Beyond Crime: Considering the Impact of Wealth and Politics on Juvenile Arrest Rates in Michigan

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Abstract

This study examines the variation of arrest rates in the state of Michigan for minors between the years 2008 and 2017, considering how socioeconomic status and political leanings of a jurisdiction (defined by the percentage of Republican votes) play a role. This paper uses regression analysis to reveal significant inverse relationships between socioeconomic status, political leanings of a jurisdiction, and juvenile crime rates by county. More specifically, higher median household incomes consistently report lower juvenile arrest rates, while counties with a higher percentage of Republican votes tend to have decreased juvenile arrest rates. By controlling for race, we further isolate the effects of socioeconomic status and political leanings of a jurisdiction that affect the variation in arrest rates. With this, by looking at various counties through case studies, the research shows the implications of these factors on a county. In each case study, the county that had a higher socioeconomic status had a lower arrest rate. In addition, the higher socioeconomic status often results in schools having more resources. Furthermore, although the models run in this study support that socioeconomic status and the political leanings of a jurisdiction affect variation in the arrest rates of minors, the results of this study support the idea that there are more factors that play a role as well.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last hundred years, there have been both significant rises and falls in the percentage of minors arrested in the United States. The variation in arrest rates goes beyond the number of crimes committed in one year- geographical location, such as whether one is in a rural or urban area, pressure from external sources, like community and governmental pressure, the overall political climate, socioeconomic status, and more play a role. But to what extent do these factors play a role? Understanding how these different factors influence arrest rates is important as to why one county has a dramatically lower arrest rate compared to its neighboring county. This paper will look at how a jurisdiction's socioeconomic status and political leaning play a role in the variation of arrest rates within the state of Michigan for minors. In the state of Michigan, a minor is someone aged seventeen or younger. The study will look at the arrest rates of all 83 counties in the state of Michigan over the span of ten years, from 2008 to 2017.

Socioeconomic status has been considered as a factor for arrest rates. With this, there have been theories presented by scholars that support the idea that as disfavored groups (referred to as "the underclass"), so will the use of prisons as a way to protect the favored groups. In addition to this, the environment in which a child grows up is essential, where the American Psychological Association (2023) found that lower socioeconomic status can be linked to higher levels of additional emotional and behavioral difficulties, which in turn can lead to a child being more likely to commit a crime. In addition, a minor's lower socioeconomic status shapes their overall experience with the juvenile justice system, beyond their initial experience with the police. Specifically, an individual's socioeconomic status may negatively influence their interactions with the court system. Researchers have found a correlation between socioeconomic

status and arrest rates in the past, but with regard to minors, there is a lack of study replication and studies conducted.

This study will also consider the political leaning of a jurisdiction and its correlation with the arrest rates of minors. We will do this by looking at the individual county's political leanings. Current published literature lacks discussion on the influence of a community's political leanings on the police and the juvenile justice system, despite the consideration of environmental factors. For example, community effects on police arrests have been significant in the past. Albert Meehan (1993) looked at two suburban towns in Britain and saw how parents pressured local law enforcement to protect their children from formal arrests. These types of community influences can drastically change a county's arrest rates. In addition to this, even though there were fewer formal arrests, this action actually increased the level of surveillance done by the police, as they adopted informal practices to keep track of the youth in their community (Meehan, 1993).

Beyond this, this paper will examine external factors, studied in the past, that influence juvenile arrest rates beyond the independent variables in this study. More specifically, this paper will discuss the school-to-prison pipeline, the influence of school resources, mental health, and community-oriented policing. In previous literature, the school-to-prison pipeline has been found to increase the rate at which minors are arrested. In addition, studies have found that minors who are imprisoned often suffer from more mental health concerns as compared to their peers who have not served time. Community-oriented policing has also been found to influence arrest rates,

specifically in reducing crime and disorder (Reisig, 2010). Although these topics were outside the scope of this study, it is essential to bring attention to their influence.

This paper aims to better understand what factors play a role in the variation in arrests of minors in the state of Michigan, looking specifically at the influence, or lack of, of socioeconomic status and political leaning of a jurisdiction. This study has multiple hypotheses based on previous literature. Hypothesis one relates to socioeconomic status, where lower socioeconomic status will correlate with higher arrests per 1000 people. Due to lower resources in a community, such as limited resources in their school district and the role of the school-to-prison pipeline, the solution for various problems with minors is more likely to be arrested. Hypothesis two relates to the political leaning of a jurisdiction, where when a community where households lean Republican will correlate with higher arrest rates, and in turn, in a community where households lean Democratic, this will correlate with lower arrest rates. This is due to the individual views of the party on the effects of policing. More so, members of the Democratic Party are more likely to support less punitive measures as ways to discipline both youth and adult offenders. On the other hand, members of the Republican Party are more likely to support the idea of "law and order" and more punitive punishments. Hypothesis three considers both the effect that socioeconomic status and political household leanings have on the arrest rates of minors. Hypothesis three states that when considering both, the arrest rates will decrease in counties that lean Republican. This is due to the fact that counties with a higher socioeconomic status tend to lean Republican. Based on the data collected in this study, eight out of the top ten counties with the highest socioeconomic levels leaned Republican at least once based on presidential elections from 2008 to 2017. Given this, due to potentially having more

resources available in educating children, higher levels of emotional support (both in and outside of school), and a higher tendency to find solutions outside the juvenile justice system as first steps.

These factors were analyzed by using statistical regression analysis. This paper will present the results of individual regression models to show how the various independent variables correlate with each other and with the overall arrest rates of minors in the state of Michigan. I will present the results of models that examine specific types of crimes, as well as the overall juvenile crime rate per 1000 minors in each county. Following the description of the results found from the various models, there will be a discussion of the findings in relation to what is both similar and what is different among the various counties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last fifty years, various academic fields have heavily discussed increased incarceration rates and the overall interaction people in the United States have with the criminal justice system. Although, what is discussed less is the juvenile court system. Researchers have recently conducted more studies focusing on the juvenile justice system. These studies show a large variation in focus areas and have produced minimal study replications. Although many aspects of the juvenile justice system need to be focused on, I will be looking specifically at different factors that play a role in initial contact with the juvenile justice system. This will include looking at various indicators of the socioeconomic status of the Michigan counties and the residents' political leanings. In this literature review, I aim to create a roadmap that explains the background and connects these different factors to the variation of the arrest rates of minors.

This will be done by discussing the effects of socioeconomic status and the political household leanings, and then in tandem, within this thesis. Then, I will discuss how they overlap and why my research will add to the existing literature.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS IMPACT

Lower socioeconomic backgrounds make children more susceptible to arrests. Especially when considering minors, a household's socioeconomic status extends beyond the median household income. Socioeconomic status encompasses income, educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class (American Psychological Association, 2023). These factors are important to consider when assessing what affects a minor being arrested. With that being said, studies focusing on socioeconomic status have produced inconsistent results in terms of whether high or low socioeconomic status plays a significant role in the indication of if a minor is more likely or not to commit a crime. In addition to this, many studies are older, spanning back seventy years, leaving the conclusions outdated and not as applicable to today's juvenile justice landscape. Because of this, I am testing to see if the socioeconomic status of individual counties correlates to the arrest rates within counties. This will be measured by looking at median household income at the county level. Measuring socioeconomic status at the county level serves two crucial purposes. First, the overall socioeconomic status of a community is important due to the resources available for minors. Secondly, socioeconomic status measured using median household income also represents individual residents' socioeconomic conditions. This section of the literature will serve as background into how socioeconomic status has been reviewed by scholars in the past regarding the impact on minors.

Theories have been presented within the social context of explaining incarceration rates within the United States, specifically looking at the Criminal Justice System. One theory presented to explain why the incarceration of people in the United States is steadily rising as crime is declining is that there are outside motivations that go beyond a response to maintain social order for law enforcement. One hypothesis proposed to support this idea concerns socioeconomic status, which is defined as the underclass hypothesis. The underclass hypothesis is an idea that argues that, due to social lines around racial and/or class differences, this results in a more significant proportion of disfavored groups, as well as higher favored groups. With this, as the underclass (the disfavored groups) grows, so does the use of prisons. Society uses imprisonment to protect those within the favored groups (Smith, 2004, p 927-930). Although this theory looks at the increase in incarceration rather than arrest rates, it supports the idea that lower socioeconomic status results in higher arrests. With that being said, this shows a gap in the literature because it only discusses these theories concerning incarceration following the arrest period. This paper will attempt to address this gap.

Scholars have examined the economic conditions of a minor's home over the last few decades. With this, they have also looked at their relationship to the involvement in the juvenile justice system. The American Psychological Association concluded that juvenile delinquency is impacted by both social and economic development (Nisar et al., 2015, p 39-40). In addition to this, they found that higher levels of additional emotional and behavioral difficulties can also be linked to lower socioeconomic status (American Psychological Association, 2023). This is important to note because of the significance of the science behind this impact. Looking at the

socioeconomic factors individually does not necessarily paint the whole picture of what external factors influence a minor to commit a crime. With that being said, this supports the idea that lower socioeconomic status leads to higher arrest rates. In addition, Sociologist Robert Sampson (1986, p 876-880) found that individual socioeconomic status negatively influences the aftermath of coming into contact with the juvenile justice system overall, specifically the courts. Sampson also found that neighborhood socioeconomic status had an inverse effect on coming into contact with the police, independent of actual law-violating behavior. These findings are significant to discuss because of the difference between looking at the situations from an individual versus a neighborhood perspective. With that being said, this study will be looking specifically at arrest rates based on the county level, as well as looking at a more recent time frame when examining how socioeconomic status plays a role in arrest rates.

