CJ bulletin

Criminal Justice Research Division, SANDAG

San Diego Crime Victims and Suspects in 2006

August 2007

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A SANDAG CJ BULLETIN

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SAN DIEGO CRIME VICTIMS AND SUSPECTS IN 2006

INTRODUCTION

This SANDAG CJ Bulletin, which is the final in a three-part series presenting 2006 annual crime information, includes crime and arrest report data from local law enforcement agencies regarding characteristics of crime victims and suspects. Analyses are presented regarding which population subgroups were more likely to report being victimized in 2006, as well as how victims and suspects differed by crime type in terms of their ethnicity, age, and gender. This information, which is provided nearly one year prior to the release of these data nationally, is useful to those interested in better understanding who is affected by crime in our region and using this information to help develop strategies to best meet the needs of these individuals.

WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO REPORT BEING A CRIME VICTIM?

Ethnicity

In 2006, slightly over half (53%) of the San Diego region's population was non-Hispanic White, around one-quarter (27%) were Hispanic, 14 percent represented "other" ethnicities, and 5 percent were non-Hispanic Black (Figure 1). However, these proportions differed from the ethnicity of violent crime victims[1]. Specifically, Blacks were overrepresented[2] as victims of violent crimes (14% versus 5% of the population), while Whites were underrepresented (43% versus 53%). Hispanics and individuals of other ethnicities had similar representation as victims of violent crime to their proportion in the population.

In addition, as Table 1 shows, there were ethnic disparities in the type of violent crimes. Specifically, Blacks were overrepresented as victims of homicide (21%), rape[3] (11%), and assault (15%), as were Hispanics in incidents of homicide (38%) and robbery (39%).

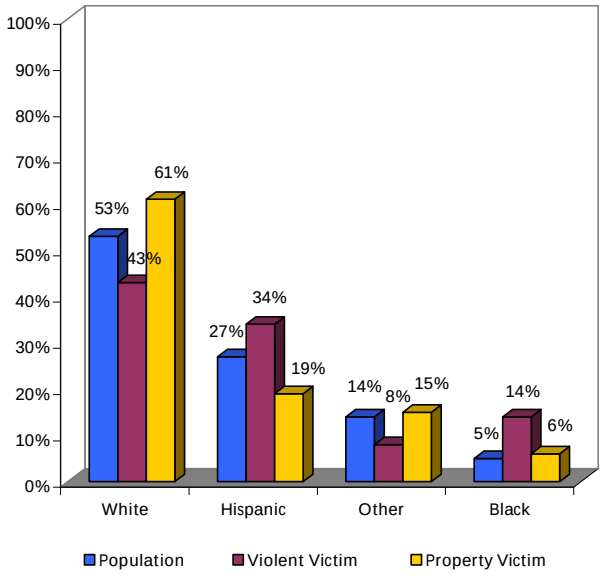
FAST FACTS
2006 VICTIMS AND SUSPECTS

- Individuals between 18 and 24 years old were most likely to be violent crime victims, and those 40 and older were most likely to be property crime victims.
- Males were three times more likely to be homicide victims, but males and females were almost equally likely to be victims of assault.
- Blacks were overrepresented as victims of homicide, rape, and assault.
- One in four rape victims was under the age of 18 years old.
- Overall, females were 25 percent of homicide victims but 40 percent of homicide victims under the age of 18 years old.
- Gang activity was responsible for 17 percent of homicides for which motive was known.

[1] Violent crime includes homicide, robbery, simple assault, and aggravated assault.
[2] Only differences significant at the $p < .05$ level are presented.
[3] According to Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) standards for the crime of rape, all victims are females and all suspects are male.

This association between ethnicity and victimization was not evident for property crime[4], with similar proportions of the population being victims. Specifically, 61 percent of property crime victims were White, 19 percent were Hispanic, 15 percent were other ethnicities, and 6 percent were Black (Figure 1).

Figure 1
VIOLENT AND PROPERTY CRIME VICTIMS AND POPULATION BY ETHNICITY



NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

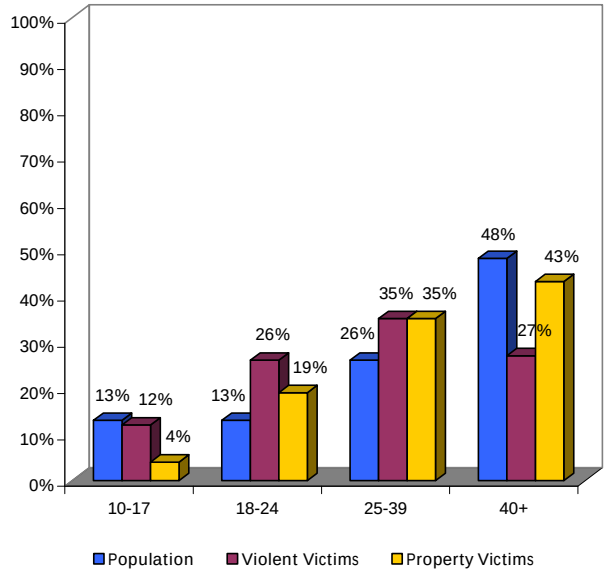
SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) and SANDAG 2006 Statistics

Age

According to 2006 estimates, 13 percent of the region's population was between the ages of 10 and 17, 13 percent was between the ages of 18 and 24, 26 percent was between 25 and 39, and 48 percent was 40 years of age and older (Figure 2). Similar to ethnicity, residents in the region had different probabilities of being the victim of a violent crime, depending on their age. That is, individuals between 18 and 24 were significantly more likely to be victims of a violent crime (26% versus 13%) and were overrepresented in each of the four violent crimes (Table 1). In comparison, individuals who were 40 years of age and older were underrepresented as violent crime victims (27% versus 48% of population). Individuals ages 25 to 39 also were overrepresented as violent crime victims (35% versus 26%), with a disproportionate representation as assault victims (36%) primarily responsible for this relationship.

This difference in representation was not as evident in terms of property crime, with individuals between 10 and 17 the only group significantly underrepresented among crime victims (4%). Individuals 40 years or older represented 43 percent of all property crime victims, with 25 to 39-year-olds representing 35 percent, and young adults 18 to 24 years old representing 19 percent (Figure 2).

Figure 2
VIOLENT AND PROPERTY CRIME VICTIMS AND POPULATION BY AGE



NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) and SANDAG 2006 Statistics

[4] Property crime includes burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

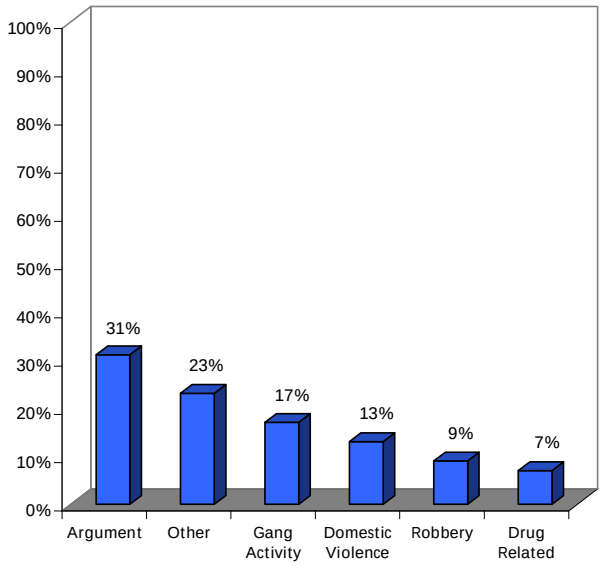
Gender

In 2006, half (50%) of the region's population was male and half (50%) was female. Overall, there was no difference in this proportion for violent (50% female and 50% male) or property crime (46% female and 54% male) (not shown). However, there were differences among each of the crime types. Specifically, males were overrepresented as victims of homicide (75%) and robbery (68%) in comparison to their representation in the population. In addition, females under 18 years old were almost twice as likely to be a victim of rape in comparison to their representation in the female population (24% versus 13%, respectively) (Table 1).

WHO WERE VICTIMS OF HOMICIDE IN 2006?

Not only because of the tragedy associated with the loss of a human life, but also because homicide is one of the most reliable indicators of violent crimes[5], more detailed information is provided on individuals who died as a result of criminal homicide in 2006. According to the California Department of Justice (personal communication, 2006), for the 94 homicides in 2006 for which motive could be determined, 31 percent were related to an argument, 23 percent to other motives[6], 17 percent to gang activity, 13 percent to domestic violence, 9 percent to robbery, and 7 percent to drugs.

Figure 3
HOMICIDES BY MOTIVE



SOURCE: California Department of Justice 2006 Statistics

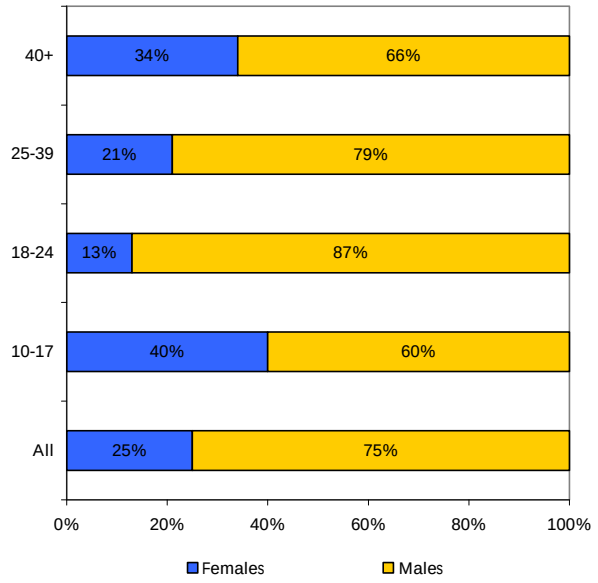
Age and Gender

Closer examination of all homicide victims in 2006 provides more insight about the characteristics of victims. Specifically, there was an association between age and gender. While females represented 25 percent of all homicide victims, they represented 40 percent of victims under the age of 18 years. Likewise, males represented 75 percent of all homicide victims, but represented 87 percent of victims aged 18 to 24 years old (Figure 4).

[5] Fox, A., & Zawitz, M (2007). **Homicide Trends in the United States.** Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available on-line at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

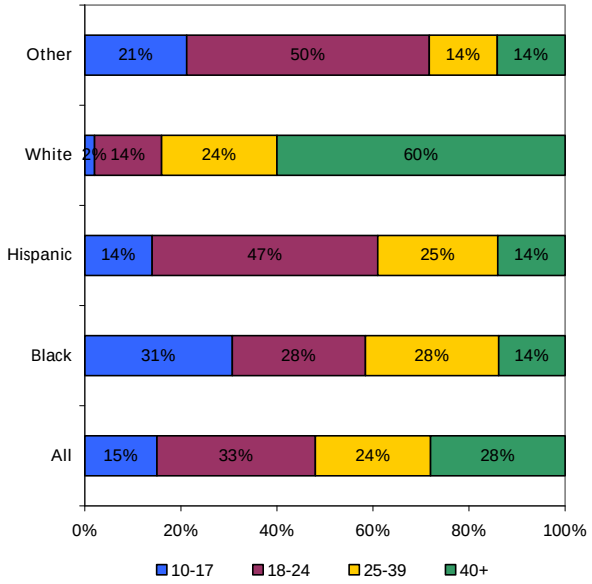
[6] The "other" category includes homicides precipitated by events which could include a variety of circumstances leading up to the homicide, such as arson, larceny, or drive-by shooting.

Figure 4
HOMICIDE VICTIMS BY AGE AND GENDER



SOURCE: California Department of Justice 2006 Statistics

Figure 5
HOMICIDE VICTIMS BY AGE AND ETHNICITY



SOURCE: California Department of Justice 2006 Statistics

Age and Ethnicity

Overall, around one-third of homicide victims were Hispanic (38%) or White (31%), one in five was Black (21%), and one in ten was an individual of other ethnicity (10%) (Table 1). However, proportions varied again by age of victim. Most notably for Whites, individuals over the age of 40 were overrepresented (60% versus 14% for all other ethnic groups), and for Blacks, youth under the age of 18 were overrepresented (31% versus 2% to 21%). Additionally, young adults (18 to 24) were overrepresented for Hispanics and individuals of other ethnicities (47% and 50%, versus 14% and 28%) (Figure 5). While these differences may be related at least in part to motive, these data still are noteworthy.

WHAT WERE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS AND SUSPECTS FOR EACH OF THE CRIME TYPES?

As with victimization, the pattern of suspect characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, age, and gender) can vary across crime types. These data, along with all victimization characteristics, are provided in more detail in Tables 1 and 2. Some noticeable differences include:

- Males represented three out of four (75%) victims and nine out of ten (92%) suspects for homicide.
- Females represented over half (54%) of assault victims, but only 23 percent of assault suspects.
- Females were equally represented as victims of property and violent crimes (46% and 50%) compared to the population, but were underrepresented as suspects (27% and 22%, respectively).

- Females represented from one-fifth to almost one-third of property crime suspects but around one-tenth to one-quarter of violent crime suspects.

- One in four female rape victims was under the age of 18 years.

- Almost one-third (32%) of identified robbery suspects were under the age of 18, compared to about one in ten for other violent crimes.

METHODOLOGY

The numbers presented in this report were provided by the Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) and derived from the Crime Analysis Statistical System (CASS). A few qualifications should be considered when interpreting this information.

- Information regarding crime victim characteristics was available from incident reports that were completed when a crime was reported to law enforcement. It should be noted that not all crimes are reported to law enforcement and that some subgroups of the population may be more likely to report crime than others[7].

- Information regarding crime suspect characteristics was available from arrest reports. Obviously, descriptives from individuals who committed a crime but were not arrested are not included; and it is possible that some individuals in the suspect sample did not commit the crime for which they were arrested.

- With the exception of homicide, for a victim or suspect's information to be included in these statistics, all three variables (ethnicity, age/date of birth, and gender) had to have valid information entered into the ARJIS database.

- Information regarding violent crime victims and suspects was more reliably available than property crime victims and suspects. Therefore, it is possible that the percentages presented for violent crime may be more valid and/or reliable than those presented for property crime.

- The number of victims reported in this bulletin varies from the number of crimes reported in other publications because of missing information for some crimes, multiple victims reported for one crime, the inclusion of simple assault, and the inclusion of some crimes later determined to be unfounded.

- In some cases, especially with property crimes, a business, organization, or household member can be the reporting party, rather than an individual victim. With these data, businesses/organizations are not included, but for households, the characteristics of the reporting party are reflected.

- Statistics on 2006 population estimates for youth include juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17, but it is possible that in a small number of cases an individual who was the victim of a crime was younger.

[7] The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

Table 1

VIOLENT CRIME VICTIM AND SUSPECT CHARACTERISTICS 2006

	Victims	Suspects
Criminal Homicide		
Black	21%	35%
Hispanic	38%	25%
White	31%	29%
Other ethnicity	10%	10%
Under 18	15%	7%
18 to 24	33%	38%
25 to 39	24%	32%
40 and older	28%	23%
Male	75%	92%
Female	25%	8%
Rape		
Black	11%	21%
Hispanic	31%	44%
White	52%	30%
Other ethnicity	6%	5%
Under 18	24%	11%
18 to 24	35%	23%
25 to 39	26%	42%
40 and older	15%	23%
Robbery		
Black	9%	35%
Hispanic	39%	37%
White	38%	22%
Other ethnicity	14%	6%
Under 18	16%	32%
18 to 24	28%	39%
25 to 39	29%	20%
40 and older	27%	9%
Male	68%	87%
Female	32%	13%
Assault		
Black	15%	20%
Hispanic	33%	36%
White	44%	37%
Other ethnicity	8%	8%
Under 18	11%	12%
18 to 24	25%	24%
25 to 39	36%	38%
40 and older	27%	25%
Male	46%	77%
Female	54%	23%

SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) and SANDAG 2006 Statistics

Table 2

PROPERTY CRIME VICTIM AND SUSPECT CHARACTERISTICS 2006

	Victims	Suspects
Burglary		
Black	6%	18%
Hispanic	21%	37%
White	61%	37%
Other ethnicity	12%	8%
Under 18	3%	28%
18 to 24	14%	30%
25 to 39	33%	28%
40 and older	50%	14%
Male	56%	74%
Female	44%	26%
Larceny		
Black	5%	16%
Hispanic	19%	35%
White	61%	40%
Other ethnicity	15%	8%
Under 18	4%	15%
18 to 24	21%	29%
25 to 39	35%	34%
40 and older	40%	22%
Male	53%	69%
Female	47%	31%
Motor Vehicle Theft		
Black	5%	15%
Hispanic	19%	47%
White	49%	31%
Other ethnicity	27%	7%
Under 18	2%	18%
18 to 24	22%	35%
25 to 39	35%	34%
40 and older	41%	13%
Male	62%	79%
Female	38%	21%

SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) and SANDAG 2006 Statistics