



# Mistrust and Ambivalence between Residents and the Police

## Evidence from Four Chicago Neighborhoods

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*August 2017*

Violence in Chicago has been national news as shootings and homicides have increased over the past year. Total homicides in 2016 reached levels the city has not experienced since the late 1990s (University of Chicago Crime Lab 2017); meanwhile, homicides in other large US cities have been declining or remaining steady (Freidman, Grawet, and Cullen 2016). Chicago residents have been demanding reforms to the ways police treat and interact with the public; this issue, which has been a persistent one particularly for residents of high-crime neighborhoods with heavy police presence, has been given renewed visibility after the release of video showing the killing of Laquan McDonald by a Chicago police officer. A subsequent US Department of Justice investigation of the Chicago Police Department revealed the department has problems with use of force and accountability that contribute to a lack of community trust in the department (US Department of Justice and US Attorney's Office 2017). These issues are no doubt related: community trust in the police is an important contributor to effective crime control.

While this brief is not intended to weigh in on what caused the most recent crime spike in Chicago, it does present findings that show the fractured relationship between residents of high-crime neighborhoods and the police that serve those communities. The data are based on surveys collected before the recent crime spike from residents and officers living or working in four Chicago neighborhoods that have had *consistently* high crime rates relative to other parts in the city.

Because of the sampling methodology used for this study, our findings provide new insights on a topic that has received much empirical scrutiny: the criticality of police-citizen relationships. This brief discusses the level of mutual mistrust between residents (including those recently involved with the criminal justice system) and police officers in Chicago's 5th, 10th, 15th, and 25th police districts. Drawn from surveys of both officers and residents, the data demonstrate ambivalence between the police and

the residents they serve. While the results are generally sobering, we find some potential for repairing the mistrust and pathways for building stronger police-community relationships.

This brief proceeds in four sections. First, we discuss the importance of strong police-resident relationships; then, we outline the study methodology and the demographic characteristics of the sampled groups. Next, we present key findings on residents' perceptions of procedural fairness of police and support for officer behavior and actions, residents' perceptions of unreasonable stops, residents' willingness to participate in crime control, and police officers' perceptions of community cooperation and community trust. A final section summarizes the key findings and discusses the implications of our findings for police-community relationships and crime control, which are most relevant for the people living in the neighborhoods we studied and executive staff and patrol officers in the Chicago Police Department.

## Importance of Strong Police-Community Relationships

A sizable literature relays the importance of strong police-community relationships in crime control. Much of this literature focuses on the concept of police legitimacy: the public's belief that police are justified in exercising their power to maintain order and solve crime and, therefore, worthy of being obeyed and enforcing rules or laws worthy of being followed (Tyler 2004; Tyler and Jackson 2014). Research has shown that people's law abidingness is shaped most strongly by their belief that the law is just and moral and its enforcers legitimate (Tyler 1990). Research has also shown that perceived legitimacy can significantly influence residents' willingness to participate in various public safety efforts, such as their willingness to cooperate with authorities by reporting crime and working with community or neighborhood groups to fight crime.<sup>1</sup> Further, the nature and fairness of interactions with law enforcement is more important to people than the risk or consequence of noncompliance with police or the outcomes of police interaction.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between police legitimacy and following the law has been established among the general public as well as among people involved in criminal activity (Papachristos, Meares, and Fagan 2013). Therefore, maintaining legitimacy should be viewed as a central goal for police in a democratic society, since it contributes to the norms that motivate people to respect and comply with the law even when police (and personal risk of consequences) are not immediately present or when people disagree with a law or specific police decision (Tyler 2004).

Yet, a substantial body of evidence shows that African Americans/Blacks and other people of color have consistently reported lower levels of confidence and trust in police—two of the most important components of legitimacy—than whites.<sup>3</sup> Our understanding of this dynamic is based mostly on general surveys, executed by mail or telephone, in which African Americans/Blacks and other minorities are purposely oversampled. These negative perceptions are influenced by the higher likelihood that African Americans/Blacks and other nonwhites experience negative police encounters, both personally and vicariously, and by their high likelihood of living in neighborhoods with elevated levels of crime and poverty where policing activity and aggressive policing tactics have been typically concentrated.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the lack of trust and confidence in police among African Americans/Blacks and communities of

color has captured public attention given the police shootings of unarmed African Americans/Blacks that have been captured on video.

To date, much of the research examining the police-community relationship has concentrated on the community perspective. There has been relatively little research on how much police trust the community, despite substantial evidence that mistrust is mutually reinforcing.<sup>5</sup> The research that has been done shows that while community perceptions vary based on demographic characteristics, years of service, and policing orientation,<sup>6</sup> officers express a low degree of positivity or confidence toward the community they serve, and they believe they are disliked and mistreated by residents.<sup>7</sup> Some research has shown that officers who perceive community relations as more negative also demonstrate more anger and hostility (Zhao, He, and Lovrich 2002), which further undermine the community's perceptions of fairness and legitimacy. Other research has linked officer distrust in residents with increased rates of problem behaviors, including complaints by residents or fellow officers, internal investigations, disciplinary violations, and use of force (Hickman 2008). While police attitudes were studied often in previous decades, the subject has received considerably less attention in the past decade despite increased attention to police/criminal justice reform and amid growing recognition of the collateral consequences of aggressive order-maintenance policing tactics (Fagan and Davies 2000; Harcourt 2009; Harcourt and Ludwig 2006). Indeed, given the current climate around policing reform and surging violence in Chicago, better understanding officers' perceptions of the communities they serve is worthwhile and timely.

