



# Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report

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Suggested citation: Sickmund, Melissa, and Puzzanchera, Charles (eds.). 2014. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

# Chapter 5

## Law enforcement and juvenile crime

For most delinquents, law enforcement is the doorway to the juvenile justice system. Once a juvenile is apprehended for a law violation, it is the police officer who first determines if the juvenile will move deeper into the justice system or will be diverted.

Law enforcement agencies track the volume and characteristics of crimes reported to them and use this information to monitor the changing levels of crime in their communities. Not all crimes are reported to law enforcement, and many of those that are reported remain unsolved. Law enforcement's incident-based reporting systems include victim reports of offender characteristics in crimes in which the victim sees the offender. For these crimes, even when there is no arrest, law enforcement records can be used to develop an understanding of juvenile offending. For all other types of crimes, an understanding of juvenile involvement comes through the study of arrest statistics. Arrest statistics can monitor the flow of juveniles and adults into the justice system and are the most frequently

cited source of information on juvenile crime trends.

This chapter describes the volume and characteristics of juvenile crime from law enforcement's perspective. It presents information on the number and offense characteristics of juvenile arrests in 2010 and historical trends in juvenile arrests. This chapter also examines arrests and arrest trends for female juvenile offenders and offenders under age 13 and compares arrest trends for males and females and different racial groups. It includes arrest rate trends for many specific offenses, including murder and other violent crimes, property crimes, and drug and weapons offenses. The majority of data presented in this chapter were originally compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting Program, which includes the Supplementary Homicide Reports and the National Incidence-Based Reporting System. Arrest estimates were developed from these data by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

# The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program monitors law enforcement's response to juvenile crime

## Since the 1930s, police agencies have reported to the UCR Program

Each year, thousands of police agencies voluntarily report the following data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program:

- Number of Index crimes reported to law enforcement (see sidebar).
- Number of arrests and the most serious charge involved in each arrest.
- Age, sex, and race of arrestees.
- Proportion of reported Index crimes cleared by arrest, and the proportion of these Index crimes cleared by the arrest of persons younger than 18.
- Police dispositions of juvenile arrests.
- Detailed victim, assailant, and circumstance information in murder cases.

## What can the UCR arrest data tell us about crime and young people?

The UCR arrest data provide a sample-based portrait of the volume and characteristics of arrests in the United States. Detailed national estimates (see sidebar) are developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) based on these sample data. The estimates include detailed juvenile age groups as well as details by sex, race, and specific offense. The data can be used to analyze the number and rates of juvenile arrests within offense categories and

\* In this chapter, "juvenile" refers to persons younger than age 18. In 2010, this definition was at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in 13 states—11 states where all 17-year-olds are defined as adults and 2 states where all 16- and 17-year-olds are defined as adults.

demographic subgroups and to track changes over various periods. They can also be used to compare the relative number of juvenile and adult arrests by offense categories and demographics and to monitor the proportion of crimes cleared by arrests of juveniles.

## What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this chapter properly, the reader needs a clear understanding of what these statistics count. Arrest statistics report the number of arrests that law enforcement agencies made in a given year—not the number of individuals arrested nor the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not the same as the number of people arrested because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once during the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent the number of crimes that arrested individuals commit, because a series of crimes that one person commits may culminate in a single arrest, and a single crime may result in the arrest of more than one person. This latter situation, where many arrests result from one crime, is relatively common in juvenile law-violating behavior because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. For this reason, one should not use arrest statistics to indicate the relative proportions of crime that juveniles and adults commit. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of entry into the justice system.

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 weapon would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore, when arrest statistics show that law enforcement

## What are the Crime Indexes?

The designers of the UCR Program wanted to create an index (similar in concept to the Dow Jones Industrial Average or the Consumer Price Index) that would be sensitive to changes in the volume and nature of reported crime. They decided to incorporate specific offenses into the index, based on several factors: likelihood of being reported, frequency of occurrence, pervasiveness in all geographical areas of the country, and relative seriousness.

The Crime Index is divided into two components: the Violent Crime Index and the Property Crime Index.

**Violent Crime Index**—Includes murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

**Property Crime Index**—Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Although some violent crimes, such as kidnapping and extortion, are excluded, the Violent Crime Index contains what are generally considered to be serious crimes. In contrast, a substantial proportion of the crimes in the Property Crime Index are generally considered less serious crimes, such as shoplifting, theft from motor vehicles, and bicycle theft, all of which are included in the larceny-theft category.

agencies made an estimated 31,400 arrests of young people for weapons law violations in 2010, it means that a weapons law violation was the most serious charge in these 31,400 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 2010 included a weapons charge as a lesser offense.

### What do clearance statistics count?

Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were cleared (or “closed”) by either arrest or other, exceptional means (such as the death of the offender or unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, 1 arrest could clear 10 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 10 crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if a group of offenders committed the crime.

For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports the proportion of clearances that involved only offenders younger than age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime that this age group commits than is the proportion of arrests, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic

overestimates the proportion of crimes that juveniles commit. Research has shown that juvenile offenders are more easily apprehended than adult offenders; thus, the juvenile proportion of clearances probably overestimates juveniles’ responsibility for crime.

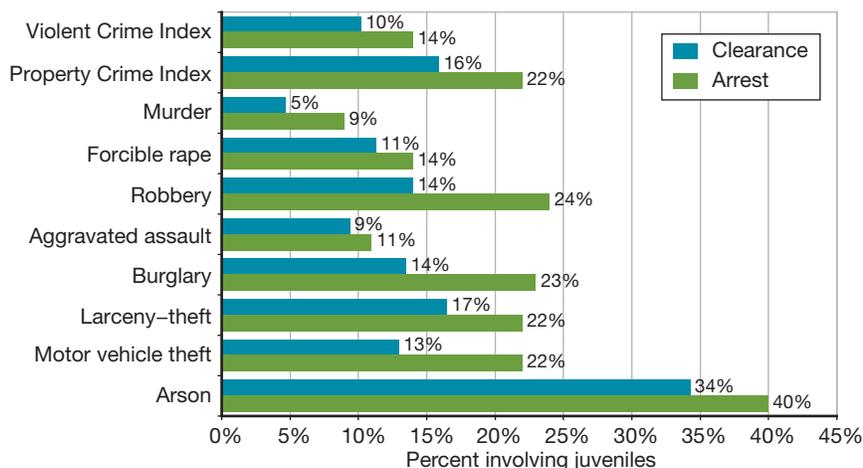
To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI’s reporting guidelines require that clearances involving both juvenile and adult offenders be classified as clearances for crimes that adults commit. Because the juvenile clearance proportions include only those clearances in which no adults were involved, they underestimate juvenile involvement in crime. Although these data do not present a definitive picture of juvenile involvement in crime, they are the closest measure generally available of the proportion of crime known to law enforcement that is attributed to persons younger than age 18.

### How are national estimates of arrests calculated?

The FBI’s *Crime in the United States (CIUS)* report presents a detailed snapshot of crime and arrests voluntarily reported by local law enforcement agencies. Some agencies report data for a full calendar year, other agencies are “partial reporters” (i.e., their reported data cover less than 12 months), and some agencies do not report at all. Data from 12-month reporting agencies form the basis of the tables presented in the annual *CIUS* report. As such, *CIUS* presents a sample-based portrait of arrests that law enforcement agencies report. There is an exception, however. Each *CIUS* report includes one table that presents national estimates of arrests for 29 offense categories. However, *CIUS* does not include national estimates for any subpopulation groups.

For nearly two decades, the National Center for Juvenile Justice developed national estimates of juvenile arrests based on data presented in *CIUS*; these estimates were the basis of the juvenile arrest data presented by OJJDP since the 1990s. However, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) recently developed a new process that supplants the estimation procedure used for juvenile arrests. The method that BJS uses takes advantage of more complete sample data reported to the FBI from local law enforcement agencies. To learn more about the BJS estimation process, see *Arrest in the United States, 1980–2010*, which is available from the BJS Web site ([bjs.gov](http://bjs.gov)).

### The juvenile proportion of arrests exceeded the juvenile proportion of crimes cleared by arrest in each offense category



Source: Authors’ analysis of the FBI’s *Crime in the United States 2010*.

# Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. made 1.6 million arrests of persons under age 18 in 2010

Larceny-theft, simple assault, drug abuse violations, and disorderly conduct offenses accounted for half of all juvenile arrests in 2010

Most serious offense	2010 estimated number of juvenile arrests	Percent of total juvenile arrests					
		Female	Ages 16–17	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
<b>Total</b>	1,642,500	29%	73%	66%	31%	1%	1%
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	75,890	18	73	47	51	1	1
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	1,010	10	91	43	56	0	1
Forcible rape	2,900	2	67	63	36	1	1
Robbery	27,200	10	81	31	67	0	1
Aggravated assault	44,800	25	69	56	41	1	1
<b>Property Crime Index</b>	366,600	38	72	64	33	1	2
Burglary	65,200	11	73	62	36	1	1
Larceny-theft	281,100	45	72	65	32	1	2
Motor vehicle theft	15,800	16	80	55	42	1	1
Arson	4,600	13	42	75	22	1	1
<b>Nonindex</b>							
Other (simple) assault	210,200	35	62	60	38	1	1
Forgery and counterfeiting	1,700	27	88	67	31	1	2
Fraud	5,800	34	84	59	39	1	1
Embezzlement	400	41	95	63	34	1	2
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	14,600	16	78	56	42	1	1
Vandalism	77,100	15	61	78	20	1	1
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	31,400	11	67	62	36	1	1
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,000	82	89	38	60	1	2
Sex offense (except forcible rape and prostitution)	13,000	10	52	72	26	1	1
Drug abuse violation	170,600	16	82	74	24	1	1
Gambling	1,400	3	89	8	91	0	1
Offenses against the family and children	3,800	35	68	72	25	3	1
Driving under the influence	12,000	25	98	91	6	2	2
Liquor laws	94,700	39	90	88	7	3	1
Drunkenness	12,700	27	88	89	8	2	1
Disorderly conduct	155,900	34	63	58	40	1	1
Vagrancy	2,100	23	72	76	23	0	1
All other offenses (except traffic)	296,800	26	77	69	28	1	2
Suspicion (not included in totals)	100	23	74	68	32	0	1
Curfew and loitering	94,800	30	75	59	38	1	1
U.S. population ages 10–17:	33,599,246	49%	26%	76%	17%	2%	5%

- In 2010, females accounted for 18% of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests, 38% of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests, and 45% of juvenile larceny-theft arrests.
- Youth ages 16–17 accounted for nearly three-fourths of all juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses and Property Crime Index offenses in 2010 (73% and 72%, respectively).
- Black youth, who accounted for 17% of the juvenile population in 2010, were involved in 67% of juvenile arrests for robbery, 56% for murder, 42% for motor vehicle theft, and 41% for aggravated assault.

Notes: UCR data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. In 2010, 89% of Hispanics ages 10–17 were classified racially as white. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder, H., and Mulako-Wantota, J. (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

## In 2010, 11% of male arrests and 14% of female arrests involved a person younger than age 18

In 2010, juveniles were involved in about 1 in 10 arrests for murder, about 1 in 4 arrests for robbery, burglary, and disorderly conduct, and about 1 in 5 arrests for larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft

Juvenile arrests as a percentage of total arrests

Most serious offense	Juvenile arrests as a percentage of total arrests						
	All persons	Male	Female	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
<b>Total</b>	12%	11%	14%	11%	13%	10%	14%
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	14	14	13	11	18	9	12
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	9	9	8	8	10	4	7
Forcible rape	14	14	29	14	16	9	7
Robbery	24	25	19	18	29	16	26
Aggravated assault	11	11	12	10	14	9	9
<b>Property Crime Index</b>	22	22	23	21	26	21	29
Burglary	23	23	17	21	27	21	26
Larceny-theft	22	21	23	21	25	20	30
Motor vehicle theft	22	22	20	19	28	25	20
Arson	40	42	31	40	40	40	52
<b>Nonindex</b>							
Other (simple) assault	16	14	21	15	20	11	15
Forgery and counterfeiting	2	3	2	2	2	2	3
Fraud	3	3	2	3	4	4	4
Embezzlement	3	3	2	3	3	4	3
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	15	16	13	13	20	14	17
Vandalism	30	32	24	32	26	23	31
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	20	19	25	21	18	21	25
Prostitution and commercialized vice	2	1	2	1	2	3	1
Sex offense (except forcible rape and prostitution)	18	17	23	17	20	10	18
Drug abuse violation	10	11	9	12	8	16	14
Gambling	14	15	5	4	18	10	3
Offenses against the family and children	3	3	5	4	3	5	3
Driving under the influence	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Liquor laws	18	16	25	20	11	17	19
Drunkenness	2	2	3	2	1	3	3
Disorderly conduct	25	23	31	23	30	15	24
Vagrancy	7	6	8	9	4	1	7
All other offenses (except traffic)	8	8	9	8	7	6	11
Suspicion (not included in totals)	11	11	11	12	10	0	14

- Juvenile females accounted for more than one-fifth (21%) of all simple assault arrests involving females in 2010, while male juveniles accounted for 14% of all simple assault arrests involving males.
- On average, juveniles accounted for 9% of all murder arrests during the 2000s, compared with 14% during the 1990s.
- Overall, in 2010, 11% of white arrests and 13% of black arrests involved a person younger than age 18. However, for some offenses, juveniles were involved in a greater proportion of black arrests than white arrests (e.g., robbery, motor vehicle theft, and disorderly conduct). For other offenses, juvenile involvement was greater in white arrests than black arrests (e.g., vandalism and liquor law violations).

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

## Across most offenses, juvenile arrests fell proportionately more than adult arrests between 2001 and 2010

The number of arrests of juveniles in 2010 was 21% fewer than the number of arrests in 2001

Most serious offense	Percent change in arrests, 2001–2010								
	All persons			Juveniles			Adults		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
<b>Total</b>	-3%	-8%	14%	-21%	-24%	-10%	0%	-5%	19%
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	-12	-14	-2	-22	-22	-22	-10	-13	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	-18	-17	-27	-20	-20	-22	-18	-16	-28
Forcible rape	-26	-26	-31	-37	-37	-8	-24	-24	-38
Robbery	4	1	27	3	2	13	4	1	31
Aggravated assault	-15	-17	-5	-31	-33	-27	-12	-15	0
<b>Property Crime Index</b>	2	-9	26	-25	-32	-9	13	1	42
Burglary	-1	-3	14	-27	-27	-29	11	8	31
Larceny-theft	10	-3	31	-18	-27	-4	21	7	47
Motor vehicle theft	-52	-52	-47	-67	-67	-69	-44	-45	-36
Arson	-40	-41	-33	-52	-54	-44	-26	-27	-26
<b>Nonindex</b>									
Other (simple) assault	-2	-6	13	-13	-17	-3	1	-4	18
Forgery and counterfeiting	-31	-31	-32	-71	-67	-77	-29	-29	-30
Fraud	-42	-39	-45	-58	-61	-53	-41	-38	-45
Embezzlement	-18	-20	-16	-77	-76	-77	-11	-13	-10
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	-22	-24	-13	-43	-43	-41	-17	-19	-7
Vandalism	-7	-10	10	-27	-28	-17	6	3	23
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	-4	-4	-4	-15	-15	-17	-1	-1	1
Prostitution and commercialized vice	-22	-31	-18	-29	-60	-15	-22	-30	-18
Sex offense (except forcible rape and prostitution)	-21	-21	-16	-30	-32	-3	-19	-19	-19
Drug abuse violation	3	1	14	-15	-16	-9	6	4	16
Gambling	-11	-9	-26	31	32	19	-15	-13	-27
Offenses against the family and children	-23	-25	-13	-58	-57	-60	-20	-24	-8
Driving under the influence	-2	-10	39	-42	-47	-19	-1	-9	40
Liquor laws	-16	-24	16	-13	-21	6	-17	-25	19
Drunkenness	-9	-13	14	-38	-42	-23	-8	-12	16
Disorderly conduct	-1	-6	16	-6	-12	10	1	-4	19
Vagrancy	15	22	-7	-22	-23	-20	19	27	-6
All other offenses (except traffic)	3	-2	22	-22	-22	-21	6	0	28

- With few exceptions, juvenile arrests declined across offenses between 2001 and 2010. The relative decline was less for females than for males in most offense categories (e.g., driving under the influence, larceny-theft, simple assault, and vandalism). As a result, while male juvenile arrests declined 24% over the period, female juvenile arrests declined 10%.
- Arrests declined for juveniles and adults between 2001 and 2010, but the patterns varied by gender. While arrests were down across nearly all offenses for males, the relative decline for juveniles exceeded that of adults (e.g., aggravated assault, simple assault, and weapons law violations). Similar to the pattern found among males, juvenile female arrests declined proportionately more than adults for several offenses (motor vehicle theft, fraud, and stolen property offenses). More common, however, was a decline in juvenile female arrests coupled with an increase for adults (burglary, larceny-theft, simple assault, weapons law violations, and drug abuse violations).

