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Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

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A National Crime Victimization Survey Report

ACQUISITION

Criminal Victimization 1991

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Persons age 12 or older, living in the United States, experienced 34.7 million crimes in 1991 according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).¹ Approximately 6.4 million of these victimizations consisted of violent crimes such as rape, robbery, and aggravated and simple assaults. Another 12.5 million victimizations were crimes of theft — larcenies both with and without contact between the victim and offender. Finally, there were 15.8 million household crimes in 1991.²

- The combined number of personal and household crimes committed in 1991 was not significantly different from that for the previous year.³

- The number of violent crime attempts increased 11% between 1990 and 1991.

- No statistically significant change in household crime rates was evident between 1990 and 1991.

¹The National Crime Survey was renamed the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1990.

²For definitions of the crimes measured by the NCVS and a description of NCVS operations, see *Measuring Crime*, BJS Bulletin, NCJ-75710, February 1981.

³Because 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.

- Since 1981, the peak year for victimizations, crime levels have dropped overall. However, the number of violent crimes committed in 1991 did not differ measurably from that estimated for 1981.

- The rate at which crimes were reported to the police did not change significantly between 1990 and 1991. Thirty-eight percent of crimes overall were reported to law enforcement officials last year. Just under half of all violent crimes were reported to the police.

- 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 those living in households in the lowest income category were more likely to be violent crime victims than persons from households in the highest income bracket.

October 1992

The new name of the only ongoing U.S. survey that produces national estimates of crime victimization clearly emphasizes its strength — National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Since 1973 this household survey, the Nation's second largest, has provided a measurement of those personal and household victimizations which were not reported, as well as those reported, to law enforcement agencies.

The Bureau wishes to acknowledge and thank all those who responded to the survey. Only with the continued cooperation and support of these persons is the NCVS possible.

Steven D. Dillingham, Ph.D., LL.M.
Director

Victimization trends, 1973-91

Number of victimizations

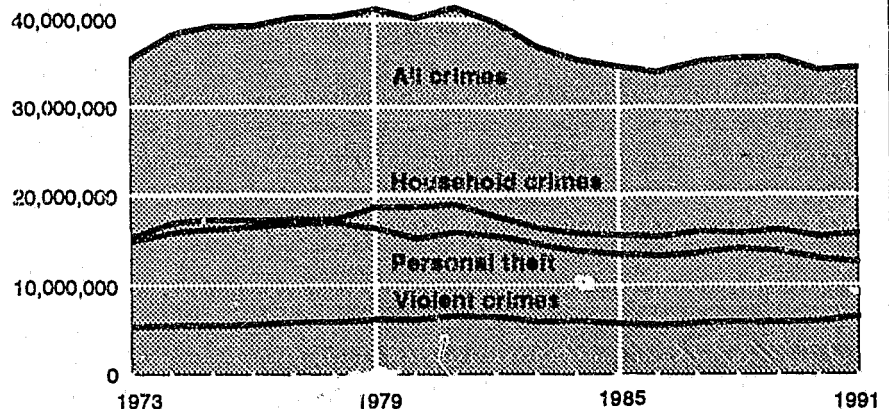


Figure 1

Crimes levels and rates in 1991

Between 1990 and 1991 the number of violent crimes attempted against U.S. residents increased significantly, by nearly

11% (table 2). This increase can be attributed primarily to a rise in assaults; as in the past, the largest portion of the violent crimes consisted of simple assaults.

Since 1981, a peak year for victimizations, the trend in crime levels among the major crime categories has been generally downward. However, for 1991, the level of violent crime overall did not differ measurably from that estimated for the peak year: Approximately 6.6 million violent victimizations were committed in 1981, while 6.4 million occurred last year (table 1).

The number of personal thefts and household crimes recorded for 1991 continued to be lower than the peak. Between 1990 and 1991 thefts declined somewhat, driven by a 24% drop in personal larcenies with contact between the victim and offender — primarily pocket picking (table 2). Among the household crimes little changed from the previous year; there was some evidence that household larcenies in which the total theft loss was under \$50 increased in 1991.

Table 1. Victimization levels for selected crimes, 1973-1991

	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	5,509	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	34,730	6,424	12,533	15,774
Percent change, 1981-91 ^a	-16.2% ^b	-2.4%	-21.0% ^b	-17.0% ^b

^aTotal victimizations peaked in 1981.

