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AUTHOR Bryant, Clifton D.; Shoemaker, Donald J.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to present the results of a crime victimization survey conducted among Virginia residents. The description of the findings is divided into four sections: criminal victimization experiences, reporting of victimizations, attitudes toward crime, and crime prevention and protection measures. The report is offered as a source of information about the extent of criminality in Virginia and the attitudes and experiences of Virginia citizens relative to crime and crime prevention. While the study focused exclusively on residents of Virginia, comparisons with national data and references to other victimization studies are occasionally presented. The report studies community attitudes in relationship to age, education, social status, sex, employment, and community size. Over one-third of the respondent group had family members who had been victims of crime within the past year. The great majority of these crimes were property-related, with 6% of the households having individuals who had fallen victim to violent crimes. The overall rate of criminal victimization was somewhat higher than reported in earlier national surveys. Crime victimization was somewhat greater in urban communities than rural communities, especially in regard to property victimization. In terms of general trends, the likelihood of being victimized was highest for people up to age 29 and declined with each successive age group. The lowest incidence of total victimization occurred in the lowest educational category and moved up with each successively higher educational bracket, with the exception of a very minor drop between the "post high school" and "college" categories. (TES)

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CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD CRIME IN VIRGINIA: A RESEARCH REPORT

CLIFTON D. BRYANT
AND
DONALD J. SHOEMAKER

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION AND ATTITUDES

TOWARD CRIME IN VIRGINIA:

A RESEARCH REPORT*



Clifton D. Bryant
and
Donald J. Shoemaker
(in alphabetical order)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia
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I. Introduction

In the United States public concern regarding crime and crime victimization has had a long history. Special commissions and governmental reports concerning criminal activity, and the victims of these crimes, have appeared at least since the late 19th century (Inciardi, 1978:Chapter 2).

In the 1930s, the Federal Bureau of Investigation began publishing statistics on the incidence of crime in America. This publication is named the *Uniform Crime Reports (U.C.R.)*, and is now published annually. The *U.C.R.* contain information on the number of crimes reported to the police throughout the nation, as well as the number of crimes cleared by arrest. In addition, these reports identify the results of arrests in selected cases, including such information as whether the offender was released, convicted, convicted for another crime, or sent to juvenile court.

The *Uniform Crime Reports* have proven useful to many individuals working in the field of criminal justice. They have been used by judges, lawyers, police chiefs, probation officers, and college professors, to name a few. However, these reports do have limitations (Vetter and Silverman, 1986:43-47). For one, the *U.C.R.* do not record all the crimes which have occurred, only the ones reported to the police. In addition, the *U.C.R.* reveal nothing about the attitudes of the offenders, or of their victims, nor do they speak to the relationship between offender and victim.

Partly in response to these problems with the *U.C.R.*, criminologists have developed other means of determining how much crime is occurring and where it is happening. One such mean is the victimization survey. This method of studying crime has been used for over twenty years.

The purpose of the current report is to present the results of a crime victimization survey conducted among Virginia residents. The description of the findings are divided into four sections: criminal victimization experiences; reporting of victimizations; attitudes toward crime; and crime prevention and protection measures.

This report is offered as another source of information about the extent of criminality in Virginia and the attitudes and experiences of Virginia citizens relative to crime and crime prevention. The results of this study are intended as a supplement, rather than as a replacement, for other data on criminal behavior in the state, such as statistics published by criminal justice agencies.

While the study focused exclusively on residents of Virginia, comparisons with national data and references to other victimization studies will occasionally be presented. These comparisons are offered to provide the reader with illustrations of comparabilities and differences between the results of this study and those of other surveys.

II. Setting and Sample

This study was a component research project of a larger regional study of most of the states in the South that addressed the question of crime victimization and the context and circumstances of the victimization experience, as well as the social characteristics of the individuals studied and various attitudes toward, and perceptions of, crime. In the preliminary phases of this study, phone surveys were used through random digit dialing of phone numbers listed in Virginia. This method proved to be unproductive. It tended to raise suspicions in the minds of some respondents who either refused to cooperate or purposefully misled the

caller. This information was relayed to the researchers by extension personnel, who had been contacted by suspicious respondents. It was then decided to gather the data through the use of a mail questionnaire. The survey instrument was originally pretested on a group of adult residents in Montgomery County, Virginia. Appropriate revisions were made on the instrument as a result of this pretest.

A questionnaire was then prepared and delivered to 226 residents in three counties in Virginia: North Hampton, King George, and Charlotte. The questionnaires were administered to these people by community leaders in each county, with the cooperation of the county extension office. The results were used to develop the questionnaire which was administered for the present study.

The survey sample was based on the universe of motor vehicle registrants in Virginia who owned motor vehicles and were issued standard, six-character license plates. The requirement of six-character license plates excluded from the universe, and sample, those plates associated with business, educational establishments, or governmental enterprises. Also excluded were licenses issued to trucks, tractors, or trailers, bicentennial plates, rental vehicle plates, and personalized plates.

The Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) was provided with a list of 9600 six-character number sets, randomly generated by computer programming, and asked to provide a list of approximately 6000 names and addresses of motor vehicle registrants. This list of approximately 6000 names came from a total of around 3,000,000 standard license plates issued in Virginia at the time of the study. From the list of 6000 names and addresses, 4000 were randomly selected to receive the survey instrument.

The instruments were mailed in the fall of 1984. By the end of 1984, 952 questionnaires had been returned. In January, 1985, a reminder was mailed to those who had not returned the questionnaire. In April 1985, another reminder and copy of the survey form were mailed. These two reminders yielded an additional 372 returned questionnaires. The combined total of 1324 returns represents almost 33 percent of the sample. Statistical tabulations between the early and late returns yielded no differences in rates of criminal victimizations.

From a comparison with 1980 Virginia population characteristics, the sample is underrepresentative of the percentage of blacks in the state (see Table 1). In addition, there are also some moderate differences between the present sample and Virginia residents relative to sex, marital status, education, and age. This, in turn, might make more tenuous the process of generalizing from the results of the study to the specific population of Virginia. Thus, the conclusions of this study essentially address basic distributions and relationships among the variables examined.

Table 1.
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample
and the Population of Virginia, 1980 (in percents)

SAMPLE		VIRGINIA	
<i>Sex</i>		<i>Sex (age 18 +)</i>	
Male	58.6	Male	48.2
Female	38.6	Female	51.8
Missing Data	2.8		-----
	-----		100.0
	100.0		
<i>Residence</i>		<i>Residence (18 +)</i>	
Urban	54.0	Urban	66.9
Rural	41.4	Rural	33.1
Missing Data	4.5		-----
	-----		100.0
	99.9		
<i>Race</i>		<i>Race (18 +)</i>	
White	88.6	White	81.0
Black	8.2	Black	17.6
Other	1.0	Other	1.4
Missing Data	2.3		-----
	-----		100.0
	100.1		
<i>Marital Status</i>		<i>Marital Status (18 +)</i>	
Never Married	11.0	Single	21.1
Married	74.8	Married	61.8
Separated or	8.0	Separated or	0.3
Divorced		Divorced	
Widowed	4.0	Widowed	7.6
Missing Data	2.2	Status Uncertain	.2
	-----		-----
	100.0		100.0
<i>Education</i>		<i>Education (18 +)</i>	
None	.1	None	.8
1-8	5.2	1-8	17.6
9-12	10.0	9-11	17.0
High School	20.8	High School	31.3
Post High School	19.1	1 Year of College	6.4
Vocational	7.8	2 Years of College	6.7
2-Year College	6.6	3 Years of College	3.4
4-Year College	17.2	4 Years of College	9.2
Graduate	11.2	5+ Years of College	7.6
Missing Cases	2.0		-----
	-----		100.0
	100.2		

Table 1. (continued)

Age		Age	
14-29	15.4	14-29	30.0
30-39	23.6	30-39	15.3
40-49	21.9	40-49	10.6
50-59	18.7	50-59	10.1
60 +	16.7	60 +	13.6
Missing Cases	3.7		-----

	100.0	Note: Ages 0-13 are not included.	

III. Victimization Experiences

A. Introduction

The central purpose of this survey was to gauge the extent to which adult residents in Virginia had been the victim of a crime within the past year. The crimes which were included in the study were vandalism, motor vehicle theft, theft around the home, theft from persons in places other than the home, burglary of the home, violent crimes such as robbery, assault, rape, and murder, crimes around a second home or camp (theft, vandalism, burglary, arson), and crimes occurring to business or rental property (theft, vandalism, burglary, arson, robbery). Respondents were asked to identify personal instances of criminal victimization, as well as those which occurred to members of their households. Not all respondents answered the questions on victimization; in fact, only 1046 did so. Since victimization is the key issue of this report, only those who addressed the questions on victimization will be included in the following sections of this report.

