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# **Visible Minorities and Victimization**

2004

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Statistics Canada

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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## Note of appreciation

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## Preface

This series of profiles provides analysis on a variety of topics and issues concerning victimization, offending and public perceptions of crime and the justice system. The profiles primarily draw on results from the General Social Survey on victimization. Where applicable, they also incorporate information from other data sources, such as the Census of Population and the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Examples of the topics explored through this series include: Victimization and offending in Canada's territories, Canadians' use of crime prevention measures and Victimization of older Canadians. This is a unique periodical, of great interest to those who plan, establish, administer and evaluate justice programs and projects, or anyone who has an interest in Canada's justice system.

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### Highlights

- According to the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS), visible minorities experienced rates of violent victimization, including sexual assault, robbery and physical assault that were similar to non-visible minorities (98 incidents compared with 107 incidents per 1,000 population).
- While victimization rates were similar for visible minorities and non-visible minorities between the ages of 15 and 24, visible minorities in the older age groups (25-to-34 years and 35 years and over) experienced lower victimization rates than their non-visible minority counterparts.
- Canadian-born visible minorities experienced rates of violent victimization that were three times higher than visible minority immigrants and two times higher than non-visible minorities. However, certain factors that are associated with a higher risk of victimization are more common among Canadian-born visible minorities. For example, a higher proportion of Canadian-born visible minorities are between the ages of 15 and 24, unmarried and unemployed compared to their counterparts.
- About 47% of visible minority females and 39% of males reported that they would use public transportation alone after dark more often if they felt safer, compared to 29% and 22% of non-visible minorities.
- Visible minorities were less likely than non-visible minorities to rate the police at doing a good job with tasks that were related to police accessibility and attitudes such as: being approachable and easy to talk to, supplying the public with information on ways to reduce crime and treating people fairly.
- Visible minorities were more likely than non-visible minorities to feel that loitering, people sleeping on the streets, harassment and attacks motivated by racial intolerance and prostitution posed a problem in their neighbourhoods.
- The proportion of visible minorities who felt they had experienced discrimination was twice that of non-visible minorities. Overall, 81% of visible minorities who felt that they had experienced discrimination believed that it was because of their race or ethnic origin.

## Introduction

According to the 2001 Census, 4 million Canadians reported that they were visible minorities, representing 13.4% of the total population. This compares to only 4.7% of the population in 1981. According to the most recent population projections, high immigration levels and high fertility rates will result in the population of visible minorities in Canada reaching between 6.3 million and 8.5 million by 2017 (Bélanger, Caron-Malenfant, 2005).

Using data from the 2001 Census of Population and self-reported data from the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, this profile examines certain socio-demographic and economic characteristics of visible minorities in Canada followed by an analysis of the rates and characteristics of violent crimes involving visible minority victims. It also provides information on visible minorities' perceptions of safety and of the criminal justice system.

## A profile of visible minorities in Canada<sup>1,2</sup>

According to the 2001 Census, among the visible minorities living in Canada, the Chinese group is the largest, with a population aged 15 and over of 834,145, or 3.5% of the population. The next largest groups are South Asians, with a population of 688,735 (2.9%), and Blacks, with a population of 467,090 (2.0%) (Table 1).

### The visible minority population tends to be younger, more urban and more educated

Visible minorities tend to be younger than their non-visible minority counterparts. In 2001, visible minorities had a higher proportion of persons in the 15-to-24 age group compared to non-visible minorities (20.9% compared to 16.1%).

The vast majority of visible minorities (98%) resided in an urban centre in 2001, compared to only 77% of non-visible minorities. Moreover, more than 80% of visible minorities were living in one of the five largest Canadian cities,<sup>3</sup> compared to just over one-third of non-visible minorities.

Results from the 2001 Census have also shown that the visible minority population is generally more educated than the rest of the Canadian population. In 2001, 23.6% of visible minorities held a university degree, compared to 14.2% of non-visible minorities. Among the different visible minority groups, the Chinese were the most educated, with 27.3% holding a university degree. Blacks had a slightly lower proportion of university graduates than the national average, with 12.7% holding a university degree. However, this group had a high proportion (18.2%) of persons with a college diploma as their highest level of schooling completed.

