

107458

# Robbery in Wisconsin 1977-1986

Wisconsin Statistical Analysis Center

## I. Introduction

This publication summarizes data on robbery offenses available through the State Uniform Crime Reporting program. It addresses such issues as the geographic location of offenses, comparison of Wisconsin offense trends with the nation and the Midwest, demographic information, and other related information.

Robbery is defined by the Uniform Crime Reporting System as "the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or the threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear."

Robbery is a crime with a significant impact on communities, with both an emotional and a financial impact on the victim. In the last ten years there have been an estimated 30,966 robberies in Wisconsin

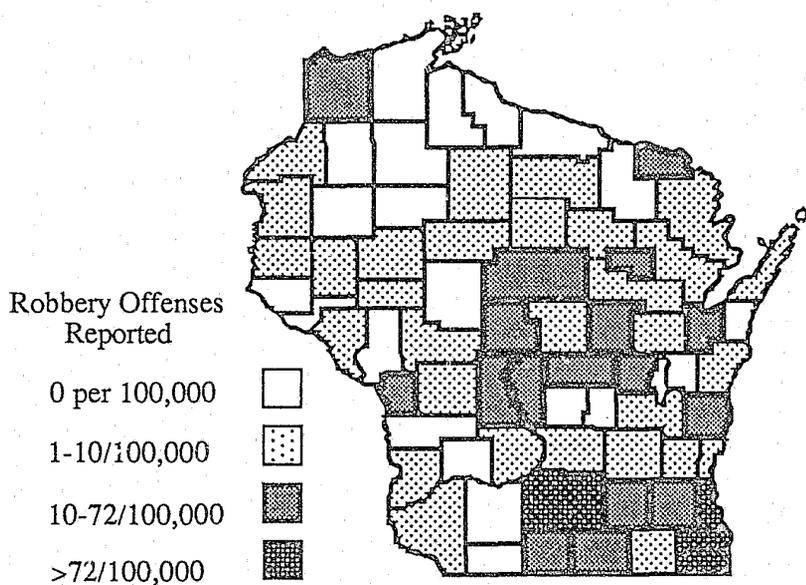
(about one every two and a half hours) with \$11,853,946 in losses resulting. In 1986, robbery made up 28.1% of the violent crime index (murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery) and 1.8% of the total Crime Index (violent index crimes plus burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson).

The majority of the information used in this publication has been obtained from *Crime and Arrests in Wisconsin*, published by the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice, and *Crime in the United States*, published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The data supplied in these publications are summary data. This limits the type of information that can be presented in this publication. Only data already summarized can be presented because the original, incident-based data are not available.

## II. Geographic Location of Offenses

The map of Wisconsin at right categorizes counties by their 1986 robbery rate (number of offenses per 100,000 people). The Southeast area of the State and Dane county have the highest robbery rates. The rates drop with decreasing populations. This rate distribution illustrates that there is a positive relationship between population density and number of robberies, even with population, per se, controlled (through the use of rates).

Wisconsin Counties' Robbery Rates-1986



NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice  
Theodore Meekna - Executive Director