## Data Sources

We present data collected by the Urban Institute as part of an evaluation of an antiviolence strategy targeting people at highest risk of being involved in group or gang violence, called the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy.<sup>8</sup> Surveys were collected from people living in and police officers serving in Chicago's 5th, 10th, 15th, and 25th police districts on the city's south and west sides. These four police districts have long histories of persistently high violence, concentrated poverty, and institutional disinvestment; people living there are overwhelmingly nonwhite, particularly African American/Black. The 5th, 10th, 15th, and 25th districts roughly correspond to the Roseland, Lawndale, Austin, and Belmont Cragin community areas, respectively.

Three different samples were surveyed: members of criminally active groups, community residents, and police officers. The sample of group members was generated using arrest data from the Chicago Police Department on people involved in co-offending networks at high risk of violent perpetration or victimization in the four districts; the community resident sample was generated using publicly available data on households within the districts; and the sample of police officers was generated through the districts' roll call session attendance. Throughout this brief, we use "group member" to refer to people who operate in criminally active groups. We purposely avoid referring to them as gang members, since that language may imply an organizational structure, leadership, and hierarchy that is not always appropriate or accurate. "Group member" includes people who may be traditionally considered as in a

gang, along with people in street-based drug crews, cliques, or other loosely affiliated, criminally active groups. Box 1 contains additional details on the sampling strategy for each sample group.

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## BOX 1

### Chicago Violence Reduction Evaluation Survey Sampling and Administration Methodology

We constructed the sample of group members in several steps. First, we used arrest data from the Chicago Police Department to create co-offending networks of individuals over 18 years old in each of the four evaluation police districts (the 5th, 10th, 15th, and 25th). Then, we identified the component that contained the most individuals in the co-offending networks in each district. Third, we used statistical techniques to model the likelihood of individuals within the largest component being selected to attend a call-in meeting (the Violence Reduction Strategy's primary form of intervention). Fourth, in each district, we ranked the group members by their propensity to be selected to receive the intervention. From the top-ranked 1,000 people, we randomly selected 500 to participate in the survey. We then worked with the Chicago Police Department to gather the address information they had on file for all 1,000 individuals in the sample.

We constructed the sample of community residents by randomly selecting 450 households from a list of all residential addresses in the district. We constructed the police officer sample by having researchers attend all roll call meetings held over a single day in each district. This administration method resulted in a sample of patrol officers working that day and members of the tactical units.

The group member surveys were administered over several days, including one weekend day, in June 2014 (5th and 15th districts) and October 2014 (10th and 25th districts). The community resident surveys occurred over several days, including one weekend day, in April 2014 (5th and 15th districts) and August 2014 (10th and 25th districts). The officer surveys occurred over one 24-hour period in April 2014 (5th and 15th districts) and August 2014 (10th and 25th districts).

For more information on the methodology, see Fontaine et al., *Put the Guns Down: Outcomes and Impacts of the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2017).

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Group members and community residents in each of the four districts were administered surveys face to face by research staff. They were asked about their perceptions of their neighborhood resources and conditions, crime and precautionary behaviors, and perceptions of police-community interactions and relationships. Police officers in each of the four districts were provided self-administered surveys that asked about their perceptions of the neighborhood they policed, community trust and cooperation, and their role as officers in the community. The evaluation team collected surveys in each district, from each group, at two points. This brief focuses on the most recent survey wave implemented in 2014, in which we collected valid surveys from 474 residents, 392 group members, and 385 officers.

The findings from this data collection effort make three compelling contributions to the literature. First, we present data from the perspective of both residents and police officers living in and working in the same districts collected at the same time. In this way, we are able to tell both sides of the story.

Second, a vast majority of studies on police legitimacy have been drawn from general population surveys or general surveys of those who have interacted directly with the police (e.g., police-led interactions or citizen-led interactions).<sup>9</sup> Our sample comprises exclusively people living in high-crime, high-poverty neighborhoods and includes those with recent histories of arrest in co-offending networks. We sample people that have had recent direct police contact, through their arrest, and people who have not but are likely to have had vicarious experiences with law enforcement by virtue of where they live. Few studies have focused on the perceptions of residents in high-crime, highly disadvantaged neighborhoods; and, to our knowledge, virtually no research documents police perceptions among justice-involved people or groups, despite the fact that such individuals are highly engaged with the police as victims, perpetrators, or witnesses to crime (Papachristos and Wildeman 2014; Pyrooz, Moule, and Decker 2014).

Third, the findings are drawn from surveys administered face to face. Studies of police legitimacy in the United States have relied overwhelmingly on information gathered through mail and telephone surveys. Face-to-face surveys, while resource intensive, are superior to mail surveys for the topics and populations we explored because their response rates are generally higher and more representative (Hox and De Leeuw 1994; Marcus and Crane 1986; Miller et al. 1997). In addition, nonresponse rates for telephone and mail surveys are particularly high among lower-income groups (Blumberg and Luke 2007; Marcus and Crane 1986; McHorney, Kosinski, and Ware 1994), less-educated groups (Marcus and Crane 1986; McHorney, Kosinski, and Ware 1994; Whitehead, Groothuis, and Blomquist 1993), and African Americans/Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos (Fowler et al. 2002; Krysan et al. 1994). In summary, the data collected through our study provide a more compelling picture of the state of police-citizen relationships in the high-crime neighborhoods where those relationships are most critical.

