

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

**UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA,**

*

*

Plaintiff,

*

v.

CIVIL NO. JKB-17-0099

*

**BALTIMORE POLICE
DEPARTMENT, et al.,**

*

Defendants.

*

SUBMISSION OF SECOND SURVEY OF CUSTODIAL ARRESTEES

The Baltimore Police Department Monitoring Team (“Monitoring Team”) hereby submits its report on the second survey of custodial arrestees conducted under Paragraphs 23, 24 and 26 of the Consent Decree (“Report”). See ECF No. 2-2 (as modified by ECF Nos. 39 and 410). The Report is attached as Exhibit 1. The Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, together with Rose Street Community Center, conducted the survey interviews and prepared the Report on behalf of the Monitoring Team.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

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Exhibit 1

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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE IN BALTIMORE

Second Report for the Monitor
Based on Interviews with Arrested Detainees

Abstract

This report relies on interviews with custodial arrestees in the Baltimore City Detention Center shortly after their arrest in order to understand residents' experiences and perceptions of the police and their ideas about how to improve policing. It stems from the requirement in the Consent Decree (paragraph 23b) that there be annual "surveys" of experiences and perceptions of the Baltimore Police Department among a representative sample of residents, including "detained arrestees." The report finds more intensely negative perceptions of the performance of the police among the individuals we interviewed in 2022 than among those we interviewed in 2019 (none were the same) as well as greater ambivalence about policing. It also finds poorer appraisals of the quality of relations between residents and officers, no greater confidence in police accountability systems, and increased skepticism about the future of policing in Baltimore.

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Executive Summary

This report draws on interviews with detainees shortly after they were arrested by the Baltimore Police Department to learn about the current practice of policing and how it might be improved. It may provide the BPD with sources of insight that lie beyond the police department's own systems of information, intelligence, and record-keeping. The analysis we offer here might also inform any other internal or external assessments of the Department and its strategic goals.¹

We interviewed fifty-seven individuals who were arrested in the first week of November 2022.² We spoke to them within a few hours of their arrest; some immediately after their booking and some shortly before meeting with a hearing commissioner. In no case did detainees spend a night or an extended period of time in holding cell before the interview. Nearly three-quarters of the people we interviewed had been in the Baltimore Intake Center for less than eight hours.

We asked detainees about their experiences of policing and the character of relations between residents and the police in their neighborhood. We solicited their views about the performance of the Baltimore Police Department by asking how well is the BPD doing "overall," how effective is it at "stopping crime," and how well are officers working with residents to "solve local problems." We also asked detainees about the potential future for policing and their confidence in systems of police accountability. We engaged detainees in open conversation, too, inviting their opinions about the greatest priorities for the city and views about how life in Baltimore is changing. At the end of each interview asking them to contemplate what they might do first if they were chief of police.³

The responses to these questions capture experiences and perceptions of the BPD five years after the signing of the Consent Decree. Compared to the views of detainees that we interviewed in 2019, a smaller proportion of the detainees we spoke to in 2022 believed the Department is doing a good job or has improved its performance. A greater proportion of those interviewed in 2022 believed the BPD is not effective at stopping crime and that it polices their neighborhood in an unprofessional manner. Fewer detainees sensed that relations between the police and their community are positive or improving. Fewer said they would call the police to report a crime if they were threatened with violence and fewer were satisfied with their experience of arrest. Detainees in 2022 also reported feeling less respect from the police than those we interviewed in 2019; they expressed less confidence in systems of accountability for police misconduct and more concern about the equal treatment of people from different racial and ethnic groups.

¹ Paragraph 25 of the Consent Decree stipulates that the BPD "will analyze the results of the survey and use this analysis to modify and improve policies, training, and practices as needed."

² The sample for this analysis is smaller than in the first report in 2019, just before the onset of COVID, when we interviewed 70 detainees. One consequence of the smaller sample size that requires emphasis here is that the number of detainees who identified as White (6) is too small for reliably calculating percentages within this group and for precise comparisons between White and Black respondents' perceptions and experiences of the police. We therefore aggregate their responses in this report and where relevant focus on the responses of detainees who identified as Black or African American. The demographic profile of the detainees we interviewed is described in detail in Appendix 1 to this report.

³ The interview protocol containing the questions we posed appears in Appendix 2.

Most of the individuals we spoke with also expressed ideas about how to improve policing. Several said they wished the police were more “active in the community,” for instance by ending the operation of open-air drug markets, interacting with residents in a more personable manner (and not merely in the course of a law enforcement encounter), and making greater efforts to stop retaliatory violence, especially homicides. Some detainees thought the police should do more to help residents solve the problems that give rise to conflicts, particularly in domestic settings. Many detainees believed the police could be more considerate and less bureaucratic in their communications with residents, for example, by explaining in simple terms the reasons for the arrest, the probable charges, and the likely consequences of custody. A few thought the Commissioner of Police could reduce the strain on officers and improve relations with residents through more humane training programs and returning to the original “vocation” of a police officer.

Interpreting these findings

The more negative views of the BPD among the cohort of people we spoke to in 2022 could have several explanations, including changes in the social and political environment between October of 2019 and November 2022, such as the pandemic, which caused social isolation, debilitating illness, and, according to the CDC, more than 8000 “excess deaths” in Baltimore in 2020 alone. Although the individuals we spoke with rarely mentioned the pandemic, the morbidity and mortality rates from Covid were highest in poor and minority neighborhoods, which might have depressed people’s sense of security and changed the way they think about policing.

National events could have shaped detainees’ perceptions of the BPD, too. For instance, the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020 was followed by protests in Baltimore as well as many other cities and coincided with a greater sense of insecurity in minority neighborhoods and a decrease in “confidence” in local police, according to Gallup polls.⁴ Unfortunately, none of the national surveys we reviewed nor any local research we studied deciphered whether any of these or other events influenced detainees’ perceptions of the police in Baltimore, nor whether they improved or worsened their sense of the relative quality of policing in the city.⁵ Our interviews were not designed register the repercussions of national events in Baltimore, but it is worth emphasizing here that few detainees explicitly mentioned incidents beyond city limits.⁶

Detainees’ perceptions of the BPD also could have been affected by operational changes in policing or by changes in patterns in violent and nonviolent crime across the city of Baltimore. This may include the introduction of body worn cameras, a contraction in the number of encounters with the police, or a decrease in violent and property crime, a trend that was reversed in 2022 for most offenses other than homicide, or many other changes in the way the BPD does its work.

⁴ See, for example, Jeffrey Jones, “Confidence in US Institutions Down; Average at New Low,” *Gallup*, July 5, 2022, available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/394283/confidence-institutions-down-average-new-low.aspx>

⁵ See the account of the Washington Post-ABC poll on public perceptions of the police in early 2023, which reports that White residents are four times more likely than Black residents of the United States to believe “the police treat White and Black people equally,” in Mark Berman and Scott Clement, “Confidence in Police Drops After Tyre Nichols beating,” *Washington Post*, February 3, 2023, available at: [Post-ABC poll: Confidence in police drops after Tyre Nichols beating - The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inside-police/post-abc-poll-confidence-in-police-drops-after-tyre-nichols-beating-the-washington-post/)

⁶ Only one person we interviewed mentioned George Floyd, whereas 10 referred to Freddy Gray.

Slight differences in the demographic composition of the people we spoke to might explain some of the greater negativity we found in 2022, although this seems unlikely. In 2022, 74 percent of the people we interviewed identified as Black or African American, compared to 80 percent in 2019. One third of detainees we spoke to in 2022 were less than 25 years old, compared to one quarter in 2019, and the average age of detainees in 2022 was 32 years, compared to 33.5 in 2019.

Finally, many of the detainees we spoke to in 2022 were interviewed immediately after their booking, whereas all the detainees we interviewed in 2019 had spent at least a few hours in a holding cell. Perhaps the additional time in detention moderated the views of the police among people we interviewed in 2019. Maybe the smaller amount of time between the incident of the arrest and our interviews in 2022 kept detainees' minds on the police rather than the detention facility.

There is no way with the data at our disposition can conclusively affirm or refute any of these conjectures about the reasons for differences in the views of detainees in 2019 and 2022. Nor was the research for this report designed to identify a cause or assign responsibility for differences in detainee perceptions of the police over time.⁷ Instead, its purpose was to register sentiment about policing among a group of people who have intense and often recurring interactions with the police.

Understanding these perceptions may have special value for the BPD as it fulfills the requirements of the consent decree. Unlike many residents who participate in community-wide surveys, all arrested detainees have had a recent encounter with the police and can anchor their appraisals in a specific experience. Moreover, their views might have special weight when measuring the reputation, performance, and character of social support for the Department. Only a few detainees initiated the contact with the police (for example, by calling to resolve a domestic dispute), and impressions from involuntary contacts might have an outsized impact on overall public perceptions of the police department if detainees relay their experiences with others.

To make sense of these findings, the Baltimore police department might need to first define its own expectations of what the estimation of policing among detainees should or could be – how positive or negative, and how different from the perceptions of residents who have no contact with the police or only a voluntary contact, such as by calling for urgent assistance. There is no national standard for gauging these views; the experiences of detainees do not figure prominently in conventional appraisals of trust and confidence in the police in the United States. Nevertheless, the BPD could consider comparing the perceptions of detainees recorded here to the views of detainees in other cities whose police departments also operate under consent decrees. To aid that process, this report relays comparative information about perceptions of the police among detainees in Los Angeles and Cleveland at different stages of the implementation of consent decrees in those cities.

The BPD could use this report in several ways. One is by organizing discussions of the findings with community groups and local researchers to gain insight into how the different social setting today may have affected residents' expectations of policing. Another way is as a prompt for internal discussions with patrol officers and their supervisors about changes in the frequency and quality of their

⁷ A longitudinal study that interviewed the same individuals over time and tracked changes in their lives between interview periods might permit inferences of a causal nature when contrasted with views among a comparison group.

interactions with residents. For instance, the questions we posed to detainees could be added to the focus group sessions led by the Monitoring team; comparisons of the perceptions of the character or value of these encounters among officers and residents could help define areas of understanding and misunderstanding in relations with the public.⁸

A third way the BPD could use this report is as a supplement and complement to other sources of insight about change in policing under the consent decree in Baltimore. For instance, these findings can be compared to the results of surveys of local residents as well as administrative data about changes in policing and the city as a whole that the BPD routinely collects, such as the number and character of calls for police services, the amount of recorded crime, and the frequency and type of voluntary and involuntary interactions between officers and residents. In short, the perspectives of policing recorded here might be seen as thick accounts of people's experiences of policing that contextualize routine administrative data collected by the BPD. Used in concert, these different sources might place the BPD's assessment of community policing on a more robust empirical footing and help to explain, for example, changes in the incidence of calls for service or variance in the amount and character of cooperation with police investigations in different neighborhoods and divisions.⁹

⁸ See, for instance, "Feedback from the Field: A Summary of Focus Groups with BPD Officers in May 2022," Criminal Justice Institute Report to the Monitor, August 2022, available [here](#).

⁹ Many researchers today emphasize the value of drawing upon multiple sources of data and analyzing the broader landscape of public safety and social cohesion to understand relationships of trust and levels of confidence in policing. For example, combining administrative and survey data, recent research from Chicago demonstrates that calls to 911 are persistently higher in neighborhoods with higher rates of skepticism about law and the efficacy of policing, along with higher concentrations of African-American residents, and rates of incarceration and foreclosures. In contrast, calls to 911 are lower in those neighborhoods where people report more positive perceptions of the police, as measured through perceptions of trust and fairness. These counter-intuitive findings suggest that residents in marginalized neighborhoods seek protection from the police despite residing in a context of skepticism, an outcome that the researchers theorize as reflecting "desperate hope" for police assistance. See John Hagan, Bill McCarthy, Daniel Herda and Andrea Cann Chandrasekher, "Dual-process theory of racial isolation, legal cynicism, and reported crime." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115 (2018). In Cleveland, through interviews with arrested detainees and an analysis of police department data on calls for service, we found that among detainees calling the police is more specifically related to desires for city services and hope for official recognition by state authorities: see Holly Campeau, Ron Levi and Todd Foglesong, "Policing, recognition, and the bind of legal cynicism." *Social Problems* 68 (2021).

