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# CRIME IN GREATER NEW ORLEANS:

*CURRENT TRENDS AND HISTORICAL PATTERNS*

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JUL 21 1995

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September 1994

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## PREFACE

Crime in New Orleans is now the number one concern of its citizens. Fear of crime lowers the quality of life of all the city's citizens and destroys the sense of community that is essential in solving urban problems. It is perhaps the single most important reason for the flight of the middle class to suburbia. It threatens tourism and makes the city unattractive to industries that would bring job growth.

The image of a soaring crime rate is based primarily on a murder rate which appears out of control. Murders reached an historic high in 1993 and threaten to substantially exceed that record in 1994. The belief is widespread that violent crime of all kinds has reached epidemic levels, not only locally but on a national basis as well.

Reports on crime trends in the media focus only on year-to-date totals, individual incidents, or, at best, changes in rates since the prior year. None of these perspectives provides answers to some of the most important questions which need attention. Crime rates recorded in one year may be consistent with a long-term trend that suggests some structural or cultural shift in New Orleans, or they may indicate a new trend, or they may be an essentially random fluctuation. If New Orleans crime rates are similar to those of other cities of similar size, then there is less need to look for special local causes or deficiencies. However, if crime in New Orleans is significantly different from that of comparable cities, we need to ask why.

This report is an attempt to provide an historical and national perspective on crime in the New Orleans area and to establish a factual basis for the ongoing debate about crime and its potential solutions. The report does not address the causes of or solutions to crime, but seeks to provide a solid factual foundation for those who wish to investigate these issues.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report documents a serious crime problem both in New Orleans and in Jefferson Parish. A detailed look at historical trends, however, shows that crime is not increasing in every category in every parish. Comparison of results to national crime levels and trends shows that New Orleans area parishes compare favorably to similar cities or counties in some categories but unfavorably in others.

New Orleans crime rates are, in almost all cases, higher than the crime rates of its suburban parishes. Only for theft is the Jefferson rate similar to that of New Orleans, though rape rates also seem to be converging. Both New Orleans and Jefferson Parish crime rates now substantially exceed St. Tammany rates. These differences between parishes are fairly typical of urban-suburban crime differences elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Of more interest are trends over time within parishes. For New Orleans the most striking trend is the startling increase in murder rate in the last five years. This rate has grown by a factor of six since 1960 and has more than doubled in six years. The New Orleans murder rate not only far exceeds the rates for cities of similar size, but also far exceeds the average murder rate for U.S. cities over one million in population.

Most other serious crimes in New Orleans, however, show recent decreases. In the case of rape, this decrease seems to be a long term trend. Robbery and auto theft are now making a limited retreat from the strong advances of the 80's. Burglary and larceny show no long term trend either up or down.

Crime in Jefferson is now increasing in all categories except burglary. These increases are particularly pronounced in the cases of robbery and theft, especially auto theft.

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<sup>1</sup> Nationally, for example, murder rates for cities of New Orleans' population size (250,000-499,999) are more than three times the rate for suburban counties. Rates for most property crimes are more than double, except for auto theft, for which rates are four times higher in New Orleans' size cities.

St. Tammany crime rates are decreasing or stable in all crime categories and fall below rates not only for Jefferson but for the typical U.S. suburban county as well.

Arrest rates show that juveniles in New Orleans commit a disproportionate number of New Orleans crimes. Juvenile arrest rates have shown sharp recent increases for violent crimes but not for property offenses.

## I. New Orleans Area Crime Trends, 1960-1993

### Introduction

In order to provide the historical context for discussion of crime in the greater New Orleans area, we chose the thirty-three year period 1960-1993. For national comparison, we compiled the rates for cities similar in size to New Orleans<sup>2</sup> for the same period.<sup>3</sup> Rates for Jefferson and St. Tammany Parishes are only available after 1970, and for some years crime rates for St. Tammany were not submitted to the FBI and therefore are not available. Rates for these suburban parishes are compared to national rates for suburban counties.

Crime analyses in this report are limited to trends in what are commonly referred to as "Index" crimes: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and auto theft. These crimes are reported annually by the FBI in the Uniform Crime Reports and constitute the FBI's "Part I Index" of crime. Though this set of offenses leaves out some infrequently committed serious offenses such as kidnapping and ignores white collar crime and drug offenses, it is a good indicator of serious street crime.

The crime totals maintained by local police and by the FBI include only crimes reported to and recorded by police. It is now well known that many crimes are not reported to the police, and this underreporting varies both by crime and by victim characteristics. Victimization surveys provide a better estimate of total crimes committed. Such a survey is now done annually by the Bureau of the Census; this survey, however, provides only national estimates of criminal activity. Estimates for individual cities are not available.

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<sup>2</sup> In its annual *Uniform Crime Reports* the FBI provides crime rates for cities by size category. The two categories closest in size to New Orleans are 250,000-499,999 and 500,000-999,999. New Orleans actually fits into both of these categories during the period under study, having exceeded 600,000 in 1960 but fallen below 500,000 in the most recent census. Therefore the rates for both city categories are used for comparison in the charts that follow.

<sup>3</sup> Rates for U.S. city and county groups for 1993 were not yet published at the time this report was prepared. Rates were estimated, however, from partial 1993 counts.

The crime rate estimates presented here for New Orleans and the suburban parishes, therefore, are incomplete. In addition, comparisons between New Orleans rates and those of other cities and parishes cannot be made conclusively, since New Orleans' citizens and visitors may report crimes to the police at a different rate than citizens and visitors of other cities and parishes.<sup>4</sup> (See discussion in the Appendix).

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<sup>4</sup> In addition, New Orleans rates may be somewhat overstated because the size of the resident population significantly understates the population at risk within city limits. When tourists, commuters, and transients are included, the true at risk population may be as much as 20% higher than the resident population, particularly during business hours and during the Mardi Gras season.

## Murder

The New Orleans murder rate has been the primary focus of concern about crime in the city during recent years. This concern is well taken. Though the murder rate has been high in New Orleans since the early 1970's, the trend in the last five years has been frightening.

The murder rate rose steadily in New Orleans during the decade of the 60's, more than doubling. In the early 1970's the rate stopped rising and fluctuated within the same range for about fifteen years. Beginning in about 1988, however, the rate began to increase again, but at a rate much greater than it had during the 1960's, doubling in six years. Projections from the first six months of 1994 indicate that the increase is continuing.

### New Orleans Murder Rate Compared to Medium and Large U.S. Cities

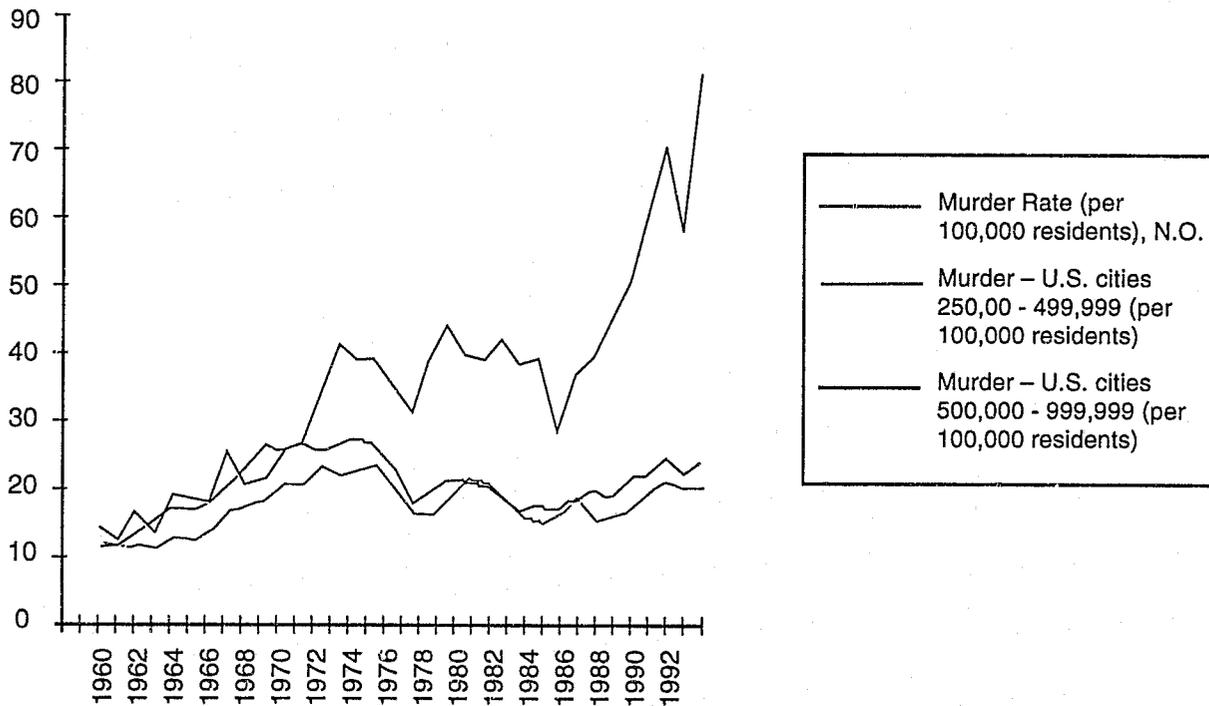


Figure 1

The New Orleans murder rate was typical of cities of its size through the 60's, but began to diverge in the early 1970's. During the 70's and early to mid 80's the New Orleans murder rate averaged about double the rate for comparable cities. After 1988, the New Orleans rate soared to as much as triple the comparable city rate.

Jefferson and St. Tammany murder trends were very similar both to each other and to average rates for suburban counties from 1970 to the mid-1980's. In the mid-80's St. Tammany dropped below the suburban average and Jefferson rates moved significantly higher, peaking in 1990 at almost double the average suburban rate.

