

# **PERCEPTIONS OF VICTIMIZATION AND ATTITUDES TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

## **KINGS COUNTY, NOVA SCOTIA**

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The data analyzed in this Report was supplied by GPI Atlantic from a survey that was conducted for Kings County Citizens for Community Development Society. GPI Atlantic is a non-profit research group dedicated to building a new measure of well-being and quality of life for communities, -- the Genuine Progress Index (GPI). This Kings County pilot project was funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre (Business Action Program), the Rural Secretariat, and Human Resources Development Canada. Other contributing partners included Central Kings Community Health Board, Eastern Kings Community Health Board, Kings CED Agency, Kentville Rotary Club, Nova Scotia Community College - Kentville campus, and the Population Health Research Unit, Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University.

## **Part I Crime Victimization Survey**

The perceptions of the nature of crime and disorder in rural society is one other aspect of the policing scene which is necessary to document. Rural society has long been seen as a relatively crime-free environment in contrast to the blight of urban social problems. Rural orderliness and low levels of official crime (Kaill 1986) have been attributed to a number of factors, including the persistence of traditional values, close-knit communities, cultural uniformity, effective social control institutions, and high levels of social integration (Wilson 1985; Murphy and Clairmont 1990). It has been well established in research that not all victimization people experience is reported to the police, particularly in situations of intimate violence. This under-reporting may be especially characteristic of rural populations (Smith 1980, Murphy and Clairmont 1990).

In 2000, a non-profit, economic development NGO, as part of the construction of a "genuine progress index", undertook an extensive survey of economic and social conditions in Kings County (and in the Cape Breton town of Glace Bay). Part of the questionnaire they circulated contained questions on perceptions of crime and victimization, and assessed respondents' attitudes to the police and criminal justice. This report analyzes the results of the GPI survey.

### **Profile of Crime Victims**

The G. P. I. survey asked respondents to self-identify themselves as having been victims of crime or not, according to three measures of time: over the last 12 months, the last three years, and the last five years. Logically, the longer the time examined, the larger the proportion of individuals who would have been victimized. Of the 1828 people who responded to the question, 266 (14.6%) said they had been victimized at least once over the past five years, with almost identical proportions of men and women indicating their victimization (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1 Victim at any time over past 5 years (2000)**

	Men	%	Women	%	Total	
Yes	120	14.8	146	14.5	226	14.6
No	693	85.2	859	85.6	1552	85.4
Total	813		1005		1818	

Of these, 196 reported that the crime(s) occurred during the last three years (137 reporting one occasion), while 144 had become victims of crime over the last 12 months (95 reporting one victimization) (see Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2 Victim at any time over last 12 months: Frequency (2000)**

	Men	%	Women	%	Total	%
1	45	78.9	50	74.6	95	76.6
2	5	8.8	11	16.4	16	12.9
3-7	7	12.3	6	9.0	13	10.5
Total	57		67		124	

Considering only the previous 12 months, the most frequently indicated crime was theft under \$5,000, suffered by 70 victims (54 once only), 62 of whom reported the incident to the police.

The largest sub-sample will consist of those victimized over the five-year period. The following table (1-3) provides a summary of victim characteristics, describing those who had been a victim at any time over the past five years. While more women than men (55% vs. 45%) reported themselves victims, this reflected the skewed nature of the survey, for which more women responded than men. Among age groups, the middle age category (25-54) was victimized more frequently than was consistent with its relative proportion of the population. Proportionately, fewer in the older group, those 55 or over, were victims of crime: these more senior citizens composed 33.8% of the respondents but only 20.7% of the victims.

**Table 1-3: Victim of Crime at any Time Over the Last Five Years (2000)**

		Yes	%	Pop.	%
Sex	Male	120	45.1	813	44.7
	Female	146	54.9	1005	55.3
	Total	266		1818	
Age	15-24	21	7.9	143	7.9
	25-54	190	71.4	1059	58.3
	55+	55	20.7	613	33.8
	Total	266		1815	
H Sch Grad	Yes	190	78.8	1162	71.2
	No	51	21.2	470	28.8
	Total	241		1632	
Education	Grade 1-8	7	2.9	95	5.8
	9-12	84	34.6	662	40.5
	College Dip	68	28.0	390	23.9
	Univ Deg	63	25.9	323	19.8
	Other	21	8.6	164	10.0
	Total	243		1634	
Main Activity	Employed	171	64.3	913	50.3
	Unemployed	6	2.3	69	3.8
	Student	20	7.5	122	6.7

	Home maker	26	9.8	230	12.7
	Retired	38	14.3	419	23.1
	Other	5	1.9	61	3.4
	Total	266		1814	
Lab Force	Employed	180	67.9	1017	56.0
	Unemployed	23	8.7	147	8.1
	Not in Lab F	62	23.4	651	35.9
	Total	265		1815	

On the question of education, there was a tendency for crime victimization to be higher among those who were high school graduates and, in general, those with higher educational qualifications.

Compared to other general levels of economic activity (defined in the survey as the respondent's "main activity"), those who were employed were over represented among crime victims, as well as the student category to a lesser extent. The unemployed, home-makers, and particularly the retired respondents (the last being consistent with the variation by age) were underrepresented.

