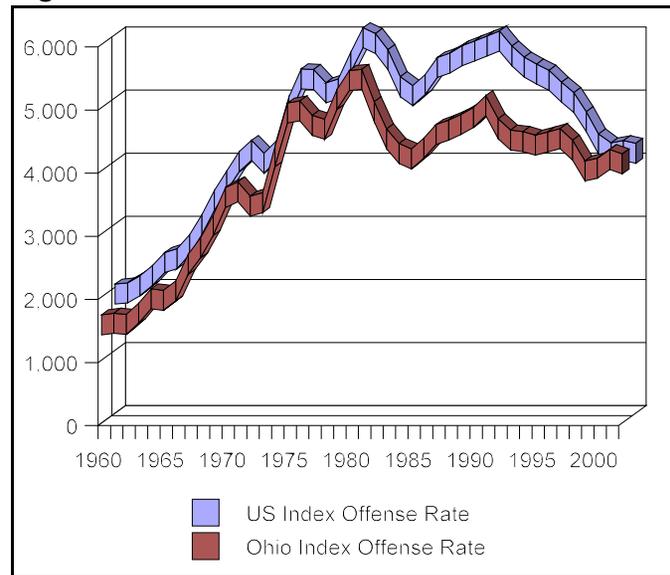


Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

Crime trends are a good indicator of the total potential volume of criminal justice activities in an area. Since they are gathered nationally, there is some potential for comparison across jurisdictions. All reported offenses will provide an indicator of the volume of crime in an area, but it is by no means a measure of *all* crime, since many offenses may not be reported to police or may fall into other categories.

Index Crime Rates

Figure 3.1 Index Offense Rates in the US and Ohio



Since 1960, police agencies have reported information about the following key offenses to the Federal Bureau of Investigation: murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. In 1979, an 8th offense, arson, was added to the reporting requirements. These charges were selected because they are serious offenses (felonies), are among the most frequently reported offenses, and tend to have similar elements in the statutes. When “crime rates” are generally reported, these are the *only* offenses considered. Crime rates are useful because they provide a way to compare crimes across multiple jurisdictions of varying sizes.

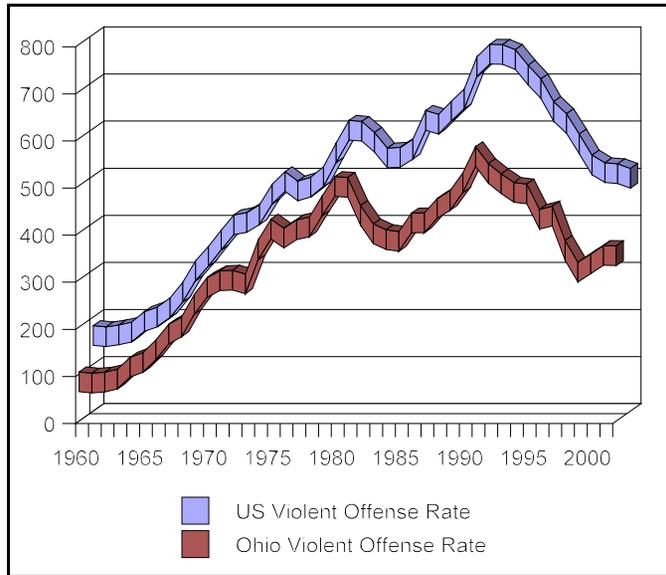
Figure 3.1 shows the national and State pattern in index offenses rates. Rates indicate the number of index offenses per 100,000 residents in the jurisdiction for the year reported. From 1960 through 1980, index offenses consistently increased. Beginning in the 1980's, index offense rates experienced a period of decline to approximately 1985, when another increase began. Since 1991, index offenses have declined consistently until the last two years. Index offense rates in Ohio have generally followed the same pattern. The Ohio rates have consistently been below the national average although since 2000 they appear to be very consistent with the US rates. Data on which these figures and all

subsequent figures in this section are based is provided in Appendix B.

Index offenses are divided into two groups: violent offenses and property offenses. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 provide these rates for the US and the State of Ohio.

Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

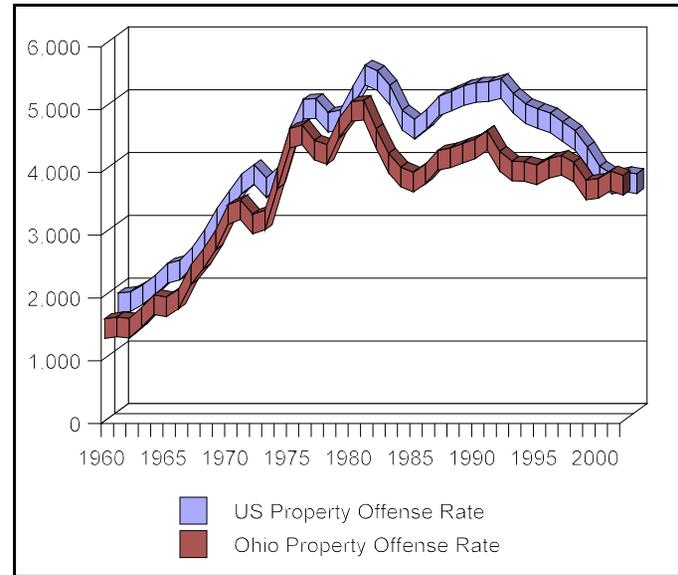
Figure 3.2 Violent Offense Rates in the US and Ohio



Review of Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 show that violent and property offense rates in the State generally follow the same pattern as the nation. Note that the violent crime rate is much lower per 100,000 than the property crime rate. In 2002, violent crimes were 12% of the national total and 9% of Ohio's.

There are several differences. The violent crime rate in Ohio has been considerably lower than the national rate since the 1980's.

Figure 3.3 Property Offense Rates in the US and Ohio



However, Ohio has seen an increase in the violent crime rate since 2000 while the nation has not. The property crime rate in Ohio is very similar to the national property crime trends.

Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

Figure 3.4 Index Offense Rates (US, Ohio, Hamilton County Sheriff, Cincinnati Police Department)

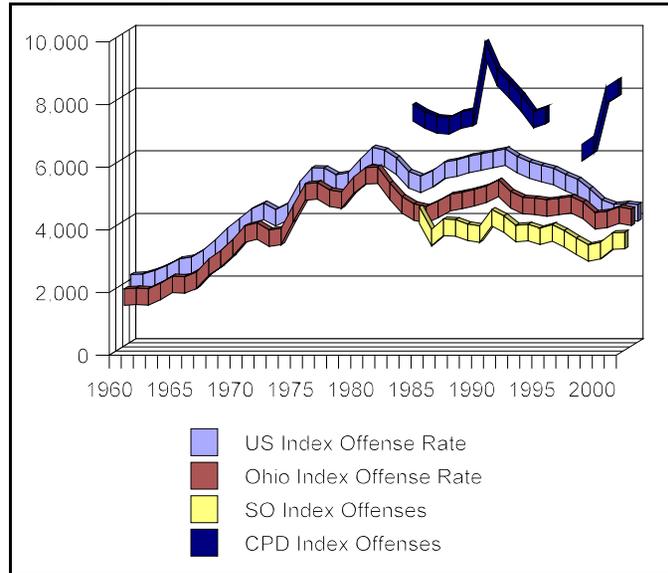
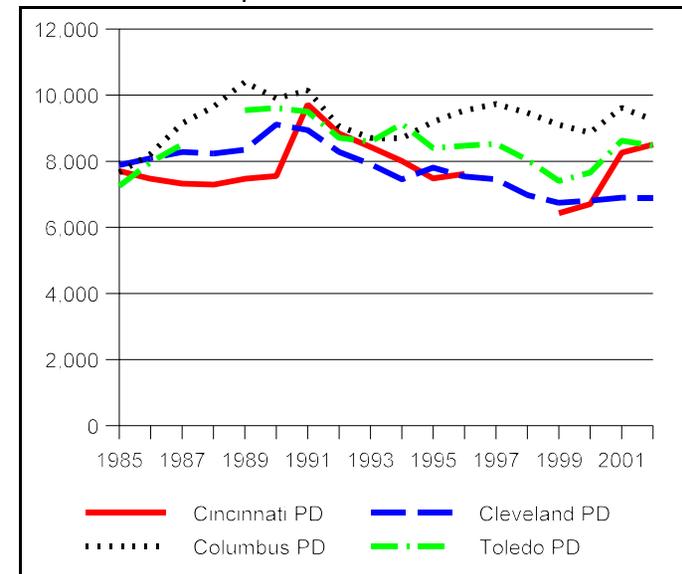


Figure 3.4 adds information that is available for selected Hamilton County agencies (Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office and the Cincinnati Police Department, which together account for approximately 85% of jail bookings). Information by agencies is accessible as far back as 1985, but has not been updated by the FBI beyond 2002. Information about local agencies has been obtained through the Bureau of Justice Statistics web site. Since reporting is voluntary, not all years may be available, and no information is available for the Cincinnati Police Department for years between 1997 and 1998. Figure 3.4 shows that index offense rates for population who reside in areas in which the Sheriff’s Office is the enforcement agency closely parallel the trend in the State. However, index offense rates in those areas policed by the Cincinnati Police Department are significantly higher than both the State and the nation as urban areas typically are. It is also worth noting that the increase in the offense rate has increased significantly during the period from 1999 - 2002.

