



Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

Black Victims

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Data from the National Crime Survey (NCS) show that between 1979 and 1986 blacks had higher rates of violent and household crime victimization than whites. In addition, violent crimes committed against blacks tended to be more serious than those committed against whites.

Major findings of this report include—

- During 1979 to 1986 the violent crime victimization rate for persons age 12 or older was 44 per 1,000 blacks and 34 per 1,000 whites. Blacks experienced higher rates of rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, but whites had higher rates of simple assault and personal theft.

- Blacks had higher robbery rates than whites for both males and females. Robbery rates per 1,000 persons were 18 robberies for black males, 7 for white males, 9 for black females, and 4 for white females. Robbery rates were higher for blacks than for whites for all age and marital status categories and nearly all levels of family income. Robbery rates for blacks and whites with family incomes of \$50,000 or more did not differ.

- In central cities, blacks had higher robbery and household burglary rates than whites regardless of the age or family income of the victim or household head. In the suburbs and nonmetropolitan areas, blacks had higher rates than whites for these crimes but there were fewer measurable differences when age, family income, and home ownership were taken into account.

April 1990

Analyzing data collected over 8 years, this Bureau of Justice Statistics report reveals that black Americans suffer relatively more violent crime than other Americans and that crimes against them cause greater injury than similar crimes committed against persons of other races. Moreover, compared to white victims of violent crime, black victims were more likely to report the crimes to the police.

These conclusions come from the National Crime Survey, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The NCS is the Nation's second largest ongoing household survey, asking the members of 50,000 households to describe any criminal victimization they suffered during the previous 6 months. The NCS is a rich source of data on how crime affects Americans of all races and backgrounds.

Joseph M. Bessette
Acting Director

- Offenders were more likely to have weapons in violent crimes committed against blacks than in those against whites. The percentage of violent crimes against blacks in which the offender had a gun was nearly twice the percentage of violent crimes in which whites were the victims (11% versus 20%).

- Of all crimes of violence committed by single offenders against white or black victims, 69% involved a white offender and a white victim, 15% involved a black offender and a white victim, 11% involved a black offender and a black victim, and 2% involved a white offender and a black victim. (About 3% involved offenders of other races.)

- Robbery was the violent crime most likely to have an offender and victims of different races—about 37% of all robberies committed by a single offender and involving white or black victims.

- Black victims were more likely than white victims to be physically attacked during a violent crime. Although white robbery victims were more likely than black robbery victims to be physically attacked, offenders were more likely to attack black victims of aggravated assault than white victims (48% versus 41%). In aggravated assaults, black victims were more likely than white victims to be injured. Black victims injured in violent crimes were more likely to sustain serious injuries than white victims.

This report presents NCS data on the rates and characteristics of crimes experienced by blacks and whites during the period 1979 to 1986. The NCS collects information from a nationally representative sample of households about completed and attempted crimes, including incidents not reported to law enforcement authorities. Not included in this report is information about crimes experienced by other racial groups who represent about 2% of the population age 12 or older and experience about 2% of the NCS crimes. Data about

Hispanic victims have been published separately.¹ In this report, both races include persons with Hispanic origins.

Victimization rates

During 1979 through 1986, blacks had a higher annual average rate of violent crime than whites (table 1). The violent crime victimization rate was 44 per 1,000 blacks and 34 per 1,000 whites. Blacks experienced higher rates of rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, but whites had a higher rate of simple assault.

¹Hispanic victims, BJS Special Report, NCJ-120507, January 1990.

Whites had a higher rate of personal crimes of theft than did blacks primarily because of a greater likelihood of experiencing personal larceny without contact (78 versus 71 per 1,000). Blacks were more likely than whites to be a victim of personal larceny with contact, which consists of purse snatching and pocket picking.

For each of the three categories of household crime, households headed by blacks had higher victimization rates than households headed by whites.

Trends

During 1979 to 1986 the trends in personal crimes for blacks and whites were similar. The annual rate of violent crime decreased by about 20% during this period for whites and 17% for blacks (figure 1).

Both blacks and whites had decreasing annual rates of crimes of theft during 1979 to 1986. Although whites had somewhat higher rates of crimes of theft than blacks in 1979, the rates for the two groups did not differ in the early 1980's. From 1983 to 1986, the rates of crimes of theft decreased by 21% for blacks and 12% for whites.

Table 1. Average annual victimization rates and number of victimizations, by race of victim and type of crime, 1979-86

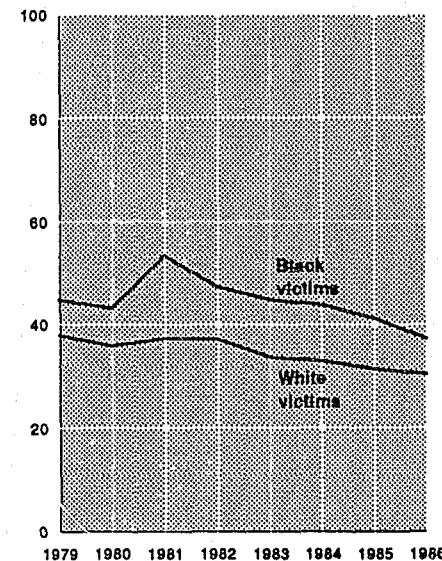
	Race of victim	
	White	Black
Victimization rates		
Crimes of violence	34.5	44.3
Rape	.8	1.5
Robbery	5.4	13.0
Aggravated assault	9.3	13.8
Simple assault	18.9	16.0
Crimes of theft	80.5	77.1
Personal larceny with contact	2.6	5.6
Personal larceny without contact	77.9	71.4
Household crimes	201.0	260.7
Burglary	72.4	108.4
Household larceny	113.7	127.9
Motor vehicle theft	14.9	24.5
Number of victimizations		
Crimes of violence	5,638,350	937,960
Rape	135,420	31,460
Robbery	890,570	276,010
Aggravated assault	1,526,060	292,790
Simple assault	3,086,300	337,700
Crimes of theft	13,172,080	1,630,430
Personal larceny with contact	427,970	118,680
Personal larceny without contact	12,744,110	1,511,740
Household crimes	15,063,000	2,448,720
Burglary	5,426,690	1,017,850
Household larceny	8,518,440	1,200,880
Motor vehicle theft	1,117,860	229,980
Number of persons	163,599,680	21,159,700
Number of households	74,945,970	9,392,490

