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Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey

December 1998, NCJ 173385

Criminal Victimization 1997 Changes 1996-97 with Trends 1993-97

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Americans age 12 or older experienced fewer violent and property crimes in 1997 than in any other year since the 1973 inception of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). In 1997 as measured by the survey, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced almost 35 million criminal victimizations, down from about 44 million such crimes experienced in 1973.* The 1997 estimate was also a decrease from almost 37 million violent and property victimizations in 1996.

Of the crimes in 1997, 8.6 million involved the violent crimes of rape, sexual assault, robbery, and assault; 25.8 million involved the property crimes of theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft; and 0.4 million involved personal thefts such as purse snatching.

In 1997 there were 39 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, down significantly from the 42 per 1,000 in 1996. The 1997 property crime rate of 248 per 1,000 households was lower than the 266 per 1,000 households experienced in 1996. These declines continued a general downward trend in criminal victimization that began in 1995.

*Estimates from before 1993 were adjusted following the 1992 NCVS redesign.

The trends reported in this Bulletin encompass 1993 through 1997. The initial year was the first in which the redesigned NCVS used a full sample of households. Compared to 1993 rates, the 1997 victimization rates

for every type of violent and property crime measured by the NCVS showed a significant decrease. Between 1993 and 1997 the violent crime rate declined by 21%, and the property crime rate fell by 22%.

Highlights

- The NCVS property and violent crime rates are the lowest recorded since the survey's inception in 1973.*
- The downward trend in violent victimization begun in 1994-95 continued in 1997.
- In 1997 violent crime rates were 21% lower than they had been in 1993. Property crime rates were 22% below 1993 property crime rates.
- The recent decreasing violent and property crime trends were experienced by most segments of the population. However, in 1997 the violent victimization rates for persons age 50 or older were no lower than they had been in 1993.
- The violent and property crime rates each declined by 7% in 1996-97.
- The murder rate declined 8% between 1996 and 1997.
- In 1997 as in past years, males and younger people were more vulnerable to violent crime victimization than females and older persons, respectively. Blacks experienced higher violent crime rates than whites or persons of other races.
- In 1997 as in previous years, males experienced higher victimization rates than females for all violent crimes except rape/sexual assault.
- In 1997, 4 of 10 violent and property crimes were reported to police. Females and blacks were more likely to report a violent crime to police than were males and whites.
- About half of all violent crimes in 1997 were committed by someone whom the victim knew.

*After adjusting rates following the 1992 NCVS redesign.

Criminal victimization, 1996-97

Violent crime

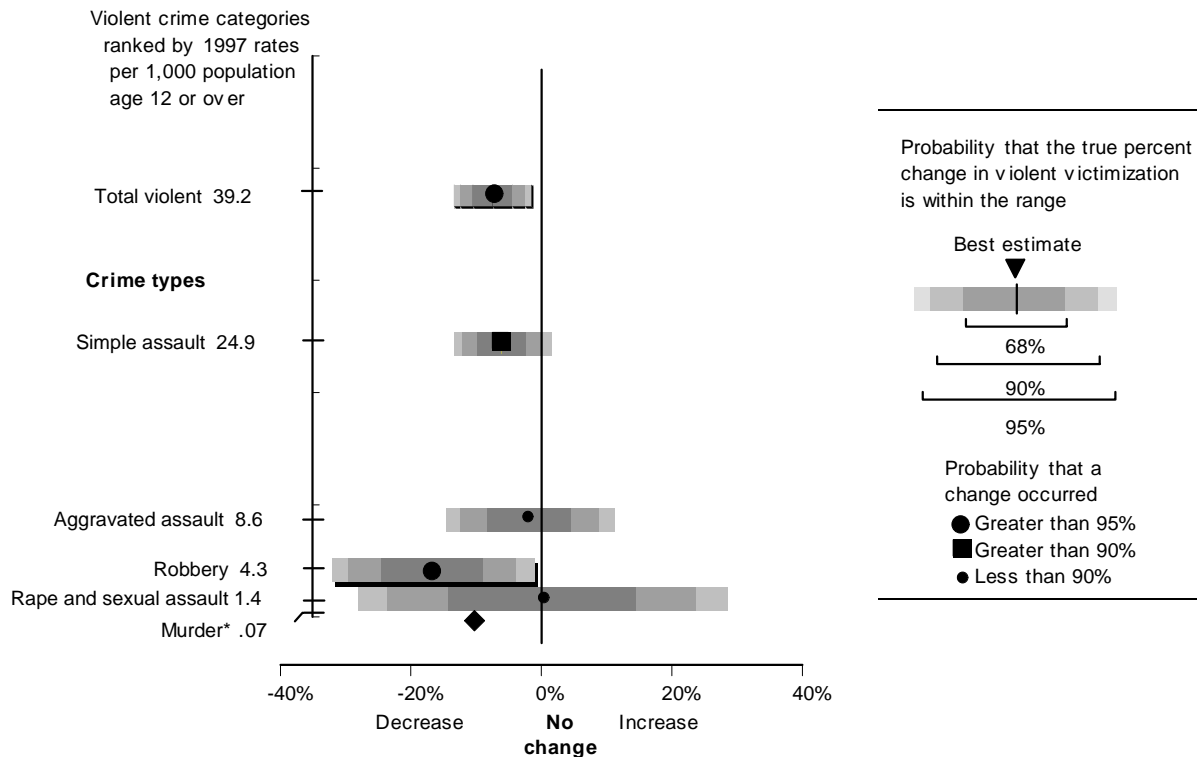
The NCVS collects data on nonfatal violent crimes against persons age 12 or older, both reported and not

reported to police. The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program of the FBI collects data on murder and nonnegligent manslaughter.

From 1996 to 1997 the murder rate declined by 8%, and the violent crime

rate fell by 7%. Of the violent crimes measured by the NCVS, only robbery showed a significant decline from 1996, while simple assault was down slightly (table 1 and figure 1). For aggravated assault the apparent decline was not statistically significant.