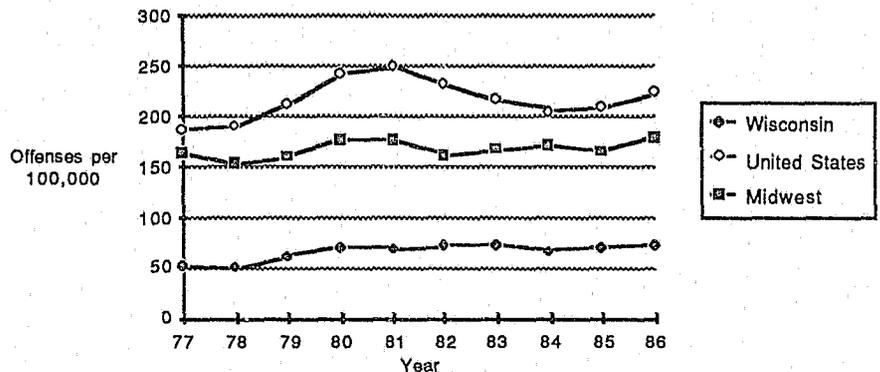
Tommy G. Thompson  
Governor

### III. Trend Comparisons

#### Regional Rates

Graph 1 shows the regional robbery rate trends for the United States, the Midwest, and the State of Wisconsin for the last ten years. All three categories show a slight increase in the number of robbery offenses reported per 100,000 people. Wisconsin's robbery rate has remained less than one-third the rate of the nation and has also remained substantially below the Midwest rate. (The Midwest includes the states of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, and South Dakota.)

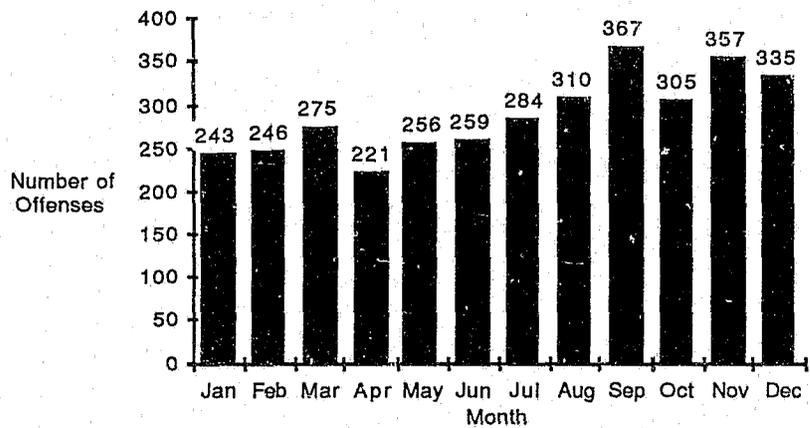
Graph 1: Robbery Offense Rates



#### Seasonal Trends

Graph 2 shows the number of robberies which occurred each month in 1986. Seasonality seems to have only a minor impact on robbery rates, although there seems to be a slight trend upwards from April to September with a minor decline after that. This pattern is somewhat unusual since many crimes peak during the summer months of June to August.

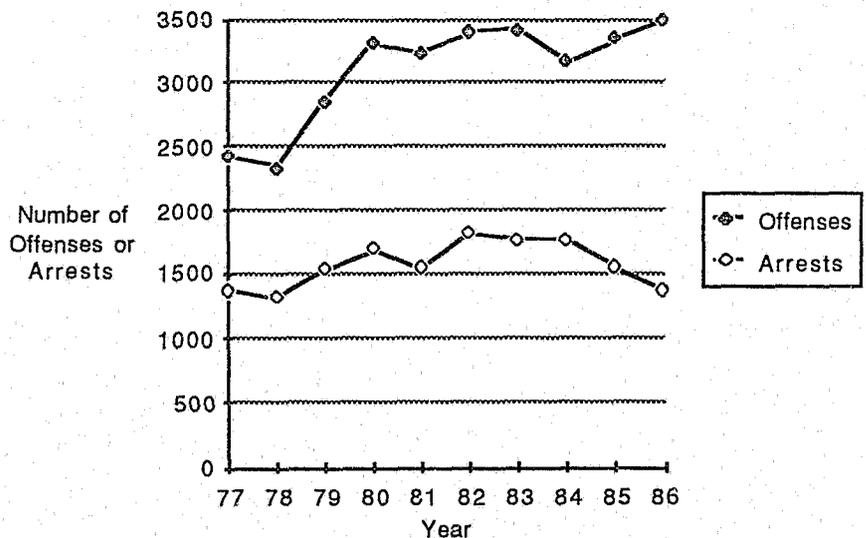
Graph 2: Robbery Offenses by Month - 1986



#### Weapon Trends

To examine any changes over time in the type of weapons being used in robberies, the percentage of the robberies involving weapons from four categories was analyzed. (The four categories were firearms, knives and other types of cutting weapons, other dangerous weapons, and strong arm robbery - robbery without the use of a weapon.) Trends in the type of weapon used have remained fairly stable over time. Over the last five years, strong-arm robbery has been committed the most frequently (45.7%), firearms were the next most frequently used type of weapon (34.7%), followed by knives and other cutting instruments (14.0%) and other dangerous weapons (5.7%).

