

CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION IN THE UNITED STATES: 1991¹

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The survey results contained in this report are based on data gathered from residents living throughout the United States, including persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings. Individuals aged 12 or older living in units designated for the sample were eligible to be interviewed with the exception of: crew members of merchant vessels, Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks, institutionalised persons, such as correctional facility inmates, US citizens residing abroad and foreign visitors to this country.

Data collection

Each housing unit selected for the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) remains in the sample for 3 years, with each of seven interviews taking place at six-month intervals. An NCVS interviewer's first contact with a housing unit selected for the survey is in person, and, if it is not possible to secure face-to-face interviews with all eligible members of the household during this initial visit, interviews by telephone are permissible thereafter. The only exceptions to the requirement that each eligible person be interviewed apply to incapacitated persons and individuals who are absent from the household during the entire field-interviewing period.

If an adult insists, 12- and 13-year-olds may be interviewed by proxy. In the case of temporarily absent household members and persons who are physically or mentally incapable of granting interviews, interviewers may accept other household members as proxy respondents, and in certain situations non-household members may provide information for incapacitated persons. Interviews are done by telephone whenever possible, except for the first and fifth interviews, which are primarily conducted in person. The percentage of telephone interviews is approximately 74% currently.

Sample design and size

Survey estimates are based on data obtained from a stratified, multi-stage cluster sample. The primary sampling units (PSUs) composing the first stage of the sampling were counties, groups of counties, or large metropolitan areas. Large PSUs were included in the sample automatically and are considered to be self-representing (SR). The remaining PSUs, called non-self-representing (NSR), were combined into strata by grouping PSUs with similar demographic characteristics, as

1 A separate survey entitled the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) was carried out in the United States.

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determined by the 1980 Census. One PSU was selected from each stratum by making the probability of selection proportionate to the population of the PSU. The sample drawn from the 1980 Census based design consists of 84 SR PSUs and 153 NSR strata, with one PSU per stratum selected with probability proportionate to size.

The remaining stages of sampling were designed to ensure a self-weighting probability sample of dwelling units and group quarters within each of the selected areas. (In this context, self-weighting means that each sample housing unit had the same initial probability of being selected.) This involved a systematic selection of enumeration districts (geographic areas used for the 1980 Census), with a probability of selection proportionate to their 1980 population size, followed by the selection of clusters of approximately four housing units each from within each enumeration district. To account for units built within each of the sample areas after the 1980 Census, a sample was drawn, by means of an independent clerical operation, of permits issued for the construction of residential housing.

Jurisdictions that do not issue building permits were sampled using small land-area segments. These supplementary procedures, though yielding a relatively small portion of the total sample, enabled persons living in housing units built after 1980 to be properly represented in the survey. With the passage of time, newly constructed units account for an increased proportion of the total sample.

Approximately 50,500 housing units and other living quarters were designated for the sample. In order to conduct field interviews, the sample was divided into six groups, or rotations, each of which contained housing units whose occupants were to be interviewed once every six months over a period of three years. The initial interview was used to bound the interviews, (bounding establishes a time frame to avoid duplication of crimes on subsequent interviews) but was not used to compute the annual estimates. Each rotation group was further divided into six panels. Persons occupying housing units within a sixth of each rotation group, or one panel, were interviewed each month during the 6-month period. Because the survey is continuous, additional housing units are selected in the manner described, and assigned to rotation groups and panels for subsequent incorporation into the sample. A new rotation group enters the sample every six months, replacing a group phased out after being in the sample for three years.

A portion of the housing units selected to participate in this survey were used to test a revised survey questionnaire designed to provide more information about incidents of crime. Information collected from households given the revised questionnaire was not used in the data tables shown in this report.

Interviews were obtained at 6-month intervals from the occupants of about 42,000 of the 50,500 housing units selected for the sample. About 7,305 of the remaining 8,780 units were found to be vacant, demolished, converted to non-residential use, or otherwise ineligible for the survey. However, approximately 1,500 of the 8,780 units were occupied by persons who were eligible for the survey yet were not interviewed because they could not be reached after repeated visits, declined to be interviewed, were temporarily absent, or were otherwise not available. Thus, the occupants of about 97% of all eligible housing units, some 83,000 persons, provided responses for the survey through the near-term questionnaire.

