LECTURE 8 – This lecture covers UCR CLEARANCE RATES and INTERNATIONAL MURDER RATES

UCR INDEX CRIME CLEARANCE RATES – WHY NO CHANGE IN FOUR DECADES?

So enough with CUISC and CUIPDSC for a while anyway. Different types of crimes have different clearance, or solved, rates. When we look at the **Visible UCR Index crimes** (these are crimes reported to the police, **remember?),** we see **quite a variance in clearance rates**. Obviously, reported clearance rates vary on a yearly basis, so the rates discussed here are averages over a two decade period.

Just consider **murder and burglary** crimes. Murder comprises less than 1% of all Index crimes, but it has the highest average clearance rate (65%). On the other hand, burglary accounts for 18% of all Index crimes, but an average of only 13% are cleared. Quite a difference between the two.

Violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery, and assault) comprise only about 17% of all Index crimes, but their combined clearance rate averages about 45%. However, the **property crimes** (burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson) comprise over 80% of all Index crimes, but their average clearance rate is only about 17%. Again quite a difference.

But overall, when you add everything together, the **average clearance rate for UCR Index crimes is about 20%,** and has hovered around 20% for **decades**, no matter whether the per capita number of crimes has increased or decreased. **Hmmm.** Crime increases – 20% clearance rate. Crime decreases – 20% clearance rate. What do you think that says about the police "traditional investigation process" that we discussed earlier? Maybe something like, if the amount of info available in the ACTION and ESCAPE phases when the offender is in the FUGITIVE phase is minimal and transitory for most crimes, and if the police respond to them all the same way and base their decisions on that info, then they consistently get the same results? Something like that, maybe? So the traditional investigation process is very efficient in always clearing only 20% of the cases reported to police, give or take.

Actually, the FBI stopped using the 20% clearance figure for all UCR Index crimes a few years back, around 2004 or so – something about the violent and property crime data not being really combine-able or something. Instead they now use clearance rates for violent and property crime groups separately. But whatever, the same results expressed in a different way, I guess.

SO WHO SOLVES CRIME ANYWAY?

Well, here's what the research shows. This is a quote taken from an article entitled "the Criminal Investigation Process: A Summary Report, by Chaiken, Greenwood, and Petersilia, published in 1977 in the journal Policy Analysis (page 192), which summarized the major findings of their Rand study. [138] This is the best and latest info we have on the subject:

Quote:

…arrest and clearance rates reflect activities of patrol officers and members of the public more than they reflect activities of investigators. …approximately 30 percent of all clearances are the result of pickup arrests by patrol officers responding to the scene of the crime.   In roughly another 50 percent of cleared crimes, the perpetrator is known when the crime report is first taken, and the main jobs for the investigator are to locate the perpetrator, take him or her into custody, and assemble the facts needed to present charges in court. This means that around 20 percent of cleared crimes could possibly be attributed to investigative work, but … most of these were also solved by patrol officers, or by members of the public who spontaneously provided further information, or by routine investigative practices that could also have been followed by clerical personnel.
In fact, we estimate that no more than 2.7 percent of all Part I crime clearances [these are the eight UCR Index crimes] can be attributed to special techniques used by investigators.
Unquote.

What this means is that of the 20% of the reported UCR Index crimes that are solved, most of them are **solved** based on **information provided by victims and witnesses to the responding patrol officer, during the preliminary investigation phase** of the traditional investigation process. The responding patrol officer? **Geez,** I thought detectives were supposed to solve all the crimes. That's what they do on TV, anyway**.** So the patrol officer plays a **key role** in the criminal investigation process and crime clearances, don't you think?

So just exactly what is it that detectives do anyway? Well, let's not get ahead of ourselves here, but just think - - If most of the crimes reported to police are either solved or screened out during the traditional investigation process before they even get to detectives, then what's left?

Here's a chart of the eight Index crimes. As you cannot see it, I will dutifully explain it to you. For each crime, the percent of the total Part I Index crimes and the percent solved is given.
For the violent crimes:
    - Murder accounts for 0.2% of all the crimes, and about 65% of them are solved.

- Rape accounts for 1.5%, and 53% are solved.

- Robbery – 5%, and 24% solved, and

- Assault – 10%, and 56% solved.

