

# SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY JUNE 2001

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The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) released its annual report on criminal victimization in June of 2001<sup>3</sup>. Victimization rates in 2000 are the lowest recorded since 1973. In 2000, the violent crime<sup>4</sup> rate fell 15% from the previous year, and the property crime<sup>5</sup> rate fell 10% for the same period. There were 28 violent crime victimizations per 1,000 people in 2000, compared to 33 per 1,000 people in 1999. The rate of property crime fell to 178 per 1,000 households in 2000. In 1999 the property crime rate was 198 per 1,000 households.

## **Violent Crime**

The 15% drop in violent crime from 1999 to 2000 is the single largest year decrease recorded by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Rape and assault decreased significantly<sup>6</sup> between 1999 and 2000, showing decreases of 29.4% and 14.2% respectively. The decrease in robbery was 11.1%, but was not significant. *[AUTHORS' NOTE: Robberies with injury were down 9%, and robberies without injury were down 8%.]* Robbery is at the lowest rate (3.2 robberies per 1,000 people) since 1973, when the NCVS began collecting data. Last year, rapes and sexual assaults

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<sup>3</sup> The Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Victimization report can be found on-line at:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv00.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> In the NCVS, "violent crime" includes rape/sexual assault, robbery, and assault (both aggravated and simple). This survey is based on interviews with victims, and therefore cannot measure murder.

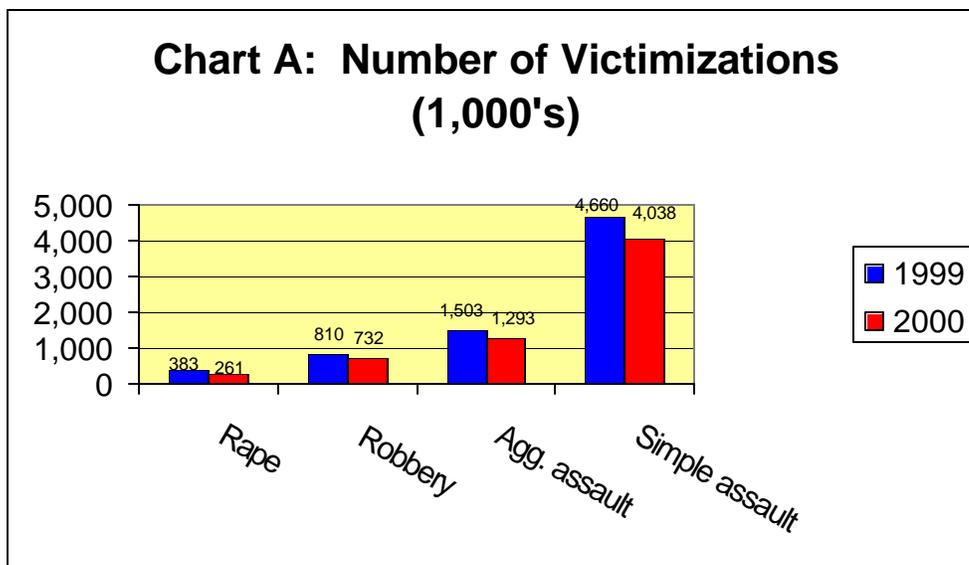
<sup>5</sup> In the NCVS, "property crime" includes burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft.

increased 15% from 1998. This year, rapes and sexual assaults decreased by approximately 122,000 victimizations, or 29.4%. [AUTHORS' NOTE: Measure of rape is the least reliable based on small sample size.] Table 1 below shows the volume of victimizations in the major categories of violent crime. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 1,000.

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMES**

Crime	1999	2000	Percent Change
<b>Rape/Sexual Assault</b>	<b>383,000</b>	<b>261,000</b>	<b>-29.4%</b>
Rape	201,000	147,000	-33.3%
Sexual Assault	182,000	114,000	-37.5%
<b>Robbery<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>810,000</b>	<b>732,000</b>	<b>-11.1%</b>
With injury	267,000	226,000	-9%
Without injury	543,000	146,000	-8%
<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	<b>1,503,000</b>	<b>1,293,000</b>	<b>-14.9%</b>
With injury	449,000	346,000	-25%
Threatened with weapon	1,054,000	946,000	-10.6%
<b>Simple Assault</b>	<b>4,660,000</b>	<b>4,038,000</b>	<b>-14.4%</b>
With minor injury	998,000	989,000	0
Without injury	3,662,000	3,048,000	-17.8%