Note: The victimization rate is the annual average of the number of victimizations for 1979-86 per 1,000 persons or households in that racial group. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Personal crime rates, by race of victim, 1979-86

Crimes of violence

Crimes per 1,000 population age 12 and older



Crimes of theft

Crimes per 1,000 population age 12 and older

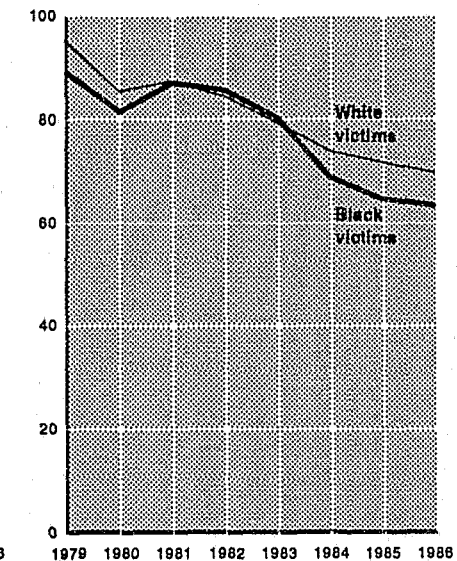


Figure 1

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Household crime rates, by race, 1979-86

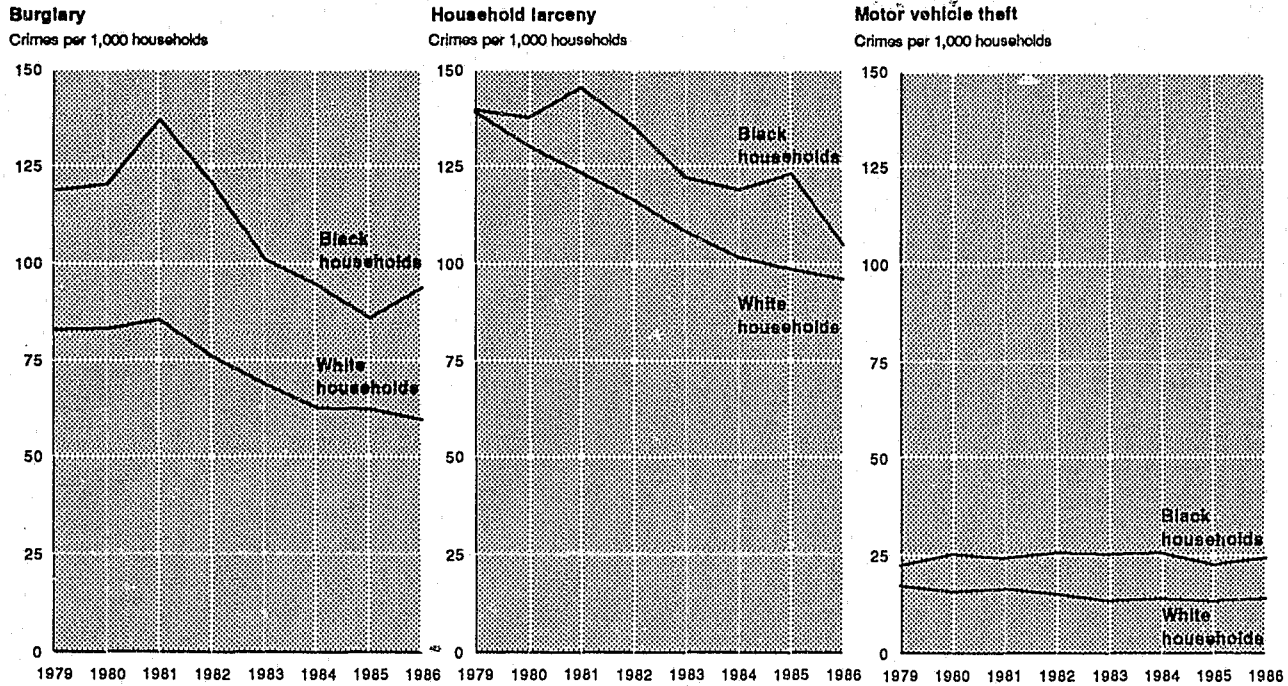


Figure 2

Both groups experienced a decline in burglary rates from 1979 to 1986 (figure 2). Black and white households had similar household larceny rates at the beginning of the period and in 1986. Black households had higher household larceny rates than white households beginning in 1981 and ending in 1985.

Although the rate of motor vehicle theft did not change for black households, the rate of motor vehicle theft for white households in 1986 was significantly lower than the annual rates for 1979 to 1981.

Victim characteristics

NCS data have consistently shown that certain population groups, especially males, the poor, younger persons, and central-city residents, have higher victimization rates than others. Blacks in the United States are more likely than whites to be in some of these groups associated with a higher risk of victimization. From 1979 to 1986, 56% of blacks and 24% of whites lived in central cities (table 2).

