

**Crime, Justice and Victimization Survey
of Georgia Residents
1997**

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CRIME

The first few questions pertain to your attitudes and opinions about crime.
Is there any area right around your home--that is, within a mile--where you
would be afraid to walk alone at night?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

How much does fear of crime prevent you from doing the things you
would like to do?

- 1 Very much
- 2 Somewhat
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never [not at all]

When you leave your home or apartment, how often do you think about
being robbed or physically assaulted?

- 1 Very often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never [not at all]

When you leave your home, how often do you think about it being broken
into or vandalized while you're away?

- 1 Very often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never [not at all]

How much do you worry that your loved ones will be hurt by criminals?

- 1 Very much
- 2 Somewhat
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never [not at all]

When you're in your home, how often do you feel afraid of being attacked or assaulted?

- 1 Very often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never [not at all]

How fearful are you of being the victim of a violent crime?

- 1 Very much
- 2 Somewhat
- 3 Very little
- 4 Never [not at all]

Do you think any of the following are likely to happen to you during the next year? Please answer yes or no.

Someone breaking into your home and taking something or attempting to take something?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Someone stealing or attempting to steal a motor vehicle belonging to you?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Someone stealing other property or valuable things belonging to you?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Someone taking something from you by force or threat of force?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Someone beating or attacking you with a knife, gun, club, or other weapon?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Someone threatening you with their fist, feet or other bodily attack?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Someone forcing you to have sexual intercourse with them against your will?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Being beaten or attacked by a member of your family or someone in your household?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

HOW WELL IS THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM WORKING?

My next set of questions are about the criminal justice system and how well you believe the criminal justice system is working.

Over the past three years, do you believe the violent crime problem in your community has:

- 1 Gotten better
- 2 Stayed about the same
- 3 Gotten worse

During the next three years, do you believe the violent crime problem in your community will:

- 1 Get better
- 2 Stay about the same
- 3 Become worse

How would you rate the job being done by law enforcement in your community?

- 1 Poor
- 2 Fair
- 3 Good
- 4 Excellent

Which of the following do you believe are responsible for our violent crime problem? You may answer yes or no.

Criminal justice system is too easy

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Breakdown of family life

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Population increase

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Moral decay

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Use of drugs

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Domestic violence

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Television and movie violence

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Availability of guns

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The economy

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Too much leisure time

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Gangs

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Use of alcohol

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Parental discipline

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Are there any other reasons for violent crime?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Which substances do you feel contribute most to the violent crime problem in your community? Please answer yes or no.

Cocaine

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Crack cocaine

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Heroin

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Marijuana

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Alcohol

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Other Drugs

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The next few questions refer only to things that happened to you during the last 12 months in Georgia, between December 1, 1995 to November 30, 1996.

Did anyone take something directly from you using force, such as

by a stick-up, mugging or threat?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone TRY to rob you by using force or threatening to harm you (other than any incident you already mentioned)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Were you knifed, shot at or attacked with some other weapon by anyone at all (other than any incident you already mentioned)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)

- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone threaten to beat you up or threaten you with a knife, gun or some other weapon NOT including telephone threats (other than any incident you already mentioned)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone hit you, attack you or beat you up (other than any incident you already mentioned)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone force you, or attempt to force you, to have sexual intercourse with them?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone force you, or attempt to force you, to engage in any unwanted sexual activity (other than those incidents already mentioned)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone try to attack you in some other way (other than any incidents already mentioned)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by:

- 1 A stranger or unknown person
- 2 A casual acquaintance
- 3 A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4 A family member
- 5 A person at your school

Did anyone break in or try to break into your car or truck, home or some other building on your property?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Did anyone damage, steal or try to steal something that belonged to you?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Were you the victim of an automobile crash involving a drunk driver?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Were any of your close relatives homicide victims?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

In Georgia, there are agencies designed specifically to help victims of crime. These victim assistance agencies are sometimes known as Victim/Witness Units, Domestic Violence Units, Sexual Assault Units or perhaps other names. These agencies may provide services such as explanations of the criminal justice system and how each victim's case will be handled. They may accompany a victim or witness to court. They may provide shelter for victims, or they may provide many other services.

The next series of questions seek your opinions and insight regarding victim assistance agencies in Georgia.

Do you know where in your community or neighborhood to go when you need help or services as a victim of crime?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Where would that be?

A Victim/Witness Assistance agency?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

A Shelter?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The Police?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

A Church or Synagogue?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The Fire Station?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Other Place?

- 1 Yes _____
- 2 No

Have you been a victim of a crime since living in this state?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

After you became a victim, did you know that there were victim assistance programs which could help you?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Have you ever received help from a victim assistance agency in this state?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Which Agency? _____

How did you find out about the victim assistance agency?

