

Impact of Aggravated Assault on Adult Residents Between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado: A Comparative Crime Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research paper addresses how many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, are impacted by aggravated assault each year. Aggravated assault is a serious crime that has a significant impact on adult residents, particularly between the ages of 20 and 49. This study aims to gain a deeper insight into how many residents are affected by aggravated assault. Data was collected from existing sources to identify the age groups most affected and the type of weapons that are used the most during aggravated assaults. The analysis includes details such as age ranges and the type of weapons used. While some past studies focus on violent crime rates, this research focuses more on comparing victim demographics and aggravated assault offense characteristics between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, including how certain types of weapons, such as firearms, knives, or personal weapons, appear more often in one city over the other. These differences offer insight into the kinds of violence each city faces. Seattle, Washington, has an adult population aged 20–49 of 531,076, while Denver, Colorado, has 430,121. Breaking the population down to the victim's demographics and offense characteristics shows how aggravated assaults occur and which age group is affected the most. The findings show that Denver, Colorado, had a significantly higher number of residents affected by aggravated assault than Seattle, Washington. This research paper statistically illustrates how aggravated assault continues to affect adult populations in both cities. It emphasizes the importance of using detailed data to improve responses within the criminal justice system.

Keywords: aggravated assault; Seattle, WA.; Denver, CO.; victim impact.

INTRODUCTION

Aggravated assault is a serious crime that has a significant impact not only on adult residents but on society as well. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, it is defined as an unlawful attack intended to cause severe bodily harm, often involving a weapon (UCR, 2019). Washington State outlines fifteen different definitions of aggravated assault; the most common include causing physical injury that requires medical treatment, such as bandaging, suturing, or surgery. Other definitions include physical attacks using weapons, body parts, food products, or bodily secretions, as well as attempts to commit such acts, all of which are listed under WAC 137-25-020 (Washington State, 2025). In Colorado, first-degree assault under CRS-18-3-202 includes knowingly causing serious bodily injury with a deadly weapon (Colorado Public Law, 2025).

Looking at what influences people to commit violent crimes (Burns & Roszkowska, 2016) can help explain why this specific crime continues to occur. Understanding how aggravated assault affects adult residents is essential for improving public safety and potentially modifying current prevention strategies.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To conduct a crime intelligence analysis as part of a requirement for the Crime Analysis and Investigation certificate program at Pierce College. Particularly, the impact of aggravated assault on adult residents between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, to see how aggravated assault affects the adult population, specifically between the age group of 20–49-year-olds, for the year 2024. The purpose is to conduct a comparative analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aggravated assault greatly impacts an individual's sense of personal safety and security as the crime results in a physical injury (Breetzke, 2017). Previous research often focuses on national trends, overlooking the specific impacts on adults living in individual cities, such as Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. However, there is limited research that examines how adult residents in specific urban environments experience and respond to these assaults. Past studies have looked at other influences on violence, including economic stress, repeat victimization, and offender motivation (Burns & Roszkowska, 2016). To fill in the gap, this study will research how many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year.

Aggravated Assault on Adults

Definitions of aggravated assault can vary between states, depending on things like the kind of weapons that are used, the offender's intent, and the characteristics of the victim (Champlin, 2015). To gain a clearer understanding, more research is needed, especially studies that compare how aggravated assault affects adults aged 20 to 49 across different states.

Victim Impact

Victims of aggravated assault often face severe physical and long-term emotional trauma, which can involve having flashbacks or nightmares about the assault and avoiding places that remind them of the assault alone (OVC, 2025). The immediate and long-term effects of the assault can significantly disrupt a victim's life. Recognizing the wide range of victim experiences is essential for developing trauma-informed responses and support systems.

Category of Crime

Aggravated assault has multiple categories that define what type of weapon used during the crime. The four main categories are personal weapons, handguns, knives or cutting instruments, and firearms. The categories chosen are the most commonly reported in assault cases. Personal weapons usually involve physical attacks, while handguns and other firearms cause serious injuries. Knives or sharp objects also have a risk of injury and can show a different kind of intent in the assault. Weapon use in violent crimes proves how serious the crime is and how much harm is done to the victim (Thompson et al., 2022). Looking at the four categories, the study can compare the types of violence happening in Seattle and Denver and how weapon choice might affect the outcome of the assault.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory helps explain why people commit violent crimes like aggravated assault, meaning that people weigh the possible benefits and consequences before they decide to do something. When someone chooses to hurt another person, they may be acting on emotion, but they still consider whether it is worth the risk of getting caught or facing jail time (Burns & Roszkowska, 2016). The theory fits with aggravated assault since many of these situations involve choices made quickly, but still based on what the offender sees as a benefit. Understanding how people make these choices will help get a better idea of how to prevent or reduce this kind of violence.

