

147005

**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this ~~copyrighted~~ material has been granted by

Public Domain/OJP/BJJ
U.S. Department of Justice

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the ~~copyright~~ owner.



Crime Data Brief

June 1994, NCJ-147005

Crime and Neighborhoods

By Carol J. DeFrances and Steven K. Smith
BJS Statisticians

From 1985 to 1991 the percentage of all U.S. households identifying "crime" as a neighborhood problem increased from 5% to 7%, according to the American Housing Survey. Crime has become a particular neighborhood concern among black households. Asked what bothers them about their neighborhood, the percentage of all black households reporting "crime" almost doubled from 9% to 17%. Among central city black households in 1991, 23% said "crime" was a neighborhood problem, up from 12% in 1985.

In 1991 "crime" was the most often mentioned neighborhood problem for black central city households. Less frequently cited problems included "traffic," "noise," and "poor public services." In 1985 the most often mentioned problem that bothered black central city households was "people" (19%),

In 1991 central cities held over a fourth of white households and over half of black households

	Percent of households	
	White	Black
Central city*	28%	59%
Suburban	49	27
Rural	23	14

*Refers to the largest city or a grouping of cities in a Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Black households were most likely to identify "crime" as a neighborhood problem, 1985-91

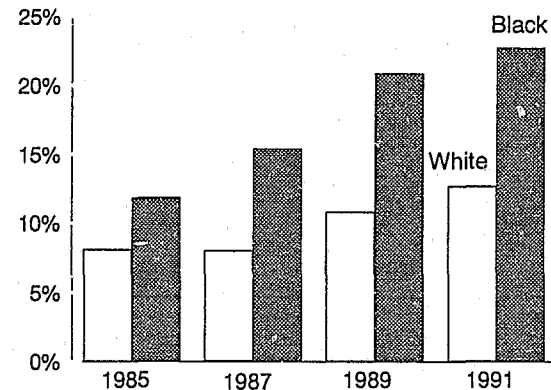
	Percent of households identifying "crime" as a problem			
	1985	1987	1989	1991
All households	4.7%	4.8%	6.4%	7.4%
White	4.0	3.8	5.1	6.0
Black	8.5	11.0	15.4	16.5
Hispanic	7.7	8.4	11.2	12.1
Elderly	3.2	3.1	3.4	4.4
Place of residence				
Central city	9.1%	9.7%	13.1%	15.0%
Suburban	2.9	2.9	3.9	4.6
Rural	1.4	1.1	1.5	1.9

Note: Excludes missing data and those occupied units not considered in a neighborhood, ranging from 1% to 4% of units in subpopulations.

Question: "Is there anything about the neighborhood that bothers you?"
Source: American Housing Survey, 1985, 1987, 1989, and 1991.

Black central city households increasingly indicated "crime" as a neighborhood problem, 1985-91

Percent of central city households citing "crime"



Question: "Is there anything about the neighborhood that bothers you?"

Source: American Housing Survey, 1985, 1987, 1989, and 1991, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Bureau of the Census.

For black central city households, few problems other than "crime" were an increasing concern, 1985-91

	Percent of black central city households			
	1985	1987	1989	1991
No problems	55.4%	52.1%	50.2%	50.2%
Problems	44.6%	47.9%	49.8%	49.8%
Crime	11.8	15.4	20.9	22.7
People	18.6	17.7	17.2	17.6
Noise	10.1	10.0	10.0	12.1
Litter or housing deterioration	9.5	10.1	8.5	7.7
Traffic	5.2	5.7	5.6	6.2
Poor city or county services	3.3	3.0	2.7	3.1
Undesirable commercial property	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.8
Other	8.0	3.3	9.7	8.5
Number of households (in millions)*	5.90	6.09	6.21	6.25

Note: Excludes missing data and those occupied units not considered in a neighborhood, an estimated 84,000 in 1985, 161,000 in 1987, 151,000 in 1989, and 144,000 in 1991. Figures may not add to totals because more than one category may apply to a housing unit.

*The estimate for the total number of households in 1991 is based on 1990 weighting and is not directly comparable to prior year estimates.

Question: "Is there anything about the neighborhood that bothers you?"
Source: American Housing Survey, 1985, 1987, 1989, and 1991.

which includes disliked neighbors, while "crime" was mentioned by 12%. In 1989 and 1991 "crime" displaced "people" as the most often specified problem.

The percentage of all white households mentioning "crime" as a neighborhood problem also increased during this period, but it was consistently lower than that of black households. Among white central city households, "crime" never became the most frequently mentioned neighborhood problem, despite an increase from 8% in 1985 to 13% in 1991.

- Central city households (15%) were more likely to have identified "crime" as a neighborhood problem in 1991 than suburban households (5%) or rural households (2%). This has been the case since 1985 when this particular question was first asked.

Perception reflects victimization

In general, how different types of households assessed neighborhood crime reflected how much they were victimized by crime. Black households regularly mentioned "crime" as a neighborhood problem more frequently than white households and have consistently had a higher percentage of violent crime victimization as well as overall victimization.

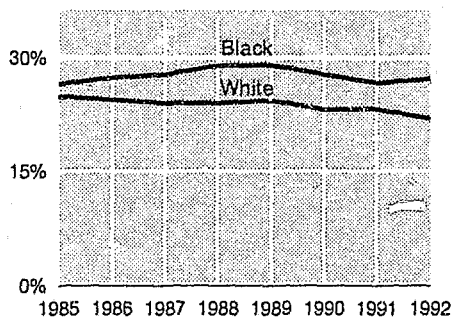
- During the period addressed by this report, central city households were consistently more likely to have experienced a violent crime than either suburban or rural households.

Most State prison inmates report having committed their offense outside their own neighborhood

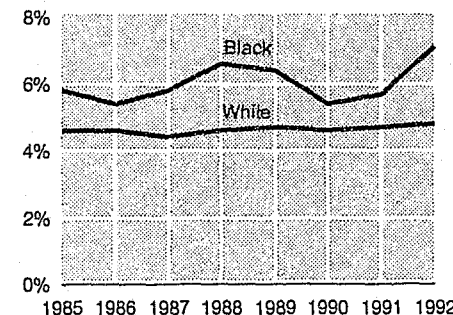
The 1991 BJS survey of State prison inmates found a majority (57%) of inmates had committed the offense for which they were serving time outside their own neighborhood. This included an estimated 69% of property offenders and 55% of violent offenders.

Black households were victimized by crime, especially violent crime, more often than white households

Percent of households experiencing any crime



Percent of households experiencing any violent crime



Source: National Crime Victimization Survey.

72% of robbers in State prison committed the crime outside their neighborhood

Offense	Percent of State prison inmates committing crime	
	In own neighborhood ^a	Outside own neighborhood
All offenses	43.0%	57.0%
Violent offenses	44.7%	55.3%
Murder ^b	44.5	55.5
Rape	59.6	40.4
Robbery	28.4	71.6
Assault	50.0	50.0
Property offenses	31.1%	68.9%
Burglary	32.5	67.5
Larceny/theft	24.8	75.2
Motor vehicle theft	32.1	67.9
Drug offenses	52.0%	48.0%
Public-order offenses	47.9%	52.1%
Weapons	50.6	49.4
Other	47.0	53.0
Other offenses	34.4%	65.6%

Note: Based on a sample survey from among the approximately 711,000 State prison inmates. Table excludes approximately 1.8% of cases that are missing data.

^aIncludes offenses committed in inmate's home.

^bIncludes nonnegligent manslaughter.

Source: 1991 Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/BJS
Permit No. G-91

Washington, D.C. 20531