



A presentation to the
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A Retrospective Look at Edmonton's Recent Homicide Cases

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Goals

- Examine offender, victim, and environmental characteristics of homicides
- Compare characteristics within same sample of homicide cases
- Consider the findings in light of the local, provincial, and national context



Limitations

- Limited to a *sample* of homicides in Edmonton
 - Not necessarily generalizable to homicides in other municipalities
- Academic endeavor
 - Not exhaustive of all analyses that will be conducted

Methodology

- 124 cleared homicide cases from 2007 to 2012
- Extensive review of police file documentation and electronic sources
- Examined offence characteristics, offender features, and victim features
 - If more than a single victim or offender, all individuals were coded (hence, there were more offenders than victims in the analyses).



The Offence: Location of Homicides

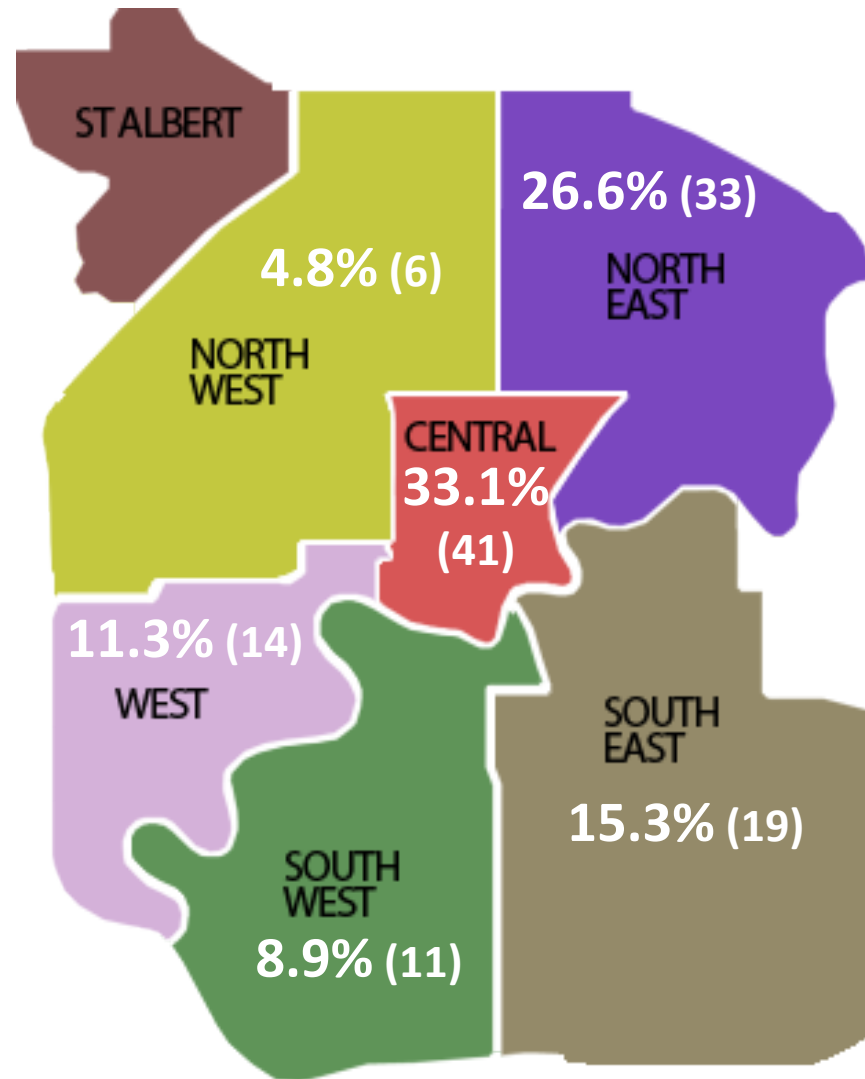
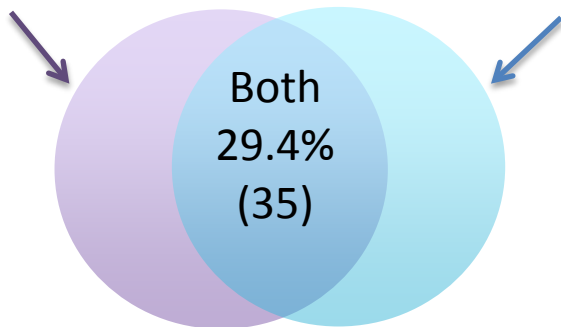


56.5% committed in a private residence

(note: 2.4% ($n = 3$) committed in a penal institution)

Victim's home
16% (19)

Offender's home
9.2% (11)



