Canada

CANADIAN URBAN VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

Patterns in Violent Crime

Bulletin

8

PATTERNS IN VIOLENT CRIME

This is the eighth in a series of Bulletins based on the findings of the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey[1], and the first to include data from the replication survey conducted in Edmonton.

In 1985, approximately 10,000 residents of Edmonton aged 16 years and older were interviewed about their perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system, their experiences with crime in 1984, and the impact criminal

victimization had upon them. The methodology and core questionnaire used in the Edmonton (1985) survey were virtually identical to those used in the 1982 seven-city survey, thereby permitting direct comparisons over time. Two new question modules included in the 1985 survey dealt in greater depth with the psychological consequences of victimization and with awareness of the "Crime Stoppers" program and the Victim Service Unit of the Edmonton Police Department (see Appendix 1 for a description of the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey).

The value of victimization studies is greatly enhanced when they are replicated at regular intervals. The

replication of the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey provides the first opportunity in Canada to test the consistency of risk factors over time in a city that has undergone considerable social and economic change. Understanding the social and economic context within which certain crimes occur is fundamental to the development of appropriate prevention strategies. Accurate knowledge of changes in crime rates and risk factors is essential to this process. This Bulletin deals with patterns in violent crime in Edmonton in 1982 and 1985. A future Bulletin will address patterns in property crime (see Appendix 2 for definitions of offences).

[1] The 1982 Canadian Urban Victimization Survey was conducted in seven major urban centres: Greater Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax-Dartmouth and St. John's.
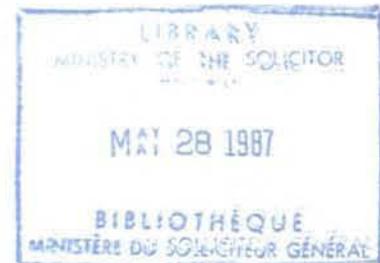

Context of the Survey

Edmonton, the capital of Alberta, is a city of approximately 600,000 people. At the time of the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (CUVS) early in 1982, the oil industry in northern Alberta was at a peak and Edmonton was enjoying considerable prosperity. The adult population (aged 16 and older) was about 404,200 (CUVS, 1982). Individuals and families were attracted to Edmonton by employment opportunities which caused a corresponding boom in housing and service industries. The net migration into Edmonton from other provinces in Canada was approximately 10,000 in 1981 (Statistics Canada, 1986). By the time of the second victimization survey in 1985, the oil industry was in a slump and the level of unemployment had

increased. The net migration out of Edmonton in 1984 was about 13,000 (Statistics Canada, 1986). The adult population in 1985 was estimated to be 420,300 (CUVS, 1985).

By 1985 the proportion of males in the Edmonton population had increased from 47% to 50%, and those who described their employment status as "looking for work" in the survey year had increased from 2% in 1982 to 6%[2]. In 1985, 55% of Edmon-

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, changes or differences which are described in the text are statistically significant at the .05 level. This means that we are 95% sure that the noted change was not simply a chance result of the particular sample selected for interview (see Appendix 3).

ton residents were in paid employment compared to 62% in 1982. The mean age of the population had also increased: the proportion of adult residents aged 25 and older increased from 69% in 1982 to 73% in 1985. One in three Edmonton residents were single and approximately one-half were married in both survey years. The average number of evening activities outside the home each month increased from 21 per adult resident to 23.

General Trends in Violent Victimization

Victimization surveys in Canada, the United States and Great Britain have produced evidence of important personal and social characteristics associated with the risk of violent victimization. Young, unmarried people, those who are most active outside the home in the evenings, and those who describe themselves as "students" or "looking for work" show a significantly greater risk of becoming victims of violent offences, and males within these categories have the highest risk.

On the basis of these earlier surveys and the changes that have occurred in Edmonton, an increase in violent victimization over this three year period might have been predicted. Increases in the proportions of the population which were male, unemployed and regularly attending activities outside the home in the evenings suggests an increase in the rate of violent victimization. Only the change in the median age of the population might lead to the expectation of a decline in rates.

In fact, the number of violent crimes recorded by Edmonton police did increase between 1981 and 1984, but with year-to-year fluctuations (see Figure 1). The victimization surveys, on the other hand, identified about five times as many violent incidents as were recorded by the police in 1981 and 1984, but remarkably little change in overall rates or patterns of risk. Although the tendency was toward a reduction in number of victimizations (from 33,300 to 30,800) and rates per thousand adults (from 82 per 1,000 to 73 per 1,000),[3] the decrease was not statistically significant (Figure 2). In some crime categories, significant rate changes were noted. For example, the overall rate of sexual assault dropped by 50% over the three year period, and in the case of female victims, the rate declined by almost 60%. Non-sexual assault involving male victims, and the overall category of violent offences for male victims, fell by about 15% (Table 1).

[3] These figures represent the estimated number of persons victimized during the survey year as opposed to the estimated number of violent incidents. These figures may differ from estimates given in previous Bulletins in the series because some incidents involved more than one victim.