The figures in Table 2 indicate that, of those who answered the items concerning victimization, just under half (48.9%) responded that they, or a member

of the household, had been victimized at least once by a crime in the twelve months preceding the survey. While this figure may seem large, it should be remembered that the percentage is based on those who addressed the questions on victimization. If all 1324 respondents were included in the population base, the percentage of those reporting some victimization experience would decline to 38.7 percent, which is still higher than the percentage of persons nationwide (26%) who reported a criminal victimization in 1984 (Households Touched by Crime, 1984).

Before considering variations in victimization occurrences, two other sections of Table 2 should be noted. First, the overwhelming majority of crimes committed against the respondents were property related, and this result is consistent with national data. Second, the number of violent criminal victimizations is low. Additional investigation revealed that this figure was partially reflective of very low reported incidents of violent crime experiences among blacks residing in urban areas. This result, along with the conclusion that blacks are underrepresented in the sample of returnees (Table 1), led to the exclusion of race as a demographic factor of comparison in the other parts of this report.

**Table 2.
Victimization Experiences**

All Crimes

	Frequency	Percent
No	534	51.1%
Yes	512	48.9%
Totals	1046	100.0%

Property Offenses

	Frequency	Percent
No	551	52.7%
Yes	495	47.3%
Totals	1046	100.0%

Violent Crimes

	Frequency	Percent
No	985	94.2%
Yes	61	5.8%
Totals	1046	100.0%

B. Victimization Patterns by Size of Community

The incidence of crime in the United States has traditionally been related to community size. Rural areas and small towns have tended to have less crime than larger towns and cities. Such differences have resulted from several factors. The larger communities contain more opportunity for crime, and offer more anonymity for the perpetrators of crime. There is a greater diversity of people in the larger community, which provides more potential for disagreement and conflict. However, in recent years, crime in rural areas and small towns has been increasing.

This study also examines the relationship between crime victimization and size of community. Community size was divided into three categories: *rural*---open country and communities of under 2500 population; *urban*---communities of 2500 to 50,000 population; and *metro*---cities of over 50,000 population. As the figures in Table 3 show, there was a stronger likelihood for crime to be underrepresented in rural communities and overrepresented in communities of larger size. Crime victimization percentages were approximately the same in urban and metro communities. Less than one-half (43.4%) of the respondents of the rural communities reported that they had been victimized while over one-half of those from the larger sized communities indicated that they had been the victim of a crime.

The relationship between community size and crime victimization is partially explained when victimization is separated into property crime and violent crime victimization. In the instance of the former, there is a strong relationship with community size. Over one-half of the individuals in urban and metro communities said that they had experienced property crime victimization, but only a little

more than two-fifths (40.8%) of the respondents in rural communities reported such victimization.

In the case of violent crime victimization, there appeared to be no pattern in terms of a relationship with community size. In the case of all three categories of community size, approximately the same percentage of residents indicated that they had been the victim of violent crime.

Table 3.
Victimization by Size of Community

Total Victimization	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Not Victimized	56.6%	44.5%	47.6%	509
Victimized	43.4%	55.5%	52.4%	499
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	431	310	267	1008

Property Crime Victimization	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Not Victimized	59.2%	45.5%	48.7%	526
Victimized	40.8%	54.5%	51.3%	482
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	431	310	267	1008

Violent Crime Victimization	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Not Victimized	94.2%	93.9%	94.0%	948
Victimized	5.8%	6.1%	6.0%	60
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	431	310	267	1008

C. Demographic Variations of Victimization

1. Age

Because of a variety of factors, including behavioral patterns, opportunities, and vulnerability, individuals in different age brackets tend to have different criminal victimization experiences. To explore the relationship of age and criminal victimization in this study, the age of respondents was divided into five different categories, "up to 29," "30 to 39," "40 to 49," "50 to 59," and "60 plus." Victimization experience was then analyzed by age (Table 4).

Over one-half of the respondents in the two lower age groups reported having been victimized in the past year. The percentage of those victimized in the age group "40 to 49" is around 55 percent. The percentage declines to less than one-half in the "50 to 59" category and is lowest among those in the "60 plus" category. This victimization age trend is typically found in national studies as well.

When property crime victimization is examined separately, a similar age pattern emerges. Slightly more than one-half (51.2%) of the respondents in the youngest age category, "up to 29," reported that they have been victimized. The percentage of victimized individuals in each of the next two older age categories, "30 to 39" and "40 to 49," are also larger than one-half (55.5% and 51.7%, respectively), but then the figure falls to under one-half (42.9%) in the "50 to 59" age bracket. The percentage of victimized respondents is again lowest (33.1%) in the "60 plus" age category.

**Table 4.
Victimization by Age**

Total Victimization	Age					Total N
	Up to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 Plus	
Not Victimized	47.1%	43.4%	45.4%	56.1%	66.3%	513
Victimized	52.9%	56.6%	54.6%	43.9%	33.7%	503
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	170	256	238	189	163	1016

Property Crime Victimization	Age					Total N
	Up to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 Plus	
Not Victimized	48.8%	44.5%	48.3%	57.1%	66.9%	529
Victimized	51.2%	55.5%	51.7%	42.9%	33.1%	487
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	170	256	238	189	163	1016

Violent Crime Victimization	Age					Total N
	Up to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 Plus	
Not Victimized	91.8%	91.8%	93.3%	96.8%	98.2%	956
Victimized	8.2%	8.2%	6.7%	3.2%	1.8%	60
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	170	256	238	189	163	1016

No more than 8.2 percent of any single age group indicated that they had been the victims of violent crime. With respect to violent crime victimization, the highest percentages are found in the "up to 29" and "30 to 39" age groups, (8.2%), while the lowest incidence was reported by those in the "60 plus" category (1.8%). These figures, while considerably smaller than for property crimes, also reflect the same trend, with victimization rates being higher for younger people and lower for those above the age of fifty.

Overall, it would appear that for most crimes a level of victimization around 50 percent remains the same in all of the age brackets up through age 49, and then drops to a low mark of slightly over one-third among those respondents 60 years of age or older. Violent crime victimization, never large among any age category, is highest among the youngest age groups and declines with each successive age category, to the lowest incidence of victimization (1.8%) in the oldest age group.

2. Gender

No large differences were found between male and female respondents relative to victimization (Table 5). Females had only a slightly higher incidence of total crime victimization than males (50.9% and 48.0%, respectively).

Property crime victimization followed the same trend with less than one-half the males (45.9%) and the females (49.9%) having been victimized.

Females also were more likely to have been the victim of a violent crime than were males (6.6% and 5.6%, respectively), but this difference was not large enough to be of significance.

