



# OJJDP

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

February 1997

## JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

# Juvenile Arrests 1995

Howard N. Snyder

Law enforcement agencies in the United States made an estimated 2.7 million arrests in 1995 of persons under age 18.\* According to the FBI, juveniles accounted for 18% of all arrests. In 1995, for the first year in nearly a decade, juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index Offenses—murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—declined 3%. Even with this decline, the number of juvenile violent crime arrests in 1995 was 12% greater than the level in 1991 and 67% above the 1986 level. Similarly, all adult age groups also experienced increases in Violent Crime Index arrest rates between the mid-1980's and the mid-1990's.

These findings are derived from data reported annually by local law enforcement agencies across the country to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Based on these data, the FBI prepares its annual *Crime in the United States* report, which summarizes crimes known to the police and arrests made during the reporting calendar year. This information is used to characterize the extent and nature of juvenile crime that comes to the attention of the justice system. Other recent findings from the UCR Program are:

- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 32% of all robbery arrests, 23% of weapon arrests, and 15% of murder and aggravated assault arrests in 1995.
- ◆ Juveniles under age 15 were responsible for 30% of juvenile violent crime arrests

\* Throughout this Bulletin, persons under age 18 are referred to as juveniles. See Notes on page 12.

in 1995, but they accounted for more than half (55%) of the decline in these arrests between 1994 and 1995.

- ◆ Less than one-half of 1% of all persons ages 10 through 17 in the United States were arrested for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1995.
- ◆ Juvenile murder arrests declined 14% between 1994 and 1995. The number of juvenile arrests for murder in 1995 was 9% below the level in 1991, but still 90% above the number of murder arrests in 1986.
- ◆ In contrast to violent crime, juvenile Property Crime Index arrests showed no change between 1991 and 1995. The declines in juvenile burglary arrests (11%) and motor vehicle theft arrests (17%) were offset by the 6% increase in juvenile arrests for larceny-theft—the highest volume offense category for juveniles.
- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 13% of all drug arrests in 1995. Between 1991 and 1995, juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations increased 138%.
- ◆ In 1995, 57% of arrests for running away from home involved females and 44% involved juveniles under age 15.
- ◆ Arrests of juveniles accounted for 14% of all violent crimes cleared by arrest in 1995; more specifically, juveniles accounted for 9% of murders, 15% of forcible rapes, 20% of robberies, and 13% of aggravated assaults cleared by arrest.

### From the Administrator

In a period when the Nation is concerned about juvenile crime, it is important that we have an accurate, current, empirically based picture of this problem. In October 1996, the FBI released *Crime in the United States 1995*, the most recent report in a series dating back to the 1930's. Policymakers, researchers, and the media rely on these annual reports to quantify criminal justice activities and trends.

This OJJDP Bulletin summarizes the statistics on the arrests of youth under age 18 found in *Crime in the United States 1995* and other data flowing from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. As readers will see, the newest FBI arrest statistics give us hope for the future. Juvenile arrests for violent crime declined in 1995 for the first time in nearly a decade. Most encouraging is that this decline was greatest among younger juveniles. This promising turnabout should temper recent forecasts of an epidemic of violent juvenile crime.

It is hoped that this Bulletin will stimulate the search for solutions to the problems that cause, and result from, juvenile crime.

Shay Bilchik  
Administrator

## Arrests of juveniles for all violent crimes declined between 1994 and 1995, with murder arrests down 14%

Offense	1995 Estimated Number of Juvenile Arrests	Percent of Total Juvenile Arrests		Percent Change		
		Female	Under Age 15	1986-95	1991-95	1994-95
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,745,000</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Crime Index total	885,100	24	40	15	2	-2
Violent Crime Index	147,700	15	30	67	12	-3
Murder & nonnegligent manslaughter	3,300	6	14	90	-9	-14
Forcible rape	5,500	2	37	-4	-12	-4
Robbery	55,500	9	28	63	18	-1
Aggravated assault	83,500	20	32	78	11	-3
Property Crime Index	737,400	26	42	8	0	-2
Burglary	135,800	10	39	-18	-11	-6
Larceny-theft	510,600	32	44	14	6	1
Motor vehicle theft	80,500	15	28	28	-17	-9
Arson	10,500	12	67	40	20	-8
Nonindex						
Other assaults	215,700	28	41	111	36	3
Forgery & counterfeiting	8,800	35	13	2	10	0
Fraud	25,100	26	26	5	69	1
Embezzlement	1,300	42	10	47	9	23
Stolen property; buying, receiving, possessing	42,800	12	28	20	-6	-2
Vandalism	139,600	11	47	25	5	-7
Weapons; carrying, possessing, etc.	56,300	8	30	75	13	-12
Prostitution & commercialized vice	1,300	48	17	-50	-6	11
Sex offense (except forcible rape & prostitution)	16,100	7	51	-4	-13	-8
Drug abuse violations	189,800	13	17	115	138	18
Gambling	1,600	5	17	98	50	-8
Offenses against the family & children	6,900	37	30	78	62	17
Driving under the influence	14,900	16	3	-49	-17	0
Liquor law violations	120,000	29	10	-18	-1	3
Drunkenness	20,600	16	15	-39	-1	12
Disorderly conduct	173,900	25	35	67	45	5
Vagrancy	3,500	11	21	15	29	-4
All other offenses (except traffic)	420,300	22	28	20	28	-1
Suspicion	2,000	21	27	-26	-57	-6
Curfew & loitering	149,800	30	29	76	84	14
Running away	249,500	57	44	53	17	-2

- ◆ Even with the decline in juvenile violent crime arrests in 1995, the number of violent crime arrests was still 12% greater than the 1991 level and 67% above the 1986 level.
- ◆ The number of juvenile arrests for murder in 1995 was 9% below the level in 1991 but still 90% above the number of murder arrests in 1986.
- ◆ Females were involved in 15% of Violent Crime Index arrests, 26% of Property Crime Index arrests, and 13% of drug abuse violation arrests in 1995.
- ◆ Between 1994 and 1995, the number of juvenile arrests fell in each of the following offense categories: murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, vandalism, and weapons law violations.

