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Bulletin

A National Crime Victimization Survey Report

Criminal Victimization 1992

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With this publication, BJS marks the 20th anniversary of the annual National Crime Victimization Survey, the Nation's second largest ongoing survey of U.S. households. In addition to the regular NCVS annual publications, BJS has just published *Highlights from 20 Years of Surveying Crime Victims* (NCJ-144525) — a summary of some of the most important things we have learned from the Survey. I would urge anyone interested in the NCVS to obtain a copy of this the report by contacting the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at 1-800-732-3277.

On behalf of BJS, I want to extend my appreciation to the millions of people who have allowed the NCVS to gather information about their experiences with crime over the last 20 years.

Lawrence A. Greenfeld
Acting Director

During 1992, persons age 12 or older living in the United States experienced 18.8 million victimizations involving violence or personal theft, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).[1] In addition, 14.8 million household crimes were committed. The NCVS measures both crimes that are reported to the police and those that go unreported. Fifty percent of violent crimes and over 60% of crimes overall went unreported last year. The NCVS measures the violent crimes of rape, robbery, aggravated and simple assault; personal thefts; and the household crimes of burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.[2]

• Just as in 1991, the level of violent crime in 1992 did not differ significantly from the number measured in 1981, the peak year for crime. Approximately 6.6 million violent crimes occurred in both 1981 and 1992.[3]

Victimization trends, 1973-92
Number of victimizations

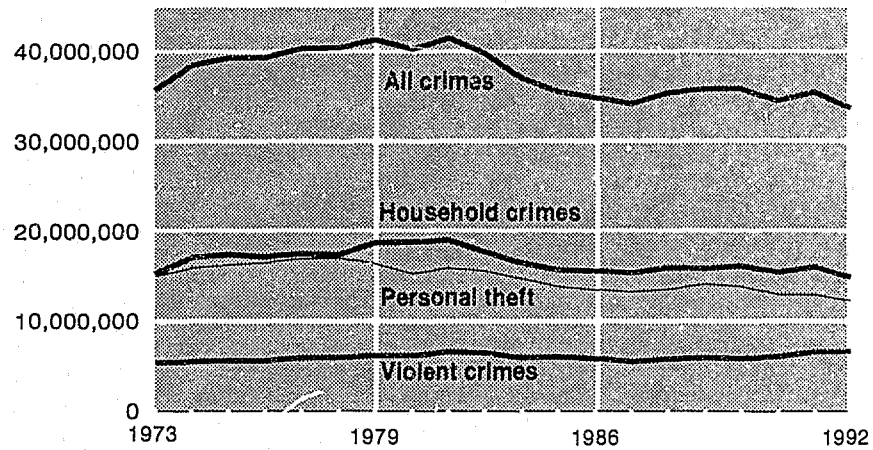

Figure 1

• Rates of crime either declined or remained stable last year. While violent crime rates did not change significantly compared to figures for 1991, rates of theft, both personal and household, decreased.

• The robbery rate was lower last year than at its highest points in 1981 and 1982, and the rate of household burglary was signficantly lower than at any time throughout the 1970's or 1980's.

[1]The National Crime Survey was renamed the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1990.
[2]For definitions of the crimes measured by the NCVS and a description of NCVS operations, see *Measuring Crime*, BJS Bulletin, NCJ-75710, February 1981.
[3]Because the numbers in this report are estimates based on a sample, some apparent differences may reflect sampling variation. Such differences are described in the report as not statistically significant or not measurably different. Unless one of these designations is used, any difference described reflects at least a 90% certainty that the difference is not the result of sampling variation. See the discussion on page 7.

• Motor vehicle thefts were most likely to be reported to the police (75%) while larcenies without contact were the least likely (30%).

• Certain demographic groups had higher victimization rates than others: Blacks were more likely than whites to be victims of violent crime; persons under age 25 had higher victimization rates than older persons; and households with the lowest incomes were more likely to be victims of violent crime than households with higher incomes.

Crimes levels and rates in 1992

The level of theft overall, as well as the level of completed thefts, declined somewhat between 1991 and 1992 (table 2). However, the number of personal larcenies without contact resulting in losses of $50 or more decreased significantly by 8% in 1992.

The number of household crimes, completed household crimes, and household larcenies, including those with losses under $50, all also decreased, differing measurably over the previous year's levels. Burglaries showed some evidence of a decline in 1992.

Just as in 1991, the level of violent crime did not differ significantly last year from the number measured in 1981, the peak year for crime (table 1 and figure 1). Approximately 6.6 million violent crimes occurred in both 1981 and 1992. Levels in all other general crime categories continued to decline from the peak. There were 23% fewer thefts and 22% fewer household crimes last year than in 1981. With 12.2 million thefts in 1992, this crime reached its lowest level since the peak year.

Rates of crime — the number of crimes per 1,000 persons for personal crimes or per 1,000 households for household crimes — either declined or remained stable last year. While violent crime rates did not change significantly compared to figures for 1991, rates of theft, both personal and household, decreased (table 2).