These results are surprising because they run counter to the conclusions of other victimization studies, which show males significantly more likely to be the victim of a crime than females (*Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice*, 1983:19-20). Although differences in the present study were not significantly large, females had a slightly larger percentage of victimization than did males. The reasons for this result are not readily apparent. It has already been noted that females were underrepresented among those who returned the surveys. Perhaps those females who did respond were more likely to have been victimized, but this bias, if it exists, would probably have only a small affect on the relationship between gender and victimization, since roughly half of both males and females reported a victimization experience.

**Table 5.
Victimization by Gender**

Total Victimization	Gender		Total N
	Male	Female	
Not Victimized	52.0%	49.1%	521
Victimized	48.0%	50.9%	503
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	629	395	1024

Property Crime Victimization	Gender		Total N
	Male	Female	
Not Victimized	54.7%	50.1%	538
Victimized	45.9%	49.9%	486
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	629	395	1024

Violent Crime Victimization	Gender		Total N
	Male	Female	
Not Victimized	94.4%	93.4%	963
Victimized	5.6%	6.6%	61
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	629	395	1024

3. Income

While it might seem logical that the financially affluent would be more likely to be criminally victimized as a result of their having more in the way of material possessions, such is not uniformly the case in the United States (*Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice*, 1983:19-20). In this study, however, there does appear to be a direct relationship between the incidence of victimization and income.

The respondents were divided into four economic categories based on annual income (in thousands): "up to \$15;" "\$15 to \$25;" "\$25 to \$40;" and "over \$40," and the respective incidence of criminal victimization for the four categories was analyzed. As indicated in Table 6, those at the lower end of the economic scale were less likely to be criminally victimized than were respondents from the more affluent families. There is a consistent increase in reported victimization with each income division, and the two higher income categories show appreciably higher victimization rates than either of the two less affluent groups. Furthermore, the highest income category shows the highest victimization rate of all, (54.1%), and this is substantially higher than that of the next highest income group.

The direct relationship between income and incidence of victimization is more pronounced with respect to property offenses. This finding is consistent with national data (*Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice*, 1983:19-20). In addition, the incidence of property crime victimization is substantially greater in the highest income groups, where 52.9 percent of the respondents said they have been victimized.

When only violent crime is considered, the pattern of victimization is reversed, although differences are not large. While only a small number of people reported having been victimized by violent crime, approximately the same percentage of victimization experience was reported in all three of the lower income categories (6.3%, 6.1%, and 6.5%, respectively). In the highest income group, however, only 4.8 percent of the respondents said they had been victimized.

Thus, criminal victimization, especially property crime victimization, increases with income level of the victim, according to the responses in this survey. The exception to this pattern is violent crime victimization, which goes down somewhat in the highest income level, but remains fairly constant among all other income groups.

**Table 6
Victimization by Income**

Total Victimization	Income (in thousands)				Total N
	Up to \$15	\$15 to \$25	\$25 to \$40	Over \$40	
Not Victimized	54.7%	53.1%	50.2%	45.9%	488
Victimized	45.3%	46.9%	49.8%	54.1%	490
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	128	196	323	331	978

Property Crime Victimization	Income (in thousands)				Total N
	Up to \$15	\$15 to \$25	\$25 to \$40	Over \$40	
Not Victimized	56.3%	55.1%	52.3%	47.1%	505
Victimized	43.8%	44.9%	47.7%	52.9%	473
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	128	196	323	331	978

Violent Crime Victimization	Income (in thousands)				Total N
	Up to \$15	\$15 to \$25	\$25 to \$40	Over \$40	
Not Victimized	93.8%	93.9%	93.5%	95.2%	921
Victimized	6.3%	6.1%	6.5%	4.8%	57
Total %	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	128	196	323	331	978

4. Education

To explore the relationship between crime victimization patterns and level of education, the education of respondents was divided into five different categories: "up to high school;" "high school;" "post high school;" "college;" and "graduate school."

As level of education increased, the experience of having been a victim of a crime also increased (see Table 7). Of those reporting having attended graduate school, over one-half (55.8%) had been the victim of a crime. Those with post high school and college educations also reported high incidences of overall crime victimization (53.8% and 52.4%, respectively). Approximately two-fifths of high school educated respondents, and of those reporting up to high school education, indicated having been the victim of crime in the past year. These differences are fairly substantial and, when compared with the results concerning income and victimization, clearly indicate a greater tendency among those of upper social status to be victimized by crime, within the present sample.

**Table 7
Victimization by Education**

Total Victimization	Education					Total N
	Up to HS	HS	Post HS	College	Grad	
Not Victimized	60.1%	58.9%	46.2%	47.6%	44.2%	523
Victimized	39.9%	41.1%	53.8%	52.4%	55.8%	508
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	143	209	359	191	129	1031

Property Crime Victimization	Education					Total N
	Up to HS	HS	Post HS	College	Grad	
Not Victimized	61.5%	60.8%	47.9%	49.7%	45.0%	540
Victimized	38.5%	39.2%	52.1%	50.3%	55.0%	491
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	143	209	359	191	129	1031

Violent Crime Victimization	Education					Total N
	Up to HS	HS	Post HS	College	Grad	
Not Victimized	95.1%	95.2%	93.0%	92.1%	96.9%	970
Victimized	4.9%	4.8%	7.0%	7.9%	3.1%	61
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	143	209	359	191	129	1031

Those with a higher level of education were especially more likely to report having been the victim of a property crime at a higher rate than those with lower educational levels. Again, these findings are similar to those from national surveys (*Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice*, 1983:19). More than half of those with graduate school education reported property crime victimization, while less than two-fifths (38.5%) of the less than high school educated respondents reported a property crime victimization.

With respect to violent crime victimization, those with a college education reported the highest incidence of victimization (7.9%), while those with graduate school education by far reported the lowest incidence of violent crime victimization (3.1%). These differences, however, are not significantly large, and no consistent pattern exists between violent criminal victimization and level of education of the head of the household.

5. Employment Status

Another characteristic examined in connection with victimization is employment status. The respondents were divided into four employment categories: full-time; part-time; retired; and unemployed. The relationship between this factor and victimization is displayed in Table 8.

Full-time workers and the unemployed are the most likely crime victims (52.1%), while retirees are the least likely victims of a crime (34.8%). To an extent, this pattern parallels that for the relationship between victimization and age. The data in Table 4 indicate the elderly to have the lowest proportionate experience with crime, and it might be presumed that the elderly constitute the bulk of the retired population.

Once again, the data indicate that the relationship between criminal victimization and employment status is explained by property offenses. The pattern of property crime victimization closely matches that of total victimization, with full- and part-time workers and the unemployed reporting higher incidences than the retired, and these differences are significantly large. There is no significant relationship, however, between employment status and victimization of violent offenses, although the differences are in the same direction as with the other two relationships revealed in Table 8. Retirees, for example, represent the employment grouping with the lowest incidence of violent crime victimization (3.2%).

Table 8
Victimization by Employment Status

Total Victimization	Employment Status				Total N
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Retired	Unemployed	
Not Victimized	47.9%	50.6%	65.2%	47.9%	518
Victimized	52.1%	49.4%	34.8%	52.1%	501
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	680	87	158	94	1019

Property Crime Victimization	Employment Status				Total N
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Retired	Unemployed	
Not Victimized	49.6%	50.6%	67.1%	51.1%	535
Victimized	50.4%	49.4%	32.9%	48.9%	484
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	680	87	158	94	1019

Violent Crime Victimization	Employment Status				Total N
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Retired	Unemployed	
Not Victimized	93.4%	94.3%	96.8%	94.7%	959
Victimized	6.6%	5.7%	3.2%	5.3%	60
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	680	87	158	94	1019

Overall, the results of the present analysis indicate significant associations between victimization experiences and several personal characteristics of respondents and their households, and these relationships are particularly apparent among victims of property crimes. These results by no means imply that living in an urban area and being young, male, relatively well off, highly educated, and/or employed *cause* one to be the victim of a crime. However, the data do suggest that the social positions and geographical residences of people do have some influence on the *likelihood* that they will become the victim of a crime. Vulnerability to crime increases for these people because they behave differently, live in areas where more crime occurs, *and* become attractive as potential victims to would-be criminals.