While only six people had declared their "main activity" to be "unemployment", twenty-three respondents had been unemployed in the week prior to the survey (see table, above). Being unemployed, however, was not associated with a greater likelihood of victimization. Again, it was those who were not in the labour force (including the elderly and the retired) who were less likely to be victimized.

Different occupational groups also experienced varied rates of victimization. There was very little difference among those who were paid workers, self employed, or unpaid workers in a family business. Higher rates of crime occurred to respondents who classified their occupation as (1) business, financial, and administrative (19.3 vs. 12.9%) a group that included accountants, financial advisors, secretaries, receptionists, etc., and (2) occupations in social science, education, government service and religion, including lawyers, counselors and social workers (18.8 vs. 12.7%). Otherwise, the various groups were, in general, proportionately victimized. Only those who reported their occupation to be "Other" indicated lower rates of victimization (7.4 vs. 15.1%).

## Nature of Crime

Respondents who were victims of crime over the last 12 months were asked to complete a table which asked about the number of incidents, whether they called the police, the dollar loss from crime, and where the crime took place. The following table (1-4) summarizes the results.

This table does not record the "number of incidents" because of uncertainty how they survey answers were. There are inconsistencies in the results that are indicated above. For example, 5 incidents of home invasion were apparently indicated; 2 incidents were reported to the police while 10 were not, and when asked where the incident occurred, only three were listed. In most cases, fewer incidents were indicated on "location" than on the question of being reported to the police. Looking at these

results, theft under \$5000 is, expectedly, the most frequent crime. Otherwise, in addition to the 33 "other" crimes, a category that is wide and growing in the Uniform Crime Reports, there were fairly even numbers of assaults, break and enters, robberies, and thefts of motor vehicles, and only slightly fewer frauds and sexual assaults. Most crimes, of all types occurred in the home, including assaults, though sexual assaults (that were indicated) were more evenly distributed.

**Table 1-4 Nature, Reporting, and Location of Crime**

Nature of Crime	Incidents Reported To Police (n)	Incidents Not Reported (n)	Total	Home (n)	Neigh-bourhood (n)	Kings County (n)	Outside Kings County (n)
Theft Under \$5000	62	23	85	53	4	18	11
Theft Over \$5000	4	1	5	1	1	3	1
Motor Vehicle Thft	7	12	19	7	0	0	1
Robbery	6	13	19	8	0	0	2
Fraud	5	11	16	5	2	1	1
B&E While Away	9	12	21	12	-	-	-
B7E While At Home	2	10	12	3	-	-	-
Sexual Assault	4	13	17	2	2	0	2
Assault	6	16	22	7	1	1	0
Other	16	17	33	12	2	7	3

The most commonly reported crime was theft under \$5000. Two-thirds (66.9%) of these incidents involved amounts under \$500, while one quarter (24.2%) were more than \$1000. The robbery amounts were all under \$500, presumably reflecting the likelihood that respondents would not be carrying large amounts of cash on their persons. There were two large frauds, one over \$6000. Three of the break and enters caused substantial losses, between \$2000 and \$6100. Among the "other crimes", two major incidents cost the victims between \$4800 and \$12,100. If the median figure for each category is taken as the likely mean loss, and all the incidents are summed together, 121 incidents caused a loss of \$126,990, or about \$1050 per incident.

**Table 1-5 Reported Dollar Lost to Crime, Last 12 Months, by Offence**

<b>Dollar loss theft &lt; 5000</b>		
Range	Freq.	%
0 - 9	3	4.3
Ten-19	1	1.4
20 - 29	3	4.3
30 - 39	1	1.4
40 - 49	1	1.4
50 - 59	1	1.4

<b>Dollar loss theft &gt; 5000</b>		
Range	Freq.	%
0 - 99	1	50
16000 - 16099	1	50
<b>Dollar loss robbery</b>		
Value	Freq.	%
25	1	25

70 - 79	1	1.4
100 - 109	8	11.4
120 - 129	1	1.4
140 - 149	1	1.4
150 - 159	4	5.7
200 - 209	5	7.1
220 - 229	1	1.4
240 - 249	1	1.4
250 - 259	4	5.7
300 - 309	3	4.3
350 - 359	2	2.9
400 - 409	6	8.6
500 - 509	3	4.3
600 - 609	1	1.4
700 - 709	1	1.4
800 - 809	1	1.4
1000 - 1009	5	7.1
1500 - 1509	1	1.4
2400 - 2409	1	1.4
2700 - 2709	1	1.4
3000 - 3009	3	4.3
3500 - 3509	2	2.9
4000 - 4009	3	4.3
5000 - 5009	1	1.4
<b>Dollar loss motor vehicle theft</b>		
Range	Freq.	%
0 - 99	2	28.6
200 - 299	1	14.3
500 - 599	1	14.3
1000 - 1099	1	14.3
1600 - 1699	1	14.3
10000 - 10099	1	14.3

100	1	25
200	1	25
500	1	25
<b>Dollar loss fraud</b>		
Range	Freq.	%
0 - 9	2	28.6
120 - 129	1	14.3
400 - 409	1	14.3
1000 - 1009	1	14.3
6000 - 6009	2	28.6
<b>Dollar loss B&amp;E away from home</b>		
Range	Freq.	%
0 - 9	3	42.9
300 - 309	1	14.3
2000 - 2009	1	14.3
2500 - 2509	1	14.3
6000 - 6009	1	14.3
<b>Dollar loss assault</b>		
Value	Freq.	%
0	5	83.3
450	1	16.7
<b>Dollar loss other crime</b>		
Range	Freq.	%
0 - 99	8	44.4
100 - 199	4	22.2
300 - 399	1	5.6
500 - 599	1	5.6
600 - 699	1	5.6
1500 - 1599	1	5.6
4800 - 4899	1	5.6
12000 - 12099	1	5.6

## Effects of Victimization

Insurance cannot compensate for many effects of crime on victims, and may not cover even the monetary loss. In Kings County, 17.8% of people who reported themselves victimized over the last twelve months were compensated by insurance for loss of money or property. Of these, 27.1% (6/22) received <75% of the value lost, while a further 39.1% (11/28) recovered 50% or less.