### Higher unemployment rates and lower incomes among visible minorities

Despite being more highly educated than non-visible minorities, visible minorities have higher unemployment rates than their counterparts, namely 9.5% compared to 7.1%. Among the various visible minority groups, the Chinese had the lowest unemployment rate in 2001 (8.4%), while Blacks had the highest rate (11.5%).

Visible minorities were also much more likely to live below the low-income threshold. According to the 2001 Census, 26.0% of visible minorities were members of a low-income family, compared to 10.6% of non-visible minorities. Among visible minorities, more Blacks lived in a low-income family (32.5%), than South Asians (22.0%) or Chinese (24.6%).

1. For the definition of "visible minority", see Text box 1.

2. All data presented in this report are based on persons aged 15 and over.

3. The five largest Canadian census metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa-Gatineau and Calgary.

**Table 1**  
**Selected characteristics of visible minority groups, population aged 15 years and over, 2001**

	Non- visible minorities	All visible minority groups	Chinese	South Asians	Blacks	Others visible minorities
			number			
<b>Total population aged 15 and over</b>	<b>20,859,710</b>	<b>3,041,650</b>	<b>834,145</b>	<b>688,735</b>	<b>467,090</b>	<b>1,051,690</b>
			percentage			
Percentage of population aged 15 and over	87.3	12.7	3.5	2.9	2.0	4.4
<b>Percentage of population aged 15 and over by sex</b>						
Males	48.7	48.2	48.1	50.3	46.6	47.5
Females	51.3	51.8	51.9	49.7	53.4	52.5
<b>Percentage of population by age group</b>						
15 to 24	16.1	20.9	18.9	20.3	23.7	21.5
25 to 34	15.9	21.4	17.8	23.5	22.7	22.3
35 to 44	21.0	23.0	23.3	21.6	21.8	24.3
45 to 54	18.6	17.0	19.0	16.1	15.2	16.8
55 to 64	12.3	9.1	8.8	10.4	9.7	8.3
65 and over	16.1	8.6	12.2	8.1	7.0	6.8
<b>Percentage of population by marital status</b>						
Single (never married)	33.3	35.1	32.5	27.0	46.8	37.1
Legally married and not separated	49.4	54.1	58.5	64.4	35.5	52.2
Separated, but still legally married	3.1	2.8	1.5	1.9	6.1	3.0
Divorced	8.2	4.2	3.0	2.5	8.6	4.3
Widowed	6.0	3.8	4.4	4.1	2.9	3.4
<b>Percentage of population that are immigrants, by year of immigration</b>						
Percentage of population that are immigrants	12.8	80.8	83.5	84.3	67.6	82.3
Before 1961	4.1	1.0	2.0	0.4	0.9	0.5
1961 to 1970	2.9	4.7	4.4	4.8	7.8	3.4
1971 to 1980	2.2	15.9	14.2	17.8	17.7	15.2
1981 to 1990	1.7	21.8	21.4	19.7	16.8	25.8
1991 to 2001	1.9	37.5	41.5	41.6	24.3	37.4
<b>Percentage of population by place of residence (largest CMAs*)</b>						
Toronto	11.6	43.0	40.2	51.1	47.4	38.1
Montreal	11.6	11.3	4.8	6.3	21.6	15.1
Vancouver	5.0	19.0	33.9	18.0	2.8	14.9
Ottawa-Gatineau	3.5	3.6	2.7	2.6	5.4	4.2
Calgary	3.0	4.2	5.0	4.1	2.1	4.5
<b>Percentage of population by knowledge of official languages</b>						
English only	65.3	78.0	77.7	85.6	72.1	75.7
French only	13.5	3.0	0.4	0.2	8.6	4.4
English and French	20.7	10.9	5.4	7.0	18.6	14.6
Neither English nor French	0.5	8.1	16.5	7.2	0.7	5.3
<b>Percentage of population by level of schooling completed</b>						
Less than postsecondary certificate	31.8	28.0	30.2	29.5	28.2	25.2
Postsecondary certificate only	14.3	12.5	11.6	13.5	13.1	12.2
Some postsecondary education	10.5	13.1	12.2	12.3	14.1	14.0
Trades certificate or diploma	11.5	6.6	4.2	6.0	10.7	7.1
College certificate or diploma	15.4	12.3	10.6	10.0	18.2	12.5
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's degree	2.3	3.9	3.9	3.0	2.9	4.8
University degree	14.2	23.6	27.3	25.6	12.7	24.1