Table 1. Victimization levels for selected crimes, 1973-92

	Number of victimizations (in 1,000's)			
	Total	Violent crimes	Personal theft	Household crimes
1973	35,661	5,350	14,970	15,340
1974	38,411	5,510	15,889	17,012
1975	39,266	5,573	16,294	17,400
1976	39,318	5,599	16,519	17,199
1977	40,314	5,902	16,933	17,480
1978	40,412	5,941	17,050	17,421
1979	41,249	6,159	16,382	18,708
1980	40,252	6,130	15,300	18,821
1981	41,454	6,582	15,863	19,009
1982	39,756	6,459	15,553	17,744
1983	37,001	5,903	14,657	16,440
1984	35,544	6,021	13,789	15,733
1985	34,864	5,823	13,474	15,568
1986	34,118	5,515	13,235	15,368
1987	35,336	5,796	13,575	15,966
1988	35,796	5,910	14,056	15,830
1989	35,818	5,861	13,829	16,128
1990	34,404	6,009	12,975	15,419
1991	35,497	6,587	12,885	16,025
1992	33,649	6,621	12,211	14,817
1981-92*	-16.8%[a]	.6%	-23.0%[a]	-22.1%[a]

*Total victimizations peaked in 1981.
[a]The difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Trends in victimization rates of personal crimes, 1973-92

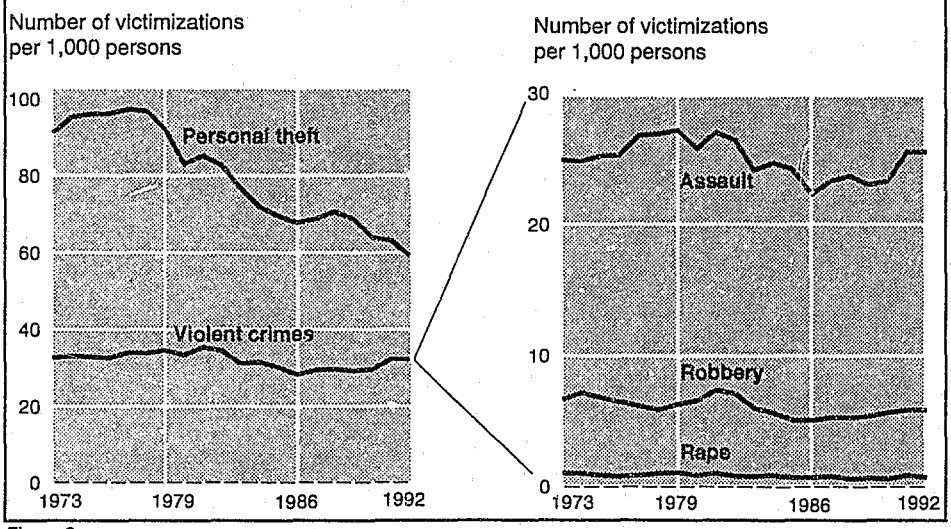

Figure 2

Trends in victimization rates of household crimes, 1973-92

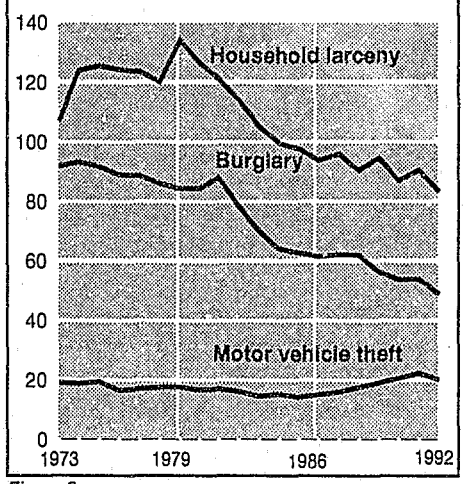

Figure 3

The rate of personal larceny without contact between the victim and offender dropped significantly in 1992, primarily attributable to a 9% decline in those larcenies that resulted in losses of $50 or more.

Table 2. Changes in victimization levels and rates for personal and household crimes, 1991-92

