Local Crime Statistics

Eagle Mountain, Utah

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Crime Statistics are difficult to find and interpret. There are several reasons why Crime Statistics, but according to Bohm and Haley (2021) the dark figure of crime makes it so that only a small percentage of crimes are actually reported and added to Crime Statistics. "Crimes that are not officially recorded by the police are called the dark figure of crime" (Bohm and Haley, 2021, pp. 36). This dark figure of crime is created by miss labeled crimes, crimes not detected, crimes not reported to the police, and crimes that police do not officially report. One of the biggest obstacles is the definition of crime. There are two definitions of crime that can be confused with each other.

Social and Legal Definitions of Crime

At times, the actual definition of crime can come into question or be debated. There are several factors that can come into play when defining a crime. One of those is the Jurisdiction that the crime was committed in. Similar crimes can be defined and given a different class between jurisdictions. There is also a difference between the social definition of crime and the legal definition of crime.

The social definition of crime is behavior that violates the norms or social mores of the society in which the crime was committed. Like social mores, these can change from group to group, place to place, or time to time and are subject to interpretation (Bohm and Haley, 2021).

The legal definition of crime can also change from place to place and time to time but is less likely to be subject to incorrect interpretation. The legal definition of crime requires certain elements to be considered a crime. It is not just something that can be seen as being against the social mores of society, even though some of those social mores do fall into the legal definition of crime, it has to meet the litmus test of the legal definition of a crime.

Elements of a Crime

There are 7 elements that are required for a crime to meet the legal definition of crime and become more than just a violation of social mores. Table 1 lists the elements of a crime, as well as a short definition of each of the elements.

Table 1

Elements of a crime

Harm	External consequence or harm either physical or verbal
Legality	Harm must be legally forbidden, and the law can not be *ex post facto* or retroactive.
Actus Reus	The criminal conduct must be intentional or criminally negligent by action or inaction to cause harm.
Mens Rea	The criminal intent or state of mind. Usually limited to intentional or purposeful action or inaction.
Causation	The criminal act must lead directly to harm without a long delay.
Concurrence	Criminal conduct and criminal intent must occur together.
Punishment	There must be a punishment associated with the behavior. Without punishment the law is unenforceable therefore not a criminal law.

Source: Bohm and Haley, 2021

Bohm and Haley (2021) note that ideally all 7 of these elements must be present, but in practice, things are considered a crime when "one or more of the elements of crime are absent." (pp. 29)

United States Crime Statistic Sources

Crime statistics are more of an index than actual statistics. They can be used to gauge the crime index in an area, but it should be remembered that the index is most likely incomplete and can easily be influenced by outside forces. One of those forces would be the Federal Justice System. Most of the money spent by the Federal Justice System is spent not on criminal justice but spent strategically to influence criminal justice policies of local and state jurisdictions by awarding grants to implement policies (Bohm and Haley, 2021). These policies usually follow Presidential agendas. These grants and policies do affect crime statistics for the jurisdictions that do accept the grant monies. It is also ironic that most of the crime statistical sources are controlled by federal criminal justice agencies.

There are three major crime statistic databases that are currently in use in the United States. Each database has its pros and cons, and can be used to show different indexes on crime in the United States. The first one is the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and is published annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The program has been in place since 1930 and currently contains data from 18,000 cities, universities and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement (FBI. 2018, September 10).

Second, is the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The NIBRS started in 1982 and on Jan 1 2021 it became the national standard for reporting in the United States. "The transition to NIBRS represents a significant shift – and improvement – in how reported crime is measured and estimated by the federal government" (BJS, n.d.) According to the Department of Justice all 50 U.S. States are certified to report crime data the NIBRS, covering 66% of the U.S. population, covering over 37 Million persons. (BJS, n.d.)

Third, are surveys. These surveys come in two different types. There are the National Crime Victimization Surveys (NCVS), and Self-Report Crime Surveys. (Bohm and Haley, 2021) It should be noted that these surveys are a good way to complement the data that is accessed from the NIBRS and UCR. (Bohm and Haley, 2021)

Crime Statistics in Eagle Mountain, Utah

Eagle Mountain uses the Utah County Sheriffs Office for policing within its city limits. As such, I will be using the crime statistics from the Utah County Sheriffs' Office (UCSO). There are a couple of factors that would affect the results of the crime indexes. First, the growth in Utah County has grown 31.7% from 2010 to 2020, while Utah state growth was only at 20.3% and the US Population only grew 7.3%. USAFacts. (2023, May 18). Their Jurisdiction includes county borders as well as the cities of Cedar Fort, Eagle Mountain, Elk Ridge, Fairfield, Goshen, Vineyard, and Woodland Hills. Office, U. C. S. (n.d.).

But interestingly enough the criminal index in the area did not increase the same as the population. One example of how indexes show crime trends that could be incorrect would be the number of reported prostitution crimes.

According to data pulled from the NIBRS and compiled by the BCI of Utah, there was a huge spike in prostitution offenses in 2019 compared to the previous year and future years. In 2019 the UCSO recorded 22 prostitution crimes, but in 2018 only 3 were recorded, in 2020 only 1 was recorded and in 2022 only 5 were recorded. (BCI Utah, n.d.) So why was there such a jump in 2019? Was there really an increase in prostitution, or was there an increase in enforcement? The data also shows that most of the reported crimes occurred in February and November.   The February increase in numbers was due to a prostitution sting done by the UCSO and Operation Underground Railroad where 18 people responded to an ad to meet with what they thought was a prostitute. (Operation Underground Railroad, (n.d.) The spike in November was due to another sting where 26 suspects were arrested during a large-scale human trafficking sting in Utah County. The sting also included the Lehi City Police Department, Department of Homeland Security, Unified Police Department, Salt Lake City Police Department, and the Provo Police Department. (Gardiner, J., 2020, February 26). Not all of those arrests reported to the database would appear under the Utah County numbers, they would also appear under the different jurisdictions that reported the arrests.

Conclusion

There are several sources or places you can go to for criminal statistics, but you need to remember that when you look at the statistics any changes should be investigated to see what the reasons for the changes were. You would expect to see rises in crime statistics and their indexes as populations increase, but it is always good to see that the indexes are not rising at the same rate that the population is in the area where you live. Reviewing the statistics in this area did not really surprise me. I

currently write for a news website that covers some crime in the area and I have done several GRAMA

requests from the UCSO for reports and data directly from them. But I was unaware of the stings

performed in 2019 and found them interesting.   Most of the data that I have reviewed in the past has

been limited to Eagle Mountain by searching court records, looking at the whole of what the UCSO

reports was a fun and interesting exercise.

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