**Table 1**  
**Selected characteristics of visible minority groups, population aged 15 years and over, 2001**  
 (continued)

	Non- visible minorities	All visible minority groups	Chinese	South Asians	Blacks	Other visible minorities
<b>Unemployment rate</b>			percentage			
Males	7.4	9.0	8.2	8.3	11.3	9.0
Females	6.8	10.0	8.6	11.3	11.7	9.4
Total	7.1	9.5	8.4	9.6	11.5	9.2
<b>Employment rate</b>	61.7	59.7	54.3	61.6	62.4	61.5
<b>Average income</b>			dollars			
Male	37,956	28,929	29,146	31,174	26,586	29,301
Female	23,283	20,043	20,764	19,329	20,929	19,371
Total	30,516	24,385	24,845	25,447	23,560	24,272
<b>Percentage of low-income families</b>	10.6	26.0	percentage			
			24.6	22.0	32.5	27.2

\* Census Metropolitan Area

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.

### Most visible minorities are immigrants

In 2001, more than 80% of Canadian visible minorities aged 15 and over were immigrants, compared to 13% of non-visible minorities. Moreover, more than one-third (38%) of visible minorities had settled in Canada between 1991 and 2001. Among visible minority groups, the Chinese and the South-Asians had the largest proportion of immigrants (84%), while Blacks had the smallest (68%).

Among the 475,785 visible minorities born in Canada, a greater proportion were aged 15-to-24, with 55% belonging to that age group, compared to 14% for visible minorities born abroad. Canadian born visible minorities were also more likely to be single (71% compared to 27%), to have a higher unemployment rate (10.7%, versus 9.1% for visible minorities born abroad) and to have a lower average income (\$22,781 compared to \$28,205 for visible minorities born abroad).

## Visible minorities as victims of crime<sup>4</sup>

### Visible minorities and non-visible minorities experience similar rates of violent victimization<sup>5</sup>

For all violent crimes, including sexual assault, robbery and physical assault (see Text box 2) the rate of victimization for visible minorities was 98 incidents per 1,000 persons, a rate which was similar to that of non-visible minorities (107 per 1,000 population).

Similar to previous findings, victimization rates among visible minorities were comparable to those of non-visible minorities for both sexes (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005). However, when violent victimization rates for specific age groups were examined, there were differences between visible and non-visible minorities. For example, visible minorities aged 25 and over experienced rates of violent victimization that were markedly lower than those of non-visible minorities in the same age group (Chart 1).

4. Throughout this profile, any differences reported are statistically significant. When reference is made to rates or proportions being similar, the differences are not statistically significant.

5. When undertaking analysis of data from the 2004 GSS, due to sample size restrictions, in particular with respect to the number of visible minorities who were victims of violent crimes, victimization rates are presented by considering visible minorities as one group. However, since all respondents answered questions on perceptions and fear, it is possible to provide details regarding the main visible minority groups, namely Chinese, South Asians and Blacks. In this section of the report, all other visible minority groups are captured in the "Other" category.

**Canadian-born visible minorities experience the highest victimization rates**

When the birthplaces of the visible minority population were examined, it was found that Canadian-born visible minorities experienced higher victimization rates than both immigrant visible minorities and non-visible minorities. For violent crimes, Canadian-born visible minorities experienced a rate of 211 incidents per 1,000 persons, compared to a rate of 107 overall for non-visible minorities and 69 for visible minorities born abroad (Chart 2).

This difference could be partly explained by the fact that a higher proportion of Canadian-born visible minorities were aged 15-to-24 and single compared to visible minorities born abroad and non-visible minorities. In addition, Canadian-born visible minorities had lower incomes and participated in a greater number of evening activities per month than did their foreign-born and non-visible minority counterparts. Previous studies have shown that these factors are related to a greater risk of victimization (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005; Mihorean et al, 2001).

