

SOCI2013: General Sociology May Intersession 2025

Chapter 7: deviance and crime II

Chapter outlines

Crime classifications
and statistics

The criminal justice
system

Crime Classifications and Statistics

Crimes are divided into felonies and misdemeanors. The distinction between the two is based on the gravity of the crime.

A felony is a serious crime such as rape, homicide, or aggravated assault, for which punishment typically ranges from more than a year's imprisonment to death.

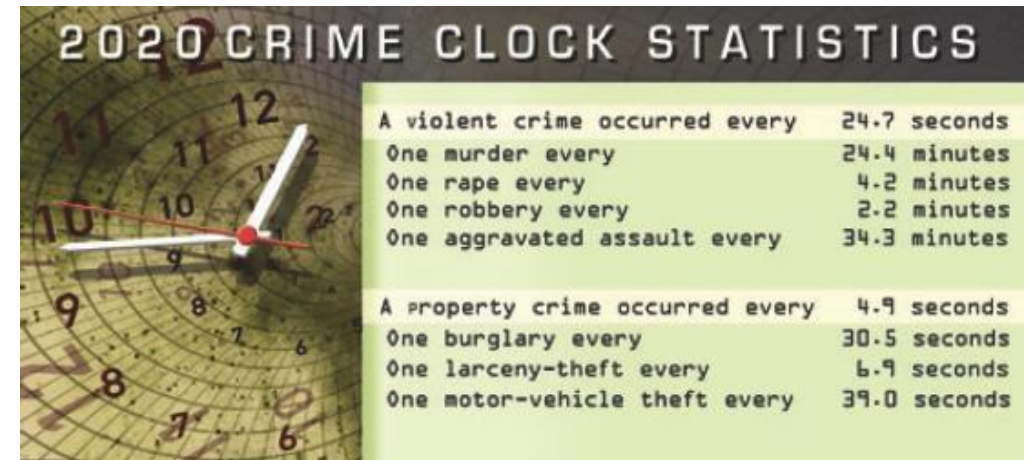
A misdemeanor is a minor crime that is typically punished by less than one year in jail.

In either event a fine may be part of the sanction as well.

Actions that constitute felonies and misdemeanors are determined by the legislatures in the various states. Thus, their definitions vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Crime Classifications and Statistics/violent crimes and property crimes

- Violent crime consists of actions—murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—involving force or the threat of force against others.
- Only 5 percent of all arrests in the United States in 2018 were for violent crimes
- Property crimes include burglary (breaking into private property to commit a serious crime), motor-vehicle theft, larceny-theft (theft of property worth \$50 or more), and arson.



Crime Classifications and Statistics/Public order crimes

Public order crimes (sometimes referred to as “morals” crimes) involve an illegal action voluntarily engaged in by the participants, such as prostitution, illegal gambling, the private use of illegal drugs, and illegal pornography.

Many people assert that such conduct should not be labeled as a crime; these offenses are often referred to as victimless crimes because they involve a willing exchange of illegal goods or services among adults.

However, public order crimes can include children and adolescents as well as adults. Young children and adolescents may unwillingly become victims of child pornography or human trafficking.

Crime Classifications and Statistics/Occupational and Corporate Crime

illegal activities committed by people in the course of their employment or financial affairs.

corporate crime—illegal acts committed by corporate employees on behalf of the corporation and with its support. Examples include antitrust violations; tax evasion; misrepresentations in advertising; infringements on patents, copyrights, and trademarks; price-fixing; and financial fraud.