Data Sources

Data is collected from the 2024 Census. The U.S. Census Bureau provides valuable information about people across the country. For this study, the 2024 census population numbers for both Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, will be collected. The U.S. Census will be used to identify how many people live in each city; having this demographic information allows for a more accurate comparison between the population in Seattle, Washington, and

Denver, Colorado (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). Additionally, data from the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE) will be used to gather the number of aggravated assault incidents in both cities. The CDE provides detailed crime statistics, including the types of weapons used, the number of victims injured, and other relevant characteristics of each incident. This data will help determine how many residents of aggravated assault in 2024 were within the 20 to 49 age range, as well as identify standard weapon types used in these assaults (FBI,2024).

Previous Studies

No previous study exists within known databases such as ProQuest, Google Scholar, Crime Data Explorer, and open research Internet tools or search engines. The usable data stems from national archives, using Crime Data Explorer (CDE), and the U.S. Census Bureau, as it relates to how many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year. The absence of previous studies as it relates to the current research topic establishes the gap in the literature.

The GAP in Literature

The gap in the literature is established due to no previous historical studies as they relate to the current research topic. Specifically, how many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year when conducting a comparative analysis of adults aged between 20 and 49 in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. The gap inspires future research studies relating to this current topic.

KEY TERMS

• Aggravated assault

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) defines aggravated assault as an unlawful attack by one person, inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. Usually accompanied by the use of a gun, knife, or other weapon (FBI, 2025).

• Crime against a person

Crimes against a person mean a crime that has an element of use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force or other abuse of a person (Cornell, 2025).

• Personal Weapon

Under Washington state law RCW 9.41.270, weapons are capable of producing bodily harm, unlawful carrying, or handling. It is unlawful for any person to carry, exhibit, display, or draw any weapon capable of causing bodily harm (Washington State, 2025).

• Category of Crime

The FBI's UCR program requires all reported crimes to be classified into eight categories (Cleveland Heights, 2025). For the purpose of this study, data collection consists of four of these categories focusing on the types of aggravated assault, including assaults involving a firearm, a knife or cutting instrument, a blunt object, or personal weapons.

• Crime Data Explorer

The interactive online tool was developed by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. It provides a platform for law enforcement agencies and the public to view and gain an understanding of the amount of crime data collected through the UCR program (FBI, 2025).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Rationale

Aggravated assault is similar to assault or simple assault; aggravated assault is an attempt to cause serious injuries to another person without any regard for human life. Certain elements that make any simple assault an aggravated assault typically include the use of a weapon, the intent of the perpetrator, the degree of injury caused, and the status of the victim (Felonies, 2020). This research focuses on how many adult residents of Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year.

RQ1- How many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year?

Aggravated assault is a common violent crime in Seattle compared to other violent crimes. The study will conduct data collection regarding aggravated assault to determine what percentage of impacts on the city population among adults aged 20 to 49.

RQ2- Do Seattle, Washington adult residents experience different types of aggravated assault more or less than compared to Denver, Colorado residents?

Seattle and Denver reported different types of aggravated assault incidents among adult residents' weapon types, such as personal weapons, knife/cutting instruments, blunt objects, and firearms.

RQ3- What types of aggravated assault are used successfully against adult residents?

The study proposes to connect research and collect data regarding the types of aggravated assault used successfully against adult residents through a comparative analysis between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. The content proposed to support the data will also include characteristics of crime to determine what type of personal weapons are used to commit aggravated assault.

METHOD AND DESIGN

Prior research and reports have identified the trends of criminal victimization of aggravated assault. The CDE provides a view of estimated national and state data, reported agency-level crime statistics, and graphs of specific variables from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) (FBI, 2024). This research will focus specifically on aggravated assault offenses categorized as crimes against persons, with a focus on adult residents between the ages of 20 and 49.