About 10% of the 42,000 households in the 1991 sample were interviewed using a technique called Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). This technique was first used in 1987, and a study of the results revealed it had no serious effects on the NCVS data. Thus, the data obtained through CATI have been included in this report.

Estimation procedure

To enhance the reliability of the estimates in this report, the estimation procedures utilised additional data concerning population characteristics which are believed to affect victimisation rates. These data were used in various stages of ratio estimation.

The estimation procedure provides quarterly estimates of the levels and rates of victimisation. Sample data from eight months of field interviewing are required to produce estimates for each quarter. For example, data collected between February and September are required to estimate the first quarter of any given calendar year. Each quarterly estimate is composed of equal numbers of field observations from the months during the half-year interval prior to the time of interview. Therefore, incidents occurring in January may be reported in a February interview (1 month between the crime and the interview), in a March interview (2 months), and so on up to 6 months ago for interviews conducted in July. This arrangement minimises expected biases associated with the tendency of respondents to place victimisations in more recent months of a six-month reference period rather than the month in which they actually occurred. Annual estimates are derived by accumulating data from the four quarterly estimates, which in turn are obtained from 17 months of field interviewing, ranging from February of one year through June of the following year. The population and household figures shown on victimisation rate tables are based on an average for these 17 months, centering on the ninth month of the data collection period, in this case October 1991. The estimation procedure began with the application of a basic weight to the data from each individual interviewed. A basic weight is the reciprocal of the probability of each housing unit's selection for the sample, and provides a rough measure of the population represented by each person in the sample. Next, an adjustment was made to account for occupied units as well as individuals in occupied units who were selected for the survey but unavailable for interview.

The distribution of the sample population usually differs somewhat from that of the total population in terms of age, race, sex, residence, and other characteristics. Because of this, an additional stage of ratio estimation was employed to bring the two distributions into closer agreement, thereby reducing the variability of the sample estimates.

The first stage of ratio estimation was applied only to data obtained from non-self-representing sample areas. Its purpose was to reduce the error caused by selecting one area to represent an entire stratum. Ratios concerning race and residence were calculated to reflect the relationship between the weighted 1980 census counts for all the sample areas in each region and the population in the non-self-representing parts of the region.

The second stage of ratio estimation was applied on an individual basis in order to bring the distribution of individuals in the sample into closer agreement with independent current estimates of the population according to the characteristics of age, sex, and race.

For household crimes, the characteristics of the wife in a husband-wife household and the characteristics of the head of household in other types of households were used to determine the ratio estimates. This procedure is

considered more precise than simply using the characteristics of the head of household since sample coverage is generally better for females than males.

In order to estimate incidents as opposed to victimisations, further adjustments were made to those cases where an incident involved more than one person. These incidents had more than one chance of being included in the sample so each multiple-victimisation was reduced by the number of victims. Thus, if two people were victimised during the same incident, the weight assigned to that incident was reduced by one half so that the incident could not be counted twice. However, the details of the event's outcome as they related to the victim were reflected in the survey results.

No adjustment was necessary in estimating data on household crimes because each separate crime was defined as involving only one household.

Series victimisations

A series victimisation is defined as three or more similar but separate crimes which the victim is unable to recall individually or describe in detail to an interviewer. These crimes have been excluded from the tables in this report because the victims were unable to provide details for each event.

Table 1 shows the counts of series victimisations for 1991. A total of 803,290 personal series crimes and 517,290 household series crimes were measured in 1991. As in the past, series crimes tended to be simple assaults, personal larcenies without contact, or household larcenies.

Reliability of estimates

The sample used for the NCVS is one of a large number of possible samples of equal size that could have been obtained by using the same sample design and selection procedures. Estimates derived from different samples would differ somewhat.

The standard error of a survey estimate is a measure of the variation among the estimates from all possible samples. Therefore, it is a measure of the precision with which a particular estimate approximates the average result of all possible samples. The estimate and its associated standard error may be used to construct a confidence interval. A confidence interval is a range of numbers which has a specified probability that the average of all possible samples, which is the true unknown value of interest, is contained within the interval. About 68% of the time, the survey estimate will differ from the true average by less than one standard error. Only 10% of the time will the difference be more than 1.6 standard errors, and just one time in a hundred will it be greater than 2.5 standard errors. A 95% confidence interval is the estimate plus or minus twice the standard error, thus there is a 95% chance that the result of a complete census would fall within the confidence interval.

