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PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE AMONG MEMBERS OF SIX ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL QUEENS, NY

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has established that race plays an important part in shaping people's attitudes toward the police. However, race is a variable that has less and less explanatory power as the U.S. becomes an increasingly multi-ethnic society. Our investigation examined the effects that one's local ethnic community plays in conditioning attitudes toward the police. From a multi-ethnic neighborhood in Queens, New York with a high proportion of foreign-born residents, we surveyed representative samples of 200 residents from six different ethnic groups. The groups included African-Americans, Italians, Indians, Colombians, Eduadoreans, and Dominicans. Respondents were asked about voluntary and involuntary contacts with the police, about perceptions of police effectiveness and misconduct, and about crime reporting.

Contrary to expectations, we found no significant differences among the six ethnic groups in police-initiated contacts. On the other hand, we noted large differences between ethnic communities in voluntary contacts with the police. The ethnic communities that were the longest-established and best-integrated into the local political structure (African-Americans and Italian-Americans) were far more likely to use the police in instrumental ways than communities that were less well-established (the three Latino communities).

We found that respondents held contradictory attitudes about police behavior. A majority believed that the police were effective in addressing local crime concerns. But a majority also believed that the police were guilty of engaging in misconduct.

As expected, experience with the police played a role in shaping people's attitudes. Individuals who had been stopped by the police within the past year were more likely to believe that the police engaged in misconduct and were less willing to report crimes than other survey respondents. However, group membership played a much larger role in how people felt about the police: The most powerful determinant of opinions about the police and willingness to report crimes was membership in particular local ethnic communities: Respondents who were from communities that were less efficacious and less well-integrated into the local political structure held less favorable views of the police than respondents from more powerful communities. Also important in conditioning attitudes toward the police was whether respondents were native citizens. Respondents who were born in the U.S. held more positive attitudes toward the police than respondents who had been born abroad. The pattern of results suggests that confidence in the police is generated less by direct experience than by the attitudes of one's peers and by prejudices about law enforcement formed in immigrants' countries of origin.

INTRODUCTION

Two notorious allegations of police misconduct in New York City have thrown a national spotlight on police dealings with recent immigrants and as well as established ethnic minorities. In the Abner Louima case, police in Queens were accused of brutalizing a Haitian immigrant held at a Brooklyn precinct house. Louima, a bank security guard and married father, was taken into custody when police came to break up a fight between two women at a Brooklyn music club. Two officers were convicted of sodomizing him with a plunger after strip searching him in a bathroom of the precinct.

In the case of Amadou Diallo four special unit police officers face grand jury charges of second degree murder in the shooting of an unarmed West African immigrant. Diallo was confronted by officers -- again all White -- from the NYPD's Street Crimes Unit in the doorway of his Bronx apartment building. The officers who apparently had mistaken Diallo for a suspected serial rapist and who may have believed that he was reaching for a gun shot the street peddler 41 times.

As a result of these incidents, the New York Police Department is under investigation by state and federal attorneys general. The cases have thrown into sharp relief the issue of police relations with minority communities. These incidents, as well as others in neighboring New Jersey have prompted an outcry over stop-and-frisk and other tactics in which police allegedly target individuals meeting certain profiles, often based on ethnicity, age, and gender. The incidents have tapped into deep-seated frustrations that immigrants and established ethnic minorities have harbored concerning their treatment at the hands of the police. The NYPD has already made changes to the way in which

its Street Crimes Unit operates, and more changes are likely to follow.

A recent Harris poll (Changing Attitudes Toward the Police, April 7, 1999) highlighted serious concerns about relations between police and ethnic minorities. For example:

> o Most Americans (55%) believe that local police are guilty of brutality against Blacks or Hispanics at least occasionally. Among Black Americans, this figure rises to 79%.
>
> o While only 16% of Whites say that they are sometimes afraid that the police will stop and arrest them even when they are completely innocent, fully 43% of Blacks express this fear.

A newly-released study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found some justification for these perceptions. The number of cases in which police used force in that study was too small to examine differences between racial groups. But the study reported that minorities who had contact with the police were more likely to be handcuffed than were Whites (Greenfeld, Langan, and Smith, 1999).

Our work examines the nature of the relationship between police and immigrant communities. While a number of investigators have examined experiences with and attitudes toward the police among racial minorities, ours is the first work we know of which looks at specific ethnic groups, some of which contained large numbers of recent immigrants. Our work sought to look at contacts with the police -- both voluntary and involuntary -- of six ethnic groups residing in central Queens, NY. We then look at how these groups view the police -- both positive attitudes (perceptions of police effectiveness) and negative attitudes (police misconduct). Next, we examine the extent to which perceptions of the police are conditioned by people's experiences, by their ethnic communities, and by demographic factors.

Another section of the report examines victimization experiences of the ethnic communities, including family violence and hate crimes. Finally, we examine crime reporting behavior of the six communities and the factors that shape willingness to report, including contacts with the police, attitudes toward the police, and membership in their local ethnic community. The picture that emerges is an interesting one and one that we hope will help law enforcement administrators and policy-makers better understand issues of concern to ethnic communities, particularly whose with recently-arrived Americans.

The current work complements earlier work that we conducted for the National Institute of Justice (Davis and Erez, 1996). In the earlier study, we examined barriers to participation in the criminal justice system for victims who are recent immigrants. We found that, while immigrants did face some special problems, overall their experience in the criminal justice system was not unlike that of native-born victims. That is, most immigrant victims were satisfied with their treatment by criminal justice officials, and when they did have complaints, the complaints were similar in nature to those of native-born victims However, criminal justice officials we interviewed believed that many immigrant victims never used the criminal justice system because they were reluctant to report crimes to the police. The present work examines the nature of the relationship between immigrant victims and the police and assesses the extent to which members of each community report crimes.

Background on Police-Minority Relations

The discouraging state of relations between the police and ethnic minority communities in New York City that we described above is nothing new: Relations between the police and ethnic minorities have experienced strains throughout U.S. history. Police officers, who are most often

White, and minority residents perceive each other as different, often leading to mistrust and animosity (Vrij, 1991). It has been argued that police treat -- or are perceived to treat -- members of minority communities differently than White citizens (Shusta, et. al., 1994; Lumb, 1995). In 1968 the Kerner Commission noted the existence of hostility at various times between New York City police and Jews, Irish, Poles, Italians, Germans, and (later) Puerto Ricans. More recently, the riots of Blacks and Latinos following the trial of police officers accused of beating Rodney King and the anti-police verdict of the (predominantly) minority O.J. Simpson jury have placed in stark relief the tensions between police and minorities.

Although research has shown that people generally hold favorable views of the police (e.g., Mastrofski, et. al., 1998, 1999), it has also consistently demonstrated that members of minority communities are more hostile toward and fearful of the police than Whites. For example, Webb and Marshall (1985) found that Latinos and Blacks were less likely than Whites to agree with positive statements about the personal and professional characteristics of police officers. Jefferson and Walker (1993) reported that two-thirds of people surveyed believed that the police discriminated against non-Whites. In fact, the most consistent of all predictors identified to date of citizen attitudes toward the police is race. Although the results from many surveys have shown that most people are generally supportive of the police and satisfied with the way they perform their duties (see Homant, Kennedy, & Fleming, 1984; Benson, 1981; O'Brien, 1978; Thomas & Hyman, 1977; Lundman, 1974; Radelet, 1980; Wilson, 1975), studies reaching back to the 1960s concur that Black citizens evaluate the police more negatively than White citizens (Hahn, 1969; McCord and Howard, 1968; Jacob, 1971; Campbell and Schuman, 1972; Skogan, 1978; Scaglion and Condon, 1980; Browning, Cullen, Cao, Kopache, and Stevenson, 1994). Moreover, such negative attitudes toward the police

are not confined only to African-Americans. Hadum and Snortum (1975) reported that Mexican-Americans as well as Blacks gave the police lower ratings than Whites.

The lower confidence in the police among minorities seems to be attributable, at least in part, to differential experience with the police (Jacob, 1971). Winfree and Griffiths (1971) reported that most of the variation in assessments of police performance were attributable to respondents' experience with the police. Scaglion and Condon (1980) found that the way that people perceive their treatment at the hands of the police is a more important determinant of their attitudes than demography. Campbell and Schuman (1972) found that lower evaluations of the police among Blacks was attributable to Blacks experiencing more insulting language, unnecessary frisks, and police brutality than Whites. Friedman and Hott (1995) found that youths who were stopped by the police were far more likely than those not stopped to fear the police: Indeed, fully 61% of those stopped felt they had been verbally disrespected, threatened, or shoved.

Thus, Blacks and other minorities are more likely than Whites to have unpleasant involuntary contacts with the police, and these contacts color their perceptions of law enforcement officials (Feagin, 1970; Walker, et. al., 1972; Parks, 1976; Winfree and Griffiths, 1971). Over a quarter century ago, Piliavin and Briar (1964) noted in an observational study of police in a large city that officers exercised a good deal of discretion in deciding whom to stop, and that youths were often stopped even when evidence of wrongdoing was absent. Race was an important factor in the decision to detain, with Black youths being targeted more often than Whites. Black and Reiss (1970) conducted a similar investigation of police interactions with juveniles in several major metropolitan areas and found that the likelihood of arrest for Black juveniles was higher than for Whites. Sykes and Clark (1981) analyzed data from 200 police-citizen encounters in a large city. They found that

officers failed to show respect in most encounters, but especially those involving minority youth. Officers' behavior toward minorities was occasioned, in part, by failure of minority youth to show deference to officers.

Decker (1981) distinguished between voluntary and involuntary contacts with the police. He defined voluntary contacts as being initiated by citizens to report crimes, requests for information, and so forth. Involuntary contacts were police-initiated contacts such as stops for questioning on the streets or arrests. Decker reasoned that involuntary contacts would generate more negative reactions by citizens than voluntary contacts. However, evidence suggests that any form of contact with the police -- voluntary or involuntary -- push attitudes in a more negative direction (Smith and Hawkins, 1973). For example, several studies have suggested that persons who are victimized by crime hold more negative attitudes toward the police than those not victimized (Block, 1971; Homant, Kennedy, and Fleming, 1984). It has been suggested that the higher rate of victimization among minorities may partially account for their more negative attitudes toward the police (Gaines, Kappeler, and Vaughan, 1994). Southgate and Eckblom, 1984).

It has also been suggested that minorities hold the police in lower regard because they are more sensitive to mistreatment by the police than Whites. Friedman and Hott (1995) concluded that Latinos were the ethnic group most likely to feel disrespected by the police even though they were less likely to be stopped by the police than White or Blacks. Browning, et. al. (1994) interpreted their results to indicate that Blacks were more likely than Whites to interpret police behavior toward them as being "hassling" and or indicative of suspicion.

A Better Way of Policing Minority Communities?

In the 1970s, experts in policing began to acknowledge the roles of both police and community as co-producers of community safety. In the 1980s, community policing -- a new approach to law enforcement that emphasizes police-community partnerships -- began to make great inroads in replacing traditional policing methods that operate on a model in which the police respond to citizen calls for service (Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994). The growing popularity of community policing can be found among police administrators, politicians, and private citizens. President Clinton incorporated community policing into the Crime Bill of 1994, and its proponents have heralded community policing as the "only form of policing available for anyone who seeks to improve police operations, management, or relations with the public" (Eck & Rosenbaum, 1994, p. 4).

Community policing centers around police-citizen partnerships that attempt to solve problems before they erupt into more serious incidents. It also requires a decentralization of police operations, putting police officers back on the streets. Contrasting with the professional model, community policing underscores the importance of direct engagement with citizens and flexible responses to neighborhood disorder and crime. In short, community policing necessitates a change in the fundamental philosophy of policing: from a squad patrol orientation to a foot patrol orientation; from reactive, incident-driven responses to proactive, problem-driven responses; from part-time, short-term district assignments to full-time, long-term district assignments. The purported benefits include safer neighborhoods and greater police accountability (Uchida and Forst, 1994).

Community policing has been viewed by some as a way to improve relations between police and members of minority communities. Community policing has been described as empowering

minority segments of communities by eliciting the needs and concerns of those groups who otherwise feel that no one is listening (Trojanowicz, 1991). The NAACP (1994) has also gone on record backing community policing because it encourages the community to define problems and set priorities for the police and it helps to diffuse the notion of police as being apart from the community.

