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National Crime Victimization Survey

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Crime and the Nation's Households, 2003

By Patsy A. Klaus
BJS Statistician

In 2003, 15% of the households in the United States, accounting for 17 million households, experienced 1 or more violent or property crimes as measured by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). These crimes include rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, purse snatching or pocket picking, household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft.

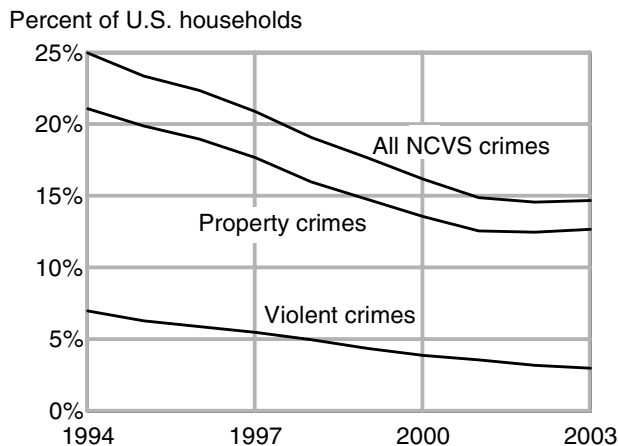
In 2003, 3% of households had a member age 12 or older who experienced one or more violent crimes. Simple assault was the type of violent crime most often sustained. Thirteen percent of households experienced one or more property crimes, with theft the most frequent type. There were no significant differences between 2002 and 2003 in the percentage of households experiencing total crimes, violent crimes or property crimes; however, both violent and property crime declined between 1994 and 2003.

Measuring crime by counting the affected households gives an understanding of the dispersion of crime in the Nation. Some households account for multiple victimizations. When interpreted in relation to the criminal victimization statistics reported in the annual BJS Bulletin (such as *Criminal*

Highlights

The percentage of U.S. households that experienced a crime fell from 25% to 15% in the period between 1994 and 2003

Both property and violent crimes declined: property crime from 21% of all households in 1994 to 13% in 2003, and violent crime from 7% to 3%.



- In 2003 about 17 million households experienced one or more property crimes or had a member age 12 or older who experienced one or more violent crimes.
- The percentage of households experiencing crimes, about 15%, did not change significantly between 2002 and 2003.
- About 1 in every 26 households in 2003 were either burglarized or had a member age 12 or older who was a victim of a violent crime committed by a stranger.
- In 2003 about 3 in 1,000 households included a member victimized by an intimate partner, such as a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.
- About 5% of households had at least one incident of vandalism in 2003. Over 5.8 million households were vandalized during this period.

Table 1. Households experiencing crime, by type of crime, 2003

Type of victimization	Households	
	Number	Percent
Any NCVS crime	16,749,820	14.7%
Personal crime	3,612,430	3.2%
Violent crime*	3,478,660	3.0
Rape	91,300	0.1
Sexual assault	69,510	0.1
Robbery	434,680	0.4
Assault	2,977,820	2.6
Aggravated	769,370	0.7
Simple	2,340,190	2.0
Purse snatching/ pocket picking	146,300	0.1
Property crime	14,465,910	12.7%
Household burglary	2,987,020	2.6
Motor vehicle theft	948,710	0.8
Theft	11,380,360	10.0

Note: Detail does not add to total or crime subtotals because of overlap in households experiencing various crimes. There were a total of 114,136,930 households in 2003. If vandalism is included among the victimizations, a total of 20,544,310 households (18%) experienced at least one crime in 2003.
*Violent crime does not include homicide.

Victimization, 2003, <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv03.htm>> the households-victimimized-by-crime indicator focuses on the national proportion of households that experience crime.

13% of U.S. households had one or more property crimes in 2003

About 17 million households experienced 1 or more of the victimizations measured by the NCVS, an ongoing household survey that collects information about crimes both unreported and reported to the police. These victimized households made up about 15% of the 114.1 million households in the United States. Victimized households experienced some type of property crime or had a member age 12 or older who was victimized by violence. Theft, affecting 1 in 10 households, was the most frequent crime of those measured.