**Jefferson and St. Tammany Murder Rates  
Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas**

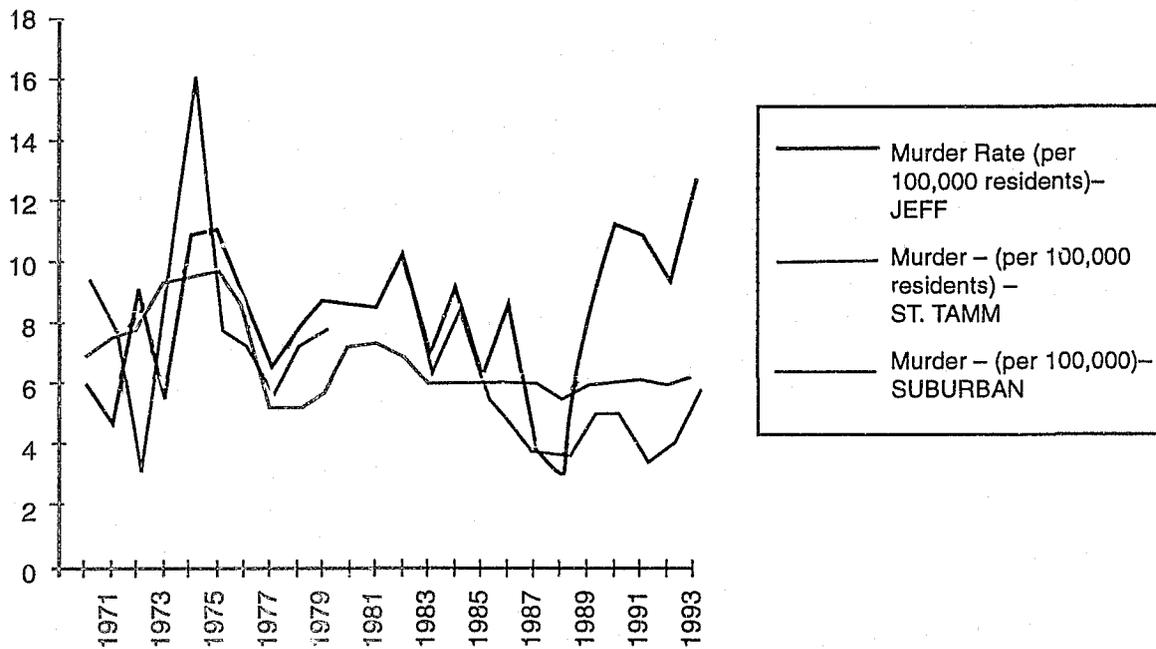


Figure 2

### Forcible Rape

The New Orleans rate of forcible rape rose sharply throughout the decades of the 60's and 70's, closely paralleling national trends both in rate and pattern of change. Both local and comparable city rates increased by a factor of at least six over the two decades. Nationally, rape leveled off after 1980, and in New Orleans the rate actually began to decline. New Orleans rates of forcible rape have now dropped to the levels of the mid-1970's and have fallen below rates for cities of comparable size.

**New Orleans Rape Rate Compared to Medium and Large U.S. Cities**

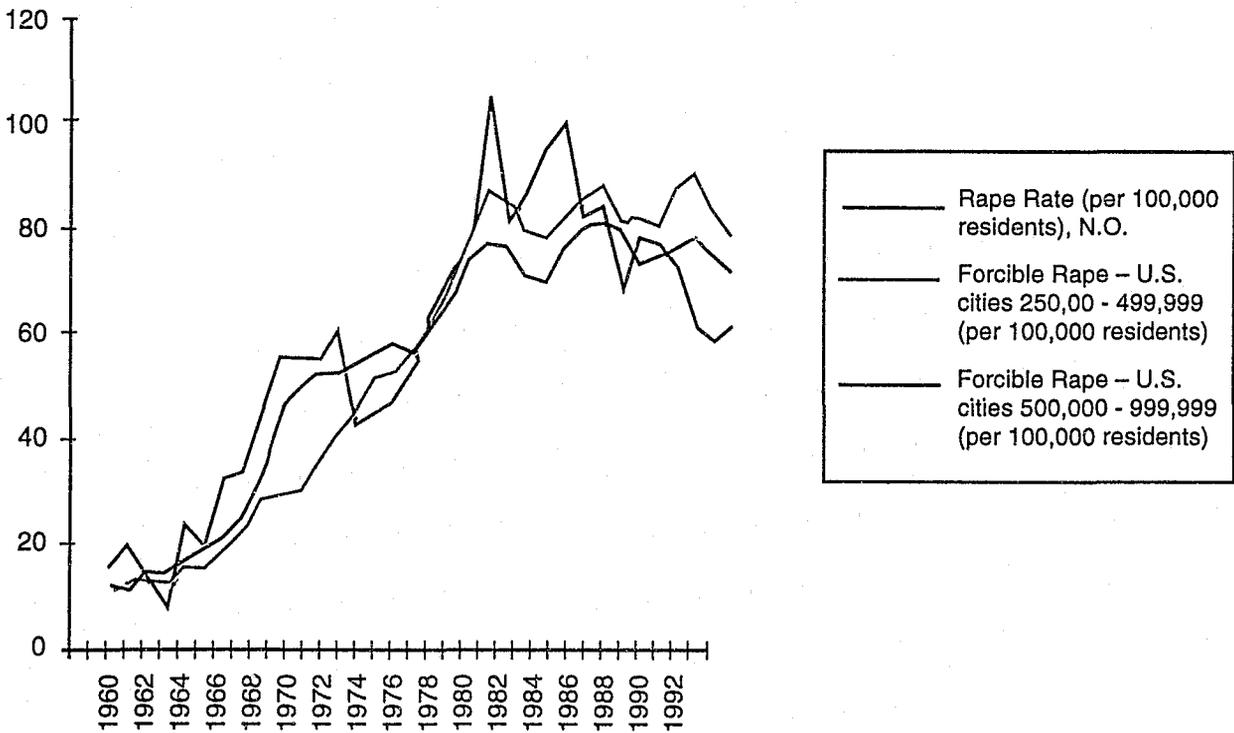


Figure 3

In Jefferson forcible rape rates rose until 1980, then leveled off at a lower rate during the 80's. In 1993 the rape rate had, however, reached an all time high in Jefferson. The St. Tammany rate stayed below the suburban average for most years since 1973 and in recent years has actually declined.

**Jefferson and St. Tammany Rape Rates  
Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas**

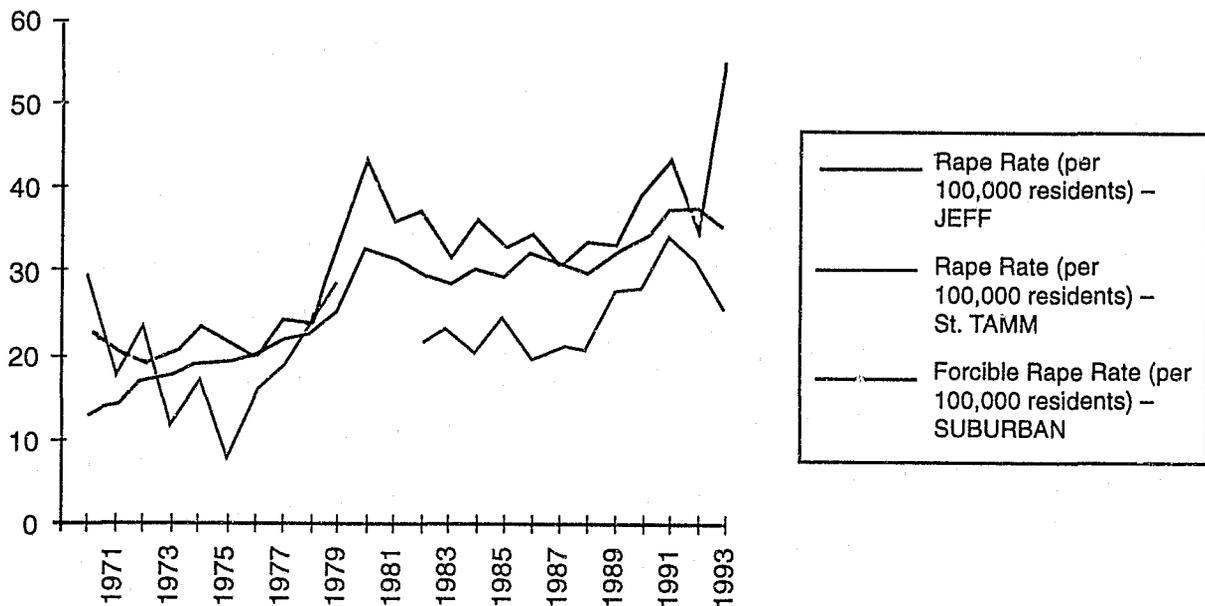


Figure 4

## Robbery

New Orleans' history of robbery rates shows some similarity to its murder rate. Robberies increased sharply both in New Orleans and comparable cities throughout the 1960's, with New Orleans closely matching the rates of those cities. Both New Orleans and other large cities reached an eight year plateau in robbery rates in 1970, with the New Orleans rate only slightly higher than the rate for other cities. By 1979, however, the New Orleans rate had reached a new plateau substantially higher than comparable cities and showed a tendency to expand this gap in the 90's.

**New Orleans Robbery Rate Compared to Medium and Large U.S. Cities**

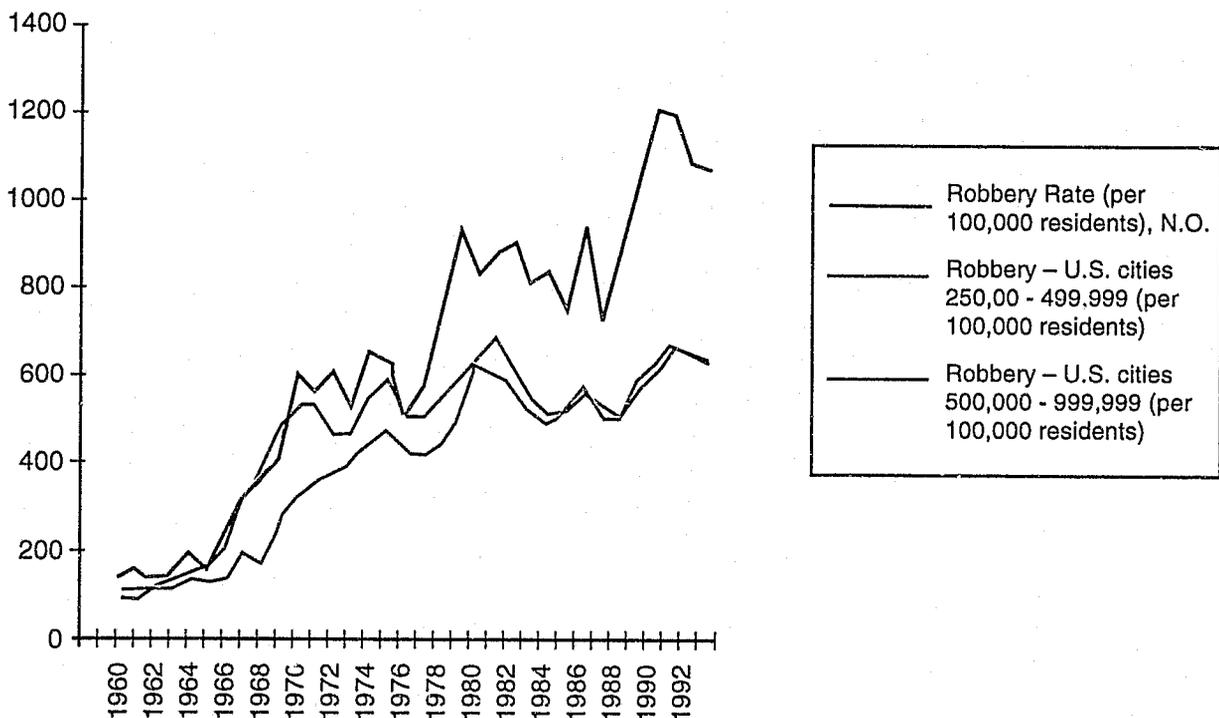


Figure 5

Robbery rates for U.S. suburban counties roughly doubled from 1970 to 1993. Jefferson rates, which were similar to the suburban average in 1970, more than quintupled over the same thirteen-year period and now stand at an historic high. St. Tammany rates, by contrast, have changed little during the period and have remained far below the suburban county average.