^bThe difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Trends in victimization rates of personal crimes, 1973-91

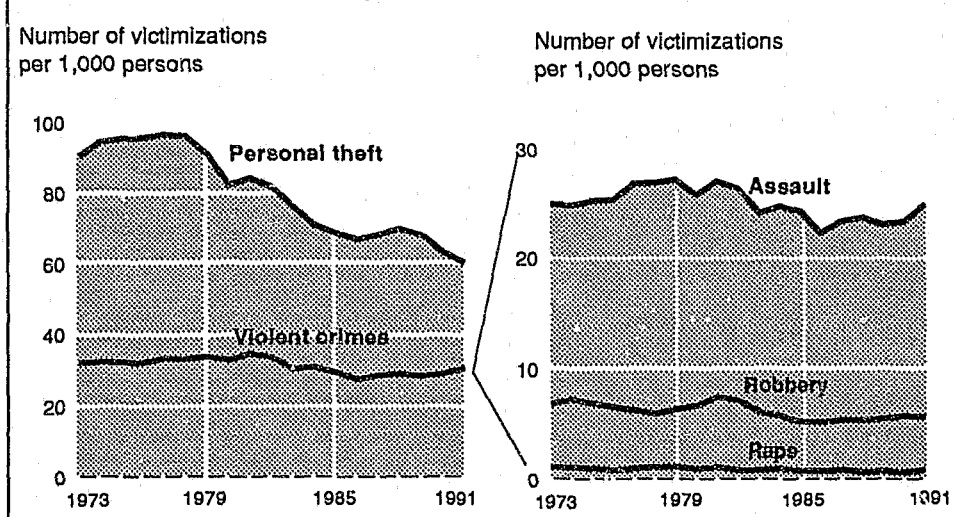


Figure 2

Trends in victimization rates of household crimes, 1973-91

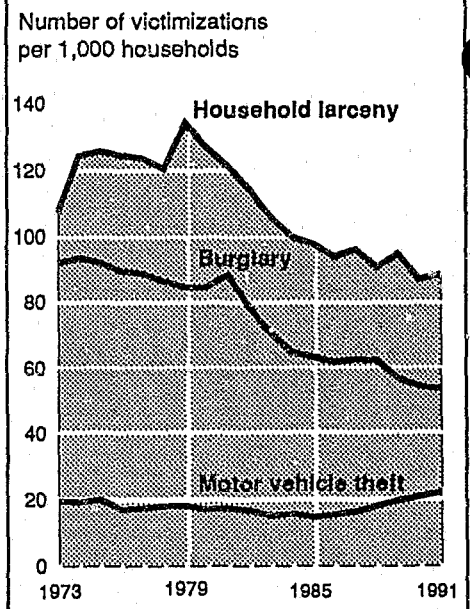


Figure 3

Crime rates — the number of crimes per 1,000 persons for personal crimes or per 1,000 households for household crimes — displayed a pattern similar to that for

crime levels. The rate of attempted violent crimes increased 10% between 1990 and 1991. The simple assault rate jumped 11%, to 17 assaults per 1,000

persons which was not measurably different from the rate for the peak year of 1981. The total theft rate decreased slightly in 1991, while the rate of personal larceny with contact was down significantly. Household crime rates did not change significantly last year.

Table 2. Changes in victimization levels and rates for personal and household crimes, 1990-91

