# Nonviolence, Violence and Voting: Effects of the 1960s Black Protests on White Attitudes and Voting Behavior [*]

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**Abstract**

How do the subordinate few persuade the dominant many? Within democratic polities, protest movements are common yet can generate both support and opposition. This article links tactics employed by subordinate group protesters to conditional feelings of empathy or antipathy among the voting majority. Nonviolent protests potentially prime shared national identities and facilitate egalitarian-oriented coalitions. Violent protests, by contrast, tend to activate subnational identities in which ethnocratic concerns for hierarchy, order and in-group safety predominate. I test this argument by comparing the political consequences of black-led protest movements in the 1960s on white attitudes and voting behavior. In the 1964, 1968 and 1972 presidential elections, I find proximity to black-led nonviolent protests was associated with significant increases in county-level Democratic vote-share whereas proximity to black-led violent protests caused a substantively significant decline. These results suggest feelings of commonality and threat are dynamic, contextual and responsive to mobilization by subordinate groups.

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How do the subordinate few persuade the dominant many? For marginalized minorities within majoritarian polities, progress through electoral politics typically demands winning coalitions. One of the most common methods by which outgroups assert their interests and cultivate allies is through protest movements. Yet protests, particularly by stigmatized subgroups, risk alienating members of the majority. How, then, do subordinate group activists reshape democratic politics toward historically disfavored groups? And, what types of tactics are most effective? These questions are central to understanding the asymmetrical politics of how statistical minorities overcome (or succumb to) the tyranny of the majority, especially when the cleavages cut across deeply entrenched racial, religious and ethnic lines. Looking at the case of the black-led protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the scholarly literature evaluating the political effects of protests is mixed, with some studies showing accommodation to protester demands (Skrentny 1996; Gillion 2012) and others showing increased opposition to the interests of African Americans (Flamm 2005; Weaver 2007).

This analysis improves on the existing literature in a number of ways. Where most prior work within American political science has tended to focus on elite behavior, possibly introducing issues of selection bias, I examine effects of black-led protests on mass opinion and mass voting behavior. Prior work has also tended to aggregate data by year and region, obscuring important temporal and geographic variation. In comparative politics, nonviolent protest movements have been shown to be substantially more effective than those that employ violence but these analyses have typically been cross-national, obscuring both within-country variation and the dynamics of electoral politics in democracies. I use a more fine-grained and geocoded national sample of protests and counties to estimate potential effects

for every county-protest dyad, irrespective of political boundaries (e.g., a protest in Newark, NJ can influence voting in both New York, NY and Philadelphia, PA even though all three are in different states). Most prior scholarship on the Civil Rights Movement and "urban riots" tends to focus only on one of the two waves of protest (or make no distinction at all). I disambiguate effects of black-led nonviolent protests as compared with violent protests. Prior work is also challenged by issues of endogeneity. I use rainfall as an instrument for protest activity to identify the causal effect of black-led violent protests on voting in the 1968 presidential election. Finally, I build on this evidence and prior work to offer a theory for when a dominant group might align with or against the interests of a subordinate group.

Examining county-level voting patterns, I find that black-led protests in which some violence occurs are associated with a statistically significant decline in Democratic vote-share in the 1964, 1968 and 1972 presidential elections. Black-led nonviolent protests, by contrast, exhibit a statistically significant positive relationship with county-level Democratic vote-share in the same period. Further, I find that in the 1968 presidential election exposure to violent protests caused a decline in Democratic vote-share. Examining counterfactual scenarios in the 1968 election, I estimate that fewer violent protests are associated with a substantially increased likelihood that the Democratic presidential nominee, Hubert Humphrey, would have beaten the Republican nominee, Richard Nixon. As African Americans were strongly identified with the Democratic party in this time period, my results suggest that, in at least some contexts, political violence by a subordinate group may contribute to a backlash among segments of the dominant group and encourage outcomes directly at odds with the preferences of the protestors.

In short, these results suggest mass movements, not just elites, can play a critical role in setting the national political agenda. In addition, these results suggest there is not evidence, between 1964 and 1972, of a national electoral backlash directly against nonviolent protest activity. When protests do escalate to violence, however, there is evidence of a backlash. Counterfactual estimates suggest that, had fewer violent protests occurred, Nixon would likely have lost to Humphrey. Also, Nixon's "Southern Strategy," far from winning the South, was effective by appealing to more racially moderate whites in the midwest and mid-Atlantic; Finally, while the mid-1960s multiracial Democratic coalition was fragile, moderate white flight from the Democratic party might not have been inevitable and that, but for the joint effect of violent protests and widespread, easily triggered anti-black sentiment, campaigns built on "law and order" might never have carried the day as a winning strategy to build new, winning right-of-center coalitions.

## Civil Rights, Black Power and "Law and Order"

In the 1960s, two competing schools of thought emerged among African American's about how to pursue justice (Walton 1971). In the early part of the decade, the civil rights movement worked within the American political system, endorsed nonviolent strategies like lawsuits and civil disobedience, and pursued incremental change over decades. As can be seen in Figure 1, nonviolent civil disobedience peaked in the earlier period of the 1960s. While bigoted white civilians and police forces often responded brutally to these protests, the protesters themselves went to great lengths to avoid responding in kind. The logic was, in part, that occupying the moral high ground helped draw attention to and sympathy for the civil rights movement among the larger more moderate white majority. Bayard Rustin, a critical

influence on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s use of nonviolence and a key organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, argued "[T]he country's twenty million black people can[not] win political power alone. We need allies. The future of the Negro struggle depends on whether the contradictions of this society can be resolved by a coalition of progressive forces which becomes the effective political majority in the United States" (1965).

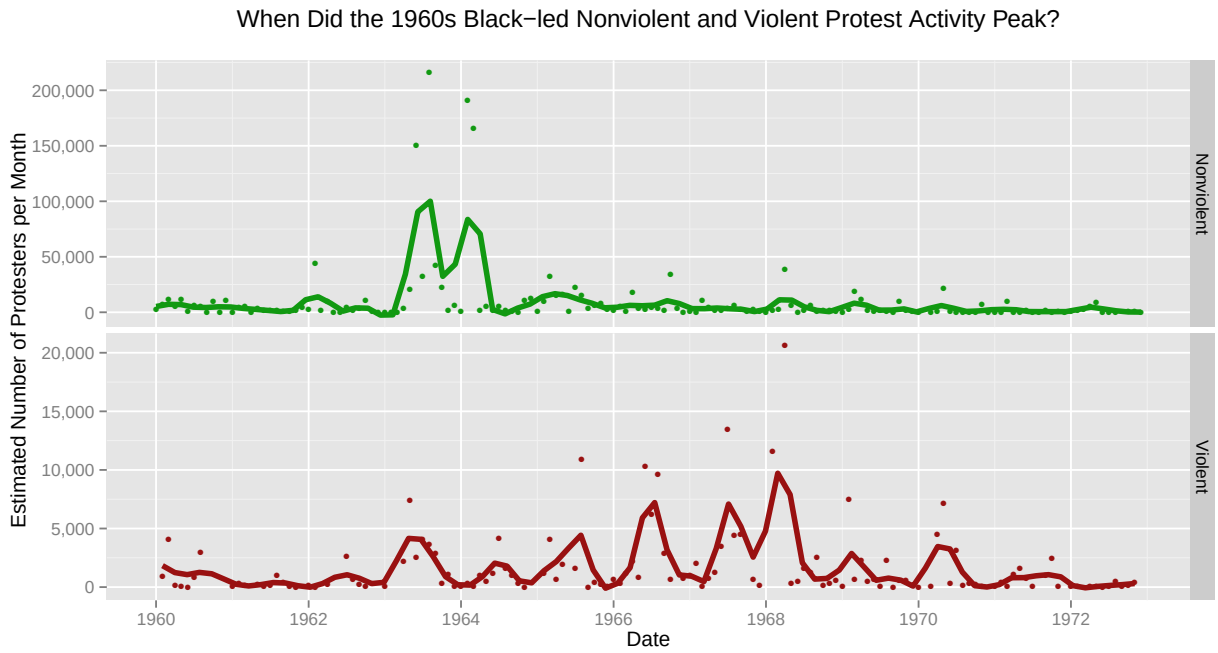


Figure 1: Scatter plot of protest activity, 1960 to 1972. by whether protesters were nonviolent (top panel) or engaged in some violence (bottom panel). Note the $y$-axis for nonviolent protests is about 10 times the scale of the $y$-axis for violent protests. Trend lines are Loess curves. Data: Olzak (1994).

The strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience required routinely subjecting protesters to extreme violence at the hands of white supremacists while at the same time defining black progress in terms that were acceptable to white moderates. Beginning in the mid-1960s, the influence of leaders like

Rustin and King was challenged by black nationalists like the Black Panthers, Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael who questioned the civil rights movement's deep commitment to nonviolent tactics and coalition politics. After centuries of white intransigence and opposition to black progress, these more militant voices spoke to growing skepticism in the integrationist agenda (Walton 1971). In contrast to the earlier era, a younger generation of leaders argued for the just use of violence. "Concerning nonviolence," wrote Malcolm X (1965), "It is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle. We believe in obeying the law." Similarly, Carmichael (1966) in a seminal speech at Berkeley, drew attention to the double standard in attitudes towards nonviolence, "The only time I hear people talk about nonviolence is when black people move to defend themselves against white people…[Black people] have already been nonviolent too many years." Figure 1 also shows that, coincident with the rise of black nationalism, black-led protests that happened to escalate to include violence by protestors peaked in the late 1960s.

In simple terms, the earlier era of the civil rights movement pursued what might be called a median white voter strategy. With African Americans outnumbered and outgunned by the white majority, nonviolent protest was both a moral and a pragmatic means to raise the salience of their cause, court the potential white allies and build politically successful multiracial coalitions. Black nationalists, by contrast, espoused more of a median black voter (or community member as many African Americans remained disenfranchised) strategy that advocated vigorous self-defense in the face of racist violence, sought advances through the development of black-led institutions and rejected the contingent power of coalition politics in which black progress depend heavily on white sympathy. While many of these ideas could be complementary, in the context of the 1960s, these two approaches came to represent

competing theories of how a subordinate group might fight for greater equality in the context of a deeply hierarchical, only partially-democratic society.

At the same time that various African American movements were working to overturn systems of racial segregation and subordination, white Americans were also mobilizing and reacting to the black insurgency. Figure 2 presents data on what Americans, when surveyed, indicated was the "most important problem" facing the country between 1950 and 1980. Looking at issues of race, two trends are noteworthy. First, from 1950 into the early 1960s, the percentage of Americans responding that civil rights was the most important problem remained low. In the early 1960s, however, it spiked from approximately 5 percent in December of 1962 to 48 percent in mid-1963. After years of being dormant, why did concern about civil rights suddenly become a national concern and then fade almost as quickly? Second, up until the mid-to-late 1960s, concern about "social control" as the most important problem remained in the single digits and then consumed the country to reach an initial peak of about 41 percent of respondents in August of 1967, before declining rapidly after 1971.[1] Again, why did concern for issues of "social control" emerge, seemingly out of nowhere, to top the national agenda and, like civil rights, drop in salience almost as quickly?In addition, what explains significant within-year variation in concern about "social control'?'

The rapidly shifting attitudes observed in polls were also evident in electoral politics among the white majority. In 1964, Barry Goldwater campaigned for the presidency, in part, by promising "law and order" against "crime in the streets." Though Goldwater lost in a blowout, in 1966 Ronald Reagan echoed Goldwater's campaign to win the California Gubernatorial race (Flamm 2005). Why was "law

[1] The "social control" measure is a composite of several different categories including concern about crime, civil unrest, communist agitators, juvenile delinquency and other issues. The polling data is also sourced from more than one pollster. For a critique of this composite measure, see Loo and Grimes (2004). Evidence suggests that many citizens conflated issues like violent protests and communist agitation so I use the composite measure without adjustment (Flamm 2005).

