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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE IN BALTIMORE

A Report for the Monitor

Based on Interviews with Arrested Detainees

Abstract

The Consent Decree requires the city of Baltimore to conduct an annual “survey of detained arrestees.” People who have been arrested are rarely the source of insight about the character of policing in the United States, and yet many of them have a great range of experience with law enforcement and criminal justice —as victims, suspects, defendants, witnesses, observers, and callers for service. This report uses interviews with custodial arrestees in the Baltimore City Detention Center shortly after their arrest to understand residents’ experiences and perceptions of the police and their ideas about how to improve policing. The report finds that most detainees we interviewed judge policing on the basis of their experiences before arrest than during it. It also finds that much of their dismay about policing in Baltimore today stems from a sense that the police “don’t care” about their community, despite the persistence of social problems they believe the police can help fix.

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Executive Summary

This report relies on interviews with detainees shortly after they were arrested by the Baltimore Police Department to gain insight into the current practice of policing and how it might be improved. We asked detainees about their experiences of policing and the character of relations between residents and the police in their neighborhood. We solicited their views about the performance of the Baltimore Police Department and their opinions about the greatest priorities for the city. We also asked what they would do first if they were chief of police. When respondents reported a specific encounter with the police that was negative, we asked: “What could the officer have done differently to make that a better experience?” The goal of the study, in other words, was not to ascertain the incidence of force during arrest or document dissatisfaction with policing in Baltimore, but rather to use the experiences and perceptions of custodial arrestees as a source of information about how the BPD is doing under the consent decree and how to make the department better.

The Interviews

We interviewed 70 detainees between July 16 and July 20, 2019, using a semi-structured interview protocol: closed questions with a fixed response scale were followed by open-ended prompts, such as “why is that?” (for the full interview instrument, see Appendix 2). All detainees we spoke with had been arrested during the day of our interview, most within 2-6 hours of our contact. To recruit participants in the research, we prepared a special letter that explained the purposes of our research, cited the consent decree, and emphasized the confidentiality of the interview. Security personnel from the Baltimore City Detention Center promised to give all new detainees this recruitment letter, but because of the configuration of the jail and the placement of our research team in the offices of the court commissioners we are unable to report how many detainees in fact received it. Sometimes court commissioners apprised detainees of the opportunity to participate during their initial hearing; sometimes corrections staff did.

The demographic profile of detainees we interviewed closely resembles the profile of persons arrested by the Baltimore Police Department in the first six months of 2019 as well as the profile of all people booked into the jail during the days we conducted interviews. Eighty percent of our interviewees identified themselves as Black; 16 percent said White; 4 percent said “other.” No persons below 18 years of age were interviewed as arrested youth and minors are taken to at a different facility. A quarter of detainees were between 18 and 25 years old (see Appendix 3 for a statistical portrait of the sample).

Before the beginning of each interview, we reminded detainees of the purpose of the research, obtained their consent to participate, informed them of their right to end the interview at any time, assured them of the confidentiality of the conversation and anonymity of the process; we do not know the names of any people we spoke with. We spoke with detainees through a window in the hearing rooms that are used by Court Commissioners to inform detainees of their rights and consider release or bail. All detainees were alone during the interview; some might have contacted counsel before our meeting, but we do not know how often or in which kinds of cases this took place. We recorded and later transcribed the interviews.

Main Findings

More than half of the detainees we interviewed thought the Baltimore Police Department was doing either a “bad” or “terrible” job. Fewer than one in five detainees said it was doing a good or excellent job. Just over a quarter judged work of the department “neither good nor bad.”

The negative appraisal was not the result of prejudice against officers or bias against policing. Several detainees who criticized the work of the police department also appeared to express solidarity with officers or a sentiment bordering on sympathy. “Like, some of them are just, you know, good people just doing their job,” one person said. Another said: “I mean, the officers themselves were actually, I mean, they just, ...I understand at some point they just gotta do what they taught to do.” Yet another said: “I mean, you know, they go to do they job, so they still trying to do it professional. But, like I say, they just mess up.”

Many respondents struggled to reconcile their views about the Department. Several told us that it was impossible to divide things into “good and bad” or “truth and lies.” Some detainees changed their response in the course of talking out loud.

“Uh... Hm. Think good, thinking bad, hell, I dunno, they all right. They all right.”

“Uh. They good, they get bad, they ... don't know, they all right, they all right.”

In some cases a negative appraisal of the department coincided with a complaint about their arrest and detention. Several detainees said they had been arrested for “nothing,” that they had been “locked up for no reason.” Two said they were wrongfully arrested; one said he planned to sue the city. But the majority of detainees separated an assessment of their own situation from their views of the police department. One detainee said:

“... 'Cause once, once you commit a crime, as a, as a male or female, you gotta, you gotta know, man up and like, accept the fact, like, you did that. And you can't- certain people got a problem with officers 'cause they just doing they job.”

Some detainees complained about slow response times and rising levels of violent crime, but most negative views of the work of the department reflected dismay rather than disappointment with the quality of service. Several detainees complained that police officers “don’t care about Baltimore.” One person said: “They have a negative, like, perception of Baltimore.” “Some of them, just not all, a lot of them, they don’t, don’t care, they don’t really care,” said another. Several detainees lamented that police officers “don’t know us;” one objected that “they not from the community, so how they going to do they job”?

Few detainees believed the police treat people from different racial and ethnic groups equally; even fewer thought police treated people with different gender identities or sexual orientations equally. Most detainees portrayed such differential treatment as a reflection of prejudice rather than profiling. Fewer than 15 percent used the word “profiling” to decry police practices; several said: “it’s bad for everyone.” One detainee who said he was “very satisfied” with the conduct of the police during this arrest and recounted many positive prior experiences of the police said, “they have a stigma of them,” referring to people in his neighborhood. Many detainees said it was the “area” they lived in that was stereotyped.

Despite these beliefs, a majority of detainees said they would seek help from the police if they were lost and in need of directions or if they had been a victim of property crime (burglary, theft). But few detainees said they would call the police if they knew the perpetrator and the offense involved an act of violence. In these situations, detainees did not trust the police to act prudently, safeguard information, and protect themselves and witnesses from retaliation.

Many detainees thought that the solution to problems in policing rested in an ethic of care and moral concern about “the community” rather than a reduction in crime, a boost in police productivity, or new service delivery model. Detainees didn’t want officers to behave like “Captain America or Wonder Woman.” They wanted officers to “be people.” They wanted the Commissioner of Police to “hire good cop, real cops that really care about citizens.” They also seemed disposed to forgive mistakes. “I mean, I feel like anyone can understand that sometimes the system is, uh, faulted and stuff,” one person said.

The most common advice and plea was for the Department to heed “the community.” Detainees recommended integrating police officers into the community, forging a sense of shared belonging, and cultivating an ethic of care for the city. They wished for this ethos to constitute the core of the police mission. “I feel like nobody knows the community better than the community,” one person said. “So if you take the people that are willin' to talk to the police about what's going on in the community- ... then maybe they'll have a better understanding of what's going on in the community and what needs to be done.”

Acknowledgements

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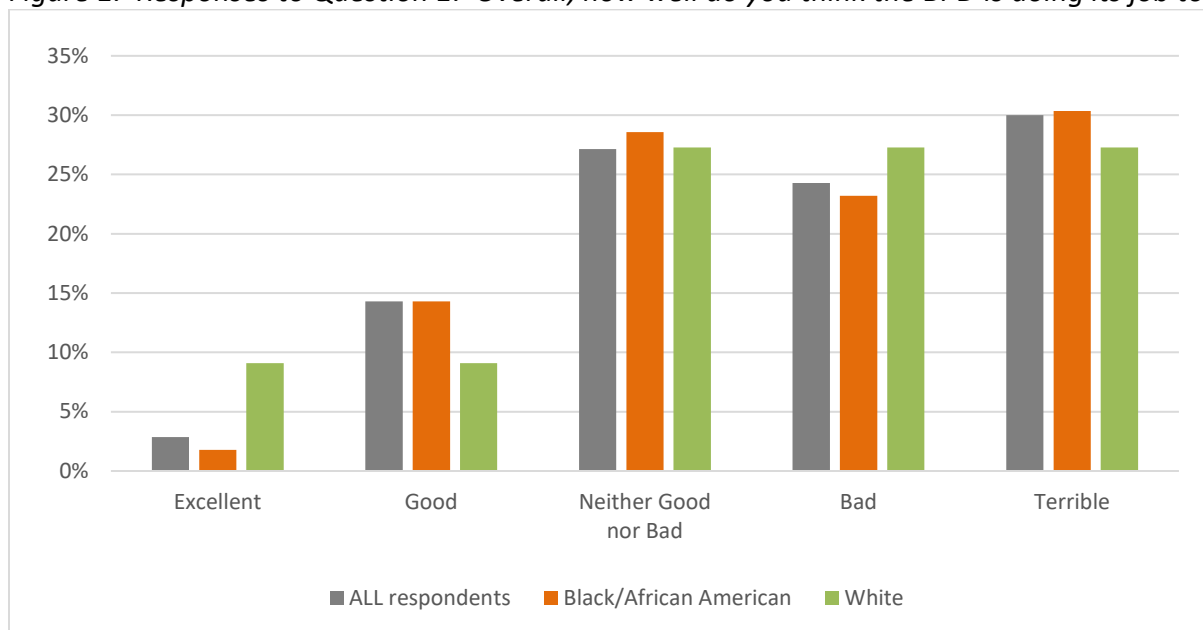
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1. Appraisals of Police Performance

The first question we asked custodial arrestees was: “Overall, how well do you think the Baltimore Police Department is doing its job today?” We posed this general question before asking about any specific experiences of the police in order to encourage detainees to express civic opinions. As you can see in Figure 1 below, 3 percent of respondents (2 people) said they thought the BPD was doing an “excellent” job today. One of these respondents was sarcastic and aggressive in the interview, preempting the completion of our questions by calling the police “top cops” and “the best.” Another 14 percent of detainees thought the Department was doing a “good” job. Over a quarter of suspects (27 percent) had mixed feelings about police performance, many of them agonizing over their answer (“it’s hard to see things true, true or false, you feel me?”) before selecting “neither good nor bad.” A slightly smaller fraction (24 percent) thought the BPD is doing a “bad” job; slightly more (30 percent) said it is “terrible.”

Figure 1. Responses to Question 1: Overall, how well do you think the BPD is doing its job today?



Variations in the pattern of responses by race were minute. A higher portion of White detainees than Black/African American detainees considered the work of the BPD “excellent,” although this favorable appraisal reflects the view of just 1 White suspect.¹ Indeed, the small number of White detainees in our sample (11 detainees overall) makes us reluctant to accord much significance either to this disparity or to the higher proportion of Black/African Americans among all detainees who said the police is doing a “good” job. There also was some symmetry in the sentiment about policing: Black/African Americans comprised 81 percent of the people who judged the work of the BPD “terrible” and 80 percent of those who deemed it “good.” This pattern makes us think that race by itself did not prejudice detainees’ appraisals of the police.

¹ Eighty percent of the detainees we interviewed said they were Black or African American, another 16 percent identified themselves as “White.” Six percent declined to state their race/ethnicity.

Variation by age was also modest. Among those who judged the work of the BPD “terrible,” the average age was 32.6 years; among those who deemed it “good” the average age was 34.3 years.² Respondents aged 25 and younger were marginally more likely than others to decry the state of policing in Baltimore; 29 percent said it was terrible, 18 percent said it was bad; a combined 18 percent said it was good or excellent.

So, how should we interpret these results, which indicate that detainees have a predominantly negative opinion of the work of the police? Should we presume that people in detention are biased against the police and discount such negativity? Are ratings of the “job” of the Department a good guide to people’s beliefs about the character of policing? Did the conditions of confinement or uncertainty about their case skew detainees’ views of the police?³

Many detainees expressed sharply negative views of the police, often with expletives. A few were upset about the duration of their custody, confused about what would happen next, and distressed by their inability to communicate with relatives or attorneys. Some were bitter, denying that they committed an offense, or insisting they were being “locked up for nothing,” or denouncing the police for not listening to their side of the story. It is hard to believe that being arrested and detained did not affect people’s views: “being locked up is a terrible experience,” one person said, “a terrible experience.”

