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# PUBLIC OPINIONS OF THE POLICE:
# The Influence of Friends, Family, and News Media

## Abstract

Police executives today broadly agree that public support is important both for the legitimacy of the police and the ability of the police to fight crime effectively. While research shows people generally support the police and are satisfied with the way police perform their duties, it also demonstrates that not all segments of society hold equally positive opinions. Yet the determinants of public support are not fully understood. Although research has focused on the influence of personal contacts between the police and civilians or on neighborhood context, other influences remain unexplored. This research asks:

- Does police treatment of citizens impact broader public opinion of the police, as citizens impart these experiences to family, friends, and neighbors?

- Is the media's portrayal of the police an important determinant of public opinion of the police?

We addressed these questions by drawing on monthly "consumer satisfaction" surveys of people who have had voluntary contacts with the police and of precinct community leaders, monthly surveys of public opinion within precincts, and news coverage of the police. These data were drawn from five precincts in New York City.

We have made a number of conclusions, including:

- Citizens' opinions of the police are positive and quite stable over time—at least in the absence of significant shifts in police policy or media scandals. The same is true of levels of consumer satisfaction among those who have had voluntary encounters with the police. This stability exists even in the face of some notable variation in news coverage of the police.

- While it is well known that people reporting negative experiences of contact with the police have lower levels of confidence in the police, this research also establishes that those whose family and friends have had such negative contacts also have less confidence. The converse, however, is not necessarily true: positive experiences with the police are not associated with substantially higher levels of confidence in the

police, either among the individuals experiencing contacts or among their friends and family.

These findings have important practical implications:

- Reducing the number of negative encounters police have with civilians may be more important for improving public opinion of the police than increasing the number of positive encounters. Using early warning systems that identify officers who develop patterns of unprofessional behavior would be one way to achieve this.

- Police managers' routine management of media coverage may not have a profound impact on public opinion. Focusing on improving the quality of police-public interactions may be more effective, at least in the absence of major scandals.

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Robert C. Davis
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John Markovic
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Vera Institute of Justice
December 2003

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## The Influence of Friends, Family and News Media

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Vera Institute of Justice
Summary Research Report to the National Institute of Justice
December 2003

## Executive Summary

Police officers and their supervisors know that news coverage about a citizen's negative encounter with the police, particularly coverage that erupts to the level of a public scandal, can quickly destroy their efforts to nurture a positive relationship with the public. But what about routine encounters—positive or negative—that are not covered by mass media? Do they shape the public's opinion of the police? Do individuals' vicarious encounters with police—encounters they merely hear about from family and friends—significantly affect public opinion? The answers to these questions can help police managers decide how best to manage the time and resources they devote to media management and officer training. They also can help officers understand the impact of their everyday encounters with citizens.

The Vera Institute of Justice conducted a nine-month study to examine these and other questions about what shapes public opinion of the police. Specifically, the researchers asked: 1) Does the way in which police treat citizens have a ripple effect on community opinion of the police as these citizens tell their stories to family, friends, and neighbors? 2) Are news media portrayals of police important determinants of public opinion of the police, regardless of whether members of the public have had direct or vicarious contacts with police officers?

To answer these questions, Vera used data from three surveys. Researchers conducted nine monthly surveys in five New York City precincts, asking nearly 2,000 people about their opinions of and experience with police and their patterns of media consumption. Over the same nine-month period, researchers also conducted monthly consumer satisfaction surveys of precinct community leaders and people who had voluntary contacts with the police and tracked media coverage of the police in six news sources.

Vera found that opinions of the police are positive and quite stable over time—at least in the absence of significant shifts in police policy or media scandals. But people who themelves or whose family and friends have had negative contacts with the police have less favorable opinions of the police. Moreover, positive experiences with police—whether they are direct or vicarious—are not associated with substantially more favorable opinions of the police. Thus, reducing the number of negative encounters police have with civilians may be more important for improving public opinion of the police than increasing the number of positive encounters. Futhermore, police managers should not assume that better media coverage of ordinary police activities can overcome the effect of unreported negative encounters.

## Introduction

Police executives today broadly agree that public support for the police is important for successful policing. Not only is public support fundamental to the legitimacy of the police, but it is also important for enlisting the public in efforts to reduce crime. Moreover, there is growing evidence that public support depends on the public's perception that police treat people fairly and professionally.[1] Against this backdrop, police executives face a range of choices about how to use their limited time and resources to persuade civilians that they operate professionally and with integrity. These might include public relations campaigns, retraining patrol officers in managing encounters with the public, improving supervisors' capacity to monitor and improve the behavior of officers in their encounters with the public, and winning over particular segments of the public through specialized community affairs staff. As police executives choose among these options, they will benefit from more information about how public attitudes toward the police are formed.

Survey research has shown that most people generally support the police and are satisfied with the way the police perform their duties.[2] While these findings are encouraging, the same research consistently demonstrates that not all segments of society hold equally positive opinions. Studies reaching back to the 1960s consistently find that black citizens evaluate the police more negatively than white citizens, that young people evaluate the police more negatively than older Americans, and that males evaluate the police more negatively than females.[3]

Yet these studies do not explain what determines or changes these assessments. While research has focused on the influence of personal contacts between police and civilians or, more recently, on neighborhood context as the determinant of attitudes toward police, other influences on public opinion have not been systematically explored.[4]

One possibility is that police-public contacts indirectly impact, as well as directly affect, public opinion. It seems plausible that police behavior in routine encounters could affect community opinions of the police through a ripple effect, as persons who have encounters with the police retell their stories to families, friends, and neighbors. A second possibility is that police-public contacts or examples of police corruption or misconduct that receive media attention assume an amplified and disproportionate effect on public opinion, compared with the large number of routine police-public interactions that do not receive media attention. While both theories are plausible, neither has received much empirical attention. This research specifically addressed the relative importance of these two factors alongside the direct effect of encounters with the police among those who seek police services or those identified as neighborhood community leaders by police commanders.

The study began with an effort to take advantage of a series of large, monthly surveys conducted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in each of its precincts

among two specific groups of civilians: those who had reported crimes to the police and those whom local police commanders regard as community leaders in their neighborhoods. The NYPD surveys attempt to measure the level of neighborhood satisfaction with police each month among these groups, described here as the "consumers" of police services. These surveys asked consumers about the speed, professionalism, courtesy, and expertise with which police officers handled their matters or concerns and their level of satisfaction with the service they received.

Support from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) allowed Vera researchers to carry out a public opinion survey in five New York police precincts where the department was conducting these consumer satisfaction surveys. This allowed Vera, together with the police department, to examine whether police behavior toward citizens, as assessed in the department's surveys, would predict subsequent opinion of the police among the general population.

Vera researchers also measured news coverage of policing over the same time period to see whether the nature of this coverage appeared to influence public perceptions of the police. We analyzed news coverage of the police in one weekly and three daily newspapers and two television news sources. Additionally, in our public opinion surveys we asked a range of questions about respondents' news consumption and direct and vicarious police contacts.

Both the police department surveys and the supplementary study supported by NIJ were conceived as pilot studies to be conducted in only nine months. Because of the project's timing, this nine-month period—from the end of December 2001 to the end of October 2002—followed soon after the events of September 11, 2001, a period that may not have been typical in terms of public opinion of the police.[5] Ultimately, this was not sufficient time to determine whether routine police-public interactions substantially influenced public opinion at large as measured by consumer satisfaction surveys. Nor did it allow us to establish definitively the nature of the relationship between public opinion and our measures of news coverage. However, even this brief pilot study, in particular the analysis of the public opinion survey, has produced findings that should be useful to police administrators.

## Key Findings

### Consumer Satisfaction and Public Opinion Appear Quite Stable Over Time

Levels of satisfaction were generally high, and we did not find substantial variation from month to month either in consumer satisfaction with encounters or in public opinion over the nine months we tracked these measures. That made it impossible to establish whether improvement or deterioration of routine police-public interactions substantially influenced public opinion. Nor were we able to establish definitively the nature of the relationship between public opinion and our measures of news coverage.

It might be expected that general public opinion would remain stable from month to month in the absence of sudden shifts in police practice (resulting from changes in policy, specific operations, or training programs, for example), or big media scandals about the police. It is interesting, however, that we found the same stability in satisfaction among those who themselves had recent, voluntary encounters with the police. These opinions appear, therefore, to be the product of relatively stable aggregate levels of performance across police officers in a neighborhood. It is likely that police departments will require concerted effort to increase these already high levels of satisfaction.

**Variations in Media Coverage Were Not Reflected in Public Opinion**

In our research, public opinion about the police was fairly stable across nine consecutive months, despite some notable variations in media coverage over the period. We measured variation in coverage in both the number of negative articles that appeared in a database of newspaper coverage of the police and in the amount of negative coverage that people recalled seeing. This suggests that variation in news coverage of the police does not easily sway people's views of the police—at least in the absence of any major scandals.

In this brief study, we were not able to identify the extent of the public's "buffer zone" of tolerance for variation in coverage of the police—that is, we cannot say to what extent coverage would have to vary to influence public opinion. Indeed, it seems likely that allegations of severe police abuse repeatedly broadcast through the media can have a significant impact on public opinion.[6] Still, the results of the present study suggest that during less volatile periods of media coverage, changes in public opinion about the police are unlikely to result from news stories about the police.

**Friends' and Relatives' Negative Experiences Affect Opinions of the Police**

Predictably, and in line with prior research, we found that people who reported negative contacts with the police—contacts in which they felt they were treated badly—tended to have lower levels of confidence in the police. However, the opposite effect was not necessarily true: people who reported positive experiences with the police had views of the police that were similar to the views of people who reported no contact with police. In addition, people who reported "neutral" experiences with the police tended to have worse opinions than people who reported no contact.

Our general opinion survey also asked respondents about their vicarious experiences with police, that is the experiences of their friends and families about which they had heard—a kind of experience unexplored in previous research. We found that people who reported family and friends having been treated badly in an encounter also tended to have less confidence in the police and that people with positive vicarious encounters held opinions of the police similar to those of people who reported no police contact. People

who reported neutral vicarious encounters tended to have worse opinions of the police than people who reported no police contact.

The apparent influence of a vicarious experience on a person's opinion of the police was less powerful than the influence of direct, personal experience. Yet, while people reported similar numbers of direct and vicarious contacts, negative vicarious experiences were more plentiful than direct negative experiences. This may reflect a tendency of friends, family members, and acquaintances to talk about negative experiences more than positive ones. Thus, these findings suggest that people's negative encounters with the police may shape public opinion as much through their impact on friends and family as through the citizen directly involved in the encounters.

**Neighborhood and Public Confidence**

While we did not find much variation in public opinion over time, we did find substantial differences among the five precincts we surveyed. The precincts varied according to their social and demographic make-up, including, for example, economic status and racial and ethnic composition. These variations, as well as differences in patterns of personal and vicarious contacts with the police, in part appeared to explain the differences among precincts in public opinion. For example, the precinct with the most positive views of the police also had the highest proportion of white residents, the greatest proportion of homeowners, and the fewest reports of negative encounters with the police. However, after controlling for social and demographic factors and differences in patterns of police contacts, notable precinct differences in public opinion remained.

Previous research has found that the quality of a neighborhood is an important determinant of residents' satisfaction with policing, both at a subjective level (relating to perceptions of quality of life) and at an objective level (relating to economic and crime indicators).[7] While we were not able to explore these aspects of neighborhood environment further in the current study, the findings re-emphasize the importance of neighborhood conditions as a determinant of public opinions of local police.

## Implications for Policy and Practice

Our findings have a number of practical implications.

**Reducing the Number of Negative Encounters May be More Important than Increasing the Number of Positive Encounters**

Our research suggests that the impact of police actions on public opinion is not limited to the individuals that police deal with directly. There is, in fact, a far wider audience among the family and friends of each person who comes in contact with the police. When people feel they have been treated well or badly, their feelings toward the police appear to spread

through these social networks. However, while positive encounters do not appear to have a substantial effect on people's opinions of the police, negative encounters apparently do.

This means that attempts to improve public opinion by promoting positive contacts (for example through general police training in courtesy and respect) with the police are, on their own, probably insufficient. More important will be police managers' efforts to reduce the numbers of negative encounters. We know from previous research that those negative encounters that lead to civilian complaints are typically concentrated among a small minority of officers—and the same may be true for negative encounters in general.[8] Therefore, focusing attention on less well behaved officers may be a particularly important strategy for reducing the numbers of negative encounters between the police and public. This could involve using early warning systems that identify officers exhibiting patterns of unprofessional behavior.[9] Reducing the numbers of negative encounters also could rely on a problem-oriented approach to police behavior (much in the same way this approach is applied to crime problems). Police performance data can be systematically analyzed to identify any underlying problems that might give rise to negative police-public interactions.[10] There also is evidence that the climate of accountability police commanders create can affect the quality of police-public interactions, at least as evidenced by levels of civilian complaints.[11]

## Media Management is not Enough to Affect Public Opinion

Management of police communications with the media has, in recent years, been subject to increasing professionalization, involving greater organization and strategic planning, with a view to promoting and limiting damage to police departments' reputations. It would be wrong, on the basis of our research, to suggest that police managers should not be concerned about the media's representation of the police.

Yet attempts to effectively manage a police department's media profile can be resource-intensive.[12] Set against this, our research shows that public opinion is positive and robust in the face of a degree of variation in news coverage of the police—both objectively measured, and subjectively experienced. These findings suggest that routine management of the media may not profoundly impact public opinion. Certainly, in periods where there are no major police scandals, police departments' media management may not be effective at improving public opinion. Efforts to improve the quality of police-public interactions, which clearly are important to public confidence, may be more successful.

## Lessons for Monitoring Consumer Satisfaction and Public Opinion

We noted that there were no substantial changes either in public opinion or in the nature of police-public encounters over the period of this research. This means that in the future and in other locations, monthly surveys of the public may not show any substantial

changes—particularly in the absence of sudden shifts in police practice or significant media scandals about the police.

Yet in the interests of promoting positive police-public encounters and positive public opinion, the use of surveys is an inherently promising idea. There are few other direct ways of holding police departments and police officers accountable for their relationships with the public. A more practical approach to monitoring through surveys might involve administering surveys less often than in this research (perhaps quarterly) and tying this monitoring directly to interventions to improve satisfaction, such as training programs for officers or new forms of supervision and accountability. Under these circumstances, gains in consumer satisfaction and public opinion might be both achieved and measured.

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## Notes

1. For example, Tom Tyler shows how people who believe that legal authorities are legitimate are more willing than other people to accept legal authorities' decisions and feel more satisfied with the authorities with whom they have interacted. See Tyler, T.R., "Trust and Law Abidingness: A Proactive Model of Social Regulation," *Boston University Law Review*, 81 no. 2 (2001): 361-406.

2. Studies going back for decades indicate high levels of public satisfaction with policing. See, for example, Mastrofski, S.D., et al., *Policing Neighborhoods: A Report From St. Petersburg*, Research in Brief, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, July 1999; Homant, R.J., Kennedy, D.B., and Fleming, R.M., "The Effects of Victimization and the Police Response on Citizen Attitudes Toward Police," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 12 (3) (1984): 323-332; Benson, P.R., "Political Alienation and Public Satisfaction With Police Services," *Pacific Sociological Review*, 24 no. 1 (1981): 45-64; O'Brien, J., "Public Attitudes Toward the Police," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 6, no. 1 (1978): 303-310; Thomas, C. and Hyman, J., "Perceptions of Crime, Fear of Victimization, and Public Perceptions of Police Performance," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 5, no. 3 (1977): 305-317; Lundman, R., "Domestic Police-Citizen Encounters," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 2 no. 1 (1974): 22-27.

3. Studies highlighting racial differences in opinions of the police include: Hahn, H., "Violence: The View From the Ghetto," *Mental Hygiene*, 53 (1969): 509-512; McCord, W. and Howard, J., "Negro Opinions in Three Riot Cities," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2 no. 4 (1968):24-27; Jacob, H., "Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City," *Law and Society Review*, 6 no. 1 (1971): 69-89; Cambell, A. and Schuman, H., "A Comparison of Black and White Experiences in the City," in *The End of Innocence: A Suburban Reader*, ed. C.M. Haar. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman,1972; Skogan, W.G., "Citizens' Satisfaction With Police Services: Individual and Contextual Effects," *Policy Studies Journal* (1978): 469-479; Scaglion, R. and Condon, R., "Determinants of Attitudes Toward City Police," *Criminology*, 17 no. 4 (1980): 485-494; Browning, S., et al., "Race and Getting Hassled by the Police: A Research Note," *Police Studies*, 17, no. 1 (1994): 1-11; and Hurst, Y.G., Frank, J., and Browning, S.L., "The Attitudes of Juveniles Toward the Police: A Comparison of Black and White Youth," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 23 no. 1 (2000): 37-53.

4. The influence of personal contacts between police and civilians is addressed by Smith, P. and Hawkins, R., "Victimization, Types of Citizen-Police Contacts and Attitudes Toward the Police," *Law and Society Review*, 8, no. 1 (1973): 135-152; Boggs, S. and Galliher, J., "Evaluating the Police: A Comparison of

Black Street and Household Respondents," *Social Problems*, 22 no. 3 (1975): 393-406; Webb, V.J. and Marshall, C.F., "The Relative Importance of Race and Ethnicity on Citizen Attitudes Toward the Police," *American Journal of Police*, 14 no. 2 (1995): 45-46.

5. Evidence taken from earlier consumer satisfaction surveys carried out before and after September 11, 2001, suggests that specific satisfaction with encounters among those having voluntary contacts with the police did not change. However, there was some evidence of a modest increase in general confidence in the police after September 11.

6. The Rodney King beating in Los Angeles and the Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo incidents in New York were followed by substantial shifts in public attitudes toward the police in public opinion polls, particularly among black and Hispanic citizens. See Weitzer, R., "Incidents of Police Misconduct and Public Opinion," *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30 no. 5 (2002): 397-408.

7. Reisig, M.D. and Parks, R.D., "Satisfaction with Police—What Matters?" Research for Practice, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October, 2002.

8. See, for example, Walker, S., Alpert, G. P., and Kenney, D. J. *Early Warning Systems: Responding to the Problem Police Officer*, Rockville, MD: National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2001.

9. See, for example, Walker, S., *Police Accountability: The Role of Citizen Oversight*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001.

10. Ibid. Walker describes a problem-oriented approach to addressing police complaints and misconduct.

11. The management styles of commanders in two South Bronx precincts were associated with lower levels of civilian complaints during their tenure. See Davis, R.C. and Mateu-Gelabert, P., *Respectful and Effective Policing: Two Examples in the South Bronx*, New York, NY: Vera Institute of Justice, March 1999.

12. One proposed public relations strategy for police departments includes audits of what is broadcast and published on a department, the development of guidelines for disseminating information to the press and public, regular reviews of public relations policies, and assignment of rotating, on-call public information officers. See Miller, C., "PR Management 101: Managing Public Relations Without a Public Relations Officer," *Law Enforcement Technology,* 29, no. 10 (2002): 96-103.

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Final Technical Report to the National Institute of Justice
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# Contents

## Introduction

Securing public confidence in the police is an important challenge for police managers. Not only is public support fundamental to the legitimacy of the police, but it is also important for enlisting the public in efforts to reduce crime. Moreover, there is growing evidence that public support depends on the public perception that police treat people fairly and professionally.[1] Yet the determinants of this public support are by no means fully understood. While many researchers have focused on the influence of citizens' personal contacts with police[2] or, more recently, on neighborhood context,[3] they have not systematically explored other possible influences on public opinion.

One of these possible influences is indirect police-public contacts. It seems possible that police behavior in routine encounters could affect community opinions of the police through a ripple effect, as persons who have encounters with the police retell their stories to families, friends, and neighbors. A second possible influence is media coverage of police-public contacts, which could cause the contacts to assume an amplified and disproportionate effect on public opinion, compared with the large number of routine police-public interactions that are positive and do not attract media attention. While both theories are plausible, neither has received much empirical attention. This research specifically addresses the relative importance of these two factors alongside the direct effect of encounters with the police among those who seek police services or attend meetings with local police commanders.

The present study began with an effort to take advantage of a series of large, monthly surveys conducted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in each of its 76 precincts. New York City invested $1.4 million in this 12-month project to survey 5,000 people belonging to two specific groups of civilians: those who had reported crimes to the police and those who are regarded as community leaders in their neighborhoods by local police commanders. The NYPD surveys attempt to measure the level of neighborhood satisfaction with police each month among people who have had direct, voluntary contact with the police, described here as the "consumers" of police services. The surveys ask consumers about the speed, professionalism, courtesy, and expertise with which police officers handled respondents' matters or concerns and their level of satisfaction with the service they received.

Support from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice (NIJ) allowed Vera researchers to carry out parallel monthly repeated population surveys of public opinion in five precincts. This allowed Vera, together with the police department, to examine whether police behavior toward citizens as assessed in the department's surveys would predict subsequent opinion of the police among the general population. Building on the research opportunities presented by a survey of public opinion, Vera researchers also measured news coverage of policing over the same time period to see

whether the nature of coverage appeared to influence public perceptions of the police. Additionally, the surveys asked a range of questions about respondents' news consumption and direct and vicarious police contacts.

Both the surveys by the police department and the supplementary study supported by NIJ were conceived as pilot studies to be conducted in only nine months. Because of the project's timing, this nine-month period—from the end of December 2001 to the end of October 2002—followed soon after the events of September 11, 2001, a period that may not have been typical in terms of public opinion of the police.[4] Ultimately, nine months was not sufficient time to determine whether routine police-public interactions substantially influenced public opinion at large as measured by consumer satisfaction surveys. Nor did it allow us to establish definitively the nature of the relationship between public opinion and our measures of news coverage. However, even this brief pilot study, in particular the analysis of the public opinion survey, has produced findings that should be useful to police administrators.

## Research on Public Opinion of the Police

In a democracy, it is important that all segments of society see the police as legitimate, their actions as well-intentioned and fair.[5] It is encouraging that, according to survey research, most people generally support the police and are satisfied with the way the police perform their duties.[6] However, the same research consistently demonstrates that not all segments of society hold equally positive opinions. Studies reaching back to the 1960s have consistently found that black citizens evaluate the police more negatively than white citizens, that young people evaluate the police more negatively than older Americans, and that males evaluate the police more negatively than females.[7] Other research has indicated that Americans of lower socioeconomic status hold more negative opinions of the police than people of higher socioeconomic status.[8]

Researchers have tried to understand why opinions of the police are lower among some Americans than others—particularly among people of different races and ethnicities. One popular theory is that people's neighborhood context may determine their attitudes: people who reside in the same community share norms and values that affect their view of the world, including their view of police services. Researchers have studied the contribution of both individual characteristics and ecological factors to satisfaction with the police using a hierarchical modeling technique.[9] This research showed that differences between blacks and whites in satisfaction with police disappeared when neighborhood-level factors such as concentrated disadvantage (poverty, public assistance, and unemployment, for example), immigrant concentration, and violent crime rate were taken into account. Other researchers using a similar approach found that, in some models, neighborhood context, especially concentrated disadvantage, reduced the disparity in satisfaction with police between blacks and whites.[10] In earlier work for NIJ,

Vera found that, even within the same geographic area, the norms and values of people's local ethnic community are important determinants of opinions of police services.[11]

But neighborhood or community context as an explanation for variations between segments of society in attitudes toward the police begs the question of how neighborhoods or ethnic communities come to share a common set of beliefs. One explanation is that more frequent encounters and more negative encounters with the police generate greater antipathy toward the police among some Americans. There are numerous studies that have reported a negative effect on opinions of the police of traffic stops, pedestrian stops, and arrests.[12] Some evidence even indicates that any form of contact with the police—voluntary or involuntary—pushes attitudes in a more negative direction.[13] However, other researchers have suggested that it is not experiences, per se, that influence opinions of the police, but the quality of experiences. It is commonly argued that bad experiences have a negative impact, and some evidence suggests that it is formal, rather than informal, encounters that tend to drive attitudes down.[14] Some authors have gone so far as to suggest that experience with the police is a better predictor of attitudes toward the police than any demographic indicator.[15] Studies have found that blacks and other minorities are more likely than whites to have unpleasant involuntary contacts with the police that may shape their perceptions of law enforcement officials.[16] Moreover, there is research evidence that blacks are more likely than whites to evaluate involuntary police contacts negatively and that black people's attitudes about police become more negative because of these experiences. [17]

## Vicarious Experience and Public Opinion

It is clear from the research literature that unpleasant experiences with the police affect individual opinions. Most people have not had recent unpleasant experiences with the police, but many people know a family member or friend who has.[18] We do not know the extent to which the experiences of family and friends affect community attitudes toward the police. For example, do contacts between police and citizens have a ripple effect, as people tell their families, neighbors, and friends about their experiences? And is such information important in the formation of community opinions? The information certainly has the potential for being important, especially in high-crime areas where many people are likely to know someone who has had an encounter with police.

There is virtually no research on this subject. One recent paper reported that racial differences in young peoples' attitudes toward the police disappeared after controlling for whether they had recently heard about or witnessed police misconduct.[19] But the researchers' definition of vicarious experience includes events that young people witnessed, which is different from the concept examined here. To find other relevant literature, we have to turn to research on fear of crime. Several significant studies in this field suggest that information conveyed through social networks is important to attitude

formation. For example, one study found that knowing someone in the neighborhood who was a recent crime victim was associated with increased fear of crime after other factors were controlled in a multivariate analysis.[20] Moreover, the impact of vicarious victimization grew stronger with increasing similarity between the survey respondent and the victim. In other words, an older black female would experience a greater increase in fear if she knew another older black female who was victimized than if she knew a young white male who was victimized.

One study compared the effects of direct personal experience with crime with the effects of indirect experience, or knowing people who were victimized, and found that both direct and indirect exposure to crime influenced estimates of personal vulnerability to crime.[21] Contrary to expectation, this research also found that indirect influences were, overall, just as powerful in their effect on subjective vulnerability as direct experiences were. Other research had found that using community-based networks is an effective way to spread awareness about crime and promote prevention strategies.[22] A 1984 review of research in this field concluded that people's judgment of their own risk of crime is significantly influenced by the experiences of their family, friends, and neighbors.[23]

## The Role of the Media in Public Opinion

Vicarious experience may include not only communications from members of one's social network, but also exposure to information through mass media.[24] It certainly appears that allegations of severe police abuse broadcast through the media can have a significant impact on public opinion. The Rodney King beating in Los Angeles and the Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo incidents in New York were covered extensively by the media and large numbers of people responded to the incidents with outrage. According to one piece of research, these highly publicized negative events were followed by substantial shifts in public attitudes toward the police in public opinion polls, particularly among blacks and Hispanics.[25] However, this work does not distinguish measured variations in the extent of media coverage as a causal factor in the shifts in public opinion and does not address the influence of how public opinion might be affected by more routine media coverage of the police.

There is no other work we are aware of that addresses the possible effects of media on opinions of the police. We turn again to the literature on fear of crime, but the evidence here is mixed. Several studies have found that newspapers and television have an effect on citizens' fear of crime. For example, one study found that fear of crime increased with increasing frequency of viewing television news.[26] Viewing local news was more strongly related to fear of crime than viewing national news. Other research found that people's fear of crime was related to the crime content in the newspapers they read.[27] Respondents who read newspapers with sensationalized crime reporting had higher fear levels than respondents who read other newspapers. As in the study on television news,

this study found that local news coverage had the strongest effect on people's fear of crime. An analysis of newspaper coverage of crime found that exaggerated reporting of local crime was significantly associated with increased neighborhood fear, while exaggerated reporting of non-local crime had little effect on people's fear.[28] Similarly, researchers have found that readers of British tabloids—papers characterized by exaggerated reporting—had higher levels of fear than readers of broadsheets—papers characterized by more realistic or neutral reporting.[29]

The effects of media in these studies generally have not been large, and such effects have not been found at all by other researchers. One study found a small relationship between the amount of television people watched and fear of crime, but the association disappeared when the researchers controlled for demographic factors in a multivariate analysis.[30] Other researchers also found that the amount of television and violent television people watched were associated with elevated levels of fear, but the relationship was no longer statistically significant when the researchers controlled for localized crime data and confounding demographic variables.[31]

One explanation for these inconsistent findings is that mass media have little influence upon formation of personal attitudes such as fear of crime, but that they may affect global judgments about the prevalence of crime in society.[32] Two empirical studies that attempted to tease out the two different types of beliefs support this thesis. If this thesis is correct, then in our work we would expect that media might influence general beliefs about police effectiveness or misconduct.

## Methodology

### Research Questions

If vicarious experience is important to the formation of opinions about the police (as it seems to be in forming attitudes about crime risk), then one might imagine that the relayed experiences of people who have direct encounters with the police would be retold by these people's family members and neighbors and would be influential in shaping public opinions. Similarly, media portrayal of the police might also impact public opinions. In our research, we subjected these possibilities to empirical scrutiny. Specifically, we asked:

- Does the way in which police treat citizens have a ripple effect on community opinion of the police, as these citizens impart their experiences to family, friends, and neighbors? In this way, do police contacts impact broader public opinion of the police?

- Are news media portrayals of police important determinants of public opinion of the police, regardless of whether members of the public have had direct or indirect contacts with police officers?

## Overview of Methodology

We used three complementary approaches to address our research questions. To assess the influence on public opinion of both vicarious police contacts and media coverage of the police, we used both individual and aggregate measures of the two concepts.

*Public opinion surveys.* We conducted nine surveys of the general public in five police precincts. The surveys asked people a range of questions about their opinions of the police, patterns of media consumption, experiences with the police, and demographic information. Thus, we obtained subjective information about people's exposure to media coverage and their vicarious contacts with police.

*Consumer Satisfaction Surveys.* Unlike opinion surveys that measure general views of the police, regardless of personal contact, these surveys document and quantify how people feel about their own voluntary experiences with police officers and police commanders. We surveyed community leaders identified by police precincts as the community figures with whom they interact as well as people who had voluntary contacts with the police, whom we identified through official police department records, including criminal complaints and domestic incident reports.[33] Our original study plan also called for sampling a cross-section of NYPD involuntary contacts. However, after a concerted effort by Vera and NYPD, a decision was made to drop the voluntary contacts from the study because of problems in securing contacts with the intended survey respondents. Our goal was to administer surveys in four-week cycles parallel to the public opinion surveys (though exceptions to this are outlined below) and in the same five precincts. These surveys aim to gauge how satisfied neighborhood residents are after specific encounters with police. As such, they represent an objective measure of the quality of police-public encounters.