	Number of victimizations (1,000's)			Victimization rates		
	1991	1992	Percent change, 1991-92	1991	1992	Percent change, 1991-92
All crimes	35,497	33,649	-5.2%[a]	...	...	...
Personal crimes	19,472	18,832	-3.3%	95.3	91.2	-4.3%[b]
Crimes of violence	6,587	6,621	.5	32.2	32.1	-.5
Completed	2,528	2,410	-4.7	12.4	11.7	-5.7
Attempted	4,059	4,212	3.8	19.9	20.4	2.7
Rape[c]	174	141	-19.0	.9	.7	-19.8
Robbery	1,203	1,226	1.9	5.9	5.9	.8
Completed	802	806	.6	3.9	3.9	-.4
With injury	266	334	25.6	1.3	1.6	24.3
Without injury	535	472	-11.8	2.6	2.3	-12.7
Attempted	402	419	4.4	2.0	2.0	3.3
With injury	126	103	-17.8	.6	.5	-18.7
Without injury	276	316	14.5	1.4	1.5	13.3
Assault	5,210	5,255	.9	25.5	25.5	-.2
Aggravated	1,634	1,849	13.1	8.0	9.0	11.9
Completed with injury	601	658	9.5	2.9	3.2	8.4
Attempted assault with weapon	1,034	1,191	15.2	5.1	5.8	14.0
Simple	3,575	3,406	-4.7	17.5	16.5	-5.7
Completed with injury	1,056	905	-14.3	5.2	4.4	-15.2
Attempted assault without weapon	2,519	2,501	-.7	12.3	12.1	-1.7
Crimes of theft	12,885	12,211	-5.2[b]	63.1	59.2	-6.2[a]
Completed	12,004	11,448	-4.6[b]	58.8	55.5	-5.6[b]
Attempted	881	762	-13.5	4.3	3.7	-14.4
Personal larceny with contact	497	485	-2.4	2.4	2.3	-3.4
Purse snatching	142	152	7.1	.7	.7	6.0
Pocket picking	355	333	-6.2	1.7	1.6	-7.2
Personal larceny without contact	12,389	11,726	-5.3[b]	60.6	56.8	-6.3[a]
Completed	11,537	11,006	-4.6	56.5	53.3	-5.6[b]
Less than $50	4,491	4,391	-2.2	22.0	21.3	-3.2
$50 or more	6,460	5,942	-8.0[a]	31.6	28.8	-9.0[a]
Amount not available	585	673	15.0	2.9	3.3	13.8
Attempted	852	720	-15.5	4.2	3.5	-16.4
Household crimes	16,025	14,817	-7.5%[a]	166.4	152.2	-8.5%[a]
Completed	13,592	12,586	-7.4[a]	141.2	129.3	-8.4[a]
Attempted	2,433	2,231	-8.3	25.3	22.9	-9.3
Household burglary	5,187	4,757	-8.3[b]	53.9	48.9	-9.3[b]
Completed	4,050	3,785	-6.6	42.1	38.9	-7.6
Forcible entry	1,689	1,602	-5.1	17.5	16.5	-6.1
Unlawful entry without force	2,362	2,183	-7.6	24.5	22.4	-8.6
Attempted forcible entry	1,136	972	-14.4	11.8	10.0	-15.3
Household larceny	8,702	8,101	-6.9[a]	90.4	83.2	-7.9[a]
Completed	8,169	7,582	-7.2[a]	84.8	77.9	-8.2[a]
Less than $50	3,414	2,801	-18.0[a]	35.5	28.8	-18.8[a]
$50 or more	4,308	4,200	-2.5	44.7	43.2	-3.6
Amount not available	447	581	30.1[b]	4.6	6.0	28.7
Attempted	533	519	-2.5	5.5	5.3	-3.5
Motor vehicle theft	2,136	1,959	-8.3	22.2	20.1	-9.3
Completed	1,372	1,220	-11.1	14.3	12.5	-12.1
Attempted	764	739	-3.3	7.9	7.6	-4.3

Note: Detail may not add to totals shown because of rounding. Percent change is based on unrounded numbers. Victimization rates are calculated on the basis of the number of victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households. The population age 12 or older grew from 204,280,050 in 1991 to 206,414,480 in 1992, an increase of 1%. The number of households grew from 96,281,890 to 97,324,770 between 1991 and 1992, an increase of 1.1%.
...Not applicable.

[a]The difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
[b]The difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.
[c]There were 1.4 rapes per 1,000 women age 12 or older in 1991 and .8 in 1992. As rapes accounted for only about one-half of 1% of all crimes measured by the NCVS in 1992, the 1992 rate for rape was not statistically different from any annual rape rate measured over the past 10 years.

The total household crime rate also declined about 9% last year, from 166 crimes per 1,000 households in 1991 to 152 per 1,000 in 1992. Much of this decline may be accounted for by an 8% decrease in household larcenies overall, and especially by the sharp 19% drop in the rate of household larcenies resulting in losses under $50. There was some evidence of a decrease in burglaries as well: 54 burglaries per 1,000 households in 1991 compared to 49 per 1,000 in 1992.

Trends in crime rates, 1973-92

In 1992 both the total theft rate and total household crime rate reached all-time lows, partly because of significant declines in personal larcenies without contact and household larcenies, respectively (tables 3 and 4). The rate of personal theft was 59 crimes per 1,000 persons in 1992, and for household crime the rate was 152 crimes per 1,000 households. Although the rates of personal crime, theft, and household crime have all generally shown declining trends since the early years of the survey, the violent crime rate has fluctuated. The rate of violent crime in 1992 was lower than in its peak years during the late 1970's and early 1980's, at 32 crimes per 1,000 persons, but generally higher than at any year between 1985 and 1991.

Although assault rates have also fluctuated, the percent change between 1974 and 1992 was the largest significant *decrease* for aggravated assault (-13.8%). The percent change for 1974-92 represented the largest *increase* for simple assault rates (14.3%).

The robbery rate was lower last year than at its highest points in 1981 and 1982, and the rate of household burglary was significantly lower than at any time throughout the 1970's or 1980's. The burglary rate last year was 49 burglaries per 1,000 households. During the late 1980's the motor vehicle theft rate began to increase over its peak years in the early 1970's; the rate has remained stable at these high levels from 1989 to the present.

