

## New & Noteworthy

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### Study of Crimes Against College Women

*The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, a report supported by NIJ and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), reports that about 3 percent of college women experience a completed or attempted rape during a typical college year.

Authors Bonnie S. Fisher, Francis T. Cullen, and Michael G. Turner estimate that more than 350 rapes a year could occur at a college with 10,000 female students—a finding with serious policy implications for college administrators. The report, which offers a comprehensive look into the prevalence and nature of sexual assault occurring at American colleges, also states that about 13 percent of college women are stalked each year.

### Online Database

College administrators, potential students, parents, and others interested in tracking crime on campus can search an online database that contains reported criminal offenses for more than 6,000 colleges and universities in the United States. The database was developed by the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education as a result of the 1998 Congressional amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The database can be searched by city, geographic region, instructional program, name of institution, number of students enrolled, State or outlying area, and type of institution.

Visit the database at <http://www.ope.ed.gov/security/Search.asp>.

In about half of the incidents categorized by the researchers as completed rapes, the women did not consider the occurrence to be a rape for a number of reasons, such as embarrassment, not clearly understanding the legal definition of rape, or not wanting to define someone they knew as a rapist. The study asked a number of questions to determine what happened during incidents reported by survey

respondents and whether force or coercion was used. Completed rape was defined as “unwanted completed penetration by force or threat of force.”

The study also included a comparison component sponsored by BJS that used methodology similar to that of the National Crime Victimization Survey, and the two components used different questioning methodologies to screen for

incidents of rape. The differences in estimated levels of sexual assault associated with the methodological differences will help researchers design better and more accurate surveys in the future.

Copies of *Sexual Victimization of College Women* (NCJ 182369), grant numbers 95-WT-NX-0001 and 97-MU-MU-0011, are available online at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> or by calling NCJRS at 1-800-851-3420.

## Domestic Violence in the Courts

An overview of current court practices in domestic violence cases is the focus of Susan Keilitz' new book, *Specialization of Domestic Violence Case Management in the Courts: A National Survey*. In the NIJ-sponsored study, Keilitz found that only half of all courts specializing in domestic violence cases require any judicial training, approximately one-third require

training specific to domestic violence, and less than 10 percent of courts exclusively assigned to domestic abuse require any related training.

The study also found that in most courts:

- Systems are not in place for monitoring batterer compliance.
- Case screening and coordination are not standard.
- Basic information gathering tools are not utilized.
- Domestic violence victims are not given information critical to their decision making.
- Few courts offer all the available services to victims, including legal assistance for economic support or civil issues.

The study, which includes the responses of 103 courts representing 22 States, offers data gathered through a written questionnaire, telephone interviews, and a panel discussion with 27 professionals.

The 103 courts were chosen because they operated a special service, process, or structure related to domestic violence.

In addition to the survey's findings, the book includes an extensive appendix outlining each individual court's responses. The questions cover several topics, including court jurisdictions, monitoring of batterer compliance, intake services, and general court services. A copy of the survey sent out to the identified courts also is included.

