

Local Criminal Justice Survey

MacArthur Foundation's
Safety and Justice Challenge
All Sites Meeting
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What is Public opinion?

- Collective preferences – sum individual opinions
- Opinion - position on an issue
- Opinions are not facts

Why does Public Opinion Matter?

- Democratic theory
- Public's opinion reflected in government
- Context is important
- Public opinion can influence policy decisions

Our Survey Methods

- Annual National (50-state) online poll conducted by Zogby Analytics
- Separate poll of respondents from SJC sites

Annual Survey Sample Size

Source	N
2015 National	3,066
2016 National	3,007
2017 National	3,064
2017 SJC	10,596

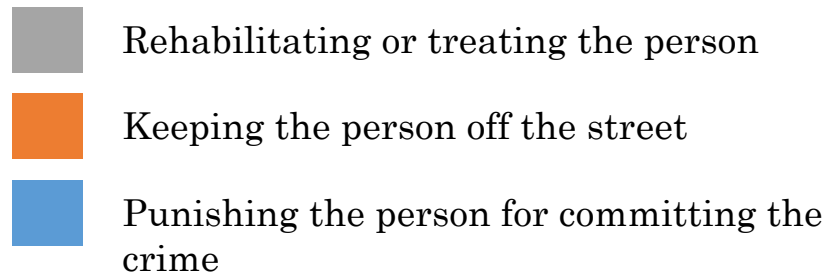
Survey Topics

- Knowledge of jails
- Attitudes regarding sentencing
- Decision makers in the criminal justice system
- Trust in police and criminal justice system
- Personal experience with courts and jails
- Additional items in the future

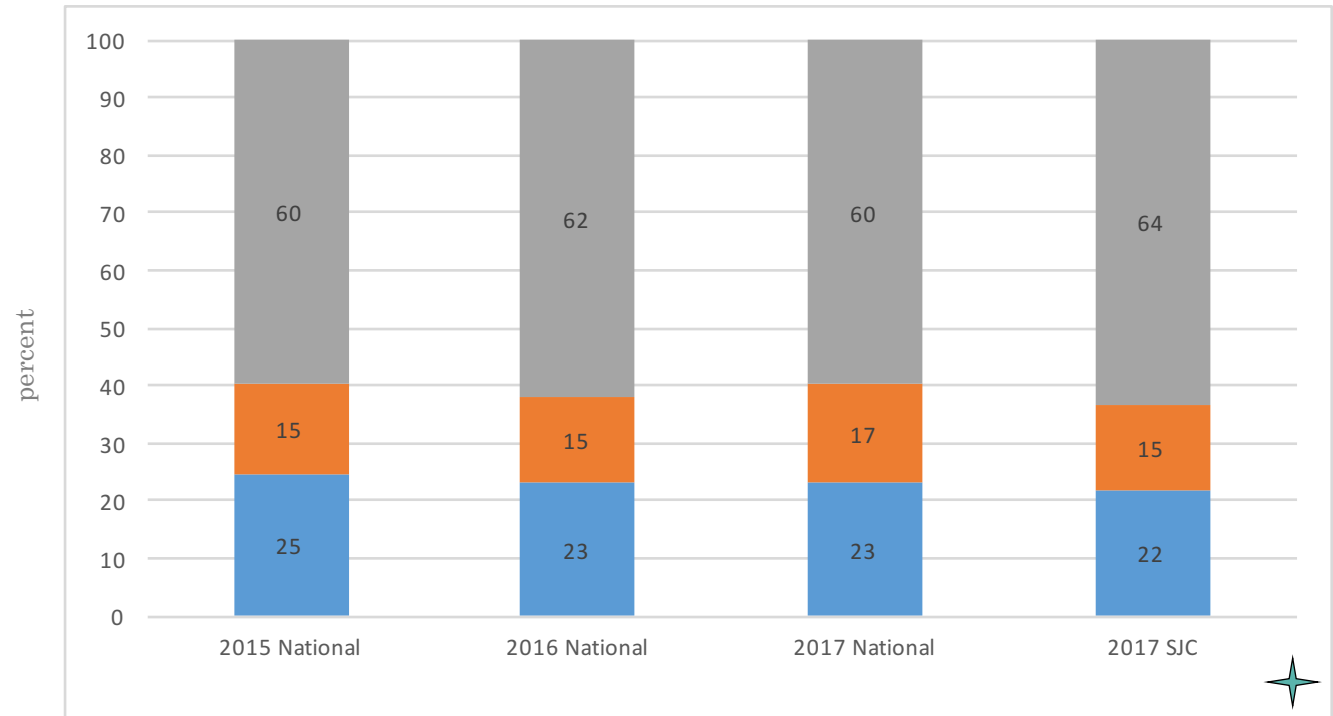
What is public opinion towards punitiveness vs. rehabilitation?

Broad support for rehabilitation for non-violent crimes

- Nearly two-thirds of all respondents view rehabilitation as the primary function for sentencing for the non-violent



What is the most important factor in sentencing?
non-violent crimes



statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2017 national samples



statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

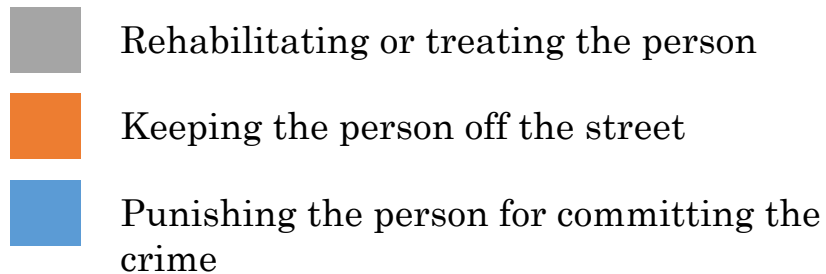
Poll the Audience

What is the most important factor in sentencing non-violent crimes committed by individuals with mental illnesses?

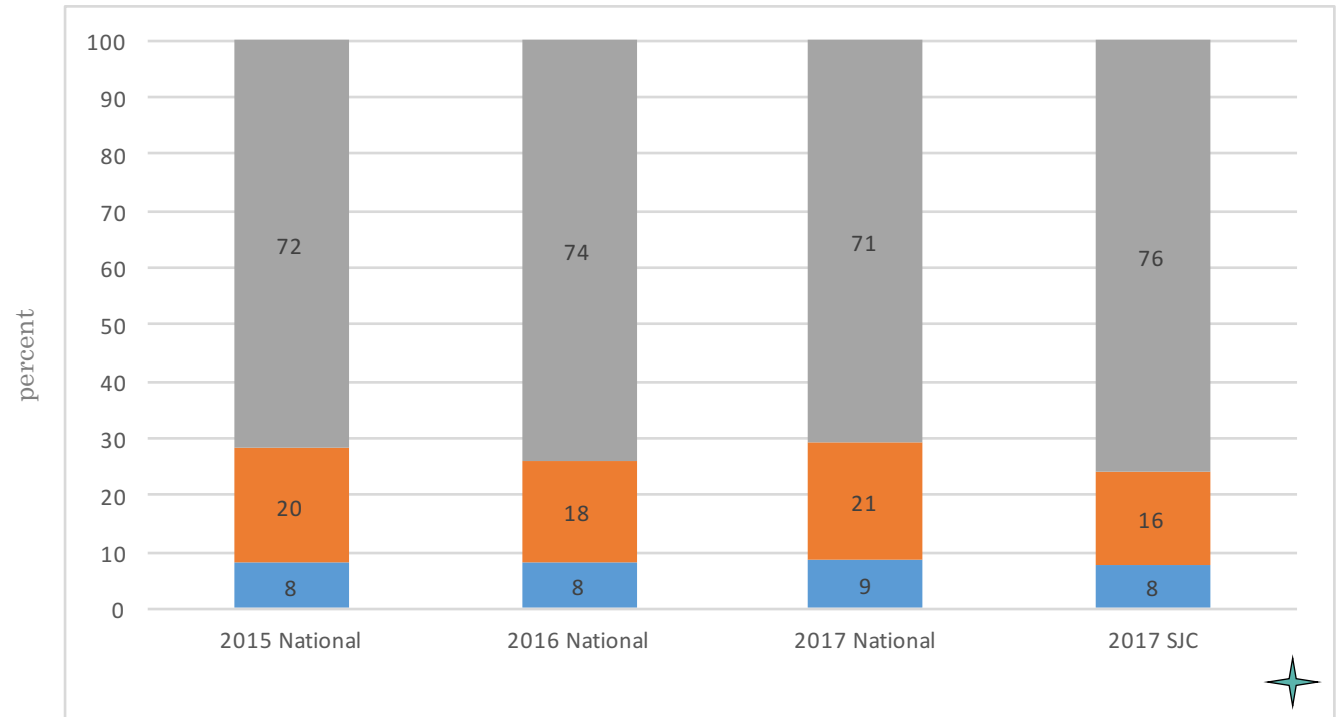
- 1) Rehabilitation/treatment
- 2) Keeping them off the streets
- 3) Punishment

Rehabilitation is the most important factor for sentencing the *mentally ill*

- Approximately 3 out of 4 Americans prefer rehabilitation for non-violent/mentally ill individuals.



