

Public Safety Survey

Burnaby



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Introduction

Satisfaction among the public with their local police is important as it effects confidence in the police to ensure public safety, increases public support for local police, and increases the public's willingness to report crime and suspicious activity (Hinds, 2007). Research in Canada has consistently found a high level of public satisfaction with the police. For instance, a 2006 study among eight communities in British Columbia found that the overwhelming majority of respondents (91 per cent) were satisfied with their local Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments (Cohen, Plecas, & McCormick, 2007).

Although general satisfaction is high, there are a number of factors that can mitigate or aggravate the public's perception of the police. Two critical factors are fear of crime and victimization experiences. In other words, a central hypothesis is that the higher the fear of crime or the more an individual is victimized, the lower their level of satisfaction with the police. Moreover, the constructs of fear of crime and victimization are interrelated in that one tends to affect the other.

This report describes the results of a public safety survey that was conducted by the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of the Fraser Valley for the Upper Fraser Valley Detachment of the RCMP. The purpose of the survey was to assess residents' feelings about their own personal safety and the nature and extent of any victimization in the past 12 months. The survey also sought to determine residents' level of satisfaction with the Upper Fraser Valley RCMP. The overall aim of the project was to provide the RCMP with information helpful to improving the quality of local police services. In describing the survey results, this report provides a comparison to the results of a similar public survey conducted by the University of the Fraser for the Upper Fraser Valley RCMP in 2006.

Literature Review

Fear of Crime

The concept of fear of crime has been defined in many ways; as a feeling of anxiety regarding the security of the person or of one's property (Amerio and Roccato, 2007), the interpretation of the intangible and tangible consequences of future victimization (e.g. Dolan and Peasgood, 2007), and the emotional response to the potential experience of future victimization (Adams and Serpe, 2000). Fear of crime has also been identified as distinct from general concern about crime. In other words, while fear of crime refers to the anticipation of personal victimization, concern about crime reflects more upon the perception of crime as a social problem (Amerio and Roccato, 2007). Despite the fact that crime rates have recently decreased in Canada, a large percentage of Canadians continue to

perceive themselves as being at risk of future victimization which manifests in high rates of fear of crime (Adams and Serpe, 2000).

Regardless of its definition, it is generally agreed upon in the research literature that fear of crime has a detrimental effect on an individual's psychological health and quality of life. Fear of crime leads directly to increased worry and anxiety, increased levels of distrust and disempowerment, perceptions of alienation, and feelings of distress and depression (Amerio and Roccato, 2007; Adams and Serpe, 2000). Fear of crime can also indirectly lead to a decrease in subjective and objective physical health due to reductions in participation in routine physical activities, such as walking in one's neighbourhood (Dolan and Peasgood, 1997; Adams and Serpe, 2000). As a result, poorer health can be linked to fear of crime's effect on social activities (Dolan and Peasgood, 2007; Amerio and Roccato, 2007).

There is also a growing body of research indicating that fear of crime contributes towards a poorer quality of life. In a 2001 survey in the United Kingdom, nearly one-quarter of respondents (24 per cent) identified fear of crime as an important factor affecting their quality of life. In fact, fear of crime was the third most frequently identified factor effecting quality of life, following only money and physical health (Dolan and Peasgood, 2007). In effect, the fear of crime produces a chronic stress that not only influences psychological health, but can also exhaust physical resources, such as energy and finances, in an attempt to protect against real or potential future victimization (Adams and Serpe, 2000). The insecurity that fear of crime produces contributes towards a negative social atmosphere. In many cases, fear of crime can negatively affect one's social life by reducing one's feelings of community/social cohesion and, in some instances, by producing feelings of xenophobia or racism (Amerio and Roccato, 2007).

Community conditions appear to have a strong effect on levels of fear of crime, and several studies have suggested that the effect of social factors exert a stronger influence on fear of crime than actual crime rates (Adams and Serpe, 2000). Indications of physical disorder, such as graffiti and property damage, or of social disorder, such as perceptions of vandalism, loitering by youth, the presence of homeless persons, prostitution, and verbal violence, have all been identified as important determinants of fear of crime (Amerio and Roccato, 2007). Related to this, the extent to which a person feels as though they belong to their neighbourhood and their level of social integration dictates, to a large degree, the extent to which one feels physically safe in their neighbourhood. Essentially, attachment and connectiveness to one's neighbourhood typically serves to increase one's perception of safety (Adams and Serpe, 2000).

There is empirical support for the role that social integration plays in victimization experiences. In the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey (GSS), results indicated that those who had lived in their residence for less than one year had the highest rate of household victimization, while those who lived in their residence for at least ten years had the lowest

reported victimization rates. The likely explanation for this finding is that living in a neighbourhood for a shorter period of time decreases one's ability to recognize neighbours, feel connected to their neighbours, or feel comfortable trusting their neighbours. Furthermore, those who live in their residence for only a short period of time are less likely to feel that their neighbours would help each other. The effect of social integration on victimization was reflected in the 55% greater likelihood for household victimization seen in areas where neighbours were not perceived as helping each other (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005).

Overall, the 2004 GSS found that a majority (60 per cent) of Canadians believed that crime was lower in their own neighbourhood compared to elsewhere in Canada, while nearly one-third (30 per cent) believed their neighbourhood's crime rate equaled other neighbourhoods. Very few respondents (9 per cent) believed their own neighbourhood had higher crime rates than others (Gannon, 2004). In other words, nearly all respondents felt that their neighbourhood was either as safe as or safer than other neighbourhoods in Canada.

For the GSS, fear of crime was measured as feelings of satisfaction towards one's own safety and anticipated fear of becoming a victim of crime (Gannon, 2004). Using this definition, the GSS research concluded that, for the overwhelming majority of respondents (94 per cent), Canadians were satisfied with their self-assessed perceived level of personal safety from being a victim of crime. The most common scenario that increased one's fear of being victimized, cited by nearly half of the sample (42 per cent), was while waiting for transit at night (Gannon, 2004).

There are a wide range of additional factors that contribute towards the fear of crime. For instance, research suggests that gender is a consistent predictor of fear of crime with women exhibiting higher levels than males (e.g. Alvi, Schwartz, DeKeseredy, & Maume, 2007). The 2004 GSS found a slight gender difference in this regard as feelings of personal safety were a little higher in men (95 per cent) than women (93 per cent). These fears, however, appeared to be related to specific incidences, such as women being significantly more fearful than males while waiting for transit at night (58 per cent for females compared to 29 per cent for males), being at home alone at night (27 per cent among females and 12 per cent among males), and walking home alone in the dark (16 per cent for females and 6 per cent for males) (Gannon, 2004). Similarly, Alvi and colleagues (2007) reported that the enhanced fear of crime among women may be attributed to their greater dissatisfaction regarding indicators of neighbourhood public disorder.

Indicators of public disorder may involve social indicators, such as substance use in public, excessive noise, or loitering youth, or physical indicators, such as litter, graffiti, broken windows, and other vandalism (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2001). In an evaluation of the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey data, Sprott and Doob (2009) identified that

perceptions of public disorder resulted in greater dissatisfaction with the local police. Likewise, previous research indicated that public disorder contributed towards an increase in the fear of crime and in actual crime rates (e.g. Fagan and Davies, 2000; Christmann, Rogerson, & Walters, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2008). Recently, Franklin, Franklin, and Fearn (2008) concluded that public disorder contributed more strongly towards fear of crime than did prior victimization among residents in Washington State. Similarly, Payne and Gainey (2007) identified that being approached by a drug dealer negatively affected perceptions of personal safety and satisfaction with police to a greater degree than did prior victimization.

The process by which public disorder contributes to fear of crime likely occurs through the notion of “collective efficacy”, which reflects social cohesion among residents of a neighbourhood, combined with a willingness to act on behalf of neighbours in promoting the common good of the neighbourhood (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Collective efficacy is reduced in a neighbourhood when there are signs that neighbours are not committed to promoting the common good, most typically through indicators of public disorder, such as broken building windows, open-air drug markets, and vandalism. Research findings support the notion that lack of social cohesion and trust in one’s neighbours contributes to a greater fear of crime (e.g. Renauer, 2007). Given this, the conclusions drawn from previous research suggest that by targeting public disorder, fear of crime and crime rates can be reduced as more residents will contribute to the establishment of collective efficacy (e.g. Alvi et al., 2007; Renauer, 2007). This will correspondingly have a positive effect on the perceptions of the police by the public.

Additional research suggested that fear of crime was higher among people of lower socioeconomic status, those who lived in urban areas, those who had been victimized in the past, minorities, and among young adults and/or senior citizens (Amerio and Roccato, 2007; Adams and Serpe, 2000; Fitzgerald, 2008). However, research evaluating the predictors of fear of crime has provided inconsistent results concerning the effect of age. Although official crime statistics generally suggest that the elderly are among the least likely to be victimized and young males are at greatest risk of victimization, various studies have shown that the elderly typically have the most fear of crime, while the young are relatively fearless (Moore and Shepherd, 2007; Crank, Giacomazzi, & Heck, 2003). This finding is referred to as the fear-victimization paradox in which the elderly have comparatively low levels of victimization, yet report relatively high levels of fear of crime (McCoy, Wooldredge, Cullen, Dubeck, & Browning, 1996). However, additional studies have suggested inconsistent results, finding that the elderly were not in fact more likely to have higher levels of fear of crime (McCoy et al., 1996). Such inconsistent results are due, in part, to the manner in which information on age has been collected. In effect, some research has asked respondents for their exact age, while other research has categorized age into groups (e.g. 18 to 24; 25 to 40; or older than 66 years of age). Collecting information in such an

aggregated form prohibits sophisticated analyses from being performed and limits accurate understanding of the role that age actually plays in determining fear of crime (Moore and Shepherd, 2007).