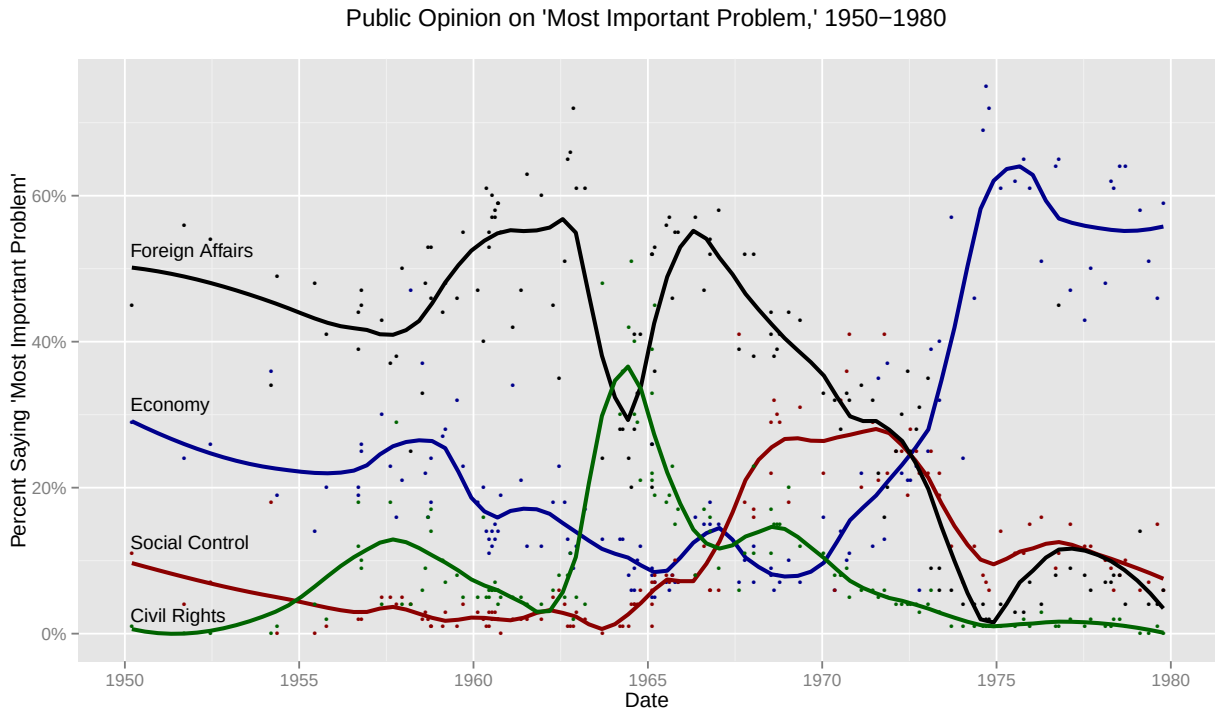


Figure 2: Scatter plot of public opinion on the 'Most Important Problem,' 1950 to 1980. Each dot represents the percentage of people answering that a particular issue is the most important problem in America in a single poll. Lines represent a smoothed trend across polls (with Loess). Data from: Loo and Grimes (2004); Niemi, Mueller, and Smith (1989).

and order" a losing strategy in 1964 yet a winning strategy in 1966? In addition, why did "law and order" fail Goldwater but reward Richard Nixon who successfully marshaled a tough-on-crime campaign to help win the Whitehouse. Further, while "law and order" rhetoric had been popular in the South for decades (Finkelman 1992), why did it first take root outside the South in relatively moderate California? In short, how do we explain the rapid temporal and geographic variation in concern for race-related policy, first with civil rights and, later, with law and order?

# Protests and political behavior

How might black-led protests have influenced white voting and public opinion in America? Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Democrats became the de facto party of African American voters (Carmines and Stimson 1990; Bositis 2008).[2] As such, Democrats are assumed to be the party most aligned with black interests and preferences. It is not immediately clear, based on the current literature, whether 1960s black-led protest movements in the U.S. helped or hurt Democratic vote share. The following sections survey the literature on protests and voting in the field of comparative politics, and on the 1960s urban protest movements in the field of American politics.

## Resistance, redistribution and repression in American politics

In American politics, the dominant approach to understanding political responses to protest movements and civil unrest has been to research whether elite political actors utilize positive or negative incentives to exert control. When positive incentives are deployed, elite state actors enact redistributive policies to temper insurgent voices.[3] In the wake of the 1960s and 1970s urban uprisings, scholars have found that political elites responded to the civil unrest through increased spending on welfare programs like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and other redistributive policies (Fording 2001; 1997; Skrentny 1996; Hicks and Swank 1983; Isaac and Kelly 1981; Cloward and Piven 1971).

In addition to "carrots," states also mobilize "sticks" in which efforts at repression may trump or complement those of redistribution (Button 1978). While much of the literature recognizes that state

[2] According to data published by Bositis (2008, Table 1, p 8), between 1944 and 1960 black party identification with Democrats averaged about 53 percent. Between 1964 and 2012, black party identification with Democrats averaged 81 percent (See Figure 14) in Appendix.

[3] For example, in response to the popular unrest of the "Arab Spring," one analyst estimated that Middle Eastern Gulf Coast governments have increased spending on social programs by $150 billion (Kapur 2011).

actors may respond with both redistributive and repressive policies, most research has focused on beneficent responses. Only a few scholars have investigated whether protest and civil disorders were associated with enhanced expenditures on policing and efforts at coercive control (Yates and Fording 2005; Fording 2001; Welch 1975; Button 1978; Feagin and Hahn 1973; Iris 1983). The results of these studies have been ambiguous, with some finding a positive relationship between protests, political violence and state repression while others report null findings.

Results across the broader literature on the political consequences of social movements and violent protests have also been ambiguous. Summarizing the field, Giugni (1998) notes, "…in the whole it is difficult out of this impressive amount of empirical work to provide a clear-cut answer to the question whether disruption can produce policy changes …." A number of methodological and conceptual problems likely contribute to the muddle in these results. First, prior work focuses almost exclusively on elite response as the outcome of interest. As a result, the studies tend to have a small number of units, many of which are likely influenced by idiosyncratic factors like historical and institutional constraints on elite decision making. Second, prior studies typically ignore geographic data beyond narrowly paired protest events and the immediately proximate governmental or administrative units (i.e. metropolitan statistical areas or states). Consequently, the aggregate effect of multiple protests across regions or even the nation is unobserved. Third, analyses of limited subsets of cities and civil disorders may confound the results by biasing the samples.

Gillion (2012; 2013) by contrast, conducts a large-N statistical analysis using nationally geocoded data of racial and ethnic minority protests and theorizes that civil unrest serves as a form of informative cue to which members of Congress are responsive. While Gillion's approach offers a systematic

empirical case for political consequences of protests by subordinate groups, it leaves unanswered how protests shape mass voting behavior, executive politics and potential differential effects of nonviolent and violent protests.

## Nonviolent and violent protest in comparative perspective

Looking at violent and nonviolent movements between non-state and state actors between 1900 and 2006, Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) find that nonviolent campaigns are successful about 53 percent of the time as compared with 26 percent for violent efforts. Stephan and Chenoweth explain that nonviolent methods are more effective, on average, as compared with violent tactics because they enhance both domestic and international legitimacy while also constraining state deployment of violence to suppress the movement. While the theory and evidence are attentive to the role of protest tactics on electoral politics, the units of analysis in the statistical results are 323 resistance campaigns. As a result, there is no means to test within-country variation in the reactions to those campaigns. In addition, while Stephan and Chenoweth use historical case studies to address mechanisms of action, the quantitative data do not allow the authors to fully test mechanisms such as the effect of protest on public opinion.

Wilkinson (2004) offers a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between elections and ethnic riots.[4] Using data from India, Wilkinson investigates what factors contribute to the occurrence of a violent protest or, conversely, work to suppress inter-ethnic violence. He finds that, at the local level, politicians often work to incite violent protests in an effort to increase the salience of ethnic ties and

[4]Throughout this article I use a variety of phrases to refer to violent protests including political violence, civil unrest, uprising, ethnic violence, riots and uprisings. I refer to events without violence by protesters as nonviolent protests. I do this in keeping with the range of terminology commonly used to describe these events in scholarly writing across sociology, economics and political science over the last four decades.

reduce the pull of other cross-cutting political cleavages like party affiliation, particularly as elections loom. In contrast to local political actors working to gin-up inter-ethnic rivalries, Wilkinson finds that Indian state-level politicians sometimes work to thwart budding violent protests while, at other times, facilitate such violence. He explains the variation with an electoral-incentives model that suggests state-level actors attempt to maintain the peace when such actions are useful to sustaining winning political coalitions.

Wilkinson also applies the model to other cases, including the United States. While the white-on-black race riots of the American case fit the electoral-incentives model between Reconstruction and the 1950s, Wilkinson (2004) does not address how the electoral-incentives model would apply to the black-led nonviolent and violent protests of the 1960s and 1970s. Further, the electoral-incentives model does not clearly extend to the 1960s protests. There is no evidence of which I am aware of local politicians in the U.S. strategically inciting black protests for electoral gain, and no pattern of state or national actors intentionally facilitating protests once underway.

## Protests and the rise of punitive politics

A third literature that investigates the effects of black-led protests on voting is primarily concerned with the origins of law and order campaign strategies and policies. While numerous theories attempt to explain the rising salience of crime in the public consciousness, most fail to offer a convincing argument about timing beckett2008power,Wacquant:2002p1276,Schlosser:1998p7090,gottschalk2006prison,garland2001the-culture. Broadly speaking, two theories in the literature on the rising salience of social disorder are attentive to the issue of timing. An older "backlash" hypothesis argues that white masses mobilized

against the perceived excesses of liberalism, particularly in response to crime and black-led violent protests (Flamm 2005). Flamm offers an historical account of the emergence of law and order politics beginning with growing concerns about juvenile delinquency in the late 1950s. Flamm argues that rising rates of crime and civil unrest in the 1960s were the key spark motiving changes in voter sentiment. Weaver (2007), by contrast, rejects this mass mobilization or "backlash narrative" in favor of a theory of "frontlash" or an elite-led push that caused citizens to be concerned with crime. In line with scholars of public opinion like Zaller (1992), the frontlash theory argues that agenda setting by elites was the critical factor driving mass opinion. With frontlash, Weaver contends that resistance to the civil rights movement drove opponents to seek new policy domains in which to compete. Responding to the success of the civil rights agenda, right-of-center elite political actors began to champion a new agenda built around law and order. Where Flamm emphasizes that law and order arose in response to growing levels of crime and social disorder, Weaver situates the taste for punitive policy in the broader racial struggles of the period. Thus, according to Weaver, the timing of law and order campaigns is essentially a reaction to the civil rights movement. Weaver comments that the strongest interpretation is, "punitive criminal justice was part of the price of civil rights liberalizations" (265).

Both the backlash and the frontlash hypotheses leave important questions unanswered. Weaver argues the backlash analysis is more of a narrative than a theory and suggests it offers little guidance as to what circumstances should generate a backlash and what sorts of electoral or policy outcomes should be expected (Weaver 2007, 237). Though the frontlash account is more fully theorized, the evidence in support of it is ambiguous. For example, the frontlash hypothesis emphasizes the important role of the 1964 Republican presidential nominee Barry Goldwater's nomination speech and campaign in

triggering concern about crime in the general public (Weaver 2007, 264). Weaver's data, however, suggest that the first spike in crime salience came in 1966, about two years after Goldwater's 1964 campaign and after a modest dip in part of 1965. Public opinion data (see Figure 5) suggests that until 1967, fewer than ten percent of the respondents mentioned factors related to "social control" (such as crime or riots) as the most important problem in America. That concern about "social control" remained low in the immediate wake of the Goldwater campaign and then rose significantly before the Nixon campaign for the presidency began suggests that perhaps something other than elite political rhetoric was critical to the shift in public opinion. In addition, an elite-driven theory of public opinion would need to explain the seasonal spikes and troughs in public opinion on "social control" seen in Figure 5. The large spike in concern about "social control" in 1967, an off-election year, poses an additional puzzle for an elite-driven model.

Two additional questions of timing and geography remain for the frontlash theory. Finkelman (1992; 2007) note that the argument that crime became increasingly racialized in the mid-1960s gives insufficient attention to the multi-century history of criminalizing black activity that was legal for whites. Given the long history, particularly in the deep south, of elected officials racializing crime and criminalizing black activity as an explicit campaign strategy, why did such efforts generally fail to succeed on the national stage through Goldwater's 1964 presidential election but then become ascendent regionally in California in 1966 and nationally in 1968?

## Conditional group identity theory

To explain the puzzles of temporal and geographic variation in attitudes and voting behavior on issues of race, I propose a theory of conditional group identity. Within this framework, all individuals are understood to belong to many distinct and overlapping social groups in which the salience of each group varies according to cues and context. In line with work on social identity theory (Tajfel et al. 1971) and more recent work on operationalizing race (Sen and Wasow 2016), these group identities are understood to be malleable and amenable to manipulation. While some individuals may be more fixed than others in their identification with a particular group, the theory posits that all identity is fluid to some degree and is responsive to some cues and context.