Complementary Perspectives on Crime

Victimization surveys measure crime from the perspective of victims, producing data which are complementary to but in important ways different from police statistics. Although the crime categories developed for the CUVS approximate, as closely as possible, the major crime classifications used by the police when compiling Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), important differences remain between the two measures. First, victimization survey data for personal offences are restricted to victims aged 16 and older, whereas UCR data include incidents involving victims of all ages. Second, the surveys reported only those incidents in which Edmonton residents were involved, although police statistics record all incidents known to them which have occurred in Edmonton, whether they involved residents, commuters or visitors. Finally, and most importantly, estimates made from the survey include incidents which were reported to the interviewers but which for one reason or another never came to the attention of police, and therefore did not appear in the Uniform Crime Reports (see below for a more complete discussion of this issue).

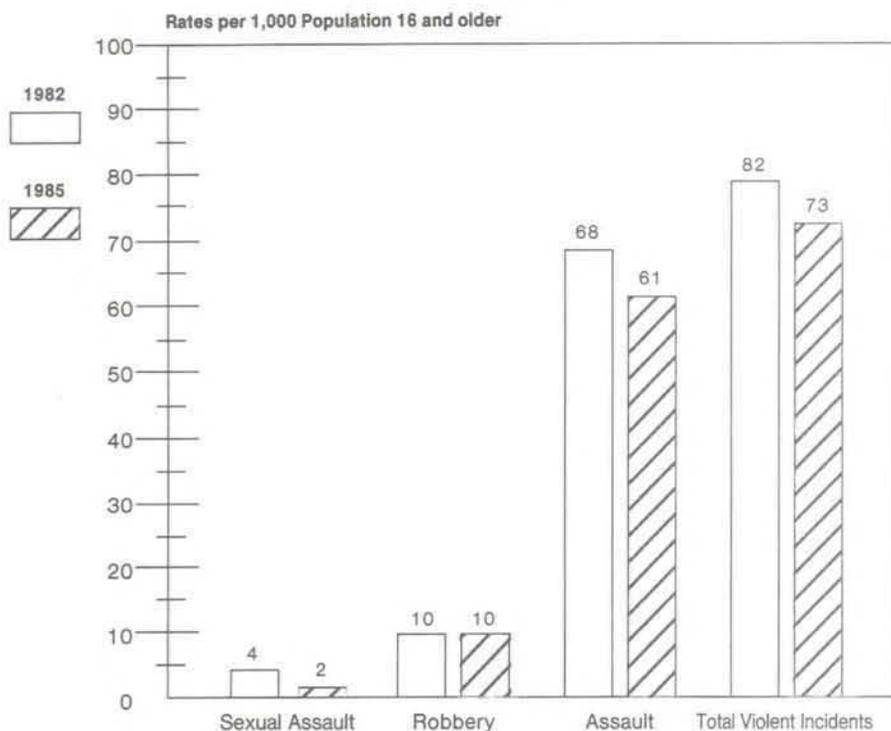### FIGURE 1

VIOLENT INCIDENTS[(1)] RECORDED BY THE EDMONTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 1981-1984
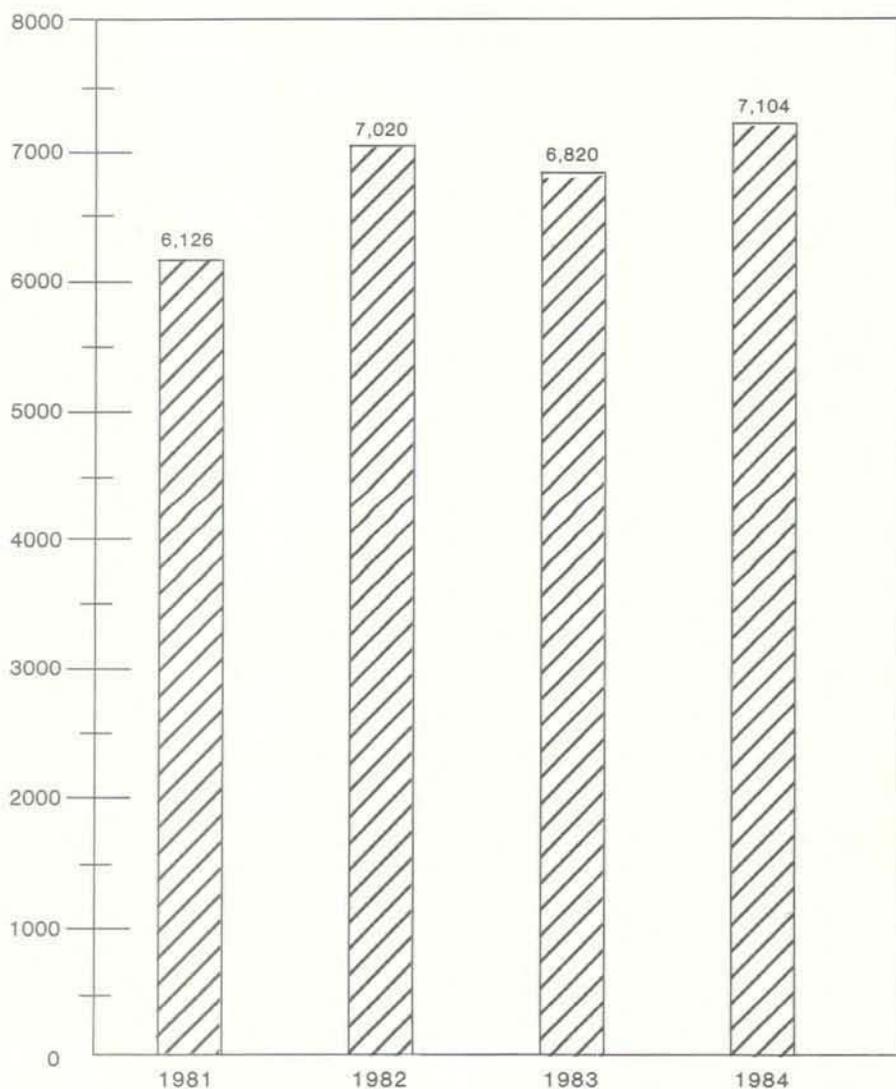
[(1)] Violent incidents include sexual assault, robbery and assault.

