

Chapter Two

The History of Measuring Crime

There were, of course, crimes before statisticians occupied this territory, but it may be doubted whether there were crime rates.

Porter (1995:37)

The 20th century has been referred to as “the First Measured Century” (Public Broadcasting System 2000). During the past 100 years or so, U.S. citizens became “the most energetic measurers of social life that ever lived. . . . They pioneered the measurement of facets of American life that had never been systematically counted before, such as crime, love, food, fun, religion, and work” (Caplow, Hicks, and Wattenberg 2000). Just a few examples will illustrate the range of topics measured: in 1900, approximately 1 in 6 infants died before his or her first birthday, compared to 1 in 141 in 1999; less than 1 out of 10 men was unmarried in 1900, compared to 1 out of 3 in 1997; only 13 percent of U.S. adolescents completed high school in 1900, compared with 83 percent in 1998; in 1904, there were 69 state and federal prisoners per 100,000 population, whereas the corresponding rate was 462 in 1992.

It is certainly true that the measurement of social phenomena has become more sophisticated and extensive over time. Today’s general public is

virtually bombarded with information on an ever-expanding range of topics, yet such measurement has a long history, dating to the beginning of Greek and Roman civilizations. More to the point here, although the first national police statistics in the United States were not published until 1930, alternative measures of crime appeared much earlier, both in the United States and in other nations.

In this chapter, we discuss the development of statistics on crime, both cross-nationally and historically. We first address "official" statistics on crime, examining their sources and how they were often used uncritically by social scientists and individuals who wrote articles in the popular media to comment on crime and its causes. We then move to a discussion of how a growing realization of the inadequacies of these official statistics led to the development of alternative measures of crime and delinquency. Several social scientists became concerned about how official crime data were generated, noting that uncritical analyses of these statistics could result in misleading conclusions regarding the causes of crime. In particular, they noted problems related to the so-called dark figure of crime, that is, crimes committed by individuals that were not recorded in the official data. These concerns led first to the development of self-report studies of deviant and criminal behavior beginning in the 1940s, followed by the emergence of victimization studies in the 1960s. The use of these alternative measures of crime data led to important theoretical and policy debates within the discipline of criminology and, some would argue, a fundamental shift in the focus of criminology as a discipline.

The Early History of Measuring Social Phenomena and Crime

Number, weight, and measure are the foundations of all exact science; neither can any branch of human knowledge be held advanced beyond its infancy which does not, in some way or other, frame its theories or correct its practice by reference to those elements. What astronomical records or meteorological registers are to a rational explanation of the movements of the planets or of the atmosphere, statistical returns are to social and political philosophy. They assign, at determinate intervals, the numerical values of the variables which form the subject matter of its reasonings, or at least of such "functions" of them as are accessible to direct observation; which it is the business of sound theory so to analyze or to combine as to educe from them those deeper-

seated elements which enter into the expression of general laws. (Herschel 1850, as cited in Duncan 1984:97)

Perhaps the earliest examples of social measurement consist of censuses (taken from the Latin word *censere*, meaning to tax or assess) of the population. These have existed in one form or another for thousands of years; there are records of taxpaying homes recorded in China as far back as 2275 B.C., and Egyptians registered their citizens from as early as 1400 B.C. (Storey 1997). The early Roman census process required individuals to declare their age, family, and property holdings, which allowed the administration to record and rank the jurisdiction's human and property resources. These early censuses were primarily used to determine the number of men available to fight in the military and for tax purposes; the data were not generally used for public policy making, as is common in the current period.

In the 1700s, the purpose of census taking shifted to the creation of a statistical database for studying social and economic trends and, in some cases, developing policies based on these trends. The first census in the United States, conducted in 1790, was different from censuses in other countries that had preceded it in that it was an important part of government and was required by the Constitution. The data for this initial U.S. census were collected by 16 federal marshals, who had considerable difficulty in enumerating the population because residents were concentrated in widely dispersed rural areas. In many cases, the marshals had to use word of mouth to find out about the existence of households in remote areas. Additional problems included a lack of cooperation on the part of residents, who were often suspicious of the questions being asked (*History of the United States Census* 2000).

In addition to census taking in several countries, social data were collected in the context of periodic "surveys" conducted by social scientists. For example, in the 19th century, the British social activists Henry Mayhew and Charles Booth conducted extensive surveys of England's population. Booth's survey sought to investigate "the numerical relation which poverty, misery, and depravity bear to the regular earnings and comparative comfort, and to describe the general conditions under which each class lives" (as cited in Biderman and Reiss 1967).