Although major studies are still underway (most notably in Chicago by Wes Skogan and his associates), there is ample evidence that community policing has beneficial effects on perceptions of the police, crime, and fear of crime, relative to traditional policing methods. Skogan (1990) described the results of large-scale evaluations of community policing experiments by the Police Foundation in Houston and Newark. He reported that, in both communities, community perceptions of police performance in sectors of the cities where community policing had been adopted. Public perceptions of social and physical disorder were down, fear of crime was down, and area satisfaction increased. Other major studies of community policing have found similar positive impacts (e.g., Uchida, Forst, and Annan, 1992; Greene and McLaughlin, 1993).

There is some evidence that community policing can help to improve police-minority relations. Trojanowicz (1991) found that improvement in police-community relations were seen when foot patrols were begun as part of a community policing strategy. However, there also is evidence that awareness of community policing and benefits of community policing are not shared equally by all segments of the community. For example, Pate (1986) reported that awareness of and contact with community policing programs in Houston were lower in poor and minority neighborhoods, Whites were more likely than Blacks to report that they were aware of community policing meetings, to recall that police had paid courtesy calls, and/or to state that they had called

or visited the local community policing storefront precinct. Differences were even more striking between Whites and Latinos: In each of the program penetration categories, Whites reported at least three times more involvement than Latinos.

Such differences have not been universally noted. Skogan (1990) reported few subgroup differences in an evaluation of Newark's community policing experiment. Skogan and Hartnett (1997) reported higher turnout for community meetings among Black and poor residents in the current Chicago community policing experiment. However, differences in subgroup awareness and participation long have been reported in studies of community organizing (e.g., Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams, 1982; see Rosenbaum, 1987 for an extended discussion).

Differences of this sort were envisioned by Reiss (1971), who argued that community-based policing may not work well in communities characterized by racial and economic diversity of residents. The values of police officers reflect those of the particular subgroups from which the officers are drawn. These values may be different than those of other segments of the community. As a result, officers may show favoritism toward some segments of the community and single out other segments for strict enforcement efforts (Skogan, 1990).

The lesser impact of community policing that has been observed on minority communities may be most pronounced in communities which contain large numbers of recent immigrants. It is telling, for example, that in the Houston community policing experiment Latinos scored even lower on measures of awareness, participation, and effectiveness of community policing than Blacks. The Latino communities presumably contained many more foreign-born residents than the Black communities studied. Similarly, Skogan and Hartnett (1997) found lower participation in community meetings among Latinos than among Whites or Blacks.

The Difficulty of Policing Immigrant Communities

While the literature has made clear that there are special problems policing racial minorities, problems are likely to be exacerbated when communities contain large numbers of recent immigrants. There are strong reasons to expect that efforts to recruit citizens into the fight against crime would be less successful in communities of foreign-born minorities. The most obvious hindrance is language. Many recent immigrants know little English and most police officers are not fluid in other languages (Pogrebin and Poole, 1989). Thus recent immigrants may not receive messages about community policing from mass media, advertisements or officers themselves to nearly the same extent as English-speakers.

Immigrants' participation in police-sponsored activities may be diminished by negative expectations about authorities. Many immigrants come here carrying the baggage of bad experiences with authorities in their country of origin (Pogrebin and Poole, 1990b). These perceptions of authorities are transferred to officials in the U.S. in the absence of any direct experience with authorities here. When they do have contact with police here, the contact may be negative because of misunderstandings arising from cultural or language differences.

Immigrants may also avoid involvement with police because of concern about their immigration status (e.g. Meeker and Dombrink, 1988). Official estimates place the influx of undocumented immigrants at 5-10 million over the past ten years (Nelan, 1993). In a recent study for NIJ, we reported that undocumented immigrants were perceived by criminal justice officials and by leaders of their own communities as likely to avoid involvement with the criminal justice system out of fear of deportation (Davis and Erez, 1996).

But gaining the cooperation of recent immigrants in crime reporting and police activities is important because their numbers are large and growing. For example, in 1980, just over 14,000,000 foreign - born individuals were living in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980) and by 1990, the number of foreign - born people had nearly risen to 20,000,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). In some metropolitan areas, including Miami FL, Union City NJ, and Santa Ana CA, more than half of the population is foreign-born (Chaste, 1995).

New York Policing

Under the Dinkins mayoral administration, the NYPD made serious efforts to reach out to engage the community. The Safe Streets, Safe City program proposed in 1990 provided expanded manpower for the police and other criminal justice agencies. But, more significantly, it made community policing the department's top priority. Officers were to become knowledgeable about people, problems, and issues in their neighborhoods. Officers were to be partially freed up from responding to 911 calls to become proactive problem solvers, to become advocates for community residents, and to build local capacity to deal with neighborhood problems. Although community policing in New York can be traced to the Community Patrol Officer Program (CPOP) in 1984, the Safe Streets initiative quintupled the number of officers assigned to community patrol (Greene, 1999).

Under the tenure of William Bratton, the NYPD shifted its focus in the direction of greater enforcement efforts, making extensive use of crime mapping and crackdowns on areas of high crime activity. Bratton believed that the community policing program of the previous mayoral administration lacked focus on crime and was hampered by an overly centralized decsion-making

process. He also believed that the previous administration had not sufficiently emphasized attention to quality of life issues (Bratton, 1998).

Although the concept of community policing was de-emphasized, the notion of beat officers was not lost. Every block still had its own beat officer whom residents could come to identify. Under the Giuliani administration, the department also instituted a new policy of "Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect" which promotes respectful policing and improved understanding between police officers and community members. The CPR policy provides consequences for officers and commanders who are the recipients even of minor multiple complaints of abuse and provides for rewards for officers who are respectful. Coupled with that the NYPD instituted new training programs in Verbal Judo and in diversity training to encourage officers to interact in more constructive ways with the public, especially ethnic minorities.

We set out to examine the success of these initiatives to promote better police-community relations in neighborhoods composed largely of recent immigrants, and to identify ways in which the police can better engage and mobilize these communities. We examined the nature of police-citizen interactions among six ethnic communities -- four composed largely of recent immigrants and two composed largely of native-born residents. We examined the frequency of both voluntary interactions with the police (e.g., asking a police officer for directions) as well as involuntary contacts such as being stopped and questioned by the police.

We also assessed resident perceptions of the police -- both perceptions of competence and perceptions of mistreatment. We examined the extent to which people's opinions were linked to personal experience with their local police, to where they were born (in the U.S. or abroad), and to the influences of their local ethnic communities.

Our study also picks up where our previous one left off on the issue of crime reporting by recent immigrants. In the Davis and Erez (1996) report, the consensus of criminal justice officials whom we interviewed was that crime under reporting is a serious issue in immigrant communities. Field work in two multi-ethnic neighborhoods (Jackson Heights, New York and Logan, Philadelphia) led us to conclude that under reporting was especially acute in ethnic communities that were poorly organized and disenfranchised from the local power structure. Such communities were also characterized by mistrust of authorities. Other authors as well have suggested that under reporting among immigrants is commonplace, although no study to date has based this conclusion upon solid empirical research (Junger, 1990; Pogrebin and Poole, 1990 & 1990a; Meeker and Dombrink, 1991; Sorenson and Telles, 1991).

In the current study, we asked immigrants directly whether they had been victims of a recent crime and whether they reported it. We also asked whether they would be willing to report various crimes if they were to witness them. Using this information, we develop a model of crime reporting behavior based loosely on the work of Kidd and Chayet (1984). They proposed a model of crime reporting that represents one of the only attempts to bring theory to bear upon this behavior. Kidd and Chayet argued that the decision to report crimes is a function of fear of retaliation from the offender, feelings of helplessness or powerlessness, confidence in the ability of the police to apprehend the offender, and mistrust of authorities. Our work tests the extent to which people's failure to report crimes is rooted in factors related to Kidd and Chayet's model, including a sense that their ethnic community is not politically powerful or efficacious, through confidence in police abilities, through perceptions of police misconduct. In addition, we also relate crime reporting to contacts with the police, to membership in local ethnic communities, and to demographic factors.

METHOD

Overview

The research sample was drawn from communities in central Queens, New York. With assistance of staff of the University of Baltimore's Schaffer Center for Public Policy, a sampling plan was constructed which would provide representative samples of each of the six ethnic communities. Telephone interviews were conducted with approximately 200 persons from each of the six ethnic communities (total N=1,123).

Research Design

Selection of Site and Ethnic Communities Our primary criterion in selecting a research site in New York City was to find a police precinct located within a multi-ethnic neighborhood. The 115th precinct located in Jackson Heights, Queens -- one of the sites of an earlier NIJ study we conducted on immigrant victims in the criminal justice system -- is as diverse as neighborhoods come. With 53% of its 128,000 residents foreign-born, Jackson Heights has been called the "United Nations of New York." Its diverse immigrant communities include large numbers of persons of Asian descent (Chinese, Indian, and Korean), Hispanic descent (Dominicans, Colombians, and Ecuadoreans), European descent (Italians, Irish, and German), and African descent.

In our previous work, we learned that ethnic groups coexist in relative harmony, with each community concentrated in different parts of the 115th precinct. Our interviews with police and leaders of ethnic communities also suggested that there are substantial differences between the various immigrant communities in perceptions of the police and willingness to become involved in

the U.S. justice system. For these reasons -- and because our previous work familiarized us with the neighborhood, its organizations, and its leaders -- we determined to use the 115th precinct in Jackson Heights as the sampling frame for the proposed research.

We planned to sample members of six diverse ethnic groups. We intended that two would be Latino: Colombians and Dominicans were two of the ethnic groups we examined in our earlier work in Jackson Heights. According to police and community leaders, the two communities contrast sharply in such important areas as proportion of undocumented immigrants, degree of community organization, and confidence in the police. We also planned to include two Asian communities in the sample. The Chinese and Indian communities in Jackson Heights are the two most numerous Asian residents and provide a striking contrast in social and legal cultures. Finally, we planned to include two European communities in the sample. The Italian and Irish communities are the most numerous European residents of Jackson Heights. Both contain largely persons native to the U.S.: We planned to use these groups as comparisons for the four communities containing large numbers of recent immigrants.

Sampling Frame Using a 1990 census database made available by the New York City Planning Department, a sampling plan was developed with assistance from experts from the University of Baltimore's Schaffer Center for Public Policy. The objective of the plan was to yield a representative sample of 200 residents from each of the six targeted ethnic communities. To achieve this objective, employed a cluster sampling methodology. That is, we used the census data to sample block groups with high concentrations of the six ethnic groups. For each block group selected, Schaffer Center staff set a quota for one or more ethnic groups, based on the prevalence of those groups in the 1990 census. Then we sampled every nth house in order to fill the quota. For

example, if our quota was 25, and there were 100 households in the block group, we would sample every fourth household. If the first sampling failed to yield enough completed interviews to fill the quota, we sampled an additional n households from the same block group until the quota was met.

For each of the six subsamples, a sufficient number of block groups was sampled to yield approximately 400 households. If the initial sample of 400 households proved insufficient, we sampled additional blocks in the same manner.

The sample size projected was designed to yield a 7-8% margin of error in estimates, given the 130,000 population from which we were drawing. That meant that we would be able to detect reliably differences of 15% and greater in dependent measures between ethnic groups. That seemed appropriate, since we were interested in policy questions (e.g., Are there substantial differences between ethnic groups in experience with the police?), rather than questions involving theory.

Changes to the Sampling Plan Once the survey was underway, we were forced to make some changes to the original design. The changes were necessitated by changes in the spatial distribution of ethnic groups that had occurred since the 1990 census. By the time we were in the field, the 1990 census data were seven years out of date. We found that block groups did not always contain substantial numbers of the ethnic groups they were supposed to according to the census. In particular, Irish and Chinese residents had left the area in large numbers and had been replaced by Latin American immigrants, especially Ecuadorians. Italians had also left Jackson Heights, but remained in large numbers in surrounding communities.

The demographic shifts necessitated several changes to our design. First, it became clear that finding large pockets of Irish and Chinese residents was not possible. We replaced the Chinese subsample with Ecuadorians who were ubiquitous in Jackson Heights. Having three Latino groups

was not ideal, but there simply were not enough of any Asian group except Indians to add a second Asian subsample. Losing the Irish subsample was especially problematic because it was one of two groups we had chosen to act as controls (since most were native-born). We determined that there was also a sizeable pocket of African Americans in Jackson Heights. This seemed a good choice to replace the Irish since the African Americans were also largely native-born. Also, African Americans would provide a unique additional perspective on the police.

Italians had also deserted Jackson Heights. But since we felt strongly that we needed at least one European ethnic group, we decided to expand the catchment area for the study to include other communities in central Queens where large numbers of Italians remained. These communities, including Corona, Elmhurst, Maspeth, Ridgewood, and Middle Village, were all contiguous with Jackson Heights.

