and the Czech Republic. Homicide rates greater than those of the United States are found in nations such as Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, and Lithuania.

Homicide risk is not randomly distributed among individuals in the populations. In general, relationships among risk factors found in the United States are applicable to those in other nations. For instance, males are more likely to become a victim of homicide than are females, regardless of the nation considered. Further, younger people—teens and those in their 20s—are victims of homicide at higher rates than older people. This is the case again regardless of the nation under consideration.

Homicide rates are thought to be related to several factors aside from development. Most hotly debated is the relationship between firearm availability and homicide rates. It is thought that where firearms, especially illegal firearms, are readily available, homicide rates are higher.

**Nonlethal Violence**

The nonlethal forms of interpersonal violence most often examined include robbery, nonsexual assault, and physical assault. It has been demonstrated that the homicide rate is not a valid proxy for nonlethal violence (or vice versa). Indeed, though the homicide rate in the United States sets it apart from other developed nations, the nonlethal victimization rate in the United States is much more like that of similarly developed nations. For example, nonlethal violent victimization rates in the United States are generally similar to those found in Sweden.

**Robbery**

Robbery rates differ greatly among nations. Like homicide rates, robbery rates are lowest in developed nations and higher in developing nations. Also like homicide rates, there is considerable variation in robbery rates among developed nations, as well as among developing nations. Further, the differences in these rates change from year to year and depending upon the data considered. In general, however, it appears that among developed nations, Canada and the Netherlands tend to have higher robbery rates than do nations such as the United States, Scotland, and Australia.

**Nonsexual Assault**

Nonsexual assault rates tend to be higher in developing nations than in developed nations. However, assault rates are not generally lower in the industrialized countries of the world than in the urban areas of east and central Europe. The relationship between assault and gender is contingent on the nation considered. In the United States, Canada, and Australia, assault rates are generally higher than robbery rates. This is not the case in other industrialized countries where assault and robbery occur at similar rates. In developed nations, males are more likely to be a victim of assault than are females. In developing nations, males and females experience assault at similar rates. This is especially the case where assault is very prevalent.

**Sexual Assault**

Like much interpersonal violence data, data on sexual assault suggest that it is more frequent in developing nations than in developed nations. However, there is considerable variation among developed countries with regard to sexual assault rates. For instance, data suggest that females in the United States, Australia, and England are at greater risk than are females in Japan, Northern Ireland, Poland, and Portugal. In developing nations, the highest rates of sexual assault have been recorded in the areas of Northern Africa and Latin America and the lowest rates of sexual assault have been measured in Asian nations.

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See also Assault; Homicides, Criminal; Rape/Sexual Assault

Further Readings


perpetration rates do not provide a complete picture of interpersonal violence rates, largely because they are almost exclusively based on arrest records or self-report surveys. Arrest records rely on accurate reporting of violent incidents and uniform arrest policies across demographic groups and community settings. Yet, many violent acts are not reported, and arrest policies may vary considerably by gender, ethnicity, and community setting. For instance, an overrepresentation of a particular ethnic group in perpetration of a specific type of interpersonal violence could reflect a true difference in perpetration or a bias in arrest of individuals from that ethnic group. Self-report surveys, although less likely to reflect underreporting or bias than arrest data, are also limited by characteristics of the sample selected, the lack of a regular survey methodology (such as a national interpersonal violence perpetration survey), and possible inaccuracies in self-report. Accordingly, it is important to supplement perpetration data with other sources of information, such as victimization surveys, in order to provide the best estimate of actual rates.

There are also many different types of interpersonal violence and an assortment of agencies tasked with reporting perpetration rates for one or more types of interpersonal violence. There is no single repository of perpetration data for all types of interpersonal violence. In the United States, the most comprehensive source of information on arrests for certain interpersonal violence criminal offense categories is the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since 1930 and based on monthly reports from nearly 17,000 state and local agencies. Four types of offenses that would be considered interpersonal violence are reported: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Offense data are provided separately for males and females and by age group, but data on ethnicity are limited to race, and data on socioeconomic status of offenders are not provided. However, studies that have examined the geographic distribution of interpersonal violence, particularly UCR offenses, suggest that crime rates are higher in lower-income and inner-city communities.

The UCR must be supplemented by other sources of information for forms of interpersonal violence perpetration not specifically addressed. Two additional types of interpersonal violence of major concern (and linked to age of victims) are child maltreatment and elder abuse. Most child maltreatment perpetration data in the United States are provided annually by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). However, data for elder abuse (and other types of interpersonal violence, such as violence in the workplace and intimate partner violence perpetration) often rely on surveys or estimates from various sources of information that are not always available annually or for the most recent year.

**Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter**

The UCR defines murder and non-negligent manslaughter as one human being killing another in a manner that is willful and non-negligent. Incidents that fall into this category in the UCR are determined by police investigation rather than by medical examiners and/or a judge or jury. For 2004, the UCR reported a total of 15,935 incidents of murder and non-negligent manslaughter in the United States. Of these, approximately 13% were perpetrated by youth 13 to 19 years old, 17% were perpetrated by younger adults 20 to 24 years old, and 17% were committed by individuals 25 to 34 years old. Rates decline steadily after age 35. There are also significant gender and ethnicity differences in perpetration rates. In 2004, 64% of these crimes were perpetrated by males, 7% were perpetrated by females, and the remaining 29% were classified as perpetrated by individuals of "unknown" gender. Looking at ethnic/racial breakdowns reported in the UCR, Whites committed approximately 51% of all incidents of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, Blacks committed 47% of these crimes, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives and Asians or Pacific Islanders each committed 1%. Whites committed more murder and non-negligent manslaughter in terms of numbers of offenses than other ethnic groups, but Blacks were overrepresented relative to their percentage in the overall U.S. population.

**Forcible Rape**

The UCR defines the crime of forcible rape as the forcible carnal knowledge of a female against her will. Attempts to commit forcible rape are also included in this category. In 2004, there were a total of 18,489 instances of forcible rape reported. The age breakdown of perpetration was as follows: 25% of rapes were committed by youth ages 13 to 19; 19% by
those 20 to 24; 23% by those 25 to 34; and 33%, by those 35 and older. Males perpetrated 98.5% of forcible rapes in 2004, with female perpetrators accounting for the additional 1.5%. Approximately 66% of forcible rapes in 2004 were committed by Whites, 32% by Blacks, 1% by American Indians or Alaskan Natives, and an additional 1% by Asians or Pacific Islanders. Again, the UCR does not provide data on the socioeconomic status of perpetrators of crime.

**Robbery**

The UCR defines robbery as the use of force or threat of force for theft or attempted theft of anything of value directly from the care, custody, or control of another person. In 2004, there were 78,494 instances of robbery. The age breakdown of perpetration was as follows: 37% of the robberies were committed by youth ages 13 to 19; 22% by those 20 to 24; 20% by those 25 to 34; and 21% by those 35 and older. These statistics suggest that a disproportionately high percentage of adolescents is responsible for robbery. Males accounted for 89% of all robberies in 2004, with females committing the remaining 11%. Whites were responsible for approximately 45% of robberies in 2004, while Blacks were responsible for 53%. American Indians or Alaskan Natives perpetrated less than 1% of robberies in 2004, as did Asians or Pacific Islanders.

**Aggravated Assault**

The UCR defines aggravated assault as an unlawful attack with the intent of inflicting bodily injury. In 2004, there were 312,911 incidents of aggravated assault. The age breakdown of perpetration was as follows: 20% of aggravated assaults were committed by youth ages 13 to 19; 19% by those 20 to 24; 26% by those 25 to 34; and 45% by those 35 and older. Approximately 89% of all aggravated assaults in 2004 were perpetrated by men, and 11% by women. Whites accounted for approximately 65% of all aggravated assaults, while Blacks accounted for approximately 33%. American Indians or Alaskan Natives and Asians or Pacific Islanders accounted for approximately 1% of aggravated assaults, respectively.

**Child Maltreatment**

For 2004, the ACF reported a total of 872,000 instances of childhood maltreatment in the United States. This figure includes neglect (62.4%), physical abuse (17.6%), sexual abuse (9.7%), and psychological maltreatment (7.0%), and an additional category of "other," which includes such forms of maltreatment as abandonment, threats of harm, and/or congenital drug abuse (3.3%). Approximately 84% of perpetrators of child maltreatment were parents of the victim, and 6.5% were nonparental caregivers. Approximately 5% of perpetrators were under 20 years old. The majority of acts of child maltreatment were perpetrated by those in the 20 to 39 age group, with 35% of perpetrators between the ages of 20 and 29, and 37.5% between the ages of 30 and 39. The remaining 22% of child maltreatment perpetrators were over 40 years old. Male perpetrators accounted for 42% of child maltreatment cases in 2004, and female perpetrators accounted for 58%. Breakdowns of perpetration by ethnicity and socioeconomic status were not recorded; however, there is evidence to suggest that financial problems may lead to child maltreatment, indicating a link with socioeconomic status.

**Elder Abuse**

The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) defines elder abuse as any form of mistreatment resulting in a harm or loss to an older person. NCPEA has identified six categories of elder abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, psychological abuse, financial abuse, and neglect. Based on estimates, it is generally believed that 4% to 6% of the elderly in the United States are abused each year. In addition to being underreported, elder abuse is considered a relatively new phenomenon, and data collection regarding this type of crime is in the early stages. As with child maltreatment, perpetrators of elder abuse are likely to be persons known to the victim. Most often they are the adult children of victims, although there are cases in which other relatives (including spouses) and/or caregivers commit elder abuse. The NCPEA reports that perpetrators of elder abuse are likely to be unmarried, live with their victim, and be unemployed. Many perpetrators of elder abuse engage in some form of substance abuse. Perpetration does not vary by gender.

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See also Assault, Aggravated; Child Neglect; Elder Abuse; Homicides, Criminal; Intimate Partner Violence; Workplace Violence