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1995*, Tables 29, 32, 34, 36, and 38. Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

## Decline in violent crime arrests was greater for younger juveniles

The decline in arrests for violent and property crime between 1994 and 1995 was greater for younger than for older juveniles.

	Percent Change in Arrests 1994-1995	
	Under Age 15	Ages 15 to 17
Total Crime Index	-2%	3%
Violent Crime Index	-5	-2
Murder	-1	-16
Forcible rape	-7	-2
Robbery	-2	0
Aggravated assault	-6	-2
Property Crime Index	-4	0
Burglary	-9	-3
Larceny-theft	-1	3
Motor vehicle theft	-14	-7
Arson	-10	-3
Vandalism	-11	-3
Weapons	-16	-11
Drug abuse violations	20	17
Running away	-5	0

Data source: Analysis of data from *Crime in the United States 1995*, Table 36.

Juveniles under age 15 were responsible for 30% of juvenile violent crime arrests in 1995, but they accounted for over half (55%) of the decline in these arrests between 1994 and 1995. Younger juveniles accounted for 70% of the decline in juvenile robbery arrests, 62% of the decline in aggravated assault arrests, and 67% of the decline in burglary arrests. All of the decline in juvenile property crime arrests between 1994 and 1995 can be attributed to younger juveniles.

## Violent crime arrests peaked with 18-year-olds

In 1995, 1.2% of juvenile violent crime arrests involved persons under age 10. Violent crime arrests increased with each age group between 10 and 17. In 1995, the number of violent crime arrests peaked with 18-year-olds and declined thereafter.

In 1995, 2.2% of juvenile property crime arrests involved persons under age 10. In contrast to violent crime, property crime arrests peaked in the 16-year-old age group and then declined abruptly, with the number of property crime arrests of persons age 20 less than half the number for persons age 16.

## One in four juvenile arrests in 1995 were arrests of females

Law enforcement agencies made 702,000 arrests of females below the age of 18 in 1995. The female proportion of juvenile arrests has grown in recent years. In fact, increases in arrests between 1991 and 1995 were greater for juvenile females than juvenile males in most offense categories.

	Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests 1991-1995	
	Female	Male
Violent Crime Index	34%	9%
Murder	18	-10
Forcible rape	3	-12
Robbery	24	17
Aggravated assault	39	6
Property Crime Index	17	-5
Burglary	3	-13
Larceny-theft	19	1
Motor vehicle theft	8	-20
Arson	70	15
Simple assault	56	30
Vandalism	33	2
Weapons	42	11
Drug abuse violations	176	133
Running away	17	15

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1995*, Table 35.

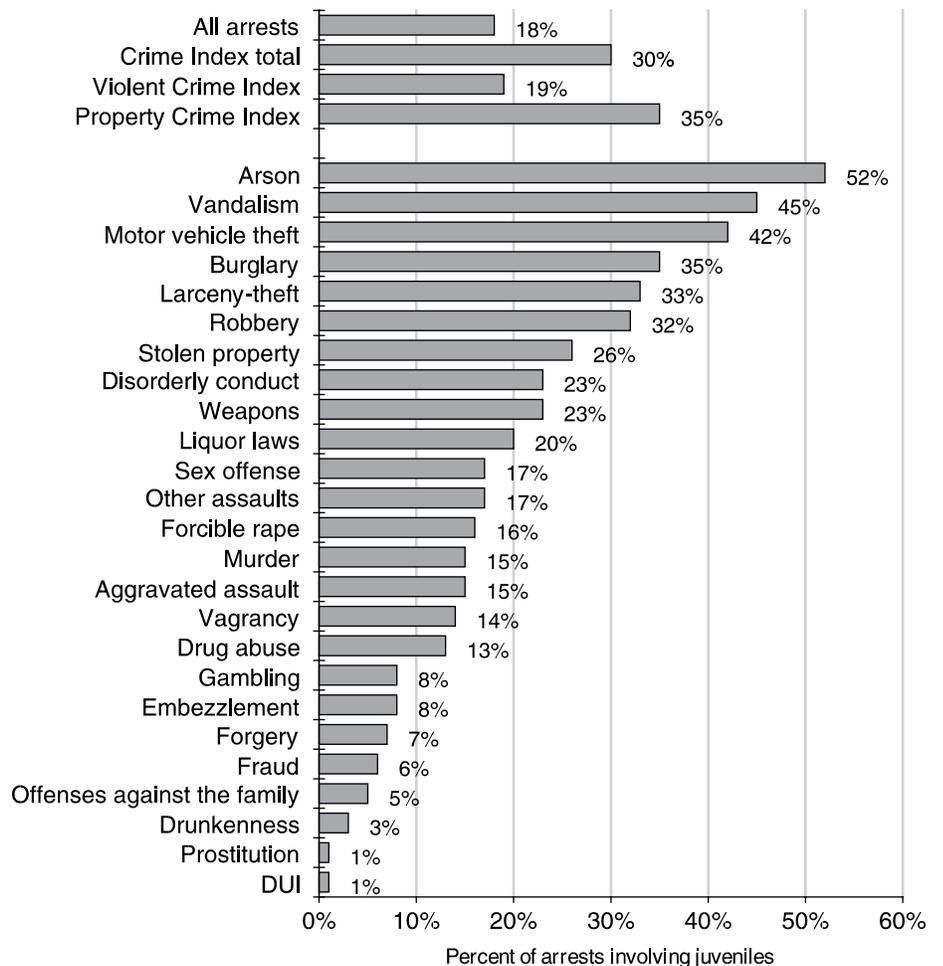
## Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities

The racial composition of the juvenile population in 1995 was 80% white, 15% black, and 5% other races, with juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity being classified as white. In contrast to their proportion in the general population, roughly equal numbers of violent crime arrests involved white and black youth in 1995.

	White Proportion of Juvenile Arrests in 1995
Murder	39%
Forcible rape	54
Robbery	38
Aggravated assault	56
Burglary	73
Larceny-theft	70
Motor vehicle theft	58
Weapons	63
Drug abuse violations	64
Running away	77

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1995*, Table 43.

