

What We Know and Don't Know About Recent Crime Trends

Richard Rosenfeld

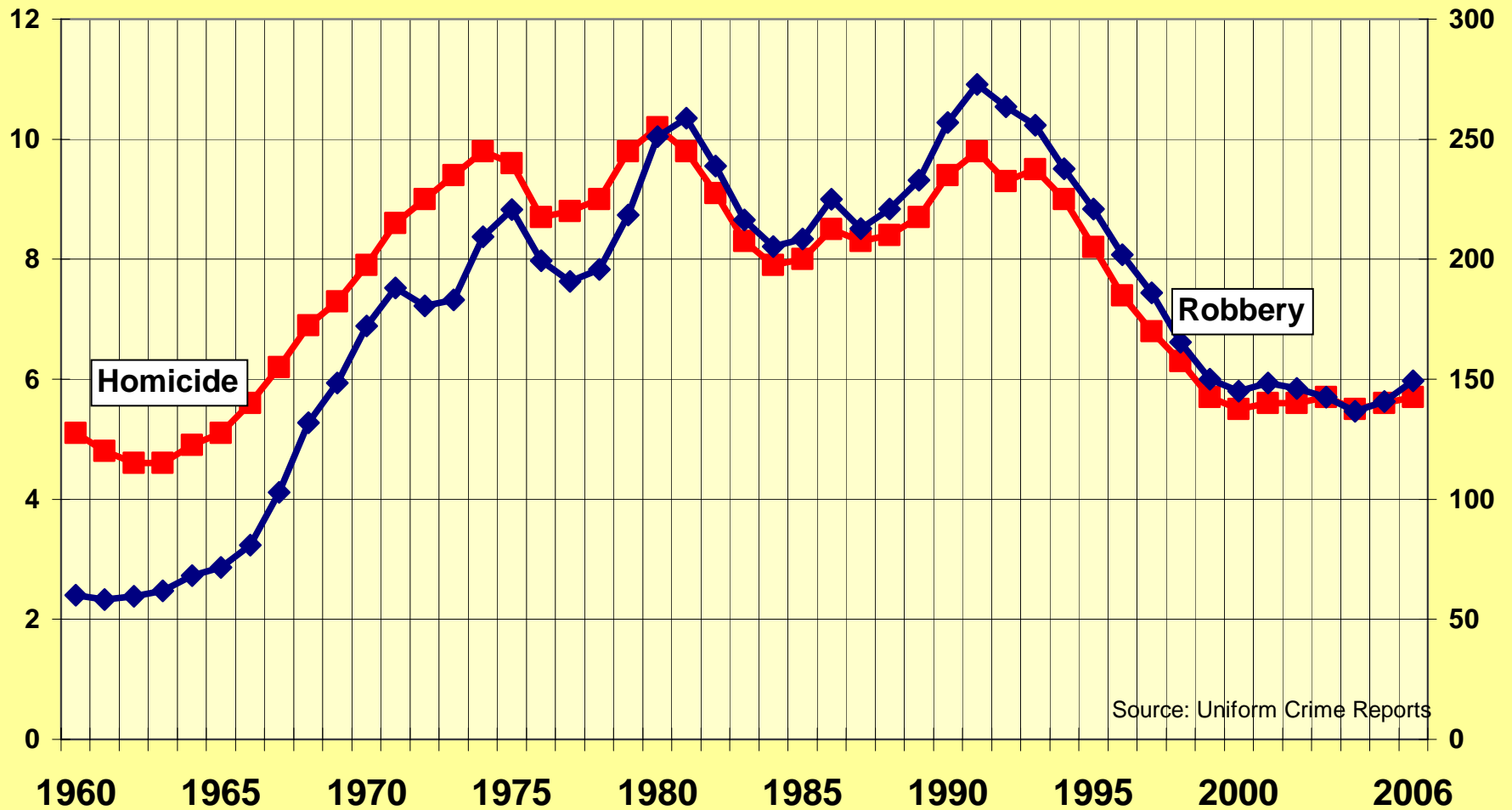
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Overview

- Trends Since 1960
- 1990s Crime Drop
- The Recent Period
- Crime Rates and the Economy
- Another Crime Increase?
- Improving the Nation's Crime Monitoring Capacity