An additional source of inconsistency concerns two specific points regarding the nature of the relationship between fear of crime and age. The first of these concerns reflects the non-linear relationship between fear of crime and age. Research has suggested that the relationship between these two factors was of a curvilinear relationship in that fear of crime increased with age; however, it appeared to peak at a certain age and then began to decline. For instance, young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years old exhibited the lowest rates of fear of crime, as did those over 65 years of age. However, higher rates of fear of crime were exhibited by people between the ages of 25 to 64 year old (Moore and Shepherd, 2007). Thus, the relationship between age and fear of crime was not as straightforward as the research traditionally suggested. In effect, fear of crime appears to peak some time in middle age and then declines.

The second of these relationships concerns the definition of fear of crime. Traditionally, fear of crime has been assessed as a single construct, i.e. "how safe do you feel walking in your neighbourhood at night?" (e.g. Moore and Shepherd, 2007). More recently, research has recognized that fear of crime is a much more complex construct, and that relative levels of fear of crime may differ depending on different types of crime. Research findings further suggest that fear of crime can be broken into two main constructs: (1) fear of personal victimization and (2) fear of property victimization (Moore and Shepherd, 2007). Various studies have suggested that each of these two fears of crime had unique determinants, and that the relationship between, for example, age and fear of crime, was effected by which form of crime was being considered (e.g. Moore and Shepherd, 2007).

Specifically, fear of personal victimization appears to be related to being younger. According to Moore and Shepherd (2007), fear of personal victimization was highest among those 16 to 25 years of age with a peak at 23 years old. In contrast, fear of property victimization was associated with the middle age years as it was highest among those between 40 and 60 years old with a peak at 45 years old. Moore and Shepherd interpreted these findings with the suggestion that middle aged people are those most likely to have accumulated a sufficient amount of property to be concerned with its potential loss.

Moore and Shepherd (2007) encouraged the direction of policy towards these issues by emphasizing that, as the fear of crime could essentially be reduced into the two primary categories of personal victimization and property loss, policy efforts to reduce fear of crime need not be directed elsewhere. However, additional relevant determinants of fear of crime identified by their study were the presence of a mental disorder and self-health. Fear of personal harm was additionally affected by one's level of income and some household characteristics, such as living in a "run-down" home. By contrast, fear of property loss was

affected by indicators of social disorder, such as graffiti and property damage. Gender also played an important role as females indicated greater levels of fear of personal victimization, while males expressed a greater concern regarding fear of property loss. Furthermore, poorer health, previous victimization, and environmental litter were associated with both fear of personal victimization and property loss (Moore and Shepherd, 2007). Therefore, it appears that while age plays an important role in the relative degree of fear, alternative determinants of fear of crime must be addressed, a primary example of which is prior experience of victimization.

Experiences of Victimization

Prior victimization has received a large degree of support as a major determinant of fear of crime (e.g. Payne and Gainey, 2007). Victimization models propose a direct link between being a victim of crime and subsequent fear of crime (Crank, Giacomazzi, & Heck, 2003). In 2004, the General Social Survey (GSS) was conducted with 24,000 residents in all Canadian provinces. The results indicated that those most at risk of violent victimization were young Canadians between the ages of 15 to 24 years old. The results also suggested that lifestyle was an important determinant of risk of victimization as being single, living in an urban residence, and having a household income of less than \$15,000 increased the risk for violent victimization, while a higher income, living in a semi-detached, row, or duplex home, and renting increased the risk of household victimization (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005). Overall, in the 12 months prior to the survey, slightly more than one-quarter (28 per cent) of Canadians reported being victimized one or more times. Moreover, nearly half of the victims (40 per cent) reported being victimized multiple times in the 12 months preceding the survey. Considering all of the victimizations, only one-third (34 per cent) were reported to the police.

Those who self-identified as Aboriginal on the GSS survey were three times more likely to be a victim of a violent crime. In effect, nearly half (40 per cent) of the Aboriginal respondents reported experiencing at least one victimization within the past year (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006). Aboriginal people between the ages of 15 to 34 years old were nearly 2½ times more likely than Aboriginal people over the age of 35 years old to be violently victimized. Compared to non-Aboriginal respondents, Aboriginal respondents were much more likely to be victimized violently by someone they knew (56 per cent compared to 41 per cent respectively). In contrast, non-Aboriginal respondents had a much higher rate (45 per cent) of stranger violent victimization than did Aboriginal respondents (25 per cent). Many of the violent victimizations experienced by Aboriginal respondents were cases of spousal abuse. In the five years prior to the survey, slightly more than one fifth (21 per cent) of Aboriginal respondents reported being the victim of some form of physical or sexual spousal violence compared to only 6% of non-Aboriginal

respondents. These findings were very similar to those found by Cohen, Corrado, and Beavon (2004) who explored the victimization experiences of Aboriginal people in Vancouver, British Columbia. The rates of homicide were also much higher among the Aboriginal population, with a rate of 8.8 per 100,000 compared to the non-Aboriginal rate of 1.3 per 100,000 (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006).

Neighbourhood characteristics may play an important role in this relationship as the on-reserve violent crime rate was eight times higher than for the rest of the country (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006). In fact, Aboriginal respondents were much more likely than non-Aboriginals to agree that socially disruptive conditions (i.e. noisy neighbours, loud parties, loitering, people sleeping on the street, garbage, vandalism, harassment, hate-motivated attacks, drugs, public drunkenness, and prostitution) were very or fairly significant neighbourhood problems. Research has consistently suggested that indicators of social disorder are an important determinant in judgments regarding fear of crime and risk of victimization. However, the survey also found that, despite the generally high levels of victimization, offending, and indicators of social disorder, Aboriginal people were no more likely to fear crime than non-Aboriginals. Overall, 92% of Aboriginal respondents indicated they were either somewhat or very satisfied with their level of personal safety – a finding very similar to non-Aboriginal respondents (94 per cent) (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006).

There are a number of reasons why the rates of Aboriginal victimization, as well as Aboriginal offending, are so much higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population. Important predictors for both victimization and offending are young age, low educational attainment, unemployment, low level of income, living in a single-parent family, living in crowded conditions, and high residential mobility. All of these factors are more common in Aboriginal populations (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006). For instance, data from the 2001 Census indicated that, on average, the Aboriginal population was younger than the non-Aboriginal population with a median age of 24.7 years old compared to 37.7 years old for the non-Aboriginal population. This is an important factor as age is consistently one of the strongest predictors of victimization and offending.

In addition, Aboriginal people tend to have lower rates of educational attainment. The 2001 Census indicated that nearly half (48 per cent) of the Aboriginal population did not have a high school diploma compared to slightly less than one-third (31 per cent) of the non-Aboriginal population. Similarly, Aboriginal populations tended to have higher rates of unemployment (19 per cent) in 2001 compared to the non-Aboriginal population (7 per cent). Subsequently, Aboriginal persons also had lower levels of income than non-Aboriginals with a median income of \$13,500.00 compared to \$22,400.00 for the non-Aboriginal population. Aboriginal people also tended to have higher rates of living in a single-parent family (46 per cent), living in crowded conditions (17 per cent), and

residential mobility (22 per cent) compared to the non-Aboriginal population (17 per cent; 7 per cent, and 14 per cent, respectively) (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006).

The nature of victimization may have a particular effect on fear of crime. For instance, the Canadian 2004 GSS survey identified that, in one-quarter of all incidences of violent victimization over the past year, victims reported having trouble carrying out their main activity (e.g. work, being a student). For more than one-third of victims (37 per cent), these problems only lasted for one day; however, slightly more than an additional one-third of victims (39 per cent) had trouble for two to seven days, while 16% experienced problems that lasted over two weeks.

Being a victim of violence also has an emotional toll with the potential to increase fear of crime. Common emotional responses from victims of violence in the GSS survey included: fearfulness (18 per cent); anger (32 per cent); and feeling upset, confused, or frustrated (20 per cent). For a small minority of victims of violence (9 per cent), their experience led to a greater level of cautiousness and awareness (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005). In terms of household victimization, those who experienced a break and enter were much more likely to express fearfulness (19 per cent) than those who had experienced household thefts (5 per cent), vandalism (6 per cent), or motor vehicle theft (6 per cent). Break and enter experiences also had the effect of making victims feel more cautious (13 per cent) and more victimized (11 per cent) (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005).

Research also suggested the possibility of an indirect victimization model in that those who perceived themselves as vulnerable (e.g. the elderly) also exhibited the most fear. Empirically, however, this was not always the case as statistics typically indicated that those who exhibited the most fear (the elderly and women) were also the least likely to be victimized by crime, while those who were most likely to be victimized (young males) typically displayed the lowest levels of fear of crime (Crank, Giacomazzi, & Heck, 2003). The causal force behind high levels of fear of crime in those least likely to be victims is often explained by the frequent media portrayals of crime and violence, particularly those that are relatively infrequent, but exponentially terrifying, such as rape and murder. These media depictions can have the effect of increasing levels of fear in those who perceive themselves to be the most vulnerable (Crank, Giacomazzi, & Heck, 2003).

In contrast, other studies have suggested that people tended not to rely on the media, but rather estimated their level of risk of victimization based on their own experiences and the experiences of their friends and neighbours (Ditton and Chadee, 2006). In fact, there was consistent empirical support for the presumption that people tended to overestimate their risk of victimization (Ditton and Chadee, 2006). The indirect victimization model, therefore, suggests that fear of crime can be present without any actual experience of direct victimization.