## Findings

### Sample Characteristics

Table 1 displays the sociodemographic characteristics of the community residents, group members, and police officers. The sociodemographic characteristics of community residents and group members differ substantially on several measures—in expected ways. The two samples appear similar only on the number of years they have lived in the neighborhood. Group members are younger and comprise substantially more men, fewer parents, and fewer spouses. They have lower incomes and less education than community residents do, and fewer group members reported being employed at the time of the survey.

Table 1 also shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the officers surveyed, 83 percent of whom were patrol officers. A small percentage of officers reported living in the district in which they worked.<sup>10</sup> The sociodemographic characteristics of the surveyed officers differ markedly from those of surveyed residents and group members. The officers are more racially diverse than the group members or community residents, with a larger percentage of whites. Most officers have earned an associate's degree or higher, and the largest share of officers is 31 to 40 years old.

TABLE 1

**Sociodemographic Characteristics of Surveyed Community Residents, Group Members, and Police Officers, 2014**

	Community residents	Group members	Police officers
<b>Age (percent)</b>			
20 or younger	6.2	18.6	0.0
21–30	22.6	66.8	19.9
31–40	18.3	6.5	46.6
41–50	23.0	3.4	21.1
51 or older	29.9	4.7	7.3
<b>Male (percent)</b>	51.3	94.3	82.1
<b>Race and ethnicity (percent)</b>			
African American/Black	65.8	83.7	16.3
Latino/Hispanic	27.1	15.5	29.0
White	6.0	0.3	47.1
<b>Highest level of education (percent)</b>			
Less than college	55.9	93.3	17.6
Some college	21.9	4.9	20.7
Associate's degree or higher	22.2	1.8	61.7
<b>Currently employed (percent)</b>	45.3	26.9	
<b>Currently married (percent)</b>	28.0	4.8	
<b>Have children (percent)</b>	79.8	53.3	
<b>Income (percent)</b>			
Less than \$10,000	30.0	82.9	
\$10,000–\$19,999	20.1	7.2	
\$20,000–\$29,999	18.4	3.9	
\$30,000–\$39,999	11.6	3.6	
More than \$40,000	19.9	2.5	
<b>Average time lived in neighborhood (years)</b>	15.4	15.8	
<b>Live in district (percent)</b>			6.5
<b>Average time working with Chicago Police Department (years)</b>			9.8
<b>Average time working in district (years)</b>			7.0

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from residents, group members, and police officers in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Note:** Valid sample is 474 community residents, 392 group members, and 385 officers.

With the demographic characteristics of the samples as context, we present survey findings based on questions posed to community residents and group members about their perceptions of procedural fairness of police, support for police behaviors or activities, experiences with police stops perceived as unreasonable, and willingness to participate in crime control activities. Then, we present findings based on questions posed to officers about their perceptions of community trust and cooperation and their responsibility as officers.

## Residents' and Group Members' Perceptions of Police Fairness and Support for Officer Behavior or Activities

The key components that factor into police legitimacy are trust and confidence in police and the perceived fairness and appropriateness of police actions.<sup>11</sup> Community residents and group members were asked validated questions—based on previous studies—regarding their perceptions of the procedural fairness of police and their support for police behavior and activities. For each question, respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed with each statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In table 2 and table 3, we present the average ratings on each statement, by sample group, along with the scale averages. In general, the perceptions of police procedural fairness and police support are not particularly strong among community residents or group members; neither of the two scales approaches the 4 (agree) rating. On average, community residents and group members perceive the procedural fairness of officers as 3.2 and 2.4, respectively. On the police support scale, the community residents' responses averaged 3.2 and the group members' responses averaged 2.5.

TABLE 2

Average Ratings of the Procedural Fairness of Police by Community Residents and Group Members

	Community residents	Group members
Most police in my neighborhood are willing to listen to what I have to say.	3.30	2.48***
Most police in my neighborhood treat people with respect.	3.23	2.36***
Most police in my neighborhood treat people fairly.	3.14	2.37***
The police in my neighborhood care about the well-being of everyone they deal with.	2.91	2.31***
Most police in my neighborhood treat some people better than others. <sup>a</sup>	3.14	3.34*
Most police in my neighborhood are dishonest. <sup>a</sup>	2.88	3.49***
Scale average	3.16	2.38***

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys of community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Notes:** Valid sample is 467 community residents and 391 group members. Ratings were on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses to the first four items for the community residents and group members are internally consistent, with Cronbach's alphas of 0.86 and 0.82, respectively.

<sup>a</sup> Item was reverse coded. It is not included in the scale because of low reliability.

\*  $p < 0.10$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

TABLE 3

### Average Ratings of Support of Police Behavior and Actions by Community Residents and Group Members

	Community residents	Group members
Most police in my neighborhood do their job well.	3.31	2.46***
I can usually understand why the police who work in my neighborhood are acting as they are in a particular situation.	3.54	2.80***
The police in my neighborhood are effective at reducing crime.	3.09	2.47***
Most people in my neighborhood view the police favorably.	2.84	2.15***
Scale average	3.20	2.46***

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Notes:** Valid sample is 463 community residents and 391 group members. Ratings were on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Community resident responses and group member responses were internally consistent, with Cronbach's alphas of 0.82 and 0.78, respectively.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Figure 1 and figure 2 show the shares of community residents and group members who agree or strongly agree with statements related to police procedural fairness and police support. Unsurprisingly, perceptions of police fairness and police support differ between community residents and group members. Although the average community member rating was in the middle of the five-point scale on perceptions of procedural fairness and support, a large share of community members expressed positive attitudes toward police. Group members' perceptions are notably negative and less varied. For example, while 50 percent of residents agree that "most police are willing to listen to what [they] have to say," only 23 percent of group members agree with that statement. In another example, a near-majority of community residents (47 percent) say police in their neighborhood do their job well, while less than a quarter of group members agree with that statement (21 percent). More than half of surveyed group members agreed that the police were dishonest, as did a third of community residents generally.