POLITICAL LEANINGS WITHIN A COMMUNITY

In addition to the internal factors that influence how authorities arrest minors in the United States, this paper will also explore external factors that contribute to these actions. Current literature provides little information on how communities influence police practices and the juvenile justice system. With that being said, there is a lack of literature on the influence of the community on both the police and the juvenile criminal justice system. This could be because of the difficulty of conducting tests to create a substantial theory. In addition, this section will look at the differences in how the two dominant political parties in the United States have viewed the juvenile justice system and its use to deter crime. Not only are the people of a county voicing their opinions on the police when they vote, but there are also those in the county with these

beliefs serving as local law enforcement. To understand how the system has become polarized, it is essential to look at the history of events that have led to the current opinions of each party.

Police arrest practices have been influenced by the community, regardless of whether they are often studied. Albert Meehan agreed with this. Looking at two suburban towns in Britain, Meehan (1993) understood that community influence, especially pressure from adults, significantly impacted the arrests of minors. Meehan notes that within one of the two counties, parents put pressure on their police department to protect the youth offenders from formal arrests and, in turn, the court process to avoid their children having to deal with the consequences of "having a record" (Meehan 1993). This influence bent the laws as the police complied. This is important to note because of how influential a community of trusted individuals can be. Although Meehan's study was conducted in England, where this paper is focused on the United States, it is important to recognize how influential a community can be and how willing specific departments are to listen to the people they serve.

Under extreme community pressure, local law enforcement may change how they operate to appease those around them. Meehan continues to note that local law enforcement had to devise methods to control juvenile crime by arresting and prosecuting youth offenders and responding to the community's request. The local law enforcement team adopted alternative methods to track youth in their community, ultimately implementing an informal social control system to prevent youth involvement in the juvenile justice system. This system included informal record-keeping practices to track the potential youth offenders, specifically using surveillance tactics, such as keeping records of the youth's movement. The results of this

informal system enhanced police oversight of minors (Meehan, 1993, p 505). Meehan's observation in this study shows the intense influence that a community can have on arrests and contact with the juvenile justice system. Although this study does not take place in the United States, it focuses explicitly on the political influence of an individual; it is important to look at how community members have affected the outcomes of young offenders in the past. The overlap of political leanings and the community impact on local law enforcement has not been heavily studied. Because of this, this has become a level of interest in this paper, looking at whether the political leanings of the county affect the overall impact on the arrest rates of youth offenders. Meehan's study suggests a correlation exists, highlighting a significant gap in the literature. As mentioned, although the study was based in England, the landscape for law enforcement is highly similar to that of the United States.

Turning to the United States, the effects of the politicization of police and views on how both the juvenile and criminal justice system affect crime rates are significant because one's views on this play a role in which political party they identify as. With this, it is important to look at the rise of polarization on this topic. To combat what was thought to be rising crime rates in the United States, in the 1960s, there was a call for a "War on Crime" where the federal government would be playing a more active role in combating criminal behavior (Hinton, 2015, p 808-810). The "War on Crime" is often not referred to in the context of the juvenile justice system, but the Johnson administration added many different programs in the 1960s. Some programs, including the Youth Service Bureaus, intended to "reign in potential lawbreakers" and assist troubled youth. It began to require public schools to partner with juvenile courts, police departments, and correctional facilities to receive more funding. Following these government

initiatives, another bill was passed, the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, which resulted in many social services being intertwined with crime control programs. This bill also created a national justice system for juvenile offenders, as well as formally labeling all economically vulnerable youth as "potentially criminal" (Hinton, 2015, p 808). This bill and the overall "War on Crime" resulted in targeting communities with a lower socioeconomic status, which often had a sizable non-white demographic. Specifically, young Black, Latino, and Native American minors were arrested at a much higher rate than other demographics, even though they made up significantly less of the population (Institute of the Black World 21st Century). These actions heavily contributed to the United States having the highest youth incarceration rate of any industrialized nation (Hilton, 2015, p 808).

Understanding the rise of the "War on Crime" is crucial for analyzing police actions, given the politicization of the issue. A significant aspect of Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign included a promise for a "War on Drugs" in addition to a "War on Crime," which had been introduced by Lyndon B. Johnson during his term as president (U-M Department of History and U-M Carceral State Project). Since the 1980s, specifically during Reagan's administration, there have been political developments that have changed the landscape of arrests, jailing, and imprisonment in the United States, signifying this idea that this became a part of the Republican political agenda. One specific development was that conservative politicians have promoted and voted for harsh crime control in addition to harsh drug policies. As mentioned, the War on Drugs, encouraged by the Reagan and Bush administrations, resulted in a vast increase in arrests and imprisonments, as well as harsher imprisonments (Tonry, 1994, p 475). In addition to this, many Republicans employed a "Southern strategy" when it came to crime. This strategy was adopted

to appeal to the white Republican voter bloc's racial antipathies, specifically by politicizing crime, welfare policies, and affirmative action. With this, the conversation around minors shifted, resulting in the referral of young offenders as dangerous criminals or super predators (Feld, 2017, p 105, 140-141). It is important to note that with this, a significant tactic that Republican politicians used to both gain and scare voters into supporting the Republican Party's agenda was the act of criminalizing people of color. This shift changed the landscape of how those in the United States viewed the act of policing.

The parties' shifting views on crime began in the "Get Tough" era for the juvenile population in the late twentieth century. According to Conservatives' political campaigns, there was a group of youths under the age of seventeen who were categorized as "dangerous super-predators" who were suffering from "moral poverty" who they claimed would end up in gang violence, drive-by shootings, and murder. This message was pushed by Republicans, both in office and in political media, allowing the party to gain more support for their stance on repressing youth crime. With this, politicians projected never-seen-before crime rates, even though juvenile violence had significantly declined in recent years (Feld, 2017, p 105). This period signified the policies in the juvenile courts and schools. In addition to an increase in overall juvenile offenders being sent to detention and correctional facilities for more extended periods, the most popular approach to fight the "rise" in juvenile delinquency was to make it easier to "transfer" or "waive" various youths to the criminal justice system, with adult courts (Torbet et al., 1996 as cited in Jordan and Myers, 2011, p 248). This transfer would occur, so minors could receive harsher and longer punishments to lower crime rates (Scialabba, 2016). The discussion of the "Get Tough" era is essential in this literature review because it helps in showing

the general feelings of those in a more dominant Republican county towards youth offenders. In addition, it shows how over the course of a few decades, the landscape of both who, how, and at what frequency minors came into contact with the juvenile justice system changed with this shift in ideology.

With Presidents, Senators, and politicians alike of a specific party pushing for more arrests, higher imprisonments, and overall harsher penalties, and the opposing party not, this becomes the party's stance overall. As previously discussed, Republicans adopted the tougher-on-crime stance, and Democrats focused on social programs beyond prison, as well as lowering the level of crimes that can be punished by jail time. This has become more and more clear over time, looking at the current political landscape today. Although the 1994 Crime bill passed as a bipartisan bill, it came about after the Democratic Party chose to follow in the Republicans' exploitation of crime by matching their tough stance, specifically so they would not be viewed as "soft on crime" (Feld, 2017, p 107). Today, many Democrats have come out and said voting yes on this bill was a mistake due to its impact. Overtime, as the United States began to see the effects of what the "War on Crime" meant for different populations, many who leaned Democratic started to be against this movement. In contrast, those who leaned Republican continued to fight for it.

In the twenty-first century, there has been ample discussion of this partisanship regarding the debate on police in the United States. Specifically, since the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement following the police shooting of Michael Brown (2014) and the death of Eric Garner (2014) following an officer from the NYPD holding him in a chokehold, a vital issue for

Americans, has been their opinions in response to this social movement. This issue has become a hyper-partisan issue, where calls for police reform and broader policies to address racial inequalities and injustices have been attempted to be heard at the local, state, and federal levels. According to Drakulich et al. (2021), as reported by Drakulich and Denver (2022, p 1191), a majority of white Americans oppose the movement. With this in mind, Drakuhlich and Denver (2022) found that those who identify as Republican or Democrat have taken two increasingly divergent paths in how they view the Black Lives Matter movement. Part of this difference is how discrepant the two parties' racial attitudes are. For example, in the 2020 Democratic primary, candidates openly discussed systemic racism, police reform, and mass incarceration. Republican candidates had a different outlook on the situation. Then, President Donald Trump in 2017 discussed how the country is to be divided, using the "us" (the hard-working, "real" Americans who longed to return to the idealized past) against "them" (the immigrants, minorities, and liberals who were calling for "American carnage") (Abramowitz and McCoy, 2018, p 139-142). This stark contrast in messages being sent about racial tensions, both in general and in the context of race, to the voting base was apparent, demonstrating that these issues are still prevalent even in the 21st century.

The conversation around police and the Black Lives Matter movement grew significantly with the police killing of George Floyd in the early summer of 2020. Becoming the most prominent social movement the United States has seen to date, police reform legislation was being called for by Democrats and blocked by Republicans. In June 2020 in Minnesota, where George Floyd was killed, the Minnesota Democrat-Labor-Farm Party brought forward a substantial package of police reforms, looking to codify the changes into law in an emergency

session. The Republican response was not to discuss police reform but to focus on the Governors' actions regarding their response to the coronavirus pandemic (Bierschbach, 2020, p 1-2). These exchanges, an inability to pass what Democrats felt was significant legislation, became common during this time across the United States. This is important because it changed how legislators, constituents, and police officers viewed law enforcement. Specifically with constituents, it is essential to note that what the police were doing became a highly politicized issue. Politicians of the Republican Party often spoke out against the Black Lives Matter Movement, whereas politicians of the Democratic Party spoke in favor. In turn, so did the supporters of the party.