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

# The female proportion of youth entering the juvenile justice system for law violations has increased

## Gender-specific factors influence juvenile arrest trends

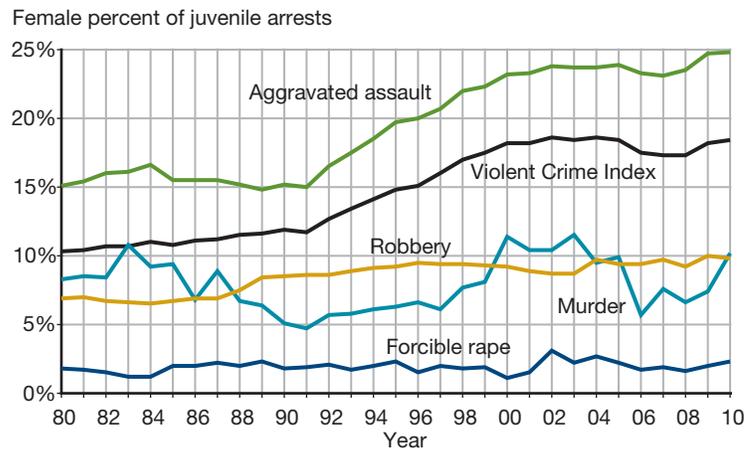
If juvenile males and females were contributing equally to an arrest trend, then the female proportion of juvenile arrests would remain constant. If, however, the female proportion changes, that means that the female arrest trend differs from the male trend—and any explanation of juvenile arrest trends must incorporate factors that affect males and females differently.

There has been growing concern over the rise in the proportion of females entering the juvenile justice system. In 1980, 17% of all juvenile arrests were female arrests; in 2010, this percentage had increased to 29%—with the majority of this growth occurring since the early 1990s. The female proportion increased steadily between 1980 and 2010 in juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses (from 10% to 18%) and for Property Crime Index offenses (from 18% to 38%); however, the female proportion of drug abuse violations arrests was about the same in 1980 (17%) and 2010 (16%). This implies there were (1) different factors influencing the volume and/or nature of law-violating behaviors by male and female juveniles over this time period and/or (2) differential responses by law enforcement to these behaviors.

## A closer look at violence trends points to possible explanations

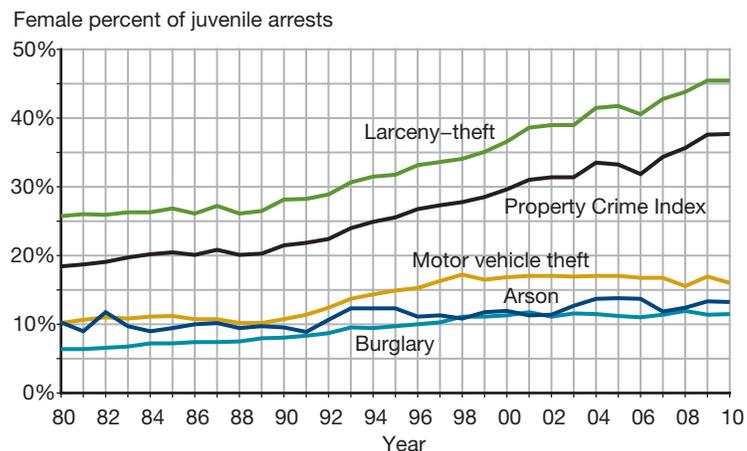
If juvenile females had simply become more violent, the female proportion of juvenile arrests would be expected to have increased for each violent crime. This did not occur. For example, the female proportion of juvenile arrests remained relatively constant between 1980 and 2010 for robbery (6% to 10%). The change that caused the Violent Crime Index proportion to increase between 1980 and 2010 was the increase in the female proportion of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault

Between 1980 and 2010, the female percentage of juvenile violent crime arrests increased, with the overall increase tied mainly to aggravated assault arrests



Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

The female percentage of juvenile arrests increased between 1980 and 2010 for each of the four Property Crime Index offenses



Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

(from 15% to 25%). Similarly, a large increase was seen in the female proportion of juvenile arrests for simple

assault (from 21% to 35%). To understand the relative increase in female arrests for violence, it is necessary to

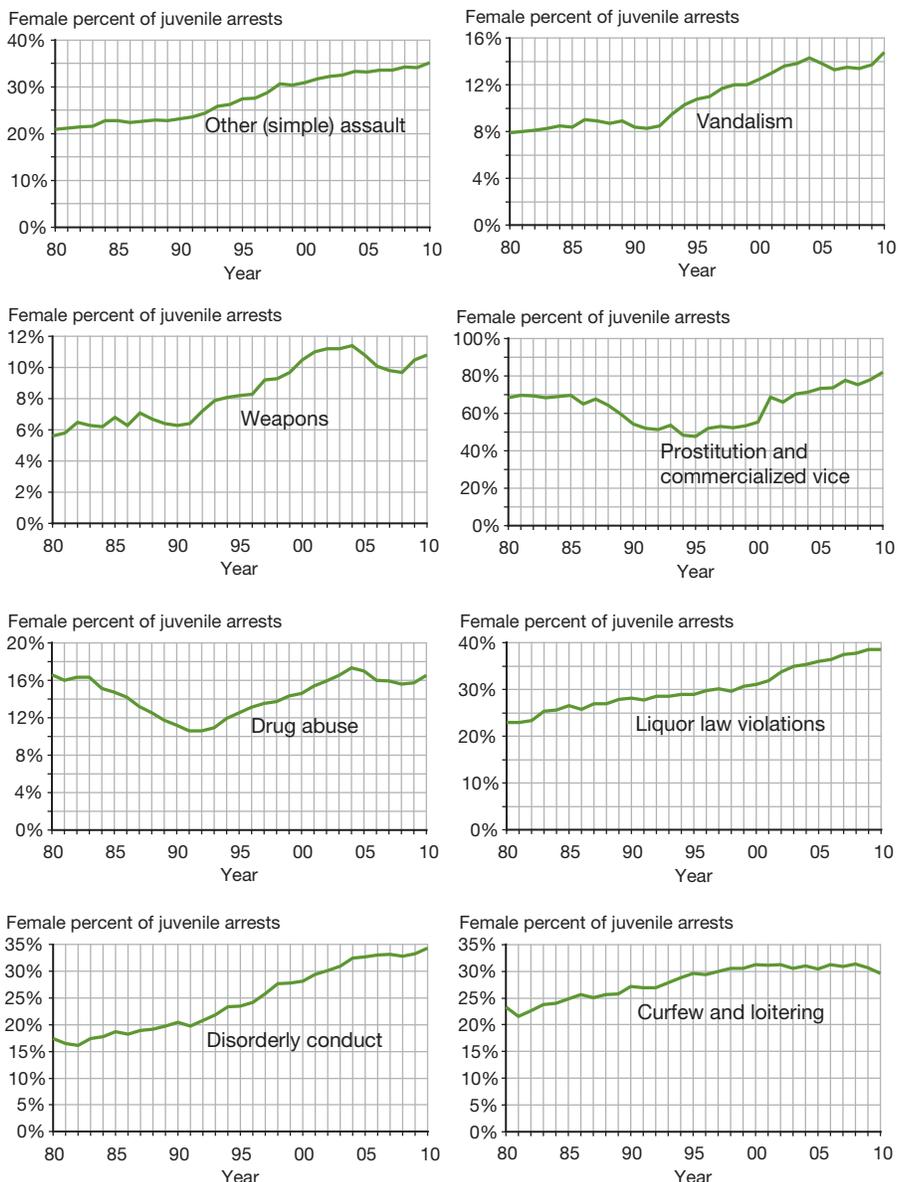
look for factors related primarily to assault.

One possible explanation for this pattern could be the changing response of law enforcement to domestic violence incidents. Domestic assaults represent a larger proportion of female violence than male violence. For example, analysis of the 2010 National Incidence-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data finds that 18% of aggravated assaults known to law enforcement committed by juvenile males were against family members or intimate partners, compared with 28% of aggravated assaults committed by juvenile females. Mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence, coupled with an increased willingness to report these crimes to authorities, would yield a greater increase in female than male arrests for assault, while having no effect on the other violent crimes. Thus, policy and social changes may be a stimulus for the increased proportion of juvenile female arrests.

### The female proportion of arrests increased for many offenses

When the female proportion of juvenile arrests remains constant over time, factors controlling this arrest trend are unrelated to gender. This pattern is seen in juvenile robbery and arson arrests from 1980 through 2010. Over this period, the female arrest proportions for some other offenses (e.g., murder, prostitution, and drug abuse violations) first declined and then increased back to earlier levels. However, for most other offenses (e.g., aggravated assault, simple assault, larceny-theft, vandalism, driving under the influence, liquor law violations, and disorderly conduct), the female proportions of juvenile arrests increased substantially over the 1980–2010 period.

### Between 1980 and 2010, the female proportion of juvenile arrests increased substantially for simple assault, vandalism, weapons, liquor law violations, and disorderly conduct



- Between 1980 and 2010, the large decline and subsequent growth in the female proportion of juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations reflected a decline in the female arrest rate for drug abuse violations during the 1980s and early 1990s while the male rate generally held constant, followed by a proportionately greater increase in the female rate after the early 1990s.

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

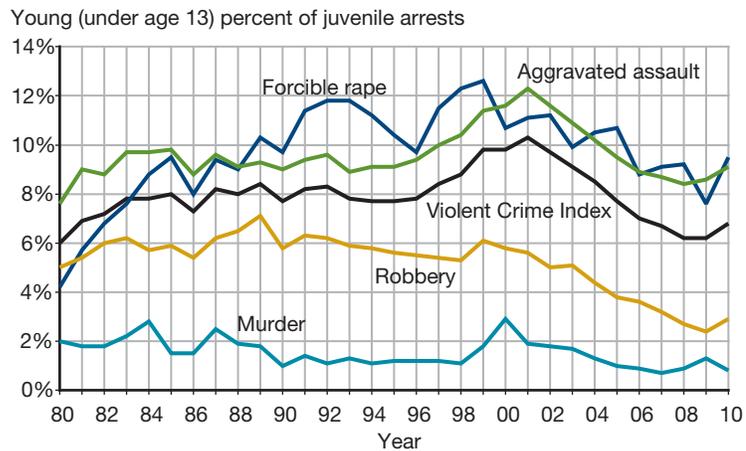
# Fewer young juveniles are entering the juvenile justice system

## Arrest rates for very young juveniles declined considerably since 2001

A common perception in the last few years was that the rate and proportion of young juveniles (under age 13) entering the juvenile justice system had increased. This statement is not true. In 1980, there were an estimated 1,259 arrests of persons ages 10–12 for every 100,000 persons in this age group in the U.S. population. By 2010, this arrest rate had fallen to 784, a decline of 38%. In 1980, 9.4% of all juvenile arrests were arrests of persons under age 13; in 2010, this percentage had decreased to 6.6%—with the majority of the decrease occurring since the early 1990s.

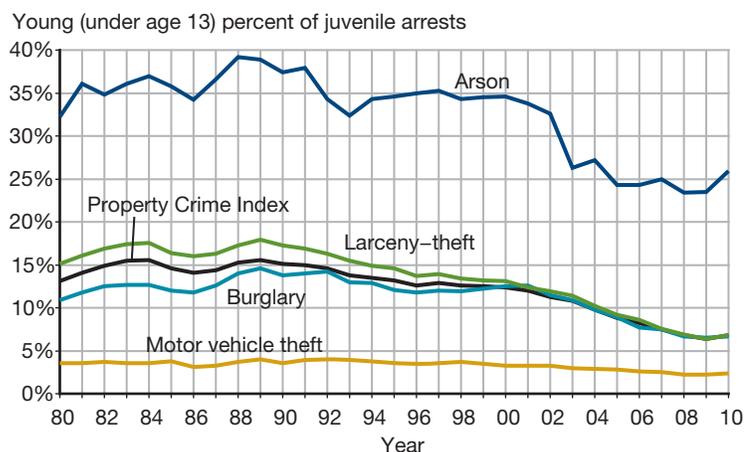
However, while the overall arrest rate for young juveniles declined, arrests for some offenses increased dramatically, and the types of young juvenile offenders entering the juvenile justice system changed. For example, the Property Crime Index arrest rate for juveniles ages 10–12 fell 72% between 1980 and 2010. Over the same period, the aggravated assault arrest rate increased 37% and the simple assault arrest rate more than doubled. Thus, while the overall arrest rate for young juveniles fell, a larger proportion of those arrested were arrested for assault offenses. Over the period 1980–2010, the arrest rate for juveniles ages 10–12 fell for robbery (66%), burglary (82%), larceny-theft (69%), arson (43%), and vandalism (60%). Over the same period, the arrest rate for young juveniles doubled for weapons law violations (101%) and drug law violations (103%), and increased for sex offenses (67%), disorderly conduct (65%), and curfew and loitering law violations (28%). As a result, even though the overall arrest rate declined, more young juveniles entered the juvenile justice system charged with assaults, weapons, and drug offenses in 2010 than in 1980. This implies there were (1) different factors influencing

## The proportion of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests involving youth younger than age 13 declined from a high of 10% in the early 2000s to 7% in 2010



Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

## The proportion of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests involving youth younger than age 13 declined from 16% in the late 1980s to 7% in 2010



Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

the volume and/or nature of law-violating behavior by young juveniles over this time period and/or (2) differential responses by law enforcement to these behaviors.

## Arrest rates of young females outpace those of young males

The 38% decline in the total arrest rate for youth ages 10–12 between 1980

and 2010 was a combination of a 46% decline in the young male arrest rate and a 4% increase in the young female arrest rate. For most offenses, the arrest rate for young females either increased more or decreased less from 1980 to 2010 than the arrest rate for young males. As a result, a greater number and proportion of the young juvenile arrestees in 2010 were female than in 1980, and these females had very different offending patterns compared with 1980.