The GPI survey attempted to measure other consequences of crime on victims. For some it means loss of work and, potentially, income. Thirteen people took days off due to crime; of these, most (61.5%) took only one day off. This loss of work time may be due to a summons to appear during the trial of the accused, though most criminal

prosecutions do not involve trials.

More seriously, time off may be due to a personal injury sustained during the crime. Of those who reported victimization over the last year, almost no one (a very small number) was injured seriously enough to spend time in hospital. Nine visited a health professional, and ten reported taking medication as a result of their victimization. for as long as two-thirds of a year. Twelve received counselling. A further 4.7% spent time in bed to recover following the crime, with a maximum of nine days spent recuperating.

Crime disrupts people's lives in other ways. In some cases, victims are obliged to cancel activities they otherwise would have done. Among victims, 15% (19/127) cancelled activities due to the crime. Of these, 6 of 17 (35.3%) cancelled 14 days or more.

Finally, 86 or 33.9% said that they changed their approach to life because of the crime. A further 67 or 26.3% do things now they normally would not have done as a result of their victimization. Finally, 24 (9.3% of 258 victims) said that, as a result of crime over the last five years, they suffered another tragedy that could be attributed directly to the crime.

## **Assistance for victims of crime**

To whom do you turn after being victimized by crime? Informally, people often turn to relatives, friends, and neighbours for help after a crime. In Kings County, approximately 25 to 30% of respondents who were victimized over the last 12 months reported seeking assistance from those personally closest to them – their relatives, friends or neighbours.

There are also a number of formal agencies that are designed specifically to assist crime victims. About three per cent of victims turned to a local service club, or to a senior's support network – the latter clearly applicable only to the more elderly victims in the County. The provincial government, through the Department of Justice, has established a Victims' Services organization which is run by paid professionals with the assistance of volunteers. Less than 40% of those who were victimized were aware of the existence of this organization whose mandate is specifically to assist crime victims. Despite the awareness of many, only 5% of victims sought help from this provincial body.

In addition, police departments – particularly the RCMP – coordinate their own victims' services units, which are usually run by volunteers under the supervision of police personnel. This was the most widely used service. Of those victimized, 61% were aware of the service, and 32% took advantage of its assistance. The greater awareness of the service is likely brought about by police contact with the victim. In cases where the police are called, it is likely to be the policy of the force that the officers should inform the victim of the availability of the police-run assistance service. They could, conceivably, also provide information about Victims' Services at the Department of Justice, although the data suggest they may be less likely to divulge this information, preferring their in-house operation.

**Table 1-6 Assistance Sought by Crime Victims**

	Received Help		Knew About	
	n	%	n	%
Assist from Pol/RCMP Victim Services	35	32.1%	60	61.3
Assist from Dept of Justice Victim Serv.	5	5.2%	34	38.7
Assist from Seniors Support Network	3	3.2%	23	28.4
Assist from local volunteer groups	3	3.1%	53	61.6
Assist from neighbours	26	25.2%		
Assist from relatives	32	30.5%		
Assist from others (pastor, friends)	17	23%		

## Knowledge of Wider Victimization

There are degrees of victimization depending on how close the crime occurs to the individual. You may be deeply affected by a crime that occurs to someone close to you. The indirect effects can be equally devastating. Even knowing someone who has been victimized can have an effect on how we live our lives and how safe we feel in our community. In addition to asking respondents about their own victimization, research routinely widens the scope of the investigation by asking whether the respondent knows others who have been victimized.

In Kings County, the GPI data revealed that 481 people (26.8% of 1792) reported that they knew someone who had been a victim of crime over last 12 months. Again, the older respondents (55 or more) were the least likely to know someone who had been victimized over the previous year. Just under half of these (43% or 199) knew of one incident affecting an individual. In addition, 120 (25.9%) knew of two incidents, while a further 69 (15%) reported three incidents. The maximum number reported was knowledge of 20 crime incidents affecting friends, relatives, or acquaintances.

Two hundred sixty respondents indicated that the crime that had occurred to someone they know was violent. Most (65%) knew of one incident, while 3.8% were aware of more than three violent incidents. Given the normative distribution of types of crime, most respondents (423) who were aware of at least one crime incident affecting someone they knew indicated that it was a property crime, about 30% being aware of more than three incidents.

## Domestic Violence

Reporting personal victimization is an extremely difficult thing for victims to do, even in a survey that claims to be confidential. This reticence is normal and understandable. The result is that personal victimization, especially in an intimate context, is not likely to be reported even on a questionnaire. The number of incidents revealed in a self-report survey may be higher than those reported to the police,

because the latter will certainly result in consequences, many of which the victim may not desire.

