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ACQUISITIONS

CRIME PREVENTION SURVEY; JUNE 1978

Office of Criminal Justice Planning  
FOURTH DIMENSION - Crime Prevention Unit  
Jacksonville, Florida

48664

## CRIME PREVENTION SURVEY: JUNE 1978

The average citizen knows when something is a crime, but does not appear to be as quick to identify information as being crime preventive. The FOURTH DIMENSION-Crime Prevention Unit of the Office of Criminal Justice Planning in Jacksonville is concerned, in part, with obtaining statistical data to aid in developing crime prevention programs. Sensitivity to public opinion and perceptions is important in planning. In order to measure general perceptions of crime prevention awareness, a county-wide survey was conducted in June of 1978. The survey was designed to measure perceptions of neighborhood safety and attitudes toward some components of the Criminal Justice System as they relate to crime prevention.

A variety of techniques are available for obtaining a systematic sampling of attitudes. Each technique has positive and negative qualities which will affect the sample chosen, the feasibility and reliability of the results, as well as cost, personnel and survey time required. It was decided that this survey team would utilize a random telephoning technique.

This technique is not usually seen by respondents as threatening, can be conducted quickly and is safe to administer. Telephone surveying allows surveyors to answer respondent's questions; survey personnel are also able to screen ineligible respondents (those who are too young, live outside the survey area, business and/or non-residential respondents). The technique elicits responses from persons who are not literate, those who might not take the time to complete a written questionnaire, and those who might find a personal interview too threatening and non-confidential. Randomness, high response rate and relative low cost are other advantages of the random telephone survey.

The major limitation of surveying by the random telephone technique is that 100% of the population does not subscribe to telephone service. However, telephone usage has grown to the point that more than 90% of the nation's households can be reached by telephone.<sup>1</sup> The remaining 10% could constitute a distinctive sub-group and their omission could result in a biased sample; however, a Ford Foundation survey conducted over the telephone by the Police Foundation in cooperation with the University of Cincinnati was compared to a personal door-to-door canvass on a victimization study. The demographic data from the two surveys did not differ notably with regard to income, age, race and sex factors.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Jacksonville Area Planning Board, there were an estimated 534,874 people in Jacksonville in 1975 (excluding the Beaches) of which 344,306 were over 18 years of age. There were 46 telephone exchanges which serve the entire City of Jacksonville according to Southern Bell Telephone Company. Eight of these are special exchanges or are exchanges serving exclusively the Beaches communities and will not be used in the survey.<sup>3</sup> The September, 1976, Cross Reference Directory of Greater Jacksonville including all of Duval County, Green Cove Springs, Middleburg, Orange Park, Penny Farms and Ponte Vedra Beach has a total listing of 205,606 telephones of which 25,622 are businesses. It is estimated that 106,386 of these listings are in the 38 telephone exchanges to be used in the survey.

Statistical tables were consulted to determine the size of the sample needed to obtain results at the 95% confidence level with a high rate of reliability and allowable error of plus or minus five percent ( $\pm 5\%$ ). The tables showed a sample of 384 would be adequate for a population of 100,000 and over. To insure the best distribution of the sample, an estimation per number of listings for each exchange was made and a

proportionate number of samples was determined for each exchange. Interviewers were provided with only numbers selected at random from each of the exchanges listed in the September, 1976, Cross Reference Directory of Greater Jacksonville. The interviewers could then randomly select from the available listings the pre-determined number of samples needed for each exchange.

In the last two and one-half years, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning has gained confidence and expertise in conducting surveys over the telephone. The most recent have been two general surveys to specific groups and two random sample surveys to determine prevailing attitudes in specific subject areas. To insure that the level of proficiency and confidence would continue, telephone interviewers were given careful training in handling each question on the questionnaire and in ways of answering respondents' questions. They introduced themselves and attempted to gain the confidence of the respondents; respondents were encouraged to verify the actuality of the survey by telephoning the office. A series of screening questions were used to determine eligible respondents and the interview was terminated and a new number selected if the person resided outside the survey area, was at a business number or was under age.

Interviewers did not attempt to obtain responses from all adult household members, but interviewed the first available person over 18. If the person answering the telephone was under 18, they were asked, "Is there anyone home who is over 18 and who could talk with me now?" Calls were made from May 26 until June 16. Calling times were scheduled to provide several opportunities to reach respondents from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. weekdays and on intervening weekends. It was determined that an original call and five callbacks at various times

during the day and week would be attempted before a number would be discarded.

Five hundred and twelve telephone numbers were called in the survey. Of these, one hundred and twenty-four were not used because of number changes, no answers or ineligible respondents. Three hundred and eighty-eight responses were tallied as the sample in the survey. Random distribution was assured by keeping to the pre-determined number of responses needed for each telephone exchange. According to a telephone spokesman, a concerted effort is made by the telephone company in Jacksonville to assure that the exchanges are geographically inclusive.

