

Multiple Offense Incidents in the National Incident-Based Reporting System



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Multiple-Offense Incidents in the National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016

Report

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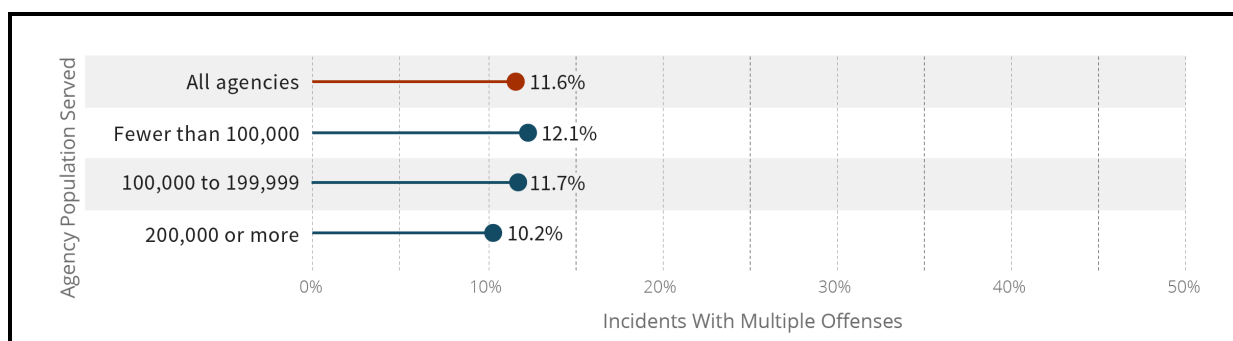
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1. Introduction

In 2016, about 5.2 million crime incidents were recorded by law enforcement agencies to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). An estimated 12% of those 5.2 million incidents were multiple-offense incidents (MOIs; **Figure 1**). An MOI is defined as a crime incident in which two or more unique offense types occurred. Examples include incidents in which a homicide occurred during the course of a burglary, or an incident in which a weapons offense co-occurred with a drug crime. The percentage of crime incidents involving the commission of multiple types of offenses was slightly lower among the largest NIBRS-reporting agencies (those serving populations of 200,000 people or more; 10%) than among agencies serving populations of fewer than 100,000 people (12%).

Figure 1. Percentage of incidents involving multiple offenses, by agency population served, 2016



Note: Analysis of 5,674 city, county, university/college, and state general purpose law enforcement agencies. Excludes special purpose agencies, other state agencies, and tribal agencies—5,534 agencies served resident populations of less than 100,000; 89 agencies served 100,000–199,999; and 51 agencies served 200,000 or more.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

The information in this report comes from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)-sponsored analysis of data from NIBRS. This report presents estimates of the volume and nature of crime incidents in which two or more unique offense types were committed. The data come from the 2016 crime incident data submitted to NIBRS by general purpose law enforcement agencies—state police, local police departments, and county sheriffs' offices. The analyses focus on the co-occurrence of two or more unique offense types collected in NIBRS by agency size (for more information about the agencies included in the analyses for this report and for a list of unique offense codes, see **Methodology**). Tables and figures show what types of incidents are most likely to involve the commission of multiple types of offenses and how frequently specific offense combinations occur within a single incident.

Highlights

In 2016–

- Of the more than 5.2 million crime incidents recorded in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), an estimated 600,000 (12%) were multiple-offense incidents (MOIs).
- The MOI percentage was slightly lower (10%) for the largest law enforcement agencies serving populations of 200,000 people or more than for agencies serving smaller populations.
- About one-third (200,515) of MOIs consisted of multiple property offenses, making this the most common type of MOI.
- About 89% of the 600,000 MOIs were incidents in which two offenses occurred; the remaining 11% involved three or more offense types.
- Fewer than 1% of the 5.2 million incidents involved multiple Part I offenses, such as a burglary in which a homicide occurs, or a rape committed during a robbery.
- Violent sex offense incidents were the least likely to involve an additional criminal offense.
- Incidents involving a public order (43%) or drug offense (35%) were more likely than other incidents to involve additional offense types.

2. Background

Beginning in January 2021, NIBRS will become the national standard for law enforcement crime data reporting.

In 1930, the FBI began collecting crime data from law enforcement agencies through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program's Summary Reporting System (SRS). Since that time, SRS data have served as the standard for police crime data reporting. Until 2017, the SRS collected information on eight Part 1 crime types: murder/nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.¹ Agencies provide aggregate counts of the number of reported crime incidents that involved those offense types, employing a hierarchy rule such that only the most serious offense in an incident is reported. Data reported to the SRS do not contain additional information about the attributes of the crime.