The point is that reported incidents of family violence are very likely to seriously under report the actual frequency of domestic violence. In order to obtain a picture of domestic violence in the County, the GPI survey asked people to self-report their own victimization: Has your spouse/partner, ex-spouse/partner, or other family member, assaulted you at any time in the past 5 years? In order to specify more precisely what was meant by the term "assault", the survey specified the following: "This includes threatening to hit you, or doing anything that could hurt you, like throwing something, pushing, grabbing, hitting, kicking, biting, choking, or threatening to use a weapon, etc."

In response to this question, 61 individuals (3.4% of 1811) said they had been assaulted by a spouse, an ex-spouse, or another family member in the last five years.

For the second question, which asked the number of times such violent domestic incidents had occurred over the last five years, the number claiming victimization dropped to 39. Of these, just over one third (35.7%) experienced abuse more than three times. Only seven victims reported the crime to the police.

**Table 1-7: Reported Incidents of Violence in the Home**

	Number who rep't Incidents	Reported them To Police	Spouse/ Partner	Ex-spouse/ Partner	Other Family member
Past 12 months	26	5	17	5	13
Past 3 years	38	6	20	5	15
Past 5 years	39	7	22	9	14

Additional information was sought from respondents, who were asked to identify their domestic victimization over the past three years and past year, and also to indicate who perpetrated the violence. As Table 1-7 indicates, victims most frequently receive abuse from their spouse or partner, followed by other family members. These numbers are not wholly consistent. There is a drop from 61 to 39 who indicate their victimization over five years from one question to the next. For each year, for example, the sum of those victimized by spouses, ex-spouses, and family members is greater than the number who report themselves to have been victimized by family members. This is understandable in the general uncertainty about answers on surveys about personal victimization.

Looking more closely at these numbers, while fewer cases involved ex-spouses or ex-partners, this does not mean that these relationships are likely to be less violent because there are fewer of them. (Only 7.4% of respondents said that they were divorced at the time of the survey, although no information was gathered about marital history – remarried people could have one or more ex-spouses.)

When asked whether they were physically injured in any of these incidents, 19 said they had been injured, 64.7% one time and 6% more than three times.

Examining the 61 respondents who reported being the victim of domestic assault over the last five years, the survey results indicated that 40 (65.6%) were women. There were marked differences by age.

**Table 1-8: Domestic victimization by age**

	15-24	25-34	35-54	55 or >	Total
Victims (n)	13	13	30	5	61
Victims (%)	21.3	21.3	49.2	8.2	
Group % Of Total	5.4	12.5	48.2	33.9	

Those aged 15 to 24 were the most likely to report having been victimized. In the survey, 21.3% of those who reported being assaulted were in the youngest age group although they comprised only 5.4% of the total number surveyed. Similarly, students were more likely to be victimized, comprising 21.3% of all victims, yet only 6.1% of the total respondents. Those aged 25 to 34 also reported a disproportionate number of victims. Finally, the older age group (> 54) was less likely to report victimization – the older group comprised 33.9% of the survey population, but only 8.2% of the victims of domestic assault.

With respect to marital status, consistent with the findings relative to age, those who were never married were more likely to suffer domestic violence than those who were currently married. It stands to reason that the group who were most likely to indicate their victimization were those who were divorced or separated: 7.4% of all respondents indicated they were divorced or separated, but this category accounted for 26.2% of the victims of domestic assault.

Rate of victimization was inconsistently related to education. Among those with high school or less, the rate of victimization approximated the proportion in the total survey. On the other hand, those with community college diplomas tended to be somewhat more likely to indicate their victimization than those with a college degree. Being unemployed was not disproportionately linked to domestic victimization.

In a later question, Kings County respondents in 2000 were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that “violence against spouses” was a “big problem” in their county. Of those who responded, 50.4% strongly agreed or agreed. Of 12 choices of “problems”, however, this was the lowest proportion of those who agreed (tied with “bullying”, with the exception of noise complaints and concern about fighting between groups. There was no significant gender difference in the identification of violence against spouses as a big problem: 52.3% of women and 4% of men agreed that it was a “big problem”.

Finally, Kings County residents were asked in 2000 whether or not they agreed with the statement, “Police should more often press charges for spouse battering.” Overall, there was substantial agreement: 80.2% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Even with this high level of acceptance for the laying of charges, statistically significant differences emerged among gender categories. Women more than men

agreed with pressing charges in cases of spouse battering. The differences among age categories was not systematic; the main differences being the greater likelihood that respondents under 25 more than those over 25 expressed a neutral attitude, while those 55 or over tended to slightly more likely to disagree and more likely to indicate agreement rather than strong agreement. These differences are not substantively significant. Agreement that the police should pursue a policy of pressing charges did not appear to be affected by education. Respondents with different types of educational attainment were not statistically significant.