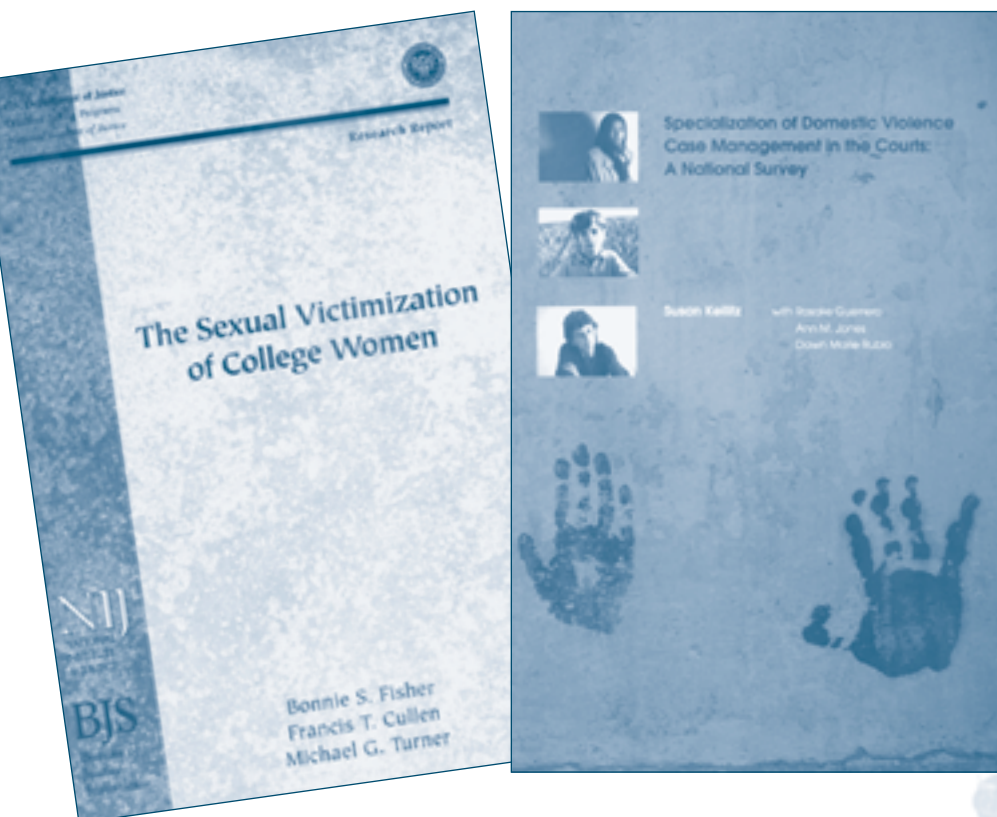
To obtain copies of *Specialization of Domestic Violence Case Management in the Courts: A National Survey*, grant number 98-WT-VX-0002, contact Pam Petrakis, National Center for State Courts, [ppetrakis@ncsc.din.us](mailto:ppetrakis@ncsc.din.us), 757-259-1822, fax: 757-564-2081. A shipping and handling charge of \$5 applies. It also is available from NCJRS (NCJ 186192).

## New Book Plots the Effects of Crime Mapping

Technology is revolutionizing the criminal justice system, and a new book looks at how crime mapping and geographic information systems are changing the face of justice practice and research.

*Atlas of Crime: Mapping the Criminal Landscape*, edited by Linda S. Turnbull, Elaine Hallisey Hendrix, and Borden D. Dent, uses mapping to look at "hot spots" and crime trends (both current and historic) in the United States. Among other topics, *Atlas of Crime* delves into crimes of personal violence, property crime, and the criminal justice system.

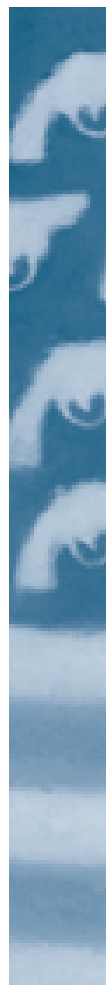
Crime mapping, which provides a visual display of where crimes are occurring and what types of crime are most prevalent in these areas, is



becoming more widespread. Police departments are using this process to fight crime by placing officers in the identified “trouble spots” and developing new approaches based on the crime mapping data.

In chapters dealing with violent crime, notable scholars discuss the geographic and time-based variations in homicide, sexual assault, and robbery in various U.S. locations and explore why these variations exist. For robbery, the authors also describe the victims and perpetrators, focusing on New York City in particular.

The section on property crime includes both traditional (burglary and motor vehicle theft) and “new” crimes (environmental and computer crimes). Although only 4 percent of all American residences are burglarized each year, this chapter includes several levels of locational analysis and investigates the factors related to these burglaries. Other sections provide information on the direction and distance a stolen car might travel following a theft and explain the phenomenon of environmental crime, which includes both moral and criminal crimes that affect the global community. The

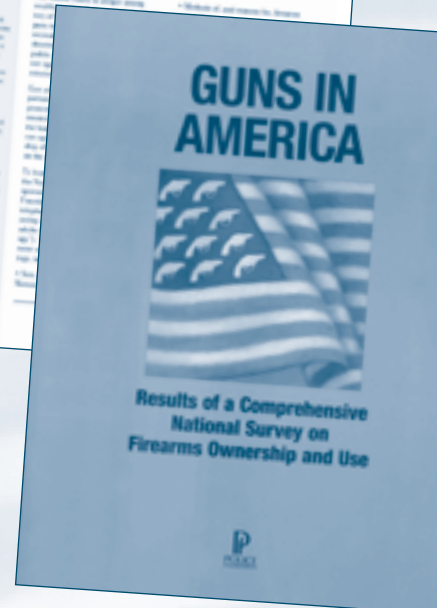


## Guns In America

The definitive research about gun ownership in the United States was conducted by Philip J. Cook and Jens Ludwig under NIJ grant number 93-IJ-CX-0017. The study, published in 1997, focused on four central issues: (1) the size, composition, and ownership of America’s gun stock; (2) how and why firearms are acquired; (3) gun storage and carrying; and (4) the defensive use of firearms against criminal attackers.

