Geographic Analysis of Crime Data and Restorative Justice in Rural and Urban Nova Scotia

International Institute for Restorative Practices Conference

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

June 16, 2011

NOVA SCOTIA

Community Counts for Crime Prevention

International Institute for Restorative Practices Conference

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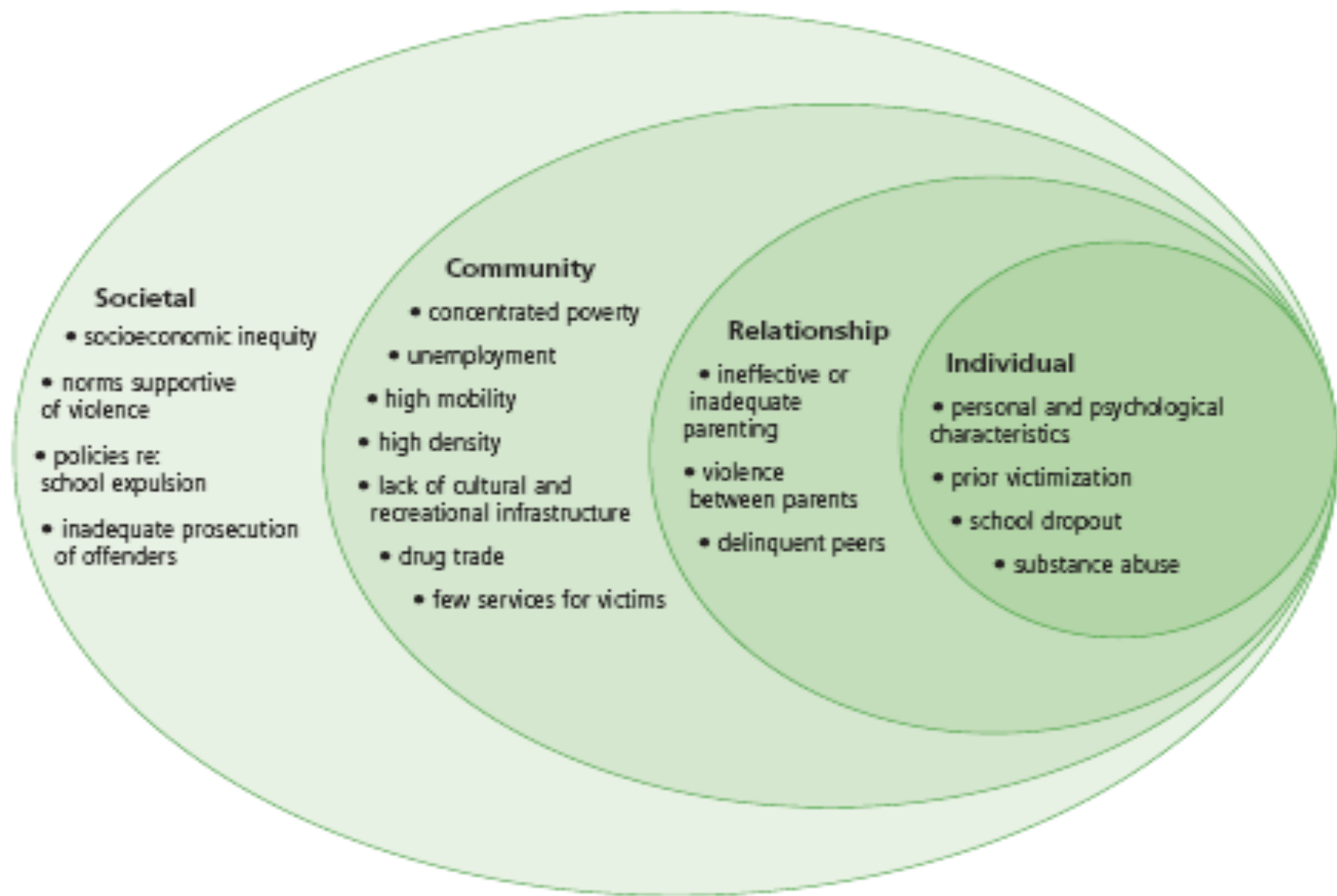### June 2011

Community Counts for Crime Prevention

- **Sponsored by Depts of Justice and Finance**

- **Funded by National Crime Prevention Centre**

- **Supporting Nova Scotia's Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy**

Risk Factors for Crime and Delinquency

Adopted from World Health Organization (2002)

Societal
- socioeconomic inequity
- norms supportive of violence
- policies re: school expulsion
- inadequate prosecution of offenders

Community
- concentrated poverty
- unemployment
- high mobility
- high density
- lack of cultural and recreational infrastructure
- drug trade
- few services for victims

Relationship
- ineffective or inadequate parenting
- violence between parents
- delinquent peers

Individual
- personal and psychological characteristics
- prior victimization
- school dropout
- substance abuse

Crime Statistics

➤ **Crime data from Statistics Canada (Uniform Crime Reporting Survey)**

➤ **Incident-based reporting**
- **Police reported**
- **Most serious offence rule**

➤ **Crime Severity Index**

Risk Factor Statistics

- *Socio-economic status (SES)*
  education, employment, income

- *Demographics*
  population, families, households, mobility

- *Dwellings*
  ownership, repair, age

Two Unique Geographies

➤ *Justice Police Districts (JPDs)*
  - ▪ More than 40 JPDs
  - • Correspond to police services
  - • Include municipal and RCMP
  - • Lowest level of geography for crime data

➤ *Justice Centres (JUCs)*
  - ▪ 11 JUCs
  - • Correspond to courts
  - • Composed of several police service areas (JPDs)

Boundaries are subject to change year-to-year.

Crime Prevention and Reduction Policy View

- A "policy lens" for viewing data

- A "crime prevention and reduction lens" for looking at communities

- Using the latest knowledge on crime prevention and reduction

View the Crime Prevention and Reduction Maps

by Justice Police District
by Justice Centre

View the Crime Prevention and Reduction Profiles

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Community Counts Map Centre
Assets for Crime Prevention

- ✓ **Restorative Justice**
- ✓ **Legal Aid**
- ✓ **Victim Services**
- ✓ **Mental Health**
- ✓ **Community Health**
- ✓ **Seniors Safety**
- ✓ **Social supports**

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What the tool does:

✓ Provides data on police-reported crime and crime-related risk factors.

✓ Facilitates comparisons among different geographic areas (i.e. local, provincial, national).

Limitations:

➢ Data are not exhaustive.

➢ Does not include context-related information (i.e. local intelligence).

On Nova Scotia Community Counts

NOVA SCOTIA
Community
Counts

Hundreds of communities. Thousands of facts. One website.

www.gov.ns.ca/communitycounts/

Crime Prevention and Reduction Profile

In 2009, 1,181 incidents of police reported crime occurred in Amherst, as compared to 1,087 in 2008, and 65,035 for the province as a whole. Of those violations, 221 were incidents of violent crime and 960 were incidents of non-violent crime.

The overall rate of police reported crime for Amherst in 2009 was 1,243 per 10,000 population, as compared to 1,139 per 10,000 population in 2008, and 693 per 10,000 population for the province as a whole.

Figure 1: Overall Rate of Crime

225   5,819

▼ Amherst
▼ Nova Scotia
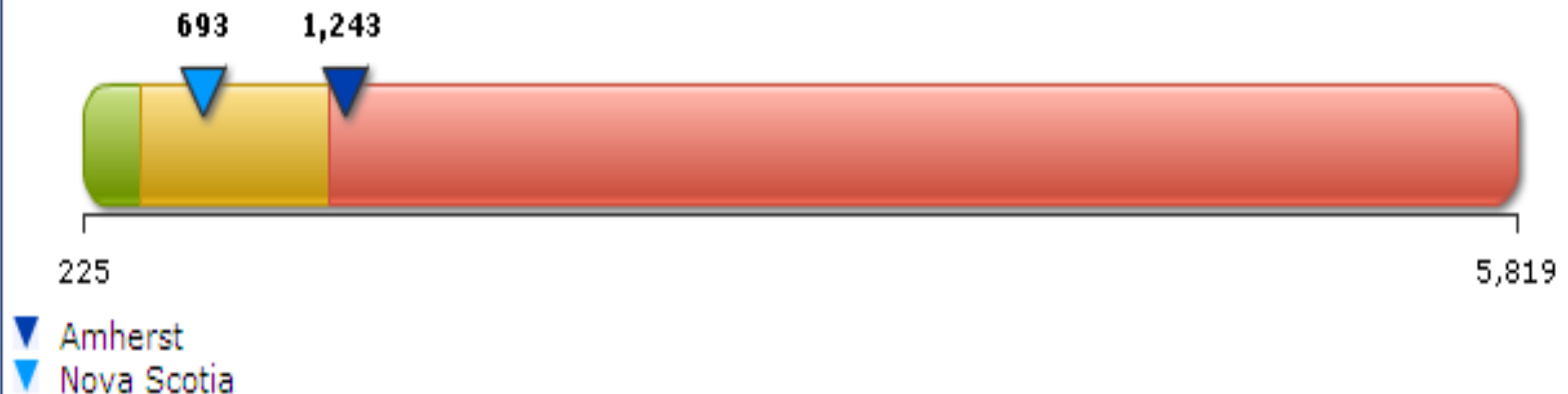
Crime Prevention and Reduction Profile

Crime Stats | **Risk Factors** | **Maps** | **Help**

Socio-Economic Status | **Demographics** | **Dwellings**

Low income indicators

In 2006 there were 263,995 economic families living in Nova Scotia, of which 27,080, or 10.3 percent were low income. The rate for Canada in 2006 was 11.6 percent.