**Table 1-9  
Police Should Press Charges for Spousal Battery, by Sex and Age (2000)**

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	St.Agree	n
Gender					
males	3.4	20.7	50.7	25.2	783
females	2.2	14	50.9	32.9	964
Age					
15-24	1.5	20.4	46.7	31.4	137
25-54	2.6	16	49.4	32	1023
> 54	3.3	17.8	54.5	24.5	584

## **Perceived Change in Crime Rates**

Typically, surveys ask people to compare the amount of crime in their neighbourhood relative to a variety of comparison points. The G.P.I. survey of 2000 asked respondents to compare their neighbourhood with other areas in Canada. Only 1.2% (22 of 1789) of Kings County respondents said that crime was higher in their neighbourhood. By far the largest majority (76.1%) believed it was lower than in other areas of Canada. The remainder, 22.6% believed it was much the same.

There was almost no difference in the response by gender, and very slight differences by age and marital status (with the older respondents and those widowed slightly more likely to claim crime was the same in their neighbourhood as elsewhere). These differences were statistically insignificant. There was a slight (and also insignificant) tendency for a smaller proportion of the unemployed (64.2%) to judge crime to be lower in their area. On the other hand, those with more education were, again slightly, more likely to see crime in their neighbourhood as lower (for example, 83% of those with a college degree).

Being victimized in the last five years, as might be expected, was statistically associated with a tendency to claim less frequently that crime in their area was lower than elsewhere in Canada, most of the variation being accounted for by those who felt crime was about the same as elsewhere. Still, 68.3 of victims felt crime was lower in their area.

**Table 1-10 – Perceived Amount of Crime by Victimization**

	Higher		About Same		Lower		n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Victim (5 yrs)	7	2.6	77	29.1	181	68.3	265
Not Victim	15	1.0	327	21.5	1181	77.5	1523

Similarly, respondents are routinely asked whether crime in their neighbourhood has increased or decreased over a certain period, in the G.P.I. survey, the comparison framework was five years. While most respondents felt that it had remained the same (56%), more believed it had increased (19.7%) than the proportion who thought it had decreased (5.5%) – the remainder indicated “don’t know”.

Looking at only those who expressed an opinion, men were slightly more likely to think crime had decreased; women to think it had remained the same. Looking at age groups and marital status, those 15-24 as well as those separated or divorced were slightly more likely to think crime had increased; those 25-54 as well as those who were widowed, were more likely to believe that it had remained the same. Those with university degrees were the least likely to think crime had increased, and the most likely to think it had remained the same. Finally, being victimized was significantly correlated with a higher tendency to believe crime had increased, while fewer believed it had remained the same.

**Table 1-11 Perceived Change in Crime by Victimization**

	Increased		Decreased		About Same		n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Victim, last 5 yrs	86	38.4	13	5.8	125	55.8	224
Not victim	267	21.7	86	7.0	879	71.3	1232

## Problems in Kings County

In 2000, the GPI asked respondents to agree or disagree about whether a list of possible social problems were “big problems in King’s County” (see Table 1-12). The GPI survey did not ask about traffic problems; however, the two major concerns reported were drinking and driving (75.6% agreed or strongly agreed was a “big (problem”) and drug use and/or trafficking (71.5%). The other most serious problems in 2000 were “increasing number of crimes involving young offenders” (69.9% agree) and “under-age drinking” (68.7%).

**Table 1-12 Perceptions of “Big Problems in Kings County (2000)**

	St. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	St. Agree	n
Places being broken into	1.6	10.8	25.9	47.6	14.1	1758
Vandalism or property destruction	1.3	8.6	23.5	50.9	15.7	1762
Fighting mong different groups	5.3	31.2	45.8	14.3	3.4	1746
People hanging around	2.5	15.4	30.3	37.2	14.5	1754
Noisy parties, quarrels, music	3.2	26.2	45.5	19.1	6	1753
Increasing crimes involving youth	1.2	7.7	21.1	49.2	20.7	1755
Drug use and/or trafficking	1.1	5.6	21.7	45.3	26.2	1754
Violence against spouses	0.9	6.6	42.1	40.2	10.2	1745
Child abuse	1.3	7.6	47.8	32.9	10.3	1741
Bullying	1	7.7	41.1	36.8	13.4	1743
Under-age drinking	0.7	5.5	25.1	46.2	22.5	1752
Drinking and driving	0.7	5.1	18.6	47.3	28.3	1751

On break and enters, in 2000, 61.7% agreed or strongly agreed that “homes or other places being broken into” was a “big problem”. Vandalism was a “big problem” for 66.6% in 2000. The most important background variable on these measures was age; gender had a small effect. For example, on the question of whether or not breaking and entering were a “big Problem” in Kings County, more women than men agreed (63.3% vs. 60%), but age differences were highly significant. Of those 15-24, 62.3% disagreed B&Es were a big problem. This contrasts with 38.5% and 31.6% for those 25-54 and 55 or more, respectively.

Finally, Kings County residents were asked in 2000 whether “More resources should be put into fighting ‘white collar crime’ (fraud, embezzlement, corporate crime, etc.).” Just over half (55.2%) agreed with expending more resources on this type of crime. It indicates that it is not a great priority among respondents. There were, in addition, significant differences among gender and age groups. Men more than women, and the older more than younger groups thought more resources should be expended on white-collar crime. More men than women reported owning a business (14.1% vs. 10.7%). Among age groups, those aged 25 to 54 were the most likely to own or manage a business (16%). There was virtually no difference between those who owned/managed a business and those who did not on this question. Almost the same proportion of business owners/managers had their business victimized by crime over the previous 12 months (16.5%). Of those victimized, there was a slight tendency to wish for more resources to fight white-collar crime (50% vs 56.7%), but this difference was not significant statistically.