Table of Contents and Outline of the Report

This report sorts detainees' responses to our interview questions into three categories, one focusing on *perceptions* of police performance, a second that concentrates on *relations* between residents and officers, and a third that highlights views about the *future* of policing in Baltimore.

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Appendix 1: Methodology and Sample

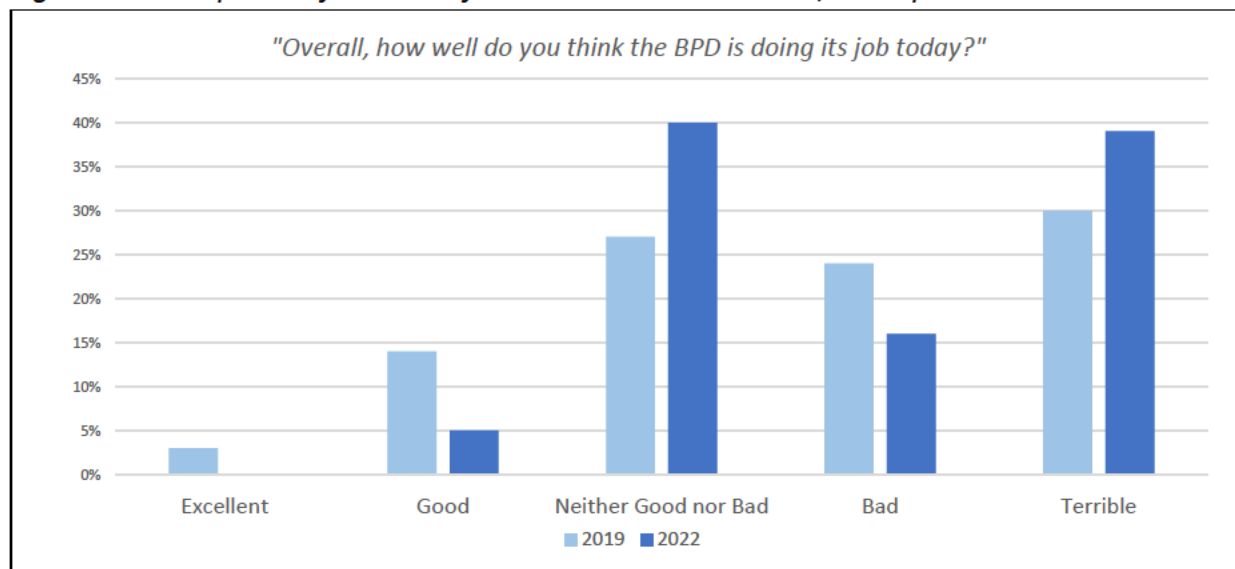
Appendix 2: Interview Protocol

1. Perceptions of Police Performance

Perceptions of police performance among detainees were more negative in 2022 than 2019. There was also more ambivalence about the police, with 40 percent of respondents indicating that policing in Baltimore was “neither good nor bad,” compared with just over 25 percent of detainees who felt that way in 2019.

As Figure 1 shows, no detainee we interviewed in 2022 thought the police were doing an “excellent” job, whereas in 2019 two detainees (3%) believed the police were then doing an excellent job. Only 5 percent of detainees believed the BPD was doing a “good” job in 2022, compared to 14 percent in 2019. Negative perceptions of police performance also were more intense in 2022: although a smaller percentage of respondents reported the BPD as doing a “bad” job, 38 percent of detainees said the police are doing a “terrible” job, compared to 30 percent three years ago.

Figure 1. Perceptions of Police Performance in 2019 and 2022, all respondents



The higher quotient of negative sentiment about policing was pronounced among Black defendants; nearly half said the BPD was doing a “terrible job” in 2022, compared to just 30 percent in 2019. Detainees who identified as White were not significantly more negative about policing in 2022 than 2019.¹⁰ We cannot tell whether this result reflects a polarization of opinion about policing. The sample is too small to permit an inference about views among the population as a whole, and surveys from other cities show ambiguous results.¹¹

¹⁰ On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “terrible” and 1 being “excellent,” the average rating of the police among White detainees was identical in 2019 and 2022 (3.5). The average rating among detainees who identified as Black or African American deteriorated from 3.7 to 4.1.

¹¹ According to [a survey conducted for the New Orleans Crime Coalition](#) in June 2022, both Black and White residents in that city reported a sharp decline in “satisfaction” with the police, though nearly identical levels of dissatisfaction. Gallup, by contrast, reported an increase in “confidence” in policing among minority residents in

Some of the deterioration in detainee views about policing may reflect changes in expectations. For example, some of the detainees in 2019 who said, “I guess they alright” in response to our question about the quality of the job done by the BPD nonetheless rated performance as “good.” By contrast, some of the detainees in 2022 who expressed ambivalence about policing – for example, by shrugging their shoulders or hesitating before responding to the question – rated the police less favorably. One person who said the police were “neither good, nor bad” explained his rating this way: “‘cause, like, some of 'em do they job.” In other words, detainees in 2022 may have rated police more ambivalently because of heightened expectations: being “alright” may no longer be sufficient to see the BPD as “good,” but instead as “neither good nor bad.”

A smaller proportion of detainees in 2022 referred to their own arrest when explaining negative views of police performance. Nevertheless, this specific experience influenced several people’s views. For instance, a few detainees expressed dismay at the way arrest warrants were served: one detainee said that in his case the officer gained entry into the house by deception, causing the detainee to believe it was all a misunderstanding that “could be cleared up;” another said so many officers entered the house that his family was scared and even “traumatized.” One detainee was upset by having tasers pointed at him through a car window, and another said his car was searched for contraband when officers said they smelled marijuana when it was in fact a perfumed cigarillo. Other detainees felt harassed by the police. For example, when asked why he thought the police were doing a “terrible job,” one detainee told us:

Cause they, I feel like they worry about the wrong things. Like, there's people they like come to my house for, uh, a violation of probation. What y'all got doing? There's people out here killing people every day, all day, and y'all ain't even chasing them down. I got this one police officer. When I go into a neighborhood, bro, he literally pulls up on me, said my whole name, and he be like, 'you getting in any trouble today?' And like, 'what you doing here?' He'll drop out on me, pull my hoodie up, all that like, yeah. And 'you, bro, walk up, walk.' I'll be around a group of people. He'll pull out and be like, yeah. So what's up with that? Like, "what you, what you down here for? You, you working for them or what?" Yeah, like, it's just like, it's crazy. Like, I feel like they just be right about the wrong things.

Some of the complaints that the police were focusing on the “wrong things” could have stemmed from self-interest or a desire to deflect attention from the offense for which the arrested individuals were taken into custody. For example, one detainee who was arrested for possession of marijuana was disappointed that “they [are] focused more and stuff like weed

2021, following a sharp decline after the murder of George Floyd. See Jeffrey Jones, “In US, Black Confidence in Police Recovers from Low in 2020,” July 24, 2021, available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/352304/black-confidence-police-recovers-2020-low.aspx> To our knowledge, no researcher in this field has directly investigated the relationship between “confidence,” “satisfaction,” and “trust,” although these words are sometimes used interchangeably. See for example, Jon Jackson and Ben Bradford, “What is trust and confidence in policing,” *Policing*, 4/3 (2010).

and stuff. Like there's people really out there killing people. But y'all focused on weed, right?" Even as the timing of the interviews might reasonably have fostered such thinking, most of the consternation about policing in Baltimore was not expressed in personal terms. Instead, much of the conveyed concerns focused on the role and effects of crime in the community. For example, one person said simply and broadly: "They need to do better; there's a lot more crime and drugs in the city." Another person put it more dramatically:

There are criminals out here that's robbing, that's killing and doing all of this, this craziness. Okay? The shootings, every other day there's 300 something murders in Baltimore. Right? But you just standing there, pulling somebody over for a traffic violation or something. I mean, it just don't make sense.

Several detainees believe police are indifferent to the problems of crime and violence that they find salient in their neighborhoods. For example, one person claimed the police were simply ignoring problems with drugs: "Um, it's just wide open out there today with the open edge drug market. They're sitting there watching people selling, watching people shoot up and doing nothing." Two people said that unless the prospect of violence was involved the police don't do anything about crime, even if that crime seemed to matter to residents.

I see them just standing around pretty much just watching crime rather than dealing with the crime. They, they just watch, they, they're sitting there watching it, make sure that no violent activities is on rather than deal with the crime itself.

You know, they're, they're on their post to make sure nobody gets shot. That's what they're there for. They, they don't care if people are selling drugs or they don't care if you know you're out there getting high. They're not active in the community, they're not talking to the neighborhood.

A few people said the police were not idle but, instead, were both over-active and indifferent to the people and problems causing crime. "They locking the wrong people up for the wrong reasons," one person said, "and not helping the people that needs their help." Another said: "They're not doing their job at all. They, they just looking for a reason to lock somebody up, that's like, they really just looking for a reason to lock them up."

One person told us he thought the police had a process for making arrests that targeted racial groups – and that this process was designed to perpetuate a sense of control and authority:

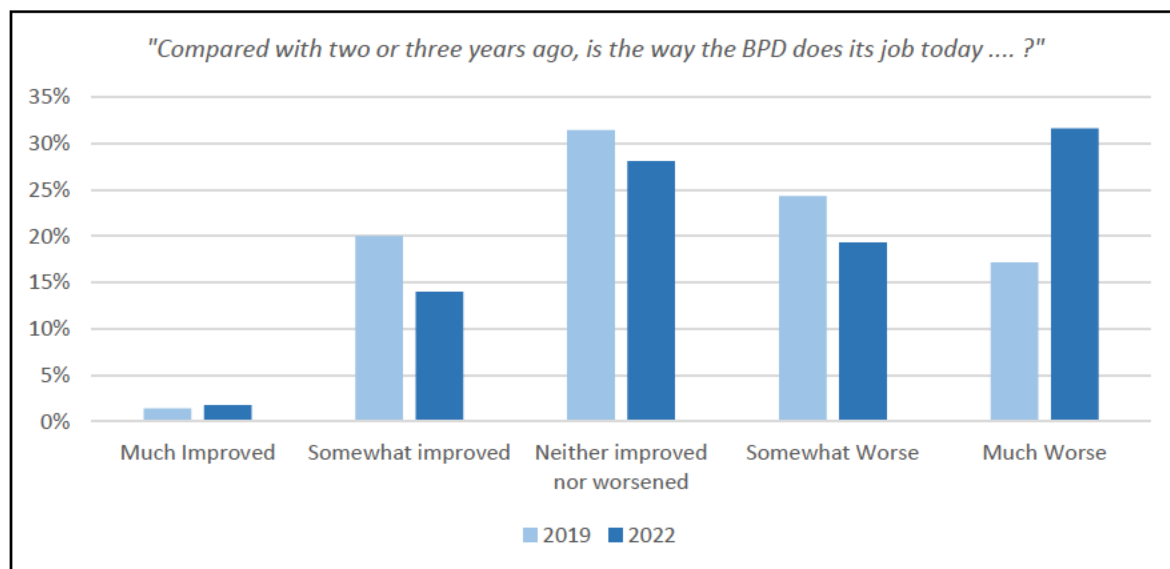
I feel like they are designed to target, you know, African Americans only due to the fact that through history a lot of African Americans don't know the Constitution of the United States. So it's better to target them because, and then it's, it's not even just the fact that they don't, they're not aware of their rights, but they also don't have the funds in case they get locked up. So when, what they do is they target us and they might lock us up for something that we, you know, something they might assume that we did or something they might have involved us or give something extra, and they

give us a hundred charges and then basically make us, make us feel like they doing us a favor by give, by giving us the smallest one.

