



OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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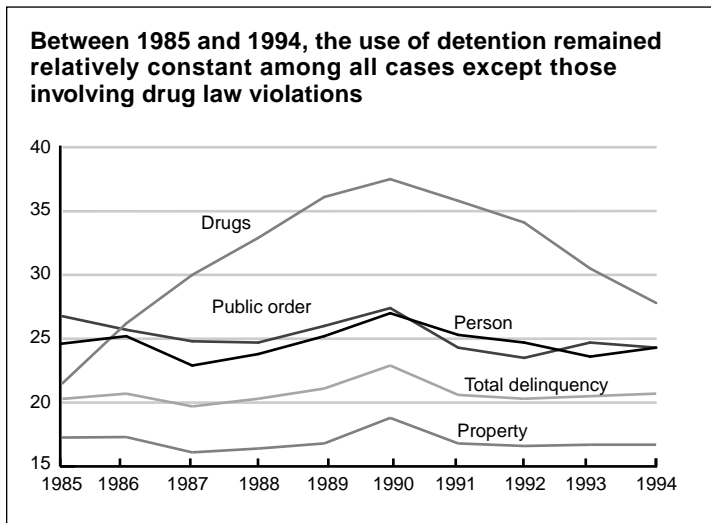
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Detention and Delinquency Cases, 1985–1994

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The increase in the number of cases detained is driven largely by the increase in the referrals to juvenile court

Youth were detained at some point between referral to court and case disposition in 21% (or 321,200) of all delinquency cases disposed in 1994. Detention was less likely among youth charged with a property offense (17%) than with public order (24%), person (24%), or drug law violation (28%) offenses.



The proportion of cases the courts chose to detain was only slightly higher in 1994 than in 1985 (21% versus 20%). Consequently, the 43% increase in the number of delinquency cases involving detention paralleled the 41% increase in the number of cases handled by juvenile courts during that period. This pattern of similar growth in the number of cases involving detention and the number of cases referred was seen in all offense categories except drug law violations. The number of drug offense cases involving detention increased almost twice as much as the number of referrals for drug violations between 1985 and 1994.

Except for drug cases, the juvenile court's use of detention was relatively stable between 1985 and 1994

| Case Type | Percent of Cases Involving Detention | | | Percent Change in the Number of Cases, 1985 and 1994 | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|--|------------|
| | 1985 | 1990 | 1994 | Total Detained | |
| Total | 20% | 23% | 21% | 41% | 43% |
| Person | 25 | 27 | 24 | 93 | 90 |
| Property | 17 | 19 | 17 | 22 | 19 |
| Drugs | 21 | 38 | 28 | 62 | 111 |
| Public order | 27 | 27 | 24 | 50 | 36 |
| Male | 21% | 24% | 22% | 38% | 44% |
| Person | 26 | 29 | 26 | 85 | 84 |
| Property | 18 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| Drugs | 22 | 39 | 29 | 70 | 125 |
| Public order | 26 | 28 | 25 | 52 | 43 |
| Female | 18% | 18% | 16% | 54% | 38% |
| Person | 18 | 19 | 18 | 124 | 130 |
| Property | 13 | 14 | 12 | 40 | 23 |
| Drugs | 19 | 28 | 20 | 26 | 31 |
| Public order | 29 | 26 | 22 | 45 | 13 |
| White | 18% | 20% | 17% | 26% | 17% |
| Person | 21 | 23 | 21 | 90 | 87 |
| Property | 15 | 17 | 14 | 13 | 3 |
| Drugs | 18 | 27 | 18 | 24 | 22 |
| Public order | 25 | 26 | 21 | 25 | 3 |
| Black | 26% | 29% | 28% | 78% | 92% |
| Person | 29 | 31 | 29 | 94 | 91 |
| Property | 22 | 24 | 23 | 41 | 45 |
| Drugs | 34 | 51 | 44 | 240 | 339 |
| Public order | 32 | 31 | 31 | 135 | 133 |

Detention of females charged with property and public order offenses increased less than referrals to court because of the declining use of detention among these cases.

Between 1985 and 1994, the use of detention increased most among drug offense cases involving blacks and males

In 1994 males accounted for four out of five cases involving detention. Juvenile courts detained a greater proportion of delinquency cases involving males than females in 1994 (22% versus 16%). Between 1985 and 1994, the number of cases resulting in detention increased more for males than females (44% versus 38%).

Changes in the court's use of detention among male and female youth varied by offense. Between 1985 and 1994, the use of

detention for drug offense cases increased more among males (22% to 29%) than among females (19% to 20%). The likelihood of detention for public order offenses declined more among females (29% to 22%) than among males (26% to 25%) during this time.

In 1994 black youth accounted for more than two out of five cases involving detention. However, black juveniles represented only one-third of juvenile court referrals during that year. In 1994, 28% of cases involving black youth resulted in detention compared with 17% of cases involving white youth. In fact, among all offense categories, black youth were more likely to be detained than white youth during every year between 1985 and 1994.

Growth in the number of cases involving detention was more than five times greater for black youth than white youth (92% versus 17%) between 1985 and 1994. This disproportionate increase is largely driven by the rise in juvenile court referrals involving black youth during this time. However, it also reflects the greater likelihood of detention among drug offense cases involving black youth in 1994 than in 1985 (44% versus 34%).

For further information

This Fact Sheet is based on the report *Juvenile Court Statistics 1994*. Copies are available from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 800-638-8736. OJJDP also supports distribution of a PC-compatible software version of the data analyzed in *Juvenile Court Statistics*. For a copy of the software, *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics*, call the National Juvenile Court Data Archive at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, 412-227-6950. This software can also be downloaded from OJJDP's home page: <http://www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm>.

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Compared with 1985, a higher percentage of youth sent to detention centers in 1994 were charged with a person offense (25% versus 19%)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1994 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Detained Cases | 224,500 | 297,500 | 321,200 |
| Case Type | | | |
| Person | 19% | 22% | 25% |
| Property | 50 | 48 | 42 |
| Drugs | 7 | 9 | 10 |
| Public order | 23 | 21 | 22 |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 84% | 85% | 84% |
| Female | 16 | 15 | 16 |
| Race | | | |
| White | 64% | 57% | 53% |
| Black | 32 | 39 | 43 |
| Other | 3 | 4 | 4 |

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

- ◆ The proportion of youth held for person and drug offense cases increased between 1985 and 1994 while the proportion detained for property and public order offenses declined.
- ◆ The detained population contained a larger proportion of black youth in 1994 than in 1985.

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