## Juveniles were involved in a much larger proportion of property crime arrests than violent crime arrests in 1995



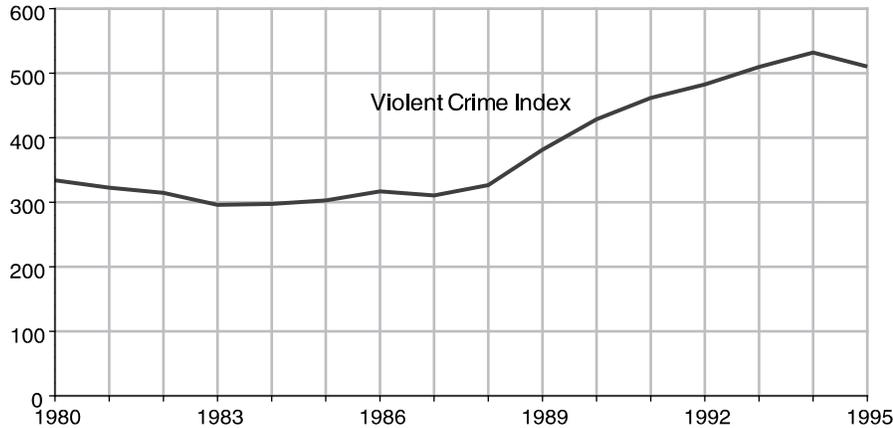
- ◆ Nearly one-third (32%) of all persons arrested for robbery in 1995 were under age 18, substantially above the juvenile proportion of arrests for other violent crimes: forcible rape (16%), murder (15%), and aggravated assault (15%).
- ◆ Most crime is committed by persons between ages 10 and 49. In fact, in 1995, 95% of all arrests involved persons in this age range. Juveniles ages 10 through 17 made up 19% of this segment of the U.S. population. Compared to their proportion in the 10- to 49-year-old population, juveniles were disproportionately involved in arrests for arson, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, burglary, larceny-theft, robbery, stolen property, disorderly conduct, weapons, and liquor law violation offenses.

Note: Running away from home and curfew violations are not presented in this figure because, by definition, only juveniles can be arrested for these offenses.

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1995*, Table 38.

**The juvenile violent crime arrest rate held constant for more than a decade, rose steadily from 1988 through 1994, then finally fell in 1995**

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17



Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**The Violent Crime Index monitors violence trends**

The FBI assesses trends in the volume of violent crimes by monitoring four offenses that are consistently reported by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are pervasive in all geographical areas of the country. These four crimes are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Other crimes may be considered violent by their nature or effect (e.g., kidnapping, extortion, drug selling), but the four crimes that together form the Violent Crime Index have traditionally been used as the Nation's barometer of violent crime.

**Juvenile violent crime arrest rates declined for the first time since 1987**

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1988 was nearly identical to the rate in 1980; in fact, this rate had changed little since the early 1970's. However, between 1987 and 1994, the rate increased 71%. This steady increase after years of stability focused national attention on the juvenile violent crime problem.

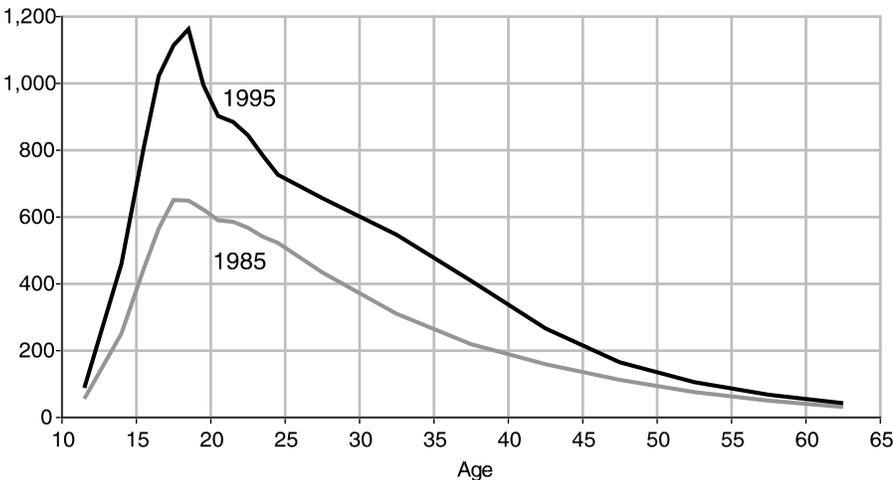
The most recent arrest and population data show that in 1995 the juvenile violent crime arrest rate declined 4% from the 1994 level and returned to the 1993 level. While the 1995 rate was still 64% above the 1987 level, this drop in the juvenile violent crime arrest rate represents the first variation in a pattern of consistent increases dating back to the late 1980's.

**Few juveniles are arrested for a violent crime**

The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate tells us that in 1995 there were about 500 arrests for these violent crimes for every 100,000 youth in the United States between 10 and 17 years of age. If each of these arrests involved a different juvenile (i.e., if each juvenile arrested in 1995 for a Violent Crime Index offense were arrested only once that year—which is very unlikely), then less than one-half of 1% of all persons ages 10 through 17 in the United States were arrested for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1995.

**Between 1985 and 1995, violent crime arrest rates increased substantially for all ages**

Violent Crime Index arrests per 100,000 population



- ◆ There were large increases between 1985 and 1995 in juvenile violent arrest rates, with the rates for juveniles ages 14, 15, or 16 up more than 80%. The violent crime arrest rate for 17-year-olds increased more than 70%.
- ◆ Large increases were also found in the adult age groups. The rate for 18-year-olds increased about 80% and for 19-year-olds about 60%. The rate increases for persons in their early 20's averaged about 50% and for persons in their 30's about 80%. Even the rate for persons age 65 or above increased 28%.
- ◆ Increases in the overall violent crime arrest rates were driven by substantially larger increases in arrests for aggravated assault.

