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# Victim Blame as a Strategy for Coping with Criminal Victimization: An Analysis of Victim, Community, and Police Reactions

Dennis P. Rosenbaum  
*Loyola University Chicago*

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VICTIM BLAME AS A STRATEGY FOR COPING WITH CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION:  
AN ANALYSIS OF VICTIM, COMMUNITY, AND POLICE REACTIONS

by

Dennis P. Rosenbaum

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of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
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## VITA

The author, Dennis Patrick Rosenbaum, is the son of Lloyd Smith Rosenbaum and Rose Veronica Rosenbaum. He was born on May 6, 1952, in Oregon City, Oregon.

His elementary education was obtained in the Clackamas public schools (Carver and Clackamas, Oregon) and St. Johns Grade School (Oregon City, Oregon). He received his secondary education at Central Catholic High School (Portland, Oregon), where he graduated in 1970. While attending Central Catholic, he was a member of the National Honor Society, a Portland Metropolitan League All Star in cross country, and served as student body president.

In September, 1970, he accepted a scholarship from Claremont Men's College (Claremont, California). In June, 1974 he received his Bachelor of Arts degree, graduating Magna Cum Laude, with special departmental honors in the field of psychology.

In September, 1974, he began his graduate study in social psychology at the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) and in May, 1976, was awarded the Master of Arts degree. In September, 1976, he pursued the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by enrolling in the Applied Social Psychology Program, Loyola University of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois).

In August, 1977, he married Susan Margaret Hartnett of Chicago,

Illinois, and on January 7, 1979, their first child, Sarah Ann Rosenbaum, was born.

He has served as a consultant for criminal justice agencies and private research firms. He is presently employed by the Westinghouse Evaluation Institute, Evanston, Illinois, as a Senior Research Associate. He has published articles on individual reactions to crime and belief in extraterrestrial life.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### OVERVIEW

Over the past 15 years, crime has been recognized as a major social problem in the United States. Using data from national victimization surveys (U. S. Department of Justice, 1977), one can extrapolate that roughly 25 million serious criminal offenses were committed each year during the 1970's, including murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, and theft. Crime was publicly recognized as a major problem in 1965, when President Johnson established the Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice to investigate the "challenge of crime in a free society" (President's Commission, 1967). The subsequent creation of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) marked the beginning of a substantial government effort to alleviate this social ill. Over the next decade, billions of dollars were spent to research the causes and extent of crime, to develop crime prevention programs, and most of all, to improve the law enforcement capabilities of the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, most of these efforts have failed to show any substantial impact on the crime problem (see Silberman, 1978, for a thorough analysis of this failure).

While the central goal of reducing crime has not been achieved, LEAA-funded research has helped to clarify the nature and extent of the

crime problem. In particular, the early victimization surveys (e.g., Biderman, Johnson, McIntyre, & Weir, 1967; Ennis, 1967; Reiss, 1967) brought attention to the fact that crime involves more than criminals, that it carries negative consequences for individual victims, as well as society at large. For example, the public's fear of criminal victimization soon became a major issue in itself. Since the formation of the President's Commission in 1965, public opinion polls and victimization surveys have maintained an almost yearly interest in the cost of crime to American citizens in the form of fear and expensive precautionary behaviors. However, a substantial interest in the impact of crime on its immediate victims did not emerge until the 1970's brought a strong victims' rights movement (cf., Nicholson, Condit, & Greenbaum, 1977).

The forces contributing to this interest in the victim are noteworthy. Community-based "rape crisis centers" began to appear in 1971, shortly after supporters of the equal rights movement publicly expressed strong disapproval of the treatment given to rape victims by the criminal justice system (Brownmiller, 1975). Subsequent research conducted for LEAA revealed that victim cooperation with, and participation in, the criminal justice system is probably the most important determinant of prosecution success (Cannovale, 1976). Aware of the victim's role in the system, the Federal Government, in 1974, began funding victim assistance programs throughout the country. Since then, more than 100 programs<sup>1</sup> have been funded to provide a variety of

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<sup>1</sup>See Newton (1976) for a description of diverse victim service programs.

services to victims of crime. These services are intended to (1) improve the treatment that crime victims receive from both the criminal justice system and the local community, and (2) to facilitate the victim's recovery from the criminal incident.

The success of victim assistance programs in meeting these objectives may depend, to a large extent, on first establishing a clear understanding of the problems being addressed. In a counseling or interview situation, the counselor/victim advocate should be able to recognize, and respond appropriately to, the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of victims which suggest how well that victim is coping with this negative experience. Furthermore, in order to improve the treatment that victims receive from nonvictims and enhance public support for victim services, there is a need to understand how the nonvictims perceive crime victims and what determines these perceptions.

Previous research has documented the financial, legal, medical, and informational problems facing crime victims (e.g., Evaluation/Policy Research Associates, Ltd. & Price Waterhouse & Co., Note 1; Fremont Police Department, Note 2; Schneider & Reiter, Note 3; Vera Institute of Justice, Note 4). However, the psychological impact and processing of criminal victimization have received little systematic attention. The pioneering research by rape counselors has been unable to fill this knowledge gap.

Similarly, there is a paucity of data on the public's attitudes and judgments of crime victims. The policies and practices of the

criminal justice system vis a vis the rape victim have been examined in several national surveys (U. S. Department of Justice, 1977), but the public's social-psychological reactions to crime and crime victims have been measured on few occasions. There is a sizable survey literature on "reactions to crime" (see Dubow, McCabe, & Kaplan, Note 5, for a review) which has sought to determine the distribution and correlates of fear of crime, as well as precautionary actions. However, the role of cognitive processes in determining reactions to crime have been virtually ignored.

While the psychological processes that operate in response to the threat or reality of criminal victimization are not well documented, we can be sure that, in a world replete with serious victimization, neither victims nor observers can dismiss these negative outcomes without some attempt to understand them. At the foundation of many social-psychological theories is the assumption that people are motivated to see the world as a predictable and orderly place in which to live (Heider, 1958). Hence, theorists have hypothesized that one of the most common reactions to victimization is the tendency to ask oneself why it happened, i.e., to seek out a sufficient causal explanation for the observed misfortune (e.g., Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967). The basic question people ask themselves is--to whom or what can this misfortune be attributed?

Within this causal attribution framework, the present dissertation examines the controversial tendency among victims and nonvictims to "blame the victim" for his/her own victimization. The victim-blaming



response<sup>2</sup> is a frequently discussed topic in both journalistic and scientific writings, yet the actual magnitude and/or psychological function of this response in the context of crime remains unknown. Hence, the research reported here addresses several major questions: (1) How extensive is the victim-blaming response among victims (i.e., self-blame) and nonvictims? (2) Does self-blame facilitate, retard, or have no impact on the crime victim's ability to cope with victimization? (3) Does victim-blame serve some psychological function for the nonvictim as a mechanism for coping with the threat of criminal victimization? (4) How important are causal attributions, relative to certain situational and personological factors, for predicting coping responses?

This dissertation is based on correlational data, and hence, should be viewed as an exploratory response to these questions. However, some specific hypotheses will be posited on the basis of pertinent research and theory, and the strength of several social-psychological models for predicting reactions to criminal victimization will be explored. Given the limited amount of previous work addressed specifically to causal attributions among crime victims, a variety of related literatures will be pooled to provide some basis for prediction. To provide a clearer picture of this knowledge base and the extent of its applicability, an effort will be made to identify and distinguish

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<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise specified, terms such as "victim blame" and "victim blaming response" will be used to refer to both victim self-blame and blame by nonvictims.

studies by such characteristics as type of subjects (victims or non-victims), type of victimization (criminal or noncriminal), and type of setting ("real world" or laboratory).

If this dissertation can enhance our understanding of the psychological and behavioral strategies employed by either crime victims or nonvictims in responding to the threat of crime, the results may be useful for developing strategies for minimizing the impact of victimization, improving the treatment of crime victims, and preventing future victimizations.

The remainder of this introduction will be structured as follows: First, the controversial victim-blaming bias, as a general phenomenon that extends beyond the realm of criminal victimization, is discussed. This section is followed by a discussion of the practical implications of blaming the victim as these implications pertain to the victim and the criminal justice system. Subsequently, theoretical explanations of the victim-blaming tendency are summarized, followed by an extensive review of research relevant to these theories. Because perceived control is hypothesized as an important variable for explaining the blaming tendency, the literature on control is then discussed. In the next section, research concerning the psychological importance of attributions and perceptions of control as "coping" mechanisms is assessed. For clarification, a critical summary of the research reviewed up to that point is then provided, including the identification of knowledge gaps to be addressed in the present dissertation. This critical summary is followed by some definitions of key variables to be

used in the present research. The closing section of Chapter I details a set of exploratory hypotheses and predictions, derived from previous research and theory, that will guide this inquiry.

## THE VICTIM-BLAMING BIAS

In recent years, the tendency to blame victims for their misfortunes has emerged as a controversial issue among those seeking to define and remedy a variety of societal problems. Crime is only one problem area where victims have been held accountable for their own plights. Ryan (1971) has written extensively about a middle class "blaming-the-victim" ideology which, he argues, has been used to retard progress toward equality in America. Concerned in the mid-1960's about a backlash against the war on poverty and the civil rights movement, Ryan criticized efforts to identify defects among the poor and blacks--efforts which he claims were meant to justify poverty and racism. In a later revision of his book, Ryan (1976) broadened this universe of potential victims to "everyone who depends for the sustenance of himself and his family on salary and wages" (p. xiii). According to this more extreme view, victimizing events might include medical expenses, excessive gas prices, unemployment, unfair taxes, pollution of air and food, hazardous work and driving conditions, and inflation.

While the controversy regarding the victim-blaming bias in the late 1960's and early 1970's has focused on victims of poverty and racism (e.g., issues ranging from the rights of the accused to genetic intelligence), attention later switched to female victims of sexism. Of course, crime has been one of the major contexts for this controversy. For example, in the 1960's, black males, who were frequently

arrested as criminal suspects and harrassed by the police, were one of the more salient "victim" groups. However, in the 1970's, females, who were subjected to the crimes of rape or spouse abuse, were among the more publicized victim groups.

The controversy over the blameworthiness of female crime victims is particularly germane to the present investigation, as it has played a role in stimulating what little research is available on attributions concerning criminal victimization (to be reviewed later). As the equal rights movement continues to gain momentum, there has been a parallel growth in the published literature on rape and wife abuse. In these areas, considerable professional attention has been given to analyzing the role of female victims in precipitating crimes of violence (Amir, 1971; Gayford, 1975; Scott, 1974; Snell, Rosenwald, & Robey, 1964; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, Note 6). On the other hand, this position has been heavily criticized for reflecting a "victim-blaming bias" (Adelman, 1976; Holstrom & Burgess, Note 7, 1976b; Pagelow, Note 8, Note 9; Schurr, Note 10; Symonds, 1975; Weis & Borges, 1976).

A central theme running throughout these counterattacks is that our male-dominated culture has popularized and maintained a number of myths and stereotypes about women which produce the victim-blaming response. These myths include female masochism, provocation, and intrinsic enjoyment, among others (Pagelow, Note 9).

"Society" is not the only target of criticism in the victim-blaming controversy. The critics of the female/victim-blaming tendency

have argued that the myth of provocation is at the very heart of much victimology research. The concept of "victim precipitation" is evident in the pioneering victimology papers by Von Hentig (1940; 1948), Ellenberger (1954), and Mendelsohn (1956), as they have emphasized the causal role of the victim in contributing to victimization. Weis and Borges (1976) have recently accused the entire field of victimology of becoming the art of "how to blame the victim." Caplan and Nelson (1973) provide a more heuristic analysis of the phenomenon by accusing social scientists, in general, of manifesting a person-blaming bias in the way they define and investigate social problems.

Clearly, the issue of victim blameworthiness has received considerable attention as of late. Before reviewing research that may help to explain the nature and extent of blaming crime victims, the importance of studying the blaming response should be discussed.

## IMPLICATIONS OF BLAMING CRIME VICTIMS

The tendency to attribute blame or responsibility to crime victims may have a number of consequences for the victim, the criminal justice system, and society. To achieve complete "justice" through the criminal justice system, a multi-stage decisionmaking process must be exhausted, beginning with the decision to define the incident as a crime, and ending with the sentencing decision. Perceived victim blameworthiness has been postulated as a critical variable at almost every major decision point in this process. Perceptions of the crime victim's causal role may affect the judgments and decisions made by citizens, police officers, prosecuting and defense attorneys, juries, judges, and of course, victims, themselves. These decisions include defining the incident as a crime, reporting the crime, arresting the accused, pressing charges, arguing the case, determining the victim's eligibility for compensation and social services, determining the defendant's guilt, and determining the proper sentence.

The potential impact of victim blame on these decisions is indirectly suggested in previous research. For example, there is some evidence from actual rape cases that police officers are more likely to continue their investigation ("Police Discretion," 1968) and juries are more likely to convict (Kalven & Zeisel, 1966) when the victim and rapist are strangers and/or violence is involved. To use the words of Kalven and Zeisel, perhaps "contributory negligence" is the concept that forms the basis of these judgments. As another example,

victimization surveys reveal that approximately half of all serious crimes are never reported, and more importantly, crimes that are generally thought to be associated with high victim blame, such as rape and spouse abuse, tend to be the most underreported (U. S. Department of Justice, 1977).

A good illustration of the role of victim blameworthiness in the criminal justice process can be found in the legislation on victim's compensation (e.g., Schafer, 1974). The notion that not all victims are equally innocent is formalized in many state victim compensation laws, where prior involvement with the offender (e.g., living in the same household) is sufficient grounds for disqualifying a victim from seeking monetary compensation for physical injury suffered during the crime.

While such mechanisms encourage the assessment of victim blameworthiness, other procedures have been implemented to restrict the possibility of victim blame. For example, since 1975, 40 states have developed "rape shield" statutes to limit the courtroom admissibility of a rape victim's prior sexual history (Borgida & White, 1978).

As these examples suggest, perceived victim blameworthiness may play an important role in determining how far along a case will continue in the criminal justice system and what level of "justice" will be achieved. The general assumption is that the greater the blame placed on the victim, the less blame placed on the defendant, and the less appropriate the case is for criminal proceedings.

Blaming the victim can also have important implications for



crime prevention activities. Much of the crime prevention literature seems to reflect the attributional bias under consideration. As Kidder and Cohen (in press) note, most recommended crime prevention strategies are aimed at changing the behavior of potential victims (victimization prevention) rather than changing the behavior of potential offenders (offender prevention). Riger and Gordon (Note 11) correctly point out that prevention strategies which focus on the victim, assuming they do not tackle the basic causes of crime, run the risk of displacing crime onto other victims, rather than truly preventing it. Furthermore, the general person-blaming bias that apparently motivates us to study the traits of victims (and offenders) may cause us to ignore the larger societal or cultural factors responsible for crime (cf., Caplan & Nelson, 1973).

The long-range implications of victim blame concern the effective administration of justice and prevention of crime, but the immediate implications concern the impact of crime on the individual victim and nonvictim. As suggested earlier, a crime victim's ability to cope with victimization may depend upon his/her self-attribution of blame for the incident. Similarly, a nonvictim's ability to cope with the threat of victimization may depend upon his/her ability or freedom to blame the victim. The nonvictim's perception of victim blameworthiness may, in turn, affect his/her treatment of victims and support for victim service programs. These possibilities, and their theoretical foundations, will be discussed in more detail, as they constitute the focal point of this dissertation.

Having postulated the victim-blaming tendency and articulated its importance, there is now a need to provide a theoretical explanation for this phenomenon.

## THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VICTIM-BLAMING RESPONSE

There are at least two basic questions about the victim-blaming response that should be addressed at the theoretical level. First, there is the question of why victims are blamed or choose to blame themselves? In other words, what are the causes of victim blame? Second, there is the related question of what psychological purpose or function is served by the blaming response? That is, what psychological consequences does this response have for the individual?

Attribution theories provide a general framework for approaching these questions. According to Heider (1958), a naive causal analysis of action is performed by the individual to make that individual's world a stable, predictable, and controllable place to live. This predictability and control is achieved by "referring transient and variable behavior and events to relatively unchanging underlying conditions, the so-called dispositional properties of his world" (p. 79). While both the person and the environment have stable properties, the individual's behavior often

tends to engulf the total field rather than be confined to its proper position as a local stimulus whose interpretation requires the additional data of a surrounding field--the situation in social perception (Heider, 1958, p. 54).

There is substantial evidence that observers show this bias toward attributing behavior to dispositional, rather than situational factors (e.g., McArthur, 1972). Jones and Nisbett (1971) have found that, while this tendency is evident among observers, actors, on the other

hand, prefer to attribute their behavior to situational constraints. Jones and Nisbett explain this actor-observer difference primarily in terms of differences in available information and, indeed, Storms (1973) has creatively demonstrated that through videotape manipulation of such information, actors' and observers' roles can be reversed, producing a corresponding change in their attributions.

The major attribution theories (Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967, 1973; Jones & McGillis, 1976) have specified the general types of information likely to generate a person attribution. However, in the case of criminal victimization, involving the assignment of responsibility for a serious negative outcome and the threat of similar negative outcomes occurring in the future, there is a need to consider possible motivational biases in the attribution process. There are several theories within the overall attribution framework that provide motivational explanations for attributional responses, including the tendency to blame the victim. These theoretical formulations are given special attention in this dissertation.

Social psychologists have constructed and tested three theories that are capable of explaining reactions to victimizing outcomes in attributional terms; namely, the just world theory (Lerner, 1965, 1970), defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970), and control theory (Kelley, 1971; Walster, 1966). According to the just world theory, the blaming response is determined by the individual's need to protect or enhance his/her self-esteem. Finally, the control model hypothesizes that the blaming response stems from the individual's desire to achieve

and maintain a sense of control over his/her environment. Although these theories are rarely tested outside the laboratory, they provide a useful framework for exploring hypotheses about the blaming tendency among crime victims and nonvictims.

In the following subsection, blame-related research, derived from the justice and defensive attribution models, will be critically reviewed. In addition, a variety of literatures on criminal and non-criminal victimization will be examined to the extent that they pertain to the question of victim blame. The main objective of this section is to establish some empirical foundation for estimating the extent and psychological value of blaming crime victims, as well as determine the applicability of certain theories to criminal victimization. The literatures on perceived control and coping will be covered in subsequent sections.

## RESEARCH ON THE VICTIM-BLAMING RESPONSE

### Just World and Defensive Attribution Research

Within the field of social psychology, the just world theory is the only model that deals exclusively with the issue of victimization and the only model that has received considerable application in the area of criminal victimization. Hence, this section commences with an extensive critical discussion of the just world research and its relationship to defensive attribution findings.

As noted earlier, Lerner's just world theory postulates a motivation to believe in a world where an individual's behavior leads to outcomes that are just and deserved. Hence, when a person is faced with information that contradicts or threatens this belief, such as the suffering of an innocent crime victim, the individual is motivated to restore justice. According to this model, blaming the victim (even if oneself is the victim) may be employed to maintain one's belief that the world is a fair and predictable place, where individuals get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Unfortunately, the role of victim blame in restoring or maintaining a sense of justice is not clearly specified in this model. Lerner's theory suggests that there are several ways one can respond to apparent injustices. These include compensating the victim, punishing the offender, blaming the victim, devaluing the victim, or denying that any suffering has occurred. To date, justice research has not fully delineated the conditions under

which these different methods will be selected. For example, there is some laboratory evidence that derogating the victim is an improbable response if the victim can be compensated for his/her misfortune (Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Lincoln & Levinger, 1972; Mills & Egger, 1972), yet other results indicate that compensation and derogation may be employed simultaneously (Kenrick, Reich, & Cialdini, 1976). Lerner and his colleagues (Lerner, Note 12; Lerner, Miller, & Holmes, 1976) argue that when compensation is not possible, victim blaming will precede victim derogation, and denial will be used only as a last resort.

Before reviewing the criminal justice applications of the just world theory, the more controlled tests of the model will be discussed, as they raise questions about the underlying construct and its robustness. Most laboratory victimization data have been collected within the Lerner and Simons (1966) paradigm, in which subjects observe a co-subject victimized by an electronic shock and are later asked to evaluate the victim. Lerner's most frequently cited and challenged finding is that observers, when unable to compensate or rescue the victim, will derogate him/her to the extent that the victim's fate is unjust or undeserved (i.e., the greater the injustice, the greater the derogation).

Recent studies suggest that the justice motive operates under a more restrictive set of conditions than Lerner and his colleagues (Lerner, Miller, & Holmes, 1976) have hypothesized. For example, derogation will not occur if the victim is seen as internally motivated (Godfrey & Lowe, 1975), or if the subjects do not view themselves as

responsible in any way for the victim's suffering (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Hoerig, 1976). Consistent with the latter finding, other studies have found that an innocent victim will not be derogated if subjects are led to expect a fate physically similar to the victim's (Sorrentino & Boutilier, 1974); asked to imagine themselves in the victim's position (Alderman, Brehm, & Katz, 1974); or told that they will, in fact, be assuming the victim's role (Chaiken & Darley, 1973). These findings suggest that the Lerner and Simmons (1966) instructions may be inhibiting observer empathy for the victim by arousing ego-defensive processes, rather than stimulating a desire for justice. Thus, these results can be interpreted in terms of Shaver's (1970) defensive attribution theory, which postulates that observers are motivated to avoid responsibility for negative outcomes. In fact, a number of studies seem to favor this interpretation (c.f., Chaiken & Darley, 1973; Cialdini, Kenrick, & Hoerig, 1976; Shaver, 1970; Sorrentino & Boutilier, 1974; Stokols & Schopler, 1973; Walster, 1966). For those who question motivational research findings altogether, Sicolly and Ross (1977) have demonstrated the presence of ego-defensiveness in the attribution process under laboratory conditions which are not subject to the major methodological criticisms of previous work (cf., Miller & Ross, 1975).

Unfortunately, victim derogation has been the major dependent variable in these theoretical tests, rather than victim blameworthiness. While some evidence suggests that devaluing and blaming are positively related, the causal relationship is not well documented.

At the level of theory testing, victim blameworthiness has



received the greatest research attention in relationship to severity of victimization. Here again, the results are equivocal. Consistent with predictions from both the just world theory and control theories, some researchers (e.g., Chaiken & Darley, 1973; Walster, 1966) have found that blaming increases with the severity of victim suffering. However, others (e.g., Shaver, 1970; Stokole & Schopler, 1973; Walster, 1967) have been unable to replicate this finding.

The just world victim-blaming hypothesis has received some empirical support at the level of personality differences. For example, using Rubin and Peplau's (1973) Belief-in-a-Just-World scale, studies have found that persons with a strong belief in a just world will blame (Zuckerman, Gerbasi, Dravitz, & Wheeler, Note 13) and derogate (Izzett & Diamond, Note 14; Miller, Smith, Feree, & Taylor, 1976) a victim more than persons with a weak belief in a just world.

The justice-related studies of greatest relevance to the present investigation are those which focus on perceptions and judgments of crime victims. The large majority of experimental laboratory studies on perceptions of criminal victimization have been designed, or at least discussed, as tests of the just world theory. The bulk of these studies have utilized a standard paradigm (Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Feldman-Summers & Lindner, 1976; Frederick, in press; Frederick & Luginbuhl, Note 15; Fulero & Delara, 1976; Izzett & Diamond, Note 14; Jones & Aronson, 1973; Kahn, Gilberg, Latta, Deutsch, Hagen, Hill, McGaughey, Ryen, & Wilson, 1977; Kanekar & Kolsawalla, 1977; Kerr & Kurtz, 1977; Luginbuhl & Millin, Note 16; Scroggs, 1976; Seligman,

Birckman, & Koulack, 1977; Smith, Keating, Hester, & Mitchell, 1976; Thornton, 1977; Zuckerman, et al., Note 13). Almost without exception, college students are supplied with information about a mock rape case and they are usually asked to play the role of jurors. After reading a hypothetical scenario, subjects are typically asked to make social judgments about the victim and offender, reach a verdict, and, in some cases, assign a penalty or sentence to the offender. Through the use of crime scenarios, researchers have manipulated one or more of the following variables: Victim respectability, victim pleasantness, defendant respectability, victim-subject attitude similarity, type of crime (e.g., attempted rape, rape), degree of victim resistance, prior victim-rapist relationship, and sex of the subject.

The most commonly tested hypothesis is that an increase in victim respectability should produce an increase in the desire to blame and/or devalue the victim. The assumption is that the victimization of a respectable person is a greater threat to one's belief in a just world than the victimization of a less respectable person ("Bad things never happen to good people"). Supporting this line of thinking, a pioneering study by Jones and Aronson (1973) found that more respectable rape victims (i.e., married or virgin) were viewed as more blameworthy than a less respectable rape victim (i.e., divorced). However, subsequent attempts to replicate this finding have been consistently unsuccessful. Aside from this lack of empirical support, Fulero and Delara (1976) have offered the alternative explanation that Jones and Aronson's subjects identified more with the less respectable divorcee and

defensively assigned less blame to her.

Few other consistent findings have emerged from this body of research. Sex differences have been rather stable across studies. That is, males generally attribute greater responsibility to the rape victim than do females, assign less severe penalties to the rapist, and are more influenced by extraneous factors, such as the victim's attractiveness, resistance, and respectability.

Luginbuhl and Frederick (Note 17) offer two methodological explanations for the lack of consistent findings and difficulty interpreting the literature on the social perception of rape victims. First, the authors argue that researchers have generally confused (and combined) two different models--the "naive observer" model, concerned with the average person's perceptions of a rape victim, and the "jury process" model, concerned with the juror's perceptions within the context of the courtroom. Thus, subjects may be confused by the experimental situation (e.g., subjects are sometimes asked to assign punishment without first determining the defendant's guilt or even being labeled a "juror"). Furthermore, social perceptions of the rape victim are sometimes measured before, and in other cases, after the subject is requested to judge the defendant's guilt.

A second problem with this literature is the absence of a standard dependent variable across different experiments. Rape victim blameworthiness has been operationalized by asking subjects to judge how much she is to blame; how responsible she is for being raped; how much her behavior precipitated the rape; to what extent her

character is to blame; and to what extent her behavior is to blame.

There are other limiting characteristics of this literature that should be mentioned before turning to other areas. Unfortunately, both theory and research have focused almost exclusively on the observer's responses to victimization. Consequently, predictions regarding the victim's own reactions, including self-blame, are not always easily derivable from these models, nor do they have any empirical support. Furthermore, in the case of criminal victimization, the stimulus victim is almost always a rape victim and observer-subjects are typically placed in the role of jurors. Moreover, subjects usually represent a rather select group within the larger population; namely, college sophomores interested in psychology. Finally, relevant aspects of this justice/defensive attribution literature have focused on the causes of victim blame, leaving the psychological consequences of this attribution relatively unexplored.

### Noncriminal Victimization

The diverse research on noncriminal victimization may contribute to our understanding of the victim-blaming response. Both "real world" and laboratory research concerning attributions for noncriminal victimization are briefly reviewed below. The focus is the victim's attributions.

The world is replete with serious victimizations, including disease, natural and human disasters, personal accidents, the death of loved ones, divorce, etc. Research in these areas, at a minimum,

provides a glimpse of the victim's perspective, not seen in the laboratory. Wortman (1976) has reviewed much of the literature on serious "real world" victimizations and has concluded that one of the most common reactions by innocent victims is a feeling of (irrational) guilt and a feeling that their past behavior somehow caused the victimization. Feelings of guilt have been reported in interviews with cancer patients (Abrams & Finesinger, 1953), parents of terminally ill children (Chodoff, Friedman, & Hamburg, 1964), survivors of Hiroshima (Lifton, 1963), and bereaved persons (Lindemann, 1944). These findings can be interpreted as consistent with Lerner's "just world" hypothesis, which assumes that victims and nonvictims, alike, have a need to believe that whatever happens to them is somehow just and deserved.

The unfortunate problem with most of this "real world" research is that the authors frequently fail to report how their samples were generated, how many subjects were interviewed, what questions were asked, how responses were measured, and a host of other facts that are critical for evaluating the quality of the investigation and the validity of the conclusions. One exception to this criticism is a study of paralyzed victims of freak accidents conducted by Bulman and Wortman (1977). Of the 29 victims interviewed, 62 percent attributed at least "some blame" to themselves for the accident. The longer the time since the incident, the greater the blame placed on environmental factors. When answering the question, "Why me?" the most common response ( $n = 10$ ), was "God had a reason," followed by "chance" ( $n = 8$ ) and "fate" ( $n = 7$ ). The authors concluded that two attribution

processes were operating--the need to find out why it happened (i.e., what caused it) and the need to find out why it happened to me (i.e., what meaning it has).

Less serious victimizations have been systematically studied in attributional terms. In a 1957-1976 cohort study, Veroff and Melnick (Note 18) have examined changes in causal attributions for problems in marriage, jobs, and raising children. Many descriptive results were reported (e.g., women showed a reduction from 1957 to 1976 in blaming their husbands for marital problems); however, the correlates of blame were not discussed.

There is one area of laboratory research that involves noncriminal victimization and indirectly addresses the question of self-blame among victims.<sup>3</sup> In studies which examine the relationship between transgression and compliance (e.g., Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973), the subject is allowed to cause a mishap which s/he neither foresaw nor intended. Guilt is typically posited as the mediating variable to account for the observed relationship between transgression and subsequent compliance with the experimenter's request. However, given the experimental setting, the subject is only a "victim of circumstances," whose behavior is better described as an offender or transgressor. Nonetheless, the assumed presence of irrational guilt and self-blame

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<sup>3</sup>There are many other areas of laboratory research where social and clinical psychologists have created minor victimizations (most typically by manipulating task performance). The majority of these studies do not provide information about the prevalence of victim blame. However, a few of these "victimization" areas (i.e., control and learned helplessness) either directly or indirectly address the psychological function of victim blame. These areas will be reviewed.

is noteworthy.

### Criminal Victimization

The research literature on attributional responses to criminal victimization is highly relevant to this dissertation, but not very informative. Aside from the just world studies on hypothetical rape cases (reviewed earlier), this literature is comprised of a smattering of vaguely related studies, examining both the victim's and nonvictim's attributional analyses.

#### The Victim's Perspective

Little is known about the extent or psychological function of self-blame among crime victims. In the few studies which focus exclusively on crime victims' psychological reactions, attribution processes have received no systematic attention. Nonetheless, the major findings will be mentioned to place attributions in the context of other psychological reactions. Symonds (1976) appeals to an unspecified amount of clinical experience as the basis for his conclusion that victims of violent crime respond similarly to individuals who have experienced "sudden and unexpected loss." He claims that victims pass through a number of psychological phases on the road to recover, including shock and denial, fright, apathy, combined with inner-directed rage (self-blame?), and outer-directed resentment/anger. Unfortunately, the present author knows of no empirical documentation for this widely cited stage model.

Le Jeune and Alex (1973) conducted extensive in-person interviews with 24 mugging victims in New York City. The authors concluded that mugging victims are affected in a variety of ways. Because the mugging incident was very unexpected, victims commonly reported a sense of vulnerability to future victimization. This feeling appears to diminish with the passage of time (the time period between the mugging and the interview varied from one week to two years). Anger and shame were also reported, as well as a generalized distrust of strangers and a loss of confidence in the police as a means of protection. The authors noted the tendency "for a few victims to blame themselves in part for their victimization" (p. 286). Unfortunately, the lack of any systematic data collection procedure and the small number of cases bring into question the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Rape victims constitute the only other group of crime victims to be studied in depth (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974, 1976; Medea & Thompson, 1974; Schultz, 1975; Sutherland & Scherl, 1970; Weis & Borges, 1973). While hundreds of articles have been written recently on the topic of rape (e.g., prevention, treatment, criminal justice processing), very few contain data on the psychological reactions of the victim. Furthermore, the methods of inquiry in psychological studies are often inadequately described or justified. The research studies which serve as the foundation for the many books on rape counseling appear to be based on weakly documented clinical impressions or content analyses of the victim's spontaneous reports.

As rape counselors/researchers, Burgess and Holmstrom have worked



extensively with rape victims and their research should be mentioned as one of the better examples. In one study (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974), they personally interviewed 92 women within 30 minutes of the crime and followed up 85 percent at some unspecified time. The authors, using terms familiar to stage-model advocates, described the "rape trauma syndrome" as a two-phase reaction. An acute, two-to-three week disorganization phase was followed by a long-term reorganization process. The victimization incident was often followed closely by shock and disbelief. The disorganization period included any number of possible physical symptoms, and at the psychological level, this period was characterized by fear, humiliation, embarrassment, anger, revenge, and self-blame. The fear of physical violence and death was the "primary feeling" described by victims, but the frequency of various reactions was only rarely reported by the authors. Thus, the pervasiveness and psychological significance of self-blame among rape victims remains unknown.

