Do Local Realignment Policies Affect Recidivism in California?

Mia Bird and Ryken Grattet
Realignment brought sweeping changes to California corrections

- Sent many released prisoners to counties for supervision and sanctioning
- Kept some felony offenders in counties who were previously eligible to be sent to prison
- Sent supervision violators into county jails
- State provided funds
  - “Locals can do it better”
  - Freedom to experiment
After realignment, changes in recidivism have been modest

Felony convictions
- 2.0%
- 1.0%
- 0.0%
- 1.0%
- 2.1%
- 3.0%

All convictions
- 1.2%

Felony arrests
- 1.0%

All arrests
- 2.0%

Percentage point change

Central questions for this study

- Has realignment reduced recidivism among a particular group of offenders?
  - Post-release community supervision (PRCS)
  - Previously supervised by state parole, now supervised by the counties

- Did county approaches impact recidivism in the first year of realignment?
Outline

- Changes in recidivism
- County approaches to realignment
- Conclusions
Felony arrests and convictions of all types increased after realignment.

- Felony convictions: 1.9%
- All convictions: 2.3%
- Felony arrests: 4.7%
- All arrests: 0.0%

Percentage point change
Before realignment, changes in recidivism were uneven

- Felony convictions: 0.0%
- All convictions: 0.6%
- Felony arrests: -0.4%
- All arrests: 5.0%

Percentage point change
Outline

- Changes in recidivism
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- Conclusions
Realignment gave new responsibilities to counties

- Provided funds and overarching goals to reduce recidivism
- Encouraged evidence-based practices
- Required counties to submit plans for state funding
Changes in felony arrest rates varied across counties ...

- Ventura: 32.9%
- Orange: 10.5%
- Santa Barbara: 8.4%
- Los Angeles: 3.4%
- San Diego: 3.3%
- Sacramento: 1.9%
- Shasta: -1.5%
- Santa Cruz: -2.2%
- San Francisco: -6.0%
- Mendocino: -13.7%
... as did changes in felony conviction rates

Percentage point change in 6 month felony conviction rate

- Solano: 9.70%
- Contra Costa: 2.50%
- Los Angeles: 2.40%
- Orange: 1.50%
- Kings: 0.70%
- San Joaquin: -0.10%
- San Bernardino: -0.30%
- Shasta: -0.70%
- Santa Cruz: -2.10%
- Mendocino: -5.10%
Realignment implementation plans differ in emphasis.

- Substance Abuse: 52
- Mental Health: 50
- Housing: 38
- Parenting Classes: 20
- Restorative Justice: 12
- Mentorship: 1

Number of realignment implementation plans.
Resource allocations differ, too

- Programs
- Law Enforcement
- Jails
- Sheriff
- Probation

Relative share of total budget allocation
Plans cluster into two groups

- **Re-entry focused**
  - Programs and services received more than two times greater budget share
  - A somewhat wider range of re-entry services indicated

- **Enforcement focused**
  - Sheriff, jails, and law enforcement received more than three times greater budget share
  - A narrower range of re-entry services indicated
Reductions in recidivism were greater in counties emphasizing re-entry services

- All arrests: -1.9%
- Felony arrests: -3.7%
- All convictions: -2.3%
- Felony convictions: -1.7%
Outline

- Changes in recidivism
- County approaches to realignment
- Conclusions
Recidivism patterns have not changed dramatically

- Recidivism did increase modestly among PRCS population
  - Indications that rates for some types of arrest were going up before realignment
  - Increases in felony arrest and felony conviction rates are most attributable to realignment

- Emphasis on local approach has not yet produced reductions in recidivism
County approaches matter

- Greater declines in recidivism among county plans emphasizing re-entry services
  - Emphasizing this approach at highest levels may help to improve recidivism outcomes
- Tracking new programs and strategies is essential
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Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.