February 2023


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An Examination of Racial Disparities in Arrest Across Florida Counties, 1998-2018:

A Test of the Racial Threat and Political Representation Hypotheses

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this Dissertation to God, so that He may receive all the honor and glory. For it is not I that accomplished this journey, but the power, strength, and grace provided within and to me by our Lord and Savior. It is through Him, I live, I trust, and I shall continue and praise and bless Him with the opportunities and gifts that He has given me. Lord, I thank You! May You receive every praise, for You did not have to do this, but You have never failed me, and I cannot thank You enough. Thank You God! May I bless Your Name! Thank You for never leaving me! May this achievement return unto You with the utmost gratitude and humbleness!

Dedicated in memory of Onnie Mae Burch, Maddie Woods, Dr. Diane Johnson, and Scott Allen – may your positivity that inspired me, continue to grow. We did it!
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Abstract
The purpose of this dissertation is to examine variations in the racial distribution of reported arrests across counties, and whether those outcomes are related to racial demographics variables and measure of the political structure in the State of Florida. The study seeks to bring awareness to the importance of representation of minorities by conducting a test of Blalock’s minority threat theory and extending the theory through the examination of political variables across Florida counties. Arrest and population data from 67 Florida counties along with the racial composition of the Florida State House of Representatives from 1998 to 2018 are utilized to test the minority threat theory and examine the additional political aspect. The study finds support for Blalock’s minority threat theory but does not find support for Blalock’s, percent Black squared, curvilinear assumption. The study finds evidence of consistent racial disparities in arrest over time, in approximately 81% of the counties with a decreasing trend of racial disparities in arrest, however, while maintaining a large disproportional gap between Black-specific arrest rates and White-specific arrest rates. Findings of the Black political representation indicates that racial disparities in arrest continue to increase in the presence of Black political representation and presents inconclusive evidence to whether Black political representation have a negative effect on racial disparities in arrest, however, the study concludes that the effect may not be prevalent due to the low number of Black political representation in the political structure across Florida counties.
Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, concerns about the treatment of minorities by police and within the criminal justice system have become heightened, especially in light of the increase in high profile national incidents involving police killings of Black Americans. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine variations in the racial distribution of reported arrests across counties and time in Florida, and to assess whether that distribution is correlated with empirical indicators of racial concentration and political power. Additional discussion and analysis extend Blalock’s minority threat thesis to the political structure and examines whether the racial structure of political systems across Florida counties are related to racial differences in arrests. Specifically, this dissertation examines three primary phenomena: 1) Whether racial disparities in arrest exist across Florida counties over time (1998-2018), and how widespread those disparities might be in the counties; 2) Whether those race differences in arrest are explicable using Blalock’s racial threat thesis. 3) Whether measures of county-level racial representation in the political structure seem to be related to racial differences in arrest across Florida’s counties.

The political structure that this dissertation is referring to consists of the State Representatives and Senators in each Florida district. The level of analysis involves counties. Both criminal justice (i.e., arrest) data and political data are collected and published at the county level in Florida. County level data are the lowest level of aggregation for which arrest data with broad coverage can be collected. County-level analysis of this type for Florida is also consistent with prior research on the geographic distribution of crime in Florida (Kovandzic and Sloan...
Racial differences in arrests in the general population and political representation, race differences in arrests (i.e., Black/White arrest difference), and race-population rates will be used to support this dissertation. The population demographics of each county with the racial differences in arrest across Florida counties will allow for a better understanding of the level of racial disparities. This data also provides an opportunity to examine any correlation between arrest data with political measures, such as the race and party of elected officials, and to assess whether counties with a higher population of minority arrests have certain political representation characteristics.

One of the primary focuses of this study will be arrest. Since the police are the “gatekeepers” of the remainder of the criminal justice process, police decisions have significant impacts on decisions made in the criminal justice process. Extensive racial differences in arrests may impact racial differences in other phases of the criminal justice process, following arrest. That is, if racial differences occur at the arrest phase, they may contribute to the continuation of racial differences following arrest at other criminal justice phases.

Even though little is known about racial variations in reported crime across times and counties in Florida (Kovandzic and Sloan 2002), studying racial differences in arrest across Florida’s counties can be useful to answering some basic questions which have not been adequately addressed regarding race and arrest in the state of Florida. The State of Florida is known as a Republican or more conservative state, normally mentioned along with other southern states in this regard. In this respect, Florida is a useful location to examine arrests across time as Florida has become more racially politically diverse. Studying the state of Florida may
not be generalizable to other states, but it may present the framework for studying other, similar states across the United States in future research.

**Present Study**

This study will examine a series of trends in official racial arrest data across Florida counties over a specific period of time, which will be examined to provide basic information and an understanding of race-arrest differences and trends. This information is important for future research, and efforts to discover whether county level factors such as economic, social, or political factors, may impact racial disparities in arrest. Before developing studies of whether county level factors may impact racial disparities in criminal justice processes such as arrest, it is first useful to know if racial differences in arrest exist at the county level. In short, it is necessary to establish whether racial differences in arrest exist before undertaking more complex research studies that endeavor to discover factors that may contribute to racial disparities in the criminal justice system. The empirical contribution of the present study, then, involves an examination of racial differences in arrests in each county. Focusing on the county population’s racial demographics and comparing the racial demographics with the racial differences of arrest in the respective county is necessary for understanding whether racial disparities exist at the county level. The latter comparison involves a test of the basic premise of the racial threat thesis offered by Blalock (1967).

This dissertation will examine the following basic research questions about the representation of race in official Florida arrest data and explore data that addresses some key hypotheses about factors that have been posited as correlates of racial differences in arrest. The particular interest is twofold. First, to determine whether racial disparities in arrest exist within
Florida counties across time. Secondly, if racial disparities are found, are they related to racial threats posed by Black/White population sizes, and/or the racial representativeness of the Florida political structure?

The most important element in this study is the racial differences in arrest. The proposition that political and economic power affects racial discrimination practices such as racial differences was argued by Hubert M. Blalock in 1967, who hypothesized that the majority race may employ its political and economic power to marginalize racial minorities and protect and maintain existing power structures. Therefore, minority presence and changes in the minority population were important concerns, as the majority might perceive changes in minority presence as a threat to their power. This threat may be real or symbolic but represents the possibility that the majority interprets the size of or changes in the composition of the minority population as a threat. In other words, Blalock argues that the majority race may see the increase or presence of minorities as a threat that must be addressed. One way that can be done is through the use of criminal justice processes.

This proposition can also be translated into one that addresses race and politics. In that view, race-linked political threats may emanate from an increase in minority representation in the political structure (the number of Black politicians) while the economic threat focuses on the rise of minority entrepreneurs, or the increase of employed minorities - which leads to the assumption that minorities are “taking our jobs.” The racial symbolic element is where Blalock argues that the threat can be measured indirectly by the size of the minority population in a location. Lastly, Blalock (1967) also posits that minority threats or racial threats can be measured by the relative size of, and/or changes in the size of a racial group in an area (see also Eitle, D’Alessio and Stolzenberg 2002; Novak and Chamlin 2012). Utilizing Blalock’s theory to assist
in the understanding of the importance of racial differences in arrest and its correlation with the political structure, the present study seeks to address the research questions below. A summary of the questions will be discussed in the methodology Chapter.

1. **Are there differences in the level of racial disparities in known arrests for crimes across counties annually?**

2. **Does the level of racial disparities in arrest data change over time?**
   
   a. Given increased sensitivity to racial biases in the criminal justice process, and to racial biases in society more generally, it can be hypothesized that over time, racial biases (and thus disparities) in arrest should decline. Conversely, racial differences in arrest might not decline if they are driven by racial threat perceptions which remain unchanged and may be reflected in the size of minority populations in different locations.

3. **Are the patterns in the official arrest data by race related to factors, particularly the percentage of Blacks, across counties?**
   
   a. If that relationship exists, does it provide evidence for the utility of a minority threat hypothesis operating within counties in the state of Florida?

4. **Is there a relationship between political diversity and racial differences in arrest across Florida counties?**

**Theoretical Approach**

The theoretical approach focuses on Blalock’s minority threat hypothesis. With respect to racial differentials in criminal justice responses to offenders from different racial and ethnic groups, Blalock’s thesis offers one of two hypotheses. *The first*, related to policing, is that race of
the offender, or some combination of race of the offender and race of the officer, either increases or decreases the probability of arrest. This explanation can be interpreted as one based on race-linked biases held by individual officers, and operates at the individual level of interaction, and would be visible when analyzing arrest outcomes at the individual level. The second explanation is structurally oriented and suggests that the level of perceived overall or political and economic threat in a given location is a reflection of the presence or dominance of the minority population in that area. This outcome reflects social structural conditions and would be expected to be visible at the structural or aggregate level of arrests. This dissertation will not focus on the first hypothesis, as that hypothesis requires a micro examination of arrest cases and requires information about the race of arrestees and officers. This dissertation will focus on the second explanation and focus on county level data to examine the phenomena on a macro level.

An alternative to the discrimination argument contained in Blalock’s approach would include a differential offending hypothesis. There have been mixed results from tests of that alternative. Several prior studies have addressed this alternative explanation with respect to minor offenses, such as traffic stops (Tillyer & Engel, 2012). There are some people in society who believe African Americans commit more crime because minorities are more likely than other groups to engage in crime, and hence higher arrest rates for minorities would be expected (Davis and Smith 1996; Quillian and Pager 2001). Other studies, however, suggest that police presence in minority areas (Unnever & Cullen, 2012) - coupled with implicit bias (Harris, 2017) -- creates conditions (e.g., increased persons in poverty, more unemployed persons, etc.), under which minorities are more likely than other groups to be arrested. In other words, it is not that minorities commit more crime or have more opportunity to do so; rather, it is that minorities are arrested more than their White counterparts even if the rate of offending were equal. Data on
differential offending, however, is not widely available, and certainly does not exist at the county level in Florida over time. Therefore, differential offending characteristics will not be included in the present study. In some studies, however, rates of offending have been collected and compared to rates of arrest.

For example, in regard to differentials in offending behavior, Tillyer & Engle (2012) found that Blacks speed more often than Whites. At the same time, the Stanford Open Policing Project at Stanford University (Pierson, et al., 2020) found that Blacks (5.4% rate) were more likely to be searched than their White counterparts (3.1% rate) even though White motorists were more likely to be found with contraband. The ACLU examined the effects of the “War on Marijuana” and found that marijuana use is roughly equal among Blacks and Whites, yet Blacks are 3.73 times as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession compared to Whites (Bunting, Garcia, & Edwards, 2013). It is imperative to understand the effects of over policing in minority communities and implicit bias effects on poor urban areas. The higher the presence of police, the more likely an individual may encounter the police or be arrested. Therefore, the dissertation will not be examining differential offending as the explanation for differentials in arrest. Data limitations concerning measurement of the “true” or “absolute” level of offending is largely unknown, specifically for each of Florida’s counties. While this dissertation cannot completely discount that alternative, prior studies suggest that racial differentials in criminal behavior cannot explain differentials in arrest. Rather, differences in arrest are likely due to police departments' practices in each county, the level of police presence in urban areas, the discretion of the officers, the perception of police by the community, implicit bias, lack of explanation for serious crimes, etc. In other words, there is no viable data to measure or support differential offending, and the
present study is not seeking to explain whether or why differential offending exists (Tillyer & Engel, 2012).

In examining race-linked arrest or other outcomes, there is room to explore the possible effects of political variables on those outcomes. This is an interesting omission given that crime is defined by political processes, and that therefore, any biases in the political definition of crime could impact racial differences in the criminal justice process. For example, studies of racial bias have shown that the “crack” cocaine related crimes and powder cocaine crimes had adverse impacts on the sentencing of people charged with those crimes. This outcome is important to the extent that there are racial differences in the use of those forms of cocaine, as Blacks were more likely to use the crack cocaine rocks while Whites used the powdered cocaine. The Anti-Drug Act of 1986 was passed, which punished the crack cocaine users more harshly than powder cocaine. This became known as the 100 to 1 sentencing, as crack cocaine users (who were typically Black) were sentenced harshly than powder cocaine users (typically White) even though powder cocaine was deemed equally, if not, more dangerous than the crack cocaine (Davis, 2010). The dissertation will enhance this area of criminology by examining whether political variables (e.g., the representation of minorities in the political structure) are related to racial differences in arrest at the county level in the State of Florida.

With respect to the connection between politics and crime, several studies have indicated that political party affiliation affects attitudes toward race-crime assumptions, and that the two primary political parties in the US offer different opinions on the race-crime connection. The effect of political party membership on race-linked outcomes has rarely been examined. There are few studies which have explored this issue. Rather than replicate each noted study, concepts
and elements from those studies will serve as guides to select appropriate viable concepts within the present study.

A few studies to note are Keen and Jacobs (2009) who found that the presence of African Americans in deep southern states (including Florida) and greater support for Republican presidential candidates co-occurred with increases in the most menacing crimes. In their study, racial threat is measured with the percentage of African Americans in a state and to identify political structure they measured the political party of each governor. In their study, Helms & Jacobs (2002) found that African Americans and males receive longer sentences when local courts are embedded in conservative political environments where a law-and-order presidential candidate received more votes. Jacobs and Helms argue that the results support theoretical claims that punishment is an intensely political process. Lastly, Jacobs & Carmichael (2001) found that Republican strength and minority threat lead to higher imprisonment rates across states.

To date, criminologists have not examined whether the “political structure” of an area, measured by political party affiliation (e.g., percent X party in a location) or the party voting record (e.g., percent voting for a given party, or the party membership of local political representatives) in an area perhaps influences the trend in or tendency for arresting Black Americans, thus contributing to racial differences in arrest. To introduce this idea into the race-arrest literature, this study examines the correlation between political party membership of a county in Florida (representatives and commissioners) and the Black/White arrest difference for counties. As part of that analysis, the study will control for percent Black to address the racial threat hypothesis.
Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2 will fully discuss the theoretical framework focusing on Blalock’s minority threat theory. The chapter will first present a historical background section, discussing the historical presence of racial disparities in the criminal justice system, marginalization of minorities, and the relationship between representation of minorities (specifically African Americans) in the political structure and the presence of discrimination and perceived threats within the political structure. This will provide a foundation as to why African Americans may not be properly represented in the political structure and why African Americans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. The theoretical framework will utilize Blalock’s minority threat hypothesis, which argues that as the relative size of racial and ethnic minority groups increase, members of the majority group perceive a growing threat (Wang & Todak, 2016). Blalock presents two forms of threats: economic threat and political threat. The present study will focus on the political threat, as the theoretical framework will discuss these two threats and how discrimination and threats may play a role in the overrepresentation of minorities in the prison system and underrepresentation of minorities in the political structure.

Chapter 3 presents the literature review, which examines crime in the U.S. and specifically in Florida, the political parties and their respective views in the political structure, the demographics of the political structure, the political influence on punishment and arrest, and discusses the representation in the political structure. The crime section will discuss crime rates and the racial differences in arrests in the State of Florida across counties. Prior literature is used to provide quantitative information presented to elevated arrest rates for minorities. A brief history of the overrepresentation of minorities incarcerated is also discussed in this section, as it is a consequence to arrests. The political section will discuss how laws define crime, how the
laws may impact specific race groups. This section will also detail the lack of representation of minorities in the political realm - discussing how the lack of representation affects minorities. A discussion of crime associated with the Republican and Democratic parties while also noting the general and common demographics of each party (i.e., Republicans are commonly White males) will be included. The section will also discuss politics and perception - elaborating on how the politician's view can influence the views of the people, policies, and crime.

Chapter 4 details the methodology of the present study by introducing the data, variables, and analysis. The present study utilizes secondary data from official Florida voting reports, congressional records, census data, and Florida county arrest data from the period 1998 -2018. The dependent variable includes the racial county arrest data, independent variables include political demographics (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic) as well as the political party (i.e., Republican or Democrat), and county demographic data (i.e., percent Black). The control variables consist of age (median age and aged 15-24), poverty, education, unemployment, jail, crime, registered voters, and percent Black population.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine variations in the racial distribution of reported arrests across counties, and whether those outcomes are related to racial demographics variables and measure of the political structure in the State of Florida. This dissertation will examine if the demographics of the county and district population relates to the political structure by examining the demographics of the political structure.

The present issue is the lack of studies regarding the relationship between arrest and politics and overall, the relationship of crime and politics. The legislative access defines what is
legal and illegal, thereby, the legislators ultimately define crime in the U.S. Therefore, it is imperative that the citizens of the country are equally represented in the political structure as some decisions may marginalize certain groups be it, racially, socioeconomically, or in relation to gender. Specifically, the present study seeks to examine this issue through the examination of racial disparities and its possible relationship with the political structure by examining arrest rates on a county level and correlating the data with empirical indicators of political structure in relation to the demographics of politicians in the State of Florida.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Differential Treatment: Historical Background

In America, the importance of race in the social structure is essential to understand, as the level of representation of each race or the lack thereof, can affect an individual’s life course. Essentially, race is more than a characteristic of an individual, as it is a characteristic of similar individuals, labeled as a group or race. Cultural differences - to which many may refer to as ethnicities – may also intertwine with racial groupings (e.g., Black or White; Hispanic, etc.). Along with the different races and ethnicities are different views and experiences, as well as outcomes associated with structural advantages and disadvantages of belonging to different groups.

One of the ways race relationships and structural positions impact life in America is through the association between race and politics in America. Without the voice of each race, a race is bound to suffer or experience mistreatment, by being poorly represented in numbers or in the character of the representative(s) for the group, which allows for laws and policies to be passed without the opportunity to adequately oppose a bill, or effectively explain why the bill may disadvantage that specific race. This kind of outcome can also be seen across genders (e.g., on June 24, 2022, the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, which gave rights for women to choose abortion for half a decade). There are nine Supreme Court Justices, 6 which are men. Women, who perhaps can relate to abortion law in a different way than men, had less representation - ultimately less power/say on the matter as the vote to overturn the ruling was
concluded at 6-3-1. The majority of men voted to overturn a law that they could not fully relate to or comprehend. A similar situation likely exists when we turn our analytical lens toward race.

When racial groups lack representation in the political structure, laws can be passed by other groups/races that negatively affect certain races other than their own, without the affected race having the potential, or numbers to challenge the proposed bill. This issue has been ongoing since the arrival of White Europeans to the “Americas,” and this study seeks to bring attention to this matter.

Historically, differential treatment between minorities and the majority race has deep historical roots that can be traced back to the arrival of Colonials in America (Gabbidon & Greene, 2018). When White Europeans came to America, Native Americans and Blacks were enslaved, treated as less than human, and burdened by hatred from those who held out the superiority of the majority (White European) race that established colonies on the North American continent (and also in Latin America, Gobat 2013). African Americans for hundreds of years were not seen as human beings and were legally defined as one third of a person. African Americans were treated as objects, tools, and materials to be disposed of and only maintained to benefit an (White) individual’s financial, sexual, and labor gains. It was not until January 1, 1863, when the emancipation proclamation was signed by Abraham Lincoln, that the enslaved African Americans were freed (Alexander, 2011) – at least in theory. Freeing the slaves did not occur quickly or easily and led to the US Civil War to settle this issue.

At the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, the freedom of enslaved Africans was not the primary focus, as illustrated by Abraham Lincoln, who once stated that, “If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving some others alone I would also do
that” (cited in Fields 1990). This displays the disregard that Abraham Lincoln had for the enslaved African Americans, as he truly only sought to keep the Union of the United States together. If Lincoln lacked an understanding of the cruelty and inhumane acts imposed by slavery, one can only imagine the lack of understanding held by the rest of the American public.

Furthermore, after African Americans were freed, laws were made to force and pressure them to work once again on the land on which they were previously forced to work as slaves, often for the same person who was once the enslaved persons’ master. These laws were known as Black Codes and preceded the Jim Crow Era. Black codes were passed in 1865 to restrict and maintain a legal hold on the African American population by making it difficult for African Americans to live the same lifestyles as their White counterparts (Wilson, 1965). As the Black Codes neared their end in the late 1860s and were finally repealed in 1867, they were replaced with Jim Crow laws. The first of these passed in 1865 in Louisiana, during a time when sixteen African Americans held a political office in Louisiana (Plessy v Ferguson, 1896). These laws prevented African American from engaging in many activities, established separate Black and White facilities, and even prevented Black and White people from riding together on public transportation. Similar laws were passed in other states, creating legal “White only” areas, which were more pristine and cared for than the areas designated for African Americans. The Jim Crow Era is stated to have ended in the 1960s; however, the effects continue to be felt in society today. Other mechanisms for controlling Black populations of young males and transforming them into free labor included the use of vagrancy laws and imprisonment in labor camps (Lynch & Cass, 2022).

The above history can also be related to contemporary issues such as biases against African Americans in the criminal justice system. Some researchers including Alexander (2011),
Gabbidon and Greene (2018), and others argue that the criminal justice system’s continued biased behaviors against African Americans can be linked to the history of slavery in America. It has been argued that the criminal justice system is focused on oppressing and marginalizing minorities for political, economic, and monetary gain (Johnson, 1977). Explicitly, capitalism, racism, and the failure to address institutionalized and systemic racism in the criminal justice system, allows for racial disparities to continue in society. Michelle Alexander (2011) goes further to note this marginalization is the New Jim Crow as African American men are being punished excessively, arrested more often than Whites, and even used for cheap labor in the prison system.

In today’s American Society, we are able to see contemporary racial bias as a continuation of American long history of racial biases in regard to its treatment of African American, as America is still what this dissertation notes as, “The ‘Firsts’ Era.” The “Firsts Era” is defined as African Americans being the first of their race to achieve or obtain a goal (e.g., First Black President, first Black C.E.O. of a long-standing company, First Black Neurologist graduate from a Predominantly White Institution, etc.). Although the history of racial bias continues to adversely affect Blacks and American society, some significant changes have taken place. Since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, some opportunities for Black have expanded. In more recent years, America witnessed its first Black graduates in certain academic programs and departments (i.e., Neuroscience, psychology, etc.) at Ivy League Universities and other Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), as well as the First Black President of the United States in 2008; the first Black and first female Vice President in 2020; the first Black-female Supreme Court judge; and the list continues to grow as time progresses. It should be noted, however, that these “firsts” are occurring more than one-hundred and fifty years after Blacks
were freed, in theory, in the United States from legal oppression, and became “the equals” of Whites. Despite such efforts, Black Americans have continued to be oppressed legally, economically, socially, and politically, as efforts to combat the progression of the Black community has become more prevalent.

Black people have been in America for hundreds of years; however, they continue to be treated unequally, and are poorly represented in and excluded from the political structures and other high-level positions in American society (i.e., CEOs, Board members, Trustees, etc.) (Alexander, 2010). This is one outcome or lasting effect of the slavery and Jim Crow Era that blatantly haunts America. However, America denies this issue by justifying the arrest and over-policing of African Americans and other minorities through the negative stereotypes of Black Americans shared through the media, movies, and television shows (Ferrandino, 2015), and one could argue, this also occurs even in academic literature (e.g., see recent critiques of the criminological literature and discipline by African American criminological scholars who have criticized popular assumptions and approaches such as implicit bias research - Petersen, 2018; Russell-Brown, 2018). Negative media portrayals are important because of their visibility, widespread use, and implications (Ferrandino, 2015). This negative media portrayal is displayed when African Americans are consistently depicted as thugs, or as violent criminals, etc., causing many to believe that these depictions are factual characteristics of all Black people (Dow, 2016; Kumah-Abiwu, 2020; Alinor & Tinker, 2021; Shrikant & Rahul, 2021). Essentially, by the consistent portrayals and negative discussions of African Americans, numerous people began to generalize imagery about specific individuals to an entire race of people.

Overtime, these negative stereotypes have become accepted as factual. Littlefield (2008) argues that this is perhaps the new racism, as the negative media portrayals go unchallenged and
become more accepted by the American public. Collins (2004) argues that “the power of the media to define and create attitudes that inform behavior is a crucial strategy of the new racism because the media is used to reproduce and disseminate the ideologies needed to justify racism.” Research even suggests that the circulation of images determine the beliefs and attitudes behind one’s behavior (Collins, 1991; Schiller, 1973). Some argue that one consequence of these negative stereotypes is that African Americans are less trusted, less valued, sometimes feared, and thus, are neglected and abused by society and the criminal justice system (Diawara, 1993; Park, Gabbadon, & Chermin, 2006; Littlefield, 2008).

As noted above, the kind of racism prevalent in America has changed, and this may have some impact on the broader participation and representation of African Americans in political institutions. Today, African Americans are becoming more welcomed into the political structure, even though the welcome may include reluctance. At the same time, laws are still being passed that discriminate against, restrain, or dismiss African American participants and participation in the political system.

For example, in 2022 Ron DeSantis - Governor of the State of Florida, the third most populated US state, and the state with the third largest number of Black residents -- introduced the Stop the Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees Act also known as the Stop W.O.K.E. Act. This act discriminates against and minimizes African Americans in the State of Florida as the law proposes to “give businesses, employees, children and families tools to fight back against woke indoctrination.” In other words, the law seeks to dismiss teaching criticism of past American history that includes slavery, Jim Crow, and other eras of discrimination that have largely negatively affected African Americans. Speaking to this issue, Ron DeSantis believes that teaching about past discrimination produces “White Guilt.” With this assumption, Ron DeSantis
states that White people should not feel guilty about their past. Specifically, at the bill’s signing, DeSantis and Lieutenant Governor Nunez had the following to say:

DeSantis. “No one should be instructed to feel as if they are not equal or shamed because of their race. In Florida, we will not let the far-left woke agenda take over our schools and workplaces. There is no place for indoctrination or discrimination in Florida.”

Nunez: “By signing this legislation, which is the first in the nation to end corporate wokeness and Critical Race Theory in our schools, we are prioritizing education not indoctrination. We will always fight to protect our children and parents from this Marxist-inspired curriculum.”

Racially dismissive and insensitive laws such as this, along with biased politicians who draft and pass legislation, harm African Americans by belittling the history of their existence in the U.S., ignoring the need for addressing racial inequality and equity, respect, and the existence of African Americans as “worthy” legal and social subjects, and citizens. This has occurred in numerous ways (i.e., dismissing the telling of critical history, or critical race theories and perspectives; proposing or creating Anti-Riot Laws that solely affect African Americans; creating other kinds of laws that affect only Black Americans; etc.). Numerous racist and discriminatory laws are and have been presented in legislative bodies across America. Some are passed due to the lack of representation and understanding of minorities, specifically African Americans. For example, Jim Crow laws which were enacted in the late 1800s and early 1900s, were not removed until 1965 when segregation legally (i.e., in principle, but not necessarily in practice) came to an end. Today, with slightly more representation of minorities in the political
system, racist laws are nevertheless still being presented but may now sometimes fail – though even in Florida, with a significant African American population, such laws may be approved as described above. Laws that put restrictions on voting (e.g., where, or how voting can occur) which makes it difficult for the poor and minorities, specifically African Americans to vote, have been present across the country in recent years.

In October of 2021, the Brennan Center for Justice reported that during the 2021 legislative session, 19 states had enacted 33 laws that would make it harder for Americans to vote\(^1\). It should be noted that the Brennan Center also found that 25 states enacted nearly twice as many laws (62) that would expand voting rights. The Anti-Riot laws of 2021, also known as House Bill 1, were presented in Florida, which targeted African Americans and their First Amendment rights by criminalizing protests that turned violent. The bill, however, was drafted in response to protests that were mostly peaceful. The passage of this law would more than likely have criminalized protesters, including peaceful protesters, increasing the likelihood of their entanglement in the criminal justice system. Conversely, in 2018, laws regarding voting by ex-felons were modified in Florida, which theoretically would expand voting by Blacks who are over-represented among ex-felon populations in Florida – though, some argue that the reality is that these legal modification will expand felon voter disqualifications (Gonzalez, 2019). In 2020, however, Florida moved to make it more difficult for felons, specifically African Americans to vote, as they must pay their fines and legal fees first - which is difficult for felons to do as they often struggle to obtain employment after their release from prison due to their conviction.

These examples illustrate the extent of racism and racial bias in America and highlights how the power of the majority race can present and apply changes that negatively affect minorities that benefit the White majority. This can also be seen through gerrymandering and

\(^1\)https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-october-2021
state and federal voting redistricting (Durst et al., 2021). Gerrymandering can be employed to reduce and dilute the African American and minority vote. By doing so, this practice protects the White majority’s power through the political marginalization of minorities and the poor (e.g., dictating income, bias laws, policies that disadvantage certain groups, etc.).

Telling and understanding the history of African Americans allows one to reveal unsettling facts concerning the poor or unequal treatment of Black people in America and its lasting effects through centuries. Revealing such facts is a necessary part of discovering and remedying inequalities, and while some may be unsettled by those revelations, there may be no other way to come to grips with the extent of inequality and its impacts. Black people in America continue to be marginalized and discriminated against, and as a race has had their growth stunted by this history, limiting the ability of Blacks Americans to grow politically or economically, impacting their ability to share the same social, political and economic space as White Americans.

This reality can be seen through several studies, such as Galster & Carr (1991) and Franklin & James (2015), who discuss the progress of African Americans, and how African American progress has been stunted by poor schools, low wages, and enforced racial segregations of Black neighborhoods, even today (for a classic empirical analysis see, Carnoy, 1995). Ultimately, African Americans are deprived of resources to prosper both politically and economically in America. Galster & Carr (1991) found that segregation had a direct relationship with poverty, as African Americans are more likely to live in impoverished areas while Whites lived in more stable areas and could grow politically. Today, these issues continue and have been noticed and have even been objected to, yet still little has been done to address these concerns and realities. Therefore, in the face of this reality, Blacks still suffer in an oppressed and
marginalized state of existence, living in an almost segregated fashion, as Whites live in areas and neighborhoods separated from Blacks (Groos et al., 2018; Massey 2020).