Design

Using an exploratory design method in this study is beneficial for establishing an understanding of how to proceed in investigating the issue of aggravated assault and its impact on residents. Exploratory design is often employed when there are few studies that refer to the designated outcome (USC Libraries, 2021). This study will collect data from existing databases, including the FBI's CDE, which contains reported crimes by law enforcement in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. Using a comparative analysis to see the impact of aggravated assault on adults over the same year (FBI,2024). The purpose of this study is to measure the number of adult residents who were affected by aggravated assault in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. Table 1 below shows the concept chart of this analysis.

TABLE 1: Concept chart of the comparative analysis.

Concept	Dependent Variables
Assault victims applies to both DV & IV	<p>Assault</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Assault Victims • Victim Impact • Types of Assault <hr/> <p>Independent Variable City Seattle Vs Denver</p>

Variables

The goal of this study is to look at how often aggravated assault happens to adult residents and how it affects them. The focus will be on adults living in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. This research will explore how serious the problem is in each city and in what ways adults are impacted by these violent crimes.

- *Independent variable:* The independent variable in this comparative analysis is the geographic boundaries between two comparable cities, Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado.

- *Dependent variable:* The study aims to discuss the question of how the number of aggravated assault incidents involving the number of assault victims, victim impact, and types of assault.
- *Control:* This study focuses on the population for the year 2024. Collecting one year keeps the proposed research consistent. Collected data also inspires future studies to compare new data to reduce the GAP in the literature.

Measures

• *Victims*

The victims in this study are adult residents between the ages of 20 and 49 who were involved in aggravated assault incidents reported in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, in 2024. This age group was chosen because it makes up a large portion of both cities' populations and is often the target of violent crimes (FBI, 2024).

• *Offenders*

Demographic information about the offenders is downloaded from crime reports in the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE). Including the age and gender of those arrested for committing aggravated assault. Past research has shown that looking at offender characteristics can help explain patterns in violent crime, especially when comparing different cities or age groups (Burns & Roszkowska, 2016).

• *Weapon Involvement*

Each aggravated assault case in the CDE includes a characteristic of what kind of weapon used. The characteristics are categorized into various types, including firearms, personal weapons, blunt objects, knives, and other types of weapons. Weapon choice can help explain the severity of the assault and might show differences between cities or age groups. Research also shows that weapon use plays a significant role in how serious a violent crime becomes and whether it leads to more harm or even death (FBI, 2025).

Method

The use of an exploratory research design allows the use of the existing CDE database to define both the independent variables as well as the impact measures of aggravated assault incidents. This researcher started by downloading the incidents table by age from the CDE data to show the breakdown of victims. From here, the data is analyzed to determine how many individuals between the 20–49 age groups were impacted. A bar chart is created from the data set to visualize the number of victims affected. Similar steps are repeated to collect the data to show the age, the different types of aggravated assault, and what types of aggravated assault that were used successfully on adult victims. The Crime Data Explorer uses filters to isolate bar charts to assist in the visualization of reviewed data as it relates to the topic.

Population

The population is individuals between the ages of 20–49 in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, specifically looking at those impacted by aggravated assault. Only those cases reported and recorded in the CDE data system are collected. The research will only include victims' data where aggravated assaults were officially reported and validated. Table 2 below illustrates the total population and adult residents' population between the ages of 20–49, from Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado (United States Census Bureau, 2024).

TABLE 2: 2024 US Census population data between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado.

	Seattle		Denver		Comparison	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total Population	780,995	100.0%	729,019	100.0%	51,976	6.8%
20–49-year-old	531,076	68%	510,313	70%	20,763	4%

This table shows the 2024 U.S. Census population for Seattle and Denver. Both cities have similar-sized populations in this age group; Denver, Colorado has a slightly higher percentage of residents in this age range, with 70% compared to Seattle, Washington at 68%, showing a 6.8% difference in the total population and a 4% difference for residents in the age group 20-49 years old.

Validity and Reliability

This study will collect data from the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE) for the year 2024. The data includes details like the victim's age and the type of weapon used during each aggravated assault. Only cases that were officially reported and validated to NIBRS and published in the CDE were included. Data that was not reported or submitted does not show up and could not be part of the analysis. As a result, the findings are limited to the data recorded for 2024. The focus is specifically on adults ages 20 to 49 living in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. Choosing one age group and one year keeps the project manageable and focused. The government-sourced information is official and considered validated

as the crime data is provided to the citizenry for public review annually.