Table 2. Percent of racial groups, by selected demographic characteristics, 1979-86

Characteristic	Race		Characteristic	Race	
	White	Black		White	Black
Sex			Location of residence		
Male	48%	45%	Metropolitan area		
Female	52	55	Central city	24%	56%
			Suburb	43	23
Age			Nonmetropolitan area	32	22
12-15	7%	10%	Family income		
16-19	8	11	Less than \$7,500	13%	32%
20-24	11	13	\$7,500-14,999	19	24
25-34	21	22	\$15,000-24,999	24	18
35-49	21	20	\$25,000-49,999	25	12
50-64	18	15	\$50,000 or more	7	2
65 or older	14	10	Not ascertained	11	11-
Marital status*			Home ownership		
Married	58%	37%	Owned	72%	51%
Widowed	7	8	Rented	23	49
Divorced or separated	7	14			
Never married	28	42			

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. Data are based on population estimates calculated from the NCS; see *Methodology*. The average annual number of persons estimated for 1979-

86 was 163,599,670 whites and 21,159,700 blacks. *The category "marital status not ascertained" is not displayed.

Blacks also tend to have lower family incomes than whites. The percentage of those with family incomes below \$7,500 was 32% for blacks and 13% for whites. In the sections that follow, victimization rates for these different demographic groups are analyzed to see if the differences between blacks and whites persist

when other risk factors are taken into account. Robbery, aggravated assault, and household burglary are discussed; these three crimes are often considered to be among the most serious measured by the NCS. (Comparable data for other NCS crimes are presented in appendix table 1.)

Robbery

Robbery rates remained higher for blacks than whites when other characteristics associated with victim risk were considered. For males and females, robbery rates were higher for blacks than for whites (table 3). Robbery rates per 1,000 persons were 18 for black males, 7 for white males, 9 for black females, and 4 for white females. Within each age and marital status category, blacks had higher robbery rates than whites. In metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, blacks were more likely to be a robbery victim than whites, although the differences were smaller in the suburbs and nonmetropolitan areas than in central cities. Robbery rates for blacks and whites with family incomes of \$50,000 or more did not differ (6 versus 4 per 1,000). Among those with family incomes less than \$50,000, blacks had higher robbery rates than whites. Robbery rates were higher for blacks living in households headed by a married couple,

Table 3. Robbery rates, by selected personal or household characteristics and race of victim, 1979-86

Personal or household characteristic	Average annual rate of robbery per 1,000 persons	
	White	Black
Sex		
Male	7.2	18.5
Female	3.8	8.5
Age		
12-15	9.0	16.5
16-19	9.5	18.3
20-24	10.5	19.9
25-34	6.4	14.8
35-49	3.8	9.1
50-64	2.8	8.3
65 or older	2.1	6.3
Marital status^a		
Never married	9.9	18.5
Divorced or separated	12.3	16.9
Widowed	3.1	6.2
Married	2.7	6.9
Location of residence		
Metropolitan area		
Central city	10.1	18.7
Suburb	5.0	7.9
Nonmetropolitan area	2.6	3.8
Family Income^b		
Less than \$7,500	9.5	17.1
\$7,500-14,999	6.3	13.0
\$15,000-24,999	4.6	10.4
\$25,000-49,999	4.1	9.1
\$50,000 or more	4.1	6.5

Note: Victimization rates are average annual rates per 1,000 persons.

^aThe category "marital status not ascertained" is not displayed.

^bThe category "family income not ascertained" is not displayed.

a single parent, or a single person without children than for whites in comparable households (table 4).

Aggravated assault

Blacks did not have consistently higher aggravated assault rates than whites when other personal and household characteristics were examined. There were no differences in aggravated assault rates for blacks and whites age 16 to 24 and age 65 or older (table 5). Consistent with the rates for the elderly, widowed blacks had an aggravated assault rate similar to that of widowed whites (3 versus 2 per 1,000). Among divorced or separated persons, whites had a higher aggravated assault rate than blacks (19 versus 15 per 1,000). Blacks with family income below \$15,000 were more likely than whites with comparable incomes to experience an aggravated assault, but at higher income levels there were no measurable differences in rates.

Table 4. Robbery and aggravated assault rates, by household structure and race of victim, 1985-87

Household structure	Type of crime and race of victim			
	Robbery		Aggravated assault	
	White	Black	White	Black
Household headed by:				
Married couple	3.0	6.2	5.8	7.7
Couple only	1.9	3.8	2.9	4.0
With children	3.3	6.5	7.1	10.2
With children and others	4.0	7.3	8.3	8.0
With others	3.9	7.1	6.3	4.6
Single parent	12.2	15.5	20.0	20.0
Father with children	10.1	10.5 ^a	20.1	9.8 ^a
Father with children and others	18.9	15.0	18.5	17.8
Mother with children	10.9	16.1	22.4	19.5
Mother with children and others	11.6	15.3	17.3	21.6
Single person without children	7.7	14.5	11.4	11.4
Man living alone	9.5	18.7	15.2	14.5
Man living with others	12.1	25.8	19.4	21.0
Woman living alone	4.1	9.8	4.3	5.4
Woman living with others	7.1	9.5	10.0	8.8

Note: Household composition is determined by the relationships of all persons in the sample unit to the head of household; see *Methodology*.
^aEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

Although blacks living in households headed by a married couple had somewhat higher aggravated assault rates than whites, blacks and whites in households headed by a single parent or a single person without children were equally likely to experience this crime (table 4).