What is the most important factor in sentencing?
non-violent crimes committed by individuals with mental illnesses



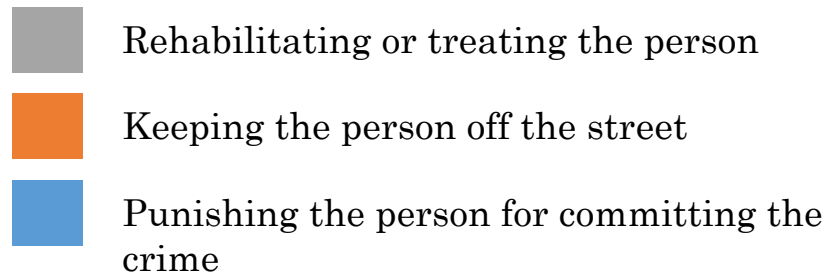
statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2017 national samples



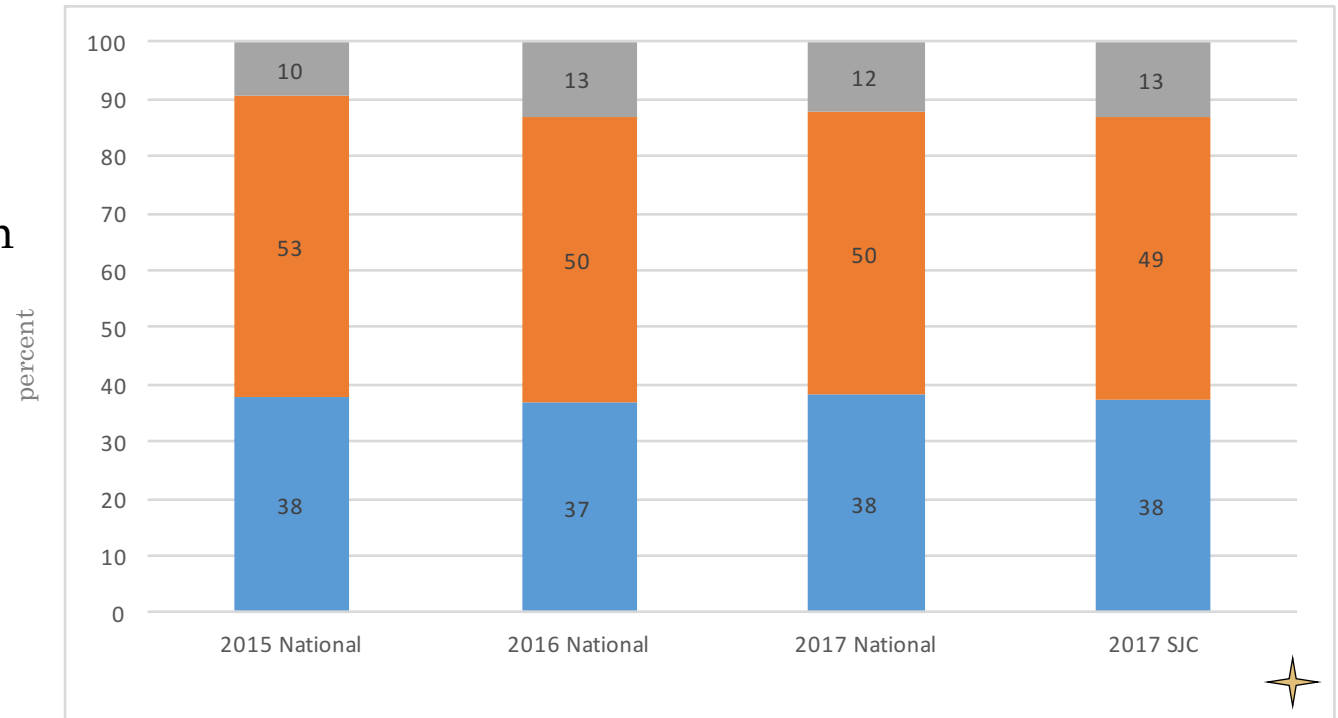
statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

For violent individuals, the public supports incarceration and incapacitation

- Nearly 9 out of 10 Americans think the point of sentencing for *violent individuals* is to keep them out of society or to punish them
- Just over 10% support rehabilitation for violent crimes



What is the most important factor in sentencing?
for violent crimes



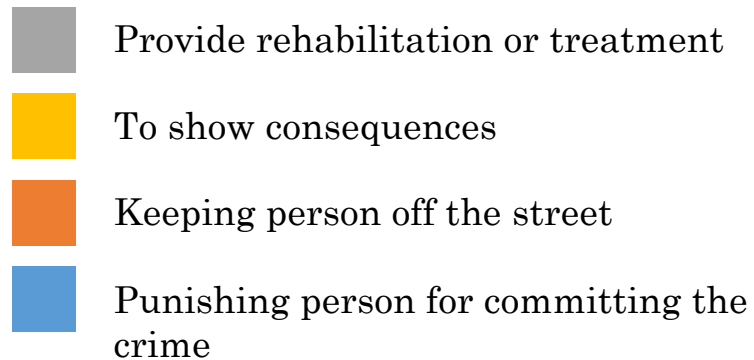
Poll the Audience

What do you think is the main role of jail for a convicted individual?

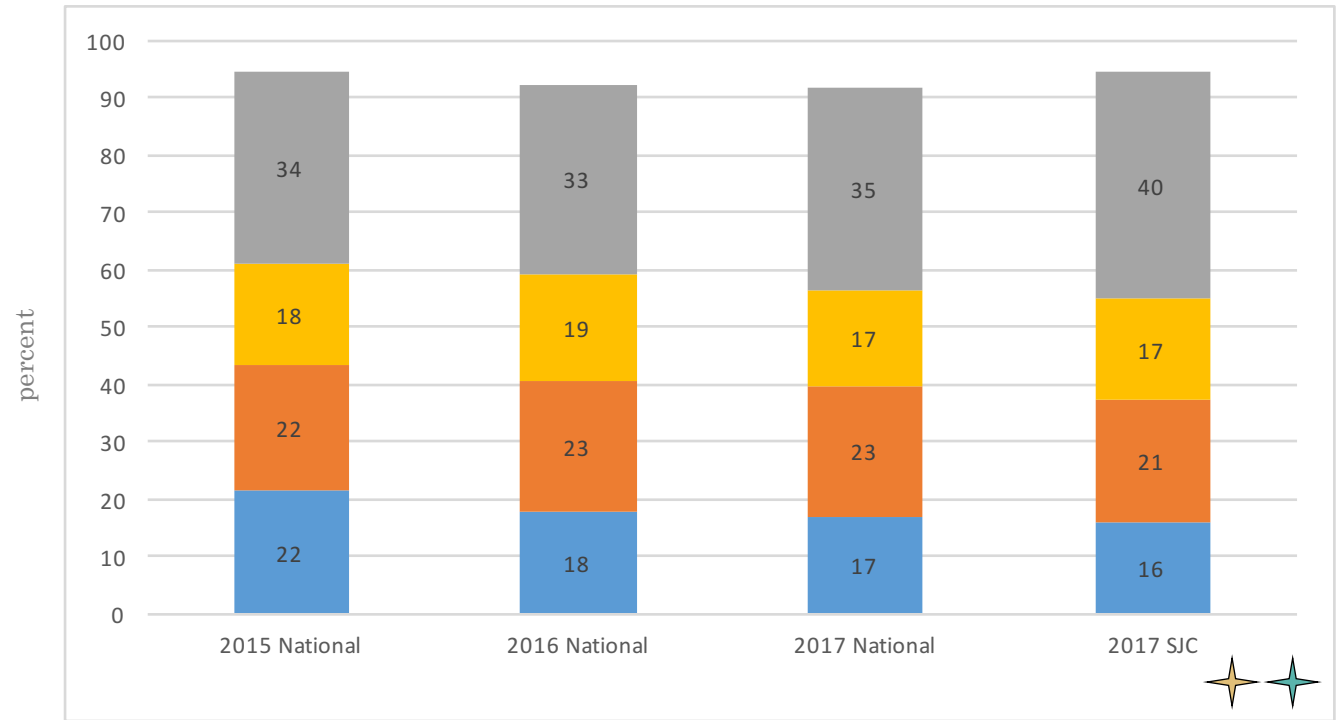
- 1) rehabilitation/treatment
- 2) show consequences
- 3) keeping them off the streets
- 4) punishment