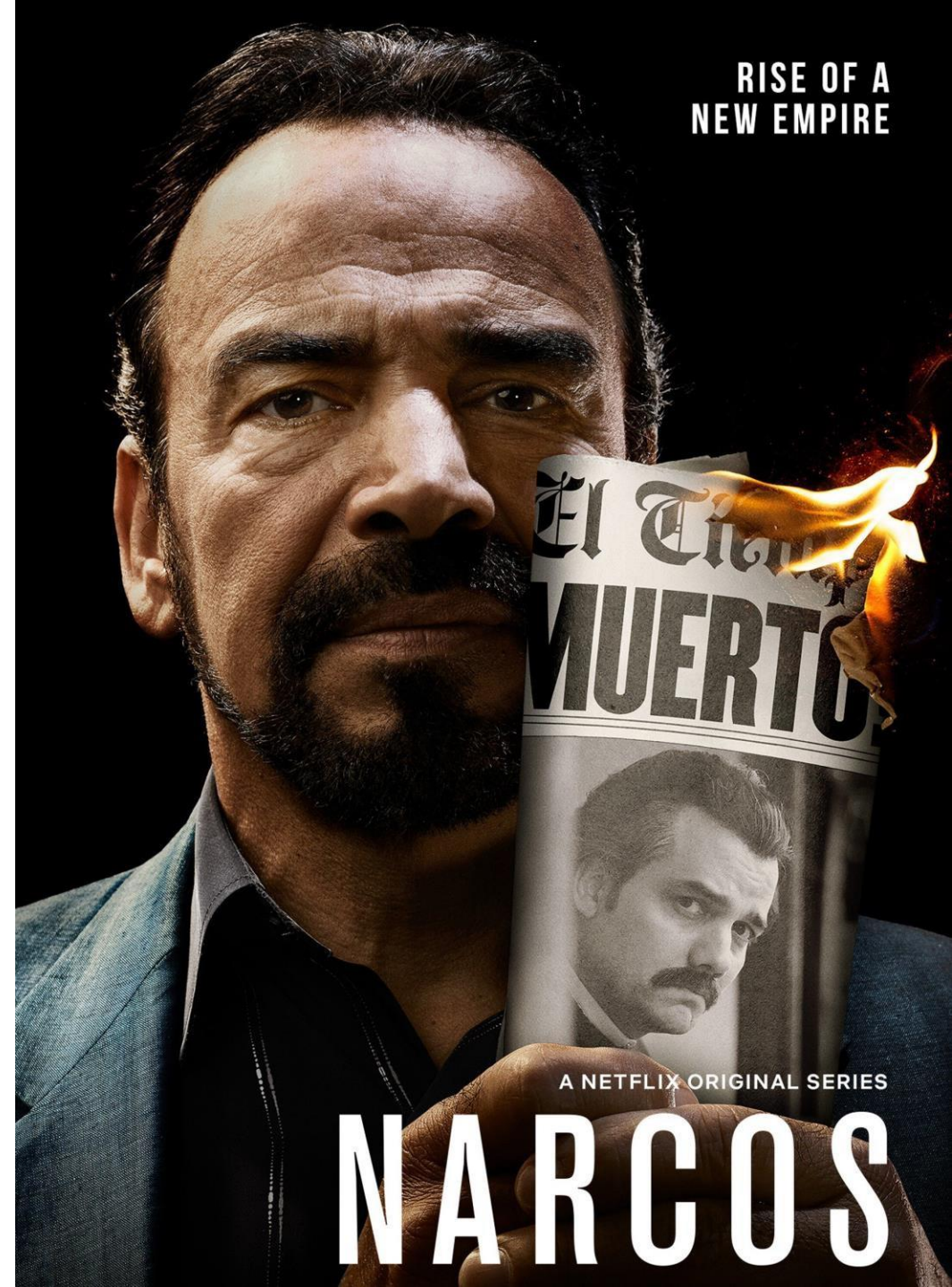
Crime Classifications and Statistics/Internet crime

Internet crime consists of FBI-related scams such as nonpayment/nondelivery of merchandise, extortion, personal data breaches, phishing, confidence fraud, romance fraud, (s)extortion, identity theft, credit-card fraud, and fake tech-support fraud.

The proliferation of computers and Internet access worldwide has contributed to the growth of lucrative crimes in which the victim never meets the perpetrator.

Crime Classifications and Statistics/organized crime

- Organized crime is a business operation that supplies illegal goods and services for profit. Premeditated, continuous illegal activities of organized crime include drug-trafficking, prostitution, loan-sharking, money-laundering, and large-scale theft such as truck-hijacking.
- No single organization controls all organized crime; rather, many groups operate at all levels of society.



