
Chapter 5

Law enforcement and juvenile crime

For delinquents, law enforcement is the doorway to the juvenile justice system. Once a juvenile is apprehended for a law violation, it is the police officer who first determines if the juvenile will move deeper into the justice system or will be diverted.

Law enforcement agencies track the volume and characteristics of crimes reported to them and use this information to monitor the changing levels of crime in their communities. Not all crimes are reported to law enforcement, and most of those that are reported remain unsolved. Consequently, information on crimes reported to law enforcement cannot shed much light on the problem of juvenile crime. Law enforcement agencies, however, also report arrest statistics that can be used to monitor the flow of juveniles and adults into the justice system. These arrest statistics are the most frequently cited

source of information on juvenile crime trends.

This chapter describes the volume and characteristics of juvenile crime from law enforcement's perspective. It presents information on the number of juvenile arrests made annually, the nature of these arrests, and arrest trends. The chapter also includes arrest rate trends for violent and property crimes, drug and weapons offenses, alcohol violations, and curfew and loitering law violations. Male and female juvenile arrests and arrest rate trends are compared. Arrests and arrest trends of juvenile offenders under age 13 are examined. Trends in age-specific arrest rates presented allow comparisons of juvenile and adult trends. The data presented in this chapter were originally compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program is the primary source of information on juvenile arrests

Since the 1930's, police agencies have reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program

Each year, thousands of agencies voluntarily report the following data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):

- Number of reported Index crimes (see sidebar).
- Number of arrests and the most serious charge involved in each arrest.
- Age, sex, and race of arrestees.
- Proportion of reported Index crimes cleared by arrest and the proportion of these cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18.
- Dispositions of juvenile arrests.
- Detailed victim, assailant, and circumstance information in homicide cases.

For 1997, law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over 95% of the U.S. population contributed data on reported crimes, but agencies contributing data on arrests represented only 68% of the population. The proportion of the population represented by arrest statistics was lower in 1997 than at any time in the prior 20 years.

What can the UCR data tell us about crime and young people?

The UCR data can provide estimates of the annual number of arrests of juveniles within specific offense categories. UCR data can also provide detail on juvenile arrests by sex, race, and type of location (urban, suburban, or rural area). The data can be used to compare the relative number of arrests of adults and juveniles within offense categories, to

develop estimates of change in arrests over various time periods, and to monitor the proportion of crimes cleared by arrests of juveniles.

UCR data document the number of crimes reported, not the number of crimes committed

The UCR Program monitors the number of Index crimes that come to the attention of law enforcement agencies. Although this information is useful in identifying trends in the volume of reported crime, it is important to recognize that not all crimes are brought to the attention of law enforcement.

Crimes are more likely to be reported if they involve a serious injury or a large economic loss. For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey for 1996 found that victims reported 76% of motor vehicle thefts to police, 55% of aggravated assaults, 54% of robberies, 51% of burglaries, 37% of simple assaults, 31% of sexual assaults, and 28% of thefts. Overall, victims reported only 43% of violent crimes and 35% of property crimes.

Changes in reported crime may reflect changes not only in the number of crimes actually committed, but also in the willingness of victims to report crimes to law enforcement agencies, and in the inclination of the police to make records of incidents reported by victims.

It is important to keep in mind that UCR reported crime data reflect only crimes that come to the attention of law enforcement and therefore cannot be used to measure the number or the proportion of crimes actually committed by juveniles.

What are the Crime Indexes?

The designers of the UCR Program wanted to create an index (similar in concept to the Dow Jones Industrial Average or the Consumer Price Index) that would be sensitive to changes in the volume and nature of reported crime. They decided to incorporate specific offenses into the index based on several factors: likelihood of being reported, frequency of occurrence, pervasiveness in all geographical areas of the country, and relative seriousness.

The Crime Index is divided into two components: the Violent Crime Index and the Property Crime Index:

Violent Crime Index—Includes murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Property Crime Index—Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Crime Index—Includes all eight crimes included in the Violent Crime Index and Property Crime Index.

While some violent crimes such as kidnaping and extortion are excluded, the Violent Crime Index contains what are generally considered to be serious crimes. In contrast, a substantial proportion of the crimes in the Property Crime Index are generally considered less serious crimes, such as shoplifting, theft from motor vehicles, and bicycle theft, all of which are included in the larceny-theft category.

UCR data document the number of arrests made, not the number of persons arrested

A person can be arrested more than once in a year. Each arrest is counted separately in the UCR data. One arrest can represent many crimes. If a person was arrested for allegedly committing 40 burglaries, it would show up in the UCR data as one arrest for burglary. Also, one crime may also result in multiple arrests. For example, three youth may be arrested for one burglary. A single crime with multiple arrests is more likely to occur with juveniles than with adults, because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups.

UCR arrest data reflect only the most serious offense for which a person was arrested

An arrest of a person for both robbery and weapons possession would appear in the UCR data as one robbery arrest. The UCR data on number of weapons arrests reflect only those arrests in which a weapons charge was the most serious offense charged. This aspect of UCR counting rules must be taken into consideration when the data are used in analysis of arrest volume and trends for less serious offenses.

UCR data document the result of a juvenile arrest

Local agencies report to the FBI what happened to arrestees who are classified as juveniles in their jurisdictions. This is the only information in the UCR Program that is sensitive to the States' statutory distinction between adults and juve-

niles. The UCR Program defines five categories for juvenile arrest dispositions: handled within the department and released; transferred to another police agency; or referred to a welfare agency, a juvenile court, or a criminal court. In 1997, law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over 57% of the U.S. population reported this information.

Clearance data provide another perspective on law enforcement

A crime is considered *cleared* if someone is charged with the crime or if someone is believed to have committed the crime but for some reason (e.g., the death of the suspect) the arrest cannot be made. If a person is arrested and charged with committing 40 burglaries, UCR records 40 burglary clearances. If three people are arrested for robbing a liquor store, UCR records one robbery cleared.

Knowing both the number of crimes reported and the number cleared in a year makes it possible to compute the proportion of crimes cleared in a year.

A much greater proportion of violent crimes than property crimes are cleared

Most serious offense	Percent of all crimes cleared in 1997
Violent Crime Index	48%
Murder	66
Forcible rape	51
Robbery	26
Aggravated assault	58
Property Crime Index	18%
Burglary	14
Larceny-theft	20
Motor vehicle theft	14
Arson	17

UCR data capture the proportion of crimes cleared by juvenile arrest

UCR data also document the proportion of cleared crimes that were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18. Assessments of the juvenile contribution to the U.S. crime problem are often based on this proportion. Clearance and arrest statistics give a very different picture of the juvenile contribution to crime. To use the UCR data properly, it is important to understand this difference.

Most serious offense	1997 juvenile proportion	
	Arrests	Crimes cleared
Violent Crime Index	17%	12%
Murder	14	8
Forcible rape	17	11
Robbery	30	17
Aggravated assault	14	12
Property Crime Index	35	23
Burglary	37	20
Larceny-theft	34	24
Motor vehicle theft	40	21
Arson	50	46

How should juvenile arrest and clearance data be interpreted?

Considerations in interpreting UCR data on juvenile arrests and clearances can be demonstrated by attempting to answer a typical question about juvenile crime: "What proportion of all robberies were committed by juveniles in 1997?" The UCR data show that 30% of all persons arrested for robbery in 1997 were under age 18 but that 17% of all robberies cleared in 1997 were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18.

The key to reconciling the difference between the two percentages is the fact, noted previously, that juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. If a police department cleared all five of its robberies in a year by arresting two juveniles for one incident and four different adults for the other four incidents, the juvenile proportion of persons arrested for robbery would be 33% (2 in 6), and the juvenile proportion of robberies cleared would be 20% (1 in 5). Arrest percentages are offender-based; clearance percentages are offense-based.

Clearance data would seem a better choice than arrest data for answering the questions posed about juveniles' proportion of all robberies committed. There are, however, concerns about what clearance figures actually represent. One concern is whether it is safe to assume that characteristics of robberies cleared are similar to characteristics of robberies not cleared (i.e., whether the 26% cleared in 1997 were like the 74% not cleared). This does not seem to be the case.

A study by Snyder of more than 21,000 robberies in seven States between 1991 and 1993 that were reported to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) found that certain offense characteristics increased the likelihood of arrest (and therefore of clearance). This study found that juvenile offenders were 23% more likely than adults to be arrested in robbery incidents. Therefore, robberies cleared differed from those not cleared in terms of the proportion of crimes committed by juveniles.

Arrest data and clearance data can be used in exploring different types

of questions. Arrest data provide a rough estimate of how many juveniles entered the justice system in a given year; but it must be remembered that a particular individual may have been arrested more than once during the year (and therefore counted more than once), and that a particular arrest may have involved more than one offense (even though only the most serious charge is counted). Clearance data are more useful than arrest data in estimating the proportion of crimes committed by juveniles; but the evidence that juveniles are more likely than adults to be arrested for their crimes indicates that clearance percentages exaggerate juveniles' actual share of total crimes.

Arrest percentages and, to a lesser extent, clearance percentages overestimate the extent to which juveniles are responsible for crimes known to law enforcement. The lesson from all of this is that it is problematic to use aggregate UCR statistics to answer questions they were not specifically designed to answer.

Incident-based reporting expands the capabilities of the UCR data

In the late 1980's, the UCR Program decided to enhance its data collection efforts by moving from aggregate statistics to detailed incident-based reporting. The redesigned data-reporting protocol was labeled NIBRS. The differences between the two systems can best be described by example.

Under the aggregate system, an incident in which a female victim reported being robbed and raped at knifepoint by two juveniles would be recorded as a rape, with no other

details about the incident. NIBRS is designed to allow law enforcement agencies to report to the FBI information on many attributes of an incident, including the following: the demographic characteristics of the victim; all the offenses involved; the date, time, and place(s) of the incident; the level of victim injury; the weapon involved; the type and dollar value of property lost; and the victim's perception of the demographic characteristics of the offender(s).

If the two juveniles were arrested a month later, the aggregate system would note the age, sex, and race of each arrestee and the most serious charge on which the arrest was based. NIBRS would link the demographic characteristics of the arrestees and the arrest information to the other incident information gathered earlier, to give a complete picture of the crimes.

As of the end of 1998, law enforcement agencies reporting NIBRS data to the FBI had jurisdiction over less than 10% of the U.S. population. NIBRS coverage is growing, as more law enforcement agencies upgrade their management information systems and are able to provide the FBI with NIBRS-compatible data.

In the near future, justice professionals and policymakers will have a much more complete picture of the crimes, victims, and offenders that come to the attention of the justice system. Analyses of NIBRS data have already provided unique insights. The future of the UCR Program is in the incident-based reporting system.

Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. made 2.8 million arrests of persons under age 18 in 1997

The most serious charge in over 40% of all juvenile arrests in 1997 was larceny-theft, simple assault, drug abuse violation, or disorderly conduct

Most serious offense charged	1997 juvenile arrest estimates	Percent of total juvenile arrests					
		Female	Ages 16–17	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	2,838,300	26%	48%	71%	26%	1%	2%
Violent Crime Index	123,400	16	51	53	44	1	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	2,500	6	74	40	58	0	2
Forcible rape	5,500	2	45	56	42	1	1
Robbery	39,500	9	54	42	55	1	2
Aggravated assault	75,900	21	49	60	38	1	1
Property Crime Index	701,500	28	41	70	27	1	2
Burglary	131,000	10	43	73	24	1	2
Larceny-theft	493,900	34	40	70	26	1	2
Motor vehicle theft	66,600	16	51	59	37	2	2
Arson	10,000	11	20	79	19	1	1
Nonindex							
Other assaults	241,800	29	41	63	34	1	1
Forgery and counterfeiting	8,500	39	75	77	20	1	2
Fraud	11,300	35	71	69	29	1	1
Embezzlement	1,400	45	88	63	34	1	2
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	39,500	13	54	60	37	1	2
Vandalism	136,500	12	38	80	17	1	1
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	52,200	9	51	64	33	1	2
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,400	56	70	60	39	1	1
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	18,500	9	33	70	28	1	1
Drug abuse violations	220,700	13	66	64	34	1	1
Gambling	2,600	3	69	10	89	0	1
Offenses against family and children	10,200	37	45	76	20	1	2
Driving under the influence	19,600	17	93	91	6	2	1
Liquor laws	158,500	30	74	90	5	3	1
Drunkenness	24,100	17	72	89	9	2	1
Disorderly conduct	215,100	26	46	64	34	1	1
Vagrancy	3,100	15	56	68	31	1	0
All other offenses (except traffic)	468,000	24	53	72	25	1	2
Suspicion	1,600	23	60	60	39	0	1
Curfew and loitering law violations	182,700	31	48	75	23	1	1
Runaways	196,100	58	33	77	18	1	4
U.S. population ages 10–17	30,640,000	49	25	79	15	1	4

- Five percent of juvenile arrests in 1997 were for the violent crimes of aggravated assault, robbery, forcible rape, or murder.
- While black youth accounted for 15% of the juvenile population in 1997, they were involved in more than half of the arrests for gambling (89%), murder (58%), and robbery (55%).
- Females accounted for the majority of juvenile arrests for running away from home (58%) and prostitution (56%).

Notes: UCR data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. In 1997, 91% of Hispanics ages 10–17 were classified racially as white. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of data presented in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*. National estimates of juvenile arrests were developed using FBI estimates of total arrests and juvenile arrest proportions in reporting sample.