Public Satisfaction with Police

Research indicates that fear of crime and previous victimization can also have a strong effect on public levels of satisfaction with the police (Ren, Cao, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2005; Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996). Public confidence in the police can be defined as the extent to which members of the public have trust in or rely upon the police in a variety of situations (Ren et al., 2005). This definition encompasses both satisfaction with the police and attitudes towards the police. Public confidence in the police is an important concept to assess as the public is a consumer of police services and the police cannot do their job effectively without the support of the communities they serve (Ren et al., 2005).

Ren and colleagues (2005) tested three models of public confidence in the police: (1) the demographic model; (2) the contextual model; and (3) the police-citizen contact model. The demographic model included race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and level of education as specific predictors of levels of public confidence in the police. In general, research suggested that minority populations showed less favourable attitudes towards the police. Age had a positive relationship with public confidence in the police as youth tended to feel as though their independence was restricted by police activity, while older adults exhibited more conservative attitudes that resulted in greater support for police. Age was similarly found to be an important factor in the analysis of public satisfaction with police in 28 countries; again, older populations consistently showed more support for the police, even when taking the nature of prior contact into consideration (Ivković, 2008). However, less consistent results have been found for the role of gender, education, and socioeconomic status. Given this, Ren and colleagues (2005) built these factors into their demographic model.

The contextual model built on the demographic model by including variables related to neighbourhood characteristics and victimization experiences. While community disorder, victimization experience, and fear of crime all tended to decrease levels of support for the police, informal collective security generally had the opposite effect. This conclusion supported the proposition that confidence in one's neighbours increased confidence in the police (Ren et al., 2005; Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996).

Lastly, the police-citizen contact model suggested that the nature of police-citizen interactions could have an effect on public confidence in the police. Police-citizen contacts could include volunteering with the police, reporting a crime, requesting information or services, or receiving traffic tickets. The nature of the interaction, as well as the number of contacts, has the potential to either decrease or increase levels of support for police.

In the study conducted by Ren and colleagues (2005), these three models were tested in order to determine which variables emerged as the most significant predictors of

confidence in the police. In terms of the demographic model, age was the only significant predictor. Age and public confidence in the police were found to share a positive relationship in that as age increased so did levels of confidence in the police. Informal collective security also increased levels of confidence in the police. In addition, the number of contacts with the police affected confidence in the police, as did the specific nature of the interaction. Negative police contacts, such as those involving traffic tickets, created negative attitudes towards the police, lowering the public's confidence in them. In contrast, voluntary contacts with the police, such as citizen involvement in community policing programs, tended to increase levels of confidence. Overall, the strongest predictor of confidence in the police was found to be volunteering (Ren et al., 2005).

The police-citizen contact model suggested that citizen calls for service or reporting of crime to the police could affect levels of satisfaction with the police. Interestingly, collective efficacy appeared to play an important role in mediation this perception of police. Hawdon and Ryan (2003) found that once the amount of community solidarity was statistically controlled for, the effect of positive police-citizen interactions on satisfaction with the efficacy of police disappeared. However, positive perceptions of the police continued to be effected by the visibility of police in the neighbourhood. A second conclusion drawn from this study was that previous experience of victimization was not significantly associated with satisfaction with police; however, indirect victimization (e.g. hearing of a neighbour's victimization) and fear of crime contributed significantly to negative perceptions of the police (Hawdon and Ryan, 2003). These findings suggested that by reducing fear of crime, for instance, through the reduction of public disorder indicators, residents would feel more satisfied with their local police.

Both subjective (e.g. perceptions of the offence) and objective (e.g. nature of the offence) characteristics of victimization experiences may determine the likelihood of the victim reporting the crime to police. In Canada, in 2004, one third of victims reported their violent experience to the police. Reporting rates were highest for robbery and physical assault (46 per cent and 39 per cent respectively) and lowest for sexual assault (8 per cent). The 2004 Canadian GSS identified that the most common reasons victims failed to report their violent experience to the police was a desire to deal with the situation in some other way (66 per cent), the perception that the victimization was not important enough (53 per cent), a desire to avoid police involvement (42 per cent), the perception of the victimization as a personal matter (39 per cent), the belief that police could not do anything about it anyway (29 per cent), the perception that police would not help (13 per cent), and fear of retaliation (11 per cent) (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005).

In contrast, the most common reasons listed for reporting a violent victimization to the police included the feeling that they had a duty to report it (83 per cent), a desire to see the offender arrested and punished (74 per cent), a desire for protection or to have an end put to the violence (70 per cent), to claim insurance or another form of compensation (20 per

cent), or because someone else encouraged them to report it to the police (19 per cent). Younger victims were least likely to report their victimization to the police (24 per cent of those between the ages of 15 to 24 years old), and females were less likely (26 per cent) than males (38 per cent) to report being victimized, likely because of the higher rates of sexual assault they experienced compared to men (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005).

The nature of the police response can influence the public's attitudes towards the police's job performance and their overall satisfaction with the police. Prior research suggested that victims of crime held less positive views towards the police (e.g. Payne and Gaine, 2007); theoretically, this may be due to dissatisfaction with the response time and the nature of the investigation (e.g. Ivković, 2008). In Canada, the 2004 GSS indicated that police response to a report of victimization commonly involved visiting the scene (77 per cent), making a report or conducting an investigation (73 per cent), issuing a warning (37 per cent), or making an arrest, laying a charge, or simply removing the offender from the scene (30 per cent) (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005).

When victims of violence did report their victimization to the police, they generally found that the police were responsive and rating the officer(s) as doing a good job. Over half of those who had been victimized violently were either satisfied (36 per cent) or very satisfied (24 per cent) with the police response. Only 14% were somewhat dissatisfied and an additional 24% reported that they were very dissatisfied with the police response (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005). Information on the reasons behind these levels of dissatisfaction was not given.

Overall rates of reporting household victimization to the police were similar (37 per cent) to the reporting rates of violent victimization (33 per cent). The types of victimizations most commonly reported were break and enter (54 per cent) and motor vehicle/parts theft (49 per cent). Although more or less similar to violent victimization, the most common reason why victims did not report their household victimization was because they perceived that the incident was not important enough (65 per cent). Other common reasons were that the police could not do anything about the incident (60 per cent), the victim had a desire to deal with the victimization in some other way (30 per cent), the victim did not want the police involved (22 per cent), a belief that the police would not help (21 per cent), the belief that the incidence was a personal matter and not a police concern (19 per cent), the fact that nothing was taken or the stolen items were recovered (13 per cent), the belief that insurance would not cover the loss (12 per cent), and fear of retaliation by the offender (4 per cent).

Victims of household victimization were much more likely to report their victimization to the police as the significance of the financial loss increased. For instance, four-fifths of respondents reported the incident when the financial loss was estimated at \$1,000.00 or more. This corresponded to the finding that just over half (51 per cent) of the victims

claimed to have reported their victimization in order to obtain compensation. Similar to violent victimizations, the most common reason given for reporting a property offence was a feeling of duty to do so (84 per cent), a desire to arrest or punish the offender (62 per cent), to stop the incident from happening again (41 per cent), or because others suggested that they notify the police (12 per cent).

When victims did report their household victimization experience to the police, the most common police response was to conduct an investigation (76 per cent). Slightly over half of the cases (54 per cent) involved the police visiting the location, which increased to 71% when the household victimization involved a break and enter. Given the nature of household victimization (i.e. the tendency for victims to discover the victimization after the fact), the likelihood of the police dealing with the offender was lower than when responding to a violent victimization. As a result, in only 5% of the incidences involving property victimization were victims aware of the police taking the offender away, arresting them, or laying charges, while in less than 10% of property victimizations respondents were aware of the police issuing a warning to the offender. Still, the majority of household victims were satisfied with the manner in which police handled their case. In effect, more than one-quarter (28 per cent) of victims were very satisfied, while a slight minority (40 per cent) were somewhat satisfied (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005).

Knowledge regarding police activities and practices can have a positive effect by increasing the public's satisfaction with police. Approximately half of the police departments in the United States operate Citizen Police Academies which offer education to citizens regarding law enforcement activities (Becton, Meadows, Tears, Charles, & Ioimo, 2005). The citizen police academy provides citizens with an opportunity to interact with police in non-confrontational environments or encounters. This process has been found to be important because citizen encounters with police officers are often limited to incidences, such as traffic stops, which tend to engender negative feelings towards the police (Becton et al., 2005). Research with these academies suggested that they had the potential to increase citizen support for the local police through the development of a sense of trust and cooperation. Citizens who have had experience with a citizen police academy tended to respond more positively towards their police chiefs, generally agreeing that they were somewhat understanding of local communities and the community's specific needs and issues. Additionally, participants of citizen police academies generally exhibited higher levels of trust in their police departments than those who had not participated in this program. In one survey of nearly 700 residents in Virginia, all of those who participated in citizen police academies felt that the police were responsive to community issues and needs, and all agreed that they were satisfied with the services provided by their police departments (Becton et al., 2005).

Given their greater familiarity with police operations following participation in citizen police academies, these citizens may hold more confidence in the police as they may be

more likely to view them as using fair procedures, or procedural justice, when working with the public (Hinds, 2007). Perceptions of fairness, perceived legitimacy of their position, and perceptions of performance all exert an influence over the public perceptions of police. According to prior research, perceptions that police treated the public with respect and made decisions perceived to be based on the facts resulted in greater satisfaction following a police-citizen encounter, as did a stronger belief in the legitimacy of the police and perceptions of how well police carried out their duties (Hinds, 2007).

