

Key Factors in Arrest Trends and Differences in California's Counties

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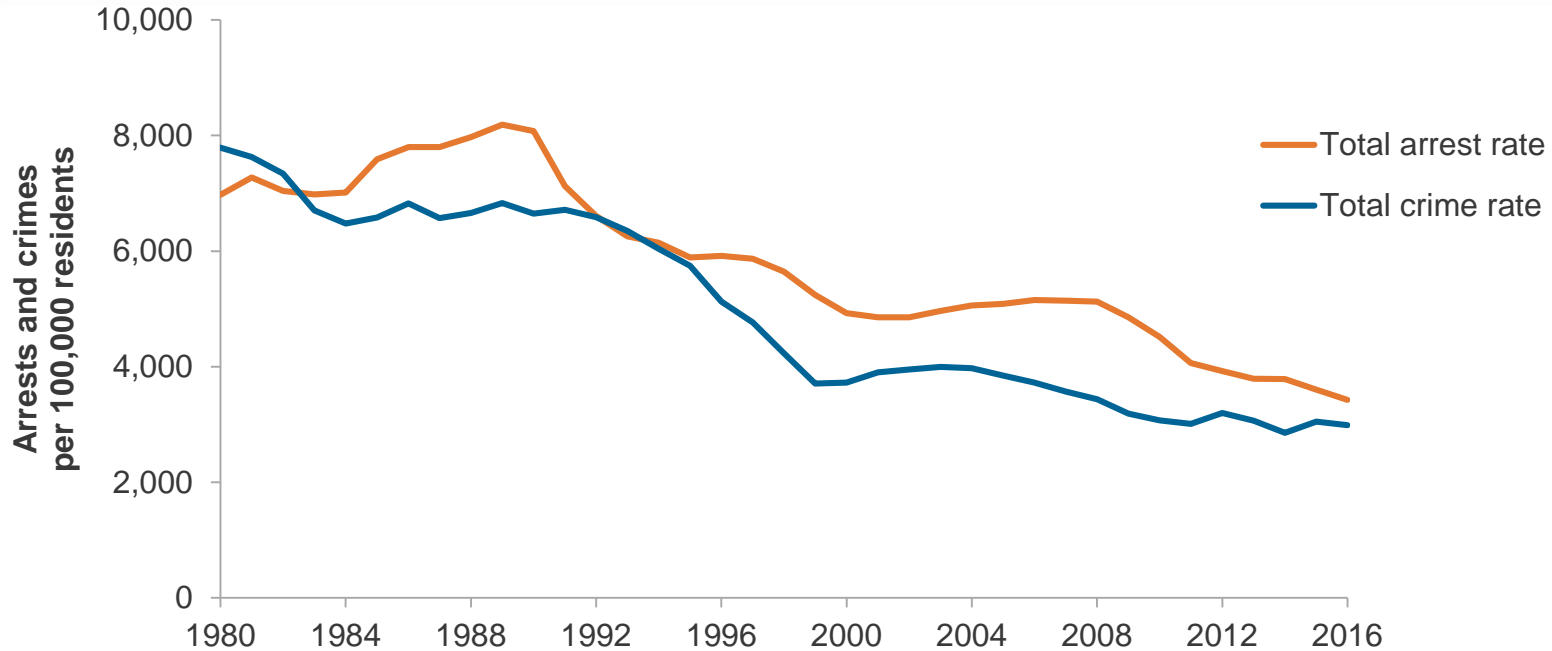
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Arrests are a critical but understudied topic

