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Experiences and Perceptions of the Police in Bakersfield

Final Report on Interviews of Arrested Detainees

October 31, 2023

This report analyzes the experiences and perceptions of policing of 49 individuals we interviewed in Bakersfield soon after their arrest. Most of these interviews took place in the last week of February and first week of March 2023. Nine more took place in early September 2023, shortly before the presentation of our findings to the Chief of Police.

The main purpose of these interviews is to provide feedback to the Chief of Police, California Department of Justice, the Monitor for the BPD, and the Community Advisory Panel about the perceptions of policing among people who, for the most part, have had an involuntary encounter with police officers (some had initiated the contact that led to their arrest by calling the police for assistance). This feedback can supplement other sources of structured insight about residents' interactions with the police, such as the customer service call-back enabled by Spydertech, the biennial survey of residents, and periodic consultations with community leaders. Used in combination with these information systems, this feedback could help the Department ascertain whether the changes in policing taking place during the implementation of the stipulated judgment are recognized and appreciated by a particular group of members of the public, many of whom have had multiple encounters with the police in the past.

The inferences we draw from detainees' impressions of policing in this report are provisional. The number of interviews allows us to offer close analyses of the views of detainees with whom we spoke, but it is smaller than the number with whom we expected to speak. The size of the sample (N = 49) also makes it more challenging to disaggregate responses by the types of charges for which they were arrested or basic demographic variables such as the age, sex, or race/ethnicity of the interviewee. We explain the reasons for the unexpectedly low number of interviews in Appendix 1, along with recommendations for how to boost the number of interviews we conduct in the next round of research in 2024. A full description of the research methodology and the questions posed to detainees appears in Appendix 2.

Sample

Table 1 (next page) contains data about the basic demographic traits of the people we interviewed. This information is sparse because we intentionally did not solicit much biographical information from the people we interviewed. We asked only their age, sex, racial and ethnic identity, and the neighborhood or area of the city in which they live. The mean age of all detainees was 37 years. Four-fifths of the interviewees were male. Almost half said they were Hispanic. Nearly one quarter identified as Black or African American. Less than 15 percent of detainees identified themselves as White non-Hispanic, which is much lower than their share among all persons arrested by the Bakersfield Police Department over the last four years (30%). The share who described themselves as Asian, Native American, or "other" (18%) was much higher than we expected, in part because 4 people (8%) refused to answer this question.

Table 1. Demographic Traits of Arrested Detainees We Interviewed

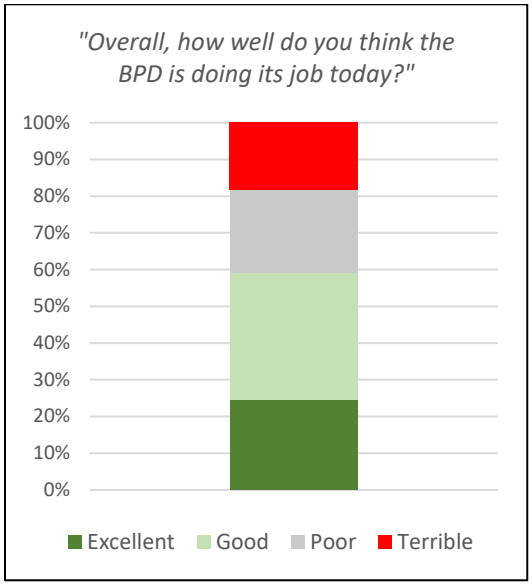
	White	Black/African American	Hispanic	Other*	TOTAL SAMPLE
Number and Percent	7 (14%)	9 (18%)	23 (47%)	10 (20%)	49
Male / Mean Age	4 /40	6 / 37.3	20 / 35.3	10 /37.8	40
Female / Mean Age	3 / 40	3 /31.3	3 /32.3	n/a	9

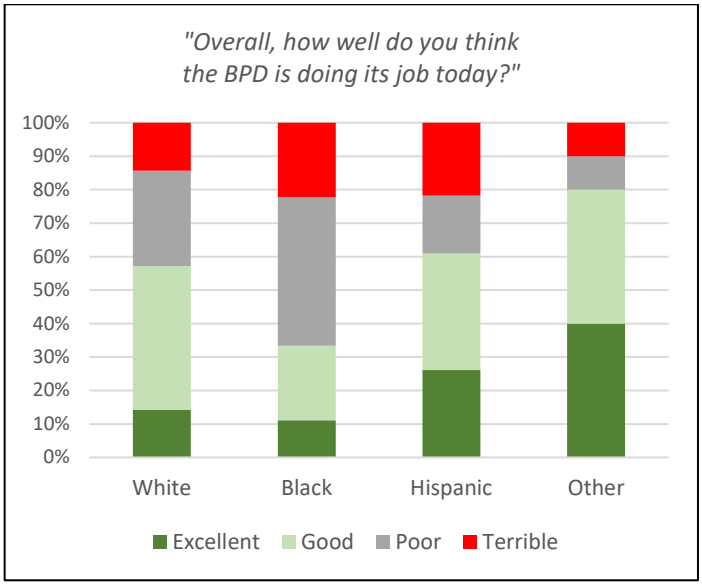
The age, sex, and racial and ethnic profile of people we interviewed corresponds roughly to the profile of all persons *arrested* by the BPD between 2019 and 2022, according to data we received from the Quality Assurance Unit -- with one exception. The BPD coded as White 30 percent of all persons arrested in 2022; another 18 percent were Black, 49 percent as Hispanic, and 1 percent "Other." Some discrepancy between our sample and the BPD data on arrests might be expected since officers use discretion about which persons to cite and release. Nevertheless, to understand the reasons for this discrepancy, and to ascertain whether our sample is representative of all *detainees*, we need to know what portion of all arrests led to a detention in this period. Changes in law and policy on the prosecution of misdemeanors may have affected the rate of detention as well as the demographic characteristics of all persons taken into custody by the BPD. We explain how we might work with the BPD on this question in Appendix 1.

1. Views About Police Performance

As Figure 1 below shows, nearly a quarter of the detainees we interviewed said that the BPD is doing an "excellent" job; just over a third said it was doing a "good" job. Roughly equal portions said it was doing a "poor" or "terrible" job. Hispanic detainees registered the most favorable *and* the most negative views, with nearly equal proportions saying the police was doing an excellent or terrible job, as Figure 2 shows. Black detainees were the most likely to say policing was "poor."

Figures 1 and 2. Detainee Perceptions of Police Performance



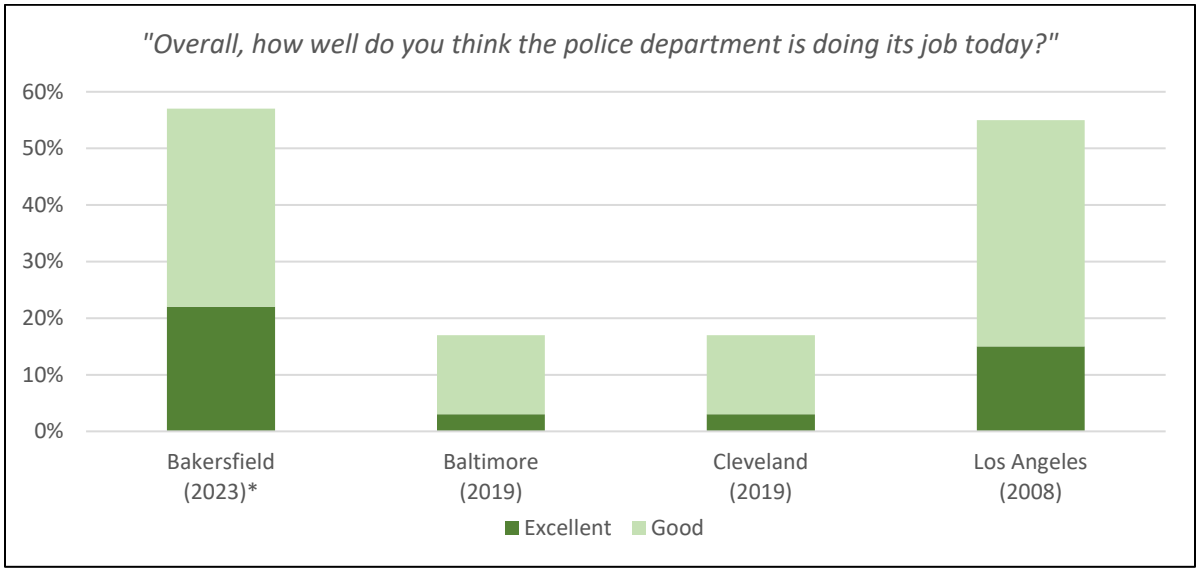


There are several ways to think about this pattern of responses. One is skeptical. That is, some observers might doubt that any detainees had genuinely favorable opinions about the overall quality of policing; they might assume and persist in a belief that detainees' attitudes about the police are hostile, prejudiced, or tainted by the negative consequences of arrest and the experience of being handcuffed and taken to jail. Others might be suspicious of the finding that some detainees expressed *negative* opinions about the Bakersfield Police Department, perhaps doubting that detainees would voice complaints for fear that the arresting officers might find out what they said later and punish them, or believing that police officers behave differently while researchers study their practices.

We heard conjectures along both these lines. One officer said, referring to detainees, "they're just going to bad mouth us." One detainee told us she thought the police were "putting on a pony show" for us. However, both these conjectures are belied by the pattern in the data described above as well as the character of the language and reasoning that detainees used to convey their views of policing, which we analyze in detail in this report.

Another way to think about this pattern of responses is celebratory. The Department might be pleased that a quarter of detainees expressed strongly favorable opinions about policing in Bakersfield. The Department also might be thrilled that the quantum of favorable views of the police among its detainees exceeds the amount we found in Baltimore and Cleveland, whose police departments operate under federal consent decrees. These differences appear stark in Figure 3, below, which also shows that detainees in Bakersfield expressed more favorable views of policing than those we interviewed in in Los Angeles in 2008, eight years after that city signed a consent decree with the US Department of Justice.

Figure 3. Detainees' Perceptions of Police Performance, Four Cities



* We have added to these results the responses of two detainees we interviewed in the county jail in March 2022, when the Sheriff proposed the visitor's booth for these conversations, which did not ensure confidentiality, and another two that took place in December 2022, when we tested the logistics of a new method for recruiting research participants proposed by the Bakersfield Police Department. Note also that we interviewed a greater number of detainees in Cleveland (63), Baltimore (70), and Los Angeles (74)

A different way to interpret these findings is critical, investigating variation in views across racial and ethnic groups, exploring whether this diversity corresponds to or belies differences in the social ecology in different neighbourhoods, and focusing on the reasoning for detainees' judgments about policing. Comparisons with approval ratings from other cities may be less instructive for the Department than an analysis of what animates views of policing in Bakersfield, which may diverge in different places and settings. After all, the greater number of officers, larger size of the urban core, and more controversial history of the police forces in these other cities, combined with the higher incidence of violent crime and arrest and the dissimilar social and economic environments may play a large role in the explanation of different sentiment we have found. A cautious reading of the results in Bakersfield thus might start with questions about the reasons for such approval and the likely trajectory of these attitudes over time. What considerations shape detainees' views? To what extent do detainees' thoughts about policing in Bakersfield draw on local events and personal experience, and to what degree are they suffused with beliefs about policing elsewhere?

The comments of detainees who said the police were doing an excellent job can be divided into two categories. One type of favorable view emphasized their personal experience of interactions with individual police officers, which often but not exclusively derived from the present arrest. For example, one person said: "To me, they're alright. I can base myself off what went on today." Another type of favorable opinion concentrated on the broader role and image of policing in society, sometimes without regard to their personal experience. The former preoccupation tended to be the focus of people with repeat experiences of the police -- individuals who had a foundation for what to expect from the encounter as well as knowledge of what was likely to happen to them afterwards. The latter tended to be expressed by people with little or no prior experience of the police.

Officer Demeanor

For many detainees, the demeanor of the officer and the way they were treated physically in particular played a large part in their appreciation of the police. "They, they were perfectly fine to me," one person said. "They were, they were great," he added. Another person who told us the police were doing an "excellent" job emphasized the care with which handcuffs were applied:

> *Maybe it was because he was new, but I told the guy, you know, cause I had a wrist injury. "Hey, my wrist hurts, the cuffs are too tight." So he combined two cuffs. I'm not sure if it's because I don't know what the hell's going on now, but I've never been treated like today where it was just, I wasn't giving them no trouble. I complied and they weren't being assholes*.

The judgment of another person who favorably rated police performance was related to other aspects of the demeanor of the officer(s), such as the way they spoke to detainees.

> Interviewee: I mean, none of 'em was rude to me. All of them like, was respectable to me. Nice to me. Not mean like some of 'em, you know, you have mean ones.
>
> Interviewer: So you've had experiences with mean officers?
>
> Interviewee: Yeah. That was like a long, long, long time ago when I was younger. But now, I mean they're, they're, they're, they're just doing they job.

Not all people who told us the police were doing an excellent job said it was because of the way they were treated by the officer. Some justified their appraisals in terms of the quality of police service – the speed of response to calls, for example, or their presence in society. "Yeah, they're cool. They're seen," one person said, referring to their visibility in his community. Another person who had been stopped multiply for drunk and dangerous driving cited, ironically, the speed of police response in his arrest: "I heard they are slow to respond these days, but they came real quick to my neighborhood [laughing], or like my girlfriend calling, like, oh yeah. Cause I live like in a nice neighborhood right now."

For other detainees, a positive appraisal of police performance was rooted in less tangible matters. One person described his "better treatment" by the police not in physical terms but as the combination of courtesy, patience, and an ethic of "concern" for the public. That concern, he suggested, could be sensed in a reduction of tension in relations with the police, which used to be "rubbery," and in a recognition of the complexity of "issues" that were manifest in the community.

