

Exploring the Data:  
Online Supplement for  
*Measuring Crime: Behind the Statistics*

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Here are links to the data sources referenced in *Measuring Crime: Behind the Statistics* by Sharon L. Lohr.

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Click on the blue link to go to each website referenced. The websites in this document were last accessed on February 27, 2019.

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## Chapter 2. Homicide

### Law Enforcement Statistics Data Sources

Statistics from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) are available from several sources. The main website for crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is [UCR Publications](#). This website contains links to statistical tables in the volumes of *Crime in the United States* as well as data that are updated as new information comes in.

The volumes of [Crime in the United States](#) provide the FBI's annual reports of crime known to law enforcement agencies. These used to be printed in books but now are available online. Clicking on a year, for example, [2016](#) gives links to tabulations of

crime statistics for that year. These tables report the estimated number of homicides for the nation as a whole for each year, as well as for different regions, states, metropolitan areas, and county, city, university, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

In 2018, the FBI launched the [Crime Data Explorer](#), which contains counts and rates for homicide and other crimes. The Crime Data Explorer presents data and statistics that are updated as new information accrues. You can also download data sets from this site. The tables in *Crime in the United States* are static (once published, the numbers are fixed), while those in the *Crime Data Explorer* can change over time.

As of February 2019, the Crime Data Explorer does not contain the expanded homicide data, but the website states it is “coming soon.”

[Easy Access to the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports](#) is an online tool for obtaining data and summaries from the Supplementary Homicide Reports on Age/Sex/Race of Victims and Offenders, Relationship between Victim and Offender, and Weapons Used, from 1980 to 2016. Other data tools in the “Easy Access” series are listed (with links) in the [Office of Justice Programs Data Analysis Tools](#).

[Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data: Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-2015](#) provides the full data sets from the Supplementary Homicide Reports.

Fox and Swatt created a version of the Supplementary Homicide Reports using multiple imputation, available at [Uniform Crime Reports \[United States\]: Supplementary Homicide Reports With Multiple Imputation, Cumulative Files 1976-2005](#).

[The UCR data tool](#) provides an easy way of obtaining tables of statistics from *Crime in the United States*, from 1960 to 2014 (more recent years are not available from this data tool). The webpage explains how to generate the tables. It also has links to other data analysis tools.

## **Vital Statistics (death certificate) data sources**

[National Vital Statistics System Mortality Data](#). This link takes you to the main page of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) mortality data page, with further links to reports and data sets.

[CDC Fatal Injury Reports](#). The CDC Fatal Injury Reports website allows you to calculate numbers of homicides by race/age/sex, type of weapon, Census region, and other variables.

[CDC Wonder](#). The CDC Wonder system also allows you to find homicide statistics based on death certificates. Click on “Detailed Mortality” or “Compressed Mortality,” then select the unit of geography and demographic subsets you want to study. To obtain the data for Figure 2-2, I grouped the results by race and year. The tricky part is narrowing the causes of death to those for homicide, under “Select cause of death.” For 1999–2016, homicides are given by the ICD–10 codes \*U01\*U02 (terrorism), X85–Y09 (assault), and Y87.1 (sequelae of assault). Click on the button for ICD–10, then select V01–Y89 and click on Open Fully. Do the same for the category containing \*U01 and \*U02. Now click on X85–Y09 (Assault), then scroll down and CTRL-Click on Y87.1 (Sequelae of Assault). To add the terrorism deaths, CTRL-click on \*U01 and \*U02. For these years, if you also want to include justifiable homicides (called legal interventions in the CDC data), also select codes Y35.0–Y35.4, Y35.6–Y35.7, and Y89.0. (Code Y35.5 is legal executions and thus is excluded from justifiable homicide statistics.)

For years 1979–1998, homicides are given by the ICD–9 codes E960–E969. The justifiable homicides (legal interventions) for these years are codes E970–E977. You can also look at specific types of homicides, such as those in which the death was caused by a firearm, and study patterns by month, by day of week, and by whether an autopsy was performed.

## Police Department data sources

Many police departments post their own crime statistics and databases. You can usually find these through an internet search engine by searching for “crime statistics [city name].” This search easily gives the official crime statistics pages for [New York City](#), [Philadelphia](#), [Phoenix](#), and [Houston](#), as well as most other cities. Make sure you go to the official statistics site of the police department. There are many other data sites that claim to give crime statistics; some of these simply repeat the official statistics, but others may have unknown sourcing.

The [Police Data Initiative](#) has links to the more than 130 law enforcement agencies that have made data sets available to the public.

The Chicago crime map used in the text was created from the spreadsheet of all Chicago crimes from 2001 to the present made available at the [Chicago Data Portal](#),

which also allows you to download data about other aspects of Chicago life (for example, building permits, education data, and information about parks) that can be studied in relation to neighborhood crime statistics.