Interviewing Procedures

We anticipated that many immigrants would not have telephones. Therefore, we planned to conduct the survey door to door. In order to increase trust of residents, we began a publicity effort prior to beginning interviews. We contacted ethnic and local newspapers and radio stations. Our overtures were greeted with interest, and stories about our work appeared in a three papers and two radio stations. We also were able to enlist the help of several local churches in publicizing our work from the pulpit or in bulletins. It was our hope that this publicity would help to decrease suspicion of our work by potential respondents, particularly recent immigrants with high levels of suspicion of authorities.

Once publicity efforts were complete, we began canvassing targeted blocks. Interviewers

were sent door to door to sampled residences. Two attempts were made to interview each sampled household. One attempt was made during the day and the other during evening or weekend hours to ensure that we did not bias the sample against persons who work outside the home. Households were assigned at random to receive initial visits during day or evening/weekend hours.

When contact was made, interviewers attempted to determine whether any member of the household fell into one of the study's six targeted ethnic groups. The individual answering the phone was asked the following screening question: "Does anyone in this household identify themselves with any of the following ethnic groups: Ecuadorean, Indian, Colombian, Dominican, African-American, or Italian"? If a positive response was given, the interviewer began the process of identifying which household member was to be interviewed.

Once it had been established that the household had passed the ethnicity screen, the interviewer decided whom to interview on the basis of residents' dates of birth. We selected from among residents home at the time of our call the person over 18 years of age who had the most recent birthday. However, this decision process proved challenging for some respondents, so we soon changed the procedure to select the person whose first name began with the letter closest to the beginning of the English alphabet.

Changes to the interviewing plan Several weeks into the door-to-door survey process, field interviewers began to question our assumption that many respondents would not have telephones available. We therefore decided to keep track over the next 100 households contacted whether a phone was present in the residence. Our informal survey showed that 92% of households did have phones. Based on this knowledge, we switched to a telephone interviewing methodology. Under our new methodology, we first sent out interviewers to do a listing or enumeration of the

addresses of all residential structures on sampled streets. Back at the research office we used a reverse telephone directory to match phone numbers to the listing of addresses. For the bulk of residences for which phone numbers were available, interview attempts were made by phone. Where residences did not have a phone or had an unlisted number, we dispatched interviewers to conduct in-person interviews.

Interviewer selection and training Three full-time interviewers were bilingual in English and Spanish. Several part-time interviewers were proficient in Italian and Hindi. One of the full-time and all of the part-time interviewers were recruited locally within Jackson Heights with the assistance of ethnic community organizations.

Initially, interviewers received a one-day training session jointly conducted by Victim Services and the University of Baltimore's Schaffer Center for Public Policy. The orientation included instruction in sampling protocols, practice administering survey instruments. Following orientation, interviewer trainees were assigned to work with senior project staff for several days in order to master interviewing skills. Schaffer Center staff conducted a second one-day training session after the first two months of sampling focused on increasing respondent compliance.

Response rate Table 2.1 depicts our success in contacting targeted households. Among 4168 households contacted for the study, 1,622 did not have a member of the six targeted ethnic groups. Seventy-five were disqualified due to physical impairment or recency of moving to the neighborhood. Among the 2,471 remaining eligible households contacted, interviews were completed with 1,123, or 45%.

Measurement

All potential respondents were asked questions to establish their ethnic group membership. Those eligible for the survey based upon those answers were asked questions in the following domains:

Experience with the police We adapted a scale used by the Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium (Johnson, 1993). The eleven item Chicago Experiences with Police Scale (Johnson, 1993) counts the number of different reasons why a person has had contact with the police during the past year. The scale has both citizen-initiated and police initiated components. The citizen-initiated items include calls to report crimes, emergencies, suspicious persons, odd noises and other events. Items also include questions on whether citizens contact the police in order to receive or give information about community concerns or other non-crime experiences. The police initiated items include questions about whether the police have stopped the individual on the street while he or she was out walking or pulled him or her over while driving.

TABLE 2.1

DISPOSITION OF CONTACTED HOUSEHOLDS

Total households contacted	4,168
No resident in six targeted groups	1,622
Unable to conduct interview*	75
Refused	1,348
Interview obtained	1,123

* New in neighborhood, hearing impaired, too sick, unable to comprehend

Perceptions of police misconduct This scale measures the extent to which people are fearful and distrustful of the police. To measure this concept we used a modified version of Jefferson and Walker's (1993) Distrust of Police Measure. Jefferson and Walker's (1993) scale measures the extent to which people thought the police took part in various forms of misconduct, including: using threats when questioning people, unnecessary violence, maintain inaccurate records, and make up evidence. (For example, do you fear that the police will use violence against you?)

Perceptions of police competence This scale measures the extent to which respondents feel that the police are doing a good job. Our measure was based on the ten-item Chicago Attitudes Toward Community Policing Scale (Johnson, 1993) designed to assess citizen evaluations of police in their neighborhoods. The items asked about police responsiveness to neighborhood concerns, and how good a job citizens believe the police are doing in their neighborhood.

Community efficacy We adapted a scale developed by Chavis and Wandersman (1990) for research on block associations, and used in our previous work on community anti-drug organizations (Davis, Smith, Lurigio, and Skogan, 1991). Example: If there was a problem in receiving some service from the city, do you think that persons in your ethnic community could get the problem solved?

Political empowerment We asked two questions that assessed the extent to which respondents perceived their ethnic communities to be integrated into the local political power

structure. The first asked whether they felt that their ethnic group was well-represented in local politics. The other asked whether local politicians were responsive to the needs of their ethnic community.

Community organization We asked seven pairs of questions about participation in community organizations. The first item in each pair queried respondents about whether particular types of local organizations existed within their ethnic communities. The second item of the pair asked their opinions about the level of participation -- weak, moderate, or strong. The seven types of organizations included in the survey were block associations, church groups, anti-crime organizations, sports clubs, social clubs, merchant groups, and organizations to help recent immigrants adapt.

Willingness to report crimes We used an approach to measuring this construct that proved successful in our earlier research on citizen reporting of drug crimes (Davis, Smith, and Hillenbrand 1993). We first asked respondents whether they believed that people in their ethnic community were likely to report various criminal situations to the police, adapted from the list used by Davis, et. al.). Respondents' beliefs were then ranked on a five-point scale.

Following the questions on beliefs about reporting in their community, we asked respondents whether they had witnessed the same list of criminal acts, whether they called the police, and, if not, why not. We also asked the respondents if they hypothetically would report various criminal situations to the police.

Victimization A series of questions was asked to ascertain whether respondents had been victims of the following crimes within the past year: Robbery, assault, burglary, domestic violence, and ethnic hate crimes. Respondents who answered "yes" to any of these questions were further asked whether the incident had been reported to the police.

Strategies to encourage citizen cooperation Respondents were asked their opinions on how the police could enlist better participation in crime fighting from their ethnic group. Both open-ended and closed questions were used. Respondents were first asked to comment freely on the police might best seek to improve relations with their ethnic group. Next, they were asked their opinion of the effectiveness of existing strategies the police are using to relate to their group. Answers were ranked on a five point effectiveness scale.

Respondent characteristics Previous studies on perceptions of the police have indicated the importance of respondent characteristics including SES (education, employment, household income, and income source), age, gender, and history of victimization (see Webb and Marshall, 1995 for a recent review). We included these variables as well as length of time that respondents have been in the U.S., time in the neighborhood, immigration status, and number of members of household.

Subjects

The study included 201 Colombians, 200 Ecuadorians, 200 Dominicans, 176 African Americans, 176 Indians, and 170 Italians. Twenty-seven percent of the sample was born in the U.S.

and 73% in other countries. Respondents had been in the U.S. for an average of 16 years and had been in their present neighborhood for an average of 11 years (see Table 2.2). An overwhelming majority (94%) claimed to be legal residents of the U.S.

Fifty-six percent of respondents were women and 44% men. The median age of the sample was 37 years.* Most respondents (77%) lived in family units of 2-4 persons. But seventeen percent lived alone and 6% lived in households of 5 or more persons. Fifty-eight percent of households had children living in them.

Sample participants were primarily lower middle class. Seven in ten respondents in the sample had graduated secondary school. About one-third (31%) owned their own homes.** Most were in the work force: Forty-seven percent had worked full time during the previous week and another 12% had worked part-time. The sample also included 18% housekeepers, 10% retired, and 4% in school. Respondents who worked did so for an average of 45 weeks during the previous year.

Household income fell below $20,000 for 42% of the sample and above $20,000 for 58%. The most common source of income (reported by 50% of the sample) was employment by others. (Because of respondents' reluctance to disclose their income, the N for the question about income amount is just 838, compared to 1123 respondents overall.)

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* These sample gender and age distributions are relatively similar to census data for Jackson Heights, where 51% of residents are females and the average age is 35 years (Demographic Profiles, New York: Department of City Planning, 1992)..

** Sample proportion of homeowners is comparable to the 34% figure for Jackson Heights (Demographic Profiles, New York: Department of City Planning, 1992).

TABLE 2.2

TIME RESIDED IN UNITED STATES AND IN CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD

	In United States	In Neighborhood
Years		
0 - 5	14%	41%
6 - 10	19	18
11 - 20	27	16
21 & over	40	25
	---	---
Total	100%	100%

About 10% stated that their main income source was a business of their own. Sixteen percent of the sample was receiving social security or disability checks. Just 5% received public assistance checks. Smaller numbers received their main financial support from parents or child support (see Table 2.3).

TABLE 2.3

RESPONDENT PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE

Primary source	Frequency
Employed by others	51%
Own business	10
Public Assistance	5
Social security/disability	15
Parents	2
Child support	3
Other	15

Total	100%

RESULTS

The Six Ethnic Communities

Survey data showed that the six ethnic groups we targeted for participation in the study did differ in significant respects. We had chosen Italians and Blacks because we believed that the proportion of immigrants would be minimal compared to the other four ethic groups, and we were right. Just 16% of Blacks and 27% of Italians were foreign-born. But, among the three Latino groups and among Indians, roughly 9 in 10 respondents were foreign-born (see Table 3.1). A similar pattern was evident with respect to how long people had resided in the U.S. Blacks and Italians had the longest residencies (at about 20 years), while the other four groups had resided in the U.S. an average of 10 years or less (row 2 of Table 3.1). Ninety-five percent or more of five of the ethnic groups claimed to be legal residents of the U.S. In contrast, one in four Ecuadorians admitted to being in this country illegally (row 3 of Table 3.1).

Characteristic of recent immigrants, the three Latino groups and Indians also lived in more crowded conditions than Blacks or Italians (see Figure 3.1). Ecuadorians averaged close to five persons per household, while Colombians, Dominicans, and Indians averaged nearly four. Blacks and Italians averaged about three.

