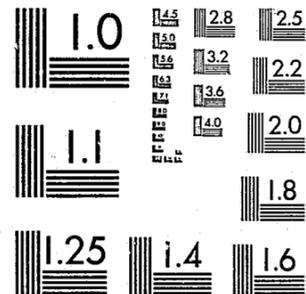


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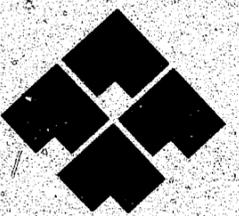
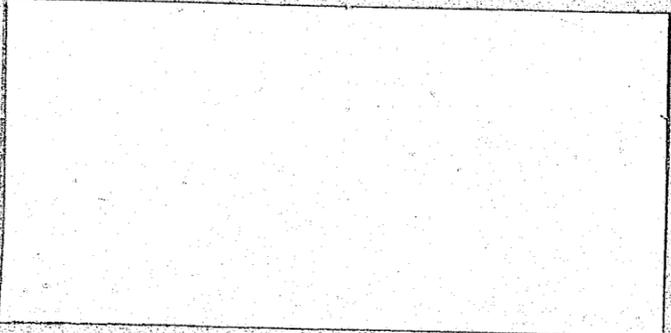
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REPORT ON THE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
CITIZEN CRIME PREVENTION SURVEY

Submitted to:

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by

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June, 1980

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APPENDIX A (Sample Interview Questionnaire)

APPENDIX B (Additional Data Tables)

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ACQUISITIONS

REPORT ON THE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
CITIZEN CRIME PREVENTION SURVEY

I. Introduction

This report summarizes the results of a citizen survey recently performed by the Division of Crime Control of North Carolina as part of the initial stages of a statewide crime prevention program in North Carolina. The Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc. assisted in the development, administration, and analysis of the survey under contract to the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. The results shown here reflect a preliminary analysis of the data by MCPC.<sup>1</sup>

The survey, entitled The North Carolina Evaluation Survey, was designed to measure the public's current level of awareness of crime problems in four counties of North Carolina and to assess that public's knowledge and adoption of crime prevention techniques designed to protect themselves and their property. The survey was conducted for two principal reasons: first, to collect baseline data and information which could be used in comparison to the results from a second survey conducted sometime after the North Carolina Community Crime Prevention program and media campaign have been in place. By examining the results of the pre and post surveys it will be possible to determine whether there have been increases in: 1) awareness of the crime problem, 2) the amount of contact with local law enforcement

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<sup>1</sup>Not all frequencies or tables are shown here; those interested in other data elements or further analysis should consult the Appendix.

agencies for crime prevention information, 3) the understanding of crime prevention, and 4) the number and kind of crime prevention measures actually taken. This survey, administered to residents of Alamance, Davidson, Guilford and Randolph counties, will be used as the baseline data for making these determinations. The second purpose of the survey was to collect information which would be useful in structuring the statewide program and media campaign and determining its content and focus.

The sample size for this baseline evaluation survey is 506. A number of people refused to answer certain questions which dropped the effective sample size for those questions as reported in the tabulation of the data. The questionnaire contained 42 questions and was administered by telephone to the random sample during a period of several weeks in December, 1979.

The survey questions were designed to provide information about several kinds of attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics of the respondents that have been shown useful in planning and evaluating other crime prevention programs. The North Carolina evaluation survey instrument was modeled after the instrument used to evaluate the Minnesota Crime Watch (MCW) program.<sup>1</sup> In the MCW survey instrument and in this instrument, there were questions designed to measure attitudes toward crime prevention, knowledge/awareness, and adoption of specific crime prevention techniques. Also, in both instruments

---

<sup>1</sup>The Minnesota Crime Watch program is a statewide crime prevention program initiated in Minnesota in 1973. Prior to its initiation a baseline citizen survey was conducted. One year after the MCW program was started a follow-up survey was conducted. The pre- and post comparisons were part of the data included in the Minnesota Crime Watch evaluation report.

there were questions intended to indicate levels of concern about crime in general and burglary in particular. The information contained in the responses to these questions is essential to evaluating a crime prevention public information campaign. In North Carolina, as in Minnesota, the crime prevention information campaign will be focusing upon residential burglary, although other types of crime will be dealt with as well. The purpose of these campaigns has been to bring these crime problems to the attention of the public, and then once they are concerned about the problems, to inform them of the steps they can take to control them.

Demographic questions were included in the survey instrument so it can be specified what population subgroups are more receptive to crime prevention messages and which groups are less concerned and do less to prevent crime. This information may prove useful for targeting program resources. By comparing other questions in the survey against these demographic questions in the follow-up survey, it will be possible to specify the impact of the North Carolina crime prevention media campaign upon specific groups of people.

Other questions are included for the purpose of informing the current campaign, as well as the future evaluation. If people are now unwilling to join with others to fight crime or if they have a bad attitude toward the police, then expectations for increases in Community Watch membership or police contacts should perhaps be tempered. Or by referencing the demographic results, it will be possible to determine which groups harbor negative and non-cooperative attitudes, and therefore these groups may require special treatment in the crime prevention program.

Wherever possible and useful, comparisons between results of this survey and the results of other similar surveys will be provided. The evaluation of the MCW program will be the major source of these comparisons. Both the pre-test and the post-test surveys from the Minnesota evaluation will be used.<sup>1</sup> The similarities and differences between survey results from North Carolina and other locations may have programmatic implications. The statistical techniques utilized consist primarily of frequency distributions and crosstabulations, and a few relationships are analyzed using somewhat more sophisticated techniques.

Several general patterns, or themes, can be observed in the North Carolina data. These will be referred to frequently in Section II (Description and Analysis of Survey Results) below, but it may be helpful to summarize these empirical patterns briefly here.

- Awareness, or knowledge, of crime prevention programs is exceptionally high in the four county area surveyed. This is especially true for the program called "Community Watch."

- The behavioral and reported activities of the individuals surveyed suggest relatively high levels of commitment to and performance of crime prevention steps. Many individuals report they are taking steps at the present time to enhance residential security.

- People seem to be satisfied with the police, and they are quite aware of the police role in crime prevention.

- Concern about crime is widespread, but not especially intense. Burglary is the type of crime that people suggest they are most concerned about.

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Crime Watch: An Evaluation Report (St. Paul: Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control, State of Minnesota, 1976).

- Where people live and their socio-economic status are the most important factors determining their level of awareness and participation in crime prevention efforts. The relations between level of education or income and crime prevention behaviors are relatively strong.

Some possible policy implications for the statewide crime prevention in North Carolina of these and other findings will be discussed and presented throughout this report and particularly in Section III. Section IV is a discussion of the survey and sampling methods used, some problems of interpretation, and some suggestions for further analysis. Finally, the Appendix includes tabular data and other survey results which are not discussed in detail in this report, but which may be interesting to some readers. A copy of the survey questionnaire is also included in the Appendix.