Table 5. Aggravated assault rates, by selected personal or household characteristics and race of victim, 1979-86

Personal or household characteristic	Average annual rate of aggravated assault per 1,000 persons	
	White	Black
Sex		
Male	13.7	19.6
Female	5.2	9.1
Age		
12-15	11.7	16.1
16-19	21.8	25.2
20-24	22.2	24.2
25-34	12.2	17.6
35-49	6.0	9.2
50-64	2.6	4.3
65 or older	1.0	1.5
Marital status^a		
Never married	16.8	20.1
Divorced or separated	19.2	15.1
Widowed	1.8	2.7
Married	5.3	8.6
Location of residence		
Metropolitan area		
Central city	12.4	15.9
Suburb	8.9	12.4
Nonmetropolitan area	7.5	10.0
Family Income^b		
Less than \$7,500	14.7	17.6
\$7,500-14,999	10.6	14.5
\$15,000-24,999	9.1	11.0
\$25,000-49,999	7.7	8.6
\$50,000 or more	5.7	8.5

Note: Victimization rates are average annual rates per 1,000 persons.

^aThe category "marital status not ascertained" is not displayed.

^bThe category "family income not ascertained" is not displayed.

Burglary

Black households had higher rates of burglary than white households for each category of family income and in metropolitan or nonmetropolitan areas (table 6). Burglary rates per 1,000 households in central cities were 123 for black households and 94 for white households. In the suburbs and nonmetropolitan areas, the rates were 102 and 73 for black households and 68 and 61 for white households, respectively.

Table 6. Burglary rates, by selected personal or household characteristics and race of victim, 1979-86

Personal or household characteristic	Average annual rate of burglary per 1,000 households	
	White	Black
Sex		
Male	68.2	103.2
Female	82.5	114.1
Age		
16-19	209.7	235.1
20-24	131.0	158.8
25-34	84.0	133.1
35-49	80.6	107.0
50-64	55.8	85.6
65 or older	40.8	67.4
Marital status^a		
Never married	103.9	140.0
Divorced or separated	118.2	127.0
Widowed	50.9	89.8
Married	61.0	87.8
Location of residence		
Metropolitan area		
Central city	94.1	122.8
Suburb	67.6	101.9
Nonmetropolitan area	61.0	73.4
Family income^b		
Less than \$7,500	95.9	122.6
\$7,500-14,999	74.0	106.8
\$15,000-24,999	66.7	90.2
\$25,000-49,999	64.4	108.8
\$50,000 or more	72.1	117.7

Note: Victimization rates are average annual rates per 1,000 households. Personal characteristics are those of the head of household.

^aThe category "marital status not ascertained" is not displayed.

^bThe category "family income not ascertained" is not displayed.

Black households were more likely to be burglarized than white households regardless of the age, sex, and marital status of the head of household. The apparent difference in burglary rates between households headed by blacks age 16 to 19 and those headed by comparable whites was not statistically significant because of the comparatively small number of households headed by teenagers.

Household crimes

Black households were more likely to be burglarized than white households when home ownership, household size, and size of the structure containing the housing unit were considered (table 7). One exception to this finding was households with six or more persons; burglary rates for black and white households of this size did not vary (101 per 1,000 for both black and white households).

By contrast, black households did not have consistently higher rates of household larceny and motor vehicle theft than white households when these household characteristics were examined. White house-

holds that were in rented dwellings or in buildings of 5 to 9 units had higher household larceny rates than comparable black households. There were no significant differences in household larceny and motor vehicle theft rates between black and white households of three or more persons. Household larceny rates did not vary for households in buildings containing 2 to 4 or 10 or more housing units. There were no measurable differences in motor vehicle theft rates for black and white households in buildings containing two to nine housing units.

Victimization rates by location of residence

Since a higher proportion of blacks than whites live in central cities (56% versus 24%), central-city crime rates have a greater influence on the total rate for blacks than for whites. When victimization rates for persons in different age, income, and home ownership categories are examined, blacks in central cities had higher robbery and burglary rates than whites, but fewer differences were found in suburban and nonmetropolitan areas.

Table 7. Household crimes by selected household characteristics and race of victim, 1979-86

Household characteristic	Type of crime and race of victim					
	Burglary		Household larceny		Motor vehicle theft	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Home ownership						
Owned	59.1	88.2	97.8	122.6	11.4	24.1
Rented	99.2	124.2	145.6	132.0	22.0	24.8
Number of persons						
In households^a						
One	66.4	106.6	70.5	80.4	10.3	20.9
Two	64.4	100.1	97.1	113.7	12.9	24.5
Three	79.4	110.3	135.1	145.4	18.8	25.3
Four or five	81.0	120.6	154.0	162.6	18.1	27.1
Six or more	101.4	101.5	204.4	187.3	26.0	27.0
Number of housing units in structure^b						
One ^c	66.7	96.6	107.8	130.9	12.0	20.8
Two	90.2	129.3	143.9	153.5	20.9	31.1
Three	104.8	113.6	141.8	131.4	32.0	24.2
Four	95.8	148.8	160.8	150.9	21.2	25.8
Five to nine	91.5	121.8	145.4	121.1	22.3	24.0
Ten or more	71.8	107.4	100.5	94.8	23.6	30.9

Note: Victimization rates are average annual rates per 1,000 households. Race is that of the head of household.

^aThe category "household size not ascertained" is not displayed.

^bCensus-designated "other units" and the category "number of units not ascertained" are not displayed.

^cIncludes mobile homes and trailers.

Age and residence

In central cities, blacks in each age category had higher robbery rates than whites (table 8). In the suburbs, however, blacks and whites age 20 to 24 were the only age group with measurably different rates of robbery victimization (17 versus 10 per 1,000). In nonmetropolitan areas, the robbery rate per 1,000 persons age 25 to 34 was 6 for blacks and 3 for whites. For the other age categories, robbery rates for blacks and whites in nonmetropolitan areas were not measurably different.