- 1 Law Enforcement

- 2 County Attorney
- 3 Doctor
- 4 Hospital
- 5 Friend or Relative
- 6 Newspaper
- 7 Television or Radio
- 8 Victim assistance agency contacted you
- 9 Other Means (please describe)
- 10 Did not find out about a victim assistance agency

I will now read a list of services offered by many victim programs throughout the state. Please answer yes if any of these services were provided to you.

Emergency help through a telephone crisis line

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Provided shelter

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

On-scene help

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped get repairs to home or office

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Financial help

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Counseling through a telephone crisis line

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Group counseling

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Individual counseling

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Support group

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Referral to other service agencies for help (such as food bank, social services, medical facilities, etc.)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Supportive listening

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Accompanied you to County Attorney's office

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Property return

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Employer intervention

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Legal assistance

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Transportation

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped in preparing or filing a Protection Order

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Explained how the criminal justice system works and how the case would be handled

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Information about the status of the case

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Intervention with landlord, utility company or other debts

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped filing insurance forms

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped with claims for Crime Victims' Compensation Program

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Explanation of court proceedings

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Accompanied to court

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped complete Victim Impact Statement

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Notification about offender's Parole hearing

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Did you receive any other assistance from an agency?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

How would you rate the services provided by the victim assistance agency?

- 1 Poor
- 2 Fair
- 3 Good
- 4 Excellent

Now I would like to ask you to think about what services you believe were needed but were not provided? I am going to read a list of them to you and I want you to answer yes, if you believe you needed this service, and no, if you do not believe you needed this service.

Emergency help through a telephone crisis line

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Provided shelter

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

On-scene help

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped get repairs to home or office

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Financial help

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Counseling through a telephone crisis line

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Group counseling

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Individual counseling

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Support group

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Referral to other service agencies for help (such as food bank,

social services, medical facilities, etc.)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Supportive listening

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Accompanied you to County Attorney's office

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Property return

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Employer intervention

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Legal assistance

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Transportation

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Helped in preparing or filing a Protection Order

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Explained how the criminal justice system works and how the case would be handled

1 Yes
2 No

Information about the status if the case

1 Yes
2 No

Intervention with landlord, utility company or other debts

1 Yes
2 No

Helped filing insurance forms

1 Yes
2 No

Helped with claims for Crime Victims' Compensation Program

1 Yes
2 No

Explanation of court proceedings

1 Yes
2 No

Accompanied to court

1 Yes
2 No

Helped complete Victim Impact Statement

1 Yes
2 No

Notification about offender's Parole hearing

1 Yes
2 No

Did you need assistance from an other agency?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

I have only two more sets of questions. For this next set I want you to think about the last time you were victimized.

Where did this victimization occur?

- 1 Your home or apartment?
- 2 Offender's home or apartment?
- 3 Some other residence?
- 4 Bar?
- 5 On the street?
- 6 In a parking lot?
- 7 At a business location?
- 8 At a school?

Was the offender intoxicated (either alcohol or drugs)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Did you report this crime to a law enforcement officer or agency?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

What was the primary reason for Not reporting this crime?

- 1 Afraid of offender
- 2 Dealt with another way
- 3 Not important enough--minor offense
- 4 Felt sorry for the offender
- 5 Crime due to my own carelessness
- 6 Did not want to get involved
- 7 Police couldn't or wouldn't do anything
- 8 No confidence in the justice system
- 9 Did not know how to report the crime
- 10 Did not have a telephone or available transportation
- 11 Other Reason

Was the crime prosecuted (Did the offender go to court)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Do you know why it was not prosecuted?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**CHARACTERISTICS
(DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS)**

This is my last set of questions. This information is needed so that your responses can be summarized properly. Your name appears nowhere and your response are kept totally confidential.

In what year were you born?

19__

What is your race?

- 1 White
- 2 Black/African American
- 3 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 4 Native American (Indian)
- 5 Other

Are you of Hispanic origin?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Please tell me the highest level of education you achieved.

- 1 Teen -- Currently attending middle or high school
- 2 Adult -- Less than High School Graduate
- 3 Adult -- High School Graduate or GED
- 4 Some College
- 5 College Degree

6 Currently attending middle or high school

Which of the following best describes where you live? (Check only one)

- 1 Rural area
- 2 Town away from an urban area
- 3 Suburb of an urban area
- 4 In a city but not in the central area
- 5 Central area of a city

Are you _____ (Select one)

- 1 Married?
- 2 Divorced?
- 3 Widowed?
- 4 Separated?
- 5 Never Married?

How many other people live with you in your home or apartment?

