PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN POLICE:
EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF POLICE MISCONDUCT IN THE MEDIA

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Abstract

The influence of media portrayals of misconduct upon confidence in police has grown substantially with the rise of social media and an increasingly rapid news cycle. Other research indicates this media effect is similar to the reaction observed when police misconduct is experienced vicariously through family members, but with a less profound emotional attachment. Research has predominantly focused on the effect of direct experiences with police misconduct, but the prevalence of media presentations of misconduct warrants further study.

This study analyzed data from a survey of Pennsylvania State University students regarding their experience with and perception toward local police, among others. Findings suggest that media representations, vicarious experiences, and personal experiences of misconduct contributed to confidence in police. Media was the most common of these sources among respondents, followed by vicarious experiences, and then personal experiences.
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Confidence in police is a vital area of study due to its implications for police effectiveness, officer behavior, and the ways in which public opinion toward police can be swayed. More practically, confidence in police can substantially influence police effectiveness which can sustain a negative effect upon confidence (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016; Murphy, Sargeant, & Cherney, 2015; Skogan, 2006). For example, if a person believes the police are ineffective in their duties or that they would behave improperly that person may be less likely to request aid from the police (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016). In such a case, the police never become aware of wrongdoing, and are thus unable to take action against it. This leads to a lack of police assistance to those in need, and raises the question of police effectiveness. This vicious cycle of distrust, inaction, and greater distrust is a serious concern for police departments, and has been the catalyst for many reforms (Chermak, 1995; Murphy, Sargeant, & Cherney, 2015; Skogan, 2006).

As noted by Chermak (1995), police departments allocate significant resources to cultivate healthy community relations. This is a necessary step against what has been described as a sense of legal cynicism (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011). Legal cynicism refers to the perception that the law, as represented by police, is unable to ensure public safety, and is thus illegitimate (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). More specifically, legal cynicism asserts that because police are viewed as ineffective, untrustworthy, and apathetic this harms their credibility. Citizen cooperation with police is contingent on the belief that there will be significant and sincere effort by the police to offer assistance. In the absence of visible improvement, the police appear to fail in their duty which leads the people to conclude the police are illegitimate. For example, the belief that police are unjust or ineffective is often the result of neighborhood
disorder and crime (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). While the literature focuses predominantly on the presence of legal cynicism in disadvantaged contexts, distrust of police caused by a perceived failure in public safety could occur in a variety of circumstances (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016; Viki, Culmer, Eller, & Abrams, 2006). A rampant distrust of police can lead to feelings of mistreatment and persecution at perceived injustices that could be resolved less strenuously with better community relations (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). By taking steps to counter this, potentially through programs meant to involve the community in reducing disorder or more proactive crime prevention, police can prevent a cycle of distrust that can further harm the public.

The level of confidence individuals have in police can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of police (Bridenball & Jesilow, 2005; Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Weitzer, 2002). The police cannot capture an offender if they are unaware that a crime has occurred since they cannot monitor the entirety of their jurisdiction at all times. The police cannot respond to crimes they are unaware of, and citizen reports are a necessary facet of the investigation process. Without that first step in citizen cooperation, the efforts of police face a large hurdle from the beginning. The willingness of citizens to report crimes and cooperate with investigations eases this burden. Through improved public confidence police organizations increase willingness to report crimes, and thus increase their overall effectiveness (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013b; Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016). Confidence in police also impacts the readiness of citizens to cooperate when they do encounter law enforcement (Hohl, Stanko, & Newburn, 2012; Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014; Murphy, Sargeant, & Cherney, 2015; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Improved confidence in police can increase community cooperation, and fosters an environment that will make citizens more
comfortable with the police (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016). Police to community interaction need not be a tense affair, and improved confidence is one way to resolve tension.

In the interest of better serving the public, the police take great interest in how the public views them (Chermak, 1995), and try to influence public perception through media collaboration, community policing efforts, and improved training for officers (Maxson, Hennigan, & Sloane, 2003). The formation of public opinion often goes beyond face-to-face encounters such as traffic stops, arrests, or a friendly greeting (Rosenbaum, Shuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2005; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004a; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004b). These impressions often include information gathered from friends, family, neighbors, and complete strangers through the lens of the media (Graziano, Schuck, & Martin, 2010; Miller & Davis, 2008; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004a; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004b). In the absence of direct experience, these indirect sources may serve as the only basis for citizens to form views on police. There are more than 700,000 sworn officers in the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011), yet most U.S. citizens have not had recent contact with the police (Skogan, 2009). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2013b), in 2011 there were 1,581,523 instances of police face-to-face contact with civilians in the United States. The most common reason for face-to-face contact between police and citizens is a traffic stop (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013a; Son & Rome, 2004). This further raises the question of how large an influence personal experiences have on confidence in police.

Police interaction with community members is a necessary facet of their duties. In order to address community concerns, many police departments have undertaken initiatives to improve relations with their communities. Increased informal interaction improves public opinion, and programs that encourage officers to interact with citizens in a non-service rather than service
related manner have shown positive results (Maxson, Hennigan, & Sloane, 2003). Building on this, Skogan (2009) found that visible police presence in a neighborhood increased that area’s confidence in police. Once again, the creation of situations where police were able to interact with citizens outside of official intervention had a positive effect. In an Australian study, modifications to procedures in traffic stops designed to make police appear more interested in the well-being of the driver and community have improved individual perceptions (Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014). Police showing that they care for the community and are interested in the well-being of citizens on a personal level assures the public their confidence is well placed (Maxson, Hennigan, & Sloane, 2003; Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014).