According to Bard (Note 20), who recently completed a book on the psychological impact of criminal victimization, there has yet to appear any systematic research addressing the question of self-blame among crime victims. Victimization surveys provide the major body of systematic research on reactions to crime. While there have been numerous local and national victimization surveys, psychological variables other than fear of crime have been largely ignored. The primary purpose of the national victimization surveys has been to estimate specific crime rates within specific jurisdictions (Skogan,

1976). Local victimization research has focused on the physical and monetary problems facing the victim (e.g., Knudten, Meade, Knudten, & Doerher, Note 21).

A recent pilot study on battered women is one of the only research endeavors where blame-related measures have been taken. Pagelow (Note 8) administered a questionnaire to 51 battered women to assess the victim-offender interaction preceding the assault, and found that 65 percent responded negatively to the question, "Did you provoke the attack either physically or verbally?" When asked if they deserved their beating, not surprisingly, an affirmative answer was given by no one.

There are a few laboratory studies where subjects have been victimized by a staged crime (e.g., Greenberg, Note 19), but this research has focused on victims' reporting behavior rather than causal attributions. Minor thefts have been staged to avoid the unethical possibility of harming the subjects. As noted by Bulman and Wortman (1977), laboratory research on the victim's perspective is limited to very minor victimizations, under conditions where subjects have freely chosen to participate in the experiment. A trivial misfortune is unlikely to arouse the same need for explanation as the more serious case of real victimization. Furthermore, only immediate reactions can be measured, as debriefing cannot be delayed.

Going beyond self-attributed blame, there is some research that pertains to the question of actual victim blameworthiness. Much of this work comes from the field of victimology, where researchers have

sought to determine the importance of the victim's role in producing the criminal act. Victimologists have primarily looked for differences between victims and nonvictims in terms of behaviors and demographic characteristics. The consistent finding is that victimization is not a randomly distributed event. In fact, the national crime surveys provide the best data for demonstrating that the likelihood of victimization among various groups of people is not proportional to their representation in the general population. Victimology studies often attempt to identify the response for these differences.

While victimology was founded on the model of victim-offender-environment interaction effects, this model is rarely tested. Furthermore, the victim-related variables which are identified, post hoc, as possible causes of victimization are often beyond the victim's immediate control (e.g., race, age, income, residence).

Studies of victim-offender behavioral interactions at least operationalize victim-blameworthiness in terms of outcomes that are potentially within the victim's control. The concept of victim precipitation became popular after Wolfgang (1958) identified homicide victims as the first to use physical force in their fatal encounter with highly similar offender. Subsequently, a few studies have examined the extent of victim precipitation using a priori definitions and quantitative analyses. Amir (1971), in his classic archival study of forcible rape in Philadelphia (1958-60), found that 19 percent of the cases he studied were "victim precipitated." According to Amir's definition, victim-precipitated behavior is any victim response that is

likely to be interpreted by the offender either as a direct invitation for sexual relations or as a sign that she will be available if he persists. Amir's work has been strongly attacked by feminists and other researchers (e.g., Weis & Borges, 1973), who reject the concept of victim precipitation, as well as Amir's research conclusion that the rape victim is sometimes a "complementary partner" in a nonrandom event.

Similar to Amir, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence looked for evidence of victim precipitation in their 17-city survey of violent crimes (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 396). The Commission concluded that victim precipitation was evident in the following percentages:

- Criminal homicide 22.0%
- Aggravated assault 14.4%
- Forcible rape 4.4%
- Armed robbery 10.7%
- Unarmed robbery 6.1%

The Commission defined victim precipitation for each crime type as follows:

- Criminal homicide: Whenever the victim was the first to use physical force against the subsequent slayer.
- Aggravated assault: When the victim was the first to use either physical force or insinuating language, gestures, etc. against the attacker.
- Forcible rape: When the victim agreed to sexual relations but retracted before the actual act or when she clearly

invited sexual relations through language, gestures, etc.

- Armed and unarmed robbery: Temptation-opportunity situations in which the victim clearly had not acted with reasonable self-protective behavior in handling money, jewelry, or other valuables (e.g., a robbery victim flashes a great deal of money at a bar and then walks home alone along a dark street late at night).

Brownmiller points out that rape victims were found to be the least blameworthy victims and that the four percent is noticeably lower than Amir's 19 percent. However, the operational definitions of precipitation are somewhat vague in both studies, leaving it difficult to explain the differences.

#### The Nonvictim's Perspective

Victim blameworthiness has been studied more systematically and extensively from the nonvictim's perspective than from the victim's perspective. Again, several lines of inquiry are relevant.

A small literature on the perceived causes of crime provides an indirect assessment of victim blameworthiness. Kidder and Cohen (in press) have reviewed this literature (which includes a national survey and several local surveys) and have categorized people's responses along two dimensions: (1) Whether the cause given by the respondent focuses on the role of the victim or the role of the offender; and (2) whether the cause is "distal" (i.e., removed from the crime in time or space). Interestingly enough, the authors concluded that respondents



when asked about the causes of crime, tended to focus almost exclusively on distal causal factors related to the offender, such as unemployment, poverty, drug addiction, and neglect of children. Of course, these causal analyses do not exclude the possibility of victim blame, but merely indicate that victims are not viewed as a salient cause of crime. Victims may still be held responsible for not preventing their own victimization. In fact, Kidder and Cohen point out that crime prevention programs focus on proximal causal factors related to the victim (e.g., locks on doors, alarms, block meetings), rather than the social conditions believed to cause crime. (Their argument is valid at least for community crime prevention programs.)

More direct information about victim blame by nonvictims can be obtained from research that deals specifically with perceptions and judgments of crime victims and blameworthiness. In addition to the laboratory research on college students' judgments of rape victims (discussed earlier), several other nonvictim populations have been studied. To date, the most significant piece of work in this area was conducted by Feild (1978) and thus, the pertinent findings are described below in some detail.

Feild constructed a multidimensional Attitudes Toward Rape questionnaire and administered it to citizens, rape crisis counselors, rapists, and police officers. Eight factors emerged from his analyses, two of which pertain to victim blameworthiness. One factor concerned a woman's responsibility in preventing rape. In the citizen sample, regression analyses indicated that this factor was best predicted from

knowledge of the respondent's race (blacks attributing more responsibility than whites), followed by attitudes toward women (less positive attitudes associated with more responsibility), and sex (men attributing more responsibility than women). However, in the other three samples, this factor correlated with very few predictors. It did not correlate with any police characteristics, and only correlated positively with rapists' knowledge about rape. In the crisis counselors sample, this factor only correlated positively with previous rape training.

The second factor of interest to emerge from Feild's data concerned a woman's role in precipitating or causing rape. In the citizen sample, this factor was best predicted from the respondent's sex (men attributing more precipitation to rape victims than women) and race (blacks attributing less precipitation to victims than whites). These same two respondent characteristics (in the reverse order of importance, but same direction), were the only two predictors of this factor in the police sample. For rape crisis counselors, this precipitation factor was best predicted from age (older counselors attributing more precipitation to victims), followed by rape training (trained counselors attributing less precipitation to victims).

An analysis of all respondents simultaneously (a sample comprised largely of citizen respondents) indicated that the best predictor of women's responsibility for rape prevention was race (black attributing more responsibility than white). The best predictor of victim precipitation was sex (men attributing more precipitation to victims

than women).

Cross-sample comparisons of standardized scores on these two factors reveal some noteworthy differences in the extent of victim blame. On the first factor, police officers were the most likely to see women as responsible for rape prevention, although they did not differ significantly from citizens. Both groups scored significantly higher on this factor than rapists, who, in turn, were significantly higher than rape crisis counselors. The four groups all differed significantly from one another, in the same order, on the victim precipitation factor. That is, victim precipitation was endorsed most strongly by police officers, followed by citizens, rapists, and rape crisis counselors. Because only standard scores were reported, the absolute levels of victim precipitation and responsibility on the Likert scale cannot be determined.

In comparison to other studies, Feild's research should be viewed as a major contribution to our understanding of how nonvictims, outside the laboratory, perceive crime victims. Although focused exclusively on rape victims, diverse groups have been studied in a relatively sophisticated manner and victim-blaming attributions have been explored.

Perceptions of rape victim blameworthiness on the part of convicted rapists have been examined in other studies, providing some evidence of the extent of victim blame. Pagelow (Note 9) cited two studies, involving interviews with 51 rapists (Landau, Note 22) and 73 rapists (Copeland, Marks, Mahabir, Jacobs, Valenzuela, & Brody,



1976). In both cases, approximately half of the rapists felt that their victims had precipitated the assault. However, Copeland, et al. noted that rapists were defining precipitation in terms of the victim's resistance and attractiveness.

Regardless of the subject population studied, there is an absence of research on perceptions of crime victims other than victims of rape. Levels of blame attributed to victims of other serious crimes, such as assault, robbery, burglary, and theft have not been determined.

Finally, a discussion of causal attributions regarding criminal victimization would seem incomplete without noting that there is a sizable literature on the determinants of perceived offender responsibility (Carroll, in press; Pepitone, 1975). This literature is of interest to the extent that perceived offender responsibility is related to perceived victim responsibility. Unfortunately, attributions to both victims and offenders are rarely measured in the same study. The commonly assumed inverse relationship between these two attributions requires further validation.

## THE DESIRE FOR CONTROL

The concept of personal control may be important for explaining reactions to criminal victimization. At the foundation of many psychological models of behavior (including competence motivation, cognitive consistency, reactance, stress, and attribution theories) is the notion that individuals are motivated to see their environment as a predictable and controllable place to live. In terms of crime, individuals should be motivated to believe that they have control over their chances of being victimized and that such negative outcomes are avoidable. Wortman (1976) has suggested that the attribution process may be one method by which individuals gain a sense of control over their environment. As Kelley (1971, p. 22) states, "the purpose of causal analysis--the function it serves for the species and the individual--is effective control." Hence, the individual should be motivated to attribute victimization to controllable factors. For crime victims, self-blame may be the most reasonable attribution for restoring a sense of control over their chances of being victimized by crime again in the future. Medea and Thompson (1974) have articulated this reasoning for the case of rape when they state that "if a woman can believe that somehow she got herself into the situation, if she can feel that in some way she caused it, if she can make herself responsible for it, then she's established a sort of control over the rape" (p. 105). For nonvictims, blaming the victim may be a successful tactic for maintaining the belief that crime is predictable and avoidable (i.e., "It

happens to certain types of people who are unlike me").

There is a substantial body of laboratory research which demonstrates that causal attributions are affected by the desire for personal control (see Wortman, 1976, for a review). To summarize the results of these studies, people have a need to believe that: Outcomes which occur together are related even when they occur together by chance (referred to as the "illusion of contingency"); they can exert influence over chance events ("illusion of control"); and they are free from external constraints ("illusion of freedom").

Concerned specifically with attributional responses to a victimizing accident, Walster (1966) appealed to a "self-protective" control model to predict that person attributions will increase as a function of increases in the severity of an accident's consequences. The assumption here is that a more serious negative outcome increases the individual's motivation to see the event as controllable/avoidable and hence, "unlikely to happen to me." Under such conditions, the individual is more motivated to see someone as responsible. Walster found support for her hypothesis in the laboratory. While this finding has been difficult to replicate using her methodology (e.g., Shaver, 1970; Shaw & Skolnick, 1971; Walster, 1967), a stronger test of this hypothesis was supportive (Chaiken & Darley, 1973).

Research on real world victimizations, particularly disastrous accidents, lends some support to the control model. Interviews with residents who lived near a large nightclub fire in Boston (Beltford & Lee, 1943) and residents who lived near three consecutive plane crashes

in Elizabeth, New Jersey (Bucher, 1957) revealed that subjects did not blame the individuals who were instrumental in causing the disasters, but rather, pointed the finger at higher authorities who had the power to control the occurrence of similar events in the future.

The feeling of having lost control over one's environment and being vulnerable to future victimization has been reported by survivors of the Buffalo Creek flood (Erikson, Note 23; Lifton & Olson, 1976), as well as mugging victims in New York City (LeJeune & Alex, 1973). For the crime victim, loss of control is probably translated instantly into fear of revictimization. Silberman (1978) describes this translation when he states that "instead of familiar environments being automatically defined as safe, they are now perceived as uniformly dangerous because of the victim's inability to rely on the old cues" (p. 15). As one crime victim put it, the city has become an "incredible jungle" (LeJeune & Alex, 1973).

Perceived control over future criminal victimization would seem to be an important concern of both victims and nonvictims, and as discussed later, fear of victimization is one way of measuring perceived control. Fear of victimization is one variable that has been measured in numerous studies (Dubow, McCabe, & Kaplan, Note 5). However, it has yet to be correlated with causal attributions. The interrelationships among attributions, perceptions of control, and other reactions to victimizations are discussed in the following section, within the context of coping strategies.

## REACTIONS WITHIN THE COPING FRAMEWORK

One of the major objectives of this dissertation is to investigate the psychological significance of "blaming the victim" for both victims and nonvictims. Hence, this section focuses on two basic questions: (1) What evidence is there that attributions play some role in coping with the threat or reality of victimization? (2) What evidence is there that perceived control plays some role in coping with victimization?

Coping processes have been studied in reference to a variety of stressful events (see Meichenbaum, Turk, & Burstein, 1975, for a review). With one exception, this literature has yet to examine the role of self-blame in the coping process, primarily because the research tends to focus on the preparation for stressful events that are expected by the "victim" (e.g., surgery).

Before summarizing the pertinent aspects of this literature, the framework for conceptualizing coping responses should be articulated. Lazarus (1966) has provided some conceptual clarity to this topic area by distinguishing between direct coping (intended to directly alter the threatening situation) and intrapsychic coping (intended to reduce stress by changing one's interpretation of the threatening situation). Most of the variables measured in this dissertation fall within the category of intrapsychic or cognitive coping, including attribution measures. However, behavioral reactions, intended to directly reduce the individual's chances of being victimized by

crime, have been assessed indirectly through self-reported precautionary behaviors.

In the "coping with stress" literature, defensiveness is commonly viewed as a poor intrapsychic coping strategy, while "cognitive control" (Averill, 1973), in the form of positive thinking (Meichenbaum, et al., 1975), or anticipatory fear and mental rehearsal (Janis, 1965), is believed to be a healthy coping strategy. Defensiveness generally refers to self-deceptive strategies involving denial or distortion of the threat in order to reduce fear or anxiety. There is some evidence, for example, that surgery patients who are highly defensive or denial-avoidant tend not to experience presurgical anxiety, but demonstrate poorer postsurgical adjustment than other patients (Burstein & Meichenbaum, Note 24; Janis, 1958). The relevance of such work to the unexpected stress of criminal victimization is difficult to determine. Perhaps citizens should live with some fear of victimization (based on a realistic assessment of their chances of victimization) and some knowledge of the experience of victimization. In any event, excessive defensiveness would appear to be unhealthy for both victims and non-victims.

While much of the work on "cognitive control" has questionable relevance to criminal victimization (because of the focus on expected events), one line of control research (Glass & Singer, 1972) has demonstrated that giving people a feeling of control over an aversive event will ameliorate the negative impact of this event. Furthermore, a number of related studies in the learned helplessness paradigm

(Seligman, 1975) have shown that failure experienced with unsolvable problems will result in a decrement in subsequent performance. Presumably, such failure creates the expectation that outcomes are independent of behavior. This feeling of helplessness or absence of personal control over events is believed to be responsible for subsequent decrements in performance (i.e., "giving up" behavior). Finally, there is limited clinical research on locus of control (Lefcourt, 1976), which suggests that individuals who do not feel a sense of control ("externals") tend to experience more negative states (depression and lack of vigor) and are more responsive to stressful circumstances than individuals who feel a sense of control over their behavior ("internals"). Consistent with these findings, Seligman (1975) has offered the learned helplessness model as an explanation for depression.

While the above findings suggest that experiencing a sense of control is a desirable objective, the question remains whether such feelings always enhance one's ability to cope with stressful events or perhaps have negative consequences for the individual. For example, exaggerated feelings of control or invincibility could be detrimental, especially when concerned with a somewhat uncontrollable outcome such as crime. Hence, Wortman and Brehm (1975) have called for an accurate assessment of the individual's potential for control--not always an easy task! Nonetheless, the above results have, to some extent, documented the importance of perceived control in relationship to the coping process, at least for cases of noncriminal "victimization."

In contrast, the role of causal attributions has not been

empirically determined with any degree of consistency. Only a few studies have looked at the relationship between self-blame and coping. In a laboratory setting, Wortman and her colleagues (Wortman, Panciera, Shusterman, & Hibscher, 1976) have manipulated subjects' causal attributions for failure to control an aversive stimulation, and found that "subjects who attributed their failure to their own incompetence felt considerably more stress than subjects who made situational attributions" (p. 30). However, the authors point out that a situational attribution may be equally, if not more, stressful, under a different set of circumstances (e.g., perceived inability to change the situation and high likelihood of "revictimization"). Interestingly enough, although the self-blame subjects experienced more stress, they performed better on subsequent problems than subjects in the situation attribution conditions. However, other researchers (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973) have found that self-blame for failure is positively correlated to performance decrements. Hence, the available data are inconclusive regarding the relationship between self-blame and other coping responses.

A study by Bulman and Wortman (1977) assessed the relationship between causal attributions and "coping" among 29 paralyzed victims of freak accidents. Coping was determined by the combined ratings of one nurse and one social worker on a 15-point scale (ranging from "has coped extremely poorly" to "has coped extremely well"). The results indicate that victims who coped the best were those who tended to blame themselves for causing the accident, and yet saw the accident as unavoidable or beyond their control. Thus, while self-blame did not



seem to function as mechanism for enhancing control (after all, subjects were paralyzed for life), for some, it may have provided a satisfactory explanation for a very serious outcome that demanded explanation.

The study by Bulman and Wortman is unique in that it quantatively explored the relationship between blame and coping in the real world. However, the authors were quick to point out possible methodological limitations, including the correlational nature of the results and the possibility that the observed differences in coping were as much the result of how the accidents were attributionally interpreted. Their relatively small sample included a wide range of accidents that may have differed on such dimensions as seriousness.

While self-blame appears to be a healthy response among paralyzed victims, the applicability of these findings to crime victims is questionable. Clearly, the situations are quite different. Self-blame among crime victims may be a healthy response if it functions to restore a sense of control over possible victimizations ("I won't let it happen again") or if the victimization is extremely serious and the victim is unable to find a sufficient alternative explanation for the event. Otherwise, ego-defensiveness may limit the amount of self-blame, and hence, limit its value as an effective coping mechanism. These alternatives are further discussed in the statement of hypotheses.

In summary, there has been little empirical work on the question of whether self-blame inhibits or facilitates coping among victims. Nonetheless, there are many opinions on the topic. Some authors (e.g.,

Abrams & Finesinger, 1953) claim that self-blame is maladaptive or counterproductive, while others (e.g., Averill, 1968; Chadoff, et al., 1964; Medea & Thompson, 1974) argue that self-blame is an adaptive response which satisfies the victim's need to believe that misfortunes do not occur randomly. That is, victims need to believe that someone was responsible for what happened.

As the above discussion suggests, the literature on reactions to criminal victimization can be conceptualized in terms of coping processes. Specifically, this dissertation takes the perspective that both victims and nonvictims are forced to cope (cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally) with the reality and/or threat of criminal victimization. Fear of victimization is an emotional coping response; the individual's estimated risk of victimization is a cognitive coping response. Each of these responses has been studied in previous research, and each is used in the present work as a measure of coping.

Fear, perceived risk, and precautionary behavior have been studied through local and national victimization surveys (Dubow, et al., Note 5). Several selected findings deserve mention in this review because of their relevance to the present research. First, there is some evidence of a self-protective bias in people's perceptions of their own safety. In a number of surveys (e.g., Boggs, 1971; Ennis, 1967; Reiss, 1967; Garofolo, 1977), respondents (mostly non-victims) have tended to see their own neighborhoods as safer than other sections of the community. Second, researchers (e.g., Baumer, Note 25) have examined the interrelationships among several of the

reactions noted above. In general, the results indicate that a person's fear of victimization, perceived risk of victimization, and number of self-reported precautionary behaviors are positively related. Third, the demographic factors of sex, age, and race are consistently found to be significant predictors of these coping responses. In the case of fear, for example, the elderly (e.g., Cook & Cook, 1976), women (e.g., Erskine, 1974), and nonwhites (e.g., Nehnevajsa, Note 26) are generally more fearful of victimization than their counterparts.

One recent study in the reactions to crime literature is especially noteworthy because it examines perceived risk in the theoretical context of perceived control and helplessness. Concerned with women's (e.g., mostly nonvictims') reactions to rape, Heath and her colleagues (Heath, Rigor, & Gordon, Note 27) have examined the relationship between perceived risk of being raped and endorsement of both personal and societal rape prevention strategies. The authors found that, for women who felt there was at least some chance of being victimized, belief in the effectiveness of personal strategies (e.g., not going out alone at night; not talking to strangers; enrolling in self-defense classes) increased as their perceived risk of victimization increased. This finding was interpreted as support for Walster's (1966) protective attribution theory rather than Shaver's (1970) defensive attribution theory. Stated differently, the desire for self-control and self-protection may outweigh the ego-protective desire to avoid self-responsibility or self-blame, should victimization ever occur.

Unfortunately, the findings are somewhat ambiguous. For example, personal strategies were endorsed most strongly by those who felt "no chance" of being sexually assaulted. Furthermore, perceived risk was unrelated to the endorsement of societal strategies, which happened to be more strongly endorsed, overall, than personal strategies. Hence, the data provide only weak support for the authors' conclusion.

This study by Heath, et al. did not directly assess the subjects' attributions, nor did it include an assessment of any victim reactions, given that a subsample of victims was presumably generated through random digit dialing procedures. Essentially, the psychological impact of victim blame on the coping reactions of crime victims and nonvictims has yet to be systematically explored. Self-blame among crime victims is the least well explored domain. Studies of rape victims have been conceptualized in terms of a coping process, but the role of self-blame has not been clearly defined or measured. As noted earlier, the studies are typically based on unstructured interviews with rape victims and few quantifiable measures are reported. More importantly, few attempts have been made to systematically examine the relationship between various coping responses. For example, Burgess and Holmstrom (1974), using rather general terms, concluded that coping and reorganization among rape victims were determined by "ego strength, social network support and the way people treat them as victims" (p. 983). Such causal inferences not only require empirical support, but the variables named require more concise operational definitions. The same criticisms apply to other psychological studies

of crime victims (e.g., LeJeune & Alex, 1973).

Similarly, little is known about what role, if any, is played by the victim-blaming response in nonvictim strategies for coping with criminal victimization. Perhaps blaming the victim alters nonvictims' feelings of vulnerability to criminal victimization, as well as their attitude toward services created to compensate the victim. At a minimum, previous laboratory work suggests that perceived threat is related to subjects' evaluations of the victims and assignment of causality. Several of the theory-based studies reviewed earlier (e.g., Aderman, et al., 1974; Chaiken & Darley, 1973; Sorrentino & Boutellier, 1974) have manipulated the victim-nonvictim relationship in such a way as to presumably affect subjects' (i.e., nonvictims') own chances of future victimization. A fairly consistent finding has been that increasing the threat of one's own victimization will yield a more positive, empathetic, and less blaming response to the victim. Clearly, this result is consistent with defensive attribution theory. Similarly, threat has been manipulated in one study of college student perceptions of rape victims (Wortman & Coates, Note 28) and similar results were obtained. However, the findings were not unambiguous. Both male and female subjects were included, and a closer look at the data reveals that women (clearly more threatened by rape than men) blamed and derogated the rape victim more than men. This finding is inconsistent with the majority of studies on sex differences in the perception of rape victims (cited earlier). In any event, there is a need to specifically measure the relationship between threat in the general public

and the tendency to blame crime victims. Generally speaking, there is a need to examine the relationship between causal attributions and other coping responses among both victims and nonvictims. These research needs, among others, are addressed in this dissertation.

## CRITICAL SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

A variety of literatures have been discussed to the extent that they provide information about the practical importance, pervasiveness, and psychological significance of the victim-blaming response among crime victims and nonvictims. While some consistent findings have emerged from available research, many inconsistencies, ambiguities, and methodological shortcomings are apparent. A summary of the major findings, knowledge gaps, and limitations in these literatures is provided in this section.

The victim-blaming tendency was first discussed in terms of its practical importance for the administration of criminal justice, the prevention of crime, and the impact of crime on the individual victim or nonvictim. Specifically, some empirical evidence was combined with speculation to suggest that perceived victim blameworthiness may determine: (1) How far a case will progress through the criminal justice system and hence, what level of justice will be achieved, (2) how the crime problem will be defined and who/what will be the target of preventative action, and (3) how well victims and nonvictims cope with the reality and/or threat of criminal victimization. This third question is the focal point of the present investigation.

Several theoretical accounts of the victim-blaming response were critically reviewed. The just world theory has been the most popular explanation for this tendency, but has not fared well under empirical scrutiny. The results of recent laboratory studies within the just

world paradigm have been interpreted as support for defensive attribution theory. One of the major findings in this regard has been that nonvictims are less likely to blame and derogate a victim as their identification with the victim's plight increases. Apparently, the tendency to blame innocent victims occurs under a more restrictive set of circumstances than previously suspected.

The just world theory has been unable to predict reactions to criminal victimization, especially in the laboratory. A host of studies using the mock jury paradigm have consistently failed to support predictions derived from the just world model about nonvictims' perceptions and judgments of rape victims. However, these studies have tended to be poorly designed and have yielded few consistent results other than sex differences.

One of the major limitations of the theories and laboratory studies on reactions to victimization has been the one-sided focus on the observer's/nonvictim's reaction, leaving a paucity of information about the victim's perspective. (In fact, very little is known about nonvictims' reactions to crime victims other than rape victims.) Furthermore, this literature has tended to address the causes of victim blame and derogation, while the psychological consequences of attributions remain unexplored.

Beyond the laboratory, there have been several studies conducted on victims' reactions that can be interpreted as supportive of the just world theory. Feelings of irrational guilt and self-blame among victims of serious misfortunes (both criminal and noncriminal) have been



reported in the literature. However, these data were often collected through unstructured interviews, which did not yield quantifiable results. The absence of any quantifiable results is one of the primary reasons why the pervasiveness of victim blame cannot be reliably estimated. Self-attributions for criminal victimization have been quantified in only one study on battered women, and the results indicate that approximately two-thirds of the victims denied any responsibility for precipitating the attack. Finally, with the exception of this one study on battered women and another on mugging victims, the literature on psychological reactions to victimization has been limited to unstructured, in-person interviews with rape victims.

Aside from these few psychological studies, the crime literature offers very little in the way of assessing victims' attribution processes. The national and local victimization surveys simply have not measured victims' attributions. With little interest in psychological level of analysis, victimology studies have made an attempt to determine the objective, causal role played by crime victims in creating their own victimization. While the general conclusion has been that victimization is not a random event, this finding in itself does not suggest that victims are generally blameworthy for precipitating their victimization. "Precipitation" usually implies that victims have some control over the factors that lead to victimization, but many of the factors identified in this literature are, or at least appear to be, uncontrollable. Very few studies have sought to define and measure precipitation. The available results, although based on rather vague

definitions, suggest that victims (especially rape victims) generally do not play a substantial role in causing major crimes, and causality is usually considered a necessary precondition for attributing blame or responsibility.

Consistent with this conclusion, there is a small literature on nonvictims' perceptions of the "causes" of crime, which indicates that victims, as a whole, are not seen as one of the major causes of crimes. Although this conclusion suggests that victims are not a salient cause of crime, their selection as the target group for many crime prevention programs suggests that they may be held responsible for their own victimization.

One crime-related study was helpful for clarifying how nonvictims conceptualize the blameworthiness of rape victims. The results suggested that victim blame or victim responsibility has at least two dimensions--prevention and precipitation. The demographic variables of race and sex were among the strongest predictors of these two factors. Furthermore, differences in the extent of victim blame were observed across several distinct groups, with police officers being the most prone to engage in victim blaming. Similar to the other studies in this literature on the perceptions of crime victims, the only stimulus crime employed was rape. Thus, not only is there a lack of knowledge about the attributional reactions of nonrape victims, but there is a parallel deficit in our understanding of how nonvictims assign responsibility to nonrape victims.

In addition to the just world theory and defensive attribution

theory, a third theoretical model was posited to help account for reactions to criminal victimization; namely, the control model. There is considerable laboratory evidence, and weaker evidence from research on serious real world accidents, that people are motivated to feel a sense of personal control and predictability over their environment in general, and victimizing events, in particular. The present author has argued that the literature on reactions to crime has measured perceptions of control in the form of fear and perceived risk of criminal victimization. Given this interpretation, the research has shown that perceptions of control over future victimization are most strongly determined by the demographic characteristics of age, sex, and race. While this literature has also isolated a number of situational factors that are correlated with perceived control (e.g., type of neighborhood), it has virtually ignored the cognitive variables that may mediate the relationship between perceptions of control and various personological and situational factors. Furthermore, this literature has suffered from a scarcity of theoretical models to account for the observed relationships.

There has been at least one theory-based study of nonvictims' responses that is relevant to the present framework. Although the results of this study were somewhat ambiguous, they suggest that the desire for control over future victimization may be more important to nonvictims than the desire to avoid blame in the event of victimization. However, attributions, per se, were not measured.

The control model was incorporated into the present framework

because of its usefulness in explaining attributional responses to victimization and predicting the relationship between attributions and other coping responses. Several authors have suggested that self-blame or victim blame may serve to enhance one's sense of control over future victimization, and that feelings of control are a desirable, healthy outcome. To address the question of whether certain attributions do, in fact, result in a healthier post-victimization state than would otherwise be expected, pertinent aspects of the coping-with-stress literature were reviewed. The role of attributions in the post-victimization coping process has rarely been studied, and the existing results are equivocal, at best. Moreover, the healthiness of attributions among crime victims has never been studied. In contrast, there is some consistent evidence from the research on learned helplessness and locus of control to suggest that feelings of control are indicative of, or contribute to, healthy post-victimization coping among noncrime victims.

In summary, the pervasiveness of the victim-blaming response among crime victims and nonvictims is difficult to estimate, given the paucity of previous research. More importantly, the research literature has yet to examine the relationship between attributions, perceptions of control, and other coping responses among victims of crime or nonvictims. In the absence of strong empirical guidance, the hypotheses delineated in the following section have been primarily derived from previous theoretical statements.

The research reported here was conducted as an attempt to fill

some of the knowledge gaps evident in previous work, with special attention given to the research questions stated earlier. Interviews were conducted with a variety of crime victims (e.g., victims of robbery, battery, assault, burglary, theft, and rape), a random sample of nonvictims, and a sample of police officers, all from the same community. The victim's perspective has been the primary focus of this inquiry because this perspective has received the least attention in past research. Thus, after the initial set of data were collected from various types of crime victims, another study was conducted to collect more in-depth information about the victim's coping mechanism shortly after the victimization. In addition to interviews, observational and archival methods were employed in these victim studies to provide alternative measurement strategies.

## DEFINITIONS OF KEY VARIABLES

Before stating the hypotheses for the present research, the major variables of interest should be identified and conceptually defined. There are four sets of variables which are not necessarily self-explanatory and may benefit from theoretical clarification. These variable sets are: Attributions, perceptions of control, precautionary behaviors, and perceived coping/impact.

At the most fundamental level, attributions refer to the individual's judgment as to who or what caused a particular outcome. However, the present research will focus more on blame than on cause-- i.e., to whom or what can criminal victimization be blamed? Although causality is believed to be an important determinant of blame, the two are certainly not identical (cf., Pepitone, 1975). Psychologists have sought to specify the conditions that affect the blaming response, but have rarely defined the concept. The American Heritage Dictionary (Morris, 1973) defines blame in the following terms:

"1. To hold responsible; accuse. 2. To find fault with; to censure. 3. To place responsibility for (something) on a person." The definition goes on to state that "blame stresses censure arising from something for which one is held liable."