More than 1 in 3 Americans feel rehabilitation is the purpose of jail

- Greatest support for rehabilitation is in the SJC sites
- One-fifth see incapacitation as the purpose of jails



What is the main role of jail for convicted individuals?



statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2017 national samples



statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

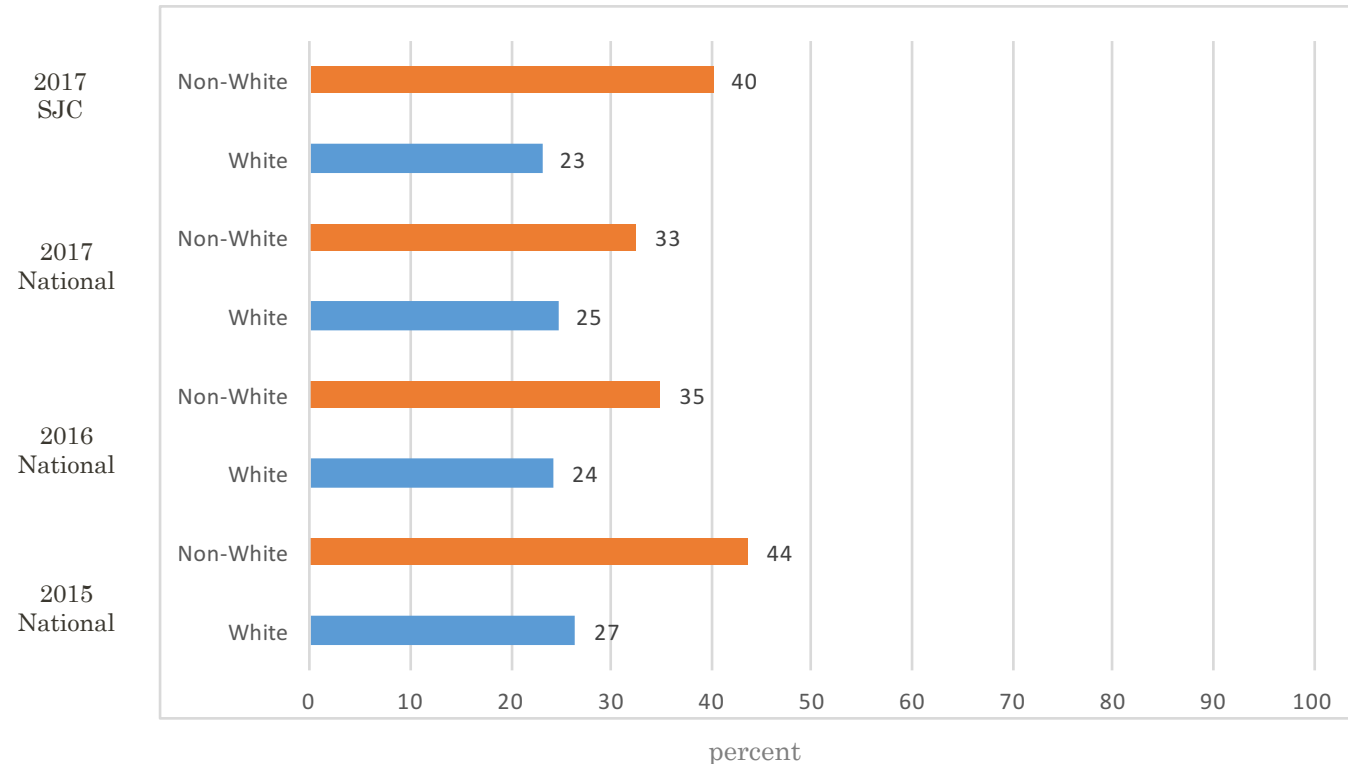
Explaining the racial/ethnic disparity in
local criminal justice systems

Non-whites more likely to cite unfairness in criminal justice system

- Nationally, gap between whites and non-whites narrowed
- Nationally, decrease in non-whites seeing CJ as unfair
- Non-whites in SJC sites nearly twice as likely to report unfairness as whites

non-white
white

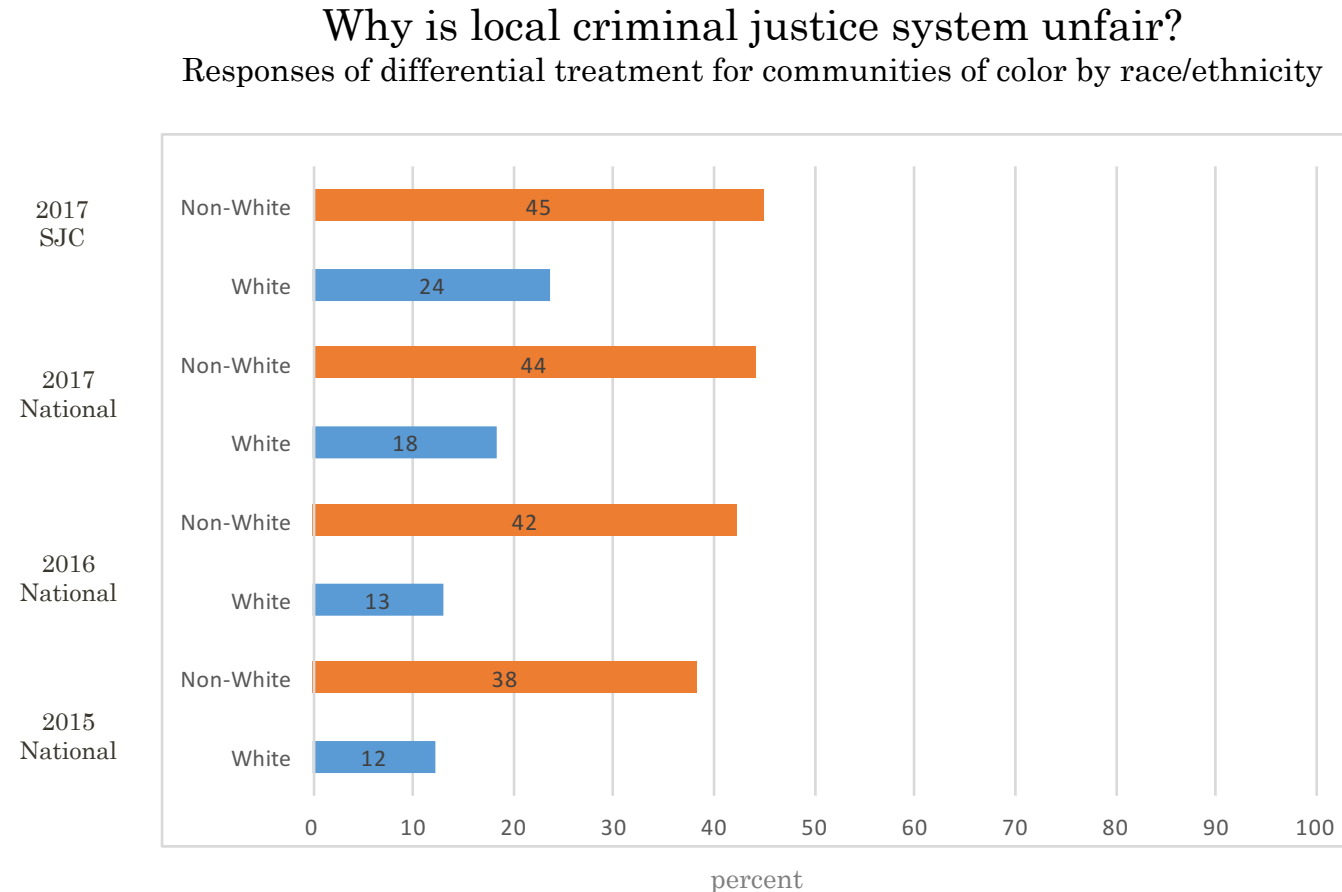
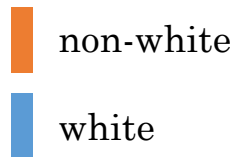
How fair do you believe your local criminal justice system is? (Percent reporting unfair)