If police departments are to have positive relationships with their communities a logical first step would be for their administrations to allocate resources to maintain a positive image in the form of media contacts (Bridenball & Jesilow, 2005; Chermak, 1995; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). As stated previously, direct contacts with police officers are relatively rare (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013b; Skogan, 2009). However, in an age of increasingly prevalent media exposure there are alternative sources of information for citizens to make judgments of police effectiveness. In contrast to the rarity of direct encounters with police officers, media representations of police misconduct have become quite common.

Recent Media Displays

In recent years, there have been a number of highly publicized cases of police misconduct that have resulted in severe criticism from the public (Burns, 2015; Fausset, Pérez-Peña, & Robertson, 2016; Hassan & Botelho, 2014; Mele, 2016; Schultz, 2015; Valencia, 2013). While face-to-face contact may have a powerful impact on public opinion, negative representation from sources other than personal experience such as the media, friends, or family also play a
significant role (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). One highly publicized case involved a young man in Durham, North Carolina who was shot in the head by police (Valencia, 2013). Protests erupted and eventually turned violent as it was revealed that the young man was detained in the rear of a police cruiser when he died (Valencia, 2013). In another case, an Indiana man in police custody died in his cell after the use of a stun gun sent him into cardiac arrest (Schultz, 2015). Officers had used a stun gun in order to restrain the man as they moved him from his cell, and the family later claimed that, while he was emotionally unstable, he was not violent (Schultz, 2015). A more recent case in New York City also involved the use of a stun gun. A Bronx man was confronted by police after he had allegedly threatened his neighbor with a knife (Mele, 2016). The man brandished an intact bottle at the responding officers who used a Taser on the man multiple times; the man went into cardiac arrest and died shortly after (Mele, 2016). A New Mexico man accepted a settlement of $1.6 million after he was subjected to several highly invasive searches of his body and possessions by local police acting on an invalid search warrant (Hassan & Botelho, 2014). A case in which Detroit police officers arranged drug deals only to stop the seller en route so they could perform erroneous searches (Burns, 2015). They would confiscate the drugs, not log them into evidence, and sell the drugs themselves (Burns, 2015). A man from Baton Rouge, Louisiana was pinned to the ground by two officers before he was shot (Fausset, Pérez-Peña, & Robertson, 2016). His death in particular sparked a national controversy on police use of force as well as trust and confidence in police. According to Sunshine & Tyler (2003), individuals tend to have more favorable views of police when they believe the police act in the best interest of their community. With such highly publicized cases of misconduct followed by public outcry some parts of America may not feel the police serve their best interest.
In sum, the American people can and do form very strong opinions about police even if they have no firsthand experience. In lieu of personal experience, people will create composite opinions based upon the experiences of others and media representations of police behavior. The goal of this research is to elucidate how different sources of information affect public confidence in police. The next chapter will discuss research examining how media representation of police misconduct may influence confidence on a large scale as well as how the experiences of acquaintances and personal experiences can influence public perception. As will be discussed, previous research has examined direct experiences compared to media or peer influences. However, examining the three as separate forces with an influence upon public opinion, or whether there is a significant interaction among them, is a significant absence from the literature.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Public confidence in police can shift as a result of many factors including, but not limited to, media influences, the views of family, and personal experiences. The initial formation of attitudes toward law enforcement can also vary. As previously mentioned, many Americans have not had direct experience with the police, but in spite of this many citizens still hold firm beliefs about the effectiveness and trustworthiness of police (Skogan, 2009). In the absence of direct contact, indirect factors such as media portrayals of police as well as the experiences of family can act as the basis for views of police (Dirikx & Bulck, 2014; Rosenbaum et al, 2005; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004a). How these influences affect confidence in police has been subject to some uncertainty, as will be described below.

Media portrayal of police behavior including misconduct does not occur in a vacuum. Police departments contribute significant resources in an attempt to influence the media in their favor (Chermak, 1995). Chermak (1995) examined approximately 3,000 news stories both in print and broadcast in 1991 to better understand the relationship between police and the media. He found that the two entities benefit mutually from cooperation. According to Chermak (1995), this involves the promotion of positive stories by departments while dismissing negative publicity. Departments also encourage media representatives to publicize active but unsolved cases to garner community support. In exchange, media outlets receive more information in general and are able to report on developing cases much more efficiently.

Media Portrayal

General news consumption tends to impact public opinion in correlation to the positive or negative coverage present (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk,
2016; Dirikx & Bulck, 2014; Weitzer, 2002). Dirikx & Bulck (2014) examined the opinions of nearly 2,000 Flemish students in regard to their views of police relative to their consumption of media representations of police. They found that the students tended to be more aware of instances of behavior that matched what they had witnessed in the media. Specifically, they were more likely to view police as capable and effective if the media portrayed them as such and were more likely to be distrustful or report mistreatment if media representations had supported that (Dirikx & Bulck, 2014). This is somewhat supported by Callanan & Rosenberger (2011) who performed a similar study that used data collected from roughly 4,000 Californians in 1999. They reported that, in general, media consumption had a positive effect upon confidence. This may have been due to cooperation between media and the police as described by Chermak (1995), or the result of visible police action taking place. Police preserving communal safety is counterintuitive to the concept of an increasingly cynical community (i.e. Kirk & Papachristos, 2011). This could potentially dispel these cynical views of police.