The politicization of police in the United States has piqued the interest of social theorists to better understand how this plays a role in politics. As a result, social theorists have developed multiple theories on what has led to the politicization of policing, and the involvement of politics within both the criminal justice system and the juvenile justice system has evolved overtime. Smith (2004, p 930-931) discusses this idea. He notes that there is a theory, accepted by most social theorists, that the incarceration of individuals serves political purposes beyond the response to a threat against the social order, specifically, the partisanship hypothesis. This hypothesis argues that Republicans have more to gain by pursuing strict law and order policies, since this stance offered Republicans a way to connect with voting blocs that they did not typically benefit from with their traditional party's economic policies. These voting blocs included groups such as the middle class and White Southerners affected by the anti-minority sentiment within these messages (Smith, 2004, p 930-931). However, Smith (2004) does not discuss the actions leading up to the arrests, as this paper will do. With this in mind, although

there is no significant literature on these theories explicitly discussed in the context of the juvenile justice system, these theories have played an important role in the politicization of the arrests of minors.

Overall, the history of the politicization of police in the United States has been long in the works, spanning decades. The policies adopted during the time of the War on Crime or the Get Tough era are still active today, influencing the actions of those involved in the arresting and imprisonment of minors, specifically those of color. These ideas are essential to understanding how the United States juvenile justice system has become what it is today. The background presented in this section of the literature review serves as the necessary background to fully understand why it is important to look at how political leanings are connected to arrest rates and the views of those in a county, as the politics over time have become a significant influence on the system itself.

OTHER IMPACTS: THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

In addition to socioeconomic status and political leaning of a jurisdiction, researchers have discussed other factors affecting the variation in minors' arrest rates, which this paper will not consider as independent variables. These include, but are not limited to, the school-to-prison pipeline, mental health, and community-oriented policing. Although they are not being tested as independent variables in this study, it is important to briefly look at previous scholarly studies conducted to better understand their impact on arrest rates and to better understand the complex issue.

Researchers coined the phrases "school to prison pipeline" and "school pathways to the juvenile justice system" in the last few decades to describe policies and practices in US schools that increase students' likelihood of criminal involvement with the juvenile courts. It is important to note that Mallett (2015, p 15-16) emphasizes that escaping the school-to-prison pipeline becomes difficult once a student comes into contact with it. Legislation from Congress initiated these policies. The Gun-Free Schools Act passed to keep weapons out of schools requires a one-year expulsion and a mandatory referral to the juvenile justice system for students caught with a weapon on school grounds. This was viewed as a green light for zero-tolerance policies. This went far beyond weapons, including but not limited to non-violent student behaviors (verbal harassment, obscene language), violent behavior, harassment, and destruction of property. These policies are now often enforced with security guards or police officers in the school. In lower-income and inner-city public schools, the impact of these measures can be much harsher on students, resulting in more immediate contact with the police and in turn, what was once viewed as a school conflict can turn into an arrest report (Mallett, 2015, p 19-21).

Another topic that is discussed concerning what plays a role in a minor getting arrested is mental health concerns. Hirschfield et al. (2006, p 593-594) reported that individuals in secure confinement suffer from more mental health problems than their peers, suggesting that mental disorders may increase the risk of arrest. The first that juvenile justice involvement and mental disorders are linked has been consistently reported in research for multiple decades (Domalanta et al., 2003; Otto et al., 1992; Teplin et al., 2002; Vermeiren, 2003; Wasserman, Ko, and McReynolds, 2004, found in Hirschfield et al., 2006, p 594). Hirschfield et al. (2006) also found

that mental health problems may elevate the risk of arrest by having an increased likelihood of summoning the police. If school personnel are apprehensive about disciplining a student with a mental health condition, it is more likely that they will turn to local law enforcement for help. These two ideas are important to consider when thinking about the overall influences on arrests of minors.

Briefly mentioned in this paper, community members can heavily influence local law enforcement. Dating back to the 1970s, community-oriented policing has become a tactic adopted by communities as a response to public dissatisfaction with police. Community-oriented policing builds real trust between communities and their police, requiring police agencies to collaborate with their communities and tackle issues through problem-solving strategies (McCarthy et al., 2019, p 556-558). Empirical evidence suggests community and problem-oriented policing has reduced crime and disorder (Reisig, 2010, p 1). This is important to note because if a county participates in this type of policing practice, it could have a distinctive level of variation from the county next to it.

CONCLUSION

Overall, scholars have considered various topics when considering variations in arrest rates for adults and minors. Like other topics regarding the two justice systems, the criminal justice system dominates the literature compared to the juvenile justice system. Still, in the past few decades, more have begun to focus on minors. While there is some literature on socioeconomic status and how it affects the arrest rates of minors, there is a significant lack of

research concerning the effects of political leanings on arrest rates. With this, no current literature discusses both of these in tandem, as this paper will do.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Data Collection and Methods

This paper focuses on the question of what causes variation in arrest rates of minors in the state of Michigan. To examine this question, we must address the factors that could cause this variation. This study will specifically look at the impact of socioeconomic status based on median household income at the county level and the political leanings of the households within the county based on the percentage of victory for the presidential race in each county. Overall, these ideas were picked due to their potential impact on minors being arrested and because they have not been widely considered together but rather just individually. With these factors being picked, I decided that an observational study would be most beneficial for this research. Although being able to conduct surveys and look at other modes of collecting data in addition to this observational study would be helpful, unfortunately, due to the time constraint on this study and the data available, this is not possible for this study. Collecting this information and conducting this study will allow more insight into the arrest rates of minors, as well as potentially show where there is a correlation between higher and lower arrest rates and reasoning for why this may be the case.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aims to identify statistically significant factors that influence and do not influence minors' arrest rates in Michigan. The data will show what factors in a county are more

susceptible to higher rates of arrest and what are not. This will spark further research that will look into what environmental factors are similar and what are different. A greater understanding of what leads to arrests under certain circumstances will allow for recommendations on what has worked for some counties and what has not worked for others. That said, the next step in this research is to analyze the collected data.

For this study, the data collected was analyzed using R Studio. This allows for the data to be analyzed by using a regression analysis. Specifically, with the regression analysis, this study can look at various factors at a time and their correlation between arrest rates and the different independent variables. With this, all R code will be in the appendix. By running multiple regressions, we examined the impact of the independent variables individually and together, such as the impact of both socioeconomic status and political leanings in relation to a county in a given year. Six regressions were done, and three models focused on each independent variable individually. Following that, the three were considered together, looking at whether there were correlations separately, then when considering the year and county and the year, county, and controlling for race.

With that being said, there were limitations when collecting data. Data for Alpena County, Antrim County, and Chippewa County was unavailable for 2017. In addition, the time frame was chosen based on the published data. No data was available beyond 2017, and no data was available before 2008. Using the results from the regression models, this study will consider various counties in Michigan as case studies to see how the results of the regression models correlate to current counties. Then, I will look at additional environmental factors that could have

influenced the arrest rates to present a more accurate picture. With these findings, the study will be able to further draw conclusions on the variation of arrest rates of minors in the state of Michigan.

DATA

This study will focus on all eighty-three counties in Michigan. I chose the state of Michigan for multiple reasons, mainly because its population represents a cohesive study group. Specifically, during the timeframe this study focuses on, there has been a range of political parties in charge of both sheriff roles and the state government, as well as a range of socioeconomic statuses in the state. The Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice has published arrest rate data by county for the years 2008 through 2017. This study is based on this range due to the availability of data. The data is divided by crime type, gender, age, and race. The type of offense is categorized by crime type: specifically noting serious crimes (aggravated assault, homicide, rape, and robbery), property crimes (arson, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft), and other types of crimes (all other, such as non-aggravated assault, driving under the influence, and narcotic laws. The age ranges specified are 11-12, 13-14, and 15-16, although all crimes reported for those 17 and under are reported. The MCJJ also specifies the crime breakdown based on race, which includes White, Black, American Indian/ Alaskan, Asian / Pacific, Hispanic, and unknown. The crime rate is calculated per 1,000 juveniles for every county, allowing this study to compare each county to the other. The data that the MCJJ collected is from the Michigan State Police.

The state of Michigan has a diverse population based on race. 26 percent of the population consists of non-white residents. The three most dominant ethnic groups in the state of Michigan include White (Non-Hispanic), which consists of about 74 percent of the population, Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), which consists of about 13.4 percent, and Multiracial (Non-Hispanic), which consists of about 3.32 percent of the population. Depending on which county, these numbers can vary vastly. Counties such as Alcona County, Ontonagon County, Delta County, and Oscoda County all have fewer Black populations than one percent. On the other hand, Wayne County, Genesee County, and Saginaw County have had Black populations of more than twenty percent of their population. This is significant to consider regarding arrest rates because of how the Black population has been disproportionately arrested based on race. Because of this, in this study, race is controlled to isolate the effects the independent variables have on the various arrest rates.

I have linked arrest rates to multiple factors outside the Juvenile Justice System that could account for these variables. This includes socioeconomic status, based on median household income, and the political leanings of the households, based on the overall Republican voting share. These factors will be the independent variables, and the dependent variable will be the arrest rates for each county being looked at. The unit of analysis for this study will be based on county and year. Each of the eighty-three counties per year will serve as a separate unit of analysis. To effectively measure and then evaluate the relationships between the two independent variables and their relationship with juvenile arrest rates in Michigan, the data collection and operationalization of this data was vital. This paper will discuss why each variable was chosen and how it is going to be measured in this study. This is important because it will produce

answers to how socioeconomic status and political leaning of a jurisdiction relate to the variation in arrest rates.

The choice to look only at minors was made because of the lack of literature discussing the influence of arrests, minors in contact with the juvenile justice system, and recidivism for minors. Very little literature discusses a household's political leanings concerning arrest rates. Although socioeconomic status is more dominant in current literature, it is not often considered in tandem with other potential influences. Because this study focuses on minors, data collection was more challenging, as many records are kept sealed or unavailable to the public due to state protection laws.