Out of 891,010 individuals living in private households in 2006, 123,295 (or 13.8 percent) were classified as low income in Nova Scotia. The rate for Canada as a whole was 15.3 percent in 2006.

Figure 1: Percentage of Individuals (classified as Low Income) living in Private Households

13.8   15.3

0   21

▼ Nova Scotia
▼ Canada

Mapping Assets for Restorative Justice
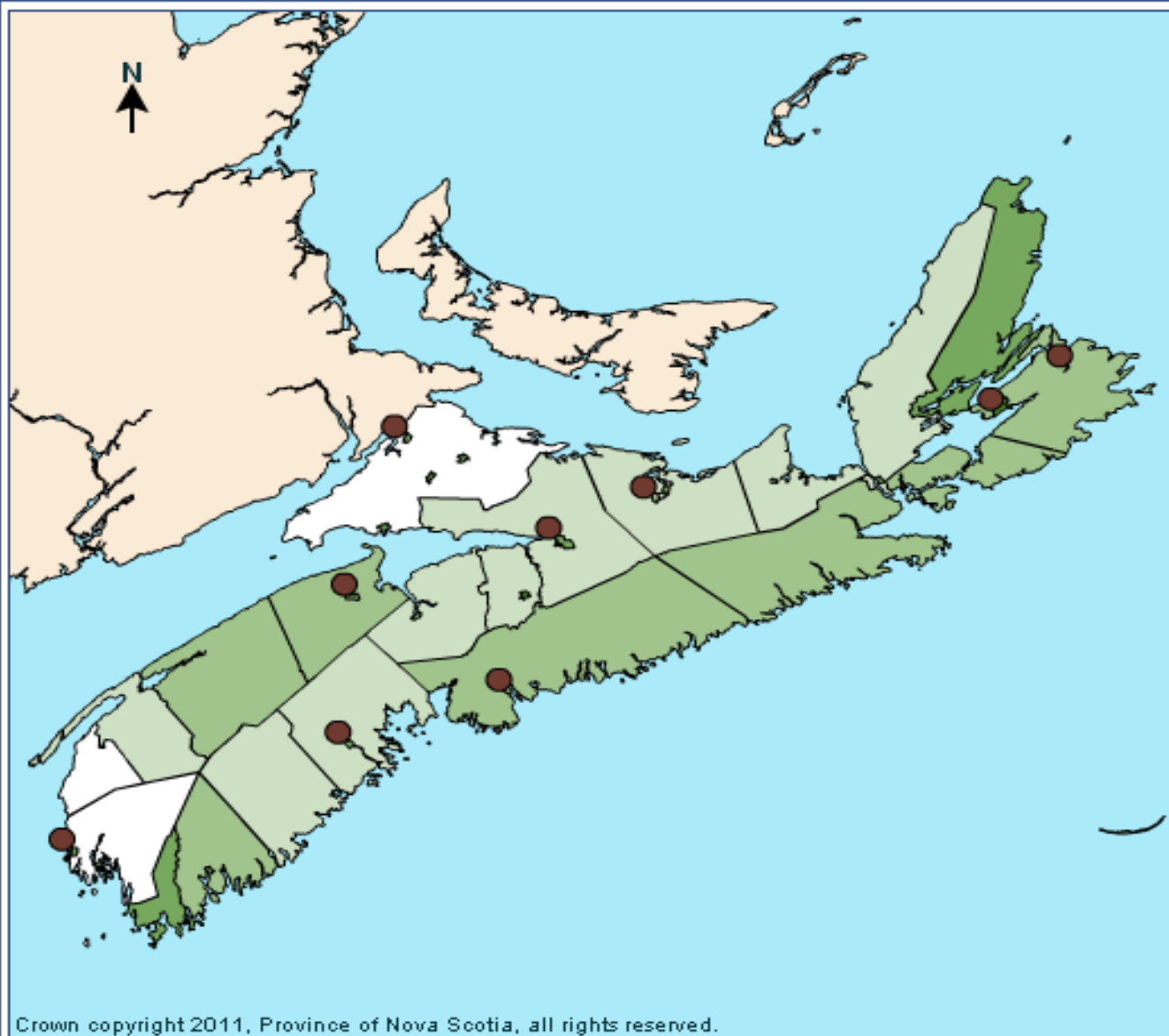
Crime - Violent Crime - Crime Rates
by Justice Police District
Year: 2009

Crime Rate (per 10,000)
- 801 - 2,400 (2)
- 201 - 800 (17)
- 131 - 200 (8)
- 81 - 130 (11)
- 40 - 80 (3)
- Suppressed Data (2)
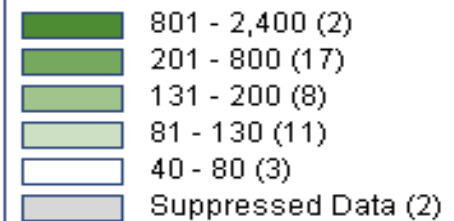
Assets
- Restorative Justice

Source:
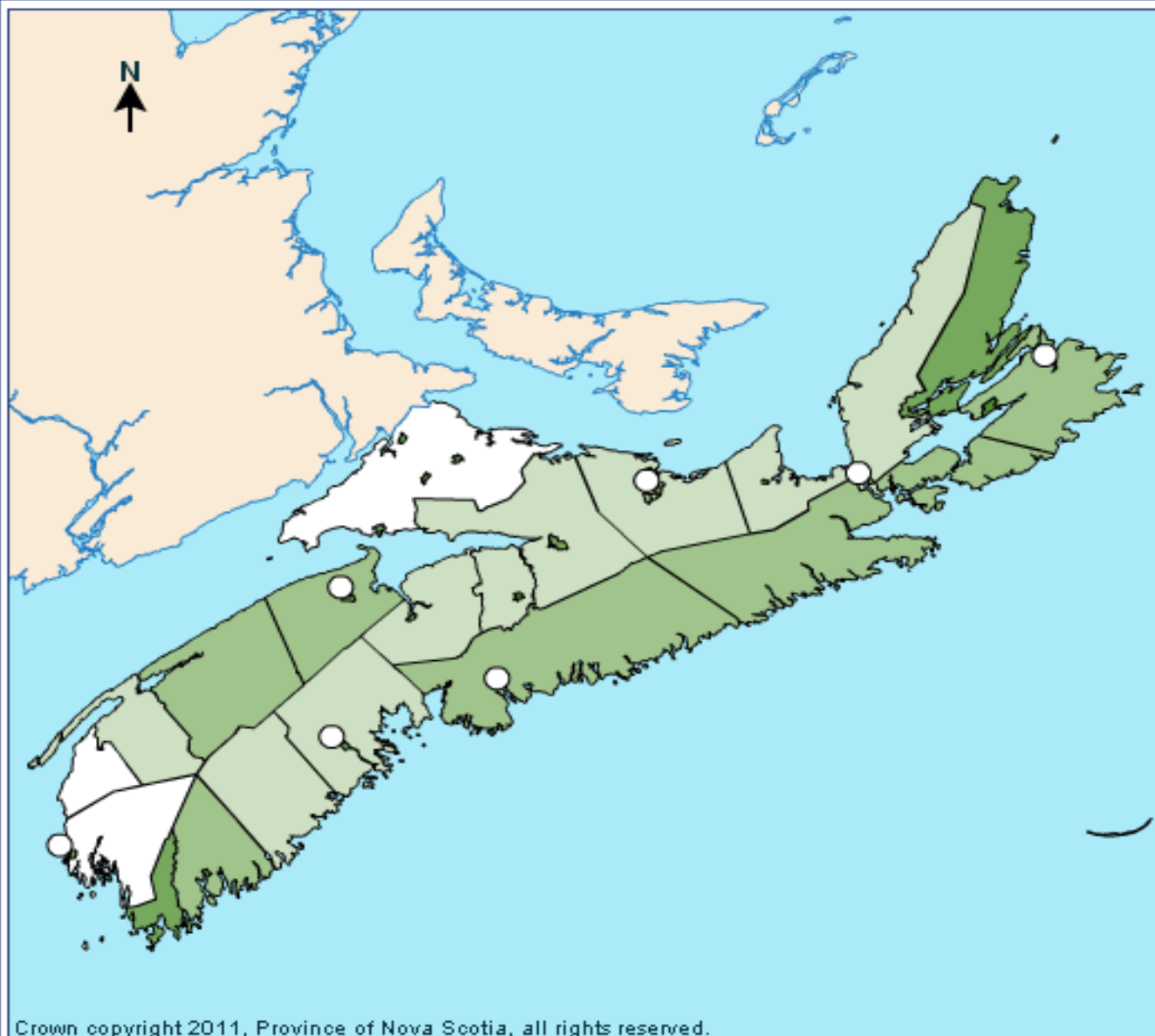Justice Police District Boundaries - NS Justice.
Crime - Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

Assets for Victim Services

Crime - Violent Crime - Crime Rates
by Justice Police District
Year: 2009

Crime Rate (per 10,000)
- 801 - 2,400 (2)
- 201 - 800 (17)
- 131 - 200 (8)
- 81 - 130 (11)
- 40 - 80 (3)
- Suppressed Data (2)

Assets
○ Victim Services

For more information...

