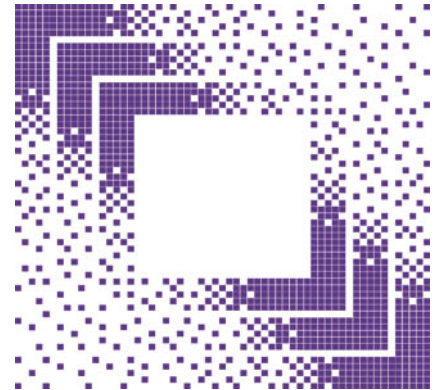




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General Social Survey on Victimization, Cycle 18: An Overview of Findings

2004



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Statistics Canada
Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division

General Social Survey on Victimization, Cycle 18: An Overview of Findings

2004

By Maire Gannon

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Note of appreciation

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Highlights

- According to the 2004 General Social Survey, six in ten Canadians believe that crime was lower in their neighbourhood than elsewhere in Canada. The same proportion of Canadians was of the opinion that crime levels in their neighbourhood were unchanged over the past five years.
- Satisfaction with personal safety has continued to grow since 1993 and now stands at 94% of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over. The figure remains high but is somewhat lower when Canadians are asked to rate their feelings of safety in a variety of situations. For instance, four out of five people (80%) indicated that they were not at all worried when home alone at night.
- Canadians living in the Atlantic provinces were generally less fearful of crime. In 2004, 97% of residents in Newfoundland and Labrador and 96% of residents in Prince Edward Island felt safe walking alone at night, while the same was true for 88% of people living in British Columbia and Quebec.
- While fear of crime is generally higher among women than men, the difference has narrowed since 1999. This can be attributed to the fact that women's level of personal safety has improved, while men's overall feelings of safety and safety in particular situations has only marginally increased or remained unchanged.
- Not surprisingly, fear of crime tends to be more pronounced for Canadians who believe they live in a neighbourhood where crime is higher than elsewhere and who think that neighbourhood crime has increased in the past five years.
- When asked to assess the criminal justice sectors, the majority of Canadians were satisfied with police. As was the case in previous victimization surveys, opinions on the criminal courts, prison and parole systems were less favourable. Nevertheless, positive assessments of the courts and prisons have generally increased since 1999.
- In 2004, there were inter-provincial differences in satisfaction with the criminal justice sectors. While people in the Western provinces were less likely to give positive assessment, confidence levels in these provinces have not worsened but have either improved or stayed the same, depending on the criminal justice sector and functions.
- Age plays a role in how Canadians rate the criminal justice sectors. Positive attitudes toward the police generally increased with age, while favourable perceptions of the courts, prison and parole systems were more common in younger Canadians.

Introduction

In 2004, Statistics Canada conducted its fourth General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization – previous cycles were carried out in 1988, 1993, and 1999. This survey asks Canadians aged 15 years and older about their experiences of being a victim of crime, their fear and perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system. As with previous cycles on victimization, the 2004 survey introduced new questions on current justice issues.

This report provides a first look at the results of the 2004 General Social Survey by examining how Canadians¹ perceive crime and the criminal justice sectors. Descriptive statistics are provided for various measures of perception, with differences highlighted across sex, age groups, and provinces.² In addition, the report explores the public's fear of becoming a victim of crime and their general feelings of personal safety.

This report is divided into two sections. The first half examines Canadians' perceptions of crime in their neighbourhoods, their fear of crime and general satisfaction with personal safety from crime. The second section looks at the public's assessment of the criminal justice system, including the police, criminal courts, prison and parole systems.

Section 1: Perceptions and fear of crime

Canadians' perceptions of crime in their community can be shaped by a number of factors, including their own personal and household victimization; experiences of those close to them; and media reports of criminal incidents. These views were measured in the 2004 General Social Survey with questions on the perceived level of crime in the respondent's neighbourhood compared to other areas in Canada and the perceived crime trends in the respondent's neighbourhood.

Most Canadians believe that crime is lower in their neighbourhood

As was the case in previous victimization surveys, most Canadians believe that crime is lower in their neighbourhood than elsewhere in Canada. About six in ten Canadians (59%) had this opinion, while a further three in ten (29%) thought neighbourhood crime levels were about the same as in other neighbourhoods. A small proportion of Canadians (9%) felt their neighbourhood experienced higher rates of crime. The remaining 3% of the population did not know or did not state an opinion.

1. Data collected in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut as part of a pilot test are not included in this analysis.

2. These differences are statistically significant, unless otherwise noted. A significance level of $p < .05$ is used in this report. This means that there is less than a 5% probability that the survey (sample) data will suggest that two groups are significantly different, when no difference actually exists in the population.

While a majority of residents in nearly all provinces thought their neighbourhood had less crime, those residing in the Atlantic provinces³ were most likely to have this opinion (Table 1). Proportionally speaking, between 72% and 87% of residents of Atlantic provinces felt this way. In comparison, the share of Canadians west of Atlantic Canada who believed that the crime rate was lower in their community ranged from 49% in Quebec to 62% in Ontario and Saskatchewan.

Six in ten people believe crime rates in their neighbourhood have been stable over the past five years

Results from the 2004 GSS reveal that almost six in ten Canadians (58%) believed that their neighbourhood crime rate has remained unchanged over the past five years. Another 30% of the population were of the opinion that crime had worsened in their community, while 6% expressed the belief that crime had dropped. In general, opinions have improved since 1993, when Canadians were more likely to say that crime in their neighbourhood was on the rise (46%) than they were to say that crime was unchanged from five years earlier (43%).

