

The Contours of Crime

Kentucky is a relatively low-crime state. In a state-by-state comparison conducted in 1996, Kentucky ranked as the 17th safest state. Kentucky's rate for the serious crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft was 3,449 per 100,000 people in 1995 compared to the national rate of 5,278 per 100,000. Some emerging trends in Kentucky include: an increasing focus on domestic violence; the increasing cost of the expanding prison population; youth crime; guns and self-protection; and community policing. Ultimately, the solutions for fighting crime lie in strengthening families, integrating neighborhoods, building communities, improving social institutions, and finding rewarding jobs for all who need them.

By John Curra
Eastern Kentucky University

Crime is a world problem, affecting nations, states, communities, and individuals across the globe.¹ It is woven deeply into the fabric of life in the United States.² Americans report that they are more fearful to walk alone at night than they once were, but they do feel safer at home than they once did.³ The fear of crime varies with the perceived seriousness of a crime *and* the perceived risk of becoming a victim. Respondents in one study indicated that they are more afraid of strangers loitering near their home than they are of murder because they believe that murder, while serious, is rare. Fear is greatest when people believe a serious crime can actually happen to them.⁴

Cross-national comparisons show that the United States has a higher rate of serious violence than other industrialized democracies primarily because U.S. criminals are more likely to use handguns in the commission of their crimes.⁵ The rates of minor violence and serious property crime are lower in the United States than in nations like England, Wales, Australia, and Canada.⁶ If a worldwide crime wave exists, it has been caused primarily by increases in drug-related crimes.⁷

Kentuckians are concerned about the problems of crime and drugs. In a recent Bluegrass State Poll (conducted from September 26 through October 1, 1996), 806 individuals, age 18 or older from the Louisville area, were asked what they thought

Offense	United States	Kentucky
Murder	Every 24 minutes	Every 32.3 hours
Forcible Rape	Every 5 minutes	Every 6.9 hours
Robbery	Every 54 seconds	Every 2.2 hours
Aggravated Assault	Every 29 seconds	Every 1.1 hours
Motor Vehicle Theft	Every 21 seconds	Every 53.4 minutes
Burglary	Every 12 seconds	Every 18.6 minutes
Larceny-Theft	Every 4 seconds	Every 6.9 minutes
<i>Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Report, 1995</i>		

¹ Union of International Associations. (1991). *Encyclopedia of world problems and human potential* (3rd ed.). Muenchen, Germany: K.G. Saur.

² Currie, E. (1985). *Confronting crime: an American challenge*. New York: Pantheon.

³ Maguire, K., Pastore, A. (Eds.). (1995). *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics—1994*. Washington, DC: USGPO, p. 167.

⁴ Warr, M., Stafford, M. (1983, June). Fear of victimization: a look at the proximate causes *Social Forces*, 61, 1033-1043.

⁵ Fingerhut, L., Kleinman, J. (1990, June). International and interstate comparisons of homicide among young males *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 26.

⁶ Lynch, J. (1995). Crime in international perspective. In J. Wilson, J. Petersilia (Eds.) *Crime* (p. 21). San Francisco, CA: ICS Press.

⁷ United Nations. (1992). Trends in crime and criminal justice, 1970-1985 In *Context of Socio-Economic Change*. New York: Author.

was the most important problem facing the country. Seventeen percent picked drugs/substance abuse and 13 percent picked crime. Respondents in an earlier Bluegrass State Poll from September 1992 reported lower levels of concern: 5 percent picked drugs/substance abuse, and 1 percent picked crime.⁸

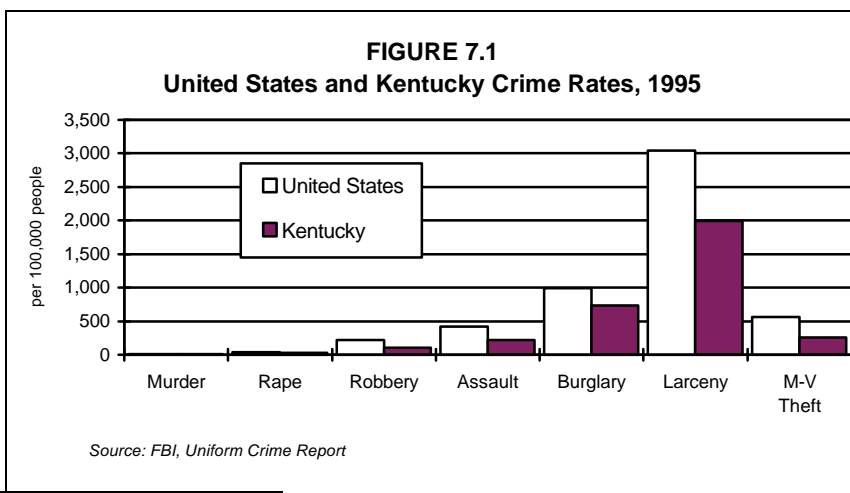
When it comes to the crime problem, no simple answers or quick fixes are to be found. Currie reminds us that “there are no magic buttons to push, no program waiting just around the corner to reform the courts or strengthen the police or organize the neighborhood that will make criminal violence disappear tomorrow.”⁹ We can make our homes, schools, and communities safer and better than they are, *but* we are in for the long haul. Long-range planning is essential because world problems require world-class solutions, the kind that only come from deliberate efforts to reach attainable goals.