Major differences emerged between the ethnic groups in socioeconomic status. The proportion of high school graduates was highest among Italians (88%), Blacks (84%), and Indians (84%). In sharp contrast, high school graduation rates were under 70% for each of the three Latino

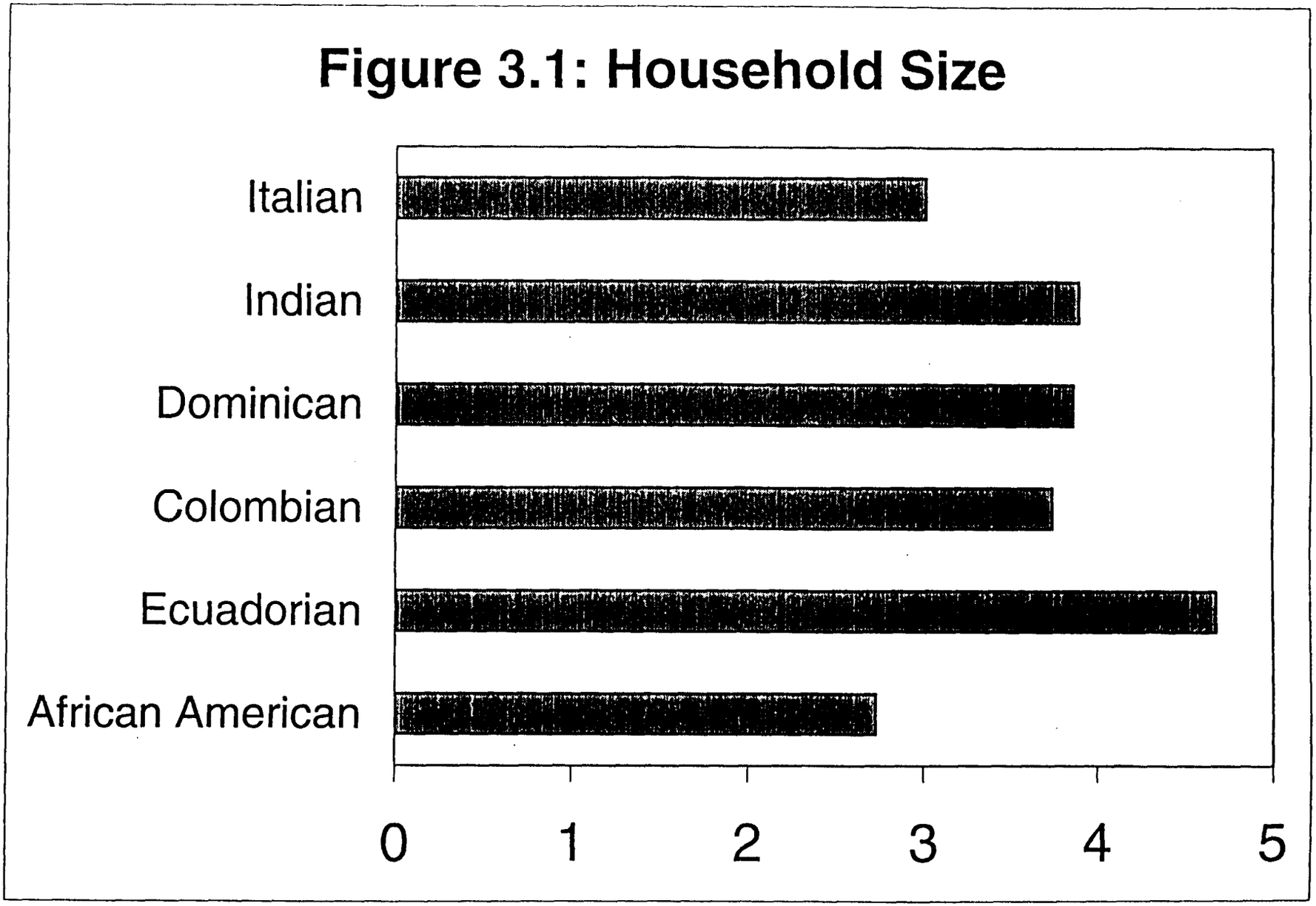


TABLE 3.1

SAMPLE RESIDENCY

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
% born in U.S.	84%	6%	7%	11%	9%	73%	.000
Years in U.S.	41	12	14	16	12	35	.000
% in U.S. illegally	98%	75%	95%	98%	99%	99%	.000

groups (see Table 3.2). Home ownership was high for Blacks and Italians (about 6 in 10 owned their home in each group), but under 30% for the three Latino groups and Indians (row 2 of Table 3.2). Stark differences in household income emerged as well. At least two in three Blacks, Italians and Indians reported incomes of $20,000 or above. But that was true of just one-third of the three Latino groups (row 3 of Table 3.2). Dominicans, in particular, also had a public assistance rate four times that of any other group (row 4 of Table 3.2).

We noted as well differences between respondents in the six groups by age and gender. Black and Italian respondents averaged over 40 years of age, while the three Latino groups and Indians each averaged under 40 years (see Table 3.3). Respondents were primarily female in each of the ethnic groups except among Indians, where two in three were males.

Community organization We asked seven pairs of questions about participation in community organizations. The first item in each pair queried respondents about whether particular types of local organizations existed within their ethnic communities. The second item of the pair asked their opinions about the level of participation -- weak, moderate, or strong. The seven types of organizations included in the survey were block associations, church groups, anti-crime organizations, sports clubs, social clubs, merchant groups, and organizations to help recent immigrants adapt. For purposes of analysis, we collapsed the pairs into one item for each type of organization, coded as either strong/moderate participation by the ethnic community or not. Overall, respondents said that their ethnic community was most likely to participate in church groups (57% rated participation as strong or moderate). Next most common were sports clubs (37%), social clubs (36%), and merchant groups (30%). Least popular were block associations (20%), immigrant aid

TABLE 3.2

SAMPLE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
% high school graduates	84%	55%	63%	52%	84%	88%	.000
% own home	62%	14%	9%	25%	27%	57%	.000
% income $20,000+	73%	34%	38%	31%	67%	79%	.000
% on public assistance	4%	4%	3%	16%	3%	1%	.000

TABLE 3.3

SAMPLE AGE AND GENDER

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Mean age	47	35	38	39	36	43	.000
% female	63%	50%	66%	66%	34%	54%	.000

groups (17%), and anti-crime groups (12%).

Ethnic groups differed markedly in the kinds of local organizations in which they participated (see Table 3.4). Dominicans had the highest participation rate in church groups (79%), followed by Blacks (73%). Indians had by far the lowest participation rate in church groups, with just 24% of respondents rating their community's participation as strong or moderate.

Sports clubs were most popular among Dominicans (62%), and, again, Indians rated themselves lowest in participation at just 15%. Participation rates in the other four groups fell between 30 and 40%. Dominicans topped the list again in participation in social clubs at 56%, followed by Blacks (47%) and Italians (42%). Indians were least likely to participate in social clubs, with 17% rating participation as strong or moderate among their community. Dominicans once again were highest on the measure of participation in merchant associations. The other five groups bunched together with participation rates of 20-30%.

Participation in block associations was exceptionally high in the Black community, with 54% rating participation as strong or moderate. Participation among Italians was also good (27%), but negligible among the other four groups. Differences were smaller (though still statistically significant) in participation in immigrant aid associations. Italians had the lowest participation (10%) while the other groups hovered at about 20% positive responses. Participation in anti-crime groups was highest among Italians (22%), Blacks (19%), and Dominicans (14%). Among the other three groups, less than 10% of respondents rated participation by their community as strong or moderate.

Statistically significant (although not large) differences between the ethnic communities emerged when we examined a composite measure of participation in community organizations (see

TABLE 3.4

PARTICIPATION RATES IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Church groups	73%	51%	55%	79%	24%	57%	.000
Sports clubs	37%	36%	33%	62%	15%	37%	.000
Social clubs	47%	26%	27%	56%	17%	42%	.000
Merchant associations	26%	21%	29%	48%	24%	30%	.000
Block associations	54%	10%	10%	17%	8%	27%	.000
Immigrant aid groups	20%	13%	20%	22%	19%	10%	.012
Anti-crime organizations	19%	7%	4%	14%	7%	22%	.000

Figure 3.1). Respondents from the well-established Black and Italian communities reported high overall participation, relative to most other communities. Surprisingly, however, overall participation in community organizations among Dominicans was even higher than among the longer-established Black and Italian communities.

Collective efficacy We asked respondents a series of questions about how successful their ethnic community was in solving neighborhood problems such as deficient municipal services, drug use, or other signs of social disorder. In general terms, about half of the respondents in each ethnic group believed that it was very likely that their community would work together to solve local problems. Respondents had the greatest confidence in their community rallying to demand better municipal services (47% felt that it was very likely that their community could get the problem solved). Forty-five percent of respondents thought it very likely that their community could solve problems connected to drugs and the same percentage thought it very likely that their community could resolve other signs of social disorder such as drinking, gambling, or loitering.

The responses to these items, displayed in Table 3.5, show surprisingly relatively small differences between the six communities. .There were no significant differences between the six communities on the municipal services item. On the other two items, Blacks and Italians had the highest proportions of respondents who believed that their communities were very likely to solve the problems. Indians were the most pessimistic on both of these items. But the differences between groups on these items is not large -- about 15 percentage points differentiated the highest from the lowest groups.

Political empowerment Two additional questionnaire items asked respondents about their political empowerment. The first asked whether they felt their ethnic group was

TABLE 3.5

MEASURES OF COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

% who believe their community very likely to solve problem with:	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Municipal services	48%	49%	46%	49%	41%	48%	.194
Drinking, gambling	55%	44%	40%	44%	39%	47%	.003
Drugs	50%	49%	41%	39%	39%	54%	.000

well-represented in local politics. Overall, 44% of respondents felt that their group was poorly represented in local politics, while 34% felt that they were somewhat wee-represented, and 22% felt that they were very well-represented. The other asked whether local politicians were responsive to the needs of the respondent's ethnic community. One in four respondents believed that local politicians were not at all responsive to their ethnic community, while 52% felt that politicians were somewhat responsive, and 24% felt that they were very responsive.

On the political empowerment items, inter-ethnic differences were substantial (see Table 3.6). About four in ten Blacks and Italians believed that their ethnic group was very well represented in local politics, compared to just one in ten in each of the Latino groups and Indians. Similarly, when asked whether local politicians were responsive to the needs and concerns of their community, roughly four in ten Blacks and Italians reported that the politicians were very responsive. In contrast, just 10-15% of respondents from the three Latino groups felt that local politicians were very responsive to their community. (Indians were in the middle, with one in four believing that local politicians were very responsive.)

In sum, all six ethnic communities appeared to be healthy and viable. They all had active local organizations and possessed a basic sense of empowerment with respect to solving local problems. Blacks and Italians were the oldest established ethnic groups of the six. These two groups, along with Indians, were the best-educated and most affluent. In contrast, the three Latino communities were newer to the U.S. They also were younger, less well educated, poorer, and more disenfranchised from the political process.

TABLE 3.6

MEASURES OF POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
% who believe their community very well represented in local politics	43%	11%	10%	13%	16%	44%	.000
% who believe politicians very responsive to needs of their community	44%	12%	14%	13%	25%	36%	.000

Experience with the Police

We asked respondents a series of nine questions about interactions with the police in the neighborhood. The contacts divided into seven citizen-initiated interactions and two police-initiated interactions. The most common citizen-initiated interaction with the police was asking an officer for directions (reported by 46% of respondents). Thirty percent had reported a non-crime emergency, 26% had stopped to talk to an officer walking a beat, 25% had reported a crime, 20% had contacted the police to report suspicious persons, 18% had contacted the police about neighborhood problems or concerns, and 8% had contact with the police while participating in block watch or other anti-crime programs. Police-initiated interactions were also common, with twenty-two percent of respondents reporting having been stopped by the police while walking or driving and 6% having been arrested.

Surprisingly, there were no substantial differences in police-initiated contact between the six ethnic groups (see Figure 3.2). African Americans were the most likely to have involuntary contact with the police, with 35% reporting such contacts. Italians and Colombians had the lowest rate at 24% each. These differences, however, failed to approach statistical significance.

There were wide disparities in citizen-initiated contact with the police. Forty-two percent of Blacks and 39% of Italians had reported crimes, while in all of the three Latino communities under 20% said that they had reported crimes (see Table 3.7). Similarly, 39% of Blacks and 42% of Italians had reported non-crime emergencies, compared to an average of 26% for the three Latino groups. Thirty-two percent of both Blacks and Italians said that they reported suspicious persons to the police, while the other ethnic groups hovered around 15%. Thirty-four