**Jefferson and St. Tammany Robbery Rates  
Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas**

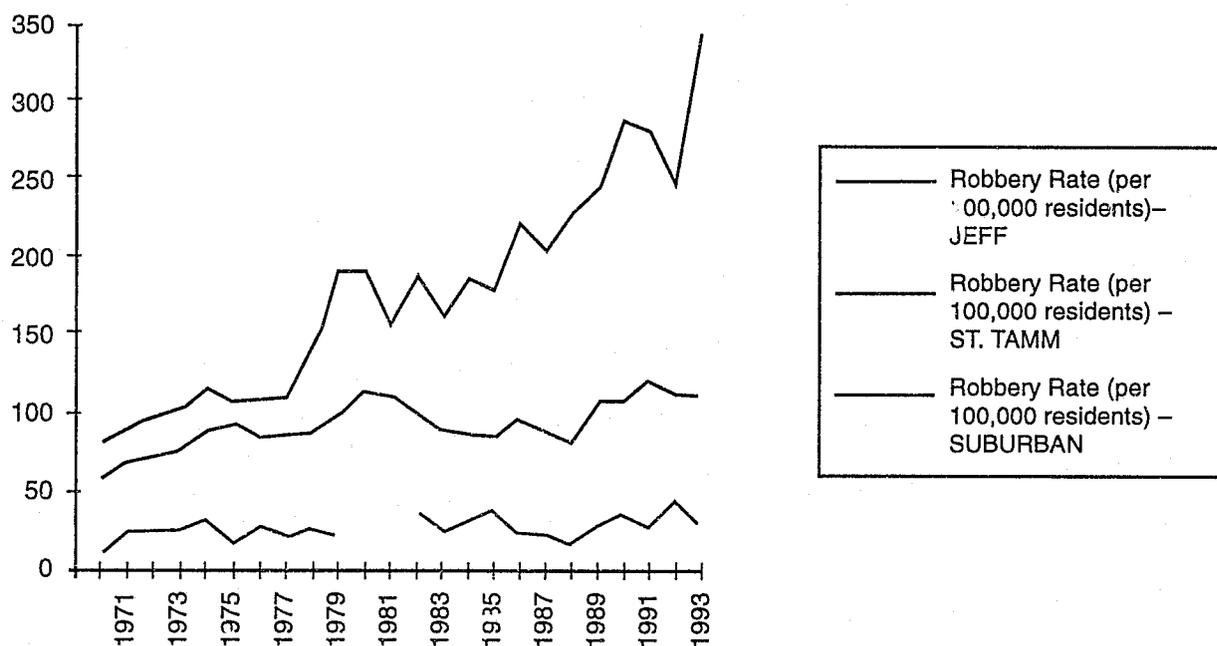


Figure 6

### Aggravated Assault

Aggravated assault rates for large cities exceeded that of medium sized cities until 1974, then dropped steadily below the medium city rate ever since. The New Orleans assault rate has matched the higher of the two rates very closely for the entire thirty-three year period under study. While New Orleans shows an almost continuous increase in assault rate over the entire period, both the rates and pattern are consistent with those of comparable cities.

New Orleans Aggravated Assault Rate Compared to  
Medium and Large U.S. Cities

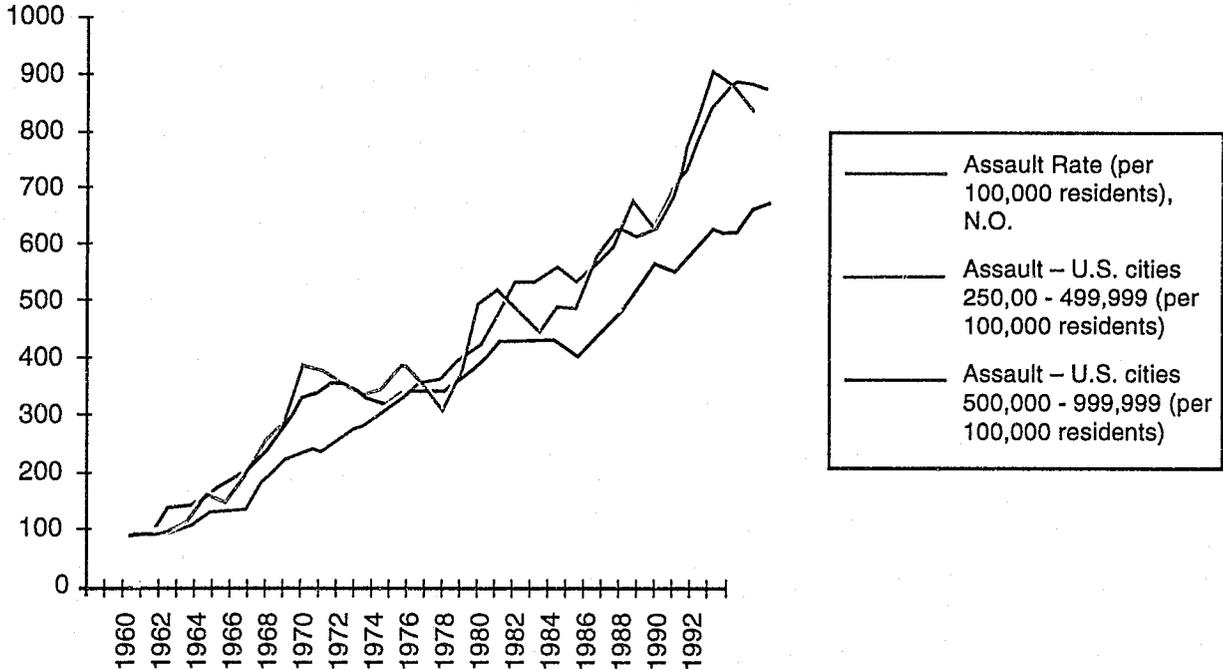


Figure 7

Jefferson assault rate has increased consistently from 1970 to the present, paralleling trends for suburban counties while remaining somewhat higher. St. Tammany trends have decreased during the last ten years and are now far below comparable suburban rates.

**Jefferson and St. Tammany Aggravated Assault Rates  
Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas**

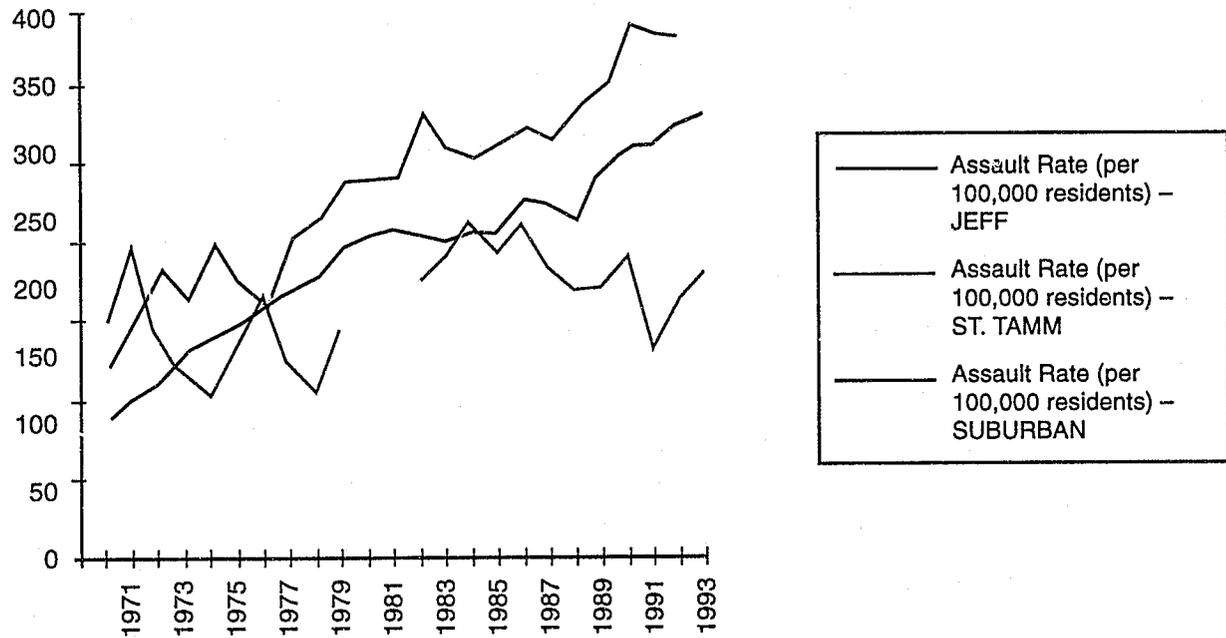


Figure 8

## Burglary

Where comparable city rates have actually been in decline since 1980, New Orleans rates show a more complex pattern, declining in the mid-80's then rising by the end of the decade to slightly exceed the rates of other cities. Nevertheless, throughout the entire period New Orleans rates were similar to those of cities its size.