Crime Trends

The 1968 Kentucky General Assembly enacted a uniform crime reporting law, mandating the collection of information on crime in the Commonwealth. *Crime in Kentucky 1995* is the 26th annual report. It informs readers that increases or decreases in crime rates can be caused by a number of factors like the methods of tabulating and reporting used by law enforcement agencies and differences in citizens’ propensity to report crimes to police.¹⁰ Places with high crime rates may simply be more efficient at finding and reporting illegal behavior, or changes in reporting procedures can themselves influence changes in crime rates. For example, from 1994 to 1995, aggravated assault in Kentucky showed a 52.42 percent *decrease*. The reason is that less serious aggravated assaults were downgraded to simple assaults and removed from the list of most serious crimes.¹¹

In a state-by-state analysis of the 50 U.S. states, the dangerousness of each one was determined by using 14 separate factors like crime rates, changes in crime rates, changes in violent crime rates, juvenile crime statistics, data on corrections, expenditures for police protection, and the number of full-time police officers. In 1996, Nevada was classified as the most dangerous state in the nation (replacing Louisiana). Kentucky was ranked 34th, a situation in which the higher the score (up to 50), the safer the state.¹²

The Kentucky rate in 1995 for serious crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft—the Index Crimes—was 3,449 per 100,000



⁸ Garrett, R. (1996, October 13). Crime, drugs replace work as top concern *The Courier-Journal*, p. A1.

⁹ Currie. *Confronting crime*, 17-18.

¹⁰ Kentucky State Police. (1996). *Crime in Kentucky, 1995*. (Crime Report). Frankfort, KY: Author, p. 4.

¹¹ Kentucky State Police. *Crime in Kentucky, 1995*.

¹² Morgan, K., Morgan, S., Quitno, N. (1996). *Crime state rankings 1996: crime in the 50 United States* (3rd. ed.). Lawrence, KS: Morgan Quitno Press, p. iv.

people.¹³ This was substantially lower than the nation as a whole, which had a serious crime rate in 1995 of 5,278 per 100,000 people.¹⁴ Kentucky's rate was also lower than most other states. Only five states had lower rates of serious crime than Kentucky: Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia.

Kentucky's rates of both violent crime and property crime compare quite favorably with those rates found in other parts of the country. The rate of violent crime for a region is a composite number that covers murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Kentucky's violent crime rate in 1995 was 365 per 100,000 people, and only 15 states had lower rates of violent crime (Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming). Kentucky's property crime rate in 1995, which combines information on burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft, was 2,987 per 100,000 people. Only five states had lower rates of property crime (New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia).

Not all people in the Commonwealth, nor in the nation as a whole, have an equal risk of being victimized by crime. For approximately 20 years, an annual survey of victims of crime has been conducted in the United States. This survey measures the number of rapes, robberies, assaults, and thefts that Americans experience. Since their peak in the early 1980s, victimizations have declined over time.¹⁵ Males, young persons,¹⁶ blacks,¹⁷ Hispanics,¹⁸ residents of central cities, and the poor tend to have higher rates of victimization. Rates of victimization tend to decline with age. However, elderly victims are the most likely to be traumatized by their experiences, partly because they more physically vulnerable, but also because they are more likely to face assailants who are strangers and to be victimized in or near their own homes.¹⁹

Population characteristics and changes in them over time influence crime rates. Seventy-five million babies, the Baby Boom generation, were born in the United States from 1946 to 1964, 70 percent more people than were born during the previous two decades. By 1994, the Baby-Boom generation made up approximately one third of the U.S. population.²⁰ Increases in U.S. crime rates of the 1960s were caused in part by the Baby Boomers entering the crime-prone years—14 to 24—and decreases in U.S. crime rates in the 1980s were caused in part by Baby Boomers leaving the crime-prone years behind.²¹

Some of the demographic changes occurring in the nation as a whole—population growth, urbanization, and increases in population diversity—are not found to the same degree in Kentucky. Kentucky's population growth in the 1980s was sluggish, increasing only 0.7 percent throughout the decade (compared to a national increase of 8.7 percent). This stagnancy was caused in part by an out-migration of individuals in their early 20s.²² A reversal of this pattern of out-migration is underway, and predictions are that Kentucky will experience moderate population growth in the years ahead, an increase of 7 percent, or 240,000 persons, from 1990 to 2020.²³ Despite some population increase, Kentucky will continue to be primarily a rural state, and it will lack substantial racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.²⁴ In 1990, 92 percent of

¹³ Kentucky State Police. *Crime in Kentucky, 1995*.

¹⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). (1996). *Crime in the United States, 1995*. Washington, DC: USGPO, p. 58.

¹⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1994). *Criminal victimization in the United States: 1973-92 trends*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

¹⁶ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1991). *Teenage victims: a national crime survey report*. Washington, DC: USGPO, p. 1.

¹⁷ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1994). *Young black male victims*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

¹⁸ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1990). *Hispanic victims*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

¹⁹ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1994). *Elderly crime victims*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

²⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1996). *65+ in the United States*. (Current Population Reports, Special Studies, P23-190). Washington, DC: USGPO, pp. 2-1, 2-2.

²¹ Walker, S. (1994). *Sense and nonsense about crime and drugs* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, p. 87.

²² Smith-Mello, M., Schirmer, P. (1994). *The context of change: trends, innovations and forces affecting Kentucky's future*. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, pp. 2-9.

²³ Price, M., Sawyer, T., Scobee, M. (1995). *How many Kentuckians: population forecasts 1995-2020*. Louisville, KY: Kentucky State Data Center, p.1.

²⁴ Smith-Mello, Schirmer. *The context of change*, 4-6.

