



**CONFIDENCE
AND
CAUTION:
Arizonans'
Trust in
the Police**

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Prepared for
Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Do Arizonans trust the police? How do we best describe the police-public relationship in Arizona? These and related questions are the subject of this report, which was commissioned by the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (AZPOST).

National surveys, as well as an Arizona poll commissioned for this report, indicate that most Americans do trust police. But a closer examination of the relationship between police and public finds it to be remarkably complex, resting as it does on a fundamental ambivalence that both sides bring to it. Police, on one hand, are sworn to “serve and protect” the public, but in doing so regularly must discipline and compel some of them. The public, on the other hand, must obey officers and rely on them; but many also acknowledge that they sometimes resent and even fear the police.

This report addresses the issue of trust in police in three ways: 1) reviewing national and Arizona-focused research literature; 2) analyzing the results of 10 focus groups across the state; and 3) providing the findings of a random-sample opinion poll of all Arizona adults.

The national literature, which broadly confirms the results of this report, is reviewed in an annotated bibliography.

Focus group participants, asked to list the attributes of good police officers, commonly cited the following: caring, honest, disciplined, trained, knowledgeable, experienced, respectful, and ethical. The majority of participants said they trusted police, but group discussions revealed a significant undercurrent of wariness, and featured frequently voiced concerns about officer rudeness, arrogance, non-responsiveness, bias, and use of excessive force. Asked to rate officer misconduct in 15 scenarios, participants were most troubled by officer misconduct that both broke the law and violated fundamental values of law enforcement – such as racial profiling, planting evidence, and stealing from crime scenes. Participants were more forgiving of less serious misconduct, while expressing concern that accepting even small “perks” could lead to

more serious infractions. One of the most consistent themes throughout the group discussions was the importance of officers' demeanor in influencing residents' satisfaction with their encounters and, thus, their degree of overall trust.

The results of the statewide opinion poll confirmed the Arizona public's general confidence in police. Nine out of ten (89%) indicated they have either a great deal or some trust in police. Only 10% indicated they do not have much or any trust. Asked to rate the importance of five officer attributes, poll respondents gave the highest rating to "To treat the public with respect." This finding also supports the importance of the manner in which officers conduct themselves during all contacts with residents, further highlighting officer demeanor as an area where leadership and training could make a difference. Other suggestions from focus group participants including making officers more visible to residents through such means as foot or bike patrols; promoting more involvement of officers with the public in "positive" circumstances; hiring and maintaining a more diverse force; and offering more credible, responsive avenues for citizen complaints.

The findings of this report are encouraging for Arizona's law-enforcement community, as they reflect a clear vote of confidence from state residents. But the research also shows that public confidence is extended with caution by residents who remain wary of the potential for police misconduct, quick to draw broad conclusions from individual incidents, and sensitive to hints of impropriety even in individual officers' expression, tone, and mannerisms. Arizonans do trust their police, in other words, but it's a trust that officers must go out and re-earn every day.

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Law enforcement is one of the few institutions that have maintained public confidence in recent years.

The Police-Public Relationship

No relationship is more important to Arizona's social and political health than that between residents and their law enforcement officers.¹ Police, sheriff's deputies, and other peace officers enforce the order and security that safeguard our lives and property — and are granted unique coercive powers to do so. In addition, the conduct of the police carries a potent symbolic meaning: officers don't just fight crime and keep order, but also serve as *de facto* models of ethical behavior (Moore 1997; Jackson and Sunshine 2007). This modeling, in turn, is crucial to effective law enforcement, which relies upon the active cooperation of civilians — i.e., their trust.

Do Arizonans trust their police? How confident are they that officers will not abuse the considerable powers they wield over other citizens? What are the elements of that confidence and what might cause it to falter? How do we best describe the police-public relationship in Arizona? These and related questions are the subject of this report, which was commissioned by the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (AZPOST), the statutory agency that oversees peace officer selection, recruitment, and training. AZPOST officials are seeking a deeper understanding of Arizonans' view of law enforcement so as to better shape standards for officer recruitment, training, and discipline.

At first glance, the issue of public confidence in police may appear to be a simple one. Judging from national surveys, most Americans do trust police. In fact, law enforcement is one of the few institutions that have maintained public confidence in recent years. Polls have regularly found strong pro-police majorities that have persisted as public confidence in other authority structures has waned (Sherman 2002). In 2002, for example, the U.S. National Institute of Justice

¹ The terms "police" and "law enforcement officer" will be used interchangeably in this publication.

found that only 27% of Americans expressed “a great deal” of confidence in the criminal justice system, while 59% expressed such confidence in the police (Tyler 2005). A 2005 nationwide Harris Poll found that 66% of respondents said they tended to trust the police. Arizonans are no different: A May 2007 Arizona poll commissioned as part of this study (see page 27) found that nine out of ten participants (89%) either said they had a great deal (42%) or some (47%) trust in police.

But a closer examination of the relationship between police and public finds it to be remarkably complex, resting as it does on a fundamental ambivalence that both sides bring to it. Police, on one hand, are sworn to “serve and protect” the public, but in doing so regularly must discipline and compel some of them. And despite the advent of “community policing,” law enforcement officers remain a largely insular group given to little informal interaction with those they serve and protect. Finally, for safety reasons officers are trained and conditioned to approach members of the public warily. The public, on the other hand, must obey officers, rely on them in emergencies, and may look to them as exemplars of ethical behavior. Yet many also acknowledge that they sometimes resent and even fear the police.

What “trust” should mean under these circumstances is not obvious. One dictionary defines it as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.” But in fact neither side can always be too “assured” about the other: the relationship between public and police is laced with mutual suspicion. Trust inevitably involves risk — those we trust might, and sometimes do, fail us. In matters concerning the police, this risk can be quite high. It touches upon the most intimate and immediate of our personal concerns — issues of fear, violence, and loss — yet also extends to fundamental elements of our democracy, tracing the fault line between the goals of freedom and security, between the sovereignty of the individual and power of the state. Indeed, some level of mistrust — in the sense of mutual vigilance — is arguably a proper ingredient for a healthy democracy.

Unraveling the complex nature of police-public trust has been a frequent goal of researchers, who have examined the issue with varying results.² Some studies have found that individuals’ personal

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² See the annotated bibliography in the appendix.

One would think the public would be grateful to police for the recent drop in crime; this is not necessarily the case.

encounters with officers do play a major role in shaping their overall views of police. Even if personal experiences are lacking, accounts passed on by others can also play an important role. But other research suggests that most people carry a preexisting set of beliefs and values that shapes their encounters with police (Christenson 1983). The portrayal of police in the media — both news and entertainment — has often been identified as a factor. Other elements that shape the relationship, according to researchers, include the level of crime or disorder in one’s neighborhood, one’s age, education level, and in some cases, race. Professor Tom Tyler of New York University synthesized much of this thinking when he proposed three determinants of public trust in police: first, effective crime control — how well officers perform their primary job; second, fairness in the distribution of police services across different social groups — how equitably officers deal with all members of society; and third, the level of fairness and respect with which police treat residents — sometimes called “procedural justice” (Tyler 2005: 326). All three of these themes will be considered in this report.