Nevertheless, several observations suggest to us that detainees were exercising judgment rather than venting frustration about the police when responding to our questions. First, most of the intensely negative experiences of the police recounted by detainees had taken place in the recent past rather than in the course of the instant arrest. Second, most detainees responded to all our questions patiently and many paused before responding; several asked us to repeat the scale of possible responses in order to calibrate their answers. One asked: “is ‘bad’ worse than ‘terrible’?” to which we replied “no,” whereupon the detainee selected “bad” as the most apt response. Third, over a third of all detainees said at the end of the interview that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with this most recent experience of the police, suggesting to us that their views were not jaundiced or unduly compromised by their recent arrest and custody.⁴ Indeed, several people who told detailed stories of being arbitrarily stopped by the police in the past and alleged that they were “profiled” also said they were “satisfied” with this most recent experience of the police; some even commended the officers for their treatment, such as parking their car or patiently explaining the warrant.

² The average age of all respondents was 33.5 years. Though we were initially surprised by this average age, it closely resembles the age profile of people arrested and booked during this time period. See Appendix 2 for an account of the social and demographic traits of the detainees we interviewed.

³ All interviews took place before a final bail hearing with a court commissioner; accordingly, most detainees did not know whether their custody would be continued. For a detailed description of the process of recruitment and the location of the interviews, see Appendix 1, Methodology.

⁴ A much higher percentage of Black/African American detainees (40%) than White detainees (18%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of arrest. We cannot tell what factors might explain this variation without further research into detainees’ *expectations* of the police or their evaluations of prior experiences of arrest.

Still, even if we treat detainees' testimony as truthful, and as accurate reflections of their views, how can we interpret these results in the absence of an applicable baseline measure of attitudes about the police? Are the negative views of policing recorded here a recent development, an aberration or the norm? Is a 30 percent rating of terrible low or high? By what criterion should we analyze the responses? We see two options. First, we can compare the responses of detainees in Baltimore to the findings from nearly identical research in Cleveland in 2017 and Los Angeles in 2009, when the police departments of both these cities were likewise operating under a consent decree (though at different stages of their implementation). Second, we can analyze responses to other questions within the same interview protocol, not solely for the purposes of testing their consistency and "internal validity" but for gauging whether the views of detainees are fixed and cynical or whether they are sensitive and suggestible and therefore capable of appreciating change over time in the work of the police department.⁵

1. Comparison to Other Police Departments

One possible benchmark for interpreting these results comes from comparing the responses of arrested detainees in Baltimore to an identical question posed to recently arrested detainees in Cleveland in April 2017 and in Los Angeles in April 2009. This comparison is obviously not ideal. By the spring of 2009, the LAPD had been operating under a consent decree for nearly eight years; many of its worst practices had been the subject of repeated reforms. On a wide range of measures (use of force, internal and external accountability, crime reduction) that department had already improved its practices and relations considerably.⁶ By the time of our interviews of detainees in Cleveland in April 2017, the police department had already operated under a consent decree for two years.

Comparisons with Los Angeles and Cleveland might seem inapt, too. Beliefs about the purpose of policing and other public expectations of police departments in these cities are unlikely to be the same as those in Baltimore. The distinct histories, demography, and socio-economic conditions of each city might make the views of detainees diverge even if the number of years of concerted reform in policing were identical. Every city is exceptional in its own way.

Clearly, the best way to interpret the appraisals of police performance depicted above is to repeat the interviews with detainees and compare the evolution of responses *within* Baltimore over time. We hope to begin charting such change next year, after conducting a fresh round of interviews. Nevertheless, a comparison of the responses to our questions in these different cities reveals two things: first, it is realistic to expect some custodial arrestees to appreciate

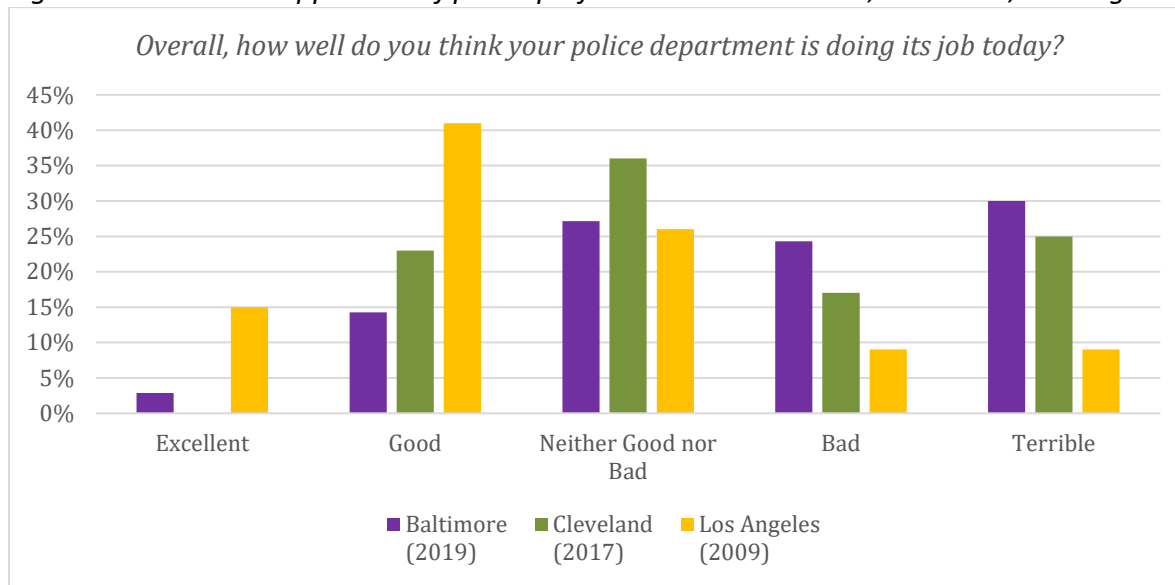
⁵ A third source will become available later this fall with the publication of a report from the Institute for Urban Research of Morgan State University which will summarize findings from face-to-face interviews with nearly 650 residents of Baltimore. Several of the questions we asked detainees were also posed to residents in that survey, with identical phrasing and response scales. A close comparison of the findings might reveal the effects of intense or repeat contact with the police on people's perceptions of the BPD.

⁶ For an account of the research on change in policing in Los Angeles and the views of detainees in that city in 2009, see "Policing Los Angeles Under a Consent Decree: The Dynamics of Change in the LAPD," Chris Stone, Todd Foglesong, Christine M. Cole, available at: <http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/Harvard-LAPD%20Study.pdf>

excellence in the work of a police department, despite their present situation. Second, it demonstrates that police departments can improve over time.⁷

Detainees’ perceptions of the job being done by the police in Baltimore today are much more negative than they were in Cleveland in 2017 and Los Angeles in 2009. As you can see below in Figure 2, a combined fifty four percent of detainees in Baltimore said the police is doing either a “bad” or “terrible” job, compared to 42 percent in Cleveland and 18 percent in Los Angeles. Favorable views were also scarce: only 14 percent of detainees in Baltimore thought the police was doing a good job, compared to 23 percent in Cleveland and 41 in Los Angeles.⁸

Figure 2. Detainees’ appraisals of police performance in Baltimore, Cleveland, Los Angeles



2. Change Over Time

To gauge whether detainees’ views of police in Baltimore are static and bleak or dynamic and hopeful, our second question was whether they thought the way BPD does its job had improved or deteriorated over the past 2 or 3 years. As the data in Figure 3 on the next page show, one out of five detainees thought it had improved, which is a slightly higher portion of those who judged policing “good” (compare with Figure 1 above). A combined 41 percent believed it was “somewhat worse” or “much worse,” which is considerably lower than the combined percentage

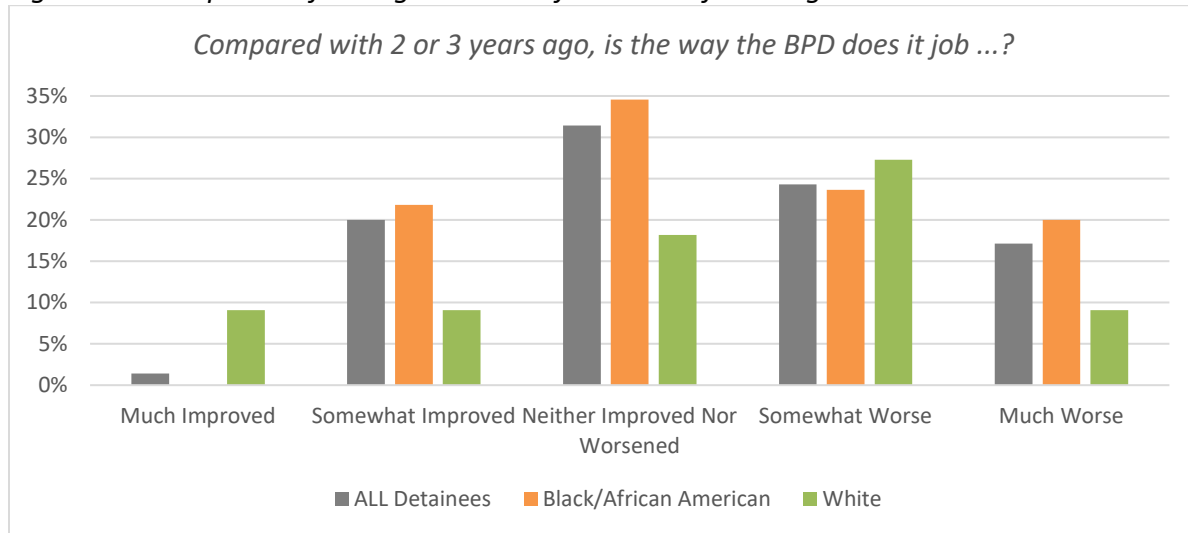
⁷ We expect to know later this year, when we conduct a second round of interviews of detainees in Cleveland, whether there have been positive changes in the appraisal of the Cleveland Police Department. According to the Community Survey in that city, residents’ appraisal of the “job” performed by the police increased measurably between 2016 and 2018, and yet perceptions of equal treatment and the appropriate use of force declined appreciably in the same period.

⁸ The modal response in Cleveland was mixed, or ambivalent. We should know in September, when the results of the second round of interviews in Cleveland have been analyzed, whether and these views have changed since 2017. A copy of the 2017 report is available here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5651f9b5e4b08f0af890bd13/t/5a3acf34e2c483dfe3ae8536/1513803574980/%23161+Motion+Regarding+Biennial+Community+Survey+of+Detained+Arrestees.pdf>

of detainees who judged policing “bad” or “terrible” (54%). The modal response was that policing had not moved in either direction. One person described this as a “stand-still.”

Figure 3. Perceptions of Change in the Performance of Policing in Baltimore



*The responses from white detainees do not sum to 100% because 3 respondents (27%) did not answer.

What’s good or better in policing?

Most detainees who thought policing was “excellent” or “good” described the positive work of the police in general terms. For instance, one person said: “So as far as seeing through that and participating and, you know, they common sense and they job work and how they operate, I say good. I ain't gonna say it's excellent, I'll say good.” Likewise, most detainees who said policing was “somewhat improved” struggled to be specific about the changes they sensed. “I don't really got examples,” one person said. “But, I don't really got, like, specific examples.”

A few people said they detected improvements in how the police treat people. “I just noticed how they handle people better,” said one person. Another said: “I just feel like they’re not as aggressive towards who they’re arresting, and things like that.” One detainee was more specific about this change in the treatment of detainees during arrest:

“Well when I got arrested, it was just that they jumped out, they grabbed me, there wasn't no physical force or nothing like that. He just grabbed me and locked me up and that was that. I had had times before where they come out, jump out, like, they don't say, “Put your hands up.” they just come out and grab you.”

Several people pointed to things that had improved in the neighborhood rather than things that had happened to them personally. “More and more people getting locked up back then,” said one person. “Now it’s calmed down.” One person thought a combination of pride and self-improvement was responsible for this change:

"They, they been, they been trying to better they self, even with just, just, just being realistic with people. It's, it's more, they, they, they put they pride in they work so I'll say- ... it's much more better."