Crime Classifications and Statistics/political crimes

- The term political crime refers to illegal or unethical acts involving the usurpation of power by government officials or illegal/unethical acts perpetrated against the government by outsiders seeking to make a political statement, undermine the government, or overthrow it.
- Government officials may use their authority unethically or illegally for the purpose of material gain or political power. They may engage in graft (taking advantage of political position to gain money or property) through bribery, kickbacks, or “insider” deals that benefit them financially.
- Edward Snowden, referred to by some media analysts as an NSA whistleblower, is shown here being interviewed about allegations of U.S. spying in Germany



Crime classifications and statistics/Crime Statistics

Why are some crimes not reported? People are more likely to report crime when they believe that something can be done about it (apprehension of the perpetrator or retrieval of their property, for example).

About half of all assault and robbery victims do not report the crime because they may be embarrassed or fear reprisal by the perpetrator.

Thus, the number of crimes reported to police represents only the proverbial “tip of the iceberg” when compared with all offenses actually committed.

Crime classifications and statistics/ Terrorism and Crime

- Terrorism is the calculated, unlawful use of physical force or threats of violence against persons or property in order to intimidate or coerce a government, organization, or individual for the purpose of gaining some political, religious, economic, or social objective.
- Terrorism remains a major worldwide concern in the twenty-first century. Here, people are paying homage to victims of one of many terrorist attacks in Paris, France. The United States has not been immune to terrorism either.



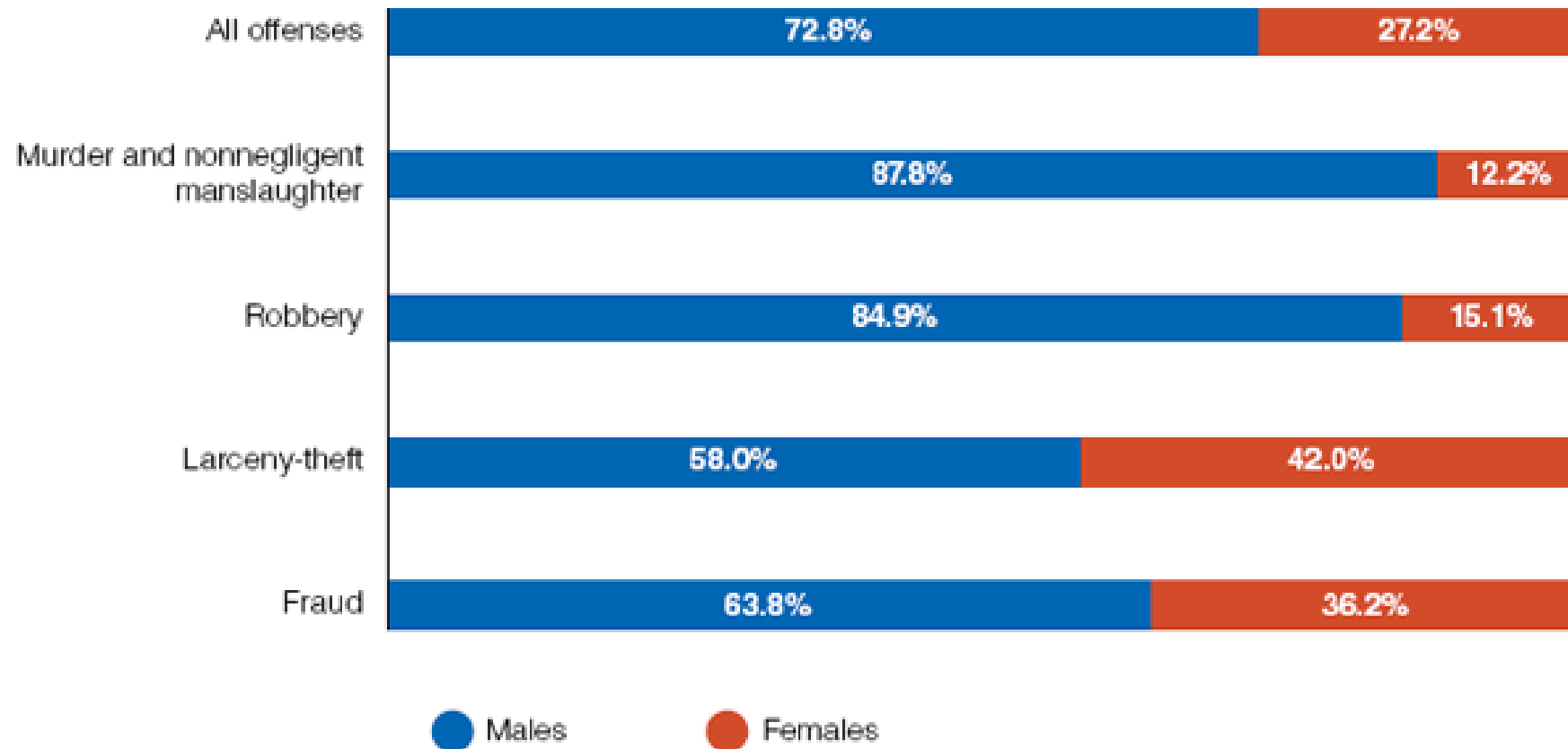
Crime classifications and statistics/gender and crimes