Long-Term Trend

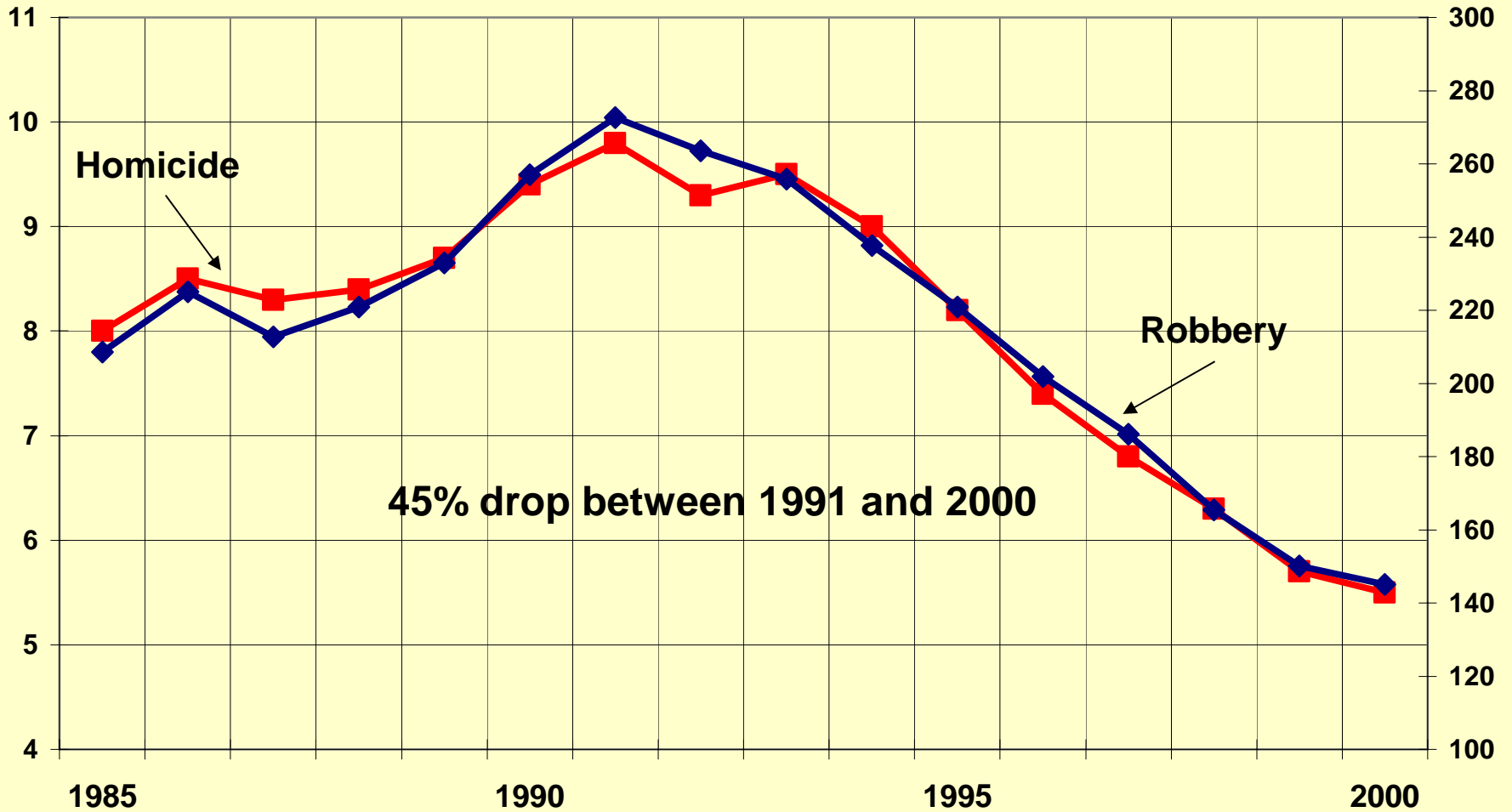
Homicides and Robberies Per 100,000 Population in the United States, 1960-2006



Source: Uniform Crime Reports

“The Great American Crime Decline”