Although the index crime rate for Cincinnati is higher than that seen in other portions of Hamilton County, it is important to note that it is

not different in a statistical sense from index crime rates in Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo. The pattern seems most similar to the crime rates in Toledo and has consistently been lower than the crime rates in Columbus. Because crime rates can generate such emotional reactions and because they are among the most misunderstood statistics, it is important to see local information in context with comparable municipalities.

Figure 3.5 Comparison of Index Crime Rates for Four Ohio Municipalities



Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

Figure 3.6 Violent Offense Rates (US, Ohio, Hamilton County Sheriff, Cincinnati Police Department)

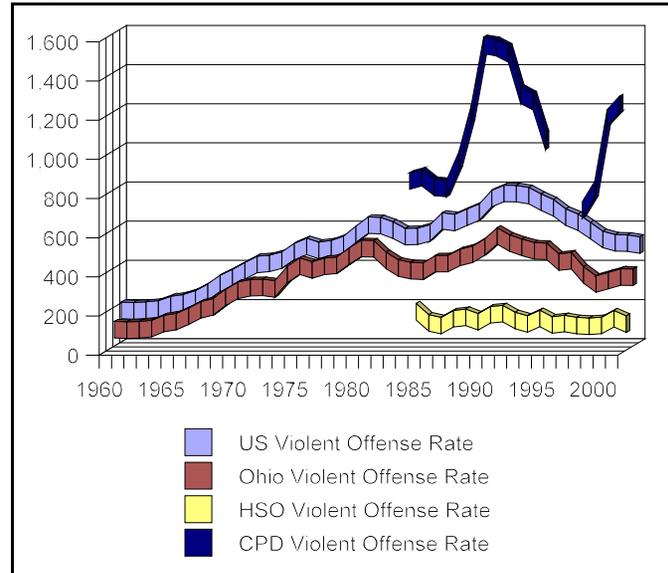
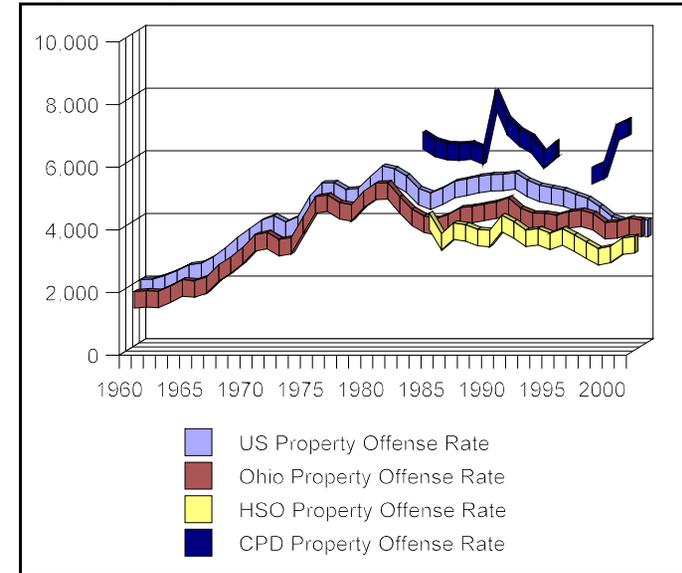


Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6 provide some additional information. Violent offense rates are very low in areas policed by the Sheriff's Office, but higher in areas policed by the Cincinnati Police Department. It appears that violent crime rates in Cincinnati were decreasing significantly until the mid 1990's. In 1999, violent crime rates began to increase. It is worth noting that even in 2002, violent crime rates are lower in the City than they were in the late 1980's. Property crime rates in the areas policed

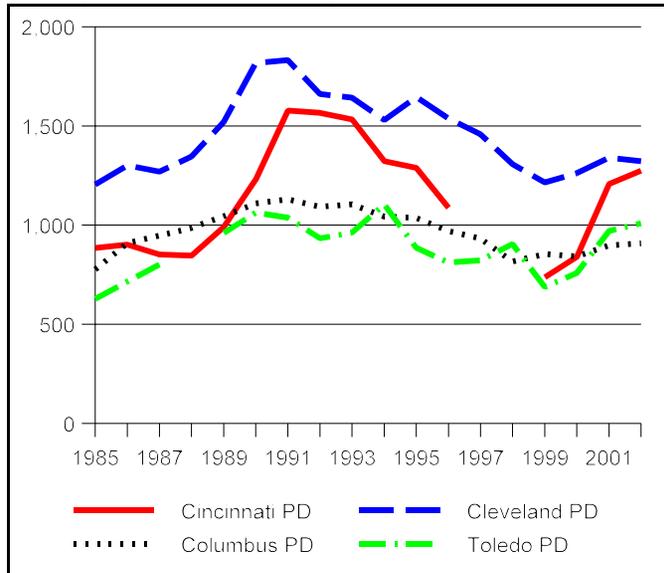
Figure 3.7 Property Offense Rates (US, Ohio, Hamilton County Sheriff, Cincinnati Police Department)