Kentucky's population was classified as white, 7 percent as black, and the remainder from other categories (American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, Asian, Pacific Islander).²⁵ The homogeneity of the population, Kentucky's rural nature, and the gradual nature of its population growth all have a dampening effect on crime rates. Even Kentucky's major urban areas—Lexington and Louisville—are relatively safe. Based on the average rankings of the 1993 rates in six categories—violent crime, property crime, murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery—Lexington was ranked as the 17th safest city in the United States and Louisville as the 20th.²⁶

Economic well-being of a region is also an important variable in understanding its crime rates. Human nature does not develop in a vacuum. The experiences people have in institu-

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tions, homes, and communities shape them as individuals. The industrial revolution attracted people to U.S. cities who were looking for employment, decent wages, excitement, and new opportunities for growth and personal fulfillment.²⁷ Instead, what many of

them found was poverty, inequality, and restricted or nonexistent mobility. Orderly and secure communities became more difficult to maintain in the face of the social changes that were creating economic insecurity, social impoverishment, and communal disruption for some while visibly enriching others.²⁸ Some people became angry, frustrated, and aggressive, and they drifted away from the constraining influence of central institutions. Economically deprived groups are heavily involved in serious criminal offenses, especially violent street crime.²⁹

Poverty is higher in the South than in the Midwest, West, and Northeast, and it is quite persistent. Kentucky's poverty rate in 1989 was 19.0—almost one person in five lived in poverty—and the Commonwealth's rank was 46, which meant that only five states had higher rates of poverty.³⁰ Things were not much different 10 years earlier in 1979 when Kentucky's poverty rate was 17.6, and its rank was 45. Kentucky's poverty rate in 1969 was 22.9, and its rank was 46.³¹ In 1993, 20.4 percent of Kentuckians were classified as living in poverty.³² Poverty does not inevitably cause crime, and a great deal depends on how income is shared and how the poor view their lot and their relationship to the nonpoor. Crime flourishes when valued resources are unfairly divided, especially if the contrast between the rich and the poor is glaring.³³

A central challenge for governmental agencies in Kentucky is to find ways to raise citizens' incomes enough to promote greater prosperity and social equality.³⁴ Harsh inequality is unjust, damaging to human growth, and destructive of social order. Kentuckians in need require both incentives and supports to make it possible for them to prepare for, find, and successfully hold jobs that pay wages and salaries that enable a sense of accomplishment that makes law-abiding behavior and social conformity valuable and worthwhile.

²⁵ Cabinet for Economic Development. (1996). *Kentucky deskbook of economic statistics*. Frankfort, KY: Author., pp. 42-43.

²⁶ Morgan, K., Morgan, S., Quitno, N. (Eds.). (1995). *City crime rankings: crime in metropolitan America*. (xi). Lawrence, KS: Morgan Quitno.

²⁷ Sykes, G. (1980). *The future of crime*. Washington, DC: USGPO, p. 11.

²⁸ Currie E. (1989, March). Confronting crime: looking toward the twenty-first century *Justice Quarterly*, 6, 18.

²⁹ Hagan, J., Peterson, R. (Eds.). (1995). *Crime and inequality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

³⁰ See M. Fordham and D. Jacovitch in this volume for a detailed discussion of poverty in Kentucky.

³¹ Bureau of the Census. (1993, August). Poverty in the United States—changes between the censuses *Statistical Brief*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

³² Cabinet for Economic Development. *Kentucky deskbook of economic statistics*, 3.

³³ See A. Chandra in this volume for a detailed discussion on income inequality.

³⁴ Sebastian, B. (1996, March). *Scanning Kentucky 1995: the year in review*. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, 31.

Crime Trends and Public Policy

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994—Public Law 103-322—was enacted to control and prevent crime in the United States.³⁵ Because of the crime-control strategies it mandates, this law will serve as a foundation for many of the crime-related issues that will be at the top of the Kentucky agenda in the years ahead: domestic violence, the role of prisons, youth crime, guns, and community policing.³⁶

Domestic Violence in Kentucky. Domestic violence includes any of the following crimes when committed by one family member/partner against another: homicide, kidnapping, sex offenses, stalking, assault, and terroristic threatening.³⁷ In fiscal year (FY) 1995, the Department for Social Services received 21,089 spouse abuse reports.³⁸

A study of 510 Kentucky women who were battered by their partners shows that battered women often find themselves trapped in abusive relationships, not because they suffer from learned helplessness or battered-woman syndrome, but because of factors like poverty, low educational achievement, the absence of child care facilities, and the unavailability or inaccessibility of safe, affordable, alternate housing.³⁹ Battered women are geographically and socially isolated, economically dependent, and subordinated by a cultural tradition of patriarchy in which a man's home is viewed as his castle, and what he does there is viewed as his own business.⁴⁰ Those women who do manage to leave abusive relationships usually return and continue to be abused. If abused women find separate housing and their own jobs, they are usually successful in stopping their abuse.⁴¹ Victims of abuse must be supported in their movement toward greater self-reliance.⁴²

In principle, police could be powerful allies of abused women. However, some police officers are unwilling to intervene in domestic disputes and reluctant to arrest abusive partners.⁴³ Battered women who have summoned police for help strongly believe that Kentucky State Police officers do a far better job of handling domestic violence calls than do local police, probably because state police are more detached from rural communities and less likely to be compromised by familiarity with the abuser.⁴⁴

The Department for Social Services in the Cabinet for Families and Children is legally required to investigate all reported cases of child abuse, neglect, and dependency and to protect children from harm. In FY 1995, 63,313 children were reported as abused (physical and/or sexual), neglected, or dependent. Most of these children were under age 10 (71.65 percent), and just about half were female (50.62 percent) and half were male (49.28 percent).⁴⁵

Of particular concern to the Attorney General's Office is the sexual abuse of children. Thirty new victim advocate positions have been established throughout Kentucky under a \$1.6 million grant program. These victim advocates work in county and commonwealth attorneys' offices, rape crisis centers, and mental health agencies. Acting on proposals drafted by the Attorney General's Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, the 1994 General Assembly signed

³⁵ 103d Congress. (1994, September 13). *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*. Public Law 103-322.

³⁶ Kentucky Justice Cabinet. (Various Dates). *Project Briefs*. Frankfort, KY: Author.