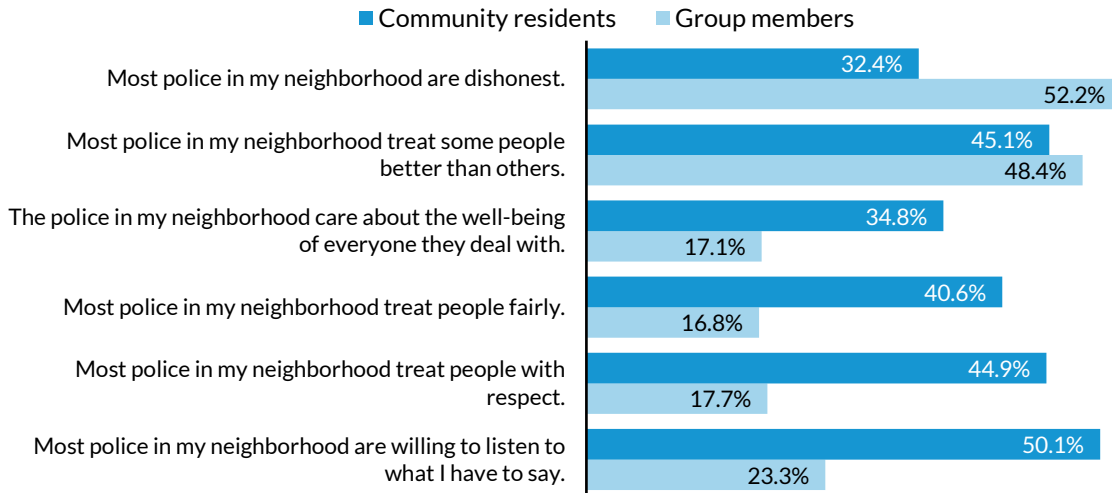
The differences in perceptions are not surprising given the demographic differences between group members and community residents. Group members are younger, more likely to be men, have lower incomes, and (by definition) are made up entirely of people with recent arrest histories. The extant literature would suggest that group members would have more negative perceptions of police. It is particularly problematic, however, that this group has such low perceptions of police behavior and activities given the importance that legitimacy and procedural fairness play into people's willingness to obey the law and cooperate with law enforcement.



FIGURE 1

### Community Residents' and Group Members' Perceptions of Procedural Fairness of Police

Percentage who agree or strongly agree with each statement



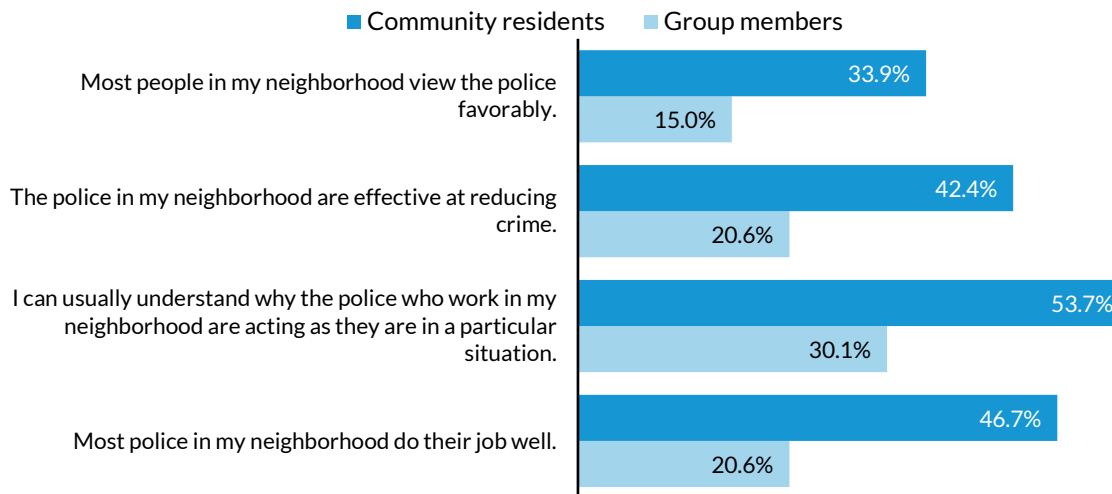
**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Notes:** Valid sample is 467 community residents and 391 group members. Percentages are respondents who chose agree (4) or strongly agree (5) on the five-point scale.

FIGURE 2

### Community Residents' and Group Members' Support for Police Behaviors and Actions

Percentage who agree or strongly agree with each statement



**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Notes:** Valid sample is 463 community residents and 391 group members. Percentages are respondents who chose agree (4) or strongly agree (5) on the five-point scale.

