**Violent Crime in the U.S.**

*Note to Professors: The figures highlighted below should be kept as the key but deleted before giving to the students so that they can find these on their own.*

We have been studying crime in the U.S. In this exercise, we’re going to examine data on violent crime from the two national data sources. We’ll compare rates over time as well as compare rates across the two datasets.

**Data Background:**  
The [National Crime Victimization Survey](http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nvat) (NCVS) “is the nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization. Each year, data are obtained from a nationally representative sample of about 90,000 households, comprising nearly 160,000 persons, on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization in the United States. The NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders.” NCVS data have been collected from 1972-2014; the instrument underwent a major redesign in 1992.

The [FBI’s Uniform Crime Report (UCR)](https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014) Program is a “nationwide, cooperative statistical effort of more than 18,000 city, university and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies voluntarily reporting data on crimes brought to their attention. Since 1930, the FBI has administered the UCR Program and has continued to assess and monitor the nature and type of crime in the nation.”

There are some issues of non-comparability between the two sources. The NCVS does not collect data on murder or commercial robberies and the UCR does not collect data on simple assault. The activity of comparing figures here is an exercise. If you want to use these data for a research project, you will want to adjust some of the figures.

**Assignment:**

1. Go to each website and find the data you need to fill in the empty cells in the tables below. You may need to hunt around. (The last set of questions asks you to go to the U.S. Census and provides a link.)
2. Answer the questions about each table within this document or a new document. Attach/copy graphs as appropriate.

**Table 1. Violent Crime Rate (Incidents per 100,000 People)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | NCVS Estimate | UCR Estimate |
| 2014 | 2010 | 365.5 |
| 2006 | 3401 | 479.3 |
| 1996 | 6470 | 636.6 |
| 1986 | 4190 | 620.1 |
| 1976 | 4850 | 467.8 |

1a. Are the differences between the two data sets (within any given year)? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

1b. Are there differences between the years (within either dataset)? Do you see a trend? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

1c. Enter these data into an Excel spreadsheet and graph these two trajectories. (Paste/attach your graph.) How would you summarize the graph?

**Table 2. Aggravated Assault Rate (Incidents per 100,000 People)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | NCVS Estimate | UCR Estimate |
| 2014 | 410 | 232.5 |
| 2006 | 710 | 292.0 |
| 1996 | 1320 | 391.0 |
| 1986 | -- | 347.4 |
| 1976 | -- | 233.2 |

2a. Are there differences between the two data sets (within any given year)? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

2b. Are there differences between the years (within either dataset)? Do you see a trend? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

2c. Enter these data into an Excel spreadsheet and graph these two trajectories. (Attach your graph.) How would you summarize the graph?

**Table 3. Murder/Non-negligent Manslaughter Rate (Incidents per 100,000 People) (UCR Estimate)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Overall Rate |
| 2014 | 4.5 |
| 2006 | 5.8 |
| 1996 | 7.4 |
| 1986 | 8.6 |
| 1976 | 8.7 |
| 1966 | 5.6 |

3a. Are there differences between the years? Do you see a trend? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

3b. Why don’t we have NCVS data for this variable?

**Table 4. Rate of Violent Victimization by Age of Victim (Incidents per 100,000) (NCVS Estimate)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | **12-14** | **15-17** | **18-20** | **21-24** | **25-34** | **35-49** | **50-64** | **65+** |
| 2014 | 3100 | 2920 | 2030 | 3130 | 2850 | 2160 | 1790 | 310 |
| 2006 | 5700 | 5950 | 6740 | 6330 | 5010 | 2900 | 2000 | 400 |
| 1996 | 15000 | 14340 | 13420 | 11390 | 8570 | 5020 | 2290 | 660 |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | **12-15** | **16-19** | **20-24** |  | **25-34** | **35-49** | **50-64** | **65+** |
| 1986 | 5240 | 6070 | 5880 | 3430 | 2000 | 820 | 450 |
| 1976 | 5200 | 6670 | 5850 | 4060 | 2000 | 1220 | 760 |

4a. Are there differences between the age groups (within years)? Do you see a trend? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

4b. Are there differences between years (within age groups)? Do you see a trend? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

**Table 5. Rate of Violent Victimization by Race of Victim (Incidents per 100,000) (NCVS Estimate)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | White | Black |
| 2014 | 1940 | 2280 |
| 2006 | 3180 | 4480 |
| 1996 | 6440 | 7130 |

5a. Are there differences between the races (within years)? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

5b. Are there differences between the years (within races)? What might explain these?

**Table 6. Race of Arrested Offender for Violent Crime (by Percent of All Races) (UCR Estimate)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Race of Arrested | |
|  | % Black | % White |
| 2014 | 37.7 | 59.4 |
| 2006 | 37.0 | 60.8 |
| 1996 | 43.2 | 54.6 |

6a. Are there differences between the races (within years)? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

6b. Are there differences between the years (within races)? What might explain these?

**Table 7. Racial Composition of the U.S. (Find These Data at the** [**U.S. Census**](http://www.census.gov/en.html)**)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | % Black Alone | % White Alone |
| 2014 | 13.2 | 77.4 |
| 2006 | 12.8 | 81.4 |
| 1996 | 12.6 | 82.8 |

7a. How does the proportion of blacks (or whites) in the U.S. compare to the proportion of blacks (or whites) arrested, by year? What might explain these differences?