

Has the Crime Drop Ended?

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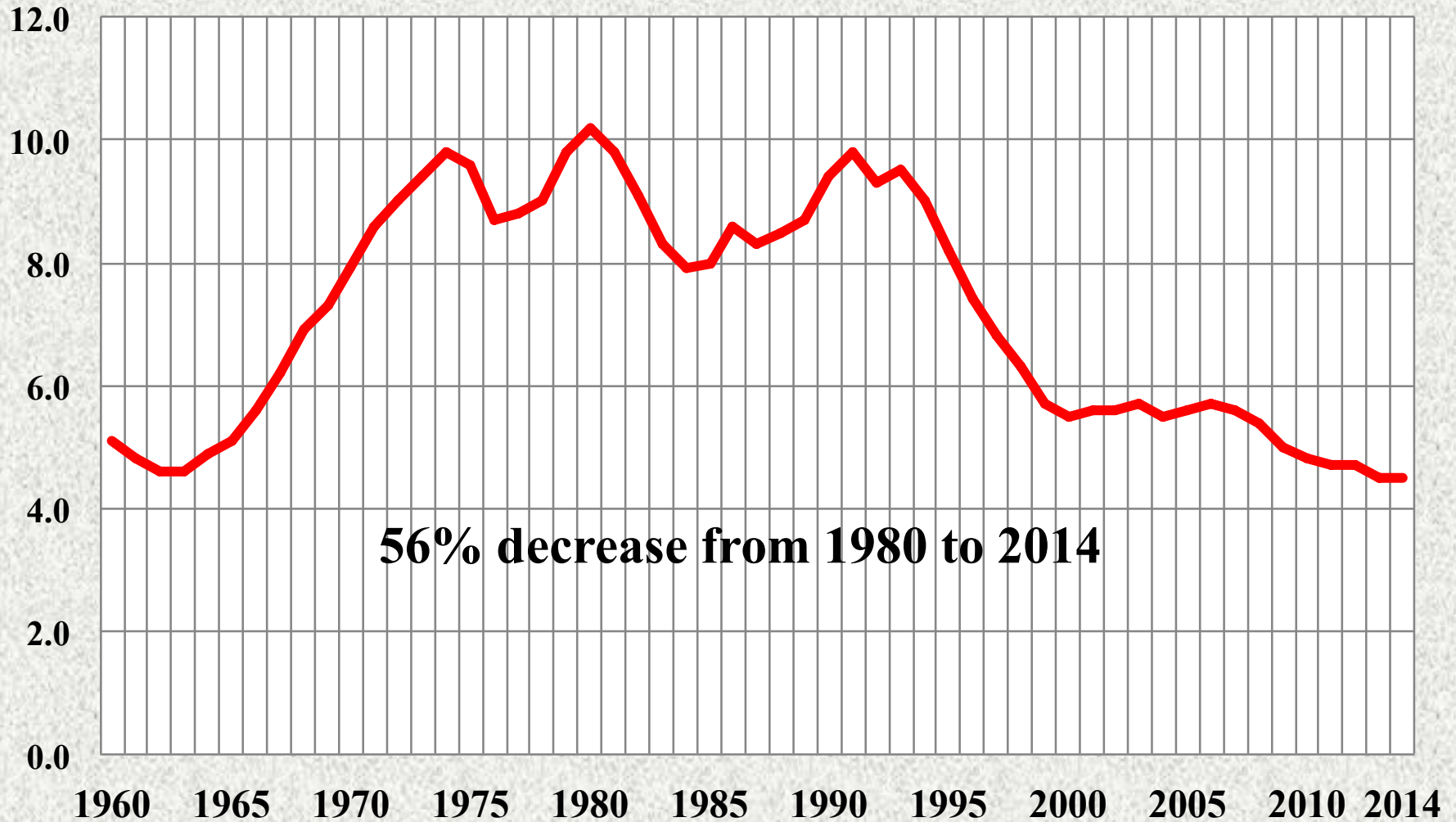
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Overview