Although the SRS data are widely used by law enforcement agencies, researchers, policymakers, the media, and the public, the summary counts collected in that system lack the attribute-based, incident-specific details necessary to fully understand the nature of crime incidents. To address that lack of detail and other shortcomings of the SRS, the BJS

¹ Starting in 2017, two additional crime types were included as Part 1 crimes: 1) Human Trafficking, Involuntary Servitude and 2) Human Trafficking, Commercial Sex Acts. See <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/topic-pages/offense-definitions>.

and FBI commissioned the Study of the National Uniform Crime Reporting Program of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, overseen by a joint BJS/FBI task force. Work on the study commenced in September 1982 and culminated in a set of recommendations that subsequently led to the development and implementation of NIBRS.²

The structure of NIBRS enables agencies to provide much more comprehensive information about each reported crime incident than they can in the SRS. NIBRS collects detailed incident-level information on 52 distinct offense codes that fall into three broad categories: crimes against persons, crimes against property, and crimes against society. NIBRS eliminates the hierarchy rule, as the system allows agencies to report information on up to 10 offenses per incident, rather than just the one most serious offense as under the SRS. In addition, NIBRS provides a more complete picture of crime by recording information on the attributes of each crime incident, such as demographic information about each victim and alleged offender, victim injury, incident time of day and location, the victim's relationship to the alleged offender, and the presence and type of weapon involved in the incident.

Counting Crime Using NIBRS Data

In 2016, the FBI announced its intention to retire the SRS and transition to NIBRS-only crime reporting as the nation's official indicator of crime recorded by law enforcement. The transition deadline is January 1, 2021. The transition to an incident-based crime-reporting standard enables the United States to provide the public with critical information about crime in their respective communities, information not currently available under the SRS. NIBRS data also provide a more complete picture of the work of law enforcement agencies, showcasing the extent to which agencies respond to and investigate more complex crime incidents involving multiple offenses, victims, and offenders.

Generally, law enforcement leaders and other stakeholders acknowledge the benefits of incident-based crime reporting and support the transition to NIBRS.³ However, law enforcement agencies face uncertainty about whether the shift from the SRS to NIBRS will affect their crime statistics. Of particular concern is what will happen to crime rates when agencies no longer use the SRS's hierarchy rule and calculate crime counts and rates based

² Poggio, E., Kennedy, S., Chaiken, J., & Carlson K. (1985, May). *Blueprint for the future of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Final report of the UCR study*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

³ See *Joint position paper issuing support for the transition of the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program for all law enforcement agencies to the National Incident-Based Reporting System and retirement of the Summary Reporting System*, issued August 26, 2015, by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, National Sheriffs' Association, and Major County Sheriffs' Association. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/Crime%20Reporting%20Joint%20Position%20IACP-MCC-NSA-MCSA%20082615.pdf>.

on the larger scope and scale of offense information recorded in NIBRS—up to 10 offenses per incident and a broader array of offense types.

Concern about the potential adverse impact of the shift to NIBRS on agencies' crime statistics is based on one key assumption—that a meaningful proportion of crime incidents involve multiple offenses that are not currently counted in the SRS. Few statistical analyses of NIBRS data have examined the volume of crime incidents involving multiple offenses. Research by the FBI and BJS found that the difference between crime rates calculated using data from the SRS and those calculated using NIBRS is small.^{4, 5} However, important questions remain regarding what are the nature and prevalence of incidents involving multiple offenses, and whether some agencies record a higher volume of MOIs than other agencies. This information gap leaves law enforcement agencies uncertain about whether and how the transition to NIBRS will affect their crime statistics. The analyses in this report will examine the characteristics of incidents recorded in NIBRS, including the percentage of incidents that involved more than one unique offense type and how the percentage and type of MOI varies by the size of the population served by the agency.

3. Characteristics of Incidents Recorded in NIBRS

Just over 5.2 million incidents were recorded in NIBRS in 2016; more than half involved at least one property offense.

In 2016, law enforcement agencies that submitted data to NIBRS reported more than 5.2 million incidents (**Table 1**). Law enforcement recorded more than three times as many incidents involving violent offenses not captured as part of the SRS program, which includes simple assault, intimidation, and kidnapping (909,451) as serious violent non-sexual crimes such as murder, aggravated assault, and robbery (265,945).⁶ Incidents involving a serious violent non-sexual offense, a violent sexual offense, a non-violent sexual offense, or a public order offense collectively made up fewer than 10% of all crime incidents. Property crimes were the most common offense type to occur during an incident (58%), followed by other violent offenses (17.5%). Another 12% of incidents involved a drug offense and 9% a fraud offense.

⁴ Rantala, R. (2000). *Effects of NIBRS on crime statistics* (p. 2; NCJ 178890). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/encs.pdf>

⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program, National Incident-Based Reporting System. (n.d.). *NIBRS participation by state*. Retrieved from <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/nibrs/2012/resources/nibrs-participation-by-state>

⁶ For purposes of these analyses, we have classified simple assault, intimidation, and kidnapping as "other violent offenses" and murder, aggravated assault, and robbery as "serious violent non-sexual crimes."

Table 1. Crime incidents submitted to NIBRS, by type of offense, 2016

Offense Committed During Incident	Number	Percent*
Total Incidents	5,207,481	
Serious violent non-sexual offenses	265,945	5.1
Violent sexual offenses	78,627	1.5
Other violent offenses	909,451	17.5
Non-violent sexual offenses	5,161	0.1
Property offenses	3,024,469	58.1
Fraud offenses	456,647	8.8
Public order offenses	116,266	2.2
Drug offenses	614,071	11.8

*Percentages will not sum to 100% because incidents may involve more than one offense category. For offense definitions, see Methodology.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

Most crime incidents did not involve a violent offense.