Some of the improvements noticed by detainees were not about interactions with the police, but technology. For instance, one detainee was especially excited about body cameras:

"Actually, they [the police] a lot [better] because nowadays they, like they have these little body cams, body cameras? That's like, excellent now. ... Because they didn't have them at first, and that's why it's so amazing now."

Another detainee shared this appreciation of body cameras, though he believed they were often turned off opportunistically by officers and he portrayed their virtue chiefly in terms of their ability to help citizens hold police accountable for misconduct. "That's what helped us beat 'em," he said, referring to the evidence generated by cameras that incriminated police. "They [the cameras] helps us beat their ass up, those who beat up kids," he said.

A few accounts of improvements in policing focused on a decline in the volume of bad things, such as the use of force and corruption, rather than an increase in the quantum of something intrinsically good about policing. For example, one man said:

"Freddie Gray. It's just the Freddie Gray shit. They've been doing better. ... They don't roughhouse you as so much no more. ... They don't do that. They don't bust- They don't rough- don't slack you with paddy wack and all that no more. They more careful now."

Another person who recognized a reduction in misconduct was nevertheless pessimistic.

"Uh, I noticed them try to crack down on some of the corruption a little bit, like, uh, they got those officers that was, uh, you know, taking guns and drugs and money for themselves... But besides that, they're still crooked. With everything."

Best experiences

Detainees became more specific and personal when we asked about their best experiences of the police; even a few of the detainees who said policing was "bad" or "terrible" were able to recount a positive interaction with the police in the past. One detainee told a story about being helped by an officer after being victim of an accident. Two others recalled careful and caring treatment during a previous arrest. A fourth told about an incident in which an officer protected a flock of fowl in the community.

"That's, um... that's a hard one. I was in an accident. Came and took care of me. That's about the most helpful I can think about, when somebody, uh, ran into me and knocked me across the median strip. The police was... that, that police was very, you know, attentive. Very helpful."

"Well, even though, even though I was placed in incarceration, I was able to be respected-... my, uh, voice was heard, uh, my rights wasn't broken-... um, I wasn't belittled. Uh, they

provided protection for me like, um, "Okay, I understand this is happening, let me make sure you're okay because I wouldn't want to be in that position myself." They put they self in my shoes to help me. And, you know, when, when all this got ... [inaudible] above they head, you, you know, apply certain actions, then you know, they have to do what's, what's best. They have to do, they have to follow the rules. So I cannot go against that, I respect that."

"I had a warrant for a traffic ticket. And they came to the house, and came and got me. And what happened? Oh. They let me ride in the front seat, they didn't put me in handcuffs, none of that. I was just chilling. That was just nice, you know? You know, that's the only [positive experience] I can think of. And it ain't like I see officers, you know, helping women out with their bags and stuff like that."

"Um, the best experience is when I, when I, um, one of 'em sa-, one of 'em saved a group of ducks. So like it was like baby ducks- ... so I'm in like on the yellow part of the road when I'm walking, so I, I had my hand up in the air and I'm flagging 'em down but they looking like what? Like what are you flagging me down for? So I got to quack and my, like I was a duck. Like I'm like duck, duck ... so he cut on his lights and he turned the cars so can't no cars, you know, come either way. And he got out the car and it took a long time for the ducks to really re- they not humans. It took them a long time to realize the, you know, giving them this side of the street now and right into the pond in the water, you feel me? Yeah, that was something-... I'm, I won't forget, that was awesome."

The "best experiences" highlighted by detainees certainly varied, and yet we are struck by the emphasis on care and support by the police described in terms of being "helpful," "attentive," or "providing protection" and "being saved" rather than the use of fair procedures and the availability of police officers to provide professional services.

What's "terrible" in policing?

Many detainees mentioned physical violence when explaining their negative appraisal of the job the police were doing. This subject came up even though none of the questions we posed in the interview referred to use of force or violence. It came up more often in response to a question at the end of the interview about people's "worst experiences" of the police. But the topic of force and violence also arose at the outset of the interview in response to our question about the job the police department was doing.

Some detainees told stories about personal experiences of violence; others told stories about incidents of the use of force they had witnessed, heard about, or watched on television. For instance, one detainee told us "I just seen two officers beat up a guy just because he didn't want to get down on the ground." But even those detainees who had personally experienced violence or rough treatment by the police seemed upset more by the manner of policing that preceded or accompanied the incident, the sense that rules were being broken when force was being applied, and the belief that no consequence would follow from misconduct.

"I've been- I ... when I was a kid, I was- I was a victim to police brutality. All I was doing was riding my bicycle. I was riding my bike down the street and c- c- couple cops came up behind me and maybe I was wrong, but that doesn't ... that's no justification for them smacking me in my face. And punching me in my face and that was it."

"I think I ran from the police one day. And they hit me with a car. Yeah, so, I'm like, "That was cruel, I don't see what the problem is. They took me- they- they took me to the hospital. But they hit me with a car. Like, all right I'm running." You- I mean, I thought you was supposed to chase me, not hit me with your car. I'd have died, and they would have been, "Oh, he ran in front of our car."

"Um... I've been pulled over by police. Ripped out of my car. Thrown on the ground. Cold ground. Um, car searched, you know. Everything. You searched. Um, you sitting on the side, freezing, while they search your car. And, um, just, just no remorse. There's no... and they don't find anything. [...] that's the culture of them. They come to work feeling like they did nothing wrong. So they go home every day feeling like they did nothing wrong."

Some detainees invoked the word "brutality" or alluded to physical violence when decrying what they perceived as an aggressive posture in policing or the sense that interactions with the police could easily escalate into violence.

"Because they got a license to kill. So their- their job is to, "Okay, we going to- we're going to go out, we're going to lock people up, we're going to do this, we're going to do that. Somebody get out of hand, we going to kill them. When somebody get out of hand they going to jail."

"I think that the police officers are terrible because sometimes I feel like I've been in various different incidents where I've been, um, subjected to, uh, police brutality. So I- I think that- ... I think that's the reason why I say that it's terrible because of the conditions that- that we live- living under."

"Yeah, [it's bad] because these days, polices don't ask questions these days. That they just going around threatening with people all day, you feel me? Instead of just asking the people, reading people they rights ... Or telling somebody, uh, what they done wrong, or you shouldn't be right here- and all that. You feel what I'm saying? They gotta jump they gun, jump down somebody throat. The next day, you know, you're all escalated, you fightin' with the police, good night."

Abuse of "authority"

Sometimes, a gruff and haughty manner by itself was cause for dissatisfaction with policing. "I don't see them being people-friendly," one person lamented, referring to the curt demeanor of police officers she encountered. But several people thought a tyrannical impulse lay behind brusque interactions with residents. "They just flaunt their authorities," one person complained. "They are jack-asses with badges and guns," decried another. "They use their badges to try and get away with whatever they can. Trying to get a little more people that don't know the law," said another, suggesting that police preyed on the legal ignorance of residents.

“Now's it's like they, they, they, they just feel empowered to do what they want. [...] You feel that there's no... that they have full authority. And, and they do, they literally do what they want in the city of Baltimore. They do what they want. And it's, it's proven. All you gotta do is be here for a while. You'll see it.”

“Yeah, it's, police in this, in this city hold themselves above the law. So, the laws don't apply to them. They can talk on their cell phones, ride, and they can run red lights. They can point guns at people and threaten to shoot them whether you're not doing anything but standing. Like I've seen it all, these cops.”

Impatience

A number of detainees were upset by what they considered the unwillingness of the police to listen to and sort out conflicting accounts of a dispute, especially in domestic settings. Some said officers rushed to make an arrest, even though this act did not defuse the situation or solve the problem. A few suggested the police were abrupt and agitated in their handling of such situations:

“So y- yeah, th- they could do a little bit better with ju- uh, with judicial process. Because it's like, if, if, if I ...I go tell the police that you did something, [but] you been sitting out here the whole time, they come and lock you up. That's what they do.”

“For no apparent reason this man is very angry and emotional. And he's very ... he's- he's- he's very, uh- uh ... he's just angry and emotional. And he ... I think that he needs to just calm down—with his approach to his job because it's no that serious. He's using his job as a way of, like, persecuting people. And- and oppressing people.”

“Um, maybe I could have made it less stressful for him as well because I was kind of belligerent but, I think he didn't have to go for his tasing me, I'd rather got tased than shot, so... [laughs] but he could have called for more back up, he could have got a woman officer...”

Prejudice

Other detainees thought the police were simply prejudiced against them.

“They treat me like, as if- as if I'm inferior- inferior being or something. Like I'm just an animal.”

“I feel like the police is- is treating us as if we're like some type of subhuman race. Like we're just not people. We're just sub-humans or something.”

“They, they treat all young kid- well, most of the black young kids like they criminals. And it went national when, uh, the police officer said, We got a lot of black, blacks down here. And he was like, yeah. Be on the look out. Because most of them are criminals, and, you know what I mean, bad people, like... you can't say that.”

“When they pull up, you been living right your whole life. It's not my fault, it's the inner city. It's not my fault it's the drugs running. It's not my fault this is where I grew up. This is where my family is. This is where the people I know at. But because of what's going on in the whole city- If you're on a block that's known for anything, which almost every block in Baltimore city is known for drugs, then you're part of the problem.”

What's worse in policing?

For some detainees, the answer to this question was straightforward: the persistence of crime, especially violent crime, was a clear sign that the job of the Police Department had not improved. “It ain't better,” one person said. “A lot of people still dying and all that.” Another said: “Well... I think if you look at all the crime going on...It doesn't look like it's changed much.” One detainee lamented that “the crimes are getting sadder.” Another added: “it's still, like, a lot of unsolved murders. You can look at that statistically, like, ain't nothing improved. Every year a murder, every year the murder rate get higher and higher. So, really, they not really improving at all.”

Several detainees thought that the police could be doing a better job, both by being more “committed” to the job and also focusing on “real crime.”

“I just feel like they're take- they're- they're not committing their self to doing all their right job. I just see them, you know, harassing people, doing small stuff when they should be fighting real crime. I mean, they're gonna pick up somebody for loitering or sitting on a corner or on their steps having a beer. When three blocks up the street, there's somebody on the corner selling dope. And, you know, you don't single [me out on] my front step, drinking a beer. And I get pulled for having an open container?”

Some detainees were indignant that the police arrested them for smoking marijuana rather than saving the lives of people from overdosing on lethal substances.

“Like, it's really the littlest thing ever could be, rolling up some weed. And 20 cop cars just swarn up on me. And I'm just like, “Dang! All right. It's gone”. And then I have to get locked up for... but they be doing... it's always like that. Like I got friends that just got locked up in different places for the same thing. I'm just like, “For how much weed?” He seen me smoking a blunt. Are you serious? Y'all in here for smoking weed? People be dying every day. People be dying. This week, I lost four friends, two in the same place and other two in two different places.”

Many detainees portrayed police as passive observers of the problems in their neighborhood. One person said: “they spending all day long watching everything that's going on. Dope's being sold, coke's being sold, cubes being sold, fen's being sold. Everything being sold right in front of their face.” Another complained that the just “post up” in certain neighborhoods, “just sittin' in cover.” Yet another said: “Like, they just park. They're not doing anything they just sit in their car on their phones, three blocks probably from where somebody got shot and they not even right there. It's ridiculous.”

Some detainees believed the police deliberately ignored problems in their community, failing to stop crime. One person said he had called the police to report a dangerous situation, but instead of solving the problem the officers who were dispatched just drove by:

“The kids were out there playing and drug addicts were in the yard with guns. And I called them [the police] and told them they was in there with the drugs. I never done that [called the police before]. I mean with guns. And with the kids, you know what I mean? They fucking didn't come, I called them again 25 minutes later, I seen them ride by. They don't come up where I tell them, I tell them again. They come through the alley, turned their heads where it was and kept on going. ... Like, really had me lose respect for officers like, I'm telling you like, they're in their yard with a gun and you don't come? Like, they rode past and they seen them in the yard because the yard had no fence there. The fence was torn down, they were in the yard- They playing in the yard and it was right on the corner so they rode up Addison Alley to Pratt Street, they rode right past, they turned their head.”