The issue of public confidence in police remains as important today as ever. Prof. Lawrence Sherman of the University of Pennsylvania and other authors have noted that the legitimacy of all forms of authority is being challenged in America, as is the very notion of authority itself (Sherman 2002). Even the level of public trust expressed in the police, Tyler notes, while remaining relatively high, has failed to rise during the past two decades of dramatic decreases in violent crime (Tyler 2005). This only underlines the importance of public perception in shaping relations with police: If officers’ primary job is combating crime, and if crime has decreased significantly, one would think that the public would be aware and grateful; this is not necessarily the case. And while the public may rate police highest among criminal justice agencies, the polls still indicate that about one out of three Americans lacks trust in law enforcement. This, in turn, may contribute to the challenges today facing police recruiters, who must battle stiff competition for candidates truly capable of both serving and protecting. Finally, the spread of policies generally summarized as “community policing” should only increase officers’ frequency and variety of public contacts, and thus raise the importance of gaining and keeping residents’ trust.

While the goal of this report is to help AZPOST develop policies to preserve and enhance Arizonans’ confidence in police, every agency

operates in a context that includes elements it can influence little, if at all. It's worth noting some of the factors — both positive and negative — affecting the police-public relationship in Arizona that AZPOST and other agencies must adapt to:

- The general decline in Americans' respect for authority
- The nation's recent historic decline in serious crime
- The pervasive impact of the news/entertainment media
- The aging of the U.S. population
- The lingering impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and national insecurity about terrorism
- The expanded percentage of the U.S. population (especially male) who have had criminal-justice contacts
- High-volume documented and undocumented immigration
- Arizona's population "churn" that brings a steady stream of new residents with experiences and attitudes formed elsewhere, and that maintains a high level of transience in the population

A final note of ambivalence: The current study suggests that many Arizonans hold their police to a higher standard of conduct than the general public — yet are often willing to tolerate deviations from this standard in recognition of how difficult, dangerous, and unpleasant police work can be. These conflicting sentiments — as perceived from the police side — were captured by Prof. Mark Moore of Harvard, who recounted a meeting with Philadelphia police supervisors about research he was doing on the department. Moore described his confusion at the contradictory results of a poll seeking Philadelphians' views of their police:

We sent out a survey to the citizens of Philadelphia and asked them the following question...: "On a scale of one to five, what do you think of the Philadelphia Police Department?" It came back about 4.5. Pretty good, right?...Then it asked a whole series of discrete questions: "Do you think the cops are rude?" [Oh yeah, terrible, awful.] "Do you think they sleep on the job?" [Yeah, sure. We see them sleeping on the job all the time.] "Do you think they take bribes?" [Yes — a lot of people thought they did.] "Do you think they sexually harass defendants?" [One-third of the people thought the cops did that often.] And yet, they rated the department at 4.5!

I was discussing these results with a room full of captains from the Philadelphia Police Department, and they were all kind of looking down at their shoes, embarrassed that I didn't understand. Finally, one guy

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was goaded beyond endurance by my ignorance. He looked up at me and he said, "Look, Doc, you gotta understand; when you're shoveling shit, you gotta be indulged a little bit." (Moore 1997: 71-72)

Moore said he realized then that "a deal had been struck between the citizens of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Police Department [that] could have been struck (maybe had been struck) in cities throughout the country." Examining what sort of "deal," if any, exists in Arizona may help us probe the nature of Arizonans' trust in police.

Previous Research in Arizona

A review of previous research in Arizona was used to inform the design of the current study and to provide some continuity of findings for AZPOST. Differences and similarities in findings are reported below.

In 1993, Arizonans' views about police officer certification standards were measured through a telephone poll administered by the Media Research Program at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication (Merrill 1993). The statewide random sample of adults was asked a series of questions concerning past conduct that should disqualify individuals from becoming law enforcement officers, with most of the questions centering on the issue of prior drug use. Asked what in a candidate's background should disqualify him or her from becoming a police officer, respondents most often said "having a criminal record or felony," "drug abuse," and "unstable mental health." Present but less often mentioned were such factors as "excessive drinking/DWIs," "lack of integrity/morals," "child molestation," and "low education."

The survey found that about one-third of Arizona adults felt that any prior marijuana use should disqualify candidates. Respondents taking a more flexible position tended to consider whether the candidate used the drug as a juvenile or adult, whether the candidate was still using, and whether the candidate only "experimented" with marijuana. Arizonans expressed stronger opposition to the use of more powerful drugs, with two-thirds supporting disqualification of candidates who had any previous use of cocaine, heroin, or LSD. The survey also found that younger Arizonans, those with higher educational levels, and those living in urban areas were more tolerant of previous drug use by candidates.

What sort of "deal," if any, exists between police and the public in Arizona?

In 1997, 45 workshops were held across Arizona by Applied Research Associates in which 568 residents were asked what qualities and capabilities are important for patrol officers to possess (Applied Research Associates 1997). Opinions on desirable personal qualities were gathered in group exercises, while the most important officer skills were rated via questionnaires. The report also cited the responses of 144 patrol officers who either participated in a workshop or completed questionnaires on the same issues. The top-ranked and bottom-ranked qualities and skills – out of a total of 51 choices – are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The most striking aspect of these results is the high level of agreement between community respondents and patrol officers, especially regarding the most important skills and qualities. It's also worth noting that the skills cited as least important by both residents and officers included some of officers' most frequent tasks, such as enforcing traffic laws. In addition, skills marked as least important by officers include several that are among those heavily emphasized in community policing and frequently cited by participants in the current study as significant to their level of trust in police.

Table 1: Public and police ranked many of the same skills and qualities as most important

Five skills and qualities ranked as *most important* (out of 51) for law enforcement officers

Skills/Qualities Ranked by Workshop Participants	Skills/Qualities Ranked by Patrol Officers
Honest, ethical, impartial	Honest, ethical, impartial
Making sound decisions/performing effectively under stress	Making sound decisions/performing effectively under stress
Listening to and comprehending others	Recognizing/ minimizing threats to self or others
Resolving situations with sensitivity	Evaluating a situation and taking appropriate action
Evaluating a situation and taking appropriate action	Personally adherent to laws, rules, regulations, etc.

Source: Applied Research Associates, 1997.

Table 2: Public and police views differed more over “least important” skills and qualities

Five skills and qualities ranked as *least important* (out of 51) for law enforcement officers

Skills/Qualities Ranked by Workshop Participants	Skills/Qualities Ranked by Patrol Officers
Investigating public nuisance crimes	Investigating public nuisance crimes
Coming up with solutions to new or unique problems	Enforcing traffic laws
Writing reports and other required documentation	Investigating traffic accidents
Investigating unusual or suspicious persons or circumstances	Informing and advising the public
Enforcing court orders	Learning about and becoming known by the community

Source: Applied Research Associates, 1997.

“[AZPOST bears] a responsibility for ensuring that a relationship of trust exists between the citizens of Arizona and the officers that POST certifies.”

— AZPOST Official

Research Design

AZPOST is responsible for ensuring uniformity in the selection, recruitment, retention, and training of peace officers in Arizona, and for providing curriculum and standards for all certified law enforcement training facilities. Further, as one AZPOST official put it, the agency is charged with “a responsibility for ensuring that a relationship of trust exists between the citizens of Arizona and the officers that POST certifies.” In order to better promote that relationship, AZPOST officials wanted to know more about how average Arizonans view the conduct – and misconduct – of their law enforcement officers. They sought a deeper understanding of:

- Arizonans’ level of trust in the institution of law enforcement
- Arizonans’ expectations in terms of police conduct
- Which officer characteristics promote residents’ trust in the integrity and competence of officers
- What conduct by officers, on or off duty, would cause Arizonans to lose trust in law enforcement

Morrison Institute addressed these questions by reviewing national and Arizona-focused research literature on the issue of public trust in police, conducting a series of 10 focus groups across the state, and commissioning a random-sample opinion poll of Arizona adults. This multi-methodological approach was chosen in part to see how initial opinion might be modified through deliberation in focus groups, and to explore with residents the full complexity of the issue. The statewide opinion poll replicated some of the issues of an earlier study (Merrill 1993) and some of the questions asked of current focus group participants.