This research used words that are familiar to most people when measuring their attributions. Victims were asked about "blame" and "responsibility" for victimization. These terms imply negative evaluation, as well as causality. By focusing on blame rather than causality,

response variation can be expected and the theory-based hypotheses described in the following section can be tested. As Pepitone (1975) notes, causal attributions and blame attributions do not have a one-to-one relationship because blame is "systematically discounted or enlarged under certain conditions" (p. 201). In fact, Heider (1958) has delineated some of the factors that determine whether people will be held responsible for their actions. For example, facts such as foreseeability and intentionality can be important determinants of blame. Thus, causality is often seen as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for responsibility, and the latter is more sensitive to various types of information.

The second important construct that should be conceptually defined as it is used in the present research is personal control. As noted earlier, the concept of control generally refers to the people's belief that they can exert influence over events in their environments, and that they are largely free from external constraints. In the present context, control will be defined in terms of cognitions and feelings about one's own vulnerability to future criminal victimization. Control will be treated as a general concept that encompasses (1) people's perceived ability to personally control their chances of future victimization, (2) their perceived risk of victimization, and (3) their worry about victimization. These variables can be viewed as complementary aspects of personal control: Belief in control, actual control, and feelings about actual control, respectively. Each of these factors should contribute to the individual's overall feeling

of vulnerability to, or control over, criminal victimization. Perceived risk of victimization and worry about victimization are clearly indirect measures of perceived control.

The third variable that should be defined in this research is the tendency to engage in individual precautionary behaviors. In general, this refers to "individual behaviors designed to avoid, deter, or reduce losses due to victimization" (Reactions to Crime Project, Note 29). While previous research has been concerned with analyzing the content of self-reported precautionary actions, the present research is simply concerned with whether or not people reported having engaged in behaviors for the specific purpose of protecting themselves or their property from criminal victimization.

The final theoretical construct of interest is psychological coping/impact. One of the primary objectives of this research is to predict the negative psychological impact of victimization on victims or their ability to cope with their misfortune. At the conceptual level, impact/coping was defined primarily in terms of victims' emotional reactions to the incident, although a cognitive assessment of their own recovery was requested. Thus, coping was viewed in terms of personal, emotional responses and was assessed in terms of the extremity of these emotional reactions. In general, more extreme negative reactions were assumed to be indicative of poorer coping. The extremity of emotional reactions was determined by self-ratings and, in some cases, observer-ratings.



## HYPOTHESES

This research was designed and conducted as an exploratory investigation with guidance provided by theory-based hypotheses. The results should not be viewed as strong tests of competing theories, although certain findings appear to support one theory over another, and seem to reflect upon the robustness of specific models outside the laboratory. The majority of the relationships reported here are correlational in nature, although the hypotheses stated below are best articulated using causal terminology. In cases where theory and/or research are ambiguous, contradictory, or totally absent, competing hypotheses will be offered or the central research question will be stated without an accompanying prediction.

### The Magnitude of Victim Blame and Other Attributions

Past research provides little guidance in estimating the magnitude of victim blame and other attributions within the victim and non-victim populations. Typically, absolute or relative levels of blame have been considered secondary to the study of cause-and-effect relationships. While practical and theoretical factors provide some basis for prediction, these factors are not in agreement. For example, the apparent victim-blaming focus of most crime prevention programs, as well as the victim's need for a predictable, controllable, just world (Walster, 1966; Lerner, 1970), would lead one to predict that victim blame is rather extensive among both victims and nonvictims. In

addition, research on serious "real world" victimizations and laboratory research on transgression-compliance also tend to support this position. However, given the individual's ego-defensive motivation to avoid responsibility for negative outcomes (Shaver, 1970; Sicolý & Ross, 1971; Snyder, et al., 1978), victim blame may not be prevalent or extensive.

The absolute and relative magnitude of victim blame will be explored in the present research. In the absence of a better control group, relative predictions will be tested by comparing the responses of victims and nonvictims, starting with certain assumptions. The main assumption is that victimization is a more important, and more personal topic for victims than nonvictims, and therefore, is likely to produce more extreme psychological reactions among victims. Several hypotheses can be derived from this starting point. Assuming that ego-defensiveness is greater for victims than nonvictims, victims are expected to assign less responsibility or blame to themselves than would be assigned to them by nonvictims. However, assuming that the desire for predictability and control is also greater for victims than nonvictims, the opposite result is expected (i.e., self-blame among victims should be more extensive than victim blame among nonvictims).

A more specific prediction among nonvictims, generated from existing data (cf., Feild, 1978), is that police officers will blame victims more than will local residents. The explanation for this expected difference is not easy to determine. Clearly, police officers will blame victims more than will local residents. The explanation for this expected difference is not easy to determine. Clearly, police

officers are more familiar with the circumstances surrounding victimization, including possible victim-precipitating actions (but situational factors may be equally salient). Another possibility is that police officers, after numerous contacts with victims, begin to attribute predictability, similarity, and perhaps responsibility to these individuals, as a way of making their daily calls easier. In summary, the available information is not sufficient for making a confident prediction about the absolute or relative amount of victim blame.

In addition to victim blame, the magnitude of chance and offender attributions will be examined by comparing victim and nonvictim responses. Again, the different theories lead to different predictions. Beginning with the assumptions noted above, defensive attribution theory predicts that victims will be more likely than nonvictims to see victimization as a chance or random event. Justice and control theories, on the other hand, predict the opposite result (i.e., victims will attribute less to chance than will nonvictims). Defensive attribution theory would suggest that greater blame will be attributed to the offender by victims than by nonvictims, while the other theories do not allow a general prediction.

### Interrelationships Among Attributions

While subjects could, theoretically, give a variety of independent attributional explanations for victimization, one can assume that attributions are determined by some common motives (e.g., justice, control, ego-defensiveness) and are expressed along some common dimensions (e.g.,

personal-situational). Therefore, different attributions are expected to correlate with one another, as discussed below.

From a cognitive viewpoint, person attributions (whether to the victim or the offender) suggest stability/predictability and should be inversely related to chance attributions. This also implies that victim and offender attributions will be positively related. However, given motivational biases in the attribution process, this latter prediction may not be supported. In fact, defensive attribution theory would predict an inverse relationship between victim and offender blame for both victims and nonvictims. (The relationship between these two variables is not easily predicted from the attribution-control model, as offender blame does not clearly relate to perceived control; see the following section for details).

An attempt was made to assess the relationship between self-blame and independent ratings of victim blameworthiness. Although the hope of convergent validity is confounded with the possibility of real "actor-observer" differences, a simple prediction can be offered: Assuming that victims and independent raters/observers make veridical assessments of victim blame, then victim self-blame should correlate positively with independent judgments of victim blameworthiness based on police offense reports and observations of victims shortly after the crime.

Finally, an attempt was made to explore the relationship between the victims' self-blame and their perception that other people have blamed them for what happened. The primary theories do not address this

question, but certainly there is the possibility of social influence in the definition of responsibility. The perception that others have blamed you for your victimization may increase or decrease your own self-blame, depending upon whether you accept or reject their judgment. Hence, no prediction is made.

### Attributions and Perceptions of Control

Because cognitive processes have received so little attention in previous research on reactions to crime, the relationship between victim blame and other coping responses is difficult to predict. Self-blame by crime victims may or may not be a healthy, adaptive response to victimization. Similarly, the tendency among nonvictims to blame victims may or may not be psychologically functional. Nonetheless, some predictions are possible based on previous theorizing and research.

Victim self-blame may serve as a mechanism for restoring a sense of personal control over one's environment (Bulman & Wortman, 1978; Medea & Thompson, 1974; Wortman, 1978). The general relationship between attributions and personal control will be tested in several ways, as several measures of control have been utilized.

Assuming that self-blame can be incorporated into a control theory framework, one might expect to find that self-blame is a healthy reaction to victimization. Specifically, increased self-blame should be associated with an increased sense of personal control over future victimization and a greater belief in citizen crime prevention efforts. Similarly, self-blame should follow from a desire to believe that the

previous victimization was avoidable. The control/justice model makes a similar prediction for nonvictims. As the tendency to blame the victim increases, nonvictims should report stronger feelings of control over their own chances of being victimized by crime.

The predictions for chance attributions can be derived from the predictions for victim attributions, as the two variables are assumed to be inversely related. Specifically, the individual's sense of control should be enhanced by down-playing the role of chance in criminal victimization. However, it is unclear whether attributions to the offender will serve to increase or decrease feelings of control. While there exists a pervasive tendency to make person attributions and see events as predictable, blaming the offender may provide little assurance to the individual that s/he will not be victimized by similar offenders in the future. (In fact, offender attributions may enhance feelings of helplessness.) Blaming the offender is one situation where the desire for predictability and the desire for control may be in conflict. Hence, a clear-cut prediction is not possible concerning the relationship between offender blame and feelings of control.

#### Attributions and Precautions

Assuming that control is important to the victim, then it may be worthwhile to speculate about how the victim achieves this sense of control (subsequent to self-blame) and what consequences this feeling might have for the coping process. Although the attribution-control model does not specify how self-blame is translated into feelings of

control, in the present context, self-blame may increase the individual's sense of control by motivating him/her to engage in additional precautionary behaviors.

Hence, the prediction follows that self-blame and perceived control will be positively correlated with the tendency for victims to engage in precautionary actions. However, if precautionary action does not mediate the relationship between self-blame and control, this does not reflect poorly upon the justice or control theories, as there may be other methods of achieving control. Perhaps self-blame is a sufficient cognitive response to create a sense of safety without any behavioral response. Hence, there are several questions: Is there a relationship between attributions and precautions? Is there a relationship between perceived control and precautions? If self-blame is related to perceptions of control, is the effect direct, or indirect via precautions?

The relationship between victim blame and precautionary action is also somewhat difficult to predict for nonvictims. Within the parameters of the justice/control model, nonvictims who engage in victim blame and feel a sense of personal control over victimization may believe that precautionary behaviors are unnecessary (e.g., "I'm not the type of person that gets victimized--only bad people suffer from crime") or, to the contrary, may feel that precautionary behaviors are what have kept them safe (e.g., "Victims don't have enough sense to properly protect themselves"). Thus, the question of whether victim blame and other attributions are causally related to self-protective behaviors will be

explored without any a priori directional prediction. (Defensive attribution theory offers no basis for predicting a relationship here, since it focuses on ego-protection rather than on self-protection.)

### Psychological Impact of Victimization

Other reactions to victimization were measured that focus more directly on the psychological impact of the incident and the victim's ability to cope with the experience. These reactions should be predictable within this attribution-control framework: The greater a victim's sense of responsibility for, and control over, victimization, the less psychological impact the incident would have on him/her; that is, the victim should be less "angry," less "upset," report less "impact," and feel more psychological and emotional "recovery." Observer ratings of the victim's coping ability were made at the scene of the crime to help determine the healthiness of the blaming response and test the validity of self-reports. Within the control framework, blame and control should be positively related to observer ratings and self-ratings of coping.

Defensive attribution theory can be stretched to support the general argument that self-blame is a healthy reaction to victimization. Ego-defensiveness, in the form of denying responsibility for negative outcomes, may interfere with the victim's ability to recognize his/her own role in preventing future victimizations. The psychological effort spent denying fault may do little to reduce the threat of being victimized again, and may even contribute to feelings of helplessness,



fear, anger, etc., as suggested above.

In contrast to the above predictions, self-blame may be a dysfunctional response, as rape counselors have claimed. According to this argument, self-blame only serves to enhance anger and self-depreciative thoughts, and may even increase the fear of revictimization. If self-blame is a labeling process, whereby the individual comes to view himself/herself as possessing certain dispositions or uncontrollable traits which contribute to victimization, then self-blame may only exacerbate negative feelings (cf., Storms & McCauley, 1976) and contribute to feelings of helplessness, thus discouraging individual crime prevention behaviors.

A third possibility is that self-blame plays an insignificant role in the coping process, and hence, will be unrelated to measures of perceived control and psychological impact. Attribution questions may be less salient and less important in the victim's mind than other factors. Because the role of attributions is unknown, the analysis plan will include a comparison of attributions with certain trans-situational characteristics of the victim (e.g., demographic variables) and situational afctors (e.g., seriousness of the crime, victimization history) to assess their relative importance and independence in predicting coping responses.

#### Seriousness and Threat of Victimization

The perceived seriousness of, and threat posed by, victimization should be an important set of variables within the attribution-control

framework for predicting both victim and nonvictim reactions to victimization. The just world theory and control theories suggest that as the seriousness and threat of victimization increase, victims, as well as nonvictims, should be motivated to make more person attributions as insurance that nothing similar will ever happen again, or at least, as confirmation that the world is a fair and predictable place to live. (Perceived seriousness and threat of victimization have not been conceptually distinguished in the literature and are assumed to be highly correlated. That is, more serious victimizations are assumed to be more threatening or more likely to arouse various motives.) The justice model would predict that self-blame among victims and victim blame among nonvictims will increase as the seriousness and threat of victimization increase. Similarly, the control model would predict the same relationship if people are unable to find a more appropriate person(s) to blame. As Wortman (1976) notes, the implication of the control model is that people will be motivated to blame anyone having enough power or authority to prevent the reoccurrence of such negative events.

Stronger predictions are possible from the control model. As the seriousness and threat of victimization increase, victims should have a greater desire to see their past victimization as avoidable. Furthermore, both victims and nonvictims should be less likely to attribute victimization to "chance."

In contrast to the attribution-control model, defensive attribution theory can be interpreted to suggest that both the victim's and

nonvictim's desire to deny personal responsibility for victimization will increase along with severity or threat of victimization. The assumption here is that a serious negative outcome has the potential to be more ego-involving and perhaps more embarrassing than a less serious outcome. Therefore, as the perceived seriousness and threat of victimization increase, victims should attribute less blame to themselves, more to chance and/or more to the offender. Nonvictims should respond in a similar manner. These predictions are based on laboratory research which has demonstrated similar effects by asking nonvictims to identify with the victim's role (Aderman, et al., 1974; Chaiken & Darley, 1973; Shaver, 1970). Consistent with their theoretical underpinnings, these predictions suggest that protecting oneself from future blame is more important than avoiding or gaining control over future victimization.

Previous research suggests that crimes vary in terms of perceived seriousness (University of Pennsylvania Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, Note 30) and in terms of their ability to arouse fear (Baumer, 1979). Therefore, the greater threat posed by crimes which are more serious and fear-arousing should lead both victims and nonvictims to assign more responsibility to people involved in such crimes. Using six types of crime, the prediction is made that victim blame will increase as the seriousness of the crime increases.

In addition to perceived seriousness, perceived threat of victimization will be used to test these notions. The respondent's sex will be

used as an indicator of the perceived threat of victimization.<sup>4</sup> Based on previous research (Dubow, et al., Note 5), females in general are assumed to be more threatened by, or fearful of criminal victimization. Therefore, the attribution-control model would predict that females will generally engage in more victim attributions and less chance attributions than males. Defensive attribution theory predicts the opposite outcome, as females are expected to identify more with victims' misfortunes and feel more empathy as a result.

A further test of the threat hypothesis is possible from the community nonvictim data. Under the attribution-control model, female non-victims are expected to attribute greater blame to rape victims (relative to other victim types) than male nonvictims. Supporting the opposite prediction, defensive attribution theory can be used again to argue that females will identify more with the rape victim's plight than will males, and this identification will inhibit victim blame.

Returning to the attribution-control model, more qualified and subtle "seriousness-control" predictions can be generated from Wortman and Brehm's (1975) integration of reactance theory and the learned

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<sup>4</sup>The perceived control index provides a more direct measure of threat than sex, but could not be used to discriminate between these theories, given the present "one-shot" correlational data. The attribution-control model proposes a dynamic process, in which increased threat leads to victim blame, which in turn leads to decreased threat. Presumably, measurement has occurred after the level of threat has stabilized. If this assumption is correct, then the two models predict the same positive correlation between threat/control and blame. (The only real difference is that threat/control is treated as an antecedent of blame under the defensive attribution model, and as a consequence of blame under the attribution/control model--at least in the present context.) On the other hand, I am arguing that the level of threat represented by the respondent's sex would not be as vulnerable to cognitive maneuvers over time as would be perceived control.

helplessness model. Assuming that criminal victimization reduces victims' sense of control/freedom, they will react against this loss and seek to restore control, perhaps through self-blame and precautionary behaviors, as predicted earlier. However, as the learned helplessness literature suggests, if victims are unable to restore control, they will stop trying (i.e., become helpless in the face of uncontrollable events). As the seriousness of the victimization increases, the victim should try harder to restore control (as suggested earlier) and be more disappointed with failure to reestablish control.

Given the variables of interest in the present research, several predictions follow from the reactance-learned helplessness model. First, as the seriousness of the victimization increases, greater variability is expected among victims in their feelings of control/helplessness. The assumption here is that variability is due to varying levels of success in restoring control among those who had suffered serious victimizations.

Secondly, if control is an important construct, one would expect that victims who perceive their victimization as serious (or were victims of crimes defined as serious) but yet do not report a sense of control, will report the greatest psychological impact in terms of being more angry, upset, and less fully recovered. Furthermore, these victims should be rated by observers as coping the poorest with victimization. In contrast, victims of the least serious crimes who feel a strong sense of control should be the best copers, according to self-ratings and observer ratings. Hence, feelings of control are expected

to interact with victimization seriousness to affect coping responses. Viewing this prediction from a correlational perspective, perceptions of control should be more strongly correlated with coping responses under conditions of high seriousness than under conditions of low seriousness.

A third, related prediction postulates an interaction between seriousness and attributions. If self-blame and nonchance attributions serve to restore a sense of control over victimization, then these variables should also be better predictors of coping responses when victimization is more serious. Thus, the worst coping should be reported under conditions of high seriousness, low self-blame, and/or high chance attributions. The best coping should be reported under just the opposite conditions. In sum, the greater variability in coping responses expected under conditions of serious victimization should be, to some extent, explained by perceptions of control and causal attributions.

### The Passage of Time

Two predictions are offered concerning the effects of time on attributions and perceptions of control. According to Wortman and Brehm's (1975) model, victims may experience less control than nonvictims shortly after the incident, but the average level of perceived control among victims should increase as certain individuals take constructive action to restore a sense of predictability and control to their environments. In addition, if data from paralyzed accident

victims are applicable to crime victims, less self-blame can be expected with the passage of time (Bulman & Wortman, 1977). However, it should be noted that these two predictions, in combination, are inconsistent with the attribution-control model, which implies that self-blame and perceived control are positively related, regardless of time.

### Attitudes Toward Victim Services

For nonvictims, an attempt has been made to assess the relationship between causal attributions and attitudes toward the delivery of crime victim services. Assuming the operation of a justice motive, nonvictims should have a need to believe that victimization is somehow deserved--that the victim "had it coming." Hence, there should be little motivation to approve of victim compensation for any harm suffered. Similarly, based on the control model, one might expect that victim blame and the absence of support for victim services would result from a desire to believe that such negative outcomes do not occur by chance. (Attributing victimization to chance makes oneself vulnerable.) In light of these considerations, the prediction is made that increased victim blame and decreased chance attributions will be associated with more negative attitudes toward crime victim services.

### Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of victim and nonvictim respondents will be used to assess the importance and interconnections of attributions and other psychological variables in the coping process.

(These demographic variables include age, sex, race, education, income, previous exposure to crime media, victimization history, and previous exposure to crime victims.) For example, the relative importance of psychological and demographic variables for predicting coping will be explored without prediction. Only one multiple regression study has appeared in the literature (Garofalo, 1979) and the results indicate that sex, age, and comparative neighborhood danger were stronger predictors of perceived safety than victimization history and perceived protection by the police.

Demographic variables will also play an important role in testing the previously hypothesized relationships for spuriousness. In addition, demographic factors will be assessed to determine their relative importance for predicting coping responses. These variables are considered important for preliminary model development within a larger multivariate context.



## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### SUBJECTS

Four samples were generated in four distinct studies--two containing subjects who were victims of serious crimes, and two containing nonvictims. All subjects lived in the same suburb. (The two victim studies will be referred to as victim study I and victim study II.) In victim study I, the sample was comprised of 181 victims of the following crimes: Personal larceny ( $\underline{n} = 37$ ), verbal assault ( $\underline{n} = 28$ ), residential burglary ( $\underline{n} = 42$ ), physical assault ( $\underline{n} = 33$ ), personal robbery ( $\underline{n} = 36$ ), and rape ( $\underline{n} = 5$ ). In victim study II, data were collected from 59 victims of residential burglary. The nonvictim samples were comprised of local community residents ( $\underline{n} = 125$ ) and local police officers ( $\underline{n} = 77$ ). The procedures used to generate these samples, as well as those used to collect the data, are described in the following Procedures section.

Victims and nonvictims were comparable on the standard demographic variables. The age distributions did not differ significantly across victim study I ( $\bar{X} = 38.38$ ,  $SD = 18.62$ ), victim study II ( $\bar{X} = 40.82$ ,  $SD = 17.55$ ), and the community study ( $\bar{X} = 37.66$ ,  $SD = 18.68$ ). Basic demographic information was not obtained from police officers due to situational constraints at the police department.

Both sexes were well represented in all three samples and no

significant differences were found in the ratio of males to females across the samples: 48:52 in victim study I; 52:48 in victim study II, and 46:54 in the community study.

In terms of race, there was no difference in the percentage of Caucasians sampled in victim study I (79.9%,  $n = 143$ ) and the community study (85.5%,  $n = 106$ ). However, the percentage of Caucasians in victim study II (58.6%,  $n = 34$ ) was significantly less than the percentage found in victim study I,  $\chi^2(2) = 10.47$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the community study,  $\chi^2 = 20.45$ ,  $p .001$ .

While subjects in the nonvictim community sample seemed slightly more educated ( $\bar{X} = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ) than subjects in either victim study I ( $\bar{X} = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ) or victim study II ( $\bar{X} = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ), the differences were nonsignificant. In more descriptive terms, each sample contained a sizable percentage of individuals who reported having at least "some college" education: 65.1% ( $n = 117$ ) in victim study I; 69.0% ( $n = 40$ ) in victim study II; and 76.6% ( $n = 95$ ) in the community study.

There were no differences between the samples in terms of household income, with most people reporting incomes that fell in the 15,000 to 25,000 dollar range. Using a five-point income scale, the following results were obtained: Victim study I,  $\bar{X} = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ; victim study II  $\bar{X} = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ; and community study  $\bar{X} = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ .

Although similar demographic information was not obtained from the sample of police officers, other descriptive data were collected that

pertain to their occupation. Sixty percent ( $\underline{n} = 45$ ) of the police officers who participated in the study were from the patrol division, 16% ( $\underline{n} = 12$ ) from the detective division, 13% ( $\underline{n} = 10$ ) from the youth division, and 11% ( $\underline{n} = 8$ ) from the traffic division. This breakdown was fairly proportional to the total population. All levels of police experience were represented in the sample. Years with the force were distributed as follows: 0-2 years, 19%; 3-7 years, 26%; 8-12 years, 35%; and 13 or more years, 20%.

Finally, it should be noted that 20.0% ( $\underline{n} = 25$ ) of the respondents in the "nonvictim" community sample reported being victimized at least once by a "serious crime" during the past two years. The data obtained from these individuals have been excluded from the results reported here, in an effort to maintain a truly nonvictim sample.

## PROCEDURE

The procedures used in this research are best understood by noting the context in which they were implemented. The author conducted this research within a suburban police department, in partial fulfillment of his job requirements as a consultant/research analyst for the department's Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit (V/WAU), a program developed to provide assistance to victims and witnesses of crimes. The sampling and data collection procedures for each study are described below.

### Victim Study I

Police records were used to generate a random sample of crime victims for victim study I. The general population of interest was defined as all victims of the serious noncommercial crimes noted above whose victimizations were reported to the police during the 21-month period<sup>5</sup> immediately prior to the study. (The selected crimes have been categorized by the FBI as "index crimes" because of their frequency of occurrence and/or seriousness.) A random sample of offense reports was pulled, stratified by the type of victimization listed above. This stratification procedure was designed to increase the generalizability of the overall results and provide a sample of crime victims that seemed to contain variability in terms of victimization seriousness. The

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<sup>5</sup>This 21-month time-frame was the result of a decision to start sampling in January of the previous year.

following information was collected from the police offense reports: The victim's name, address, and telephone number; date of victimization; and type of victimization.

A number of victims were eliminated for not meeting certain selection criteria. Specifically, victims were excluded from the sample if: (1) They were judged to be under 16 years of age at the time of the interview; (2) they did not live in the city at the time of the incident; (3) they were victimized by a relative; or (4) some other reason was apparent (e.g., classified as mentally ill by the police on several occasions). The age restriction was considered necessary to ensure that respondents would fully understand and pay attention to the questions asked of them. The residency requirement was included to improve the equivalence of the victim and nonvictim samples, since the latter contained only city residents. Finally, domestic cases were excluded because of the many methodological and personal problems inherent in the situation (e.g., the interview may restimulate lingering problems; moreover, research by Turner, 1972, has demonstrated that victims of domestic crimes have poorer recall of victimization and its circumstances). Although sampling continued until the desired sample size was achieved,<sup>6</sup> Table 1 shows that the excluded subgroups comprised a substantial percentage (28%) of the initial pool (N = 375) of target victims.

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<sup>6</sup>The initial plan was to obtain a sample of approximately 200 victims. The sample loss, at the stage of locating and successfully interviewing victims who met the initial criteria, was estimated not to exceed 25 percent. Therefore, a sample of 270 victims was generated. The actual loss rate of 33 percent resulted in a final sample size of 181.

Table 1

## Reasons Victims Eliminated From Initial Sample

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Under 16 years of age	36	9.6
Domestic case	28	7.5
Noncity resident	22	5.8
Other reasons	19	5.1
TOTAL	105	28.0

At the next stage, telephone numbers and addresses were checked in the telephone and criss-cross directories to update this information and minimize subject mortality due to recent changes. Previously missing numbers and addresses were located whenever possible.

Preparations were then made for telephone interviews (and in some cases, in-person interviews) with the selected victims. The procedure for contacting victims in study I placed great emphasis on protecting the confidentiality of information and the victim's right to refuse participation. A letter (see Appendix A) was mailed to victims explaining the purpose of the new V/WAU program (i.e., "to help crime victims and witnesses") and the rationale for seeking a telephone interview with them (i.e., "We feel that you can increase our awareness of the difficulties facing victims and witnesses"). The letter forewarned victims that they could expect a call from a V/WAU representative, and it covered issues of confidentiality of information, anonymity, and freedom to decline the interview. A special letter (Appendix B) was sent to the few rape victims in the sample, giving them the option of an in-person interview.

Interviewers were trained in the methods of telephone interviewing, with emphasis on call-backs, completeness of information, and especially on how to balance empathy against objectivity and standardization of questioning. Special training was provided concerning how to handle sensitive topics in a professional manner.

One week after the letters were mailed, interviewers began contacting victims from the sample list. In all cases, interviewers were

instructed never to disclose the actual reason for calling (i.e., to discuss victimization) until they were confident that the person with whom they were speaking was, indeed, the victim. Interviewers then introduced themselves as working for the V/WAU program at the police department. Victims were asked about their willingness to be interviewed, and on the whole, they were very cooperative. Only 3.1% refused to be interviewed. However, as Table 2 indicates, a noticeable percentage of victims (i.e., 29.9%) were never interviewed because they could not be reached, for the reasons listed.

Archival data collection and analysis were performed as another aspect of victim study I. Archival methods were used to develop an "observer" measure of victim blameworthiness that could be compared with the victim's own attributions, and used as another predictor of coping. (As noted earlier, the rationale for this strategy stems from the author's cautiousness about accepting self-reports at face value.) Police Offense Reports on cases involving physical and verbal assault were selected for analysis because they were judged to be the most likely to contain information pertinent to the question of victim precipitation. Thus, all 61 assault reports were reviewed by a trained graduate student and a judgment was made in each case concerning victim precipitation. (Operational definitions of precipitation are provided in the section on measurement.) A second judge was utilized in one-third of the cases to test for reliability.



Table 2

## Reasons Victims Could Not be Interviewed

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
No answer or not home	50	18.5
Disconnected number	24	8.9
Refused	8	3.0
Wrong number	7	2.6
TOTAL	89	33.0

Victim Study II

Because the police department was interested in the impact of home security checks on the behavior of residential burglary victims, this interest was combined with the present author's plan to investigate the effects of time on victims' attribution processes, and to collect observational data on victims' coping abilities and blameworthiness. To meet these objectives, a true experiment was designed, in which all residential burglaries that occurred during a preselected time period (approximately one month) were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions. Once a burglary complaint was filed with the police department, the victim was designated to receive or not receive a home security check. Furthermore, the victim was scheduled to receive a follow-up telephone interview no later than one week after the incident or between the second and third week after victimization. (Security checks always preceded telephone interviews.) Hence, a 2 x 2 (security check x time elapse) experimental design was implemented.<sup>7</sup>

Approximately 60 victims were needed to complete the experimental design and 63 consecutive burglaries reported to the police department were examined for possible inclusion in the study. Four victims were excluded from one study, three because they were continuously unavailable and one who refused a home security check because her home was

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<sup>7</sup>Results concerning the impact of security checks on the victim's behavior are beyond the scope of this dissertation, and therefore, will not be discussed here.

protected by a Great Dane. Thus, 59 individuals were included in the final sample. The loss of four subjects did not seem to upset the pretreatment equivalence of the conditions. Some confirmation of random assignment was evident in the fact that the experimental groups were not significantly different in terms of age, sex, race, education, income, and other pre-experimental factors that tend to discriminate between individuals.

Home security checks were conducted by the police department's crime prevention officer, who has many years of experience in this area. After the initial offense report was filed by the responding officer and the victim was randomly assigned to receive a security check, the crime prevention officer would call the victim and arrange to visit the victim's home/apartment. (In cases involving two or more victims, a coin flip was used to determine which victim would receive the security check and the follow-up interview.)

A traditional security check was performed, involving observations and tests of various doors, windows and other portals, followed by recommendations for improving physical security. However, the nontraditional aspect of the visit involved the officer's assessment of the victim's reactions and apparent coping ability. The officer was specifically instructed to observe and evaluate the victim's verbal and physical behavior while in the process of inspecting the victim's home and discussing security.

Before departing, the officer told the victim to expect a follow-up call from someone at the V/WAU program, who will "ask some questions

about the burglary incident, how you have responded to it, and any problems you may be having." When the officer returned to his car, he immediately completed a form developed specifically to record his impressions of the victim's coping responses on a number of rating scales and whether the victim was negligent in any way that may have contributed to victimization (see last page of Appendix D).

The officer received observational training to the extent that the meaning of each evaluative dimension was discussed prior to any security checks and the officer was requested to use these dimensions to structure his observation. For one-third of the home security visits, a second observer was employed to provide some measure of reliability, and this individual completed the rating form independently.

Upon completing a security check, the officer immediately contacted the interviewers working for the V/WAU and gave them the go-ahead for a telephone interview. (In many cases, the officer supplied the information about the best time(s) to contact the victim.) Follow-up interviews were then completed according to the random assignment schedule.

When victims were called, the interviewer would explain that "the reason I'm calling is to follow-up on the burglary that occurred at your place recently--to find out how you're doing and ask you a few questions about the incident and how well you were treated." All telephone interviews for both victim study I and victim study II concluded with the interviewer thanking the victims for their cooperation, reassuring them that the information will remain confidential and

anonymous, and encouraging them to call the V/WAU program if any assistance is needed in the future.

### Community Survey

By means of a random-digit dialing technique, 125 citizens were randomly selected from the population of city residents with listed or unlisted telephone numbers, and then interviewed over the telephone. To implement this sampling technique, randomly generated four-digit numbers were attached to the city's telephone prefixes. Each of the city's seven prefixes was represented in the sample in proportion to the number of residents listed under that prefix by Bell Telephone.

Calls were made during the day and evening on all seven days of the week (over a two-week period) to reduce the chances that certain types of people would be systematically excluded from the sample. Females were somewhat more likely than males to answer the telephone, but this difference was eliminated by interviewing only males on the last day of surveying. Businesses were excluded from the sample and the age restriction of at least 16 years old was, again, established.

Similar to the victim studies, trained interviewers introduced themselves as working for the V/WAU program. They proceeded to explain that they were conducting an important survey to "find out how people feel about crime in (the city), victims of crime, and the police." The first person over 16 years of age to answer the telephone was defined as the interviewee. The interview was conducted in a manner very similar to the victim surveys.