Change in violent victimization, by category, 1996-97



Note: The change in murder rates is presented as a point because the source of the data, the Uniform Crime Reports, is not a sample survey.

For further explanation of the graph, see the BJS Technical Report *Displaying Violent Crime Trends Using*

Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey, NCJ 167881.

*The murder rates were for all ages.

Sources: BJS, National Crime Victimization Survey, and FBI, Uniform Crime Reports.

The figure shows the estimated annual percentage change in victimization rates from 1996 to 1997 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 1997 rates per 1,000 population age 12 or older. 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 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 in which 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

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter

In 1997 there were 6.8 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. This represents an 8% decline from the previous year. The decrease was apparent across all sizes of cities and regions. (See the box on page 6.)

Violent crime measured by the NCVS

Overall violent crime measured by the NCVS declined from 1996 to 1997. There was a statistically significant decrease in the rate of robbery. The rate of simple assault victimizations declined marginally due to a slight decrease in simple assault without injury. For completed rape an apparent increase was not significant, nor were apparent declines in attempted rape and aggravated assault when threatened with a weapon.

The apparent 1996-97 increase in personal theft, comprising pocket picking and purse snatching, was not statistically significant.

Among demographic groups examined, only for males, non-Hispanics, and Midwesterners were the 1996-97 declines in violent crime statistically significant, while for whites the decline was marginally significant.

	Number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	1996	1997
Male	49.9	45.8*
Female	34.6	33.0
White	40.9	38.3
Black	52.3	49.0 [†]
Hispanic	44.0	43.1
Non-Hispanic	41.6	38.3*
Northeast	37.7	34.6
Midwest	43.7	36.4*
South	37.5	38.1
West	51.5	48.4

Significant 1996-97 difference at *95% or [†]90% confidence level.

For non-Hispanics and Midwest residents, the overall decreases in violent crime were the result of decreases in

Table 1. Criminal victimization, 1996-97

Type of crime	Number of victimizations (1,000's)		Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older per 1,000 households)		Percent change, 1996-97
	1996	1997	1996	1997	
All crimes	36,796	34,788	
Personal crimes^a	9,443	8,971	43.5	40.8	-6.2%*
Crimes of violence	9,125	8,614	42.0	39.2	-6.7*
Completed violence	2,700	2,679	12.4	12.2	-1.6
Attempted/threatened violence	6,425	5,935	29.6	27.0	-8.8*
Rape/Sexual assault	307	311	1.4	1.4	0
Rape/attempted rape	197	194	0.9	0.9	0
Rape	98	115	0.4	0.5	25.0
Attempted rape	99	79	0.5	0.4	-20.0
Sexual assault	110	117	0.5	0.5	0
Robbery	1,134	944	5.2	4.3	-17.3*
Completed/property taken	757	607	3.5	2.8	-20.0*
With injury	250	243	1.1	1.1	0
Without injury	508	363	2.3	1.7	-26.1*
Attempted to take property	377	337	1.7	1.5	-11.8
With injury	79	73	0.4	0.3	-25.0
Without injury	298	265	1.4	1.2	-14.3
Assault	7,683	7,359	35.4	33.5	-5.4
Aggravated	1,910	1,883	8.8	8.6	-2.3
With injury	513	595	2.4	2.7	12.5
Threatened with weapon	1,397	1,288	6.4	5.9	-7.8
Simple	5,773	5,476	26.6	24.9	-6.4 [†]
With minor injury	1,240	1,258	5.7	5.7	0
Without injury	4,533	4,218	20.9	19.2	-8.1 [†]
Personal theft ^b	318	357	1.5	1.6	6.7
Property crimes	27,353	25,817	266.3	248.3	-6.8%*
Household burglary	4,845	4,635	47.2	44.6	-5.5
Completed	4,056	3,893	39.5	37.4	-5.3
Forcible entry	1,511	1,497	14.7	14.4	-2.0
Unlawful entry without force	2,545	2,396	24.8	23.0	-7.3
Attempted forcible entry	789	742	7.7	7.1	-7.8
Motor vehicle theft	1,387	1,433	13.5	13.8	2.2
Completed	938	1,007	9.1	9.7	6.6
Attempted	449	426	4.4	4.1	-6.8
Theft	21,120	19,749	205.7	189.9	-7.7*
Completed ^c	20,303	18,960	197.7	182.3	-7.8*
Less than \$50	7,580	7,218	73.8	69.4	-6.0 [†]
\$50-\$249	7,374	6,680	71.8	64.2	-10.6*
\$250 or more	4,216	3,955	41.1	38.0	-7.5 [†]
Attempted	818	789	8.0	7.6	-5.0

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 10.) Completed violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery with or without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury. In 1994 the total population age 12 or older was 213,135,890; in 1995, 215,080,690; in 1996, 217,234,280; and in 1997, 219,839,110. The total number of households in 1994 was 100,568,060; in 1995, 101,504,820; in 1996, 102,697,490; and in 1997, 103,988,670.

... Not calculable.

*The difference from 1996 to 1997 is significant at the 95% confidence level.

[†]The difference from 1996 to 1997 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.

^cIncludes thefts with unknown losses.

robbery and simple assault, while whites experienced a decrease in the rate of simple assault. No demographic group examined experienced a decline in aggravated assault.