> *Really, I would say it's just, um, better treatment. Um, back then they were a little bit rubbery, but back then it, well, things were kind of crazy as it was. Um, now they're pretty courteous. You know, they've always been really courteous to me. They've never been rude. I've never seen that. You know, a couple of my other homeless friends, they're jerks themselves, but the police department in Bakersfield, they've been patient and very nice. You know, always their concern is for the public, and, um, that's key for me cuz they do look out for the community and for those who are out here that have issues, you know.*

Negative Appraisals

Some detainees with negative appraisals of the work of the police in Bakersfield cited conventional markers of police performance such as response times, although shortcomings in that aspect of policing alone did not explain their views. For one person, the mix of slow response times for residents and high rates of compensation for officers denigrated the police's stature; that incongruity led him to sense that police power was exercised arbitrarily.

> *It's not good. No, they're not up to the mark. They're getting paid pretty well and they lack their job in every area. They have a very, very lagging response time. I mean, they're not quick in the interaction. They're, uh, becoming more like third world country police. They have all the authority, and they think they're a gang out fishing with badges.*

Other detainees with negative appraisals thought the problem was that the police were *not* using their authority, overly rule-bound, and in one case following instructions from a computer. For example, one person who said the police are doing a "bad" job explained his view this way:

> *Because, when I was riding in the back of the car, I was reading what it said on the screen about what I was being brought in for. And it, um, states on the screen do not, um, arrest solely because of, um, um, the particular, um, of my, um, arrest. So with that being said, it distinctly says, do not arrest solely on that. And the only other, um, reason they stopped me was for misdemeanor trespassing on a, on railroad property, which they were gonna, um, cite and release me for anyway. So technically I'm up here for no reason. Okay? Cause the, the reason*

> *they brought me in, it states don't arrest solely on that. So, they were gonna cite me out for, um, the misdemeanors trespassing that shouldn't even be arrested.*

Some detainees believed the police were not properly prioritizing their work and focusing on minor crimes rather than serious violence. "They gotta step up and focus on the more important cases, not just those that get a slap on the hand," one person said. "I feel like they're making a half-effort." Another said: "They gotta help those who really need help or really cause problems. Don't just take calls but get out there and stop people from damaging property. It's not fair, I mean, what the hell?!" Another person complained: "Look at all the shootings going on, and they just out stopping cars." One detainee who was arrested while driving a stolen car thought police attention to his crime was excessive:

> *I just felt that there was, there was too many patrol cars, two called engines for a simple, uh, you know, possession or assault. It was too many cops, like, uh, it was out of control, like if I was a murderer or, or I was a rapist or something like that. I don't know. Cause I was like, I'll even ask them what's going on and they're like "we'll tell you right now!" And then they were just calling, you know, talking to me really aggressively, which I understand, you know. Um, but for a stolen vehicle, I was like, come on now. Yeah, I don't think it was anything, all that balls, patrol cars were unnecessary to be honest. They could've been patrolling somewhere else, you know, something, you know, real serious*.

Some of these comments may sound self-serving or even exculpatory, and yet many detainees acknowledged their responsibility for the offense, and for some of these people what stood out in their critique of the police was an apparently condescending attitude. "They should come at me like I'm a human being," one person complained. "They not higher than me because of the badge," said another. "Just do the job that you're supposed to do, not the one the badge makes possible."

For several detainees arrested on charges of domestic violence, an ethic of listening and problem-solving in policing was missing. For instance, when we asked one detainee what the police could have done better, she said:

> *I feel like they could sit there and ask me what happened, you know, and listen to people or try to understand what's actually going on. Not just do the same thing. Cause, I mean, ain't anything really happened, and you know, communicating better would actually help you get your job done.*

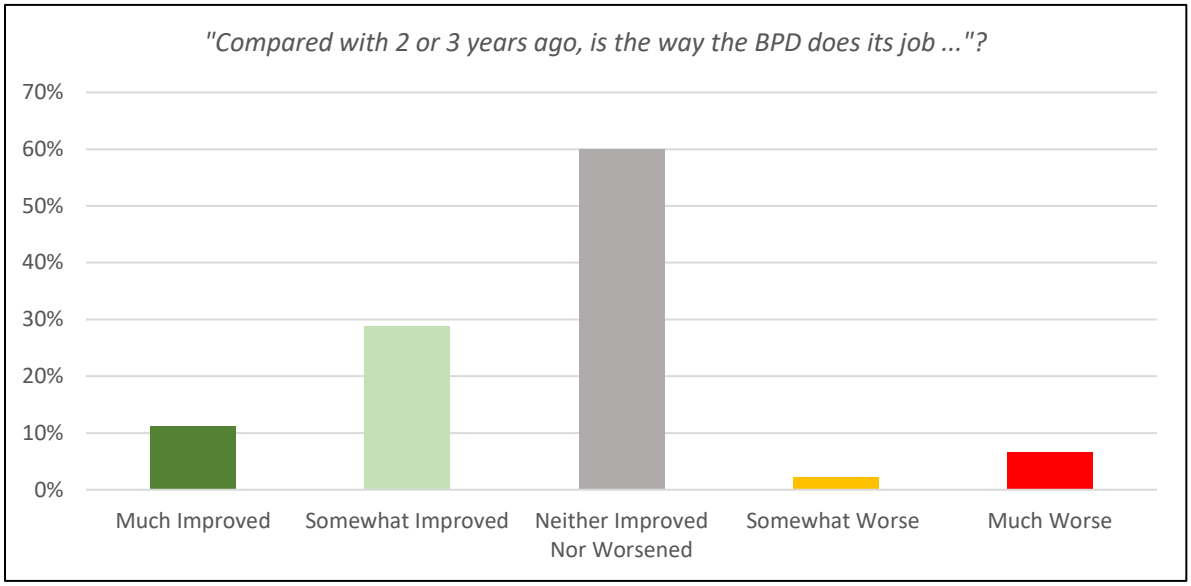
Two of the detainees we interviewed complained about use of force during arrest; one mentioned an elbow to the back of the neck, which he said was unnecessary because he "wasn't resisting." A few people commented on the red marks on their wrists left by handcuffs, and two said shortly after their handcuffs were removed that their arms and shoulders hurt; one massaged his "kinked" right shoulder throughout the interview, periodically wincing in pain; another repeatedly rubbed and stared at his wrists. Several people with prior arrests emphasized the absence of force in their encounters. One person said: "today it was weird that they were calm and nice to me when usually it's always aggressive." Another person who told us the police were doing a good job today explained why: "because they didn't beat the shit out of me. When they arrested me [laughing]; that's a good thing. Now they're just arresting." As these comments suggest, use of force by the police in the past influenced detainees' views; they played a large role in detainees' impressions of the credibility of arrangements for police accountability, as we describe later in this report.

Baselining and Betterment

A different way to regard the response pattern in Figures 1, 2, and 3 above is to treat it as a baseline. When the interviews with detainees are conducted again in 2024, the Department will know whether the views of detainees are more favorable or less favorable, and perhaps also whether any changes in these views are responsive to changes in the policies and practices of police officers. However, any interpretation of increases in positive sentiment, or a further polarization of sentiment, will depend on what the Department expects and hopes these views to be, and especially how much they might diverge from perceptions of other residents. In short, before treating these data as a baseline, the Department should articulate what it would like detainees' views to be and how they might change over time. Does it expect continuous improvement? Is the absence of deterioration in ratings of the police acceptable?

Eleven percent of detainees thought policing in Bakersfield today was "much improved over the last few years, and over a quarter believed it had "somewhat improved," as Figure 4 below shows. Only a small fraction thought it was somewhat worse or much worse. But note that the modal response to this question was neutral, with over half of detainees saying the BPD was doing neither a better nor worse job than in the past two or three years. None of the female detainees we interviewed thought policing had improved.

Figure 4. Perceptions of Change Over Time in Policing



It is difficult to make sense of the dominant view in Figure 4 without a prior baseline measure of detainees' perceptions of the police, or a sense of their expectations of the direction of change. Some detainees who thought policing had not changed was already excellent or good and may not have anticipated improvement. For instance, one person told us: "No, like I said, I don't think there's a change. They've always been, like, normal people, you know. I trust them, and Bakersfield PD's always, like, been fair to me or my friends." By contrast, some detainees who thought it was bad or terrible believed it had always been poor, and nothing would change. "Nope," one person said, explaining their view. "They, they're doing like the same as before, like they're on cruise control."

For many detainees who perceived improvement over time, an experience of police violence in the past influenced their assessments. For example, a female detainee contrasted her treatment on the day of our interview with an experience with the BPD ten years ago, when she was a teenager:

Interviewee: Yeah. When I was a teenager, like, one of them was rude, very rude. Yelling at me and taking me to the cemetery.

Interviewer: What?

Interviewee: Yeah, to, to, to, to beat us I guess. I don't know. One of 'em said we could take 'em to the cemetery and nobody can hear them scream.

Interviewer: So you were actually taken to the cemetery?

Interviewee: Yeah, I was like, I was, I was a teenager. That was, that was scary. I was scared.

Interviewer: You think that's not happening now?

Interviewee: No, I don't, I'm not sure cuz I, I'm, I never heard nothing like that happening.

Another detainee who said the police was doing a better job today initially confused us because he also said it was still doing a "terrible" job.

Interviewer: Wait, so you think policing is terrible today, but it's still better than it was in the past?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's better.

Interviewer: Okay. So, tell us about that.

Interviewee: Two years ago, it was dangerous. Dangerous for just a regular stop. Really. Fuck yeah. I mean, regular stop. Coulda got your ass kicked. Just being smart to 'em. Now it's a little bit different, but, if what I witnessed today, … if everything was done as it was today, then, absolutely. Absolutely, they've changed.

When we asked for more information about his interactions with the police in the past, he said:

> *A few years ago, we we're sitting downtown laughing and, you know, messing off and -- this was downtown cops, you know -- and "you guys gotta move along," they say. We say "[who the] hell are you guys?", and oh fuck, it's like messing with some frat boys. They fucked us up.*

Violent interactions with the police figured prominently in this detainee's judgment about the BPD, and differences between its practices and those of the Sheriff were part of the criteria for his appraisal.

> *The sheriffs are like, it's almost like a gang where you see a sheriff coming, even if you ain't doing nothing weird cuz you don't know what the hell they're gonna do. So sheriffs are different. Ballgame. Those guys are like a government paid gang. I mean, they'll threaten you all kinds of shit and they don't even, I don't like the Sheriff. …. I mean, you got some assholes that work for BPD. Yeah, but the sheriffs, it's like everybody there, they just hired every bad*

> *apple that you could find. Give 'em a badge, gave a gun, and the reason to do shit. So I rather get arrested by BPD any day than the sheriff's.*

For other detainees, change in the use of force was not the only thing that explained positive views. One person who said the police were "much improved" told us there was a bundle of signs:

> *"The department is doing a better job; I'm not gonna lie, they doin' better. You can tell because crime is going down, and they're out patrolling. They used to slam people against cars for no reason and shoot people, for real, and that's not happening any more. It was much worse in the 1990s and 2000s. Back then they shot my homie. Then they shot my other homie. But that's not happening any more."*

Other detainees summoned other criteria from past experiences with the police in their appraisal:

> *Um, I really don't, um, I really don't encounter the police much. So, and I don't have a bunch of people around me that encounter cops at all. And I've been in trouble before. It's been 10 years since I've been in trouble. So I would say from, from then to this today in general, the gentleman I dealt with seemed to be doing their job efficiently.*

When we asked for him to specify what he meant by "efficiently," he said:

> *Just, I would say just how they approach the situation and the aggression and even the respect that they show through, you know, in that process. Cuz the, assuming that you're, you're guilty or whatever the phone call or the reason they're coming out for it, they're, the way they deal with you, talk to you is could be very disrespectful and demeaning. And I didn't get that today.*

He then relayed in great detail a traffic stop from 10 years ago that, in his view, escalated into a conflict that could have been avoided: "it seemed like it was personal, like as if he was just picking at me then. You know what I mean? So compared to that, to them it's, it's much different today."