## II. Description and Analysis of Survey Results

### A. Concern About Crime

Early crime prevention programs often assumed that simply telling people about activities they could take to reduce their chances of criminal victimization would be enough to get those people to take crime preventive actions. Experience has shown that the matter is more complex than this. First, people have to believe that there is a crime problem in their community, i.e., they must think that crime is a serious problem that affects them. Even when "objective" crime rates derived from police statistics are high, there is no automatic guarantee that people will recognize that crime is a serious problem. Second, they must be sufficiently concerned about crime to want to do something about it. Therefore, a certain amount of concern about crime is assumed to be a necessary motivator to get people to participate in

crime prevention activities.<sup>1</sup> Some crime prevention practitioners have even suggested that a program should arouse this concern if it does not already exist in the population. This suggestion raises the undesirable possibility that too much concern would be generated, leaving people overly fearful and perhaps unwilling to believe that their participation in crime prevention could make a difference.<sup>2</sup> In the ideal, a crime prevention program would be designed to take advantage of the concern of various groups in the population -- and perhaps even stimulate those concerns to some extent -- without overly arousing people into a fearful state about crime. This is difficult to do since the same message may affect people differently. For these reasons, however, it is important to assess the level of concern about crime among people in the sample.

Table 1 shows responses to the question "Do you think crime is a serious problem in your community?" for both the North Carolina and Minnesota Crime Watch evaluation samples. Almost 42 percent of the North Carolina sample felt crime was a serious problem. This measurement is not a sufficient test by itself to specify the level of intensity of concern. Some crimes may be of more concern than others to a respondent, and even a "serious" crime problem may not be serious in relation to other problems. This result does indicate that a sizable number of people consider crime enough of a problem to merit attention, and perhaps action. This level of response is quite similar

<sup>1</sup>Some of the results of this survey confirm this assumption. People who are more concerned about crime tend to be more likely to take certain crime prevention steps, like joining Operation I.D.. See below, pp. 31-32.

<sup>2</sup>See Leonard Bickman, et al., Evaluating Citizen Crime Programs, National Evaluation Program, Phase I, Summary Report (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, April, 1977), p. 28.

Table 1: "Do you think crime is a serious problem here in your community?"

| Response  | North Carolina Survey | Minnesota Crime Watch (State) <sup>1</sup> |             |
|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
|           |                       | Pre-test                                   | Post-test   |
| Yes       | 212 (41.9%)           | 140 (34.6%)                                | 174 (43.0%) |
| No        | 286 (56.5%)           | 232 (57.3%)                                | 207 (51.1%) |
| Other     | 8 (1.6%)              | 33 (8.1%)                                  | 24 (5.9%)   |
| Totals(N) | 506                   | 405                                        | 405         |

to the one of the post-test sample in the Minnesota program, which was conducted in 1974, one year following the initiation of the MCW media campaign. Differences between the current level of concern in North Carolina and the Minnesota pre-treatment sample could be accounted for by measurement and sampling error, but it seems more likely that other factors -- such as cultural or program experiences -- make the difference. The higher level of concern in the North Carolina sample is consistent with evidence of relatively high crime awareness and crime prevention activity obtained from other survey questions.

The question, "How serious is the crime problem in your community?" is meant to distinguish several levels of perceived crime seriousness. Thus, some measure of the intensity of concern is available for those who think crime is a serious problem. Table 2 shows that there is a sizeable minority who consider crime to be a "fairly" or "extremely serious" problem (over 31 percent of the sample). Thus, a significant number in the population are very concerned about crime. It is important to note, however, that the scale responses don't necessarily mean the same things to all respondents. In

<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Crime Watch: An Evaluation Report, p. 25.

addition, these responses do not compare concern about crime to concerns over other issues.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2: "How serious is the crime problem in your community?"

| Response          | Frequency | Percent  |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| Not serious       | 295       | (58.3%)  |
| Slightly serious  | 48        | (9.5%)   |
| Fairly serious    | 107       | (21.1%)  |
| Extremely serious | 51        | (10.1%)  |
| Other             | 5         | (1.0%)   |
| Total (N)         | 506       | (100.0%) |

Table 3 reports the responses to the question about "the type of crime that comes to mind" when the respondent thinks about crime. The results for a related question from the pre-treatment survey for the

Table 3: "When you think about the crime problem in general, what is the type of crime that comes to mind?"

| Response       | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Burglary       | 256       | (50.6%) |
| Robbery        | 64        | (12.6%) |
| Assault        | 26        | (5.1%)  |
| Rape           | 26        | (5.1%)  |
| Larceny        | 36        | (7.1%)  |
| Auto Theft     | 3         | (.6%)   |
| Vandalism      | 21        | (4.2%)  |
| Drugs          | 23        | (4.5%)  |
| Murder         | 7         | (1.4%)  |
| Other, Refused | 44        | (8.7%)  |
| Total (N)      | 506       | (99.9%) |

<sup>1</sup>Typically, it is the case that even among people who are very concerned about crime there are other issues which are even more basic or important such as housing, energy, inflation, etc. Thus, a high level of concern about crime does not automatically imply that many people are motivated to expend energy on crime prevention.

Minnesota Crime Watch evaluation support the finding here that burglary and robbery are crimes that most concern people. Burglary is ranked number one in both the North Carolina and Minnesota samples. However, extreme differences in question wording, necessitated by differing methods of survey administration, make a line-by-line comparison of the two samples misleading and inadvisable.

Another point that should be made is that there is evidence that citizens in some localities are more concerned about "incivilities" or "nuisances" than they are about the usual legally-defined crimes.<sup>1</sup> The North Carolina survey does not explicitly tap these dimensions, but the respondents naming drugs and vandalism as the general crime problem that comes to mind may reveal some concern of this type. However, the high level of responses indicating burglary as the crime problem that comes to mind suggests that this crime is highly recognized among people and is probably a major source of concern. The predominance of burglary as a recognized problem may indicate that it has been brought to peoples' attention by programs or crime prevention messages prior to the survey.

When asked how likely they thought their own residence would be burglarized in the coming year, about 34 percent responded that it was "very likely" or "fairly likely." These responses indicate that a large number of people (one-third of the sample) felt their chances of being

<sup>1</sup>Dan Lewis and Michael Maxfield, "Fear in the Neighborhoods" (Evanston, IL: Reactions to Crime Project, Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, 1978). This study, among others, looks at peoples' responses to anti-social behaviors like littering, defacing property, and "hanging out" as the basis for fear of crime rather than the actual incidence of Part I crimes themselves.

burglarized were relatively high. (See Table 4 for a breakdown of the responses.) This subjective report may be considered a good indication of the existence of a sizable group of people who are concerned about residential burglary and who may be responsive to crime prevention programs aimed at it.<sup>1</sup> However, the majority of the respondents estimate the likelihood of being burglarized in the coming year as being fairly or very unlikely.

Table 4: "How likely do you think it is that someone will burglarize your residence in the coming year?"

| <u>Response</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Very Likely     | 73               | (14.4%)        |
| Fairly Likely   | 98               | (19.4%)        |
| Fairly Unlikely | 185              | (36.6%)        |
| Very Unlikely   | 107              | (21.1%)        |
| Don't Know      | 27               | ( 5.3%)        |
| Other, refused  | 16               | ( 3.2%)        |
| Total (N)       | 506              | (100.0%)       |

When asked to estimate the percentage of residences in the community that were burglarized last year, the majority of the respondents (54 percent) estimated the chances at 5 percent or less. Comparing the results of the respondents estimates of their own likelihood of being burglarized to their estimates for the community provides some evidence of perceptual consistency. In other words, respondents are perceiving overall crime rates for their community and their own personal chances of being victimized in a similar fashion.

<sup>1</sup>There is, of course, a problem of interpreting what people mean when they said it is "very likely" they will be burglarized.