The first national crime statistics, based on judicial data, were published in France in 1827 (covering the year 1825). These early crime statistics were part of the "moral statistics" movement that emerged in several Western nations in the 1800s. They were also very much a result of the belief that the quantitative techniques being applied to measure phenomena in the physi-

cal world could also be applied to the measurement of human phenomena. These data were used in the earliest studies of the spatial and temporal distributions of crime as well as for analyses of the sex, age, income, education, and occupation of criminals.

In France, Adolphe Quetelet, who had originally worked in the field of astronomy, was one of the early moral statisticians who believed that it would be possible to uncover the types of laws and regularities in social phenomena that were emerging from scientific explorations in the natural world. Writing in the 1800s, Quetelet was one of the first commentators to recognize the so-called dark figure of crime. He noted, "All we possess of statistics of crime and misdemeanors would have no utility at all if we did not tacitly assume that there is a nearly invariable relationship between offenses known and adjudicated and the total unknown sum of offenses committed" (as quoted in Sellin and Wolfgang 1964). According to Quetelet (as cited in Coleman and Moynihan 1996), this dark figure was related not only to the seriousness of the crime but also to "the activity of justice in reaching the guilty, on the care with which the latter will take in hiding themselves, and on the repugnance which wronged individuals will feel in complaining, or on the ignorance in which perhaps they will be concerning the wrong which has been done to them" (p. 5).

Based on judicial statistics from France, Quetelet (1842) observed a consistency in crime rates in that country between the years 1826 and 1829 (see Exhibit 2.1). There was 1 accused person for every 4,463 inhabitants over this period, and for every 100 accused, there were 61 individuals "condemned" (in prison). He observed a similar consistency in the ratio between crimes recorded and crimes prosecuted for Belgium between 1826 and 1830. The ratio in that country was 1 accused person for every 5,031 inhabitants. These data led Quetelet to conclude that the ratio of known to unknown offenses was fairly constant over time. However, he was also aware that this ratio of recorded to actual crime would differ according to offense type. He noted that "in a well organized society where the police [are] active and justice is rightly administered, this ratio, for murders and assassinations, will be nearly equal to unity . . . [but] when we look to thefts and offenses of smaller importance, the ratio will become very small, and a great number of offenses will remain unknown, either because those against whom they are committed do not perceive them, or do not wish to prosecute the perpetrator" (p. 82).

In his attempt to explain these crime rates, Quetelet conducted a number of analyses that focused on a variety of factors. Similar to some current theories of crime, he noted the relationship between the consumption of

Exhibit 2.1. Quetelet's Analyses of Crime in France and Belgium

Year	France					
	Accused Persons	Condemned Persons	Inhabitants/Accused	Condemned/Accused	Property Crimes	Person Crimes
1826	6,998	4,348	4,557	62	5,081	1,907
1827	6,929	4,236	4,593	61	5,018	1,911
1828	7,396	4,551	4,307	61	5,552	1,844
1829	7,373	4,475	4,321	61	5,582	1,791
Total/Average	28,696	17,610	4,463	61	21,233	7,453

Year	Belgium					
	Accused Persons	Condemned Persons	Inhabitants/Accused	Condemned/Accused	Property Crimes	Person Crimes
1826	725	611	5,211	84	536	189
1827	800	682	4,776	85	580	220
1828	814	677	4,741	83	584	230
1829	753	612	5,187	81	550	203
1830	741	541	5,274	73	581	160
Average	767	625	5,031	82	566	200

SOURCE: Quetelet, L. A. J. 1842. *Treatise on Man and the Development of His Faculties*. Edinburgh: S. W. & R. Chambers.

alcohol and violent crime: "Of 1,129 murders committed in France during the space of four years, 446 have been in consequence of quarrels and contentions in taverns; which would tend to show the fatal influence in the use of strong drinks" (p. 96). Quetelet also emphasized the importance of poverty and relative inequality: "[These factors] give rise to crime, particularly if those who suffer are surrounded by materials of temptation, and are irritated by the continual aspect of luxury and inequality of fortune, which renders them desperate" (pp. 88-9). This impact of inequality was greater in urban areas: "The great cities . . . present an unfavorable subject, because they possess more allurements to passions of every kind, and because they attract people of bad character, who hope to mingle with impunity in the crowd" (pp. 88-9).