US Homicide and Robbery Rates per 100,000 Population, 1985-2000



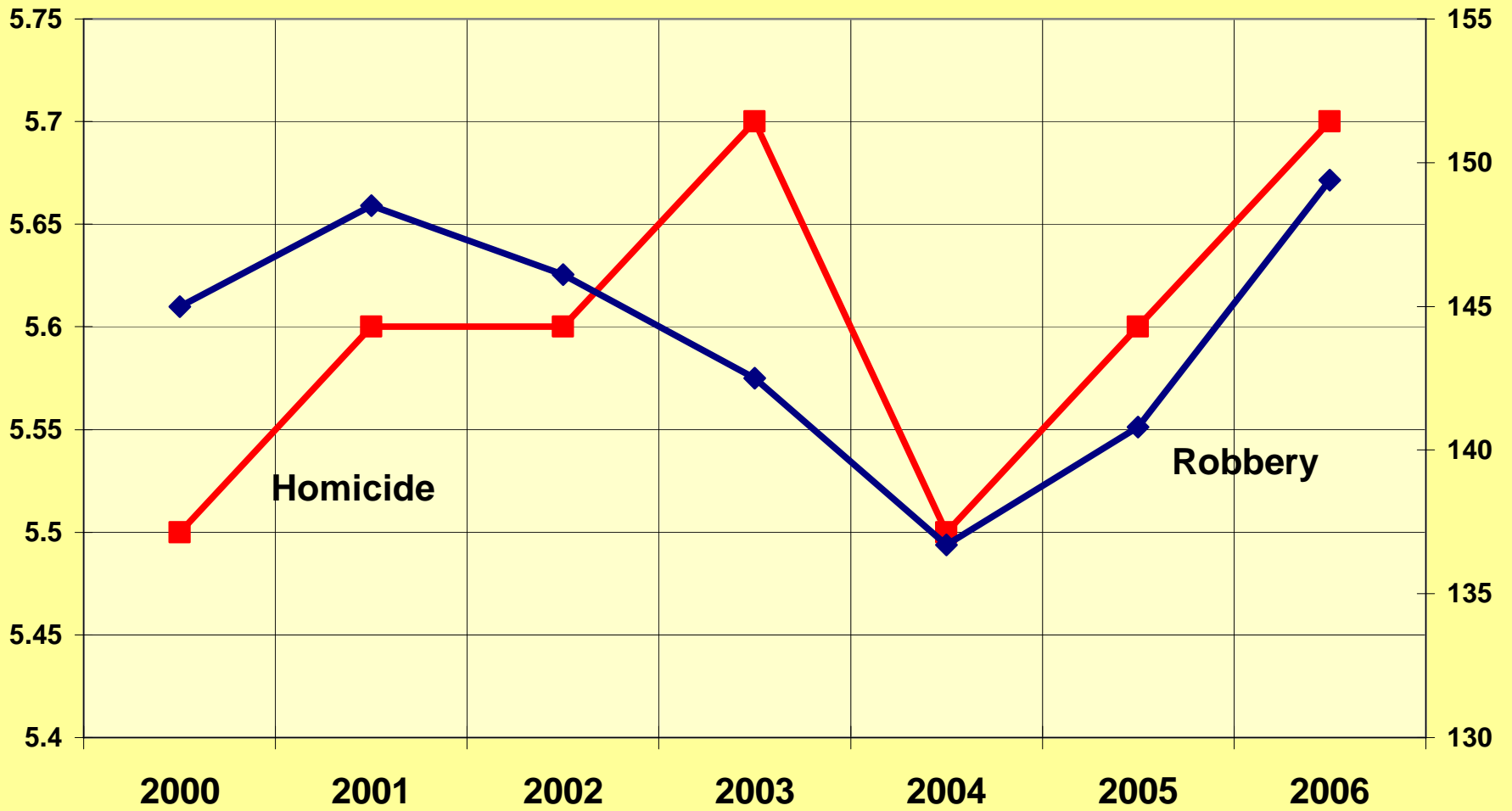
Explaining the Crime Drop

- Shrinking drug markets
- Expanding economy
- Escalating imprisonment
- Uncertainties remain