An important contribution to the analysis and understanding of racial bias in American history was developed by Hubert Blalock. Blalock (1967) argued that issues such as residential segregation, unequal pay, etc., continue because the obstacles placed in front of Blacks and the marginalization of Blacks are intentional, and occur so that Whites can maintain their political and economic power through social control. Researchers such as Blumer (1958) and Blalock (1967), have studied this assumption. Both researchers have argued that there is prejudice against minorities. Blalock, however, speaks more to how and why prejudice occurs in American society.

**Blalock’s Minority Threat Hypothesis**

Hubert M. Blalock hypothesized that as members of the minority group enhance their political power and influence, members of the majority group feel that their political dominance is being threatened, which leads to efforts to control the expanding minority groups that can produce discrimination and prejudice against the minority group (Wang, 2012). Essentially, in America, it can be argued that even something as simple as an increase in the number of African Americans may be perceived as a threat to the White race and thus, may create a response mechanism that promotes the marginalization of African Americans in society. Blalock (1967) notes that this racial threat can be perceived in two ways; as an economic threat and/or as a political threat. The economic threat is argued to create an impression of increased competition for employment, housing, and other opportunities (Wang & Mears, 2010). The political threat appears when the numbers of minorities in the political structure rise (congress, mayoral
positions, etc.) and is perceived as enhancing minorities’ political power and presenting a threat to the White dominance. As a result of either type of minority threat, Whites may demand intensified social control to maintain their political, economic, and social dominance (Wang & Mears, 2010).

Essentially, as African Americans gain more seats in the political realm, Whites view their rise of political power as a threat to maintaining White dominance. It is assumed that Whites will then employ discriminative social control to decrease the progress of African American political power, while maintaining power. Blalock also predicts that the relationship between the political threat and social control to be curvilinear. It is believed that as the political threat increases, social control should also increase. In areas of little minority political threat, social control should be at its lowest (Eitle et al., 2002; Wang & Mears 2010). At some point, however, when the threat posed by an expansion of the Black population either generally or within the political system reaches some unknown peak, it is assumed that White responses to increased Black threat begins to diminish. It is unclear why this occurs, but this type of curve is seen in many social science explanations (e.g., what are also known as Kuznet’s curve hypotheses, first developed to explain the relationship between inequality and income per capita; for application of the environmental Kuznet curve argument see, Lynch 2016).

Other scholars have expanded and contributed to the general assumptions of racial threat theory. Liska & Chamlin (1984), Jackson (1989), Chamlin & Liska (1992), Liska (1992), and Hawkins & Thomas (2013), for instance, argue that the social control used to maintain dominance is a response of elites, authorities, and majorities to acts, people, and distributions of people deemed threatening to the interests of the elite. Quillian (1995) states that the connection between economic conditions and prejudice stems either from blaming the subordinate group for
economic hardship or from competing with the subordinate group for scarce economic resources (see also Wang, 2012). Modifying his argument, Blalock also argued that there is a curvilinear relationship between the threat and discrimination. Essentially, a positive correlation (notably a non-linear slope) is predicted when a threat is present (Eitle et al, 2002), and a non-linear decrease is predicted after control is established. The increase of the slope is accredited to the discriminatory elements employed to control the minorities, while the decrease is attributed to the maintenance of control over the minority group by the majority race and should not be interpreted as a natural lessening of antagonism between groups when, for example, the majority becomes more familiar with or accepting of the minority population.

Importantly, as noted, perceived threats can impact the application of social control to minority populations/groups/individuals. Blalock (1967), for example, asserts that competition between Whites and African Americans for jobs and other finite economic resources results in an increase in the amount of social control imposed on African Americans. The social control utilized to maintain economic control may include housing bias, discrimination on the job, selection bias in the hiring process, or biases with bank loans.

Economic conditions have been identified as another source of minority group threat (King and Wheelock, 2007; Liska, 1992; Sampson and Laub, 1993). The increase of African Americans may enhance social control leading to other outcomes such as a decrease in the attainment of a high economic position, or the possibility for progressive residential immobility, thereby containing minorities, specifically, African Americans in low-income jobs and low-income areas. These areas also have a low property tax, which means that the schools within these areas are not well established, and that those schools cannot offer the best teachers, the best textbooks, or the best education possible. All of these economic factors may neutralize the threat
presented by the expanded presence of African Americans. As African Americans are thus confined to poor living conditions, poor education, and low employment, the possibility to progress economically, financially, and politically becomes more difficult. The challenge for minorities becomes their progress in society, which ultimately controls the minorities by continuing to marginalize and stunt their potential economic, social and political growth. This process can also be identified as involving systemic racism or socially designed processes that constrain minority’s ability to achieve economically, socially, and politically.

The difficulties noted above extend to the criminal justice system where discrimination against African Americans can be seen through the behaviors and policies of three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. Within the legislative and executive branches, laws can be presented and passed, and policies followed that negatively affect a certain group. In this case, the group is African Americans. For example, in 1994, Former President Bill Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act in 1994 which focused on increasing the number of police to deter crime. The Act moved to increase the police force by 100,000 street officers and enforce harsher sentencing laws, and tougher gun restrictions, by increasing certainty of apprehensiveness and punishment in targeted areas (Paternoster, 2010). The enforcement of the Act was presumed to increase deterrence by increasing the certainty of detection, as the presence of police officers made it more certain that criminals would be apprehended during or after the commission of a crime (i.e., burglaries, property theft, homicide, etc.). What in turn happened, was that African Americans were being arrested at a higher rate than any other race.

Another example involves the actions of Former President Richard Nixon who declared a “War on Drugs” (WoD) in 1971. The WoD was not only costly and inefficient, but it gravely and
negatively affected African Americans (Sirin, 2011). Alexander (2010) states that the WoD has been waged almost exclusively in poor communities of color, even though studies consistently show that people of all colors use and sell illegal drugs at remarkably similar rates. In fact, some studies indicate that White youth are significantly more likely to engage in illegal drug dealing than Black youth. As a consequence of the WoD, large numbers of African American males have been virtually erased from African American communities and incarcerated in prisons and jails. This mass incarceration of African Americans has created many endemic problems for the African American community (Nunn, 2002). For more than a decade, Black drug dealers and users would be regulars in newspaper stories and saturate the evening TV news (Alexander, 2010).

Following Nixon’ lead, numerous drug laws were passed by the U.S. Congress and in individual states. In later years, due to the extended WoD, more African Americans were being arrested and sentenced for using crack cocaine than their White counterparts who, instead were using the chemically identical powdered cocaine (Sirin, 2011). The difference between these types of cocaine, some have argued, was the quality and price - crack cocaine was cheap and was not as pure, as the powder was purer and of a higher price. Those differences, however, fail to explain why the users of these two drugs would be treated differently, since the differences would suggest that powdered cocaine should receive more attention from law enforcement and longer prison sentences. Certainly, both were addictive, illegal, and deadly. The racial disparities in laws and arrest in this well-known case had nothing to do with the differences between these two forms of cocaine. What was different was largely the assumed race of the users – it was assumed Blacks and White used crack at different rates, an assumption that was not true, with
research also indicating that White arrestees were more likely to underreport/lie about using crack cocaine than Black arrestees (Lu, Taylor and Riley 2001).

Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, establishing for the first time mandatory minimum sentences triggered by specific quantities of cocaine. This law was passed to “get tough” on drugs with hefty sentences. The law, however, was biased. As noted, there was an assumption that White and Black Americans used these drugs at different rates, and that crack use among Black Americans was causing a crime epidemic, much like the crime wave blamed on Black use of marijuana decades earlier. Reflecting these racial-based use and adverse outcome assumptions, distribution of just 5 grams of crack carried a minimum 5-year federal prison sentence, while for powder cocaine, distribution of 500 grams – 100 times the amount of crack cocaine – carried the same minimum sentence (Sirin, 2011). As a result of these penalty biases – along with enforcement biases -- more minorities, specifically African Americans, were being arrested and sentenced to prison for crack use/possession/sales than Whites who were more likely to use powder cocaine, even though Whites used cocaine more often than African Americans. Prior research and data indicated that African Americans made up 15% of the country’s drug users, yet they comprised 37% of those arrested for drug violations, 59% of those convicted, and 74% of those sentenced to prison for a drug offense (Interfaith Drug Policy Initiative, 2003). Specifically with regard to crack, more than 80% of the defendants sentenced for cocaine offenses were African American, despite the fact that more than 66% of crack users were White or Hispanic.

The numbers noted above present the serious matter at hand, as it displays the racial disparities in arrest. One is able to understand that when an individual interacts with a law enforcement officer, the officer is allowed to use his or her discretion. In a study conducted by
Mitchell & Caudy (2015), they found that roughly 85% of African Americans’ higher probabilities of drug arrest were not attributable to differences in drug use, drug sales, non-drug offending, or neighborhood context. Instead, their findings are consistent with prior researchers such as Beckett et al.’s (2005) explanation, which attributes African Americans’ higher probability of drug arrest to racial bias in law enforcement. However, Mitchell & Caudy made it clear that these findings do not prove that Blacks’ elevated rates of drug arrest are due to racial bias in law enforcement—these findings are simply consistent with such an explanation. Ultimately, one must understand that there is bias in the criminal justice system from the presentation and passage of laws, enforcement of the laws through law enforcement, and the sentencing of the court.

**Politics and Crime**

The reality discussed above, and current criminological research often lacks discussions of the effects of politics on arrest. One potential explanation that has been overlooked is that the overrepresentation of African Americans in the criminal justice system is associated with the underrepresentation of African Americans in the political structure. To explore this argument further the following chapter presents studies that have focused on racial biases in criminal justice processes and the lack of racial political representation and its consequential effects on African American arrest rates in the State of Florida. The chapter will further discuss literature on racial disparities in arrests and politics, and perception. The racial disparities in arrests section will define racial disparities and discuss the presence of large populations of African Americans in the criminal justice system and how that situation affects the White majority and, in turn, African Americans. The section will also present a subsection discussing the political effects on
the African American population in Florida through laws that have led to a larger number of arrests of African Americans in comparison to their White Counterparts. The political section will encompass the political parties’ views (e.g., conservative vs. liberal), the demographics of political parties, the lack of representation of African Americans in the political structure, and the political structures effects on arrest. The third section will explore where and how politics and perception intersect. The section will discuss voting behavior, shared views about race and crime by the elected officials and the voting population, and how stereotypes, beliefs, and media affect voting behavior. This will provide further understanding of the variables selected for the present study, which will be detailed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4).
Chapter 3: Literature Review

There is a constant debate between two sides is present among citizens in America in general, with one side stating that the criminal justice system is working perfectly fine and is just and fair, while the opposing side states that the criminal justice system is flawed, riddled with injustice, and influenced by institutional and systemic racism that promotes racial discrimination that produces biased outcomes. The present study examines this debate employing cross-county arrest data from Florida. This dissertation examines the distribution of arrests by race across Florida counties. Although racial disparities in arrests have been widely studied, there is little research on this subject that has incorporated employing data from Florida. Moreover, prior studies (Johnson et al. 2016, Kutateladze et al. 2012, Wu, 2016; Kurlychek & Johnson, 2019) have both documented the existence of racial biases in arrests and rejected some of the explanations for those differences. Explanations for these differences have been drawn from various perspectives and approach the subject using materials that address variables from different levels of analysis (i.e., individual versus structural). This dissertation examines the distribution in arrests across counties, and thus it is appropriate to employ a structural theory.

Race and Criminal Justice Research Overview

There are numerous studies and relevant literature such as, Alexander (2010), Hinton, Henderson, & Reed (2018), Kurlychek and Johnson (2019), Hinton & Cook (2021), that posit the existence of racism in the American criminal justice system. Specifically starting at arrest, a number of studies find that stop, question, and frisk practices contribute to disparities in the
criminal justice system (Alpert et al. 2005; Gelman et al. 2007; Weisburd et al. 2014, 2015; Goel et al. 2016; Neil & Winship 2019). Goel et al. (2016), for example, reported that the overall likelihood of finding a weapon during a police stop was quite low even though Blacks and Hispanics were disproportionately stopped and searched. The authors suggest that officers may have lower thresholds for stopping racial and ethnic minorities relative to similarly situated Whites, especially in high-crime, low-income areas (Kurlychek & Johnson, 2019).

The targeting of African Americans in stop and frisk situations also contributes to the disparities in arrests - specifically drug arrests. The findings of Beckett et al. (2006) show that minority overrepresentation in drug arrests at least partially reflects the differential targeting of outdoor drug markets by police. Qualitative interviews confirm that “because of the more public, highly visible nature of drug markets in inner city communities, arrests are much easier to make than in suburban areas” (Barnes & Kingsnorth 1996). These urban areas, of course, consist of mostly African Americans.

Further into the criminal justice process is the charging of the defendant. Empirical evidence for inequalities in charging outcomes is found in numerous studies (Johnson et al. 2016, Kutateladze et al. 2012, Wu, 2016; Kurlychek & Johnson, 2019). Some research suggests that less favorable plea deals are offered to minority defendants (Kutateladze et al. 2014, Piehl & Bushway 2007) and that those deals are less likely to divert minorities into alternative programming (Schlesinger 2013). Studies also indicate that male and minority defendants are more likely to receive mandatory minimum enhancements, particularly in drug cases (Caravelis et al. 2011, Crawford et al. 1998, Ulmer et al. 2007). However, Kurlychek & Johnson (2019) state that it is also not uncommon for research to find limited or no evidence of discrimination in charging outcomes (e.g., Franklin 2010, Holmes et al. 1987, Wooldredge et al. 2005).
After being charged, racism and discrimination has been examined at the plea bargaining and sentencing stages. Kutateladze et al. (2014) investigated whether minority defendants were at enhanced risk of specific combinations of unfavorable outcomes across stages of the punishment process. They reported that Black and Latino defendants were more likely than White defendants to be detained and to receive custodial plea offers, which translated into harsher sentences. These biases exist at the stage of prison sentencing as well. Carson (2015) found that prison populations have roughly quintupled over the past forty years, with poor people of color dramatically overrepresented in mass incarceration (Alexander 2012). Ultimately, Wooldredge et al. (2015) found that African Americans experienced greater disadvantage across decision-making stages that included pretrial release, guilty pleas, and incarceration decisions.

As stated previously, America has a history of marginalizing and oppressing minorities, especially African Americans (Alexander, 2010). Hinton, Elizabeth, and Cook (2021) identify this ongoing racism and oppression as affecting African Americans, and argue that in the U.S., being incarcerated is an anti-Black punitive tradition.

The present study focuses on arrest rates by race across Florida counties over time. Given the focus on arrest, the next section examines research on race and arrest in greater detail. When discussing explanations of these potential disparities in arrest, there are several variables one must consider (e.g., prior record), and a number of explanations that have been overlooked (i.e., political variables such as political party membership; race of political leaders; voting rates). This chapter will define racial disparities and discuss potential explanations for racial biases in the criminal justice process. The discussion focuses attention on Blalock’s racial threat theory which posited that the size of the Black population affects arrest rates. Expanding on Blalock’s general view, this dissertation hypothesizes that the larger the Black population in a county, the
higher the arrests of African Americans in said county. It is imperative that the different
treatment of African Americans compared to their White counterparts is discussed to understand
the oppression of the Black community and how that occurs through structured societal obstacles
in the U.S. These factors are consistent with Blalock’s minority threat hypothesis and other
views (Ousey & Lee 2008), which will serve as the basis of the analysis in this dissertation.

Florida has been selected as the state of interest because it has one of the most diverse
populations in both the United States and in the state political structure compared to other U.S.
states. Although there is extensive literature on racial disparities in criminal justice processes,
few studies examine this issue in the state of Florida. For example, notable studies of disparities
in the criminal justice system in the State of Florida published between 2010 and 2022 can be
found in Table 1. Studies are listed by year, and years in which no relevant studies were
published as noted by the entry “NA” (non-available). These studies have been noted to highlight
the studies that are closely related to the issue of interest in the present study for the respective
years. Note that for this thirteen-year time period, there were ten relevant studies, and none in
three of the years. It also bears mention that none of these studies focused specifically on arrest
and whether there are disparities in arrests, and factors that might be employed to explain race-
linked arrest disparities.

The studies noted in the table cover (displayed below) recent decades and are appropriate
for assessing the recent trend in race relative arrests. Moreover, these data can be linked to other
available explanatory indicators that have become available on race and population across
Florida counties, and political representation by race across Florida counties.
Table 1. Relevant Studies on The Racial Disparities in The Criminal Justice System in the State of Florida, 2010-2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Researcher(s)</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Study Description/Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Moore &amp; Padavic</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Examined how gender-role ideology may affect racial/ethnic disparities, using data on the population of Black, White and Hispanic female juvenile offenders in Florida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bales &amp; Piquero</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Assessed whether Blacks and Hispanics are disadvantaged at the sentencing phase of the justice system and whether the findings depend on the use of traditional regression-based methods to control for legally relevant variables vs. the use of precision matching methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Thomas, Moak, &amp; Walker</td>
<td>31 Florida Counties</td>
<td>Investigating the salience of racial threat and symbolic threat to racial bias in pre-adjudication detention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Feldmeyer, Warren, Siennick, &amp; Neptune</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Explored the effects of racial, ethnic, and immigrant threat on sentence disposition (jail, prison, or community corrections) and sentence length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Nadel, Scaggs, &amp; Bales</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Explored the role election cycles of political figures plays in influencing punishment policies and practices and its effects on minorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Metcalfe &amp; Chiricos</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Uses a sample of felony cases to assess the influence of race and race/sex on the mode of disposition, similarities and differences in the factors that predict the likelihood of a plea across race, and potential racial disparities in the plea value received pertaining to a charge reduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Tuttle</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Examined racial sentencing disparities and test the second explanation: that agents in the criminal justice system (police, prosecutors, judges, etc.) treat black and Hispanic defendants differently than similar White defendants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 1 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Researcher(s)</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Study Description/Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Omori &amp; Peterson</td>
<td>Miami Dade County, Florida</td>
<td>Examined whether—and to what degree—racial and ethnic disparities in court and sentencing outcomes are explained through differences in case characteristics that disproportionately affect Black and Latino people, reflecting inequalities embedded in broader policy decisions and organizational practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Moise &amp; Piquero</td>
<td>Miami Dade County, Florida</td>
<td>Utilized two cluster detection techniques to identify clusters of violent crime during the 3 months of the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown in Miami-Dade County compared to that during an equivalent period in 2018 and 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Mitchell, Mora, Sticco, &amp; Boggess</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Utilized a cumulative case outcome approach that tracks cases from arrest to disposition to examine whether cases prosecuted under progressive chief prosecutors receive less punitive sanctions and exhibit smaller racial/ethnic disparities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explore the above, the next section of this chapter examines prior literature examining disparities in arrest. The following section then focuses attention on a neglected subject – how political party concentration or strength in a location may affect the distribution of African American arrests, and the possibility that political party strength may be related to racial disparities in arrests. Racial disparities in arrest may not only be due to political party ideology/beliefs but may also be affected by the racial composition of political parties. The section also discusses the police expenditures - addressing how the political structure affects arrest rates through the funding of law enforcement agencies, essentially by adding more officers to the streets. The effects of lawmakers’ efforts to “control crime” especially as these are used in campaign pledges during elections, are also noted in the section to provide an understanding of...
how the political structure employs race and crime images and how that process may impact racial disparities in arrests across locations.

That discussion provides insight about why and how race plays a role in campaigns, elections, appeals, etc., (e.g., who do politicians reach out to? Gerrymandering, the difficulties of voting, etc.) which may affect why and how individuals are elected through the cycle of discrimination and racism in the American society. It should be noted, however, that while these processes may have impacts on disparities in arrests by affecting election outcomes, it would be largely impossible to measure those political messages across time and counties and the various politicians who sought office in Florida during the time-period examined in this dissertation. A section discussing voting behavior and citizen perceptions explains how political party messages may target different groups and address beliefs and values those parties associate with different racial groups.

**Disparities in Arrest**

The term ‘disparities in arrests’ refers to the differential treatment of individuals due to their race or ethnicity (Kovera, 2019). Specifically, this study focuses on the racial disparities in arrests between Black and White citizens across Florida counties. In the state of Florida, according to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, in the year 2017 African Americans comprised approximately 15% of the total population, yet constituted 34% of the total arrests, while Whites constituted approximately 65% of the total population and approximately 55% of the total arrests. It is clear that there are racial disparities in arrest in Florida that are obvious even at this basic level of analysis. The question is whether this pattern of arrest is explainable
and is consistent with factors that have been identified in prior studies as the source of differential enforcement and arrest.

Prior studies indicate that racial differences in arrest have been and continue to be the ongoing reality, not only in Florida, but in the United States. Ward (2022) argues that this trend in racial disparities has been occurring for over 150 years, since the abolition of slavery. Essentially, it can be argued that biases and discrimination in the criminal justice process are some of the long-term products of slavery, and that these outcomes continue to be an issue in the present day (Alexander, 2010). Though research shows the presence of racial disparities in a variety of criminal justice processes over time (Mitchell & Caudy, 2013; Kovera, 2019; Headley & Wright, 2020), outcomes indicating the existence of those racial disparities do not, at the same time, explain the underlying causes of this phenomenon. Some criminologists agree, however, that the racial disparity in arrests cannot be fully explained by racial differences in participation in criminal behavior (Crutchfield, Skinner, Haggerty, McGlynn, & Catalano, 2012). Because these differences in arrest rates, for example, have a racial element, and because at the same time they cannot be explained by differences in the behavior of individuals from different races, it becomes necessary to explore racial differences in arrests as a result of structural processes that impact how the criminal justice system processes people from different races.

The differences in arrest cannot solely be connected to the racial differences in participation in criminal behavior because numerous factors such as racial profiling, discretion, implicit bias, falsified arrests, unjustified arrests, the impact of the police encounters, and more come into play when discussing the arrests of Black people in America. This is not to say that most police encounters or all police encounters that end in an arrest are due to these factors, however, in several cases these factors play a role in the matter. In a Los Angeles study
conducted by Ayres and Borowsky (2008), it was found that Blacks were 127 percent more likely to be stopped and frisked than Whites. Similar findings are found across the United States as America has a history of mistreating African Americans. There are officers that tend to “fear for their life” when dealing with a Black man, there are residual effects that come from individuals watching their friends being beat, killed, or mistreated by police, and there are few officers that have been found to arrests innocent Blacks in relation to a crime, in order to seem more efficient. As there is a dark figure of crime, there is a dark figure of truth. Though there may not be data that states this exists, does not mean that it is not a reality. To assume or assert that Blacks commit crime more than Whites without recognizing the injustice that stains and works within the American structure, is an insult.

To do so, the present study takes up Blalock’s argument concerning racial threat and examines the racial threat argument from a population based and a political perspective by examining the differential/underrepresentation of racial groups in the political structure to explore whether the lack of representation of African Americans in the political structure serves as a factor in the racial disparities in arrest.

Another argument suggests that the distribution and concentration of African Americans can affect the outcome of various social, political, and economic processes by producing discrimination against African Americans. One such argument is found in Blalock’s racial threat hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that Whites feel threatened by the Black population when that population is growing, which can be perceived as a threat to the dominant social, economic, and political position Whites tend to occupy in American society. Through understanding Blalock’s racial threat hypothesis, one can argue that cities, districts, counties, and states with a higher percentage of Blacks would be expected to have a higher arrest rate for Blacks. This
causal effect is not solely due to Blacks being more present, and thus having a higher probability and opportunity for police contact that would result in an arrest. Nor does it mean that Black individuals moving into or concentrated in those areas are criminals or more likely to be engaged in criminal behavior. Though the increased presence of African Americans might lead to more interactions with police as a simple mathematical function, other social processes can also affect those interactions and the results of those interactions (i.e., such as who gets selected for arrest, how often, and how race affects that process). In other words, social organization could impact the likelihood of racial profiling, discrimination, and/or racism occurring.

Although Blalock’s argument provides a very general hypothesis concerning how the increased presence of Black Americans affects racial biases, numerous factors might also affect racial biased outcomes such as racial profiling and the likelihood of arrest, and there are no easily identifiable factors that have been specified in the relevant literature as the ‘most crucial.’ Moreover, it is also not possible to easily measure these other explanations. While it can be posited that racial profiling would lead to racially biased criminal justice outcomes, translating the concept of racial profiling into easily identifiable or measurable outcomes is much more problematic.

In addition, among the crucial elements that can define when an individual may be arrested is the police officer’s discretion and actions and sometimes, the citizen’s behavior. Some research indicates that citizen behavior is the most important, though this relationship can be questioned. Using a sample of arrests from Cincinnati, Brown and Frank (2006) found that White officers were more likely to arrest Black suspects than Black officers, while, at the same time, Black officers were more likely to arrest Black rather than White suspects. Many researchers, such as Alexander (2010), Tucker (2019), and Headley & Wright (2020) note that the issue may
be the race of the police officers, who are usually White. However, Headley & Wright (2020) found that both Black and White officers were less likely to arrest White civilians during force encounters. These conflicting results have made it difficult to reach definitive conclusions concerning how officer and suspect race interact to affect arrest outcomes.

Spatial Opportunities & The Bias Treatment of Blacks

According to Ousey & Lee (2008), racial disparities in arrest rates may vary as a result of spatial opportunities for biased law enforcement. Spatial opportunity suggests that regardless of the nature or the source of discriminatory motivations, the population percentage of Blacks and Whites can have an important impact on race-based disparities in arrest rates (Ousey & Lee, 2008). This idea is similar to the racial threat hypothesis posited by Blalock. To build further on a similar observation, Stuart (2004) notes, structural race-linked population "unevenness makes it easier for . . . organizations to deliberately or unintentionally treat people of different races differently." This means that individuals who are unsettled by or unaware/unconscious of the presence of another group may contribute to their mistreatment. This can occur, for example, as a reflection of spatial segregation which is still visible in numerous cities, where minorities are in urban-inner city areas, sometimes identified as “high crime” and low-income areas, while the majority of Whites live in rural, suburban, middle-class areas. Consistent with this observation, Sampson & Raudenbush (2004) argue that the intentions of effectively and efficiently addressing crime results in concentrating police attention on spatially distinct Black communities that are perceived to be crime “hot spots.” More recently, Gatson (2019) argued that intense, persistent racial residential segregation stems not from naturally occurring processes but from a confluence of deliberate efforts to relegate Blacks to distressed neighborhoods and ensure Whites’ residency
in the most desirable communities. Essentially, the intent to target and marginalize minorities includes restrictive deed covenant agreements, residential zoning laws, red lining by lenders, steering by real estate companies, disinvestment, and discriminatory federal housing policies, all of which have worked to concentrate poverty, create an underclass, and produce the structural-cultural conditions conducive to visible crimes—street violence and visible drug activity—police are preoccupied with enforcing (Capers, 2009; Gordon, 2009; Massey & Denton, 1993; Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Wilson, 1987).

Ousey & Lee (2008) state that the types of intentional discriminatory methods, mechanisms, and strategies that focus on minority areas, including arrest, are formal social control measures. Essentially, these are measures derived from or influenced by the social structure to control minorities and reduce their access to power in economic, social and political institutions. These controls may marginalize, discriminate against, or hinder the potential of minorities - thus, forcing minorities to remain under the supervision and jurisdiction of the majority race. One potential possibility is enhanced police presence and social control in minority communities (Ferrandino, 2015). Studies have shown substantial evidence of heavier “police emphasis on drug control” in minority neighborhoods, leading to more arrests among minorities (Mitchell & Caudy, 2013).

Here, it can be argued that the influence of racial threat and over-policing intersect in minority communities, an argument that has relevance to, for example, the history of the war on drugs in the U.S. and practices that have led to widespread racial disparities in arrests for drug related crimes. Referring to the war on drug and race, Ousey & Lee (2008) suggest that the overrepresentation of African Americans among arrests for drug crimes is also overlooked and often ‘justified’ or legitimized. The justification stems from politicians claiming that officers are
patrolling high crime areas to control crime. This behavior (i.e., patrolling assumed high crime areas) can put minorities, specifically African Americans, at a disadvantage, because African Americans are living in the high crime areas that are not receiving help from the city, county, or state, yet are receiving over policing, harassment, and targeting.

The above has long been recognized. Specifically, Shaw & McKay (1942) found that crime remains high in low income/high crime areas regardless of who resides in those neighborhoods. Thus, as Blacks are forced by structural arrangements to live in these areas and are already arrested more than others, the existing police practices justify expanding those biased practices and expanding efforts to arrest Blacks and expand the use of arrest as a social control mechanism over the Black population. The heavy presence of police is consistently justified to patrol Black neighborhoods, allowing citizens to believe the myth that minorities commit more crime, when in fact, this is not true. Furthermore, researchers such as Beckett et al., (2006), Geller & Fagan, (2010), and Lynch, (2011) provide findings that suggest that drug policing cannot be justified by rational policy decisions or the spatial distribution of drug or violent crimes. These findings indicate that while American citizens believe that the arrests of the poor and minorities in high crime areas are justified, drug policing, in itself, is unjustified. Drug policing is unjustified, as it increasingly targets certain groups and introduces numerous individuals to the criminal justice system, which may alter their life course towards a darker path (e.g., more drugs, crime, etc.). It is clear that unjust/unequal policing coupled with justified policing (i.e., the concentration of police in Black communities because the arrest data shows Black commit more crime) facilitates discrimination against African Americans. In truth, the equation is actually unjust heavy policing plus the persuasion of justified policing, equals unjustified arrest of minorities. This simply means that the over-policing of African Americans
and the disparities in arrest are unjust and become justified by the ‘tautology’ of Black arrests, thus producing and contributing to an unjust outcome. However, through the false sense of justification of arrests of African Americans, American society continues to allow the mistreatment of minorities, specifically African Americans, by believing that minorities are committing more crime.