Some detainees thought policing had improved because of a return to a neutral brand of professionalism. "They just doing they job," one person said. "They're improving now because, I mean, cuz they're doing their job." Other detainees who believed policing had "somewhat improved" were cynical about the reasons for the change as well as its sustainability. "I think maybe they just ran out of evil in the world," one person told us. Another detainee attributed the changes to the "consent decree":

> *Maybe it's better selection. Maybe it's better training. Maybe it's all the scrutiny that's happened over the years and just recently, you know, they just had this documentary come out that I'm pretty sure it's touched a lot of different nerves. So it's just got, it may have some of them walking in line a little better than they usually would. You know what I mean? Cuz it's a lot of eyeballs on 'em right now.*

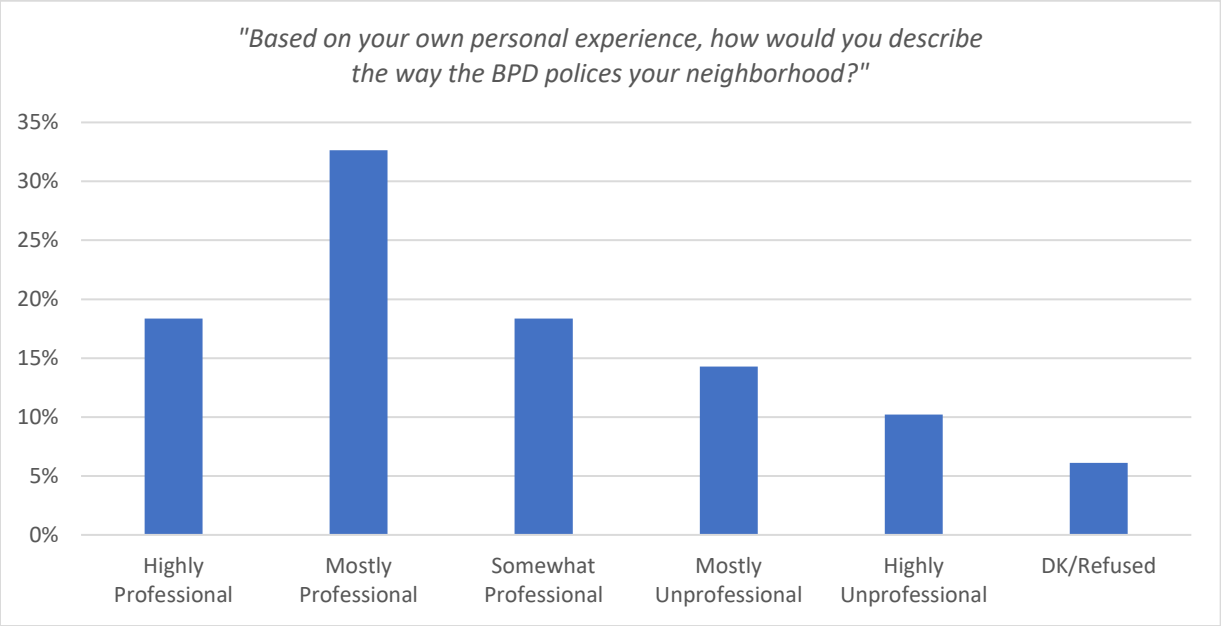
Beyond Ratings

In the next section, we move beyond appraisals of the job police are doing and focus on specific traits of policing, such as the perceived degree of professionalism and equal treatment of residents. The purpose of asking such qualitative questions was to generate insight about what people appreciate or dislike about policing in different settings, and to understand how such differences affect interactions with the police, willingness to cooperate with investigations and, inclination to solve conflicts on their own.

II. Police Professionalism

More than half of detainees we spoke to told us the way the BPD policed their neighborhood was either "highly" or "mostly professional." A smaller fraction thought the police were "somewhat professional," as Figure 5 shows, and nearly a quarter (24%) thought the police were mostly or highly unprofessional.

Figure 5. Perceptions of Professionalism



For one person, it was the "clean vehicles, their dress code, and mannerism" of the police officers that exemplified professionalism. "You know, they've always been polite, call me by my last name. Like, that's part of the professionalism, you know, or even use my middle name."

For others, the professionalism of the police was determined by the quality of the neighborhood that was being policed. One person told us: "It's only in certain areas you've good policing and only certain areas where it's, it's bad. So let's just say it wouldn't be as good in a good neighborhood then it was in a bad neighborhood, if that makes."

Another person who said the police were highly professional didn't specify what conduct or action by the police exemplified professionalism; instead, he spoke about the quality of his neighborhood as if it were itself an indicator of professionalism in policing.

> *I think it's highly professional. I mean, well, especially the neighborhood I live now, I went from living like in a $600 apartment to this year. I moved to $1,800 that I came from the next neighborhood. Now I live next to the actual four year university. Nice. It's like, it's, it's nice neighborhood. And so there's a lot, there's always a cops there because like, they're over there. There's like a Hagen Daz, like a rich area. Okay. I live, I live around a bunch of, uh, rich houses. So, and before I lived downtown I, yeah. Before previously I lived downtown, but no, they, they was still like, there's a lot of cops downtown too, cuz I, a police station downtown mm-hmm, and I never any issues with them, you know.*

Response times to calls for service figured in only a few appraisals of police professionalism, and ironically it came up in both positive and negative assessments. For example, one detainee who was arrested because of an unexpectedly swift police response to a call for service; he singled this out as the reason for his appraisal as mostly professional. "I think there has been a little bit of an improvement, as far as, you know, the response time, because they got to me; they got there real quick and it's like, for real, I didn't even know what the hell was going on." Another person told us in response to our question about whether policing had become more or less professional over time that he believed there had been a marked deterioration in response times, although he was reluctant to blame the police for this development:

> *I think they respond a lot less since, since Covid, you know? I think maybe there's like less money around. I heard from people they don't, like, some don't even come. But again, I don't have any personal experience, since I'm just hearing things, from what I've heard I think maybe Covid messed up the funding. I never had to call 'em for any reason. But I think it is gotten worse as far as there's like, there's less people, like, you know, they're trying to hire a lot from there. You see like their bumper stickers, like they're hiring, and I've heard that they take a long time to come in some areas. … But I don't wanna put something negative about them just 'cause I hear it from somebody else. So just say "the same" because I have no issues with them.*

Some of the detainees appeared to give the police high marks for professionalism because they had low expectations for how they would be treated. For instance, one person who said they were "mostly professional" told us: "obviously if they come up to you and talk to you the right way, then that's good. I mean, I haven't had somebody come at me at a, in a bad way, you know?" Another person said: "I would say they are 'highly professional' 'cuz they've never given me any trouble at all. Okay? They've always done what they were supposed to do, in my opinion." One detainee was less positive. "I guess they're professional, I guess. Cuz they don't, they don't harass me [laughing]. As long as they don't harass me, I'm good."

Still another person who told us the police were mostly professional was clearly disappointed by the dispassionate and impersonal character of their response to her call for help: "Um, I feel like they all, you know, I guess they did their part I would say. I don't know. Um, I feel like maybe I could have gotten a little more help, but it, it wasn't like a bad experience, you know?" When we asked what happened, the detainee explained that she had hoped the police would sort out the problem with her cohabitant, a former spouse. She had called the police because:

> *… like I had somebody knocking out my door that was being bothersome, which is, my, the man that I have been in a relationship with, um. So they, I wanted them to come remove him from the situation, but because my restraining order fell out before, I didn't have a restraining anymore, anymore. So they've always told me to go get one, but I failed to do so because when I, when something fails for me, I ha, I get, and I think I was convinced that I wasn't, and I shouldn't have ever done that to him. So I was convinced that, so then I was like, okay, well I can't do it again. Right? Even though he's making me crazy, and I can't work anymore and have a life. Like, that's how I felt, you know? Right? But, um, okay, they were able to come there, but they didn't get, they couldn't do much 'cuz they're like, we don't, you didn't do the restraining order.*

The inability of the police to prevent the recurrence of problem influenced her appraisal. “They didn't do anything at all before,” she said. “Like he just, he came right back. He just kept coming back, coming back. He's been bothering me since, but, and now, like, I'm financially dependent on the person, so it's been really hard for me to walk away, you know?

One of the detainees we spoke to who thought the police were only “somewhat professional” explained this judgment by distinguishing between officers who were always professional and others who were always un-professional. In response to our question, he said: “I would say it's, it is probably a, a good balance of both, of being highly unprofessional and highly professional.”

> Interviewer: And that's individual officers who are sometimes highly professional and sometimes not professional? Or some police officers are always professional and others always unprofessional?
>
> Interviewee: Bingo. It's some officers who are very unprofessional and some who are very professional.

Another person who said the police were “very unprofessional” focused on the tenor of his recent interaction with the police during the arrest, which disappointed him greatly. Drawing on his experience in a dental office, which he described as “my career,” he outlined a way for the police to be more professional in the future.

> *Okay, you come in, and I say, “Hi, how you doing? You know what you here for today? Okay, we're doing this, this, and that.” We make you feel comfortable about the procedures that we're doing today. “Oh, you’re scared of the dentist? Great. So, my job is to make you feel comfortable.” You might have a small feeling [of pain] today, no big deal, but let's take care of before it gets bigger.*

The detainee then likened the process of managing the process of arrest to numbing a site in the mouth before a root canal. It would not be painless, he emphasized, but it would smooth the interaction and might even have preventive effects.

> *I guarantee you I'm gonna disappoint you because you're already expecting the worst. But after we're done, you're like, “okay, it wasn't that bad.” Not that you want another one, but I have to educate you. Floss and brush minimize the cavities.*

These potential benefits were forfeited, however, because “the police don't make you feel comfortable,” he said. He then highlighted the repercussions of the absence of such “people skills.”

> *If you are scared already going to the dentist, and I'm upset or I’m hostile toward you, then it's gonna be worse. You're gonna be like, “this is not the office for me.” And you [the dentist] be like, “what's wrong? Uh, just shut up, open your mouth,” and stick it in.*

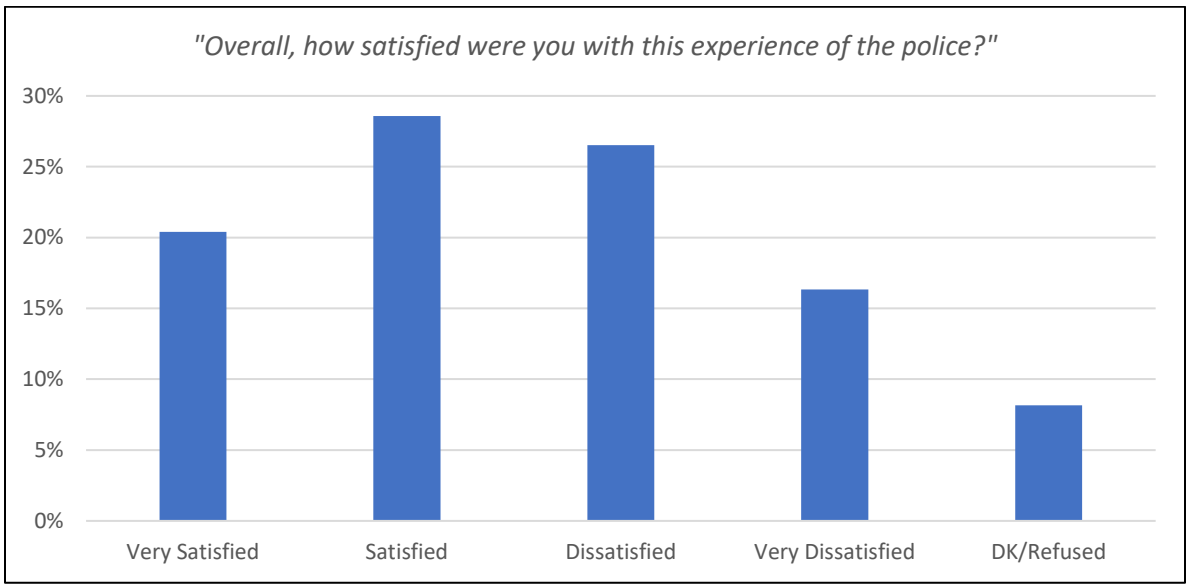
Two of the detainees who said the police were “highly unprofessional” said they believed the police were making arrests with a kind of professional indifference, or as a way to earn money. “They just take me in to add a couple of bucks to their check,” one person told us. Other detainees thought the police were using brute force to achieve their objectives. One person who described the degree of professionalism in policing in the past as “reasonably respectable” said:

Now they act like they're Gestapo. Like, before when were stopped about our camping places, where we weren't supposed to camp, they gave us an opportunity to move our stuff and stuff like that. Now they just come in and destroy our property and cut up our tents and stuff like that, which makes it harder for us 'cause we already barely got money and, um, no, no place to stay as it is. So when they damage our property or take our property or take up in for no apparent reason just to do it, like, I recycle for a living. It's like, today I, I had just got back right, right before they came and I, and I did real well. And, um, they took that and just threw it in the trash and arrested me. So, um, even though, um, this is not gonna be something I'm gonna be in here a long time, for maybe eight hours, um, I'm right back to zero and I worked all night.

III. SATISFACTION WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF ARREST

When we asked detainees whether they were "satisfied" with their experience of the police today, responses were more equally distributed across a spectrum of positive and negative sentiment. The question struck some detainees as odd: "well, I'm not satisfied, because I'm going to jail," one person said. But many detainees disregarded that fact when answering the question. As Figure 6 shows, nearly half of all. detainees were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their arrest; a slightly smaller fraction of detainees were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 8 percent "didn't know" how to appraise their experience.

Figure 6. Levels of Satisfaction with the Experience of Arrest



The reasons for satisfaction varied greatly: one woman who was "very satisfied" with her experience of being arrested told us she was "glad" she was arrested since she felt like she was being rescued from an abusive former partner with whom she still lives and on whom she's financially dependent. One male detainee said the same thing when explaining why he was "satisfied" with the arrest. "It sucks that I'm in here," he said, "but it's kinda good because I'm away from her [his girlfriend] for a while. I gotta learn to just walk away, not worry about it." One person who said he was "satisfied" explained: "I don't feel disrespected. I know what I'm here for. Um, I'm okay with that honestly." Another person said: "Well, getting arrested, um, that's a mixed bag. But with their, with their, with their job, I'm very satisfied."

For many detainees with prior experiences of arrest, the answer to this question depended on the way they were treated during the arrest. "Yes, I'm very satisfied," one person said. "They was professional today." Some detainees were surprised that they were very satisfied with their experience of arrest. One person said he was "shocked."

> Interviewer: Oh, you were shocked that you were very satisfied? So, tell us what happened.
>
> Interviewee: Right, I got pulled over, um, gave the guy my information. Um, I knew I had a warrant. I had a, I had a warrant. Um, I had a bar fight like three years ago, so I had a warrant for that. And uh, I seen he was pulling that up.
>
> Interviewer: You're in the car still?
>
> Interviewee: Yeah. Cause I got a seven year one and a three-year-old and, uh, nobody's cussing. Nobody's yanking me out of the car. He took me to the sidewalk. I said, 'Hey, can I just wait in your doorway until my wife gets here to get my kids?' 'Sure.' Never had that happen. And it takes my wife like eight, nine minutes. We waited on the doorway right there where the officer talked to my kids, right? Yeah. Interacted with my kids and everything. And it was like, holy shit. Like it was weird.