	Number of victimizations (1,000's)			Victimization rates		
	1990	1991	Percent change, 1990-91	1990	1991	Percent change, 1990-91
All crimes	34,404	34,730	.9%
Personal crimes	18,984	18,956	-.1%	63.4	62.3	-1.2%
Crimes of violence	6,009	6,424	6.9 ^a	29.6	31.3	5.8
Completed	2,422	2,447	1.0	11.9	11.9	.0
Attempted	3,587	3,977	10.9 ^a	17.6	19.4	9.7 ^a
Rape ^c	130	173	33.0	.6	.8	31.3
Robbery	1,150	1,145	-.4	5.7	5.6	-1.4
Completed	801	752	-6.1	3.9	3.7	-7.1
With Injury	286	257	-10.2	1.4	1.3	-11.1
Without Injury	514	495	-3.8	2.5	2.4	-4.8
Attempted	349	393	12.6	1.7	1.9	11.5
With Injury	110	125	13.7	.5	.6	12.5
Without Injury	239	268	12.2	1.2	1.3	11.0
Assault	4,729	5,105	8.0 ^a	23.3	24.9	6.9 ^b
Aggravated	1,601	1,609	.5	7.9	7.8	-.5
Completed with Injury	627	594	-5.3	3.1	2.9	-6.3
Attempted assault with weapon	974	1,015	4.2	4.8	4.9	3.2
Simple	3,128	3,497	11.8 ^a	15.4	17.0	10.7 ^a
Completed with Injury	931	1,032	10.9	4.6	5.0	9.8
Attempted assault without weapon	2,197	2,464	12.2 ^a	10.8	12.0	11.0 ^b
Crimes of theft	12,975	12,533	-3.4 ^b	63.8	61.0	-4.4 ^b
Completed	12,155	11,691	-3.8 ^a	59.8	56.9	-4.8 ^a
Attempted	821	841	2.5	4.0	4.1	1.4
Personal larceny with contact	637	482	-24.3 ^a	3.1	2.3	-24.9 ^a
Purse snatching	165	136	-17.7	.8	.7	-18.5
Pocket picking	472	346	-26.6 ^a	2.3	1.7	-27.4 ^a
Personal larceny without contact	12,338	12,050	-2.3	60.7	58.7	-3.3
Completed	11,559	11,239	-2.8	56.9	54.7	-3.8
Less than \$50	4,592	4,363	-5.0 ^b	22.6	21.2	-6.0
\$50 or more	6,453	6,311	-2.2	31.7	30.7	-3.2
Amount not available	514	565	9.9	2.5	2.8	8.8
Attempted	779	812	4.2	3.8	4.0	3.1
Household crimes	15,419	15,774	2.3%	161.0	162.9	1.2%
Completed	13,072	13,370	2.3	136.5	138.1	1.1
Attempted	2,347	2,404	2.4	24.5	24.8	1.3
Household burglary	5,148	5,138	-.2	53.8	53.1	-1.3
Completed	4,076	4,006	-1.7	42.6	41.4	-2.8
Forcible entry	1,816	1,668	-8.1	19.0	17.2	-9.2
Unlawful entry without force	2,260	2,338	3.4	23.6	24.1	2.3
Attempted forcible entry	1,072	1,132	5.6	11.2	11.7	4.5
Household larceny	8,304	8,524	2.6	86.7	88.0	1.5
Completed	7,769	8,013	3.1	81.1	82.7	2.0
Less than \$50	3,144	3,359	6.8 ^b	32.8	34.7	5.6
\$50 or more	4,206	4,219	.3	43.9	43.6	-.8
Amount not available	419	435	3.7	4.4	4.5	2.5
Attempted	535	511	-4.5	5.6	5.3	-5.6
Motor vehicle theft	1,968	2,112	7.4	20.5	21.8	6.1
Completed	1,227	1,350	10.1	12.8	13.9	8.8
Attempted	741	762	2.9	7.7	7.9	1.7

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 203,273,870 in 1990 to 205,344,910 in 1991, an increase of 1%. The number of households grew from 95,762,680 to 96,839,300 between 1990 and 1991, an increase of 1.1%.
...Not applicable.

^aThe difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

^bThe difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

^cThere were 1.4 rapes per 1,000 women age 12 or older in 1991 and 1.0 in 1990. As rapes accounted for only about one-half of 1% of all crimes measured by the NCVS in 1991, the 1991 rate for rape was not statistically different from any annual rape rate measured over the past 10 years.

Trends in crime rates, 1973-91

Rates in several of the major crime categories have generally been declining since 1973, some reaching low points in recent years. For example, the rate of personal crime was significantly lower in 1991 than in any other year but 1990 (tables 3 and 4). Personal thefts decreased somewhat in 1991 making the rate of 61 thefts per 1,000 persons the lowest since the inception of the NCVS in 1973. The household crime rate was not significantly different in 1991 than its lowest point which was recorded the previous year. The violent crime rate reached its highest points in the late 1970's and early 1980's and is currently lower than at any time between 1977 and 1983.

Violent crime rate increases in the Northeast

In the Northeast the rate of violent crime rose by 17% between 1990 and 1991. The total assault rate increased significantly, while the rate of completed robberies declined (table 5). The total theft rate, as well as the rate of personal larceny with contact, decreased significantly. There was some evidence that the rate of household larceny increased in this region in 1991.

Rates of personal crime declined marginally in the Midwest during 1991. The theft rate decreased, perhaps largely due to a 47% drop in the rate of personal larcenies with contact; both pocket picking and purse snatching declined significantly. There was some evidence that the rate of personal larcenies without contact decreased as well. There was no measurable change in rates of household crime between 1990 and 1991.

The South experienced very little change in crime rates last year. Larcenies without contact declined somewhat, but no change in either violent or household crime rates was evident.

Crime rates were generally higher in the West than in any other region of the Nation. Rates of violent crimes increased somewhat in the West in 1991. There was also some evidence of an increase in the assault rate.