The Offence: Time and Day of Occurrence

Time of the day

48.4% Early morning (midnight to 7am)

8.1% Morning hours (7 to 11am)

21.8% Afternoon (11am to 6pm)

23.4% Evening (6pm to midnight)



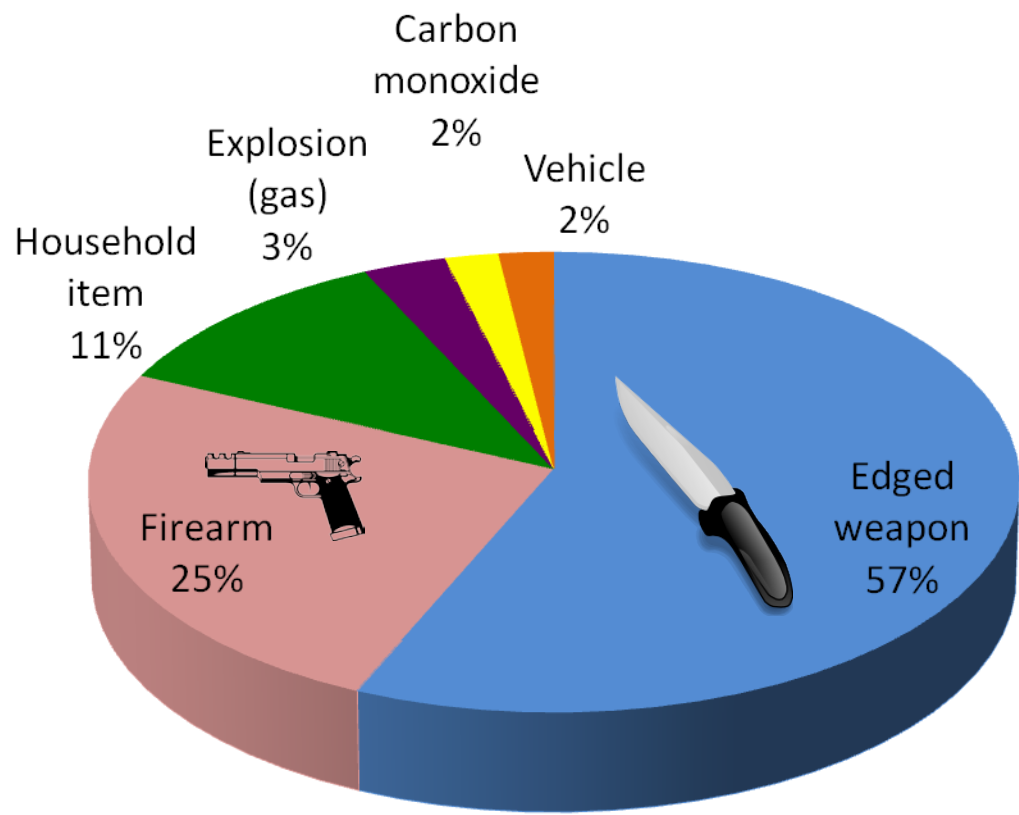
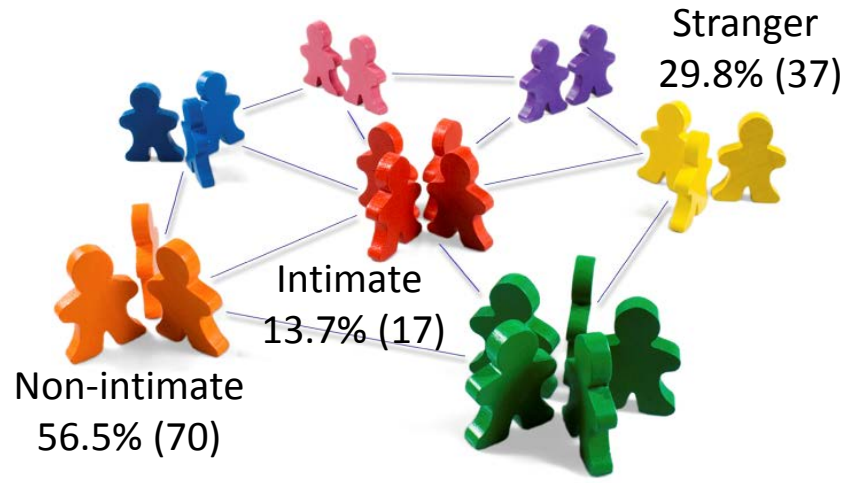
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
# of cases	14	1	11	18	25	23	21

Weekday – 44.5% (55)

Weekend – 55.6% (69)

Note. Only victim use of alcohol differed between weekday (36%) vs. weekend homicides (57%).