## Residents' and Group Members' Experiences with Unreasonable Police Stops

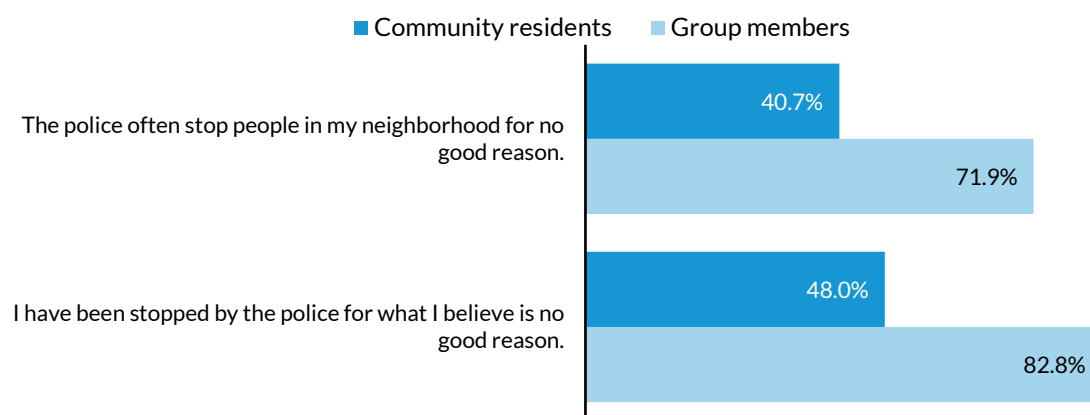
There is evidence that direct interactions with police play a strong role in shaping residents' perceptions and that negative police encounters can influence perceptions of fairness and legitimacy more than positive interactions (Skogan 2006). Procedural fairness has received a great deal of attention, partly because it provides officers an opportunity to directly influence perceived legitimacy through every citizen encounter (Tyler 2003). The survey of residents and group members included two items about the nature of their interactions with police officers, focused on whether respondents felt stops were unreasonable. Respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed they had been "stopped by the police for what [they] believe is no good reason" and how often people in their neighborhood were stopped "for no good reason." An overwhelming majority of the surveyed group members said they had been stopped for what they believed was no good reason, and a near-majority (48 percent) of community residents said they had been stopped for what they believed was no good reason (figure 3). In addition, 41 percent of residents and 72 percent of group members agreed that police *often* stop people for no good reason.

The percentages of both residents and group members with personal experiences of police stops that they perceive as unreasonable is high. Further, most group members perceive such stops as common in their neighborhood. Since group members and community residents perceive these stops as "unreasonable," it is fair to conclude that they interpret these stops as undoubtedly negative police encounters. Transparency is also a component of procedural fairness and legitimacy. As such, these high percentages also indicate that police legitimacy is low among both group members and residents, and it is potentially contributing to a lack of belief in the law and a felt need to comply with law enforcement.

FIGURE 3

### Community Residents' and Group Members' Experiences of Unreasonable Police Stops

Percentage who agree or strongly agree with each statement



**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Notes:** Valid sample is 472 community residents and 389 group members. Percentages are respondents who chose agree (4) or strongly agree (5) on the five-point scale.

## Residents' Willingness to Participate in Crime Control Efforts

Community residents were asked about their willingness to participate or help in crime control efforts, which research has shown also relates to police legitimacy. Residents were asked how much they agreed with several statements reflecting their willingness to participate in various crime control efforts. On the five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, residents expressed a general willingness to participate in crime control (table 4). The scale average, 3.92, is close to the value for agreement (4). Though responses varied, the majority agreed with each statement about participating in crime control (figure 4). Notably, the overwhelming majority agreed they would report crime to the police if they saw it happening (83 percent); and a smaller majority (56 percent) would volunteer their time to help law enforcement solve a crime or find a suspect. The level of willingness to participate in crime control is a positive finding, and it is unclear how much this finding contradicts the indications of residents' low to moderate perceptions of legitimacy suggested by the earlier tables. The expressed willingness to assist with crime control may simply reflect the severity of the crime problems residents see in these neighborhoods. Perhaps more citizens would be willing to participate in crime control, particularly in direct partnership with law enforcement, if they perceived police as acting more procedurally fair and being more legitimate authorities.

TABLE 4

### Average Ratings of Willingness to Participate in Crime Control Efforts among Community Residents

If I saw a crime happening in my neighborhood, I would report it to the police.	4.38
I would be willing to volunteer my time to help the police in my neighborhood solve a crime or find a suspect.	3.55
I would patrol the streets of my neighborhood as part of an organized community group.	3.65
I would attend community meetings to discuss crime in my neighborhood.	4.07
Scale average	3.92

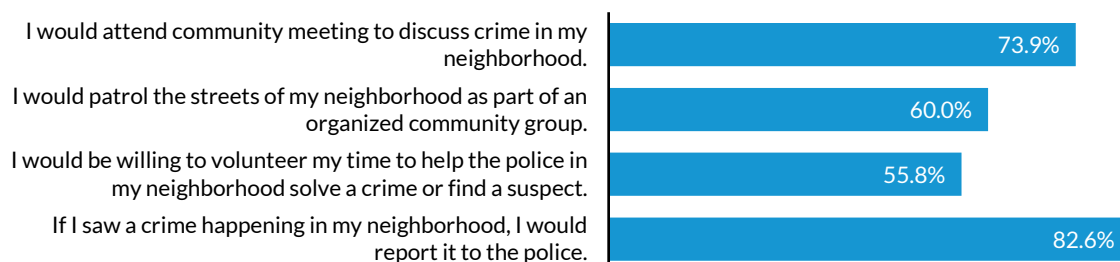
Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from residents in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

Notes: Valid sample is 469. The community responses were internally consistent, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80. Ratings were on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

FIGURE 4

### Residents' Willingness to Participate in Crime Control Efforts

Percentage of community residents who agree or strongly agree with each statement



Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from residents in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

Notes: Valid sample is 469. Percentages shown are respondents who chose agree (4) or strongly agree (5) on the five-point scale.