**Table 1-13 More Resources Should be Put into Fighting White Collar Crime, by Sex and Age (2000)**

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	St.Agree	n
Gender					
males	8.2	30.7	42.7	18.4	782
females	10.9	38.6	38.2	12.3	958
Age					
15-24	11.8	46.3	33.8	8.1	136
25-54	11.3	41	35.7	12	1019
> 54	6.4	21.6	49.8	22.2	582

## Fear of Crime

A common measure of the fear of crime is to ask how safe the respondent feels walking alone in their area after dark. The question about fear of walking alone was asked in the 2000 GPI Survey. Table 1-14 indicates that considerably more men than women (43.7% vs. 15.3%) feel "very safe" while more women feel somewhat unsafe. In addition, more than three times as many women than men say they do not walk alone after dark. This may not be due to fear but could be caused by problems of mobility, if it is assumed that men may have more access to transportation than women.

**Table 1-14 Fear of Walking Alone at Night, by Sex (2000)**

	Very safe	Reasonably safe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Do not walk	Total (n)
Male	43.7	43.5	5.1	1.1	6.6	804
Female	15.3	46.6	14.8	1.6	21.6	998
Total	28	45.2	10.5	1.4	14.9	1802

While the general trend was similar with respect to gender, the 1989 public survey found that a higher proportion of both men and women felt "very safe" walking alone at night, 73.5% of men compared with 34.8% of women. The proportion of men feeling somewhat or very unsafe was similar in the two surveys (6.7% in 1989; 6.2% in 2002), but 34.3% of women felt unsafe in 1989 compared with 21% in 2002. In 1989, then, more men and women felt very safe than those who reported in 2002, but more women in 1989 also felt somewhat or very unsafe than in 2002.

Fear of walking alone is associated with age. More residents in the 2000 Survey who are older stay home and do not venture out at night. Among those who do, the age group 55 or more were the least likely to report they felt very safe, but also the least likely to say they felt very unsafe. The latter finding is possibly because many others who would feel very unsafe do not go out, indicating that fear of being victimized is a likely factor in their lower mobility. The Valley survey of 1989 similarly reported a significant difference in fear among the older rather than the younger

residents. Similarly, among economic groups the most fearful group was those who were retired. The university educated group was also anomalous, in this case being the least fearful group. Those with high school or less, or community college diplomas were more likely to claim they were "reasonably" rather than "very safe". Looking at groups according to their reported "main activity", homemakers were the least likely to feel very safe, and the most likely to say they felt reasonably safe. Similarly, the greatest difference among economic groups in 2000 was between the retired and others.

The university educated was also anomalous, being the least fearful group. Those with high school or less, or community college diplomas were more likely to claim they were "reasonably" rather than "very safe". Looking at groups according to their reported "main activity", homemakers were the least likely to feel very safe, and the most likely to say they felt reasonably safe.

More women than men (19.5% vs 24.7%) agreed that they would be more willing to walk at night if they felt safer from crime. Crime, then, was not the main factor inhibiting outdoor activity after dark.

**Table 1-15 Fear of Walking Alone at Night, by Age (2000)**

	Very safe	Reasonably safe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Do not walk	Total (n)
15-24	32.6%	48.2%	12.8%	1.4%	5%	141
25-54	30.3	46.4	11/3	1	11	1052
>54	22.9	42.4	8.6	2.1	23.9	606
Total	28	45.2	10.5	1.4	14.9	1799

The youngest group (aged 15-24) was more likely to say that they would walk more at night if they were less afraid of crime. Eighteen per cent of the 55+ age group, and 40.9% of the 15-24 group would walk more if they feared crime less. At least for the younger group, fear appears to be a significant factor inhibiting their activity.

Consistent with the above findings, previous victimization is associated with greater fear. A higher proportion of those who were not victimized say they do not walk at night, most likely reflecting the tendency for older respondents both to be less victimized and to be less mobile. If we examine only those who claim they do walk at night, logically very few feel "very unsafe". Otherwise, victimization has a considerable and significant effect making people more fearful.

**Table 1-16 Fear of Walking Alone at Night, by Previous Victimization**

	Very safe	Reasonably safe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total (n)
Victimized	26.8%	50.2%	21.3%	1.7%	
Not Victim	33.8	53.9	10.7	1.6	
Total	504	821	190	25	1540

Employing the measure of education, the university educated were the least fearful.

## **Worry About Specific Crimes**

In 2000, respondents were asked how worried they were about a set of specific crimes. The overall results appear in table 1-17. Logically, respondents tended to be more worried about property than violent crimes. Although far fewer acts of violent crime occur, the worry about them may be greater because of the severe potential impact they may have. The greatest proportion said they were worried about "having my vehicle, residence or other property broken into" or "vandalized". It would have been useful to separate out residence from vehicle, since vehicles are more vulnerable and more frequently broken into than residences. Theft from automobiles has been a frequent occurrence in some neighbourhoods.