Another person was surprised by the decorum of the arresting officers:

> *They were just cool. Like, uh, it was like, you know, my girlfriend had called up, cause like, mean she's super drunk. We're drinking tonight. And then she likes to like, you know, threaten me and stuff with like, calling the cops. Anyway, so they came, I was with the baby and they're like, chill, like, bro, like, okay, so, 'cause my girlfriend calls the cops like, I have to get arrested and it's stupid. But I was like, no. I was like, I, I get like this. What has to go down? You know? This is not something what happened. And, but no, they were like, they're really calm and like, yeah, they're really, really cool. Like, they let me, I took, I told em, Hey, can you grab my phone? You know, like the green one, I had like three different phones, but like, he grabbed three, my green one, and then they did, you know? And no, they, they were really nice today [laughing].*

Another person was pleased the police were not abrupt or aggressive, which made him feel safe.

> *Because when they came in, they announced themselves as who they were and, they didn't like go around the little shack that I had right there. They didn't like, you know, go storm Trooper inside and you know, or tear down the canopy that I was in and they, you know, they called me, and I tell them where I was. They say 'you have to step out' and at the time I had my pants down, so I had my pants were down and he says, 'alright, and just pull 'em up and step outside.' So it wasn't, you know, 'we gotta see your hands' and, no. Um, my roommate first went out and, you know, no "need to put your hands behind your back "and it wasn't, you know, getting her and shaking her around and myself also, you know, I felt very safe.*

Another detainee said he was satisfied in part by the way "backup" was involved in his arrest, despite misgivings about the offense that precipitated the encounter with the police:

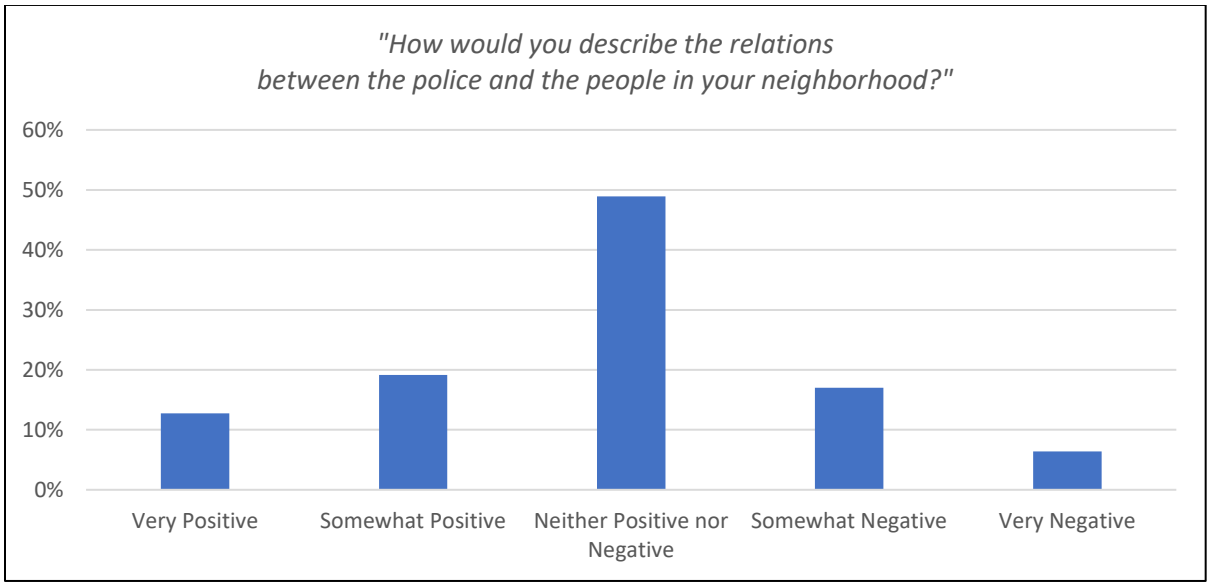
> *I'm not satisfied all that I got arrested, especially for, I didn't know, uh, I was in a possession of some stolen vehicle, so that's, I'm really upset about that. Um, I should have seen all the red*

flags before I purchased the vehicle. But yeah, I mean, they, they did, did a good job as far as, you know, getting to me and, um, getting their backup up to, you know, to arrest me, I guess.

IV. Relations with the community

A greater proportion of the people we interviewed said that relations between the police and people in their neighborhood were positive than negative. As Figure 7 below shows, nearly a third of the detainees we spoke to said that relations with the police were very or somewhat positive. The most common response to this question was neutral, however, and few detainees who thought relations with the police were positive or improving could specify what about these relations were good.

Figure 7. Perceptions of Police-Community Relations



A couple of detainees speculated that good relations were a feature of the neighborhood rather than any specific practice or conduct by the police, and perhaps the result of limited contact with the police. For instance, one person said: "I mean, I really don't live out that way where I'm at now, uh, okay? I live in the southwest. I live in a nice neighborhood, so they don't be called over there. We just don't have a lot of crime over there." Another person who told us relations with the police in his neighborhood were bad believed this depended on the area.

Only in certain areas it's bad. So let's just say there wouldn't be as much police in a good neighborhood as there is in a bad neighborhood, if that makes sense…. If you go towards like Martin Luther King Park, towards that way, then there's more maybe, maybe see a little bit more police over there. Um, let's see. Um, Rosedale or, what's another good neighborhood? Um, a lot of those other streets that are like way out there where, you know, police officers probably live. Then, you know, they probably wouldn't, you probably wouldn't see as much police unless they're probably going home. But that's my opinion.

Many detainees insisted there was no relationship with the police in their neighborhood. One person told us: "They don't work *with* the community, I don't think. But they're just like, like *in* the community.

It's more that they have a job, and they do that job." Another person who said there was effectively no relationship with the police appeared to say this was a feature of the landscape:

> *Basically there's not really a relationship between the cops and, and the civilians. It is just, you know, uh, it's just, it's, it's tough out here around, it's tough for sure. So it's like, I don't know. I mean, it, I wish they, it will get better in that area, but, you know, it's like, uh, it's just hard.*

Two detainees said the distance between the public and the police was in part the result of the rarity of interactions unrelated to law enforcement, which meant that their only observations were of police officers patrolling and making arrests. For example, one person said:

> *Well, in the neighborhood that I live in, it's not very, it's not very common. You see 'em, you know what I mean? But it's not, it's not an everyday thing. You see people getting arrested or police patrolling the neighborhood. Just in, in, in the parts of town that I live in.*

Another detainee said the infrequency of positive encounters with police might complicate efforts to improve relations with the community since vicarious experience and rumour would fill the void:

> *It's hard to change the perception without interaction, you know what I mean? So most people are going off of what they see and what they hear others go through. You know what I mean? So it, it's not necessarily personal interaction they're [negative views] being based off of.*

Other detainees said relationships with the police in their community were adversarial and filled with reciprocal distrust. One person told us: "They're just not positive. We're like, hey, I'm gonna have to call the police. Right? But there's no, no trust." One person said relations were implacably hostile: "I hate them, really. And they hate us," referring to friends in his neighborhood. Another person told us that the community perceived the police as an enemy. "People look at the police different. They take them as, as a threat instead of safety." One person likened the mood in his neighborhood to war. "It's like martial law," he said.

Several detainees said they were wary of encounters with the police, but few thought violence was likely to ensue from an interaction. "No, that would just be straight out, uh, back in the whole day, you know, cowboy day," one woman said. Another person who told us he always kept his distance from the police, but said he didn't think this meant a dangerous experience was inevitable.

> *It's Bakersfield. It's crazy, but you know, you should stay out the way, stay out the way. But if, you know, like I said, there's some nice police and there's some bad ones too. So I think if you be respectable, or whatever, if you get hemmed up or pulled over and you're not being rude, I think you'll be all right.*

Several people who said relationships with the police were negative told us that they had no personal animus against the police, but that such encounters entailed risk. Asked whether he felt comfortable talking with police officers, one person replied: "That's a different story. I can say hi and bye and all that shit, but I ain't gonna snitch. I just shut up around them." Another said:

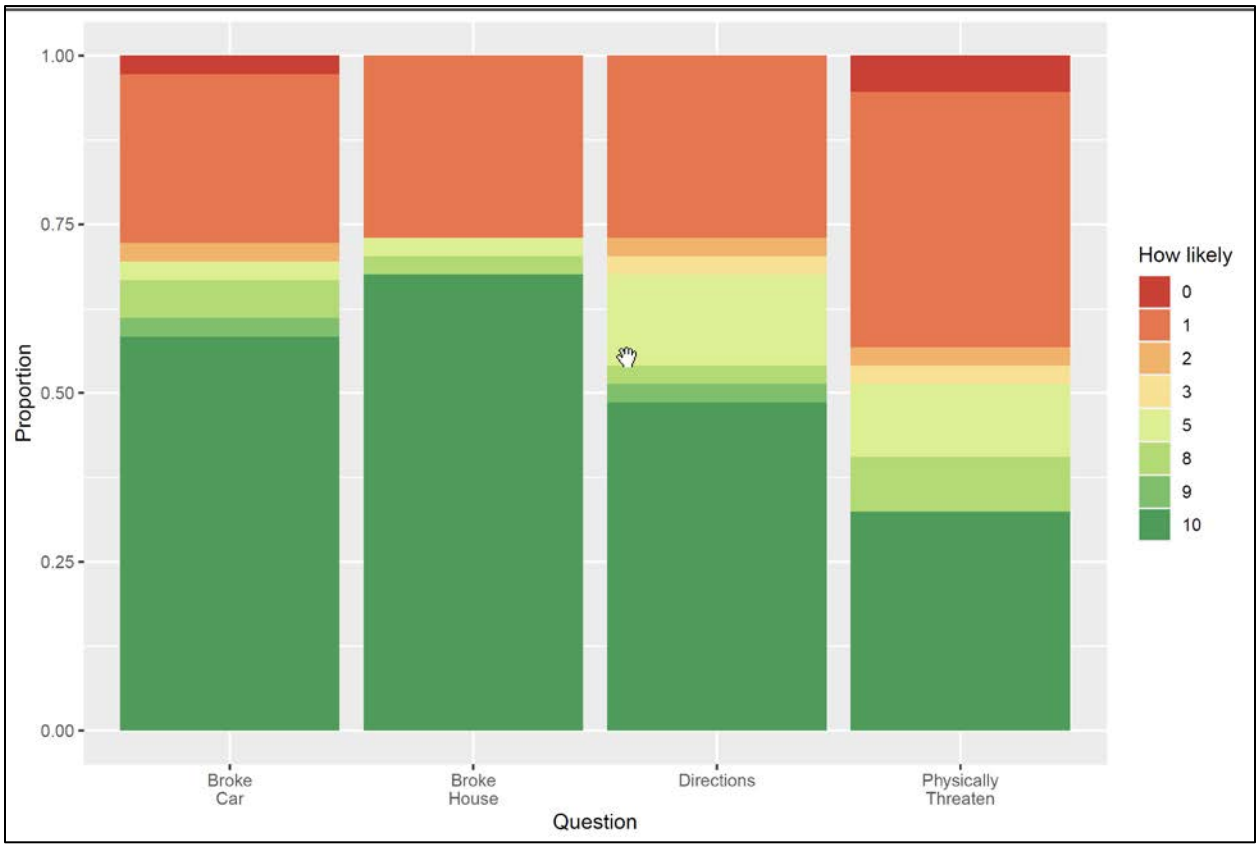
> *I can, I could probably communicate with a cop, um, like talk to 'em. Yeah. I mean I was on the way here talking to 'em. And other than that, um, nothing really personal. I'm pretty sure they,*

uh, or you know, nothing personal they can ask me cuz they're cops. They're not detectives. So they could, I mean, they could communicate. We can have a good talk on the way back this way or whatever, but nothing really personal. I would not want them to ask me no type of personal question. Like who? Or like, say like for instance, I've been in a gang, um, like most of my life I, I know people from the neighborhood, so I don't like them to tell me where I'm from or nothing. What, what's on the record is on the record. Like, you don't need to know, uh, this person, this person or you know, I mean, I know when to stop, you know, uh, answering their questions after I was like, I don't know, I don't know. Or they want to talk to me about some good cake they ate or something. The way over here like yeah, we can communicate, you can know me, I'm cool. We can talk about anything you want. But other than something really personal, I want like, I feel, um, discomfort.

V. Inclination to Call the Police for Help

We asked detainees to tell how us how likely they would be to ask the police for help in the following four possible situations: (1) if their car was stolen or vandalized; (2) if their house was burgled; (3) if they were lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood, (4) if they were threatened with violence. We used a scale of 1 to 10, with one being "not likely" and ten being "very likely," to gauge the intensity of their inclinations. As Figure 8 below shows, two-thirds of detainees said they were very likely to call the police if their house was broken into, whereas less than one-third said so if they were threatened with violence.

Figure 8. Willingness to Call the Police or Cooperate in Different Situations



A few people said it was a matter of principle when asked to explain why they would "definitely" call the police for help. "Because I'm supposed to, right? It's, It's the right thing to do," on person said. Another said: "because stress for society teaches us to do this call the police." Then he added another reason:

> *Cuz you can't win against them [the suspected perpetrators]. So they would bring a lot of power. So things will get outta hand to where, like, yeah. There's no way out of this. like it's cause me against 10 people. Right. We ain't gonna win that. Right. But people want to try like, yeah. That's pretty dumb, you're not gonna win that.*

Some detainees who said they would not call the police for help also articulated principles for their views. One person cited the bible. "The good book says, you know, don't let it get too far out. Don't take your brother to court, you know, try to settle out with him before he goes to court. He should be judged and, and, and, and harshly punished, you know, so make amends. You know? I believe that. I believe in that." Another referenced the right to self-defence. "Yes, I'd ask a cop if I was lost," he acknowledged, "but no, I aint' gonna call them for nothing. I protect myself, I ain't gonna call the cops."