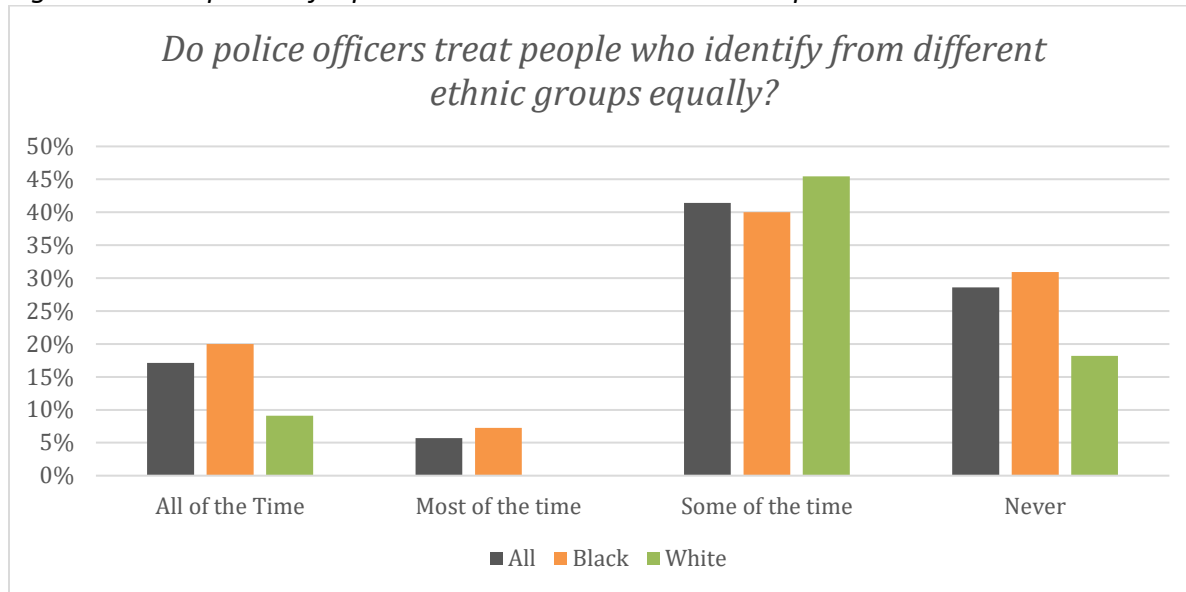
Two detainees said that experiences of such neglect made them give up on the police and rely on self-protection. One person who said he would never call the police asked rhetorically, “If they can't save lives, what can they do for me?” Another told a story that indicated to her that the police could not be counted on to protect or save lives.

“Uh, and so this situation where the police ... somebody needed the police's help. And we were in the neighborhood and they weren't able to call the police. We were there. We responded to that situation. That lady was- was inside her house and the- and the house was burning down. The house caught on fire. She was in the house sleep. We kicked the door in. We had to go in and kick the door in and- and extract the lady outside her house. Just to help her. [...] Yeah, I feel like the police ... I feel like what are they even here for? [...] nobody man. When it all comes down to it, y'all ain't gone jump in front of nobody and save nobody god damn life.”

2. Perceptions of Equality in Policing

We asked detainees whether they thought police officers treated people who identify from different races and ethnic groups equally. As you can see in Figure 4 on the next page, 17 percent of detainees said they did this “all of the time,” and over 40 percent thought police treated different ethnic groups equally at least some of the time. Just under a third of respondents said “never.” White detainees were less likely than black detainees to believe the police “never” treated people equally, though they were also less likely to say they did so “all of the time” and a quarter of them said they “didn't know.”

Figure 4. Perceptions of Equal Treatment Across Ethnic Groups



Some detainees were adamant that the police did not discriminate by race or ethnicity.

“You ain’t, we ain’t, they ain’t arrest you because you white, black, or Mexican. They, they treat us all the same here. I can’t speak for everywhere else. I ain’t been nowhere else.”

“Treat us all fair here. With fa- ain’t no, “Cause we black.” None of that. ‘Cause of most of the time, black, n- black people be hanging with Mexicans, whites, South Baltimore. It’s, it’s all the same. ... They never bother us [just] ‘cause we black.”

Other detainees were equally adamant that disparate treatment by race was self-evident in the language and tone police used to communicate on the job. One person said:

“The things you see done to use you ain’t never seen done to no Chinese person. Or if we go out tossing on the night or any day you tossing, just across anywhere, you won’t see none just pull up on the kids around their bikes and tell them, ‘Come here. You. Come here.’”

Two detainees said that black police officers were more abusive of black detainees, especially in the presence of white officers. One said: “they often treat blacks just as worse as maybe then, maybe the white.” Another said: “I know for a fact that when black officers are messing with other black folks, they’re harder on them.”

Several detainees who thought the police behaved in a discriminatory manner suggested that disparate treatment was common in some areas and neighborhoods but not others. “It all depends on the area,” one person said. “Baltimore’s really like, poor cities,” emphasized another. “They do better in Cherry Hill,” said another person, who had observed what he considered good policing. “I live in a good neighborhood, so...” added another, implying that the quality of policing depended on the type of neighborhood. Another person said “I don’t go downtown anymore” for fear of being stopped.

Some detainees complained about being stopped for being in a particular “area” of the city, and being subjected to “inappropriate questions.”

“Like I had to stop once because an area I was in, again, it’s a drug, it’s a drug, um, area. And I was stopped and shook down, you know searched, uh, because I was in the area.”

“They ask inappropriate questions. Like I get pulled over and they ask ‘where you goin’?’ I’m like, “hey why you askin’ where we’re going?” You know I got a right to go on the streets.”

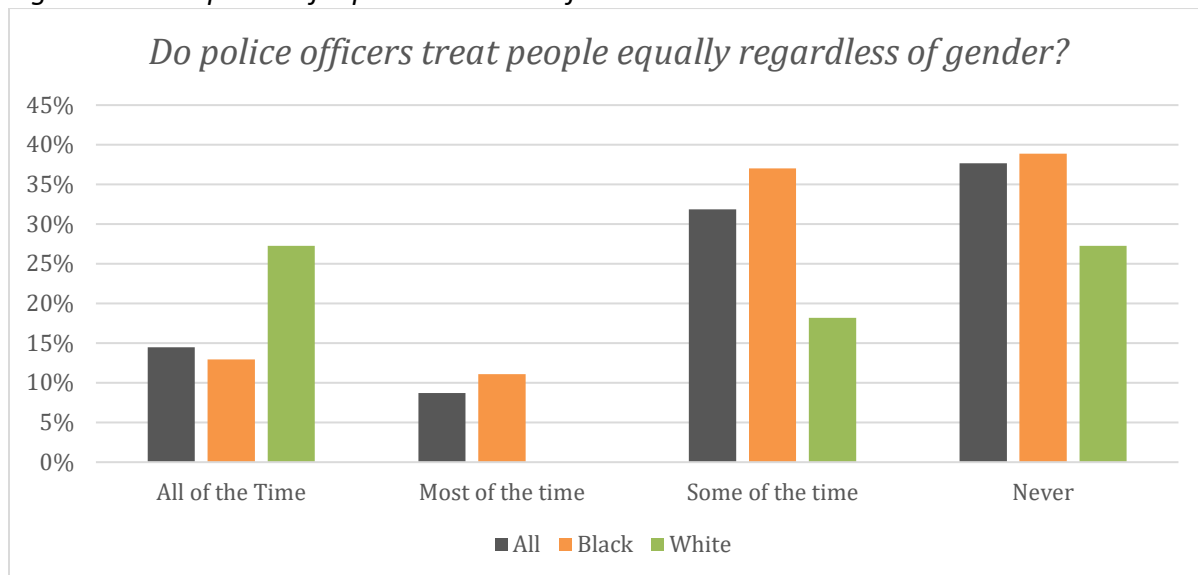
One person insisted there was “racial profiling,” although it was unrelated to skin color:

“I mean, it's just, where I live it's just racial profiling no matter what. White or black. Everybody a drug addict, everybody's a piece of shit, you know what I mean, because you live in a poor neighborhood or whatever. I might live in a black neighborhood, but that don't mean that I'm a drug addict. And I'm always be careful like that because I walk... this is where I live, this is where I walk. Why am I getting interrogated because I live here? You all know I live here. You know what I mean, but you treat me like shit in front of my kids and everything. You know what I'm saying, because you think I get high but you didn't see me doing nothing. You know what I mean? You jump out on me cause I'm white and I live in a black neighborhood. No, this used to be a white neighborhood, but you know what I'm saying? Time has changed so now it's a mixed neighborhood.”

Perceptions of Police Treatment of Gender and Sexual Identity

Perceptions of disparate treatment were more pronounced in responses to our questions about gender. Thirty-seven percent of respondents thought police “never” treat people equally regardless of gender, compared to 29 percent in response to the question about race/ethnicity. Here, too, the differences in the beliefs about equal treatment were greater between black and white respondents, with white respondents substantially more likely to perceive equal treatment.

Figure 5. Perceptions of Equal Treatment of Gender



Most interviewees who thought that the police did not treat men and women equally believed that women got better and “gentler” treatment than men did. Some men suggested that this difference in treatment did not reflect a bias against men, but simply gendered interactions: “Cause, you know, they might- they might be less aggressive with a female,” one interviewee said. “Maybe if I was a woman,” one man speculated, “then they might treat a woman a little more...” Another complained, “Girls get away with a whole lot.”

Several men said that police are more inclined to “believe the woman,” particularly in domestic disputes. “I feel like men are being taken advantage of and, like, wrongly accused for- for things that- that they say we doing,” one person said. “I wouldn’t say it, no,” said one man when asked if police treat people equally regardless of gender. “If the officer that was a female was going to make a call on a woman who, you know, cried rape against a guy, and let’s say she sympathized with the girl and, didn’t ask the guy any questions and all. And just like maybe he didn’t do anything to her.”

Conversely, several women thought they had been treated dismissively by officers, especially in situations of domestic violence. One woman thought she has been treated with prejudice by male officers:

“Unfortunately for the most part, they see an angry black woman. Honestly speaking, in most instances its domestic; black women fighting. But you got to understand why we’re angry. You had a pre-judged bias on me before you ever walked in my door.”

Many interviewees did not want to answer the question about sexual orientation, simply saying “I wouldn’t know.” Some thought that “it’s hard to determine [someone’s sexual orientation], so I would say until they figure out that they are gay or homosexual... then I would say it doesn’t matter.” However, one interviewee expressed his belief that sexual and gender minorities experience very specific kinds of challenges when interacting with the police:

“They (homosexuals) one of the most oppressed- oppressed people in this whole country. In the world. They don't receive ... they really don't receive no justice like that. 'Cause if a gay person was to come to a cop and start talking to him- the cop probably would be like, I don't wanna talk to you. They probably would just be like, I don't wanna talk to you 'cause you gay. They probably would do that. Making them ... treat them like they just, insignificant or something. And a gay person probably would be like, what the hell could I do then? That's wrong.”