Goal

The goal of this study is to analyze and answer the question of how many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year. Looking at national data and comparing it to city-specific data, the question is answered.

Data Collection

The researcher gathered data from two primary sources: the U.S. Census Bureau and the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE). The 2024 census data will help compare the populations of Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, by taking the population and the percentage of victims from the CDE and multiplying them to find the number of adult residents between the ages of 20-49. This age group is the center of this study because it makes up a large portion of the population in both cities and has shown a noticeable rate of aggravated assault incidents. Using the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (2024), the researcher downloaded the aggravated assault cases for both cities based on incidents reported in 2024.

The researcher downloaded data for each city and sorted it by weapon type, including personal weapons, handguns, knives or cutting instruments, and firearms in general. The CDE data also includes details about the victims and offenders, such as age and gender, which helps break down who is being affected the most.

Once the data was collected, charts were created in Excel to help compare aggravated assault trends between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado.

Allowing the researcher to visually see how many incidents involved each type of weapon and how often victims in the 20–49 age range were involved. Looking at both population and crime data side by side helps show the actual impact of aggravated assault in both places and leaves room for future studies to look deeper into why these crimes happen and how they could be reduced. Figure 1 below shows a screen capture from the U.S. Census Bureau website with the appropriate filters set as described above.

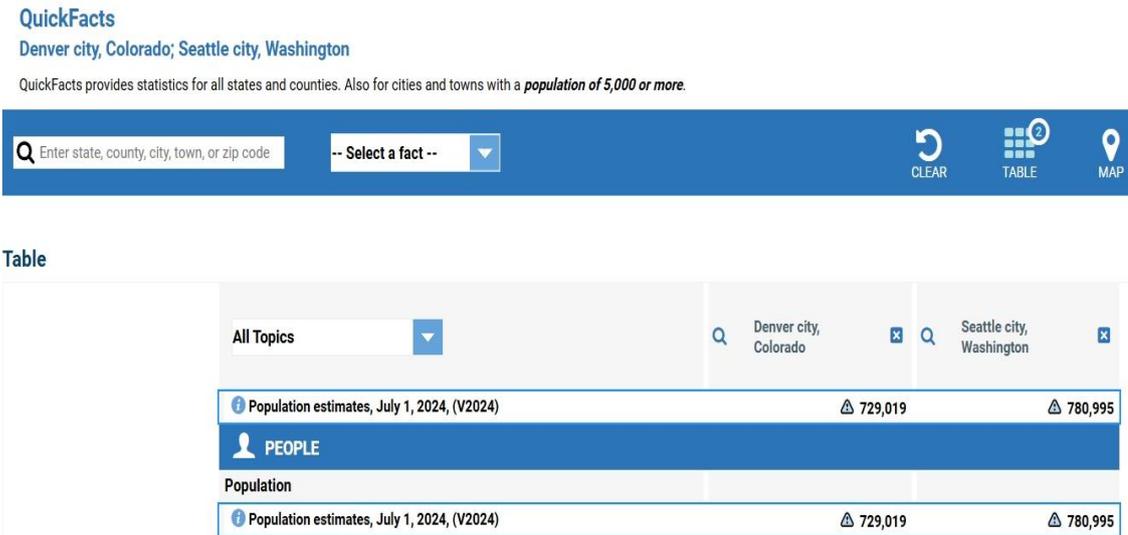
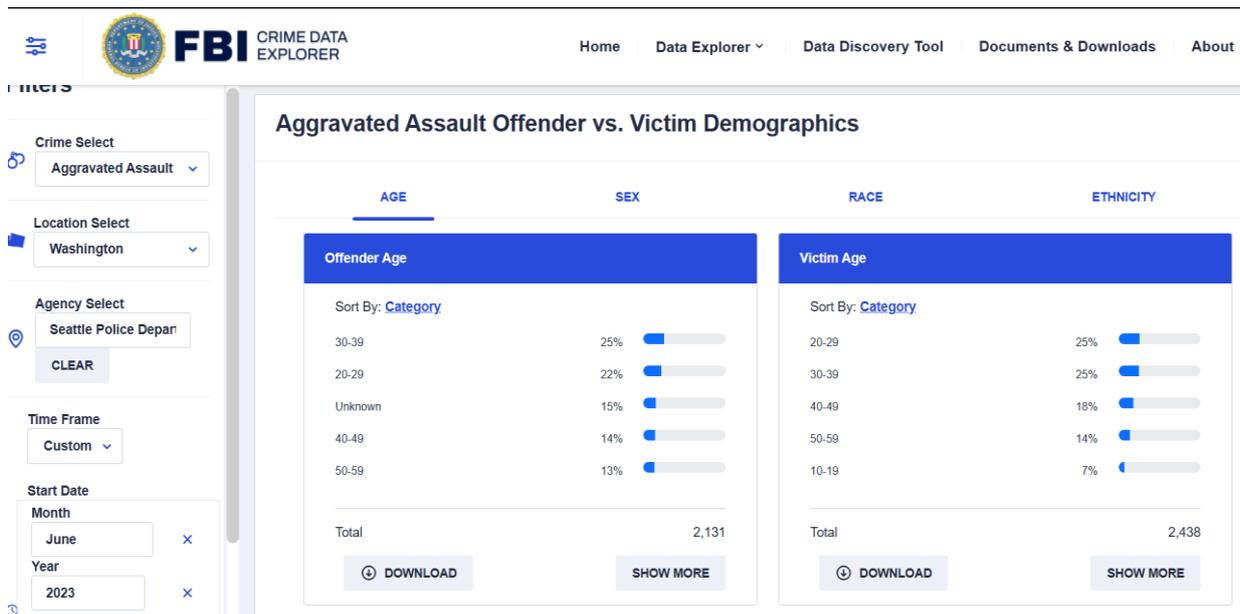