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Restorative Justice in Rural and Urban Nova Scotia

Anthony Thomson

The philosophy of restorative justice emphasizes the role of the community in the process. Modern justice has replaced the community with the formal role of the State as representative of the community of harm and the agent of punishment and deterrence. Arguably, a more traditional perspective considers both the offender and the victim to be part of a community. Offenders do not simply disappear but are likely to remain in the community following their sentence. Restorative can mean that it may be possible to restore pre-crime conditions and relationships. A communal relationship, of which the offender is a part, has been breached and is in need of being restored. For some, restoration presupposes an element of reintegrative shaming. Feeling shame is linked to remorse and a desire to compensate and appease the victim and the community. The former presupposes that it is possible to restore something like the relationships that existed prior to the offence. Shaming presupposes the offender is concerned about his/her negative reputation in the community. Both depend, to some extent, on the cohesiveness, homogeneity, and relative isolation of a particular community.

There has been an assumption that these restorative justice processes may be more effective in rural than urban communities. The argument is that restorative justice has its roots in small, cohesive, and often religious communities and is best suited to small, typically rural communities. Restorative justice, at least conceptually, has been linked to rural at least in the sense of arising from and being believed to be particularly applicable to small communities, in which people have long-standing and multi-generational residence with relative stability over time, which are assumed to be homogeneous, cohesive, and closely-knit rather than fragmented, where people tend to know each other and engage in more face-to-face or intimate communication rather than anonymous interactions, share a similar set of values, and are relatively isolated from cultural centres or have a strong local culture that is to some extent distinct from mass, urban culture. Typically, many offenders remain part of the community, are dealt with informally, and are reintegrated. Restorative justice, as we know and practice it, did not originate in aboriginal communities, but some of the conditions of these communities suggest they may be appropriate places to use restorative principles. The situation appears to be different in the typically anonymous blocks of metropolitan areas, where people are strangers, justice is formal, and no assumption can be made about shared values.

The binary opposition of rural and urban has a long-standing history in social science analysis. Among the original concerns of sociology has been the transition from traditional to modern society. As a dichotomy, this transition is not something that happened once and is over. In one sense, the drama of modernization is being played out now in the global South. We live on a globe that is now more urban than rural. In the developed North, however, the binary scheme has been less and less useful in the analysis of social change.

The rural/urban binary is more useful as an ideal-typical comparison than an actual spatial difference that has implications for such social processes as justice. First, living in the open spaces has significant, negative possibilities. Rural areas are also places in which people guard their privacy in the face of local knowledge about them and the constant spinning of the gossip mills; where informal handling of offenders can take nasty turns; where people may be

targeted because they are not anonymous, but are all too-well known; where the stability of residence can be accompanied by long-standing feuds between individuals and families.

In addition, the binary itself does not reflect many changes in living patterns over space and time. The hollowing-out of inner city cores through suburbanization, for example, caused urban life to sprawl over adjoining land and created an intermediate space between rural and urban. Suburban pockets such as Portland Estates in Dartmouth have won awards for their community-mindedness and collaborative projects. Immigration from ethnically diverse regions creates pockets of closely-knit communities within urban cores. Gentrification transforms older, inner-city block into potentially self-consciousness neighbourhoods. Beyond the core and the suburbs, ribbons of highway meander away from the city centre, like cracks in pond ice, and commuters follow these routes daily into the city from homes spread along rural by-ways in a typically unplanned form of string development. But these are city people in the (increasingly urbanized) countryside. Communities within a hundred kilometre radius of the urban core are increasingly oriented to urban life. King's County in the Valley has the third largest population density of any county and is increasingly within the community orbit of the Halifax Regional Municipality. Even the traditionally more isolated parts of the Annapolis Valley—specifically the north and south mountains—are encountering suburban spread. In the more specifically rural parts of the province, such as Guysborough and Shelbourne counties, amalgamated high schools undermine long-standing relationships and create new types of communities. Areas around Truro, Bridgewater, and the Wolfville-Coldbrook corridor in Kings County are about an hour's commute from Halifax, but much of the space in between is apparently rural.Everywhere the spread of mass culture invades more rural areas and displaces long-standing local cultures. And, inevitably, where there is change there is resistance. Small communities in the commuter zone, for example, may consciously attempt to create local values, cherish their distinctive identity, and reinforce community identities, just as the ideal of community is consciously reconstructed in urban pockets.

By one measure, Statistics Canada (1996) has defined urban as any settlement of 1,000 or more people.[1] By this definition, every county in Nova Scotia has urban areas, of larger or smaller sizes, and every agency conducting restorative justice in the province has a rural and an urban clientele. What would be more rural than the Annapolis Valley, with its large agricultural sector? But Kings County has the third-largest population density of any county in Nova Scotia. Insofar as social scientists and geographers use the rural-urban dichotomy, they also recognize the existence of intermediate spaces. A continuum exists, and being rural is a matter of degree. Rurality, then, is not so much an absolute binary to urban, but a graduated concept. In between are not just suburbs, but less remote regions where commuting is typical into the metropolitan area for work, shopping, and entertainment. A Statistics Canada report recommended defining "rural" as outside "the main commuting zones of larger urban centres (of 10,000 or more)".[2]

While, for a variety of reasons, differences between rural and urban areas may be on the wane, 'rural Nova Scotia' continues to exist in places – along the Fundy shore in Annapolis County, for example, or out on Digby Neck, where the non-urbanized nature of the countryside is unmistakable. Life chances, opportunities, development, education – all have specific characteristics that are affected by space. Second, people still talk about rural and urban differences – they are believed to exist, often in terms similar to the stereotypes about small and big communities with which this report began. In this report, the rural/urban distinction does not

[1] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-601-m/2002061/4224867-eng.pdf.
[2] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-601-m/2002061/4224867-eng.pdf.

take these subtleties into account. The data available, at the moment, was collected at the agency level which, spatially, confines analysis to counties or an amalgamation of counties. In most cases, I analyze information from agencies confined to mainland Nova Scotia, where the agency responsible for RJ in Halifax Regional Municipality (the urban core) is contrasted with the less-urbanized counties on the mainland.

My intention in exploring the rural/urban dimension of restorative justice in Nova Scotia is to see whether there exist differences in either discourse, practice, or both. This report is based on several sources. The NSRJ Programme produces summary data in the form of annual reports that report on referrals and outcomes of the work of the RJ agencies in the province. A federal research grant, known as a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA), has collected several sets of data, including qualitative data from a series of focus group meetings held with restorative justice practitioners, academics, and collaborative members of the justice system. The second is a quantitative survey of about 125 RJ Board members, agency workers, and agency volunteers also conducted by the NSRJ-CURA. The NSRJ undertook an extensive five-year evaluation conducted by Don Clairmont. I report below on some rural-urban differences reported in Clairmont's final evaluation report (2005). In the future, a more detailed data set will be available on RJ practices in Nova Scotia, released to NSRJ-CURA researchers by the Department of Justice under Order-in-Council. Currently, these data are unavailable for analysis.

NSRJ SUMMARY DATA: REFERRALS AND OUTCOMES

The Nova Scotia Department of Justice releases annual summaries of RJ 'traffic' in Nova Scotia, separated by agencies. In the analysis below, I combine data from the years 2006, 207, and 2010 to present a picture that avoids some anomalous annual variations.

Figure 1
**Percentage of RJ Referrals that were Not Completed Successfully**
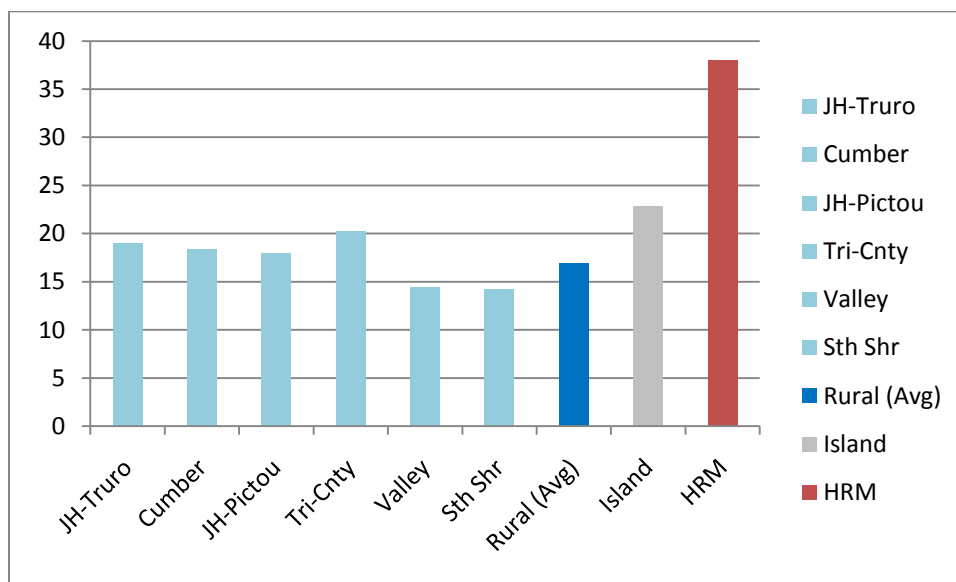
The data lists the number of cases that were completed successfully as well as the number of cases in the year that were unsuccessful (at the pre-conference, conference, or post-conference

stage). The first striking difference is that the rate of successful completion is higher in the more rural counties as opposed to the more urbanized HRM. As shown in Fig. 1, 38% of referrals in HRM were not completed successfully in the three years, compared with 17% in the rural, mainland counties.