In 2016, almost a quarter (24%) of all incidents involved at least one violent offense—5.1% serious violent non-sexual offenses, 1.5% violent sexual offenses, and 17.5% other violent offenses such as kidnapping, simple assault, or intimidation. Most incidents (76%) recorded in NIBRS in 2016 involved non-violent offenses only. About 0.1% of incidents involved a non-violent sexual offense of incest or statutory rape.

4. Prevalence and Nature of Multiple-Offense Incidents

The vast majority—88%—of crime incidents involved a single offense type.

Of the more than 5.2 million crime incidents reported to NIBRS in 2016, most (88%) involved only one offense type (**Table 2**). Analysis was conducted to determine whether the percentage of MOIs was different for large law enforcement agencies than for smaller agencies. Agencies were grouped by the size of the population served, as most agencies serving larger populations also employ larger numbers of sworn police officers.⁷ Findings from this comparative analysis indicate that the percentage of single-offense incidents was fairly consistent across agencies of all sizes. About 88% of incidents submitted by agencies serving populations of fewer than 200,000 people involved a single offense type, compared with about 90% for agencies serving populations of 200,000 or more.

⁷ Analysis of agency characteristics captured under the FBI's Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) program shows that the size of the population served is highly correlated with the number of sworn officers (Pearson correlation coefficient, $r = .96$). For more information on the LEOKA, see <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/37062/datadocumentation#>.

Table 2. Number and percentage of incidents with single and multiple offenses, by agency population served, NIBRS, 2016

Number of Offenses in the Incident	Agency Population Served (No. of Agencies)							
	All Agencies (5,674)		<100,000 (5,534)		100,000–199,999 (89)		≥200,000 (51)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total incidents	5,207,481	100.0	3,109,283	100.0	761,858	100.0	1,336,340	100.0
1 offense	4,605,479	88.4	2,732,763	87.9	672,711	88.3	1,200,005	89.8
2 offenses	537,858	10.3	335,347	10.8	79,055	10.4	123,456	9.2
3 or more offenses	64,144	1.3	41,173	1.3	10,092	1.3	12,879	1.0

Note: Analysis of 5,674 city, county, university/college, and state general purpose law enforcement agencies. Excludes special purpose agencies, other state agencies, and tribal agencies.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

Most MOIs involved no more than two co-occurring offenses.

Among MOIs reported to NIBRS for 2016, the most common type involved two unique offense types (89%). Eleven percent of all MOIs involved three or more offense types. Incidents with two offense types made up about 10% of all 5.2 million incidents analyzed for this report, whereas incidents with three or more offense types were a small fraction of the total—1%, or 64,144 incidents. The percentage of incidents involving three or more offenses was similar for all agencies, regardless of the size of population served.

About 1% of all incidents involved multiple Part 1 offenses.

For decades the nation's standard of crime data reporting was defined by the FBI's SRS, which collects information on eight Part 1 crimes and employs a hierarchy rule. NIBRS collects information on 52 offense codes, including the eight Part 1 offenses collected by the SRS. Analyses were conducted to estimate how often more serious offenses, including Part 1 offenses, co-occurred in a single incident. Findings indicate that just 1% of the 5.2 million incidents in the 2016 NIBRS involved the co-occurrence of multiple Part 1 offenses (**Table 3**). That percentage was similar regardless of agency size.

Table 3. Percentage of single- and multiple-offense incidents, by type of co-occurring offense and agency population served, 2016

Incident Type	Agency Population Served			
	All Agencies	<100,000	100,000–199,999	≥200,000
Total	100	100	100	100
Single-Offense Incidents	88.4	87.9	88.3	89.8
Single Part 1 offense	51.1	48.8	53.5	54.8
Single non-Part 1 offense	49.0	51.2	46.5	45.2
Multiple-Offense Incidents	11.6	12.1	11.7	10.2
Multiple Part 1 offenses only	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0
Single Part 1 offense + at least 1 non-Part 1 offense	5.1	4.8	5.8	5.2
Multiple non-Part 1 offenses only	5.1	5.9	4.6	3.7
Multiple Part 1 offenses and at least one non-Part 1 offense	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Number of Incidents	5,207,481	3,109,283	761,858	1,336,340

Note: The following NIBRS offense codes were classified as SRS Part 1 offenses for this table: Murder/manslaughter, rape/sexual assault (i.e., rape, sexual assault with an object, and sodomy), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft offenses, and arson. NIBRS offenses that were classified as non-Part 1 offenses include kidnapping/abduction, forcible fondling, simple assault, intimidation, extortion, counterfeiting, fraud offenses, embezzling, stolen property offenses, destruction of property, drugs and drug equipment violations, incest, statutory rape, pornography offenses, gambling offenses, prostitution offenses, bribery, and weapon law violations.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

5. Which Offenses Frequently Co-occur Within a Single Incident?

After estimating the percentage of crime incidents involving multiple offenses, we examined which offenses were more likely to co-occur with another offense type. Rather than analyzing incidents by the most serious offense in the incident, we analyzed each offense type separately to examine the distribution of offense types that co-occurred with the primary offense. To illustrate, consider an incident involving both a murder and a weapons offense. The weapons offense would be included as co-occurring with the murder; in addition, the murder would be included as co-occurring with the weapons offense. Excluding the murder from the distribution of offenses that co-occurred with the weapons offense would underestimate the percentage of weapons-related offenses that also involved the commission of another offense type.