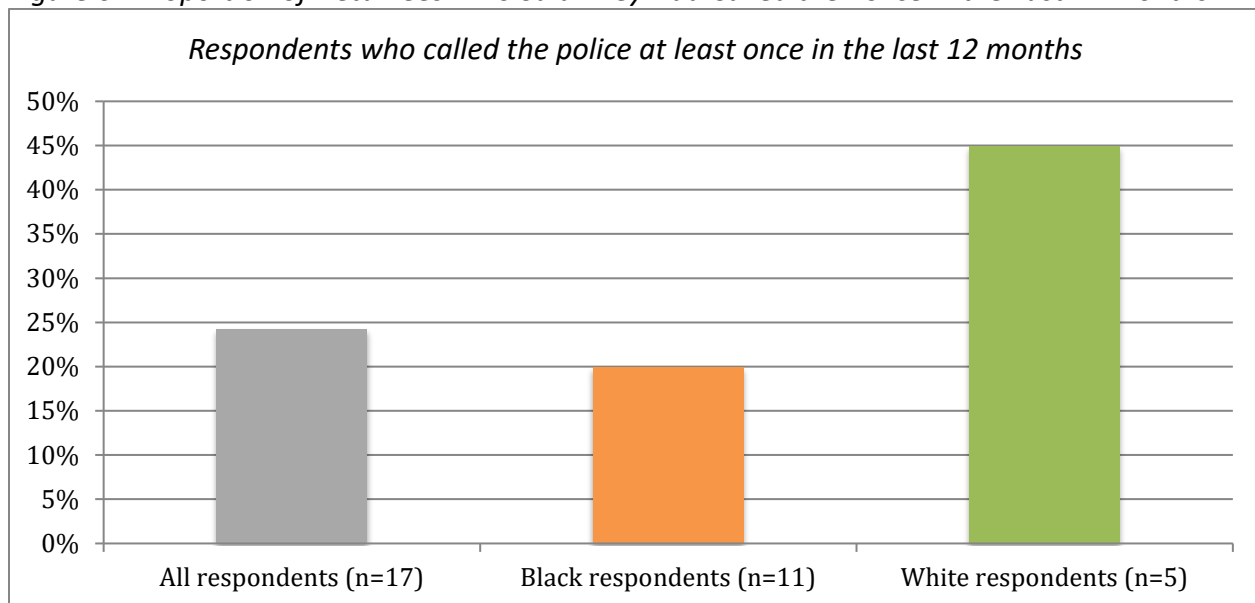
One man expressed concern that very young women from his community were being sexually exploited by police officers: “I see it too much. I see too many older police officers chasing females that is younger than fucking 15, 17 years old. I see them giving them too much attention and there’s no telling what they’re doing or what they are telling you. And you feeding into it, because you think this is a grown ass lady by her body, but you know by her face that she’s still a child. So I see, to me, a lot of officers taking advantage of a lot of children.”

3. Asking for Help from the Police

In order to gauge the effects of discontent with policing on detainees' willingness to seek help from police, we asked questions about their inclinations to call the police in four different scenarios: if they were lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood, the object of a threat of violence, the victim of a burglary or a theft from a car. We asked these questions because of prior research by others suggesting that negative perceptions of the police can suppress not only a willingness to cooperate with police in the apprehension of detainees, but also in reporting personal victimization and other problems that in many cities are often handled by police.⁹

We prefaced these hypothetical questions with a factual one about whether they had in fact called the police in the past year. As the data in Figure 6 below show, less than a quarter of all detainees said they had called the police one or more times in the last 12 months. White detainees were twice as likely as blacks to say they had called the police.

Figure 6. Proportion of Detainees Who Said They Had Called the Police in the Last 12 months

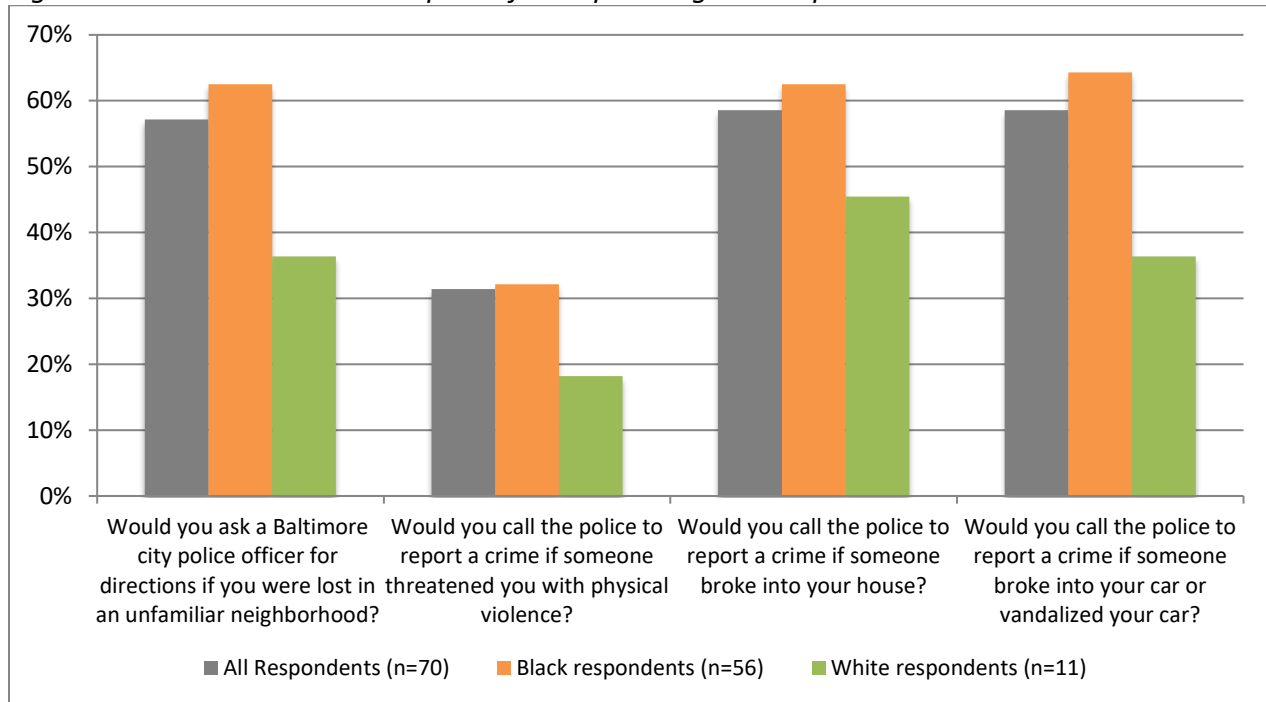


The racial disparity in this pattern of responses is reversed, however, in responses to the hypothetical situations. Overall, about a third of all respondents said they would call the police if they were threatened with physical violence, while nearly 60 percent said they would call the police for help if they were lost in an unfamiliar part of town or if their property had been stolen. For all four types of problems, white detainees were substantially less likely to

⁹ Research on calls for service in Milwaukee suggests that calls to 911 declined for over a year in the wake of a high-profile episode of police violence, and that this decline in calls for service was more pronounced in predominantly black neighborhoods (Desmond et al. 2016). In addition, research on calls for service in Chicago demonstrate that residents persist in calling the police even when they live in neighborhoods of higher skepticism and cynicism over policing (Hagan et al. 2018). These findings may simply reflect different outcomes in different locales. Yet if taken together, these findings could suggest that high profile incidents of police violence and/or misconduct change the social fabric of police-community relations for some period of time, as reflected in the willingness of individuals to voluntarily engage with the police.

say they would seek the help of the police. As you can see in Figure 7 below, only 18 percent of white respondents said they would call the police to report a threat of violence compared to 32 percent of black respondents.

Figure 7. Inclinations to ask the police for help solving certain problems



Why not call?

Not all respondents explained *why* they were disinclined to call the police for help when faced with a potentially violent situation. But some did, and their views tended to fall into one of three categories. One reflected a belief that the respondent could handle the issue on their own, though in some cases this was the result of distrust of the police as much as an affirmation of self-determination. A second reflected the respondent’s belief that the police were ineffective, that a call would be “a waste of time.” A third reflected the respondent’s fear that police involvement could make the situation worse.

1. Self-help

Some interviewees who said they were unlikely to call the police sounded tough. “I can take care of myself, I’ll be just fine,” a 40-year-old white man said. Other explanations seemed more pragmatic and may have reflected a belief that they are simply better situated to respond to interpersonal violence than the police. “I wouldn’t call the police because... I don’t wanna say that I take matters into my own hands, but I will in fact say that,” said a 30-year-old black man. He added that using his own hands would “serve justice. It wouldn’t be logical, because I can get locked up [for taking matters into his own hands] because I’m not a police officer. But somebody’s gotta do it. I’ve done it before, and I’ll do it again. I’ve been coming here helping people, doing things.”

The logic of self-reliance was sometimes instrumental and even mercenary. Several respondents said that they would call the police only for insurance purposes. One black man in his 40s said, "I'd probably have to get a police report, but that's about it. But do I wanna call? No." A black man in his 30's told us, "I would have to get some documentation so I can get my insurance to pay the bill." A 47-year-old white man told us that he would consider reporting a crime "for them [the police] to find out [who did it], like, so I could get revenge. I would do that just to find out who did just so I could get back at 'em. But when I get to see who it is, I'd drop the charges and I'd handle it myself." In other situations, though, a preference for self-help was driven by the inconvenience of using the police. For instance, a 28-year-old black woman described her strategy for circumventing the police in situations where she felt the need to protect herself.

"Most of us just go ahead and skip talking to the police altogether and just go file a restraining order cause the place is open 24/7 and you don't really have to talk to nobody, its just like fill our paperwork, hand somebody this paper, and then you leave. It just skips all of them. Cause you don't even get a police report for it. Its just stupid. You just gotta sit there and kinda wait for somebody to beat you up and then get one."

2. Futility

Some of the detainees said they would not call on police because they believed the police were indecisive or hapless. Referring to the hypothetical detainees in his burglary scenario, a white man in his 40's said sarcastically, "Like they're gonna fucking find them anyway." One woman who said she wouldn't call the police in the future said they were unapologetic about being unable to prevent future violence. Recounting the advice the police gave to her after her arrest, she said: "They was like, 'Hey, once you get out of jail, go file a restraining order. Cause I can bet you my bottom dollar, she's coming back to your house.' And I said, 'Well maybe she wouldn't come into my house if she was in jail too!'"

A young black man who responded that he would "absolutely" ask the police for directions if lost in the city and would similarly call to report a crime if his home or car was broken into nevertheless hesitated when asked if he would call for help if faced with violence. He paused at length before explaining that "a lot of the times they [the police] see what's going on..." but do nothing. "And I understand," he added, "that we human and we have natural fear, but we see things, we hear things, and, they gotta do their job." A 30-year-old man from a mixed racial background doubted that police could solve homicides. "I've done that," he said, referring to phoning the police for help. "That's what I did, and I still got... I mean... I don't know if it's gonna mean anything. I know people out on the streets now that have bodies."

3. Fear

Several respondents said they were afraid of what might happen if they called the police for help. A 21-year-old black man, arrested for marijuana possession, told us, "We ain't calling the police for nothing because that doesn't keep us safe. Never called 'em once." Some detainees who expressed such a fear said that a call to the police in a situation of violence would mean to risk a potentially violent and fatal encounter with an officer:

“Now, people are scared to call on them because they're afraid if you run they will shoot you or if you're black, white, Hispanic, something will happen. People don't like the police now.”

A 32-year-old mixed race man cited both a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the police and fear of the repercussions of involving them in the dispute. “I wouldn’t call the police for anything. They do nothing. I’ve heard people call for crimes of violence or threats. This happens and the other person got in trouble too. Too risky.” A younger black man believed that police officers were likely to “misuse words” of victims and witnesses in a mischievous manner. “As far as how stuff happen in the streets. Like people telling on people. I honestly believe officers are the people that will put them people against each other.”

One black woman told us that she was comfortable calling the police for some problems but worried that the experience might leave her yet more vulnerable. “I mean, I’m not calling to be telling on nobody or anything. But if, it’s for my own, you know, personal [issue], yeah I would.” In a follow up question about whether she would feel the BPD could protect her if she reported a crime, she said, “Well, I know they wouldn’t.”

Age

Age might be related to the disinclination to call the police, especially in situations that are fraught with violence. Forty percent of respondents aged 30 and over said they would call the police if threatened with violence, compared to just 23 percent for those where were between 18 and 30 years old. One black man in his 40’s laughed knowingly in response to the question and told us, “Well, I’m older now, so I probably would do that.” Another black man in his 50’s gave an ironic smile and winked as he told us, “Yes I would, now I’ve gotten older.” By contrast, younger respondents said they preferred to settle matters on their own. “I’m not a cop-caller,” one young person said proudly.

Prior contact

It is possible that prior experience with the police may influence the willingness to call. Detainees that reported being stopped by the police in the last year (outside of this arrest) were half as likely as those who had not been stopped to say they would call the police if threatened with violence. The number of respondents in both categories is too small for us to make much of the disparity, but detainees who reported positive experiences with the police in the past were more likely to say they would call the police for help in the future. Sixty percent of the detainees who were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their experience of the police in the course of this arrest said they would call the police if threatened with physical violence, compared to 34 percent of all respondents. But one detainee who said he was satisfied with his arrest (the police had parked his car for him) said he wouldn’t call the police if he was lost and said he was unlikely to ask for help in the event of violence.