Overall, it appears that Canadians are generally satisfied with the services provided by the police. For instance, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) surveyed Canadian citizens annually collecting information on their perceptions of the service provided by the RCMP. In 2006, a large majority (82 per cent) of 8,540 Canadian citizens surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the service received during their RCMP contact. While still high, rates for British Columbians were slightly lower. Of the 672 British Columbia citizens surveyed, slightly more than three-quarters (79 per cent) reported being satisfied with the RCMP. There was also general support for the RCMP's integrity and honesty (91 per cent), and the majority of Canadian citizens agreed that the RCMP treated them fairly (90 per cent), demonstrated professionalism (90 per cent), acted courteously and respectfully (92 per cent), were knowledgeable and competent (89 per cent), delivered their services in a timely manner (83 per cent), and gave them all the information necessary for their situation (84 per cent) (RCMP website, 2007).

In conclusion, although certain demographic variables, such as age, significantly predicted confidence in and support for the police, stronger determinants of confidence in the police result from previous experiences with crime. Specifically, research supported the role that the fear of crime and recent previous victimization played in determining the degree of confidence the individuals had for their police. Those who had been a more recent victim of crime and who exhibited a greater degree of fear of crime were more likely to indicate a lack of confidence in the police (Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996). However, research also indicated that the relationship between prior victimization and fear of crime and confidence in the police was tempered by the degree of neighbourhood cohesion. If respondents had more confidence in their neighbours' willingness to help protect them from crime, and if indications of physical and social disorder were relatively absent, fear of crime and victimization were no longer significant indicators of confidence in police.

These results suggest that while confidence in the police can be determined by certain demographic variables, prior experience with victimization and fear of crime, the ability of these indicators to determine level of support for the police are affected by neighbourhood characteristics. It appears that confidence in one's neighbourhood encourages confidence in the police. These findings suggest that when assessing community perceptions of public and personal safety, as well as confidence in and support for the police, it is imperative to go beyond the collection of information, such as basic demographics (age, gender, race,

education, income) and previous victimization, but to consider perceptions of community context, such as indicators of social disorder.

Methodology

The methodology used in this survey involved mailing a questionnaire (see Appendix A) to a randomly selected sample of 1,200 residents of Burnaby in September 2009. The sample of residents was drawn using the telephone directory. Some questionnaires were undeliverable (n = 48) for a variety of reasons, such as the resident had moved or the address in the directory was incorrect, which reduced the number of eligible respondents. Overall, the response to the survey was somewhat poor with a total of 248 residents completing and returning questionnaire – a response rate of 21.5%.

Research Results

Demographic Information

As demonstrated by Table 1, the sample was comprised of residentially stable, educated, married, male respondents. More specifically, the majority of respondents were male (60.6 per cent) and Caucasian (58.7 per cent). However, more than one-quarter of the sample (28.1 per cent) identified themselves as being of an Asiatic ethnic background. Moreover, only one individual identified themselves as Aboriginal. The mean age of the sample was 58 years old with a range of 22 years old (one respondent) to 94 years old (one respondent). This average older age helped explain the finding that more than one-third of the sample (38.2 per cent) reported being retired, while a slightly larger proportion (41.2 per cent) reported being employed full time. Only a very small proportion of the sample reported being either a student (1.7 per cent) or unemployed (2.5 per cent). The remaining respondents indicated that they were either employed part-time (5.9 per cent) or self-employed (10.5 per cent).

One-third of the sample (33.2 per cent) had no post-secondary education. This is an important factor because of the well-established relationship between lower levels of education and more frequent police contacts. Still, slightly more than one-fifth of the sample (21.3 per cent) reported having some college or university education and nearly one-third (31.9 per cent) had a college or university degree or diploma.

Given the mean age of this sample, it was not surprising that a large majority of respondents reported that they were currently married (70.1 per cent). A small proportion indicated that they were either divorced or separated (12.0 per cent) or single (7.7 per cent).

Again, given the mean age of the sample, it was not surprising that the most common income category selected by the sample was \$30,000 to \$39,999, or that nearly a majority of respondents (47.6 per cent) reported that they currently lived in a house. The next most common type of residence was an apartment (21.4 per cent) followed by a condominium (16.1 per cent).

Critical to many of the issues explored in this study, respondents lived in their current community, on average, for a substantial amount of time. Specifically, the mean amount of time that respondents lived in their current community was 17 years, with a range of one year (three respondents) to 70 years (one respondent) (see Table 1). The benefit to this study of this high average amount of time lived in the community was that it was a sufficient amount of time for respondents to develop an opinion about safety and crime in their community, establish an opinion about their local police, and have a sense of how their feelings of safety, fear of crime, and police performance have changed or remained stable over time.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	
Average Number of Years Living in the Community	17 Years Old
% Employed	55%
% Married	70%
% Male	61%
Average Age	56 Years Old
% Caucasian	59%
% With No Post-Secondary Education	33%

Residents' Sense of Personal Safety

For the most part, residents' perceived themselves to be generally safe in their current neighborhoods. Nearly all respondents reported feeling safe in their home, neighborhood, and in Burnaby during the day. Importantly, a large percentage of respondents reported feeling safe at night, especially in their residence (87.3 per cent) (see Table 2). As expected, the further away from their residence a respondent traveled at night, the more likely they were to report increasing feelings of being unsafe. Still, nearly three-quarters of respondents (72.2 per cent) felt safe in their neighbourhoods at night, and nearly two-thirds (60.3 per cent) felt safe in Burnaby at night.

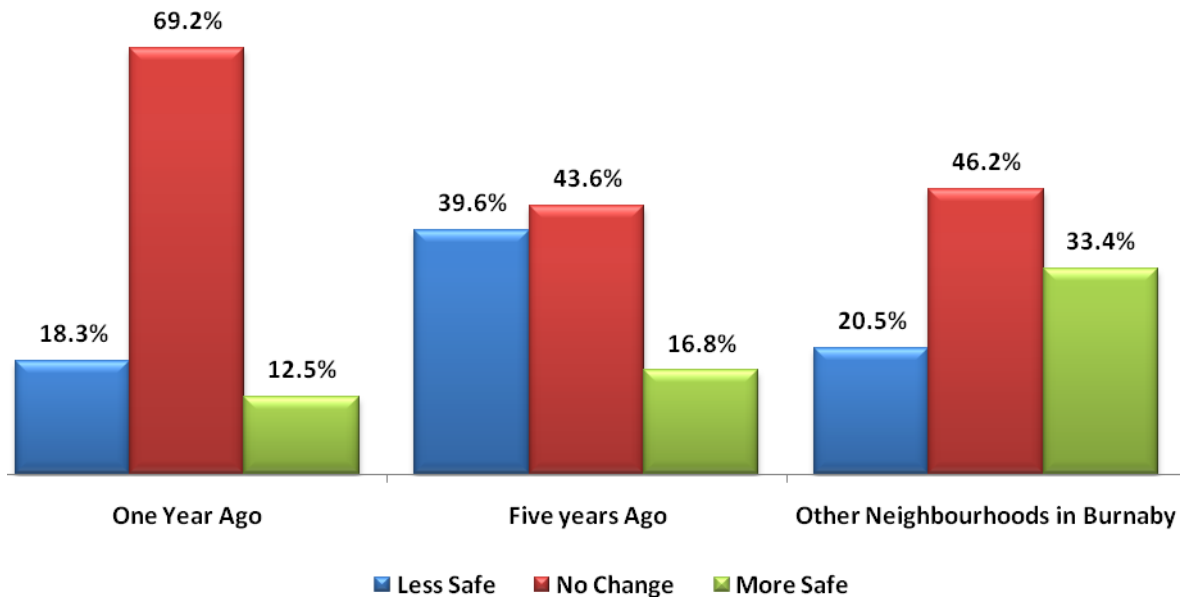
Table 2: Feelings of Personal Safety

Daytime	Feel Very or Somewhat Safe
At Residence	98%
In Neighbourhood	96%
In Community	91%
Night Time	
At Residence	87%
In Neighbourhood	72%
In Community	60%

Interestingly, there were two statistically significant correlations, albeit very weak correlations. The first significant correlation was between how long a respondent lived in their current neighbourhood and their feelings of safety in Burnaby during the daytime. Here, the longer one lived in their current Burnaby neighbourhood, the greater their personal feelings of safety in Burnaby during the day. It is important to keep in mind that this correlation was extremely weak ($r = .129$) and just met the accepted threshold for statistical significance ($p = .046$). The second correlation was between a respondent's current age and their feelings of safety in Burnaby at night ($r = .147$). In other words, as the age of the respondent increased, so did their perception of personal safety in Burnaby at night. Again, the correlation was extremely weak, but statistically significant ($p = .027$).