In the case of the 1960s social movements, like Gillion (2012) I conceive of protests as a form of signaling. In addition, I argue that the signal operates not only as information but also as a kind of emotional prime that triggers bridging cross-group identities or bonding subgroup identities in the mass public depending on the cue (Putnam 2001; Transue 2007). In simple terms, I argue that nonviolent protests, when used by a subordinate group, have the potential to trigger overarching identities, such as a common Americanness, in the dominant group. Violent protests by a subordinate group, by contrast, are more likely to trigger racial or ethnic subgroup identities, such as whiteness, in the dominant group. This approach treats feelings of group empathy or group threat as part of a single continuum of possible reactions an individual may experience in response to some sort of signal or cue.

When a subordinate group engages in activities that prime a bridging, cross-group identity, they also trigger the potential for cross-group empathy. Sirin, Villalobos, and Valentino (2014) define the dynamic as, "empathy felt by members of one group toward another can alter reactions to threats

and improve intergroup attitudes and behavior, boosting opposition to punitive policies and elevating support for civil-rights protections that might even translate into political action" (pg 5). Conditional group identity theory builds on this framework in two ways. First, in line with Transue (2007), the capacity for cross-group empathy should be seen as a dynamic trait that responds to cues and context. Second, and relatedly, the boundaries of which groups are perceived to be ingroups, and therefore deserving of empathy, are also fluid and responsive to a variety of social and environmental triggers.

In electoral politics, conditional identity theory suggests that triggering feelings of group empathy will have multiple implications. First, group empathy has the potential to turn statistical minorities into members of winning majorities. Second, following prior work in social psychology, feelings of group empathy will tend to trigger less egoistic and more altruistic attitudes, as well as more egalitarian and less hierarchical attitudes (Batson et al. 1997; Sirin, Villalobos, and Valentino 2014). Third, conflicts that occur in the context of heightened group empathy will be more likely to be solved through peaceful, democratic means as opposed to coercive, more authoritarian means (Tuschman 2013).

Conversely, when a subordinate group engages in activities that prime a bonding identity, they also trigger the potential for the dominant group to engage in ingroup bonding and heightened outgroup antipathy (Key 1949; Enos 2010). Under the conditional group identity model, perceptions of militancy or violence by an outgroup can provoke a "circle the wagon" mentality among members of the ingroup that heighten ingroup identity, increase outgroup antipathy and motivate greater concern for safety.[5] The "circle the wagon" phenomenon appears to operate a bit like a "rally 'round the flag" effect (Mueller 1970) in which external conflict drives increased nationalist fervor and patriotism. Per-

[5] The idiom "circle the wagons" comes from the history of the early American West and is defined by Reference.com as a maneuver "to form the wagons of a covered-wagon train into a circle for defensive purposes, as against Indian attack" (Dictionary.com 2013). Though the term can refer to more general forms of defensiveness and inward looking, its etymological roots in interracial conflict make it especially apt as a way to describe a type of group threat.

ceptions of an internal threat by a domestic outgroup differ from the "rally 'round the flag" dynamic, however, in a number of critical ways. First, these perceived conflicts are sub-national and typically operate through cleavages of race and ethnicity rather than country. Second, rather than a surge of national pride, these perceived conflicts generate a heightened sense of allegiance to the ethnic or racial ingroup. For example, survey research in Los Angeles before and after the Watts uprising found that African Americans became more black-identified following the unrest (Sears and McConahay 1973).

Third, where the "rally 'round the flag" dynamic leads to greater support for a President or the state, these cases of racial threat correspond with feelings that the state is failing to adequately protect members of the ingroup and, therefore, lead to greater support for more punitive justice policy. Fourth, building on the earlier points, in the wake of perceptions of violence by an outgroup and a sense that the state has failed to ensure safety, members of the ingroup often take it upon themselves to provide security through actions ranging from moving to a new neighborhood to buying a gun to engaging in vigilante "rough justice." As an example, a proxy for this anxiety can be found in data on gun sales. According to one estimate, "gun sales to whites more than doubled during the weekend after Watts" (Flamm 2005, 59). Farley (1980) reports that about 600,000 guns were sold, per year, in the first half of the 1960s but that more than two million guns were sold, per year, in the latter half of the 1960s and early 1970s. Citing a report from the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Newton, Zimring, and on Firearms 1969, Figure 11-5), Farley also points out, "in many cities a sharp increase in gun sales and registrations followed a riot. In Detroit, for example, the number of handgun permits issued by the police increased by a factor of five between 1965 and 1968." Similarly, news reports suggest that equivalent trends played out more recently during the black-led protests which escalated to violence

| | Nonviolent Protest | Violent Protest |
|---|---|---|
| Identity prime | Bridging, cross-group | Bonding, subgroup |
| Intergroup dynamic | Group empathy | Group threat |
| Tradition invoked | Egalitarian | Ethnocratic |
| Political implications | Cross-group coalition | "Circling the wagons" |
| Dispute resolution | Democratic means | Authoritarian means |

Table 1: Overview of how conditional group identity theory predicts a dominant group might respond to nonviolent and violent protests by a subordinate group.

in Ferguson, MO (Kravarik and Sidner 2014). Fifth, when the ingroup in question is the dominant group in the society and the outgroup is a subordinate group, perceptions of outgroup violence will likely spark more consolidated ethnic and racial bloc voting as well as a shift by a significant swath of the dominant group toward a more nativist or ethnocentric party. Table 1 presents an overview of how conditional group identity theory might apply to a dominant group in the context of nonviolent and violent protests by a subordinate group.

# Data and Variables of Interest

## Protests

The data on protests comes from two distinct sources. Though both are built primarily from newspaper accounts of protest, they differ in several important ways. Olzak (1994) covers protest activity between 1960 and 1980 for a wide range of groups and causes and includes data on both nonviolent and violent

protests. Carter (1990) provides data exclusively on black-led protests between 1964 and 1972 that escalate to violence outside of institutional settings such as colleges or prisons.[6] The Carter data defines a violent protest as an event that involves at least 30 participants and generates a detectable level of injury or property damage. This data set builds on decades of scholarship in sociology on the 1960s "urban riots" and offers more detail on violent protests than the Olzak data. For the analysis of nonviolent events, Olzak (1994) is used exclusively. For the analysis of violent protests, both Olzak (1994) and Carter (1990) are used, where possible, as a way to replicate the results across different data sets. For the instrumental variable analysis in which rainfall in April, 1968 is used to identify a causal effect of violent protests, only the Carter data is used as the Olzak data records few nonviolent or violent protests in the wake of Martin Luther King, Jr's assassination.

The primary explanatory variable, $Protest_{i,t}$, indicates whether county $i$ was "treated" with black-led protest activity in year $t$. Both data sets provide the date, city and state of each protest as well as several measures of the event's intensity such as the number of participants, arrests, injuries and deaths. Using the longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates of cities and towns, all protests were geocoded and the distance between protests and counties measured as the shortest distance between the centroids.

The protest treatment is a binary term that incorporates measures of distance, time and event intensity. The distance measure is a dichotomized measure that takes the value one if the distance is equal to or under 100 miles and zero if the distance is over 100 miles.[7] As the model relies heavily on distance between counties and protest cities, only states in the continental U.S. are included and thus

[6] I amend the Carter data to include one institutional protest in which violence occurs, the Attica prison uprising. I do so because the scope and size of the event is comparable to some of the largest non-institutionalized violent protests. The results presented are robust to its exclusion.

[7] As compared to a decay function in which the "strength" of the treatment declines with distance, a binary measure throws away much of the available data. A binary measure is used, however, because it is more easily interpreted and precisely delineates treated from control units which simplifies matching. The results are similar under either specification.

all counties in Alaska and Hawaii are excluded. The time measure is also a dichotomized term that takes the value one if the number of days between the date of the protest and the date of the relevant November election between 1964 and 1972 is less than 730 days and zero otherwise. The last component of the protest treatment is an intensity measure that takes the value one if the protest includes 10 or more protesters (for the Olzak data) or 10 or more arrests (for the Carter data) and zero otherwise. For a given county $i$ in a given year $t$, if the distance, time and intensity measures are all ones, the then protest treatment is also assigned a value of one. If any of the composite measures are zero, however, the county-year protest treatment will receive a value of zero.

## Voting

The outcome variable is the county-level percentage of votes going to the Democratic party in presidential elections between 1964 and 1972. The county-level voting data is drawn from Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale (1986). I focus on vote-share as the outcome variable because it offers a reasonable proxy for attitudes towards black interests and indicates mass opinion and behavior. In the counterfactual simulation estimating which candidate would have won the 1968 election if Martin Luther King, Jr. had not been assassinated, the electoral college vote data is taken from Leip (2005).

## Control Variables

I control for a wide range of variables that influence voting and for which data was available across three county-level censuses in 1962, 1972 and 1983. County-level demographic variables include the birth rate per 1,000 residents; the percentage of the population that has at least a high school diploma; the

percentage of the population that is black[8], and to account for non-linearities, the same term squared; and the median age. To account for some of the institutional and population-level variation across counties, I include terms for the logged per capita expenditures by local government, the percentage of the county population that lives in an urban setting, the logged total population and the percent population growth. To account for economic factors, the county-level median income, percent of the population that is unemployed and the percentage of housing that is owner occupied. Finally, a lagged term of the Democratic vote-share from the prior presidential election is included.[9] Where the census year data from 1962, 1972 and 1983 does not correspond to election years, I use linear interpolation to estimate the relevant values for 1964, 1968 and 1972.

# Empirical Strategy

To estimate the effects of black-led protest activity on opinion and voting behavior, I use four methods: plots of raw data, panel models, a variety of linear models with various matching and weighting techniques and, to address endogeneity, an instrumental variable model.

# Results

## Did black-led protests shift public opinion?

The spike and decline in protest activity corresponds to similar rises and falls in public concern about civil rights and "social control." Figure 4 presents a scatter plot of protest activity and public opinion

[8] In the 1960 Census, this item is the percentage of the population that is nonwhite.

[9] For the 1968 and 1972 elections, inclusion of the lagged Democratic vote-share term likely introduces post-treatment bias that attenuates the effect of protests. Table 6 in the Appendix presents results without a lagged term.

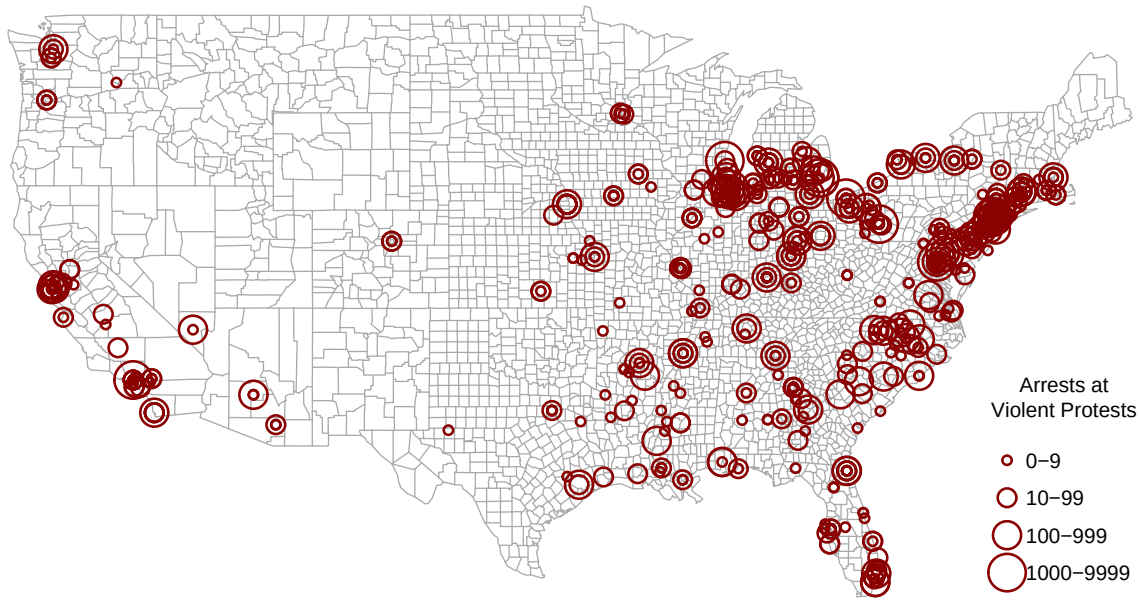


Figure 3: Map of the geographic distribution and intensity of urban uprisings, 1964-1971. More intense violent protests are indicated by a larger radius. Concentric circles indicate multiple events of varying intensity within the same city. Arrest data from Carter (1990).

on 'civil rights' from 1960 to 1971. The left $y$-axis is the number of protesters per month participating in nonviolent events and is represented by a small black circle. The right $y$-axis is the percentage of respondents in a national survey saying that 'civil rights' is the most important problem in America and is represented by the trend line. The data in Figure 4 suggest that public opinion on 'civil rights' and black-led nonviolent protest activity move together. In the summer of 1963, as protest activity per

month peaks, concern about civil rights skyrockets and, as monthly protest activity dies down, so, too, does the percentage of people stating 'civil rights' is the most important problem.[10]

Similarly, a plot of violent protest and public opinion data shows a strong correlation between uprisings and a taste for "social control" among the mass public. Figure 5 presents a plot of uprising severity for 752 incidents by month and year using data from Carter (1986) and public opinion data from from Niemi, Mueller, and Smith (1989). The logged number of arrests is presented on the left-hand $y$-axis and, as before, each event is plotted as a small circle. The public opinion data is presented with a scale on the right-hand $y$-axis and details what percent of those surveyed identified "social control" as the most important problem facing America (and is plotted with the trend line). The measures not only follow similar year-over-year patterns, but also season-by-season.

