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# Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

A SURVEY OF CRIME IN NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA ANNUAL SOCIAL INDICATORS SURVEY, 1979

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The data were collected as part of the Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Bureau of Sociological Research assumes no responsibility for the views or interpretations contained herein. A detailed description of the way in which the data were collected is contained in the booklet, "Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey" which may be obtained by writing Study Director, Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588.

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**ACQUISITIONS**

## SYNOPSIS

In order to obtain victimization data as a measure of actual crime volume in the state, the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice purchased interview time in the third Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research, University of Nebraska - Lincoln. The Commission asked 11 questions pertaining to people's experiences as victims of crime and attitudes regarding the criminal justice system in the state.

## HIGHLIGHTS

1. 1 in 4 (23.3%) of the survey respondents were victims of an offense in the 12 months preceding the survey (Spring 1979), a 1.8% decrease from the previous year.
2. Two-thirds of all victimizations involved vandalism (35.9%) and larceny-theft (31.1%).
3. Less than half (48.9%) of actual (not attempted) victimizations were reported to law enforcement authorities. Burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson were most frequently reported (more than 66%). Only 5% of the 82 fraud incidents were reported.
4. About 4% of the respondents were victimized more than once.
5. Young and urban respondents were the most likely to be victims of crime.
6. About 84% of all respondents considered their community as safe or safer from crime than two years previously.
7. Overall victimization rates have not changed significantly over the NASIS 1977, 1978 and 1979 surveys.

## INTRODUCTION

The information presented in this report is based on data collected in the 1979 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. This survey has been conducted annually since 1977 and selects a representative sample of Nebraskans who are interviewed by phone about their life experiences and attitudes. Respondents answer questions dealing with the environment, transportation, housing, health, crime, family life, and other variables reflecting the quality of life experienced in the State. Information provided by the survey is used by a variety of organizations and individuals for program, planning, and research purposes.

Each year since 1977, the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice has purchased interview time in NASIS to obtain information regarding Nebraskans' attitudes toward and experiences with crime and related matters. The focus of the Commission's interest in NASIS 1979, as in previous years, has been on victimization. That is, the collection of information concerning the characteristics of crime victims, the number and nature of offenses committed, and the victims' responses to these events. In this year's survey, 11 questions concerning crime were asked of each of the 1,882 respondents. These questions dealt primarily with the details of any offense of which the respondent may have been a victim (for a listing of the major questions, see the section on "Specific Offenses").

Several factors about the survey in general are pertinent. First, the respondents were quite representative of Nebraskans as a whole. That is, the demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, geographic distribution, etc.) of the NASIS 1979 respondents closely match those of Nebraska's total population. Second, most of the 1979 respondents (81%) also participated in NASIS 1977. The intent of the NASIS designers was to have a relatively fixed "panel" of Nebraskans who would participate every other year so that changes in the quality of life could be examined over time. Thus, comparisons between NASIS 1977 data and NASIS 1979 involve most of the same respondents. NASIS 1978 selected a "new" group of respondents. Third, surveys such as NASIS provide one of the most effective means of "filling the gap" between popularly expressed sentiments or comments concerning attitudes and events and individuals' attitudes and perceptions of events. Specifically, in the case of crime, information can be gained from the victim and it may be that some information of interest can only be gained from the victim.

#### INTERPRETING NASIS 1979 VICTIMIZATION DATA

All surveys (including NASIS) are subject to varying degrees of "sampling error". Basically, this means that the number of crime victims, or the percentage of high school graduates, etc., measured in the sample will not ordinarily be equal to the "real" numbers or "real" percentages which might be estimated by taking a very large number of samples. Generally, with relatively large samples such as in NASIS 1979, these two figures are relatively close, but results from NASIS 1979 should not be interpreted as completely exact estimates of Nebraska's total population characteristics.

This report utilizes labels to describe respondent characteristics (i.e., age, sex, race, etc.) and the nature of responses which were made (i.e., victim of assault, victim of robbery, etc.). However, the label of "assault" for a participant's response to a question, for example, does not necessarily imply that a crime was committed. Because respondents categorize events in response to questions, the term "offense" is applied in this report to identify events which might be described in general terms as "assault", "fraud", "burglary", etc., but may not necessarily satisfy all the statutory or legal definitions for that particular crime.

In addition, certain offenses such as burglary or vandalism are perpetrated against property rather than individuals, and their incidence is reported per number of households surveyed. Other offenses such as robbery or assault are perpetrated against individuals and their incidence is reported per number of individuals surveyed.

## VICTIMIZATION SUMMARY: 1979

### Offense Rates and Distribution

Of the 1,882 respondents in the NASIS 1979 survey, almost 1 in 4 (23.3%) indicated being the victim of an attempted or actual offense. A grand total of 557 attempted or actual offenses were recorded; across all offense categories, this yields a victimization rate of 296 victimizations per 1,000 respondents/households surveyed.

Table 1 contains rate and frequency information by offense category. Vandalism and larceny-theft victimization rates were somewhat more than twice the rates for any other offense category and combined account for two-thirds of the total offenses recorded. Typically low incidence offense categories such as sexual assault, arson, motor vehicle theft, and robbery combined represented only 3.4% of the total number of victimizations. Victimization rates for each offense category are depicted in Figure 1.

National victimization surveys, such as the National Crime Survey (NCS), conducted by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and the U.S. Bureau of the Census use a sample 20 to 30 times the size of that in NASIS 1979. Therefore, the amount of error in NCS victimization estimates is considerably less than in smaller surveys such as NASIS. Nevertheless, comparisons between results of NASIS and the NCS may be useful. Figure 1A presents comparison information for the offense categories of larceny-theft, burglary, assault, motor vehicle theft, and robbery. There are several important differences between NASIS and NCS including survey methodology, offense

FIGURE 1: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION RATES BY OFFENSE CATEGORY