Residents of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador were the least likely to believe that neighbourhood crime had worsened (Table 2). In particular, 23% of the population in these provinces felt that crime had increased over the past five years. In comparison, these feelings were highest among Canadians in the two westernmost provinces, Alberta and British Columbia (35% and 36%, respectively).

The vast majority of Canadians are satisfied with their personal safety from crime

Fear of crime can be measured by feelings of satisfaction with personal safety from crime and an individual's anticipated fear of or worry about becoming a victim. The 2004 GSS asked respondents about their overall satisfaction with their own personal safety from crime, as well as their level of fear of crime in three situations: being home alone at night, taking public transportation at night, and walking alone after dark. These questions focused on general feelings of security, as opposed to individuals' fear of certain types of crime.

In 2004, the overwhelming majority of Canadians were satisfied with their safety from being a victim and this proportion is growing. Fully, 94% of Canadians indicated that they were somewhat or very satisfied with their safety from crime, up from 91% in 1999 and 86% in 1993.

The figure remains high but is slightly lower when considering specific situations. For example, nine in ten Canadians (90%) who walk alone in their neighbourhood at night

3. Atlantic provinces include Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

felt safe doing so – 46% felt ‘reasonably safe’ and 44% felt ‘very safe’ (Table 3).⁴ This represents a continuing positive trend, up from 88% in 1999 and 86% in 1993. Although overall anxiety is low, fear seems to reduce participation in walking activities. Among the 61% of Canadians who walk alone at night but do so less frequently than daily, about four in ten said they would walk more often if they felt safer.

Of those individuals who stayed at home alone in the evening or at night, 80% believed that being in this situation was not at all worrisome, the same proportion as in 1999.^{5,6} Waiting for and using public transportation alone after dark remains the most fear-inducing among the three situations presented to respondents. In 2004, fewer than six in ten (57%) were not at all worried about being a victim of a crime when using public transportation alone at night.⁷ A further 38% of Canadians who relied on transit services at night indicated that they were ‘somewhat worried’ and 5% of the population were ‘very worried’. When asked if they would take public transportation more often if they felt safer from crime, half of non-daily night transit riders indicated that they would.⁸

Compared to earlier victimization surveys, however, taking public transportation has become slightly less frightening. The share of the population who were not at all worried increased from 54% in 1999 to 57% in 2004.

Residents of Atlantic Canada less fearful of crime

At the provincial level, there were some differences in Canadians’ perceived level of safety, which appear to follow regional patterns in crime rates (Table 4). Feelings of satisfaction with personal safety from crime were highest in the East, with the majority of individuals stating that they were ‘very satisfied’ with their safety from crime. This was most evident in Newfoundland and Labrador, where 71% of the population were very satisfied and 28% said they were somewhat satisfied with their personal safety.

While the remaining provinces also experienced relatively high levels of satisfaction with personal safety, the population tended to be evenly split between those who were “very” and “somewhat” satisfied with their safety. For example, in Manitoba, 46% of the population was very satisfied and another 47% was somewhat satisfied. The one departure from this pattern was in Quebec, where residents were far more likely to say they were somewhat satisfied (66%) with their safety from crime than very satisfied (27%).

4. Includes only responses of people who walked alone in their area after dark. In 2004, 76% of Canadians engaged in this activity.

5. For both 1999 and 2004, the figures exclude the estimated 1% of the population that is never home alone.

6. For 1993, the estimate includes the population who is never home alone and is therefore not comparable with 1999 and 2004.

7. Includes only responses of Canadians who waited for or used public transportation alone at night. In 2004, 25% of Canadians engaged in this activity.

8. Includes responses of non-daily night transit riders, which represent an estimated 21% of Canadians aged 15 years and over.

In terms of engaging in activities at night, the greatest inter-provincial variation in feelings of safety was found in using public transportation at night, with a difference of 37 percentage points between the highest and lowest ranking provinces. In particular, 46% of Manitobans who rely on public transit at night said they were not at all worried taking it alone, while this was the case for 83% of night transit riders in Newfoundland and Labrador and 74% in New Brunswick. In the remaining provinces, between 52% and 62% of people felt safe when taking public transportation at night.⁹

Similarly, feelings of safety while walking alone or being home alone at night were most prevalent in Newfoundland and Labrador (97% and 88%) and Prince Edward Island (96% and 87%) and less prevalent, but still high, in British Columbia (88% and 78%) and Quebec (88% and 79%).

Vast majority of men and women are satisfied with personal safety

Overall, feelings of personal safety were slightly higher among men (95%) than women (93%) (Table 5). While there has been a general increase in levels of personal satisfaction with safety among both men and women since 1999, women's feelings of personal safety improved at a greater rate than those of men (+5 percentage points versus +2 percentage points). This has resulted in a narrowing of the gender difference in feelings of safety.

Considerable gender-specific variations in fear of crime, however, can be seen when examining specific activities at night. In 2004, feelings of anxiety about being victimized while waiting for or using public transportation at night were more prevalent among women than men.¹⁰ Indeed, twice as many women than men were worried when relying on public transit alone at night (58% versus 29%). Likewise, women expressed higher levels of fear than men when home alone at night (27% versus 12%) and walking alone after dark (16% versus 6%). For all three situations, women's fear of crime has dropped slightly since 1999, while men's level of fear remained stable.

While fear of crime is greater for women than men across all age groups, with the exception of overall feeling of personal safety, women's concerns about being victimized generally decrease with age and men's fear remains the same or increases (Table 5). For example, 79% of women aged 15 to 24 felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.¹¹ These feelings of safety increase to 87% for women aged 65 and over. Alternatively, 94% of young men aged 15 to 24 felt safe walking alone. This figure drops slightly to 91% for older men aged 65 and over.

