



Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey

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Criminal Victimization 1996 Changes 1995-96 with Trends 1993-96

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In 1996 U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced nearly 37 million criminal victimizations, according to data collected from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Of these victimizations, 27.3 million involved property crimes against households, 9.1 million involved the violent crimes of rape, robbery, and assault, and 0.3 million involved personal thefts such as purse snatching.

Translated into the number of violent and property crimes per 1,000 persons or households, crime rates for 1996 show 42 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons and 266 property crimes per 1,000 households. The victimization rates declined from 1995, and are the lowest recorded by the NCVS since its inception in 1973.*

From 1995 to 1996 the violent crime rate overall, as measured by the NCVS, decreased about 10%, and the rate of property crime went down 8%. These declines followed a general downward trend of criminal victimization rates over the past 3 years.

The trends reported in this Bulletin encompass 1993 through 1996. The redesigned NCVS first used a full

sample of households in 1993; therefore, the trends presented begin with that year.

Compared to 1993 rates, the 1996 victimization rates for all property crimes,

for personal theft, and for the measured violent crimes except robbery showed a significant decrease. Between 1993 and 1996, the violent crime rate fell 16%, and property crime rates dropped 17%.

Highlights

- The 1994-95 general downward trend in criminal victimizations continued in 1996.
- The NCVS property and violent crime rates for 1996 are the lowest recorded since the survey's inception in 1973.*
- The murder rate dropped 10% between 1995 and 1996 — the largest decrease in the past 4 years.
- Though overall violent crime rates decreased significantly from 1995 to 1996, the decline in the rates for robbery and aggravated assault were not statistically significant.
- In 1996 males experienced significantly higher victimization rates than females for all violent crimes except rape/sexual assault. Males were 2 times more likely than females to experience robbery and aggravated assault.
- In 48% of violent victimizations in 1996, the victim knew the offender.
- In 1996, 4 in 10 violent crimes and 3 in 10 property crimes were reported to the police. Females and blacks were more likely to report a crime to police than were males and whites.
- In 1996 violent crime rates were 16% lower and property crime rates 17% lower than they were in 1993.
- Between no two consecutive years from 1993 to 1996 did a violent, personal, or property crime rate increase a statistically significant amount.
- The decreasing victimization trends during 1993-96 were experienced about equally by both males and females and by the racial and income groups.
- Between 1993 and 1996 Hispanic households experienced a greater decrease than non-Hispanic households in the rate of property crime victimization.

*After rates were adjusted following the 1992 NCVS redesign.

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Criminal victimization, 1995-96

Violent crime

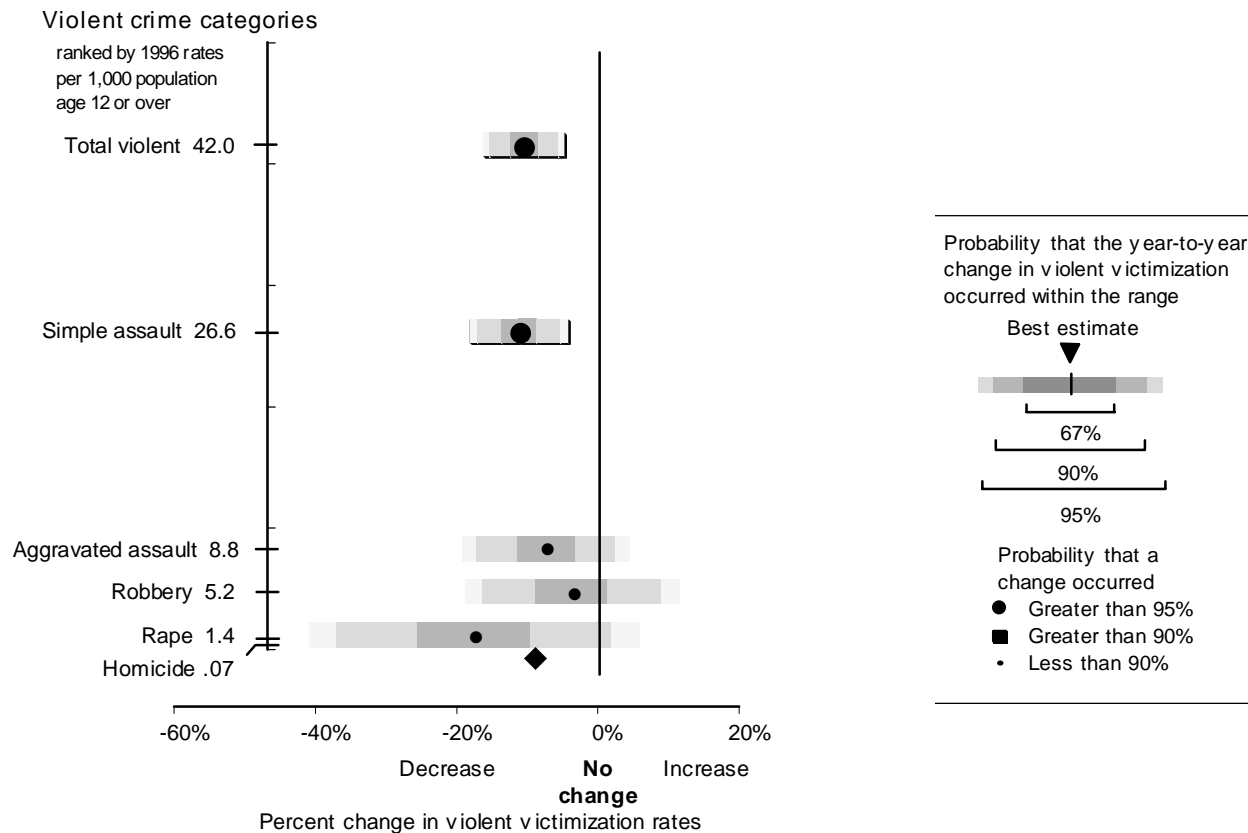
The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) program of the FBI collects data on murder and nonnegligent manslaughter. The NCVS collects information

about rape and sexual assault, robbery, and simple and aggravated assault.