Figure 3.2:
of Police-Initiated Contacts

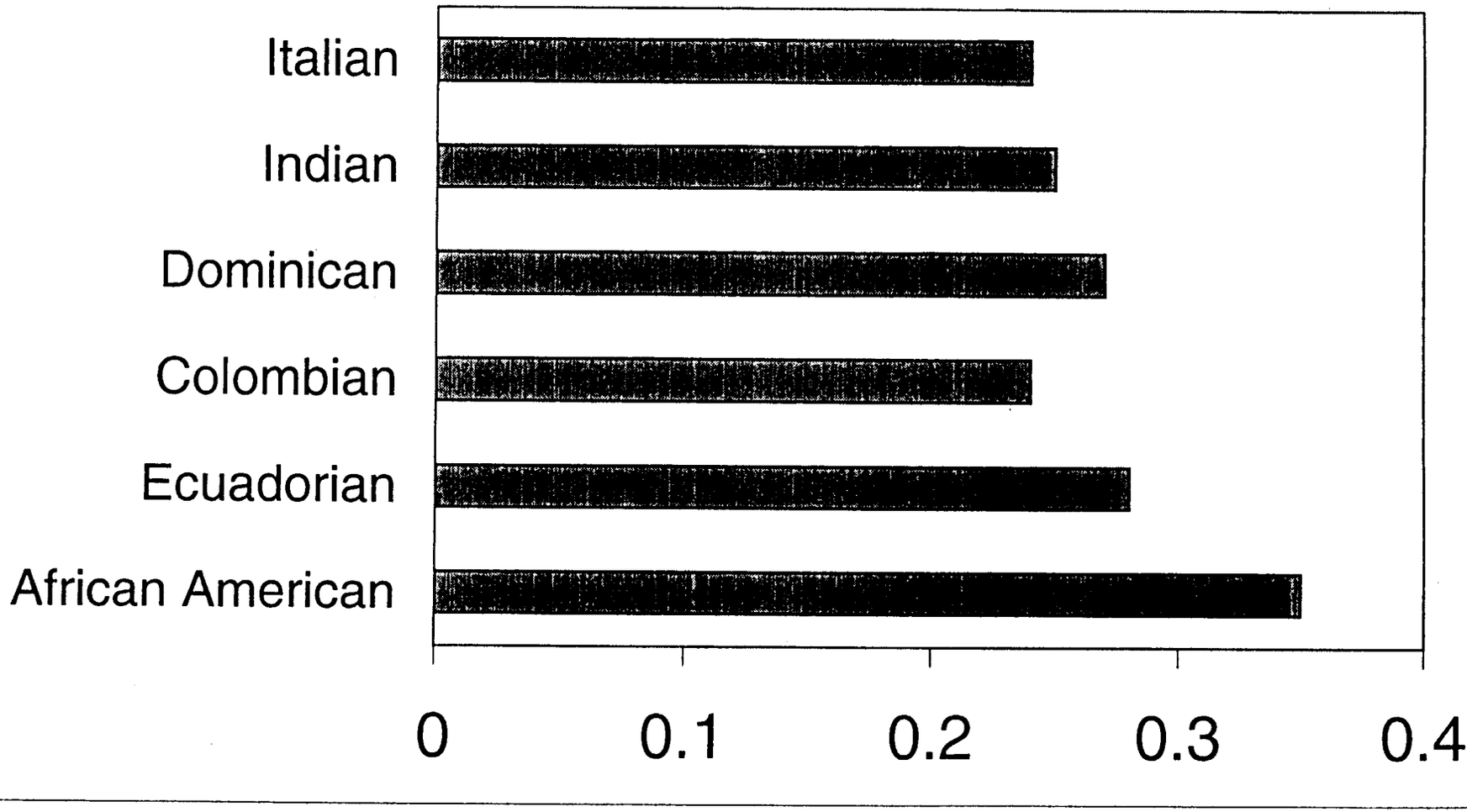


TABLE 3.7

VOLUNTARY CONTACTS WITH THE POLICE WITHIN PAST YEAR

Have you reported:	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Crime	42%	14%	19%	14%	26%	39%	.000
Non-crime emergencies	39%	25%	26%	32%	19%	42%	.000
Suspicious persons	32%	13%	14%	17%	13%	32%	.000
Neighborhood problems	30%	7%	13%	18%	11%	34%	.000
Have you:							
Stopped to talk to officer	36%	18%	20%	26%	23%	34%	.000
Participated in anti-crime organization	20%	2%	4%	9%	5%	10%	.000
Asked directions of officer	47%	40%	61%	40%	46%	45%	.000

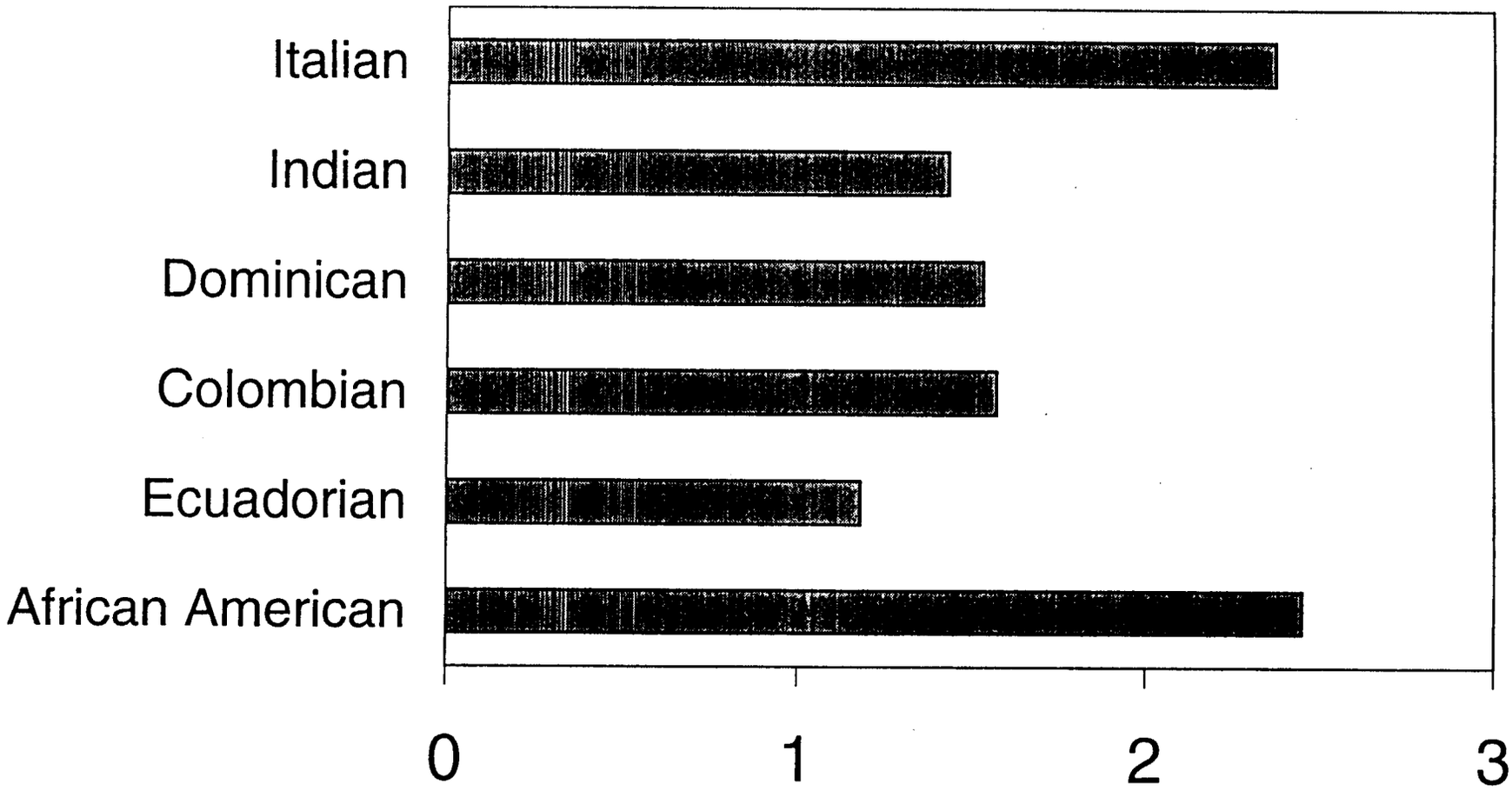
percent of Italians and 30% of Blacks said that they had contacted the police about neighborhood problems. Dominicans were the highest Latino group on this item with 18% affirmative responses; Ecuadorians had just 7% affirmative responses.

Differences by ethnic group in other voluntary contacts with the police were smaller, but still statistically significant. Thiry-six percent of Blacks and 34% of Italians said that they had stopped to talk to an officer, while the three Latino groups and Indians hovered in the low twentieth percentiles. On the item about participation in anti-crime organizaations, Blacks led Italians by a 2-1 margin (20% versus 10%). Dominicans were just behind with 9%, while Ecuadorians, Colombians, and Indians averaged around 3% participation.

The only measure of voluntary police contacts that did not follow this pattern by ethnicity was whether respondents had asked a police officer for directions. On this item, Colombians led the other groups with 61% affirmative responses. The other five groups clustered around the low 40th percentile.

A composite measure of voluntary contact was created from the individual items. Respondents were scored "1" on this measure if any of the individual items had been answered affirmatively and "0" if none of the items had been answered affirmatively. African-Americans and Italians -- the longest-established groups -- initiated significantly more contacts with the police than the three Latino groups or Indians (see Figure 3.3) These data indicate that Blacks and Italians were most comfortable using the police in instrumental ways to help them solve problems. Because of fear or just tradition, Latinos and Indians were far more reluctant to use the police in this way.

Figure 3.3:
of Citizen-Initiated Contacts



Perceptions of Police Effectiveness

Respondents were asked a series of six question about their belief in the effectiveness of local police. The first item had to do with whether the police took care of problems that concerned people in the neighborhood. Agreements outweighed disagreements by 48% to 25%, while 27% had no opinion (see Table 3.8). By a margin of 35% to 30% residents agreed that police in their neighborhood were working together with residents to solve local problems (35% were neutral). The results of these first two questions taken together suggest a belief that police are effective, but that they are not especially oriented toward working cooperatively with citizens -- exactly what one would expect given the de-emphasizing of community policing under the current police administration.

Most respondents agreed that police were slow in responding to calls for assistance (40% agreed, 30% disagreed, and 30% were neutral). By a 2-1 margin respondents agreed that police were helpful to crime victims (38% to 18%, 44% expressing no strong opinion). A similar proportion believed that the police were doing a good job of preventing crime (50% versus 20%, 31% expressing no definite opinion). Finally, most people agreed that the police were usually able to protect people from retaliation by criminals (31% versus 21% with 48% expressing no opinion).

We noted some differences by ethnicity in the individual police effectiveness scales, however. Table 3.9 shows that Indians were less likely than the other five ethnic groups to agree that police in their neighborhood take care of problems that really concern people. The three Latino groups were more likely to agree that local police work together with citizens to solve neighborhood problems.

TABLE 3.8

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE EFFECTIVENESS

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Police in neighborhood take care of problems that really concern people	14%	34%	27%	13%	13%
2. Police in neighborhood work together with residents to solve problems	9%	25%	35%	17%	14%
3. Police in neighborhood are slow in responding to calls for assistance	22%	18%	30%	18%	12%
4. Police in neighborhood are helpful to crime victims	12%	26%	45%	10%	7%
5. Police in neighborhood are doing a good job of preventing crime	16%	34%	31%	11%	9%
6. When people report crimes, the police are able to protect them from retaliation	9%	23%	48%	11%	9%

TABLE 3.9

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE EFFECTIVENESS

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Police take care of problems that really concern people	2.89	2.85	2.93	2.71	2.46	2.73	.002
Police work together with citizens	2.89	3.10	3.13	3.14	2.88	2.13	.017
Police slow to respond	2.85	2.75	2.74	2.79	2.82	2.94	.699
Police help victims	2.74	2.84	2.80	2.76	2.64	2.74	.527
Police prevent crime	2.70	2.65	2.73	2. 58	2.50	2.62	.409
olice protect crime Reporters from harm	2.97	2.92	2.85	2.85	2.82	3.02	.365

1=strongly agree 2=agree 3=neutral 4=disagree 5=strongly disagree

We constructed a composite scale of police effectiveness by summing scores from the items in this section of the questionnaire. A reliability analysis showed that one of the items -- whether the police were slow in responding to calls for assistance -- did not correlate well with the other items. In the final police effectiveness scale, that item was dropped, leaving five items remaining. The resulting scale had a reliability of 0.78.

Figure 3.4 presents differences in the composite police effectiveness scale according to ethnicity. The differences were small and were not statistically significant in a bivariate test. However, when we ran a multivariate model predicting police effectiveness ratings using ethnicity, demographics, experience with the police, and community empowerment variables, a different picture emerged (see Table 3.10). Controlling for the effects of other variables, ethnicity emerged as a strong predictor of police effectiveness. Blacks and Italians rated the police as being significantly more effective than other ethnic groups. Also, respondents who were born in the U.S. tended to rate the police as more effective than foreign-born respondents. But the most powerful determinants of police effectiveness were the community empowerment variables: Respondents who rated their ethnic communities high on collective efficacy and/or high on political empowerment were more likely than others to believe that the police were effective. Perceptions of police effectiveness were lower among persons who had been crime victims and persons who were better educated.

Perceptions of Police Misconduct

In spite of the relatively positive views of residents toward police effectiveness, people saw serious problems in the way that the police dealt with their ethnic community (see Table 3.11).

