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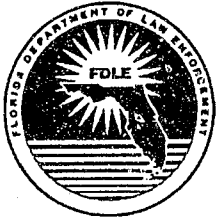
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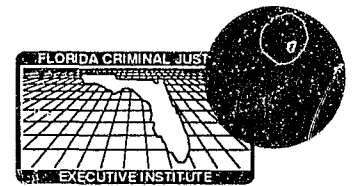
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# SAC Notes

A Report on Crime, Criminal Justice and Technology  
The Florida Statistical Analysis Center  
July 1994



NCJRS

## A Closer Look at Arrests in Florida

OCT 7 1994

ACQUISITIONS

### Introduction

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement recently released Uniform Crime Report data for 1993. Statements in the release regarding the "typical" offender or the "most frequently arrested" offender prompted additional questions about the 1993 arrest figures:

- What percent of Florida's population is arrested for crime?
- What is the relative representation of whites and blacks in the arrest population?
- Are juveniles becoming more involved in crime?
- How frequently are women involved in crime?

The following report attempts to answer these and other questions. It is based on FDLE's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data and demographic information supplied by the State Data Center in the Executive Office of the Governor, for the years 1989 to 1993.

### Florida Demographics

Although actual percentages vary slightly (by less than one percent), Florida's population can generally be described as 48% male/52% female and 85% white/15% nonwhite for the five years under study. Table 1 examines percent population in each of five age groups. According to these figures:

- There is very little change in the relative age composition of Florida's population. Even so, this period is characterized by an increasing proportion of juveniles (0-17) and young adults (18-24).
- The elderly (age 55+) continue to be the largest population group, even though this group witnessed the greatest decline in percent population of any age category.

Table 1  
Population of Florida, by Percent Age Group, 1989 - 1993

Age Group	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
0 - 17	22.41%	22.29%	22.38%	22.47%	23.52%
18 - 24	9.76%	9.49%	9.26%	9.05%	10.72%
25 - 34	16.17%	16.37%	15.88%	15.42%	15.34%
35 - 54	23.45%	23.85%	24.48%	25.08%	24.58%
55+	28.22%	28.01%	28.00%	27.98%	25.84%
Total Population	12,650,935	12,937,926	13,195,952	13,424,416	13,608,627

### Arrests in Florida

Table 2 provides information on arrests in Florida over the last five years. These figures show a general decline in the number of Part I and Part II arrests, from a high of 756,750 in 1990 to a low in 1993 of 653,787. Table 2 uses the population figures from Table 1 to calculate arrests as a percent of population. Declining arrests combined with an increase in population result in an overall decrease in this percentage, although it remains at or around 5%.

	Part I Arrests	Part II Arrests	Total Arrests	Arrests as % of Population
1989	195,888	487,585	683,473	5.40%
1990	206,045	550,705	756,750	5.85%
1991	208,895	535,967	744,862	5.64%
1992	185,917	519,216	705,133	5.25%
1993	179,957	473,830	653,787	4.80%

As with population figures, arrest figures remain relatively stable with respect to gender and race: 82% male/18% female and 63% white/37% non-white ( $\pm <1\%$ ). Males and non-whites, therefore are over-represented among Florida arrestees.

### What would a "typical" offender look like?

It is not uncommon to hear mention of a "typical" offender, but what this offender might look like depends on how the word "typical" is defined. Generally, "typical" is equated with "most frequently arrested," or that group with the greatest number or greatest percentage of total arrests. This definition, however, does not consider those small segments of the population that are over-represented in terms of the number of arrests.<sup>1</sup> Table 3 examines this phenomenon in more detail.

	Part I Violent Crimes	Part I Non-Violent Crimes	All Crimes (Part I and Part II)
Greatest # of All Arrests or Greatest % of All Arrests	White Male Age 25-34	Non-White Male Age 0-17	White Male Age 25-34
Greatest % of Group Arrested	Non-White Male Age 18-24	Non-White Male Age 18-24	Non-White Male Age 18-24

Table 3 reveals that, regardless of other arrest statistics, a greater percentage of all non-white males age 18-24 are arrested. Because this age group is small (7% of total population), it is unlikely that it would ever represent the "typical" offender.