Nationally, studies over several decades (see bibliography) have found that people’s feelings towards police can be influenced by a variety of factors: their sense of personal safety, their satisfaction with conditions in their neighborhood, their general attitudes towards the social order, their consumption of media reports, and their personal police contacts, as well as by demographic factors like age, gender, ethnicity, and educational level.

Findings

Focus Groups

Characteristics of Participants

Ten focus groups were held, which on average lasted about 1 ½ hours, in Tempe (2), Tucson (2), Phoenix, Yuma, Lake Havasu City, Flagstaff, Show Low, and Sierra Vista. The total of 73 participants were recruited by Arizona State University’s Institute of Social Science Research to ensure diversity in age, gender, ethnicity, and educational level, and were screened to eliminate individuals with felony arrest records or close relatives in law enforcement. Two minority-only focus groups were held, one in Tempe and one in Tucson.

The participants ranged in age from 18 to 83; 44% were male and 56% female; 64% identified themselves as White, 15% as Hispanic/Latino, 10% African American, and 11% were Other (Native American, Asian American, and others). Participants were also asked where they received most information about police, and were invited to check all that applied to them from eight options; the results are shown in Table 3.

Opening Group Discussions – Locating Trust in Police

The topics for discussion by groups were decided upon following a pilot session involving Morrison Institute staff members. A key finding of that session was the difficulty members had – a difficulty borne out repeatedly in the actual groups – focusing on trust in *police as an institution* as opposed to *police as individuals*. Most participants spoke readily about specific instances of police behavior that they had experienced or that were related by family and friends. Most then applied their reaction to those instances more or less directly to the institution – from a particular department to “police” in general – without stopping to question how reasonably the behavior of the officer(s) in question could be said to reflect the institution as a whole. Some participants took the same path when recounting media stories about police misconduct. This tendency to conflate the specific with the general underlines the importance of individual officer contacts in shaping public opinion; but it also makes it more challenging to elicit Arizonans’ views on the *institution* of law enforcement.

As a result, the focus groups opened with a brief general discussion of “trust” as it relates to a number of common public professions,

Table 3: More focus group participants reported getting information about the police from radio and the Internet than from TV and newspapers; only 14% said their information came from personal experience.

Sources of information about police

Source	%
Radio	91%
Internet	78%
TV	50%
Newspapers	42%
Other people	16%
Personal experiences	14%
TV police shows	8%
Movies	3%

Source: Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University, 2007.

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**“Doctors and teachers,
those are both
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— Tucson-area man

notably teaching, medicine, and law enforcement. This was aimed at prompting group members to examine and express their views about trust on an arguably more abstract level than they usually might.

Participants were asked which common occupations they trusted most, and least, and were prompted to offer a list of adjectives that described, say, a trustworthy teacher. At the conclusion of these discussions, participants were asked to focus their thinking about trust on the law enforcement profession. Professions repeatedly cited as “highly trusted” included airline pilots, firefighters, doctors, and teachers. Professions meriting “medium trust” included journalists and judges. Those deserving of “low trust” included lawyers, politicians, car salesmen, contractors, and mechanics. Law enforcement officers were rated neither highest nor lowest.

Participants in most groups were then asked to list the attributes of trustworthy individuals in three occupations — teachers, doctors, and law enforcement officers. The attributes most often cited for trustworthy teachers included compassionate, resourceful, competent, accountable, honest, patient, creative, trained, friendly, consistent, and passionate. Characteristics associated with trustworthy doctors included honest, ethical, knowledgeable, thorough, good listener, trained, accountable, respectful, experienced, and skilled. The most commonly cited attributes of trusted law enforcement officers included caring, honest, disciplined, trained, knowledgeable, experienced, respectful, ethical, patient, approachable, polite, fair, law-abiding, dependable, smart, and non-judgmental. Participants almost never cited attributes reflecting officers’ physical strength, stamina, toughness, or personal courage.

In every group but one, participants’ *initial* responses to the subject of police officers were negative, and decidedly more negative than their responses to most other professions, except perhaps for lawyers and politicians. A Tucson-area man said,

Doctors and teachers, those are both constructive professions — there’s positive energy coming out of both of those things, but police officers, that’s punitive; it’s like coercive. It will always have issues of mistrust right from the beginning.

A Tucson-area woman said people typically associate police officers with negative situations. “I think if you’re seeing a police officer, it’s got to be bad....it’s never like, ‘Oh, cool! A police officer!’”

Further, participants were initially more likely to speak about their negative experiences with police than their positive ones. In other words, most participants' initial "default" response to police was a negative one. However, this negativity waned as the discussions proceeded and as participants acknowledged the difficulty, dangerousness, and unpleasantness of many law enforcement duties and the potentially corrosive effect on officers of attending to such duties. A Phoenix-area woman said, "They're humans like everybody else; they see the most evil and the worst parts of society on a day-to-day basis, and how could you not have that rub off on you?"

Participants also noted the wariness — indeed, the mistrust — that they believe many officers come to adopt towards many or most members of the public. A Phoenix-area man said,

It's so hard [to trust officers] because they're trained to mistrust you. So you're going to mistrust them because they're mistrusting you....So how do you ever get a really great relationship with somebody who's been trained that way? You're never going to have them as your best chum. There's always going to be that edge, that psychological thing there.

Most participants displayed little difficulty reconciling these two seemingly contradictory views — a reflexive negativity towards police tempered by an appreciation of the rigors of the job.

Survey of Focus Group Participants

Participants were asked to complete a three-page questionnaire (see appendix, page 38) that was developed with input from AZPOST officials. The survey began with four statements that participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with on a five-point scale from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." Despite the negativity expressed in the discussions before and after the questionnaires were administered, most participants recorded high levels of confidence in police in their responses to the four statements:

- 75% reported generally feeling safe in their neighborhoods.³
- 67% agreed that police usually do what's right for their community.

³ These measures combine those who indicated "strongly agree" and "agree."

“[Police officers] see the most evil and the worst part of society on a day-to-day basis, and how could you not have that rub off on you?”

— Phoenix-area woman

- 64% indicated that they generally trust police officers to tell the truth.
- 64% agreed that most police officers usually treat people with respect.

These percentages are generally consistent with findings in other studies and reflect the observation by Harvard's Mark Moore, noted above, that the implicit "bargain" the public has made with police enables residents to both rate police positively and criticize them roundly.

The implicit "bargain" the public has made with police enables residents to both rate police positively and criticize them roundly.

