



Homicide: An Examination of the Increase in 2015

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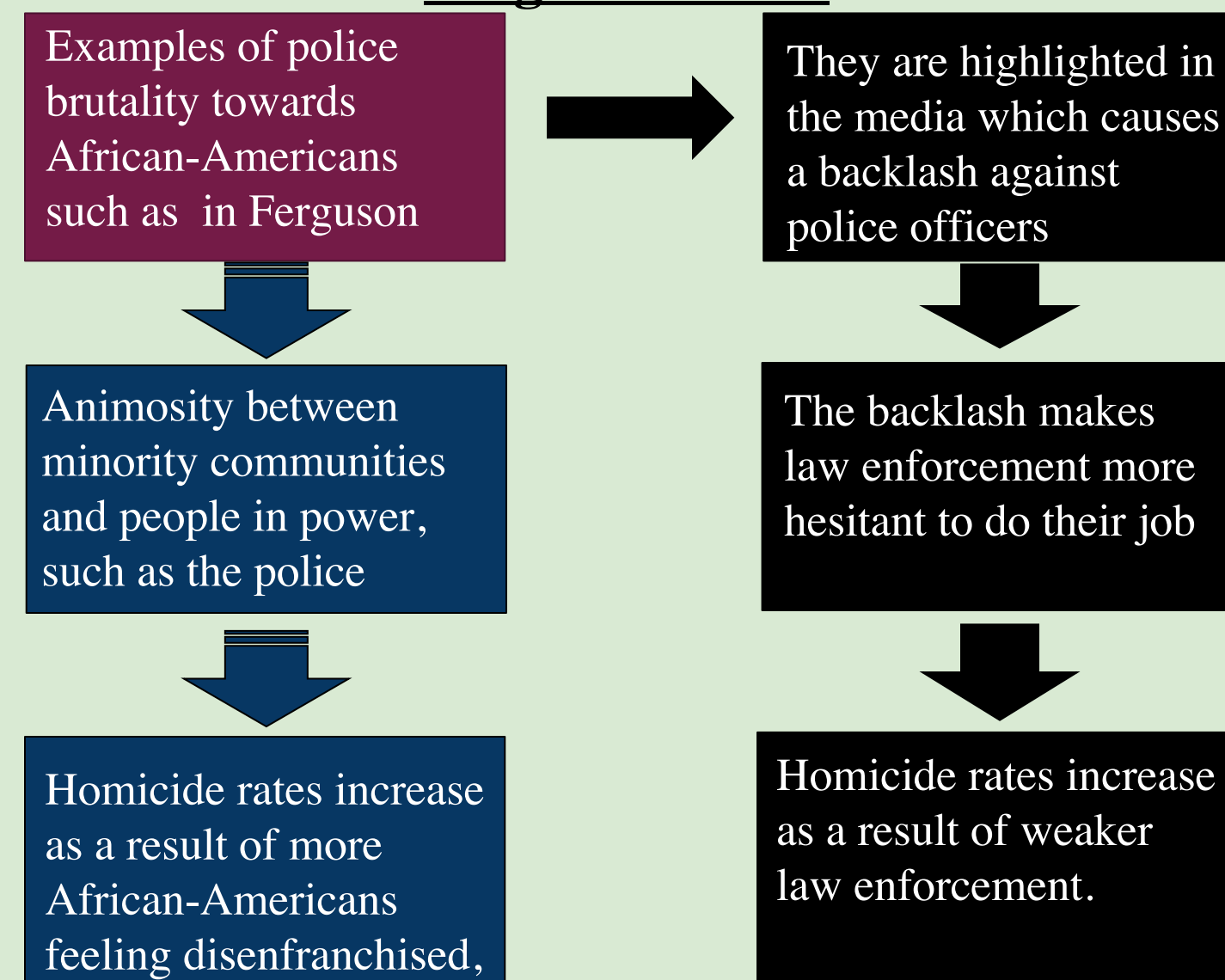
INTRODUCTION