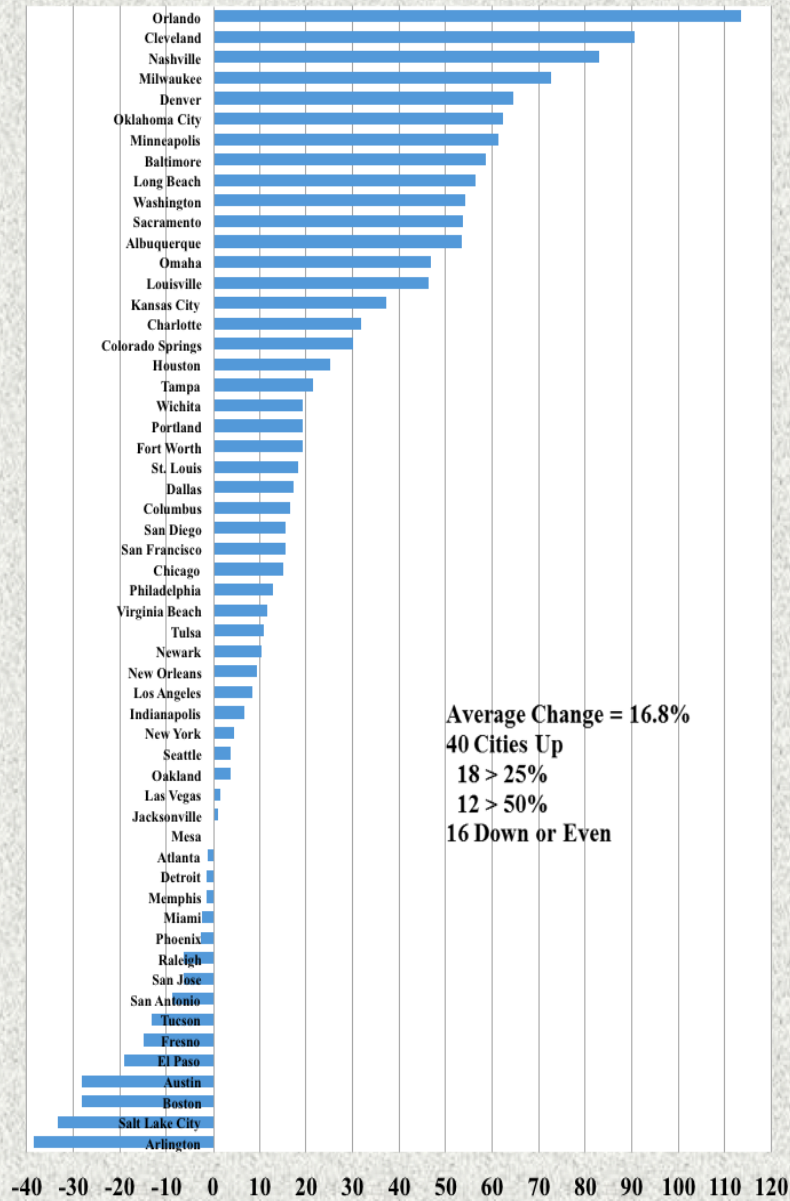
- Long term decline in US homicide rate (1960 – 2014)
- The 2015 homicide rise in big cities
 - Magnitude (~17%)
 - Concentration (cities with larger black populations)
 - Explanations (expanding drug markets, returning prisoners, “Ferguson effects”)
- A one year increase has not ended the crime drop
- We should not have had to wait nearly 10 months to find out if crime went up last year

Figure 1. Homicide Rate per 100,000 US Population, 1960 - 2014



Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Figure 2. Percentage Change in Homicide in 56 Cities, 2014-2015



Source: Rosenfeld (2016)

Data Needs

- FBI's Uniform Crime Reports disseminates crime and arrest data 9-10 months after the collection year – too late to address *emerging* crime problems
- FBI should return to a practice it abandoned 80 years ago and release *monthly* crime and arrest data

UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS

FOR THE UNITED STATES
AND ITS POSSESSIONS

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Conclusions

- One year increase does not spell the end of the long-term crime drop
- Still, 2015 homicide rise in large cities was real and nearly unprecedented
- Rise concentrated in cities with larger African-American populations
- Explanations
 - Why the time lag in drug market and prisoner effects?
 - De-policing claims attribute too much significance to policing effects on homicide

Conclusions, cont.

- Circumstantial evidence favors police legitimacy hypothesis
 - Timing is right
 - Squares with evidence on cities with largest homicide increase
 - Abrupt crime increases imply “exogenous shock”
 - Reservoir of minority mistrust of the police activated by recent events

References

Rosenfeld, Richard. 2016. Documenting and Explaining the 2015 Homicide Rise: Research Directions. NCJ 249895. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice.

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249895.pdf>.

Uniform Crime Reports. 1960-2014. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice. <https://ucr.fbi.gov>.