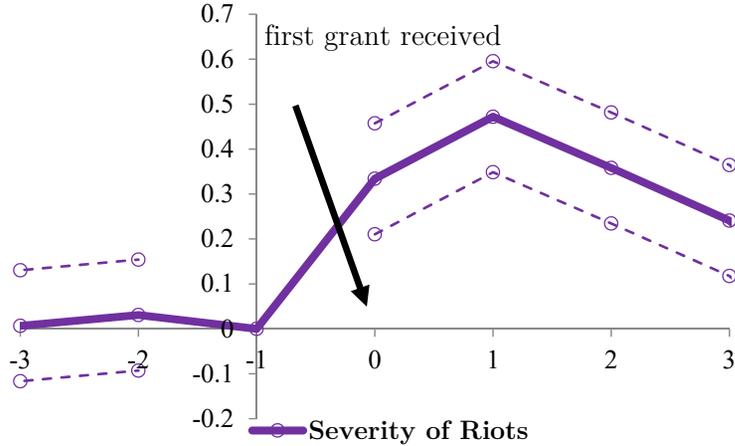

D. Event: First Riot – DV: NLSP Funding (In Millions)
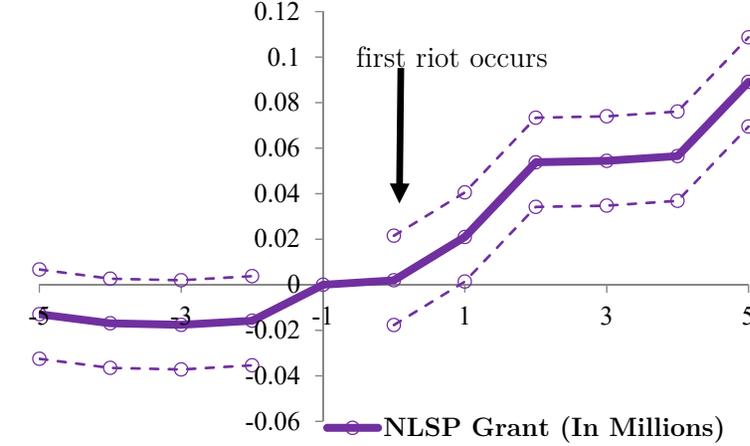
Note: Figure 3 plots coefficients from the following regression $Y_{i,t} = \gamma_i + \alpha_{t,s(i)} + \sum_{\tau=1}^{q} \pi_{-\tau} D_i 1(t - T^* = -\tau) + \sum_{\tau=1}^{p} \delta_\tau D_i 1(t - T^* = \tau) + \varepsilon_{i,t}$ where $Y_{i,t}$ is the size of the legal services grant in millions in city i in year t (t= 1960, 1961,…1980); γ_i is a set of city effects which control for unobservable city characteristics that are time invariant; α_t is a set of state-by-year effects. D_i is an indicator variable equal to one if the city ever received federally funded legal services. $1(t - T^* = -\tau)$ is an indicator variable equal to one if the observation year is $-\tau$ years from the year the first riot occurs in city i or $1(t - T^* = \tau)$ is equal to one if the observation year is τ years after the first riot occurs. T^* is the year before the first riot; q refers to the number of lags or years before the first riot, and p is the lead or years after the first riot. The coefficients of interest are $\pi_{-\tau}$, which are pre-treatment effects, and post-treatment effects δ_τ.

Table 1. Characteristics of Cities from 1960

	All cities	NLSP cities	Non-NLSP cities	T-Test of difference
A. 1960 city characteristics				
	(N=616)	(N=211)	(N=405)	
Means				
Population	119,893	253,333	50,373	<0.01
Population per square mile	5,258	6,065	4,837	<0.01
Median income	6,192	5,907	6,340	<0.01
Median age	30.1	30.6	29.9	<0.05
Proportion of residents				
Nonwhite	9.7	13.2	7.9	<0.01
With 12 years of education	46.0	43.7	47.2	<0.01
Means from 1964 to 1971				
Number of riots	0.94	2.19	0.29	<0.01
Severity of riots	0.61	1.64	0.07	<0.01
Number of Days Rioting	1.31	3.01	0.42	<0.01

Source: Table displays averages from the 1960 Decennial Census. Census data from 1962 County and City Data Book publicly available at the ICPSR. Riot data comes courtesy of Carter and Margo (2007). Carter (1986) original source of race riots data from 1964 to 1971.