## Group-Community Differences

As tables 2 and 3 demonstrated, perceptions of police behavior and actions are worse among sampled group members than among community residents. However, additional analyses suggest that the differences are not necessarily driven by group membership itself. As outlined in table 1, the sample of community residents varies by age, race, and gender, while the sample of group members is predominately male and under the age of 30. Table 5 compares the ratings of African American/Black men under age 30 on perceptions of police procedural fairness, by sample group (group member and community resident). As shown, this demographic group has strikingly (and statistically) similar perceptions of police officer fairness, regardless of whether they were in the group member or community resident sample. Figure 5 shows the extremely negative perceptions of African American/Black men under 30 in the group member sample and community resident sample. A majority in both groups agree that police are dishonest, and an extremely small percentage agree that most police treat people with respect, treat people fairly, and are willing to listen.<sup>12</sup>

TABLE 5

### Average Ratings of the Procedural Fairness of Police by African American/Black Male Community Residents and Group Members under Age 30

	Community residents	Group members
Most police in my neighborhood are willing to listen to what I have to say.	2.36	2.37
Most police in my neighborhood treat people with respect.	2.28	2.28
Most police in my neighborhood treat people fairly.	2.20	2.22
The police in my neighborhood care about the well-being of everyone they deal with.	2.36	2.25
Most police in my neighborhood treat some people better than others. <sup>a</sup>	3.22	3.23
Most police in my neighborhood are dishonest. <sup>a</sup>	3.62	3.62
Scale average	2.31	2.28

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

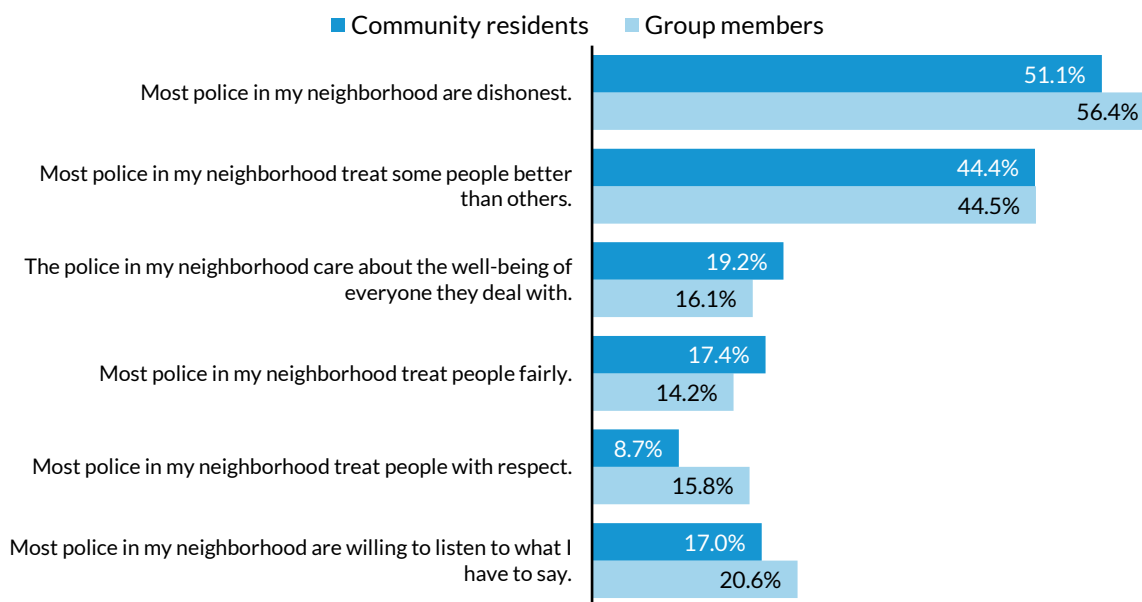
**Notes:** Valid sample is 48 community residents and 257 group members. Ratings were on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses to the first four items for the community residents and group members were internally consistent, with Cronbach's alphas of 0.80 and 0.81, respectively.

<sup>a</sup> Item was reverse coded. It is not included in the scale or the Cronbach's alphas because of low reliability.

FIGURE 5

### Perceptions of Police Procedural Fairness among African American/Black Male Community Residents and Group Members under Age 30

Percentage who agree or strongly agree with each statement



Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from community residents and group members in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

Notes: Valid sample is 48 community residents and 257 group members. Percentages are respondents who chose agree (4) or strongly agree (5) with each statement on the five-point scale.

### Officers' Perceptions of Community Trust and Cooperation

As mentioned, while it has received less study, understanding police perspectives—particularly those of patrol officers who interact routinely with the public—is important because evidence shows that mistrust is generally mutually reinforcing.<sup>13</sup> The officers were asked about their perceptions of community trust in and cooperation with the police, to get a sense of whether they felt cooperation and trust among the residents in their districts. Officers were asked how strongly they agreed with several statements related to community trust, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5); they were also asked how many of the people in the neighborhood the police thought would cooperate with them on crime control, categorized as none, a few, some, or many. Officers' ratings of community trust are rather low (table 6). The percentage of officers that agreed with statements about community trust as shown are particularly alarming (figure 6): less than 10 percent agree that the community they police trusts them, only 11 percent agree that the community they police is welcoming to them, and 23 percent agree that the police officers have reason to be distrustful of most citizens. While the preceding tables would suggest these findings are not wholly surprising, the extent and degree of the mistrust is striking.

Figure 7 shows that officers perceive that few people in their district cooperate with police. Approximately three-quarters of the officers believe that only a few people would provide information about a crime if they were asked by police or would work with police to solve neighborhood problems. Police officers report more cooperation from people who see something suspicious. The questions about officers' perceptions of community cooperation and residents' willingness to participate in crime control cannot be directly compared, but the findings appear to contradict one another in some ways. While most surveyed residents say they are willing to participate in crime control and with police, officers do not report that a majority (or many) people cooperate with them.