The Offence: Familiarity, Weapons, Substance Use



½ of victims and half of offenders used alcohol before homicide

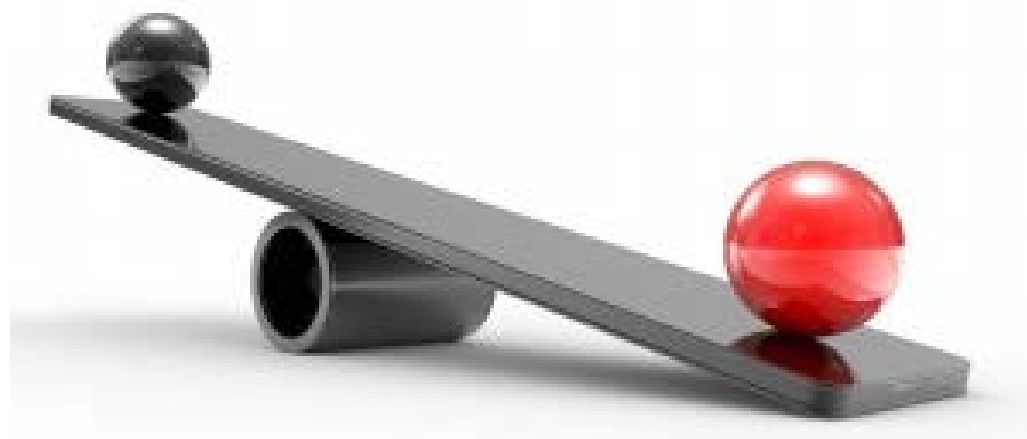
⅓ of victims and less than ⅕ of offenders used illegal drugs



(in percentages)

Examining Victim and Offender Characteristics

	Victims	Offenders
Omitted cases	5	5 4 police shootings 1 perpetrated by a child
Total	119	164



Victims and Offenders: Demographic Information

	Victims	Offenders
Age*	34.9 years (2 to 85)	28.9 years (15 to 65)
Gender*		
Male	74.8%	90.2%
Female	25.2%	9.8%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	45.4%	42.9%
Native/Metis	30.3%	30.1%
Black	6.7%	16%
Asian	9.2%	3.7%
South Asian	4.2%	4.3%
Middle-Eastern	3.4%	1.8%
Hispanic	0.8%	1.2%
Single*	53.2%	69.4%

* $p < .001$

Victims and Offenders: Personal Characteristics

	Victims	Offenders
Homeless	17.2%	22.3%
Did not complete high school	77.9%	86.1%
Unemployed	62%	70.6%
Victimization history*	21.8%	10.5%
Gang affiliation*	8%	20%
Substance abuse problems	51.8%	51.6%
Mental disorder was noted		
Mood disorder	8%	13%
Suicide history	4.5%	6.7%
Anxiety disorder	3.6%	4.3%
Psychotic disorder	4.5%	3.1%

* $p < .01$

Victims and Offenders: Offence Features

	Victims	Offenders
Familiarity		
Knew the victim/offender	72.3%	73.2%
Involved intimately	14.3%	10.4%
Substance use		
Alcohol	48.7%	53.4%
Illicit drugs (coke, meth, THC)*	36.2%	13.5%

* $p < .05$

Victims and Offenders: Criminal History

	Victims	Offenders
Criminally active (any arrests or convictions)*	67%	84.7%
Juvenile records*	31.5%	48.1%
Convictions*	58.9%	72.4%
Violent offences*	46.4%	58.9%
Supervision offences	48.2%	58.9%
Substance-related	42%	46%
Weapons-related*	30.4%	42%
Weapons prohibition history	26.8%	37.4%
Outstanding warrant	13.4%	20.2%
Served jail/prison time	40.2%	49.4%
Has criminal associations*	64.5%	82.7%