In 1997, approximately 1 in 5 arrests made by law enforcement agencies involved a juvenile

Juveniles accounted for 37% of all burglary arrests in 1997, 30% of robbery arrests, 24% of weapon arrests, 14% of murder arrests, and 14% of drug arrests

Most serious offense charged	Juvenile arrests as a percent of total arrests						
	All persons	Males	Females	Whites	Blacks	American Indians	Asians
Total	19%	18%	23%	20%	16%	19%	28%
Violent Crime Index	17	17	17	16	19	15	23
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	14	14	8	13	14	9	23
Forcible rape	17	17	27	17	18	13	13
Robbery	30	30	28	31	29	31	47
Aggravated assault	14	14	16	14	15	13	18
Property Crime Index	35	35	34	38	29	40	45
Burglary	37	37	32	39	30	43	48
Larceny-theft	34	34	33	37	27	39	44
Motor vehicle theft	40	39	43	41	38	54	42
Arson	50	52	37	54	39	44	50
Other assaults	17	16	24	17	17	16	22
Forgery and counterfeiting	7	7	7	8	4	9	10
Fraud	3	3	2	3	3	4	6
Embezzlement	8	8	7	8	8	10	10
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	25	26	21	27	23	36	37
Vandalism	43	44	34	47	30	39	52
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	24	24	26	26	20	30	35
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	18	18	17	17	21	12	14
Drug abuse violations	14	15	11	14	13	19	18
Gambling	17	18	6	6	22	4	4
Offenses against family and children	7	5	10	8	4	5	8
Driving under the influence	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Liquor laws	25	22	35	27	11	26	29
Drunkenness	3	3	4	4	2	2	5
Disorderly conduct	27	25	31	27	25	18	35
Vagrancy	11	12	7	14	7	4	16
All other offenses (except traffic)	12	11	14	14	9	10	19

■ Persons between ages 10 and 49 commit most crimes: in 1997, 95% of all arrests involved persons in this age range. Persons ages 10–17 make up about 19% of this segment of the population. Therefore, based on their representation in this population, juveniles were disproportionately involved in arrests for arson, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, burglary, larceny-theft, robbery, and weapons law violations. In contrast, juveniles were underrepresented in arrests for murder, aggravated assault, forcible rape, driving under the influence, drunkenness, and drug abuse violations.

■ A greater portion of female arrests involved a juvenile (23%) than did male arrests (18%). Juveniles were involved in a larger proportion of female arrests than male arrests for liquor law violations (35% vs. 22%) and simple assaults (24% vs. 16%). Juveniles were involved in a larger proportion of male arrests than female arrests for arson (52% vs. 37%), vandalism (44% vs. 34%), murder (14% vs. 8%), and drug abuse violations (15% vs. 11%). There was little gender difference in juvenile proportions of arrests for most other crimes.

■ A greater proportion of white arrests involved a juvenile (20%) than did black arrests (16%). Juveniles accounted for a larger proportion of white arrests than black arrests for burglary (39% vs. 30%), weapons law violations (26% vs. 20%), vandalism (47% vs. 30%), larceny-theft (37% vs. 27%), and liquor law violations (27% vs. 11%).

Source: Authors' adaptation of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*, tables 38, 39, 40, and 43.

The past decade saw large growth in juvenile arrests for violence, weapons, drugs, and curfew violations

While drug arrests continued to increase for both juveniles and adults between 1993 and 1997, arrests for most serious violent offenses and property offenses declined

Most serious offense charged	Percent change in arrests					
	1993–1997			1988–1997		
	Total	Juvenile	Adult	Total	Juvenile	Adult
Total	8%	14%	7%	16%	35%	12%
Violent Crime Index	-2	-6	-1	23	49	19
Murder & nonnegligent manslaughter	-25	-39	-22	-12	11	-15
Forcible rape	-18	-16	-19	-14	6	-17
Robbery	-12	-2	-15	8	56	-4
Aggravated assault	3	-5	5	33	51	31
Property Crime Index	-7	-3	-9	-8	1	-12
Burglary	-14	-9	-17	-21	-15	-24
Larceny-theft	-3	3	-7	-3	9	-8
Motor vehicle theft	-19	-30	-11	-15	-17	-14
Arson	0	-2	2	-2	22	-19
Other assaults	14	17	13	52	84	47
Forgery & counterfeiting	13	3	13	24	2	26
Fraud	1	3	1	15	58	14
Embezzlement	32	74	30	25	6	27
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	-6	-15	-2	-5	-8	-5
Vandalism	-6	-12	-1	12	20	6
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	-23	-23	-23	0	44	-9
Prostitution & commercialized vice	2	11	2	9	-28	10
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	-10	-13	-9	-3	11	-6
Drug abuse violations	38	82	33	48	125	41
Gambling	-5	-7	-5	-18	166	-28
Offenses against family & children	24	73	22	109	150	107
Driving under the influence	-9	35	-9	-20	-21	-20
Liquor laws	23	33	20	2	1	2
Drunkenness	-10	31	-10	-20	-9	-21
Disorderly conduct	6	31	-1	15	86	1
Vagrancy	32	2	37	-1	-7	-1
All other offenses (except traffic)	24	29	23	47	55	46
Curfew and loitering law violations	87	87	*	190	190	*
Runaway	-2	-2	*	19	19	*

■ Because the absolute number of juvenile arrests is far below the number for adults, a larger percentage increase in juvenile arrests does not necessarily imply a larger increase in the actual number of arrests. For example, while the **percentage** increase in juvenile arrests for a drug law violation was much greater than the adult increase between 1993 and 1997, the increase in the **number** of arrests was 240% greater for adults.

* Not applicable to adults.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*, tables 32 and 34.

Juvenile arrest trends in States may differ from national trends

State	Percent change 1993–1997		
	Reporting population coverage	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index
U.S. total	64%	-6%	-3%
Alabama	90	3	28
Alaska	44	11	-26
Arizona	83	-1	-2
Arkansas	89	-1	10
California	97	-2	-13
Colorado	59	-28	-14
Connecticut	83	1	-9
Delaware	4	-8	32
Georgia	32	-22	13
Hawaii	97	59	-7
Idaho	89	-27	-10
Illinois	23	-14	-24
Indiana	49	13	0
Iowa	64	-4	12
Kentucky	16	2	-9
Louisiana	56	-21	14
Maine	82	20	12
Maryland	100	17	9
Massachusetts	66	5	-12
Michigan	74	-17	-8
Minnesota	98	-45	-13
Mississippi	24	8	7
Missouri	50	-18	18
Montana	32	37	-3
Nebraska	91	-15	13
Nevada	34	-15	13
New Jersey	96	-14	-11
New Mexico	46	-28	-1
New York	41	-6	0
North Carolina	97	12	18
North Dakota	77	-25	-9
Ohio	47	11	-1
Oklahoma	98	-7	5
Oregon	84	-12	-10
Pennsylvania	39	-3	12
Rhode Island	97	-23	-10
South Carolina	95	19	14
South Dakota	43	-12	-3
Tennessee	35	42	32
Texas	93	-21	0
Utah	67	-42	-36
Virginia	97	6	-3
Washington	54	16	-1
West Virginia	95	12	-1
Wisconsin	75	-2	-5
Wyoming	96	2	18

Note: Arrest data were unavailable for the District of Columbia, Florida, Kansas, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Source: Authors' adaptation of data from an unpublished data file provided by the Communications Unit of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, 1999.

In 1997, about two-thirds of the States had a juvenile violent crime arrest rate below the national average

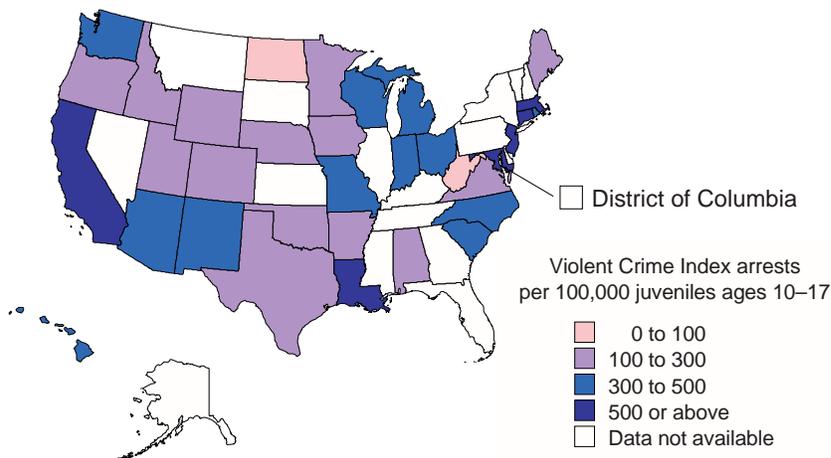
States with the lowest reported juvenile violent crime arrest rates were North Dakota, West Virginia, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Maine

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17				
		Violent Crime Index	Murder	Forcible rape	Robbery	Agg. assault			Violent Crime Index	Murder	Forcible rape	Robbery	Agg. assault
U.S. total	68%	412	8	18	134	252	Missouri	60%	406	11	22	153	220
Alabama	94	218	12	9	88	109	Montana	39	105	0	2	0	103
Alaska	44	456	8	35	53	360	Nebraska	94	132	3	9	56	65
Arizona	85	438	7	12	93	326	Nevada	46	418	5	29	167	217
Arkansas	89	288	6	22	82	178	New Hampshire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
California	99	575	10	12	223	330	New Jersey	96	576	6	19	220	332
Colorado	70	258	4	31	50	173	New Mexico	68	301	5	12	64	221
Connecticut	85	505	4	19	169	313	New York	46	332	3	11	125	193
Delaware	41	953	0	85	250	617	N. Carolina	99	430	9	11	122	288
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N. Dakota	90	64	0	5	15	44
Florida	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ohio	55	367	4	34	133	196
Georgia	33	517	8	29	161	318	Oklahoma	100	289	6	16	81	187
Hawaii	97	347	0	13	236	98	Oregon	87	269	4	19	84	162
Idaho	98	226	2	10	25	190	Pennsylvania	47	301	3	15	85	197
Illinois	23	1,015	43	48	369	555	Rhode Island	100	411	3	27	79	302
Indiana	57	491	4	8	67	412	S. Carolina	99	432	13	21	105	292
Iowa	82	256	0	8	38	210	S. Dakota	45	227	0	28	35	165
Kansas	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Tennessee	42	378	21	12	85	259
Kentucky	19	752	26	15	221	489	Texas	97	296	6	18	89	183
Louisiana	79	525	19	28	141	337	Utah	75	292	5	16	37	233
Maine	94	133	1	11	45	76	Vermont	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maryland	100	739	20	19	303	397	Virginia	98	233	8	14	81	130
Massachusetts	83	542	2	13	108	419	Washington	61	416	5	34	118	259
Michigan	81	309	11	25	88	185	West Virginia	96	79	2	4	28	45
Minnesota	100	207	2	28	53	124	Wisconsin	76	404	15	25	138	226
Mississippi	37	283	14	14	114	141	Wyoming	98	131	0	8	18	105

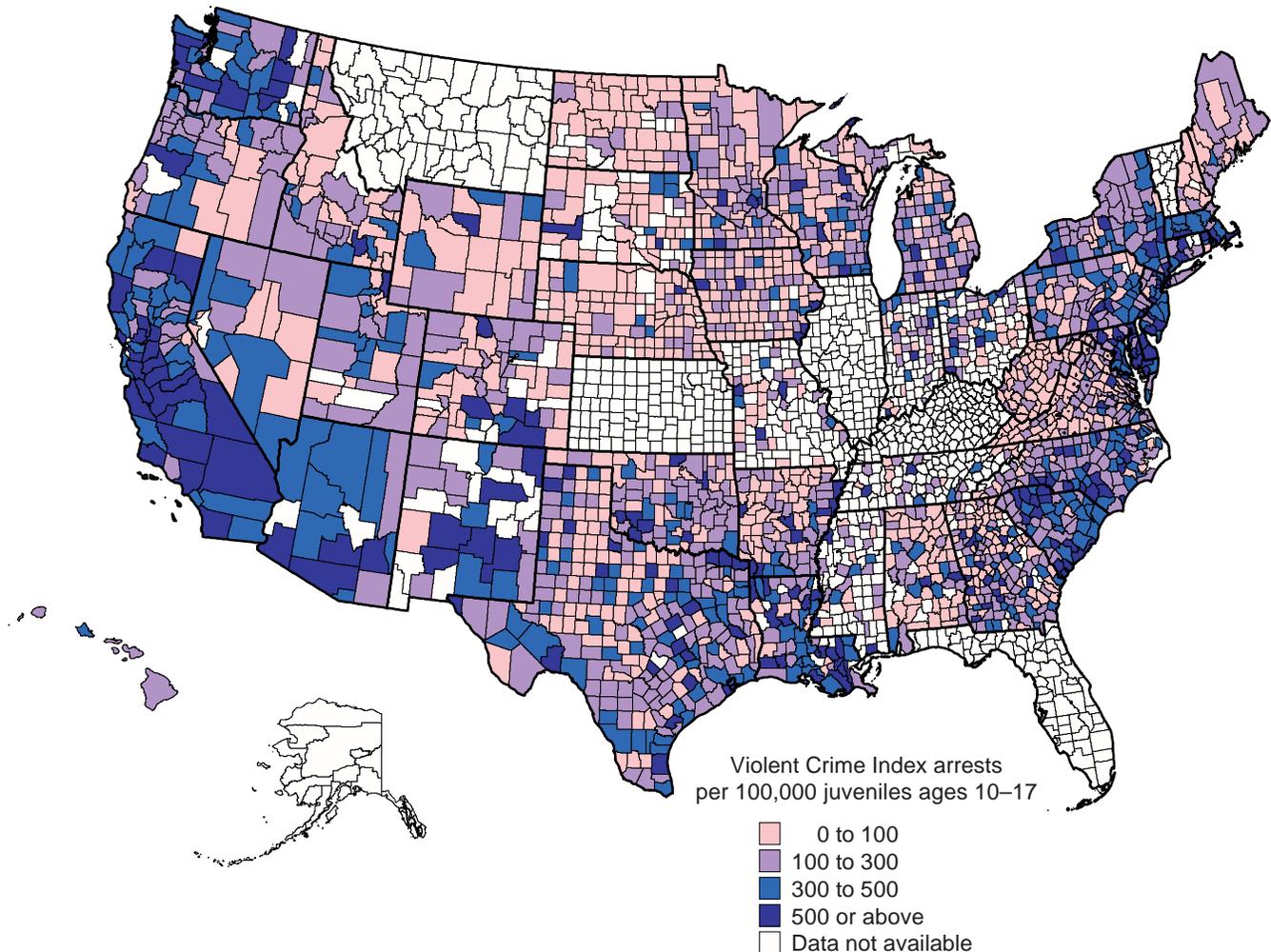
NA = Arrest counts were not available for this State in *Crime in the United States 1997*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire State. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their State's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997* and population data from the Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1997* [machine-readable data file].