Figure 3.4:
Police Effectiveness Ratings

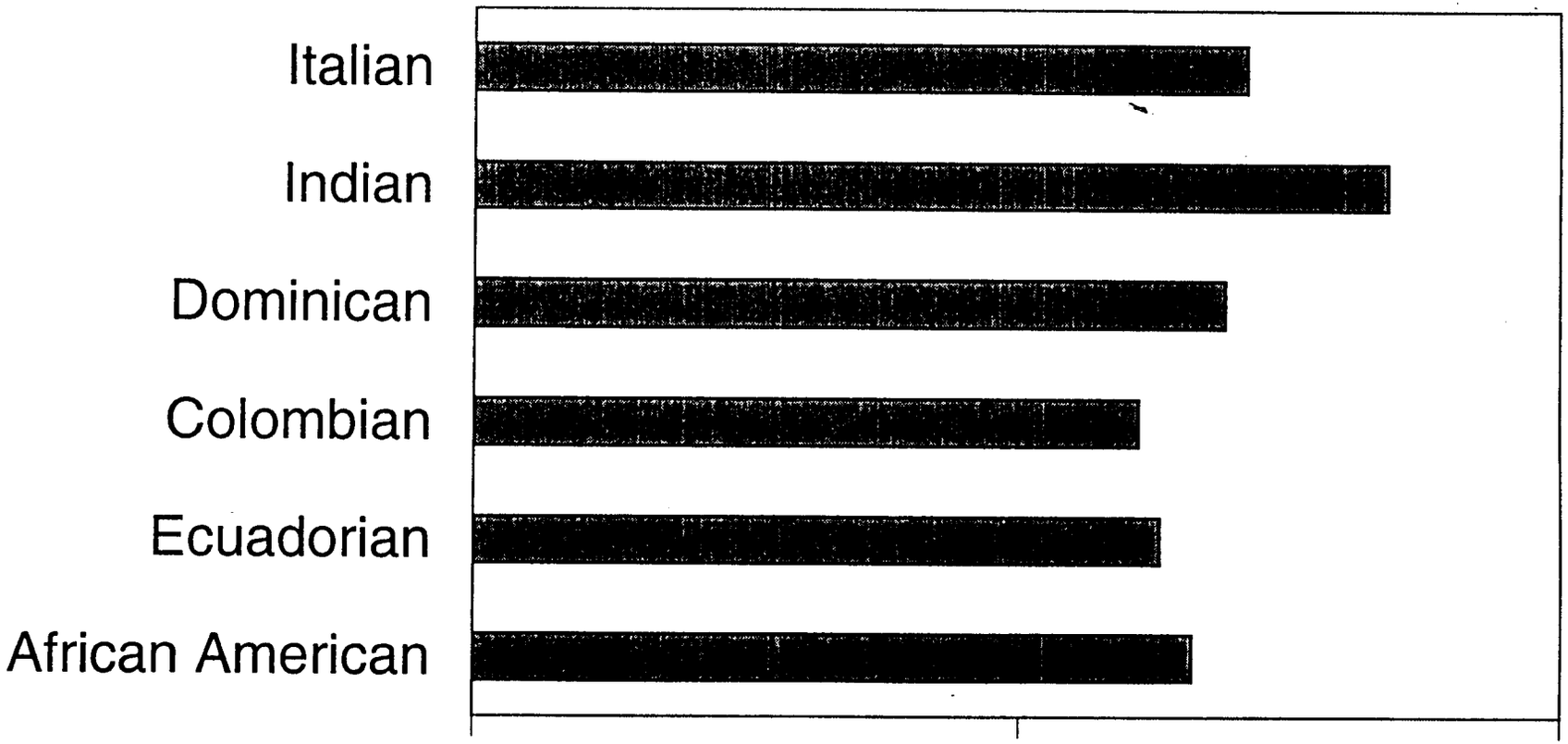


TABLE 3.10

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED POLICE EFFECTIVENESS

Variable	Coefficient	Wald Statistic*	Significance
Ethnicity**		18.38	.003
African-American	-.56	6.27	.012
Ecuadorian	-.02	0.01	.941
Colombian	-.03	0.02	.889
Dominican	.32	3.44	.063
Italian	-.42	3.90	.048
Age	.01	2.35	.125
Education	-.17	6.99	.008
Own/rent home	-.03	0.02	.892
U.S. born	.47	3.93	.048
Gender	-.08	0.21	.644
Community efficacy	.57	18.88	.000
Comm empowerment	.74	28.08	.000
Victim past year	-.28	5.48	.019
Stopped by police	-.13	0.73	.394
Contacted police	.07	2.09	.148

* Wald statistics are an indication of the effect of each independent variable, controlling for the effects of the other predictors. The larger the Wald statistic, the more explanatory power a variable has.

* Coefficients for ethnicity indicator variables are deviations from overall mean. One category (Indian) was omitted to avoid over determination of the model.

TABLE 3.11

PERCEIVED POLICE MISCONDUCT
TOWARD RESPONDENT'S ETHNIC COMMUNITY

	No Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem	Total
1. Stopping people in ethnic community without good reason	54%	17%	28%	100%
2. Using excessive physical force against members of ethnic community	48%	14%	39%	100%
3. Being discourteous toward people in ethnic community	45%	15%	40%	100%
4. Using offensive language toward people in ethnic community	47%	11%	42%	100%
5. Reporting illegal immigrants to immigration authorities	63%	11%	26%	100%

Nearly half of respondents (46%) said that police stopping people in their ethnic group without good reason was a problem in their community. Somewhat more than half (53%) believed that police using excessive force against members of their ethnic community was a problem. Similar proportions believed that discourtesy by officers was a problem (55%) and that offensive language was a problem (53%). The police were rated most positively on a question about whether police reporting of immigrants to immigration authorities was a problem: Just about one-third saw this as a problem.

Differences according to ethnic group showed up on all of the individual items dealing with police problems. Table 3.12 shows that Colombians and Dominicans were the most likely to believe that unwarranted stops by the police were a problem for their communities, while Indians and Ecuadoreans were the least likely. A similar pattern held for use of excessive force by the police. Again, Colombians and Dominicans were far more likely than the other ethnic groups to believe that excessive use of force by the police was a problem for members of their ethnic communities.

For the remaining three items on police misconduct, the familiar pattern held, with all three Latino groups perceiving the most misconduct. Colombians, Dominicans, and Ecuadoreans all were more likely than the other three ethnic groups to believe that discourtesy by the police was a problem. The identical pattern by ethnic group for use of offensive language by the police. And the same pattern held once again for reporting of illegals to immigration authorities by the police.

As we did for the police effectiveness measures, we created a composite scale of perceived police misconduct which was a sum of the five individual items. Reliability analysis showed no need to drop any of the five items, and the resulting alpha coefficient was 0.87.

TABLE 3.12

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

% reporting a problem with police:	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Stopping people	48%	40%	51%	54%	37%	42%	.001
Excessive force	42%	53%	70%	65%	37%	45%	.000
Discourtesy	44%	55%	70%	65%	43%	49%	.000
Offensive language	35%	55%	72%	67%	39%	45%	.000
Reporting illegals	14%	49%	51%	49%	36%	27%	.000

The misconduct and effectiveness scales were inversely related, but the relationship was weak (r= -0.29, p<.001). Each scale predicted only about 9% of the variation in the other.

Figure 3.5 shows that the composite measure of perceived misconduct varied substantially from one ethnic group to another.* Problems with police conduct toward their ethnic group were most likely to be felt by Colombians, Dominicans, and Ecuadoreans and least likely to be felt by Italians, Blacks, and Indians (in that order). A multivariate analysis confirmed that ethnicity was an important predictor of perceived police misconduct (see Table 3.13). Several demographic variables were good predictors of perceived misconduct as well. Respondents who were foreign-born, persons with less education renters, and persons who had been victimized in the past year tended to be more likely to perceive the police as engaging in misconduct than other respondents. Experience with the police played some role in shaping perceptions of misconduct: Persons who had been stopped by the police were significantly more likely to perceive the police as engaging in misconduct than those who had not been stopped.

Victimization

We asked respondents a series of five questions on victimization experiences within the past year. The experiences included having something taken by force or threat of force, being physically attacked by a non-family member, being assaulted by a member of one's household, having one's home broken into, and suffering an assault or property damage because of one's ethnic identity. Because this was a small part of our survey interest, our questionnaire did not go into the painstaking detail to assess the occurrence of incidents that the Bureau of Justice Assistance's National Crime

* F[5,1117] = 22.70, p = .0000

Figure 3.5:
Perceived Police Misconduct

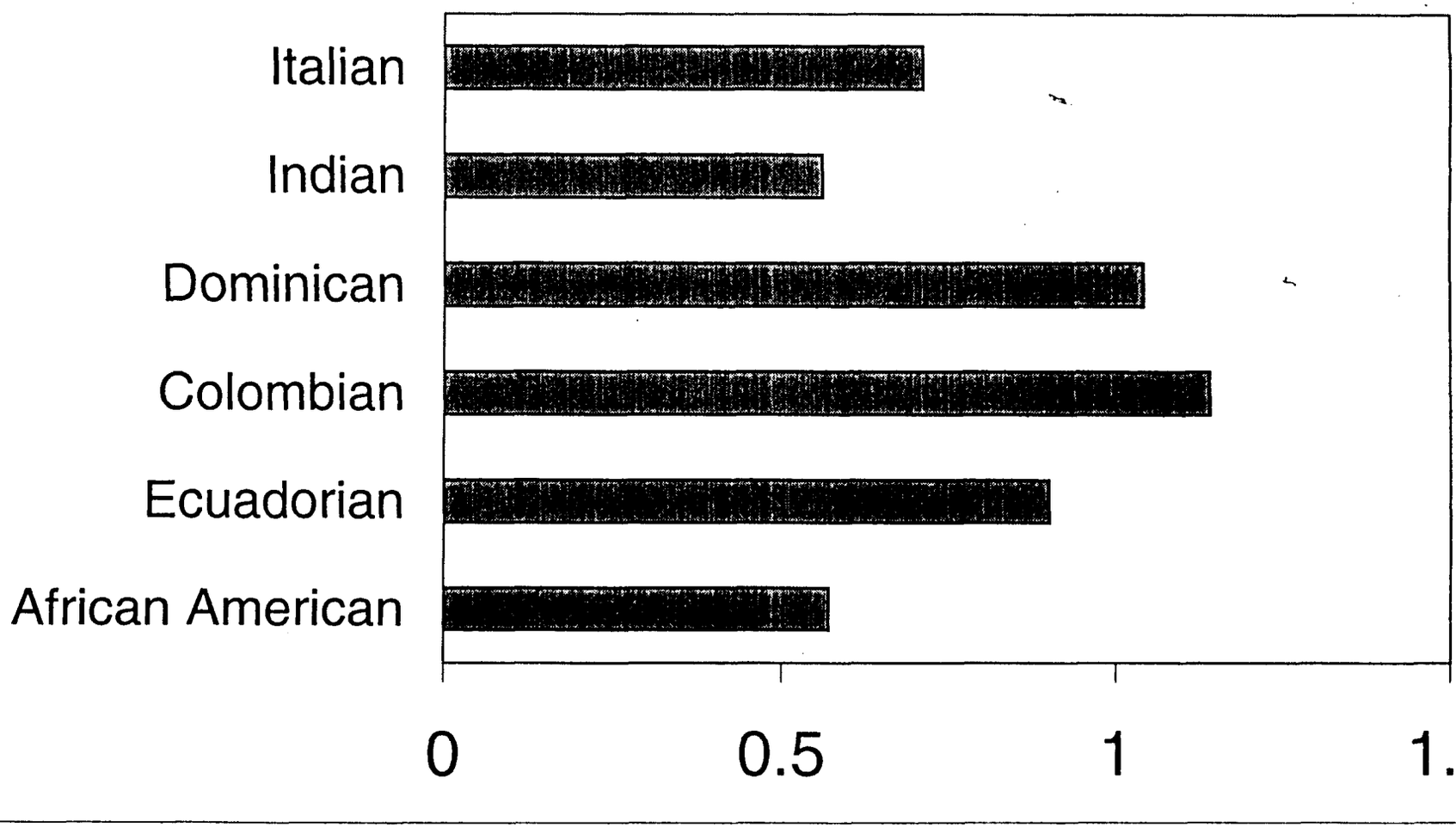


TABLE 3.13

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED POLICE MISCONDUCT

Variable	Coefficient	Wald Statistic*	Significance
Ethnicity**		26.74	.001
African-American	-.17	0.54	.463
Ecuadorian	-.15	0.67	.414
Colombian	.51	7.98	.005
Dominican	.40	5.38	.020
Italian	.21	0.96	.327
Age	-.03	26.47	.000
Education	.13	3.76	.053
Own/rent home	.40	4.32	.038
U.S. born	-.49	4.24	.040
Gender	-.01	0.00	.946
Community efficacy	.07	0.32	.574
Comm empowerment	-.04	0.06	.802
Victim past year	.48	16.33	.000
Stopped by police	.35	5.33	.021
Contacted police	-.09	3.07	.080

* Wald statistics are an indication of the effect of each independent variable, controlling for the effects of the other predictors. The larger the Wald statistic, the more explanatory power a variable has.