³⁷ Attorney General's Task Force on Domestic Violence Crime. (1993, October). *Domestic violence fatalities—a statistical report*. Frankfort, KY: Office of the Attorney General.

³⁸ Department for Social Services. (1995). *Profile on Adult Abuse, Fiscal Year 1995*. Frankfort, KY: Author, 2.

³⁹ Websdale, N., Johnson, B. (forthcoming). Reducing domestic violence: the role of structural approaches. *Social Justice*.

⁴⁰ Websdale, N. (1995). Rural woman abuse: the voices of Kentucky women. In *Violence Against Women* (pp. 309-338). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

⁴¹ Websdale and Johnson. Reducing domestic violence.

⁴² Valum, M. (1995, October). How to help someone you love. *Domestic Violence Prevention*, 1, 1-4.

⁴³ Websdale, N. (1995). An ethnographic assessment of the policing of domestic violence in rural eastern Kentucky. *Social Justice*, 22, 111.

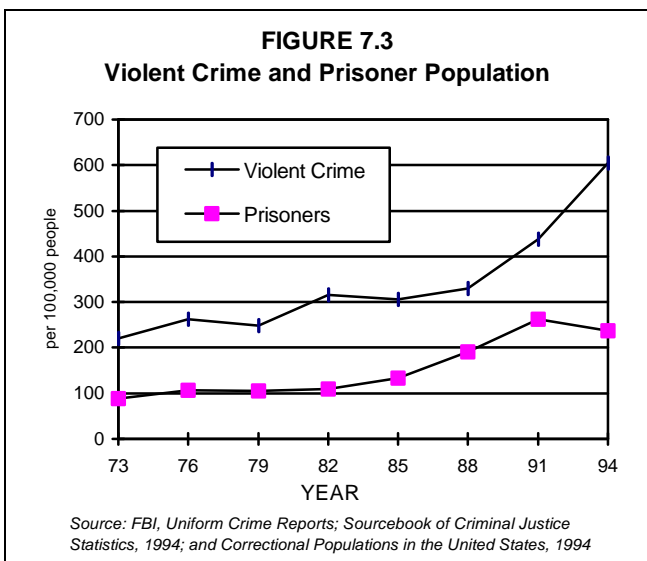
⁴⁴ Websdale, N. and Johnson, B. (1996, December). The policing of domestic violence in rural and urban areas: listening to voices of battered women. *Policing and Society*, 4, 1-18.

⁴⁵ Department for Social Services. (1996). *Profile on child abuse and neglect, fiscal year 1995, and trend charts, fiscal years 1988-1995*. Frankfort, KY: Author.

several bills into law, like SB 43, which creates a registry of convicted sexual offenders, and HB 96, which prohibits shock probation for serious sexual offenders.⁴⁶ Kentucky has almost fully implemented a statewide victim-notification system in which victims of crime, law-enforcement personnel, and others who need to know are informed 72 hours in advance about the release of prisoners.⁴⁷

In the first report of its kind, the Attorney General's Office and the Prosecutors' Advisory Council provided data on the sexual abuse of children in Kentucky. During FY 1995, 1,588 cases of child sexual abuse were opened. Fifty-two percent (828) of these cases were sent to Circuit Court, and 48 percent (760) went to District Court. Of the cases that had been closed in Circuit Court at the time of the report, 75 percent resulted in a guilty verdict on at least one charge; of the closed cases in District Court at the time of the report, 71 percent resulted in an indictment or guilty verdict on a least one charge.⁴⁸

Soaring Prison Populations. For over two decades, starting in 1973, prisons in the United States have been experiencing a tremendous expansion, and the United States now has one of the highest incarceration rates in the entire world.⁴⁹ Many things contribute to soaring prison populations—the war on drugs, the Baby Boom, mandatory sentencing laws, longer sentences, and parole boards keeping felons behind bars longer. However, the major factor fueling the increase in prison populations is the predilection to send convicted felons to prison.⁵⁰ Forty-



seven percent of state prisoners in the United States in 1994 were being held for violent crimes, 23 percent for property crimes, and 22 percent for drugs. Public-order offenses and miscellaneous crimes made up the rest.⁵¹

For most of the 1980s in Kentucky, spending on public safety—corrections and the state police—was the fastest growing of the major budget items, with most of the increased funding going to the Department of Corrections. In FY 1976, the state police received more money than corrections. Now the Department of Corrections receives more than twice as much money as state

police agencies receive, even though the Kentucky State Police started receiving a considerable part of its funding from the road fund after FY 1988. These long-term shifts in funding priorities are caused more by changes in sentencing and judicial policies than by rising crime rates.⁵² The long-term projections are that spending on police and corrections will increase to 6.5 percent of the general fund by the beginning of the next century.⁵³

⁴⁶ Office of the Attorney General. (1995). *Biennial Report 1993-1995*. Frankfort, KY: Author, 5-6.

⁴⁷ Kentucky Department of Corrections. (1995). *In Review 1994-1995*. Frankfort, KY: Author, 30.

⁴⁸ Prosecutors Advisory Council. (1996, May 31). *Child sexual abuse data collection*. Frankfort, KY: Office of the Attorney General, 3.

⁴⁹ Horn, P. (1991). Caging America. *Dollars and Sense*, 169, 12-15; 22.

⁵⁰ Langan, P.A. (1991, March 29). America's soaring prison population. *Science*, 251, 1568-1573.

⁵¹ Brown, J., Gilliard, D., Snell, T., Stephan, J., Wilson, D.J. (1996). *Correctional populations in the United States, 1994*. Washington, DC: USGPO, 11.

⁵² Schirmer, P., Childress, M.T., Nett, C.C. (1996). *\$5.8 billion and change*. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, 13-14.