Public order and drug offenses were more likely to occur in conjunction with other offense types; sexual incidents were the least likely to co-occur with another type of crime.

Two out of five (43%) public order offense incidents and one out of three (35.3%) drug offense incidents also involved the commission of another type of offense (**Table 4**). Among incidents involving a serious violent non-sexual offense—murder/manslaughter, aggravated assault, and robbery—fewer than one in five (18.8%) included another offense type. Violent sexual offenses (rape and forcible sexual assault; 6.9%) and non-violent sexual offenses (statutory rape and incest; 6.5%) were least likely to co-occur with another type of crime.

Table 4. Percentage of incidents involving multiple offenses, by types of offenses that occurred in incident, 2016

Type of Offense in Incident	Total	Percent of Incidents That Involved...	
		Single Offense	Multiple Offenses
Serious violent non-sexual offenses	100	81.2	18.8
Violent sexual offenses	100	93.1	6.9
Other violent offenses	100	88.7	11.3
Non-violent sexual offenses	100	93.5	6.5
Property offenses	100	88.0	12.0
Fraud offenses	100	83.3	16.7
Public order offenses	100	57.0	43.0
Drug offenses	100	64.7	35.3
Total number of incidents	5,207,481	4,605,479	602,002

Note: See Methodology for a list of the individual offense types included in the offense categories shown in the table. There were 5,882,886 unique offense codes recorded within the 5,207,481 incidents included in this report. All of these 5,882,886 unique offense codes are represented in at least one of the rows in this table.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

Incidents involving a single property offense accounted for more than half of all incidents.

In 2016, incidents involving a single property offense accounted for more than half (51%) of all incidents in NIBRS (**Table 5**). Incidents involving a single simple assault, kidnapping/abduction, or intimidation offense accounted for about 16% of all incidents. Incidents involving a single drug offense or a single fraud offense accounted for about 15% of the 5.2 million incidents, whereas incidents involving a single violent non-sexual offense, a single violent sexual offense, a single non-violent sexual offense, or a single public order offense were less common (i.e., each offense type accounted for fewer than 5% of all incidents).

Table 5. Percentage of offenses involving a co-occurring offense, by type, 2016*

Offense Type	No Additional Offense Occurred	Offenses							
		Serious Violent Non-sexual	Violent Sexual	Other Violent	Non-violent Sexual	Property	Fraud	Public Order	Drug
Serious violent non-sexual offenses	4.1	0.03	0.01	0.26	0.00	.46	0.01	0.23	0.10
Violent sexual offenses	1.4	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.01
Other violent offenses	15.5	0.26	0.04	0.18	0.00	1.31	0.03	0.10	0.23
Non-violent sexual offenses	0.1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property offenses	51.1	0.46	0.02	1.31	0.00	3.85	0.90	0.23	0.70
Fraud offenses	7.3	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.90	.048	0.03	0.16
Public order offenses	1.3	0.23	0.01	0.10	0.00	0.23	0.03	0.01	0.51
Drug offenses	7.6	0.10	0.01	0.23	0.00	.70	0.16	.51	3.07
Total incidents	5,207,481								

*Detail does not sum to 100% because some offense types co-occurred with more than one additional offense type. For offense definitions, see Methodology.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

Rape and sexual assault rarely occur with another crime.

The public may be especially fearful of incidents of rape or sexual assault that co-occur with another offense such as a burglary or robbery.⁸ For example, research has shown that, in general, women are more fearful of crime than men are,^{9,10,11,12} and women's higher levels

⁸ For a review, see Warr, M. (1994). Public perceptions and reactions to violent offending and victimization. In A. J. Reiss, Jr., & J. A. Roth (Eds.), *Understanding and Preventing Violence: Vol. 4. Consequences and control* (pp. 1–66). Washington, DC: National Academy Press. Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu/read/4422/chapter/2#3>

⁹ Ferraro, K. (1996). Women's fear of victimization: Shadow of sexual assault? *Social Forces*, 75, 667–690. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/75.2.667>

¹⁰ May, D. (2001). The effect of fear of sexual victimization on adolescent fear of crime. *Sociological Spectrum*, 21, 141–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732170119080>

¹¹ Smith, W., Torstensson, M., & Johansson, K. (2001). Perceived risk and fear of crime: Gender differences in contextual sensitivity. *International Review of Victimology*, 8, 159–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026975800100800204>

¹² Lane, J., Gover, A., & Dahod, S. (2009). Fear of violent crime among men and women on campus: The impact of perceived risk and fear of sexual assault. *Violence and Victims*, 24, 172–192. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.24.2.172>

of fear are explained almost entirely by an overarching fear of experiencing a sexual assault during a crime event.^{13,14,15,16} Just 0.11% of all incidents involved either multiple violent sexual offenses (e.g., rape and sodomy) or a combination of at least one violent sexual offense and some other offense type. To illustrate, about 0.02% of all NIBRS incidents involved a violent sexual offense that co-occurred with a property crime (e.g., burglary). Similarly, 0.01% of all incidents involved a serious violent non-sexual offense (i.e., murder/manslaughter, aggravated assault, and robbery) in conjunction with a violent sexual offense. When a violent sexual offense did co-occur with another crime type, the other crime was most typically a simple assault, kidnapping, or intimidation offense, although that scenario accounted for only 0.04% of all NIBRS incidents.