Percent change in young juvenile (ages 10–12) arrest rate, 1980–2010

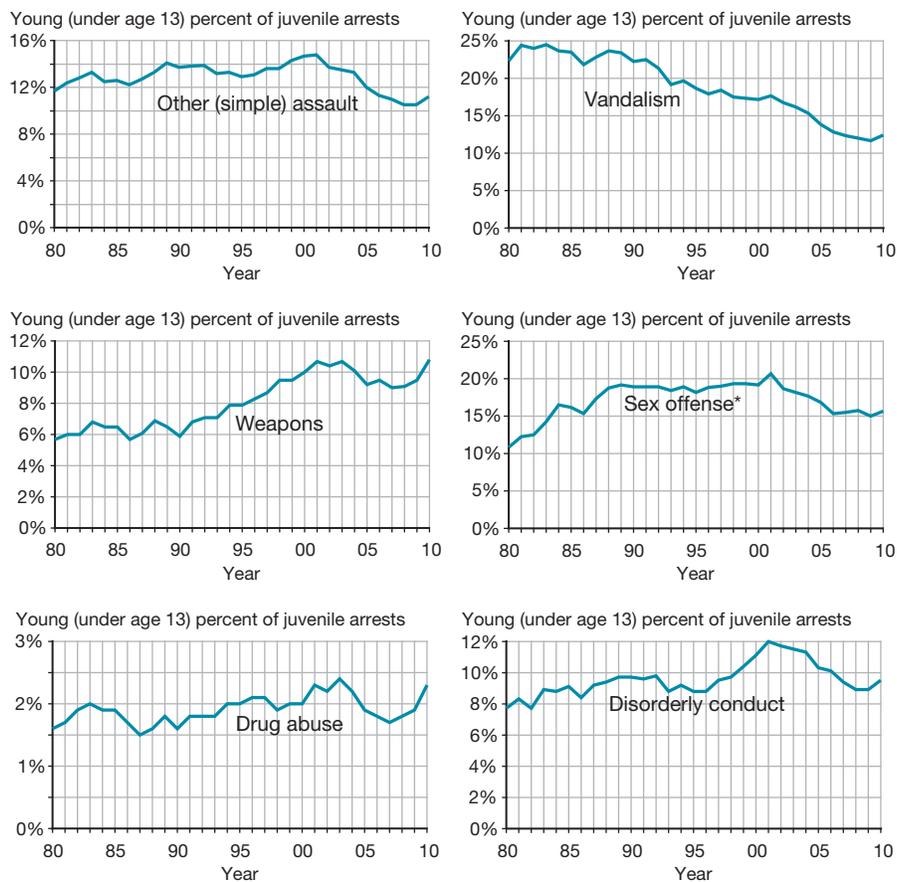
Most serious offense	Male	Female
All offenses	-46%	4%
Violent Crime Index	-17	77
Aggravated assault	24	112
Property Crime Index	-78	-49
Burglary	-83	-72
Larceny-theft	-76	-46
Simple assault	118	267
Stolen property	-78	-52
Vandalism	-64	-6
Weapons law violation	82	458
Sex offense	62	133
Drug abuse violation	105	95
Liquor law violations	-29	27
Disorderly conduct	34	218
Curfew	11	98

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

### Analysis of race-specific arrest rate trends for very young juveniles is not possible

The FBI's UCR Program captures information on the gender of arrestees subdivided into a large set of detailed age groups (e.g., under 10, 10–12, 13–14, 15, 16, and 17). It also captures information on the race of arrestees, but the only age breakdown associated with these counts is "under 18" and "18 and above." Therefore, age-specific arrest trends for racial groups, including trends for young juveniles, cannot be analyzed with UCR data.

### Between 1980 and 2010, the proportion of juvenile arrests involving youth younger than age 13 declined for stolen property and vandalism offenses but increased for weapons and sex offenses



■ In 1980, a greater proportion of juvenile simple assault arrests than aggravated assault arrests involved youth under age 13 (12% vs. 8%); this difference narrowed by 2010 (to 11% vs. 9%).

\* Sex offenses include all sex offenses except forcible rape, prostitution, and commercialized vice.

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's (Bureau of Justice Statistics) *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online].

# The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate reached a historic low in 2010

## Violent crime arrest rates declined after 1994

Between 1980 and 1987, the juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate (i.e., the number of arrests per 100,000 juveniles in the population) was essentially constant. After these years of stability, the rate grew by nearly 70% in the 7-year period between 1987 and 1994. This rapid growth led to speculation about changes in the nature of juvenile offenders—concerns that spurred state legislators to pass laws that facilitated an increase in the flow of youth into the adult justice system. After 1994, however, the violent crime arrest rate fell. Between 1994 and 2010, the rate fell 55% to its lowest level since at least 1980.

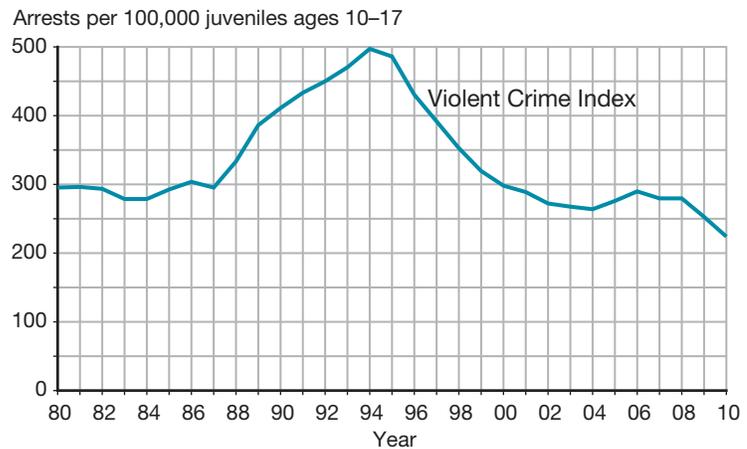
## Female violent crime arrest rates remain relatively high

In 1980, the juvenile male violent crime arrest rate was 8 times greater than the female rate. By 2010, the male rate was just 4 times greater. This convergence of male and female arrest rates is due to the large relative increase in the female rate. Between 1980 and 1994, the male rate increased 60%, while the female rate increased 132%. By 2010, the male rate had dropped to 31% below its 1980 level, while the female violent crime arrest rate was still 36% above its 1980 level.

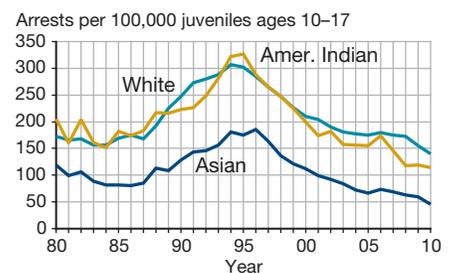
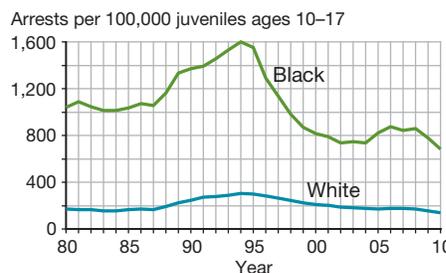
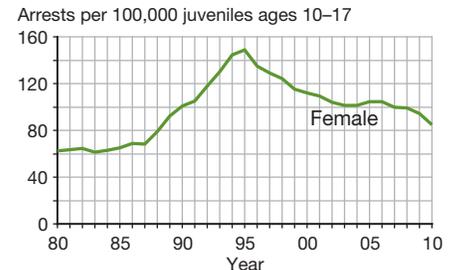
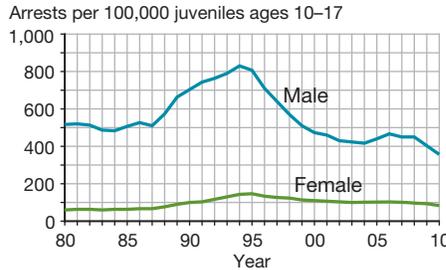
## Arrest rates declined for all racial groups since the mid-1990s

All racial groups experienced large increases in their juvenile violent crime arrest rates in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Following their mid-1990s peak, the rates declined through 2010 for all racial groups: Asian (75%), American Indian (65%), black (57%), and white (54%) youth.

Following a 23% decline since 2006, the 2010 Violent Crime Index arrest rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980



## Violent Crime Index arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The Violent Crime Index arrest rate in 2010 for black juveniles was 5 times the rate for white juveniles, 6 times the rate for American Indian juveniles, and 15 times the rate for Asian juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The juvenile arrest rate for murder has remained relatively constant during the 2000s

## The 2010 murder arrest rate was the lowest since at least 1980

Between the mid-1980s and the peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled. Since the 1993 peak, however, the rate fell substantially through 2000, resting at a level that essentially remained constant for the next decade. Compared with the prior 20 years, the juvenile murder arrest rate between 2000 and 2010 has been historically low and relatively stable. In fact, the number of juvenile arrests for murder in the 4-year period from 1992 through 1995 exceeded the total number of such arrests since 2000.

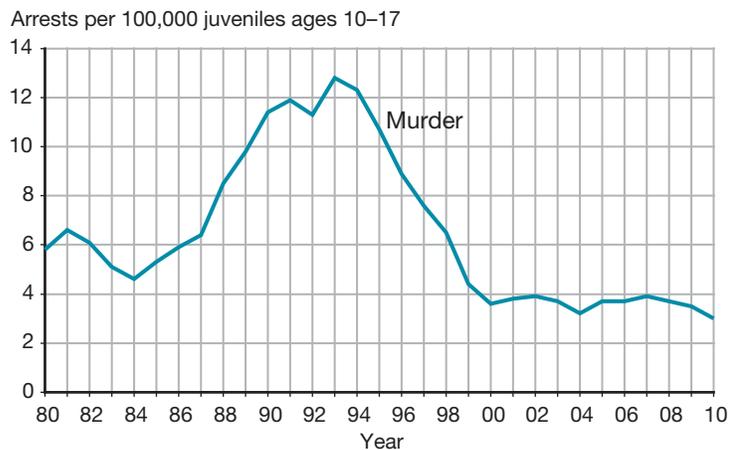
## Male arrests drove murder arrest rate trends

During the 1980s and 1990s, the juvenile male arrest rate for murder was, on average, about 13 times greater than the female rate. Both displayed generally similar trends. The female arrest rate peaked in 1994 at 62% above its 1980 level, whereas the male rate peaked in 1993 at 123% above the 1980 rate. Both fell more than 58% since their respective peaks so that, by 2010, both arrest rates were substantially below their levels of the early 1980s.

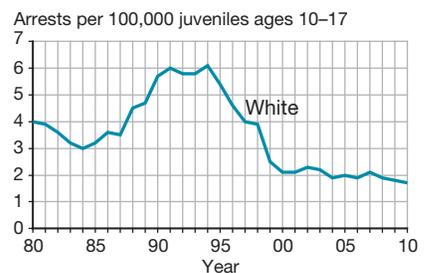
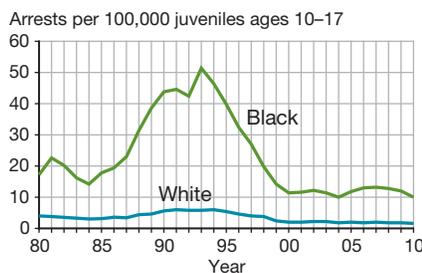
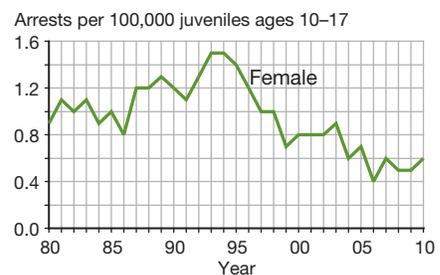
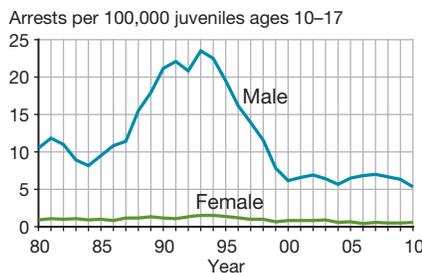
## The juvenile murder arrest rate pattern was linked to the arrests of black juveniles

The black-to-white ratio of juvenile arrest rates for murder grew from about 4-to-1 in 1980 to nearly 9-to-1 in 1993, reflecting the greater increase in the black rate over this period—the white rate increased 47% while the black rate tripled. Since the 1993 peak, both rates fell through 2000, with the black rate falling considerably more. During the past decade, the rates remained relatively constant. As a result, the black-to-white ratio of juvenile arrest rates for murder in 2010 approached 6-to-1.

Following a 23% decline since 2007, the 2010 juvenile murder arrest rate was well below the levels reached during the 1990s



## Murder arrest rate trends by gender and race



Note: Murder arrest rates for American Indian youth and Asian youth are not presented because the small number of arrests and small population sizes produce unstable rate trends.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape in 2010 was one-third its 1991 peak

The 2010 rape arrest rate was at its lowest level in three decades

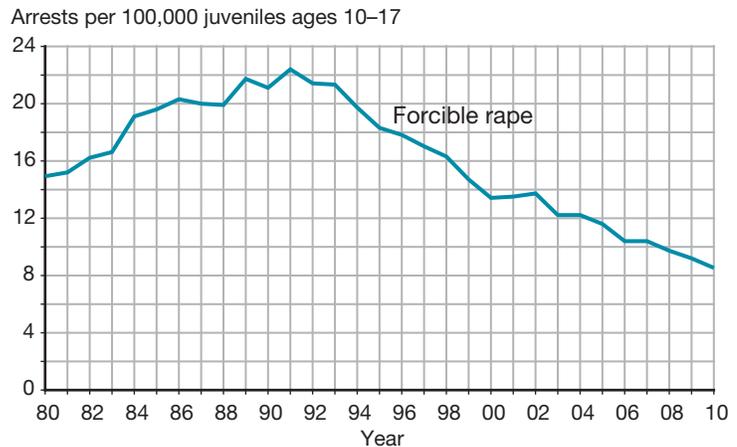
Between 1980 and the peak in 1991, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape increased 50%. This growth occurred during a time when there were also increases in arrest rates for aggravated assault and murder. After 1991, the forcible rape arrest rate gradually fell, resting at a level in 2010 that was 62% below the 1991 peak. In fact, the 2,900 estimated juvenile arrests for forcible rape in 2010 were the fewest such arrests in at least three decades.

Juveniles accounted for 14% of all forcible rape arrests reported in 2010. Two-thirds (67%) of these juvenile arrests involved youth ages 15–17. Not surprisingly, males accounted for the overwhelming majority (98%) of juvenile arrests for forcible rape.

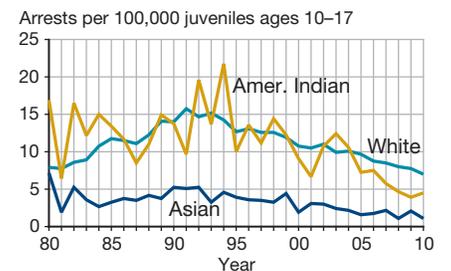
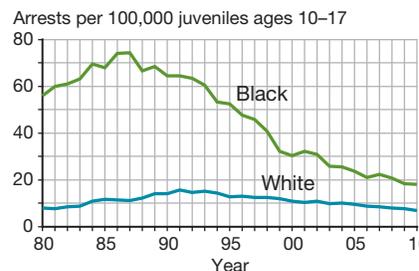
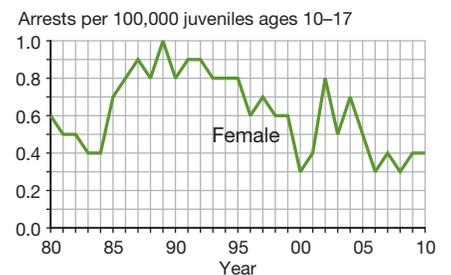
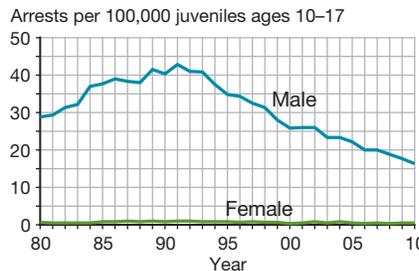
## Rape arrest rates declined more for black youth than white youth since 1991

For black juveniles, the substantial decline in the arrest rate for forcible rape began in the late 1980s. The rate peaked in 1987 and then fell 75% by 2010. In contrast to the rate for whites, the forcible rape arrest rate for black juveniles in 2010 was less than one third the rate in 1980. For white juveniles, the arrest rate for forcible rape nearly doubled between 1980 and 1991, when it reached its peak. Between 1991 and 2010, the rate declined 55%, resting at its lowest level in at least 31 years. By 2010, the black-to-white ratio of juvenile arrest rates for forcible rape was less than 3-to-1, compared to a ratio of 7-to-1 in the early 1980s.

With few exceptions, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape dropped annually from 1991 through 2010



## Forcible rape arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Although the rape arrest rate for black youth (18.2) was more than twice the rate for white youth (7.0) in 2010, white youth accounted for a greater number of arrests. Black youth accounted for more than one-third (36%) of all juvenile arrests for forcible rape in 2010, and white youth accounted for nearly two-thirds (63%).

Note: The annual rape arrest rate for American Indians fluctuates because of the small number of arrests, but the average rate over the period is close to the white rate.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The juvenile arrest rate for robbery declined substantially after its mid-1990s peak

## The juvenile arrest rate for robbery declined from 2008 to 2010

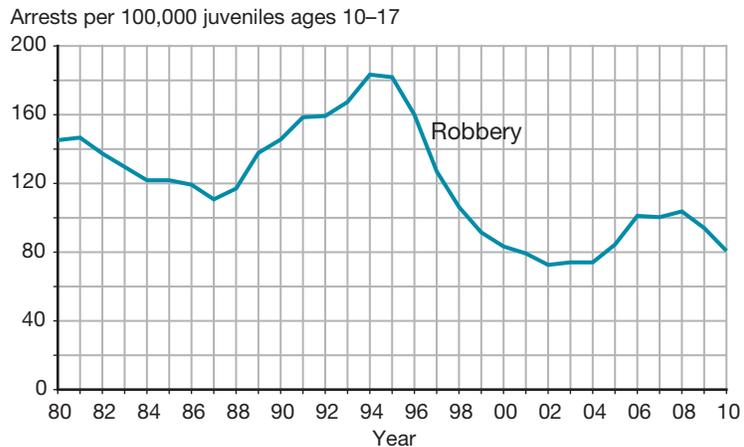
The juvenile arrest rate for robbery declined for most of the 1980s and then increased steadily to a peak in 1994. By 2002, the rate fell 60% from the 1994 peak and then increased yet again through 2008 (up 43%). Despite the decline since 2008 (down 22%), the rate in 2010 was 11% above its low point in 2002.