IV. Reporting Victimization to the Police

A. Introduction

A significant part of victimization surveys is the amount of crime which does not come to the attention of the police. Crimes, of course, can be reported by those who see a crime occurring, even if they are not the victims of the offense. In many cases, however, a criminal act is reported to the police by those who have been the victim of the crime.

The respondents in the present survey were asked to indicate whether they reported to the police any criminal acts which occurred to them or those living in their households. The following discussion will involve those who were the victims of property-related offenses. This decision is based on the small number of violent crime victimizations identified in the survey, as well as the lack of signif-

icant variations among victims of violent offenses, as was discussed in the previous section.

A total of 627 property crime victimizations was indicated by the respondents. This figure represents all such victimizations, not those having been the victim of at least one property-related criminal offense, which was the basis of tabulation for the figures presented in Table 2. Of the 627 victimizations, 321, or 51.2 percent were reported to the police. This figure is higher than the reporting percentage for household property offenses among national samples. In 1985, for example, the National Crime Survey reported the percentage of household burglaries reported to the police to be 50, and that for household larcenies (property crimes which do not involve breaking and entering, or forced entry) to be 27 (*Criminal Victimization, 1985:4*).

Within the present sample, the offenses which were reported to the police most often, in terms of percentages, were those which occurred to businesses. The reporting figures for these crimes ranged from 81 percent to 100 percent. Another crime which was very often reported to the police was motor vehicle theft. Seventy-two percent of these offenses were reported to the police, and this figure is almost exactly the same as the national percentage of reporting. Most likely these types of crime are often reported to the police because the loss is covered by insurance.

It is important also to know something about the social characteristics of those who report crime victimizations to the police in order to obtain a better understanding of this aspect of crime victimization. The next section of this analysis compares reporters and nonreporters according to several social characteristics.

B. Victimitizations Reported to the Police by Social Characteristics of Victims

1. Size of Community (Table 9)

Percentages of reporting criminal victimizations to the police show some variation by the size of the community in which the respondents lived. Rural residents reported victimizations to a lesser degree than those from either urban or metropolitan areas. This finding is not unexpected since it is assumed rural dwellers are more likely than urban people to want to handle matters, even criminal ones, informally, and without resorting to official intervention. What is surprising in Table 9, however, is the relatively high percentage of urban citizens who reported victimizations to the police. Perhaps this situation reflects a greater tendency of metropolitan citizens to feel somewhat distanced from the police, as compared with urban dwellers who might feel that the police are accessible and should be called in to investigate criminal matters.

Table 9.
Reporting by Community Size

Property Reported	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Yes	47.2%	56.9%	50.5%	317
No	52.8%	43.1%	49.5%	295
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	201	225	186	612

2. Age (Table 10)

Age differences in the tendency to report crimes to the police are only slightly indicated in the present sample. The lowest percentage is found among the youngest age group, those under 30, and the highest figure occurs with the age group "40 to 49." However, the differences are not significantly large enough to conclude that any pattern or trend exists.

Table 10
Reporting by Age

Property Reported	Age					Total N
	Up to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 Plus	
Yes	43.8%	52.1%	57.5%	53.4%	46.2%	319
No	56.2%	47.9%	42.5%	46.6%	53.8%	297
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	114	190	172	88	52	616

3. Gender (Table 11)

When examined by gender, the proportions of reporting criminal victimizations to the police reveal no significant differences. Males and females are equally as likely to report crimes which have happened to them, and this proportion is just over 50 percent. That the percentage is slightly higher for males than for females is not an indication of any pattern, and such differences are small enough to be attributable to chance.

Table 11
Reporting by Gender

Property Reported	Gender		Total N
	Male	Female	
Yes	52.1%	50.9%	317
No	47.9%	49.1%	297
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	357	257	614

4. Income (Table 12)

Since education and income tend to be correlated for adults in America, it would be reasonable to conclude that patterns of behavior or attitudes would be similar among people of similar education and economic levels. Such, however, is not the case with respect to reporting crimes to the police among the respondents in this survey. The figures in Table 12 show a tendency for higher income victims to report the crime to the police. Again, a possible reason for this tendency may be the existence of insurance protection, which would be expected more for upper-income people than those making less. This factor is not the only one, however, because the differences in reporting by income level are not overwhelmingly large. No reporting percentage figure surpasses 57 percent and none goes below 42 percent.

Table 12
Reporting by Income

Property Reported	Income (in thousands)				Total N
	Up to \$15	\$15 to \$25	\$25 to \$40	Over \$40	
Yes	42.2%	42.1%	56.9%	53.4%	310
No	57.8%	57.9%	43.1%	46.6%	296
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	71	114	202	219	606

5. Education (Table 13)

The figures in Table 13 indicate no large differences in reporting criminal victimization to the police by the educational status of respondents. The lowest percentage is for those with a high school degree and the highest proportions are listed for those with college experience. However, the percentages are so similar that the slight variations which do appear could be explained by chance factors alone. From the results presented in Table 13, one can conclude that educational background has little bearing on the decision to report a criminal victimization to the police, within the current sample of Virginia residents.

**Table 13
Reporting by Education**

Property Reported	Education					Total N
	Up to HS	HS	Post HS	College	Grad	
Yes	49.2%	47.2%	52.9%	52.7%	51.8%	319
No	50.8%	52.8%	47.1%	47.3%	48.2%	300
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	63	91	255	129	81	619

6. Employment Status (Table 14)

In a fashion similar to that of income level, employment status was related to reporting of criminal victimizations to the police. The figures in Table 14 show that those who were employed tended to report criminal victimizations more so than retirees or the unemployed. In particular, part-time employees had the highest proportion of crime reporting.

To a limited extent, these results can be explained on the basis of income. Those who are employed in the job market would more likely have higher incomes than those who are not working and, as was discussed earlier, those with higher incomes report crime victimizations to a greater extent than do those in lower income categories. This explanation is not completely adequate, however, because it is not the full-time employed who had the highest percentage of reporting but the part-time employed, who would be expected to have less income. However, the figures for all employment categories other than full-time are based on small numbers, and percentages for these employment conditions may not be reliable.

Table 14
Reporting by Employment Status

Property Reported	Employment Status				Total N
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Retired	Unemployed	
Yes	51.9%	61.8%	43.5%	37.3%	310
No	48.1%	38.2%	56.5%	62.7%	298
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	435	68	46	59	608

V. Attitudes Toward Crime

A. Introduction

An important focus of attention in this study was the psychological state of mind respondents expressed toward crime. These feelings and perceptions are called "attitudes toward crime." They are divided into three categories: perceived increase in crime; fear of crime; and perceived seriousness of crime. Responses to these items are presented for all respondents who answered the questions on victimization. Since each topic is associated with the respondent's community, responses are also presented according to the size of the community of residence.

B. Perceived Increase in Crime

Those surveyed were asked to indicate whether they felt crime in their community was increasing, decreasing, or had remained the same within the past year or two. General responses to this question are found in Table 15. The percentages in that table indicate that nearly 90 percent of the respondents felt crime in their community had either increased or remained the same in the past year or two.

Table 15
Perception of Crime in the Community

Perception of Crime		
	Frequency	Percent
Decreased	100	9.6%
Remained the Same	495	47.3%
Increased	432	41.3%
No Response	19	1.8%
Total	1046	100.0%

The information in Table 16 deals with how respondents from communities of varying size perceived crime. The percentages indicate that people who lived in metropolitan areas felt that crime had *decreased* to a greater degree than all others in the sample. At the same time, rural citizens represented the greatest percentage of those who thought crime had remained the same. Urban respondents had the highest percentage of people who felt crime had increased, although differences among the three categories of community size were small.