* statistically significant differences by race for all years and sources

Non-whites more likely to attribute unfairness to differential treatment by race

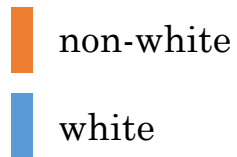
- Non-whites significantly more likely to cite differential treatment by race
- Nationally, increasingly more non-whites attribute unfairness to treatment



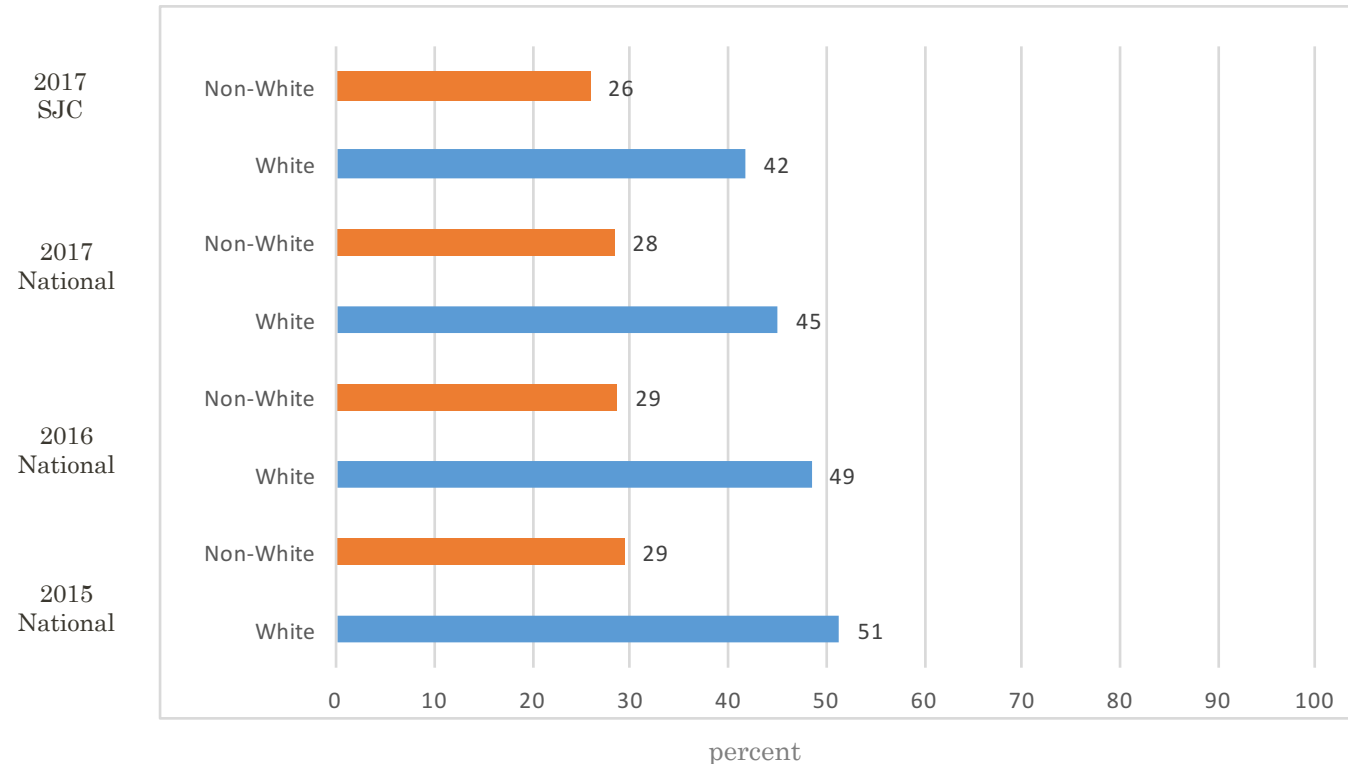
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White respondents are more likely to suggest higher minority crime rate to explain disparity in jail population

- Whites suggest disparities in jail due to higher minority crime rates
- Large differences between non-whites and whites



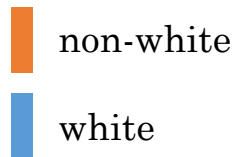
Explanation for racial disparity in jails by race/ethnicity:
“Non-whites commit more crimes”



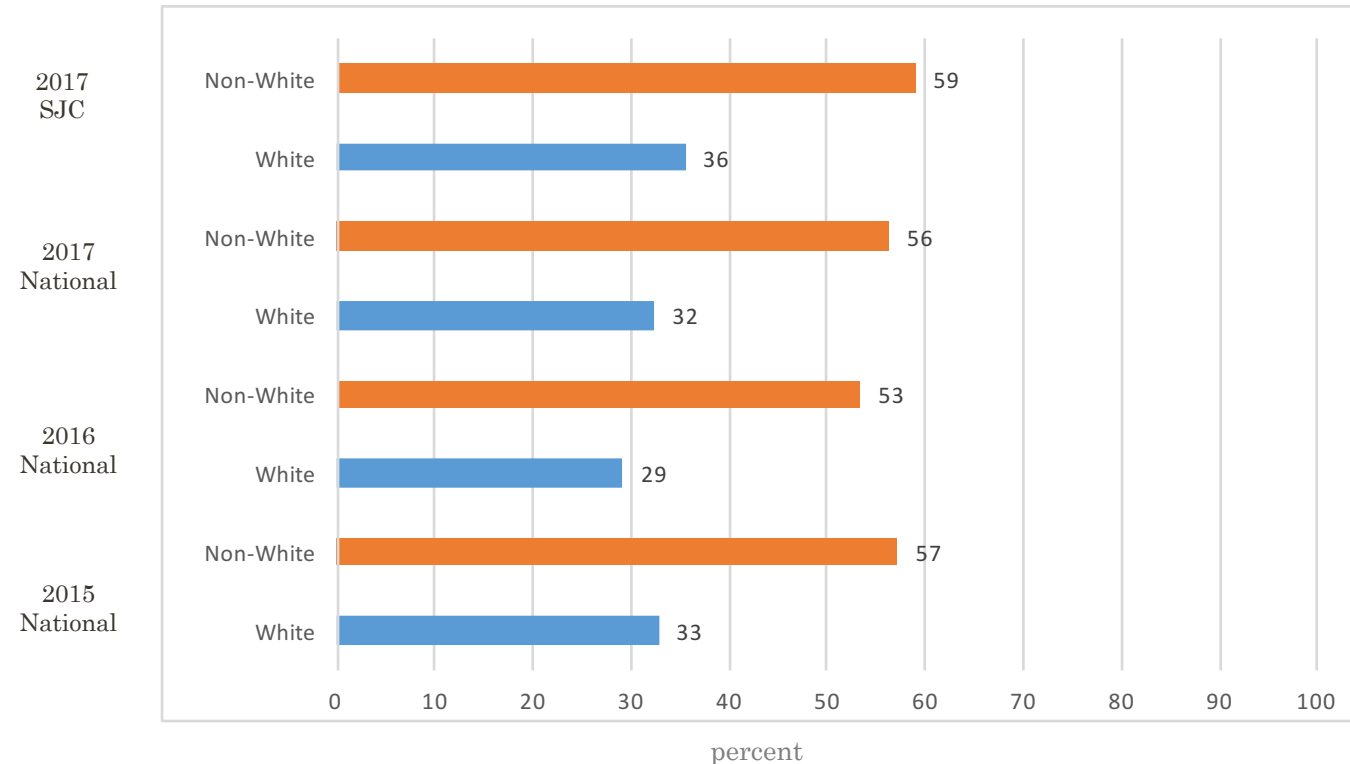
* statistically significant differences by race for all years and sources

Non-whites are more likely to suggest police targeting as cause of disparity in jail population

- Police targeting is seen as driver of disparities by:
 - One-third of whites
 - More than half of non-whites



Explanation for racial disparity in jails by race/ethnicity:
“Non-whites are targeted by police”