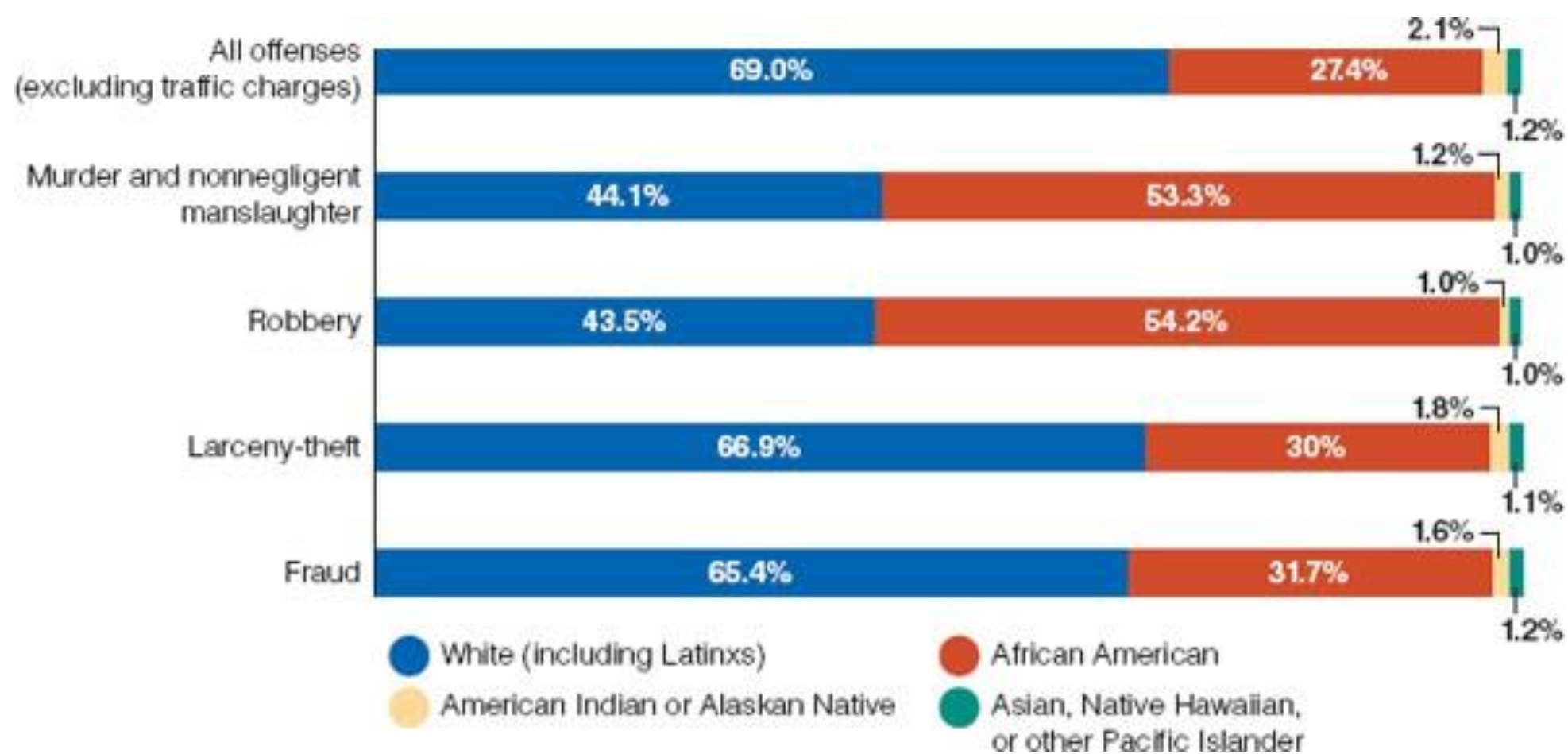
- There is a gender gap in crime statistics: Males are arrested for significantly more crimes than females.
- In 2018 nearly 73 percent of all persons arrested nationwide were male. Males made up slightly less than 80 percent of persons arrested for violent crimes and about 63 percent of all persons arrested for property crimes.
- Females have higher arrest rates than males only in the category of prostitution and commercialized vice. In all other categories, males have higher arrest rates.