Scholars consider socioeconomic status an important variable, often associating low status with higher arrest rates (Smith, 2004, p 927-930). There is no one measure of socioeconomic status. Due to this, this study will consider median household income as the measurement of socioeconomic status. Median household income is often used to measure socioeconomic status within a specific community and is computed based on standard distribution (Census.gov). Masayoshi Oka discusses indicators of socioeconomic advantage and socioeconomic deprivation, and notes that a high median household income is a sign of socioeconomic advantage. A lower median household income is a sign of socioeconomic deprivation (Oka, 2023, p 1-2). For this study, the data for median household income is from the United States Census based on county. The number used to measure each county is based on the data from 2010. This is due to what data is available for all counties and the time allotted to collect this. Researchers link higher socioeconomic status, or socioeconomic advantage, to

higher educational attainment, greater financial security, and better subjective perceptions of social status and social class (American Psychological Association). These additional resources could play a significant role in arrest rates within a county. It is important to highlight that socioeconomic status is measured at the county rather than the individual level. This will allow for a better understanding of socioeconomic status's overall impact on a community, specifically in Michigan.

The other variable being considered is the overall political leaning of a jurisdiction. Like socioeconomic status, this can be difficult to measure as there is not a singular unit of measure beyond polling. In this study, the operationalization of political leanings of a jurisdiction is based on the results of the presidential vote. More specifically, the political leanings of the county are based on the percentage of Republican votes in the county for the presidential race. This results in the number falling between zero and one, allowing it to be better compared to other variables in this study. This unit of analysis was chosen because it is a consistent measure across all counties and provides new data every four years. Because new data collection is available every four years, the variables are the same for 2008-2011, 2012-2015, and 2016-2017. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the idea of law and order and opinions on local law enforcement have become highly politicized in recent decades. Along with this, the people who work in law enforcement work as officers and are friends with local law enforcement individuals, influencing those who are making the arrests. With these two ideas working together, it is essential to consider the political leanings when discussing the influences on the arrest rates of minors.

As mentioned earlier, Michigan has a wide range of race demographics. Due to this and the impact that race, specifically for those who are Black, has on arrests, this study will run regression models that control for race. The data for race by county was collected from the Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. To best represent the effect of race, the percentage of the Black population was collected yearly by county. The county that has the lowest Black population is Alcona County (2008), with .20 percent of the population being Black. The county with the highest Black population was Wayne County (2008), with 42.1 percent of the population being Black. This is important to consider, given the range among these counties.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

As mentioned previously, data was collected from multiple different sources. For each county, this study compiled ten data frames, one for each year, detailing arrest rates and types of crime broken down by age and race. There are 827 variables for arrest rate, where the highest arrest rate (per 1,000) recorded was 86.17 (Luce County, 2017) and the lowest .22 (Cass County, 2016). As mentioned previously, socioeconomic status was measured by median household income. The highest income recorded was 85,991 (Oakland County), and the lowest was 31,205 (Lake County). To interpret the data more clearly, the median household income is converted to the median household income per 1,000 dollars. For political leanings of jurisdiction, the data collected was based on the results of the presidential elections in their county, as each county reports overall votes from their county's precincts. If the number is above .5, the county voted in favor of the Republican candidate, and if the number is below .5, the county voted in favor of the Democratic candidate. The highest number recorded (most in favor of the Republican nominee)

was .738 (Missaukee County, 2016 election), and the lowest number recorded (most in favor of

the Democratic nominee) was .25 (Wayne County, 2008 election). This available data allows this

study to conclude the arrest rates in Michigan.

Here is a brief overview of comparing the county's overall juvenile arrest rates based on

the outcome of the regression models conducted for this study. First, looking at median

household income, Michigan's overall median household income was 43,990. Oakland County

(85.991), Livingston County (72.129), and Washtenaw County (59.065) have the highest median

household income per 1000, whereas Lake County (31.205), Oscoda County (32.346) and

Roscommon County (33.542) are the lowest. Looking specifically at the top three and bottom

three counties based on median household income, the highest crime rate in 2010, as this was

when the median household income was recorded, was Roscommon County, with a rate of 37.75

per 1000 youths. Roscommon County had a median household income of 33,542, lower than

Michigan's median household income. The lowest crime rate in 2010 among the six counties was

in Livingston County, with a rate of 4.4 per 1000 youths. Livingston County had a median

household income of 72,129, much higher than Michigan's median household income.

The counties with the highest support for Republican vote share based on the presidential

election were Missaukee County in the 2016 election (73.5 percent voted for the Republican

candidate), Hillsdale County in the 2016 election (70.9 percent voted for the Republican

candidate), and Oscoda County in the 2016 election (70 percent voted for the Republican

candidate). The counties with the lowest support for the Republican candidate in the presidential

election were Wayne County in the 2008 election (25 percent of votes went to the Republican

candidate), Washtenaw County in the 2016 election (26.9 percent of votes went to the Republican candidate), and Ingham County in the 2008 election (32 percent of votes went to the Republican candidate). The county with the lowest arrest rates per 1000 is Hillsdale County, with the juvenile crime rate being 8.10 per 1000 youths for all crime types in 2016. The county with the highest out of these six is Washtenaw County, whose juvenile crime rate was 20.60 per 1000 youths for all crime types in 2008.

RESULTS

Six regression models were used to analyze the data collected. This was done to compare the three independent variables individually and together. Below, I present the results of the completed regression analysis, corresponding with the regression model numbers listed. It is important to note that median household income is referred to as "median household income per 1000 dollars," and the political leanings of a jurisdiction are referred to as "Republican vote share."
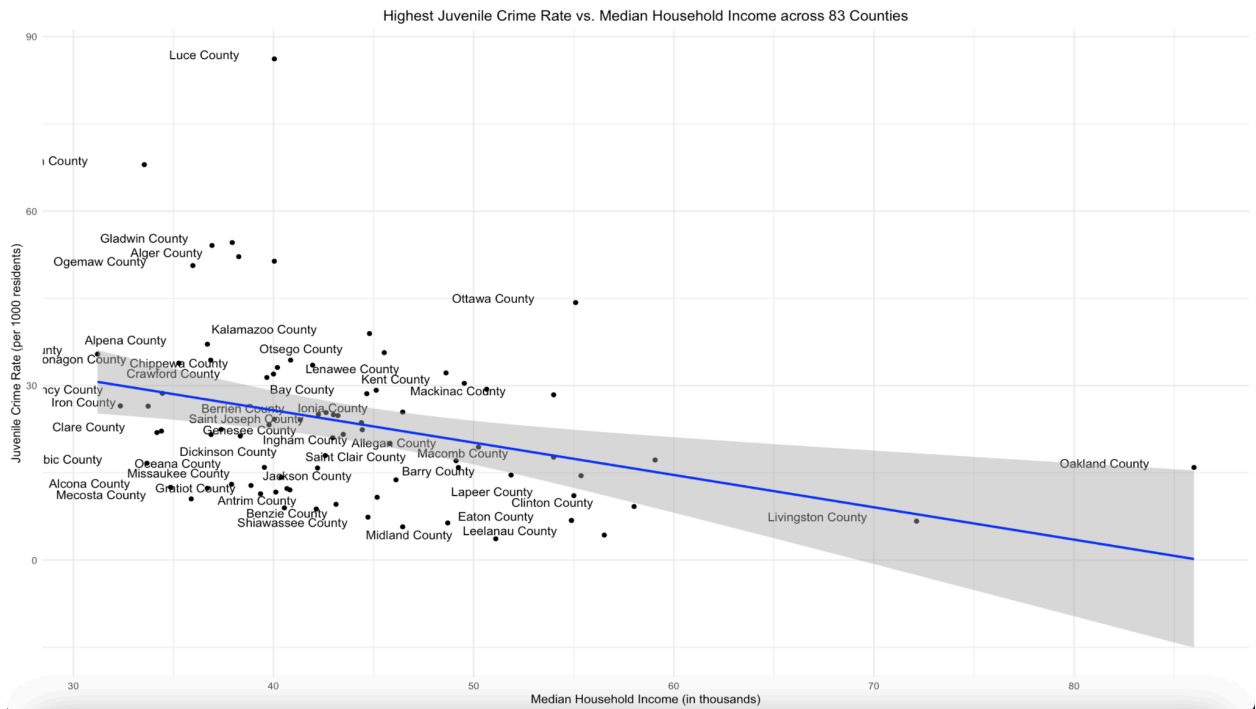
(1) Juvenile crime rate for all offense types regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars

(2) Juvenile crime rate for all offense types regressed on Republican vote share

(3) Juvenile crime rates for all offense types per 1000 minors regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars, and Republican vote share

(4) Juvenile crime rates for all offense types per 1000 regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars and Republican vote share, controlling for race

(5) Violent crime totals and rates regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars and Republican vote share, controlling for race

(6) Property crime totals and rates regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars
and Republican vote share, controlling for race

|	*Dependent variable:*			
	Juvenile_Crime_Rate_for_All_Offense_Types			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
median.household.income.per1000	-0.209***		-0.216***	-0.219***
	(0.043)		(0.043)	(0.043)
race				3.578
				(7.185)
president.voting		-15.079***	-18.417***	-16.772***
		(4.609)	(4.578)	(5.647)
Constant	23.702***	22.402***	33.699***	32.806***
	(1.920)	(2.411)	(3.205)	(3.674)
Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
R^2	0.029	0.013	0.045	0.046
Adjusted R^2	0.027	0.012	0.043	0.042

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Looking at model one, the juvenile crime rate for all offense types is regressed on median
household income per 1000 dollars. The coefficient of -.209 is statistically significant at the .01
level, signifying an inverse relationship between the two. In other words, when median
household income increases by 1000 dollars, the juvenile crime rate decreases by .209. Below is
a scatter plot graph of each county's juvenile crime rate (the highest observed during the period
of study) and county median household income. The graph depicts a downward correlation,
consistent with the regression findings. Counties with a higher socioeconomic status have a
lower arrest rate of minors. In the graph below, the blue line represents Model One, showing the
average relationship between median household income (per 1000) and the juvenile crime rate
for all offense types across the 83 counties in Michigan. The gray area surrounding the blue line
is the confidence interval from Model One. This demonstrates the uncertainty of the relationship,
providing a range for where Model One would still be true. The graph below shows that the

confidence interval varies across the median household income in Michigan. Overall, Model One supports my original expectation that lower socioeconomic status is correlated with higher arrest rates of minors.