As an example, consider what research on drug arrests and race illustrated in Cleveland. Findings indicate that certain types of policing (e.g., drug control, heavy policing, etc.) cannot be justified by rational policy decisions. Other findings reveal that there is more to racial disparities in arrest than simply trying to reduce or control crime. In a study conducted in 2011, Lynch found that despite the diversity of drugs (e.g., powder cocaine, heroin, MDMA, and marijuana) dispersed across the city, Cleveland police and local officials chose to concentrate drug enforcement efforts in predominantly Black neighborhoods, target crack paraphernalia rather than all types of paraphernalia, seek felony charges versus the option of misdemeanor charges, and financially incentivize police officers to pursue felony charges in exchange for overtime pay when required to appear in court for felonies versus misdemeanors. These policy choices resulted in over-targeting Black citizens and communities (Gatson, 2019). Essentially, though drugs were dispersed across the city, Cleveland police made a blatant and bias decision to specifically and deliberately focus on Black neighborhoods rather than seek drugs more generally across Cleveland’s neighborhoods. This unfairly allowed the opportunity for more African Americans to be targeted and arrested more than other races (i.e., White, Hispanic, Asian, etc.), as others did not have similar opportunities of police interactions due to the lack of policing in other areas, thus adding to the overrepresentation of the arrests of Blacks. These interactions and targeting methods allow one to assume that the more encounters African Americans have with police
officers, the more likely African Americans are to have committed a drug offense, and thus to legitimately be arrested than their White counterparts (Brown, 2005). Geller and Fagan (2010) further state, that unlike the characteristics of majority White or non-disadvantaged neighborhoods, Illinois v Wardlow (2000) allows the characteristics commonly found in disadvantaged, predominantly Black or Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods, such as high violent crime rates, to form in part the legal basis to stop, question, and search law-abiding minority residents, reducing individualized factors required to conduct stops and enhancing that race is used to make arrest decisions (Geller & Fagan, 2010; Illinois v. Wardlow, 2000).

**The Presence of The Black Population & The Racial Threat**

Examining these findings allows one to understand that it is not necessarily the increased percentage of minorities in an area that affects the number of arrests, but rather the societal or communal reaction to the presence of the rise of minorities, specifically African Americans, in an area. As a reaction to African Americans’ increasing population, it can be argued that population increases provide opportunities for discrimination, marginalization, and racism. Racism is noted as the race-based power system in which the dominant racial group controls institutions, resources, and the distribution of resources in an uneven manner that unequally distributed resources based upon race (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009; Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001; Haney López, 2000). With these present obstacles and mechanisms (i.e., discrimination, marginalization, and racism), African Americans continue to experience oppression. Drawing from these arguments, this oppression may vary geographically. One way to examine this outcome is to examine the percentage of African Americans in each Florida county and explore whether the population size of African American is related to the proportion
of race-linked arrests, and whether those proportions may be so extensive as to constitute racial disparities in arrests in Florida. The present study employs the Blalock’s minority hypothesis to assess whether the presence of African Americans in cities, counties, and states correlate with higher arrest rates of Blacks, in said areas.

Blalock’s research discusses the presence of African Americans in predominant White spaces; however, it is to also note how his assumptions may translate when discussing when the Black population has a larger presence in cities or counties. Blalock’s theory would argue that counties with a high Black population and/or more Black political representation may see a tipping point in the arrest disparities in arrest. It is assumed that as Blacks have more political control and a stronger presence in a county, the social control or crime control will decrease because Blacks will have power to help the Black community (decrease over policing, allow for better education, etc.) thus decrease as the racial threat diminishes due to Blacks not fearing Blacks, but yet advocating for the Blacks. Under this assumption, the assumed linear relationship will thus be a curvilinear relationship – which prompts for the percent Black squared to address the assumption. This squaring of percent Black is utilized in the instances that assume there is a curvilinear relationship as a result of how the explanatory variables affect the dependent variable. Percent Black squared has been utilized by several researchers such as, Holmes, Smith, Freng, & Muñoz (2008) who did not find a curvilinear relationship between the minority threat and crime control; McCreary, England, & Farkas (2008) who found that Blacks’ relative chances of employment are ‘hurt’ by living in a city where they are a higher proportion of the population; and Stucky (2012) who found that the percentage of a city’s residents who are Black is less than 15 percent and greater than 50 percent, violent crime arrests for Blacks are lower in cities with a Black mayor. There are mixed findings throughout literature which strengthens the need to
further test the racial threat and political representation hypothesis and the present study seeks to further use the percent Black squared variable across Florida counties.

Several questions begin to arise when examining arrest data. For example, according to the U.S. Census, Miami-Dade County has one of the largest racial/ethnicity groups in the state of Florida. In 2018, Miami-Dade County had a population of 2,705,528 people with 68.1% Hispanic, 15.6% Black, and 13.5% White. However, the arrest rate for African Americans was 42.4% of those arrested in the county. There are several relevant questions that must be examined: how do these statistics relate to laws? How do these statistics relate to the demographics of the political structure and representation of races? How does the data connect to arrest rates?

The arrest statistics above relate to laws, including traffic stops, drug offenses, and other behaviors considered more dangerous and threatening (e.g., felonies). Significant evidence has been presented that some police departments treat minority drivers differently than White drivers (Alpert, Dunham, & Smith, 2007). This may consist of fines, arrests, searches, and traffic stops. However, there have been mixed findings on how African Americans are stopped and fined or arrested in the United States as well as in Miami-Dade County, specifically as the findings vary from study to study (Alpert, Smith, & Dunham, 2004; Alpert et al., 2007; Rojek, Rosenfeld, & Decker, 2012). Furthermore, the use of zero-tolerance policies greatly disadvantages African American youth, as it was found that African Americans made up approximately 53% of school arrests, yet only comprised 22.9% of the Miami Dade County population (Thompson, 2016). These comparisons do not mean that Blacks commit more (or less) crime than arrest statistics indicate, but as noted earlier, there is evidence that White and Black involvement in crime is not sufficiently disparate to produce large racial differences in arrest.
With regard to drug offenses, Snyder & Mulako-Wangot (2012) found that the disparity in drug distribution arrests has remained considerable with drug distribution arrest rates being on average 6 times higher for Blacks relative to Whites since 1989. The structure of certain laws has increased the number of African Americans being arrested, as behaviors associated more with African American than Whites are targeted in some legislation. The targeting of African Americans, however, is also promoted by law enforcement practices, and stems from identifying and labeling neighborhoods that typically have minority populations as high crime areas, which justifies higher police presence in those locations, resulting in more arrests, which continue the arrest-crime cycle. Alexander (2010) argues that this is not a coincidence, but a means to marginalize African Americans further. Minority areas usually have a higher police presence, providing more opportunities for police-civilian interactions which presents a higher opportunity for arrests (Huff, 2021). To understand the impact of laws on arrests, it is imperative to understand that discrimination and racial bias may reflect the conscious decision of the political structure that stems from congress down to the law enforcement officers on the street or may result from the influence of structural arrangements.

**Officer Characteristics**

One current argument employed to address some of the discriminatory actions in the criminal justice system, is to increase diversity among police officers, primarily with African American officers. However, several researchers found mixed results that displayed that the presence or utilization of African American police officers decrease the negative interactions with police officers (Wallach & Jackson, 1973; Weitzer, 2000; Crotty, Crotty, & Fernandez, 2017). Brunson and Gau (2015) found that shared racial background does not guarantee positive
interactions between Black officers and Black citizens. Brunson and Gau argue that though the race of an officer may change, the perception of police remains the same and is just as damaging in arrest scenarios regardless of the race of the officer and suspect. Therefore, damaging perceptions and police interactions coupled with police discretion may lead to the same number of arrests as with White officers. However, when examining the state of Florida, Close and Mason (2007) found White officers are more likely to bring criminal charges against African American drivers and they are also more likely to exercise the least punitive enforcement actions. Therefore, the probability of arrests of African Americans increases with White officers. Close and Mason concluded that African American drivers are subject to a combination of punitive bias by White officers, and favorable bias by African officers. Lastly, they found that counties with a larger Black or Latino population in Florida counties raised the odds of a driver being charged with a misdemeanor or receiving a citation but lowers the possibility of receiving no punishment. Therefore, the present study can expect a high arrest rate in counties with a larger Black population. Essentially, with the mixed findings from various researchers, the present study seeks to extend the search further to the political realm.

**Politics in America**

Several factors contribute to the relationship of American politics and the criminal justice system, be it the political parties and their views, how politicians fund the criminal justice system, how politicians appeal to voters, and how politicians affect the accessibility of voting. Therefore, this section will discuss these factors to identify the elements that contribute to the relationship between American politics and the criminal justice system, as laws created and
passed present different gains and challenges for certain groups (e.g., minorities, upper class, investors, etc.) and are truly overlooked in the field of Criminology.

Many areas of the American political and economic system appear to provide continuing benefits to the same privileged, elite groups, with few signs of change (Baumgarten & Jones, 2010). The privileged group that this study is referring to is the White majority. The White majority is noted as the privileged group, as Whites have more economic, political power, and financial power. Built into the roots of America, is discrimination and marginalization - stemming from slavery, three-fifths clause, Jim Crow, etc. With Whites having power to present these laws and eras, it is evident that Blacks do not retain the same power of Whites. Thus, as Blacks are known to support the Democratic party than the Republican party, it is imperative to understand the position and perspectives of the political parties (i.e., voters’ political party affiliation & congressional political party affiliation), as well as the racial composition of the political party (i.e., race of the political parties in the Senate and House of Representatives, & race of voters the political parties).

American politics lack diversity, and thus not all citizens are truly represented in such an important realm. To clearly understand the nature of American political structure and the need for racial representation, one must first examine and identify the political parties’ perspectives, which allows one to understand the stance of each political party, especially as party-linked policies, preferences and ideology connect to race. Secondly, understanding the different views of different races and ethnicities reveals the different perspectives and cultural differences that reside alongside the majority race in American society. American society has truly catered to the advancement of the White majority and as a result, other races and ethnicities do not share the same level of economic and political power - causing for other races and ethnicities to
experience oppression instead of benefits. Essentially, every race and ethnicity (White, Black, Indian, Hispanic, Asian) have a different culture, belief, and traits, that if not represented or defended fairly, may put a certain group in an oppressed position (e.g., hair policies, rituals – the use of marijuana, etc.). Therefore, understanding that there are different views and cultures that are overlooked, unaccounted for, or even marginalized, allows one to be enlightened on subject of inclusion, and why the groups, races, and cultures must be represented and met with acceptance in order for all races, ethnicities, and groups to be treated equally. Lastly, comprehending the different racial and punitive attitudes and perspectives associated with different political parties clarifies how and why individuals may side with one political party over the other (e.g., punitive, tradition, liberal, progressive change, etc.). Understanding the different views, cultures, needs, and values retained by various races and ethnicities ultimately provides a clearer view of the separation among races in the political structure and the need for equal racial political representation to possibly decrease arrest rates as these separations may lead to less minorities in the political structure (e.g., less Democrats in office may mean lesser possibility of minority representation).

To begin a change, the representation in the state political structure should at least mirror the state population and the U.S. political structure should at least mirror, and the overall population. For example, if Blacks make up at least 13% of the U.S. population, then at least 15 of the 120 U.S. Representative seats should be occupied by Black Representatives. However, this is not enough to make a difference in congress and therefore, the question of “What is equal representation?” requires further examination. For there to truly be equal representation, the understanding of the matter does not reside in numbers alone, but the cognizant acceptance and trust of other individuals outside their respective groups (e.g., gender, race, sexuality, etc.).
Essentially, Whites must not only be willing to hear the views of minorities, but supportive of the views of the minority representation who seek the betterment of their communities (e.g., school funding, less police targeting, etc.). This is merely an example, and it is not to demean Whites, however it is to present an example of how equal representation can be constructed. As congress stands, voting power is laws are passed, therefore it is imperative for all members to be open to receive, learn, and support laws, motions, and movements presented by individuals more knowledgeable than themselves. It is imperative that those in congress be wise in order to understand that one’s lack of experience of a topic does not mean it is a threat, one’s commitment to a political party does not mean one has to side with the party every time, it also means that those in power must understand that perceiving everything as threat makes themselves a threat to society. It is why understanding oneself is more important than supporting a political party, in order to reach bi-partisanship.

Political Parties

When discussing political parties, one must understand partisanship and bipartisanship. Partisanship is the presence of prejudice or bias in favor of a particular group, while bipartisanship is when there is an agreement or cooperation between two political parties (White & Ypi, 2016). These concepts are vital to understand how the cohesion or discord between two political parties, specifically with race, can possibly affect disparities in arrest.

Partisanship is a particularly salient and powerful identifier for two main reasons. First, it is acquired at a young age and rarely changes over the life cycle, notwithstanding significant shifts in personal circumstances (Sears 1975). Second, political campaigns—the formal occasions for expressing one’s partisan identity politically—recur frequently and last for many
months (or even years) in contemporary American society (Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019). The two primary political parties in the U.S. are the Democrats and Republicans. Republicans are known to be more conservative and punitive (Walker, 2014), while Democrats are viewed as more liberal (Caldeira & Cowart, 1980). Conservatives maintain skepticism about—or opposition to—the use of government action to address social problems and tend to evaluate candidates and policies on the basis of ideological congeniality, whereas most Democrats are committed less to the abstract cause of liberalism than to specific policies designed to benefit particular groups (Grossman & Hopkins, 2015). In essence, the two parties are opposite of each other as one is governed more by ideologies, government power, and principles while the other is governed less by ideologies and more by the recognition and satisfactions of groups (ethnicities, genders, etc.), principles, and morals (Grossman & Hopkins, 2015). This is not to say that Republicans do not have morals, but rather that religious views are guiding the party more than moral codes (e.g., attitudes toward the acceptance of race, genders, sexualities, etc.) that have changed over time and do not align with all of the religious views held by Republicans.

The racial composition of the two parties is quite different as well, as the affiliates of the Republican party are typically Whites, while the Democratic party has more African American members. Non-Hispanic Whites accounted for 69% of Republican self-identifiers nationwide in 2022, while accounting for 70% of independents and 56% of Democrats according to the Survey Center on American Life. Blacks have overwhelmingly voted Democrat since the 1960s (Kidd, Diggs, Farooq, & Murray, 2007). It is important to note that Democrats have more African American members as it further reveals that in a political structure that contains more Republicans, there are likely to be fewer African Americans. There are also African American
Republicans that may represent the Black community; yet there are not many African American Republicans in comparison to African American Democrats, lessening the chances of an African American in a district running for office and being elected. Due to the difference in racial compositions of each party, the different political parties appeal to races differently, have different views that may differ due to race, and obtain different levels of support from certain groups (i.e., White supremacist, activists, wealthy, middle class, etc.)

Researchers have tended to note that the Democratic party has been more inclusive than the Republican party. David R. Mayhew (1966) noted that the Democratic legislative agenda “was arrived at by adding together the programs of different elements of the party” and was enacted via institutionally-facilitated log-rolling among members representing diverse constituencies. Congressional Republicans, in contrast, perceived their role as standing for the principles of “free enterprise and economy in government” (Grossman & Hopkins, 2015).

It is important to acknowledge that each party has different views about crime and its control. According to Hoenisch (2004), since the rise of the federal government's involvement in crime control, the typical Republican position has been to advocate for a strong law and order response to social and criminal unrest, focusing on repressing crime through such policies as bolstering law enforcement and lengthening prison sentences. Hoenisch states that concern with crime did not become a strong focus for politicians until the 1920s (others indicate this occurred in the 1960s during the presidency of Lyndon Johnson and the development of the first fear of crime surveys, Lynch and Michalowski, 2010). As politicians campaigned and became elected, the focus on crime control was indeed a point used to outdo one another in a campaign. While both the Republican and Democratic parties focus on crime, their approaches are different. Historically, the Democratic view of crime interprets crime as a response to social conditions,
especially limits in access to jobs and other economic resources and educational opportunities. There have been, however, numerous Democrats who have supported law and order campaigns and responses to crime (e.g., President Biden sponsored a get tough on crime Bill in 1993). In short, being associated with the democratic party is not necessarily in itself sufficient to promote a racially conscious understanding and response to crime in America.

The political parties’ views and approaches differ among matters such as wages, the funding of police agencies, and voting methods. Ultimately, these matters are important because the responses to these subjects usually benefit Whites and the upper class while oppressing and harming the minority and poor when power is in the hands of Republicans. This is not to say that Democrats have solved numerous racial problems. First, minimum wage increases remain popular among voters (Luce, 2017). Democrats have traditionally favored minimum wage increases, while Republicans have opposed them (Levin-Waldman, 1998). In the early 1990s, the federal minimum wage had fallen far below the hourly wage a worker with a family needed to meet the federal poverty line (Bernstein and Schmitt, 2000). Essentially, a worker working full-time (40 hours per week) and earning the minimum wage would just pass the poverty threshold for a single adult but would not earn enough to support a family (Waltman, 2000). A large issue in America today is that the minimum wage is not a livable wage (Luce, 2017). A livable wage allows an individual to earn at least above the poverty line, while able to provide for one’s family. The minimum wage has just increased in 2022 since the year 2009. Unfortunately, the nation has incurred inflation, causing the new minimum wage to still not be enough for many individuals to care for their families.

Ultimately, unfavorable wages are not solely a democratic or republican party issue that is the responsibility of one or the other. This is a structural product of capitalism that both
political parties can attempt to address, in order to provide better care over the American citizens. With partisanship growing over the past years (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019), it can be assumed that the divide amongst races is growing as well. The separation of races becomes evident with the backing of Black Lives Matter, Police Lives Matter, and All Lives Matter movements, which continues to cause a controversial debate in today’s society. The views, the racial composition, and actions of each party play a functional role in how to address crime and prevent crime through punishment and funding. A functional role in which political parties attempt to address crime resides in how monies are spent in the criminal justice system.

Politics and Criminal Justice Expenditures

One of the ways in which criminal justice systems can be changed and directed externally is through the funding of those agencies, and by providing increases or withdrawing funding for certain law enforcement activities. Criminal justice expenditures are distributed across three branches and forms: police expenditures, judicial expenditures, and corrections expenditures. Essentially, lawmakers create a budget concerning how to spend allotted monies for the upcoming fiscal year. Legislators must vote and pass a budget each year which includes funding police expenditures. Specifically, police expenditures are critical to examine since the budget assigned to police expenditures can enhance the number of officers on the streets and affect the probability of arrest. It is assumed that the more police officers employed, the more social control there is, and the less crime, once again reiterating the purpose of the “get tough on crime” approach by Republicans. Burch (2018) and Caldeira & Cowart (1980) found that Republican states have higher criminal justice expenditures. However, those criminal justice expenditures were found to not deter or decrease crime (Burch, 2018).
As noted earlier, an overlooked issue involves the interaction between increasing police presence and the interaction of police with members of minority groups when increased police presence is concentrated in minority neighborhoods. When there are more police officers on the streets and possibly better equipment, the effect on crime is likely minimal, while it may increase the possibility of African Americans encountering and interacting with police officers. Those increased encounters may generate more opportunity for arrest for African Americans. This does not imply that all police officers act and use discretion based on race; however, statistics show that African Americans are far more likely to be arrested than Whites (Alexander, 2010).

Politicians’ Voting Appeals & Voter Manipulation

Political parties may appeal to voters for different reasons, such as policies concerning rates, gun laws, wages, and other elements noted previously, as politicians commonly appeal to voters’ concerns (Clark & Lee, 2016). Appealing to the voters requires appealing to the feelings of individuals. Brader (2005) argues that there are several types of appeals that can be made: Enthusiasm appeals and fear appeals. Enthusiasm appeals feature content and imagery associated with success and good times, which should increase the desire to participate and reinforce the salience of prior beliefs in the candidate choice. Fear appeals feature content and imagery associated with threat, which should motivate a search for information, decrease the salience of prior beliefs, and encourage reconsideration of choices on the basis of contemporary evaluations (Brader, 2005). The appeals are also argued to correlate with race as Republicans may cater to predominantly White Americans, while Democrats cater to liberal Whites and minorities. For example, Beckett (1999) argued that in the United States. Republicans politicized imprisonment
and used a “get tough on crime” approach in an effort to attract White voters who were concerned with crime away from the Democratic party.

The enthusiasm appeal may include campaigns such as the 2016 Trump Campaign, which was “Make America Great Again.” Arguably, America was never “Great” as it was allegedly “founded” by Christopher Columbus in 1492, followed by centuries of rape, pillaging, genocide, slavery, and racism and discrimination against minorities, which is still prevalent in modern American society (Tinker & Freeland, 2008; Alexander, 2010; Wallis, 2016). Thus, many minorities received the campaign slogan as a symbol of bigotry, hatred, and White Supremacy, while many White supporters, which it appealed to the most, received the campaign as inspiring and involving the renewing of jobs, industries, becoming a stronger nation, or “taking the country back” (from non-Whites) with possible connections to the far right (Ellington, 2018). Furthermore, Obama in 2008, led with “A Change We Can Believe In” as well as “Yes We Can,” which arguably brought and inspired hope to be a better nation, coming together, and appealing to all races (Thomas, 2009; Bostdorff, 2017). However, there were several that disagreed with his principles, and rejected him for his race as well (Goldman & Mutz, 2014).

The fear appeal may encompass acknowledgement of crime rates, terrorism, the lack of available jobs, tax increases, etc. Essentially, this type of appeal strikes at the voters’ emotions to persuade and manipulate the individual into voting. Emotional appeals are communications intended to elicit an emotional response from some or all who receive them (Brader, 2005). Thus, if a candidate understands that a number of voters are nervous about the possible loss of their job or the possibility of less available jobs, a politician may make statements that instill fear or false information into the voters, and promising to do something about the issue, if elected or
re-elected. As an example, statements such as, “Mexico is sending its worst” or stating that an opponent is trying to raise taxes or cut jobs, can instill fear and invalid information to voters. Overall, Brader (2005) found that emotions can be central to whether and how campaign ads work. Unfortunately, these types of appeals may only target the White majority, while dividing the races instead of promoting unity. The divide may go further than the campaign, and carry on for years, as voters may continue to fear an unreal threat, while also becoming manipulated to view other racial groups as threats, thereby justifying the treatment of other racial groups, such as the over policing of African Americans.

Politicians’ Effects on Voting Accessibility

Political outcomes can be affected by altering election outcomes by changing voter access in elections. The accessibility of voting includes early voting, voting by felons, gerrymandering, and physical ability to vote (location, access to transportation, proof of identification). Required photo identification or proof of citizenship to vote, more stringent regulation of groups or individuals who aim to register new voters, shortened early voting periods, repeal of same-day voter registration, and increased restrictions on voting by felons exemplify the different types of policies that have been proposed and adopted in various states since the mid-2000s (National Conference of State Legislators, 2012). This includes all proposed legislation along the lines described previously, but also legislation that increases requirements or restrictions on either registration or the voting process relative to existing state law (Bentele & O’Brien, 2013).
Why are voting rights and restrictions a concern? Because they can affect who votes, and the proportion of people in different groups eligible or capable of voting. Speaking to these issues, Bentele and O’Brien (2013) state the following:

Only two additional factors are found to increase the proposal of restrictive legislation. First, larger increases in class-biased turnout, indicating higher turnout among lower income voters relative to wealthy voters, is significantly associated with a larger volume of proposed legislative changes. Low-income individuals vote less frequently than the affluent in every state, but here this gap has been closing in recent years, restrictive-access legislation is more apt to be proposed. Second, states with larger proportions of non-citizens also saw restrictive legislation proposed more frequently. In sum, where African-Americans and poor people vote more frequently, and there are larger numbers of non-citizens, restrictive-access legislation is more likely to be proposed.

Essentially, the last sentence in the section is the most insightful. This reveals a potential connection between using voting rights proposal to limit African American voting (accessibility), providing some support to the assumption that marginalization and discrimination as an intentional act. Regarding early voting, early voting makes it easier for voters who might not otherwise vote (Neely & Richardson, 2001; Herron & Smith, 2012). African Americans are more likely to use early voting (Herron & Smith, 2012) Herron & Smith conducted a study in 2012 to understand how voting restriction laws (House Bill 1355) in Florida affected individuals and groups in the state by examining the 2008 election. Herron & Smith (2012) found evidence that suggested that Democrats and African American voters would be disproportionately affected by
new Florida legislation that changes early voting requirements because these two groups tend to vote early more than other partisan and racial and ethnic groups.

*Politicians and Felon Disenfranchisement*

Voting access and political outcome can be affected in other ways as well, such as through felon disenfranchisement. The most common tool used to disenfranchise minorities is legislation banning felons or those convicted of particular categories of felony offenses from voting for life. In 1982, there was an amendment to the Voting Rights Act which prohibited discriminatory voting laws. This ban was, potentially, an extremely powerful tool against felon disenfranchisement laws because Section 3 of the amendment specified that election laws that had a discriminatory result, not intent, were illegal (Stuart, 2004b). As arrest and conviction rates for African Americans increased, over time a larger percentage of the African American population would be disenfranchised, and the voting power of Blacks began to be limited. Other such bills included increasing the criminal penalty for registering to vote if one is an ineligible felon, extending a felon’s period of ineligibility to include parole or probation if state laws does not already prevent this, or requiring that all fines imposed by sentencing, including court costs, must be paid before the restoration of voting rights (Bentele & O’Brien, 2013). These bills became an extra obstacle for felons to vote, as many released felons struggle financially, meaning the ability to pay fees and penalties may not be attainable in a timely manner if at all. Stuart (2004b) states that the disproportionate increase in incarceration rates for African Americans translates directly into a far higher disenfranchisement rate due to felony convictions. This outcome of the disenfranchisement law is vital to understand, as Black men comprise about 13 percent of the male population, but about 35 percent of those incarcerated (Hinton,
Henderson, & Reed, 2018). Hinton et al. (2018) state that Black women are similarly impacted, as one in 18 Black women born in 2001 is likely to be incarcerated sometime in her life, compared to one in 111 White women. As African Americans are stripped of their voting rights due to their criminal records, the results include a decrease in the power of Black voters (Phillips & Deckard, 2018), which one can argue is another way to address the ‘threat’ associated with the Black vote. These outcomes alter the chances of African American votes making a substantial difference in the elections.

In Florida, during the first Rick Scott administration, legislation reinstating the voting rights of felons completing all portions of their sentences that was passed during the Charlie Crist-era was repealed. This repeal increased the number of African-Americans who were unable to vote in the 2014 election (Phillips & Deckard, 2016). Sentencing Project (2014) data estimated that the number of African-American disenfranchised felons in Florida in 2010 was 520,521. The level of African Americans disenfranchised is appalling, as includes enough individuals to alter several election turnouts. With the lack of Black votes, certain candidates and parties can gain leverage to win the election.

*Politicians and Gerrymandering*

Election results are also impacted, and the Black vote diluted, by a process known as gerrymandering. When gerrymandering occurs, the connection between redistricting and the silencing and undermining of the minority, specifically the African American vote, is overlooked and if it is recognized, it is taken lightly. The term gerrymandering refers to the redrawing of electoral districts, which served to the advantage of one group and the disadvantage of another group (McDaniel, 2009). Essentially, McDaniel (2009) notes gerrymandering as a practice that
benefits a specific group with efforts consistent with achieving goals such as decreasing or increasing the demographic diversity of organizations or promoting or obstructing the growth and stability of political organizations. Due to the geographic concentration of Black voters, redistricting to reduce Black voting power proved to be a simple and effective mechanism for reducing the impact of Black voters (Hammond, Massey, & Garza, 2020). Soffen (2016) provides an example of how redistricting affects the Black vote. For instance, instead of two districts with a 60 percent and a 5 percent Black population, those districts could be redrawn to affect the likelihood of Blacks impacting the outcome of an election in either district by creating two 30 percent Black districts. This outcome could mean that instead of electing one representative in the 60 percent district, the redistricted areas would produce not would produce no Black representatives. Ultimately, extensive disenfranchisement increases the degree to which minorities generally, and African-Americans specifically, are unrepresented in the political process (Phillip & Deckard, 2018)

*Effects of Physical Voting Accessibility*

Physical accessibility is a strong component of one's voting ability. In minority communities, there can unfortunately be less convenient polls where individuals are able to easily vote - thus, adding to the decrease of Black votes. The lack of convenient polling sites may even increase the waiting period to vote. Long lines are another tool used to discourage voting by African-Americans and other people of color (Babones, 2014). In 2011, the Florida legislature curtailed the state’s early voting period, resulting in long lines for many electors who tried to vote in person during the truncated early voting period in the 2012 General Election (Herron and Smith 2014). With long lines and inconvenient poll sites, the country loses African
Americans votes, which in some areas may be vital votes for certain candidates. Research by MIT political scientist Charles Stewart III (2015) shows that in the 2012 elections the residents of 75 percent minority zip codes waited more than twice as long to vote as the residents of 75 percent White zip codes. According to Stewart III, wait times across the country vary considerably, but a state’s average wait tends to be consistent across elections. Floridians regularly report having to endure some of the longest wait times in the country; in 2012, in-person voters in Florida reported waiting 39 minutes on average prior to voting, three times the national average (Herron & Smith, 2021). Essentially, with the lack of physical accessibility for Black voters, the opportunity to vote for a political candidate that supports their community decreases. Thus, it allows more opportunities for candidates that may not have the best interests of the Black community to be elected - ultimately attributing to the cycle of low representation of African American voters by starting with the obstacles to vote, leading to the lack of political power, which leads to more discriminatory laws, more arrests and convictions, circling back to oppressing Black voters.

The voter identification requirement is another method used to negatively affect the minority vote. Not all citizens carry their identification with them at all times, and not all citizens have access to all types of identification (Vercellotti, & Andersen, 2009). Thus, not all citizens can meet that standard (Barreto, Nuño, and Sanchez, 2008). When the law was presented, it brought a challenge in some states for the poor and minorities. The timing of this legal requirement correlated with Former President Obama’s 2008 campaign - creating difficulties for first time voters, notably African American voters (Bentele & O’Brien, 2013). Ansolabehere (2009) found that in 2008, approximately half of all White voters in each poll said they were asked to show photographic identification when they voted, while two-thirds of Black voters
were asked to show picture ID. The disproportion of poll workers asking for identification not only allows one to assume the existence of distrust in African-Americans, but it displays the extra obstacles that may arise for African Americans when attempting to vote.