Further examination of the 'RJ Traffic' reports suggests at least part of an explanation for the difference. First, much of the difference is accounted for by referrals that don't make it to the Conference stage, that is, by cases that fail to be completed prior to a session (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Failure Rate of RJ Referrals, Pre-Conference
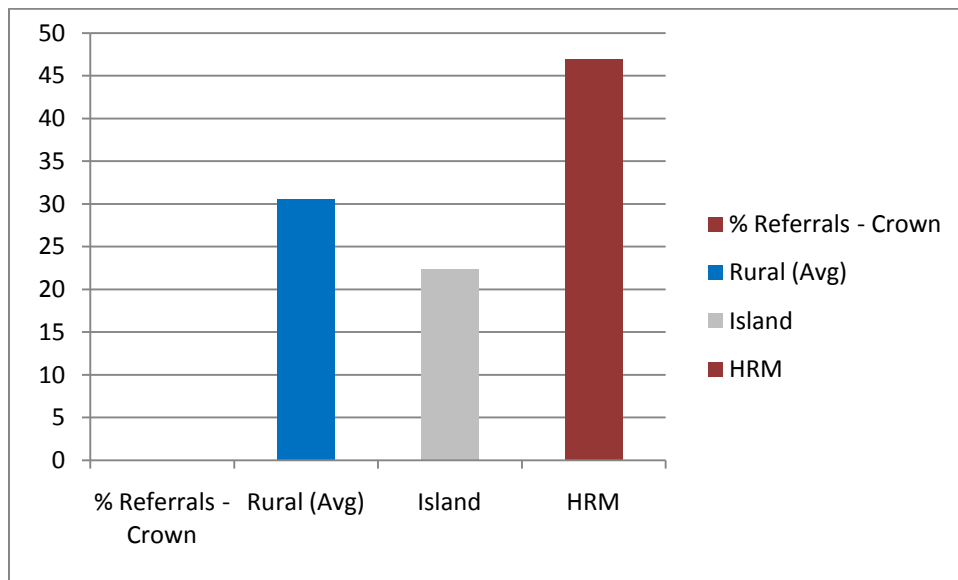
These are cases that don't make it beyond an initial referral. It makes sense to ask whether different cases are being referred in urban than in rural areas. For example, among the controversies in Restorative Justice are questions of its applicability to serious cases and repeat offenders. Typically, interviewing police officers, who are responsible for the majority of RJ referrals, the attitude is commonly found that RJ is a 'one-shot break'. It is good for minor, first offenders, and is not appropriate for more serious crimes and especially for offenders who have had a chance at restorative justice but have re-offended. There is a lot of meaning behind these comments revealing perceptions among many police officers about RJ as a 'soft' option, as not being as 'serious' as a formal court hearing, as being insufficiently punitive, and so on. In part, this attitude reflects police officers' pro-victim orientation. Enforcement is about retaliation, deterrence, punishment, not about reintegration, understanding, or reform. If the victim wants the offender to go to court on the grounds that any other option does not reflect the seriousness of the offence, the police are likely to oblige. Police may be left off the hook because referrals to RJ can be made at the level of the Crown Attorney and even the Court. It is likely the case that Crown referrals may reflect a greater tendency to refer to RJ more serious offenders, or repeat offenders, or cases that have a lower likelihood of successful completion. Figure 3 shows that the proportion of cases referred by the Crown are significantly higher in HRM (47%) than in the rural areas (31%). One of the important differences is the existence, among the Halifax Regional Police, of a relatively more centralized clearing house for youth referrals, which is distinct from

the more typical constable-level discretion about referring cases to RJ. In addition, RJ is more thoroughly institutionalized in HRM, which has a highly-integrated Youth Court in which numerous stake-holders, including RJ personnel (but also people representing welfare and health agencies, for example), have a significant presence. It might be assumed that coordinating the various role-players involved in youth justice might be easier in rural areas, where the significant players know each other and interact regularly. Informal integration can certainly be effective, but it is reliant on specific individuals and is less stable over time that a more institutionalized mechanism, such as found in HRM.

Figure 3
Referrals to RJ Originating at the Level of the Crown Attorney
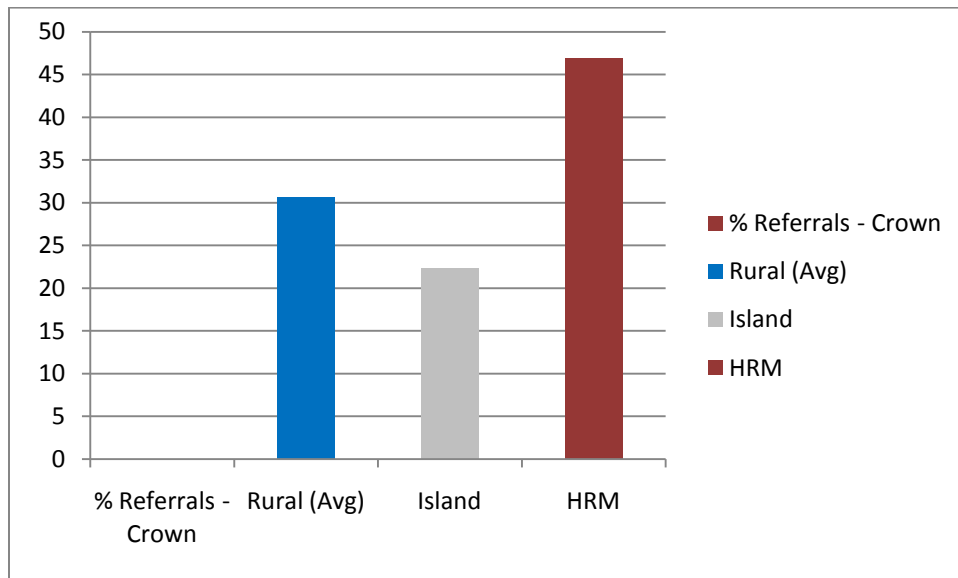
These data suggest that failure is higher in HRM because of the possibly greater overall likeliness of failure rather than some agency difference. More complete data would need to be examined to see whether, in fact, urban cases are more 'serious' in the sense of both offenders and offences compared to rural areas. In addition, many of these failures in the urban core occur at the pre-conference level. It may be that many young offenders in HRM are more mobile, less easy to track down (not in school, not consistently at a permanent address), frustrating agency workers attempts to complete the important pre-session.

One other interesting finding emerges from the expanded table of Crown referrals. As Figure 4 shows, although the average proportion of Crown Referrals in rural agencies is lower than urban, there is considerable variation among the rural agencies. In the Tri-County agency, for example, 57% of referrals over the three target years came from the Crown. In Cumberland and on the South Shore, fewer than 20% of referrals originated from the Crown. The question of inter-agency variation will be discussed below.

Figure 4
Variation in Rate of Referrals at Crown Level by Rural Agency
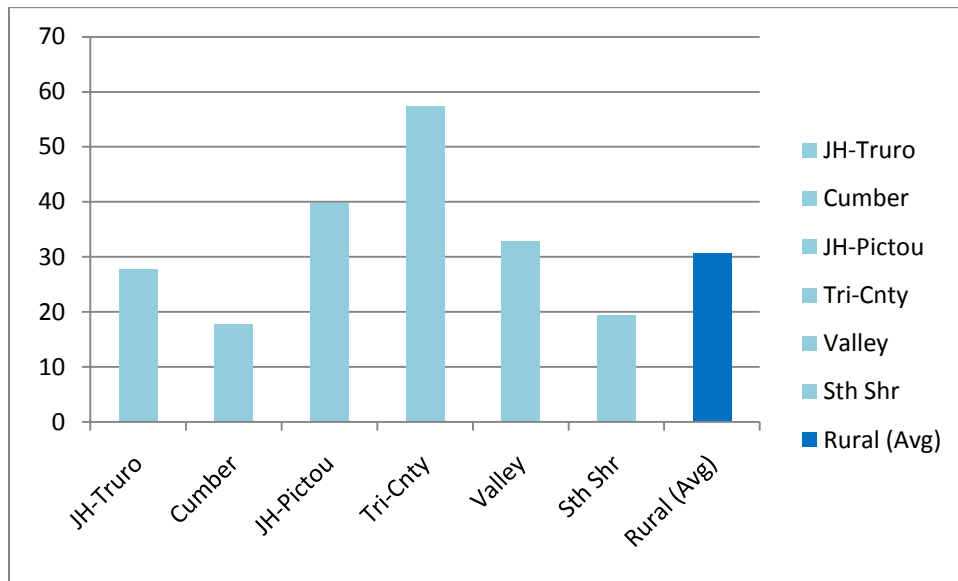
FOCUS GROUPS AND AGENCY SURVEY

The data reported above indicate some differences in the practice of RJ in rural and urban areas of the province. Data for this section of the report come from two sources. In 2009, the NSRJ-CURA organized a series of focus groups with individuals involved, in a variety of capacities, with restorative justice. Members included agency directors, police officers, Crown attorneys, staff workers, academic researchers, volunteers, and other role-players with a direct interest and involvement in Nova Scotia RJ. The discussions of the focus groups were transcribed and provide qualitative information about the attitudes of these active participants. Perceptions of rural/urban differences were addressed explicitly. Five of the focus groups meetings held in 2009 focussed on the question of community. The issue of rural and urban differences came up in discussion in a number of contexts. Several members identified differences that they had experienced. Throughout the focus groups, however, it became clear that there were also significant similarities. The rural/urban dichotomy, then, existed in discourse, but the differences were more complex than could be captured by the binary terms.

Second, in 2008, the NSRJ-CURA conducted an attitude survey among staff workers, volunteers, and board members of the seven RJ agencies in the province. The resulting data set contains responses from 125 members, reflecting a large proportion of the sampled population.