All other detainees said their inclination to ask for help involved a calculation of risk. For example, two detainees said they'd be reluctant to call the police for help in most situations. One woman said, "yeah, I'd ask for directions, but I'd be scared." Another man said: "Um, during this point in time? I mean, yeah, I would, but I'd be scared because I see the, I see what's happening on tv." Other detainees believed that any contact with the police would expose them to danger. One said: "You either lose a limb here or lose a limb there. It's like a double-edged sword," when you interact with the police. Another person was adamant that he'd never call the police, not in any situation. "Hell for no," he said. "Hell no." When we asked, "what is that," he replied:

> *Their first question will be, "why are you in this neighborhood? What are you doing?" Right? And then if they ask somebody around you, "has this guy been doing anything suspicious?" It only takes one Karen to be like, 'yeah, I seen him be a problem.' Now I'm going to jail. So I'm not asking, I'm not gonna set myself up for that failure.*

One person who had called the police for help before said that calling the police was likely to get them in further trouble.

> *It's so easy for somebody to incriminate themselves, any little words, you know, could mean the whole other things. And, and they, they could just definitely twist everything like a sickle and just write down what they think, what they feel, how, you know, depending on your, how you said certain things or certain words. And that could get you a lot of trouble, of course. And, um, and that's, uh, that's the way, you know, I see, know, sometimes I will call and they will think I'm the, I'm the, the guy that I was, you know, being called out. Cause I had people try to break into my home before. And when I called the man, they tried to hit me with it, thinking it was me, the one that was breaking in my own home.*

But some of the reluctance and ambivalence about calling the police for help was unrelated to any observed or imagined conduct of policing. In one case it was tied to a fear of strangers and a suspicion that some people might be impersonating the police:

I think I would, but you know what, these days I've been very scared of everybody because I don't know if they're really a police officer or not, because like, I don't know, I just feel like these days I, and I don't know if it's true or not, like there's a whole 'nother world out there that's not actually the law enforcement. Like, you know, I don't really know like who or what. But that's what I feel, you know, because I just feel like there's people, like maybe they steal the cop cars and act like cops. I don't really know that for a fact. That could be imagination. Understand. I don't know. But it signs around me or something is telling me that people are doing that. You know? I feel like there's people doing a lot of stuff. And so I, I'm a little nervous about those situations now, you know? Um, I just didn't realize that that was out there.

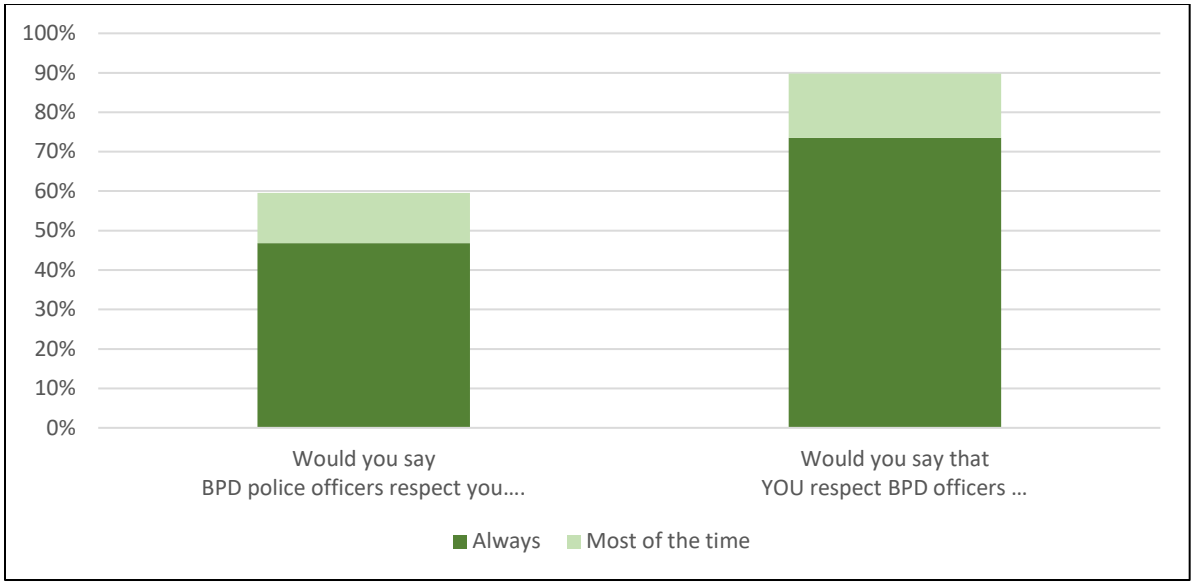
Interviewer: Well, what if someone threatened you with physical violence, would you call the police to report a crime?

Interviewee: Um, I thought I always would've, but I have not done that because I've lived in fear because of it. So I don't, no, I never do. Hmm. Like something tells me I can't, I don't know.

VI. RESPECT

We asked detainees how often they felt respected by police officers and how often they respect the officers they encounter. Nearly half of the detainees said that BPD officers respect them "always," as Figure 9 shows, and an additional 13 percent said "most of the time." By contrast, nearly three quarters of the detainees said they always respected police officers in Bakersfield, and another 16 percent said "most of the time." Figure 9 below depicts this asymmetry in the perceived reciprocity of respect.

Figure 9. Beliefs About Respect



We twinned the questions about respect in order to understand whether respect for police was believed to be conditional on receiving it from the police (as the stingy trope suggests -- you only give what you get), or whether detainees believed the offering of respect was rooted in other considerations, such as the character of their treatment, the demeanor of the officer, the reputation of the Department or the

public image of the police in general, or something intrinsic. The response pattern captured in Figure 9 belies the notion of respect as a *quid pro quo*. Only a few detainees referenced this trope directly, and those that did began with the position of the resident, not the officer, as if to suggest the origins of respect lie in society or is incumbent on residents. For instance, one person said: "Like, I talked to them and if you give 'em respect, they give you respect." Another said: "It's kind of, I mean, if the people don't respect them then, you know, the police don't respect the people as well, so, it kind of goes hand in hand, I guess." A third person portrayed the transaction in negative terms, saying: "It depends; if we treat them like shit, that's what we'll get in return, and vice versa." A fourth invoked the idea of conditionality and reciprocity in the trope but emphasized the collective benefits of giving respect, rather than the private value of the return of recognition to the individual resident:

> *Well, I mean, respect goes a long way. Um, if they show respect to someone, I think that honestly maybe that person wouldn't act out so much towards them or, you know what I mean, or be so violent maybe. So maybe it even could reduce crime or something. It could, I think, you know? Um, I think this world needs a lot more niceness [laughing].*

Because of the asymmetry in the response pattern, we asked for an explanation when people said they respected the police despite believing they received it less often from the police. For a few detainees the sense that they had been respected by the police depended on the way they were treated during the arrest. For instance, one detainee emphasized a positive personal experience with the police officer; he also speculated that the relationship might not be the same for everyone.

> *Honestly, since this is my first experience, I have not felt disrespected. Honestly, um, I think I've seen this police officer that actually brought me here like three or four times before, 'cuz I had a situation. But honestly, he has never made me feel disrespected or less or anything like that. Now I can't speak for everyone, but the ones I do know, then, yeah, most definitely I feel I have been respected.*

For most detainees, whether they felt respected by the police depended on other factors, such as the professional comportment of the arresting officer and the recognition of social differences between detainees and police officers. For instance, one detainee who said police officers in Bakersfield always treated him with respect rephrased the issue, converting into a question about "us and them" and emphasizing the social reputations of detainees and officers as well as the way the police do their "job."

> *Respect us? Oh, they always, always, yeah, always. I treated them with respect, too, today. Yeah. They're super like, cool. It's doing their job. Like they guys are cool.*"

It was common for detainees to explain the asymmetry in perceived respect in terms of the "job" performed by the police. For example, one detainee said that respect for the police was conditional on police officers doing what was expected of them, not how she was treated as an individual.

> Interviewee: I mean, they treated me with respect today, but I respect 'em 'cause they do they job.
>
> Interviewer: And you think they're doing a good job?
>
> Interviewee: I think they're doing okay.

One person insisted it was “professional” to display unconditional respect, and that he was the one being professional in the encounter by not insisting on reciprocity.

> *It's like my job, I'm a professional, so I always believe you get respect. You get respect. Doesn't always happen the return, the receptiveness, but I can't, like you, you looking at me, I'm like, well I'm being respectful. If you're not respectful of me, well I can't help that, but for sure, for sure. I can only speak for myself. I'm like, well, sorry to tell you, hey, I was being respectful. I didn't do anything.*

A couple of detainees portrayed respect as the ability of police and residents alike not to allow a fraught situation to escalate into a conflict between individuals. “Actually, I do respect them,” one detainee said: “I mean, I might say a few cuss words here and there, but not towards you personally. It's, you know, it's me. But besides that, yeah, I do, I respect them.” Another explained the virtue of respect as restraint:

> *I was raised that it starts and ends with respect. Everything does, no matter who it is. And I do understand everyone has a job to do. So you doing your job is not gonna cause me to be disrespectful or an asshole just based on -- even if I feel like I'm wrongly being dealt with or, or messed with it or pulled over whatever it may be. Like before where I told you about how they pulled me over and profiled me. I didn't get disrespectful and, and, and outlandish. I stayed calm and just ‘cause I knew it was bullshit. You know what I mean? So I just let them do what they was doing and let them mess with me and do whatever they was gonna do and send me on my way. But it was never me just getting, like, oh my goodness or disrespectful, outrageous type shit because I knew it was bush. Right? In today's, in today's instance, I know that I was wrong and it's still the same, you know what I mean? Still the same respect, you know what I mean? Like if you asked the officer, I didn't give them any issues. I wasn't, you know what I mean, trying to fight or be resistant or anything. Just letting them do their job.*

A greater number of detainees emphasized the potentially adverse consequences of not showing respect to the police when asked to explain why they respected officers without officers respecting them. One person raised the specter of “fearing the consequences” of not showing respect for the police:

> *I just do. They've, I mean, I don't know why… [laughing], that's a funny question. I just do, I mean, they've treated me, they've never done anything wrong. If, if I did something wrong, I deserved to get in trouble, you know, like when I drank and drove and got pulled over back in the day, like I deserved it. Right. You know? So, I mean, yes, I've always been afraid of like, getting in trouble. You know, but not fearing the consequences of an encounter with the police.*

Several detainees made it clear that it was prudent to display respect. One emphasized that disrespected officers could lay on “extra charges” and otherwise make life worse.

> *Well, yeah, I do respect them to me because I don't want, like, extra charges or anything like that, you know, or, or something that that's gonna, you know, incriminate me even worse, you know? So, of course I do. And you know, I just, you know, I would like for them to also treat us, you know, the same, you know, with respect. Sometimes, uh, I see a lot of, uh, people get pulled over on the streets and it's like, uh, how can I say? Um, yeah, they're pretty, they're pretty tough on, on, on the people, but like I said, it depends on wherever it is they're stopping, you know, what the background is and so forth. So I, I understand that I have to come as them a different approach, you know?*

Fear played a large role in several people's calculations. After insisting that respect was a principle of good government, one detainee admitted: "But, to be completely honest, I'm always fearful of dealing, dealing with the cops. 'Cause I never know what I'm gonna get." Another depicted dread as the reason for respecting the police, with respect taking the shape of submission:

> *Even today when I, when I hear them knock and I, I still feel 'cause I know what they're coming for. So I don't know what their intentions is when they show up cuz all police don't have the intentions of just doing their job. Like I say something get power and abuse.*

Another person who told us he "rarely, rarely," felt respected by the police said that he nevertheless respects the police "everywhere I go." When we asked, "and why is that?", he explained there was a danger to both parties, and that only by sticking to their respective "jobs" could it be managed.

> *Because I don't know if they're a good guy or bad guy there doing his job. They don't know if I'm a good guy or bad guy. But they're still both doing the jobs. There's a job on both parts.*

Two detainees made it clear that the expectation of reciprocity in respect was precarious, like a truce that might easily collapse.

> *Well, initially I don't want nobody disrespecting me. If you're not disrespecting me, I kind of just, give out the same respect. Even though they are police officers, but they are still human. And I feel like if you want somebody to respect you, you should definitely respect them. So I want them to respect me. I'm not gonna disrespect them when they haven't did anything to me. Now, if they were being a bitch and you know, just doing all that, then I probably would be disrespectful back. But if you're not being disrespectful to me, then I'm not gonna be disrespectful to you. Right. So that's it. Not an annoying reason, just treat everybody how you want to be treated. And I think that's just in general no matter who you are.*

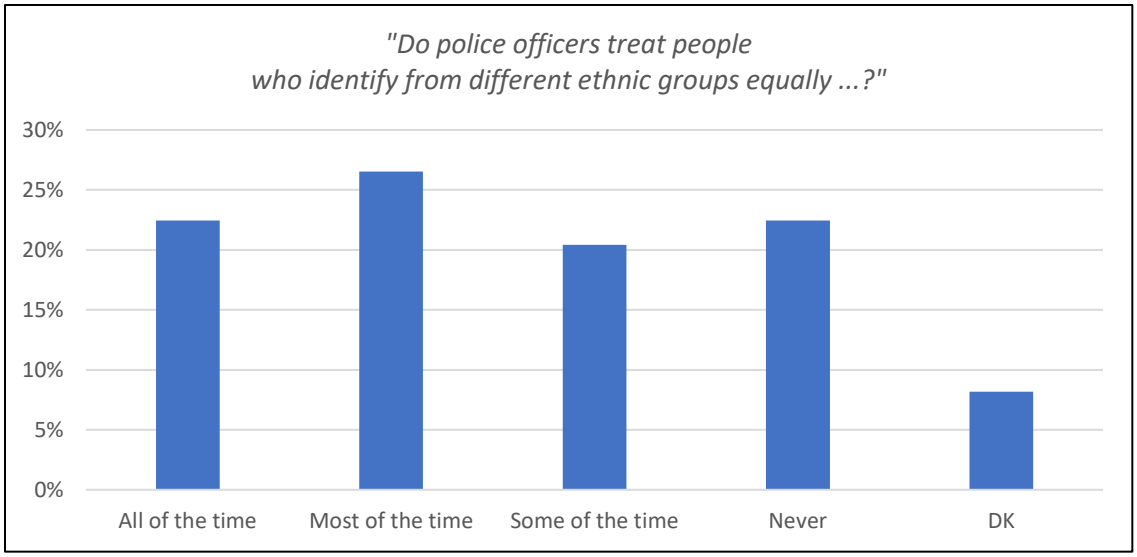
Another person who told us he "always" respected the police insisted his respect was principled and unconditional, but then explained that civic peace could easily be upset.