Juvenile violent crime arrest rates varied considerably among counties within a State in 1996



Note: Rates were classified as “Data not available” when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their county’s population did not report.

Source: Authors’ analysis of county-level arrest estimates from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research’s *Uniform Crime Reporting Program data [United States]: County-level detailed arrest and offense data, 1996* [machine-readable data file] and population estimates from the Bureau of the Census’ *Estimates of the population of counties by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1996* [machine-readable data file].

High violent crime arrest rates are found in a relatively small proportion of counties

In 1997, the national juvenile arrest rate for offenses included in the Violent Crime Index was 412 arrests of

persons under age 18 for every 100,000 persons ages 10–17 in the U.S. population. The rate was higher than the national average in just 14% of the 3,141 counties in the U.S.; in fact, 62% of the counties had rates less than half the national av-

erage. High rates of juvenile violent crime arrests are found in counties with large and small population, an indication that high levels of juvenile violence can occur in any community.

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased from 1988 to 1994 but has declined since then

In 1989, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased to a level not seen in prior years

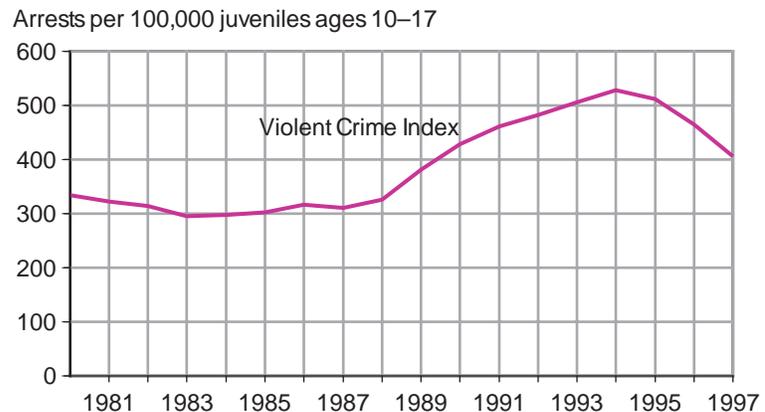
From the early 1970's through 1988, the number of juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses (murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) varied with the size of the juvenile population; that is to say, the arrest rate remained constant. In 1989, however, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate jumped to its highest level since the 1960's, the earliest period for which comparable data are available. The rate continued to climb each year thereafter until it reached a peak in 1994. In the 7-year period between 1988 and 1994, the rate surged 62%, straining the resources of the juvenile justice system and causing policymakers to ask what had changed.

The rapid increase was followed by a rapid decline. By 1997, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate was at its lowest level in the 1990's: just 7% above the 1989 rate, but still 25% above the 1988 rate.

The proportion of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrest shows similar patterns

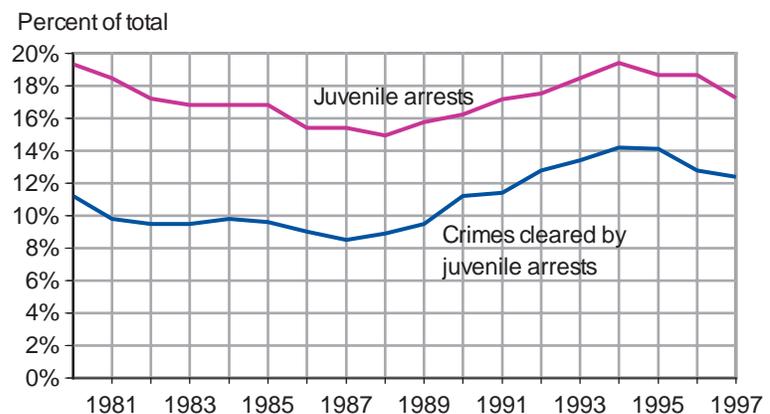
In 1980 and 1990, 11% of all violent crimes cleared by law enforcement were cleared by juvenile arrest. Between 1980 and 1990, this proportion first declined and then increased. The early 1990's saw the proportion grow to new levels, reaching a peak of 14% in 1994. By 1997, the proportion had dropped back to 12%: 1 in 8 violent crimes cleared was cleared by a juvenile arrest.

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased dramatically in the late 1980's and early 1990's



- After years of relative stability, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate began to increase in the late 1980's. After 1994, however, the rate declined; by 1997, it had returned to a level near that of 1989.

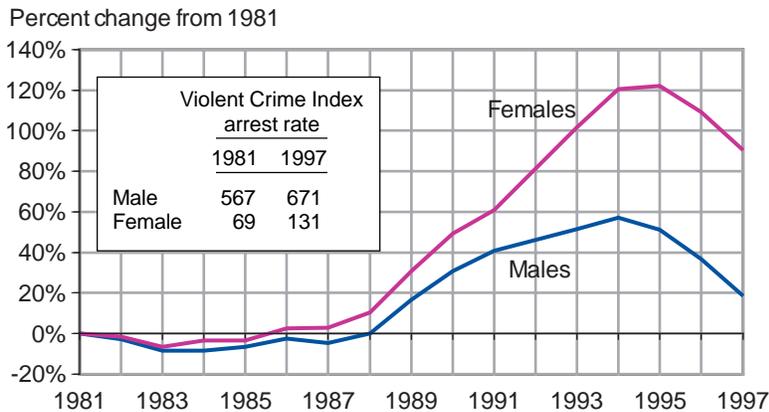
As the juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate increased, so did the juvenile proportions of arrests and crimes cleared



- In 1997, 17% of persons entering the justice system via arrest for an alleged violent crime were under age 18.
- Clearance statistics show that, between 1980 and 1997, adults (persons age 18 and over) were responsible each year for between 86% and 91% of all violent crime in the U.S.

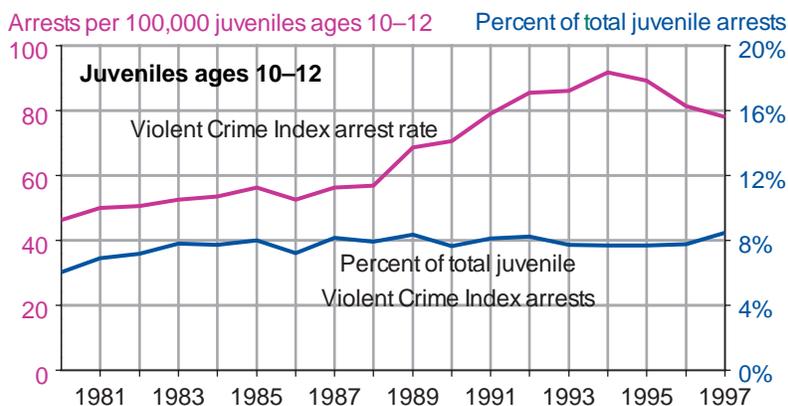
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

Between 1987 and 1994, the female juvenile violent crime arrest rate more than doubled, while the male rate increased by two-thirds



- Even though the juvenile violent crime arrest rates declined from 1994 to 1997 for both genders, the male rate in 1997 was still 24% above the 1987 rate and the female rate was 85% higher.
- Even with the large increase in female rates, the 1997 Violent Crime Index arrest rate for juvenile males was more than five times the female arrest rate.

Between 1987 and 1994, the violent crime arrest rate for very young juveniles increased 63%, paralleling older juvenile trends



- Although violent crime arrest rates for very young juveniles declined from 1994 to 1997, the 1997 rate was still 39% greater than the 1987 rate.
- The proportion of all juvenile violent crime arrests involving very young juveniles remained essentially constant in the 1980's and 1990's, an indication that arrest trends for very young juveniles paralleled those for older juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

Increases in the female juvenile violent crime arrest rate out-paced increases in the male rate

In 1981, the female juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate was 12% of the male rate. Between 1981 and 1997, both rates increased substantially but the increase was greater for females than for males. As a result, in 1997, the female rate was 20% of the male rate.

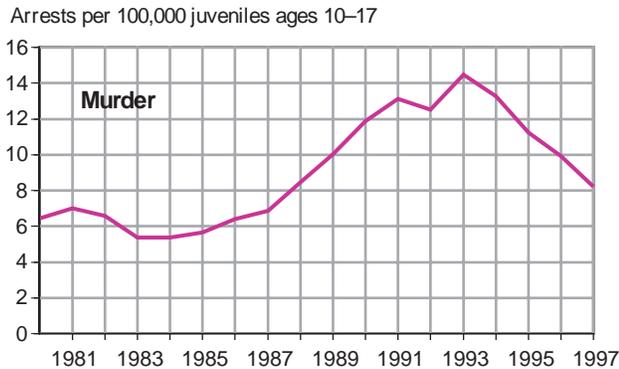
These differential changes in arrest rates for females and males changed the composition of violent offenders entering the juvenile justice system. States and local jurisdictions were faced not only with a growing number of violent juvenile offenders, but also with a disproportionate need for intervention services and placement alternatives designed to address problems unique to female offenders.

Arrest trends for very young offenders paralleled those for older juveniles

Very young offenders present unique service needs to the juvenile justice system. Between 1980 and 1994, the violent crime arrest rate for youth under age 13 nearly doubled. The absolute number of arrests for this age group is still rather small (e.g., an estimated 10,700 Violent Crime Index arrests in 1997, or 8% of all juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests). The relative rarity of such arrests (about 30 per day in the U.S.) indicates that most jurisdictions rarely require services that specifically address the developmental needs of very young offenders. The substantial growth in arrests in this age group, however, indicates that the scarce resources available for providing such services are more and more in demand.

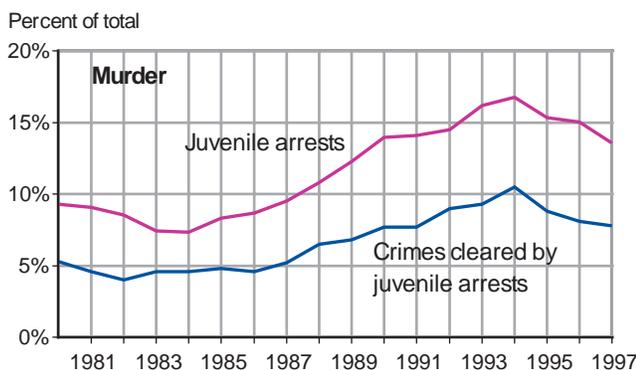
Arrest and clearance trends differed across violent offenses

The U.S. experienced an unprecedented doubling of the juvenile murder arrest rate between 1987 and 1993



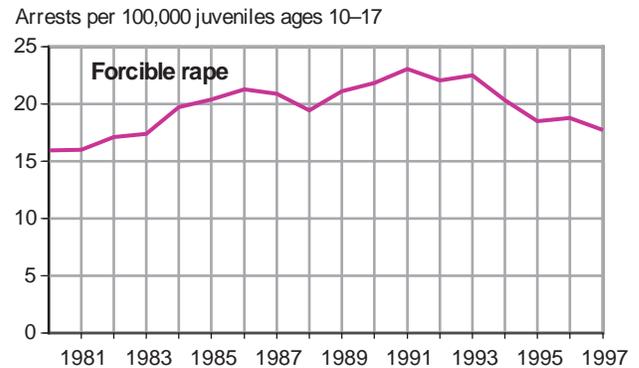
■ Nearly all of the increase that occurred between 1987 and 1993 was erased between 1994 and 1997. The 1997 juvenile murder arrest rate was the lowest in a decade: 3% below the 1988 rate.

At the peak in 1994, juvenile arrests accounted for 17% of all murder arrests and 1 of every 10 murders cleared



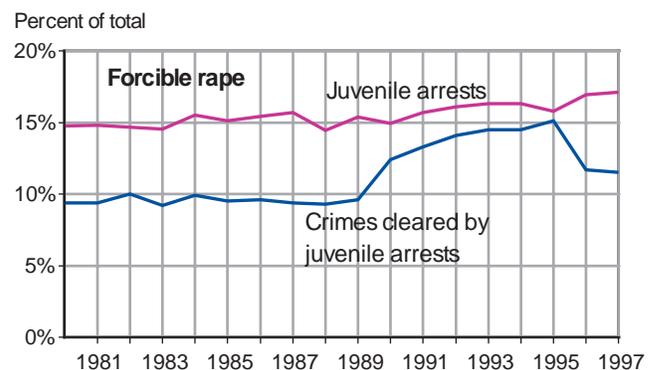
■ Although the drops were not as dramatic as that of the juvenile arrest rate for murder, the juvenile proportion of both murder arrests and murder clearances has also declined since 1994.