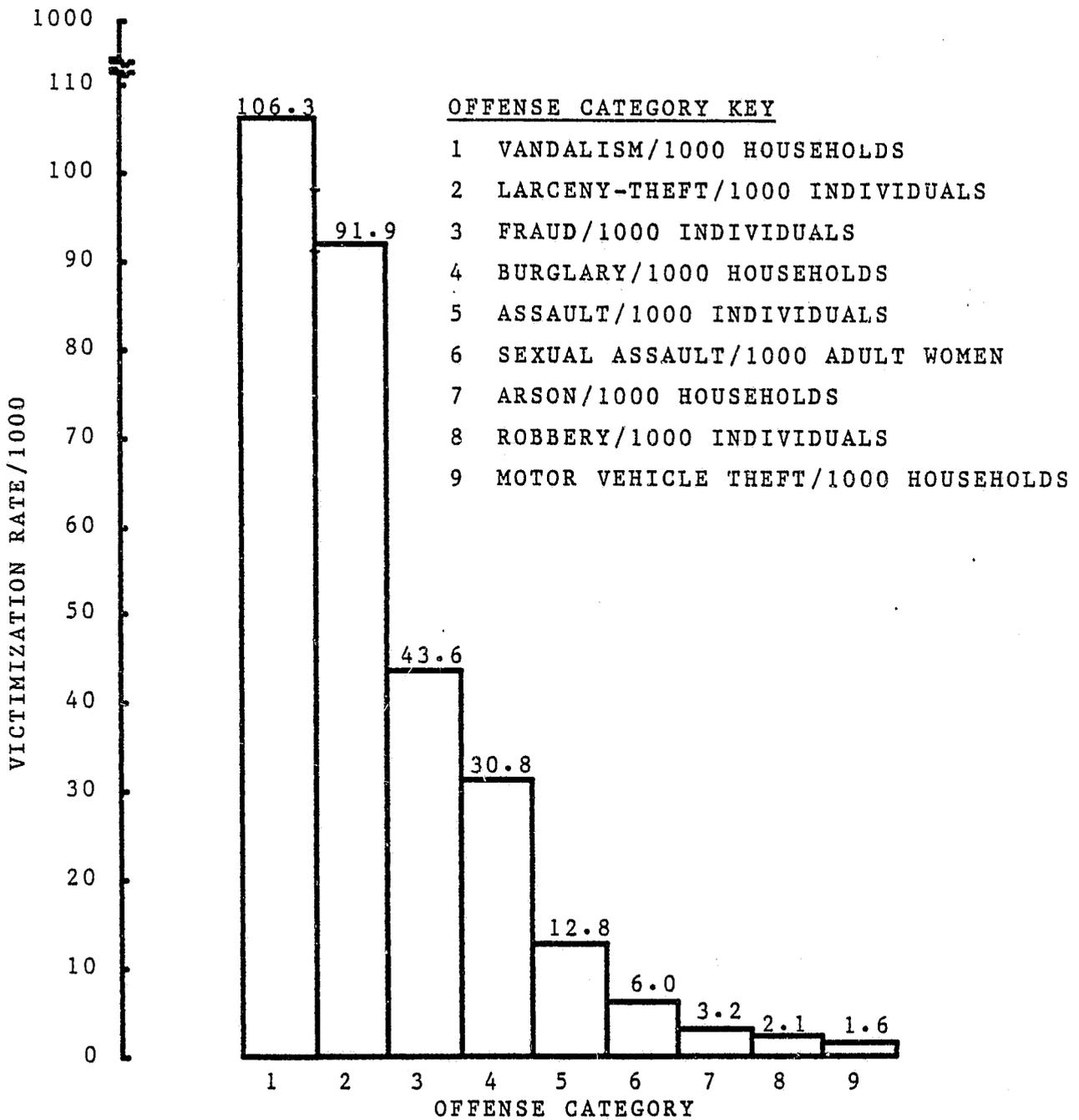
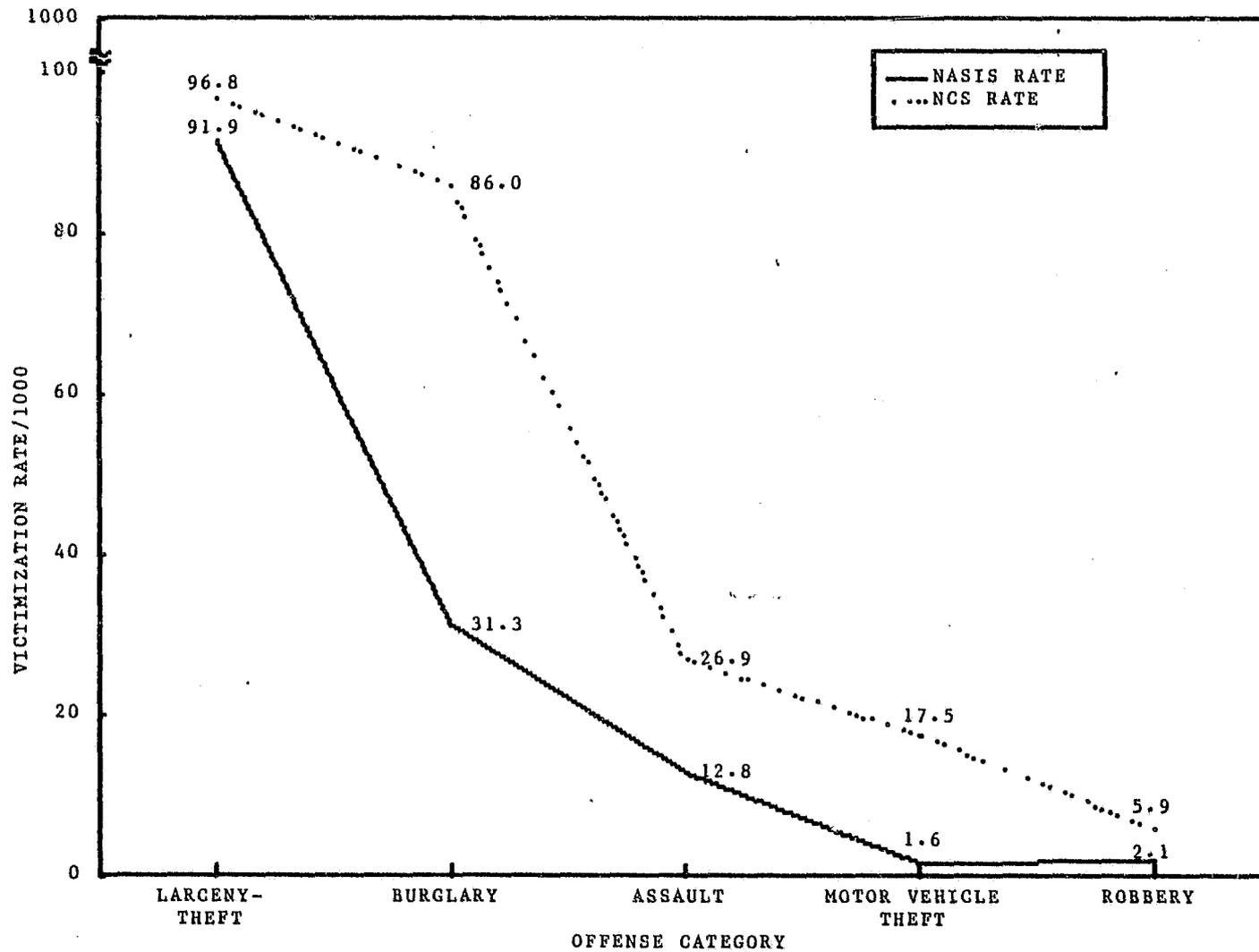


FIGURE 1A: COMPARISON OF VICTIMIZATION RATES IN SELECTED OFFENSE CATEGORIES  
NATIONAL CRIME SURVEY (NCS) 1978 VS. NASIS 1979\*



\*THE MAJORITY OF THE NASIS 1979  
REFERENCE PERIOD WAS 1978

categorization, and time period of reporting which should be taken into account in interpreting this data. This information used as a rough indicator, however, suggests that Nebraska's victimization rates for certain offenses are generally lower than corresponding national rates.

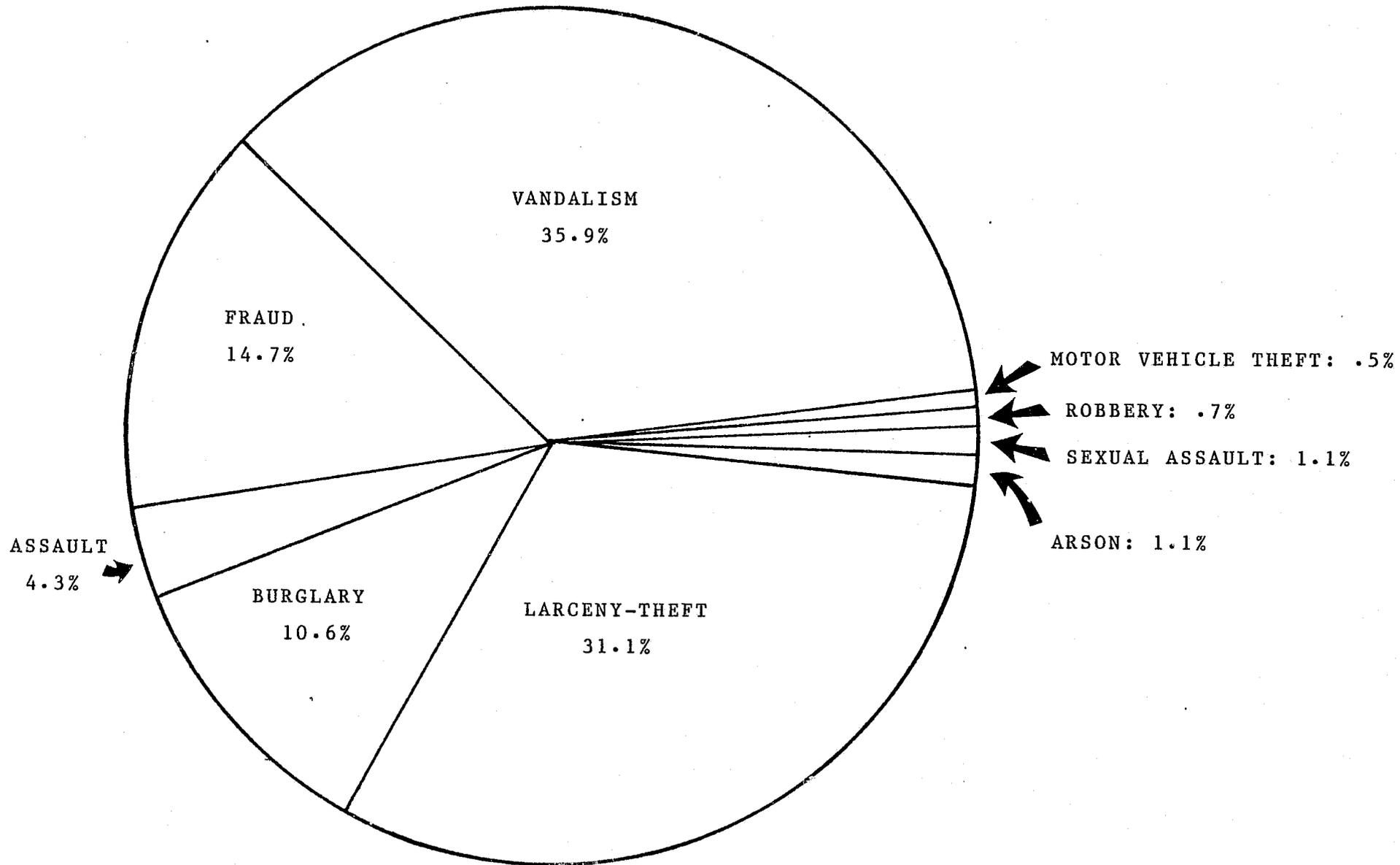
TABLE 1: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY OFFENSE CATEGORY

Offense Category	Frequency	Percent of all Offenses
Vandalism	200	35.9%
Larceny-Theft	173	31.1%
Fraud	82	14.7%
Burglary	59	10.6%
Assault	24	4.3%
Arson	6	1.1%
Sexual Assault	6	1.1%
Robbery	4	.7%
Motor Vehicle Theft	3	.5%
TOTAL (All Offenses)	557	100%
TOTAL (Index Offenses)	275	49.4%

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program has classified offenses into two categories: Part I and Part II offenses. Part I offenses, often referred to as index offenses, comprise the more serious offenses.

The six index offenses (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, robbery, sexual assault, arson, and assault) recorded in NASIS 1979 accounted for half of the total victimization rate while the two non-index offense

FIGURE 2: RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF OFFENSES BY OFFENSE CATEGORY



categories (vandalism and fraud) accounted for the remainder. Property crimes (burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, vandalism, and arson) comprised 79.2% of all offenses, while personal crimes (robbery, sexual assault, fraud, and assault) comprised the remaining 20.8%. The relative distribution of offenses by category is illustrated in Figure 2.