With the racial compositions of the parties strongly divided (i.e., Republicans majority White, Democrats include more minorities, specifically, African Americans), the kinds of laws proposed and passed can change depending on the party of the majority of representatives at any given time. This situation can result in laws that address past discrimination, or which seek to reinforce or reinstate discriminatory practices. The lack of opposition to threatening laws and policies that disadvantage African Americans dwindle with their lack of political representation.

Gerrymandering and packing minority voters into fewer districts has directly contributed to Republican takeovers of congressional and state legislative delegations (Hill 1995; Hood and McKee 2013), particularly in the South as compared with the rest of the country (Black and Black 2002). Though this process Black representation in the political system can be minimized, and with less representation, there is also an opportunity for more biased and discriminatory laws. For example, if one is unable to combat laws that target minority areas with high volume policing, more minorities, specifically African Americans, may be arrested due to a combination of more opportunities for interactions with police.

Voting & Civilian Perception

The difference in racial demographics and perspectives are imperative to understand, as it discloses the likely underlying factors, motivations, and intentions related to policies that may be promoted by both political parties. For example, López (2014) argues that especially Republican politicians, but also Democrats, use coded racial appeals or 'dog whistles' to gain votes from
Whites while enacting public policies that exacerbate inequality and benefit elites. Lopez argued that these discursive practices constitute ‘strategic racism’ or ‘purposeful efforts to use racial hostility as leverage to gain material wealth, political power, or heightened social standing.’ Lopez (2014) further argues that Democrats take up the approach of the myth of being colorblind, which is an ideology that rests on myths about fairness and discrimination that does not bring opposition from the Republicans. Racial attitudes of political parties are also notable when discussing how they appeal to the citizens during electoral campaigns.

Researchers such as Walter (2005) Lopez (2014), and Hughey & Parks (2014) have studied the views and perspectives of the two political parties with respect to race. Walters (2003) argues that since the 1980s Reagan era and fully culminating in the 2000 election, there has existed a political project from the far right of the Republican Party toward developing a White nationalist politics that targets the Black community through enhanced disempowerment. Within this political project, White interests are advanced as national interests and thus policies geared toward racial equality are framed as threats to Whites qua national interests (Rosino & Hughey, 2016). Hughey and Parks (2014) focused on and contextualized the contemporary racialization and “‘othering’” of President Obama. Given the extreme reactions of Republicans and the Tea Party to Obama’s election and presidency, Hughey and Parks (2014) note that Republican Party language usage reconstructs whiteness as simultaneously imbued with a sense of victimhood, citizenship, authority, and morality (Rosino & Hughey, 2016).

The manner in which political parties appeal to different demographics also includes how the political parties contact individuals to affect the individual’s vote. Schleiden, Soloski, Milstead, & Rynnehart, (2020) argued that policies and procedures of the justice system not only affect arrest rates, but also affect the perception of differences in behaviors and character across
races. Although numerous factors influence Black voter mobilization, being contacted about the campaign is one of the most important predictors of Black voter turnout (Clark, 2014). When Blacks are contacted about campaigns, they have a higher likelihood of voting (Green 2004; Philpot et al. 2009; Rosenstone and Hansen 2003). Clark (2014) examined the turnout in the 2008 election to understand if the presence of Black elected officials in the state legislature played a role in mobilizing Black voters, primarily credited to Obama’s candidacy. He found that disengaged Black voters from states with higher levels of collective descriptive representation were more likely to be contacted in 2008 than were disengaged Black voters from states with lower levels of collective descriptive representation. Descriptive representation means the election of Black legislators who represent the interests of mostly African-American constituencies (Swain 1993; Tate 2003).

In terms of voters, there is no direct way of testing the above explanation; that is by measuring how much expressive utility a voter receives voting for a policy, or candidate s/he believes will promote noble objectives (Clark & Lee, 2016). However, it is known that individuals vote for those who share similar views. The provided literature allows one to understand the racial effects in and from the political structure. The findings from this literature can be used to argue that there is a correlation between the racial composition of the political structure and racial disparities in arrests. This assumption has not been well studied (Stucky 2012). The present study includes a measure of Black political representation to assess whether Black political power and Black arrest rates are related. In this view, the lack of representation of African Americans in the political structures has a positive relationship with high arrest rates of African Americans. Through the understanding of the correlation, following studies may be able
to lead to policies that address the lack of not only African Americans, but other races and ethnicities, being represented and effective in the political structure as well.

Synthesis

In brief, African Americans are in a cycle of oppression and marginalization which is not only evident economically and socially within the U.S. but is also evident in the political system. Those forms of unequal power and representation, even at the population level (e.g., percent Black) have been posited as being related to the level of Black arrests compared to the other races/ethnicities. Numerous studies suggest higher than expected African Americans arrest rates compared to Whites, especially through traffic stops, drug arrests, and other police encounters. African Americans are being oppressed through laws that target their neighborhoods and are discriminated against with laws that limit the discussions of their history. Due to institutionalized racism, many are forced to live in low-income and high crime areas with poor schools and jobs that do not benefit them or provide them with resources that meet their needs to sustain a comfortable lifestyle or to progress socially and economically. This continues to occur, as the cries and fight for help and equality are ignored, as the media portrays African Americans as thugs, criminals, and violent individuals. The lack of knowledge and understanding that most African Americans do not reflect these characteristics provides an overflow of ignorance — which allows racism to continue to plague American society, as people believe that Black stereotypes contained in the news are generally correct.

The lack of racial and ethnic diversity within the political structure presents another threat to minorities, as there is little to no voice that can speak up for the Black community and other minority communities. The lack of political power and voices in the political structure
makes it difficult for Blacks and other minorities to have access to vote, ultimately cutting the Black voting power down and remaining in an antiblack cycle. With the lack of resources, high crime rates, targeting of police officers, over arrest, high incarceration rates, the false justification of targeting minority areas, stripped rights of voting, obstacles to vote, little to no racial or ethnic representation to protect the Black community, the vicious cycle will continue. Without a voice, power, or means to achieve either one, the minorities are then at the hands of the majority.

The next chapter is the methodology chapter. In that chapter I explore data used for this study, and the hypotheses that will be tested related to the discussion in this chapter and the theory chapter. In part, the following chapter presents a quantitative method to reveal the possible relationship between the racial disparities in arrest and the lack of African American representation in the political structure. It should be noted that this is the first study to look in depth at racial differences in arrest over time across all of Florida’s counties, and to examine how measures of the racial threat thesis and political representation may be affecting those outcomes.
Chapter 4: Methodology

The present study examines the possible relationship between racial disparities in arrests and racial representation in the political structure in the State of Florida, and whether racial population concentration (Blalock’s threat hypothesis) affects racial disparities in arrest across Florida. This chapter details the methodology of the present study by presenting the data, hypotheses, variables, and analytical strategies utilized to examine this phenomenon. In this study, the arrest rates are data collected at county level across Florida from 1998 to 2018, providing a 21-year span across 67 counties and 120 Florida House of Representative districts.²

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine variations in the racial distribution of arrests across counties and time in Florida, and also to assess whether that distribution is related to an empirical indicator of the political structure in the State of Florida. Essentially, this study seeks to add to the field of criminology by revealing a relationship between racial disparities in arrest, the racial composition of county populations, and the racial composition of the political structure in Florida counties. In general terms, these hypotheses are expressions of Blalock’s minority threat thesis.

The research undertaken has not been well studied in Florida, however it is imperative to assess, as researchers typically omit political variables when studying crime outcomes. Crime, as it was long ago noted by Richard Quinney (1970), is a social construction, part of which can be influenced by the political parties in power in different locations. The study seeks to bring awareness to the importance of representation of minorities, specifically African-

² Though this period is limited in time, further research can build upon this study with five-year increments of data. The study notes this matter as a limitation that will be further discussed in the Limitation section.
Americans, in the American political structure, as one factor that may impact how they are swept into and treated in the criminal justice process. To achieve these goals, the present study has gathered Florida county-level arrest data and political data with control variables to assess this phenomenon.

Data

The data utilized in this study includes county-level arrests (Black arrest and Black-to-White arrest ratio), population racial composition, political variables (e.g., racial composition of representatives), voting registration per county, and other control variables that may affect criminal behavior or its processing. The county level arrest data has been collected from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) database for the years 1998 to 2018, which provides for a 21-year period across 67 counties.\(^3\) FDLE presents the arrest dataset in four racial categories: White, Black, Indian, and Asian. The data does not include an indicator for the ethnic category, Hispanic. Hispanics may be of different races, and the focus is on race alone and not ethnicity, or the potentially complex interaction between race and ethnicity (e.g., Steffensmeier, Painter-Davis and Ulmer, 2017).

County-level data is utilized in this study as it provides a clearer indication of racial disparities, while solidifying a foundation for future studies. Essentially, county-level data provides an insight and better understanding into the possible relationship between the disparity of arrests and racial representation in the political structure. Furthermore, the county-level data can be connected to political districts of Florida representatives. The State of Florida consists of 120 districts which cover one to several counties (e.g., a district county may cover Escambia County, parts of Alachua County, St. Rosa County, etc.) but are not completely aligned with

\(^3\)https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/
county boundaries. Each political district contains one or more segments of a county. Coupled with the districts are political representatives who are elected through their respective districts. In Florida, there are 120 state representatives, at least one for each district. The Florida State Representatives data has been collected from the Florida House of Representatives website. The method of utilizing county-level data and districts allows for the study to examine the racial composition of the representatives in each county to allow an assessment of whether the race of local political representatives may be related to disparities in arrest in each county.

The population data has been collected from the Florida Health Department: Bureau of Community Health Assessment Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management. This study utilizes the county level population data to compare to county-level arrests data and political districts. The population data excluded Hispanic as a category since data on Hispanics was not available in the arrest data. With these data, the study presents hypotheses to assess the possible correlations and relationships between the disparities of arrest and the Black political representation. The present study has developed six hypotheses to organize and pinpoint the targeted areas of interest. Below are the hypotheses of the present study:

Hypotheses

\[ H_{1A}: \text{Racial disparities in arrests are widely known to exist, and these differences in arrest will be visible across counties in the state of Florida. That is, racial disparities in arrest are not constant, but vary across counties.} \]
*H*₁Β*: Following Blalock’s arguments, counties with higher Black populations will have higher Black/White arrest rate differences.*

The first two hypotheses address the existence of racial disparities across counties, or across counties and time. Hypothesis 1ₐ and 1ₐ constitute the core or basic hypotheses representing Blalock’s racial threat thesis. Specifically, hypothesis 1ₐ addresses whether racial disparities in arrest exist across Florida counties. Hypothesis 1ₐ focuses on whether counties with larger proportions of Black residents have higher Black arrest rates. Following Blalock’s argument, the assumption is that an increased presence of African Americans is perceived as a threat and thus, African Americans are more likely to be controlled through the use of arrests where they comprise a larger proportion of the population. In this case, arrest is acting as a form of race-linked social control and may operate independently of the level of offending engaged in by either race. The latter part of this argument, however, cannot be tested with the present data, as there is no mechanism for measuring unknown crimes across and within Florida’s counties over the time period examined.

*H*₂ₐ*: *In the more extreme case of racial bias, and independent of other effects, the trends in arrest within each county over time will display evidence of long-term racial differences in arrest measured by the Black/White arrest rates differences or long-term stability in a skewed Black/White arrest rate ratio.*

*H*₂ₐ*: *In contrast to arguments concerning the persistence of racial bias, as time progresses and, in theory, there is increased concern with addressing racial disparity in*
society and in the criminal justice process, racial disparities in the Black/White arrest difference decrease.

Hypothesis 2A, focuses on whether racial disparities change overtime. As time progressed, American society has become more aware of racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system. This awareness has also been punctuated by media coverage of well-known cases of racial discrimination or police violence against minorities. It could be argued that this awareness has led police to amend certain behaviors in response to public concerns, and that laws have been passed to decrease the presence of racism and discrimination which might also attenuate the Black/White arrest ratio.

Hypothesis 2B seeks to gather the assumed results from these reactions, which may be the possibility of the decline of bias arrests. This can be attributed to any number of factors not directly examined in this study: changing policing practices or police behaviors; the shift of the American mindset which may have become more inclusive; or changes in the political representation of Blacks in the political structure which may have an impact on the use of the criminal justice system. Other specific and nationally visible incidents such as Breonna Taylor, Alton Sterling, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd’s death, may also play a role in this matter. Not all of these alternatives can be examined in this study since it is first necessary to establish the baseline of whether racial differences exist in arrest across Florida counties. If so, this may be reflected in the ongoing racial disparities of arrests, where African Americans continue to be arrested several times more than their White counterparts.
H3: The level of political representation of Blacks in the political structure is related to disparities in arrest, so that in counties with low Black political representation, Black arrest disparities will be higher, but lower in counties with higher Black political representation.

H4: Counties with more republican representatives will have higher Black/White arrest ratio.

H5: The level of Black political representation in Florida is negatively associated with the racial disparities in arrests across counties.

Hypotheses 3 through 5 focus on the political representation variables in this study. These hypotheses seek to understand whether the racial composition of the political structure is associated with Black arrest rates and the Black/White arrest ratio. These hypotheses examine whether county arrest rates differ as a result of Black representation in the counties. Hypothesis 3 begins with the basic political representation hypothesis which suggests that counties with higher Black political representation have lower Black arrest rates. This is expected to occur since the increase in Black political representation could reflect the presence of larger Black populations or greater attention to racial inequality within a county. Either of those conditions could cause political representatives in those areas to attempt to address biases in arrests.

Furthermore, politically speaking, as the political parties are different in regard to their racial compositions, Hypothesis 4 suggests a relationship between the concentration of Republicans in a county and higher Black arrest rates and Black/White arrest ratio.
Hypothesis 5 focuses on all of the Black representation in the Florida State House of Representatives to examine if the increase or decrease of the presence of Black Representatives has an overall effect on Black arrests and Black/White arrest differences across counties. Essentially, does the increased presence of Black political representation become a factor in the increase or decrease of Black arrest and the Black/White arrest ratio?

**Measures & Variables**

**Independent Variables**

The present study has two primary independent variables: Percent Black Population and Black political representation. The first primary independent variable in the study is the Percent Black Population (PBP), measured with data collected from the Department of Health, State of Florida. The data is categorized by year for each respective county, with race categorized by White, Black, and Other, along with the total population of the county. To attain the percentage of the Black population, the Black population is divided by the total population.

The second primary independent variable is Black Political Representation (BPR). BPR is measured using data from the Florida House of Representatives website from 1998 through 2018. The racial/ethnicity of each member for each year has been carefully researched and recorded for accuracy. The Florida State House of Representatives has 120 members, while the Florida State Senate has 40 members. The race/ethnicity of each member has been recorded into three categories, White, Black, and Hispanic. Race and ethnicity measures are self-reported by representatives to the State of Florida.

As each representative may cover several different parts of a county, the data were recorded to accurately mirror that reality by using a count method. The counts will record every
White representative, Black, representative, other race representative, as well as Democratic and Republican representative in each Florida county. For example, if a White Republican covered parts of Clay, Duval, and St. Johns counties, then that person would be counted as 1 White representative (white_rep) and 1 Republican representative (red_rep) for each of these counties. If there is also a Hispanic Republican that covered parts of Clay, Duval, and St. Johns, the count would record 1 White representative, 1 Other representative (oth_rep), and 2 Republican representatives. After all representatives have been accounted for with each county, zeros will be entered for any remaining categories. These counts are recorded for each year of the selected time period.

These counts will be used to create percentages. In some portions for the analysis, the advantage of percentages may be the minimization of multicollinearity. A percentage measure using the percentage of White representatives (per_wht_rep) as opposed to the percentage of Black representatives will be utilized while the control variable will utilize the percentage of the Black population. Utilizing two different racial groups will help eliminate the possibility of multicollinearity, as using the same racial group for the independent variable and dependent variable could produce results that lack validity.

**Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable used in the regression portion of the analysis is disparities in arrests data which are noted in the study as the Black/White difference (BWD) will be used as annual measures to examine the disparities in arrest across 21 years. The BWD utilizes the Black-specific arrest rate (blkspec_rate) and the White-specific arrest rate (whtspec_rate). The Black-specific arrest rate is the Black arrest rate divided by the Black population, and the White-
specific arrest rate is the White arrest divided by the White population. To attain the difference of the two specific rates, the study will examine the absolute difference by subtracting the White-specific rate from the Black-specific rate which will provide the absolute difference – the BWD. Therefore, this measure represents the difference in the magnitude of arrests across races. For clarification, if the Black-specific arrest rate is .21, and the White arrest rate is .04, the absolute difference and BWD is .17. Furthermore, if the Black-specific arrest rate is .03 and the White-specific rate is .04, the absolute difference and BWD is .01. Utilizing the absolute difference will allow the study to focus on the change over time while producing results with clarity. The data used to construct the BWD is collected from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) database across all 67 Florida counties. The BWD will be utilized across all regression models in the present study.

Control Variables

The control variables consist of eight county-level compositional variables regarding the socio-demographic structure of each county: median age of each county (med_age) – interchangeable with percentage of males age 15-24 (permale_1524), percent of those under the poverty line (per_poverty), percent of the county population with bachelor’s degree and over (per_bach), percent of unemployment (per_unemploy), persons in jail (jail), crime rate (vio_crime & prop_crime), the percent of individuals registered to vote by political party (reg_rep & reg_dem), and percentage of the Black population (per_blkpop). In prior studies, (e.g., contrary to Kutateladze (2014)) age has been employed as an independent variable. Since this variable is not part of the theoretical explanation but presents alternative explanations for the outcomes, the age measures are utilized as control variables.
Age utilizes both the median age and percent of males ages 15-24 of each county. This variable is used to control for the effect noted in numerous prior studies concerning the relationship between age and crime. The variable is employed to control for the potential effect of age on crime and arrest that may exist across counties. If a relationship is found with median age, it may also indicate the possible influence of the age structure of a county interacting with arrests through other processes (e.g., the possibility that age of each race group or the ratio of age-race groups matters; or interaction between political party representation measures and age). While it is not within the scope of the present study to determine these potential age interactions, the possibility that they exist should be recognized. For example, from prior research on political matters, it is known that older populations tend to be more politically active and typically vote at a higher rate than younger citizens (Sloam, 2013). It is also known that older people are more fearful of crime (Greve, Leipold, and Kappes, 2018). Consequently, there may be more disparities in arrest in older counties. These issues should be examined in greater detail in future research and are beyond the scope of the current assessment of the existence and extent of potential race-linked differences in arrest in Florida’s counties.

Males ages 15-24 are utilized to address the age group most related to violent, such as murder, robbery, etc., and property crime, which is the 18-24 age group (Rocque, Posick, & Hoyle, 2015). Several researchers note that the age in which crime peaks in what is known as the age-crime curve, is in the early 20s (Stolzenberg & D’Alessio, 2008; Rocque et al.,2015; Le Blanc, 2020). This variable will alternate with the median age variable to separately address males, specifically, in the age group of 15-24 further address the relationship of disparities in arrest and the Black population. The issues with counties with older voters and counties with a
larger percentage of males in the 15-24 age group are imperative to understand, as this may be a factor in understanding the relationship between racial disparities in arrest.

*Poverty* is measured by the percentage of households earning less than the poverty line in each county. Understanding low-income areas in a county may provide an understanding for those who may not have resources, opportunities, and may experience high police interactions as impoverished areas have been shown to include high crime areas (Alexander, 2012; Gatson, 2019). The over saturation of police in low-income and high crime areas may present a positive correlation between poverty and disparities in arrests. In addition, because impoverished individuals may not have the resources to move out of poverty or physically vote, and the poverty rate is higher among Blacks, the impoverished vote decreases and those who live in impoverished areas unfortunately, typically minorities (Massey & Denton, 1993; Capers, 2009; Gordon, 2009).

*Education* is measured by the percentage of the population 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree or Higher in each county. It has been argued that low levels of education have a positive relationship with crime (Benson, 2012; Ades & Mishra, 2021). It is also noted that individuals with low education are less likely to vote (Hansen & Tyner, 2021). Therefore, this variable is critical to observe, as counties with more education may have lower correlation with racial disparities in arrest and a lower correlation with the Black political representation.

*Unemployment* is measured by the annual average of unemployment rate in each year for each county. Research indicates that this variable contributes to crime as unemployment rates have a positive relationship with crime rates and incarceration (Michalowski & Pearson 1990; Melossi, 1998; Burch, 2018).

Though opinions differ on the use of poverty (a measure of absolute deprivation) or the Gini index (a measure of relative deprivation), the Gini index has been excluded from the current study as true income inequality data (i.e., not estimates) recorded by year from 1998-2018 could not be located. The data which presented estimates (e.g., Census data) were not used, as the estimates could bias the results.
Jail is measured by the rate per 100,000 people jailed in each county. This variable controls for the possible deterrent effect of incarceration on criminals and has also been employed in prior tests of the threat hypothesis (Carmichael 2005).

Crime is measured by the rate per 100,000 people in each county. The crime is separated into violent crime and property crime. Violent consists of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crime consists of burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. This variable is being controlled for as the racial disparities in arrest may also be related to the amount of crime.

Voter’s Registration is measured by the percentage of Republican and Democrat registered voters. The variables will provide an understanding whether county level political party affiliation is related to the disparities in arrest. As noted earlier, republicans and democrats tend to have different attitudes about the control of crime and race in the US, and therefore the proportion of the population that is democrat or republican may be related to racial differences in arrest rates across counties. (Hoenisch, 2004; Grossman & Hopkins, 2015).

Percent Black is the percentage of the Black population in each county. Although this variable is noted as an independent variable, this variable will only be utilized as a control variable to identify the racial effect in the Racial Political Composition Model when the percent Black variable is rotated out with the Black political representation variable, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Percent Black Squared will also be utilized in the data by squaring the percentage of the Black population. As some racial threat arguments suggest a non-linear relationship (e.g., Jackson 1986, 1989), percent Black will be employed.

The age, poverty, and education variables will only be utilized from 2009-2020, as accessible and reliable data was not available prior to 2009. Therefore, the OLS equation will be
Table 2. The Description and Sources of Control Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>The median population age of each Florida county.</td>
<td>Florida Vital Statistics Annual, United States Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>The percentage of people living below the poverty level in each Florida county.</td>
<td>United States Census Bureau SAIPE State and County Estimates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>The percent of population 25 and older with bachelor’s degree or Higher.</td>
<td>United States Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Rate of annual average of each Florida county</td>
<td>United States Bureau of Labor Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail</td>
<td>Rate per 100,000 of jail population in each Florida county.</td>
<td>Vera Institute of Justice Incarceration Trends Dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>Rate per 100,000 people for violent crime and property crime, respectively</td>
<td>Florida Department of Law Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter’s Registrations</td>
<td>The voter’s registration variable is recorded by the percentage of citizens registered to vote, affiliated with their respective political party.</td>
<td>Florida Department of State - Division of Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Black</td>
<td>The percentage of the Black population in each Florida county.</td>
<td>Florida Health Department: Bureau of Community Health Assessment Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Black Squared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

run for the 21-year period without age, poverty, and education, and then run a second time for 2009-2020 with age, poverty, and education included.
Empirical Analysis

Graphing Trends and Levels of Arrest

The present study must first determine if racial disparities in arrests are present across Florida counties. This will be determined by collecting and analyzing arrest data across Florida counties for the years 1998 to 2018. A large portion of the analysis addresses race differences and requires producing three types of graphs for each of Florida’s 67 counties. These graphs can be inspected visually for trends. The three graphs consist of 1) County Black-Specific & White-Specific Annual Arrest Rate 2) County Black/White Arrest Difference and 3) County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and The Black/White Arrest Ratio.

To begin, arrest data will be displayed for each county in graphs that will show the trend in Black arrest and White arrests numbers and then rates for each county. These graphs will be followed by a series of graphs showing the Black-to-White arrest ratio for each county. Arrest rate differences are important because they display the relative relationship between the rate of White arrests to Black arrests. Arrest rate differences will be calculated by subtracting the Black arrest rate by the White arrest rate in each year in each county. When the figure is above 1, the higher the resulting rate, the higher the Black arrest rate is compared to the White arrest rate. Where the arrest rate difference is less than 1, more Whites are arrested than Blacks.

Note that separate analyses for Hispanic arrests are excluded from the study since ethnicity was excluded from the arrest data. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity may be either Black or White when classified racially. As a result, ethnicity may confound the results if Hispanics are more likely to be arrested than Whites, and also more likely to be coded as Whites with respect to race. The possibility of that outcome would potentially reduce the extent of the race effects being examined in this study but cannot be addressed given the nature of the arrest data. The
present study will present the graphs in the following chapter, as there are three sets of 67 graphs that will be discussed.

Assumptions & Regression Analyses

Proceeding to a regression that explores explanations for racial differences in arrest across time and place in Florida assumes that these patterns in Florida are consistent with patterns found elsewhere, and that there is likely to be racial differences in arrest found in the graphing of racial disparities in arrests across Florida counties. The study hypothesizes that red counties (Republican counties) also have a correlation with racial disparities in arrests. Furthermore, drawing on prior research and Blalock’s thesis, the study hypothesizes a positive relationship between race-linked crime differences and the Black population and Black political representation. To address these assumptions, the present study employs OLS regression. The OLS Regression is appropriate given that initial analysis of variables indicates that the variables have linear distributions. OLS regression can identify the strength of the relationship being assessed by providing correlation coefficients that will be interpreted to indicate the strength of the displayed relationship.

The present study presents the Racial Composition Model which will first identify two OLS regression models: Racial Population Composition & Racial Political Composition. The study conducts the model by utilizing the following general OLS equation:

\[ y = a + bx + e \]
For the Racial Population Model, the basic equation is:

\[
\hat{Y} (BWD) = b_0 + b_1 \text{Percent Black} + b_2 \text{Age}^* + b_3 \text{Poverty} + b_4 \text{Education} + b_5 \text{Unemployment} + b_6 \text{Jail} + b_7 \text{Crime} + B_8 \text{Voter's Registration}
\]

For the Racial Political Composition model, the basic equation is:

\[
\hat{Y} (BWD) = b_0 + b_1 \text{Percent White Representative} + B_2 \text{Percent Black} + b_3 X
\]

The Racial Population Model examines the association between racial disparities in arrests and the percent Black population across Florida counties. Both the Racial Population and Racial Political Composition Models address whether the two core variables suggested in the literature appear to influence racial differences in arrest. Racial Political Composition Model examines the association between racial disparities in arrests and the Black political representation across Florida counties. In both Models, a regression with all variables with their respective independent variables (e.g., Black population, Black political representation) will be conducted, to identify important variables. ‘All the variables’ include the dependent variable (disparities in arrests) regressed on the independent variable (Black population, Black political representation), while controlling for other factors (control variables: age (median age & 15-24 age group), poverty, education, unemployment, etc.). After identifying the statistically significant variables, it can be assumed that those variables are the possible explanatory variables. Therefore, variables that do not show a strong correlation will be removed from the regression analysis and another regression will be run with only the significant control variables.

The two models produced by the Racial Population Model will only consist of the control variables with their respective independent variables. The Racial Population Model will regress
the disparities in arrests variable on the percent Black population. This model seeks to understand the effect of the Black population, under the assumption of Blalock’s minority threat hypothesis which implies the results should display an increase of Black arrest as the Black population increases in each respective county. This model will be utilized for each county across time to identify the racial disparities in arrests in each Florida county. After regressing each county, the study will examine the correlation of the population and arrest to identify the highly correlated variables.

**Multicollinearity**

In aggregate empirical models, it may be the case that variables are highly correlated over time. Consequently, after running the regression, the study will conduct a multicollinearity test to ensure that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, and that the results are not biased. Examination of variation inflation factors will be undertaken to ensure that they are within an acceptable range. If the results display that multicollinearity is present among two or more variables, then the variables will be run separately, in models. As the data is anticipated to be absent of multicollinearity, the OLS regression model remains the best fit for the study.

**Limitations of Regression Analysis**

The limitations of the regression analysis include the absence of a Hispanic category in the arrest data that can be deemed critical when attempting to understand the true effects of county populations and political diversity on race-linked arrest rates. This may be especially problematic for certain Florida counties such as Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties.
that have large Hispanic populations and Hispanic political representation. The use of a 21-year period is also a limitation, as it is not enough time to fully understand a possible trend. Given that the study is restricted to Florida, the results may not be generalized to other states or counties outside of Florida. Furthermore, utilizing the poverty, education, and median age variables, respectively, from 2009-2020 does not allow for a deeper understanding of the possible effects or relationship with the present model. Lastly, a limitation of the regression analysis is the low number of Black representatives in Florida counties. Though there are some Black representatives, the low count may not display a large result.
Chapter 5: Graph & Regression Results & Analysis

This chapter contains the results from the graphs and regression analyses. First, the present study addresses the three kinds of graphs by 1) County Black-Specific & White-Specific Annual Arrest Rate 2) County Black/White Arrest Differences and 3) County’s Black Political Representation and the Black/White Arrest Ratio. The first set of graphs display the visual racial differences in arrest in each Florida county, annually. These graphs provide a visual depiction of the difference in Blacks arrests compared to White arrest rates within each of Florida’s 67 counties over time. Essentially, these graphs provide evidence of whether there are obvious visual racial disparities in arrest across time within Florida counties. The second set of graphs examine the difference between the two trends in racial arrests – examining if the racial disparities in arrest decreases, increases, or remains the same over time in the county level data. The third set of graphs examine whether there is a relationship between the presence of Black political representation in the political structure and the Black/White arrest ratio. The graphs are examined to identify if Blacks are arrested more than Whites, relative to the representation in the population, when the Black political representation increases, decreases, remains the same, or is non-existent.