Change Over Time

Detainees we spoke to in 2022 reported worse perceptions of the trajectory of change in policing than in our last round of interviews. As Figure 2 shows, a smaller portion of detainees in 2022 believed there had been improvements in policing, and nearly a third of the people we interviewed in 2022 thought the police were doing a “much worse” compared with two or three years ago. This is twice the share that believed so in 2019, which suggests that detainees do not sense many positive changes in policing (whether due to an increase in expectations or to a change in police performance).

Figure 2. Perceptions of Change in Police Performance, 2019 vs 2022



None of the eight detainees who believed that policing had “somewhat improved” pointed to specific changes, and only one person who told us that policing was “getting a bit better” in ventured a reason for this improvement. “Because at the end of the day,” he said, “they see where they’re making their faults and their mistakes.”

In 2019, a few detainees commended the presence of body worn cameras in policing, portraying them as an accountability device. This year, new technology in policing was not portrayed positively. For instance, one person who said there had been no change in policing remarked on the use of a camera in the car during his arrest. Referring to the officer, the detainee said; “He told me to stand in front of the car and the car's gonna take a picture.” When we asked if the use of such technology had improved policing, he replied:

Interviewee: Nah, I think they's got more technology against us and I don't really think they on the justice side of it.

Interviewer: So, is this technology for the better or for the worse?

Interviewee: It's not for the better, man. It's also for the sake of their protection, but it's really just for them, you know, to catch us. That's all they doing. I don't feel like the police give no justice. Like I feel like they only into discipline. They just want discipline.

This view echoes our findings above: detainees in 2022 identified these technological changes as part of a broader disconnect between police and community needs, and part of an effort by police to control residents rather than to listen to them and assist with their needs.

Some detainees were dismayed by what they found to be an absence of improvements in policing, suggesting that they expected but did not notice change occurring. One expressed surprise: "Today is like 2022 and I'm still living the same life in 2019, and 2018," he declaimed, adding: "'Cause if they would change, the problems would be solved, and they wouldn't be bigger than what it is." Other detainees similarly detected little change, yet in contrast were not surprised by the stasis and sounded despondent. One person said: "it's like they clearly are used to doing what they do, how they do it, and have no intentions on changing."

Many detainees told us they believed the police had "withdrawn" and disengaged from their community and had abdicated responsibility for stopping crime and violence. One said:

They ain't getting out the goddamn car to break up shit. They wait till it's over with before they step out there. That's fine. People can be getting beat with bats and Billy clubs, but the police sitting right here. Seeing it happened. And what is they doing? Nothing. They sitting in the car, and when it's all said and done then they get out.

A few detainees proposed explanations for the apparent withdrawal, including fear. "Like right now," one person said, "it's like they have to watch they back also because a lot of police officer getting killed here, you know, so it's like a 50 50 chance like the police trying to protect themselves but they're also trying to protect us and then you have some that just don't care. Another detainee said more directly: "Because they scared for they self," before adding: "but we scared of them, too, because they don't do shit."

Interviewer: So, why are they more scared today?

Interviewee: Because of Freddy Gray. Fred Gray incident.

Interviewer: You mean they're afraid of getting in trouble?

Interviewee: They pretty afraid of getting in trouble, and losing they job. So they just don't end up being with the criminals unless you selling drugs or something like that.

We asked several detainees, "Why do you think that the police aren't policing the drug markets and stopping crime?" One told us:

Interviewee: Um, I they think they got comfortable, got too comfortable.

Interviewer: What do you think made them become so comfortable?

Interviewee: Um, I think the state's attorney without prosecuting the low level crimes, you know, they kind of just felt like why we want to go out.

Several detainees said that crime was increasing because of police disengagement. With great frustration, one said his car was repeatedly vandalized, despite reporting several incidents to the police and asking for help. The officers, he said, merely told him to work with the insurance companies. He found the police to be out of touch: and he believed the failure of the police to help him was responsible for further crime:

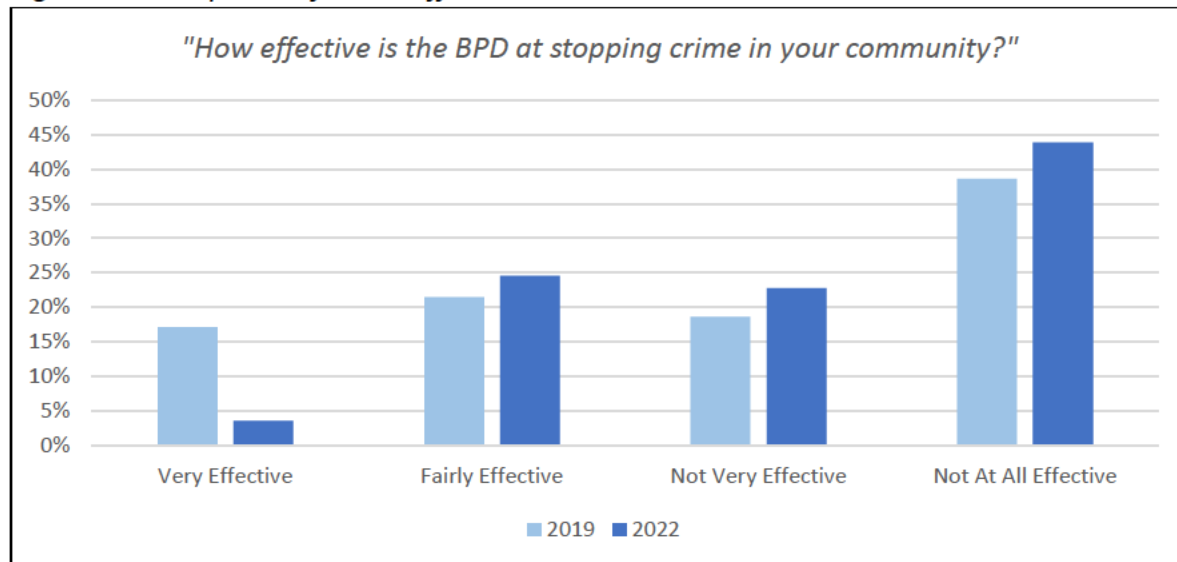
Now, because the police didn't do their job and I'm tired of getting my vehicle vandalized, now my mentors are taking it into my own hands. Cause that's the only way it's gonna stop because y'all ain't stop it. So I go retaliating and do something to them. Next thing you know, their family members come back and do something to me. And now it's just back and forth shooting and killing. So, and the police act like they don't know what's going on. It's because y'all not doing y'all job to prevent these things from happening in the beginning.

Police Effectiveness and Crime Control

Detainees who we interviewed in 2022 were more likely to believe BPD was ineffective at controlling crime in their community than those we interviewed in 2019. This is also consonant with the growth in ambivalence and perceptions of police being out of touch with community needs. As Figure 3 (next page) shows, the largest change is that just 3 percent of detainees in 2022 thought the police were “very effective” at stopping crime in their community, compared to 17 percent of detainees in 2019. The rest is comparatively stable, if a little more negative. Overall, 77 percent of detainees in 2022 thought the police were either not very effective or not at all effective in stopping crime in their community, compared with 58 percent in 2019.¹²

¹² Responses to specific questions tend to be more moderate to general questions in most public opinion surveys about policing in the United States. For instance, in 2021 three quarters of residents in the US believed that crime was “getting worse” in the country as a whole, while just 38 percent of respondents said it was a big problem in their area. See Lydia Saad, “Local Crime Deemed Worse This Year By Americans,” Gallup News, November 10, 2021, available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/357107/local-crime-deemed-worse-year-americans.aspx>

Figure 3. Perceptions of Police Effectiveness



One of the detainees who said the police were “fairly effective” attributed this to the intensity of law enforcement.

Interviewee: Cause they taking everybody down. They got a lot of people in. They taking everybody down. Like I know a lot of people in.

Interviewer: And do you think that crime decreases if everybody is taken in?

Interviewee: No, because as you locking people up, more people start to do the crime. So you just lock three people up for killing people then that same night three people just killed somebody.

Most detainees said they “rarely see” police in their neighborhoods, that police are slow to respond to calls for service, and that police are hesitant to intervene when violence occurs. Some were dismissive of police efforts to stop crime in their community. For example, one person said: “They got a little, they got a little Facebook page that’s better than police. Something can happen street and you and I can watch it on Facebook before the police get there.” Another said:

You can just feel when like something about to go wrong and it's like, okay. So for cops to just be always late for the subject, it's like, oh, you guys kind of wanted this to happen when you could avoided it in the first place.

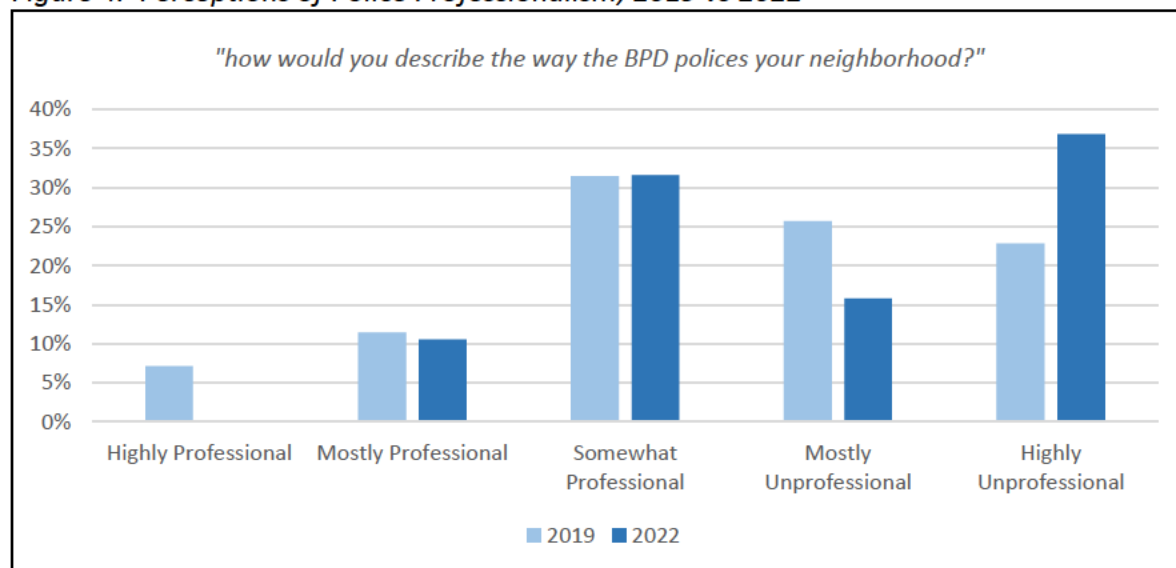
When we asked why the police are not effective at stopping crime, several people said the police were “scared.” One person said bluntly: “Because they don't want to get shot and hurt.” Another said: “They want to show to an alleged gun charge, but when motherfucker is out here shooting this shit, y'all scarce, y'all running away and hide.” Another detainee proposed a different explanation, however.

I think they, they, they be so caught up in a hype of people who actually got something going for theyself, or caught up with trying to find themselves at their lowest moments and stuff like that. Like a rapper, somebody so caught up with being that person. They don't even recognize it.

Professionalism

Perceptions of professionalism in policing in Baltimore were also worse in 2022 than 2019. As Figure 4 shows, the modal response to our question about professionalism was “highly unprofessional,” with over half of all detainees described the police as “mostly” or “highly” unprofessional in 2022. No detainee said the police were “highly professional” in 2022, whereas ten people said so in 2019.