In some cases, a single negative experience appeared to have a lasting and limiting effect on people’s trust in the police. A 28-year-old black woman said that were it not for her arrest that morning, she would have called the police for help if someone threatened her with

violence. “I’m conflicted,” she said. “Cause inside I wanna say yes. But where I’m at now I wanna say no. I would give it a five—like hallway. I’m not sure because, I already did that, and it didn’t work out.” She recounted her experience that morning to us in detail. Around 6 in the morning she woke up to a woman trying to break down her door. She claims she assaulted the woman with her hands in order to defend her home, where she lives with her seven-year-old daughter. “They didn’t see what caused my reaction”, she continued. “They didn’t see where she threatened to kill me or get me robbed or threatened my child. They only see my reaction to it. At the end of the day, my first instinct is protect mine [her child], even if it means me being here, and not too happy about it.”

In other cases, it was not a direct experience of the police but the perception that the police were biased against them or their community. One respondent, a 20-year-old black man, said he would not call the police ever because “It’s like, they stereotype us. Like we supposed to be the criminal in they eyes, so... it makes me feel uncomfortable. It’s like—like they against me, you feel me? Instead of being with me.” A black man in his 30’s said, “I wouldn’t at all because like I said, it’s so judgmental to me. I’ve been through—it scares me, it’s so judgmental right now.”

4. Experiences of Violence and the Use of Force

Several detainees gave accounts of being roughed up by the police in the course of a stop, search, or arrest, and some narrated these incidents as if police use of force was in some way inevitable. For instance, one detainee told us: “Yeah, they beat me and my homeboys up, for what?” When our interviewer asked for a clarification (“did they beat you up?”), he replied: “Not me, but my homeboys out here. They beat them good. They’ll catch you; They’re gonna do something. If you run and they catch you, oh, it’s beating time.” Another person who recalled being beaten by the police after he was pulled off his bicycle many years ago said: “That happened to me plenty of times when I was a kid. You can ask anybody in here. They gonna tell you the same thing.” One detainee who described being “hit with a door and everything” during his arrest told us that rough treatment always followed a search that uncovered no drugs: “And when they come and, and don’t find none, they wish to provoke outside of why they stopped in the first place.”

Most of the experiences of force told by detainees took place in the past. Some incidents had taken place recently; a few in the course of this arrest. But these experiences, too, were retold in the continuous present, as if they were still happening, or happening always. For instance, one detainee who decried “all that aggressive shit” about policing in Baltimore described his arrest this way: “They’re grabbing you up. You’re not even moving. And that. You know what I mean? Like I’m about to tase you. I’m not even moving. Like, why you want to tase me?” When we asked another detainee what the police department could do better, he said: “stop shooting people on demand.” One person explained why he was “always respectful” of the police: “cause I don’t wanna die. They got a gun, and I don’t, so that what he says, we’ll go. You know?”

Some perceptions of the use of force by police appear to have been influenced by events beyond detainees’ personal experience, and possibly outside of Baltimore. For instance, one

person relayed an experience of a shooting that sounded exactly like the video of the death of Philando Castille. Another described a “feeling” rather than an experience:

“Because I feel like when police take black men into custody, they're, they're always dead. But white, Caucasian people, they don't, like the Caucasian boy that killed the nine people. You know, he was taken into custody alive. You know, instead of dead.”

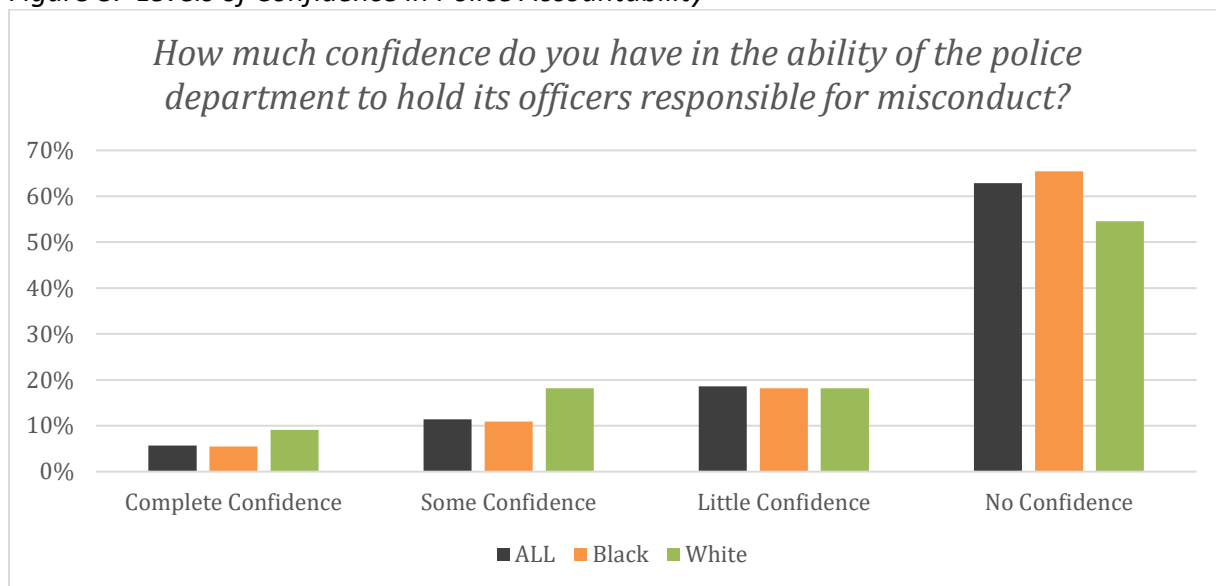
Some detainees gave accounts that sounded like an abstract of a real incident that was witnessed rather than experienced as a victim yet recounted as if they had been the vicarious target of the violence. For instance, one detainee talked about a shooting that was his “worst experience” of the police; we asked, innocently or inanely, what could the police have done differently? He responded in a way that seemed to enunciate a principle.

“Uh, I would say, I would say before you shoot this man, why shoot him and he trying to run?, Um, when a man is trying to run, he is not a threat. He is trying to escape from you, he is not running to go grab something there to fight you. He's trying to get away, he's running for his life literally. So, to point a weapon and press a button to take that life away. He's running to save his life, why would you press a button to take his life?”

5. Belief in Accountability

Few of the detainees we interviewed expressed confidence in the ability of the department to hold its officers responsible for misconduct. As the data in Figure 8 below show, only six percent had “complete confidence” in this ability; another 11 percent said they had “some confidence.” Nearly two-thirds of all respondents said they had “no confidence” in this aspect of policing; another 19 percent said they had “little confidence.” Black respondents were marginally less confident than white detainees in the ability of the department to hold its officers responsible for misconduct.

Figure 8. Levels of Confidence in Police Accountability



A person who had no confidence believed superior officers were “worse” than front-line officers and thus there was no independent authority to report misconduct to.

“Um, you know even if you're on your people's front. They'll make them leave. They'll both come around where, like the other day, they come around and where just running people's cars. Right? Like they just do what they want. And, and you can't tell nobody cause that's the police. Yeah, there's no one to tell. Their bosses are worse than the other ones so it's like-Who do you tell when you're getting wronged by the police?”

Another person thought the police department was unwilling to punish officers for misconduct and likened this indulgence to a system of reward.

“You do something to somebody, and you get... If I do something bad at work, I get suspended. If they do something bad at work, they're gonna be fishing. And I get suspended without pay. They get suspended with pay. I think that's called a vacation. Where I'm from. I don't know how they do it, but where I'm from, that's called the boss just said go have some fun.”

One person thought there was a double-standard in the absence of penalties for police officers who killed residents. Another thought it indicated anarchy.

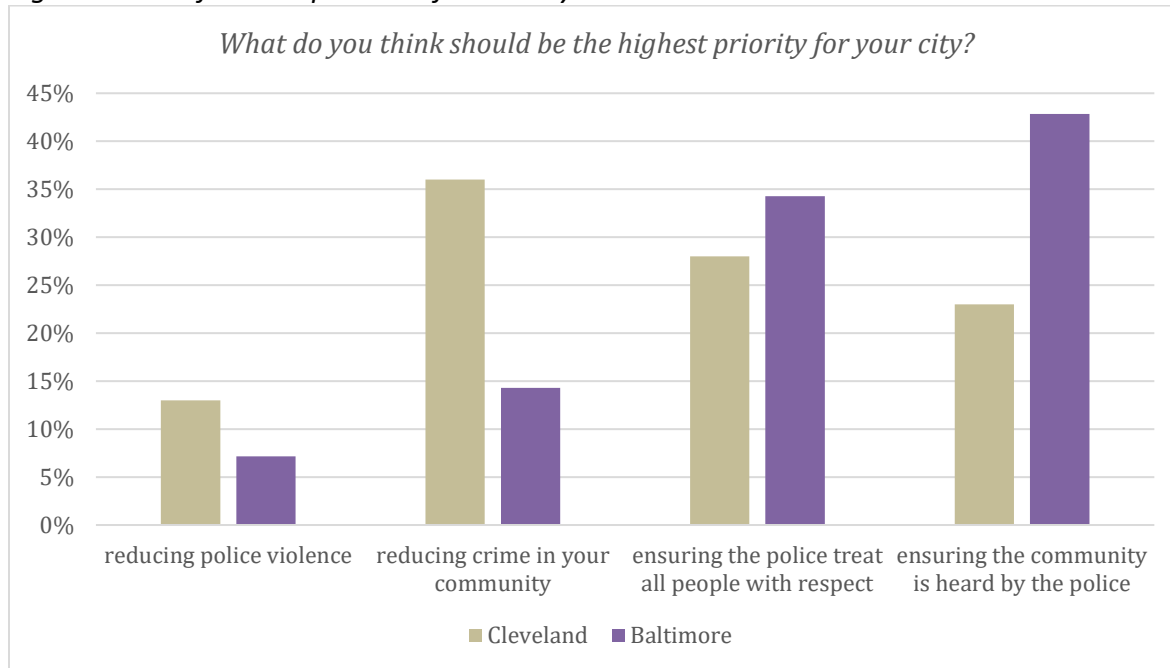
“Majority of things, that's why a lot of people don't agree what the police did because they're like, all right, they could kill somebody and get away with it. I mean they don't get no penalties. I'll kill somebody, I'm going to jail for the rest of my life. They killed somebody, they get 10 years. Well- I mean we all- people know. I mean, so w- what? Because they- they do protect and serve, but you're not protecting you kill it.”

“This is anarchy. There's no rules. There's no government. People getting killed and slain in the streets with no- no- no retribution or nothing.”

6. Priorities for the City

We asked detainees what *should* be the top priority for the city: reducing police violence, reducing crime in their community, ensuring the police treat all people with respect, or ensuring the community is heard by the police? Many detainees paused before answering, asking us to repeat the options. Several said “all of the above” before being coaxed by our interviewers into selecting the most important one. When pressed to indicate a preference, most detainees (43 percent) selected the fourth response – “ensuring the community is heard by the police,” followed by “ensuring the police treat all people with respect” (34 percent). These priorities were markedly different from the pattern of responses we received in Cleveland in April 2017, when a plurality of detainees said “reducing crime” was the priority, as you can see on the next page in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Beliefs about priorities for the city: Cleveland vs Baltimore



Most detainees who selected this response used the word “communication” in response to our follow-up question, “Why is that so important to you?” Some of the detainees explained their wishes for “better communication” in civic terms, as if communication was a democratic virtue. “I think the people should be heard, you know? Right there, they’re I don’t think they’re being heard, you know. It’s, it’s like they’re not being heard. It’s like their opinion don’t, don’t really count.” Another person suggested there was intrinsic value to having police learn from residents.

“I feel like nobody knows the community better than the community. So if you take the people that are willin’ to talk to the police about what’s going on in the community, then maybe they’ll [the police] will have a better understanding of what’s going on the in community and what needs to be done.”