When age is examined independently, age differences were modest or non-existent. The greatest difference was found for safety using public transportation at night. In this instance, the population aged 65 and over was somewhat more confident with their safety than those aged 45 to 64 (64% versus 57%).

9. Excludes Prince Edward Island because the estimate is too unreliable to be published.

10. Includes only responses of Canadians who use public transportation alone at night.

11. Includes only responses of Canadians who walk alone at night in their neighbourhood.

Lower levels of fear among those who frequently walk and use public transportation

Individuals who regularly walked alone or took public transportation at night were less likely to be fearful. This may suggest that lower levels of fear have the effect of increasing participation in nightly activities, or that people who engage in these activities believe, based on personal experience, that the probability of being a victim is not significant.

In 2004, 92% of Canadians who walked alone after dark on a daily basis felt safe doing so, compared to 81% of those who walked alone after dark less than once a month. Similarly, while 61% of people who use public transit at night on a daily basis were not at all worried, this percentage declines to 53% for those who use it less than once per month.

Fear highest for those who believe they live in higher crime neighbourhoods

In addition to demographic and lifestyle differences between individuals, levels of fear can also be affected by perceptions of crime in the immediate environment. If the neighbourhood is viewed as dangerous, individuals may have increased concerns about their own safety. This appears to be the case based on the results from the 2004 GSS.

Among individuals who thought that the level of crime in their neighbourhood was higher than in other parts of Canada, 18% of them were dissatisfied with their personal safety. In comparison, 6% of Canadians who thought local crime was the same as elsewhere were dissatisfied, and only 3% who believed that local crime rates were lower felt the same way.

This association between perceived level of crime and fear of victimization also holds true for activities taking place at night: being home alone at night, taking public transportation at night, and walking alone after dark. Furthermore, Canadians who believe that local crime had worsened were most likely to be fearful. For example, 17% of individuals who thought crime had increased felt unsafe walking alone at night,¹² compared to 9% of those who thought crime had dropped.

Section 2: Perceptions of the criminal justice system

One way to measure the public's confidence in the criminal justice system is to examine the public's evaluation of its performance. Individuals responding to the 2004 General Social Survey were asked about their perceptions of four sectors of the criminal justice system: police, courts, prison and parole. Specifically, they assessed each sector by rating the performance on particular activities or job functions. The survey used a three-point rating scale: good, average, or poor job.

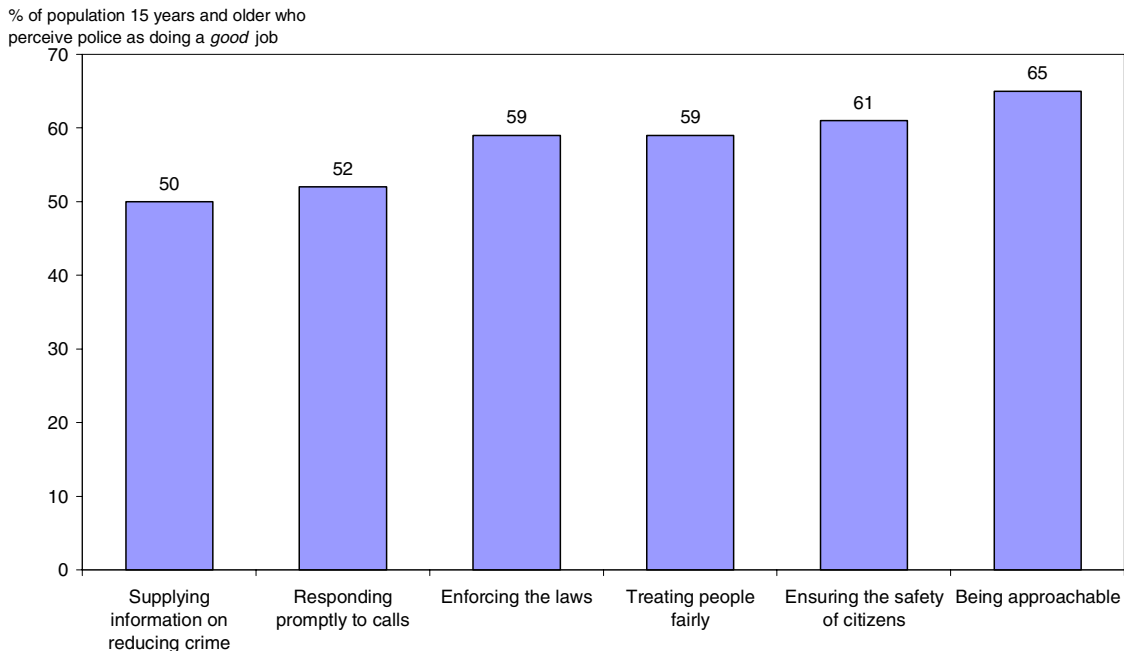
12. Excludes individuals who do not walk alone at night.

Police receive a favourable evaluation from the majority of Canadians

Overall, the majority of Canadians gave their local police a positive assessment. Nearly two-thirds of Canadians (65%) thought their local police were doing a good job at being approachable, 61% for ensuring the safety of citizens, 59% for enforcing laws, and 59% for treating people fairly (Chart 1). The level of satisfaction with police was slightly lower for responding promptly to calls (52%) and for supplying information on reducing crime (50%).