Highest Juvenile Crime Rate vs. Median Household Income across 83 Counties

For regression two, the juvenile crime rate for all offense types regressed on Republican vote share. The coefficient of -15.079 is statistically significant at the .01 level, signifying an inverse relationship between the two. This suggests that for each one-unit increase in the percentage of the vote share for the republican candidate, there is a decrease of 15.079 units in the juvenile crime rate, with the constant being 22.402. Although this suggests a significant inverse relationship between a jurisdiction's political leanings and minors' arrest rates, this is not the case. Let's consider Washtenaw County and Missaukee County in 2016 to better explain this. Based on the regression model's findings, the predicted juvenile arrest rate for Washtenaw County was 18.345. In 2016, Washtenaw County reported a juvenile crime rate for all offense

types per 1000 minors as 8.64. On the other hand, the predicted juvenile arrest rate for

Missaukee County in 2016 was 11.273. In 2016, Missaukee County reported a juvenile crime

rate for all offense types per 1000 minors as 14.21.
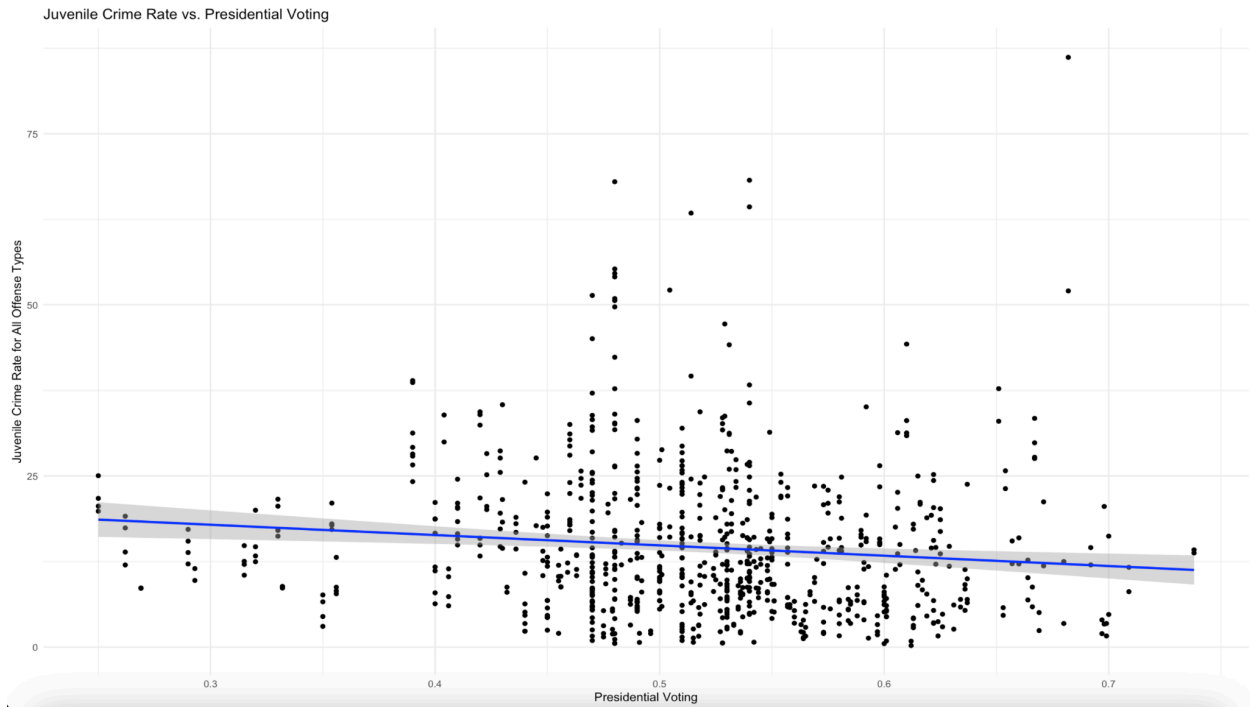
 As the model suggests, there is a decrease between the two that could be due to the higher

Republican vote share in Missaukee County, but not as significant of a change in one unit as

initially suggested. In addition, the difference between the predictive value and the actual value

indicates that the political leaning of a jurisdiction is not the main predictor of the arrest rates of

minors. Above is a graphical representation of the relationship between juvenile crime rate per

1000 and Republican vote share. The graph supports the statistical analysis model conducted,

demonstrating the inverse relationship. Once again, the blue line represents Model One. Also, the

gray area represents the confidence interval for Model One, or the regression line, showing the

range of values within which we can be confident that Model One can be. These findings are not

consistent with my original hypothesis, where the political leaning of a jurisdiction leans in favor

of the Republican candidate, the higher the arrest rate, but consistently, the two variables are correlated.

Model three looked at the effect of median household income per 1000 and Republican vote share regressed against juvenile arrest rate per 1000 for all offense types, with no fixed effects. Looking first at median household income per 1000, the model produced a coefficient of -0.216, which was statistically significant at a .01 level. This shows that for each unit increase in median household income, the juvenile crime rate decreases by 0.216. Next, the Republican vote share produced an -18.417, statistically significant at a .01 level. When median household income per 1000 is held constant, the juvenile crime rate decreases as Republican vote share increases. It is essential to draw attention to the adjusted R squared value, which is 4.3 percent. This can be interpreted as the fact that although these two variables have some effect on juvenile crime rates, other factors also play a role.

Model four looked at the effect of median household income per 1000 and Republican vote share regressed against juvenile arrest rate per 1000 for all offense types while controlling for race. The percentage of the Black population in the county was measured for the race variable. When controlling for race, there were different results compared to model four, which resulted in what the previous model showed. For median household income, the coefficient was –0.219. This was statistically significant at the .001 level. This was a .03 decrease from when race was not a control factor. Republican vote share resulted in a coefficient of -16.772, also statistically significant at the .001 level. This had an increase of 1.645 when controlling for race. With both of these, the constant was 32.806, which decreased by 0.893 compared to the

continuous of model three. The other difference for this model was the adjusted R squared value,

which decreased by .1 to have a value of 4.2 percent.

Models Five and Six shift away from looking at the overall juvenile crime rate per 1000

as the dependent variable and look at more specific types of crimes about the two independent

variables while controlling for race. Below are the results of the regressions of model five

(violent crime totals and rates regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars and

Republican vote share, controlling for race) and model six (property crime totals and rates

regressed on median household income per 1000 dollars and Republican vote share, controlling

for race).

Regression Results

|	(1)	(2)
(Intercept)	1.487***	9.103***
	(0.357)	(1.357)
president.voting	0.125	−7.621***
	(0.549)	(2.083)
median.household.income.per1000	−0.017***	−0.036*
	(0.004)	(0.016)
race	3.525***	5.906*
	(0.698)	(2.650)
Num.Obs.	801	801
R2	0.055	0.052

Model Five considers median household income per 1000 and Republican vote share

regressed against violent crime rate while controlling for race. Violent crime consists of

aggravated assault, homicide, rape, and robbery. Median household income per 1000 results in a

coefficient of -0.017, statistically significant at the .01 level. This shows that median household

income and violent crimes share an inverse effect, meaning that when income increases, violent crimes decrease. With that, Republican vote share resulted in a coefficient of .125, which is not statistically significant, suggesting no clear correlation between Republican vote share and violent crime rate based on this model. The model produced a constant of 1.487 for Model Five, which was also statistically significant. Below is a graph of the median household income per 1000 and the violent crime rate. This graph shows the visual inverse relationship between the two variables. The graph below represents the relationship between median household income and violent crime, where the blue line is the regression line and the gray area shows the confidence interval.

Relationship between Median Household Income and Violent Crime
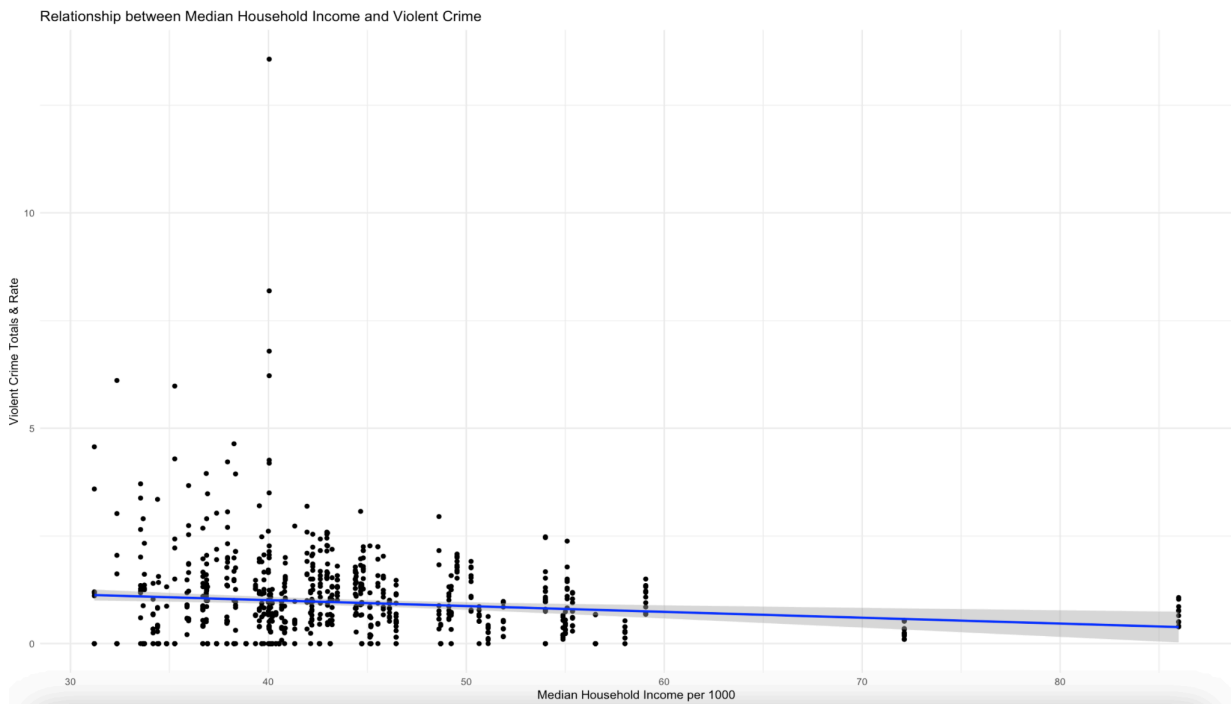
Model six considers median household income per 1000 and Republican vote share regressed against property crime rates while controlling for race. Property crime rates include arson, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. For Republican vote share, the model resulted in a coefficient of -7.621, which was statistically significant at the .01 level. As the previous models

ran, this signifies an inverse relationship between Republican vote share and property crimes in

the state of Michigan for minors. For median household income, the model produced a result of