For the property crimes:

- Burglary accounts for 18% of all crimes, and 13% solved

- Larceny accounts for 55%, with 20% solved

- Motor vehicle theft – 10%, and 14% solved, and

- Arson – about 0.1%, with 15% solved

FARMLAMB/MRRABLVA, EH?

OK, now **name the eight UCR** Index crimes. What? Go ahead. What? Er, um, uh, let's see, there was murder, and…uh. But we were just talking about them! That will never do! What happened to all you OBSERVANT TRAVELERS out there? The only crimes that we actually have clearance rates for, and you didn't think it was important to remember them? **What's up with that?**

Well, if the truth be known, I always had a hard time remembering them, too, until an anonymous female freshman student in one of my Intro to CJ classes raised her hand one fine day and said **"FARMLAMB."** I've used that acronym ever since – it works really well for me. It translates as follows: the first four letters, or F-A-R-M for FARM, stand for the violent crimes of Forcible rape, Assault, Robbery and Murder. The next four letters, or L-A-M-B for LAMB, stand for Larceny, Arson, Motor vehicle theft and Burglary. So **there you have it!** Thank you anonymous female freshman student!

Violent Crimes	Property Crimes
F = Forcible rape	L = Larceny
A = Assault	A = Arson
R = Robbery	M = Motor Vehicle Theft
M = Murder	B = Burglary

Now if for some inexplicable reason you, DEAR DETECTIVE TRAVELER, have a problem with that, you might try this next acronym – **MRRABLVA.** Translates as follows: the first four letters, or M-R-R-A, stand for Murder, Rape, Robbery and Assault. The next four letters, or B-L-V-A, stand for Burglary, Larceny, Vehicle theft and Arson.

Violent Crimes	Property Crimes
Murder	Burglary
Rape	Larceny
Robbery	Vehicle Theft
Assault	Arson

Hopefully the FARMLAND and MRRABLVA acronyms will serve as useful memory jogs for the Visible UCR Index crimes. And just a few minutes ago, some of you were complaining about the IDUM, CUISC, and CUIPDSC acronyms!

INTERNATIONAL MURDER RATES

Next, let's do yet another quick "perspective" thing here. I'm looking at a chart that shows **homicide rates for different countries around the world.** And again, you cannot see the chart, so I'm gonna have to explain it.

The data were taken from a United Nations (UN) report. [53]   Most of the country data were for the year 2012; however, several were from 2010, 2011 and 2013 for one reason or another.

Essentially, for the year 2010 and thereabouts, the UN estimated there were about **468,000 intentional murders worldwide,** for a rate of about **6.9 per 100,000** people. The rates range from none (zero, zippo, nada) per year to over 90 per 100,000 people per year.

Seven of the 10 countries with the highest murder rates were all located in and around **Central America** just south of our border. These included Honduras, Venezuela, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and the US Virgin Islands), and three were in Africa (Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa). Their murder rates ranged between 90.4 and 29.8 per 100,000 people per year.

The **US rate was 4.8** homicides per 100,000 people in 2012. The five countries clustered above the US were Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Afghanistan and North Korea, and their murder rates ranged between 8.0 and 5.2. The five countries below the US were Ukraine, Cuba, Iran, India and Egypt, and their murder rates ranged between 4.3 and 3.4.

The ten countries with the **lowest homicide** rates included New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, and Liechtenstein. Their murder rates were all less than one per 100,000 people per year.

This info is based on the best data available, but it does raise a question or two. For example, **Syria** reported a murder rate of 2.2, and **Libya** of 1.7. Both countries are currently war-torn, however, and that must be taken into account. I'm not sure how the UN dealt with car bombs, beheadings, mass graves, poison gas, etc.

The UN report was **caveated** with points that definitions of intentional murder and homicide varied between countries; that variances in trauma care between countries affected survival rates; and that some data may be underreported for political reasons (imagine that!). So clearly much of the data should not be taken at face value for direct comparisons. Also, the rates reflected reports of crimes committed, but did not address how many of them were **SOLVED**. But that's the best data we have on the subject, and we can work within that structure to improve accuracy. Just like we want to do with the CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

In contrast, however, in the **US**, homicide data are generally considered to be the **most accurate** of the eight UCR crimes, primarily due to the seriousness of the offense and multiple sources recording them (police, coroner, medical sources, news outlets, Center for Disease Control, government records, etc.).

