

Warrantless Arrest Laws for Domestic Violence: How are Youth Affected?

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Outline

- 1 Research Summary
- 2 Background- Existing Literature
- 3 Analysis- Data and Empirical Strategy
- 4 Results
- 5 Discussions

Research summary

- The study empirically examines the impact of warrantless arrest laws for domestic violence on policy-relevant youth health outcomes.
- The analysis explores exogenous variations across states and timing in implementation of state interventions in a difference-in-differences framework to identify causal impacts of the law.
- No direct link between warrantless arrest laws and domestic violence-related homicide rates.
- However, implementation of the laws is related to significant drop in the likelihood of having suicidal ideation and using substance among youth.

Domestic violence- A social problem

- Domestic violence is a large social and health concern in the United States.
- It includes physical, emotional, sexual, psychological as well as economic abuse involving family members and intimate partners.
- Domestic violence accounts for 21% of all non-fatal violent crimes in 2003-2012 (Truman & Morgan 2014).
- Direct economic costs (including medical, legal, and judicial expenses) are estimated to be in the range \$5.8-\$12.6 billion annually in the United States (CDC 2003; WHO 2011).

Domestic violence and youth

- While 15.5 million children are exposed to parental violence each year, 7 million children reside in households associated with severe domestic violence (McDonald et al. 2006; McDonald & Grych 2006).
- Children are exposed to domestic violence either by being directly abused by domestic violence offenders or by witnessing acts of domestic violence.
- Child and youth exposure to domestic violence includes various emotional and behavioral problems and health-related disorders (Beitchman et al. 1992; Briere & Diana 1994; Mullen 1996; Edleson 1998; Gayla 1998; Holden 2003; Kitzmann 2003; Wolfe et al. 2003; Holt et al. 2008; CWIG 2013; Safe Horizon 2015).

State-level domestic violence intervention

- States began implementing warrantless arrest laws for domestic violence incidents from the middle of 1980's.
- The laws allow the police to arrest a suspected abuser without a warrant if they have probable cause to believe that the crime was committed, even if the event took place out of their presence.
- Currently, all 51 states have domestic violence warrantless arrest laws.
- Warrantless arrest laws are commonly classified into: mandatory arrest (23 States), preferred arrest (6 States), and discretionary arrest (22 States) (Hirschel 2008; Zeoli et al. 2011).

Punitive measures in domestic violence - Potential effects

- Deterrent impact-
 - Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (1982) - Randomized experiment showed that arresting a domestic violence abuser reduces future risk of subsequent violence.
- Adverse impact-
 - 'Reprisal' and 'Reporting' hypothesis (Iyengar 2009) - Both theories imply that victims are less likely to report against their abuser due to fear of future violence and due to other psychological and emotional reasons.
 - Rise in dual and misdemeanor arrests (Hirschel et al., 2007) - Removal of both parents can expose children and teenagers to lack of parental supervision and care.

Analysis

- The analysis is organized in two parts.
 - Direct effect- First, we look at the effects of the laws on domestic violence-related homicide rates.
 - Indirect effect- We estimate the laws' effects on measures of youth violence, mental health, and substance use indicators.
- The analysis also considers important heterogeneities in state laws (Zeoli et al. 2011).
- Information on statutes and dates of passage of warrantless arrest laws across states are obtained from Iyengar (2009), Hirschel (2008), and Zeoli et al. (2011).

Dependent variables and other information

- Dependent variables:
 - Direct effects: Domestic violence-related homicide rates (counts per 100,000 people) - Overall (all ages) and youth (aged under 20) victimization rates and youth offence rates (UCR Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1991-2012)
 - Indirect effects: Five measures including serious fights, violence index, suicidal tendency index, and substance use indices (national and state YRBS, 1991-2013)
- State-level controls-
 - Regulatory - Anti-bullying laws, cigarette tax, beer tax, and child witness to domestic violence laws.
 - Education & crime - High-school dropout rate and arrest rate for violence against family and children.
 - Economic/Demographic - Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates and per-capita personal income, proportions of male, White, Hispanic, and adult population.

Empirical strategy

- We perform OLS/Probit regressions using five specifications ranging from a baseline model to a more saturated model.
- In the baseline model, we estimate:

$$DV_{st} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1(Law_{st}) + \gamma_s + \lambda_t + \epsilon_{st} \quad (1)$$

- In the most saturated model, we estimate:

$$DV_{st} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Law_{st}) + P'_{st}\beta_2 + Z'_{st}\beta_3 + \Omega_s \cdot t + \theta_1\delta_{st} + \theta_2(\delta_{st} * Law_{st}) + \gamma_s + \lambda_t + v_{st} \quad (2)$$

- We perform a parameterized event study for policy endogeneity (Granger causality) and address omitted variable bias in the most saturated model (equation 2).
- β_1 estimates the impact of the state laws on homicide rates/youth outcomes.

Direct effects of state laws

Table: Warrantless arrest law and DV-related homicide rates

	Overall victimization rate	Youth victimization rate	Youth offence rate
Model 5 specification(OLS)			
Arrest Law	-0.124 (0.188)	-0.039 (0.062)	-0.032 (0.070)
δ_{st}	-5.019** (8.269)	-2.089 (2.001)	-5.527** (1.242)
δ_{st} *Arrest law	0.099 (0.080)	0.004 (0.023)	-0.018 (0.014)

Indirect effects of state laws on youth

Table: DV-warrantless arrest laws and youth outcomes

	Serious fight	Violence index	Suicidal tendency index	Substance use index I	Substance use index II
Model 5 specification (Probit)					
Arrest Law	0.004 (0.002)	0.008 (0.009)	-0.016*** (0.005)	-0.017* (0.011)	-0.006 (0.017)
δ_{st}	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.010*** (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)	0.004 (0.005)
δ_{st}^* Arrest law	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.003)	0.005*** (0.002)	-0.000 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)

Sex-specific effects of state laws on youth

Table: DV-warrantless arrest laws and sex-specific effects

	Serious fight	Violence index	Suicidal tendency index	Substance use index I	Substance use index II
Model 5 specifications					
Arrest Law (HS girls)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.011)	-0.021** (0.008)	-0.024* (0.009)	-0.013 (0.016)
Arrest Law (HS boys)	0.006* (0.004)	0.025 (0.017)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.009 (0.014)	0.001 (0.020)

Concluding remarks

- There is no direct effect of warrantless arrest laws on domestic violence-related homicides - possible interaction between deterrent impact and risk of reprisal.
- However, implementation of the laws are likely to make youth feel more protective from potential offenders.
- There are large heterogeneities observed in the regression estimates when we account for important classifications in state laws.
- Warrantless arrest laws are relatively more effective for girls compared to boys.
- This study opens up a large scope for future research with respect to domestic violence-related public intervention.

Thank You!!

Thank you very much for your time!!