### Victim Characteristics

Age. Table 2 indicates that victimization was not uniform across all age groups. For the three age groups in the range 18 to 49 (18-29, 30-39, 40-49), the proportion of age group respondents who were victimized was greater than the age group's representation in the overall NASIS sample. However, for the three age groups in the range over 50, the proportion of age group respondents who were victimized was less than the age group's representation in the overall NASIS sample. Essentially, respondents under 50 were victims more often than would be expected by their representation in the NASIS sample while respondents 50 and over were victims less often than would be expected on the same basis. This finding is also reflected in Figure 3 which indicates a decreasing likelihood of victimization for age groups 50-59, 60-74, and 75 and over. Statistical analysis of these data indicates a significant association between age group and reported victimization rates.<sup>1</sup>

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VICTIMIZED BY AGE CATEGORY

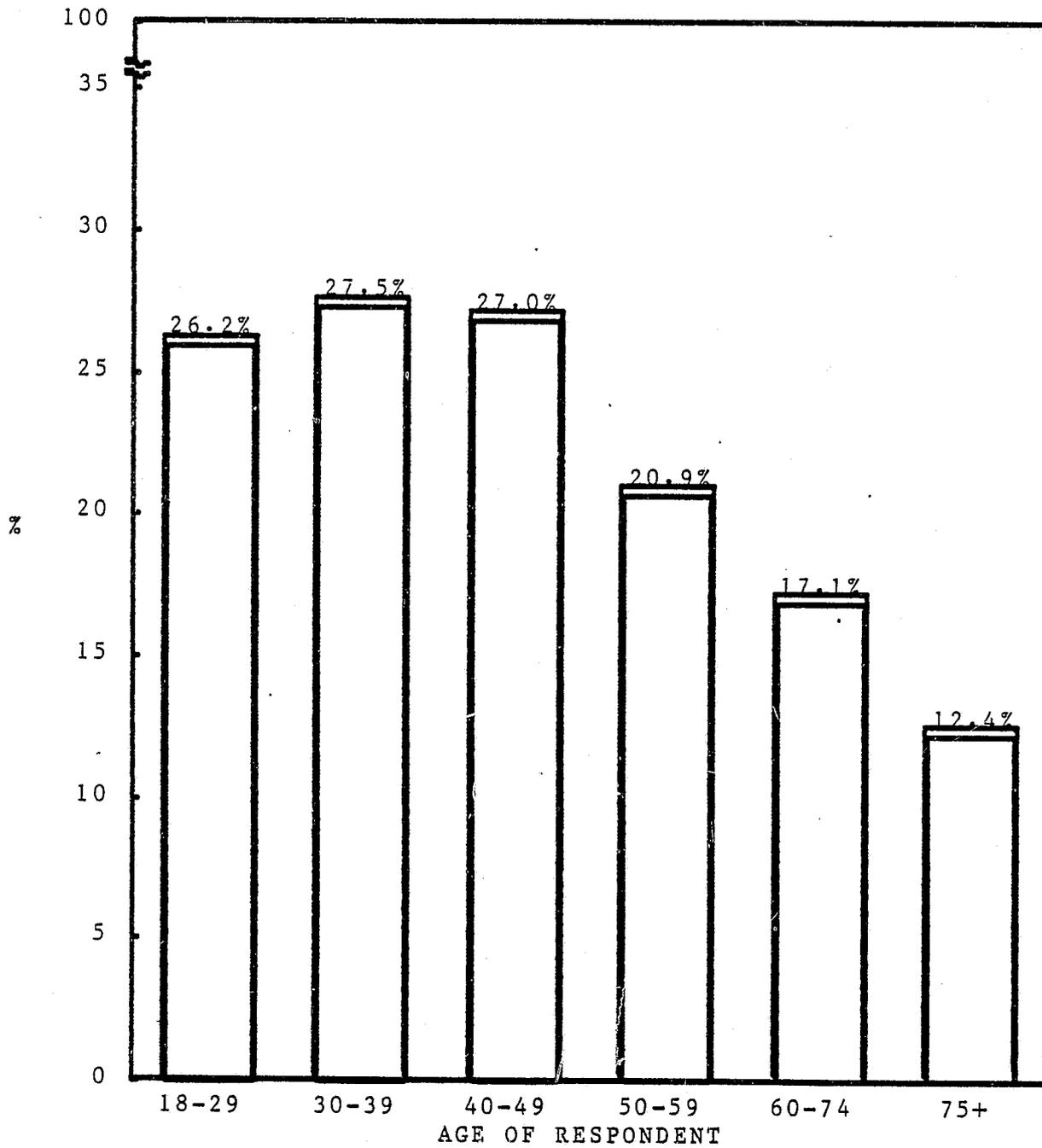


TABLE 2: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY AGE CATEGORY

Age Category	% of NASIS Sample	% of all Respondents Victimized	% of all Offenses
18-29	26.5%	29.8%	30.8%
30-39	16.6%	19.6%	19.7%
40-49	17.9%	20.7%	20.5%
50-59	15.6%	13.9%	14.3%
60-74	17.4%	12.8%	11.8%
75 +	6.0%	3.2%	2.8%

Community/population. Respondents were classified into five categories based on the population of the community in which they lived. The two largest cities in the state, Lincoln and Omaha, were thus separate categories, while others were classified as between 5,000 and 50,000; less than 5,000; and farm/non-farm rural. Residents of Omaha and Lincoln, while representing about one-third of all NASIS respondents, accounted for roughly 44% of all offenses and victims in the survey. The three population categories of less than 50,000 show below average numbers of offenses and victims with reference to the percentage of respondents in each category. Information on community/population and victimization is contained in Table 3 and Figure 4. There is a significant association between community population and reported victimization rates.<sup>2</sup>

FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VICTIMIZED BY COMMUNITY/POPULATION

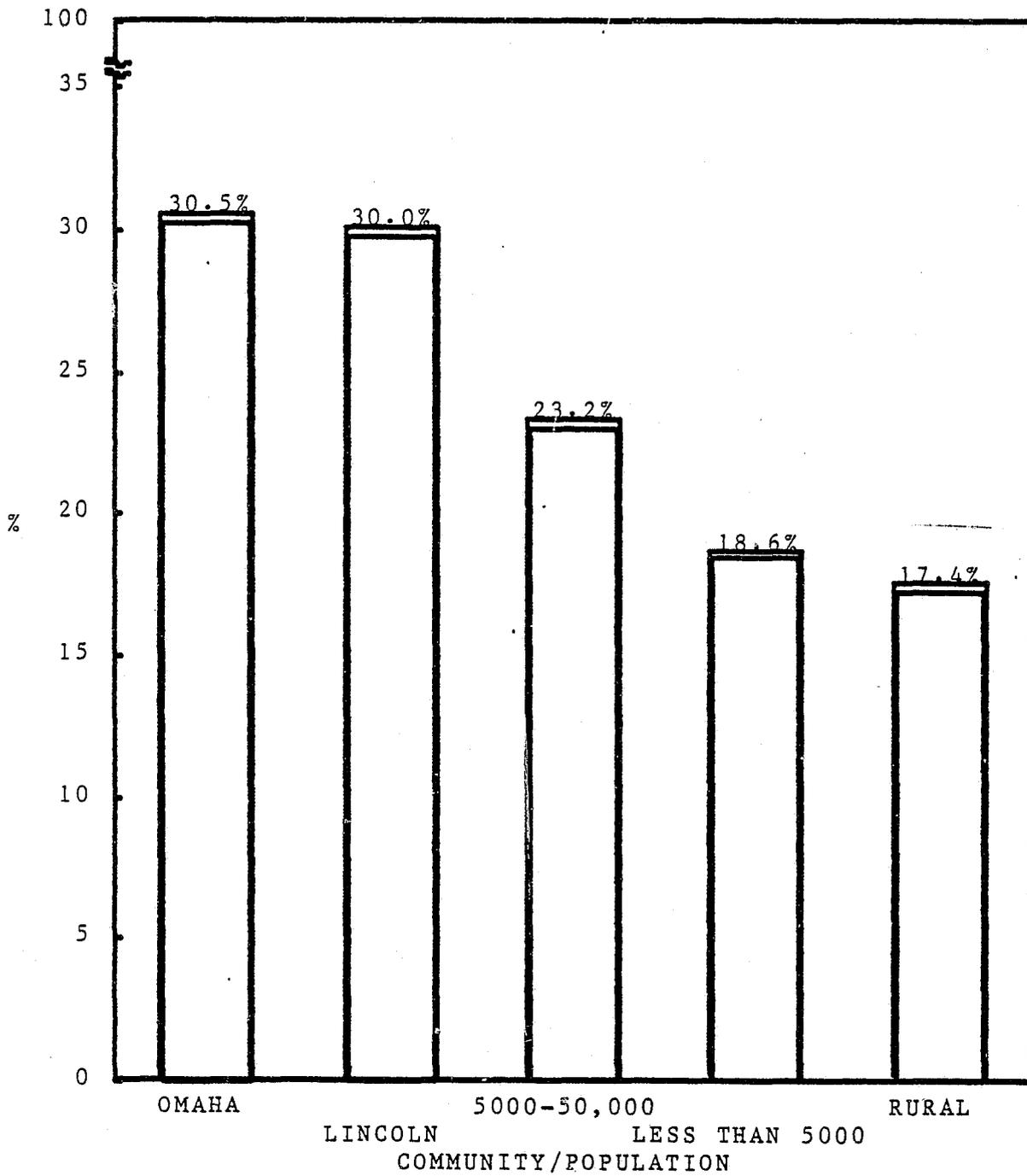


TABLE 3: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY COMMUNITY/POPULATION