Black households in each area generally had higher burglary rates than white households although the differences for households headed by persons age 16 to 19 were not statistically significant. In nonmetropolitan areas, households headed by whites age 35 to 49 had higher burglary rates than comparable black households (66 versus 50 per 1,000).

Blacks age 25 to 34 in suburban and nonmetropolitan areas had somewhat higher aggravated assault rates than comparable whites; these were the only measurable differences found for this crime. In both the suburbs and nonmetropolitan areas, the aggravated assault rate for blacks age 25 to 34 was about 17 per 1,000. For whites age 25 to 34, the aggravated assault rate was about 11 per 1,000 in the suburbs and 10 per 1,000 in nonmetropolitan areas.

Income and residence

In central cities, blacks in each income category had higher robbery and burglary rates than whites (table 9). In the suburbs, blacks with incomes above \$15,000 had higher robbery rates than whites, but robbery and burglary rates for blacks and whites in nonmetropolitan areas did not vary. Blacks in central cities with family incomes below \$15,000 had higher aggravated assault rates than whites; at higher income levels in central cities and for all income levels in the suburbs and nonmetropolitan areas, no measurable differences were found. For example, aggravated assault rates for blacks and whites with family incomes of \$15,000 to \$24,999 were 12 and 13 per 1,000 in central cities, 11 and 9 per 1,000 in the suburbs, and 8 and 6 per 1,000 in nonmetropolitan areas, respectively.

Table 8. Victimization rates, by age, race, and location of residence of victim, 1979-86

Location of residence and age of victim	Type of crime and race of victim					
	Robbery		Aggravated assault		Burglary	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Metropolitan area						
Central city						
12-15	18.5	25.9	16.5	21.0		
16-19	15.8	26.8	28.4	32.0	221.6	238.8
20-24	14.4	27.0	27.9	27.8	156.1	172.0
25-34	11.2	20.9	16.3	18.2	111.8	150.0
35-49	8.7	13.5	7.5	10.5	105.3	126.8
50-64	6.6	12.5	4.0	5.5	71.1	97.1
65 or older	4.9	8.6	1.7	1.5*	55.0	75.6
Suburb						
12-15	8.5	10.3	10.7	11.2		
16-19	9.6	10.8	22.2	21.8	202.4	302.6
20-24	10.1	16.8	20.9	21.4	119.4	131.5
25-34	5.8	7.8	11.3	16.9	75.6	125.4
35-49	3.0	4.4	5.8	7.4	78.1	99.8
50-64	2.2	4.0	2.3	3.0*	54.8	68.8
65 or older	1.7	3.4*	.7	1.9*	34.3	61.7
Nonmetropolitan area						
12-15	4.3	.9*	10.4	9.7		
16-19	5.4	6.5	17.0	13.2	206.4	190.8
20-24	7.3	5.5	18.6	18.1	119.5	153.3
25-34	2.9	6.1	10.1	16.9	69.6	86.0
35-49	1.5	2.3*	5.4	7.8	66.0	49.9
50-64	.8	1.5*	1.9	2.4	45.5	67.1
65 or older	.5	3.3*	.7	1.2*	36.5	54.3

Note: Robbery and aggravated assault rates are average annual rates per 1,000 persons. Burglary rates are average annual rates per 1,000 households. For burglary, personal

characteristics are those of the head of household. *Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

Table 9. Victimization rates, by family income, race, and location of residence of victim, 1979-86

Location of residence and income of victim	Type of crime and race of victim					
	Robbery		Aggravated assault		Burglary	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Metropolitan area						
Central city						
Less than \$15,000	14.2	22.7	16.0	19.1	109.2	131.7
\$15,000-24,999	8.1	13.8	13.2	11.9	88.1	106.3
\$25,000 or more	6.8	12.4	9.0	11.1	83.4	128.0
Suburb						
Less than \$15,000	7.2	8.9	12.1	15.1	77.8	116.7
\$15,000-24,999	4.7	7.3	9.0	10.7	66.1	80.7
\$25,000 or more	4.0	6.5	7.7	7.6	63.4	125.7
Nonmetropolitan area						
Less than \$15,000	3.4	4.0	10.0	11.1	70.9	80.7
\$15,000-24,999	2.0	4.1	6.5	8.1	51.2	44.1
\$25,000 or more	2.0	.5*	5.5	1.2*	55.2	70.3

Note: Robbery and aggravated assault rates are average annual rates per 1,000 persons. Burglary rates are average annual rates per 1,000 households. For burglary, personal

characteristics are those of the head of household. *Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

Home ownership and residence

Blacks who lived in houses that they owned or were buying had higher robbery and burglary rates than comparable whites in central cities and the suburbs (table 10). Blacks in rental housing had higher robbery rates in central cities and higher burglary rates in central cities and the suburbs. Burglary rates per 1,000 households for black and white homeowners were 110 and 82 in central cities and 87 and 58 in the suburbs. For black and white renters, burglary rates per 1,000 households were 130 and 107 in central cities and 119 and 91 in the suburbs. Blacks living in their own houses in central cities had higher aggravated assault rates than comparable whites. There were no measurable differences in aggravated assault rates for owners or renters in suburban and nonmetropolitan areas.

Crime characteristics

The severity of crime is often measured by physical attacks against the victim, the

presence of armed offenders, and the extent of injuries to the victim. NCS data on these characteristics suggest that violent crimes against blacks are more serious than those against whites.

Weapons

Black victims were more likely than white victims to face an armed offender during a violent crime (table 11). The proportion of robberies and aggravated assaults committed by an offender armed with a gun was higher for black victims than for white victims (29% versus 17% for robberies, 36% versus 29% for aggravated assault). Black victims were more likely than white victims to face an offender armed with a knife during an aggravated assault, but the proportions of black and white robbery victims who faced offenders armed with knives did not differ (16%).