In contrast to other violent crimes, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape did not show substantial growth between 1987 and 1994



■ The juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape in 1997 was at its lowest level in more than a decade and was comparable to the rate in 1983.

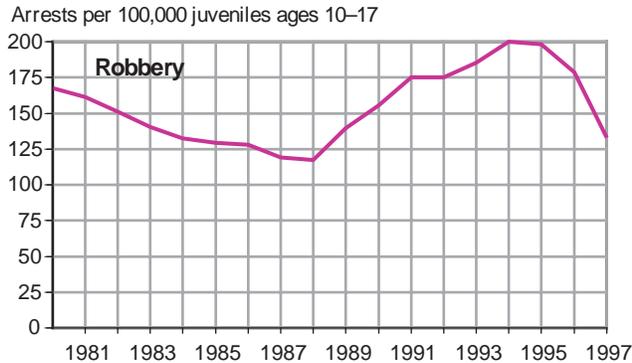
The juvenile proportion of forcible rape arrests was relatively consistent between 1980 and 1997



■ In contrast to the consistency of the arrest proportions, the juvenile proportion of forcible rape clearances increased between 1989 and 1995, then declined.

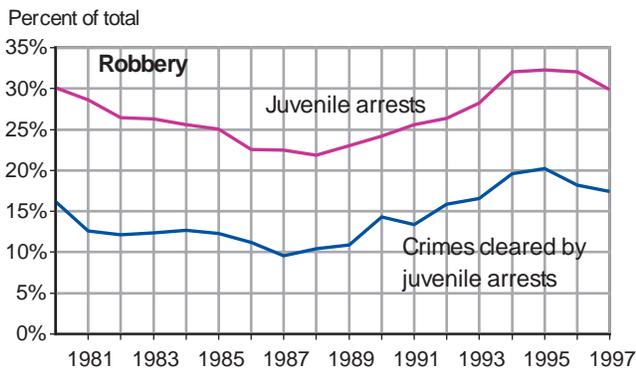
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files]. Juvenile clearance proportions were adapted from the FBI's *Crime in the United States* series for the years 1980 through 1997.

In 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for robbery was at the lowest level in the 1990's



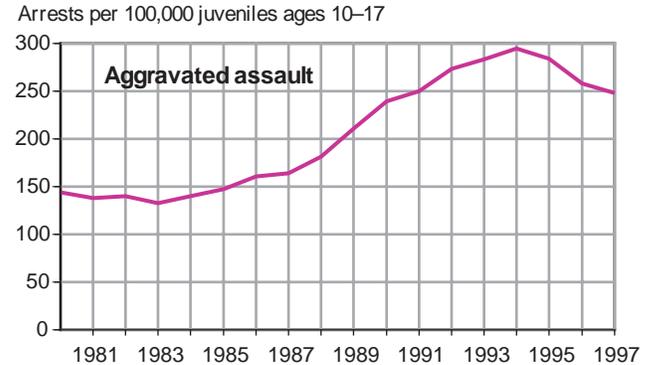
- The juvenile robbery arrest rate reached its peak in 1994. Within 3 years, however, it had fallen to near its lowest level in a generation.

The juvenile proportions of arrests and clearances are higher for robbery than for any other Violent Crime Index offense



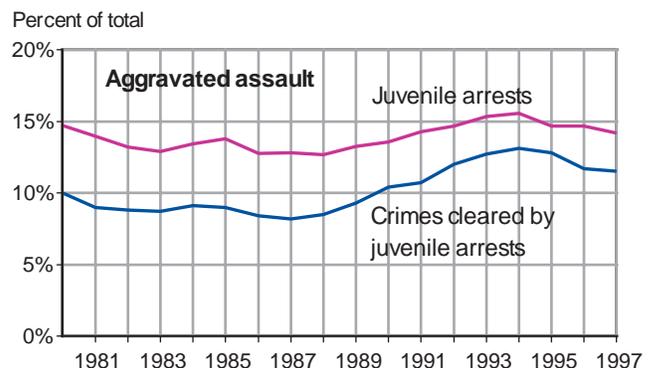
- In contrast to the relatively low level of the juvenile robbery arrest rate in 1997, the juvenile proportion of both robbery arrests and robbery clearances in 1997 was near its high point.

The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault increased steadily between 1983 and 1994, up more than 120%



- The large increase in this arrest rate between the late 1980's and the early 1990's was the driving force in the overall growth of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests over this period.

The juvenile proportion of aggravated assault arrests held relatively constant between 1980 and 1997



- In contrast to arrest proportions, the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances grew during 1980–1997. A constant arrest proportion and a growing clearance proportion imply either that fewer juveniles were being arrested in each incident or that more incidents were being cleared by a single arrest than in previous years.

States with high juvenile property crime arrest rates in 1997 tend to have low violent crime arrest rates

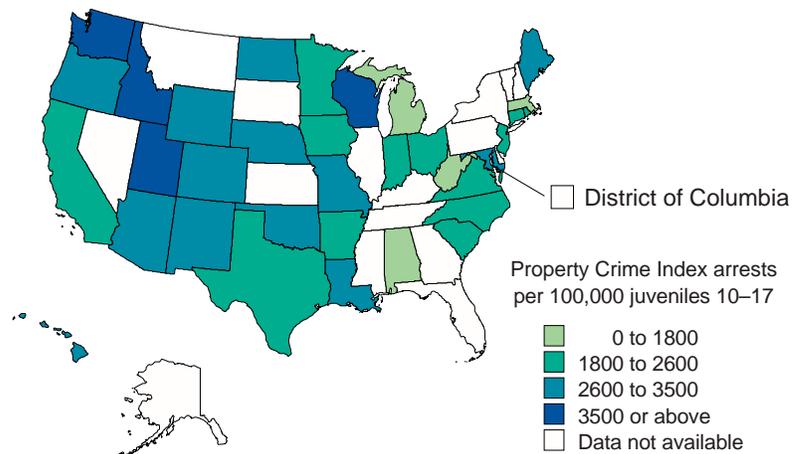
The populous States of California, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia reported juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates below the national average in 1997

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17				
		Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson			Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
U.S. total	68%	2,338	431	1,653	221	33	Missouri	60%	2,813	366	2,130	281	36
Alabama	94	1,385	225	1,082	74	5	Montana	39	1,608	240	1,210	150	9
Alaska	44	2,771	737	1,746	264	24	Nebraska	94	3,084	302	2,609	141	33
Arizona	85	3,274	543	2,374	316	41	Nevada	46	3,415	739	2,458	148	71
Arkansas	89	2,039	422	1,538	67	11	New Hampshire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
California	99	2,096	580	1,197	283	37	New Jersey	96	1,943	347	1,434	117	45
Colorado	70	2,838	285	2,314	201	38	New Mexico	68	2,970	360	2,386	201	22
Connecticut	85	2,492	421	1,764	277	30	New York	46	1,935	426	1,339	135	35
Delaware	41	4,730	864	3,670	190	6	N. Carolina	99	1,875	494	1,259	95	28
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N. Dakota	90	2,803	265	2,251	254	31
Florida	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ohio	55	1,838	351	1,263	180	44
Georgia	33	2,390	444	1,646	264	35	Oklahoma	100	2,667	424	1,923	271	48
Hawaii	97	3,161	469	2,394	277	21	Oregon	87	3,491	496	2,628	293	74
Idaho	98	3,504	451	2,768	231	54	Pennsylvania	47	1,632	371	1,060	168	33
Illinois	23	2,964	372	1,706	859	26	Rhode Island	100	2,071	399	1,447	162	63
Indiana	57	2,283	252	1,768	239	25	S. Carolina	99	2,094	531	1,440	101	22
Iowa	82	2,282	299	1,810	148	25	S. Dakota	45	4,377	584	3,524	213	56
Kansas	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Tennessee	42	2,589	320	1,991	240	38
Kentucky	19	3,139	751	1,969	381	39	Texas	97	2,211	408	1,607	176	20
Louisiana	79	2,649	528	1,987	113	21	Utah	75	3,879	294	3,264	280	41
Maine	94	3,241	642	2,332	189	79	Vermont	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maryland	100	2,792	560	1,714	479	38	Virginia	98	1,896	281	1,378	204	34
Massachusetts	83	963	223	615	111	14	Washington	61	4,259	608	3,333	265	53
Michigan	81	1,586	271	1,170	120	25	West Virginia	96	1,138	231	779	94	33
Minnesota	100	2,501	266	2,045	169	21	Wisconsin	76	4,429	552	3,372	459	45
Mississippi	37	2,445	588	1,669	171	17	Wyoming	98	2,675	261	2,237	146	31

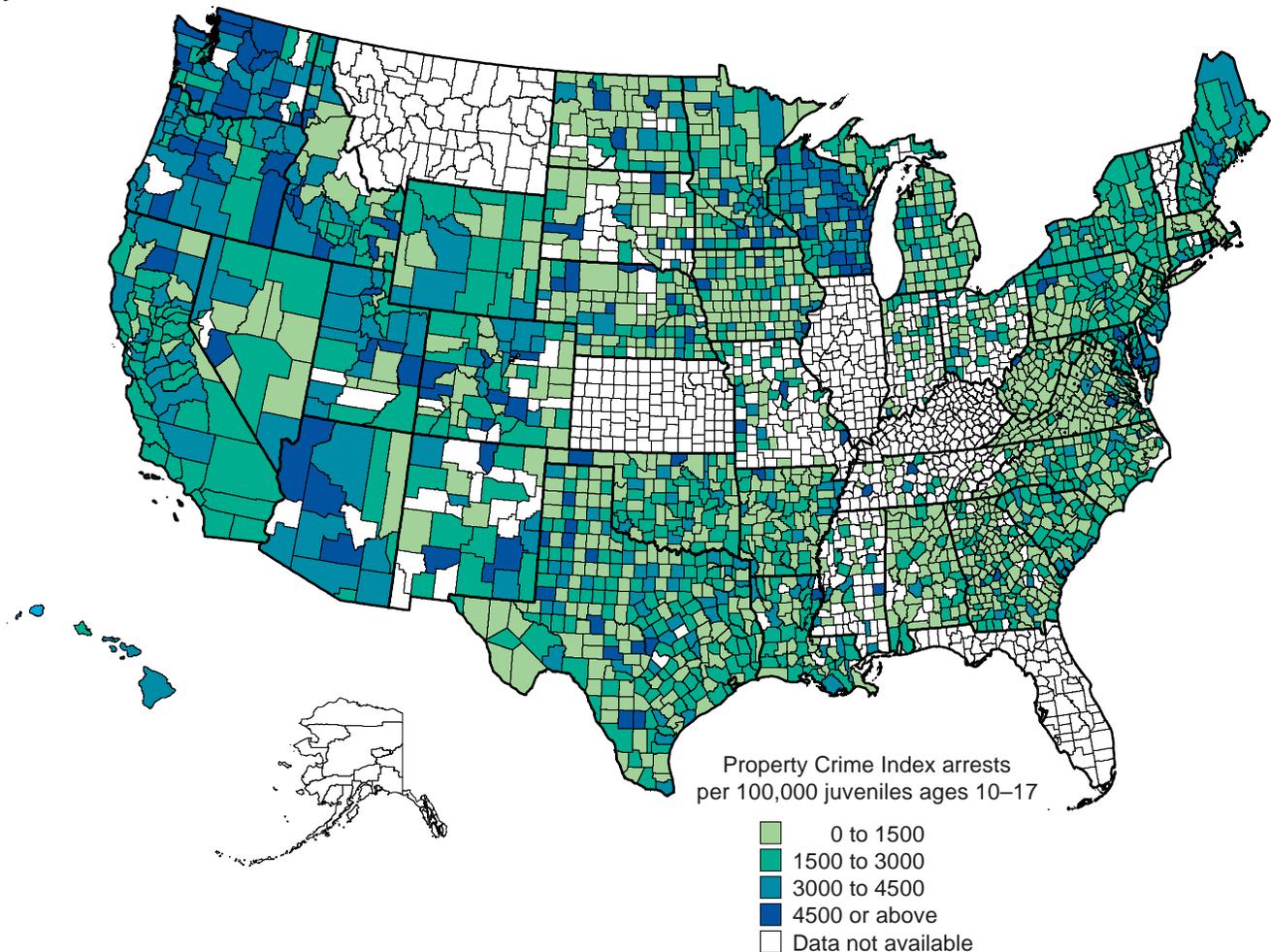
NA = Arrest counts were not available for this State in *Crime in the United States 1997*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire State. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their State's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997* and population data from the Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1997* [machine-readable data file].



Property Crime Index arrest rates are good indicators of the relative flow of youth into the juvenile justice system in different counties



Note: Rates were classified as “Data not available” when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their county’s population did not report.

Source: Authors’ analysis of county-level arrest estimates from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research’s *Uniform Crime Reporting Program data [United States]: County-level detailed arrest and offense data, 1996* [machine-readable data file] and population estimates from the Bureau of the Census’ *Estimates of the population of counties by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1996* [machine-readable data file].

Property crime arrest rates are difficult to interpret

The Property Crime Index is dominated by the high-volume crime category of larceny-theft offenses; for juveniles, shoplifting is the most common offense in this category. The Index also includes the crimes of home burglary, auto theft, and home arson—all very serious

crimes. Therefore, to assess the nature of juvenile property crimes within a jurisdiction, one must consider the components individually.

For example, in 1997, the overall juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate in California was 10% below the national average, while the State’s juvenile arrest rate for burglary was 35% above the national average.