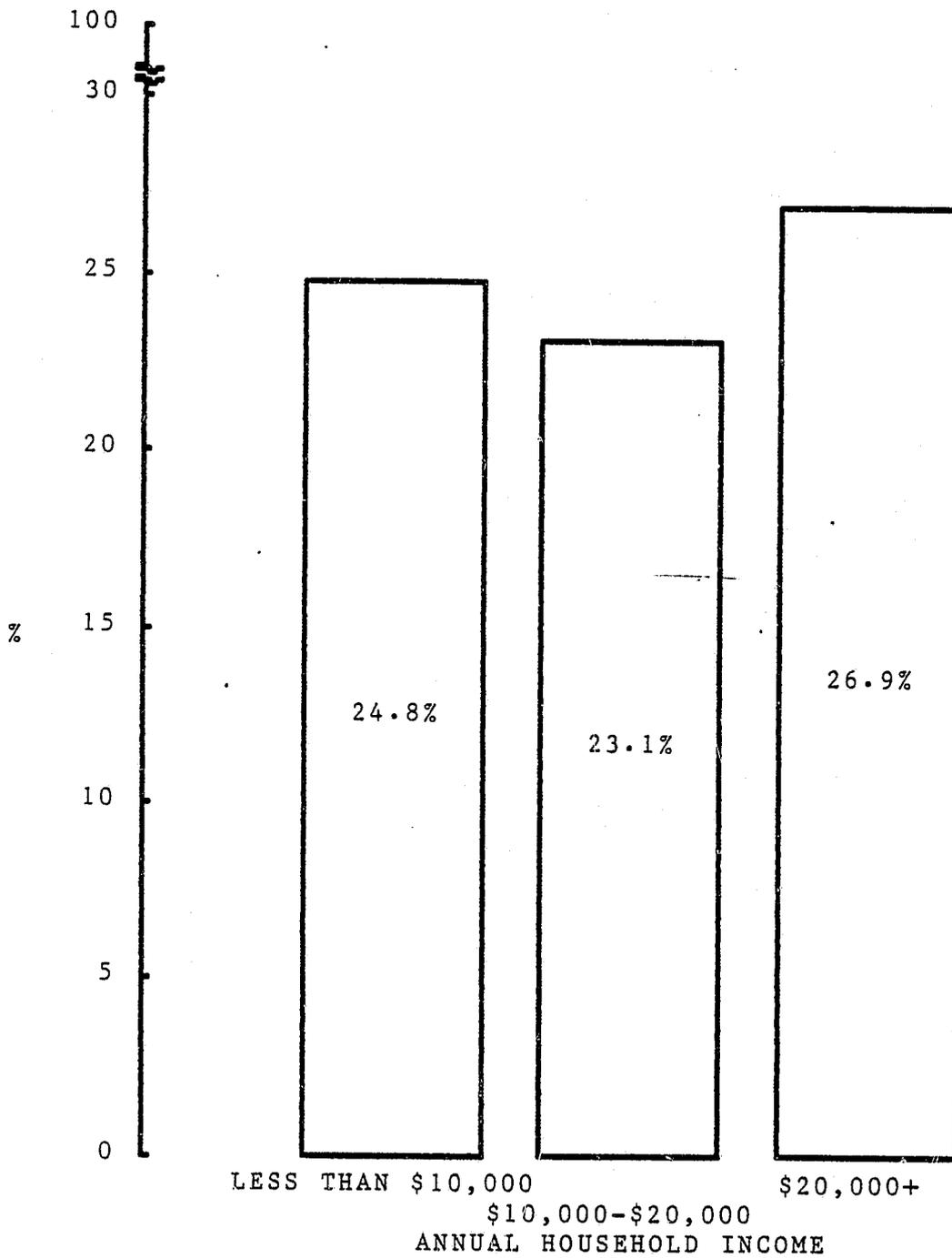
Community/Population	% of NASIS Sample	% of all Respondents Victimized	% of all Offenses
Omaha	23.5%	30.5%	31.6%
Lincoln	10.5%	13.3%	12.8%
5,000 to 50,000	23.8%	23.5%	23.6%
Less than 5,000	25.8%	20.4%	20.4%
Rural	16.5%	12.2%	11.5%

Household income. Three categories were used to classify respondents on the basis of household income: less than \$10,000 annual income, between \$10,000 and \$20,000 annual income, and annual income over \$20,000. A substantial portion of the respondents either refused to divulge this information or did not know the household income. Examination of Table 4 and Figure 5 indicates that victimization was fairly uniform within income categories, but not across income categories. Specifically, higher income categories are associated with higher numbers of victims: households with incomes over \$20,000 had the highest number of victims, \$10,000 to \$20,000 somewhat lower, and households with incomes less than \$10,000 had the lowest percentage of total victims. These differences, however, are not statistically significant.<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 4: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Annual Household Income	% of NASIS Sample	% of all Respondents Victimized	% of all Offenses
Less than \$10,000	18.5%	19.5%	19.6%
\$10,000 to \$20,000	28.0%	27.7%	27.9%
\$20,000 +	31.2%	35.8%	35.8%

FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VICTIMIZED BY ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME



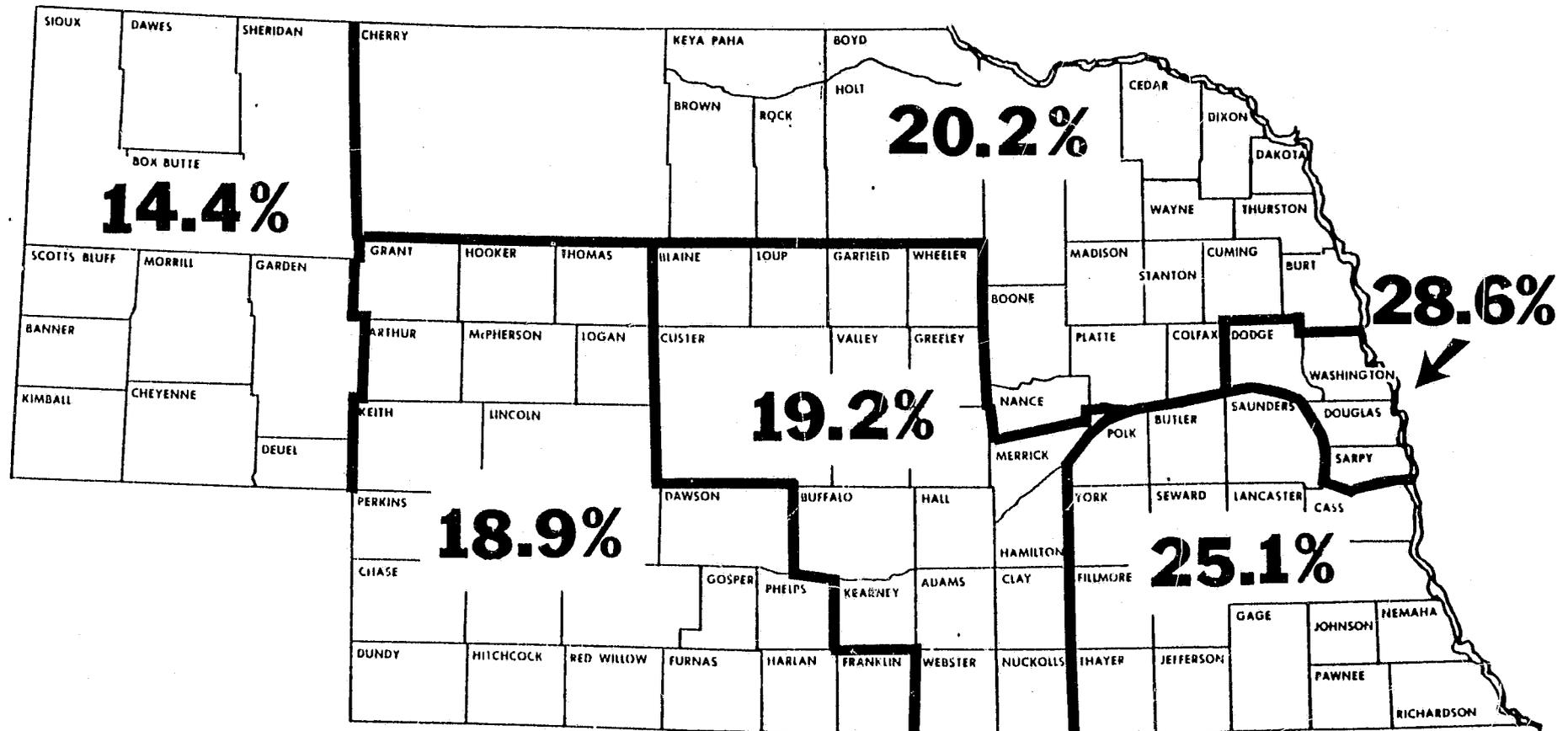
Region. Six general areas of the State were identified for purposes of NASIS 1979. These are illustrated in Figure 6 and include the Southeast, Omaha area, North, Southcentral, Southwest, and Panhandle regions. This represents a geographic as well as population size categorization of respondents. It is important to note that the percentage of NASIS respondents from each region (see Table 5) closely approximates that region's percentage of the total estimated Nebraska population. That is, about 24% of Nebraska's population lives in the Southeast region and about 24% of the NASIS 1979 respondents lived in the Southeast region.