Property crime

Household burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft make up the property crimes measured by the NCVS. In the aggregate, property crime declined 7% between 1996 and 1997. The 8%

Table 2. Rates of violent crime and personal theft, by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1997

Characteristic of victim	Population	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						Personal theft
		Violent crimes						
		All crimes of violence*	Rape/Sexual assault	Robbery	Assault Total	Aggravated	Simple	
Sex								
Male	106,598,660	45.8	0.3	6.1	39.4	10.9	28.4	1.6
Female	113,240,440	33.0	2.5	2.6	27.9	6.4	21.6	1.7
Age								
12-15	15,701,280	87.9	2.5	8.2	77.1	15.1	62.0	2.8
16-19	15,244,130	96.2	5.6	10.2	80.4	24.6	55.8	3.5
20-24	17,648,850	67.8	2.4	7.4	57.9	17.0	40.9	1.8
25-34	40,162,600	46.9	2.3	4.7	39.9	9.5	30.4	1.1
35-49	62,604,840	32.2	0.6	3.7	27.9	7.4	20.4	1.6
50-64	36,486,320	14.6	0.2	2.2	12.2	2.8	9.4	1.1
65 or older	31,991,100	4.4	0.2	0.9	3.4	0.6	2.8	1.2
Race								
White	184,617,470	38.3	1.4	3.8	33.1	8.2	24.9	1.4
Black	26,683,380	49.0	1.6	7.4	39.9	12.2	27.7	3.3
Other	8,538,250	28.0	1.1	5.0	21.9	6.1	15.8	0.8
Hispanic origin								
Hispanic	21,163,000	43.1	1.5	7.3	34.3	10.4	24.0	2.4
Non-Hispanic	196,323,060	38.3	1.4	3.9	33.0	8.3	24.7	1.5

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

decline in thefts included at least slight decreases in thefts at all value levels measured: under \$50, \$50-\$249, and \$250 or more. Apparent changes from 1996 to 1997 in the rates of household burglary and motor vehicle theft were not statistically significant.

The decrease in property crime from 1996 to 1997 was broadly based. Households in all types of localities and in all regions except the South experienced less property crime in 1997, when compared to the previous year. (See appendix table 1, page 11.)

In 1997 while white and non-Hispanic households were less victimized, black and Hispanic households were victimized at about the same rate as in 1996.

Urban households and those in the Northeast experienced less burglary in 1997 than in 1996. For non-Hispanic households the 1997 rate was slightly lower than in the previous year. For no other identified category of victims was the 1997 burglary rate lower than the 1996 rate.

The decline in theft was experienced by most, but not all, demographic groups examined. While white and

other-race households and non-Hispanic households were less vulnerable to theft in 1997 than in 1996, the decline for black households and Hispanic households was not great enough to be statistically significant.

By region, only in the South did the theft rate not fall from 1996 to 1997. Households in urban, suburban, and rural areas all were less victimized by theft in 1997 than in the previous year.

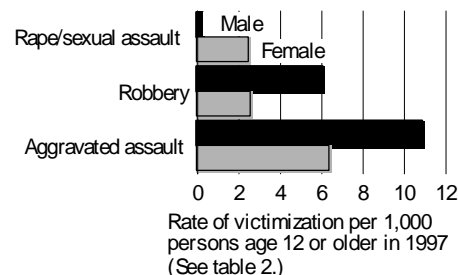
Characteristics of victims of violent crime, 1997

While victimization rates for persons in demographic groups fluctuate from year to year, the characteristics of crime victims and victimizations exhibit a large degree of stability over time. The demographic groups that were in 1997 the most vulnerable to specific violent crimes and to overall violent victimization were, in general, also the most vulnerable to victimization in previous years.

Sex of victim

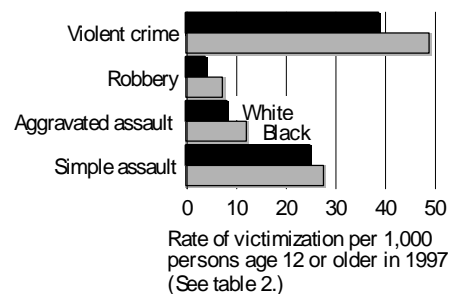
As in past years, except for rape and sexual assault, males were more likely

than females to be victims of violent crime (table 2). Men were twice as likely as women to experience robbery and were also more likely to be victims of aggravated and simple assault. Women sustained rape or sexual assault at a rate about 8 times that of men.



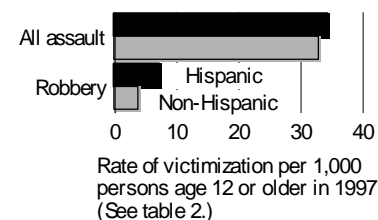
Race of victim

Blacks were more likely than whites to be victims of violent crime, who in turn were more likely than those of other races (Asians or Native Americans). Blacks had higher rates than whites for robbery and aggravated assault. The apparent difference in simple assault rates was not statistically significant. Blacks were victims of robbery at a rate about double that of whites.



Ethnicity of victim

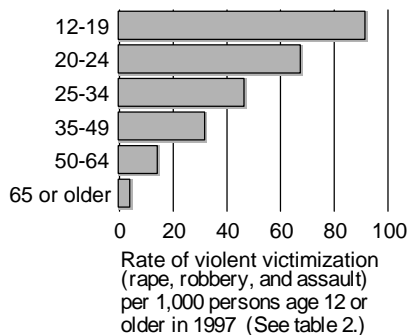
In 1997 Hispanics were about as likely to be victims of rape/sexual assault, aggravated assault, and simple assault as non-Hispanics. Only for robbery did Hispanics experience a higher rate than non-Hispanics.



Age of victim

The patterns of violent victimization across the age spectrum that existed in 1996 continued to be present in 1997. Persons between ages 12 and 15 and between 16 and 19 had higher violent crime victimization rates than did persons age 25 or older. Persons age 12-19 were about twice as likely as persons age 25-34 and about 3 times as likely as persons age 35-49 to be victims of violent crimes. Persons age 12-19 had a violent crime victimization rate about 20 times that of persons age 65 or older. Persons age 16-19 had a significantly higher rate of aggravated assault than any other age group.

Age of victim of rape, robbery, or assault



Household income

In general, violent crime rates are lowest for those in higher income brackets and highest for those in lower income brackets (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 households with incomes below \$50,000.