Table 2. Ordinary-Least-Squares Estimates of NLSP on Riot Propensities

	(1)	(2) Per Capita	(3) Per Poor Population	(4) Cumulative	(5) Cumulative Per Capita	(6) Cumulative Per Poor Population
A. DV: Number of Riots						
Legal Service Grant (In Millions)	-0.209**	-0.561	-0.00798	-0.0658	-0.0307	-0.00355
	[0.0839]	[0.384]	[0.00514]	[0.0420]	[0.0443]	[0.00648]
R-squared	0.572	0.567	0.567	0.540	0.568	0.567
B. DV: Severity Group						
Legal Service Grant (In Millions)	-0.195***	-0.199	-0.00384	-0.0945***	-0.0354	-0.00562
	[0.0652]	[0.601]	[0.00720]	[0.0308]	[0.0303]	[0.00451]
R-squared	0.457	0.453	0.453	0.450	0.453	0.453
C. DV: Days of Rioting						
Legal Service Grant (In Millions)	-0.289**	-1.031	-0.0167	-0.207***	-0.123***	-0.0152***
	[0.118]	[0.880]	[0.0117]	[0.0589]	[0.0279]	[0.00484]
R-squared	0.542	0.538	0.538	0.540	0.541	0.541
Observations	4,928	4,928	4,928	4,928	4,920	4,928
Number of Cities	616	616	616	616	615	616

Notes: Table display weighted-least-squares estimates obtained estimating Equation 1. All columns include city (C) and state-by-year (S-Y) effects and covariates (X) from 1960, 1970, and 1980 city linearly interpolated in columns. Columns 2 and 4 add indicator variables (R) to capture past rioting. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered by city are presented beneath each estimate in brackets. All columns use 1960 population as weights. Columns 1 and 2 refer to the entire sample while columns 3 and 4 only include cities that received an NLSP grant from 1965 to 1975. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Table 3. Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of the Influence of NLSP on Riot Propensities by Specification

	(1) No Co-variates	(2) Treated Only	(3) Drop 1968	(4) 1968 Only	(5) April Rainfall	(6) No Popula-tion Weights	(7) WOP Fund-ing Included
A. DV: Number of Riots							
Legal Service Grant (In Millions)	-0.219***	-0.228**	-0.281***	0.183	-0.227***	-0.129	-0.187**
	[0.0774]	[0.0893]	[0.0916]	[0.290]	[0.0832]	[0.127]	[0.0856]
R-squared	0.543	0.718	0.487	0.372	0.544	0.190	0.545
B. DV: Severity Group							
Legal Service Grant (In Millions)	-0.229***	-0.203**	-0.328***	0.346	-0.209***	-0.128	-0.182***
	[0.0716]	[0.0867]	[0.125]	[0.250]	[0.0708]	[0.121]	[0.0691]
R-squared	0.448	0.599	0.432	0.469	0.450	0.188	0.450
C. DV: Days of Rioting							
Legal Service Grant (In Millions)	-0.318***	-0.297**	-0.426***	0.110	-0.310***	-0.175	-0.256**
	[0.111]	[0.139]	[0.138]	[0.352]	[0.118]	[0.193]	[0.115]
R-squared	0.528	0.686	0.484	0.435	0.529	0.187	0.530
Observations	4,928	4,928	4,928	4,920	4,928	4,920	4,928
Number of Cities	616	211	616	616	616	616	616

Notes: Table displays weighted-least-squares estimates obtained estimating Equation 1. All columns include city (C) and state-by-year (S-Y) effects and covariates (X) and indicator variables to capture past rioting (R). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered by city are presented beneath each estimate in brackets. All columns use 1960 population as weights. Column 1 limits the sample to cities with above sample median black population. Column 2 limits the sample to cities with a population greater than 100,000. Columns 3–6 are from separate regressions, each dropping one region at a time.*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4. Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of the Influence of NLSP on Riot Propensities by Sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		Population Greater	Nearby Law School		
	Black Population Above Sample Median	Than a 100,000	No	Yes	
A. DV: Number of Riots					
					Poisson
Legal Service Grant	-0.208***	-0.217**	0.423	-0.211**	-0.967***
(In Millions)	[0.0800]	[0.0953]	[0.464]	[0.0951]	[4.00e-07]
R-squared	0.663	0.742	0.281	0.634	
B. DV: Severity Group					
					Ordered Logit
Legal Service Grant	-0.208***	-0.175*	0.634	-0.198***	-1.158***
(In Millions)	[0.0785]	[0.0890]	[0.680]	[0.0699]	[0.000363]
R-squared	0.562	0.631	0.311	0.513	
C. DV: Days of Rioting					
Legal Service Grant	-0.298**	-0.277*	0.512	-0.283**	
(In Millions)	[0.123]	[0.153]	[0.563]	[0.134]	
R-squared	0.643	0.717	0.315	0.600	
Observations	2,480	1,032	4,320	3,848	
Number of Cities	310	129	540	481	