TABLE 5: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY REGION

Region	% of NASIS Sample	% of all Respondents Victimized	% of all Offenses
Omaha area	32.7%	39.8%	41.4%
Southeast	24.2%	25.8%	24.9%
North	12.6%	10.9%	10.9%
Southcentral	14.1%	11.5%	11.1%
Southwest	10.1%	8.1%	7.6%
Panhandle	6.3%	3.9%	4.1%

The percentage of each region's respondents victimized roughly follows these population estimates: the higher population regions had higher victimization rates and more offenses, while lower population regions had lower victimization rates and fewer offenses. The Omaha and Southeast regions combined represent about two-thirds of all offenses while the remaining third is divided among the four other regions. Figure 6 depicts the percentage of respondents victimized in each geographical area (region). There is a significant degree of association between geographic region and reported victimization states.<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE 6: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VICTIMIZED BY REGION



Race. Non-white respondents made up only 2.1% of the total NASIS 1979 respondents, while 97.9% were white. The percentage of non-white respondents victimized was greater than the percentage of white respondents victimized as shown in Table 6. This difference, however, is not statistically significant.<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 6: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY RACE

Race	% of NASIS Sample	% of Racial Group Respondents Victimized	% of all Respondents Victimized	% of all Offenses
White	97.9%	23.3%	97.5%	97.9%
Non-white	2.1%	28.2%	2.5%	2.1%

Occupation. Seven general occupational categories were identified to examine respondent victimization. These were (1) Professional/Managerial; (2) Clerical/Sales; (3) Blue Collar; (4) Farm; (5) Military/Service/Household; (6) Unemployed; and (7) Retired. As indicated in Table 7, victimization is distributed fairly evenly according to the occupational category's representation in the overall NASIS sample. However, Figure 7 suggests that victimization rates within each occupational category are different. Specifically, the percentage of unemployed respondents who were victimized is almost twice that of any other category, while the percentage of retired respondents who were victimized is less than that of any other category. The relationship between occupational category and victimization probability is statistically significant.<sup>6</sup>

FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VICTIMIZED BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

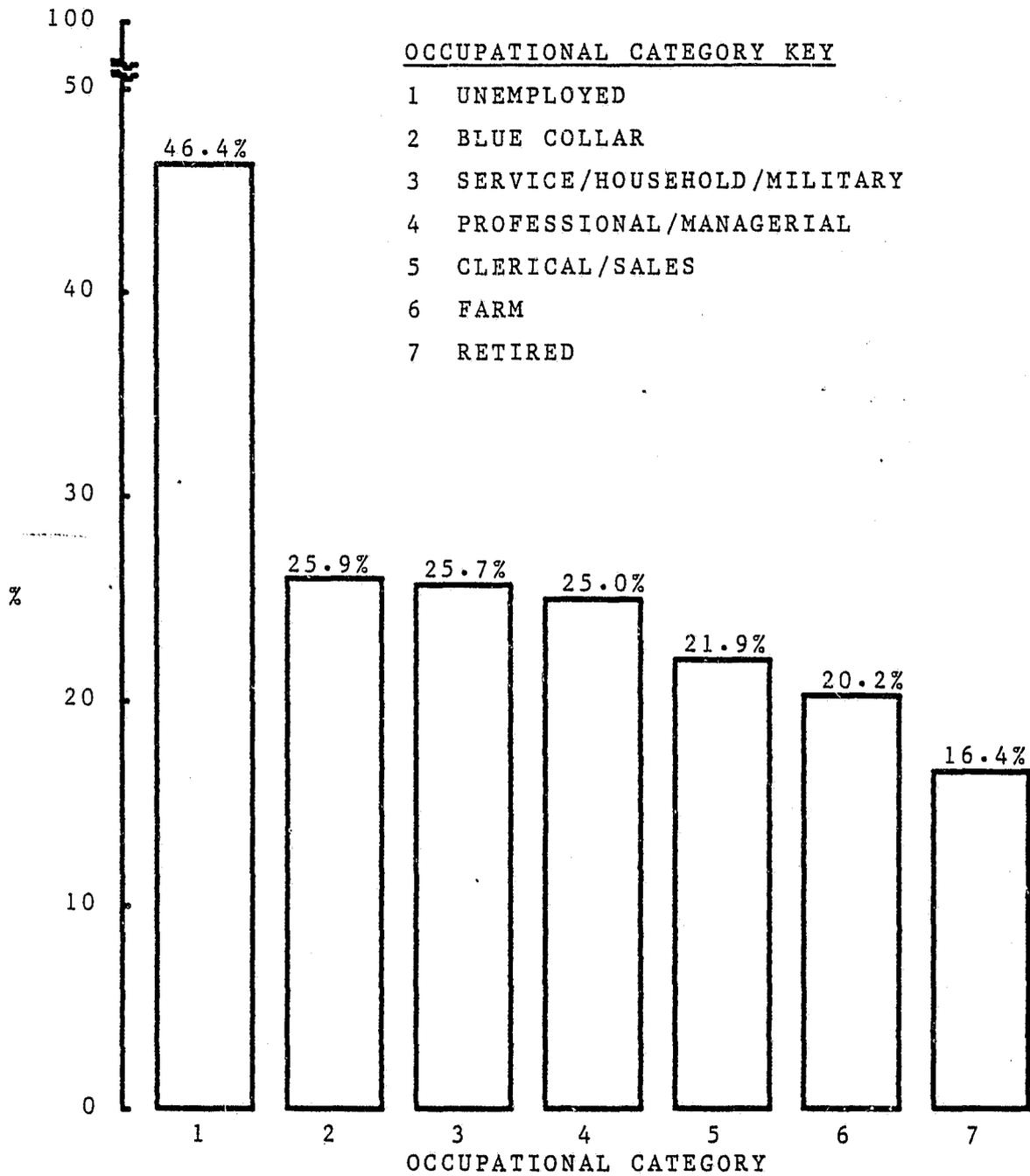


TABLE 7: RESPONDENT VICTIMIZATION BY OCCUPATION

Occupational Category	% of NASIS Sample	% of all Respondents Victimized	% of all Offenses
Professional/managerial	25.9%	27.7%	26.8%
Clerical/sales	21.6%	20.2%	20.3%
Blue Collar	15.0%	16.6%	17.3%
Farm	5.5%	4.9%	4.1%
Military/Service/Household	12.0%	13.2%	13.2%
Unemployed	1.5%	3.0%	3.5%
Retired	10.7%	7.5%	7.1%
Other	7.8%	6.9%	7.7%

Victim Reporting of Offenses

Generally, victimization surveys have shown that a substantial portion of offenses attempted or committed is not reported to law enforcement authorities by victims. Of all actual (not attempted) offenses recorded in NASIS 1979, 48.9% were reported to authorities. Approximately 57% of actual index offenses recorded were reported to authorities. Figure 8 shows the distribution of reporting by offense category. Because there were only attempted (not actual) sexual assaults, these are not included in the figure.

Age. Across all age groups there were no significant differences in reporting rates. Reporting information by age is presented in Table 8.<sup>7</sup>

FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL OFFENSES REPORTED BY TYPE OF OFFENSE