The remaining proportion of Canadians tended to rank police performance as average (from 19% to 31% for all police functions), with very few reporting that police did a poor job (between 5% and 11%). When compared over time, there has been little change in the public’s opinion on the performance of police (Table 6).¹³ However, opinions on police response to calls have improved since 1993 (up a total of five percentage points), while opinions on police performance in supplying information on ways to reduce crime fell four percentage points in 2004 after increasing in 1999.

Chart 1. Majority of Canadians believe police are doing a good job, 2004



1. Only the percentage who perceive local police force as doing a good job is shown.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Some Canadians were unsure of how to rate particular aspects of police performance (Table 7). For example, 18% of individuals in 2004 were unable or unwilling to assess

13. Questions on public’s perception of ensuring the safety of citizens were added in 1999, while questions on the public’s perception of police treating people fairly were added in 2004.

how promptly police respond to calls. This may be because they had never personally contacted the police.

Canadians' views on courts have improved since 1999

Positive opinions of the court system were less prevalent compared to the police and ratings varied depending on the particular court function. Ensuring a fair trial for the accused received a relatively high score, with 44% of Canadians believing that the courts did a good job. This is more than double the percentage of Canadians who believed the court did a good job at helping victims (20%) and providing justice quickly (15%). Positive opinions of the court's role in determining whether or not the accused was guilty were slightly more prevalent than these two lowest ranking court functions. Just over one-quarter (27%) of Canadians gave courts a favourable rating for this function.

Overall, public attitudes of courts have improved since 1993. A greater share of the population aged 15 and over in 2004 than in both 1993 and 1999 felt that the courts were doing a good job in the areas of providing justice quickly, helping the victim, and determining whether or not the accused is guilty (Table 6).

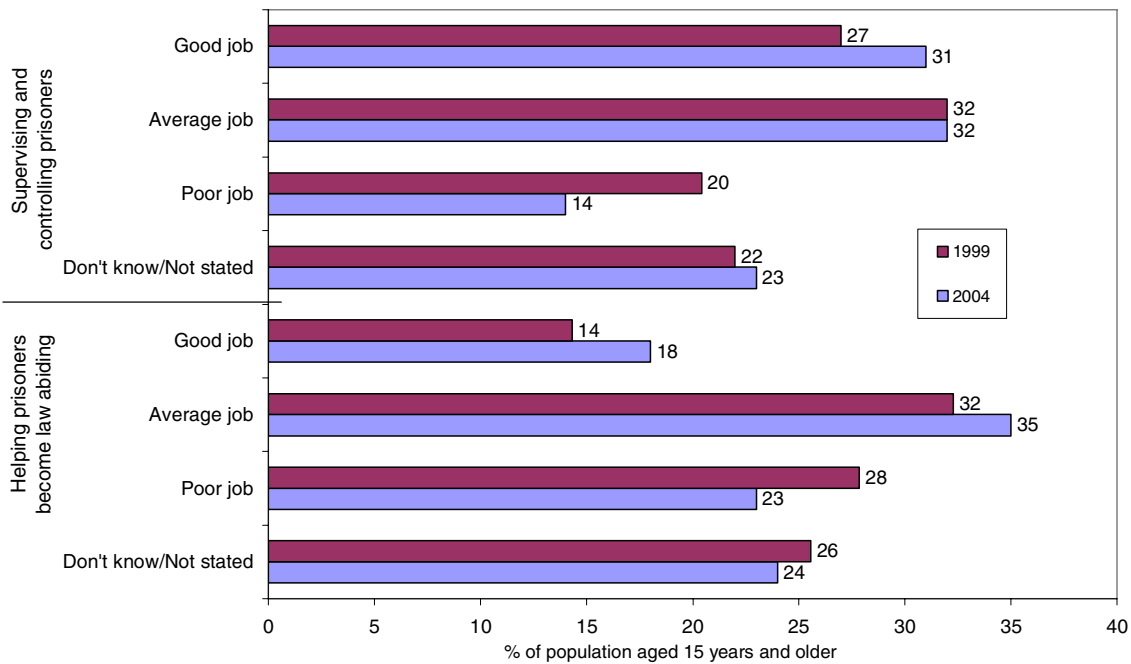
Canadians believe prisons do a better job at controlling than rehabilitating inmates

Canadians were asked about two roles of the prison system: supervision and rehabilitation. For both, the population was most likely to say that the prison system was doing an average job (Table 7). A positive rating, however, was more commonly directed at prison performance in supervising and controlling prisoners (31%) than at helping prisoners become law-abiding (18%).

Since 1999, Canadians have reported more positive views of the prison system.¹⁴ A greater proportion of Canadians in 2004 rated the prison performance as good and fewer gave it a poor rating (Chart 2). For example, in 1999, 28% of Canadians gave a negative assessment of the prison's rehabilitative role. This dropped to 23% in 2004.

14. Since questions on perception of prison were added in 1999, this represents the first opportunity to document changes in the public's perception of the prison system.

Chart 2. Canadians' assessment of prisons have improved since 1999



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Giving an assessment of prison appeared more difficult for many Canadians, compared with rating of police and courts. Almost one quarter of respondents were unable or unwilling to assess the performance of prisons in supervising/controlling prisoners (23%) and helping prisoners become law-abiding (24%). Similar proportions of individuals (22% and 26%) did not provide a rating in 1999.