Homicide in the United States has been trending downwards since at least 1990. 2014 had the lowest homicide rate in 51 years. However, 2015 has had a reported increase in homicide rate by 10.8% (Ehrenfreund, 2016). Why did this happen? *This project will analyze historical data from the 1996 to the 2015 and look at factors that could have affected the homicide rate in 2015.*

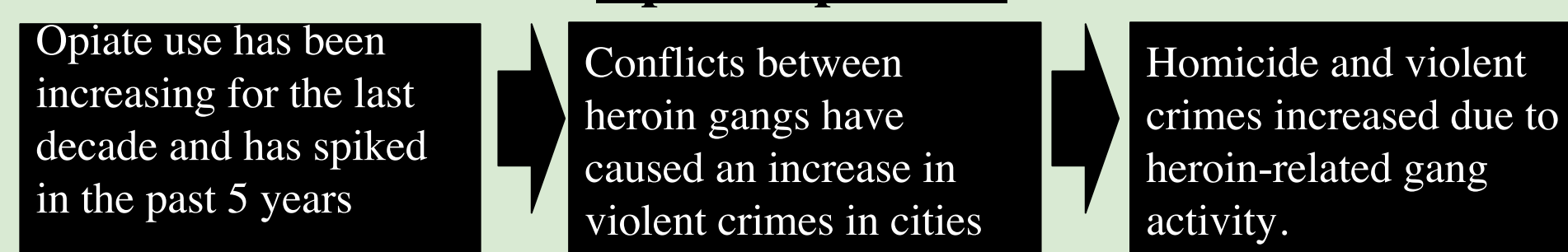
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFIGANCE

Homicide rates are usually considered indicative of other crime rates. The increase in homicides was found mostly in a handful of cities with 2/3rds of the increase in 10 cities including Baltimore, Chicago and Houston. I am considering these three factors that may have affected the homicide rate in 2015 that I am looking at-

Ferguson Effect



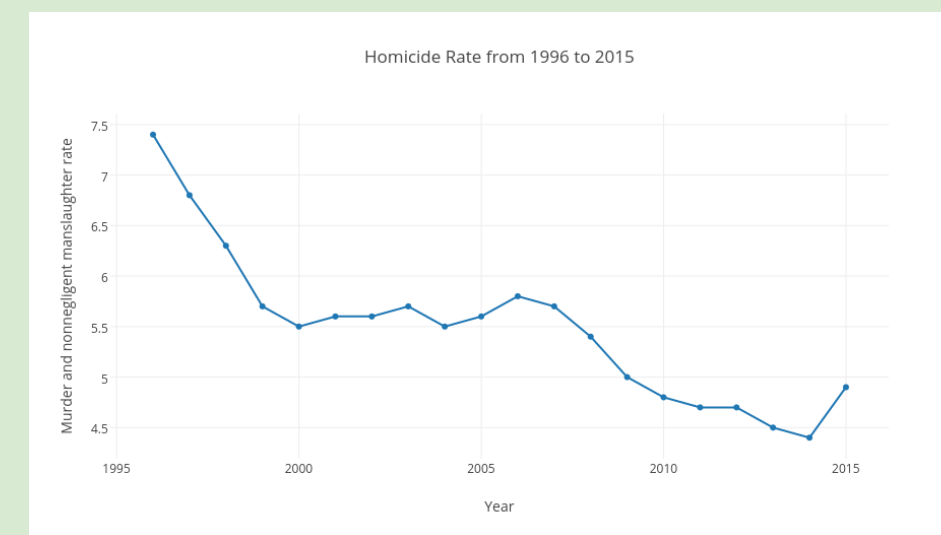
Opiate Epidemic



Incarceration Rates

- Starting in the 1990s the arrest/incarceration rate went up.
- The incarceration rate has decreased in recent years.
- Lowering the incarceration has long term impacts on the crime rate because it increases the number of former felons in society. Former felons are more likely to commit crimes than the average person.