*Media Tracking Database.* For an objective measure of media coverage of the police, we compiled news items over the nine-month period, coded them according to the nature of their content, and entered them into a database that we developed specifically for this study. We analyzed coverage during the same nine months that the public opinion surveys were being administered.

Table 2-1 outlines how answers to our two main research questions relied on the answers to a number of more specific empirical questions related to the individual and aggregate level data we collected.

Table 2-1 How research questions were addressed using the three data sources

| Key research questions | Specific empirical questions |
|---|---|
| Does police treatment of citizens impact on broader public opinion of the police as these citizens impart their experiences to family, friends, and neighbors? | Are monthly changes in consumer satisfaction followed by changes in public opinion? |
| | Do public opinion survey respondents whose family or friends have had negative encounters with the police report less confidence in the police? |
| Is media portrayal of the police an important determinant of public opinion of the police? | Are changes over time in media portrayal of police, as recorded by the media tracking database, followed by changes in public opinion, as reported in the public opinion surveys? |
| | Are changes over time in public opinion survey respondents' recall of media coverage of the police followed by changes in measures of public opinion as recorded by the public opinion surveys? |
| | Do public opinion survey respondents who report seeing negative media coverage of police report less confidence in the police than others? |
| | Do public opinion survey respondents with different patterns of media consumption report different levels of confidence in the police? |

### Data Collection

We coordinated the timing of our data collection according to nine monthly waves. We designed the waves so that the public opinion surveys followed the consumer satisfaction surveys and media tracking by four weeks. We built this lag period into the study design to allow for any impact on public opinion, either media or police-public contacts, to play out through time. When we discuss data collection waves in this report, this lag effect is implicit. For example, when we discuss wave 3, this refers to the public opinion survey conducted between March 25, 2002, and April 21, 2002, and the media coverage from the prior four weeks—February 25 through March 24. Consumer satisfaction surveys often were carried out after the public opinion survey, but they covered encounters or interactions with the police that took place four weeks prior to the public opinion survey, which may have been longer than one month from the time of the survey. So, for wave 3, the survey asked respondents about contacts that occurred between February 25 and March 24. The community leader consumer satisfaction survey asked respondents about their general impressions of the police over the previous month, rather than about specific

contacts with the police. Thus, although these surveys were administered during the same time as the other consumer satisfaction survey, they actually related to a more recent period. So, for wave 3, the survey was carried out between April 30 and May 31 and asked community leaders for their impressions from the previous month.

There were some inconsistencies in our data collection. Because of a change in NYPD administration, the consumer satisfaction surveys were suspended for a period prior to the public opinion survey. Therefore, we decided to draw on the most recent data available prior to the beginning of that time. As a result, the voluntary consumer satisfaction data for wave 1 were drawn from more than four weeks prior to the public opinion survey—September 9 to October 14, 2001. Furthermore, there was some irregularity in the timing and duration of the periods associated with the community leader consumer satisfaction survey. For this reason, there are some gaps in the time series for this data source. Table 2-2 provides the dates for all nine waves for each data source.

Table 2-2 Timing of data collection for each data source, according to wave

| Wave | Public opinion survey (period of survey) | Media tracking (period of coverage) | Voluntary consumer satisfaction survey (period of police contact) | Community Leader Survey (period of survey) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1/28/2002 – 2/24/2002 | 12/31/2001 - 1/27/2002 | 9/17/2001 - 10/14/2001 | - |
| 2 | 2/25/2002 – 3/24/2002 | 1/28/2002 – 2/24/2002 | 1/28/2002 – 2/24/2002 | - |
| 3 | 3/25/2002 – 4/21/2002 | 2/25/2002 – 3/24/2002 | 2/25/2002 – 3/24/2002 | 3/19/2002 – 4/1/2002 |
| 4 | 4/22/2002 – 5/19/2002 | 3/25/2002 – 4/21/2002 | 3/25/2002 – 4/21/2002 | 4/30/2002 – 5/31/2002 |
| 5 | 5/20/2002 – 6/16/2002 | 4/22/2002 – 5/19/2002 | 4/22/2002 – 5/19/2002 | - |
| 6 | 6/17/2002 – 7/14/2002 | 5/20/2002 – 6/16/2002 | 5/20/2002 – 6/16/2002 | 6/27/2002 – 7/16/2002 |
| 7 | 7/15/2002 – 8/11/2002 | 6/17/2002 – 7/14/2002 | 6/17/2002 – 7/14/2002 | 7/25/2002 – 8/12/2002 |
| 8 | 8/12/2002 – 9/8/2002 | 7/15/2002 – 8/11/2002 | 7/15/2002 – 8/11/2002 | - |
| 9 | 9/9/2002 – 10/6/2002 | 8/12/2002 – 9/8/2002 | 8/12/2002 – 9/8/2002 | 9/9/2002 – 10/2/2002 |

**Methodological Limitations**

To better understand how public opinions are formed, we relied on both aggregate and individual measures, an innovative methodological approach. To our knowledge, the use of consumer surveys to understand the quality of encounters with the public is unique, as is our examination of the month-to-month influence of news media on attitudes.

Because the work was treading new ground, however, questions of feasibility inevitably arose. Notably, we did not know in advance whether the consumer satisfaction surveys, public opinion survey, or the media database would show substantial variation

across time or across precincts to allow us to make inferences about what influenced these changes. For example, in the absence of introducing new training or incentive programs for police officers, would the consumer scales be likely to vary from one month to the next? Or in the absence of a major scandal reported in the media or an incident involving the police, would we see monthly swings in community opinion? These were questions that we could answer only by testing the methodology. Ultimately, there was not sufficient variation in our data over the nine-month period to establish whether public opinion at large was substantially influenced by routine police-public interactions, as measured by consumer satisfaction surveys. Nor were we able to establish definitively the nature of the relationship between public opinion and our measures of news coverage. Ultimately, therefore, our analyses relied most heavily on the public opinion survey, exploring the relationship between public opinion and people's reported experiences of the police and news consumption. With these limitations in mind, below we discuss the derivation and development of the three main data sources.

## Public Opinion Surveys

We randomly selected the public opinion survey participants from residents of five New York City police precincts. In each precinct, we aimed to interview at least 40 community members to capture their perceptions of the police, as well as their experiences of police contacts, their news consumption, and their demographic characteristics. This provided individual measures of vicarious contacts and news coverage of the police.

*Survey Content.* The survey drew on measures of confidence in the police, police effectiveness, and police misconduct developed in previous research.[34] We constructed a 10-item questionnaire relying on questionnaires used in earlier research and including new questions specific to the current project. The full questionnaire appears in Appendix A. The 10 questions focused, respectively, on evaluating the police in the neighborhood in relation to:

- fighting crime;
- responding promptly to calls for assistance;
- helping crime victims;
- working with residents to solve local problems;
- dealing with problems of concern;
- stopping people without good reason;
- using of excessive force;
- using of offensive language;
- breaking the law or police rules; and
- treating people fairly and with courtesy.

The questionnaire also asked about:

- personal experiences of contacts with the police;
- contacts with the police among family, friends, and acquaintances;
- frequencies and patterns of news media consumption—on television, the radio, and in newspapers—including recall of news about the police; and
- demographic information, such as age, sex, race, and socioeconomic status.

Because of programming problems with the Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) software during the period in which the survey was administered, we made some changes to the questionnaire. This meant that questions on home ownership, country of birth, and vicarious voluntary contacts were not asked in some of the earlier survey waves. Most notably, questions about vicarious voluntary contacts were revised for waves 7 onwards, when it was discovered that there were errors in the wording for the earlier waves. This means that some analyses were limited to a subset of survey waves.

*Sample Design.*  It was necessary to survey residents in very specific geographical areas, namely, police precincts. Random digit dialing would not have produced geographic specificity because precincts would have had to map closely onto a definable range of telephone numbers, such as a particular exchange code, which, in practice, they do not. However, we were able to purchase listed telephone numbers according to geographical location from a company called Survey Sampling, Inc. This allowed us to sample numbers according to 1990 U.S. Census information.

We therefore used GIS mapping software to visually overlay the geographical precinct boundaries provided by the NYPD with geographical block-groups on the basis of 1990 Census boundaries. All those tracts and block groups within a precinct boundary were accepted as the basis for a sampling frame. Additionally, in a couple of cases, block groups were included where they crossed the precinct boundary, but only where the implications in terms of including residents outside of the precinct were negligible. For example, in one case, we included a block group that stretched into the water, because we assumed that no residents lived there. Figure 2-1 illustrates how we achieved this in one study precinct.

**Figure 2-1  Defining precincts for sampling, using GIS mapping**



Precinct Boundary
Tracts Included
Tracts Excluded
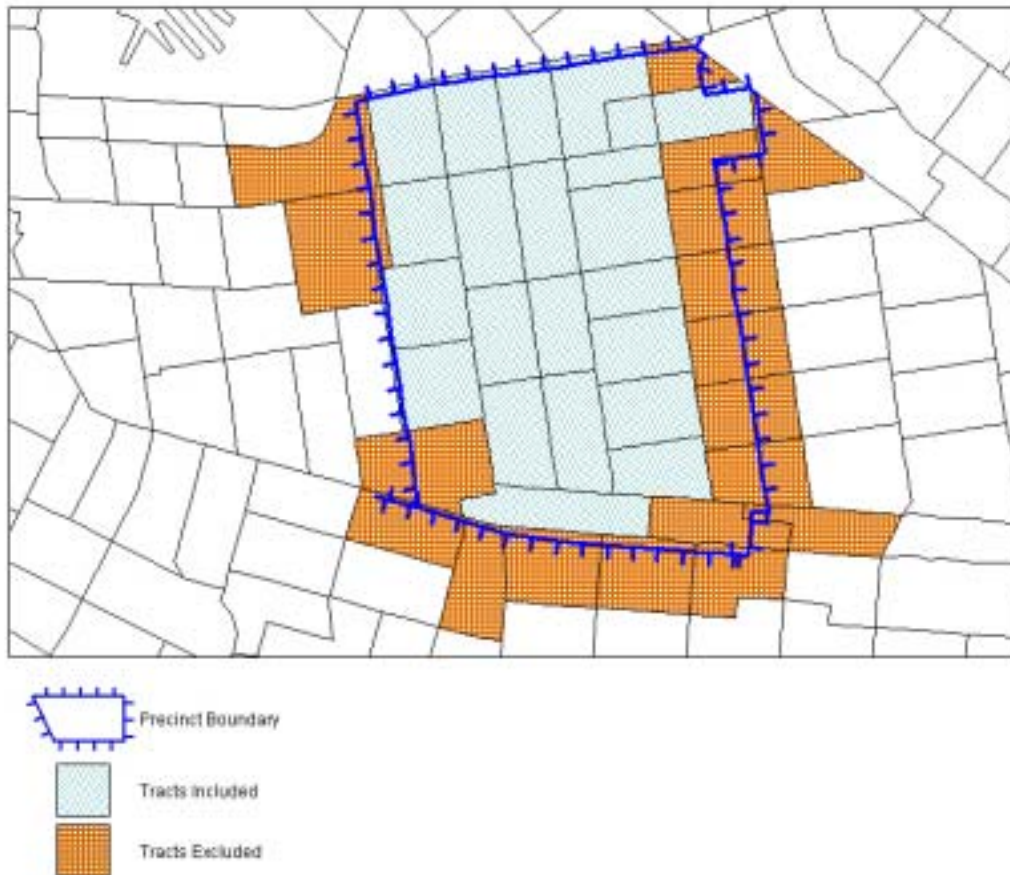
On the basis of our geographical mapping of precincts, we purchased randomly selected telephone numbers drawn from the five sampling frames derived from the tract and block-group definitions.

*Survey Methodology.*  We contracted with the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy to administer the telephone survey using CATI technology. Interviewers conducted the bulk of the surveys on weekends and evenings. However, they also made calls during weekdays to contact people who were hard to reach or who could only be reached during the day.

When interviewers reached someone in a targeted household, they gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the call and asked the person to list all the household members older than 18. To ensure quasi-random selection of respondents, interviewers asked to speak with the person whose name was closest to the beginning of the alphabet,

if he or she was home.[35] If the person was home, the interviewer would ask to speak with him or her, would solicit his or her informed consent, and conduct the interview. If the designated person was not home, the interviewer would ask the contact person for a good time to call back.

One of the early problems we encountered, particularly in Precinct A, was a failure to communicate with people answering telephones in languages other than English. Notably, many interviews were unsuccessful because of a language barrier between the English speaking interviewer and a Spanish speaking household. This clearly had the potential to impact negatively on the response rate and to compromise the sample's representativeness. To address this problem, we conducted supplementary interviews with people identified as Spanish speakers. Vera obtained their telephone numbers from the Schaefer Center and contracted and trained native Spanish speakers to conduct follow-up interviews in Spanish. Inevitably, there was some lag in this process, so some Spanish interviews drawn from one four-week sample were completed in a subsequent survey period. In this case, we included the interview data in the later survey period rather than the period for which the initial sample was drawn.

*Survey Responses.* The numbers of contacts attempted and successfully achieved for each survey are presented in Tables 2-3 and 2-4, along with the associated response rates. The tables distinguish between the basic response rate of the core English language interviews, and the response rate that includes the supplemental Spanish interviews during the same time period (even if the telephone number may have been drawn from an earlier sample period).

Table 2-3 Number of attempted and completed interviews
and response rates, by survey wave

| Wave | Attempted | Completed, English | Completed, Spanish | Response rate, English speakers only (%) | Overall response rate (%) (English and Spanish speakers) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1,344 | 201 | 4 | 15 | 15 |
| 2 | 1,329 | 207 | 23 | 16 | 17 |
| 3 | 1,264 | 202 | 23 | 16 | 18 |
| 4 | 1,165 | 203 | 20 | 17 | 19 |
| 5 | 1,042 | 204 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 6 | 1,117 | 196 | 23 | 18 | 20 |
| 7 | 1,036 | 202 | 7 | 19 | 20 |
| 8 | 1,034 | 200 | 30 | 19 | 22 |
| 9 | 1,093 | 201 | 29 | 18 | 21 |
| All | 10,424 | 1,816 | 178 | 17 | 19 |

*Note:* Number of attempted interviews includes busy signal, no answer, answering machines, and calls where there were language barriers. It excludes fax numbers, disconnected numbers, or government and business numbers.

Table 2-4 Number of attempted and completed interviews
and response rates, by precinct

| Precinct | Attempted | Completed, English | Completed, Spanish | Response rate, English speakers only (%) | Overall response rate (%) (English and Spanish speakers) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 2,222 | 363 | 114 | 16 | 21 |
| B | 2,034 | 359 | 34 | 18 | 19 |
| C | 1,802 | 368 | 13 | 20 | 21 |
| D | 2,326 | 359 | 4 | 15 | 16 |
| E | 2,040 | 367 | 13 | 18 | 19 |
| All | 10,424 | 1,816 | 178 | 17 | 19 |

*Note:* Number of attempted interviews includes busy signal, no answer, answering machines, and calls where there were language barriers. It excludes fax numbers, disconnected numbers, or government and business numbers.

The overall effective response rate, 19 percent, is less than ideal. There was some variation in response rates according to both wave and precinct. It would appear that the Schaefer Center became more successful at completing interviews over time, because response rates were lower in earlier waves than in later waves. While the variation among precincts was relatively small, Precinct D's response rate of 16 percent was somewhat lower than other precincts' rates.

Because of the low response rates, we decided it was important to check whether there were any biases in the nature of responses. To do this, we compared key variables in each of the precinct samples with known characteristics of the precincts based on

census statistics provided by NYPD. Table 2-5 breaks down survey and census data for each precinct, according to the comparable criteria of age, race, gender, and home ownership. This shows that despite the low response rate, the survey respondents' demographic characteristics were similar to those of the known population. The differences that do exist suggest that women, whites, blacks, and homeowners were overrepresented in the sample and men, Hispanics, and renters were underrepresented.

Table 2-5 Demographic characteristics of police precinct residents, based on 2000 Census data, and of survey respondents, by precinct

| Characteristics | Precinct A | | B | | C | | D | | E | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Census* % | Survey† % | Census % | Survey % | Census % | Survey % | Census % | Survey % | Census % | Survey % |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18–19 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 20–24 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 6 |
| 25–44 | 44 | 48 | 43 | 41 | 43 | 45 | 37 | 36 | 43 | 47 |
| 45–64 | 28 | 27 | 29 | 33 | 27 | 32 | 32 | 35 | 29 | 30 |
| 65+ | 12 | 10 | 13 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 21 | 22 | 15 | 15 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 48 | 46 | 46 | 37 | 46 | 37 | 48 | 40 | 48 | 42 |
| Female | 52 | 54 | 54 | 63 | 54 | 63 | 52 | 60 | 52 | 58 |
| **Race/ethnicity** | | | | | | | | | | |
| White | 6 | 17 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 7 | 60 | 70 | 50 | 55 |
| Black | 14 | 24 | 33 | 38 | 72 | 74 | 2 | 5 | 22 | 23 |
| Hispanic | 76 | 50 | 55 | 38 | 22 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 20 | 14 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 26 | 13 | 5 | 5 |
| Other | 2 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| **Homeowner** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 4 | 18 | 20 | 33 | 16 | 34 | 67 | 69 | 52 | 60 |
| No | 96 | 82 | 80 | 67 | 84 | 66 | 33 | 31 | 48 | 40 |
| **N** | 85,000 (63,000) | 467 (284) | 168,000 (117,000) | 384 (223) | 83,000 (57,000) | 371 (204) | 116,000 (93,000) | 349 (198) | 163 (118) | 365 (206) |

*Baseline census numbers are presented both for the population as a whole and for the over-18 population (in parentheses). †Numbers in parentheses apply to homeownership only (this variable was not available for all survey sweeps).

*Measuring Public Opinion.* We used factor analysis on the responses to the 10 opinion questions in the survey to develop measures of public opinion of the police. This method mathematically assesses how many underlying concepts are being measured by a range of questions. Analysis of the eigenvalues of the full range of components indicates clearly a

two-factor solution: there are only two factors (i.e. two underlying concepts) that have eigenvalues greater than one. This is illustrated in the scree plot below (Figure 2), which shows the eigenvalues for the mathematically derived factors. The eigenvalues are a measure of the variance in survey question responses explained by the mathematically derived factors. Scores of one or above indicate that the factors explain at least as much as a single survey item.

**Figure 2-2 Scree plot for factor analysis of 10 questions on public opinions of policing**
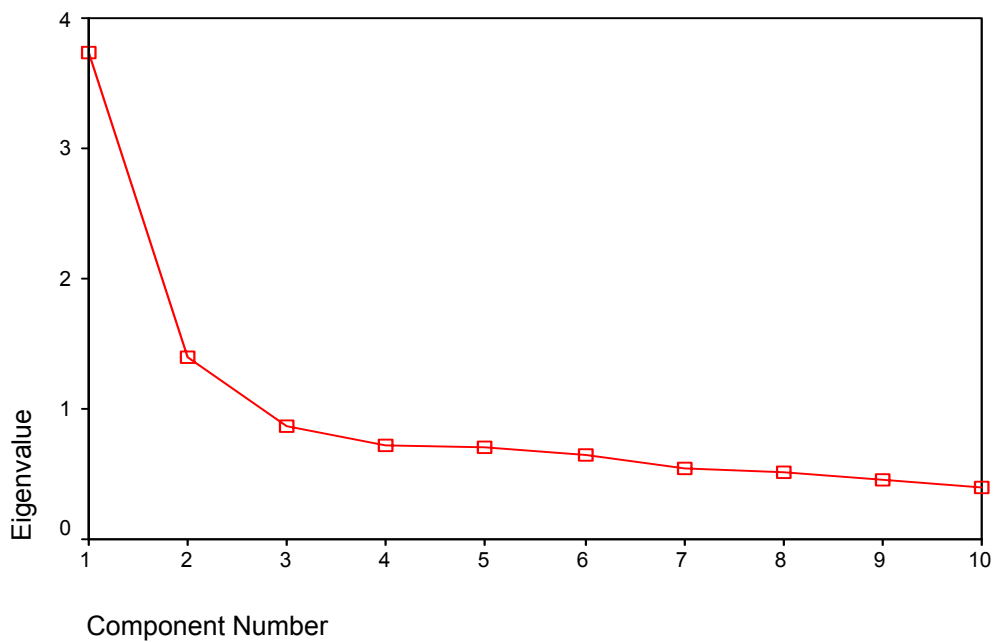


This solution is clear because the first two factors are the only factors with eigenvalues above 1, and they are above the "elbow" of the plot.

We produced a component matrix for the analysis, based on a varimax rotated solution. This matrix, presented in Table 2-6 below, indicates the specific correlations or "loadings" between each of the questions and the underlying variable.

Table 2-6 Varimax rotated component matrix
for measures of public opinion of the police

| Survey questions | Factor loadings | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | **Police effectiveness** | **Police misconduct** |
| **Perceived police effectiveness** | | |
| Fighting crime | 0.68 | (0.10) |
| Responding promptly to calls to assistance | 0.50 | (0.13) |
| Helping people who have been victims of crime | 0.59 | (0.11) |
| Working with residents to solve local problems | 0.65 | (0.11) |
| Dealing with the problems that concern people in the neighborhood | 0.74 | (0.17) |
| Dealing with residents in a fair and courteous manner | 0.66 | (0.31) |
| | | |
| **Perceived misconduct** | | |
| Stopping people without good reason | (0.00) | 0.75 |
| Using offensive language | (0.22) | 0.79 |
| Using excessive force | (0.20) | 0.78 |
| Breaking the law or police rules | (0.28) | 0.72 |

According to this analysis, the survey measured two distinct concepts: police effectiveness, measured by six questions, and police misconduct, measured by four questions. This reflects the loading scores of the different questions on the two factors. For the questions relating to police effectiveness, the loading scores of questions ranged from 0.50 to 0.74. For the misconduct variable, loadings ranged from 0.72 to 0.79. Loadings of 0.5 are considered reasonable for including questions on a scale. Also, none of the questions were associated with two factors, rather than one, which is further indication that the two sets of questions are measuring different underlying concepts.

We also tested the two sets of questions for "internal consistency," or the extent to which the questions together seem to measure the same underlying concept. Cronbach's Alpha scores, which measure internal consistency, were reasonably high: 0.74 for the general satisfaction variable and 0.79 for the misconduct variable. This added to our confidence that we could combine these sets of questions to produce the two scales. These measures are a little lower than those found in previous research (0.78 and 0.87, respectively).[36]

We compared Spanish and English speakers' responses and found similar factor structure solutions, producing two factors with high reliability scores. We also conducted separate factor analyses for each wave. In wave 3, a borderline third factor was suggested, with an eigenvalue of just 1.01. However, interpretation of the scree plot suggested that this should not be included, as it came after the elbow on the plot. Similarly, in wave 5, a third factor with eigenvalues of 1.00 was indicated, but again the scree plot did not suggest it was fundamentally important. The remaining seven waves all

had two factor solutions with the same patterns of factor loadings and high reliability measures.

Finally, we conducted factor analyses for each of the five precincts. With the exception of precinct B, all the precincts produced two factor solutions similar to those we describe above. Precinct B produced a third factor (eigenvalue of 1.02). However, this factor also appeared past the "elbow" on a scree plot of factor solutions and as such did not suggest a different factor structure for that precinct.

Overall, then, there were consistently two main components underlying public opinion of the police. We produced final scales to measure these two concepts by adding together scores across the questions that were associated with each of the two factors. We then standardized these to produce a score of between 0 and 1. For the police effectiveness scale, higher values represented a greater confidence in police effectiveness. For the police misconduct scale, higher values indicated that people perceived more police misconduct. If people did not respond to more than half of the questions in a scale, their scores on the final scale were treated as missing values. If people answered half or more of the questions in a scale, however, their scores were rounded up to produce an overall score with the same range that would be used if the score were based on all questions together.

**Consumer Satisfaction Surveys**

During former Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik's tenure, the NYPD started work with Vera to create a system for measuring how neighborhood residents feel about their encounters with police. Unlike general opinion surveys that measure views of the police that may be based on a range of sources, these surveys document and quantify how people feel about their own experiences with police officers and police commanders. Specifically, they show how satisfied neighborhood residents are after they have had personal encounters with the police.

Vera contracted with the Universal Survey Center (USC) in New York City to conduct the telephone interviews for the voluntary contact and community leader satisfaction surveys. The survey began in 2001 in five pilot precincts (one in each borough) and subsequently expanded to all 76 precincts. A survey research company administers the survey. Over a period of four weeks, interviewers attempt to contact 60 people in each precinct who have contacted the police voluntarily. The department and Vera have developed two indicators, each relating to a different kind of encounter between police and residents. One indicator is based on surveys of residents who request help from the police (voluntary contacts). The other is based on the experiences of community leaders who meet frequently with precinct commanders (community contacts). Although we attempted to design a measure of involuntary contacts with the

police, we encountered significant methodological problems and did not move forward with this effort.[37]

*Survey Content.* The voluntary contact satisfaction scale relies on seven questions that related directly to respondents' beliefs about how well contacts were handled by police officers. Specifically, these questions address:

- professionalism;
- respect;
- explanation offered by officers;
- officers' knowledge;
- officers' interest;
- officers' promptness; and
- respondents' overall satisfaction with police performance.

The community leader scale had six items that assess respondents' contacts with local precinct administrators over the past month. They address whether:

- police gave leaders an opportunity to voice concerns;
- police responded to leaders' concerns;
- police are well informed about issues raised;
- police sought advice from leaders;
- leaders were informed by police of events; and
- leaders were satisfied overall with the police.

The questionnaires upon which these scales are based are included in Appendix B. They include additional items that are not specific to the quality of contacts and that are not included in the measures of satisfaction.

*Sample Design.* People who have had voluntary contacts with the police are identified through official police department records, including criminal complaints and domestic incident reports. The survey firm attempts to contact 45 people who filed crime complaints and 15 people who reported domestic incidents. In addition, the survey firm attempts to interview 10 community leaders from each precinct about their experience dealing with precinct administrators. (Precinct commanders supply the survey firm with a list of community leaders from which to select survey respondents).

*Survey Methodology.* Although the telephone calls for these two surveys were administered simultaneously, the sampling strategies were distinct. In the case of

voluntary contact satisfaction surveys, each survey wave represented a fresh sample of people who had made criminal complaints and domestic incident reports during a pre-defined four-week period.[38] These records were provided by the NYPD's Management Information Systems Division (MISD) in an agreed upon electronic format. As Vera received this information from NYPD-MISD, staff extracted relevant data fields for USC and assigned a case-control number. The data Vera forwarded to USC were first divided into cases that had an NYPD-provided phone number and those that did not. For those cases without phone numbers, an attempt was made to search for phone numbers (on the basis of respondent name and address) through a service called Telematch. USC then eliminated duplicated phone numbers from the sample so that persons who filed more than one crime complaint or domestic incident report would not be called more than once. Once this process was completed, all records with either NYPD-provided or Telematch-provided phone numbers were loaded into the USC CATI system, which they used to release replicate groups, automatically dial phone numbers, and monitor call status and precinct quotas. USC made calls for each precinct until they reached the target quota (60 completed interviews) or until they exhausted all phone numbers (that is, they had made a minimum of four call attempts on varied days of the week and times of the day).

In the case of community leader satisfaction surveys, the sample was relatively static over the nine survey waves. We requested a list of community leaders—nonelected community leaders with whom the precincts had regular contact—from each precinct command. Community leaders fell into one of four categories: religious leaders, precinct community council members, school personnel, and leaders of civic and community organizations. Vera staff entered these data and made them available to USC in a specified format for loading into their CATI system. We aimed to have a list of 40 leaders for each precinct and interview 10 leaders per precinct each month.

The actual number of community leaders provided per precinct varied considerably, as did the quality of contact information. Although Vera did not anticipate that the leaders on these lists would change significantly over time, staff would periodically solicit updates from the precincts through NYPD's central office, particularly for precincts where there were few completed interviews in previous waves. Some precincts fell short of our target sample because the original number of leaders provided from the precincts was well short of the intended 40 or because the information on the lists was not current. Similar to the voluntary contact survey, community leader surveys were administered and tracked with the USC CATI until interviewers reached quotas in the precinct or all phone numbers were exhausted (again, a minimum of four call attempts on varied days of the week and at different times of day).

Both the voluntary contact and community leader surveys took on average five minutes to complete. Again, because the surveys each reflected a different sampling

strategy and differed in content, survey administration was different. In the case of voluntary contact satisfaction surveys, USC placed a call to the phone number provided. Because confidentiality was a concern for voluntary contacts, the USC interviewer did not identify the purpose of the call unless he or she verified that the person with whom they were speaking was the intended respondent. If a person other than the respondent requested to know who was calling, the interviewer said that he or she was calling from USC and wished to conduct a person-specific interview. If the person was not home, the USC interviewer asked when might be a good time to call back to reach the respondent. If the response was that no such person lived at that address, the phone number was declared a "dead" number—that is, it was removed from the phone queue. Other reasons for declaring phone numbers dead included disconnected numbers, fax numbers, incoherent respondents, and respondents speaking languages for which we had not contracted interviewers who spoke the language.[39] In the case of community leader contact surveys, the USC called the phone numbers provided by NYPD precinct personnel, which were either for the community leader's place of business or home.

*Survey Responses.* The USC was contractually responsible for providing Vera with the responses from all completed interviews and daily status reports on the surveys' progress. Report formats included a breakdown of call status by precinct without separating the responses to the two different surveys and by survey type without separating the responses by precinct. Starting in wave 8, we requested and received a new report that provided data suitable for determining response rates by precinct and by survey type. The results are presented in Tables 2-7 and 2-8.

Table 2-7  Attempted and completed interviews and response rates, according to precinct, for voluntary contact satisfaction survey in wave 8

| Precinct | Attempted | Completed | Response rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 357 | 60 | 17 |
| B | 206 | 43 | 17 |
| C | 329 | 50 | 15 |
| D | 298 | 49 | 16 |
| E | 403 | 60 | 15 |
| All | 1,593 | 262 | 16 |

Table 2-8  Attempted and completed interviews and response rates,
according to precinct, for community leader satisfaction survey in wave 8

| Precinct | Attempted | Completed | Response rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 42 | 9 | 21 |
| B | 39 | 8 | 21 |
| C | 34 | 3 | 9 |
| D | 27 | 6 | 22 |
| E | 59 | 9 | 15 |
| All | 201 | 35 | 17 |

*Measuring Satisfaction with Contacts.*  On the basis of our reliability analysis and factor analysis in the early stages of our work, we decided that the satisfaction scales should incorporate the first seven items from the voluntary contact questionnaire and the first six items from the community leader questionnaire in single scales. We did not include subsequent questions from the questionnaires because they addressed a more general level of satisfaction with NYPD, rather than satisfaction with encounters themselves.