Fewer than 1-in-5 Canadians gave the parole system a good rating

In general, the parole system received the lowest rating among the criminal justice sectors. A small share of respondents felt that the parole system was performing well in the areas of releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend (17%) and supervising parolees (15%). Most Canadians thought that the parole system was either doing an average or poor job in releasing offenders (37% and 31%, respectively) and providing adequate supervision (33% and 32%, respectively) (Table 7). As with data on the perception of the prison system, this is the first time that trend data on the public's perception of parole is available. Changes in perception have been quite modest, with the levels of satisfaction marginally increasing since 1999 (Table 6).

Levels of confidence in the criminal justice system lowest in West

Levels of confidence with the justice system appear to follow the same regional pattern as perceptions and fear of crime. That is, when comparisons are drawn across provinces,

satisfaction with the justice sectors generally tended to be lowest in the West.¹⁵ In 2004, 64% to 67% of Westerners rated the police positively on being approachable, compared to 72% to 75% of residents of Atlantic provinces (Table 8).

However, unlike in 1999 when Atlantic residents consistently gave better ratings of the criminal justice system than their Western counterparts, there were clear exceptions to this pattern in 2004 for the police and courts. For example, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador (54%) was only as likely as Alberta residents (57%)¹⁶ and British Columbia residents (54%) to be satisfied with the role of police in enforcing laws. Other exceptions to the higher levels of confidence among Atlantic residents related to the role of police in supplying information on crime prevention, as well as the court's roles in determining whether or not the accused is guilty and ensuring a fair trial for the accused.

Explanations for the slight regional change in perception of police can be primarily attributed to a decrease in confidence levels among particular Atlantic provinces. For the perception of courts, it is a combination of an increase in confidence among some Western provinces and a drop in satisfaction in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When it comes to the public's perception of prison and parole, individuals living in Western provinces again rated the performance somewhat lower than did residents of other provinces. For example, a lower proportion of the population in Western Canada (13% to 16%) than in Atlantic Canada (21% to 28%) said that the prison system was doing a good job in helping prisoners become law-abiding. Most provinces maintained or improved their positive ratings of prison and parole systems from 1999. A drop in satisfaction levels in the parole system was, however, reported for Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

Compared to women, men are more satisfied with courts, prison and parole

The way in which individuals perceive the criminal justice system can be influenced by their demographic characteristics and by factors related to personal experience. Although men and women appeared to hold similar opinions on whether or not the various justice sectors are doing a good job, there were some notable differences. In particular, women were slightly more likely than men to feel that the police were doing a good job at supplying information on reducing crime (53% versus 48%) (Table 9).

On the other hand, men tended to hold higher levels of satisfaction in the other justice sectors. For example, when asked to rate the court's performance in determining whether or not the accused is guilty, 30% of men gave a favourable rating, compared to 24% of women. Similarly, men were more likely to say that the courts did a good job in ensuring a fair trial for the accused (49% versus 40%).

15. Western provinces include British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

16. The difference between the proportion of Newfoundland and Labrador residents and Alberta residents who are satisfied with the police's role in enforcing laws is not statistically significant.

As with the 1999 survey, positive attitudes were also slightly more common among men in terms of the prison system's role in supervising and controlling prisoners (33% versus 29%) and the parole system's performance in releasing (18% versus 15%) and supervising offenders (16% versus 13%).

Younger people least satisfied with police

Past victimization surveys have indicated that age has an impact on Canadians' satisfaction with the criminal justice system. The results for the 2004 GSS were no different. Opinions of the police were most favourable among older Canadians, or in other words, positive attitudes toward the police generally increased with age. For example, 66% of Canadians aged 65 and older felt that the police did a good job at treating people fairly. This compares to 62% of 45 to 64 year-olds, 57% of 25 to 44 year-olds, and 51% of 15 to 24 year-olds (Table 10).

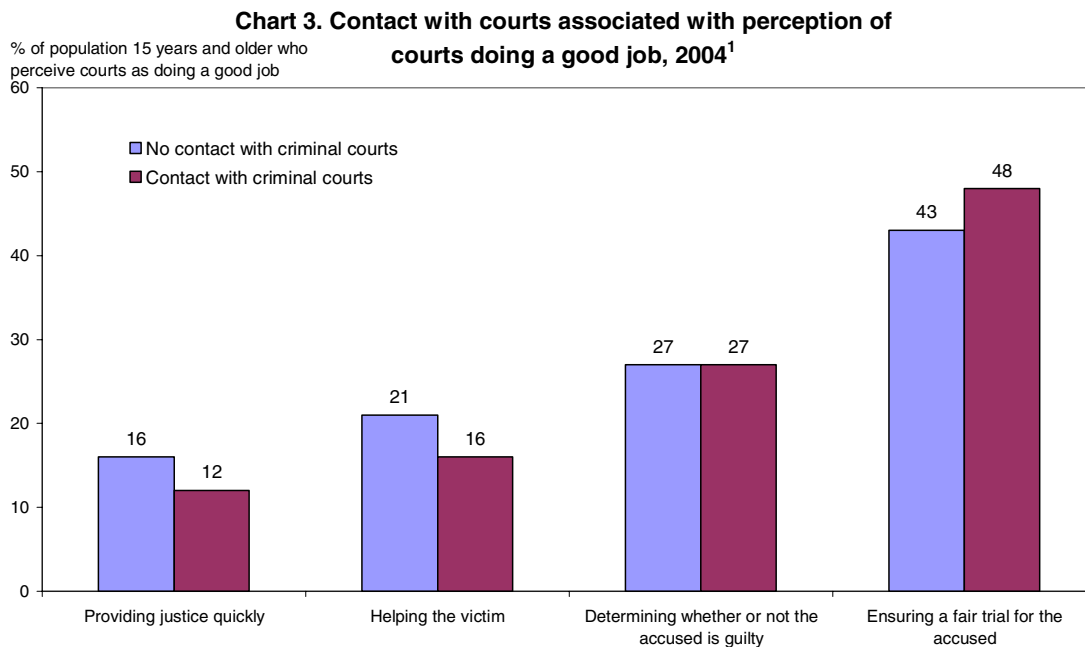
Age appears to have the opposite impact on attitudes towards the other justice sectors. More than anyone else, young people (15 to 24 year-olds) were satisfied with the performance of the court, prison and parole systems. The age disparity in satisfaction was most marked in the areas of the court's performance in helping victims and the performance of the parole system in supervising parolees (Table 10). More specifically, 34% of individuals aged 15 to 24 thought the courts were doing a good job in helping victims, compared to 19% of those aged 25 to 44, and 15% of those aged 45 to 64. Likewise, a positive rating for supervising offenders on parole was given by 30% of the youngest age group, but only 10% to 13% of older Canadians.