In addition to sampling error, the estimates in this report are subject to non-sampling error. Major sources of non-sampling error are related to the ability of the respondents to recall in detail the crimes which occurred during the six months prior to the interview. Research based on interviews of victims obtained from police files indicates that assault is recalled with the least accuracy of any crime measured by the NCVS. This may be related to the tendency of victims not to report crimes

committed by offenders who are not strangers, especially if they are relatives. In addition, among certain groups, crimes which contain elements of assault could be a part of everyday life, and are therefore forgotten or not considered important enough to mention to a survey interviewer. These recall problems may result in a substantial understatement of the actual rate of assault.

Another source of nonsampling error is the inability of some respondents to recall the exact month a crime occurred, even though it was placed in the correct reference period. This error source is partially offset by interviewing monthly and using the estimation procedure described earlier. Telescoping is another problem in which incidents that occurred before the reference period, or in a few cases, after it, are placed within the period. Events which occurred after the reference period are considered extremely rare because 75 to 80% of the interviewing takes place during the first week of the month following the reference period. The effect of telescoping is minimised by using the bounding procedure previously described. The interviewer is provided with a summary of the incidents reported in the preceding interview, and, if a similar incident is reported, it can then be determined whether the reported crime is a new one or not by discussing it with the victim. As calculated for the NCVS, the standard errors partially measure only those non-sampling errors arising from these sources; they do not reflect any systematic biases in the data.

Methodological research indicates that substantially fewer incidents of crime are reported when one household member reports for all individuals residing in the household than when each person is interviewed individually. Therefore, the self-response procedure was adopted as a general rule; allowances for proxy response under the contingencies discussed earlier are the only exceptions to this rule.

Other sources of nonsampling error result from other types of response mistakes, including errors in reporting incidents as crimes, misclassification of crimes, systematic data errors introduced by the interviewer, errors made in coding and processing the data, and biases resulting from the rotation patterns and incomplete sampling frames in the 1970 based design. The last problem has been corrected in the 1980 based design. Quality control and editing procedures were used to minimise the number of errors made by the respondents and the interviewers. Since the field representatives conducting the interviews usually reside in the area in which they interview, the race and ethnicity of the field representatives generally matches that of the local population. Special efforts are made to further match field representatives and the people they interview in areas where English is not commonly spoken. About 90% of all NCVS field representatives are female.

Deriving standard errors which are applicable to a wide variety of items and can be prepared at a moderate cost requires a number of approximations. Therefore, two parameters (identified as "a" and "b" in the following section) were developed for use in calculating standard errors. The parameters provide an indication of the order of magnitude of the standard errors rather than the precise standard error for any specific item.

Computation and application of standard errors

The results presented in this report were tested to determine whether or not the observed differences between groups were statistically significant. Differences were tested for significance at the 90% confidence level, or roughly 1.6 standard errors.

Most of the comparisons in this report were significant at the 95% confidence level (about 2.0 standard errors, meaning that the difference between the estimates is greater than twice the standard error of the difference).

Comparisons which failed the 90% test were not considered statistically significant. Comparisons qualified by the phrase "some evidence" had a significance level between 90 and 95%.

Formula 1. Standard errors for the estimated number of victimisations or incidents may be calculated by using the following formula:

$$s.e.(x) = \sqrt{ax^2 + bx}$$

where

x = estimated number of personal or household victimisations or incidents

a = a constant equal to -0.00002297

b = a constant equal to 4717

The following example illustrates the proper use of this formula. Table 4 shows 751,650 completed robberies in 1991; this estimate and the appropriate parameters are substituted in the formula as follows:

$$s.e.(x) = \sqrt{(-0.00002297)(751,650)^2 + (4017)(751,650)} = 59,435$$

Therefore the 95% confidence interval around the estimated number of robbery victimisations is about equal to 751,650 plus or minus 118,870 (632,780 to 870,520).