Figure 4. Perceptions of Police Professionalism, 2019 vs 2022



Two people who said the police were “somewhat professional” described professionalism in minimalist and mainly negative terms, mentioning things the police must avoid doing. “Just doing they job, and not bothering people for no reason,” one person explained. Another person said professionalism was “doing what they supposed to do. You see what I'm saying? Not doing nothing crooked, nothing funny.”

Here too, we see a similar pattern. A few detainees who told us the police were “mostly unprofessional” said police officers hadn’t informed them of their rights: yet their complaint wasn’t so much about officers breaking the law as *not communicating with defendants*. For example, one person who said the police were “highly unprofessional” explained what that word meant: “Locking someone up and not telling 'em they rights. They said ‘you gonna find out once you get charged.’” Another detainee who said the failure to listen and communicate with detainees was the reason innocent people were in detention together with “people who deserve” to be in jail.

Like I said, I know people upstairs that are innocent, and I know there are people upstairs who deserve to be up there. But, like, the police gotta get better at they job. This job determines people's lives. Like you can sit here forever, and some people don't even know why they here. Why, I mean, how can you not know? You should be able to tell somebody why they're being detained.

Several people arrested for domestic violence said the police weren't listening to what they perceive as both sides of the story. One person complained that "Right now I'm arrested for me calling the police on my girl and I still get arrested. That is bad for business ... They always take the men first." One person who believed the police were "much less professional today, still" said he had been arrested for violating a protective order against contacting his cousin because the police relied on "hearsay" rather than sorting the situation out "on they own." Another person arrested for auto theft complained the police failed to find out who owned the car. "They could've investigated," he said. "They could've investigated, which they didn't. They came, got a report from us, got the VIN numbers, put it in the system and that was it. That's all they care about is getting numbers.

Echoing this sentiment, several people believed the police were inert, literally idling in their cars rather than out preventing problems or solving conflicts. One person said: "Yeah, they just sitting in their cars. You see them they just sit right there." Another man who said the police had done "a good job" during his arrest for domestic violence, believed the police were doing an "okay job" in the city overall, and was "satisfied" with this arrest nevertheless told us: "Most of the time the police just sit in their cars. But I guess they are professional sitting in their cars."

Many detainees believed the police were indifferent to the situations in which they intervened, the methods used to stop conflicts, and their consequences for detainees. "They don't care as long as they got money," one person said. Another person said: "Honestly, it's from their lack of responding to the necessity, whatever that necessity could be, they'll either do the opposite or nothing at all. Which is completely useless." Yet another said:

They're more worried about catching people and taking them to the jails than how you're going to catch 'em. Or why are you are catching them. They just, know, chase that person down and bring them back and get whatever they can out of them. It's all about numbers. Why you think we got the highest numbers [of prisoners] in the world?

One detainee said that both indifference and a fear of the consequences of interfering in violent situations were at play, depending on the type of officer involved.

You have certain police officers that would be like, oh, I don't want to do this or handle that situation because of, like, the Freddie Gray stuff. And then you have other police that feel like, whatever. So, it's, it's definitely up in the air. I feel like none of 'em are really attempting to really do their jobs, right or wrong.

A few people believed the police were bureaucratic and impersonal in the way they did their job. They could “be more open, be more human, more than a robot,” one person told us. Another said the vocation of an officer required the display of care and protection of everyone, including people who break the law.

I'm already like, facing charges, and, granted, you might not understand, or you might feel like seeing as though I was already charged with something or whatever, that you feel how you feel. But as a police officer, you still should protect everybody, because, I haven't been convicted of anything, so they haven't proved anything, let alone been able to really say, okay, this is you as a person. It's like, you as a police officer should have handled me as a person, and not as the words on the paper.

Another detainee believed the problem wasn't merely that “bad people” were employed in the police department but that a concern for justice and community was missing in police work.

It's all, like, bad, but not just bad, it's all fucked up. It really is. Like for sure they need to hire somebody who's just strictly about justice. Some people -- they just wanna lock 'em up just so they can hang up and take 'em to jail, and go home. No, you gotta really be about justice [in policing] and it's not about that to them. People, families, lives, all that rely on these people hands and they don't care. I don't know if they been taking that seriously or not.

A woman who had been arrested for fighting with her neighbor after a period of repeated altercations said the police officers didn't help her prevent the escalation of the problem. Because the police had been “highly unprofessional,” she said she was forced to seek a peace bond on her own initiative. She complained: “You know, don't make me a number one goal as somebody to take to jail, you know, you gotta help the situation.”

They went on to tell me that if the girl didn't commit a crime, that basically it was nothing I could do, instead of telling me like, you know, there's ways to go around this, you could get a peace order, this is what you would need. He didn't do any of that stuff. I essentially wrote to the commissioner's office and found that out on my own.

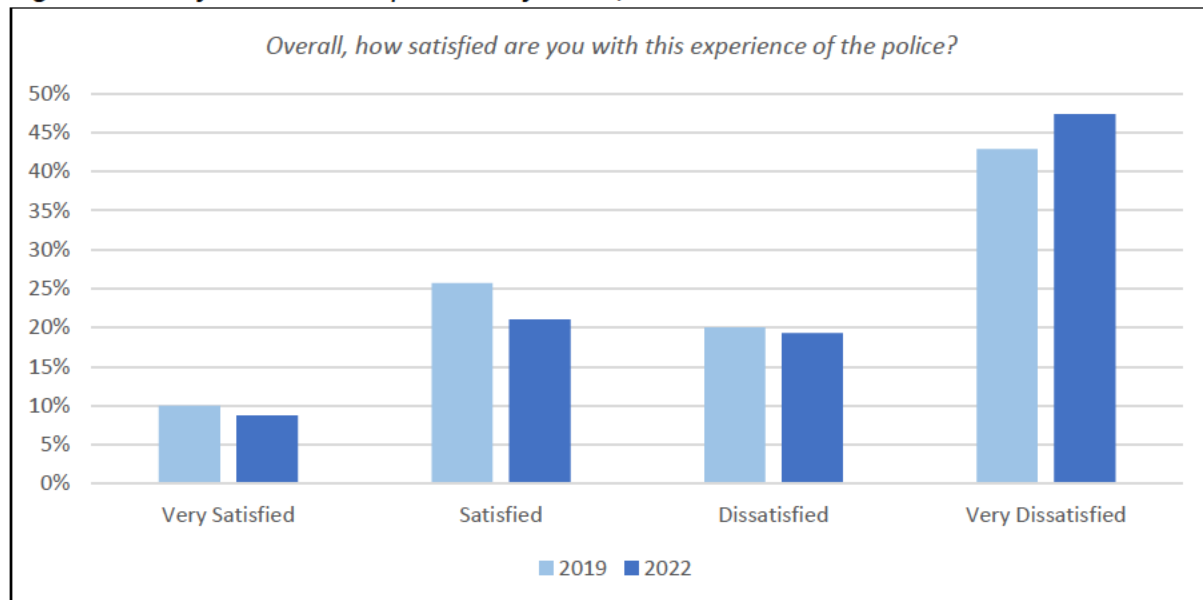
A person in a similar situation said the same thing: “Do you know how infuriating it was to have an officer tell you there nothing they can do to keep somebody outside of your house? So frustrating. Like they literally told, they said it's nothing.”

Satisfaction with the Experience of Arrest

Detainees reported greater dissatisfaction with the experience of their arrest in 2022 compared with those we interviewed in 2019. As Figure 5 (next page) shows, nearly 50 percent of detainees reported being “very dissatisfied” with their arrest in 2022, compared to 43 percent in 2019. Dissatisfaction was greater among Black detainees than White, with over half of detainees who identified as Black or African Americans reporting being “very dissatisfied” with the arrest,

compared to 42 percent of Whites. All detainees who said they were “very satisfied” were Black.¹³

Figure 5. Satisfaction with experience of arrest, 2019 vs 2022



One detainee was effusive about the police when explaining why he was so satisfied.

Yes, ma'am. I'm very satisfied, yes ma'am. Very happy. Yes ma'am. Perfect. That they treated me with respect. They, they gave me time to get myself together. So patience. And they helped me find, they helped me find my, my phone. They helped me. And they, they was just real gentlemen. Real nice policemen. All, all three of them.

Detainees who were dissatisfied with their arrest, by contrast, did not refer to discourtesy or impatience and instead made two types of complaints. For instance, many detainees complained the arresting officers did not communicate or explain their actions and the reason for their arrest. Several said their “rights” had been trampled, though none mentioned a Miranda warning or access to counsel. Instead, it was a perceived right to know what was happening and would happen. One person said “they didn't tell me what I was being stopped for. They didn't tell me what I was doing wrong. Another person said:

He pulled up, just grabbed, pulled up, just didn't say nothing, I'm asking him 'why y'all arrested me? Why y'all detained me?' He says: 'You'll find out once you get down to jail.'

¹³ These shifts in levels of satisfaction are relatively small over this three year window of time, and the sample is also small. yet are congruent with the broad and more marked pattern across several of the interview questions we asked, whether measuring satisfaction with their arrest, perceptions of police professionalism, police effectiveness, or police performance. The concerns expressed here, therefore, may offer insights about the police department's role in the city and reputation as a whole, beyond experiences with individual officers.

A second complaint was about the aggression that preceded and followed their arrest, though no one specifically alleged excessive force in these encounters. For example, one person who said he was arrested for “trespassing” and ran from the police complained:

I'm dissatisfied only because they thought that shit was a gang. Like, they thought it was a gang. They like, “Hey boys.” They so happy. Like, they so happy to see us. They like, oh yeah, “hey boys, get down’! Trying to scare us. They got the guns with the flashlights. Like, oh my god. They was ready. They was ready for anything. They was ready for anything.

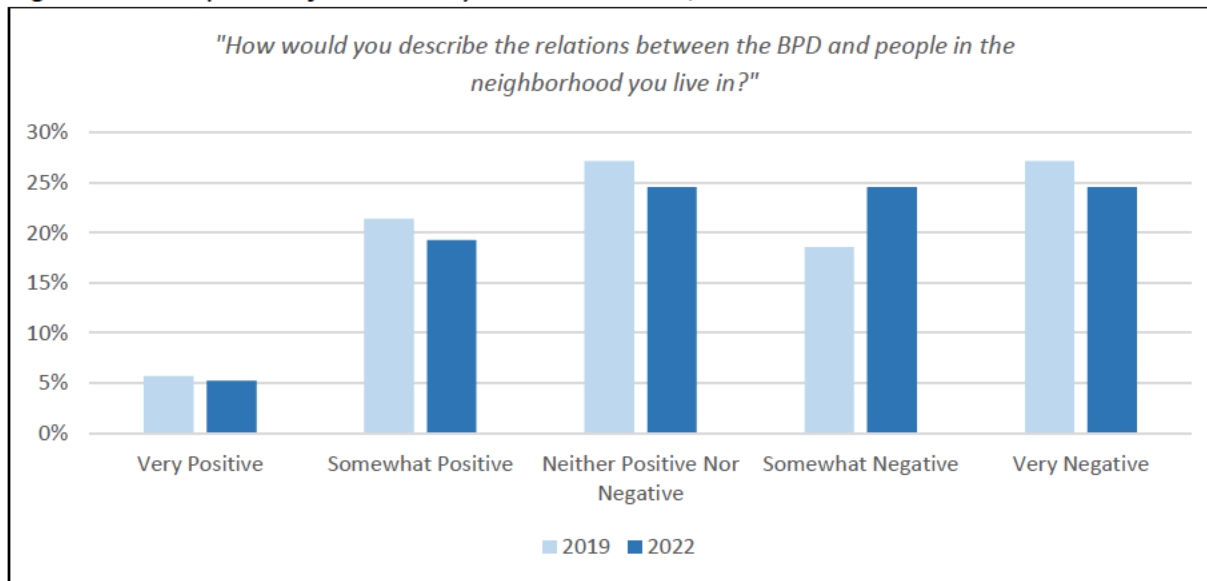
Another detainee said the police mocked him after his arrest, which also followed a chase.