Younger people's higher level of satisfaction with non-police justice sectors was less pronounced for the court's performance in ensuring a fair trial for the accused. For this job function, 48% of people between 15 and 24 years of age felt that the courts did a good job, only four-percentage points higher than those 25 to 44 years of age.

Type of police contact determines public attitudes

The degree of satisfaction with police performance generally tended to be lower among Canadians who had contact with police in the 12 months preceding the survey. This is consistent with results from the 1999 GSS. Not surprisingly, the difference between those with and without police contact was most apparent when considering people whose police contact was related to their own arrest (Table 11). Among the one percent of respondents who had been arrested in the previous 12 months, 43% thought the police did a good job in enforcing the laws, compared to 59% of other individuals. Positive attitudes were also less frequently expressed by those who came into contact with police for a traffic violation, as a victim of crime, and as a witness of crime. Attending a public information session was the only type of police contact where individuals had higher levels of confidence than those that did not have any such contact.

The assessment of the court’s performance was also associated with whether or not an individual had previous contact with the system.¹⁷ For instance, favourable views on the court’s ability to ensure a fair trial for the accused was slightly more prevalent among individuals who had contact with the court than those without any contact (48% versus 43%) (Chart 3). Conversely, Canadians who had contact with the courts were less likely than those without such contact to be satisfied with the court’s performance in the providing justice quickly (12% versus 16%) and helping the victim (16% versus 21%). On determining whether or not the accused is guilty, the figures for those with and without court contact were similar.



1. Only the percentage who perceive courts as doing a good job is shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

17. Respondents were asked if they “ever” had contact with the criminal courts. This differs from questions on police contact, where respondents were asked their experience over the preceding 12 months. In addition, the survey does not ask the respondent about the nature of the contact with the courts (i.e., as whether the respondent was a victim, offender or witness).

Methodology

In 2004, the victimization cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) was conducted for the fourth time. Previous victimization cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993, and 1999. The target population included all non-institutionalized people aged 15 and older (i.e., individuals living in households). Households without telephones and with only cellular telephones were excluded from the survey. This exclusion represents a small proportion (4%) of the population. Data collected in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut as part of a pilot test are not included in this analysis.

Data were collected each month from January to December 2004. Over this period, approximately 24,000 people were successfully interviewed using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), yielding a response rate of 75%. Some types of non-responses included respondents who refused to participate, those who could not be reached, or individuals who could not speak English or French well enough to complete the survey.

It is important to acknowledge that there are limitations to the data. The data that appear in the report are based on estimates from a sample of the Canadian population and are therefore subject to sampling error. This type of error refers to the difference between an estimate derived from the sample and the one that would have been obtained from a census that used the same procedure to collect data from every person in the population.

One measure of the sampling error is the coefficient of variation (CV). The CV gives an indication of the uncertainty associated with an estimate. For example, if an estimate is 1,000 incidents with a CV of 5%, the true value likely lies between 950 and 1,050 (i.e., $1,000 \pm 5\%$). In this publication, any estimate with a CV of more than 33.3% is considered too unreliable to be published and the symbol “F” is used in the data tables to indicate this. When the CV of the estimate is between 16.6% and 33.3%, the symbol “E” is used. These estimates should be used with caution.

In addition, there is the possibility of non-sampling errors. These refer to such issues as the respondents’ inability to remember/report events accurately, refusal by respondents to report, and errors in coding and processing of data.

Using the 2004 GSS sample design and sample size, an estimate of a given proportion of the total population, expressed as a percentage, is expected to be within 0.8 percentage points of the true proportion 19 times out of 20.

Tables

Table 1. Perceptions of neighbourhood crime compared to other areas, by province, 2004

	Levels of neighbourhood crime compared to other areas				
	Total (population 15+)	Higher	About the same	Lower	Don't know/not stated
	(000s)	% of population 15 years and older			
Canada	25,906	9	29	59	3
Newfoundland and Labrador	441	2 ^E	10	87	1 ^E
Prince Edward Island	115	F	11	87	F
Nova Scotia	778	5	23	72	1 ^E
New Brunswick	622	4	23	72	1 ^E
Quebec	6,190	7	39	49	4
Ontario	10,014	9	25	62	4
Manitoba	918	8	28	61	4
Saskatchewan	788	9	26	62	3
Alberta	2,559	8	28	61	3
British Columbia	3,482	13	29	56	3

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 2. Perceptions of neighbourhood crime compared to 5 years ago, by province, 2004