Research that includes media representations of misconduct specifically has tended to indicate a negative impact on public confidence. Lee and Gibbs (2015) examined responses from 532 college students who reported lower confidence in police if they had been exposed to media coverage of misconduct. This is congruent with the findings of Weitzer and Tuch (2004a) who found that media reports of police misconduct were positively correlated with public desire for significant reform. In a previous study, Weitzer (2002) used telephone surveys collected from 1977 to 2001 to examine how public confidence fluctuated after severe cases of police misconduct. He found that media reports of police misconduct resulted in a severe drop in public confidence, but also found that this reduction in confidence corrected itself in the following months so there was a minimal long term loss of public confidence. This would later be
supported by the work of Desmond, Papachristos, and Kirk (2016) who examined the willingness of Milwaukee, Wisconsin residents to call 911 in the wake of a highly publicized case of police brutality in that city. The authors found that after an incident all Milwaukee citizens were less likely to call the police. The authors argued this was an indicator of reduced confidence. The authors also found that within a few months of the incident this reduced willingness to call 911 dissipated to match pre-incident levels of calls for service (Desmond, Papachristos, and Kirk, 2016). This would appear to indicate that while media portrayal of misconduct does reduce public confidence the effect is limited to the time surrounding the event, and that the public will either forgive or forget the incident.

While the above studies indicate a negative effect arising from misconduct stories in the media, other authors have indicated that media representations of misconduct have a limited effect upon public confidence or have no impact. Chermak, McGarrell, and Gruenewald (2005) performed a study in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1996 shortly after an altercation involving several off-duty officers provoking civilians into a confrontation. This incident later became the subject of media attention. In spite of the behavior of the officers in question, the authors found no relation between media consumption and confidence in police. Other studies found media to be a far less significant factor in public confidence (Dowler, 2002; Miller et al., 2005). Dowler (2002) used data from a 1995 national survey with 1,005 respondents. He hypothesized that because his respondents reported more concern with local conditions than police misconduct that media reports only served to amplify preexisting concerns. Miller and colleagues (2005) appear to support a limited effects concept. They found that public confidence remained stable over time regardless of media portrayals of police. Miller and colleagues (2005) suggested this meant media could only modify previously held beliefs so much, and that they could serve as the
foundation of beliefs toward police confidence. Another study by Hohl, Stanko, and Newburn (2012) examined shifts in the opinions of 12,000 Londoners after a 2011 incident subsequently referred to as “the London Disorder”. This episode was the result of public distress after a shooting in North London, and erupted into rioting three days later. According to Hohl, Stanko, and Newburn (2012) this level of public disruption was unheard of in the area. While there was a near even divide between positive and negative views of police, the authors found that 75% of respondents reported that the incident had reinforced their views of the police (Hohl, Stanko, & Newburn, 2012).

Studies that examined how media representations of police misconduct affect public confidence have reported either a limited or negative effect. While a decrease in confidence is the logical result of improper behavior, that some studies have shown the public is resilient to media influences is cause for further exploration. It is possible that while media can influence public opinion in the short term long term views are established through other sources such as the communicated experiences of family members and personal experience.

**Vicarious Experiences**

The experiences of close acquaintances that are received second hand can have a profound impact on public opinion due to the familiarity with the source as well as how early these experiences can be shared (Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). These vicarious experiences stand separate from media portrayal, as the experiences of close relations are likely to have a more emotional aspect compared to media reports (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). While media reports emphasize the misconduct itself the shared experiences of close relations can appear more dangerous due to the closeness of the victim and the listener’s increased likelihood of identifying with them (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). As mentioned in the introduction,
most Americans have not had direct contact with the police, but given humanity’s social nature they are more likely to be told about the direct experiences of others (Skogan, 2009). While this kind of experience is inherently flawed due to potential embellishments from the source it may be the only source of information some citizens have when attempting to form an opinion about the police. A study performed by Rosenbaum et al. (2005) indicated that vicarious experiences acted as the building blocks for initial views of police. Personal experience appeared to interact with these initial impressions, but could only alter them to such a degree. Similar to the limited effects concept seen with the media, it would appear that vicarious experiences serve as the foundation for public perception that may be swayed in a limited way by sources such as the media (Dowler, 2002; Miller et al, 2005; Rosenbaum et al., 2005). In contrast, Weitzer and Tuch’s (2004a) found that vicarious experiences had no effect upon public confidence.

An alternative approach to vicarious experiences is to frame them in terms of a larger group identity. Murphy, Sargeant, and Cherney (2015) took this perspective of vicarious experience. They examined the willingness of over 10,000 Australian citizens to cooperate with police based on their identification with the Australian national identity or with a specific ethnic group. Their results indicated that affiliating with the national identity was more conducive to cooperation than an individual ethnic group (Murphy, Sargeant, & Cherney, 2015). Group identification as a motivator for confidence in police was discussed in an earlier work by Sunshine and Tyler (2003) who examined the role of moral solidarity in cultivating community cooperation with police. This idea of collective self-interest gives credence to the possibility of vicarious experiences affecting public confidence. In the absence of personal experience, it would be reasonable to accept the experience of another as a normal interaction with police. The
closeness of relatives could also lead to an assumption of similar experience. Compared to media reports, the experiences of a friend, relative or coworker may be more relatable.

