

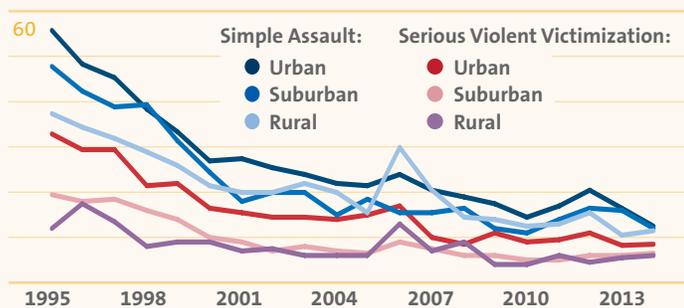
# Urban and Rural Victimization

While national-level crime statistics provide important information regarding overall crime trends, they cannot yet demonstrate differences in crime and victimization at the sub-national level. For instance, reporting local data through the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program is voluntary, making it difficult to isolate factors contributing to crime. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has recognized the need for sub-national victimization data, and is working to estimate crime at the state and local levels. Currently, results from the UCR and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate that cities with a larger population generally have higher crime rates than suburban or rural cities. While differences in crime rates may be related to population size, they may also be caused by other local factors.<sup>A</sup> For example, rural policing agencies may have organizational, resource-related, or technological differences compared to their urban and suburban counterparts, resulting in underreported crime and victimization.<sup>B</sup> For more about the UCR and NCVS, see the *Crime and Victimization in the United States* fact sheet in this series.

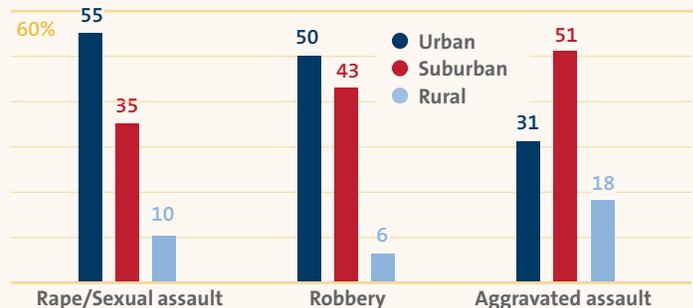
## Trends

Since 1995, **serious violent victimizations** in **urban areas** have decreased by approximately **72%**. Other forms of victimization, including simple assault, personal theft, and household burglary have declined by 74%, 84%, and 52%, respectively. In comparison, serious violent victimizations in **suburban and rural areas** have decreased by **65%** and **48%**, while simple assaults have dropped 71% and 66%. On average, motor vehicle and household thefts have declined by about 75% and 62% across urban, suburban, and rural areas.<sup>C</sup>

**Personal Victimization by Type of Community<sup>C</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 people

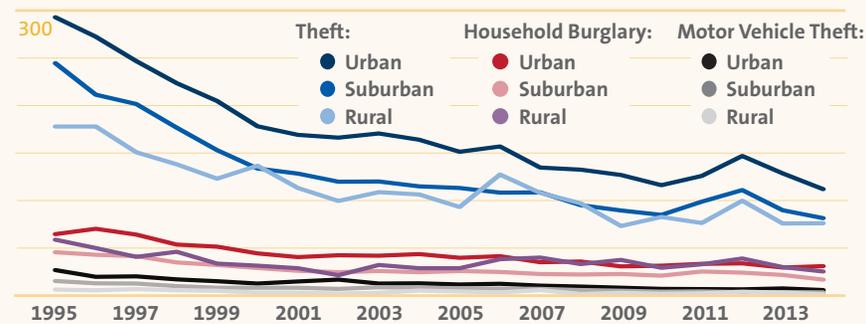


**Victimization by Location of Residence<sup>C</sup>**



In 2014, victims from **urban areas** accounted for: **55%** of all rapes and sexual assaults, **50%** of robberies, and **31%** of aggravated assaults. Victims from **suburban areas** accounted for **51%** of all aggravated assaults. And victims from **rural areas** accounted for: **10%** of rapes and sexual assaults, **6%** of robberies, and **18%** of aggravated assaults.<sup>C</sup>

**Household Victimization in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities<sup>C</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 households



### Did You Know?

**Motor vehicle theft** occurs 2.2 times more frequently in **urban areas** than rural areas.<sup>C</sup>

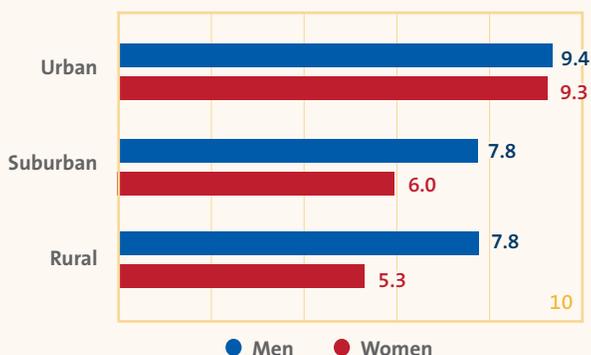
The rate of **household burglary** is greater in **rural areas** compared to suburban areas but lower than the rate of household burglary in **urban areas**.<sup>C</sup>