Because the vast majority of city residents at the time of this research had either a listed or unlisted telephone, the selection biases introduced by random-digit dialing, per se, were estimated to be fairly inconsequential (see Leuthold & Scheele, 1971; Klecka & Tuchfarber, 1976). Nonetheless, this technique does not ensure that the initial random sample will be successfully contacted, as the present results demonstrate. Table 3 shows the percentage of "unsuccessful" telephone numbers and the reasons for these problems. Overall, less than half (i.e., 40.3%) of the numbers dialed (n = 311) resulted in a completed interview.

#### Police Questionnaire

A short questionnaire was prepared for police officers to assess their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors with respect to the V/WAU program, as well as their causal attributions for victimization. The questionnaire was administered via the standard "chain of command," whereby captains sent the questionnaires to sergeants and the latter were responsible for data collection. A request was made that the questionnaires be returned as soon as possible. Attached to each questionnaire was a brief memo from the V/WAU program designed to elicit the officers' cooperation and to encourage their frankness in responding to the items. Seventy-seven officers (70%) completed the questionnaire within the time allotted.

Table 3

## Reasons Community Residents Could Not be Interviewed

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
No answer or not home	89	28.6
Refused	56	18.0
Business or institution	21	6.7
Appropriate interviewee not available	13	4.2
Other reasons	7	2.3
<hr/> TOTAL	<hr/> 186	<hr/> 59.8

## MEASURES

The four studies described above included measures of attributions, perceptions of control, precautionary behaviors, psychological impact/coping seriousness, demographic characteristics of subjects, and other variables relevant to this dissertation.<sup>8</sup> The measures pertinent to each of these areas are summarized below. The measurement instruments for victim study I, victim study II, the community study and the police study are provided in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively. Because many of the questions asked of subjects were later combined to form composite variables, the procedures used to generate these composite indices will be described before discussing the content of measures.

### Construction of Composite Variables

For all data sets, composite variables or indices were computed to measure certain constructs and to maximize the clarity of the analysis plan through data reduction. The procedure used to construct these composite variables is described below.

A list of items was prepared for inclusion in these composite

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<sup>8</sup>The measurement instruments used in these four studies were designed by the author to cover a wide range of variables and satisfy multiple purposes within an applied setting. Consequently, a number of the items included in these instruments are not within the scope of the present inquiry and will not be discussed here. Furthermore, the variables of interest were not always operationalized in the same manner across all samples because of setting constraints or measurement improvements. This is not considered a large problem because the majority of analyses are performed within, rather than between, samples.



indices. Items were selected on the basis of conceptual rather than statistical considerations. (The rationale for item selection was discussed in the Introduction, but will be further examined later in this section when specific items are discussed.) Thus, items comprising a particular factor were determined prior to any analyses. However, their relative importance in defining the index or factor was determined through analytic procedures.

Factor analysis was employed in the computation of composite indices whenever three or more items were involved. Factor analysis was used to generate the strongest and most meaningful linear combination of items comprising each index. As suggested above, analyses were performed on theoretically selected sets of variables rather than the entire set of items. Composite indices were empirically defined as factor scores that were arrived at through the process of weighting, standardizing, and summing items. Factor scores for each individual were computed from the factor-score coefficient (factor estimate) matrix. The factor-score coefficients, taken from the primary factor in the Varimax method of orthogonal rotation, were treated as the weights in each linear composite (see Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975, pp. 487-489).

There are a number of alternative procedures for generating factor-scores. Susmilch and Johnson (1975), for example, provide an empirical comparison of six different procedures along four basic criteria. In general, the approach used here is more likely to generate factor scores that satisfy validity criteria, but may be less

reliable than scores produced by more commonly used methods.

The assumption underlying the use of factor analysis in the present data was that a unidimensional scale was produced prior to analysis. In a few cases, more than one factor emerged from the data and a decision was made either to use single item(s) if they appeared to better represent the construct or to use the primary factor for calculating factor scores and measuring constructs. This situation did arise for the control index, as described later.

Unlike the conventional approach to scale construction, the equations which define the composite indices contain a term for each item included in the factor analysis, regardless of the size of item loadings or factor-score coefficients. This complete estimation approach, as suggested by Nie, et al. (1975) may provide a more valid estimate of the factor in question. Although a particular item may contribute very little to a given factor, nonetheless, if the item is considered theoretically important, its weight should be counted to obtain the most accurate definition of the construct.

For each composite index, a standardized Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed as a measure of internal consistency. The items comprising each composite index and their factor score coefficients are listed in Tables 4 through 14.

## Attributions

Items measuring attributions of responsibility/blame for victimization were included in all studies, with the most attention given to the victim's level of responsibility. In victim studies I and II, victims were first asked if they had "blamed" themselves for what happened (yes or no). They were later asked to what extent they hold themselves "responsible" for what happened on a scale ranging from 0 to 100 percent. These two items were standardized and summed in each victim study to form a composite Index of Self-blame. The items were moderately correlated in victim study I,  $r(177) = .47, p < .0001$ , and victim study II,  $r(56) = .46, p < .001$ .

To obtain supplementary information on attributions, victims in both study I and II were queried about their perceptions of observer attributions. Victims were asked: "Do you feel that some people have blamed you for what happened?"

Going beyond the victim's perceptions of blame, police offense reports on all assault cases ( $n = 61$ ) in victim study I were content analyzed for evidence of victim precipitation. Offense reports were pulled for cases involving physical or verbal assault, where the victim had been interviewed by telephone. A trained rater was asked to read the responding officer's description of the events surrounding the crime and determine whether victim precipitation was a "likely" or "unlikely" possibility, given the victim's behavior as described in the report. "Victim precipitation" was defined as any victim behaviors,

either verbal or physical, occurring during the victimization episode or on some previous occasion, and presumable controllable by the victim, that may have contributed to his/her victimization. Thus, an attempt was made to define precipitation in terms of the behavioral interaction between the victim and the offender. Uncontrollable factors, such as physical appearance or age, or controllable factors that are remote explanations for victimization, such as going out late at night, were not considered evidence of victim precipitation. Assault cases were selected for analysis because the offense reports for these personal crimes were believed to contain evidence regarding precipitation. Indeed, there was enough information for the rater to make a judgment in every case. Furthermore, an independent rater was used for one-third of the cases and the inter-rater agreement on victim precipitation was very high,  $r(18) = .90, p < .0001$ .

Observer ratings of victim blameworthiness were also obtained for half of the cases in victim study II. These cases were selected automatically as part of the randomized experiment. Cases that were randomly assigned to receive a security check also included the observational component. Immediately after completing a home security check and talking to the victim in person, the crime prevention officer made a judgment as to whether the victim was "negligent in any way that may have contributed to his/her victimization." A three-point scale was used for this judgment (yes, maybe, no) and inter-rater agreement between the officer and a staff member of the victim services program was quite high,  $r(17) = .87, p < .001$ .

In the nonvictim studies, police and community respondents were asked how much responsibility they would attribute to crime victims (in general), using the 0-to-100 percent scale. In addition, subjects in the community study used this scale to rate victim responsibility for each of the six victim types represented in victim study I. Order of presentation was varied, and respondents were randomly assigned to receive one of two orders.

Again using the 0-to-100 percent scale, subjects in all samples were asked to what extent they view criminal victimization as a "chance or random event that could happen to anyone." In the victim studies and the community study, subjects were also asked to assign responsibility to the offender using the same 0-to-100 percent scale.

### Control

Personal control over criminal victimization was measured in both victim studies and the community study. In each case, items were combined to form a composite index of personal control. As suggested earlier, these items were selected because they appear to represent different, but related, aspects of personal control. Personal control was conceived and operationalized as a somewhat global construct, covering both emotional and cognitive aspects of personal vulnerability to criminal victimization.

Hence, the argument is put forth that feelings of vulnerability and helplessness against future victimization can be inferred when an individual reports being worried about victimization, perceives a high

risk of victimization, and feels little control over victimization. Given this conceptual orientation, global composite indices of control were developed which incorporate these aspects of the construct.

In victim study I, four items were combined to form a composite index of personal control. In particular, victims were questioned concerning: (1) How worried they are about future victimization (4-point scale: "very worried" to "not at all worried"); (2) how they compare their own chances or risk of being victimized with the chances of other people in their neighborhood (5-point scale: "a lot more likely to happen to you" to "a lot less likely to happen to you"); (3) their estimated "actual chances" (or odds) of being revictimized (5-point scale: "one in 50" to "one in 10,000"); and (4) how much control they feel they have over their chances of being victimized by crime in the future (4-point scale: "almost no control over what might happen to you" to "almost complete control over what might happen to you").

As Table 4 indicates, the factor score coefficients suggest that this index of personal control was defined primarily by victims' estimated actual chances or risk of being victimized by personal crime. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this index was only .293. Such low internal consistency arouses suspicion about the reliability and validity of the index. Given this concern, special attention was directed at the most face-valid item (namely, the item that directly asks about "control") to determine how strongly it contributed to the index and whether or not it loaded on another factor. Unfortunately, the single "control" item received the smallest factor-score coefficient (.111) of

Table 4

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of Personal  
Control Over Victimization: Victim Study I

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
What do you think your actual chances of victimization are for these crimes? (Crimes defined in third item below.)	.417
How would you compare your chances of being victimized by these crimes (see next item) with the chances of other people in your neighborhood?	.264
At night in your neighborhood, how worried are you about being held up on the street, threatened, beaten up, or anything of this sort?	.216
How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future?	.111

the four items. Although it carries little weight the item did not load on a second factor, as only one factor emerged from the analysis. Nonetheless, the concern about reliability and validity is sufficient that a post hoc analysis may be necessary, using an alternative measure of personal control. The single most face-valid item will be used as a substitute for the composite control variable if the latter does not correlate moderately with other variables in the initial analysis.

In victim study II, the index of personal control was computed using five items. Two of the five items were identical to those used in victim study I (i.e., "worried" and "control"). The three additional items focused specifically on burglary, one tapping worry (same 5-point response format as "worried"), another tapping perceived risk of victimization, relative to other people in their neighborhood (same 5-point response format as victim study I), and a third item asking victims how secure they feel their home is against future break-ins (4-point scale: "extremely secure" to "not very secure"). As Table 5 indicates, this personal control index was strongly defined by the victim's worry about being burglarized again. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this index was .501. Again, the most face-valid item ("control") received the smallest weight in the linear composite. Furthermore, a two-factor solution emerged, and the control item loaded on the second factor. However, while the "control" item seems to have more face validity, the second factor really has no more meaning or interpretability than the first factor. Thus, the first factor will be used in the analysis plan because it is the primary factor. If post hoc



Table 5

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of Personal  
Control Over Victimization: Victim Study II

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
How worried are you about being burglarized again?	.934
At night in your neighborhood, how worried are you about be- ing held up on the street, threatened, beaten up, or any- thing of this sort?	.165
How secure do you feel your home is against future break-ins?	.117
How would you compare <u>your</u> <u>chances</u> of being burglarized with the chances of <u>other</u> <u>people</u> in your neighborhood?	.077
How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future?	.066

analyses are deemed necessary, a single-item strategy will be pursued.

In the community study, a Personal Control Index was computed, comprising the same four items used in victim study I. Table 6 indicates that community respondents' perceived control over future victimization and their perceived chances of victimization relative to other people in their neighborhood were the central items in this index. The alpha coefficient was .390. A two-factor solution was generated, and the "control" item loaded on the first factor.

A second type of composite control index was created in victim study II. This second index is one step removed from feelings of personal control, focusing on the individual's belief in citizen control over crime or citizen activities to prevent crime. A Belief-in-Citizen-Control Index was computed using 10 items that focus primarily on the efficacy of citizen participation in crime prevention activities. Seven of these 10 items were taken from a scale developed and pretested by Klein and Lavrakas (Note 31). Victims were asked to indicate their level of agreement (4-point scale: "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") with statements about the effectiveness of various citizen crime prevention efforts (e.g., CB radio patrols, improved physical security, block club meetings), and statements about citizens' abilities to fight crime. As shown in Table 7, this Belief-in-Citizen-Control Index was best represented by their endorsement of organized CB patrols. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the index was .760. There is no reason to believe that any particular item or set of items has considerably more face-validity than other items. Again,

Table 6

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of Personal  
Control Over Victimization: Community Study

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future?	.371
How would you compare your chances of being victimized by these crimes (see fourth item below) with the chances of other people in your neighborhood?	.357
What do you think your actual chances of victimization are for these crimes? (See next item.)	.188
At night in your neighborhood, how worried are you about being held up on the street, threatened, beaten up, or anything of this sort?	.062

Table 7

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of Belief  
in Citizen Control Over Crime: Victim Study II

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
If citizens would participate in organized CB patrols of their neighborhoods, police would be able to stop more in-progress crimes.	.790
If citizens would participate in organized neighborhood walking patrols, it would lessen the crime rate in their neighborhood.	.167
With a little effort, almost anyone can reduce his or her chances of becoming a crime victim.	.092
No matter how much money the government spends, crime will continue as a problem as long as citizens are not actively involved in crime prevention.	.080
If neighbors knew each other on a first-name basis, it would help reduce crime in their neighborhood.	.080
There are many things the average citizen can do to help fight crime.	.038
If citizens would cooperate more with the police, crime would be reduced.	.033
If citizens would increase the physical security of their homes or apartments, with locks and other precautions, it would deter unlawful entry into their homes.	.025
If citizens would join neighborhood block clubs in order to increase community cohesion, it would have a positive effect on lowering the crime rate in their neighborhood.	.011
If citizens would engrave their valuables with some identification number, it would deter burglars from stealing their property.	.004

the primary factor was used in the analyses.

In both victim studies I and II, an attempt was made to assess victims' desire for control over their recent victimization (as opposed to their feelings or beliefs about control over future victimization). Victims were asked if, looking back, they now feel they "could have done anything differently before the incident to avoid what happened." This single item was analyzed as a separate concept of Perceived Avoidability.

The composite control indices, as well as the other composites to be described, were generated on conceptual grounds. However, as the above descriptions indicate, the contributing items have been weighted empirically, using factor score coefficients.

### Precautions

The tendency to take precautionary behaviors was measured for victims and nonvictims. In both victim studies I and II, respondents were asked whether their victimization experience has caused them to take precautions to avoid being victimized again in the future. In the community study, nonvictims were asked if they had taken any precautions in the past two years to avoid becoming a crime victim.

### Psychological Impact and Coping Responses

Several items in the victim studies, in addition to measures of perceived control, were designed to assess the negative psychological impact of victimization on their ability to cope with the misfortune.

In victim study I, victims were asked (1) whether the thought of having been victimized ever makes them mad or angry; (2) how upset they were by the incident (4-point scale: "very upset" to "not at all upset"); and (3) whether they feel they have completely recovered, emotionally and psychologically, from the incident. Table 8 shows that perceived recovery was the primary contributor to this factor. The alpha coefficient for this index of psychological impact was only .393.

In victim study II, these three items were employed, as well as two additional items. Victims were asked how much of an impact the crime has had on their lives in general (4-point scale: "major impact" to "no impact"), and to what extent they would agree with the statement that "people who have never been victimized by crime have no idea how difficult it really is." These five variables were combined to form a composite index of the psychological impact of victimization. As shown in Table 9, the victim's self-reported anger was the major contributor to this index. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this composite variable was .584.

In addition to the self-reported impact of victimization, victim study II included observer ratings of the victim's coping responses shortly after the crime. After completing a home security check and visiting with the victim for approximately one-half hour, the crime prevention officer rated the victim on nine dimensions (i.e., nervous, sad, concerned, talkative, angry, surprised, strong, fearful, and emotional), using a 4-point response format ("very..." to "not at

Table 8

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of  
Self-reported Psychological Impact/Coping:  
Victim Study I

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Items	Factor Score Coefficients
Emotionally and psychologically, would you say that you've completely recovered from the experience of being victimized?	.438
Does the thought that you were victimized ever make you mad or angry?	.271
How much were you upset by this incident when it occurred?	.242

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Table 9

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of  
 Self-reported Psychological Impact/Coping:  
 Victim Study II

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
Does the thought that you were victimized ever make you mad or angry?	.840
How much were you upset by this incident when it occurred?	.089
How much of an impact would you say this burglary incident has had on your life in general?	.076
Emotionally and psychologically, would you say that you've completely recovered from the experience of being victimized?	.048
People who have never been victimized by crime have no idea how difficult it really is.	.021



all..."). Victims were also rated on their attitude toward the security recommendations (3-point scale: "Positive," "indifferent," "negative). These 10 items were combined to form a composite index of observer ratings. The emotional dimension was the major contributor to this index, as shown in Table 10. Cronbach's alpha for this index was .666.

In addition, the crime prevention officer was asked to make an "overall" assessment of how well the victim is "coping" with the incident (5-point scale: "extremely well" to "very poorly"). For analytical purposes, this item was combined with scores on the above-mentioned index of observer ratings to produce an overall, two-variable index of coping (9 judgments and coping). These two variables were strongly related,  $r(25) = .61$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### Seriousness and Threat of Victimization

The perceived seriousness of victimization was operationalized in several ways. In victim studies I and II, victims were asked "how would you rate the seriousness of this crime" (4-point scale: "very serious" to "not at all serious"). Furthermore, because the sample of victims in study I included six different types of crime victims, each victim type was assigned a seriousness rating based on previous norms of crime seriousness (University of Pennsylvania Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, Note 30), and the author's knowledge of the specific crimes involved in this particular city. Hence, the following ratings were assigned: Rape = 6; robbery = 5; physical

Table 10

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of Observer's  
Ratings of Impact/Coping: Victim Study II

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Items	Factor Score Coefficients
Emotional	.606
Nervous	.328
Fearful	.124
Concerned	.104
Weak	.087
Sad	.069
Talkative	.058
Negative attitude	.047
Angry	.014
Surprised	.009

assault = 4; burglary = 3; verbal assault = 2; theft = 1.

Victim study II contained other measures of seriousness. In addition to the perceived "seriousness" item noted above, these burglary victims were asked to provide their best estimate of the dollar value of the loss or damage, and indicate whether the property had any sentimental value beyond its monetary cost. A seriousness index was computed from these three items, defined primarily in terms of the estimated dollar value of the loss or damage (see Table 11). The Cronbach's alpha for this index was .304.

In the community study, because respondents were asked to assign responsibility to each of the victim types noted above, ratings of victimization seriousness were derived in the same manner as in victim study I (with ratings from 1 to 6). In addition, the community study included a separate, indirect measure of victimization seriousness. Respondents were asked to what extent they endorsed the following statement: "The majority of crime victims are only mildly affected by their victimization experience" (4-point scale: "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree").

Police officers were asked to assess the seriousness of six different problems<sup>9</sup> that face victims of crime (4-point scale: "very serious" to "not at all serious"). As shown in Table 12, three of the six items were weighted approximately equal. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .880.

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<sup>9</sup>Eight problems were listed on the police questionnaire for respondents to evaluate. Two of these eight were primarily police problems and hence, were excluded from this seriousness index.

Table 11

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of  
Victimization Seriousness: Victim Study II

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Items	Factor Score Coefficients
What is your best estimate of the dollar value of this loss or damage?	.739
Did this property have any sentimental value beyond its monetary cost?	.148
How would you rate the seriousness of this crime?	.061

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Table 12

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of  
Victimization Seriousness: Police Study

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
Victim/witness emotionally upset at scene and unable to answer questions for responding officer.	.307
No friends or relatives present to help restore emotional stability.	.304
Victim/witness unable to seek out community resources needed (e.g., shelter, clothing, counseling).	.294
Victim/witness has no transportation to court.	.137
Cooperative victim/witness not adequately informed about court dates, court location, questioning by defense, or case disposition.	.129
At scene, victim/witness wants to know what happens next.	.084

Finally the sex of the respondent was used as an indicator of perceived threat of victimization, under the assumption that females are more threatened by victimization than males. Threat was also defined as the interaction of sex and type of victimization, under the assumption that females are most threatened by the crime of rape.

### Attitudes Toward Victim Services

An attempt was made to assess nonvictims' attitudes toward the delivery of crime victim services. In the community study, respondents were asked to what extent they endorsed the following statement:

"Victim service programs should be created to help crime victims" (4-point scale: "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree").

In the police study, attitudes toward victims' services were studied more thoroughly. First, police officers were asked a number of questions about their attitudes toward the new V/WAU program within the police department. Five items were combined to produce a general index of attitudes toward the program. These items and their factor scores are listed in Table 13. This index was strongly defined by their belief about whether a victim/witness program was necessary in the police department. The Cronbach's alpha was .905, although item number 4 was automatically excluded from the test for having insufficient variance.

A second composite index was computed using questions that were designed to measure police officers' attitudes toward the provision of specific victim services to meet specific victim needs/problems. These

Table 13

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of  
Attitudes Toward V/WAU Program: Police Study

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Items	Factor Score Coefficients
I don't believe a victim/witness advocacy unit is necessary in the Police Department.	.734
I see it as too much trouble to contact the Unit.	.150
I prefer to handle cases myself.	.124
I believe victims or witnesses need further attention after contact with police officers.	.056
I feel that the Unit's focus on serious crime victims is too narrow or restrictive.	.055

items are listed in Table 14. This composite variable was defined primarily by their attitude about providing victims/witnesses with transportation to court. An alpha coefficient was not computed because of insufficient variance in four of the items.

### Demographic Characteristics

In victim study I, victim study II, and the community study, data were collected on the respondents' age, sex, race, level of education, income, and victimization history. Regarding the last variable, victims were asked how many times they had been victimized by serious crimes, and nonvictims were asked if they have been a victim of crime during the past two years. Police officers were asked only to indicate how many years they have been an officer and the section to which they were presently assigned.

### The Passage of Time

The time elapsed since victimization is another variable of interest in the victim studies. In victim study I, because subjects were randomly selected from a 21-month period in which crimes were reported to the police, a range of victimization dates was obtained. A measure was computed of the time lapse between the victimization incident and the interview. In victim study II, the effects of time on psychological reactions to victimization was considered to be of sufficient importance that time was manipulated as an independent variable. Victims were randomly assigned to one of two follow-up times (immediately vs. two weeks after victimization).



Table 14

Items and Factor Score Coefficients for Index of  
Attitudes Toward V/WAU Services: Police Study

Items	Factor Score Coefficients
Victim/witness has no transportation to court.	.603
Cooperative victim/witness not adequately informed about court dates, court location, questioning by defense, or case disposition.	.141
Victim/witness unable to seek out community resources needed (e.g., shelter, clothing, counseling).	.125
No friends or relatives present to help restore emotional stability.	.124
Victim/witness emotionally upset at scene and unable to answer questions for responding officer.	.122
At scene, victim wants to know what happens next.	.114

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

#### MAJOR FINDINGS

For clarity of presentation, the major hypotheses have been succinctly restated in this section, followed by the pertinent results. Each "hypothesis" is usually a group of related predictions derived from the attribution-control model. Alternative predictions from other models (e.g., defensive attribution theory) will be explicitly identified as such.

#### The Magnitude of Victim Blame and Other Attributions

Hypothesis 1. The absolute magnitude of victim blame among victims and nonvictims cannot be predicted, but certain victim-nonvictim attributional differences are expected: (a) Victims should assign more blame to themselves than will be assigned to them by nonvictims (defensive attribution theory makes the opposite prediction); (b) victims should be less likely than nonvictims to see victimization as a chance or random event (again, defensive attribution theory makes the opposite prediction); (c) victims should attribute greater blame to offenders than will nonvictims, according to defensive attribution theory; (d) police officers should blame victims more than should local community nonvictims.

The results concerning the absolute magnitude of victim blame indicate that more than one-third of the victims (36.5% in study I and 37.3% in study II) reported having "blamed" themselves for their victimization. On a 100 percent scale, the absolute amount of responsibility attributed to themselves averaged 19.7% (SD = 26.8) and 27.7% (SD = 35.3) in studies I and II, respectively.

This level of self-blame seemed less substantial when compared to nonvictims' perceptions of victim blameworthiness. Victim-nonvictim comparisons were possible for attributions of responsibility to the victim, as well as for attributions to chance and the offender. For between-sample comparisons, these data were treated as categorical because the frequency distributions were heavily skewed and appeared to lack unimodality.<sup>10</sup> Three categories of victim responsibility were defined as shown in Table 15. Contrary to prediction a, and consistent with defensive attribution theory, crime victims (from studies I and II combined) tended to assign less responsibility to themselves than was assigned to them by nonvictims (community and police respondents combined),  $\chi^2(2) = 40.51, p < .001$ . This difference is most apparent in the "zero percent" responsible category, where 46.6% and 42.4% of the victims in studies I and II, respectively claimed that they were completely innocent (i.e., zero percent responsible). In contrast, only 20.4% of the community respondents and only 12.3% of the

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<sup>10</sup>For example, on the victim self-responsibility scale, "0" and "50" percent were selected much more frequently than other responses, while "50" and "100" percent were the strongly favored responses on the chance and offender responsibility scales.

Table 15

## Percentage of Responsibility Attributed to Victims

Samples	Percentage Attributed to Victims		
	0%	1-49%	50-100%
Victim Study I	46.4 (83)	29.6 (53)	24.0 (43)
Victim Study II	42.4 (25)	28.9 (17)	28.9 (17)
Community Study	20.4 (20)	51.0 (50)	28.6 (28)
Police Study	12.3 (9)	60.2 (44)	27.4 (20)

Note. The number of subjects is listed in parentheses to the right of the percentage of subjects.

police officers attributed zero responsibility to serious crime victims. Each of the four victim-nonvictim comparisons was statistically significant at the .01 level. Neither the between-victim nor between-nonvictim comparisons was significant. Prediction d was not supported, as the police did not attribute significantly more responsibility to victims than did the community,  $\chi^2 (2) = 2.28$ , n.s., although the differences are in the predicted direction.

The victim-nonvictim differences were again evident in subjects' assignment of responsibility for victimization to chance factors and to the offender (predictions b and c). Again, in line with defensive attribution theory, victims attributed more to chance,  $\chi^2 (2) = 52.40$ ,  $p < .001$ , and more to the offender,  $\chi^2 (2) = 47.17$ ,  $p < .001$ , than nonvictims. Chance and offender attributions are shown in Tables 16 and 17, respectively. To illustrate these differences, almost half of the victims (46.8%) and only 17.0% of the nonvictims saw victimization as a completely (100 percent) "chance or random event that could happen to anyone." In terms of offender attributions, 77.9% of the victims and only 41.7% of the nonvictims felt that the offender should be held totally responsible for the victimization.

Specific between-sample comparisons indicate that, for chance attributions, each of the four victim-nonvictim comparisons was significant at the .001 level. Although the two victim samples did not differ, community subjects attributed more to chance than did police officers,  $\chi^2 (2) = 9.97$ ,  $p < .01$ . For offender attributions, all three comparisons were significant at the .05 level.

Table 16

## Percentage of Responsibility Attributed to Chance

Samples	Percentage Attributed to Chance		
	0-49%	50-100%	100%
Victim Study I	16.8 (30)	34.3 (61)	48.8 (87)
Victim Study II	23.7 (14)	35.6 (21)	40.7 (24)
Community Study	10.7 (13)	66.9 (81)	22.3 (27)
Police Study	23.3 (17)	68.4 (50)	8.2 ( 6)

Note. The number of subjects is listed in parentheses to the right of the percentage of subjects.

Table 17

## Percentage of Responsibility Attributed to Offenders

Samples	Percentage Attributed to Offenders		
	0-49%	50-99%	100%
Victim Study I	2.8 (5)	20.5 (36)	76.7 (135)
Victim Study II	8.5 (5)	10.1 ( 6)	81.4 ( 48)
Community Study	7.5 (9)	50.9 (61)	41.6 ( 50)

Note. The number of subjects is listed in parentheses to the right of the percentage of subjects.

In summary, the results generally disconfirm hypothesis 1 and support defensive attribution theory. While approximately one-third of the victims tended to blame themselves, nonvictims attributed even greater blame to victims. Nonvictims also attributed less to chance and less to the offender. Among nonvictims, police and community respondents did not differ significantly in their attributions, although differences were expected.

### Interrelationships Among Attributions

Hypothesis 2. The following intercorrelations among attributions should be observed: (a) Personal attributions to victims and offenders should be inversely related to chance attributions, and (b) victim self-blame should correlate positively with independent judgments of blameworthiness derived from police offense reports and observations of victims shortly after the crime. Victims' perceptions that others have blamed them and the level of blame assigned to offenders (by both victims and nonvictims) are two variables whose relationship to victim blame will be explored without making any predictions.

Support for prediction a was not found in victim study I, the community, or the police study, as chance attributions were independent of victim and offender attributions in each of these data sets. Data from victim study II provided mixed support for prediction a. Consistent with this prediction, greater self-blame was associated with smaller attributions to chance,  $r(56) = -.22, p < .05$ . However, contrary to prediction a, the attribution to chance was positively



related to offender attributions,  $r(57) = .61, p < .001$ .

Prediction b received support in victim study II, using observations but not in victim study I, using police offense reports. Although victim self-blame did not correlate with the independent ratings of victim precipitation from police offense reports, it was positively related to observer ratings at the scene of the crime,  $r(24) = .36, p < .03$ .

Finally, self blame was explored in relationship to offender blame and perceived blame by others. Once again, the evidence was mixed. In victim study I, more self-blame was associated with less offender blame,  $r(172) = -.16, p < .02$ ; however, this relationship was nonsignificant in victim study II and the community study. In victim study I, self-blame was positively related to perceived blame by others,  $r(177) = .19, p < .006$ . However, these variables were not related in victim study II.

In summary, personal attributions to victims and offenders were generally unrelated to chance attributions. (Only one study supported the prediction that victim blame would be inversely related to chance attributions, and this same study disconfirmed the expected inverse relationship between offender and chance attributions.) Self-blame was positively correlated with one of the two independent ratings of blameworthiness. In addition, there was some evidence among victims that more self-blame meant less offender blame, but victim and offender attributions were independent in the minds of nonvictims. Finally, there was some evidence among victims that self-blame may result from

the perception of being blamed by others.

### Attributions and Perceptions of Control

Hypothesis 3. Increased self-blame among crime victims and victim blame among nonvictims should be associated with increased feelings of personal control over future victimization. In contrast, greater attributions to chance should be associated with reduced feelings of control. No prediction is made concerning the relationship between offender blame and perceived control.

Victims. Although somewhat equivocal, the victim results generally do not support hypothesis 3. In victim study I, the composite variables of self-blame and personal control were unrelated. In victim study II, self-blame did not correlate with either the composite index of personal control or citizen control.

The only attribution measure to correlate significantly with the index of personal control was chance, and this relationship was evident only in victim study I. Ironic as it may seem, the more victims attributed their victimization to chance, the more personal control they felt over the possibility of future victimization,  $r(162) = .15$ ,  $p < .025$ . A closer look at this relationship reveals that one variable within the control index accounts for this weak, but significant relationship. In particular, the greater the role assigned to chance, the lower victims' estimate about their own chances of being victimized, relative to other people in their neighborhood,  $r(175) = .22$ ,  $p < .002$ . Nonetheless, chance attributions did not correlate with the fear-related

items in the composite personal control index. Finally, offender attributions did not correlate with any of the control measures.

Nonvictims. The data from nonvictims in the local community were partially supportive of hypothesis 3. The greater the total responsibility nonvictims attributed to six different types of crime victims, the more personal control these nonvictims felt over their own chances of future victimization,  $r(87) = .22, p < .02$ . However, attributions to chance and the offender were unrelated to feelings of personal control.

The nonsignificant finding with respect to chance attributions proved to be somewhat misleading when studied more closely. Items within the composite control index were related to chance attributions in conflicting directions. Similar to the victims' responses, the more nonvictims viewed victimization as a chance or random event, the safer they perceived themselves relative to other people in their neighborhood,  $r(90) = .19, p < .03$ , and the lower they estimated their actual chances of being victimized,  $r(95) = .19, p < .03$ . However, those who attributed more to chance were also more worried about future victimization,  $r(94) = .21, p < .02$ .

In summary, the results provide mixed support for hypothesis 3. There is some evidence that both victims and nonvictims report a greater sense of control over future victimization when they attribute more to chance factors. (However, for nonvictims, greater chance attributions also meant greater fear of victimization.) Nonvictims also reported more control over their own future victimization as they attributed

more blame to victims. However, self-blame among victims did not affect feelings of control.

Hypothesis 4. A desire to believe that the previous victimization was avoidable should be associated with greater self-blame, less chance attributions, and less offender attributions.