> *"Always. I mean, you can't look at a person different. But if I see your true colors, man…. What you give me I'll give back. If you disrespect me, I'll disrespect you; that's freedom of speech."*

VII. Equal Treatment

Nearly half of the detainees we spoke to said they believed officers treated people from different ethnic groups equally either all the time or most of the time. One fifth though this happened some of the time, but nearly a quarter believed it "never" happened, as Figure 10 shows.

Figure 10. Beliefs about Equal Treatment by Police Officers



Several detainees who said the police treat people equally only "some of the time" believe that police officers treat some people more favorably than others, rather than treating some people worse. For instance, two people with military backgrounds said that the police were indulgent of their criminal behavior on account of their past professional identity. One said he once avoided an arrest while driving drunk because of his status as a person with prior service:

> *I don't normally get arrested or something like that, you know, but, um, I remember like, uh, like four years ago, they, they, uh, they pulled me over and um, I had a really nice jeep, like a brand-new kind of Jeep. And, uh, so I didn't even know why they pulled me over, but they, they pulled me over and are like, 'oh, are you in this neighborhood? Like, you hear like, there's like a drug dealer neighborhood.' I was like, 'well, I live down the street! [laughing].' And then I had, I don't have a license, so, and they're like, 'oh, like wait, what do you do?' I was like, 'oh, I'm in the military' and this and that. And, um, I think that, I think they like military veterans a lot.*

Another detainee who identified as White told us he was once sent home rather than arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. He believed such favorable treatment was offered to others who had prior experience in the armed forces, regardless of their race.

> *One of my black friends at work, uh, he's got, he does not have no license, no insurance. No nothing. He's like being pulled over and like, they just let him go, too. That's what he told me, you know. Uh, but he was also a, a veteran, a ex navy, so, so I bought, that was cool that they did, like, they don't give him no ticket? No, no, he not, no insurance or nothing. They let him go. That's what he told me. So I thought that was cool.*

One detainee believed such favorable treatment by the police was only available to people of certain races. "If you're white," he said, "they more lenient, as opposed to your minorities." Several other detainees perceived unequal treatment in racial stereotyping. For instance, one person who claimed the police "never" treated people equally said:

You're profiled. Look at your skin color compared to mine. Now, look at me. So I am Mexican American, but I'm born here. We descend from Mexico. But when you look at 'em, they're like, there's a word called bk. BK means bik. Countryman. So, but in my culture, Mexican, they're like, BAA means I'm a bi. Um, another word, uh, wet back. Because of my skin color. Right. But if I was white, blonde hair and blue eyes, I probably wouldn't be seen here.

Some detainees believed all officers were involved in such profiling, though other detainees thought it was limited to certain officers.

Interviewer: You think that depends on the officer or you?

Interviewee: Probably just depends on the officer. Like, it's probably a few officers that I know that work for BPD that I definitely wanna stay far away from [laughing] because either they're gonna have an attitude or they're gonna be a bitch.

One person was adamant that the police "Never. Never. Absolutely Never," treat people from different racial and ethnic groups equally. He thought unequal treatment was rooted in a bias that was acquired during an "upbringing" rather than something inherent in policing or the Department.

I'm not sure if it's just a jury after where we, at the upbringing, I couldn't tell you why a person chooses to see color instead of people. If you got a guy that's dark as night and a guy is white as snow and this guy's being belligerent and this guy is being calms crazy, but you're still up in arms against this guy and just nervous while this guy is, oh, calm down sir. I mean that's a, that's a, upbringing thing. That's something that's been instilled to him since they've been little. They didn't learn that from nobody. So I don't know. I don't know to answer that. But it's sad.

One person who identified as Black said "they don't treat us equally at all. Not, not even close," believed that unequal treatment by the police was a result of officers' fears:

Um, I'm, my true belief is a fear. It's a fear factor and I don't get it, it makes zero sense. Like I, I was just telling the officer on the way over here as I asked about the documentary, what's your feelings on it? And, he gave me his opinion and then he asked me what I thought. And I said, I truly believe that fear shouldn't be the number one response, especially not for a cop, as a civilian. When we talk about people with guns; the worst person with a gun is a scared individual, in fear. And I think it works whether you're a civilian or a cop. Once you resort to fear, once fear is the first thought or response, it's a scary situation. That's who I fear the most, someone with a gun that's scared. I feel the same way with a cop. His training should take over and it shouldn't be fear. That's the first response. That shouldn't be the first thing. That can't be the, every time that they wrongfully kill or shoot or too much force, it shouldn't be okay. That first thing that comes out their mouth was, 'I was fearful for my life.' You were trained to be put in these situations to where you shouldn't, the first thing that clicks in your mind shouldn't be fear. Right. That's just my, my thoughts on it.

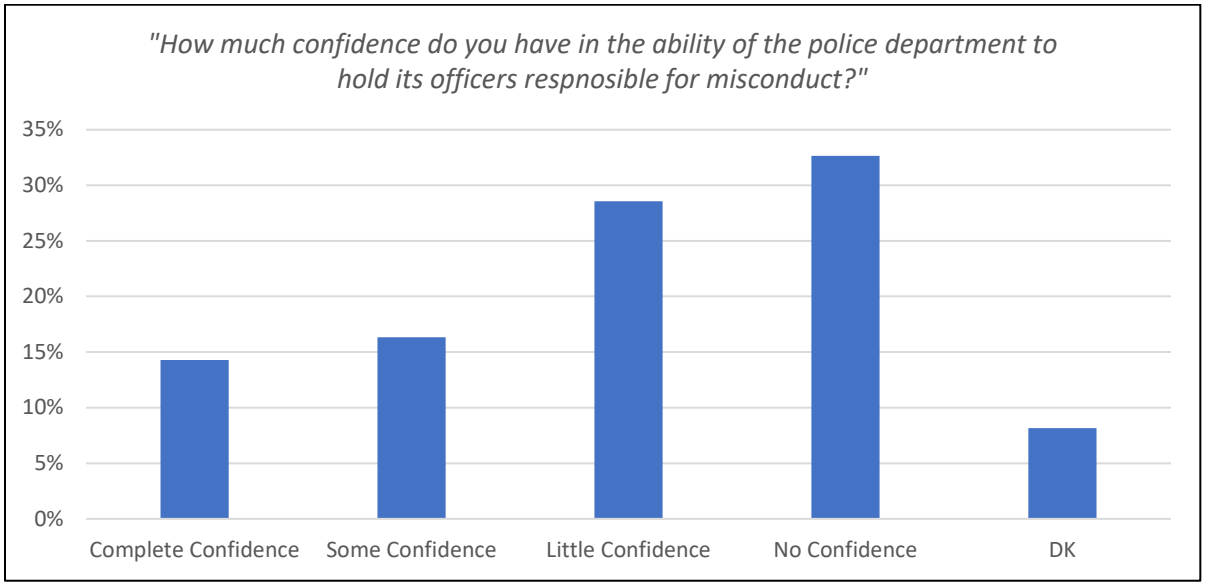
Interviewer: "So what'd the officer say to all that?"

Interviewee: "He said he agrees. And like I said, I, see both sides of it. Like, I can get how you can go into a situation and be cautious or be weary or on edge, but fear? Shit, you get horrible reactions with fear.

XIII. Misconduct and Accountability

Nearly two thirds of detainees had little or no confidence in the Department's ability to hold officers accountable for misconduct. A smaller proportion said they had "complete" or "some" confidence, as Figure 11 below shows. Four detainees (8 percent) were unsure and said: "I don't know."

Figure 11. Confidence in the Department's Commitment to Accountability



None of the detainees who said they had "complete confidence" in the Department's commitment to accountability explained the sources of their belief. One detainee who said he had "some confidence" in the response to police misconduct believed the Department had a self-interest in such accountability, though it sounded like a wish rather than confidence. "I would hope so," he said, answering this question. "They busting cops left and right now. I mean, you gonna let someone off just 'cause you got the badge? C'mon. Would you want that person in your system?"

There was a lot of uncertainty in the thinking of other people who said they had "some confidence." Two people hesitated a long time before responding and vacillated between "some" and "little" when considering the options in our response scale. One person asked:

> *Is there something between complete confidence and some confidence, like you just said? Because, you know, because, I mean there's always gonna be, um, like if, if you're sitting in the military, like there's always be some kind of protection, like someone looking down for somebody cuz you're part of it. But if I said for the most part, but I, I, I think it's the same in every city, I would say any police department say in the world. … Except in Mexico where we have, like, no confidence. But some confidence is not little confidence. Okay?*

Another person who was unsure believed that officers might protect each other rather than safeguard the integrity of the Department:

Maybe it just seems like, I don't know. You, they would just back each other up. I mean, of course they're gonna back up their officers. Yeah. But I don't know, it just kind of goes, I guess like the customary responses that a lot of the times they don't really fully get like the full punishment that they should, you know?

One person who said he had "no confidence" believed "a higher power will take care of this problem" and sabotage accountability. Another person who told us they had "a little bit of confidence," suspected that unknown forces might corrupt the response to misconduct:

I just feel like there's people and I, like I said, I don't know any of these. I did not see any of this stuff, but I feel that there's, um, people that use their power for not for good. Like they're helping people out that don't deserve it.

Several detainees thought professional solidarity among officers would thwart any efforts to hold officers accountable for misconduct. "I know they believe in the blue code, man. They, they, they protect each other. So they, there's no way they're gonna arrest officers," one person said. Another person who said he had "zero" confidence told us:

Um, proofs in the pudding for me. Like, it's, it's very clear that they're never gonna be held accountable. They have the, the mentality or the brotherhood that they claim to have and protect. It's very real. And I have people that I know in life and that's something, it's not people that necessarily deal with on a regular basis. They can give you tons of dirty, corrupt, messed up cops that just pick on you, you know, just mess with you for no reason and never be held accountable. They, uh, when I got pulled over that time, and once I told you that I felt like he made it personal, they even took my ID that night. I ended up having to call him back and meet up with him and everything else. I made a report on him. I'm pretty sure nothing came of that.

Interviewer: Would you file a complaint today? If you thought or felt something was wrong?

Interviewee: Yes, I would.

Interviewer: You would? So you have a bit of confidence then that someone would take action? Or not?

No, I mean, I'd do it just so it's on record. That's right. Like I, my parents are in law enforcement work and that's the route my mom always told me, like, you gotta report them when they do shit like that. You know what I mean? Get badge numbers, names, and you report 'em. Whether they do anything with it, it's another story. Okay. But I truly don't have any faith that they're gonna reprimand their own.

Several other detainees were more skeptical about the Department's commitment to accountability, believing in the power of a fraternal order of officers:

They're all buddies. They all work together. You, they're all, you know same softball team, you know, they're bowl teams, you know, they gotta back each other up, you know, Bible says fellowship with those of like mind, you know, and they're all like mind. So they watch each other's back no matter what.