Graph 3: Robbery Offenses and Arrests



#### Arrests and Clearances

Graphs 3 and 4 show changes in the number of reported robberies in Wisconsin and the relative ability of law enforcement agencies to clear

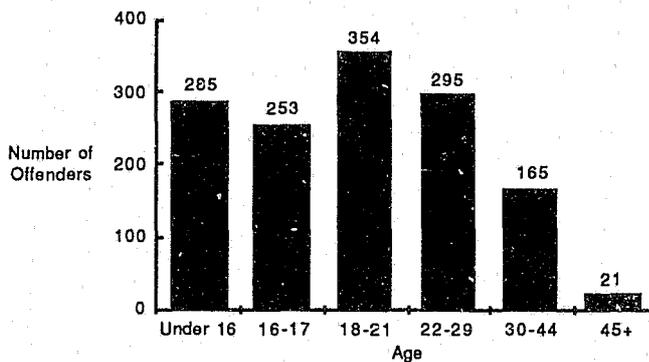
### Age

Graph 8 shows robbery offenders grouped by age category. It illustrates that most persons arrested for robbery are young, most under twenty-one years old.

### Sex

Males commit most robberies (92.4%), while females make up less than 10 percent (7.6%) of those arrested for robbery.

Graph 8: Age of Offenders

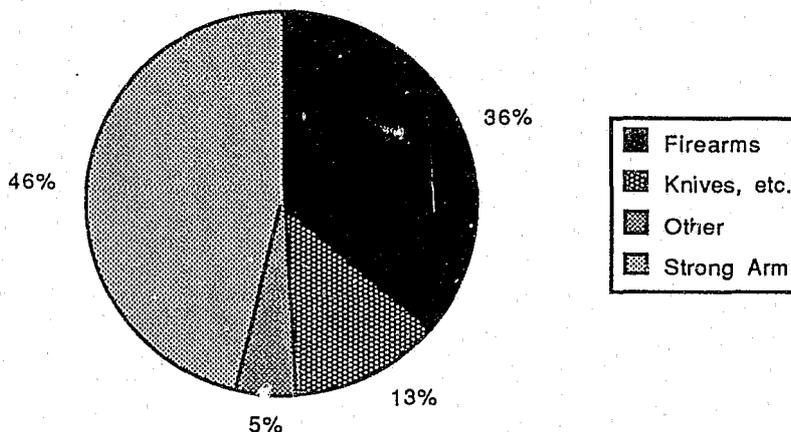


## V. Robbery Offense Characteristics

### Weapons Used

Graph 9 shows the type of weapon used in reported robbery offenses. Statewide, most robberies are strong-arm robberies (robbery without the use of a weapon other than personal force). It should be noted that in Milwaukee, robberies are most often committed with a firearm. Thus, in the balance of the state, strong-arm robberies are even more predominant than indicated in Chart 9.

Graph 9: Type of Weapon Used



### Relationship to Population

Table 1 shows the relationship between population size and reported robberies. Again, it is clear that robberies are more frequent in more populated areas, even when population size, per se, is held constant (by utilizing rates).