Crime classifications and statistics/gender and crimes

Gender differences in crimes

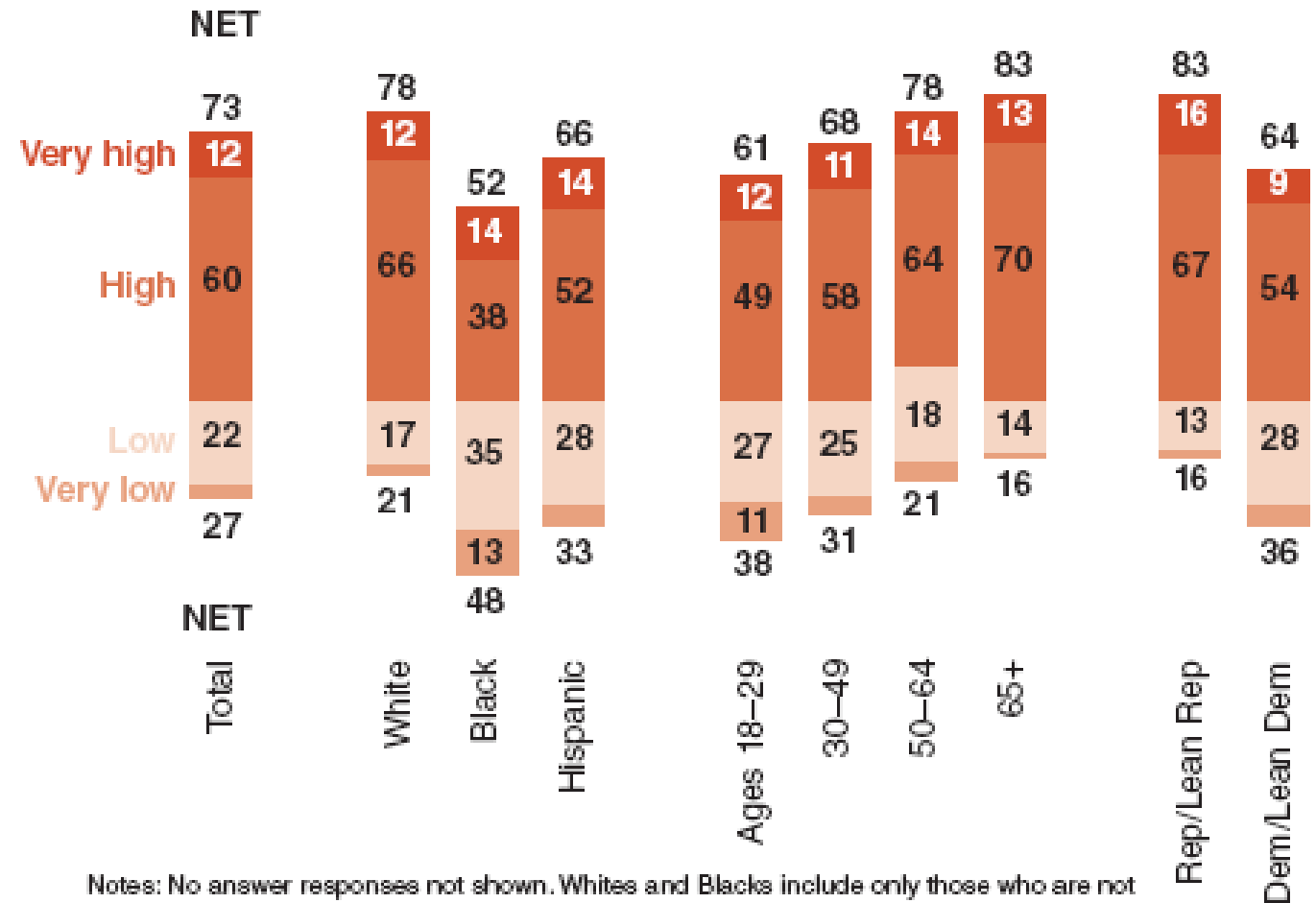




Crime classifications and statistics/public opinion of police

Most white adults – but only about half of Blacks – rated police officers' ethics highly

% who say they would rate the ethical standards of police officers as ...



Notes: No answer responses not shown. Whites and Blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Crime classifications and statistics/crime victims

There was a significant difference in male and female violent victimization rates with males being victimized at higher rates.

Violent victimization includes rape/sexual assault, robbery, total assault, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Robbery victimization was higher for males; victimization for rape or sexual assault was higher for females.

Race is also an important factor in studying victimization. In 2020 the rate of violent victimization for Blacks was higher (17.5 per 1,000) than for Whites (16.2 per 1,000).

The Criminal Justice System

- The criminal justice system refers to the local, state, and federal agencies that enforce laws, adjudicate crimes, and treat and rehabilitate criminals.
- The system includes the police, courts, correctional facilities, and people employed in police agencies, courts, prosecutorial agencies, correctional institutions, and probation and parole departments.



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Police

- Enforce specific laws
- Investigate specific crimes
- Search people, vicinities, buildings
- Arrest or detain people



Fancy/Getty Images

Prosecutors

- File charges or petitions for judicial decision
- Seek indictments
- Drop cases
- Reduce charges
- Recommend sentences



Image Source/Photodisc/Getty Images

Judges or Magistrates

- Set bail or conditions for release
- Accept pleas
- Determine delinquency
- Dismiss charges
- Impose sentences
- Revoke probation

The Criminal Justice System/The Police

The police are responsible not only for crime control and maintenance of order, but also serving human-service functions, including improving community relations, resolving family disputes, and helping people during emergencies.

Not all “police officers” are employed by local police departments; they are employed in governmental agencies ranging from the local level to the federal level.

The Criminal Justice System/The Police

- In the aftermath of sniper-style ambush killings of five Dallas police officers and the wounding of seven more, a patrol car was placed outside Dallas police headquarters as a makeshift memorial to the fallen officers. Tensions remain high across the country between law enforcement officers and some of the communities to which they are assigned.





The Criminal Justice System/The Court

- Although TV and movie crime dramas often prominently feature a judge and jury in a courtroom, about 90 percent of criminal cases are never tried in court. Nevertheless, jury duty is considered to be an important civic responsibility for citizens to perform so that those who are accused have their case heard by a jury of their peers.