The low Property Crime Index arrest rate was tied to the State’s relatively low larceny-theft arrest rate, which was 28% below the national average. In another example, the juvenile larceny-theft arrest rate in Maryland in 1997 was just 4% above the national average, while the State’s juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft was more than double the national average.

Juvenile property crime arrest rates changed little from 1980 to 1997, unlike violent crime arrest rates

In 1997, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate was near its lowest level since the mid-1970's

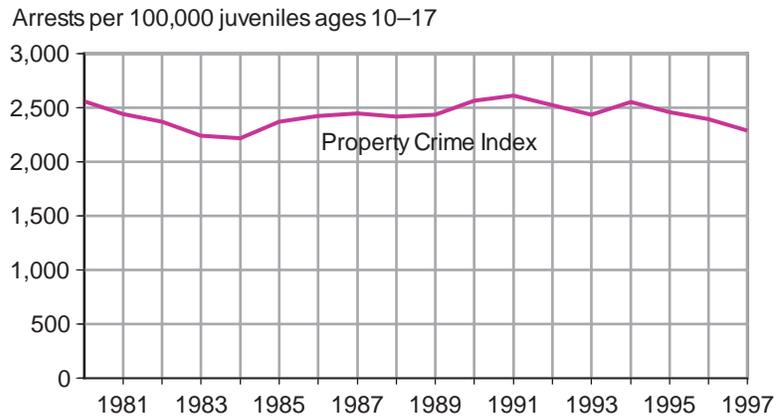
Property crime is a major portion of juvenile crime. About 1 in 3 juvenile arrests is for a property crime. Due to the sheer volume of property crime arrests, even small percent changes can translate into a large change in the actual number of cases entering the juvenile justice system.

To monitor changes in juvenile property crime arrests, the FBI developed the Property Crime Index, four offenses that are commonly reported and commonly defined across the Nation. These crime groupings (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) include both serious and nonserious offenses. For juveniles, about half of all Property Crime Index arrests are for shoplifting or minor thefts.

In recent years, violent and property crime arrest trends followed different paths. The juvenile property crime arrest rate held relatively constant, while juvenile violent crime arrest rates soared. In fact, in 1997, the juvenile property crime arrest rate was just 3% above the lowest level in the last 20 years.

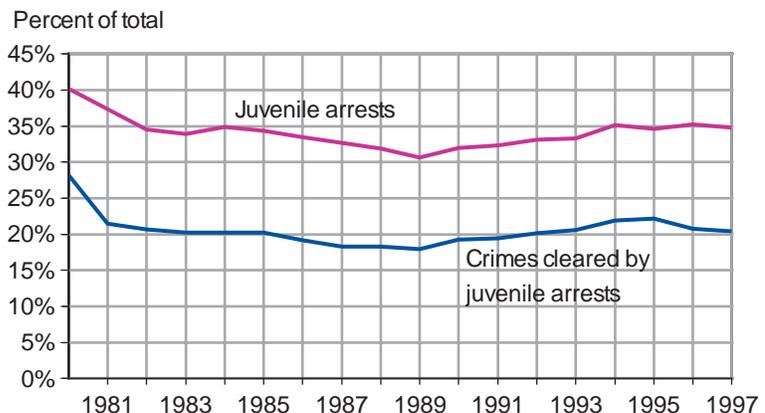
If arrests parallel crime trends, then it appears that change in one aspect of delinquent behavior does not imply changes in other areas. That is, in a given community, juvenile violence can increase while other criminal behavior does not.

The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses varied within a limited range over the past two decades



■ Controlling for the varying size of the juvenile population in the U.S., law enforcement agencies made fewer juvenile arrests for property crimes in 1997 than in any year since 1984.

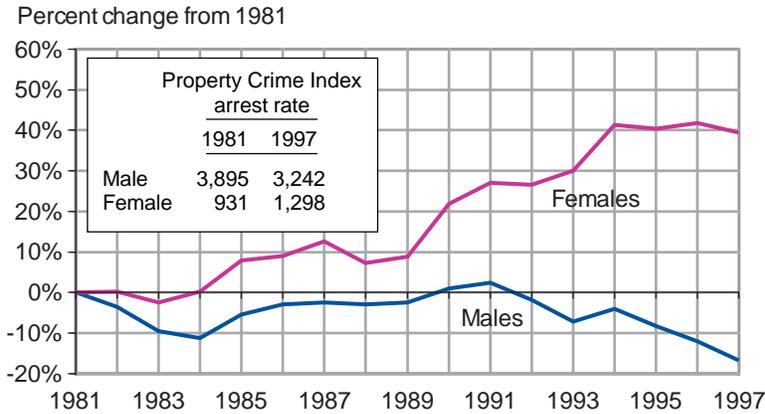
In 1997, juveniles were involved in 35% of all property crime arrests, a proportion comparable to that throughout the 1980's and 1990's



■ Similar to the pattern for arrest proportions, the juvenile proportion of property crime clearances in 1997 (23%) was typical of the levels in the 1980's and the 1990's.

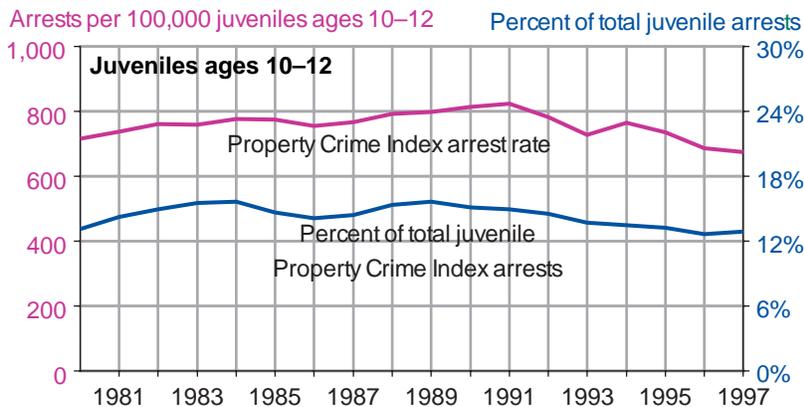
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

While juvenile male arrest rates for Property Crime Index offenses declined during the 1990's, the female rate increased



- Between 1981 and 1997, male juvenile property crime rates declined 17%, while female rates increased 39%.

Unlike the increasing arrest rate for violent crimes, the property crime arrest rate for very young juveniles remained relatively consistent from 1980 through 1997



- The Property Crime Index arrest rate for persons ages 10–12 was 8% lower in 1997 than in 1980. This decline paralleled the drop in the property crime arrest rate for older juveniles.
- In both 1980 and in 1997, 13% of all juveniles arrested for a Property Crime Index offense were under age 13.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

The female proportion of juvenile property crime arrests increased during the 1990's

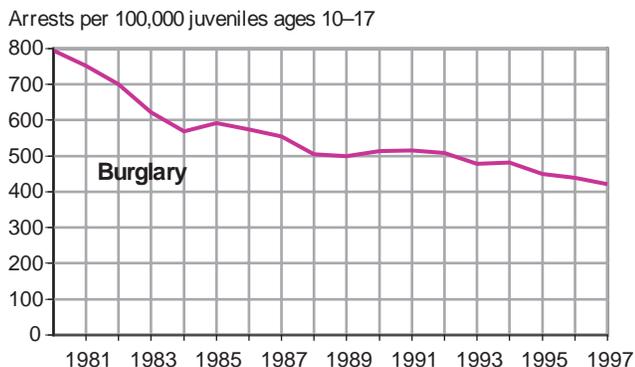
In 1997, property crime arrests accounted for about 1 in 3 female juvenile arrests. The bulk of these arrests (more than 3 in 4) was for larceny-theft, primarily shoplifting. In 1997, on average, over 600 females under age 18 were arrested daily for a property crime.

The female proportion of juvenile property crime arrests has increased over the past two decades. In 1981, the female Property Crime Index arrest rate was 24% of the male rate. Between 1981 and 1997, the female rate increased while the male rate declined. As a result, in 1997, the female Property Crime Index arrest rate was 40% of the male rate.

Many of the juveniles entering the justice system are charged with property offenses, and the disproportionate increase in female arrests for property offenses has changed the composition of this large group. Local juvenile justice systems have seen little change in demand for the types of services required by male property offenders. In contrast, the increase in female involvement in both property and violent offenses has increased the demand for intervention services and placement alternatives that address problems unique to young female offenders.

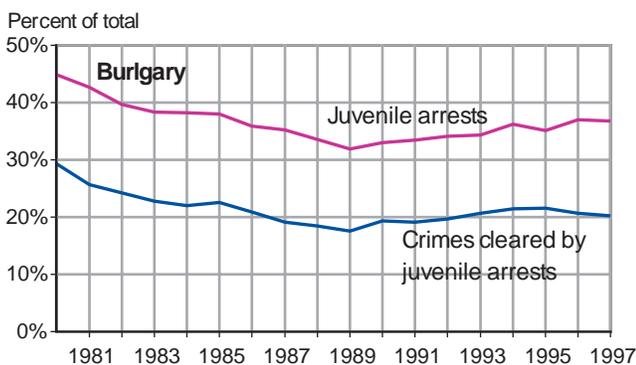
As with violent offenses, juvenile arrest trends differed across property offense categories

The juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined consistently between 1980 and 1997; the 1997 rate was about half the 1980 rate



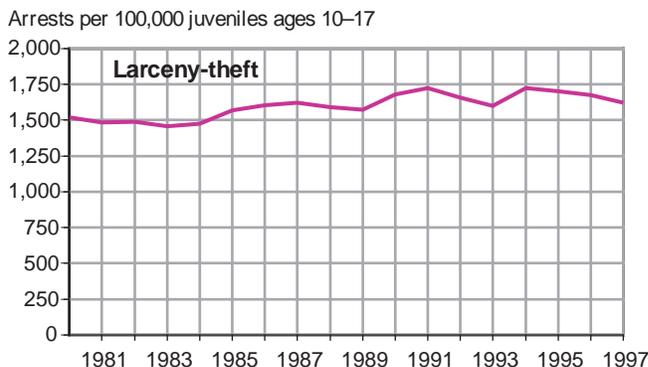
- The burglary arrest rate declined 36% between 1980 and 1988, remained constant for a few years, and then dropped by another 17% between 1992 and 1997.

The juvenile proportion of burglary arrests declined throughout the 1980's, then increased gradually during the 1990's



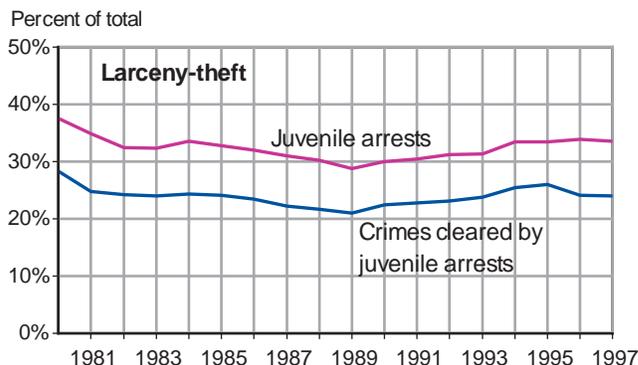
- Even with recent increases, the juvenile proportion of burglary arrests in 1997 was still below the levels of the early 1980's.

Compared with other offense categories, the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft remained constant through the 1980's and 1990's



- Larceny-theft offenses, which include shoplifting and thefts of bicycles and automotive accessories, are defined as the stealing of property without the use of force, violence, or fraud.

The juvenile proportion of arrests for larceny-theft in 1997 was comparable to the levels of the early 1980's

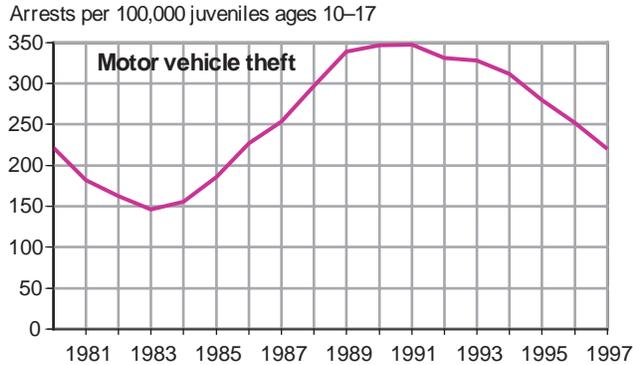


- Between 1980 and 1997, about 1 in 3 persons arrested for larceny-theft was under age 18, and about 1 in 4 larceny-thefts cleared was cleared by the arrest of a juvenile.

Note: Arson clearance data were first reported in 1981.

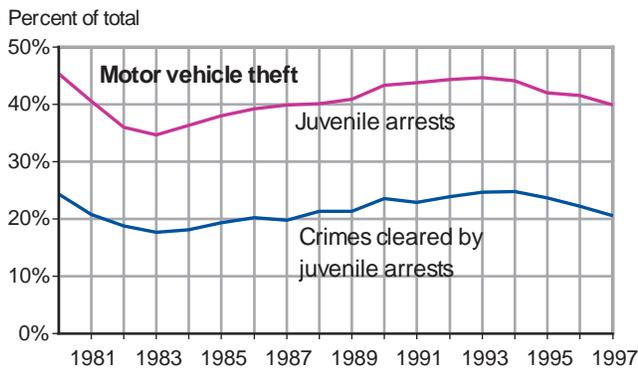
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files]. Juvenile clearance proportions were adapted from the FBI's *Crime in the United States* series for the years 1980 through 1997.