* statistically significant differences by race for all years and sources

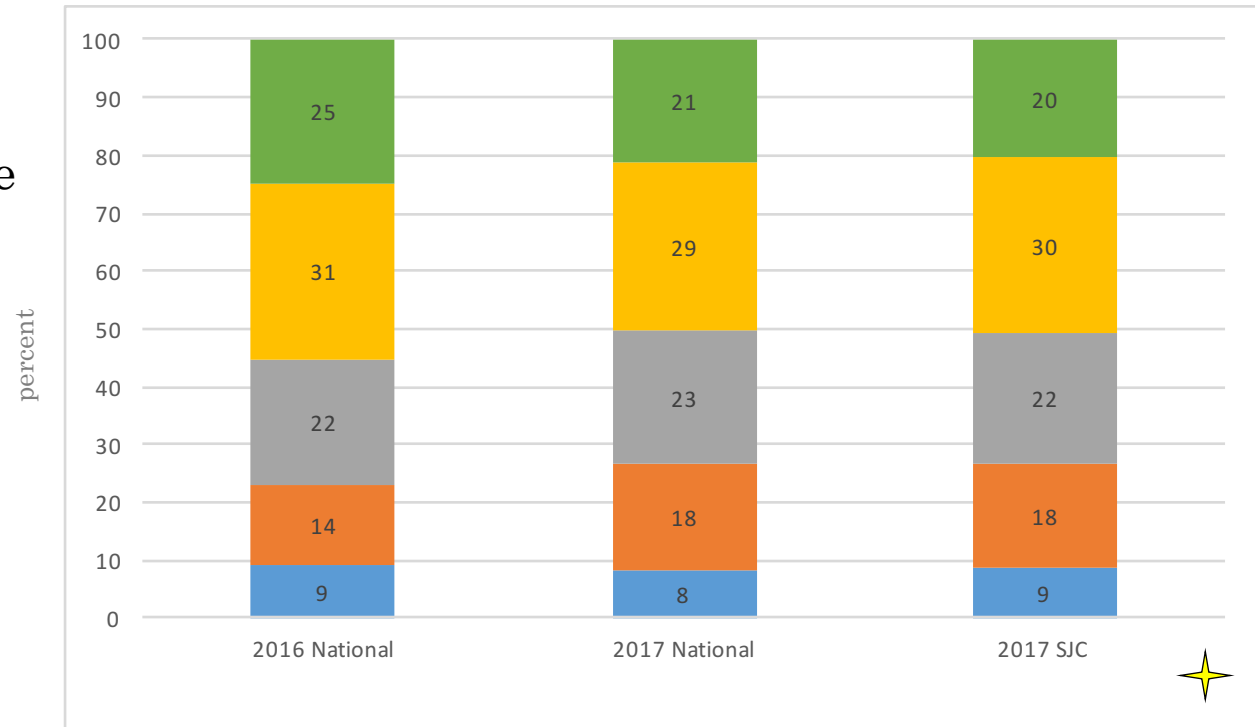
Public Opinion Towards the Police

Majority of Americans Trust Local Police

- Half of Americans report that they 'almost always' or 'usually' trust their local police
- Decreasing national trust for police



How much do you trust the police in your own community?





statistically significant difference between 2016 and 2017 national samples



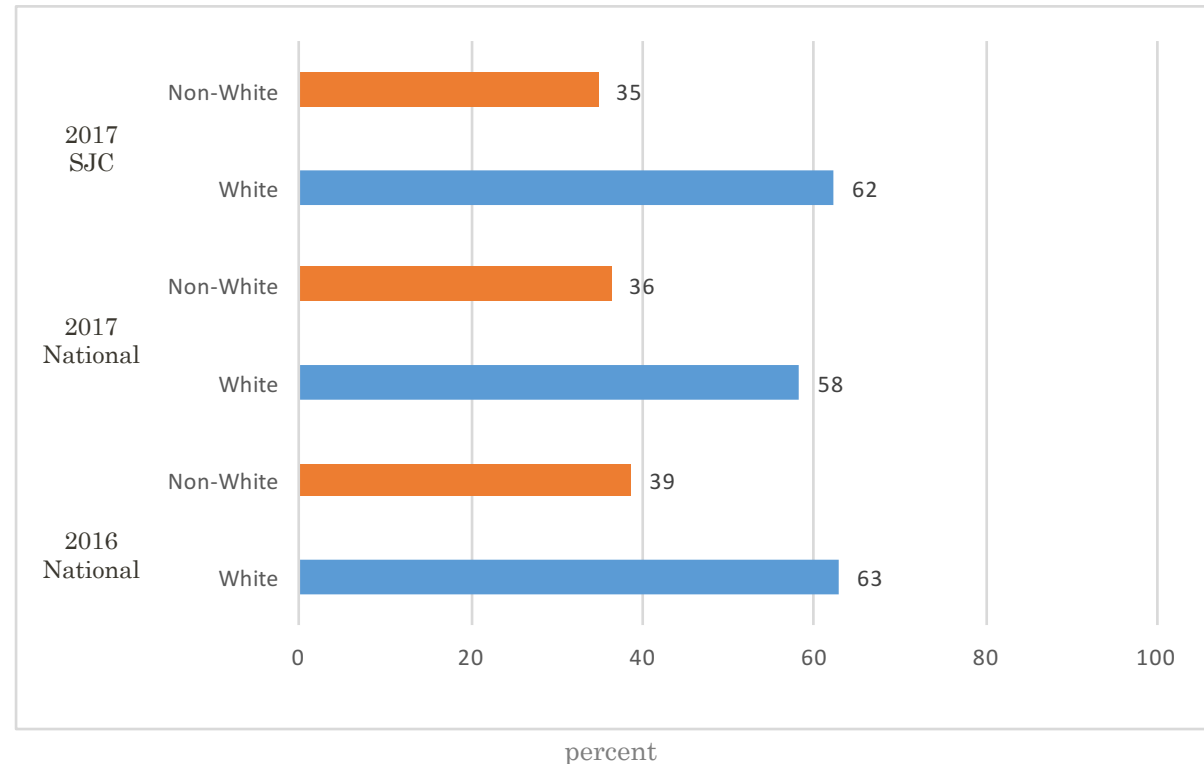
statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

Whites have higher levels of trust for the Police

- About 60% of whites report they 'almost always' or 'usually' trust their local police
- Fewer non-whites indicate this level of trust

 non-white
 white

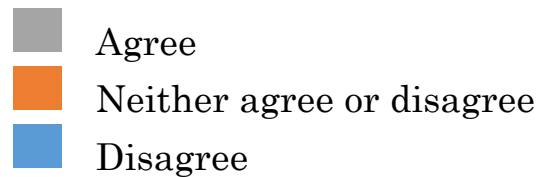
How much do you trust the police in your own community?
By race/ethnicity



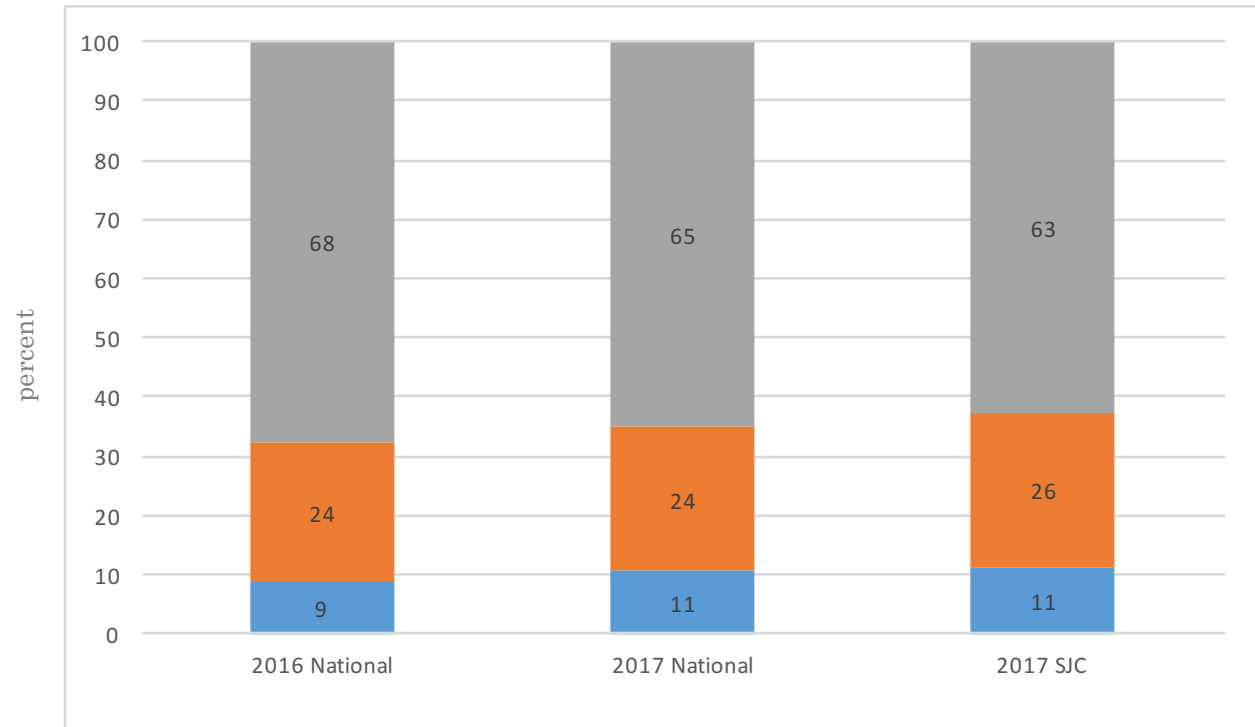
* statistically significant differences by race for all years and sources