I ain't gonna lie. They ain't do like, they ain't hit nobody physically or nothing like that. But the way they was talking, they was talking like they was hunting animals or something. Mm. Like yeah, they was laughing and all that, like I was scared cuz they was more into it. I was running, yeah. Like this is how I felt. They, they the predator and I'm the prey. They a lion and I'm a rabbit. I'm just running around in corners until I get caught and ate up.

2. Relations Between Police and the Community

Perceptions of the quality of relations between the BPD and people in the neighborhood where detainees live were slightly worse. As Figure 6 (next page) shows, half of the detainees we interviewed in 2022 said these relations were “somewhat” or “very” negative, compared to 46 percent the detainees we interviewed in 2019.¹⁴ Just under a quarter of detainees thought these relations were very or somewhat positive in 2022, whereas slightly over one quarter believed this was true in 2019. Beliefs about the deterioration of these relations were more pronounced among Black interviewees, 30 percent of whom had very or somewhat positive perceptions of these relations in 2019, compared to 22 percent in 2022. The proportion who thought that police-community relations were somewhat or very negative increased from 43 to 47 percent.

¹⁴ Recall that there was no overlap between the sample of detainees we interviewed in 2019 and 2022.

Figure 6. Perceptions of Community-Police Relations, 2019 vs 2022.

Several people said the type of the neighborhood they lived in determined the quality of relations with the police. “In a bad neighborhood,” one person said, “the police can’t do much; in a good neighborhood, the police aren’t really needed.” Another person said: “The people in my neighborhood are Black and old, and they trust them [the police].” By contrast, another detainee said his neighborhood was predominantly young and Black: “The police don’t like us. And the people don’t like the police.”

Indeed, most detainees spoke of some measure of social distance between police and community residents, and several attributed this to be responsible for greater frustration and fear during police-resident interactions. For example, some detainees said it was the identity of police as outsiders, people who were “not from the community,” as one person emphasized, that doomed relations. “If you ain’t a part of your community,” another person said, “then you ain’t even there.” Other detainees said officers’ lack of familiarity with residents fostered an aggressive posture in their encounters, which inevitably soured relations. One detainee told us:

The way they approach the scenes, by them not knowing what they walking into, they automatically feel like they have to be in defense mode. Okay? That puts other people at fear. And it's just they come off wrong. They, they make people uncomfortable. Okay? They make people not want to deal with 'em.

Another detainee thought the amount of “dialogue” had declined in recent years, intensifying the alienation of residents and causing officers to fear for their safety. He said:

A few years ago, they did more dialogue and all that, but it still was bad. And it's getting worse now. Because they're worried about their safety. Because a lot of people don't like police, so they're worried about their safety, which is somewhat understandable.

Many detainees described relations with the police as estrangement, or like an armistice that could be upended at any moment by the sudden instigation of police action. For example, one detainee who believed relations had improved said it was the result of mutual avoidance and implied that everything would be fine so long as there was no alteration in the status quo:

Cause people be trying to avoid 'em the best way they can. Okay? So, as long as you ain't doing nothing, ain't nobody that's gonna sit there and just disrespect the police officer. Nothing. Mind your own business. As long as they go about their business.

Two detainees who thought relations had deteriorated were less sanguine about the stalemate with the police, which was always fraught with potential violence.

Um, it's just, it's like the people just stopped wanting to talk to the police, you know, and the police not doing they job. If the police doing right, they I feel we wouldn't have that much of a problem and people would call the police, but you know, if I'm walking down the street and the police just harassing me for nothing, you know, I'm not going to call the police. ... It used to be different. I don't even see the kids out anymore. Like, it's like kids won't even be outside. Used to be hundred of us, me, all my friends outside. There's barely any kids now.

So, but like if you see 'em in the neighborhood and everything, they just be chilling. Like it don't be no real problems or nothing. Like a lot of 'em see me and know my face. Okay? And they very respectful and stuff like that. But then when just they get calls and stuff, it's just a whole different scenario. ..., but when it comes time for a call, ... Yeah, it comes time for a call. They're completely different.

A few detainees called upon a collective memory of police violence, indicating that the history of the use of lethal force by the police impaired relations with residents in the community. “They still shooting people,” said one person who believed relations had deteriorated, “so if they're seen as dangerous, people aren't gonna wanna talk to them.” Another person believed the police had become habituated to the use of force, even in situations that didn't warrant it, because the fear of the police among residents was matched by fear of residents among the police:

Because by so many police officers getting into so many altercations, they just feel as though like anybody can do anything to 'em. So they always on alert, okay? They always on alert. It's so quick to have tasers out, mace all that for, for the petty situations. Okay? For the petty situations.

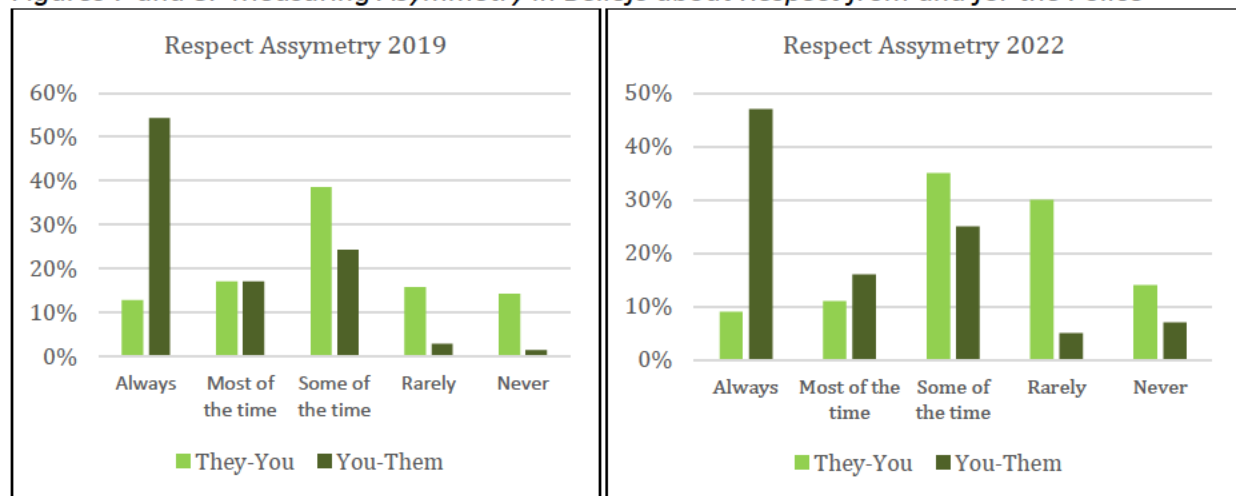
Respect

Detainees expressed a slight decline in respectful relations, saying they received respect from the police and offered it to them less often than what we encountered in 2022. For instance, 13 percent of detainees believed the police “always” treated them with respect in 2019, compared

to 9 percent in 2022. Just over half of detainees said they “always” treated police officers with respect in 2019, compared to slightly less than half in 2022.

At the same time, the degree of asymmetry in beliefs about giving and getting respect changed little from 2019 to 2022, as Figures 7 and 8 show, despite minor declines in the quantum of respect being given and received.

Figures 7 and 8. Measuring Asymmetry in Beliefs about Respect from and for the Police



One-fifth of detainees said the police respected them always or most of the time. One was especially pleased about her most recent interaction. “The ones that came and got me today, they was respectful, yes, they was. It was real sweet. They were real respectful to me.” Another person also reported being respected by the police over several encounters, though he wasn’t sure this would be the same for everyone. “Well, me personally, they treat me with respect, man. Yeah. But I can’t say for, you know, anybody else.”

Respecting the police sounded like a matter of principle for some people, although the maxims they invoked contained a hint of transaction and calculus. “I always respect them,” one person said, “because respect don’t cost you nothing in the world.” Another person emphasized the advantages of mutual respect: “They always respect me, and I always respect them. You get more with that sugar than you get with money.”

For a few detainees, respect for the police was rooted in the nature of police work. “I respect them because the work they do is kind of risky,” one person told us. This meant that respect for the police could plummet for detainees who thought the police weren’t doing a good job. For instance, one man who said he was always respected by the police nevertheless rarely respected BPD officers, “because I just don’t think things are getting done,” he explained.

Some detainees leaned on a trope about the conditionality of reciprocal respect, despite the imbalance in their own perceptions of how much respect they received and offered. Several people said simply: “you give what you get,” even though they said they always respected the

police while rarely receiving it. One person approached the trope and then made it sound as if the equilibrium depended more on residents than officers. “As long as you, you talk to them respectful and, and, and try to find out what's going on, they’ll respect you.”

For other detainees, whether they got and/or gave respect depended on the individual police officer, with respect requiring the officer to communicate effectively, display courtesy, and show restraint. “*Sometimes it depends on who the cop is,*” one person said, and then added:

Again, not all cops are bad cops. There’s just like those assholes who were like, like the last time I got arrested. And again, just like last time they didn’t articulate to me anything. They wanted to take me out of the house again as fast as they could.

A few people with experiences of the police in other cities marvelled at the difference in the way they were treated by officers, which exemplified respect in their eyes. One man who had been stopped in a car by police officers in a neighboring county told us: “But they were respectful. It's crazy how you really just had one jurisdiction away and they’re fucking, they, they treat you like gold.” Another person told a similar story, shocked by the decency of his treatment elsewhere.

Baltimore City is fucked up. In [another city] I was driving without nobody in the car on a learner's permit. So the police just wrote me a ticket for driving without supervision on my speed. I was only doing 15 over something like that. But in this city, Baltimore, I guarantee they, they would've probably impounded my vehicle, took me to jail.

If “respect” in this case was not ratcheting up the consequences of breaking the law, in other cases it was recognizing the differences in the status and power of people who are arrested and the people who arrest them. One person explained why respect must be conditional: “If they want me to respect them ‘cause they got a badge and a gun, then hey, respect me. Because again, I'm a civilian, you're a civil service.” Another person put it more plaintively: “Um, they don't, like, let you speak for yourself. Like at the end of the day, I know y'all the police and all that, but bro, I got a mouth too.”

For several detainees, the question about respect we posed caused them to think about what “side” they were on and talk about differences between “us and them.” For instance, one person who was puzzled by our question whether respect was reciprocal said: “You mean like between us and them?” Another detainee who thought there was no change in the amount of respect transacted in either direction portrayed the relationship in hierarchical terms.

I don't think they got more respect. I don't think they gained less respect. I mean, on our side, they're always gonna gain less respect, but you gotta think, just as we looking down on 'em, people looking up.

Several detainees made it plain that whether they respected the police was entirely dependent on first receiving respect from the police. One person said: “it's kind of like, if they're not giving

you respect, why would you give them respect? Another acknowledged treating officers with contempt but insisted it was part of the deal.

I ain't gonna lie. I ain't gonna lie. I probably done said a couple with disrespectful things, but I ain't going to disrespect you if I don't feel disrespect. I'll promise you that. So they made me feel some way and I, yeah, sure.

Some detainees said fear of the consequences of not giving respect forced them to be respectful. “I'm not gonna outta my way to be disrespectful to a cop,” one person said, “because I don't need any extra aggravation.” Another person explained the logic behind prudent politesse in great detail.