Table 16
Perception of Crime by Size of Community

Perception of Crime	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Decreased	6.2%	9.8%	13.4%	91
The Same	53.3%	44.0%	45.6%	479
Increased	40.5%	46.3%	41.0%	420
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	422	307	261	990

The percentages in Table 16 are a little surprising. Perhaps metropolitan residents have become used to crime, especially less serious types of crime, and tend to overlook these offenses in their general view of crime. On the other hand, people in rural areas and small cities may be more sensitive to crime, and more likely to note signs of increased criminal activity. The issue of perceived crime severity is discussed in the next section.

C. Perceived Seriousness of Crime

The questionnaire asked each person how he or she felt about the seriousness of several crimes, in the person's community. The response options were not a problem, somewhat a problem, and a serious problem. The respondents were asked to rate twenty-two offenses, including major crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, and burglary, but also crimes of lesser severity, including trespassing and traffic violations. The data in Table 17 list the responses for each crime.

For the most part, the respondents perceived crime in their communities to be a small problem, or not a problem at all. It should be stressed that this question addressed the issue of whether crimes were a serious problem, not how grave a particular crime might be. This point is illustrated with the responses to drunk driving and to murder. By law, of course, murder is a more serious criminal violation than is drunk driving. In the present sample, however, more people viewed drunk driving as "a serious problem" in their community than was the case with murder (44.2% versus 19.8%). At the time of the study the prosecution of those charged with drunk driving was being urged by many Virginia citizens. This increased attention to drunk driving undoubtedly influenced respondents' perceptions to the problem this crime presented in their communities.

Table 17
Perceived Seriousness of Crime in the Community
(percents in parentheses)

Crimes	Perceived Seriousness			
	Not a Problem	Somewhat a Problem	A Serious Problem	No Response
Burglary	110 (10.5)	614 (58.7)	316 (30.2)	6 (0.6)
Illegal drugs	127 (12.1)	460 (44.0)	450 (43.0)	9 (0.9)
Drunk driving	97 (9.3)	470 (44.9)	469 (44.8)	10 (1.0)
Embezzlement	588 (56.2)	385 (36.8)	56 (5.4)	17 (1.6)
Forgery/ counterfeiting	638 (61.0)	334 (31.9)	56 (5.4)	18 (1.7)
Fraud	510 (48.8)	441 (42.2)	77 (7.4)	18 (1.7)
Gambling	644 (61.6)	328 (31.4)	56 (5.4)	18 (1.7)
Rape	368 (35.2)	411 (39.3)	253 (24.2)	14 (1.3)
Prostitution	727 (69.5)	251 (24.0)	50 (4.8)	18 (1.7)
Assault	302 (28.9)	506 (48.4)	228 (21.8)	10 (1.0)
Robbery	261 (25.0)	508 (48.6)	270 (25.8)	7 (0.7)
Traffic violation	195 (18.6)	626 (59.8)	217 (20.7)	8 (0.8)
Motor vehicle theft	488 (46.7)	471 (45.0)	72 (6.9)	15 (1.4)
Theft/rustling of livestock	832 (79.5)	162 (15.5)	36 (3.4)	16 (1.5)
Theft or larceny	171 (16.3)	629 (60.1)	234 (22.4)	12 (1.1)
Obscene phone calls	495 (47.3)	441 (42.2)	98 (9.4)	12 (1.1)
Vandalism	232 (22.2)	597 (57.1)	211 (20.2)	6 (0.6)
Unlawful weapons	462 (44.2)	406 (38.8)	162 (15.5)	16 (1.5)
Murder	495 (47.3)	331 (31.6)	207 (19.8)	13 (1.2)
Arson	584 (55.8)	337 (32.2)	111 (10.6)	14 (1.3)
Trespassing	387 (37.0)	554 (53.0)	92 (8.8)	13 (1.2)
Poaching	577 (55.2)	333 (31.8)	112 (10.7)	24 (2.3)

Another crime which was viewed as a serious community problem in this sample was the use of illegal drugs (43.0%). Again, this perception is not consistent with the legal severity of drug use, when compared to other major crimes, such as murder, or rape, or robbery. The respondents considered these types of crimes as a serious problem in their places of residence, but to a lesser degree than they viewed illegal drug use.

Thus, the question concerning perceived crime severity in this survey gauged the respondents' views of the *prevalence* of certain crimes in their communities, as well as the basic legal gravity these offenses represent. In this context, it was found that with two exceptions, drunk driving and illegal drug use, criminal activity was not considered to be a major or serious problem in Virginia communities, as represented through the respondents in this survey.

In Table 18, the perceived seriousness of crime is analyzed by the size of the community of residence. In this table, responses to all crimes are combined into two categories, not serious and serious. This procedure was done in order to make comparisons by community size easy to see in one table. The results show that perceptions of the seriousness of crime did vary by community size. For example, people in metropolitan areas most often expressed the sentiment that crime was a serious problem in their community. On the other hand, rural dwellers had the highest percentage of people who felt crime was not a serious problem in their community.

Earlier, it was reported that more metropolitan respondents felt crime was decreasing than was true for those living in other communities. It was speculated that this feeling might be influenced by low perceptions of crime seriousness in large cities. However, the percentages in Table 18 show that perceived crime seriousness is highest in metropolitan areas. It would seem, therefore, that the respondents' feelings about increases or decreases in crime are not heavily influenced by their perceptions of crime seriousness in their community.

Table 18
Perceived Seriousness of Crime by Size of Community

Perceived Seriousness	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Not Serious	49.5%	42.2%	54.0%	404
Serious	50.5%	57.8%	66.0%	531
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	404	287	244	935

D. Fear of Crime

A third indication of attitudes toward crime used in this survey was fear of crime. The identification of this attitude was based on two conditions, at night and during the day. Specifically, those in the sample were asked to respond to these two statements: "I feel safe going anywhere in the daytime;" and "I feel safe going anywhere in the community after dark." The response choices were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. It may be argued that these statements do not approximate fear of crime but, rather, feelings of safety. However, respondents were clearly informed that the focus of the survey was on crime. Furthermore, while the word "safe" was used in the statements, an opposite of feeling safe is fear. Those who do not feel safe in their community, or in general, may logically be considered as fearful.

The responses to these statements are shown in Table 19. Most people in the survey said they feel *safe* during the *daytime*, although over one-fifth of the respondents did not feel safe. When asked to consider *nighttime* conditions, however, most respondents felt *unsafe* in their community.

Table 19
Fear of Crime

Feel Safe During Daytime		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	25	2.4%
Disagree	219	20.9%
Agree	580	55.4%
Strongly Agree	222	21.2%
Totals	1046	100.0%

Feel Safe at Night		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	129	12.3%
Disagree	406	38.8%
Agree	429	41.0%
Strongly Agree	81	7.7%
Missing	1	.1%
Totals	1046	100.0%

When analyzed by size of community, feelings of safety (or fear) during the day were not strikingly different among people from different communities (see Table 20). However, fear of crime at night was considerably different among residents of rural, urban, and metropolitan areas. Rural people were least fearful, urban residents somewhat more so, and those in metropolitan areas most fearful about going places after dark.

Table 20
Fear of Crime by Size of Community

Feel Safe During Daytime	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Strongly Disagree	1.6%	1.9%	3.7%	23
Disagree	18.8%	22.3%	22.1%	209
Agree	57.3%	53.2%	55.8%	561
Strongly Agree	22.3%	22.6%	18.4%	215
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	431	310	267	1008

Feel Safe at Night	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Strongly Disagree	7.2%	13.2%	19.5%	124
Disagree	35.6%	39.7%	44.9%	396
Agree	49.2%	38.4%	28.8%	408
Strongly Agree	7.9%	8.7%	5.7%	79
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	430	310	267	1007

VI. Crime Prevention and Protection Measures

A. Introduction

A final component of the questionnaire concerned the types of crime prevention activities or items respondents said they used or favored using. These behaviors and materials are collectively referred to in this section as "measures." It is recognized that not all of the measures identified in the survey are solely used for the purposes of preventing crime or protecting oneself from potential criminal victimization. Owning a gun, for example, can be, and often is, associated with hunting or target shooting. However, the lead-in statements to these sections of the questionnaire indicated that the interest of the investigators was in the use of these measures for crime prevention and protection.