This interpretation was confirmed by subsequent analyses. Table 2-9 below presents the component matrices for the data used in this study (excluding wave 9 for the voluntary contacts). For voluntary contacts, this pattern was also confirmed when factor analysis was carried out for separate precincts and waves. Numbers of community leaders were too small to allow factor analysis to be carried out on these subgroups.

Table 2-9 Component matrices for questionnaire items and their
underlying components for two consumer satisfaction surveys

| Voluntary contacts | | Community leaders | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Loading | Item | Loading |
| Professionalism | .85 | Voice concerns | .74 |
| | | | |
| Respect | .82 | Response to concerns | .73 |
| Explanation | .78 | Informed (issues raised) | .80 |
| Knowledge | .85 | Advice sought | .74 |
| | | | |
| Interest | .85 | Informed (events) | .78 |
| Promptness | .49 | Overall satisfaction | .80 |
| Overall satisfaction | .86 | - | - |

Reliability analysis, using Cronbach's Alpha, produced coefficients of 0.89 and 0.86 respectively, for the voluntary and community leader scales, which also indicated these questions were closely related. We therefore added together responses to form a single scale of satisfaction, respectively, for each survey. Within this study, we scaled the measures between 0 and 1, with 1 reflecting the highest possible level of confidence, and 0 reflecting the lowest.

**Media Tracking Database**

We relied on internet news sources to track media relevant to a New York audience. We chose this strategy because of its relative ease compared with alternatives which would have involved directly monitoring news, radio, or newspapers.

*Media Sources.* Our aim was to cover a range of media sources, representing diverse perspectives with different target audiences, including a mix of print and television news. We also wanted to monitor national news, because we theorized that news events in other police jurisdictions have the potential to influence confidence in local police among residents of New York City.

Our choices of news sources were limited somewhat by the accessibility of sophisticated internet search engines, as some news sources had limited search capabilities. For example, we did not include *The New York Daily News* because it was not possible to search across time periods with a combination of terms. It is also notable that we treated the web sites of television news sources as representative of the stories actually presented in television news shows. While this seems a reasonable assumption, we were not able to explore empirically how true this was in practice. These constraints may have set some limits on the validity of our media tracking database. However, we judged that by covering a diverse range of news sources (if not a comprehensive census) in the compilation of our database, we would be tracking—for the most part—the key variations in news stories on the police in the media generally during the period.

On the basis of our goals, but bearing in mind these limitations, we chose the following internet news sources for our media coverage database:

- New York 1 local cable television news
- WABC national television news
- *The New York Times*
- *The New York Post*
- *USA Today*
- *The Village Voice* (a weekly paper in New York City)

*Selecting Articles for the Database.* Each news web site has its own search engine. Some allow searches of headlines; some limit the user to searching the full body of the text of the news item. Some allow the user to search for a range of words (for example, "police" or "cops") and others are more limited.

Furthermore, different types of searches clearly provide very different outcomes. For example, during the development phase, we searched *The New York Times* web site for articles in the previous 30 days that had "police" in the full text of the article and we obtained 820 documents. However, when we searched for the word "police" in the

headline, we received 44 articles. When we searched for "police misconduct" in the text, we received 11 articles.

It was common to find that searches provided articles not particularly relevant to our needs—particularly (though not only) when this involved full text, rather than headline searches. For example, it may be that police are marginal to the focus of an article, or that the article relates to news events in another country. For example, we would not be interested in headlines such as:

MIDEAST FLARE-UP: THE CRACKDOWN: Palestinian Police Detain Founder of Islamic Group (search for 'police' in headline)

MILLIONAIRE FUGITIVE HAS BEEN CAUGHT, BUT MYSTERIES REMAIN (search for 'police' in full text)

TAKING ADVICE FROM HITCHENS AND DERSHOWITZ (search for 'police misconduct' in full text)

We realized that searching the entire text of every article would leave us sifting through an enormous amount of information, most of it irrelevant. We also theorized that the headline may be more indicative of an article's impact on public opinions because they more closely represented the focus and theme of an article. Thus, with the exception of *The Village Voice*, we chose to search for articles with any of the following words mentioned in the headline:

- police
- policing
- cop
- cops
- NYPD
- officer

We made an exception with *The Village Voice*, a weekly paper, because of the small number of articles it carries and because its search tool allows only searches of all text. Because each news site contained different search capabilities, we were concerned about maintaining consistency. To address this issue, we developed specific ways of applying our criteria to each search engine. (See Appendix C for detailed information about how we used search engines.)

After searching for articles, we refined how we selected articles to include in our database by excluding articles in which policing was incidental or marginal to the theme.

For example, we did not include stories in which the police are mentioned incidentally, as with an article with the headline "BROTHER SHOOTS SIS DEAD: COPS."

*Coding Articles*. There is a range of ways in which news coverage could affect public opinion. For example, negative public perception could arise from specific police misconduct scandals. However, it could be related to more general negative press— whether or not this relates specifically to misconduct. It could also relate to positive news coverage.

In devising codes to describe the tone of each news item, therefore, we created an elaborate coding frame to cover the range of this type of media coverage. Our final coding frame with sample headlines for each code is detailed in Table 2-10.

Table 2-10 Coding frame and examples of headlines for media items

| Code | Description |
|---|---|
| 1A | Police business (residual general category): JUDGE DISMISSES SUIT ON POLICE PROMOTIONS |
| 1B | Police work (in relation to specific incidents): HOSTAGE TAKER HAD OWN GUN, POLICE SAY |
| 1C | Police policy promoting accountability and professionalism: NASSAU POLICE REVISE POLICY ON LINEUPS |
| 2A | Death/injury to a civilian or animal from police activity or by a police officer (no suggestion of blame): SUSPECT IS KILLED BY THE POLICE |
| 2B | Death/injury to an on- or off-duty police officer from police activity: POLICE OFFICER SHOT AFTER SUSPECT GRABS HIS GUN |
| 3A | Misconduct suggested—use of force: BLACK TEENAGER TELLS OF POLICE BEATING |
| 3B | Misconduct suggested—other: POLICE COVERED UP CORRUPTION, DETECTIVE ASSERTS IN A LAWSUIT |
| 4 | Misconduct vindication: POLICE UNITS USED PROPER FORCE IN BRONX FRACAS, GIULIANI SAYS |
| 5 | Police-community relations: positive coverage: POLICE DEPT. IN WALLKILL HAS IMPROVED, MONITOR SAYS |
| 6 | Police-community relations—negative coverage: WHEN A BADGE IS SEEN, VIEWS VARY, AFTER LOUIMA, NEW YORKERS ARE SPLIT ON POLICE PROGRESS |
| 7 | Crime-fighting—positive coverage: NYPD SAYS NUMBER OF HOMICIDES REACHED NEW LOW IN JANUARY 2002 |
| 8 | Crime-fighting—negative coverage: WOMAN, MAN BECOME THE 17TH & 18TH PRISONERS TO ESCAPE FROM POLICE CUSTODY |
| 9 | 9/11 stories: MUSLIM HERO HONORED AT LAST: HUNDREDS MOURN POLICE CADET WHO PERISHED AT WTC |

The initial coding frame was based on some pilot work in which we examined news items over a few weeks prior to the start of the study. We further refined and added categories as we began collecting data. For example, category 2 (the death or injury of a civilian or an officer) at first only involved injury or death happening during the course of on-duty police activity. However, we found that there were many occasions when

incidents occurred when police were not on-duty and the article explicitly identified the individual as a police officer.

Each month, the three researchers who devised the coding scheme met to analyze the data. They relied on a majority opinion to decide in which category the news item best fit. However, in almost all cases, a consensus emerged following discussion about the articles. In any case, by the end of the process, all the researchers were typically in agreement on a majority of the articles. After compiling all of the articles of interest, we entered them into an Excel spreadsheet in which we included the following information:

- date
- news source
- headline text
- location of coverage—national (including state) or local (city) coverage, and
- tone of item (reflecting the coding frame in Table 2-10)

We compiled 855 news items over nine months.

*Database Content.* An initial analysis of the database showed that three news sources dominated the picture: New York 1, *The New York Times*, and *The New York Post*. This is illustrated by Figure 2-3 below.



Figure 2-3 Coverage of police by news sources, through time
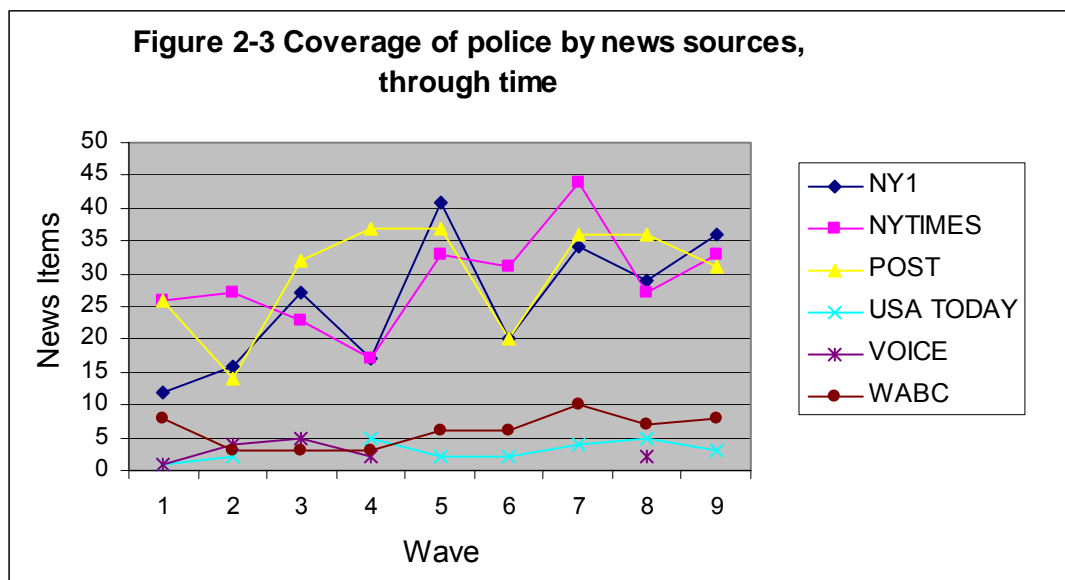
Also, local police news, rather than national news, dominated the database, as shown in Figure 2-4.

**Figure 2-4 Coverage of police at a local (NYPD) and a state/national level**
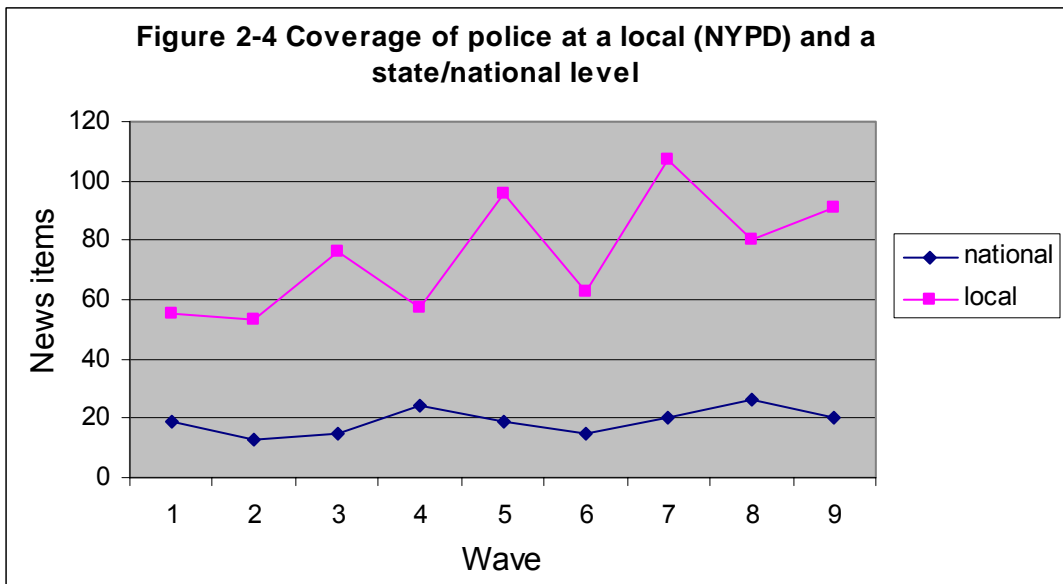
Figure 2-5 shows the number of news items in each of the main code categories.

**Figure 2-5 Numbers of news items per code across 9 waves**
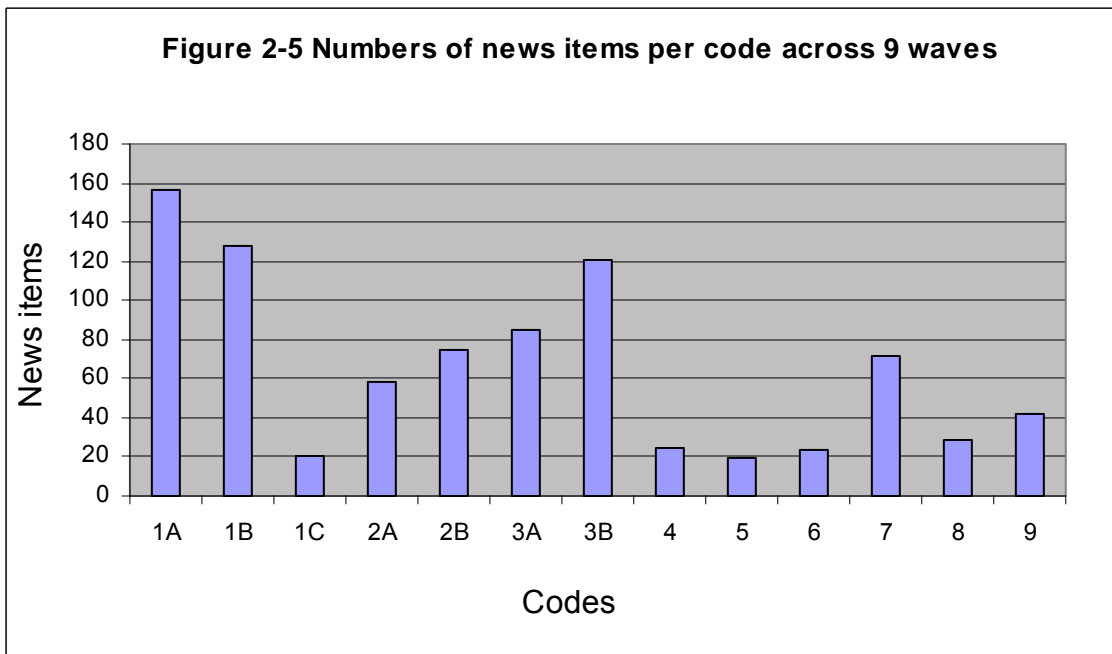
There is a substantial amount of coverage of both police business and police work in relation to specific incidents (1A and 1B). And there is substantial coverage about misconduct (both 3A and 3B) and injury or death to civilians (or animals) by police (2B) or police officers themselves (2A). Additionally, there were a substantial number of articles devoted to positive coverage of police crime-fighting (7).

*Creating Measures of Media Coverage.* It was necessary to develop some general measures of media coverage in the database. It would have been possible to treat each of the separate codes as a measure of its own. However, this would have created many separate indicators, often containing small numbers of articles. Instead, we decided to create measures using combinations of codes, drawing in particular on the more common codes and considering the goals of the study. Table 2-11 provides a description of the key codes we used.

Table 2-11 Key measures of police coverage in news media

| Measure | Codes included |
| --- | --- |
| Overall police coverage | All |
| Positive/sympathetic coverage | 1c - Police policy promoting accountability and professionalism<br>2b - Death/injury to an on- or off-duty officer from police activity<br>4 - Misconduct vindication<br>5 - Police-community relations: positive coverage<br>7 - Crime-fighting: positive coverage<br>9 - 9/11 stories |
| Negative coverage | 2a - Death/injury to a civilian or animal from police activity or by a police officer (no suggestion of blame)<br>3a - Misconduct suggested—use of force<br>3b - Misconduct suggested—other<br>6 - Police-community relations: negative coverage<br>8 - Crime-fighting: negative coverage |
| Misconduct coverage | 3a - Misconduct suggested—use of force<br>3b - Misconduct suggested—other |

## Analysis of Aggregate Measures

In this section we explore the main research questions by comparing measures of public opinion of the police with the aggregate measures of police-public contacts and news coverage of the police over the nine research waves. We hoped this approach would allow us to examine whether changes to independent variables are followed temporally by changes in dependent variables, which might have provided evidence of a causal link. In practice, however, the variation in measures was limited and we were unable to make definitive conclusions.

### Trends in Public Opinion

We explored how community opinion of the police changed over the study period. Figure 3-1 reports on measures of public opinion across the nine waves of the research, for all five precincts together.



Figure 3-1 Trends in public perceptions of policing in all five precincts
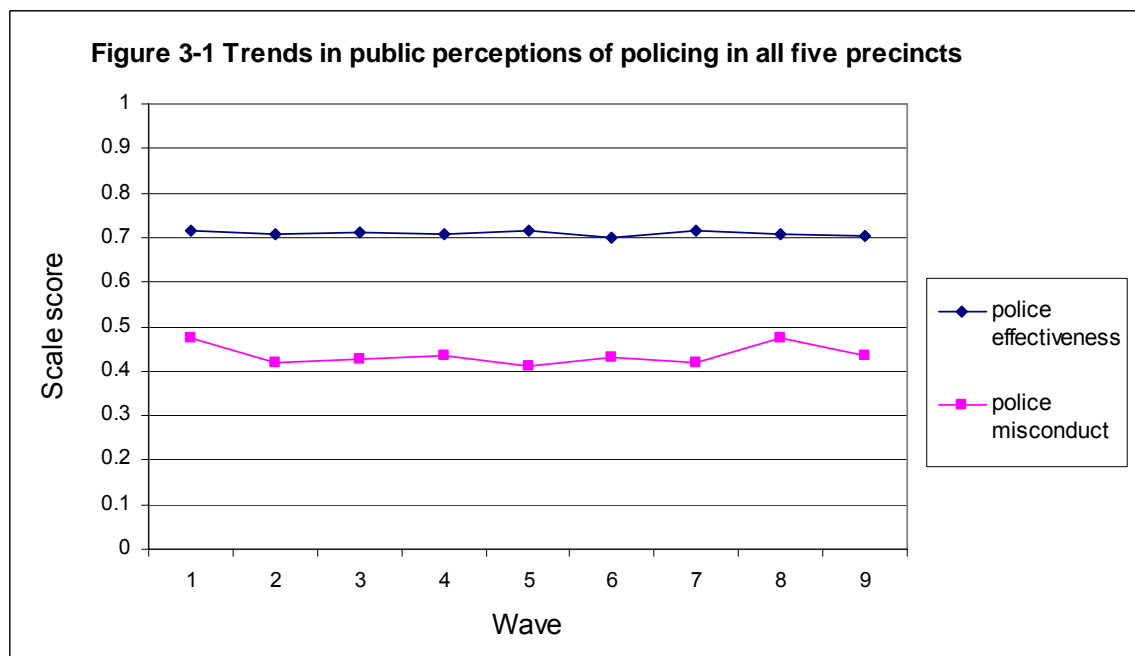
The chart shows that through the nine months of the survey, community opinions were very stable. In addition, it shows that perceptions of police effectiveness varied only very slightly, ranging only between 0.70 and 0.72. Perceptions of police misconduct showed more variation, but nonetheless were also reasonably stable, with values ranging from 0.41 and 0.48.

We can also break down these scores by precinct, to explore whether this stability masks any more variation through time within precincts. Figures 3-2 and 3-3 report on each measure.

**Figure 3-2  Trends in public perceptions of police effectiveness in each precinct**

Figure 3-3 Trends in perceptions of police misconduct in each precinct
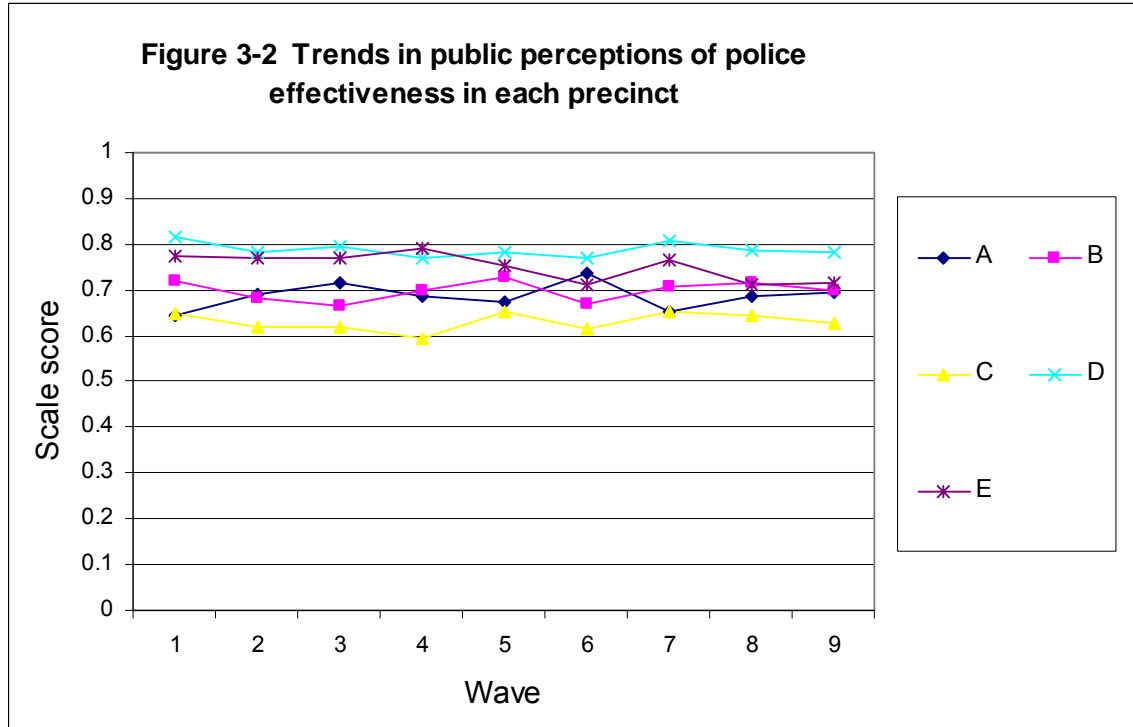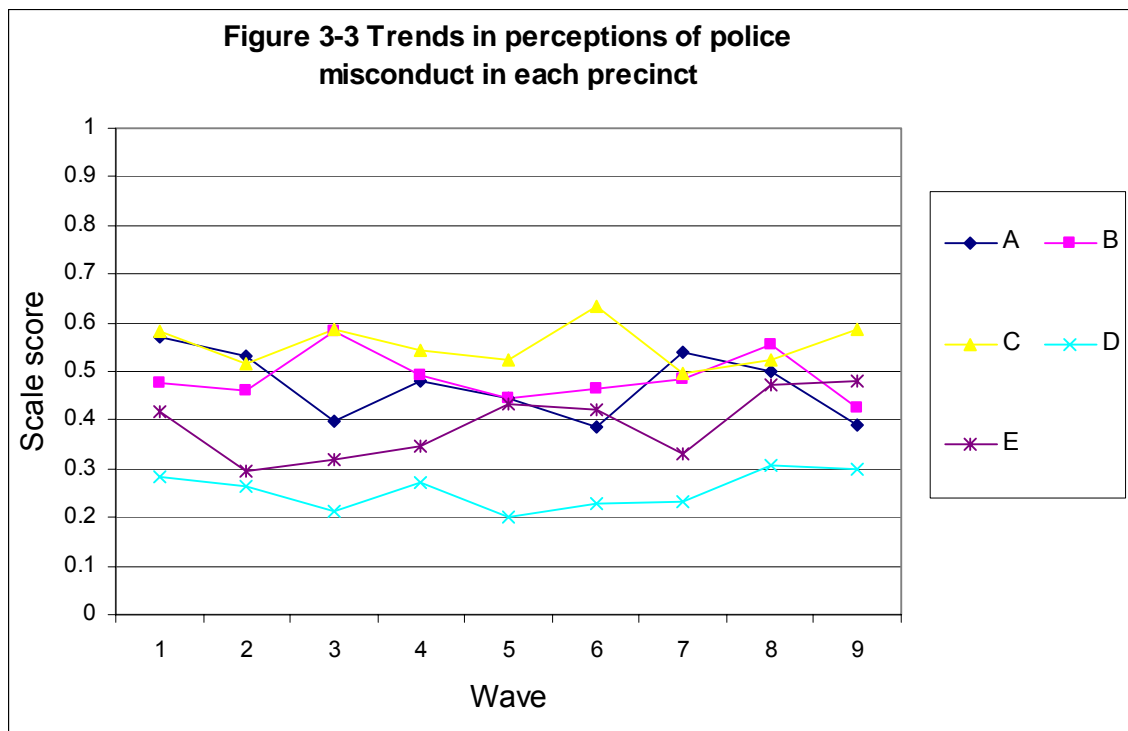
Looking at police effectiveness by precinct (Figure 3-2), there are only relatively small amounts of variation between waves—less than 0.1 for any of the precincts.

Looking separately at measures of police misconduct by precinct (Figure 3-3) shows some variation (ranging up to variation of 0.19 for precinct A). Analysis of variance on precincts separately indicates that Precincts A and B have statistically significant variation in measures of police misconduct through time (at a p=.01 level).

To explore the variation in scale scores further, an analysis of covariance model was developed for each of the scales, with precinct, wave, and an interaction of precinct and wave as independent variables. In these analyses, wave was treated as a continuous trend variable. Table 3-1 shows the results of the models. It indicates that, while there is no general trend detectable across the data, the interaction term for measures of police misconduct indicates that there is some trend at the precinct level (significant at a p=.05 level).

Table 3-1 Analysis of covariance models of public perceptions of police effectiveness and misconduct against precinct, wave (as a trend variable), and the interaction of precinct and wave

| Independent factor | Effectiveness coefficients | Misconduct Coefficients |
|---|---|---|
| Precinct A (ref.) | ** | ** |
| B | 0.01 | -0.01 |
| C | -0.06 | 0.04 |
| D | 0.12** | -0.28** |
| E | 0.11** | -0.20** |
| | | |
| Wave | 0.00 (ns) | -0.01 (ns) |
| | | |
| Precinct A * Wave (ref.) | (ns) | * |
| Precinct B * Wave | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| Precinct C * Wave | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| Precinct D * Wave | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| Precinct E * Wave | 0.01 | 0.02 |

*p<.05; **p<.01. N=the number of data points, or 45 (nine waves in five precincts). ns=not statistically significant. ref =reference category—in this case, meaning that all other precincts were compared with precinct A.

## Contacts with the Police

To explore whether negative police-public encounters impact broader public confidence in the police, we aimed to compare public opinion over time with satisfaction with police contacts. We have already observed, however, that we have very limited variation over time in public opinion. At the outset, this lack of variation limited our ability to make inferences about possible relationships between the two measures.

*Voluntary Contacts.* Figure 3-4 shows the change through time in measures of community opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts. Across the five precincts, consumer satisfaction is fairly flat. The main variation involves a slight dip in satisfaction in waves 6 and 7. With both consumer satisfaction and public opinion showing minimal variation, the chart is inconclusive about possible relationships between the two sets of data across the five precincts.

**Figure 3-4 Trends in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts, all precincts**
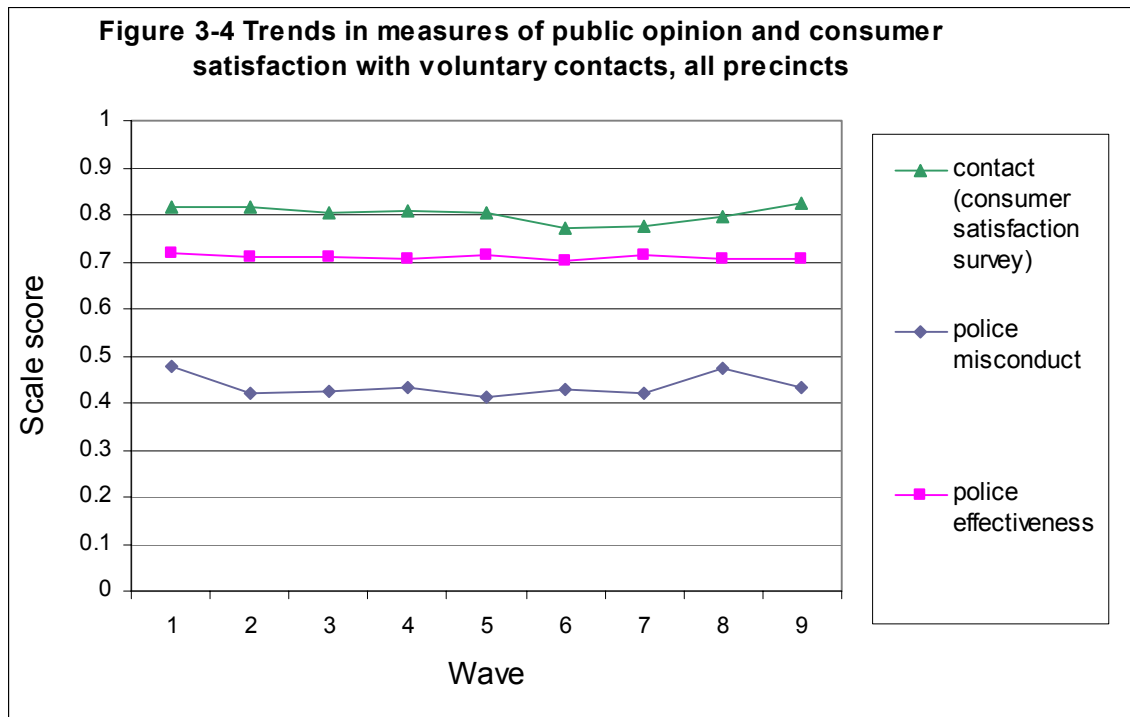
To explore these relationships further, the same charts were compiled for each precinct. Figures 3-5 to 3-9 illustrate these relationships.