An analysis of variance test comparing the question which asked the respondents to "estimate the burglary rate per 100 homes" with their own "perceived likelihood of being burglarized" produces one of the most highly significant relationships encountered.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that about one-third of the sample perceive burglary as a serious problem, and that this perception is consistent for personal and community risk. The fact that these perceptions are consistent and dependable does not necessarily mean that "objective" crime rates are consistent with the perception as well. Data on reported crime for the area surveyed would be necessary to undertake such an analysis.

Aside from the one-third minority, the concern about crime in the sample is not great, and it is probably the case that other issues concern respondents more. Even if this speculation were true, there still appears to be a reservoir of concern among people that might be the basis for motivating crime prevention activities.

One somewhat surprising finding was that the highest levels of concern about crime in the community (measured as estimated burglary rate per 100 homes) appear in communities of 5,000 to 50,000 and the lowest levels of concern appear among residents in cities over 50,000. Table 5 shows the results of an analysis of variance test performed on the estimated burglary rates within types of areas of residence.

<sup>1</sup>F = 9.52, significance = .000, Eta squared = .0854.

Table 5: Analysis of variance: Estimated burglary rate per 100 houses and type of area of residence

| Type of area                             | Average estimated burglary rate per 100 houses by Individuals within Categories |                    |            |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
|                                          | Mean                                                                            | Standard Deviation | N          |
| Farm or open country                     | 8.38                                                                            | 12.47              | 97         |
| Town, 5,000 or less                      | 8.46                                                                            | 12.59              | 54         |
| Town, 5,000 to 50,000                    | 11.71                                                                           | 15.19              | 116        |
| City, over 5,000                         | 6.96                                                                            | 9.34               | 140        |
| Don't Know                               | 3.50                                                                            | 3.02               | 6          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>8.77</b>                                                                     | <b>12.43</b>       | <b>413</b> |
| Between groups S.S. = 1643.39 dif. = 4   |                                                                                 |                    |            |
| Within groups S.S. = 62034.67 dif. = 408 |                                                                                 |                    |            |
| F = 2.7021                               |                                                                                 |                    |            |
| Sig. = .0302                             |                                                                                 |                    |            |
| Eta squared = .0258                      |                                                                                 |                    |            |

In an attempt to pinpoint which population sub-groups represented in the sample showed greatest amounts of concern about crime, comparisons between the measures of concern and several population descriptors were made. There are two population characteristics that make a significant difference in the estimates of likelihood of personal victimization: the type of area of residence and the age of the respondent. Residents of towns of 5,000 - 50,000 and cities of greater than 50,000 population are slightly more likely to consider crime a serious problem than are people who live in smaller towns or rural areas. While this relationship between perceived seriousness of crime and type of area is statistically significant, it is not strong.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The crosstab between type of area of residence (rural area; town of less than 5,000; town of 5 to 50 thousand; or city of over 50,000) with whether crime is a serious problem (yes or no) produced a chi square of 20.57, sig. = .0084. If both variables are considered ordinal, Tau c is .066 (sig. = .037).

In the case of age, those respondents over 64 years showed the greatest concern about crime and respondents aged 24-44 were the least concerned. There are no statistically significant relationships between concern about crime and the respondents' level of education, race, sex, or type of residential dwelling (single family vs. multiple dwelling units).

#### B. Knowledge and Attitudes Toward Crime Prevention

Even when people are motivated to do something about the crime problem, they must possess knowledge and information about crime prevention possibilities and they must have favorable attitudes toward crime prevention before they are likely to take crime prevention actions. Therefore, planners need to understand peoples' attitudes toward crime prevention and how much they know about it in order to design programs. For example, people may know and understand what steps they are supposed to take, but have negative attitudes toward those steps. The following two sections report on how much people know about crime prevention and what their attitudes and beliefs toward crime prevention are.

##### 1. Knowledge About Crime Prevention

Before it is reasonable to expect citizens to assume responsibility for their own safety and security and take crime preventive steps, they must know what those steps are. In other words, they must have sufficient knowledge of crime prevention methods and the role citizens play individually and collectively in making them work. One of the main objectives of a crime prevention program is usually to convey crime prevention information to citizens. A second aspect of knowledge concerns people's awareness of existing crime prevention

programs. Some of the data from the evaluation survey suggests that many citizens in North Carolina are already aware of many crime prevention techniques. In the survey, several questions were asked to measure levels of awareness of crime prevention and specific techniques and the extent of knowledge about programs and institutions which offer help to individuals or groups with crime prevention.

For most people, knowledge about crime prevention per se, means knowledge about personal safety and security of their residences. Since burglary is the primary concern of the respondents in this sample, it is reasonable to look at their awareness of crime prevention related to home security. Also, many crime prevention programs already operating in North Carolina -- such as Community Watch or Operation I.D. -- emphasize home security.

The survey interviewers asked people whether they had received any messages about home security from any source. About 61 percent responded that they had received such messages. Of this group that had received messages, over 90 percent (about 55 percent of the sample) claimed they could remember the source of these messages. By way of comparison, the MCW statewide pre-test sample reported that 71 percent had received messages from some source about burglary.

Table 6 shows the sources of the crime prevention information as remembered by the respondents. The Minnesota data provides a rough comparison of the different sources as recalled by respondents, but this data is from the post-test sample after considerable effort had been made to advertise Minnesota's statewide crime prevention program.

Table 6: "Where was it you got the information [about crime prevention] from?" (Percentages of those who remembered a source. Multiple responses possible.)

| Response            | North Carolina Survey | Minnesota Post-treatment Survey |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Billboards          | 4.0%                  | 18.3%                           |
| Posters             | 3.1%                  | 7.4%                            |
| T.V. Messages       | 52.3%                 | 75.8%                           |
| Radio               | 8.9%                  | 26.2%                           |
| Newspaper           | 12.3%                 | 60.7%                           |
| Talking with others | 6.9%                  | N.A.                            |
| Public meetings     | 8.0%                  | 10.4%                           |
| Police              | 3.7%                  | N.A.                            |
| Schools             | .85%                  | N.A.                            |
| Brochures/Pamphlets | N.A.                  | 36.3%                           |
| Other               | .56%                  | N.A.                            |

Television is remembered far more often than any other medium as the source of information in both samples. The Minnesota post-test survey taken after a period of advertising in numerous media shows somewhat higher levels throughout. It appears that the North Carolina responses could be increased considerably, but a comparison of the media efforts in the two states would be necessary to interpret these figures further.<sup>1</sup>

Since many local police departments are actively engaged in crime prevention, it is useful to know the extent to which people are aware of the police role. In response to the question "Does the police or sheriff's department in your community have a crime

<sup>1</sup>It is also possible that these figures reflect differences in media consumption habits of the two samples, or some other factors.

prevention program?" 48 percent of those who answered the question said "yes," about 11 percent said "no," and 41 percent did not know. There is a possibility that people may assume that any police department would have a "crime prevention" program. Whether this is the case or not requires further information about which localities have crime prevention programs, how they have contacted people, and so forth.

Peoples' attitudes about the police suggest that a police-run crime prevention program would be a credible effort in North Carolina. Seventy-five percent of the respondents felt that the police or sheriff's attitude toward the respondent was "good" or "excellent." And over 62 percent of those who answered the question on the quality of the job done by the police felt it was "good." This compares favorably with a survey conducted in eight cities by the U.S. Department of Justice, which found that 44 percent of the respondents rated police performance as "good."<sup>1</sup>

The survey also probed respondents' knowledge of programs, especially Operation Identification and Community Watch. Table 7 shows the very high levels of awareness of those programs in the sample.