**TABLE 1-17 Respondent's Degree of Worry About Specific Crimes (%)**

Questions I worry About:	Not at All worried	Not Too worried	Some- What worried	Very worried	n
Held-up or mugged	49.2	38.5	11.5	0.8	1778
Being assaulted	46.5	39.9	11.7	1.8	1780
My vehicle or prop. broken into	28.1	38.6	40.6	5	1778
My vehicle or prop. vandalized	18.1	43.2	34.5	4.3	1775
Family member victim of break-in	29.9	45.1	22	3	1763
Fam. member victim of home invasion	32	44.3	20.4	3.2	1761
Fam. member victim of violent crime	33	44.7	19.3	3	1758
Fam. member victim of property crime	24	45.2	27.8	2.9	1764

Examining the question, "I worry about being held up or mugged", women are more fearful. Sixty percent of men versus 40% of women were "not at all worried", while 7.4% of men and 14.6% of women were "somewhat worried". Similarly, the pattern held for "homemakers". While the disparity was narrower, a similar pattern was found for age groups, with the older group (55+) being the most likely (14.4%) to claim being "somewhat worried". Those with university degrees were the least worried: 5.6% versus 11.5% (overall) being "somewhat worried".

Considering the question about whether the respondent was worried about being assaulted, there was very little difference by age (with the 15-24 age group being slightly more fearful), although gender differences were strong, as Table 1-18 shows.

**Table 1-18 Worry About Being Assaulted, by Gender**

	Not at all Worried	Not too worried	Somewhat worried	Very worried	Total
Males	59.4	33.6	5.6	1.4	791
Females	36.1	45.1	16.6	2.1	980
n					1771

Respondents were most concerned about property crime, logically given its higher rate of incidence. Almost half (45.6%) were somewhat worried or very worried about having their vehicle, residence or other property broken into, while 39.8% were concerned about being vandalized. The results varied significantly by gender with more women (50.3%) being somewhat or very worried, than men (40.0%). The results by age were inconsistent and not significant, although the 15-24 age group was the least fearful, perhaps reflecting their lower degree of property ownership. Similarly, students and the unemployed expressed the least worry. Those victimized by crime in the last five years were also more likely to express some or much worry about being broken into than those not victimized (62.6% vs. 42.6%), a figure derived from Table 1-19. Finally, Table 1-16 also shows that those who felt that their neighbourhood had a lower rate of crime than Canada generally expressed less worry than those who felt that their neighbourhood had about the same amount of crime, or a higher amount. Logically, those who felt crime had increased in their neighbourhood also felt more worried about property crime.

**Table 1-19 Fear of Break-in, by Victimization and Attitudes about Neighbourhood Crime**

		Not at all Worried	Not too worried	Somewhat worried	Very worried	TOTAL
Victim over last 5 years	Crime victim	8.4%	29.0	51.5	11.1	262
	Not crime victim	17.1%	40.3	38.6	4.0	1515
Crime in Neighbourhood	Higher, Same	12.9%	28.0	47.6	11.5	418
	Lower Amount	16.5%	42.1	38.4	3.0	1350
Change in Neighbourhood crime	Increased Over 5 yrs	7.4%	25.4	52.7	14.5	351
	Decreased/ or the same	16.8	41.3	39.3	2.7	1090

Examining the fear that a member of the respondent's household may be the

victim of a home invasions, women were more fearful than men (25.8% vs. 21.1%). Worry also varied directly with age, though the relationship was less strong. The 15-34 age group being the least worried in comparison with other groups. Those victimized by crime in the last five years were also more likely to express some or much worry about a home invasion than those not victimized (28.7% vs. 22.7%), though the differences were narrower than on the question of property crime (see above).

## **Protective Measures**

Another measure of worry about crime asks people how they protect themselves. Asking whether people take active measures to ward off crime is more potentially useful than asking them about worry. Of 1805 respondents, almost two thirds (63.5%) said they lock their residence more often than they used to. One-third (33.7) do so even if they are home during the day. Asked about whether they lock their vehicles more often, 59.7% agreed that they did.

Considering only those who are more likely to lock their home even during the day when they are home, women were more likely than men (40.5% vs. 25.5%) to do so as were those 55 and over, who were more likely than younger respondents as a single group (42.3% vs. 29.6%). Homemakers and the retired followed the same pattern. Those with more education tended to be less likely to lock their home while they were inside.

Respondents were asked whether they had taken a number of other measures to protect themselves from crime over the last twelve months, from changing their routine, installing alarms, or actually changing residences. The results from table 1-20 show that changing your routine (11.5%) and target-hardening measures such as installing locks, alarms, or lights, or obtaining a dog, were the most common measures taken.

In addition, Table 1-20 also lists other measures that respondents were asked whether they had taken to make themselves safer from crime. About half of the respondents said they locked the car door for personal safety when they were alone (46.7%) and checked the back seat when they returned alone to a parked vehicle to check for intruders (50.5%). One third (33.7%) said that they planned their route with safety in mind, although the question did not specify driving route or walking route.