Quetelet also examined the importance of "racial" composition, noting that France's population was comprised of three different races—the Celtic, German, and Pelasgian—which were concentrated in different regions of the country. He asserted that the Pelasgian race, located primarily in the southern portion of France, was "particularly addicted to crimes against persons," whereas members of the Germanic race were most likely to be involved in property crimes, apparently because individuals from this

group were more commonly engaged in “the frequent use of strong drinks” (p. 90).

Similar to contemporary analyses of crime, Quetelet also examined the correlates of crime, with a particular focus on gender and age. He noted that in France, there were 26 women for every 100 men accused of crimes against property, compared to 16 women for every 100 men accused of crimes against persons (see Exhibit 2.2). He argued that these differences were attributable to the fact that women were “more under the influence of sentiments of shame and modesty, as far as morals are concerned; their dependent state, and retired habits, as far as occasion or opportunity is concerned; and their physical weakness, as far as the facility of acting is concerned” (p. 91). Noting that women were more likely to commit serious violent offenses against intimates as opposed to strangers, Quetelet asserted, “They can only conceive and execute guilty projects on individuals with whom they are in the greatest intimacy; thus, compared with man, her assassinations are more often in her family than out of it.”

With respect to the relationship between age and involvement in crime, Quetelet argued that “of all the causes which influence the development of the propensity to crime, or which diminish that propensity, age is unquestionably the most energetic” (p. 92). Similar to current explanations of the age correlate of crime, he suggested that crimes against property were more likely to be committed by those in the younger age groups, whereas crimes against persons evidenced a later age peak; his data from France indicated that these crimes peaked at age 25.

More generally, Quetelet’s early studies of the numerical consistency of crimes stimulated theoretical discussions of the causes of crime, contributing in particular to theories that focused on the relative importance of free will versus social determinism in explaining individual criminal behavior. If crime were determined by social forces, then explanations of crime that invoked the free will of individuals were not plausible. He argued that “every thing which pertains to the human species considered as a whole, belongs to the order of physical facts; the greater the number of individuals, the more does the influence of individual will disappear, leaving predominance to a series of general facts, dependent on causes by which society exists and is preserved” (p. 90).

Quetelet was active for nearly half a century in the attempt to measure social phenomena statistically, so much of his work is generally known. Other important and, for their time, innovative studies preceded his work but have not received considerable attention. For example, M. de Guerry Champneuf, who served as director of criminal affairs for the Ministry of

Exhibit 2.2. Male and Female Crime Comparisons (France 1826-29)

<i>Type of Crime</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Women to 100 Men</i>
Infanticide	30	426	1,320
Miscarriage	15	39	260
Poisoning	77	73	91
House robbery	2,648	1,602	60
Parricide	44	22	50
Incendiarism of building	279	94	34
Robbery of churches	176	47	27
Wounding of parents	292	63	22
Theft	10,677	2,249	21
False evidence	307	51	17
Fraudulent bankruptcy	353	57	16
Assassination	947	111	12
False coining/counterfeiting	1,669	177	11
Rebellion	612	60	10
Highway robbery	648	54	8
Wounds and blows	1,447	78	5
Murder	1,112	44	4
Violation and seduction	685	7	1

SOURCE: Quetelet, L. A. J. 1842. *Treatise on Man and the Development of His Faculties*. Edinburgh: S. W. & R. Chambers.

Justice in France from 1821 to 1835, conducted extensive analyses of crime for 86 “departments” in France. Similar to Quetelet, Guerry argued that crime rates were determined by larger societal, as opposed to individual-level, factors. He also recognized the important distinctions between types of crime. He created categories for classifying crimes against property versus crimes against the person, with 17 crimes in each category, and calculated age-sex specific crime rates for each. In contrast to Quetelet, Guerry based his measurement of crime on the number of persons accused of crime, as opposed to convictions. He believed that using convictions, which depended on the decisions and whims of juries, would result in a biased picture of the nature and extent of crime (Coleman and Moynihan 1996). Guerry (as cited in Elmer 1933) also discussed what he thought to be the important correlates and causes of crime, noting, “There is the influence of climate, and there is the influence of seasons, for whereas the crimes against persons are always more numerous in the summer, the crimes against property are more numerous in winter” (p. 64).