TABLE 6

**Average Ratings of Officers' Perceptions of Community Trust**

The community I police is welcoming to police officers.	2.41
The community I police trusts the police.	2.27
Police officers have reason to be distrustful of most citizens. <sup>a</sup>	2.81
The community I police does not care about the level of violence. <sup>a</sup>	2.43

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from officers policing in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

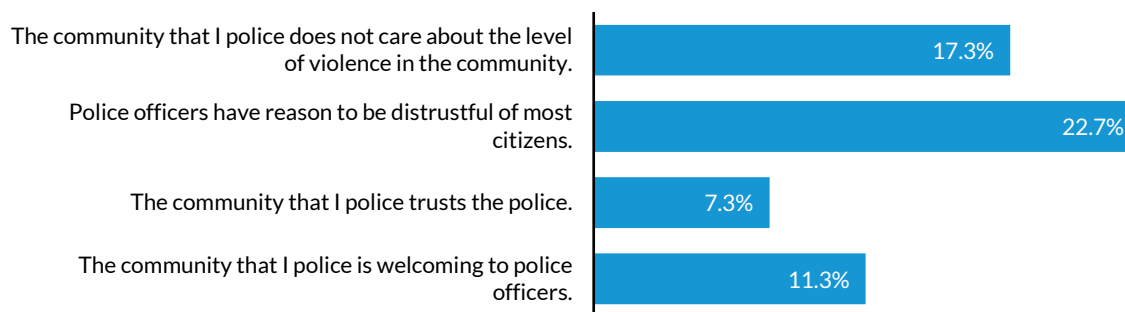
**Notes:** Valid sample is 392. Ratings were on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

<sup>a</sup> These items were reverse coded for scaling purposes; yet, the community responses were not internally consistent, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.58.

FIGURE 6

**Officers' Perceptions of Community Trust**

*Percentage of officers who agree or strongly agree with each statement*

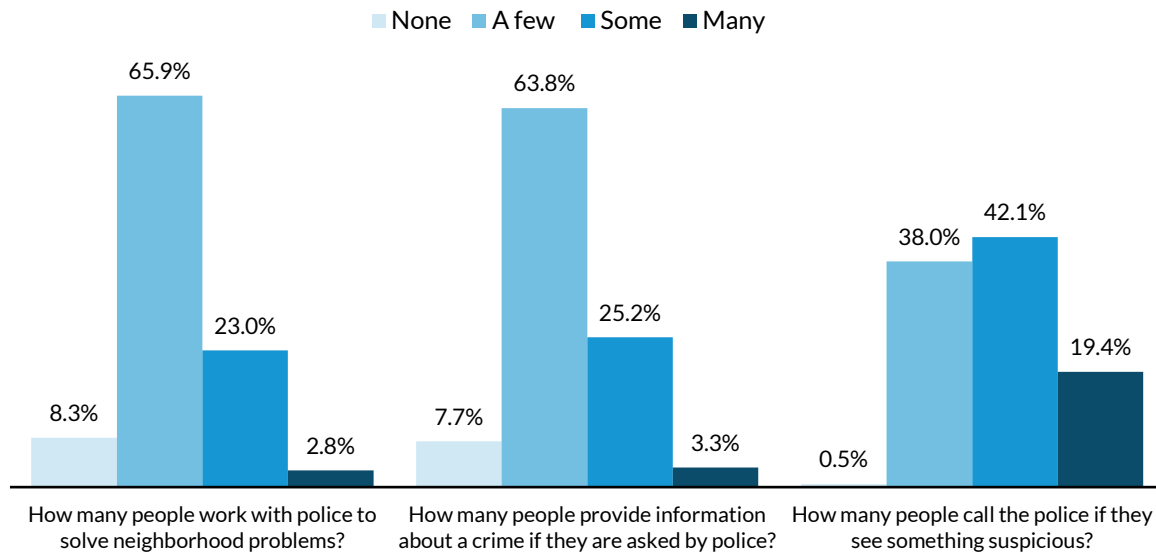


**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from officers policing in Chicago districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

**Notes:** Valid sample is 392. Percentages are respondents who chose agree (4) or strongly agree (5) on the five-point scale.

FIGURE 7

Officers' Perceptions of Community Cooperation



Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014 surveys from officers policing in Chicago police districts 5, 10, 15, and 25.

Note: Valid sample is 389.

## Conclusions and Implications

Our findings indicate high levels of mutual mistrust and negative perceptions between officers and residents of some of Chicago’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. This demonstrates a level of ambivalence that is not conducive to public safety. In particular, the study findings show the following:

1. Community residents and group members do not generally perceive the police as acting in a procedurally fair manner and do not support their work, particularly group members with recent arrest histories in co-offending networks.
2. Perceptions of procedural fairness are particularly negative among African American/Black men under 30 years old, regardless of their group membership status.
3. A high percentage of citizens also believes that they and the people they know are subject to unreasonable police stops; most residents reported this type of negative police experience.
4. Yet, residents generally express a willingness to cooperate on crime control.
5. Police officers do not believe the community trusts them, and officers do not express much confidence or trust in those living in the districts they police.