## Arrest rate trends by gender and race parallel the overall robbery arrest rate pattern

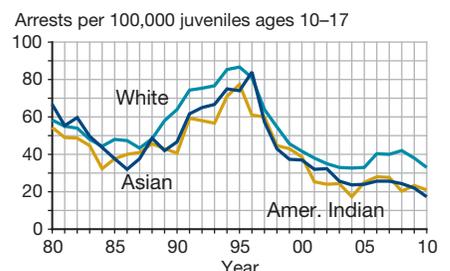
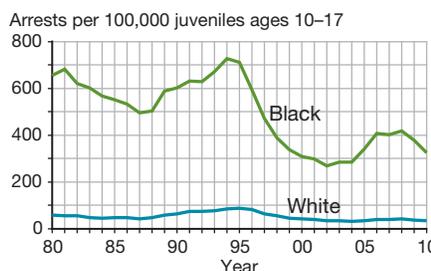
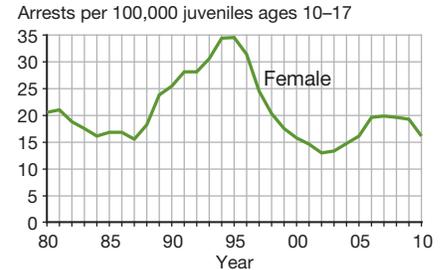
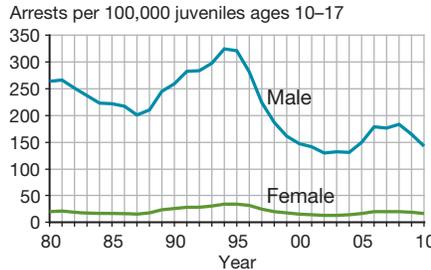
Across gender and race subgroups, robbery arrest rates decreased through the late 1980s and climbed to a peak in the mid-1990s. By 2002, the rates for males and females had fallen to their lowest level since at least 1980. Following these declines, the rates for both groups increased through 2008 (42% for males and 51% for females). Despite the decline over the previous 2 years, the rates for both groups in 2010 were above their 2002 low point.

The trends in arrest rates within racial groups were similar over the past three decades. For each racial group, the juvenile robbery arrest rate fell by more than 50% between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s. Juvenile robbery arrest rates increased for all but Asian youth since 2004. As a result, rates in 2010 were above the 2004 level for American Indian youth (21%), black youth (15%), and white youth (1%) and below the 2004 level for Asian youth (26%).

## The juvenile arrest rate for robbery reached a historically low level in 2002, 60% below the 1994 peak



## Robbery arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The racial disparity in juvenile arrest rates for robbery was quite large in 2010. Specifically, the rate for black youth was 10 times the rate for white youth, 15 times the rate for American Indian youth, and 19 times the rate for Asian youth.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The 2010 juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was at its lowest since the early 1980s

The juvenile aggravated assault arrest rate fell 53% since its 1994 peak

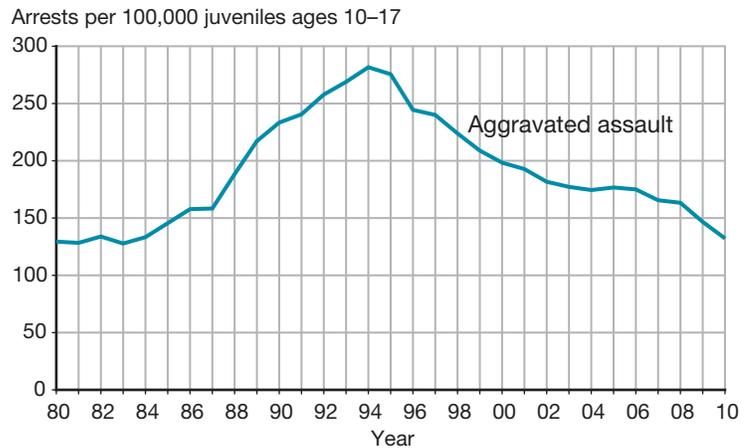
The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault doubled between 1980 and 1994 and then fell substantially and consistently through 2010, down 53% from its 1994 peak. As a result of this decline, the rate in 2010 returned to the level of the early 1980s, resting at a rate just 3% above the 1983 low point. However, of the four Violent Crime Index offenses, only aggravated assault had a juvenile arrest rate in 2010 above the levels of the 1980s.

The rate for females increased more and declined less than the male rate

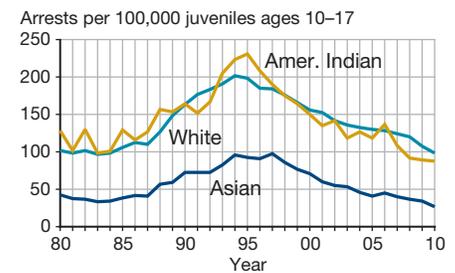
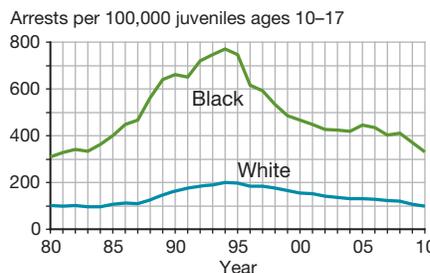
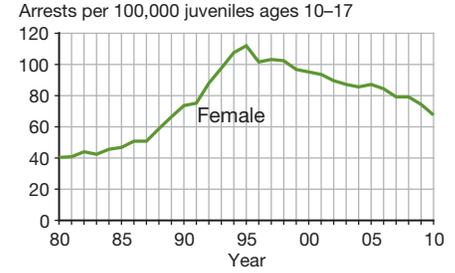
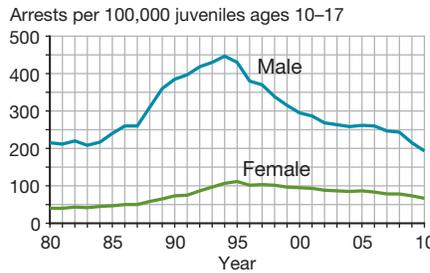
The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault doubled between 1980 and the mid-1990s for males while the female rate increased by more than 170%. Since the mid-1990s peak, the rates for both groups declined through 2010, but the relative decline was greater for males (57%) than for females (40%). As a result, in 2010, the juvenile male arrest rate was 10% below its 1980 level, and the female rate was 68% above its 1980 rate. The disproportionate increase in female arrest rates for aggravated assault compared with male rates indicates that factors that impinged differently on females and males affected the rates. One possible explanation may be found in policy changes over this period that encouraged arrests in domestic violence incidents.

The period from 1980 through 1994 saw substantial increases in aggravated assault arrest rates for juveniles in each racial group: black (149% increase), Asian (126%), white (97%), and American Indian (73%). Rates have declined for all racial groups since the mid-1990s, so much so that rates in 2010 were at their lowest levels since the early 1980s.

On average, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault declined 5% each year since 1994



Aggravated assault arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The black-white disparity in aggravated assault arrest rates peaked in 1988, when the black rate was more than 4 times the white rate; by 2010, this black-white ratio was a little more than 3-to-1.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The juvenile arrest rate for property crimes in 2010 was at its lowest point since at least 1980

After 1994, juvenile property crime arrest rates fell continuously for more than a decade

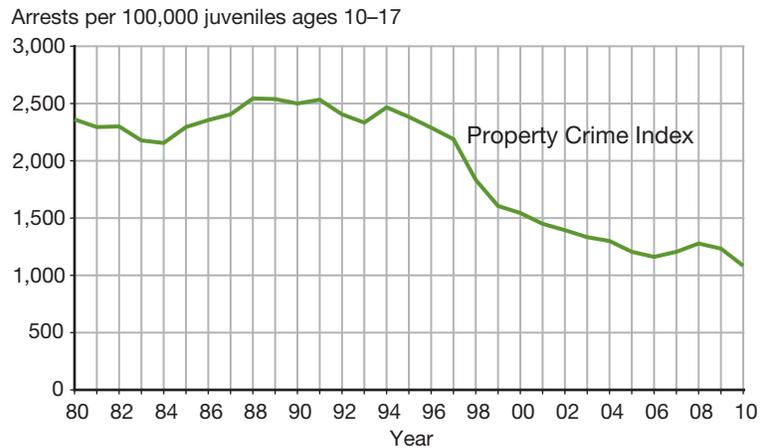
Between 1980 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses varied little, always remaining within 10% of the average for the period. After years of relative stability, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate began a decline in the mid-1990s that continued annually until reaching a then-historic low in 2006, down 54% from its 1988 peak. This decline was followed by a 10% increase over the next 2 years, and then a 15% decline between 2008 and 2010. As a result, juveniles were far less likely to be arrested for property crimes in 2010 than they were 30 years earlier.

## Female property crime arrest rates increased since 2006

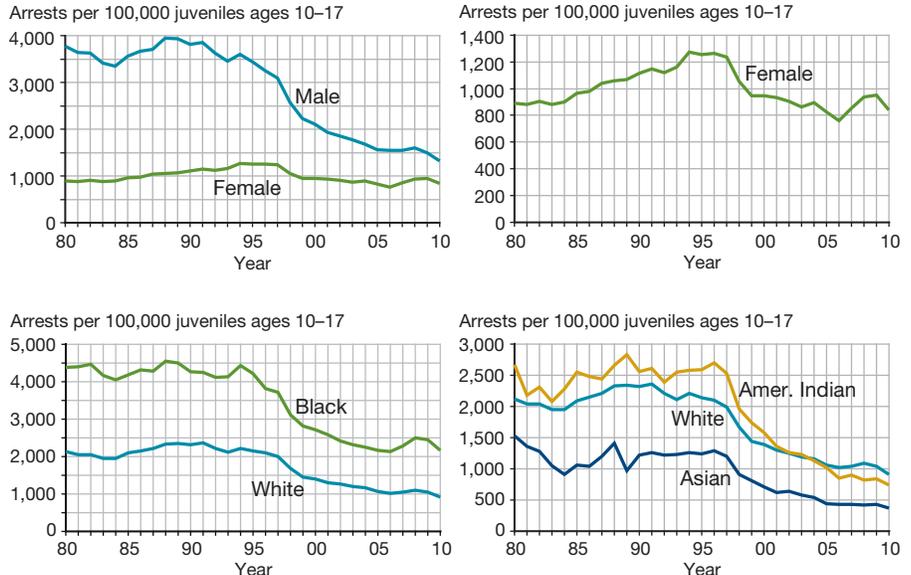
In 1980, the juvenile male arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses was 4 times the female rate; by 2010, the male rate was about 60% above the female rate. These two rates converged in large part because the female rate increased 25% between 2006 and 2009 whereas the male rate declined 3%. The stark differences in the male and female trends suggest several possibilities, including gender-specific changes in these behaviors and an increased willingness to arrest female offenders.

The Property Crime Index arrest rates in 2010 were at their lowest level in 31 years for white, American Indian, and Asian youth, while the rate for black youth in 2010 was just 2% above its 2006 low point. In the 31 years from 1980 to 2010, the black youth arrest rate for property crimes averaged twice the white youth rate, much smaller than the black-white disparity in juvenile arrest rates for violent crimes.

The juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate fell 15% between 2008 and 2010, erasing the increase between 2006 and 2008



## Property Crime Index arrest rate trends by gender and race



■ In 2010, for every 100,000 youth in the United States ages 10-17, there were 1,084 arrests of juveniles for Property Crime Index offenses. The Property Crime Index is dominated by larceny-theft, which in 2010 contributed 77% of all juvenile Property Crime Index arrests. Therefore, the trends in Property Crime Index arrests largely reflect the trends in arrests for larceny-theft.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The juvenile arrest rate for burglary in 2010 was at its lowest rate since at least 1980

## Juvenile arrests for burglary fell more than adult arrests

In 2010, the juvenile arrest rate for burglary reached its lowest point in the past 31 years, nearly one-quarter of its 1980 level. This large fall in juvenile burglary arrests from 1980 through 2010 was not replicated in the adult statistics. For example, in the 10 years between 2001 and 2010, the number of juvenile burglary arrests fell 27% while adult burglary arrests increased 11%. In 1980, 45% of all burglary arrests were arrests of a juvenile; in 2010, reflecting the greater decline in juvenile arrests, just 23% of burglary arrests were juvenile arrests.

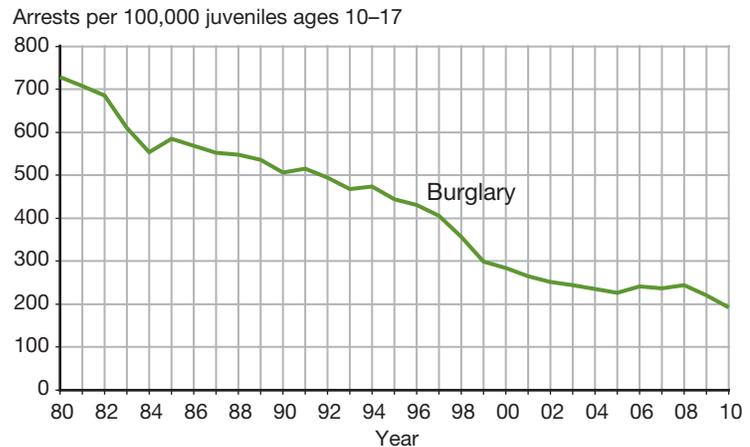
## Juvenile female arrest rates for burglary declined less than male rates

The substantial decline in the juvenile burglary arrest rate was primarily the result of a decline in juvenile male arrests. In 1980, 6% of juveniles arrested for burglary were female; by 2010, 11% were female. Between 1980 and 2010, the male rate fell 75% while the female rate dropped 52%. As a result of these declines, both rates in 2010 were at their lowest level since 1980.

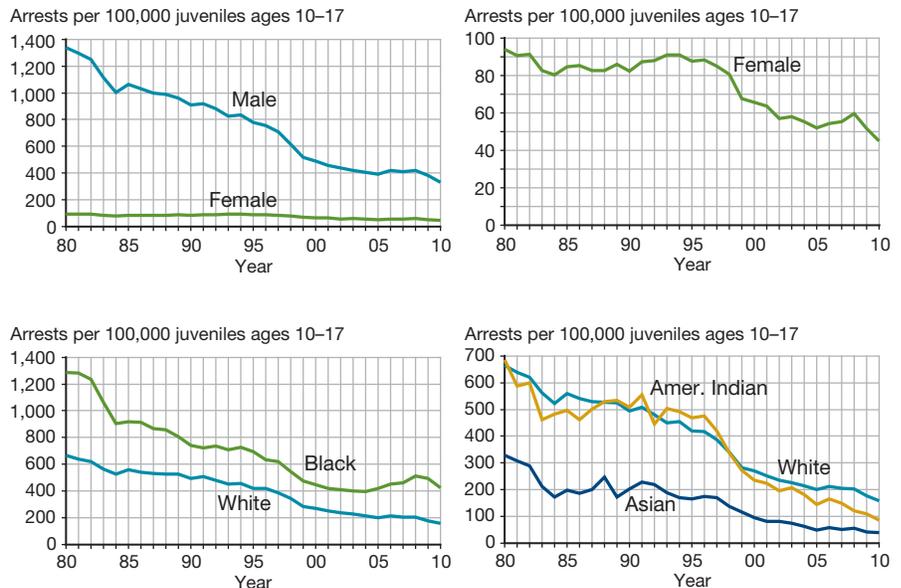
## Juvenile burglary arrest rates fell for all racial groups

Between 1980 and 2010, the juvenile burglary arrest rate declined for all racial groups: 88% for Asians and American Indians, 76% for whites, and 67% for blacks. As a result, rates for Asian, American Indian, and white youth in 2010 were at their lowest levels of the 31-year period and the rate for black youth was 7% above its 2004 low point.