Notes: Table displays weighted-least-squares estimates obtained estimating Equation 1. All columns include city (C) and state-by-year (S-Y) effects and covariates (X) and indicator variables to capture past rioting (R). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered by city are presented beneath each estimate in brackets. All columns use 1960 population as weights. Column 1 limits the sample to cities with above sample median black population. Column 2 limits the sample to cities with a population greater than 100,000. Columns 3--6 are from separate regressions, each dropping one region at a time.*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5. Law Enforcement Legal Climate from the Legal Service Agency Survey

Variables	(1) Effect on NLSP	(2) Relation to community	(3) Relation with minorities
Time since NLSP established	0.0335*	0.0477**	0.0473**
	[0.0229]	[0.0232]	[0.0235]
Observations	181	181	180
R-squared	0.366	0.380	0.366

Note: The data in the 1970 Legal Service Agency Survey (LSAS) was collected from the Auerbach Corporation for an evaluation of NLSP projects in 1970 and 1971. Each column reports estimates from a separate linear regression. All three regressions use state fixed effects. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are presented in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6. Difference in Difference Estimates of the Influence of NLSP on Property Values

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	DV: Log of Median Residential Property Rates					
	All Homes			**Black Owned Homes**		
NLSP Funding		0.0324***			0.0180*	
		[0.0113]			[0.00978]	
NLSP (0/1)			0.0441*			0.00554
			[0.0248]			[0.0332]
High Severity Group (0/1)	-0.0724	-0.0822**	-0.0882	-0.153***	-0.138***	-0.153***
	[0.0587]	[0.0393]	[0.0586]	[0.0411]	[0.0452]	[0.0409]
Medium Severity Group (0/1)	-0.0387	-0.00494	-0.0518*	-0.0282	0.00706	-0.0285
	[0.0309]	[0.0284]	[0.0311]	[0.0367]	[0.0413]	[0.0365]
Observations	1,848	1,848	1,848	555	555	555
R-squared	0.509	0.560	0.512	0.420	0.437	0.420
Number of Cities	616	616	616	185	185	185

Notes: Table display least-squares estimates. The dependent variable is the log of the median property values f provided in the published tables from the 1960, 1970, and 1980 Census. Covariates are from the1962, 1972 and 1983 City and County Data Books. Each regression is weighted by 1960 population. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are presented beneath each estimate in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7. OLS and 2SLS Estimates of the Influence of NLSP on Property Values

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
				IV: Age of Oldest Law School	
A. DV: Change in the Log of Median Residential Property Rates					
Severity Group (0-2)	-0.0629	-0.171	-0.0590	-0.334	-0.0374
	[0.0917]	[0.114]	[0.0877]	[0.265]	[0.0891]
NLSP Funding		0.0455***		0.116	
		[0.0131]		[0.0962]	
NLSP (0/1)			0.108*		0.183
			[0.0578]		[0.177]
R-squared	0.593	0.625	0.616	0.298	0.607
B. DV: Change in the Log of Median Black-Owned Residential Property Rates					
Severity Group (0-2)	-0.220*	-0.355*	-0.250*	-0.697	-0.234
	[0.129]	[0.190]	[0.133]	[0.449]	[0.144]
NLSP Funding		0.0441**		0.185	
		[0.0199]		[0.153]	
NLSP (0/1)			0.127		0.407*
			[0.0921]		[0.215]
R-squared	0.445	0.327	0.455		0.391
Observations	104	101	104	101	101