<sup>1</sup> An issue, not considered here, is that one person may be responsible for more than one arrest during the year. Uniform Crime Report statistics do not allow for an analysis that addresses this possibility.

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**What age groups are most often arrested?**

Tables 4 and 5 explore the relationship between age and arrest for each of the age categories identified earlier. Using this table and the information in Table 1, it is easy to see the disparity between the proportion of crime and the proportion of population for some age groups:

- Juvenile white males are responsible for the greatest number (and the highest percentage) of arrests for Part I crimes.<sup>2</sup>
- The 18-24 age group represents approximately 10% of Florida's population, yet is responsible for more than 25% of all arrests. This finding is consistent with the discussion of a "typical" offender, above.
- While the 55+ age group makes up 25% of the State's population, less than 3% of all arrests can be attributed to this group.
- Only the 35-54 age group is proportionately represented (25%) in both population and arrest figures over the five years.
- Because white males constitute such a large proportion of Florida's population, only a small percentage of this group is actually arrested, regardless of age. Approximately 45% of all arrests are white males, but these arrests represent only 6% of that population group.

**Table 4  
Part I Arrests in Florida, by Age, Race and Sex, 1993**

		0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 54	55+	All Ages
# Arrests	White Male	21,476	21,229	20,137	16,558	2,449	81,849
	White Female	5,958	4,187	4,794	4,236	1,101	20,276
	Non-White Male	18,645	13,942	15,408	11,403	857	60,255
	Non-White Female	5,030	4,619	4,916	2,840	172	17,577
% Total Arrests	White Male	11.93	11.80	11.19	9.20	1.36	45.48
	White Female	3.31	2.33	2.66	2.35	0.61	11.27
	Non-White Male	10.36	7.75	8.56	6.34	0.48	33.48
	Non-White Female	2.79	2.57	2.73	1.58	0.09	9.77
% Group Arrested	White Male	1.79	4.28	2.35	1.13	0.16	6.19
	White Female	0.47	0.58	0.55	0.31	0.07	1.24
	Non-White Male	5.05	11.64	9.05	4.81	0.74	18.99
	Non-White Female	1.40	3.73	2.65	1.04	0.11	3.90

<sup>2</sup> Part I (Index) includes the violent crimes murder, forcible sex offenses, robbery and aggravated assault; and the non-violent crimes burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.

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Table 5 Arrests in Florida, all Crimes, by Age Group, 1989 - 1993					
Age Group	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
0 - 17	11.94%	11.75%	12.75%	12.34%	13.41%
18 - 24	28.50%	28.37%	27.63%	26.81%	26.34%
25 - 34	36.11%	35.20%	33.93%	33.75%	32.48%
35 - 54	20.68%	21.84%	22.73%	24.21%	25.05%
55+	2.77%	2.85%	2.95%	2.89%	2.72%
Total Arrests	683,473	756,750	744,862	705,133	653,787

**Are juveniles becoming more involved in crime?**

Table 5 also shows that an increasing proportion of arrests can be attributed to juveniles. Although this suggests that juveniles are becoming more involved in crime. A better measure of juvenile "involvement" would consider the percentage of the juvenile population that is being arrested, as shown in Table 6:

Table 6 Juvenile Arrests in Florida as Percent of All Juveniles, 1989 - 1993					
Age 0 - 17	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
# Persons	2,834,558	2,883,831	2,952,674	3,016,172	3,200,935
# Part I Arrests	46,892	50,663	56,974	50,265	51,109
# Part II Arrests	34,668	38,248	38,014	36,736	36,538
Part I Arrests as % Juvenile Pop	1.65%	1.76%	1.93%	1.67%	1.60%
Part II Arrests as % Juvenile Pop	1.22%	1.33%	1.29%	1.22%	1.14%
Total Arrests as % Juvenile Pop	2.88%	3.08%	3.22%	2.88%	2.74%

Using this measure of juvenile "involvement" in crime, Table 6 shows that the percentage of juveniles involved in both Part I and Part II crimes increased between the years 1989 and 1991, but declined thereafter. A greater number of arrests and a larger percentage of all arrests can be attributed to juveniles. However, these arrests represent a decreasing percentage of the juvenile population.