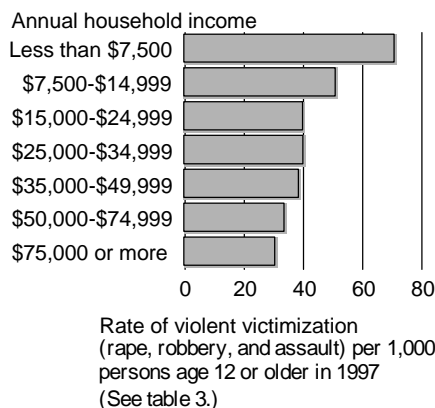


Table 3. Rates of violent crime and personal theft, by household income, marital status, region, and location of residence of victims, 1997

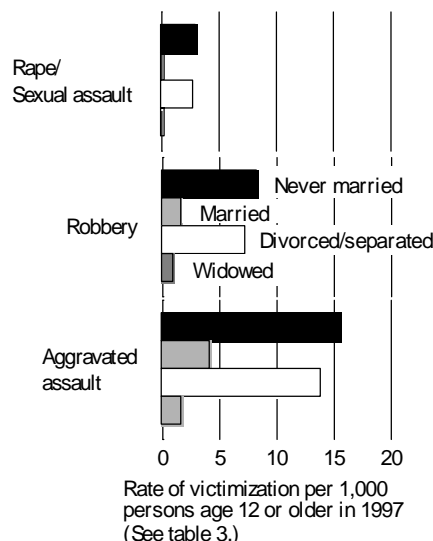
Characteristic of victim	Population	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						
		All*	Violent crimes			Personal theft		
			Rape/Sexual assault	Robbery	Assault Aggravated Simple			
Household income								
Less than \$7,500	13,085,420	71.0	5.2	10.1	55.6	13.6	42.0	2.7
\$7,500 - \$14,999	23,275,460	51.2	2.2	7.0	42.0	11.8	30.3	2.0
\$15,000 - \$24,999	30,729,010	40.1	1.5	4.6	34.0	10.4	23.6	1.7
\$25,000 - \$34,999	28,817,790	40.2	1.5	4.2	34.6	8.2	26.4	1.5
\$35,000 - \$49,999	34,712,640	38.7	0.6	2.9	35.2	8.6	26.6	1.4
\$50,000 - \$74,999	32,446,570	33.9	0.7	3.1	30.1	7.2	22.8	1.6
\$75,000 or more	26,864,180	30.7	1.1	3.7	26.0	4.7	21.4	1.4
Marital status								
Never married	67,650,800	71.5	3.0	8.3	60.1	15.5	44.6	2.4
Married	113,762,150	19.0	0.3	1.7	17.0	4.2	12.8	1.0
Divorced/separated	23,451,480	62.8	2.8	7.3	52.7	13.9	38.8	2.5
Widowed	13,838,230	8.0	0.3	1.0	6.6	1.7	5.0	1.5
Region								
Northeast	41,935,440	34.6	1.2	4.1	29.3	5.5	23.8	2.4
Midwest	53,268,360	36.4	1.3	3.4	31.7	8.3	23.4	1.5
South	78,232,420	38.1	1.4	4.4	32.3	8.8	23.5	1.8
West	46,402,880	48.4	1.7	5.4	41.3	11.4	29.9	0.9
Residence								
Urban	64,609,030	51.2	2.0	7.4	41.8	12.4	29.4	2.8
Suburban	108,671,050	36.3	1.2	3.4	31.7	6.9	24.8	1.3
Rural	46,559,030	29.2	1.1	2.1	26.0	7.3	18.8	0.7

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

Persons in households in the middle range of income (\$15,000 - \$49,999) had similar rates of victimization in comparison to one another but significantly different rates from the lowest and highest income groups.

Marital status

Never-married persons and those who had separated or divorced had higher



violent victimization rates than those who were married or had been widowed. For assault, persons who were never married were victimized at rates higher than people in any other marital status. Persons who had been widowed were the least vulnerable to assault.

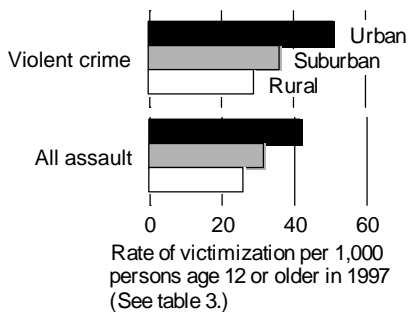
Region

People residing in the West were more vulnerable to violent crime victimization than people residing in any other region in the country. People living in the Northeast, Midwest, and South had similar victimization rates in 1997.



Urbanization

Urban residents had overall violent victimization rates significantly higher than suburban residents, who in turn had rates higher than rural residents. However, there was no difference in the rate at which suburban and rural residents were victims of rape/sexual assault or aggravated assault.



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

Victim-offender relationship

About half of all violent crimes in 1997 were committed by someone whom the victim knew. Victims of completed violence were more likely than victims of attempted violence to report that the offender was not a stranger. Among the violent crimes measured by the NCVS, rape/sexual assault was the crime most likely to be committed by a nonstranger, and robbery was the least likely. Victims of simple assault were more likely than victims of aggravated assault to report that the offender was a nonstranger.

	Percent of violent crime victimizations, 1997	
	Stranger	Nonstranger
All victimizations	46.5%	49.8%
Attempted	49.2	47.5
Completed	40.4	55.1
Rape/sexual assault	30.4%	68.3%
Robbery	66.1	25.7
Assault	44.6	52.2
Aggravated	52.6	42.1
Simple	41.8	55.7

Note: The National Crime Victimization Survey includes as violent crime rape, robbery, and assault, but not murder and manslaughter.