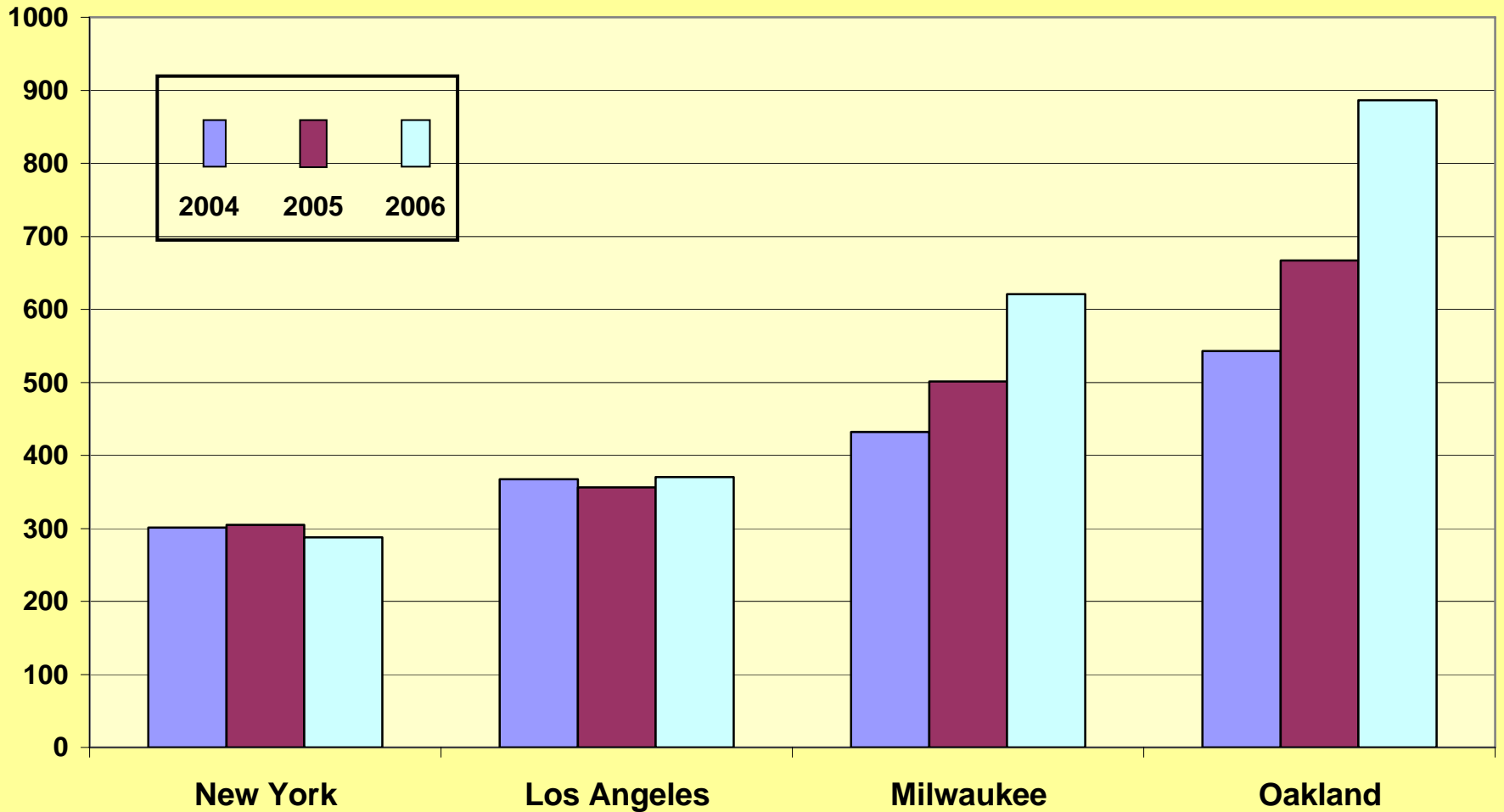
Blumstein and Wallman, eds. 2005. *The Crime Drop in America*. Rev. ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

21st Century Patterns: Temporal Volatility, Local Variation

Homicides and Robberies Per 100,000 Population, 2000-2006



Robbery Rates in New York, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Oakland, 2004-2006



“Gathering Storm”?