Fewer than half of 1% of all incidents involved a property crime offense that co-occurred with a serious violent offense.

Members of the public may also be disproportionately fearful of incidents in which they are physically harmed during the course of a property crime, such as a burglary. The percentage of incidents that involved a property offense that occurred in conjunction with a serious violent crime is low, making up fewer than 1% of all offenses recorded in NIBRS in 2016—0.46% of all incidents involved a property crime and a serious violent non-sexual offense.

When a serious violent crime incident involves an additional crime, it typically occurs in conjunction with a property offense.

About 5% of all incidents reported to NIBRS in 2016 involved at least one serious violent non-sexual offense (**Figure 2**). Of those serious violent non-sexual offense incidents, 18.8% were MOIs (N=49,992). About half (N=23,897) of those MOIs involved an additional property offense, most commonly a property destruction/vandalism offense combined with an aggravated assault. Another 27% (N=13,710 incidents) of violent non-sexual MOIs involved a simple assault, kidnapping/abduction, or intimidation offense.

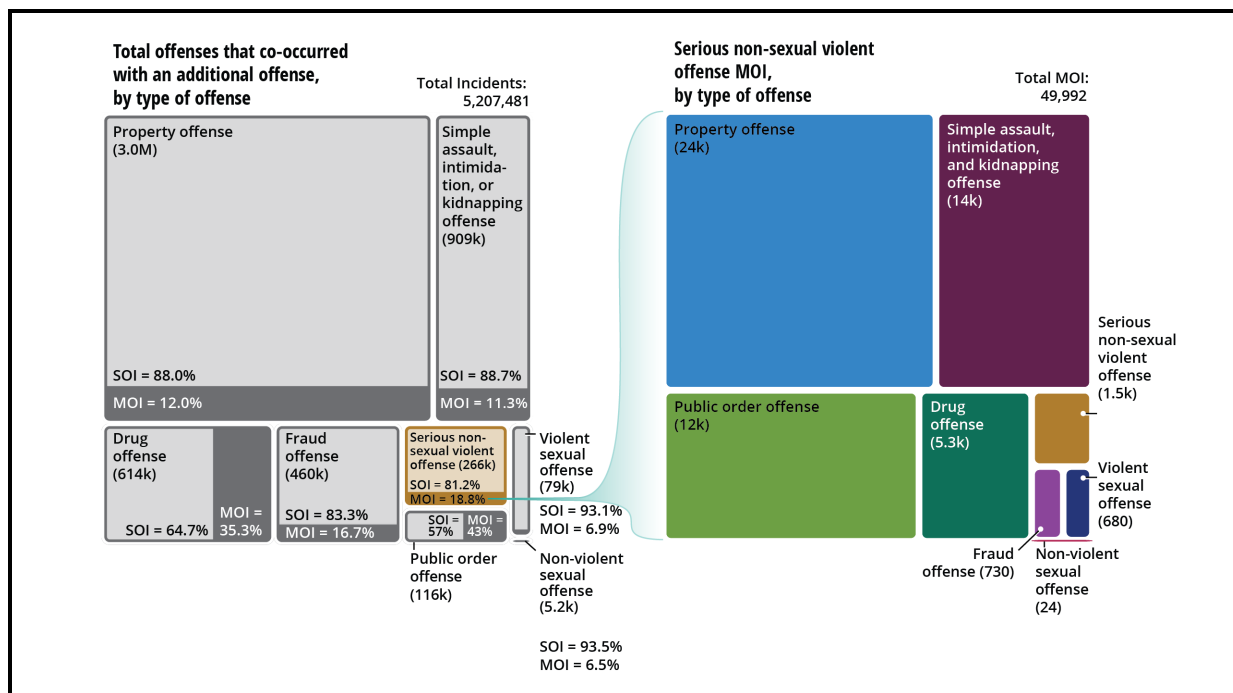
¹³ Fisher, B. S., & Sloan, J. J. (2003). Unraveling the fear of victimization among college women: Is the “shadow of sexual assault hypothesis” supported? *Justice Quarterly*, 20, 633–659. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820300095641>

¹⁴ Hilinski, C. M. (2009). Fear of crime among college students: A test of the shadow of sexual assault hypothesis. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34, 84–102. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-008-9047-x>

¹⁵ Wilcox, P., Jordan, C. E., & Pritchard, A. J. (2006). Fear of acquaintance versus stranger rape as a “master status”: Towards refinement of the “shadow of sexual assault.” *Violence and Victims*, 21, 355–370. <https://doi.org/10.1891/088667006780644631>

¹⁶ Lane, J., & Fox, K. A. (2013). Fear of property, violent, and gang crime: Examining the shadow of sexual assault thesis among male and female offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 40, 472–496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854812463564>