The questionnaire also asked if participants had had personal contact with police within the past three years, to which 80% responded in the affirmative. Asked if their contact had been a good experience, 48% checked "Yes," 28% checked "No," and 25% checked "Neither." Of those reporting contact, 36% responded to an invitation to comment on the incident. Their comments suggest the range and flavor of Arizonans' concern about their encounters with law enforcement, especially during traffic stops. The comments contained more negative reports (12) than positive (eight); six were mixed or general remarks (see appendix, page 29). Overall, they reflect several general points:

- the frequency of traffic stops among police-public contacts
- the importance of individual contacts for shaping residents' attitudes toward police
- the tendency of some residents to blame officers for things beyond officers' control, such as high crime rates
- the frequent criticism of officers as being either non-responsive or overly eager to exercise their authority to cite or arrest
- residents' appreciation of officers who behave professionally and politely, even when imposing sanctions

Again, a sense of ambivalence is present. As a Flagstaff-area woman said in one group:

I tend to hold them more to a....human level. I'm not saying you should always trust them, but they're in a situation where they're always going to be attacked for what they're doing, because they're putting themselves more in a situation to mess up. [Residents] are really quick to react, and all high and mighty about what went wrong.

The questionnaire presented 15 brief scenarios portraying various types of officer misconduct. Participants were asked to rate the

behavior on a scale from least to most serious — that is, where 1 meant it would have no effect on their overall trust in police and 10 meant it would strongly undermine their trust in police. It was emphasized that participants' task was not simply to evaluate the conduct of individual officers in the scenarios, but to judge how their trust in *all* law enforcement would be affected if they learned that a given scenario reflected typical behavior by numerous officers. The scenarios ranged from relatively minor issues (officers accepting free snacks) to quite serious (officers demanding sexual favors or using excessive force). They were worded in an effort to bridge the gap between individual behavior and general institutional concerns (e.g., a scenario about officers accepting free lunches and snacks was labeled “Many officers accept small favors from citizens.”). An effort was also made to avoid scenarios with “obvious” answers and to instead inject some of the ambivalence present in real-life conduct issues. Thus, a scenario about officers planting evidence portrayed the officers doing so only on “serious criminals;” one about excessive force had officers roughing up gang members who were terrorizing an innocent family. Table 4 shows the overall results.

As the average scores indicate, group participants were most concerned about officer misconduct that both broke the law and dramatically violated what they seemed to consider fundamental values of law enforcement. Participants' most severe reactions were to officers' offering freedom to female suspects in exchange for sexual favors, racially profiling motorists, stealing from crime scenes, and planting evidence. The first two scenarios were condemned by most participants, as indicated by their small standard deviations. Opinions were more mixed on the latter two — perhaps reflecting some participants' frustration with crime and their vulnerability to temptations to “bend the rules” in dealing with known criminals.

Average scores for the next six scenarios ranged from 7.8 (warning friends with warrants) to 7.4 (responding slowly to some 911 calls). These reflect participants' displeasure with police misconduct that generally entails less — or less severe — illegality and less direct harm to individuals (the exception has officers using excessive force, but not against “innocent” individuals). The standard deviations also begin to rise for most of these scenarios, indicating a greater range of opinion among participants. The exception here is the response to officers making false statements to supervisors; the scenario was not considered to offer the most egregious misconduct, yet did elicit broad condemnation.

Focus group participants were most concerned about officer misconduct that both broke the law and dramatically violated fundamental values of law enforcement.

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Table 4: Focus group members gave widely different ratings to police misconduct

Participant scenario scores

Behavior	Average	Standard Deviation^a
Officers improperly use their authority (Example: Officers arresting women on suspicion of prostitution offer to let them go if they perform a sex act.)	8.7	2.06
Officers treat people differently based on their ethnicity (Example: Patrol officers assigned to reduce the number of drug runners passing through their jurisdiction stop all younger Latino and African-American drivers.)	8.3	2.01
Officers sometimes steal from crime scenes (Example: Officers searching the home of an arrested drug dealer find new luxury watches and pocket them.)	8.3	2.42
Some officers plant evidence on people they know to be hardened criminals (Example: Patrol officers who pull over motorists they know to be serious criminals sometimes plant a pistol or other contraband in the car, then arrest the driver.)	8.3	2.40
Officers enforce the law selectively (Example: Officers who know there are arrest warrants out for their friends don't arrest the friend but instead warn them about the warrants.)	7.8	2.23
Officers regularly make false statements to supervisors (Example: Officers assigned to stay within a patrol area sometimes leave the assigned area for an extended period of time, but deny having done so what questioned by their sergeant.)	7.7	2.17
Officers routinely fail to arrest fellow officers when warranted (Example: Officers who stop obviously drunk motorists who turn out to be fellow officers don't arrest the drivers, but instead let them call someone to drive them home.)	7.6	2.45
Officers misuse their access to confidential information (Example: Patrol officers who see attractive women while patrolling their beats seek out the women's identify by checking their license plates on an official database.)	7.6	2.39
Officers commonly use inappropriate force (Example: Officers who know that gang members have threatened an African-American family – but can't obtain evidence to prosecute them – visit some of the gang's leaders, slap them around and threaten worse if the harassment doesn't stop.)	7.5	2.57
Officers sometimes fail to promptly respond to selected 911 calls (Example: Officers receiving 911 calls about domestic violence from an address they've repeatedly visited – only to have the victim refuse to press charges – drive slowly to the address, hoping the episode will be over before they arrive.)	7.4	2.50
Numerous officers use marijuana off duty	6.6	3.08
Numerous officers sometimes treat individuals disrespectfully (Example: An officer who pulls over a speeding car whose driver angrily yells out, "What the hell are stopping me for, idiot?" replies, "Because today is 'Arrest a Jerk Day.'")	6.2	2.86
Officers routinely do favors for fellow officers (Example: Off-duty officers working security at a sports stadium let fellow off-duty officers get prized parking spots while other motorists wait in line.)	5.4	2.56
Officers take advantage of their status while off duty (Example: Off-duty officers out to dinner with their families ask restaurant owners to move them to the front of the waiting line.)	5.2	2.76
Many officers accept small favors from citizens (Example: Patrol officers regularly accept free lunches and snacks from restaurants on their beats.)	4.0	2.71

a. The standard deviation is a measure of how closely or widely all the results cluster around the average result. A larger standard deviation means wider variation within a group of results.
 Source: Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University, 2007.

The next two scenarios elicited the widest range of opinion. “Numerous officers use marijuana off duty” received a 6.6 average score, but a relatively large standard deviation of 3.08, indicating considerable disagreement among participants. “Numerous officers sometimes treat individuals disrespectfully” received a 6.2 average score and a standard deviation of 2.86, the second highest. This latter result might seem to cast doubt on the importance of police demeanor in establishing or maintaining public trust. However, it should be noted that the example given portrays an officer responding disrespectfully to an initial insult from an angry motorist; in the group discussions, numerous participants indicated that the motorist’s action mitigated the seriousness of the officer’s response. “If somebody is going to be rude to a uniformed person, then they should expect that the guy’s going to say something back,” a Tucson-area man said. “They’re only human.” Indeed, the importance of context in shaping opinion emerged repeatedly in the group discussions. Participants would quickly agree on an initial judgment about a type of misconduct, only to discover qualifications and exceptions to that judgment as they discussed details of particular scenarios.

The final three scenarios were those judged least offensive by participants. They portrayed conduct by officers that, while objectionable, neither broke the law nor harmed others. Two of the three involved behavior by off-duty officers. Despite the relatively low average scores, the standard deviations indicate considerable disagreement among participants, especially on the last two scenarios.