Figure 5 indicates that national public concern about "social control" only spikes modestly following the Watts uprising but does generally exhibit cumulatively higher peaks and valleys with each successive wave of unrest through the early 1970s. More significantly, the public opinion data exhibits significant variation within year. Consistent across almost every year is a peak around mid-year and a trough around the new year.

[10]The Niemi, Mueller, and Smith (1989) public opinion data is the same as in Figure 2 except that I only present the percentage of people who say "social control" is the most important problem and exclude the measures for civil rights, foreign policy and the economy.

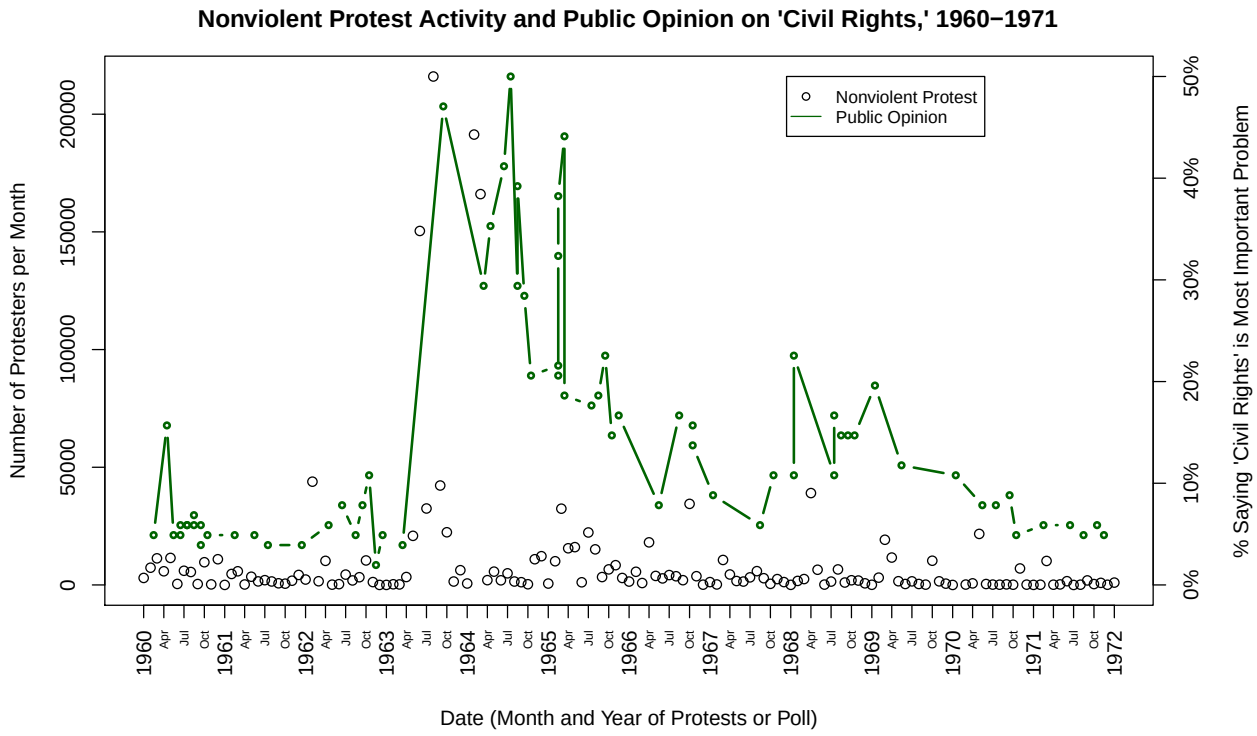


Figure 4: Scatter plot of protest activity (left $y$-axis) and public opinion on 'civil rights' (right $y$-axis), 1960 to 1971. Data from: Niemi, Mueller, and Smith (1989); Olzak (1994).

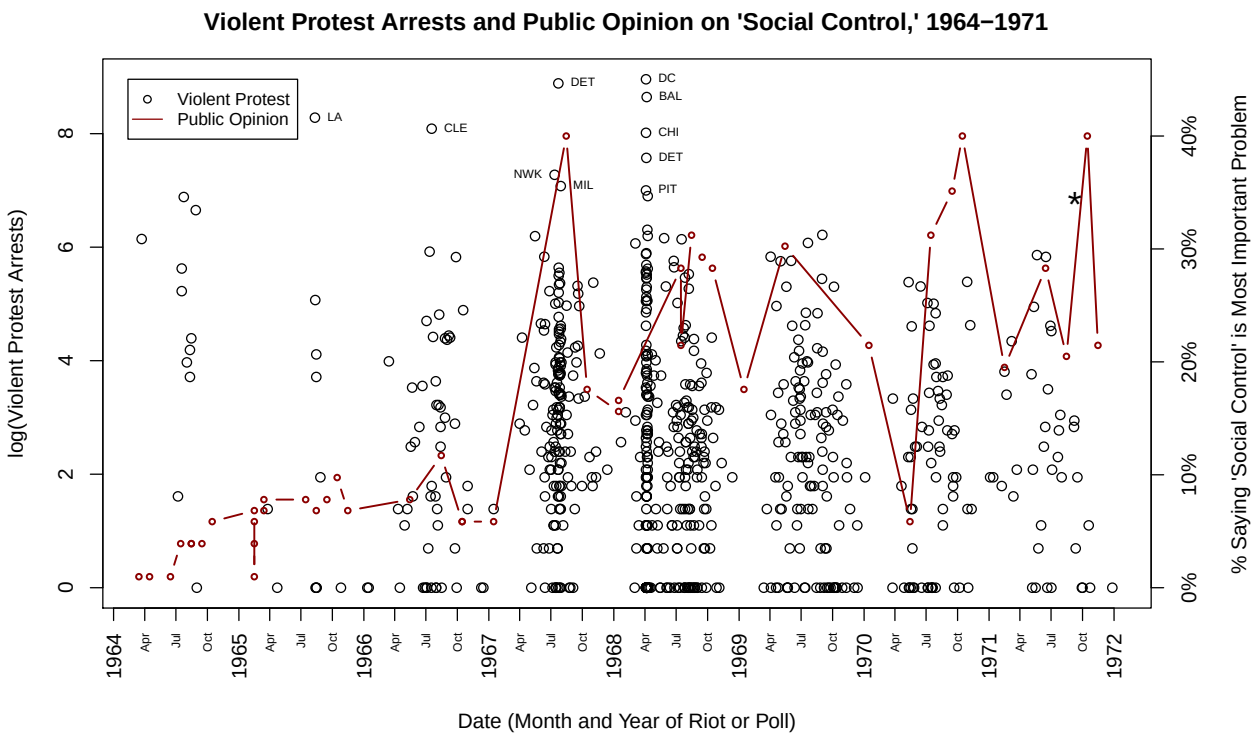


Figure 5: Scatter plot of logged violent protest arrests (left $y$-axis) and public opinion on 'social control' (right $y$-axis), 1964 to 1971. Data sources: Niemi, Mueller, and Smith (1989); Carter (1986). The ten uprisings in which more than 1,000 people were arrested are labeled with abbreviated city names. The Attica prison uprising occurs on September 9th, 1971 and is labeled with an asterisk (*). Except for the addition of Attica, in keeping with prior scholarship, violent protests occurring within institutional settings such as prisons or colleges are otherwise excluded from the data.

## Did protests influence voting behavior?

My goal is to identify a causal effect of protests on Democratic vote-share. First, I estimate the following panel model:

$$DemShare_{i,t} = \beta_1 Protest_{i,t} + \beta_2 DemShare_{i,t-1} + \boldsymbol{\beta_x} \mathbf{X_{i,t}} + \gamma_t + \mu_i + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

where $DemShare_{i,t}$ is the vote-share of Democratic party in county $i$ in the election occurring in year $t$. $Protest_{i,t}$ is a binary indicator of whether county $i$ experienced a protest in year $t$. For any given county-year, the protest "treatment" is calculated as a function of whether county $i$ was within 100 miles of any protest that occurred within 730 days before the election in year $t$ and exhibited a level of intensity in which at least 10 protesters participated (Olzak data) or were arrested (Carter data).[11]

The results of Model (1) in Table 2 suggest that moving from a county that was not exposed to black-led nonviolent protest activity to one that was is associated with a 0.83 percentage point increase in Democratic vote share ($p$ <0.001). Conversely, the results of The results of Models (2) and (3) suggest that moving from a county that was not exposed to black-led violent protest activity to one that was is associated with a 1.12 to 1.55 percentage point decrease in Democratic vote share ($p$ <0.001).

[11] The findings are robust to alternate specifications of the distance, time and intensity thresholds. The results are also robust to specifications in which $Protest_{i,t}$ is coded as a continuous rather than binary variable. In the models presented here, $Protest_{i,t}$ is coded as a binary variable both for ease of interpretation and to operate within the potential outcomes framework.

Table 2: Panel Models of Effect of Protests on County-level Democratic Presidential Vote-share, 1964-1972.

| | DV: County-level Democratic Presidential vote-share | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Nonviolent Protests (Olzak data) | Violent Protests (Olzak data) | Violent Protests (Carter data) |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Protest 'Treatment' | 0.834*** | −1.120*** | −1.546*** |
| | (0.134) | (0.132) | (0.098) |
| Birth Rate | 1.309*** | 1.274*** | 1.234*** |
| | (0.197) | (0.193) | (0.188) |
| log(PC Local Gov Exp) | −4.611*** | −4.332*** | −4.440*** |
| | (1.420) | (1.373) | (1.445) |
| % HS+ Educ | 0.238** | 0.223* | 0.216** |
| | (0.119) | (0.117) | (0.107) |
| % Black | 132.167*** | 125.044*** | 123.859*** |
| | (39.144) | (38.756) | (38.871) |
| (% Black)$^2$ | −269.417*** | −262.896*** | −267.279*** |
| | (55.043) | (54.097) | (55.893) |
| Median Age | −0.199 | −0.162 | −0.350* |
| | (0.196) | (0.194) | (0.191) |
| Median Income | −0.004*** | −0.004*** | −0.004*** |
| | (0.0003) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) |
| % Unemployment | 227.936*** | 222.436*** | 200.153*** |
| | (20.267) | (20.068) | (19.843) |
| % Urban | −0.184*** | −0.173*** | −0.118*** |
| | (0.031) | (0.031) | (0.031) |
| log(Population) | 3.868* | 4.039* | 4.726** |
| | (2.164) | (2.150) | (2.096) |
| % Owner Occ Housing | −96.654*** | −95.233*** | −91.308*** |
| | (6.468) | (6.422) | (6.255) |
| % Pop Growth | 0.141 | −0.184 | −0.508 |
| | (1.695) | (1.680) | (1.707) |
| % Pop Foreign | 0.495*** | 0.534*** | 0.531*** |
| | (0.072) | (0.071) | (0.072) |
| Lagged Pres vote-share | −0.319*** | −0.306*** | −0.290*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.013) |
| Observations | 8,923 | 8,923 | 8,923 |
| $R^2$ | 0.750 | 0.751 | 0.757 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.489 | 0.490 | 0.494 |
| F Statistic (df = 15; 5817) | 1,161.359*** | 1,172.206*** | 1,208.155*** |
| *Note:* | | | *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 |

Models (1) and (2) use data from Olzak (1994) and the protest 'treatment' is calculated as a function of estimated number of participants in the protest. Model (3) uses data from Carter (1986) and the protest 'treatment' is calculated as a function of estimated number of people arrested in the violent protest. All models use robust and clustered standard errors.