-0.036 for the coefficient, which was also statistically significant but at the .1 level, representing

less correlation. For model six, the constant produced was 9.103. This is also statistically

significant at the .01 level. The graph below shows the relationship between Republican vote

share and property crime. The graph below shows the relationship between Republican vote

share and property crime, where the blue line serves as Model One, and the gray area represents

the confidence interval.

Relationship between Presidential Voting and Property Crime
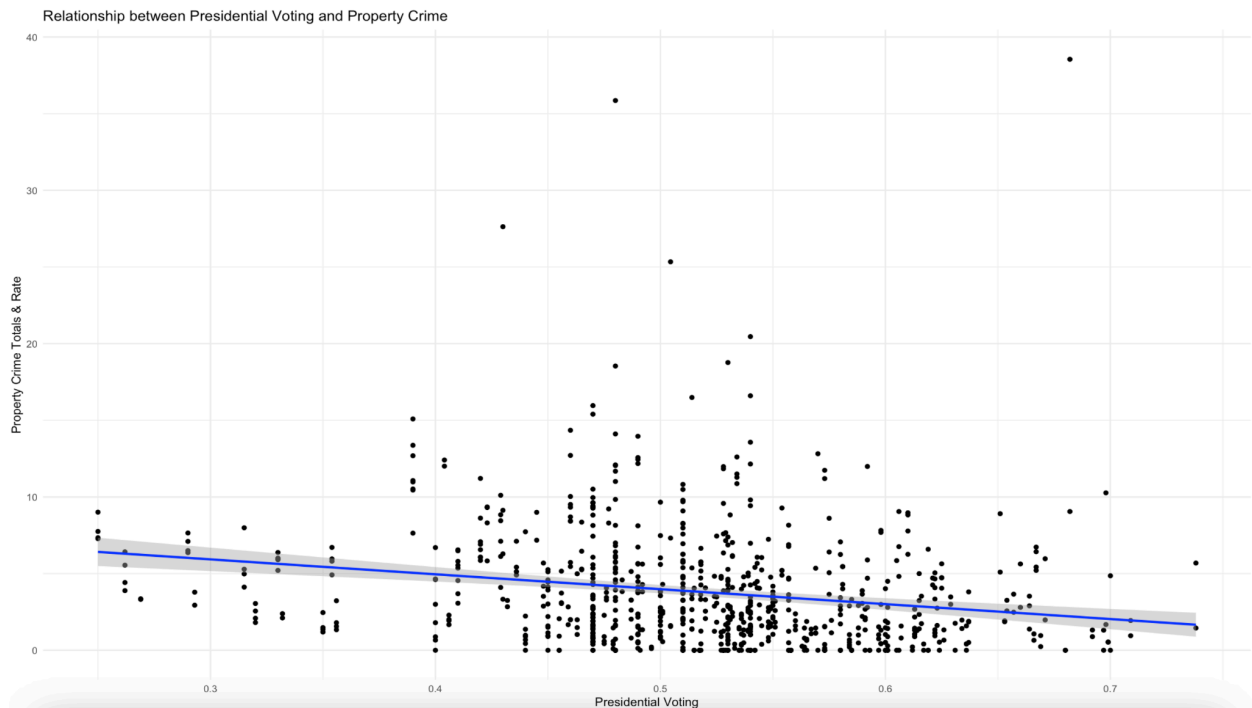
Overall, this study looked at six regression models to better understand the influence of

median household income and the political leaning of jurisdiction on juvenile crime rates, with

and without controlling for race. In multiple models, the results from these regressions indicated

statistically significant inverse relationships. Specifically, these models found that increased

median household income consistently predicted decreased crime rates. The models also showed that a higher share of Republican votes within a county correlates with decreased arrest rates for minors. Although the models revealed that there was a correlation between the various variables, the R-squared values indicated that there were other factors that also played a role in the variation of arrest rates.

CASE STUDIES

Next, I will consider individual counties in Michigan to better understand how socioeconomic status and the political leaning of a jurisdiction affect variation in arrest rates. There will be two case studies, the first focusing on Luce County and Leelanau County and the second on Cass County and Roscommon County. These four counties were picked due to a few factors. First, Luce County and Roscommon had relatively high arrest rates, and Cass County and Leelanau County had relatively low ones. Because of this, I could compare two counties with significantly different overall arrest rates and consider what was different between the two. In addition to this, the four counties mainly include rural and suburban areas. I chose not to consider counties such as Wayne County or Kent County because the population is much higher and has urban areas, making it more challenging to collect data compared to smaller, rural counties. Having similar geographical characteristics makes the counties more comparable at the baseline level. These case studies will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to the variations in arrest rates within Michigan.

CASE STUDY ONE: LUCE COUNTY AND LEELANAU COUNTY

This section will compare the factors contributing to the vastly different arrest rates in two Michigan counties, Luce County and Leelanau County. Luce County is the 82nd largest county in Michigan, and Leelanau County is the 64th largest county in Michigan (US Census). Luce County's average juvenile crime rate for all offense types per 1000 minors between 2008 and 2017 is 41.785. Luce County's highest recorded minor arrest rate was in 2017, with a rate of 86.17. This is the highest rate recorded in Michigan between these years. The lowest recorded was 13.64 in 2015 (US Census). On the other hand, Leelanau County has an average juvenile crime rate of all offense types per 1000 minors between 2008 and 2017 of 1.37556. The highest recorded arrest rate of minors was 4.29 in 2012. In 2015, zero crimes were recorded. This section will first detail the composition and characteristics of each county, followed by a comparative analysis to better understand the reasons behind their significantly different arrest rates.

LUCE COUNTY

In 2010, Luce County had a population of 6,602 people, with 482 minors between the ages of ten and sixteen (US Census; Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2010). Between 2008 and 2017, Luce County's Black population, on average, was 11.7 percent. In addition to this, Luce County also has a Native American population of 6 percent, with an overall White population of 82 percent (Michigan Department of Health and Human Resources, 2022). Also, their political leaning of a jurisdiction averaged 59.48 percent for the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections in favor of the Republican nominee. Beyond this, their sheriff, Kevin Erickson, served for the entirety of this study's time frame and belonged to the Republican Party (McGinn, 2022;The Sault News, 2012). Looking at socioeconomic status, Luce County had a median

household income of 40,041 (which ranks 54th out of 83 highest for Michigan counties) and a per capita income of 17,195 (ranked second out of 82 counties in Michigan) in 2010. In 2022, the median household income precisely for families was 65,966. As of 2022, 24.9 percent of those residing in Luce County under eighteen are considered to be in poverty. In addition, for those who are 25 years old or older, 40.2 percent have attained a high school diploma or an equivalent degree, and 17.3 percent have achieved a bachelor's degree or higher, with an employment rate of 32 percent (US Census).

Luce County has one school district, Tahquamenon Area Schools. There are two schools, Newberry Area School, which includes kindergarten through sixth grade, and Newberry High School, which provides for sixth through twelfth grade. Each school has one counselor. An important note is that the current Newberry Area School counselor is an intern overseen by the Newberry High School counselor (Tahquamenon Area Schools). Between the years of 2008 to 2017, there was no school resource officer or other type of police officer or security on campus. At the start of 2024, the schools will have police officers starting two days a week because of "frequent visits" (McGinn, 2024). Beyond this, as stated in the School Board's policies, there is zero tolerance for alcohol, and they are compliant with the drug-free school zone act. In addition, they do offer restorative practices, depending on the specific situation and in school discipline (Tahquamenon School Board of Education, Retrieved March 2024). 83.3 percent of minors in Luce County are enrolled in school, whereas the Michigan average of students enrolled is 67.7 percent (US Census).

LEELANAU COUNTY

In 2010, Leelanau County had a population of 21,718, with 1,845 minors between the ages of ten and sixteen (US Census; Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2010). Between 2008 and 2017, the county had an average Black population of .77 percent (Michigan Department of Health and Human Resources, 2022). For their political household leanings, for the 2008, 2012, and 2016 presidential elections, Leelanau County had an average of 50.14 percent in favor of the Republican nominee. With this, from 2008 to 2017, a county sheriff always identified with the Republican Party (Leelanau County, 2023). Turning to socioeconomic status, in 2010, Leelanau County had a median household income of 56,527 (which ranks 6th highest out of 83 counties in Michigan) and a per capita income of 32,194. There is also a 73.7 percent enrollment of minors in kindergarten through twelfth grade. As of 2022, the median income for families was 101,453 dollars. In addition, 11.2 percent of those under eighteen years of age were considered to be in poverty. 48.6 percent of residents in Leelanau County have attained a bachelor's degree, and the employment rate is 50.1 percent (US Census).