The evidence concerning self-blame would seem to support this hypothesis. Indeed, self-blame was positively related to the perceived avoidability in victim study I,  $r(176) = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ , and marginally related in victim study II,  $r(55) = .21$ ,  $p < .06$ . However, perceived avoidability was unrelated to chance and offender attributions in both victim studies.

#### Attributions, Control, and Precautionary Behavior

Hypothesis 5. Among victims, greater self-blame, less chance attributions, and stronger feelings of control should be associated with more precautionary behavior. Attributions may work through precautions to impact on perceptions of control. No predictions were made for nonvictims or when considering offender attributions.

Victims. The evidence concerning the relationship between self-blame and self-reported precautionary behavior is equivocal. In study I, the greater the victims' self-blame, the greater the tendency to report that victimization has caused them to take additional precautions to avoid being victimized again in the future,  $r(176) = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, this relationship did not hold up in study II.

The attribution to chance did not predict precautionary behavior

in study I, but was related to precautionary behavior in study II. Contrary to the attribution-control hypothesis, the tendency to report taking precautionary action as a response to victimization was associated with greater attributions to chance,  $r(57) = .21$ ,  $p < .05$ . Similarly, offender attributions were found to be related to precautions in victim study II such that the more they attributed to the offender, the more precautions they reported taking,  $r(57) = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Finally, perceived control among victims was unrelated to the tendency to engage in additional precautionary behavior. This finding was consistent across victim studies I and II.

Nonvictims. In general, the tendency for community nonvictims to engage in precautionary behaviors was unaffected by their attributional analysis of victimization or their perceptions of personal control. More specifically, victim blame, offender blame, and perceptions of control were unrelated to the reporting of additional precautionary behaviors. However, the attribution to chance was significantly correlated with precautionary behavior. The more nonvictims attributed to chance, the more likely they were to report having taken precautionary action to avoid future victimization,  $r(96) = .19$ ,  $p < .03$ .

In summary, the data offer only weak support for hypothesis 5. Victim blame predicted precautionary behavior in victim study I, but did not do so in either victim study II or the community study. In victim study I, victims who blamed themselves were more likely to

respond to victimization with precautionary action than those who did not blame themselves. The attribution to chance was, again, a more consistent predictor. In victim study II and the community study, the more subjects attributed to chance, the more likely they were to report having engaged in precautionary behavior to avoid future victimization. Offender attributions were also positively related to precautions in victim study II, although the attribution-control model does not clearly predict the direction of this relationship. Perceptions of control were unrelated to precautions in all three studies. Because the blame → precautions → control nexus was not established through the zero-order correlations, tests of indirect effects were not appropriate.

#### Attributions and Psychological Impact/Coping

Hypothesis 6. The greater victims' self-blame or sense of responsibility for victimization, the less negative psychological impact the incident should have on them (i.e., the better they should cope with victimization).

Several analyses were performed to assess the effects of victims' attributions on various psychological impact/coping measures. Coping was defined by several self-report measures in both studies and by observer ratings in victim study II (as described in Chapter II). Observer ratings were not significantly correlated with self-report measures of coping impact,  $r(26) = .23$ , n.s., although the direction of the relationship suggests a tendency toward agreement.

Some significant, but small relationships were identified between attributions and psychological impact/coping measures. Self-blame was a significant predictor of self-reported coping in victim study I, but not in victim study II. As self-blame increased in victim study I, victims received poorer scores on the self-report coping index,  $r(173) = .14$ ,  $p < .03$ . A look at the items comprising the coping index revealed that self-blame is associated with greater anger about being victimized,  $r(174) = .17$ ,  $p < .01$ , and a tendency to be more upset by the incident,  $r(177) = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ . Self-blame did not correlate with observer judgments of coping taken in victim study II.

Chance and offender attributions were explored in relationship to coping measures and some significant results emerged. In terms of self-reported coping, chance attributions were unrelated to this index in both studies, but offender attributions were significantly related to coping in victim study I. That is, poorer coping was reported by victims as their tendency to blame the offender increased,  $r(170) = -.16$ ,  $p < .02$ . A closer analysis of the coping items revealed that, similar to the self-blame finding, increased offender blame was associated with greater anger,  $r(171) = .13$ ,  $p < .04$ , and being more upset,  $r(174) = .14$ ,  $p < .03$ .

Both chance and offender attributions were found to be related to the observer's assessment of coping/impact in victim study II. The poorer a victim's coping ability (as determined by observer ratings), the more s/he attributed the victimization to chance,  $r(25) = -.44$ ,  $p < .01$ , and, marginally, the more s/he attributed it to the offender,

$r(25) = .27, p < .08$ .

In summary, self-blame was associated with poorer self-reported coping in victim study I, but unrelated to either self-reported or observer-rated coping in victim study II. Chance attributions were associated with poorer observer-rated coping but not with self-reported coping. Offender attributions were associated with poorer observer-rated and poorer self-reported coping, although the latter correlation was significant only in victim study I.

### Perceptions of Control and Psychological Impact/Coping

Hypothesis 7. The greater victims' sense of control over future victimization, the less psychological impact the incident should have on them (i.e., the better they should cope with the incident).

The indices of personal control were more consistently related to psychological impact/coping than were attributions. In victim study I, the composite variables of control and coping were significantly correlated, such that more personal control was associated with better self-reported coping,  $r(160) = .28, p < .001$ . The same relationship was apparent in victim study II,  $r(48) = .34, p < .008$ , perhaps indicating that feelings of control over revictimization are indicative of healthy coping.

The control-coping relationship is best illustrated by describing the relationships between personal control and the single items that comprise the coping index. In victim study I, the less personal control that victims felt, the less likely they were to report having



"completely recovered from the incident, emotionally and psychologically,"  $r(163) = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ , and the more "upset" they were about the incident,  $r(164) = .17$ ,  $p < .01$ . In victim study II, the less personal control that victims felt, the less likely they were to report complete recovery,  $r(50) = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ , the more "upset" they were about the incident,  $r(49) = .55$ ,  $p < .001$ , the greater the "impact" of the victimization,  $r(49) = .28$ ,  $p < .025$ , and the more likely they were to report being "angry" over what happened to them,  $r(50) = .38$ ,  $p < .008$ .

In addition to the above-mentioned indices of personal control and self-reported impact/coping, victim study II also included indices of citizen control over crime and observer ratings of impact/coping. The index of personal control was unrelated to observer-rated coping/impact and the index of citizen control did not correlate with either observer-rated or self-reported coping.

In summary, the primary data concerning feelings of personal control over future victimization tend to support hypothesis 7. Greater perceived control was associated with better self-reported coping, although it did not correlate with observer ratings. Belief in citizen control over crime did not predict either self-reported or observer-rated coping.

### Precautionary Behavior and Psychological Impact/Coping

Hypothesis 8. Precautionary behaviors should serve to ameliorate the impact of victimization and thus be reflected in better coping.

Because precautionary behaviors were offered as a potential link between attributions and psychological impact/coping variables, the first step was to examine their relationship to the latter. The results seem to strongly disconfirm hypothesis 8. In victim study I, victims who responded to victimization by engaging in additional precautionary behavior had poorer self-reported impact/coping scores than victims who did not take additional precautionary action,  $r(174) = -.36$ ,  $p < .001$ . In other words, the more likely they were to take precautionary action, the less likely they were to report complete emotional and psychological recovery,  $r(177) = -.20$ ,  $p < .004$ , the more anger they reported,  $r(175) = .29$ ,  $p < .001$ , and the more upset they were over the incident,  $r(178) = .30$ ,  $p < .001$ .

In victim study II, the tendency among victims to respond with additional precautionary action was similarly associated with poorer self-reported impact/coping,  $r(53) = -.22$ ,  $p < .05$ . Furthermore, taking precautionary action was associated with lower scores on the observer-rated coping index,  $r(25) = -.34$ ,  $p < .04$ .

In summary, the tendency to respond to victimization by taking precautionary action seems to be associated with poorer psychological coping according to the present operational definitions of coping/impact.

### Seriousness and Threat of Victimization

Hypothesis 9. As the perceived seriousness or threat of victimization increases: (a) Self-blame and victim blame should increase,

(b) chance attributions should generally decrease, and (c) victims should express a greater desire to see their past victimization as avoidable. (However, defensive attribution theory would predict the opposite results in all three cases, as well as perhaps greater attributions to the offender.) As two further tests: (d) Females in general should engage in more victim blame and fewer chance attributions than males, and (e) female nonvictims should attribute greater blame to rape victims, relative to other victims, than male nonvictims (again, defensive attribution theory predicts the opposite in both cases).

Victimization seriousness and perceived threat of future victimization are an important set of variables for testing the viability of the attribution-control model versus the defensive attribution model. As noted in Chapter II, seriousness has been operationalized in several ways. For victim study I, perceived seriousness ratings were obtained directly from victims. In addition, seriousness scores were derived from a priori rankings of the six types of crime. (These two measures were positively correlated,  $r(178) = .23$ ,  $p < .001$ .) For victim study II, a composite seriousness index was computed from three self-report measures (i.e., perceived seriousness, dollar value, and sentimental value of the loss). The victim results will be presented first, followed by the nonvictim results.

Victims. The seriousness results from the victim samples, when taken as a whole, do not consistently support one theory over another. Using self-blame as the criterion (prediction a), the data

from victim study I are generally consistent with defensive attribution theory. Perceived seriousness was inversely related to self-blame,  $r(176) = -.17, p < .01$ . This same relationship emerged when seriousness was operationalized in terms of type of crime. For more serious crimes, victims tended to blame themselves less,  $r(177) = -.18, p < .008$ . However, in victim study II, the composite self-blame index did not correlate significantly with perceived seriousness.

Unlike self-attributions, the only significant finding pertaining to chance attributions seems supportive of the attribution-control model (prediction b). In study I, chance was inversely related to perceived seriousness,  $r(175) = -.16, p < .02$ . However, chance was unrelated to seriousness as defined by type of crime (study I), and unrelated to the seriousness index in study II.

Offender attributions were generally unrelated to victimization seriousness. The one exception was a marginally significant negative relationship in victim study II between seriousness and offender blame,  $r(52) = -.21, p < .06$ . This finding runs counter to the defensive attribution prediction.

The significant results concerning perceived avoidability (prediction c) were consistent with a defensive attribution interpretation. In victim study I, the greater the perceived seriousness which victims attached to their victimization, the less likely they were to believe that they could have avoided it,  $r(177) = -.15, p < .02$ . This relationship was only marginally significant in victim study II,  $r(50) =$

-.19,  $p < .09$ .

Finally, victim data were examined for sex differences in victim blame (prediction d). In victim study I, there were no significant sex differences in self-blame, nor were there any sex differences in chance and offender attributions. The results of victim study II were generally the same as victim study I.

In summary, the seriousness/threat results from the victim studies are not consistently supportive of either theoretical model, although the preponderance of evidence favors defensive attribution theory. As the perceived seriousness of their victimization increased, victims were less likely to blame themselves and less likely to believe that they could have avoided the incident. Although less convincing, there was some evidence that, under similar conditions of high perceived severity, attributions to chance and to the offender also decreased. The chance attribution results are consistent with the attribution-control model, while all that can be said of the offender attribution results is that they are inconsistent with defensive attribution theory. Finally, there were no sex differences in self-blame, offender blame, or chance attributions.

Nonvictims. Hypothesis 9, as it applies to nonvictims, was explored using data for both community and police respondents. The community results will be presented first.

Two separate measures of seriousness were utilized in the community study. First, respondents were asked to assign responsibility

to six types of stimulus victims, each having its own, a priori seriousness ranking. Given these seriousness rankings, attributional differences between the six victim types were analyzed to test prediction a.

A repeated-measure analysis was performed on these data, treating each item as a different level of the seriousness variable. The results indicate that community nonvictims generally attributed different levels of blame to hypothetical persons who are victimized by crimes that vary in seriousness,  $F(5, 475) = 8.22, p < .001$ . As the means in Table 18 indicate, the relationship between attributions and seriousness rankings does not support the attribution-control hypothesis. To the contrary, a linear trend analysis revealed that as the seriousness of the crime increased, nonvictims attributed less blame to the victim,  $F(1, 474) = 42.12, p < .001$ . The quadratic component was non-significant,  $F(1, 473) = 2.56, n.s.$ , suggesting that the relationship is best described as linear.

The second measure of seriousness in the community study was an item which addressed respondents' beliefs about how much victims are affected by victimization. Paralleling the results from the first measure, the greater the tendency for community respondents to believe that crime victims are seriously affected, the less blame they attributed to victims,  $r(89) = -.29, p < .003$  (prediction a). This seriousness variable was also examined in relationship to other attributions (prediction b) but was found to be unrelated to chance and offender attributions.

Finally, the police study provided yet another look at the

Table 18

Mean Percentage of Responsibility Attributed to Victims  
As a Function of Crime Seriousness: Community Study

Crime Seriousness Ranking <sup>a</sup>	Mean Percentage of Responsibility <sup>b</sup>
1. Theft <sup>X</sup>	29.98 (27.46)
2. Verbal assault <sup>X</sup>	25.31 (25.75)
3. Burglary <sup>XY</sup>	24.83 (27.29)
4. Physical assault <sup>YZ</sup>	19.48 (22.47)
5. Robbery <sup>Z</sup>	15.48 (20.71)
6. Rape <sup>Z</sup>	18.72 (25.17)

Note. N = 96.

<sup>a</sup>Numbers 1-6 indicate the following seriousness rankings: 1 = least serious and 6 = most serious; crimes without a common letter superscript are significantly different with two-tailed t-tests at  $p < .025$ .

<sup>b</sup>Standard deviations are listed in parentheses to the right of means.

relationship between perceived seriousness and attributions from the nonvictim's perspective. As described in Chapter II, a composite index was computed using police officers' seriousness ratings for various problems facing victims. Regarding prediction a, this composite variable did not correlate with officers' assignment of blame to crime victims. However, it was significantly related to chance attributions (prediction b)--the greater the perceived seriousness of victims' problems, the more officers attributed to chance,  $r(71) = .29$ ,  $p < .006$ .

The last two predictions (d and e) under hypothesis 9 concern the effects of respondent's sex on attributions. They have been tested using data from the community study. The results do not demonstrate the sex differences that were expected from the attribution-control model. To the contrary, female respondents (presumably the more threatened group) attributed less total responsibility to crime victims than did male respondents,  $r(93) = -.18$ ,  $p < .04$ . Furthermore, females assigned more responsibility to chance than did males,  $r(96) = -.18$ ,  $p < .035$ . (These nonvictim findings are consistent with the victim results reported earlier and with defensive attribution theory.)

A more specific test of the threat prediction was conducted by comparing male and female responses across different types of victimization. The expectation that females would attribute more responsibility to rape victims (relative to other victims) was not confirmed. The sexes did not differ significantly in the level of blame they attributed to victims of rape, robbery, burglary, and verbal assault.



The only difference was that males attributed more responsibility to victims of physical assault,  $t(91) = 2.96, p < .004$ .

As some confirmation of the underlying threat construct, the following sex differences in the nonvictim data are noteworthy: Females felt less personal control over future victimization than males (composite personal control index),  $r(92) = -.29, p < .003$ . Furthermore, females felt that victimization has a larger impact on victims,  $r(93) = .40, p < .001$ .

In summary, the nonvictim data pertaining to the seriousness/threat hypothesis provide relatively consistent support for defensive attribution theory. That is, in the community study, as the perceived seriousness of victimization increased (on both measures), the tendency to blame the victim decreased. (Perceived seriousness was unrelated to chance and offender attributions.) For police officers, although perceived seriousness was unrelated to victim blame, it was positively related to chance attributions. Finally, tests of the threat prediction in the community study revealed that females (presumably the more threatened group) attributed less total responsibility to crime victims and more to chance than did males. However, there were no sex differences in attributions to rape victims. While not every tested relationship was significant, all significant differences were supportive of defensive attribution theory.

Hypothesis 10. As the perceived seriousness of victimization increases: (a) Greater variability should be apparent in victims' feelings of control, (b) perceptions of control should be more

strongly correlated with impact/coping measures, and (c) self-blame and chance attributions also should be more strongly correlated with impact/coping measures. Stated differently, predictions b and c suggest that control, self-blame, and chance attributions each interact with victimization seriousness to affect coping, such that low control, low self-blame, and high chance attributions, when combined with high seriousness, lead to the worst coping, while the opposite set of conditions lead to the best coping.

To explore prediction a, the seriousness variables were split at the median and Hartley's  $F_{\max}$  test for homogeneity of variance (Winer, 1962, p. 93) was performed on the perceived control measures, looking for differences in control variance across the "high" and "low" seriousness conditions. The results do not support prediction a. In victim study II, neither the index of personal control (high  $s^2 = 1.07$ ; low  $s^2 = 1.29$ ) nor that of citizen control (high  $s^2 = .92$ ; low  $s^2 = .86$ ) showed more or less variance as a function of victimization seriousness. In fact, data from victim study I showed a non-significant tendency toward less variability in personal control under conditions of high seriousness ( $s^2 = .276$ ) than under conditions of low seriousness ( $s^2 = .447$ ),  $F(2, 116) = 1.62$ , n.s.

Predictions b and c were tested by computing zero-order correlations and two-way analyses of variance. The correlational results, as presented in Table 19, revealed few differences in the correlations between low and high seriousness conditions which can be interpreted as supporting these predictions. Fisher's r-to-z transformation was

performed, and differences between correlations were conducted (see Hayes, 1973, pp. 662-664; 711). Contrary to the prediction, the correlation between personal control and coping does show some decrease under conditions of greater seriousness for both victim study I and II. However, these decreases were nonsignificant.

The only correlational support for these predictions is found in the significant increase in the correlation between self-blame and coping,  $z = 2.58$ ,  $p < .01$ . This finding suggests that self-blame contributes to poorer coping only when victimization is perceived as very serious. The correlations in victim study II do not support predictions b and c.

Another perspective on these predictions was achieved through analysis of variance. In victim study I, neither personal control nor chance attributions interacted with victimization seriousness to affect coping. However, self-blame did interact with seriousness  $F(1, 172) = 4.93$ ,  $p < .03$ , in the manner suggested by the above-mentioned correlation. In victim study II, personal control, self-blame, and chance attributions did not (individually) interact with seriousness to affect either observer-rated or self-reported coping.

In summary, there was little empirical support for the hypothesis that personal control and attributions would correlate more strongly with coping under conditions of high (vs. low) victimization seriousness. However, in victim study I, self-blame was more strongly correlated with coping when victimization was perceived as serious.

Table 19

Correlations of Self-reported Coping with Personal Control,  
Self-blame, and Chance Attributions as a  
Function of Victimization Seriousness

Victimization Seriousness	Correlates of Self-reported Coping		
	Personal Control	Self-blame	Chance Attributions
Victim Study I			
Low Seriousness	.33**	-.09	.03
High Seriousness	.25**	-.28*	-.09
Victim Study II			
Low Seriousness	.39*	.00	.14
High Seriousness	.28*	.11	-.19

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$

The Passage of Time

Hypothesis 11. Victims should report (a) greater perceived control over future victimization with the passage of time, to the point where control equals that reported by nonvictims (presumably equivalent to pre-victimization) and (b) should report less self-blame.

Prediction a was tested in two ways. First, the correlation was computed between the amount of time that had elapsed since victimization and perceived personal control. For both victim study I and II, the passage of time was unrelated to how much control they felt over future victimization. It should be noted that these two studies provide different timeframes. In victim study I, the time lapse ranged from one to 21 months, while in victim study II, it ranged from one day to three weeks. Given the possibility that psychological processes are more active shortly after victimization, victim study II offers a better test of this prediction. Study II also provides a stronger test because time was treated as a truly independent variable and subjects were randomly assigned to the "immediate" or "two-week" follow-up interview. Nonetheless, the results were nonsupportive in both studies.

The second test of prediction a called for a comparison of victims and nonvictims in terms of their perceived control. Levels of the time variable were created within the victim studies as points where victim and nonvictim perceptions could be compared. Victims in study I were divided into three equal-sized groups on the basis of the

amount of time that had elapsed since victimization--one to eight months, nine to 16 months, and 17 to 21 months. As noted above, subjects in victim study II were randomly assigned to an immediate interview or one conducted approximately two weeks after the crime. Independent group t tests revealed no significant differences in personal control between victims in the longest time conditions (i.e., 17-21 months; two weeks) and nonvictims. While this finding appears consistent with prediction a, the fact remains that there were no significant increases in perceived control between any of the time conditions.

Prediction b also received no confirmation in either study. In victim study I, there was some weak evidence to the contrary, indicating that self-blame increased with the passage of time,  $r(173) = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ . In victim study II, with random assignment to either the immediate versus two-week follow-up interview, time had no effect on the level of self-blame reported.

In sum, there was no evidence to indicate that feelings of control among victims increased over time and no evidence to suggest that victims at some point felt less control than nonvictims. In addition, if self-blame is related to the passage of time, the relationship is positive, rather than negative.

### Attitudes Toward Victim Services

Hypothesis 12. Among nonvictims, increased victim blame and decreased attributions to chance should be associated with more negative attitudes toward victim services.

Data from both the community and police studies were used to test this hypothesis, and the results were not very supportive. In the community study, the tendency to endorse the creation of victim service programs was unrelated to victim blame or the attribution of chance. In the police study, two composite variables were developed to assess attitudes toward victim services, both focusing on the existing Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit at the police department, where this research was conducted. Results show mixed support for hypothesis 12. As victim blame increased, there was a marginal tendency for police officers to express more negative attitudes about the victim/witness program,  $r(59) = -.19$ ,  $p < .07$ . However, victim blame did not correlate with the second composite variable measuring attitudes toward specific victim services. Chance attributions among police officers were significantly related to this second index, but not to the first. The more emphasis that police officers placed on chance as an explanation for victimization, the more likely they were to endorse specific victim services,  $r(71) = -.22$ ,  $p < .03$ .

In summary, the willingness of community respondents to attribute victimization either to victims or to chance factors had little effect on their attitudes toward victim services. However, the police study used two attitudinal measures and found that victim blame was related to one measure and the attribution to chance was related to the other, both in the predicted direction.

## INTEGRATION OF ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS AND EXPLORATORY MODEL TESTING

### Summary and Integration of Zero-order Correlations

A variety of zero-order correlational results have been discussed in reference to specific hypotheses. By and large, these hypotheses were derived from relatively simple theoretical models, and typically, addressed only two variables each. Given this bivariate emphasis, a decision was made to integrate the major results, for the dual purpose of summarizing the level of success achieved in predicting psychological reactions to criminal victimization and setting the stage for exploratory post hoc tests of a larger, multivariate model.

Figures 1 through 3 provide an integration of the major relationships examined in the previous hypotheses. Little additional conceptualizing was necessary to "piece together" the hypothesized bivariate relationships. While several post hoc tests will be reported that test additional hypotheses, at this point, the reader should assume that these diagrams are basically illustrations and summaries of previously discussed zero-order correlations. Solid lines indicate significant relationships (with correlations specified) and broken lines indicate nonsignificant relationships. Variables that are not connected with a line have not been tested for association under the existing hypotheses. For purposes of clarity and statistical analysis, several



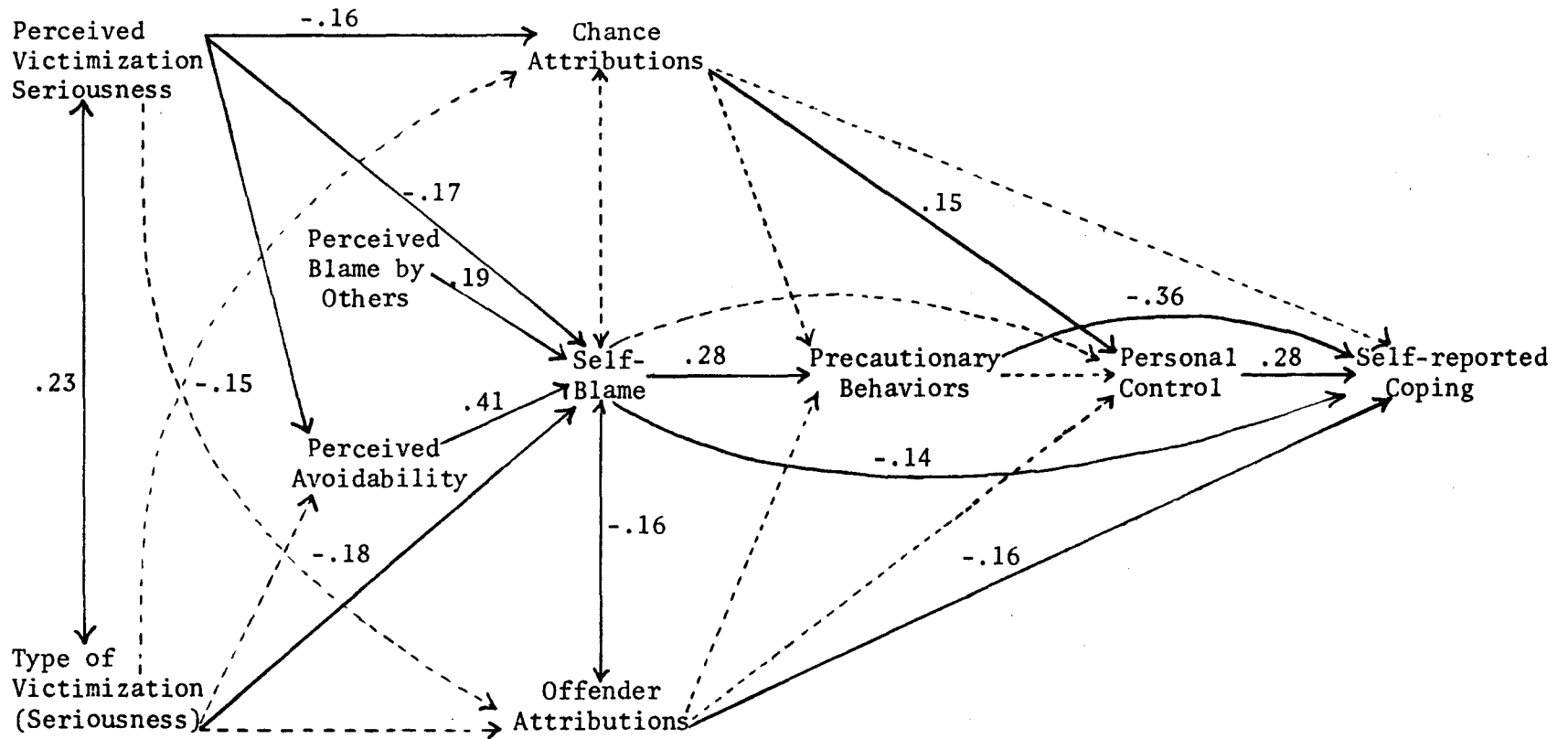


Figure 1. Integration of Zero-order Correlational Results: Victim Study I

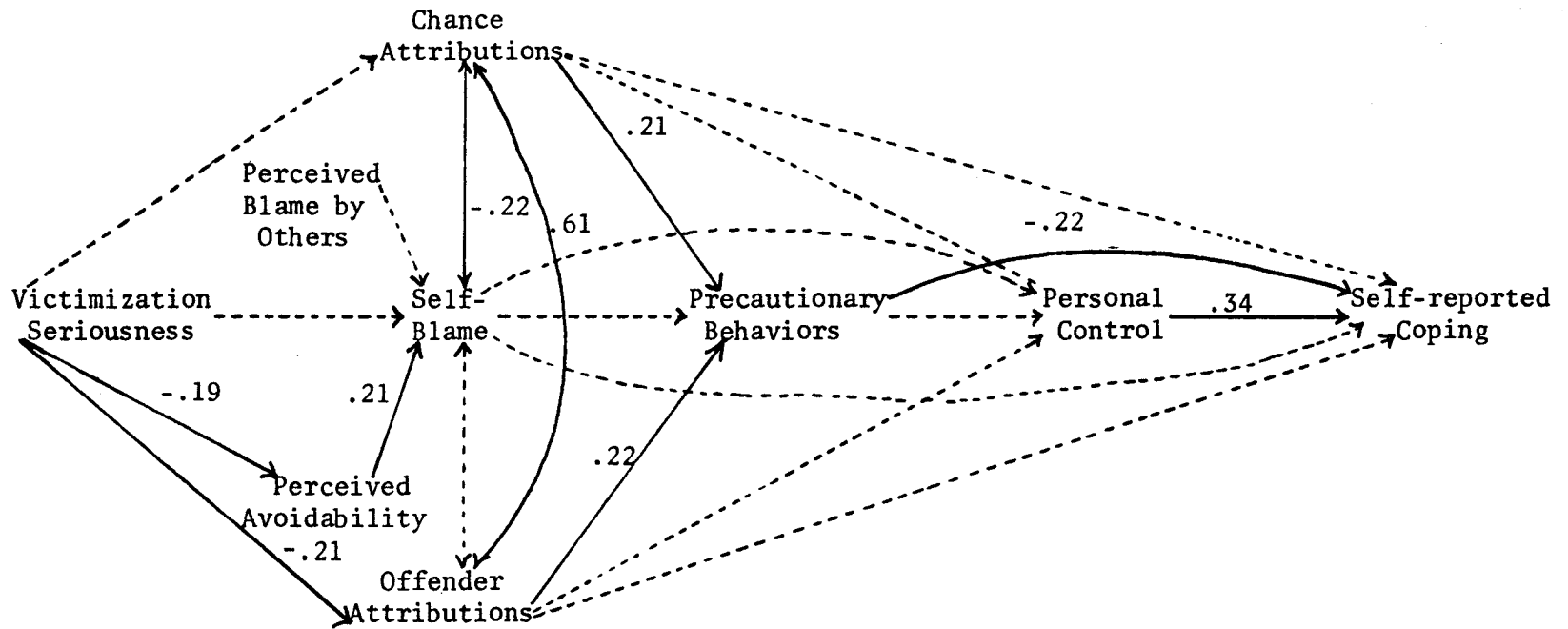


Figure 2. Integration of Zero-order Correlational Results: Victim Study II

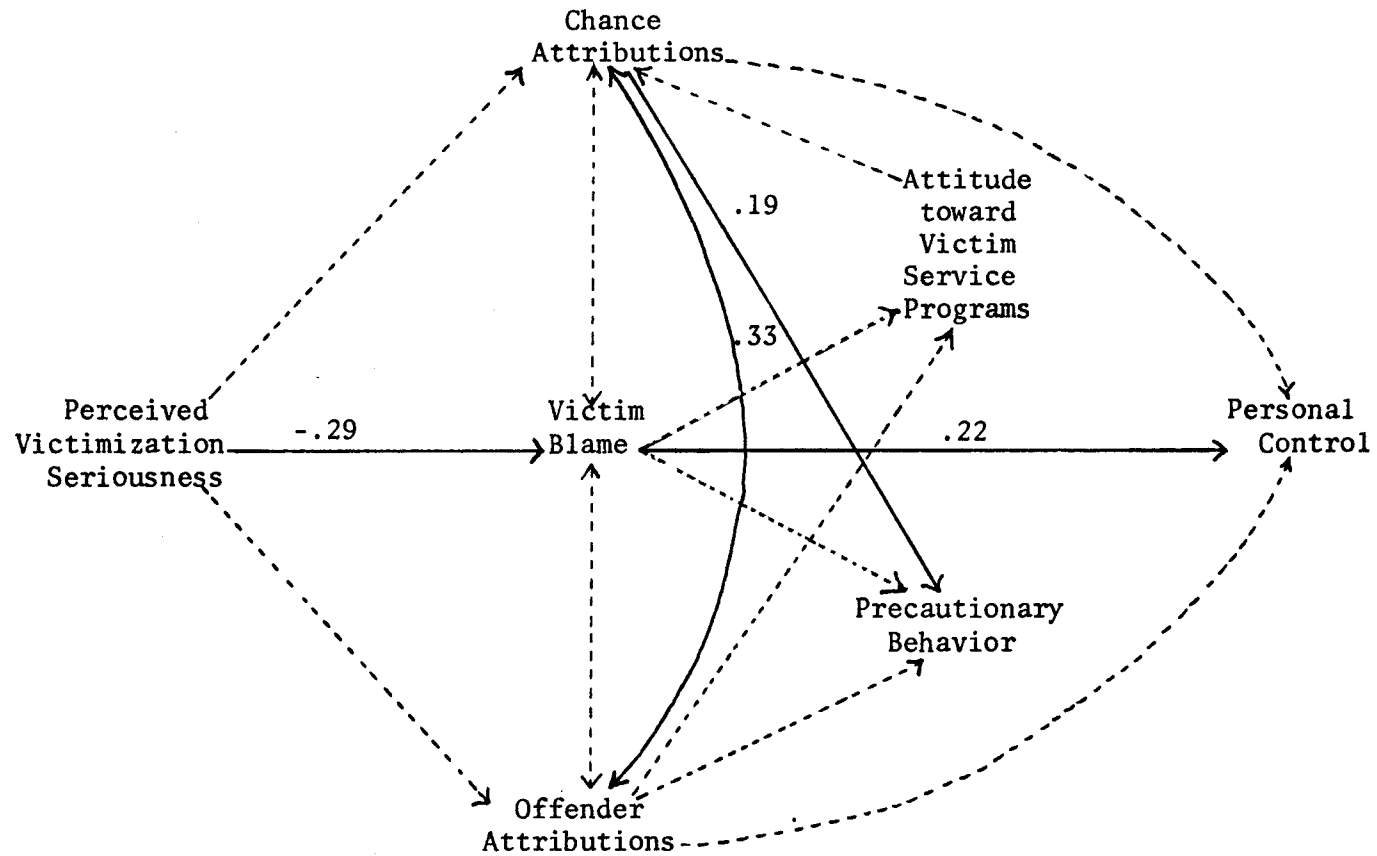


Figure 3. Integration of Zero-order Correlational Results: Community Study

variables are not presented in these diagrams.<sup>11</sup>

Attribution measures are at the hub of this research and thus, Figures 1 through 3 display the hypothesized antecedents and consequences of victim, offender, and chance attributions. The overall picture suggests that a fair number of relationships are statistically significant, but the correlations are quite small. Figure 1 shows that more than half (14 of 26) of the major correlations in victim study I are significant ( $p < .05$ ). Figure 2 illustrates that nine of 21 correlations are significant in victim study II, and Figure 3 shows that four of 12 are significant in the community study. (Noncorrelational hypotheses were obviously excluded from these figures.)