As stated in the previous chapter, the Black specific arrest rate is the Black arrest rate divided by the Black population and the White specific arrest rate is the White arrest rate divided by the White population. This provides an understanding as to how Blacks and Whites are
arrested, relative to the representation in the population. These rates examine the first set of graphs. The difference from the two specific arrest rates recorded by subtracting the White specific arrest rate from the Black specific arrest rate. These differences are utilized to construct the second set of graphs. Lastly, the Black/White arrest ratio is Black arrest rates divided by White arrest rate – providing a ratio. This ratio is examined in the third set of graphs along with the Black political representation variable that consist of the percent of Black representatives in each county.

**Florida Counties Black-Specific & White-Specific Annual Arrest Rates**

The Black/White Arrest Differences Graphs (Figures 5.1 through 5.67) can be employed to examine whether there is visual evidence of racial disparities in arrest within a county over time. These sets of graphs address the first research question and can be employed to establish whether racial disparities in arrest exist within Florida counties over time. The graphs plot the Black-specific arrest rates and White-specific arrest rates to compare two arrest rates annually in each Florida county. Each rate is calculated relative to each racial grouping. For example, in a county where there is a count of 8,538 Black individuals arrested and there are 41,541 Black individuals in the population, then the Black-Specific arrest rate for that specific year will be approximately 0.21 multiplied by 100,000 which means that 0.21 is truly 21,000. This equation is also utilized to examine the White-specific arrest rate. If racial disparities in arrest exist, the graphs should display that White-specific arrest rates (the majority race/a larger population) retain a rate lower than 0.21. This will indicate the Blacks are arrested at a higher rate than Whites, relative to the representation in the population. The graphs visibly demonstrate whether
White-specific rates are lower than the Black-specific rates. An analysis on each figure will be conducted in this section.

Graph Legend: Black and White-Specific Arrests Rates

The red line represents the Black-specific rate; the blue line represents the White-specific rate. The graphs have 21 years (1998-2018) on the x-axis, while the rate of racial specific arrest appears on the y-axis. The y-axis represents the rates at which Blacks and Whites, in comparison, are arrested relative to their respective population. All graphs scale the y-axis to a 0.35 rate, except for one county (Walton County) where the Black-specific rate exceeds 0.40. Criminologists often standardize arrest rates per 100,000 population. Relative to 100,000 population, an arrest rate of 0.10 is the same as 10,000 arrests per 100,000 population.

Analyses: Figure 5.1- Figure 5.67, Specific Arrest Rates

Results presented below relate to the graphed data and are presented in alphabetical county order. These results are summarized in a subsequent table.

Figure 5.1, Alachua County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There is some fluctuation in these rates over time, (e.g., Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates declined in 2002), but racial differences are consistently evident and greater for Blacks. Both arrests slowly increased after 2003 and continued to fluctuate until a decrease from 2010 to 2018. The Black-specific rate reached a low of 0.09 in 2018 and a high of 0.23 in 2001, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2018 and a high of 0.06 in 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2010.

These graphs do not indicate the existence of racial biases in criminal justice processes or in racial differentials in offending. Explanations consistent with these results will be discussed in a later chapter.
Figure 5.2, Baker County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. In this county, race specific arrest rates are closer than in Alachua. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 2011 and a high of 0.13 in 2005, whereas the White-specific rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2002 and a high of 0.07 in 2007.

Figure 5.3, Bay County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.15 in 2000 and a high of 0.15 in 2015, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.07 in 1999 and a high of 0.10 in 2007.

Figure 5.4, Bradford County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The racial disparities in arrests are not as large as other counties. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2000 and a high of 0.11 from 2013 to 2014, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 1998 and a high of 0.09 in 2012.

Figure 5.5, Brevard County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.08 in 2016 and a high of 0.18 in 2005, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2016 and 2018 and a high of 0.06 in 2006.

Figure 5.6, Broward County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph shows that the Black-specific arrest rates have gradually decreased from 2000 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2016 and 2018 and a high of 0.06 from 1999
and 2000 to 2003, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2017 and a high of .04 in 2008.

Figure 5.7, Calhoun County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There were two years where Whites were arrested more than Blacks – 2000 and 2012. Though these are notable findings, racial disparities continued the following years for both observation points.

Figure 5.8, Charlotte County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reflects a fluctuated increased trend from 1998 to 2008 and began to show a decreasing trend towards 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2016 and 2018 and a high of 0.06 in 1999 and 2000 to 2003, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2002 and a high of 0.06 in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2014.

Figure 5.9, Citrus County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There is a sharp increase of Black-specific arrest rates from 2003 and 2004, and a sharp decrease from 2004 to 2005, which may indicate a measurement change or issue rather than an abrupt change in police behavior in this short time period. The Black-specific arrest rate began to fluctuate and decrease towards 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.08 in 2013 and 2016 and a high of 0.34 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 for numerous years and a high of 0.05 in 2004 and 2006.

Figure 5.10, Clay County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reflects a decreasing pattern from 1998 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate
reached a low of 0.05 in 2017 and 2018 and a high of 0.16 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2017 and a high of 0.06 in 2008.

Figure 5.11, Collier County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reflects a decreasing pattern from 1998 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2017 and 2018 and a high of 0.15 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2017 and a high of 0.06 in 2005 and 2006.

Figure 5.12, Columbia County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There is a steep drop in both the Black-specific arrest and White specific arrest from 1999 to 2000 and then both rates increase. The Black-specific arrest rates seem exaggerated relative to the White-specific arrest rates over time and are typically four times larger. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2000 and a high of 0.17 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.01 in 2000 and a high of 0.07 in 2004.

Figure 5.13, DeSoto County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The arrest rate for both Blacks and Whites fluctuated and increased until 2005. The Black-specific arrest rate dropped in 2007 while the White-specific arrest rate slightly increased. However, the Black specific arrest rate returned to a higher, similar, and exaggerated rate compared to the White-specific arrest rates from 2008 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 1999 and 2017 and a high of 0.16 in 2005, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 1999, 2002, and 2017 and a high of 0.08 from 2006 to 2008.
Figure 5.14, Dixie County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate, *but is not* consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rates displayed a fluctuated decrease from 1998 to 2008 where Whites reached a higher arrest rate than Blacks in five of the years for which data were collected -- 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2016.

Figure 5.15, Duval County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. Both arrest rates seemed to remain at a stable rate until 2006 and 2007, where the Black-specific arrest rate began to decline and close the racial disparity gap with the White-specific arrest rate. However, though the Black specific arrest rate decreased, the White-specific arrest rate also gradually decreased. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2017 and a high of 0.14 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2015 to 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 2002 to 2008.

Figure 5.16, Escambia County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There is a steep decrease in the Black-specific arrest rate from 1999 to 2000 compared to the White-specific arrest rate. Both arrest rates increased until 2006 where both rates began to decrease as the Black-specific arrest rates reflected an exaggerated rate compared to the White-specific arrest rates into 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.10 in 2000 and 2018 and a high of 0.16 in 2006, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2015 to 2018 and a high of 0.04 in 2015.

Figure 5.17, Flagler County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph
shows a fluctuating Black-specific arrest rate overtime, while the White-specific arrest rate gradually remains the same over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2016 and a high of 0.11 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2015 to 2017 and a high of 0.04 in 2005.

Figure 5.18, Franklin County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate began at a very high rate (approximately 0.34) while the White-specific arrest rate began at approximately 0.09 in 1998. The rates decreased and the Black-specific arrest rate sharply increased once more in 2001. This fluctuation continued as both rates almost became equal in both 2008 and 2010. The Black-specific arrest rate also went lower than the White-specific arrest rate from 2012 to 2014 and 2016 to 2018, or in six of the years observed.

Figure 5.19, Gadsden County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates are relatively close as the Black-specific arrest rate shows a decreasing pattern overtime compared to the White-specific arrest rate, which fluctuates over time. The Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates were equal to one another in 2008 as the White-specific arrest rate increased, and the two arrest rates were almost equal in 2009 when the rates decreased. The graph shows a pattern of both arrest rates decreasing toward 2018.

Figure 5.20, Gilchrist County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. As the White-specific arrest rate remains relatively low, the Black-specific arrest rate fluctuates
greatly from 1998 to 2010. In 2007, both arrest rates spiked before decreasing into 2008. In 2010, the Black-specific arrest rates plotted lower than the White-specific arrest rates before increasing in 2011. In 2013, the arrest rates were equal to one another as the Black-specific arrest rates increased above the White-specific arrest rate once more.

Figure 5.21, Glades County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate increased from 1998 to 2004 before decreasing, while the White-specific arrest rate remained about the same and began to decrease in 2006. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2016 and a high of 0.18 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2016 and a high of 0.08 in 2006.

Figure 5.22, Gulf County, revealed mixed evidence of racial disparities in arrest. In 1998, the Black-specific arrest rate was higher than the White-specific arrest rate. In 2003, the Black-specific arrest rate was lower than the White-specific arrest rate and the fluctuation continued where the Black-specific arrest rate was lower than the White-specific arrest rate in 2004-2006, 2008, 2010, 2017-2018. In 2013, the two arrest rates nearly became equal to each other. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest were not consistent in this count over time.

Figure 5.23, Hamilton County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. Both rates display fluctuation but an overall pattern of decrease in arrest rates characterized both the Black and White rates. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2014 and a high of 0.12 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2015 and a high of 0.07 in 2008.
Figure 5.24, Hardee County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. In 2001, the Black-specific arrest rate steeply decreased before increasing steeply in 2004. The White-specific arrest rate mirrored the decrease in a more subtle manner before increasing. From 2003 to 2018, the Black-specific arrest rates appeared exaggerated relative to the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 2001 and a high of 0.21 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2001 and a high of 0.10 in 2003.

Figure 5.25, Hendry County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate appears exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate, as the Black-specific arrest rate stayed high above the White-specific arrest rate. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest were consistent over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.11 in 1999 and a high of 0.20 in 2015, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 1998 and a high of 0.10 in 2007.

Figure 5.26, Hernando County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The White-specific arrest rate gradually increased from 1998 to 2003 before becoming moderately stable. The Black-specific arrest rate was higher than the White-specific arrest rate consistently and spiked in 2004 and sharply declined before displaying a decreasing pattern into 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2018 and a high of 0.18 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 1998 and 2018 and a high of 0.05 in 2006.

Figure 5.27, Highlands County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time.
The Black-specific arrest rate began at a high rate (approximately 0.17) in 1998 and peaked at 0.21 in 2001 before showing a decreasing pattern, while the White-specific arrest rate increased and peaked in 2001 and gradually decreased. In 2018, the two arrest rates were equal to one another. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2018 and a high of 0.21 in 2001, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2015 to 2017 and a high of 0.06 in 2001, 2004, 2005, and 2007.

Figure 5.28, Hillsborough County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reflects an exaggerated White-specific arrest rate as both rates peaked around 2005-2006 before showing a decreasing pattern. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.09 in 2018 and a high of 0.20 from 2005 to 2006, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2017 to 2018 and a high of 0.07 in 2006.

Figure 5.29, Holmes County, reveals mixed evidence of racial disparities in arrest between the Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates. The Black-specific arrest rate was lower than the White-specific arrest rate in 1998, 2000, and 2015 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate sharply peaked in 2004 before reflecting a fluctuating decreasing pattern into 2018. As time progressed from 2005 to 2011, the two arrest rates remained fairly close to one another. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest in this county did not remain consistent.

Figure 5.30, Indian River County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graphs show that the Black-specific arrest rate reflected an exaggerated White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.11 in 2002, 2012, and 2015 and a high of
0.21 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 over numerous years and a high of 0.05 in 2006.

Figure 5.31, Jackson County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The two arrest rates remained fairly close and gradually increased before slightly decreasing. However, in 2015 the two arrest rates became equal before evidence of racial disparities increased again. Therefore, the disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2000 and a high of 0.07 in 2011, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.01 in 2000 and a high of 0.04 in 2010.

Figure 5.32, Jefferson County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. In 1998, the Black-specific arrest rates were above the White-specific arrest rates and peaked in 2001. The decrease of the Black-specific arrest rate began in 2002 and became equal with the White-specific arrest rate in 2006. The two arrest rates remained close through 2018. As the two arrest rates met, the racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time.

Figure 5.33, Lafayette County, reveals little evidence of racial disparities in arrest between the Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates. The Black disparities in arrest were equal to or lower than White-specific arrest in 2000 - 2001, 2004, 2007-2011, and 2016. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest in this county were not consistent over time.

Figure 5.34, Lake County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph displays a decreasing pattern in the Black-specific arrest rate as the White specific arrest rate gradually increases before gradually decreasing. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of
0.06 in 2018 and a high of 0.18 in 1999, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.04 in 2010.

Figure 5.35, Lee County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph displays a similar decreasing pattern to Lake County in the Black-specific arrest rate as the White specific arrest rate gradually increased before gradually decreasing. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.07 in 2007 and a high of 0.18 in 1999 and 2002, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2014 to 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 2006 to 2008.

Figure 5.36, Leon County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. However, the White-specific arrest rate was 0.10 higher than the Black-specific arrest rate before sinking under the Black-specific arrest rate from 1999 to 2018. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county.

Figure 5.37, Levy County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There was a drastic spike in the Black-specific arrest rate in 2004, producing a large difference between the two rates before decreasing and becoming close to the White-specific arrest rate in 2013. From 2013 to 2018, both rates increased while the Black-specific arrest rate remained higher than the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2013 and a high of 0.30 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.01 from 2013 to 2014 and a high of 0.08 in 2004 and 2006.
Figure 5.38, Liberty County, reveals *mixed evidence* of racial disparities in arrest between the Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates. The Black-specific arrest rate was equal to or lower than White-specific arrest rate in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011 to 2013, and 2015 to 2018. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest in this county were not consistent over time.

Figure 5.39, Madison County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. Both arrest rates gradually increased before decreasing in 2014. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 1998 and 2018 and a high of 0.10 in 2004 and 2012, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.01 in 1998 and a high of 0.05 from 2006 and 2013.

Figure 5.40, Manatee County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. Both arrest rates increased with a large gap between the two rates before both decreased in 2008. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.10 in 2017 and a high of 0.20 from 2005 to 2006, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.06 from 2006 and 2009.

Figure 5.41, Marion County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph reflects similar findings of Manatee County. Both arrest rates increased with a large gap between the two rates before both decreasing towards 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.08 from 2016 to 2017 and a high of 0.19 from 2001 to 2002, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.06 over numerous years.

Figure 5.42, Martin County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph
reflects similar findings of Marion County. Both arrest rates increased with a large gap between the two rates before both decreasing in 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.15 from 2017 to 2018 and a high of 0.30 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2017 and a high of 0.06 over numerous years.

Figure 5.43, Miami-Dade County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph reflects similar findings of Martin County. Both arrest rates increased with a large gap between the two rates before both decreasing towards 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 from 2017 to 2018 and a high of 0.17 in 1999, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 1999 to 2001.

Figure 5.44, Monroe County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate, in 1998, was approximately 0.17 higher than the White-specific arrest rates before a sharp decrease to 1999 (approximately 0.13) and then increased. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.12 in 1999 and a high of 0.27 in 1998, 2003, and 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 2017 and a high of 0.10 across numerous years.

Figure 5.45, Nassau County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific rate fluctuated before steadily increasing from 2012 to 2018 while The White-specific arrest rate remained relatively stable except for a spike in 2003. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 2011 and a high of 0.15 in 2018, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2014 and a high of 0.07 in 2003.
Figure 5.46, Okaloosa County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate appears exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. Both arrest rates increased before peaking in 2008 and decreasing while the Black-specific arrest rates remained above the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.10 in 1998 and a high of 0.18 in 2004, 2007, and 2008, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 1998 and a high of 0.08 from 2006 to 2008.

Figure 5.47, Okeechobee County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate fluctuated while in a decreasing pattern, while the White-specific arrest rate remained relatively stable and under the Black-specific arrest rates. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.07 in 2012 and 2015 and a high of 0.17 in 1999, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2001, 2002, and 2017 and a high of 0.06 across numerous years.

Figure 5.48, Orange County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rates appear exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. Both rates declined from 1998 to 2004 and began to increase from 2004 to 2008 before decreasing again towards 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.13 in 1998, 1999, and 2008, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2017 to 2018 and a high of 0.05 in 2007 and 2008.

Figure 5.49, Osceola County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-
specific arrest rate, in 1998, started high above the White-specific arrest rates and decreased, becoming closer to the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.22 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.08 in 2006 and 2007.

Figure 5.50, Palm Beach County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rates appear exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. Both rates remained relatively stable until increasing from 2002 to 2003 before showing a decreasing pattern from 2003 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 from 2016 to 2017 and a high of 0.14 in 2003, 2004, 2007, and 2008, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 1998 and 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 2005 to 2009.

Figure 5.51, Pasco County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate slightly rose and decreased between 1998 and 2003 before sharply increasing in 2004 and drastically declining in 2005. The Black-specific arrest rate began to gradually decrease as the White-specific arrest rate relative held a stable rate before slightly declining in 2013. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.07 in 2015 and a high of 0.21 in 2004 whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 from 1998 to 2000 and a high of 0.06 in 2004.

Figure 5.52, Pinellas County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate remained above the White-specific arrest rate as both rates remained at a relatively stable rate before beginning to gradually decrease from 2010 to 2011. The Black-
specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.09 in 2018 and a high of 0.14 in multiple years whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 2007 to 2010.

Figure 5.53, Polk County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate fluctuated from 1998 to 2004 before declining in 2005 and began a gradual decrease parallel to the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.09 in 1998, 2013, and 2015 and a high of 0.13 in 2001, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in multiple years and a high of 0.05 in multiple years.

Figure 5.54, Putnam County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate spiked in 2003 while the White-specific arrest rate slightly increased. The Black-specific arrest rate then fluctuated before declining from 2005 to 2018 while the White-specific arrest rate held relatively stable and began to decrease in 2011. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 from 2015 to 2018 and a high of 0.23 in 2003, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2014 to 2018 and a high of 0.07 in 2003.

Figure 5.55, Santa Rosa, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate appears exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. Both rates peaked in 1999 and then decreased. From 2004 to 2016, the Black-specific arrest rate displayed a decreasing pattern while the White-specific arrest displayed a decreasing pattern from 2007 to 2016 before both rates began to increase. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.07 from 2013 to 2015 and a high of 0.19 in 1999, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in multiple years and a high of 0.07 in 1999, 2006, and 2007.
Figure 5.56, Sarasota County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The graph shows a high difference between the Black-specific arrest rate in 1998 and decreases before rising again from 2003 to 2006 before a constant decreasing pattern from 2007 to 2017. The White-specific arrest rate, however, remains relatively stable before gradually decreasing from 2006 to 2017. Both rates began to increase from 2017 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.10 in 2017 and a high of 0.33 in 1999, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 2005 to 2008.

Figure 5.57, Seminole County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate appears exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.16 from 2016 to 2018 and a high of 0.14 in 1999 and from 2005 to 2009, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in 2018 and a high of 0.05 from 2007 to 2008.

Figure 5.58, St. Johns County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate drastically decreased from 2001 to 2002 while the White-specific arrest rate slightly decreased. In 2007, the Black-specific arrest rate peaked in 2007 (0.16) while the White-specific arrest rate peaked (0.03) before both rates displayed a decreasing pattern toward 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2002 and a high of 0.17 in 2007 and from 2005 to 2009, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.01 in 2002 and a high of 0.04 in 2007.
Figure 5.59, St. Lucie County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reflects an exaggeration of the White-specific arrest rate. Both arrest rates peaked in 2003 before displaying a decreasing pattern toward 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.07 in 2017 and a high of 0.19 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 from 2015 to 2018 and a high of 0.07 in 1998.

Figure 5.60, Sumter County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. In 2004, both rates peaked, however, the White-specific arrest rate peaked at 0.06 while the Black-specific arrest rate peaked at 0.25 – a drastic difference between the two rates. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2002 and 2003 and a high of 0.25 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.02 in multiple years and a high of 0.07 in 2004.

Figure 5.61, Suwannee County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate reflects an exaggeration of the White-specific arrest rate. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 2016 and a high of 0.18 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in multiple years and a high of 0.05 in 1998.

Figure 5.62, Taylor County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate appears exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. The distance between the two arrest rates began to close in 2005, 2011, and from 2015 to 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.06 in 2005 and 2016 and a high of 0.13 in 2010 and 2012,
whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 from 2000 to 2004 and a high of 0.08 in 2012.

Figure 5.63, Union County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest rate remained extremely close to the White-specific arrest rate, however, the Black-specific arrest rate traveled below the White-specific arrest rate in 2016 and 2017. As a result, the racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county.

Figure 5.64, Volusia County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The Black-specific arrest appears exaggerated compared to the White-specific arrest rate. There is a very large difference between the two rates across time. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.13 in 2018 and a high of 0.23 in 1998, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.05 in 2018 and a high of 0.08 in 2004.

Figure 5.65, Wakulla County, reveals mixed evidence of racial disparities in arrest but the Black-specific arrest rate is not consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. The two arrest rates remained close as the Black-specific arrest rates were higher than the White-specific arrest rates until the Black-specific arrest rates went equal to or lower than the White-specific arrest rates from 2010 to 2018. Therefore, the racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county.

Figure 5.66, Walton County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. There are multiple spikes in the Black-specific arrest rate - the most notable in 2004 where the Black-specific arrest rate was 0.43 while the White-specific arrest rate was 0.09. The Black-specific
arrest rate reached a low of 0.08 in 2001 and a high of 0.42 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 2004, 2017, and 2018 and a high of .09 in 2004.

Figure 5.67, Washington County, reveals evidence of racial disparities in arrest, as the Black-specific arrest rate is consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rate over time. Both arrest rates spiked in 2004 with the Black-specific arrest rate being higher during the peak (0.09 difference) and both rates became closer toward 2018. The Black-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.04 in 1998, 2015, and 2016 and a high of 0.17 in 2004, whereas the White-specific arrest rate reached a low of 0.03 in 1998 and a high of 0.08 in 2007.

Figures 5.1 through 5.67 reveal that 54 out of 67 Florida counties display consistent racial disparities in arrest from 1998-2018. This means that as time progressed, the Black-specific arrest rates were consistently higher than the White-specific arrest rates across approximately 81% of the Florida counties. The thirteen counties that do not display consistent racial disparities in arrest vary in racial disparities in arrest over time. Gadsden County, Jefferson County, and Leon County each experienced one year where the Black-specific arrest rates was lower or equal to the White-specific arrest rates; Calhoun County and Union County experienced two years where the Black-specific arrest rate were lower or equal to the White-specific arrest rate; and Dixie, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Lafayette, Liberty, and Wakulla counties each experience three or more years where the Black-specific arrest rates were lower or equal to the White-specific arrest rate. In total, of the 1,407 years in which Black and White arrest rates were examined within each of Florida’s 67 counties, there were 89 individual county-years or 6.3% of the year-cases where the Black arrest rate exceeded the White arrest rate. That information in itself is not sufficient evidence of racial bias in arrest but shows the existence of a persistent pattern of differentials in race-linked arrest rates across Florida counties over time.
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Figure 5.1. Alachua County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.2. Baker County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.3. Bay County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.4 Bradford County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.5 Brevard County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.6 Broward County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.7 Calhoun County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.8 Charlotte County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.9 Citrus County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.10 Clay County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.11 Collier County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.12 Columbia County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.13 DeSoto County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.14 Dixie County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

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Figure 5.22 Gulf County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.23 Hamilton County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.24 Hardee County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.25 Hendry County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.26 Hernando County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.27 Highlands County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.28 Hillsborough County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.29 Holmes County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.30 Indian River County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.31 Jackson County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.32 Jefferson County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.33 Lafayette County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.34 Lake County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.35 Lee County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.36 Leon County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.37 Levy County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.38 Liberty County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.39 Madison County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.40 Manatee County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.41 Marion County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.42 Martin County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.43 Miami-Dade County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.44 Monroe County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.45 Nassau County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.46 Okaloosa County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.47 Okeechobee County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.48 Orange County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.49 Osceola County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.50 Palm Beach County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.51 Pasco County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.52 Pinellas County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.53 Polk County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.54 Putnam County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Figure 5.55 Santa Rosa County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.56 Sarasota County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.57 Seminole County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.58 St. Johns County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.59 St. Lucie County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time

Figure 5.60 Sumter County Race-Specific Arrest Rates Across Time
Florida Counties Black/White Arrest Differences Across Time

Another way to display the Black and White arrest rate differences shown above is to graph the differences in the trends. To do so, the difference in each year between the Black and White arrest rate by year in each county is displayed in graph form. These graphs will display the differences in arrest over time for each county to further understand if the racial disparities in arrest change over time.

The Florida Counties Black/White Arrest Differences Across Time graphs (Figures 5.68 through 5.134) are the differences of the Black-specific and White-specific arrest rates, recorded over time. The White-specific arrest rates are subtracted from the Black-specific arrest rates to note the change over time. A higher difference means that there was a large gap, more racial disparities in arrest, between the two races in that specific county. A low difference means that there was a low presence of racial disparities in arrest recorded in the official arrest data for that specific county. A negative reading on the graph indicates that Whites were arrested at a higher rate than Blacks within that specific county in a given year. Counties where this negative pattern is more prevalent, or where the ratio is close to zero or moves toward zero over the long-run of
the series, are highlighted in gray - indicating irrelevance, as the racial disparities in arrest are not consistent over time.

**Graph Legend: Black/White Arrest Differences Across Time**

The blue line represents the difference across time. The graphs are constructed to have the years (1998-2018) on the x-axis, while the rate of racial specific arrest on the y-axis to examine the possible change over time. The y-axis represents the rates in which Blacks/Whites Arrest Differences. All graphs scale the y-axis to a 0.30 rate, except for one county (Walton County) where the Black-specific rate exceeds 0.30, in which the graph scales at 0.35. When discussing changes among the BWD, there are three changes noted: slight, moderate, and high level of fluctuations. Graphs noted to have slight fluctuations possess fluctuations of differences less than 0.02 between two increasing data points. Graphs with moderate fluctuations possess fluctuations of differences increasing between 0.03 to 0.05, between at least two data points. Graphs with high levels of fluctuations possess fluctuations increasing 0.05 or higher in at least two data points. When the observed data points are above zero, there is evidence of racial disparities in arrest. When the observed data points are equal to or less than zero, there is little to no evidence of racial disparities in arrest. In the following graphs, differences are calculated from rates. In the previous section, those rates were presented as percentages, rather than as rates per 100,000. For example, in the first county case, Alachua, the 0.17 difference between the Black and White arrest rate is 17 per 100, or 170 per 100,000.
Figure 5.68 - Figure 5.134 Analyses

Figure 5.68, Alachua County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time (1998-2018). The highest racial difference was 0.17 in 1998 and 2001. There was a decrease in 2003 to 0.09 but it increased in 2004 while continuing the decreasing pattern, ending at 0.07 BWD in 2018. The data reveals that the racial disparities change over time and were lower in 2018 than in 1998.

Figure 5.69, Baker County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. Baker county had a relatively low Black/White arrest difference (BWD), as in 1998 the difference was 0.04 BWD, the county reached a high of 0.06 in 2003 and 2005, and a low of 0.02 in 2017 and 2018. The data reveals that the racial disparities change over time.

Figure 5.70, Bay County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall increasing pattern in racial difference in arrest across time. The data shows that the BWD remained around 0.10 but increased slightly over time. The county reached a low of 0.07 in 2000 and 2001 and a high of 0.17 in 2015. In 1998, the county reached a difference of 0.10 and a very rough increase to 0.11 in multiple years. The data reveals that the racial disparities change over time.

Figure 5.71, Bradford County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall increasing pattern across time. Similar to Bay County, however, the Black/White arrest differences remained low as the differences began to roughly increase over time, with a 0.03 BWD in 1998 and 0.04 BWD in 2018. Notably, the BWD in this county reveals an approximate 0.00 difference in 2007. This means there was very little to no evidence of racial disparities in arrest in the official arrest data in that year. The data reveals that the racial disparities in arrest change over time.
Figure 5.72, Brevard County, reveals slight fluctuations and a relatively stable BWD around 0.11 from 1998 to 2005 with a gradual decreasing pattern from 2006 to 2018. The county reached a high of 0.13 in 2001, and a low of 0.05 in 2018. The data reveals that the racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.73, Broward County, reveals slight fluctuations and an overall decreasing pattern across time. Data shows that the BWD were relatively low across time. The graph shows the BWD was 0.07 in 1998 and continued to decrease to 0.02 in 2016 and 2018. The data reveals that the racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.74, Calhoun County, reveals moderate levels of fluctuation overtime, without evidence of an overall increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively low around 0.03 from 1998 to 2018 with two major spikes: 0.09 BWD in 2001 and 0.08 BWD in 2004. Overall, the data does not reveal that racial disparities changed over time.

Figure 5.75, Charlotte County, reveals slight fluctuations overtime, without evidence of an overall increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively above 0.05 and below 0.10 but does not reveal that racial disparities changed over time.

Figure 5.76, Citrus County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern from 2004 to 2018. The county reached a peak in 2004 with 0.29 BWD compared to the other data points which relatively remain below 0.10. The data shows that from 1998 (0.08 BWD) throughout the fluctuation, there was a rough linear decline to a low of 0.04 BWD in 2013 before slightly increasing to 0.07 in 2018. As the graph displays an overall decrease in the data, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.77, Clay County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The data reveals the county reached a BWD of 0.11 in 1998 and gradually
decreased to 0.03 in 2017 and 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.78, Collier County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The data reveals the county reached a BWD of 0.10 in 1999 and gradually decreased to 0.03 in 2010 and held stable through 2018. The data reveals *mixed evidence* of racial disparities in arrest changing over time.