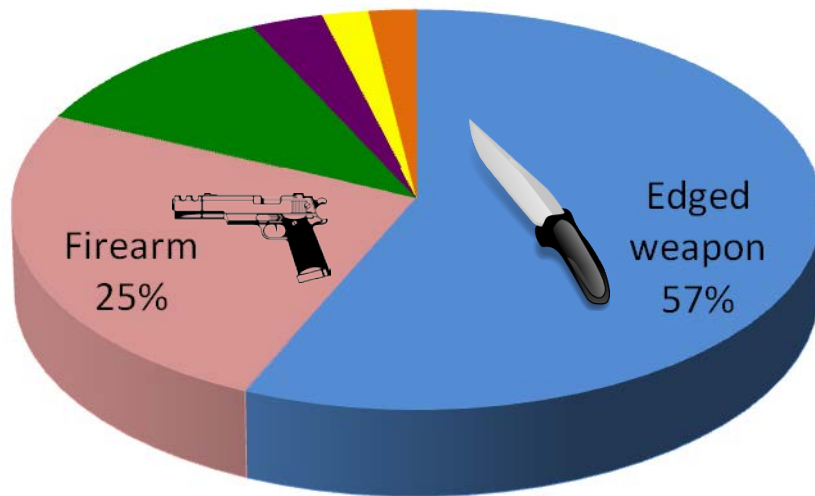
* $p < .05$

*Examining
the Wider
Social,
Economic,
and
Geographical
Context*



Type of weapon used

- *The present study found edged weapons most frequently used*



A map of Canada with its provinces and territories colored in various shades of blue, orange, green, and purple. The map is positioned at the top of a text box.

Of all homicides in Canada (2007-2011), shootings and stabbings equally common methods.

- Shootings: 30.5 - 33.7%
- Stabbings: 30.8 - 35.4%

Offenders' age and gender

- *This study identifies offenders as young males with criminal histories*
 - *Average age of 28.9 (58.1% were 18 to 34 yrs)*
 - *90% males*
 - *85% with criminal activity*



Of homicide offenders in Canada....

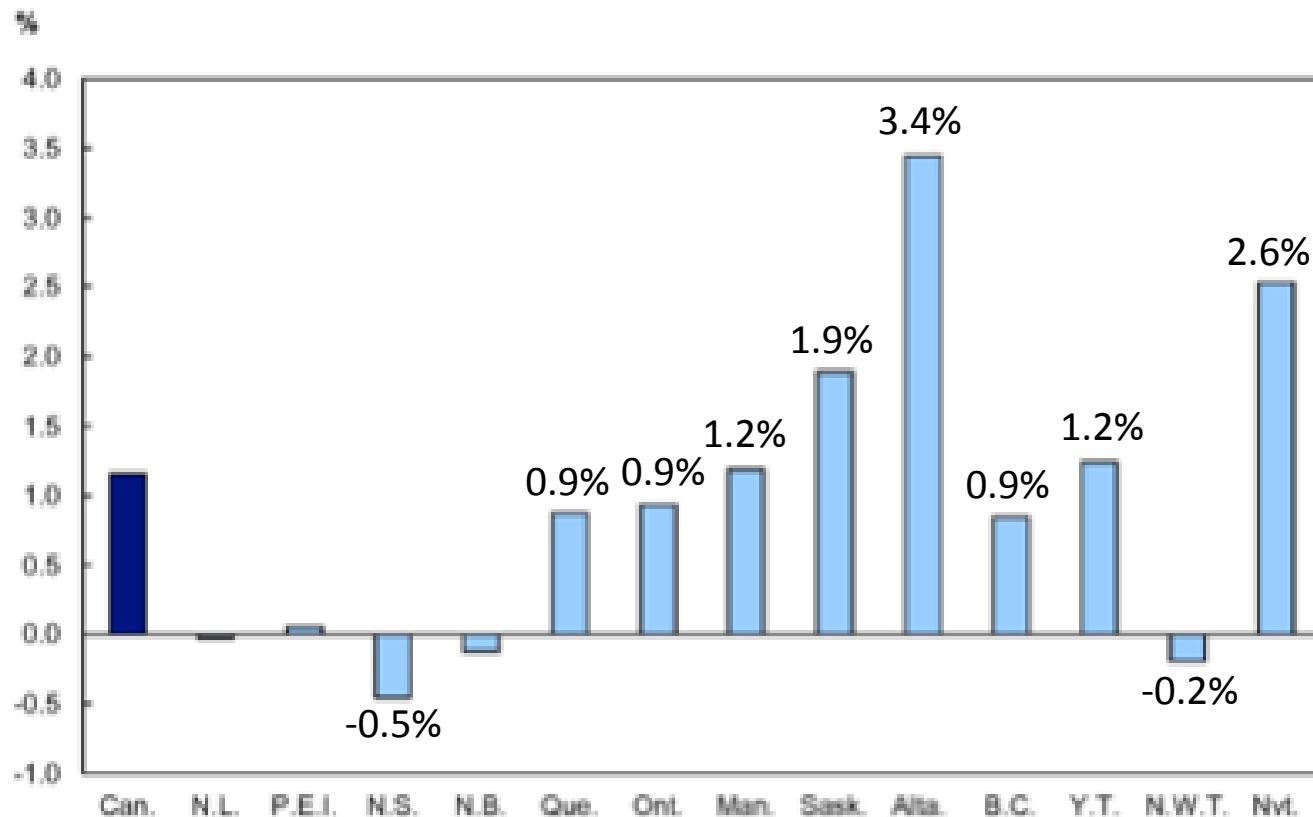
- 9 of 10 were male
- 60% were 18 to 34 years