**Are there similar disparities in the rates of arrest by race?**

Table 7 offers some insight as to the relative representation of various race and gender categories in the arrest population. Note from this table that, while non-white males are substantially over-represented in the arrest population, this figure declined substantially between 1992 and 1993. [Remember that these are figures for the total number of arrests, not the number of individuals arrested during the year. A review of FDLE's criminal

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	White Male	White Female	Non-White Male	Non-White Female
1989	6.75	1.32	23.70	4.42
1990	7.46	1.45	24.37	4.76
1991	9.00	1.84	30.03	6.59
1992	6.68	1.67	27.85	5.99
1993	6.19	1.24	18.99	3.90

**How frequently are women involved in crime?**

As mentioned previously, females represent approximately 18% of all arrests. A more detailed examination shows that the number of female arrests increased to a high of 131,416 in 1991 and then declined to 116,373 arrests in 1993. As a percentage, female arrests declined from a high of 1.96% of the female population in 1990 to a low of 1.66% of the female population in 1993.

Recent news coverage claims that female involvement in more serious crimes has increased over the last several years. The arrest data do not support this hypothesis: females represent about 21% of all Part I arrests in each of the five years, with 0.6% of the female population having been arrested.

**Conclusion**

Although this report has provided a detailed examination of arrests reported to the UCR system, a true picture of arrests in Florida should take into account the number of individuals arrested as well as the total number of arrests. UCR data does not allow for this type of evaluation, but it does give a good "snapshot" of arrest activity in Florida. A future issue of *SAC Notes* will confront the issue of repeat offenders to clarify the information provided here.

*Additional information on arrests in Florida is available from  
the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Uniform Crime Report unit, (904)488-5221,  
or the Florida Statistical Analysis Center, (904)487-4808.  
For national statistics, please contact the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1-800-851-3420.*

## SAC NOTES

SAC Notes and Other Documents Available from the Florida Statistical Analysis Center:

### *SAC Notes:*

Juvenile Violent Crime Continues to Surge, September 1992

Does Accreditation Impact the Need for Disciplinary Action? Law Enforcement Officer Decertification, 1986-1992, September 1992

"Deadly Consequences" by Deborah Prothrow-Stith (book review), December 1992

Criminal History Record Improvement in Florida, March 1993

Study Examines Inmate Recidivism, July 1993

Multijurisdictional Drug Task Force Commander's Survey, September 1993

Female Law Enforcement Officers Report That Harassment is a Common Experience, January 1994

Rapid Fire: Weapons and Violence in the U.S., March 1994

### *Issues and Commentary for the Criminal Justice Executive monographs:*

Against Brutality and Corruption: Integrity, Wisdom and Professionalism, by Edwin J. Delattre

### *Programs and Research in Criminal Justice monographs:*

Improving Criminal Justice Information Systems Using Total Quality Management, by Russell D. Buchner

Compassion & Caution: Surveying and Assessing AIDS Policies and Procedures Used by Law Enforcement Personnel, by Stephen Muffler

Planning for Prevention: Sarasota, Florida's Approach to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, by Sherry Plaster and Stan Carter

### *Other Reports:*

A Study of Motor Vehicle Theft in Florida, prepared for the Florida Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Authority by the Florida Statistical Analysis Center and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

Academically Speaking: Criminal Justice-Related Research by Florida's Doctoral Candidates, 1992

Charting the Course, papers prepared by the Charter Class of the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute's Senior Leadership Program

Florida Department of Law Enforcement  
Statistical Analysis Center  
P.O. Box 1489  
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