	Level of neighbourhood crime compared to five years ago				
	Total (population 15+)	Increased	Decreased	About the same	Don't know/not stated
	(000s)	% of population 15 years and older			
Canada	25,906	30	6	58	7
Newfoundland and Labrador	441	23	7	68	2 ^E
Prince Edward Island	115	32	4 ^E	62	F
Nova Scotia	778	28	6	62	4
New Brunswick	622	26	5	64	4
Quebec	6,190	23	8	63	6
Ontario	10,014	31	5	56	8
Manitoba	918	33	4	56	7
Saskatchewan	788	31	4	60	6
Alberta	2,559	35	4	52	9
British Columbia	3,482	36	5	50	8

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 3. Feelings of safety from crime, 1999 and 2004

	1999 Population 15+ (000s)	2004	1999 % of population 15+	2004
Personal safety				
Very dissatisfied	449	280	2	1
Somewhat dissatisfied	995	1,028	4	4
Somewhat satisfied	11,292	12,888	47	50
Very satisfied	10,678	11,464	44	44
Don't know/not stated	847	246	3	1
Total	24,260	25,906	100	100
Walking alone after dark¹				
Very unsafe	409	367	2	2
Somewhat unsafe	1,625	1,657	9	8
Reasonably safe	8,312	9,070	45	46
Very safe	7,954	8,624	43	44
Don't know/Not stated	21 ^E	F	0	F
Total	18,321	19,732	100	100
Home alone in the evening or night²				
Very worried	496	431	2	2
Somewhat worried	4,374	4,665	18	18
Not at all worried	19,104	20,596	80	80
Don't know/not stated	44 ^E	36 ^E	0	0
Total	24,018	25,728	100	100
Using public transportation alone after dark¹				
Very worried	435	300	7	5
Somewhat worried	2,388	2,434	39	38
Not at all worried	3,301	3,697	54	57
Don't know/not stated	F	17 ^E	F	0
Total	6,124	6,448	100	100

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

Figures may not add to total due to rounding.

1. Based on responses of people who engage in these activities.

2. Based on responses of people who are home alone in the evening or night.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999 and 2004.

Table 4. Feelings of safety from crime, by province, 2004

	Total	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
% population 15 years and older											
Personal safety											
Dissatisfied	5	1 ^E	F	4	3	6	5	6	5	5	6
Satisfied	94	99	98	95	97	94	94	93	94	94	93
Don't know/not stated	1	F	F	F	F	1 ^E	1	1 ^E	F	1 ^E	1 ^E
Total	100										
Walking alone after dark¹											
Unsafe	10	4 ^E	4 ^E	8	5	12	10	10	8	8	12
Safe	90	97	96	92	95	88	90	90	93	92	88
Don't know/Not stated	0	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total	100										
Home alone in the evening or night²											
Worried	20	11	13	17	15	21	20	20	17	18	22
Not at all worried	80	88	87	83	85	79	80	80	83	82	78
Don't know/not stated	0	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total	100										
Using public transportation alone after dark¹											
Worried	42	17 ^E	F	42	26 ^E	39	44	53	38	48	43
Not at all worried	57	83	F	58	74	61	56	46	62	52	57
Don't know/not stated	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total	100										

Figures may not add to total due to rounding.

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

1. Based on responses of people who engage in these activities

2. Based on responses of people who are home alone in the evening or night.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 5. Feelings of safety from crime, by sex and age, 2004

	Total males and females		Males					Females					
			Total	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total	15-24	25-45	45-64	65+	
				(000s)	%	%	%		(000s)	%	%	%	%
Personal safety													
Satisfied	94	12,104	95	96	95	95	93	12,248	93	96	93	92	92
Dissatisfied	5	538	4	3	4	5	4	770	6	3 ^E	6	7	5
Don't know/Not stated	1	105	1	F	1 ^E	1 ^E	3 ^E	141	1	F	F	1 ^E	3
Walking alone in your area after dark¹													
Safe	90	10,609	94	94	95	95	91	7,085	84	79	85	83	87
Unsafe	10	631	6	6	5	5	9	1,393	16	21	14	17	13
Don't know/Not stated	0	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Waiting for/using public transportation alone after dark¹													
Not at all worried	57	2,422	71	71	71	71	69	1,275	42	40	41	43	44
Worried	42	976	29	28	29	29	31	1,758	58	60	58	57	56
Don't know/Not stated	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Being home alone in the evening or night²													
Not at all worried	80	11,148	88	91	87	87	86	9,449	73	70	70	73	80
Worried	20	1,555	12	9	13	12	14	3,541	27	30	30	27	20
Don't know/Not stated	0	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

1. Based on responses of people who engage in these activities.

2. Based on responses of people who are home alone in the evening or night.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 6. Perceptions of the criminal justice system doing a good job, 1988, 1993, 1999, and 2004¹

	Public perceptions			
	2004	1999	1993	1988
	% of population 15 years and older			
Local police are doing a <i>good</i> job...				
Enforcing the laws	59	60	58	60
Responding promptly to calls	52	49	47	50
Being approachable	65	66	64	66
Supplying information on reducing crime	50	54	52	56
Ensuring the safety of citizens	61	62	58	..
Treating people fairly	59	..	..	..
Criminal courts are doing a <i>good</i> job...				
Providing justice quickly	15	13	10	14
Helping the victim	20	15	12	16
Determining whether or not the accused is guilty	27	21	20	25
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	44	41	46	44
The prison system is doing a <i>good</i> job...				
Supervising/controlling prisoners	31	26	..	..
Helping prisoners become law abiding	18	14	..	..
The parole system is doing a <i>good</i> job...				
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend	17	15	..	..
Supervising offenders on parole	15	13	..	..