Table 3. Victimization rates for personal and household crimes

	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households											
	1973	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Personal crimes	123.6	120.5	116.8	107.9	103.2	99.4	95.6	98.0	100.1	97.8	93.4	92.3
Crimes of violence	32.6	35.3	34.3	31.0	31.4	30.0	28.1	29.3	29.6	29.1	29.6	31.3
Rape	1.0	1.0	.8	.8	.9	.7	.7	.8	.6	.7	.6	.8
Robbery	6.7	7.4	7.1	6.0	5.7	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.7	5.6
Assault	24.9	27.0	26.4	24.1	24.7	24.2	22.3	23.3	23.7	23.0	23.3	24.9
Aggravated	10.1	9.6	9.3	8.0	9.0	8.3	7.9	8.0	8.7	8.3	7.9	7.8
Simple	14.8	17.3	17.1	16.2	15.7	15.9	14.4	15.2	15.0	14.7	15.4	17.0
Crimes of theft	91.1	85.1	82.5	76.9	71.8	69.4	67.5	68.7	70.5	68.7	63.8	61.0
Personal larceny												
With contact	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.7	3.1	2.3
Without contact	88.0	81.9	79.5	74.0	66.1	66.7	64.7	66.1	68.0	66.0	60.7	58.7
Household crimes	217.8	226.0	208.2	189.8	178.7	174.4	170.0	173.9	169.6	169.9	161.0	162.9
Household burglary	91.7	87.9	78.2	70.0	64.1	62.7	61.5	62.1	61.9	56.4	53.8	53.1
Household larceny	107.0	121.0	113.9	105.2	99.4	97.5	93.5	95.7	90.2	94.4	86.7	88.0
Motor vehicle theft	19.1	17.1	16.2	14.6	15.2	14.2	15.0	16.0	17.5	19.2	20.5	21.8

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding. Table 4 identifies statistically significant differences between the rates for 1991 and preceding years.

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

	1973-91	81-91	82-91	83-91	84-91	85-91	86-91	87-91	88-91	89-91	90-91
Personal crimes	-25.3%	-23.4%	-21.0%	-14.5%	-10.6%	-7.2%	-3.4%	-5.8%	-7.8%	-5.6%	-1.2%*
Crimes of violence	-3.9*	-11.4	-8.7	.9*	-	4.3*	11.2	6.7	5.5*	7.5	5.8*
Rape	-11.6*	-11.6*	3.7*	3.7*	-10.6*	18.3*	27.3*	12.0*	31.3*	25.4*	31.3*
Robbery	-17.2	-24.7	-21.2	-7.5*	-2.3*	10.1*	8.6*	5.5*	6.1*	3.0*	-1.4*
Assault	-	-7.8	-5.8*	2.9*	.6*	2.7*	11.4	6.8	4.7*	8.0	6.9
Aggravated	-22.2	-18.8	-15.9	-1.6*	-13.0	-5.3*	-5*	-2.5*	-10.3*	-5.3*	-5*
Simple	15.1	-1.7*	-	5.3*	8.3	6.8*	17.9	11.7	13.5	15.5	10.7
Crimes of theft	-33.0	-28.3	-26.0	-20.7	-15.0	-12.1	-9.5	-11.1	-13.4	-11.1	-4.4
Personal larceny											
With contact	-23.5	-27.7	-23.2	-20.3	-14.9*	-12.6*	-13.9*	-8.6*	-4.1*	-13.0*	-24.9
Without contact	-33.3	-28.3	-26.1	-20.7	-15.0	-12.1	-9.4	-11.2	-13.8	-11.1	-3.3*
Household crimes	-25.2%	-27.9%	-21.8%	-14.2%	-8.9%	-6.6%	-4.2%	-6.3%	-3.9%	-4.2%	1.2%*
Household burglary	-42.1	-39.6	-32.1	-24.2	-17.2	-15.3	-13.7	-14.6	-14.3	-5.9*	-1.3*
Household larceny	-17.7	-27.3	-22.7	-16.3	-11.4	-9.7	-5.9	-8.0	-2.4*	-6.7	1.5*
Motor vehicle theft	14.3	27.5	35.0	49.5	43.3	53.3	45.4	36.0	24.6	13.7	6.1*

Note: Percent change was calculated using rates that were rounded to the nearest hundredth.

*The difference is not statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

--Less than 0.5%.

Table 5. Victimization rates for personal and household crimes, by region, 1990-91*