Closely-knit Communities

It was noted by several people in the focus groups that rural areas are more likely than urban ones to have a closely-knit community. In particular, in close communities, people tend to know each other and are less likely to be anonymous. Another said that crime in small

communities can be traumatizing: Some incidents that happen in small communities have a profound impact on the whole community – 'they just sort of rip at the heart of the community.'

One way this difference apparently affects restorative justice practice is the difficulty people in rural areas have in persuading volunteers to take part in the process. As one person said, 'for some instances it's more difficult to get a representative to come in because everybody knows everybody else.' People's reticence is not 'so much that they don't want to be part of the process, it's that they know the parents and they feel bad for them and "I don't want them to know that I know."' The more you know about other people in your community, the more you have to pretend, in face-to-face- situations with them, that you don't have this knowledge.

Local knowledge affects volunteer participants. According to one RJ worker, 'I know the first thing that they [volunteers] ask when I call is, "Can you tell me their name because I need to know that I don't know them before I get in there. Because I don't want that."' In explanation, another participant said that, 'A community member that has been selected to go to the meeting might be the cousin of the victim or the offender or whatever. That's quite common.'

One group member who works in small communities said that, in 'the smaller the community its actually harder to get a community rep in because 'they're related or there's something that they just don't want to go.' ... So I think a main challenge is just getting them to go, and I see a few heads bobbing because it's hard.'

In some places, there is an entrenched culture of privacy, where 'everybody's private business' is their own 'and no one should know and all that sort of thing.' ... [T]hey just don't want to be in somebody's business or ... [it] could be "I don't really want to know this stuff. I don't want to be in your business, I know that happened but I don't really want to be in that room because I go to darts with you and I do this with you."' Another person added that

> you have to kind of break through that [privacy barrier] because a lot of people will say that "Oh no, I don't want to come." And you don't want to force people to attend but you sure have to work hard to get them there. Because they do have, they were the victim or they were close to the victim maybe they could represent the victim. There's a lot of resistance to stepping up, stepping up to the plate.
>
> Where I'm from a small community and when I talk to people at home, I think it would be really challenging, because my parents would even say, like these little boys set the garage on fire next to my grandparents house but they wouldn't, they would never participate because they would think "Who's the parents? Who's the parents? Oh their mother is this person who's related to this person and oh ya she's always been in trouble." So they have this kind of thing in their mind that is like straight and narrow. And it's coming from an old system and my grandfather says "You know etc. etc."

Part of this view of widely-shared personal knowledge about other people is the fear that will be identified and as one member said, '[T]heir reasons could be fear of retaliation.' Personal conflicts among people who know each other can take the form of property damage, for example. One participant said:

> One of the fears, I know in ... the smaller communities, in one area there's been a string of home break ins and the youth are involved so the community are very fearful that if they get involved and their face is known that they're going to

be the next victim. It's very difficult in one particular community to get people to be a community rep because they don't want the youth to know who they are. They don't want to single themselves out for fear that they will be the next.'

But people who live in bigger areas may claim to have a similar difficulty getting reps. For example,

identifying community reps, like ... you know this one, you know that one. If it's a smaller community, I think it might be a little bit easier to actually see somebody who could be appropriate for something. Whereas in downtown [large area], where's the community there? [It] is a big, big place, so we chunk it off, of course, into X, Y, Z, you know, that kind of thing. But X itself, I know it's not X, but it's still too big. You don't know you're neighbours, you really don't know who's next door. Unless you've been there 30 years or something and even then. I mean, I've been living a long time in a little place in [this area] and I don't [know] somebody three houses down, you know. So it's really very different from years ago. So community is harder I think in some ways if you're in a bigger area.'

Another case worker in small communities agreed that the difference was that offenders were not anonymous in small communities. Consequently, the labelling effect is more challenging than 'perhaps in a big city you don't necessarily know... the person that you've caused the harm to. Where in small communities you know everybody in one way or another and it effects so many generations. It goes from the grandparents right down to the kids in the school.' This case worker tells the offender,

"Well you've been charged with breaking into this home and everybody knows because it takes 5 minutes to get from one end of the community to the other so in two weeks time if someone else's home gets broken into you know who's going to get the finger pointed at them? You are. You're going to be labelled. So how are you going to make it up to yourself so that you can remove that label?"

Another member of the group, however, believed that RJ attempted to get beyond this negative barrier to community justice in small communities: 'that's just the opposite of what we're really trying to do isn't it? I mean community justice if it were true then that wouldn't be a problem, in fact it would be embraced like it is in the Mi'kmaw community. They all know that offender and maybe there's a bit of shame involved there but in order to work properly we have to get beyond that almost, don't we?'
Are representatives more difficult or easier to find in a rural rather than an urban area? There are arguments on both sides. One common element, from people with both urban and rural experience, is that getting representatives takes a lot of work. One member recalled a 'specific case in a very, very small community, and this one lady representing her entire parish, and she was, like, "I don't know that I can do that. I don't know if I can go there." But I said, "Well I've been given your name by a few different people." So we talked, we met, we chatted, we shared recipes; the next thing, she came. She did come but you got to work really hard to get them. You really got to put that effort in.' But another said that, 'In town sometimes we have to work

harder to find community.' That is, building community is harder in urban areas, but it is still the goal of the RJ worker.

The potentially close connections between offenders and the community were seen by some, however, as beneficial. It works both ways; that is, as one worker explained, we would identify a volunteer to an offender and that person would 'say, "Well, I would like to have someone else other than these people." Just feeling ashamed was not a good enough reason to change the volunteer. As the worker pointed out, the discomfort offenders feel when dealing with people they know is linked to accountability, and seen as 'a natural consequence of poor choices.' '"When somebody said "That's my cousin," we were, like, "Oh great! Perfect."... [T]hat relational piece really worked well in those communities that we were working in. And we still do our case work in that community in that way.'

Urban areas were seen as increasingly transient and as less likely to have multi-generational residents. One urban member said that, 'we have a much more transient nature now to our urban population. Even, you know, the [neighbourhood community] where my folks are, was an inter-generational community. [That community] today is very transient ... in the sense that you don't have three and four and five generations living there.'

Nevertheless, group members argued that you can't see an urban area as a single mass. It is made up of neighbourhoods, some of which are self-conscious communities that share many of the traits that were identified as typically rural. The culture of small communities, whether rural or, for example, immigrant communities in urban centres, is that, as one member said, 'the culture of many of those communities is they keep it quiet. They take care of those things in their own little communities or in their own homes or whatever.' They are relatively isolated within the larger urban setting.

> [In] the larger communities there's a larger number of people to resource to get involved. Where in the smaller communities its quite obvious that when you want something done you ask a busy person, so you know there's only so many busy people out there that are, they're so involved in so much that, one more thing, they sometimes just don't have the time, so you're kind of there racking your brain, "Who are we going to get in." because you want to get the true restorative session. You want to be able to have everybody that you can involved but sometimes you're just at a loss of "Who are we going to get in?" Because the people just aren't there.

In one small community, however, one offender victimized seventeen people and not one was willing to come to the session; 'being in a small town, I think, all those people didn't want to have any more contact with the person.'

Community knowledge may be beneficial for RJ: 'the rural community being so close knit, knowing the family, knowing the root causes, can assist in a greater way.' It was suggested that, in both rural and urban areas, 'you're never going to find that root cause unless you get someone who's really close or someone who's really connected, has the empathy.' This person believed that it might be easier to find these potentially empathetic people in a rural area, but they were also to be found in urban areas, although 'you might have to work a little bit harder to actually find them.' Although they were found more easily in a rural area, the 'more difficult work' is to 'get them to buy in.... So you get the difficult work either way, it's a difference in how you find them.'

The bottom line seemed to be that, whatever way the case was handled, preparatory work was the key, particularly to get past the potential barrier of knowledge and connections that were thought to be more characteristic of small rather than large communities. But people in neighbourhoods may also have knowledge of local kids and local troubled families, and when incidents happen in a neighbourhood, the same kind of personal reticence to get involved in the process could be in play.

Community Involvement with RJ Agency

When the survey respondents were asked whether they found it difficult to get the community involved in their work, there was hardly any contextual difference. Only a very slight rural/urban variation emerged: 6% urban vs. 2% rural strongly agreed that it was 'difficult'. It should be noted, however, that 3 in 5 respondents from both samples (64% urban, 61% rural) agreed that it was difficult.

Table 1
Find it Difficult to get Community involved in Work of RJ, by Urban/Rural Context

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Strongly Agree	**6**	**2**
Agree	58	59
Disagree	35	37
Strongly Disagree	2	2
Total (n = 111)	(52)	(59)

(Not sig.)

There was no difference, however, in the survey responses to the question whether the community was 'highly involved' in RJ processes, although it is worth noting that about 43% of both groups disagreed that the community was 'highly involved'. There was a greater (non-significant) difference about whether RJ agencies should be run by community boards, with 23% of urban and 12% of rural respondents disagreeing.

Resources

Resources were important. The work of the rural agency is spread over a large distance, and sessions are held, as much as possible, in or near the community of harm. Consequently, there is a need to identify and contact, not just people who can volunteer in these areas, but also facilities such as meeting rooms and church halls, in many locations over the area covered by the agency: 'We're always, we're outsourcing. OK, we can't use the church hall, what can [we] use now? We can use the town hall or, "Oh I know somebody," and "Somebody mentioned to me the other day that we could use this location."' More urbanized areas were better equipped for RJ because, as one person said, 'it's easier maybe to access [resources], in some respects.'