Formula 2. Standard errors for the estimated victimisation rates or percentages are calculated using the following formula:

$$s.e.(p) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{b}{y}\right)(p(1.0 - p))}$$

where

p = percentage or rate expressed in decimal form

y = base population or total number of crimes

b = a constant equal to 4717

Formula 3. The standard error of a difference between two rates or percentages having different bases is calculated using the formula:

$$s.e.(p_1 - p_2) = \sqrt{\frac{(p_1(1.0 - p_1)b)}{y_1} + \frac{(p_2(1.0 - p_2)b)}{y_2}}$$

where

p1 = first percent or rate (expressed in decimal form)

y1 = base from which first percent or rate was derived

p2 = second percent or rate (expressed in decimal form)
y2 = base from which second percent or rate was derived
b = a constant equal to 4717

This formula provides an accurate standard error for the difference between uncorrelated estimates; however, if the two estimates have a strong positive correlation, the formula overestimates the true standard error. If the numbers have a strong negative correlation the formula underestimates the actual standard error of the difference.

The ratio of the difference between two numbers to the standard error of their difference is equivalent to the statistical level of significance. For example, a ratio of two or more indicates that the difference is significant at the 95% confidence level (or greater); a ratio between 1.6 and 2.0 indicates the difference is significant at a confidence level between 90 and 95%; a ratio less than 1.6 denotes a confidence level less than 90%.

Formula 4. The standard error of the difference between two rates or percentages derived from the same base is calculated using the formula:

$$s.e.(p_1 - p_2) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{b}{y}\right)\left((p_1 + p_2) - (p_1 - p_2)^2\right)}$$

where the symbols are the same as in formula three, except that "y" refers to a common base.

Since 1973 the NCVS, the Nation's second largest survey of households, has been producing annual estimates of the level and rate of crime experienced by US residents. The data that follow present findings for 1991, as well as trends in crime over time. Also included are findings on the differences in victimisation risk for persons possessing certain demographic characteristics compared to those without these characteristics (e.g. blacks compared to whites, males compared to females).

Findings for 1991

Persons aged 12 or older, living in the United States, experienced 34.7 million crimes in 1991 according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)³. Approximately 6.4 million of these victimisations consisted of violent crimes such as rape, robbery, and aggravated and simple assaults. Another 12.5 million victimisations were crimes of theft - larcenies both with and without contact between the victim and offender. Finally, there were 15.8 million household crimes in 1991⁴.

³ The National Crime Survey was renamed the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1990.

⁴ For definitions of the crimes measured by the NCVS and a description of NCVS operations, see : "Measuring crime", *BJS Bulletin*, NCJ-75710, February 1981.

- The total number of violent, theft, and household crimes committed in 1991 was not significantly different from that for the previous year⁵.
- The number of violent crime attempts increased 11% between 1990 and 1991.
- No measurable change in household crime rates was evident between 1990 and 1991.
- Since 1981, the peak year for victimisations, 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 victimisation rates than others: blacks were more likely than whites to be victims of violent crime; persons under age 25 had higher victimisation 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.

Crime levels and rates in 1991

Between 1990 and 1991 the number of violent crimes attempted against US residents increased significantly, by nearly 11% (Table 4). This increase can be attributed primarily to a rise in assaults; since 1981, a peak year for victimisations, 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 victimisations were committed in 1981 while 6.4 million occurred last year (Table 3).

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 4). 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. 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.

Trends in crime rates, 1973-91

⁵ 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 discussions in the previous pages.

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 lower in 1991 than in any other year but 1990 (Tables 5 and 6). 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 1970s and early 1980s 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 attempted violent crime rose dramatically, by 31%, between 1990 and 1991. The total assault rate increased significantly, while the rate of completed robberies declined (Table 7). The total theft rate, as well as the rate of personal larcenies 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 crime, particularly attempts, increased somewhat in the West in 1991. There was also some evidence of an increase in the assault rate.

The rate of personal theft increased 12%, to 82 thefts per 1,000 persons, while rates of household crime 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. At 49%, just under half of all violent victimisations 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 in the 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.

Reasons for reporting and not reporting

The most common reasons victims gave for reporting violent crimes to the police were to prevent further crimes from being committed against them by the same offender (19%), to locate and punish the offender (17%), to stop or prevent the incident (17%), and because they felt it was their duty to tell the police (18%) (Table 8). For thefts the most common reason given for reporting was so that the victim could recover property (31%).