From 1995 to 1996 both the murder rate and the rate of violent crime in the aggregate declined about 10% (figure 1). This decrease in the NCVS esti-

mate was statistically significant. Of the four types of violent offenses measured by the NCVS only simple assault showed a significant decline from 1995. For aggravated assault, robbery, and rape or sexual assault, the apparent declines in rates from

Change in violent victimization by category, 1995-96



Note: The rape category includes sexual assaults. The change in murder rates is presented as a point since the source of the data, the Uniform Crime Reports, is not a sample survey. Source: BJS, National Crime Victimization Survey, and FBI, Uniform Crime Reports.

For further explanation of the graph see the forthcoming BJS Technical Report, *Displaying Violent Crime Trends Using Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey*, NCJ 167881.

The figure shows the estimated annual percentage change in victimization rates from 1995 to 1996 for the categories that comprise violent crime: homicide, rape and sexual assault, aggravated assault, simple assault, and robbery. The crime categories are displayed vertically according to their 1996 rates per 1,000 population age 12 or over. Total violent (the sum of all types) is first with

the highest rate and murder is last with the lowest rate.

Because the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) relies on a sample of households, the rates and numbers from it are estimates and are not exact. Each bar shows the range within which the true percent change in rates from year to year is likely to fall. If a bar is clear of the "No change" line, we are

reasonably certain a change occurred. If a bar crosses the "No change" line, there is a possibility that there was no change. The degree of certainty depends on where the bar crosses the line. The bars representing the crime categories where a statistically significant year-to-year change occurred are outlined.

The length of the range bars varies considerably from

crime to crime, dependent on sample size and rarity of the event. The value for the change in homicide rates is given as a point and not a range of estimates, because homicide rates are derived from nonsample data. The murder rates have no variance, but some discrepancies exist between UCR rates and *Vital Statistics* of the National Center for Health Statistics.

Figure 1

1995 to 1996 were not statistically significant.

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter

The murder rate for 1996 was 7.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, with a total of 19,645 murders. The 10% decrease in the murder rate for 1995-96 was the largest such decrease in 4 years. The decrease was apparent across all sizes of cities and regions of the country. (See the box on page 6.)

Violent crime measured by the NCVS

The decrease in overall violent crimes between 1995 and 1996 included completed rape, assault, and simple assault (table 1). For aggravated assault and robbery, apparent declines in rates from 1995 to 1996 were not statistically significant. The rate of sexual assault did not change from 1995 to 1996.

The category of assault (an aggregate measure of aggravated and simple assault) showed a significant decrease from 1995 to 1996 — just over 10%. However, this is a reflection of the significant 11% decline in simple assault from 1995 to 1996. Aggravated assault continued its downward trend, but the 7% decrease was not statistically significant.

The category of rape (which represents completed rapes) exhibited a significant decline from 1995 to 1996. However, because there were no declines in attempted rape or sexual assault over the same period, this decrease is not apparent in the aggregate category of rape/sexual assault.

Though personal theft was down 21% from 1995-96, the change was only somewhat significant.

Among demographic characteristics ethnicity was the only factor associated with a greater rate of decline in violent crime. Between 1995 and 1996 individuals of Hispanic origin experienced

Table 1. Criminal victimization, 1995-96

Type of crime	Number of victimizations (1,000's)		Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households)		Percent change, 1995-96
	1995	1996	1995	1996	
All crimes	39,926	36,796	
Personal crimes^a	10,436	9,443	48.5	43.5	-10.3*
Crimes of violence	10,022	9,125	46.6	42.0	-9.9*
Completed violence	2,960	2,700	13.8	12.4	-10.1*
Attempted/threatened violence	7,061	6,425	32.8	29.6	-9.8*
Rape/Sexual assault	363	307	1.7	1.4	-17.6
Rape/attempted rape	252	197	1.2	.9	-25.0**
Rape	153	98	.7	.4	-42.9*
Attempted rape	99	99	.5	.5	0
Sexual assault	112	110	.5	.5	0
Robbery	1,171	1,134	5.4	5.2	-3.7
Completed/property taken	753	757	3.5	3.5	0
With injury	224	250	1.0	1.1	10.0
Without injury	529	508	2.5	2.3	-8.0
Attempted to take property	418	377	1.9	1.7	-10.5
With injury	84	79	.4	.4	0
Without injury	335	298	1.6	1.4	-12.5
Assault	8,487	7,683	39.5	35.4	-10.4*
Aggravated	2,050	1,910	9.5	8.8	-7.4
With injury	533	513	2.5	2.4	-4.0
Threatened with weapon	1,517	1,397	7.1	6.4	-9.9
Simple	6,437	5,773	29.9	26.6	-11.0*
With minor injury	1,426	1,240	6.6	5.7	-13.6*
Without injury	5,012	4,533	23.3	20.9	-10.3*
Personal theft ^b	414	318	1.9	1.5	-21.1**
Property crimes	29,490	27,353	290.5	266.3	-8.3*
Household burglary	5,004	4,845	49.3	47.2	-4.3
Completed	4,232	4,056	41.7	39.5	-5.3
Forcible entry	1,570	1,511	15.5	14.7	-5.2
Unlawful entry without force	2,662	2,545	26.2	24.8	-5.3
Attempted forcible entry	773	789	7.6	7.7	1.3
Motor vehicle theft	1,717	1,387	16.9	13.5	-20.1*
Completed	1,163	938	11.5	9.1	-20.9*
Attempted	554	449	5.5	4.4	-20.0*
Theft	22,769	21,120	224.3	205.7	-8.3*
Completed ^c	21,857	20,303	215.3	197.7	-8.2*
Less than \$50	8,652	7,580	85.2	73.8	-13.4*
\$50-\$249	7,712	7,374	76.0	71.8	-5.5**
\$250 or more	4,270	4,216	42.1	41.1	-2.4**
Attempted	911	818	9.0	8.0	-11.1