One person said police misconduct would be covered up: "A lot of people want to put it under the rug. It's kind of like there's a lot of stuff behind their curtains that nobody sees, nobody cares. Your voices are not heard." When we asked, "What kind of things are happening 'behind the curtains,'?" he replied at length:

> *Well, a lot of, definitely a lot of injustice. But if you speak up, now you're a target. It's like everything else, right? Sure, sure. You make noise. Um, I think about, um, a movie called, uh, the Messenger. About a reporter. Look what happened here. He came up, he was a good journalist, wanted to speak the truth. Nothing wrong with that. Bu it cost him his life cuz at the end he ended up killing himself, cuz after what they discredited him, they found a way to, they didn't even know. Right. They told him before, Hey, he published this, you're going to ruin a whole lot of lives. They weren't worrying about his life. Mo' power is what they called it. Ours. You know, then he gonna get a job no more. And then he just committed suicide. Horrible. So if you speak too much, um, you one. Accidents, accidents happen all the time.*

In this case, the cinematic portrayal of the treatment of people who report official misconduct seemed to influence skepticism about the possibility of accountability. The views of other detainees' views also seemed to be influenced by developments outside of Bakersfield. For instance, one person who said "I'm not sure" the Department would hold officers accountable explained referred to recent events in other states:

> *I don't know cuz I don't know. It's like, like, I don't know, just like the four guys that killed that one guy and they were, and they all was the same color and they still killed him. I don't know why they killed him or nothing like that, but I mean, what are they gonna get? Are they, are people gonna get justice for him? His family for them cops? Did they get justice for the um, little boy that got killed? Trayvon Martin. Or for that guy George? I'm not sure. I'm not, I mean what did the, what did that officer get? It's like a lot of officers going around just beating on black people for nothing. What do they do? So I'm getting cell phones out they pocket. They thinking they guns, they're not giving them a chance. They just see that and they wanna fire out, fire their arms. I mean, what, what, what the, what's good is the body, um, cam for, I'm not sure.*

Other detainees expressed considerable uncertainty alongside strong concerns about racism in Bakersfield. One detainee mentioned recent shootings of minority suspects in the city, and said:

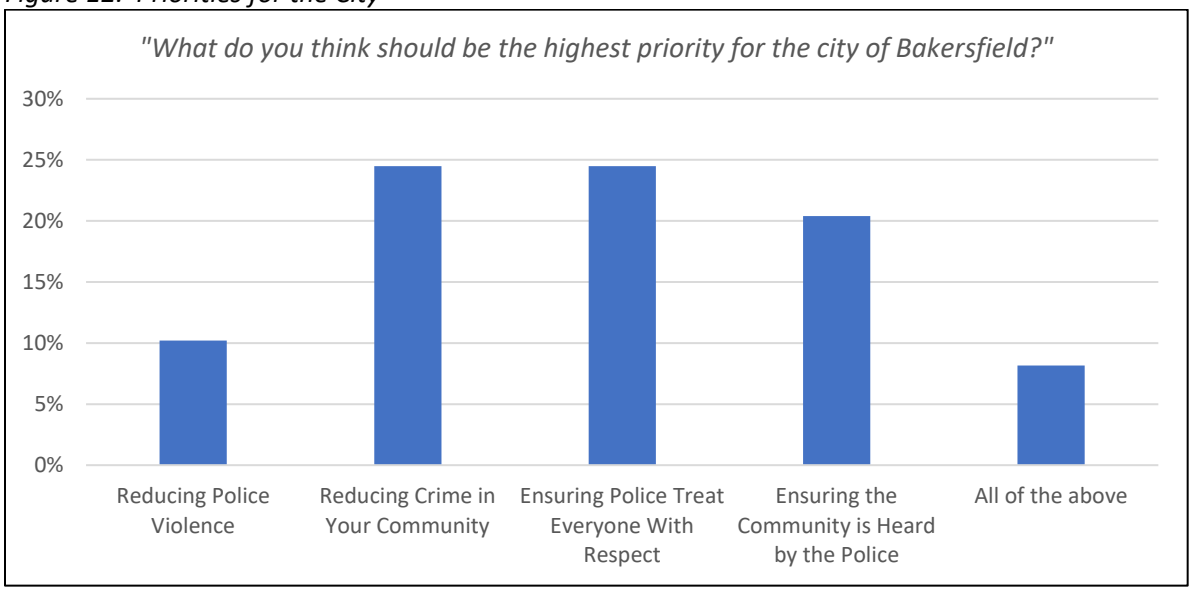
> *I would like to know why they're doing that. Why they going around just killing people? I mean they not giving them much chance. They're not like, like fighting, or trying to fight them or nothing like that. They just see black people and they just shoot 'em. I'm a black, another black guy dead. I don't know. Like black lives do matter.*

IX. Priorities and Hopes

We asked detainees to select a single priority for the city of Bakersfield, choosing from one of four options: (1) reducing police violence; (2) reducing crime in their community; (3) ensuring the police treat everyone with respect, and (4) ensuring the community is heard by the police. The most common response was "treating everyone with respect," followed by "ensuring the community is

heard by the police." As Figure 12 below shows, a smaller percentage selected reducing police violence. A quarter said that "reducing crime" was the top priority. A quarter said "ensuring police treat everyone with respect." Another 20 percent said they would prioritize "ensuring the community is heard by the police." Many people struggled to identify a single priority for the future of the city: four detainees insisted that "all of the above" were equally important, and six detainees ended up saying "I don't know" despite repeated encouragement from the interviewer to choose one and talk out loud about the various options.

Figure 12. Priorities for the City



A similar pattern of preferences was recorded in the survey of all residents last summer, when a small fraction said that "reducing crime" was the most important objective. Among detainees, the concern with crime seemed to be rooted in a worry about violence, especially shootings and homicide. "There's a lotta shootings and shit," one person said. "They gotta step up," he implored, referring to the police, "people dying left and right. C'mon! You're just letting them go." Another detainee who recounted several negative encounters with the police in the past, including being yelled at by the police in his driveway and being stopped by the police with their guns drawn while he was driving his mother and children in a car, nevertheless told us, "I'd probably say 'reducing crime.'" We were surprised and asked "Why is reducing crime more important than the others?" He replied, "um, a lot of pointless crimes."

> *A lot of pointless crimes. Very pointless. People die, they get shot, they get stabbed and sometimes it's just for no reason. Like, like, I don't know about that one encounter with that Mexican guy. He was running around with the knife. I don't know if you guys heard about that one. We, we got some stories out here. Yeah, he was shot and, … many crimes that's random. You're walking around just stabbing people and these people are citizens. So yeah. That, that should be a priority. Yeah, stop the crime.*

When we asked him: "Why do you think the police aren't stopping more crime?" He replied: "Just, there's a lot of killing going on, but hey, they got me. I committed a crime, now I gotta pay the cops."

One woman who said reducing crime was the top priority had a different concern about crime:

> *We need to stop all crimes. Stop the police from, you know, beating on people. I mean, that's not cool just to beat on just another, just beating on people like that. That's not cool. They're not resisting arrest, so why beat 'em? I mean, just because the words hurt? Just because they talking words shouldn't hurt you. You should be just like, I mean, look over that, be the better person and do your job.*

For another detainee, the imperative of reducing crime was rooted in a concern about the erosion of social norms of honesty and responsibility.

> *I just think people get away with too much. I know you can't arrest 'em necessarily, but it's like people are getting away with way too much. They pretty much can do anything besides like, murder somebody or be a major drug dealer and they are able to just walk away.*

The dominant concern, however, was with respect for residents. One person said: "Respect, definitely. Because respect is everything. It's a universal language. It's like money [laughing]. Everybody understands that." Another person who thought treating everyone with respect was paramount thought it would help overcome social inequality rather than racial difference:

> *Well, the community is scared, you know, of talking to the police, you know, but for way other reasons. But I say treat people with respect, man, you know, not everybody's a bad person. We just, you know, make wrong choices -- this was my decision. So that's what put us in position that we are now. So, yeah. But yeah, that'd be great. You know, come and treat you better. That's opposed to just ramming you up and just, you know, putting your patrol car in and say that's it.*

One person thought that treating everyone with respect might compensate for the gap between the morality of the justice system and the public it punishes.

> *Now, whether, whether they abide it by it [the rule of equal treatment], that's different. But the same one that's gonna judge me at some point in that courtroom, he has done the same thing too. There's no difference between me and him. Other than he's a judge and, um, [I'm] the criminal. Cause that's what I am now. Just he hasn't got caught. I did. And that's the reality. Cause anybody drinks [laughing]. Like, he had a wine, too, and you're, but you're not impaired because you're still coherent. So, sucks.*

Other detainees wished for the resolution of persistent social problems. "Get rid of the bums," one person said, though not through law enforcement. "Solve the homelessness problem by building better housing instead of new gas stations and shit. Crime will go down for sure. Everyone deserves a fair shot in life." Another person wanted better treatment and less discrimination for the homeless.

> *It's been a lot of kick down. A lot of people have been kicked out, stepped on a lot. And it's not just police doing it to me. It's, it's the people out here on the streets. It's the people, the homeowners and businesspeople that just look down on at us, because they, they judge you. Right? You know, I look like a criminal. I know I do. I look like a criminal and I'm walking the street. They looking at me all speechless, you know, and they just start labeling, labeling you and putting these jackets on you.*

One person worried the police might not be able to do this on their own.

> *Well, you know what, they're, they're trying to mediate. They're trying to make things right for both. But sometimes you just can't please both sides. The cops are on that other side, right? The haves and have-nots. Yeah. Dirt bags. And not everybody's like that though. Not everybody's a dirt bag, you know? It's a lot of people out on the street who take care of themselves and are carrying themselves properly.*

X. ADVICE FOR THE CHIEF

The final question we asked detainees was: "what's the first thing you would do if you where the chief of police"? Several detainees were daunted by the prospect of taking on such responsibility and balked at giving an answer. "I could not do that job," one person said. "Yeah, It it's crazy job. Huge responsibility. Sure is." Another person added: "That's, that's a, um, that's going to be, you'd have to have definitely some people on your team to help you." Still another replied in awe. "Honestly, I'm really not sure on that one. That's something that they would have to come up with. Cause honestly, I don't, I don't know what it would take. So I feel bad for the higher authority; they have to figure that out." One person believed the task was so tall that only biblical wisdom could help, adding that even a wise chief would have withstand counter pressure from elected officials.

> *That's the big question to put on one person. A lot of pressure. Man. Well, I think I want to be a spiritual, like, and I want to be wise. I want to have wisdom. I don't want riches. So I pray for my higher power to gimme the wisdom if I was to be in that position. Gimme the wisdom that I need to be able to govern your people. So I can praise and elevate. But all these politicians, they always have their own agenda.*

Several detainees thought the forces arrayed against a wise chief were inside the department and had to be exorcised by changing personnel. "I'd retrain and fire half the staff," one person said.

> Interviewer: Half?
>
> Interviewee: Oh yeah. You know, half of 'em are command or Street. That's gonna be command. Command. All the higher ups are gone. Those are the ones allowing it. If you know this new worker, he just did this. It's not like, oh work on the next guy, now your ass gone. This is the type of job where you fuck up, you're done. In the military, you fuck up, you're done. So why not here?

Another person said: "I'd fire the whole department, and stop suspecting everybody based on what they wear. They don't know me; I'm wearing sweats today because I feel like it; they should start explaining things better."

Two detainees emphasized the need for new personnel without firing current officers. "I would start with the process, the whole process of picking and training," one person said. "I will start with that first. That process has to be more strenuous in my opinion, and more thorough." Another person echoed that idea. "I believe it starts with the screening and the training. Better screening, better training of police officers. We asked what that would lead to: "It would lead to less police violence. Especially on the fear question. Oh yes, most definitely. You have, you have violent police officers, too."

Other detainees recommended changes in policy, not personnel, and the prioritization of what they considered the greater problems in Bakersfield.

> *If I was chief of police? I would, I would try to stop the policing of all the highways and all the attention to the speeding stuff and, you know, have more people respond to crimes, you know, rather than just like, trying to get money out of somebody for like, going over a speed limit which everybody does.*

Two detainees said they would focus on persistent crime problems and residents' sense of personal safety. One said: "I'd make the community think they're safe. You gotta be able to walk down the street with your child without a fear of nothing happening." Another said:

> *I'd have a lot of gang units go around the neighborhoods where there's more crime activity. Just wipe 'em out, you know, get around there, you know, I know there's lot of people that have, that I have, uh, warrants and then, and you know, they are not, you know, they're on parole and everything that's, you know, still doing some kind of activity. So just do, you know, have gang and just, you know, started going neighborhoods. Yeah.*

Solving problems associated with homelessness was a greater priority for one detainee:

> *I mean, right now you see a lot of abandoned houses getting burnt down. I mean, basically, we need to be taking care of all these people that are homeless, doing all these things, you know what I mean? And recently we started getting homeless people from out of LA and stuff like that sent over here. So it's all a big issue here in town, right? So maybe I'd work on something like that. Okay? That'd be a great start, you know.*

For other detainees, the priority was to improve mutual understanding between police officers and residents. Some thought that could be achieved by retail means, by changing interactions with residents one at a time. "I'd focus on treating people with more dignity and respect," one person said. "That would definitely, uh, help out. Uh, just know that we're human bro. That we're not out there, you know, dogs and, you know, be treated like one sometimes." Another person said:

> *Nobody really likes any, any kind of involvement with the cops. Um, so, I guess that just being nice or, you know, showing more respect and kindness would spread the word and maybe start changing the views of some people on how they view the police overall.*

Other detainees recommended wholesale actions and community engagement. "I'd do community outreach, said one person. "I mean, I don't know if people actually do that anymore." Another said, "I'd probably organize a parade." A third recommended a peace walk:

> *The first thing I would do is probably have like a community pep rally, peace walk, some sort of thing like that. Um, probably, that's it, honestly. I'm not sure, but things like that, you know, like you should be going over with your community of how you want it to be. Probably something like that. Like pep rally or a walk or a top or a prep or whatever you want to call it.*

Still another recommended the chief “get to know the people” and demonstrate pastoral care.

> *That's what the police supposed to do. Right? Aren't they supposed to get to know the people beat? And they get to know them and know their hearts. You know, it's like the Lord. He judges you from your heart. Right? And he knows the heart. He knows your intentions. Now if you are running a beat and you know these people and, and you got a good rapport with them, well then that's where that discerning comes in. You know, help them out. Don't pretend like you know why he did it and, and you understand or whatever. Um, an argument with her loved one or something that, and he came to blows or something like that. But they, they know each other for years they've always done that. And they always love each other and they never break up. You know, you know that. So back, take a break. Take a break, you know, they said them, you know, and then if you arrest 'em and, and you know, this about them. Put a good word in for them. The judge, that amount.*

Another person lacked a specific plan but made a plea for an end to “martial law” and the alienation of people from the police.