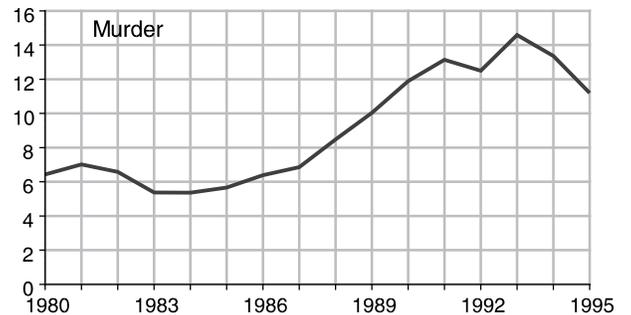
Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

## The juvenile arrest rate declined for all offenses within the Violent Crime Index between 1994 and 1995

### Murder

- ◆ The rate at which juveniles were arrested for murder increased by nearly 170% between the low year of 1984 and the peak year of 1993.
- ◆ The juvenile murder arrest rate declined in both 1994 and 1995, with the 1995 rate 23% below the peak 1993 rate and at its lowest level in the 1990's.
- ◆ Between 1994 and 1995, while cities experienced a 17% decline in juvenile murder arrests, murder arrests of juveniles in suburban counties increased 6%.

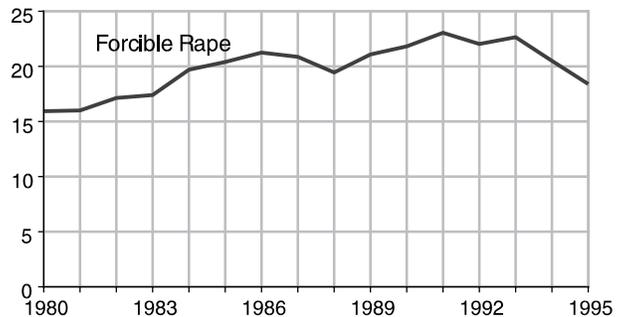
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17



### Forcible Rape

- ◆ Since the mid-1980's, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape has fluctuated within a limited range.
- ◆ In 1995, the rate at which juveniles were arrested for forcible rape was at its lowest point since 1983.

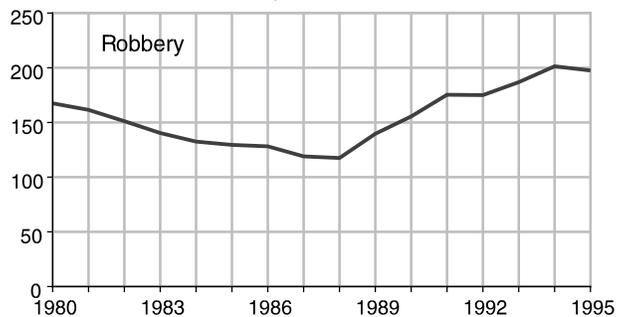
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17



### Robbery

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for robbery declined through most of the 1980's, reaching a low point in 1988.
- ◆ Between 1988 and 1994, the rate at which juveniles were arrested for robbery increased about 70%, before declining slightly in 1995.
- ◆ The increase from 1988 through 1994 follows nearly a decade of declining rates, so that the 1995 robbery arrest rate was just 18% above the 1980 rate.

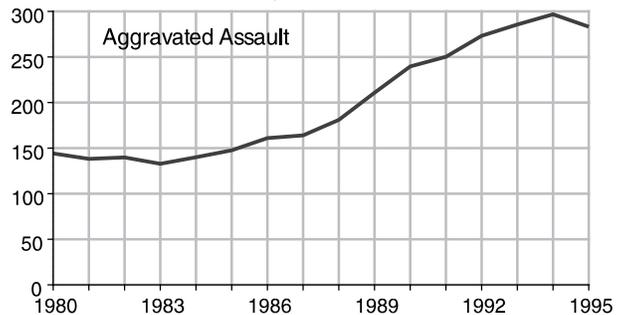
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17



### Aggravated Assault

- ◆ The rate at which juveniles were arrested for aggravated assault increased steadily between 1983 and 1994, up more than 120%.
- ◆ The aggravated assault arrest rate fell for the first time in more than a decade in 1995, down 5%.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17



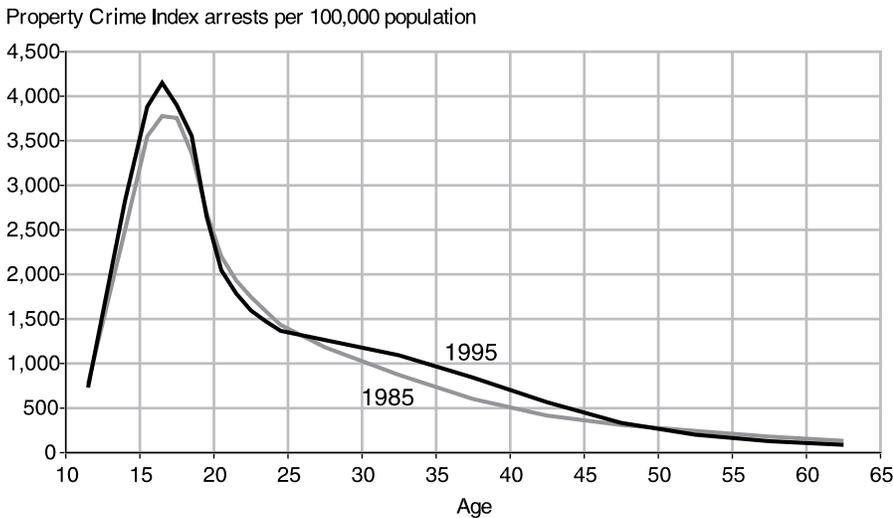
Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**The stability of the juvenile arrest rate for property crime is in stark contrast to recent increases in violent crime arrest rates**



Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**Regardless of the age of those arrested, property crime arrest rates changed little between 1985 and 1995**



Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**Juvenile arrests for property crimes remain stable**

As with violent crime, the FBI assesses trends in the volume of property crimes by monitoring four offenses that are consistently reported by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are pervasive in all geographical areas of the country. These four crimes, which form the Property Crime Index, are burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Since 1980, during a period when violent crime arrests were rising dramatically, juvenile property crime arrest rates (as measured by the Property Crime Index) remained constant. Therefore, juvenile arrests from 1980 through 1995 can be conceptualized as a large, stable base of property arrests supporting a relatively small, but growing layer of violent crime arrests.