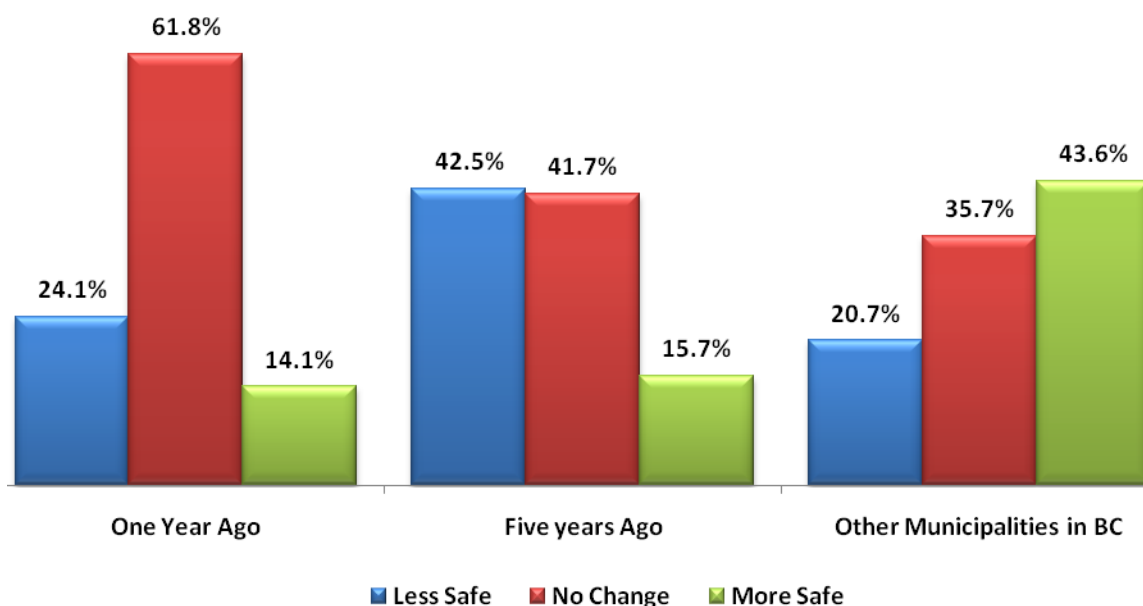
In terms of respondents' personal safety in various situations, slightly more than two-thirds of residents (69.2 per cent) reported that there were no changes in their feelings of personal safety in their Burnaby neighborhood when compared to one year ago (see Figure 1). However, among those who reported a change in their perception of personal safety, few felt that they were more safe today compared to one year ago (12.5 per cent), and less than one-quarter (18.3 per cent) felt less safe today than one year ago in their neighbourhoods. However, when compared to five years ago, more than one-third of respondents (39.6 per cent) felt that their level of safety had declined in their neighbourhood, and only a small proportion (16.8 per cent) felt safer. Conversely, when asked to compare their neighbourhood with other neighbourhoods in Burnaby, while nearly a majority (46.2 per cent) felt that their neighbourhood was as safe as others in Burnaby, one-third felt that their neighbourhoods were more safe and one-fifth felt their neighbourhoods were less safe. In effect, it would appear that nearly a majority of respondents felt no change in their feelings of safety from one year ago and from five years ago, but the biggest shift was when one considered their feelings of safety compared to five years ago. More research would be needed to understand why such a large proportion of respondents felt more safe in their Burnaby neighbourhoods five years ago than today.

Figure 1: Sense of Personal Safety in Neighbourhood



Respondents were also asked about their changing perceptions of personal safety over time in Burnaby more generally, and in Burnaby compared to other municipalities in British Columbia (see Figure 2). In general, the time trends were not very positive, while the comparison to other municipalities was positive. Specifically, when asked to compare their personal levels of safety in Burnaby compared to one year ago, the majority of respondents (61.8 per cent) reported no change. However, nearly one-quarter (24.1 per cent) indicated that they felt less safe in Burnaby than they did one year ago. And, while the proportion of respondents who reported feeling more safe in Burnaby than they did one year ago (14.1 per cent) and five years ago (15.7 per cent) were similar, the proportion of respondents who felt less safe in 2009 in Burnaby compared to five years ago climbed from nearly one-quarter (24.1 per cent) to nearly one-half (42.5 per cent). Still, only one-fifth of respondents reported that they felt less safe in Burnaby than in other municipalities in British Columbia. Again, it is unclear why there are a growing proportion of Burnaby residents who feel less safe in Burnaby today compared to just a few years ago.

Figure 2: Sense of Personal Safety in the Burnaby Area



Of note, 32 respondents (13.1 per cent) indicated that they had been the victim of a criminal offence in the Burnaby area in the past 12 months. Those who reported being victimized were more likely to report that they felt their neighbourhood was less safe than one year ago. Specifically, slightly more than one-third (34.4 per cent) of those who had been victimized reported feeling less safe in their neighbourhoods compared to one year ago, while only 15.7% of those who had not been victimized felt similarly. However, there were no statistically significant differences between victims and non-victims on their sense of personal safety in Burnaby more generally when compared to one year ago. In effect, it appears that being a recent victim played a role in one's perception of safety in their specific neighbourhood, but not in Burnaby more broadly.

Respondents' Reported Victimization

As mentioned above, slightly more than one-tenth of the sample (13.1 per cent) reported that they had been the victim of at least one crime in the past 12 months in the Burnaby area. The general demographics of the victims were very similar to the overall sample with nearly two-thirds (61.3 per cent) being male, the mean age being 52 years old, and nearly two-thirds (64.5 per cent) being Caucasian.

Respondents were asked to consider all the crimes that they had been the victim of in the past 12 months in Burnaby (n = 32); the overwhelming majority of those who had been victimized indicated that they were the victim of property crimes exclusively (87.5 per cent). Only one respondent indicated that they had only been the victim of a personal crime, and only three respondents indicated that they had been the victim of at least one property as well as at least one personal crime in Burnaby in the past 12 months. For the most part, respondents stated that they reported their victimizations to the police (78.1 per cent). This is an interesting finding given that many people do not report property offences to the police because they believe the police can or will do nothing about the offence. It is also important to note that the one respondent who was victimized exclusively by a personal crime reported that they did not report this incident to the police. Of those who notified the police about their victimizations (n = 25), slightly more than two-thirds (68.0 per cent) indicated that they were generally satisfied with the overall police response.

Respondents' Reporting of Victimization to the Burnaby RCMP

Respondents were asked to identify the one victimization that occurred in Burnaby in the past 12 months that had the greatest negative effect on them. Here, the same four respondents identified their personal offence as the most serious, leaving the large majority of respondents (87.9 per cent) identifying a property crime. It would appear that, in terms of physical harm, all of the victimizations were minor as only one respondent from the entire victimization sample indicated that they were physically injured as a result of victimization in Burnaby in the past 12 months, and that respondent indicated that they did not require any medical attention.

For those who identified a property crime as their most serious victimization in Burnaby in the past 12 months (n = 28, all reported some financial loss; slightly more than half (54.5 per cent) reported that their insurance covered only a portion of their financial losses, and a very small proportion (6.1 per cent) indicated that their insurance covered all of their financial losses.

In response to their most serious victimization, nearly three-quarters of respondents (71.9 per cent) indicated that either they or someone else reported the incident to the police. In those instances in which the police were notified (n = 22), the most common way of informing the police was by dialing 911 (68.2 per cent). In slightly more than one-fifth of cases (22.7 per cent) the police were notified by someone telephoning the non-emergency number. Only one respondent indicated that they approached a police officer in person and one other respondent indicated that the police initiated the contact.

In terms of a police response, the RCMP handled contacts from victims in a variety of different ways. This was to be expected because the nature of victimization may differ, such

as in terms of severity. Still, the most common response from the RCMP was to make a report or conduct an investigation (54.5 per cent) (see Table 3). Other common responses were to take information (50.0 per cent) or to send out a patrol car (45.5 per cent). Although this is generally positive, there remains the question of why respondents did not always indicate that the police officer(s) who responded to their call for service recorded the information related to the offence. Similarly, it is unclear why a report was not made or an investigation was not conducted in more cases. While it is likely that many calls for service involved minor infractions or did not require significant police intervention, it is important to keep in mind that these findings stemmed from an incident that the respondent defined as their most serious victimization in the past 12 months. Given this, it seems unlikely that, in most cases, these victimizations would warrant the police doing more than taking the information, especially when one considers the fact that these victims or someone else contacted the police in response to the incident. Still, given the small sample size and the fact that the overwhelming majority of victimizations in which the police were notified were property offences, these findings are likely not generalisable, and certainly do not speak to the common approaches taken by the Burnaby RCMP in cases of personal offences.

Table 3: Ways in which the Burnaby RCMP Responded to Victims

	N = 22
Made a Report or Conducted an Investigation	54.5%
Took the Information	50.0%
Sent a Patrol Car	45.5%
Provided the Information Requested by Victim(s)	9.1%
Referred the Victim(s) to Another Agency	9.1%
Gave a Warning or Arrested the Offender	4.5%
Asked the Victim(s) to Visit the Community Police Office	4.5%
Asked the Victim(s) to Visit Police Headquarters	0
Referred the Victim(s) to a Victim Service Worker	0
Put the Victim(s) in Touch with Community Services	0

Critically, regardless of how those who were victimized in Burnaby in the past 12 months contacted the police or the actions taken by the police, a majority of respondents who contacted the police in response to their most serious victimization in the past 12 months (69.5 per cent) were either mainly or very satisfied with the response and performance of the police officers on their specific case.

In terms of non-reporting, slightly more than one-quarter of victims (28.1 per cent) who identified a most serious victimization in the past 12 months did not contact the police (n = 9). As demonstrated in Table 4, when considering the myriad of reasons why a victim of

crime would not contact the police, although the incident was the most serious victimization that they experienced in the past 12 months, it would appear that there was a general sense that the police could not do anything or that the victimization was too minor or not important enough to contact the police. Again, this finding might speak to the overall lack of seriousness of the victimizations captured in this survey.

Table 4: Reasons for Not Reporting Victimization to the Burnaby RCMP

	N = 9
Incident was Too Minor or Not Important Enough	87.5%
Did Not Think the Police Could Do Anything	85.7%
Did Not Want to get Involved with the Police or Courts	50.0%
Nothing was Taken or the Items were Recovered	40.0%
You Did Not Want to Get Involved with the Police	40.0%
Dealt with Incident in Some Other Way	33.3%
Police Would Not Help	25.0%
The Incident was a Personal Matter and did not Concern the Police	25.0%
Family Put Pressure on Victim to Not Contact Police	25.0%
Fear of Revenge by Offender(s)	0
Fear of Publicity or Media Coverage	0
Did Not Want a Child or Children Arrested or Jailed	0
Did Not Want Anyone to Find Out About the Incident	0

Given that the overwhelming majority of victimizations involved property offences, it was not surprising that a large majority of respondents (82.4 per cent) reported that an offender was not identified in their case. In only six cases was an offender identified, and in only two of these cases was the offender known to the victim.

Respondents were also asked whether anyone else in their household had been the victim of a crime in Burnaby over the past 12 months and the overwhelming majority (88.2 per cent) had not. Moreover, only four respondents (1.6 per cent) reported that a member of their household had been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months outside of Burnaby. In effect, this sample was not characterised by either respondents or members of their households experiencing much victimization in the past 12 months.

Additional Contacts with the Burnaby RCMP

In addition to inquiring about victims' contacts with the RCMP as a result of their most serious victimization over the past 12 months, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had any other contacts with the Burnaby RCMP over the same time period. In this sample, nearly one-quarter (23.2 per cent) reported having some other contact with the

Burnaby RCMP. In terms of the number of contacts, the mean number of other contacts was 4.8 contacts. However, two respondents indicated that they had 50 or more contacts with the Burnaby RCMP in the past 12 months. Once these two respondents were removed from the analysis, the mean number dropped to 2.7 contacts. In fact, among those with a police contact, a majority (60.4 per cent) had only one contact with the Burnaby RCMP over the past 12 months, while only 11.1% reported having five or more such contacts.

The most common reasons for having direct contact with the police, aside from the option of “some other reason”, were to report a suspicious person (59.1 per cent), to be questioned about a possible crime (45.5 per cent), or to report a property crime (41.7 per cent) (see Table 5). The least common reasons were to complain about police services (12.5 per cent), to report a violent crime (25.0 per cent), and to report a traffic accident (27.8 per cent).

Table 5: Reasons for having Direct Contact with the Burnaby RCMP

	N = 56
For Some Other Reason	74.2%
To Report a Suspicious Person	59.1%
To Be Questioned about a Possible Crime	45.5%
To Report a Property Crime	41.7%
To Request Information	35.3%
As Part of a Police Traffic Enforcement Action	28.1%
To Report a Traffic Accident	27.8%
To Report a Violent Crime	25.0%
To Complain about Police Services	12.5%

Respondents’ Rating of and Satisfaction with the Burnaby RCMP

Although the sample was very small, the vast majority of respondents were satisfied with the Burnaby RCMP.¹ The overwhelmingly majority of respondents (89.6 per cent) indicated that they were either very satisfied (21.3 per cent) or mainly satisfied (68.3 per cent) with their local police.² There was no statistically significant difference based on ethnicity. In fact, among those who indicated that they were unsatisfied (10.4 per cent), only two

¹ Even though the Burnaby sample was very small compared to the sample sizes of other public safety surveys conducted by the authors, the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with the Burnaby RCMP was very similar to the findings from other RCMP jurisdictions in British Columbia.

² There were no statistically significant differences in overall satisfaction with the Burnaby RCMP by ethnicity.

respondents (0.8 per cent) reported that they were very unsatisfied with their local police.³ Moreover, there was no statistically significant difference in ratings based on whether the respondent had been the victim of a crime in Burnaby in the past 12 months or whether they had any other contact with the Burnaby RCMP in the past 12 months. There were also no statistically significant differences in overall satisfaction with the Burnaby RCMP based on the age of the respondent or how many contacts one had with the police in the past 12 months.

As indicated by Table 6, the majority of respondents were satisfied with a number of critical aspects of policing. Specifically, respondents were satisfied with the Burnaby RCMP’s professionalism (86.3 per cent), competence in solving crimes (81.3 per cent), and ability to communicate with the public (80.6 per cent). However, a smaller proportion of respondents were satisfied with the Burnaby RCMP’s willingness to seek public input (69.3 per cent) and ability to prevent crime (60.0 per cent). Perhaps in relation to both this latter result and their overall satisfaction with the Burnaby RCMP, only a slight majority of respondents (55.7 per cent) were satisfied with the current number of police officers on the street. Still, when all of these factors are considered together, at the very least, a majority of respondents were either mostly or very satisfied with all of the qualities asked about in the survey.

Table 6: Respondent’s Satisfaction with the Burnaby RCMP

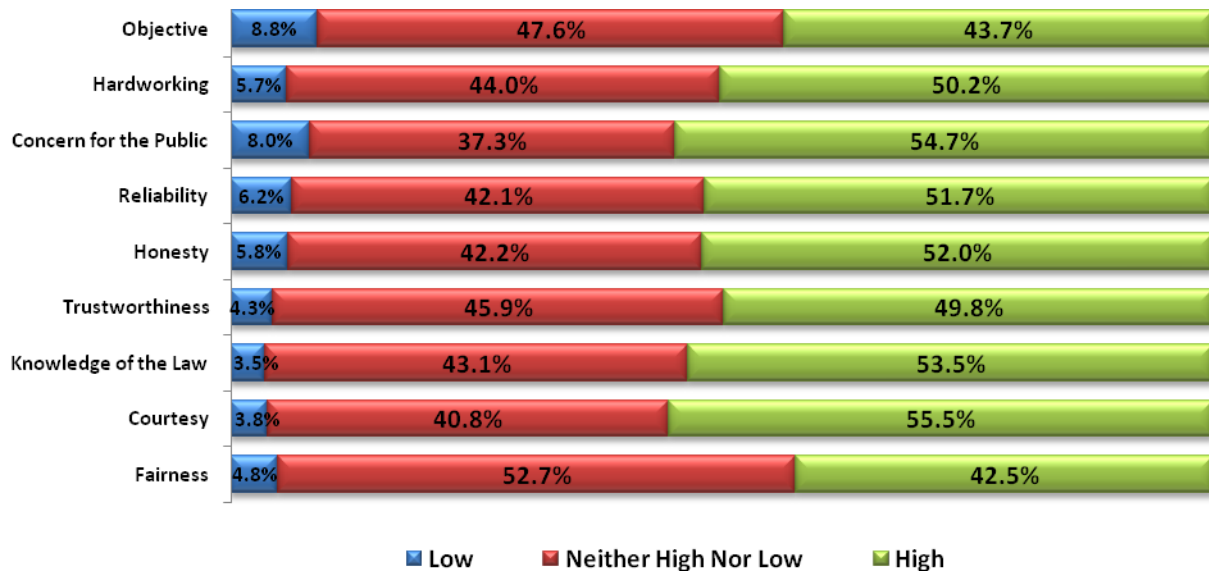
	% of Respondents either Very or Mostly Satisfied
Professionalism of the Department	86.3%
Competence in Solving Crimes	81.3%
Ability to Communicate with the Public	80.6%
Seeking of Public Input	69.3%
Ability to Prevent Crimes	60.0%
Number of Officers on the Streets	55.7%

Respondents were also requested to rate their typical local Burnaby RCMP officer on a five point scale ranging from very low to very high on a series of performance indicators. With the exception of being objective, fair, and trustworthy, a majority of respondents rated their local RCMP officer as either high or very high on all other measures (see Figure 3). However, there are some areas of concern that could be improved upon by the police. For the most part, it is clear that very few respondents rated Burnaby RCMP officers as either low or very low on any one measure. However, it is also clear that respondents did not

³ Of note, one of the two respondents indicated that they had not been the victim of a crime in Burnaby in the past 12 months, nor did they report having any other contact with the Burnaby RCMP in the past 12 months.

overwhelmingly rate their officers, on any particular quality, as being either high or very high.

Figure 3: Ratings of Burnaby RCMP Officers by Respondents



One possible explanation for these results was that respondents with a police contact would rate officers lower than those who did not have any police contacts in the past 12 months. In testing this hypothesis, there was only one statistically significant difference found. There was a statistically significant relationship between scoring officers as low on being objective and having at least one contact with the police. Specifically, 16% of respondents with a police contact rated officers as either low or very low on being objective compared to only 6.5% of respondents without a police contact in the past 12 months.⁴ In considering this finding, it is important to keep in mind that we were not able to control for the nature of the contact or to isolate what type of contact was most likely to contribute to a respondent rating a Burnaby RCMP officer as low on objectivity. However, what was clear was that the number of contacts an individual had with the Burnaby RCMP did not affect their rating. In this sample, analysing this data by the number of contacts respondents had with the Burnaby RCMP did not produce any statistically significant correlations. In effect, it appeared that respondent ratings were not affected by the number of contacts they had with the RCMP over the past 12 months, although they were somewhat negatively affected by having had contact with the police, in terms of perceiving police as objective.

⁴ $\chi^2 (4) = 10.20, p = .037$

A set of correlations were conducted considering officer ratings and the number of years that the respondent lived in their current neighbourhood. Here, there were statistically significant correlations with all the measures other than officer's knowledge of the law.⁵ While all of the correlations were very weak, they generally indicated that the longer one lived in their current neighbourhood, the more positively they rated their local police officers.

An explanation for the ratings might be that there were differences in how victims versus non-victims rated officers. Based on the research literature, the hypothesis was that victims would rate officers lower than those who had not been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. However, there were no statistically significant differences based on whether the respondent had been a victim of a crime in the past 12 months and any of the officer ratings.

As will be discussed in the next section, there were a number of issues respondents identified that they felt required more police attention or resources (see Figure 4). While these issues will be discussed in greater detail below, it is noteworthy that there was no correlation between the number of problems identified by respondents and officer ratings.

