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Connections between Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use and Violent Crime within the Black Community

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Connections Between Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use and Violent Crime Within the Black Community

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Introduction

- According to a CDC report, homicide is the number one cause of death for Blacks Males aged 1-44 (1).
- While there are several contributing causes to this epidemic, this project will be limited in scope to the effects of illegal drugs and alcohol in propounding Black-on-Black violence.
- The effects of alcohol on the body are well-known and copiously documented. It decreases self-control, clouds thinking, and is associated with reckless behavior (2).
- Similarly, drug consumption promotes violent and unpredictable behavior, anxiety, and mental deterioration (3). Users are also known to resort to homicide in extreme instances to acquire more.



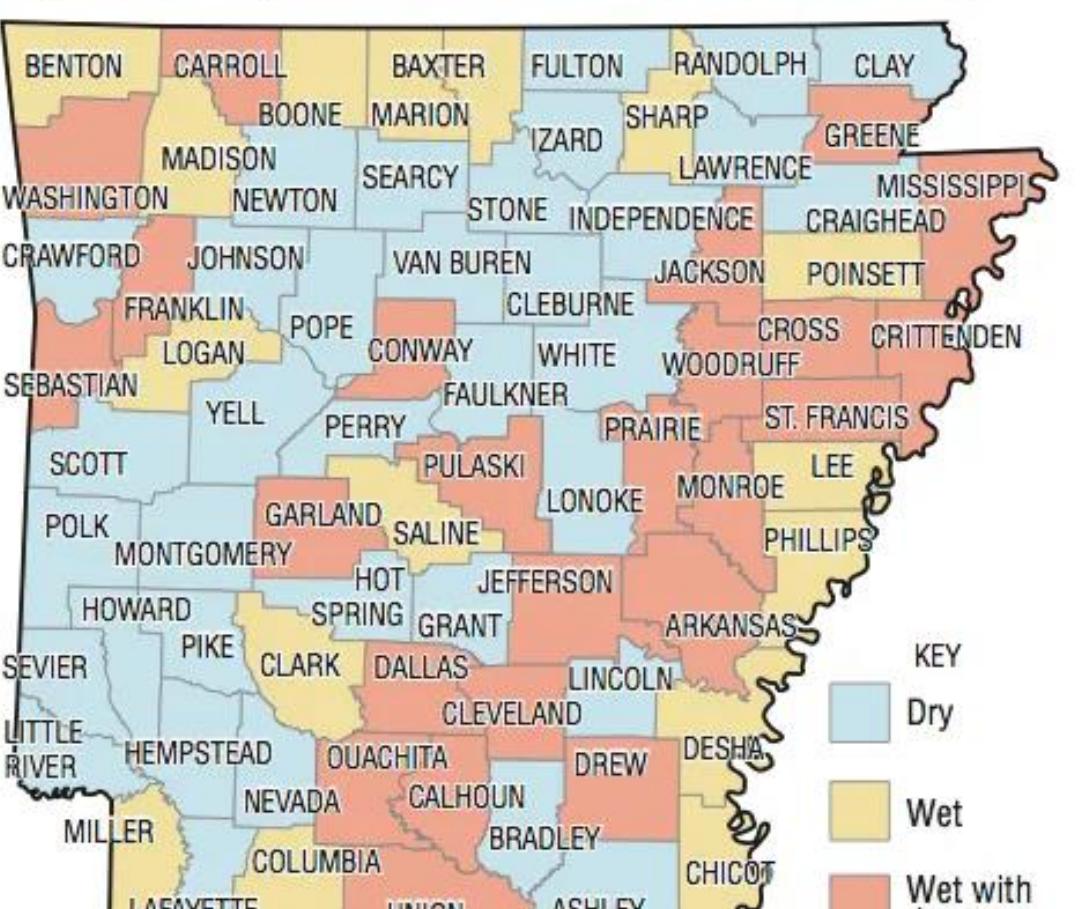
- The goal of this research project is to examine if there is a link between illegal drug and alcohol use and violence within the Black community**
- Once a conclusion has been reached, more informed policy, policing, and community decisions can be made in an ongoing effort to reduce overall violence within the Black community

Methodology

- First, three Wet and three Dry counties with a significant number of African Americans will be selected. The violent crime rate between the two groups of counties will then be compared.
- Further analysis of alcohol consumption among the Black population as well as drug and alcohol related violent crimes will be done to focus the research on the Black community specifically.
- Research related to the research question will be analyzed as well and topical conclusions will be reported.
- Chicot, Desha, and Phillips are the Wet counties in Arkansas that were used in this analysis
- Ashley, Lincoln, and Cleburne are the Dry counties in Arkansas that were used in this analysis