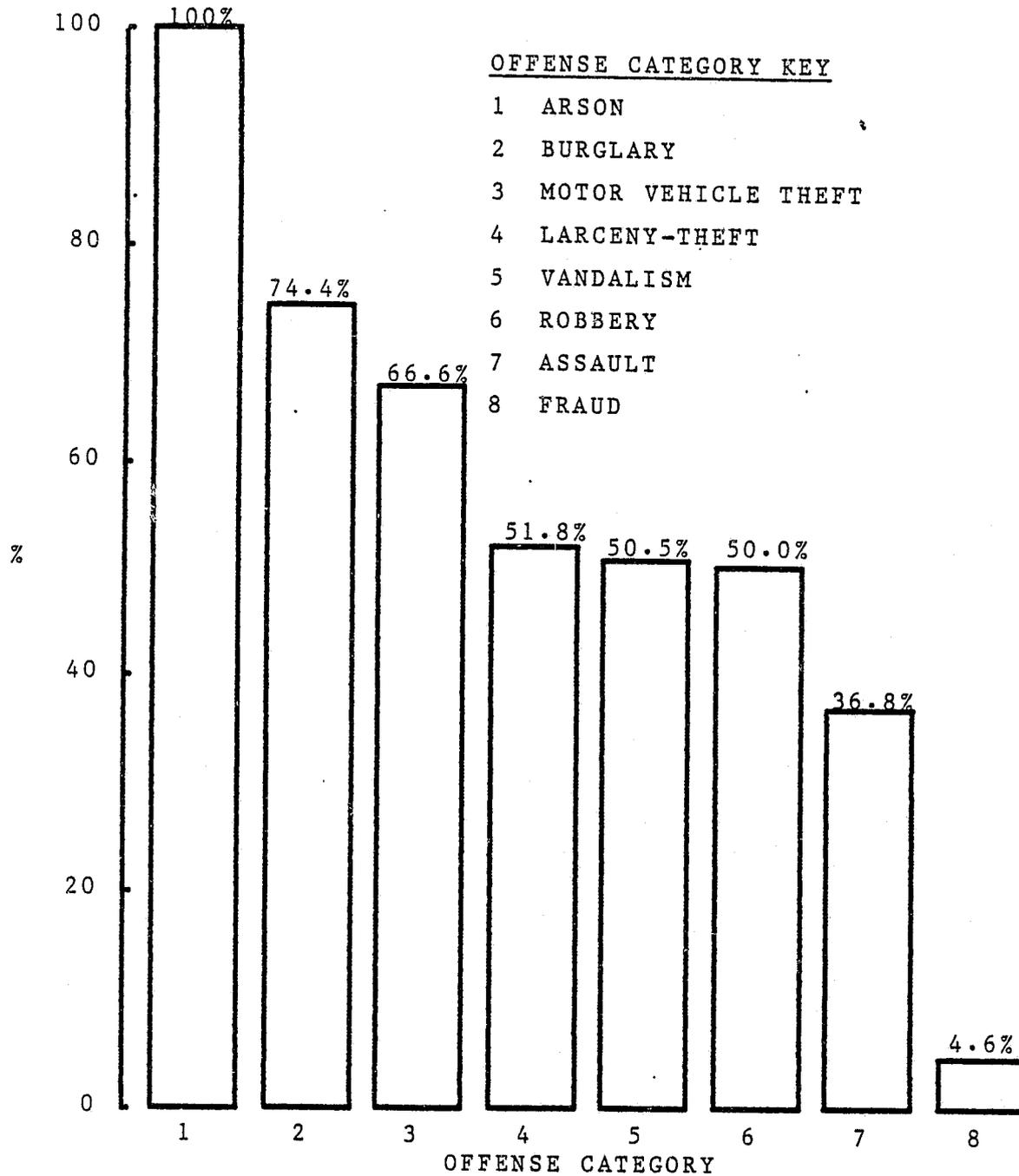


TABLE 8: RESPONDENT REPORT OF VICTIMIZATION  
BY AGE CATEGORY

Age Category	% of all Offenses	% of Offenses Reported
18-29	30.8%	45.1%
30-39	19.7%	53.3%
40-49	20.5%	53.2%
50-59	14.3%	51.3%
60-74	11.8%	39.7%
75 +	2.8%	53.3%

Community/population. Table 9 suggests that offense reporting rates are associated with community size. That is, larger communities have higher offense reporting rates and vice versa. However, these differences are not statistically significant.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 9: RESPONDENT REPORT OF VICTIMIZATION  
BY COMMUNITY/POPULATION

Community/Population	% of all Offenses	% of Offenses Reported
Omaha	31.6%	55.9%
Lincoln	12.8%	52.2%
5,000 - 50,000	23.6%	48.8%
Less than 5,000	20.4%	40.9%
Rural	11.5%	38.7%

Region. There is no significant association in Table 10 between geographic region and offense reporting rates.<sup>9</sup>

TABLE 10: RESPONDENT REPORT OF VICTIMIZATION BY REGION

Region	% of all Offenses	% of Offenses Reported
Omaha area	41.4%	66.1%
Southeast	24.9%	48.4%
North	10.9%	52.0%
Southcentral	11.1%	64.3%
Southwest	7.6%	41.2%
Panhandle	4.1%	50.0%

Reasons for non-reporting. Of those respondents who provided an identifiable reason for not reporting an offense, approximately 40% indicated that the offense was "not important enough". Close to 39% of respondents said the offense was "useless to report" or "nothing will be done". Approximately 14% of victimizations were not reported because respondents indicated that the offender was "a friend or relative".

A significant factor in NASIS 1979 is the respondent's perception of victimization. A respondent may report a particular event as an incidence of fraud, for example, but that response is influenced by the nature of the inquiry made (the question the interviewer asks) and the respondent's reaction to the event. The statutory classification of the event may indeed be fraud, but it may also be a civil matter or a business misunderstanding. The 40% of unreported offenses which were not reported because they were "not important enough" may include events which could not be classified as violations of the law. These caveats should be applied to any victimization survey data.

Of the actual offenses reported to law enforcement authorities, 58% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the manner in which the complaint was handled by authorities after it was reported.

### Multiple Victimization

Of those respondents who were victims of an offense (about 1 in 4), approximately 18% were victimized more than once. About 1 in 8 respondents were victims of an index offense; of these, approximately 10% were victimized more than once. Considering all offenses recorded in NASIS 1979, 4.2% of all respondents were victimized more than once. The percentage of all respondents who were victimized more than once decreases to 1.2% when only index offenses are considered. Table 11 provides multiple victimization information for all respondents.

TABLE 11: RESPONDENT FREQUENCY OF VICTIMIZATION

Number of times Victimized	Index Offenses			All Offenses		
	Number of Respondents	% of all Victims	% of all Respondents	Number of Respondents	% of all Victims	% of all Respondents
0	1,653	--	87.8%	1,441	--	76.6%
1	207	90.4%	11.0%	362	82.1%	19.2%
2	20	8.7%	1.1%	64	14.5%	3.4%
3	2	.9%	.1%	13	2.9%	.7%
4	0	--	--	2	.5%	.1%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,882</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,882</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

There were no significant differences in multiple victimization across the categories of age, community/population, or region.

#### NASIS 1979 and Uniform Crime Report Data

Victimization surveys are sometimes viewed as more accurate or reliable sources of information concerning actual crime incidence than some structured reporting systems such as the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), because higher incidence rates are often recorded in victimization surveys. For this reason, comparisons between UCR and victimization survey data are made. The resulting disparity in crime incidence rates forms the basis for a number of conclusions regarding crime reporting, actual crime incidence, etc. However, major differences in the nature and sources of UCR and victimization survey data should preclude drawing direct comparisons. Some major reasons for the apparent differences between results from UCR and victimization survey data bases include:

- (1) Certain crimes in NASIS 1979 are reported "per 1,000 households". UCR crimes are reported "per 1,000 population".
- (2) The source of information in NASIS 1979 was a sample of Nebraska residents. UCR data is collected from local law enforcement agencies.
- (3) NASIS 1979 totals include a large proportion of offenses that was never reported to authorities. This may sometimes be double the corresponding UCR rates.
- (4) Definitions and categorizations of crimes are not the same. In NASIS 1979, respondents categorize the offense and interpret whether an event was an offense. For UCR data, law enforcement

authorities use a well-defined categorization system. Respondent interpretation of whether an event was an offense or not may inflate the resulting figures.

- (5) Low incidence offense rates recorded in NASIS 1979 (e.g., motor vehicle theft) are not totally reliable estimates because of the few offenses recorded.

Victimization surveys already have shown that a large number of "crimes" are not reported to police. Therefore, it should not be expected that UCR data (compiled on the basis of law enforcement authority reports) would closely approximate victimization survey data. In examining NASIS 1979 data and Nebraska UCR data for the comparable reporting period, it is apparent that NASIS victimization rates for specific offenses far exceed UCR rates for the same offenses. Because comparisons will inevitably be drawn, this data is presented in Table 11A.

TABLE 11A: COMPARISON OF OFFENSE RATES FOR  
NASIS 1979 AND NEBRASKA UCR, 1978

Offense	NASIS Rate Per 1,000 Adults (over 18)/Households	UCR Rate Per 1,000 Population
Larceny-theft	91.9	22.4
Burglary	31.3	7.4
Assault	12.8	1.0
Sexual Assault	6.0	.2
Motor Vehicle Theft	1.6	2.1
Robbery	2.1	.7

### Specific Offenses

The four highest incidence offenses in NASIS 1979 (burglary, vandalism, larceny-theft, and fraud) are described in more detail below. The low frequencies for other offenses recorded in NASIS 1979 (from 3 to 24 victimizations) generally do not provide meaningful information if they are broken down into smaller categories (e.g., there were only 3 motor vehicle thefts recorded).

Burglary. "During the last 12 months, did anyone break into your home or apartment and steal something?"

Of 1,882 respondents to this question, 39 reported a successful burglary, and 19 reported an unsuccessful attempt. About 3% of the households surveyed were burglarized for an overall victimization rate of 30.8/1,000 households. Burglaries comprised 21.5% of index offenses and 10.6% of all offenses.

--- The largest number of burglary victims live<sup>d</sup> in Omaha; the fewest in rural areas of the state. The percentage of Lincoln and Omaha respondents who were victims of burglary (6.6% and 4.0% respectively) was roughly twice that of smaller community/population areas.

--- The Omaha area and Southeast regions accounted for three-quarters of all burglary offenses. Only 3 respondents in the Southwest and Panhandle regions were burglary victims.

- The 58 burglary offenses were distributed fairly evenly across the categories of household income (less than \$10,000: 17; \$10,000 to \$20,000: 14; greater than \$20,000: 16; no category: 11).
- 4.1% of apartment residents were burglary victims; 2.4% of respondents in single family dwellings were burglary victims.
- In 25 instances where burglars entered through a door, there were 10 instances in which the door was unlocked.
- Half of the burglaries occurred during the day, half at night.
- Where property was stolen, only twice was it recovered.

Vandalism. "During the last 12 months, has anyone unlawfully damaged your property?"

Two hundred vandalism incidents were recorded in NASIS 1979. Approximately 10% of the respondents reported being the victim of vandalism for an overall victimization rate of 106.3/1,000 households surveyed. More vandalism incidents were recorded in NASIS 1979 than any other offense category; 36% of all offenses were classified as vandalism.

- Respondents under the age of 40 comprised half of all vandalism victims. About 20% of vandalism victims were aged 60 and over.

- Half of all vandalism incidents were recorded by respondents in the cities of Omaha and Lincoln. Approximately one-quarter of the vandalism victims lived in Omaha, one-quarter in cities of 5,000 to 50,000 and one-quarter in cities and towns of less than 5,000. Lincoln had the highest percentage of respondents victimized (13.8%), followed by Omaha (11.6%), cities of 5,000 to 50,000 (10.3%), and cities and towns of less than 5,000 (9.3%).
- 62% of vandalism victimizations were recorded in the Omaha area and Southeast regions. The Panhandle and Southwest regions had the lowest percentage of respondents victimized (7.1% and 8.9%, respectively), while the Omaha area had the highest (11.3%).
- The average dollar value of a vandalism incident was approximately \$250.00.
- About half of the vandalism incidents involved damage to a motor vehicle; approximately one-quarter resulted in damage to residence or grounds.