- 1 Live alone
- 2 One
- 3 Two
- 4 Three
- 5 Four or more

Of the following categories, which one best describes your total household income?

- 1 Under \$10,000
- 2 \$10,000 to \$20,000
- 3 \$20,001 to \$40,000
- 4 \$40,001 to \$60,000
- 5 Over \$60,000

What is your present employment status? [SELECT ONLY ONE]

- 1 Employed full time
- 2 Employed part time
- 3 Homemaker

- 4 Student
- 5 Unemployed
- 6 Retired
- 7 Other

In what county or city do you live? _____

What is your zip code? _____

This concludes our interview. Thank you for your cooperation.

Interviewer: ENTER "1" or "2" for GENDER of the RESPONDENT. Ask "What is your gender?," if necessary [especially for teens].

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

APPENDIX

Crime, Justice, and Victimization Survey of Georgia Residents, 1997

by Daniel Lockwood and Majeda Nabhan

Issues and Findings

Discussed in this Report: This report describes attitudes about crime as reported by a random sample of 400 Georgia residents. It also presents information about the actual victimization experiences of these persons, and identifies some of their areas of concern. The report also presents survey data that measures awareness regarding victim assistance agencies in Georgia.

The purpose of the work is to aid planning efforts to better assist victims of crime within the state.

A telephone survey using random digit dialing (RDD) obtained 400 completed interviews. The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council provided the survey instrument. It measured participants' attitudes toward crime, some of their perceptions about the justice system, fear of crime, perceived causes of crime, and knowledge of and use of victim services.

The survey also measured rates of victimization for different types of crime, the percentage of incidents in which a weapon was used or not used by type of crime, victim offender relationships, the percentage of victimizations by perceived

drug/alcohol use by offenders, and the percentage of victimizations reported to police.

Key issues: Criminal justice agencies may do an outstanding job of managing crimes that occur. They may also implement progressive programs to prevent crime and violence and to help the victims of crime. However, fear may persist in spite of such measures. Our report measures this fear.

How much crime is there in the state? Can we trust official statistics based on reports to the police? While the National Crime Victimization Survey gives us national estimates of unreported crime, we cannot use this for local estimates. Our project measured the amount of unreported crime in Georgia.

Are the views of the public consistent with what crime statistics tell us? Both Uniform Crime Reports and the National Crime Victimization Survey tell us that violent crime rates are going down. Our report tells how the public perceives changes in violent crime.

Key findings: Specific findings from our sample of respondents include the following:

- ◆ Twenty-one percent of persons surveyed report

being a victim of a crime at one time in the state of Georgia

- ◆ Forty percent of persons questioned said they were afraid to walk alone at night near their home.
- ◆ About half the sample said they were deterred from desired activities by fear of crime.
- ◆ About half the sample said they thought about being robbed or physically assaulted when they left their home or apartment.
- ◆ About three-quarters of the sample worried about their loved ones being hurt by criminals.
- ◆ Fear of crime is prevalent among all persons in the state, regardless of gender, age, locality, ethnicity, family income, or education.
- ◆ About half of our sample believe that the violent crime problem has gotten worse. Half also believe it will get even worse in the future.

Crime, Justice, and Victimization Survey of Georgia Residents, 1997

Study methodology

The questionnaire is in the Appendix. It contains questions on demographics as well as items about the following:

1. Attitudes and knowledge concerning crime.
2. How well the criminal justice system is working.
3. Victimization experiences in the most recent year.
4. Experience with and knowledge of available victim services.
5. Opinions regarding additional services they believe are needed.
6. The justice system's response to their victimization.

The questionnaire was coded for computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using CI3 software. It was then pretested before any interviews were conducted.

Sample

We completed 400 interviews, using random digit dialing. This provided a 95% confidence level in the survey findings. The sample consisted of persons 12 years of age or older residing in Georgia for one year prior to the survey. We scheduled callbacks when necessary in order to conduct the interviews, dialing ten times before eliminating the record from the sample. In the case of a busy

signal, the CATI system was programmed to wait ten minutes before redialing. Substitute numbers were dialed when the set number of attempts did not produce a completed interview.

The Method of Administration

Telephone interviews were conducted using the computer network, software, and telephone facilities of the Survey Research Center, located in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs on the Savannah State University Campus. Interviewers were selected, trained, and supervised by the Survey Research Center's Assistant Director, Majeda Nabhan. A night time supervisor was hired to assist in the supervision of the telephone interviewers in the evening. All interviewers were Savannah State University students.

Interviews were randomly verified by Ms. Nabhan. Calls were conducted from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday. Interviewers were instructed to speak to the parent or guardian of a minor, if the interview was to be conducted with the minor, to obtain permission to conduct the interview.