Unlike larceny-theft, juvenile arrest rates for motor vehicle theft soared between 1984 and 1989, then decreased through the 1990's



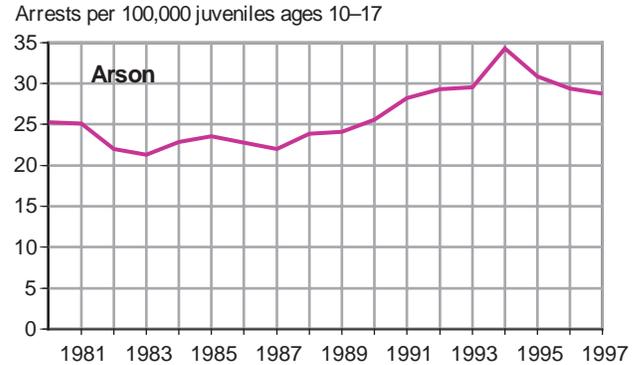
- The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft increased 130% between 1983 and 1989. The decline in the 1990's resulted in a 1997 arrest rate that was 50% above the 1983 low point and equal to the 1980 rate.

Between 1980 and 1997, the juvenile proportion of arrests for motor vehicle theft varied between 35% and 45%



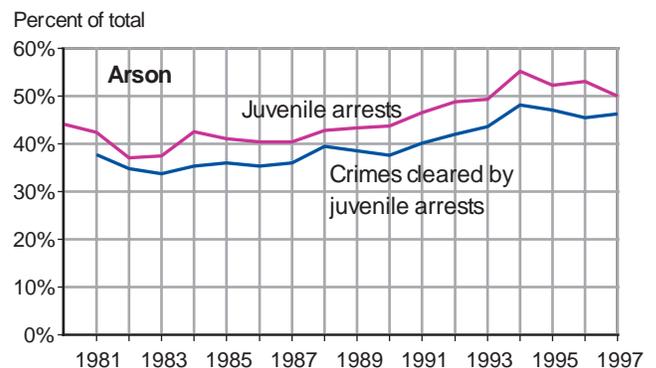
- The juvenile proportion of clearances for motor vehicle theft fluctuated between 18% and 25% between 1980 and 1997, with the 1997 level nearing the average for the prior two decades.

After remaining relatively constant in the 1980's, the juvenile arrest rate for arson increased more than 40% between 1989 and 1994



- By 1997, half of the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for arson between 1989 and 1994 had been erased.

From the early 1980's through the mid-1990's, the juvenile proportion of arson arrests and arson clearances grew



- Juveniles are responsible for a greater proportion of arson offenses than of any other crime in the Property Crime Index. In 1997, juveniles accounted for 50% of all arson arrests and 46% of all arson clearances.

Can future juvenile crime trends be predicted?

In the early 1990's, there were predictions of a coming wave of "superpredators"

Juvenile violent crime trends of the late 1980's and the early 1990's led some to conclude that the nature of juvenile violence had changed and that a new breed of juveniles—the superpredator—was now a threat to U.S. society. These were juveniles for whom violence was a way of life—new delinquents unlike youth of past generations. Many accepted this concept. Nearly every State changed its laws to make it easier to handle more youth as adult criminals. The fear of a new breed of juvenile delinquent even led many to wonder if the juvenile justice system itself was obsolete. In the mid-1990's, this fear was heightened by the realization that the juvenile population would increase into the next decade. More juveniles meant more superpredators.

What evidence do crime statistics offer for superpredators?

The most common crimes juveniles commit are property offenses. If there were a change in the nature of juvenile offending in the last decade, it should generate changes in juvenile property crime arrests. The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses, however, changed little in the 1980's and 1990's.

There is evidence that juvenile violence did increase for a few years in the early 1990's. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) found that after years of stability the rate of juvenile serious violence did increase in the early 1990's—breaking out of its historic range to a level well above that of past generations.

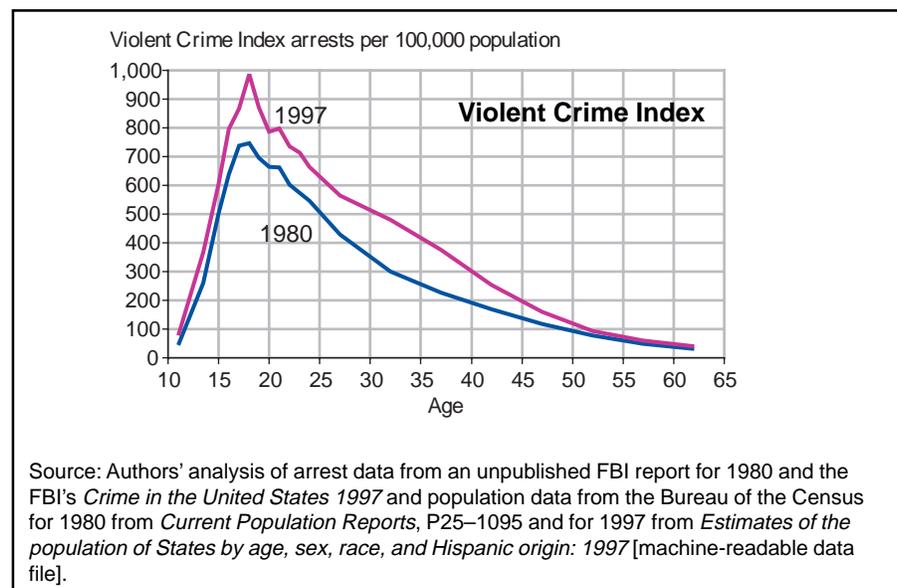
The NCVS data also show, however, that by 1995, the rate had returned to its traditional level. Rather than providing evidence for development of a juvenile superpredator, the NCVS data indicate that, despite a temporary increase, the rate of serious juvenile offending as of the mid-1990's was comparable to that of a generation ago.

The large increase in juvenile violent crime arrest rates reported by law enforcement agencies between 1988 and 1994 is the data most commonly cited as evidence for a new breed of violent superpredator. The increase in the juvenile violent crime arrest rate was much greater than the increase in serious juvenile offending documented by the NCVS. NCVS data indicate that serious juvenile offending returned to traditional levels by 1995, but the juvenile violent crime arrest rate did not follow this pattern. Even after a large decline that began in 1994, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1997 was still far above levels of the early and middle 1980's.

Violent crime arrest rates increased for all age groups

To understand disparities between NCVS data and arrest data, it is necessary to analyze arrest rate trends for all age groups, not just for juveniles. Age-based patterns for Violent Crime Index arrest rates are similar in 1980 and 1997. In both years, the rates reach their peak in the late teens and early twenties and decline consistently and substantially through the older age groups. For all age groups, however, the 1997 rate is higher than the 1980 rate. (See Violent Crime Index graph.)

The data show that, in the 1990's, the Nation experienced an overall increase in violent crime arrest rates among all age groups, not just juveniles. It is hard to use the superpredator argument to explain this broad-based increase in violent crime arrests. The age group with the greatest increase in violent crime arrest rates is persons in their thirties and forties. No one has argued that there is a new breed of middle-aged superpredator, but the



data provide more support for that conclusion than for the concept of a juvenile superpredator.

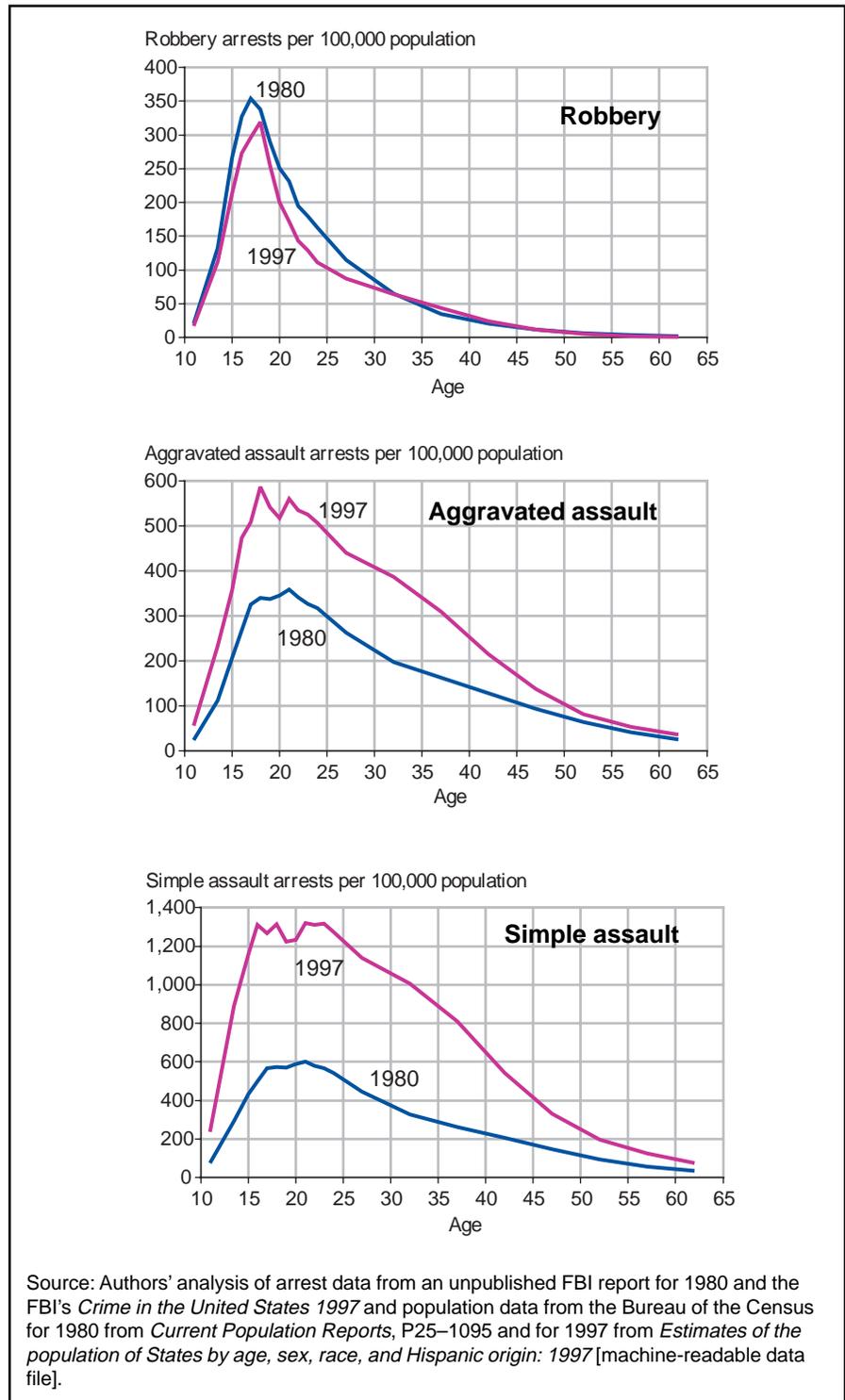
To explore further the disparities between NCVS data and arrest data, it is necessary to analyze age-specific arrest rate trends for the individual offenses that comprise the Violent Crime Index. Most arrests for violent crimes are for robberies and aggravated assaults. The arrest rates for these two offenses have different trends.

The 1997 robbery arrest rates are lower than the 1980 rates in nearly all age groups. Therefore, robberies are not responsible for the overall increase in violent crime arrest rates during 1980–1997. (See robbery graph.)

In contrast to robberies, aggravated assault arrest rates increased substantially between 1980 and 1997 for all age groups. (See aggravated assault graph.) Aggravated assault arrests clearly are the driving force for the overall increase in violent crime arrest rates.

Some have speculated that the increase in aggravated assault rates was due to law enforcement reclassification of simple assaults as aggravated assaults. This does not appear to be the case, because simple assault rates also increased substantially during 1980–1997 for all age groups. (See simple assault graph.)

As with the increase in the overall violent crime arrest rate, the increase for aggravated assault was found in all age groups and was, in fact, highest among persons in their thirties and forties. Again, the juvenile superpredator theory is not the most straightforward explanation for the pattern of increase.



Arrest rate trends reflect changes in public attitudes and law enforcement policy

Any explanation of the changes in violent crime arrests between 1980 and 1997 must accommodate certain facts. It must explain why:

- Juvenile violent crime arrest rates were higher in 1997 than in 1980 even though victims' reports of juvenile violent crime did not increase during this period.
- Aggravated and simple assault arrest rates increased, but robbery arrest rates did not.
- Assault arrest rates increased in all age groups.

Other arrest data point to some possible explanations.

After years of consistency, juvenile arrests for curfew law violations increased markedly from 1993 to 1996. It is unlikely that more youth were violating curfew in 1996 than in 1993. Some communities, however, decided that keeping youth off the streets would reduce juvenile violence. As a result, law enforcement began arresting more juveniles for curfew violations. The increase in juvenile arrests for curfew violations

reflects a change in public attitude and a resulting law enforcement response, not a change in juvenile behavior.

Another example of this process can be found in arrests for drug law violations. Juvenile drug abuse arrest rates nearly doubled between 1992 and 1996. Self-report studies do not indicate a large change in drug use among youth during this period. Since most of the increase in drug abuse arrests was attributable to arrests for marijuana possession, it seems clear that communities became more concerned about marijuana use among youth and that law enforcement, responding to this concern, arrested more juveniles for this offense.

There was a societal change during this period that arguably could have caused increases in assault arrest rates (particularly for middle-aged persons) without affecting robbery arrest rates. During this period, legislative and policy changes required a formal law enforcement response to domestic violence incidents. This change would have resulted in more aggravated and simple assault arrests, but no additional robbery arrests. It would have had its great-

est impact on the arrests for middle-age persons. It also would have caused arrests to increase without a change in victim-reported crime levels.