Table 3. Victimization rates for personal and household crimes

Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households	Type of crime													
		Crimes of violence						Crimes of theft			Household crimes			
					Assault				Personal larceny					
	Personal crimes	Total	Rape	Robbery	Total	Aggravated	Simple	Total	With contact	Without contact	Total	Burglary	Larceny	Motor vehicle theft
1973	123.6	32.6	1.0	6.7	24.9	10.1	14.8	91.1	3.1	88.0	217.8	91.7	107.0	19.1
1974	128.1	33.0	1.0	7.2	24.8	10.4	14.4	95.1	3.1	92.0	235.7	93.1	123.8	18.8
1975	128.9	32.8	0.9	6.8	25.2	9.6	15.6	96.0	3.1	92.9	236.5	91.7	125.4	19.5
1976	128.7	32.6	0.8	6.5	25.3	9.9	15.4	96.1	2.9	93.2	229.5	88.9	124.1	16.5
1977	131.2	33.9	0.9	6.2	26.8	10.0	16.8	97.3	2.7	94.6	228.8	88.5	123.3	17.0
1978	130.5	33.7	1.0	5.9	26.9	9.7	17.2	96.8	3.1	93.6	223.4	86.0	119.9	17.5
1979	126.4	34.5	1.1	6.3	27.2	9.9	17.3	91.9	2.9	89.0	235.3	84.1	133.7	17.5
1980	116.3	33.3	0.9	6.6	25.8	9.3	16.5	83.0	3.0	80.0	227.4	84.3	126.5	16.7
1981	120.5	35.3	1.0	7.4	27.0	9.6	17.3	85.1	3.3	81.9	226.0	87.9	121.0	17.1
1982	116.8	34.3	0.8	7.1	26.4	9.3	17.1	82.5	3.1	79.5	208.2	78.2	113.9	16.2
1983	107.9	31.0	0.8	6.0	24.1	8.0	16.2	76.9	3.0	74.0	189.8	70.0	105.2	14.6
1984	103.2	31.4	0.9	5.7	24.7	9.0	15.7	71.8	2.8	69.1	178.7	64.1	99.4	15.2
1985	99.4	30.0	0.7	5.1	24.2	8.3	15.9	69.4	2.7	66.7	174.4	62.7	97.5	14.2
1986	95.6	28.1	0.7	5.1	22.3	7.9	14.4	67.5	2.7	64.7	170.0	61.5	93.5	15.0
1987	98.0	29.3	0.8	5.3	23.3	8.0	15.2	68.7	2.6	66.1	173.9	62.1	95.7	16.0
1988	100.1	29.6	0.6	5.3	23.7	8.7	15.0	70.5	2.5	68.0	169.6	61.9	90.2	17.5
1989	97.8	29.1	0.7	5.4	23.0	8.3	14.7	68.7	2.7	66.0	169.9	56.4	94.4	19.2
1990	93.4	29.6	0.6	5.7	23.3	7.9	15.4	63.8	3.1	60.7	161.0	53.8	86.7	20.5
1991	95.3	32.2	0.9	5.9	25.5	8.0	17.5	63.1	2.4	60.6	166.4	53.9	90.4	22.2
1992	91.2	32.1	0.7	5.9	25.5	9.0	16.5	59.2	2.3	56.8	152.2	48.9	83.2	20.1

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding. Table 4 identifies statistically significant differences between the rates for 1992 and preceding years.

Table 4. Comparison of changes in victimization rates for personal and household crimes

	Type of crime													
		Crimes of violence						Crimes of theft			Household crimes			
					Assault				Personal larceny					
	Personal crimes	Total	Rape	Robbery	Total	Aggravated	Simple	Total	With contact	Without contact	Total	Burglary	Larceny	Motor vehicle theft
1973-92	-26.2%	-1.5%*	-28.1%*	-11.9%*	2.4*	-11.1%	11.5%	-35.0%	-23.5%	-35.5%	-30.1%	-46.7%	-22.2%	5.5%*
1974-92	-28.8	-2.7*	-30.3*	-17.3	2.5*	-13.8	14.3	-37.8	-24.5	-38.3	-35.4	-47.5	-32.8	6.9*
1975-92	-29.2	-2.3*	-24.9*	-12.2*	1.1*	-6.8*	6.1*	-38.4	-24.0	-38.9	-35.6	-46.7	-33.6	3.3*
1976-92	-29.1	-1.5*	-18.7*	-8.1*	.7*	-9.2*	7.1*	-38.4	-18.7*	-39.1	-33.7	-45.0	-32.9	22.2
1977-92	-30.4	-5.4*	-23.3*	-4.5*	-5.0*	-10.3*	-1.8*	-39.2	-11.4*	-40.0	-33.4	-44.8	-32.5	18.6
1978-92	-30.1	-4.9*	-29.6*	.8*	-5.2*	-7.6*	-3.8*	-38.9	-24.7	-39.3	-31.9	-43.1	-30.6	14.9
1979-92	-27.8	-7.1	-36.8	-5.2*	-6.4*	-9.7*	-4.6*	-35.6	-18.2*	-36.2	-35.3	-41.9	-37.7	14.9
1980-92	-21.5	-3.6*	-27.3*	-9.5*	-1.1*	-3.3*	--*	-28.7	-22.5	-29.0	-33.1	-42.0	-34.2	20.6
1981-92	-24.3	-9.2	-28.3*	-19.9	-5.6*	-7.1*	-4.8*	-30.5	-27.6	-30.6	-32.6	-44.4	-31.2	17.6
1982-92	-21.9	-6.4	-15.7*	-16.1	-3.5*	-3.8*	-3.4*	-28.3	-23.2	-28.5	-26.9	-37.5	-26.9	24.5
1983-92	-15.5	3.5*	-15.7*	-1.5*	5.4*	12.5*	2.0*	-23.1	-20.4	-23.2	-19.8	-30.2	-20.9	37.9
1984-92	-11.6	2.3*	-27.3*	4.0*	3.0*	-.5*	5.0*	-17.6	-14.9*	-17.8	-14.8	-23.7	-16.3	32.2
1985-92	-8.2	6.9	-3.8*	17.1*	5.2*	8.3*	3.5*	-14.8	-12.7*	-14.9	-12.7	-22.0	-14.6	41.4
1986-92	-4.6	14.1	3.5*	15.5*	14.1	13.8*	14.3	-12.3	-14.0*	-12.3	-10.4	-20.5	-11.0	34.2
1987-92	-6.9	9.4	-8.9*	12.2*	9.4	11.5*	8.3*	-13.8	-8.6*	-14.0	-12.4	-21.3	-13.0	25.5
1988-92	-8.9	8.2	6.7*	12.9*	7.2*	2.6*	9.9	-16.1	-4.1*	-16.5	-10.2	-21.0	-7.7	15.0
1989-92	-6.7	10.2	1.9*	9.5*	10.6	8.3*	12.0	-13.9	-13.0*	-13.9	-10.4	-13.3	-11.8	4.9*
1990-92	-2.3*	8.5	6.6*	5.0*	9.4	13.7*	7.2*	-7.3	-25.0	-6.4	-5.4	-9.1	-4.0*	-2.0*
1991-92	-4.3	-.5*	-19.8*	.8*	--*	11.9*	-5.7*	-6.2	-3.4*	-6.3	-8.5	-9.3	-7.9	-9.3*