Attacks

Violent crimes are defined in the NCS as physical attacks or as threats against the

victim. Offenders can attack victims by using weapons or physical force; victims may or may not sustain injuries as a result. Threats include verbal threats, following the victim, or displaying (but not using) weapons.

Black victims were more likely than white victims to be physically attacked during violent crimes (table 12). In particular, a higher proportion of black victims of aggravated assault than of white victims were physically attacked (48% versus 41%). White robbery victims were more likely than black robbery victims to be physically attacked.

Injuries

White robbery victims were more likely than black victims of this crime to sustain injuries (34% versus 28%). Black victims of aggravated assault were more likely than white victims to be injured (38% versus 32%); this finding can be attributed in part to the higher percentage of attacks among black victims than among white

Table 10. Victimization rates, by home ownership, race, and location of residence of victim, 1979-86

Location of residence and home ownership	Type of crime and race of victim					
	Robbery		Aggravated assault		Burglary	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Metropolitan area						
Central city						
Owned	5.5	10.7	8.0	11.4	82.1	109.9
Rented	16.6	25.2	18.8	19.6	107.3	130.5
Suburb						
Owned	3.5	5.6	6.6	8.3	57.8	87.0
Rented	9.7	11.2	16.3	18.2	91.5	117.6
Nonmetropolitan area						
Owned	1.6	2.2	4.9	6.1	47.3	46.2
Rented	6.0	6.1	16.3	15.8	98.5	106.5

Note: Robbery and aggravated assault rates are average annual rates per 1,000 persons. Burglary rates are average annual rates per 1,000 households. For burglary, personal characteristics are those of the head of household.

Table 11. Presence of weapons in violent crimes, 1979-86

Type of weapon used by offender	Type of crime and race of victim					
	Crimes of violence*		Robbery		Aggravated assault	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No weapon	60	42	43	30	6	3
Weapon	33	48	46	57	94	97
Gun	11	20	17	29	29	36
Knife	9	14	16	16	22	27
Other	12	13	11	10	38	30
Type not ascertained	2	2	2	2	4	3
Don't know	7	10	11	12	--	1**

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. If the offender had more than one weapon, the crime is classified by the most serious weapon present. --Less than 0.5%.

*Include data on simple assaults, which by definition cannot be committed by an armed offender, and rape. **Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

Table 12. Attacks and injuries in violent crimes, 1979-86

Type of crime and race of victim	Type of crime and race of victim							
	Crimes of violence*		Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Not attacked	53	50	46	50	59	52	54	50
Attacked	47	50	54	50	41	48	46	50
Injured	29	31	34	28	32	38	26	26
Not injured	18	19	20	22	10	11	20	24

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

*Include data on rape, not shown as a separate category.

victims.² Black victims of simple assault were about as likely as white victims of this crime to sustain injuries.

When injured, black violent crime victims were more likely than white victims to sustain serious injuries (table 13). About 24% of injured black victims and 16% of injured white victims sustained serious injuries. The proportion of injuries that were knife wounds and gunshot wounds was higher for blacks than for whites. This finding is consistent with the higher percentage of black victims than of white victims who faced offenders armed with guns or knives.

Medical care

A higher proportion of injured black victims of violent crime than of injured white victims received medical care (table 14). Injured black victims were more likely than injured white victims to receive medical care in a hospital. The proportion of injured black victims hospitalized overnight or longer was twice the percentage of injured whites (8% versus 4%).

²When injuries are calculated as a percentage of those attacked, white robbery victims were more likely to be injured than black robbery victims (63% versus 56%). However, there was no significant difference in the proportion of black versus white victims of aggravated assault who sustained serious injuries (77% versus 78%).

Table 13. Type of injuries sustained in violent crimes, by race of injured victim, 1979-86

Type of Injury	Race of Injured victim	
	White	Black
Total	100%	100%
Serious Injuries	16%	24%
Knife wounds	3	8
Gunshot or bullet wounds	1	3
Broken bones, teeth knocked out	7	5
Internal injuries	3	4
Knocked unconscious	4	5
Other Injuries only ^a	--	1*
Minor Injuries only ^b	84%	76%

Note: The individual injury categories sum to more than the total for serious injuries because some victims sustained multiple serious injuries.

--Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

^aUndetermined injuries resulting in 2 or more days of hospitalization.

^bBruses, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, or undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization.

Reporting crimes to the police

About 35% of crimes against whites and 37% of crimes against blacks were reported to the police (table 15). Black victims were more likely than white victims to report to the police violent crimes, burglary, and motor vehicle theft; a higher proportion of white victims than of black victims reported crimes of theft and household larceny to law enforcement authorities. Past research has shown that police reporting rates vary more by the severity of the incident than by the characteristics of the victim. The higher rates of police reporting by black violent crime victims than by white victims is consistent with the greater likelihood that they will face armed offenders and sustain serious injuries.

Table 14. Medical attention received, by race of injured victim of violent crime, 1979-86

Medical care	Race of Injured victim	
	White	Black
Total receiving care	46%	61%
In hospital		
Overnight or longer	4	8
Less than a day	9	13
Emergency room	10	15
Doctor's office	6	6
Health unit	1	1
At home	14	15
At scene	2	1
Other	1	--*

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. Injured victims who received medical care in more than one place are tallied once in the location offering the most intensive medical care.

--Less than 0.5%.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.

Offender characteristics

The NCS collects from crime victims these characteristics about offenders: sex, race, age, and relationship to the victim. The proportion of violent crimes committed by males and by offenders from different age groups tended to be similar for black and white victims. However, differences between black and white victims were found for the race of the offender and relationship to victim.