Larceny-theft. "During the last 12 months, did anyone steal something from you without threatening you or using force and without breaking into your home?"

Of 1882 respondents to this question, 173 indicated that he/she had been the victim of an actual or attempted larceny-theft. This yields an overall victimization rate of 91.9/1,000 respondents surveyed. Accordingly, approximately 9.2% of all NASIS respondents were larceny-theft victims.

- The largest percentage of all respondents victimized lived in Omaha (32.9%). Generally, the victimization rates followed community/ population size, with Omaha having a victimization rate of 121/1,000 with successive decreases to rural areas (59/1,000).
  
- Respondents age 60 and over were less likely to be larceny-theft victims. About 6% of respondents 60 and over were larceny-theft victims while about 9.5% of respondents under 60 were victims.
  
- Residents of the North and Panhandle regions were victimized less often than residents of other regions. The Omaha area accounted for approximately 40% of all larceny-theft victimizations; 10.6% of Omaha area respondents were victims of larceny-theft.
  
- 17% of larceny-theft victims indicated that all or part of the property stolen was eventually recovered.
  
- Of the actual larceny-thefts recorded, about 42% occurred at the respondent's home and approximately 26% occurred at the respondent's car.
  
- For those cases in which the respondent knew the time of day in which the larceny-theft occurred, 45% took place during the day while the remaining 65% took place at night.

Fraud. "During the last 12 months, did anyone cheat you out of your property or money in any way?"

Sixty-five respondents replied affirmatively to this question; 17 respondents indicated that an unsuccessful attempt took place. This results in an overall victimization rate of 43.6/1,000 individuals surveyed. Fraud incidents comprised 14.7% of all offenses recorded in NASIS 1979.

--- The largest percentage of respondents who were victims of fraud were in the age category of 18-29 (6.6%). Senior citizens (respondents aged 60 and over) comprised about 16% of all fraud victims but were about 23% of the total NASIS sample.

--- Respondents from Omaha and rural areas were victims of fraud more often than would be expected by their representation in the NASIS 1979 sample. Respondents in the other community/population categories were victims less often than would be expected on the basis of their representation in the sample (e.g., Lincoln respondents comprised 10.5% of the NASIS sample but accounted for only 6.1% of the fraud victims).

--- The North, Southeast, and Omaha area regions had the highest percentage of respondents victimized (5.9%, 5.3% and 5.2% respectively). These regions were over-represented in terms of their percentage of all fraud victims while the Panhandle, Southwest, and Southcentral regions were under-represented.

--- As with other offense categories, the nature of the incidents described by respondents classified as fraud may not correspond to the statutory definition of fraud. The most frequent types of incidents recorded were wage disputes. Other frequent categories included bill or loan nonpayment, rent disputes, and partnership disputes.

#### Crime Loss Insurance

Of those respondents who were victims of an offense, 64% indicated that the loss suffered was not covered by insurance. About 14.5% of victims incurred crime losses which were fully covered by insurance. The crime losses of about 20% of the victims were partially covered by insurance.

#### Community Crime Safety Rating

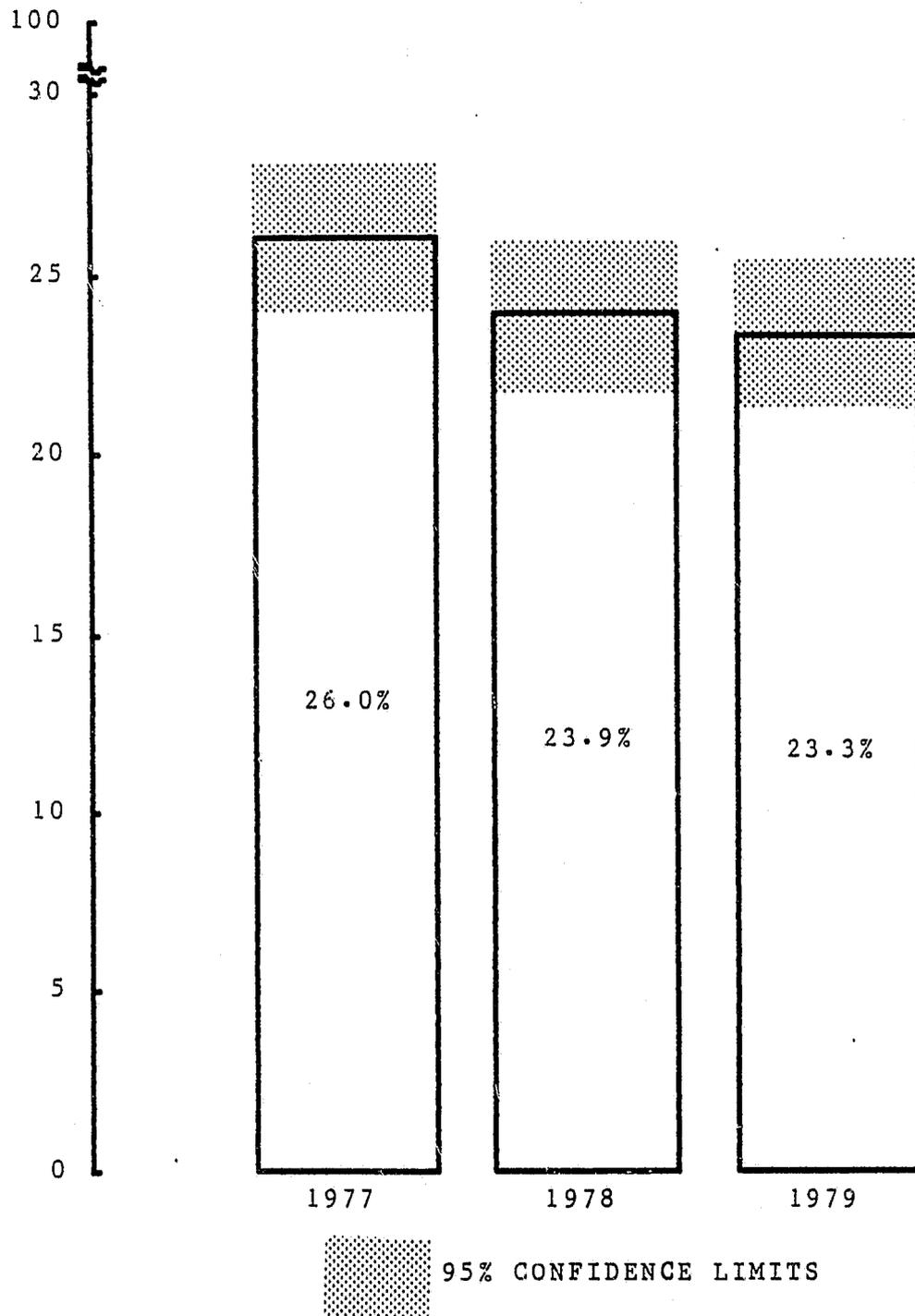
All respondents were asked to gauge their community's safety from crime relative to two years previously. About 7.9% indicated their community was safer, 75.8% said their community was about as safe as two years previously, while 13.2% responded that their community was less safe from crime. Approximately 21% of Omaha residents said their community was less safe from crime, almost twice as many as respondents in the other community/population categories. The percentage of respondents who considered their community less safe from crime than two years previously was highest for Omaha (21%), and decreased for rural areas (12.7%), towns and cities of 5,000 to 50,000 (12.2%), Lincoln (9.3%), and towns less than 5,000 (9.1%).

### NASIS 1977, 1978, 1979

Victimization surveys are often seen as alternate views of crime incidence and its attendant circumstances. As such, repeated measures of victimization over a number of years may provide useful information concerning changes over time. It is important to note, however, that the NASIS samples for 1977, 1978, and 1979 are not completely independent. As mentioned previously, about 81% of the 1979 respondents also participated in the 1977 survey. Respondents in 1978, though, did not participate in the other years' surveys. Therefore, direct comparisons between data from 1977 and 1979 involve measurements of responses from many of the same people at two different times. For purposes of comparing incidence rates for 1977 and 1979, for example, many of the same persons are included in the sample.

Percentage of respondents victimized. The percentage of respondents who were victimized has remained fairly stable over the period from 1977 to 1979. Figure 9 illustrates this finding as well as the relative accuracy of measurement in each year. The shaded areas in Figure 9 indicate the "confidence intervals" for the corresponding percentage. Essentially, this indicates the range of possible error due to sampling methods and may be interpreted to mean that if repeated surveys of Nebraskans were conducted in these years, 95 out of 100 of the surveys would be expected to yield results in this range, for these data. By looking at the results in this way, it can be seen that there is enough overlap among the three years/percentages so that on the basis of this data alone, there are probably no significant differences across years in the percentage of respondents victimized.

