San Francisco Taskforce on Fines & Fees

The Financial Justice Project

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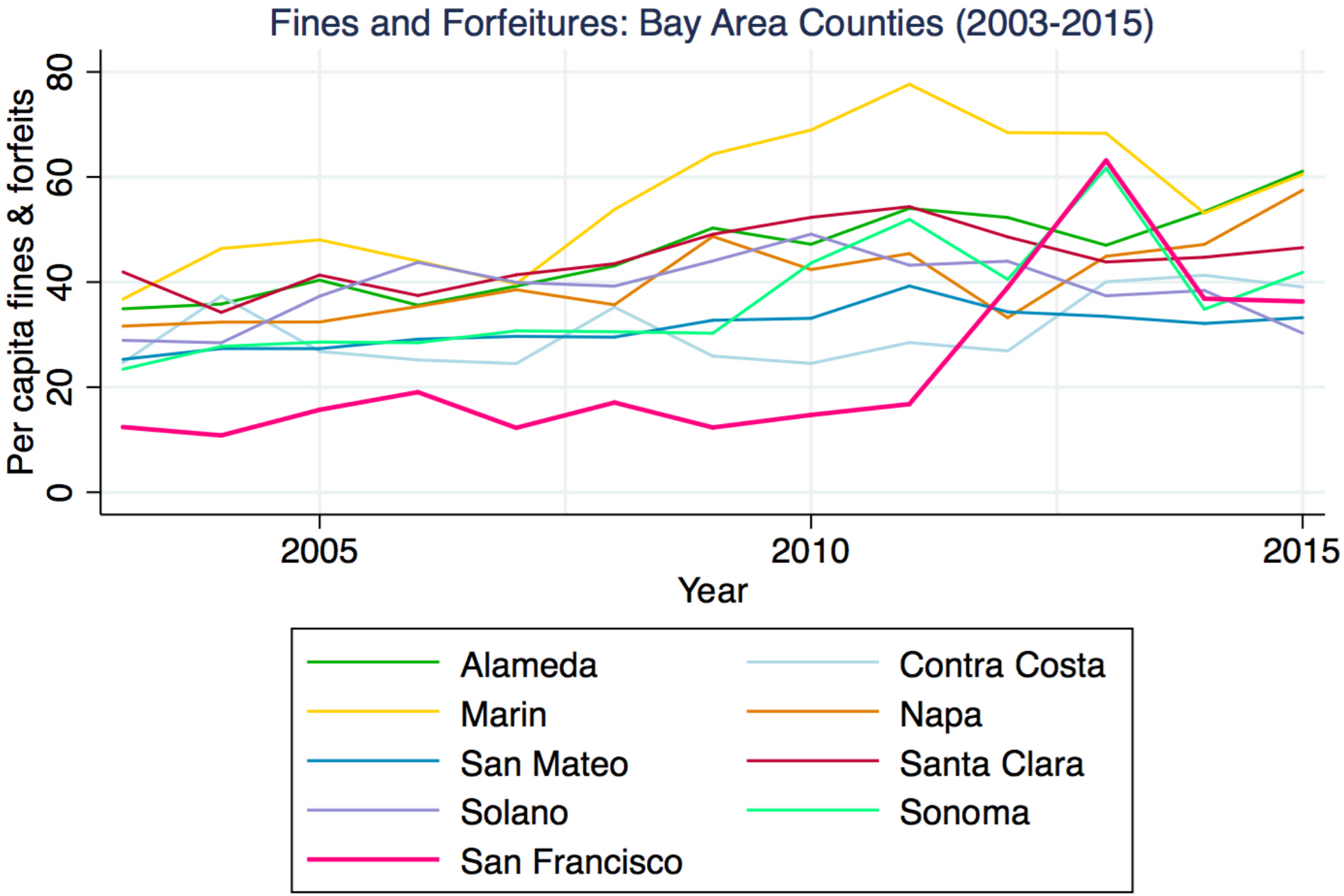
Municipal Reliance on Fines & Forfeitures: Motivation for Project