Note: The number of victimizations may differ from those reported previously because the estimates are now based on data collected in each calendar year rather than data about events within a calendar year. See *Survey methodology* on page 9. Completed violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery with or without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury. In 1993 the total population age 12 or older was 210,906,900; in 1994, 213,135,890; in 1995, 215,080,690; and in 1996, 217,234,280. The total number of households in 1993 was 99,746,020; in 1994, 100,568,060; in 1995, 101,504,820 and in 1996, 102,697,490.

*The difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

[†]The difference is significant at the 90% confidence level.

^aThe NCVS is based on interviews with victims and therefore cannot measure murder.

^bIncludes pocket picking, purse snatching, and attempted purse snatching not shown separately.

a significantly greater decline than those of non-Hispanic origin in the rate of violent crime. The 1995-96 rate of decrease in violent crime was not different for males compared to females or whites compared to blacks.

Property crime

The crimes of motor vehicle theft, household burglary and theft make up the NCVS property crimes. In the aggregate, property crime showed just

over an 8% decrease from 1995 to 1996. Household burglary decreased (but not significantly) from 1995. This was true for both forcible entry and unforced entry.

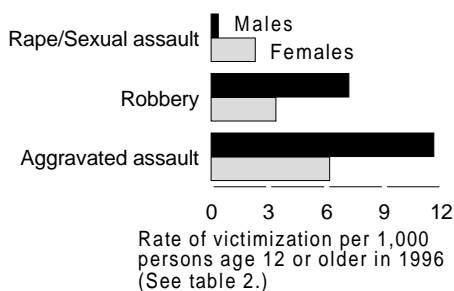
Motor vehicle theft, down 20%, showed the largest percent change from 1995. Both completed and attempted motor vehicle thefts decreased significantly. The significant 8% decrease in theft included a 13% decrease in thefts with a loss of under \$50. Thefts of greater economic loss (\$50-\$249 and \$250 or more) did decrease somewhat between 1995 and 1996.

Characteristics of victims of violent crime, 1996

The rate of violent victimization in 1996 varied across demographic characteristics such as sex, race, and ethnicity (table 2).

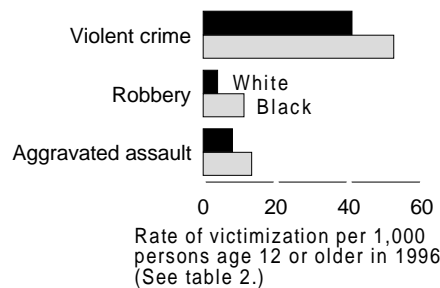
Sex of victim

Except for rape and sexual assault, males were more likely than females to be victims of violent crime. Men were twice as likely as women to experience aggravated assault and robbery. Women, however, were 10 times more likely than men to be a victim of rape or sexual assault.



Race of victim

Blacks were more likely than whites to be victims of violent crime. Robbery — for which blacks are victimized at 3 times the rate for whites — shows the greatest difference. While there was no statistically significant difference between the rates for blacks and whites for the overall assault category or for simple assault, there was a difference for aggravated assault, the more serious specific category. Blacks were nearly twice as likely as whites to experience aggravated assault.



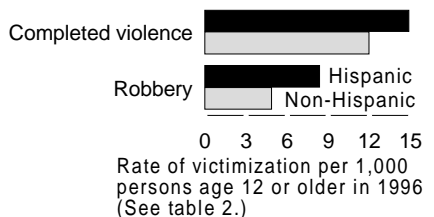
Note: The crime survey includes as violent crime rape, robbery, and assault.

Ethnicity of victim

Hispanics were twice as likely as non-Hispanics to fall victim to robbery and personal theft. While the rates of violent crime overall and attempted violent crime did not differ significantly between Hispanics and non-Hispanics, Hispanics were victims of completed violent crimes at a rate somewhat higher than that of non-Hispanics.

	Number of victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
All violence	44.0	41.6
Attempted	29.1	29.6
Completed	14.9*	12.0*

Note: The National Crime Victimization Survey excludes murder and manslaughter. *Difference is significant at 90-percent level of confidence.



Note: The crime survey includes as violent crime rape, robbery, and assault.

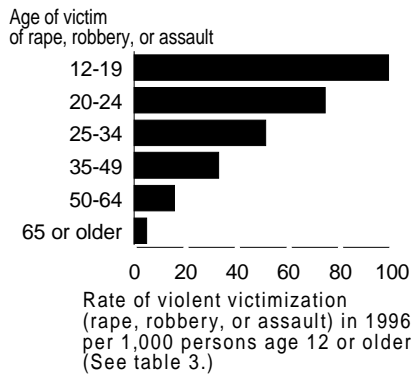
Table 2. Rates of violent crime and personal theft, by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1996