To examine the results in more detail, each participant’s score on the scenarios was categorized as either “less serious” (scores from 1 to 5) or “more serious” (scores from 6 to 10) and cross-tabulated with the demographic variables recorded by the participants to see if there were any significant⁴ differences. Differences were found by gender, but on only three of the 15 scenarios: women were significantly more likely ($p < .05$) to indicate that their trust in police would be undermined if “Officers sometimes fail to promptly respond to selected 911 calls” (the example being officers responding slowly to a domestic violence call); if “Officers improperly use their authority” (officers offering to free suspected prostitutes in exchange for sexual

“If somebody is going to be rude to a uniformed person, then they should expect that the guy’s going to say something back.”

— Tucson-area man

⁴ In statistics, “significant” differences are differences that are unlikely to be explained by chance.

favours), and if “Officers treat people differently based on their ethnicity” (officers stopping all younger Latino and African American drivers in order to reduce drug running).

No statistically significant differences were found in responses to the scenarios by age (analyzed by three categories 18-30 years, 31-50, and 51 and above), race/ethnicity (analyzed by “white” and “minority”), political leanings, political affiliation, or educational level.

Participants’ scores indicating their level of agreement with statements on trust in police (“I generally trust police officers to tell the truth,” “I believe police officers usually try to do what is right for my community,” and “Most police officers usually treat people with respect”) were summed into a composite score and then categorized into three roughly equal levels of trust (low, medium, and high). This variable was then cross-tabulated with responses to each scenario to see how, if at all, participants’ overall level of trust in police was related to their reaction to each example of police misconduct. Only one statistically significant difference was found: The higher the level of trust in police that participants had, the more likely they were to view accepting even small favours from citizens as serious.

The higher the level of trust focus group participants had, the more likely they were to view accepting even small favours from citizens as serious.

Extended Discussions

Following completion of the questionnaires, participants discussed the scenarios. Participants were not asked to identify or defend their scenario rankings, but rather to talk about the issues that the scenarios brought up. A number of themes emerged consistently from the discussions across groups.

Participants displayed considerable skepticism about many professions. “I don’t trust anyone,” was a frequent opening response. Participants repeatedly expressed wariness towards even the professions that received “high trust” rankings, with the exception of teachers and firefighters. One reason cited for this was that, as a Phoenix-area man said, “We trust somebody who’s doing something for not a lot of money.” Even doctors were regularly criticized for arrogance, alleged collusion with pharmaceutical firms, and for valuing monetary rewards over patient care. Doctors were also criticized for problems connected with the overall health-care system. More generally, several participants said they found it difficult to trust — as one put it — “those with power over you.” Such comments framed discussions in all the groups: It was almost as if participants

were not identifying professions they trusted most, but naming those they mistrusted least. This seemed to support observations by Penn's Lawrence Sherman and others of the general erosion of trust in authority that they say has been underway in the United States for several decades.

Participants generally do have confidence in law enforcement, but it is a trust that is extended cautiously and tempered by wariness and resentment. As mentioned above, solid majorities of participants indicated trust in police on the questionnaire's opening four items. It should be noted, however, that this leaves approximately one out of three participants who do *not* trust or think well of officers. In discussions, participants were much more likely to voice negative rather than positive feelings about police — at least at first. Many participants readily related anecdotes about police non-responsiveness, incompetence, rudeness, inaccessibility, racial/ethnic biases, and even brutality. They spoke of calling police who never came; of being unfairly ticketed at a traffic stop by an officer determined to find — or invent — a pretext; of a friend or relative who was beaten by officers “for no reason;” of officers who avoided responding to dangerous calls; and of police who treat residents differently for the wrong reasons. A Flagstaff-area woman said,

I kind of see it more as kind of the reverse of the question, like whether they trust you, so if you tend to be young, male, you might have more of a bad experience, or with the minority situation....I would be responded to better because I'm a female, and they maybe see me as more of a victim.

Other members related positive experiences — sometimes even despite the officer's attitude. For example, a Phoenix-area woman said she'd been speeding to an important business meeting when she was stopped and berated by an angry officer. “Oddly, I actually appreciated it,” the woman said, noting that the officer had “snapped me back into reality” before she hurt anyone.

Near the end of each group, participants were asked how they'd feel, and act, if pulled over by a marked patrol car while driving alone on a deserted road at night. Most participants ultimately said they would probably feel reasonably comfortable. Some initially expressed fear that they were being pulled over by someone impersonating an officer, perhaps illustrating the general mistrust of authority remarked on in other studies. Even beyond that concern, however, numerous participants — especially women — expressed skepticism and

Focus group participants were much more likely to voice negative rather than positive feelings about police — at least at first.

“I kind of see it more as kind of the reverse of the question, like whether [officers] trust you.”

— Flagstaff-area woman

concern. Some said they would dial 911; others said they would not stop until reaching a populated area. In other words, participants expressed a blend of confidence and caution.

At the conclusion of each session most participants also acknowledged that, in general, they do trust law enforcement. Still, their reservations remained evident: “They’re no better than me,” a Phoenix-area woman said, adding,

They’ve got a job that’s high risk, and I can respect that. It’s a job that I wouldn’t want to do. But you know what? Don’t put yourself above me, because you’re not any better. And I think if they took that kind of attitude, I think the community would begin to respect them.

**“Don’t put yourself
above me, because
you’re not any better.”**

— Phoenix-area woman

Participants’ personal and vicarious experiences play a large role in their current attitudes. Participants opened every group by citing their own contacts with law enforcement or those of friends or family. The overwhelming majority of these contacts involved traffic stops or accidents. Others came as residents reported crimes, sought information, or encountered officers at crowd scenes. A handful of participants indicated that they’d been detained or arrested. Very few spoke of encountering officers who were participating in recreational or informational community events; indeed, a perceived lack of such contacts was frequently cited as a drawback to enhanced police-public trust. As noted above, many participants tended to conflate their personal experience with their overall assessment of law enforcement — moving directly from police as individuals to police as an institution. Members also dwelled at length on how they were treated by officers, almost regardless of the final outcome of the encounter. It should also be noted that a number of the anecdotes related by participants came from their contacts with police outside of Arizona. The fact that such contacts are beyond AZPOST’s jurisdiction did little or nothing to ease their impact on participants’ overall view of police.

**“They have a chip on
their shoulder. I can
understand why.... It’s a
fine line they have to
walk.”**

— Tucson-area man

Participants believe that most officers enter the profession with the right motives, then are adversely affected by their job experience.

This theme emerged frequently in the sessions. “I think a lot of so-called [bad] cops come in good,” a Phoenix-area woman said, “[but] you know, the stress of situations brings out sides of them that they’re even surprised exist within them.” Such remarks seemed to reflect many participants’ view of officers as well-meaning individuals who can hardly be blamed for succumbing to the harsh conditions of their work — as long, that is, as officers don’t engage in serious

misconduct as a result. Again, perhaps, the contours of Moore’s police-public “bargain” are revealed. As a Tucson-area man said: “They have this chip on their shoulder — I can understand why they have to have that, too, because they’re an authority figure. It’s a fine line they have to walk.”