Figure 5.79, Columbia County, reveals slightly high levels of fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. In 1998, the BWD was 0.07 and declined to 0.03 in 2000 before increasing to the peak (0.10) in 2004. From 2004 there were numerous fluctuations while declining to a low BWD (0.02) in 2017 before slightly increasing to a BWD of 0.03 in 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.80, DeSoto County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The data shows fluctuations in 2005 (0.09 BWD) and 2008 (0.08 BWD). Overall, the county still displayed a decreasing pattern and reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.81, Dixie County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The data reveals the county reached a BWD of 0.05 in 1999 and gradually decreased to -0.01 in 2011. Indicating that racial disparities were *not present* in the official data for that specific year. The county remained around 0.00 and 0.01 from 2008 to 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time, and that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county.

Figure 5.82, Duval County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The county maintained a relatively stable BWD around 0.08 from 1998 to 2008.
before decreasing and maintaining a relatively stable BWD around 0.03 in 2012. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.83, Escambia County, reveals slight fluctuations with *mixed results* in the pattern. The data shows that the BWD slightly increased from 1998 to 2008 and slightly decreased from 2008 to 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.84, Flagler County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The county reached a decrease from a 0.08 BWD in 1998 to a 0.04 in 2000 before increasing to 0.07 in 2004 and 2006 before gradually decreasing to a 0.03 BWD in 2016 and 2017 before increasing to 0.04 in 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.85, Franklin County, reveals high levels of fluctuations, without evidence of overall decreasing or increasing over time. The county reached a high BWD of 0.26 in 1998 before drastically decreasing to 0.01 in 1999. The high fluctuations continued to occur throughout the period (e.g., 0.15 BWD in 2001; 0.07 BWD in 2005) while the fluctuated patterns became lower over time. The BWD decreased to -0.04 in 2018, further indicating that racial disparities in arrest *were not consistent* over time in this county. The information does not, however, provide enough evidence and clarity that the BWD decreased over time.

Figure 5.86, Gadsden County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The county reached a 0.02 BWD in 1998 that increased to 0.04 in 1999 and 2000 and decreased before reaching 0.00 BWD from 2006 to 2009 before slowly increasing to 0.02 BWD in 2010 and remaining relatively stable through 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.
Figure 5.87, Gilchrist County, displays similar results of Franklin County. The county reveals high levels of fluctuations, without evidence of overall decreasing or increasing over time. The county drastically increased from a 0.01 BWD in 1999 to 0.06 in 2001. The high fluctuations continued to occur throughout the period (e.g., 0.06 BWD in 2005; 0.09 BWD in 2007) while the fluctuated patterns became lower over time and reached a low -0.01 in 2010 – indicating that racial disparities in arrests were not consistent over time in this county. The information does not provide enough evidence and clarity that the BWD decreased over time.

Figure 5.88, Glades County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows an increase in BWD from 1998 (0.06 BWD) to 2004 (0.12 BWD) before decreasing to 0.02 in 2013. The BWD slightly fluctuated towards 2018 but remained relatively low. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.89, Gulf County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The county reached a high of a 0.06 BWD in 1998 before decreasing to 0.02 BWD in 2001 and held relatively stable around 0.01 from 2002 to 2018. The BWD reached -0.01 in 2004, 2005, and 2017. Indicating that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.90, Hamilton County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows that the BWD decreased from 0.06 in 1998 to 0.01 in 2007 before increasing in 2008 and decreasing to a low of 0.01 BWD in 2011. An increase in the BWD is seen from 2011 to 2018 (0.06 BWD). The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.91. Hardee County, reveals high levels of fluctuation without evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The county reached a notable decrease in 2001 to a 0.02 BWD but increased to a 0.12 BWD in 2004. The BWD fluctuated overtime but remained relative to a
0.07 BWD from 1998 to 2018 (0.06 BWD). The information does not provide enough evidence that racial disparities change over time.

Figure 5.92, Hendry County, reveals high levels of fluctuations with an overall increasing pattern across time. The county’s BWD began at 0.07 and gradually increased to 0.13 BWD in 2016 before a slight decrease in 2017. Within the period, the BWD declined to 0.05 in 2005 and 2006 before continuing the increase. Overall, the data reveals evidence that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.93, Hernando County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The county reached a 0.06 BWD in 1998 and fluctuated into the peak (0.13 BWD) in 2004. After 2004, a decreasing pattern emerged, and the decline continued through 2018 with a 0.03 BWD. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.94, Highlands County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The data reveals the county reached a BWD of 0.13 in 1999, peaked at a 0.15 BWD in 2001 and gradually decreased to 0.01 in 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.95, Hillsborough County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows an increase in BWD from 1998 (0.09 BWD) to 2005 and 2006 (0.14 BWD) before decreasing to 0.06 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.96, Holmes County, reveals slight fluctuations and one high peak with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The BWD reached a low of -0.02 in 2000 and -0.01 in 1998 and 2016, indicating that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time. The BWD remained relatively stable around 0.02 throughout the period with a high peak in 2004 (0.09
BWD) and a decrease in 2018 with a 0.00 BWD. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.97, Indian River County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD fluctuated over time, the BWD decreased from 0.16 in 1998 to 0.10 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.98, Jackson County, reveals slight fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively low and stable from 1998 (0.02 BWD) to 2018 (0.02 BWD). The information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figure 5.99, Jefferson County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD fluctuated over time, the BWD decreased from 0.07 in 1998 to 0.03 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.100, Lafayette County, reveals slight fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively low and stable from 1998 (0.03 BWD) to 2018 (0.02 BWD). However, the BWD reached a low of -0.02 in 2007 and -0.01 in 2004 and from 2008 to 2011, indicating that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time. However, the information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern of racial disparities in arrest over time.

Figure 5.101, Lake County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the
BWD decreased from 0.13 in 1998 to 0.04 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.102, Lee County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.12 in 1998 to 0.05 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.103, Leon County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The county’s BWD began with a low of -0.06 before the BWD remained relatively stable around 0.05 from 1998 to 2013 before decreasing to 0.04 towards 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time and that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time.

Figure 5.104, Levy County, reveals high levels of fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern from 2004 to 2018. The county reached a peak in 2004 with 0.22 BWD. The data shows that from 2004 there was a rough linear decline to a low of 0.02 BWD in 2013 before increasing to 0.07 in 2018. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.105, Liberty County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The county reached a high of a 0.05 BWD in 2001 before decreasing to 0.01 BWD in 2001 and held relatively stable around 0.01 from 2002 to 2018. However, the county reached a low of -0.02 in 2017 and -0.01 in 2006, 2007, 2016, and 2018, indicating that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time in this county. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.
Figure 5.106, Madison County, reveals slight fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows an increase in BWD from 1998 (0.03 BWD) to 2016 (0.05 BWD) before decreasing to 0.01 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.107, Manatee County, reveals slight fluctuations and a relatively stable BWD around 0.14 from 1998 to 2006 with a gradual decreasing pattern from 2006 to 2018 (0.08 BWD). The data reveals that the racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.108, Marion County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern from 2001 to 2018. The BWD increased from 0.10 in 1998 to 0.13 in 2001 through 2005 before decreasing towards 2018 (0.06 BWD). The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.109, Martin County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.25 in 1998 to 0.11 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.110, Miami-Dade County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.11 in 1998 to 0.04 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.111, Monroe County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows a drastic decrease from 0.17 in 1998 to 0.06 in 1999 and increasing to a 0.17 BWD in 2003 and 2004. The BWD then decreased from 2004 to a 0.09 BWD in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.
Figure 5.112, Nassau County, reveals slight fluctuations with *mixed results*. The BWD roughly remained around 0.05 before declining to a 0.04 BWD in 2011 and gradually increasing to 0.10 in 2018. The data does not provide enough information to reveal a continuing increasing or decreasing pattern of racial disparities in arrest over time.

Figure 5.113, Okaloosa County, reveals moderate fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively below 0.10 and above 0.06 throughout the period, without a notable change. The information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figure 5.114, Okeechobee County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD fluctuated over time, the BWD decreased from 0.09 in 1998 to 0.05 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.115, Orange County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD fluctuated over time, the BWD decreased from 0.08 in 1998 to 0.04 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.116, Osceola County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.16 in 1998 to 0.02 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.117, Palm Beach County, reveals moderate fluctuations with *mixed results*. The county held a relative BWD around 0.06 from 1998 to 2002 before reaching the county peak (0.10 BWD) in 2003. After 2003, a decreasing pattern emerged, and the decline continued
through 2018 with a 0.04 BWD. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.118, Pasco County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The county attained a high BWD from 1998 to 2003 before reaching the county peak (0.15 BWD) in 2004. After 2004, a decreasing pattern emerged, and the decline continued through 2018 with a 0.03 BWD. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.119, Pinellas County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD remained relatively stable around 0.09 from 1998 to 2012 before decreasing to 0.06 towards 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.120, Polk County, reveals slight fluctuations with little variation over time. The county reached a high of a 0.08 BWD in 2001 before maintaining a relatively stable BWD around 0.06 from 2005 to 2018. The information does not provide enough evidence to identify an increasing or decreasing pattern of racial disparities in arrest over time.

Figure 5.121, Putnam County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows various fluctuations from 1998 (0.13 BWD) to 2005 (0.15 BWD) before gradually decreasing to a 0.03 BWD in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.122, Santa Rosa County, reveals moderate fluctuations with mixed results. The data shows various fluctuations from 1998 (0.06 BWD) to 2002 (0.10 BWD) before gradually decreasing to a 0.04 BWD in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.
Figure 5.123, Sarasota County, reveals high fluctuation levels with an overall decreasing pattern. The county had a BWD high of 0.29 in 1999 before decreasing to 0.19 in 2002. The BWD increased again to 0.27 in 2006 and 2007 before drastically decreasing in 2009, and another decrease towards 2018 (0.08 BWD). The data reveals that the racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.124, Seminole County, reveals moderate fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively below 0.10 and above 0.05 throughout the period, without a notable change. The information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figure 5.125, St. Johns County, reveals high levels of fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD sharply decreased in 2002 (0.03) from a 0.08 in 2001 and sharply increased from 0.07 in 2006 to 0.14 in 2007. The fluctuations in the graph do not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figure 5.126, St. Lucie County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.11 in 1998 to 0.05 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.127, Sumter County, reveals moderate fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained around 0.05 between fluctuations. The county reached a sharp increase in 2004 (0.18) from 0.03 in 2003 before declining to and maintaining a stable BWD of around 0.05. The fluctuations in the graph do not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.
Figure 5.128, Suwannee County, reveals moderate fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.13 in 1998 to 0.06 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.129, Taylor County, reveals moderate fluctuations without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD remained relatively below 0.06 and above 0.00 throughout the period, without a notable change. The information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figure 5.130, Union County, reveals slight fluctuations and one high peak with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The BWD remained relatively stable around 0.01 throughout the period with a high peak in 2004 (0.06 BWD) and a decrease in 2018 with a 0.00 BWD. The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.131, Volusia County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.16 in 1998 to 0.08 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.132, Wakulla County, reveals slight fluctuations with an overall decreasing pattern across time. The BWD reached -0.01 in 2012, indicating that racial disparities in arrest were not consistent over time. The graph shows that while the BWD gradually decreased over time, as the BWD decreased from 0.04 in 1998 to 0.00 in 2018. Overall, the data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time.

Figure 5.133, Walton County, reveals high fluctuations levels without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The BWD spiked several times: 2000 (0.18 BWD), 2004...
(0.34 BWD), and 2007 (0.16 BWD). With the various fluctuations in the BWD, the information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figure 5.134, Washington County, reveals moderate fluctuations with *mixed results* without clear evidence of an increasing or decreasing pattern. The county reached a 0.06 BWD in 1998 and fluctuated into the peak (0.09 BWD) in 2004. After 2004, the BWD decreased to 0.00 in 2010 before fluctuating again in 2013 (0.02) and in 2018 (0.03). The data reveals that racial disparities in arrest change over time. The information does not provide enough evidence to reveal an increasing or decreasing pattern.

Figures 5.68 through 5.134 reveal that 36 out 67 counties experienced a decrease in the Black/White arrest difference over time. Fifteen counties produced mixed results – decreasing before increasing, increasing before decreasing, remaining constant before increasing, etc. The graphs show that 3 out of 67 counties (Bay County, Bradford County, and Hendry County) have an increasing pattern over time. Furthermore, 13 out 67 counties displayed inconclusive results, which is an increase or decrease could not be interpreted from the graphs.

As a reminder, these graphs address the second research question which asks, “*Does the level of racial disparities in arrest data change over time?*” The graphs display mixed findings. In the majority of the graphs (approximately 54%), however, racial disparities in arrest were found to change over time. As noted in the majority of cases, racial disparities in arrest declined using this measure. That decline is a good indication of decreasing racial disparities in arrest across Florida counties, but it does not mean, however, that racial disparities in arrest disappeared. Furthermore, these graphs indicated that four counties – Gulf, Holmes, Lafayette,
Table 5.2 Counties Black/White Arrest Differences Across Time Summary

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Florida Counties Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.68 Alachua County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.69 Baker County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.70 Bay County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.71 Bradford County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.72 Brevard County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.73 Broward County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.74 Calhoun County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.75 Charlotte County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.76 Citrus County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.77 Clay County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.78 Collier County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.79 Columbia County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.80 DeSoto County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.81 Dixie County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.82 Duval County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.83 Escambia County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.84 Flagler County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.85 Franklin County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.86 Gadsden County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.87 Gilchrist County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.88 Glades County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.89 Gulf County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.90 Hamilton County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.91 Hardee County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.92 Hendry County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.93 Hernando County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.94 Highlands County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.95 Hillsborough County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.96 Holmes County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.97 Indian River County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.98 Jackson County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.99 Jefferson County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.100 Lafayette County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.101 Lake County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.102 Lee County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.103 Leon County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

147
Figure 5.104 Levy County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.105 Liberty County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.106 Madison County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.107 Manatee County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.108 Marion County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.109 Martin County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.110 Miami-Dade County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.111 Monroe County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.112 Nassau County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.113 Okaloosa County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.114 Okeechobee County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.115 Orange County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.122 Santa Rosa County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.123 Sarasota County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.124 Seminole County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.125 St. Johns County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.126 St. Lucie County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

Figure 5.127 Sumter County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time
Figure 5.134 Washington County Black/White Arrest Difference Across Time

and Liberty -- displayed long term evidence of a larger portion of arrests for Whites compared to Blacks.

The evidence above is also summarized in Table 5.2. Given the above evidence, it is not possible at this time from these data to suggest why trends decrease, increase, or remain stable, or why in a few counties, the White arrest rate is persistently higher than the Black arrest. These data, however, indicate that it may be useful to explore these issues further in future research. This study provides effort made to predict these outcomes in the section focused on the regression analysis of race-linked arrest rates across Florida counties.

**Florida Counties Percentage of Black Political Representation & The Black/White Arrest Ratio**

Earlier, it was hypothesized that an extension of Blalock’s theory on racial threat can be employed to suggest that the racial representation of Black politicians may present a threat to the White majority, which might lead to increased social control measures such as an increased use of arrests. This hypothesis suggests a relationship between a county’s Percent Black Political Representation and Black arrest rates. The Counties’ Percentage of Black Political
Representation (BPR) and BWR (Figures 5.135 through 5.201) are utilized to understand the potential relationship. These graphs are utilized to ascertain whether there is a possible decrease in racial disparities in arrest when BPR is present or increases. If the present study’s hypotheses are correct, then the racial disparities in arrest should display a negative relationship with BPR. As BPR increases, the BWR should be expected to decrease toward or become below 1. If the BWR increases in the presence of BPR, BPR may not have an immediate effect, if at all, or social controls may be introduced or enforced as a response to BPR. However, results are determined through the graphs, as the graphs simply seek a relationship between BPR and BWR. These graphs seek to answer the third and fifth hypotheses and address the third research question.

**Graph Legend: Black Political Representation & The Black/White Arrest Ratio**

The red line represents the Black/White arrest ratio, and the blue line represents Black political representation. For these graphs, it is hypothesized that Blacks are arrested more than Whites relative to the representation in the population, when the red line is higher than 1 and Whites are arrested more than Blacks when the line is equal to or lower than 1. To depict these relationships, two y-axes are employed due to the difference in the scale of measurement of the variables. The first y-axis (left) represents the ratio to which Blacks are arrested when compared to Whites and is scaled 0 to 8. The second y-axis (right) represents the percentage of Black political representation for the blue line and scaled from 0 to 1. The counties that do not have BPR through the 21-year period are darkened in gray and briefly discussed, as those counties are not applicable for the present study. This is also indicated in the next section. In total, 46 of the 67 counties do not have a Black political representative during this time period.
Figure 5.135 - Figure 5.201 Analyses

Figure 5.135, Alachua County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018 with approximately 33% from 1998 to 2000. BPR decreased to 25% from 2001 to 2010 and the BWR continued to decrease until 2005 and began to increase. The BWR continued to increase even after the BPR increased to 33% from 2011 to 2018. Therefore, the results provide mixed findings on the relationship between the BPR and the BWR and a possible relationship cannot be determined.

Figures 5.136 (Baker County), 5.137 (Bay County), 5.138 (Bradford County), and 5.139 (Brevard County) display that BPR is not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.140, Broward County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018. The BWR decreased from 2.99 to 2.01 as BPR increased from 17% to 36% from 1998 to 2018. The results support the present hypotheses and third research question, as the graph shows a negative relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figures 5.141 (Calhoun County), 5.142 (Charlotte County), and 5.143 (Citrus County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.144, Clay County, reveals that BPR was present from 2002 to 2009 with 20%. During the time period, the BWR decreased from 3.04 in 2002 to 2.35 in 2006. From 2006 to 2009, BPR slightly increased to 2.51, but still lower than 2002. From 1998 to 2018, Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites with a low BWR of 1.95 and a high of 3.54. The graph
shows that there is a gradual decrease in the BWR over time. The results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.145, Collier County, reveals that BPR was present from 2016 to 2018; with 50% from 2016 to 2017 before decreasing to 33% in 2018. During that time, the BWR increased from 2.23 in 2016 to 2.35 in 2017, before decreasing to 2.15 in 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time, but because BPR was present in a short time frame, the results do not provide clear findings that can determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figures 5.146 (Columbia County), 5.147 (DeSoto County), and 5.148 (Dixie County), display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.149, Duval County, reveals that BPR was present throughout the period and the Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites with a low BWR of 2.05 and a high of 2.85. From 1998 to 2008, the BWR held relatively stable around 2.60 while BPR increased from 14% to 38%. From 2008 to 2012 the BWR decreased to 2.05, as BPR decreased to 25% in 2010. The BWR began to increase from 2012 to 2018 as BPR in 2012 and held stable at 33%. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time, but the results provide mixed findings on the relationship between BPR and the BWR. Thus, a possible relationship cannot be determined.

Figure 5.150, Escambia County, displays that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graph is not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graph reveals that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.
Figure 5.151, Flagler County, reveals that BPR was present from 2000 and 2001. The BPR increased from 0 to 50% in 2000 and decreased to 33% in 2001. During that time, the BWR increased from 2.43 to 2.68 from 2000 to 2001. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time at a relatively stable rate, but because BPR was present in a short time frame the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.152, Franklin County, displays that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graph is not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graph reveals that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.153, Gadsden County, reveals that BPR was present throughout the period and that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites with a low BWR of 0.99 and a high of 4.78. The BWR peaked in 2000, when BPR held stable at 50% from 1998 to 2001. From 2001 to 2011, the BWR fluctuated in a decreasing pattern while BPR held stable at 33% from 2002 to 2011. In 2012, the BWR increased from 1.49 to 1.78 and began to fluctuate while increasing to 2.00 in 2018, while BPR increased to 100% in 2012 and remained stable toward 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time except from 2007 to 2009. The results provide mixed findings on the relationship between BPR and the BWR thus, a possible relationship cannot be determined.

Figure 5.154 (Gilchrist County), 5.155 (Glades County), 5.156 (Gulf County), 5.157 (Hamilton County), and 5.158 (Hardee County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.
Figure 5.159, Hendry County, reveals that BPR was present from 2016 to 2018 with 100% BPR. During that time, the BWR fluctuated but continued to increase, as the BWR shows an increasing pattern from the low BWR of 1.59 in 2006 to the county’s high of 3.14 in 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, because BPR was present in a short time frame, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figures 5.160 (Hernando County) and 5.161 (Highlands County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.162, Hillsborough County, reveals that the BPR gradually increased from 0.09% in 1998 to 33% in 2018. Over time, the graph shows the opposite trend as the BWR slightly fluctuates but displays a gradual increase over time from 2.98 to 3.04. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, the results do not support the fifth hypothesis as BPR and BWR display a positive relationship, while still supporting the third hypothesis.

Figures 5.163, (Holmes County), 5.164 (Indian River County), 5.165 (Jackson County), 5.166 (Jefferson County), and 5.167 (Lafayette County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites without BPR. Notably, Indian River County shows very high BWR with all data points over 3.00, meaning Blacks were 3 to 4 times more likely to be arrested than Whites in this county.
Figure 5.168, Lake County, reveals that BPR was present from 2000 to 2001 with 17% in both years. During that time, the BWR decreased from 4.49 to 4.34. However, the overall BWR shows a gradual decrease from 1999 to 2018, thus the decrease in BWR may not be attributed to the presence of BPR. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, because BPR was present in a short time frame, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.169, Lee County, displays that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graph is not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graph reveals that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.170, Leon County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018. The BWR sharply increased from 0.67 - where Whites were more likely to be arrested than Blacks - in 1998 to 1.94 in 1999. During that time, the county had 25% BPR until it increased to 33% in 2002. As BPR held relatively stable overtime, the BWR continued to fluctuate in an increasing pattern. The results do not support the fifth hypothesis, as the data roughly shows a positive relationship between BPR and the BWR while supporting the third hypothesis.

Figures 5.171 (Levy County), 5.172 (Liberty County), and 5.173 (Madison County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.174, Manatee County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2016. From 1998 to 2000, the BWR decreased from 4.28 to 3.89 as BPR held stable at 33%. In 2002 when BPR decreased to 25% and held relatively stable through 2011, the BWR decreased from 4.00 to 3.10. However, when BPR increased to 33% in 2012 and held stable through 2018, the BWR
increased from 2.98 to 3.46. This graph presents *mixed findings*. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time; however, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.175, Marion County, reveals that BPR was present from 2000 to 2018. The BPR increased from 13% in 2000 to 25% in 2002. From 2002 to 2018, the BWR moderately fluctuated while displaying a slight decreasing pattern. Throughout the time, BPR was still present and even decreased to 20% in 2004 before increasing to 25% in 2012. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. The graph shows support for the current hypotheses and research questions, as the graph shows a negative relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.176, Martin County, displays that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graph is not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graph reveals that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.177, Miami-Dade County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018, as BPR held relatively stable at approximately 28%. Over time, there were slight fluctuations in the BWR but essentially remained relatively stable with the 2.80 and 3.10 range – a 0.30 difference. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, the results do not show a relationship between BPR and the BWR, nor does it support the current hypotheses.

Figures 5.178 (Monroe County), 5.179 (Nassau County), 5.180 (Okaloosa County) and 5.181 (Okeechobee County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.
Figure 5.182, Orange County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018, as BPR held relatively stable at approximately 8-11% from 1998 to 2010 and gradually increasing to 33% in 2014, and then remained stable through 2018. Over time, there were slight fluctuations in the BWR, which essentially remained relatively stable with the 2.29 and 2.79 range – a 0.50 difference. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, the results do not show a relationship between BPR and the BWR, nor does it support the current hypotheses.

Figure 5.183, Osceola County, reveals that BPR was present from 2008 to 2009 with 33%. During that time, the BWR decreased from 1.73 to 1.63. However, the overall BWR shows a gradual decrease from 1999 to 2018, thus the decrease in BWR may not be attributed to the presence of BPR. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, because BPR was present in a short time frame, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.184, Palm Beach County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018. The BWR decreased from 3.88 to 2.55 from 1998 to 2006. During that time, the BPR held stable at 9% before constant fluctuation from 2008 to 2018. As BPR fluctuated, the BWR began to slightly fluctuate but remained relatively stable before increasing from 2016 to 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, the mixed results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.185, Pasco County, displays that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graph is not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graph reveals that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.
Figure 5.186, Pinellas County, reveals that BPR was present from 1998 to 2018, as BPR held relatively stable at approximately 11-13% from 1998 to 2009 and gradually increasing to 25% in 2010. The BPR gradually increased to 29% in 2013 before decreasing to 14% in 2014 and remained stable through 2018. Over time, there were slight fluctuations in the BWR but essentially remained relatively stable with the 2.75 and 3.35 range – a 0.60 difference. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, the results do not show a relationship between BPR and the BWR, nor does it support the current hypotheses.

Figure 5.187 (Polk County), 5.188 (Putnam County), and 5.189 (Santa Rosa County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.190, Sarasota County, reveals that BPR was present from 2002 to 2018 with 20%. During that time, the BWR increased from 6.21 to 6.79 from 2002 and 2003. The BWR remained relatively stable before gradually decreasing to 4.64 in 2010 where the BWR, again, remained relatively stable until 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, because BPR remained stable over time and the BWR became constant at two separate times, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between the BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.191 (Seminole County) and 5.192 (St. Johns) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.
Figure 5.193, St. Lucie County, reveals that BPR was present from 2012 to 2018 with 25%. During that time, the BWR increased from 2.49 in 2012 to 2.62 in 2013 before decreasing to 2.41 in 2014. The BWR then gradually increased from 2014 to 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, because BPR remained stable over time and the BWR fluctuated before increasing, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figure 5.194 (Sumter County), 5.195 (Suwannee County), 5.196 (Taylor County), and 5.197 (Union County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

Figure 5.198, Volusia County, reveals that BPR was present from 2000 to 2017 with 17% from 2000 to 2011 and 25% from 2012 to 2018. The BWR decreased from 3.26 in 2000 to 2.43 in 2003 and remained relatively stable through 2018. Overall, the graph shows that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites over time. However, because BPR remained stable over time and the BWR fluctuated before increasing, the results do not provide clear findings to determine a possible relationship between BPR and the BWR.

Figures 5.199 (Wakulla County), 5.200 (Walton County), and 5.201 (Washington County) display that BPR was not present in the 21-year period and thus the graphs are not applicable to address the current research question or hypotheses. However, the graphs reveal that Blacks were more likely to be arrested than Whites.

According to the graphs, there are 21 out of 67 counties that have had Black political representation from 1998 to 2018. Out of the 21 counties, four counties displayed a relationship between the BPR and BWR; two counties reveal a positive relationship, and two counties reveal
a negative relationship. Three counties produced results that showed no support to the hypotheses while the remaining 14 of the 21 counties produced unclear findings to determine if a relationship exists. Overall, the graphs did not identify a relationship between the BPR and BWR. The graphs were more likely to have displayed mixed (e.g., increase and decrease, increase and constant, decrease and constant, or vice versa) or unclear results (inconclusive due to no displayed pattern). As some BWRs may have first decreased and then increased in the presence of BPR several factors could have played a role in this matter (e.g., district changes, increased social control to control the rise of BPR, etc.). Several factors could also go into BWRs remaining relatively stable as well that the graphs may not account for but may be addressed in the regression analysis. Some of the graphs were unclear because BPR was present in a short time, and thus the changes in the BWR may have been attributed to other factors as there was a much larger decreasing or increasing trend in the study or larger than the scope of the study. The study seeks to gain a better understanding of the possible relationship between BPR and the BWR through the use of the OLS regression model.

Table 5.3 Counties Percentage of BPR and BWR Relationship Summary

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Florida Counties’ Percentage of Black Political Representation and Black/White Arrest Ratio Graphs

Figure 5.135 Alachua County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.136 Baker County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.137 Bay County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.138 Bradford County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.139 Brevard County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.140 Broward County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.141 Calhoun County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.142 Charlotte County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.143 Citrus County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.144 Clay County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.151 Flagler County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.152 Franklin County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.153 Gadsden County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.154 Gilchrist County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.155 Glades County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.156 Gulf County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.157 Hamilton County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.158 Hardee County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.159 Hendry County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.160 Hernando County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.161 Highlands County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.162 Hillsborough County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.163 Holmes County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.164 Indian River County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.165 Jackson County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.166 Jefferson County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.167 Lafayette County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.168 Lake County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.175 Marion County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.176 Martin County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.177 Miami-Dade County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.178 Monroe County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.179 Nassau County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.180 Okaloosa County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.181 Okeechobee County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.182 Orange County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.183 Osceola County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.184 Palm Beach County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.185 Pasco County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.186 Pinellas County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.187 Polk County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.188 Putnam County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.189 Santa Rosa County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.190 Sarasota County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.191 Seminole County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.192 St. Johns County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Figure 5.193 St. Lucie County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.194 Sumter County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.195 Suwannee County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.196 Taylor County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.197 Union County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR

Figure 5.198 Volusia County’s Percentage of Black Political Representation and BWR
Regression Analysis

The models in the present study regress the Black/White arrest ratio on the percentage of the Black population, and the Black/White arrest ratio on the Black political representation, separately. The models are then reduced to only include the important variables (variables that show significance). The regressions were first run with all variables, and the variation inflation factors (VIF) were examined to determine if multicollinearity existed in the data. The test suggests inflated variance between the median age variable and the registered republican variable, and between the age variable and the jail rate. Therefore, the median age variable was
removed and was not utilized in any regressions. In its stead, the crime-age variable, percentage of males ages 15 to 24, was utilized in all regressions. The first model is the racial population model (BWR regressed on percent Black population while controlling for other variables while the second model regresses the BWR on the Black political representation while controlling for other variables.