Characteristics of victims	Population	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						
		All crimes of violence*	Rape/ Sexual assault	Violent crimes			Personal theft	
				Robbery	Assault Total	Aggra- vated Simple		
Sex								
Male	105,054,160	49.9	.4	7.2	42.3	11.6	30.8	1.3
Female	112,180,110	34.6	2.3	3.4	28.9	6.2	22.7	1.6
Age								
12-15	15,587,620	95.0	2.6	10.0	82.3	15.6	66.8	3.3
16-19	14,866,000	102.7	4.9	12.0	85.7	25.3	60.4	2.5
20-24	17,533,290	74.3	2.1	10.0	62.2	15.9	46.4	2.9
25-34	40,876,720	51.1	1.8	7.1	42.2	9.8	32.4	1.2
35-49	61,741,430	32.8	1.3	3.8	27.7	7.4	20.3	1.0
50-64	34,889,360	15.7	.1	1.8	13.8	3.8	10.0	1.2
65 or older	31,739,850	4.9	0	1.1	3.8	.8	3.0	.7
Race								
White	182,853,380	40.9	1.3	4.2	35.3	8.2	27.2	1.4
Black	26,274,270	52.3	1.8	11.4	39.1	13.4	25.6	1.9
Other	8,106,620	33.2	2.1	7.4	23.8	7.2	16.6	1.3
Hispanic origin								
Hispanic	20,502,470	44.0	1.2	8.4	34.5	10.6	23.9	2.7
Non-Hispanic	194,729,590	41.6	1.4	4.9	35.3	8.5	26.8	1.3

*The National Crime Victimization Survey includes as violent crime rape/sexual assault, robbery, and assault but not murder or manslaughter.

Age of victim

Persons between ages 12 and 15 and between 16 and 19 had higher rates of violent crime victimization than those 25 or older. Persons age 12 to 19 were twice as likely as those age 25-34 and 3 times as likely as those age 35-49 to be victims of violent crimes. Persons age 12 to 19 had a violent crime victimization rate 20 times higher than those age 65 or older. For the crime of aggravated assault, individuals between ages 16 and 19 had a significantly higher rate of victimization than any other age group.



Income

In general, as household income levels decrease, rates of violent crime increase (table 3). Persons in households with an annual income of less than \$7,500 experienced significantly more violent crime than persons in households at any other income level, while persons in households with incomes of \$75,000 or more experienced significantly less than any others. Persons in households in the middle range of income (\$15,000-\$49,000) had similar rates of victimization in comparison to one another but significantly different rates from the lowest and highest income groups.

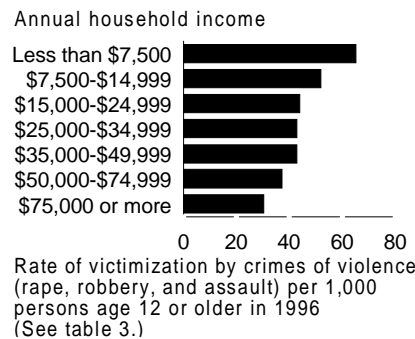


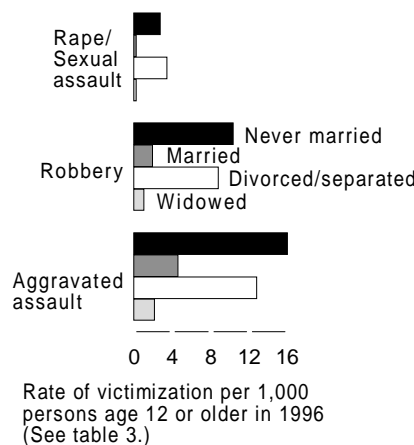
Table 3. Rates of violent crime and personal theft, by household income, marital status, region, and location of residence of victims, 1996

Characteristics of victims	Population	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						
		All crimes of violence*	Rape/Sexual assault	Robbery	Assault			Personal theft
					Total	Aggravated	Simple	
Household income								
Less than \$7,500	14,774,050	65.3	2.9	9.9	52.5	17.3	35.2	2.6
\$7,500 - 14,999	24,184,130	52.1	1.8	8.5	41.9	11.9	30.0	1.1
\$15,000 - 24,999	31,709,970	44.1	1.4	5.4	37.3	10.3	26.9	1.5
\$25,000 - 34,999	29,229,150	43.0	1.9	5.5	35.6	6.8	28.8	.9
\$35,000 - 49,999	34,958,450	43.0	1.4	4.5	37.1	8.6	28.5	1.5
\$50,000 - 74,999	31,007,900	37.5	.8	3.3	33.3	7.9	25.4	1.8
\$75,000 or more	23,924,850	30.5	1.0	2.0	27.5	5.5	22.0	1.5
Marital status								
Never married	66,576,940	79.1	2.8	10.4	65.9	16.0	49.9	2.5
Married	113,157,450	20.5	.3	2.0	18.2	4.6	13.6	.8
Divorced/separated	22,925,490	62.5	3.5	8.8	50.2	12.8	37.4	2.2
Widowed	13,724,460	7.2	.3	1.1	5.8	2.2	3.6	.9
Region								
Northeast	42,545,610	37.7	1.4	5.4	30.9	7.0	23.9	1.9
Midwest	51,833,600	43.7	1.7	5.2	36.8	7.9	28.9	1.5
South	76,436,860	37.5	1.0	4.4	32.1	8.6	23.5	1.2
West	46,418,200	51.5	1.8	6.3	43.4	11.8	31.5	1.5
Residence								
Urban	63,137,110	55.1	2.0	10.4	42.7	11.7	31.1	2.4
Suburban	104,794,740	38.9	1.3	3.3	34.2	7.8	26.4	1.4
Rural	49,302,420	31.9	.9	2.6	28.3	7.2	21.1	.5

*The National Crime Victimization Survey includes as violent crime rape/sexual assault, robbery, and assault but not murder or manslaughter.

Marital status

Individuals who had never married or who had separated or divorced had higher rates of violent crime and personal theft than those who were married or widowed. For overall violent crimes, those who had never married were 4 times more likely than married persons to be victimized.