Majority of Americans Feel Police Are Legitimate Authorities

- Nearly 2 out of 3 Americans feel that local police are legitimate and to be obeyed



Police are legitimate authorities and are to be obeyed



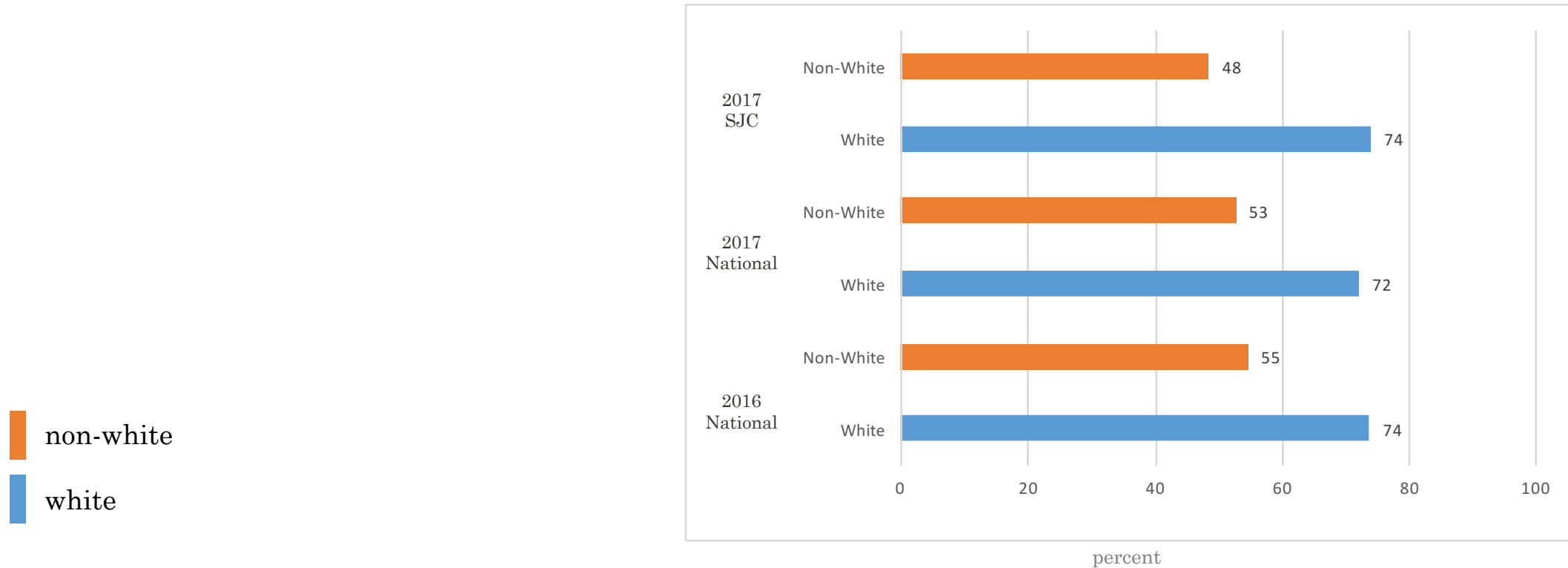
statistically significant difference between 2016 and 2017 national samples



statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

Despite Ethno-Racial Gaps, Most Describe Police as Legitimate

Police are legitimate authorities and are to be obeyed:
By race/ethnicity



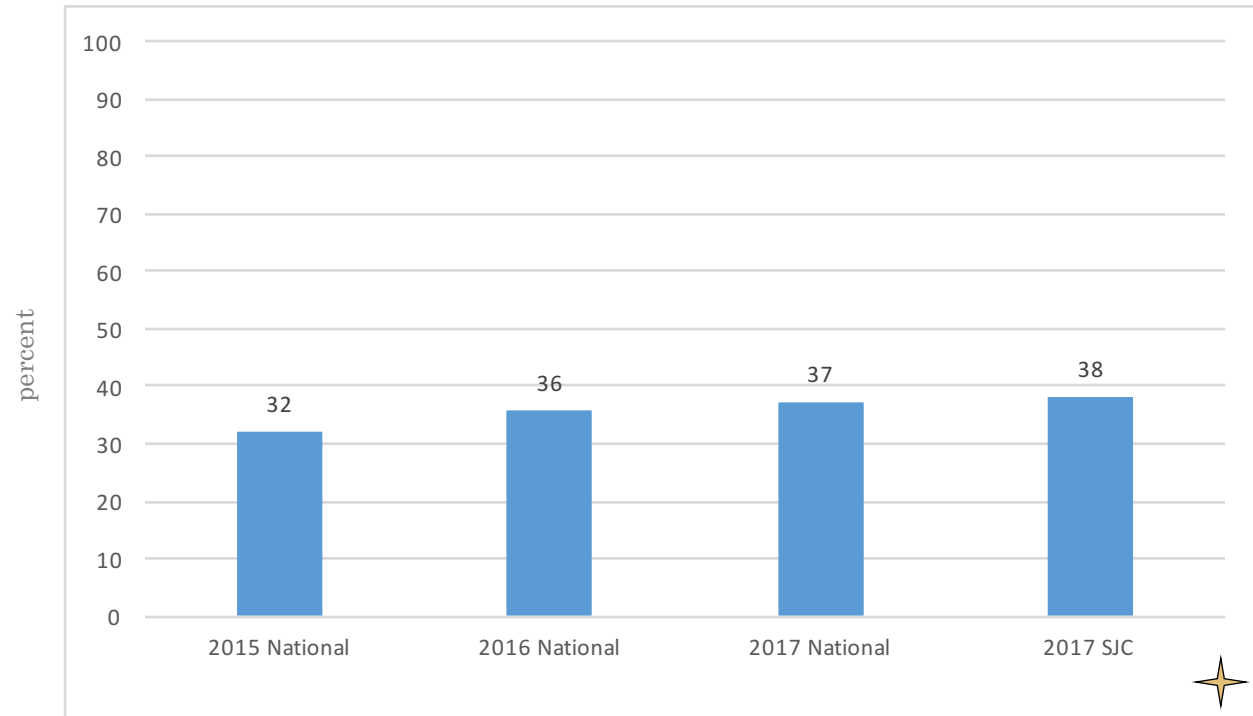
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What is the public's knowledge of and attitude
towards pretrial services?