## Did violent protests cause a decline in Democratic vote share?

To further assess the robustness of these results, I estimate several additional models. Following Collins et al. (2004), I work with the subset of 137 violent protests recorded in the Carter data that occur following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April of 1968. To address possible bias introduced by heterogeneity of units, I estimate a variety of linear models with different matching and weighting methods. In addition, to address concerns about endogeneity, I use rainfall as an instrument for protest activity in April, 1968 and estimate the effect of violent protests with a two-stage least squares model.[12] Figure 6 presents a choropleth plot of the counties within 100 miles of a violent protest that included at least 10 arrests.

The OLS, matched, weighted and instrumental variable (IV) models all take the form:

$$DemShare_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Protest_i + \beta_2 DemShare_{i,t=1964} + \boldsymbol{\beta_x}\mathbf{X_i} + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

As in the panel model, $DemShare_i$ is the Democratic party vote-share in county $i$. Unlike the panel model, however, the only election of interest is the 1968 presidential election and, therefore, there is no year $t$ subscript. For all but the IV model, $Protest_i$ is calculated as in the panel model except that only the 137 violent protests occurring in April, 1968 are included.[13] The control variables are the same as in the panel model. For the IV model, in the first stage, $Protest_i$ is modeled as a function of average county-level rainfall in millimeters. For the second, the predicted values of the first stage

[12] For other work using rainfall to instrument for protest activity or public gatherings, see: Collins and Margo (2007); Madestam and Yanagizawa-Drott (2011); Madestam et al. (2013).

[13] In the Olzak data, there are only 18 nonviolent protests recorded in April, 1968 and so no attempt was made to estimate an independent effect of nonviolent protests during this period.

are used as the $Protest_i$ 'treatment' to explain variation in county-level democratic vote share.[14] As the most severe uprisings occur in the first few days following the assassination, I use more granular day-level rainfall data rather than rainfall for the whole month. Figure 7 presents a choropleth plot of the estimated county-level rainfall on April 4th and April 5th in 1968. The rainfall measures are taken from long-term daily precipitation records from the US Historical Climatology Network (Easterling 2002).

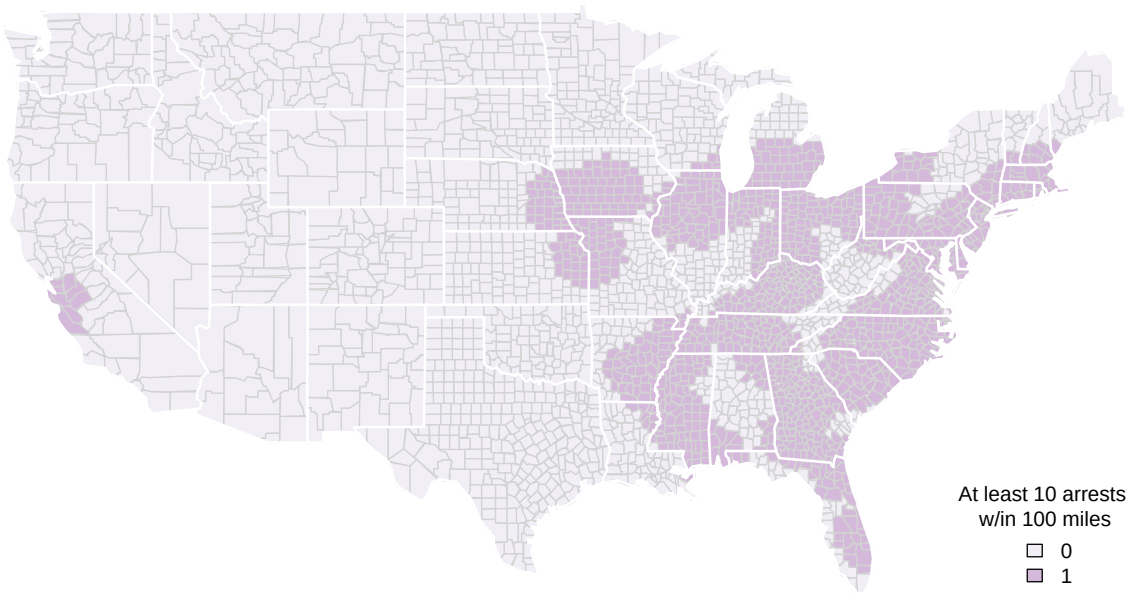


Figure 6: Choropleth map of estimated exposure to black-led violent protests following Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination on April 4th, 1968.

[14] I do not conduct a similar analysis of nonviolent protests as the Olzak et al. data only includes 18 black-led nonviolent protests in the four weeks following King's assassination.

**OLS, matched & weighted models**

Table 3 presents five specifications of a linear model estimating the effect of 137 violent protests on Democratic vote share in the 1968 presidential election. The first column uses ordinary least squares with no matching while the remaining four each use a different matching and weighting methods. In the second column, the data are matched using the "nearest neighbor" propensity score method with a caliper of 0.1 (Ho et al. 2006). The third column matches uses Mahalanobis distance. The fourth column uses a subclassification method with weights. The fifth column of Table 3 uses Covariate Balanced Propensity Score (CBPS) weights (Imai and Ratkovic 2014). Across all the models, moving from a county that was not exposed to violent protest activity to one that was is negatively and statistically significantly associated with a decrease in Democratic vote share of about two percentage points (for all models, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3: OLS Models of April, 1968 Protests on Democratic Vote-share

| | DV: County-level Democratic Presidential Vote-share | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | OLS | Logit Match | Mahalanobis | Subclassification | CBPS |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Protest 'Treatment' | −2.17*** | −1.91*** | −1.77*** | −2.51*** | −2.26*** |
| | (0.27) | (0.32) | (0.27) | (0.24) | (0.23) |
| Birth Rate | 0.005 | −0.03 | 0.05 | −0.18*** | −0.05 |
| | (0.04) | (0.07) | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.05) |
| log(PC Local Gov Exp) | −0.71* | −2.54*** | −3.24*** | −1.12** | −1.41*** |
| | (0.41) | (0.64) | (0.48) | (0.47) | (0.39) |
| % HS+ Educ | 0.49 | 18.14*** | 17.08*** | 3.34*** | 2.05*** |
| | (0.51) | (2.57) | (1.92) | (0.96) | (0.68) |
| % Black | −35.06*** | −31.80*** | −30.26*** | −31.10*** | −32.67*** |
| | (2.45) | (3.35) | (2.55) | (2.22) | (2.41) |
| (% Black)$^2$ | 108.95*** | 108.49*** | 105.19*** | 100.96*** | 104.80*** |
| | (4.20) | (5.71) | (4.33) | (3.34) | (3.98) |
| Median Age | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.04 | −0.06 | 0.01 |
| | (0.04) | (0.06) | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
| Median Income | 0.0002* | −0.0000 | −0.0001 | 0.001*** | 0.0004*** |
| | (0.0001) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0001) | (0.0001) |
| % Unemployment | 60.71*** | 54.37*** | 73.34*** | 81.03*** | 65.89*** |
| | (5.60) | (9.83) | (7.04) | (7.23) | (5.92) |
| % Urban | 0.04*** | 0.02* | 0.03*** | 0.04*** | 0.04*** |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| log(Population) | 1.31*** | 1.36*** | 1.32*** | 1.15*** | 1.22*** |
| | (0.16) | (0.24) | (0.18) | (0.17) | (0.16) |
| % Owner Occ Housing | 2.30 | −3.34 | 6.68*** | −5.07*** | 0.81 |
| | (1.84) | (2.78) | (2.07) | (1.94) | (1.94) |
| % Pop Growth | −9.49*** | −12.54*** | −12.01*** | −15.01*** | −11.75*** |
| | (0.74) | (1.11) | (0.87) | (0.87) | (0.78) |
| % Pop Foreign | 0.37*** | 0.33*** | 0.41*** | 0.37*** | 0.36*** |
| | (0.02) | (0.04) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.02) |
| Lagged Pres vote-share | 0.49*** | 0.47*** | 0.47*** | 0.39*** | 0.47*** |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| South | 2.34*** | 2.24*** | 2.49*** | −0.19 | 2.27*** |
| | (0.50) | (0.71) | (0.51) | (0.47) | (0.51) |
| Observations | 3,067 | 1,530 | 2,652 | 3,034 | 3,034 |
| $R^2$ | 0.71 | 0.70 | 0.71 | 0.72 | 0.70 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.70 | 0.70 | 0.71 | 0.72 | 0.70 |
| Residual Std. Error | 6.21 (df = 3050) | 6.22 (df = 1513) | 6.00 (df = 2635) | 6.48 (df = 3017) | 0.16 (df = 3017) |

*Note:* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

**Instrumental Variable models**

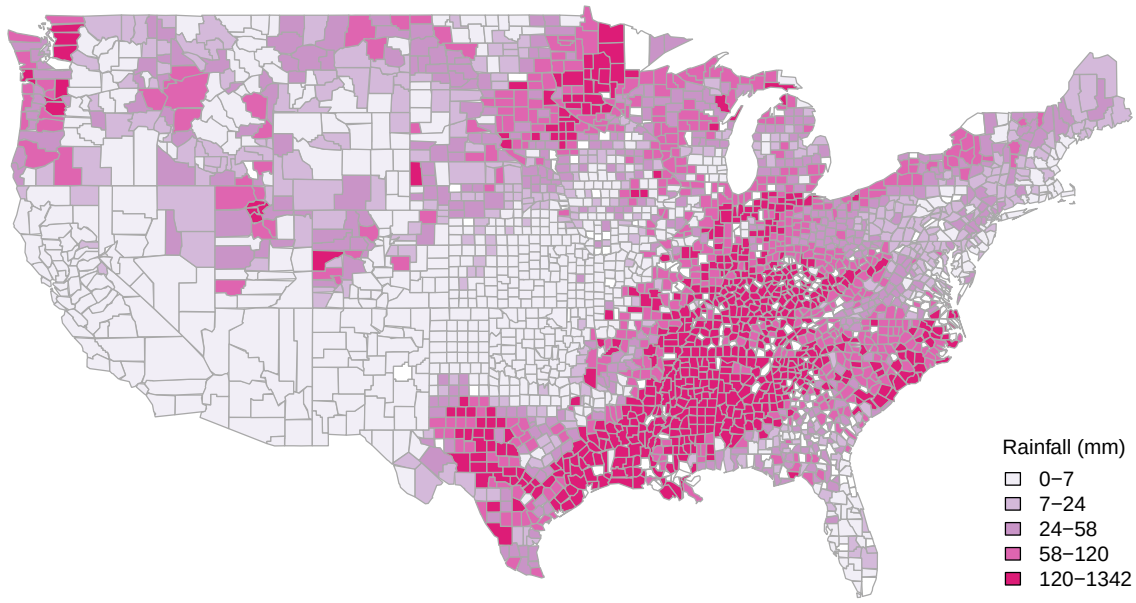


Figure 7: Choropleth map of county-level rainfall in the one-week period beginning with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination on April 4th through to April 10th, 1968. This week-long period accounts for 95 percent of the violent protests that occur in April, 1968.

Table 4 presents results of a two-stage least squares regression in which cumulative county-level rainfall is used to predict violent protest activity and then the predicted violent protest activity is used to estimate shifts in Democratic vote-share. Model (1) uses rainfall before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated as a placebo test and suggests that the relationship between pre-assassination rainfall in April, 1968 and Democratic vote share is not distinguishable from zero. Model (2) uses rainfall in the

first three days following the assassination in which about 61 percent of the protests occur and suggests that exposure to violent protests, all other things being equal, caused a significant negative shift in the county-level vote share of about $-25.06$ percentage points ($p$ <0.01). Model (3) uses rainfall for the week following the assassination in which about 95 percent of the protests occur and, like Model (3), suggests that violent protests caused a significant negative shift in the county-level vote share of about $-11.79$ percentage points ($p$ <0.001).

Model (4) offers a second placebo test by using rainfall in the period of April 11-30 when only 5 percent of protests occur and suggests, as we'd expect, there is no significant relationship between rainfall and voting in the absence of significant protest activity. The estimates in Models (2) and (3) are substantially larger than those presented Table 3 and are interpreted as evidence of a causal relationship between violent protests and voting rather than a precise estimate of the true effect size. All models use data matched with CBPS weights as calculated in column (5) of Table 3 and the results are robust to the absence of matching.[15]

[15] To test for the possibility of a weak instrument, following Staiger and Stock (1997), I run a partial $F$-test comparing the first-stage model to a model without the rainfall variable. I also run two additional $F$-tests to account for possible heteroskedasticity and clustering. The "rule-of-thumb" guideline is that $F$-statistics below 10 indicate a weak instrument. The $F$-statistics for the three tests, respectively, are: 37.24, 26.16, 19.72, suggesting rainfall is not a weak instrument for protests.