Therefore, one could explain the increase in violent crime arrest rates between 1980 and 1997 by an increase in law enforcement response to the crime of domestic violence. Society has become more sensitive to problems caused by domestic violence and has chosen to no longer ignore a crime that has been a part of American culture for generations. Juveniles are not immune to domestic violence arrests. Family problems, even some that in past years may have been classified as status offenses (e.g., incorrigibility), can now result in an assault arrest. This logic also explains why violent crime arrests over the past decade have increased proportionately more for juvenile females than males.

In summary, arrest increases are not always related to an increase in crime. They can reflect positive policy changes. Regardless, it is clear that national crime and arrest statistics provide no evidence for a new breed of juvenile superpredator.

Growth in murders by juveniles is linked to weapon use

The large growth in juvenile arrests for murder between 1987 and 1993 was not due to changes in police response. There was an actual increase in homicides by juveniles. This increase, however, can be explained by factors other than the advent of juvenile superpredators.

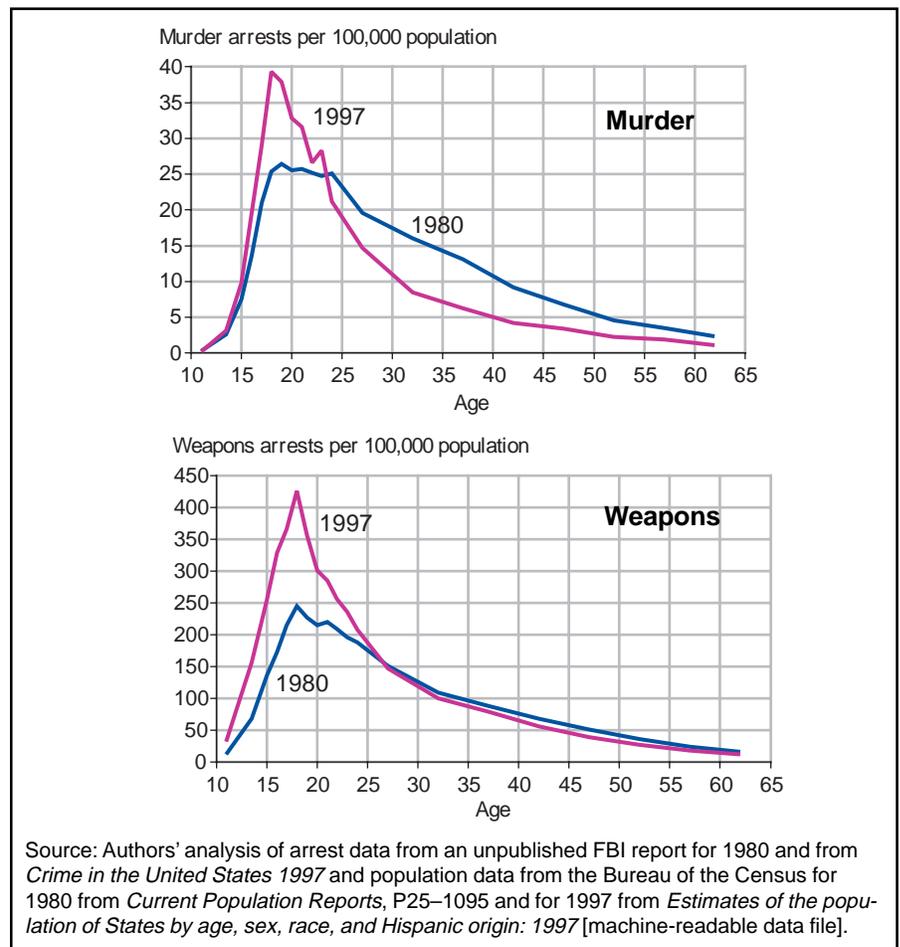
Nearly all of the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for murder that occurred between 1987 and 1993 was erased by 1997. In fact, the murder rate in the U.S. in 1997 was lower than it had been since the 1960's. This trend raises another question about the superpredator theory. If the increase in juvenile homicides between 1987 and 1993 is explained by the development of a new breed of juvenile superpredator, then what explains the substantial decline after 1994? Nothing in the superpredator notion would predict such a decline.

Relevant to an understanding of juvenile murder arrest trends is the link between murder rates and weapon use. The relationship of the murder age-arrest curves for 1980 and 1997 is very different from the relationship for assaults and more similar to that for weapons law violations. (See murder graph and weapons graph.) For assaults, rates were higher in 1997 than in 1980 for all age groups. For murders, the rates were lower in 1997 than in 1980 for all persons above age 25, but there were substantial increases in murder rates among juveniles and young adults. The age-specific arrest rate trend profile for weapons violations is comparable to that for murder, showing large increases for juveniles and young adults.

Further evidence concerning the link between juvenile murder arrest trends and weapons use can be found in the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report data, which show that the overall trend in homicides by juveniles—the increase from the mid-1980's through 1993 and the subsequent decline through 1997—is entirely attributable to homicides committed with firearms. This finding also argues against the existence of juvenile superpredators. Superpredators probably would not be selective about how they kill. They would use any weapon available—guns, knives, clubs, fists, motor vehicles, explosive devices. If superpredators were responsible for the

increase in juvenile murder arrests, then there would be increases in murders in all weapons categories. But this is not the case: the increase was firearm-related, as was the subsequent decline. Trends in juvenile homicide arrests are linked to gun use (as reflected in trends in weapons-related arrests).

In summary, this analysis of juvenile homicide arrests also leads to the conclusion that juvenile superpredators are more myth than reality. In the early 1990's this myth caused a panic that changed the juvenile justice system and its response to the Nation's youth.



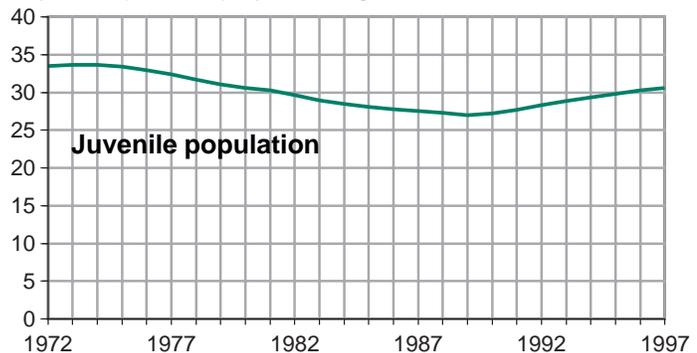
Changes in juvenile violent crime arrests are not closely tied to changes in the juvenile population

History shows that it is a fool's errand to try to predict future crime trends. The first edition of this publication series, using 1992 data, speculated about future juvenile violence. Assuming that the arrest rate would continue to grow as it had in the previous 5 years or that the rate would hold constant, increased juvenile violence was anticipated. Some researchers even predicted a coming bloodbath. Since these predictions, murders by juveniles have declined remarkably, and the juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1997 was at its lowest level in the 1990's.

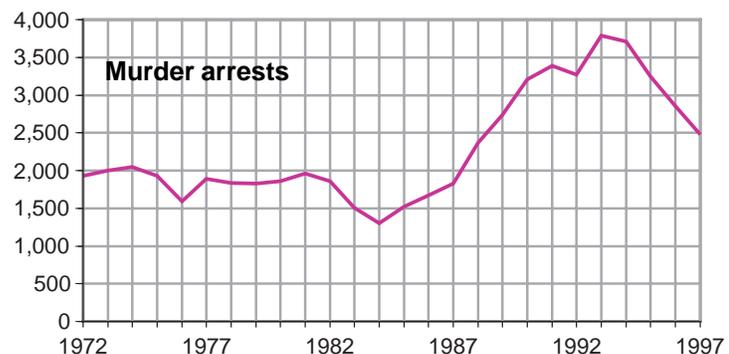
It would be simple to predict the future if juvenile violent crime trends were primarily related to changes in the size of the juvenile population. But as recent arrest trends clearly show, the number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes is unrelated to the size of the juvenile population. From 1987 to 1994, while the juvenile population grew slightly, juvenile arrests for violent crime soared. Then, as the juvenile population increased slightly from 1994 through 1997, juvenile arrests dropped precipitously. In fact, the magnitude of the decline in violent crime arrests in the 3-year period between 1994 and 1997 was greater than the projected growth in the juvenile population over the next 20 years.

No one has been able to predict juvenile violence trends accurately. It is clear, however, that the Nation is not doomed to high levels of juvenile violence simply because the juvenile population will increase. As Attorney General Janet Reno has often said, demography is not destiny. Most of the violent juvenile offenders in the year 2010 have not yet even entered grade school. Current and future social and policy changes will have more effect on juvenile violent crime and arrest trends than will population changes.

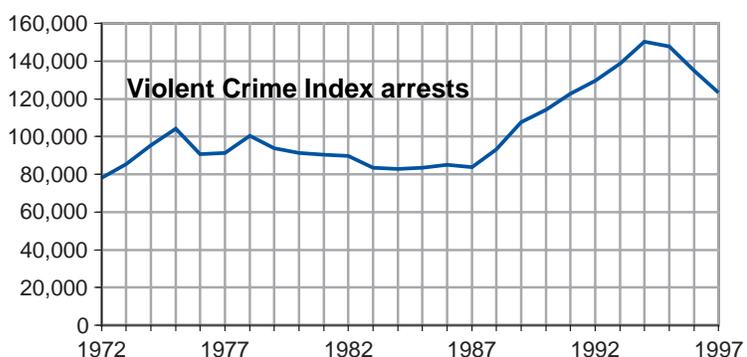
Population (in millions) of juveniles ages 10–17



Juvenile murder arrests



Juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests

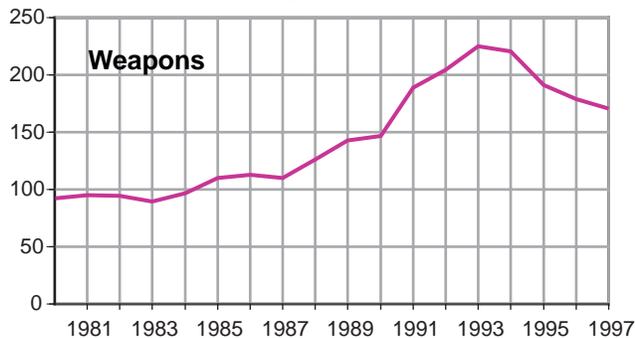


Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997; population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

What are the juvenile arrest rate trends for offenses other than Violent and Property Crime Index offenses?

The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations doubled in the 6-year period between 1987 and 1993

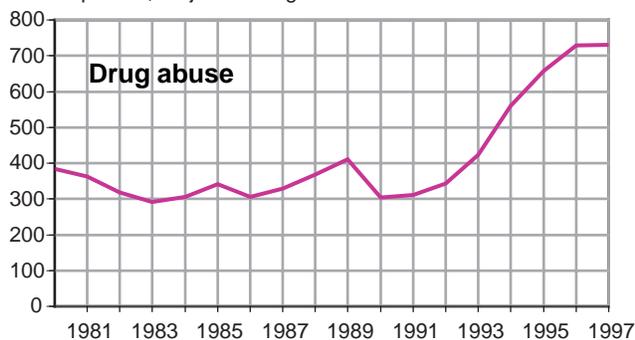
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- The decline between 1993 and 1997 brought the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations to its lowest level since 1990, but the rate was still 55% above the 1987 level.

After more than a decade of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased more than 70% between 1993 and 1997

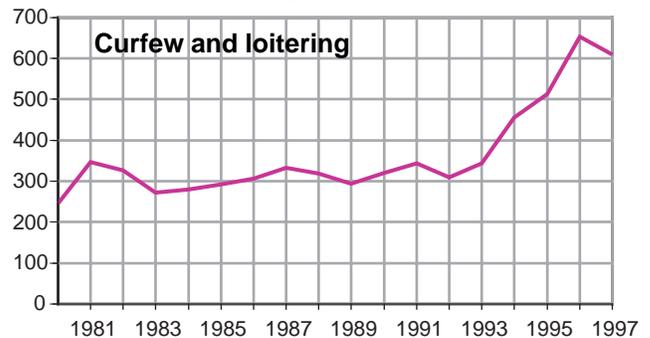
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Of juveniles arrested for drug abuse violations, 64% were white, 16% were age 14 or younger, and 13% were female.
- The large increase in arrests occurred during a period when self-report data show only small changes in the use of drugs by juveniles.

After years of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations nearly doubled between 1993 and 1996, and then fell in 1997

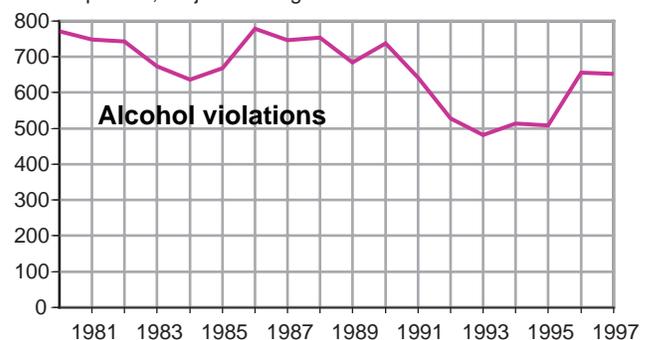
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Between 1993 and 1997, the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations was greater for females (88%) than for males (66%).

The 1996 increase in the juvenile arrest rate for alcohol-related offenses came after a general pattern of decline over the prior 10 years

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Alcohol-related crimes include liquor law violations, drunkenness, and driving under the influence.
- The juvenile arrest rate for alcohol-related crimes increased 29% between 1995 and 1996, then remained the same in 1997. The 1996–1997 rate was still 11% below the 1990 rate.

