

collection addresses a subset of incidents where harm is done to the police. The first UCR data on law enforcement officers killed on duty were gathered in 1960 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004:2).

A final component of the broader UCR program collects no offense or incident information at all. Rather, it functions as a “rolling census” of sorts of law enforcement personnel. On an annual basis, UCR data providers are asked to submit the *Number of Full-Time Law Enforcement Employees as of October 31*, providing some rough information on size of law enforcement staffs (total and sworn officers) and the resources available to some specific units within the individual agencies. Though this particular subcollection does not gather actual crime data, it does have some bearing on the final estimates of crime generated by the UCR. Size of a law enforcement agency, whether in number of personnel or in population of the communities within the department’s jurisdiction, can play a role in imputation routines for handling missing data through reference to “similar” agencies.

### **2.1.2 Crime-Type Coverage and the Hierarchy Rule in UCR Summary Reporting**

Box 2.1 depicts the basic classification of crimes/offenses covered by the UCR Summary Reporting System as of 2014. Contrasting it with the original Part I and Part II crimes outlined in 1929 (Box 1.2)—and looking over the cosmetic appearance of the 2014 Part I list being expanded to include some subcategories (the reason for said expansion being described below)—it is clear that change has occurred but at a vastly slower pace than might reasonably be expected over many decades. Moreover, the changes that have been made have largely taken the form of expanding crime types or making relatively modest additions, rather than revising definitions.

When discussing the crime-type coverage of the UCR’s Summary Reporting System, one must inevitably describe what is probably the system’s single most distinctive feature, as it is the one that most starkly illustrates the “Summary” nature of the data. This distinctive feature is what is known as the Hierarchy Rule, which is invoked to determine the one—and only one—offense type that is recorded for any particular incident. The order in which offenses are listed in the UCR Part I classification is not accidental, and derives directly from the order in which they were originally presented in 1929; the offense types are listed in a rough descending order of severity while also differentiating between crimes against a person and crimes against property. Box 2.2 presents the Part I listing again, with some expansion, in formally laying out the Hierarchy Rule. As it was stated as a “General Provision” in 1929 (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1929:34–35):

**Box 2.1** Current Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Summary Reporting System (SRS) Crime Classification, 2014

**Part I Classes**

- 1 Criminal homicide
  - 1a Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter
  - 1b Manslaughter by negligence
- 2 Rape
  - 2a Rape
  - 2b Attempts to commit rape
  - 2c Historical rape
- 3 Robbery
  - 3a Firearm
  - 3b Knife or cutting instrument
  - 3c Other dangerous weapon
  - 3d Strong-arm—hands, fists, feet, etc.
- 4 Aggravated assault
  - 4a Firearm
  - 4b Knife or cutting instrument
  - 4c Other dangerous weapon
  - 4d Strong-arm—hands, fists, feet, etc.—aggravated injury
- 5 Burglary
  - 5a Forcible entry
  - 5b Unlawful entry—no force
  - 5c Attempted forcible entry
- 6 Larceny—theft (except motor vehicle theft)
  - 6Xa Pocket-picking
  - 6Xb Purse-snatching
  - 6Xc Shoplifting
  - 6Xd Thefts from motor vehicles
  - 6Xe Theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories
  - 6Xf Theft of bicycles
  - 6Xg Theft from buildings
  - 6Xh Theft from coin-operated device or machine
  - 6Xi All other
- 7 Motor vehicle theft
  - 7a Autos
  - 7b Trucks and buses
  - 7c Other vehicles
- 8 Arson
  - Structural (*Codes 8a–g cover different types of structures*)

- Mobile (*Codes 8h–i differentiate between motor vehicles and other mobile property*)
- Other (*Code 8j*)

- A Human trafficking—commercial sex acts
- B Human trafficking—involuntary servitude

**Part II Classes**

- 9 Other assaults—simple, not aggravated (*also coded 4e “as a quality control matter and for the purpose of looking at total assault violence”*)
- 10 Forgery and counterfeiting
- 11 Fraud
- 12 Embezzlement
- 13 Stolen property: buying, receiving, possessing
- 14 Vandalism
- 15 Weapons; carrying, possessing etc.
- 16 Prostitution and commercialized vice
  - 16a Prostitution
  - 16b Assisting or promoting prostitution (*also coded 30*)
  - 16c Purchasing prostitution (*also coded 31*)
- 17 Sex offenses (except rape and prostitution and commercialized vice)
- 18 Drug abuse violations
- 19 Gambling
- 20 Offenses against the family and children
- 21 Driving under the influence
- 22 Liquor laws
- 23 Drunkenness
- 24 Disorderly conduct
- 25 Vagrancy
- 26 All other offenses
- 27 Suspicion
- 28 Curfew and loitering laws (persons under 18)
- 29 Runaways (persons under 18)

SOURCE: Adapted from Federal Bureau of Investigation (2013b).