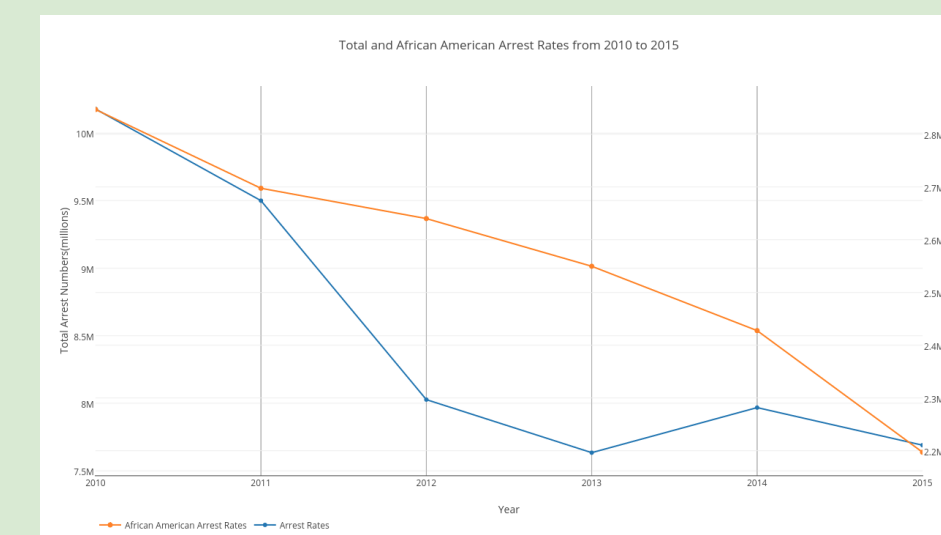
DATA



- This graph shows homicide rates from 1996 to 2015

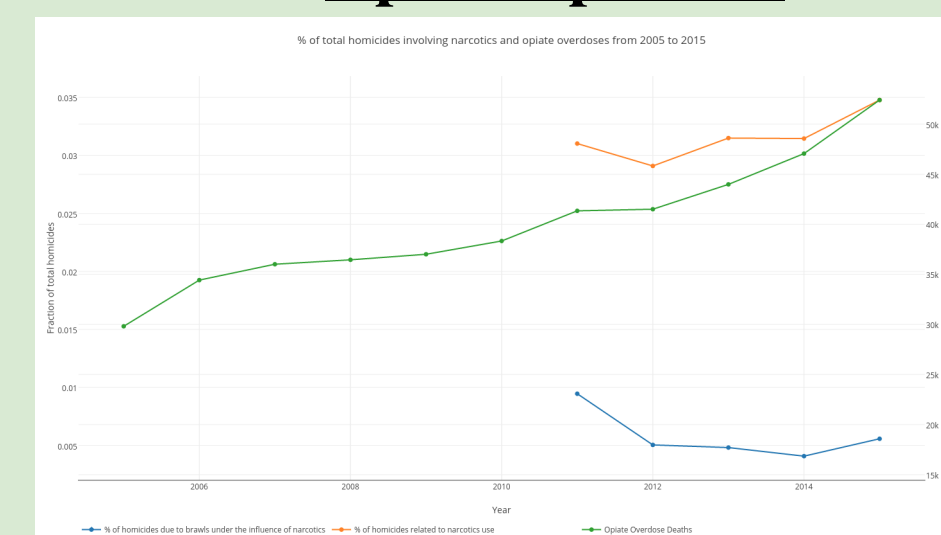
Ferguson Effect

- The Ferguson Effect is based off of the assumption that events of police brutality could have caused an increase in violent crime in African-American communities.