Unique in the set of property crime offenses, the juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined almost consistently and fell 74% from 1980 to 2010



## Burglary arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The gender disparity in juvenile burglary arrest rates has diminished over the past 31 years. In 1980, the juvenile male arrest rate for burglary was more than 14 times the female rate; in 2010, the male rate was 7 times the female rate.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# Despite recent growth, juvenile arrest rates for larceny-theft remain low

## Juvenile larceny-theft rates fell dramatically in the late 1990s and early 2000s

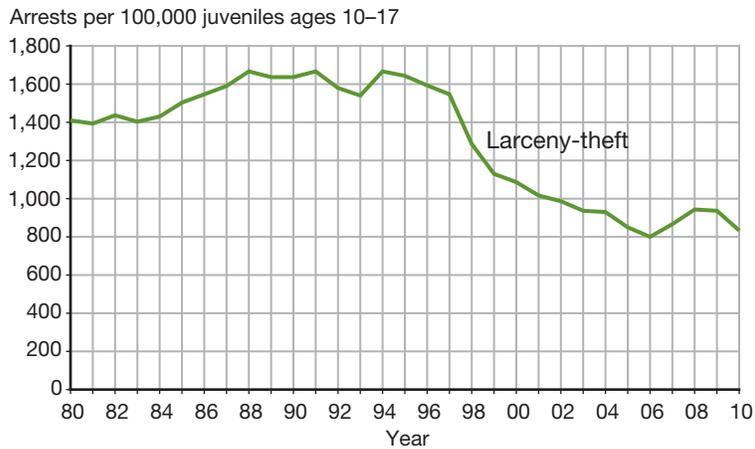
The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft generally increased between 1980 and the mid-1990s and then fell 52% between 1994 and 2006, reaching its lowest point since 1980. This decline reversed as the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft increased 4% between 2006 and 2010. Despite this increase, the overall decline in arrests for a high-volume offense translated into significantly fewer juveniles charged with property crimes entering the justice system.

## The female proportion of larceny-theft arrests has grown

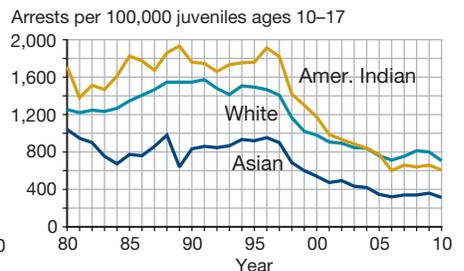
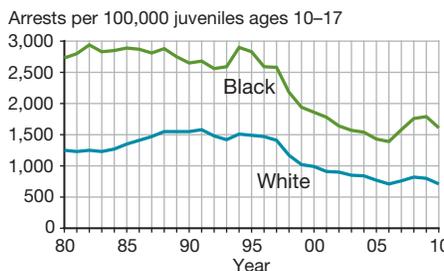
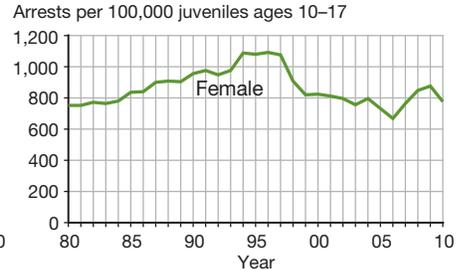
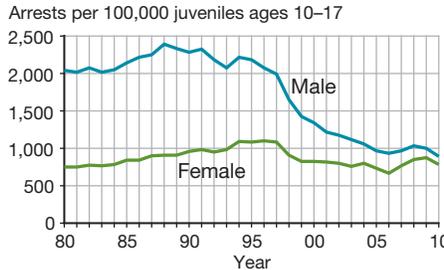
In 1980, 26% of juveniles arrested for larceny-theft were female; by 2010, this proportion had grown to 45%. Although larceny-theft arrest rates dropped for male and female juveniles in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the prior increases for females resulted in their 2006 rate being just 11% below their 1980 rate, whereas the 2006 rate for males was 55% below their 1980 rate. By 2010, the rate for males reached its lowest point since at least 1980 while the female rate was 16% above its 2006 low point.

The decline in the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft between 1994 and 2006 was similar in each of the four racial groups: 66% each for Asians and American Indians, 53% for whites, and 52% for blacks. Since 2006, the black juvenile larceny-theft arrest rate increased 15% while the rates for other racial groups remained about the same. In 2010, the black juvenile larceny theft arrest rate was 2.3 times greater than the white juvenile rate, equivalent to the 1982 peak in black-white disparity for larceny theft.

The recent increase in the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft reversed in 2010, as the rate fell 11% in the past year



## Larceny-theft arrest rate trends by gender and race



■ Larceny-theft is the unlawful taking of property from the possession of another. This crime group includes such offenses as shoplifting, bicycle theft, and pickpocketing—or thefts without the use of force, threat, or fraud. For juveniles, it has been the most common type of crime: in 2010, 1 in 5 juvenile arrests was for larceny-theft.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The motor vehicle theft arrest rate for juveniles was at a 31-year low in 2010

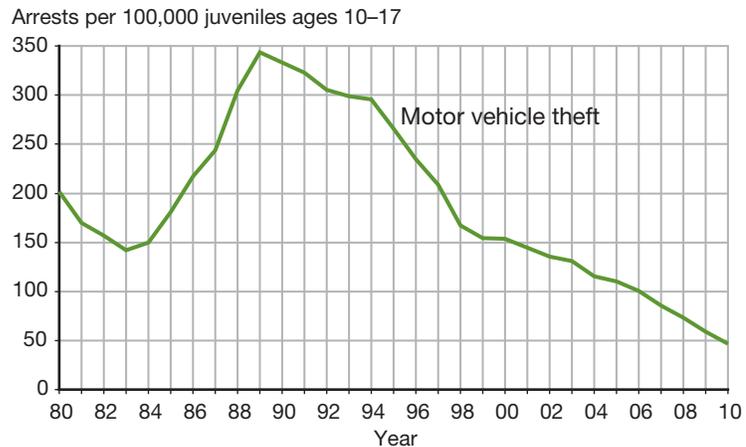
## The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft peaked in 1989

The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft more than doubled between 1983 and 1989, up 141%. After the 1989 peak, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft declined steadily, erasing its prior growth by the early 2000s. In 2010, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft was lower than in any year in the 31-year period, 86% below its peak level. This large decline in juvenile arrests outpaced declines in adult statistics. In the 10-year period between 2001 and 2010, the number of juvenile motor vehicle theft arrests fell 67%, and adult motor vehicle theft arrests decreased 44%.

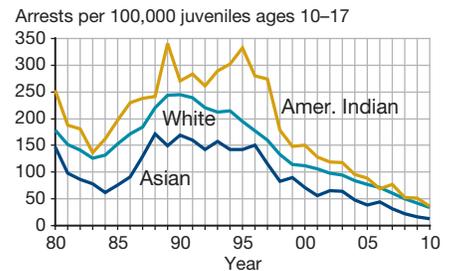
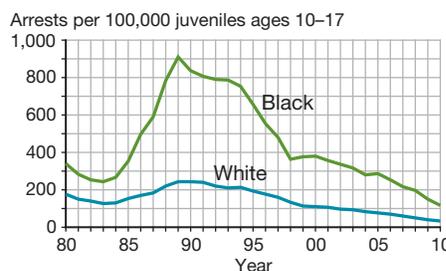
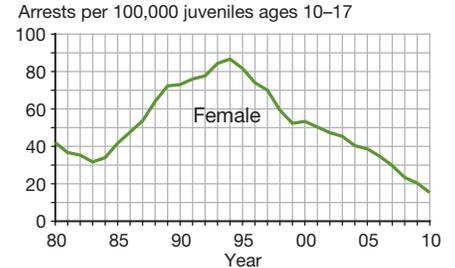
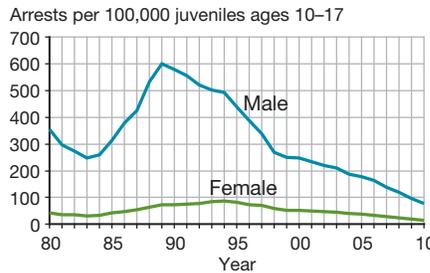
Male and female juvenile arrest rates for motor vehicle theft displayed generally similar trends in the 1980s and 1990s, first increasing and then decreasing. However, the male rate peaked in 1989, but the female rate did not peak until 1994. With a longer period of decline than the female rate, the male rate in 1999 fell to within 1% of its 1983 low, but the female rate was still 66% above its 1983 low point. By 2010, the male and female rates reached their lowest level in over 3 decades.

From 1983 to their peak years, arrest rates for motor vehicle theft nearly doubled for white juveniles (peak year 1990) and Asian juveniles (peak year 1988), increased nearly 150% for American Indian juveniles (peak year 1989), and more than tripled for black juveniles (peak year 1989). By 2010, motor vehicle theft arrest rates were at their lowest level since at least 1980 for all race groups.

Between 1989 and 2010, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft fell 86%, so that the rate in 2010 was at its lowest level since 1980



## Motor vehicle theft arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The juvenile arrest rate trends for motor vehicle theft differed from those for the other high-volume theft crimes of burglary and larceny-theft. In the 1980s and 1990s, the burglary arrest rate declined consistently and the larceny-theft rate remained relatively stable, but the motor vehicle theft rate soared and then dropped just as dramatically.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# Forty percent of all persons arrested for arson in 2010 were younger than 18; 1 in 4 was younger than 15

## Arson is the criminal act with the largest proportion of juvenile arrestees

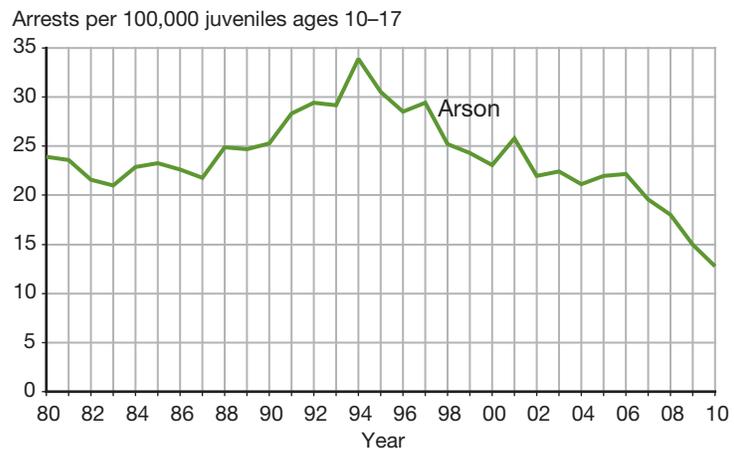
In 2010, 40% of all arson arrests were arrests of juveniles, and more than half of these juvenile arrests (58%) involved youth younger than 15. In comparison, 22% of all larceny-theft arrests in 2010 involved juveniles, but only 28% of these juvenile arrests involved youth younger than 15.

## Trends in juvenile arson arrests paralleled that of violent crime

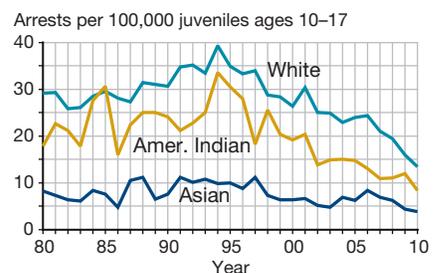
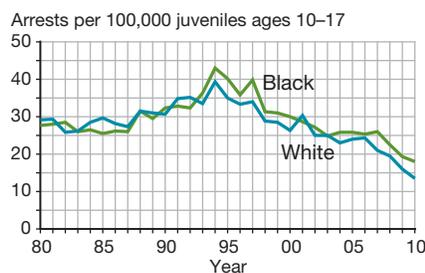
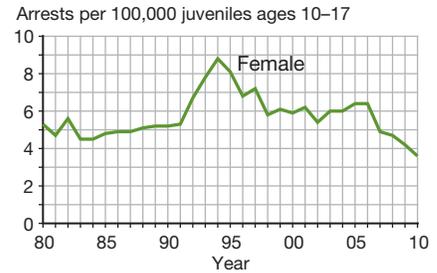
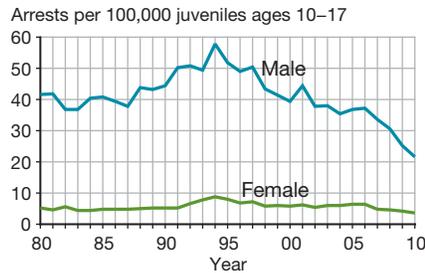
The pattern of stability, growth, and decline in the juvenile arrest rate for arson in the past 31 years was similar in magnitude and character to the trend in juvenile violent crime arrest rates. After years of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for arson increased more than 50% between 1987 and 1994 before falling 60% through 2010. During the period of increase, the female rate increased abruptly between 1991 and 1994 (up 66%). During the period of decline after 1994, the male and female rates declined proportionally (63% and 59%, respectively). However, because of the greater increase in the female rate, these declines left the female rate in 2010 32% below its 1980 level, and the male rate was 48% below its 1980 level.

One major distinction between violent crime and arson arrest rates over this period was that white and black rates were similar for arson but not for violent crime. For white juveniles and black juveniles, arson arrest rates were essentially equal between 1980 and 2010, but the violent crime arrest rate for black juveniles was on average 5 times the white rate. Both racial groups ended the 31-year period at their lowest rates for arson arrests.

Following a 42% decline between 2006 and 2010, the juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2010 reached a historic low



## Arson arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Between 1980 and 2010, the arson arrest rate for Asian juveniles stayed within a limited range and was substantially below the rate for other races, averaging less than 30% of the white rate over the 31-year period.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault in 2010 was more than twice the 1980 rate

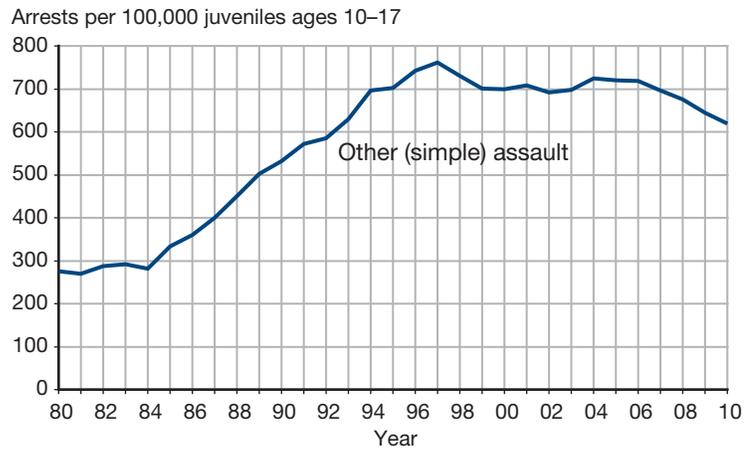
Simple assault is the most common of all crimes against persons

The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 176% between 1980 and 1997, then declined 19% by 2010. In comparison, the rate for juvenile aggravated assault arrests declined 53% between its 1994 peak and 2010. As a result of the greater decrease in aggravated assault rates, a greater percentage of assaults that law enforcement handled in recent years has been for less serious offenses. In 1980, there were 2 juvenile arrests for simple assault for every 1 juvenile arrest for aggravated assault; by 2010, this ratio had grown to 4-to-1—with most of this growth occurring after the mid-1990s. The large increase in the juvenile arrest rate for simple assault was paralleled by a similar increase in the adult rate, so that the juvenile proportion of all simple assault arrests was 18% in 1980 and 16% in 2010.