**Most arrested juveniles are referred to court**

In most States, some persons below the age of 18 are, due to their age, or by statutory exclusion of certain offenses from juvenile court jurisdiction, under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For those persons under age 18 and under the original jurisdiction of the State's juvenile justice system, the UCR monitors what happens as a result of the arrest. This is the only instance in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program where the statistics on arrests coincide with State variations in the legal definition of a juvenile.

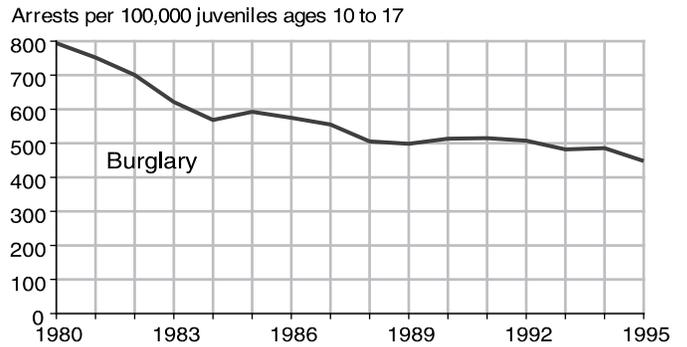
In 1995, 28% of arrests involving youth who were eligible in their State for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within the law enforcement agency and then released. About two in three were referred to juvenile court, and 3% were referred directly to criminal court.

Since 1980, the proportion of arrests sent to juvenile court has gradually increased, from 58% in 1980 to 66% in 1995. Suburban areas and rural counties in 1995 were less likely than large cities to refer juvenile arrests to juvenile court.

**In contrast to their combined trend, the components of the Property Crime Index display different juvenile arrest rate trends between 1980 and 1995**

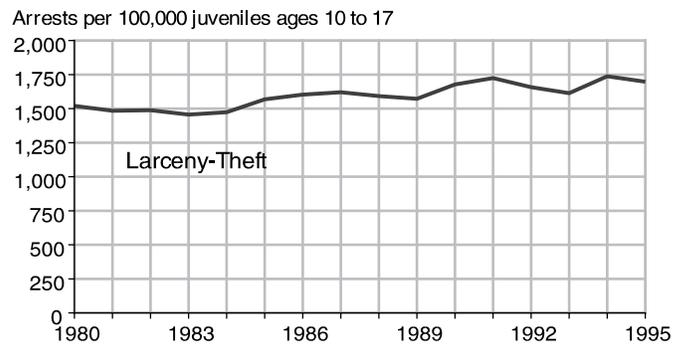
**Burglary**

- ◆ Juvenile arrest rates for burglary declined consistently between 1980 and 1995, down more than 40% over this period.
- ◆ The decline in burglary arrests between 1986 and 1995 was similar for juveniles and adults.



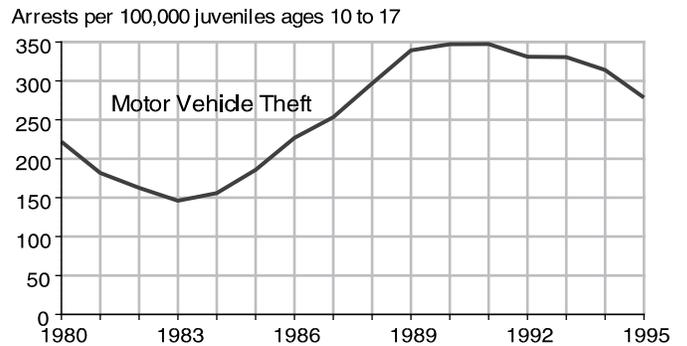
**Larceny-Theft**

- ◆ Due to their volume, larceny-theft arrests dominated the Property Crime Index.
- ◆ Relative to other changes, the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft remained constant between 1980 and 1995. Over this time period, the rate changed, on average, less than 1% per year.



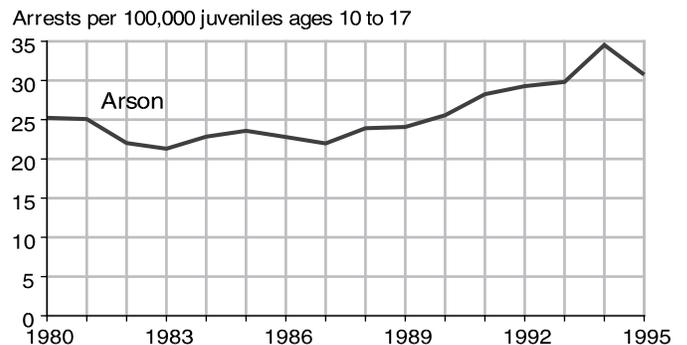
**Motor Vehicle Theft**

- ◆ Juvenile arrests for motor vehicle theft soared between 1983 and 1990, with the rate up more than 130% over this period.
- ◆ Between 1990 and 1995, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft declined, down nearly 20%.



**Arson**

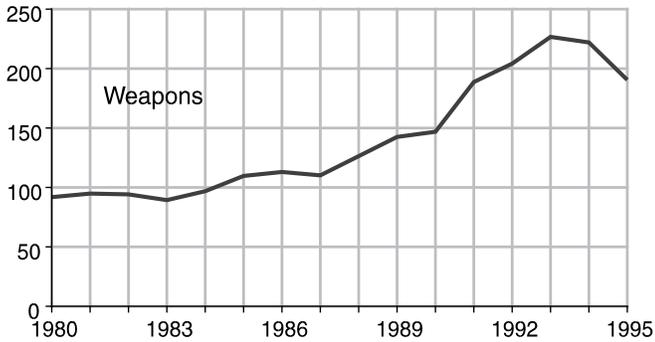
- ◆ During the 1980's, the rate of juvenile arrests for arson remained constant.
- ◆ Between 1990 and 1994, the rate of juvenile arson arrests increased 35%, then in 1995 declined 11% back to the 1993 level.



Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**Juvenile arrests for weapons law violations followed a pattern similar to murder arrests**

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17

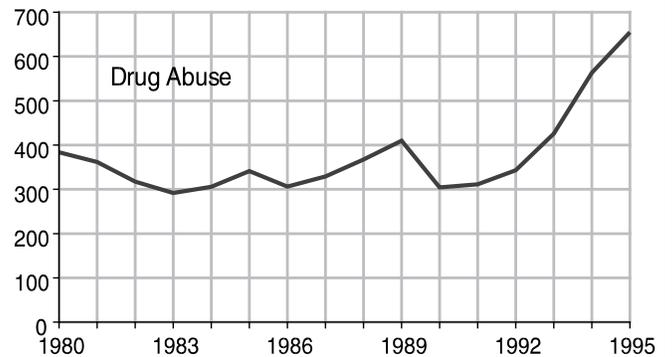


- ◆ From 1987 through 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations more than doubled. Similar to the murder arrest rate, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations declined in both 1994 and 1995, with the weapons arrest rate down 16% from 1993 to 1995.

Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**After more than a decade of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased by more than 50% between 1993 and 1995**

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17

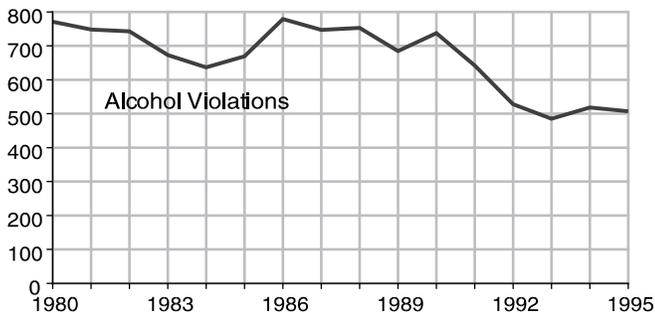


- ◆ The juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined substantially from the mid-1970's to the early 1980's.
- ◆ Through the 1980's and the early 1990's the rate stayed within a limited range.

Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**Alcohol violations, which include liquor law violations, drunkenness, and driving under the influence, declined between 1990 and 1995**

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17

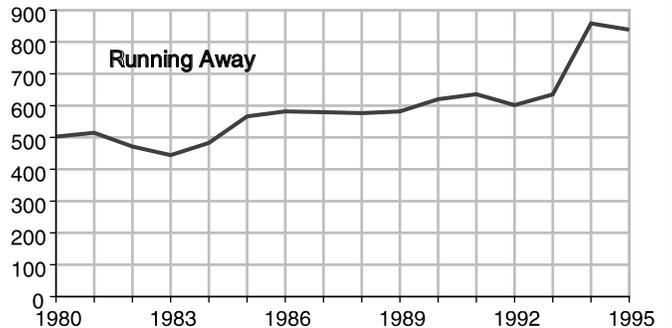


- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for each of the three liquor offenses declined between 1990 and 1995.
- ◆ Combined, the juvenile arrest rate for these alcohol offenses fell sharply (down more than 30%) between 1990 and 1993. This lower rate was maintained in 1994 and 1995.

Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

**Between 1993 and 1994, the runaway arrest rate increased by nearly one-third (32%), with the 1995 rate dropping only slightly**

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17



- ◆ In 1995, 57% of arrests for running away from home involved a female and 44% involved a juvenile under age 15.

Data source: Analysis of unpublished arrest data provided by the FBI and population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25.

## For most crimes reported to law enforcement in 1995, no one was arrested

When law enforcement agencies clear a crime, they identify the individual(s) they believe committed the act. Many crimes are never reported to law enforcement, and most crimes that are reported are never cleared. Violent crimes are cleared more often than property crimes. In 1995, law enforcement agencies cleared 45% of all reported violent crimes, compared with 18% of reported property crimes.

Murders were cleared more often than any of the other Violent Index crimes. In 1995, 65% of murders were cleared by arrest, compared with 56% of aggravated assaults, 51% of forcible rapes, and 25% of robberies. In comparison, all Property Index offenses had low clearance rates: larceny-theft (20%), arson (16%), motor vehicle theft (14%), and burglary (13%).

## The juvenile share of the violent crime problem increased in recent years

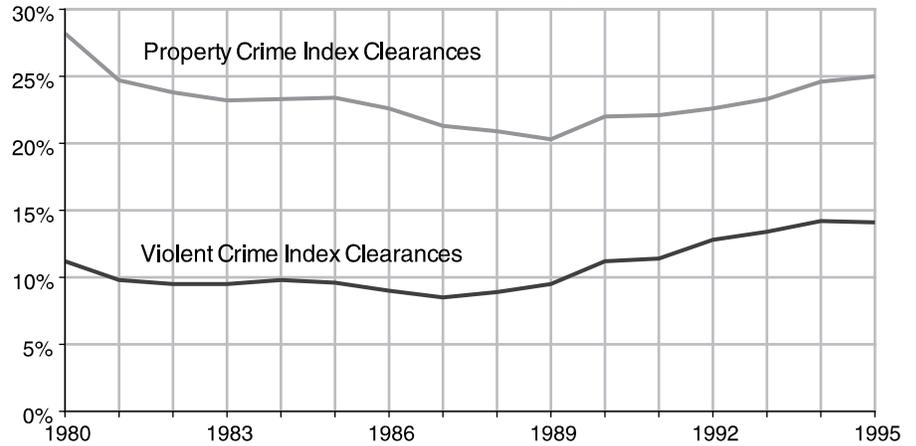
The relative responsibility of juveniles for the U.S. crime problem is hard to determine. Studying the proportion of crimes that are cleared by the arrest of juveniles gives one estimate of the juvenile responsibility for crime.

The clearance data in the *Crime in the United States* series imply that the proportion of violent crimes committed by juveniles is lower than many believe but has increased in recent years. While the juvenile proportion of the U.S. population remained relatively constant, the juvenile responsibility for violent crime grew from 10% in 1980 to 14% in 1995 and increased for each of the four components of the Violent Crime Index: murder (5% to 9%), forcible rape (10% to 15%), robbery (12% to 20%), and aggravated assault (9% to 13%).

Similarly, the juvenile responsibility for property crime increased from 23% in 1985 to 25% in 1995. Juvenile responsibility for three of the four offenses within the Property Crime Index increased: larceny-theft (24% to 26%), motor vehicle theft (19% to 24%), and arson (36% to 47%). The only Index crime for which juveniles appeared to be less responsible in 1995 than in 1985 was burglary (22% to 21%).