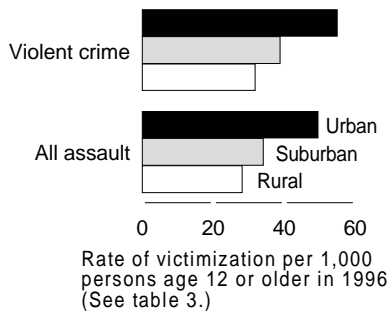
Region

Considered by region, Western residents were the most likely in the United States to be victims of violent crime. The South and the Northeast were indistinguishable from each other in victimization rates for overall violent crime, rape/sexual assault, robbery, and assault. The Midwest had generally higher rates of violent victimization than the South and Northeast but lower rates than the West.



Urbanization

City dwellers had a significantly greater likelihood than suburbanites and rural residents to be victims of all types of violent crime and of personal theft. Except for robbery and rape/sexual assault, for which differences were negligible, individuals in suburban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to experience violent crime.



Note: The crime survey includes as violent crime rape, robbery, and assault.

Victim-offender relationship

Half of the victims of nonfatal violent victimizations knew the offender. If the victim knew the offender, a violent crime was more likely to be completed rather than left as a threat or attempt. Among categories of violent crime included in the NCVS, the greatest likelihood of the victim's knowing the offender occurred with rape — 68% of the rape victims. The least likelihood was with robbery; 23% of robbery victims knew the offender.

	Percent of violent crime victimizations, 1996	
	Stranger	Nonstranger
NCVS violent crime	47.5%	48.2%
Attempted	48.9	46.7
Completed	44.1*	51.3*
Rape/sexual assault	29.1%*	67.5%*
Robbery	71.1*	23.3*
Assault	44.7*	50.8*
Aggravated	48.5	45.2
Simple	43.5*	52.9*

Note: The National Crime Victimization Survey includes as violent crime rape, robbery, and assault but not murder or manslaughter.
*Significant at 95-percent level of confidence.

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, by characteristics of victims and location, 1993-96

Characteristic of victim or location	Percent of murders and nonnegligent manslaughters			
	1993	1994	1995	1996
Race of victim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
White	46.0	46.2	48.0	48.3
Black	50.7	50.8	48.4	48.2
Other	2.4	2.3	2.7	2.7
Not reported	.9	.8	1.0	.9
Sex of victim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Male	77.1	78.4	76.6	76.9
Female	22.7	21.5	23.2	22.9
Not reported	.2	.1	.2	.2
Age of victim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Under 18	11.6	11.4	12.1	12.4
18 or over	87.0	86.8	86.2	86.3
Unknown	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.3
Type of weapon used	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Firearm	69.6	70.0	68.2	67.8
Knife	12.7	12.7	12.7	13.5
Blunt object	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.6
Personal weapon	5.0	5.3	5.9	5.9
Other	8.2	7.8	8.7	8.2
	Murder rate per 100,000 residents			
Overall U.S. rate	9.5	9.0	8.2	7.4
Region				
Northeast	8.2	7.1	6.2	5.4
Midwest	7.6	7.5	6.9	6.4
South	11.3	10.7	9.8	9.0
West	9.9	9.4	9.0	7.7
Urban character				
Metropolitan cities*	10.6	10.0	9.1	8.1
Smaller cities*	5.3	4.8	4.7	4.5
Rural counties	5.4	5.0	5.0	4.7
Number of murders and nonnegligent manslaughters	24,530	23,330	21,610	19,650

*Metropolitan cities are those in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), and smaller cities are those outside an MSA.

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports.

Murder in the United States, 1996

Statistics on murder are compiled from over 16,000 city, county and State law enforcement agencies as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program (UCR). For 1996 the UCR showed 19,645 murders — a rate of 7.4 murders per 100,000 persons. The number of murders per 100,000 U.S. population in 1996 is 10% lower than in 1995.

The FBI defines murder in its annual report *Crime in the United States* as the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. The incidence of murder varies across different victim characteristics.

- 77% of the victims were male.

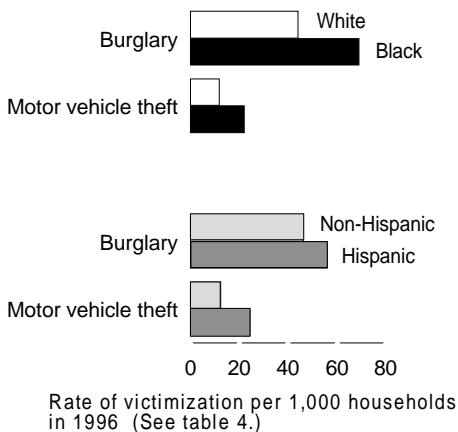
- 13% of murder victims were under age 18; 28% were under age 23. Individuals age 18-22 represent 15% of murder victims but only 7% of the U.S. population.
- Whites and blacks each made up 48% of murder victims.
- Firearms were the weapons used in about 7 of every 10 murders.
- The number of murders declined from 1995 to 1996 for all regions, with the largest decrease — 13% — occurring in both the Northeast and West.
- In 1993-96 the murder rate dropped 22%. During this period the Northeast experienced a 34% decrease and city dwellers a 24% decrease.

Characteristics of victims of property crime, 1996

Race/ethnicity of head of household

There were significant differences in property crime rates for black versus white households and Hispanic versus non-Hispanic households (table 4). For overall property crime, household burglary, motor vehicle theft and theft, black and Hispanic households were more likely to experience property crimes than white or non-Hispanic households, respectively.

Black households were twice as likely as white households, and Hispanic households twice as likely as non-Hispanic households to be victimized by motor vehicle theft.



Note: The race or ethnicity is that of the household head.