Table 4: Instrumental Variable Models of April, 1968 Protests on Democratic Vote-share

| | DV: County-level Democratic Presidential Vote-share | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Placebo (Rain Apr 1-3) | Three days (Apr 4-6) | Week (Apr 4-10) | Placebo (Apr 11-30) |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Protest 'Treatment' | −2.80 | −25.06*** | −11.79*** | −85.70 |
| | (6.78) | (8.52) | (2.64) | (86.05) |
| Birth Rate | −0.05 | −0.14 | −0.09 | −0.37 |
| | (0.05) | (0.10) | (0.06) | (0.45) |
| log(PC Local Gov Exp) | −1.45*** | −0.77 | −1.17** | 1.09 |
| | (0.44) | (0.83) | (0.49) | (3.67) |
| % HS+ Educ | 1.61 | −4.82* | −0.98 | −22.35 |
| | (2.07) | (2.82) | (1.14) | (25.27) |
| % Black | −29.71*** | −27.39*** | −28.78*** | −21.07 |
| | (2.43) | (4.81) | (2.91) | (17.69) |
| (% Black)$^2$ | 102.06*** | 103.91*** | 102.81*** | 108.95*** |
| | (3.98) | (8.04) | (4.90) | (26.80) |
| Median Age | −0.02 | −0.02 | −0.02 | −0.02 |
| | (0.04) | (0.08) | (0.05) | (0.25) |
| Median Income | 0.0003** | 0.0004 | 0.0004** | 0.001 |
| | (0.0001) | (0.0003) | (0.0002) | (0.001) |
| % Unemployment | 63.58*** | 49.32*** | 57.82*** | 10.49 |
| | (7.34) | (13.21) | (7.55) | (67.40) |
| % Urban | 0.04*** | 0.02 | 0.03*** | −0.04 |
| | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.01) | (0.10) |
| log(Population) | 1.25*** | 2.14*** | 1.61*** | 4.57 |
| | (0.31) | (0.47) | (0.22) | (3.60) |
| % Owner Occ Housing | 0.48 | −3.14 | −0.98 | −13.01 |
| | (2.24) | (4.19) | (2.45) | (18.93) |
| % Pop Growth | −11.75*** | −8.74*** | −10.53*** | −0.52 |
| | (1.21) | (1.96) | (1.03) | (12.73) |
| % Pop Foreign | 0.36*** | 0.22*** | 0.30*** | −0.16 |
| | (0.05) | (0.07) | (0.03) | (0.55) |
| Lagged Pres vote-share | 0.45*** | 0.47*** | 0.46*** | 0.53*** |
| | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.01) | (0.10) |
| Observations | 3,034 | 3,034 | 3,034 | 3,034 |
| $R^2$ | 0.70 | −0.23 | 0.54 | −11.83 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.70 | −0.24 | 0.54 | −11.89 |
| Residual Std. Error (df = 3018) | 0.16 | 0.33 | 0.20 | 1.07 |

*Note:* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Each model uses county-level cumulative rainfall in April, 1968 to instrument for violent protest activity. Model (1) uses rainfall before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated as a placebo test. Model (2) uses rainfall in the first three days following the assassination in which about 61 percent of the protests occur. Model (3) uses rainfall for the week following the assassination in which about 95 percent of the protests occur. Model (4) offers a second placebo test by using rainfall in the period of April 11-30 when only 5 percent of protests occur. All models use data matched with CBPS weights as calculated in Table 3.

## What were the political consequences of violent protests?

Additional evidence from other historical and public opinion sources suggests widespread concern among the mass public about crime and disorder. Weaver (2007) notes that Members of Congress were deluged with "torrents of constituent mail" in favor the 1968 Safe Streets bill and that even liberal Democrats "felt compelled by public anxiety over crime and riots to vote for the bill" (257). Figure 8 presents polling data from August, 1968 in which 81 percent of respondents agreed with the statement "Law and order has broken down in this country" (Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. 1968a).

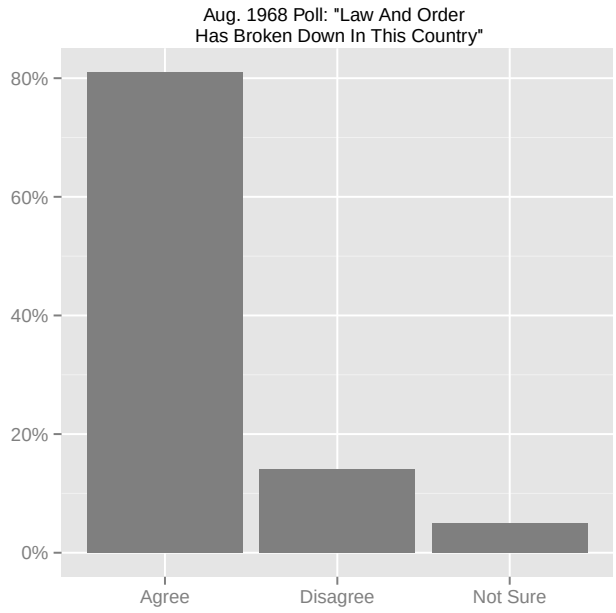


Figure 8: Bar plot of public opinion on "law and order." Respondents were asked "(Now I want to read you some statements about law and order in this country. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree)... Law and order has broken down in this country." Data from: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (1968a).

In the 1968 presidential election, Nixon and Humphrey polled at similar levels on many issues. On law and order, however, a wide gulf existed in public perceptions of the two candidates. Figure 9

presents the results of a poll that asked "Which presidential candidate do you feel could do the best job in handling law and order?" Not only did respondents favor Nixon over Humphrey by 36 to 23 percent, but third party candidate George Wallace also beat Humphrey in the poll by 26 to 23 percent. Though these polls offer no insight into the source of the anxiety, the results do suggest that such anxieties were pervasive and worked to Nixon's benefit.

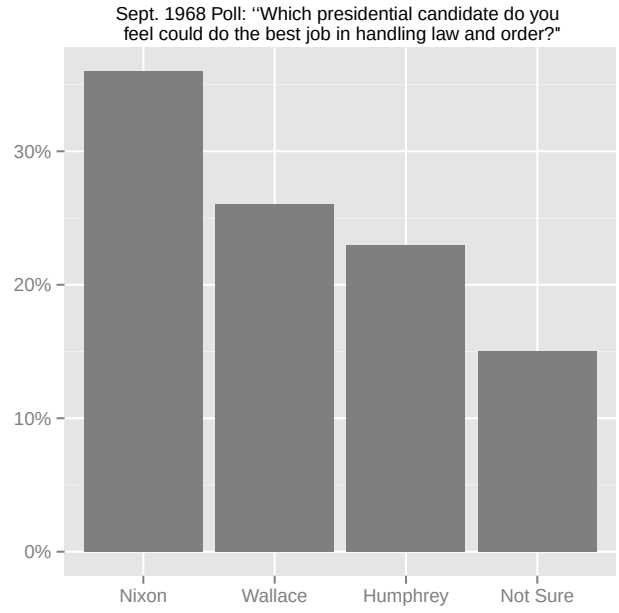


Figure 9: Bar plot of public opinion on presidential candidates and law and order. Data from: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (1968b).

As urban uprising occurrence was highly idiosyncratic (Spilerman 1976; Olzak and Shanahan 1996), many counterfactual scenarios could be envisioned in which fewer events of civil unrest occur. Figure 5 presents the expected allocation of electoral vote in the 1968 presidential election under one such plausible counterfactual. In this scenario, I estimate a revised violent protest 'treatment' as if Martin Luther King, Jr. had not been assassinated on April 4th, 1968 and 137 violent protests had not occurred in the immediate wake of his death.

| Humphrey Gains | # of Electoral Votes | # of Outcomes | % of Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| NJ, OH | 234 | 130 | 13 |
| DE, NJ, OH | 237 | 127 | 13 |
| MO, NJ, OH | 246 | 28 | 3 |
| DE, MO, NJ, OH | 249 | 26 | 3 |
| IL, NJ, OH | 260 | 268 | 27 |
| DE, IL, NJ, OH | 263 | 303 | 30 |
| IL, MO, NJ, OH | 272 | 51 | 5 |
| DE, IL, MO, NJ, OH | 275 | 67 | 7 |

Table 5: Results of 1,000 Counterfactual Simulated Elections with effect of violent protests on Democratic vote share estimated at -1.77.

To estimate a counterfactual, I simulate the 1968 election 1,000 times as if the 137 violent protests from April, 1968 had not occurred. For each county was exposed to violent protest activity, I estimate a counterfactual county-level Democratic vote share assuming Humphrey gained share at Nixon's expense. For each run of the simulation, the county-level Democratic vote share is estimated as the observed vote share plus, if the county was exposed to protest activity, some additional share under the counterfactual assumption that the absence of protests would result in Democratic gains. The estimated increase is drawn from a random normal distribution with a mean of the original Democratic vote share plus 1.77 percentage points and a standard deviation of 0.27.[16] I then calculate the estimated change in the number Democratic votes in each county and aggregate the counterfactual vote totals to estimate the state-level vote totals and, ultimately, the winner of the state's electoral votes. Across

[16]As we cannot know which of numerous plausible models is correct, I estimate these parameters by simply taking the minimum of the five coefficients and the mean of the standard errors from the models in Table 3. Figure 12, in the Appendix, presents the results of simulated counterfactual elections run at a variety of effect sizes.

the simulations there are 8 unique outcomes (see Table 5) and Humphrey wins in 992 out of 1,000 or about 99 percent of the simulations. [17]

Under the counterfactual scenario in which 137 violent protests in April, 1968 had not occurred, I estimate that Humphrey would have won an additional 596,904 votes nationally (95% credible interval: 547,483, 631,441) and, in the modal outcome, a majority of the votes in 4 additional states: Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, and Ohio. These swing states would collectively have provided Humphrey with an additional 72 electoral votes and allowed him to win the 1968 election with a total of 263 electoral votes.[18]

Figure 10 presents a map of the allocation of electoral votes in the 1968 presidential election under the counterfactual scenario of Martin Luther King, Jr. not being assassinated and 137 violent protests not occurring in the wake of his death. As can be seen in Figure 10, none of the states Humphrey is estimated to pick up in the modal counterfactual scenario (i.e., Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, and Ohio) are Southern.[19] While Nixon is widely credited with having won the 1968 election with a "Southern Strategy," in actuality, he wins very little of the South and, in these counterfactuals, the swing states are mid-Atlantic and Midwestern. A more accurate interpretation of the Southern Strategy in 1968 is that it helped Nixon peel off white moderate voters in middle America but did little for him in the South. In 1968, the third party candidacy of George Wallace carries the deep south. Had Wallace been less competitive, simulations still suggest that the contested states with the potential to swing between Humphrey and Nixon were in the midwest and mid-Atlantic. Echoing Rustin (1965), in 1964, a coalition of white liberals, white moderates and blacks helped the Democratic party win the presidency decisively. In 1968, by splitting that coalition and pulling white moderates outside of the South into the Republican fold, Nixon prevailed.

[17] For these estimates, increases to the Democratic vote total were assumed to come only at the expense of the Republican vote total and not from those of George Wallace's third party candidacy. Other simulations using multinomial models in which three-way shifts were possible produced similar results.

[18] With Wallace assumed to retain 46 electoral votes from the deep south, Humphrey needs at least 247 electoral votes to win. As Alaska, Hawaii and the District of Columbia are excluded from the statistical model, they are assumed to remain unchanged with Nixon carrying Alaska's three electoral votes and Humphrey carrying Hawaii and D.C.'s seven.

[19] Missouri is classified as part of the Midwest by the US Census Bureau.