**New Orleans Burglary Rate Compared to Medium and Large U.S. Cities**

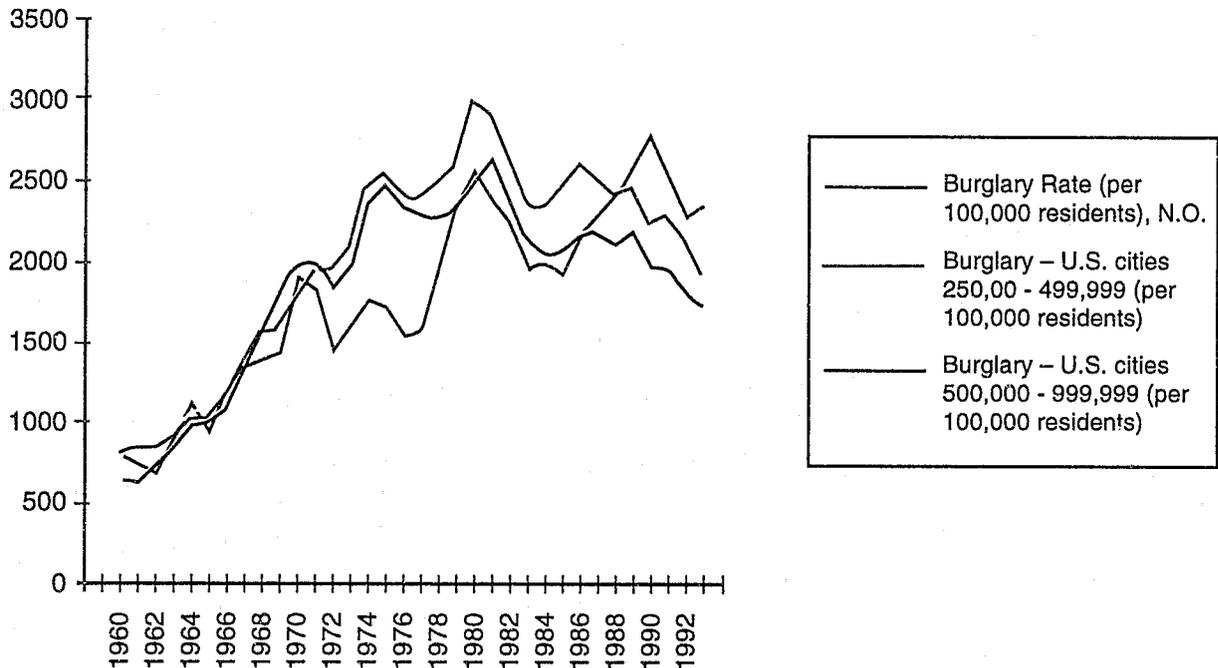


Figure 9

The Jefferson burglary rate began to diverge from those of comparable counties in the 80's and now exceeds the comparable average rate significantly. This gap, however, was the result of declining rates for U.S. suburban counties, rather than increases in Jefferson rates. Jefferson rates have stayed fairly constant

since the late 1970's. St. Tammany rates show declines similar to those of comparable counties since the early 80's.

### Jefferson and St. Tammany Burglary Rates Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas

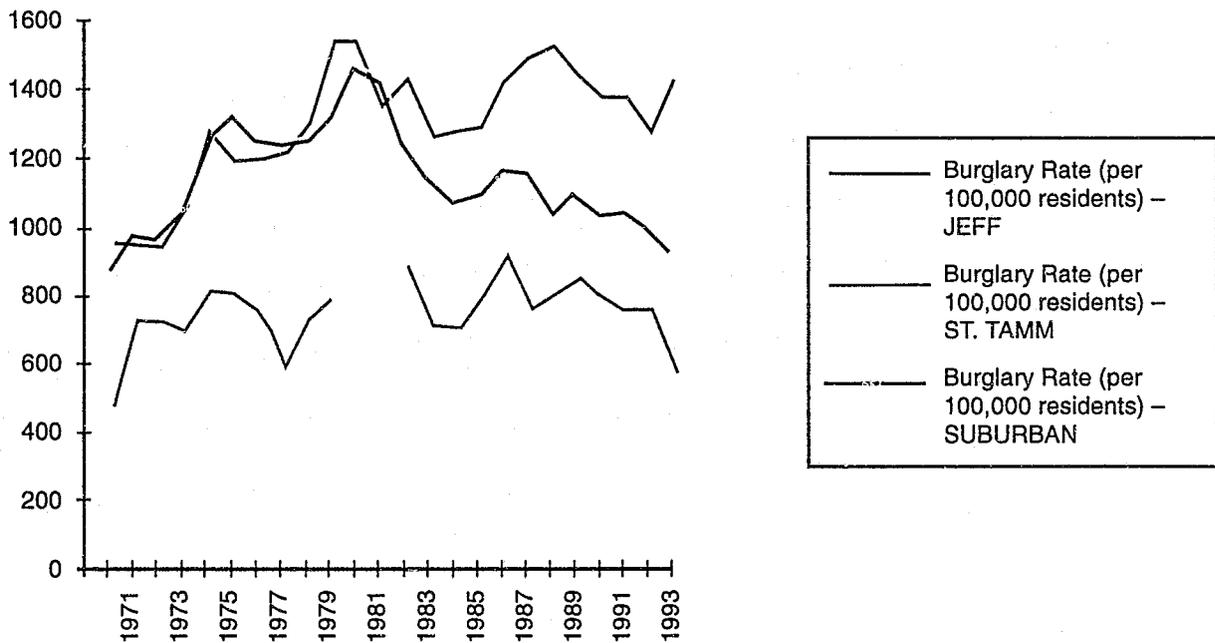


Figure 10

### Larceny-theft

Like burglary, the larceny-theft rate for New Orleans has fallen at or below rates for comparable cities throughout the study period. The rate for New Orleans increased steadily until the early 80's, and leveled off thereafter.

**New Orleans Theft Rate Compared to Medium and Large U.S. Cities**

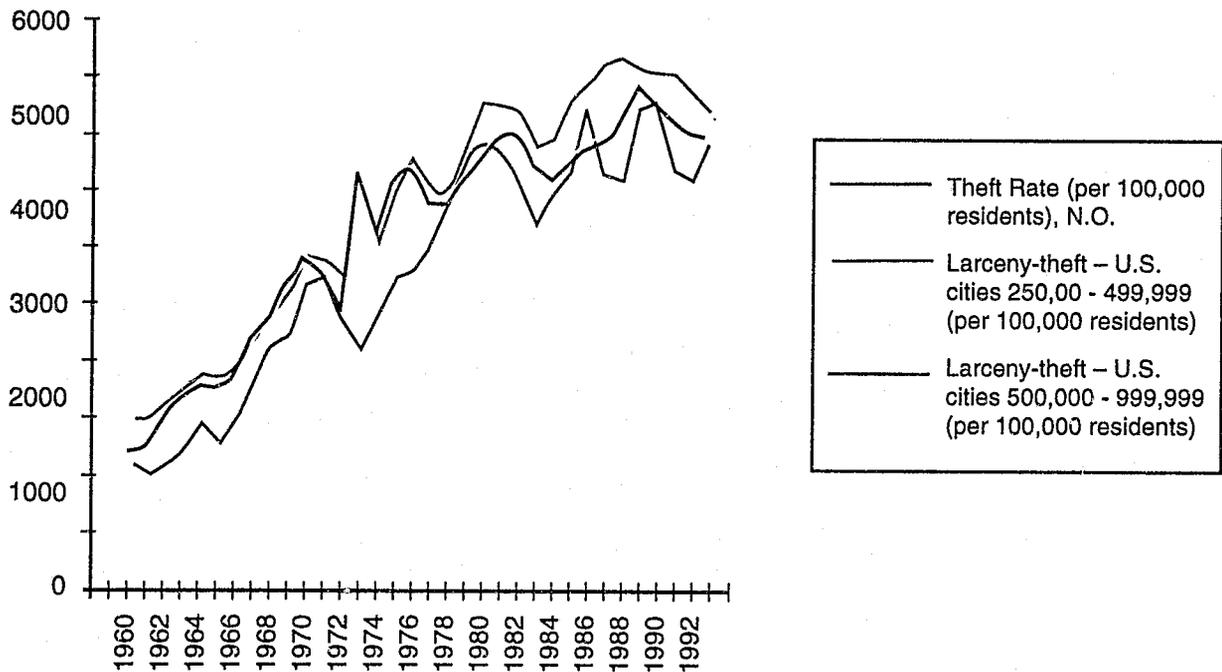


Figure 11

The theft rate for Jefferson fell below rates of comparable counties until 1979. While suburban county rates actually declined during the 80's, Jefferson's rates increased steadily during the entire period with their single largest increase between 1992 and 1993. Just as with burglary, St. Tammany's theft

rates paralleled those of comparable counties but fell consistently below those rates.

### Jefferson and St. Tammany Theft Rates Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas

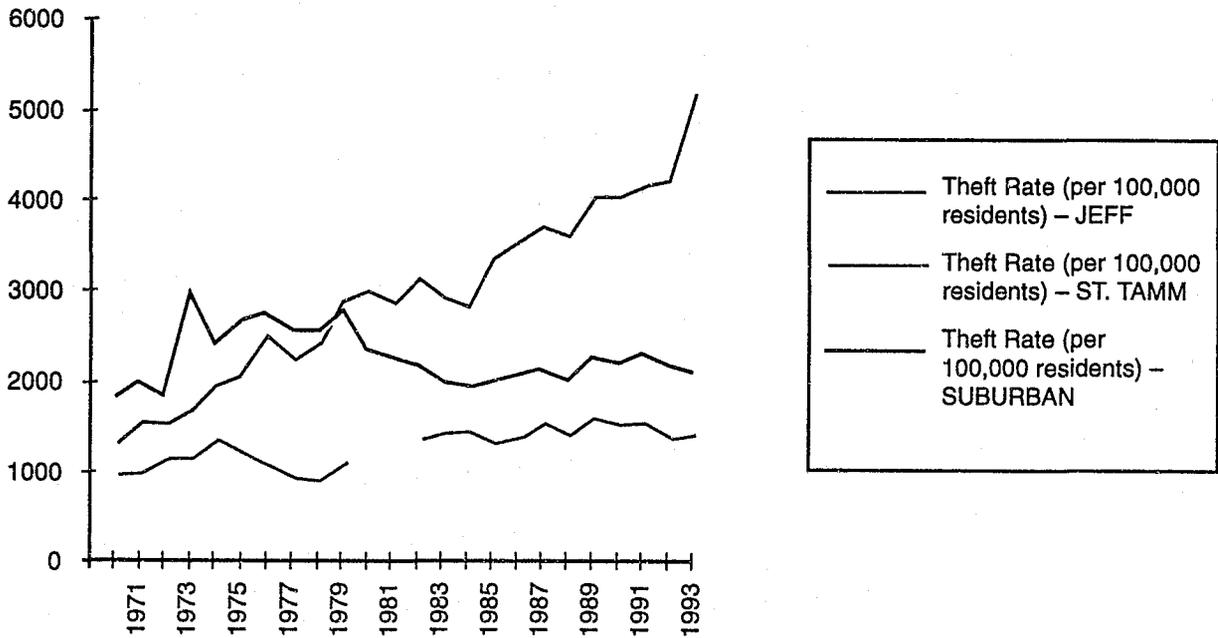


Figure 12

### Auto Theft

Auto theft rates in New Orleans tracked rates for comparable cities closely until 1985, increasing during the 60's then decreasing through 1984. Auto theft rates then soared until 1991, far outstripping increases for comparable cities. Rates appear now to be declining.