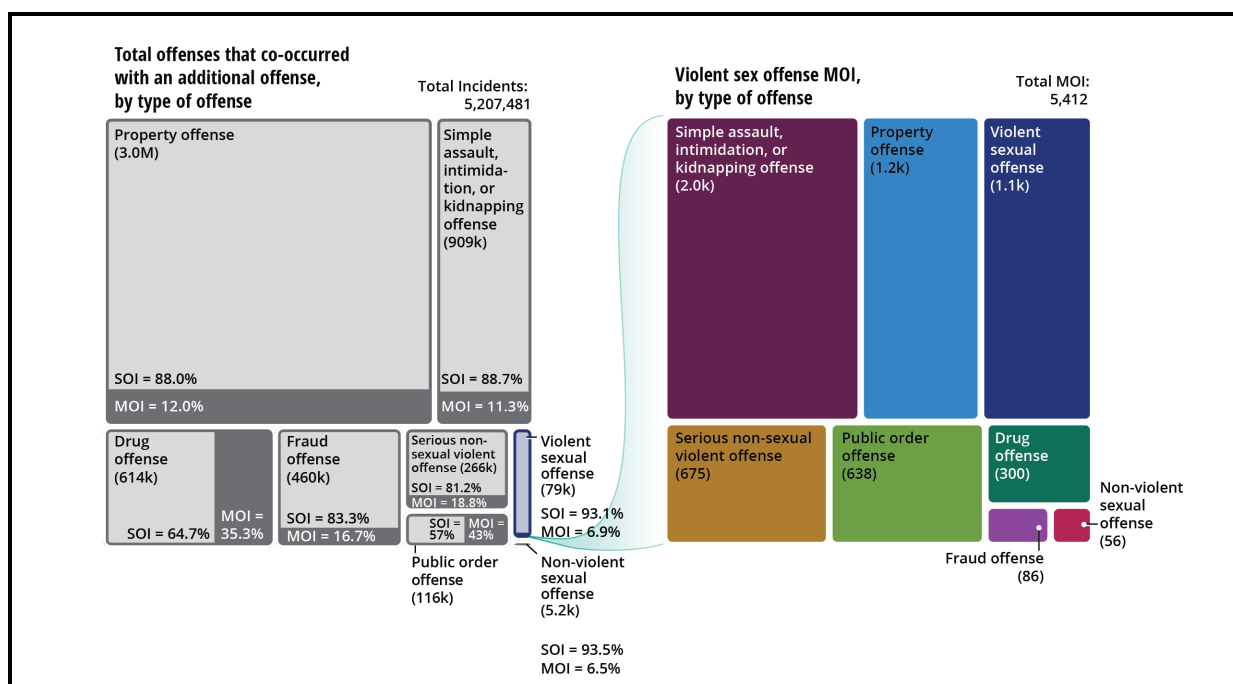
Figure 2. Serious violent non-sexual offenses, 2016



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

About 1.5% (N=78,627) of all 2016 NIBRS incidents involved a violent sexual offense (**Figure 3**). Of those, 6.9% (N=5,412) were MOIs. More than one-third (N=2,003) of those MOIs involved an additional simple assault, kidnapping/abduction, or intimidation offense. About a quarter (N=1,226) of violent sexual offense MOIs involved an additional property offense.

Figure 3. Violent sexual offenses, 2016



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016.

6. Concluding Remarks

This report leverages the more detailed incident-based crime data contained in NIBRS to provide critical insights about the context and nature of crime incidents recorded by participating law enforcement agencies in the United States. Our analyses revealed that MOIs are not common, making up 12% of approximately 5.2 million incidents recorded by law enforcement in 2016. Incidents involving more than one of the Part 1 offenses measured under the SRS are especially rare; 1% of the 5.2 million incidents we examined involved multiple Part 1 offenses, such as a home burglary that results in an aggravated assault or homicide, or a robbery in which a victim also experiences a sexual assault. Importantly, NIBRS data analyzed for this report also indicated that larger NIBRS agencies serving populations of 200,000 or more residents did not have a higher rate of MOIs than did smaller law enforcement agencies.

Only recently has enough data on crimes reported to law enforcement been available at the federal level to explore the extent to which multiple offense types which often remain hidden under the SRS because of the hierarchy rule occur in a single incident. Unlike the SRS, NIBRS provides rich information about up to 10 offenses that occurred within a single event, not just the most serious offense, in addition to numerous attributes about victims,

offenders, and the incident itself. Ultimately, the details presented in this report, and NIBRS data more generally, provide police, researchers, and other stakeholders with the tools to more accurately communicate the public safety challenges and personal victimization risks in their communities. Considering the linkage between fear of crime and negative mental and physical health,^{17,18,19} improving transparency about crime through better data has the potential to improve the strength of communities and public health more broadly.

Although our analysis is based on a nonrepresentative sample of agencies that report crime data to NIBRS, all law enforcement agencies are requested to transition to NIBRS by January 2021. The National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X) initiative has already expanded the number of agencies capable of reporting crime data to NIBRS. Thus, the level of detail presented in this report will soon be accessible to all agencies in the United States and will enhance our understanding of crime at local, state, regional, and national levels. These data can ultimately be used to inform crime prevention and to promote public safety.