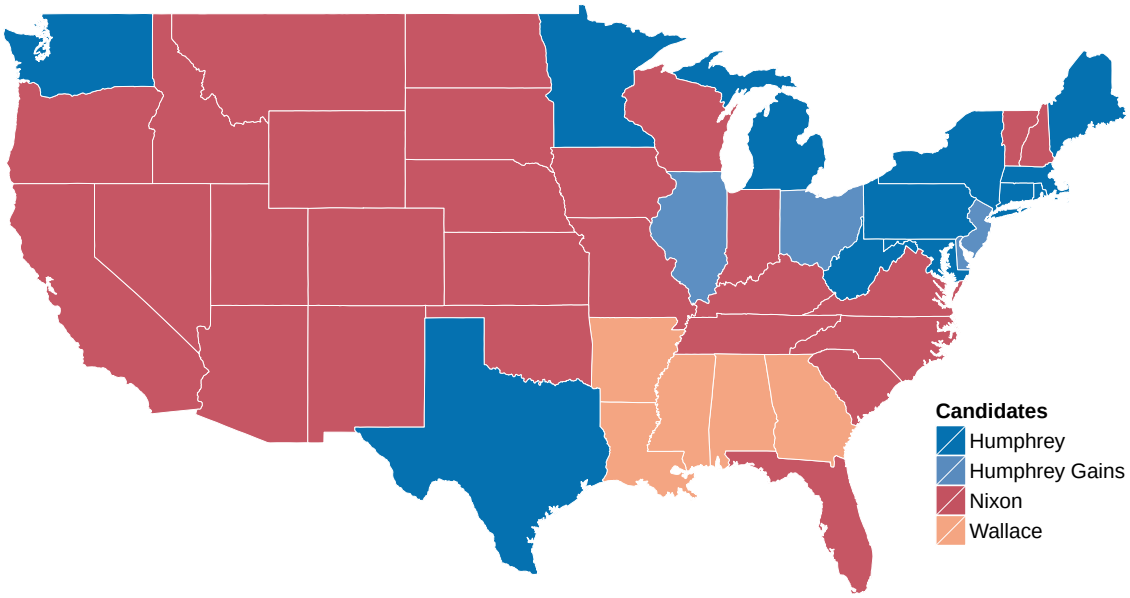


Figure 10: Choropleth map of the United States with electoral votes allocated under the counterfactual scenario of Martin Luther King, Jr. not being assassinated and 137 uprisings not occurring in the wake of his death. As noted in Table 5, in the modal counterfactual scenario, the following states tip from Nixon to Humphrey: Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, and Ohio. In the map, these states are labeled 'Humphrey Gains' in the legend. In this scenario, Humphrey gains 72 electoral votes to win the 1968 presidential election with an estimated 263 total votes in the electoral college.

# Conclusion

Looking at the United States in comparative context, post-war America can be viewed as a kind of transitional democracy. Most academic research on transitional democracies focuses on countries that have undergone significant changes to economic policies or political institutions, such as in post-communist or post-authoritarian societies. Partially democratic and market-oriented societies, like post-war America and South Africa, however, differ from these cases in critical ways. As compared with more ethnically homogenous states, such as those in Europe, multiracial societies with colonial history were more likely to develop parallel governing structures for whites and non-whites (Young and Meiser 2008). These "dual states" developed essentially liberal democracies for whites and zones of illiberal authoritarianism for non-whites. Thus, for the United States, the post-war transition was less about transforming into a democracy or capitalist economy and more a function of expanding who was included in the polity and attempting to dismantle its illiberal institutions.

In short, before the mid-1960s, the United States might have been best described as an ethnocracy or a system of government organized in significant part to support the material and political interests of a dominant ethnic or racial group in the context of a diverse society (Yiftachel 1997). Only under the sustained pressure of the civil rights movement was the American ethnocracy pushed towards becoming a multiracial democracy. Seen through this lens, the rise of "law and order" politics can be understood as one outcome of the contested transition from ethnocracy towards democracy. King and Smith (2005) argue that the long arc of American political development can be seen as an ongoing power struggle between two competing racial orders, one coalition fighting for white supremacy and another coalition pushing to dismantle racial hierarchy. Put simply, the civil rights movement pushed for "transformative egalitarian" policies and a counter, ethnocratic-movement pushed to maintain the old racial order in part through more punitive criminal justice policy (Weaver 2007).

While these results are broadly consistent with that hypothesis, the details suggest a more subtle process at play. There is not statistical evidence that exposure to nonviolent civil rights protests trig-

gered an exodus by whites from the Democratic party in the presidential elections between 1964 and 1972. Proximity to black-led urban uprisings, however, does appear to have caused significant and substantively meaningful declines in county-level Democratic vote share. Put in terms of ethnocracy and democracy, the earlier period of the nonviolent civil rights movement appears to have modestly tipped some whites towards the democratic or "transformative egalitarian" coalition and the violent protests of the latter period caused a politically meaningful subset of whites to switch to the ethnocratic or "white supremacist" coalition. Critically, however, these results suggest that nothing in the contest between the ethnocratic and egalitarian traditions was inevitable. These findings suggest that the "transformative egalitarian" coalition identified by King and Smith (2005) and Rustin (1965) was fragile but, in the absence of violent protests, would likely have won the presidential election of 1968. In this counterfactual scenario, the United States would have elected Hubert Humphrey rather than Richard Nixon and, in the absence of white antipathy to black uprisings, "law and order" as advocated by the ethnocratic coalition might never have carried the day.

# 1 Appendix

## 1.1 Models Black-led Protests vs Democratic Vote-share

Figure 11 presents three models of how protest activity might be associated with Democratic vote-share.

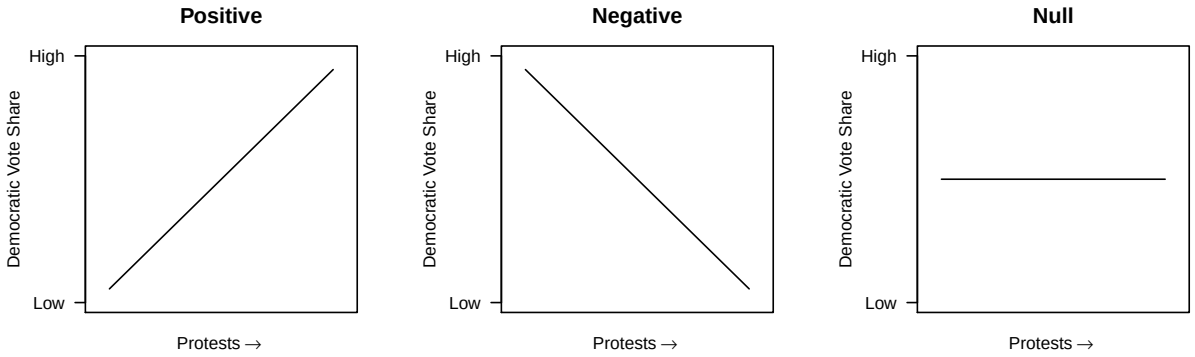


Figure 11: Hypothetical models of the relationship between black-led protests and Democratic vote-share.

## 1.2 Simulating Different Protest Effects on the 1968 Presidential Election

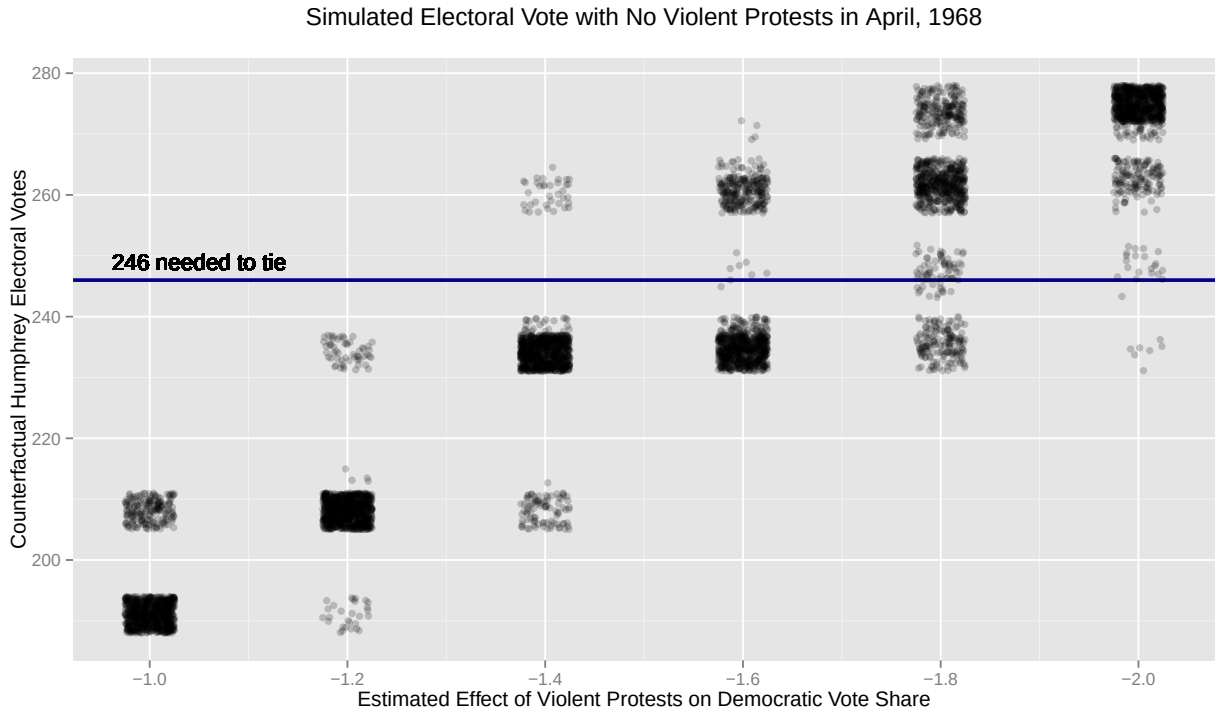


Figure 12: Dot plot of simulated electoral outcomes for Humphrey under the counterfactual condition that Martin Luther King, Jr. is not assassinated and no violent protests occur in April, 1968. Each dot represents the number of electoral votes won by Humphrey ($y$-axis) in one of 1,000 simulated elections at a particular estimated effect of violent protests on voting ($x$-axis). The dots are jittered and slightly transparent to better show the distribution of simulated outcomes. The blue line indicates the 246 electoral vote threshold Humphrey would have needed to tie the election. For all simulations, the standard error for the simulated protest effect was set at 0.27, the mean from Table 3.

## 1.3 Choropleth of Actual Electoral College Results

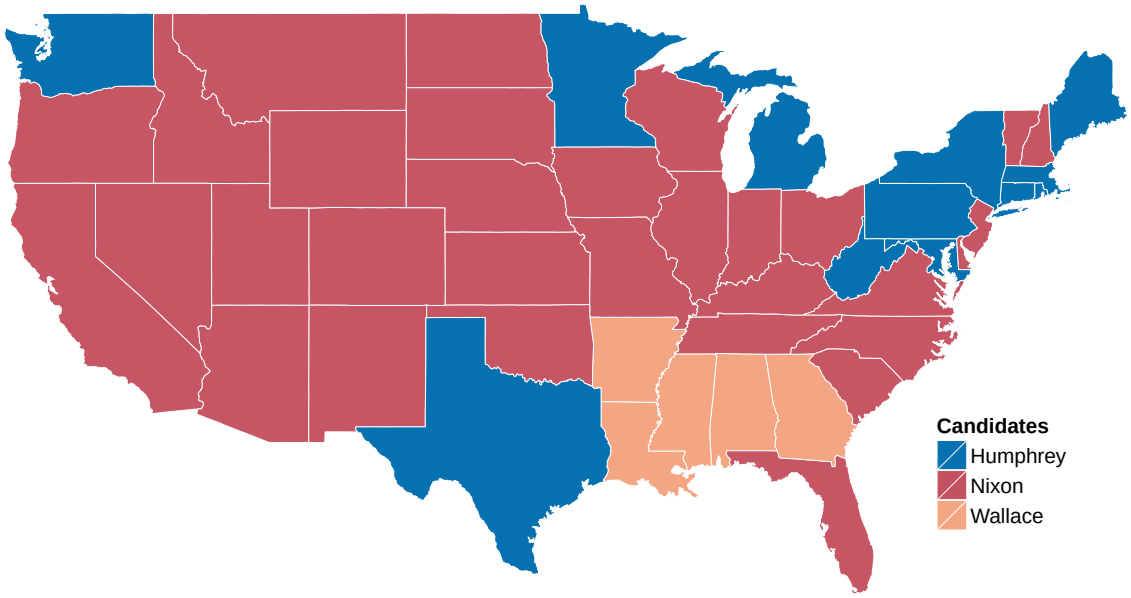


Figure 13: Choropleth map of the United States with electoral votes allocated in 1968 presidential election

## 1.4 Panel Models without Lagged Presidential vote-share

Table 6: Panel Models of Effect of Protests on County-level Democratic Presidential vote-share (without Lagged Presidential vote-share), 1964-1972.