There are three types of models utilized in this section, as noted previously in the methodology chapter: racial population, political composition, and the reduced models. All models were assessed using data from all 67 Florida counties across time. Model 1 is the racial population model which addresses Hypotheses 1A and 1B. There are three forms of Model 1: original form, short-term form, and curvilinear form. The original form regresses the dependent variable (BWR) on the independent variable while controlling for other variables from 1998 to 2018. The short-term form examines the same variables in the same manner as the original, from 2009 to 2018, with the addition of the poverty and education variables (percent of individuals 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree or higher) to examine the possible effects on the dependent variable. The Curvilinear form utilizes the original and reduced forms and adds the percent Black squared variable to test Blalock’s curvilinear assumption. This curvilinear form is applied to all other forms while all forms are utilized across all models. Model 1, in its original form, is the racial population model which estimates whether a possible relationship between racial disparities in arrest and the Black population exists. The second form of model 1 is the short-term form which is utilized to understand the effects of the additional variables without percent Black squared, to further avoid multicollinearity. A curvilinear form section is presented at the end of each Models’ section to address all other forms with the addition of the percent Black
squared variable. The percent Black squared is also graphed to visually examine and understand whether there is evidence to support Blalock’s curvilinear hypothesis.

Model 2 is the political composition model, which addresses the fourth and fifth hypotheses, follows the same formalities as the racial population model [utilizes same control variables and includes three forms of the model: original, short-term, and curvilinear forms (2009 to 2018)] but regresses the BWR on the BPR while controlling for other variables. Additionally in Model 2, there are two more control variables: the Black population variable; and the political party variable (register republicans) which examines the percentage of the counties that have Republican representatives. The model utilizes the original from – running a regression with the years 1998 to 2018 with the variables noted above, the short-term form estimates the data from 2009-2018 while adding the poverty and education variable, and the curvilinear form of Model 2 includes percent Black squared as a control variable in the other forms.

Model 3 is the reduced model which consists of important variables of the original and short-term forms of Model 1 and Model 2. This means that Model 3 examines the significant variables from the original forms and the short-term forms for both Model 1 (racial population model) and Model 2 (political composition model), separately. Thus, Model 3 presents four separate regressions – the original reduced model and the short-term reduced model for Models 1 and 2. The reduced models do not include variables that display insignificance. After retaining only, the variables that displayed significant effects, a regression is run to further understand if the significance increases or decreases when only including significant variables. As Model 3 is an extension of both Models 1 and 2, the results for each regression are displayed in their respective Models. For example, the reduced racial population model is located in the racial
population model section and the reduced political composition model is located in the political composition model section.

Racial Population Model

*Original Form*

Table 5.4 Racial Population Model Across Counties, 1998 - 2018

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<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>4.278</td>
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<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
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<td>% Unemployed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
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<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
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<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
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Note. R² = .765, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.4 displays results for regression Model 1, predicting the Black/White arrest rate ratio. The results find support for Blalock’s Minority Threat Theory, which argues that as the Black population increases, the social control (racial disparities in arrests) increases. The model shows that as the percentage of the Black population increases 1 percent, the Black/White arrest ratio increases, indicating that Blacks are arrested 4 times more relative to Whites (p < 0.000). These results support hypothesis 1, that states that counties with higher Black populations have higher Black/White arrest ratio. The crime-age variable is significant (p < 0.000) and shows that as the percentage of males ages 15 to 24 increases, Blacks were less likely to be arrested than Whites. This is an unexpected relationship, as it was expected that the BWR
would have a positive relationship with the crime-age (males ages 15-24), as research shows that young Blacks are more likely to be arrested than any other age group and race (Tonry, 2011; White, 2015; Skeem & Lowencamp, 2016). The effect may be a more general age effect since the variable measures both Black and White young males.

The jail rate was significant (p < 0.000) with a small negative coefficient indicating that as the jail population rate increases by 1 percent, Blacks are arrested less, relative to Whites. The property crimes rate was significant (p < 0.000), indicating that as property crime increases by 1 percent, the Black/White arrest ratio increases. This is consistent with FDLE data that finds that Blacks are arrested more for property crimes than violent crimes. Registered Republican voters variable was significant (p < 0.000), and indicates that as registered Republican voters increase, the Black/White arrest ratio rises, indicating more Blacks are arrested relative to Whites. This aligns with prior literature that suggests that Republicans are more punitive (Caldeira & Cowart, 1980; Helms & Jacobs, 2002; Walker, 2014). Racially, this provides an assumption that the more registered voters affiliated with the Republican party, who are predominantly White, may play a possible role with social control to marginalize the Black population. This supports the hypotheses of Blalock. The remaining predictors (the unemployment rate and the violent crime rate) were insignificant.
Table 5.5 Racial Population Model Across Counties, 2009-2018

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<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>3.98</td>
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<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
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<td>% Impoverished</td>
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<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
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<td>% Unemployed</td>
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<td>Jail Rate</td>
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<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
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Note. R² = .865, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.5 predicts the Black/White arrest ratio for 2009-2018. The shorter time period for the estimate is the result of adding variables which could not be obtained for the entire series for all counties. This regression includes the percent impoverished and the education variable. The results show that from 2009 to 2018, poverty was significant (p < 0.001) and indicates that as the percentage of households earning less than poverty line increases, the Black/White arrest ratio increases. The education variable, which measures individuals 25 years or older with a bachelor’s degree or higher, indicates a significant relationship with the BWR. The results indicate that as the percentage of individuals 25 years or older with a bachelor’s degree or higher increases, the Black/White arrest ratio increases. In Table 5.5, unemployment is significant and positive (p < 0.003), so that as unemployment rises, the Black/White arrest ratio increases. In this regression, the jail rate was insignificant (p = 0.475). This finding is unexpected, as it would be
assumed that the jail rate would be significantly related to the BWR. Additionally, more research concerning this finding is needed to help reveal the possible explanation for this relationship.

Table 5.6 Racial Population Reduced Model Across Counties, 1998-2018

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<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>56.85</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>3.48e-03</td>
<td>-3.76</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>-1.02e-04</td>
<td>2.33e-05</td>
<td>-4.40</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td>5.28e-05</td>
<td>4.31e-06</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.316</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>-7.58</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .765, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05

Removing insignificant variables confirmed that the remaining relationships were significant predictors of the outcome. The R² for the equation indicates that the result is fairly well predicted, but there is still some omitted variable bias that is unaccounted for in the model.
Table 5.7 Racial Population Reduced Model Across Counties, 2009-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>12.12</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>6.91e</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-0.694</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>-10.29</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R$^2 = .864, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.7 reflects the model from Table 5.5 with insignificant variables removed. Removing insignificant variables confirmed that the remaining relationships were significant predictors of the outcome. The $R^2$ for the equation indicates that the result is well predicted, but there is still some omitted variable bias that is unaccounted for in the model.

*Curvilinear Form*

Table 5.8 includes Black population squared as a predictor of the Black/White arrest ratio. Results are similar to those found in Model 1. The percent Black squared was significant (p < 0.000). The results, however, indicate a positive relationship with the BWR. This means that the percent Black squared in this model does not support Blalock’s assumption that growth in the Black population would display a curvilinear relationship with the BWR, so that as the Black population increases, Black arrests decrease. As noted, interactions between Black population squared and the age variable were expected from the VIF analysis, and the age variable was altered. In Table 5.8, the age variable became insignificant with the addition of the Black
Table 5.8 Racial Population Model Across Counties with Percent Black Squared, 1998-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black^2</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>18.94</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>1.69e-03</td>
<td>3.21e-03</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>-4.39e-03</td>
<td>1.99e-03</td>
<td>-2.21</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>-7.76e-05</td>
<td>2.08e-05</td>
<td>-3.73</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>-5.38e-07</td>
<td>1.88e-06</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>6.12e-05</td>
<td>3.89e-06</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.104</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-2.56</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R^2 = .813, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05

population square variable. Also, in this model, unemployment became significant (p < 0.027), while the violent crime rate remained insignificant.

Table 5.9 Racial Population Model Across Counties with Percent Black Cubed, 1998-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black^2</td>
<td>-4.42</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>-2.35</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black^3</td>
<td>13.94</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>2.94e-03</td>
<td>3.17e-03</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>-4.87e-03</td>
<td>1.97e-03</td>
<td>-2.48</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>-9.35e-05</td>
<td>2.07e-05</td>
<td>-4.51</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>-3.89e-07</td>
<td>1.86e-06</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>6.13e-05</td>
<td>3.85e-06</td>
<td>15.94</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.244</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>-5.26</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R^2 = .818, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05
Table 5.9 is utilized to examine the graphs of Figures 5.202 and 5.203. Figure 5.202 displays the relationship of percent Black and the BWR from the regression of Table 5.9. The y-axis is the BWR by 100,000, as the x-axis is the percent Black population. The graph is plotted to 60%, as that is the highest percentage of Blacks in a Florida county. The study utilized percent cubed only in this model to further examine the relationship visually, after running the prior regressions. The graph reflects the results of the regressions analyses where the regression holds all other variables at each variable’s respective mean. The graph indicates that there is no peak in the curvilinear relationship with percent Black population even in counties where 60% of the population is Black. As Blalock’s curvilinear assumption anticipates an inverted U-shaped curve, the graph reveals otherwise. However, the graph still finds support for Blalock’s hypothesis, as the percent Black squared displays an increase. The results may imply that the examined data may be part of an ongoing trend and the present study captured a low point of percent Black squared after decreasing from a previous peak. Thus, the graph may be displaying the latter half of the trend from the percent Black squared’s lowest point while also revealing it’s continued increase, which may be preceding a curvilinear peak and decrease.
Figure 5.203 displays the adjusted predictions from 60 to 100 percent Black population. As the graph in figure 5.202 presented a question on when or whether there would be a peak or decline in BWR, the study utilized the data to predict the trend of the BWR and Black population. The graph shows that from 60 to 100 percent is the prediction and reveals that a peak and decrease does not occur. In fact, the social controls -racial disparities in arrest continue to increase. These predictions do not find support for Blalock’s curvilinear hypothesis.

Furthermore, the data presented an opportunity to utilize percent Black cubed to understand when BWR would be stable or at a low level, thus the study also conducted another graph of the regression and found that -100 of Blacks, BWR would be at its lowest while increasing at the presence of the Black population. The graph displays that as the Black population increases to 100 percent, the Black/White arrest ratio still does not peak. The findings indicate that the predicted values, the results would not show any support for Blalock’s curvilinear assumption.

Table 5.10 includes Black population squared as a predictor of the Black/White arrest ratio for the short-term form. The regression reveals similar findings of Table 5.5. However, the
male crime age and unemployment variables become insignificant, when controlling for percent Black squared which is similar to the findings of Table 5.8.

Table 5.11 includes Black population squared as a predictor of the Black/White arrest ratio in the reduced model for the original form. The findings are similar to Table 5.6, except that the male crime age variable became insignificant which is similar to Table 5.8.

Table 5.10 Racial Population Model Across Counties with Percent Black Squared, 2009-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% % Black^2</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>16.61</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>3.45e-03</td>
<td>3.82e-03</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>4.96e-03</td>
<td>1.81e-03</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>9.67e-04</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>1.68e-03</td>
<td>2.20e-03</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>2.37e-05</td>
<td>1.68e-05</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>1.59e-06</td>
<td>2.06e-06</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>3.94e-05</td>
<td>6.28e-06</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Register Republicans</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.453</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>-7.08</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R^2 = .894, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05
Table 5.11 Racial Population Reduced Model Across Counties with Percent Black Squared, 1998-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>18.92</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>1.96e-03</td>
<td>3.21e-03</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>-7.91e-05</td>
<td>2.08e-05</td>
<td>-3.80</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>6.16e-05</td>
<td>3.88e-06</td>
<td>15.89</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.134</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-3.48</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .812$, $N = 1,407$, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.12 Racial Population Reduced Model Across Counties with Percent Black Squared, 2009-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>.361</td>
<td>13.54</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>2.81e-03</td>
<td>3.78e-03</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>5.11e-03</td>
<td>1.80e-03</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>9.47e-04</td>
<td>12.02</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>1.39e-03</td>
<td>2.20e-03</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>4.04e-05</td>
<td>6.24e-06</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.436</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-6.96</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .894$, $N = 670$, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.12 includes Black population squared as a predictor of the Black/White arrest ratio in the reduced model for short-term form. The findings are similar to Table 5.7, except that the male crime age and unemployment variables became insignificant which is similar to Table 5.8.
Political Composition Model

Original Form

Table 5.13 Political Composition Model Across Counties, 1998-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>49.20</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>3.34e-03</td>
<td>-3.25</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>-3.62e-03</td>
<td>2.13e-03</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>7.35e-05</td>
<td>2.24e-05</td>
<td>-3.28</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>-9.93e-07</td>
<td>2.02e-06</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>0.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>3.96e-05</td>
<td>4.33e-06</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.343</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Republican Representatives</td>
<td>-.040</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>-1.86</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.217</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>-4.87</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .786, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.13 displays results for effects of political composition on the Black/White arrest rate. The results reject the fifth hypothesis, which states that the level of Black political representation in Florida should be negatively associated with the Black/White arrest ratio. This hypothesis was seen as an extension of Blalock’s racial threat thesis to the intersection between racial threat and politics. The model shows that as the percentage of the Black political representation increases, the Black/White arrest ratio increases (p < 0.000). The effect is fairly large – a 1 percent change in the percent of Black representatives is related to an increase of 0.509 in the Black/White Arrest ratio. Since the dependent variable is a ratio, this change can be interpreted relative to a starting point where there are 100 Black arrests and 100 White arrests in a year in a given county. That produces an arrest ratio of 1.00. When the ratio increases by 0.509
to 1.509, the number of additional Black arrests for every 100 White arrests increases to approximately 150:100.

Therefore, two issues must be considered with this phenomenon: first, an increase in the Black/White arrest ratio can occur if Black arrest remains constant, or even when Black arrest decreases, so long as the White arrest rate has declined at a greater rate than the Black arrest rate. Technically, this means that this variable cannot be strictly interpreted as always involving an increase in Black arrests. Second, in addition, it must also be considered that the change in percent of Black representatives is usually large, (i.e., adding a Black representative to a county is a big change numerically) and is not on the scale of a few percentage points, but are likely to be on the order of a 20 percent change or more. Thus, for example, in counties where the change in the percent of Black representatives is 20 percent across counties and time, the change in Black arrests would be 1,081 for every 100 White arrests. This result, as noted, rejects the threat hypothesis, and also poses significant issues for those who suggest that increasing Black political representation should expand Black political power, and lead to policies that could reduce the use of arrests for Blacks. The opposite result actually seems to occur – as Black political representation increases, perhaps a greater Black threat is perceived, leading to higher arrest rates for Blacks relative to Whites. This issue is examined further in the discussion and conclusion.

The remaining variables mostly behave in the same manner that displayed in Table 5.4, and there are no exceptional relationships that emerge that have not been discovered in the previous regression models.

The crime age variable is significant with a p-value of 0.001 and shows that as the crime age increases, Blacks were slightly less likely to be arrested than Whites by 0.01. The unemployment variable does not show any significance with a p-value of 0.089. The jail rate
shows significance with a p-value of 0.001 with a very small coefficient in a positive direction – indicating that as the jail population rate increases by a rate of 1, Blacks are slightly more arrested than Whites. The violent crime variable still remains insignificant with a p-value of 0.622. The property crimes variable shows significance with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that property crime increases by 1 percent, Blacks are very slightly arrested more than Whites. The registered Republican voters show significance with a p-value of 0.000 and indicate that as registered republican voters increase 1 percent, Blacks are arrested approximately 0.35 times more than Whites. Lastly, the Republican Representative variable is insignificant, rejecting the fourth hypothesis that states that counties with more republican representatives will have higher Black/White arrest ratio.

**Short-Term Form**

**Table 5.14 Political Composition Model Across Counties, 2009-2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>45.22</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>-4.94e-3</td>
<td>3.91e-3</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>0.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>5.58e-3</td>
<td>1.92e-3</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>1.04e-3</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>8.32e-3</td>
<td>2.28e-3</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>1.51e-05</td>
<td>1.76e-05</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>-1.41e-07</td>
<td>2.15e-06</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>1.59e-05</td>
<td>6.55e-06</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Republican Representatives</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.674</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>-10.09</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .884, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05
Table 5.14 replicates the model in Table 5.5 with the addition of political representation variables. The models employed data from 2009 to 2018 in order to include the effects of some variables which were only available for shorter time periods. The theoretically important variable in this regression, as in Table 5.13, is the percentage of Black representatives. Similar to the results in Table 5.12, the percent Black population was significant in the opposite of the direction predicted by an extension of Blalock’s minority threat thesis, so that an increase in Black political representation leads to an increase in the Black/White arrest ratio.

The reduced form model for this equation is found in Table 5.15. Removal of the insignificant variable confirms the remaining relationship with the exception of the Republican representative indicator, which is now insignificant.

*Political Composition Reduced Model*

| Table 5.15 Political Composition Reduced Model Across Counties, 1998-2018 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|
| Variable                    | b       | se(b)   | t    | p    |
| DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR) |         |         |      |      |
| % Black Representatives     | .509    | .050    | 10.17| 0.000|
| % Black Population          | 3.089   | .079    | 49.16| 0.000|
| % Male Crime Age            | -.010   | 3.33e-03| -3.15| 0.002|
| Jail Rate                   | -7.43e-05| 2.24e-05| -3.31| 0.001|
| Property Crime Rate         | 3.95e-05 | 4.31e-06| 9.17 | 0.000|
| % Registered Republicans    | .348    | .060    | 5.79 | 0.000|
| % Republican Representatives| -.041   | .021    | -1.93| 0.054|
| _cons                       | -.242   | .042    | -5.69| 0.000|

Note. \( R^2 = .785, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05 \)
Table 5.16 Political Composition Reduced Model Across Counties, 2009-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>45.72</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>4.32e-03</td>
<td>1.60e-03</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>8.30e-03</td>
<td>2.25e-03</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>1.56e-05</td>
<td>6.43e</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.653</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-10.44</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .884, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.16 reflects the reduced model of Table 5.7. As expected, all variables remained significant predictors of the outcome.

Curvilinear Form

As a further test of the political composition model, the percent Black squared variable was added to the model found in table 5.13. Table 5.17 shows no support for Blalock’s curvilinear assumption concerning an increase in the Black population, or more generally, Black representation in the general population. As noted earlier, adding the percent Black squared variable produces results that are directly opposite those hypothesized by Blalock. Notably, the crime age became insignificant in this regression, as the unemployment, violent crime, and republican variables remained insignificant, as the BPR, percent Black population, jail rate, and registered Republican voters remained significant.
Table 5.17 Political Composition Model Across Counties with Percent Black Squared, 1998-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.352</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black$^2$</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>16.81</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>1.90e-03</td>
<td>3.14e-03</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>-3.97e-03</td>
<td>1.94e-03</td>
<td>-2.04</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>-6.20e-05</td>
<td>2.05e-05</td>
<td>-3.03</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>1.10e-07</td>
<td>1.84e-06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>5.19e-05</td>
<td>4.01e-06</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Republican Representatives</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>-0.86</td>
<td>0.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.083</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-2.01</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .822$, N = 1407, **p < .01, *p < .05

Table 5.18 Political Composition Model Across Counties with Percent Black Squared, 2009-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black$^2$</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.380</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>4.54e-03</td>
<td>3.72e-03</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>4.30e-03</td>
<td>1.78e-03</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>9.62e-04</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>3.53e-03</td>
<td>2.16e-03</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>2.26e-05</td>
<td>1.63e-05</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>1.26e-06</td>
<td>1.99e-06</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>3.26e-05</td>
<td>6.26e-06</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Republican Representatives</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.495</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>-7.72</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .901$, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05
Table 5.18 includes Black population squared as a predictor of the Black/White arrest ratio in the short-term form of the political composition model. The findings are similar to Table 5.13, except that the male crime age variable became insignificant which is similar to Table 5.10.

Table 5.19 presents findings similar to Table 5.14, except that the male crime age variable became insignificant which is similar to Table 5.11.

Table 5.20 presents findings that are similar to Table 5.13, except that the male crime age and unemployment variables became insignificant which is similar to Table 5.10.

### Table 5.19 Political Composition Reduced Model with Percent Black Squared, 1998-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black²</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>16.89</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male Crime Age</td>
<td>2.31e-03</td>
<td>3.13e-03</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Rate</td>
<td>-6.42e-05</td>
<td>2.04e-05</td>
<td>-3.15</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>5.27e-05</td>
<td>3.93e-06</td>
<td>13.40</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-2.76</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .821, N = 1,407, **p < .01, *p < .05
Table 5.20 Political Composition Reduced Model with Percent Black Squared, 2009-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se(b)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV: Black/White Arrest Ratio (BWR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Representatives</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black$^2$</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Impoverished</td>
<td>5.62e-03</td>
<td>1.48e-03</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 25 w/ Bachelors or Higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Unemployed</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>8.91-04</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
<td>3.01e-03</td>
<td>2.14e-03</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Rate</td>
<td>1.26e-06</td>
<td>1.99e-06</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Registered Republicans</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>-.468</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-7.73</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .901, N = 670, **p < .01, *p < .05$
Chapter 6: Discussion & Conclusion

This chapter discusses the findings of the dissertation and how those findings relate to the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter first reviews the research questions, hypotheses and results, addressing the findings to their respective research questions followed by the hypotheses. This chapter structures the findings in order of the research questions, followed by the order of the hypotheses. The findings are discussed in regard to their indications and are deemed as either supportive or unsupportive of the research questions. A conclusion follows the discussion section. It provides a summary of the dissertation. The summary details the purpose of the study, presents what the study presented to the field of Criminology, the key findings, and limitations of the study. Lastly, the chapter concludes the dissertation with a Future Research section, which details what methods, measures, or ideas should be considered or utilized in future research.

Discussion

This dissertation examined racial disparities in arrest within and across all Florida counties over time from 1998 to 2018. The methods utilized to examine these data included graphs of arrest rates by race and change in arrest patterns and examination of whether the pattern lines displayed racial disparities in arrest. The graphs also examined the Black political representation, to visually examine whether the presence of Black politicians made a significant difference in arrest rates. Following the initial examination, several regression models were
estimated to ascertain whether specific factors may be related to the Black/White arrests ratio. Theoretically, the dissertation pulled from Blalock’s minority threat theory which assumes that Whites perceive the rise of the minority presence as an economic, political, or ethnic threat and utilize social controls to marginalize that minority group in order to maintain power. Blalock hypothesizes that as the Black population increases, social controls should increase – arrests, unemployment, poverty, etc., as the majority race begins to discriminate against the minority race to decrease the probability of competition with the minority race. However, Blalock argues that as Blacks gain political and economic traction, the social control that marginalizes the Black community should peak and decrease in a curvilinear fashion as a result of the threat diminishing and Blacks in high positions providing positive change for their community. The dissertation built upon the political element of the theory with an extension to examine whether the Black political representation made a noticeable difference, specifically in this study across Florida counties.

The Black political representation variable addition, to Blalock’s theory and the type of study that examines differences in race-linked arrest rates, is rarely researched. There has not been any study conducted utilizing county level data in Florida across all 67 counties over time. Thus, this is an important addition to the literature because it must first be established that racial disparities in arrest exist across Florida counties before examining the possible causal factors of racial disparities. This information provides an insight on the extent of and changes in racial disparities in arrest in Florida over time. The existence of racial disparities in criminal justice processes are widely discussed, and various kinds of empirical analyses and definitions of disparity have been employed. This remains an unsettled and very important debate that requires further attention. Understanding that the field of criminology must examine who is represented
when laws are being created, established, and defined, as well as who is creating those laws, is imperative because for hundreds of years, Blacks have been marginalized, seen as less than, discriminated against, and this trend has continued to the present day. Blacks have a long history of being marginalized and oppressed in the U.S., which is important to understand. It is also important to examine whether this history continues to negatively affect the Black population today through outcomes such as racial disparities in arrest.

**Overall Findings**

The overall graph findings reveal the racial disparities in arrest do, in fact, exist across Florida counties. Almost all counties displayed some evidence of racial disparities in arrest in some of the years examined. Fifty-four of the 67 counties (80.6%) showed evidence of racial disparities being consistent over time. In other words, approximately 81% of the counties consistently had Black-specific arrest rates higher than the White-specific arrest rates. However, as these disparities continued and were widespread, the study found that racial disparities in arrest change over time, and the majority of counties (approximately 54%) of the counties showed a decreasing pattern of racial differences in arrest. At the same time, approximately 4% showed an increasing trend, approximately 22% of counties showed mixed results where rates increased before decreasing or vice versa, or remained constant before increasing or decreasing or vice versa, while another 19% of counties presented unclear results. The graphs that presented unclear results indicated that it was unclear whether Black political representation had an effect on the racial disparities in arrest. This may be due to the lack of representation across and within Florida counties, thus providing a low probability of displaying a significant change or impact on the racial disparities in arrest.
The overall regression findings provide support for Blalock’s minority threat theory, as the results indicate that as the Black population increases, racial disparities in arrest increase. This finding remained consistent even in counties with a high Black political representation. In addition, the results did not support Blalock’s curvilinear assumption, that there would be a peak in Black arrest followed by a decreasing pattern of racial disparities in arrest. Persistent racial disparities in arrest were seen in counties with higher levels of Black political representation and may be due to social controls being employed more in those counties in response to the perceived threat posed by Black political representation. This may, in fact, still be relative to Blalock’s study that asserts that more social controls are being implemented to maintain or take back control and power by the majority race. Overall, the study did not find a clear relationship between the Black political representation and racial disparities in arrest. The findings also displayed that counties that had more Republican representatives were not significantly more likely to display racial disparities in arrest. The regressions revealed that the poverty rate, percent 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree, property crime, and registered Republican voters were consistently significant with racial disparities in arrest across time and models. Further details on the impacts and meaning of these relationships will be discussed later in this chapter.

As noted in the literature review, Blalock’s minority threat theory has been tested several times (Wang & Mears, 2010; Lowery, Burrow, & Kaminski, 2018; Carl Reeds, 2021). The majority of previous examinations interpret Blalock in a similar and perhaps very strict way and have largely focused on the minority threat hypothesis using Black population size or concentration measures. The proposed element that a political dimension of racial threat might also exist was tested by examining the potential effect of Black political representation on racial differences in arrest within and across Florida counties. As noted, overall, the dissertation found
mixed support for the research questions and hypotheses. These findings and their relevance are reviewed in more detail below.

**Research Questions, Hypotheses, & Findings**

The first research question asked whether there were differences in the level of racial disparities in known arrests for crimes across counties annually? After graphing the Black-specific arrest rate and White-specific arrest rate (Figures 5.1-5.67), it was found that 54 of 67 Florida counties displayed racial differences in arrest. Essentially, approximately 81% of Florida counties arrest Blacks at a higher rate than Whites. This result was also supported by graphs of the Black/White arrest ratio, which shows that numerous counties arrest Blacks at a higher rate than Whites. Overall, the answer to this research question is ‘yes’, meaning that there are persistent racial disparities in arrest across most of Florida’s counties for the time period examined in the study. Furthermore, these findings reject the null hypothesis of hypothesis 1A, which hypothesized that racial disparities in arrest are not constant but vary across counties and hypothesis 1B which hypothesized that counties with higher Black populations will have higher Black/White arrest rate differences. It should be noted that there was at least some evidence of racial disparities in arrest across the 67 counties. Each county contained at least three years during the 21-year period where Blacks were arrested more often than Whites. The question that remains about these disparities, which this dissertation cannot answer, is whether they result from racial bias in the criminal justice process?

The second research question was, does the level of racial disparities in arrest data change over time? The graphs from Figures 5.68 to 5.134 show that racial disparities do change over time with 36 Florida counties showing a decrease, 3 counties showing an increase, and 15
counties displaying mixed results. Therefore, 54 of 67 counties showed some form of race-linked change in arrest whether it be an increase, decrease, or mix of the two directions. This means that approximately 81% of the Florida counties displayed evidence that the level of racial disparities in arrest data changed over time. Notably, in some counties, disparities appeared to disappear (the BWD was around 0.00), while in other counties that ratio remained high. These findings provide supporting evidence to reject the null hypothesis of hypothesis 2 a, which hypothesized that the trends in arrest within each county over time will display evidence of long term racial differences in arrest measured by the Black/White arrest rates differences or long-term stability in a skewed Black/White arrest rate ratio and hypothesis 2 b hypothesized that as time progresses and, in theory, there is increased concern with addressing racial disparity in society and in the criminal justice process, racial disparities in the Black/White arrest difference decrease.

The third research question asked whether patterns in the official arrest data by race related to factors, particularly the percentage of Blacks, across counties? This research question directly addresses Blalock’s racial threat hypothesis. The Racial Population Model (Tables 5.4 to 5.8) regression analysis provides evidence that arrest racial disparities in arrest are related to the percentage of the Black population across counties. When the BWR is regressed on the Black population, the findings showed that as the Black population increased across counties, racial disparities in arrest increased. These findings were found in all three regressions related to the Racial Population Model. Therefore, the findings support Blalock’s minority threat theory, that as the Black population increases, the racial disparities in arrest should increase as a form of marginalization and discrimination through social control. Essentially, the high rate of Black arrest may be attributed to a reaction to control the increasing Black population – to maintain the social, economic, and political status of the majority race. However, when examining political
parties, the regressions indicated that counties with more Republican representatives were not significantly related to disparities in arrest. Therefore, the study accepts the null hypothesis that counties with more republican representatives do not have higher Black/White arrest ratios.

The fourth research question examined whether there is a relationship between political diversity and racial differences in arrest across Florida counties? The answer is gathered from the Florida counties percentage of Black political representation and the Black/White arrest ratio graphs (Figures 5.135 - 5.201). First, it was found that the majority of Florida counties did not have a Black political representative, and that only 21 (approximately 31%) had Black political representation within the 21-year period. This limited the number of counties that could be employed to test this relationship. The results were unclear for 13 of the 21 counties, and largely these results suggest that the question cannot accurately be answered. Thus, further research is needed to assess this phenomenon.