The attribution-control model, as described in this dissertation, was used to generate the following primary hypotheses concerning self-blame: As the seriousness of victimization increases, victims will have a greater desire to see their victimization as avoidable and will be more likely to engage in self-blame as a self-protective method for gaining control over the chances of future victimization. In addition, self-blame may serve to stimulate more precautionary behaviors, which, in turn, should create a sense of personal control over victimization

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<sup>11</sup>The variables excluded from Figures 1-3 deserve mention. Observer ratings of victim coping and ratings of blameworthiness were excluded for statistical reasons. Because these measures were taken on only a portion of the subjects, they do not allow sufficient statistical power for multiple regression analyses. "Perceived citizen control" was excluded because it had no internal consistency and thus does not deserve the status of a construct. Demographic variables do not appear because they have been defined as exogenous relative to the model. However, as such, their contribution will be carefully assessed. Data from the police study were not illustrated because so few variables were measured. Finally, it should be noted that noncorrelational hypotheses are necessarily excluded from such diagrams.

and better coping along several dimensions. The results, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 provide only weak support for this a priori model. The major results are highlighted below.

As noted earlier, the data do not consistently support one theoretical model over another. For example, the negative relationship between victimization seriousness and chance attributions evident in victim study II seems to support the attribution-control model, but the negative relationships between seriousness and self-blame are more in line with defensive attribution theory. The consistent negative relationship between perceived seriousness and perceived avoidability shows support for defensive attribution theory.

The behavioral and psychological consequences of self-blame were even less predictable using the attribution-control framework. While self-blame was followed by more precautionary behaviors in study I (consistent with the model), it was unrelated to precautionary behaviors in study II. More importantly, neither self-blame nor precautionary behaviors showed any relationship to feelings of personal control in either study. These null results question the role of self-blame as a psychological mechanism for restoring control over victimization.

Consistent with the attribution-control model, greater perceived control was associated with better self-reported coping in both studies, which indicates that feelings of fear and loss of control are related to being angry, upset, and not fully recovered from the victimization experience. However, in conflict with the model was the

finding (in both studies) that more precautionary action was associated with poorer self-reported coping.

For nonvictims, the hypothesized role of victim blame in the attribution-control model is similar to the role of self-blame discussed above. The greater the seriousness of criminal victimization in the eyes of nonvictims, the greater should be their tendency to blame crime victims. In addition, greater victim blame should result in more negative attitudes toward victim service programs and a greater sense of control over one's own chances of future victimization. As shown in Figure 3, the nonvictim data are only weakly supportive of this model. In fact, the negative relationship between the perceived seriousness of victimization and victim blame is more consistent with defensive attribution theory. While the association between increased victim blame and increased feelings of personal control lends some support to the attribution-control framework, the expected relationship between victim blame and attitudes toward victim services was not consistently observed.

### Exploratory Model Testing

The absence of significant zero-order correlations is usually very informative concerning the goodness of fit between the data and the available theoretical models (the above discussion is no exception), but the presence of zero-order correlations often leaves many questions unanswered. These questions are inherent in multivariate data sets that involve potentially correlated predictors, and are sometimes shaped by

the theoretical framework being utilized. In the present case, additional analyses were performed in an attempt to provide at least preliminary answers to the following questions: (1) Are the significant relationships "real" or are they spurious in nature? (2) Are there any obvious mediating effects not stated in the hypotheses that would be consistent with the theoretical models used to guide this research? (3) Can the variables be combined to improve the prediction of coping? and (4) What is the importance of psychological variables relative to demographic variables in the prediction of coping?

Spurious relationships. In response to the first question, tests for spuriousness were conducted using demographic variables as possible "third variable" explanations. These demographic variables included age, sex, race, education, income, exposure to crime media, and victimization history. Partial correlations were computed in all cases where these exogenous variables suggested possible spuriousness within the model (i.e., all cases where two variables were significantly correlated and each was also significantly related to a common demographic variable). At the simplest level, spuriousness was inferred when a significant relationship became nonsignificant after partialling out (or controlling) the effects of the "third variable."

The outcomes of these partial correlation analyses are presented in Tables 20 through 22. As these results indicate, there was little evidence in victim study I and the community study to suggest that the significant relationships (illustrated in Figures 1 and 3) were spurious and explainable by demographic third variables. For example,

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Table 20

Partial Correlation Results: Victim Study I

Relationship Tested	Variable Controlled	Type of Correlation	
		Zero-order	Partial
1. Seriousness with Avoidability	Education	-.15*	-.14*
2. Avoidability with Self-blame	Age	.41**	.39***
3. Blame by Others with Self-blame	Age	.19**	.16**
4. Precautions with Self-reported Coping	Sex	-.36***	-.33***

Note.  $N = 181$ .

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .



Table 21

## Partial Correlation Results: Victim Study II

Relationship Tested	Variable Controlled	Type of Correlation	
		Zero-order	Partial
1. Chance with Precautions	Education	.21*	.14
2. Precautions with Self-reported Coping	Age	-.22*	-.11
3. Precautions with Self-reported Coping	Education	-.22*	-.18
4. Precautions with Self-reported Coping	Age	-.22*	-.14
5. Control with Self-reported Coping	Age	.34**	.29*

Note.  $N = 59$ .

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 22

## Partial Correlation Results: Community Study

Relationship Tested	Variable Controlled	Type of Correlation	
		Zero-order	Partial
1. Seriousness with Victim Blame	Race	-.29**	-.23*
2. Seriousness with Victim Blame	Sex	-.29**	-.29**
3. Seriousness with Victim Blame	Education	-.29**	-.24**
4. Victim Blame with Control	Age	.22*	.18*
5. Victim Blame with Control	Race	.22*	.26**
6. Victim Blame with Control	Sex	.22*	.17*
7. Victim Blame with Control	Education	.22*	.26**
8. Chance with Precautions	Sex	.19*	.15

Note.  $N = 100$ .

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 20 shows that, in victim study I, partialling out the effects of education, age, and sex on four significant relationships did not reduce any of these relationships to nonsignificant levels. Similarly, Table 22 shows that of the eight relationships tested in the community study, only one (#8) became nonsignificant after controlling the effects of a demographic variable. (In this one case, the zero-order correlation was quite small.)

Given the possibility that a correlation could be "significantly" reduced after controlling the effects of a third variable, but still differ significantly from zero, a second criterion for spuriousness was used, namely, a test of change in the correlation. Fisher's r-to-z transformation was performed and tests of the difference between zero-order and partial correlations were conducted. Consistent with the results discussed above, a significant decrease in the correlation was not observed for any relationship, including victim study II. For example, the largest decrease (i.e., .11) was still nonsignificant, z = 1.51, n.s.

However, in victim study II, spuriousness remains a plausible explanation for several relationships. In general, if a correlation is no longer significantly different from zero after controlling for a third variable (regardless of whether the amount of decrease is significant), this result is sufficient to suggest spuriousness. As shown in Table 21, this outcome occurred in four out of five relationships tested. Therefore, the following modifications and additions to the results of victim study II are necessary: (1) Chance

attributions and precautionary behaviors are probably spuriously related, via the respondent's level of education. More educated victims attributed their victimization more to chance factors,  $r(56) = .33$ ,  $p < .005$ , and also responded more frequently with precautionary behaviors,  $r(56) = .24$ ,  $p < .04$ , than less educated victims; (2) precautionary behaviors and self-reported coping are probably spuriously related, via the demographic variables of age, education, and income. Precautionary behaviors are more frequently reported among younger victims,  $r(54) = .31$ ,  $p < .01$ , more educated victims,  $r(56) = .24$ ,  $p < .04$ , and victims with higher household incomes,  $r(54) = .31$ ,  $p < .01$ . Similarly, poorer self-reported coping was reported by younger victims,  $r(51) = .38$ ,  $p < .002$ , more educated victims,  $r(53) = .21$ ,  $p < .06$ , and victims with higher household incomes,  $r(51) = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ .

In summary, the "third variable" test was applied to a number of relationships, but few were found to be spurious. Spuriousness was an alternative explanation for several relationships in victim study II, where partial correlations did not differ from zero. Even in these cases, the partial correlations did not satisfy the criterion of being significantly smaller than the zero-order correlations, which only indicates that, in general, small correlations make it difficult to test for spuriousness.

Mediating relationships. In response to the second question posited above, a number of intervening- or mediating-variable hypotheses have been explored, post hoc. These hypotheses are consistent

with at least one of the theoretical models used to generate the initial set of hypotheses, but go beyond the initial predictions in an attempt to substantiate the major indirect effects.

The possibility of mediating or indirect relationships was tested in situations where three variables were connected by three significant zero-order correlations. As Figures 1 through 3 illustrate, this situation arose only in victim study I. As shown in Figure 1, there are six meaningful intervening-variable hypotheses that can be tested. In five of these hypotheses, self-blame is the potential mediating-variable, while perceived avoidability takes on this role in the sixth hypothesis.

To test these indirect effects, standard multiple regression analyses were performed. Given an  $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$  model, the indirect effect of A on C was inferred when the apparent direct effect of A on C (as suggested by a significant zero-order correlation) was eliminated by entering A and B simultaneous into a regression equation predicting C. The assumption is that if A does not make a significant, independent contribution to the prediction of C (as determined by an  $F$  test of significance for A's standardized regression coefficient), then A probably has an indirect effect on C through B. This assumption is valid only if A has a direct or indirect effect on B. Indeed, only those relationships will be tested where A may have direct effects on B and C as suggested by the presence of significant zero-order correlations. (No suppressor variables are hypothesized.) The results of the mediating-variable tests are shown in Table 23.

Table 23

Regression Equations for Assessing  
Mediating Effects: Victim Study I

Dependent Variables	Predictors				
	Victimization Seriousness	Perceived Avoidability	Blame by Others	Self-Blame	Precautionary Behaviors
I. Self-Blame	.109	.392**			
II. Precautionary Behaviors		.218**		.196*	
III. Self-reported Coping	.203**			.171*	
IV. Self-reported Coping		.079		.105	
V. Self-reported Coping			.102	.118	
VI. Self-reported Coping				.038	.349**

Note.  $N = 180$ . Regression coefficients are in standardized form.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Regression equation I tested the following hypothesis: High perceived seriousness → Low perceived avoidability → Low self-blame. Confirming this expectation, the absence of a significant regression coefficient for seriousness suggests that seriousness affects self-blame by working through perceived avoidability.

Regression equation II examined the following hypothesis: Low perceived avoidability → Low self-blame → Fewer precautionary behaviors. Apparently, self-blame does not serve as a mediating variable in this equation, as perceived avoidability continues to play a significant role in the regression equation after the variance accounted for by self-blame is considered.

The mediating role of self-blame is further examined in three of the four remaining equations shown in Table 23, all of which focus on the prediction of self-reported coping. These three equations represent the following hypotheses: High perceived seriousness (equation III), low perceived avoidability (equation IV), and low perceived blame by others (equation V) each contribute to better victim coping through the reduction of self-blame (see Figure 1). The regression results do not support these hypotheses. In equation III, perceived seriousness continues to play a significant role in predicting coping when the contribution of self-blame is taken into account. Equations IV and V are inconclusive in that both variables in both equations produced insignificant regression coefficients. Although the zero-order correlations were significant, these nonsignificant betas can be attributed to low zero-order correlations with the dependent

variable and the problem of colinearity.

Equation VI tested the following intervening-variable hypothesis: Low self-blame → Less precautionary behavior → Better coping. The regression coefficients seem to support this hypothesis. The variance in self-reported coping that was previously attributed to self-blame has been absorbed by precautionary behaviors in this equation. Thus, precautions may mediate the relationship between self-blame and coping.

Predictors of coping. One of the main objectives of this research is to assess the effects of causal attributions (and other variables) on the individual's ability to cope with the threat or experience of criminal victimization. Thus far, the effects of individual variables have been examined, but no attempt has been made to (1) improve the prediction of coping by examining the combined effects of these variables, or (2) identify the best predictors of coping. Hence, the third and fourth questions stated at the beginning of this section will be addressed.

In terms of improving the prediction of coping, the question can be stated as follows: What is the "best" linear combination of variables for predicting self-reported coping? The "best" linear combination will be defined as that combination of variables which accounts for the most variance in the dependent variable using the least number of predictor variables. Stepwise multiple regression analyses were performed to create these optimum equations for each study. In order to be included in these equations, each predictor was required to make a significant increment in the proportion of variance ( $R^2$ ) explained



by variables already in the equation, and/or have a significant standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ).

The regression results for victim studies I and II are shown in Tables 24 and 25. The search for variables to include in the most parsimonious regression equations can be summarized as follows: In victim study I, victims coped better as they: (1) Took less additional precautionary action, (2) felt more personal control over possible future victimization, (3) attributed less blame to the offender, and (4) perceived their victimization as less serious. These four variables accounted for 25.3% of the variance in self-reported coping,  $F(4, 152) = 12.86$ ,  $p < .01$ . Adding the remaining 11 variables would only explain an additional 3.7% of the variance. Hence, these four variables should comprise the best prediction equation.

In victim study II, victims coped better if they: (1) Were older, (2) reported lower household incomes, (3) read the local newspaper column about crime less frequently, (4) were victimized more than once by a serious crime, and (5) felt more personal control over possible future victimization. These five variables accounted for 52.5% of the variance in self-reported coping,  $F(5, 41) = 9.07$ ,  $p < .01$ . Adding the remaining 10 variables would only account for an additional 7.9% of the variance in coping.

In the community study, perceived control was used as the dependent variable. As Table 26 indicates, only two variables should be included in the most parsimonious equation. Greater personal control over the possibility of future victimization was expressed by nonvictims

Table 24

Stepwise Regression for Predicting Coping: Victim Study I

Step	Predictors Entered	$R^2$	$\beta$
Variables to be Included in Best Linear Equation			
1	Precautions	.130	.305**
2	Personal Control	.195	.232**
3	Offender blame	.230	.198**
4	Seriousness	.253	.183**
Remaining Variables			
5	Blame by others	.264	.104
6	Type of crime (serious- ness)	.272	.079
7	Education	.277	.072
8	Media exposure	.281	.064
9	Income	.283	.061
10	Self-blame	.286	.050
11	Sex	.288	.050
12	Age	.289	.037
13	Race	.290	.037
14	Chance attributions	.290	.014
15	Avoidability	.290	.012

Note.  $N = 180$ .  $R^2$  = squared multiple correlation.  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 25

Stepwise Regression for Predicting Coping: Victim Study II

Step	Predictors Entered	$R^2$	$\beta$
Variables to be Included In Best Linear Combination			
1	Age	.148	.292*
2	Income	.240	.488**
3	Media exposure	.345	.469**
4	Victimization history	.459	.320*
5	Personal control	.525	.292*
Remaining Variables			
6	Offender blame	.541	.263
7	Precautions	.553	.160
8	Seriousness	.566	.154
9	Self-blame	.577	.144
10	Citizen control	.584	.096
11	Education	.593	.108
12	Sex	.602	.098
13	Blame by others	.603	.039
14	Race	.604	.048
15	Chance attributions	.604	.032

Note.  $N = 59$ .  $R^2$  = squared multiple correlation.  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 26

## Stepwise Regression for Predicting Perceived Control:

## Community Study

Step	Predictors Entered	$R^2$	$\beta$
Variables to be Included In Best Linear Combination			
1	Income	.138	.282*
2	Sex	.225	.327**
Remaining Variables			
3	Age	.263	.150
4	Chance attributions	.296	.193
5	Race	.311	.147
6	Victim blame	.332	.191
7	Knowledge of victims	.350	.140
8	Precautions	.362	.122
9	Seriousness	.367	.067
10	Media exposure	.371	.061
11	Offender blame	.372	.045
12	Education	.372	.023

Note.  $N = 100$ .  $R^2$  = squared multiple correlations.  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

who: (1) Reported a higher household income, and (2) were males. These two variables only accounted for 22.5% of the variance in perceived control,  $F(2, 83) = 12.03$ ,  $p < .01$ , but no other variables could independently satisfy the criteria for inclusion in the "best" linear equation.

The last question of interest concerns the relative importance of various predictors of coping. What are the best predictors of coping and, more specifically, how do attributions (and other variables within the model) compare with demographic factors? Two approaches to this question have been taken--one comparing individual items and the other comparing groups of items.

The regression results shown in Tables 24 through 26 offer a comparison of individual items in terms of their relative importance in predicting coping responses. Victim study I revealed a different pattern of results than victim study II. In the former study, psychological and behavioral reactions were certainly better predictors of coping than were demographic variables (e.g., no demographic variables were included in the best regression equation). However, the results from victim study II and the nonvictim community study indicate that demographic variables were the best predictors (e.g., personal control was the only nondemographic variable included in the best regression equation for victim study II).

These results generally confirm the findings of the stepwise regressions discussed above. Several outcomes are noteworthy. In victim study I, the tendency to engage in precautionary behavior, as a single

item, contributed more to the  $R^2$  than any of the item groupings. In addition, attributions, as a group, made a significant contribution to the prediction of coping in victim study I and a significant contribution to the prediction of perceived control in the community study.

Finally, it should be noted that personal control played an important role in predicting coping responses in both victim studies I and II. However, in two of the three studies, demographic variables accounted for the most variance in coping.

Table 27

Regression Results for Assessing the Relative  
Importance of Predictors: Victim Study I

Predictors Entered Last	Number of Variables	$R^2$ Increment	$F$
Demographic variables	6	.015	0.50
Personal control	1	.046	10.70**
Precautions	1	.073	16.98**
Blame by others	1	.009	2.09
Avoidability	1	.000	0.00
Seriousness	2	.029	3.37*
Attributions	3	.036	2.79*

Note.  $N = 180$ . The  $F$  ratio indicates the amount of increment in  $R^2$  when each of the above-named predictors is entered last in the regression equation.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 28

Regression Results for Assessing the Relative  
Importance of Predictors: Victim Study II

Predictors Entered Last	Number of Variables	$R^2$ Increment	$F$
Demographic variables	7	.358	5.44**
Personal control	1	.085	4.52*
Precautions	1	.017	1.81
Blame by others	1	.001	1.06
Avoidability	1	.000	0.00
Seriousness	1	.015	1.60
Attributions	3	.054	1.93

Note.  $N = 59$ . The  $F$  ratio indicates the amount of increment in  $R^2$  when each of the above-named predictors is entered last in the regression equation.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .



Table 29

Regression Results for Assessing the Relative  
Importance of Predictors: Community Study

Predictors Entered Last	Number of Variables	$R^2$ Increment	$F$
Demographic variables	7	.225	5.74**
Precautions	1	.013	2.32
Seriousness	1	.003	0.54
Attributions	3	.059	3.51*

Note.  $N = 100$ . The  $F$  ratio indicates the amount of increment in  $R^2$  when each of the above-named predictors is entered last in the regression equation.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

## REANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In general, the results described above are relatively weak and inconclusive. Small correlation coefficients may suggest measurement error--a problem that may increase the number of type II errors (i.e., failures to detect the x-y covariation). In the present case, there is a real possibility of sizable measurement error as a result of unreliable and perhaps invalid measures. As discussed earlier, the composite control variables are of particular concern because of their low internal consistency and questionable factor structure. Thus, a decision was made to explore the effects of using an alternative operational definition of personal control. In victim study I, victim study II, and the community study, the one item with the best face validity was selected from the composite control indices to represent the personal control construct--"How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future?" (4-point response format: "Almost no control" to "Almost complete control"). This item was then used to re-examine each hypothesis that involved the personal control variable. The results of this post hoc reanalysis are presented below.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states that increased self-blame among crime victims and increased victim blame among nonvictims should each be associated with increased feelings of personal control over future

victimizations. In contrast, greater attributions to chance should be associated with reduced feelings of control. No prediction was made concerning the relationship between offender blame and personal control.

As described earlier, the results based on the composite control index showed little support for this hypothesis among crime victims, although somewhat better support among nonvictims. The results produced from using a single control item were generally similar, although two differences were apparent in victim study I. First, as hypothesized, self-blame was positively correlated with personal control (when using the single item), although the relationship was weak,  $r(176) = .14$ ,  $p < .03$ . Secondly, the unexpected positive relationship between chance attributions and personal control found in victim study I was no longer significant when using the single control item.

The single-item results from victim study II and the community study were essentially the same as those reported for the composite control variable. That is, attributions were unrelated to personal control in victim study II, and victim blame was, again, positively related to feelings of personal control in the community study,  $r(92) = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ .

#### Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 states that, for victims, feelings of personal control should increase along with the tendency to engage in precautionary behaviors. In addition, precautions should mediate the relationships between attributions and personal control.

Although precautionary action was unrelated to feelings of control for both victims and nonvictims when using the composite control index, a significant relationship was found in victim study II when using the single control item. That is, victims who reported taking additional precautionary behaviors also felt more control over their chances of being victimized by crime again in the future,  $r(56) = .39, p < .001$ . The finding is consistent with the attribution-control model.

Because chance and offender attributions were correlated with precautionary behavior, they may exhibit indirect effects on personal control. However, neither of these attributions was significantly correlated with personal control. Furthermore, although the total indirect effects of offender attributions ( $.22 \times .39 = .09$ ) and chance attributions ( $.21 \times .39 = .08$ ) are slightly larger than the direct effects (.02 and .05 respectively), they are still very small.

### Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis 7 states that the greater victims' sense of control over future victimization, the less psychological impact the incident should have on them (i.e., the better they should cope with the incident). In both victim studies I and II, more personal control (as measured by the composite indices) was associated with better self-reported coping.

The use of the single control item yielded a different set of results. In victim study II, the correlation between control and coping was no longer significant. In victim study I, the correlation

remained significant, but suffered a noticeable reduction in size,  $r(174) = .15$ ,  $p < .03$ . (The original correlation using the composite variable was .28).

### Hypothesis 10

The relevant portion of hypothesis 10 states that as the perceived seriousness of victimization increases: (a) Greater variability should be apparent in victims' feelings of control and (b) perceived control should be more strongly correlated with impact/coping measures. Prediction b also suggests an interaction between control and seriousness, such that "low" control and "high" seriousness lead to the worst coping, and the opposite set of conditions lead to the best coping.

Prediction a received no support in either victim study I or II, as the composite control index showed no variance across "high" and "low" seriousness conditions. The results were no different using the single control item. Control variance did not differ within victim study I (low seriousness  $s^2 = .645$  vs. high seriousness  $s^2 = .664$ ),  $F(2, 119) = 1.00$ , n.s., or within victim study II (low seriousness  $s^2 = .765$  vs. high seriousness  $s^2 = .529$ ),  $F(2, 30) = 1.45$  n.s.

Concerning prediction b, perceived control as a single item was not more strongly correlated with self-reported coping under conditions of high seriousness than under conditions of low seriousness. This finding matches the results using the composite variable and, again, fails to support the prediction. Unlike the correlations shown in Table 19, the single item correlations between control and coping were

all nonsignificant.

An analysis of variance yielded the same results as found in the initial analyses. In neither victim study I nor II did personal control interact with victimization seriousness to affect the overall coping indices.

### Hypothesis 11

The relevant portion of hypothesis 11 states that victims should report greater perceived control over future victimization with the passage of time, to the point where perceived control equals that reported by nonvictims (presumably equivalent to a previctimization state). When the composite index was used, the passage of time was unrelated to how much control victims reported in both studies. However, the reanalysis showed support for the original hypothesis. As time passed, victims reported more control over the chances of future victimization. This relationship was significant in victim study I,  $r(176) = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ , and marginally significant in victim study II,  $r(56) = .20$ ,  $p < .06$ . (In the latter case, the amount of time since victimization was a truly "independent variable" created through random assignment procedures.)

In addition, comparisons between victims and nonvictims were supportive of the hypothesis. In victim study II, victims felt less control than nonvictims (1.78 vs. 2.15) shortly after victimization,  $t(127) = 2.25$ ,  $p < .05$ , and that this difference became nonsignificant with the passage of time (2.00 vs. 2.15). Victims in study I showed

a similar trend toward increased perceived control, from 1.93 in months 1-8 to 2.17 in months 17-21. Neither mean is significantly different from 2.15.

### Exploratory Model Testing

Similar to the initial exploratory analyses, an attempt will be made to answer questions concerning spuriousness, mediating variables, maximum prediction, and the relative importance of specific variables. The definitions of these terms and the nature of these inquiries were explicated earlier.

Tests for spuriousness again used demographic variables as possible "third-variable" explanations. Only two additional tests for spuriousness were necessary. In victim study I, the victim's age was a plausible explanation for the observed relationship between self-blame and perceived control. However, the relationship remained significant after controlling for age,  $r(173) = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the community study, the respondent's age and sex were possible rival explanations for the observed relationship between victim blame and perceived control. However, the relationship remained significant after controlling for age,  $r(89) = .19$ ,  $p < .03$ , and for sex,  $r(89) = .21$ ,  $p < .02$ .

No mediating-variable hypotheses were tested using the single control item, as none of the relationships satisfied the criterion established earlier for examining indirect effects.

New regression analyses were performed for both victim studies

and the community study to identify any changes that occurred in the best linear equations for predicting self-reported coping and personal control. For victim study I, the initial results were shown in Table 23 involving the composite control variable. While the composite control variable was entered on the second step and included in the best equation, the single control item was entered on the fourth step and narrowly missed inclusion in the best equation. However, the order of entry for the three best variables was unaffected. In summary, the most parsimonious regression equation for victim study I would indicate that victims coped better as they: (1) Took less additional precautions, (2) attributed less blame to the offender, and (3) perceived their victimization as less serious. Although these variables account for only nineteen (19) percent of the variance in self-reported coping,  $F(3, 160) = 12.55, p < .01$ , the remaining 13 variables only accounted for an additional seven (7) percent of the variance.

For victim study II, the composite control variable was entered as the fifth and last variable in the most parsimonious equation (see Table 25). In contrast, the single control item made virtually no contribution to the prediction of coping and thus, was excluded from the equation. Furthermore, it had no effect on the order of entry or the number of variables included in the most parsimonious equation. In summary, victims in study II coped better if they: (1) Were older, (2) reported lower household incomes, (3) less frequently read the newspaper column about crime, and (4) were victimized more than once by a serious crime. These four variables accounted for 45.9 percent



of the variance in coping,  $F(4, 45) = 9.56$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the remaining 11 variables only accounted for an additional seven (7) percent of the variance.

For the community study, the composite control variable was treated as the dependent variable and only two predictors were retained in the best linear regression equation--household income and sex (see Table 26). The reanalysis using the single control item also produced a parsimonious equation that contained only two predictors, but this time, sex dropped out of the equation and age became the first entry, followed by income. In summary, nonvictims reported more personal control over their chances of future victimization when they were (1) younger and (2) reported a higher household income. These two variables accounted for only fourteen (14) percent of the variance in personal control,  $F(2, 84) = 6.87$ ,  $p < .01$ . The other nine predictor variables explained an additional 10.5 percent of the variance.

One final analytic strategy was employed to assess the relative importance of specific variable sets for predicting coping and control responses. Groups of items or single items were each entered last in the regression equation to identify those which contribute independently to the prediction of the dependent variable, over and above the contribution made by the other variables. The initial results were shown in Tables 27, 28, and 29.

Several differences between the initial results and the single item results are noteworthy. In victim study I, personal control did not make a significant independent contribution ( $R^2$  increment = .017),

$F(1, 164) = 3.82$ , n.s. Similarly, independent contributions were no longer apparent from seriousness ( $R^2$  increment = .027),  $F(2, 164) = 3.00$ , n.s., or attributions ( $R^2$  increment = .034),  $F(3, 164) = 2.52$ , n.s. Thus, precautionary behavior was the only independent contributor to self-reported coping over and above the other predictors.

In victim study II, demographic variables played a larger independent role in predicting coping ( $R^2$  increment = .418),  $F(7, 43) = 10.55$ ,  $p < .01$ , personal control no longer made a significant independent contribution ( $R^2$  increment = .010),  $F(1, 43) = 0.88$ , n.s., and attributions made a significant contribution to the prediction equation ( $R^2$  increment = .045),  $F(3, 43) = 2.65$ ,  $p < .05$ .

In the community study, where the control item was used as the dependent variable, none of the predictors made a significant independent contribution to the  $R^2$  when entered last in the prediction equation. The predictor variables which lost their predictive power were demographic variables ( $R^2$  increment = .103),  $F(7, 84) = 1.70$ , n.s., and attributions ( $R^2$  increment = .052),  $F(3, 84) = 2.00$ , n.s.

### Summary

Substituting the most face-valid control item for the composite control index yielded some noteworthy differences in the results, as well as some replications. The single-item results pertaining to hypothesis 3 were similar to the composite results, although somewhat more supportive of the hypothesis. Self-blame in victim study I and victim blame in the community study were each positively related to

feelings of personal control, while only the latter relationship was significant when using the composite index. Hypothesis 5 received no support in the original (composite variable) analyses, but was supported in victim study I using the single control item, i.e., additional precautionary action was associated with greater feelings of control over future victimization.

Not all of the single-item results offered better support than the composite results for the attribution-control model. Hypothesis 7 received strong support in both victim studies using the composite index (i.e., more personal control was associated with better coping), but this hypothesis received support only in victim study I when the single control item was employed. Hypothesis 10, which concerned the complex effects of victimization seriousness, received no support when using either the composite or single-item measure.

Hypothesis 11 is another case where the reanalysis provided support for the hypothesis, but the original composite results did not. When using the single-item, feelings of control among victims increased with the passage of time, to the point where personal control was equivalent to that reported by nonvictims.

Additional analyses in the context of model testing covered a variety of questions. Tests of spuriousness yielded no support for third-variable explanations, and no mediating-variable hypotheses were necessary, given the pattern of results. Comparisons between the composite and single-item control variables were possible when addressing the questions of maximum prediction and relative importance of

predictors. In both cases, the composite variable played a stronger role than the single-item, as summarized below.

Unlike the composite variable, the single-item was not included in the most parsimonious equation for predicting self-reported coping in victim study I or victim study II. Changing to the single control item also reduced the total amount of variance accounted for by the best equation in each study. However, changing to the single control item did not affect the order of entry or membership in the best equations.

In terms of the relative importance and independence of the variables, the single-item control variable did not make a significant independent contribution in either victim study, while the composite variable did so in both studies. (Furthermore, as the dependent variable, the control item was not independently predicted by any variables in the community study.)

However, it should be emphasized that the overall pattern of results for victims was relatively unchanged by the reanalysis. Precautionary behavior remained the critical independent predictor of coping in victim study I, and demographic characteristics continued to be the important predictors in victim study II.