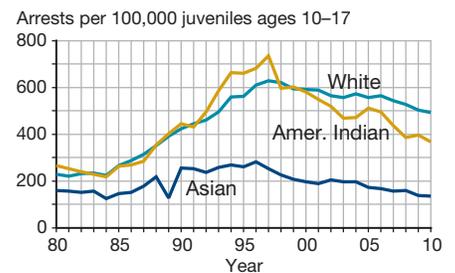
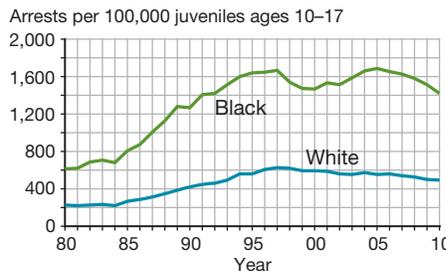
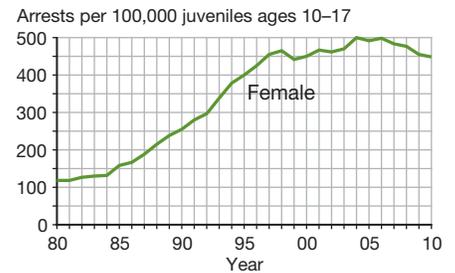
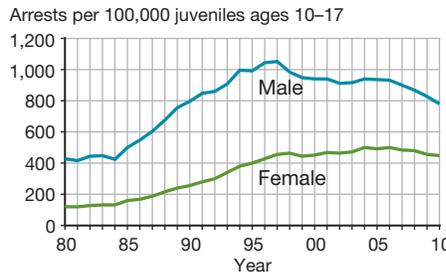
## Growth in the female arrest rate for simple assault outpaced the male rate

As with aggravated assault, between 1980 and 2010, the increase in the juvenile female arrest rate for simple assault far outpaced the increase in the male rate (278% vs. 83%). As a result, the female proportion of juvenile arrests for simple assault grew from 21% to 35%. During that period, simple assault arrest rates increased substantially for black (131%), white (114%), and American Indian (38%) youth, with rates for Asian youth declining 15% over the 31-year period. These increases were greater than the corresponding increases in aggravated assault rates

The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault has declined steadily since 2004—down 15% over that period



## Other (simple) assault arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Juvenile male and female simple assault arrest rates declined similarly between 2004 and 2010 (by 17% and 10%, respectively).
- In 2010, the ratio of simple to aggravated assault arrests of juveniles varied across gender and racial groups: male (4.0-to-1), female (6.7-to-1), white (5.0-to-1), black (4.3-to-1), American Indian (4.2-to-1), and Asian (5.0-to-1).

Note: In contrast to aggravated assault, a simple assault does not involve the use of a weapon and does not result in serious bodily harm to the victim. The lesser severity of simple assault makes the reporting of it to law enforcement less likely and gives law enforcement more discretion in how to handle the incident.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# Juvenile arrest rate trends for weapons law violations generally paralleled trends for violent crimes

## The juvenile weapons arrest rate in 2010 was half its 1994 peak

Between 1980 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations increased 146%. Then the rate fell substantially, so that by 2002 the rate was just 21% more than the 1980 level. However, between 2002 and 2006, the juvenile weapons arrest rate grew 32% and then fell through 2010. As a result, the rate in 2010 was only 8% above the 1980 level and 56% below its 1994 peak. It must be remembered that these statistics do not reflect all arrests for weapons offenses. An unknown number of other arrests for more serious crimes also involved a weapons offense as a secondary charge, but the FBI's arrest statistics classify such arrests by their most serious charge and not the weapons offense.

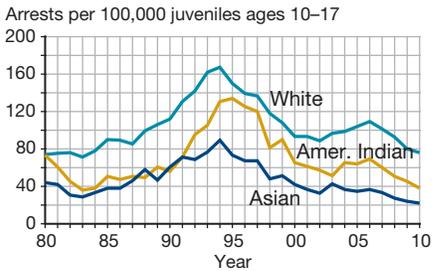
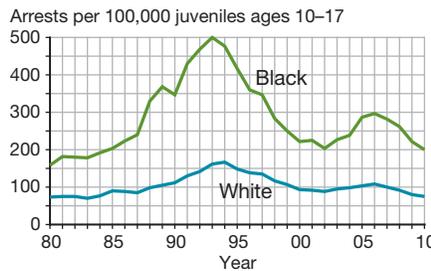
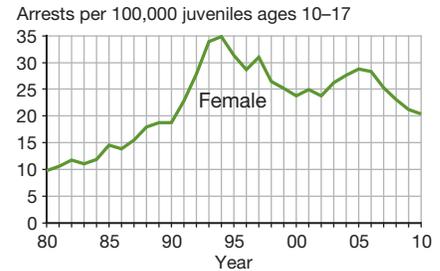
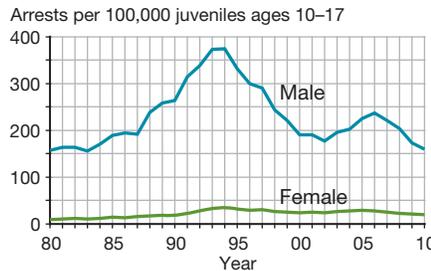
Between 1980 and 1994, the arrest rate for weapons law violations increased proportionally more for females (256%) than for males (139%). After reaching a peak in 1994, both rates declined through 2002 (53% for males and 32% for females), increased through 2006, and then fell through 2010.

Arrest rates for weapons law violations peaked in 1993 for black juveniles, in 1994 for white and Asian juveniles, and in 1995 for American Indian juveniles. The increase between 1980 and the peak year was the greatest for black juveniles (215%), followed by whites (126%), Asians (104%), and American Indians (83%). Similar to trends for males and females, the rates for all racial groups dropped quickly after their peaks, grew between 2002 and 2006, and fell again between 2006 and 2010. Despite recent declines, the 2010 arrest rates were still slightly above their 1980 levels for male (2%) and white (3%) juveniles, and substantially above their 1980 levels for female (109%) and black (27%) juveniles. In 2010,

## The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations declined for the fourth consecutive year, falling 32% since 2006



## Weapons law violation arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The disproportionate increase in the female rate narrowed the gender disparity in weapons law violation arrest rates. In 1980, the male rate was 16 times the female rate; in 2010, the male rate was about 8 times the female rate.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

arrest rates for weapons law violations were actually below their 1980 levels

for American Indian and Asian youth (by 49% and 50%, respectively).

# The juvenile drug abuse violation arrest rate more than doubled between 1991 and 1997 but has since declined

## Racial disparity in drug arrests increased in the 1980s and early 1990s

The annual juvenile arrest rates for drug abuse violations (a category that includes both drug possession and drug sales) varied within a limited range in the 1980s. A closer look at juvenile drug arrest rates finds sharp racial differences. The drug abuse violation arrest rate for white juveniles generally declined between 1980 and 1991 while the black rate soared. The white rate fell 54%, compared with a 190% increase for blacks. In 1980, the white and black arrest rates were essentially equal, with black youth involved in 14% of all juvenile drug arrests. By 1991, the black rate was nearly 6 times the white rate, and black youth were involved in 52% of all juvenile drug arrests.

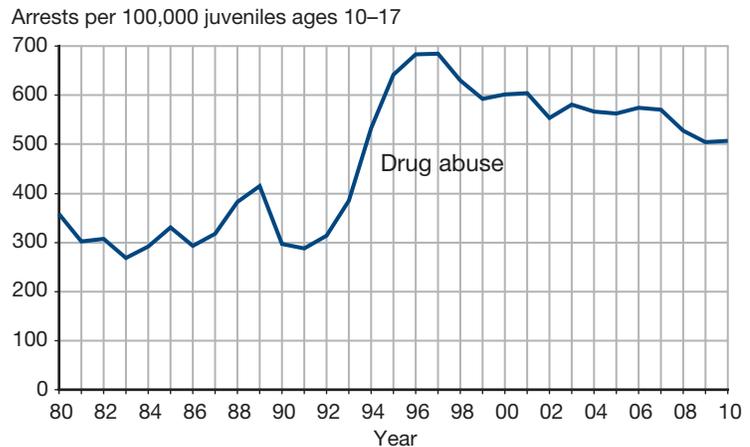
## Drug arrests soared for all youth between 1991 and 1997

Between 1991 and 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased 138%. The rate declined 26% between 1997 and 2010, but the 2010 rate was 76% more than the 1991 rate.

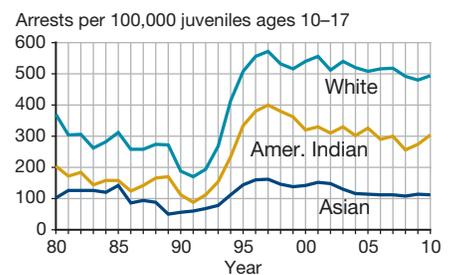
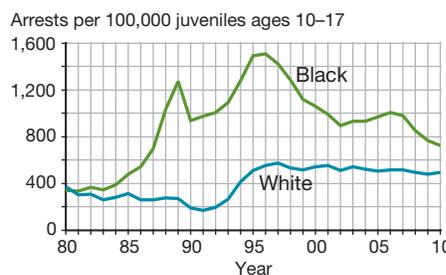
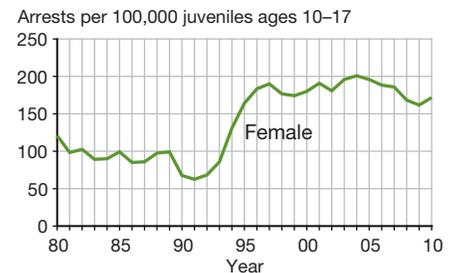
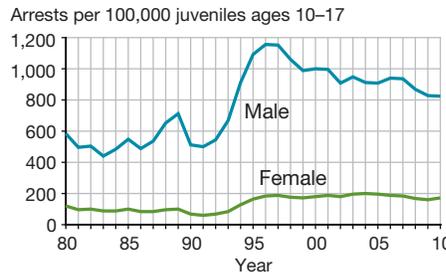
After a period of substantial growth in the early and mid-1990s, the male juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations generally declined after 1996 while the female rate remained relatively stable. By 2010, the drug abuse arrest rate for males declined 29% from its 1996 peak, whereas the rate for females was just 7% below its 1996 level. For both groups, the arrest rates in 2010 were considerably above the rates in 1980 (41% for both males and females).

Between 1980 and 2010, the juvenile drug arrest rate for whites peaked in 1997 and then remained relatively constant through 2010 (down 14%). In contrast, the rate for blacks peaked in 1996 and then fell 52% by 2010.

After a period of substantial growth through the 1990s, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations generally declined through 2010



## Drug abuse violation arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The trend in juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations among blacks was different from the trends for other racial groups. Whereas the arrest rate for other races generally declined throughout the 1980s, the rate for black juveniles increased substantially during this period.

- Despite recent declines, rates for all racial groups in 2010 remained above their 1980 rates: white (34%), black (115%), American Indian (49%), and Asian (9%).

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# Age-specific arrest rates for violent crimes in 2010 were well below their mid-1990s peak for all juvenile age groups

## What is the age-crime curve?

Most displays of juvenile and adult arrest rates show data that combines all ages younger than 18 into the juvenile group and all ages 18 and older into the adult group. However, UCR data allow the calculation of age-specific arrest rates. When graphed, these rates show a mountain-shaped curve—which increases through young adulthood—often referred to as the “age-crime curve.” This age-crime curve is seen across offense categories, although the exact shape of the curve varies. Variations are also seen over time.

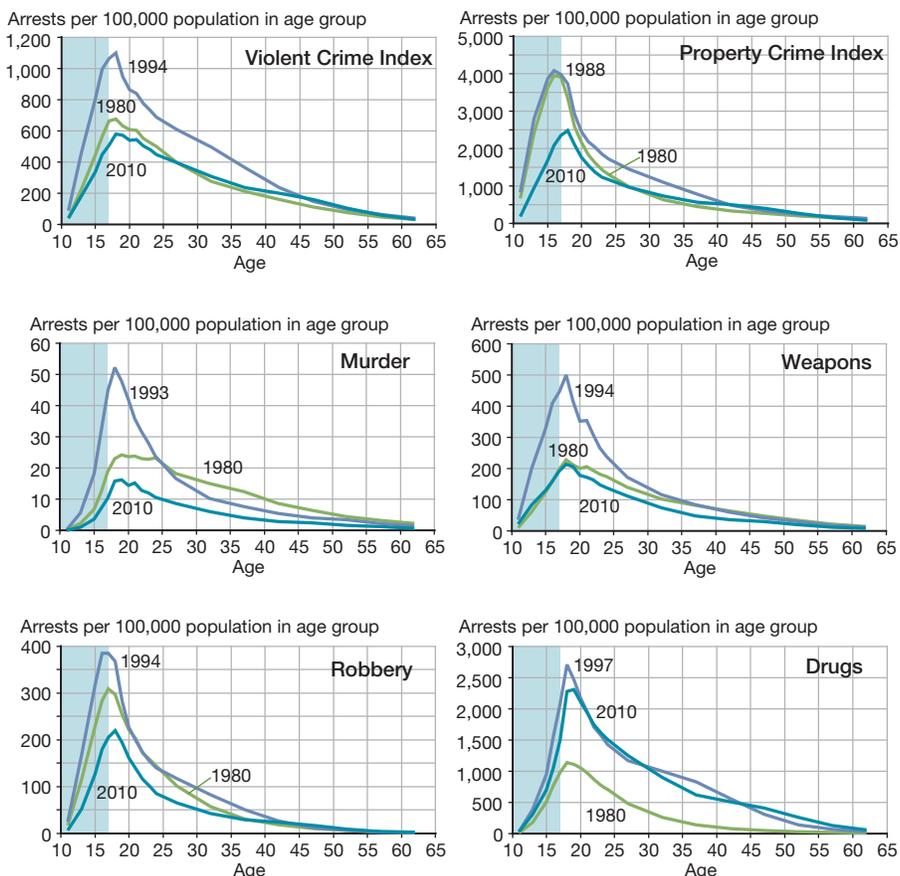
Although the overall juvenile arrest rate for Violent Crime Index offenses was 224.5 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17 in 2010, the age-specific rates ranged from 37.8 for children ages 10–12 to 508.6 for 17-year-olds. The age with the highest rate was 18-year-olds with a rate of 579.9. In 2010, all ages between 16 and 24 had Violent Crime Index arrest rates greater than 400. Only adults who reached age 60 had a rate lower than the rate for 10- to 12-year-olds (32.9 per 100,000 persons ages 60–64).

## The shape of the age-crime curve has changed for some offenses

For both murder and aggravated assault, the age-specific arrest rates in 2010 were substantially below the levels of the mid-1990s. The biggest declines were in the age groups that had the highest rates, specifically ages 15–24.

The 2010 age-crime curve for simple assault did not decline to the 1980 level, as was the case for aggravated assault. There was some decline from the 1997 rates, and what had been a moderate peak at age 21 became two pronounced peaks at age 16 and age 21.

## The shape of the age-crime curve varies across offense categories and over time within offenses

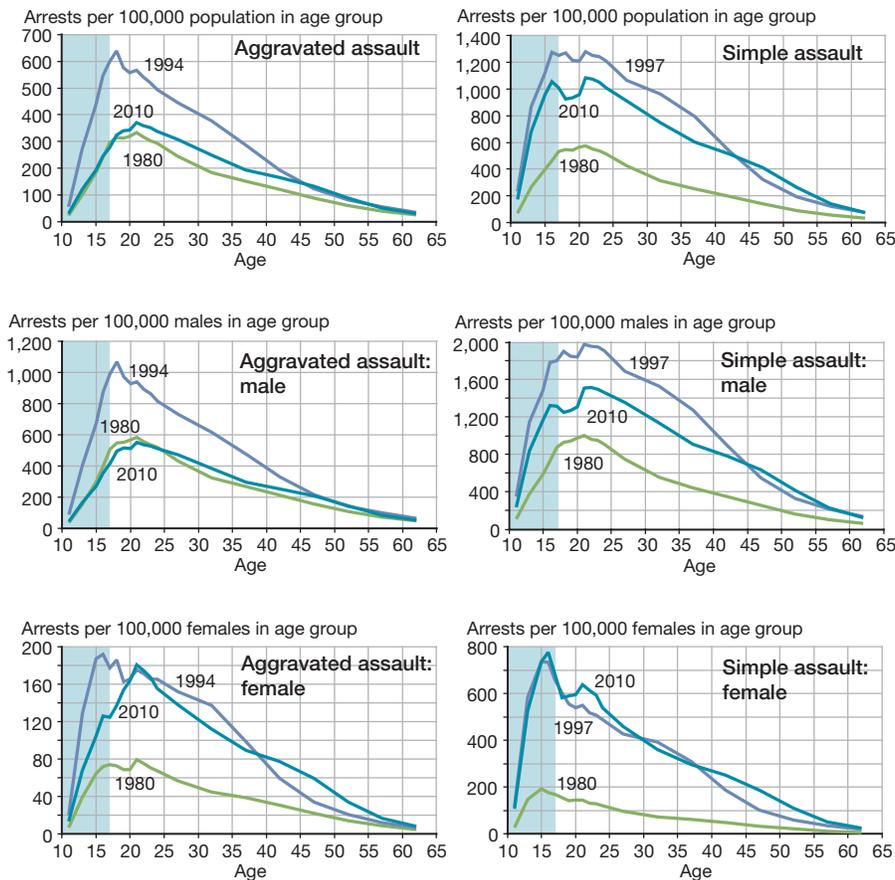


- In 2010, Violent Crime Index age-specific arrest rates peaked at age 18.
- Property Crime Index arrest rates in 2010 were below 1980 rates for ages younger than 30; for youth younger than 18, the differences were at least 40%.
- From 1993 to 2010, murder arrest rates declined for all age groups, but the declines were greater for juvenile ages than for adults.
- Robbery arrest rates were lower in 2010 than in 1980 for nearly all age groups—the declines were greater for youth younger than 18 than for adults.
- The 2010 arrest rates for weapons offenses were less than the 1980 rates for all ages older than 16. The largest relative declines were for those age 35 or older.
- Unlike other offense categories, the 2010 arrest rates for drug abuse violations were higher than the 1980 arrest rates for all ages.