Table 15. Reporting crimes to the police, by race of victim and type of crime, 1979-86

Type of crime	Percent of crimes reported, by race of victim	
	White	Black
Total	35%	37%
Crimes of violence	48%	52%
Rape	51	57
Robbery	55	55
Aggravated assault	57	59
Simple assault	41	43
Crimes of theft	27%	24%
Household crimes	38%	40%
Burglary	49	52
Household larceny	27	23
Motor vehicle theft	69	75

Race of offender

Of all crimes of violence committed by lone offenders against white or black victims, 69% involved white offenders and white victims; 15% involved black offenders and white victims; 11% involved black offenders and black victims; and 2% involved white offenders and black victims (table 16). (About 3% of violent crimes involved offenders of other races.)

Robbery was the violent crime most likely to have offenders and victims of different races — about 37% of all robberies committed by a lone offender involved victims and offenders of different races.

The proportions of crimes committed by multiple offenders that involved offenders and victims of the same race were similar to the findings for lone offenders. However, the proportion of crimes involving either white victims and offenders or black victims and offenders was lower primarily because of crimes committed by offenders from different racial groups.

Victim-offender relationship

Black-victims of aggravated or simple assault were more likely than white assault victims to report that they knew the offenders (table 17). The proportion of robberies committed by nonstrangers did not vary by the race of the victim.

Methodology

The NCS obtains information about crimes, including incidents not reported to the police, from a nationally representative sample of households. In 1986 about 100,000 persons 12 years old or older in 49,000 households took part in the survey. The NCS measures attempted and completed incidents of rape, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, personal theft, burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

In this report, series crimes are counted as one incident, and the characteristics are those of the most recent event in the series. Series crimes are three or more similar crimes that the victim cannot describe as separate events.

Calculation of rates

The rates in this report are annual average rates for the period 1979 to 1986. The numerator of a given rate is the sum of the crimes that occurred each year from 1979

Table 16. Race of victim, by race and number of offenders, 1979-86

Number of offenders by victim/offender race	Crimes of violence				
	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault	
Single-offender victimizations					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White victims					
White offenders	69	63	44	67	76
Black offenders	15	15	31	13	12
Other race offenders	3	5	4	3	3
Black victims					
White offenders	2	2*	2	2	1
Black offenders	11	16	19	15	8
Other race offenders	--	--*	1	--	--
Multiple-offender victimizations					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White victims					
White offenders	53	39	28	61	66
Black offenders	21	22	34	14	14
Other race offenders	4	5*	4	4	3
Mixed racial groups	6	12	7	6	6
Black victims					
White offenders	2	4*	2	2	2
Black offenders	13	16	22	11	8
Other race offenders	1	1*	1	--	--*
Mixed racial groups	1	1*	2	1	1

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. Excludes crimes where the number of offenders was not known or not ascertained.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases; see *Methodology*.
--Less than 0.5%.

Table 17. Victim-offender relationship in violent crimes, 1979-86

Type of crime and race of victim	Type of crime and race of victim							
	Crimes of violence*		Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Stranger	58	54	75	75	60	46	52	42
Non-stranger	38	42	21	20	34	48	44	54
Don't know/not ascertained	4	5	4	5	6	6	3	3

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding. Multiple-offender victimizations are classified by the most intimate relationship between the

victim and one of the offenders.
*Include data on rape, not shown separately.

to 1986; the denominator is the sum of the annual population totals for these years. The average annual rate per 1,000 is computed as follows:

$$\frac{(x1979 + \dots + x1986) \times 1,000}{(y1979 + \dots + y1986)}$$

where x1979 is the number of victimizations in 1979 and y1979 is the appropriate population total for x in that year.

Calculation of population estimates

The population proportions presented in table 2 of this report are calculated from estimates derived from the NCS. Included in the NCS are persons age 12 or older living in households, including group quarters such as dormitories. The estimates do not include children under 12, institutionalized persons, U.S. citizens living abroad, crew

members of merchant vessels, and Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks. The percentages are calculated using a formula similar to the one used for average annual rates.

Household composition

Household composition is determined by the relationship of all persons in the unit to the reference person or head of household. The reference person is one of the household members who owns, rents, or is buying the housing unit and who is generally 18 years old or older. Household members are defined as children if they are age 18 or younger. Adult children of the reference person, other relatives, and persons unrelated to the household head are listed as "other persons." If a spouse is not present, the head of household is defined as not married regardless of the marital status reported by that person.

Reliability of comparisons

All comparisons presented in this report were tested to determine if the differences were statistically significant. Most comparisons passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (or the 95% confidence level), meaning that the estimated difference between comparisons was greater than twice the standard error of this difference. Statements qualified by "somewhat" or "some evidence" were significant at the 90% level.

The data tables note when estimates are based on 10 or fewer sample cases. Since standard errors cannot be computed accurately for such estimates, it is inadvisable to compare estimates based upon 10 or fewer sample cases to other small estimates.

More information on NCS estimation procedures can be obtained from appendix III of *Criminal victimization in the United States, 1987* (NCJ-115524).