	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households											
	Northeast			Midwest			South			West		
	1990	1991	Percent change, 1990-91	1990	1991	Percent change, 1990-91	1990	1991	Percent change, 1990-91	1990	1991	Percent change, 1990-91
Personal crimes	72.1	69.7	-3.4	97.7	91.1	-6.7 ^b	95.6	90.7	-5.2 ^b	107.8	121.5	12.7 ^a
Crimes of violence	21.8	25.5	17.1 ^b	30.5	30.9	1.2	31.1	30.6	-1.8	34.2	39.4	15.3 ^b
Robbery	7.3	6.8	-6.5	4.5	4.4	-2.0	5.3	5.1	-3.6	5.8	6.4	10.0
Assault	14.1	17.8	25.6 ^a	25.5	25.9	1.8	25.1	24.5	-2.3	27.5	32.1	16.8 ^b
Aggravated	3.9	5.0	26.3	8.3	6.8	-18.7	9.4	8.9	-4.9	9.0	10.2	13.5
Simple	10.2	12.8	25.3 ^b	17.1	19.2	11.7	15.7	15.6	-.7	18.5	22.0	18.4
Crimes of theft	50.3	44.2	-12.3 ^a	67.1	60.2	-10.2 ^a	64.5	60.2	-6.8 ^b	73.6	82.0	11.5 ^a
Personal larceny												
With contact	6.3	3.4	-45.6 ^a	2.9	1.5	-47.1 ^a	2.1	2.0	-2.1	1.9	2.7	43.5
Without contact	44.1	40.8	-7.5	64.2	58.7	-8.6 ^b	62.5	58.1	-6.9 ^b	71.7	79.3	10.7 ^a
Total population age 12 or older (in 1,000's)	44,202	44,238	--	46,527	46,552	--	72,086	74,188	2.9	40,459	40,367	--
Household crimes	119.3	124.8	4.6	148.0	155.6	5.1	173.2	167.5	-3.3	199.8	204.6	2.4
Household burglary	36.9	33.8	-8.4	49.1	53.6	9.2	60.6	60.3	-.6	65.2	60.0	-8.0
Household larceny	57.7	66.4	15.0 ^b	83.8	83.7	--	92.9	87.7	-5.6	110.6	117.4	6.2
Motor vehicle theft	24.7	24.6	--	15.1	18.3	21.1	19.7	19.5	-1.1	24.0	27.3	13.4
Total number of households (in 1,000's)	20,507	20,559	--	22,427	22,445	--	33,962	34,994	3.0	18,866	18,841	--

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding. Percent change is based on unrounded numbers. Crimes of violence rates include rape.

*See Methodology, page 7.

--Less than 0.5%.

^aThe difference is statistically significant at the 95%

confidence level.

^bThe difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

The rate of personal theft increased 12%, to 82 thefts per 1,000 persons, while the household crime rate remained stable.

Reporting of crime remains stable

The rate at which crimes were reported to the police did not change significantly between 1990 and 1991 (table 6 and figure 4). At 49%, just under half of all violent victimizations were reported to law

enforcement officials. Both the personal crimes of theft and household crimes remained at the same proportions reported in 1990 — 29% and 41%, respectively. Overall, 38% of all crimes committed last year were reported to the police.

In specific crime categories, motor vehicle thefts were most likely to be reported to the police (74%) while larcenies without contact were the least likely (28%).

Over time, the reporting rate for violent crimes has remained stable. However, the rates at which the crimes of theft and household crimes, overall, were reported to the police were significantly higher in 1991 than at any time between 1973 and 1980.