Participants did not sanction “noble cause corruption,” though some were tempted. “Noble cause corruption” refers to police misconduct that is aimed not at individual benefit but at more effectively accomplishing official goals of fighting crime and maintaining order (Martinelli 2006). Two of the scenarios — planting evidence and using excessive force — were designed to fit that description, the first because the defendants were known to be serious criminals and the second because the force was used to stop gang members from terrorizing innocent residents. Most participants responded negatively to both cases: they gave “planting evidence” an 8.3 in seriousness, and ranked “excessive force” at 7.5. But some participants were tempted to accept some bending of the rules. A Sierra Vista-area woman said:

Actually, I have mixed opinions on [the planting evidence scenario]. Part of me says do whatever you have to do to get that awful person off the streets. And I know that legally and morally [officers] are not supposed to do that, but we also know that our law often allows these people back on the street.

But most participants were not swayed by suggestions that the ends justified the means in such cases. They instead argued that — despite officers’ “noble” motives — such misconduct violated basic legal tenets and threatened the overall integrity of the system. Instead, they said, the officers should redouble their efforts to deal with the situations through legal means. Participants held to this view while acknowledging that some of their favorite police shows and movies portrayed “hero” officers engaged in just these sorts of “noble” misdeeds.

Participants offered more nuanced responses to lower-level misconduct, but remained concerned about worse behavior in the future. Most participants agreed that officers’ accepting free food and preferential treatment or doing minor favors for colleagues were only mildly objectionable or even “perks” that could reasonably accompany a difficult job. Some members acknowledged that they did similar things for their colleagues. A key concern among many was whether officers were accepting genuine gifts from willing

“Part of me says [to the police] do whatever you have to do to get that awful person off the streets.”

—Sierra Vista-area woman

members of the public, or taking “bribes” that they had come to expect (a common question: “Was the favor offered, or was it demanded?”). A related concern was to what degree such behavior, minor in itself, reflected a worrisome level of arrogance on officers’ part. And many participants expressed concern that such “perks,” if permitted, could lead to more serious misdeeds. For example, a Tucson-area woman said:

I thought that some of the levels of cops doing different things wrong seemed tiny, but I thought they could snowball pretty quickly into much worse. You know, once you get comfortable taking free lunches and once you get comfortable doing favors, once you get comfortable doing this that and the other, that can only lead to bad things rather than better.

A Flagstaff-area woman agreed:

I think the idea of ‘snowballing’ is what it’s about. We’re saying that if you do this we will trust you less, meaning that we expect you to do it again or we expect you to do something worse the next time.

The influence of the news and entertainment media was evident throughout the focus group sessions.

The news and entertainment media shape attitudes to some extent.

Focus-group participants reported on their questionnaires that they received most of their information about police from the radio, the Internet, TV, and newspapers, in that order; a few also cited TV police shows or movies. In any case, the influence of news and entertainment reports was evident throughout the sessions. On numerous occasions, participants discussing particular issues — such as excessive force — shifted back and forth between their own experiences, those of friends or family, those reported by news organizations, and even those occurring in fictional TV shows and movies. A number of participants mentioned the TV show, *Cops*, as a referent. Members made frequent reference to news reports about police, especially negative ones. In fact, several members said they wished there were more positive reporting about law enforcement.

Their remarks about negative reports suggested that the reports caused an impact on public thinking well beyond the individual officers involved: the Los Angeles Police Department, which suffered negative news coverage in connection with the O.J. Simpson murder trial, the videotaped beating of Rodney King, and the Rampart Division scandal, was commonly cited for its poor reputation. A Yuma-area woman summed up the general impact of negative news reports by comparing police departments containing a few misbehaving officers to a family with one problem child, “[T]hat family’s going to

earn a reputation — ‘That’s the family to stay away from’ — because of that one person, and that’s what happens in police departments.”

Residents’ overall level of confidence in police is independent of how they evaluate specific misconduct. No statistically significant relationship was found between participants’ general level of trust in police — as recorded in their responses to the opening items in the questionnaire — and their ratings of the misconduct cited in the scenarios. That is, some members who expressed high trust in police on the initial items judged the scenarios relatively harshly, while others who expressed high trust did not. The same was true of participants who expressed lower trust in police on the initial items. This supports past findings that residents’ trust in police is made up of a number of factors that may or may not be affected by specific instances of misconduct.

Officers’ demeanor is extremely important. One of the most consistent themes throughout the group discussions was the importance of officers’ demeanor in influencing residents’ satisfaction with their encounters and, thus, their degree of overall trust. Participants repeatedly emphasized officers’ tone of voice, language, attitude, willingness to listen, and overall respectfulness in describing their encounters and those of friends and relatives. In many cases, an officer’s demeanor seemed to matter as much or more than the encounter’s concrete outcome — e.g., whether a ticket was issued. A number of members said they form their opinions of officers quickly. A young Phoenix-area woman said: “[I judge an officer by] the way he speaks to me. You can tell an arrogant one from a basic, normal one...from what comes out of his mouth.” Some participants indicated that proper behavior was a required hallmark of officers’ special role. “They should set the standard and be a role model for the rest of us,” a Lake Havasu City-area woman said. For others, like a Tucson-area woman, officers simply deserve as much respect as they give: “They demand we respect them because of the uniform or whatever,” she said. “You have to have the same respect.”

Many participants’ remarks suggested that they expected officers to be business-like and gruff, even somewhat curt and unsympathetic, especially in adversarial encounters such as traffic stops. Indeed, some participants recounted positive experience with officers in tones approaching surprise. “[When] I started to explain what happened,” a Show Low-area man said about a traffic stop, “he actually listened.” And the beneficial impact of a positive officer

“They demand we respect them because of the uniform or whatever. [Officers] have to have the same respect.”

— Tucson-area woman

“Instead of handcuffing me or treating me as a criminal, he pretty much treated me as an equal.”

— Yuma-area man

demeanor was illustrated by a young Yuma-area man who said he’d had past negative encounters with police but changed his attitude after his treatment following an accident:

Ever since then, I guess I have a softer side for sheriffs and policemen.... The accident was obviously my fault. But instead of, you know, handcuffing me or treating me as a criminal, he pretty much treated me as an equal, and didn’t use his power to treat me bad.

Statewide Opinion Poll

A public opinion poll was administered by telephone in May 2007 by Behavior Research Center in Phoenix. A total of 800 randomly selected adult heads of households throughout Arizona were asked questions⁵ concerning:

- Their overall trust in teachers and doctors
- Their overall trust in law enforcement officers
- The most important attributes of law enforcement officers
- Past conduct that should disqualify law enforcement applicants

The poll also repeated the first four questions from the focus group questionnaire.

The results, which have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5%, confirmed the Arizona public’s general confidence in police. Nine out of ten (89%) indicated they have either a great deal (42%) or some (47%) trust in police. Only 10% indicated they do not have much (4%) or any trust (6%). It is impossible to know for certain what distinguishes “some trust” from “a great deal of trust” for individual respondents; but the choice of “some trust” might reflect a wariness towards police that was evident in the focus groups. In contrast to the groups’ results, however, the positive assessment of officers was slightly higher than that given to medical doctors (86%) or public school teachers (84%). Officers received consistently high scores across *all* demographic subgroups; they received somewhat lower positive readings from lower-income residents (78%), minority residents (82%), rural residents (84%), and those under 35 years of age (85%), but it should be noted that some of these differences fall within the margin of error.

⁵ See appendix for the public opinion survey questions.