Other researchers in the moral statistics tradition included Mayr (as cited in Bonger 1916), who, like Guerry, questioned the use of conviction

statistics as measures of crime: "The immorality of a people is determined not by the number of individuals convicted, but by the number of crimes committed; else that people would be most moral in which no offender ever let himself be caught, even if more crimes were committed there than elsewhere" (p. 39). Corne (1868, as cited in Bonger 1916), using court statistics as his data source, attributed an increase in crime that occurred in France between the years 1849 and 1853 to a "better organization of the police" (p. 48). Rettich (as cited in Bonger 1916) criticized existing criminal statistics in Germany and the purported causes of crime that were derived from these data because they did not take into account what we now refer to as white-collar crime: "The worst offenses against property are not committed by the hungry. The merchant who goes into a fraudulent bankruptcy, the banker who embezzles deposits, the worldling who forges drafts, have all taken the step into crime from a life, if not of abundance, at least of a competence" (p. 67).

Judicial statistics were first collected in England in 1805, and more standardized judicial statistics recording indictments and convictions for indictable (more serious) offenses were collected annually beginning in 1834. Commentators on these statistics emphasized the importance of exercising caution in interpreting them. Morrison (1892) argued that it was not possible to determine whether crime was increasing or decreasing in England, due to the fact that crime statistics were handled in an "erratic and haphazard manner" (p. 950). He also noted that a primary cause of increases in crime was changes in legislation that added offenses to the criminal code, whereas at the same time, decreases in crime could be attributed to "the abolition of old penal laws, and the greater reluctance of the public and police to set the law in motion against trivial offenders." The influence of legislative changes on crime rates was also emphasized by du Cane (1893), who noted that offenses against the British Education Acts (which required parents to send their children to school), which were not legislatively mandated prior to 1870, totaled over 96,000 in 1890: "Few people [however] would say that 'crime' was increasing and civilization demoralising us because we now compel parents to send their children to school" (p. 486). Du Cane thus argued that an uninformed comparison of crime rates over the 1870-to-1890 period might conclude that crime had increased, when in reality the increase was due to an expansion in the definition of crime.

The earliest crime statistics published on a statewide basis in the United States were judicial statistics from the state of New York in 1829; statewide prison statistics were first collected in Massachusetts in 1834. By 1905, 25

states had enacted legislation providing for statistics on the number of people prosecuted and convicted in their courts (Pepinsky 1976).

Prior to the development of the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system in the United States in 1930, the closest thing to national crime statistics was data on individuals committed to jails, houses of correction, and penitentiaries. These statistics were compiled by the Census Bureau beginning in the 1850s; collection continued in the years 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1890, with separate enumerations in 1904, 1910, 1923, and 1933. Focusing on the number of offenders serving sentences on the date the census was taken, information was collected on the sex, race, age, and length of sentence of offenders, among other things. Due to limitations in the way they were collected within jurisdictions, these data were not particularly useful for measuring levels of crime, let alone for the purposes of making comparisons across jurisdictions.

Federal government attention to more refined criminal statistics began in 1870, when Congress passed a law creating the Department of Justice. One section of this legislation provided that it was "the duty of the Attorney-General to make an annual report to Congress . . . [on] the statistics of crime under the laws of the United States, and, as far as practicable, under the laws of the several states" (as cited in Maltz 1977). However, as Maltz notes, this provision was basically ignored by law enforcement officials, and it fell into almost immediate disuse.

In the 1920s, certain jurisdictions and states conducted surveys of the criminal justice system. The first of these was conducted in Cleveland in 1922, and surveys at the state level followed in Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, California, Virginia, Georgia, Minnesota, Michigan, and Oregon (Robinson 1933). Although these studies provided some important insights into the administration of criminal justice, they too were not particularly useful for the purposes of crime measurement and cross-jurisdictional comparisons.

The Development of Uniform Crime Reports in the United States

The statistics compiled by federal bureaucracies enforcing criminal justice are so deficient and incomparable as to render impossible the answering of a single important question about crime. . . . Statistics of crime . . . are of little value because of the lack of uniformity in the definitions of crime, because of the close relation between police work and politics, because of the lack of comparability among categories

employed in reporting, because of varying police practices, and because of the absence of centralized reporting (Tibbitts 1932:963).