Note: Percent change was calculated using rates that were rounded to the nearest 100th.
*The difference is *not* statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.
--Less than 0.5%.

Reporting of crime remains stable

Of all crimes measured by the NCVS only 39% were reported to law enforcement officials in 1992 (table 5 and figure 4). The rate at which crimes were reported to the police has not changed significantly since 1990. Fifty percent of all violent crimes were reported to police last year, as were 30% of all personal thefts and 41% of household crimes.

In specific crime categories, motor vehicle thefts were most likely to be reported to the police (75%), while larcenies without contact were the least likely (30%).

Over time the reporting rate for violent crime has remained stable. However, the rates at which the crimes of theft and household crimes, overall, were reported to the police were generally higher in 1992 than in any year between 1973 and 1980.

Table 5. Reporting victimizations to the police, 1973-92

Percent of victimizations reported to the police	Type of crime														
			Crimes of violence						Crimes of theft			Household crimes			
						Assault				Personal larceny					
	All crimes	Personal crimes	Total	Rape	Robbery	Total	Aggravated	Simple	Total	With contact	Without contact	Total	Burglary	Larceny	Motor vehicle theft
1973	32%	28%	46%	49%	52%	44%	52%	38%	22%	33%	22%	38%	47%	25%	68%
1974	33	30	47	52	54	45	53	39	25	34	24	37	48	25	67
1975	35	32	47	56	53	45	55	39	26	35	26	39	49	27	71
1976	35	32	49	53	53	48	58	41	27	36	26	38	48	27	69
1977	34	30	46	58	56	44	51	39	25	37	24	38	49	25	68
1978	33	30	44	49	51	43	53	37	25	34	24	36	47	24	66
1979	33	30	45	51	55	42	51	37	24	36	24	36	48	25	68
1980	36	33	47	41	57	45	54	40	27	36	27	39	51	28	69
1981	35	33	47	56	56	44	52	39	27	40	26	39	51	26	67
1982	36	33	48	53	56	46	58	40	27	33	27	39	49	27	72
1983	35	32	47	47	53	46	56	41	26	36	26	37	49	25	69
1984	35	33	47	56	54	45	55	40	26	31	26	38	49	27	69
1985	36	34	48	61	54	46	58	40	27	33	27	39	50	27	71
1986	37	34	50	48	58	48	59	41	28	38	28	41	52	28	73
1987	37	34	48	52	55	46	60	38	28	36	27	40	52	27	75
1988	36	34	48	45	57	46	54	41	27	35	27	40	51	26	73
1989	37	34	45	51	51	43	52	38	29	30	29	41	50	28	76
1990	38	35	48	54	50	47	59	42	29	37	28	41	51	27	75
1991	38	36	49	59	55	47	58	42	29	38	28	41	50	28	74
1992	39	37	50	53	51	49	62	43	30	31	30	41	54	26	75