7. Methodology

7.1 NIBRS Coverage

The FBI's NIBRS compiles data on all crime incidents recorded by participating state and local law enforcement agencies. The system was designed to capture detailed information on each incident recorded by participating law enforcement agencies for 52 offense types under 24 major offense categories. In addition to recording information on a wide variety of different crime types, the data also include details about the incident, such as demographic information about each victim and alleged offender, victim injury, incident time of day and location, the victim's relationship to the alleged offender, and the presence and type of weapon involved in the incident.

Law enforcement participation in NIBRS is currently voluntary. In 2016, approximately 6,900 law enforcement agencies across 32 states were certified to contribute to NIBRS.²⁰ These agencies represented 37% of all police departments reporting crime statistics to the FBI. In 2012, the BJS launched the NCS-X, an effort to strategically expand the number of law enforcement agencies reporting crime data to NIBRS. The goal of the NCS-X is to build

¹⁷ Ross, C. E. (1993). Fear of victimization and health. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 9, 159–175. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01071166>

¹⁸ Ross, C. E. & Mirowsky, J. (2001). Neighborhood disadvantage, disorder, and health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 42, 258–276. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090214>

¹⁹ Stafford, M., Chandola, T., & Marmot, M. (2007). Association between fear of crime and mental health and physical functioning. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97, 2076–2081. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2006.097154>

²⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2017, December 11). *2016 NIBRS crime data released: Report contains new data, including animal cruelty*. Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2016-nibrs-data-released>

a statistical system that can use the detailed incident-based data reported to NIBRS to generate detailed national estimates of the volume and characteristics of crimes reported to law enforcement. Additional information about the history and coverage of NIBRS can be found at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs-overview>.

7.2 Data Used for Analyses

Reporting Agencies

The 2016 NIBRS extract files²¹ were downloaded from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research and used for this report. The data comprised 5,293,536 crime incidents recorded by 6,570 law enforcement agencies.²² Of those 6,570 agencies, 605 were partial reporters, meaning they reported fewer than 12 months of data for the 2016 reference year. Those 605 partial reporters, and the 56,334 incidents they reported, were excluded from the MOI analyses. The reported data used for analyses were further limited to include only (1) city, (2) county, (3) university or college, and (4) state police agencies. A total of 98 special-jurisdiction agencies (representing 19,644 incidents), 182 “other state agencies” (representing 5,939 incidents), and 11 tribal agencies (representing 2,441 incidents) were also excluded from the analysis. These exclusions totaled 896. Eleven agencies were classified by NIBRS as “covered by other agency.” After conducting additional background research on each of these agencies, we reclassified 8 of the 11 as city police departments and 3 as state police agencies. With each recode, verification was conducted to ensure that the incidents represented by these agencies were not duplicated by those agencies listed as the covering agencies. Data from a net 5,674 law enforcement agencies were used in the analyses.

Of those 5,674 law enforcement agencies included in the analysis, 3,679 (65%) are city police departments, 1,293 (23%) are county agencies, 483 (8.5%) are state police agencies, and 219 (4%) are university or college agencies (**Table 6**). A total of 5,534 agencies serve populations under 100,000 people (97% of all agencies in the analysis), 89 agencies (2%) serve populations between 100,000 and 199,999, and 51 agencies (1%) serve populations of 200,000 or more. A plurality of agencies, regardless of agency size, are located in the South.

²¹ United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2018, August 17). *National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016: Extract files* (ICPSR 37066). Retrieved from <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/37066>

²² Although approximately 6,900 agencies were certified to contribute to NIBRS, only 6,570 agencies actually did so in 2016.

Table 6. Characteristics of NIBRS agencies that provided data for this report, 2016

Agency Characteristic	Average Population Served			
	All Agencies	<100,000	100,000–199,999	≥200,000
Average Population Served	17,204	11,825	134,506	396,161
Census Region	100%	100%	100%	100%
Northeast	12.3	12.4	9	2
North Central	33.7	34	22.4	21.6
South	39.5	39.5	36	47
West	14.5	14.1	32.6	29.4
Agency Type	100%	100%	100%	100%
City	64.8	64.8	70.8	54.9
County	22.8	22.5	27	43.1
University or college	3.9	4	0	0
State	8.5	8.7	2.2	2

Note: Analysis of 5,674 city, county, university/college, and state general purpose law enforcement agencies. Of these, 5,534 agencies served resident populations of less than 100,000; 89 agencies served 100,000–199,999; and 51 agencies served 200,000 or more. Excludes special purpose agencies, other state agencies, and tribal agencies.

Recorded Incidents and Offenses

Several other decisions further restricted the number of incidents used in the analyses. For instance, nearly 1,500 incidents were dropped from the analyses because they involved offense types that were new within NIBRS data structure and were recorded infrequently, such that those offense types are less reliably used by state and across contributing law enforcement agencies. Specifically dropped from the analyses were

- 144 incidents that contained a human trafficking-commercial sexual acts offense,
- 34 incidents that contained a human trafficking-involuntary servitude offense,
- 689 incidents that contained an animal cruelty offense and, and
- 595 incidents that contained a hacking offense.