One person who thought that better communication was especially important was worried about the gulf between “us and them” in his community, which pitted “me against them, they against us.” He thought young people in his neighborhood “always feel like they’re on guard,” living in fear of the police. “And that’s, that’s a big deal. They understand the young ones, it’s like, they’re being taught how to see a certain way, how to act at that young age by how people treat ‘em, you know what I’m saying? With all these people being treated that way they’re always on guard, so you are like their enemy. You’re looking at them as their enemy at all times.”

Others offered instrumental justifications for advocating better communication. The benefits ranged from the positive effects that communication might have on the amount of crime and violence in society to a general ability to solve problems in their community. “Honestly,” one

person said, “because proper communication between the residents and the police could stop a lot of stuff from happening.” Another said that by talking to people in their community the police could “stop a lot of violence and whatever.”

Some detainees had simple advice for how to have better communication. For instance, one person advised the police to “chill out,” and stop “going up on people.” Others thought police were being “instructed” to communicate poorly with residents, and thus there needed to be a change in the way officers are taught and supervised.

“So, whoever give them their instruction, their, their authority, uh, who is overtop of them, their authority’s giving them these instructions. Is teaching them not to develop that relationship.”

7. Wishes for Policing

Despite grave misgivings about policing, detainees were full of advice about how it could be improved. Indeed, to our surprise, no one advocated abolishing the police as some detainees did in Cleveland. One person said plainly: “we always going to need the police.” Another person who said policing today in Baltimore is terrible said the department needed to “hire more officers.” To be sure, some of this perceived need for policing stemmed from a belief that crime was a problem in their communities that police could help solve. For instance, even a detainee who said the police stole his cell phone and money from his wallet and lives “in fear of my life” in his encounters with the police nevertheless said that he would “put more surveillance” out in the communities where there are a lot of “negative things going on.” But reducing crime was not the main priority for many detainees. In fact, much of the perceived “need” for better policing was not linked to a utilitarian calculus.

Common Pleas

One of the most recurring wishes was for the Police Department to display more “humility” “compassion,” “patience” and “respect” for residents. Some of these wishes sound like banal requests – “just talk” to residents in a polite manner, walk about the neighborhood, perhaps in civilian clothes, and offer a helping hand once in a while! And yet these same wishes were conveyed with a sense of urgency, in the form of a plea. Residents want to be “known” by police, not just treated like citizens; they want to be respected as human beings—as equals and maybe even as “friends.” They want more than merely to avoid being dragged into jail by gruff officers; they want help saving their kids from destructive lives.

“Try to be more human. Be more humane. Just stop categorizing everybody. At least talk to a person before you judge them.”

“I guess just be more compassionate. Just, you know, just... it's just, it's a lot that go into that. They just need to... they just gotta, like, be more comp- they just gotta treat people like they're human, you know? Just gotta be more... I don't know if patient is the word, or...”

"And that's just it. We're all people, so we should be more understanding considering it's a person, just like you understand, the air we breathe, we bleed the same, everything. Fully respect somebody, because that's like, you should wanna give respect. I was always raised, you treat people the way you want to be treated, right."

"It should be- just have, show more- more humility. And not just when somebody call the police. Come into the neighborhoods and walk around and just talk to people. They ain't even ... they don't have to have their uniforms on. They can have ... they don't have to have guns. But come in the neighborhood with like, regular shirts on, no straps or none of that stuff. Come there with collar shirts on, khakis or something and walk through the neighborhoods and say ma'am are you okay, do you need some help with your bags? Anything."

There is something deeply personal and leveling about the relationships imagined in these pleas. Some make it seem as if the police officer isn't in their eyes an agent of the state (or of the official), but rather just someone else trying to get their way:

"You talk, you have a dialogue, y'all become friends or associates, and everything else falls into place. You can't just demand a person it's your way or that's the only way."

You know, it's like, you don't come around the neighborhood with any respect. Look around and try to build any rapport. You don't come around and try to get to know anybody as a, you know, person. Cause when you come around the street, everybody is basically under one umbrella. You're doing something wrong, you're doing something wrong. You don't even know me. Yeah, you don't even know me. How am I doing something wrong? No "How you doing?" You know what I mean? I mean, you know, might've got a call or any- No small talk."

Still other remarks sound like advice to the Prince about how to govern—not in order to be fair and just, but in order to succeed at achieving police goals:

"If, if we can get a rapport and then we all have respect for each other, you know, you probably could talk about to people about what's going on in their neighborhood. Somebody might could help you with the crime that's going on in the neighborhood, you know? Like, but if you just come around treating everybody like they're the criminals, man, you're never gonna have rapport with anybody."

"They need to talk to these kids instead of locking them up. That's what I think. A lot of these kids is like, some tender-hearted kids. It just- they just tender and soft. They- they- they adolescents. They don't know what's going on. They just following behind older kids in their neighborhood. Tender, that's all they is. And someone- someone has to teach them and not come to jail and commit and carry guns and do the thing they been doing. [...] Police can do something to help them. Try to like talk to them or something 'cause them kids will listen to you. If you got the right one. Like a grown man that need a father figure or something. Listen to them. And probably change- change their life. It probably would be like, out of ten- ten kids, you can probably at least reach, I wanna say, please reach at least, like five of them. Something."

Advice for the Commissioner

Our final question to detainees was: what's the first thing you would do if you were Chief of Police?¹⁰ This question is designed to prompt interviewees to reflect in imaginative ways about how to conceive of the struggles of policing and the possibilities for reform. Some people proposed a change in the focus and basic purpose of policing, moving away from law enforcement and towards social development. For instance, one person said: "I'd work where all of them homeless people are staying. Or all the kids that dropped out. Make sure they ...I'd help them go back to school." For the most part, though, detainees talked about making changes in personnel in order to bring about a different culture.

Detainees proposed a variety of means of achieving that objective, from punishing and removing bad officers to recruiting better ones and showing kindness. "I'd just talk to the police and tell 'em I love 'em and let 'em know they ain't gotta go so hard, listen to all these people as people," one person said. Another person said: "I'd just make sure everybody treated fairly and all just to, to de-escalate things instead of effecting—it, you know, just try to keep things at a, a positive where everybody can be happy." Several detainees believed that officers were being taught to be distant and alienating, and that underneath the veneer of tough policing one could find caring cops. One detainee said, "you take that shit off [and] they're like soft as Cottonelle tissue, at least 80 percent of them are."

For others, though, motivational interviewing and positive reinforcement would not be enough. One person promised a lot of "cleaning house." "I'd get rid of every lazy, ill-minded, ill-tempered officer on my payroll," he added. "Yeah, I'd remove the dead-weight," said another, "'cause if you don't wanna do nothing, then find yourself another job. Go drive for Uber or something." The belief that there were a lot of corrupt cops led one detainee to say he'd "run the internal affairs sting," and "put the IAD out, like, undercover," manufacturing incidents that require police dispatch in order to "see how they respond to what he said, and if it's in, within their training or whatever."

Others recommended discrete changes in personnel policy. For instance, several detainees said they would reduce the number of young officers, who in their view tended to be more oppressive than the older officers. One person said he would "get [rid of] all the rookies." Two detainees thought that the next chief needed to get rid of returning military personnel, since they worried about the "mental states" of these officers. One said:

"And those people, when they come out of the service, we don't know what they've seen in battle. We don't know what they've seen... and, you know, their, their, um... their... uh, what do you call it, their, um... temper or whatever can go from zero to 100. And that's where they're taking it out on the-the citizens. So I think they need to kind of just double-check and see who's got what going on before they put them out on the street like that."

¹⁰ We used the word "chief" rather than "commissioner" to pre-empt confusion that might come from detainees' familiarity with the commissioner of hearings and corrections; we thought there would be less ambiguity about the role and agency in Baltimore we were asking detainees to imagine directing by asking about the "chief."

For other detainees, though, the solution wasn't in changing the age cohort or professional training of officers but in recruiting for the right personality traits. One said he would do a "round house interview process" to make sure "that the officers that I had would display the type of policing I want done." Another said he would hire "real cops that really care about the citizens." Still others thought the police needed officers from the neighborhood being policed, "so that they had the local knowledge that they needed." One said:

"My things is, to be a good officer, I feel like you need to come from the environment. But like, they should hire more people that, that understand what's going. That are from this... [neighborhood], that, that are from that."

No one thought this was going to be easy. Several detainees balked at the prospect of giving advice off the cuff. One person sighed at the scale of the challenge:

"Uh, I just think it takes a village to change everything, so everyone comes together, that, I mean it's something that will take a lot to get to trusting a police officer to do their job. It's gonna take a lot of trust-building."

One detainee thought there was some momentum in the right direction already. "I, I, would do what he doing," she said, apparently referring to the new commissioner's attempt to learn directly from residents about the community. She continued:

"You know what I mean, I would step out. I would get in the community and listen. You know, try to get in the community to see exactly what's ... what's the problem? You know, try to listen to some people. Because I mean, you, you, you, don't nobody know you, and you don't know nobody else, so we've all ... you getting background from the police, that's not good intel. As a commissioner. ... you're just basically getting what they see. You need, you need to talk to the people that's not in trouble."

One detainee took such a long time thinking through the various answers to this question he had in mind, none of which were completely satisfactory, that our interviewer had to coax his commentary.

Detainee: That's a big thing, you know.

Interviewer: Take your time.

Detainee: I mean, these things, now that I'm thinking, these are things that they have already done.

Interviewer: Such as?

Detainee: The schools. I mean sending polices to the elementary schools to examine and be around the youth.

Interviewer: Okay.

Detainee: Before they even get too far gone outside and be the next young kid with a gun or a drug pack. You see what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yep.

Detainee: But I've already seen that.

Interviewer: Yep.

Detainee: I've already seen that. You see what I'm saying? So, you can't... Now I'm fucked up. A move that would be one of my first initial moves? Was somebody else's first initial move already. It's already been done. You see what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yep.

Detainee: So, why would I go requote that, I got to think that.

Interviewer: Yep.

Detainee: That's crazy.

Interviewer: Maybe you got to take that idea, run it back, and try it again in a different way.

Detainee: That's not my position.

Interviewer: You're the chief of police.

Detainee: I could never be.

Interviewer: It's a what if, you know.

Detainee: I think the school, though. Yeah, police in schools. Because when you, when you, when you get to the school, you will get to the kids, which will indirectly get you to the parent. Whether you catch them in the morning, or you catch them in the evening. You know what I'm saying? And then like... You can... As an educated person, right there at that school dealing with the parent and dealing with the child. You in your, you, you got the power in that position to know whether this mother and child needs more than that mother and child. You see what I'm saying? And then you might can affect whether, how that kid or that kid... I don't know, I just don't know. Then you got, what I'm saying?

8. Conclusion

The findings of this research create an opportunity for understanding change over time in policing, and not just in the near term under the life of the consent decree. The findings generate a baseline not only for studying whether perceptions of the police and policing improve over time, but also how they evolve. Will people who say policing is improving continue to emphasize “being heard” by the police, or will they start to prioritize reductions in crime and violence? Will detainees’ perceptions come to resemble those of other residents, or will their views grow further apart? So long as positive shifts in perceptions of the police are not limited to one district or part of the city, or limited to only one of the community or detainee populations, the Monitor, Mayor, and Police Department might reasonably infer from such a result that the changes reflect genuine improvements in the work of the police rather than changes in impersonal influences on residents’ views, including digital media, print news, and television.

At the same time, the findings from interviews with detainees also provide insights into what a specific subgroup of residents hope for from policing. Across the varied responses to our interview questions, there is a moral appeal for changes in the way officers’ exhibit their sense of commitment to the city and care for its residents. Moreover, their hope for policing seems rooted in a sentimental relationship with the city as a whole, not just their neighborhood. Detainees expressed a collective nostalgia for a time in which “communities” rather than “streets” were patrolled by “Officer Friendly.” They evinced a personalized longing for relationships with the police marked by innocence, honesty, and reciprocity. They stated a belief that crime is the product of despair and neglect rather than depravity (with one detainee remarking that even “the crimes today are getting sadder”). They wanted police that shared these views.