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, by characteristics of victims and location, 1993-97

Characteristic of victim or location	Percent of murders and nonnegligent manslaughters				
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Race of victim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
White	46.0	46.2	48.0	48.3	47.5
Black	50.7	50.8	48.4	48.2	48.4
Other	2.4	2.3	2.7	2.7	3.0
Not reported	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.2
Sex of victim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Male	77.1	78.4	76.6	76.9	77.2
Female	22.7	21.5	23.2	22.9	22.7
Not reported	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Age of victim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Under 18	11.6	11.4	12.1	12.4	12.2
18 or older	87.0	86.8	86.2	86.3	86.6
Unknown	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.3	1.2
Type of weapon used	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Firearm	69.6	70.0	68.2	67.8	67.8
Knife	12.7	12.7	12.7	13.5	12.8
Blunt object	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.6	4.6
Personal weapon	5.0	5.3	5.9	5.9	6.3
Other	8.2	8.7	8.2	8.5	8.5
Overall U.S. rate	9.5	9.0	8.2	7.4	6.8
Region					
Northeast	8.2	7.1	6.2	5.4	4.8
Midwest	7.6	7.5	6.9	6.4	6.1
South	11.3	10.7	9.8	9.0	8.4
West	9.9	9.4	9.0	7.7	6.8
Urban character					
Metropolitan cities*	10.6	10.0	9.1	8.1	7.4
Smaller cities*	5.3	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.2
Rural counties	5.4	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.6
Number of murders and nonnegligent manslaughters	24,530	23,330	21,610	19,650	18,210

*Metropolitan cities are those in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's), and smaller cities are those outside an MSA. Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports.

Murder in the United States, 1997

Statistics on murder are compiled from over 16,000 city, county, and State law enforcement agencies as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. For 1997 the UCR showed 18,210 murders — a rate of 6.8 murders per 100,000 population. The number of persons per 100,000 U.S. population in 1997 was 8% lower than in 1996 and 28% lower than in 1993.

The FBI defines murder in its annual *Crime in the United States* as the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. The incidence of murder varies across victim characteristics. While the number of homicides has decreased since 1993, the pattern of character-

istics of homicide victims has remained relatively unchanged.

- Three-fourths of the victims were male.
- Whites and blacks each made up about 48% of murder victims.
- 1 in 8 murder victims were under age 18.
- Firearms were used in about 7 in 10 murders.
- The homicide rate was highest in the South and lowest in the Northeast.
- The homicide rate was higher in metropolitan cities than in smaller cities and rural areas.

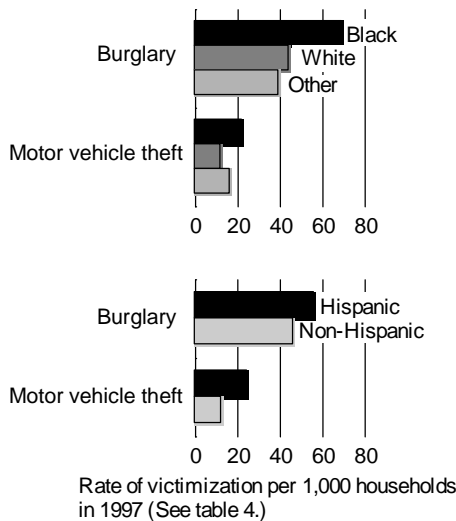
For more information about U.S. murder trends: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/homtrnd.htm>

Characteristics of victims of property crime, 1997

Race/ethnicity of head of household

Black households were more likely than white or households of other races (Asian or Pacific Islanders and American Indians/Alaska Natives grouped together) to be victims of property crimes (table 4). Black households had higher rates of household burglary and theft than did white and other-race households. Black and other-race households experienced motor vehicle theft at rates about twice that of white households.

Hispanic households were more likely than non-Hispanic households to be victims of each of the property crimes measured by the NCVS: burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft.



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

Region, urbanization, and home ownership

As with violent crime, households in the West were more vulnerable to property crime than households in other regions. The property crime rate was lowest in the Northeast.

Overall, urban households had higher property crime rates than suburban households, which in turn had higher rates than rural households. This order also occurred for theft and motor vehicle theft. For burglary, urban households were the most vulnerable, but there was no significant difference between the suburban and rural rates.

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.

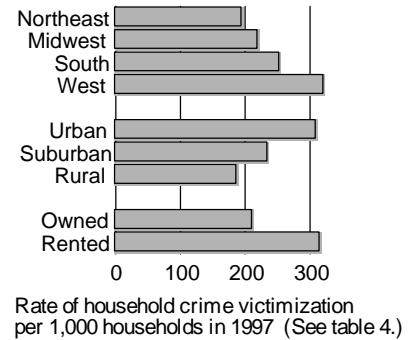
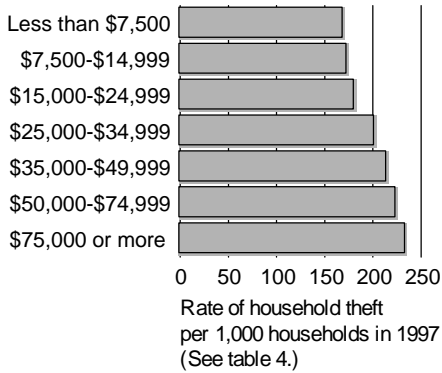


Table 4. Household property crime victimization, by race, Hispanic origin, household income, region, and home ownership of households victimized, 1997