Poll respondents were also asked to rate the importance of five selected attributes of police officers on a 1 to 10 scale, with 10 the most important. The most highly rated officer attribute was “to treat the public with respect,” with a mean (average) score of 9.4. This supports the findings of the focus groups about the importance of officers’ demeanor in dealing with residents. Three additional attributes received mean scores of about 9.0: “To follow the law in his or her personal life” (9.1); “To operate strictly according to the law” (9.0), and “To treat everyone the same” (8.9). The fifth attribute, “To use personal judgment resolving situations,” received a noticeably lower mean score of 8.2. These rankings of attributes were generally consistent across demographic subgroups. When participants were asked to suggest any other important attributes police officers should have, the largest group spoke of honesty and trustworthiness (44%), and compassion and sensitivity (21%).

When participants were asked to indicate what in a person’s past, if anything, should disqualify them from becoming a police officer, most responses concerned criminal involvement (71%), notably including “criminal record” and “felony arrest.” The other major category focused on a person’s personal traits (28%), including drug or alcohol addiction (11%). These results track in part with the 1993 Arizona public opinion poll described above. In that survey, 70% of respondents to this same question cited “having criminal record or felony” as the primary disqualifier. However, the second disqualifier mentioned by respondents in this year’s poll was “drug/alcohol addiction,” which was mentioned by 11% of respondents. In the 1993 poll, 29% of adults cited “drug abuse” — presumably a lesser standard — as the second most serious disqualifier.

The three statements about police intentions and conduct also received strong positive responses. Eighty-eight percent of residents either strongly agreed (26%) or agreed (62%) with the statement “I believe police officers try to do what is right for my community;” 81% agreed with the statement, “I generally trust police officers to tell the truth;” and 80% agreed with the statement, “most police officers usually treat people with respect.” These levels are significantly higher than those of the focus group participants. Minority and rural poll respondents had the lowest levels of agreement with each of the three statements.

The majority of respondents to both the focus group survey questions and the public opinion poll generally trust the police. The higher levels

Asked what should disqualify police applicants, most poll respondents mentioned criminal involvement and drug addiction.

CONFIDENCE AND CAUTION:

A R I Z O N A N S ’ T R U S T I N T H E P O L I C E

of trust shown by poll respondents may be explained by two factors: first, focus group members reflected a broad cross-section of Arizonans, while the poll drew upon a representative sample of all heads of households; second, the differences may in part be due simply to how differently people respond to different types of inquiries — e.g., while participating in a face-to-face group discussion vs. answering a series of short questions in a private telephone conversation with an anonymous caller. As noted above, the focus group members' *written* comments were favorable towards police.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the complexity of the police-public relationship, several points emerge clearly from this research:

Arizonans worry that small instances of police misconduct can lead to bigger ones.

A majority of Arizonans have confidence in their law enforcement officers. More than 60% of focus-group participants said they felt positively toward police, as did an even higher percentage (80%+) of statewide opinion poll respondents. Poll respondents even rated police higher than doctors or teachers. Focus-group participants expressed numerous concerns and complaints about police, but with few exceptions also acknowledged a fairly high level of overall confidence.

Arizonans worry about a “slippery slope” of police misconduct that can start with minor infractions. Residents are very concerned about police behavior, yet are prepared to distinguish between various levels of misconduct and to heed the details in order to reach a judgment. For example, the officer who made a disrespectful remark to a motorist was judged less harshly by most focus group participants because he/she was responding to an initial insult from the motorist. Arizonans do seem willing — in the words of the Philadelphia police captain quoted above — to “indulge” their officers a little bit. On the other hand, residents also worry that small instances of misconduct can lead to more serious ones. Focus-group participants commonly expressed concern about lesser misconduct for fear of where it might lead. “It doesn’t seem like that big of a deal moving to the head of the line,” a Tucson-area man said, “but it shows you what they think about society and their importance towards other people, which leads to abuses that are much more serious.”

Arizonans don't expect perfection, but they do want officers who are honest, respectful, fair, patient, and law-abiding. There was much agreement here among the choices made by the 1997 Arizona workshops (page 6), and the current study's focus groups (page 9) and statewide poll (page 22).

Arizonans are especially concerned about illegal acts that violate basic moral standards. Among the scenarios, these involved the treatment of suspects (offering freedom for sexual favors), treatment of minorities (racial profiling), and subverting the justice process (planting evidence, stealing from crime scenes). Participants reacted sharply to these scenarios, and brushed aside efforts to mitigate the misconduct by, say, postulating the unsavory nature of the individuals being targeted. Participants repeatedly expressed the view that officers must themselves obey the laws that they're sworn to enforce. This sentiment was echoed by poll respondents, who gave high scores to officer attributes of following the law in their personal and professional activities.

How officers act is as important as what actions they take. Perhaps the strongest and most consistent finding is the critical importance of the manner in which officers conduct themselves during all contacts with residents. This is also a frequent finding in the national research literature; and respondents to this study's poll ranked treating the public with respect highest among officer attributes. These concerns seem to apply to even the most minor and routine of encounters — some participants asked why officers couldn't simply act friendlier when encountered in public. Given the importance of personal contacts in shaping beliefs, itself based on participants' tendency to generalize from individual officers to the entire institution, officer demeanor stands out as area where leadership and training could make a difference. When officers do show respect and patience, residents remember it — like a Phoenix-area man cited for DUI who made a point of praising the officer who gave him the ticket: "He still respected me enough to know that I am human."

Harvard's Mark Moore, borrowing a phrase from management consultant Karl Albrecht, referred to such encounters as "moments of truth" that could have a large impact on the police-public relationship. It is almost as if officers must, in their everyday routine actions, re-legitimize the authority of law enforcement in the minds of the public. It's a challenging task, but also an opportunity to both enlist greater public allegiance and to model the sort of behavior that a lot of

“Don't treat me like the pedophile or the drug dealer because you have to deal with them. I'm not him.”

— Phoenix-area man

Arizonans still associate, perhaps nostalgically, with Officer Friendly. As a Phoenix-area focus group member said:

[Officers'] behavior toward the average, ordinary Joe has got to change....It needs to be more respectful, it needs to be more social....That's how you get people to like and respect and trust you. Don't treat me like the pedophile or the drug dealer because you have to deal with them. I'm not him."

Near the conclusion of the focus groups, participants were asked what measures a police agency could take to repair diminished or eroded public trust. Their most common replies included:

- Making officers more highly visible to residents, through such means as foot or bike patrols — so officers aren't just "zooming past with the windows rolled up"
- Promoting more involvement of officers with the public in "positive" circumstances, such as in community activities
- Hiring and maintaining a more diverse force
- Offering more credible, responsive avenues for citizen complaints and a more transparent departmental disciplinary process
- Being sure to punish serious officer misconduct quickly, severely, and publicly
- Promoting leadership values and recruitment, promotion, and training policies that emphasize friendliness, respect, patience and sensitivity in contacts with the public

**Arizona police agencies
today find themselves
immersed in modern
America's "customer
service culture."**

Further Research

Two major findings of this research are 1) the importance of officer demeanor in maintaining public trust and 2) the impact that even minor police misconduct can have on the police-public relationship. These suggest two avenues of inquiry:

Officer attitudes

The advent of community policing reflects the realization that officers' duties go well beyond crime control, and that officers must be prepared to play these extended roles. However, past research in Arizona (see page 10) revealed a tendency for officers to downplay the importance of such skills as "informing and advising the public" and "learning about and becoming known by the community." It would be useful to know whether most Arizona officers still place so little value on such duties.