**Personal Experience**

At first, it would appear logical to conclude that personal experience would be the final determinant of public opinion, but based on the studies reviewed thus far, that may not be the case. As previously noted, a lack of personal experience coupled with an abundance of media or vicarious exposure may result in the premature formation of public opinion that may be resilient to even first-hand experiences (Murphy, Sargeant, & Cherney, 2015; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Callanan and Rosenberger (2011) found that personal experience in the form of arrest was able to override the influence of media on confidence, as respondents who had been arrested appeared to be impervious to media influences when compared to non-arrestee respondents. This does not dismiss the influence of vicarious experiences. Dirikx and Bulck (2014) would agree with this assessment, as their study concluded that personal encounters were a powerful predictor of public confidence, but the overall rarity personal experience with police nearly invalidated the effect through scarcity.

Personal experiences, when they did occur, changed public confidence as one would expect: positive experiences increased confidence while negative experiences reduced confidence (Hohl, Stanko, & Newburn, 2012; Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014; Viki et al., 2006). Murphy, Mazerolle, and Bennett (2014) performed a study involving 21,000 Australian drivers who were subjected to an alternative procedure for random breath tests at road checkpoints. The alternative procedure involved officers expressing interest in local concerns as well as requesting feedback and questions from the driver in order to give them a voice in what would be an otherwise routine procedure (Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014). The authors
found that drivers who were given the opportunity to voice concerns later reported greater confidence in police, and that this opportunity to express their concerns outweighed perceived effectiveness in determining respondent confidence in police. Unlike the above studies, Skogan (2006) found that positive experiences had a minimal effect while negative experiences had a more significant impact on public perception.

In contrast, Hohl, Stanko, and Newburn’s (2012) examination of “the London Disorder” revealed that Londoners who did report a decrease in confidence of police were mostly from the areas most affected by the unrest, and that respondents from these areas had the most severe negative reactions. Rosenbaum et al. (2005) reported that negative experiences initiated by the police had no effect on confidence, but negative contacts initiated by citizens had a severe negative impact upon public confidence. This would appear to indicate a sense of trust assumed by community members when they reach out to police. The expectation is for the police to assist whoever reaches out to them, but as Rosenbaum et al. (2005) indicate this is not always the case. Additionally, Dowler and Zawilski (2007) used data from the 2000 Law and Media Survey involving approximately 1,000 adults from across the United States. The surveyed examined corrections and courts in addition to police; the survey also measured the respondent’s rates of media consumption. The authors found that respondents with a prior arrest tended to view police misconduct as more common. Based on the other studies, it would appear that confidence is linked to the perception of the police as agents working in the individual or group’s best interests, and that when this image is broken such as by arrest or by an altercation, confidence plummets. This calls back to the group identity issue raised by Sunshine and Tyler (2003), and the effect the experiences of relatives may have on confidence.
In opposition to the other studies that indicated the significance of individual interactions with police, some studies indicate that personal experiences play a minimal role in citizen’s perceptions (Weitzer and Tuch, 2004a). Bridenball and Jesilow (2008) had similar findings with neighborhood conditions playing a larger role in public opinion than personal experiences. These authors concluded that individual experiences with the police were capable of reinforcing previously held conceptions of the police, but were not responsible for the initial formation of these views. This is compatible with the findings of other authors, who appear to indicate that due to the rarity and delay of personal experiences with police that media portrayals and vicarious experiences serve as the initial foundation for public opinion (Dowler, 2002; Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

Given the rarity of personal experiences (Dirikx and Bulck, 2014; Skogan, 2009), it would appear that direct experiences are an unreliable method of examining public confidence in a broader sense. However, there is still value in exploring the effects of direct experiences on confidence, as the direct experiences of one will be the vicarious experiences of others. Vicarious experiences are separate from direct experience and media exposure as they are close to the recipient while also filtered through another's perception. Direct experiences are immediate and personal while media presentations are often distant. Vicarious experiences of close relations maintain the personal aspect while also being distant from the recipient. Through a developed understanding of how officer behavior affects confidence, training can be developed to address specific problem areas (Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014, Rosenbaum et al., 2005). By correcting issues with direct contacts, the spread of negative vicarious experiences should also decrease.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

Hypotheses

This research will examine the impact of media representation of police misconduct on confidence in police as well as the influence of vicarious and direct experiences. The literature has reported surprisingly mixed findings on the effect media consumption may have on public confidence. While some authors (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016; Dirikz & Bulck, 2014; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Lee & Gibbs, 2015; Skogan, 2006; Viki et al., 2006; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004b) reported a clear negative effect of media reports of misconduct on public opinion, others found that public opinion was resistant to even severe reports of misconduct (Chermak, McGarrell, & Gruenewald, 2005; Dowler, 2002; Miller et al., 2005). Due to the mixed conclusions detailed in previous research, my first hypothesis is: exposure to media representation of police misconduct affects a person’s level of confidence in the police.

Several previously mentioned works also described a relationship between the vicarious experiences of family with the police and reported levels of confidence. Once again, results were not always the same as some authors reported vicarious experiences acting as a framework for attitudes toward direct contact. Other authors found a correlation between vicarious experiences with misconduct and lower reported levels of confidence. Due to the uncertainty expressed in previous research, my second hypothesis is: vicarious experiences of police misconduct affect a person’s level of confidence in the police.