by the Hamilton County Sheriff are quite consistent with the rates in both the State and the nation. While property crime rates in the City are higher, the extremes are less marked, although the pattern remains the same.

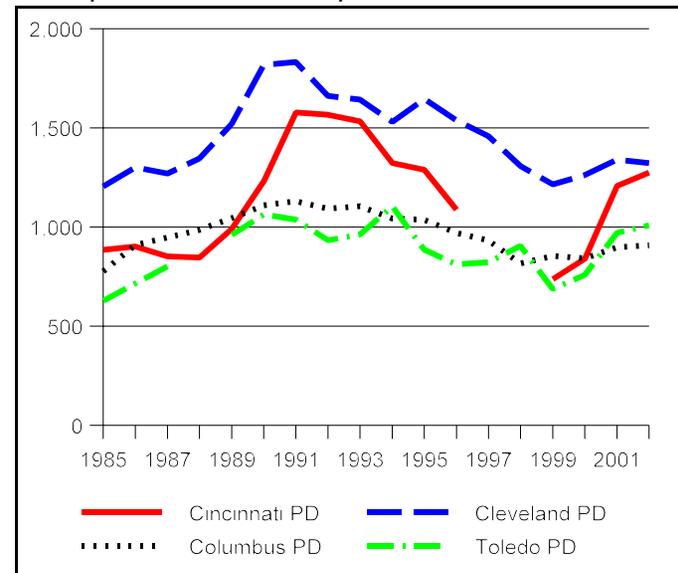
Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

Figure 3.9 Violent Index Crime Rates for Four Metropolitan Ohio Municipalities



Again it is useful to have a context when examining violent and property index crime rates. Violent index crime rates in Cincinnati seem very similar in pattern to those seen in Cleveland, but fall below the level seen there. The trend seen in the late 1990's which continued through 2002 shows violent index crime rates increasing in all four municipalities. A similar pattern emerges for index property offenses.

Figure 3.8 Property Crime Rates for Four Metropolitan Ohio Municipalities



It is also worth noting that there is some evidence of a cyclical pattern in which all of these offenses rise and fall. Unlike State and National trends, for which we have the benefit of a very long view, it is more difficult to see the entire trend for specific jurisdictions for whom less data is available. As planning efforts continue, it will be important to continue to monitor crime and arrest patterns.

Index Crimes

While crime rates are useful as a means of comparison among jurisdictions, because they express crime as a factor of population, it is also very important to look at the *number* of offenses. If the number of crimes is held constant, but the population decreases, then the crime rate will increase. This is particularly important in this environment when the population of Cincinnati has decreased during the period that is examined.

Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

Figure 3.10 Index Offenses (Hamilton County Sheriff and Cincinnati PD)