NIJ published a 12-page Research in Brief of the national survey entitled *Guns in America: National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms* (NCJ 165476). NIJ’s report is available at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/165476.pdf> or by calling NCJRS at 1-800-851-3420.

The Police Foundation published a 94-page book entitled *Guns in America: Results of a Comprehensive National Survey on Firearms Ownership and Use*, which can be purchased on their Web site at <http://www.policefoundation.org>. There is a charge of \$15.00.

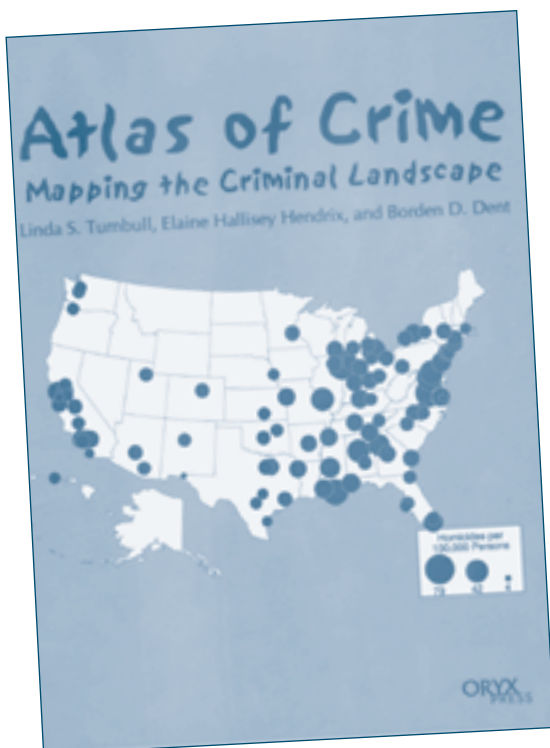


authors also discuss the difficulty in solving computer-based crimes (identity theft, software piracy, and data alteration, for example) and explain how geography can be used to solve these problems.

*Atlas of Crime* takes a general look at crime mapping in the criminal justice system. Experts examine several examples of its use, including the geographic distribution of State and local law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty (both feloniously and accidentally); the use of crime scene sketches to help officers rebuild or reconstruct crime scenes; the operation of community policing on a local level

through a case study of Lima, Ohio; and the geographic evolution of one of today’s most controversial criminal justice issues—capital punishment.

For more information about the book or to order a copy, visit the Oryx Press Web site at <http://www.oryxpress.com>. For more information about crime mapping and the use of geographic information systems in the criminal justice field, revisit Thomas Rich’s “Mapping the Path to Problem Solving,” *NIJ Journal*, October 1999, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/journals> (NCJ 179444), or visit OJP’s Crime Mapping Research Center’s Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/cmrc> and the Crime Mapping and Analysis Program at <http://www.nlectc.org/cmrap>.



## Events

### VAWA's Impact Subject of Joint Workshop



To begin assessing the impact of programs funded through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), NIJ, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Violence Against Women Office brought together researchers, practitioners, and Federal and State government officials to discuss how to define and measure the impact.

Opening discussions focused on how to define VAWA impacts. Attendees proposed using the term “victim well-being” rather than “victim safety” because “well-being” broadens one’s perspective. They also noted that adverse and differential impacts with regard to race, ethnicity, and social class need to be considered both for victims and offenders. Other suggestions included focusing on community-level interventions and responding with more than punitive approaches.

Attendees also suggested using or augmenting major measures of violence against women: The geographic codes in the National Crime Victimization Survey could be used to examine communities with and without VAWA funding, paying special attention to the subpopulations not captured in the Survey. A clearinghouse of instruments could be developed, enabling researchers to gather more consistent data and allowing better future impact evaluations. Measures could go beyond criminal justice outcomes (e.g., arrest, prosecution, convictions, and recidivism) and include social justice measures such as equality in service provision, economic autonomy, tribal sovereignty, respect for victims, and fair treatment of all perpetrators who go through the criminal justice system.

Some of the issues raised during the workshop have been addressed by the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (VAWA II), including differential impacts targeting underserved populations (elderly persons, immigrants, and people in same-sex relationships). VAWA II includes a reauthorization of the original VAWA legislation, amendments to further protect abused immigrant spouses, and strengthened full-faith and credit provisions to support enforcement of protection orders across jurisdictional boundaries.