Note: Rates are shown for 2010, 1980, and the year with the highest juvenile arrest rate peak for each offense.

Source: Authors’ analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

**Age-specific arrest rates for simple assault showed patterns very different than those for aggravated assault**



**Age-crime curves vary by gender within offense categories**

A closer look at the age-specific arrest rates for assault by gender shows some very different patterns for males and females. For both aggravated and simple assault, compared with males, the age-specific arrest rates for females in 2010 had not declined much from the rates in the late 1990s. For aggravated assault, 2010 arrest rates for males were near the 1980 rates, but for females, only girls 18 or younger had declines greater than 25%.

For simple assault, the 2010 age-specific arrest rates for males were between the 1980 and 1997 levels. However, the age-specific rates for females were higher in 2010 than the 1997 peak-year levels for most age groups.

The male and female data also show how the simple assault twin peaks developed. In 2010, the age group with the highest rate was 16 for females and 21 for males. Each gender showed a secondary peak at the peak age group for the opposite gender (21 for females and 16 for males).

- The 2010 aggravated assault arrest rates for youth ages 15–17 were about the same as in 1980.
- In 1980, all ages 17–24 had simple assault arrest rates between 530 and 574. By 2010, not only had the rates increased for all ages, but the age-crime curve had developed two pronounced peaks with rates greater than 1,000 for ages 16 and 17 and also for ages 21–24. Those ages 18, 19, and 20 had rates between 924 and 959.
- Most assault arrest rates for females were less than half the rates for their male counterparts. The only exceptions were simple assault rates for the 13–17 age groups.

Note: Rates are shown for 2010, 1980, and the year with the highest total juvenile arrest peak for each offense. Male and female rate trends are displayed for the same years as the total rate trends for each offense.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

# Clearance figures implicate juveniles in 1 in 20 murders, 1 in 9 forcible rapes, and 1 in 10 aggravated assaults in 2010

## Clearances give insight into the relative involvement of juveniles and adults in crime

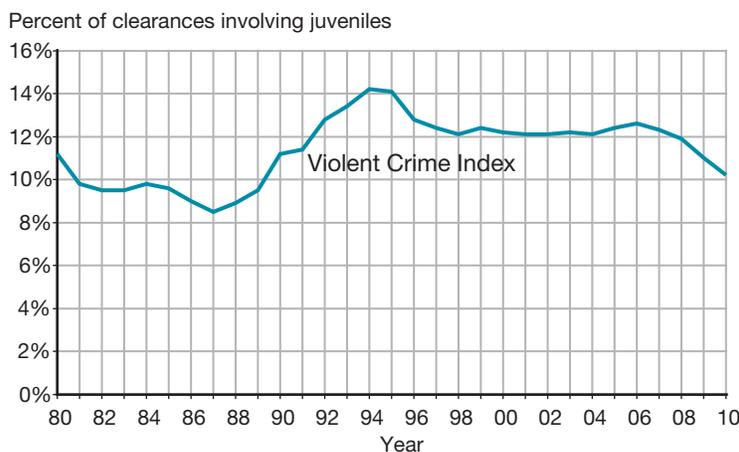
Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that are resolved by an arrest or other, exceptional means (e.g., death of the offender, unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances if the arrestee committed several crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if the crime was committed by a group of offenders. The FBI reports information on the proportion of clearances that involved offenders under age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime committed by this age group than is the arrest proportion, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the juvenile proportion of crimes. Nevertheless, trends in clearance proportions are reasonable indicators of changes in the relative involvement of juveniles in various crimes.

## The juvenile share of violent crime returned to levels of the late 1980s

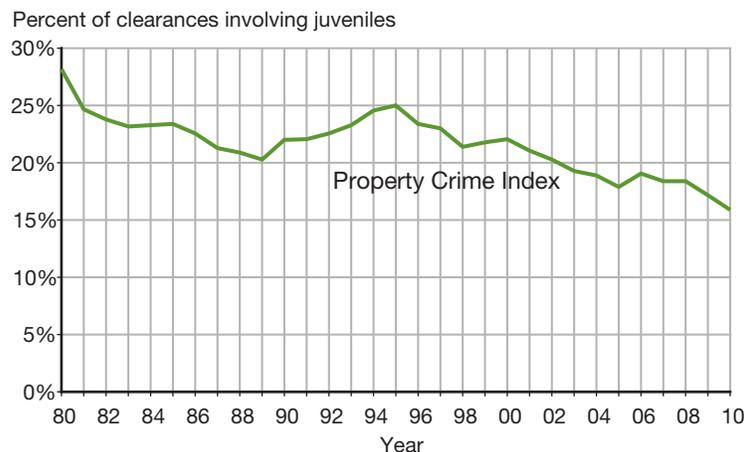
The FBI's *Crime in the United States* series shows that the proportion of violent crimes attributed to juveniles declined somewhat in recent years—returning in 2010 to a level last seen in 1989. The juvenile proportion of Violent Crime Index offenses cleared by arrest (or exceptional means) grew from an average of 9% in the 1980s to 14% in 1994, then fell to 12% in 1997, where it remained through most of the 2000s and then dropped to 10% by 2010. Based on these data, it is fair to say a juvenile committed 1 in 10 violent crimes known to law enforcement in 2010.

Each of the four Violent Crime Index offenses showed an increase in juvenile clearances between 1980 and the mid-1990s. The juvenile proportion of murder clearances peaked in 1994 at

The juvenile proportion of violent crimes cleared by arrest or exceptional means in 2010 was at its lowest level in more than 20 years



The juvenile share of property crime has fallen substantially since 1980

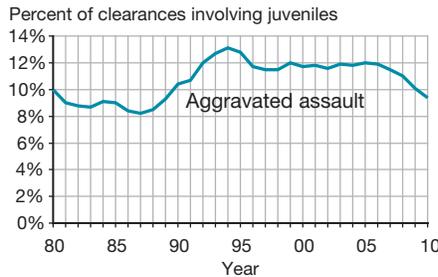
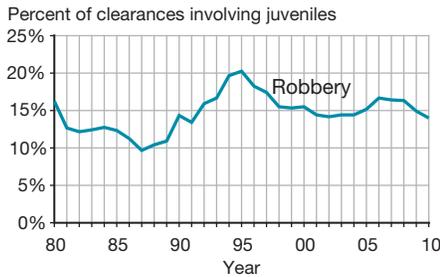
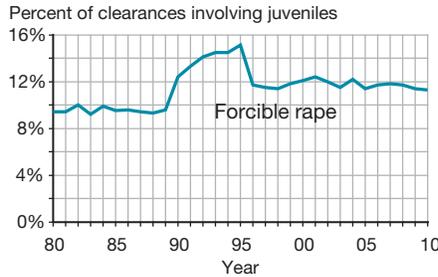
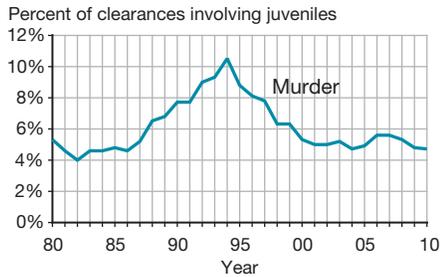


Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for the years 1980 through 2010.

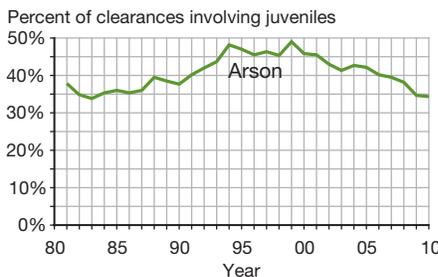
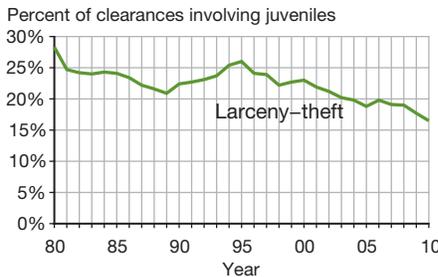
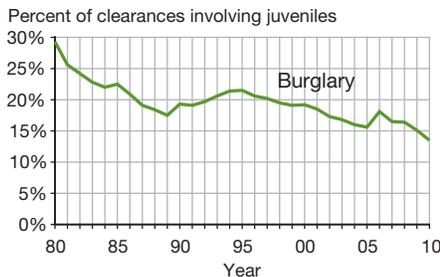
10% and then fell. Between 2001 and 2010, the proportion has stayed within a limited range, averaging 5% over the past 10 years. The juvenile proportion of cleared forcible rapes peaked in 1995 (15%). While the proportion has remained relatively constant since 1996 (between 11% and 12%), the 2010

proportion (11%) was still above the levels of the 1980s (9%). The juvenile proportion of robbery clearances also peaked in 1995 (20%); it fell substantially through the mid-2000s, and ended the decade at 14%—above the average level of the 1980s (12%). After reaching a peak (13%) in 1994, the

## Clearance statistics imply that juvenile involvement in robbery and aggravated assault have declined since 2006



## In 2010, the juvenile shares of clearances for burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft were at their lowest points in more than 30 years



Note: Arson clearance data were first reported in 1981.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for the years 1980 through 2010.

juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances was relatively constant through the mid-2000s, resting in 2010 (9%) at the same level of the 1980s.

## In 2010, a juvenile committed roughly 1 in 6 property crimes known to law enforcement

In the 1980s, the juvenile proportion of cleared Property Crime Index offenses decreased from 28% to 20%. This proportion then increased in the early 1990s, peaking in 1995 at 25%. After 1995, the juvenile proportion of clearances for Property Crime Index offenses fell, so that by 2010 it was at its lowest level since at least 1980 (16%).

By 2010, juvenile clearance proportions for the crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft were at their lowest levels since 1980 (14%, 17%, and 13%, respectively). For arson, the juvenile proportion of clearances in 2010 was at its lowest level since the early 1980s.

## The juvenile proportion of crimes cleared varied with community size

In 2010, cities with populations over 1 million had the lowest proportion of clearances attributed to juvenile arrest for both Violent Crime Index and Property Crime Index offenses.

Percent of clearances involving juveniles, 2010:

Population served by reporting agencies	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index
All agencies	10.2%	15.9%
1 million or more	7.9	12.5
500,000 to 999,999	9.2	15.4
250,000 to 499,999	10.3	17.4
100,000 to 249,999	11.0	19.2
50,000 to 99,999	11.2	18.4
25,000 to 49,999	11.1	16.8
10,000 to 24,999	11.0	15.4
under 10,000	11.8	13.8

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2010*.

# In 2010, more than one-fourth of states had a juvenile violent crime arrest rate above the national average

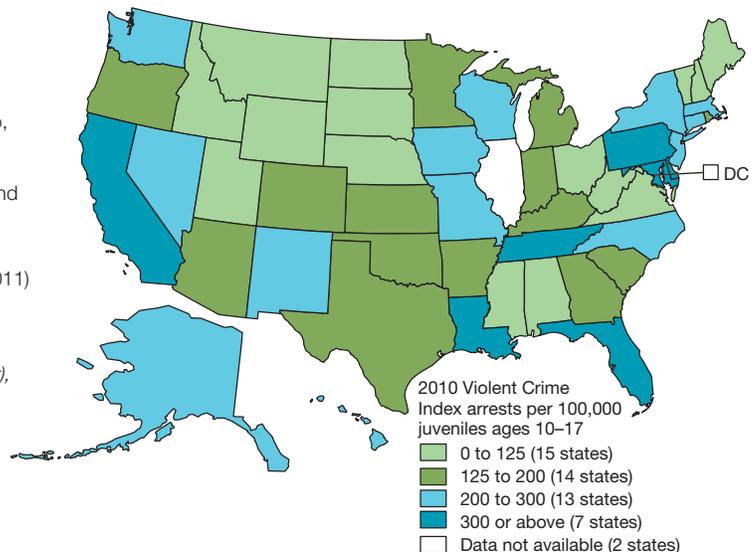
Among states with at least minimally adequate reporting, those with high juvenile violent crime arrest rates in 2010 were California, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee

State of offense	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of juveniles under age 18 per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17					State of offense	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of juveniles under age 18 per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17				
		Violent Crime Index	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Other assault	Weapon			Violent Crime Index	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Other assault	Weapon
U.S. total	84%	225	81	132	619	92	Missouri	93%	222	68	142	901	70
Alabama	72%	80	27	48	229	19	Montana	87%	120	16	97	647	23
Alaska	99%	248	50	192	539	35	Nebraska	90%	109	42	50	1,081	86
Arizona	90%	182	41	133	635	49	Nevada	89%	300	112	180	944	105
Arkansas	74%	130	23	96	612	49	New Hampshire	87%	93	23	62	940	17
California	96%	304	123	172	417	162	New Jersey	98%	243	114	119	326	118
Colorado	89%	156	31	111	409	90	New Mexico	88%	240	22	200	854	120
Connecticut	95%	212	75	126	1,007	66	New York	50%	221	90	121	494	58
Delaware	100%	368	117	230	1,287	127	North Carolina	83%	211	73	122	850	172
Dist. of Columbia	0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	90%	92	9	58	636	22
Florida	100%	343	110	218	759	67	Ohio	74%	111	60	41	669	54
Georgia	81%	192	65	117	618	104	Oklahoma	99%	149	34	104	293	65
Hawaii	89%	217	108	96	778	18	Oregon	87%	147	47	93	469	55
Idaho	94%	93	10	72	628	77	Pennsylvania	97%	355	135	202	619	99
Illinois	23%	815	379	411	1,247	275	Rhode Island	99%	198	69	110	684	145
Indiana	59%	143	32	105	607	50	South Carolina	95%	186	48	124	692	114
Iowa	88%	203	23	171	785	40	South Dakota	78%	109	10	90	679	97
Kansas	69%	149	20	115	541	37	Tennessee	78%	383	100	268	1,052	120
Kentucky	70%	125	62	53	326	33	Texas	99%	146	46	90	737	40
Louisiana	58%	503	72	408	1,105	82	Utah	97%	90	18	56	609	99
Maine	100%	55	15	34	688	44	Vermont	87%	66	0	40	340	9
Maryland	83%	522	261	249	1,303	185	Virginia	98%	112	47	58	622	53
Massachusetts	94%	259	52	200	384	35	Washington	78%	211	77	118	681	92
Michigan	94%	179	63	104	387	63	West Virginia	80%	59	11	44	248	8
Minnesota	100%	160	54	104	574	92	Wisconsin	89%	237	103	106	502	153
Mississippi	53%	119	71	34	748	125	Wyoming	99%	96	16	77	1,080	82