“it is the net increase in young males that generally leads to an increase in homicide”

- Andresen (2012)

Offenders' age and gender (con't)

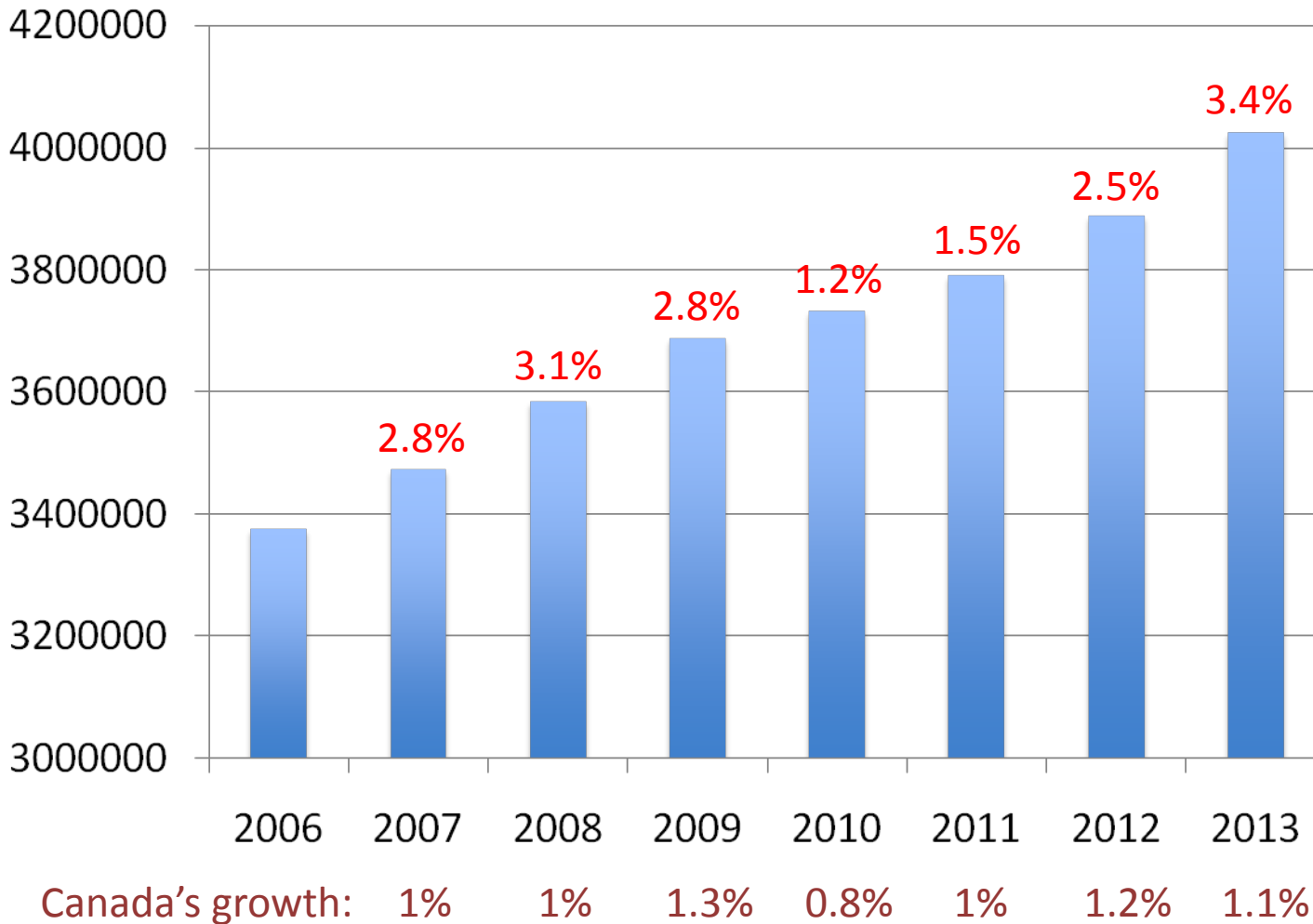
- Of the Canadian provinces, Alberta has seen the highest overall population growth:



*Growth from July 2012 to July 2013

Note. +3.4% equates to +136,335

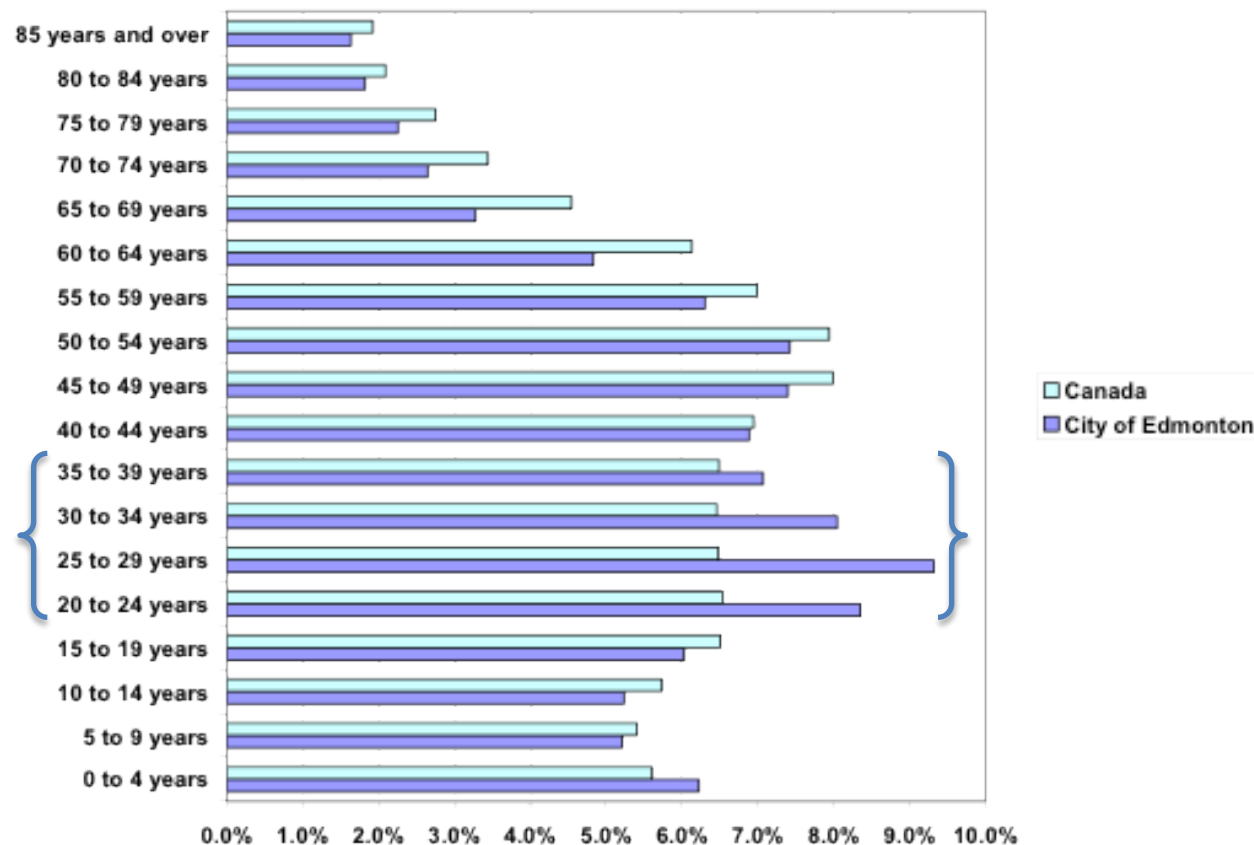
Alberta population



Growth in Edmonton from 2006 to 2011 was +11.2% (vs. national average of 5.9%)
 Note that several other areas had increases of over 10% (e.g., Fort Saskatchewan, 27.4%;
 Strathcona County, 12.1%) while Calgary had an increase of 10%.