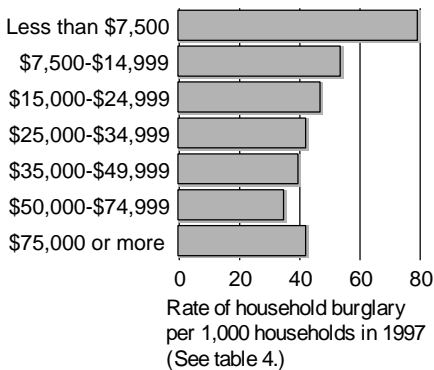
Characteristic of household or head of household	Number of households, 1997	Victimizations per 1,000 households			
		Total	Burglary	Motor vehicle theft	Theft
Race					
White	87,680,170	242.3	42.3	11.9	188.1
Black	12,821,410	292.0	62.5	24.1	205.3
Other	3,487,090	237.4	36.2	23.3	177.9
Hispanic origin					
Hispanic	8,257,860	329.4	60.9	29.6	238.9
Non-Hispanic	95,028,300	240.8	43.2	12.5	185.2
Household income					
Less than \$7,500	8,343,820	258.8	79.5	10.0	169.3
\$7,500 - \$14,999	12,648,520	236.3	53.9	9.1	173.3
\$15,000 - \$24,999	15,237,980	242.4	47.2	14.1	181.2
\$25,000 - \$34,999	13,430,070	260.3	42.4	15.8	202.0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	14,967,560	271.7	39.8	17.2	214.6
\$50,000 - \$74,999	13,033,070	270.9	35.0	11.7	224.2
\$75,000 or more	10,728,660	292.8	42.4	16.3	234.1
Region					
Northeast	20,039,640	195.6	28.5	11.2	155.9
Midwest	25,474,750	219.9	41.8	8.7	169.4
South	37,234,080	253.8	48.7	15.3	189.8
West	21,240,200	322.2	55.7	19.7	246.8
Residence					
Urban	31,912,480	309.9	56.5	20.1	233.3
Suburban	50,284,550	235.4	38.9	12.7	183.8
Rural	21,791,640	187.7	40.1	7.1	140.5
Home ownership					
Owned	67,512,040	211.7	35.8	11.1	164.8
Rented	36,476,630	316.0	60.9	18.7	236.5

Household income

In general, households with higher incomes were more susceptible than those with lower incomes to theft and motor vehicle theft. Households with incomes \$35,000 or above had the highest theft victimization rates.



Conversely, the lower the income, the higher the likelihood of burglary, in general. Households with incomes below \$7,500 had burglary rates significantly higher than households with higher annual incomes. There were no differences in the burglary rates of households in the income categories \$35,000 and above.



Reporting to the police

About a third of the crimes measured by the NCVS were reported to law enforcement authorities, according to the victims. Motor vehicle thefts were reported to police at the highest rate — 80%, and thefts were reported at the lowest rate — 28%. Of violent crimes, 59% of aggravated assaults were reported, compared to 31% of rapes or sexual assaults.

Among victims of violent crime, females were more likely than males to report the crime to the police. Black victims of violence were somewhat more likely than whites to report to the police. There was no significant difference between Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims in the percentage reporting a violent crime to the police.

	Percent of crime reported to the police
All victimizations	37.4%
Violent crime	44.0%
Rape/Sexual assault	30.5
Robbery	55.8
Assault	43.7
Simple	38.4
Aggravated	59.1
Household crime	35.1%
Burglary	51.8
Motor vehicle theft	79.8
Theft	27.9

Victim characteristic	Percent of violent victimizations reported to the police
All	44.5%
Male	42.3%
Female	47.5
White	43.7%
Black	48.7
Hispanic	48.4%
Non-Hispanic	44.0

Victimization trends, 1993-97

The 1993-96 declining trends in violent and property crime continued in 1997. While not all year-to-year changes for every category of crime were statistically significant, the overall rates for violent crime and every major type of crime measured — rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft — showed statistically significant declines between 1993 and 1997.

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, followed by a decline through 1997. While some year-to-year changes in victimization rates for violent crime in the aggregate and for some types of crime were not significant, every type of violent crime declined significantly over the whole period.

Table 5. Rates of criminal victimization and percent change, 1993-97

Type of crime	Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households)					Percent change			
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1993-97	1994-97	1995-97	1996-97
Personal crimes^a	52.2	54.1	48.5	43.5	40.8	-21.8%*	-24.6%*	-15.9%*	-6.2%*
Crimes of violence	49.9	51.8	46.6	42.0	39.2	-21.4*	-24.3*	-15.9*	-6.7*
Completed violence	15.0	15.4	13.8	12.4	12.2	-18.7*	-20.8*	-11.6*	-1.6
Attempted/threatened violence	34.9	36.4	32.8	29.6	27.0	-22.6*	-25.8*	-17.7*	-8.8*
Rape/Sexual assault	2.5	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.4	-44.0*	-33.3*	-17.6	0
Rape/attempted rape	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.9	-43.8*	-35.7*	-25.0 [†]	0
Rape	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.5	-50.0*	-28.6	-28.6	25.0
Attempted rape	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	-42.9*	-42.9*	-20.0	-20.0
Sexual assault	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	-37.5 [†]	-16.7	0	0
Robbery	6.0	6.3	5.4	5.2	4.3	-28.3*	-31.7*	-20.4*	-17.3*
Completed/property taken	3.8	4.0	3.5	3.5	2.8	-26.3*	-30.0*	-20.0*	-20.0*
With injury	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.1	-15.4	-21.4	10.0	0
Without injury	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.3	1.7	-32.0*	-34.6*	-32.0*	-26.1*
Attempted to take property	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.5	-31.8*	-34.8*	-21.1 [†]	-11.8
With injury	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3	-25.0	-50.0*	-25.0	-25.0
Without injury	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.2	-33.3*	-29.4*	-25.0*	-14.3
Assault	41.4	43.3	39.5	35.4	33.5	-19.1*	-22.6*	-15.2*	-5.4
Aggravated	12.0	11.9	9.5	8.8	8.6	-28.3*	-27.7*	-9.5	-2.3
With injury	3.4	3.3	2.5	2.4	2.7	-20.6 [†]	-18.2 [†]	8.0	12.5
Threatened with weapon	8.6	8.6	7.1	6.4	5.9	-31.4*	-31.4*	-16.9*	-7.8
Simple	29.4	31.5	29.9	26.6	24.9	-15.3*	-21.0*	-16.7*	-6.4 [†]
With minor injury	6.1	6.8	6.6	5.7	5.7	-6.6	-16.2*	-13.6 [†]	0
Without injury	23.3	24.7	23.3	20.9	19.2	-17.6*	-22.3*	-17.6*	-8.1 [†]
Personal theft ^b	2.3	2.4	1.9	1.5	1.6	-30.4*	-33.3*	-15.8	6.7
Property crimes	318.9	310.2	290.5	266.3	248.3	-22.1%*	-20.0%*	-14.5%*	-6.8%*
Household burglary	58.2	56.3	49.3	47.2	44.6	-23.4*	-20.8*	-9.5*	-5.5
Completed	47.2	46.1	41.7	39.5	37.4	-20.8*	-18.9*	-10.3*	-5.3
Forcible entry	18.1	16.9	15.5	14.7	14.4	-20.4*	-14.8*	-7.1	-2.0
Unlawful entry without force	29.1	29.2	26.2	24.8	23.0	-21.0*	-21.2*	-12.2*	-6.9
Attempted forcible entry	10.9	10.2	7.6	7.7	7.1	-34.9*	-30.4*	-6.6	-7.8
Motor vehicle theft	19.0	18.8	16.9	13.5	13.8	-27.4*	-26.6*	-18.3*	2.2
Completed	12.4	12.5	11.5	9.1	9.7	-21.8*	-22.4*	-15.7*	6.6
Attempted	6.6	6.3	5.5	4.4	4.1	-37.9*	-34.9*	-25.5*	-6.8
Theft	241.7	235.1	224.3	205.7	189.9	-21.4*	-19.2*	-15.3*	-7.7*
Completed ^c	230.1	224.3	215.3	197.7	182.3	-20.8*	-18.7*	-15.3*	-7.8*
Less than \$50	98.7	93.5	85.2	73.8	69.4	-29.7*	-25.8*	-18.5*	-6.0 [†]
\$50-\$249	76.1	77.0	76.0	71.8	64.2	-15.6*	-16.6*	-15.5*	-10.6*
\$250 or more	41.6	41.8	42.1	41.1	38.0	-8.7*	-9.1*	-9.7*	-7.5 [†]
Attempted	11.6	10.8	9.0	8.0	7.6	-34.5*	-29.6*	-15.6*	-5.0