### Based on clearance information, juveniles are responsible for a substantially smaller proportion of violent crimes than property crimes

Percent of reported crimes cleared by arrest of person under age 18



- ◆ If the crimes cleared by law enforcement are representative of all crimes committed in 1995, then juveniles were responsible for 14% of all violent crimes and 25% of all property crimes. If, however, juveniles were more easily apprehended than adults, then the juvenile responsibility was less.

Data source: Compiled from *Crime in the United States* series for the years 1980 through 1995.

### Based on the FBI's clearance statistics for 1995, the relative responsibility of juveniles for violent and property crime was generally greater in small cities than in large cities

Offense	All Cities	City Population			
		Over 250,000	100,000 to 250,000	50,000 to 99,999	10,000 to 49,999
Violent Crime Index	14%	13%	14%	15%	16%
Murder	9	9	8	11	8
Forcible rape	13	12	12	13	16
Robbery	20	18	20	23	23
Aggravated assault	13	11	12	14	15
Property Crime Index	25	22	23	28	27
Burglary	21	17	18	22	24
Larceny-theft	26	22	24	29	28
Motor vehicle theft	24	27	22	24	21
Arson	49	45	48	52	54
Sample Coverage	80%	73%	90%	87%	82%

- ◆ Contrary to other Index offenses, 1995 clearance figures indicate that juveniles in large cities were responsible for a greater proportion of the area's motor vehicle thefts (27%) than were juveniles in small cities (21%).
- ◆ The juvenile responsibility for violent crime in rural areas was less than in cities (11% versus 14%). Similarly, juveniles in rural areas were less responsible than juveniles in cities for their area's property crime (21% versus 25%).

Data source: Analysis of data from *Crime in the United States 1995*, Table 28.

## States with high rates of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests tend to have low Violent Crime Index arrest rates

State	Percent Reporting	Arrest Rate		Comparison With U.S. Rate		State	Percent Reporting	Arrest Rate		Comparison With U.S. Rate	
		Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index			Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index
Total United States	75%	517	2,510			Missouri	59%	515	2,675	0%	7%
Alabama	97	236	1,085	-54%	-57%	Montana	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Alaska	82	414	3,649	-20	45	Nebraska	90	184	3,172	-64	26
Arizona	92	505	3,653	-2	46	Nevada	92	421	3,183	-18	27
Arkansas	100	286	1,843	-45	-27	New Hampshire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
California	98	787	2,287	52	-9	New Jersey	95	697	2,289	35	-9
Colorado	79	296	3,832	-43	53	New Mexico	27	NA	NA	NA	NA
Connecticut	84	577	3,217	12	28	New York	87	979	1,634	89	-35
Delaware	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Carolina	97	413	1,884	-20	-25
Dist. of Columbia	100	1,418	2,038	175	-19	North Dakota	75	159	3,560	-69	42
Florida	100	799	3,450	55	37	Ohio	47	NA	NA	NA	NA
Georgia	63	384	1,996	-26	-20	Oklahoma	99	380	2,842	-26	13
Hawaii	100	285	2,868	-45	14	Oregon	68	349	4,364	-32	74
Idaho	98	286	4,176	-45	66	Pennsylvania	13	NA	NA	NA	NA
Illinois	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	Rhode Island	100	504	2,617	-2	4
Indiana	56	494	2,405	-4	-4	South Carolina	96	378	1,870	-27	-25
Iowa	88	273	1,829	-47	-27	South Dakota	63	305	4,337	-41	73
Kansas	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	Tennessee	32	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kentucky	33	NA	NA	NA	NA	Texas	96	377	2,393	-27	-5
Louisiana	68	535	2,818	3	12	Utah	87	307	4,436	-41	77
Maine	65	143	3,237	-72	29	Vermont	51	30	395	-94	-84
Maryland	99	689	2,873	33	14	Virginia	99	267	2,002	-48	-20
Massachusetts	80	590	1,058	14	-58	Washington	66	426	4,177	-18	66
Michigan	84	387	1,744	-25	-31	West Virginia	100	80	1,049	-84	-58
Minnesota	96	409	3,507	-21	40	Wisconsin	99	427	4,976	-17	98
Mississippi	25	NA	NA	NA	NA	Wyoming	90	106	2,809	-79	12

- ◆ Of the 40 States with adequate coverage, the 5 with the highest Violent Crime Index arrest rates in 1995 were New York, Florida, California, New Jersey, and Maryland.
- ◆ Of reporting States, Wisconsin, Utah, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington had the highest juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates.

Arrest Rate = Arrests of persons under age 18 per 100,000 persons ages 10–17.

Note: Rates were classified as “not available” when reporting agencies represented less than 50% of the State population.

Data source: Analysis of data from *Crime in the United States 1995*, Tables 5 and 69.

### Technical Note

Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in reporting jurisdictions. While juvenile arrest rates reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the size of these rates.

For example, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have a higher arrest rate than a jurisdiction whose resident youth behave in an identical manner. Therefore, jurisdictions, es-

pecially small jurisdictions, that are vacation destinations or that are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect more than the behavior of their resident youth.

Other factors that influence the magnitude of arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of its citizens toward crime, the policies of the jurisdiction’s law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. Consequently, the comparison of juvenile arrest rates across States,

while informative, should be done with caution.

In most States, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for these States are then necessarily based on partial information. If the reporting law enforcement agencies in these States are not representative of the entire State, then the rates will be biased. **Therefore, reported arrest rates for States with less than complete reporting may not be accurate.**

## What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this Bulletin properly, the reader must have a clear understanding of what these statistics count. The arrest statistics report the number of arrests made by law enforcement agencies in a particular year—not the number of individuals arrested or the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not equivalent to the number of people arrested because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once in the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent a count of crimes committed by the arrested individuals because a series of crimes committed by one individual may culminate in a single arrest or a single crime may result in the arrests of more than one person. This latter situation, many arrests resulting from one crime, is relatively common in juvenile law-violating behavior because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. This is the primary reason why arrest statistics should not be used to indicate the relative proportion of crime committed by juveniles and adults. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of flow into the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Arrest statistics also have limitations in measuring the volume of arrests for a particular offense. Under the UCR Program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify an arrest by the most serious offense charged in that arrest. For example, the arrest of a youth charged with aggravated assault and possession of a controlled substance would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore, when arrest statistics show that law enforcement agencies made an estimated 189,800 arrests of young people for drug abuse violations in 1995, it means that a drug abuse violation was the most serious charge in these 189,800 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 1995 included a drug charge as a lesser offense.