It should be noted, however, that there was hardly any difference between urban and rural people who answered the Board/Staff/Volunteer survey on the question: 'We find it difficult to get the community involved with our work.' The slight difference was in the expected direction: 6.3% (urban) and 1.7% rural said that they strongly agreed with the statement.

Is RJ better suited to, and more effective in, rural communities?

Staff, board members, and volunteers in the seven agencies were asked how strongly they agreed with the statement "RJ is better suited to rural communities than urban", and "RJ is more effective in small communities than big communities". The assumption in the wording for both questions is that they would agree with the statements (just a question of "how strongly"). Despite the leading nature of both questions, the answer categories also allowed people to disagree, and the majority (80 to 90%) disagreed.

The rural/urban dimension may be considered in several ways. To simplify the analysis, I considered the agencies only on mainland Nova Scotia, excluding Cape Breton. On the mainland of Nova Scotia, I considered Metro Halifax to be urban and the other five agencies (Amherst, Truro, Westville, Yarmouth, and Kentville) to be rural (or small town/rural).

Considering the first question (see Table 1), only 10% (n = 11) agreed that RJ was "better suited to rural communities". (Note that the one person who agreed strongly has been included in the "agree" category). Among the individuals who agreed, people from the rural agencies were more likely than those from urban to agree that RJ was "better suited" to rural communities (2% urban vs. 16% rural). Among those who disagreed, however, slightly fewer urban respondents (16% vs. 20% rural) disagreed strongly.

Table 2
RJ More Suited to Rural Areas by Agency

	Urban (%)	(Rural (%)
Strongly Agree / Agree	2	16
Disagree	82	64
Strongly Disagree	16	20
Total (n = 111)	(50)	(61)

(cc .027)

The second question was worded a bit differently, distinguishing between "small" and "big" communities. The answers were also somewhat different. There may be "small" communities within a metropolitan area (a neighbourhood, for example), so the difference isn't that the "community" is rural or urban, it is that it is "small" rather than big. The direction of the answers was similar to the previous question, however, ("more suited in rural areas"), with somewhat more variation.

Table 3
RJ More Effective in Small Community by Agency

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Strongly Agree / Agree	8	27
Disagree	84	64
Strongly Disagree	8	9
Total (n = 110)	(51)	(59)

(cc =.029)

Only 20 of 110 (18%) people agreed with the statement that RJ was "more effective" in small rather than "big communities" (and only one "strongly agreed"). Almost three-quarters disagreed (74%) while a further 7% (n = 9) disagreed strongly. Again, however, within this overall trend, rural respondents were more likely to agree. The answer to this question parallels the above question about whether RJ was 'more suited' to rural communities. Rural respondents more likely agreed (27% vs. 8%) that RJ was more effective in small communities.

People were asked to identify their main role in the RJ agency: Board member (31), case worker (19), or volunteer facilitator: (60). Differences are small, but case workers were slightly more likely to strongly disagree that RJ was 'better suited to rural communities' (9% vs. 32% vs. 9% Board and 18% volunteers), and also more likely to strongly disagree that RJ was 'more effective in small communities': (16% case workers vs. 7% Board and volunteers).

Strengthening Community and Community Building

How important is strengthening community? People from urban areas were more likely than people from rural areas (62% vs. 49%) to rate strengthening community as a very important element of RJ practice (Table 3). On another question, only 6% disagreed that RJ *could* strengthen communities, with slightly more rural people agreeing that RJ could have this effect (33% urban vs. 42%).

Table 4
In RJ, how Important is Strengthening Community

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
3 (Neutral) / 4 (Important)	39	51
5 Very Important	62	49
Total (n = 113)	(51)	(62)

(c.c. = .188)

There was also a slight tendency for urban people to be more likely to strongly agree that the community should be more involved in 'running the NSRJ program' (22% urban vs. 11%), but the difference was largely that rural respondents were simply likely to agree with the statement (39% urban vs. 54%) rather than strongly agree.

Urban respondents were somewhat more likely than those who were more rural to see 'community building' as an important element of RJ. While most responses were positive, seeing community building as 'important', 62% of urban respondents and 48% of rural respondents said it was 'very important'. In an almost identical result (62% vs. 49%), urban respondents also rated 'strengthening community' as an important element.

Table 5
Importance of Community Building in RJ by Rural/Urban

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
3 (Neutral)	10	5
4 (Important)	29	47
5 Very Important	62	48
Total (N = 112)	(52)	(60)

(c.c. = .134)

Punishing the Offender

Rural respondents tended to be more punitive than their urban counterparts. They were more likely than urban respondents to believe that punishing the offender was very important (23% vs. 12%) while 39% of urban RJ practitioners viewed punishment as 'not at all important' (vs. 20% Rural).

Table 6
Importance of Punishing the Offender, Urban vs. Rural Agencies

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
1 Not At All Important	39	20
2 (Not Important)	8	23
3 (Neutral)	17	18
4 (Important)	25	16
5 Very Important	12	23
Total (n = 113)	(52)	(61)

(c.c. = .030)

On the other hand, rural people were more likely than urban to strongly agree that RJ provided 'adequate consequences for offenders' (18% rural vs. 8%) and, similarly, more urban people disagreed that the consequences were adequate (10% rural vs. 18%). Rural participants were also somewhat more likely than urban people to see 'reintegrative shaming' as very important. In short, rural people were slightly more likely than urban people to believe that punishing the offender was important, but not in the sense that they considered RJ insufficiently punitive, because more rural people than urban agreed that RJ provided adequate punishment.

Table 7

RJ Provides Adequate Consequences for Offenders, by Urban vs. Rural Agencies

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Strongly Agree	8	18
Agree	74	72
Disagree	18	8
Strongly Disagree	0	2
Total (n = 111)	(50)	(61)

(c.c. = .174)

Apology

The results by agency are somewhat mixed, but 57% or rural respondents and 40% of urban respondents believed an apology to be a 'very important' element of RJ practice. On the other hand, among the 8 people who believed an apology was not important, there also were more rural than urban respondents (10% vs. 4%).

Table 8

Importance of Apology in RJ by Rural/Urban

	Urban (%)	(Rural (%)
2 (Not Important)	4	10
3 (Neutral)	15	3
4 (Important)	40	30
5 Very Important	40	57
Total (n = 113)	(52)	(61)

(c.c. = .034)

Spirituality

Table 9

Importance of Spirituality in Urban vs. Rural Agencies

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
1 Not At All Important	29	16
2 (Not Important)	16	24
3 (Neutral)	28	36
4 (Important)	10	19
5 Very Important	18	5
Total (n = 99)	(51)	(58)

(c.c. = .052)

Root Cause of Crime

Should RJ get at the root cause of crime? There was a small difference on whether getting to the root cause was an important element of RJ. Again, however, the results were mixed. The largest number felt it was very important, with 50% or urban and 43% or rural respondents agreeing with this highest category. Conversely, however, 17% of rural respondents said getting to the root cause was either not at all important or not important compared to 2% of urban people. It is not clear, however, what getting to the 'root' of a problem means to the respondents.

Table 10
Importance of Getting to the Root Cause of Crime, Urban vs. Rural Agencies

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
1 Not At All Important / 2 Not Important	2	17
3 (Neutral)	25	15
4 (Important)	23	26
5 (Very Important)	50	43
Total (n = 113)	(52)	(61)

(c.c. = .071)

How restorative are Common RJ Practices?

The respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of a number of RJ practices, including victim-offender mediation, victim-offender conferences, and RCMP Community Justice Forums. The conferences typically include a larger number of people, such as supporters, officials (e.g., police), and community members. Only 7 respondents viewed Victim-Offender mediation as *not at all* or *not* restorative. The majority (Table 10) saw mediation as very restorative. The overall results surprised me because part of the philosophy of NSRJ is that it is not a 'mediation' programme, a term which may suggest there are mutual wrongs that need to be reconciled, rather than a victim and an offender. Considerably more urban respondents (85%) than rural (59%) agreed that mediation was 'very restorative'.

Table 11
How restorative is Victim-Offender Mediation by Urban/Rural

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
1 Not At Al Restorative	0	2
3 (Neutral)	2	8
4 (Restorative)	14	31
5 Very restorative	85	59
Total (n = 113)	(52)	(61)

cc. = 025

On the other hand, more rural than urban participants considered a victim-offender conference to be 'very restorative': (67% rural vs. 54%) while, similarly, urban respondents were more likely to see victim-offender conferences as 'not at all' or 'not restorative': 10% urban vs. 2%).

Rural people also tended to have a slightly more negative view of RCMP Community Justice Forums as being 'restorative': (11% rural vs. 4% urban scored 1 or 2 (where 1 = 'not at all restorative'). Similarly, 41% of urban and 35% of rural respondents viewed these forums as 'very restorative'.

Using Restorative Justice

About three-quarters of both urban and rural people agreed that there are 'kinds of offenders for whom RJ should never be used'. The agreement was slightly less on 'kinds of offences": 74 (urban) vs. 67% (rural) agreed that it was important to exclude some offences.

Rural people were also slightly more likely to disagree that 'RJ is essentially a way to keep offenders out of the traditional justice system' with 4% (urban) and 12% (rural) disagreeing strongly; urban people were slightly more likely to agree (49% urban vs. 43%).

All respondents agreed that RJ can 'increase victim satisfaction', with a slight tendency for rural people to agree strongly (17% urban vs. 25% rural).