**Box 2.2** Hierarchy Rule for Part I Offenses, Uniform Crime Reporting Program

The order in which the Part I offenses and their subcategories are listed in Box 2.1 is not accidental; rather, it defines a preference hierarchy used in the UCR Summary Reporting System to associate incidents (which may involve the commission of multiple crime offenses) with a single crime type for reporting purposes. Lower numbers outrank higher numbers, so that a home invasion/burglary gone awry that ends in serious injury to a homeowner would be counted only as assault; a robbery in which the offender also sexually assaults the victim would be counted only as the rape or attempted rape; and so forth.

The 2013 *Summary Reporting System User Manual* (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013b)—the successor to the *Uniform Crime Reporting Program Handbook* that spelled out UCR policy in various revisions over the decades (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004)—retains four prominent “exceptions” to the Hierarchy Rule:

- The first, largely technical exception derives from the fact that motor vehicle theft is a subset—but special case—of the broader offense of larceny-theft. In instances of larceny-theft involving theft of a whole vehicle *and* other items (e.g., contents of trunk or parts of the vehicle, as when a stolen car is recovered with parts missing), the theft of the vehicle would trump the theft of the other items and the incident counts as motor vehicle theft.
- Two Part I offenses—arson and human trafficking (both the commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude variants)—are special exceptions to the Hierarchy Rule in that the same incident can result in multiple offenses being counted. Arson and human trafficking are reported on separate forms, so other offenses committed in conjunction with the arson or trafficking (e.g., homicide due to arson) would be reconciled using the Hierarchy Rule and counted on Return A, while the arson/trafficking component would be logged on the separate reporting form.
- For UCR purposes, “justifiable homicide” necessarily occurs in conjunction with some other offense(s); it is defined as “the killing of a felon” either “by a peace officer in the line of duty” or by a private citizen “during the commission of a felony” (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013b:30). Accordingly, the same incident can involve multiple offenses being counted: The other offense(s) would be evaluated under the Hierarchy Rule for reporting on Return A while the felon’s death may be reported as a homicide “known to the police” but which is “unfounded” (in this case, not considered a crime) rather than an actual offense.

When several offenses are committed by one person at the same time, list as the crime committed the one which comes first in the classification. For example, *one* offense of robbery would be listed if both assault and robbery had been committed, because Robbery appears before Aggravated Assault in the classification.

In this manner, single incidents occurring at the same time but involving multiple individual offense types are generally collapsed in the SRS to count as only one offense. Box 2.2 describes some exceptions to this general rule that have developed over the years.

A second distinctive rule, known as the Separation of Time and Place Rule, also governs how—and how many—offenses are tallied in the SRS. It, too, derives directly from a “General Provision” promulgated in the original 1929 UCR manual (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1929:35):

Offenses which follow in a more or less natural sequence but after an appreciable length of time, such as a robbery following auto theft, should be listed as separate offenses in their respective classes.

As currently operationalized (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013b:26), the statement of the rule actually addresses the *inverse* of separation of time and place. That is, it does not argue for any minimum interval in time or space that would constitute a separation but rather defines “same time and place” as occurrences in which “the time interval between the offenses and the distance between locations where they occurred is insignificant.” Generally, the rule defers to investigative findings by law enforcement: If “investigation deems the activity to constitute a single criminal transaction,” then even incidents at different times and locations are to be treated as single occurrences in the SRS.

### 2.1.3 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

Problems with the relative inflexibility of UCR structures were already apparent by the early 1980s. After several calls for the creation of a new UCR program, the FBI and BJS formed a joint task force in 1982 to oversee a study by Abt Associates Inc., which led to a major planning conference in 1984 and ultimately to a final report, the *Blueprint for the Future of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program* (Poggio et al., 1985). The *Blueprint* called for implementation of “unit-record” data collection within a tiered structure: All agencies would be asked to submit incident and arrest information in incident-level detail, but the burden on the vast majority of agencies (dubbed “Level I participants”) would only be tasked to provide information on a rough analogue to the list of Part I offenses. A much smaller set of “Level II participants”—albeit comprised of the nation’s largest law enforcement agencies (augmented by a sample of other agencies), and so covering the bulk of committed crime—would provide the incident-level offense and arrest information for a full, broad range of offense categories.

What evolved directly from the *Blueprint* recommendations is what is now known as NIBRS. The focus of this report is the content and coverage of “crime” by NIBRS, not the detail of its design and operations. However, that operational story will be a major part of our second and final report. For this report, it suffices to summarize that NIBRS diverged from the *Blueprint*’s tiers-of-agencies approach and instead adopted something more akin to the tiers-of-offense-types in the UCR Summary Reporting System, as we will describe below. For a variety of reasons—certainly among them the switch in approach,