**Being young is the strongest predictor of violent victimization**

In order to determine whether being both a visible minority and Canadian-born independently increased the odds of victimization, a multivariate analysis using logistic regression was undertaken. Additional factors that were included in the model were age, sex, marital status, family income, number of evening activities and proximity to crime.

When all factors were held constant, being both a visible minority and Canadian-born did not significantly increase the odds of being a victim of a violent crime. However, being both a visible minority and an immigrant reduced the odds of being a victim of a violent crime by approximately 40%.

The analysis revealed that age was by far the strongest predictor of being the victim of a violent crime – those aged 15-to-24 had odds of being the victim of a violent crime that were nearly six times greater than for persons aged 55 and over. The odds of being victimized were two times greater for those who were unmarried compared to their married counterparts. Other factors, like having a low household income (under \$15,000), being male, participating in 10 or more evening activities per month and one’s proximity to crime (measured by perceptions of neighbourhood crime and fear of walking alone after dark) increased the odds of being victimized by 40% to 75%.

**Text box 1  
Definitions**

**Visible minority:** Statistics Canada defines visible minority status by using the criteria set out in the *Employment Equity Act*. According to that Act, “Members of visible minorities are persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are not white in race or colour.”

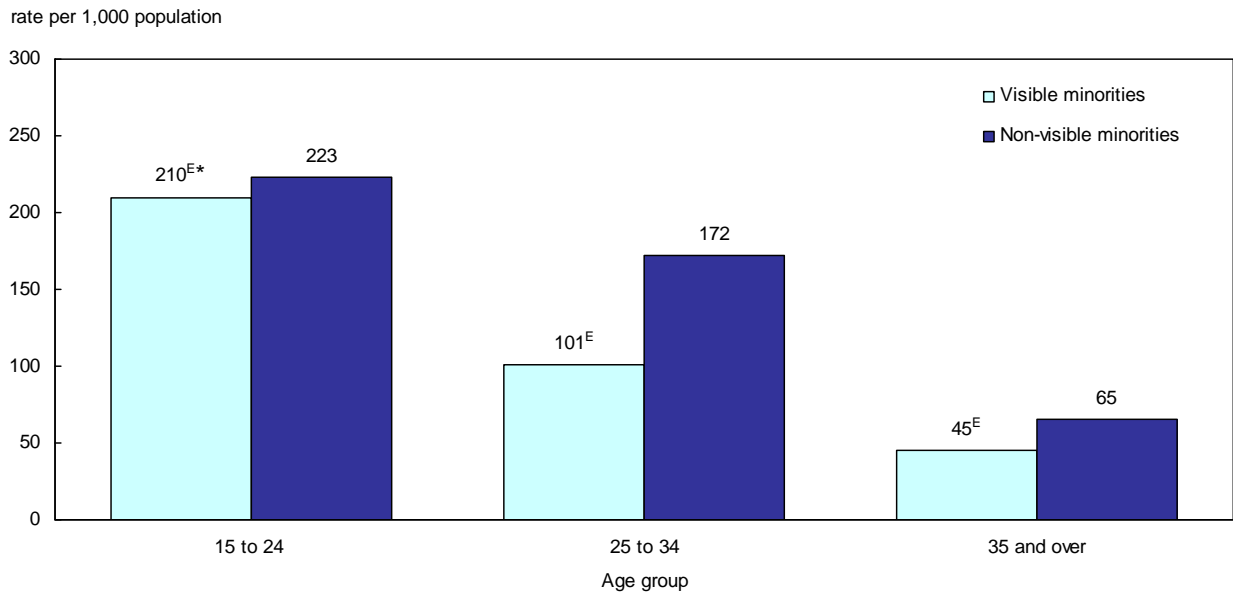
According to that Act, the visible minority population includes the following groups:

- Chinese
- South Asian (e.g., Indian from India, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan)
- Black (e.g., African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somalian)
- Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan)
- Filipino
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese)
- Latin American
- Japanese
- Korean
- Other

**Non-visible minority:** Throughout this report, all those who did not identify themselves as belonging to one of the above groups are referred to as non-visible minorities.