The Criminal Justice System/ Punishment and Corrections

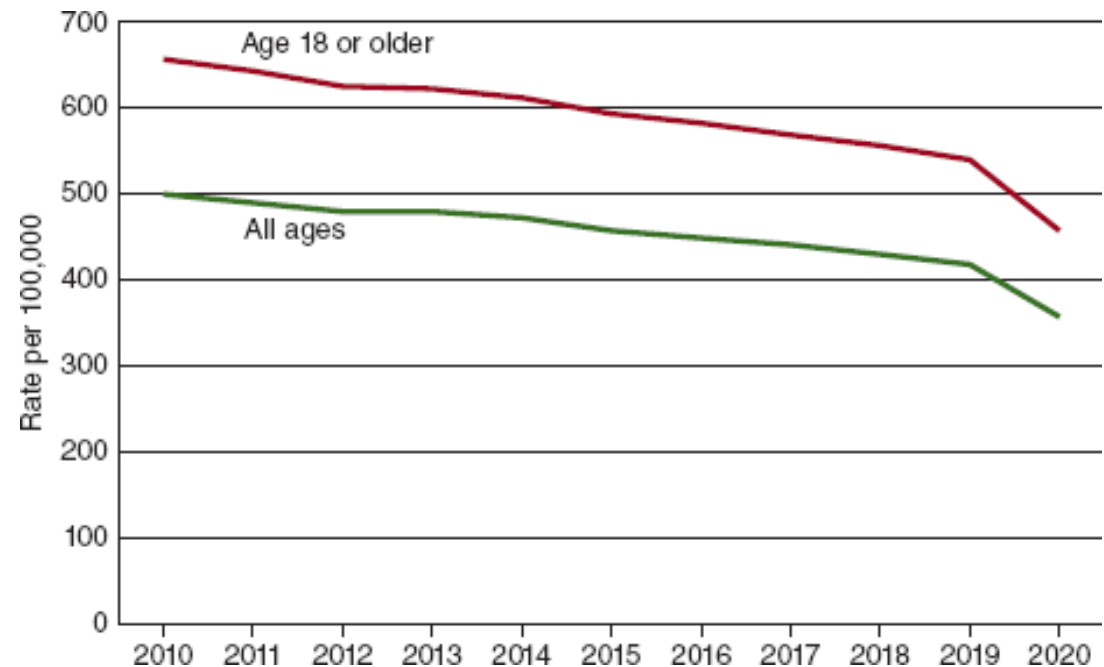
- Purposes of punishment (four)
 - Retribution is punishment that a person receives for infringing on the rights of others.
 - General deterrence seeks to reduce criminal activity by instilling a fear of punishment in the general public.
 - Incapacitation is based on the assumption that offenders who are detained in prison or are executed will be unable to commit additional crimes.
 - Rehabilitation seeks to return offenders to the community as law-abiding citizens by providing therapy or vocational or educational training.

The Criminal Justice System/ Punishment and Corrections

- The imprisonment rate for Black U.S. residents decreased 37 percent, from 1,489 per 100,000 in 2010 to 938 per 100,000 in 2020.
- Yet wide differences exist in rates across various racial, ethnic, and gender categories. The imprisonment rate for Blacks (938 per 100,000) is much higher than for Latinxs (446 per 100,000) and Whites (131 per 100,000).
- Likewise, the imprisonment rate for women of all races (47 per 100,000) is much lower than that for men of all races (678 per 100,000).