Several general conclusions can be drawn from this reanalysis effort. The composite control index was able to explain variance in coping that was unexplained by the single control item. However, the single control item seems to provide somewhat stronger support for the attribution-control model as a whole, and offers face validity that is

more congruent with the language of this theoretical framework. Nonetheless, the results are oftentimes weak and sometimes ambiguous. The major limitations of these data are detailed in the Discussion section.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary and Assessment of Major Findings

The primary thrust of this dissertation has been to investigate the extent and psychological importance of the victim-blaming response among victims of crime and local nonvictims. Concerning the extent of victim blame, a surprising number of presumably innocent crime victims (one in three) accepted some responsibility for their own victimization, but not as much responsibility as nonvictims would like to attribute to them. Victims also attributed more responsibility for their victimization to chance and more to the offender than did nonvictims. Assuming that victimization is a more personal, ego-involving topic for victims, these results are consistent with defensive attribution theory. According to this interpretation, victims have an ego-protective need to deny responsibility for negative outcomes and see such events as beyond their control (i.e., due to chance factors and offenders). However, the present data do not clearly indicate whether these victim-nonvictim differences are due to such motivational biases or to differences in available information. For example, the latter possibility is supported by research on actor-observer differences (cf. Jones & Nisbett, 1971). Victims (as "actors") may place greater emphasis on external factors to explain victimization than will nonvictims (as "observers") because these two groups possess differing amounts and

types of information about the victimization incident. This is especially true in the present research, where nonvictims knew nothing about the individual victimization cases.

The hypothesized causes and consequences of victim blame have been examined for both victims and nonvictims. In general, the psychological importance of victim blame as a reaction to crime was not well identified in this research. The findings were only partially supportive of the attribution-control model.

To begin with, the model was unable to predict the effects of victimization seriousness. The seriousness data were generally consistent with defensive attribution theory--victims of more serious crimes wanted to believe that their victimization was unavoidable and furthermore, were less likely to blame themselves for what happened. Similarly, nonvictims who viewed victimization as rather serious tended to assign less blame to victims than those who saw victimization as a less serious outcome. Thus, victimization seriousness may stimulate ego-defensive processes. However, it does not appear to affect feelings of personal control.

Perhaps the central hypothesis derived from the attribution-control model was that self-blame and victim blame should be positively related to feelings of personal control over future victimization. This hypothesis received some support from the data. Although self-blame among victims did not enhance feelings of control when using the composite control variable, a reanalysis of the data using a single face-valid control item did find this relationship in one of the

studies. In addition, the more blame attributed to victims by non-victim community residents, the more personal control that nonvictims felt over their own chances of being victimized by crime.

For nonvictims, victim-blame was assessed not only in terms of its possible effects on their feelings of personal control and vulnerability, but also in terms of its effects on their attitudes toward crime victim services. The justice model received some support on attitudinal measures. Police officers who tended to blame crime victims held more negative attitudes toward victim services than officers who were less prone to victim blame. However, this relationship did not hold up for community respondents.

One of the main questions posited in this research is whether self-blame will facilitate, retard, or have no effect on the victim's ability to cope with victimization. One study suggested that self-blame has no effect on coping, while the other study suggested that it has a weak negative effect. The latter study indicated that victims who blamed themselves were somewhat more angry and upset about their victimization than those who tended not to blame themselves. These results seem to conflict with the only available data (Bulman & Wortman, 1977), which indicate that self-blame among paralyzed accident victims is a healthy, positive response to victimization. Of course, paralysis is usually much more serious than criminal victimization, bringing permanent consequences for the victim.

Self-blame did not appear to have only negative consequences for the individual. For example, greater self-blame was associated with



additional precautionary behaviors. However, a closer look at the data revealed that engaging in additional precautionary behaviors was associated with poorer coping, and, in fact, self-blame seemed to contribute to poor coping indirectly through additional precautionary actions.

The reanalysis of the data using the single control item yielded an apparent theoretical inconsistency. Precautionary behavior was associated with poorer self-reported coping, but it was also associated with feelings of greater control over future victimization in victim study II. How can victims feel a sense of control, but yet cope poorly with victimization? These relationships with precautions imply that personal control and coping might be negatively related--a finding that would make little theoretical sense. However, in victim study II, where these relationships can be examined, control and coping were unrelated when using the single control item, and, in fact, were positively related when using the composite control index. Hence, while these results are somewhat confusing, at a minimum, they indicate that the single control item and the composite control index have different correlates. The single control variable seems to stand separate from coping as a reaction to victimization.

Another set of questions addressed in this research concerned the interdependence and relative importance of the various predictors of coping, with emphasis on the relationship between attributions and other variables. Several conclusions were reached. First, the large majority of the zero-order correlations were not spurious in nature,

although in one victim study, precautions seemed to be spuriously related to chance attributions and to coping by way of certain demographic variables. Second, the mediating role of self-blame was questionable and difficult to determine because of the small zero-order correlations involved. However, as noted above, self-blame contributed to more precautions, which, in turn, contributed to poorer coping. Third, it was determined that psychological, behavioral, and demographic variables could be successfully combined to account for more variance in coping than was possible by individual variables. Nonetheless, most of the variance remained unexplained.

Fourth, although demographic variables were able to account for the most variance in coping responses in two of the three main studies, certain psychological and behavioral reactions made a significant, independent contribution in each study. However, attributions were not among the strongest predictors of coping.

### Implications

The implications of these results for the treatment of crime victims are necessarily limited, due to the paucity of strong relationships in the data. One might conclude from this research that attribution processes have little effect on a victim's personal adjustment, and therefore, have virtually no implications for how to improve the plight of crime victims. However, given some significant results, as well as the real possibility of measurement error, it would be unwise to accept the null hypothesis without further research. In light of these

factors, a few implications should be discussed.

Understanding the victim's attribution process may be important for determining the most appropriate form of victim services, especially in the areas of supportive counseling and crime prevention. If psychological intervention is to be effective, counselors/therapists must identify and attack any thought processes which impede the recovery process. As noted above, the present research suggests that self-blame among crime victims does not contribute to better coping, as it apparently did in Bulman and Wortman's study of paralyzed accident victims. To the contrary, self-blame may lead to poorer coping, but more research is needed to confirm this very tentative conclusion. This conclusion is consistent with the general tendency among victim counselors/advocates to discourage victims from blaming themselves. However, it would be premature to propose a specific reattribution therapy. Altering an individual's attributions can be risky if the effects of this alteration are unknown. The present data suggest that encouraging victims to attribute their misfortune to chance of the offender would be no better than self-blame. Hence, a reattribution strategy should be proposed only after additional data point toward specific modifications.

While the "best" attributions for coping with victimization are unknown, arguments for and against self-blame can be proposed. If self-blame carries little or no psychological benefit for the individual, it seems reasonable to discourage this personal attribution, especially in light of other research (Wortman & Coates, Note 28) which

demonstrates that self-blame is seen by observers as an indication of poor coping and is likely to result in personal rejection. However, self-blame may bring long-range benefits for the victim. The present research shows some evidence of a positive relationship between self-blame and the tendency to engage in precautionary behaviors. Evaluation data on certain crime prevention programs (e.g., Schneider, Note 31) suggest that people who engage in precautionary behaviors may actually reduce their own chances of being victimized. Thus, victims who blame themselves may be generally safer than victims who do not blame themselves. (However, the present data indicate that victims do not fully appreciate this long-term benefit, as precautions were consistently unrelated to feelings of personal control.) Thus, we are faced with a minor dilemma--self-blame may contribute to poorer coping, poorer observer-rated coping and observer rejection, yet it may reduce the victim's actual chances of being victimized through additional precautions. In some respects then, the choice facing a victim service program is between preventing revictimization or enhancing immediate coping skills.

The above discussion should not be allowed to distort the importance of causal attributions in the present research findings. Assuming that the overall results are valid and reliable, they indicate that attributions are less important than other factors for predicting coping, and perhaps these other factors deserve greater attention from victim advocates. For example, one might think that self-protective, precautionary behaviors would contribute to better coping, but just the

opposite was true. Perhaps victims should be reminded that their precautionary measures do, indeed, decrease their chances of being victimized. An alternative strategy might be to discourage them from taking excessive precautions out of concern that too much crime prevention activity will distort the threat of victimization and give crime an unwarranted importance in their lives.

Personal control may be an important determinant of the victim's ability to cope with victimization (although the present results show only mixed support for this proposition). If this is true, then improving the victim's sense of personal control over victimization may be a fruitful therapeutic approach. Strategies for improving internal control have been suggested by others (e.g., Dweck, 1975), with the primary emphasis on altering attributions. Other strategies should also be explored, including more indirect approaches (e.g., changing perceptions of the risk of being victimized and pointing out the control potential of precautionary behaviors).

Some authors (e.g., Wortman & Brehm, 1975) have expressed concern about giving people a false sense of control over their environment. While this should always be a concern, criminal victimization may be a more controllable event than most people are willing to believe. This author believes that citizens can protect their property and themselves much more effectively than they are doing at present. If this is true, then perhaps feelings of control should be substantially increased. In fact, even a somewhat exaggerated sense of control may not be problematic. If creating a mild "illusion of invulnerability" is

psychologically functional for the victim and unlikely to increase the risk of being revictimized, then feelings of control can be encouraged with little reason for concern.

Knowing how nonvictims react to criminal victimization may also be helpful for improving the treatment received by crime victims, both individually and as a group. For example, the present results indicate that the receptiveness of police officers to the delivery of victim services is affected by their general belief in the blameworthiness of victims. Consistent with the just world theory, officers who maintained that victims were generally responsible for being victimized also felt that special victim services were unnecessary. The tendency for police officers to blame crime victims may translate into various discretionary behaviors regarding arrest, referrals for service, preparation of offense reports, etc., but these possibilities have yet to be studied. Perhaps an educational program could be developed to alter police officers' perceptions of victim responsibility as a method of engendering greater empathy and support for victim services. However, such an approach should not be pursued until there is more evidence to indicate that police perceptions are biased or distorted in some way. (Although police officers attributed more blame to victims than did other respondents, their judgments may be more veridical than either local citizens or victims.)

For nonvictim community residents, blaming the victim seems to provide them with a sense of personal control over the possibility of being victimized, but does not affect their general attitude toward

victim services. However, the tendency to blame the victim in order to make oneself less vulnerable may have negative consequences for victims in general. For example, the concepts of compensation and restitution are central to the recent victim's rights movement, and support for these ideas may depend upon people's willingness to believe that this is not a just world, where individuals get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Again, research and educational strategies may be appropriate for correcting misperceptions about the extent of victim responsibility, victim compensation, offender punishment, and other factors that contribute to the determination of fairness and justice.

### Limitations and New Directions

The methods and measures used in this research have some potential and actual limitations that should be made explicit for those seeking to evaluate and interpret the results. These limitations not only encourage cautiousness in the interpretation of the results, but also suggest new directions for future research.

One of the fundamental methodological limitations of this research is that, by and large, it is based on correlational data collected at one point in time. This creates the familiar problem of being unable to confidently identify either the existence or direction of causal relationships. While certain theories have been utilized to establish some causal ordering among the variables, undoubtedly alternative conceptualizations and different causal orders can be imagined. Future

research in this area should consider the collection of panel data to resolve such problems.

There is a second methodological limitation that should be noted--one which affects the generalizability of the findings. The results obtained from interviews with crime victims can, at best, be generalized to those victims who report their victimization to the police. Victimization surveys indicate that a substantial proportion of crime is never reported to the police. In addition, it should be noted that subjects in the victim and community (nonvictim) samples were residents of a large suburban city, and the police sample was drawn from this city's police department. Therefore, generalizations to urban areas should be seriously questioned.

The sample in victim study I contained six different types of crime victims in order to enhance the generalizability of the findings. However, if reactions to victimization differ substantially across the different types of crimes, then this sampling approach would treat these differences as error variance and decrease the chances of finding meaningful relationships. Future research should test for differences in attributional and coping responses among different types of victims using larger sample sizes. Because the circumstances surrounding victimization are noticeably different across various crimes, the possibility of constructing a theoretical model to account for diverse psychological reactions should be explored.

There are several conceptual and measurement issues that deserve mention. First, there is a potential validity problem with self-report



measures. Social psychologists have learned to be very cautious about accepting self-reports at face value. Research has shown that people are often apprehensive about being evaluated (Rosenberg, 1965) and interested in making a favorable impression (Riecken, 1962). Furthermore, people are often unable to predict their own behavior (Freedman, 1969); their attitudes often do not correspond to their actions (Wicker, 1969); and they are frequently unaware of the real causes of their behavior (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). While the present research has shown convergence between behavioral observations and self-reports on the variable of victim blame, other types of self-report measures should be validated in future work.

Another important problem concerns both the conceptual and operational definitions of "blame," "control," and "coping." For example, the present research has used the words "blame" and "responsibility" to measure the blame construct, yet it remains unclear exactly what subjects were thinking when they responded to these questions. Were they thinking of causality or responsibility? As noted earlier, these attributions may have had different meanings in the area of crime and punishment (cf. Pepitone, 1975). If responsibility is the primary focus, future research may benefit from Heider's (1958) delineation of five distinct ways of conceptualizing moral responsibility. If causality is the primary focus, perhaps future research should go beyond the internal-external dimension of attributions to include the stable-unstable dimension (see Weiner, 1974).

Perhaps the most problematic construct was that of personal

control. The primary impetus for a reanalysis of the data was the conceptual and measurement issues surrounding the composite Personal Control Index. Although variables such as worry, perceived risk, and perceived control were initially treated as aspects of a larger control dimension, they were not highly intercorrelated. Certainly, the concept of personal control must be further developed and refined in the context of criminal victimization before it can be meaningfully applied in future research. For example, the relationship between measures of control over victimization and personality measures of control should be studied. Perhaps items measuring locus of control can be adapted to criminal victimization in particular.

With respect to coping, the present research has focused on aspects of personal adjustment, such as perceived impact, anger, emotional and psychological recovery, etc. Other aspects of personal adjustment, such as self-esteem and general anxiety could be measured to expand our knowledge of how victimization impacts on the individual. Furthermore, adjustments to work and social interactions constitute other important components of coping that should be given greater attention in future research. Again, traditional personality measures may be useful in future attempts to assess coping.

The present research is also limited in its ability to operationally define "healthy coping." For example, when a victim reports being "angry" and "upset," does this indicate that s/he is not coping as well as someone who does not report these feelings? Perhaps some anger is a healthy response to victimization. Certainly, there is a

point where such feelings are too intense or too extreme to be defined as "healthy" adjustments, but this point would be difficult to determine without expanding or modifying the response format. However, not all of the coping measures were this ambiguous. For example, when individuals reported that they they have not "recovered" from victimization or that the incident had a major "impact" on their lives, the data are somewhat less ambiguous.

Conceptual problems are especially noteworthy when they translate directly into concerns about reliability and validity. The conceptual ambiguity of certain composite variables (especially personal control) is reflected in low internal reliability. In this research, unreliable measurement is a plausible threat to statistical conclusion validity (cf. Cook & Campbell, 1979), i.e., the validity of statements about the existence of covariation between variables. Unreliable measurement will inflate the error variance and increase the probability of making type II errors, i.e., falsely concluding that no relationships exist. One solution to this problem was suggested above--in future work, constructs must be carefully defined with specific items which are highly intercorrelated.

In summary, there are several methodological and measurement issues that encourage caution when interpreting and applying the results of this research. This work was an exploratory investigation and future efforts should not ignore these limitations. To the author's knowledge, this research is the first and only attempt to systematically measure the personal effects of attributional reactions

to criminal victimization in the "real world." Certainly more research is needed to fully understand the role of motivational biases and cognitive processes in coping with crime and criminal victimization.

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APPENDIX A  
LETTER SENT TO ALL VICTIMS (EXCEPT RAPE)



EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

1454 ELMWOOD AVENUE

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60204



WILLIAM C. MCHUGH  
CHIEF OF POLICE

491-1500

The Evanston Police Department has recently created a Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit to help crime victims and witnesses. Our general objective is to do whatever we can to make things easier for these individuals.

In order to accomplish this, we urgently need the advice of people like yourself. Knowing that you were a crime victim in Evanston, we feel that you can increase our awareness of the difficulties facing victims and witnesses. We feel that we can improve the situation in the future only if we are truly sensitive to the needs and suggestions of those people who were involved in the past as crime victims and witnesses.

Thus, if you are agreeable, we would like to speak with you for approximately 30 minutes regarding your experiences and any suggestions you may have for us. You can expect a call from us within the next few days and probably no later than a week after you receive this letter. At that time, you can tell us if you are able to assist us in our effort to help future victims and witnesses. If you are willing to answer our questions, the interview can be completed at that time by phone. If another time would be more convenient, this too can be arranged. In either event, you can be assured that any information which you provide to us will be kept confidential and anonymous. If you prefer not to speak with us, your decision will be understood and accepted.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Wm. C. McHugh  
Chief of Police

Ronna Stamm, Coordinator  
Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit

RS/mja

**APPENDIX B**  
**LETTER SENT TO RAPE VICTIMS**



## EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

1454 ELMWOOD AVENUE

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60204

WILLIAM C. MCHUGH  
CHIEF OF POLICE

491-1500

The Evanston Police Department has recently created a Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit, staffed by civilians, to help crime victims and witnesses. Our general objective is to do whatever we can to make things easier for these individuals.

In order to accomplish this, we urgently need the advice of people like yourself. Knowing that you were a victim of serious crime in Evanston, we feel that you can increase our awareness of the difficulties facing victims and witnesses. We feel that we can improve matters in the future only if we are truly sensitive to the needs and suggestions of people like yourself who were involved as crime victims in the past.

We realize that being victimized can be a very stressful, emotionally upsetting event. However, we are not interested in discussing the details of your experience. Rather, we are concerned about any problems that you may have encountered after the crime incident. If possible, we will take corrective action to see that future victims are not faced with similar difficulties. We hope that you will be able to help us help others.

If you are agreeable, we would like one of our staff members to speak with you for approximately 30 minutes concerning any problems you encountered or suggestions you have for us. Any information that you give her will remain completely confidential and anonymous. You can expect a call from her within the next few days and probably no later than a week after you receive this letter. At that time, you can tell her if you are able to help us in our effort to provide services to crime victims and witnesses. If you are willing to answer some questions and offer suggestions, an interview can be arranged. You may wish to speak with her over the telephone or arrange for her to visit your home. The choice is yours. If you prefer not to speak with her, your decision will be understood and accepted.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Wm. C. McHugh  
Chief of Police

Ronna Stamm, Coordinator  
Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit

RS/mjm

APPENDIX C  
VICTIM TELEPHONE SURVEY (STUDY I)

## VICTIM TELEPHONE SURVEY (STUDY I)

Report # \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Crime \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Crime \_\_\_\_\_

Present Date \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Time \_\_\_\_\_ am  
pm

Length of Interview \_\_\_\_\_ min.

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm calling to speak with Mr., Ms., \_\_\_\_\_.

(IF VICTIM NOT HOME, ASK a)

(IF VICTIM ANSWERS OR COMES TO PHONE, ASK b)

a. When is the best time to get in touch with \_\_\_\_\_?

Day(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am; \_\_\_\_\_ pm.

I'll try to contact \_\_\_\_\_ when I have a better chance of catching him (her) at home.

(IF PERSON ASKS TO TAKE MESSAGE, SAY:)

No thank you. I'll try again. Goodbye.

b. Is this Mr., Mrs., Ms. \_\_\_\_\_? I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm working for the Victim/Witness Unit of the Evanston Police Department. Did you receive the letter we sent you?

(IF NO, SAY c, THEN d)

(If YES, SAY d)

c. If you don't mind, I'll quickly read you the letter so that you'll know why I'm calling.

(READ LETTER, THEN SAY:)

d. Do you mind answering some questions over the phone about your experiences as a crime victim? Your answers will be completely anonymous, but should be very helpful to us in planning our program.

- (1)  Okay  
 (2)  Okay, but not convenient now  
 (3)  Not interested

(IF 3, SAY:) Thank you for the time you've given us.  
 Goodbye. (Apparent reason for refusal:  
 \_\_\_\_\_.)

(IF 2, SAY:) When would be a more convenient time for  
 me to call back? Day(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time \_\_\_\_\_ am \_\_\_\_\_ pm

(IF 1, SAY:)

This should take about 25 to 30 minutes. Most of the questions only require that you give a Yes or No answer, but some will ask for a short explanation. For all questions, please try to keep your answers as brief as possible. This way, we can cover a wide range of questions in the shortest possible time.

First, I'd like to ask you some factual questions about the crime incident you were involved in. I'm referring to the \_\_\_\_\_ (CRIME) incident that took place in \_\_\_\_\_ (MONTH) of \_\_\_\_\_ (YEAR).

1. Were there any victims in this case other than yourself?  
 (1)  Yes (2)  No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 3)  
 (If YES, SAY:)

2. How many other people were victims not counting yourself? \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. How many eye-witnesses were there? \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. Was the offender a... (1)  Stranger (2)  Someone you knew by sight (3)  Casual acquaintance (4)  Friend, or (5)  Relative  
 5. Did you suffer any loss or damage of property? (1)  Yes (2)  No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 7)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

6. What would be your dollar estimate of this loss or damage?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. Did you suffer any loss of income, not including income lost as a result of court appearances? (1)  Yes (2)  No  
 8. If you had insurance, did you encounter any problems such as increased rates or policy cancellation? (1)  Yes (2)  No (3)  No insurance



9. Since the time of the incident, have you been threatened in any way by the offender? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
10. Has this crime caused you to lose a significant amount of time from normal activities such as work, school, or recreation? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
11. Were you physically injured? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No  
 (IF NO, GO TO ITEM 14)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)
12. Did you receive any medical treatment? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No  
 (IF NO, TO TO ITEM 14)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)
13. Were your medical expenses more than \$200 after you were compensated by insurance? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
14. How much were you upset by this incident when it occurred? Were you...  
 (1)\_\_\_Very upset (3)\_\_\_A little upset  
 (2)\_\_\_Fairly upset (4)\_\_\_Not at all upset
15. Who reported the crime to the police? Was it...  
 (1)\_\_\_You (3)\_\_\_Eye-witness  
 (2)\_\_\_Another victim (4)\_\_\_Someone else (specify)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
16. After the police were called, approximately how many minutes did it take for an officer to arrive? \_\_\_\_\_Minutes \_\_\_\_\_don't know \_\_\_\_\_Inapplicable
17. Did the police officer with whom you first had contact seem interested in gathering information about the crime? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
18. Did the officer fill out a report in your presence? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No (3)\_\_\_Don't know
19. Did s/he explain to you what course of action s/he intended to take or how the case would be handled? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
20. Did the officer seem concerned about you as an individual and the personal problems you were facing? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

21. Aside from gathering information about the crime, did the officer make an effort to say anything that would make you feel better?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

22. Overall, how satisfied were you with the treatment you received from the police?

(1)\_\_\_Very satisfied (3)\_\_\_Dissatisfied  
 (2)\_\_\_Satisfied (4)\_\_\_Very dissatisfied

(IF 1 OR 2, GO TO ITEM 24)  
 (IF 3 OR 4, SAY:)

23. Would you briefly explain why you weren't satisfied? \_\_\_\_\_

24. Has anyone reacted to you differently because you were a crime victim, either by treating you more negatively or more positively?

(1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 27)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

25. Have people reacted to you... (1)\_\_\_In a negative way  
 (2)\_\_\_In a positive way (3)\_\_\_Both

26. Would you explain, in just a few words, how people have reacted to you? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you feel that some people have blamed you for what happened?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

28. Have you in any way blamed yourself for what happened? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No

29. Has this victimization experience caused you to take precautions to avoid being victimized again in the future? In other words, have you changed your behavior or style of living in any way?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 31)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

30. In what ways have you changed or what precautions have you taken?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

31. Has this victimization experience caused you to change your attitude about people in general? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 33)

(IF YES, SAY:)

32. Would you briefly explain how your attitude toward other people has changed?

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33. As a result of your being a crime victim, has anyone close to you suffered or been negatively affected in any way not including people who were also victims? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 35)

(IF YES, SAY:)

34. How was this person affected? \_\_\_\_\_

---

35. Did you experience any problems related to this crime incident that we haven't touched upon yet, not including problems related to court appearance? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 37)

(IF YES, SAY:)

36. What other problems did you encounter?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

37. Did you receive any help for the problems you have mentioned up to this point--for example, counseling, financial compensation, or general advice? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 41)

(IF YES, SAY:)

38. From whom did you receive help? \_\_\_\_\_

39. What type of help did you receive? \_\_\_\_\_

40. Were you satisfied with the quality of service you received?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(GO TO ITEM 42)

41. Was there any particular reason why you didn't receive any help?
- 

42. Considering all the events that took place after the crime incident, but not including court appearance, which single problem stands out in your mind as the most serious or bothersome to you?
- 

43. Have you ever asked yourself why you were victimized? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 45)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

44. What conclusion did you reach? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

45. Does the thought that you were victimized ever make you mad or angry? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 47)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

46. In a few words, could you explain why? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

47. Looking back, do you now feel that you could have done anything differently before the incident to avoid what happened? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 50)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

48. What do you think you could have done? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

49. Did you know before the crime that this would help you avoid being victimized or is this something you've learned after the crime?  
 (1)\_\_\_Before (2)\_\_\_After

(GO TO ITEM 51)

50. Why do you feel that there was nothing you could have done to avoid being victimized? \_\_\_\_\_

51. How would you rate the seriousness of this crime? Would you rate it as...

(1) \_\_\_ Very serious

(3) \_\_\_ Not very serious

(2) \_\_\_ Serious

(4) \_\_\_ Not at all serious

(REPEAT CHOICES)

52. To what extent do you hold yourself responsible for what happened? Rate your responsibility on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, where 0 means that you were 0% responsible and 100 means that you were 100% responsible for what happened. \_\_\_\_\_%

53. To what extent do you see this incident as a chance event that could have happened to anyone? Again, use a scale from 0 to 100. This time, 0 means there was no chance involved--you were the right person at the right time--and 100 means that it was a completely chance or random event that could have happened to anyone. \_\_\_\_\_%

54. To what extent do you hold the offender responsible for what happened? Use a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 means that the offender was 0% responsible and 100 means that the offender was 100% responsible for what happened. \_\_\_\_\_%

55. Did you sign a complaint against someone in this case?

(1) \_\_\_ Yes (2) \_\_\_ No

56. Was someone arrested? (1) \_\_\_ Yes (2) \_\_\_ No (3) \_\_\_ Don't know

(IF 2 OR 3, GO TO ITEM 58)

(IF 1, SAY:)

57. What was this person charged with? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Don't know

58. Did you attend any court proceedings related to this case?

(1) \_\_\_ Yes (2) \_\_\_ No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 89)

(IF YES, SAY:)

59. How many times did you appear in court? \_\_\_\_\_



73. Were you at all nervous or anxious about appearing in court?  
(1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
74. When you arrived, did you already know what would be expected of you? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
75. Did someone prepare you for the type of questions you might be asked? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
76. Did anyone explain to you the major steps of the court process?  
(1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
77. Did anyone instruct you concerning your rights and duties as a witness? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
78. Do you feel that you were kept well informed as to what action was being taken on this case? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
79. Did the outcome of this case involve plea bargaining, whereby the accused person plead guilty to a lesser charge? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No (3)\_\_\_Don't know
80. Do you know what the outcome of the case was? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
81. Was the defendant... (1)\_\_\_found guilty and locked up  
(2)\_\_\_found guilty but not locked up  
(3)\_\_\_found not guilty  
OR (4)\_\_\_was the case dismissed  
OR (5)\_\_\_is it still in progress

(IF 5, GO TO ITEM 84)  
(IF 3 OR 4, GO TO ITEM 83)  
(IF 1 OR 2, SAY:)

82. What were the charges on which this person was found guilty?
- 

83. Do you feel that the final outcome was... (1)\_\_\_too lenient on the offender (2)\_\_\_too harsh on the offender (3)\_\_\_about right--neither too lenient nor too harsh
84. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way the State's Attorney handled the case?
- (1)\_\_\_Very satisfied (3)\_\_\_Dissatisfied  
(2)\_\_\_Satisfied (4)\_\_\_Very dissatisfied

(IF 1 OR 2, GO TO ITEM 86)  
(IF 3 OR 4, SAY:)

85. Would you briefly explain why you weren't satisfied with the State's Attorney? \_\_\_\_\_

---

86. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way the judge handled the case?

- (1) \_\_\_ Very satisfied                      (3) \_\_\_ Dissatisfied  
 (2) \_\_\_ Satisfied                              (4) \_\_\_ Very dissatisfied

(IF 1 OR 2, GO TO ITEM 88)  
 (IF 3 OR 4, SAY:)

87. Would you briefly explain why you weren't satisfied with the judge? \_\_\_\_\_

88. Considering all your court-related experiences, which single problem stands out in your mind as the most serious or bothersome to you? \_\_\_\_\_

---

89. Reviewing all your experiences in this case from start to finish, how willing would you be to cooperate with people from the criminal justice system should you ever be in contact with them in the future? Would you say you are...

- (1) \_\_\_ Very willing to cooperate      (3) \_\_\_ Not very willing  
 (2) \_\_\_ Somewhat willing                      (4) \_\_\_ Not at all willing to cooperate

(REPEAT CHOICES)

90. Emotionally and psychologically, would you say that you've completely recovered from the experience of being victimized?

- (1) \_\_\_ Yes    (2) \_\_\_ No    (3) \_\_\_ Don't know

(IF YES, GO TO ITEM 92)  
 (IF NO, OR DON'T KNOW, SAY:)

91. In what ways do you still feel the impact of this incident?

---

Now I'll ask you a few assorted questions. By the way, I won't be keeping you too much longer--we've already covered the major portion of the questions. My next question is...



92. How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future? Would you say that you have...

- (1)  Almost no control over what might happen to you  
 (2)  Some control  
 (3)  A lot of control  
 (4)  Almost complete control over what might happen to you

93. Could you briefly explain why you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

94. At night in your neighborhood, how worried are you about being held up on the street, threatened, beaten up, or anything of this sort? Are you...

- (1)  Very worried                      (3)  Just a little worried  
 (2)  Somewhat worried              (4)  Not at all worried

95. How would you compare your chances of being victimized by these crimes with the chances of other people in your neighborhood? Would you guess that these crimes are...

- (1)  A lot more likely to happen to you  
 (2)  A little more likely to happen to you  
 (3)  Equally likely for everyone  
 (4)  a little less likely to happen to you  
 (5)  a lot less likely to happen to you

(REPEAT CHOICES)

96. What do you think your actual chances of victimization are for these crimes? I realize that this is guess work, but would you say that your chances are...

- (1)  One in 50                              (4)  One in 1000  
 (2)  One in 100                          (5)  One in 10,000  
 (3)  One in 500

Now I'm going to read you a few statements. For each statement I read, you should tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with it. There are four possible answers you can give (READ SLOWLY): Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree. The first statement is:

97. Individuals who are charged with committing serious criminal offenses usually receive a just or fair punishment for their wrongdoing. (REPEAT SENTENCE.)

- (1)  Strongly agree                      (3)  Somewhat disagree  
 (2)  Somewhat agree                      (4)  Strongly disagree

98. There are many things the average citizen can do to help fight crime.  
 (1)\_\_\_Strongly agree (3)\_\_\_Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_Somewhat agree (4)\_\_\_Strongly disagree
99. Victims of crime in Evanston have always received as much attention and understanding as they deserve.  
 (1)\_\_\_Strongly agree (3)\_\_\_Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_Somewhat agree (4)\_\_\_Strongly disagree
100. The majority of crime victims are only mildly affected by their victimization experience.  
 (1)\_\_\_Strongly agree (3)\_\_\_Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_Somewhat agree (4)\_\_\_Strongly disagree
101. Have you ever heard of the Crime Victim's Compensation Act?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
- (IF NO, GO TO ITEM 104)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)
102. Did you receive any compensation? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
103. Had you ever heard of the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit before you received the letter from the Police Department? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No
104. As you were informed in the letter you received, the Victim/Witness Unit is doing whatever it can to help crime victims and witnesses. Where do you think the Unit should invest its time and energy? Can you suggest any problem areas where this new program might be helpful to victims or witnesses? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

SUGGESTIONS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, we need some basic background information from you and then we'll be finished. These are the usual questions about age, race, education, and income, with a few exceptions.