FIGURE 1: U.S. Census Bureau Data Collection Screen Capture for Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado.

This figure shows the population estimates for Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, as of July 1, 2024 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). Figure 2 below shows the CDE tool under the city, state, and year (FBI, 2024).



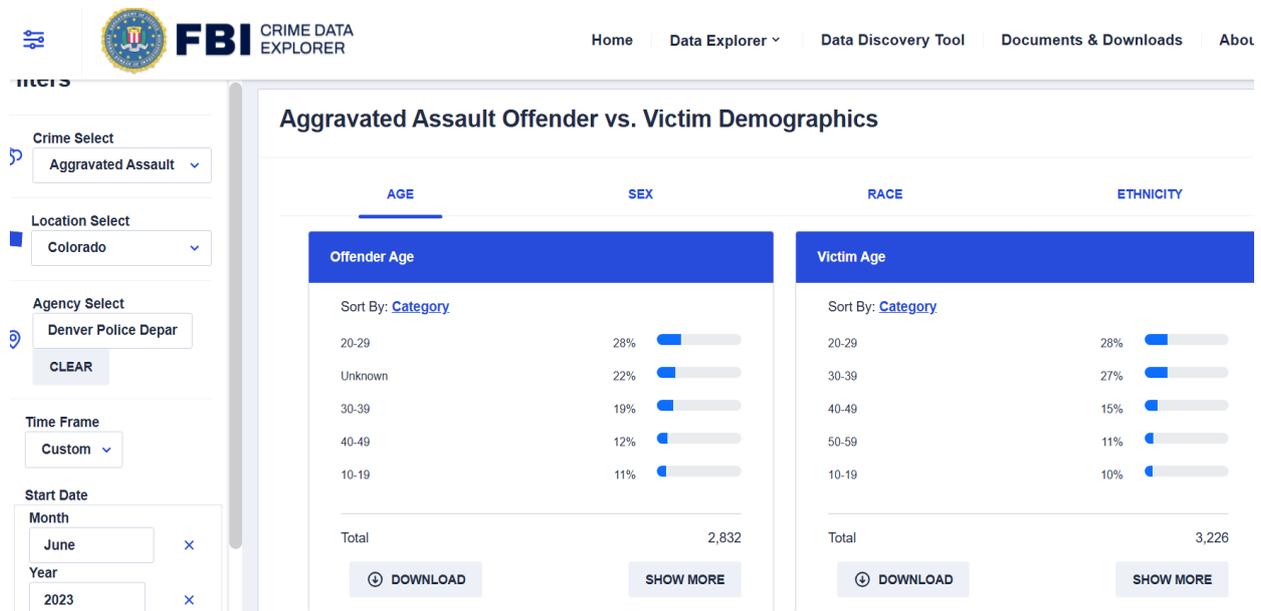


FIGURE 2: CDE screen capture of the data collection process.