Appendix: Race and homicide

The NCS does not collect data on homicide; information on this crime can be obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). UCR data are compiled from police department reports sent to the FBI either directly or through State agencies. Murder as defined in the UCR includes nonnegligent manslaughter but excludes

Appendix table 1. Selected victimization rates, by personal or household characteristics and race of victim, 1979-86

Personal or household characteristic	Crimes of violence				Crimes of theft		Household larceny		Motor vehicle theft	
	Total		Simple assault		White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Sex										
Male	44.8	54.8	23.7	16.5	86.1	86.6	116.1	135.1	15.9	28.9
Female	24.9	35.6	14.4	15.5	75.3	69.1	107.8	119.8	12.6	19.5
Age										
12-15	57.8	63.1	35.9	28.4	132.4	106.0				
16-19	73.3	71.6	39.5	25.6	135.7	89.7	242.6	199.4	33.5	24.5
20-24	73.2	72.6	38.5	26.0	131.2	111.5	196.0	172.7	29.9	30.7
25-34	44.3	52.8	24.7	18.2	93.5	94.4	146.7	151.0	19.4	29.1
35-49	23.0	29.4	12.8	10.2	72.7	66.7	129.7	134.6	17.4	27.5
50-64	10.5	18.2	5.1	5.4	46.5	43.2	89.4	112.6	11.7	24.9
65 or older	5.3	10.8	2.2	2.8	21.6	23.8	50.6	72.3	4.5	8.5
Marital status^a										
Never married	63.2	65.0	34.9	24.1	129.3	92.8	135.0	126.3	22.0	24.2
Divorced or separated	72.8	54.2	38.6	20.3	113.5	80.4	148.3	132.6	19.3	25.5
Widowed	8.6	14.5	3.6	5.2	29.5	30.2	57.6	86.5	5.4	10.2
Married	18.6	23.2	10.3	7.3	58.6	67.7	113.5	140.6	14.4	29.3
Location of residence										
Metropolitan area										
Central city	46.7	55.0	22.9	18.7	99.1	83.5	142.3	139.8	22.4	30.5
Suburb	33.9	36.3	19.3	14.6	85.3	89.4	112.4	129.9	15.6	25.8
Nonmetropolitan area	26.1	25.1	15.3	10.4	60.1	47.4	92.1	90.9	8.0	5.4
Family income^b										
Less than \$7,500	53.1	56.4	27.0	19.2	76.4	63.6	115.0	109.7	11.1	12.8
\$7,500-14,999	38.8	43.6	20.9	14.8	75.2	78.9	122.0	138.9	14.6	25.6
\$15,000-24,999	31.9	36.2	17.7	14.3	80.4	85.5	121.9	141.8	15.6	33.7
\$25,000-49,999	29.5	32.7	17.2	14.2	87.3	100.9	111.2	152.5	15.7	44.3
\$50,000 or more	26.0	27.4	15.7	11.9	102.6	115.2	104.8	165.2	19.7	51.3

Note: Crimes of violence and crimes of theft are average annual rates per 1,000 persons. Household larceny and motor vehicle theft rates are annual average rates per 1,000 households. For household larceny and motor vehicle theft, personal characteristics are those of the head of household.

^aThe category "marital status not ascertained" is not displayed.

^bThe category "family income not ascertained" is not displayed.

negligent manslaughter, suicide, and justifiable homicide. In addition to the number of murders, police departments provide information on the characteristics of homicide victims and offenders and the circumstances surrounding the murder.

Supplemental information was collected for about 93% of the estimated 20,610 murders that occurred in 1986. In 2% of the cases where some supplemental information was available, data on the characteristics of the victim were missing. Ratios were applied to the available data to obtain estimates of the total number of homicides by the race, sex, and age of the victim. These adjusted counts show that in 1986, an estimated 10,971 murder victims were white, 9,153 were black, and 486 victims belonged to other racial groups. Unadjusted counts were 10,199 white victims, 8,509 black victims, and 452 victims of other races.

Adjusted homicide rates show that the murder rate for blacks was nearly six times the rate for whites (31.2 versus 5.4 per 100,000). Homicide rates per 100,000 were highest for black males, followed by black females, white males, and white females:

	Adjusted rate per 100,000
Black total	31.2
Male	52.3
Female	12.3
White total	5.4
Male	7.9
Female	2.9

Males have higher homicide rates than females; this disparity is greater for blacks than for whites. The homicide rate for black males in 1986 was 4.3 times higher than the rate for black females. Among whites, the homicide rate for males was 2.7 times the rate for females.

For both races, homicide rates were highest for persons age 20 to 34 and lowest for those under age 12 (appendix table 2). Homicide rates were highest for black males age 25 to 34 who had a rate of 104.3 per 100,000, followed by black males age 20 to 24 at 100.0 per 100,000. These rates were about 4.7 times higher than the rates for black females in these age groups and 6 to 7 times higher than the rates for white males age 20 to 34.

Source: The homicide counts for 1986 were calculated from the *UCR supplementary homicide report*. This data set is available from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Estimates of the resident population were used to calculate rates per 100,000 and were obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1022, *United States population estimates by age, sex, and race, 1980-1987*. Adjustments of homicide counts for missing data and calculation of homicide rates were done by the author.

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The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Office for Victims of Crime.

Appendix table 2. Homicide rates per 100,000 residents by race, sex, and age of victims, 1986

Age of victim	Rate per 100,000 persons					
	Total		Male		Female	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Total	5.4	31.2	7.9	52.3	2.9	12.3
1-11	1.4	6.1	1.4	6.6	1.3	5.5
12-15	1.8	8.3	1.8	9.2	1.7	3.3
16-19	4.1	33.6	8.7	54.3	3.4	12.6
20-24	10.1	59.3	15.0	100.0	5.1	21.4
25-34	9.0	60.9	13.6	104.3	4.3	22.4
35-49	6.7	39.8	10.1	71.6	3.4	13.5
50-64	4.1	21.5	6.2	39.0	2.1	7.2
65 or older	3.2	16.5	4.2	28.5	2.6	8.4

Note: Homicide rates have been adjusted for missing data.

The National Victims Resource Center

provides vital information

The National Victims Resource Center (NVRC) is a national clearinghouse for victims information funded by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. Like the Justice Statistics Clearinghouse, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the NVRC is one of several information resources maintained by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). When you contact the NVRC, information specialists will provide you with access to the following resources:

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