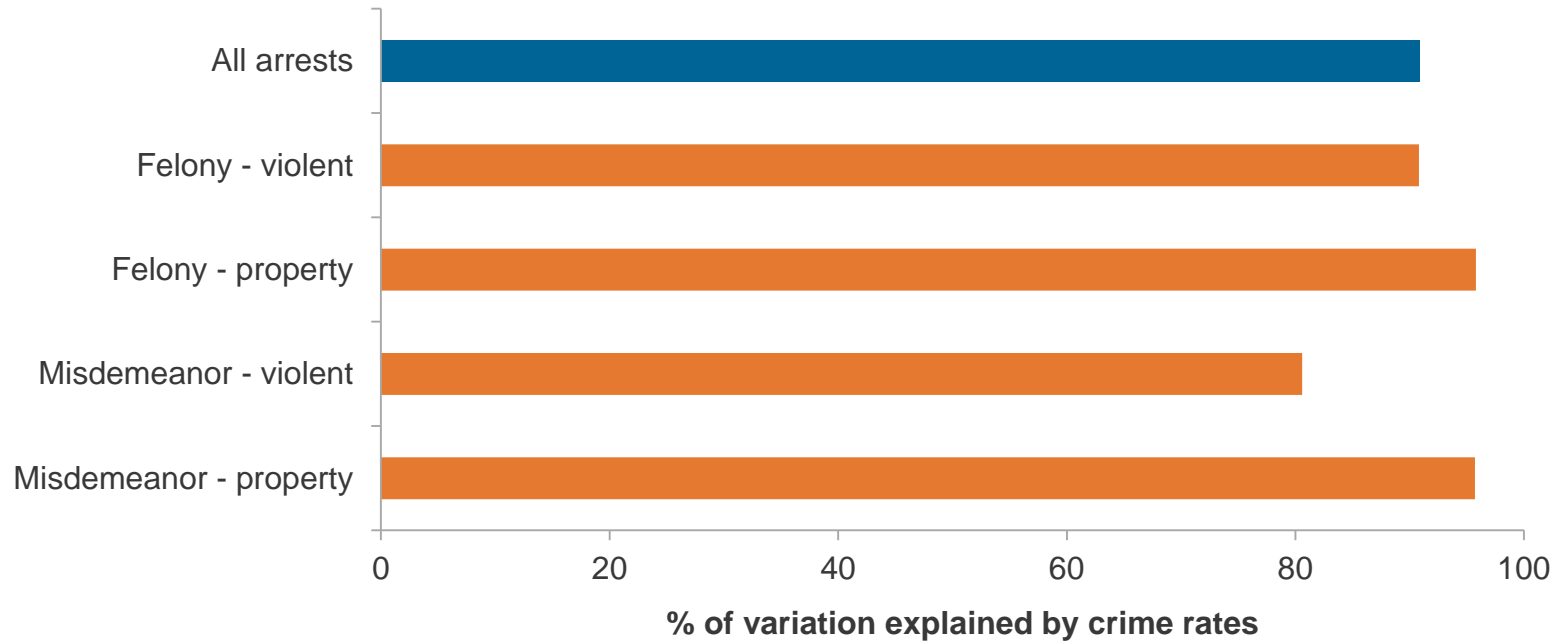
- Arrests have wide-ranging consequences
 - Risk of injury, use of public resources
- Racial disparities are a key concern
- We examine statewide arrest trends as well as differences in arrest rates and racial disparities across counties in California
 - Crime rates
 - Recent criminal justice reforms
 - County-level factors



Arrest and crime rates in California have both declined substantially



Statewide trends in arrest rates are largely driven by crime rates



Arrest rates decreased in the wake of recent criminal justice reforms

- After public safety realignment in 2011:
 - Drop of about 7% in overall arrest rate
 - Driven by decrease in misdemeanor traffic- and alcohol-related arrests
- After Proposition 47 in 2014:
 - Drop of an additional 11% in overall arrest rate
 - Driven by decrease in felony drug and property arrests



Arrest rates vary significantly across counties

- High-arrest counties arrest two to three times as many suspects per 100,000 residents as low-arrest counties
- County crime rates play a significant role in this variation
- A range of other factors likely contribute:
 - Demographics
 - Poverty and labor market conditions
 - Jail capacity and law enforcement staffing



Counties with higher arrest rates tend to have poorer economic conditions

- Counties with the highest arrest rates tend to have:
 - Poorer economic conditions
 - Lower shares of nonwhite residents
 - Higher shares of young adults
 - Lower population density
- The ratio of law enforcement officers to residents does not appear to affect arrest rates