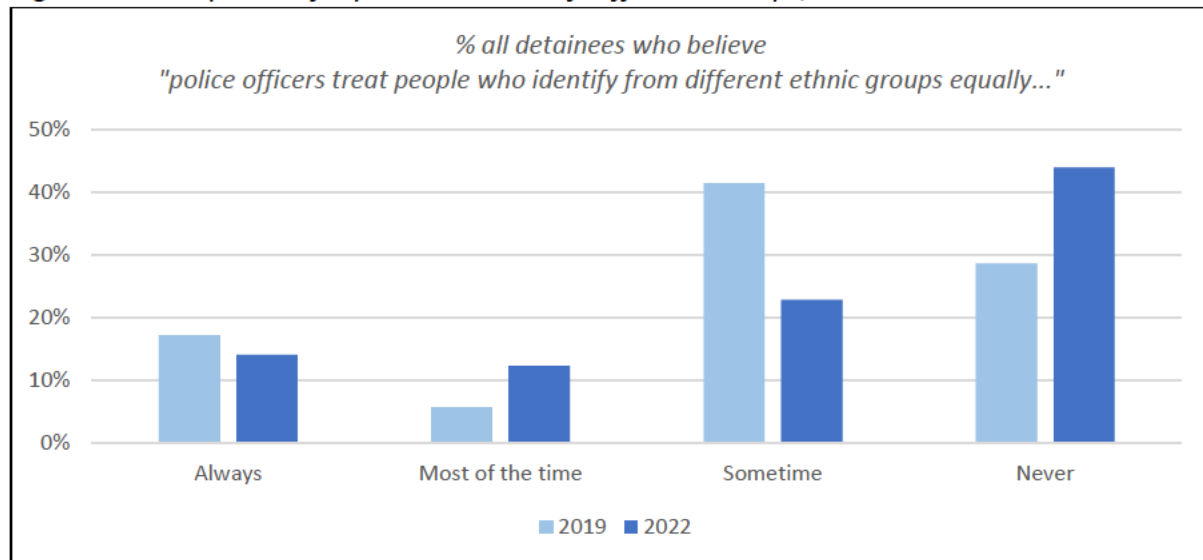
Because the thing is essentially, regardless of whether I agree with them or not, they still have power to do stuff to me that I can't just undo. So, it would serve me no purpose to be disgruntled. Um, even if I'm like emotional, it wouldn't help to be aggressive to them in any kind of way because they will use that to be aggressive to you. And it's crazy because the guys who locked me up this morning, I thank them for being pleasant. And that speaks volumes because if everybody was pleasant, it would just be, you know, second hand to just go through the process. But soon as when you get treated bad so much, when you do get treated decent or at least like calm and not aggressive, you, I have to thank them. Because it's already enough dealing with police and handcuffs and all that stuff anyway.

A few other detainees portrayed the prudence of demonstrating respect in starker terms. “I gotta always respect them,” one detainee said, “Cause again, I, I'm a Black man, I can't just be out here. I fear for my life, fear for life. I've had too many friends get killed by a goddamn dirty cops for no goddamn reason. Another person who expressed many misgivings about policing and nevertheless told us he always respected the police when we asked “why” said: “Because I don't want to die. And you can get locked up for no reason.”

Equal Treatment

As Figure 9 (next page) shows, roughly equal proportions of all respondents in 2019 and 2022 said the police treated people from different ethnic groups equally always or some of the time, but a larger fraction of detainees in 2022 thought the police “never” treat people from different groups equally.¹⁵ Though we interviewed few White detainees, White respondents were more negative than Black respondents in response to this question: four of the six detainees who identified as White (66%) believed the police “never” treat people of different groups equally, compared to 19 of the 42 Black detainees (45%).

¹⁵ Our interview protocol included questions about perceptions of equal treatment by the police regardless of gender and sexual orientation, but too few of the detainees we spoke to gave confident responses to these questions for us to analyze the responses. In 2022, 40 percent of detainees said they “didn't know” in response to both questions, compared to 10 percent in 2019.

Figure 9. Perceptions of Equal Treatment of Different Groups, 2019 vs 2022

A few detainees who said the police treat people equally regardless of race and ethnicity “some of the time” told us that it depended on the officer. For example, one person said: “listen to me. Some polices, they, some of 'em is racist and some of 'em not.” Another person said the same thing almost apologetically. “It depends on the officer; it really depends on the individual officer. I don’t blame them, because he might have had a bad day, or someone is resisting.”

One person said it depended on the character of neighborhood in which people lived rather than the disposition of the individual police officer.

I feel like they have more positive relationship [with White people] because -- not to bring race into it, but I live in an all White area, so they deal with White people differently than Black people. Which I think is wrong, but I think that's the case.

But more detainees thought unequal treatment was not contingent on social circumstances or the traits of individual officers, and many were scathing in response to this question. One person said: “Ah, no. No, no, no. They're definitely a racist squad. Oh my god.” When we asked a White detainee who initially said the police “almost never” treat people the same to clarify whether this meant “never” or “some of the time,” he replied: “No, not never. Me and you. We walk out on, on, on the drug charge. Somebody else. They're gonna get charged.” Another person put it starkly. “If you not White and if you're not a female then they don't give a fuck about you.”

One detainee suggested it was a mystery why unequal treatment was the norm:

Interviewer: So they're treating Black people differently than White people?
Interviewee: Not even, but Black people, the whole races, like they're all different.
Interviewer: Why do you think that is?
Interviewee: Good question.

Another believed that the police felt threatened by Black and African American residents.

Interviewee: They treat Black people so much worse. So much worse.

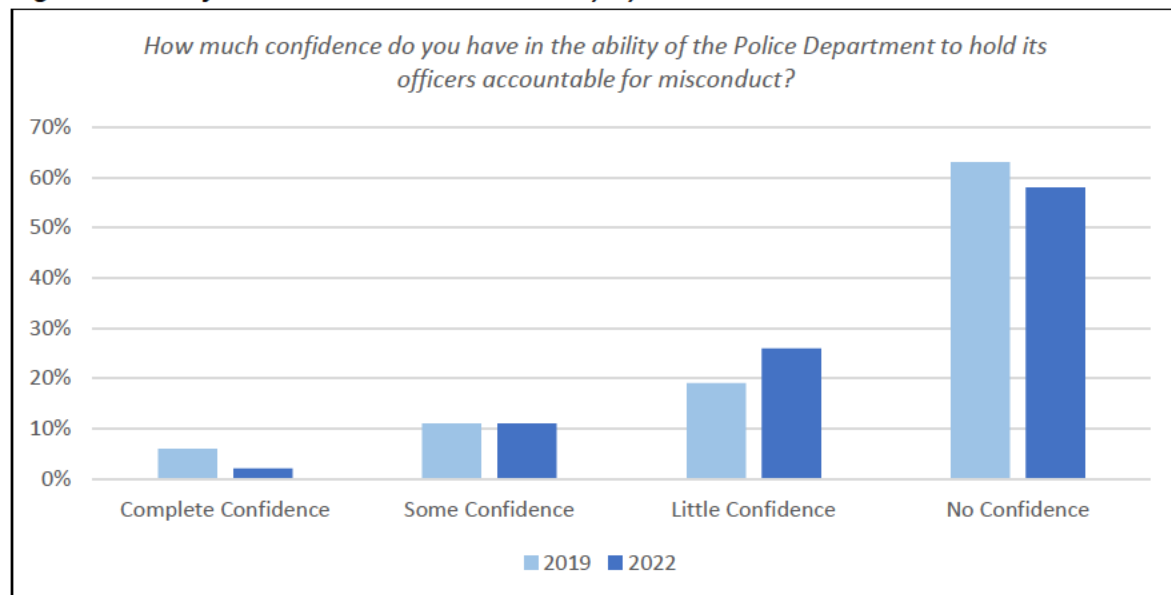
Interviewer: Why is that?

Interviewee: Because they just feel like we're a threat.

Confidence in Police Accountability

Detainees expressed little confidence in the ability of the police department to hold officers responsible for misconduct in both years. As Figure 10 shows, the proportion who had “no confidence” declined slightly from 63 percent of detainees in 2019 to 58 percent in 2022, but so did the percentage of those reporting complete confidence.

Figure 10. Confidence in Police Accountability Systems



No detainee we spoke to this year described a direct experience or personal knowledge of the way accountability for misconduct operates in Baltimore. One person said paradoxically that he had “no confidence at all” precisely because many officers recently had been disciplined for misconduct: “We got many people, many officers have been held accountable in this city in the past year,” he said. “And think about how many have probably done something in the next year. Shit's not right.”

Detainees had divergent predictions of what would happen after officer misconduct. One person, for example, said “I think they're gonna be showing a lot more accountability now, because of the recent events, you know, and what's going on in the world. ... [If] the social media or the media show portrays how the police officers to be, [then] I guess they would take that in consideration.” Others thought the opposite result was more likely: “it's like nobody

gets nothing. Like we, if we do a crime, we get punished for the crime, but when the police do a crime towards us or voluntarily put their hands on us or we on us, they don't get no type of suspension or fired.”

Two detainees believed that accountability systems are weak because of the surfeit of power in policing. “Like at the end of the day, they regular people but they get so much power. They get way too much power, and they're literally just like us.” Another person said he “knew somebody who done really been frank by the police” and filed a complaint but then was intimidated by the officers involved. He suggested you would need celebrity power “Like the rapper Young Moose” to obtain a settlement with the police.

Several detainees said that no accountability system would be powerful enough to combat the corporate “interest” of the organization in shielding its officers. For instance, one detainee said he had no confidence “because they stick together.” Another who said he had “a little bit of confidence” explained why: “because most of the time the police work for the prosecutor. So I guess they'll do everything to protect the police officer or their interest.” Another person who expressed no confidence told us: “I feel like it is going take a unanimous decision, basically that everybody think he wrong, for an officer to do something [to hold another officer accountable]. That's the only time it'll happen.” Yet another suggested that police officers, like correction officers “live by a code” that would thwart any accountability system:

I was just talking to my CO about it, and the way he put it to me, like, if me and four of my homeboys get locked up, or something, like, we're all going to stick to the same story, you know what I'm saying? So he said: why would anybody We live by a code. So, from him and his colleagues, right, why would they go against each other?

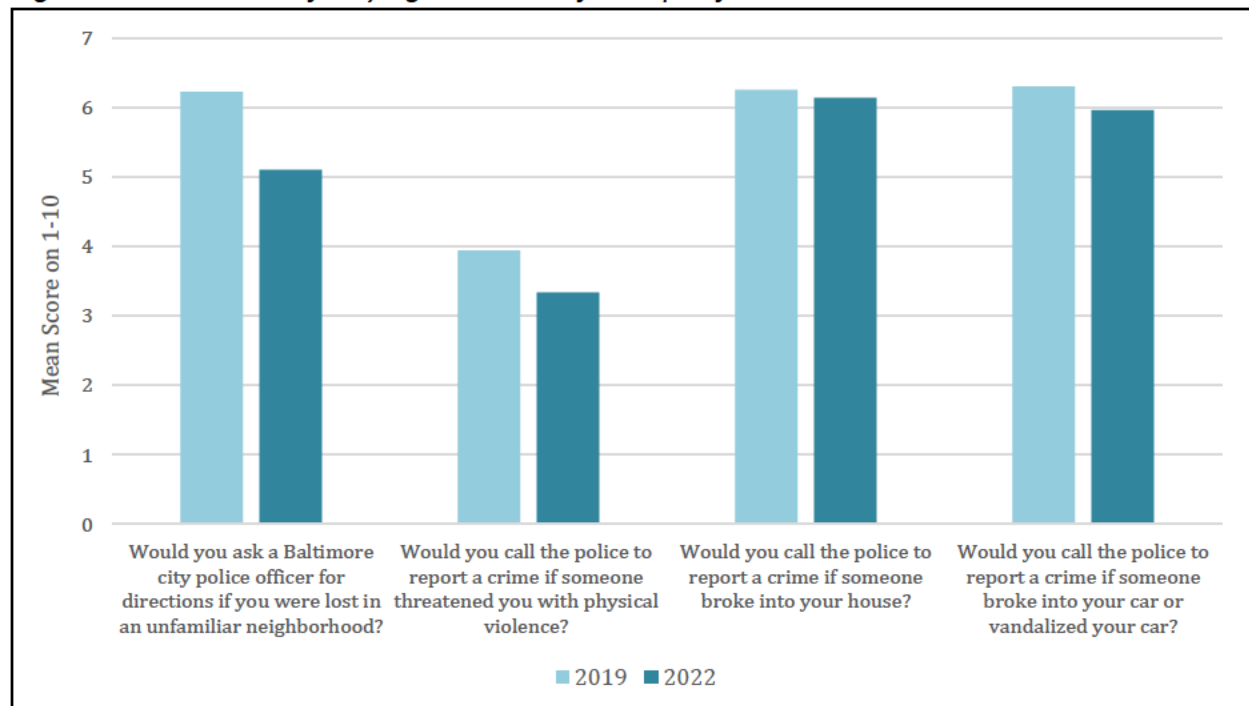
Calling the Police For Help

We have no direct evidence of the behavioral consequences of dismay about the police or doubt about the integrity of accountability systems, but we asked detainees how often they called the police for help in the preceding twelve months. Sixteen of the detainees (28 percent) said they had called the police in the past year; nine said they had called just once, six said they had called between 2 and 5 times, and one told us he had called the police ten times in the last twelve months. BPD data on the distribution of calls for service throughout the city might indicate whether these reported rates of relying on the police for help are higher or lower than average.