While the survey did not ask any questions about media representation of the police, it is possible that recent negative reports about the RCMP, especially the Robert Dziekanski incident in 2007, contributed to the proportion of respondents who rated their local police officers as low or neither high or low. Still, when considering these findings, it is critical to keep in mind that the proportion of respondents who rated the RCMP as low or very low on each of these characteristics was extremely small.

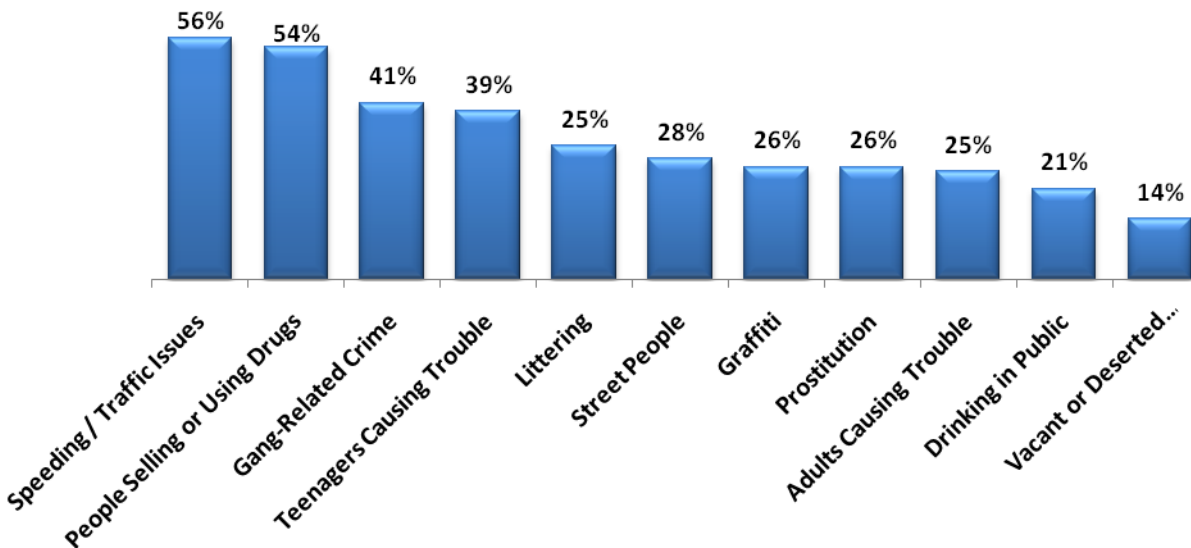
Problems Identified by Respondents as Deserving More Burnaby RCMP Resources and Attention

Respondents were asked if there were any problems in their neighbourhoods that they felt police should devote more resources and attention to. As indicated by Figure 4, the largest proportion of respondents indicated that speeding and traffic-related issues (55.6 per cent) and people selling and using drugs (54.1 per cent) needed more police resources and attention. Interestingly, there was little consensus in this sample as these two issues were the only two problems identified by a majority of respondents. Still, a large proportion of respondents also felt that gang-related crime (41.0 per cent) and groups of teenagers

⁵ The correlations were: Fairness ($r = +.184$; $p = .008$); Courtesy ($r = +.152$; $p = .028$); Knowledge of the Law ($r = +.077$; $p = .278$); Trustworthiness ($r = +.143$; $p = .039$); Honesty ($r = +.150$; $p = .031$); Reliability ($r = +.213$; $p = .002$); Concern for the Public ($r = +.187$; $p = .006$); Hardworking ($r = +.182$; $p = .009$); and Objective ($r = +.145$; $p = .038$).

hanging out in the neighbourhood and causing trouble (38.5 per cent) also required additional police resources and attention. Only a small proportion of respondents (14.1 per cent) felt that vacant or deserted houses or storefronts were a problem that needed greater police attention and resources.⁶

Figure 4: Problems that the Burnaby RCMP Should Devote More Resources and Attention

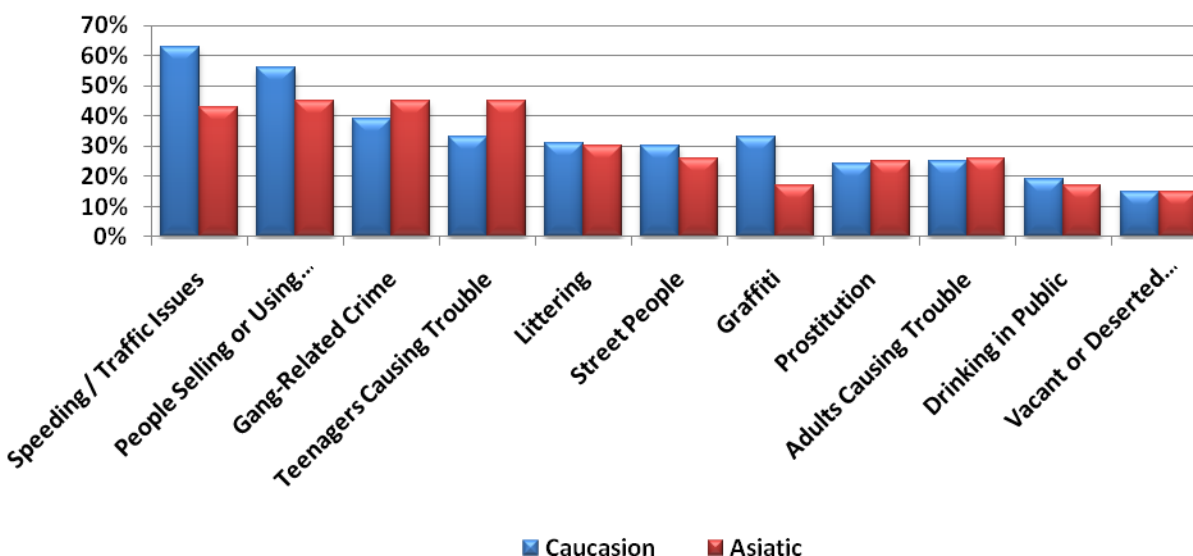


While it was not unexpected that few respondents would select vacant or deserted houses as a significant problem that they would most like the police to devote additional resources to, it was interesting that traffic enforcement received more votes than gang-related crime. A possible explanation for this may be that traffic enforcement is something that respondents encountered on a daily basis, while these other issues were less frequent problems for respondents.

It is interesting to note that the issue with the largest proportion of male respondents was people selling or using drugs (56.4 per cent) followed by speeding or other traffic-related issues; however, among females in the survey, the order was reversed with the most commonly cited problem being overwhelmingly speeding and other traffic-related issues (67.1 per cent) followed by people selling and using drugs (51.9 per cent). Similarly, there were subtle differences between respondents who identified themselves as Caucasian and those who identified themselves as primarily of Asiatic descent (see Figure 5).

⁶ Because respondents could select more than one problem, the total percentage is greater than 100%. In fact, this sample provided a total of 738 responses.

Figure 5: Problems that the Burnaby RCMP Should Devote More Resources and Attention by Ethnicity



For Caucasian respondents, the most important issues requiring additional police attention and resources were speeding and traffic-related issues (63.2 per cent) and people selling and using drugs (55.6 per cent). However, for those who self-identified as being of Asiatic descent, the most important issues were people selling and using drugs, gang-related crimes, and groups of teenagers hanging out in the neighbourhood and causing trouble (45.3 per cent each).

Conclusion

Although the sample size for this study was small, the results of the Burnaby RCMP survey indicated that the vast majority of respondents felt that their communities were safe places to live. As would be expected, feelings of safety decreased somewhat at night and when respondents travelled further away from their homes.

Respondents' feelings of personal safety were consistent with their reports of victimization. Specifically, only a small proportion of respondents reported being victimized in the past 12 months in Burnaby and the most common type of victimization was some form of property crime. Moreover, while non-reporting of victimization was high (28.1 per cent), the overwhelming majority of respondents who did not contact the police felt that the incident was too minor or not important enough to involve the police. Given the nature of the victimizations reported, this finding was not unexpected.

In terms of general satisfaction with the Burnaby RCMP, virtually all respondents reported being satisfied with their police, and the majority of respondents also reported being satisfied when considering specific police activities. Respondents also generally gave high ratings to specific characteristics of their local RCMP officers.

Respondents identified a number of problems in their neighborhoods that they felt police should devote more resources and attention to. Most commonly cited were speeding and traffic-related issues and people using or selling drugs.

In sum, the Burnaby findings were very consistent with the results from a number of other public safety surveys conducted by these authors in RCMP jurisdictions. As in the other studies, the sample's attitudes towards the activities, performance, and characteristics of the Burnaby RCMP were generally favourable. When considering all of the data collected in this survey, the overall conclusion is that Burnaby residents are generally satisfied with the Burnaby RCMP and has confidence in the RCMP detachment as a whole.

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Appendix A

INSTRUCTIONS

We hope that you will find this questionnaire easy to follow. In most cases, all you have to do is circle or check the answer that best describes how you feel. The questionnaire should take you about 15 minutes to complete.

As you have been advised by the enclosed covering letter, your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous to the RCMP and the university researchers. In this regard, please remember that the questionnaires are returned directly to us at UFV, all of the information is aggregated for reporting purposes, and we will not reveal individual responses to anyone.

In addition to your anonymity, you are free to not answer any question in the survey that you would rather not answer.

For the present, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at the University of the Fraser Valley at 604-854-4553. For any concerns regarding the administration of the survey, please contact Yvon Dandurand, Dean of Research and Industry Liaison at 604-864-4654.