Comparisons of knowledge of Community Watch with responses to other attitudinal or demographic questions do not show any significant relationship. Race, education, area or county of residence, and type of dwelling make no great difference in the proportion of people who

<sup>1</sup>Public Opinions About Crime (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1977), p. 28.

| Responses | Heard of Operation I.D.? | Heard of Community Watch? |
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Yes       | 350 (74.9%)              | 436 (93.2%)               |
| No        | 117 (25.1%)              | 32 (6.8%)                 |
| Total (N) | 467                      | 468                       |

have heard of Community Watch.<sup>1</sup> Further, Community Watch is such a broad program that it is difficult to know exactly what people have in mind when they say they know of it.

On the other hand, those who have heard of Operation Identification are not evenly spread throughout the population. Some groups appear more likely to have heard of it than others. There are significant relationships between whether people have heard of Operation I.D. and both county and type of area of residence. Table 8 reports the frequencies and percentage within counties for whether the respondent had heard of Operation I.D. Guilford stands out clearly as the county in which the largest proportion of people have heard of the program, and Davidson the least.

The correlation is not especially strong, but it does fit with other evidence produced by the survey to support the interpretation that geographical area is in some way associated with crime prevention

<sup>1</sup>When the overall level of a response is as high as the positive response to awareness of Community Watch is, it is not reasonable to expect many highly significant relationships to appear among subgroups of the sample. There is very little variation in the criterion to contribute to a relationship.

| Responses    | County     |            |             |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|              | Alamance   | Davidson   | Guilford    | Randolph   |
| Yes          | 50 (70.4%) | 40 (59.7%) | 168 (83.6%) | 46 (74.2%) |
| No           | 21 (29.6%) | 27 (40.3%) | 33 (16.4%)  | 16 (25.8%) |
| Total (N)    | 71         | 67         | 201         | 62         |
| Chi square   |            |            |             |            |
| sig. = .0006 |            |            |             |            |
| Eta = .208   |            |            |             |            |

knowledge or behaviors in the sample. Type of area of residence is also significantly related to having heard of Operation I.D., with residents of the cities over 50,000 and towns less than 5,000 population being slightly more likely to have heard of the program.

Interpreting these geographic patterns would require additional information. One explanation that is reasonable in this context is that previous program efforts have differed systematically by area. The MCW evaluation produced evidence that those areas of the state where program efforts were greatest had the highest levels of awareness.<sup>1</sup> Although this does not prove the effectiveness of the Minnesota program, the possibility that it had an impact is circumstantially supported. For North Carolina, this raises the importance of identifying where crime prevention programs have been and are currently operating. The necessity of doing this in order to interpret the evaluation results of any statewide program is obvious.

<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Crime Watch Evaluation, *Op Cit*, p. 151, *passim*.

In terms of demographic variables, there are strong relationships between having heard of Operation I.D. and measures of socio-economic status, like education and income. Table 9 displays the relationship between awareness of Operation I.D. and education, with percentages figured within education categories.

Table 9: Crosstabulation: "Have you heard of Operation Identification?" by "What is the highest level of education completed...?"

|                                        | Less Than High School | High School | Some College | Bachelor's Degree | Some Grad School |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <u>Responses</u>                       |                       |             |              |                   |                  |
| No                                     | 34 (43.0%)            | 33 (28.9%)  | 17 (15.5%)   | 9 (15%)           | 2 ( 6.9%)        |
| Yes                                    | 45 (57.0%)            | 81 (71.1%)  | 93 (84.5%)   | 51 (85%)          | 27 (93.1%)       |
| Total (N)                              | 79                    | 114         | 110          | 60                | 29               |
| Chi square = 28.74, 4 df., sig. = .000 |                       |             |              |                   |                  |
| Tau C = .251                           |                       |             |              |                   |                  |

The higher the level of education, the greater the awareness of Operation I.D. Whether this relationship reflects the different media habits of the well-educated, the fact that people with more education are disproportionately located in the areas with more active programs, the fact that programs like Operation I.D. attract middle-class people, or what, cannot be discerned at this point.

No other variables achieved significance with the measure of awareness of Operation I.D., although race produces a nearly significant relationship, with whites slightly more likely to be aware than non-whites.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Corrected chi square = 2.589; significance = .0909.

## 2. Attitudes Toward Crime Prevention

Two sets of attitudes toward crime prevention are important for assessing the feasibility of a citizen participation program -- the beliefs of respondents regarding the effectiveness of crime prevention and individuals' intentions to participate in crime prevention activities. Many crime prevention programs require individuals to take initiatives that they probably would not undertake if they thought the actions would have no effects. Another dimension of many programs is the necessity of a cooperative attitude between neighbors and between residents and police, so attitudes toward fulfilling a role in these cooperative ventures are important. For example, if people distrust their neighbors, crime prevention programs based upon mutual, cooperative surveillance are not likely to be effective. Similarly, if people distrust their police, they are not likely to become involved in a police-sponsored crime prevention program.

Two questions form the basis for the measurement of peoples' attitudes about the effectiveness of crime prevention. Both of these questions refer explicitly to residential burglary. The first question asked people how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "Most of the burglaries of houses and apartments in my community occurred because people did not take the proper steps to secure their houses." About 57 percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed somewhat with this statement. This suggests that the majority of people apparently believe that residential burglary is at least somewhat controllable through individual citizen efforts to make their homes a less attractive target to burglars.

A second indicator of peoples' views on the effectiveness of crime prevention is their belief that their neighbors would notice a burglary in progress. This attitude is directly relevant to cooperative surveillance strategies that are part of many crime prevention programs. Fifty-two percent of the respondents indicated they felt that there was a "good" or "certain" chance for their neighbors to see a burglary in progress, with another seventeen percent suggesting there was a "fair" chance. Even though there are no absolute interpretations of "good" and "fair," these responses suggest that the majority of the people in the sample perceive that mutual surveillance might be an effective part of crime prevention.

Another aspect of crime prevention programs is that many of them require cooperative behavior on the part of individuals, whether on their own initiative or in groups. Measuring actual behaviors is beyond the scope of a survey like the one reported here, but peoples' intentions to participate in relevant behaviors can be measured. One simple step in community crime prevention is reporting known crimes to the police. When asked about the likelihood of reporting an incident where someone broke into their home but stole nothing, 93.6 percent of the people who responded felt it was "very likely" that they would report such a burglary involving no loss. Fully 98.9 percent of these respondents think it "very likely" they would report a burglary that involves some loss. These intentions, of course, may not eventuate in actual reports to the police. As the differences between crime rates constructed from victimization surveys versus those from reported crimes illustrate, many crimes are not reported. However, about 35 percent of the respondents indicated they had contacted the police in

the last year or two for one reason or another. Taken together, these responses probably indicate a willingness to rely on the police in appropriate situations.

Finally, almost 80 percent of those who responded to a question about their willingness to join with others in a crime prevention program were "very willing" to do so. This intention may signal a reservoir of activity that could be utilized in a crime prevention program, although it is impossible to infer from this question alone exactly what actions people would be willing to pursue over what period of time.

#### C. Involvement in Crime Prevention Activities

The primary objective of most crime prevention programs is to encourage citizens to take crime preventive steps, such as joining Operation Identification, locking doors and windows, purchasing and using security devices (like deadbolt locks and alarms), joining with neighbors in a mutual surveillance effort, etc. It has already been suggested that several preconditions must be present before citizens are likely to be motivated to engage in these behaviors: they must be sufficiently concerned about crime; they must be knowledgeable and aware of the appropriate steps; and finally, they must have a favorable attitude toward these crime prevention methods.