**New Orleans Auto Theft Rate Compared to  
Medium and Large U.S. Cities**

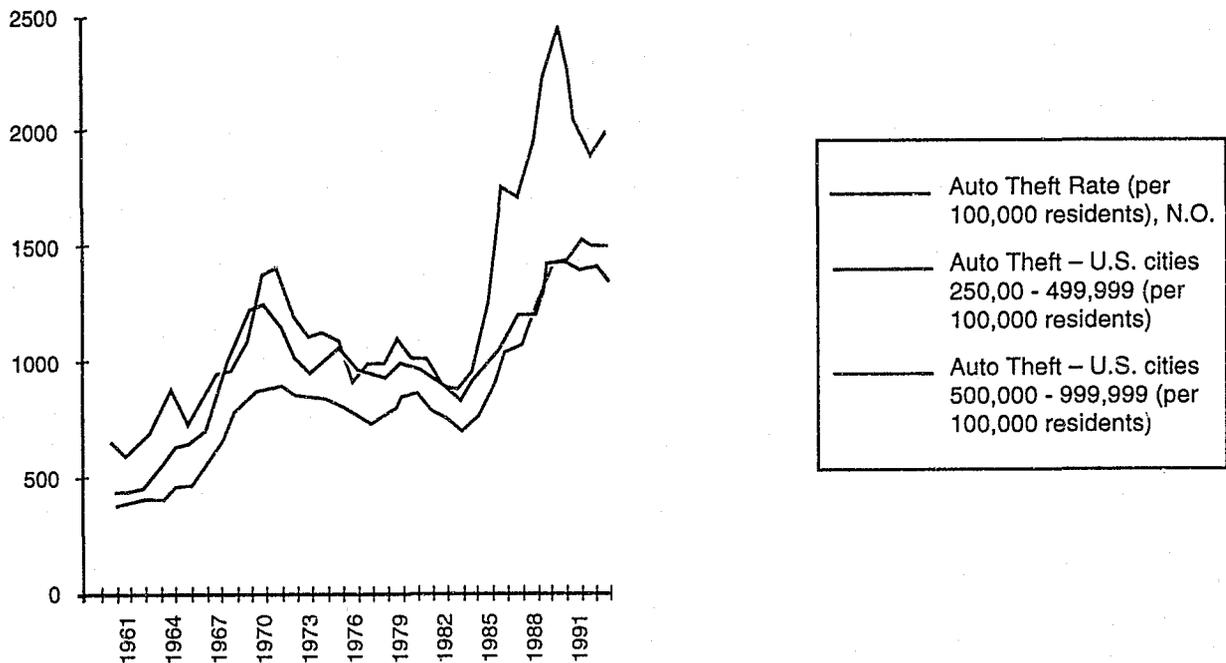


Figure 13

Jefferson auto theft rates showed little change from 1970 to 1987 but rose sharply thereafter and are now more than double the rate for comparable counties. Unlike New Orleans, this increase shows no signs of abating. St. Tammany auto theft rates, however, have stayed consistently low during the entire 1970-1993 period.

**Jefferson and St. Tammany Auto Theft Rates  
Compared to U.S. Suburban Areas**

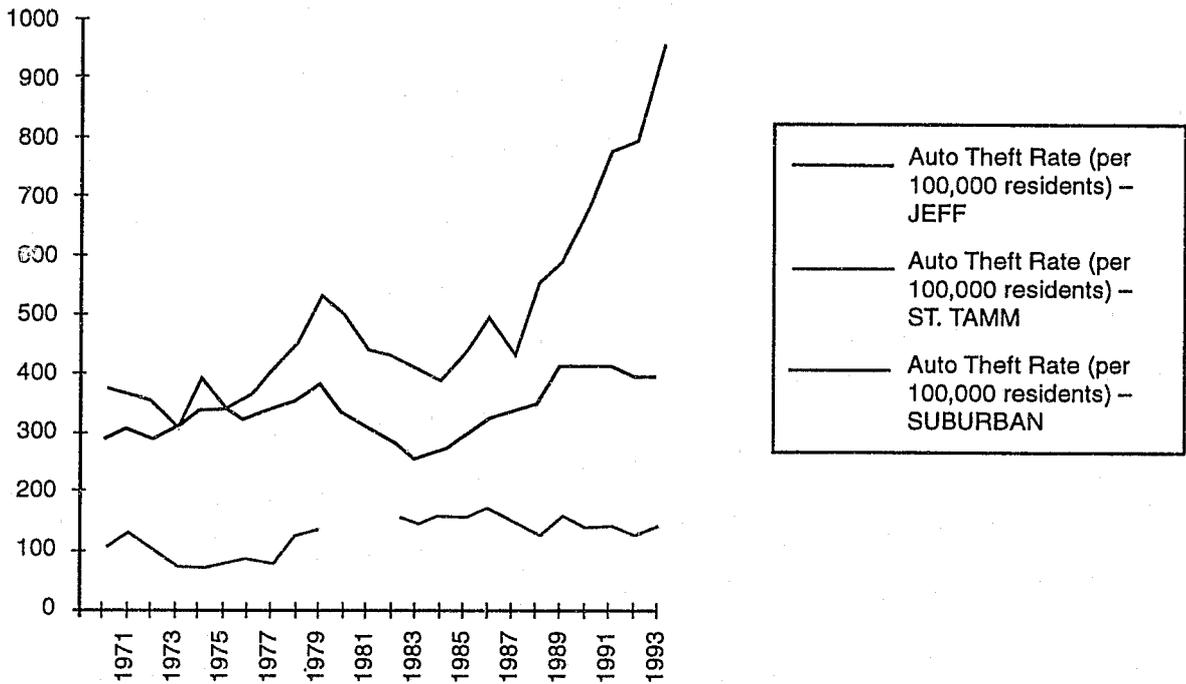


Figure 14

## II. Crime Rate Rankings

Another way of looking at New Orleans' crime problem is in terms of its ranking relative to other large cities rather than by comparison to an average city rate. Such comparisons indicate that New Orleans' rank for one type of crime is unrelated to its rank for other types.

In 1991, for example, New Orleans murder rate ranked second only to that of Washington, D.C. Robbery also ranked high, placing the city ninth among other large cities. But for other Index crimes, New Orleans was fairly typical of large U.S. cities, ranking eighteenth in auto theft, for example, and fifty-first of seventy-four cities for forcible rape.

*Table 1 New Orleans Crime Rate Rankings, 1991*

Crime	New Orleans Rate	Rank	Highest City	Rate
Murder	69	2	Washington, D.C.	80
Rape	60	51	Minneapolis, MN	199
Robbery	1,192	9	Miami, FL	2,304
Assault	869	27	Tampa, FL	2,307
Burglary	2,476	19	Tampa, FL	3,841
Theft	4,189	55	Miami, FL	8,322
Auto Theft	1,975	18	Newark, NJ	5,049

### III. New Orleans Arrest Rates

Offense rate patterns provide a picture of the frequency of victimizations; they offer no information, however, on offenders. For information on offenders we must turn to arrest rates.

Arrest rates are the number of arrests for a type of crime in a given period, usually a year, divided by size of the relevant population.<sup>5</sup> For example, the age 16 arrest rate for murder is based on the number of arrests of 16 year olds for murder divided by the size of the age 16 population. These rates provide a means of comparing criminal activity among groups, such as those defined by age, race, or sex criteria, or can serve as an indicator of criminal activity in a group over time. Though arrest rates are an imperfect indicator of a group's criminal activity,<sup>6</sup> they offer valuable insight into the dimensions of the crime problem in New Orleans.

#### Age and Gender

Arrest rates show that serious crime is primarily a male phenomenon. In 1990, for example, about 88% of all murder arrests and 98% of juvenile murder arrests were of males. Percent male for other crimes ranges from 76% for larceny to 95% for robbery.

Arrest rates also vary by age. Though juveniles do not commit the majority of crimes (see Table 2), they do commit crimes at a rate disproportionate to their proportion of the population. Juveniles (ages 8-16) are 18.1% of the New Orleans population ages 8-64 but account for 28% of the murders, 31% of the burglaries, and 26% of the thefts.

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<sup>5</sup> In this report all arrest rates are expressed as arrests per 100,000 people.

<sup>6</sup> Arrest rates do not provide a good measure of the absolute level of criminal activity in a group, since most crimes are not solved and the offender cannot therefore be identified. Even for comparative purposes, the measure may be flawed, because different groups may have different probabilities of arrest for criminal activity. Two groups with the same level of criminal activity may have differing arrest rates because one is more adept at eluding capture than the other. Finally, it is difficult to determine if a high arrest rate exists because of a high level of *participation* in the population, i.e., because a large proportion of the population is involved in crime, or because a small proportion of the population is frequently arrested. This issue of *participation vs frequency* is discussed later in the report.

Arrests in 1990	Percent Juvenile
Murder	28.1
Rape	8.9
Robbery	16.7
Aggravated Assault	10.8
Burglary	31.7
Larceny	26.2

### Violent Crime

New Orleans arrest rates for violent crimes<sup>7</sup> (figure 15) indicates a heavy juvenile involvement. Arrest rates rise rapidly through age 16, peak at age 19, then decline steadily through the rest of the life cycle.

New Orleans Violent Crime Arrest Rate by Age  
1990/92

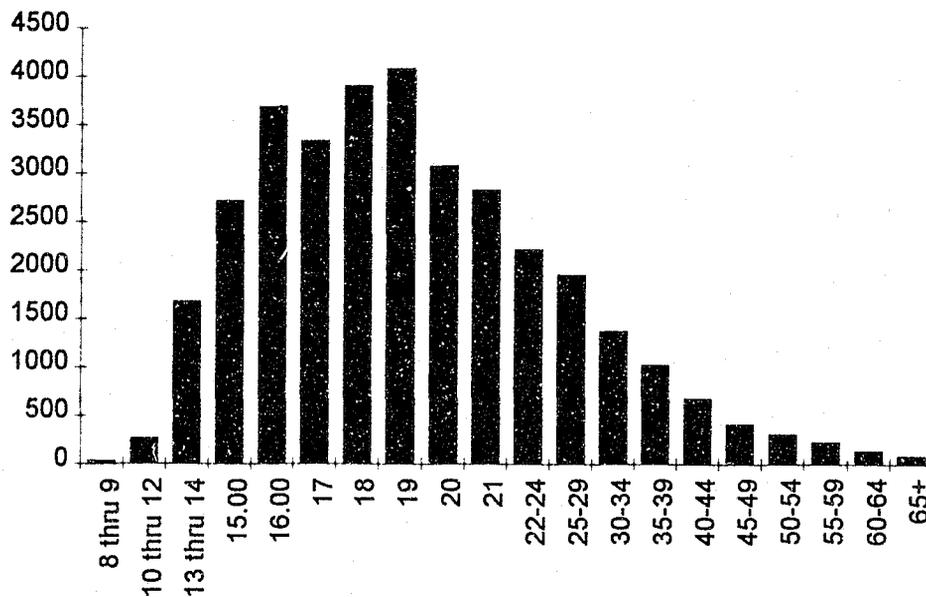


Figure 15

<sup>7</sup> Age-specific arrest rate distributions (figures 15 through 21) are expressed as rates per 100,000 for New Orleans for years 1990 and 1992 combined (arrest figures for all ages were available only for these years).