Direct contact is, of course, still a prime predictor of confidence in police. It is simple logic that first hand experiences of mistreatment will negatively affect a person’s perception of the parties involved. However, some previous literature indicates individuals can resist the
effects of personal experiences given other powerful influences (see Murphy, Sargeant, & Cherney, 2015; Rosenbaum et al., 2005). To this end, my third hypothesis is: personal experiences of police misconduct affect a person’s level of confidence in the police.

Sample

Data were collected from the Pennsylvania State University's residential student body. The PSU system has approximately 86,000 students attending Commonwealth campuses. The student population from the Fall of 2015 was 68.0% White, 5.5% Black, 4.4% Asian, 5.8% Hispanic/Latino, 10.4% identified as international, 2.3% identifying as multiple races, 2.2% stated their race was unknown, and the remaining 0.1% consisting of Native American and Native Hawaiian students (The Pennsylvania State University Budget Office, 2015a). Additionally, 45.2% of students were female and 5.8% male (The Pennsylvania State University Budget Office, 2015b). Data were drawn from the PSU system as a convenience sample, collected between September and December of 2015 via an online survey through Qualtrics. The Penn State system includes University Park, nineteen Commonwealth campuses, and the World Campus. The World Campus entails the university’s online program, and thus requires neither physical attendance nor residing in Pennsylvania. Due to its remote nature and thus lack of geographical limitations, the World Campus was not included in this study. The initial sample consisted of 5,000 residential students of which 920 responded; thus the response rate of 18%.

Data were screened using a technical screening question and a conceptual screening question. The question “Please select 'Two times' for this question” was used as a technical screening question, and the 80 respondents who failed to respond correctly were excluded due to a failure to follow survey instructions. A failure to properly follow survey directions here raises the question of whether they followed instructions in other sections of the survey. If the
respondent was unable to follow the survey instructions then their responses may be invalid. In order to avoid these invalid responses influencing the data they were excluded. The question “Are you currently, or have you ever been, a police officer?” was used to exclude those with policing experience, as they would reasonably have a bias in favor of police officers in spite of other factors. A total of five respondents were excluded in this fashion. Additional exclusions resulted from incomplete or invalid submissions.

**Measurements**

**Dependent Variable**

For the purpose of this study, confidence in police is defined as the beliefs that police are effective in performing their duties. Five questions were used to examine confidence. Four questions (“I am generally satisfied with the police”, “The police are responsive to community concerns in my neighborhood”, “The police are doing a good job controlling violent crimes in my neighborhood” and “The police are doing a good job controlling the sale and use of illegal drugs in my neighborhood”) used the 4-point scale of 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 4 = disagree; and 5 = strongly disagree. A fifth question, “How much confidence do you have in the police?”, used a different 4-point scale (2 = a great deal through 5 = not at all). These items were selected based on whether they would logically indicate confidence, and based on the efforts of previous authors. Similar questions to the first and fifth listed above have been used in other research such as Chermak, McGarell, and Gruenewald (2005); Skogan (2006); Sunshine and Tyler (2003); and Callanan and Rosenberger (2011) to examine confidence more directly. Questions examining police effectiveness in a given area (such as controlling violent crime) have been used as more indirect measures in Dowler (2002); Hohl, Stanko, and Newburn (2005); and Rosenbaum et al. (2005).
To facilitate effective analysis the questions “I am generally satisfied with the police”, “The police are responsive to community concerns in my neighborhood”, “The police are doing a good job controlling violent crimes in my neighborhood”, and “The police are doing a good job controlling the sale and use of illegal drugs in my neighborhood” were recoded to a different 4-point scale (1=”Strongly disagree”, 2=”Disagree”, 3=”Agree”, and 4=”Strongly agree”). “How much confidence do you have in the police?” was recoded to use the scale 1= “Not at all”, 2= “Not very much”, 3= “Quite a lot”, and 4= “A great deal”. These questions were assessed for significant correlation due to their theoretical similarity, and were found to be significantly correlated at the 95% confidence level. They were subsequently combined to create an index measure of public confidence by taking the average of their scores.

**Independent Variables**

Media representation of police misconduct examines how frequently the respondent was informed of various forms of police misconduct. Exposure to media coverage was broken into three categories of misconduct: police use of excessive force, police racial profiling, and police corruption. Respondents were asked how often they hear or read about the previously mentioned forms of misconduct. Respondents were asked to indicate the prevalence of these reports on a 4-point scale (1= “Not at all”; 2= “Not very much”; 3= “Quite a lot”; and 4= A great deal). Such measures were used effectively in the past by Lee and Gibbs (2015) and Weitzer and Tuch (2004b). Other forms of this examination have also seen compelling results (Chermak, McGarell, & Gruenewald, 2005). These measures were examined for significant correlation, and were found to be significantly correlated at the 95% confidence level. Due to their similarity, the average of these responses was used to create the index of media representation.
Personal and vicarious experiences with police misconduct were examined using the same questions. In a series of binary response questions ("Yes"= 1 and "No"= 2) restricted to the past two years, respondents were asked separately whether they or a family member had been stopped by police without good reason, had a police officer use insulting language against them, or had a police officer use physical force against them. Previous studies have approached measurement of personal and vicarious experiences in a similar manner with a focus on these specific forms of misconduct (Lee & Gibbs, 2015; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004b). These responses were then recoded to “No”= 0 and “Yes”= 1 for ease of analysis. The questions examining personal experiences and those examining vicarious experiences were separately analyzed for significant correlation, and the results indicated a significant relationship at the 95% confidence level for each group. Due to the relevance of the theoretical relationship among the measures they were used to form separate indices of personal and vicarious experiences using the average responses of each.