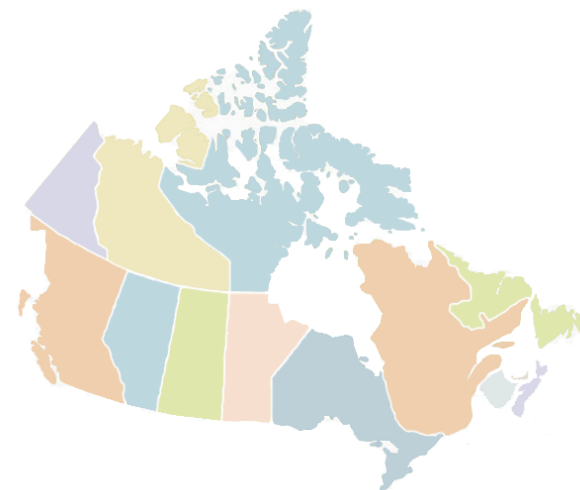
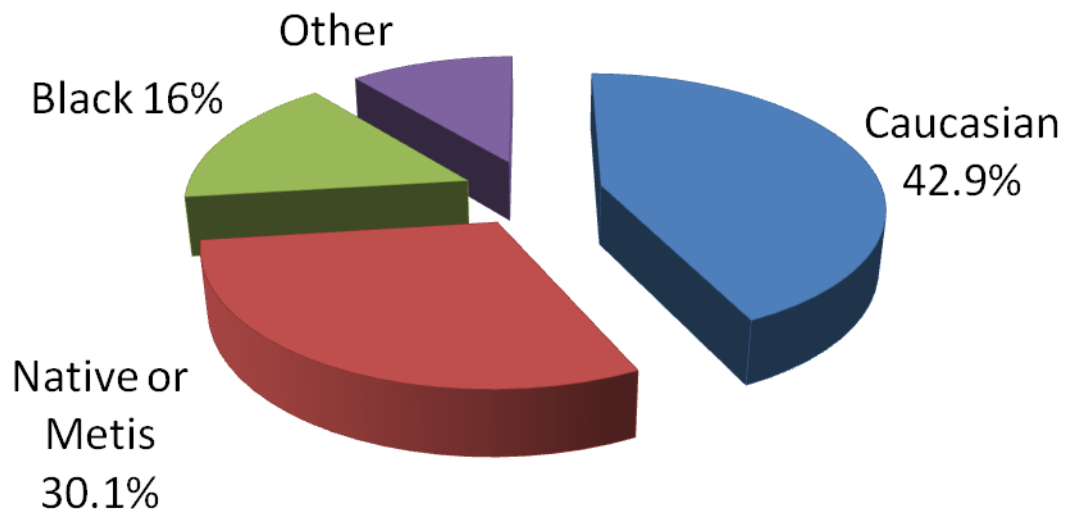
Offenders' age and gender (con't)

- Canadian research found that a net increase in the immigration of young males is associated with increased homicide rates.
- The net migration to Edmonton from July 2012 to July 2013 is higher for 20- to 39-year-olds than national average:



Offenders' ethnicity

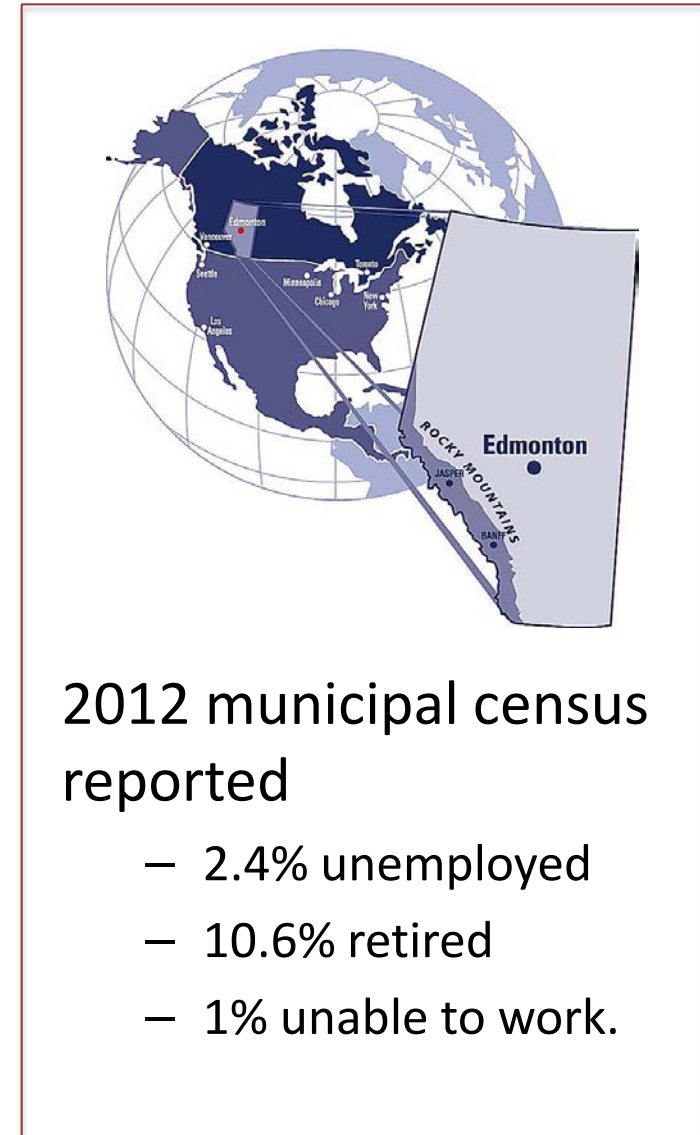
- *This study identifies offenders as Caucasian, followed by Native or Metis, as the most common ethnicity of homicide offenders.*



A Canadian study found 59% of their sample were Caucasian, while 36% were Aboriginal.