**Table 1: Robbery Offenses and Rates by Population Group**

| <u>Population Group</u> | <u>1986 Estimated Robberies</u> | <u>1986 Rate/100,000</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Police Agencies:        |                                 |                          |
| Over 250,000            | 2209                            | 363.0                    |
| 50,000-250,000          | 815                             | 100.0                    |
| 25,000-49,999           | 116                             | 30.2                     |
| 10,000-24,999           | 163                             | 26.5                     |
| 5,000-9,999             | 46                              | 13.2                     |
| Under 5,000             | 31                              | 11.4                     |
| Sheriff's Departments:  |                                 |                          |
| Suburban                | 69                              | 9.8                      |
| Rural                   | 29                              | 2.8                      |

## Robbery Targets

Graph 10 and Table 2 show the target of reported robberies and the value stolen. The data illustrate that "highway" robbery (any robbery occurring outside) is more frequently committed than all other classification types but that the amount of money taken is the least. Conversely, bank robbery is the least frequently committed type of robbery but has the highest average financial loss per robbery.

Milwaukee has a higher percentage of highway robbery and lower percentages of commercial, residential, and gas station robberies. It is similar to other areas of the state in the average value of property stolen per robbery.

Graph 10: Robbery by Type

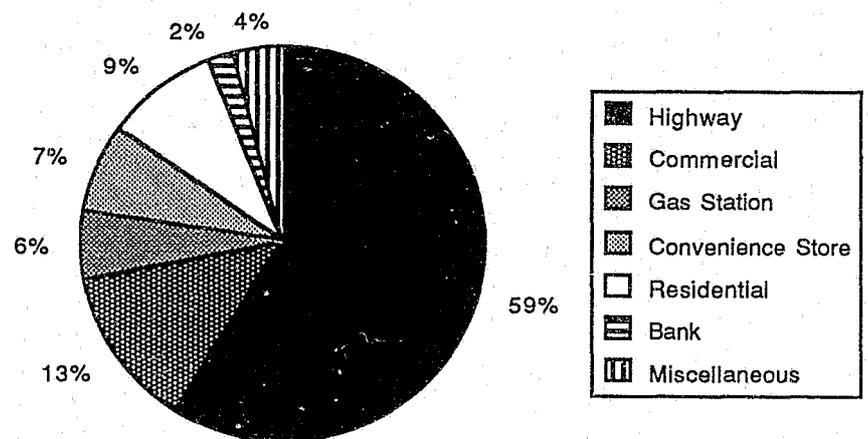


Table 2: Robbery by Type

| Type of Robbery   | Percent | Estimated Number | Total Value | Average Value |
|-------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Highway           | 59.3%   | 2061             | \$428,888   | \$208         |
| Commercial        | 12.6%   | 437              | 177,647     | 447           |
| Gas Station       | 6.1%    | 211              | 52,456      | 249           |
| Convenience Store | 6.6%    | 230              | 61,890      | 269           |
| Residential       | 9.5%    | 330              | 183,902     | 557           |
| Bank              | 1.7%    | 60               | 223,766     | 3,729         |
| Miscellaneous     | 4.3%    | 149              | 51,713      | 347           |
| Total             | 100.1%  | 3478             | 1,180,262   | 339           |