Source: Statistics Canada, *Canadian Crime Statistics*, Annual Catalogue #85-205.

FIGURE 2

**RATES OF VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION IN EDMONTON
1982 AND 1985**

Rates per 1,000 Population 16 and older

The change in sexual assault rates from 4 per 1,000 to 2 per 1,000 was statistically significant (see Appendix 3).

Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985).

Risk of Violent Victimization in Edmonton

A strong inverse relationship between age and rates of victimization was evident in both surveys. Those between the ages of 16 and 24 experienced by far the highest rates of violent victimization. These rates declined sharply with age (Figure 3).

Residents who were single, separated or divorced were two to four times as likely to experience a violent victimization[4] as were married residents (Figure 4). Over the three year period, the rate of violent victimization among single residents of Edmonton declined, while rates among divorced residents increased.

Those who described their employment status during the reference year as "looking for work" consistently had the highest rates of violent victimization, followed by students. Employed people experienced moderate rates.

The personal characteristics of sex, age and marital status combined to put homemakers at a much lower risk of violent victimization than residents with other daytime occupations (Figure 5).[5]
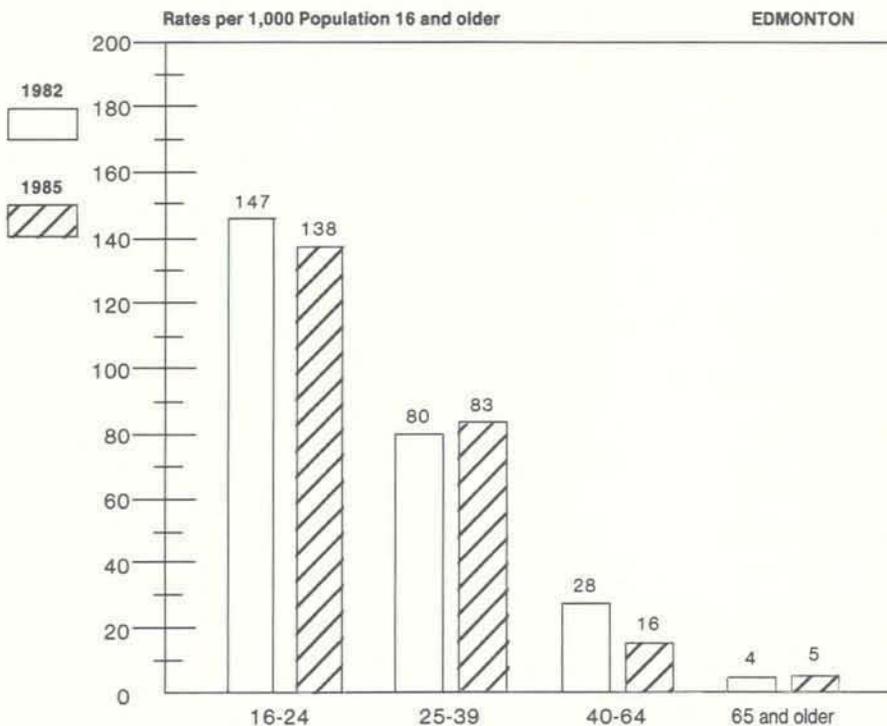
The Importance of Lifestyle

Rates of violent victimization increased steadily as the average number of evening activities outside the home each month increased. This strong relationship persisted despite controls for personal characteristics. Whether married or single, employed or not, young or elderly, those who reported frequent activities outside the home in the evenings experienced higher rates of violent victimization than those with similar characteristics who were less active.

Although the frequency of activities outside the home has a strong influence on relative risk of victimization, some personal characteristics take precedence. For example, students and unemployed people in the "most active" category (20 or more evening activities per month) were more than four times as likely to be victimized than were the most active homemakers. In fact, homemakers who reported an active social life in the evenings

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[4] In the larger sample from seven cities, those who were widowed at the time of the interview were less likely than married residents to be the victim of a violent crime. The number of widowed victims in the sample from any one city is too low to produce statistically reliable estimates.

[5] In the larger sample from seven cities, those who were retired were less likely than homemakers to be the victim of a violent crime. The number of retired victims in the sample from any one city is too low to produce statistically reliable estimates.