Common reasons given for not reporting violent victimisations to the police included: the crime was a private or personal matter (18%), or the offender was unsuccessful (18%).

The most common reason for not reporting household crimes and thefts was that an object had been recovered (30% and 26%). The next most common reason cited for failing to report a theft was that the crime had been reported to some other official (17%).

Characteristics of victims

Research by BJS has shown a relationship between certain demographic characteristics and the risk of crime victimisation.⁶ Males, younger persons, blacks, Hispanics, residents of central cities, and the poor tend to have higher rates of victimisation than persons who do not possess these characteristics (Table 9).

In every personal crime category males sustained significantly higher victimisation 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 victimisation rates than older persons. Those 65 or older generally had the lowest victimisation 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 victimisation 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 victimisation, overall (36.2 versus 30.8).

In general, persons from households with low incomes experienced higher violent crime victimisation 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 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 non-metropolitan areas.

Certain demographic groups also had higher household victimisation rates than others (Table 10). 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 victimisation. 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 their residence. 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.

⁶ BJS Special Report (1985) "The risk of violent crime", BJS special report, NCJ-97119, May.

TABLES

Table 1: Number of series victimisations by type of crime

Type of crime	Number
Personal crimes	803,290
Crimes of violence	600,810
Rape	6,240 ¹
Robbery	47,720
Assault	546,840
Aggravated	157,770
Simple	389,060
Crimes of theft	202,470
Household crimes	517,290
Burglary	174,320
Household larceny	317,270
Motor vehicle theft	25,690*

* Estimate is based on about 10 or fewer cases.

Table 2: Month of interview by month of reference (X's denote months in the six-month reference period)

Month of interview	Period of reference											
	First quarter			Second quarter			Third quarter			Fourth quarter		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Jan												
Feb	x											
Mar	x	x										
Apr	x	x	x									
May	x	x	x	x								
June	x	x	x	x	x							
July	x	x	x	x	x	x						
Aug		x	x	x	x	x	x					
Sept			x	x	x	x	x	x				
Oct				x	x	x	x	x	x			
Nov					x	x	x	x	x	x		
Dec						x	x	x	x	x	x	
Jan							x	x	x	x	x	x
Feb								x	x	x	x	x
Mar									x	x	x	x
Apr										x	x	x
May											x	x
June												x
July												

Table 3: Victimisation levels for selected crimes, 1973-1991

	Number of victimisations (in thousands)			
	Total	Violent crimes	Personal theft	Household crime
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	34,730	6,424	12,533	15,774
Percent change, 1981-91 ¹	-16.2% ²	-2.4%	-21.0% ²	-17.0% ²

1. Total victimisations peaked in 1981.

2. The difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4: Changes in victimisation levels and rates for personal and household crimes, 1990-91

	Number of victimisations (thousands)			Victimisation rates		
	1990	1991	% change 1990-91	1990	1991	% change 1990-91
All crimes	34,404	34,730	.9%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Personal crimes	18,984	18,956	-1%	93.4	92.3	-1.2%
Crimes of violence	6,009	6,424	6.9 ¹	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 ¹	17.6	19.4	9.7 ¹
Rape ³	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 ¹	23.3	24.9	6.9 ²
- 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 ¹	15.4	17.0	10.7 ¹
- Completed with injury	931	1,032	10.9	4.6	5.0	9.8
- Attempted assault without weapon	2,197	2,464	12.2 ¹	10.8	12.0	11.0 ²
Crimes of theft	12,975	12,533	-3.4 ²	63.8	61.0	-4.4 ²
- Completed	12,155	11,691	-3.8 ¹	59.8	56.9	-4.8 ¹
- Attempted	821	841	2.5	4.0	4.1	1.4
- Pers. larceny with contact	637	482	-24.3 ¹	3.1	2.3	-24.9 ¹
- Purse snatching	165	136	-17.7	.8	.7	-18.5
- Pocket picking	472	346	-26.6 ¹	2.3	1.7	-27.4 ¹
- Pers. larc. 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 ²	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 ²	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 victimisations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older or per 1,000 households. The population aged 12 or over 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%.