**Immigrant:** The definition of immigrant in this profile varies depending on the data source. In the section that examines data from the Census of Population, immigrants are defined as those, at the time of the 2001 Census, who had, or had ever had landed-immigrant status, whether or not they were Canadian citizens. In the section that examines data from the 2004 GSS, immigrants are defined as those who were not born in Canada or were not Canadian citizens by birth and who came to live permanently in Canada in 2004 or before.

**Chart 1**  
**Visible minorities in the older age groups experienced lower rates of violent victimization than non-visible minorities**



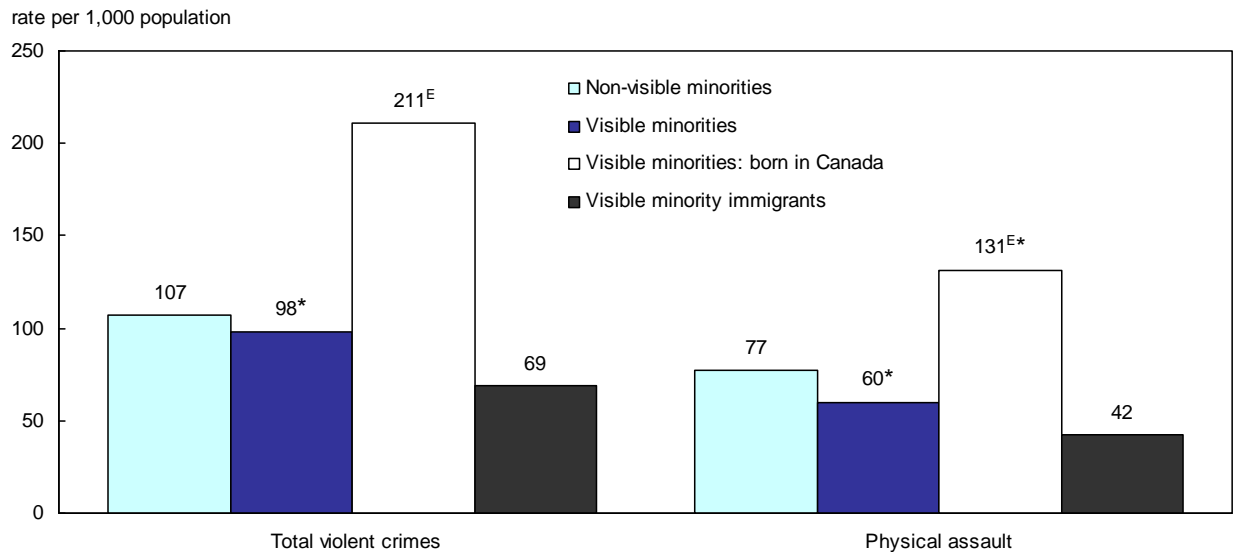
<sup>E</sup> use with caution

\* Indicates that there is no significant difference compared to non-visible minorities.

**Note:** Violent offences include sexual assault, physical assault and robbery.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

**Chart 2**  
**Visible minorities born in Canada experience higher rates of violent victimization**



<sup>E</sup> use with caution

\* Indicates that there is no significant difference compared to non-visible minorities.

**Note:** Violent offences include sexual assault, physical assault and robbery.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

### Characteristics of violent incidents similar for visible minorities and non-visible minorities

Many of the characteristics of violent incidents involving visible minority victims are similar to those of non-visible minority victims. For example, only one-third of violent incidents involving both visible minority and non-visible minority victims were reported to the police.

In addition, the relationship between the victim and the offender was similar for both visible minority and non-visible minority victims. In 48% of violent incidents committed against visible minorities and 44% of those committed against non-visible minorities, the perpetrator was a stranger. Conversely, the perpetrator was known to the victim, either as a family member, friend or acquaintance or other in 52% of incidents against visible minorities and 56% of incidents involving non-visible minorities. However, when incidents of spousal abuse were included, the perpetrator was known to the victim in 61% of incidents against visible minorities and 74% of incidents against non-visible minorities.

