

The Crime Drop

Criminal Justice

Recorded crime fell across many countries from the 1990s, and why is contested.

A large, cross-national fall with no agreed explanation.

Explanations offered

Better security: locks, immobilisers, alarms

Changing age structure of populations

More, and more targeted, policing

Reduced childhood lead exposure

Fewer cash transactions and portable targets

Why it is unresolved

The fall happened under opposed policies

It began before many reforms were made

Countries fell together despite different systems

Fraud and online offences were not counted

Most tests are correlational, not experimental

Educational reference. The security hypothesis has most support for vehicle crime; no single explanation is settled.