1. The difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

2. The difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.
3. There was 1.0 rape per 1,000 women aged 12 or older in 1990 and 1.4 in 1991.

Table 5: Victimization rates for personal and household crimes

	Victimisations per 1,000 persons aged 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
-Personal larceny without contact	88.0	81.9	79.5	74.0	69.1	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 6 identifies statistically significant differences between the rates for 1991 and preceding years.

Table 6: Comparison of changes in victimisation rates for personal household

	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% ¹
Crimes of violence	-3.9 ¹	-11.4	-8.7	.9 ¹	(2)	4.3 ¹	11.2	6.7	5.5 ¹	7.5	5.8 ¹
-Rape	-11.6 ¹	-11.6 ¹	3.7 ¹	3.7 ¹	-10.6 ¹	18.3 ¹	27.3 ¹	12.0 ¹	31.3 ¹	25.4 ¹	31.3 ¹
-Robbery	-17.2	-24.7	-21.2	-7.5 ¹	-2.3 ¹	10.1 ¹	8.6 ¹	5.5 ¹	6.1 ¹	3.0 ¹	-1.4 ¹
-Assault	(2)	-7.8	-5.8 ¹	2.9 ¹	.6 ¹	2.7 ¹	11.4	6.8	4.7 ¹	8.0	6.9
-Aggravated	-22.2	-18.8	-15.9	-1.6 ¹	-13.0	-5.3 ¹	-.5 ¹	-2.5 ¹	-10.3 ¹	-5.3 ¹	-.5 ¹
-Simple	15.1	-1.7 ¹	(2)	5.3 ¹	8.3	6.8 ¹	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 ¹	-12.6 ¹	-13.9 ¹	-8.6 ¹	-4.1 ¹	-13.0 ¹	-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 ¹
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 ¹
Household larceny	-17.7	-27.3	-22.7	-16.3	-11.4	-9.7	-5.9	-8.0	-2.4 ¹	6.7	1.5 ¹
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 ¹

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

1. The difference is not statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.
2. Less than 0.5%.

Table 7: Victimization rates for personal and household crimes, by region, 1990-91¹

	Victimisations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older or per 1,000 households											
	Northeast			Midwest			South			West		
	1990	1991	% change 1990-91	1990	1991	% change 1990-91	1990	1991	% change 1990-91	1990	1991	% change 1990-91
Personal crimes	72.1	69.7	-3.4	97.7	91.1	-6.7 ²	95.6	90.7	-5.2 ²	107.8	121.5	12.7 ³
Crimes of violence	21.8	25.5	17.1 ²	30.5	30.9	1.2	31.1	30.6	-1.8	34.2	39.4	15.3 ²
-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 ³	25.5	25.9	1.8	25.1	24.5	-2.3	27.5	32.1	16.8 ²
-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 ²	17.1	19.2	11.7 ³	15.7	15.6	-7.2	18.5	22.0	18.4
Crimes of theft	50.3	44.2	-12.3 ³	67.1	60.2	-10.2 ³	64.5	60.2	-6.8 ²	73.6	82.0	11.5 ³
-personal larceny												
-with contact	6.3	3.4	-45.6 ³	2.9	1.5	-47.1 ³	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 ²	62.5	58.1	-6.9 ²	71.7	79.3	10.7 ³
Total population aged 12 or older (in 1,000s)	44,202	44,238	(4)	46,527	45,552	(4)	72,086	74,188	2.9	40,459	40,367	(4)
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 ²	83.8	83.7	(4)	92.9	87.7	-5.6	110.6	117.4	6.2
Motor vehicle theft	24.7	24.6	(4)	15.1	18.3	21.1	19.7	19.5	-1.1	24.0	27.3	13.4
Total number of households (in 1,000s)	20,507	20,559	(4)	22,427	22,445	(4)	33,962	34,994	3.0	18,866	18,841	(4)

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

1. See methodology, page 7.
2. The difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.
3. The difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
4. Less than 0.5%.