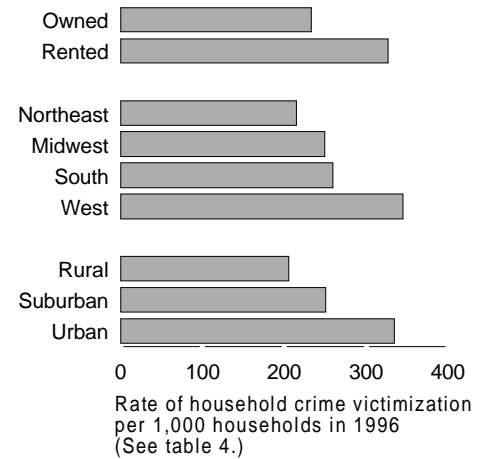
Region, urbanization, and home ownership

Rates of property crime victimization were often different according to level of urbanization, place of residence, and home ownership. For each type of property crime, people living in rented homes or apartments had a significantly higher rate of victimization than those living in their own homes. Renters were 1½ times as likely as home owners to be victims of burglary and theft.

Households in the West had the greatest risk of property crime. For overall property crimes, motor vehicle theft,

and theft, households in the West had significantly higher victimization rates than the households in the Northeast, Midwest, and South. For burglary, the South joined the West in having higher victimization rates than other regions.

Households in urban, suburban, and rural areas had significantly different rates of victimization. Compared to suburban and rural households, households in urban areas were the most likely to be victims of property crimes. Except for burglary, urban households had the highest rates of property crime, followed by suburban households and then rural households. For burglary, suburban households experienced the lowest rate, while urban households had the highest.



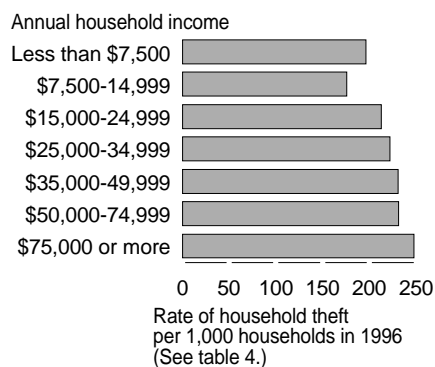
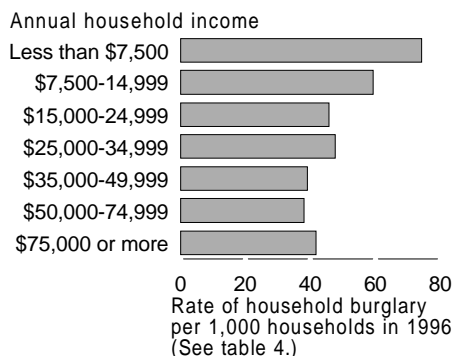
Income

The most noticeable differences in rate of victimization for households of different income levels were for burglary and theft. Households with incomes under \$7,500 and those between

Table 4. Household property crime victimization, by race, Hispanic origin, household income, region, and home ownership of households victimized, 1996

Characteristic of household or head of household	Number of households, 1996	Victimizations per 1,000 households			
		Total	Burglary	Motor vehicle theft	Theft
Race					
White	86,828,970	259.9	44.3	12.1	203.5
Black	12,610,740	310.0	69.3	22.2	218.5
Other	3,257,780	268.4	39.4	16.5	212.5
Hispanic origin					
Hispanic	8,029,100	328.1	56.2	24.6	247.3
Non-Hispanic	94,046,690	261.2	46.4	12.5	202.3
Household income					
Less than \$7,500	9,169,350	282.7	74.5	11.8	196.5
\$7,500 - 14,999	13,196,430	247.5	59.5	11.5	176.5
\$15,000 - 24,999	15,715,240	273.1	45.9	14.1	213.1
\$25,000 - 34,999	13,529,800	285.1	47.8	14.5	222.8
\$35,000 - 49,999	14,894,950	287.6	39.3	16.1	232.1
\$50,000 - 74,999	12,444,620	284.0	38.1	14.4	231.6
\$75,000 or more	9,471,690	304.6	41.8	14.4	248.3
Region					
Northeast	20,287,590	215.2	35.5	12.0	167.8
Midwest	24,933,490	249.6	44.4	10.0	195.1
South	36,181,470	259.9	51.0	13.2	195.7
West	21,294,940	345.6	55.0	19.6	271.0
Residence					
Urban	31,501,620	334.5	64.2	20.3	250.0
Suburban	48,322,180	250.5	37.8	12.9	199.8
Rural	22,873,690	206.0	43.7	5.4	156.9
Home ownership					
Owned	66,798,710	233.7	38.9	10.7	184.1
Rented	35,898,780	327.1	62.6	18.8	245.8

\$7,500 and \$14,999 were more likely to be victims of household burglary than those with household incomes of \$15,000 or higher, but less likely to be victims of theft.



Reporting to the police

The percentage of victimizations that were reported to law enforcement authorities varied by type of crime and victim characteristic. Of all types of victimizations, motor vehicle theft had the highest rate of being reported to the police — 76%, compared to 35% of property crime overall. The victim or someone else reported 43% of all violent crimes to authorities. Thirty-one percent of the rapes or sexual assaults were reported to police.

	Percent of crime reported to the police
All victimizations	36.8%
Violent crime	42.8%
Rape /Sexual assault	30.7
Robbery	53.9
Assault	41.6
Simple	37.3
Aggravated	54.6
Household crime	34.8%
Burglary	50.6
Motor vehicle theft	76.5
Theft	28.4

Victim characteristic	Percent of violent victimizations reported to the police
All	42.8%
Male	39.0
Female	47.9
White	41.4
Black	50.4
Hispanic	44.1
Non-Hispanic	42.5

Females were more likely than males, and blacks more likely than whites, to report a crime to the police.