⁵³ Schirmer, Childress, and Nett. (1996, April). *Research Brief*.

The evidence is not particularly persuasive that increases in either the use of prison or the severity of sentences will have much impact on the crime rate. In order for the threat of prison to stop criminal activities, the probability of going to prison following the commission of a crime would have to be higher than it is now. Law enforcement agencies across the nation only cleared 21 percent of serious crimes by arrest in 1995.⁵⁴ Because the chances of being arrested are low, making prison more forbidding by increasing the length or severity of sentences will have little impact on fluctuations in the crime rate. If prisons have any deterrent effect at all, it is due to increases in the certainty of punishment, not its severity.⁵⁵

Prison populations in southern states have grown the fastest.⁵⁶ As of January 3, 1995, Kentucky had 10,888 inmates housed in a variety of institutions across the state—maximum, medium, minimum security; private prisons; a boot camp; community service centers; and others. Sixty-four percent of the inmates are white and 36 percent are black. Most inmates are incarcerated for violent crimes (39 percent), followed by property crimes (27 percent), drug crimes (18 percent), sex crimes (13 percent), and miscellaneous crimes (3 percent). The median age of inmates is 32 years, and practically all inmates are male (94 percent).⁵⁷ The average cost to incarcerate a Kentucky inmate in FY 1994-1995 was \$37.30 per day or \$13,613.30 a year. Costs of incarceration were highest in the Kentucky State Reformatory and lowest in the Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex.⁵⁸

It is likely a correctional establishment will always exist, but it is also very likely that its nature and function will change over time. Penal practices develop from the connections between political, social, and economic factors in a community, and many changes within the correctional establishment are traceable to factors outside prison. Decriminalization of some current offenses, the discovery of an effective drug-treatment program, or a reduction in criminal violence would significantly reduce future prison populations. The rising costs of imprisonment have led to a search for sanctions that are still punishing but that can be used in place of prisons.⁵⁹

Youth Crime in Kentucky. In 1995, 8,612 people under 18 were arrested in Kentucky for the commission of murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. An additional 13,283 individuals under 18 were arrested for crimes like arson, vandalism, liquor law violations, drunkenness, and disorderly conduct.⁶⁰ Because of changes in the way the Commonwealth now records arrests (based on the number of *persons* arrested), *Crime in Kentucky* cannot be used at this time to make long-term comparisons. However, the FBI's 1995 Uniform Crime Report indicates that nationwide, from 1991 to 1995, juvenile arrests rose 20 percent (while adult arrests increased 2 percent).⁶¹

When young people are arrested, especially for serious crimes, it seems particularly tragic. However, the situation may not be as grim as it appears. Statistics on arrest are not particularly good indicators of criminal involvement, especially for minors. Juveniles are overrepresented because they often commit less sophisticated crimes (such as vandalism and larceny), and they are usually easier to find and arrest than adults.⁶² One thing is true, juvenile arrests are still a relatively small percentage of all arrests, both in the nation and in Kentucky. Nationwide, 18.7 percent of the arrests for violent crimes involved people under 18 (1995),⁶³ and in Kentucky,

⁵⁴ FBI. (1996). *Crime in the United States 1995*. Washington, DC: USGPO 197.

⁵⁵ Blumstein, A. (1995). Prisons. In J.Q. Wilson and J. Petersilia (Eds.), *Crime* (pp. 387-419). San Francisco, CA: ICS Press.

⁵⁶ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1995, August). *Prisoners in 1994*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

⁵⁷ Kentucky Department of Corrections. (1995) *Profile: Institutional Population*. Frankfort, KY: Author, 1-3.

⁵⁸ Kentucky Department of Corrections. (1995) *In Review 1994-1995*. Frankfort, KY: Justice Cabinet, 37.

⁵⁹ Zvekic, U. (Ed.). (1994). *Alternatives to imprisonment in comparative perspective*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

⁶⁰ Kentucky State Police. *Crime in Kentucky 1995*, 44.

⁶¹ FBI. *Crime in the United States 1995*, 207.

⁶² Albanese, J. (1993). *Dealing with delinquency* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

⁶³ FBI. *Crime in the United States 1995*, 218.

13.87 percent of those people arrested for violent crimes were under 18 (1995).⁶⁴ Self-report studies of juveniles indicate that nearly all juveniles break the law some time, but only a small percentage engage in persistent and serious crime.⁶⁵

House Bill 117 passed the Kentucky House of Representatives with no dissenting votes (96 RS BR 889).⁶⁶ About two weeks later the bill unanimously passed the Senate. It was enacted on Monday, April 1, 1996. The bill presents a get-tough approach to juvenile crime. It

Offense	1985	1990	1995
Murder	9.7	5.3	19.4
Forcible Rape	10.2	10.8	15.6
Robbery	14.9	15.3	26.3
Aggravated Assault	7.1	6.4	11.2
Burglary	35.3	27.8	29.9
Larceny	27.9	24.3	33.2
Motor Vehicle Theft	41.1	34.3	41.7
Arson	29.4	38.2	53.6
Violence	8.7	7.6	13.9
Property	30.4	26.2	33.6
Index Crimes	25.3	19.3	26.7

Source: Data are compiled from FBI's Uniform Crime Reports.

mandates severe penalties for serious crimes and makes it easier for juveniles to be tried as adults. Parents can be forced to pay court costs and restitution for their children's crimes, and responsibility for youth crime shifted to a Department of Juvenile Justice, established to identify youth at risk, initiate programs of rehabilitation, develop detention facilities, and prevent juvenile crime. During FY 1994, 12,480 juveniles were admitted to detention centers, holding facilities, and county jails in Kentucky. Eighty-eight percent of them were categorized as public offenders, and the remainder were either status offenders (6.96 percent) or traffic offenders (4.75 percent).⁶⁷