The survey results reported in this section show how many respondents are already participating in these common types of crime preventive behaviors. To a certain extent these results may be interpreted as suggestive of the effectiveness of the many local crime prevention program efforts which have been occurring in these four counties in North Carolina over the past eight or so years. At the

same time, the results can be used to provide useful information for structuring the program efforts, as well as critical baseline measures for the future evaluation of the statewide crime prevention program. The figures presented below show how many respondents engage in what types of crime prevention activities as of December, 1979. By comparing these data to similar data collected in a follow-up survey some time after the statewide program is in effect, it will be possible to ascertain changes in levels and kinds of citizen participation in crime prevention.

Table 10 presents peoples' responses to questions about the steps they take to secure their homes when they're away. Again, a similar question from the MCW evaluation is provided for comparison.<sup>1</sup> Two sets of questions were asked of the North Carolina sample, one for steps taken when the resident would be gone for "a few hours," and one for an absence of "a few days."

Regardless of whether the Minnesota and North Carolina questions are compatible or not, one fact is evident: the North Carolina sample reports virtual unanimity in taking the most fundamental crime prevention steps, even for short absences, and very high positive responses on a number of other steps. Some of these steps -- like stopping the mail -- require some degree of advance planning and effort to increase residential security. The average number of steps

<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Crime Watch An Evaluation Report, Op Cit, p. 34. The responses tabulated here are responses to the question "Do you in fact take any steps to secure your home if you are going to be gone for a while and no one will be home?" from the pre-treatment statewide sample. The questions in the two surveys were quite dissimilar and may account for much of the differences in responses.

Table 10: Positive responses to steps to secure home when resident is absent (multiple responses)<sup>1</sup>

| Responses                      | North Carolina<br>"Gone for a few<br>Hours" |              | North Carolina<br>"Gone for a few<br>Days" |              | Minnesota<br>"Gone for a while" |              |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
|                                | #                                           | (% of cases) | #                                          | (% of cases) | #                               | (% of cases) |
| Lock doors                     | 450                                         | (96.8%)      | 447                                        | (99.1%)      | 287                             | (70.9%)      |
| Use deadbolt locks             | 157                                         | (33.8%)      | 157                                        | (34.8%)      | 6                               | (1.5%)       |
| Lock garage                    | 129                                         | (27.7%)      | 440                                        | (97.6%)      | 4                               | (1.0%)       |
| Tell neighbor                  | 220                                         | (47.3%)      | 407                                        | (90.2%)      | 96                              | (23.7%)      |
| Turn on alarm                  | 32                                          | (6.9%)       | 33                                         | (7.3%)       | 7                               | (1.7%)       |
| Outside lights on              | 300                                         | (64.5%)      | 202                                        | (44.8%)      | 8                               | (2.0%)       |
| Inside lights on               | 374                                         | (80.4%)      | 280                                        | (62.1%)      | 68                              | (16.8%)      |
| Drapes, shades open            | 273                                         | (58.7%)      | 172                                        | (38.1%)      | 3                               | (.7%)        |
| Leave dog                      | 15                                          | (3.2%)       | 5                                          | (1.1%)       | 18                              | (4.4%)       |
| Radio, TV, stereo on           | 7                                           | (1.5%)       | 8                                          | (1.8%)       | -----                           |              |
| Leave car out                  | 4                                           | (.9%)        | 5                                          | (1.1%)       | -----                           |              |
| Have someone check             | 9                                           | (1.9%)       | 27                                         | (6.0%)       | -----                           |              |
| Lighttimer                     | 8                                           | (1.7%)       | 6                                          | (1.3%)       | 9                               | (2.2%)       |
| Lock windows                   | -----                                       |              | 440                                        | (97.6%)      | 119                             | (29.4%)      |
| Stop newspapers                | -----                                       |              | 372                                        | (82.5%)      | -----                           |              |
| Stop deliveries                | -----                                       |              | 226                                        | (50.1%)      | 10                              | (2.5%)       |
| Have lawn mowed                | -----                                       |              | 239                                        | (53.0%)      | -----                           |              |
| Stop mail                      | -----                                       |              | 370                                        | (82.0%)      | -----                           |              |
| Notify police                  | -----                                       |              | 6                                          | (1.3%)       | 25                              | (6.2%)       |
| Other                          | 13                                          | (2.8%)       | 16                                         | (3.5%)       | 19                              | (4.7%)       |
| <b>Total Responses:</b>        | <b>1991</b>                                 |              | <b>3418</b>                                |              | <b>678</b>                      |              |
| <b>(N):</b>                    | <b>(465)</b>                                |              | <b>(451)</b>                               |              | <b>(405)</b>                    |              |
| <b>Avg. steps/ respondent:</b> | <b>4.28</b>                                 |              | <b>7.58</b>                                |              | <b>1.67</b>                     |              |

<sup>1</sup>Each step on the list is presented as a question to which the respondent answers "yes" or "no." Percentages are proportion of "yes" responses.

per respondent is extremely high in North Carolina, at least when compared to the Minnesota results. Of course, it is impossible to know if people actually do these things, or merely responded as they think they ought to.

The large number of possible steps an individual could take to secure his/her home made it very difficult to do an analysis of these results without aggregating the data into a more convenient form. A summary measure of the number of crime prevention steps each individual takes when leaving home for a few hours or a few days was created by counting the number of positive responses for each respondent. This sum was then used in further analysis of these individual crime prevention behaviors to compare the behavior of different individuals and different groups of individuals.

Once again, education level proved to have a strong relationship with the constructed crime prevention variable (average number of crime prevention steps taken). Table 11 reports an analysis of variance test of the relationship between the number of crime prevention steps taken for an absence of a few days and level of education. The data show that the higher the level of education attained or the greater the income, then the greater the number of crime prevention steps taken. This confirms the pattern that emerged in the previous sections that higher socio-economic status is associated with more knowledge about crime prevention and participation in crime prevention activities. This is a pattern that is consistently found in surveys or studies of this sort. The explanation for this association between greater education (or, to generalize, higher socio-economic status) and greater awareness and performance of crime prevention steps cannot be ascertained from this data.

Table 11: Analysis of variance: Crime prevention steps taken for a few days' absence and level of education.

| Education level       | Average Number of Steps Taken by Individuals Within Categories |                    |     |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----|
|                       | Mean                                                           | Standard Deviation | N   |
| Less than high school | 6.72                                                           | 2.51               | 95  |
| High school           | 7.32                                                           | 2.34               | 133 |
| Some college          | 7.79                                                           | 2.55               | 122 |
| Bachelor degree       | 8.29                                                           | 2.51               | 73  |
| Some grad school      | 8.14                                                           | 2.49               | 35  |
|                       | 7.54                                                           | 2.52               | 458 |
| Between groups S.S. = | 131.74                                                         |                    |     |
| Within groups S.S. =  | 2768.13                                                        |                    |     |
| Total S.S. =          | 2899.87                                                        |                    |     |
| F =                   | 5.3898                                                         |                    |     |
| Sig. =                | .0003                                                          |                    |     |
| Eta Squared =         | .0454                                                          |                    |     |

Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest several tentative hypotheses. The high number of steps taken in the North Carolina sample may reflect the fact that the question encouraged multiple responses, which inflated the totals. However, the Minnesota question also permitted multiple responses, but people reported much lower activity. Another possible explanation is that North Carolina residents have already been well informed about crime prevention steps and have taken these messages to heart. There is evidence throughout the survey that prior efforts may be affecting responses, and further information about the location and nature of these efforts is necessary to evaluate that possibility. Another alternative explanation for high activity levels is simply that citizens in North Carolina live in a culture that encourages crime prevention behaviors. Examination of such a possibility was beyond the scope of this survey.

Whatever the true explanation for these results may be, they pose some difficulty for a statewide crime prevention program or an evaluation of such a program. The very high responses in several important categories imply that it will be difficult -- if not impossible -- to get even higher responses in a post-test. In fact, it is quite possible that response rates in some of the categories where positive responses are almost unanimous will decline (possibly due to sampling errors). To the extent that these high response rates hold across groups and areas, planners and program activists may find it necessary to move on to other, more sophisticated crime prevention strategies than those which inform people about these relatively simple steps. Another approach may be to target the programs very carefully on those sub-groups -- such as the less educated -- that may produce the greatest gains in responses. For instance, a very detailed analysis of the data may indicate which steps are (or are not) taken by which groups, thus leading to a more narrowly targeted program with more focused objectives.

Another, more direct set of measures of the effects of previous crime prevention efforts, is in the questions about participation in existing programs. A series of questions were asked about both Operation Identification and Community Watch. As might be expected, the proportions of the sample that have joined one or both of these programs are considerably less than the number who have heard of them. Table 12 gives the number of people who have joined both Operation Identification and Community Watch in North Carolina sample, plus the Minnesota post-treatment numbers for Operation Identification

| Table 12: "Have you joined Community Watch?"<br>"Have you joined Operation Identification?" |                 |                |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Responses                                                                                   | North Carolina  |                | Minnesota-post |
|                                                                                             | Community Watch | Operation I.D. | Operation I.D. |
| Yes                                                                                         | 124 (26.6%)     | 103 (22.1%)    | 43 (10.6%)     |
| No                                                                                          | 342 (73.4%)     | 364 (77.9%)    | 362 (89.4%)    |
| Total (N)                                                                                   | 466             | 467            | 405            |

participation. Compared to Minnesota (after one year of the program effort), the proportions who report having joined Operation Identification or Community Watch in North Carolina are quite high.

One of the important objectives of an analysis of this survey is discovering what kinds of people are more likely to participate. The data can suggest where past successes have occurred and where future efforts should be concentrated. Quite similar questions were used in the MCW evaluation for some of these relationships, so some useful comparisons can be made.

Again, the patterns in the data suggest that location and socio-economic status are related to crime prevention behavior. The number that have joined Community Watch varies significantly between the four counties surveyed. Table 13 shows that over 60 percent of the respondents in Davidson county report having joined Community Watch, while about 20 percent reported joining in Alamance and Guilford counties. There are also differences between the counties in terms of the numbers that have joined Operation Identification, although the differences are not so pronounced as for Community Watch (see Table 14).

Table 13: Crosstabulation: "Have you joined Community Watch?" by county of residence

| Responses | County     |            |           |            |
|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|           | Alamance   | Davidson   | Guilford  | Randolph   |
| Yes       | 13 (19.1%) | 38 (60.3%) | 38 (20%)  | 18 (32.1%) |
| No        | 55 (80.9%) | 25 (39.7%) | 152 (80%) | 38 (67.9%) |
| Total (N) | 68         | 63         | 190       | 56         |

An important result in Tables 13 and 14 is that Alamance county shows the lowest participation rates in both types of programs. Again, this may be due to previous program efforts.

Table 14: Crosstabulation: "Have you joined Operation Identification?" by county.

| Responses | County     |            |             |            |
|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|           | Alamance   | Davidson   | Guilford    | Randolph   |
| Yes       | 8 (16.0%)  | 9 (22.5%)  | 56 (33.3%)  | 14 (30.4%) |
| No        | 42 (80.9%) | 31 (39.7%) | 112 (66.7%) | 32 (69.6%) |
| Total (N) | 50         | 40         | 168         | 46         |

There is some evidence from the survey that begins to illuminate what it is about these counties that yields different rates for participation in these programs. One of the variables in the survey describes the type of area where a respondent lives. Looking at the relationship between program joiners and type of area suggests that type of area makes a difference in the relative penetration of different types of programs into different type of areas.

Tables 15 and 16 present the relationships between type of area of residence and respondents who have joined one of the programs. Using an appropriate measure of the strength of these relationships, both are about equally strong and both are statistically significant.

Table 15: Crosstabulation: "Have you joined Community Watch?" by type of area of residence.

| Responses | Farm or Open Country | Town, less Than 5,000 | Town, 5,000 to 50,000 | City, Over 50,000 |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Yes       | 29 (33.0%)           | 18 (34.6%)            | 36 (34.6%)            | 23 (18.4%)        |
| No        | 59 (57.0%)           | 34 (65.4%)            | 68 (65.4%)            | 102 (81.6%)       |
| Total (N) | 88                   | 52                    | 104                   | 125               |

Kendall's Tau C = -.137  
Sig. = .0042

Table 16: Crosstabulation: "Have you joined Operation I.D.?" by type of area of residence.

| Responses | Farm or Open Country | Town, less Than 5,000 | Town, 5,000 to 50,000 | City, Over 50,000 |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Yes       | 13 (19.4%)           | 10 (23.3%)            | 22 (28.9%)            | 41 (36.3%)        |
| No        | 54 (80.6%)           | 33 (76.7%)            | 54 (71.1%)            | 72 (63.7%)        |
| Total (N) | 67                   | 43                    | 76                    | 113               |

Kendall's Tau C = .148  
Sig. = .0053

The interesting thing about a comparison of the two tables is that the relationships are in opposite directions. The more urbanized the area of residence, the less the participation in Community Watch, but the greater the participation in Operation I.D. Conversely, more rural areas appear to have more successful Community Watch programs, but less participation in Operation Identification. These differences may indicate that leaders or officials emphasize certain program activities for certain areas, or that one type of program appeals to individuals living in one type of area better than another.

Taken together, these findings indicate that location makes a difference in getting people to join. To the extent that these results are due to prior crime prevention efforts, they have implications for any statewide program that attempts to use the symbols, strategies, or methods of one of the previous programs. To avoid confusion and maximize positive results, it may be advisable for a statewide program to tailor specific strategies to specific locations or types of locations, building on previous efforts.

Participation in either Community Watch or Operation Identification is also related to socio-economic status, although the relationships are more pronounced for Operation I.D. than they are for Community Watch. Table 17 reports the relationship between participation in Operation I.D. and different levels of education. While the overall

Table 17: Participation rates in Operation I.D.:  
"Have you joined Operation I.D.?" by  
"What is the highest level of education  
you have completed?"

| Responses | Education Level |             |              |            |               |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
|           | Less Than H.S.  | High School | Some College | B.A.       | Some Graduate |
| Yes       | 11 (21.2%)      | 21 (23.1%)  | 35 (34.0%)   | 23 (35.9%) | 11 (34.4%)    |
| No        | 41 (78.8%)      | 70 (76.9%)  | 68 (66.0%)   | 41 (64.1%) | 21 (65.6%)    |
| Total (N) | 52              | 91          | 103          | 64         | 32            |

participation rate in North Carolina is higher than in the Minnesota sample, both the North Carolina and Minnesota samples indicate that participation is higher among the relatively well-educated.<sup>1</sup> Looking

<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Crime Watch: An Evaluation Report, op cit., p. 159.

at the relationship between participation in Operation I.D. and income yields similar conclusions: participation rates in North Carolina are substantially higher for all income categories, and the higher the income, the more likely the respondent is a member of Operation I.D.