Table 6. Reporting victimizations to the police, 1973-91

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

Trends in reporting crimes to the police, 1973-91

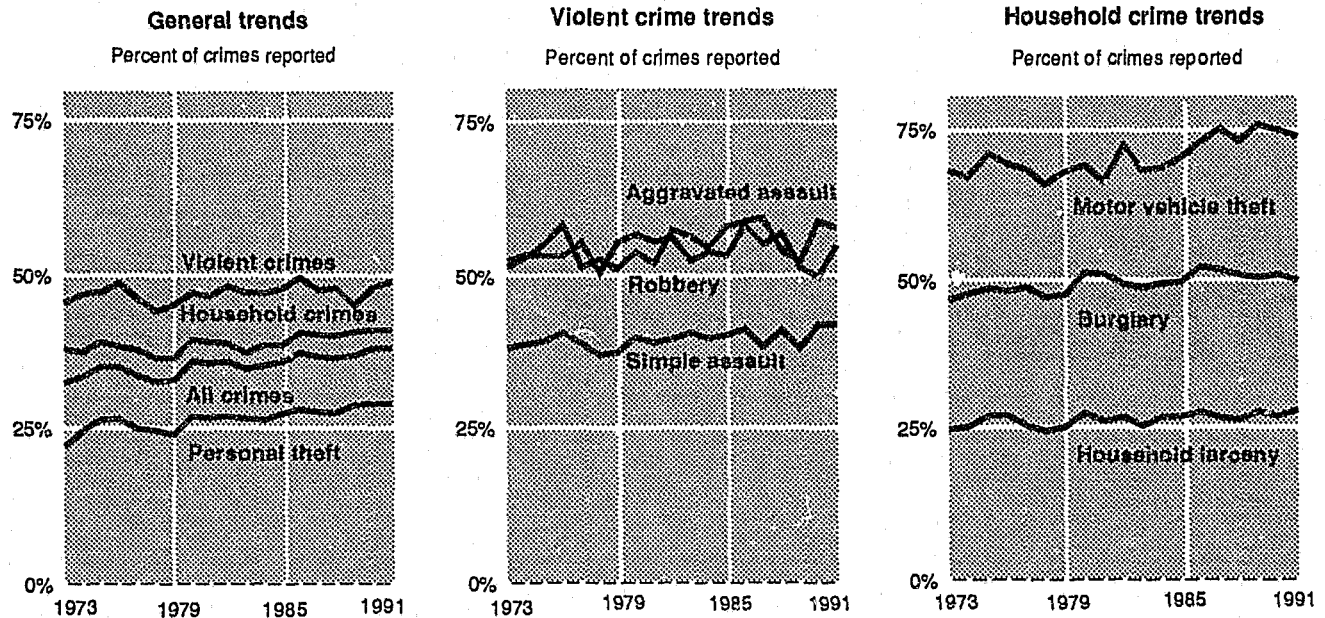


Figure 4

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 7).

In every personal crime category males sustained significantly higher victimization rates than did females. Males were more than 2.5 times as likely as females to experience an aggravated assault, for example (11.5 versus 4.4).

Blacks were generally more likely than whites or persons of other races, such as Asians or Native Americans, to be victims of violent crime. In 1991 there were 13.5 robberies for every 1,000 black persons, 4.4 robberies for every 1,000 whites, and 7.4 for every 1,000 persons in other racial categories.

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 79.2 per 1,000 persons ages 16 to 19 and 1.8 per 1,000 persons 65 or older.

Although Hispanics and non-Hispanics had generally similar victimization rates, they differed in two categories of crime. The most pronounced difference was for robbery. Hispanics sustained a robbery rate twice that of non-Hispanics (10.0 versus 5.2). Hispanics also had a somewhat higher rate of violent victimization overall (36.2 versus 30.8).

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 significantly higher rates of robbery and assault than persons in most other income groups, particularly those from households earning \$50,000 or more. For the crimes of theft, however, this pattern did not hold. Persons from

Table 7. Victimization rates for persons age 12 or older, by type of crime and sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, and locality of residence of victims, 1991

	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						
	Crimes of violence						Crimes of theft
	Total	Total*	Robbery	Assault			
Total				Aggravated	Simple		
Sex							
Male	105.1	40.3	7.8	32.4	11.5	20.9	64.8
Female	80.4	22.9	3.5	17.9	4.4	13.4	57.5
Age							
12-15	163.9	62.7	10.0	51.6	12.9	38.7	101.2
16-19	185.1	91.1	8.3	79.2	25.5	53.8	94.1
20-24	189.4	74.6	13.9	59.0	23.0	36.0	114.8
25-34	106.3	34.9	7.2	26.6	8.3	18.3	71.4
35-49	75.5	20.0	4.0	15.4	3.9	11.4	55.6
50-64	45.0	9.6	1.8	7.6	2.4	5.2	35.4
65 or older	23.2	3.8	1.9	1.8	.9	.9	19.5
Race							
White	90.9	29.6	4.4	24.3	7.4	16.9	61.4
Black	105.6	44.4	13.5	30.4	11.1	19.3	61.1
Other	80.2	28.1	7.4	20.5	8.2	12.3	52.0
Ethnicity							
Hispanic	95.6	36.2	10.0	25.2	11.8	13.4	59.4
Non-Hispanic	91.9	30.8	5.2	24.8	7.5	17.3	61.2
Family income							
Less than \$7,500	121.5	59.4	9.6	48.0	19.6	28.4	62.1
\$7,500-\$9,999	102.9	42.1	7.9	34.2	9.5	24.7	60.8
\$10,000-\$14,999	103.4	43.1	7.6	33.9	9.8	24.1	60.2
\$15,000-\$24,999	88.3	30.9	5.0	24.8	7.5	17.4	57.4
\$25,000-\$29,999	88.8	31.9	6.0	25.6	8.3	17.3	56.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	85.4	25.0	3.7	20.5	6.3	14.2	60.4
\$50,000 or more	85.7	19.9	3.3	16.2	3.9	12.3	65.8
Residence							
Central city	118.9	43.7	11.5	30.7	10.8	19.9	75.2
Suburban	87.6	26.4	3.9	22.0	6.5	15.5	61.2
Nonmetropolitan areas	69.4	24.9	1.5	22.7	6.5	16.1	44.4

*Includes data on rape not shown separately.

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 rates for all personal crimes than did suburbanites or residents of nonmetropolitan areas.

Certain demographic groups also had higher household victimization rates than others (table 8). 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.

Households that rented their residence had significantly higher rates than households that owned. Households that rented sustained motor vehicle thefts at greater than 1.5 times the rate of households that owned their residence, with 29.1 thefts per 1,000 households versus 17.7.

⁴The 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, 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 1991, approximately 83,000 people in 42,000 housing units were interviewed about the crimes they had experienced in the previous 6 months. These numbers reflect a 97% response rate.