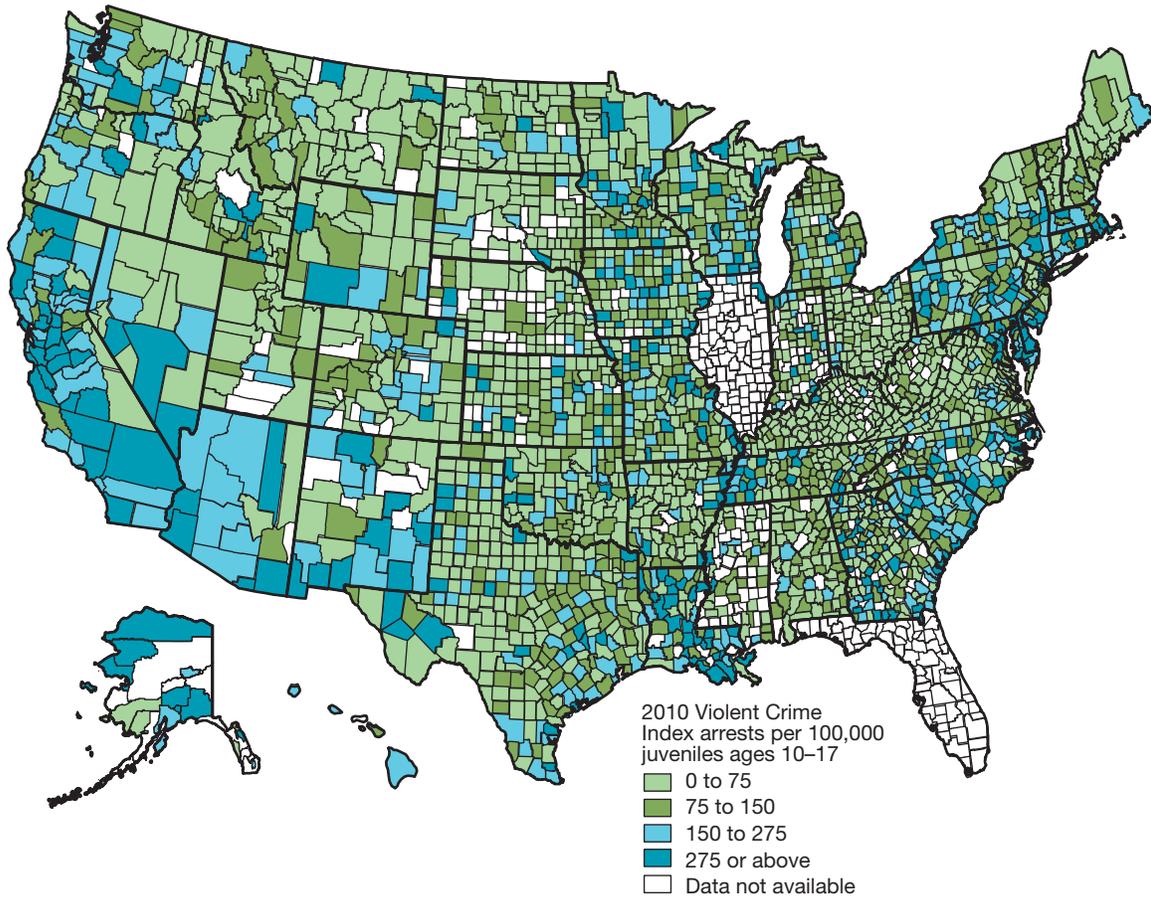
NA = Arrest counts were not available for the District of Columbia in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2010*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire state. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their state's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States 2010* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011) tables 5 and 69, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2010–July 1, 2011, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex (Vintage 2011)* [machine-readable data files available online at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm), as of 7/18/12].



High violent crime arrest rates are found in a relatively small proportion of counties



- Of the jurisdictions with at least 50% reporting coverage (2,716 counties of the 3,143 counties in the U.S.), just 17% had a juvenile violent crime arrest rate greater than the U.S. average of 225 arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17.
- Of the reporting counties, 39% had Violent Crime Index arrest rates less than half the U.S. average, half the counties had rates less than 74 (making that the median rate), and 31% reported no juvenile violent crime arrests at all for the year.

Note: Rates were classified as “Data not available” when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of the county’s population did not report.

Technical note: Although juvenile arrest rates may largely reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the magnitude of these rates. Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in the jurisdiction. Therefore, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have a higher arrest rate than jurisdictions where resident youth behave similarly. Jurisdictions (especially small ones) that are vacation destinations or that are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect the behavior of nonresident youth more than that of resident youth. Other factors that influence arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of citizens toward crime, the policies of local law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. In many areas, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for such areas are necessarily based on partial information and may not be accurate. Comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions can be informative. Because of factors noted, however, comparisons should be made with caution.

Source: Authors’ analysis of arrest data from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research’s *Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data: County-level Detailed Arrest and Offense Data, 2010* [machine-readable data file]; and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics’ *Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2010–July 1, 2011, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex (Vintage 2011)* [machine-readable data files available online at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm), as of 7/18/12].

# High juvenile property crime arrest rates in 2010 did not necessarily mean high violent crime arrest rates

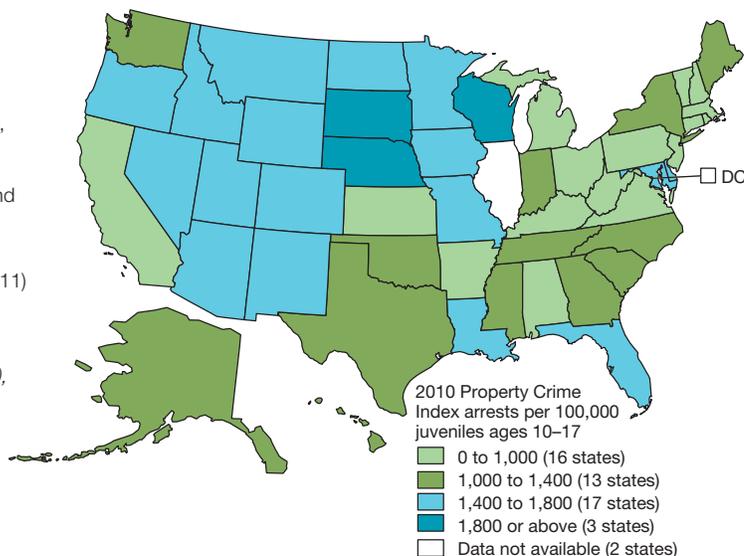
Among states with at least minimally adequate reporting, those with high juvenile property crime arrest rates in 2010 were Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

State of offense	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of juveniles under age 18 per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17					State of offense	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of juveniles under age 18 per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17				
		Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Vandalism			Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Vandalism
U.S. total	84%	1,084	192	832	47	13	Missouri	93%	1,537	219	1,254	53	12
Alabama	72%	495	69	412	12	2	Montana	87%	1,570	90	1,374	84	22
Alaska	99%	1,329	170	1,063	72	24	Nebraska	90%	1,920	146	1,700	57	17
Arizona	90%	1,426	190	1,176	44	17	Nevada	89%	1,492	215	1,235	28	14
Arkansas	74%	984	174	790	14	6	New Hampshire	87%	825	97	691	21	17
California	96%	922	293	560	56	13	New Jersey	98%	736	119	585	16	16
Colorado	89%	1,424	121	1,228	52	24	New Mexico	88%	1,488	169	1,241	56	23
Connecticut	95%	849	131	663	40	15	New York	50%	1,084	194	833	47	10
Delaware	100%	1,452	299	1,098	44	12	North Carolina	83%	1,177	321	818	25	14
Dist. of Columbia	0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	90%	1,693	116	1,490	80	7
Florida	100%	1,530	426	1,023	74	8	Ohio	74%	771	138	595	29	9
Georgia	81%	1,200	244	891	56	9	Oklahoma	99%	1,167	190	924	23	29
Hawaii	89%	1,284	87	1,129	55	13	Oregon	87%	1,635	157	1,387	48	42
Idaho	94%	1,456	198	1,197	38	23	Pennsylvania	97%	874	135	671	49	19
Illinois	23%	1,449	307	808	330	5	Rhode Island	99%	901	217	617	37	30
Indiana	59%	1,198	138	1,013	40	7	South Carolina	95%	1,110	212	865	29	4
Iowa	88%	1,616	241	1,305	47	23	South Dakota	78%	1,818	110	1,646	53	9
Kansas	69%	976	110	807	44	15	Tennessee	78%	1,352	276	995	63	18
Kentucky	70%	754	162	565	20	7	Texas	99%	1,049	161	854	28	6
Louisiana	58%	1,517	299	1,156	51	11	Utah	97%	1,748	96	1,610	31	11
Maine	100%	1,346	267	991	54	34	Vermont	87%	469	107	312	33	17
Maryland	83%	1,697	287	1,251	127	32	Virginia	98%	763	101	621	26	14
Massachusetts	94%	449	98	319	21	11	Washington	78%	1,201	202	934	49	16
Michigan	94%	880	151	662	54	13	West Virginia	80%	346	39	288	15	4
Minnesota	100%	1,507	137	1,312	40	17	Wisconsin	89%	1,904	222	1,607	63	12
Mississippi	53%	1,350	367	941	36	7	Wyoming	99%	1,636	197	1,378	47	14

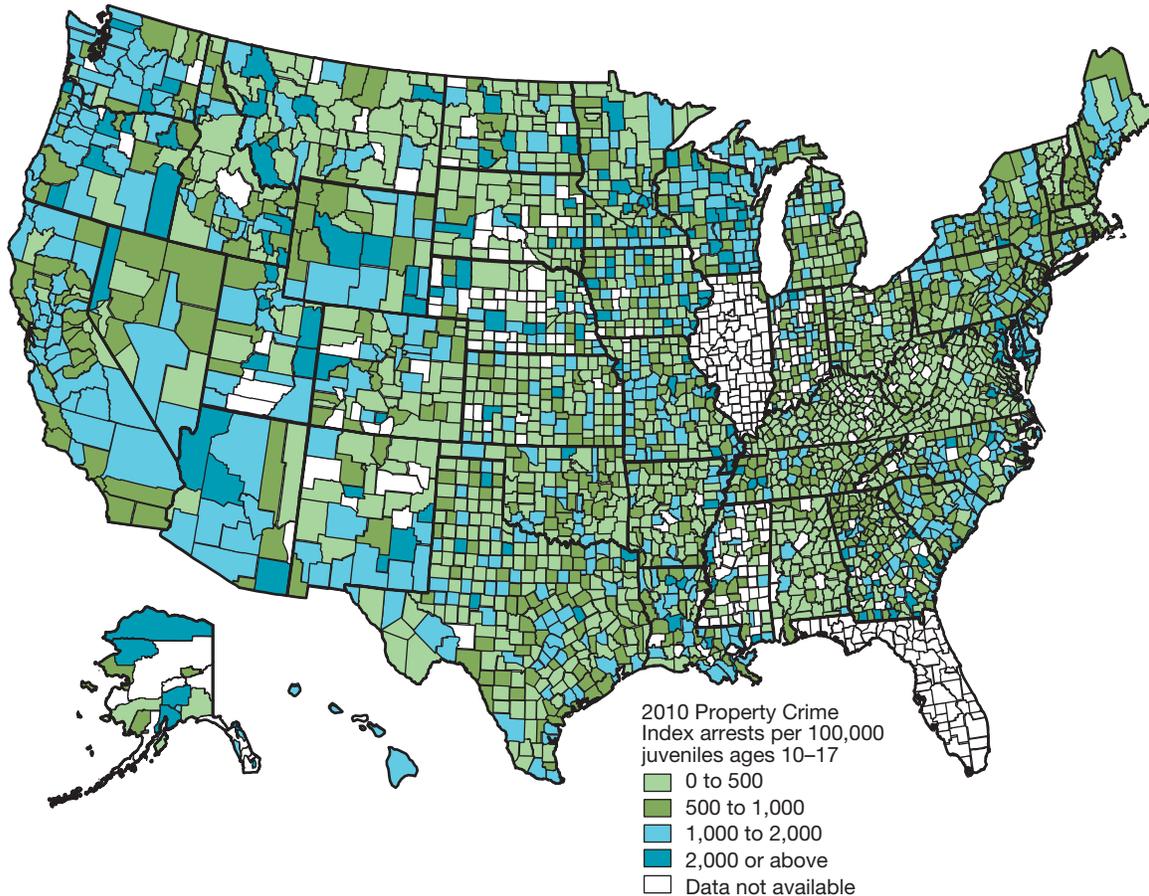
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Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States 2010* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011) tables 5 and 69, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2010–July 1, 2011, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex (Vintage 2011)* [machine-readable data files available online at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm), as of 7/18/12].



Property Crime Index arrest rates are a barometer of the flow of youth into the juvenile justice system



- In 2010, the national juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate was 1,084. More than 7 in 10 reporting counties had rates below the national average. Half of all reporting counties had rates below 571 (i.e., the median rate).
- The Property Crime Index is dominated by the high-volume crime of larceny-theft, and for juveniles, shoplifting is the most common offense in this category. However, the Property Crime Index also includes offenses such as burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson, which are considered more serious. Therefore, it is important to consider the various offense categories individually.

Note: Rates were classified as “Data not available” when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of the county’s population did not report.

Technical note: Although juvenile arrest rates may largely reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the magnitude of these rates. Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in the jurisdiction. Therefore, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have a higher arrest rate than jurisdictions where resident youth behave similarly. Jurisdictions (especially small ones) that are vacation destinations or that are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect the behavior of nonresident youth more than that of resident youth. Other factors that influence arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of citizens toward crime, the policies of local law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. In many areas, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for such areas are necessarily based on partial information and may not be accurate. Comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions can be informative. Because of factors noted, however, comparisons should be made with caution.

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# What do police do with juveniles they arrest?

## Many large law enforcement agencies have specialized units that concentrate on juvenile justice issues

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' *Local Police Departments, 2007* report, part of the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data collection series, provides detailed characteristics of an estimated 12,575 local police departments throughout the U.S. In 2007, these local departments employed more than 600,000 full-time persons, and approximately 463,000 of these employees were sworn personnel with full arrest powers.

The 2007 survey included items about policies and procedures for responding to special populations and situations. Local law enforcement agencies include various provisions for responding to youth and family problems. For example, 90% of local law enforcement agencies (i.e., county police departments and municipal police departments) had specific policies and procedures for dealing with juveniles, and 91% had provisions in place for responding to domestic disputes. A smaller proportion of local departments (67%) had a written racial

profiling policy or provisions for dealing with mentally ill persons (69%).

About one-third (35%) of local police departments had officers assigned to a drug task force in 2007, while 12% of local departments had officers assigned to a gang task force. A small proportion of local departments (2%) had officers assigned to a human trafficking task force. However, participation in each of these three task forces was common among larger local police departments (i.e., those serving a population of one million or more).

Many local police departments employ sworn officers as school resource officers. School resource officers not only provide law enforcement services but can also function as counselors. In 2007, more than one-third (38%) of local police departments employed 13,000 school resource officers.

## Most arrested juveniles were referred to court

In 13 states, statutes define some persons younger than age 18 as adults for prosecution purposes. These persons are not under the original jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system; they are under the jurisdiction of the criminal

justice system. For arrested youth who are younger than 18 and under the original jurisdiction of their state's juvenile justice system, the FBI's UCR Program monitors what happens as a result of the arrest. This is the only aspect of the UCR data collection that is sensitive to state variations in the legal definition of a juvenile.

In 2010, 23% of arrests involving youth eligible in their state for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within law enforcement agencies, 68% were referred to juvenile court, and 8% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. The proportion of juvenile arrests referred to juvenile court increased from 58% in 1980 to 68% in 2010.

In 2010, juvenile arrests were less likely to result in referral to juvenile court in large cities (population over 250,000) than in moderate-size cities (population 100,000–250,000) or small cities (population less than 100,000). In large cities, 64% of juvenile arrests resulted in referral to juvenile court, compared with 74% in moderate-size cities and 68% in small cities.

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### Arrest rate data source

Authors' analysis of arrest data from Snyder and Mulako-Wantota's *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [available online]; population data for 1980–1989 from the U.S. Census Bureau's *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1980 to 1999* [machine-readable data files available online]; population data for 1990–1999 from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Bridged-Race Intercensal Estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States Resident Population by County, Single-Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data files available online]; population data for 2000–2009 from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2000–July 1, 2009, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online]; and population data for 2010 from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2010–July 1, 2011, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex (Vintage 2011)* [machine-readable data files available online].