**Figure 3-5 Trends in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts, precinct A**

**Figure 3-6 Trends in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts, precinct B**



**Figure 3-7 Trends in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts, precinct C**

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**Figure 3-8  Trends in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts, precinct D**



**Figure 3-9  Trends in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts, precinct E**

Looking at these measures separately across precincts, a fairly similar picture emerges. Although there is more month on month variation within separate surveys of each precinct than with the precincts combined, this is substantially attributable to the smaller sample sizes of each precinct taken separately, rather than combined. For the most part, there is no great variation through time. However, insofar as there is variation between data points, it shows no consistent relationship with variations in public opinion. Again, this provides us with little evidence that bears on the possible relationships between the quality of voluntary contacts with the police and broader public opinion.

To further explore the relationship between police-public contacts and public opinion, we used canonical correlation analysis of constituent questions of both public opinion survey measures and consumer satisfaction measures. We drew on precinct and wave averages for data points for this analysis. However, we found no relationships between measures that were even close to being statistically significant.

*Community Leaders.* Figure 3-10 shows the change through time in measures of public opinion and consumer satisfaction among community leaders. Unfortunately, data on community opinions were not consistently available for the nine research waves, (as described in the methods section of the report). Figure 3-10 also shows that, taking the five precincts together, consumer satisfaction varies slightly across the five data points (0.74 and 0.83).



Figure 3-10 Trends in measures of community opinion survey and consumer satisfaction with community contacts, all precincts
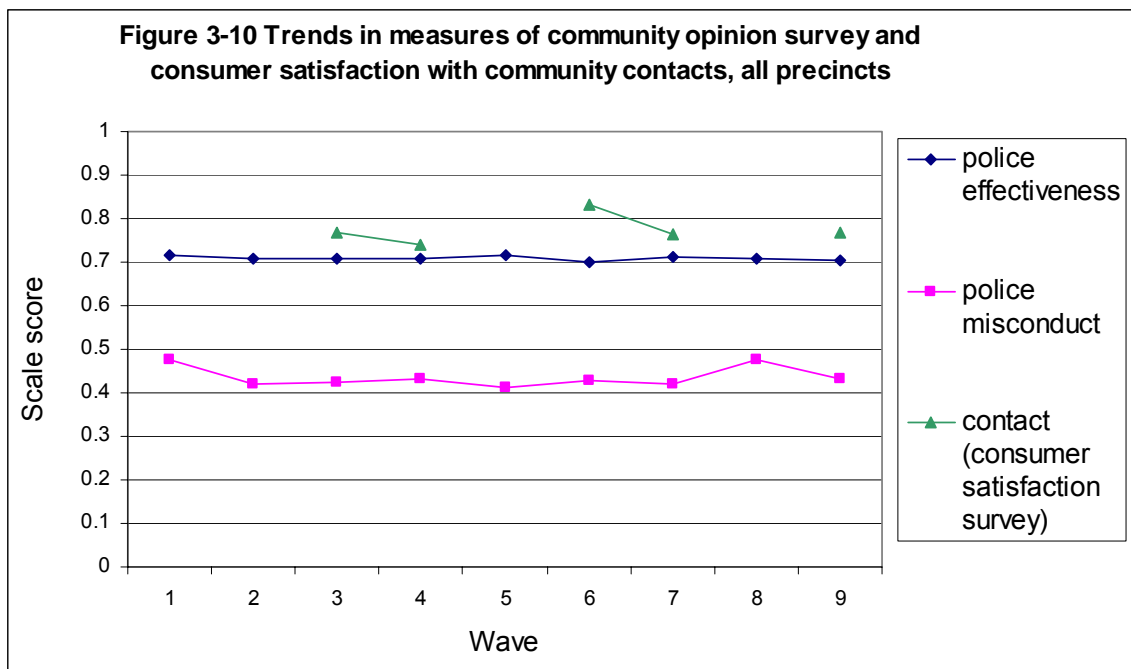
As we look at each precinct we see little evidence of any relationships (Figures 3-11 to 3-15).

**Figure 3-11 Trends in measures of community opinion survey and consumer satisfaction with community contacts, precinct A**



**Figure 3-12 Trends in measures of public opinion survey and consumer satisfaction with community contacts, precinct B**
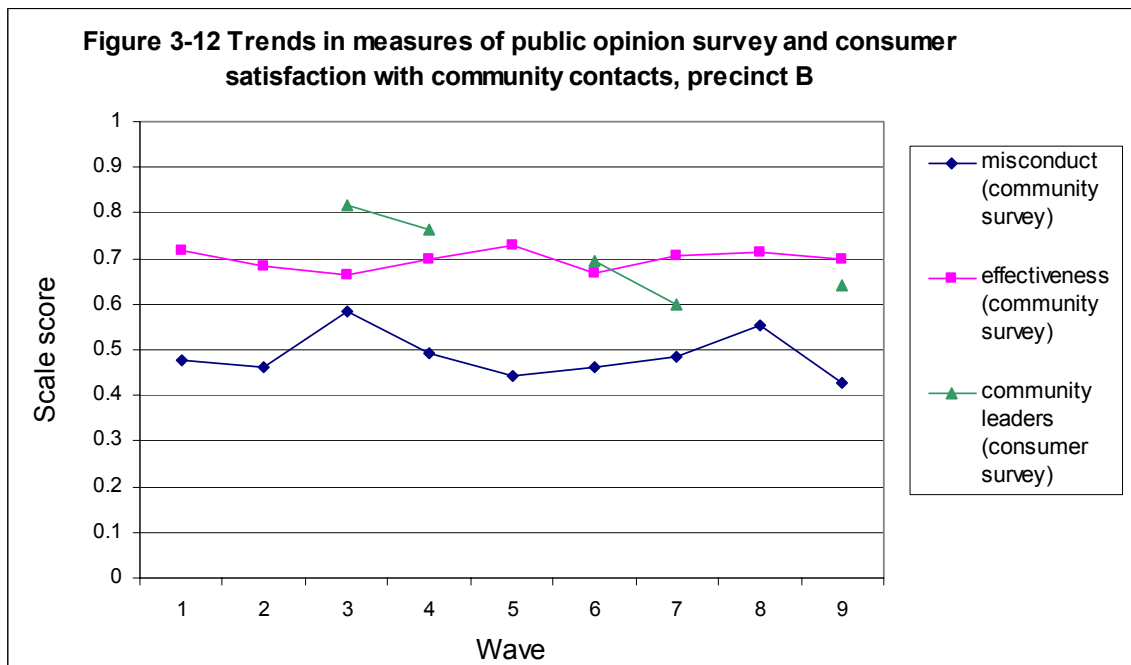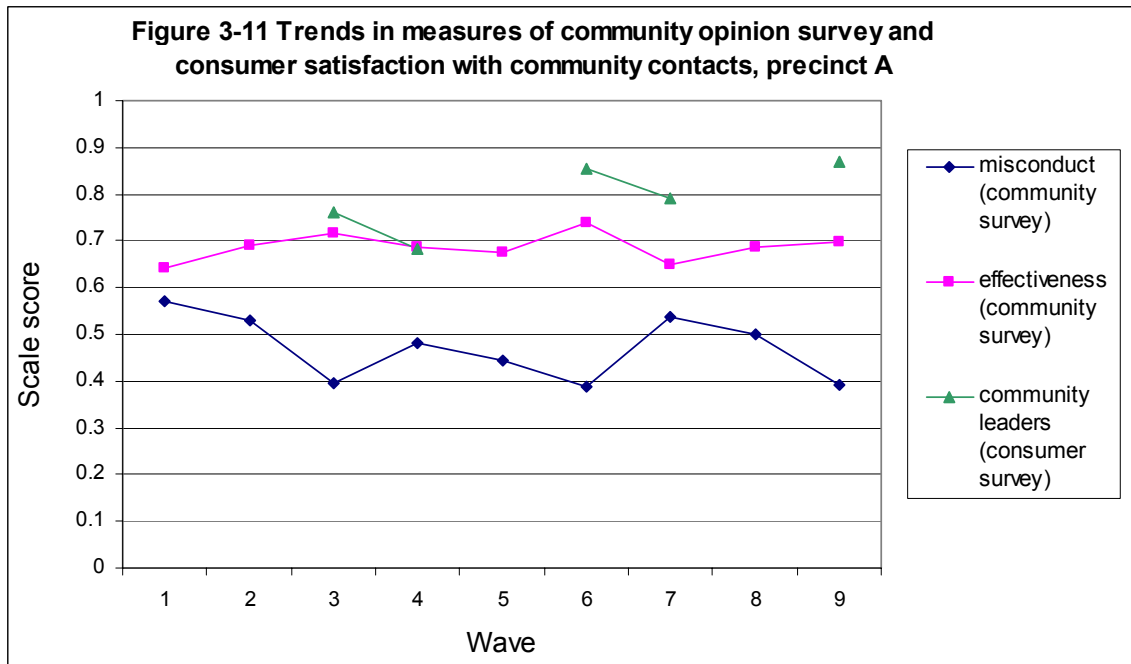
Figure 3-13 Trends in measures of public opinion survey and consumer satisfaction with community contacts, precinct C
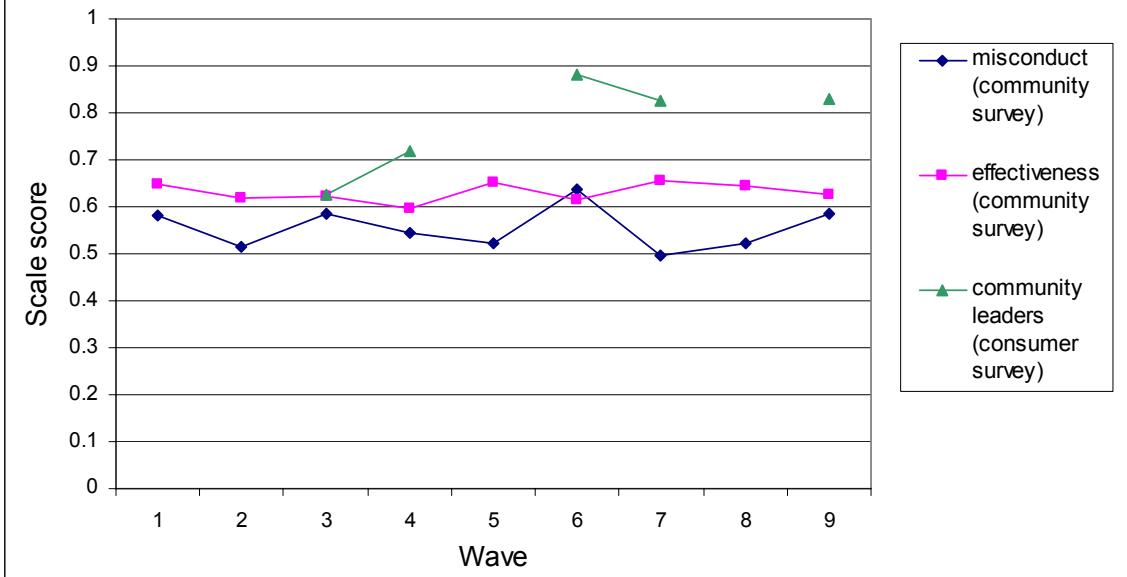


Figure 3-14 Trends in measures of public opinion survey and consumer satisfaction with community contacts, precinct D

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Figure 3-15 Trends in measures of public opinion survey and consumer satisfaction with community contacts, precinct E
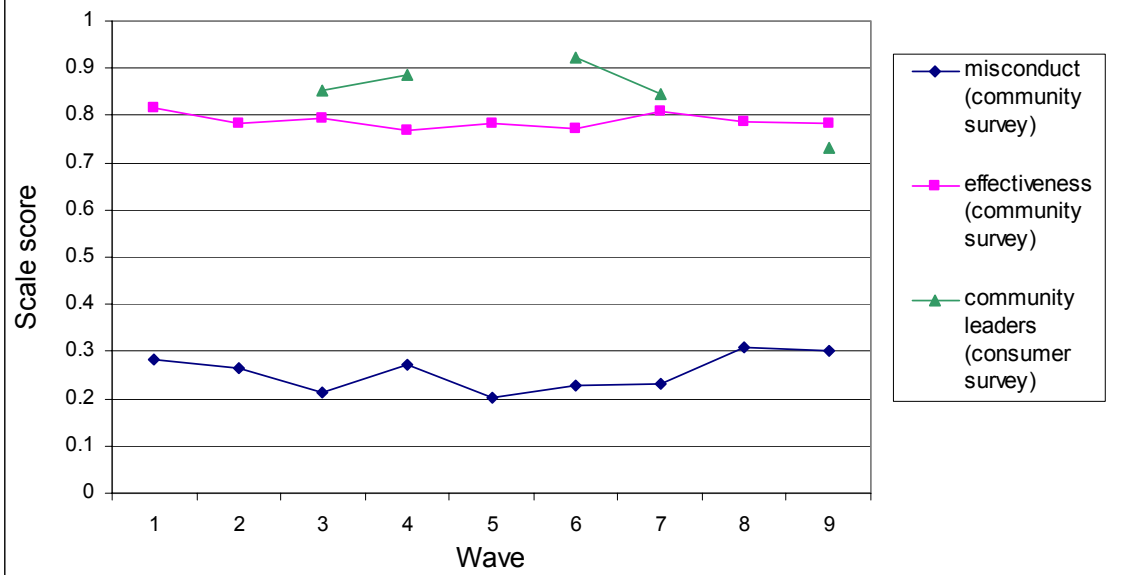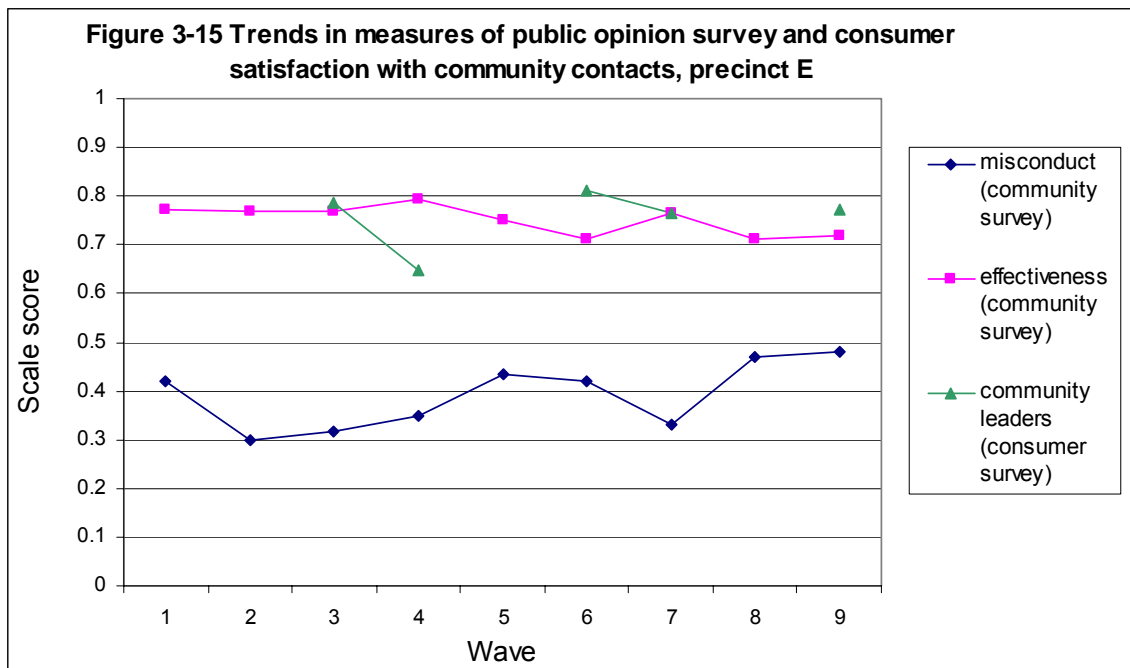
Inevitably, there is little evidence of correlation between the levels of satisfaction with police contact and measures of broader community opinion, given the limited variation in public opinion. While there was some superficial evidence of variation over time in consumer satisfaction for precincts A, B, C, D, and E, these results are based on small numbers of contacts (10 or fewer for each data point) and inevitably show variation because of statistical chance. Certainly, analysis of variance indicates no statistically significant variation for these consumer satisfaction surveys. Again, we have little conclusive evidence of an association, or lack of one, between consumer satisfaction and broader community opinion.

**News Coverage of Policing**

We turn next to the relationships between public opinion and news coverage over the nine research waves. We draw both on our objective measures of news coverage derived from our media tracking database and on our subjective measures of media coverage drawn from the public opinion survey. However, we are once again limited in our analysis by the lack of variation in public opinion over the nine waves of the survey.

*Trends in Media Coverage.* Our measures correspond to the number of articles in each research wave characterized by four types of coverage: overall police coverage, positive coverage, negative coverage, and misconduct coverage. Alongside these measures, we also analyzed subjective reports of coverage of police based on the public opinion survey. Because these measures are based on recall over the previous month, they broadly

correspond to the same waves as the media tracking database. This allowed us to construct survey measures of the proportions of respondents who reported, in each wave, any police coverage, broadly positive police coverage, overall, and broadly negative coverage, overall.

Figure 3-16 reports on the volume of overall police coverage, on the basis of both the media database and on proportions of respondents recalling police news stories in the previous month.



Figure 3-16 Comparison of any coverage of police in database with proportion of respondents who recalled coverage
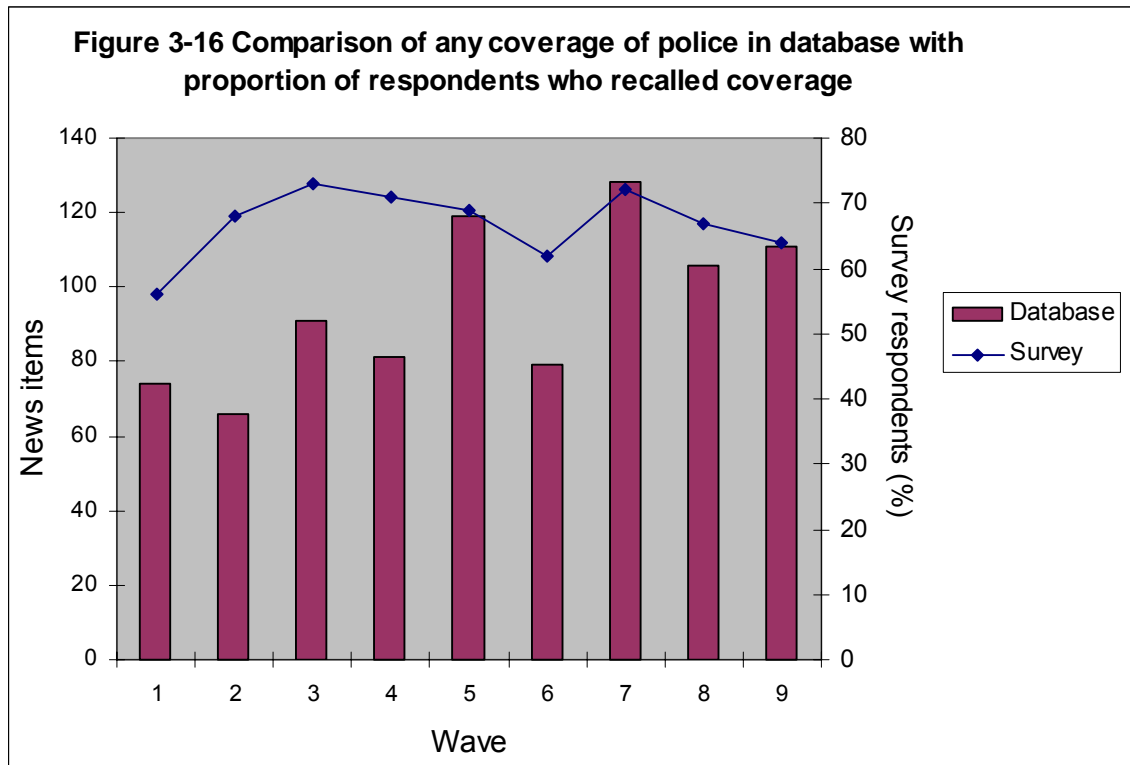
Both measures show some variation. The database ranges from 66 to 128 news items per wave. The surveys indicate variation from between 56 and 74 percent of respondents (statistically significant at p=0.01 using a chi-square test). Visually, there appears to be some limited association between the two measures—though clearly there is less than perfect correspondence between them. However, with only nine data points to analyze, it is difficult to assess statistically whether there is a meaningful correlation between the two measures (there is a correlation coefficient of 0.39 between the measures with a significance level of 0.30). We should also insert a note of caution regarding recall of media coverage over the previous month—we should not assume that this recall is necessarily accurate and reliable, as people may extend the recall beyond a specific month, particularly where high profile news stories about the police may have caught

their attention. Overall, however, it is probably safe to say that there is some variation through the nine waves of the research in the level of news coverage of the police.

Looking only at positive coverage of police, both database and survey measures appear to show substantial variation, with the number of news items ranging from 15 to 37 and survey measures indicating a range of between 13 and 30 percent of respondents reporting positive coverage (the latter is statistically significant, p=.01) (Figure 3-17). Comparisons between the two measures do not indicate much association, visually or otherwise (there was a correlation coefficient of only 0.16, and a significance level of 0.68). These may reflect some disparity between what the public views (or recalls) as positive news and how we have defined it for the purposes of the database. Once again, however, it may be safe to assume there was some variation through time in the level of positive police coverage.



**Figure 3-17 Comparison of positive police coverage in database with proportion of respondents who recalled positive police coverage**
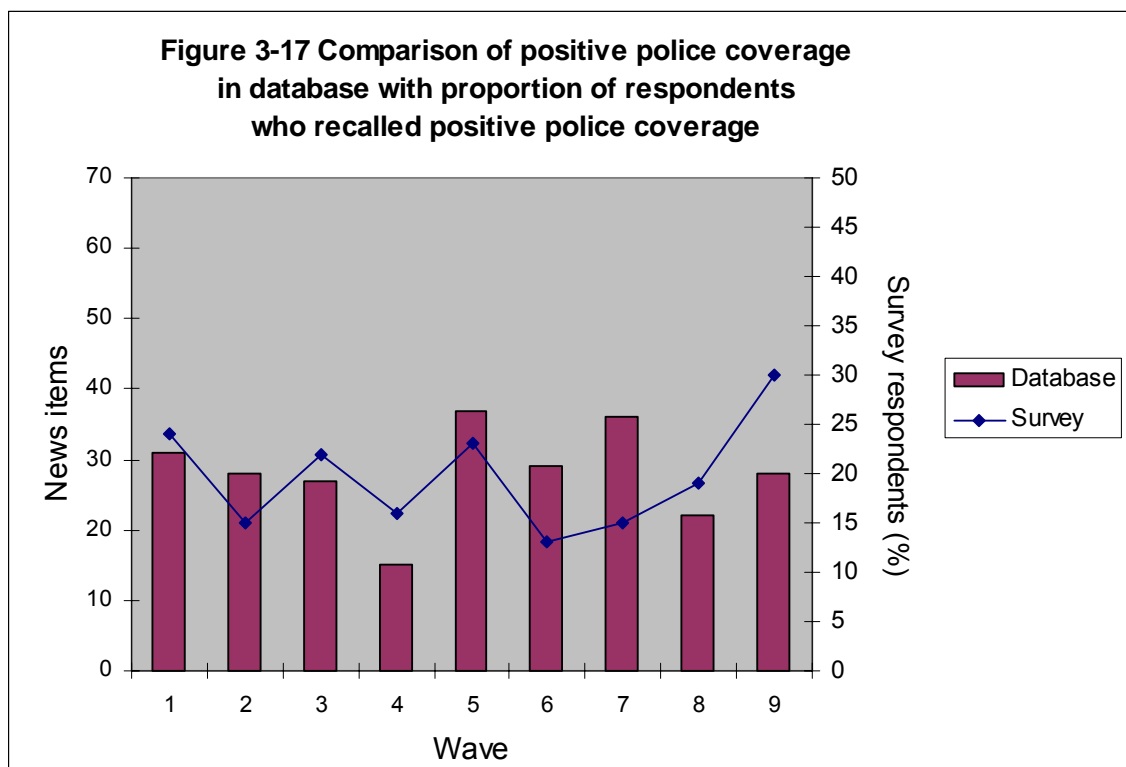
We can look at the negative coverage of policing in the same way (Figure 3-18). Again, we see substantial variation through time, with numbers of negative news items per wave varying between 19 and 58 and survey respondents who recalled negative news coverage ranging from 18 to 46 percent (the latter was statistically significant, p=.01). In this instance, there was at least some visual evidence of association, though by no means a perfect correspondence (there was a correlation coefficient of 0.31 and a significance level of p=.41).

**Figure 3-18 Comparison of negative police coverage in database with proportion of respondents who recalled negative police coverage**
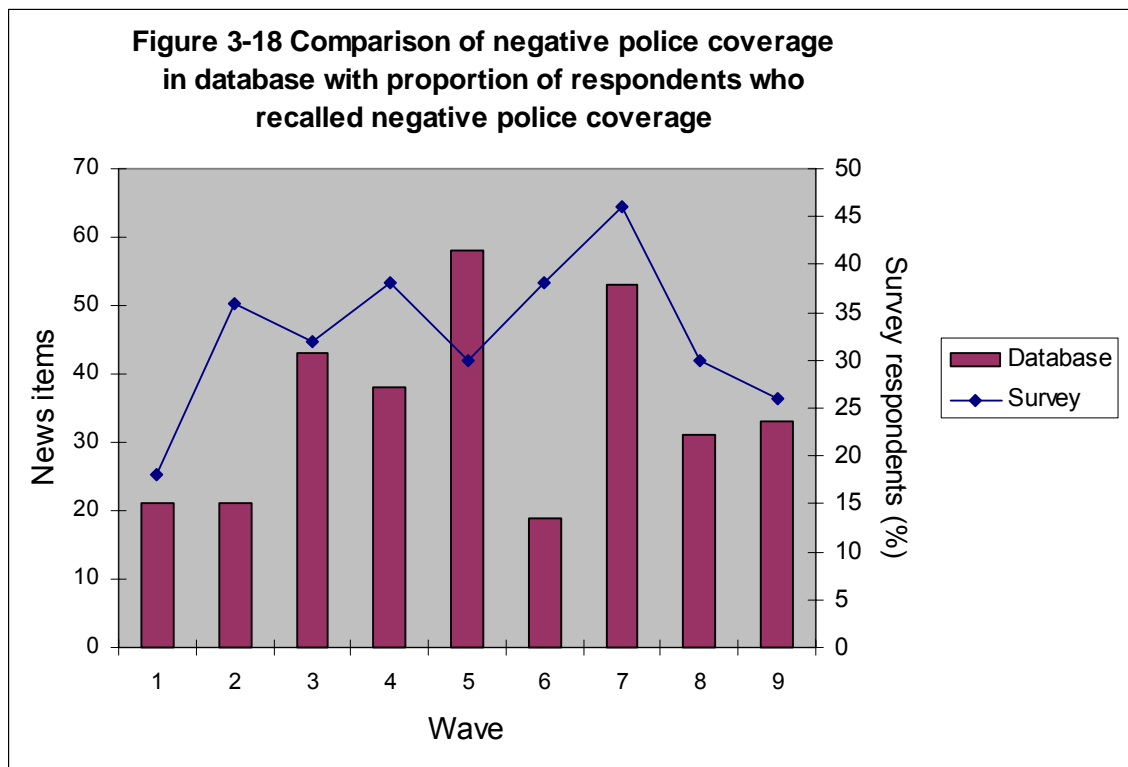
Finally, we can focus on the news items about misconduct and compare these with the respondents' recollections of negative coverage (Figure 3-19). This also suggests a substantial variation over time in the database, ranging from 6 to 44 news items per wave. The database and survey measures again show some limited visual evidence of association, with a correlation coefficient of 0.34 (significance of 0.38). However, we would need more than nine data points to establish whether this was a meaningful association over the long term. Once again, though, we can probably have some confidence that, however we measure it, there was some variation across the waves of the survey in the media reporting of misconduct.[40]

**Figure 3-19 Comparison of police misconduct coverage in database with proportion of respondents who recalled negative police coverage**
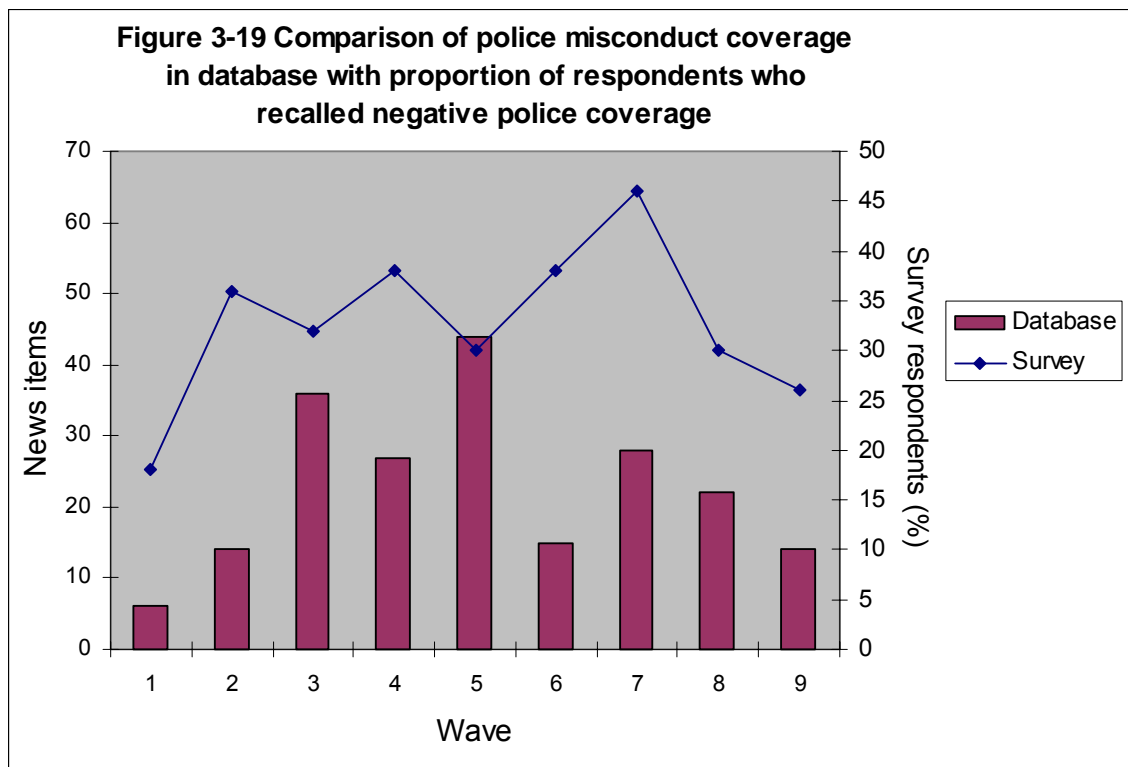
*Relationship Between Media Coverage and Public Opinion.* We have already outlined how, on the one hand, public opinion has been stable over time for the nine waves of the research, while media coverage of policing and the tone of this coverage appear to have shown some substantial and statistically significant variation. It appears, therefore, that public opinion has—for the nine-month period of this research—resisted the influence of some variation in the volume and tone of news coverage of the police. Figures 3-20 and 3-21 place these findings in sharp relief by comparing the measures of public opinion with negative media coverage from both the media database and public opinion survey.