Additionally, 2 incidents were dropped because of invalid offense codes.

Justifiable homicide offenses were recoded to a missing value, as that offense type is not considered a crime offense. Incidents were retained in the analyses if they contained a justifiable homicide and an additional offense. However, incidents involving a single offense of justifiable homicide were dropped from analyses, resulting in the exclusion of 213 additional incidents. Accounting for these various exclusions, the final number of incidents included in the analyses was 5,207,481 recorded by 5,674 law enforcement agencies.

7.3 Definitions and Measures

Our primary interest in this study was to better understand the nature of crime incidents in the United States and, more specifically, the crime types that are masked by the SRS. To achieve this understanding, we estimated the extent to which multiple unique offenses co-occur within a single incident. We defined MOIs as crime incidents in which two or more unique offense types occurred. On the basis of that definition of MOI, incidents involving multiple victims of the *same* offense type were not coded as MOIs. For example, if a single incident involved two victims of aggravated assault, that incident was not classified as an MOI because only one type of offense code was recorded. The same logic applies for incidents involving property crimes. A single robbery involving multiple victims is scored as a single robbery under both NIBRS and SRS reporting standards; thus, the transition to NIBRS results in no changes to counts of crime. Accordingly, because our focus was on understanding the types of offenses that are obscured by the SRS's hierarchy rule, we considered an incident involving multiple victims of a single robbery committed in the same time and space to be a single-offense incident rather than an MOI.

Offense Categories: The 52 NIBRS offense codes were aggregated into broad categories. As stated above, five offense types were removed from the analysis: human trafficking-commercial sexual acts, human trafficking-involuntary servitude, animal cruelty, hacking, and justifiable homicide. For the remaining 47 offenses, eight categories were created to combine similar types of offenses:

- *Serious Violent Non-Sexual Offenses* are murder, nonnegligent manslaughter, and negligent manslaughter; aggravated assault; and robbery.
- *Violent Sexual Offenses* are rape, sexual assault with an object, sodomy, and fondling (indecent liberties or child molesting).
- *Other Violent Offenses* are simple assault, intimidation, and kidnapping or abduction.
- *Non-Violent Sexual Offenses* are incest and statutory rape.
- *Property Offenses* are arson; burglary; motor vehicle theft; pocket-picking; purse-snatching; shoplifting; theft from building; theft from coin-operated machine or device; theft from motor vehicle; theft of motor vehicle parts or accessories; all other larceny; stolen property offenses; and destruction, damage, or vandalism of property.
- *Fraud Offenses* are counterfeiting or forgery; bribery; extortion or blackmail; embezzlement; impersonation; false pretenses, swindle, or confidence games; credit card or automatic teller machine fraud; welfare fraud; wire fraud; and identity theft.
- *Public Order Offenses* are prostitution; purchasing prostitution; assisting or promoting prostitution; sports tampering; betting or wagering; operating, promoting, or assisting gambling; gambling equipment violations; weapon law violations; and pornography or obscene material.
- *Drug Offenses* are drug and narcotic violations and drug equipment violations.

An index was created for each offense category that counts the total number of offense types in each category that occurred in each incident. Indexes were also created to count the number of Part 1 and non-Part 1 offenses in each incident. As previously noted, *Part 1 offenses* are arson, murder/manslaughter, sexual assault offenses (rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary/breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft, and larceny-theft offenses (pocket-picking, purse-snatching, shoplifting, theft from building, theft from coin-operated machine or device, theft from motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle parts/accessories, and all other larceny). *Non-Part 1 offenses* are identity theft; kidnapping or abduction; fondling; simple assault; intimidation; extortion or blackmail; counterfeiting or forgery; false pretenses, swindle, and confidence games; credit card or automatic teller machine fraud; impersonation; welfare fraud; wire fraud; embezzlement; stolen property offenses; destruction, damage, or vandalism of property; drug or narcotic offense; incest; statutory rape; pornography or obscene material; betting or wagering; operating, promoting, or assisting gambling; gambling equipment violations; sports tampering; prostitution; assisting or promoting prostitution; purchasing prostitution; bribery; weapon law violations; and drug equipment violations.

7.4 Missing Data

Only two incidents contained missing offense data in the 2016 NIBRS, both of which were dropped from analysis. As mentioned above, 9% of agencies in the 2016 data did not report the full 12 months of data (**Table 7**). All but three partial reporter agencies served populations under 100,000. Sensitivity analysis with and without partial reporters included in the analysis did not reveal significant changes to the results.

Table 7. NIBRS-participating agencies that submitted 12 months of data, 2016

Agency Reporting Status	Population Served							
	All Agencies		<100,000		100,000–199,000		≥200,000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	6,570	100	6,427	100	91	100	52	100
Full-year reporters	5,965	90.8	5,825	90.6	89	97.8	51	98.1
Partial reporters	605	9.2	602	9.4	2	2.2	1	1.9

Note: Full-year reporters are participating agencies that reported the full 12 months of data in 2016. Partial reporters are participating agencies that reported fewer than 12 months of data in 2016.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016