Victim Veto

Urban people were also slightly more likely to agree that the victim veto was important – Table 7 – (46% vs. 38%).

Table 12
Importance of Victim Veto by Rural/Urban

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Agree	46	38
Disagree	54	62
Total (n = 112)	(52)	(60)

cc. = .403

Fairness of RJ

How fair are RJ processes to victims, offender, and community participants? All respondents thought that RJ was 'fair' or 'very fair' for both victims and offenders, although rural people were slightly more likely to say that RJ was 'very fair' for both groups, particularly in the case of offenders 67% urban vs. 82%). Slightly fewer urban (54%) than rural (72%) also saw RJ as being 'very fair' to community participants (although one rural respondent said 'not at all fair'; another indicated 'don't know'.

More rural respondents also tended to see restorative justice practices as 'very fair' in its protection of the rights of all participants (victims, offenders, community members). The difference was largest for community participants.

Table 13
How Fair are RJ Practices? How Well Do RJ Practices Protect Rights?

	Urban (% Very Fair)	Rural (% Very Fair)
RJ Fair for Victims	60	69
RJ Fair for Offenders	67	82
RJ Fair for Community Participants	54	72
RJ Protects Rights - Victims	65	72
RJ Protects Rights - Offenders	69	75
RJ Protects Rights – Comm'ty Participants*	64	79

*(cc. = .044)

RJ and African-Canadians

There was a difference on the question whether they had heard of Africentric principles, with slightly more than one half of urban people and one quarter of rural people indicating that they were familiar with or had heard of Africentricity of Africentric principles' (Table 13). Similarly, urban people were considerably more likely to agree that racial issues often arise in RJ cases involving African Nova Scotians (68% vs. 43% -- see Table 14).

There was, however, little difference on the question that 'African Nova Scotians are treated fairly in the RJ program' (96% agreement) and needs have been met by the RJ program', a statement that had a substantial amount of agreement: (89% vs 87% agreement).

Table 14
Familiarity with Africentricity by Rural/Urban

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Yes	55	25
No	45	75
Total (n = 111)	(51)	(60)

cc. = .001

Table 15
Racial Issues Often Arise in RJ by Rural/Urban

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Agree	68	43
Disagree	32	57
Total (n = 84)	(44)	(40)

cc. = .016

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE EXIT SURVEYS

In March, 2005, Clairmont analyzed the outcomes of RJ sessions focusing 'in particular on the description and analyses of the views of participants in the restorative justice (RJ) conferencing, namely the young offenders, their parents/guardians and supporters, the victims, their supporters, and the others/neutrals who attended the conferences' such as 'police officers ... criminal justice system (CJS) officials, community representatives and specialists / trainees.' His report presented results from two 'broad outcome dimensions in the evaluation, namely (a) the exit surveys which garnered participants' views as the RJ conference was ending and all participants were on site, (b) the follow-up telephone interviews conducted a minimum of six months after the conference' (4).

The first analysis involved the exit surveys completed by participants at the conclusion of an RJ session. Based on 3899 exit surveys collected between 2002 and 2004, with the majority (66%) coming from the urban agencies (Halifax and Sydney), reflecting their greater case load. Offenders and offender supporters constituted 70% or respondents; victims 11% and victim supporters 6% (9-10).

Rural areas tend to have greater participation of victims and victim supporters. Clairmont notes that 'there were major differences among the agencies concerning the proportion of victims and victim supporters in their sub-samples; the lowest percentage of the latter was found, not unexpectedly, in metropolitan Halifax where there has been a higher proportion of accountability sessions relating to minor property crime (especially shoplifting). Approximately 31% of the overall sample had been involved in accountability sessions' (10).

Clairmont grouped offenses 'into two categories ... the more overtly minor offenses including mischief, public order offenses, provincial/municipal statute violations and minor property crime, and, category two including all other offenses, the largest single contributor being assault.' Minor crimes 'accounted for 58% of the cases and the latter 42%' (11).

Exit-oriented Outcomes

'The questions or statements eliciting the more diverse response were oriented more to "outcome" aspects, such as whether RJ conferencing helps the offender more than the victim, whether it will deter future crime by the offender and whether the respondent saw the crime/offence differently as a result of the RJ experience. Although there were differences, it can be seen that the large majority of the respondents assessed very positively both process and outcomes aspects of the RJ experience, and overwhelmingly would "recommend conferences like this to deal with offenses like this one"' (12).

'Tables A-5, A-6 and A-7 explore the variation found among the "outcome" issues, concentrating on the positive "strongly agree" responses.

Clairmont distinguished more urban agencies (Halifax, Sydney) from more rural agencies (Amherst, Kentville, Truro). Table A-5 presents data on the impact of contextual factors for an index score indicating positive assessment of the RJ experience. In this index a low score is one where the respondent gave no "strongly agree" response to the [4] outcome questions while a medium score represents one or two such responses and a high score, three or four.' A higher score—more likely to 'strongly agree'—was related to involvement with an urban (28%) rather than rural agency (22%) (15).

Table 16
Special RJ Exit Index Scores by Select Variables, 2002-2004 (%'s) (Excerpt from Table A-5, p. 27)

	Urban (%)	Town/Rural (%)
Low	28	34
Medium	43	44
High	28	22
Total (n = 3897)	(2576)	(1321)

'Tables A-6 and A-7 examine, first, the variation by contextual factor in "strongly agree" responses to the outcome questions/statements in general, and then their impact on each of the questions/statements by participant's role.' In Table A-6, impact is defined as a percentage difference greater than 5%'. 21% (urban) vs. 15% (rural) saw the offence differently after the RJ session; '[U]rban agencies (56%) ... were ... associated with more enthused recommendations of RJ in similar cases' than rural agencies (48%) (16, 28). For Table A-7, again concentrating on the 'strongly agree' category, 'Agency type impacted on the assessments of all participant roles to some extent but, unlike the other contextual variables, the direction of impact changed by role, making interpretation problematic' (17). Examining contextual factors, Clairmont examined differences among agencies. Urban offenders (40%) were less likely than urban offenders (48%) to believe that RJ was a deterrent. Conversely, urban offender supporters (36%) were more likely that rural offender supporters (28%) to agree that the RJ session was a deterrent, and more likely to recommend RJ for similar offences (54% urban vs. 48%) (29-30).

Table 17
Exit Outcome-oriented Responses by Select Contextual Factors, 2002-2004 (Excerpt from Table A-7, p. 17)

Response by Role				
	Satisfied with Agreement	Conference a Deterrent	See Offences Differently	Would Recommend RJ
Offenders: Urban		40%		
Offenders: Rural		48%		
Offend Supp: Urban		36%		
Offend Supp: Rural		28%		
Victims: Urban	48%			46%
Victims: Rural	36%			30%
Victim Supp: Urban		16%		42%
Victim Supp: Rural		25%		48%

Follow-Up Interviews

Almost identical proportions of participants (~60%) in rural and urban agencies agreed to a follow-up interview (35). Examining only mainland agencies, 56% (Halifax) agreed to a follow-up interview, while 64% in Kentville, Truro, and Amherst agreed. (The Cape Breton response rate was 69%) (39). The total available number of interviews was 1350 (36). Among

other analyses, Clairmont examines 'the contextual variables that impact on variation within the different[role] groupings.'

359 offenders were interviewed. 'The sample of youths was fairly well distributed among the five selected local RJ agencies though one-third were from the Halifax agency (41). 'The sample of 564 offender supporters, overwhelmingly parents and especially mothers, was very well distributed among the five RJ agencies, with the Sydney-based agency accounting for the largest proportion at 28%' (47). 'The victim sample [n = 225] drew quite evenly from all five local RJ agencies, the largest proportion - 24% - having been involved with the Kentville-based, Annapolis Valley agency' (53). 'The sample of victim supporters [n = 98]was well-distributed in terms of agency involvement, the range for the five agencies being from 11% (Truro) to 28% (Halifax)' (60). 'The ninety-five others/neutrals interviewed were a diverse grouping made up in almost equal measure of CJS officials (mostly police officers), community representatives and trainees or specialists. Almost 50% of this entire grouping was associated with the Sydney-based RJ agency which attests to two main points, namely the more extensive use of community representatives (additional to offender and victim supporters) by that agency, and the overall, infrequent attendance of the referring agent (e.g., police, crown prosecutor)' (66).

'It was ... considered that perhaps urban areas would differ from more rural and small town areas with respect to how participants assessed their RJ experience, so that variable was also included and measured by the location of the local RJ agencies' (72).

Considering victims, 'The impact of agency type was largely linked to victims' satisfactions with the session's agreement, both at the time and when interviewed in the follow-up; here satisfaction was less among victims in the rural and small town areas.' Specifically, ural respondents were less likely to have been satisfied initially with the agreement (70% vs. 47%), and less likely to be 'still happy' with the agreement (57% vs. 43%) (75). The latter [rural] category's victims were also less likely to report themselves more positive about the CJS as a result of their RJ experience [38% urban, 28% rural], and less disposed to recommend the RJ option to their friends in similar circumstances'(68% urban, 54% rural) (73).

Among victims' supporters, 'Agency type also impacted on several themes. Victim supporters in the more urban contexts were more satisfied with the RJ agreement [52% vs. 34%] and of the view that they had benefited from the RJ experience [45% vs. 33%], but their counterparts in the more rural/small town areas were more positive about using the RJ option for similar cases [40% vs. 63%] and also about thinking that the offender was be less likely to re-offend [39% vs. 63%]' (76, 78).