**Figure 3-20 Comparing survey measures of public opinion with negative and misconduct coverage in database**



**Figure 3-21 Comparing survey measures of public opinion with proportion of respondents who recalled negative coverage**
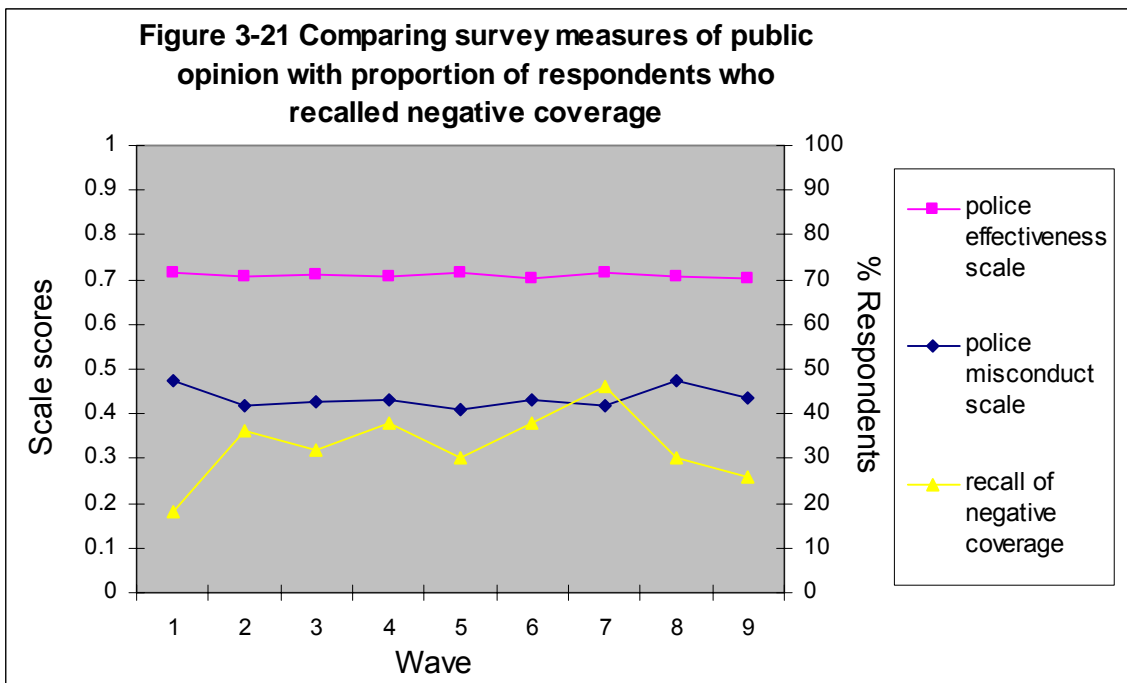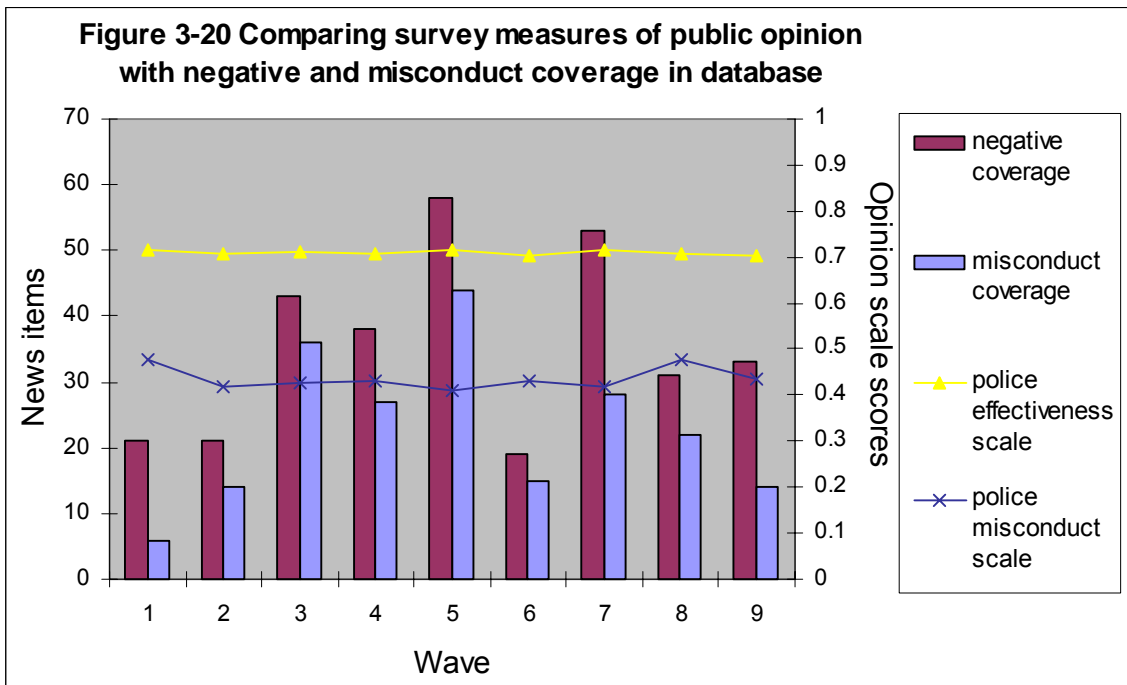


We should note, however, that the robustness of public opinion evidenced in this research is unlikely to extend to all other time periods. In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, it is conceivable that the general public developed support for the police that is higher, or more robust, than it would be typically. There is actually limited evidence from waves of the voluntary contacts consumer satisfaction survey carried out

before and after September 11, 2001 (but prior to the current study) of an improvement in public confidence across this period. Comparing respondents before and after September 11 on general questions on the survey (not those used for the measure of satisfaction with specific encounters) shows an improvement in public opinion at a significance level of p=0.01. Before September 11, 47 percent of respondents thought the NYPD did a good job of being fair and courteous, and 46 percent thought they did a good job of fighting crime. After September 11, this figure moved up to 54 percent for both questions.

At times when the media have given more attention to the police than in the nine waves of this survey, media coverage might well have a tangible impact on public opinion. The negative coverage of the NYPD following the Amadou Diallo shooting or the torture of Abner Louima might well have driven public opinion in a more negative direction. Certainly, there was far more coverage of misconduct at the time of these events than in our study period. Recent research has demonstrated that these highly publicized negative events were followed by substantial shifts in public attitudes toward the police in public opinion polls, particularly among black and Hispanic citizens.[41] If we compare the media coverage of misconduct during the study period and media coverage following police scandals, there are substantial differences. For example, if we exclude NY1 and WABC sources, which we could not search that far back, in the first 28 days of March 1999 (immediately after the Diallo shooting and still in the shadow of the torture of Louima), 81 articles were devoted to police misconduct using our media tracking database criteria. In the waves of our study, coverage of misconduct (excluding NY1 and WABC) averaged 16.2 articles, and ranged from a low of five articles to a high of 28 articles. So, even at its most negative point, misconduct coverage in our sample was only about one third that of March 1999.

It is possible, also, that the stability in public opinion may reflect successful attempts by the NYPD to manage its media profile, despite variations in media portrayal. However, at best this could only partly explain the stability of public opinion. For if it constituted a full explanation, we would not see the variations in subjectively experienced news coverage of policing that we do. Rather, successful media management would counter negative impressions of the police conveyed by some new sources to produce a stable media portrayal of the police through time.

Ultimately, therefore, the research teaches us that, at least in certain periods, public opinion has a kind of "buffer zone" in the face of news coverage of policing. Within a certain range variation through time in negative (or positive) coverage, the public does not change its opinion of the police. How wide or enduring this buffer zone is remains a question for further research to establish.

## Precinct Differences and Neighborhood Context

Differences between precincts in both measures of public opinion were statistically significant (p=0.01). Previous research has found that citizens' neighborhoods were important determinants of their satisfaction with policing, both at a subjective level, relating to perceptions of quality of life, and at an objective level, relating to economic and crime indicators.[42] We did not explore these aspects of neighborhood environment. However, we were able to examine how variations in public opinion varied according to the other measures of police performance.

Table 3-2 presents the four measures relating to public opinion and consumer satisfaction for each precinct. The table shows that, for all measures, there are statistically significant differences between precincts.

### Table 3-2 Precinct measure on four indicators of public opinion and consumer satisfaction

| | Voluntary contact satisfaction ** | Community leader satisfaction * | Public perceptions of effectiveness ** | Public perceptions of misconduct ** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Precinct** | | | | |
| A | 0.82 | 0.79 | 0.69 | 0.47 |
| B | 0.79 | 0.70 | 0.70 | 0.49 |
| C | 0.79 | 0.78 | 0.63 | 0.55 |
| D | 0.83 | 0.85 | 0.79 | 0.26 |
| E | 0.78 | 0.76 | 0.75 | 0.39 |

*p<.05; **p<.01 (based on ANOVA tests).

To make it easier to interpret these precinct differences, Table 3-3 below ranks precincts for each of these measures, according to their level of positive or negative appraisal of the police.

### Table 3-3 Precinct ranks according to four indicators of survey respondents' evaluation of police (1=most positive, 5=most negative)

| Precinct | Voluntary contact satisfaction | Community leader satisfaction | Public perceptions of effectiveness | Public perceptions of misconduct |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| B | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| C | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| E | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |

While the rank order of these scores is not consistent across measures, there are some similarities. Most significant is the fact that precinct D, which is by far the most positive about the police according to the public opinion survey, also has the most positive rating of police-public contacts. However, the measures vary less consistently among the remaining precincts. For example, precinct E, which has the lowest voluntary contact satisfaction, and the second lowest community leader satisfaction, is second highest on both measures of public perception.

If the difference between precinct D and the other precincts is anything to go by, this may be an indication that differences in public perceptions of policing among precincts may reflect more than just differences in the social, economic, and criminal character (whether subjective or objective) of the neighborhood. They may also reflect real differences in the quality of policing as experienced by members of the public. However, on the basis of our data, we can only tentatively conclude this.

## Modeling Public Opinion

Using the limited data available, we were able to generate multivariate models of public opinions of police at an aggregate level. Specifically, we constructed analysis of covariance models, using the average scores for satisfaction and misconduct, for each month/precinct, as dependent variables. This gave a total of 45 data points (nine waves in five precincts). The analysis then used precinct, voluntary contact satisfaction scores (also averaged for each month and precinct), and media coverage of misconduct (city-wide measures only) as independent variables. The results of these models are presented in Table 3-4, below.

Table 3-4 Analysis of covariance models of public perceptions of police effectiveness and misconduct, based on aggregated month/precinct averages for each data point

| Independent factor | Effectiveness coefficients | Misconduct Coefficients |
|---|---|---|
| Precinct A (ref.) | ** | ** |
| B | 0.01 | 0.02 |
| C | -0.05** | 0.09** |
| D | 0.10** | -0.22** |
| E | 0.07** | -0.08** |
| | | |
| Voluntary contact satisfaction | 0.01 (ns) | 0.01 (ns) |
| | | |
| Media coverage of misconduct | 0.00 (ns) | 0.00 (ns) |

$*p<.05$; $**p<.01$.  N=the number of data points, or 45 (nine waves in five precincts). ns=not statistically significant. ref =reference category—in this case, meaning that all other precincts were compared with precinct A.

As we would have anticipated from the earlier analysis, there is a substantial and statistically significant relationship between precinct and public opinion of the police. However, neither media coverage of misconduct, nor consumer satisfaction with voluntary contacts emerged as predictors of public opinion in the monthly aggregate measures by month/precinct.

## Analysis of Individual-Level Data

In this section, we focus exclusively on our analysis of the public opinion surveys and address our research questions. In doing so, we examine the relationships between people's opinions of the police, their demographic characteristics, their direct and vicarious experiences with the police, and their patterns of media consumption. For these analyses, we combined the data from across waves into a larger database.

**Demographic Variations in Public Opinion**

First of all, we examine the ways in which public opinion varies according to public opinion survey respondents' demographic background. Table 4-1 presents the mean scores for the scales of police effectiveness and police misconduct that we developed from the survey according to key demographic criteria.

Some demographic variables, notably age, race and ethnicity, and precinct of residence, have a substantial and statistically significant relationship with public views of the police. Younger people are far less likely than older people to see the police as effective, and far more likely to see them as prone to misconduct. Among racial and ethnic groups, white respondents have the most favorable views of the police, while black respondents have the least favorable. Hispanic respondents fall between the white and black respondents in their views. These differences support previous research.[43]

Consistent with research showing that people with lower socioeconomic status have more pessimistic views of the police, we found that home ownership and public opinion are related—though the relationship is not very strong.[44] People who were born outside the United States had more confidence in the police than others. This finding contrasts with the finding of a previous study of a Queens neighborhood in New York City that foreign-born residents were less confident in the police.[45] This may be because the neighborhood forming the focus of this earlier study was, in some way, atypical of the wider population of New York City—for example, the immigrants in the earlier study and their experiences of the police may not be representative of the experiences of immigrants throughout the city. A person's sex has only a very limited relationship with confidence in police, which is at odds with some earlier research. Surprisingly, there is no statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and opinions of police, either.

Table 4-1 Public opinion survey respondents' mean scores on
police effectiveness and police misconduct scales, and analysis of variance,
according to demographic characteristics

| | Effectiveness (mean) | Misconduct (mean) | Minimum no. of cases |
|---|---|---|---|
| Demographic characteristic | | | |
| **Age** | ** | ** | |
| 18–24 | 0.63 | 0.55 | 198 |
| 25–34 | 0.69 | 0.46 | 407 |
| 35–44 | 0.70 | 0.46 | 405 |
| 45–54 | 0.70 | 0.45 | 331 |
| 55–64 | 0.73 | 0.41 | 227 |
| ≥65 | 0.80 | 0.28 | 249 |
| | | | |
| **Race** | ** | ** | |
| White | 0.77 | 0.31 | 545 |
| Black | 0.65 | 0.56 | 597 |
| Hispanic | 0.70 | 0.44 | 488 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 0.75 | 0.34 | 91 |
| Other | 0.69 | 0.45 | 92 |
| | | | |
| **Sex** | * | ns | |
| Male | 0.70 | 0.45 | 776 |
| Female | 0.72 | 0.43 | 1084 |
| | | | |
| **Precinct** | ** | ** | |
| A | 0.69 | 0.47 | 451 |
| B | 0.70 | 0.49 | 365 |
| C | 0.63 | 0.56 | 358 |
| D | 0.79 | 0.25 | 329 |
| E | 0.75 | 0.39 | 360 |
| | | | |
| **U.S.-born** | ** | ** | |
| Yes | 0.70 | 0.45 | 866 |
| No | 0.73 | 0.40 | 379 |
| | | | |
| **Home owner** | ** | * | |
| Yes | 0.74 | 0.41 | 423 |
| No | 0.69 | 0.45 | 628 |
| | | | |
| **Education** | ns | ns | |
| Elementary school | 0.73 | 0.44 | 111 |
| High school/GED | 0.72 | 0.44 | 585 |
| Some college | 0.70 | 0.44 | 462 |
| College degree | 0.70 | 0.42 | 429 |
| Post-graduate study | 0.70 | 0.45 | 230 |
| Other | 0.75 | 0.32 | 26 |

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$ (based on ANOVA tests). ns=not statistically significant.

## Contacts with the Police

Research consistently has shown that people's experience of police contacts correlates with their confidence in the police. Our research has reproduced these findings. However, the more important question we have posed relates to the influence of vicarious contacts—the contacts of family, friends, and associates—on public opinion. Our survey data demonstrate that these kinds of contacts are also associated with respondents' confidence in the police, suggesting that their influence may be important.

*Personal Contacts.* Table 4-2 divides respondents' reports of encounters with the police into public-initiated, or "voluntary" contacts, and police-initiated, or "involuntary" contacts. The table presents proportions of respondents reporting different levels of satisfaction with their encounters, according to precinct.

Table 4-2 Percent of survey respondents who reported contact with police during the past 12 months and who reported specified opinions about their contact, according to type of direct contact, by precinct

| Type and nature of contact | Respondents in precincts (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | All |
| N | 475 | 391 | 380 | 361 | 379 | 1,988 |
| **Voluntary contact** | 35 | 38 | 40 | 37 | 45 | 38 |
| **Opinion of treatment during voluntary contact** | | | | | | |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 26 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 37 | 30 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 5 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| **Involuntary contact** | 24 | 27 | 25 | 26 | 36 | 28 |
| **Opinion of treatment during involuntary contacts** | | | | | | |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 16 | 17 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 19 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 5 |

All differences are significant at p<.01 (chi-square).

The table shows that within the last 12 months, 38 percent of respondents had had a voluntary contact with the police (with a range from 35–45 percent), and 28 percent had had an involuntary contact (with a range from 24–36 percent). Similar (though a little higher) rates of contacts previously were reported in a survey of residents of Jackson

Heights in New York City that probed more elaborately on voluntary and involuntary contacts.[46] For example, 46 percent of respondents in that study had approached an officer to ask directions, 30 percent had reported a non-crime emergency, and 25 percent had reported a crime. In the same study, 22 percent of respondents reported having been stopped by the police while walking or driving and six reported having been arrested.

Table 4-2 also highlights respondents' levels of satisfaction with police encounters. A substantial majority of respondents were essentially positive about their encounters. Overall, however, one in 20 respondents reported having had a negative voluntary encounter with the police, and a similar proportion reported having had a negative involuntary experience with the police.

Table 4-3 shows how the survey measures of community opinion of police effectiveness and police misconduct vary according to experiences of voluntary and involuntary contacts with the police.

Table 4-3 Public opinions of police effectiveness and police misconduct, according to type of contact and opinion about nature of contact

| Type of contact and opinion about contact | Effectiveness (mean) | Misconduct (mean) | Minimum no. of cases |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Voluntary contact** | | | |
| None | 0.72 | 0.43 | 1,131 |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 0.75 | 0.39 | 566 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 0.54 | 0.59 | 57 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 0.46 | 0.68 | 102 |
| | | | |
| **Involuntary contact** | | | |
| None | 0.72 | 0.42 | 1,336 |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 0.73 | 0.39 | 353 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 0.62 | 0.58 | 74 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 0.48 | 0.77 | 97 |

All differences are significant at p<.01 (based on an ANOVA test).

The variation in these measures is striking. Contacts with the police, specifically where these experiences are not positive, have a profound negative association with public opinion, with respondents viewing the police as less effective and more prone to misconduct. Notably, it also suggests that the influence of encounters on opinion may be far more profound for encounters that are viewed negatively than those that are viewed positively. Interestingly, this evidence of an asymmetrical impact of positive and negative experiences has important parallels with other literature—notably that addressing psychological adjustment following traumatic or difficult events. A number of research studies have shown that, for people dealing with adverse events, experience of positive supporting behavior in social interactions has far less an impact on psychological adjustment than negative experiences following an adverse event.[47]

Although this provides, on the face of it, evidence for a causal impact of the quality of encounters on subsequent opinions of the police, we should nonetheless acknowledge that there may be an opposite causal effect. That is, people who have a more negative view of the police may also be more likely to evaluate an encounter with the police negatively. This also may have a role in explaining the correlations observed, and we should be cautious about inferring the impact of encounters on public opinion on the basis of the evidence presented here.

*Vicarious Experiences of Police Contacts.* The public opinion survey's questions about voluntary and involuntary contacts among respondents' family, friends, and acquaintances allow us to explore directly whether vicarious experiences of police contacts—experiences communicated through social networks—impact people's confidence in the police.

Table 4-4 presents the contacts with police that respondents had heard about from their family, friends, and acquaintances in the previous year. Overall, 33 percent of people knew someone who had had a voluntary contact in the previous year (ranging from 24–41 percent across precincts), and 33 percent knew of someone having an involuntary contact in the previous year (ranging from 25–38 percent across precincts).

These proportions are similar to the 38 percent of people who had had direct voluntary contacts, and the 28 percent who had had direct involuntary contacts. What is particularly striking, however, is that respondents have far more negative impressions of vicarious encounters than of their own personal contacts. For example, more than twice the proportion of respondents were aware of someone who had experienced a negative involuntary encounter as had experienced one themselves (13 vs. 5 percent, respectively). This may reflect a greater tendency for friends, family members, and acquaintances to discuss negative experiences rather than positive ones. Again, there were notable differences among precincts in the degree to which respondents reported negative experiences.

Table 4-4 Percent of survey respondents who reported vicarious contacts with the police during the past 12 months and who reported specified opinions about their contact, according to type of vicarious contact, by precinct

| Contact type and opinions | Respondents in precincts (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **All** |
| N | 474 | 390 | 379 | 362 | 377 | 1,982 |
| | (160) | (133) | (125) | (123) | (125) | (666) |
| **Voluntary contact with police\*** | 24 | 40 | 34 | 30 | 41 | 33 |
| **Opinion of treatment during voluntary contacts\*\*** | | | | | | |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 14 | 26 | 17 | 25 | 26 | 22 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 6 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 7 |
| **Involuntary contact with the police\*\*** | 29 | 36 | 38 | 25 | 36 | 33 |
| **Opinion of treatment during involuntary contacts\*** | | | | | | |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 12 | 16 | 14 | 14 | 19 | 15 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 12 | 14 | 19 | 6 | 11 | 13 |

\*p<.05; \*\*p<.01 (based on chi-square test). *Note:* Numbers in parentheses apply to voluntary contacts, because these are based on a smaller survey sample.

Table 4-5 explores how respondents' opinions of the police vary according to their vicarious experiences of police contacts. There is a remarkably similar pattern to that seen with direct, personal experiences. That is, people who know people who have had voluntary or involuntary experiences, particularly negative ones, have less confidence in police effectiveness and see police as more prone to misconduct. It appears, therefore, that these vicarious police contacts are an important influence on how people view the police.

Table 4-5 Public opinions of police effectiveness and police misconduct, according to type of vicarious contact and opinion about nature of contact

| Type of contact and opinions about contact | Effectiveness (mean) | Misconduct (mean) | Minimum no. of cases |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Voluntary contact** | | | |
| None | 0.73 | 0.40 | 415 |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 0.73 | 0.43 | 137 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 0.54 | 0.66 | 30 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 0.51 | 0.72 | 44 |
| **Involuntary contact** | | | |
| None | 0.74 | 0.38 | 1245 |
| Somewhat/very well treated | 0.76 | 0.44 | 281 |
| Treated neither well nor poorly | 0.63 | 0.53 | 90 |
| Treated somewhat/very poorly | 0.54 | 0.69 | 237 |

*Note:* All differences are significant at p<.01 (based on an ANOVA test).

Of particular interest here is that vicarious positive encounters do not improve people's perceptions of the police. Rather, positive encounters are to some extent associated with more negative opinions of the police. For example, for those having vicarious voluntary contacts which they report positively, assessments of effectiveness average 0.73. This figure is identical to the assessments of those without vicarious voluntary contacts. However, among those having neutral or negative vicarious voluntary contacts, evaluations of police effectiveness are, respectively, 0.54 and 0.51, representing a somewhat lower level of confidence. As with direct contacts, this provides evidence that negative experiences heard about through friends and family impact upon people's opinions of the police. However, the associations may also reflect, at least in part, a tendency for people with more negative opinions of the police to evaluate encounters they have heard about negatively (or to associate with people more likely to evaluate their encounters with the police negatively).

Ultimately, however, we can best understand the importance of associations between vicarious contacts and public opinion after controlling for other variables that may influence people's perceptions that may be correlated with people's vicarious experiences. Multivariate models, which control for these extraneous factors, are presented later (see Table 4-11) and provide a more definitive confirmation of the importance of vicarious contacts.

## News Consumption

The second research question we posed focuses on the influence of media on public perception. We examined survey respondents' answers to questions about their patterns of consumption of news on television, radio, and in print media over the previous seven days and about the specific sources of this news. The surveys also asked whether

respondents specifically recollected news coverage of the police in the previous month and the nature (whether positive or negative) of that coverage.

*General Patterns of Media Consumption.* Table 4-6 presents general patterns of survey respondents' news consumption. Most respondents said they had consumed news in the previous seven days from each of the three main media types. Overall, 91 percent had watched television news, 67 percent had listened to radio news, and 84 percent had read a newspaper. Comparing precincts, news consumption was higher, overall, in precincts D and E than in the others.

The majority (66 percent) of respondents could recall news items about the police in the last month, suggesting that news coverage of the police has a relatively high profile with the public. Thirty-three percent specifically recalled media coverage that made the police look somewhat or very bad, overall. People were more likely to recount negative than positive coverage, with just 20 percent recalling news coverage that made the police look somewhat or very good. Additionally, there were 14 percent who recalled coverage that did not make the police look good or bad, overall. A comparison of the balance of coverage recorded in the media tracking database with that recalled by survey respondents suggests that the public may be more likely to recall or interpret news about the police as negative: across nine waves, 30 percent of news items could be characterized as positive, 33 percent as neutral, and 37 percent as negative; by contrast, counting only those who recalled news items, 30 percent of respondents characterized the previous month's news coverage of the police as positive, 21 percent as neutral, and 49 percent as negative. However, the media and survey-based measures were compiled differently, and conclusions based on a direct comparison of the two must be tentative at best.

Table 4-6 Public opinion survey respondents' patterns of news consumption during previous seven days and recollections of coverage of the police, by precinct

| | Respondents (%) | | | | | |
| | A | B | C | D | E | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 476 | 391 | 379 | 362 | 380 | 1,988 |
| **News consumption** | | | | | | |
| TV (ns) | 87 | 92 | 90 | 93 | 92 | 91 |
| Radio ** | 51 | 54 | 54 | 66 | 62 | 67 |
| Newspapers** | 66 | 73 | 71 | 81 | 80 | 84 |
| **Recollection of news about police **** | 64 | 59 | 66 | 67 | 76 | 66 |
| **Coverage made the police seem…**** | | | | | | |
| Somewhat/very good | 22 | 15 | 18 | 20 | 23 | 20 |
| Neither good/bad | 12 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 19 | 14 |
| Somewhat/very bad | 29 | 30 | 37 | 34 | 34 | 33 |

**p<.01 (based on chi-square test). ns=not statistically significant.

To explore whether there was any evidence that the level of news consumption affected public opinion of the police, we compared the survey's community opinion measures with respondents' news consumption. Table 4-7 presents the opinion measures associated with different levels of news consumption for the three types of media sources.

Table 4-7 Public opinion survey respondents' mean scores on scales of perceptions of police effectiveness and misconduct, according to type and frequency of news consumption during previous week and nature of coverage of police in news consumed during previous month

| News consumption | Effectiveness (mean) | Misconduct (mean) | Minimum no. cases |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Television** | ns | ** | |
| every day | 0.71 | 0.41 | 1,029 |
| 5–6 days | 0.70 | 0.45 | 212 |
| 3–4 days | 0.70 | 0.48 | 276 |
| 1–2 days | 0.72 | 0.45 | 168 |
| None | 0.70 | 0.46 | 172 |
| **Radio** | ns | ** | |
| every day | 0.72 | 0.42 | 514 |
| 5–6 days | 0.71 | 0.40 | 179 |
| 3–4 days | 0.71 | 0.42 | 200 |
| 1–2 days | 0.69 | 0.49 | 159 |
| None | 0.71 | 0.45 | 804 |
| **Newspapers** | ns | ** | |
| every day | 0.71 | 0.41 | 722 |
| 5–6 days | 0.71 | 0.41 | 166 |
| 3–4 days | 0.70 | 0.45 | 235 |
| 1–2 days | 0.69 | 0.51 | 259 |
| None | 0.72 | 0.44 | 476 |
| **Nature of coverage of police** | ** | ** | |
| Did not see/ hear any | 0.72 | 0.42 | 605 |
| Made police seem good | 0.74 | 0.39 | 364 |
| Made police seem neither good nor bad | 0.71 | 0.43 | 255 |
| Made police seem bad | 0.68 | 0.48 | 595 |

\*\*p<.01. ns=not statistically significant.

Perceptions of police effectiveness are not related to the volume of news consumed. Perceptions of misconduct do, however, show some variation, though the relationship between consumption and opinion is not a linear one. Rather, those who are the most pessimistic about the police are those who are infrequent consumers of news (one to two days per week) compared with more frequent news consumers and those who do not consume any news.

There was, however, a correlation between recollections of police media coverage and both police effectiveness and police misconduct measures. Predictably, those who reported experiencing bad news over the previous month were also less likely to see the police as effective, and more often as involved in misconduct. In keeping with the findings relating to contacts with the police, we see here another example of how negative stories about the police appear to have a greater downward impact on general perceptions of the police than positive stories have an upward impact. This time though, the negative stories are based on news rather than personal or vicarious encounters. However, we probably need to be cautious about how we interpret the causal direction of this finding. For it is quite possible that those with more negative perceptions of the police are also more likely to interpret news of the police more negatively.

*Types of Media Consumption.* Table 4-8 presents the specific news sources respondents reported seeing and listening to. The most commonly viewed television channels were ABC (41 percent), NBC (31 percent), Fox (25 percent), and CBS (23 percent). The newspapers that respondents read most frequently were *The Daily News* (New York City; 43 percent), *The New York Times* (25 percent), and *The New York Post* (23 percent). Respondents' radio news consumption was widely dispersed among different radio channels. Only one channel, 1010 WINS (27 percent), was common among respondents. There were also some variations in patterns of news consumption across precincts for most media sources, suggesting different patterns of media preference.