B. Perceived Effectiveness of Prevention Measures

One of the sections on crime prevention dealt with how *effective* respondents perceived various suggested activities for reducing crime in their area. There were twenty-two suggested activities, including night curfews for young people, creating more jobs for the unemployed, organizing local crime prevention groups, and giving stiffer penalties to law violators.

The responses to these suggestions were summarized for the respondents as a whole and the results are presented in Table 21. The percentages in that table indicate that the respondents generally perceived the suggested activities to be effective in preventing crime. Specifically, over 70 percent felt that the measures were somewhat or very effective in preventing crime, while only 22 percent said they were ineffective.

The data in Table 22 show the perceived effectiveness of crime prevention measures by size of community. The results indicate some differences in perceptions among respondents living in the three types of areas. Metro residents were most likely to view the suggestions as not effective while rural citizens were most likely to see the measures as very effective. In all comparisons, however, the differences were small and it can be concluded that perceptions of the effectiveness of crime prevention measures were not affected by size of community of residence in this sample.

Table 21
Crime Prevention Measures

Effectiveness of Crime Prevention Measures

	Frequency	Percent
Not Effective	230	22.0%
Somewhat Effective	370	35.4%
Very Effective	363	34.7%
No Response	83	7.9%
Totals	1046	100.0%

Table 22
Perceived Effectiveness of Crime Prevention Measures
by Size of Community

Perceived Seriousness	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Not Effective	20.3%	24.8%	28.9%	222
Somewhat Effective	39.6%	38.8%	33.9%	352
Very Effective	40.1%	36.4%	37.2%	355
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	404	286	239	929

C. Personal and Property Protection Devices

Another indication of crime prevention and protection, as studied in this survey, was the use of personal and property protection devices.

Those answering the questionnaire were asked how frequently, if ever, they did any of a number of things to protect themselves and their property *at home*. The list included nineteen activities, such as locking doors or windows during the day or at night, marking property, having delivery of mail and newspapers stopped while on trips, having neighbors watch the house and property while away, and leaving on lights when away for short periods of time.

The answers respondents gave to these crime prevention options are presented in Table 23. It appears that there are three distinct groups of people relative to the use of crime prevention devices; those who *never* use them, those who *always* use them, and those who *sometimes* use them. The highest percentage of respondents said they never used crime prevention measures at home, but the next highest percentage said they always used such precautions. The rest either said that sometimes they did these things, or did not respond at all.

When this topic is analyzed by size of community, the results are striking (see Table 24). Nearly half (46.7%) of the rural respondents said they never used crime prevention measures, while over one-third (35.5%) of metro residents answered that they always used such devices. Overall, the percentage differences in Table 24 are as large or larger than any comparisons presented in this study, and they uniformly run in the direction of increased use of crime prevention and property protection measures with increased community size.

Table 23
Use of Devices to Protect Self and Property at Home

	Frequency	Percent
Never	342	32.7%
Occasionally	192	18.4%
Frequently	145	13.9%
Always	269	25.7%
No Response	98	9.4%
Totals	1046	100.0%

Table 24
**Personal and Property Protection Measures
to Protect Self and Home by Community Size**

Use of Protection Measures	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
Never	46.7%	31.1%	25.3%	332
Occasionally	21.4%	19.6%	18.4%	184
Frequently	11.5%	16.8%	20.8%	143
Always	20.4%	32.5%	35.5%	258
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	392	280	245	917

D. Use of Home Security Devices

A third way of assessing crime prevention and personal property protection in this study was by asking Virginia citizens whether they had one of several security devices at their home. In all, twelve security items were listed, including owning a dog or guns, having a burglar alarm system, using security lights around the home or buildings on the property, using dead bolt locks or security chains on doors, and having window latches or locks.

As shown in Table 25, the overwhelming majority, nearly 75 percent, of the respondents said they did *not* use any of these home security devices. In Table 26, these answers are categorized by size of community. Unlike the use of crime prevention and personal property protection measures, there were *no* large differences among respondents relative to the use of home security devices. The high percentage (80.5%) of those from rural areas who indicated no use of security practices is not surprising, since nearly half of these people said they never used any crime prevention or property protection measures. The surprising figure in Table 26 is the high percentage (76.5%) of metro respondents who said they did not use home security devices. This is the same group of people among whom 35.5 percent answered that they *always* used personal and property protection measures at home (Table 26). It would seem from these results that the people in this sample are selective in the specific crime prevention and property protection measures and devices they use.

Table 25
Use of Home Security Devices

	Frequency	Percent
No	778	74.4%
Yes	215	20.6%
No Response	53	5.1%
Totals	1046	100.0%

Table 26
Use of Home Security Devices by Size of Community

Use of Security Devices	Size of Community			Total N
	Rural	Urban	Metro	
No	80.5%	76.0%	76.5%	750
Yes	19.5%	24.0%	23.5%	211
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total N	410	296	255	961

VII. Summary and Conclusions

On the basis of the data derived from the questionnaire returns, the respondent sample appeared to exhibit socio-economic characteristics that were somewhat different from those associated with the general population in Virginia. Males and married individuals were significantly overrepresented in the respondent sample, and blacks were significantly underrepresented, as were urban dwellers in this group. The respondent group also had a higher median educational level than the general Virginia population. Some of the characteristics of the respondent sample group, however, would seem to more closely approximate the automobile owning population in Virginia--male, white, married, and higher average education--than the general population. Automobiles in a family are frequently registered in the name of the husband/father and so, presumably, automobile owners are also more likely to be heads of household. This respondent sample would appear to represent the population of automobile owning, household heads, and, therefore, the group to which this survey was most relatively aimed.

The analysis of the respondent data provided a number of important insights about criminal victimization in Virginia. To begin with, over one-third of the households had members who had been the victims of crime within the past twelve months. The great majority of these crimes were property related. Only about 6 percent of the households had individuals who had been the victim of a violent crime. The overall rate of criminal victimization of the Virginia respondents was somewhat higher than that reported in earlier national surveys.

Consistent with previous research, the data from this survey revealed that the likelihood of crime victimization was somewhat greater in urban or metro

communities than in rural communities. This likelihood was even more pronounced in the case of property crime victimization than with crime victimization in general. In regard to violent crime victimization, the direction of the relationship between community size and incidence of victimization remained the same, although the percentages of victimization incidences were substantially lower and were relatively small.

Age, as with community size, appeared to be related to victimization experience. In terms of general trends, the likelihood of being victimized was highest in the "up to 29" age category and declined with each successive age group. This trend is similar to that found in previous national studies and is likely the result of opportunity structure. Individuals in the youngest category age, presumably, are the most active and this tends to put them in situations where they are more vulnerable to crime (out on the streets at night, for example). In terms of property crime, the highest rate of victimization was among those in the "30 to 39" age category and declined with each successive age category thereafter. (The victimization rate, while highest in the "30 to 39" age group, was still relatively high in the age group just below and just above this age bracket.) This trend probably reflects the fact that most individuals do not accumulate as much property (real and personal) until their mature years when they marry and establish a family. Also, it is during their 30's and 40's that many individuals have the largest families. In effect, the families are larger before the children grow up and leave home, thus, there are more people in the family unit who may be victims of property crime. Furthermore, people often continue to remain relatively active in the sense of being out on the streets (going shopping, to the movies) until the time they reach their 50's. Finally, violent crime victimization, while rela-

tively low overall, peaked in the age categories of "up to 29," and "30 to 39," and declined with age brackets thereafter. Again, this is probably a reflection of the fact that people are most active and move about their communities more in their 20's and 30's and are more sedentary later in life. In doing so, they put themselves in situations where they are more vulnerable to violent crime victimization (that is, an individual on the streets, or going to an automobile in a parking lot is more likely to be assaulted or attacked).