FIGURE 9: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VICTIMIZED:  
NASIS YEARS 1977, 1978, 1979



Victimization rates. Victimization rates will generally correspond to the percentage of respondents victimized except where respondents are victims of more than one offense. The overall victimization rate (number of offenses per 1,000 individuals/households surveyed) across all offense categories has decreased each year since 1977. Table 12 presents information on percent change for each offense category for 1977, 1978 and 1979. Although some of the percentage changes for specific offenses over the period are relatively large (but little change in absolute numbers) none of the changes are statistically significant.<sup>10</sup>

TABLE 12: COMPARISON OF CHANGES IN VICTIMIZATION RATES BY OFFENSE CATEGORY: NASIS YEARS 1977, 1978, 1979

Offense Category	% Change in Victimization Rate		
	1977-78	1977-79	1978-79
Burglary	+ .9	-27.8	-28.4
Vandalism	+ 1.1	- 7.3	- 8.4
Motor Vehicle Theft	+17.6	+16.5	-85.9
Larceny-theft	-37.8	- .1	+61.0
Robbery	-72.4	-71.6	+ 3.1
Sexual Assault	-63.6	-42.1	+58.8
Fraud	+ 7.5	-22.4	-27.8
Arson	N/A	N/A	N/A
All Categories	-10.9	-14.0	- 3.4

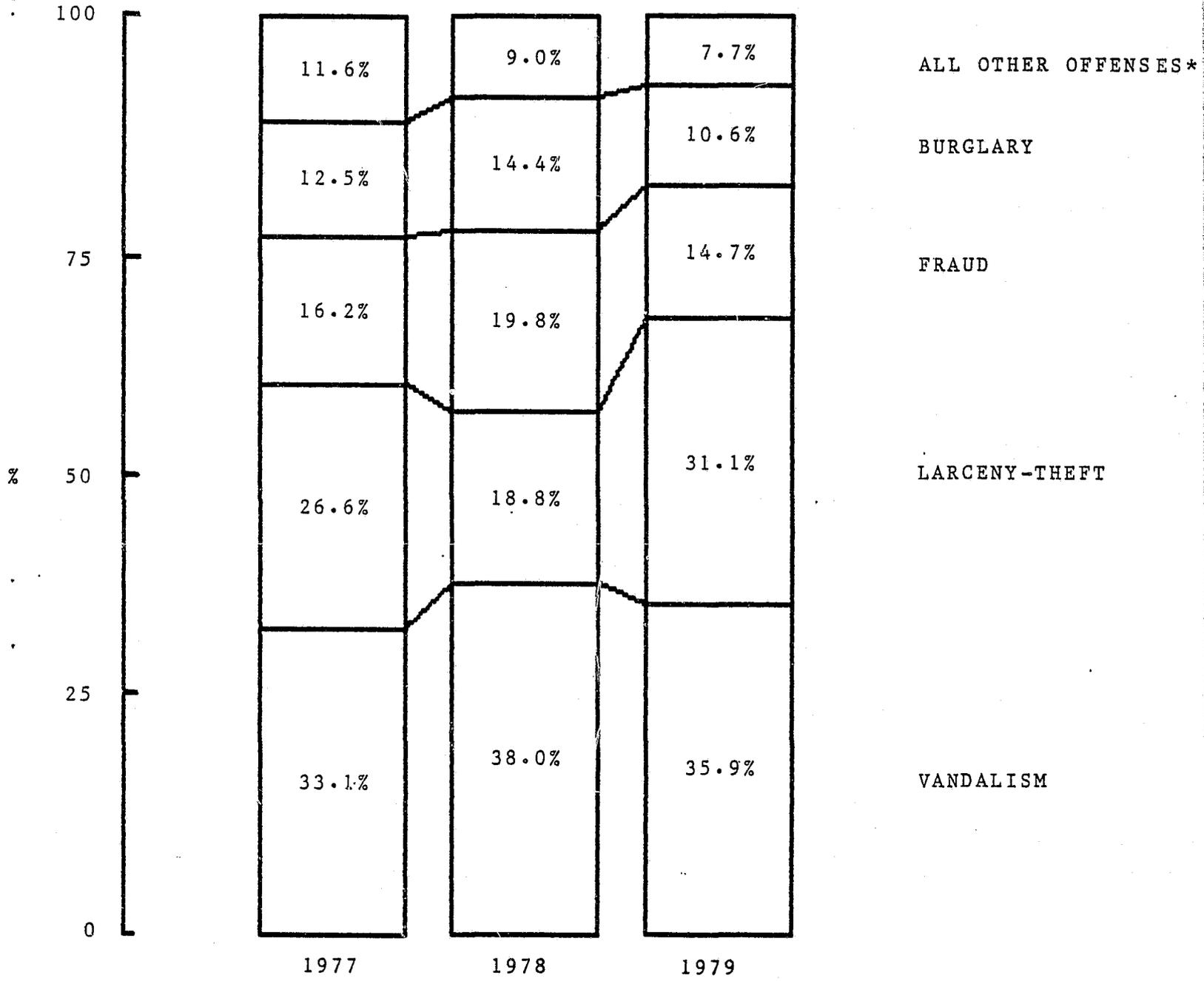
Relative distribution of offenses. Burglary, fraud, larceny-theft, and vandalism accounted for roughly 90% of all offenses in 1977, 1978 and 1979.

Figure 10 illustrates the relative proportions of total offenses by category for these years. The distribution of the low incidence offenses in the "other" category is shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14: RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF LOW INCIDENCE ("OTHER") OFFENSES BY OFFENSE CATEGORY: NASIS YEARS 1977, 1978, 1979

Offense Category	% of Total Offenses		
	1977	1978	1979
Assault	5.1%	4.1%	4.3%
Robbery	2.2%	.6%	.7%
Motor Vehicle Theft	2.8%	3.7%	.5%
Sexual Assault	1.5%	.6%	1.1%
Arson	N/A	N/A	1.1%
Total	11.6%	9.0%	7.7%

FIGURE 10: PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OFFENSES BY OFFENSE CATEGORY:  
NASIS YEARS 1977, 1978, 1979



\*SEXUAL ASSAULT, ROBBERY, MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT, ASSAULT, ARSON (1979 ONLY)

Victim reporting of offenses. The rate of reporting of victimizations to law enforcement authorities has not changed substantially over the years 1977 to 1979. In each year, less than half of the total victimizations were reported to authorities. In addition, the reporting rates for each offense category have remained relatively stable across the time period. As in the examination of victimization rate changes, one must bear in mind that for low incidence offenses (e.g., sexual assault, robbery, and motor vehicle theft) relatively small absolute changes in reporting rates from year to year may greatly affect the percentage changes. For example, if 2 of 4 burglaries were reported in 1978 and 4 of 4 in 1979, this will produce a change from 50% to 100%. Table 13 shows the percentage of offenses reported to authorities for the NASIS years 1977, 1978 and 1979.

TABLE 13: VICTIM REPORTING OF OFFENSES BY  
OFFENSE CATEGORY: NASIS YEARS 1977, 1978, 1979

Offense Category	% of Offenses Reported to Authorities		
	1977	1978	1979
Motor Vehicle Theft	83%	74%	67%
Burglary	81%	70%	74%
Vandalism	56%	54%	51%
Larceny-theft	48%	40%	52%
Robbery	56%	50%	50%
Assault	53%	24%	37%
Sexual Assault	67%	0%	N/A
Fraud	9%	9%	5%
Arson	N/A	N/A	100%
% of Total Offenses	49%	42%	49%

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

An implicit purpose of victimization surveys, such as the one based on NASIS 1979 data, is to produce a fairly reliable estimate of "true" crime rates in Nebraska. It must be emphasized that the degree of confidence placed in estimates of offense rates in NASIS 1979 should be tempered by the fact that these are only estimates. Low incidence offense estimates (e.g., sexual assault, arson, robbery) should be treated with more caution than higher incidence offense estimates (e.g., vandalism, larceny-theft). Ideally, a very large sample of Nebraskans (5-10% of the state's population) could be interviewed and a much greater degree of confidence could be placed in the results. In practice, however, this is hardly feasible.

While recognizing the limitation of NASIS 1979 for purposes of collecting victimization data, one must also be aware of its value. First, victimization surveys provide information about the volume and circumstances of crime from the victims' point of view as opposed to the records of law enforcement authorities. The nature and extent of unreported crime, for example, is quite valuable information for all components of the criminal justice system. Second, victimization surveys increase the quantity and quality of demographic and other descriptive information available to criminal justice planners, public officials, and law enforcement authorities in their efforts to develop crime prevention programs and policies. Third, repeated victimization surveys of the same population provide an alternate means of assessing changes and trends in crime over a period of months and years. Fourth, victimization survey data (specifically as obtained in NASIS 1979) is a relatively efficient and low-cost method of collecting victimization information when it is compared to

established systems such as the Uniform Crime Reporting System. Last, NASIS 1979 has provided a means of comparing Nebraska victimization rates with those from other victimization surveys such as the National Crime Survey. Comparisons such as this, as well as comparisons between Nebraska and national UCR offense rates indicate that Nebraska offense rates are generally lower.

One area which has not received a great deal of emphasis in the NASIS victimization surveys has been Nebraskans' attitudes toward and opinions about crime and its attendant circumstances. Surveys such as NASIS are particularly appropriate for collecting this kind of qualitative information. NASIS 1980 will address these important topics and issues as well as obtaining quantitative information relating to incidence rates, reporting, and victim characteristics.

## NOTES

1.  $\chi^2 = 23.67$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p < .001$
2.  $\chi^2 = 31.17$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$
3.  $\chi^2 = 1.96$ ,  $df = 2$ , n.s.
4.  $\chi^2 = 23.62$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p < .001$
5.  $\chi^2 = .499$ ,  $df = 1$ , n.s.
6.  $\chi^2 = 19.92$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .005$
7.  $\chi^2 = 5.17$ ,  $df = 5$ , n.s.
8.  $\chi^2 = 8.99$ ,  $df = 5$ , n.s.
9.  $\chi^2 = 10.75$ ,  $df = 5$ , n.s.
10. 90% or 95% confidence interval

**END**