Table 4-8 Percent of public opinion survey respondents who
reported relying on specific media sources in the
previous week, according to type of media, by precinct

| News Source | Respondents (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **All** |
| N | 476 | 391 | 379 | 362 | 380 | 1,988 |
| **Television** (N=1,985) | | | | | | |
| ABC** | 28 | 46 | 49 | 42 | 41 | 41 |
| CBS** | 16 | 20 | 24 | 35 | 21 | 23 |
| Fox** | 20 | 24 | 29 | 30 | 22 | 25 |
| NBC** | 24 | 26 | 28 | 45 | 34 | 31 |
| PBS (ns) | 4 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| UPN 9 ** | 11 | 16 | 25 | 12 | 11 | 15 |
| WB *. | 9 | 13 | 14 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| CNN * | 15 | 15 | 15 | 23 | 16 | 17 |
| NY-1 ** | 18 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 24 | 15 |
| Other ** | 29 | 16 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 13 |
| **Newspaper** (N=1,989) | | | | | | |
| *New York Times*** | 28 | 20 | 23 | 31 | 25 | 25 |
| *New York Post* (ns) | 22 | 22 | 21 | 26 | 26 | 23 |
| *Daily News* (New York City)** | 32 | 54 | 54 | 43 | 35 | 43 |
| *Wall Street Journal* (ns) | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| *New York Press* (ns) | na | na | na | 1 | na | na |
| *Village Voice* (ns) | 1 | 1 | 1 | na | na | 1 |
| *Newsday* (Long Island) ** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 20 | 3 | 6 |
| *USA Today* ** | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Other ** | 14 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 36 | 14 |
| **Radio** (N=1,987) | | | | | | |
| WABC ** | 2 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| WCBS ** | 4 | 7 | 5 | 20 | 11 | 9 |
| 1010 WINS ** | 21 | 27 | 27 | 34 | 30 | 27 |
| NPR (ns) | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| WNEW (ns) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| WPLJ (ns) | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Hot 97 (ns) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| WBLS ** | 3 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| WBAI ** | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Other * | 21 | 18 | 13 | 16 | 16 | 17 |

*p<.05; **p<.01 (based on chi-square test). ns=not statistically significant. na=not applicable because no respondents reported relying on that source.

To explore patterns of news consumption in a more manageable way, we grouped respondents into four discrete categories using K-means cluster analysis focusing on respondents' most commonly reported news sources. The categories of users are:

- *Tabloid news consumers* (Cluster 1): Virtually all of this group read the *Daily News*, and are also often readers of the *New York Post*. However, they are very infrequent readers of the *New York Times*.

- *News abstainers* (Cluster 2): This group has a relatively low level of consumption across all news sources.

- *News addicts* (Cluster 3): This group has a high rate of consumption across all the media sources, regardless of media type or source.

- *"High-brow" news consumers* (Cluster 4): This group read the *New York Times*, and relatively infrequently read the *New York Post* and the *Daily News*. Of all the groups, these respondents are also most likely to have watched CNN news.

Table 4-9 presents the results of our cluster analysis—or proportions of respondents in each cluster who reported relying on specific media sources for news.

Table 4-9 Percentage of respondents in four groups of news consumers who reported relying on specific media sources during the previous week, by cluster

| News source | Respondents' news sources (%) | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Cluster 1** | **Cluster 2** | **Cluster 3** | **Cluster 4** |
| N | 544 | 739 | 310 | 391 |
| **Television** | | | | |
| ABC | 53 | 24 | 72 | 30 |
| CBS | 11 | 8 | 93 | 12 |
| Fox | 26 | 14 | 49 | 25 |
| NBC | 23 | 15 | 86 | 29 |
| UP9 | 19 | 8 | 34 | 8 |
| WB | 10 | 9 | 23 | 7 |
| CNN | 11 | 10 | 25 | 29 |
| NY-1 | 14 | 13 | 15 | 17 |
| **Radio** | | | | |
| 1010 WINS | 33 | 13 | 52 | 27 |
| **Newspapers** | | | | |
| *New York Times* | 2 | na | 33 | 100 |
| *New York Post* | 36 | 10 | 39 | 18 |
| *Daily News* | 99 | na | 58 | 34 |

na=not applicable because no respondents reported relying on that source.

Table 4-10 Mean scores on police effectiveness and misconduct perception scales,
according to news media consumer cluster

| News consumer cluster | Effectiveness** | Misconduct** | Minimum no. of cases |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1: Tabloid news consumers | 0.69 | 0.47 | 520 |
| 2: News abstainers | 0.73 | 0.40 | 688 |
| 3: News addicts | 0.72 | 0.40 | 291 |
| 4: "High-brow" news consumers | 0.68 | 0.47 | 363 |

**p<.01 (based on ANOVA).

There are statistically significant variations in opinions of the police, according to patterns of media consumption. However, the differences are not substantial and they are somewhat difficult to interpret. For example, Clusters 2 and 3, who have very different patterns of news consumption, have virtually identical opinions of the police, as do Clusters 1 and 4, whose media consumption is also very different from each other.

**Modeling Determinants of Public Opinion**

So far, on the basis of bivariate analyses, we have seen evidence that experiences of both direct and vicarious police contacts are associated with opinions of the police. Similarly, there is some evidence that different patterns of media consumption are associated with different views of the police, though some of this evidence is ambiguous.

To provide a more definitive view on the relationships between public opinion of the police, experiences of police contacts, and news consumption, it is important to control for variables that might also be related to public opinion. This is because the latter might mislead us about the importance of our variables of interest in affecting public opinions, if we relied only on bivariate analyses focusing on variables of interest. We thus explored these relationships with an analysis of covariance, multivariate modeling procedure.

Models for both measures of public opinion were developed using a backwards, stepwise procedure. In this procedure, all the variables of potential importance were included in some initial models (on the basis of the bivariate analyses above, and including key demographic variables). Subsequent models progressively removed non-predictive variables to leave only key demographic variables and the other variables predicting public opinion of the police. We present these models in Table 4-11.

Table 4-11 Analysis of covariance models of survey respondents' perceptions of police effectiveness and misconduct, according to type and nature of contact with police, media consumption, demographic characteristics, and precinct

| Respondent Variables | Effectiveness Coeff. | Police Misconduct Coeff. |
|---|---|---|
| N | 591 | 572 |
| **Intercept** | 0.64** | 0.42** |
| **Personal involuntary contact** (compared with none) | ** | ** |
| Good/neutral | -0.02 | -0.03 |
| Bad | -0.16 ** | 0.17 ** |
| **Personal voluntary contact** (compared with none) | ** | ** |
| Good/neutral | 0.00 | -0.01 |
| Bad | -0.14 ** | 0.14 ** |
| **Vicarious involuntary contact** (compared with none) | * | ** |
| Good/neutral | -0.01 | -0.03 |
| Bad | -0.07 ** | 0.17 ** |
| **Vicarious voluntary contact** (compared with none) | ** | |
| Good/neutral | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| Bad | -0.10 ** | 0.07 |
| **News coverage of police** (compared with none) | | ** |
| Good/neutral | 0.02 | -0.05 |
| Bad | -0.01 | 0.04 |
| **News consumer cluster** (compared with tabloid news consumers) | | ** |
| News abstainers | 0.03 | -0.04 |
| News addicts | 0.01 | -0.02 |
| "High-brow" news consumers | 0.01 | 0.05 |
| **Sex** (compared with female) | | |
| Male | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| **Race and ethnicity** (compared with white) | | ** |
| Black | -0.05 | 0.16 ** |
| Hispanic | -0.03 | 0.07 * |
| Other | -0.03 | 0.04 |
| **Age** | 0.00 ** | 0.00 |
| **Precinct** (compared with A) | ** | ** |
| B | 0.06 ** | -0.04 |
| C | 0.00 | -0.04 |
| D | 0.07 ** | -0.13 ** |
| E | 0.06 ** | -0.07 * |

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$.

Voluntary and involuntary encounters, both personal and vicarious, remain important correlates of public opinion, after controlling for media and demographic variables. Only one combination of dependent variables and police contact variables is not statistically significant: the association between vicarious voluntary encounters and perceptions of misconduct. As we have already noted, we should be careful about what we infer from this. It may be that negative opinions of the police directly affect the way encounters—whether personal or vicarious—are interpreted. The associations we observe may be partly explained by this principle.

Overall, we can conclude from the pattern of coefficients that negative vicarious contacts with the police have an important association with public opinion of the police, though they are less important than direct personal contacts. We also know that negative vicarious experiences of police are actually more common than direct experiences. We should not, therefore, infer that any indirect impact of police encounters that may explain an association with public opinion is less important than their direct impact, for they ultimately fan out to a range of people beyond the immediate person with whom police are interacting.

News consumption variables are correlated with public opinion of police misconduct, but not of police effectiveness. The relationship that does exist shows that, after controlling for other variables, Cluster 4 media consumers—those whose most frequent news source is the *New York Times*—are most likely to see the police as prone to misconduct while people who have a low level of news consumption are least likely to do so. Differences here may reflect the different portrayals of the police in the different news sources or may simply reflect the different news preferences of those more or less critical of the police.

In line with other research, race and ethnicity are associated with public opinion of the police. Differences are greatest between white and black respondents, with Hispanic respondents in the middle. However, this relationship is statistically significant only for perceptions of police misconduct. The relationship between police effectiveness and race and ethnicity falls slightly short of statistical significance, and the effect size of race and ethnicity in relation to effectiveness is somewhat smaller than in relation to misconduct.

Finally, precinct remains an important predictive variable of both types of public opinion. This may reflect the influence of neighborhood, as reported in previous research.[48]

## Discussion

According to our analyses, consumer satisfaction and public opinion appear quite stable over time. Levels of satisfaction were generally high and there was little variation from month to month in either consumer satisfaction with encounters or in public opinion over the nine months we tracked these measures. That made it impossible to establish whether improvement or deterioration of routine police-public interactions substantially influenced public opinion. Nor were we able to establish definitively the nature of the relationship between public opinion and our measures of news coverage.

It might be expected that general public opinion would remain stable from month to month in the absence of sudden shifts in police practice (resulting from changes in policy, specific operations, or training programs, for example), or big media scandals about the police. The fact that we found the same stability in satisfaction among those who themselves had recent, voluntary encounters with the police as with public opinion in general suggests that this is the product of relatively stable aggregate levels of performance across police officers in a neighborhood. It is likely that police departments will require concerted effort to increase these already high levels of satisfaction.

We also found that variations in media coverage were not reflected in public opinion: public opinion about the police was fairly stable across nine consecutive months, despite some notable variations in media coverage. We measured variation in coverage in both the number of negative articles that appeared in a database of newspaper coverage of the police and in the amount of negative coverage that people recalled seeing or hearing. This suggests that variation in news coverage of the police does not easily sway people's views of the police—at least in the absence of any major scandals.

In this brief study, we were not able to identify the extent of the public's "buffer zone" of tolerance for variation in coverage of the police—that is, we cannot say to what extent coverage would have to vary to influence public opinion. Indeed, it seems likely that allegations of severe police abuse repeatedly broadcast through the media can have a significant impact on public opinion. Research has demonstrated that highly publicized negative events such as the Rodney King beating and the Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo incidents were followed by substantial shifts in public attitudes toward the police in public opinion polls, particularly among blacks and Hispanics.[49] Our results suggest that during less volatile periods of media coverage, changes in public opinion about the police are unlikely to result from news stories about the police.

While people's attitudes of the police may be relatively immune from shifts in media coverage of the police (within a certain range, at least), there is evidence that they are not immune to negative experiences with the police. Predictably, and in line with prior research, we found that people who reported negative contacts with the police—contacts in which they felt they had been treated badly—tended to have lower levels of confidence

in the police. The opposite effect was not necessarily true: people who reported positive experiences with the police had views of the police that were similar to the views of people who reported no contact with police. In addition, people who reported "neutral" experiences with the police tended to have worse opinions than people who reported no contact.

To our knowledge, previous research has not explored vicarious experiences with police—that is the experiences of police contact that are relayed to people by their friends and relatives. We found that people whose family and friends told them they had been treated badly in an encounter with police also tended to have less confidence in the police and that people with positive vicarious encounters held opinions of the police similar to those of people who reported no police contact. People who reported neutral vicarious encounters tended to have worse opinions of the police than people who reported no police contact.

The apparent influence of a vicarious experience on a person's opinion of the police appeared less powerful than the influence of direct, personal experience. Yet, while people reported similar numbers of direct and vicarious contacts, negative vicarious experiences were more plentiful than direct negative experiences. This may reflect a tendency of friends, family members, and acquaintances to talk about negative experiences more than positive ones. Thus, these findings suggest that people's negative encounters with the police are likely to shape public opinion as much through their impact on friends and family as through the person directly involved in the encounters.

While we did not find much variation in public opinion over time, we did find substantial differences among the five precincts we surveyed. The precincts varied according to their social and demographic make-up, including, for example, economic status and racial and ethnic composition. These variations, as well as differences in patterns of personal and vicarious contacts with the police, in part appeared to explain the differences among precincts in public opinion. For example, the precinct with the most positive views of the police also had the highest proportion of white residents, the greatest proportion of homeowners, and the fewest reports of negative encounters with the police. However, after controlling for social and demographic factors and differences in patterns of police contacts, notable precinct differences in public opinion remained.

Previous research has found that the quality of a neighborhood is an important determinant of residents' satisfaction with policing, both at a subjective level (relating to perceptions of quality of life) and at an objective level (relating to economic and crime indicators).[50] While we were not able to explore further these aspects of neighborhood environment in the current study, our findings re-emphasize the importance of neighborhood conditions as a determinant of public opinions of local police.

## Implications for Policy and Practice

Our findings have a number of practical implications. First, our research suggests that the impact of police actions on public opinion is not limited to the individuals that police deal with directly. There is, in fact, a far wider audience among the family and friends of each person who comes in contact with the police. When people feel they have been treated well or badly, their feelings toward the police appear to spread through these social networks. However, while positive encounters do not appear to have a substantial effect on people's opinions of the police, negative encounters apparently do.

This means that attempts to improve public opinion by promoting positive contacts with the police are, on their own, probably insufficient. More important will be police managers' efforts to reduce the numbers of negative encounters. We know from previous research that those negative encounters that lead to civilian complaints are typically concentrated among a small minority of officers—and the same may be true for negative encounters in general.[51] Therefore, focusing attention on less well-behaved officers may be a particularly important strategy for reducing the numbers of negative encounters between the police and public. This could involve using early warning systems that identify officers exhibiting patterns of unprofessional behavior.[52] Reducing the numbers of negative encounters could also rely on a problem-oriented approach to police behavior (much in the same way this approach is applied to crime problems). Police performance data can be systematically analyzed to identify any underlying problems that might give rise to negative police-public interactions.[53] There is also evidence that the climate of accountability police commanders create can affect the quality of police-public interactions, at least as evidenced by levels of civilian complaints.[54]

In recent years, management of police communications with the media has been subject to increasing professionalization, involving greater organization and strategic planning, with a view to promoting and limiting damage to police departments' reputations. It would be wrong, on the basis of our research, to suggest that police managers should not be concerned about the media's representation of the police. Yet, attempts to manage a police department's media profile can be resource-intensive.[55] Set against this, our research shows that public opinion is positive and robust in the face of a degree of variation in news coverage of the police—both objectively measured and subjectively experienced by the public. These findings suggest that routine management of the media may not profoundly impact public opinion. Certainly, in periods where there are no major police scandals, police departments' media management may not be effective at improving public opinion. Efforts to improve the quality of police-public interactions, which clearly are important to public confidence, may be more successful.

Our research also provides lessons for monitoring consumer satisfaction and public opinion. Over the nine months we conducted our research, there were no substantial changes either in public opinion or in the nature of police-public encounters, suggesting

that in the future and in other locations, monthly surveys of the public may not show any substantial changes—particularly in the absence of sudden shifts in police practice or media scandals about the police.

Yet, in the interests of promoting positive police-public encounters and positive public opinion, the use of surveys is an inherently promising idea. There are few other direct ways of holding police departments and police officers accountable for their relationships with the public. A more practical approach to monitoring through surveys might involve administering surveys less often than in this research (perhaps quarterly) and tying this monitoring directly to interventions to improve satisfaction, such as training programs for officers or new forms of supervision and accountability. Under these circumstances, gains in consumer satisfaction and public opinion might be both achieved and measured.

**Further research**

A number of ideas for further research emerge from this research and the problems we encountered.

A key unresolved question is whether changes through time in the level of customer satisfaction with police contacts affect public confidence in the police among the public at large. One way to answer this would be to conduct a study similar to the current one, but tracking indicators of customer satisfaction and public opinion over a longer period of time and perhaps more frequently (such as quarterly rather than monthly measures). Additionally, such a study might be undertaken in a police department before, during, and after the police department implements changes to improve the character of police-public encounters (for example through a training program or changes to supervision). Such policy changes would do more to promote a substantial and significant change in the level of customer satisfaction over the time period of the research. This, in turn, would provide an opportunity to assess any effects of changes in levels of customer satisfaction on broader public opinion.

However, one feature of customer satisfaction that this research was unable to measure—and would need to be resolved in further work on customer satisfaction—is satisfaction with *involuntary* encounters between the public and police. Our research encountered significant practical problems operationalizing a method to capture this information. It remains a key challenge to researchers to find ways to do this. It may be that there are inherent constraints in obtaining reliable contact information from the police relating to the people they subject to involuntary encounters. Perhaps there are other methodological routes to identifying these individuals and surveying them about their experience during encounters. A resolution of this problem is likely to be critical in designing research that definitively establishes the impact of customer satisfaction with police encounters on public opinion of the police.

One of the provisional findings of this research was the possibility of a 'buffer zone' in variations in media coverage, in which the public's opinion of the police is largely unaffected by the media. However, further research would be required to validate this finding and to lend greater empirical clarity to the extent and character of any such buffer zone. This might involve tracking media coverage of the police and public opinion of the police over a longer period of time and when media coverage of policing showed greater variability, perhaps resulting from more controversial policing stories in the news.

# Notes

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**2.** Smith, P., and R. Hawkins, "Victimization, Types of Citizen-Police Contacts, and Attitudes Toward the Police," *Law and Society Review* 8 (1) (1973): 135-152; Boggs, S., and J. Galliher, "Evaluating the Police: A Comparison of Black Street and Household Respondents," *Social Problems* 22 (3) (1975): 393-406; Webb, V.J., and C.F. Marshall, "The Relative Importance of Race and Ethnicity on Citizen Attitudes Toward the Police," *American Journal of Police* 14 (2) (1995): 45-6; and Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, *Satisfaction with Police: What Matters?* Research for Practice, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October 2002.

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**4.** Evidence taken from earlier consumer satisfaction surveys carried out before and after September 11, 2001, suggests that specific satisfaction with encounters among those having voluntary contacts with the police did not change. However, there was some evidence of a modest increase in general confidence in the police after September 11.

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**8.** Kusow, A.M., L.C. Wilson, and D.E. Martin, "Determinants of Citizen Satisfaction with the Police: The Effects of Residential Location," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 20 (4) (1997): 655-664.

**9.** Sampson, R.J., and D. Jeglum-Bartusch, "Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences." (see note 3).

**10.** Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with the Police." (see note 3).

**11.** Davis, R., "Perceptions of the Police Among Members of Six Ethnic Communities in Central Queens, NY," final report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2000.

**12.** Smith, P., and R. Hawkins, "Victimization, Types of Citizen-Police Contacts, and Attitudes Toward the Police." (see note 2); Boggs, S., and J. Galliher, "Evaluating the Police: A Comparison of Black Street and Household Respondents." (see note 2); Webb, V.J., and C.F. Marshall, "The Relative Importance of Race and Ethnicity on Citizen Attitudes Toward the Police." (see note 2); and Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, *Satisfaction with Police: What Matters?* (see note 2).

**13.** Smith, P., and R. Hawkins, "Victimization, Types of Citizen-Police Contacts, and Attitudes Toward the Police." (see note 2); Block, R., "Fear of Crime and Fear of the Police," *Social Problems* 19 (Summer 1971): 91-101; Homant, R.J., D.B. Kennedy, and R.M. Fleming, "The Effects of Victimization and the Police Response on Citizen Attitudes Toward Police." (see note 6).

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**20.** Maxfield, M.G., and W.G. Skogan, *Coping with Crime: Individual and Neighborhood Reactions*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1981.

**21.** Tyler, T.R., "Impact of Directly and Indirectly Experienced Events: The Origin of Crime-Related Judgments and Behaviors," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39 (1) (1980): 13-28.

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**25.** Weitzer, R., "Incidents of Police Misconduct and Public Opinion," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30 (5) (2002): 397-408.

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**32.** Tyler, T.R., "Assessing the Risk of Crime Victimization: The Integration of Personal Victimization Experience and Socially Transmitted Information." (see note 23).

**33**. In New York State, police departments are required to report domestic incidents on standardized forms. For the purposes of our research we used the data originally collected by NYPD officers on these forms and maintained in a computer data base. As others have noted (see for instance New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act of 1994: Evaluation of the Mandatory Arrest Provisions.* Albany, NY: New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, 2001) the definition of a domestic incident as applied by law enforcement agencies is rather fluid. Based on our initial assessment of paper records, our impression is that the NYPD employs a rather broad definition of

domestic incidents, which encompasses but is not synonymous with domestic violence. Examples from forms we reviewed included a wide variety of disturbances reported in residences and other locations as well as a wide array of victim-perpetrator dyads, including legal spouses, domestic partners, parent-child, and boyfriend-girlfriend relationships. Circumstances in which domestic violence forms were completed ranged from those in which there was only a verbal dispute to those that involved serious criminal actions such as assault or harassment. In the vast majority of domestic incident cases, the victim had sought police services, although calls were sometimes made by a third party such as a family member or neighbor. In this sense, domestic incidents were similar to crime-report incidents in that they were overwhelmingly instances where alleged victims (or occasionally other parties) *voluntarily* sought out the services of the NYPD. Because it was possible that a domestic violence report and crime complaint were filled out on the same incident, we eliminated all duplicate respondents within any sample month. We did not want to risk calling the same respondent twice on the same incident.

**34.** Skogan, W.G., *Community Policing, Chicago Style*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997; Davis, R., "Perceptions of the Police Among Members of Six Ethnic Communities in Central Queens, NY." (see note 11); Jefferson, T., and M.A. Walker, "Attitudes to the Police of Ethnic Minorities in a Provincial City," *British Journal of Criminology* 33 (2) (1993): 251-266.

**35.** Davis, R., "Perceptions of the Police Among Members of Six Ethnic Communities in Central Queens, NY." (see note 11).

**36.** Ibid.

**37.** During the initial three months of the study, which was considered a pilot period, we attempted to use information collected on B-Summonses (traffic), C-Summonses (quality-of-life and other minor infractions), and Stop-and-Frisk paper forms to contact persons who were issued such forms. In contrast to the voluntary forms (crime incident and domestic violence reports), the phone number and address information for the involuntary was less often available and of lower quality. Although B-Summonses and C-Summonses had a field for phone numbers, this information was virtually always left blank. In the case of Stop-and-Frisk forms, only about one in four had a phone number, and this phone number often ended up resulting in reaching a wrong ("no such person here") or disconnected number. Attempts to look up phone numbers by using name and address information from the forms yielded insufficient results. For most cases, no phone number was returned after using a survey research industry standard *telematch* process to attempt phone look-ups. For those cases where a possible *telematch* phone number was returned, only about 1 in 20 resulted in a respondent contact during the pilot period. In contrast, most voluntary cases contained telephone numbers and, for those that did not, about one in six yielded a reliable *telematch* phone number. In an attempt to salvage the important customer group of "involuntary" contacts, we revisited our earlier decision to exclude arrestees (we had eliminated them because of contact problems, legal concerns, and because they might be dubious about contact, particularly if legal proceedings were still pending). We contemplated using as a contact group of only low-level arrests that were not prosecuted. Upon reflection and review by legal representatives within the agency, however, these plans were dropped. In summary, given the low rate of respondent contact for involuntary cases, we did not have a sufficient universe of voluntary records necessary to reach a sample quota of 60 completed surveys per precinct per month. We regretfully decided to drop this group from the survey. Further, we recognized the cost per completed interview would have been prohibitive (we would have needed to make many attempts for each completed interview). Finally, even if we had settled for smaller involuntary contact quotas, our analyses would have been limited in terms of the statistical power required to discern differences across precincts or time.

**38.** Once we began processing these data, we found that the date range used to download the file at NYPD had been defined by date-of-record-entry rather than date-of-incident. To compensate, we extracted all records from the data file that were not within the intended date range before sending records to USC. At each wave, this resulted in approximately 20 percent of cases being excluded because the actual incident-date pre-dated the defined date range for that wave. We also found that the data available at any given time may not be up-to-date because of data entry backlogs.

**39.** Vera's contract with USC required interviewers to complete interviews when respondents spoke English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Polish, or Korean—languages that the NYPD had indicated were the most common they encountered on the basis of their call-for-service logs.

**40.** The peaks in the media tracking database at waves 3 and 5 corresponded, respectively, to the retrial of a police officer in the Abner Louima case, which drew substantial coverage, and several members of a family being killed by a police officer who was allegedly driving while intoxicated. The peak in the survey-based measure of police misconduct coincided with some shocking video footage of police beating a suspect in California.

**41.** Weitzer, R., "Incidents of Police Misconduct and Public Opinion." (see note 25).

**42.** Sampson, R.J., and D. Jeglum-Bartusch, "Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences." (see note 3); Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with the Police." (see note 3).

**43.** Sampson, R.J., and D. Jeglum-Bartusch, "Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences." (see note 3); Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with the Police." (see note 3); Hahn, H., "Violence: The View from the Ghetto." (see note 7); McCord, W., and J. Howard, "Negro Opinions in Three Riot Cities." (see note 7); Jacob, H., "Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City." (see note 7); Campbell, A., and H. Schuman, "A Comparison of Black and White Experiences in the City." (see note 7); Skogan, W.G. "Citizen Satisfaction with Police Services," in *Evaluating Alternative Law-Enforcement Policies*, edited by R. Baker and F.A. Meyer, Jr., Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1979: 29-42; Scaglion, R., and R. Condon, "Determinants of Attitudes Toward City Police." (see note 7); Browning, S. et al., "Race and Getting Hassled by the Police: A Research Note." (see note 7); and Hurst, Y.G., J. Frank, and S.L. Browning, "The Attitudes of Juveniles Toward the Police: A Comparison of Black and White Youth." (see note 7).

**44**. Kusow, A.M., L.C. Wilson, and D.E. Martin, "Determinants of Citizen Satisfaction with the Police: The Effects of Residential Location." (see note 8).

**45**. Davis, R., "Perceptions of the Police Among Members of Six Ethnic Communities in Central Queens, NY." (see note 11).

**46**. Ibid.

**47.** Davis, R.C., E. Brickman, and T. Baker, "Supportive and Unsupportive Responses of Others to Rape Victims: Effects on Concurrent Victim Adjustment," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 19 (3) (1991): 443-451; Sandler, I.N. and M. Barrera, Jr., "Toward a Multimethod Approach to Assessing the Effect of Social Support," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 12 (1984): 37-52.

**48**. Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with the Police." (see note 3).

**49**. Weitzer, R., "Incidents of Police Misconduct and Public Opinion." (see note 25).

**50**. Reisig, M.D., and R.B. Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with the Police." (see note 3).

**51**. See, for example, Walker, S., G.P. Alpert, and D.J. Kenney, *Early Warning Systems: Responding to the Problem Police Officer*, Rockville, MD: National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2001.

**52**. Davis, R. et al., *Turning Necessity into Virtue: Pittsburgh's Experience with a Federal Consent Decree*, New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2002; Walker, S., "Searching for the Denominator: Problems with Police Traffic Stop Data and an Early Warning System Solution," *Justice Research and Policy* 3 (1) (2001): 63-95.

**53**. Walker, S., "Searching for the Denominator: Problems with Police Traffic Stop Data and an Early Warning System Solution." (see note 51).

**54**. Davis, R. and P. Mateu-Gelabert, *Respectful and Effective Policing: Two Examples in the South Bronx*, New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 1999.

**55**. Miller, C., "PR Management 101: Managing Public Relations Without a Public Relations Officer," *Law Enforcement Technology* 29 (10) (2002): 96-103.

## Appendix A: Public Opinion Survey Questionnaire

### NEW YORK COMMUNITY SURVEY

**OPENING TEXT**

Hello. My name is _____. I am calling to ask New York residents to participate in a survey on their views of the police. This is a government-funded project, being carried out by the Vera Institute of Justice. It's important for us to get a representative range of views in our survey. I need to ask you a couple of questions to select someone from your household to participate in the survey. All your responses are completely confidential.

Please tell me how many adults there are in your household that are aged 18 years and older. Include yourself if you are at least 18 years old.

Of the adult household members, whose name comes first alphabetically?

Is (the adult with name that comes alphabetically first) available right now, to answer some survey questions? It will take about 10 minutes.

Hello. My name is _____. You have been selected to participate in a survey. This is a government-funded project for New York residents on their opinions of the police. I am calling on behalf of the Vera Institute of Justice, and will need about 10 minutes of your time.

All your responses will be completely confidential.

**Police Effectiveness**

q1  First, I'm going to ask you some general questions about your views of the police.