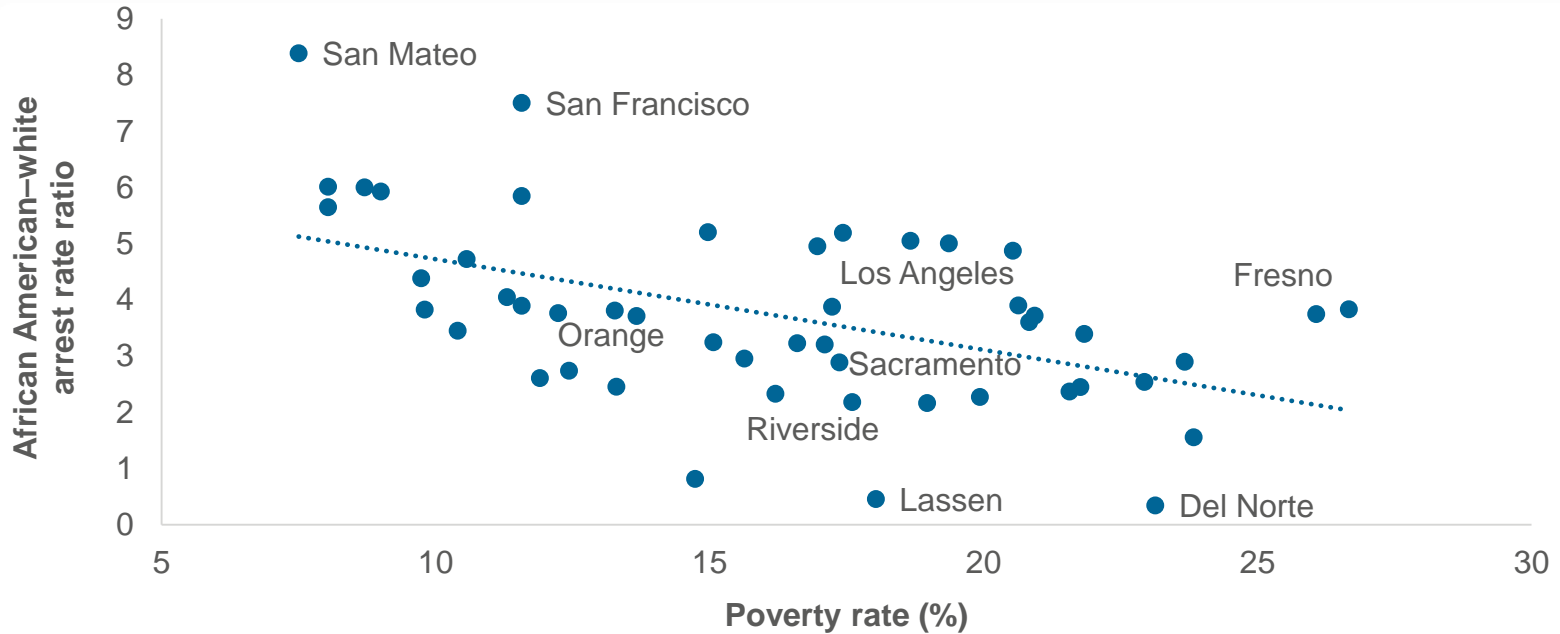


Racial disparities in arrests also vary across the state

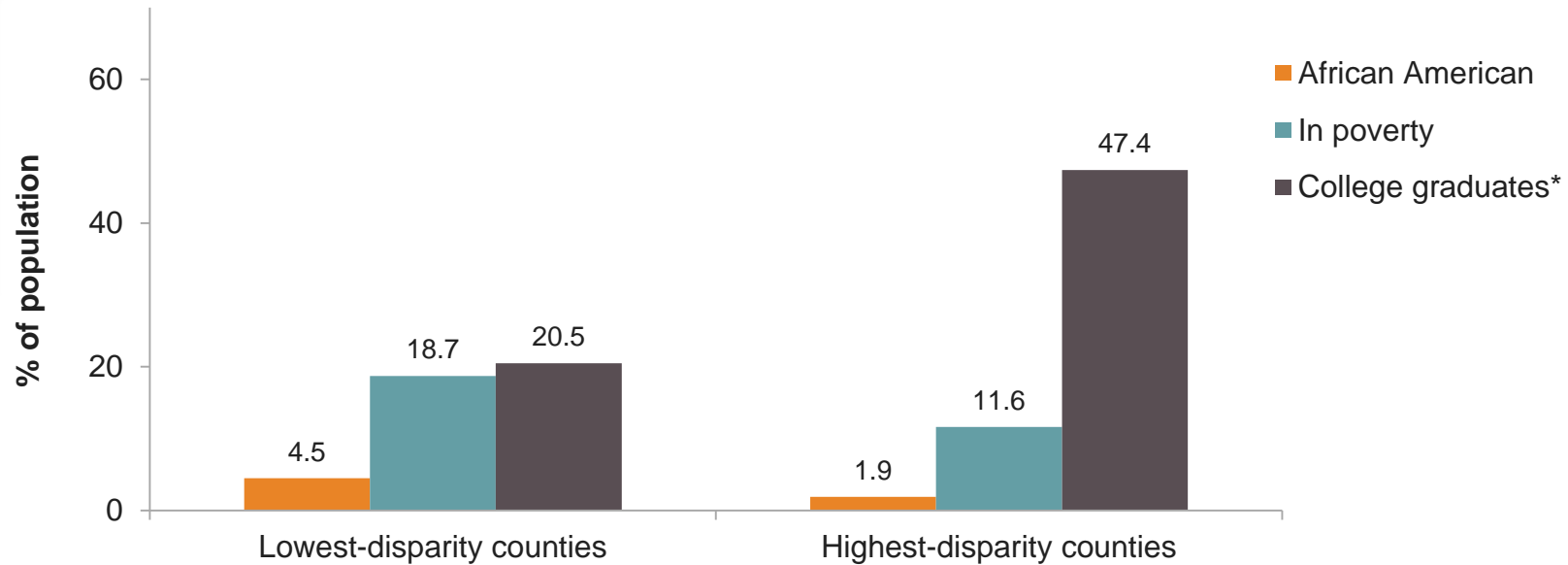
- Statewide, the African American arrest rate is about three times as high as the white arrest rate
- Counties with the highest disparities have, on average, an African American arrest rate about six times higher than the white arrest rate
 - In counties with the lowest disparities, the African American arrest rate is about two times higher



Racial disparities tend to be greater in counties with lower poverty rates



Counties with larger racial disparities have lower shares of African Americans and lower poverty rates



*Data available only for the 41 largest counties.



Conclusions

- Crime rates are a major factor in arrest rates
- Arrest rates declined substantially after public safety realignment and Proposition 47
- Counties with the highest arrest rates tend to have poorer economic conditions
 - But counties with the largest racial disparities tend to be relatively affluent
- Efforts to reduce racial disparities in arrests should include wealthier areas



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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.