Leelanau County has five public school districts and three private schools. The public schools are Glen Lake Community Schools, Leland Public School, Northport Public Schools, Suttons Bay Public School, and Leelanau Montessori. The three private schools include Pathfinder School, The Leelanau School, and Lake Leelanau St. Mary's. This discussion will primarily focus on the public schools, as Luce County offers no private school options to compare to. Glen Lake Community Schools consists of three schools: an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. They provide a school counselor at each school, and at the high school, they give a student-led mental health team. In addition, they have two intervention

specialists on staff and one student family support staff member (Glen Lake Community Schools, 2024). Both Leland Public School and Northport Public School only have one school each, where Leland Public School is a middle school, and Northport is an elementary school. Leland Public School provides two middle school counselors and two support dogs (Leland Public School, 2024). Northport Public School provides students with a school counselor and a mental health specialist, where parents can request meetings online, and the counselor will schedule an appointment within twenty-four hours (Northport Public School, 2024). Lastly, Suttons Bay Public Schools have a school at each level. Students have access to a counselor at each school, an SE specialist at the high school, and a specific fourth and fifth-grade specialist. In addition, Suttons Bay Public Schools offers a core public assistance program run by the school's principal, counselor, social worker, and teachers who have received special training. This program provides counseling, big brother/sister programs, ADD screenings, drug/violence prevention programs, and more (Suttons Bay Public Schools, 2024).

CONSIDERING BOTH

Luce County and Leelanau County have significant similarities and differences. Multiple similarities are important to note. First, both counties had similar political leanings, voting in favor of the Republican candidate in the presidential elections for all but one election (Leelanau County, 2008 election) and the sheriff identifying as a member of the Republican Party for all six elections. Also, both counties are in rural Michigan. Turning to their education systems, both counties have at least one counselor at every elementary, middle, and high school. This is important for how mental health is valued and addressed in various counties. In addition, from 2008 to 2017, there was no mention of any school resource officers or police liaisons at the

schools. The lack of resource officers means that disciplinary issues in school were more likely to simply be dealt with by administrators as opposed to the police.

Beyond the similarities between Luce County and Leelanau County, there are also multiple differences. For one, there is a difference in socioeconomic status. As mentioned, Luce County has the 54th (out of 83) highest median household income, whereas Leelanau County has the sixth-highest median household income. This suggests that Leelanau County will have access to better resources in their community. This can be seen in the school districts. Among the various Leelanau County public school districts, there are multiple additional resources compared to those offered by Luce County to help students. For example, the core public assistance program that allows for ADD testing is available. Being able to identify these mental disorders early will enable the students to get assistance in managing their condition and learn different techniques to learn their best. It has been found that minors with mental health disorders are more likely to encounter the juvenile justice system as compared to their peers. Therefore, having access to resources to get tested and learn how to best manage systems is enormously beneficial. In addition to this, Leelanau County schools also offer various specialists, including student-family support, intervention specialists, and mental health specialists. This adds to additional support that minors in Leelanau County have access to and those in Luce County do not.

In addition to the socioeconomic and school resources, there are also differences in the population demographic and size. For one, there is a difference in the education of the adults in the county who are influencing and raising the minors. In Luce County, 17.3 percent of adults

have attained a bachelor's degree; in Leelanau County, 48.6 percent have achieved a bachelor's degree (US Census). In addition to this, the population based on race is quite different as well. In Luce County, on average, 11.7 percent of the county was Black, and 6 percent of the county was Native American between the years of 2008 and 2017. In Leelanau County, there was an average of .77 (Michigan Department of Health and Human Resources, 2022). This is important to note because of the disproportionate rate at which people of color, specifically Black men, are arrested as compared to their white counterparts. Overall, Leelanau County has a much larger population than Luce County. In 2010, Luce County had a population of 6,602 people, whereas Leelanau County had a population of 21,718 (US Census). Population is important to consider due to how the county can allocate resources.

While Luce County reported an average annual arrest rate for all offense types per 1000 minors as 41.785 and Leelanau County reported an average yearly arrest rate for all offense types per 1000 minors as 1.37556, it is clear some factors played a significant role in this variation. When considering Luce County and Leelanau County, socioeconomic status, resources within the school systems, and community demographics play an important role, as these are the most significant differences. The lack of resources available to students in Luce County compared to what is available in Leelanau County, especially regarding mental health, could be one explanation for this disparity. In addition, Leelanau County reported a higher percentage of adults with bachelor's degrees and a predominantly white population. This supports the idea that higher education rates and racial demographics play a role in the variation of arrest rates. Overall, the difference in the arrest rates of minors in Luce County and Leelanau County shows that not only can many factors influence the variation of arrest rates, but also that there are

things, such as providing a comprehensive support system at schools, that can help reduce the arrests of minors.

CASE STUDY TWO: CASS COUNTY AND ROSCOMMON COUNTY

This section will next consider Cass County and Roscommon County, examining and comparing the various factors that could contribute to the different arrest rates. As of 2022, Cass County is the 35th largest county by population in Michigan, and Roscommon County is the 58th (US Census, 2022). First, looking at Cass County, between the years 2008 and 2017, the county has an average of 3.228 juvenile arrest rate for all offense types per 1000 minors. Cass County's highest recorded juvenile arrest rate was in 2009, where their arrest rate was 10.79. The county's lowest recorded juvenile arrest rate for all offense types was in 2016, with an arrest rate of .22. This was the lowest arrest rate for all kinds of crime per 1000 minors in Michigan between the years of 2008 and 2017. On the other hand, Roscommon County, on average, reported a juvenile arrest rate of 36.81 for every 1000 minors. The highest rate reported was in 2011, when the county reported a juvenile arrest rate of 67.99, and the lowest rate reported was in 2015, with a juvenile arrest rate for all offense types of 16.11. First, the compositions of the two counties will be described, followed by a comparative analysis.

CASS COUNTY

In 2010, Cass County had a population of 52,245, with 5,184 being the population of ten to sixteen-year-olds (US Census; Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2010). 77.6 percent of minors in Cass County are enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade, and 21 percent fall

below the poverty line(US Census). Between the years of 2008 and 2017, Cass County's Black population was 6.57 percent (Michigan Department of Health and Human Resources, 2022). Looking at socioeconomic status next, Cass County had a median household income of 45,117 and a per capita income of 22,698. Cass County's median household income ranks 55th lowest out of 83 counties in Michigan. With this, the per capita income ranked 52nd lowest out of 83 counties in 2010. As of 2022, the median household income for families was 79,502, and the median household income for married families was 93,350 (US Census). With this, the employment rate for Cass County was 56.3 percent as of 2022. 21.2 percent of Cass County attained a bachelor's degree, 23.4 percent completed some college, and 33.9 percent attained a high school degree or some equivalent (US Census). In addition to this, Cass County also has a political leaning of a jurisdiction of 53.6 percent, meaning that for the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections, the county voted in favor of the Republican candidate, 53.6 percent. Also, from 2008 to 2017, whoever held the role of county sheriff was identified as a member of the Republican Party.

Cass County has four public school districts- Cassopolis Public Schools, Dowagiac Union Schools, Edwardsburg Public Schools, and Marcellus Community Schools. Cassopolis Public Schools consists of one elementary school, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative school. The high school has two counselors, the middle school has a student interventionist, and the elementary school offers a student support specialist. The district also provides grief resources (Cassopolis Public Schools). Edwardsburg Public Schools consists of one high school, one middle school, and one intermediate school, which consists of fourth and fifth grade, Eagle Lake Elementary, which consists of second and third grade, primary school,

which consists of kindergarten and first grade, and an alternative school. Edwardsburg High

School offers two counselors at the high school for tenth through twelfth grade and one

counselor for eighth and ninth grade (who splits time between the middle school and high

school). There is also one counselor at the middle school for sixth and seventh grades. An

academic interventionist and student support services are offered at the intermediate school. The

elementary and primary schools have one student support specialist (Edwardsburg Public

Schools).

Marcellus Community Schools, like Cassopolis Public Schools, have one elementary

school, one middle school, and one high school, but they do not offer an alternative school. The

elementary school and middle school both have one social worker, and the middle school also

has a student mentor. The high school has one counselor (Marcellus Community Schools).

Lastly, Dowagiac Union Schools comprises seven schools - four elementary schools, one middle

school, one high school, and one alternative school. Between the four elementary schools, the

district staffs a social worker, aides, behavior support specialists, counselors, and

interventionists. For the behavioral support specialist and social worker, those serving in the

roles split time between more than one elementary school in the school district. The middle

school staff has one counselor and a social worker. In addition, the high school offers students

access to a counselor, a health aide, two student advocates, and a student mentor (Dowagiac

Union Schools).

ROSCOMMON COUNTY

In 2010, Roscommon County had a total population of 24,441 and a population of 1,669 for minors between the ages of 10 and 16 (US Census; Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2010). Between 2008 and 2017, Roscommon County's Black population consists of .76 percent on average. During the same time frame, there was also a county sheriff who ran as a member of the Republican Party in office for the entirety of that time. In addition, the political leaning of a jurisdiction based on the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections, on average, resulted in 52.26 percent favoring the Republican candidate. On the other hand, 39.5 percent of the Roscommon County population is employed, and 72.5 percent of minors are enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth-grade schools. 10.5 percent of those residing in Roscommon attained a bachelor's degree, 26.6 percent partook in some college, and 33.8 percent attained a high school diploma or equivalent. 27 percent of minors in Roscommon County are considered to live in poverty (US Census). Looking at socioeconomic status next, Roscommon County had the third lowest median household income recorded as of 2010 in Michigan, with an income of 33,542. In 2010, the per capita income was 20,194, which ranked as the 29th lowest in the state of Michigan. With this, the median household income for a family in 2022 was 63,425, and the median household income for a married family was 70,383 (US Census).