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 10.) 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, 1993-97.

*The difference from 1996 to 1997 is significant at the 95% confidence level.

[†]The difference from 1996 to 1997 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.

^cIncludes thefts with unknown losses.

Personal theft

Personal theft includes pocket picking and attempted and completed purse snatching. The personal theft rate decreased significantly from 1993 to 1997.

Property crime

The numbers and rates of property crime, both in the aggregate and by

type of crime declined throughout the 1993-97 period. However, as was the case with violent offenses, not every year-to-year decrease was significant.

Characteristics of victims

The general downward trend in criminal victimization can be seen across demographic characteristics such as victim sex, race, and income. Males and females, blacks and whites, and

those at different income levels all experienced declines from 1993 to 1997 for overall violent and property crime victimizations. (See appendix figures on page 11.)

Between 1993 and 1997 urban households did experience greater declines in property crime rates than suburban or rural households.

Survey methodology

Except for homicide data obtained from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, this report presents data from the 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 1997 approximately 43,000 households and 80,000 people age 12 or older were interviewed.

For the 1997 NCVS data presented here, the response rates were 95% of eligible households and 89% of eligible individuals.

The data in this report are based on interviews conducted during the calendar year being estimated. Because of the retrospective nature of the survey, the estimates include some incidents that actually occurred during the previous year. Analyses comparing the victimization information collected in a calendar year (denoted here as a

collection year) to that obtained about victimizations experienced in the same calendar year (called a *data year*) show only a small difference between the two methods. For example, for 1995 the violent crime rate based on data-year victimizations was 44.5 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, compared to 46.6 based on the collection-year method. The differences will be greater during periods of changing crime rates and less during periods of stable rates.

Trends in violent victimization, 1973-97

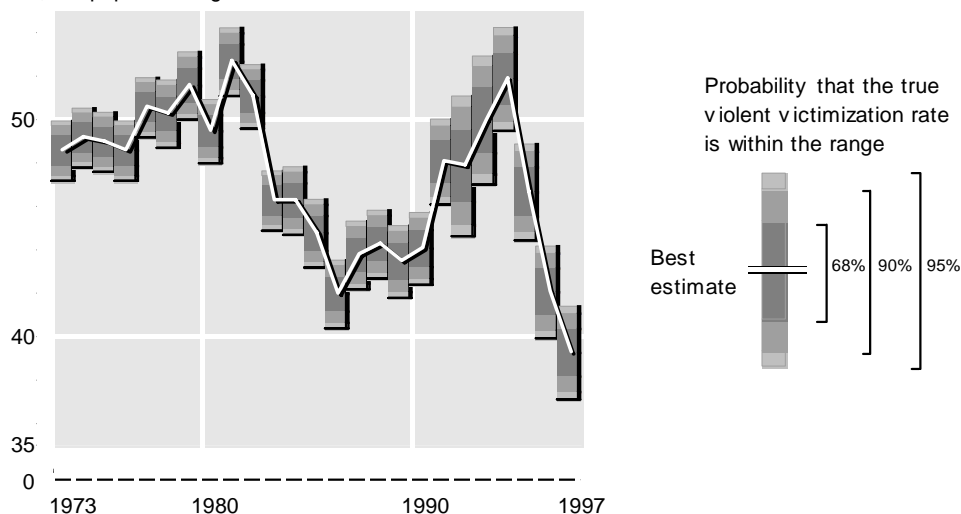
Because the National Crime Victimization Survey relies on a sample of households, the rates and numbers from it are estimates and are not exact.

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.

Because the estimates are based on samples, their precision depends on the sample size: The larger the sample, the better the estimate and the smaller the range bars. Some year-to-year changes are so large that contiguous bars do not touch (1980-81, 1982-83, 1990-91, 1994-95, and 1995-96), suggesting statistically significant increases and decreases. Where there is a lot of overlap

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, 1973-97.