> *I’d get the actual cops in tune with the actual community. Become part of the community, not a standout force. Right? So right now it's like martial law. If you go outside, you're not gonna talk to one of those soldiers that's standing out there with a gun telling you, you gotta be in a house by five. Right? Now it’s stay the fuck away from them, but if it was somebody that you've known that's in the community, then you're gonna have a conversation with 'em. But we don't know these guys. Even if we knew 'em, we don't know 'em. Cuz when you get here, as soon as you put that badge on, it changes you. So I'm not gonna have a conversation with, y'all know you, I don't know what you're gonna do to me now. I don't know what your agenda is.*

Appendix 1. Methodology and Sample

We interviewed a total of 49 detainees, with 36 interviews taking place over 8 days between Thursday February 24 and Saturday March 4, 2023. We conducted two interviews in December 2022 while testing our method for recruiting and interviewing detainees and another two in the jail in March 2022 before we decided to interview detainees in the headquarters of the BPD. We interviewed another 9 in early September 2023. Our hope was to interview 100 to support our analysis of patterns in the responses to our interview questions across demographic characteristics.

The remainder of this appendix describes the method for recruiting and interviewing detainees; it also explains the reasons for the unexpectedly low number of interviews as well as some sources of attrition in the recruitment process.

Recruitment

According to our agreement with the BPD and the operational plan devised by Lt. Holcombe, patrol officers working during the period of our interview process were expected to bring every arrested detainee into the parking lot behind police Headquarters on Truxton Ave. At the same time, officers were instructed to use their discretion to screen out any detainee they deemed too violent, dangerous, intoxicated, or mentally and psychologically disturbed to participate in the research.

Upon arrival in the parking lot, officers exited the vehicle; one of the members of our research team (the "recruiter") then approached the window nearest the detainee, who remained seated and handcuffed, and asked whether they would like to participate in the research. When a detainee indicated an interest in participating (60 percent in the first part of 2023, and 33 percent in September 2023), the arresting officer and another officer recruited by Lt. Holcombe to supervise our research would escort the detainee to an interview room on the second floor, using the central elevator. Our recruiter followed. A second member of our team who had been waiting in the Department's coffee room/lounge, adjacent to the interview rooms, then joined this group.

Upon arrival in the interview room, detainees were again searched by the officers and then uncuffed. The door was closed to preserve quiet and confidentiality. Outside the room, the arresting and supervising officers were seated at a large table where they wrote reports, reviewed the CAD, or discussed other business.

Before proceeding to interview the detainee, we read the consent form, reminding the detainee that no benefit would accrue to their participation in the research, that the conversation was both anonymous and confidential, and that we would only analyze responses to questions in aggregated form. We then asked permission to record the interview (one person declined). We offered the detainee a glass of water; no other inducements or rewards were made available.

The interview room had three chairs and a plastic table. The unblinded windows and spacious rooms created a calm atmosphere. Most interviews took between 20 and 40 minutes. Some interviews lasted longer; we permitted this extension to capture responses to open-ended questions on the interview protocol, which appears in full in Appendix 2. Most detainees were eager to talk; many became more talkative during the conversation; only two grew more reticent as the interview proceeded.

Immediately after ending the interview, detainees were re-handcuffed and escorted back down to the parking lot, placed in patrol vehicles, and taken to the county jail for booking. Our research team immediately uploaded the recording of the interview to a secure and password protected server; these recordings were later transcribed. The text of those transcriptions, as well as the coded responses to closed-ended questions, form the basis of this report.

Attrition During Screening and Recruitment

Despite advance notification and planning, not all officers who made custodial arrests during our stay contributed to the pool of detainees from which we recruited participants. Some patrol officers failed to notify their supervisor of an arrest and instead took detainees straight to jail. Some shift supervisors forgot to remind officers to deliver detainees to the police department rather than the jail. We do not know whether the Special Enforcement Unit or other specialized units made custodial arrests during our stay: the register developed by the BPD for tracking arrest notification and the recruitment process recorded only the name of the arresting officer(s) and initial charges and whether we or the BPD screened them out. We might add this information to the register in subsequent research.

Lt. Holcombe used two strategies to increase the size of this pool throughout our stay: he reminded patrol sergeants to bring us arrests throughout their shifts and directed one of the senior officers who accompanied detainees to the interview rooms to monitor the CAD and notify officers who had just made a stop of the need to bring detainees to the BPD rather than take them to jail. In fact, one of the persons we interviewed on Thursday was initially taken to jail and, to his surprise, brought back to the BPD before he was booked after the intervention of a senior officer (the detainee told us later that he thought he was caught in a reality TV show). Despite these special efforts, some gaps persisted. For example, on Thursday afternoon we learned that 3 people arrested for organized retail theft (ORT) were taken to jail rather than brought to the parking lot at HQ; the arresting officers, we were told, transferred the suspects to detectives, who then transferred them to other officers for transport to jail.

Another reason for the smaller than expected number of interviews is that four detainees were screened out on grounds of safety when officers determined that the arrestee was or might be violent and combative. We believe the BPD exercised reasonable discretion on this matter and did not seek to exclude potential participants on the grounds of their charges alone. For example, the last person we invited to participate in the research was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon, kidnapping, and possession of a firearm.

Finally, several detainees were screened out because of their state of mind and health. Several were so intoxicated that the arresting officer ruled them out. We do not have reason to believe that BPD officers were applying overly strict standards when gauging whether detainees were fit to participate. Indeed, our team members themselves had to screen out several potential participants after determining them to be too high, drunk, angry, or otherwise upset to give informed consent.[1] We do not know whether the incidence of such circumstances at the time of arrest is common in other cities in California.

[1] The short time elapsed between arrest and our recruitment in the parking lot may have increased the number of detainees unable to participate for these reasons. For instance, two detainees were screened out by our team when they were found sleeping in the back of the patrol car and did not respond to our voices.

Participation Rates

Participation rates were initially high. Thirty-six of the 58 arrested detainees we greeted in the parking lot in February and March (i.e. 62 percent) agreed to participate in the research. None withdrew from the interview, none ended their interview early, and none asked to have their interview responses deleted. This participation rate seems high to us based on our prior research with detainees, and because of the unusual nature of the recruitment process we needed to follow in Bakersfield: detainees were greeted while they were in the back of patrol cars, which may have seemed odd to detainees with prior experiences of arrest in Bakersfield. Moreover, in our initial contact we emphasized that we are not lawyers and cannot help with their current situation or offer rewards for participation.

Participation rates were lower in the first week of September 2023. Only a third of detained arrestees agree to participate in the research. This may simply reflect random differences in participation rates. One possibility is that the identity of the researcher recruiting participants played a role. In September, just two researchers, both male, did the recruiting in the parking lot; in February and March, our research team rotated this role between men and women. Another possibility is that arrested individuals during the weekend reflect a different population of arrested individuals, and this may have had an effect on their willingness to participate. As we elaborate below, we intend to address these possibilities during a next round of interviews by having different rotations of interviewers available across days and times.

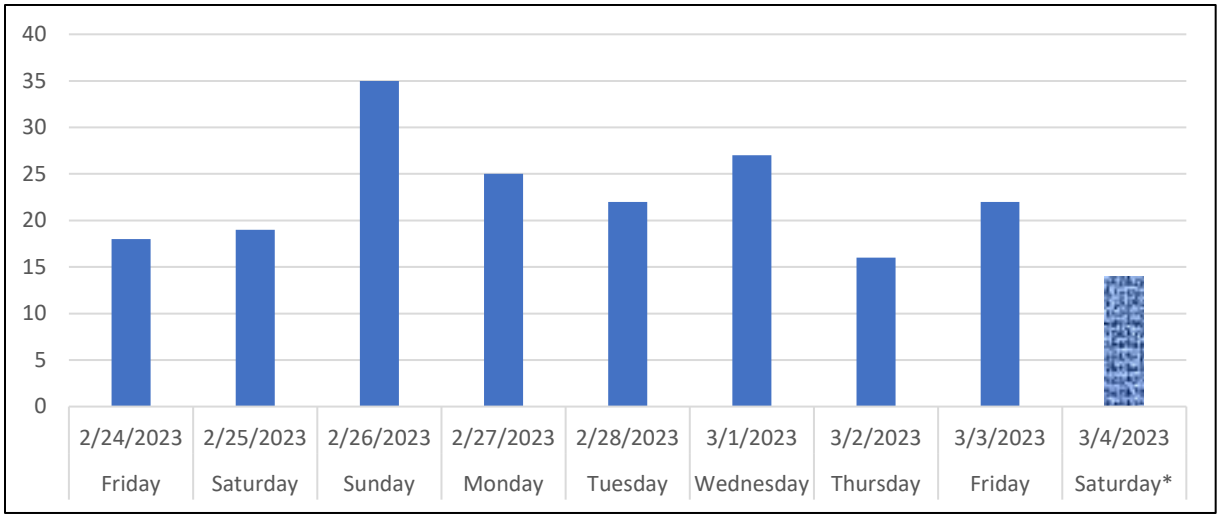
Custodial and Non-Custodial Arrests in Bakersfield

We did not interview everyone that was arrested by the BPD during our research; nor did we have an opportunity to invite all people detained by the police during our research to participate. This is because we agreed the BPD should exercise discretion about whether detainees were in some way unfit to participate, either by being combative, potentially violent, or in an altered mental state. We also are not able to interview anyone subject to a non-custodial arrest.

To ascertain the total number of custodial arrests during the period of our research and thus gauge the size of the universe of potential research participants, we had to consult the Arrest Record Information system by accessing the CAD and then manually count the number of individuals booked into custody each day during our visit. This is because the data on arrests we were given last year indicated that the BPD made, on average, 35 arrests every day in January and February 2022. But this source did not distinguish between custodial and non-custodial arrests, and we could not use the proportion of arrests involving misdemeanor charges as a proxy for custodial arrests because officers use considerable discretion when deciding whether to cite and release a suspect.

We learned that BPD made 198 custodial arrests during our stay, an average of 23 per day. This number varied substantially throughout our stay. As Figure 1.1 shows, the BPD made just 18 custodial arrests on the first day we began interviews, and 35 on Sunday (the only day during our stay that we were not scheduled to interview). The BPD also made 14 custodial arrests between 12:01 am and 2pm on Saturday, at which point we ended the research and ceased recruiting participants.

Figure 1.1. Number of Custodial Arrests in Bakersfield, 2/24/2023 to 3/4/2023



Source: ARIESTES, Bakersfield Police Department. * arrests from 12:01 am to 2pm.

All police officers we spoke to were surprised by the low number of custodial arrests during our stay. Some speculated that the rainy weather suppressed the amount of criminal activity and arrests, including through what was called proactive policing measures. An initial analysis of meteorological information combined with data on all arrests, including non-custodial arrests, lends some support for the view that days with low numbers of arrests are more likely to be rain days, though we cannot specify whether this is due to changes in the pattern of criminal activity or changes in the patterns of policing. Amore robust analysis is needed to parcel out whether arrests decline when there is *any precipitation* on a given day, and whether arrests decline due to *the amount of precipitation* on rainy days.

The timing of custodial arrests varied. Half of the custodial arrests made during our stay took place between midnight and 8 am, when our research team was not scheduled to conduct interviews. In response to this discovery, two of our researchers stayed until 3 am on Saturday morning. That tack netted only 2 additional interviews, which suggests that the volume and timing of arrests may be stochastic.

To identify the days and times at which the greatest number of potential research participants might be recruited in the future, we will need access to a data set that distinguishes custodial and non-custodial arrests by hour of the day over the last 12 months. Such data will also help us ascertain whether the pattern of arrests depicted in Figure 1.1 above is abnormal.[2]

[2] We have not yet been able to reconcile conflicting information on the total number of custodial arrests contained in two data sets shared by the BPD. One data set on all arrests between 2019 and 2022 has 58,970 unique entries; this data set distinguishes between arrests that involved a person being "cited," "charged," or placed in "detention" but has no demographic information about arrestees. It indicates that approximately 60 percent of all arrests between 2019 and 2022 were custodial, with the detainee "charged" or "taken into custody." The detention or custodial booking rate for the entire month of February for all four years was 58 percent. This rate was slightly lower than average in the last week of February 2022 (54%). It also appears to vary considerably by day of the week: for example, it was 32 percent on Friday 25, 2022 and 74 percent on Sunday, February 27, 2022.

APPENDIX 2. Interview Protocol for Arrested Detainees

Section I. General Impressions of Policing

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

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

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

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

Can you give me an example of this change?

_____

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

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

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

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

According to this data set, the BPD made 106 custodial arrests in the last five days of February 2022. This number is slightly lower than the 119 custodial arrests made in the last five days of February 2023, when we did the majority of our interviews. This suggests that the universe from which we recruited potential research participants this year was slightly larger than usual. But we are uncertain of this inference because we received another data on all arrests for the same years containing 45,476 unique entries; this data set includes demographic information about detainees, but it does not indicate whether the arrestee taken into custody.

- Somewhat less professional
- Much less professional

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

_____

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

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

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

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

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

_____

Section II. Personal Experiences of Policing

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

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

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

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

Why is that?

_____

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

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

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

   _____

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

   _____

10. How many times *in the last 12 months* have you been **stopped** by the police <u>on the street?</u>

    _____

    What was the police reason for the most recent stop?

    _____

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

    What was the police reason for the most recent stop?

    _____

12. Now I want to ask about your most recent experience of the police -- **today, with this arrest**.

Overall, how satisfied were you with this experience of the police?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

Why is that? _____

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

_____

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

_____

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

_____

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

_____

Section 3. Feelings and Attitudes About Policing

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

17a. *If yes, why is that?*

_____

17b. *If no, why not?*

_____

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

_____

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

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

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

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

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

Section IV. Rating the Performance of Policing

23. How effective is the BPD at <u>stopping crime</u> in your neighborhood? Would you say …

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section V. Recommendations and Advice for the Police Department

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

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

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

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

_____

32. Why is that so important to you?

_____

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

_____

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

_____

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

_____

Section VI. DEMOGRAPHICS

36. In what neighborhood do you live? _____

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

Which district is that? _____

38. In what year were you born? _____

39. Do you consider yourself …….

White □ Black/African American □ Asian □ Hispanic □ Other □

(you can name more than 1)

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

_____