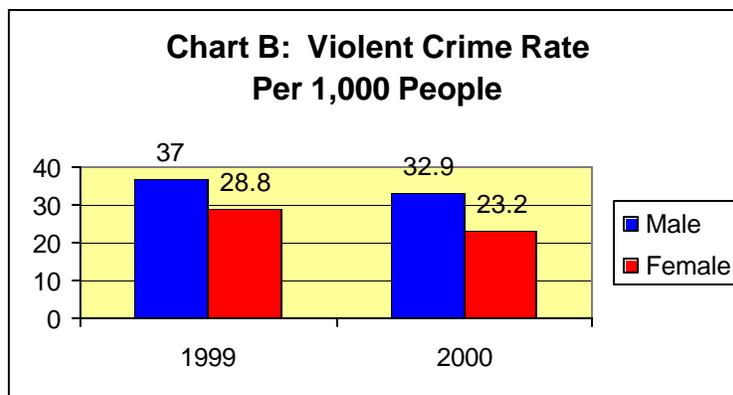
Chart A below shows number of victimizations in the four major violent crime categories in 1999 and 2000:



<sup>6</sup> Based on statistical significance, not social significance.

## Violent Crime by Gender

The violent crime rates fell for both genders from 1999 to 2000, as illustrated in Chart B below. For males, the violent crime rate per 1,000 was 37.0 in 1999 and 32.9 in 2000. For females, the violent crime rate was 28.8 in 1999 and 23.2 in 2000. Males experienced violent crimes at rates 42% greater than females. Males were robbed more than twice as often as females, and were victims of aggravated assault at a rate 159% greater than females.

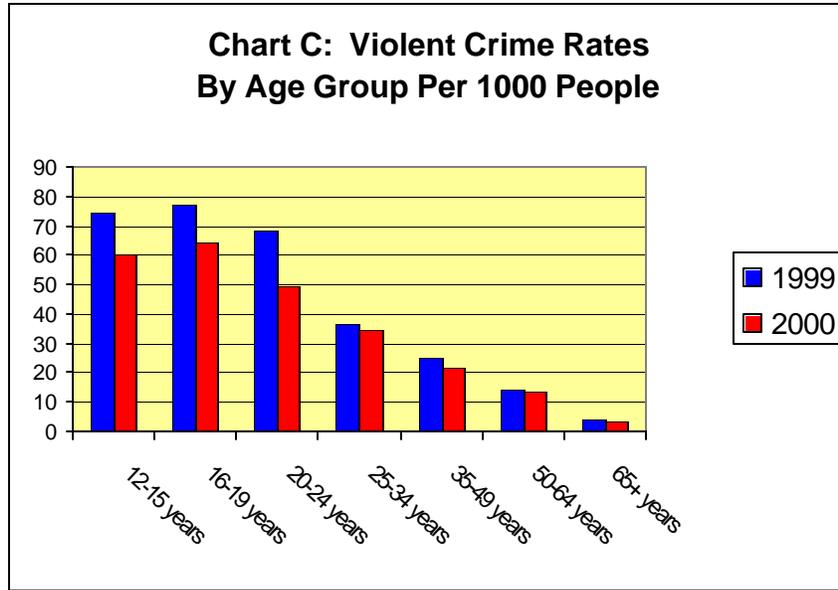


## Violent Crime by Age

Violent crime victimization rates fell among all of the age groups in the year 2000. As illustrated in Chart C below, the younger the person, the higher the rate of being a violent crime victim.

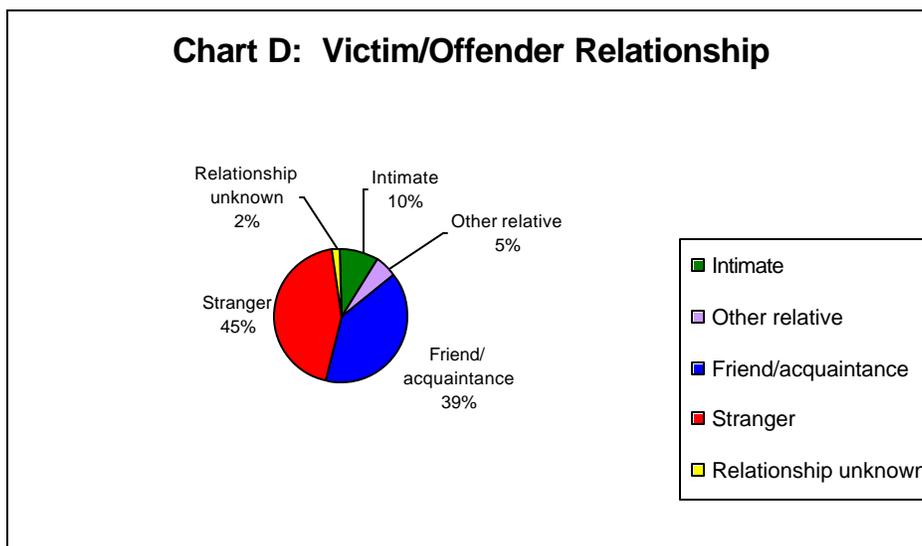
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<sup>7</sup> Combines completed and attempted robbery.