We also asked how likely detainees would call the police in the future across four situations in which residents sometimes might need police – (1) being lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood, (2) being threatened with violence, (3) having their residence burgled, and (4) having a car stolen or vandalized. The detainees we spoke to in 2022 said that they were less likely to call the police

than the detainees we spoke to in 2019. As Figure 11 shows, there was a very small difference in the likelihood that detainees in both years said they would call the police for if their car was vandalized or someone broke into their house. Most of them said they were more likely than not to call the police in such situations. But detainees in 2022 were measurably less likely to call the police if they were threatened with violence or lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood than their counterparts in 2019. The greatest decline was recorded in asking for directions if residents were lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood, suggesting that residents might not want help from the police rather than because they didn't need it.

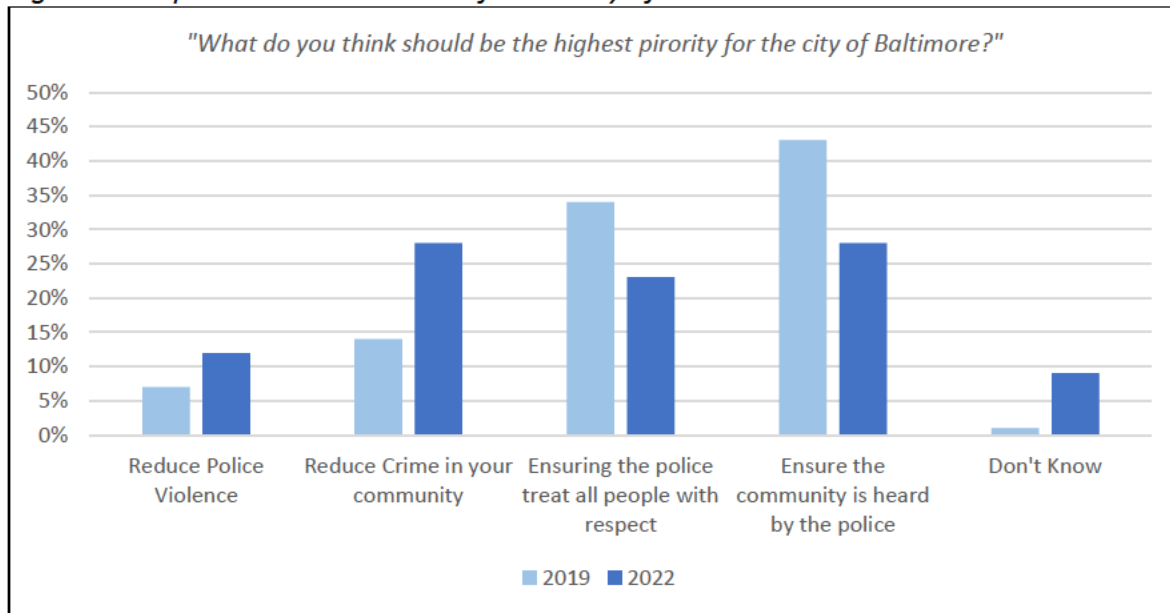
Figure 11. Likelihood of Relying on the BPD for help in four situations



III. The Future of Policing

Priorities for the City

There was an appreciable change in detainees' beliefs about the priorities for the city of Baltimore between 2019 and 2022. As Figure 12 (next page) shows, twice the proportion of detainees in 2022 said "reducing crime" was the most important objective, and the distribution of responses was more equal than 2019. Identical portions of respondents said: "ensuring community is heard by the police" and "reducing crime in their community" were the top priority, and a slightly smaller share said "ensuring the police treat all people with respect."

Figure 12. Opinions about Priorities for the City of Baltimore

Many detainees said all four priorities listed in the interview protocol were important, and several hesitated before choosing just one. Nearly 10 percent said they “didn’t know” or couldn’t choose between the options, despite our entreaties to “pick just one.” A few people refused also insisted on some combination of goals: “It’s A and B,” one person said, emphasizing their equal importance. But far more detainees this year prioritized the reduction of crime as an objective on its own. As one person put it:

I mean, all those things seem good, but I think the main thing for a police officer, that police work should do is reducing the crime in the community. That should be their primary goal. Because who wants to live in the neighborhood filled with crime?

Another person said the situation with crime and violence was dire and abnormal.

Like, we gotta live here and, like, nobody wanna live where everything is bad and you have somebody dying and stuff like that. Like that’s abnormal, for real. People dying every day. Or we don’t get killed every day, but that’s not normal.

Despair about the quality of life in communities also pervaded the comments of people who prioritized “ensuring the community is heard by the police.” That is, rather than affirming a belief in being heard, most detainees in this group emphasized a sense of neglect and oblivion – echoing the social distance we heard across many questions that we asked detainees. When we asked “why is ensuring the community is heard so important to you?” one person told us:

Because I feel like, I feel like everybody feels like nobody’s there [for them]. Nobody wants to help, nobody wants to protect. I just feel like everybody, ... nobody really likes who the city is. Okay?

How to improve policing

When we asked detainees “what could the police do to improve life in the city,” residents spoke mainly about closer relations in the community, and more engagement with residents.

Several mentioned more activities for youth and neighborhood revitalization. “They could create some place for the kids to play sport, football, basketball, anything,” one person proposed, adding that “If you give them something to do, they not going to hang out with the bad kids.” Another person appealed for improvements in housing conditions so that fewer people would be cramped together or loitering on the stoops. “There might be 20 people in one house, in my area, and no AC. And you wonder why there’s 20 people outside.”

A few people wished for more consistent and engaged policing in their community. “We just need active and fair policing in the city,” one person told us. Another said: “show up when they need to be shown up and stop showing up late.” Still another said, “just be, just be more active. Okay? Like instead of just sitting in their cars, just watching. Yeah. Picking up. Get up, walking around.”

Several people recommended the police develop a better understanding of the communities they serve. “Know the community,” one person said simply. “Community policing is the best way to go for me.” For a few detainees, “community policing” meant not just a better understanding of the people in their neighborhoods, or the shared identification of problems the police should tackle, but mutual respect and recognition. One person explained why, in his view, the police “gotta try to improve their connection with the environment.”

Connection is the most important. Like look if you, like, let's say if I get into something right now and I see a police officer that I don't like, oh man, you know what? Fuck you bro. I don't even like him. But if I get into something right now and I see a police officer that I know who's gonna respect me and I'm gonna respect them.

Another person said respect meant not just getting to know people but residing together.

Be respectful to everybody. Okay? Come, come to some community events. Show up. Don't just sit in your car, come talk to the people in your neighborhood. Okay? Have the people that are living in your neighborhood police your neighborhoods. Okay? Not the people that live way the fuck out somewhere else.

Several detainees emphasized what the police ought not to do. “Uh, they gotta stop the harassment. Just stop the harassment.” Another person said slowly with capital letters, “Stop. Police. Brutality. You gotta stop beating on people.” Still another said: “Just stop the abuse.”

For some detainees, “abuse” meant not the use of physical force and intimidation while policing, but what they perceived to be a haughty and dismissive attitude toward residents. “Stop trying to be condescending and demeaning to people,” one detainee advised.

You don't do that. It's the wrong way to go about things. Okay? Don't rough us up, don't beat us. Don't talk down on us. Don't disrespect us. I mean, it is common courtesy. Treat people like you would want to be treated. Okay?

Another detainee thought that “the badge” had replaced the performance of good public service as a source of respect and authority of police officers. “Stop believing that your badge gives you so much power,” another detainee counseled.

Like, I get it, you are a civil servant, you have a gun and a badge, cool, but don't take that entire badge thing Stop believing that they got a badge, give them all the authority in the world, like they're God. All authority, Like their God, oh, White cops. And then it's like, bro, what the fuck?

As Chief of Police

When we asked what's the first thing they would do if they were chief of police, two detainees rejected the idea out of hand.¹⁶ One said simply, “I'd quit,” and another told us: “I ain't never want to be the police. I don't even know what they can do.” A few detainees, though, had specific ideas about what they'd do first. One said he'd review the budget to make sure money wasn't being spent ineffectively. “They gotta get better with their spending budget,” he explained. Another said he would first “clean all my cars out, and end harassment. No harassment. Unless you have a good reason to, unless you have a good reason in evidence and all that, but you gotta bring that [evidence] back to me.”

One detainee said he would impose “martial law.”

Interviewer: Okay, so you, you, you'll shut everything down?

Interviewee: Yeah. Like, like, like before Covid.

Interviewer: So, you, you looking at martial law to put order back in place?

Interviewee: Briefly. Briefly. Because I have to force to put things back in order. Because only two things can go. Either everyone's gonna write or gonna stay in the house and be like, oh, we're bored now. Like, get our shit together.

Interviewer: So you think that'll actually have people think about what's going on that's out there involving themselves in criminal activity?

¹⁶ We asked detainees about their first actions as “Chief” of police rather than as “Commissioner” because we believed detainees were more likely to identify with this terminology.

Interviewee: Like winter. Cause like, like winter, like the reason why, like when it snows outside, like I'm saying like the last blizzard back in two crime rate was like the lowest possible because everyone was in the house.

By contrast, two detainees said they first would find out what community needs are and then place more officers on foot patrol. "I'd go out to the community and see where the community thinks that needs to be done," one said. Another said of his officers: "I'd put them on their feet. They sleeping in the cars, you know? My friends they take pictures of police sleeping in their cars. So they gotta get out more and whatnot."

Most detainees said they'd focus on changes in personnel. "I'd talk around, and we'd hire new people," one person said, adding: "And I'd fire a lot of people with multiple complaints." One detainee who said the city should hire more officers and pay them more told us he would "fire all the bad cops" as his first act as chief of police. "That's the first thing," he emphasized, "and then proper vetting." Another person said: "They need updated training. And they need to watch who they hire, too." Still another person said: "I think they need to get better training. Like not even just physical training. Like mentally training." "It all depends on who they partner is," another detainee explained. "'Cause if they partner with the, the old, the one that's doing the, the shit that's not right. He going to be trained just like him."

Several detainees mentioned the need for officers to "be more open, more human, more than just a robot." One person explained why:

I don't want to be a chief of police. But if I was, I'd do more social training on like how to become a police. I'd start a hands-on class within the training program so they can see how to interact with people, how to be there for people, how to be a human to people instead of being a police to people first.