## What do clearance statistics count?

Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were resolved by an arrest or other, exceptional means (e.g., death of the offender, unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). In 1995, the FBI reported that 13% of all burglaries reported to law enforcement agencies were cleared by

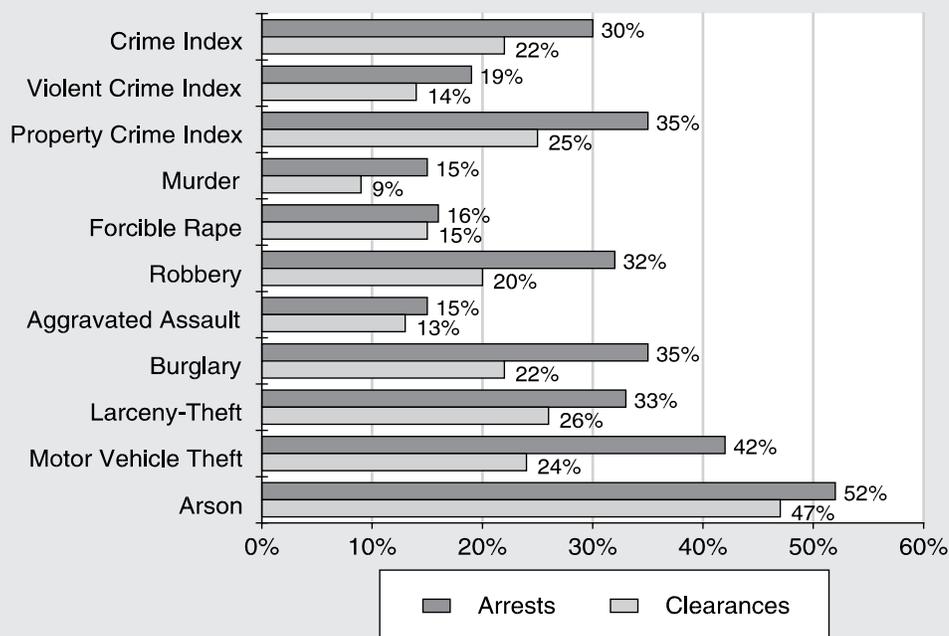
arrest or other, exceptional means. This does not mean that a person was convicted in 13% of all burglary cases or even that a person was referred to court in 13% of all burglary cases. An unknown portion of the arrests that clear a reported crime were handled within the police department and released. Another aspect of clearance statistics is that a single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, 1 arrest could clear 40 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 40 of these crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if the crime was committed by a group of offenders.

For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports information on the proportion of clearances that were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18. This statistic is often used as an indicator of the proportion of crime committed by this age group, although there are some concerns about this interpretation.

For example, the FBI reports that persons under age 18 accounted for 22% of all burglaries that were cleared in 1995. If it can be assumed that cleared burglaries have similar offender characteristics to those that were not cleared, then it would be appropriate to conclude that persons under age 18 were responsible for 22% of all burglaries in 1995. However, the offender characteristics of cleared and noncleared burglaries may differ for a number of reasons. If, for example, juvenile burglars were more easily apprehended than adult burglars, the proportion of burglaries cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18 would overestimate the juvenile responsibility for all burglaries. To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI's reporting guidelines require the clearance to be tied to the oldest offender in the group if more than one person is arrested for a crime.

Given these and other factors, reported clearance proportions may have some interpretation concerns, but they are the closest measure available of the proportion of crime committed by persons under age 18 and should provide a barometer of the changing contribution of persons under age 18 to the Nation's crime problems.

## Across all crime types, juveniles account for a greater proportion of arrests than of crimes cleared by arrest



Data source: *Crime in the United States 1995*, Tables 28 and 38.

## Notes

Throughout this Bulletin, the term *juvenile* refers to persons below the age of 18. This definition of the term is at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in 1995 in 11 States, including 8 States where all 17-year-olds are subject only to criminal court jurisdiction (Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, and Texas) and 3 States where all 16- and 17-year-olds are subject only to criminal court jurisdiction (Connecticut, New York, and North Carolina). Therefore, this analysis of UCR data overreports the true level of arrests of persons subject to juvenile court jurisdiction because the FBI statistics do not take into consideration the legal definition of a juvenile.

Arrest rates developed for this Bulletin are based on unpublished data provided to the author by the FBI and on published population estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census' *Current Population Reports*. The FBI data are counts of arrests within age of arrestee and offense categories from all law enforcement agencies that reported complete data for the calendar year. The proportion of the U.S. population covered by these 12-month reporting agencies ranged from 75% to 86% between 1980 and 1995.

Assuming that the reporting agencies had a population profile similar to the Nation's, estimates were made of the number of persons in each age group in the resi-

dent population of the reporting agencies. The resident population for a particular age group in the reporting agencies was developed by multiplying the reporting agencies' total populations by the U.S. Bureau of the Census' most current estimate of the proportion of the U.S. population in that age group for that particular calendar year. With these age-specific population estimates, age-specific arrest rates were calculated by dividing the number of arrests in the offense category by the estimated number of persons in that age group residing in the jurisdictions served by the agencies.

## Related materials

Interested readers may obtain a copy of *Crime in the United States 1995* by contacting the U.S. Government Printing Office or their local Federal bookstore.

With funds from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) has prepared a user-friendly software package that presents annual juvenile and adult arrest statistics for every county and State in the United States for the last 5 years. *Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics: 1990-1994* (and two other data sets in the series) can be downloaded from OJJDP's home page: <http://www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm>. Copies can also be obtained by calling NCJJ at 412-227-6950 or by writing to the National Center for Juvenile Justice, 710 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15219-3000.

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