For more information about the Violence Against Women Act and NIJ’s Violence Against Women Office, visit <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo>. For more information about the workshop, contact Angela Moore Parmley, Social Science Analyst, Violence and Victimization Division, NIJ, at [parmleya@ojp.usdoj.gov](mailto:parmleya@ojp.usdoj.gov).

### Drug Policy Technologies Focus of ONDCP Symposium

“Counterdrug Research and Development: Technologies for the Next Decade” is the theme of this year’s Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) International Technology Symposium. The conference, sponsored by ONDCP’s Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center, will take place June 25–28, in San Diego, California.

Designed to promote the exchange of information and foster discussion, the symposium will cover two main topics—demand reduction and supply reduction.

The demand reduction sessions will focus on the development and facilitation of methodologies that address

substance abuse, dependence, and addiction. This includes related neurological imaging and chemical assay technologies, genetics, and methods to detect use and treat addictions.

The supply reduction discussions will cover new technological approaches to disrupting all phases of drug operations and increasing agencies’ capabilities. This includes several types of sensors (i.e., nuclear, acoustic, and biological) to monitor and detect the growth, processing, shipment, and distribution of illegal drugs, and the identification of drug-associated currency. Non-intrusive cargo inspection also will be discussed.

In addition, a special session is planned on unmanned aerial vehicles, airships, and balloons as cost-effective surveillance sensor platforms, and two plenary sessions are scheduled dealing with drug detection equipment standards and the legal implications and ramifications of new surveillance and detection technology.

For more information about the symposium or to register online, visit <http://www.reg4.com/pdg/main.asp> or call 1-800-377-4734.

### Perspectives on Crime and Justice Lecture Series

Every year, NIJ invites scholars to Washington, D.C., for the Perspectives on Crime and Justice lecture series. The lectures are designed to present provocative points of view to policymakers and practitioners.

In February, Alfred Blumstein, a well-known criminologist from Carnegie Mellon University and director of the National Consortium on Violence Research, discussed factors contributing to the falling violence rate in the United States and concepts to consider in the future.



The March lecture featured Laurence Steinberg of Temple University, director of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice. He spoke on juvenile psychopathy.

### **Blumstein's Lecture on Declining Violence**

A dramatic rise in crime was recorded in the United States during the 1980's, but it has been steadily decreasing since its peak in 1993. Blumstein discussed the violent crime trends of the past few years by looking at variables such as offender age, weapon use, and drug markets.

During the crime peak years, Blumstein found, younger offenders were arrested twice as often for homicide compared to 1985, when the rise started. Starting in 1985, a major dichotomy occurred between young people under 20 years of age and the 25 and older group, marking considerable shifts in violent crime for just the younger group, with a steady and continuing decline for the older ones.

Blumstein reported that an increase in gun use by young people was largely responsible for this crime boom. By 1993, juvenile offenders were committing homicide using handguns more than four times as often as in 1985, with no comparable change in weaponry other than handguns. Because the dynamics of teenage fights accelerate dramatically when a handgun is used, the homicide rate for that age group increased dramatically. The rate of gun use and young people's homicide peaked in 1993 and was largely restored to 1985 levels by the end of the 1990's.

He also pointed to the crack epidemic of the 1980's as a key factor contributing to the increased violent crime rate. Crack made cocaine more affordable and available, and sellers were needed to serve the rapid growth in demand. Young African Americans who saw only limited economic opportunities in the

legitimate economy were recruited both to meet the growing demand and to replace the older sellers who were sent to prison in large numbers. Until the late 1980's, the drug arrest rate for white and nonwhite juveniles was roughly comparable, but between 1989 and 1992, nonwhite juveniles' drug arrest rate zoomed to four times that of whites. Handguns became necessary protection for these young sellers, but because young people are so tightly networked, there was a widespread diffusion of handguns to their peers, including those not involved with drugs. As a result, handguns became a much more common instrument for dispute resolution.

*Why is crime falling?* Two explanations are generally cited for the decrease in crime—fewer total young adults and higher incarceration rates. Blumstein was quick to point out, however, that the demographic shift was more significant in the crime drop of the early 1980's as the baby boom generation aged out of the prime crime age bracket. He also pointed out that the late 1980's marked a period in which incarceration and crime went up, leaving us with the highest incarceration rate in the industrialized world. This precludes the simplistic claim many have made that the 1990's crime drop was caused only by the growth of incarceration. He reported estimates by both William Spelman and Richard Rosenfeld that about 25 percent of the 1990's crime drop was attributable to incarceration.