Two detainees said they would get the department back to basics. "I'd make sure officers do their job right, and not break the law." Another person said he would order his officers to write an essay about the vocation of policing:

Interviewee: Uh, if I was the chief, I would make, I ain't gonna lie, I make everybody write a one page, one page paper on why do you really wanna be a police officer? If it's not, if it's not thorough enough. You get fired.

Interviewer: What would be a good answer?

Interviewee: Um, long story short, like somebody explaining the story and telling them why they really want to serve justice. Like, I don't need nobody out here trying to discipline these people. Cause at the end of the day, everybody make they own decisions.

IV. Conclusion

The detainees we spoke to in 2022 reported more negative views and greater ambivalence about policing in Baltimore in 2022 than the people we spoke to in 2019. These views contrast with earlier positive appraisals and more negative views were registered across several dimensions of perceptions of the police, suggesting a broader negative turn in impressions of policing in Baltimore. While some of the changes between 2019 and 2022 are smaller than others, the findings tend to all run in the same direction, indicating greater dismay about policing in Baltimore among detainees. The interviews also suggest that these views reflect beliefs that the police are insufficiently responsive to community aspirations and alienated from residents, which at times leads to fear and resentment and a belief that the police seek to control residents rather than to assist people.

Recent research in criminology and legal studies suggests that one aspect of strained community relations and a sense of vulnerability among residents is a habit of “system avoidance.” Scholars studying the practices of people in contact with criminal justice within the US demonstrates such system avoidance especially among minority residents in the wake of police violence.¹⁷ Research in Washington, DC, for example, demonstrates that because of this estrangement residents make strategic and contingent decisions in these contexts as to when to call on the police, and for which purposes.¹⁸ Yet new research outside the US also demonstrates that minority residents who live in disadvantaged locales and fewer supportive institutions are more likely to express skepticism and avoid calling on state authorities, potentially exacerbating such inequality by not calling for assistance as a result.¹⁹ We suggest that the ambivalence we see among detainees in 2022, alongside a reduced willingness to call the police for assistance for the most minor of needs, may echo this as well: that the sense of distance that people describe leads them to be more likely to not engage with the police unless the need is acute.

¹⁷ Brayne, Sarah Brayne, “Surveillance and System Avoidance Criminal Justice Contact and Institutional Attachment,” *American Sociological Review*, 79:367–91 (2014); Asad Asad, “On the Radar: System Embeddedness and Latin American Immigrants’ Perceived Risk of Deportation,” *Law & Society Review* 54:133–67 (2020).

¹⁸ Monica Bell, “Situational trust: How disadvantaged mothers reconceive legal cynicism,” *Law & Society Review*, 50: 314-347 (2016).

¹⁹ Ioana Sendroiu, Ron Levi, and John Hagan, “Legal Cynicism and System Avoidance: Roma Marginality in Central and Eastern Europe,” *Social Forces* 101: 281-308 (2022).

APPENDIX 1. Methodology and Sample

We used a two-prong approach to recruiting detainees for this research. First, two researchers sat beside the nurse's station at the Central Booking and Intake Facility, where a medical decision about whether a detainee may remain in custody at that facility is made. Immediately after the completion of this medical screening, we asked detainees whether they would like to participate in the research. When detainees agreed, we used an open cell across the narrow hall from the nurse's station to conduct these interviews. A second approach was to recruit detainees who were moving in and out of holding cells either shortly before or immediately after a hearing with a commissioner about the possibility of bail and release on recognizance.

We believe this recruitment method has several advantages over the method used in 2019. Then, members of our research team waited in hearing rooms provided by the court commissioners while corrections staff brought us detainees who had indicated an interest in participating after reading the recruitment letter made available to them in the nurses' station immediately after their initial booking. This recruitment method made the composition of research participants dependent on corrections staff, whose representations of the purpose of the research to detainees we could not observe and thus might have affected the sample. The interviews in 2019 also took place across a glass divider, which perpetuated the isolation of detainees and at times made it difficult to hear what they said.

We interviewed 57 detainees, 13 fewer than in 2019. The main reason for the lower number of interviewees in 2022 was that jail staff disallowed interviews we planned for Saturday, November 5. Corrections staff at the Central Booking and Intake Facility did not permit our research team to enter the building that day. Other circumstances complicated the process of recruiting detainees, despite careful planning and coordination with the Deputy Warden. Corrections staff occasionally seemed irritated by the presence of our research team and on a few occasions discouraged detainees from speaking with us after initially indicating their interest in participating in the research.

Table 1 (next page) records basic information about the demographic profile of detainees who participated in the research. Three quarters of participants were male, which is a slightly smaller fraction than the portion of all persons arrested by the police between March 2019 and December 2021 who were identified as male in the BPD database (see Table 2). Three quarters of participants identified as Black or African American, which is slightly lower than the proportion who were identified that way by the BPD in the data base we received for 2019 (82 percent). One reason for the divergence might be that five detainees this year either declined to indicate their race and ethnicity or proposed "none" of the above when read the list of options ("do you consider yourself White, Black/African American, Hispanic, Asian, or other?")

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Research Participants

	Entire Sample			Race and Ethnicity					
				Black		White		Other*	
	N	%	Mean Age	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	44	77%	30.4	32	76%	5	83%	7	78%
Female	8	14%	43.6	6	14%	1	17%	1	11%
Other**	5	9%	27.6	4	10%	0	0%	1	11%
TOTAL	57	100%	32.1	42	74%	6	11%	9	16%

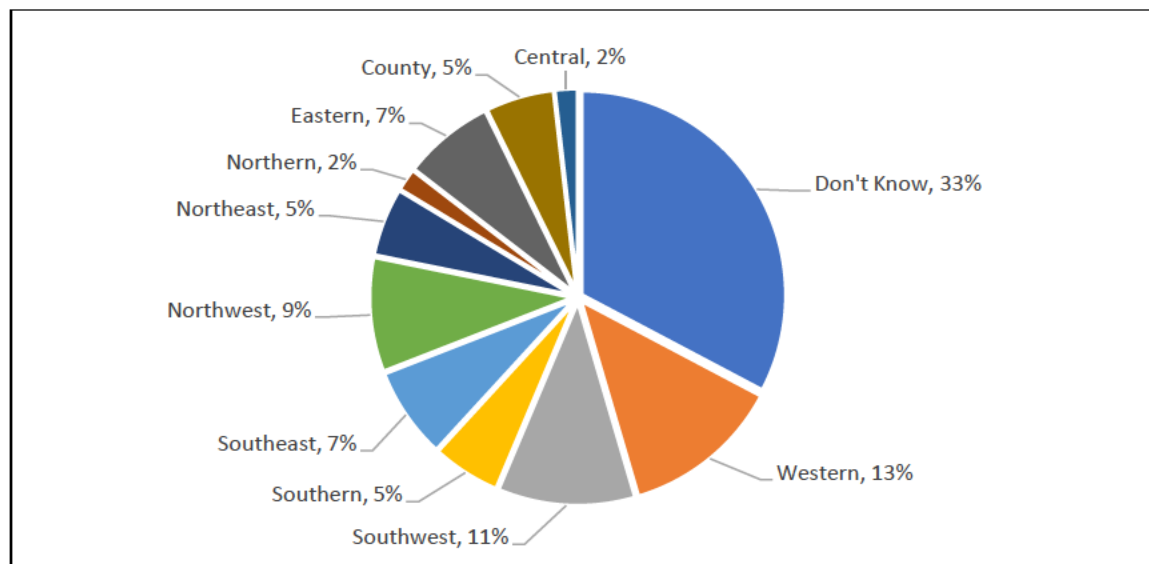
*Five respondents declined to indicate how they identified themselves or said “other” when offered an option.

**Five respondents said “other” when we asked whether they identified as “male, female, or other.”

The group of people we interviewed in 2022 was also slightly younger than the cohort of detainees we interviewed three years ago, yet only marginally younger than the average age of people arrested by the police in 2019. For instance, in 2022, the average age of detainees we spoke with was 32.1 years, compared to 33.5 years in 2019, and 34 percent were either 25 years or younger, compared to 24 percent of detainees in that age bracket in 2019. By contrast, the average age of individuals arrested by the BPD in 2019 was 33.1 years; one quarter of them were below the age of 25.

Figure 1.1 below depicts the distribution of detainees by the “police district” that detainees said corresponded to their neighborhood of residence. A third of the detainees (18 of 57) we spoke to did not know the name of the police district in the are in which they resided, and two detainees claimed to be residents of the “county.”

Figure 1.1. Spatial Distribution of Sample – by “police district” (n=39)



To help appraise the representativeness of the sample of detainees we interviewed, we analyzed basic demographic information about all persons arrested by the BPD in 2022 who were subsequently booked into the booking and intake facility. Table 2 below shows that a greater portion of all custodial arrestees in 2022 involved Black men and women than in our sample (86 vs 76 percent). Note that the gender of detainees in this data set was assigned by the BPD or corrections staff rather than by the detainees, as was the case in our sample. This difference in coding might explain the slight divergences in the composition of detainees identified as “female” in Table 1 and 2 (14 percent vs 20 percent), but it does not explain the divergence in the mean age of detainees, which was considerably higher among the women in our sample (43 vs 33 years).

Table 2. Demographic Profile of All Custodial Arrestees in 2022

	All Detainees			Race & Ethnicity								
				Black			White			Other		
	N	%	Mean Age	N	%	Mean Age	N	%	Mean Age	N	%	Mean Age
Male	8947	79.6%	33.8	7701	86.1%	33.5	823	9.2%	37.3	423	4.7%	32.4
Female	2254	20.1%	32.6	1841	81.7%	32.2	348	15.4%	34.9	65	2.9%	32.2
Other	33	0.3%	43	5	0.1%	40.9	0	0.0%	0%	28	5.4%	46.6
Total	11234	100%	33.5	9547	85.0%	33.2	1171	10.4%	36.6	516	4.6%	32.5

Acknowledgements

All interviews with arrested detainees were conducted jointly by a team of researchers from the University of Toronto and two leaders from the Rose Street Community Center -- Clayton Guyton and Walker Gladden. The interview protocol in Appendix 2 was designed by researchers in Toronto and then revised after focus groups with residents that were organized by the Rose Street Community Center. The analysis and conclusions in this report are the work solely of researchers from the University of Toronto.

Appendix 2. Interview Protocol

Section I. General Impressions of Policing

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

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

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

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

Can you give me an example of this change?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section II. Personal Experiences of Policing

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

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

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

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

Why is that?

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

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

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

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

10. How many times *in the last 12 mths* have you been **stopped** by the police on the street?

What was the police reason for the most recent stop?

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

What was the police reason for the most recent stop?

12. Now I want to ask about your most recent experience of the police -- **today, with this arrest**. Overall, how satisfied were you with this experience of the police?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

Why is that?

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

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

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

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

Section 3. Feelings and Attitudes About Policing

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

17a. If yes, why is that?

17b. If no, why not?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section IV. Rating the Performance of Policing

23. How effective is the BPD at stopping crime in your neighborhood? Would you say ...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27. Do the police treat people equally regardless of gender?

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

28. Do the police treat people equally regardless of sexual orientation?

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

29. What about young people? Do police officers treat young people with the care and caution that is required to prevent harm or further problems with justice?

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

Section V. Recommendations and Advice for the Police Department

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

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

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

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

32. Why is that so important to you?

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

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

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

Section VI. DEMOGRAPHICS

36. In what neighborhood do you live? _____

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

Which district is that? _____

38. In what year were you born? _____

39. Do you consider yourself

White Black/African American Asian Hispanic Other

(you can name more than 1)

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

NOTES:

