



 **Violence**  
and  
**Public Safety**   
in the  
**Halifax Regional Municipality**

***A Report to the Mayor***

Supplemental Report #3:  
The Student Survey

Don Clairmont  
Director  
Atlantic Institute of Criminology  
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# **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 3: THE STUDENT SURVEY**

## **STUDENT SURVEY (N = 1542)**

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## **PART A: THE SURVEY AND OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES**

The student on-line survey was coordinated by the Halifax Student Alliance of Universities and Colleges and took place in the fall of 2007. The response was considerable as evidenced by the sample size of 1542, encouraged perhaps by a modest prize that could be won via a draw. Procedures set in place required that an on-line participant had to complete the instrument thereby virtually eliminating the likelihood of multiple copies by a respondent. The survey instrument or questionnaire was a slightly modified version of the instrument used in the telephone and mail-back surveys; the modification largely involved adding questions about student experiences in the Downtown. The Student Alliance made a presentation to the Roundtable in mid-November based on initial analyses of the data. The data were then made available to the Roundtable project as agreed upon and an SPSS file was created which is the basis for the description and analyses reported upon below.

The overall frequencies for each question are presented in Part A and detailed analyses plus recommendations emerging from the survey and other student reports are provided in Part B and Part C below. As in the mail-back and telephone samples, females respondents accounted for the majority of the sample (i.e., 63%+). The average age of the student respondents was approximately 24, about half the age of respondents in the other surveys. A plurality of the respondents – 33% - reported themselves as out of province Canadians attending university or college in HRM; the next largest grouping – 29%- were longtime HRM residents. Nova Scotian students whose home base was outside HRM, and International students, accounted for 22% and 7% of the sample respectively. Over 10% of the student sample self-identified as a minority group member. Almost half the respondents lived in university or college residence.

Students' perceptions of the crime in HRM were different in nuance from the telephone and mail-back survey respondents. Slightly fewer, 32% to 41%, considered the Halifax area to have a high amount of crime than did the telephone sample but the same percentage (53% to 54%) reported feeling at least somewhat safe walking alone in their local area after dark. Generally though, the students expressed more fear and worry about possible victimization, especially person violence such as muggings, robberies and being molested. While the percentage of students reporting themselves "not at all worried" about burglary or theft matched up well with the telephone sample respondents (i.e., about one-third in each sample), the students were less than half as likely to report no worry about person violence; only 25% of the students gave that response while 65% of the telephone respondents expressed "not at all worried". Students typically went out more in the evening than either the telephone or mail-back respondents, whether to work or attend classes (11 times a month to 8 times for the telephone sample), go to restaurants or movies (5 times to 3 times a month for the telephone sample) or to bars, pubs and similar places (3.5 to 2.5 times a month for the telephone sample). From the perspective of routine activities or opportunity theory, they are more at risk. It can be noted in the frequencies highlighted in Part A that walking home after going out in the evening is the most common mode of transportation employed by the students. Since being in HRM, students have clearly made efforts to adapt to the risks they encounter. More than half reported having changed their routines or avoided certain places (57% compared to 39% among the telephone sample), 73% have planned their route with safety in mind (compared to 55% of the telephone sample) and 12% indicated that they have changed residence or moved, nearly twice the 7% among the telephone respondents. 37% of the students reported that they began carrying "something to defend myself or alert others", slightly higher than the 30% in the telephone sample. Still, the students were much less likely than their telephone survey counterparts to report being "very satisfied with your personal safety from crime and violence" (i.e., 20% to 45%).

The students reported going Downtown in the evening, on average, once or twice a week. Roughly 30% indicated that they had witnessed a crime while there but only 7% indicated that they were victims of crime. Gender and age discrimination while there were reported by 12% to 16% of the respondents. 2% (roughly 30 students) indicated that they themselves had been arrested at least once in the Downtown. Overall, the students were rather positive about their Downtown experience and the Downtown itself (see q16 below). Only about a third considered Downtown Halifax in the evening as a dangerous place to go but less than a third were of the view that “it is okay to go Downtown alone in the evening”. The sample was evenly split, percentage-wise, between those who agreed or disagreed with the characterization of the Downtown as having a lot of violence in the evening and with the statement, “I feel safe in Downtown Halifax during the evening”. The students were also equally divided in their assessments of whether “bouncers” treated students fairly and whether there were enough police in Downtown Halifax.

About 45% of the students reported in the survey that they had been the victim of a crime. This figure matches up well with that yielded in the telephone survey (40% weighted) though the questions were not strictly comparable. Within the past twelve months (from the fall of 2007) the most frequent reported victimizations involved property crimes such as vandalism (12%) and theft (14%). Compared to the telephone respondents, the students’ proportions for all crimes, property and violence, were significantly higher. The percentages for violence victimization were especially greater among students with 7% reporting assaults compared to 4% of the telephone sample, and larger differences being reported for stalking (6% to 1%), robbery (3% to 1%) and sexual assault (5% to 1%). In the majority of cases of victimization the students indicated that they did not report the matter to the police. The main reasons for not doing so were that they did not think the incident was serious enough to report, or that they did not think the police could do anything about it, or that they did not think the police would do anything about it. Interestingly, these were also the chief reasons given by respondents in the telephone and mail-back surveys when asked why they did not report their victimization to the police.

A large percentage of the student respondents (sometimes as many as a third of the sample) reported that they did not know enough about HRM policing to give an informed assessment but, among those who did so, their assessments did differ sharply from those of the telephone survey respondents. Like the latter, they were about evenly divided as to whether the number of police in the area was “about the right number” or “too few”. But in their evaluations of whether the HRM police are doing a good job, average job or poor job over the conventional nine police functions, the students were more critical. While the plurality – and sometimes the majority – response for the telephone respondents was usually “a good job”, for the students, it was “an average job”; moreover, the students were more likely than their telephone survey counterparts to give a “poor job” rating, especially with respect to the police being approachable (22% to 8%), providing crime prevention information (27% to 9%) and treating people fairly (17% to 7%).

Not surprisingly, the students overall reported less community embeddedness or integration than the telephone or mail-back survey respondents. They had fewer relatives living in the area and knew fewer of their neighbours. Interestingly, only about a third as many as in the telephone sample (10% to 33%) gave the highest score on a “how much do you trust people in your neighbourhood” scale. The students basically depended on the same sources as other HRM adults for their information about violence and public safety. The top two sources depended upon the most were similar, namely, television / radio, then newspapers and magazine. Students depended more on informal sources such as friends and on the internet and university/college sources but here the percentages were small.

In Part B below, following the presentation of the frequencies, these descriptive patterns will be examined more closely.

## FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES

Q 1 Are you currently a student?		
Yes		98%
No		2%

Q 2 If you are a student, which school do you currently attend?		
Dalhousie		68%
Saint Mary's		25%
Mount Saint Vincent		<1%
King's		4%
NSCC		< 1%
Atlantic School of Theology		< 1%
NSCAD		< 1%
Other		< 1%
Not a student		1%

Q 3 How long have you lived in Halifax?		
Less than six months		17%
Less than 12 months		8%
1-2 years		9%
3-6 years		37%
7-9 years		3%
More than 10 years		26%

Q4. Do you think Halifax is an area with a high amount of crime, an average amount of crime, or a low amount of crime?		
High		32%
Average		53%
Low		12%
Don't know		2%

Q5. How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark?		
Very safe		14%
Somewhat safe		39%
Somewhat unsafe		34%
Very unsafe		12%
No answer		< 1%

Q6. How much do you worry when you have to leave your home, apartment, or room unattended though locked, for more than a few hours?		
Not at all		55%
Some		35%
Much		10%
No answer		< 1%

Q7 – In your area, do you worry about:	Very Much	Much	Some	Not at all	NA
a. Theft of personal property	10%	17%	51%	22%	< 1%
b. Being held up or mugged	10%	20%	45%	25%	< 1%
c. Being attacked or molested	12%	19%	43%	26%	< 1%
d. Having your house or property broken into	6%	14%	49%	31%	< 1%
e. Having your car or property vandalized	8%	16%	42%	34%	< 1%

<b>Q8. On average, how many times a month do you go out during the evening to do the following activities?</b>	<b>Mean Number of Times</b>
a. Attend classes, study, work nights or do volunteer work	11.0
b. Attend sports events	1.5
c. Go to restaurants, movies or the theatre	4.9
d. Go to bars, pubs, or comedy clubs	3.4
e. Attend or participate in sports, exercise or recreational activities	5.0
f. Visit relatives or friends in their homes	5.5
g. Go out shopping (including window shopping)	4.0

<b>Q9. Do you worry about your personal safety when you go out in the evening?</b>	
Feel Very safe	9%
Feel Reasonably safe	53%
Feel Somewhat unsafe	33%
Feel Very unsafe	5%
No answer	<1%

<b>Q10. Which mode of transportation do you use after going out in the evening?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a) Drive home after going out in the evening	41%
b) Take the bus home after going out in the evening	75%
c) Take Tiger Patrol or Husky Patrol after going out in the evening	10%
d) Take a taxi home after going out in the evening	65%
e) Call someone you know for a ride home after going out in the evening	34%
f) Walk home after going out in the evening	81%
g) Bike home after going out in the evening	13%

<b>Q11. Which mode of transportation are you most LIKELY to use after going out in the evening?</b>	
Drive home	21%
Take the bus	21%
Take the Tiger Patrol/Husky Patrol Van	< 1%
Taxi	18%
Call someone you know for a ride	4%
Walk	32%
Bike	3%
Other	< 1%
No Answer	1%

<b>Q12. Since being in Halifax, have you:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>NA</b>
a) Changed your routine or avoided certain places?	57%	40%	2%	< 1%
b) Installed new locks or security?	15%	84%	< 1%	< 1%
c) Changed your phone number?	5%	95%	< 1%	< 1%
d) Changed residence or moved?	12%	87%	< 1%	< 1%
e) Carried something to defend yourself or alert others?	37%	62%	1%	< 1%
f) Planned your route with safety in mind?	73%	25%	1%	< 1%
g) Locked the car doors for personal safety when alone in the car?	60%	35%	5%	< 1%
h) Installed burglar alarms?	9%	89%	2%	< 1%
i) Used the student security van (i.e. Tiger Patrol, Husky Patrol)?	13%	86%	1%	< 1%
j) Taken a self defense class since?	11%	88%	1%	< 1%

<b>Q 13. In general, how satisfied are you with your personal safety from crime and violence?</b>	
Very satisfied	20%
Somewhat satisfied	57%
Somewhat unsatisfied	20%
Very unsatisfied	4%
No answer	< 1%

<b>Q14. How often do you go to downtown Halifax during the evenings?</b>	
1-2 times a week	62%
3-4 times a week	15%
5 or more times a week	7%
Never	10%
Don't know	6%

<b>Q15. While downtown Halifax in the evening, have you:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a) Experienced medical attention or been treated for an injury?	6%
b) Been arrested?	2%
c) Been a victim of crime?	7%
d) Experienced age discrimination?	12%
e) Experienced gender discrimination?	16%
f) Experienced racial discrimination?	7%
g) Experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation?	5%
h) Witnessed a crime while there?	30%
i) Has experienced none of these	16%

<b>Q16. Thinking about your experiences in downtown Halifax, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
a. It is dangerous to go to downtown Halifax during the evening	6%	24%	41%	17%	13%
b. Bouncers at bars, pubs and clubs treat students fairly	7%	30%	26%	13%	25%
c. Restaurant staff treat students fairly	19%	44%	18%	3%	16%
d. There are enough police in downtown Halifax	7%	32%	31%	15%	15%
e. It is okay to go to downtown alone in the evenings	5%	18%	29%	36%	12%
f. There is a lot of violence in downtown Halifax during the evenings	10%	31%	36%	10%	15%
g. I feel safe in downtown Halifax during the evening	8%	35%	34%	11%	12%

<b>Q17. Thinking about your own experiences, has anything happened to you in the past that may have been a crime?</b>	
Yes	44%
No	47%
Don't know	7%
No Answer	2%

<b>Q. 18 In the past 12 months have you experienced any of the following crimes:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a) I did not experience a crime in the past twelve months	13%
b) Vandalism (something damaged)	12%
c) Theft (or attempt) of personal property	14%
d) Theft (or attempt) of household goods	4%
e) Break and enter (or attempt)	4%
f) Fraud	2%
g) Motor Vehicle theft (or attempt)	3%
h) Assault	7%
i) Stalking (persistent unwanted attention)	6%
j) Robbery (or attempted)	3%
k) Sexual Assault (unwanted touching etc)	5%
No answer / non-applicable	26%

<b>Q19. Thinking about all of your past experiences as a victim of crime, what is the likelihood that you would share these experiences with your friends and/or family?</b>	
Very likely	21%
Likely	11%
Somewhat likely	8%
Not likely	5%
No answer/Not applicable	56%

<b>Q20. Thinking about all of your past experiences as a victim of crime, how often did you report the crimes to the police?</b>	
Never	16%
Rarely	11%
Often	7%
Always	10%
No answer/Not applicable	56%

<b>Q21. If you didn't report to the police, why not?</b>	<b>(percent of total sample)</b>
a) Didn't report because not serious enough	18%
b) Didn't report because matter too personal	5%
c) Didn't report because decided to solve it myself	5%
d) Didn't report because police COULD NOT do anything	9%
e) Didn't report because police WOULD NOT do anything	6%
f) Didn't report because fear of offenders or others	3%
g) Didn't report because fear of an increase in my insurance	1%
h) Don't know why didn't report	2%

<b>Q22. How much of the following sources of information do you rely on for information about crime?</b>	<b>Great Deal</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
a) TV or radio news	39%	44%	9%	92%	8%
b) Friends or relatives	25%	63%	7%	95%	5%
c) Newspapers, magazines	30%	51%	11%	92%	8%
d) Personal experience	10%	48%	33%	91%	9%
e) Movies and TV shows	4%	22%	63%	89%	11%
f) Internet	15%	53%	26%	94%	6%
g) Government materials	2%	27%	60%	89%	11%
h) Police	3%	27%	60%	90%	10%
i) Justice Officials	2%	13%	73%	88%	12%
j) University / College sources	13%	63%	18%	95%	6%

<b>Q23. Which of the following sources of information do you rely on the most for information about crime? Please indicate ONE answer only.</b>	
TV or radio news	40%
Friends or relatives	17%
Newspapers, magazines	19%
Personal experience	3%
Movies and TV shows	< 1%
Internet	9%
Government materials	1%
Police	1%
Justice Officials	< 1%
University / College sources	7%
Missing	4%

<b>Q24. Thinking about the number of police you see in your area, would you say that there are:</b>	
Too many	2%
About the right number	43%
Too few	41%
Don't know	10%
No answer	4%

<b>Q25. Do you think your local police does a good job, an average, or a poor job in the following areas:</b>	<b>Good job</b>	<b>Average job</b>	<b>Poor job</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>No answer</b>
a) Local police enforce the law and keeping order	24%	52%	9%	12%	4%
b) Local police respond to calls for service	21%	31%	10%	35%	4%
c) Local police respond timely to emergencies	22%	27%	10%	37%	4%
d) Local police investigating and solving crimes	10%	32%	15%	39%	4%
e) Local police are visible in the local area	22%	44%	26%	5%	4%
f) Local police are approachable and easy to talk to	23%	31%	22%	21%	4%
g) Local police provide information to the public on ways to prevent crime	9%	34%	27%	26%	4%
h) Local police help people with local area problems	10%	33%	16%	38%	4%
i) Local police treat people fairly	15%	34%	17%	30%	4%

<b>Q26. How many of your relatives live in other households in your neighborhood?</b>	
Many	3%
Some	12%
Very few	13%
None	64%
Don't know	< 1%
No Answer	8%

<b>Q27. How many of your friends live around your neighborhood?</b>	
10 or more	27%
5-9	23%
2-4	26%
1	5%
None	11%
Don't know	1%
No Answer	8%

<b>Q28. How many of your neighbours do you know (apart from household members)?</b>	
Most	8%
Many	14%
A few	53%
Nobody else	16%
No Answer	9%

<b>Q29. How much do you trust people in your neighbourhood?</b>	
Cannot be trusted	2%
2	13%
3	38%
4	29%
Can be trusted	10%
No answer	8%

<b>Q30. In what year were you born?</b>	
Average Age	23.81

<b>Q31. What is your sex?</b>	
Male	28%
Female	63%
No answer	9%

<b>Q32. Do you consider yourself to be:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a) A disabled person	< 1%
b) A visible minority	9%
c) Aboriginal	1%
d) A Recent Immigrant	4%
e) Don't know	8%

<b>Q33. Do you consider yourself to be:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a) A longtime Halifax resident	29%
b) A Nova Scotian in Halifax for school	22%
c) An out-of-province Canadian for school	33%
d) An international student	7%
No answer	9%

<b>Q34. What type of dwelling are you now living in?</b>	
Single house	25%
University Residence	48%
Private apartment / flat	17%
Other	1%
No answer	9%

## **PART B: ANALYSES**

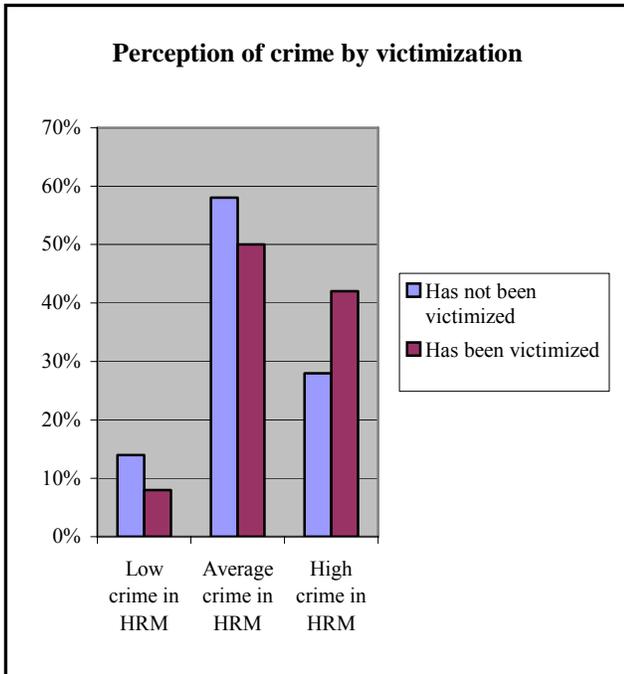
### **THE SIX TOPICS**

- 1. Perception of Crime**
- 2. Fear and Worry about Victimization**
- 3. Reported Victimization**
- 4. Assessments of Police and the Justice System**
- 5. Change and Adaptation of Crime Prevention Strategies**
- 6. Student Activity and Attitudes about Downtown**

# 1. PERCEPTION OF CRIME

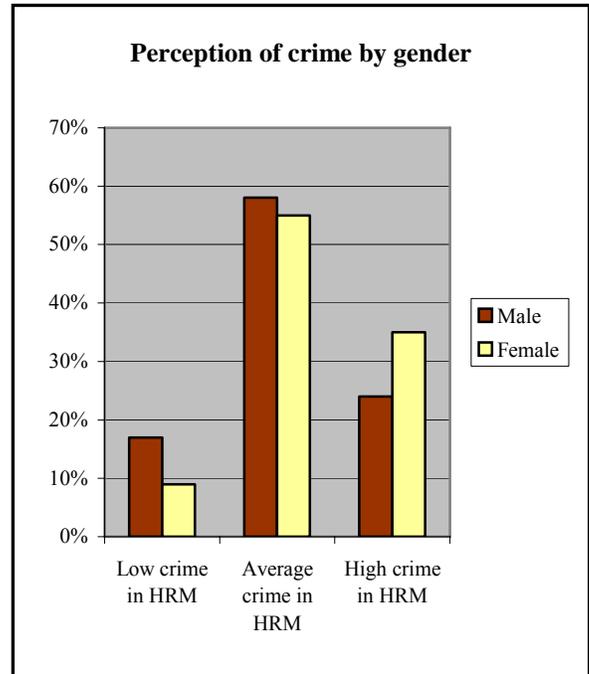
Overall, most students (56%) believed that Halifax was an area with an average amount of crime (Q4). There were, however, differences observed among particular students on both sides of that mid-level perception of crime that, though unsurprising, warrant attention. A larger proportion of students who had been victimized while in Halifax perceived Halifax to have a high crime rate; 42% compared to 28% of those who had not been victimized. Further, despite overall reported victimization levels being about even between males and females, more female students (35%) believed that Halifax was an area of high crime than male students (25%).

**Graph A**



*N=1542; p<.001*

**Graph B**



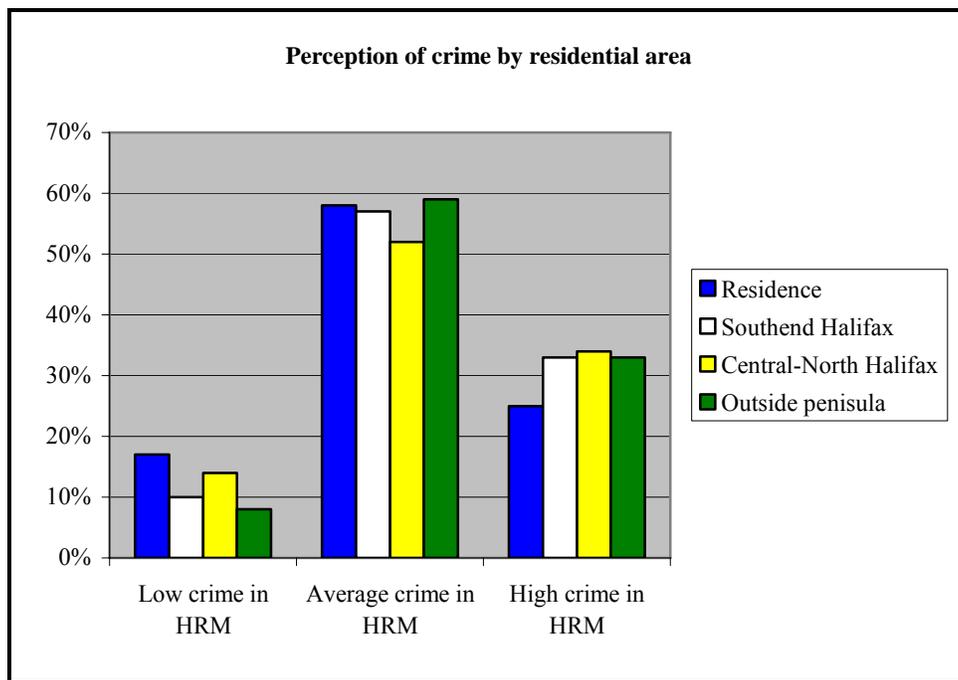
*N=1405; p<.001*

Among the many students who added comments in completing the on-line survey, those who perceived that HRM was not an area of high violence and crime, typically indicated that they personally had not been victimized here and / or that avoidance of victimization depended on the person. For example, one out-of province Canadian male living in Central Halifax wrote, “I feel Halifax is a very safe community. I have never been a victim of crime nor have I seen a crime being committed, Downtown or anywhere else”. Another male, a Haligonian living in a North End private flat, commented, “Halifax is a safe place as long as you don’t cause any trouble yourself, which can go for just about any city”. A few students having similar views blamed the media for exaggerating the violence and crime. One female, a longtime resident of Halifax currently renting in the North End, reported “I think that the media are exaggerating things a bit when it comes to crime in Halifax. Crime is going down in the city but you would never know it to read the newspapers or to watch the TV news. I think Halifax is very safe if you just keep aware of what is going on around you and try not to walk alone. Random crimes seem to be occurring less often”. A male from out-of province residing in the South End had a similar view, “I have many female friends who will not walk down the street in the South End even for 1 or 2 blocks. It’s partially due to the biased media coverage and the gross exaggeration via word-of-mouth. The only place I feel unsafe to go at night is The Commons”. The comments of females and victims usually, though not always, reflected quite different perceptions. One female, a longtime residence of HRM, living in Central Halifax, wrote, “Crime in Halifax has skyrocketed and something needs to be done so it is a safe city once more”. Another female, an out-of-province student renting a private flat in the North End, commented, “A very close friend of mine was recently severely beaten while walking alone at night in my neighbourhood. This has changed my views

of the reality of violence in my area”. A male out-of-province student wrote, “Myself and family members visiting have experienced a high and unacceptable amount of property crime at my apartment on Coburg Road. The amount of violence in Halifax, although not affecting me personally, is very disturbing”.

Significant differences were also observed among students based on where they lived in Halifax. Graph C shows that more students living in university residence perceived Halifax to be an area of low crime, than students living in other parts of the city. Aside from this pattern, however, the differences in perception of crime levels by residence arrangement were quite modest. Moreover, as will be noted below, the relationship between student “home base” and current residential area ( $\phi=.51$ ) indicates that “home base” rather than current HRM residence is the key factor affecting perceptions of crime. Between 62% and 67% of the students sampled who are either International, or out of province or from outside HRM live in university residence or in the South End while only 24% of the students whose home is HRM do so, and as shown in Graph D, International and out of province students are the most likely to perceive Halifax as having a low level of violent and crime.

**Graph C**



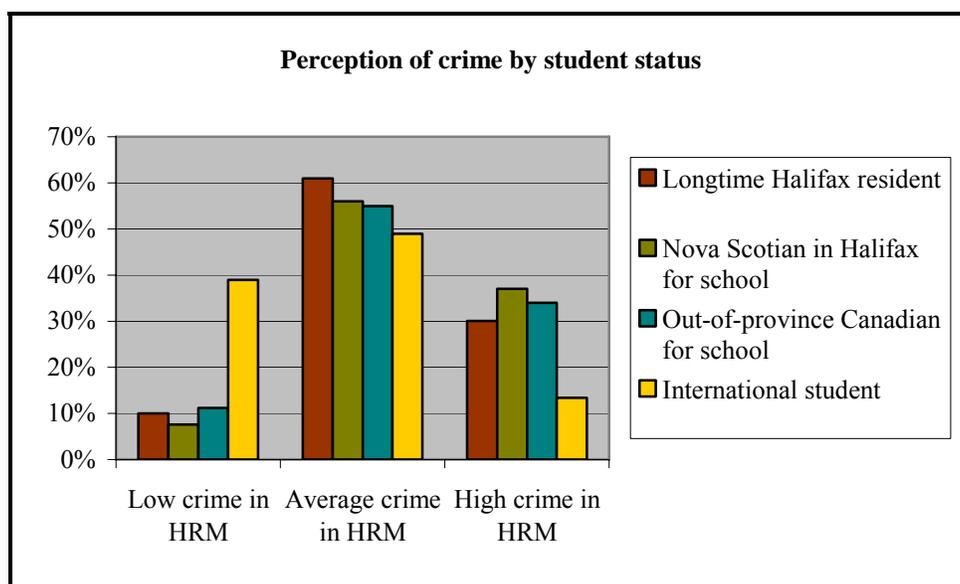
*N=1383;phi=.11; p<.01*

The relationship between perception of crime and students’ “home base” status is interesting and perhaps the one that speaks most to the relativity of crime in a city like Halifax, and the contextual factors which may influence perception of crime. As shown in Graph D, more students who come to Halifax from elsewhere in Nova Scotia perceived that it was a city with high crime than any other group, which perhaps reflects a small town / rural perception of the city as being a big and scary place. A male student whose home is in the province outside HRM and who lives in university residence stated, “The issue of crime in Halifax is out of control and the means used by the regional and provincial governments to resolve the situation are dismally ineffective. I think it safe to say that my peers, many of whom are spending their first time in Halifax, find the city to be full of bigots, indifferent and generally unsafe”. A female counterpart (i.e., Nova Scotian from outside HRM currently in university residence) echoed those comments, “I don’t feel Halifax is safe at all. I hear about too many stabbings or gunshots and stuff. It’s very uncomfortable. I rarely go out at night unless I’m coming home from work and even walking from the student centre to residence by myself makes me uneasy”. A female student from the nearby PEI, currently renting a flat in the South End, expressed that basic vantage point in her comment, “I am from PEI and I do find a difference in the crime rate here in Nova Scotia. For the most part I do feel safe, however I would never walk alone at night and there are certain areas I stay away from”. On the other hand, as seen in

Graph D, the biggest difference observed was the higher proportion of International students, (i.e., 39%), who held that Halifax was a low crime area. A female student from Columbia, living in the North End, wrote “I have lived for a year in Columbia before moving to Halifax three years ago. I have traveled to other locations that have a great deal more poverty so I don’t consider Halifax to be that dangerous in comparison. I walk my dog regularly alone at night and walk and bike at night and have never felt unsafe in the area where I live”. Another female, international student noted, “I guess that I feel kind of safe in Halifax because I come from a city with about 3 million inhabitants. The criminality rate there isn’t exceptionally high, but of course it is a lot higher than in Halifax because the city is much bigger”.

The written comments of Canadian students from larger metropolitan centres beyond the Maritimes, unexpectedly, were more in keeping with the views of the Nova Scotian university students temporarily riding in HRM. They seemed to be somewhat surprised at the level of crime and violence in HRM. For example, a female currently in university residence wrote “Having lived in Vancouver for the last 23 years I am frankly shocked at the amount and severity of violence in such a small city. While Vancouver certainly has problems, the youth violence is not as severe and not as frequent. It is 4 times larger, more if you count surrounding areas. Youth violence is my number one concern when out around Halifax which is a very sad statement considering that I was a youth not long ago”. A female from Toronto commented “I’m from downtown Toronto and I always felt safe there. I do not feel safe in Halifax. People have no respect for property and violent crime is everywhere. There is also a great deal of racial tension which I am not used to .. police response [is poor] I had to call 911 three times to report a stabbing victim who was bleeding out. Please help this city get some focus”. Another such student wrote, “I had to do a work term this summer in the North End. My car was vandalized, the street [once] was closed because of a shooting, and drug dealers are completely visible. Also a classmate was swarmed on Spring Garden during the daylight and [severely injured]. I am from a city with a similar population size. It has violence but not as often”. Of course not all students from the bigger metropolitan areas perceived HRM as violent and crime-ridden; one Toronto female, renting in the South End, commented “Although Halifax is a lot more crime ridden than it was a few years ago, I still don’t think it is a hotbed of crime. As a single female who lives Downtown, I can’t say I’ve ever felt very threatened in my two and a bit years here. Maybe I’m just stupid but I don’t think we’ve got a crime wave so much as a few stupid and violent people. I can’t say I’m even faintly as worried about walking about in Halifax at night as I was in Toronto where I lived most of my life”.

**Graph D**



*N=1345; phi =.25; p<.001*

While gender, victimization, and student status influenced one's perception of crime, other attitudinal measures were found to also be significantly related to it. As shown in Table 1, significant correlations exist between the perception of crime in HRM and worry about being a victim of crime, the number of crime prevention strategies that were adopted by students, and students' assessment of the HRM police service. The first two associations were positive while inverse in the case of assessment of police (i.e., positive assessment of policing was associated with low perceived crime levels). Further, as trust in unknown neighbours (Q29) decreased, students increasingly perceived Halifax to be a city with higher levels of crime.

**Table 1**

	Perception of crime in HRM	N
Worry of person victimization	.41**	1533
Worry of property victimization	.22**	1524
Number of crime prevention strategies	.29**	1538
Approval of HRM Police	-.17**	1470
Trust in unknown neighbours	-.14**	1426

\*\* $p < .01$

In a regression analysis on perception of crime in HRM that considered only the objective factors of gender, victimization, minority status, age, number of times a student went out in an evening in a month, how long the student has been a resident of Halifax, residential area and student status, these variables, with victimization having the largest effect, taken together accounted for 4% of the variation in perception of direct effect on perception of crime. When the subjective measures of fear and worry, approval of HRM police, number of crime prevention adaptations and levels of trust in neighbours were also included, the model captured 17% of the explained variance in crime perception, with worry of being person victimized having the largest direct effects on crime perception. The differences in these regression models are seen in Table 2.

**Table 2**

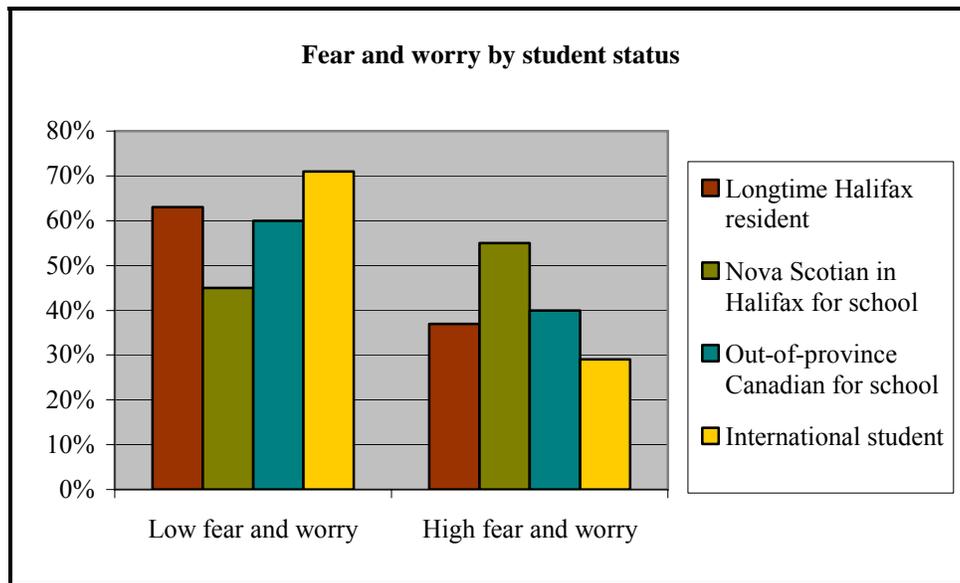
Dependent Variable=Perception of crime in HRM	Model 1 N=1285 r <sup>2</sup> = <b>.04</b>	Model 2 N=1285 r <sup>2</sup> = <b>.17</b>
	β	β
Student Status ( <i>longtime Halifax resident as reference category</i> )		
International Student	-.10***	-.08*
Victim of crime in Halifax	.13***	.06*
Female	.10***	n/s
Fear and worry of person victimization		.32***
Number of crime prevention adaptations		.10**
Approval of HRM Police		-.09**

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

## 2. FEAR AND WORRY ABOUT VICTIMIZATION

Fear and worry was an index created from the survey questions dealing with levels of worry about being a victim of violent crime: How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark? (Q5), Do you worry about being held up or mugged in your area? (Q7b), Do you worry about being attacked or molested in your area? (Q7c). The index scores, for the analyses below, ranged from 1 (feel quite safe and secure against these crimes) to 4 (feel quite unsafe or fearful of being mugged or attacked). There were differences observed between students' levels of fear and worry, based on their student status and gender. As shown in Graph E, the largest percentage of students with high levels of fear and worry were those from elsewhere in Nova Scotia, which is congruent with the pattern observed above with respect to perception of crime.

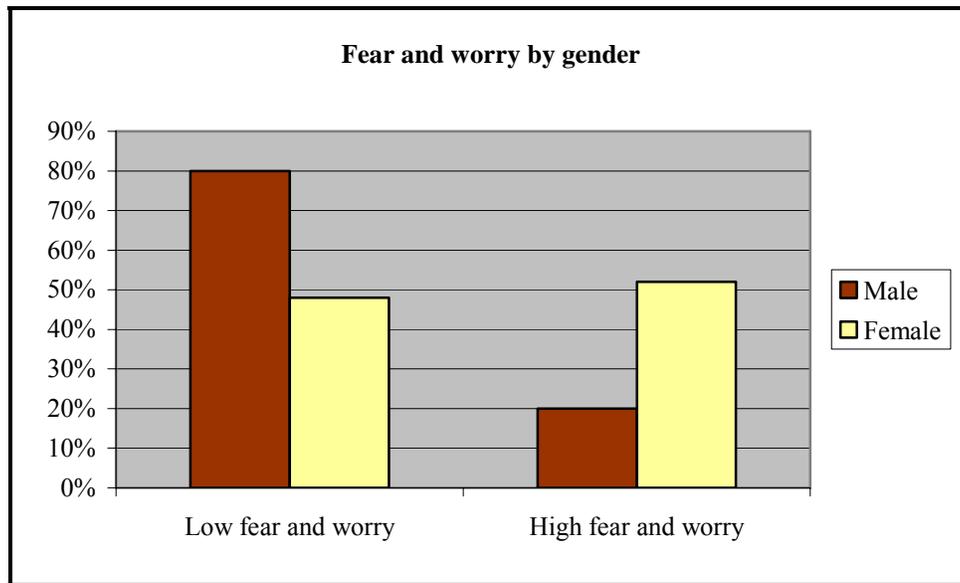
Graph E



*N=1336; phi=.16; p<.001*

Female students also had higher levels of fear and worry about being a victim of a personal crime than males. On the fear and worry scale of 1-4, the average fear and worry score for a female student was 3.2, compared to the average male score of 2.4. In fact, 52% of females scored either a 3 or a 4 (i.e., high) on the fear and worry scale, compared to only 20% of males, as shown in Graph F. Virtually all the written comments about fear and worry were by females, either longtime HRM residents or out-of-province students. A number of female students work in the service sector and find themselves having to walk home early in the morning, a cause of much anxiety. One longtime HRM student residing in the South End noted, "As a female student who has to work night shifts and is also stereotypically poor, I have to walk home many nights after the buses have stopped running and I am always nervous". Two other longtime HRM females, both residing in the Armdale suburb, related their high level of fear and worry to trends in violence. One wrote, "This city has changed a lot in the past five years or so. I used to feel safe in it but now I don't. More police presence / patrols would be helpful but more importantly, try to get at the essence of the problem, work more effectively with youth, give them space to express themselves". The other wrote, "I am definitely more nervous now in the city than I was five years ago. I typically would not walk alone at night in my neighbourhood and I live in an upper class Clayton Park area. I also worry about sexual assault when I'm on the Dalhousie campus after dark". Several out of province female students, living in diverse areas of HRM, expressed similar concerns about their being at risk and not liking to walk alone at dark in the city. One such student gave the worry a more optimistic character in her comments, "It's not that I feel totally unsafe in Halifax. It's just that I find certain kinds of crime are widely publicized in Halifax and it's important to be prudent based on that. I never walk or bike through the Commons at night and we lock our door. As long as I follow the safety rules I set out for myself, I feel totally safe and happy in Halifax. Thanks for creating this survey".

**Graph F**



*N=1396, r=.30, p<.001*

As indicated elsewhere, being a victim of crime and high levels of anxiety about victimization were significantly related to one another. Table 3 shows that perception of much crime in HRM, negative assessment of policing, the number of crime prevention strategies adopted, and the level of trust students had in unknown neighbours (low trust correlated with high fear and worry) were also significantly related to high levels of fear and worry.

**Table 3**

	<b>Fear and worry</b>	<b>N</b>
Number of crime prevention strategies	.40**	1529
Approval of HRM Police	-.18**	1461
Perception of crime in HRM	.41**	1533
Trust in unknown neighbours	-.23**	1417

*\*\*p<.01*

A regression analysis on worry of being a victim of an attack (person rather than property victimization) that considered only the objective factors of gender, victimization, minority status, age, number of times a student went out in an evening in a month, how long the student has been a resident of Halifax, residential area and student status, accounted for 11% of the variation in worry about victimization with gender having the largest direct effects. When the subjective measures of perception of crime, approval of HRM police, number of crime prevention adaptations, and levels of trust in neighbours were also included, the model captured 28% of the explained variance in fear and worry, with the perception of Halifax being an area of high crime having the largest direct effects on fear and worry. The differences in these regression models are seen in Table 4. It is clear that the major variables impacting on fear and worry are perception of crime levels, gender and one's use of adaptive strategies; this latter variable is presumably more a correlate than a cause of fear and worry.

**Table 4**

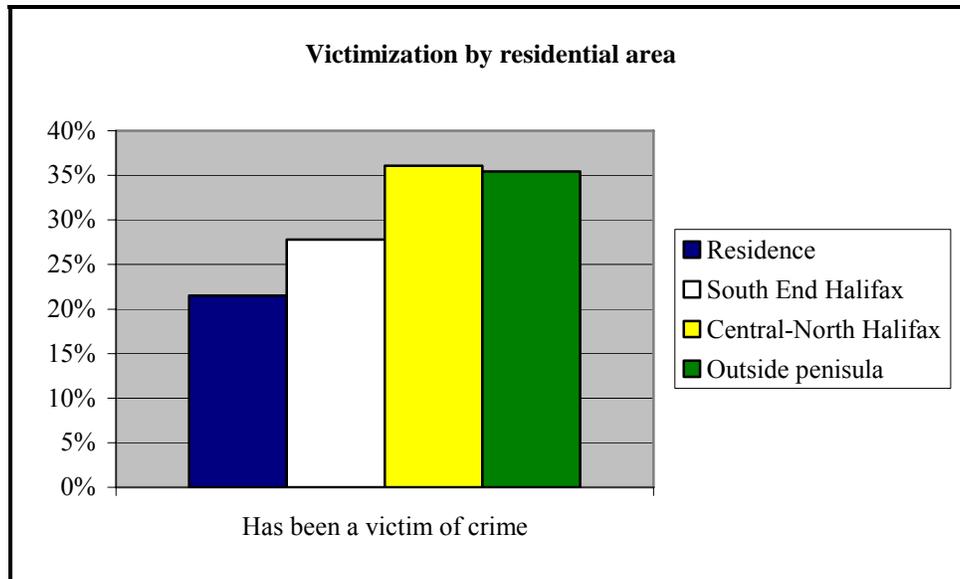
Dependent Variable=Fear and worry of person victimization	<b>Model 1</b> <b>N=1285</b> <b>r<sup>2</sup>=.11</b>	<b>Model 2</b> <b>N=1285</b> <b>r<sup>2</sup>=.28</b>
	$\beta$	$\beta$
Student Status ( <i>longtime Halifax resident as reference category</i> )		
Nova Scotian in Halifax for school	.07**	n.s.
Victim of crime in Halifax	.12***	n.s.
Female	.29***	.20***
Number of years in Halifax	-.06*	-.07**
Trust in unknown neighbours		-.12***
High Perception of Crime		.28***
Number of crime prevention adaptations		.20***
Approval of HRM Police		-.06*

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

### 3. VICTIMIZATION

Overall, 30% of the students who participated in the survey reported being a victim of one of the ten queried crimes while they were studying at a Halifax university (Q18b to Q18k). Differences in victimization were observed based on the student’s residential area of Halifax during the school year. Notably, students who lived in areas in Central and North End Halifax (36%) and outside the peninsula (35%), reported more crime victimization than those living in university residence (22%) or the South End of Halifax (28%) as indicated in Graph G.

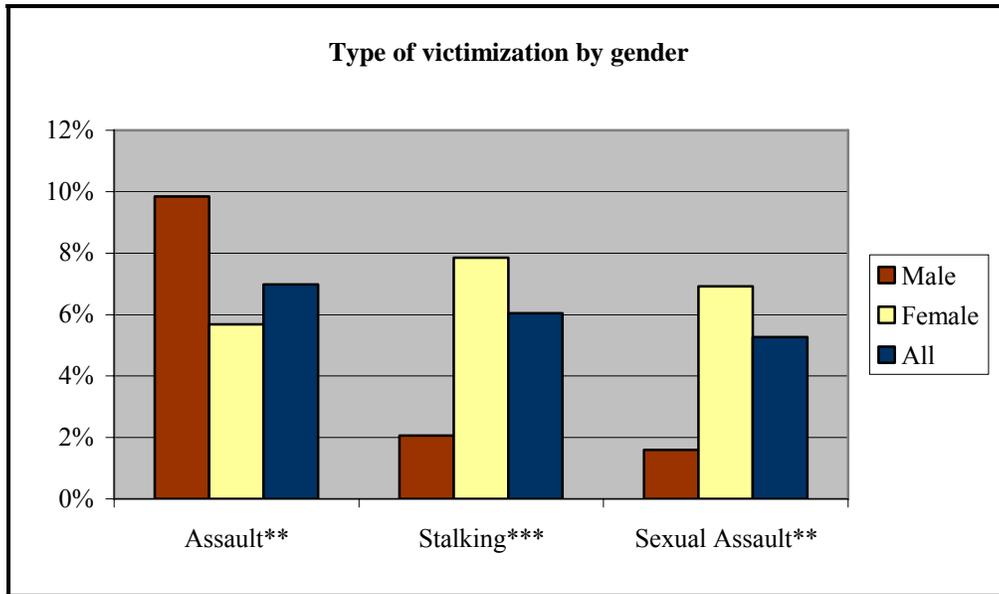
Graph G



*N=1383 phi=.12; p<.001*

It was evident from a number of written comments that being victimized oneself or seeing a close friend victimized – especially a person rather than property victimization – usually had a major impact on the students and altered their subsequent attitudes and behaviour. One out of province female student commented, “A close friend of mine was recently severely beaten while walking alone at night in my neighbourhood (North End). This event has changed my views of the reality of violence in my area”. A male, out of province student wrote, “I was walking through the field on Robie just north of St. Mary’s with three friends, two girls and a guy. We were approached by a group of 5 guys. They took a personal item and I was punched in the face by one of them. I tried to reason with the guys but one of them threatened me with a knife. That’s my only encounter with crime but it certainly shook me up”. A longtime HRM resident, a female, wrote, “I actually live in the West End now but lived in the North End for years. I was sexually assaulted once while living there but still felt safer than when I lived in the South End. The South End is the scariest place I have ever lived, scarier than Scarborough”. Interestingly, there were no significant gender differences in overall victimization among the student sample. However, looking at the specific incidences of assault ( $r=.08$ ), stalking ( $r=.11$ ) and sexual assault ( $r=.11$ ), there were important gender differences observed in who reported being a victim of these person attacks.

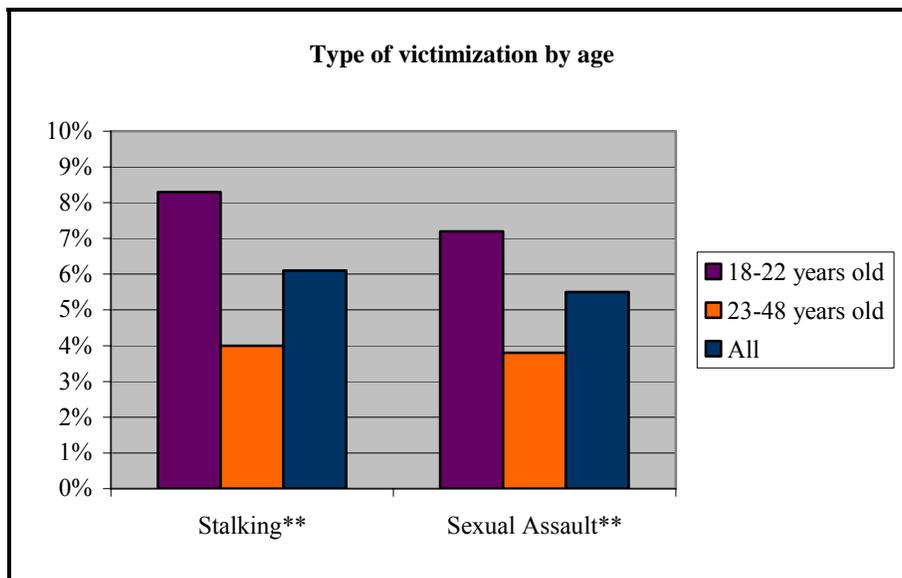
**Graph H**



*N=1405; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$*

Male students reported more incidences of assault, while female students reported more incidences of stalking and sexual assault. Even though, overall, the total number of incidents in these areas was small (less than 7% of the whole sample for all three), given the often traumatic nature of the crimes, these differences are important to take into consideration. Compounding the concern, an analysis of these types of victimization by age revealed that a larger percentage of victims of stalking ( $r=.09$ ) and sexual assault ( $r=.07$ ) were under the age of 22, as shown in Graph I.

**Graph I**



*N=1305; \*\*  $p < .01$*

Being a victim of crime was related to number of reported attitudes and behaviours among students. As shown in Table 5, being a victim of crime was significantly related to the number of crime strategies a student employed (presumably in response to victimization) as well as how often they went out in the evenings (opportunities for victimization). It was also significantly and directly related to levels of fear and worry about becoming a victim of crime, the perception of crime in HRM, and inversely to positive assessments of the HRM police.

**Table 5**

	<b>Victim of Crime</b>	<b>N</b>
Number of crime prevention strategies	.25**	1538
Opportunities for victimization	.07**	1535
Worry of person victimization	.13**	1533
Worry of property victimization	.26**	1254
Approval of HRM Police	-.16**	1470
Perception of crime in HRM	.15**	1542

In a regression analysis (not shown), living in residence or not was the only variable which had direct effects on victimization ( $\beta=-.09$ ) with those not in residence reporting more victimization. The model considered the area in which students lived in Halifax, along with gender, age, student status as a Halifax resident, number of times a student went out in the evenings in a month, how long a student has been a Halifax resident and minority status; however, taken together these variables only explained 1% of the variance in victimization. Clearly there is considerable unexplained variance with respect to which students become victimized.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT OF THE POLICE AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Unlike the other public surveys undertaken for this report, students were not asked their assessment of the criminal justice system and indeed there were only a few questions about their views on policing. As seen in the marginal frequencies above the students, on the whole and in comparison with the public telephone and mailback samples, were not especially critical of the police service, and indeed, like the public at large, were about evenly distributed as to whether the number of police in their was ‘about right’ (43%) or ‘too few’ (41%). The telephone sample equivalences were 48% and 47% respectively, but there were fewer ‘don’t know’ responses there, and if the don’t know were eliminated from calculations for both samples, their percentage differences would be only 1% for the ‘about right’ response and 3% for the ‘too few’ one. There were some significant differences within the student sample concerning this variable, the number of police in your areas. These differences are detailed in table 6 below. Clearly gender and home base do matter. Females were significantly more likely to report ‘too few police in their area’ than male students, and Nova Scotian students from outside HRM, as well as out of province Canadian students, differed significantly, though in different ways, from the criterion category, longtime HRM residents on this assessment.

**TABLE 6**

The Number of Police in My Area is	Gender		Home-Base *		
	Male	Female***	Other ** Nova Scotia	Other ** Canada	International
Too Many	3 %	2 %	1 %	2 %	1 %
About Right	52 %	41 %	39 %	50 %	42 %
Too Few	35 %	46 %	50 %	37 %	52 %
Don’t Know	10 %	11 %	10 %	12 %	5 %
Sample Size	435	966	341	508	104

\* The significance test used the category, ‘long time residents of HRM’ as the criterion category. \*\* Significance is  $p < .00$  \*\*\* Significance is  $p < .000$

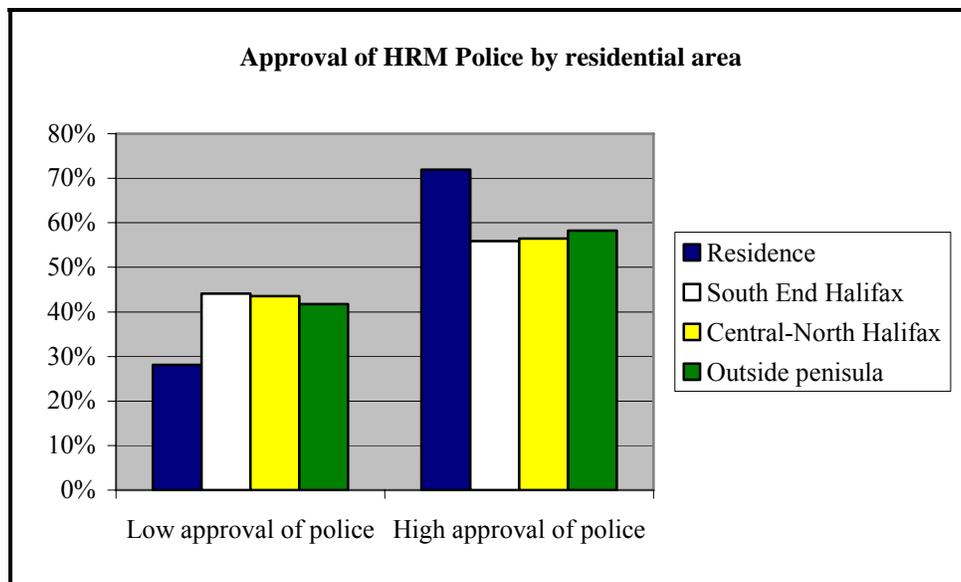
The students, as in the public samples, were asked to assess the police service in terms of a number of police functions such as enforcement, investigation, conveying information about crime prevention and the like (Q25a to Q25i). The police function they considered the police to be accomplishing best was ‘enforcing the law and keeping order’(24% rated the police ‘good’ and another 52% as ‘average’), while the functions least positively assessed were ‘providing information to the public on ways to prevent crime’ where 27% rated the police service as ‘poor’ and another 26% replied ‘don’t know’, and ‘helping people with local area problems’ (16% poor and 38% ‘don’t know’). There was little significant variation among the assessments of student sub-groupings on the specific police functions; even the assessments of police visibility were quite similar whatever the gender and home base status of the students. Interestingly, the assessments of adults in the mail-back survey on the specific police functions were similar to those of the students; the police function rated highest was ‘enforcing the law and keeping order’ (30% rated the police ‘good’ and 48% as ‘average’) and the assessments for ‘providing information’ and ‘helping with local problems’ were among the lowest. Still while the rank ordering was similar, the students were clearly more critical, less likely than the other survey respondents to rate any police function as being done ‘good’ and more likely to say ‘poorly’.

It is also interesting to compare the student and mail back samples in terms of whether they reported their victimization to the police. 58% of the adults in the mail back survey indicated that they always or often did so while only 38% of the student victims gave those responses. Nevertheless there was the same rank ordering of the

top three reasons when both groupings of victims when asked why they did not report victimization to the police, namely (a) the victimization was not serious enough; (b) the police could not do anything about it, and (c) the police would not do anything about it. The fourth most common reason given by the students was “It was too personal” while the fourth for the mail back survey respondents was “fear of reprisals”.

On the composite scale of assessment of policing made up of the nine questions, related to the effectiveness of the HRM police, the only significant differences observed were along the dimensions of area of residence and victimization. Students living in university residence, overall, were most likely to think that HRM police were doing a good job (72%). The lowest levels of approval were among students who lived in the South End but they only differed slightly from students living in Central-North Halifax or outside the peninsula (see Graph J). More detailed analyses suggest that the “university residence” effect may be a function of the fact that that sub-grouping reported significantly less victimization than the combined other students and also had twice the percentage of International students.

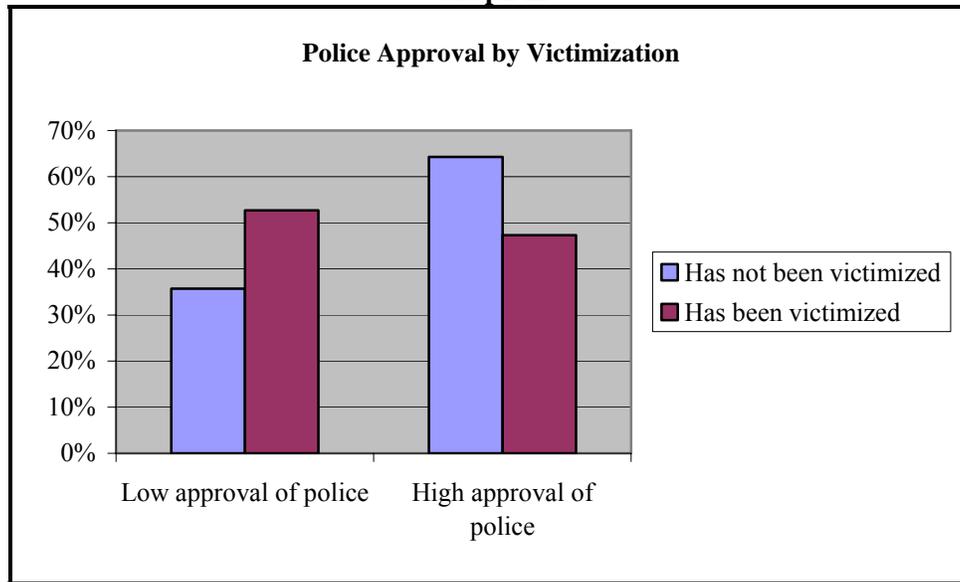
**Graph J**



*N=1367, p<.001*

A much stronger relationship was observed between victimization and police approval. As shown in Graph K, 54% of those who were victimized had a low approval of the job that HRM police were doing compared to 36% of those who reported no victimization. Students who were victimized gave significantly poorer assessments of the police service on each of the nine police functions. In a regression analysis (not shown) there were very few variables which had direct effects on the assessment scores with respect to the HRM police. Even with all variables included in previous regression, the model only accounted for 7% of the variation in police approval, with victimization having the largest direct effects, namely victims gave low approval ratings of the police services.

**Graph K**



*N=1470, r=-.16, p<.001*

In their write-in comments specifically for the question on police functions, there was a wide range of student opinions. A number were highly favorable such as, “I think they do a great job in a difficult position” and “For a police force that is understaffed they do the best they can and certainly do a good job”. Concerning enforcement, a significant number of students called for more police presence, especially at night and especially in the area of the Commons. Several students criticized the response times to their 911 calls as, for example, “Last year I found a guy peeping in my bedroom window when I took my dog outside. I called the police and they didn't show up until the next day”. Some of those who had been victimized complained about the quality of investigations that ensued, especially, allegedly, hearing comments from the police such as “There is nothing we can do about it” or “This is this worst neighbourhood so what do you expect”. A number of students questioned the priorities for enforcement seeing them as unfair to students, arguing along the lines that police are concentrating on open alcohol, underage drinking, drunkenness, busting house parties in the South End instead of going after violent criminals. A few students considered that police have a negative attitude towards university students; for example, one 23-year-old male student wrote, “The police seem to treat students as a second-class population compared to the non-student population.” A few students considered the police as serving more the interests of the rich and powerful than the poor and the students. Another few complained about what they perceived to be unnecessary rough treatment by an officer, such as “I've watched (while sober) cops tazered students walking away from a party that cops have come to break up”.

In their concluding comments many students returned to issues pertinent to policing. A major theme concerned the need for more police presence at night in the area of the Commons. One “out of province” female, living in Central Halifax, wrote, “The areas around the Commons are particularly vulnerable to attacks. I have lived near the Commons for two years and have never seen the police”. Another female, a longtime HRM resident, currently living in the South End, commented, “It seems as though there are a lot of police in certain areas such as Argyle St. on any given evening and fewer in places like the Commons that need attention. I have read so many pieces in the local newspapers about what local people think the city needs to be safer and it seems like everyone in authority disregards the obvious – patrols in the Commons. It's frustrating”. Still another student wrote “I feel like the police should be focusing more on making the Commons safe at night. They should put up more lights and patrol it at night. The police are aware that there are attacks on the Commons at night, and rather than simply advising people to avoid this area, they should make their presence [obvious] in order to diminish these attacks”. Other students cited alternative ways to provide security in the Commons area, including welcoming the Guardian Angels, a much discussed topic in HRM over the past several months. The Commons issue was cited by so many students in large part, it appears, because it is located strategically between places

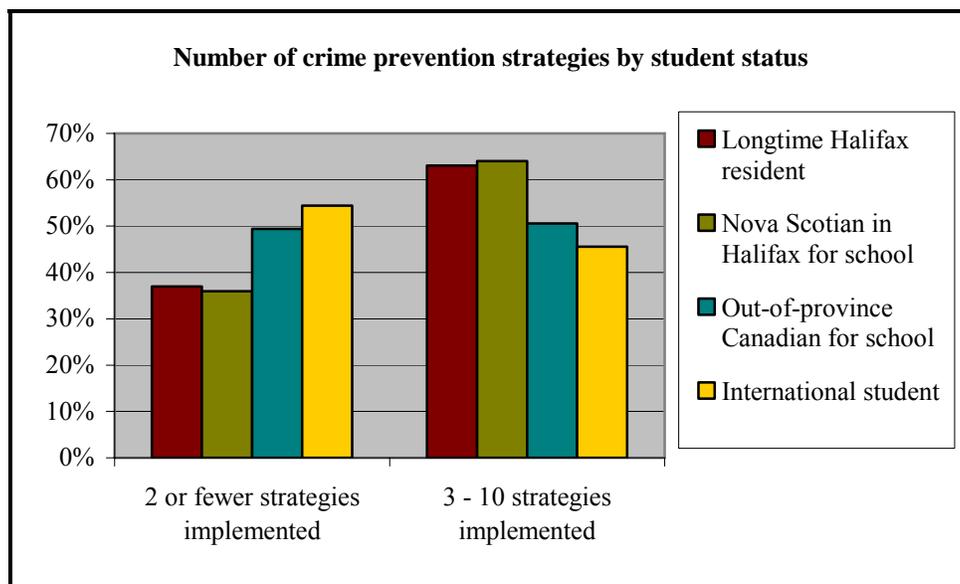
where they work or go for an evening out and their own residence, and because common modes of transportation for students (see below) include walking and cycling. More generally, the students' chief theme was the desirability of greater police presence and visibility at night outside the Downtown area which many think now has sufficient numbers of police officers; as one male, longtime HRM resident in Central Halifax wrote, "There are lots of police near the bars but not enough away from the bars which is where all the bad stuff happens and I am most afraid to go". Other concluding, written comments by the students reiterated their "different" views about the priorities of policing, primarily urging the police service to focus more on violent offenders, "swarmers" and the like and "less on minor offenses such as marijuana possession, bicycle helmet laws and busting up parties". There was implicit in much of the criticism that police focus too much on matters where the students are allegedly the offenders and not as much as they should on matters where the students are the victims.

While the students' survey did not ask for views on the criminal justice system, in their comments they expressed somewhat similar views as the respondents in the telephone and mail back surveys, chiefly that the justice system – the YCJA, adult sentencing – is too lenient and ineffective in dealing with serious offenses. One student captured this fairly common vantage point in his comment, "I think the police do a good job policing the North end, but once criminals are handed over to the judicial system, I think the criminals are not being dealt with properly (for example house arrest instead of jail time, or light sentences for violent assaults)". A male from elsewhere in Nova Scotia echoed these views "Cops can arrest everybody who commits a crime but it's up to the judges and prosecutors to punish these people. Longer, harsher punishments are what is needed if we really want to fix the violence problem here". Several students did articulate a more "social development" perspective when calling for the police and the City to respond more effectively to violence; for example, one male International student wrote, "When will the Police address swarmings? When will the City give restless youth some activities or small jobs to keep them from selling or using drugs"? Another student noted, "Arresting culprits and keeping them behind bars does not help. Steps have to be taken to give them counseling and put them in programs for them to better themselves and of course it will benefit our community. In the case of minors, get the parents involved and together they all should be counseled".

## 5. ADAPTATION OF CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The level of worry about being a victim of crime was also significantly related to the number of crime prevention strategies a student employed. A composite measure of ten crime prevention tactics (Q12a to Q12j) was created to analyze the types of strategies students were employing in their effort to protect themselves from personal and property crime. Having the perception that Halifax was a city with high crime influenced the number of strategies implemented ( $r=.29$ ), as did levels of fear and worry about being the victim of a personal crime ( $r=.40$ ). Whether a student was a native of Halifax, or from elsewhere in the province influenced the number of crime prevention strategies employed ( $\phi=.14$ ). As shown in Graph L, a higher percentage of longtime residents of Halifax, and those from other areas of Nova Scotia utilized three or more strategies to keep themselves safe from personal or property victimization.

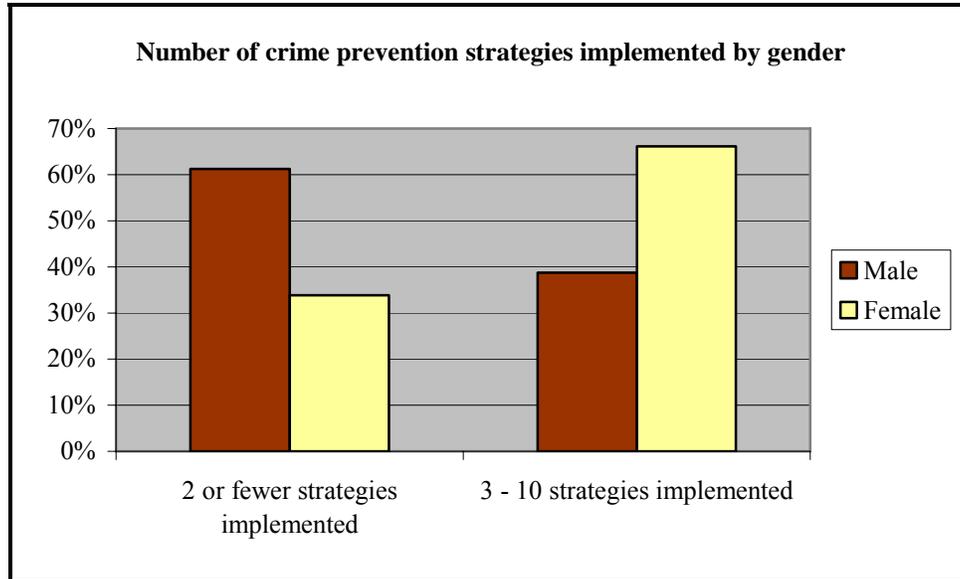
**Graph L**



*N=1382; p<.001*

This result was linked to the area in which the students lived, as crime prevention strategies were also lower for those who lived in residence ( $\phi=.12$ ). There were clearer differences in the number and ways by which male and female students approached crime prevention. Overall, 61% of females indicated that they had implemented 3 to 10 crime prevention strategies since being in Halifax, compared to only 34% of males.

**Graph M**



*N=1402; r=.26; p<.001*

Looking at the different types of strategies individually, the ones where there were significant gender differences in the strategies involved conduct while in public. There were no significant differences in the strategies that involved securing property. Virtually all of the comments entered by students were done by females. Here the chief strategies mentioned by frequency were (1) going out in pairs or larger groupings (by far the most frequent adaptation strategy), (2) carrying a cell phone (several students elaborated further; for example, one noted that she is always talking on the cell phone as she walks alone in the evening, and another commented that she always keeps her cell phone in her hand with the Dalhousie Security number at the ready; (3) simply not going out in the evening (e.g., a female wrote, “I’ve just decided not to go out”). Other adaptive strategies included avoiding certain places such as the Commons.

**Table 7**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>All</b>
Planned route with safety in mind***	56%	81%	73%
Has changed routine or avoided certain places ***	46%	62%	57%
Locked car doors for personal safety when alone in the car***	42%	68%	60%
Has carried something to defend self or alert others***	25%	42%	37%
Took a self defense class*	8%	12%	10%
Used the student security van***	7%	16%	13%

*N ranges from 1399 to 1401;\*\*\*p<.001, \*p<.05*

A regression analysis on the number of crime prevention strategies a student employed - that considered only the objective factors of gender, victimization, minority status, age, number of times a student went out in an evening in a month, how long the student has been a resident of Halifax, residential area and student status or home base - accounted for 13% of the variation in strategies with gender having the largest direct effects. When the subjective measures of fear and worry, approval of HRM police, perception of crime in HRM and levels of trust in neighbours were also included, the model (2) captured 21% of the explained variance in crime prevention strategies, with worry about being a victim of crime having the largest direct effects on strategies. The differences in these regression models are seen in Table 8. The top three determinants of the overall number of adaptations utilized were high fear and worry about person victimization, being female, and years lived in Halifax.

**Table 8**

Dependent Variable=Number of crime prevention strategies	<b>Model 1</b> N=1285 r <sup>2</sup> =.13	<b>Model 2</b> N=1285 r <sup>2</sup> =.21
	β	β
Student Status ( <i>longtime Halifax resident as reference category</i> )		
Out-of-province Canadian	-.11***	-.08**
International Student	-.07*	n/s
Victim of crime in Halifax	.14***	.11***
Female	.27***	.20***
Minority	.08**	.05**
Number of years in Halifax	.14***	.14***
Trust in unknown neighbours		-.05*
Perception of Crime		.10***
Approval of HRM Police		-.06**
Worry about person victimization		.21***

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

## 6. STUDENT ACTIVITY AND ATTITUDES ABOUT DOWNTOWN

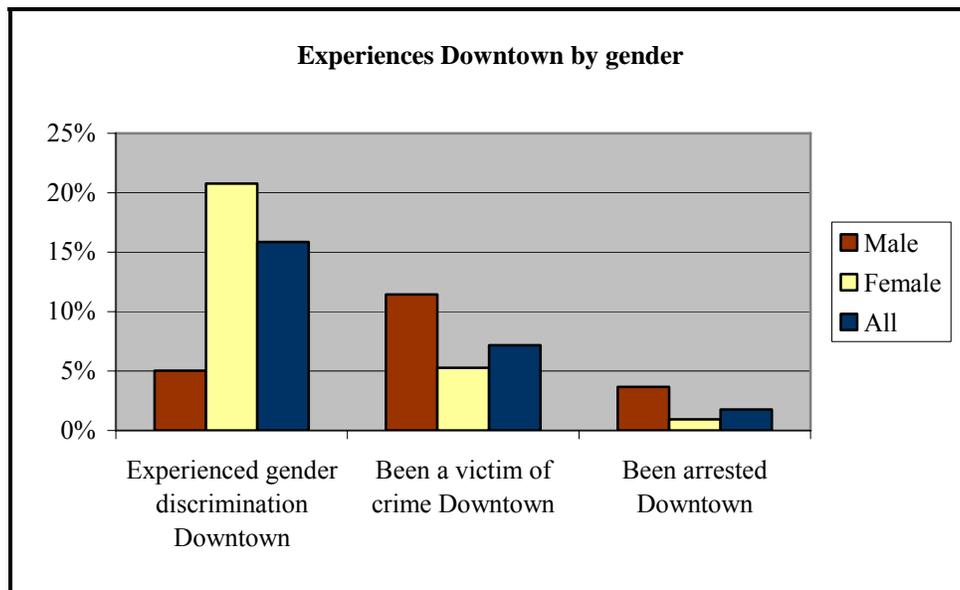
On average students reported going to bars, pubs and clubs about 3-4 times a month (Q8d). Students indicated that while Downtown they had experienced a variety of criminal acts and felt that they had been discriminated against in a variety of ways. Table 9 shows the percentages of the whole sample who indicated that they had either personally experienced or witnessed a crime, and /or who felt they had been discriminated against. While 30% indicated that they had witnessed a crime while in Downtown Halifax in the evening, only 7% reported actually being a victim of crime there themselves. Further, 16% of students reported being the victim of gender discrimination while Downtown in the evening. 2% reported that they had been arrested at least once.

**Table 9**

While Downtown Halifax in the evening, have you:	Yes
Witnessed a crime	30%
Experienced gender discrimination	16%
Experienced age discrimination	12%
Been a victim of crime	7%
Experienced racial discrimination	7%
Experienced medical attention or been treated for an injury	6%
Experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation	5%
Been arrested	2%

There were differences in the Downtown experiences among male student and female students, particularly in regards to gender discrimination ( $r=.20$ ), being a victim of crime while Downtown ( $r=.11$ ), and getting arrested ( $r=.10$ ). Graph N shows these differences.

**Graph N**



$N=1405; p<.001$

With 21% of females reporting gender discrimination, it is not surprising (see table 10) that almost half (48%) thought that bouncers and bar staff did not treat students fairly. However, females were more likely than males to believe they are treated fairly by bar staff while Downtown; 52% of females compared to 44% of males.

Table 10 clearly established that the Downtown milieu (the “night time economy”) is seen as more dangerous by females; indeed, only a fifth of the female respondents considered it wise to go Downtown alone in the evening. Still, both male and female students in about equal numbers reported assaults; for example one Nova Scotian from outside HRM but currently living in the South End, wrote, “Halifax crime rate is becoming a major problem, especially in the area of assaults, walking alone downtown can be very dangerous. I have been assaulted a few times...usually by a group of males for no reason at all. I also know several other people who have had this problem, especially when walking home from a bar”.

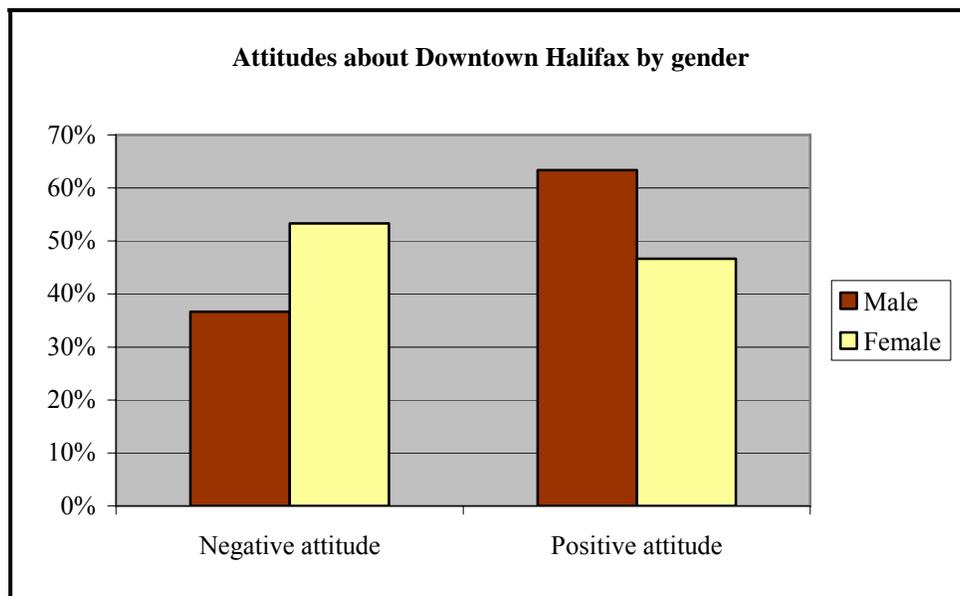
**Table 10**

<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
I feel safe in Downtown Halifax during the evening***	66%	42%	50%
There are enough police in Downtown Halifax*	50%	44%	46%
Bouncers at bars, pubs and clubs treat students fairly**	44%	52%	50%
It is okay to go to Downtown alone in the evenings***	39%	21%	26%
It is dangerous to go to Downtown Halifax during the evening**	28%	36%	33%

*N ranges from 1082 to 1261; \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$*

On a composite score of seven measures of Downtown attitudes (Q16a to q16g), males were far more inclined to have positive attitudes about Downtown Halifax than females, as shown in Graph O. Despite females’ negative attitudes, there were only small differences in the average number of times males and females went Downtown in the evening ( $\eta = .05$ ), males indicating going Downtown to bars and pubs about 4 times a month and females about 3 times a month.

**Graph O**

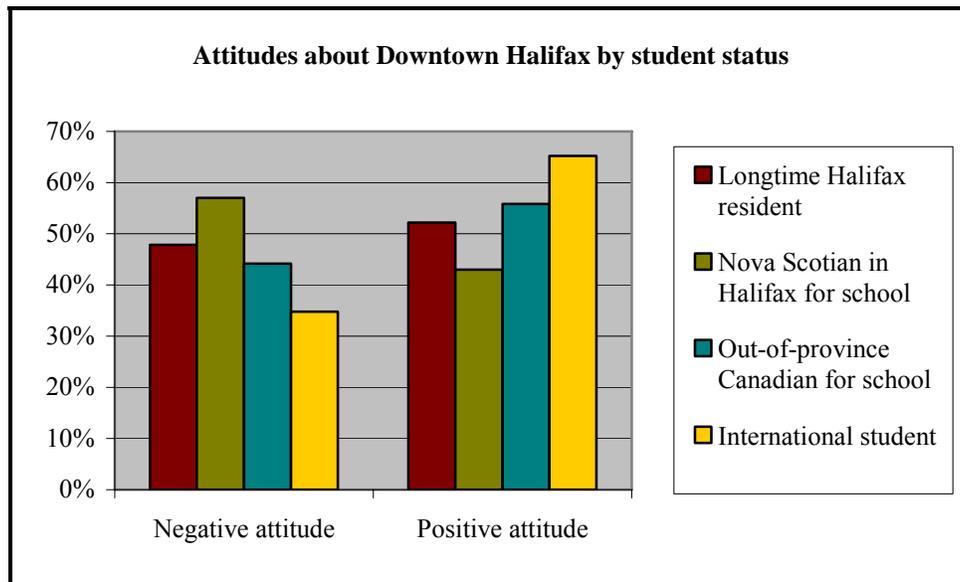


*N=1023 r=.16;  $p < .001$*

Looking at attitudes by students’ home base or geographic origin (Graph P), the highest proportion of positive attitudes was observed among international students (65%), followed by out of province students (55%). Interestingly, students from elsewhere in Nova Scotia were the sub-group who had the lowest proportion of

positive attitudes about downtown (42%). It is possible that this difference stems from different rural-urban views about the city as demonstrated in the outside-HRM, Nova Scotian students' higher levels of fear about victimization and perception that Halifax is a city with high crime.

**Graph P**



*N=975;phi=.12, p<.001*

A regression analysis, examining a number of positive (and reversed negative) attitudes about the Downtown, that considered only the objective factors of gender, victimization, minority status, age, number of times a student went out in an evening in a month, how long the student has been a resident of Halifax, residential area and student status, accounted for 6% of the variation in Downtown attitudes with gender and being a victim of crime having the largest direct effects. When the subjective measures of fear and worry, approval of HRM police, perception of crime in HRM, number of crime prevention strategies employed, and levels of trust in neighbours were also included, the model (2) captured 28% of the explained variance, with perception of crime having the largest direct effects on Downtown attitudes. The differences in these regression models are seen in Table 11. In the full model, the only variables positively related to positive views about the Downtown were Central –North residence and positive assessment of policing while perception of high crime levels, high worry of victimization, and utilization of many crime prevention strategies were negatively related; the impact of victimization and gender was reduced to insignificance.

**Table 11**

Dependent Variable=Attitudes about downtown Halifax	Model 1 N=948 r <sup>2</sup> =.06	Model 2 N=948 r <sup>2</sup> =.28
	β	β
Student Status ( <i>longtime Halifax resident as reference category</i> )		
Nova Scotian student	-.08**	n/s
International Student	.07*	n/s
Victim of crime in Halifax	-.15***	n/s
Male	.15***	n/s
Minority	.08*	.08*
Residential Area ( <i>South End resident as reference category</i> )		
Central/North End Halifax	.09*	.09**
Number of years in Halifax		.06*
High Perception of Crime		-.25***
Number of crime prevention adaptations		-.12***
Approval of HRM Police		.13***
Worry about person victimization		-.23***

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

When comparing the average number of times students went Downtown, those living in Halifax who came from elsewhere in Nova Scotia were frequenting Downtown bars and pubs about 3 times a month, which was roughly the same as international students and longtime Halifax residents. Out of province students reported going Downtown about 4 times a month. A comparison of the average number of times students went Downtown can be seen in Table 12. Where a student lived also influenced the number of times a student was frequenting Downtown bars and pubs. Despite the notion that it is individuals who are coming into the Downtown from outside the peninsula to party, in the case of the student sample, this was not the pattern reported. Those who were living outside the peninsula reported going to Downtown bars an average of about 2 times a month. It was students living in the South End of Halifax which were frequenting bars the most, reporting an average of about 4 Downtown visits to bars or pubs a month.

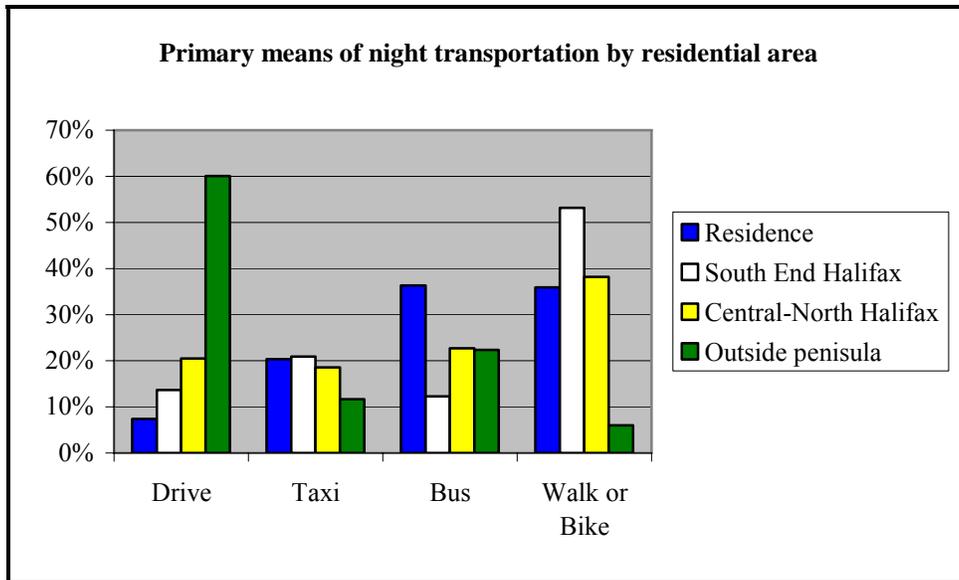
**Table 12**

	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Male	3.6	425	3.6
Female	3.2	955	3.6
Longtime Halifax resident	2.8	413	3.3
Nova Scotian	3.3	316	3.3
Out of province Canadian	3.8	494	3.7
International student	3.4	99	4.2
Residence	2.5	231	3.3
South End Halifax	4.2	457	3.7
Central-North End Halifax	3.7	360	3.5
Outside Peninsula	2.3	311	2.7

Of the students who indicated that they never went Downtown Halifax in the evening, the reasons they gave were related to issues of personal safety, no need to go downtown, and a lack of transportation options to get them in and out of the city. A 22-year-old female student stated, “I don't like the bar scene in Halifax. I don't feel very safe at all knowing that there has been past incidents of crime downtown. Makes me uncomfortable and I'd just prefer to avoid those areas.” A 25-year old male student added, “Just not into the downtown scene, nothing to do with safety, I just don't go.” Most students indicated that after being out in the evening, they would most likely get themselves home by walking or biking; 35% said this was their primary mode of transportation in the evening

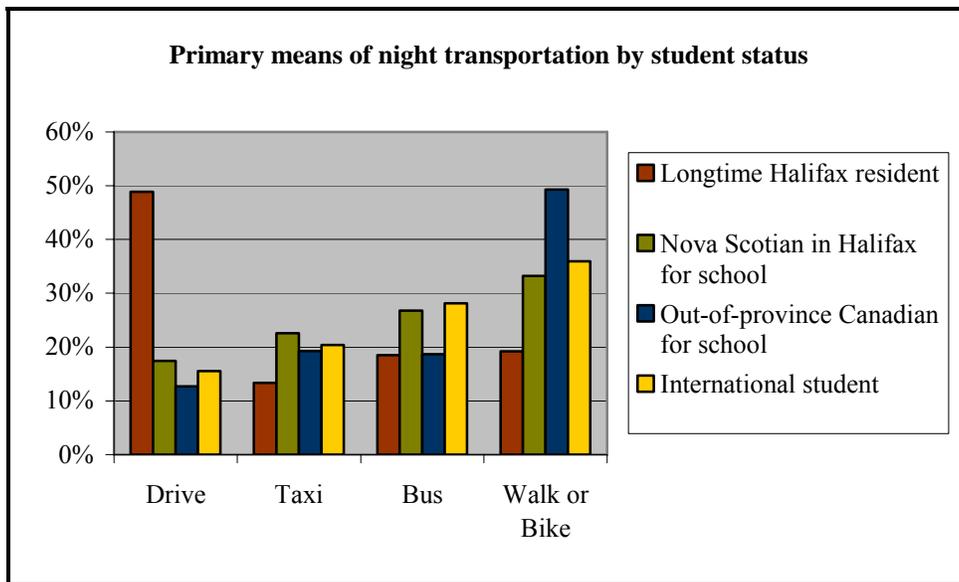
followed by 26% of students who drove, 21% who took the bus and 21% who used taxis. Unsurprisingly, a greater proportion of males indicated that they primarily walked; 44% compared to 31% of females. The highest proportion of walkers was reported among students who lived in the South End (53%) and among out-of-province students (49%), as shown in Graph Q and R.

**Graph Q**



*N=1365; phi=.53, p<.001*

**Graph R**



*N=1327; phi=.40, p<.001*

In their comments, many students indicated that they would use public transit more, if there was better nighttime service. Further, they believed that lack of public transit was a safety issue. A 26-year-old female student noted, “I rarely go Downtown, not because I think it's unsafe, but traveling to and from is dangerous. It's hard to get a cab or other transportation and I usually end up waiting on the street alone for a while.” Another 23-

year-old female student wrote, "I am unhappy with the public transit in Halifax, specifically, how infrequent the service is and how early the bus routes end. I often have trouble getting a taxi at night, and end up walking, although this makes me feel unsafe." An increase in Metro Transit routes along student destinations (buses 1, 10, 14, 17, 18, 80, etc.) would be tremendously helpful in getting people home. It can be very tempting to simply walk home when the next bus isn't coming for 25 minutes. + Why aren't busses free after midnight? The students frequently called attention, too, to unsafe design and demographic features of the Downtown; one longtime female student wrote, "The only parts of the Downtown where I feel unsafe are those which are not properly lit and which have the fewest people around. It's not hard to stay away from these areas but if you're walking alone, especially as a female, there are many areas which can cause you to feel worry".

Another major characteristic of the written comments was the frequent reference to other areas of the urban area as being at least if not more unsafe than the Downtown in the evening. As noted elsewhere the Commons was cited the most in this regard but there were a number of references also to North End Dartmouth, and more surprisingly to the campus area of Dalhousie. Several students wrote in comments about feeling unsafe on campus in the evening and one student articulated that concern as follows, "I really think that Dalhousie needs to up its Security. Again, Queens' University security would have student updates about goings-on on campus. There was also a website where student could see all the events where security was called out (e.g. fire alarm, mischievous behaviour, someone reported stealing bicycles, etc). There were also tips on the security website about the right bike locks to buy to prevent your bike being stolen. I've already commented on inadequacy the night time security at Dalhousie as well. Altogether I think that Dalhousie University security- particularly the night time hours - is quite inadequate. As a grad student, night-time work is part of our life and I feel I can't stay on campus at night to do it as I'm too vulnerable". While undoubtedly appreciative of services such as Tiger Patrol (Dalhousie), a number of students wrote some criticisms and suggestions for improvement; for example one student commented, "It ends long before you are going home' if you [I] go out to the bars normally I won't be home until 2 or 3 am". Another student commented, "The Tiger patrol vans need to be available always going both north and south. I have walked home many times past 12am because they said they were only going the opposite way I was going (i.e. north). You can't have a service that is suppose to make sure students get home safely and then not drive them home because they "can only go one way". Many times I have been very unhappy with this service".

## **PART C: RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THE STUDENT SURVEY ANALYSES**

It is clear that the post-secondary and university students in HRM are a considerable stimulus for the HRM economy and help to define a quality of life that makes Halifax so attractive to HRM residents and outsiders. The Roundtable report contains data showing the economic contribution associated with the high percentage of university students who come here from outside HRM, other provinces and other countries. A recent ACOA study, cited at the Roundtable, apparently found that a significant factor in such students coming to Halifax has been their perception that it is a safe place to be. It is important to ensure that such a perception will always be well-founded. Recently, or earlier, a number of initiatives have been undertaken which focus on the student-related safety issues. There has been increased collaboration between the Dalhousie University officials / security staff and the HRPS police. Two examples are the HRPS special Dalhousie Patrol project and the HRPS Community Response Team's engagement with the university (Kings included) residences, and dealing (often through a form of mediation) with community – student conflict. According to councillors, community spokespersons and police sources, there has been a significant improvement in the reduction of social disorder and property damage, although there still are a significant number of community complaints. Dalhousie University has increased its security activity especially in the campus area. In addition to the 25 full-time, trained security staff, there are about 100 students employed part-time during the school year as attendants in major university buildings or with the Tiger Patrol. The latter involves some forty students engaged (on a scheduled basis) between 6.30 pm and 12.30 am in either walking 'patrols' or providing free transportation (the van service follows a published schedule and extends beyond the campus though not into the Downtown). Dalhousie Security has long provided self-defence information (basically a one evening session), an emergency call number (4109) and in March 2008 announced an additional emergency response notification initiative accessible by registered student (and others) cell-phone. Over the past five years the average annual number of assaults on its campus has been 1.5.

While there have been initiatives and changes it appears also to be true that students and officials, whether HRM or University, have different models of what the central public safety issues may be. All models have both a preservative and explanatory function, rooted in both interests and evidence-based accounting. The students' model in our survey essentially posited a few major themes, one is that too much attention is paid to them as troublemakers and minor offenders and not enough to them as victims of sometimes serious threats and assaults occurring Downtown or in transit to and from it. Another theme is that police and other officials give exaggerated, overkill aggressive response to minor alcoholic-induced disturbance, and a third is that too much attention is focused on their consumption of alcohol and not enough on the security at bars, the training of the bouncers and so on. On the other hand, police and security people are more likely to point to the community complaints (especially in the South End), to note that many public safety measures are in place, and to emphasize the problem of alcohol abuse which may discount public safety measures. To some degree the two models "talk past one another".

When representatives of the Halifax University Student Alliance approached the mayor's Roundtable's project leader in October 2007 with their wish to become more engaged in the Roundtable, they indicated that the reality and the perception of violence and public safety among students are crucial for several reasons, namely (a) personal safety, (b) the value of their degree, (c) the reputation of the universities, and (d) the possibility of inaction contributing to an already declining university enrollment (both Saint Mary's and Dalhousie experienced such declines in the past two years). In their presentation at the Roundtable in mid-November, the student leaders strongly emphasized that "We want more collaboration with the municipality". The students, at the Roundtable and at a subsequent workshop in January 2008, also advanced recommendations for restorative justice initiatives, and improved relationships with HRPS police ("We should try working with the police") and the university's security staff. Indeed, the student calls for the development of a more collaborative and trusting relationship among all parties should be a priority given the crime and violence that happen to students, the crime and disorder / property damage they cause and the significance of the universities for HRM. The above analyses do support the concerns they raised and it is hoped that the recommendations noted below will contribute to positive change.

1. A more effective partnership between the HRPS, campus security and student organizations should be explored for purposes both of student safety and improved communications between the HRPS and the universities and colleges. Currently HRPS does have informational sessions with students in residence at least at the beginning of the school year, and the Dalhousie Patrol, under a cost-sharing agreement between Dalhousie and HRM, provides extra patrol on certain evenings in certain months (October and November and January through March). These and other programs have had positive effects for responding to the community complaints about vandalism, liquor violations and disturbances. Perhaps other universities and colleges should examine their collaboration with HRPS along similar lines. All campus liaison with the HRPS could likely do more in terms of crime prevention programs to reduce violence against students, assisting student victims, improving the communication and other collaboration between HRPS and campus security, and providing the students or their representatives with a conduit to encourage more reporting of violence to the authorities, and to bring forth their concerns about, what they feel, is inadequate or unfair treatment by the police.
2. It is clear from the gender differences noted throughout the survey analyses that females generally feel more worried about their personal safety in Halifax. Despite the use of more personal strategies to adapt to their feelings of vulnerability, female students have higher levels of anxiety about being attacked. While the overall social factors that generate female anxiety about personal safety are complex, the Universities and their Student Services could implement small and student-led programs which could provide female students with more piece of mind, such as formalized buddy systems for walking around and in the vicinity of campus after dark, or providing female students with a small alarm device that they could use to alert people in the event of trouble, and perhaps offering more awareness and informational sessions, bringing together students, security officials and persons with other expertise, on how to avoid, or, if necessary, respond to violence or threats of violence. Male students' concern about violence should also be responded to along similar lines.
3. Based on students' views about the inefficiency of public transit options in the evenings, the municipality may want to consider re-adjusting night-time schedules for Metro Transit, at least within the peninsula, on weekends. Given the high proportions of student "walkers" living in the South End, which happens to be the area where most complaints of drunk and disorderly behaviour and a good number of the assaults occur, it is possible that such a transportation policy could lower the incidences of such conduct while students make their way home after a night of Downtown recreation or work. Adding more public transit options at night provides safe alternatives, not only for students, but for all residents of Halifax. Perhaps, given the importance of the so-called "night-time economy" to HRM and Nova Scotia, a system of free transportation could be prudently implemented after midnight, along the line of FRED (i.e. free rides everywhere Downtown) which was initiated to facilitate the movement of tourists; it should be noted that HRM already provides subsidized bus passes for students and others.
4. It is clear that there are significant property damage, disturbances and bylaw infractions caused by some students going to and from the Downtown "under the influence" and, also, other offenses and minor assaults. A restorative justice, extra-judicial sanction, program should be established as detailed elsewhere in this report for minor, off-campus offending. Such a special project could underline the inappropriateness if not criminality of the acts and, by engaging both the student councils and local community in the restorative justice process, do much to reduce those public safety problems and instill more trust among students, community members and officials. An additional advantage is that accountability may be achieved without the students getting a criminal record. Protocols can readily be put in place (e.g., eligibility, type of sanctions, operational and organizational issues), drawing upon the considerable experience in these regards of Corrections' Adult Diversion and/or the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program. Such a program has proven effective in responding to similar off-campus university-community concerns in the Antigonish area.

5. As noted in the introduction to this section, security, police officials and other observers and authorities have emphasized that excessive alcohol consumption and attendant social disorder and property damage are central to student problems in the Downtown, Central Halifax and the South End. Some students in their on-line comments also drew attention to these issues. Both these issues could benefit from the restorative justice initiative being proposed since the extra-judicial sanctions could include, where appropriate, restitution, community service and / or referrals to alcohol and drug counseling.
6. There are some serious crimes against the person that occur Downtown or to and fro Downtown at late night or early morning, including gangs of predators assaulting the students and sexual and other serious assaults. These require not only police presence and investigation – largely in effect already - but also better collaboration among HRPS, the Downtown bars, and the students. The suggestion of police liaison noted above would help achieve this and other salient recommendations can readily be advanced by the implementation committee that is recommended in the text.
7. Students raised a number of issues concerning campus security and improving services already in existence such as the Tiger Patrol at Dalhousie. From evidence noted elsewhere in this report, it does appear that University – community – police initiatives have been quite successful in diminishing vandalism and public order problems. The view of many students is that violence and their own victimization needs to be given more attention by campus officials and the police, and that is a reasonable position. For example, the problems of perceived dangers walking or biking at or near the Commons are not trivial nor are they easily dealt with by students who not only “party” Downtown but who work there in order to afford their university attendance; the Commons area is a strategic nodal point for walkers and bicyclists going and coming back from the Downtown (including Spring Garden Road) and other areas. A student suggestion advanced in the January 2008 workshop at Dalhousie that there should be some exploration of students’ use of the Tiger Patrol (especially why, reportedly, many students do not use it) has merit.
8. Students raised a number of other possible recommendations consistent with the safety thrusts of HRM by Design (e.g., more people living Downtown may yield greater public safety) and the CPTED approach (e.g., better lighting) that are applicable to many areas in HRM including their own campus areas.
9. In the larger perspective about violence and public safety, student recommendations for, on the one hand, more strict sentencing for violent offenses, and on the other, more strategic planning to get at underlying social factors, generally are congruent with the views of the public at large, with perhaps slightly more focus on the “social development” approach (including how to deal with the culture of substance abuse) on the part of the students.