Involvement of juveniles in murder, both as victims and as perpetrators, has generated intense interest in New Orleans in recent years. The data show this concern is warranted. Murder arrest rates show an even younger peak than violent crimes in general (figure 16). Surprisingly, 16 year old males show an arrest rate for murder substantially higher than any other age group.

**New Orleans Murder Arrest Rate by Age  
1990/92**

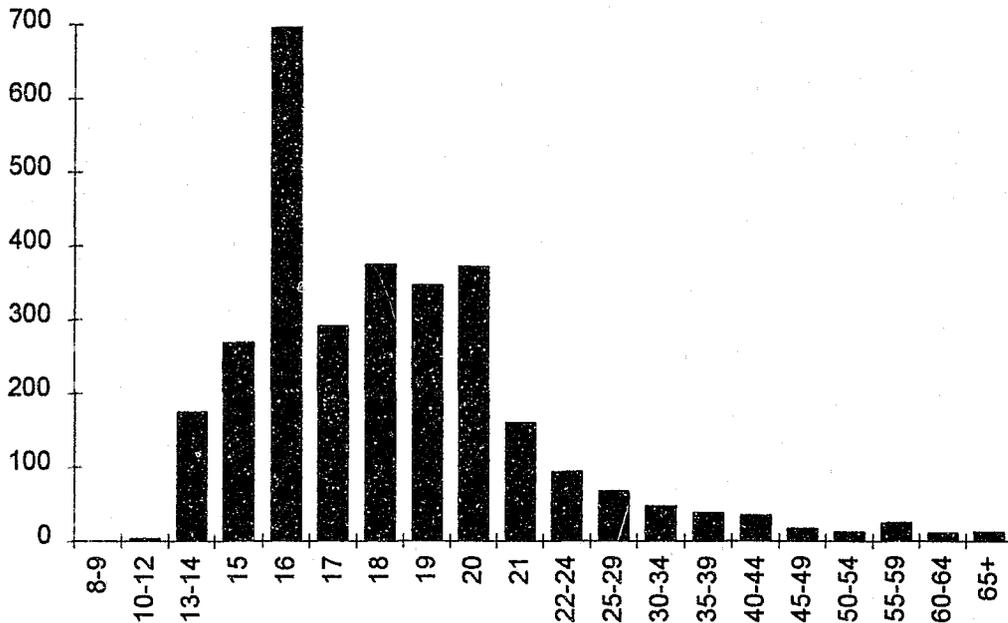


Figure 16

Other violent crimes also show a pattern of juvenile involvement. Robbery and assault (figures 17 and 18) show peaks in the late teens. Rape shows a similar pattern (figure 19) except for ages 13-14, which show the highest level of rape arrests of any age group.

New Orleans Aggravated Assault Arrest Rate by Age  
1990/92

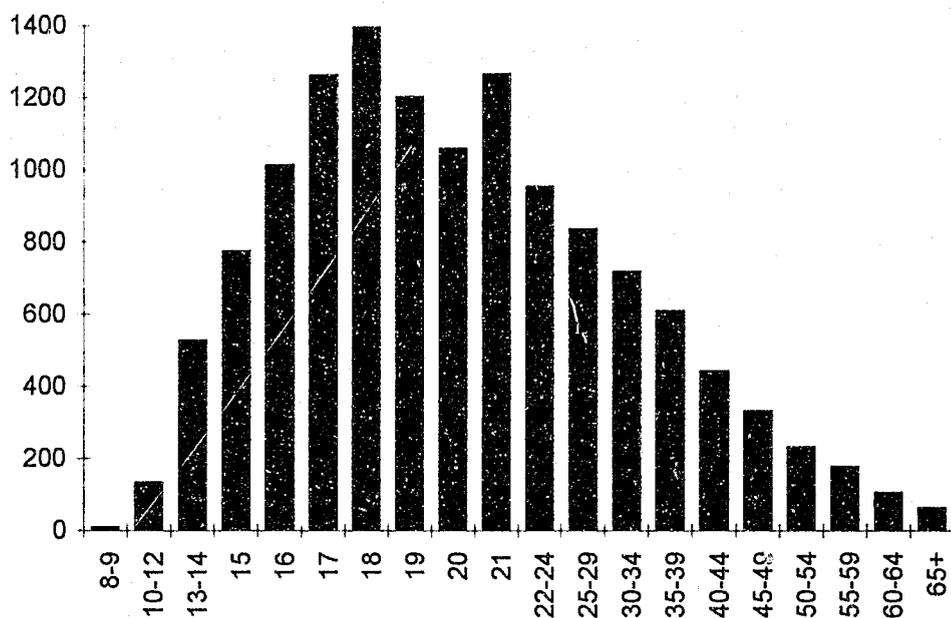


Figure 17

**New Orleans Rape Arrest Rates by Age  
1990/92**

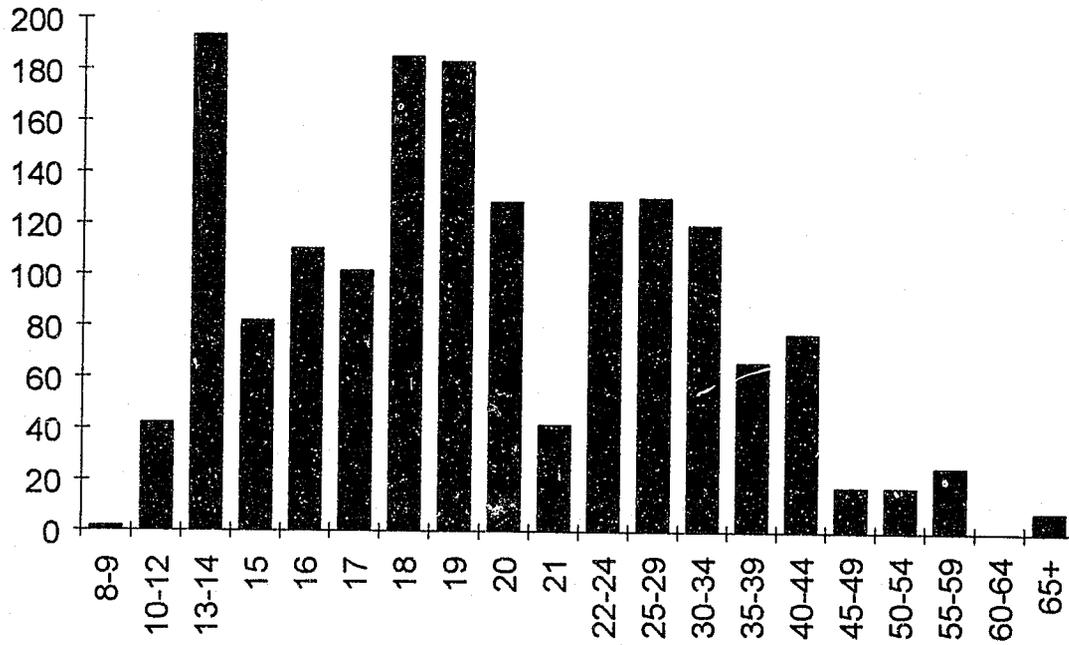


Figure 18

### Juvenile Crime Trends

The contribution of juveniles to crime in New Orleans is a function of the size of the juvenile population and the criminal behavior of juveniles. The size of the age 8-16 year old population has been declining in absolute terms in New Orleans (from 106,755 in 1970 to 66,871 in the 1990 Census) and as a percentage of the population (18% in 1970 vs 13.5% in 1990). The involvement of juveniles in violent crime, however, has increased.<sup>8</sup> Juvenile violent crime arrest rates in New Orleans have shown a generally increasing pattern since 1960, at a roughly constant rate until about 1988. Since 1988 violent crime among juveniles has risen at an extremely fast pace.

**Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate**

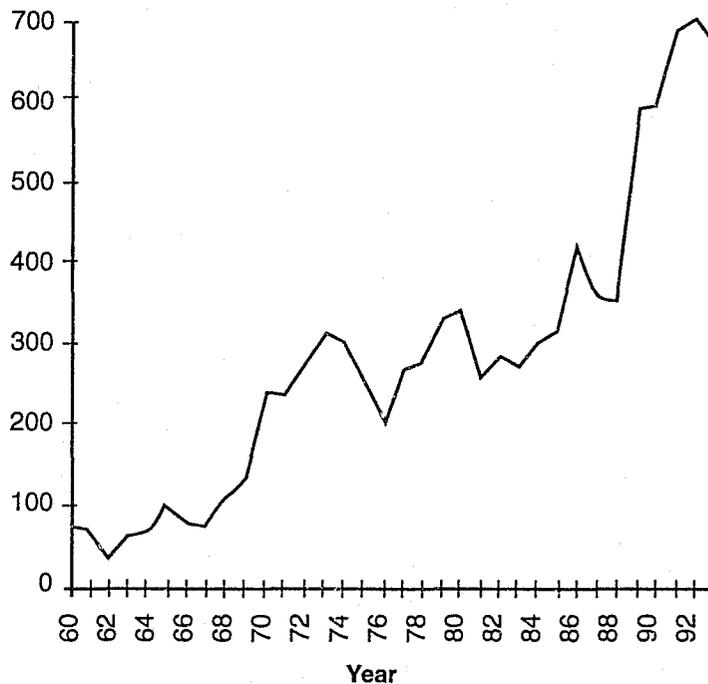


Figure 19

<sup>8</sup> Historical arrest information for New Orleans was available to us only for juveniles, largely through the annual reports of the NOPD Juvenile Division which are available starting in 1960.

All forms of violent crime among male juveniles have increased since 1988, the sharpest increases occurring for murder (figure 22) and robbery (figure 23).