Growing knowledge of pretrial services

- Knowledge of pretrial services increases
- More than 1 in 3 aware of pretrial programs

Percentage of Sample Familiar with Pretrial Services



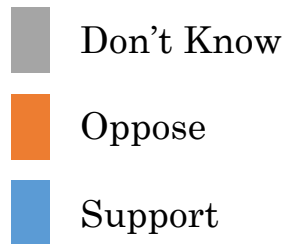
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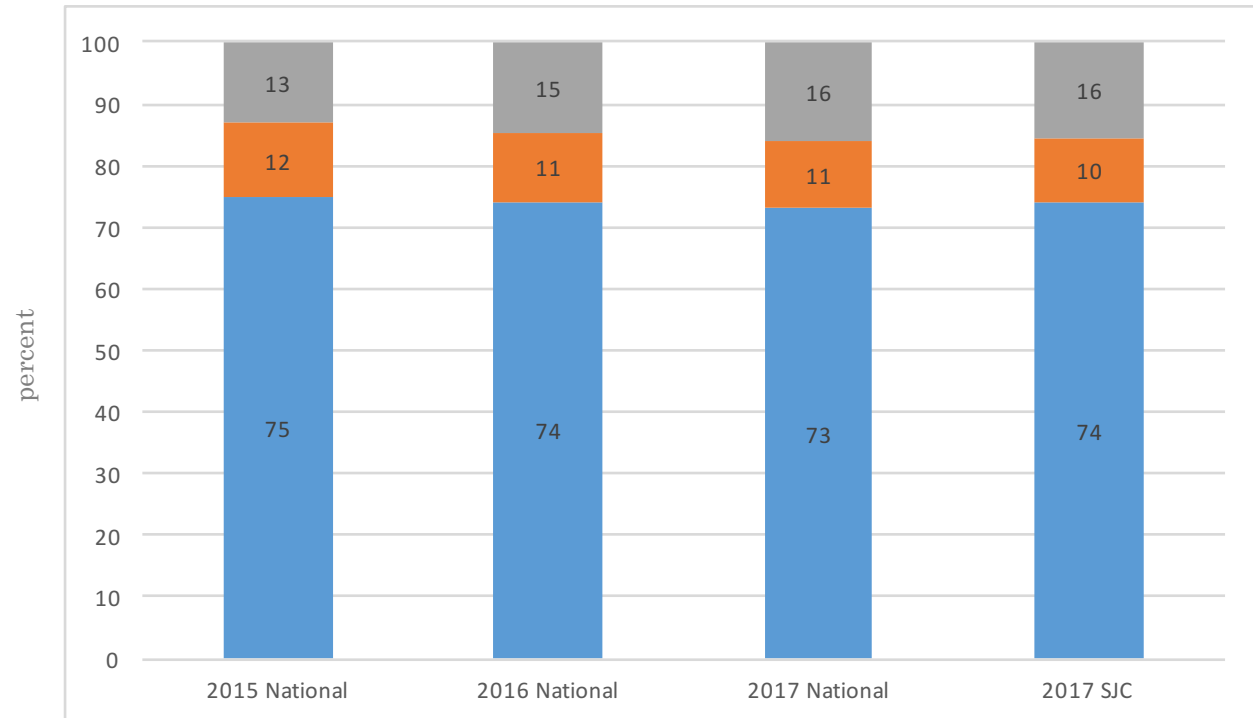
statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

Majority of knowledgeable Americans support use of pretrial services

- Nearly 3 in 4 Americans familiar with pretrial services approve of their use
- Consistent support across years



Opinion Towards Pretrial Services:
Respondents Familiar with Pretrial Programs



statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2017 national samples



statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

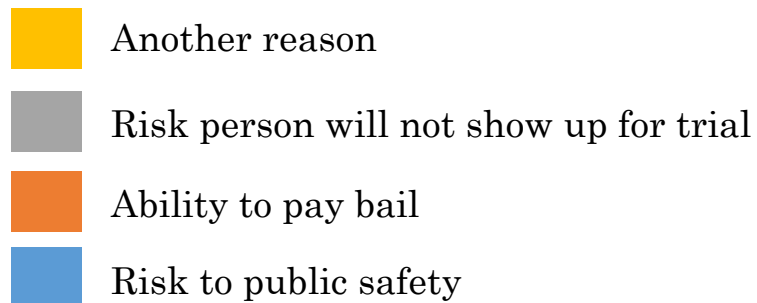
Poll the Audience

What do you think should be the main factor in determining pretrial release?

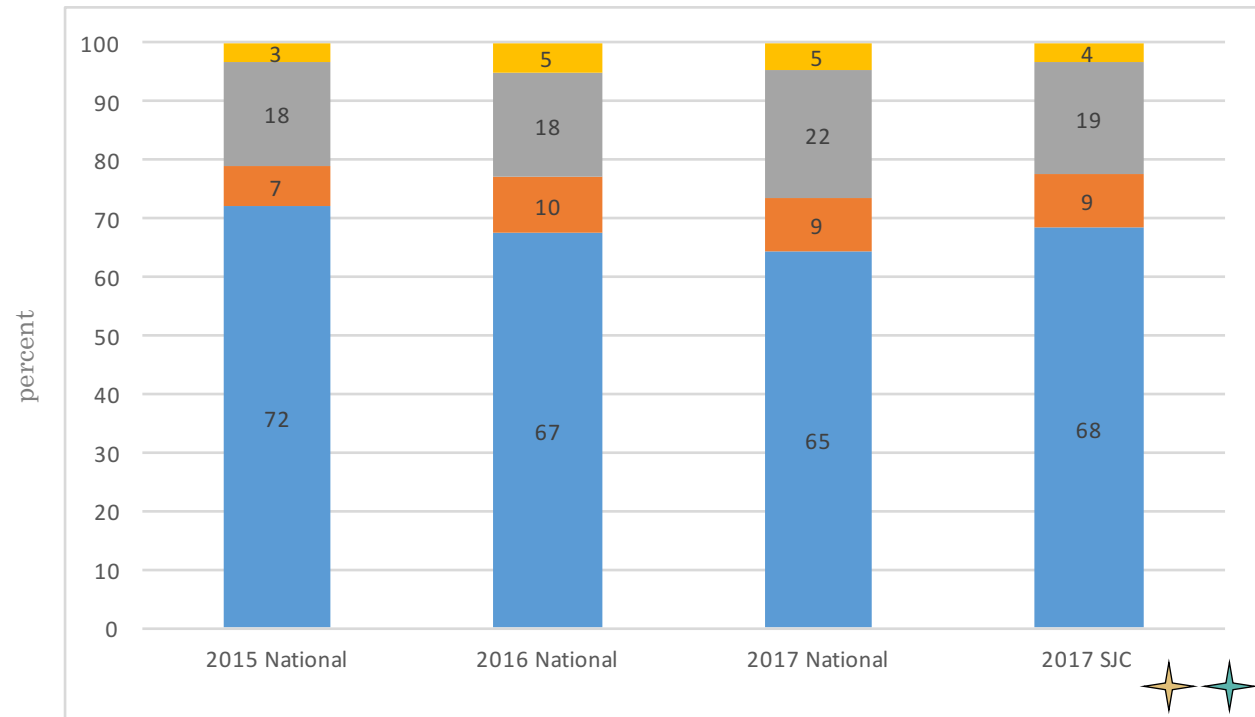
- 1) Risk to public safety
- 2) Ability to pay
- 3) Failure to appear
- 4) Another reason

Risk to public safety is the main factor in determining pretrial release

- More than two in three Americans view the risk to public safety as the main factor in pretrial release
- Few suggest the inability to pay bail should factor into pretrial release decisions



Main Factor in Determining Pretrial Release



statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2017 national samples



statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

Is the public aware of local CJ reforms?

