

LEAA Report Disputes '74-'75 FBI Crime Data

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Associated Press

A new government poll suggests there was little, if any, increase in violent crime and most property crimes in the United States in 1975.

The report from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration yesterday runs counter to FBI statistics that indicated the nation's crime rate increased substantially from 1974 to 1975.

But the LEAA cautioned against comparing the two studies because they were based on different data collected in different ways.

The LEAA poll, part of the agency's program of measuring the crime rate by asking citizens whether they have been crime victims, was conducted by the Census Bureau. Occupants of about 60,000 households and 2,400 businesses were questioned.

The FBI's statistics are based on the number of crimes reported to state and local law enforcement agencies, which report them to the FBI.

The LEAA report said, "No significant changes in victimization rates from 1974 to 1975 were recorded for any of the major crimes measured."

There was "no meaningful change" in the rates for assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft or commercial robbery, the report continued.

The statistics showed a 7 per cent decline in rapes, but the researchers said they could not be certain the figure was accurate.

By contrast, the FBI report issued last year showed a 9 per cent increase in the overall crime rate from 1974 to 1975.

The FBI's most recent report, issued two months ago, said there was no change in the national crime rate from 1975 to 1976. That report showed a decline in violent crimes but increases in thefts in some big cities.

The FBI statistics include murder, which the LEAA report cannot because it is based on interviews with victims.

The FBI report also defines the other categories somewhat differently.

Nevertheless, acting LEAA administrator James M. H. Gregg said the new poll "challenges the conventional view that the nation had experienced an unremitting rise in crime between 1974 and 1975."

Though the LEAA report showed little overall change, the statistics indicated some variation in the victimization rates among particular categories of people.

For example, the report showed a 13 per cent decline in the number of men 20 to 24 who were victims of violent crimes.

There was a 64 per cent increase in the number of black women who were victims of minor beatings and a 36 per cent increase in the number who were victims of aggravated assault, the report said.

There was a 13 per cent decline in the number of white men who were victims of aggravated assault, it said.