Despite attempts by the Census Bureau to collect crime statistics based on law enforcement data as early as 1907, it was not until 1930 that such statistics became available at the national level. In 1927, a committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) was formed to examine the feasibility of collecting uniform crime records (IACP 1929). In this period, most crime reports produced by state and municipal agencies were virtually useless for comparative purposes. Definitions of crime were not uniform across jurisdictions or even within states, there were no centralized reporting procedures, law enforcement policies varied across jurisdictions, and crime statistics were frequently used for political purposes. In the 1920s, aside from Massachusetts, no state published any statistics on the total number of arrests, and no state released statistics on crimes known to the police. Virtually the only sources of information in the field of police statistics at this time were the annual reports of individual city police departments, with only 14 cities publishing data covering the more serious offenses that were reported to them (Maltz 1977).

Exhibit 2.3, based on data compiled by Monkkonen (1994), reveals some of the vagaries associated with cross-jurisdictional and longitudinal comparisons of early police arrest data. In 1880, arrests for drunkenness offenses ranged from a low of 1,630 per 100,000 population in Cincinnati, Ohio, to a high of 4,776 in Boston, Massachusetts. By 1915, Boston's drunkenness arrest rate had almost doubled to 8,208, whereas Cleveland, which had a drunkenness arrest rate of 2,191 per 100,000 population in 1880, saw a decline to 378. These vast discrepancies in drunkenness arrest rates over time and across jurisdictions are primarily related to differences in law enforcement activity rather than differences in the actual number of individuals who were arrested because they were drunk. Although they are not as likely to be influenced by police activity, the comparative data on homicide arrests are also interesting to consider. In 1880, Louisville, Kentucky, had the highest homicide rate at 16.2 per 100,000, whereas New Haven, Connecticut, had a rate of 0.0. By 1915, San Francisco's homicide rate had nearly doubled from its 1880 rate to 29.1 per 100,000, and St. Louis saw its rate increase sixfold, from 4.6 to 27.6.

One of the primary motivations for the establishment of the UCR program was to counter media-generated crime waves (O'Brien 1985), and when the IACP began deliberations on the collection of crime data, there were debates about what specific crime statistics would be most useful to

Exhibit 2.3. Arrest Rate Comparisons (per 100,000 Population: Selected Offenses and Cities, 1880 and 1915)

City	Total Arrest Rate		Drunkenness Arrest Rate		Homicide Arrest Rate	
	1880	1915	1880	1915	1880	1915
Baltimore, MD	6,627	6,342	3,633	3,205	81	91
Boston, MA	6,858	12,514	4,776	8,208	30	95
Buffalo, NY	5,809	6,684	1,715	3,128	19	30
Chicago, IL	5,660	4,981	2,841	2,226	24	108
Cincinnati, OH	5,719	6,680	1,630	1,527	55	97
Cleveland, OH	3,679	2,203	2,191	378	34	84
Detroit, MI ^a	3,682	3,030	3,030	NA	95	87
Louisville, KY	3,807	5,323	1,746	3,042	162	231
Milwaukee, WI	2,663	2,718	1,868	1,328	29	19
Newark, NJ	3,694	2,948	1,954	881	22	121
New Haven, CT	7,333	7,001	5,098	3,899	00	20
New Orleans, LA	8,488	10,212	NA	4,108	93	157
New York, NY	5,667	4,091	3,672	1,280	NA	87
Philadelphia, PA ^a	5,230	6,066	3,877	3,539	33	94
Providence, RI	6,205	4,592	4,387	2,848	09	39
Richmond, VA	6,204	8,505	1,948	3,400	47	247
San Francisco, CA ^b	9,003	6,999	4,043	2,987	150	291
St. Louis, MO	4,040	5,413	2,263	1,937	46	276
Washington, DC	9,205	9,684	3,951	4,028	68	83

SOURCE: Adapted from Monkkonen, 1994.

a. 1915 rates based on data from 1914.

b. 1915 rates based on data from 1910.

collect. Some believed that the number of arrests made by the police would be the most useful, but apparently the views of individuals such as August Vollmer, chief of police in Berkeley, California, ultimately held sway. Vollmer maintained that the number of arrests would constitute a false and inadequate measure of crime, because these would be subject to potential bias on the part of the police. Vollmer argued that the only dependable data would be the actual number and types of complaints received by law enforcement officials (Maltz 1977). Hence, the UCR data were based on "crimes known to the police," that is, crimes that were reported to the police by the public.