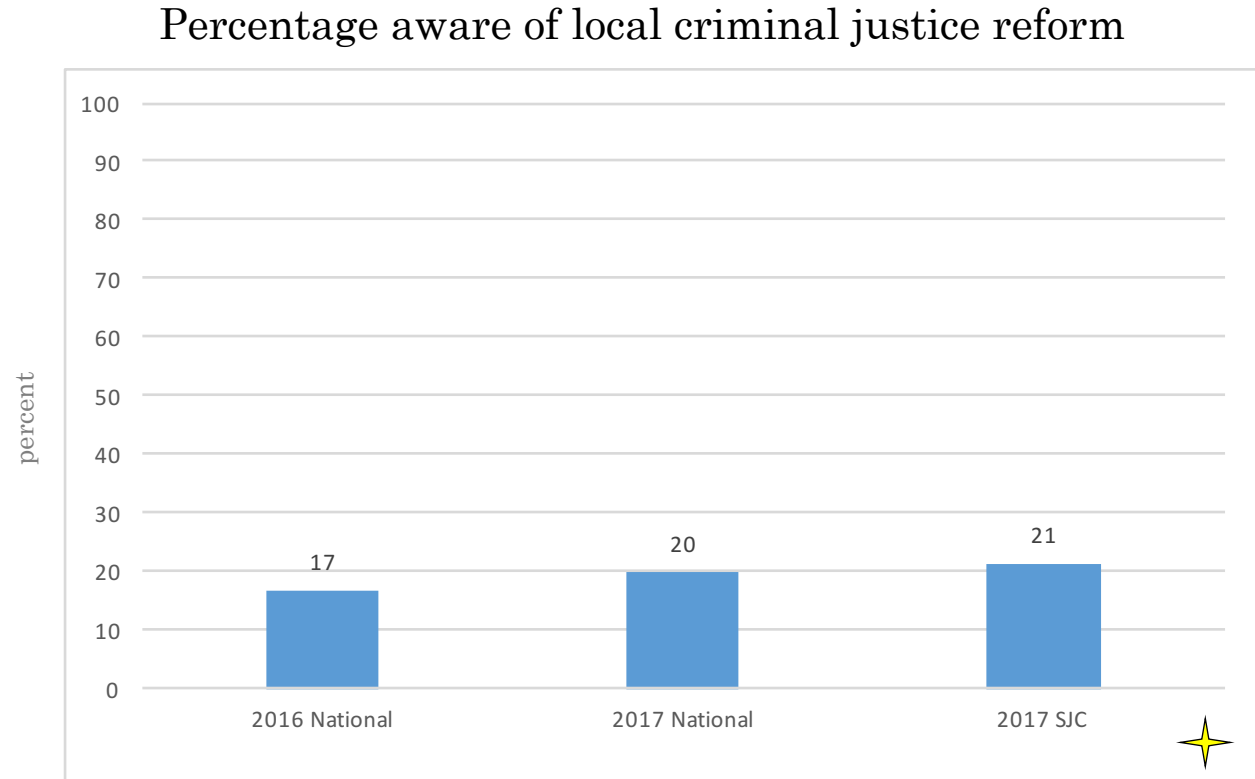
Poll the Audience

About what percent of the public is aware of local criminal justice reforms?

- 1) 6 percent
- 2) 20 percent
- 3) 33 percent
- 4) 42 percent

Majority of Public Unaware of Local CJ Reforms

- Approximately 1 in 5 Americans report knowledge of a reforms



statistically significant difference between 2016 and 2017 national samples



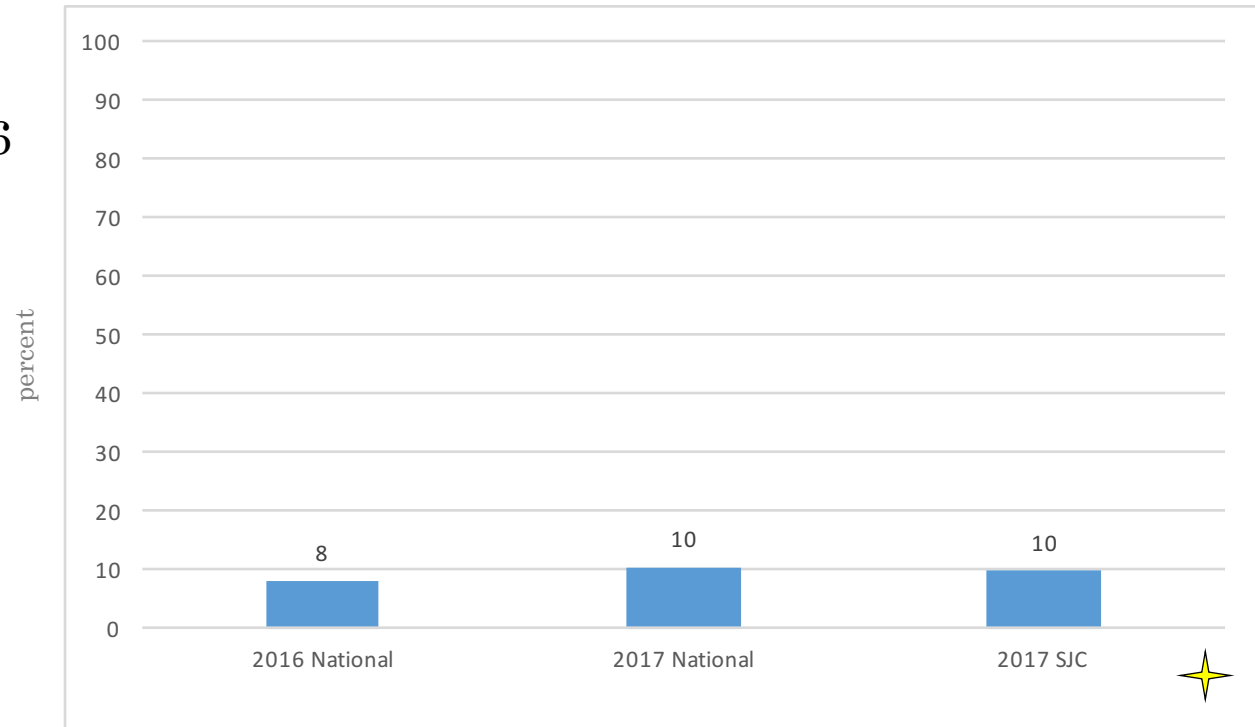
statistically significant difference between 2017 national and SJC samples

What proportion of the public reports having been involved in efforts that may contribute to CJ policies and practices development in the past year?

Even fewer Americans involved in CJ policy reform

- 10% of the public have participated in local CJ reform
- Participation has grown since 2016

Have you contributed to the development of CJ policies in the past year?



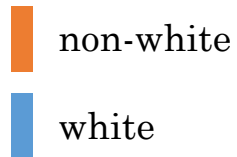
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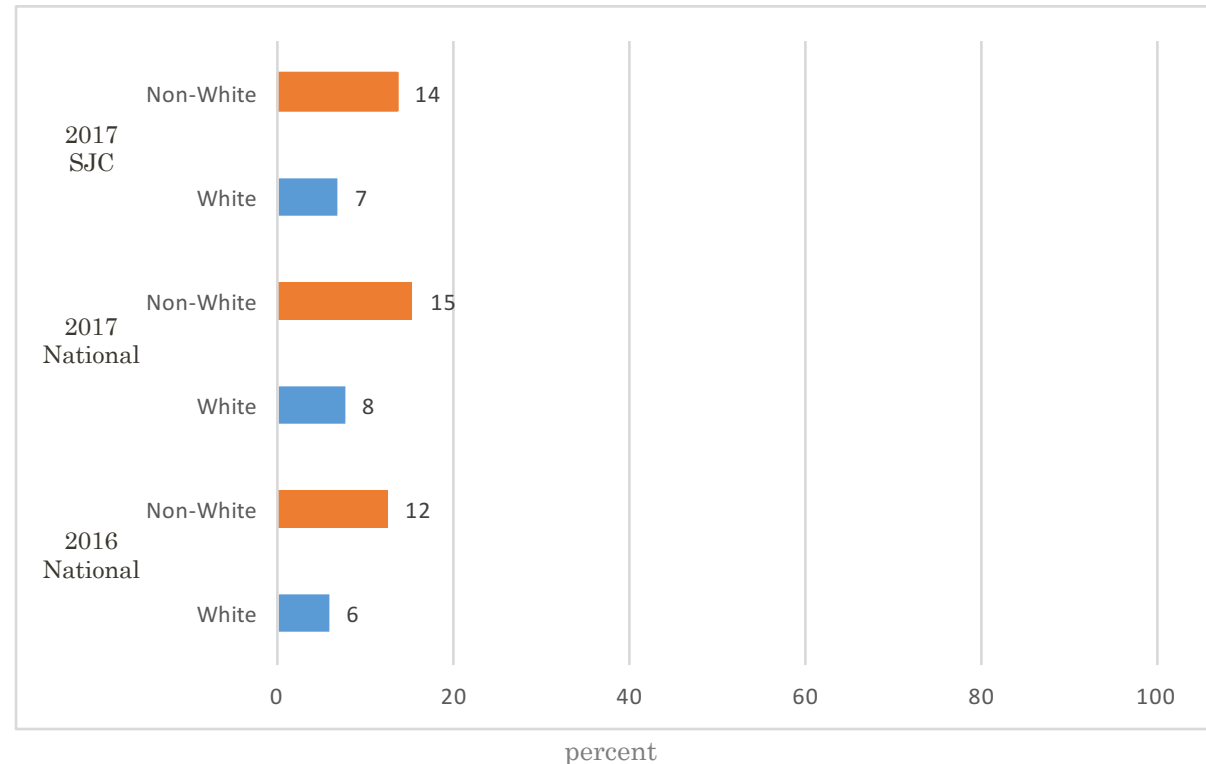
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Non-whites more likely to be involved in CJ reform & development

- Non-whites twice as likely to participate in CJ reforms



Have you contributed to the development of CJ policies in the past year?



* statistically significant differences by race for all years and sources

Overall Conclusions

- Rehabilitation – non-violent/MH
- Public safety – violent individuals and pretrial release
- CJ system and police – Fair and Legitimate
- Differential Involvement vs. Differential Enforcement
- Stark racial/ethnic differences

Thank You!

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