Blalock’s Curvilinear Assumption

In both the racial population model and political composition model along with the Figure 5.202 and 5.203 graphs, the percent Black variable was significant, and had a positive relationship with the BWR. However, as stated previously, these results did not support Blalock’s assumption of curvilinear relationship where at some point, an increase in the Black population would lead to a decrease in the level of Black arrests. In the racial population model, the results were similar to those found by Holme et al. (2008) and McCreary et al (2008) who did not find any significance with the percent Black squared variable but found significance with other variables such as unemployment and poverty. These findings could be attributed to Blalock’s assumption that the majority race will employ social controls to maintain their power
while marginalizing the minority race. It is possible that the current study captures a period in
time that precedes the curve, where discrimination against the minority race continues. In fact, it
can be adequately assumed that this is the case as the literature presented several laws and
policies that have been passed and implemented that have negatively affected Blacks in America.
Drug laws, targeting minority areas, the increase of police officers without the increase of police
training, voting restrictions, felon disenfranchisement, low funding of minority schools, and
several other methods.

These laws and policies are harming the Black population and diminishing the
opportunities for Blacks to prosper and gain traction economically and politically. There is also
discrimination which hinders the progressions of Blacks by jobs discriminating against Blacks
during the hiring process, the over policing and unjustified police shootings being justified – as
Blacks are wrongly portrayed as violent and criminals, and being denied into educational
institutions, denied by banks for loans, passed over for promotions, and much more that keeps
Blacks from gaining traction. Therefore, several Blacks remain in impoverished areas with poor
schools, work low wage jobs, may be unemployed, or may be victims to police brutality and
unfair laws more than Whites, as a result of Blacks not being seen as equal or having adequate
representation in high economic or political positions. Thus, what the findings may be displaying
are the results and continued issues brought forth from the history of Blacks in America – which
has consistently belittled, mistreated, disrupted, brutalized, marginalized, oppressed, and
uprooted Blacks for centuries.

In the political representation model, the percent Black squared was again insignificant.
This may be due to social controls put in place to combat the rise or presence of the Black
political representation in the political office and/or the Black population. The fact that Blacks
are now entering the political realm more, is still new in America. Blacks have been in America for more than 500 years and yet the first Black president was elected in 2008 and first Black vice president in 2020. This does not mean that Blacks did not campaign or run for a political office throughout the, it means that Blacks were not allowed to be seen as equal for more than 400 years - legally and immorally, and that Blacks are still not widely accepted in the American society. If this is the case, Black citizens and politicians across Florida counties may be experiencing discrimination and/or marginalization as a result of their presence. More policies or laws may be created to hinder the chances for Blacks to be elected, or to vote, impacting how Blacks understand the importance of voting. Part of the social control may be, in fact, increased targeting of minority communities which may result in more arrests of Blacks for drug offenses, minor violations, traffic stops, detainments, etc. A person cannot vote if he/she is incapacitated in a correctional facility. One could argue that the more Blacks are arrested, the smaller the Black population, thus the smaller the political threat posed by Blacks. When Black voting numbers are suppressed, Blacks may be less likely to be voted for in an election and there is a very low number of Black representatives across Florida counties and with little presence there may be little impact. Again, the findings may be displaying the ongoing marginalization of Blacks as a result of Blacks gaining political traction and Black political representation.

It is possible that the result found here related to Black political representation is a result of the fact that current levels of Black political representation remain insufficient. At some point in the future, Black political representation may remain relevant to a decreased perception of racial and political threat. However, it is not to negate the fact that the linear relationship may be attributed to other factors beyond the scope of this dissertation.
This brings up again the question that remains about these disparities, which this dissertation cannot answer, that is, whether racial disparities result from racial bias in the criminal justice process? The racial disparities in arrest are at times argued to be attributed to Blacks committing more crime, Blacks being violent, uneducated, financially illiterate, aggressive, menacing, and other negative stereotypes. However, it is not that Blacks commit more crime, it is that Black communities are watched, targeted, and overpoliced more than other areas. Blacks are living in low-income high-crime areas that lack opportunity. In these areas, Shaw & McKay (1942) found that it does not matter who lived in the high crime areas, as the areas will remain high crime areas regardless of who lives in the area. Blacks are more likely to live in these areas with consistent crime and are less likely to escape those circumstances.

The argument that Blacks are more violent and engage in more violent crime is a consistent stereotype that hinders the perception of Blacks. All Blacks are not violent, and the study indicates that the racial disparities in arrest are not significantly related to the violent crime rates. This disproves the stereotype, at least for Florida counties from 1998 to 2018. Research on television portrayals of Blacks suggests that while overtly demeaning stereotypes no longer populate the airwaves, more subtle forms of anti-Black imagery persist (Entman, 1994). Entman (1994) states that crime stories in the local news tend to depict Blacks as more dangerous than Whites accused of similar crimes. Consequently, stereotypes may affect who will be stopped or shot by police (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Payne, 2001; Payne, Lambert, & Jacoby, 2002). These stereotypes are also enough for Blacks to be stopped and frisked, and detained, more likely to be seen as a threat, and may even cause companies and employers to avoid or be hesitant to hire Blacks. Thus, stereotypes can be detrimental to the progression of the Black community as Blacks may encounter less opportunities, empathy, understanding, and
positive perceptions. These stereotypes are able to affect the judicial branch of the criminal justice system, as Skorinko and Spellman (2013) found that crime stereotypes exist, and more importantly, that crime and criminal stereotypes can influence both jurors’ memories and decisions. Thus, more Blacks may receive more punishment and even harsher punishments than their White counterparts, due to implicit bias, partially attributable to the racial stereotypes.

Furthermore, Blacks are usually the majority at low funded schools and these low funded schools cannot provide for the well-being of their students (Rothstein, 2015). Thus, graduation rates are lower and dropout rates are higher than for Whites (Hauser, Simmons, & Pager, 2000; Tyler & Loftstrom, 2009; Laird, Kienzl, DeBell, & Chapman, 2014). Specifically, in Florida, the state is increasing funding for charter and private schools, while decreasing funding for traditional public schools—specifically, predominantly Black schools. There are several claims that charter schools drain money from traditional public schools for which school boards are responsible (Gawlik & Allen, 2019) and as a result, the low-income schools suffer. Therefore, the educational gap among races increases and leaves those in poor schools in severe conditions that cannot support the students as needed.

It is known that charter and private schools are not very racially diverse. Prior studies find that charter school students are more racially isolated than traditional school students—particularly for Black or minority students (Bifulco & Ladd, 2007; Cobb & Glass, 1999; Frankenberg & Lee, 2003; Frankenberg et al., 2010; Garcia, 2008; Ladd & Fiske, 2000). In a Florida study, Cowen and Winters (2013) found that minority students were more likely to move to charters with more minorities and Whites were more likely to move to charters with more Whites than their traditional public schools. This is more segregation and one of the many factors that continue to negatively affect the Black population. It is not that Blacks are uneducated, but
the fact that Blacks are not presented the same resources and materials as predominantly White schools and the tool utilized to justify the poor funding of school are test scores. Schools with lower test scores and resources have less options and face more challenges (Ostrander, 2015). If a school does not have sufficient funding for resources, test scores that meet the standard of the Board of Education are almost unattainable. Thus, some Blacks may not have the diplomas for jobs, or to further their education, or to become noticed as a prestigious or well-rounded individual by society’s standards. This takes away the opportunity to gain economic and political traction and status beginning at a young age.

Ultimately, racial and class segregation, and the gap between low-income schools and middle-income schools are issues that have yet to be fully addressed (Rothstein, 2015). Importantly, it should be noted that these gaps continue to adversely impact Blacks by failing to adequately care for and educate future generations. This further perpetuates the ongoing cycle that keeps Blacks in an oppressed state, by minimizing their education attainment, which hinders the opportunity for a positive trajectory that will lead them out of poverty and marginalization. This may be compared to a slavery tactic, when Blacks were not allowed to read or become educated, in order for the majority race to maintain power and control over the enslaved Blacks. Furthermore, the racial segregation has increased, as Orfield, Frankenberg, Kascera (2014) found that the share of Black students attending schools that are more than 90% minority grew from 34 to 39 % from 1991 to 2011. If, in fact, these are low-funded schools, then Blacks may have a possible increasing disadvantage related to academic attainment. Relatedly, several studies (Neely & Griffin-Williams 2013; Anderson 2014; Maynard, Salas-Wright, & Vaughn 2015; Tebes & Fagan 2022) found a relationship between dropout rates and crime and more encounters with police officers. Consequently, it can be assumed that Blacks are now becoming more likely
to be arrested due to community-environmental factors, factors that go beyond the scope of this dissertation.

As the above suggests, many factors might be related to the differentials in arrest that have been shown to exist in earlier chapters. One could construct a list of those factors; however, this study limits the discussion to a few factors that are useful for consideration. The most important factor is understanding the history of America and the ongoing marginalization of Blacks. Without this knowledge, one will not be able to come close to fully comprehending what factors contribute to the racial disparities in arrest in the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system has treated Blacks unfairly since its foundation and emergence in America (Wilson, 1996; Alexander, 2011). How stereotypes affect Blacks cannot but be fully determined through research but nevertheless must be acknowledged, along with the American perception of Blacks, and other positions on implicit bias, wrongful accusation of individuals, unlawful arrests and executions, etc. To understand all of the factors is a difficult task, but to address as many of the factors as possible, criminologists must be willing to understand the social structures effects on Blacks and to further this study, one must understand the importance of political diversity and the presence of Blacks in the political realm.

For decades, equal treatment and representation of Blacks has been discussed and stated by numerous Black leaders such as Fredrick Douglas, Malcolm X, Senator John Lewis, The Black Panther Party, Reverend Dr. William J. Barber, and many other prestigious African Americans. These people have argued for equal rights and equal treatment under the law, and also in relation to moral, economic, social, and political theories and outcomes. These leaders discussed the lasting effects of slavery, how those effects continue to loom over and within American society, which continues to marginalize minorities while blatantly ignoring that these
issues exist. It should also be noted that in the criminal justice and criminological literature, when these concerns are addressed, they are not addressed appropriately, to remove the strain, oppression, and intentional discrimination against Blacks. Research such as Michelle Alexander (2011), Bentele & O’Brien (2013), and Gabbidon & Greene (2018) have found that Blacks are consistently being marginalized and state that there is a need for change. Duarte et al. (2015) argue that increased political diversity would improve social psychology by reducing the impact of bias mechanisms such as confirmation bias, and by empowering dissenting minorities to improve the quality of the majority’s thinking.

Essentially, by improving political diversity, social and psychological encounters can be enhanced, thus altering the perception and understanding of Blacks which can ultimately lead to adequate treatment of Blacks. Though the study found that the increase of Black political representation and its relationship with racial disparities were positive, it does not mean that Black political representation does not matter. This instance may indicate that the perceptions of the majority race must also change as well so that Blacks are not considered a threat when Blacks engage in the political system or experience an increase in their economic status. It is possible, for instance, that there are not a sufficient number of Blacks in the political system, or that they are unequally distributed, and that the effects of Black politicians have not and cannot become salient until the political sphere is more saturated with Black political representatives. Therefore, it is possible that increasing the representation of Blacks in the political realm alters the perception of Blacks, which in turn could lead to minimizing racial disparities in arrest.
Conclusion

This dissertation examined variations in the racial distribution of arrests across counties and time in Florida, and also to assess whether that distribution is related to an empirical indicator of the political structure in the State of Florida. The present study examined all 67 Florida counties from 1998 to 2018. The dissertation tested Blalock’s minority threat theory while also adding a new component to the theory and to the field of Criminology – the minority political representation. The study found support for Blalock’s hypothesis, that as the Black population increased the racial disparities in arrest (i.e., social control, marginalization, discrimination) would increase over time. The study found that racial disparities in arrest do, in fact, exist across 54 of 67 Florida counties. The other thirteen counties still show numerous periods in time where racial disparities in arrest existed, but the racial disparities were not consistent across the 21 years. The study did not find support for Blalock’s curvilinear assumption, that as the Black population increased the racial disparities in arrest should peak and begin to decrease. This curve was not found, as this examined period may be preceding the curve. That is, the Black population may be facing discrimination and marginalization as the social controls enforced upon them as a result of the majority races attempt to maintain political and economic dominance before peaking in a later year. Due to this marginalization, the Black political representation is still low among Florida counties, as numerous counties have not even experienced a Black representative within the 21-year period examined in this study.

The study did not find support for the newly added component – the presence of the Black political representation. Only twenty one of 64 Florida counties experienced Black political representation within the 21-year period. Out of those twenty-one years, only 5 of the 21 counties with BPR displayed some form or relationship between the BWR and BPR while 3
counties displayed mixed results and thirteen counties presented unclear results. As a result of such a low number of counties that displayed a relationship between the two variables and a high number of unclear findings, the findings could not support the fourth research question and third and fifth hypotheses. These findings may be unclear due to such a small presence of the BPR along across Florida counties with a short period of time in which their presence existed. In order to fully understand the effects of the BPR on the racial disparities in arrest over time, a larger size of the BPR may be needed along with a longer period of time.

Though the findings for the new component was inconclusive, the results do not mean that the possible relationship between the presence of the Black political representation and racial disparities in arrest does not exist. This new component can be utilized in various different states that have had an increase of Black politicians over time. Perhaps, the study precedes the adequate time to implore the study for Florida counties, as the Black politicians are still low across Florida counties. However, this brings forth awareness that more Black politicians are needed, as there are low numbers of Black representation, there is an existence of racial disparities in arrest, and the racial disparities increase as the Black population increases. It is imperative to have adequate representation to combat such issues in the American society. Examining the effects of the political structure on crime, should not be overlooked, to fully understand how laws and policies are affecting minorities, specifically the Black community.

Overall, the present dissertation found support for Blalock’s minority threat theory but no support for the new component. The study also found that counties that had more Republican representatives did not have a significant effect on racial disparities in arrest. However, male crime age, percent of individuals who earned less than the poverty line, the percentage of individuals 25 and over with a bachelor’s degree or higher, property crime, and registered
republican voters were consistently significant across all models. The property crime variable and register Republican variable consistently had a positive linear relationship with racial disparities in arrest. Meaning that as property crimes increase, racial disparities in arrest increased. Furthermore, as registered Republican voters increased, racial disparities in arrest increased. This finding is interesting, as the findings display significance with the registered Republicans but did not find significance with the Republican representatives. This is unexpected and it may be a result of the perception of the threat from the registered voters compared to the application of action to address the threat, politically. Whether this is the reality or merely an assumption, the findings suggest further research is required. Furthermore, across Models with the 10-year time period of 2009 to 2018, the education variable and poverty variable remained significantly related to racial disparities as well. That is, as the percent of individuals 25 and older with a bachelor’s or higher degree increase, racial disparities in arrests increased; and as the percent impoverished increased, racial disparities increased, respectively. The jail rate variable and percent unemployed variable, however, were not consistently significant, nor were the two variables consistently in the same direction in relation to the racial disparities in arrests. However, some of the changes in directions and insignificance may be attributed to some limitations of the dissertation.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this dissertation. One limitation of this study is the use of 21 years over time. The time period may not be adequate to examine a trend over time. Also, the information presented and gathered from the study is not generalizable to other counties in other states. Furthermore, the use of the poverty and education variable for only 10 out of the 21 year
period may not have provided the full view of the effects of those variables on the racial disparities in arrest. There is also a limitation from the use of the Black political representation. Due to the low Black political representation over time, it is difficult to examine a change or attribute a change to the presence of the Black political representation. Also, with the Black population not vastly increasing or decreasing over time, the examination in change may present difficulties as the results may become unclear as a result of very little change or effect. Specifically in regard to the data, the arrest rates utilize data from the FDLE. However, when examining the data, it was noticed that at least two counties had very high peaks in arrests which could have indicated new policies or a local campaign to address certain crimes. Severe declines and peaks were also displayed in the property crime data which may indicate that some crimes may not have been recorded or reported to the FDLE. For example, two counties displayed a zero count for property crimes, but this may be due to missing data. Also, some of the crimes may have been defined differently through policies as some counties may attempt to target more drug offenders one year and the number may spike while another county may have lower rates as the county did not change their policies or protocol. Furthermore, in several counties there were notable changes around 2004 and 2008. Notably, these are election years, and the graphs show that in 2004, numerous counties peaked or at least increased while in 2008, it prompted a decline to 2009. The study does not go in depth to understand what may have contributed to this trend that presented itself across the graphs, but it is worth noting that around these years there was a change among numerous counties.

The absence of the Hispanic category and voter registration by race present limitations as the Hispanic category could provide better insight on the political and minority effect, while the voter’s registration by race could truly allow one to further test the political threat with the
presence of Black voters. Though the study does not focus on Hispanics, the category could have
provided more insight on counties, such as Miami-Dade County, that has a lot of Hispanic
representatives and a large Hispanic population. Regarding the Black voter’s variable, this is a
critical component that could provide more information about the effects of the Black
population. In relation to the Black political representation, a limitation was also presented from
only utilizing the House of Representatives. Though the study sought to first establish a
relationship between the racial diversity in politics and crime, the study did not include the racial
composition of senators, the governor of Florida, or include a law enforcement variable such as
the sheriff – also, an elected official. With the absence of the factors, the study possibly misses a
partial contribution to racial disparities in arrest. The senators must approve the laws that come
from the House of Representatives; thus, it would be beneficial to utilize the racial composition
across time with the senators as well. The governor would, of course, be a shared variable across
counties but examining the racial composition and political party of the position may provide
more information on racial disparities in arrest. Not utilizing an elected sheriff as a variable, does
not allow one to understand how the laws and policies are being enforced under certain sheriffs,
Black or White. A Black sheriff may look to enforce laws differently than a White sheriff, and
those results are worth noting. These limitations give way to what can possibly be utilized in
future research to further examine this phenomenon.

Future Research

For future research, it is recommended that researchers conduct the study with a longer
time period and with an addition of the voter’s registration by race variable. When utilizing a
longer time period, one will be able to determine if there is an ongoing trend, that the present
study may have taken a ‘snapshot’ when examining the phenomenon. It is strongly recommended that future research includes the voter registration by race variable because it allows one to understand another dimension of the strength of the Black population politically. This strength is defined as the voting power of the Black population, which may be seen as a threat by the majority race. What may be found is that it is not just the Black population that contributes to an increase in racial disparities in arrest, but it may be related to the number of Black registered voters. That is, as the number of Black voters increase, racial disparities in arrest increase. The variable adds another level of understanding in regard to the racial threat – how are Blacks becoming a political “threat” to the majority race?

Future research should also include senators, the governor, and elected sheriffs. The senator variable will provide more information on the Black political representation and can be utilized separately from the House of Representative variable to examine the possible effects of both chambers, and the variables can be combined as the Legislative effect as the BPR. One could also utilize the governor variable to examine if the political party of the governor has an effect on racial disparities in arrest. Though this will, of course, only change every four years, it gives more reason to attain a larger dataset and allows one to understand the possible effects on racial disparities in arrest under a certain race or political party. This can be utilized as a control variable to possibly address the fourth hypothesis of the present study.

To further the present study, one may also utilize the suggested variable previously noted and also add a variable that categorizes the regions of the counties. One can utilize the Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Florida (FASFAA) region map, as it is considerably the most accurate representation of the Florida regions, and the map is very similar to the Florida Highway Patrol, Troop boundaries map - which separates jurisdictions into
segments that mirror regions. This is important to note, as traffic stops are noted to be a possible factor that leads to racial disparities in arrest, in prior research (Bowling & Phillips, 2007; Langton & Durose, 2013; Harris, 2017). According to the FASFAA map, there are five regions, and the future study can categorize them as such: Region 1 - Northwest Florida, Region 2 - North Florida, Region 3 - East Central Florida, Region 4 - West Central Florida, and Region 5 - South Florida. These five regions can be examined across all different models in an attempt to reveal more about the effects of the Black population and racial disparities in arrest, as well as the relationship between the Black political representation and racial disparities in arrest.

Another suggestion for future research is grouping the counties by population sizes. These population sizes may vary from 0 to 50,000, 50,001 to 100,000, etc., in the intervals of the researcher’s choice to be able to understand and run the regressions on certain counties at a time. There may be different effects that are missed by examining all 67 counties at once across time. By categorizing the counties by population, one may reveal different patterns that occur among extra small counties, small counties, medium counties, large counties, and extra-large counties. It is suggested to also separate the counties in two groups regardless of size: BPR and No BPR group. This, too, allows for more information on the relationship between the Black population, Black political representation, and racial disparities in arrest by being able to examine the regressions of counties that did not have BPR against counties with BPR.

If one is interested in a lower level or more detailed examination of this study, the mayors of each city and town should be included in the study. However, if this is done, then the study should not utilize panel data but only one year, as many cities and towns do not keep accurate or easily accessible mayoral data that one may need for the study. Furthermore, it may be effective to only examine two or three large counties and two or three smaller counties to be able to
compare the counties without a very tedious and harsh study. By utilizing this method, the study now focuses on the level of racial disparities in a year, rather than examining racial disparities in arrest over time. One will be able to compare the large counties such as Duval County, Miami-Dade County, and Broward County (all counties over 1.3 million population) and compare Gadsden County, Leon County, and Madison County (all small counties under 50,000 with a large percentage of Blacks). These counties can be compared among their relative size or all together, to examine if there is a city-level effect.

The use of regressions to examine the change over time also presents challenges thus, future research should also consider examining the levels of change through the utilization of the latest year as opposed to the use of panel data. For future studies, it is suggested that the Hispanic category is added as well, to understand the effects on the Hispanic community separate from the Black community, as well as together. These two groups are looked down upon in American society, and thus further research should be conducted in the field of Criminology to assess whether minorities are being arrested out of discrimination and marginalization as a response to the minority threat.

Policy Implications

To summarize, this study found support for Blalock’s minority threat theory but did not find support for Blalock’s curvilinear assumption. It was also shown that the relationship between the rise of the Black population and racial disparities in arrest is positively related to more traditional explanations of crime (e.g., the percentage of males ages 15-24, household poverty, education, etc.). Some of these factors involve structural issues that must be addressed. With racial disparities in arrest being related to poverty, for example, it must be understood that
the reality and quality of life for minorities, specifically Blacks, must be improved. Thus, systemic racism, discrimination, and ongoing marginalization must be addressed at a societal level. This means that in relation to poverty, low wages should be addressed. Unemployment can be attended to by addressing the lack of Black hires, and employment and discrimination issues addressed by paying serious attention to the representation of Blacks in administrative and high-income positions. Furthermore, when it comes to felon disenfranchisement, individuals who are released from prison should be able to have more assistance and support to finding a job, rather than sending individuals back into society without help or guidance. Once released from prison, many individuals return to low-income and/or high crime areas that make prospering and progressing, a difficult challenge. In order to help create a stronger society, society must first care about all of its people.

Jail and property crime can possibly be addressed by creating a stronger positive relationship between law enforcement and citizens. There is a strong disconnect between Blacks and law enforcement, as Blacks have continued to be brutalized since being enslaved. Blacks witnessed and experienced brutality beyond what a normal individual should incur, and continue to be brutalized, murdered, discriminated against, unheard, and in the midst of it all, justice is rarely sought or provided. To address this relationship, Blacks must be able to be comfortable around law enforcement and law enforcement must not see Blacks as a higher threat or treat them more harshly than the officer(s) would a White citizen. This is not to say that all law enforcement officers are racist, discriminative, or have poor judgment; nor is it to say that all Blacks have a negative view of law enforcement or have encountered a negative experience with law enforcement. What is being stated is that the issue of tension between police and Blacks
must change through the perceptions of one another; citizen-police encounters must change, and thus the outcomes may lead to less arrests.

It has long been true that Black access to the educational system has been limited and different from White access. Policies have long sought to address these issues, and none have had extensive success. Blacks are more likely to attend low-funded and poor schools that may not have the resources to prepare them for better opportunities, jobs, and further education. Thus, it can be assumed that there is a positive relationship between the education variable and racial disparities in arrest because it is the majority race with more degrees than Blacks across Florida counties.

One of the troubling findings was the positive relationship between registered Republican voters and Black/White disparities in arrest. Counties with larger proportions of Republican voters had higher and more persistent Black/White arrest differentials. Republicans have, for many decades, taken up a punitive response to criminals. The results here suggest that a punitive response is more severe if the offender is Black. This is a very difficult outcome to address, since Whites are more likely to be Republicans, and the Republican party has traditionally attracted voters – especially lower income White voters – by presenting minorities as a threat to White job security.

The findings show that racial disparities continued to increase in the presence of Black political representation and that the Black political representation. Due to the results, one may question if the presence of Black political representation matters, and the answer is ‘yes, it continues to matter’. The lack of support does not necessarily mean that Black political representation does not have an effect or does not matter, but that the presence of BPR may not be as effective because of a low level of representation. It may also mean that the presence of
BPR is causing a positive relationship between BPR and racial disparities in arrest, as the presence of BPR is more of a threat to the majority race.

Essentially, it is not just the number of Black political representation that must change, but the perception and attitude of the majority race of Black representation. Even in the presence of Blacks, laws are still created that will negatively affect that Black population and, in many instances, those laws have been passed such as the War on Drug Bill, Stay W.O.K.E. Act, and other discriminatory laws. These reactions are recurrent behaviors that have become normal in American society but need to be addressed. The attitudes and perception of the majority race must go from ‘We must stay the same reap the benefits or go back to when America was great’, to ‘there must be a change so that no one lacks, even if it means I must relinquish luxurious ideas that only benefit myself or my community, group, or race while marginalizing others’. The majority race must also listen and understand that minorities know more about minorities than the majority race. As a society, America is heterogeneous, but it is understood that the day-to-day lifestyle, community, schools, and groupings are usually homogenous. This may be due to preference, discriminatory factors, cultural ties, or other factors, but individuals know more about their specific group than an individual outside of the group. Therefore, when it comes to race, the majority race in the political structure should respectfully understand when a certain member or members of a certain race or group state explain and proclaim that a certain law is or will be damaging to their race or group. The mutual respect, perception, rightful attitude, and trust in their fellow man should be enough to make adjustments that do not negatively affect (e.g. marginalize, oppress, discriminate against) certain groups. For ignoring the statements and information due to selfish intent, a willful ignorance, or purposeful discrimination should not be allowed within the confines of the legislature. The legislature sets the precedence and thus, if it is
accepted on a higher level, it will continue to be accepted in larger increments, the lower the level becomes (e.g., Federal, State, County, City, Jobs, Classrooms). Therefore, in order to change, the majority race must be acceptive to change, even if it means that the normality of America changes.

**Summation**

The take-away should be understood that the rise of Blacks is, in fact, a threat to the majority race’s way of life. This is so, as some of the majority race is used to easily obtaining jobs over minorities, living a higher quality of life, easily being accepted into universities and colleges over minorities, making decisions that solely benefit their way of life while demeaning and damaging the lives of the poor and minorities. With the rise of the Black population in the political structure and economically, the presence of Blacks will begin the dismantlement of ongoing systemic racism that negatively affects Blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Indians. The increase of Blacks includes the increase of educated Blacks, qualified Blacks, strategic Blacks, Black innovators, Black geniuses, and many more highly esteemed quality Blacks. It is not that Blacks have never fallen into any of these categories, it is that Blacks have either not been accepted or recognized for their contribution(s). Blacks create a threat economically, as Blacks are now being more accepted with their ideas, entrepreneurships, academic achievements, knowledge, talents, and skills. For centuries, Blacks have fought for a voice to be treated equally and to be treated equally must mean that one side increases while the other side decreases. Thus, discrimination, egos, pride, selfishness, must be destroyed and diminished as those characteristics set in, so that minorities can be treated equally, thus racial disparities in arrest should begin to decrease. The rise of Black political representation will
present un-comfortability to those who want the American society to stay the same, yet the
American society only benefits the majority race, and of the majority race it benefits the rich and
wealthy.

As the Black population increases, the threat increases to those who see discriminatory
and marginalizing methods as a tool and working factory to maintain dominance and control.
America was built on the backs of Blacks, yet Blacks barely have a seat at the table in the house
they built. With discrimination and racism being a norm that keeps the segregated schools,
housing, job opportunities, and educational opportunities, the presence of the Black population
and presence of Black political representation is indeed a threat – as Blacks will prosper, have
the same level of income, the same opportunities to move into middle and high-class
neighborhoods, the ability to be elected, vote, control how money is spent. This money may no
longer line the pockets of individuals with private prisons or people invested into prisons. With
higher status, the stereotypes and views of Blacks being ignorant, uneducated, aggressive,
violent, thugs, rappers, and only athletes will begin to dwindle, and status will dismantle the
falsely impressed images that taint the substance and power gifts of Black people.

In order for this research to gather more information, racial disparities in arrest to
decrease, and for American society to grow, the majority race must understand that Blacks will,
in fact, change America. Blacks will change what is acceptable, as Blacks have accepted too
much grief for too little pay and too little pay for so much grief. It is imperative that Black
political representation is increased not only in Florida but across the nation and globe and
provided the respect that is rightfully deserved. This research extends Blalock’s minority threat
theory in hopes to shine a light on an area lightly studied, an area in which is dismissed, and an
area that is critical to understand the relationship between politics and crime.
In the field of Criminology, this study seeks to be part of the beginning of research dedicated to politics and crime. This study does not only want to limit the use of Blacks as minorities but understand the significance of adequate representation for genders and other minority groups. With understanding the importance of representation, it can be understood how the lack of representation may disenfranchise or negatively affect a certain group. With the presence of adequate representation and respectful understanding from opposite groups, certain issues and/or crimes may decrease such as deaths from botched abortions, drug crimes, hate crimes, sexual harassment, over policing, and more issues. It is hoped that future research pulls from this study and builds on this study to further understand the contributions and factors that potentially cause crime. With more information, criminologists may then begin to understand methods to help assist in the prevention of crime by promoting political diversity for gender and race, promoting equality, and ultimately assisting advocates with this needed information to fight against the racist and sexist constructs that are faced in America, today. This research seeks to be a tool for equality, equity, and advocacy in the field of Criminology and American society, as it looks to a brighter and stronger world.
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