Notes: Table display least-squares estimates. The dependent variable is the change in the log of the median property values f provided in the published tables from the 1960, 1970, and 1980 Census. Covariates are from the1962, 1972 and 1983 City and County Data Books. Each regression is weighted by 1960 population. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are presented beneath each estimate in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 1A. Estimated Average NLSP Funding (In Millions) by Instrument
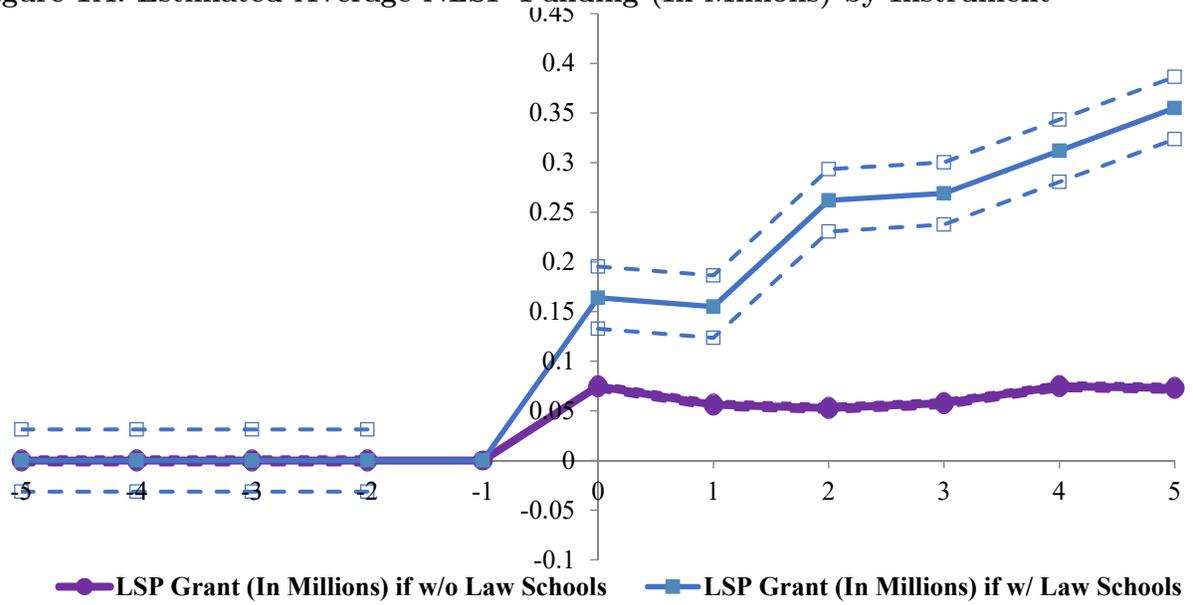
Note: Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered by city are presented. Dependent variable is size of a NLSP Grant in millions. The horizontal axis corresponds the years before and after the first NLSP grant is received. Zero is the year the grant is received.

Table 1A. The Relationship between First Legal Services Grants and 1960 City Demographics

Dependent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) First NLSP Grant (in Millions)	(6)
	0/1 Receive NLSP		Year NLSP Established			
Median age	0.00558	0.00676	-0.0215	-0.0180	-0.00686	-0.00738
	[0.00547]	[0.00559]	[0.0455]	[0.0472]	[0.00688]	[0.00695]
Median income	-0.0650**	-0.0610**	0.0241	-0.0674	0.0602	0.0740
	[0.0265]	[0.0281]	[0.259]	[0.278]	[0.0550]	[0.0563]
Population per square mile	-0.00248	-0.00878*	0.00771	0.0209	0.0358***	0.0327***
	[0.00376]	[0.00478]	[0.0172]	[0.0222]	[0.00712]	[0.00674]
Log of the proportion of residents w/ 12 or more years of schooling	-0.00252	-0.00221	0.0313	0.0343*	0.00234	0.00146
	[0.00293]	[0.00306]	[0.0200]	[0.0207]	[0.00379]	[0.00365]
Nonwhite	0.0115***	0.0147***	-0.0134	-0.0166	0.00494*	0.00465*
	[0.00251]	[0.00244]	[0.0173]	[0.0163]	[0.00267]	[0.00268]
Riot in 1964	0.145	0.0390	0.266	0.455	0.0580	0.0439
	[0.109]	[0.136]	[0.404]	[0.424]	[0.121]	[0.118]
Riot in 1965	0.0511	0.0863	-0.318	-0.340	0.0173	0.00332
	[0.0514]	[0.0600]	[0.406]	[0.374]	[0.0847]	[0.0824]
Law school (0/1)	0.450***		-0.683*		0.0613	
	[0.0444]		[0.380]		[0.0439]	
Age of law school		0.00453***		-0.00729*		0.00105**
		[0.000586]		[0.00372]		[0.000462]
Observations	616	616	211	211	211	211
R-squared	0.547	0.509	0.495	0.487	0.857	0.860

Note: Each column reports estimates from separate weighted-least-squares regressions. The dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 is an indicator equal to 1 if a city receives an NLSP grant from 1965 to 1975. The dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is the year a city first receives an NLSP grant. The dependent variable in columns 5 and 6 is the size of the first NLSP grant in millions of dollars. All columns include state fixed effects. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are corrected for clustering with state and presented in brackets. City demographic variables are from the 1960 Decennial Census. All columns use 1960 population as weights. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1