Among offenders, 'In terms of advocating the use of the RJ option, the young offenders' views were impacted most by agency type where those from rural/small town areas were more positive than their urban counterparts [recommending RJ in similar cases (66% vs. 82% rural), and for more serious cases (24% vs. 34% rural).... When the issue of possibly recommending the RJ option to a friend in similar circumstances was raised, there was something of a flip on the agency variable as here the urban youth were more positive [75% vs. 63%].' (79).

'Youths [offenders] in more urban contexts, those involved in accountability sessions and those accused of category one offenses were significantly more likely than their counterparts to have been satisfied with the agreement reached both at the time [72% urban vs. 61%] and when interviewed at follow-up [77% urban vs. 61%]; also they were more of the view that the RJ conference, and what they did in the agreement, helped them make up for the offence' [65% urban vs. 54% said the session would 'help you atone'] (79). 'Agency impacts too and generally respondents in small towns and rural areas are less positively impacted by RJ than their urban

counterparts. Cross Tabulations indicate that the contextual variables are quite independent of each other for these analyses' (80).

Among offenders' supporters, 'In terms of using RJ in instances of more serious offending, there was variation, and here—consistent with the impact for all the other participant groupings, females and those supporters involved with the small town / rural agencies were less positive about using the RJ option [45% urban vs. 28%].

'Urban agency and category one offence involvement produced significant positive impact regarding offender supporters' views on whether their youths had taken responsibility for their actions [81% urban vs. 55%], on whether the youths were committed to the session's agreement [80% urban vs. 56%] and on whether they were less likely to re-offend because of the RJ experience [60% urban vs. 48%]. These results again were generally consistent with the contextual impacts for other participant groupings' (82).

Table 18
Role Players' Follow-Up Views by Urban/Rural (Excerpts from Tables C-6 to C-9)

Theme	Victims	Victims' Supporters	Offenders	Offenders' Supporters
Yes RJ for Similar Cases	40% to 63%	40% to 63%	66% to 82%	
Yes RJ for More Serious Cases			24% to 34%	45% to 28%
Would Recommend RJ	68% to 54%		75% to 63%	
Offender Atoned			65% to 54%	
Offender Take Responsibility				81% to 55%
More Positive re: CJS	38% to 28%			
Offender Less Likely to Re-Offend		39% to 63%		
Has Victim Benefitted		45% to 33%		
Satisfied Initially with Agreement	70% to 47%	52% to 34%	72% to 61%	81% to 50%
Still Happy re: Agreement	57% to 43%		77% to 61%	
Offender Committed to Agreement				80% to 56%
Offender Less Likely to Re-Offend				60% to 48%

The four tables can be combined into one, indicating urban/rural differences among the four role players. The results in red indicate questions for which rural responses were higher than urban. Overall, of the 20 significant results, urban respondents were more positive than rural respondents in 15 (75%). Clairmont concludes, 'residents of less urban communities generally

had less positive views of various restorative justice concerns.... Agency type unexpectedly emerged as a usually important contextual variable with some twists and turns in its impact' (84).

CONCLUSION

Clairmont found that support for RJ was high among all participants of RJ sessions as reported in exit surveys immediately after the meeting. The majority of participants continued to be supportive after six months, as indicated by a follow-up telephone interview. At that point, however, there was a somewhat greater likelihood that rural respondents would be less supportive. This is the opposite of what would be expected, on the assumption that RJ was more suited to rural communities than urban ones.

It is possible that decline in the more positive evaluations would be more likely to occur in rural areas because of the greater visibility of offenders and the as a consequence of the closer degree of interaction among community members. How much tangible or apparent change can be expected from the RJ experience? It is possible that the greater visibility of offenders in small communities might lead to greater cynicism about the effectiveness and appropriateness of RJ. If they appear unchanged, in the same circumstances, for example, hanging around with the same people in the same places, then support for RJ might be a victim of greater community interaction in rural areas.

It could also be, however, that there is a tendency to greater conservatism in rural areas. The assumption that rural people are more conservative than urban is consistent with the traditional, long-standing nature of rural communities and the smaller degree of mobility and the accumulation of older people. Among conservative values, for example, the importance of law and order tends to be high. There may be less tolerance of diversity and difference; less forgiveness for transgressions. Juvenile justice has come in for a significant amount of social criticism, at least since the early 1980s and the Young Offenders' Act. It is possible that attitudes are generally more conservative in rural Nova Scotia. The one attempt to test this idea, using the question about the importance of spirituality, however, gave an ambiguous answer. On the one hand, urban respondents to the NSRJ survey were more likely than rural ones to say that spirituality was not at all an important goal of RJ, reflecting a less conservative, urban orientation. Paradoxically, however, more urban respondents than rural also said that spirituality was a 'very important' goal of RJ.

Qualitative data indicated that people involved with RJ in the province tended to perceive rural urban differences. Crime rates may be similar in urban and rural areas, but some people felt that crime in rural areas tended to be more traumatizing. People may respond differently depending on their expectations of what is normal and what is frightening. It is more shocking when a violent crime, for example, occurs in a small community. How could such a terrible thing happen here? people will ask, making the assumption that it happens frequently in the city. One publicized incident is enough to make rural people feel less secure about their home, lock their doors, and so on.

Problems of physical distance are greater in rural areas. Transportation is more likely private than public, and people who are economically disadvantaged cannot access resources as easily as in an urban setting with mass transit. In addition, urban centres tend to be resource- and specialist-rich compared with outlying areas. For many specialized services, in terms of quantity and quality, rural people have to travel to the city. One way the problem of human resources plays out is the difficulty finding volunteers to take part in RJ sessions, or to supervise the work

of offenders in cases where community service is a requirement o the session agreement. It is frequently pointed out that rural areas operate with a small resource base of people who are active. Active people tend. Also, to be active in more than one area – in the church, fire department, community centre, and so on. Burn-out is high and rural RJ workers complain that they find it difficult to get people involved in RJ. However, the same complaint surfaces among urban RJ workers – getting people is never easy. The greater availability of potential volunteers may be equally busy with the greater number of offenders. In any agency, success appears to depend on the effort expended. One difference, however, did stand out. Rural people debated whether the greater local knowledge in small communities made it more difficult to get volunteers. People anted to know whether they had any connections with a case and wished to avoid situations where they know the individuals involved. Greater visibility and knowledge also breed as secretiveness and a sense of privacy. Volunteers may be equally difficult to get in rural and urban contexts, but for different reasons. In urban areas there may be greater indifference, less sense of community duty, and a desire not to be involved. In rural areas greater knowledge of the people involved may lead to a desire not to disturb the privacy of people you know or may make you feel vulnerable to retaliation, also leading to less involvement.

While the majority of people surveyed did not agree that RJ was better suited to and more effective in a rural rather than an urban setting, more rural respondents than urban ones were more likely agree with the statement. I think this difference may be partly explained by the different contexts in which the respondents viewed the question. When you live and work in a rural part of the province, the most tangible and immediate comparison point is the urban centre closest to you – HRM in Nova Scotia. When you work and live in HRM, however, you may be less likely to judge what you do and what you think according to a comparison with rural parts of the province, and be more inclined to compare your work with other urban areas – with London, Ontario, or Hull, England perhaps, but not with Kentville or Yarmouth. The urban/rural comparison is more salient for people living in rural than urban contexts.

Finally, there were some differences in the perceived goals of RJ. Urban respondents were more likely than rural ones to say that strengthening communities was a very important goal of RJ. The stronger sense of community you have, as in more rural areas, perhaps the less likely you are to perceive RJ as a means to strengthen that community. The more community needs strengthening, the more you might see that goal of RJ as being important. Rural people more than urban saw punishment as an important goal of RJ. Conversely (though not significantly), rural respondents also more likely to agree that RJ provides adequate consequences for offenders. Presumably, then, rural people found RJ to be more punitive that did urban respondents. They also were somewhat more likely to consider 'shaming' an important goal. Shame may be consistent with small-community values and reflect the appropriate response of a young offender who is faced with the consequences of her or his actions as they affect victims and the community.

Analysing RJ processes, as opposed to attitudes, revealed an important rural/urban difference in the greater proportion of unsuccessful outcomes in the urban core compared with rural agencies. The higher degree of failure was linked, not to agency work, but to the greater proportion of RJ referrals from the Crown in HRM compared with mainland rural agencies. A higher proportion of potentially less likely cases may being referred in HRM, and, given that many of the failures came prior to an RJ session, the lower rate of success suggests that HRM has a less stable, more mobile and floating population of young offenders who are difficult to

bring into the system for logistical reasons. The difference in referrals and outcomes partly also reflects the greater degree of institutionalization of RJ in HRM.

Finally, however, while Crown referrals overall tended to be higher in HRM than in other mainland agencies, there was considerable variation within the rural areas. This factor points, I think, to a significant difference between rural and urban areas in Nova Scotia. Effective RJ may not require institutionalization, although the stable success of the programme over time may require relatively permanent interaction into the justice system (and other systems affecting youth). But unofficial interaction, among role-players who know each other, work in close proximity to each other, and more frequently interact socially (as might be the case in more rural areas), might also lead to effective restorative justice practices. The difficulty with more unofficial and less institutionalized practice, however, is that much is dependent on individuals. Different Crowns, for example, support the principles of RJ to greater or lesser degrees; constable attitudes may vary, but a supportive Chief in a small town has a great deal of influence over referrals; conversely, where the police don't refer, the onus is placed more on the Crown. In short, in smaller areas, idiosyncrasies among the significant role players has a lot to do with the differential use and effectiveness of restorative justice.