The search is on to find affordable, effective alternatives to prison for juvenile offenders. One controversial policy is the enactment of laws that hold parents legally responsible for the crimes and delinquencies of their children. Depending on the

situation, parents can be counseled, fined, or jailed for the trespasses of their youngsters.⁶⁸ Boot camps have become another popular item on many delinquency-prevention agendas. Boot camps generally involve a short period of incarceration for first-time offenders convicted of nonviolent crimes. Camp inmates follow a rigid schedule of physical training, work, and life skills development. Postincarceration aftercare services are supposed to be coordinated with boot camp experiences.⁶⁹

Kentucky's shock incarceration boot camp, as of January 3, 1995, held 49 offenders—55 percent of the inmates were black and 45 percent were white. Most were confined for property offenses (43 percent), followed by drugs (37 percent), and violent offenses (10 percent). The median age of inmates was 23.⁷⁰ Kentucky's boot camp consists of a four-month program of intense supervision and military drill. A typical day starts at 4:30 a.m. and ends at 9:30 p.m., during which time inmates receive educational instruction, substance abuse information, life skills training, and information about victims of crime. The program seems effective—83 percent make parole—and those who complete the program but then break the law again are almost always guilty of a technical violation, usually a positive urine test.

⁶⁴ FBI. *Crime in the United States 1995*, 268.

⁶⁵ Albanese. *Dealing With Delinquency*, 29.

⁶⁶ House of Representatives. (1996, January 2). House Bill No. 117 *In House*.

⁶⁷ Justice Cabinet. *In Review 1994-1995*, 47-48.

⁶⁸ Smolowe, J. (1996, May 20). Parenting on trial. *Time*, 50.

⁶⁹ Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, p. 1818.

⁷⁰ Department of Corrections. *Profile institutional population*, 64-66.

The jury is still out on the effectiveness of boot camps.⁷¹ No one has shown that boot camps can consistently turn serious lawbreakers away from crime. Well-run boot camps can teach self-reliance and some valuable life skills, while boot camps that demean and abuse juveniles to scare them straight may do more harm than good. Troubled youth may get the idea that abuse—verbal and physical—is perfectly acceptable. If it were not, why would their guards use it so often? Boot camps may change some youth, but no one knows for how long or in what direction.⁷² A consensus is developing that intensive programs outside institutions help juvenile delinquents more than incarceration in prisons and/or boot camps.⁷³ Research suggests that youth who are imprisoned are more likely to continue in their criminality after release than youth who are given alternate sanctions.⁷⁴

Youth have special needs that require more than a uniform get-tough approach. They need to see some value in lawful behavior, and they need to develop a strong sense of self-worth. When adolescents carry weapons, steal from others, act violently, use and deal drugs, and join gangs, they do these things because they see little value in conventional behavior.⁷⁵ Some juveniles may reach the point where they are willing to do practically anything to practically anybody. Their lives are aimless, their bonds to society are weak, and their stake in conformity is absent. A two-year study by the RAND Corporation discovered preventive measures to encourage high-risk youth to finish school and to teach more effective parenting skills to the parents of violent youth are more successful and more economical than incarceration in reducing youth crime.⁷⁶

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Guns and Self-Protection. On Friday, March 29, 1996, Governor Paul Patton signed House Bill 40, the concealed weapons bill, into law. Its purpose is to give citizens more self-protection against predatory individuals. Citizens 21 years of age or older, who meet certain criteria, and who buy a permit from the state to carry a concealed weapon, may now carry a hidden firearm. Some restrictions apply—many businesses, universities, and schools prohibit the carrying of weapons by anyone other than law enforcement officials—and applicants must take a course of gun instruction to qualify for a permit. The ink was barely dry on the bill when just the kind of thing that made critics nervous came to pass. An employee of McDonald's Restaurant in Richmond was washing the outer wall of the eatery. He leaned over to rinse his scrub brush, and a .22-caliber pistol fell from his shirt pocket, hit the ground, discharged, and shot him in the throat.⁷⁷ He survived the wound, but things could have turned out far worse. The man could have been carrying a more potent weapon, or someone could have been killed.

Will concealed weapons give Kentuckians protection against crime? It is still too early to tell, but research shows that a gun in the home is far more likely to be used to kill a member of that household than it is to be used to kill an intruder in self-defense. One study of 388 home

⁷¹ Walker. *Sense and nonsense about crime and drugs*, 223-225.

⁷² Bentayou, F. (1995). *How should America deal with young offenders?* San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 212-219.

⁷³ Currie, E. (1994, January 31). What's wrong with the crime bill? *The Nation*, 118.

⁷⁴ Travis, J. (1996, February). Alternative sanctions in Germany. *National Institute of Justice Research Preview*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

⁷⁵ Wright, J., Sheley, J. (1995). Society should reduce young people's need for guns. *How should America deal with young offenders?* San Diego, CA: Greenhaven, 192-193.

⁷⁶ Greenwood, P.W. et al. (1996). *Diverting children from a life of crime: measuring costs and benefits*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

⁷⁷ Delgado, V. (1995, March 29). Man accidentally shoots self in throat at work with alleged concealed weapon. *The Richmond Register*, A1; A2.

homicides, half of which involved firearms, in the Memphis, Seattle and Cleveland areas, between 1987 and 1992 found that 51 percent of the killings took place in the context of a romantic triangle or argument, and 77 percent of the victims were killed by a relative or acquaintance. The authors concluded that firearms are too dangerous to keep in the home, even for purposes of protection.⁷⁸ However, this study only showed that guns in the home increase the levels of violence. It did not show that guns in the home are ineffective as a form of self-protection.