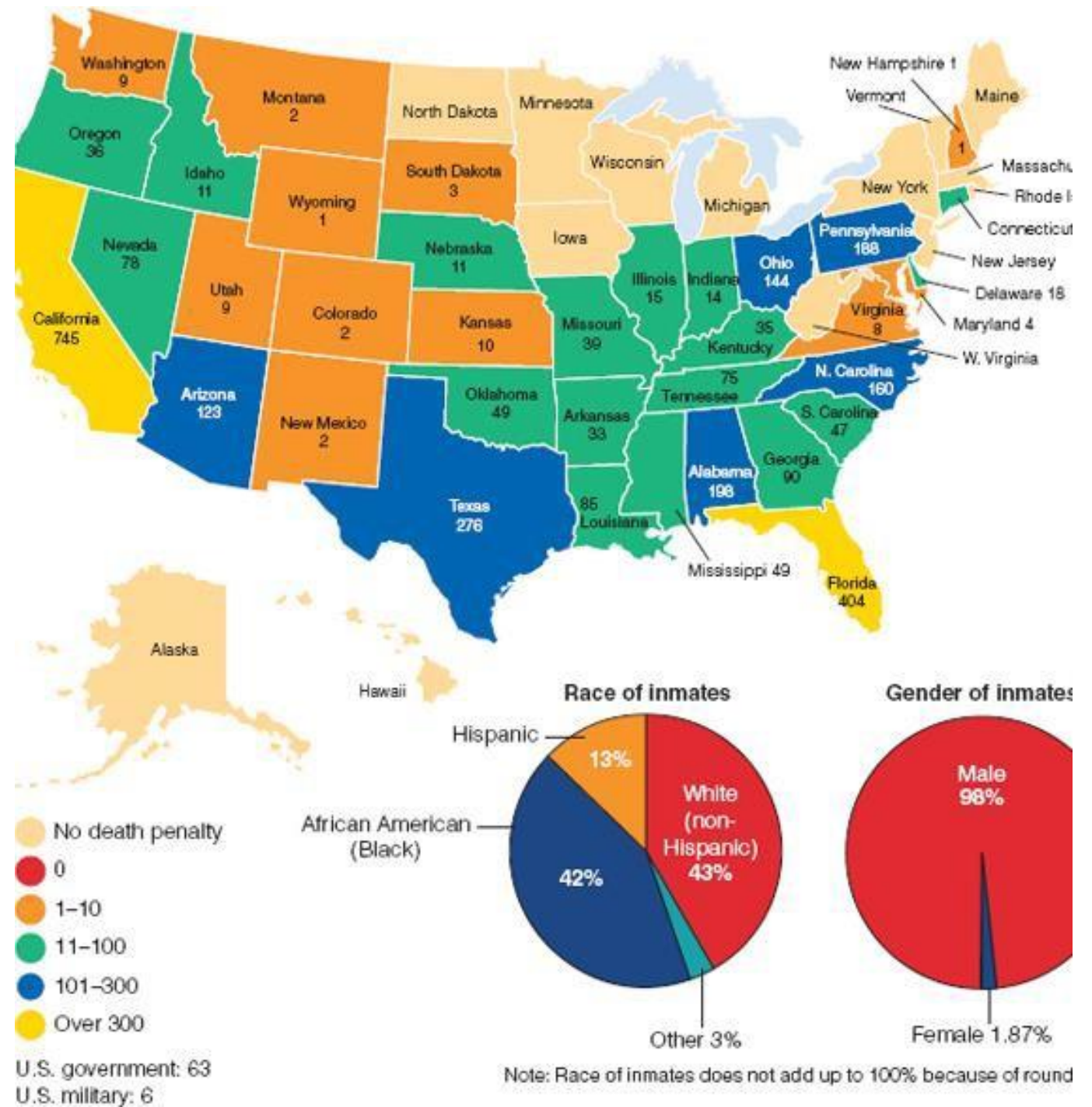
The Criminal Justice System/ Punishment and Corrections

- Mass incarceration and its decline
- Although the United States makes up less than 5 percent of the world's population, our nation accounts for about 22 percent of the world's prison population.



The Criminal Justice System/The Death Penalty

- Does death penalty deter crimes, especially murders? While some said yes, most say no.



Death penalty deters crime

Isaac Ehrlich (1975, AER) found a negative relationship between the use of the death penalty and homicide rates, over the three and a half decades from 1935-69 in the United States.

1975

2003

Hashem Dezhbakhsh, Paul H. Rubin, and Joanna M. Shepherd (2003, American Law and Economics Review) found that capital punishment has a strong deterrent effect; each execution results, on average, in eighteen fewer murders.

Death penalty does not deter crime

most common sensical explanations stress the non-deterrence effect of death penalty because criminology studies reveal that criminals and murderers rarely went through thorough calculations before committing their crimes.

Having death penalty or not would not be a factor in murders as criminals act very impulsively.