.. Not available for a specific reference period.

1. Only the percentage who perceive justice agencies as doing a good job is shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 7. Perceptions of the criminal justice system, 2004

	Public perceptions			
	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/Not stated
% of population 15 years and older				
What kind of job are your local police doing at...				
Enforcing the laws	59	31	6	4
Responding promptly to calls	52	23	8	18
Being approachable	65	19	5	11
Supplying information on reducing crime	50	28	11	11
Ensuring the safety of citizens	61	28	5	6
Treating people fairly	59	25	7	10
What kind of job are criminal courts doing at...				
Providing justice quickly	15	37	36	11
Helping the victim	20	37	28	15
Determining whether or not the accused is guilty	27	43	15	16
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	44	35	8	13
What kind of job is the prison system doing at...				
Supervising/controlling prisoners	31	32	14	23
Helping prisoners become law abiding	18	35	23	24
What kind of job is the parole system doing at...				
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend	17	37	31	16
Supervising offenders on parole	15	33	32	20

Figures may not add to total due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 8. Perceptions of the criminal justice system doing a good job, by province, 2004¹

	Total provinces	Province									
		N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
% of population 15 years and older											
Local police are doing a good job...											
Enforcing the laws	59	54	58	58	60	64	60	52	49	57	54
Responding promptly to calls	52	50	61	58	58	56	52	42	42	47	47
Being approachable	65	74	75	72	74	61	66	64	67	67	65
Supplying information on reducing crime	50	56	54	54	51	53	49	49	48	53	49
Ensuring the safety of citizens	61	66	63	63	66	66	62	55	55	60	54
Treating people fairly	59	66	68	63	65	63	58	57	55	57	54
Criminal courts are doing a good job...											
Providing justice quickly	15	21	20	16	25	17	14	11	15	15	11
Helping the victim	20	24	25	21	27	21	20	17	19	19	16
Determining whether or not the accused is guilty	27	25	38	31	36	30	26	19	25	27	22
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	44	38	54	46	49	45	44	38	43	46	43
The prison system is doing a good job...											
Supervising/controlling prisoners	31	32	36	35	39	38	29	28	27	25	26
Helping prisoners become law abiding	18	24	28	21	25	24	16	14	16	15	13
The parole system is doing a good job...											
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend	17	17	24	19	22	23	14	11	16	14	13
Supervising offenders on parole	15	20	23	19	21	17	14	12	15	14	11

1. Only the percentage who perceive justice agencies as doing a good job is shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 9. Perceptions of the criminal justice system doing a good job, by sex, 2004¹

	Total	Female	Male
% of population 15 years and older			
Local police are doing a good job...			
Enforcing the laws	59	60	58
Responding promptly to calls	52	52	51
Being approachable	65	66	65
Supplying information on reducing crime	50	53	48
Ensuring the safety of citizens	61	61	62
Treating people fairly	59	58	60
Criminal courts are doing a good job...			
Providing justice quickly	15	14	16
Helping the victim	20	20	20
Determining whether or not the accused is guilty	27	24	30
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	44	40	49
The prison system is doing a good job...			
Supervising/controlling prisoners	31	29	33
Helping prisoners become law abiding	18	17	19
The parole system is doing a good job...			
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend	17	15	18
Supervising offenders on parole	15	13	16

1. Only the percentage who perceive justice agencies as doing a good job is shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 10. Perceptions of the criminal justice system doing a good job, by age, 2004¹

	Age of population (years)				
	Total	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+
	%				
Local police are doing a good job...					
Enforcing the laws	59	54	56	62	66
Responding promptly to calls	52	48	48	54	59
Being approachable	65	56	63	70	70
Supplying information on reducing crime	50	41	47	56	59
Ensuring the safety of citizens	61	61	57	63	68
Treating people fairly	59	51	57	62	66
Criminal courts are doing a good job...					
Providing justice quickly	15	24	14	12	13
Helping the victim	20	34	19	15	18
Determining whether or not the accused is guilty	27	36	26	25	21
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	44	48	44	45	38
The prison system is doing a good job...					
Supervising/controlling prisoners	31	44	32	28	21
Helping prisoners become law abiding	18	28	16	16	17
The parole system is doing a good job...					
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend	17	27	16	14	12
Supervising offenders on parole	15	30	13	10	10

1. Only the percentage who perceive justice agencies as doing a good job is shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 11. Perceptions of local police doing a good job, by contact with police, 2004¹

	Perception of the local police doing a <i>good</i> job					
	Being approachable	Ensuring the safety of citizens	Enforcing the laws	Supplying information on reducing crime	Responding promptly to calls	Treating people fairly
	% of population 15 years and older					
Contact with the police²...						
Total	65	61	59	50	52	59
for a public information session						
Yes	75	65	62	63	54	64
No	65	61	59	49	51	59
for a traffic violation						
Yes	59	56	54	42	47	52
No	66	62	60	52	52	60
as a victim of crime³						
Yes	65	50	49	43	47	53
No	66	62	60	51	52	60
as a witness of a crime						
Yes	64	51	50	45	49	52
No	66	62	60	51	52	60
by being arrested						
Yes	41	48	43	29	45	29
No	66	62	59	51	52	59
other contact						
Yes	70	59	57	50	51	58
No	65	62	60	51	52	59

1. Only the percentage who perceive local police force as doing a good job is shown.

2. Includes the 12 months preceding the survey.

3. Crimes are defined by the respondent and may therefore not fall within the specific offences measured by the General Social Survey.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.