As a result of the efforts of the IACP, the first monthly report of offenses known to the police was published in January 1930. The association continued monthly publication of these reports until September 1930, when the

work was taken over by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the U.S. Department of Justice. In 1931, official crime reports were received from 1,127 cities and towns having a combined population of nearly 46 million, which represented approximately 80 percent of the population of the United States (Tibbits 1932).

Even in the initial years of the UCR, the records were subject to checks for reliability by the FBI, and data from several jurisdictions were eliminated due to irregularities. In addition, some police departments were reluctant to compile and publish reports on the volume of crime in their jurisdictions due to concerns that the data would be used by the public to negatively evaluate their performance (Leonard 1954). The limitations of these data were recognized by the agency that published them. Included in the 1931 UCR publication (as cited in Biderman and Reiss 1967) was the statement, "If it took the highly centralized English government 66 years to get its famous and highly efficient police to report correctly crimes known to the police, it is evident that it will take many years before our decentralized and nonprofessional police forces can be induced to make trustworthy reports of crimes known to the police" (p. 3). Similarly, one issue of the UCR, released in May 1931 (as cited in Maltz 1977), stated that "wide divergences in the total number of particular crimes for various cities of approximately the same population may in some cases not be indicative of a variance in the amount of crime in those cities but may be charged to inadequate record systems or a lack of understanding of the classification on the part of some officials" (p. 38). In subsequent UCRs, caveats such as "in publishing the reports sent in by the chiefs of police in different cities, the Department of Justice does not vouch for their accuracy" were included.

Critics were also aware of the potential misuses of crime statistics by police departments in order to generate additional funding. As the 1930 Wickersham Commission (as cited in Maltz 1977) noted, "It takes but little experience of such criminal statistics as we have in order to convince that a serious abuse exists in compiling them as a basis for requesting appropriations or for justifying the existence of or urging expanded powers and equipment for the agencies in question" (p. 36).

In the early UCR, offenses were classified under 26 separate headings according to their general common-law definitions, and these were then categorized into two broad categories. Seven crimes were selected for inclusion in the initial UCR index. These were murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. These offenses were chosen because (1) they constituted

offenses that were most likely to be reported to the police, (2) police investigations of such incidents could easily establish that a crime had occurred, (3) these crimes occurred in all geographical areas of the United States, (4) they occurred with sufficient frequency to provide an adequate basis for comparison between jurisdictions, and (5) they were serious by their nature and volume (O'Brien 1985).

Although the number of law enforcement agencies reporting to the UCR increased over time, the practices and procedures of the program essentially remained unchanged until 1958, when a number of modifications were implemented. Included among the changes were the removal of manslaughter by negligence from the criminal homicide category, the limiting of rape offenses to forcible rape, and the exclusion of thefts of property valued at less than \$50 from the theft category. One effect of these changes is that historical and cross-jurisdictional comparisons of the number, distribution, and rates of these offense classes cannot be made for the years prior to 1958.

Although improvements were certainly made in the UCR from the time of its implementation in 1930, critics still pointed to problems associated with making cross-jurisdictional and historical comparisons of crime rates. Beattie (1960) noted the difficulties in making cross-state comparisons, first using the example of the ratio of crimes against the person to crimes against property across a number of states. In California, the ratio of crimes against the person to crimes against property was 1 to 7; in New York, 1 to 6.5; in Ohio, 1 to 7. However, the ratio of crimes against the person to crimes against property was 1 to 2 in North Carolina, 1 to 3 in Mississippi, 1 to 22 in Rhode Island, and 1 to 50 in Vermont. Beattie suggested that these vast disparities indicated that states were using entirely different practices in reporting offenses known to the police.

Moving to the level of city comparisons, Beattie used the example of Akron and Canton, adjacent metropolitan areas in Ohio. In 1958, Akron reported three times the forcible rape rate of Canton and more than three times the aggravated assault rate, leading Beattie (1960) to conclude, "It is just not conceivable that crime rates in these metropolitan areas in reality could vary as indicated by these published figures. It is much more likely that the disparities are due to differences in methods of accounting from crimes reported to the police" (p. 55). Beattie further asserted that Los Angeles, which had an efficient police department that collected complete records, was falsely identified as having a high crime rate compared to other cities that were not characterized by similar standards of high-quality record keeping. He also pointed to difficulties in classifying crimes into the various index