Arkansas' patchwork of liquor laws

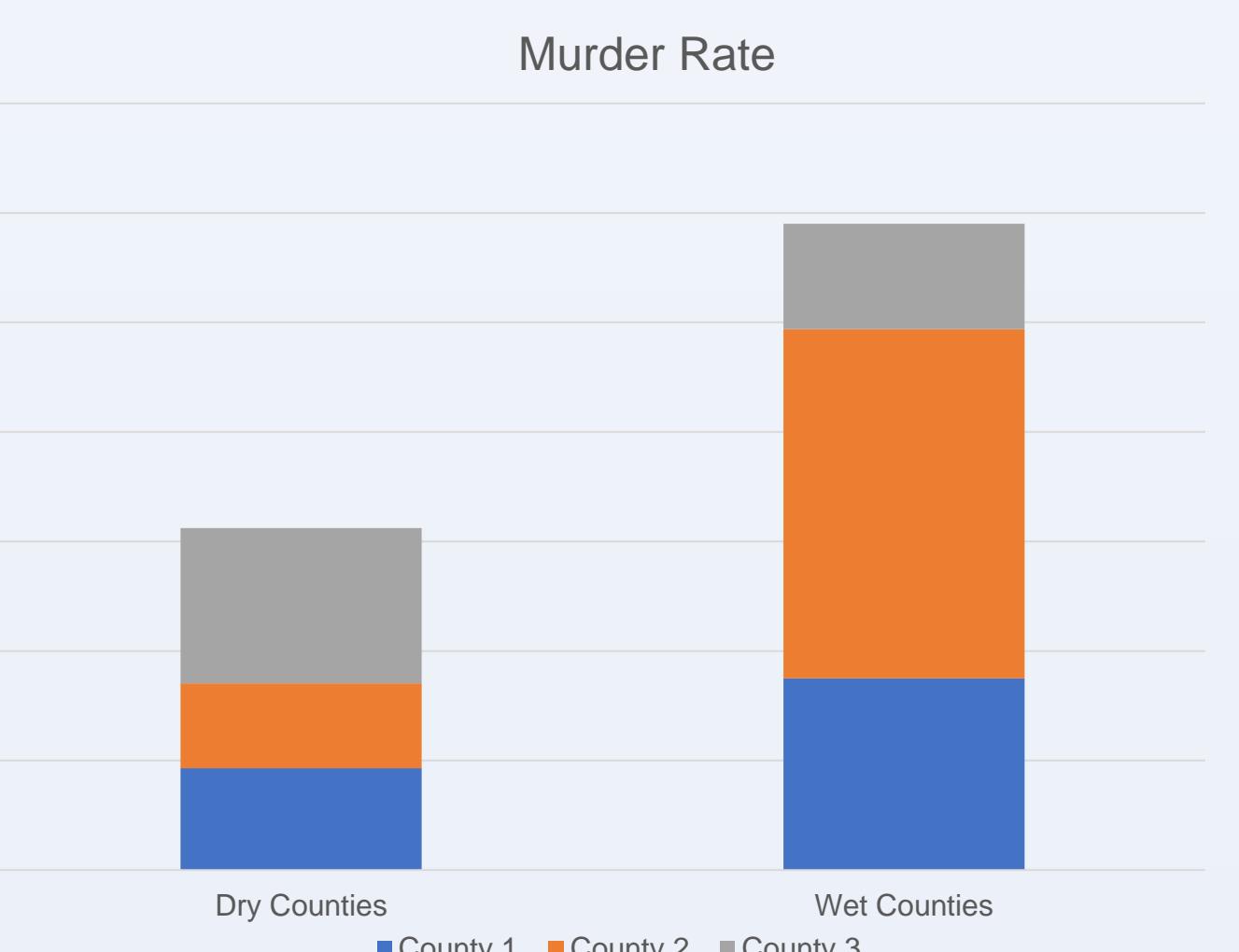
Along Interstate 40, between Pulaski County and the Oklahoma state line, there are only two counties where the sale of alcohol is legal.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Results

- Throughout the research process, it was found that alcohol was a factor in 40% of violent crimes (4).
- For the Wet Counties, the results were as follows: Chicot county murder rate per 100,000 people was 8.75, Desha county murder rate per 100,000 people was 15.94, and Phillips county murder rate per 100,000 people was 4.81 (6). The average murder rate per 100,000 of the Wet Counties was 9.83.
- For the Dry Counties, the results were as follows: Ashley county murder rate per 100,000 people was 4.65, Lincoln county murder rate per 100,000 people was 7.09, and Cleburne county murder rate per 100,000 people was 3.87 (6). The average murder rate per 100,000 of the Dry Counties was 5.20.
- Existing research has shown that Blacks consume alcohol less frequently than Whites (the ethnic group with the highest consumption) and take illegal drugs at approximately the same rates as other ethnic groups (5).



Conclusions

- There is a correlation, but not complete causation between alcohol and drug consumption and violent crime within the Black community (4),(7).
- While there are numerous other factors at play that account for the difference in murder rates between Wet and Dry counties, the research cited shows that the legal presence of alcohol is a potential modifier.
- With this information in mind, there are several things that communities can do to stymie the influence that illegal drugs and alcohol have on the Black community
- Some of these changes can include more accessible rehabilitation programs, additional community policing to better address specific needs, and policy to deter and limit the spread of illegal drugs further

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