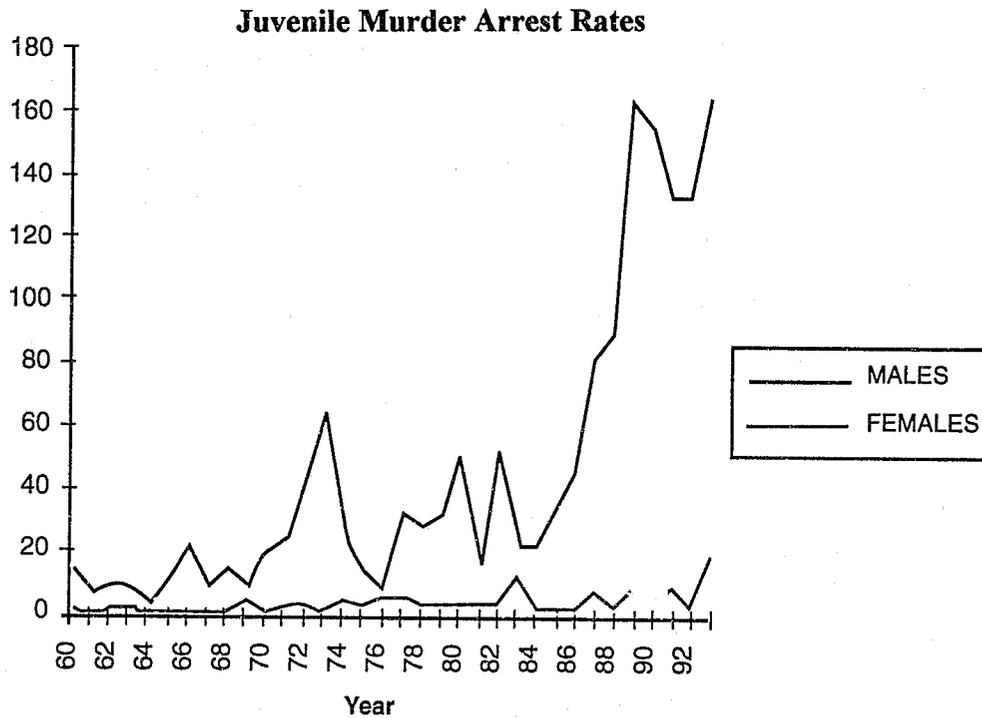


Figure 20

### Juvenile Robbery Arrest Rates

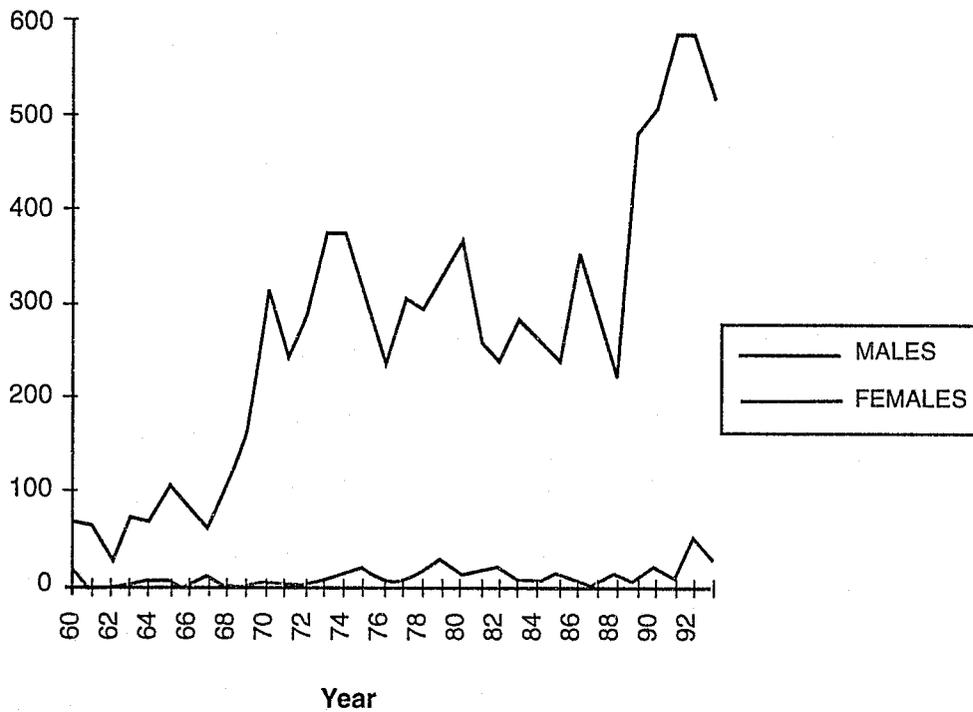


Figure 21

Property crime arrest rates show a different pattern. Burglary arrest rates for all juvenile males have showed a general pattern of decline since a 1973 peak (figure 24). Larceny rates peaked in 1977 (not shown). Auto theft rates for males peaked in the early seventies and again in 1990, but have fallen sharply since 1990 (figure 25).

### Juvenile Burglary Arrest Rates



Figure 22

### Juvenile Auto Theft Arrest Rates

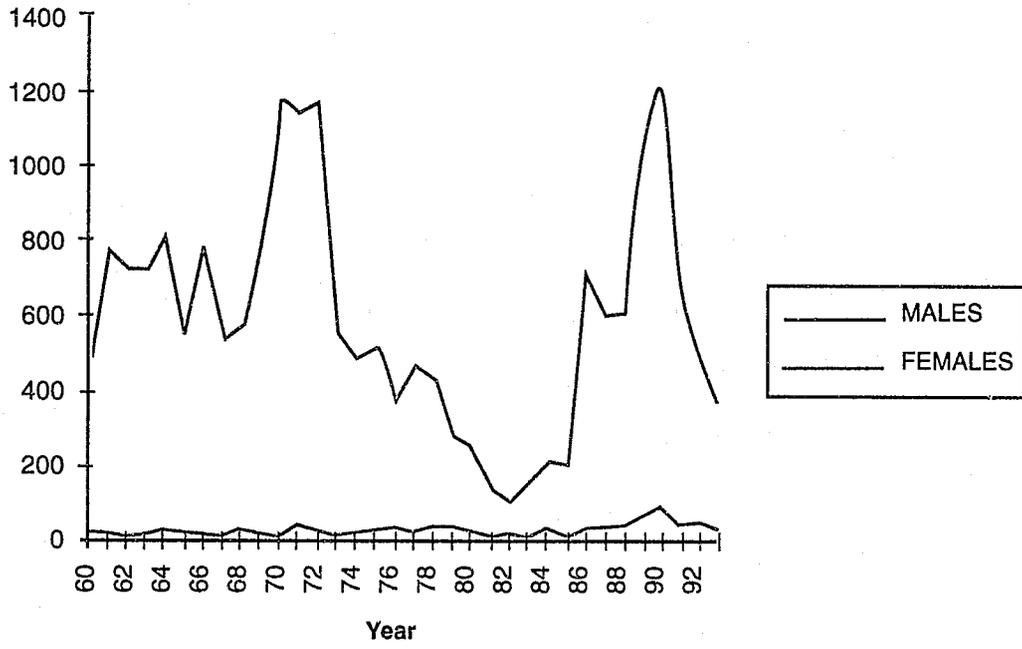


Figure 23

### Participation vs Frequency

Arrest rates may be high because of a high degree of *participation* in the age group, that is, because a relatively large percentage of the age group has been arrested. Alternatively, arrest rates may be high because a small percentage of the age group is arrested, but those arrested have, on the average, a high *frequency* of arrests.

It is very important to determine if juvenile crime is the product of a small group of highly active offenders or is widespread in the juvenile population. To find the answer to this question, we examined the group of juveniles resident in New Orleans who were born in 1971, and thus had their juvenile "at risk" years (ages 8-16) in the period 1979-1987.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 2 Juvenile Participation Rates for 1971 Birth Cohort**

MALES	Offense	FEMALES	TOTAL
7.9	Violent	2.0	5.0
14.8	Property	5.0	9.9
1.5	Drug	0.0	0.8
12.3	Other	2.8	7.6
2.9	Traffic/ Status	1.5	2.2
20.7	Non-traffic non- Status	7.7	14.2

About 14% of the juveniles in this birth cohort had at least one arrest for an offense other than traffic or status crimes. About 5% had an arrest for a violent crime, 10% for a property offense,

<sup>9</sup> This period was chosen because it was the latest available. The data was obtained from the files developed for the *New Orleans Offender Study*, which included New Orleans arrest data for the years 1974-1987.

and less than 1% for a drug offense<sup>10</sup>. On the average, those arrested for violent crimes were arrested 1.76 times during their juvenile years. Those arrested for non-traffic/status crimes were arrested an average 3.5 times.

More than one third of all offenders for a non-traffic/status crime had been arrested at least once for a violent crime, and about one-sixth of all arrests were for violent crimes.

Both participation and frequency of arrest vary by sex. About 8% of males but only 2% of females were arrested for a violent crime. The same pattern holds for property crimes (15% vs 5%). Males also have a higher frequency of arrest than females (4.09 vs 1.92 for non-traffic/status crimes).

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<sup>10</sup> Juvenile drug arrests increased dramatically in 1988, after this cohort became adults. Therefore the drug arrests reported here are probably not indicative of the participation of later cohorts.

## APPENDIX

### **MEASURING CRIME: THE INTERPRETATION OF CRIME STATISTICS**

#### **Introduction**

This report focuses on the crimes of murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and auto theft. These crimes make up what the FBI, in its Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), refers to as Part I Index crimes. The UCR is compiled from the reports of thousands of U.S. law enforcement agencies serving over 98% of the U.S. population.

Since counts of these offenses are based primarily on reports by citizens to police, they are subject to error based on the failure of citizens to report crimes and police failure to record reported crimes. Until the 1970's, however, crime statistics compiled by police were virtually the only source of information on crime trends available.

The National Crime Survey (NCS), begun by the Department of Justice in 1973, was in part an attempt to remedy the deficiencies of crime statistics based on reports to the police. The NCS collects detailed information from individual citizens on the frequency and nature of rape, personal robbery, aggravated and simple assault, household burglary, personal and household theft, and motor vehicle theft. Interviews are conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau with all household members 12 years and older in a nationally representative sample of about 49,000 households (about 101,000 persons).

The crimes and populations covered by the NCS and the UCR are not exactly comparable. For example, the NCS does not measure homicide, arson, commercial crimes, or crimes against children younger than 12, and the UCR measures only crimes reported to the police.

There are errors in both measures. The UCR, in addition to unreported crime, is subject to recording, classification, and reporting errors or distortions by police. Local or state criminal statutes may not correspond in precise definition to UCR crime categories. The NCS is subject to errors by interviewers and respondents, and is subject to normal sampling error.

Nevertheless, comparison of UCR and NCS statistics yields important findings, and suggests certain caveats about the interpretation of the statistics used in this report.

**Reporting Differences by Type of Crime**

Results from the NCS indicate that a large number of crimes are not reported to the police. The rate of non-reporting varies by crime and is related in part to the seriousness of the incident.