A strong relationship based on mutual trust between police and the community is beneficial to both, particularly in neighborhoods where crime is high. For the police, better relationships can mean better access to information and cooperation from the community necessary to learn about and address crime, and less stressful day-to-day work. For community residents, it can lead to policing that is more

effective, respectful of all members of the public, and responsive to community concerns. Both the police and the community benefit from the greater law-abiding that legitimacy supports. This is also true, even particularly true, of people who are involved in crime, who experience high rates of victimization.

The four neighborhoods that were part of this study could undoubtedly benefit from having stronger police-community relationships for all these reasons. Simply, the extent to which the police-community relationship can be strengthened in these neighborhoods could facilitate crime declines or guard against the type of crime spikes Chicago neighborhoods are currently experiencing. Conversely, the presence of the levels of mutual mistrust found in our surveys may heighten the likelihood of the withdrawal of community cooperation with police in the face of a critical incident, as has happened in other places (Desmond, Papachristos, and Kirk 2016). While this brief shows that mistrust is high, which may contribute to a pernicious cycle of crime increases or persistently high-crime areas, the data include kernels of opportunity with significant implications.

First, residents appear generally willing to participate in crime control. While officers do not appear to share the perception that the community they police is cooperative, the majorities suggesting they are willing to participate in crime control efforts might mean that officers have more allies in the community than they realize. Second, while resident perceptions are generally unfavorable, they seem particularly negative among young African American/Black men. This suggests a clear starting point for improving police-community relations: ensuring better, more procedurally fair and supportive (and perhaps less frequent) police interactions with young African American/Black men. Third, in many ways, the police officers' perceptions of trust and cooperation are lower than expected based on the self-reported perceptions of residents. This study cannot speak to the causes of officers' perceptions. Yet, research studies like it can support police by highlighting that not everyone in the neighborhood is against them or their activities. A sizable percentage of community residents agreed that police use some procedurally fair practices and supported some of their behaviors and actions. A better outlook among patrol officers might lead to even better police-community relationships, which might further contribute to crime reductions. There is a foundation on which to build better and stronger relationships.

There is a growing movement across the country to develop policing practices that deliver public safety and build trust in all communities. Public safety and community trust are mutually reinforcing successes. Routine interactions with police need to foster legitimacy and trust. Building trust is difficult work, but understanding and listening to the voices of the community residents and police officers summarized in this brief show how necessary it is to undertake it.

## Notes

1. See Sunshine and Tyler (2003); Murphy (2005); Tyler and Fagan (2008); Hinds (2009); Reisig and Lloyd (2009); Kochel, Parks, and Mastrofski (2013); Murphy, Tyler, and Curtis (2009); Bradford and Jackson (2010); Tyler, Schulhofer, and Huq (2010); and Reisig, Tankebe, and Meško (2012).



2. See Gau et al. (2012); Hinds and Murphy (2007); Jackson et al. (2012); Mazerolle et al. (2012); Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd (2013); Murphy (2005); Murphy, Tyler, and Curtis (2009); Reisig and Lloyd (2009); Reisig, Tankebe, and Meško (2012); Tyler (2003, 2004); Tyler and Fagan (2008); Tyler and Wakslak (2004); Wolfe (2011); and Wolfe et al. (2016).
3. See Bradford et al. (2014); MacDonald and Stokes (2006); Reisig, Tankebe, and Meško (2012); Tyler (2005); Tyler and Fagan (2008); Frank Newport, "Gallup Review: Black and White Attitudes Toward Police," Gallup, August 20, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/175088/gallup-review-black-white-attitudes-toward-police.aspx>; and Pew Research Center, *Few Say Police Forces Nationally Do Well in Treating Races Equally* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2014), available at <http://www.people-press.org/2014/08/25/few-say-police-forces-nationally-do-well-in-treating-races-equally/>.
4. See Kirk (2008); Lundman and Kaufman (2003); Reisig and Parks (2006); Rosenbaum et al. (2005); and Weitzer and Tuch (2002, 2004).
5. See Ferrin, Bligh, and Kohles (2007); Goldsmith (2005); Peterson and Behfar (2003); and Song (2006).
6. See Evans, Coman, and Stanley (1992); Ford and Weissbein (2003); Greene et al. (2004); Lasley (1994); Lasley et al. (2011); Paoline, Myers, and Worden (2000); Richardsen, Burke, and Martinussen (2006); and White et al. (2010).
7. See Greene et al. (2004); Zhao, He, and Lovrich (2002); Lurigio and Skogan (1994); and Paoline (2004).
8. For more details on the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy, see *Put the Guns Down: Outcomes and Impacts of the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy*.
9. General population surveys include Hinds and Murphy (2007); Jackson et al. (2012); Sunshine and Tyler (2003); Tyler and Wakslak (2004); and Wolfe et al. (2016). General surveys of those who have interacted with the police include Skogan (2005); Tyler (1990); and Tyler and Wakslak (2004).
10. CPD officers are required to live in the city of Chicago.
11. See Gau (2011); Hough, Jackson, and Bradford (2013); Jackson et al. (2012); Murphy (2005); Tyler (2004); Tyler and Fagan (2008); and Tyler and Wakslak (2004).
12. We analyzed whether Latino/Hispanic men under 30 have similarly low perceptions of procedural fairness and support for police behaviors, regardless of group membership status, and do not find a similar dynamic. Our sample of Latino/Hispanic men is smaller overall, but young group members have significantly different perceptions of police procedural fairness and support than young community residents.
13. See Ferrin, Bligh, and Kohles (2007); Goldsmith (2005); Peterson and Behfar (2003); and Song (2006).

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# Acknowledgments

This brief was funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. We are grateful to them and to all our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute's funding principles is available at [www.urban.org/support](http://www.urban.org/support).



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