(1973-76 and 1986-90), the year-to-year changes may be too small to be statistically significant.

Even though the victimization rates have a range of possible values, general trends are readily apparent. Violent crime rates increased from the early 1970's to the early 1980's, then fell until around 1986. For several

years in the late 1980's, violent crime rates were stable, but increased in the early 1990's and fell after 1994 through 1997.

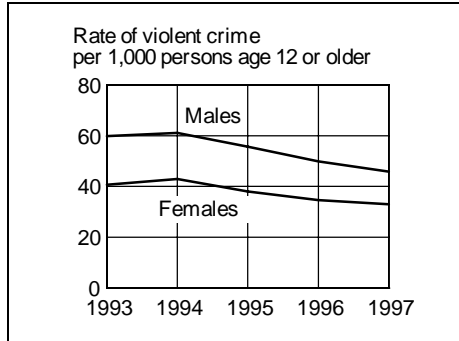
For more explanation of this graph, see the BJS Technical Report *Displaying Violent Crime Trends Using Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey*, NCJ 167881.

Computation of standard errors

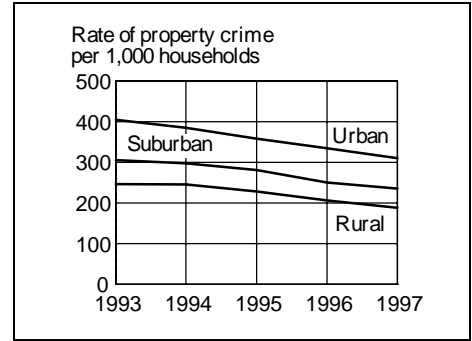
The comparisons made in this report were tested to determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant. Comparisons mentioned in the report passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (or the 95% confidence level). This means that the estimated difference 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 terms *somewhat different* or *slight difference* are 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.

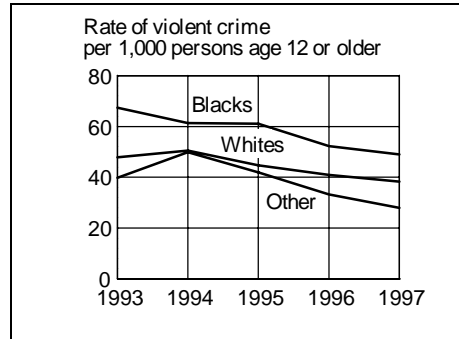
Calculations were conducted with statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. These programs take into account the complex NCVS sample design when calculating generalized variance estimates.



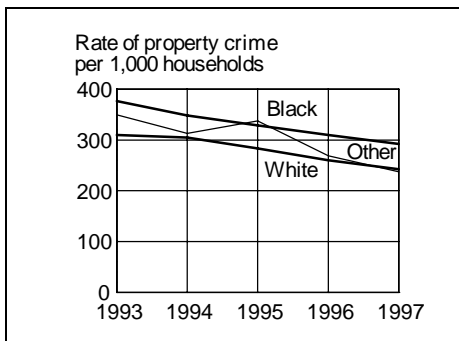
Appendix figure 2



Appendix figure 5



Appendix figure 3



Appendix figure 4

Appendix table 1. Property victimization rates of selected household categories, 1996 and 1997

	Number of property crimes per 1,000 households	
	1996	1997
Property crime		
White	259.9	242.3*
Black	310.0	292.0
Other	268.4	237.4
Hispanic	328.1	329.4
Non-Hispanic	261.2	240.8*
Urban	334.5	309.9*
Suburban	250.5	235.4*
Rural	206.0	187.7*
Northeast	215.2	195.6*
Midwest	249.6	219.9*
South	259.9	253.8
West	345.6	322.2*
Burglary		
Hispanic	56.2	60.9
Non-Hispanic	46.4	43.2†
Urban	64.2	56.5*
Suburban	37.8	38.9
Rural	43.7	40.1
Northeast	35.5	28.5*
Midwest	44.4	41.8
South	51.0	48.7
West	55.0	55.7
Theft		
White	203.5	188.1*
Black	218.5	205.3
Other	212.5	177.9*
Hispanic	247.3	238.9
Non-Hispanic	202.3	185.2*
Urban	250.0	233.3*
Suburban	199.8	183.6*
Rural	156.9	140.5*
Northeast	167.8	155.9†
Midwest	195.1	169.4*
South	195.7	189.8
West	271.0	246.8*

*Significant at the 95% confidence level.
†Significant at the 90% confidence level.

Appendix table 2. Violent and property victimization rates, by annual household income, 1993-97

Annual household income	Number of victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or 1,000 households				
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Violent victimizations					
Less than \$7,500	84.7	86.0	77.8	65.3	71.0
\$7,500-\$14,999	56.4	60.7	49.8	52.1	51.2
\$15,000-\$24,999	49.0	50.7	48.9	44.1	40.1
\$25,000-\$34,999	51.0	47.3	47.1	43.0	40.2
\$35,000-\$49,999	45.6	47.0	45.8	43.0	38.7
\$50,000-\$74,999	44.0	48.0	44.6	37.5	33.9
\$75,000 or more	41.3	39.5	37.3	30.5	30.7
Property victimizations					
Less than \$7,500	305.9	299.6	304.3	282.7	258.8
\$7,500-\$14,999	285.9	299.1	267.1	247.5	236.3
\$15,000-\$24,999	307.0	308.1	289.8	273.1	242.4
\$25,000-\$34,999	336.7	305.2	294.8	285.1	260.3
\$35,000-\$49,999	342.7	326.9	301.5	287.6	271.7
\$50,000-\$74,999	374.4	364.1	333.2	284.0	270.9
\$75,000 or more	400.3	356.0	350.4	304.6	292.8

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.

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

December 1998, NCJ 173385

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 can be obtained from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive can also be accessed through the BJS Web site. When at the archive site, search for dataset ICPSR 6406.