Crime Down in First Half of 2007

- Preliminary UCR data show violent and property crime reduction over January-June 2006
- Homicide and robbery decline in small and large cities

**The Past 9 Months: The
Infrastructure is Silent**

Signs of a Another Increase . . .

Homicide and robbery up in large cities in 2008

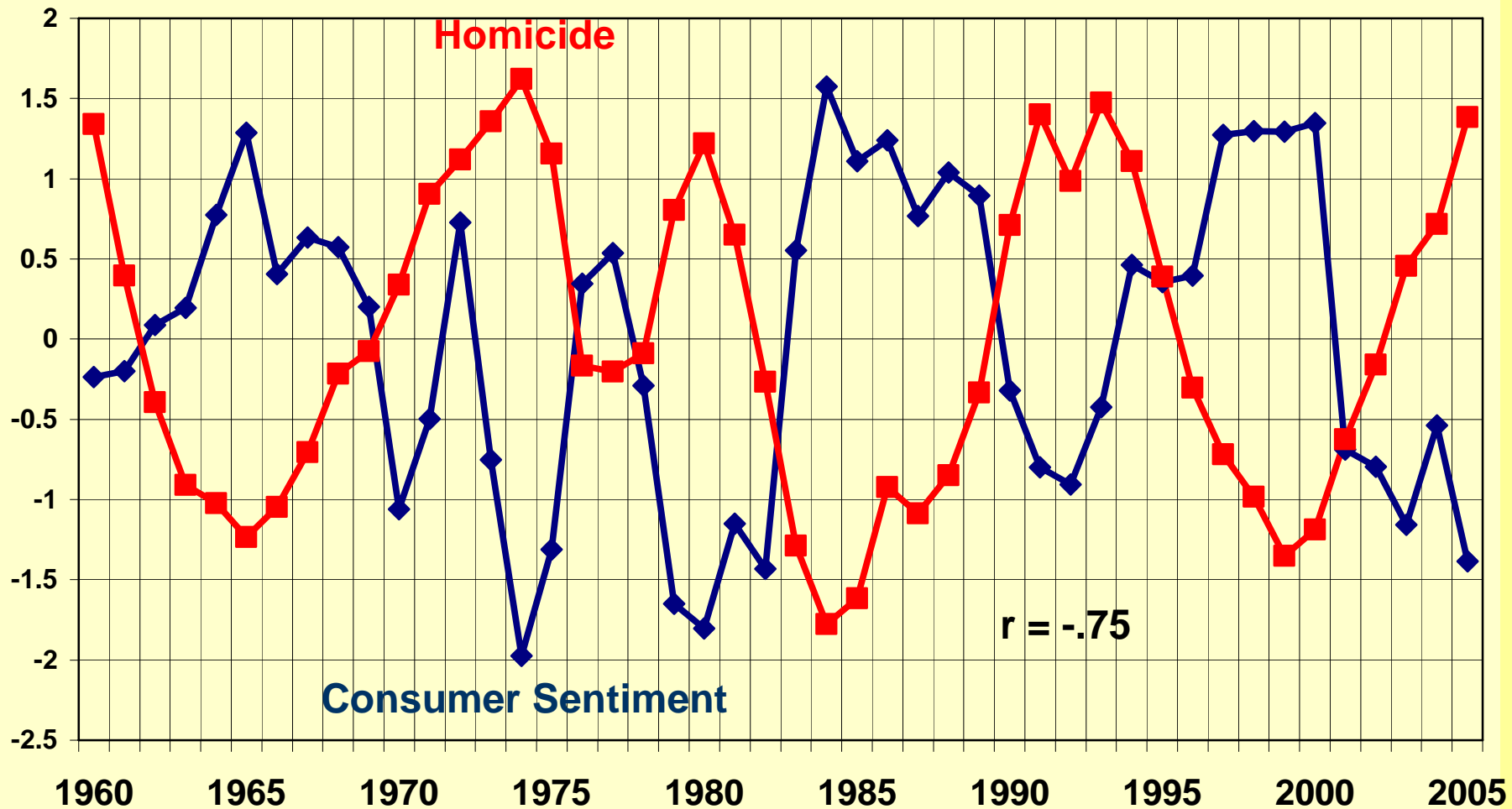
- New York: Homicide +21%, robbery +5%
- Chicago: Homicide +15%, robbery +16%
- Los Angeles: Homicide +20%, robbery -7%