Additionally, 70% of violent incidents committed against visible minorities occurred in a public place such as in the street or in a commercial or institutional establishment, while 24% occurred in a private residence, most often the victim's residence. These proportions were similar to those of non-visible minority victims.

## Visible minorities' perceptions of the criminal justice system

### Satisfaction with aspects of police performance lower for visible minorities

While the performance of the police was generally rated favourably by both visible minorities and non-visible minorities, visible minorities were less likely to rate the police as doing a "good" job with tasks that were related to police accessibility and attitudes such as: being approachable and easy to talk to (55% compared with 67%), supplying the public with information on ways to reduce crime (42% compared with 52%) and treating people fairly (50% compared with 61%).

Differences between visible minorities and non-visible minorities were smaller with respect to rating the police at doing a "good" job at: enforcing the laws (55% compared with 60%), responding promptly to calls (49% compared with 52%) and ensuring the safety of citizens (58% compared with 61%).

Among the various visible minority groups, the Chinese were the least likely while South Asians were the most likely to rate the police as doing a "good" job in all aspects of their performance (Table 2).

### Those who have had contact with the police<sup>6</sup> generally have a less favourable perception of them

According to the 2004 GSS, people who had come into contact with the police for one reason or another in the year prior to the survey had a less favourable opinion of them than did those who had not had any

### Text box 2 Types of offences

The 2004 GSS measured the extent of violent victimization by looking at three types of crimes, according to their definitions in the *Criminal Code*. When an incident included more than one type of crime, it was classified according to the most serious offence (in the order shown below).

#### Violent offences:

**Sexual assault:** Forced sexual activity, an attempt at forced sexual activity, or unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling.

**Robbery:** Theft or attempted theft in which the perpetrator had a weapon or there was violence or the threat of violence against the victim.

**Assault:** An attack (victim hit, slapped, grabbed, knocked down or beaten), a face-to-face threat of physical harm, or an incident with a weapon present.

6. Contacts with the police can vary in nature. A person might have come into contact with the police in connection with a public information session, a traffic code violation, being a victim of a crime, being arrested, or some other reason. This analysis does not distinguish between respondents as to the nature of the contact; all respondents are analyzed as persons who have come into contact with the police.

contact with police. For example, 43% of visible minorities who had come into contact with the police thought that they were doing a “good” job treating people fairly compared to 52% of visible minorities who had not come into contact with the police over the course of the previous year.

**Visible minorities less satisfied with the performance of criminal courts and the correctional system than that of the police**

For the most part, performance of the criminal courts was rated less favourably than police performance by both visible minorities and non-visible minorities. Evaluations of criminal court performance differed depending on the type of activity being performed. For example, visible minorities were more likely than non-visible minorities to rate the courts as doing a “good” job providing justice quickly (22% compared with 14%) and helping the victim (29% compared with 19%). Visible minorities, however, were less likely to feel the courts were doing a “good” job ensuring a fair trial for the accused (39% compared with 45%).

Similar to their perceptions of police performance, among the various visible minority groups, the Chinese were the least likely to rate the courts at doing a “good” job, while South Asians were the most likely.

Assessments of the performance of the prison and parole systems also varied between visible minorities and non-visible minorities, depending on the function. For example, fewer visible minorities said the prison system was doing a “good” job at supervising and controlling prisoners (27% compared with 32%), while more of them felt the prison system did a good job helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens (22% compared with 18%).

**Table 2**  
**Perceptions of the criminal justice system, population aged 15 years and over**

	Non-visible minorities	Chinese	South Asians	Blacks	Other visible minorities
	percentage				
<b>Local police force is doing a good job of...</b>					
Enforcing the laws	60	40	63	56	58
Responding promptly to calls	52	36	57	49	51
Being approachable	67	46	65	56	55
Informing the public about crime prevention	52	32	44	42	46*
Ensuring the safety of citizens	62	44	62	63	61
Treating people fairly	61	41	60	43	51
<b>Canadian criminal courts are doing a good job of...</b>					
Providing justice quickly	14	16	23***	18	26
Helping the victim	19	19	33	23	35
Determining guilt	27	18	32	25***	31*
Ensuring a fair trial	45	37	44	33	41*
<b>The prison system is doing a good job of...</b>					
Supervising and controlling prisoners	32	21	29	28	29
Helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens	18	21	23*	20	24*
<b>The parole system is doing a good job of...</b>					
Releasing prisoners not likely to re-offend	17	15	24	14	16
Supervising offenders on parole	14**	13**	26**	16	19

\* Indicates a significant difference compared to non-visible minorities.