Protection of Research Subjects

Interviewers signed confidentiality statements with the Survey Research Center promising to uphold the confidentiality of the

interviews.

Method of Analysis

The data file from the CI3 software was converted to an SPSS system file. Then, all tables were created using the SPSS Tables program. This insured total accuracy of the findings, since the quantitative information entered into the computer by the interviewer was transferred directly to the final, publication-quality tables.

Research Findings

Perceived fear of crime

Tables 1.1 through 1.8 present our findings concerning the crimes persons fear by their demographic characteristics. Since we interviewed 400 randomly selected persons, we may generalize these findings to the population of Georgia with a 95 percent confidence level.

No commentary on our part should substitute for reading the tables in this report. These tables provide a rich data source for gaining an understanding of the prevalence of the fear of crime among Georgians of all social classes, ages, and races. While Tables 1.1-1.8 show a range of values, there are no demographic groups that score low on our measures of fear.

Surprisingly, persons in rural areas

and small towns away from the city say they are as afraid as those living in large metropolitan areas. While a higher percentage of African-Americans than whites are very much deterred from desired activities by fear of crime, nearly equal percentages of these races limit activities because of fear.

Perceptions about the justice system

Tables 2.1-2.3 present our findings concerning perceived changes in violent crime over the past three years, beliefs about future changes in violent crime over the next three years, and the perceived effectiveness of law enforcement. Most Georgia residents are pessimistic about the violent crime problem, although they rate law enforcement well on effectiveness. Less than ten percent say law enforcement is doing a poor job.

Perceived causes of crime

Tables 3.1-3.6 show the opinions of Georgia residents about the causes of crime. The survey presented respondents with a list of possible causes of crime and asked them which they believed to be responsible for our violent crime problem. The responses differed little by ethnicity. However, a higher percentage of women than men think that the availability of guns is responsible and African-Americans are more likely than whites to believe that crack cocaine is responsible.

Victimization among Georgia residents

Tables 4.1-4.14 and 8.1-8.13 show our findings about victimization among Georgia residents. These data are presented as percentages (Tables 4.1-4.14) and rates or numbers per 1,000 persons (Tables 8.1-8.13).

Twenty-one percent of the respondents reported that they had been victims of a crime at one time in Georgia.

A higher percentage of young than old reported being victims at one time.

Victimization rates were somewhat higher in metropolitan areas than in rural areas and towns away from cities.

We also asked about victimization during the last 12 months. As can be seen in Table 4.2, among the 400 respondents there were only a few cases of serious violent crimes. In regard to these variables, readers, thus, should be cautious in extrapolating the findings of our sample to the entire population. Our sample size of 400 is too small, for example, to give accurate sexual assault rates when only four cases of this crime were reported to us. However, other crimes occurred with greater frequency within this 12 month period. These rates can be highlighted here:

- ◆ Three percent of the sample reported having something taken by violence.
- ◆ Eight percent said they had been the object of serious threats of violence.
- ◆ Eighteen percent said that someone had broke in or

attempted to break into their home or vehicle.

- ◆ Fourteen respondents (3.5%) had been the victim of an automobile crash involving a drunk driver.
- ◆ Six percent had close relatives who were homicide victims.

While Tables 4.3- 4.13 and Tables 8.1-8.13 show these victimizations by demographic characteristics, readers should again be cautioned about generalizing from the small numbers of cases in each demographic group.

We learned about the characteristics of some of these events by asking respondents to describe the last time they had been victimized. Only 25% of these 83 persons perceived the offender to be intoxicated by drugs or alcohol.

Surprisingly, 63% of the victimizations reported by 83 respondents occurred in the victim's home or apartment.

Victims knowledge and use of victim services

Tables 6.1-6.9 present our findings about victims' use of victim services. While 37% of 83 victims said that they knew about victim assistance programs that could help them, only 11% actually received help from a victim assistance agency in the state. While our Tables 6.3-6.7 give detailed data about the ratings of this service and differences in demographic characteristics, the

number of cases, only nine people, is too few on which to make any significant conclusions.

More helpful are the judgements of these 83 victims about what services were needed and not provided. These are in Tables 6.8-6.9.

Victims use of law enforcement services

These findings are in Tables 7.1-7.3. Seventy-seven percent of the 83 persons asked to recall the last time they were victimized did report the crime to the police. However, only 24% of these respondents reported that the crime was prosecuted.

About the Authors

Authors are employed by Savannah State University, Savannah, GA. Daniel Lockwood is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Majeda Nabhan is Assistant Director of the Survey Research Center. The research was supported under an award from The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily express the position of The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council or Savannah State University.