When the data from the respondent sample were analyzed by gender, there appeared to be no significant differences in the incidence of criminal victimization, for all forms of victimization, between males and females. However, in all categories of victimization, females appeared to be more likely than males to be the victims of crime, with the largest percentage difference in the instance of property crime victimization. These findings concerning gender are not consistent with the patterns observed in previous research, where males were significantly more likely to have been criminally victimized.

When analyzed by income category, the data displayed a very direct relationship between victimization pattern and income. In the case of total victimization, the lowest rate of victimization was encountered with individuals in the lowest income category. The incidence of victimization rose with each successively higher income bracket. A similar pattern was observed in terms of property crime victimization. More affluent categories of people have more to steal, such as items left in the yard, more expensive automobiles to be vandalized, or have items stolen from them, or may be more likely to be pickpocketed. With violent crime victimization, however, there was a slightly different pattern. The incidence of victimization was relatively low and approximately the same for the

lower three income categories. The percentage of victimization did rise very slightly in the first three categories, but the difference among the three groups was negligible. The rate of victimization then dropped by about one-fourth in the highest income category. Presumably, individuals in this income bracket stay out of situations where they would be especially vulnerable to violent crime. Also, they more likely live in homes that are secure, and in neighborhoods that are less crime prone and possibly better protected, at least in terms of protection from violent crime ("tough type" suspects would be more visible on the streets and more likely to be stopped and questioned, or arrested). All of these patterns, while perhaps logically expected, are not entirely consistent with research findings from national surveys.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between education and criminal victimization tended to be very similar to the pattern of income and victimization. The lowest incidence of total victimization was about 40 percent and occurred in the lowest educational category. The level of victimization moved up with each successively higher educational bracket, with the exception of a very minor drop between the "post high school" and "college" categories. The biggest increase in incidence frequency, however, occurred between the "high school" and the "post high school" categories. In terms of property crime victimization essentially the same overall pattern occurred, with percentages only slightly different. The violent crime victimization pattern was a bit different from the first two. For the lower two educational levels, the incidence of victimization was essentially the same--only slightly less than 5 percent. For those individuals in the "post high school" and "college" level educational categories, however, the percentage of persons victimized jumped almost by one-half. Then in the "graduate school"

level bracket, the victimization rate fell to slightly over 3 percent. Apparently, in the case of total victimization and property crime victimization, educational level tended to coincide with or reflect income level. The higher the level of education, the greater the property inventory and the greater the vulnerability of property. With the "graduate school" educational level, however, the individuals in this category may well have represented a professional class of persons with exceptional incomes whose vulnerability to violent crimes was much reduced because of residential location and/or daily activity patterns, or were persons in selected occupational fields (such as college professors) whose living conditions were relatively isolated from a high violent crime context.

In regard to the final demographic characteristic, employment status, the pattern of relationship between work status and criminal victimization is not surprising. The highest incidence of total victimization was among persons who were employed full time. The level of victimization went down with individuals who were employed part-time, and was further, and substantially reduced with persons who were retired. Interestingly, the incidence of victimization increased to the level of full-time employed persons with individuals who were unemployed. Essentially the same pattern existed for property crime victimization. Here, too, the level of victimization fell to the lowest point with retired persons, and then rebounded almost up to the highest level among the unemployed. In all likelihood, the explanation for these redundant patterns can be found in the daily behavior of each group, with the full-time employed spending the most time in a potential high crime context--in business areas, shopping areas, parking lots and commuting, and also having their automobile in a potential high crime area. The unemployed probably tended to resemble them in the sense of going into town

or business areas frequently, if not daily, either seeking employment or to collect unemployment benefits.

The Virginia survey probed the question of crime victimization reporting to the police. Some of the findings based on the analysis of the data at first seem confusing, but upon reflection, may well be quite understandable. In this regard, in terms of size of community, slightly less than one-half of the respondents in rural communities indicated that they reported property crime victimization to the police. This percentage rose somewhat for the individuals who live in urban communities, but fell back, almost to the former level, for persons in metro communities. Rural dwellers are likely less prone to report crimes to law enforcement authorities and are more inclined to deal with matters informally. Metro dwellers probably have less confidence in police, and in the outcome of reporting crime, because of the size, diversity, and anonymity of the metro population. Reporting may simply not bring results. In the small cities, the urban communities, however, the victims do report property crimes, perhaps because they hold more confidence in the police and more optimism about the recovery of their property.

In terms of age differences, there was only a relatively modest change in the incidence of reporting property crime victimization to the police. The youngest age group was the least likely to report property crime and each successively older age group was more likely to report property crime victimization, through the age bracket "40 to 49." After this, with each successively older age group, the incidence of reporting declined. Those in the two younger age categories may be more cynical concerning crime reporting and the subsequent efforts of law enforcement authorities. The value of their property that is stolen or vandalized may be somewhat less than for other age groups. Similarly, those in the two older

age categories may also have fewer resources to be stolen, and the very oldest group may also harbor a lack of confidence in the reporting procedure, or even be fearful of the consequences should they report property crime victimization. On the other hand, individuals in their 40's may well be those with the largest economic inventory of goods, and their families are also likely to be at their maximum size and, therefore, most vulnerable to property victimization. They probably also have their greatest insurance coverage at this age juncture in their life and, accordingly, have more motivation to report crime.

There appears to be no appreciable difference between males and females in terms of reporting property crime victimization. The differences in reporting frequency for various income levels were modest but reflected more of a tendency for individuals in the higher income categories to report property crime victimization than those in the lower brackets. There was virtually no difference in reporting frequencies up to the \$25,000 level. The level of crime reporting jumped substantially in the next income level and fell slightly in the highest income category--over \$40,000. This pattern is likely the result of the fact that the \$25 to \$40 thousand income category may well be the level at which property acquisition tends to accelerate. In effect, this is the first income category that has the discretionary income with which to buy and acquire significant numbers of possessions--automobile, home appliances, hobby items, and so on. This may also be the level at which significant insurance coverage is acquired--all of which auger for reporting crime victimization. The upper income level may be less inclined to report property crime victimization because the economic loss is of less import to them, and also because they may be disinclined to undergo law

enforcement scrutiny, have the attendant publicity, or admit investigators into their home.

Examination of crime victimization reporting patterns by education revealed no real significant differences. Persons with post high school or greater educational background were slightly more prone to report such victimization to law enforcement authorities. This difference, while small, may well reflect the likelihood of the better educated individuals having more property subject to theft or vandalism and, thus, a greater investment in their belongings, but also less tolerance for crime and more motivation to see crime reduced and offenders arrested. That is, more highly educated persons may be more sensitized to the fact that only by them reporting criminal victimization, can law enforcement authorities have any real chance of apprehending offenders, and lowering the crime rate.