\*\* Indicates a significant difference compared to the “other visible minorities” group.

\*\*\* Indicates a significant difference compared to the Chinese group.

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, a difference less than or equal to 7 percentage points is not statistically significant.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Visible minorities were more likely than non-visible minorities to rate the parole system as doing a “good” job at supervising offenders on parole (18% compared with 14%), and equally likely to rate the parole system positively when it came to releasing offenders that were not likely to re-offend.

It should also be noted that visible minorities were generally more likely than non-visible minorities to be uncertain about how to assess the performance of the various sectors of the criminal justice system.

## Perceptions of discrimination and social disorder among visible minorities

### A higher proportion of visible minorities felt that they experienced discrimination

According to the GSS, visible minorities were twice as likely as non-visible minorities to have believed that they had experienced discrimination (28% compared to 13%). Overall, 81% of visible minorities who felt that they had experienced discrimination believed that it was because of their race or ethnic origin.

Among the various visible minority groups, Blacks and Latin Americans were the most likely to have experienced discrimination,<sup>7</sup> (36% for both groups). Among the other groups, 30% of Koreans, 29% of South Asians, 28% of Chinese, 26% of Japanese, 25% of Filipinos and 19% of Arabs/West Asians and Southeast Asians believed that they had experienced discrimination at least once in the five years preceding the survey.

Of all those who reported experiencing discrimination, 14% of visible minorities felt that they had experienced discrimination in dealing with the police or the courts, compared to 8% of non-visible minorities.

### Certain social conditions were problematic for visible minorities

Respondents to the 2004 GSS were asked the extent to which various social conditions posed a problem in their neighbourhood. These conditions included loud parties and noisy neighbours, people loitering in the streets, people sleeping on the streets, the presence of garbage, vandalism, harassment or attacks motivated by racial, ethnic or religious intolerance, the presence of drugs, public drunkenness and prostitution.

In general, visible minorities were more likely than non-visible minorities to feel that these situations posed a problem in their neighbourhood. Specifically, they were more likely to feel that loitering (30% versus 24%), people sleeping on the streets (12% versus 6%), harassment and attacks motivated by racial intolerance (18% versus 11%) and prostitution (16% versus 8%) posed a problem. This may be partially attributed to the higher proportions of visible minorities living in urban areas.

#### Text box 3

#### Hate crime incidents most commonly motivated by race or ethnic origin

Respondents to the GSS on victimization who indicated that they had been the victim of a crime were also asked whether they believed the crime committed against them could be considered a hate crime. A hate crime was described as a crime motivated by the offender’s hatred of a person’s sex, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or language.

According to the 2004 GSS, race or ethnic origin was the most commonly cited motive for hate crime incidents (66% of all hate-motivated incidents).

In just over 3% of all crimes (including crimes against the person and crimes against households), the victim believed that the crime had been motivated by hate. However, when only those incidents in which the victim was a visible minority are considered, the corresponding proportion was just over 7%<sup>E</sup>.

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution: CV between 16.6 and 33.3

**Note:** Additional information will be available in the forthcoming GSS profile: Brennan, S. 2008. “Hate-motivated victimization”.

7. Not all differences between Blacks/Latin-American and certain groups are significant. However, the proportion of Blacks and/or Latin-Americans who experienced discrimination was significantly different from the proportion of all other groups as a whole.



On the other hand, a comparable number felt that drugs (32%) and people drunk in public (25%) posed a problem. Visible minorities were also slightly less likely than non-visible minorities (27% versus 30%) to feel that vandalism was a problem in their neighbourhood.