** Coefficients for ethnicity indicator variables are deviations from overall mean. One category (Indian) was omitted to avoid over determination of the model.

Victim Survey (NCVS) does. Rather, we asked direct and simple questions designed only to obtain a rough approximation of victimization rates to help fill an enormous gap in the literature concerning victimization rates for immigrant groups.

In most ways, the rates of victimization reported by the Jackson Heights sample exceeded the national urban average reported on the NCVS. Twelve percent of the sample reported being a victim of robbery. This figure is higher than the 7% rate reported by the 1997 NCVS. Eight percent of the Jackson Heights sample reported being attacked by a non-family member, compared to a 1997 NCVS assault rate of 5%. Eleven percent of our sample reported a home break-in compared to 6% on the NCVS.

Several categories of victimization could not be compared to NCVS rates. For example, 4% of the Jackson Heights sample reported being attacked by a household member. A recent study by Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found a 3% annual rate of intimate partner violence, but this figure does not include violence by other family members. Just 2% of our sample reported being victims of bias crimes during the past year. Although there are not as of yet scientific population estimates of ethnic bias crimes, newspaper polls suggest a range of 8-20% lifetime prevalence.

When we broke down the victimization questions by ethnic group membership, a consistent pattern emerged (see Table 3.14). The three Latino groups generally were victimized at higher rates than Blacks, Italians, and Indians. For example, robbery was reported by 18% of Ecuadoreans, 13% of Colombians, and 11% of Dominicans. This contrasts to just 9% of Italians and 5% of Blacks. Indians were in the middle, with an 11% rate. Similarly, for rates of assault by non-family members ranged from 9-11% for Latinos, compared to 6% for the three non-Latino groups. Burglary rates

TABLE 3.14

ANNUAL VICTIMIZATION RATES FOR SPECIFIC CRIMES
ACCORDING TO ETHNIC GROUP

	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Burglary	8%	16%	12%	15%	8%	8%	.05
Robbery	5%	18%	13%	11%	11%	9%	.01
Non-family assault	6%	11%	10%	9%	6%	6%	.30
Family violence	4%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	.22
Bias crimes	1%	2%	4%	1%	3%	1%	.09

varied from 12-16% for Latinos, compared to 9% for Indians and 8% for African Americans and Italians.

The same pattern by ethnicity did not hold for family violence or bias crimes. Latinos did tend to report somewhat more family violence than Indians and Italians, but the numbers were low for all groups, ranging from 1-6%. For bias crimes, the numbers were even lower, ranging from 0.5-4%. Surprisingly, Blacks reported the *lowest* rate of bias crimes, while Colombians reported the most.

While Latino groups tended to report higher victimization rates than others, it is quite possible that the differences were attributable to the socioeconomic and other demographic differences among ethic groups noted earlier in the report. To untangle these effects, we ran a multivariate analysis with the dependent measure indicating whether respondents had been the victim of any crime during the past year. According to the summary variable, 26% of respondents had experienced at least one of the five types of victimization.

The results of the analysis are contained in Table 3.15 below. They show that, once demographic factors are controlled, there is little effect of ethnicity on victimization rates. The rate for Ecuadoreans is somewhat higher than that of Italians (the reference category for this analysis), but even this result attains only marginal statistical significance. In the equation, age has the most powerful effect upon victimization rates, with younger respondents reporting higher rates than older respondents.

TABLE 3.15

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VICTIMIZATION STATUS

Variable	Coefficient	Wald Statistic*	Significance
Ethnicity**		4.43	.489
African-American	-.29	1.63	.201
Ecuadorian	.28	2.73	.099
Colombian	.05	0.09	.770
Dominican	.21	1.73	.188
Indian	-.01	0.01	.941
Age	-.02	7.92	.005
Education	.10	2.65	.104
Own/rent home	.32	2.75	.097
Gender	-.04	0.05	.807

* Wald statistics are an indication of the effect of each independent variable, controlling for the effects of the other predictors. The larger the Wald statistic, the more explanatory power a variable has.

** Coefficients for ethnicity indicator variables are deviations from overall mean. One category (Italian) was omitted to avoid over determination of the model.

Crime Reporting

We asked respondents about their willingness to report four criminal activities, including muggings, break-ins, drug sales, and domestic violence. Once again, we found major differences between ethnic communities. The highest rates of reporting were for break-ins: Eighty-three percent of respondents said that they would be very likely to report a break-in to someone's home. Thirteen percent said that they would be somewhat likely to report and just 4% said that they would not be likely to report a break-in that they witnessed. Blacks had the greatest percentage who said that they would be very likely to report a break-in at 93% (see Table 3.16). Ecuadoreans and Indians were at the low end, with 76% and 77% respectively saying that they would very likely report a break-in. While the differences by ethnicity were not substantial, they did attain statistical significance..

Muggings were the next most likely crimes to be reported, with 77% of respondents saying that they would be very likely to report a mugging, 18% saying that they would be somewhat likely, and 5% saying that they would be unlikely to report a mugging to authorities. Once again, Blacks had the highest proportion (88%) who said that they would be very likely to report a break-in. Indians and Ecuadoreans had the lowest percentages at 67% and 70%, respectively. Again, these differences attained statistical significance.

Our data contradict the often-expressed idea that immigrants are unlikely to report family violence. Overall, 71% of respondents said that they would be very likely to report family violence incidents, 21% said that they would be somewhat likely, and 8% not likely. Colombians and Dominicans had the most respondents who said that they would be very likely to report family

TABLE 3.16

WILLINGNESS TO REPORT SPECIFIC CRIMES
ACCORDING TO ETHNIC GROUP

% very likely to report:	Blacks	Ecuadoreans	Colombians	Dominicans	Indians	Italians	prob
Break-ins	93%	76%	87%	81%	77%	85%	.000
Muggings	88%	70%	78%	78%	67%	83%	.000
Family violence	66%	70%	80%	80%	65%	61%	.000
Drug sales	59%	46%	49%	44%	55%	73%	.000

violence, each with 80%. All four of the other ethnic groups had between 60 and 70% of respondents who said that they would be very likely to report family violence. These differences were statistically significant as well.

Drug selling was the crime least likely to be reported to authorities. Only 54% of respondents said that they would be very likely to report it, 24% said that they would be somewhat likely, and 22% not likely. Italians had the highest proportion who said that they would be very likely to report (73%). The three Latino communities had the lowest proportions, with 44% of Dominicans, 47% of Ecuadoreans, and 49% of Colombians saying that they would be very likely to report drug selling to the authorities. .These results were also highly reliable.

Again, we combined the individual items to create a composite scale of willingness to report crimes. The reliability (alpha) for this four-item scale was 0.69. A multivariate analysis conducted with this scale showed no significant differences in willingness to report among the six ethnic groups (see Table 3.17). The best predictors of willingness to report were the other measures of community: Respondents who perceived their communities as better able to solve problems and more politically empowered expressed greater willingness to report crimes than other respondents. Experience with the police also played a significant role in willingness to report: Those persons who had had voluntary contacts with the police expressed greater willingness to report crimes and those who had had involuntary contacts expressed less willingness. Finally, respondents who had been victims during the past year tended to express less willingness to report crimes than those who had not been victims.

Reporting actual crimes In addition to asking respondents hypothetical questions about reporting crimes, we also asked those who were victimized whether they had reported the crime they

TABLE 3.17

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF WILLINGNESS TO REPORT CRIMES

Variable	Coefficient	Wald Statistic*	Significance
Ethnicity**		1.57	.905
African-American	-.12	0.29	.589
Ecuadorian	.21	1.26	.263
Colombian	.05	0.07	.795
Dominican	-.08	0.22	.640
Italian	-.08	0.16	.686
Age	-.01	1.33	.248
Education	.06	0.84	.360
Own/rent home	-.26	1.82	.178
U.S. born	.05	0.05	.832
Gender	-.17	1.10	.293
Community efficacy	.63	21.45	.000
Comm empowerment	.44	9.65	.002
Victim past year	-.31	6.20	.013
Stopped by police	-.33	4.51	.034
Contacted police	.16	10.25	.001
Police misconduct	.21	2.96	.085
Police effectiveness	.09	0.75	.386

* Wald statistics are an indication of the effect of each independent variable, controlling for the effects of the other predictors. The larger the Wald statistic, the more explanatory power a variable has.

** Coefficients for ethnicity indicator variables are deviations from overall mean. One category (Indian) was omitted to avoid over determination of the model.

experienced to authorities. About two in three (63%) had reported the crime to police. Because numbers of particular crimes are small -- only 40 persons said that they were victims of family violence and 21 claimed to be victims of bias crimes -- we did not try to break this figure down according to type of victimization. We did, though, break down whether victims reported the crime by ethnicity. Consistent with the questions on hypothetical reporting, Figure 3.6 suggests that Blacks were somewhat more likely than other groups to report actual crimes. Nearly three in four Blacks who were victimized reported to the police compared to about 60% for all of the other five groups. Because of the small numbers, however, this difference cannot be regarded as reliable.*

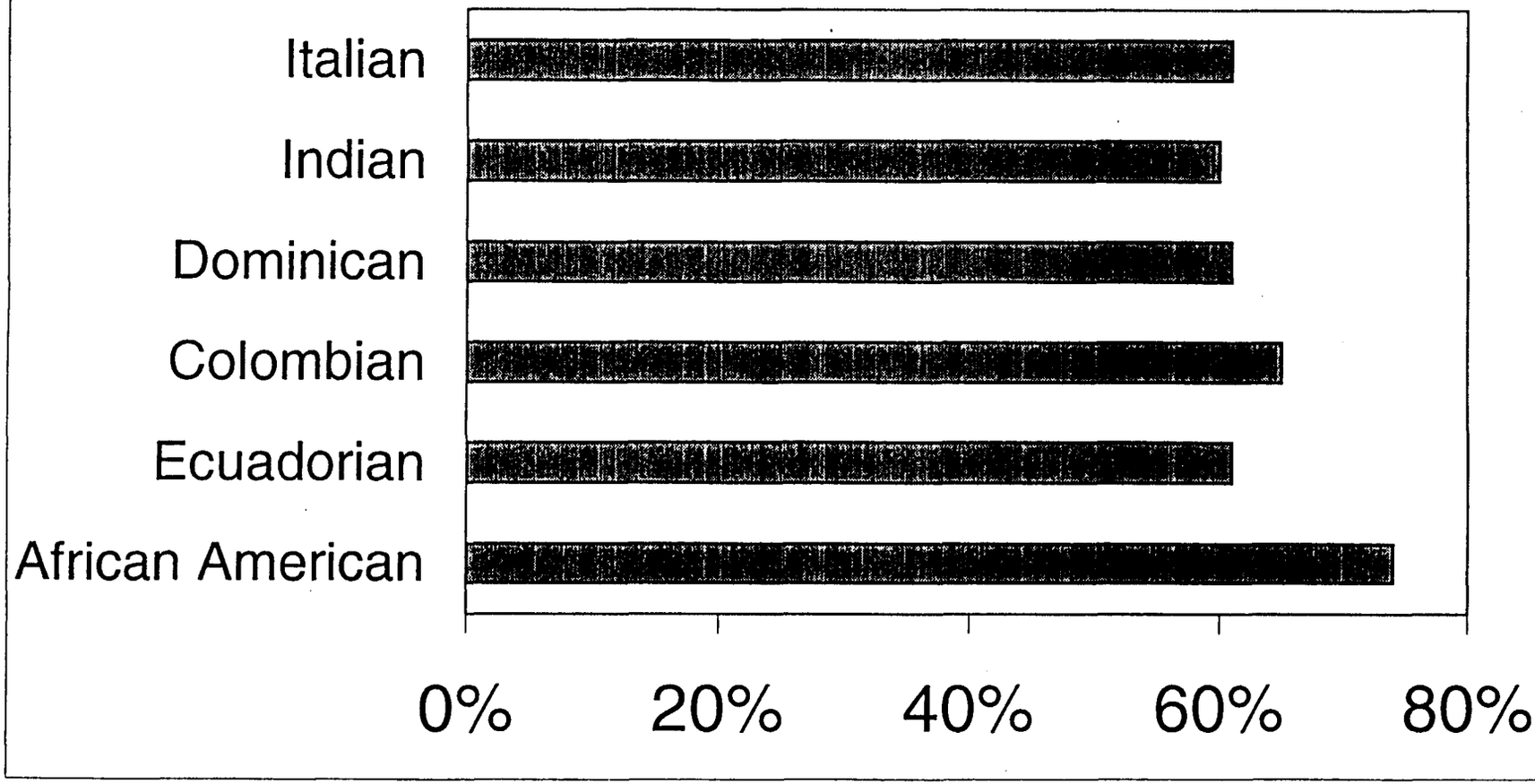
Ways to Improve Police-Community Relations

We read respondents a list of suggestions for improving police-community relations. They were asked to rate each as being very effective, somewhat effective, or not effective. All of the five items were perceived as very effective by more than half of the sample. The two suggestions seen as most effective were increasing the number of foot patrols (79% rated it as very effective) and holding meetings with the community (78% rated it as very effective).