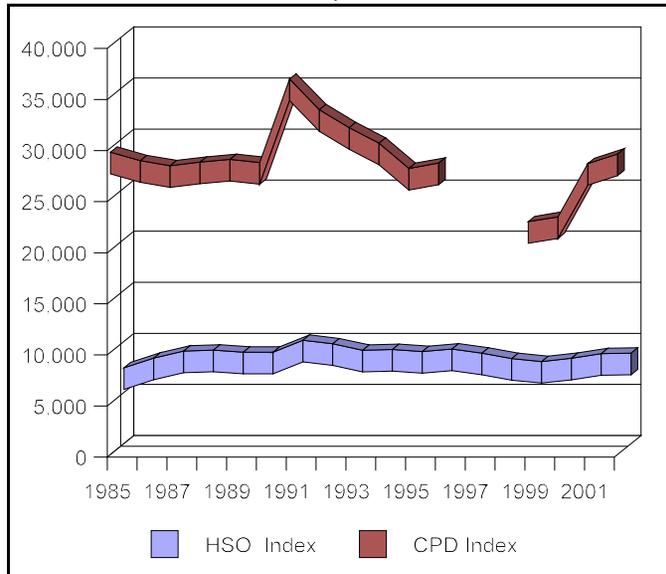
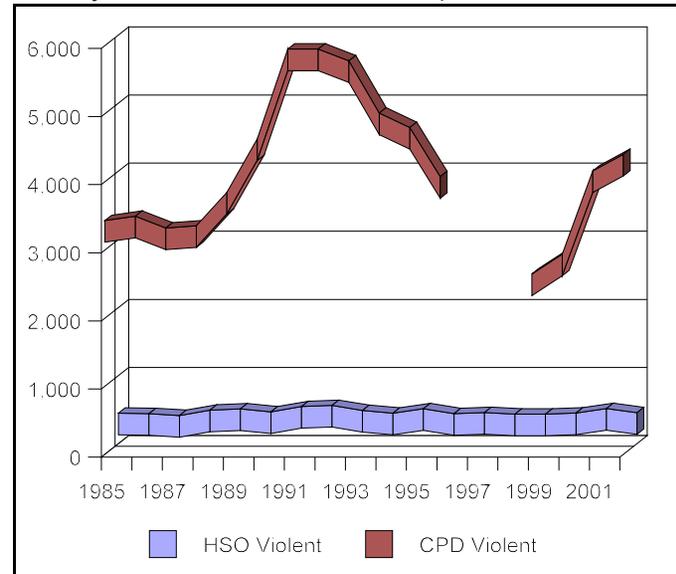


Figure 3.7 shows that the pattern in the actual number of index crimes reported by the two agencies varies significantly. Index crimes are relatively “flat” in the areas policed by the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, but they are more volatile in the City of Cincinnati. It may be that there is something cyclical in nature occurring in the City of Cincinnati, since there appears to be one peak (1991-1995) and an implied valley (from 1996-2000). If that is the

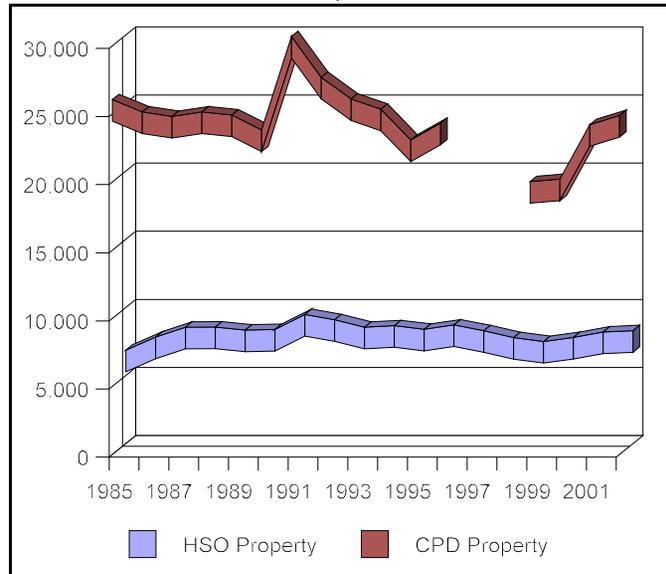
Figure 3.11 Violent Index Offenses (Hamilton County Sheriff and Cincinnati PD)



case, then the increases seen in index offenses in the City from 2000-2002 may relate to a larger cycle which these statistics represent. This seems particularly likely since the pattern appears to be the same in Figure 3.8 and 3.9.

Section 3. Crime and Crime Rates

Figure 3.12 Property Offenses (Hamilton County Sheriff and Cincinnati PD)



As noted earlier, there is considerable more volatility in index offenses reported by the Cincinnati Police Department. Violent offenses comprised from 3% - 5% of the index offenses reported in areas policed by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, but they were 5% - 18% of the index offenses reported in areas policed by the Cincinnati Police Department.

Conclusion

While index crimes will have an impact on the pretrial population of the jail, their real impact tends to be on the prison system, particularly violent crimes. However, many states now provide for some non-violent felons to stay in the local community as a condition of probation, which can result in a period of incarceration in the local jail.

There are a number of other offenses which have more immediate impacts on the local jail. Section five of this document includes information about cases filed in the Courts, which is a good indicator of crimes in Hamilton County.

If county population is the canvas on which criminal justice needs are painted, then crime and crime trends is the first wash of color to go on the painting. How the state and local system respond to these crimes make the shape of criminal justice practices emerge on the canvas. While legislative changes form the parameters in which all local officials operate, local policy and practice has the most significant and immediate impact on crime. When change occurs at the legislative level, however, there can be profound impacts on the demand for local jail resources. In the past, the State of Ohio has legislatively changed which felony offenses go into the state system, and which will stay at the County level. This planning effort must be cognizant of potential changes in both local and state criminal justice policy and practice.