In terms of fighting crime, would you say the police in your neighborhood are doing . . . [READ LIST]

1. A very good job

2. A somewhat good job

3. A somewhat bad job

4. A very bad job

5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know

9. Refused

q2  In terms of responding promptly to calls for assistance from residents, would you say the police in your neighborhood are . . .[READ LIST]

1. Very prompt

2. Somewhat prompt

3. Somewhat less than prompt

4. Not at all prompt

5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know

9. Refused

q3  In terms of helping people who have been victims of crime, would you say the police in your neighborhood are  . . . [READ LIST]

1. Very helpful

2. Somewhat helpful

3. Somewhat less than helpful

4. Not at all helpful

5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know

9. Refused

q4  In terms of working together with residents in your neighborhood to solve local problems, would you say the police in your neighborhood are doing a very good job, a somewhat good job, neither a good nor bad job, a somewhat bad job, a very bad job, or would you say you don't know what kind of job the police are doing. . . [DO NOT READ LIST]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. A very good job | 4. A very bad job |
| 2. A somewhat good job | 5. Don't know |
| 3. A somewhat bad job | 9. Refused |

q5  Overall, how effective are the police doing in dealing with the problems that concern people in your neighborhood? Would you say they are . . . [READ LIST]

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective
3. Somewhat less than effective
4. Not at all effective
5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

**Police Professionalism**

q6  In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your neighborhood to stop people on the street, or people driving in their cars, without good reason? Would you say this. . .[READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon
3. Is somewhat uncommon
4. Is somewhat common
5. Is very common
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q7  In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your neighborhood to use excessive force, for example, by using guns unnecessarily, or using more physical force than required? Would you say this . . .[READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon
3. Is somewhat uncommon
4. Is somewhat common
5. Is very common
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q8  In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your neighborhood to use offensive language when dealing with criminal suspects or other members of the public? Would you say this . . . [READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon

3. Is somewhat uncommon

4. Is somewhat common

5. Is very common

6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know

9. Refused

q9 In your opinion, how common is it for police officers in your neighborhood to break the law or break police rules when carrying out their work? Would you say this. . .[READ LIST]

1. Never happens

2. Is very uncommon

3. Is somewhat uncommon

4. Is somewhat common

5. Is very common

6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know

9. Refused

q10 Overall, in terms of dealing with residents in a fair and courteous manner, would you say the police in your neighborhood are doing…[READ LIST]

1. A very good job

2. A somewhat good job

3. A somewhat bad job

4. A very bad job

5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know

9. Refused

**Police Contacts**

q11 I'm going to read some statements about any experiences you may have had seeking help or assistance from the police. This could include reporting a crime, asking for assistance, calling or going into a police station, or approaching a police officer on the street. Which of the following best describes your experience . . .[READ LIST]

1. You have approached the police within the last 12 months

2. You have approached the police in the past, but not within the last 12 months

3. You have never approached the police [GO STRAIGHT TO Q13]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO Q13]

q12  On the last occasion when you approached the police how do you think you were treated? Would you say you were treated ... [READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q13  As far as you are aware, have any of the following people that you know approached the police to report a crime or ask for assistance within the last year?
[DO NOT READ OUT YES/NO RESPONSE CATEGORIES]

q13a  Members of your immediate family

1. Yes
2. No

q13b  Other family relatives

1. Yes
2. No

q13c  Friends or neighbors

1. Yes
2. No

q13d  Other acquaintances

1. Yes
2. No

If more than one is picked, go to question 14.

If just one is picked, go straight to question 15.

If none picked, go straight to question 16

q14  Thinking about the last time you heard about one of these experiences, who did it involve? Was it [READ LIST, CHOOSE ONLY ONE]

1. A member of your immediate family
2. Another family relative
3. A personal friend or neighbor
4. Another acquaintance
9. Refused

q15  On this occasion, how well did the person appear to have been treated by the police overall? Would you say they were treated. . .[READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q16  Please tell me which of the following best describes any experiences you may have had being approached or stopped by the police. This might involve a police officer stopping you while you were driving or walking, or having an officer come to your home to question you about an incident.

1. You have been approached or stopped by the police within the last 12 months.

2. You have been approached or stopped by the police in the past, but not within the last 12 months.

3. You have never been stopped or approached by the police. [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 18]

q17  On the last occasion you were approached by the police, how do you think you were treated? Would you say you were treated. . .[READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q18  As far as you are aware, have any of the following people that you know been approached or stopped by the police within the last year?
[DO NOT READ OUT YES/NO RESPONSE CATEGORIES]

q18a  Members of your immediate family

1. Yes
2. No

q18b  Other family relatives

1. Yes
2. No

q18c  Friends or neighbors

1. Yes
2. No

q18d  Other acquaintances

1. Yes
2. No

If more than one is picked, go to question 19.

If just one is picked, go straight to question 20.

If none picked, go straight to question 21

q19  Thinking about the last time you heard about one of these experiences, who did it involve? Was it. . .[READ LIST AND SELECT ONE]
1. A member of your immediate family
2.  Another family relative
3. A personal friend or neighbor
4. Another acquaintance
9. Refused

q20  And, on this occasion, how well did the person appear to have been treated by the police overall? Would you say they were treated. . .[READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

**Media Consumption**

q21 Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about any news programs that you watch, see, or hear. This information is useful to us in understanding people's opinions of the police.

First of all, I'd like to ask you about any TV news that you may have watched in the last 7 days. Would you say that you have seen TV news ... [READ LIST]

1. Every day for the last 7 days
2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
5. None of the last 7 days [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 23]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 23]

q22  In the last 7 days, which of the following TV channels did you watch when viewing the news?

[READ THE LIST FIRST AND LISTEN FOR ANSWERS AFTERWARDS. SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY]

1.  ABC [WABC (Channel 7)]
2.  CBS [WCBS  (Channel 2)]
3.  FOX [WNYW-FOX (Channel 5)
4.  NBC [WNBC (Channel 4)]
5.  PBS [WNET-PBS (Public Television-Channel 13)]
6.  UPN9 News [WWOR-UPN9 News (Channel 9)]
7.  WB Network [WPIX-WB Network (Channel 11)]
8.  CNN
9.  NY1-[Time Warner Cable (Channel 1-CNN NYC affiliate)]
10. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
12. NO MORE CHOICES. EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION.

q23  Please tell me about any radio news programs that you may have listened to in the last 7 days. Would you say that you have listened to radio news programs…[READ LIST]

1. Every day for the last 7 days
2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
5. None of the last 7 days [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 25]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 25]

q24  In the last 7 days, on which of the following radio channels did you hear the news?

[READ THE LIST FIRST AND LISTEN FOR ANSWERS AFTERWARDS. SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY]

1. WABC [WABC 770 (am) News/Talk Radio]
2. WCBS [WCBS  880 (am) News/Talk Radio]
3. 1010  WINS [1010 WINS (am)]
4. National Public Radio [WNYC 820 (am) / WNYC 93.9 (fm)]

5. WNEW [102.7 (fm) News/Talk Radio]
6. WPLJ [95.5 (fm) Top 40]
7. Hot 97 [WQHT 97.1 (fm) (Hip hop)]
8. WBLS [107.5 (fm) Urban Contemporary]
9. WBAI [95.5 (fm) Community Radio]
10 Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
12. NO MORE CHOICES. EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION.

q25  The next statements describe any newspapers that you may have read
in the last 7 days. Would you say that you have read a newspaper on . . .
[READ LIST]

1. Every day for the last 7 days
2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
5. None of the last 7 days [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 27]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 27]

q26  In the last 7 days, which of the following newspapers did you read?

[READ THE LIST FIRST AND LISTEN FOR ANSWERS
AFTERWARDS. SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY]

1. *New York Times*
2. *New York Post*
3. *New York Daily News*
4. *Wall Street Journal*
5. *NY Press*
6. *Village Voice*
7. *Newsday* (Long Island)
9. *USA Today*
10. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
12. NO MORE CHOICES. EXIT FROM QUESTION.

q27  Thinking about any news you may have seen, heard or read in the last
month, do you recall any news items about the police?

1. YES
2. NO [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 29]
3. [DO NOT READ] Don't know [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 29]
9. REFUSED [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 29]

q28  Forgetting about your own views on the police for a moment, would you say that the news that you have seen, heard, or read within the last month. . .[READ LIST]

1. Made the police look very good
2. Made the police look somewhat good
3. Didn't make the police look good or bad, overall
4. Made the police look somewhat bad
5. Made the police look very bad
9. Refused

**Demographics**

q29  Your responses to the remaining questions will only be used for statistical  purposes and will be kept strictly confidential. If you are uncomfortable giving a response to any of these questions, please let me know.

First of all, how old were you on your last birthday?

ENTER AGE _____

q30 Which of the following categories best describes your racial or ethnic heritage?

READ LIST AND SELECT APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

1. White
2. Black
3. White Hispanic
4. Black Hispanic
5. Asian or Pacific Islander
6. American Indian or Alaskan Native
7. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]

9. Refused

q31  What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed?

READ LIST AND SELECT APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

1. Elementary school
2. High school or GED
3. Some college
4. College degree
5. Some post-graduate school
6. Master's degree
7. Any doctorate, professional, or medical degree
8. Vocational or technical degree beyond high school
9. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
10. Refused

q 31.5  Were you born in the United States?
1. Yes [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 31.7]
2. No
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 31.6]

q 31.6 How many years have you lived in the United States?

_____

q 31.7  Do you or your family own the home in which you live?
1. Yes
2. No
9. Refused

q32  Interviewer record respondent's gender

1. Male
2. Female
3. Uncertain

## CLOSING MESSAGE

Those are all the questions I need to ask. Thank you very much for your time. Your responses will be combined with many others to help us understand New York residents' views and experiences of the police. Again, thanks very much. Good bye.

# Appendix B: Consumer Satisfaction Survey Questionnaires

**Voluntary Contact Questionnaire**
**(Text Version of Universal Survey Center CATI)**

Phone Number: xxx-xxx-xxxx

 Hello, my name is _____.  I'm calling from Universal Survey Center,

 May I please speak with xxxxxxx?

(Interviewer:  If at anytime you wish to change to Spanish text, type ... l=b at any
prompt.)

| | |
|---|---|
| 00 - CONTINUE | 07 - Disconnected |
| 01 - Answering machine/voicemail | 08 - Fax/modem |
| 02 - Busy | 09 – Non-residential number |
| 03 - Changed number | 11 - Language |
| 04 - No answer | 12 - Privacy manager |
| 05 - Respondent not available | 13 - Respondent hung up |
| 06 - Schedule a callback | 14 - Respondent said "never callback" |
| | 15 - No such person at this number |
| YY - Break/end of shift | 16 - Respondent incoherent |

I would just like to confirm that I am speaking with xxxxxxx.

1 Yes, proper party on phone
2 No, proper party coming to phone
3 Callback

Hello, my name is _____.  My company, Universal Survey Center,
has been hired by the New York Police Department to contact people who have recently
used police services. The police commissioner wants to find out if people are satisfied
with the service that they receive from the NYPD.
I want to ask you some questions about your experience with the police

recently when you ... event description  on xx/xx/xx.

It will take just five minutes, and your answers will help the Police Department do a better job of serving the community. The information you give will be used for statistical purposes only: Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Do you have a few minutes now?

(IF NOT, TRY TO GET RESPONDENT TO COMMIT TO ANOTHER TIME).
1 Continue
2 Callback
3 Civilian denies having had contact with police
4 Respondent refuses to continue

Before we get started, could you please tell me whether you are at least 18-years-old?

1 Yes, at least 18 years old
2 No, under 18

1.  How professionally would you say that the officer(s) treated you? Would you say that you were treated...

(Interviewer: Read list.)

1 Very professionally
2 Somewhat professionally
3 Somewhat unprofessionally, or
4 Very unprofessionally
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

2.  How respectfully would you say that you were treated by the officer(s)...

(Interviewer: Read list.)

1 Very respectfully
2 Somewhat respectfully
3 Somewhat disrespectfully, or
4 Very disrespectfully
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable

6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

3.  How well did the officer(s) explain where you could get help for problems you might
have had as a result of the incident? Would you say the officer(s) explained this...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very clearly
2 Somewhat clearly
3 Somewhat unclearly, or
4 Very unclearly
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

4.  Based on your experience, or what you may have read, seen, or heard, how
knowledgeable was the officer(s) in dealing with the problem you were experiencing?
Would you say the officer(s) was...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very knowledgeable
2 Somewhat knowledgeable
3 Somewhat unknowledgeable, or
4 Very unknowledgeable
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

5. How interested was the officer(s) in your problem? Would you say the officer(s) was...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very interested in helping
2 Somewhat interested in helping
3 Somewhat uninterested in helping, or
4 Very uninterested in helping
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

6.  How promptly did the police respond to your situation?
    Would you say they responded...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very promptly
2 Somewhat promptly
3 Somewhat less than promptly, or
4 Not at all promptly
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused
(Do NOT Read) I sought out the police

7.  Overall, how satisfied are you with how the officer(s) handled your situation...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very satisfied
2 Somewhat satisfied
3 Somewhat dissatisfied, or
4 Very dissatisfied
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

8.  Now, I want to ask you about how your interaction with the officer(s) affected your satisfaction with the NYPD. As a result of this encounter with the police, would you say you feel...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 More satisfied
2 No change, or
3 Less satisfied
4 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
5 (Do NOT Read) Refused

9.  Based on your experience, or what you may have read, seen, or heard, in terms of fighting crime overall, would you say the NYPD overall is doing...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 A good job
2 An adequate job
3 A less than adequate job, or
4 A poor job
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

10.  Based on your experience, or what you may have read, seen, or heard, in terms of dealing with citizens in a fair and courteous manner, would you say the NYPD is doing...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 A good job
2 An adequate job
3 A less than adequate job, or
4 A poor job
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

11.  Are there any ways that the officers could have handled your situation better? *(open-ended question asked of 5% of the sample)*

12. Is there anything you can suggest that the NYPD can do to better meet neighborhood needs? *(open- ended question asked of 5% of the sample)*

The remaining questions will help us better understand what people the NYPD is serving. If you are uncomfortable giving these responses, you may refuse to answer. Keep in mind, however, that your responses will only be used for statistical analysis and will be kept strictly confidential.

13.  May I please ask your age?

(Interviewer:  Record age (13-99). Enter RF for Refused.)

14.  Which of these categories best describes your racial/ethnic heritage?

(Interviewer:  Record one response)

1a. White
2b. Black

3c. White Hispanic
4d. Black Hispanic
5e. Asian or Pacific Islander
6f. American Indian or Alaskan Native
7 (Do NOT Read) Other (Specify)
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

15. (Interviewer:  Record gender by observation.)

1 Male
2 Female
3 Uncertain

Thank you for your time. Your responses will be combined with the responses of many others to develop a measure of how the NYPD is doing in dealing with citizens. The Police Commissioner will use this measure to help improve the way the Department interacts with the public.

(Interviewer:  Press return to continue)

# Community Leader Questionnaire
## (Text Version of Universal Survey Center CATI)

Phone Number: xx-xxx-xxxx

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Universal Survey Center,

May I please speak with xxxxxxx?

(Interviewer: If at anytime you wish to change to Spanish text, type l=b at any prompt.)

00 - CONTINUE
01 - Answering machine/voice mail
02 - Busy
03 - Changed number
04 - No answer
05 - Respondent not available
06 - Schedule a callback

YY - Break/End of Shift

07 - Disconnected
08 - Fax/modem
09 – Non-residential number
11 - Language
12 - Privacy manager
13 - Respondent hung up
14 - Respondent said "never callback"
15 - No such person at this number
16 - Respondent incoherent

I would just like to confirm that I am speaking with xxxxxxx?

1 Yes, proper party on phone
2 No, proper party coming to phone
3 Callback

Hello, my name is _____. My company, Universal Survey Center, has been hired by the New York Police Department to contact community leaders who have regular contact with their local police precinct administrators. You have been designated by your precinct commander as one of the influential leaders in your community.

The police commissioner wants to find out if people are satisfied with the service that they receive from the NYPD. I want to ask you some questions about your experience with the police during the past month. It will take just five minutes, and your answers will help the police department to do a better job of serving the community. The information you give will be used for statistical purposes only: Your identity will not be associated with your answers.

Do you have a few minutes now?

(IF NOT, TRY TO GET RESPONDENT TO COMMIT TO ANOTHER TIME).

1 Continue
2 Callback
3 Civilian reports not having contact with police during past month
4 Respondent refuses to continue

1.  In your contact(s) with local police command this past month, did you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to voice your concerns? Would you say that the opportunity you had was...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very sufficient
2 Somewhat sufficient
3 Somewhat insufficient, or
4 Very insufficient
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

2.  How did the police command with whom you had contact respond to the issues you presented? Over the last month, would you say they were...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very responsive
2 Somewhat responsive
3 Somewhat unresponsive, or
4 Very unresponsive
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

3.  How informed did the local police command keep you about progress on issues that you or your organization raised? Over the last month, would you say that they kept you...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 Very well informed

2 Somewhat well informed

3 Less than adequately informed, or

4 Not at all well informed

5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable

6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

4. Over the last month, would you say that the police command sought your advice...

(Interviewer: Read list.)

1 Frequently

2 Occasionally

3 Rarely, or

4 Never

5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable

6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

5. How well informed has the police command kept you about significant events in the precinct? By significant, I mean those that could affect your organization. Over the last month, would you say they kept you...

(Interviewer: Read list.)

1 Very well informed

2 Somewhat well informed

3 Less than adequately informed, or

4 Not at all well informed

5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable

6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

6. Overall, during the past month how satisfied are you with the way the precinct command has interacted with your constituency?

(Interviewer: Read list.)

1 Very satisfied

2 Somewhat satisfied

3 Somewhat dissatisfied, or

4 Very dissatisfied

5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable

6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

7.  Now I want to ask you about your satisfaction with the NYPD.  Based on your contacts over that last month would you say you feel...

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 More satisfied
2 No change, or
3 Less satisfied
4 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
5 (Do NOT Read) Refused

8.  In terms of fighting crime overall, would you say the NYPD is doing....

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 A good job
2 An adequate job
3 A less than adequate job, or
4 A poor job
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

9.  In terms of dealing with citizens in a fair and courteous manner, would you say the NYPD is doing....

(Interviewer:  Read list.)

1 A good job
2 An adequate job
3 A less than adequate job, or
4 A poor job
5 (Do NOT Read) Not applicable
6 (Do NOT Read) Refused

10. Is there anything you can suggest that the NYPD can do to better meet neighborhood needs? *(open-ended question asked of ALL community leaders)*

11. Each month we will be speaking with community leaders like yourself. In the future we would like you to share your opinions. Would you be willing to speak with us next month?

1 Yes
2 No

12a. What day of the week is most convenient?

1 Monday
2 Tuesday
3 Wednesday
4 Thursday
5 Friday
6 Saturday
7 Sunday

12b. Which week of the month is most convenient?

1 First
2 Second
3 Third
4 Fourth

12c. What time of the day is most convenient, AM or PM?

1 AM
2 PM

12d. And lastly, approximately, what time? (Interviewer: Record in HHMM format.)

The remaining 2 questions will help us better understand what people the NYPD is serving. If you are uncomfortable giving these responses, you may refuse to answer. Keep in mind, however, that your responses will only be used for statistical analysis and will be kept strictly confidential.

May I please ask your age?

(Interviewer: Record age (13-99). Enter RF for Refused.)

14. Which of these categories best describes your racial/ethnic heritage?

(Interviewer:  Record one response)

1a. White
2b. Black
3c. White Hispanic
4d. Black Hispanic
5e. Asian or Pacific Islander
6f. American Indian or Alaskan Native
7 (Do NOT Read) Other (Specify)
8  (Do NOT Read) Refused

15. (Interviewer:  Record gender by observation.)

1  Male
2  Female
3  Uncertain
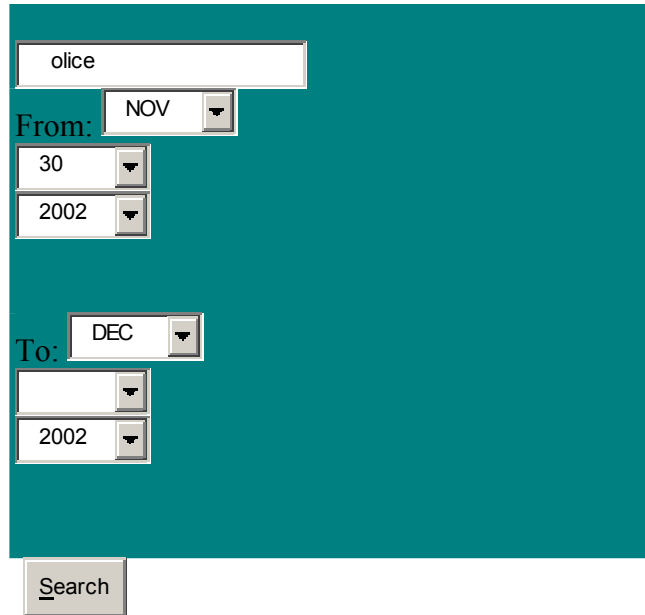
 Thank you very much for your time and for your cooperation.

 (Interviewer:  Press return to continue.)

## Appendix C: Use of Internet News Search Engines

This appendix provides a brief description of the search engines used for the news database.

The NY1-Cable news site allowed us to search within a particular date range, but did not allow us to be more specific about whether the keyword was located in the headline or in the body text.



**Note:** Results are limited to the 30 most recent stories and/or video clips within the date range you've selected. If you don't find what you're looking for, try changing the range of dates. The NY1.com searchable archives currently go back to September, 1999.

The WABC 7 search tool only allowed us to cull articles based on keywords. After obtaining results, we went through each individual headline to be sure it met our criteria.

**Search WABC:**

| Police | Find |

The *Village Voice* site was similar to the WABC site, in that there was no date range.

article search
| Police | go |

*USA Today* and the *New York Post* had the same search engines. They both allowed for specific detail and were easily searchable.

USA TODAY Archives

## Advanced Search

Basic | Advanced

**Search for:**

| Police |

Search

**Date Options:**

◉
Last 2 Years

○
All dates (April 1987 to present)

○ Date Range

**From**

| Apr ▼ | 1 ▼ | 1987 ▼ |

| Nov ▼ | 11 ▼ | 2002 ▼ |
|---|---|---|

**Author:**

[            ] (optional)

**Headline:**

[            ] (optional)

**Section:**

| All ▼ |

**# of Matches:**

| 25 ▼ |

Search Examples:

- Single word: **education**

- Phrase: **"White House"**

- Wildcard: **educat***
  (will match **educat**e, **educat**ion, **educat**or ...)

- Multiple words/phrases: **"white house" AND education**

- [More search tips...](#)

The *New York Times* database was also comprehensive and easily searched although full text articles older than seven days were accessible only by paying a fee. We solved this problem by using the New York Public Library site.

# Advanced Search

Past 30 Days ▾

Search the archive for over 500,000 articles dating back to Jan.1, 1996.

**\* Enter Search Words** (use quotes around phrases)

> Police

**Appearing In**

> Headline ▼

◉ And  ☐ Or  ☐ Not

**Additional Words or Phrases**

> [ ]

**Appearing In**

> Full Article ▼

**Select a Publication Date or Range Since January 1, 1996**

☐   On this specific day:

> Nov ▼  11 ▼  1996 ▼

◉   In a date range from

> Jan ▼  1 ▼  1996 ▼  to  Nov ▼  11 ▼  2002 ▼

**Look for Articles in:**

> All Sections ▼

**Sort Results by:**

> Closest Match ▼

**Search ⊙**

A red **\*** indicates that the field is required.

Note: Articles from the last 7 days are free, as are all reviews back to 1996.
Articles in the Premium Archive (**$**) may be purchased for as little as $1.05. Learn more.

The *New York Times* and the *New York Post* were available free online through the New York Public Library with a regular library card. This tool allowed us to search full text articles published in the last 365 days.

**New York Public Library**
**New York Public Library Newspapers**

**Keyword search**

**Click in the entry box and enter search term(s)**

| Police | | Search |

Search for words ◉ in title, citation, abstract ◯ in entire article content
Type words to search for. You can use AND, OR, NOT. Results are sorted by date.

**Limit the current search (optional)**

by date _____

to the following journal(s) _____ Brow se

by section ☐ Arts and Entertainment ☐ Business News ☐ Lifestyle ☐ News ☐ Opinion and Editorial ☐ Regional News ☐ Sports

**History**

No Search Results

New York Public Library Newspapers has 153,836 articles and was last updated on Nov 11, 2002.

# NEW YORK COMMUNITY SURVEY

## OPENING TEXT

Hello. My name is _____. I am calling to ask New York residents to participate in a survey on their views of the police. This is a government-funded project, being carried out by the Vera Institute of Justice. It's important for us to get a representative range of views in our survey. I need to ask you a couple of questions to select someone from your household to participate in the survey. All your responses are completely confidential.

Please tell me how many adults there are in your household that are aged 18 years and older. Include yourself if you are at least 18 years old.

Of the adult household members, whose name comes first alphabetically?

Is (the adult with name that comes alphabetically first) available right now, to answer some survey questions? It will take about 10 minutes.

Hello. My name is _____. You have been selected to participate in a survey. This is a government-funded project for New York residents on their opinions of the police. I am calling on behalf of the Vera Institute of Justice, and will need about 10 minutes of your time.

All your responses will be completely confidential.

## Police Effectiveness

q1  First, I'm going to ask you some general questions about your views of the police.

In terms of fighting crime, would you say the police in your neighborhood are doing . . . [READ LIST]

1. A very good job
2. A somewhat good job
3. A somewhat bad job
4. A very bad job

5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q2  In terms of responding promptly to calls for assistance from residents, would you say the police in your neighborhood are . . .[READ LIST]

1. Very prompt
2. Somewhat prompt
3. Somewhat less than prompt
4. Not at all prompt
5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q3  In terms of helping people who have been victims of crime, would you say the police in your neighborhood are  . . . [READ LIST]

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Somewhat less than helpful
4. Not at all helpful
5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q4  In terms of working together with residents in your neighborhood to solve local problems, would you say the police in your neighborhood are doing a very good job, a somewhat good job, neither a good nor bad job, a somewhat bad job, a very bad job, or would you say you don't know what kind of job the police are doing. . . [DO NOT READ LIST]

1. A very good job            4. A very bad job
2. A somewhat good job        5. Don't know
3. A somewhat bad job         9. Refused

q5  Overall, how effective are the police doing in dealing with the problems that concern people in your neighborhood? Would you say they are . . . [READ LIST]

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective

3. Somewhat less than effective
4. Not at all effective
5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

**Police Professionalism**

q6  In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your neighborhood to stop people on the street, or people driving in their cars, without good reason? Would you say this. . .[READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon
3. Is somewhat uncommon
4. Is somewhat common
5. Is very common
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q7  In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your neighborhood to use excessive force, for example, by using guns unnecessarily, or using more physical force than required? Would you say this . . .[READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon
3. Is somewhat uncommon
4. Is somewhat common
5. Is very common
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q8  In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your neighborhood to use offensive language when dealing with criminal suspects or other members of the public? Would you say this . . . [READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon
3. Is somewhat uncommon
4. Is somewhat common
5. Is very common

6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q9  In your opinion, how common is it for police officers in your neighborhood to break the law or break police rules when carrying out their work? Would you say this. . .[READ LIST]

1. Never happens
2. Is very uncommon
3. Is somewhat uncommon
4. Is somewhat common
5. Is very common
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q10  Overall, in terms of dealing with residents in a fair and courteous manner, would you say the police in your neighborhood are doing…[READ LIST]

1. A very good job
2. A somewhat good job
3. A somewhat bad job
4. A very bad job
5. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

**Police Contacts**

q11  I'm going to read some statements about any experiences you may have had seeking help or assistance from the police. This could include reporting a crime, asking for assistance, calling or going into a police station, or approaching a police officer on the street. Which of the following best describes your experience . . .[READ LIST]

1. You have approached the police within the last 12 months
2. You have approached the police in the past, but not within the last 12 months
3. You have never approached the police [GO STRAIGHT TO Q13]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO Q13]

q12  On the last occasion when you approached the police how do you think you were treated? Would you say you were treated ... [READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q13  As far as you are aware, have any of the following people that you know approached the police to report a crime or ask for assistance within the last year?
[DO NOT READ OUT YES/NO RESPONSE CATEGORIES]

q13a  Members of your immediate family

1. Yes
2. No

q13b  Other family relatives

1. Yes
2. No

q13c  Friends or neighbors

1. Yes
2. No

q13d  Other acquaintances

1. Yes
2. No

If more than one is picked, go to question 14.

If just one is picked, go straight to question 15.

If none picked, go straight to question 16

q14  Thinking about the last time you heard about one of these experiences, who did it involve? Was it [READ LIST, CHOOSE ONLY ONE]

1. A member of your immediate family
2. Another family relative
3. A personal friend or neighbor
4. Another acquaintance
9. Refused

q15  On this occasion, how well did the person appear to have been treated by the police overall? Would you say they were treated. . .[READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q16  Please tell me which of the following best describes any experiences you may have had being approached or stopped by the police. This might involve a police officer stopping you while you were driving or walking, or having an officer come to your home to question you about an incident.

1. You have been approached or stopped by the police within the last 12 months.

2. You have been approached or stopped by the police in the past, but not within the last 12 months.

3. You have never been stopped or approached by the police. [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 18]

9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 18]

q17  On the last occasion you were approached by the police, how do you think you were treated? Would you say you were treated. . .[READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

q18  As far as you are aware, have any of the following people that you know been approached or stopped by the police within the last year?
[DO NOT READ OUT YES/NO RESPONSE CATEGORIES]

q18a  Members of your immediate family

1. Yes
2. No

q18b  Other family relatives

1. Yes
2. No

q18c  Friends or neighbors

1. Yes
2. No

q18d  Other acquaintances

1. Yes
2. No

If more than one is picked, go to question 19.

If just one is picked, go straight to question 20.

If none picked, go straight to question 21

q19 Thinking about the last time you heard about one of these experiences, who did it involve? Was it. . .[READ LIST AND SELECT ONE]

1. A member of your immediate family
2. Another family relative
3. A personal friend or neighbor
4. Another acquaintance
9. Refused

q20 And, on this occasion, how well did the person appear to have been treated by the police overall? Would you say they were treated. . .[READ LIST]

1. Very well
2. Reasonably well
3. Neither well nor badly
4. Somewhat badly
5. Very badly
6. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
9. Refused

**Media Consumption**

q21 Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about any news programs that you watch, see, or hear. This information is useful to us in understanding people's opinions of the police.

First of all, I'd like to ask you about any TV news that you may have watched in the last 7 days. Would you say that you have seen TV news ... [READ LIST]

1. Every day for the last 7 days
2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
5. None of the last 7 days [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 23]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 23]
q22 In the last 7 days, which of the following TV channels did you watch when viewing the news?

[READ THE LIST FIRST AND LISTEN FOR ANSWERS AFTERWARDS. SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY]

1. ABC [WABC (Channel 7)]
2. CBS [WCBS  (Channel 2)]
3. FOX [WNYW-FOX (Channel 5)
4. NBC [WNBC (Channel 4)]
5. PBS [WNET-PBS (Public Television-Channel 13)]
6. UPN9 News [WWOR-UPN9 News (Channel 9)]
7. WB Network [WPIX-WB Network (Channel 11)]
8. CNN
9. NY1-[Time Warner Cable (Channel 1-CNN NYC affiliate)]
10. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
11. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
12. NO MORE CHOICES. EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION.

q23  Please tell me about any radio news programs that you may have listened to in the last 7 days. Would you say that you have listened to radio news programs…[READ LIST]

1. Every day for the last 7 days
2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
5. None of the last 7 days [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 25]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 25]

q24  In the last 7 days, on which of the following radio channels did you hear the news?