. . . But nationwide data
unavailable

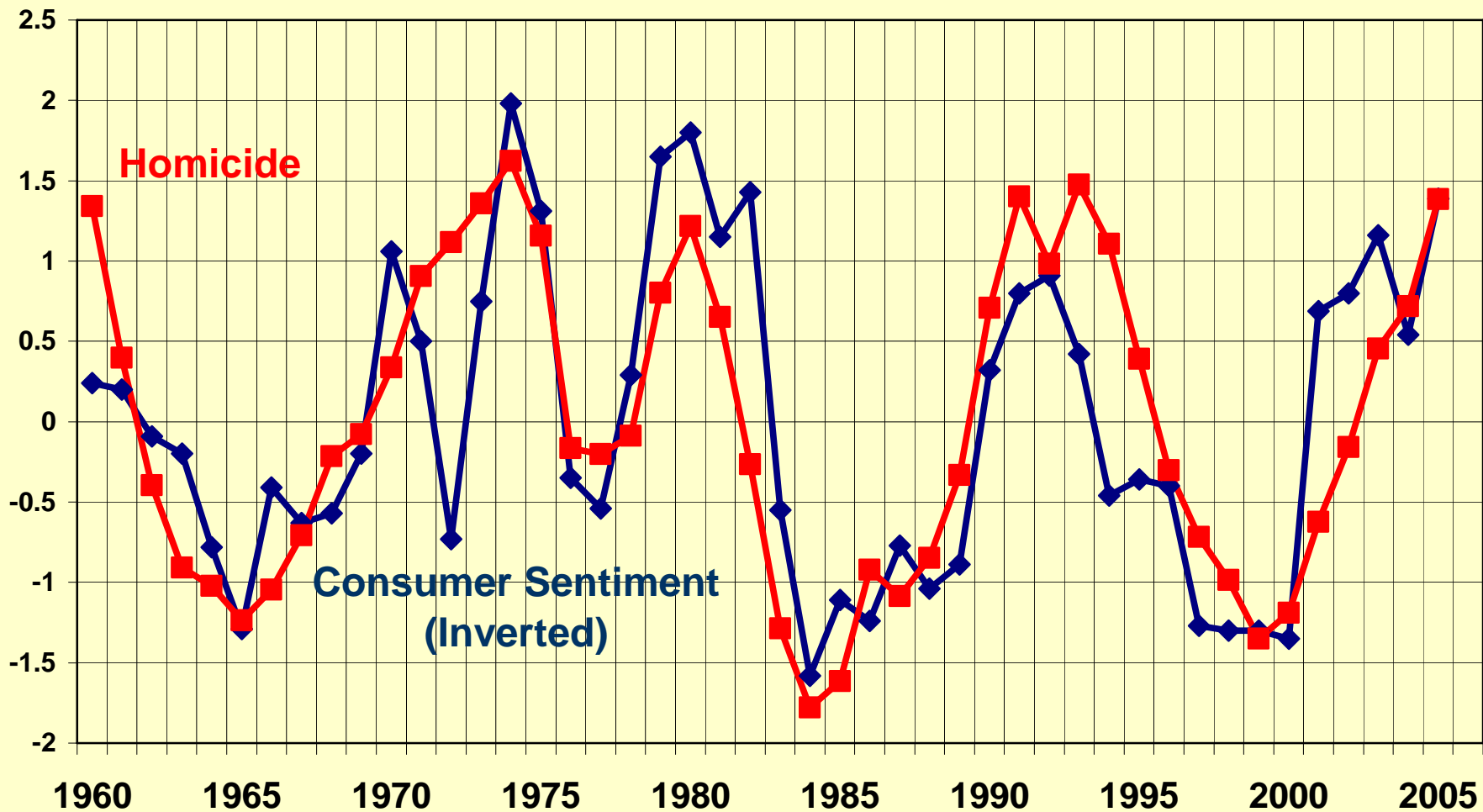
Crime Trends and the Economy

- Crime rates track changes in “consumer sentiment”
- Consumer sentiment has plummeted in recent months