The consistency of these relationships across time and space gives us reason for confidence in them. Higher socio-economic status and increased participation in crime prevention activities is a finding that has been replicated in other contexts. The reason for the relationship is less clear. It is possible that middle-class or upper status people are more interested than lower status people in programs like Operation I.D., possibly because they have more to lose or because they are more responsive to police-type programs. Or alternatively, lower status people may not have the same access to crime prevention information via the media or personal contacts that upper status people do.

Finally, participation in crime prevention programs does vary with level of concern about crime. As mentioned above, this relationship corresponds to one of the primary assumptions of crime prevention programs. The North Carolina survey respondents who consider crime a serious problem, join both Operation I.D. and Community Watch at a higher rate than those who don't. About half of those who have joined Operation Identification consider crime a serious problem, while only about one-third of those who did not join Operation Identification consider crime to be serious. These results are reported in Table 18.

Table 18: Crosstabulation "Is crime a serious problem in your community?" and "Have you joined Operation Identification?"

|               |     | Joined Operation Identification |             |
|---------------|-----|---------------------------------|-------------|
|               |     | Yes                             | No          |
| Crime Serious | Yes | 50 (49.5%)                      | 87 (35.5%)  |
|               | No  | 51 (50.5%)                      | 158 (64.5%) |
| Totals (N)    |     | 101                             | 245         |

Chi square = 5.856  
Sig. = .0155

D. Reasons for Non-Involvement in Crime Prevention

Some of the most useful information for restructuring and redirecting North Carolina's statewide program effort comes from the analysis of why people have not joined crime prevention programs. Neither lack of concern nor disbelief that the programs will work are cited as significant reasons for not joining Operation Identification or Community Watch. Table 19 provides the frequencies for responses to "Why haven't you joined Operation Identification or any property inventory program?"

As this table indicates, the majority of respondents either haven't heard of the program (33.2 percent), or don't believe the program is available in their community (24.7 percent), or don't know enough about the program (12.8 percent). Less than 1 percent responded they didn't think the program would work, and only 2 percent didn't want to mark or deface their property by engraving it. These findings suggest that there appear to be no serious attitudinal barriers on the part of citizens toward participation in Operation

Table 19: Reasons for Not Joining Operation Identification

| Responses                                          | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Haven't heard of the program                       | 117       | 33.2%   |
| Live in a safe place                               | 7         | 2.0%    |
| Do not have much to lose                           | 17        | 4.8%    |
| Do not have the time                               | 34        | 9.7%    |
| Do not know enough about Operation I.D.            | 45        | 12.8%   |
| Do not think it works                              | 2         | .6%     |
| Do not have an Operation I.D. program in Community | 87        | 24.7%   |
| Do not want to mark up property                    | 7         | 2.0%    |
| Haven't gotten around to it                        | 15        | 4.3%    |
| Engraved own property                              | 10        | 2.8%    |
| New to the Community                               | 6         | 1.7%    |
| Other reasons                                      | 5         | 1.4%    |
| Total (N)                                          | 352       | 100.0%  |

Identification. Rather, there appears to be a lack of information/knowledge about the program, whether or not it's available in the community, and how the program works.

The reasons cited for not joining Community Watch show a somewhat similar pattern. These results are provided in Table 20. In the case of Community Watch, the most common reason -- cited by almost two-thirds of the respondents -- for not joining the program is that Community Watch is not available in the respondent's community. Another 9.7 percent hadn't heard of the program and almost 9 percent don't know enough about the Community Watch program. This pattern of responses suggests that there may be some confusion about how Community Watch operates, who organizes and initiates the program, and how people actually participate and "join" Community Watch.

Table 20: Reasons for not Joining Community Watch

| <u>Responses</u>                                 | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Haven't heard of the program                     | 32               | 9.7%           |
| Live in a safe place                             | 9                | 2.7%           |
| Do not have much to lose                         | 3                | .9%            |
| Do not have the time                             | 10               | 3.0%           |
| Do not know enough about the program             | 29               | 8.8%           |
| Do not think it works                            | 3                | .9%            |
| Do not have Community Watch program in Community | 214              | 64.7%          |
| Do not want to be involved                       | 7                | 2.1%           |
| Haven't been asked to join                       | 7                | 2.1%           |
| New to area                                      | 7                | 2.1%           |
| Other reasons                                    | 10               | 3.0%           |
| Total (N)                                        | 331              | 100.0%         |

It would appear that the statewide program needs to focus on providing widespread specific information about both the Operation Identification and Community Watch programs. The attitudinal disposition of the respondents in the North Carolina survey are favorably disposed toward crime prevention and the citizens role in it. What they appear to be lacking is more specific information about how these programs work and the process by which they can "join" or participate in them.

### III. Policy Implications

This section contains a summary of some of the more general policy implications that may be drawn from the results of the survey. At the broadest level of generality, the four-county area from which the sample was drawn appears to be a very favorable environment for crime prevention. The respondents show high levels of awareness of crime prevention activities and are participating in crime prevention

activities at a relatively high rate. Many of the respondents take crime prevention steps when they leave home, and the average number of steps taken is quite high overall compared to Minnesota rates and other reported crime prevention participation rates. Most of the people in the sample have favorable attitudes toward the police, who have important roles in programs like Community Watch and Operation I.D. It's probable that some of the difference in response rates in North Carolina as compared to Minnesota is due to differences in the wording of questions. But undoubtedly the higher rates in North Carolina can be attributed primarily to other factors, such as prior and existing crime prevention program efforts.

#### A. General Policy Options

The data analysis reported suggest that a large majority of the people in the four-county area have heard of either Community Watch or Operation I.D., or both. Sufficient numbers of people are concerned about crime to support a crime prevention effort. Most people do not hold negative feelings toward the necessity or efficiency of such programs. Both stated intentions and reported behaviors indicate a willingness to take crime prevention steps. And compared to Minnesota after a one-year program, the rates of participation are quite high in terms of either numbers of crime prevention steps individuals take or numbers of people who have joined a program.

These results are not uniform throughout the population. People who live in certain locations are more likely to have joined a program; for example, Guilford County residents are more likely to have joined Operation I.D. and people who live in more rural areas join Community Watch at a higher rate. Socio-economic status, as

measured by either education or income, makes a difference in both the amount of crime prevention information held and the number of crime prevention activities taken. Upper status people know more, join more, and take more crime prevention steps, which confirms results found in other surveys.

While North Carolina's residents are relatively highly informed about crime prevention and participation rates for some common crime prevention activities is high, this is especially true for certain people in certain places. This situation raises two broad policy options that may be considered. The first option is to build on strength. This would imply, for instance, continuing to actively promote Operation I.D. in these areas and among those people who are most likely to join. Since these appear to be middle-class city dwellers, an efficient way to expand existing programs may be in the direction of a more intense effort to contact and mobilize these people.

A second option would be a strategy of reaching these people who have shown the least interest to date. This may permit the program to involve those people who are concerned enough about crime to want to join, but who haven't had the opportunity or knowledge to do so. More rapid expansion of the program may occur in this way.