Trends in reporting crimes to the police, 1973-92

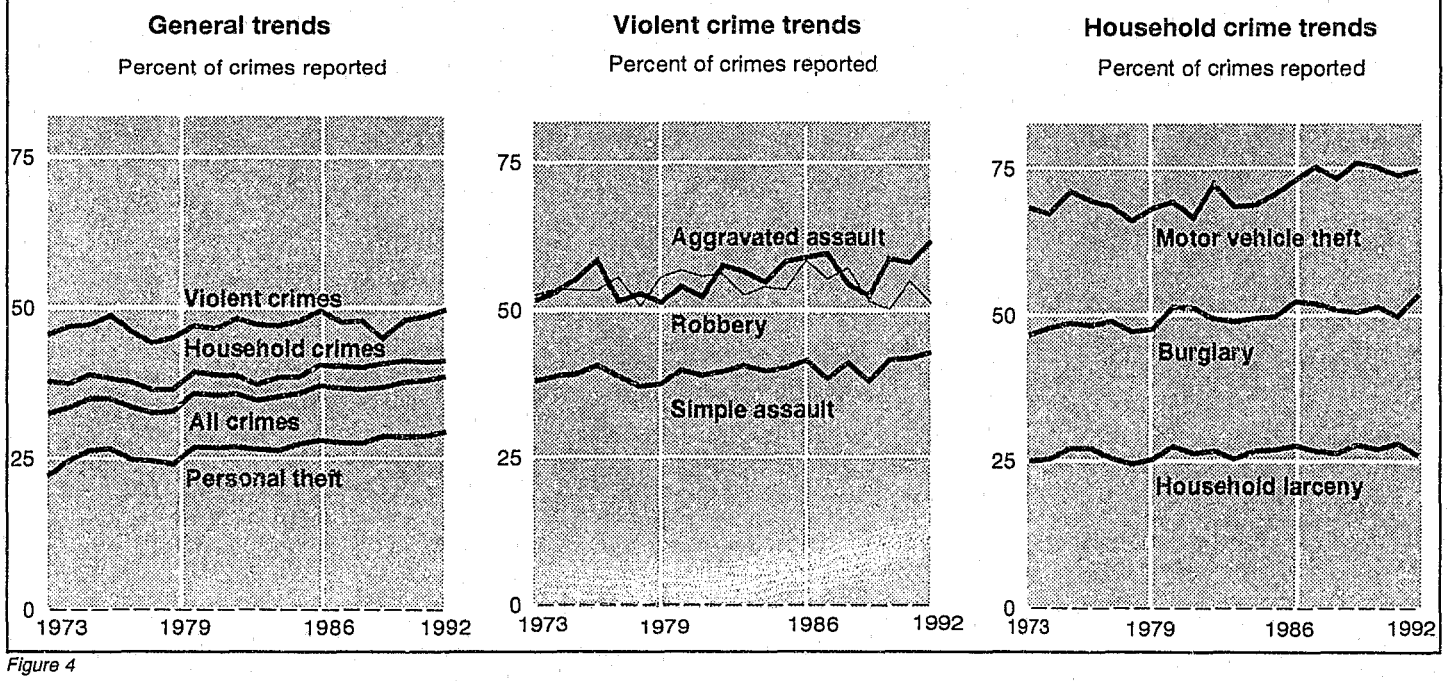

Figure 4

Characteristics of victims

Research by BJS has shown a relationship between certain demographic characteristics and the risk of crime victimization.[4] Males, younger persons, blacks, Hispanics, residents of central cities, and the poor tend to have higher rates of victimization than persons who do not possess these characteristics (table 6).

In every personal crime category males sustained significantly higher victimization rates than did females. Males were twice as likely as females to experience both robberies and aggravated assaults, for example.

Except for the crimes of theft and simple assault, blacks were significantly more likely than whites or persons of other races, such as Asians or Native Americans, to be victims of crime. For instance, in 1992 there were 15.6 robberies for every 1,000 black persons, 4.7 for every 1,000 whites, and 5.1 for every 1,000 persons in other racial categories. There were no significant differences between the three racial groups for simple assaults and theft.

Persons under age 25 had higher victimization rates than older persons. Those 65 or older generally had the lowest victimization rates. The rate of assault was 60.9 crimes per 1,000 persons ages 16 to 19 and 3.1 per 1,000 persons 65 or older.

Table 6. Victimization rates for persons age 12 or older, by type of crime and sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, and locality of residence of victims, 1992

	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						
	Crimes of violence						
				Assault			Crimes
	Total	Total*	Robbery	Total	Aggravated	Simple	of theft
Sex							
Male	101.4	36.8	8.1	30.1	12.0	18.1	62.6
Female	81.8	25.9	3.9	21.1	6.1	15.0	55.9
Age							
12-15	171.0	75.7	9.8	64.8	20.1	44.7	95.3
16-19	172.7	77.9	15.4	60.9	26.3	34.5	94.8
20-24	177.0	70.1	11.4	56.0	18.1	38.0	106.9
25-34	111.1	37.6	7.7	29.4	9.3	20.1	73.4
35-49	75.1	21.2	3.8	17.1	6.8	10.2	53.9
50-64	43.3	10.0	2.8	7.1	2.3	4.8	33.3
65 or older	21.1	4.8	1.5	3.1	1.3	1.8	16.3
Race							
White	88.7	29.9	4.7	24.6	7.8	16.8	58.8
Black	110.8	50.4	15.6	33.5	18.3	15.2	60.4
Other	88.3	23.7	5.1	18.6	5.3	13.3	64.6
Ethnicity							
Hispanic	100.1	38.1	10.6	26.9	10.0	16.8	61.9
Non-Hispanic	90.3	31.4	5.4	25.3	8.9	16.4	58.9
Family income							
Less than $7,500	136.7	64.4	11.1	52.0	23.1	28.8	72.3
$7,500-$9,999	94.4	40.3	11.5	28.8	9.3	19.5	54.1
$10,000-$14,999	85.9	34.3	7.1	26.6	9.0	17.6	51.6
$15,000-$24,999	88.1	34.1	5.4	27.8	9.7	18.1	54.0
$25,000-$29,999	93.3	35.6	6.3	29.3	6.3	23.0	57.6
$30,000-$49,999	83.3	26.6	4.8	20.9	6.6	14.3	56.6
$50,000 or more	92.2	21.2	3.7	16.9	5.5	11.4	71.0
Residence							
Central city	116.5	43.2	10.8	31.5	12.1	19.4	73.3
Suburban	84.8	28.2	4.4	23.1	7.3	15.8	56.5
Nonmetropolitan areas	72.4	25.2	2.7	22.1	7.8	14.3	47.2

*Includes data on rape not shown separately.

Hispanics and non-Hispanics had generally similar victimization rates except for the crime of robbery. Hispanics sustained robberies at twice the rate of non-Hispanics (10.6 versus 5.4).