#### Observations About Survey Findings

This survey was conducted to measure perceptions of neighborhood safety and attitudes toward some components of the Criminal Justice System as they related to crime prevention. (See Annex A)

Questions one and two were designed to measure the citizen's perception of his safety in the neighborhood. A 1977 study by the Department of Justice, Public Opinion About Crime,<sup>4</sup> found that 55% of the people in selected cities nationwide felt very safe or reasonably safe out alone in their neighborhoods at night. Our Jacksonville survey found 60.8% of the sample unafraid to walk alone in their neighborhoods at night.

A 1972 Gallup poll found one person in six (16.7%) who did not feel safe inside his own home at night. This survey found 10.3% of the respondents or less than one person out of ten felt unsafe inside at night. Several people did mention measures they had taken which made them feel safer: burglar bars, watch dogs and guns in the house.

The victimization study in question three revealed that 20.1% of the sample had been victimized by crime. It is interesting that most crimes

happened to our survey respondents within one mile of where they were living at the time. 10.5% of the sample did not report the crime committed against them.

Questions four and five were designed to measure attitudes toward cooperation with the courts and the police. If respondents gave qualifications to their "yes" answers, they were counted with the "conditionally" group. Comparing the two questions, twice the number of "conditional" respondents and almost three times the number of "no" respondents were unwilling to testify in court. Most of these people voluntarily said that they would be afraid of reprisals from the person on trial.

Rape was the crime feared the most by the largest percentage of respondents. The choice of this as the most feared crime may be partially attributable to the large number of women responding, although several men named rape of wives in answer to question six. Publicity about rape and rape prevention may also account for increased public awareness of this crime. Burglary and assault followed even though their frequency of occurrence is greater. Twenty-five percent of those people who had been victimized were most afraid of the same crime happening to them again.

Over 33% of the sample were unable to say what they would like to see done to prevent crime. Seventeen percent of those responding gave responses classified as Citizen Initiative/Community Involvement. The largest group of respondents (18%) cited harsher, stricter or longer sentencing of convicted persons as the best crime preventive. In all, 26% gave answers centering around changes in the Court System (including legislative changes such as capital punishment). Changes in Law Enforcement were cited by 23% of the sample. Over half (11.9%) of the respondents in this grouping saw increases in the police force as the best answer to preventing crime.

Citizen awareness of local crime prevention programs is relatively low (19.6%) especially in light of the recent media campaigns. People who responded positively mentioned Neighborhood Watch Programs, newspaper articles and the Helping Hand Program.

## Comparison of Demographic Data

Although the 1970 census figures have not been updated to reflect any changes or shifts in the population of Jacksonville, the demographic data from the 1970 census is presented for comparative purposes.

### 1970 Census\*

#### Age

18-24	19.2%
25-44	37.8
45 and Over	42.9
	<u>99.9%</u>

#### Race

White	76.1%
Black	23.4
Other	.4
	<u>99.9%</u>

#### Sex

Male	47.0%
Female	53.0
	<u>100.0%</u>

#### Marital Status

Single	23.3%
Married	60.9
Separated	2.9
Divorced	4.9
Widowed	8.0
	<u>100.0%</u>

#### Residence

Not Available

### Respondents of 1978 Survey on Crime Prevention\*

#### Age

18-24	14.7%
25-44	34.0
45 and Over	50.3
	<u>100.0%</u>

#### Race

White	76.8%
Black	22.7
Other	.5
	<u>100.0%</u>

#### Sex

Male	27.6%
Female	72.4
	<u>100.0%</u>

#### Marital Status

Single	20.1%
Married	58.0
Separated	1.0
Divorced	8.0
Widowed	12.6
No Reply	.3
	<u>100.0%</u>

#### Residence

Private Home	75.8%
High Rise	2.3
Apartment	15.5
Trailer	6.2
Other	.3
	<u>100.1%</u>

\*Excludes the Beaches' Communities



### Analysis of Comparative Data

An important point to bear in mind as one studies the results of this survey is that the major concern of the staff was to show opinion of individuals 18 years of age and older. There was no intent to try to determine a breakdown of opinion by age grouping. The comparative data was included to show that various age groups were surveyed. The age categories in the 1978 survey show a combined percentage increase in the 25-44 and 45 and over groups which is very close to the percentage decrease in the 18-24 group. The percentages of the races were remarkably similar. The sex category and the variances in the marital status categories showed marked differences in percentages, but this is probably attributable to the work habits within the residences which were contacted for the most part during the day. Based upon previous experience, it is felt that the disproportionate ratio of female to male respondents would not appreciably affect the outcome of the attitudes within individual residences had there been a converse ratio.

### Limitations

When only a small percentage of the population units are included in the sample, there is some skepticism about the accuracy of inferences made. However, there has been significant progress in sampling so that private pollsters are hired to sample people's attitudes toward candidate choice prior to election, their television show preferences, and many other areas of public concern. Because of cost, personnel, and time constraints, a sample is generally used. Edward Lakner, in his book entitled "A Manual of Statistical Sampling Methods For Corrections Planners," includes a discussion on precision of sample results. He states:<sup>4</sup>

In most situations a sample precision for proportions of two to four percent at the 95 percent confidence level should suffice to meet planning purposes. In many instances, somewhat larger confidence limits might be tolerable. No absolute criteria can be laid down for the precision of estimates of means and total values in the population, but 95 percent of the obtained sample findings do not seem unreasonable as a working standard.

### FOOTNOTES

1. Alfred J. Tuchgarber and William R. Klecka - "Random Digit Dialing -- Lowering The Cost of Victimization Surveys." (Police Foundation, 1976)p. 20.
2. Ibid, p. 43.
3. Southern Bell Telephone Company - Jacksonville Office (1977)  
The following telephone exchanges were not used in the survey:
  - 241 - Jacksonville Beach
  - 246 - Jacksonville Beach
  - 249 - Jacksonville Beach
  - 350 - Southern Bell Telephone Company
  - 632 - Blackstone Building
  - 644 - City of Jacksonville Centrix
  - 646 - Florida Junior College
  - University of North Florida
  - 791 - U.S. Government Offices
4. James Garofolo, Public Opinion About Crime: The Attitudes of Victims and Non-victims in Selected Cities (Albany, New York: Criminal Justice Research Center 1977) p. 58.
5. Edward Lakner, "A Manual of Statistical Sampling Methods for Corrections Planners" (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois -- National Clearinghouse for Criminal Justice Planning and Architecture, 1976) p. 57.

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1. "Are you afraid to walk in your neighborhood alone at night?"

Yes - 152 (39.2%)                      No - 236 (60.8%)

2. "Do you feel safe inside your home at night?"

Yes - 348 (89.7%)                      No - 40 (10.3%)

3. "Have you ever been the victim of crime?"

Yes - 78 (20.1%)                      No - 310 (79.9%)

If yes:

(a) "How many times have you been a victim of crime?"

Once - 48 (61.5%)    Twice - 17 (21.8%)    More than twice - 13 (16.7%)

(b) "What crime(s) was it?"

Burglary	71	49.6%
Larceny	28	19.6
Robbery	24	16.8
Vandalism	10	7.0
Rape	3	2.1
Auto Theft	2	1.4
Mugging	2	1.4
Assault	1	.7
Threatened Assault	1	.7
Attempted Rape	1	.7
	<u>143</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

(c) "Was it in the last two years?"

Yes - 89 (62.2%)                      No - 54 (37.8%)

(d) "Did the crime happen within one mile of where you were living?"

Yes - 125 (87.4%)                      No - 18 (12.6%)

(e) "Did you report it to the police?"

Yes - 128 (89.5%)                      No - 15 (10.5%)

4. "If you were witnessing a crime, would you report it to the police?"

Yes - 367 (94.6%) No - 8 (2.1%) Conditionally - 13 (3.3%)

5. "Would you be willing to testify in court?"

Yes - 339 (87.4%) No - 23 (5.9%) Conditionally - 26 (6.7%)

6. "What crime worries you the most?\* (\*\*\*)

Assault	46	11.9%
Burglary	66	17.0
Crimes Against Children	7	1.8
Drug Related Crimes	1	.3
Larceny	5	1.3
Mugging	5	1.3
Murder	40	10.3
Rape	87	22.4
Robbery	38	9.8
Vandalism	3	.8
All	22	5.7
Nothing	24	6.2
Don't Know	32	8.2
Miscellaneous	12	3.1
	<u>388</u>	<u>100.1%</u>

7. "What one thing would you like to see done to prevent crime?"\*\* (\*\*\*)

#### Citizen Initiative/Community Involvement

a. Citizen awareness/cooperation	9	2.3%
b. "Law into own hands"	5	1.3
c. Gun control	5	1.3
d. Better street lighting	6	1.5
e. Parental involvement/education	29	7.5
f. Church attendance/salvation	6	1.5
g. Miscellaneous but related to citizen initiative/community involvement	7	1.8
	<u>67</u>	<u>17.2%</u>

#### Court Systems

a. Harsher, stricter or longer sentencing of convicted persons	70	18.0%
b. Capital punishment	19	4.9
c. Miscellaneous but related to the court system	13	3.4
	<u>102</u>	<u>26.3%</u>

# Law Enforcement

a. Increased police force	46	11.9%
b. Better training for police	6	1.5
c. Increased visibility of police ("Neighborhood Cop")	12	3.1
d. Better Service from Police	11	2.8
e. Miscellaneous but related to law enforcement	15	3.9
	<u>90</u>	<u>23.2%</u>

Don't know	<u>129</u>	<u>33.2</u>
	388	99.9%

8. "Are you aware of any organized crime prevention programs locally?"

Yes - 76 (19.6%)

No - 312 (80.4%)

- \* Names of crimes supplied by respondents
- \*\* Categories were developed to tabulate similar responses
- \*\*\* Total percentages deviate from 100.0% due to rounding off of decimals



**END**