105. Your age is \_\_\_\_\_
106. (DO NOT ASK) (1)\_\_\_Male (2)\_\_\_Female

107. Your race? (1)\_\_\_Caucasion (2)\_\_\_Black (3)\_\_\_Latino/Spanish speaking  
 (4)\_\_\_Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

108. How much education have you had?

- (1)\_\_\_8 grades or less (4)\_\_\_Some college
- (2)\_\_\_Some high school (5)\_\_\_College graduate
- (3)\_\_\_High school graduate (6)\_\_\_Graduate work or beyond

109. We would like some estimate of the combined income of all household members. Which of the following income categories applies to your household?

- (1)\_\_\_ Less than \$7,500 (4)\_\_\_ Between \$25,000 & \$50,000
- (2)\_\_\_ Between \$7,500 & \$15,000 (5)\_\_\_ More than \$50,000
- (3)\_\_\_ Between \$15,000 & \$25,000

110. Have you been a victim of serious crime more than once?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 14)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

111. How many times have you been victimized, including the present case? \_\_\_\_\_

112. What types of crimes were involved in the other case(s)?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

113. My last question is: How often, if at all, do you read the Evanston Police Column in the Evanston Review newspaper? Do you read it... (1)\_\_\_Frequently (2)\_\_\_Infrequently (3)\_\_\_Never

I want to thank you very much for your cooperation. I'm sure that the information you've given us will be very helpful in the planning and development of our new Victim/Witness Program here in Evanston. Again, I would like to reassure you that the information you have given us will remain confidential and anonymous. Furthermore, if we can ever be of any help to you or someone you know who has been victimized by crime or has witnessed a serious crime in Evanston, please feel free to contact us at the Evanston Police Department.

Thank you again. Goodbye. COMPLETION TIME \_\_\_\_\_ am  
 \_\_\_\_\_ pm

APPENDIX D  
VICTIM TELEPHONE SURVEY (STUDY II)

## VICTIM TELEPHONE SURVEY (STUDY II)

I.D.# \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_, from the Victim/Witness Program. Is Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ there?

- A. (If not home) He/She was expecting a call from me. Can I contact him/her later today/this evening? Available \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm
- B. (If home) Is this Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_? I'm from the Victim/Witness Unit of the Evanston Police Department.

The reason I'm calling is to follow-up on the burglary that occurred at your place recently--to find out how you're doing and ask you a few questions about the incident and how well you were treated.

If you don't mind, I'll ask you some questions. This should take about 10 minutes and your answers will help us better understand any problems you've encountered so that we will know if we can be of any help to you or future crime victims in Evanston.

OK, I will go through these questions rather quickly, so a short answer of "yes" or "no" is usually all that is necessary.

1. Did you suffer any loss or damage of property? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
(2)\_\_\_No

(IF YES, ASK 2; IF NO, ASK 7)

2. Was this your personal property or did it belong to someone else (for example, other family members)? (1)\_\_\_Own (2)\_\_\_Someone else.
3. Did this property have any sentimental value beyond its monetary cost? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
4. What is your best estimate of the dollar value of this loss or damage? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. (If property stolen:) What do you think the chances are that you will recover the stolen property?
- (1)\_\_\_Very good (3)\_\_\_Poor  
(2)\_\_\_Good (4)\_\_\_Very poor

6. How much repayment for damages do you expect from insurance?

- (1)  Almost complete repayment (3)  No insurance  
 (2)  Very little repayment (4)  No real damage/loss

7. Did the police officers with whom you first had contact seem concerned about you as an individual and the personal problems you were facing? (1)  Yes (2)  No

IMPORTANT: (  ASK 8;  ASK 11)

8. After your initial contact with the police, did someone from the Police Department later stop by to inspect your home and make recommendations about home security? (1)  Yes (2)  No (MAKE SURE!)

9. Do you feel that this visit was...

- (1)  Very helpful (4)  Harmful  
 (2)  Helpful (5)  No opinion  
 (3)  Not helpful

10. How many of the officer's security recommendations are you planning to carry out within the next few months?

out of  recommendations (made on sheet)  
 recommendations already carried out

11. How secure do you feel your home is against future break-ins?

- (1)  Extremely secure (4)  Not very secure  
 (2)  Very secure (5)  Don't know  
 (3)  Somewhat secure

12. After your first contact with the police, did someone from the Police Department later stop by or call seeking more information about the burglary incident? (1)  Called only (2)  Stopped by (3)  No follow-up

13. Do you feel this contact was...

- (1)  Very helpful (4)  Harmful  
 (2)  Helpful (5)  No opinion  
 (3)  Not helpful

14. Overall, how satisfied were you with the treatment you received from the police?

- (1)  Very satisfied (3)  Dissatisfied  
 (2)  Satisfied (4)  Very dissatisfied

15. Reviewing all your experiences in this case, how willing would you be to cooperate with people from the Criminal Justice System should you ever be in contact with them in the future. Would you say you are...

- (1)  Very willing to cooperate      (3)  Not very willing  
 (2)  Somewhat willing                      (4)  Not at all willing to cooperate

16. How much were you upset by this incident when it occurred? Were you...

- (1)  Very upset                                      (3)  A little upset  
 (2)  Fairly upset                                      (4)  Not at all upset

17. How would you rate the seriousness of this crime? Would you rate it as...

- (1)  Very serious                                      (3)  Not very serious  
 (2)  Serious    (4)  Not at all serious

18. Emotionally and psychologically, would you say that you've completely recovered from the experience of being victimized?

- (1)  Yes    (2)  No    (3)  Don't know

19. Has this victimization experience caused you to take precautions to avoid being victimized again in the future? In other words, have you changed your behavior or style of living in any way?

- (1)  Yes    (2)  No

(IF NO, SKIP 20)

20. In what ways have you changed or what precautions have you taken?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you feel that you took adequate precautions before the burglary actually occurred? (1)  Yes    (2)  Maybe    (3)  No

22. Have you ever asked yourself why you were victimized? (1)  Yes  
 (2)  No

23. To what extent do you hold yourself responsible for what happened? Rate your responsibility on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, where 0 means that you were 0% responsible and 100 means that you were 100% responsible for what happened. \_\_\_\_\_%
24. To what extent do you see this incident as a chance event that could have happened to anyone? Again, use a scale from 0 to 100. This time, 0 means there was no chance involved--you were the right person at the right time--and 100 means that it was a completely chance or random event that could have happened to anyone. \_\_\_\_\_%
25. To what extent do you hold the offender responsible for what happened? Use a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 means that the offender was 0% responsible and 100 means that the offender was 100% responsible for what happened. \_\_\_\_\_%
26. Does the thought that you were victimized make you mad or angry? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
27. Looking back, do you now feel that you could have done anything differently before the incident to avoid what happened? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
28. Has this victimization experience caused you to change your attitude about people in general? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
29. Have you discussed the burglary incident with your family or relatives? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
30. ...with your friends? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
31. In total, how many people, not including police officers, have you spoken with about this incident? \_\_\_\_\_
32. Do you feel that some people have blamed you for what happened? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
33. Have you in any way blamed yourself for what happened? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
34. How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future? Would you say that you have...
- (1)\_\_\_ Almost no control over (3)\_\_\_ A lot of control  
           what might happen to you (4)\_\_\_ Almost complete control over  
 (2)\_\_\_ Some control (4)\_\_\_ what might happen to you



35. Could you briefly explain why you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_

---

36. At night in your neighborhood, how worried are you about being held up on the street, threatened, beaten up, or anything of this sort? Are you...

- (1) \_\_\_ Very worried                      (3) \_\_\_ Just a little worried  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat worried              (4) \_\_\_ Not at all worried

37. How worried are you about being burglarized again?

- (1) \_\_\_ Very worried                      (3) \_\_\_ Just a little worried  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat worried              (4) \_\_\_ Not at all worried

38. How would you compare your chances of being burglarized with the chances of other people in your neighborhood? Would you guess that burglary is...

- (1) \_\_\_ A lot more likely to happen to you  
(2) \_\_\_ A little more likely to happen to you  
(3) \_\_\_ Equally likely for everyone  
(4) \_\_\_ A little less likely to happen to you  
(5) \_\_\_ A lot less likely to happen to you

39. How much of an impact would you say this burglary incident has had on your life in general? Would you say it has had a...

- (1) \_\_\_ Major impact                      (3) \_\_\_ Minor impact  
(2) \_\_\_ Sizable impact                    (4) \_\_\_ No impact

Now I'm going to read you a few statements. (We're almost finished.) For each statement I read, you should tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with it. There are four possible answers you can give. (READ SLOWLY:) Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree. The first statement is:

40. Most criminals who are arrested deserve more punishment than that they get. (REPEAT SENTENCE)

- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree

41. There are many things the average citizen can do to help fight crime.

- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree

42. Victims of Crime in Evanston have always received as much attention and understanding as they deserve.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
43. The majority of crime victims are only mildly affected by their victimization experience.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
44. People who have never been victimized by crime have no idea how difficult it really is.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
45. If citizens would engrave their valuables with some identification number, it would deter burglars from stealing their property.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
46. If citizens would participate in organized neighborhood walking patrols, it would lessen the crime rate in their neighborhood.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
47. If citizens would increase the physical security of their houses or apartments, with locks and other precautions, it would deter unlawful entry into their homes.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
48. If citizens would join neighborhood block clubs in order to increase community cohesion, it would have a positive effect on lowering the crime rate in their neighborhood.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ strongly disagree
49. If citizens would cooperate more with the police, crime would be reduced.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree

50. If neighbors know each other on a first-name basis, it would help reduce crime in their neighborhood.

- (1)\_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3)\_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4)\_\_\_ Strongly disagree

51. If citizens would participate in organized CB patrols of their neighborhoods, police would be able to stop more in-progress crimes.

- (1)\_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3)\_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4)\_\_\_ Strongly disagree

52. No matter how much money the government spends, crime will continue as a problem as long as citizens are not actively involved in crime prevention.

- (1)\_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3)\_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4)\_\_\_ Strongly disagree

53. With a little effort, almost anyone can reduce his or her chances of becoming a crime victim.

- (1)\_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3)\_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
 (2)\_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4)\_\_\_ Strongly disagree

Finally, we need some basic background information from you and then we'll be finished. These are the usual questions about age, education, and income, with a few exceptions.

54. Your age is? \_\_\_\_\_

55. (DO NOT ASK) (1)\_\_\_ Male (2)\_\_\_ Female

56. Your race? (1)\_\_\_ Caucasian (2)\_\_\_ Black (3)\_\_\_ Latino/Spanish speaking  
 (4)\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

57. How much education have you had?

- (1)\_\_\_ 8 grades or less                    (4)\_\_\_ Some college  
 (2)\_\_\_ Some high school                  (5)\_\_\_ College graduate  
 (3)\_\_\_ High school graduate (6)\_\_\_ Graduate work or beyond

58. How many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

59. Do you have many relatives or friends that live in this area?

- (1)\_\_\_ Yes (2)\_\_\_ No

60. We need some estimate of the combined income of all household members. Which of the following income categories applies to your household?

- (1) \_\_\_ Less than \$7,500      (4) \_\_\_ Between \$25,000 & \$50,000  
 (2) \_\_\_ Between \$7,500 & \$15,000      (5) \_\_\_ More than \$50,000  
 (3) \_\_\_ Between \$15,000 & \$25,000

61. Have you been a victim of serious crime more than once?  
 (1) \_\_\_ Yes    (2) \_\_\_ No

(IF NO, SKIP 62)

62. How many times have you been victimized, including the present case? \_\_\_\_\_

63. My last question is: How often, if at all, do you read the Evanston Police column in the Evanston Review newspaper? Do you read it... (1) \_\_\_ Frequently    (2) \_\_\_ Infrequently  
 (3) \_\_\_ Never

I want to thank you very much for your cooperation. I'm sure that the information you've given me will be very helpful in our efforts to achieve a better understanding of your case and victimization in general.

Again, I would like to reassure you that the information you have given me will remain confidential and anonymous.

(IF PROBLEMS ARE APPARENT, OFFER ASSISTANCE AT THIS POINT, EXPLAIN SERVICES, ETC.)

If we can ever be of any help to you or someone you know who has been victimized by crime or has witnessed a crime in Evanston, please feel free to contact us here at the Evanston Police Department.

Thank you again. Goodbye.

## OBSERVATIONAL RATINGS OF VICTIMS BY CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER

I.D.# \_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_ House (2) \_\_\_ Apt. (1) \_\_\_ Own (2) \_\_\_ Rent

#Outside markers: \_\_\_ Signs ("Keep out") \_\_\_ Barriers (fences)  
\_\_\_ Personalizations \_\_\_ Surveillance devices  
\_\_\_ ("The Jones") \_\_\_ (peep hole)

My general impression was that the victim seemed...

(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
nervous nervous nervous nervous(1) \_\_\_ very sad (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
sad sad sad sad(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
concerned concerned concerned concerned(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
talkative talkative talkative talkative(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
angry angry angry angry(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
surprised surprised surprised surprised(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
strong strong strong strong(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
fearful fearful fearful fearful(1) \_\_\_ very (2) \_\_\_ somewhat (3) \_\_\_ a little (4) \_\_\_ not at all  
emotional emotional emotional emotional

Victim seemed to...

- (1) \_\_\_ Encourage and accept recommendations (positive attitude)  
 (2) \_\_\_ Deny or defend against recommendations (negative attitude)  
 (3) \_\_\_ Be unresponsive/quiet (indifferent)

Overall, how well is the victim coping with this incident?

- (1) \_\_\_ Extremely well (4) \_\_\_ Poorly  
 (2) \_\_\_ Very well (5) \_\_\_ Very poorly  
 (3) \_\_\_ Average

APPENDIX E  
COMMUNITY TELEPHONE SURVEY

## COMMUNITY TELEPHONE SURVEY

Interview # \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Prefix \_\_\_\_\_

Present Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

(IF BUSINESS OR INSTITUTION ANSWERS, SAY: Oh, I'm sorry. I must have the wrong number! KEEP RECORD OF ALL CALLS WHERE SOMEONE ANSWERS.)

(IF PERSON SAYS "HELLO," THEN SAY:)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm working for the Victim/Witness Program of the Evanston Police Department. We are conducting an important survey to find out how people feel about crime in Evanston, victims of crime, and the police.

(IF CORRECT VOICE--MALE OR FEMALE--TO TO ITEM A)

(IF INCORRECT VOICE, SAY:)

At the present time, we are interviewing only (males/females) who are at least 16 years old. Is there anyone who lives at this residence who meets this requirement and would be willing to answer a few questions for us? Only ten minutes is needed.

(1) \_\_\_ Yes (coming to the phone) (3) \_\_\_ Absolutely not  
(2) \_\_\_ Maybe, but not now or unsure

(IF 1, READ FIRST PARAGRAPH AGAIN, THEN GO TO ITEM A)

(IF 2, GO TO ITEM B)

(IF 3, SAY:)

Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

A. The survey questions take only about 10 minutes to answer and your answers will be completely confidential. Are you willing to help us?

(1) \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_(3)\_\_\_ Absolutely not  
(2) \_\_\_ Maybe, but not now  
or unsure

(IF 1, GO TO ITEM 1)

(IF 2, GO TO ITEM B)

(IF 3, SAY:) Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

B. We are trying very hard to interview people like yourself who were the first to be selected so as to keep a balanced, random sample. Would it be more convenient if I called you back at another time?

- (1)  Yes--call again  
 (2)  Not interested

(IF 2, SAY:) Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

(IF 1, FIND A SUITABLE TIME TO CALL BACK--PREFERABLY IN EVENING)

Call back: Day(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time \_\_\_\_\_<sup>am</sup>  
 Ask for? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you. You can expect a call from me at \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be looking forward to speaking with you.

C. Because we picked your number at random, we do not know if we are calling you at home or at work, or somewhere else. Is this a...

- (1)  Household  
 (2)  Business  
 (3)  Student housing  
 (4)  Institution

#### BEGIN QUESTIONS

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I will be asking you. We simply want your own opinions and feelings. Most of the questions only require that you give a short answer. For all questions, please try to keep your answers as brief as possible. This way, we can cover a wide range of questions in a short period of time.

First, I'd like to read you a few statements. For each statement I read, you should tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with it. There are four possible answers you can give. (READ SLOWLY:) Strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, somewhat disagree. The first statement is:



4. There are many things the average citizen can do to help fight crime. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? How strongly do you agree or disagree? (REPEAT STATEMENTS WHEN NECESSARY)
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
5. There are many things the police can do to help fight crime.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
6. It is the responsibility of the police, and not the citizens, to reduce crime.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
7. Oftentimes, reporting a crime to the police doesn't do any good.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
8. Individuals who are charged with committing serious criminal offenses usually receive a just or fair punishment for their wrongdoing.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
9. Victims of crime in Evanston have always received as much attention and understanding as they deserve.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
10. The majority of crime victims are only mildly affected by their victimization experience.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree
11. Victim service programs should be created to help crime victims.
- (1) \_\_\_ Strongly agree                      (3) \_\_\_ Somewhat disagree  
(2) \_\_\_ Somewhat agree                    (4) \_\_\_ Strongly disagree

Now I'd like to ask you a few specific questions about serious crime victims. By serious crime victims, I mean people who have been robbed, or raped, or physically injured or threatened with injury, or had their homes or apartments broken into, or had something stolen from them.

My first question is:  
(READ SLOWLY)

12. To what extent do you see victims of serious crimes as responsible for what has happened to them? Clearly, responsibility differs from one case to the next, but we are interested in your general impression. Rate victim responsibility on a scale ranging from 0 to 100 where 0 means that most victims are 0% responsible for their own victimization and 100 means that most victims are 100% responsible for what has happened to them. So give me a number from 0 to 100. Most victims are what % responsible for their victimization? \_\_\_\_\_%
13. Now I'd like you to use the same scale and rate the responsibility of specific types of victims rather than victims in general.
- a. What about victims whose homes or apartments are broken into and whose possessions are stolen? On the whole, how much do you hold these people responsible for what has happened to them using the scale ranging from 0 to 100% responsible?  
\_\_\_\_\_%
- b. What about rape victims? To what extent do you hold them responsible?  
\_\_\_\_\_%
- c. What about robbery victims who are held up?  
\_\_\_\_\_%
- d. What about victims who are verbally or physically threatened with injury, although never injured?  
\_\_\_\_\_%
- e. What about victims who are physically injured or beaten up, with the exception of rape or murder victims?  
\_\_\_\_\_%
- f. What about victims whose things are stolen, not including incidents where someone breaks into the house or apartment?  
\_\_\_\_\_%

(READ SLOWLY)

14. When you back away and look at crime victims as a whole, to what extent do you see crime victimization as a chance event that could happen to anyone? Again, use a scale from 0 to 100. This time, 0 means there is not chance involved, the victim is the right person at the right time, and 100 means that victimization is a completely chance or random event that could happen to anyone. So, in most cases, a person's victimization is what % explainable by chance events?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

15. To what extent do you see offenders as responsible for what happens to victims? Again, use the responsibility scale that ranges from 0 to 100% responsible for the incident.

\_\_\_\_\_ %

16. How satisfied do you think serious crime victims are with the treatment that they receive from the Evanston Police? Would you say that they are...(READ ALL OPTIONS EXCEPT 5)

(1)\_\_\_ Very satisfied                      (4)\_\_\_ Very dissatisfied  
 (2)\_\_\_ Satisfied                              (5)\_\_\_ Don't know  
 (3)\_\_\_ Dissatisfied

17. When victims appear in court as witnesses, how satisfied do you think they are with the treatment that they receive from the State's Attorney and the Judge? Would you guess that they are...

(1)\_\_\_ Very satisfied                      (3)\_\_\_ Dissatisfied  
 (2)\_\_\_ Satisfied                              (4)\_\_\_ Very dissatisfied

18. From your experiences or from what you've heard about the police and the courts, how willing would you be to cooperate with people from the Criminal Justice System should you ever be in contact with them in the future? Would you say you are... (READ AND REPEAT)

(1)\_\_\_ Very willing to                      (3)\_\_\_ Not very willing  
       cooperate                              (4)\_\_\_ Not at all willing to  
 (2)\_\_\_ Somewhat willing                      cooperate

19. On the whole, do you feel that the Evanston Police are responsive to the needs of the community? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No (3)\_\_\_Don't know

20. Do you feel that the Evanston Police Department is spending enough time and effort on crime prevention programs? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No (3)\_\_\_Don't know

21. If the police were to invest more time and effort on crime prevention, do you think it would have an impact on the crime rate?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No (3)\_\_\_Don't know
22. Are you at all familiar with any of the community service programs sponsored and run by the police department? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No
23. Have you had any contact with Evanston Police officers during the past 12 months, either by talking with an officer or possibly listening to an officer speak with someone else? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No
24. What type of contact did you have?  
 (1)\_\_\_Law enforcement (3)\_\_\_Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_  
 (2)\_\_\_Emergency \_\_\_\_\_
25. Did this contact...  
 (1)\_\_\_Improve your opinion of the police?  
 (2)\_\_\_Lower your opinion of the police? Or  
 (3)\_\_\_Have no effect on your opinion of the police?
26. How much control do you feel you have over your chances of being victimized by crime in the future? Would you say that you have...  
 (1)\_\_\_Almost no control over what might happen to you  
 (2)\_\_\_Some control  
 (3)\_\_\_A lot of control, or  
 (4)\_\_\_Almost complete control over what might happen to you.
- (REPEAT OPTIONS)
27. Could you briefly explain why you feel this way? (REPEAT VERBATIM)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
28. At night in your neighborhood, how worried are you about being held up on the street, threatened, beaten up, or anything of this sort? Are you...  
 (1)\_\_\_Very worried (3)\_\_\_Just a little worried  
 (2)\_\_\_Somewhat worried (4)\_\_\_Not at all worried  
 (REPEAT OPTIONS)

29. How would you compare your chances of being victimized by these crimes with the chances of other people in your neighborhood? Would you guess that these crimes are...

- (1)  A lot more likely to happen to you  
 (2)  A little more likely to happen to you  
 (3)  Equally likely for everyone  
 (4)  A little less likely to happen to you  
 (5)  A lot less likely to happen to you

(REPEAT IF NECESSARY)

30. What do you think your actual chance of victimization is for these crimes? I realize that this is guess work, but would you say that your chances are...

- (1)  One in 50 of being victimized  
 (2)  One in 100  
 (3)  One in 500  
 (4)  One in 1,000  
 (5)  One in 10,000 of being victimized

(REPEAT OPTIONS)

31. In the past two years, have you taken any precautions to avoid becoming a crime victim? In other words, have you changed your behavior or style of living in any way to reduce your chances of being victimized? (1)  Yes (2)  No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 33)  
 (IF YES, SAY:)

32. What precautions have you taken?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

33. Have you been a crime victim or witness to a crime in Evanston during the past two years? (1)  Yes (2)  No

34. Were you a victim or a witness? (1)  Victim (2)  Witness

35. What type of crime was it? (CHECK DESCRIPTION)

- (1)  Assault (no injury) (4)  Robbery (holdup)  
 (2)  Battery (5)  Theft (stealing)  
 (3)  Burglary (breaking and entering) (6)  Rape  
 (7)  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

36. Was the incident reported to the police? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF YES, GO TO ITEM 37)

(IF NO, SAY:)

37. Was there any reason why you did not report it to the police?

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(GO TO ITEM 40)

38. Who reported the crime to the police? Was it...

(1)\_\_\_You (3)\_\_\_Eyewitness  
 (2)\_\_\_Another victim (4)\_\_\_Someone else (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

39. Did you attend any court proceedings pertaining to this crime?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

40. Do you personally know anyone who has been a crime victim or a  
 crime witness in Evanston during the past two years? (1)\_\_\_Yes  
 (2)\_\_\_No

41. Have you ever heard of the Crime Victim's Compensation Act?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

42. Have you ever heard of the Victim/Witness Program of the Evanston  
 Police Department before you received this telephone call?  
 (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

43. Are you familiar with the services that the Victim/Witness Program  
 offers? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

44. The Victim/Witness Program was created for the purpose of help-  
 ing crime victims and witnesses in Evanston. Because it's a  
 new program, the staff is open to suggestions you might have as to  
 what services are needed or what the major problems are facing  
 the victims and witnesses. Can you think of any problems that  
 perhaps this new program should attend to? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF NO, GO TO ITEM 46)

(IF YES, FILL IN ITEM 45)

45. Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, we need some basic background information from you and then we'll be finished. These are the usual questions about age, race, education, and income, with a few exceptions.

46. Your age is \_\_\_\_\_?
47. (1)\_\_\_ Male (2)\_\_\_ Female
48. Your race? (1)\_\_\_ Caucasian (2)\_\_\_ Black (3)\_\_\_ Latino/Spanish speaking  
 (4)\_\_\_ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_
49. How much education have you had?  
 (1)\_\_\_ 8 grades or less  
 (2)\_\_\_ Some high school (IF 1, 2, or 3, GO TO ITEM 51)  
 (3)\_\_\_ high school graduate  
 (4)\_\_\_ Some college  
 (5)\_\_\_ College graduate (IF 4, 5, or 6, GO TO ITEM 50)  
 (6)\_\_\_ Graduate work or beyond
50. Are you a university student now? (1)\_\_\_ Yes (2)\_\_\_ No
51. What street intersection is nearest to where you live?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
52. Are the people on your block organized in any way to fight crime? (e.g., block meetings and representatives) (1)\_\_\_ Yes (2)\_\_\_ No
53. We need some estimate of the combined income of all household members. Which of the following income categories applies to your household?  
 (1)\_\_\_ Less than \$7,500 (4)\_\_\_ Between \$25,000 and \$50,000  
 (2)\_\_\_ Between \$7,500 and \$15,000 (5)\_\_\_ More than \$50,000  
 (3)\_\_\_ Between \$15,000 and \$25,000

54. My last question is: How often, if at all, do you read the Evanston Police column in the Evanston Review newspaper? Do you read it... (1)\_\_\_Frequently (2)\_\_\_Infrequently (3)\_\_\_Never

I want to thank you very much for your cooperation. I'm sure that the information you've given us will be very helpful in the planning and development of our new Victim/Witness Program here in Evanston. I want to reassure you that your answers will remain confidential. Furthermore, if we can ever be of any help to you or someone you know who has been victimized by crime or has witnessed a crime in Evanston, please feel free to call us at the Evanston Police Department.

Thank you again. Goodbye.



APPENDIX F  
POLICE QUESTIONNAIRE

## POLICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Place a check mark next to your desired answer or fill in the blanks on all items that apply to you.

1. Are you familiar with the services of the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
2. Have you ever utilized the services of this Unit? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No

(IF YES, ANSWER QUESTIONS 3 & 4)  
(IF NO, GO DIRECTLY TO QUESTION 5)

3. In a few words, would you explain what type of service(s) you requested from the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How satisfied are you with the manner in which the Unit handled your request?  
 (1)\_\_\_Very satisfied                      (3)\_\_\_Dissatisfied  
 (2)\_\_\_Satisfied                              (4)\_\_\_Very dissatisfied
5. Have you ever received a memo from the Victim/Witness Unit offering to help you ensure that a particular victim or witness will appear in court? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
6. If you received a memo, but did not ask for our assistance, was there any particular reason why?  
 (1)\_\_\_Expected victim or witness to show up without assistance  
 (2)\_\_\_Could handle it myself  
 (3)\_\_\_Let the detectives handle it  
 (4)\_\_\_Simply forgot to ask the unit  
 (5)\_\_\_Memo did not arrive in time  
 (6)\_\_\_Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_
7. Let us assume that you could utilize the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit more frequently than you have in the past. In a few words, what do you see as the major reason why you have not contacted the Unit more often? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- | 8. Check True or False   | <u>TRUE</u> | <u>FALSE</u> |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| a. I do not fully understand the role of the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit.                                       | _____       | _____        |
| b. I know how to contact the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit if I want assistance.                                  | _____       | _____        |
| c. I prefer to handle cases myself.  | _____       | _____        |
| d. I don't believe a Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit is necessary in the Evanston Police Department.                | _____       | _____        |
| e. I haven't had enough personal contact with the Victim/Witness Unit to feel comfortable referring cases to it. | _____       | _____        |
| f. I didn't know the Unit existed.   | _____       | _____        |
| g. I see it as too much trouble to contact the Unit.   | _____       | _____        |
| h. I feel that the Unit's focus on serious crime victims is too narrow or restrictive.                           | _____       | _____        |
| i. I have had no cases, or only a few cases, where the Unit could be helpful.                                    | _____       | _____        |
| j. I believe victims or witnesses need further attention after contact with police officers.                     | _____       | _____        |

9. When the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit prepares training for the Police Department, what topics would you like to see covered? (Feel free to suggest anything.)

SUGGESTED TOPICS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Can you think of any services that you feel the Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit should provide, but to your knowledge doesn't at present? (1) Yes (2) No  
 IF YES, PLEASE SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS CONCERNING RESPONSE TO SERIOUS CRIMES

For the following questions, "serious crimes" = assault, battery, burglary, homicide, rape, robbery, theft.

11. In most cases, do you fill out a report in the presence of the victim? (1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
12. At the scene, do you usually explain to the victim(s) what course of action will be taken or how the case will be handled?  
(1)\_\_\_Yes (2)\_\_\_No
13. In general, how satisfied do you think serious crime victims are with the treatment that they receive from the Evanston Police?  
(1)\_\_\_Very satisfied (3)\_\_\_Dissatisfied  
(2)\_\_\_Satisfied (4)\_\_\_Very dissatisfied
14. In general, how cooperative do you find serious crime victims?  
(1)\_\_\_Very cooperative (3)\_\_\_Uncooperative  
(2)\_\_\_Cooperative (4)\_\_\_Very uncooperative
15. To what extent do you see victims of serious crime as responsible for what has happened to them? Clearly, responsibility differs from one case to the next, but we are interested in your general impression. Rate victim responsibility on a scale ranging from 0 to 100 where 0 means that most victims are 0% responsible for their own victimization, and 100 means that most victims are 100% responsible for what has happened to them.  
Most victims are \_\_\_\_\_% responsible for their victimization.
16. To what extent do you see crime victimization as a chance event that could happen to anyone? Again, use a scale from 0 to 100. This time, 0 means there is no chance involved--the victim is the right person at the right time, and 100 means that victimization is a completely chance or random event that could happen to anyone.  
In most cases, a person's victimization is \_\_\_\_\_% explainable by chance events.
17. A serious crime can present many problems for both police and victims. Some problems are listed below from a to i. Use the following number system to rate the seriousness of these problems and to decide whether or not the Victim/Witness Unit should try to assist with these problems. Fill in ALL blanks on the right.

SERIOUSNESS

- 1 = very serious problem when it occurs
- 2 = fairly serious problem when it occurs
- 3 = not very serious problem when it occurs
- 4 = not at all serious problem when it occurs

UNIT ASSISTANCE

- 1 = Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit should try to assist with this problem.
- 2 = Victim/Witness Advocacy Unit should not try to assist with this problem.

(Place a number on each line below)

<u>SERIOUSNESS</u>	<u>UNIT ASSISTANCE</u>
(1-4)	(1-2)

POLICE & VICTIM PROBLEMS

- |  |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|
| a. Victim/Witness emotionally upset at scene and unable to answer questions for R/O  | _____ | _____ |
| b. No friends or relatives present to help restore emotional stability   | _____ | _____ |
| c. Victim/Witness unable to seek out community resources needed (e.g., shelter, clothing, counseling)                                | _____ | _____ |
| d. At scene, Victim/Witness wants to know what happens next  | _____ | _____ |
| e. Victim/Witness unwilling or unable to answer questions  | _____ | _____ |
| f. Officer unable to locate Victim/Witness for court appearance  | _____ | _____ |
| g. Victim/Witness has no transportation to court   | _____ | _____ |
| h. Cooperative Victim/Witness not adequately informed about court dates, court location, questioning by defense, or case disposition | _____ | _____ |
| i. Other (specify) _____   | _____ | _____ |

18. How long have you been a police officer? \_\_\_\_\_years
19. To which section are you presently assigned? (Check one)  
\_\_\_Patrol \_\_\_Youth \_\_\_Detective \_\_\_Traffic
20. Name (Optional)\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Dennis P. Rosenbaum has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Leonard Bickman, Director  
Professor of Psychology, Loyola

Dr. John Edwards  
Associate Professor of Psychology, Loyola

Dr. Paul J. Lavrakas  
Research Associate, Center for Urban Affairs  
Northwestern University

Dr. Emil Posavac  
Professor of Psychology, Loyola  
Director of Social Psychology Division

Ms. Ronna Stamm  
Coordinator of Community Services  
Evanston Mental Health Board

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

28 March 1980

Date



Director's Signature