In any case, these data give you, QUESTIONING TRAVELER, a brief introduction to international crime data and comparisons between countries regarding crime. It really is a fascinating area of study, and can quickly broaden one's horizons regarding the tremendous differences between countries and criminal justice systems – and their data collection and criminal investigation processes.

So how advanced are we really, as a country, and as a global community? And why are there such great differences between countries? How can countries divided by only an imaginary border line on a map be so different with regard to governing and protecting their people? I wonder what ol' Socrates would think about all that? I also wonder what you think about that. Two hundred empires and we're still at it. Well, at least we're beginning to collect and organize data in a more methodical way, even as we ponder. In consideration of the fact that crime just in the US costs us over a trillion dollars EVERY YEAR, that counts for something – doesn't it?

We in the US may at the same time **pat - and kick -** ourselves for our murder rates in comparison to other countries in the world. We may argue about why our murder rates are so much higher or lower than some other countries. But that also raises questions as to why our incarceration rates are so much higher than other countries that suffer from much greater crime problems. Are their CJ systems better – or worse – than

ours? And why is it that some tiny countries have the highest murder rates, and other tiny countries have the lowest rates? At lease size doesn't seem to be an issue there. I'm **flummoxed.**

Over 90% of all crimes in all five major crime categories in the US are never reported to the police. We know that. And we just discussed that the NCVS and UCR indicate that the police solve only about 20% of Index crimes (45% of violent crimes and 17% of property crimes). So if most offenders are never dealt with in the CJ system, why oh why are we worried about our high incarceration rates? It would seem that the much bigger problem that looms in our society is the huge number of offenders who are never caught or brought to justice or incarcerated. Are we selectively complaining about our "high" incarceration rates without objectively evaluating the questionable comparison data of other countries, and in the process just blithely ignoring our own data regarding crime and clearance rates? But that's **just me,** I guess.

And those are discussions for another day – or maybe the **bulletin board**. Right now our business is the criminal investigation process in the US, and one of the things I'm really pondering about is how effective we are. Let's go have a look in the next lecture.

NOT INCLUDED IN AUDIO

UCR Index Crimes	% of Total Index Crimes	% Solved
Murder	0.2	65
Rape	1.5	53
Robbery	5	24
Assault	10	56
Total Violent Crimes	17	45
Burglary	18	13
Larceny	55	20
Motor Vehicle Theft	10	14
Arson	0.1	15
Total Property Crimes	83	17
Total UCR Index Crimes	100	20

List of Selected Countries by Intentional Homicide Rate per 100,000 inhabitants:

Highest	Similar to US	Lowest
Honduras - 90.4	Iraq - 8.0	Ireland - 1.2
Venezuela - 53.7	Pakistan - 7.7	Australia - 1.1
Belize - 44.7	Palestine - 7.4	China - 1.0
El Salvador - 41.2	Afghanistan - 6.5	United Kingdom - 1.0
Guatemala - 39.9	North Korea - 5.2	France - 1.0
Jamaica - 39.3	**United States - 4.8**	South Korea - 0.9
Lesotho - 38.0	Ukraine - 4.3	Norway - 0.9
US Virgin Islands - 35.5	Cuba - 4.2	Italy - 0.9
Swaziland - 33.8	Iran - 3.9	Austria - 0.9
South Africa - 31.0	India - 3.5	New Zealand - 0.9
Colombia - 30.8	Egypt - 3.4	Saudi Arabia - 0.8
Bahamas - 29.8	Chile - 3.1	Spain - 0.8
Dem Rep of Congo - 28.3	Taiwan - 3.0	Germany - 0.8
Puerto Rico (USA) - 26.5	Turkey - 2.6	Sweden - 0.7
Brazil - 25.2	Syria - 2.2	Indonesia - 0.6
Dominican Republic - 22.1	Israel - 1.8	Hong Kong - 0.4
Mexico - 21.5	Libya - 1.7	Japan - 0.3
Haiti -10.2	Greece - 1.7	Singapore - 0.2
Russia - 9.2	Canada - 1.6	Liechtenstein - 0.0