*Looking ahead.* The crime rate cannot continue to decrease at the current rate, and there are already indications that the decline is beginning to level off—especially in the big cities. Potential threats for the future include new drug markets involving weapon use that might create a situation similar to the crack epidemic of the 1980's. Blumstein pointed out that an economic downturn and increased unemployment could also increase the incentive

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to engage in criminal activity. Demographic changes, which are now increasing the population in the high-risk age ranges but only slowly at about 1 percent per year, could also adversely affect the violence rate. He also emphasized the importance of building the research program to reach a much fuller understanding of the mutually supporting—or opposing—contributions of our various efforts to control crime.

### **Steinberg's Lecture on Psychopathic Juveniles**

The characterization of the juvenile offender as a psychopath is a trend that concerns Laurence Steinberg. Although no hard data are available to validate this perceived increase, Steinberg feels that there are many reasons to sound a note of caution about the potential overuse of juvenile psychopathy as a diagnostic label.

Psychopathy, a personality disorder defined by a combination of antisocial behavior and emotional detachment, is generally assessed through the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL); a slightly revised version called the PCL Youth Version is being used with adolescents. PCL scores are based on interview responses and official records, and they are often used to predict future behavior—adults who score over 29 on the test are four times more likely to commit a future violent crime.

The construct of psychopathy is questionable when applied to juveniles, however. Psychopaths are probably more likely to be viewed as incorrigible, less likely to receive rehabilitation, and more likely to be transferred to the adult criminal justice system when branded with the disorder. The stability of psychopathy measures over the course of adolescence or between adolescence and adulthood is unknown, though, and few data have been gathered on the predictive utility of the diagnosis when applied to juveniles.

Steinberg expressed concern that juvenile psychopathy assessments are being used to make decisions to transfer youths into the adult system, making false-positives especially worrisome. Steinberg believes the trend is due to four factors: a problem, a crisis, a theory, and a diagnostic tool.

**The problem.** One of the problems facing practitioners in the juvenile justice system is differentiating between serious offenders who are likely to reoffend and those who are not—and wanting to protect communities without exposing low-risk juveniles to adult sanctions. If differentiating these juveniles were possible, far better decisions could be made regarding transfers to the adult system and the decertification of juveniles charged as adults.

**The crisis.** Today's sense of urgency over the need to identify psychopaths has its origins in the now infamously wrong prediction about the coming wave of superpredators. Although views have softened on the inevitability of an epidemic of juvenile violence, the legacy of the superpredator lives on today in the label of the juvenile psychopath.

**The theory.** Although warnings about superpredators were not based on reality or precise evidence, Steinberg said that the translation of the rhetoric into policy and practice necessitated two other ingredients: a saleable theory about the condition's origin and a diagnostic test to identify offenders. In recent years, psychopathy has been attributed to low serotonin levels, low autonomic reactivity, unusual patterns of physiological arousal, and prefrontal cortical dysfunction. It also has become increasingly common at professional meetings to see "pictures" of criminal brains; whether this is informative or simply high-tech phrenology remains controversial.

**The diagnostic tool.** The widespread use of the PCL in work with adults has led many to believe that the instrument is appropriate for use with juveniles. Translating a test from one age group to another is far from worry-free, however. Until certain fundamental questions about the use of the PCL are answered through systematic scientific research, Steinberg stated that it should not be used in forensic practice.

**Future of the use of the psychopathy diagnosis with juveniles.** Three important questions must be answered before using juvenile psychopathy assessments in sentencing, transfer, and decertification decisions:

- Do measures of psychopathy mean the same thing when used

in adolescent and adult populations?

- Are scores on measures of psychopathy derived during adolescence correlated to those derived during adulthood?
- Do scores on measures of psychopathology derived during adolescence predict future antisocial behavior and violence?

Although research is attempting to answer these questions, the only answer available now is, "We don't know." Steinberg feels that the use of psychopathy assessments to make important decisions about juvenile offenders is premature, and if the answer to any of these three questions is "no," the use of psychopathy assessments to make important decisions about juvenile offenders is bad practice, and perhaps even unethical.

Before relying on assessments of psychopathy to determine serious juvenile offender dispositions, longitudinal research must be conducted. Steinberg added, "Psychopathy is, by definition, not something that individuals grow out of. Adolescence, by definition, is."

## The Lecture Series

Two other Perspectives lectures occurred in 2001. Summaries will appear in the next issue of the *NIJ Journal*.

- Carl Bell, Community Mental Health Council and Foundation, "Violence Prevention 101," April 20, 2001.
- Margaret Berger, Brooklyn Law School, "The Impact of DNA Testing on the Field of Forensics," May 9, 2001.

To obtain copies of the collected papers from previous lectures, visit NIJ's Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/184245.htm>.