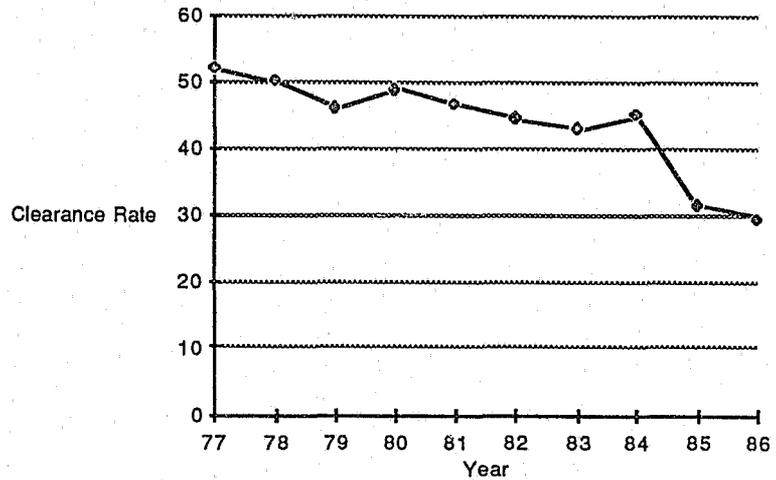
## VI. Conclusion

Robbery in Wisconsin has been relatively stable over the past ten years. There has been a slight increase in the number of offenses reported. The robbery rate for Wisconsin is less than one-third the rate of the United States and substantially less than the rate for the Midwest region. Recently, especially in Milwaukee, clearance rates for robbery offenses in Wisconsin have dropped notably. Highway robbery is the most frequent type of robbery reported. Most robberies are committed without the use of a weapon other than personal force. Demographic statistics show that the median age of arrested robbery offenders is usually under twenty-one years old, males commit robbery more often than females, and Blacks are arrested for robbery more often than Whites.

these offenses. Graph 3 shows that over time the number of arrests were highly correlated with the number of reported offenses, yet during the past two years the number of reported offenses rose and the number of arrests declined.

Graph 4, which shows clearance rates (the percentage of offenses cleared), further illustrates the same phenomenon. In the last 10 years there has been a general downwards trend in the clearance rates. During the past two years clearances have dropped even more significantly. This statewide trend is due largely to a decrease in the Milwaukee clearance rate which has decreased from 49.3% in 1984 to 29.5% in 1986.

Graph 4: Robbery Clearance Rates

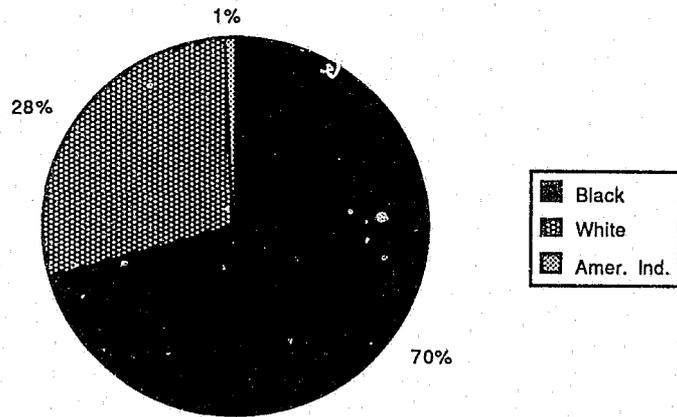


IV. Demographic Information

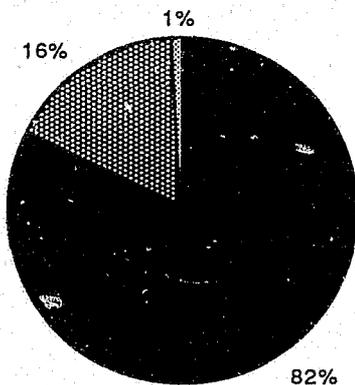
Race

Graph 5 shows the race of persons arrested for robbery in Wisconsin in 1986. Seventy percent of those arrested were Black. To better understand the racial characteristics of robbery offenders, two additional pie charts have been created, one showing the racial breakdown for Milwaukee and one showing the breakdown for the balance of the state. This breakdown shows how Milwaukee, which has a large Black population, can influence statewide statistics. Outside of Milwaukee, the slight majority of arrested offenders (51%) were White.

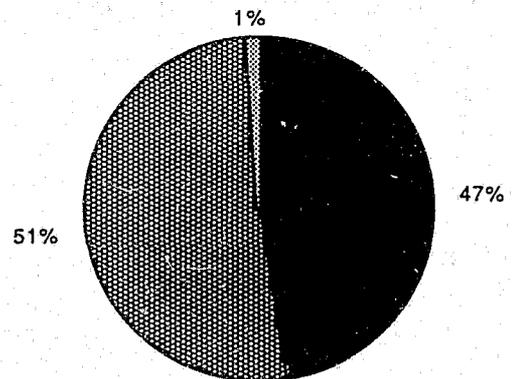
Graph 5: Racial Characteristics of Persons Arrested - Wisconsin



Graph 6: Racial Characteristics of Persons Arrested - Milwaukee



Graph 7: Racial Characteristics of Persons Arrested - Balance of the State



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