In general, persons from households with low incomes experienced higher violent crime victimization rates than did persons from wealthier households. Persons from households with an income under $7,500 had a significantly higher rate of aggravated assault than persons in all other income groups, particularly those from households earning $50,000 or more. For crimes of theft, however, this pattern did not hold. Persons from households earning less than $7,500 had personal theft rates that were not significantly different from persons with a household income of $50,000 or more.

Residents of central cities had higher victimization rates for all personal crimes than did suburbanites or residents of nonmetropolitan areas. In fact, central city residents were robbed at greater than 3 times the rate of residents of nonmetropolitan areas (10.8 versus 2.7).

Certain demographic groups also had higher household victimization rates than others (table 7). Blacks had a significantly higher rate of household crime than whites. Compared to non-Hispanics, Hispanics had a higher rate for each of the household crimes.

As was the case for personal crimes, place of residence was related to a household's risk of victimization. For each type of household crime, central city residents had consistently higher rates than suburban or nonmetropolitan residents. For example, households in central city areas were burglarized at 1.5 times the rate of nonmetropolitan households (60.1 versus 41.7).

Households that rented their residence had significantly higher victimization rates than households that owned. Households that rented sustained motor vehicle thefts at about twice the rate of households that owned their residence, with 29.2 thefts per 1,000 households versus 15.0.

[4] *The Risk of Violent Crime*, BJS Special Report, NCJ-97119, May 1985.

Survey methodology and sampling error

The National Crime Victimization Survey measures personal and household offenses, including crimes not reported to the police, by interviewing all the occupants of housing units, age 12 or over which have been selected to comprise a representative sample. Each housing unit is interviewed at 6-month intervals; interviews for the complete sample of households are spread out over the entire year. In 1992, approximately 110,000 people in 66,000 housing units were interviewed about the crimes they had experienced in the previous 6 months. These numbers reflect a 96% response rate.

In 1992, about 58,000 persons in 34,000 housing units in selected areas were interviewed using a new survey questionnaire. Data from households receiving this new questionnaire are excluded from this report. To convert to the new questionnaire, while maintaining the capability of producing estimates of annual crime rate changes, the new questionnaire is being phased in gradually over a few years. Adjustments were made in the NCVS weighting to compensate for the exclusion of these new questionnaire cases from the 1992 data.

Each person interviewed is asked about the crimes he or she may have experienced over the previous 6 months. Certain (nonsampling) errors may occur during data collection — responses to questions may be erroneously recorded, questions may not be answered correctly, or some people may forget to mention crimes, for example. The NCVS was designed to eliminate as many of these errors as possible.

The estimates in this Bulletin are derived from sample survey data and are subject to sampling variation. Comparisons presented in this report were determined to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the estimated difference is greater than twice the standard error. Statements of comparison qualified by language such as "slightly," "somewhat," or "marginal" indicate statistical significance at the 90% level (1.6 standard errors).

Note that with the exclusion of the sample cases receiving the new questionnaire, the standard errors for 1992 estimates are larger than those in recent years. Because of this, larger differences between two numbers are needed in order to be declared significantly different. Additionally, with the composition of the sample areas changing as the new questionnaire is phased in, the consistency of certain types of geographic and demographic estimates over time may be reduced.

It is also possible that the crime trends exhibited by the National Crime Victimization Survey during the past 20 years may have been affected by changes in the demographic makeup of the American population. For example, the proportion of the American population that was between the ages of 12 and 19 was much smaller in 1992 than it was in 1972. This group has the highest violent crime rate of any age group and has experienced a rising violent crime rate during the past few years, while older groups have experienced a much more stable rate. Preliminary analysis by BJS and the Bureau of the Census indicates that the national

Table 7. Household victimization rates, by type of crime and race, ethnicity, income, residence, and form of tenure of head of household, 1992

	Victimizations per 1,000 households			
	Total	Burglary	Household larceny	Motor vehicle theft
Race				
White	146.0	46.4	82.3	17.3
Black	199.1	68.4	93.6	37.1
Other	147.4	44.3	68.6	34.5
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	260.2	69.9	141.8	48.6
Non-Hispanic	144.1	47.3	78.8	18.0
Family income				
Less than $7,500	174.2	71.3	87.9	15.0
$7,500-$9,999	190.8	63.4	103.3	24.2
$10,000-$14,999	164.7	61.2	78.9	24.5
$15,000-$24,999	151.3	45.0	86.3	20.0
$25,000-$29,999	157.5	44.3	91.8	21.4
$30,000-$49,999	146.5	40.5	86.5	19.5
$50,000 or more	141.4	43.6	79.3	18.5
Residence				
Central city	209.9	60.1	114.5	35.3
Suburban	134.3	44.6	72.4	17.3
Nonmetropolitan areas	109.5	41.7	61.6	6.2
Form of tenure				
Home owned	126.7	39.4	72.3	15.0
Home rented	197.8	65.8	102.8	29.2

Table 8. Estimates based on 1980-decennial and 1990-decennial census population counts, 1991