Crime	Percent of households	
	2002	2003
Any NCVS	14.6%	14.7%
Violent	3.2	3.0
Property	12.5	12.7

About 3% of households had an adolescent or adult member who was victimized by one or more crimes of violence during the year. (NCVS interviews all members of a household age 12 or older and does not estimate victimizations of children younger than 12.) About 2.3 million households had members who experienced simple assault, the most frequent type of violence encountered. Simple assault does not result in serious injury and does not involve a weapon.

For the households-victimimized-by-crime measure, households that experienced the same type of crime more than once were counted only once for that victimization. For example, a household with two members who were assaulted or with a member who was assaulted more than once, was counted only once for assault. Similarly, a household burglarized several times during the year was counted only once for burglary.

In 2003 less than 1% of households had members victimized by more than one type of violence, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, and assault. About 1% of households were victimized by both violent and property crimes. Such households were counted once in the violent crime measure, once in the property crime measure, and once in the overall measure.

About 1 in every 26 households experienced violence by a stranger or a household burglary during 2003 (figure 1). The portion of households affected by these NCVS crimes, often cited as among the most fear provoking, has

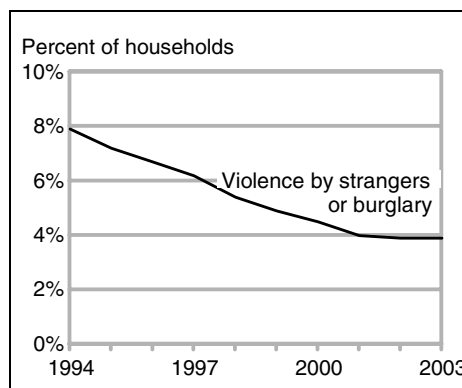


Figure 1

Vandalism of residences or other property owned by an individual

Over 5.8 million households, 5.1% of all U.S. households, had at least one incident of vandalism in 2003. First compiled by the NCVS in 2000, vandalism is not included in the overall measure of households experiencing victimization. If vandalism is included in the overall measure, the total percentage of households experiencing a crime rises from 15% to 18%.

fallen since 1994 but did not change between 2002 and 2003. These “crimes of high concern” affected 3.9% of households in 2003.

Intimate partner violence affected about 3 households in 1,000 during 2003

Less than 1% of all households experienced intimate partner violence, which is violence committed by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend (figure 2). Intimate partner violence declined between 1994 and 2003. The household-victimimized-by-crime indicator does not measure repeated victimizations or victimizations of more than one household member during the year.

Black and Hispanic households more vulnerable to crime

In 2003 households headed by blacks were more likely to experience crime (16%) than those headed by whites (14%) (table 2). Households headed by Hispanics (18%) were more likely to

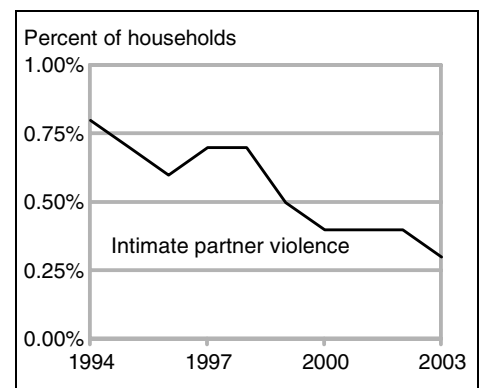


Figure 2

sustain one or more crimes than those headed by non-Hispanics (14%).*

Crime	Percent of households	
	Hispanic head	Non-Hispanic head
Any NCVS	18.4%	14.3%
Violent	3.7	3.0
Property	16.1	12.3
Violence by strangers or burglary	4.9%	3.8%
Intimate partner violence	0.3%	0.4%

Prevalence of crime higher for urban households, large households, and those in the West

Households in urban areas (19%) were more likely to experience one or more crimes than suburban households (13%) and rural households (12%) in 2003 (table 3).

Household size affected the likelihood of experiencing criminal victimization in 2003 (table 4). Twenty-eight percent of households with six or more persons experienced one or more crimes compared with 21% of households made up of four or five persons, 14% of households with two or three persons, and 9% of one-person households.

Households located in the West were more likely to experience one or more crimes when compared with households in other regions of the country.