Victimization trends, 1993-96

While not all year-to-year changes were statistically significant for the detailed victimization categories, there

Table 5. Rates of criminal victimization and percent change, 1993-96

Type of crime	Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households)				Percent change		
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1993-96	1994-96	1995-96
Personal crimes^a	52.2	54.1	48.5	43.5	-16.7*	-19.6*	-10.3*
Crimes of violence	49.9	51.8	46.6	42.0	-15.8*	-18.9*	-9.9*
Completed violence	15.0	15.4	13.8	12.4	-17.3*	-19.5*	-10.1*
Attempted/threatened violence	34.9	36.4	32.8	29.6	-15.2*	-18.7*	-9.8*
Rape/Sexual assault	2.5	2.1	1.7	1.4	-44.0*	-33.3*	-17.6
Rape/attempted rape	1.6	1.4	1.2	.9	-43.8*	-35.7*	-25.0 [†]
Rape	1.0	.7	.7	.4	-60.0*	-42.9*	-42.9*
Attempted rape	.7	.7	.5	.5	-28.6	-28.6 ^{††}	0
Sexual assault	.8	.6	.5	.5	-37.5*	-16.7	0
Robbery	6.0	6.3	5.4	5.2	-13.3	-17.5*	-3.7
Completed/property taken	3.8	4.0	3.5	3.5	-7.9	-12.5	0
With injury	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.1	-15.4	-21.4	10.0
Without injury	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.3	-8.0	-11.5	-8.0
Attempted to take property	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.7	-22.7 ^{††}	-26.1*	-10.5
With injury	.4	.6	.4	.4	0	-33.3*	0
Without injury	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	-22.2	-17.6	-12.5
Assault	41.4	43.3	39.5	35.4	-14.5*	-18.2*	-10.4*
Aggravated	12.0	11.9	9.5	8.8	-26.7*	-26.0*	-7.4
With injury	3.4	3.3	2.5	2.4	-29.4*	-27.3*	-4.0
Threatened with weapon	8.6	8.6	7.1	6.4	-25.6*	-25.6*	-9.9
Simple	29.4	31.5	29.9	26.6	-9.5*	-15.6*	-11.0*
With minor injury	6.1	6.8	6.6	5.7	-6.6	-16.2*	-13.6*
Without injury	23.3	24.7	23.3	20.9	-10.3*	-15.4*	-10.3*
Personal theft ^b	2.3	2.4	1.9	1.5	-34.8*	-37.5*	-21.1 ^{††}
Property crimes	318.9	310.2	290.5	266.3	-16.5*	-14.2*	-8.3*
Household burglary	58.2	56.3	49.3	47.2	-18.9*	-16.2*	-4.3
Completed	47.2	46.1	41.7	39.5	-16.3*	-14.3*	-5.3
Forcible entry	18.1	16.9	15.5	14.7	-18.8*	-13.0*	-5.2
Unlawful entry without force	29.1	29.2	26.2	24.8	-14.8*	-15.1*	-5.3
Attempted forcible entry	10.9	10.2	7.6	7.7	-29.4*	-24.5*	1.3
Motor vehicle theft	19.0	18.8	16.9	13.5	-28.9*	-28.2*	-20.1*
Completed	12.4	12.5	11.5	9.1	-26.6*	-27.2*	-20.9*
Attempted	6.6	6.3	5.5	4.4	-33.3*	-30.2*	-20.0*
Theft	241.7	235.1	224.3	205.7	-14.9*	-12.5*	-8.3*
Completed ^c	230.1	224.3	215.3	197.7	-14.1*	-11.9*	-8.2*
Less than \$50	98.7	93.5	85.2	73.8	-25.2*	-21.1*	-13.4*
\$50-\$249	76.1	77.0	76.0	71.8	-5.7	-6.7*	-5.5 ^{††}
\$250 or more	41.6	41.8	42.1	41.1	-1.2	-1.7	-2.4 ^{††}
Attempted	11.6	10.8	9.0	8.0	-31.0*	-25.9*	-11.1

Note: Victimization rates may differ from those reported previously because the estimates are now based on data collected in each calendar year rather than data about events within a calendar year. (See *Survey Methodology* on page 9.) Completed violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery with or without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury. See the note on table 1, page 3, for the population counts, 1993-96.

*The difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

[†]The difference is significant at the 90% confidence level.

^aThe victimization survey cannot measure murder because of the inability to question the victim.

^bIncludes pocket picking, purse snatching, and attempted purse snatching not shown separately.

^cIncludes thefts with unknown losses.

was a statistically significant decline in the overall rates between 1993 and 1996 for violent and property crimes (table 5).

Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter

The number and rate of murder in all regions of the United States have declined steadily since 1993. (See the box on page 6.) The characteristics of murder victims have remained relatively stable during that time.

Violent crime

The general pattern among violent crimes measured by the NCVS was a nonsignificant increase in both the number and rate of victimization between 1993 and 1994 and then a decline through 1996. While some year-to-year changes in victimization rates for violent crime in the aggregate, for rape and sexual assault and assault (both aggravated and simple) were not significant, the declines for these crimes over the whole period were statistically significant.

Personal theft

Personal theft includes pocket picking and attempted and completed purse snatching. The personal theft rate decreased significantly from 1993 to 1996.

Property crime

When broken into its component rates of household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft, property crime shows a different pattern than violent offenses. There was a slight, steady decline for all property crimes from 1993 to 1996. However, as was the case with violent offenses, not every year-to-year decrease was significant, though the rate in 1996 was significantly lower than the rate in 1993 for each type of property crime.