	Number of victimizations (in 1,000's)			Victimization rates		
	Based on 1980 census	Based on 1990 census	Percent change	Based on 1980 census	Based on 1990 census	Percent change
Personal crimes	19,469	19,472	0%	94.8	95.3	.5%
Crimes of violence	6,567	6,587	.3	32.0	32.2	.8
Rape	173	174	.4	0.8	0.9	.9
Robbery	1,207	1,203	-.4	5.9	5.9	.2
Assault	5,186	5,210	.5	25.3	25.5	1.0
Aggravated	1,623	1,634	.7	7.9	8.0	1.2
Simple	3,563	3,575	.3	17.4	17.5	.9
Crimes of theft	12,902	12,885	-.1	62.8	63.1	.4
Personal larceny						
With contact	501	497	-.8	2.4	2.4	-.2
Without contact	12,402	12,389	-.1	60.4	60.6	.4
Household crimes	16,105	16,025	-.5%	166.3	166.4	.1%
Household burglary	5,213	5,187	-.5	53.8	53.9	.1
Household larceny	8,742	8,702	-.5	90.3	90.4	.1
Motor vehicle theft	2,149	2,136	-.6	22.2	22.2	0

Number of persons		**Number of households**	
1980 based	205,344,340	1980 based	96,839,300
1990 based	204,280,050	1990 based	96,281,890

Note: Detail may not add to totals shown because of rounding. Victimization rates are calculated on the basis of the number of victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households. Percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

rate of violent crime would have been higher in 1992 if the age distribution in 1992 had matched that in 1972. Upon completion of the analysis, BJS will publish a report describing the effects of demographic changes in the U.S. population.

Differences between estimates based on the 1980 and 1990 decennial censuses

The NCVS employs independent population estimates, derived and updated from decennial censuses, to improve the precision of its statistics on victimization. Use of the latest census counts allows the population controls (which are used in weighting the sample data) to be updated and provides an opportunity for introducing estimation refinements that further enhance the reliability of the estimates.

Table 8 shows that the population counts for 1991 based on the 1980 census compared to those based on the 1990 census varied by only about one-half of 1 percent for both persons and households. Also, there were no significant differences between estimates of crime rates based on the 1980 census counts compared to rates based on the 1990 census.

Comparison of findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the Uniform Crime Reports

The U.S. Department of Justice administers two programs to measure the magnitude, nature, and impact of crime in the United States: the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the source of this report, and the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR).

Because of differences in methodology and crime coverage, the two programs examine the Nation's crime problem from somewhat different perspectives, and their results are not strictly comparable. The definitional and procedural differences can account for many of the apparent discrepancies in estimates from the two programs. The Department of Justice fact sheet *The Nation's Two Crime Measures* (NCJ-122705) contains a detailed description of the NCVS and UCR.

This Bulletin was written by Lisa D. Bastian with assistance from Marshall M. DeBerry, Jr. and Tina Dorsey. Lisa D. Bastian designed the layout of the report. Editorial and post-production assistance was provided by Thomas Hester, Marilyn Marbrook, Jayne Pugh, and Yvonne Boston.

October 1993, NCJ-144776

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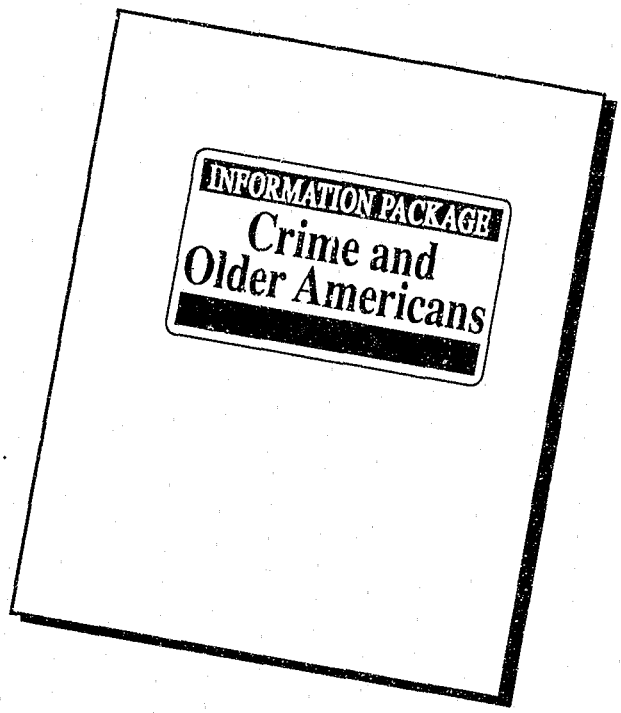

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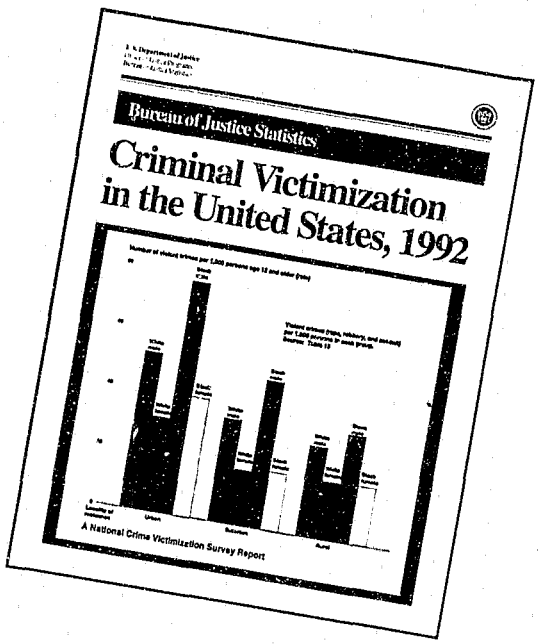

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