Table 8: Percent distribution of victimisations reported to the police, reasons for reporting and not reporting victimisations to the police, by type of crime, 1991

	Crimes of violence						Crimes of theft	Household crimes			
	Total	Rape	Robbery	Assault		Simple		Total	Burglary	Household larceny	Motor vehicle theft
				Total	Aggravated						
Victimisations reported to police	48.6%	58.8%	54.5%	46.9%	58.4%	41.5%	28.5%	41.2%	49.9%	27.8%	73.7%
Reasons for reporting victimisations to police											
Stop/prevent this incident	16.5%	8.7% ¹	7.0%	20.0%	20.9%	19.6%	3.6%	5.0%	6.1%	4.5%	3.6%
Needed help due to injury	2.8	7.7 ¹	1.6 ¹	2.6	2.0 ¹	2.9	.1 ¹	.1 ¹	0 ¹	.2 ¹	.2 ¹
To recover property	6.3	4.2 ¹	24.0	1.4 ¹	2.2 ¹	.9 ¹	30.8	26.7	21.0	25.3	39.6
To collect insurance	.5 ¹	0 ¹	.8 ¹	.4 ¹	.7 ¹	.3 ¹	10.2	7.0	6.4	5.5	10.6
Prevent further crimes by offender against victim	19.3	19.6	8.4	22.5	19.7	23.9	4.4	9.6	11.8	10.5	4.2
Prevent crime by offender against anyone	9.5	10.5 ¹	8.6	9.6	11.9	8.5	5.1	5.4	5.0	5.6	5.7
To locate offender	16.5	25.0	22.6	13.9	13.9	13.9	9.6	13.4	14.7	12.6	12.4
To improve police surveillance	3.9	8.1 ¹	3.1 ¹	3.7	4.8	3.2	5.8	8.4	8.9	9.3	6.1
Duty to tell police	17.5	7.4 ¹	19.5	17.9	19.2	17.2	24.4	20.4	21.6	22.5	14.7
Some other reason	5.9	8.7 ¹	3.2 ¹	6.4	4.3 ¹	7.5	4.5	2.7	3.4	2.7	1.3 ¹
Not available	1.3	0 ¹	1.1 ¹	1.4 ¹	.3 ¹	2.0 ¹	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.5	1.6 ¹
Reasons for not reporting victimisations to police											
Reported to another official	13.4%	16.9%	5.3%	15.0%	8.6%	17.0%	17.1%	3.9%	8.4%	2.2%	2.8% ¹
Private or personal matter	17.6	24.7 ¹	6.6	19.8	18.1	20.3	2.4	5.3	5.4	5.2	6.2
Object recovered; offender unsuccessful	18.1	5.7 ¹	19.3	18.2	16.1	18.8	26.0	30.3	25.5	32.4	29.3
Not important enough	5.5	1.7 ¹	1.8 ¹	6.4	6.5	6.4	2.2	4.5	5.5	4.4	1.1 ¹
Not aware crime occurred until later	.5 ¹	1.8 ¹	.6 ¹	.5 ¹	.9 ¹	.3 ¹	5.7	7.2	9.0	6.5	6.1
Unable to recover property; no ID number	.9	.0 ¹	5.1	0 ¹	0 ¹	0 ¹	8.6	7.6	5.7	9.0	.7 ¹
Lack of proof	7.1	10.0 ¹	14.5	5.4	7.5	4.8	12.3	12.0	11.7	12.0	13.7
Police would not want to be bothered	12.6	3.2 ¹	20.6	11.2	13.2	10.6	11.2	13.5	13.3	13.4	15.6
Fear of reprisal	4.3	10.9 ¹	5.2	3.9	6.9	3.0	.3	.7	.9	.6	0 ¹
Too inconvenient or time consuming	4.5	6.4 ¹	6.2	4.0	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.2	2.6	3.1	6.6
Other reasons	15.5	18.7 ¹	14.9	15.5	18.1	14.8	10.3	11.8	12.0	11.1	17.9

1. Estimate is based on about 10 or fewer cases.

Table 9: Victimization rates for persons aged 12 or older, by type of crime and sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, and locality of residence of victims, 1991

	Victimisations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older						
	Crime of violence						Crimes of theft
	Total	Total ¹	Robbery	Total	Assault 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

1. Includes data on rape not shown separately.

Table 10: Household victimisation rates, by type of crime and race, ethnicity, income, residence, and form of tenure of head of household, 1991

	Victimisations 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
Nonmetrop. 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

ANNEX