The data collected from the Crime Data Explorer shows the total percentage of adult residents. Image one shows Seattle, Washington, and image two shows Denver, Colorado (FBI, 2024).

Analysis

Answering the research questions for this study, Figures 3, 4, and 5 show the types of aggravated assault most commonly used against adult victims aged 20–49. Data downloaded from the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (2024) gives a clear picture of how weapon types play a role in the kinds of assaults reported in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. So far, previous research has primarily focused on broader age ranges or national trends, but this study narrows its focus to these two cities and this specific age group.

has been studied in different ways; there has not been much focus on comparing weapon types used across similar cities in one specific year. This study utilizes CDE data and crime-related articles to gain a deeper understanding of the problem and its impact on real individuals. The data was organized into tables to show data trends like offense characteristics, whether handguns or personal weapons were used more often, and how often people in this age range were victims. Looking at 2024 data gives this research a current and focused view that could be helpful for future studies or crime prevention strategies. Figure 3 below shows the number of victims involved in aggravated assault in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado (CDE,2024).

Answering the question ‘How many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault each year’ in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, begins with looking at how it

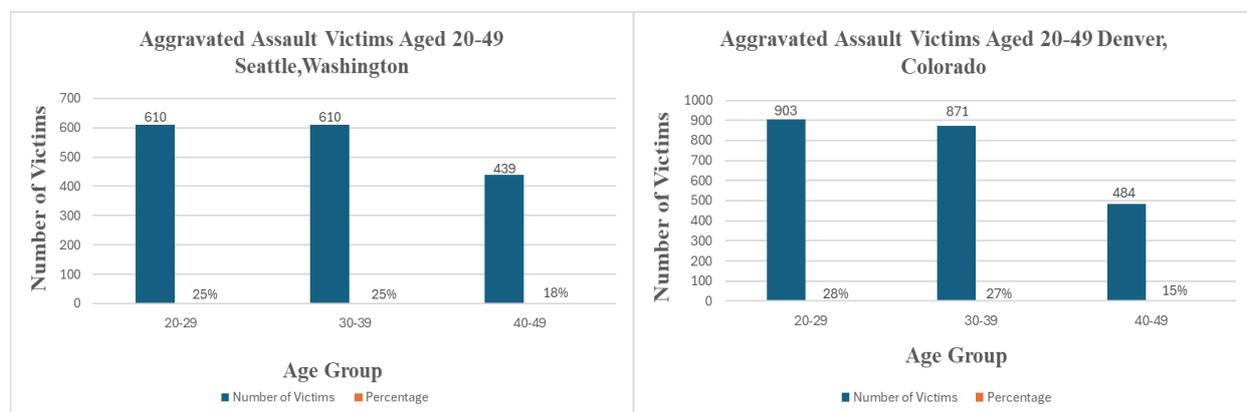


FIGURE 3: The chart below breaks down the number of adult residents affected by aggravated assault by victim demographics.

This data successfully answers research question one: How many adult residents from Seattle, Washington, are impacted by aggravated assault. In Seattle, Washington, 25% of aggravated assault victims were between the ages of 20–39, while 18%

were between 40–49 years old. Comparatively, Denver, Colorado, showed slightly different trends among aggravated assault victims, 28% were aged 20–29, 27% were 30–39, and 15% were 40–49.

These findings highlight that both cities experience high rates of aggravated assault among adults aged 20–49. Figure 4 below illustrates the comparison of

aggravated assault types between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, residents in 2024 (FBI,2024).