**Table 1-20 Activities Undertaken, last 12 Months, for Protection**

	Yes	(n)
Changed routine, activities, or avoided certain places	11.5	1707
Installed new locks or security bars	9.9	1710
Installed home burglar alarms or motion detector lights	10.4	1709
Installed a new car alarm	1.5	1704
Taken a self-defence course	1.4	1705
Changed your phone number	0.9	1703
Obtained a dog	5.4	1707

Obtained a gun	0.4	1702
Changed residence or moved	0.6	1696
Carry something for defence or to alert other people	9.5	1747
Lock the car door when alone in the car	46.7	1761
Check back seat of car when returning to it alone	50.5	1762
Plan your route with safety in mind	33.7	1753
Stay at home at night out of fear to go outside	4.9	1762

Looking at the question of whether the respondent plans his or her route with safety in mind, more women (43.5%) than men (21.6%) claimed that they did. Among age groups, those under 25 were the least likely to plan their route (16.7%) compared to those 25 or over (35.2%). Those victimized by crime were also more likely to plan their route, although the difference was narrower than for sex and age (39.2% vs. 32.7%).

Finally, the survey asked, in general, how satisfied Kings County residents felt with their personal safety from crime. Women, the elderly, and those victimized by crime were significantly more likely to be "somewhat" rather than "very" satisfied with their personal level of security. In addition, those who were students, and those with a university degree were also more likely than their comparison groups to be "very satisfied".

**Table 1-21 Level of Satisfaction with Safety, by Background Variables**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat /Very Dissatisfied	(n)
Men	58.9	38.7	2.4	793
Women	43.4	53.1	3.5	975
Age: 15-24	59.7	37.4	2.9	139
Age: 25-54	52.0	45.1	2.9	103 2
Age 55 or >	45.1	51.7	3.2	594
Victimized Last 5 yrs	36.4	57.1	6.5	261
Not Victimized	52.7	44.8	2.4	151 5

## BUSINESS OWNERS

226 respondents owned a business. The most common (42%) was retail. Almost half (47.7) were based in the respondent's home. 38.1% employed no one; 36.3% reported between 2 and 5 employees.

## **Part II Public Attitudes about the Criminal Justice System**

The final section of the G.P.I. survey examined attitudes of Kings County residents to the justice system.

In 2000, at least 15% of Kings County residents reported coming into contact with the police. The survey asked respondents a number of contexts in which this contact could have been made, and multiple answers were possible. Almost 13% said their contact was through a public education session, considerably more than those who reported coming into contact as victims (5.8%) or witnesses (4.9%). Five residents claimed that their contact was through "being arrested", while 8.6% (n=146) made contact "for a traffic violation".

In an effort to assess the question of the degree of support for the informal resolution of disputes, Kings County residents were asked, in the 2000 GPI survey, to agree or disagree with the statement, "Friends and neighbours should settle their disputes out of court." The conflation of "friends" with "neighbours" may have helped skewed the results positively; however, phrased this way, only 5.6% disagreed while 70.9% agreed that informal was better. As Table 2-1 indicates, there was very little gender variation on this question (with women marginally more likely to disagree); but there was a significant difference by age: older respondents were more likely to support the use of informal measures than were younger respondents.

**Table 2-1  
Support for Use of Informal Dispute Settlement, by age and gender (2000)**

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	St.Agree	n
Gender					
males	5.7	21.4	59.7	13.1	785
females	5.5	25.3	55.3	13.9	965
Age					
15-24	16.1	39.4	35.8	8.8	137
25-54	6.2	26.3	54.1	13.5	1024
> 54	2	15	68.1	14.8	580

### **Rating Police Effectiveness**

Respondents were asked to rate the job done by their local police, on a scale of a "good job", an "average job", or a "poor job" in a number of areas.

**Table 2-2 Valley Residents' Perceptions of Local Police (2000)**

	Good	Average	Poor
Enforcing the laws	54.3	43.6	2.2
Promptly responding to calls	51.4	43.3	5.3
Investigating and solving crime	41.1	53.4	5.5

Being approachable and easy to talk to	64.9	31.3	3.8
Supplying information to reduce crime	53.2	41.5	5.3
Ensuring the safety of citizens	49.5	47	3.4
Helping people with neighbourhood problems	40.1	52.8	7.1
Being careful not to arrest innocent people	42.7	52.2	5.1

The overall ratings are average or good; relatively few respondents believed the police did a “poor” job. Among respondents who reported that, within the last year, they had contact with the police through “a traffic violation”, 57.3% agreed the police did a good job of enforcing the law; only 21.% said they did a “poor job”.

As usual, age made a difference in respondent’s perceptions of the police. Consistently, in all questions, the youngest grouping (aged 15-25) were the least likely to claim the police were doing a “good job” while the oldest group (55 or more) were the most positive. The educational variable also tended to be insignificant statistically; however, while university-educated respondents tended consistently to give the highest rating for the police, those with a community college diploma or certificate tended to rate the police less highly than those with only high school.

## General Attitudes on Justice-Related Issues

Finally, Kings County residents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements concerning formal and informal justice.

**Table 2-5 General Attitudes about the Justice System**

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
More resources put into fighting white collar crime	55.2	35.2	9.6
Police more often press charges spouse battering	80.2	17	2.7
Gun control laws need to be tougher	48.6	23.1	28.3
Friends/neighbours should settle disputes out of court	70.9	23.5	5.6
More & better youth programs would reduce crime	80.1	12.9	7
Death penalty should reintroduced for convicted murders	43.5	23.8	32.7
Community service used more as alternative to prison	37.2	25.6	37.2
A lot of crime because sentences not severe enough	66.3	19.1	14.6
Young offenders are treated too harshly	3.8	12	84.2
The justice system is fair to everyone	25.4	25.4	49.2
Marijuana should be legalized	26.6	30.2	43.2