Control Variables

In addition to media, vicarious, and direct experiences the literature established victimization, sex, and race as potentially significant factors affecting confidence in police (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Lee & Gibbs, 2015; Weitzer, 2002). Some authors have found a significant negative relationship between past victimization and confidence in police. Thus, respondents were asked if in the past two years they had been a victim of a crime using the scale 1= “None”, 1= “One time”, 3= “Two times”, and 5= “Three times or more”. Respondents were subsequently categorized as non-victims (0) and victims (1) due to a large majority reporting as non-victims (83%).
The sex of respondents needed to be accounted for as previous studies have found men to report less confidence than women (Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Taylor & Lawton, 2012). Lee and Gibbs (2015) reported that men had more negative encounters with police officers. To account for sex differences in confidence, sex was recorded using the question “What is your gender?” with possible responses of male (1), female (2), and other (3). After examining the data, only two respondents selected “Other”. Due to this low representation, these cases were excluded from the data set. This variable was recoded to use the scale of 0= “Female” and 1= “Male”. Race also has been a significant factor when examining confidence in police (Chermak, McGarrell, & Gruenewald, 2005; Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016; Lee & Gibbs, 2015). Some studies have found an increased likelihood of negative vicarious with police among minority respondents (Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Lee & Gibbs, 2015). To examine this relationship, respondents were asked to identify their race among a list of options (African American= 1; Asian/Pacific Islander= 2; Latino/Latina= 3; White= 4; Middle Eastern= 5; Bi-racial or Multi-racial= 6; and Other= 8). These were later re-categorized into Non-White (0) and White (1) due to a considerable portion of the sample identifying as White. Participants also were asked to identify their age from a list of responses ranging from “17 or younger” followed by specific responses (“18”, “19”, “20”, etc.) upwards to “50 or older.” This was later re-categorized to use ten year ranges beginning with “17 or younger” onward to “20 through 29”; “30 through 39”; “40 through 49”, and “50 or older.” This measure was subsequently excluded due to approximately 90% of respondents clustering in the “19 or younger” and “20 through 29” ranges. This was somewhat expected from data collected from a university
Plans for Analysis

After examining and preparing the data, an analysis of bivariate correlations was run as a preliminary test. Before proceeding to the regression analysis, the data was examined to ensure it was appropriate for an OLS regression. First, scatter plots were used to assess variables for the linearity of their relationship. Second, a P-P plot was used to test for multivariate normality. The plot showed a slight drift from a normal distribution, but was well within acceptable limits. Collinearity diagnostics were included in the regression analysis, as well as a Durbin-Watson test for auto-correlation. These did not indicate collinearity or auto-correlation among the variables. Homoscedasticity was examined using a residuals scatter plot (Figure 3.1). In spite of some minor clustering the data appear to be sufficiently homoscedastic. After these assumptions were met, an OLS regression was performed using a single model.

Figure 3.1

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: confidence_index
Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Findings

Measurement Analysis

Descriptive statistics, as represented in Table 4.1, indicate that the sample was 24.17% non-white, 38.76% male, and 83.05% had no history of victimization. The age of respondents was heavily clumped toward the younger categories with approximately 93% being 29 years old or younger. Exposure to media representations of any form of police misconduct was common with more than half of respondents reporting “Quite a lot” of exposure in each category. In contrast, personal experiences with police in the past two years were incredibly uncommon with 12.36% of respondents reporting they had been stopped without a good reason by police, 7.91% reporting that insulting language had been used against them, and 2.16% reporting having force used against them. Vicarious experiences were only slightly more common in each category with 15.95% reporting a family member had been stopped by police without a good reason, 7.9% had family claiming insulting language was used toward them, and 3.74% had family claiming force was used against them. Confidence in police was also rather high in the sample with more than half of respondents indicating a positive attitude toward police across all measures.

Bivariate correlations listed in Table 4.2 revealed several relationships that were significant at the 95% confidence level. Confidence in police was negatively correlated to personal experiences with misconduct ($r = -.30$), vicarious experiences of misconduct ($r = -.26$), media representations of misconduct ($r = -.16$), and a history of victimization ($r = -.11$). Personal experiences with misconduct were positively correlated to vicarious experiences ($r = .45$), media representation ($r = .13$), gender ($r = .11$), and a history of victimization ($r = .16$). Vicarious experiences with misconduct and media representation of misconduct were positively
Table 4.1 (cont.)  
Descriptive characteristics of the sample (n=662)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>¯</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vicarious: Stopped without reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0) Non-White</td>
<td>24.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0) No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) White</td>
<td>75.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vicarious: Insulting Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0) Female</td>
<td>61.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0) No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Male</td>
<td>38.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vicarious: Use of force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) 19 or younger</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0) No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 20-29</td>
<td>48.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) 30-39</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) 40-49</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) 50 or older</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media: Police excessive force</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police responsive to community concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Not at all</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Not very much</td>
<td>15.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Quite a lot</td>
<td>38.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) A great deal</td>
<td>44.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Police racial profiling</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police controlling violent crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Not at all</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Not very much</td>
<td>14.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Quite a lot</td>
<td>40.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) A great deal</td>
<td>41.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media: Police corruption</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police controlling drug crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Not at all</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Not very much</td>
<td>26.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Quite a lot</td>
<td>35.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) A great deal</td>
<td>33.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal: Stopped without reason</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>Confidence in police</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0) No</td>
<td>87.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Yes</td>
<td>12.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Not very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal: Insulting language</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>(3) Quite a lot</td>
<td>51.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0) No</td>
<td>92.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) A great deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Yes</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal: Use of force</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0) No</td>
<td>97.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Yes</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
correlated ($r = .22$). Vicarious experiences were also negatively correlated to race ($r = -.09$) at the
95% confidence level, and positively correlated to victimization ($r = .09$). Finally, gender and
race were positively correlated ($r = .08$).

### Table 4.2
Bivariate correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Personal experience</th>
<th>Vicarious experience</th>
<th>Media representation</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Victimization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious experience</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media representation</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01

### Regression Analysis

The findings from a single multiple linear regression analysis shown in Table 4.3 support
the hypothesis that exposure to media coverage of police misconduct diminishes one’s
confidence in the police ($b= -0.087$, s.e. = 0.029). Its effect was statistically significant at the
95% confidence level. Next, when a person perceived that his or her personal experience with
the police was not fair or legitimate, the person appears to have less confidence in the police ($b=$
-0.630, s.e. = 0.128). This was also the case for vicarious experiences of contact with the police. A person with a family member who perceived his or her contact with the police was not fair tends to be less confident in the police (b= -0.343, s.e. = 0.115). The fully standardized regression coefficient report suggests that among the three significant correlates, personal experience appears to have the largest association with confidence in the police ($\beta = -0.207$). The model accounted for about 12% of the variance in confidence in the police among the students. Other control variables did not have statistically significant associations with confidence in the police.

**Table 4.3**
Regression coefficients (n=662)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious experience</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media representation</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td></td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
Chapter 5 – Summary and Conclusions

Summary of the Research

This research examined the attitudes of college students towards police based on their own experiences with police misconduct, the experiences of family, and experiences witnessed through the media. The sample was comprised of students attending the Pennsylvania State University in late 2015 with 920 students responding. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of confidence in their local police as well as whether they had experienced police misconduct personally, if any family members had such experiences, and if they had witnessed cases of police misconduct in the media. The analysis involved creating an index measure for each of these concepts, and performing a regression analysis also accounting for respondents’ sex, race, and history of victimization. Age also was measured, but was subsequently excluded due to a large portion of respondents being within a small age range. While having personal experience, vicarious experience, and viewing media of police misconduct all had a negative impact upon confidence sex, race, and victimization history did not.

This study supports the body of previous works that found a significant negative impact upon confidence caused by media representations, vicarious experiences, or personal experiences of police misconduct. The findings support the conclusion that experiences with misconduct, whether personal or from an outside perspective, reduce confidence in police. This is in opposition to other studies that have indicated confidence in police is resilient to cases of misconduct.

Implications
The implications of this study extend to police, the media, and the public. The finding that personal experience with police misconduct contributes to reduced confidence is not a surprising one, but it is the easiest to mitigate directly. The most common form of personal experience with misconduct reported in this survey was being stopped without a good reason. While this could be downplayed as minor, these incidents do appear to have a significant impact upon confidence. Previous literature has indicated that more informal officer interactions can assist with improving confidence, and this appears to be applicable here (Maxson, Hennigan, & Sloane, 2003). Officers engaging citizens in a friendlier manner will certainly reduce reports of insulting language, and would have a positive impact on confidence (Murphy, Mazerolle, & Bennett, 2014). Police administrators could mandate additional training for their officers with the goal of improving their interpersonal skills, and encourage them to explain their actions to citizens. On the level of individual officers, being clearer in their intentions and reasoning would help the average citizen immensely.

This study also has implications regarding public perceptions of police officers and how easily they can be influenced. As indicated by other authors and replicated here, personal experiences with police misconduct are rare (Dirikx & Bulck, 2014; Skogan, 2009). In this case, there must be some consideration of how influential indirect factors must be for people to still have such strong feelings toward police. One takeaway from this study is that the average citizen could be more critical of what they are told about the police. With the prevalence of violent stories in the media it is easy for viewers to wrongfully generalize this misconduct to their local police, and the findings of this study support that this happens (Burns, 2015; Fausset, Pérez-Peña, & Robertson, 2016; Hassan & Botelho, 2014; Mele, 2016; Schultz, 2015; Valencia, 2013). While police misconduct is a serious concern and it is good for people to be aware of it, the
assumption that a highly publicized use of excessive force in another city is indicative of local police behavior is preposterous. Instead of contributing to a nationalized distrust of police, individuals should temper their outrage at their local police with their knowledge of those officers. Demanding a department with no history of serious misconduct engage in the same reform as a problematic institution could be more harmful than helpful.

The findings of this paper also have potential implications for the news media itself. The examples of media portrayal mentioned at the beginning of this paper serve as examples of police misconduct as it is often portrayed by the media (Fausset, Pérez-Peña, & Robertson, 2016; Hassan & Botelho, 2014; Mele, 2016; Schultz, 2015). This kind of representation spread nationally runs the risk of creating an illusion that this is typical behavior for police officers. Based on the findings reported here, respondents did have a negative shift in their view of local law enforcement based on media coverage of events from outside their area. Police misconduct as a national craze could be tempered by a more even-handed approach by the media. By emphasizing that a police officer behaving incorrectly in one location does not indicate that all police officers are to be mistrusted could help alleviate viewer trepidation. Alternatively, the media could take greater steps to report on the positive contributions of police officers and show their effectiveness. Reporting on criminals being captured or of law enforcement initiatives could offset the negative impact of misconduct stories. This is a functional albeit unfortunate option, as it is still dependent upon the viewers to make faulty overgeneralizations about their local police based on media reports.

Limitations

While the findings of this study were consistent with previous research, there are of course limitations to consider. External validity concerns include the sampling method as well as the
contents of the sample. The sample used in this study was comprised of Pennsylvania State University students attending Commonwealth campuses. While this would imply that all respondents were living in or near Pennsylvania, generalizability concerns are assuaged by the diverse student body of the university. Students hail from across the United States and the rest of the world. While there were only a few international respondents included in this study the remainder should provide a sufficient diversity of experience to be representative of the larger United States. An additional concern for external validity was the exclusion of age in the analysis. This would be of greater concern if there was a degree of personal experience with police inconsistent with previous literature, but that is not the case (Dirikx & Bulck, 2014; Rosenbaum et al., 2005). The more social nature of vicarious and media experiences make them less susceptible to the age concern. Finally, there is an internal validity concern present due to the relatively low R square value reported here. This is indicative of other factors influencing confidence in police that were not measured in this study, and can be corrected in future examinations by including additional factors in the model.
References


The Pennsylvania State University Budget Office. (2015a). *Enrollment by race/ethnicity category as a percent of total enrollment Fall 2016.* Retrieved from:

https://budget.psu.edu/FactBook/StudentDynamic/StudentTableofContents.aspx?Year=2015


Sunshine, J. & Tyler, T. (2003). Moral solidarity, identification with the community, and the importance of procedural justice: The police as prototypical representatives of a group’s


## Appendix

1/19/2017 Qualtrics Survey Software

### Default Question Block

**In this first section, please let us know what you think about your local police (Please think of your township/city police; NOT campus police or state troopers on highway).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am generally satisfied with the police.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family members are satisfied with the police.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police are responsive to community concerns in my neighborhood.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police are doing a good job controlling violent crimes in my neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police are doing a good job controlling the sale and use of illegal drugs in my neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe to be alone outside in my neighborhood at night.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be best if I don’t see any police in my neighborhood.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t really feel the need to personally know police officers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a lot in common with police officers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Please answer the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Not very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much confidence do you have in the police?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much confidence do you have in the justice system?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling close refers to being listened to, understood by, able to share feelings and to talk openly with another person. Indicate how close you currently feel to the police.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Now, do you ....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>want to be a police officer?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have at least one police officer among your family members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have at least one police officer among your close friends?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have any officer's phone number (not 911) in case you witness something or someone suspicious?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know any local police officer by his or her name who is neither your family member nor your close friend??</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Now, since you mentioned you know a police officer in your neighborhood....
How often have you had a conversation with the above officer(s) in the past 3 months?  
I feel comfortable talking with the above officer(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Not very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer how often you hear or read about the following incidents in the media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Not very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Police use of excessive force
Police racial profiling
Police corruption or misconduct

In the past 2 years, how often have you experienced the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>One time</th>
<th>Two times</th>
<th>Three times or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You reported a crime to the police
You reported a traffic incident to the police
You were a victim of crime
Your family member(s) was a victim of crime
You received a citation from the police
Your family member(s) received a citation from the police
Please select 'Two times' for this question
You were arrested by the police
Your family member(s) was arrested by the police
The police could have ticketed me for a traffic violation, but let me go with a warning instead
The police could have arrested me, but let me go with a warning instead

In the past 2 years, have you experienced the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have been stopped by the police without a good reason.
My family member(s) have been stopped by the police without a good reason.
A police officer has used insulting language against me.
A police officer has used insulting language against my family.
A police officer has used physical force against me.
A police officer has used physical force against my family.
Last, would you please let us know a little bit more about yourself?

Are you Hispanic?
- YES
- NO

How would you describe yourself?
- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Middle-Eastern
- Latino/Latina
- White
- Bi-racial or Multi-racial
- Other

What is your neighborhood zip code? (Do NOT put your address here)

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Other

How old are you?

Are you a citizen or permanent resident of the United States?
- Yes
- No

What is your academic status as of now?
- Freshmen
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Master's Student
- Doctoral Student
Are you currently, or have you ever been, a police officer?
- Yes  - No

What is your marital status as of now?
- Unmarried  - Married  - Divorced/Separated  - Widowed

What is your annual household (including your parents) income?

BEFORE WE SAY GOODBYE, IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ENTER INTO A DRAWING TO WIN $20 LION CASH FOR 50 RANDOM PICKS, YES, 50 OF YOU WILL WIN THE CASH!

PLEASE SEND 1) YOUR NAME AND 2) YOUR PSU EMAIL ADDRESS WITH 3) “GO POLICE” IN THE SUBJECT LINE TO JLEE@PSU.EDU.

THE DRAWING WILL BE ON November 30th, 2015. WINNERS WILL BE INFORMED WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE DRAWING, AND $20 WILL BE DEPOSITED TO THEIR PSU ACCOUNT.

Thank you again for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. We value your opinions!