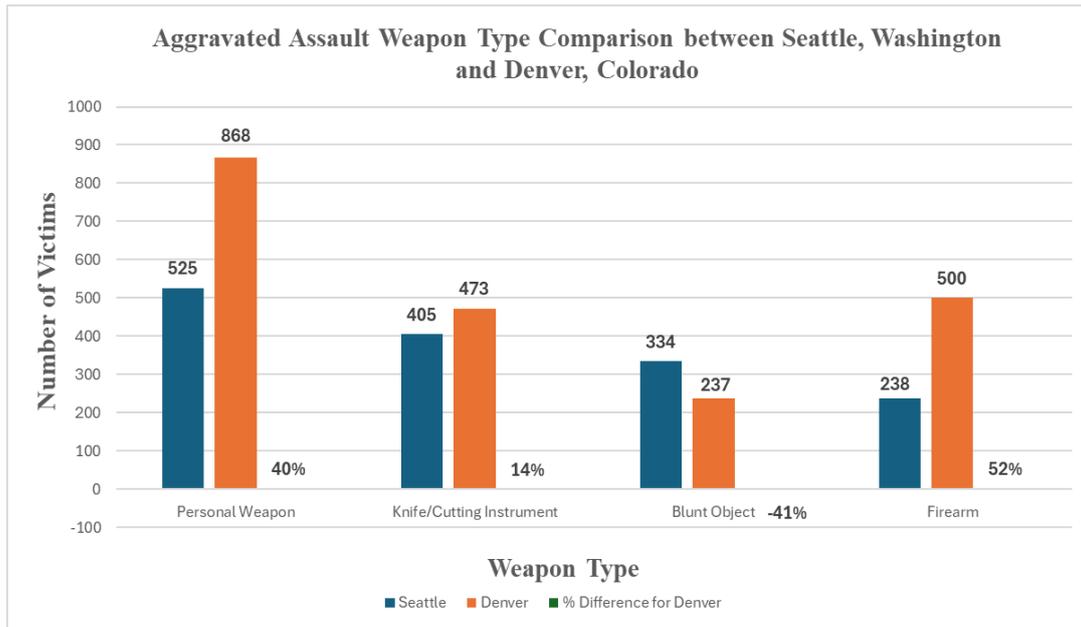


FIGURE 4: Comparison of aggravated assault types between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado residents in 2024.

This data successfully answers research question two: Do Seattle, Washington, adult residents experience different types of aggravated assault more or less than compared to Denver, Colorado residents. Denver, Colorado, reported 40% more assaults involving personal weapons and 52% more assaults involving firearms than Seattle,

Washington. Knife or cutting instrument assaults also slightly higher increased at 14%. Whereas Seattle, Washington, reported 41% more for blunt object assaults. Figure 5 below shows the combined number of aggravated assault incidents involving adult residents by weapon type across Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado (FBI,2024).

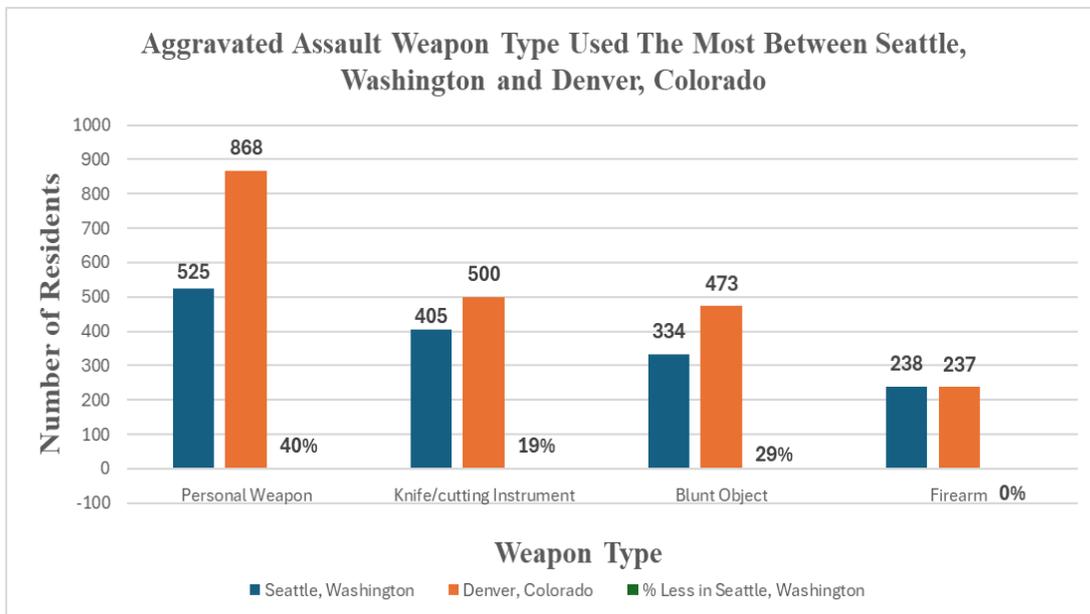


FIGURE 5: Comparison of what types of aggravated assault are used successfully against adult residents between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado adults in 2024.