In 1991, about 21,000 persons in 10,500 housing units in selected areas were interviewed using a new survey questionnaire. Data from households receiving this new questionnaire are excluded from this report. In order 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 1991 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.

Another source of error comes from taking a sample instead of a complete census. Since the NCVS cannot question everyone, a sampling error (standard error) is associated with every number in this report. In general, if the difference between two numbers is greater than twice the standard error of that difference, then the two numbers can be declared significantly different at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that about 95% of the time the two numbers are truly

different, and roughly 5% of the time the sample will be imprecise enough that it detects a difference which does not actually exist. Similarly, if the difference is greater than 1.6 standard errors, the results are significant at the 90 percent confidence level. Everything described in the text as significantly different is at or above the 90 percent confidence level. If the difference between two numbers is less than 1.6 standard errors, then the two numbers are described as not measurably different.

Note, with the exclusion of the sample cases receiving the new questionnaire, the standard errors for 1991 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. Also, 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.

Table 8. Household victimization rates, by type of crime and race, ethnicity, income, residence, and form of tenure of head of household, 1991

	Victimizations per 1,000 households			
	Total	Burglary	Household larceny	Motor vehicle theft
Race				
White	156.6	50.2	87.0	19.4
Black	207.6	74.5	96.2	36.9
Other	170.7	51.9	85.1	33.7
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	239.9	74.8	123.1	41.9
Non-Hispanic	157.0	51.3	85.3	20.3
Family income				
Less than \$7,500	186.7	80.8	95.5	10.4
\$7,500-\$9,999	173.6	68.9	85.5	19.3
\$10,000-\$14,999	175.5	65.1	91.5	19.0
\$15,000-\$24,999	168.2	49.4	96.5	22.4
\$25,000-\$29,999	136.2	44.5	75.8	15.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	155.2	43.8	87.2	24.2
\$50,000 or more	148.9	41.4	79.8	27.6
Residence				
Central city	223.4	69.5	117.4	36.5
Suburban	142.7	44.5	77.7	20.5
Nonmetropolitan areas	121.2	46.5	68.6	6.2
Form of tenure				
Home owned	136.7	41.6	77.3	17.7
Home rented	209.5	73.4	107.1	29.1

Table 9. Preliminary and final estimates for victimization levels and rates, 1991

	Number of victimizations (in 1,000's)			Victimization rates		
	Preliminary	Final	Percent change	Preliminary	Final	Percent change
Personal crimes	19,415	18,956	-2.4%	94.6	92.3	-2.4%
Crimes of violence	6,427	6,424	--	31.3	31.3	--
Rape	208	173	-16.5	1.0	.8	-16.6
Robbery	1,146	1,145	--	5.6	5.6	--
Assault	5,083	5,105	--	24.8	24.9	--
Aggravated	1,653	1,609	-2.7	8.1	7.8	-2.7
Simple	3,431	3,497	1.9	16.7	17.0	1.9
Crimes of theft	12,992	12,533	-3.5	63.3	61.0	-3.6
Personal larceny						
With contact	552	482	-12.7	2.7	2.3	-12.7
Without contact	12,436	12,050	-3.1	60.6	58.7	-3.1
Household crimes	15,640	15,774	.9%	161.5	162.9	.9%
Household burglary	5,093	5,138	.9	52.6	53.1	.9
Household larceny	8,602	8,524	-.9	88.8	88.0	-.9
Motor vehicle theft	1,948	2,112	8.4	20.1	21.8	8.5

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. --Less than 0.5%.

Preliminary estimates

In April 1992 the Bureau of Justice Statistics released preliminary NCVS victimization levels, rates, and police reporting data for 1991. For most crimes the preliminary rate estimates were close to the final ones. For example, the rate for simple assault increased 1.9% from 16.7 victimizations per 1,000 persons in the preliminary estimate to 17.0 in the final estimate (table 9).⁵

Preliminary numbers indicated that the level and rate of violent crime overall, as well as the rates for the specific crimes of rape and simple assault, had increased somewhat between 1990 and 1991. The levels for each of these crimes were also estimated to have increased significantly. The final data for 1991, however, show some differences: Rates of violent crime and rape were not significantly different from the previous year, while the total theft rate, driven by a decrease in personal larcenies with contact, actually declined somewhat. For crime levels, the number of rapes estimated in the final data for 1991 was not measurably different from that recorded in 1990.

⁵For a complete discussion of preliminary estimation procedures, see *Criminal Victimization, 1983*, BJS Bulletin, NCJ-93869, June 1984.

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.