# Current Data on Urban and Rural Crime

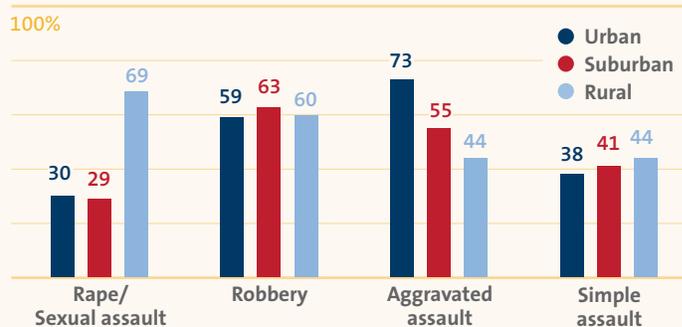
Residents of urban areas experienced the highest rates of victimization in 2014. While **rates of violent victimization in urban areas were similar for both men and women** (9.4 and 9.3 per 1,000 individuals, respectively), the rate of violent victimization in **suburban areas** was about **23% lower for women** than for men. Similarly, in **rural areas** the rate of victimization among women was about **32% lower** than among men.<sup>c</sup>

Only **56%** of victims of serious violent victimization in 2014 reported their victimization to the police. **Among urban and suburban locales, rape and sexual assault were the least reported** form of violent victimization, averaging about **30%** each. Comparatively, **60%** of rape and sexual assault victims in **rural communities** said that they had reported their victimization to the police.<sup>c</sup>

**Serious Violent Victimization by Locale and Sex<sup>c</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 people

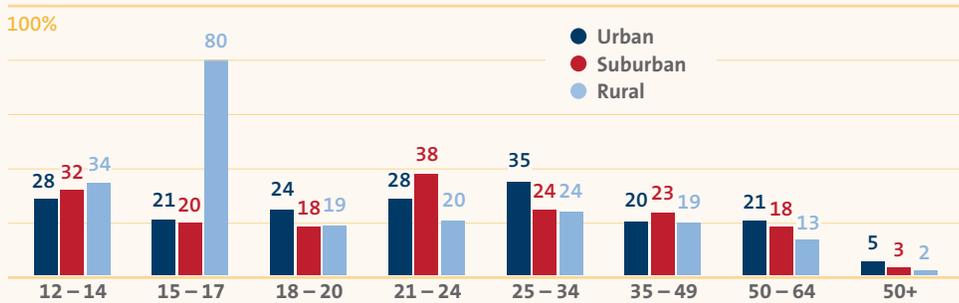


**Victims Who Reported Victimization to Police<sup>c</sup>**



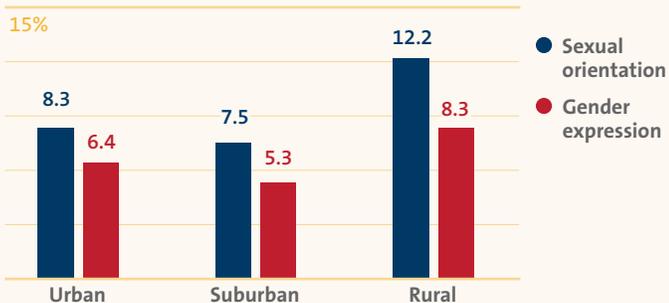
In 2014, rates of victimization for different age groups were similar across urban, suburban, and rural communities. Notably, **youth ages 15 – 17 in rural areas** were victimized at a rate **3.9x greater** than youth of the same age in urban areas, and **4x greater** than youth in suburban areas.<sup>c</sup>

**Violent Victimization by Locale and Age<sup>c</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 people



In 2013, **12%** of **LGBTQ students in rural areas** reported that they had been physically **assaulted** because of their sexual orientation—about **1.5x** as many victims as in urban or suburban areas. Similarly, **8%** of rural students who identified as **gender nonbinary** reported being physically assaulted, compared to 6% of urban and 5% of suburban students.<sup>d</sup>

**LGBT Students Who Were Victims of Sexual Assault<sup>d</sup>**



## SOURCES

- A Mark T. Berg and Janet L. Lauritson, "Telling a Similar Story Twice? NCVS/UCR Convergence in Serious Violent Crime Rates in Rural, Suburban, and Urban Places (1973-2010)," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* (2015)
- B Ralph A. Weisheit, David Falcone, and Edward Wells, "Rural Crime and Rural Policing," (National Institute of Justice, 1994), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/rcrp.pdf>
- C Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Crime Victimization Survey, Concatenated File, 1995 - 2014*, (U.S. Department of Justice)
- D GLSEN, "2013 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of LGBTQ Youth in Our Nation's Schools," (2014), [https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report_0.pdf)