| | DV: County-level Democratic Presidential vote-share | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Nonviolent Protests (Olzak data) | Violent Protests (Olzak data) | Violent Protests (Carter data) |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Protest 'Treatment' | 1.255*** | −1.933*** | −2.230*** |
| | (0.145) | (0.137) | (0.124) |
| Birth Rate | 1.962*** | 1.851*** | 1.772*** |
| | (0.261) | (0.250) | (0.239) |
| log(PC Local Gov Exp) | 1.156 | 1.282 | 0.702 |
| | (1.037) | (1.003) | (1.063) |
| % HS+ Educ | 0.107 | 0.095 | 0.093 |
| | (0.227) | (0.215) | (0.196) |
| % Black | 11.666 | 6.767 | 13.212 |
| | (37.771) | (37.333) | (37.614) |
| (% Black)$^2$ | −186.462*** | −181.035*** | −191.556*** |
| | (55.070) | (53.926) | (56.138) |
| Median Age | 0.977*** | 0.959*** | 0.619*** |
| | (0.202) | (0.199) | (0.196) |
| Median Income | −0.003*** | −0.003*** | −0.003*** |
| | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) |
| % Unemployment | 278.550*** | 265.288*** | 232.735*** |
| | (20.265) | (19.899) | (19.598) |
| % Urban | −0.326*** | −0.297*** | −0.215*** |
| | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.029) |
| log(Population) | 6.342*** | 6.508*** | 7.310*** |
| | (2.241) | (2.199) | (2.114) |
| % Owner Occ Housing | −113.675*** | −110.035*** | −103.890*** |
| | (6.955) | (6.806) | (6.524) |
| % Pop Growth | 3.103* | 2.320 | 1.848 |
| | (1.727) | (1.680) | (1.671) |
| % Pop Foreign | 0.010 | 0.103 | 0.120* |
| | (0.067) | (0.064) | (0.062) |
| Observations | 9,074 | 9,074 | 9,074 |
| $R^2$ | 0.698 | 0.705 | 0.714 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.459 | 0.464 | 0.470 |
| F Statistic (df = 14; 5969) | 987.670*** | 1,020.185*** | 1,066.385*** |

*Note:* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Models (1) and (2) use data from Olzak (1994) and the protest 'treatment' is calculated as a function of estimated number of participants in the protest. Model (3) uses data from Carter (1986) and the protest 'treatment' is calculated as a function of estimated number of people arrested in the violent protest.

## 1.5 Black party identification, 1936-2012

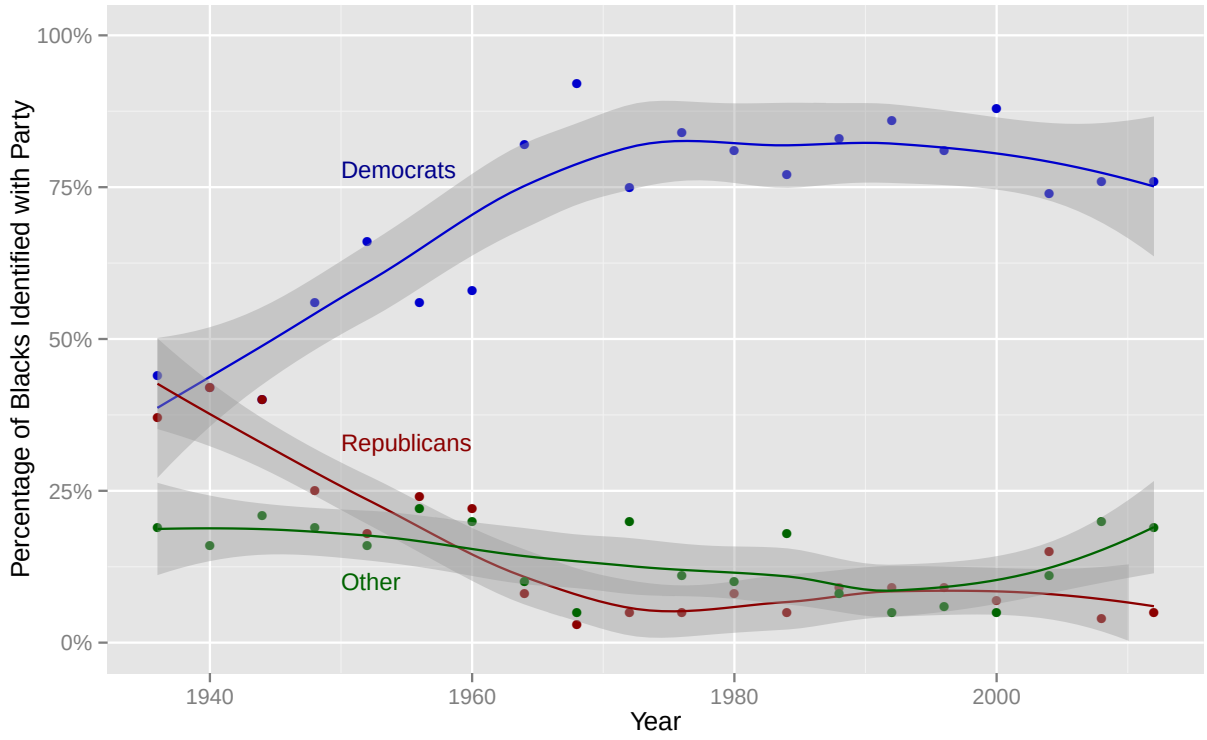


Figure 14: Line plot of black party identification, 1936 to 2004. Lines drawn with loess smoothing function. Data from: (Bositis 2008).

## 1.6 Black Population, 1790-2000

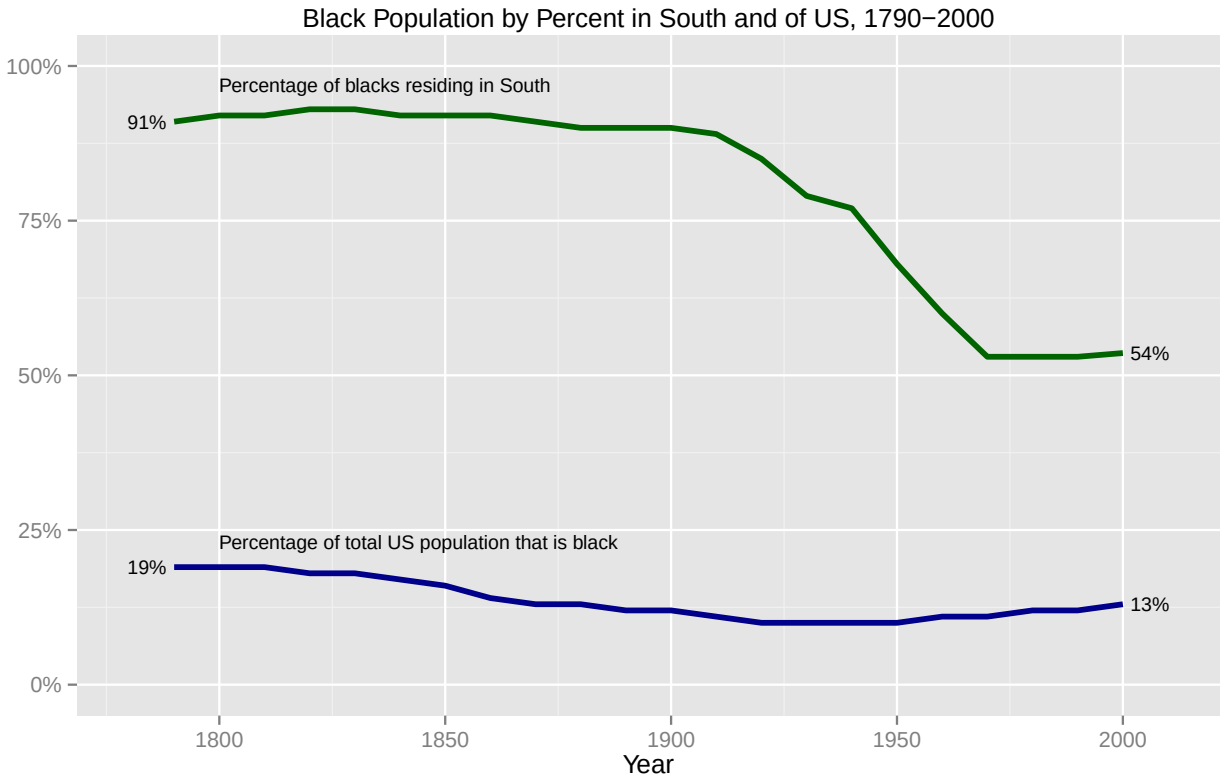


Figure 15: Line plot of black population by percent in South and of U.S. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, Gibson and Jung (2002)

## 1.7 Nonviolent protest activity, 1960-1972

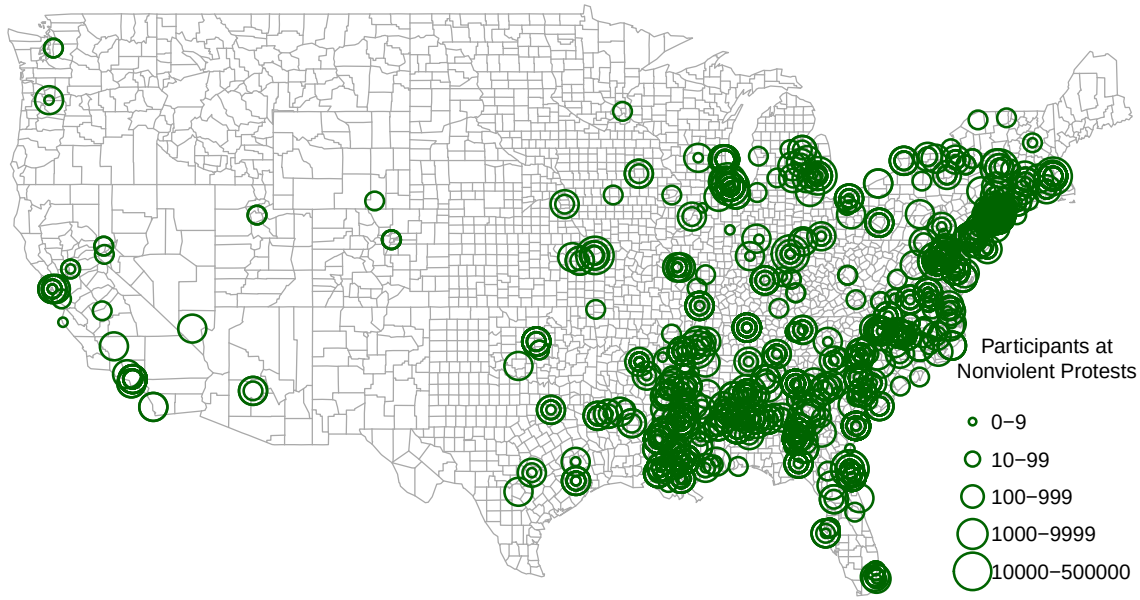


Figure 16: Map of the geographic distribution and intensity of nonviolent protests, 1960-1972. Protests with larger numbers of prostestors are indicated by a larger radius. Concentric circles indicate multiple events of varying intensity within the same city.

## 1.8 WLS Model of Violent Protest in LA on 1966 CA Gubernatorial Election

Table 7: WLS Models of Watts Protest 'Treatment' on Democratic Vote Share in California Gubernatorial Elections, 1962-1966

| | DV: County-level Gubernatorial Democratic Vote Share | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1962 (Pre-Watts) | 1966 (Post-Watts) |
| | (1) | (2) |
| Watts 'Treatment' | −0.03 | −0.05*** |
| | (0.02) | (0.02) |
| Dem. Vote Share ('50-'58) | 1.37*** | |
| | (0.10) | |
| Dem. Vote Share ('54-'62) | | 0.82*** |
| | | (0.08) |
| Births per 1000 | 0.0000 | −0.0000 |
| | (0.0000) | (0.0000) |
| log(Population) | 0.004 | 0.02*** |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| Percent Black | −0.60 | −0.52 |
| | (0.46) | (0.45) |
| (Percent Black)$^2$ | 3.48 | 3.59 |
| | (2.92) | (2.60) |
| Percent Pop. Growth | 0.0002 | −0.0001 |
| | (0.0002) | (0.0002) |
| Median Age | 0.01*** | 0.01*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Median Income | −0.0000 | 0.0000 |
| | (0.0000) | (0.0000) |
| Median Education | 0.0002 | −0.01 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| Percent Unemp. | −0.01*** | −0.01** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Constant | −0.19* | −0.35*** |
| | (0.11) | (0.12) |
| Observations | 58 | 58 |
| $R^2$ | 0.93 | 0.93 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.91 | 0.91 |
| Residual Std. Error (df = 46) | 0.002 | 0.002 |
| F Statistic (df = 11; 46) | 52.34*** | 53.83*** |
| *Note:* | | *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 |

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