The patterns of property crime victimization were also analyzed by the employment status of the respondents. In general, those persons who were employed were more prone to report crime than were those who were retired or unemployed. The full-time employed group demonstrated the highest percentage of crime reporting, and the retired and unemployed had successively smaller percentages of reporting. The first finding may well be based on the fact that the employed group was likely the highest income group and persons in higher income categories are generally more prone to report crime. The retired and unemployed persons may have had smaller property inventories and, thus, less to steal plus not having to go to work for regular periods each day may have meant that they were at home more and, therefore, less often in vulnerable situations during the day (robbed in parking lots, pickpocketed in crowds, and so on). In addition, they could better monitor the premises of their home and prevent crime

there. Accordingly, they may simply have had less to report. The highest percentage of crime reporting, in the part-time category, may seem a bit confusing, but there is a plausible explanation. Even part-time work probably entails going to work in a business area, possibly even on an everyday basis. Thus, the people would have almost the same exposure to crime victimization in public places (parking lots and streets), as would individuals employed on a full-time basis. In addition, however, they would also be away from their home on a more erratic basis than would be the full-time employed persons and might not undertake the same security measures for their premises as someone who was away from home for longer periods regularly. Furthermore, being home part of the time might permit them to be more aware if a theft occurred, and they would have more time to do the reporting. In any event, the numbers of cases in all but the full-time category was small.

The Virginia survey also asked for an assessment on the part of the respondents concerning whether they felt that crime in their community was increasing, decreasing, or had remained the same within the past year or two. The largest percentage, almost one-half, indicated that they thought crime had remained the same. The next highest percentage of respondents, slightly over 40 percent, said they felt it was increasing. When these responses were broken down by size of community, it appeared that the largest percentage of rural dwellers thought that crime had remained the same. The largest percentage of urban citizens thought it was increasing, and the largest percentage of metro inhabitants felt that crime was about the same. Inasmuch as persons in the rural communities had been the least likely to have reported crime victimization of any variety, it is, perhaps, not surprising that they thought it was about the same. The metro

residents, because of high crime rates, may well have become relatively inured to crime, and felt that it had remained the same. The urban inhabitants, on the other hand, who had reported the highest percentage of crime in all categories, may also have been the most concerned, in that the highest percentage of them reported that they felt that crime in their community had increased.

The respondents were asked to rate a wide range of offenses in terms of the seriousness of the problem. It is interesting to note that some crimes, while not the most serious from a *legal* standpoint, were considered by the great majority of respondents to be quite problematic. Examples here were illegal drugs and drunk driving. On the other hand, some crimes legally considered to be quite serious, and eliciting very severe sanctions, such as murder and rape, were curiously considered to be less than "a serious problem" by the great majority of the respondents. In recent years, the mass media has given considerable attention to illegal drug use, and also to accidents caused by drunken drivers. This media exposure has apparently overly-sensitized many individuals to the point where they view such offenses as more troublesome than crimes of more serious legal severity.

The assessments of the perceived seriousness of crime were combined into two categories of concern, "Not Serious" and "Serious." The combined responses were further analyzed by size of community. In all sized communities, the largest percentage of respondents felt that crime was "Serious." In the rural communities, the respondents were almost equally divided in assessing crime as "Serious" or "Not Serious," with only a slightly higher percentage in the "Serious" category. In the urban communities, there was a substantial majority of respondents who viewed crime as "Serious." In the metro community, however, almost two-thirds

of the respondents indicated that they felt crime was "Serious." This overall pattern suggests that the larger the community size, the more serious is the crime problem viewed. There is also the strong possibility that heavy media coverage, including extensive newspaper reports of crime committed, may well contribute to the more prevalent concern in the larger communities.

Respondents were asked to make subjective assessments of their fear of crime. In this regard, they were requested to indicate their degree of agreement with statements concerning feeling safe during daylight, and feeling safe in the community at night. In regard to feeling safe during daytime, almost three-quarters of the respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. On the other hand, only slightly less than one-half of the responding individuals agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe at night in their communities. It was the nighttime period then that was of most concern to the citizens.

When the data were further analyzed by size of community, a relatively similar pattern for daytime fear of crime appeared. Approximately three-quarters of the respondents in all three sized communities indicated that they felt safe in daylight. There was a somewhat different pattern of concern for night, however. Only a little less than one-half of the urban citizens felt safe at night. Again, urban and metro dwellers may accurately feel that they are more vulnerable to crime at night in their communities, and so indicate.

Because of concern about crime, many individuals employ a variety of devices and techniques to prevent or foil crime, ranging from extra locks, to dogs, to firearms. At the collective level, some communities rely on programs and activities, such as night curfews for young people, or local crime prevention groups as means to forestall crime. All of these activities and devices were generically

grouped as crime prevention or protection "measures" and respondents were requested to evaluate their effectiveness. Upwards of three-quarters of the respondents felt the various crime prevention measures were effective to some degree. When analyzed by size of community, almost 80 percent of the rural dwellers felt such measures were effective. Among the urban citizens about three-quarters of the respondents indicated they thought the devices were effective, and only about 70 percent of the metro residents felt that way. While the great majority of all three groups deemed crime prevention measures to be effective, the rural dwellers expressed the most confidence in such devices, with inhabitants of the larger sized communities expressing somewhat less confidence in them.

The respondents were also asked if they used a range of crime prevention devices and measures (that is, locking windows during the day, or leaving lights on when away from home) to protect their own home. Almost two-thirds of them did so. The tendency to do so appeared to be related to the size of community in which one lives. In rural communities, only a few more than one-half of the respondents ever did so, but in the urban communities, more than two-thirds reported using such measures. In metro communities, almost three-quarters of those responding said they employed crime prevention measures. The inhabitants of the larger communities have more concern about crime, and feeling more vulnerable to crime, apparently rely on such crime prevention measures.

Finally, the survey respondents were probed about their use of personal and property protection devices, such as owning a gun or dog, having a burglar alarm system or using dead bolts on doors. Almost three-fourths of the respondents said they did not use such devices. When analyzed by size of community, there

was little difference in the response pattern. While about 80 percent of rural dwellers did not use such devices, neither did about three-quarters of urban and metro inhabitants. It would appear that there are limits to the use of crime prevention devices to which many citizens will not go.

In the final analysis, the citizens of Virginia (at least the members of the households of automobile owning citizens) have experienced property crime victimization in over one-third of the cases and violent crime in a very small percentage of cases. Victimization of all varieties is more frequent in the larger communities than in the rural communities. Victimization seems to be more prevalent in the middle-age years, and appears not to be related to gender differential. Generally speaking, crime victimization rises with income level, and with educational level as well (the exception to these patterns is violent crime victimization). Victimization rates appear to be highest among the full-time employed and the unemployed. Citizens in the larger communities are more likely to report crime than those in rural communities, and those in their middle years are most likely to report crime. Similarly, the affluent respondents are more likely to report crime victimization than the less affluent, as are the more educated respondents as opposed to the less educated group. The full-time and part-time respondents are more likely to report crime than are the retired and unemployed. The large percentage of respondents feel crime has remained the same, but those in rural communities are more likely to do so than those in larger communities. Crimes that receive much media coverage are likely to be viewed as more serious by persons in all communities but the percentage of those seeing it as serious rises as the size of the community increases. The great majority of respondents feel safe during the day, but only about half feel safe at night. As with

other questions, rural dwellers feel safer during the day and at night than do inhabitants of larger sized communities. Most respondents think crime prevention measures are effective but inhabitants of rural communities feel so more strongly than the citizens of larger communities. A substantial majority of all respondents, especially those in the larger communities, use some type of crime prevention measures. Most do not, however, rely on home security devices.

Obviously, crime is a problem for the citizens of Virginia and many have experienced it firsthand, especially property crime victimization. It is more of a problem, both real and imagined, for residents of larger communities, the middle aged groups, the higher educated, and the fully employed. Virginia citizens do tend to report crime and think crime prevention measures are effective. They do not see crime decreasing, however, and are concerned about their safety, especially at night. Concern with crime is apparently related to some degree to media coverage, and the direction of media coverage may influence public attitudes about crime in the future. Actual experience with crime, fear of, and concern about crime, all impact on the quality of life for Virginia citizens, and given the high incidence of crime victimization and the high level of concern with crime, forceful efforts to alleviate public anxiety, as well as reduce the incidence of crime, would seem to be justifiably indicated.

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