## US Census Data

Data from the decennial US Census and the American Community Survey can be downloaded from [factfinder.census.gov](https://factfinder.census.gov). These are useful if you want to compare homicide statistics for states or cities with other statistics about the US population such as demographic composition, poverty, type of household, and educational attainment.

## Chapter 3. Police Statistics

The UCR links given for Chapter 2 also contain the UCR data for other types of crime.

The NIBRS data sets are available from the [Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research](#). Search for “NIBRS” to find the data sets. You need to use statistical software to be able to analyze the data sets, but an online data analysis tool is available for some years. You can create simple tabulations of NIBRS data for 2014, for example, from [ICPSR Data set 36398](#), for offenses, victims, and offenders. Click on the “simple crosstabs/frequency” link for the data set you are interested in.

The [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(OJJDP\)](#) has another online tool for analyzing NIBRS data, called [Easy Access to NIBRS Victims \(EZANIBRS\)](#). You can compute statistics of the number of offenses in the NIBRS data classified by type of offense, characteristics of victim, characteristics of offender, weapon used, location, and other characteristics.

NIBRS data for participating states are also available for download from the FBI website at <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/downloads-and-docs>.

Be careful when you use the [Crime Data Explorer](#) NIBRS statistics, however: in some states only a handful of agencies participate in NIBRS and those are often unrepresentative of the state. For example, when I checked on 2016 statistics for Arizona in February 2019, the Crime Data Explorer listed 470 violent crime offenses per 100,000 people, for a total of 32,542 violent offenses for the Arizona population

of 6,908,642 people. The Arizona NIBRS statistics, however, listed 902 violent crime offenses. Why so low? Only 5 agencies in Arizona participated in NIBRS that year.

Make sure when comparing NIBRS statistics across years that the same set of agencies participated both years.

## Chapters 4–6. National Crime Victimization Survey

**NCVS reports.** The [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) (BJS) produces numerous reports based on statistics from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

**NVAT.** The BJS provides an online tool that allows you to calculate statistics from the NCVS for 1993 and later. The [NCVS Victimization Analysis Tool \(NVAT\)](#)<sup>1</sup> allows the user to obtain estimates of the number and rates of different types of victimizations.

NVAT is easy to use, and will calculate statistics about total numbers of victimizations, victimization rates, and percentages of victimizations with specific characteristics. You can look at relationships between victimization and up to two other characteristics: for example, you can generate a table of annual estimated number of aggravated assaults for each sex and age group.

For each type of statistic (number, rate, or percent), NVAT also produces a table of standard errors. The standard error is approximately half of the margin of error, so to get the margin of error for a statistic, multiply the standard error by 2.

**Public-use NCVS data files.** As useful as NVAT is, its statistics are limited to the variables in the drop-down menus. If you can find the information you need from the NVAT, I encourage you to do that. However, if you want information about more detailed crime categories or police response to incidents, or if you want to estimate changes over time along with their margins of error, or if you want to count multiple offenses per incident (like NIBRS does), you need to dive into the full data set.

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<sup>1</sup>Government agencies are famous for their use of acronyms, but few have exceeded the achievement of the BJS in nesting the acronym NCVS within the acronym NVAT.

Public-use data files of the NCVS can be obtained from the [International Consortium of Political and Social Research](#). You need statistical software and experience at analyzing data from large complex surveys to extract information from these datasets, however. The NCVS data sets are among the most challenging survey data to analyze—to estimate victimization rates, you need to merge separate data sets to obtain the numerator and denominator, and navigate the different weights used for households, persons, and victimization incidents. This is not for the faint-hearted.

## Chapter 8. Sexual Assault

The Uniform Crime Report and National Crime Victimization Survey statistics and data sets on sexual assault can be found at the web pages mentioned earlier.

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reports can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/index.html>. As of February 2019, the most recent year for which public-use data were available was 2010: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/34305>. However, much of the information in the data is not available to the general public, but only to persons at research institutions.

The US Department of Health and Human Services issues an annual report on [Child Maltreatment](#), which includes statistics on sexual abuse of children known to Child Protective Services agencies. Cornell University maintains the [National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect](#); the FAQs tell how to order a data set. The CDC also provides links to [data sets](#) about child abuse and neglect.

## Chapter 9. Fraud

The NCVS data sets on fraud and identity theft are available from the [Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research](#) (ICPSR). The 2014 data are at <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/36044>

The FBI reports data on fraud through the NIBRS program.

Most other organizations that study fraud do not make the data sets available, and the information is available to the general public only through reports.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Consumer Sentinel reports can be found at the FTC web site at <https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/consumer-sentinel-network/reports>.

## Chapter 10. Big Data and Crime Statistics

The 2015 and 2016 data sets on persons killed by police collected by *The Guardian* are available online at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/series/counted-us-police-killings>. The *The Washington Post*'s data are available from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/national/police-shootings-2019/>.

## Chapter 11. Crime Statistics, 1915 and Beyond

Statistics from the [National Violent Death Reporting System](#), linking information from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, and toxicology reports, are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/nvdrs.html>.