[READ THE LIST FIRST AND LISTEN FOR ANSWERS AFTERWARDS. SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY]

1. WABC [WABC 770 (am) News/Talk Radio]
2. WCBS [WCBS  880 (am) News/Talk Radio]
3. 1010  WINS [1010 WINS (am)]
4. National Public Radio [WNYC 820 (am) / WNYC 93.9 (fm)]
5. WNEW [102.7 (fm) News/Talk Radio]
6. WPLJ [95.5 (fm) Top 40]

7. Hot 97 [WQHT 97.1 (fm) (Hip hop)]
8. WBLS [107.5 (fm) Urban Contemporary]
9. WBAI [95.5 (fm) Community Radio]
10 Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
11. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
12. NO MORE CHOICES. EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION.

q25  The next statements describe any newspapers that you may have read
in the last 7 days. Would you say that you have read a newspaper on . . .
[READ LIST]

1. Every day for the last 7 days
2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
5. None of the last 7 days [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 27]
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 27]

q26  In the last 7 days, which of the following newspapers did you read?

[READ THE LIST FIRST AND LISTEN FOR ANSWERS
AFTERWARDS. SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY]

1. *New York Times*
2. *New York Post*
3. *New York Daily News*
4. *Wall Street Journal*
5. *NY Press*
6. *Village Voice*
7. *Newsday* (Long Island)
9. *USA Today*
10. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
11. [DO NOT READ] Don't know
12. NO MORE CHOICES. EXIT FROM QUESTION.

q27  Thinking about any news you may have seen, heard or read in the last
month, do you recall any news items about the police?

1. YES
2. NO [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 29]

3.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 29]
9. REFUSED [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 29]

q28  Forgetting about your own views on the police for a moment, would you say that the news that you have seen, heard, or read within the last month. . .[READ LIST]

1. Made the police look very good
2. Made the police look somewhat good
3. Didn't make the police look good or bad, overall
4. Made the police look somewhat bad
5. Made the police look very bad
9. Refused

**Demographics**

q29  Your responses to the remaining questions will only be used for statistical  purposes and will be kept strictly confidential. If you are uncomfortable giving a response to any of these questions, please let me know.

First of all, how old were you on your last birthday?

ENTER AGE _____

q30 Which of the following categories best describes your racial or ethnic heritage?

READ LIST AND SELECT APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

1. White
2. Black
3. White Hispanic
4. Black Hispanic
5. Asian or Pacific Islander
6. American Indian or Alaskan Native
7. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
9. Refused

q31  What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed?

READ LIST AND SELECT APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

1. Elementary school
2. High school or GED
3. Some college
4. College degree
5. Some post-graduate school
6. Master's degree
7. Any doctorate, professional, or medical degree
8. Vocational or technical degree beyond high school
9. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
10. Refused

q 31.5  Were you born in the United States?
1. Yes [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 31.7]
2. No
9. Refused [GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 31.6]

q 31.6 How many years have you lived in the United States?

_____

q 31.7  Do you or your family own the home in which you live?
1. Yes
2. No
9. Refused

q32  Interviewer record respondent's gender

1. Male
2. Female
3. Uncertain

**CLOSING MESSAGE**

Those are all the questions I need to ask. Thank you very much for your time. Your responses will be combined with many others to help us understand New York residents' views and experiences of the police. Again, thanks very much. Good bye.

# Coding frame and examples of headlines for media database

| Code | Description |
|---|---|
| 1A | Police business (residual general category): JUDGE DISMISSES SUIT ON POLICE PROMOTIONS |
| 1B | Police work (in relation to specific incidents): HOSTAGE TAKER HAD OWN GUN, POLICE SAY |
| 1C | Police policy promoting accountability and professionalism: NASSAU POLICE REVISE POLICY ON LINEUPS |
| 2A | Death/injury to a civilian or animal from police activity or by a police officer (no suggestion of blame):  SUSPECT IS KILLED BY THE POLICE |
| 2B | Death/injury to an on- or off-duty police officer from police activity: POLICE OFFICER SHOT AFTER SUSPECT GRABS HIS GUN |
| 3A | Misconduct suggested—use of force: BLACK TEENAGER TELLS OF POLICE BEATING |
| 3B | Misconduct suggested—other: POLICE COVERED UP CORRUPTION, DETECTIVE ASSERTS IN A LAWSUIT |
| 4 | Misconduct vindication: POLICE UNITS USED PROPER FORCE IN BRONX FRACAS, GIULIANI SAYS |
| 5 | Police-community relations: positive coverage: POLICE DEPT. IN WALLKILL HAS IMPROVED, MONITOR SAYS |
| 6 | Police-community relations—negative coverage: WHEN A BADGE IS SEEN, VIEWS VARY, AFTER LOUIMA, NEW YORKERS ARE SPLIT ON POLICE PROGRESS |
| 7 | Crime-fighting—positive coverage: NYPD SAYS NUMBER OF HOMICIDES REACHED NEW LOW IN JANUARY 2002 |
| 8 | Crime-fighting—negative coverage: WOMAN, MAN BECOME THE 17TH & 18TH PRISONERS TO ESCAPE FROM POLICE CUSTODY |
| 9 | 9/11 stories: MUSLIM HERO HONORED AT LAST: HUNDREDS MOURN POLICE CADET WHO PERISHED AT WTC |

# PUBLIC OPINIONS OF

# THE POLICE

## The Influence of Friends, Family and News Media

Code-book for data from Community Survey and Media Database

# Contents

## Variable definitions - Survey of public

```
                 List of variables on the working file

Name
Position

WAVE        survey wave
1
            Measurement Level: Scale
            Column Width: 7   Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F8
            Write Format: F8

            Value     Label

               1      1
               2      2
               3      3
               4      4
               5      5
               6      6
               7      7
               8      8
               9      9

PRECINCT
2
            Measurement Level: Nominal
            Column Width: 8   Alignment: Left
            Print Format: A8
            Write Format: A8

SPANISH     spanish interview
3
            Measurement Level: Scale
            Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F8.2
            Write Format: F8.2

            Value     Label

             1.00     spanish
             2.00     english

HOUSHLD     Please tell me how many adults there are in your household t
4
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
            Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F4
            Write Format: F4

Q1          In terms of fighting crime, would you say the police in your
5
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
```

```
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1

                Value     Label

                    1     1. A very good job
                    2     2. A somewhat good job
_



                    3     3. A somewhat bad job
                    4     4. A very bad job
                    5     5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                    9     9. Refused

Q2              In terms of responding promptly to calls for assistance from
6
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1

                Value     Label

                    1     1. Very prompt
                    2     2. Somewhat prompt.
                    3     3. Somewhat less than prompt
                    4     4. Not at all prompt
                    5     5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                    9     9. Refused

Q3              In terms of helping people who have been victims of crime, w
7
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1

                Value     Label

                    1     1. Very helpful
                    2     2. Somewhat helpful
                    3     3. Somewhat less than helpful
                    4     4. Not at all helpful
                    5     5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                    9     9. Refused

Q4              In terms of working together with residents in your neighbor
8
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1

                Value     Label
```

2

```
               1      1. A very good job
               2      2. A somewhat good job
               3      3. A somewhat bad job
               4      4. A very bad job
               5      5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
               9      9. Refused


    _



    Q5         Overall, how effective are the police doing in dealing with
    9
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1

               Value     Label

               1      1. Very Effective
               2      2. Somewhat effective
               3      3. Somewhat less than effective
               4      4. Not at all effective
               5      5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
               9      9. Refused

    Q6         In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your nei
    10
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1

               Value     Label

               1      1. Never happens
               2      2. Is Very uncommon
               3      3. Is Somewhat uncommon
               4      4. Is Somewhat common
               5      5. Is Very common
               6      6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
               9      9. Refused

    Q7         In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your nei
    11
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1

               Value     Label

               1      1. Never happens
               2      2. Is Very uncommon
               3      3. Is Somewhat uncommon
               4      4. Is Somewhat common
```

3

```
                   5     5. Is Very common
                   6     6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                   9     9. Refused


     _


Q8         In your opinion, how common is it for the police in your nei
12
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1

           Value     Label

                   1     1. Never happens
                   2     2. Is Very uncommon
                   3     3. Is Somewhat uncommon
                   4     4. Is Somewhat common
                   5     5. Is Very common
                   6     6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                   9     9. Refused

Q9         In your opinion, how common is it for police officers in you
13
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1

           Value     Label

                   1     1. Never happens
                   2     2. Is Very uncommon
                   3     3. Is Somewhat uncommon
                   4     4. Is Somewhat common
                   5     5. Is Very common
                   6     6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                   9     9. Refused

Q10        Overall, in terms of dealing with residents in a fair and co
14
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1

           Value     Label

                   1     1. A very good job
                   2     2. A somewhat good job
                   3     3. A somewhat bad job
                   4     4. A very bad job
                   5     5.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                   9     9. Refused
```

4

—

Q11         I'm going to read some statements about any experiences you
15
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
            Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F1
            Write Format: F1
            Missing Values: 9, *

            Value      Label

                1      1. You have approached the police within
                2      2. You have approached the police in the past,
                3      3. You have never approached the police
                9 M    9. Refused

Q12         On the last occasion, when you approached the police, how do
16
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
            Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F1
            Write Format: F1
            Missing Values: 9, *

            Value      Label

                1      1. Very well
                2      2. Reasonably well
                3      3. Neither well nor badly
                4      4. Somewhat badly
                5      5. Very badly
                6      6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                9 M    9. Refused

Q13A        Members of your immediate family
17
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
            Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F1
            Write Format: F1
            Missing Values: 9, *

            Value      Label

                1      1. Yes
                2      2. No

—

Q13B        Other family relatives
18

5

```
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                   1     1. Yes
                   2     2. No


    Q13C        Friends or neighbors
    19
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                   1     1. Yes
                   2     2. No


    Q13D        Other acquaintances
    20
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                   1     1. Yes
                   2     2. No


    Q14         Thinking about the last time you heard about one of these ex
    21
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                   1     1. A member of your immediate family
                   2     2. Another family relative
                   3     3. A personal friend or neighbor
                   4     4. Another acquaintance
                   9 M   9. Refused


          _
```

6

```
Q15        On this occasion, how well did the person appear to have bee
22
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1
           Missing Values: 9, *

           Value      Label

               1      1. Very well
               2      2. Reasonably well
               3      3. Neither well nor badly
               4      4. Somewhat badly
               5      5. Very badly
               6      6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
               9 M    9. Refused

Q16        Please tell me which of the following best describes any exp
23
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1
           Missing Values: 9, *

           Value      Label

               1      1. You have been approached or stopped by the police
               2      2. You have been approached or stopped by the police
               3      3. You have never been stopped or approached by
               9 M    9. Refused

Q17        On the last occasion you were approached by the police, how
24
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1
           Missing Values: 9, *

           Value      Label

               1      1. Very well
               2      2. Reasonably well
               3      3. Neither well nor badly
               4      4. Somewhat badly
               5      5. Very badly
               6      6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
               9 M    9. Refused


           —


Q18A       Members of your immediate family
25
```

7

```
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: 9, *

                    Value      Label

                       1     1. Yes
                       2     2. No

Q18B        Other family relatives
26
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: 9, *

                    Value      Label

                       1     1. Yes
                       2     2. No

Q18C        Friends or neighbors
27
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: 9, *

                    Value      Label

                       1     1. Yes
                       2     2. No

Q18D        Other acquaintances
28
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: 9, *

                    Value      Label

                       1     1. Yes
                       2     2. No

_


Q19         Thinking about the last time you heard about one of these ex
29
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
```

8

```
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                    1     1. A member of your immediate family
                    2     2  Another family relative
                    3     3. A personal friend or neighbor
                    4     4. Another acquaintance
                    9 M   9. Refused

Q20             And, on this occasion, how well did the person appear to hav
30
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                    1     1. Very well
                    2     2. Reasonably well
                    3     3. Neither well nor badly
                    4     4. Somewhat badly
                    5     5. Very badly
                    6     6.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
                    9 M   9. Refused

Q21             First of all, I'd like to ask you about any TV news that you
31
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9

                Value     Label

                    1     1. Every day for the last 7 days
                    2     2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
                    3     3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
                    4     4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
                    5     5. None of the last 7 days
                    9 M   9. Refused

        _

Q22_1     TV - ABC
32
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
```

9

```
               Write Format: F1
               Missing Values: *

               Value     Label

                  0       not watched
                  1       watched

Q22_2     TV - CBS
33
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1
               Missing Values: *

               Value     Label

                  0       not watched
                  1       watched

Q22_3     TV - Fox
34
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1
               Missing Values: *

               Value     Label

                  0       not watched
                  1       watched

Q22_4     TV - NBC
35
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1
               Missing Values: *

               Value     Label

                  0       not watched
                  1       watched

    ─

Q22_5     TV - PBS
36
               Measurement Level: Ordinal
               Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
               Print Format: F1
               Write Format: F1
```

```
                Missing Values: *

                Value      Label

                   0       not watched
                   1       watched

Q22_6      TV - UPN9
37
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value      Label

                   0       not watched
                   1       watched

Q22_7      TV - WB
38
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value      Label

                   0       not watched
                   1       watched

Q22_8      TV - CNN
39
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value      Label

                   0       not watched
                   1       watched


_



Q22_9      TV - NY1
40
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *
```

11

```
            Value    Label

              0      not watched
              1      watched

Q22_10     TV - other
41
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1
           Missing Values: *

           Value    Label

              0      not watched
              1      watched

Q22_11     In the last 7 days, which of the following TV channels did y
42
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1

           Value    Label

              1      1.  ABC [WABC (Channel 7)]
              2      2.  CBS [WCBS  (Channel 2)]
              3      3.  FOX [WNYW-FOX (Channel 5)
              4      4.  NBC [WNBC (Channel 4)]
              5      5.  PBS [WNET-PBS (Public Television-Channel 13)]
              6      6.  UPN9 News [WWOR-UPN9 News (Channel 9)]
              7      7.  WB Network [W PIX-WB Network (Channel 11)]
              8      8.  CNN
              9      9.  NY1-[Time Warner Cable (Channel 1-CNN NYC
affiliate)]
             10      10. Other. [SELECT AND RECORD]
             11      11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
             12      12. NO MORE CHOICES   EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION


_


Q22_12     In the last 7 days, which of the following TV channels did y
43
           Measurement Level: Ordinal
           Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
           Print Format: F1
           Write Format: F1

           Value    Label

              1      1.  ABC [WABC (Channel 7)]
              2      2.  CBS [WCBS  (Channel 2)]
```

```
         3      3.  FOX [WNYW-FOX (Channel 5)
         4      4.  NBC [WNBC (Channel 4)]
         5      5.  PBS [WNET-PBS (Public Television-Channel 13)]
         6      6.  UPN9 News [WWOR-UPN9 News (Channel 9)]
         7      7.  WB Network [W PIX-WB Network (Channel 11)]
         8      8.  CNN
         9      9.  NY1-[Time Warner Cable (Channel 1-CNN NYC
affiliate)]
         10     10. Other. [SELECT AND RECORD]
         11     11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
         12     12. NO MORE CHOICES   EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION


Q22_OTH
44
         Measurement Level: Nominal
         Column Width: 16  Alignment: Left
         Print Format: A50
         Write Format: A50


Q23      Please tell me about any radio news programs that you may ha
51
         Measurement Level: Ordinal
         Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
         Print Format: F1
         Write Format: F1
         Missing Values: 9


         Value     Label

           1     1. Every day for the last 7 days
           2     2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
           3     3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
           4     4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
           5     5. None of the last 7 days
           9 M   9. Refused


_


Q24_1    WABC
52
         Measurement Level: Ordinal
         Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
         Print Format: F1
         Write Format: F1
         Missing Values: *

         Value     Label

           0     not heard
           1     heard


Q24_2    WCBS
53
         Measurement Level: Ordinal
         Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
```

13

```
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: *

          Value     Label

             0     not heard
             1     heard

Q24_3     1010 WINS
54
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: *

          Value     Label

             0     not heard
             1     heard

Q24_4     National Public Radio
55
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: *

          Value     Label

             0     not heard
             1     heard


 _


Q24_5     WNEW
56
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: *

          Value     Label

             0     not heard
             1     heard

Q24_6     WPLJ
57
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
```

```
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: *

                    Value     Label

                        0     not heard
                        1     heard

Q24_7      Hot97
58
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: *

                    Value     Label

                        0     not heard
                        1     heard

Q24_8      WBLS
59
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: *

                    Value     Label

                        0     not heard
                        1     heard


_



Q24_9      WBAI
60
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
                    Missing Values: *

                    Value     Label

                        0     not heard
                        1     heard

Q24_10     other radio
61
                    Measurement Level: Ordinal
                    Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                    Print Format: F1
                    Write Format: F1
```

15

Missing Values: *

Value      Label

   0      not heard
   1      heard

Q24_11     In the last 7 days, on which of the following radio channels
62
       Measurement Level: Ordinal
       Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
       Print Format: F1
       Write Format: F1

       Value      Label

        1      1. WABC [WABC 770 (am) News/Talk Radio]
        2      2. WCBS [WCBS  880 (am) News/Talk Radio]
        3      3. 1010  WINS [1010 WINS (am)]
        4      4. National Public Radio [WNYC 820 (am) / WNYC 93.9
(fm)]
        5      5. WNEW [102.7 (fm) News/Talk Radio]
        6      6. WPLJ [95.5 (fm) Top 40]
        7      7. Hot97 [WQHT 97.1 (fm) (Hip hop)]
        8      8. WBLS [107.5 (fm) Urban Contemporary]
        9      9. WBAI [95.5 (fm) Community Radio]
      10      10 Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
      11      11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
      12      12. NO MORE CHOICES   EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION

_

Q24_12     In the last 7 days, on which of the following radio channels
63
       Measurement Level: Ordinal
       Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
       Print Format: F1
       Write Format: F1

       Value      Label

        1      1. WABC [WABC 770 (am) News/Talk Radio]
        2      2. WCBS [WCBS  880 (am) News/Talk Radio]
        3      3. 1010  WINS [1010 WINS (am)]
        4      4. National Public Radio [WNYC 820 (am) / WNYC 93.9
(fm)]
        5      5. WNEW [102.7 (fm) News/Talk Radio]
        6      6. WPLJ [95.5 (fm) Top 40]
        7      7. Hot97 [WQHT 97.1 (fm) (Hip hop)]
        8      8. WBLS [107.5 (fm) Urban Contemporary]
        9      9. WBAI [95.5 (fm) Community Radio]
      10      10 Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
      11      11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
      12      12. NO MORE CHOICES   EXIT TO NEXT QUESTION

```
Q24_OTH
64
          Measurement Level: Nominal
          Column Width: 16  Alignment: Left
          Print Format: A50
          Write Format: A50

Q25       The next statements desribe any newspapers that you may have
71
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: 9

          Value     Label

            1     1. Every day for the last 7 days
            2     2. 5 or 6 out of the last 7 days
            3     3. 3 or 4 out of the last 7 days
            4     4. 1 or 2 out of the last 7 days
            5     5. None of the last 7 days
            9 M   9. Refused


_



Q26_1     New York Times
72
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: *

          Value     Label

            0     not read
            1     read

Q26_2     New York Post
73
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
          Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
          Print Format: F1
          Write Format: F1
          Missing Values: *

          Value     Label

            0     not read
            1     read

Q26_3     New York Daily News
74
          Measurement Level: Ordinal
```

17

```
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value     Label

                    0     not read
                    1     read

Q26_4       Wall Street Journal
75
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value     Label

                    0     not read
                    1     read


_


Q26_5       NY Press
76
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value     Label

                    0     not read
                    1     read

Q26_6       Village Voice
77
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: *

                Value     Label

                    0     not read
                    1     read

Q26_7       Newsday (Long Island)
78
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
```

18

```
              Print Format: F1
              Write Format: F1
              Missing Values: *

              Value     Label

                 0     not read
                 1     read


Q26_8      nothing
79
              Measurement Level: Ordinal
              Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
              Print Format: F1
              Write Format: F1
              Missing Values: *

              Value     Label

                 0     not read
                 1     read


_


Q26_9      USA Today
80
              Measurement Level: Ordinal
              Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
              Print Format: F1
              Write Format: F1
              Missing Values: *

              Value     Label

                 0     not read
                 1     read


Q26_10     other newspaper
81
              Measurement Level: Ordinal
              Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
              Print Format: F1
              Write Format: F1
              Missing Values: *

              Value     Label

                 0     not read
                 1     read


Q26_11     In the last 7 days, which of the following newspapers did yo
82
              Measurement Level: Ordinal
              Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
              Print Format: F1
```

19

```
            Write Format: F1

            Value     Label

              1     1. New York Times
              2     2. New York Post
              3     3. New York Daily News
              4     4. Wall Street Journal
              5     5. NYPress
              6     6. Village Voice
              7     7. Newsday (Long Island)
              9     9. USA Today
             10     10. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
             11     11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
             12

    _


Q26_12    In the last 7 days, which of the following newspapers did yo
83
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
            Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F1
            Write Format: F1

            Value     Label

              1     1. New York Times
              2     2. New York Post
              3     3. New York Daily News
              4     4. Wall Street Journal
              5     5. NYPress
              6     6. Village Voice
              7     7. Newsday (Long Island)
              9     9. USA Today
             10     10. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
             11     11.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
             12

Q26_OTH
84
            Measurement Level: Nominal
            Column Width: 16  Alignment: Left
            Print Format: A50
            Write Format: A50

Q27       Thinking about any news you may have seen, heard or read in
91
            Measurement Level: Ordinal
            Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F1
            Write Format: F1
            Missing Values: 9, *, 3

            Value     Label
```

```
          1    1. YES
          2    2. NO
          3 M  3.  [DO NOT READ] Don't know
          9 M  9. REFUSED
```

—

Q28      Forgetting about your own views on the police for a moment,
92
         Measurement Level: Ordinal
         Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
         Print Format: F1
         Write Format: F1
         Missing Values: 9, *

         Value    Label

          1    1. Made the police look very good
          2    2. Made the police look somewhat good
          3    3. Didn't make the police look good or bad, overall
          4    4. Made the police look somewhat bad
          5    5. Made the police look very bad
          9 M  9. Refused

Q29      First of all, how old were you on your last birthday? ENTER
93
         Measurement Level: Scale
         Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
         Print Format: F3
         Write Format: F3
         Missing Values: 99

Q30      Which of the following categories best describes your racial
94
         Measurement Level: Ordinal
         Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
         Print Format: F1
         Write Format: F1
         Missing Values: 9

         Value    Label

          1    1. White
          2    2. Black
          3    3. White Hispanic
          4    4. Black Hispanic
          5    5. Asian or Pacific Islander
          6    6. American Indian or Alaskan Native
          7    7. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
          9 M  9. Refused.
```

—

21

Q30_OTH
95

      Measurement Level: Nominal
      Column Width: 16  Alignment: Left
      Print Format: A50
      Write Format: A50

Q31       What is the highest grade or year of school you have complet
102

      Measurement Level: Ordinal
      Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
      Print Format: F2
      Write Format: F2
      Missing Values: 10

      Value    Label

        1    1. Elementary school
        2    2. High school or GED
        3    3. Some college
        4    4. College degree
        5    5. Some post-graduate school
        6    6. Master's degree
        7    7. Any doctorate, professional, or medical degree
        8    8. Vocational or technical degree beyond high school
        9    9. Other [SELECT AND RECORD]
     10 M  10. REFUSED

Q31_OTH
103

      Measurement Level: Nominal
      Column Width: 16  Alignment: Left
      Print Format: A50
      Write Format: A50

QBORN     Were you born in the United States?
110

      Measurement Level: Ordinal
      Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
      Print Format: F1
      Write Format: F1
      Missing Values: 9, *

      Value    Label

        1    1. Yes
        2    2. No
        9 M  9. Refused

  —

YRSLIVE   How many years have you lived in the United States? ENTER NU
111

      Measurement Level: Scale

```
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F5
                Write Format: F5

QOWN            Do you or your family own the home in which you live?
112
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 9, *

                Value     Label

                   1    1. Yes
                   2    2. No
                   9 M  9. Refused

Q32             Interviewer record respondent's gender
113
                Measurement Level: Ordinal
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F1
                Write Format: F1
                Missing Values: 3

                Value     Label

                   1    1. Male
                   2    2. Female
                   3 M  3. Uncertain

GENSAT          Derived effectiveness scale
114
                Measurement Level: Scale
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F8.2
                Write Format: F8.2
                Missing Values: -9.00

MISCON          Derived misconduct scale
115
                Measurement Level: Scale
                Column Width: 8  Alignment: Right
                Print Format: F8.2
                Write Format: F8.2
                Missing Values: -9.00


        _
```

## Data - Media tracking database

```
                List of variables on the working file

Name
Position

DATE        Date of article
1
            Measurement Level: Nominal
            Column Width: 10   Alignment: Right
            Print Format: ADATE8
            Write Format: ADATE8


HEADLINE    Article headline
2
            Measurement Level: Nominal
            Column Width: 86   Alignment: Left
            Print Format: A86
            Write Format: A86


SOURCE      News source
13
            Measurement Level: Nominal
            Column Width: 16   Alignment: Left
            Print Format: A9
            Write Format: A9


TYPE        Article coding
15
            Measurement Level: Nominal
            Column Width: 6   Alignment: Left
            Print Format: A2
            Write Format: A2


WAVE        Resarch wave
16
            Measurement Level: Scale
            Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F8.2
            Write Format: F8.2
            Missing Values: -9.00

NATLOC      National or Local story
17
            Measurement Level: Scale
            Column Width: 8   Alignment: Right
            Print Format: F8.2
            Write Format: F8.2
            Missing Values: -9.00


            Value      Label

             1.00      national
             2.00      local
```

# DATA FILE DETAILS

## Public Opinions of the Police: The Influence of Friends, Family, and News Media

(Grant number 2001–IJ–CX–0038 from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice).

These are SPSS portable files and have been provided to NIJ on a CD-ROM

**survey file for data archive (Aug 2003).por**

*First five cases:*

```
1,A,2,2,2,5,1,2,1,2,1,1,1,1,3, , , , , , , ,3, ,2,2,2,2, ,
,2,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,5,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0, , ,
,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,0,1,world journal,1,2,47,5, ,7, , , ,
,2,.866666666666667,.0625
1,A,2,1,3,1,5,2,3,4,1,1,2,1,3, , , , , , , ,3, ,2,2,2,2, ,
,3,0,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,4,0,0,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,9,-9,-9,-9,-
9,-9,-9,-9,-9,-9,-9,0,1, ,3, ,65,2, ,4, , , , ,1,.666666666666667,.25
1,A,2,2,2,2,2,4,3,3,5,5,5,2,2,4, , , , , ,
,2,1,2,2,1,1,3,3,1,1,0,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,
,3,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,4,42,3, ,6, , , , ,2,.5,.875
1,A,2,2,2,5,5,2,5,5,6,6,6,2,1,1, , , , , , , ,3, ,2,2,2,2, ,
,1,1,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,0,1,0,1,98.7 kiss
fm,3,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,2,64,2, ,3, , , , ,
,2,.666666666666667,-9
1,A,2,2,1,2,2,2,2,4,3,2,4,2,3, , , , , , , ,1,1,2,2,2,2, ,
,2,1,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,
,1,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,2, ,60,2, ,5, , , , ,
,1,.722222222222222,.5625
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*Last five cases:*

```
9,E,2,2,2,2,2,5,2,2,2,2,2,2,1,2,2,2,2,2, , ,1,2,2,2,2,2, ,
,1,0,0,1,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,2,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,
,2,0,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,2,32,1, ,4, ,1,
,2,2,.666666666666667,.25
9,E,2,2,1,2,1,1,2,2,1,6,1,1,2,1,2,2,2,2, , ,1,1,2,2,2,2, ,
,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,5,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0, , ,
,1,0,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,4,51,1, ,2, ,1,
,1,2,.888888888888889,.0833333333333333
9,E,2,2,1,1,2,3,3,5,5,5,4,2,2,5,2,2,1,2, ,4,2,5,1,2,2,2,
,5,1,1,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,1,0,0,1, ,2,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,
,2,1,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,4,48,2, ,3, ,1,
,1,1,.666666666666667,.9375
```

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9,E,2,2,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,1,1,2,2,1,2,2, ,1,1,2,2,2,2,2, ,
,1,0,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,
,1,1,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,2,35,1, ,3, ,1, ,2,2,1,.0625
9,E,2,2,1,5,2,5,1,2,3,2,2,1,3, ,2,2,2,2, , ,2,1,2,2,2,2, ,
,1,0,0,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,3,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,
,2,1,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1, ,1,5,64,1, ,2, ,1,
,1,1,.916666666666667,.3125
```

**media file for data archive (Aug 2003).por**

*First five cases:*

```
12/31/2001,2001WRAPUP-YEAR IN LAW ENFORCEMENT,NY1,1A,1,2
12/31/2001,MIDDLETOWN: POLICE UNION PRESIDENT WONT RUN,NYTIMES,1A,1,1
12/31/2001,OFF-DUTY OFFICER AMONG 4 KILLED IN 2 SI
CRASHES,NYTIMES,2B,1,2
12/31/2001,COPS: OFFICER DIES IN DWI HIT-AND-RUN,POST,2B,1,2
12/31/2001,POLICE: FLEEING DRIVER HITS COP,POST,2B,1,2
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*Last five cases:*

```
10/5/2002,"FOR COP, ITS HONOR, POST BAIL",POST,3B,10,2
10/5/2002,NYPS MOSQUE SPIES HAVE FEDS IRATE,POST,1A,10,2
10/5/2002,SNIPE SPREE EX-COP SENT  TO PSYCH WARD,POST,3B,10,2
10/6/2002,POLICE OFFICER SHOT AFTER SUSPECT GRABS HIS GUN,NY1,2B,10,2
10/6/2002,POLICE CHIEFS JOB ON LINE OVER TESTIMONY ON
PROFANITY,NYTIMES,3B,10,1
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**Publications**

Currently, there are no publications based on these data. Publications relevant to the research are found in the technical report.