It is possible that detainees said they would still ask for help from the police at least in some situations because there is no other recourse or few thinkable alternatives to the police. This may be the case. But even so, when detainees said the police “don’t love Baltimore,” and when they complained they are treated “[l]ike we’re just not people,” it sounds to us as if they are seeking a relationship of mutual care, not a new social contract or a different service provider. What they seem to want is for the police to demonstrate a “commitment” to residents and the city, not a vindication of their rights during arrest. Detainees did not often invoke the law or speak in procedural terms about justice. Instead they asked for proof of officers’ personalized commitment to protecting lives. “When it all comes down to it, y’all ain’t gone jump in front of nobody and save nobody god damn life,” one person decried, having lost faith in the police’s core obligation. Accordingly, the request for care and commitment in these statements may provide ways to operationalize and measure the concept of “dignity” that appears in the first paragraph of the Consent Decree, not just supplement measures of the availability, service delivery, and procedural compliance of the Baltimore Police Department.

Appendix 1. Methodology

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 73 recently arrested detainees at the Baltimore Central Booking facility between Wednesday morning July 16th and Friday evening 19th, 2019. Three of the detainees chose to stop the interview before it was over, so this report is exclusively based on the remaining 70 interviews. The interview team consisted of researchers and faculty from the University of Toronto and representatives of the Rose Street Community Center. Of those researchers conducting interviews, two of the interviewers were men, and two were women.

Our agreed upon protocol was to inform detainees of the opportunity to participate in this research by circulating a recruitment letter explaining the research to everyone booked into the facility, before or during their first encounter with a Court Commissioner. This first meeting typically takes place within 2-4 hours of arrival in the jail.

Research interviews took place in two private rooms that were designated by the court commissioners for use by the interview team. Each room contained a glass partition that separated the interview room from a holding cell for the detainee. An intercom system allowed for communication between the researchers and the detainees.

Because of the location of the research team on the Court Commissioners' side of the jail, researchers were unable to directly recruit detainees. Instead, representatives of the Department of Corrections chose to make the recruitment letter available on the other side of the jail or leave it to commissioners to inform detainees of the opportunity, while researchers waited for participants in a room devoted to hearings. As a result of the layout of the jail, we cannot confidently report the number of detainees who we met who received this initial recruitment document and decided not to participate. However, in all cases in which a detainee appeared in one of the hearing rooms used for the research, a member of the research team described the confidentiality of the research and explained their participation was voluntary.

By following this process, the research team established the consent of the interviewee prior to participation in all cases. Upon greeting a detainee, a member of the research team introduced the study and reviewed a consent form explaining in detail the purposes and conditions of the research. We ensured the detainee understood that our research was independent - neither funded by nor affiliated with the Baltimore Police Department or the Commissioner's office. We also made it clear that their cooperation had no determination on the outcome of their case or their second Commissioners meeting.

Some members of the research team arrived at the detention facility each day by 9 AM and stayed until 8-9 PM. During this time, each of the interview rooms was staffed by one or more members of the research team. Research team members from our community partner arrived between noon and 1 PM each day. When all were present, community partners would be part of explaining the study to detainees. In addition, one team member from our community partner would assist with interviews; the other would, upon establishing participation, sit in the corridor adjacent to the interview rooms.

Over the course of the research, approximately 65 percent of the detainees met by our teams agreed to participate in the interview. Interviews typically took between 20 and 40 minutes to complete and all interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder.

The interview protocol (see Appendix 2) consisted of a range of closed-response and open-ended questions that were designed to generate responses that could be compared to answers to questions posed to residents by researchers at Morgan State University. The protocol used in Baltimore closely resembles the instrument used in Cleveland (2017) and Los Angeles (2009) to interview detainees when the police departments in those cities were operating under a consent decree.

Appendix 2. Interview Protocol

Section I. General Impressions of Policing

1. Overall, how well do you think the Baltimore Police Department is **doing its job** today?

- Excellent
- Good
- Neither good nor bad
- Bad
- Terrible

2. Compared with two years ago, is the way the BPD **does its job** today...

- Much improved
- Somewhat improved
- Neither improved nor worsened
- Somewhat worse
- Much worse

Can you give me an example of this change?

3. Based on your own personal experience, how would describe the way that the Baltimore Police Department **polices your neighborhood**. Is it:

- Highly professional
- Mostly professional
- Somewhat professional
- Mostly unprofessional
- Highly unprofessional

4. Compared with two years ago, would you say the way the BPD **polices your neighborhood** today is:

- Much more professional
- Somewhat more professional
- About the same as two to three years ago
- Somewhat less professional
- Much less professional

Can you give me an example of the change in professionalism?

5. Based on your own personal experience, how would you describe the **relations** between the BPD and the people in the neighborhood where you live? Are these relations....

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

6. Compared with *two or three years ago*, would you say the **relations** between the BPD and the people in your neighborhood where you live today are ...

- Much better
- Somewhat better
- About the same
- Somewhat worse
- Much worse

Can you give me an example of the change in these relations?

Section II. Personal Experiences of Policing

7. In your experience, would you say that Baltimore police officers treat **you** with respect ...

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometime
- Rarely
- Never

8. What about **you**, would you say that **you** respect the BPD officers that you encounter ...

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometime
- Rarely
- Never

Why is that?

Now I want to ask about specific experiences of the police you might have had over the last year.

9. How many times in the last 12 months have you called the police for help? _____

9A. What kind of help did you ask for the last time you called for help?

9B. How did that interaction with the police go?

10. How many times *in the last 12 mths* have you been **stopped** by the police on the street?

What was the police reason for the most recent stop?

11. How many times in the last 12 months have you been stopped by the police in a car?

What was the police reason for the most recent stop?

12. Now I want to ask about your most recent experience of the police -- **today, with this arrest**. Overall, how satisfied were you with this experience of the police?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

Why is that?

13. Can you describe the **best experience** you've had with a BPD officer?

14. What did the officer do to make that experience go so well?

15. Can you describe the **worst experience** you've had with a BPD officer?

16. Was there anything the officer could have done to make **that** experience better?

Section 3. Feelings and Attitudes About Policing

17. Do you feel comfortable communicating with Baltimore city police officers? Yes No

17a. If yes, why is that?

17b. If no, why not?

18. What could the Baltimore city police department do to make it easier for people to communicate with them?

Now, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being NOT likely and 10 being the MOST likely, please tell me whether you would do any of the following things:

19. Ask a Baltimore city police officer for directions if you were lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood. _____ (1-10)

20. Call the police to report a crime if someone threatened you with physical violence. _____ (1-10)

21. Call the police to report a crime if someone broke into your home. _____ (1-10)

22. Call the police to report a crime if someone broke into your car or vandalized your car. _____ (1-10)

Section IV. Rating the Performance of Policing

23. How effective is the BPD at stopping crime in your neighborhood? Would you say ...

- Very Effective
- Fairly Effective
- Not Very Effective
- Not at all Effective

24. How good are the police at working together with residents in your neighborhood to solve local problems? Are they doing a ...

- Very good job
- Good job
- Fair job
- Poor job
- Uncertain

25. How much confidence do you have in the ability of the Police department to hold its officers responsible for misconduct? Do you have:

- Complete confidence
- Some confidence
- Little confidence
- No confidence

26. Do police officers treat people who identify from different ethnic groups equally ...

- Almost all the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Almost never

27. Do the police treat people equally regardless of gender?

- Almost all the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Almost never

28. Do the police treat people equally regardless of sexual orientation?

- Almost all the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Almost never

29. What about young people? Do police officers treat young people with the care and caution that is required to prevent harm or further problems with justice?

- Almost all the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Almost never

Section V. Recommendations and Advice for the Police Department

30. What do you think should be the highest priority for the city of Baltimore?

- a) Reducing police violence
- b) Reducing crime in your community
- c) Ensuring that the police treat all people with respect
- d) Ensuring the community is heard by the police

(If interviewee struggles, ask: could you tell me which one is most important to you)?

31. What one thing could the police do to improve life *in your neighborhood*?

32. Why is that so important to you?

33. What else could the Baltimore police do to improve life in the city as a whole?

34. Why do you think the police aren't doing these things already?

35. If you were the chief of police, what's the first thing you would do?

Section VI. DEMOGRAPHICS

36. In what neighborhood do you live? _____

37. Do you know which Police District serves your community? Yes ___ No ___

Which district is that? _____

38. In what year were you born? _____

39. Do you consider yourself

White Black/African American Asian Hispanic Other

(you can name more than 1)

40. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about policing in Baltimore?

NOTES:

Appendix 3. Sample

This report relies on 70 interviews we conducted with arrested detainees. A brief demographic portrait of the sample appears below in Table 1. It shows that 80 percent of these individuals identified themselves as Black/African American at the end of our interview; about 16 percent said they were White; a few declined to identify themselves in terms of race or ethnic identity. The data in Table 1 also shows that the racial/ethnic composition of detainees we interviewed is nearly identical to the profile of individuals that were booked into the Baltimore Detention Facility on the four days we conducted interviews, and only marginally different from the profile of individuals that were arrested by the Baltimore Police Department between January 1 and June 30, 2019.¹¹ The average age of our interviewees is also slightly lower than that of those who were recorded as booked into the detention facility during the period of our research, but nearly identical to the mean age of those arrested in the first six months of the year.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Portrait of Suspects Arrested, Detained, and Interviewed

	Baltimore Police Department		Baltimore Central Booking		Munk School Sample	
	Arrested between January 1 and June 30, 2019		Detained between 9 am July 16 and 9pm July 19		Interviewed between July 16 and July 19	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
TOTAL	10598	100%	180	100%	70	100%
Black	8701	82.1%	142	78.9%	56	80.0%
White	1620	15.3%	33	18.3%	11	15.7%
Other	277	2.6%	5	2.8%	3	4.3%
Male	8373	79%	147	81.7%	58	82.9%
Female	2225	21%	31	17.2%	12	17.1%
Mean Age	33.1		35		33.5	
% < 25 years	2576	24.30%		23%	17	24.3%

It is possible that respondents' experiences and perceptions of the police vary by district, but we have not analyzed the geographic distribution of the people we interviewed, primarily because so few of the detainees we spoke to knew the name of the division of police responsible for their arrest. Future research might study this question, however, since an understanding of the geography of public perceptions of policing in Baltimore could yield insight into how experiences of the police map on to other aspects of the urban ecology, whether this ecology consists of poverty, the availability of social services, the demographic composition of neighborhoods, the character of police deployments, or the amount of crime and calls for police service. In other words, such an analysis might help situate experiences and perceptions of policing within the broader urban landscape of the city of Baltimore.

¹¹ The most recent estimates of the demographic composition of the city of Baltimore as a whole, which are based on census figures, indicate that 63 percent of residents identify as Black, 27 percent as White, 5 percent as Hispanic/Latino, and another 5 percent as "other."

Appendix 4. Calls for Service

Because many detainees said they would not call the police for help in situations of violence, we wondered whether the data on calls for service to the Baltimore Police Department would indicate changes in the composition and distribution of requests for help across the city in the past few years. In addition, because recent empirical research from Milwaukee (Desmond et al. 2016) suggests that high profile incidents of police violence may be followed by a reduction in calls for service for some period of time, and these drops may be larger in some neighborhoods rather than others, we wondered whether incidents in Baltimore might have had similar effects on the responses that detainees provided to our survey.

While we are still working with the data on calls for service provided to us by the Consent Decree Implementation Unit, we provide a chart below that depicts two city-wide measures: Baltimore-wide calls for service for assault, and the city-wide homicide rate. We also provide annual calls for service in three districts: the two districts most represented in the booking data of the jail during our research days (the Central and Northeast Districts), as well as the Western District which we understand to be the site of the widely reported Freddie Grey incident in 2015. While we do not have other crime rate data at the district level, we note that calls for service in the Northeast and Central districts have tended to fall over this time period. In the Western District, we also see a similar drop in calls for service. We are not yet able to draw any inferences from these data, though in future work we hope to compare respondents of detainees in neighborhoods with different patterns in calls for service. A more detailed analysis of this data in partnership with the BPD might yield insights about the conditions that boost or suppress trust and confidence in the police in different neighborhoods, especially those in which the majority of arrests take place.