*The Office of Management and Budget introduced new guidelines for the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data in all government demographic surveys. As of January 1, 2003, persons previously asked to select a single primary race are allowed to identify more than one racial category. In this report persons are classified as solely white, black, or other race or as having more than one race.

Table 4. Households experiencing crime, by number of household members, 2003

Type of crime in the household	Percent of households, by number of members			
	1 member	2-3	4-5	6 or more
Any NCVS crime	9.5%	14.0%	21.4%	27.8%
Violent crime	1.8	2.7	4.9	7.3
Property crime	8.2	12.2	18.4	24.3
Violence by strangers or burglary	3.0%	3.7%	5.2%	7.8%
Intimate partner violence	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%

Note: Murder and vandalism are not measured in this table.

Table 2. Households experiencing crime, by race of the household head, 2003

Type of crime in the household	Percent of heads of household			
	White	Black	Other race	More than one race
Any NCVS crime	14.4%	16.3%	13.5%	26.2%
Violent crime	3.0	3.4	2.5	8.3
Property crime	12.4	14.1	11.9	22.2
Violence by strangers or burglary	3.8%	4.8%	3.5%	5.7%
Intimate partner violence	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	2.1%

Note: Beginning in 2003, multiple race entries were allowed. *White* refers to a household head who listed only white as racial background; *black* refers to those listing only black. Other race heads of household were Asians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, or Pacific Islanders reporting a single racial background.

Table 3. Households experiencing crime, by urban, suburban, and rural location, 2003

Type of crime in the household	Percent of households		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Any NCVS crime	18.6%	13.3%	12.1%
Violent crime	3.7	2.9	2.5
Property crime	16.2	11.4	10.7
Violence by strangers or burglary	5.1%	3.4%	3.6%
Intimate partner violence	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%

Note: Murder and vandalism are not measured in this table.

Crime	Percent of households, 2003
Northeast	
Any NCVS	12.2%
Violent	2.8
Property	10.1
Midwest	
Any NCVS	14.2%
Violent	3.1
Property	12.1
South	
Any NCVS	14.3%
Violent	2.8
Property	12.5
West	
Any NCVS	18.1%
Violent	3.7
Property	15.8

Prevalence of crime in households decreased from 1994 to 2003

About 1 in 7 households experienced one or more crimes in 2003, compared to 1 in 4 households in 1994 (table 5). The percentage of households experiencing either violent or property crime also declined. In 2003, 3% of households had a member who experienced at least one violent crime, compared to 7% in 1994. For property crimes, 13% of households were affected in 2003, compared to 21% in 1994.

Table 5. Households experiencing crime, by type of crime, 1994 and 2003

	Percent of households	
	1994	2003
Any NCVS crime	25.0%	14.7%
Violent crime	7.0	3.0
Property crime	21.1	12.7
Violence by strangers or burglary	7.9%	3.9%
Intimate partner violence	0.8%	0.3%
Number of households experiencing some type of crime	25,103,670	16,749,820
U.S. total	100,544,570	114,136,930

Methodology

This Bulletin presents data on nonlethal violence and property crimes from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). In 2003, 83,660 households and 149,040 people age 12 or older were interviewed. For the 2003 NCVS data presented here, the response rate was 91.6% of eligible households and 86.3% of eligible individuals.

The households-victimized-by-crime measure counts each household once for the calendar year, regardless of the number of times a household experienced a particular type of crime. For the overall indicator, household-based crime estimates are derived from NCVS statistics on rape/sexual assault,

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawrence A. Greenfeld is director.

Patsy A. Klaus, BJS, wrote this report under the supervision of Michael R. Rand. Cathy T. Maston provided the statistical review. Tom Hester produced and edited the report.

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robbery, assault, personal theft, household burglary, household theft, and motor vehicle theft. A household is counted if anyone in the household experienced one or more of any of these crimes within the year. For categories such as violent crime by a stranger or intimate partner crime, a

household is counted if person(s) in the households were victimized one or more times by that particular type of crime.

Detailed information about the construction of the households-victimized-by-crime measure, as well as data about households in prior years, is available in *Crime and the Nation's Households, 2000, With Trends, 1994-2000*, <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cnh00.htm>>.

For more explanation about general survey methodology and estimates of standard error, see the BJS Bulletin *Criminal Victimization, 2003*, <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv03.htm>>.

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