## Perceptions of safety and fear of crime among visible minorities

### Visible minorities somewhat more fearful than non-visible minorities

When asked about their satisfaction with their safety from crime, visible minorities overall were slightly less likely than non-visible minorities to say that they were very satisfied with their personal safety (39% versus 45%).

While overall, about one-third (34%) of visible minority females and two-thirds (67%) of visible minority males said they felt safe while waiting for public transportation after dark, there were some differences between visible minority groups. Both Black females (50%) and males (81%) were the most likely to say they felt safe in such a situation, while both Chinese females (30%) and males (57%) were the least likely. Among non-visible minorities, 40% of females and 73% of males said they felt safe in such a situation (Table 3).

### Visible minorities less likely to engage in various activities because they feel unsafe

Just over half of male and female visible minorities said that they would walk alone after dark more often if they felt safer (52% and 53% respectively), compared to non-visible minority males and females (31% and 43%). The difference between males and females was even greater with respect to using public transportation, with 39% of males and 47% of female visible minorities reporting that they would use public transportation more often if they felt safer compared to 22% and 29% of non-visible minority males and females.

The greater tendency to think that there exist certain social problems in their neighbourhoods might partly explain a higher level of fear among visible minorities. Silver et al., 2004 also suggested that hate-motivated crimes could have repercussions on the whole of the community targeted, a hypothesis that might also partly explain a higher level of fear in visible minorities.

**Table 3**  
**Perceptions of safety from crime**

	Non-visible minorities	Chinese	South Asians	Blacks	Other visible minorities
<b>Population aged 15 and over who felt safe...</b>	percentage				
<b>Walking alone in their area after dark</b>					
Males	94	88*	91	89	88*
Females	76	76	67*	76	67*
<b>Waiting for public transportation alone after dark</b>					
Males	73	57	71	81	66*
Females	40	30	32	50	28
<b>Being alone at home after dark</b>					
Males	89	87**	79*	86	80*
Females	74	71	66*	73**	64*

\* Indicates a significant difference compared to non-visible minorities.

\*\* Indicates a significant difference compared to the "other visible minorities" group.

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, a difference less than or equal to 10 percentage points is not statistically significant.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

## Methods

### General Social Survey on Victimization

In 2004, Statistics Canada conducted the victimization cycle of the GSS for the fourth time. Previous cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993 and 1999. The objectives of the survey are to provide estimates of the extent to which people experience incidences of eight offence types (assault, sexual assault, robbery, theft of personal property, break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property and vandalism); to examine risk factors associated with victimization; to examine rates of reporting victimization to police; and to measure fear of crime and public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

Households in the 10 provinces were selected using Random Digit Dialing (RDD). Once a household was chosen, an individual 15 years or older was selected randomly to respond to the survey. Households without telephones, households with only cellular phone service, and individuals living in institutions were excluded. These groups combined represented 4% of the target population. This figure is not large enough to significantly change the estimates.

The sample size in 2004 was about 24,000 households, similar to the sample size in 1999 (26,000) and considerably higher than the sample in 1993 and 1988 (10,000 each). Of the 31,895 households that were selected for the GSS Cycle 18 sample, 23,766 useable responses were obtained.

### Data limitations

The data that appear in this profile are based on estimates from a sample of the Canadian population and are therefore subject to sampling error. Sampling error refers to the difference between an estimate derived from the sample and the one that would have been obtained from collecting data from every person in the population.

This profile uses the coefficient of variation (CV) as a measure of the sampling error. Any estimate that has a high CV (over 33.3%) has not been published because the estimate is too unreliable. An estimate that has a CV between 16.6 and 33.3 should be used with caution. The symbol 'E' is used to identify these estimates.

When comparing estimates for significant differences, we test the hypothesis that the difference between two estimates is zero. We construct a 95% confidence interval around this difference and if this interval contains zero, then we conclude that the difference is not significant. If, however, this confidence interval does not contain zero, then we conclude that there is a significant difference between the two estimates.

In addition, non-sampling errors may have also been introduced. Types of non-sampling errors may include the refusal by a respondent to report, a respondent's inability to remember or report events accurately, or errors in coding and processing of the data. In addition, individuals who could not speak English or French well enough to complete the survey were not included. For these reasons, the victimization data should be used with caution.



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