Placing a minstation in the neighborhood was seen as a very effective way to improve police-community relations by 69% of the sample. Slightly fewer respondents endorsed police attending meetings of church groups and other local organizations and TV or radio ads asking for citizen cooperation (each seen as very effective by 66% of the sample). Recruiting more police officers from the respondent's ethnic community was seen as very effective by 61% of the sample. Finally, a number of respondents mentioned spontaneously that police ought to work with neighborhood

* Chi-square[5] = 2.20, p = .82

Figure 3.6: Proportion of Victims Who Reported Crimes



youths and/or help them to find jobs.

CONCLUSIONS

To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first study using scientific survey techniques to examine how experiences with the police, attitudes toward the police, and crime reporting vary across ethnic groups. Numerous other studies have examined variations in police-citizen interactions by race. Our premise was that race lumps people into gross categories that have less and less utility as the United States becomes an increasingly multi-ethnic society. It is no longer enough to ask about how public policy decisions affect minorities. It is important now numerically to consider that policies may affect Hispanic-Americans, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans in different ways. Moreover, it may be misleading as well to categorize together American-born Blacks with Jamaicans, Chinese with Indians, or Mexicans with Dominicans.

We found evidence that opinions about police misconduct are significantly affected by involuntary contacts with the police: Being stopped tends to turn people off. But, even more important in shaping attitudes is the role of community. Community exerts a powerful influence on how people perceive the police both through prejudices imported from people's countries of origin and through message communicated through the local culture. The most significant predictor overall of perceptions of the police was the extent to which people's ethnic communities have become integrated into the social and political fabric of the city. In our study, African-American and Italian-American respondents -- the best-established communities -- were virtually indistinguishable on several of the indices we used to examine police-citizen relations. At the other end of the spectrum were the three newcomer groups -- Dominicans, Colombians, and Ecuadoreans -- who had not yet

become well-integrated into the local political structure.

We would expect that the pattern of results we found by ethnic group would not be replicated elsewhere. For example, in parts of the Southwest, where they have been long-time residents, we would not be surprised to find that Latin-American communities were among the most positive in their attitudes toward the police. We believe that the effects of ethnic group membership that we observed in our data are not the effects of ethnicity group membership as much as they are the effects of the *local* ethnic community culture. That is, people's attitudes are conditioned more by neighborhood values and beliefs than they are by membership in larger social groups.

Differences among the ethnic communities The ethnic groups divided somewhat cleanly into two groups. Blacks and Italians had been in this country far longer than the three Latino groups and Indians. All ethnic communities seemed to have vibrant social organizations. And all respondents were equally likely to believe that their ethnic community was able to solve local problems such as crime and municipal services. But the longer-established ethnic communities were, in many respects, more successful than the relative newcomers. Blacks and Italians had higher incomes and better educations than Dominicans, Colombians, or Ecuadoreans. In addition, the former groups were more likely to own their own homes and to live under less crowded conditions. There were as well major differences in political empowerment, with the better-established groups being more likely to believe that they were well-represented in local politics and that local government was responsive.

Experience with the Police We found rates of involuntary contact with the police consistent with the literature: About one-quarter of our sample reported being stopped and/or arrested, a figure virtually identical with results reported out of the Chicago community policing

study (e.g., Johnson, 1993). The literature would have led us to expect strongly that Blacks would have had more involuntary contacts with the police than members of other ethnic groups. While African-American respondents in our study did report a slightly higher rate of police contacts than other groups, the differences did not approach statistical significance. Our data suggest that race in and of itself is not as important as the particular community that someone belongs to. The African-Americans in our study were largely middle-class and part of a community that was politically well-integrated. It also is worth noting that, even in the Chicago study, the relationship between race and involuntary police contacts is not a strong one: Other variables such as age, gender, and employment status were all found to be better predictors.

Citizen-initiated contacts were far more common than police-initiated contacts. We found substantially higher levels of voluntary contacts that those reported in the Chicago work. In our study, about three in four respondents initiated contact with the police compared to about one in two respondents in Chicago (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). The reason for this is that we asked a more detailed series of questions. In particular, when we remove from our scale casual contacts (i.e., questions about whether respondents had stopped to talk to a beat officer or had asked an officer for directions) that were not asked by the Chicago researchers, our results become comparable to theirs. Whether such casual experiences with the police play an important a role in forming opinions about the police has not been studied, so it is not clear whether they are best included or excluded on scales measuring citizen-initiated contacts.

In contrast to the small differences among ethnic groups in police-initiated contacts, we noted large differences among the six communities in citizen-initiated interactions with the police. The better-established African-American and Italian-American communities were far more likely than

the Latino communities or the Indian community to report initiating contact with the police. This pattern held across the range of questions we asked on this topic. But the pattern is particularly disturbing because differences were most pronounced on the more substantive forms of contact such as reporting crimes, suspicious persons, or neighborhood problems. The lesser willingness by Latino and Indian communities to use the police in instrumental ways means that they are not getting the level of police services that they are entitled to and that better-established communities take advantage of. Since we did not anticipate this finding, we did not probe for reasons respondents would not initiate contact with the police. We can only speculate, therefore, that the reluctance may be attributable to attitudes about law enforcement brought here from people's native cultures or to the lack of connection people in the Latino and Indian communities in Queens felt to the local political establishment.

Our findings of major differences among ethnic communities in the number of voluntary contacts with the police differ substantially from findings in Chicago, where differences by race were minor. This is a good illustration of why it is important to examine effects by local ethnic communities rather than by global racial categories.

Perception of Police Effectiveness In agreement with the literature (e.g., Mastrofski, et. al., 1998, 1999), respondents held quite favorable opinions about the effectiveness of their local police. On measures from crime prevention to working together with residents to solve neighborhood problems, the number of residents holding favorable opinions outweighed those holding negative opinions. Only in the area of response time did the police receive lower marks.

We found significant differences among ethnic communities in perceptions of police effectiveness. In the Chicago study as well, ethnicity was found to be one of the strongest predictors

of attitudes toward the police. Like most other studies, the Chicago evaluation found that Blacks held the police in lower esteem than others, while we found the opposite. In our work, ethnic communities that were better-established rated the police more highly than those which were not as well-established, i.e., the newer Latino communities. The best predictor of perceived police effectiveness was political empowerment: Respondents who believed that their ethnic community was politically potent had higher opinions of police effectiveness than respondents who believed that their community was politically disenfranchised.

Surprisingly, we found that opinions about the effectiveness of the police have little to do with direct contact with the police. This is in sharp contrast to much of the literature, which suggests that much of the variation in attitudes toward the police is accounted for by people's experience with the police. (The Chicago investigation found only a slight inverse relationship between involuntary encounters with the police and attitudes.) Rather, attitudes about police effectiveness were part of people's global perceptions of how responsive the local political process was to their ethnic community and to prejudices about law enforcement brought with them from their native lands. Also important was whether respondents had been victims within the past year: Those who had held less favorable opinions of the police than those who had not.

Perceptions of Police Misconduct While most respondents believed that the local police were effective, they also believed that they were guilty of misconduct toward members of their ethnic community. More than half of respondents believed that each of the five misconduct items -- from stopping people without a good reason to using force or abusive language -- were a problem. We were surprised to note that the proportion of people perceiving police misconduct to be a problem was far higher in our sample than that reported for Chicago by Skogan and Hartnett (1997:

p.216). For example, they report that just 18% of their sample felt that too many unwarranted stops was a problem and that 19% thought that excessive force was a problem.

The observation that respondents perceived the police to be at the same time to be effective and abusive seems like a contradiction. But the data show only a very weak correlation between the two attitudinal scales. These seem to be separate dimensions of how people see the police.

There were substantial differences among the six ethnic groups on the misconduct measure. The three Latino communities all held more negative views of police behavior than others. In contrast to what one would expect from the literature, African-Americans were least likely to perceive the police as behaving badly. As past studies have found, persons who had had involuntary encounters with the police were likely to perceive the police as engaging in misconduct than those with no involuntary encounters. But the effect was not large. Other variables, such as whether respondents were foreign-born and socioeconomic status indicators had equally large effects on perceptions of police misconduct. And youthfulness and recent victimization led even more strongly to negative beliefs about police misconduct. Again, it seems that perceptions of the local police are conditioned more by group membership (i.e., ethnicity, country of origin, age) than by direct experience.

Victimization In general, victimization rates for specific crimes tended to be higher in our sample than those reported by the NCVS for urban residents. Differences could well be due to the fact that our methodology was not nearly as sophisticated as that used by the NCVS. With this caution, we noted that our data did not confirm a high rate of family violence among immigrant communities, as some experts and journalists have predicted. Our 4% annual rate of respondents reporting attacks by a household member was well below the number who reported being victims

of robberies, burglaries, or non-domestic assaults. Also surprising was that the rate of bias crimes reported by our sample was even lower (2% responded affirmatively), and did not vary significantly according to ethnic group.

Latinos reported higher rates of victimization than other respondents. However, when the data were analyzed controlling for demographic factors, the difference in victimization rates between ethnic groups disappeared. This suggests, not surprisingly, that it is not ethnicity per se that leads to differential victimization rates, but rather difference in age and socioeconomic status associated with the different ethnic communities we studied.

Crime Reporting While there has been speculation in the literature about the willingness of immigrants to report criminal victimizations, ours is the first study to address this issue empirically. Large majorities of respondents said that they would report break-ins, muggings, and family violence. Respondents were less enthusiastic about reporting drug selling but, even here, a majority said that they would inform authorities.

Following the pattern we have seen throughout the dataset, respondents from Latino communities were less likely to say that they would report crimes than respondents from better-established ethnic communities. Surprisingly, crime reporting was not strongly linked to attitudes toward the police. But it was linked to experience: Respondents who had had involuntary contacts with the police were less likely to say that they would report a crime, while those who had had voluntary contacts were more willing to report. The best predictors of crime reporting, however, were the measures of community empowerment: Persons who said that their ethnic community was likely to work together to solve local problems and those who believed that their community wielded political power were more likely than others to say that they would report crimes.

Concluding Thoughts

We have examined differences in how people in different ethnic communities respond to their local police. Unlike previous research, we did not find large Black versus White differences. Rather, we found that there are substantial differences among ethnic communities, and that these differences are largely explainable by how well-integrated into the social and political fabric ethnic communities have become.

In agreement with other work we found that, to some extent, involuntary contacts with the police exert some influence upon people's perceptions. But we found the effects of experience with the police upon perceptions of police effectiveness, perceptions of police misconduct, and willingness to report crimes to be generally smaller than the effects of community membership. Our results suggest that, to a significant degree, how people respond to the police is conditioned by norms and beliefs of the local ethnic community in which they reside and by global perceptions of that community's political empowerment and collective efficacy.

It is only logical that experience with the police play a major role in shaping people's responses to them. However, it may be that experience should be defined more broadly to include police encounters with respondents' family and/or friends as well as personal encounters. Researchers needs to ask respondents how they derived the information necessary to formulate good or bad opinions about the police. Were opinions derived from personal experiences? From experiences of family or friends? From hearsay about the experiences of others in the community? From media stories? Or from long-held opinions based on experience with law enforcement in other places?

Our research has suggested that there is a gap in understanding between the police and recent

immigrants to this country. These communities do not have the same confidence as better-established residents that the police will deal with them fairly and they are reluctant to use the police in instrumental ways to help to maintain order in their communities. It is up to the police to find ways to reach out to these new residents and find ways to build trust. Respondents in our study has suggested some ways that this might be done. They believed that the most effective ways to bridge the gap between the police and ethnic communities was to increase the number of foot patrol officers and to sponsor meetings with the community.

Our data show that recent immigrants hold contradictory opinions of their local police, believing them to be effective yet capable of being abusive. The good news is that those opinions may be subject to change through positive actions taken by law enforcement administrators.

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