Roscommon County has two public school districts - Houghton Lake Community Schools and Roscommon Area Public Schools. First, looking at Houghton Lake Community Schools, the district is made up of two schools, a junior/senior high school, which consists of seventh to twelfth grade, and an elementary school, which consists of prekindergarten to sixth grade. Houghton Lake Collins Elementary School employs a social worker, behavior coach,

student support specialist, and behavior interventionist. The high school offers one counselor (Houghton Lake Community Schools). Next, looking at Roscommon Area Public Schools, the district provides three schools: one elementary, one middle school, and one high school. The three schools share one psychologist, who splits their week up among the three schools. The elementary school employs an interventionist and a behavior interventionist. The middle school offers a behavior interventionist and a counselor. Lastly, the high school provides a school counselor (Roscommon Area Public Schools).

CONSIDERING BOTH

Cass County and Roscommon County have both similarities and differences. Looking first at similarities, they have very similar political leanings for both the household and the sheriff. This is important because it shows that in the case of these two counties, the hypothesis that the political leaning of a jurisdiction plays a role in the variation of the arrest rates of minors is not significant, given that the two counties have such different arrest rates. In addition to this, both counties had a Republican sheriff as well from 2008 to 2017. There were also significant similarities when looking specifically at the minors in the counties. For one, the two counties had similar rates for minors in school. Cass County had 77.6 percent of minors in a kindergarten through twelfth-grade class, and Roscommon County had 72.5 percent- a 5.1 percent difference. The two counties also had similar resources in the schools. Each school has at least one counselor and/or social worker in both counties. With this, both counties have at least one district that shares resources among multiple schools, such as a school psychologist. These are important factors to consider when considering the different arrest rates. More specifically, both counties have a high amount of school resources. With this, these counties show that even though they

have very different socioeconomic statuses, to an extent, they have similar resources that help minors within their school districts.

In addition to the similarities between the two counties, Cass County and Roscommon County differ in multiple ways. For one, the two have highly different socioeconomic statuses. Roscommon County's household median income ranks third lowest in all of Michigan and 29th lowest for per capita income. In contrast, Cass County ranks 55th for median household income and 52nd lowest for per capita income. This is a significant difference in socioeconomic status. Beyond this, there is also a significant difference in population, where in 2010, Cass County was the 35th largest county by population in the state of Michigan, and Roscommon County was the 58th largest county by population in the state of Michigan. In addition, the population by race is also very different, where Cass County has an average of 6.57 percent Black population and Roscommon County, on average, has a .76 percent Black population. This is important because, based on previous literature, people of color, specifically Black men, are often arrested at disproportionately high rates compared to their white counterparts. With this, one would predict that Cass County would have higher arrest rates than Roscommon, but this is not the case. Another important fact to note is that Cass County supplies students with easy-to-access mental health services available to students and teachers on their school websites. There was nothing like this for Roscommon County schools (Cass County Public Schools; Roscommon Public Schools). Also, based on previous literature, those with a history of mental health concerns are more likely to come in contact with the juvenile justice system. Therefore, providing these services could help act as a deterrent.

The results of this case study are significant to consider, given the outcome of the regression models in the study. First, by looking at socioeconomic status, this case study supports the results of the models. This study found that the higher the socioeconomic status, the lower the arrest rate will be. Given that Cass County had an arrest rate of 3.228 and Roscommon had an arrest rate of 36.81, this comparison supports the findings of this study. Beyond this, the study found that when a county votes more in favor of a Republican candidate, their arrest rates will be lower. Based on this case study, this is not significantly supported. More specifically, when looking at Cass County individually, this remains true as the county did vote, on average, more in favor of the Republican candidate and had a low arrest rate for minors. On the other hand, Roscommon also voted, on average, in favor of the Republican candidate but had a much higher arrest rate average. This suggests that although this study found that political household leanings had a statistically significant correlation between low arrest rates and higher Republican favor, other factors also play a role.

DISCUSSION

As discussed above, the regression models show that juvenile arrest rates are lower in wealthier counties and counties with a higher percentage of Republican voting based on the presidential election. The results of the models concerning socioeconomic status remained consistent with my original hypotheses. The models' results concerning a jurisdiction's political leaning did not. Although there were slight changes in the coefficients across regressions when controlling for race, this relationship remained true. In other words, the overall relationship was consistent whether the regressions controlled for race. First, this section will focus on how the results of this study aligned with previous research with regard to socioeconomic status and then

why this took place. Following this, there will be a discussion of how this study aligned with

previous literature with regard to the political leaning of a jurisdiction and why this took place.

Then, there will be a discussion of both the limitations of the study and overall recommendations

based on the findings and future research.

Hypothesis one	Lower socioeconomic status correlates with higher arrests of minors per 1000 people	Supported
Hypothesis two	In a community that leans Republican, there will be higher arrest rates and in Democratic leaning counties, there will be lower arrest rates	Not supported
Hypothesis three	When considering both socioeconomic and political leaning of a jurisdiction, when a county leans Republican, it will result in lower arrest rates	Supported

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

As hypothesized and seen in previous literature, the findings for socioeconomic status

remained constant. More specifically, the findings of this study align with the underclass

hypothesis, that due to both racial and social class differences, there became disfavored groups,

who were more likely to be arrested in order to protect the favored groups (Smith, 2004). In

addition, the findings align with the overall idea that social and economic development impacts

juvenile delinquency (Nisar et al., 2015). The regression models conducted in this study show

that the better socioeconomic status a community has, the lower the rate at which minors will be

arrested for crimes, and in turn, shows that the lower the socioeconomic status a community has,

the higher the rate at which minors will be arrested for crimes.

Multiple factors could explain this. For one, counties with greater socioeconomic levels have access to better resources, such as better-funded public schools. Public school funding is often from property taxes, meaning counties with higher socioeconomic statuses usually have better-funded schools (Chingos and Blagg, 2017). Being in a better-funded public school has many benefits. They often have better-qualified teachers and the ability to staff more people, such as counselors, who can work with students who have behavioral issues before they come into contact with the police. Building off of this, those in lower socioeconomic areas are more susceptible to the effects of the school-to-prison pipeline, especially in urban areas. Instead of being able to have an issue addressed with just counselors, teachers, and administrators, a police officer often gets involved, bringing the student into contact with the juvenile justice system. In addition, with specific zero-tolerance policies, students are susceptible to making a mistake, and a required police report is also submitted in addition to the school punishment.

POLITICAL LEANING OF A JURISDICTION

As previously stated, there was little literature on the topic of political leaning of a jurisdiction influencing the arrest rates of minors. With this, hypothesis two hypothesized that due to the Republican Party's stance on police, which often calls for more punitive punishments, counties that lean Republican would have higher arrest rates as compared to those in Democratic-leaning counties. This has developed since the 1970s and the federal government's "Get Tough" program to lower crime rates. This was proven to be false based on the regression models run in this study. Instead, the regression models suggested a statistically significant

correlation between higher arrest rates in Democratic counties and lower arrest rates in Republican counties.

There are a few reasons why hypothesis two may have proved incorrect, and that if a county leans Republican, it is more likely that they have lower arrest rates was statistically significant. For one, there is a possibility that due to the Republican Party's stricter stance on crime, there might be more discussion about it in the household. This could potentially lead to a better understanding of the potential consequences if they do something that could summon the police. Although this model specifically looked at the political leaning of a jurisdiction, it is difficult to ignore the implications of socioeconomic status. In addition, the influence of the political party that members identify with may have little effect on those who serve in local law enforcement. In other words, those who work in local law enforcement support the ideals of local law enforcement, often aligning more with the Republican Party on the contested issues when it comes to police.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

When conducting this study, there were a few limitations. For one, data was only available for arrest rates between 2008 and 2017. Looking at a broader range, specifically to 2022, to add another election would have benefited the study. Limited available data was a consistent problem throughout this study. Initially, this study focused on the variation of recidivism rates for minors within the state of Michigan. Due to the lack of data, the study was altered. Also, looking at specific cities would be beneficial. This would allow a better understanding of what practices influence higher or lower arrest rates. In addition to this, the

time variable had limitations. More specifically, considering the additional factors that influence arrest rates would have contributed to a more complete picture of why there is variation in arrest rates. Being able to consider how the school-to-prison pipeline by looking at zero-tolerance policies and the use of school resource officers could shed significant light on the influence they have on the arrest rates of minors. In addition, looking at how various school districts prioritize mental health and how they address emotionally challenged students at a young age would also be beneficial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study results, I believe it is crucial to understand the impact of socioeconomic factors and political leaning on juvenile arrest rates across Michigan counties. The models show that juvenile arrest rates are lower when socioeconomic status is higher. When in these lower socioeconomic counties, the results suggest that minors are more likely to get arrested. This correlation raises concerns about the underlying mechanisms at play, suggesting that socioeconomic status goes beyond just economic inequality, but instead has a direct influence on the juvenile justice system's engagement with youth in the state of Michigan. On the other hand, the political leaning on a jurisdiction also affected juvenile arrest rates. The models found that when there was a higher Republican vote share, there was a lower rate of juvenile arrests in that county. This relationship between political leanings and juvenile arrest rates presents an interesting discussion on how political ideologies impact local law enforcement, community involvement, and the allocation of resources toward preventive measures versus punitive actions.

Overall, this study has allowed for a greater understanding of what plays a role in the variation of arrest rates of minors. With that, much more must be considered to fully understand this topic. Following this study, it would be beneficial to look at these other influences in tandem with a jurisdiction's socioeconomic status and political leaning. In addition, looking at additional states compared to Michigan would be beneficial, specifically when looking at the political leaning of a jurisdiction and socioeconomic status. Michigan is a diverse state that is well representative of the United States. However, compared to other states with a very low or high socioeconomic status or lean extremely Republican or Democrat, it could be highly beneficial to draw more substantive conclusions on what impacts the variation. A greater focus on minors and the juvenile justice system in scholarly literature would benefit various actors, such as schools and municipal governments, to produce lower arrest rates.

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