Many thanks,

Dr. Darryl Plecas
University Research Chair
School of Criminology & Criminal Justice
University of the Fraser Valley

A. IS YOUR COMMUNITY A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE?

In this section, we would like you to tell us how safe you feel in your residence and neighbourhood generally, at night and during the day. We would also like to know whether or not your sense of personal safety has changed since you have moved into your present neighbourhood. By neighbourhood, we mean the geographic area that is within a **15 minute walk** in any direction from your home. ***Please circle the numbers that best indicate how safe you feel.***

1. How safe do you feel in each of the following situations?

	Very Unsafe	Somewhat Unsafe	Somewhat Safe	Very Safe
In your residence during the daytime?	1	2	3	4
In your residence during the night?	1	2	3	4
In your neighbourhood during the daytime?	1	2	3	4
In your neighbourhood during the night?	1	2	3	4
In the Burnaby area during the daytime?	1	2	3	4
In the burnaby area during the night?	1	2	3	4

2. What is your sense of personal safety in your neighbourhood?

	Much Less Safe	Somewhat Less Safe	No Change	Somewhat Safer	Much Safer	Does not Apply
Compared to one year ago?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared to five years ago?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared to other neighbourhoods in your area?	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. What is your sense of personal safety in the Burnaby area?

	Much Less Safe	Somewhat Less Safe	No Change	Somewhat Safer	Much Safer	Does not Apply
Compared to one year ago?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared to five years ago?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared to other municipalities in BC?	1	2	3	4	5	6

B. HAVE YOU BEEN A VICTIM OF A CRIME IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

In this section, we would like you to tell us if you have been the victim of crime your community in the last 12 months.

4. In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you been the victim of a crime in your community?

0. No → GO TO QUESTION #17
1. Yes → GO TO QUESTION #5

5. Thinking about all the crimes you have been the victim of in the PAST 12 MONTHS, were they:

1. Only Property Crimes (i.e. B+E; Theft)
2. Only Personal Crimes (i.e. Assault, Robbery)
3. Both Property and Personal Crimes

6. Thinking about all the victimizations you experienced in the PAST 12 MONTHS, in general, did you report the incident(s) to the RCMP?

0. No → GO TO QUESTION #8
1. Yes → GO TO QUESTION #7

7. In general, were you satisfied with the police response?

0. No
1. Yes

OF ALL THE VICTIMIZATIONS YOU EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE THINK ABOUT THE MOST SERIOUS IN THAT IT HAD THE MOST NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOU.

8. Thinking about the most serious crime you experienced in the PAST 12 MONTHS, was it:

1. A Property Crime (i.e. B+E; Theft)
2. A Personal Crime (i.e. Assault, Robbery)

9. Did you or anyone else report this particular crime to the police?

0. No → GO TO QUESTION #13
1. Yes → GO TO QUESTION #10

10. How did you contact the police? (Check only ONE response)

- 1. Telephoned 911
- 2. Telephoned the non-emergency number
- 3. Visited the police headquarters station
- 4. Visited a community police station
- 5. Flagged down a patrol vehicle
- 6. Approached a police officer in person
- 7. The police initiated the contact
- 8. Some other way

11. How did your local police respond to your request? Please check all that Apply.

- 1. Took information
- 2. Sent a patrol car
- 3. Asked you to visit the headquarters building
- 4. Asked you to visit the community police office
- 5. Provided the information you requested
- 6. Referred you to another agency
- 7. Made a report or conducted an investigation
- 8. Gave a warning or arrested the offender
- 9. Put you in touch with community services
- 10. Referred you to a Victim Service Worker

12. How satisfied were you with the local police response?

- 1. Very Unsatisfied → GO TO QUESTION #14
- 2. Somewhat Unsatisfied → GO TO QUESTION #14
- 3. Mainly Satisfied → GO TO QUESTION #14
- 4. Very Satisfied → GO TO QUESTION #14

13. There are many different circumstances that may affect why people do not report their victimizations to the police. Were any of the following reasons why you did not report this incident to the local police?

	Yes
1. You did not want to get involved with the police or the courts	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did not think that the police could do anything about the incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Fear of revenge by the offender	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The incident was too minor or it was not important enough	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The incident was a personal matter and did not concern the police	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Nothing was taken or the items were recovered	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You dealt with it in another way	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. You did not want anyone to find out about the incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Family member(s) put pressure on you to not contact the police	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The police would not help	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. You did not want to get involved with police	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Fear of publicity or media coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. You did not want a child or children arrested or jailed	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. HAS BEING A VICTIM OF CRIME AFFECTED YOU?

In this section, we would like you to explain the extent to which you have been affected by the crime(s) referred to in Section B.

14. Were you physically injured by any crime in your community in the last 12 months?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes, but no medical attention was required
- 2. Yes and medical attention was required

15. Did you suffer any financial losses for any crime in your community that occurred in the last 12 months?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes, but insurance did not cover any of the losses
- 2. Yes, but insurance only covered a partial of the losses
- 3. Yes and insurance covered all of the losses

16. Was an offender identified in your case?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes, but I did not know the offender
- 2. Yes and I knew the offender

17. To your knowledge, has anyone else in your household been a victim of crime in your community in the PAST 12 MONTHS?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

18. Have you been the victim of a criminal offence outside your community in the PAST 12 MONTHS?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

D. HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR LOCAL POLICE?

In this section, we would like to ask for your opinion regarding your local police. When responding to these questions, please DO NOT include any police contact you may have had that resulted from one of the victimization experiences your reported in Section B.

19. Other than police contact you may have had as a result of the incident(s) reported in Section B, have you had any other direct contact with the local police in the last 12 months?

- 0. No → GO TO QUESTION #22
- 1. Yes → GO TO QUESTION #20

20. How many times in the PAST 12 MONTHS have you had direct contact with the local police?

|__|__| times

21. What were the primary reasons you had direct contact with the local police? Check all that Apply.

- 1. To report a property crime
- 2. To report a violent crime
- 3. To report a traffic accident
- 4. To report a suspicious person
- 5. To be questioned about a possible crime
- 6. To request information
- 7. To complain about police services
- 8. As part of a police traffic enforcement action
- 9. For some other reason

22. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your local police? Please circle the one answer that best applied to each question.

	Very Unsatisfied	Mostly Unsatisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
The level of competence in solving crimes	1	2	3	4
The number of officers on the street	1	2	3	4
The ability to communicate with the public	1	2	3	4
The ability to prevent crimes	1	2	3	4
The seeking of public input	1	2	3	4
The professionalism of the department	1	2	3	4

23. How would you rate the typical local RCMP officer on the following qualities? Please circle the one answer that best applies to each question.

	Very Low	Low	Neither High or Low	High	Very High
Fairness	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of the Law	1	2	3	4	5
Trustworthiness	1	2	3	4	5
Honesty	1	2	3	4	5
Reliability	1	2	3	4	5
Concern for the Public	1	2	3	4	5
Hardworking	1	2	3	4	5
Being Objective	1	2	3	4	5

24. Overall, how satisfied are you with your local police?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Mainly Satisfied
- 3. Mainly Unsatisfied
- 4. Very Unsatisfied

25. This is a list of some things which may be a problem in your neighbourhood. Please indicate if you feel that this is a particular problem in your neighbourhood that your local police should devote more resources and attention to. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

	Yes
1. Litter, Broken Glass, Trash, or Graffiti in your Neighbourhood	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Drug Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Drug Production	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Organised Crime / Gangs	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Property Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Motor Vehicle Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Impaired Driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Traffic Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Public Disorder / Causing a Disturbance	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Prostitution	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Personal or Violent Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>

E. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In this section, we need to ask you some basic background information about yourself to confirm that those responding to our survey are truly a representative cross-section of community residents.

27. For how many years have you been living in your present neighbourhood?

|__|__| years

28. Are you currently an employee or volunteer with your local police?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

29. Which category best describes the type of residence in which you are currently living?

- 1. House
- 2. Apartment
- 3. Condominium
- 4. Townhouse
- 5. Duplex
- 6. Other

31. How many individuals aged 18 years and OLDER currently reside with you? |__|__|

32. How many individuals UNDER the age of 18 years old currently reside with you? |__|__|

33. What is your gender?

- 1. Male
- 2. Female
- 3. Transgender

34. What is your current age? |__|__| years old

35. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- 1. Less than high school
- 2. A high school diploma
- 3. Some college/university
- 4. A College/University diploma or degree
- 5. A graduate/professional degree

36. What is your current employment status?

- 1. Employed full-time
- 2. Employed part-time
- 3. Self-Employed
- 4. Retired
- 5. Unemployed
- 6. Student
- 7. Other

37. What is your current marital status?

- 1. Single – never married
- 2. Married – including common law
- 3. Divorced or separated
- 4. Widowed

38. What is your annual level of income BEFORE taxes?

1. No Income <input type="checkbox"/>	2. Less than \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	3. \$10,000 - \$19,999 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. \$20,000 - \$29,999 <input type="checkbox"/>	5. \$30,000 - \$39,999 <input type="checkbox"/>	6. \$40,000 - \$49,999 <input type="checkbox"/>
7. \$50,000 - \$59,999 <input type="checkbox"/>	8. \$60,000 - \$69,999 <input type="checkbox"/>	9. \$70,000 - \$79,999 <input type="checkbox"/>
10. \$80,000 - \$89,999 <input type="checkbox"/>	11. \$90,000 - \$99,999 <input type="checkbox"/>	12. More than \$100,000 <input type="checkbox"/>

39. What do you consider to be your PRIMARY ethnic background? (check only ONE)

- 1. Aboriginal
- 2. Caucasian
- 3. Asiatic
- 4. Black
- 5. East Indian/South Asian
- 6. Other

F. COMMENTS

Please use this space to provide any additional comments you would like to make about crime, personal safety, and your local police department.

Thank you, again.