Criminal Victimization, 1991 95 percent confidence intervals

	Number	95% confidence interval	Rate	95% confidence interval
Personal crimes	18,956,060	18,397,677 — 19,514,443	92.3	89.6 — 95.0
Violent crime	6,423,510	6,087,715 — 6,759,305	31.3	29.7 — 32.9
Rape	173,310	117,293 — 229,327	.8	.6 — 1.1
Robbery	1,145,020	1,001,378 — 1,288,662	5.6	4.9 — 6.3
Assault	5,105,170	4,804,820 — 5,405,520	24.9	23.4 — 26.3
Aggravated	1,608,580	1,438,520 — 1,778,640	7.8	7.0 — 8.7
Simple	3,496,580	3,247,016 — 3,746,144	17.0	15.8 — 18.2
Personal theft	12,532,550	12,070,770 — 12,994,330	61.0	58.8 — 63.3
Burglary	5,138,310	4,837,012 — 5,439,608	53.1	50.0 — 56.1
Household theft	8,523,660	8,138,894 — 8,908,426	88.0	84.1 — 91.9
Motor vehicle theft	2,112,330	1,917,693 — 2,306,967	21.8	19.8 — 23.8

Estimates have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

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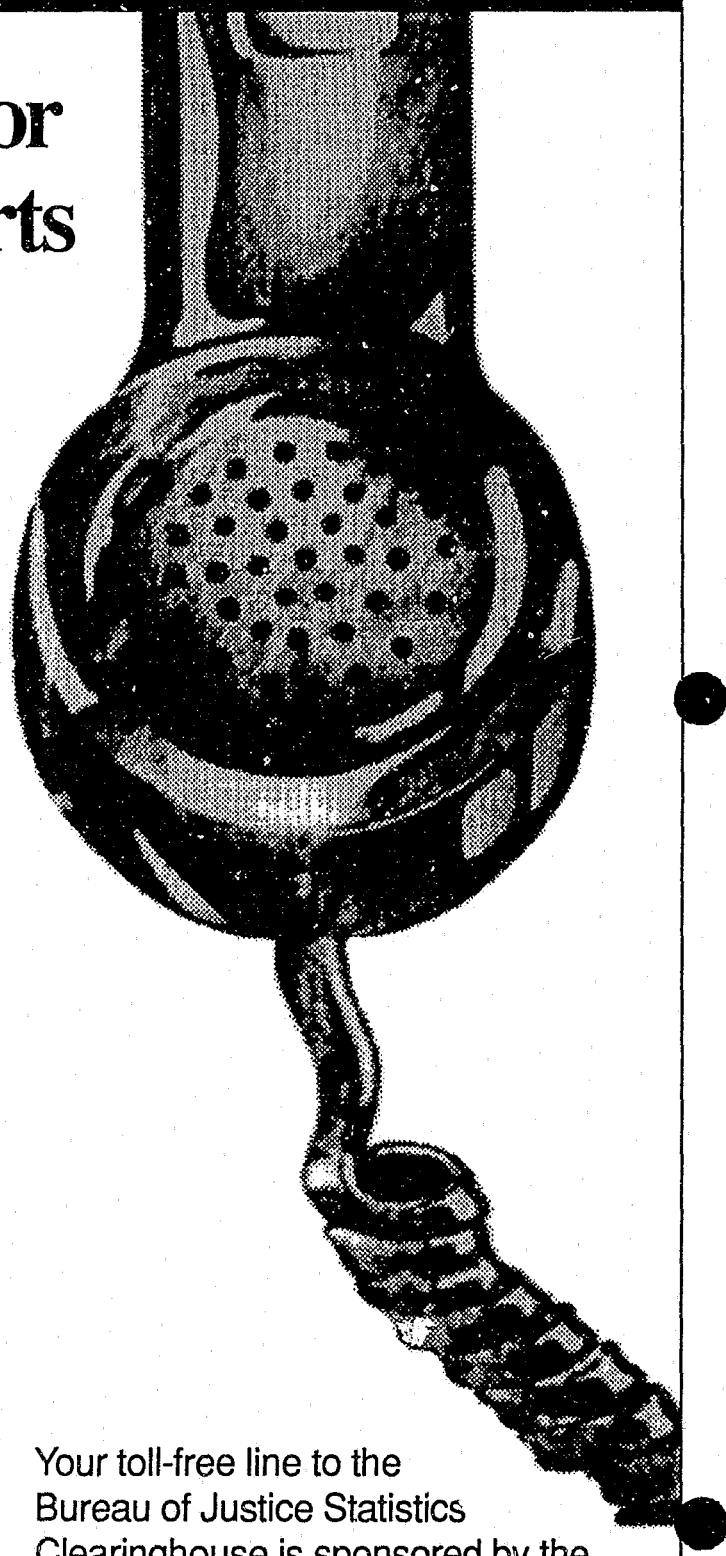
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