Most gun owners do report that guns make them feel safe from harm, and they do believe that their guns will help protect them from criminals.⁷⁹ Apparently, these owners are not kidding themselves. Gun-armed defenders usually face a criminal who is unarmed, so they do manage to deter a crime, often without firing a shot.⁸⁰ We may provisionally conclude that the defensive use of guns by civilians can keep them from becoming victims of violent crime.

The demonstration that the possession of a weapon averts violent crime does not prove that people ought to own one. At some point, individuals must deposit their concealed weapons somewhere, and it is at this point that even the most responsible owner loses some control over his or her weapon. Research by David Brent and his colleagues indicates that firearms in the home increase the chances of a troubled adolescent taking his or her own life, no matter how carefully the owners store their weapons.⁸¹

Kentuckians who carry concealed weapons will fear crime and criminals less, we may predict. Some will use their weapons successfully to protect others, themselves, and their possessions from predatory individuals. However, the number of gun-related accidents and suicides should increase if substantial numbers of people carry guns and store them in their homes.

Community Policing. Policing used to be more proactive and community-oriented. Constables walked the beat and knew the comings and goings of residents of the community. They worked to prevent crime and eliminate criminogenic conditions by making sure that doors were locked, that suspicious individuals were questioned, and that residents were taking care of themselves. One reason for the shift from foot patrols to cruisers was budgetary—officers could cover more territory if they were in motor vehicles. Another reason was that foot patrols invited corruption—they made it easier for police officers to accept bribes or solicit payoffs.⁸²

Americans do have confidence in the police. A Gallup poll from 1995 discovered that 88 percent of the sample had a “great deal/quite a lot,” or “some” confidence in the police.⁸³ The confidence in police was higher than the confidence in church or organized religion, the U.S. Presidency, the U.S. Supreme Court, Congress, or the criminal justice system.⁸⁴ The only factor that seemed to diminish confidence levels was minority status—nonwhites were less inclined to trust police.⁸⁵

Does community policing reduce crime rates? Does it improve citizens’ feelings of safety and security? Most research indicates that community policing has a minor influence on crime levels in an area, but it does seem to calm citizens’ fears in communities plagued by crime.⁸⁶ When police do make a difference in crime rates, it is usually because they have attacked some

⁷⁸ Kellerman, A., et al. (1993, October 7). Gun ownership as a risk factor for homicide in the home. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 1084-1091.

⁷⁹ Kleck, G. (1991). *Point blank: guns and violence in America*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 120.

⁸⁰ Kleck. *Point Blank*, 124.

⁸¹ Brent, D., et al. (1991, December 4). The presence and accessibility of firearms in the homes of adolescent suicides: a case control study. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 226, 2989-2995.

⁸² Worsnop, R. (1991, September 6). Police brutality. *The CQ Researcher*, 1, 633-656.

⁸³ Maguire and Pastore. *Sourcebook*, 147.

⁸⁴ Maguire and Pastore. *Sourcebook*, 145.

⁸⁵ Maguire and Pastore. *Sourcebook*, 147.

⁸⁶ Walker, S. (1992). *The police in America*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

risk factors for crime, like the illegal ownership of weapons.⁸⁷ The resurgence of an interest in community policing implicitly acknowledges that the quality of life in communities must improve before crime will decrease.

Community policing is becoming more popular all across the nation, but it has always been an integral part of police work in Kentucky. Many police officers in the Commonwealth work in towns and small cities where a sense of community is already present, and the officers are familiar with the residents, their problems, and the identity of troublemakers. However, if community policing is carried too far, it can become oppressive. Community residents may wish to be left alone to deal with their own problems, and they may have a generalized suspicion of police.⁸⁸

At some distant point, police may be replaced by physicians, theologians, psychologists, social workers, or urban planners. However, for now the police will carry the burden for a society that either cannot or will not change, and they will remain an essential part of the U.S. crime-fighting apparatus. Despite the many changes in police activities, organization, and technology, police generally continue to do what they have always done. They try to insulate themselves from too much interference from superiors; they try to protect other officers; they try to do whatever they believe is proper and just in surroundings that have the potential for great personal injury; they try to make arrests and provide services when they think it will do some good; and they try to uphold the peace the best they can.⁸⁹ These features of police activity are likely to remain constant into the foreseeable future.

Crime and Punishment in the 21st Century

Physicist Hans Bethe insisted that prediction is very hazardous, especially when it concerns the future.⁹⁰ We can appreciate the truth of his assertion by considering one effort from the last century to gaze into the future. In 1893, the American Press Association (APA), a ready-print syndicate based in New York City, commissioned 74 distinguished Americans to prepare short essays in response to questions about how things would look in the United States 100 years in the future, in 1993.⁹¹

These futurists of the 1890s believed that by 1993, technology would have solved all of society's ills, and human nature would have changed for the better. While some predictions were correct, most were not. John Habberton, editor and author, predicted the disappearance of insurance companies (there will be no house fires because brick, stone, and iron will replace wood houses) and the disuse of stimulants (because of proper cooking and better living habits). He insisted all marriages would be happy because men and women unfit for marriage would be executed. The journalist Junius Henri Browne believed that the law would become so simple the number of attorneys would be significantly reduced. He also believed criminals would be less severely punished and that their numbers would decrease because of educational advancements. The forecasters' predictions were incorrect primarily because human nature is not quite as pliable as they seemed to think, and technological improvements will transform human relationships only so much.

As we move into the next century, changes in society will create new crimes, and the criminal justice system will be expected to respond to them.⁹² The rates of most street crimes

⁸⁷ Sherman, L.W. (1995). The police. In J.Q. Wilson and J. Petersilia (Eds.) *Crime* (pp. 327-348). San Francisco, CA: ICS Press.