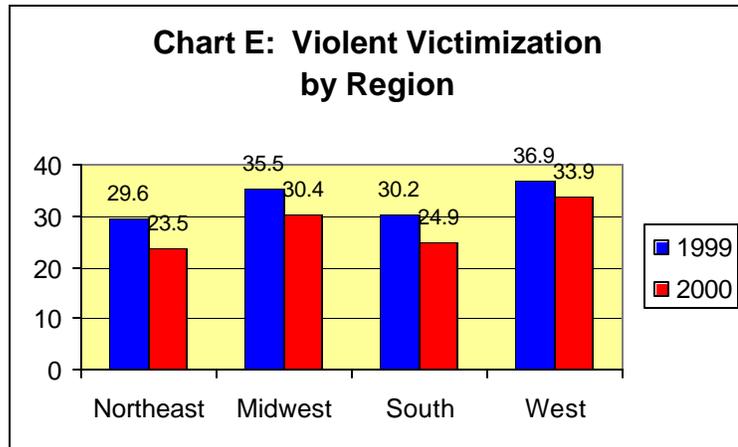
### Violent Crime – Victim-Offender Relationship

In 2000, over half (53%) of violent crime victims knew their offenders, down slightly from 55% in 1999. Forty-five percent of the offenders were strangers, and 2% were unknown. Rape or sexual assault victims were most likely to know the offender, and robbery victims were the least likely. Males experienced violence at the hands of strangers in higher percentages—54% of violent crimes against males were perpetrated by strangers compared with 33% of violent crimes against females. Chart D below shows the relationship between the victim and offender for all violent crimes in 2000.



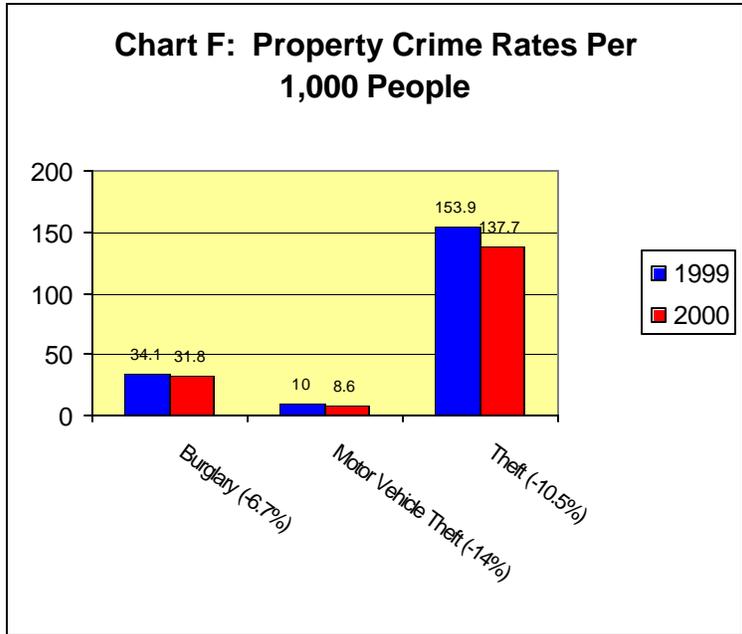
## Violent Crime – By Region

Residents of the West were the most likely to be violent crime victims in 2000, with a rate of 33.9 per 1000. Midwesterners followed closely with a rate of 30.4 per 1000. Northeastern and Southern residents were significantly less likely to be violent crime victims, with rates of 23.5 and 24.9 per 1000, respectively. Rates fell for all regions from 1999 to 2000, as shown below in Chart E:



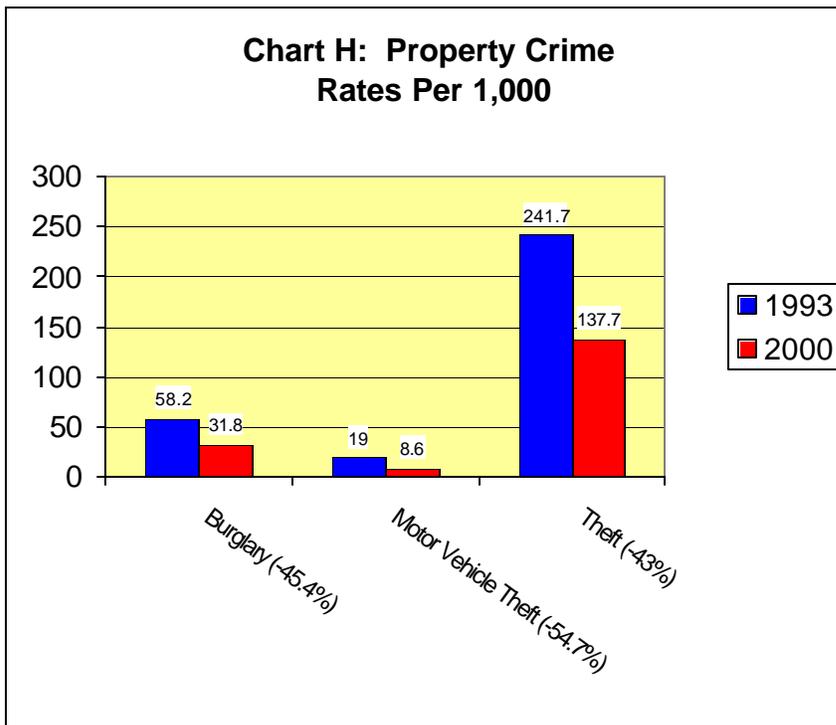
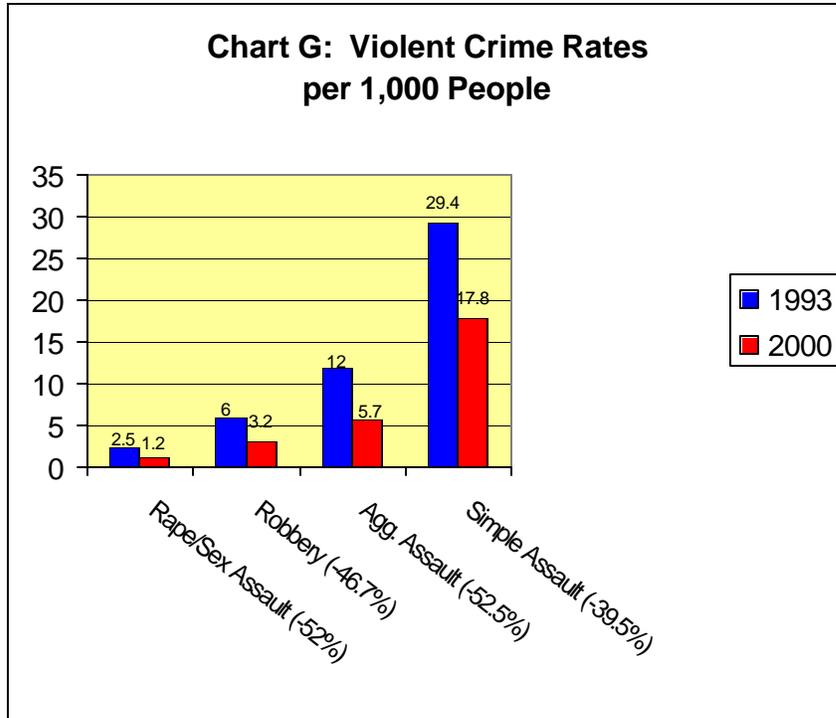
## Property Crime

Property crime rates decreased 10% from 1999 to 2000 with an overall incidence rate of 178 per 1,000 households, down from 198 in 1999. Burglary rates fell 7%, motor vehicle theft rates decreased 14%, and theft rates decreased 11%, as shown in Chart F below:



**Trends 1993 – 2000**

Every major type of personal and property crime measured decreased from 1993 to 2000. Violent crimes decreased 44.1%, and property crimes decreased 44.2%. Chart G below shows the decrease for each of the major types of violent crime for the years 1993 through 2000, and Chart H shows the decrease for each of the major types of property crime for the same period of time – 1993 through 2000:



## Reporting to Police

The rate at which crimes were reported to the police was higher in 2000 than in many previous years. In 2000, 47.9% of all violent crimes were reported, up from

43.2% in 1993. Property crimes were reported 35.7% of the time in 2000, whereas 33.5% were reported in 1993. Females reported violent crimes more frequently (54.5%) than did males (42.9%) in 2000.

### **The NCVS and the FBI's UCR**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Preliminary Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for the year 2000 was released two weeks prior to the NCVS, on May 30, 2001. The FBI's final report is expected to be released this fall. The two reports paint a different picture of crime in the year 2000. Usually the two reports mirror each other, but the reports for 2000 are vastly different. The UCR shows violent crime **up** 0.1%. The NCVS shows violent crime **down** 14.9%.

The methodology for data collection is very different for the UCR and NCVS. The FBI collects information from law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and uses offenses known to law enforcement for the UCR. The BJS conducts a survey each year of households and individuals 12 and older to obtain information about crimes, both reported and unreported. In 2000, approximately 160,000 individuals were interviewed. The BJS then estimates actual crime occurrences based on the sample.

The FBI and BJS use different definitions for their crime categories. "Violent crime" by the FBI's definition includes murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. The BJS defines it as rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

### **Authors' Conclusion**

We have been predicting that crime would increase, beginning in 2000, and the FBI data support that in 2000. It is likely that the NCVS will reflect these changes, as well, by 2001.