Characteristics of victims

The general downward trend in criminal victimization can be seen across demographic characteristics such as sex, race, and income. Males and females, blacks and whites, and those at different income levels experienced similar rates of decline for overall violent and property crime victimizations from 1993 to 1996.

The one characteristic associated with a more rapid decline in victimization was ethnicity. Between 1993 and 1996 the decrease in the rate of property crime was greater for Hispanic households than for non-Hispanic households.

For some segments of the population the rate of specific crimes did not decline significantly between 1993 and 1996. For example, blacks did not experience a significant decrease in the rate of aggravated assault, and Hispanics did not experience a decline in the rate of robbery, 1993-96.

Survey methodology

Except for homicide data obtained from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program, this report presents data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS obtains information about crimes from an ongoing, nationally representative sample of households in the United States. NCVS data include both those incidents reported and those not reported to the police. In 1996 approximately 45,400 households and 94,000 people age 12 or older were interviewed. For the 1996 NCVS data presented here, the response rates were 93% of eligible households and 91% of eligible individuals.

Calendar year estimates

Previous reports in this series have presented data on incidents occurring during a given calendar year. Because of the 6-month retrospective nature of the survey, 17 months of interviews, culminating in June of the year following the year being estimated, were required to produce these annual estimates.

Beginning with this report, annual NCVS estimates are based on data collected in interviews conducted during the calendar year being estimated. For example, 1996 data represent incidents reported during interviews conducted January through December 1996. This change is being made to expedite reporting of NCVS data. The 1993-95 data presented in the tables were recalculated to represent the data collected during those respective calendar years.

Analyses have compared the victimization information *collected* in a calendar year to that collected about victimizations *experienced* in the same calendar year. The results of the analyses show that the impact of the change on annual estimates is small. For example, the violent crime rate for 1995 based on the old method was 44.5 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, compared to 46.6 based on the new method. The differences will be greater during periods of changing crime rates and less during periods of stable rates.

Computation of standard errors

The comparisons made in this report were tested to determine whether the observed differences between groups or over time were statistically significant. Comparisons mentioned in the report passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (or the 95% confidence level). This means that the estimated difference between comparisons was greater than twice the standard error of that difference. For comparisons that were found to be statistically significant at the 90% confidence level, the term *somewhat* is used.

Caution should be used when comparing estimates not discussed in the text. Seemingly large differences may not be statistically significant at the 95% or even the 90% confidence level.

This report and additional data, analyses, and graphs about criminal victimization in the United States are available on the Internet at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

Data presented in this report may be obtained from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive may also be accessed through the BJS Web site. When at the archive site, search for data set ICPSR 6406.

Calculations were conducted with statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. These programs take into account the complex NCVS sample design when calculating generalized variance estimates.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

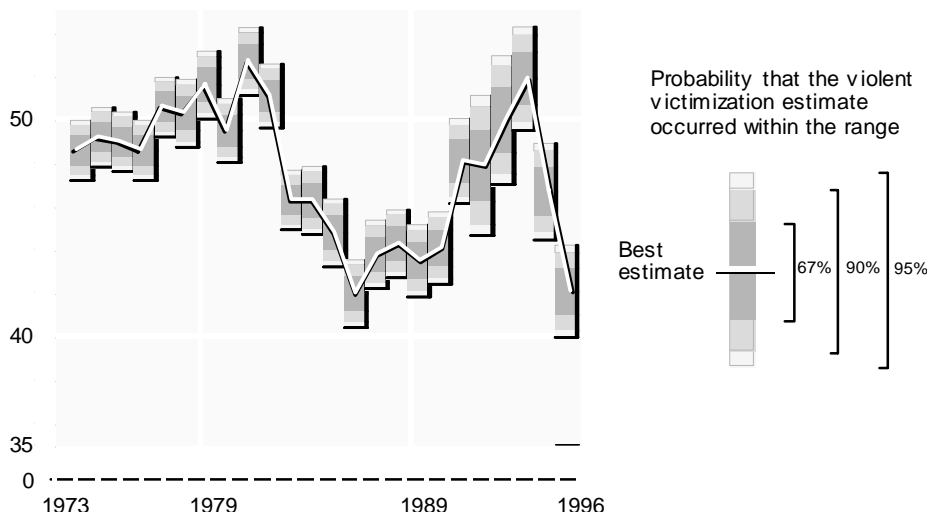
This report continues the BJS Bulletin series of *Criminal Victimization*. BJS Bulletins present the first release of findings from permanent data collection programs such as the National Crime Victimization Survey.

Cheryl Ringel, BJS, wrote this report. Marianne Zawitz, BJS Statistician, and Michael Maltz, BJS Fellow, produced figure 1 and the figure on this page. Cathy Maston and Greg Warchol provided statistical review. Tom Hester edited and produced the report. Marilyn Marbrook, assisted by Jayne Robinson and Yvonne Boston, administered final production.

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The best estimate and range of estimates

Violent victimizations
per 1,000 population
age 12 or over



Note: Because of changes made to the victimization survey, data prior to 1992 are adjusted to make them comparable to data collected under the redesigned methodology.

Source: National Crime Victimization Survey, 1973-96.

Because the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) relies on a sample of households, the rates and numbers from it are estimates and are not exact.

The figure shows trends in the violent victimization rate: each bar shows the range within which the true victimization rate is likely to fall for the indicated year and the line represents the best estimate, the most likely value for the rate in each year which is the published number. There is a greater likelihood that the true rate will fall near the best estimate, and the bars reflect that likelihood: the darker the bar segment the greater the likelihood.

The difference between two estimates is considered significant when their range bars do not overlap. The precision in the estimate depends almost entirely on the sample size. For more explanation of this graph see the forthcoming BJS Technical Report, *Displaying Violent Crime Trends Using Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey*, NCJ 167881.