This data successfully answers research question three: What types of aggravated assault are used successfully against adult residents. Personal weapons accounted for the highest assaults in both cities. However, Seattle, Washington, reported 40%

fewer cases involving personal weapons than Denver, Colorado. Knife and cutting instruments and blunt objects followed similar patterns, with Seattle, Washington showing 29% and 19% fewer cases than Denver, Colorado. Firearm use remained nearly equal between both cities (FBI,2024).

Analysis Conclusions

Overall, the 2024 CDE data shows that aggravated assault differs statistically between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, when it comes to adult residents. Seattle, Washington, reported that 25% of assault victims are between the age group of 20-39, while 18% are between 40-49. Whereas Denver, Colorado, showed slightly different numbers, 28% of assault victims were between the ages of 20-29, 27% were between the ages of 30-39, and 15% were between the ages of 40-49. Denver, Colorado, reported 40% more assaults involving personal weapons and 52% more assaults involving firearms, whereas Seattle, Washington, reported 41% more assaults involving blunt objects (FBI, 2024). Personal weapons accounted for the highest assaults in both cities. However, Seattle, Washington, reported 40% fewer cases involving personal weapons than Denver, Colorado. Knife and cutting instruments and blunt objects followed similar patterns, with Seattle, Washington showing 29% and 19% fewer cases than Denver, Colorado. Firearm use remained nearly equal between both cities (FBI, 2024).

DISCUSSION

Limitations

This study has several limitations; using the CDE data has limitations based on specific data that is collected, such as reported incidents of aggravated assault. Aggravated assault is often underreported, especially among certain age groups or communities; the actual number of incidents may be higher than the data shows. Second, the study focuses only on two cities, Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, which limits the extent to which the results can be applied to other locations. It also centers on a specific age group, 20 to 49 years old, for which very little focused research exists. Comparing this age group between these two cities is a topic that has never been studied before. Third, most existing literature from the past five years does not provide age-specific insights, which makes it challenging to find detailed research to support the study. Finally, this researcher imposes limitations, as it was completed as a student project for the Pierce College Crime Analysis Certificate Program. Time constraints and limited research experience may have influenced the depth and scope of the findings.

Strengths and Weaknesses

One strength of this project is its focus on the adult residents between Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, between the ages of 20 and 49, who are affected by aggravated assault. Focusing on a single group can significantly impact the understanding of broader crime trends. Additionally, the use of reliable, publicly available data from the U.S. Census and FBI Crime Data Explorer made the findings transparent and replicable.

However, the project also has several weaknesses not a lot of studies have been done on the specified age group, and there were limited scientific studies on aggravated assault. Using the CDE data has limitations based on specific data that is collected, such as reported incidents of aggravated assault. Second, the study focuses only on two cities, Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. The researcher has limited research experience, which was conducted in a short amount of time as a project for the Pierce College Crime Analysis Certificate Program.

Ethical Concerns

This research is being conducted to provide an understanding of the crime of aggravated assault between adult residents of Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. The researcher of this paper has taken great care to ensure the confidentiality of aggravated assault residents aged 20-49. This research project contains no bias towards individuals, as research is gathered through published, accredited documentation.

Overall Project Conclusion

Overall, this researcher answered the research questions by breaking down national data to a state level to understand the issue better. Looking at aggravated assaults in Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado, helped show how adult residents between the ages of 20 and 49 are affected. The data shows Denver, Colorado's population had a significantly higher number of residents of the affected age group by aggravated assault. Giving insight into what types of weapons are most commonly used, Denver, Colorado reported 40% more assaults with personal weapons and firearms. Whereas Seattle, Washington, reported 41% more assaults with blunt objects. This data successfully answers all three of the research questions. However, the research focused on just one year and a specific age group. This project demonstrates how focusing on a single group can significantly impact the understanding of broader crime trends and aid others who wish to study similar topics in the future.

Need for Future Research

Future research should explore additional things, such as race, gender, and neighborhood characteristics, to get a better understanding of the underlying causes of aggravated assault. Since aggravated assault continues to be a serious issue, future studies should look at other cities and states to see if the patterns are the same or if they differ based on location, population, or local laws. Researchers could gather better data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the FBI's Crime Data Explorer. These resources provide data that can be used to compare crime trends over time and across different areas, focusing on more specific details and locations. Future researchers could gain a better understanding of how aggravated assault impacts adults.

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