Which option would be preferable depends on why certain people join and others do not. If, for example, property security programs like Operation I.D. appeal more strongly to middle or upper status people who have more possessions to protect, these people will self-select into the program. Under these conditions, trying to expand

Operation I.D. greatly in lower status neighborhoods may be a waste of effort. However, if a simple lack of information or opportunity is the only reason for not joining Operation I.D., then expanding the program by improving those aspects would be possible. The data suggest that lack of information is a significant reason for not joining.

It is probably rarely the case that the reasons for peoples' actions are "simple." Upper status people have more information about crime prevention, as shown by their much greater awareness of Operation I.D. and Community Watch. Thus, it may be the case that upper status people are both better informed and more attracted to these programs. The implication in this case would be that reaching lower status people will require either more intensive efforts to make these same programs work, or programs that are redesigned to meet the concerns of lower status people better.

#### B. Effects of Previous Programs

A crucial fact to consider in drawing policy implications from the survey is that North Carolina has had a very active crime prevention effort for a number of years. Minnesota Crime Watch, by comparison, had been active for only one year when the post-treatment measurements were taken, and there were few isolated local efforts prior to MCW. The active crime prevention background in North Carolina has probably affected results of the survey in numerous ways, including the fact that both lower and upper status respondents in North Carolina are more active than their Minnesota counterparts. Since it is impossible to "control" for the effects of these programs in current statistical analyses of the data, a detailed awareness of the extent and quality of these past programs would be valuable in designing and evaluating any future program.

The data seem to reflect differential kinds and quality of prior programs in numerous ways, exemplified by the relationships found between location and several other variables. These sorts of relationships have two broad kinds of implications for program development. First, the design of future programs must accommodate the already existing high levels of awareness and activity among some people in some places. Second, a complete evaluation of the statewide program would need to be developed against this backdrop of already existing activity. Part of the evaluation effort should be directed toward inventorying local crime prevention program efforts.

The design of programs cannot benefit greatly from knowing that virtually everyone already locks their doors and windows when they leave home (unless the reliability of these responses can be questioned). New avenues of crime prevention effort should be explored where this is the case. This conclusion is reinforced to the extent that people already take the individual steps suggested by existing programs, and it is desired to maintain the beneficial impacts of these programs. New programs that advocate the same behaviors in areas that have already been the targets of crime prevention programs cannot expect to have great impact, and may even detract from prior efforts.

Following from these points, evaluation difficulties are raised. Previous program activity has had some impact on these survey responses. These impacts cannot easily be separated from results due to current statewide efforts. Further, the very gains made by prior programs make it difficult for these subsequent efforts to show great

gains on these same behaviors or attitudes. That is, the greatest part of those people who would actually participate in a program of this type may already have been mobilized.

### C. Community Watch

Although the general conclusion that may be drawn from all this is that the statewide program should (a) not contradict or confuse prior program efforts, and (b) that new sorts of program efforts should be considered, some caution in implementing these conclusions is urged. The data in the survey do not present an unalloyed picture of a well-informed, crime preventing public that has responded positively to previous programs. There may be, in fact, some confusion over just what those prior programs are.

The Community Watch program, for example, quite possibly suffers from confusion about how it works. Community Watch is a very broad, general purpose crime prevention program with little discernable structure.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that this program can be and is perceived differently by different persons. For instance, some people may assume they have "joined" Community Watch by simply taking some of the recommended steps, while others may consider "joining" to mean official membership in an organization.

Over 93 percent of the respondents answering the question have heard of Community Watch. However, slightly less than 27 percent of the respondents have "joined" Community Watch. This very large discrepancy throws some doubt on the interpretation that local

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<sup>1</sup>"Community Watch in North Carolina," Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, n.d.

programs have, in fact, penetrated every nook and cranny of these communities. As suggested, the primary reason for not joining Community Watch given by respondents is that there is no local program (64.7 percent). Apparently, there is confusion about what it means to "join" Community Watch. And the very high participation in certain crime prevention steps (i.e., locking doors, telling neighbors when going away) may not result from local programs but from completely different sources, such as general cultural background.

This suggests that it will be difficult to attribute certain observed crime prevention attitudes and behaviors to the widely known, but diffuse, Community Watch program. There appears to be a need for more specific information provided to citizens about both the Community Watch and Operation Identification programs. Media materials should be explicit and explanatory about these programs, rather than simply urging citizens to "join."

#### D. Further Research

The policy implications of the survey will become clearer with further research. Several avenues that may be useful to explore are:

1. The spatial distribution and quality of current programs. A major hypothesis emerging from this analysis is that prior programs may account in large part for the levels and distributions of responses found in the evaluation surveys.

2. Further analysis of the survey data itself may be useful, especially in conjunction with the first research step noted above. Both location and certain demographic characteristics are related to attitudes and behaviors of interest. How these may be related to program content or effort is not yet clear in detail.

3. Corroboration or verification of the results of the survey should be made with different sorts of data. For example, the tentative classification of counties as percent urban may suggest some ways to use other data sources to bolster survey findings.

#### IV. Analysis of the Sample and Survey

The methodological properties of the sample and the survey may themselves contribute to variation found in the measurements. A brief review of these properties can provide some corrective information for interpretations of the results.

##### A. The Sample

The sample drawn was 506, which yields estimates of population attributes accurate to +5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. The specific population for which this survey can be used to make inferences is the voter registration population of the four-county area. Making inferences to the entire state population is, strictly speaking, not permissible. Evidence documenting the similarity of the population sampled to the state population will partially justify inferences to the state level, but this is a risky approach and cannot be justified statistically.

The similarity of the sample to the four-county population is close in most respects, but discrepancies do occur. Table 21 briefly compares some important characteristics of the sample with the four-county population characteristics. The comparison suggests that both females and blacks are somewhat undersampled. This suggests that the sampling frame (voter registration lists) may have been inappropriate for duplicating the actual four-county population, under-representing the percent female and percent non-white, and over-representing the proportion in the older age groups. This may have artificially inflated the rates of participation in crime prevention activities.

Table 21: Comparison of sample characteristics with four-county population characteristics

| <u>Characteristics</u> | <u>Sample<br/>(Adjusted Freqs.)</u> | <u>Four-County<br/>Population</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| % Female               | 42.5                                | 52.6                              |
| % Non-White            | 15.9                                | 18.5                              |
| Age                    |                                     |                                   |
| 18-24                  | 6.6                                 | 15.8                              |
| 25-44                  | 39.7                                | 40.4                              |
| 45-64                  | 36.0                                | 29.5                              |
| Over 65                | 17.7                                | 14.4                              |

B. The Survey

There are several potential problems with the survey and the measurements it yields. First, the responses to a number of questions may have suffered due to interviewer error. A number of questions require the interviewer to determine if the respondent belongs in a category that requires asking the next question. For example, only those who responded "yes" to the question of whether they had received crime prevention messages should have been asked if they remembered the source of the message. There is evidence from the N's on some questions that these protocols were not strictly followed, which affects subsequent analyses of these questions.

Second, the very high positive responses on some questions lead one to suspect that a positive response bias may be present.

Finally, some questions involve knowledge or interpretations on the part of the respondent that may not be consistent across respondents. The example of Community Watch, raised above, suggests

that people may attach different meanings to the program, which makes results less clear. Likewise, many people may simply assume that the local police routinely do crime prevention as a part of their normal operations, thus responding that their local police have a crime prevention program when in fact they do not.

**END**