- The above graph compares the homicide rate with the arrest rate and the African American arrest rate from 2012 to 2015

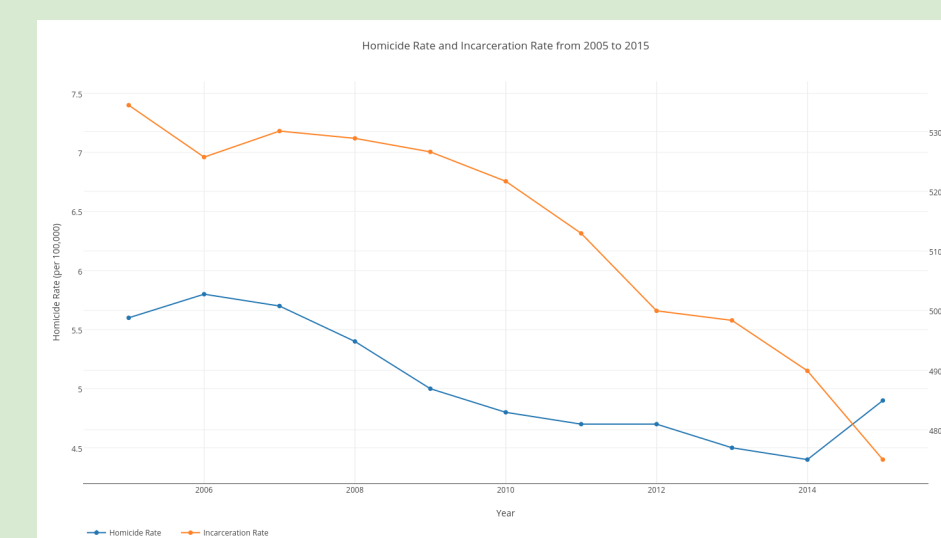
Opiate Epidemic



- This graph shows the overdose deaths as well as the percentage of homicides that have had narcotics involved.

Incarceration Rates

- This graph compares the incarceration and homicide rates over time



DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Analysis of Homicide Data

- There was a 10.8% increase in homicide rates in 2015
- There has not been an increase in homicide rates in the last 20 years
- Other violent crimes also increased, but not as much as homicides

Ferguson Effect

- The graph shows that there is an increase in homicide rates, but there are decreases in both the arrest rate and the arrest rate of African-Americans.
- This supports the version of the Ferguson effect that states that police officers are more afraid to do their job and because of that, the arrest rate decreased and then the homicide rate increased.
- The largest change in African-American homicide rates happened between 2014 and 2015 with a percentage change of 9.496%. This is when the Ferguson effect would have happened.
- Most of the cities with the highest change in homicide rate have majority African American populations (Baltimore, Chicago, Milwaukee, Cleveland).

Opiate Epidemic

- Opiate use has been increasing since the mid 2000s.
- As shown on the graph, the increase has increased in the last 5 years. Use spiked in 2010 and 2011 and kept increasing after that.
- The percent of homicides related to narcotics usage is trending upwards.

Incarceration Rates

- Due to the "War on Crime" in the 1990s, the incarceration rate increased.
- The incarceration rate peaked in the mid 2000s (not shown on graph) and the actual number of people in prison peaked in 2009.
- The incarceration rate began to decrease slowly at first, but then the rate decreased significantly.
- 2015 had the lowest incarceration rate since the 1990s.
- The lower incarceration rate could have caused an increase in homicide rates. One would expect that incarceration rates and homicide rates would have an inverse relationship if this were true. However, most research shows that the impact of the incarceration rate on the homicide rate is long term so the relationship between them is more complicated than that.

2016 Data

- The final 2016 data has not been released by the FBI. However the preliminary data has been released for the first half of 2016.
- This data shows that 2016 has had an increase in homicide rate that is almost as large as the increase in 2015. This may suggest a larger trend.
- The cities with the largest homicide rate changes are not the same as 2015. This has interesting ramifications for the Ferguson Effect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/REFERENCES

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