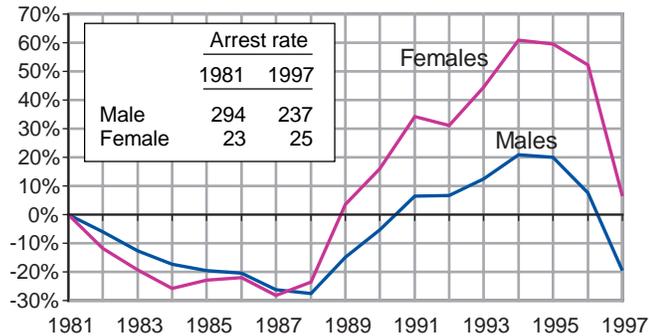
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

The increase in juvenile arrest rates since 1981 has been greater for females than for males

Juvenile male arrest rates and female arrest rates for robbery peaked in 1994 and fell sharply thereafter

Robbery

Percent change from 1981

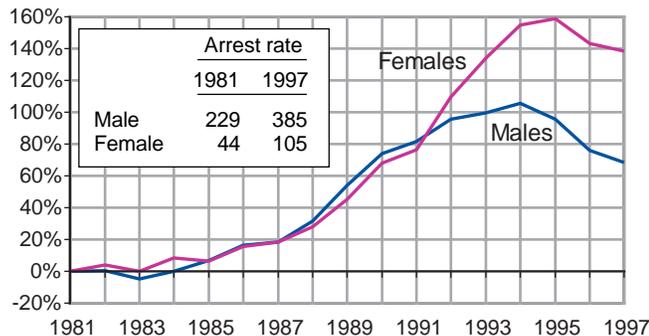


- The male arrest rate in 1997 was 20% below the 1981 rate, while the female rate increased slightly.

While male arrest rates for aggravated assault leveled off between 1992 and 1995, female arrest rates continued to increase

Aggravated assault

Percent change from 1981



- In 1997, male arrest rates for aggravated assault were nearly four times the female rates.
- Between 1981 and 1997, female arrest rates increased twice as much as male rates increased.

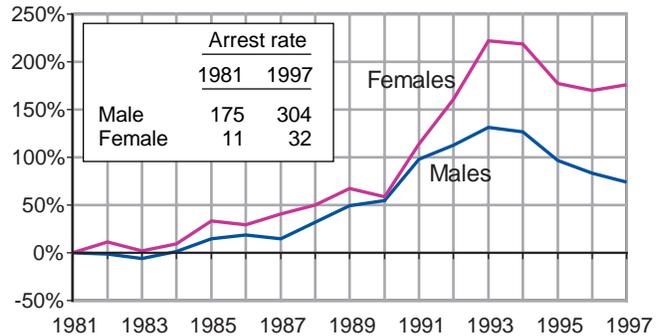
Note: Arrest rates are arrests per 100,000 males or females ages 10–17.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

Female arrest rates for weapons law violations nearly tripled between 1981 and 1997, while the male rate nearly doubled

Weapons

Percent change from 1981

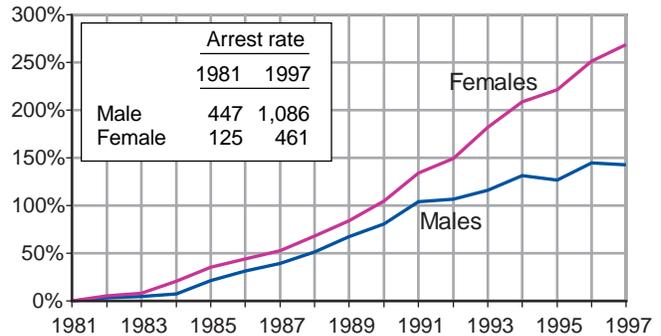


- Even with its greater increase, the female rate in 1997 was only 10% of the male rate.

Since 1981, the female arrest rate for simple assault has increased more sharply than the male rate

Simple assault

Percent change from 1981

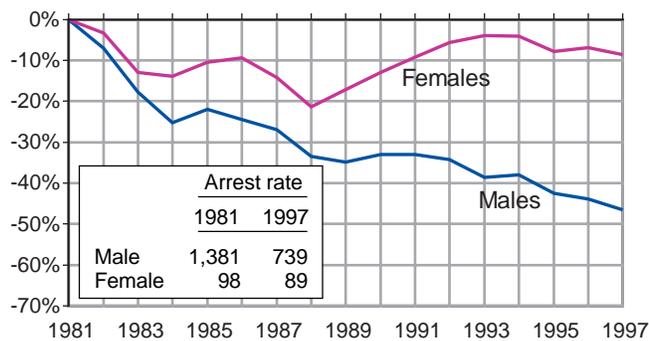


- In 1997, the female arrest rate for simple assault was about 40% of the male rate, while in 1981 it was only 28% of the male rate.

While juvenile male arrest rates for burglary declined substantially between 1981 and 1997, the female rate remained relatively constant

Burglary

Percent change from 1981

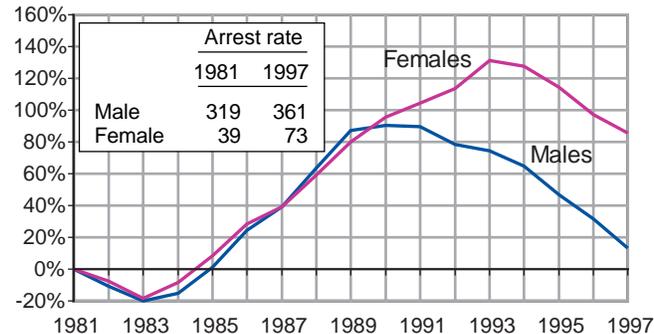


- Even after its large decline, the male rate was still more than eight times the female rate in 1997.

Both the male and female arrest rates for motor vehicle theft increased during the 1980's and have decreased in the 1990's

Motor vehicle theft

Percent change from 1981

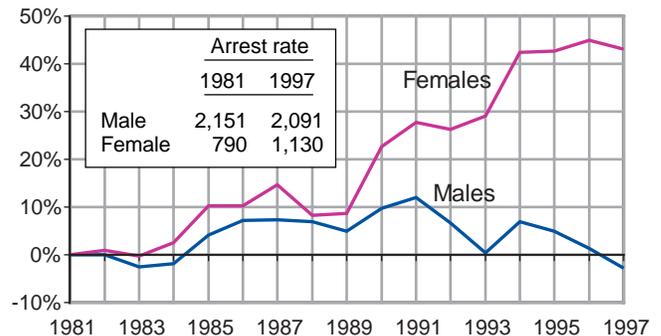


- While the male rate in 1997 was near its lowest level in two decades, the female rate in 1997 was twice its lowest level.

While male arrest rates for larceny theft remained essentially constant between 1981 and 1997, the female rate grew by 40%

Larceny-theft

Percent change from 1981

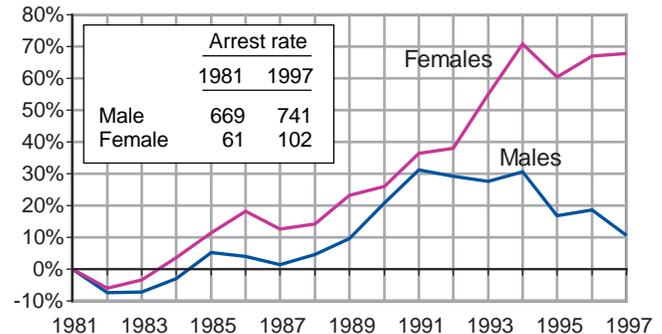


- In 1997, the male arrest rate for larceny-theft was less than twice the female rate.

While male arrest rates for vandalism declined after 1991, female arrest rates continued to increase

Vandalism

Percent change from 1981



- Female arrests represent a small proportion of all vandalism arrests, but because of the much larger growth in female arrest rates than in male arrest rates between 1981 and 1997, that proportion grew from 9% to 14%.

Note: Arrest rates are arrests per 100,000 males or females ages 10–17.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

About 1 in 11 juveniles arrested in 1997 was under age 13

The proportion of juvenile arrests involving very young juveniles has been relatively constant since 1980

Most serious offense	Juveniles younger than age 13				
	1997 arrest estimates	1997 percent female	Percent of total juvenile arrests		
			1980	1990	1997
Total	253,100	24%	9%	11%	9%
Violent Crime Index	10,700	14	6	8	8
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	<50	5	2	1	1
Forcible rape	700	3	4	10	12
Robbery	2,600	11	5	6	6
Aggravated assault	7,400	17	8	9	10
Property Crime Index	91,200	26	13	15	13
Burglary	16,400	12	11	14	12
Larceny-theft	68,900	31	15	17	14
Motor vehicle theft	2,500	18	4	4	4
Arson	3,400	9	32	37	35
Nonindex					
Simple assault	30,600	23	12	14	13
Forgery and counterfeiting	200	32	3	5	2
Fraud	500	33	5	5	4
Embezzlement	<50	31	4	5	2
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	2,200	13	6	6	6
Vandalism	25,100	10	22	22	18
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	4,400	12	6	6	8
Prostitution and commercialized vice	<50	24	1	3	3
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	3,300	9	11	19	19
Drug abuse violations	4,500	22	2	2	2
Gambling	<50	4	2	4	2
Offenses against family and children	1,000	37	31	12	11
Driving under the influence	100	18	1	1	1
Liquor laws	2,000	39	1	1	1
Drunkenness	400	25	1	2	2
Disorderly conduct	20,700	24	8	10	9
Vagrancy	200	15	4	7	5
All other offenses (except traffic)	31,100	23	8	9	7
Suspicion	100	15	9	13	5
Curfew and loitering law violations	9,300	29	4	5	5
Runaway	15,700	48	9	9	8

- In 1997, 35% of all juveniles arrested for arson were under age 13.
- High-volume crimes with large proportions of very young arrestees were vandalism, larceny-theft, and simple assault.
- About half (48%) of the nearly 16,000 very young juveniles arrested in 1997 for running away were young girls.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of data presented in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*. National estimates of juvenile arrests were developed using FBI estimates of total arrests and juvenile arrest proportions in reporting sample.

What do police do with juveniles they arrest?

Most large law enforcement agencies have specialized units that concentrate on juvenile justice issues

A national survey of law enforcement agencies conducted in 1997 asked large police departments and sheriffs' departments (those with 100 or more sworn officers) about the types of special units they operate. A large proportion reported that they had special units targeting juvenile justice concerns.

	Type of agency	
	Local police	Sheriff
Special units		
Drug education in schools	95%	79%
Juvenile crime	66	49
Gangs	55	50
Child abuse	48	53
Domestic violence	46	37
Missing children	33	28
Youth outreach	32	24

A large proportion of these agencies also reported that they had written policy directives for handling juveniles (97% of police and 95% of sheriffs' departments) and for handling domestic violence/spousal abuse events (97% of police and 92% of sheriffs' departments). Most agencies reported having full-time school resource officers (76% of police and 77% of sheriffs' departments).

About 1 of every 10 juveniles arrested was held in a lockup in 1990

Lockups are the temporary holding facilities maintained by law enforcement agencies. Twenty-six percent of local police departments in 1993 operated a lockup facility separately from a jail. While the average capacity of these lockups was 10 inmates, the range was quite broad. The average capacity of lockups was only 4 in communities with populations under 10,000, but was more than 810 in communities with populations of more than 1 million.

A national survey asked departments that administered these facilities for the number of juveniles they had admitted on Friday, June 29, 1990. It was estimated that approximately 750, or 4% of persons admitted to lockups on this day, were classified by State law as juveniles. If it is assumed that, on average, about 6,000 juveniles were arrested per day in 1990, this means that roughly 1 in 10 was placed in a lockup. While most stays are short, this volume of admissions implies that a substantial portion of all juveniles in custody are held in police lockups.

Most juveniles arrested in 1997 were referred to court for prosecution

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program asks law enforcement agencies to report their responses to the juveniles they take into custody. This is the only component of the UCR Program that is sensitive to State variations in the definition of a juvenile. Consequently, in New York,

law enforcement agencies report their responses to those persons arrested who were younger than age 16 at the time of arrest; in Illinois and Texas, the reports are for arrestees younger than age 17; and in most other States, the reports are for arrestees younger than age 18.

Twenty-five percent of juveniles taken into custody by law enforcement in 1997 were handled within the department and released. These juveniles were warned by police and then released, usually to parents, other relatives, or friends. In some jurisdictions, the law enforcement agency may operate its own diversion programs that may provide some intervention services to juveniles. Another 1% of arrested juveniles were referred either to another law enforcement agency or to a welfare agency.

The remaining juveniles, more than 2 in 3 arrested, were referred to court intake, the next step in the justice system. Most of these juveniles (91%) were referred to a juvenile court or a juvenile probation department. The other 9% were referred to criminal courts for prosecution as an adult.

Juveniles arrested in small cities and in rural areas were more likely than those in large urban centers to be referred to a criminal court. For example, in 1997, only 6.1% of juveniles referred for prosecution in cities with populations of more than 250,000 were sent to criminal courts, compared with 9.3% in suburban counties and 9.8% in cities with populations of less than 10,000.

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Technical Note

While juvenile arrest rates may largely reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the magnitude of these rates.

Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in the jurisdiction. Therefore, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have a higher arrest rate than jurisdictions where resident youth behave similarly.

Jurisdictions (especially small ones) that are vacation destinations or that are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect the behavior of nonresident youth more than that of resident youth.

Other factors that influence arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of citizens toward crime, the policies of local law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system.

In most areas, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for such areas are necessarily based on partial information. Reported rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be accurate.

Comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions can be informative. But because of the factors noted above, such comparisons should be done with caution.