⁸⁸ Weisheit, R., Falcone, D., Wells, L.E. (1994, October) *Rural crime and rural policing*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

⁸⁹ Crank, J. (1995). The community-policing movement of the early twenty-first century. In J. Klofas and S. Stojkovic (Eds.), *Crime and justice in the year 2010* (pp. 107-126). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

⁹⁰ Currie. *Confronting crime*, 94.

⁹¹ Walter, D. (Ed.). (1992). *Today then*. Helena, MT: American & World Geographic Publishing, 23.

⁹² Wells, L.E. (1995). Explaining crime in the year 2010. In J. Klofas and S. Stojkovic (Eds.) *Crime and Justice in the Year 2010*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

will probably go down, and the rates of white-collar crimes will probably go up. Females and the elderly will increase their participation in criminal activities. Cities will be safer, and small towns and rural areas will be more dangerous. The computer will become a major site of criminal activities. Increases in the size of the elderly population will stimulate the growth of medical swindles and insurance frauds.⁹³ The rates of domestic violence, rape, and child abuse are likely to increase as victims are encouraged to report their experiences to police and find better support services.⁹⁴ Criminal organizations may eventually control the governments of entire countries.⁹⁵ A shift to a cash-free society will make theft and robbery difficult and the illegal or unauthorized transfer of money easier to detect and prosecute.⁹⁶

It is likely that new technology will be found to control crimes and criminals in the next century. For example, auto theft may become obsolete. Auto-Avenger is a remote-controlled device that shocks a thief attempting to drive off in a stolen car after it immobilizes the vehicle.⁹⁷ Weapons of the future may be safer. A computerized safety lock on a gun that reads the user's fingerprints or a gun locked by a combination would make it difficult for an unauthorized individual to use the weapon. Nonlethal weapons that immobilize an individual until he or she is apprehended are already available (capture nets, immobilizers, or tasers), and they could become more prominent as the police use of deadly force is restricted.⁹⁸ Criminals who do not pose an immediate threat to others might be controlled through "walking prisons" in which an offender's movements are electronically monitored to keep him or her from committing future crimes. Criminals could be required to wear implants that register their emotions and release drugs to sedate them if they get into trouble.⁹⁹ The physical addiction to drugs might be remedied in the future by the discovery of a drug that breaks an addict's habit.¹⁰⁰

Future Implications

The criminal justice system has an important role to play in combating crime, and few will dispute that we need an effective and efficient one. However, no amount of police, prisons, laws, or harsher and longer sentences will be able to do much to achieve the safe, secure, and viable society that we seek. We will not fix the crime problem with legislation and imprisonment. Crime exists because of fundamental social contradictions and the impact that these have on the human spirit and personal development.

A deteriorating community, where people know little about their neighbors and lack concern for them, offers great opportunities for predatory crime.¹⁰¹ Not only will neighbors have little incentive to treat each other with kindness and respect, they will have little incentive to help each other in times of need.¹⁰² What we are seeing in many parts of the United States is the impact of decades of neglect, economic deprivation, and social impoverishment on communities, families, and individuals.¹⁰³ The quality of the social environment must become a top priority in the nation, and it must remain an important item on the political agenda for the years ahead.¹⁰⁴

⁹³ Bennett, G. (1987). *Crimewarps: the future of crime in America*. Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday.

⁹⁴ Hagan, F. (1994). *Introduction to criminology*. (3rd ed.). Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 545.

⁹⁵ Moore, R., Jr. (1994, September-October). Wiseguys: smarter criminals and smarter crime in the 21st century. *The Futurist*, 28, 33-37.

⁹⁶ Warwick, D. (1992, November-December). The cash-free society. *The Futurist*, 26, 19-22.

⁹⁷ Shock treatment for carjackers. (1993, March-April) *The Futurist*, 21, 5.

⁹⁸ Swank, C. (1993, Spring). The police in the 21st century: hypotheses for the future. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 17, 106-120.

⁹⁹ Winkler, M. (1993, July-August). Walking prisons. *The Futurist*, 27, 34-36.

¹⁰⁰ Cole, G. (1995). Criminal justice in the twenty-first century. In J. Klofas and S. Stojkovic (Eds.) *Crime and justice in the year 2010* (pp. 4-17). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

¹⁰¹ Felson, M. (1986). Linking criminal choices, routine activities, informal control, and criminal outcomes. In *The reasoning criminal: rational choice perspectives on offending*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 123.

¹⁰² Smith-Mello, M. (1996). Community, trust key to our economic and social future. *Foresight*, 3.

¹⁰³ Currie. *Confronting crime*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ Currie. *Confronting crime*, 23.

We in Kentucky might rest on our laurels and do nothing, taking pride in our relatively low rates of crime. However, our quality of life might be improved far more if we resolve that one crime is one crime too many and then work together to eliminate some of the more brutalizing social conditions—poverty, inequality, unemployment, prejudice, discrimination, lack of opportunity—that can be the breeding grounds for both crime and human suffering. Levels of social support must increase so that citizens develop a trust in each other and a personal interest in the well-being of their communities. High social support seems to reduce criminogenic strains, and it provides the social capital needed to resist criminal involvement.¹⁰⁵

Kentuckians will find themselves in the crossfire between what works and what they can afford, as well as between what works and what is consistent with their values. Different groups have different understandings about the causes of crime and what should be done to control it, and they often clash with one another over goals and means. The crime problem cannot be separated from other social problems, and social problems cannot be separated from other happenings in a society. The first step toward taking crime seriously is to renew our commitment to the long-term challenge of strengthening families, integrating neighborhoods, building communities, improving social institutions, and providing rewarding jobs for all who need them. At some point we must realize that individual change must be based on sociocultural change or it will fail. This crime control strategy is the only one that has any chance of long-term success.

¹⁰⁵ Cullen, F. (1994, December). Social support as an organizing concept for criminology: presidential address to the academy of criminal justice sciences. *Justice Quarterly*, 11, 527-559.