US Homicide Rates and Consumer Sentiment (Detrended), 1960-2005

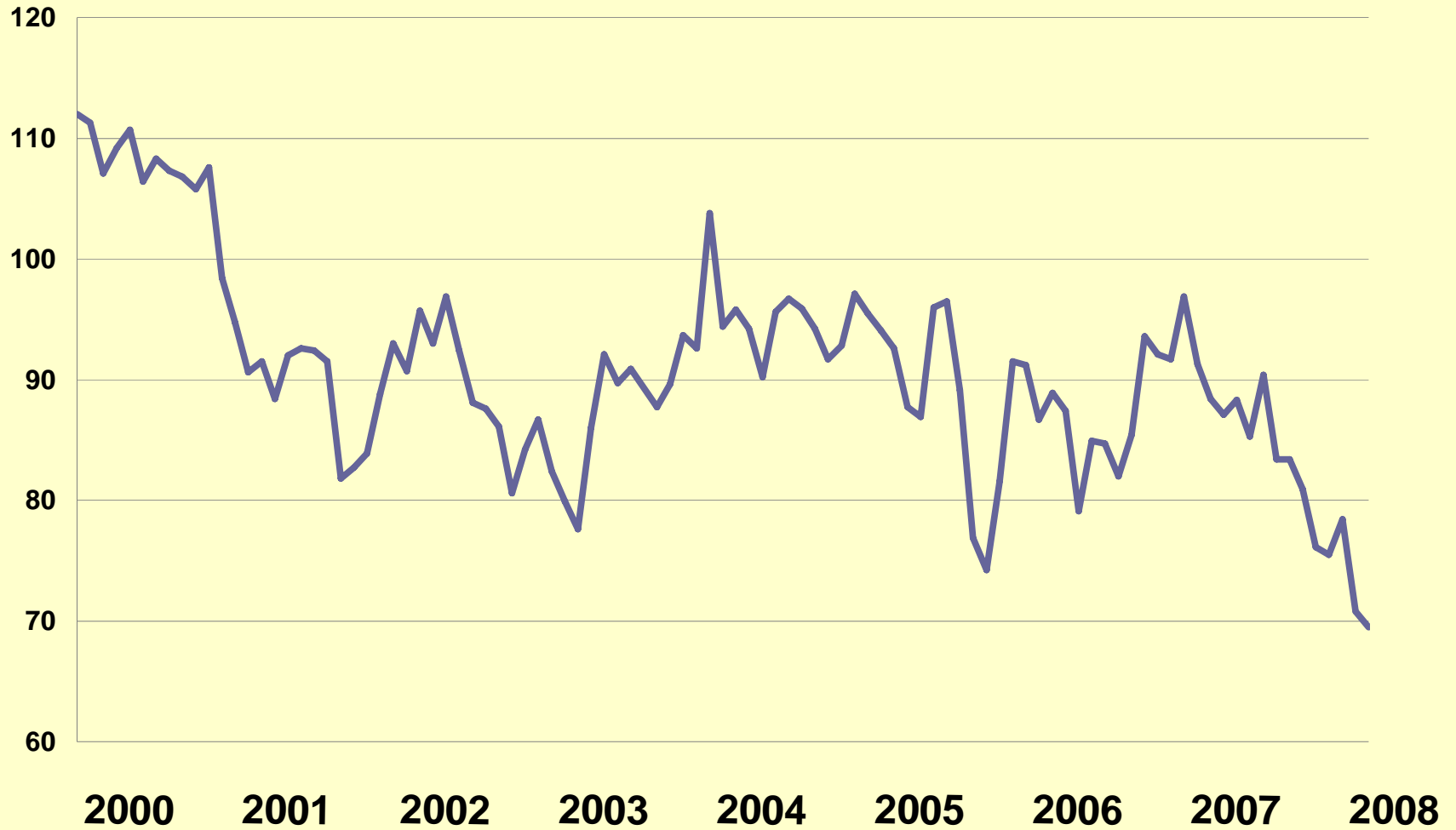


US Homicide Rates and Consumer Sentiment (Detrended), 1960-2005



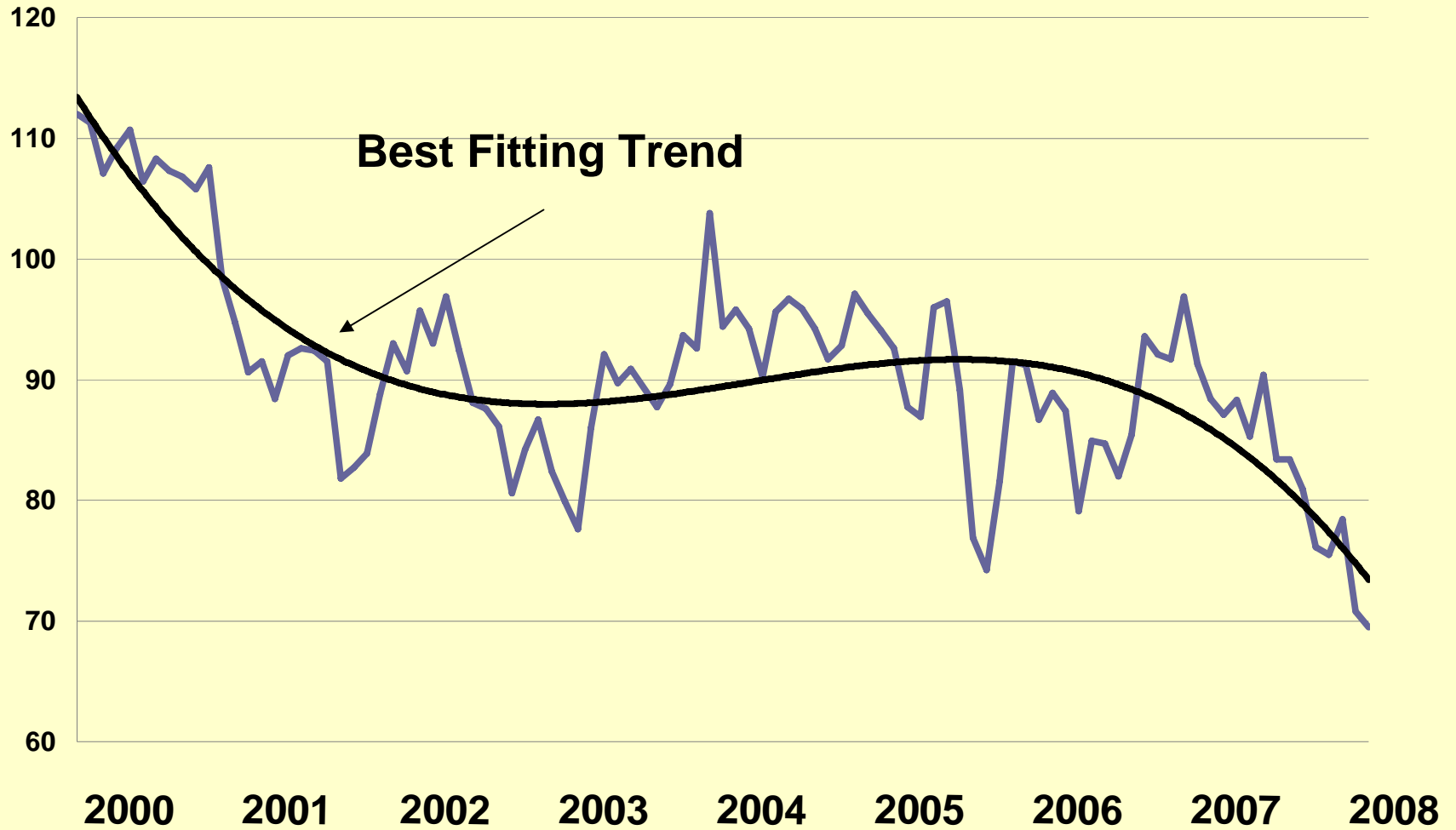
Index of Consumer Sentiment

January 2000 - March 2008



Index of Consumer Sentiment

January 2000 - March 2008



Building the Infrastructure

- Should the nation prepare for another crime increase?
- Meaningful policy evaluation requires *timely* data
- Reasonable objectives
 - Disseminate *annual* UCR data 3 months after reporting year
 - Disseminate *quarterly* data for a sample of jurisdictions
- Time to consider transferring the UCR program from the FBI to Justice Department's statistical arm, the Bureau of Justice Statistics