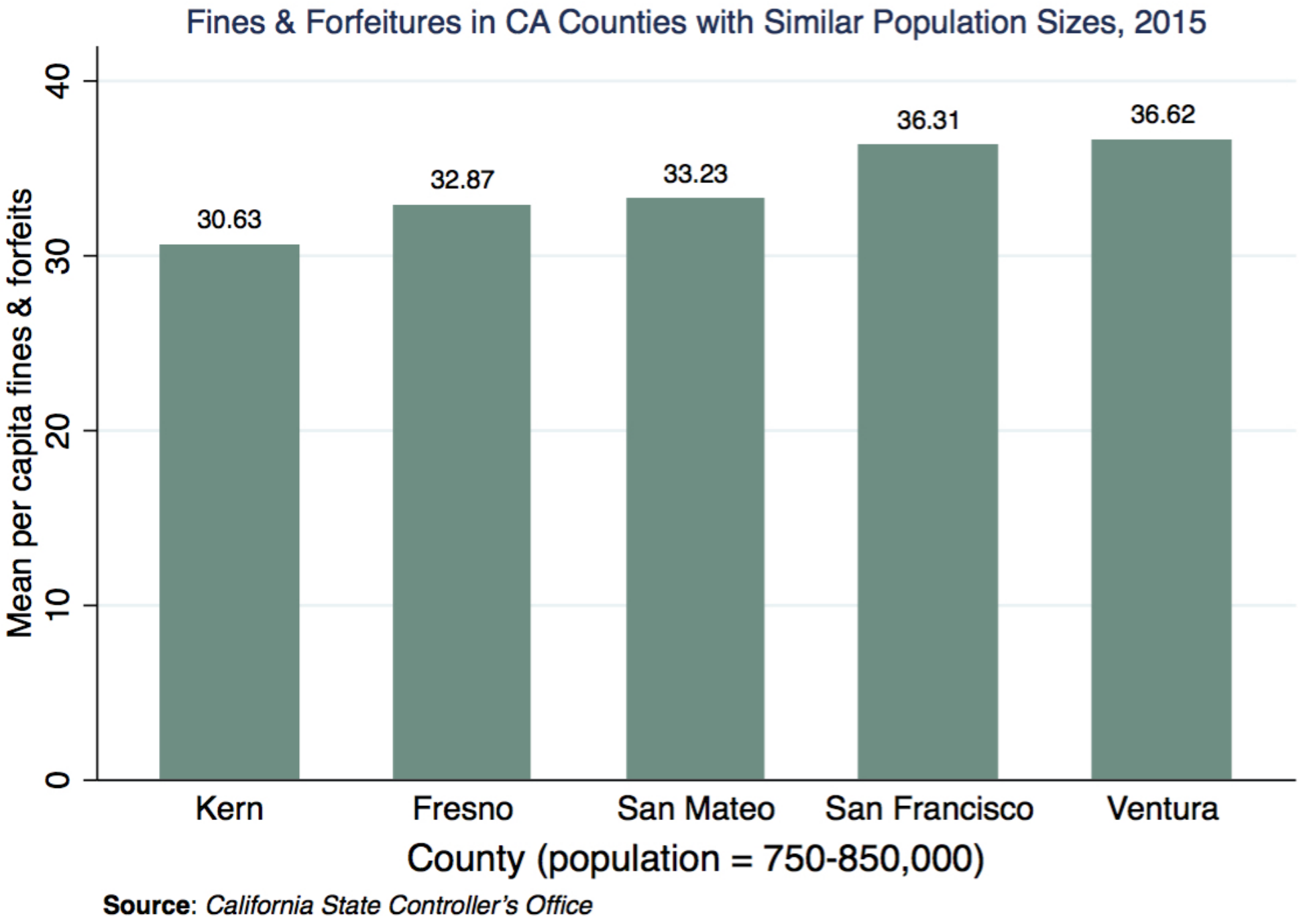
- The need to understand role of fine, forfeiture, and fee revenue in funding public sector.
- National picture: across all 3000+ counties, 10,000+ municipalities.
- Model economic, social, and demographic correlates:
  - State/Region of Country
  - City Size & Statutory Context
  - Race, Ethnicity, Immigration
  - Role of Revenue Shocks

Understanding The Data

- Census Definition:
  - "Revenue from penalties imposed for violations of law; civil penalties (e.g., for violating court orders); court fees if levied upon conviction of a crime or violation; court-ordered restitutions to crime victims where government actually collects the monies; and forfeits of deposits held for performance guarantees or against loss or damage (such as forfeited bail and collateral)."
- SF is consolidated City & County
  - Complicates reporting; difficult to disentangle
- Compare SF to:
  - Other CA Counties by aggregating across all cities within county
  - Other large consolidated City-County units
- Caveats
  - Data quality
  - Only see revenue dollars collected, not outstanding debts
  - Fine & Forfeiture *revenue level* not a measure of how punitive, regressive or impactful fine and fees are



Source: *California State Controller's Office*



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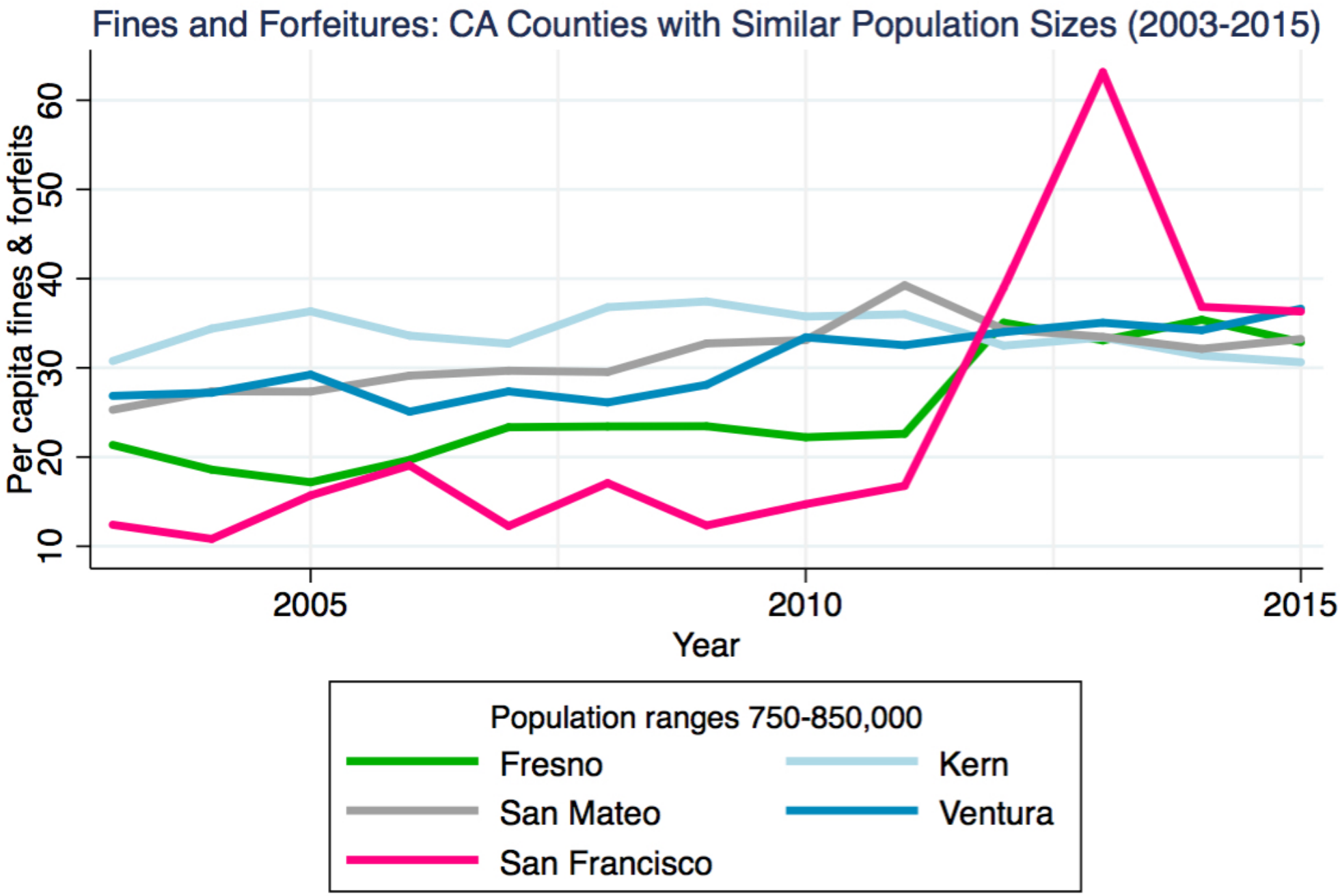

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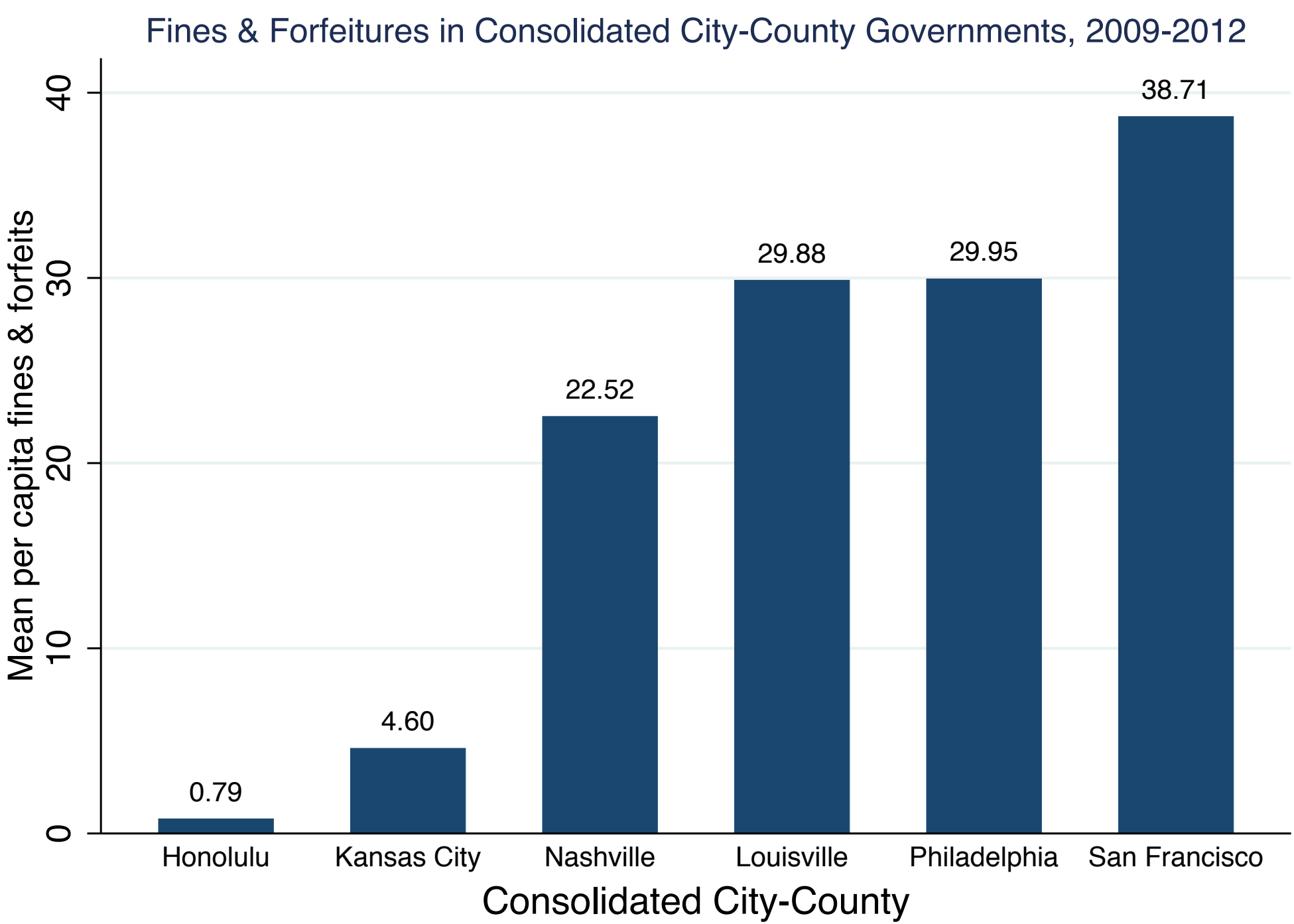
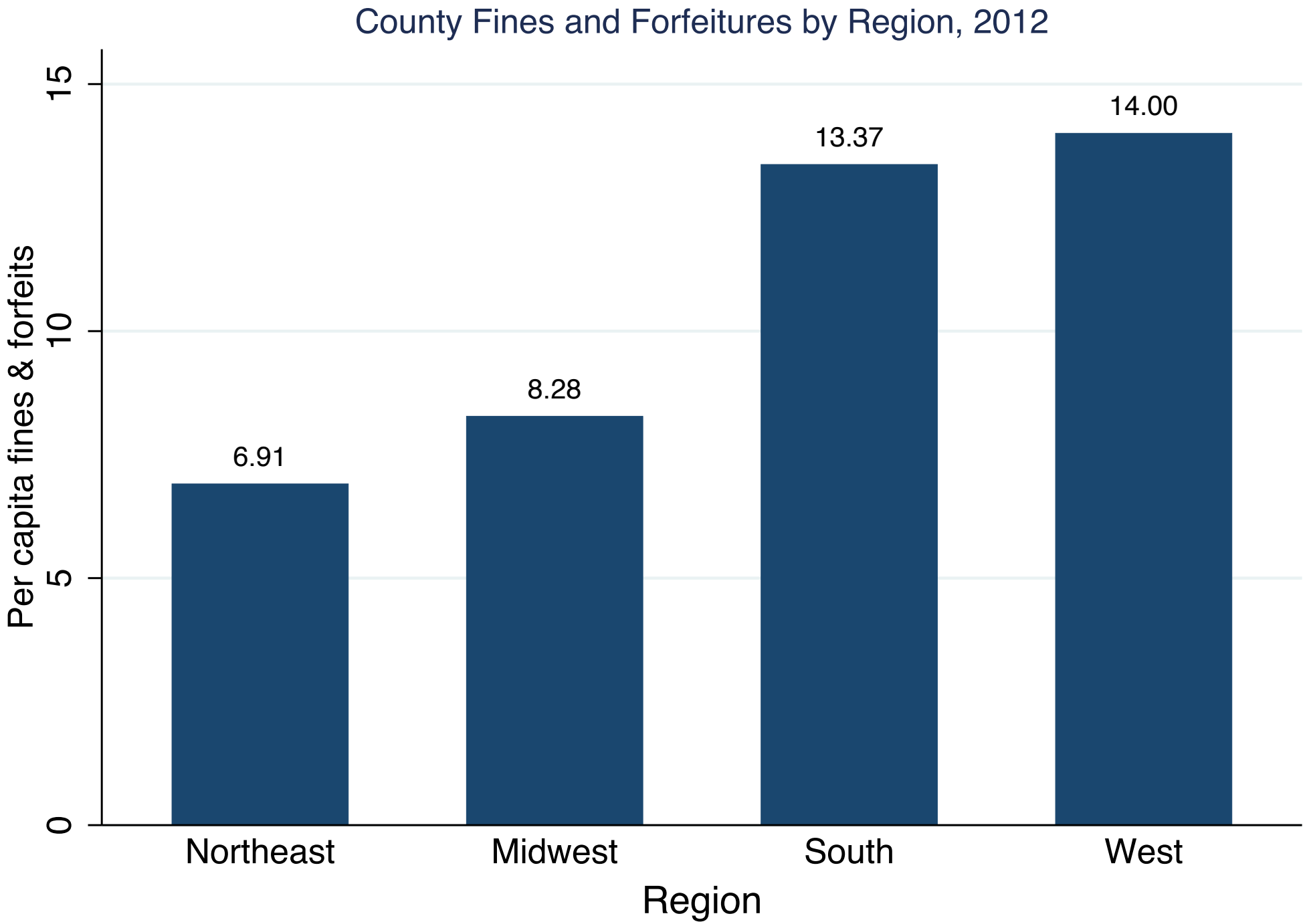
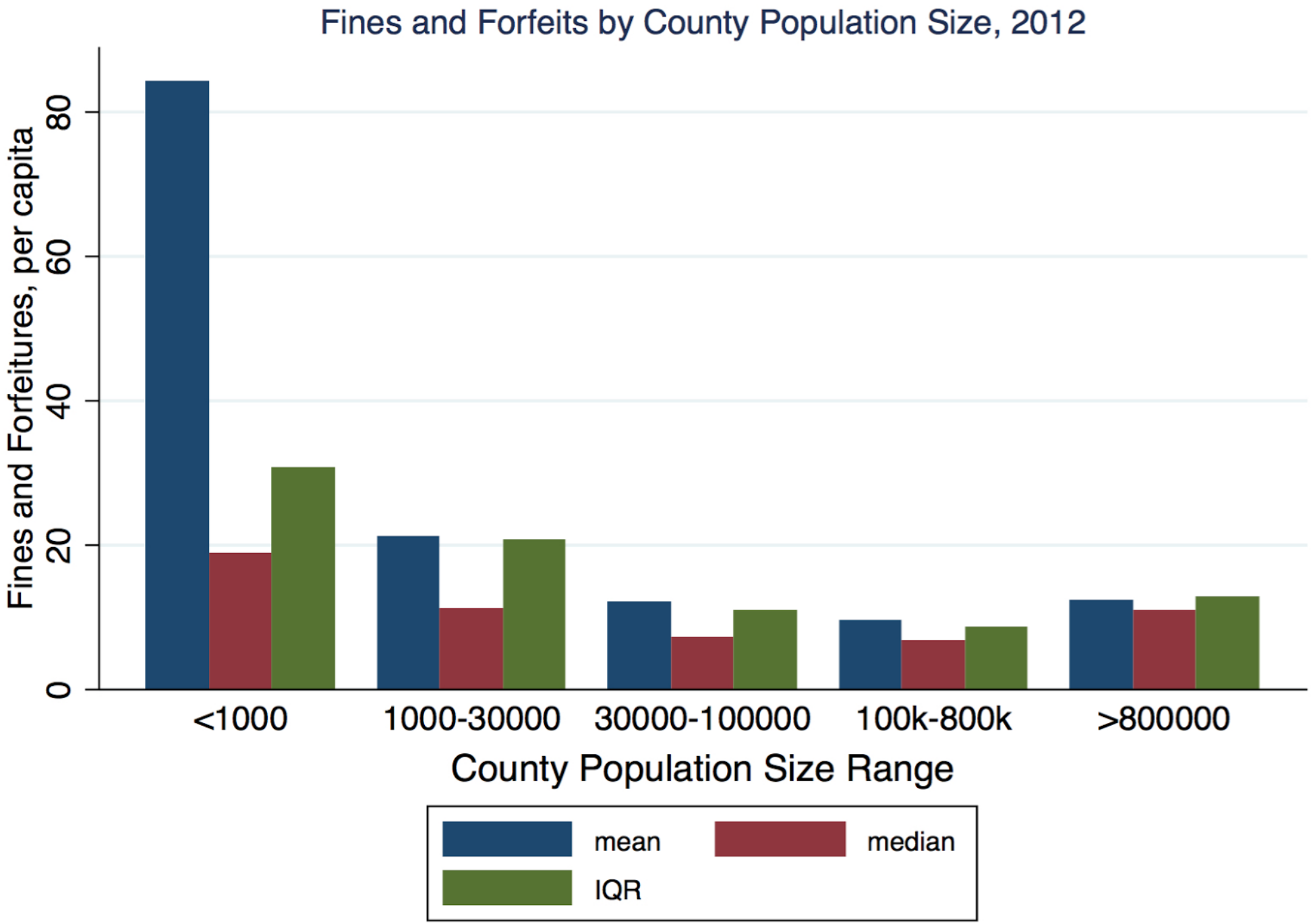

Fines & Forfeitures in Consolidated City-County Governments, 2009-2012
Mean per capita fines & forfeits
0
10
20
30
40
0.79
4.60
22.52
29.88
29.95
38.71
Honolulu
Kansas City
Nashville
Louisville
Philadelphia
San Francisco
Consolidated City-County

Snapshot on National Trends


County Fines and Forfeitures by Region, 2012
Per capita fines & forfeits
0
5
10
15
6.91
8.28
13.37
14.00
Northeast
Midwest
South
West
Region


Fines and Forfeits by County Population Size, 2012
Fines and Forfeitures, per capita
0
20
40
60
80
<1000
1000-30000
30000-100000
100k-800k
>800000
County Population Size Range
mean
median
IQR

Opportunity for SF to Lead

- City of San Francisco has (largely) unrestricted authority to tax and a diverse tax base.
  - Fine and Forfeits revenues small fraction of total revenue
  - Other cities restricted in legal/fiscal capacity.

- Consolidated City & County functions may facilitate reform.

- National conversation

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