Employment

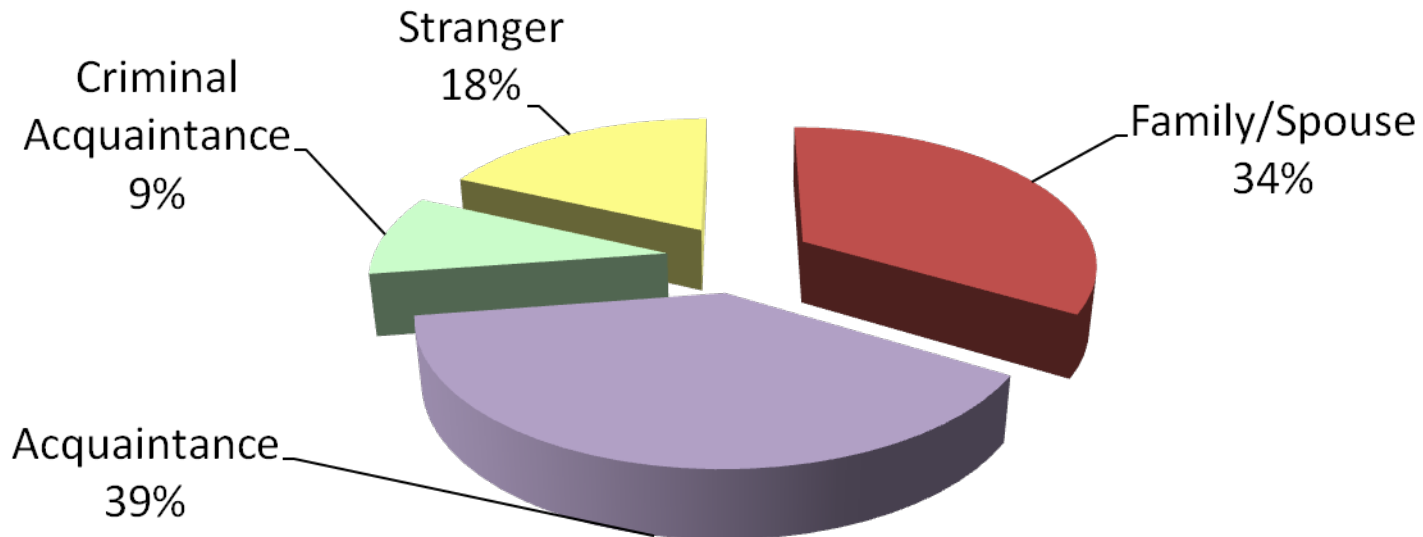
- *Less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of offenders and less than $\frac{2}{5}$ of victims were employed.*
- *Between $\frac{1}{5}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ were engaged in illegal jobs*



Victim-offender relationship

- *In the current study, 7 of 10 victims knew their perpetrator.*

Statistics Canada (2009)



Alcohol use

- In our study, nearly 50% of victims and offenders used alcohol at the time of the homicide*

Alcohol consumption has been shown to be associated with total homicide rates in Alberta and Ontario.

“changes in alcohol sales may have a significant impact on rates of violence”

- Rossow (2004)

Liquor Licenses in Alberta

Liquor Class	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Hotels, bars, lounges	5,037	5,015	5,059	5,087	5,094	5,067
Facilitiesw/entry fee	507	507	523	540	542	554
Private Clubs	782	795	793	793	793	795
Retail Outlets	1,800	1,801 (+0%)	1,868 (+3.7%)	1,942 (+4%)	1,960 (+0.9%)	1,978 (+0.9%)

Overall Summary of Findings

- From the review of 124 closed homicide cases in Edmonton from 2007 to 2012, the following are the most prevalent features:
 - Victims and offenders were mostly male
 - Use of edged weapons
 - Occurred in downtown or NE
 - During weekends and evening/early morning hours
 - Among individuals known to one another
 - Caucasian, followed by Native/Métis offenders and victims
 - Lacking high school education
 - Unemployed
 - Criminally active victims and offenders

Conclusion

- In light of wider context, Edmonton homicides appear to involve:
 - edged weapons more than the national average
 - youthful males
 - individuals known to each other
 - unemployed and uneducated victims and offenders
 - alcohol use by half of the victims and the offenders
 - alcohol abuse problems exhibited by over half of the victims and the offenders
- These empirical findings could be used to guide change and potentially facilitate future reductions in violence.





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