Table 1

Victimization Rates by Sex   Rates per 1,000 Population

		Edmonton	
		1982	1985
Sexual Assault	Females	7	3+
	Males	**	**
Robbery	Females	7	7
	Males	14	13
Assault	Females	42	40
	Males	96	81+
Total Violent Offences	Females	56	51
	Males	112	96+

+ This difference is statistically significant at the .05 level (see Appendix 3).
** The actual count was too low to make statistically reliable population estimates.
Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985)

FIGURE 3

VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION RATES BY AGE

Rates per 1,000 Population 16 and older

EDMONTON

1982

1985

Age	1982	1985
16-24	147	138
25-39	80	83
40-64	28	16
65 and older	4	5

Changes in victimization rates were not statistically significant (see Appendix 3).

Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985).

sporting events. Women were more likely to report attending meetings or visiting friends or relatives in their homes (27%). Young people under the age of 25, students, unemployed and single people, all described night-time activities which were not only quantitatively but qualitatively different from the night-time activities of employed, married or older people.

Risk of sexual assault was not as strongly linked to marital status, employment status or frequency of evening activities as was risk of other violent offences. Sexual assault was more likely to take place between victims and offenders known to one another, and in the home of the victim or the offender than was the case for either robbery or assault.

Place of Residence

Violent victimization rates were twice as high for residents of downtown Edmonton as for residents of the

experienced *lower* rates of violent victimization than students or unemployed people who seldom went out in the evenings. The rates for employed people fell between these extremes.

The same can be said about age and sex of victims. Rates increased with frequency of evening activities for all age groups and for both males and females, but older people who went out frequently in the evenings were less likely to be victimized than younger people who rarely went out in the evenings. In all cases, men were at greater risk of victimization than women. The most active men were five times as likely to be victimized as were the least active men, while the most active women were three times as likely to be victimized as were the least active women.

Clearly, it is not simply the frequency of night-time activities but the type of activity that increases threats to personal safety. In most cases, those with the highest rates of violent victimization were also more likely to participate in activities usually regarded as "higher risk". Thus, men were more likely than women (35% vs 21%) to report regular involvement in such evening entertainment as going to pubs, movies or

FIGURE 4

VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION RATES BY MARITAL STATUS

Rates per 1,000 Population 16 and older

EDMONTON

1982

1985

Marital Status	1982	1985
Single	143	121
Married/Common Law	45	42
Separated	133	100
Divorced	117	171
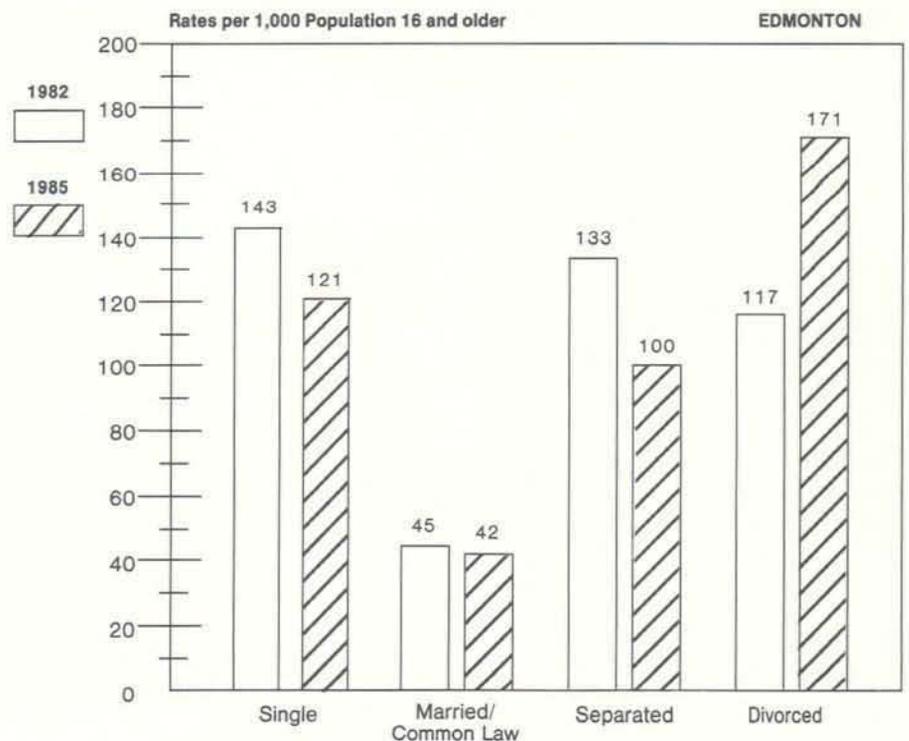
The changes in victimization rates for single and divorced people were statistically significant (see Appendix 3).
The category of "widowed" has been omitted due to low counts.

Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985).

FIGURE 5

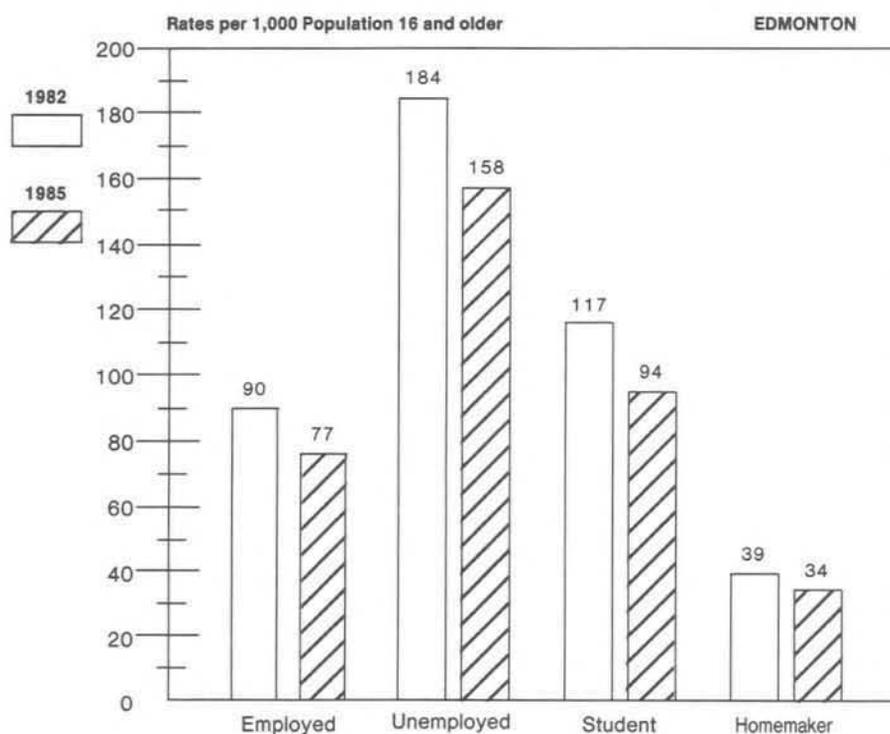### VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION RATES BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Rates per 1,000 Population 16 and older   EDMONTON

1982 ☐

1985 ▨

Employed	Unemployed	Student	Homemaker
90 / 77	184 / 158	117 / 94	39 / 34

Changes in victimization rates were not statistically significant (see Appendix 3).
The category of "retired" has been omitted due to low counts.

Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985).

were more likely to visit friends in their homes or to attend meetings. It appears that lifestyle factors associated with living in the city centre put those residents at greater risk of violent victimization.

Reporting Violent Crime to the Police

Only one-third of violent incidents were reported to the police in Edmonton in each survey year. This ranged in 1985 from 32% of assaults to 39% of sexual assaults and 42% of robberies (Table 2). The most commonly cited reasons for not reporting crimes of violence to the police were that the incident was "too minor" or that "the police couldn't do anything about it" (Table 3). It might seem that these reasons are interconnected and that incidents about which victims thought the police could do nothing also were too trivial. However, this was not always the case. One-half of the incidents not reported because of a belief that the police couldn't do anything about it were serious violent offences, including offences with weapons. The decision not to report the incident to the police may signal the perception that traditional law enforcement techniques are inappropriate in some situations.

suburbs (Figures 6 and 7)[6]. Some of the difference in rates of violent victimization for those who live in the city centre can be explained by demographic differences; downtown residents were significantly younger than residents of other areas of the city (one in three were under the age of 25 compared to one in four in the suburbs) and the centre core had a higher proportion of residents who were single (53% compared to 33%).

Perhaps most importantly, however, the night-time activities of downtown residents revolved to a much greater extent around high risk activities. Significantly higher proportions of downtown residents went to pubs, bars, movies or sporting events on a regular basis. Like most Canadian cities, bars and other entertainment facilities are concentrated in the core of Edmonton. Residents of other areas were equally likely to go out in the evenings, but they

[6] Victimization rates in this report are calculated on the basis of victims' *place of residence*, not the place in which the incident occurred.

FIGURE 6

RATES OF VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE 1982 AND 1985
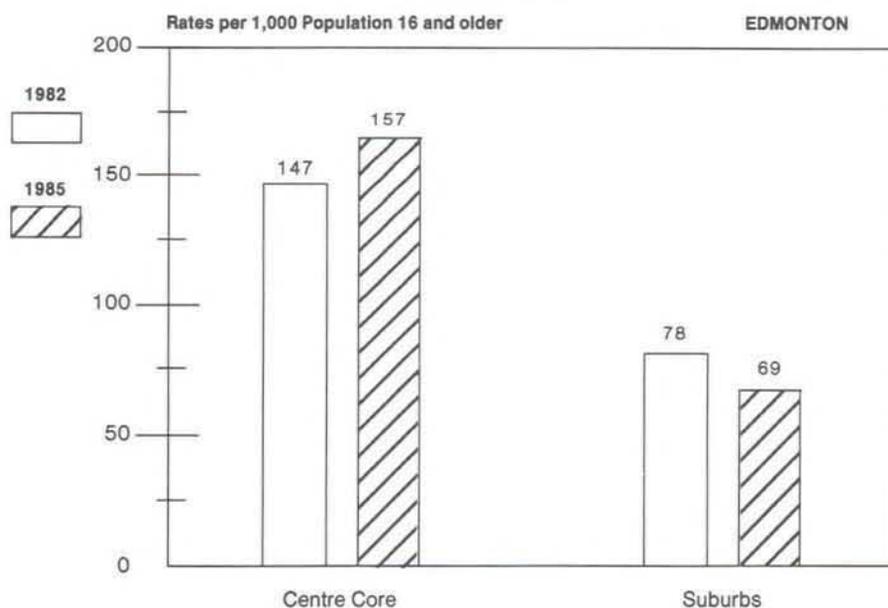
Rates per 1,000 Population 16 and older   EDMONTON

1982 ☐

1985 ▨

Centre Core	Suburbs
147 / 157	78 / 69

Changes in victimization rates were not statistically significant (see Appendix 3).

Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985).

FIGURE 7

CITY OF EDMONTON

Shaded area denotes centre core as defined by Edmonton Police Division D.

Although in general victims do not seem overly inhibited from reporting crimes because of a concern about how they themselves may be treated in the process, these concerns were particularly salient for female victims of domestic and sexual violence. Despite gradual changes in the attitudes and policies of criminal justice workers toward these victims, the proportion who chose not to report because of these concerns did not diminish over the three year period.

Expectations of the Criminal Justice System

Approximately two-thirds of violent incidents brought to the attention of the police in Edmonton were reported by victims themselves. To gain further understanding of victims' needs and expectations, in the 1985 survey these victims were asked why they had decided to involve the police. "Wanting the offender arrested" was the reason most often cited by victims of violent crime (70%). Much less prevalent but still appreciable was the number expressing either the desire to ensure personal protection (46%) or the wish to obtain advice from the police on how to prevent further victimization (40%)[7].

Asking victims "what do you think the courts should do about offenders in this kind of incident?" was intended to elicit their expectations of the criminal justice system and their perceptions of the type of sentence warranted. Only one-quarter of the victims of violent offences thought that offenders should receive prison terms (Table 4). Responses ranged from 73% of sexual assault victims to 40% of robbery victims and 23% of assault victims. Slightly fewer (21%) said that no official action should be taken, while equal numbers stated that offenders should be fined (15%) or warned (14%).

There were interesting differences in the responses of male and female victims to the question of what action the courts should take. Males were more than twice as likely (26%) as females (10%) to state that the courts should "do nothing", while females (18%) were more likely than males (12%) to say the offender should receive a warning. Females were more than twice as likely to recommend "other" unspecified penalties. There were too few cases recorded in the survey to test the connection between opinions about type of sentence warranted and the victim-offender relationship.

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[7] Victims could state more than one reason for reporting the incident to the police.

Table 2

Proportion of Violent Incidents Reported to the Police, 1982 and 1985

	Edmonton	
	1982	1985
Sexual Assault	**	39*
Robbery	46	42
Assault	31	32
Total Violent Offences	32	33

Changes in proportions reported were not statistically significant (see Appendix 3).
* The actual count was low (11 to 20), therefore caution should be exercised when interpreting this proportion.
** The actual count was too low to make statistically reliable population estimates.
Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985)

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Table 3

Reasons for not Reporting Violent Offences, 1982 and 1985   Edmonton

| | Percent of Unreported Incidents | |
	1982	1985
Too Minor	57	65
Police Couldn't do Anything	52	56
Nothing Taken	39	26
Personal Matter	32	31
Too Inconvenient	22	30
Fear of Revenge	15	17
Protect Offender	13	19
Concern with Attitudes of Justice Officials	10	16
Reported to Other Official	6	10

Percentages do not add to 100 because victims could give more than one reason for not reporting any one incident.
Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1982; 1985)

Table 4

What Should Courts Do about Offenders in this Kind of Incident?
Edmonton

| | Percentage of Victims of Violent Crime | | |
	Male	Female	Total
Courts should do nothing	26	10	21
Offender should repay victim	**	**	5
Should receive warning	12	18	14
Should be fined	16	14	15
Should perform community work	9	9	9
Should be put on probation	9	8	9
Should receive prison term	27	27	27
Other	18	39	24

Percentages do not add to 100 because victims could give more than one response to any one victimization.
** The actual count was too low to make statistically reliable population estimates.
Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1985)

Willingness to notify the police and opinions about appropriate court action were both linked to the seriousness of the incident. Serious violent incidents were more likely to be reported to the police, and more likely, in the victim's view, to deserve punishment. Those who reported the incident were twice as likely (40%) as those who failed to report (20%) to state that offenders should receive a prison term; those who did not report were twice as likely to state that no official action should be taken. However, the perception that an incident warranted a prison term did not necessarily lead victims to report the incident to the police: 47% of violent offences for which victims believed a prison term was warranted were not reported to the police.

The "Crime Stoppers" Program

Along with a number of other North American cities, the city of Edmonton has recently instituted a "Crime Stoppers" program. The purpose of this program is to encourage citizens to provide tips anonymously to the police to help them solve crimes. Several questions were included in the 1985 survey to test the knowledge of Edmonton residents about the functioning of the Crime Stoppers program.

The proportion of Edmonton residents who had heard of Crime Stoppers at the time of the survey was an overwhelming 97%. Citizens' understanding of the purpose of the Crime Stoppers program was largely correct: 61% responded that the aim was to help police solve crimes, 49% that it was to provide a way to give anonymous tips for information about crimes, and 7% that the program provided rewards to citizens who help police.[8] The perception of Edmonton residents was that Crime Stoppers is very effective (56%) or moderately effective (32%) in helping police solve crimes.

Fear and Perceptions of Crime

Edmonton residents, like other urban Canadians, perceive crime rates in their own neighbourhoods to be low and stable but city-wide crime to be increasing. In 1982, residents of Edmonton generally perceived the level of crime in their own neighbourhoods to be low (57%) or average (30%). Although 90% believed that city-wide crime had increased in the year or two prior to the survey, only 31% believed that crime in their own neighbourhood had increased. Thirteen percent perceived the crime problem in their own neighbourhood to be "serious" and even fewer (6%) described their neighbourhood as having more crime than other areas of the city. In general terms, although Edmonton residents expressed some concern about crime, they perceived it as happening somewhere away from their own immediate neighbourhoods.

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[8] Respondents could state more than one purpose of the Crime Stoppers program.

At the time of the second survey, perceptions were even more positive. In 1985, residents were much more likely to perceive that crime in their neighbourhood had decreased or remained the same (67% up from 54%) and to perceive that city-wide crime had decreased or remained the same (from 4% to 34%). Those who viewed their neighbourhoods as low crime areas increased from 57% in 1982 to 60% in 1985, a small but statistically significant difference. In addition, residents who believed that their neighbourhood had a serious crime problem declined from 13% to 10%.

When neighbourhood distinctions were made, however, residents of the downtown core were much more likely to perceive their neighbourhood as a high crime area and to perceive that a serious crime problem existed in their neighbourhood. One-third of downtown residents, compared to 6% of the overall Edmonton population, believed — correctly — that their neighbourhood had a higher crime rate than others. Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant increase in the number of residents both of the downtown area and the suburbs who believed that crime in their own neighbourhoods had declined over the past year or two, and there was a similar significant decline in the proportion that described neighbourhood crime as a serious problem. These positive assessments prevailed even though there was little or no corresponding change in rates of violent victimization as measured by the survey.

In 1982, the majority of residents in seven cities (60%) and in Edmonton (58%) reported feeling "very" or "reasonably" safe walking alone in their own neighbourhoods after dark. In 1985, the proportion of Edmonton residents who felt safe walking alone after dark had increased to 61%. This is in keeping with diminished concern about the level of crime in their communities.

A consistant finding of victimization surveys is that although women and elderly people experience relatively low rates of victimization, they are among the groups most likely to express fear of walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark. Inner city dwellers in Edmonton were also more likely than suburban residents to report feeling unsafe and the proportion who felt unsafe remained unchanged over the three year period despite a marked

difference in perceptions of the level of crime in their communities.

Researchers are beginning to question whether fear for personal safety is linked primarily to crime rates, or whether it is more closely associated with other social problems. Vagrants, transients and substance abusers concentrated in the downtown areas of most major cities may adversely affect the sense of personal security of all people living in the area. Lack of community ties may raise the level of insecurity of transient people and newcomers, while long-time residents of the area may feel insecure about the high turnover of people in their neighbourhoods.

The overall decline in fear and in perceived levels of crime in Edmonton was accompanied by increases in the proportion of Edmonton residents that regarded the local police force favourably on such measures as the ability to enforce laws, to respond promptly to calls, to supply crime prevention information, and on "approachability". These trends prevailed in all areas of the city on almost all measures of performance. Perceptions that crime in the community was decreasing or remaining stable may have meant, for some, that the police were "doing their job". An additional factor may have been the increase in the mean age of the Edmonton population. In both the 1982 and 1985 surveys, favourable ratings of the police increased with the age of residents, with elderly people most likely to give positive assessments.

The Trauma of Victimization

Fear is one effect of victimization which can have serious consequences for victims and for communities. Other emotional and psychological consequences of violent victimization can also impair normal functioning long after the experience. Three-quarters of victims of violent crime in Edmonton in 1985 suffered emotional or physical reactions following the incident. The most common reaction to violent victimization was anger: 64% of victims reported feeling angry. In addition, 37% of victims reported feeling anxious, nervous or confused, 28% reported feeling that their privacy had been invaded, and 28% expressed increased fear for their personal safety outside the home as a result of the

incident[9]. On all measures, female victims were two to three times as likely as male victims to describe a strong emotional reaction (Table 5). The proportion of victims of both sexes that suffered reactions increased with the seriousness of the offence, from assault to robbery to sexual assault.

Victims of violence, and female victims in particular, were most likely to state that emotional or psychological counselling should be available for the type of victimization they had suffered. Yet 40% of victims said that they had received no assistance in coping with traumatic reactions. Those who were helped were most likely to receive assistance from friends or neighbours (60%) or family members (43%). Police officers (9%), private counsellors (5%) and social agencies (4%) were mentioned much less frequently. Those who described heightened fear of being alone at home and fear for the safety of others as a result of the experience were most likely to report the incident to the police.

In 1979, the Edmonton Police Department created a special Victim Services Unit to provide direct assistance to victims of crime. In 1983, this unit received an award from the Washington-based National Organization for Victim Assistance as an exemplary police-based victim service unit. The VSU began as a service to provide case information and crime prevention advice to victims of property crimes and to facilitate the early return of stolen property. In 1982, the Unit began to offer crisis counselling to victims of violence. Police officers are encouraged to make referrals to the Crisis Intervention service in appropriate cases. According to the survey, an estimated 550 victims of violent offences (5% of those who had reported the incident to the police) made use of the VSU in the survey year. A proportion of those who received assistance from private counsellors and social agencies also may have been referred by the VSU.

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[9] Victims could state more than one emotional or physical reaction to a single victimization.

Table 5

Emotional and Physical Reactions to Victimization by Sex of Victim

Edmonton

	Percentage of Victims of Violent Crime		
	Female	Male	Total
Anger	75	58	64
Fear of being alone at home	42	4 *	17
Fear for personal safety outside	50	15	28
Fear for safety of others	35	15	22
Anxiety, nervousness, confusion	60	25	37
Headaches, nausea, loss of appetite	32	10	18
Sleeping difficulties	44	13	24
Feelings of invasion of privacy	50	16	28

Percentages do not add to 100 because victims could cite more than one reaction to a single victimization.
* The actual count was low (11 to 20), therefore caution should be exercised when interpreting this proportion.
Source: Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1985)

Conclusions

The Canadian Urban Victimization Survey helps describe the complex relationship between personal characteristics and risk of violent victimization. The survey findings indicate that certain daytime occupations and night-time activities which are linked in turn to age, sex, marital status and place of residence increase personal risk. The relative importance of these factors in determining risk remained virtually constant over the three year period.

As we look closely at the experience of victims of violence we also learn about their relationship to the criminal justice system. Many victims in need of help never come into contact with the services designed to assist them. The surveys uncovered many serious violent victimizations which escaped the attention of the police, not because they were too trivial, but because victims perceived that the danger or costs of reporting outweighed the benefits. Those victims who did summon the police not only wanted the offender arrested, but were also seeking personal protection and advice on how to prevent a reccurrence of the incident. Information about victims' motives in reporting crimes to the police, and about victims' perceptions of appropriate sanctions against offenders, are important in furthering our understanding of Canadians' expectations of the criminal justice system.

The 1985 victimization survey also contributes to a growing awareness of the emotional costs of violent crime. In addition to increased fear for their personal safety, the majority of victims of violent crime suffered some kind of traumatic reaction to the incident. Most agreed that counselling should be available for victims of violence, but for many, assistance to cope with these difficulties was not forthcoming. Very few received support from within the criminal justice system. Listening to victims' real-life needs and experiences provides crucial information for improving the nature of the response and the services provided to victims.

About the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey, 1985

Early in 1985, the Ministry of the Solicitor General, with the assistance of Statistics Canada, conducted a replication of the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey in Edmonton, Alberta. A random sample of 9,200 Edmonton residents 16 years of age or older was asked about their perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system, their experience of certain crimes, and the impact that criminal victimization may have had upon them.

This replication survey was conducted to trace patterns in victimization, to test for the significance of risk factors over time, and to enhance existing knowledge about the traumatic effects of victimization. In order to increase the practical utility of the survey for the Edmonton Police Department, special questions were also included on the functioning of the Crime Stoppers Program and the Victim Service Unit in Edmonton. Aside from minor changes in the question-

naire made necessary by these objectives, the methodology of the survey was the same as that for the CUVS (1982). (See Bulletins 1 through 7)

To maximize reliability of recall, respondents were asked to report only on those incidents which had occurred between January 1 and December 31, 1984. On the basis of these interviews, statistical estimates were made for the population 16 and over in Edmonton. These statistically derived estimates were used throughout this bulletin.

Definitions and Limitations

The eight categories of crimes included in the surveys were: sexual assault, robbery, assault, break and entry, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property, theft of personal property and vandalism. These offences are ranked in descending order of seriousness.

1. Sexual assault includes rape, attempted rape, molesting or attempted molestation, and is considered the most serious crime.

2. Robbery occurs if something is taken and the offender has a weapon or there is a threat or an attack. The presence of a weapon is assumed to imply a threat. Attempted robberies are also included in this offence category.

3. Assault involves the presence of a weapon or an attack or threat.

Assault incidents may range from face-to-face verbal threats to an attack with extensive injuries.

4. Break and entry occurs if a dwelling is entered by someone who has no right to be there. "No right to be there" differentiates, for example, between a workman who is in a dwelling with the permission of the owner and steals something, and someone illegally entering the dwelling to take property. The latter would be classified as a break and enter as are attempts to enter a dwelling if there is some evidence of force or knowledge of how the person tried to get in.

5. Motor vehicle theft involves the theft or attempted theft of a car, truck, van, motorcycle or other motor vehicle.

6. Theft or attempted theft of household property.

7. Theft or attempted theft of money or other personal property (not household property).

8. Vandalism occurs if property is damaged but not taken.

Incidents which involved the commission of several different criminal acts appear in the tables only once, according to the most serious component of the event. Thus for example, if sexual assault, theft of money and vandalism all occurred at the same time, the incident would be classified in these tables as sexual assault. An incident would be classified as vandalism (least serious on the hierarchy) only if no other crime which is higher on the seriousness scale occurred at the same time.

Testing for Statistical Significance

The test of significance used in this Bulletin is the two-tailed t-test because a hypothesis of change in crime rates in either direction is more plausible than one which assumes a given direction.