**Table 3 Percent of Victimizations Reported to the Police, 1991<sup>11</sup>**

All Personal Crimes		All Household Crimes	
	35.3		41.2
Rape	58.8	Burglary	49.9
Completed	50.6	Completed	54.4
Attempted	64.2	Attempted	33.9
Robbery	54.5	Household Larceny	27.8
Completed	62.5	Completed	27.5
Attempted	39.3	Attempted	32.4
Assault	46.9	Auto Theft	73.7
Aggravated	58.4	Completed	92.4
Simple	41.5	Attempted	40.6
Purse Snatching	54.7		
Completed	63.1		
Attempted	23.9		
Pocket Picking	32.1		
Other Larceny	28.1		
Completed	28.4		
Attempted	24.4		

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1991*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1992, p. 102

If New Orleans' residents report crimes at rates similar to the national average, the actual number of rapes, robberies, and burglaries are roughly double the number reported by police and the number of thefts (excluding auto) more than triple the reported number. Auto thefts are better reported, in part for insurance reasons, in part because victims see a higher probability of recovery.

### **Comparisons between Jurisdictions**

In this study reported crime in the city of New Orleans has been compared to crime in its suburban parishes and other large cities, and Jefferson and St. Tammany have been similarly compared to other suburban counties in the U.S. Since victimization surveys are unavailable for these individual jurisdictions, it is not known to what extent the differences in reported crime among these parishes reflect actual differences in the rate of criminal incidents.

Police procedures governing the classification and recording of offenses may differ from one parish to the next. Even within parishes, such as Jefferson, the practices of different law enforcement authorities (Sheriff, Kenner Police, Harahan Police, etc.) may differ. Without a detailed study of the practices in each department, we cannot determine to what extent variations in crime rates are a product of variations in law enforcement policies and practices. Such a study has not, to our knowledge, been done.

Citizen reporting practices also affect recorded crime figures. Again, without victimization surveys, we can only speculate on the differences among New Orleans area jurisdictions. The NCS has, however, provided information on reporting practices by victim characteristics that might shed light on differences between parishes and on differences among neighborhoods within parishes.

Higher income residents and home owners are more likely to report household crimes. Older residents are much more likely to report crimes of violence.

Blacks and Whites report crimes at about the same rate. As parishes differ, then, their reporting rates will differ. Since

Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Tammany populations differ in home ownership patterns, age of population, income level, and racial composition it is likely that their reporting rates differ as well.

### Variations over Time

Crime reporting patterns vary not only from neighborhood to neighborhood but over time as well. The NCS has found that the percentage of crimes reported increased in all crime categories from 1973 to 1991. The largest increase was reporting rates for rape, which rose from 49 to 59 percent.

Improvements both in police recording practices and in citizen reporting over time has meant that national crime rates over time, as measured by the NCS, differ from UCR measured trends. Forcible rape, for example, seems to have declined nationally since 1973 according to the NCS but police reported rapes have increased over the same period. Robbery and aggravated assault show the same difference in patterns.

NCS and UCR Comparison for Forcible rape rates (1973-1991)

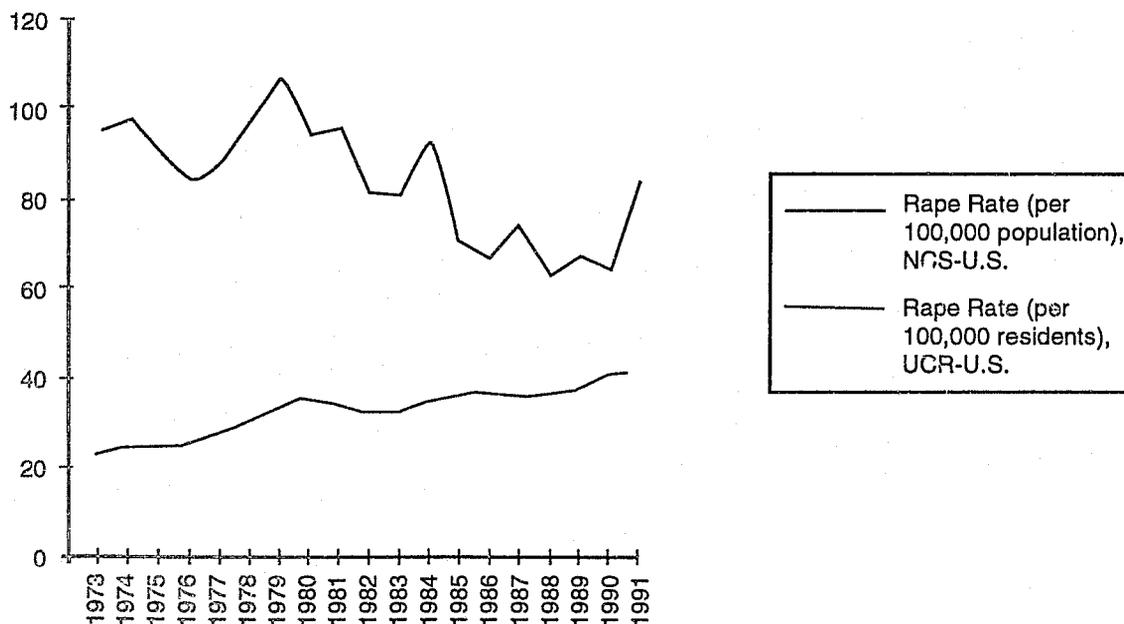


Figure 24

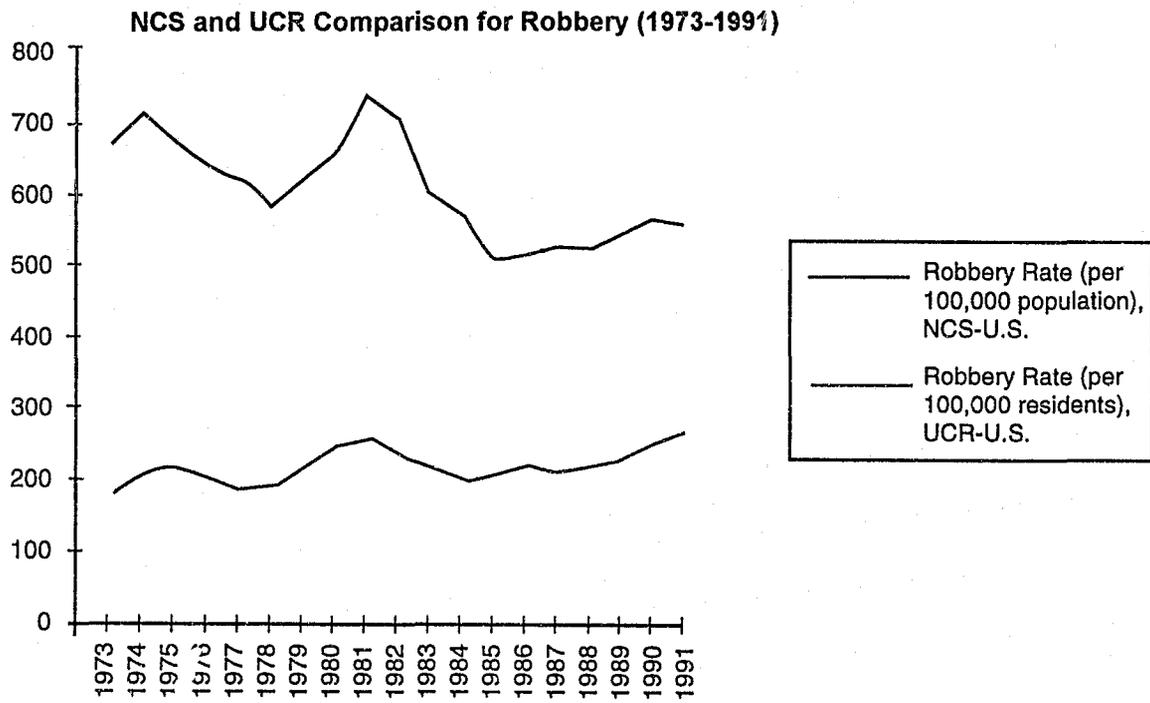


Figure 25

NCS and UCR Comparison for Aggravated assault (1973-1991)

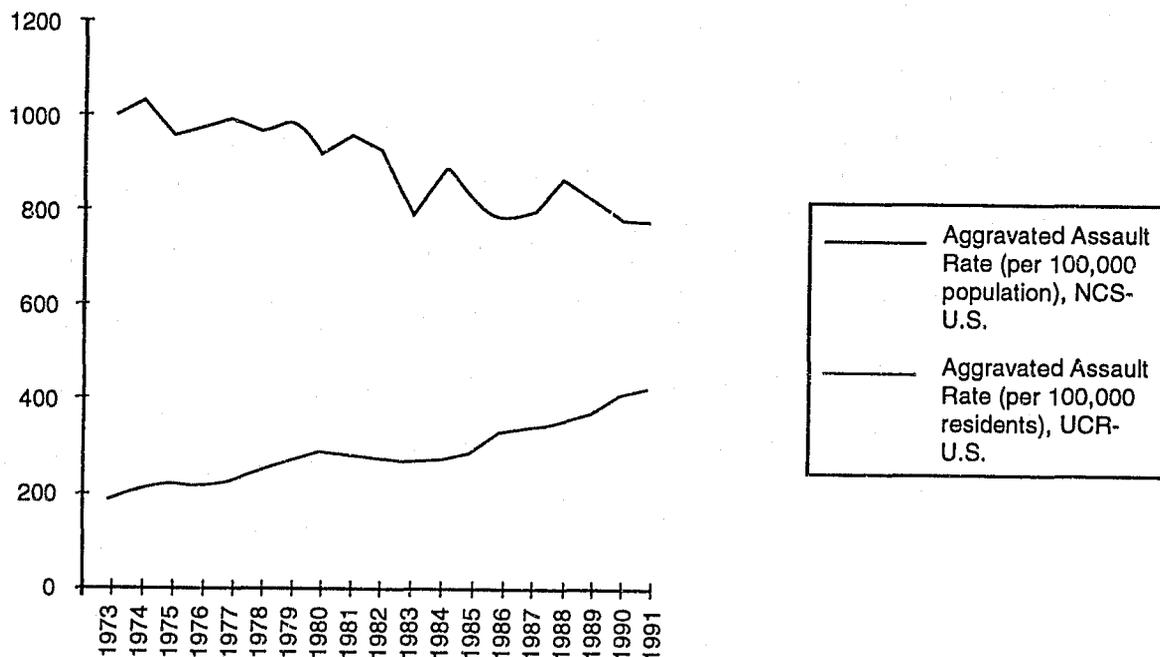


Figure 26

Similarly, increases in the reported level of New Orleans or Jefferson Parish crime over time, such as that documented in this report, may not be entirely reflective of actual crime trends but may, at least in part, be a function of improvement in citizen reporting of crime. In fact, increased confidence in the effectiveness of the police can lead to an increase in citizen reporting rates and an increase in the police reported crime rate. While there is no evidence that such a phenomenon has taken place in the New Orleans area, it must be considered in any crime rate analysis.