Officer demeanor

Given the potential impact on public trust of officer demeanor, AZPOST might wish to examine how often Arizona agencies receive complaints about demeanor and what actions, if any, are taken.

Police agencies in Arizona today find themselves immersed, for better or worse, in modern America's "customer service culture," in which residents have come to expect equality in treatment rather than orders from authority. Community policing initiatives are, in part, responses to this. But law enforcement officers, who are invested with lethal coercive powers and relied upon as the primary actors in emergencies of every sort, can go only so far down this path. One way of coping with this ambivalence has been the emergence of a tacit "deal" between the police and the public: the former handle society's dangerous and unpleasant tasks, while the latter tolerate deviations from ideal conduct. This is hardly an inspiring bargain.

Surely a preferable arrangement would be for officers to adhere rigorously to the highest standards, and for the public to take on more responsibility for public safety – matching its high expectations of police with greater resources, cooperation, and compensation. But that bargain does not seem likely, leaving AZPOST the duty to promote the highest possible law enforcement standards regardless of what deal the customers are offering. This research for this report shows, first, that Arizona officers enjoy a high degree of public trust; and, second, that they must go out and re-earn it every day.

APPENDIX

Opinion Poll Questions

1. In general, how much would you say you trust teachers?
A great deal,
Somewhat,
Not much, or
Not at all?
2. In general, how much would you say you trust doctors?
A great deal,
Somewhat,
Not much, or
Not at all?
3. In general, how much would you say you trust the police and other law enforcement officers?
A great deal,
Somewhat,
Not much, or
Not at all?
4. On scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the least important attribute a law enforcement officer should have and 10 is the most important, how important are the following?
 - Operates strictly according to the law
 - Treats everyone the same
 - Follows the law in his/her personal life
 - Treats the public with respect
 - Uses personal judgment in resolving situations
5. Are there any other attributes that you consider very important for law enforcement officers to have? _____
[Record up to 3]
6. What in a person's past do you believe should disqualify them from becoming a law enforcement officer? _____
[Record up to 3]
7. I'm going to read out a series of statements. Please tell me how much you agree with each one, on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree:
 - I generally trust police officers to tell the truth.
 - I believe police officers try to do what is right for my community.
 - Most police officers usually treat people with respect.

[SCALE: Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree]

Opinion Poll Results

Table 5: Would you say you have a great deal of trust, some trust, not much trust or no trust for the following groups?

Groups	Great deal	Some	Not much	None	Not sure
Police officers	42%	47%	4%	6%	1%
Medical doctors	35%	51%	8%	5%	1%
Public school teachers	37%	47%	8%	3%	5%

Table 6: On scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means not important at all and 10 means extremely important, how important are each of the following attributes for a police officer to have?

Attributes	1-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	Not sure
To treat the public with respect	2%	3%	9%	86%	
To follow the law in his or her personal life	4%	6%	11%	80%	
To operate strictly according to the law	2%	7%	19%	72%	
To treat everyone the same	6%	7%	11%	75%	1%
To use personal judgments resolving situations	6%	12%	28%	52%	2%

Table 7: Are there any other attributes that you consider very important for a police officer to have?

Attributes	%
None	52%
Personal attributes (honest, trustworthy, etc.)	44%
Job performance (well trained, listen to public, etc.)	5%
Appearance/health (clean cut, fit, etc.)	2%

Table 8: What in a person's past do you believe should disqualify them from becoming a police officer?

Incidents in Person's Past	%
Criminal involvement (criminal record, felony arrest, etc.)	71%
Personal traits (drug/alcohol addiction, etc.)	44%
Nothing	7%
Not sure	9%

Table 9: Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree not disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
I believe police officers try to do what is right for my community.	26%	62%	5%	5%	1%	1%
I generally trust police officers to tell the truth.	22%	59%	8%	8%	1%	1%
Most police officers usually treat people with respect.	16%	64%	7%	10%	2%	1%

Written comments by focus-group participants on their encounters with police

- ▶ *Attempting to enter college dorm w/o proper ID, although a matriculated student, and was stopped by officers. No other students were questioned for similar infractions, ONLY students of color.*
- ▶ *My 17-year-old daughter was in a park after it was closed. The police officer called me to let me know and see if I wanted to pick her up or if he should drop her off! I wanted him to charge her for being in the park after, but he refused. He told me I really did not want to do that. I called his supervisor to have her charged and he never called me either!*
- ▶ *Officer tried to get me for DUI, when he couldn't, he gave me a speeding ticket, and said he paced my speed with his vehicle. This was a very winding road and you cannot pace like that in this terrain. The officer lied.*
- ▶ *I live near Broadway and Alvernon. I hear gunshots most nights of the week. Unsolved murder, methlabs, midtown rapist, and so on. Police are like anyone else, they will stretch the truth if needed in court. I find that a majority of the police carry a chip on their shoulders, play judge and jury, [are] belligerent and use unnecessary force. I think that new recruits should be scrutinized more, have personality testing. Provide more in depth of continuing training [in] human relations psychology.*
- ▶ *There is a program that some of the neighborhood associations in Tucson are involved with to help fight crime. The Tucson police work actively with neighborhood leaders and residents to address the criminal activities associated with meth use. Regular meetings are held monthly to determine areas to be watched closely, plans of action and give progress reports. I attended one of these meetings in December and left with a more positive impression of Tucson Police.*
- ▶ *DPS officer rear-ended me, neither local police department nor DPS officers were concerned with me, only their own. Another time, my husband had to be taken down to the police station for paperwork and then would be released. The officer said he would not put the handcuffs on in front of our daughter so that she would not get upset. He put the handcuffs on my husband on the side of the house and put him in the back of the police car. Then he drove the car around to the front of the house so my daughter still saw her daddy being taken away.*
- ▶ *Positive experience. When I explained my action, the officer apologized for stopping me.*
- ▶ *I was pulled over on my university campus and I felt like the police officer judged me and presumed things before even talking to me.*

He was rude and seemed to act annoyed with pulling me over (although HE did). He saw me as a flighty college girl wasting his time. I was very polite and probably overly nice, but he seemed to have had a bad day. My good attitude won him over in the end and he ended things nicely. I've found many times my young age effects police officer's attitudes negatively. They dismiss me easily.

- ▶ *Police came to the scene of a car accident. They were respectful. Not too sympathetic, but at least they were helpful.*
- ▶ *Pulled over recently for "following too closely"-didn't even receive a warning but the officer spent a lot of time shining his flashlight into my car, especially the back seat, and the whole incident took almost half an hour for Nothing.*
- ▶ *Pulled over for registration issue, cited for tags and not other possible violations.*
- ▶ *Worked as reporter covered excessive force case. I was arrested for trying to seek comment from cop who killed woman. I met several Border Patrol agents who acted with a high degree of professionalism. Somerton AZ cop was attitudinal and threatened to jail me for speeding. A DPS officer was nice and let me go with warning after speeding. Covered story where Chandler cop let a buddy cop go although he was a DUI suspect.*
- ▶ *Cop was too lazy and too friendly with the family we had a dispute with to either write a report or be confrontational with them. They took their side and it was unfair and unprofessional.*
- ▶ *I was a witness at the scene of a hit and run. The first thing the officer does when he arrives is ask me for my identification. I felt insulted, but I didn't show it. [It] almost made me not want to be a witness anymore.*
- ▶ *I feel I was stereotyped because of what I was driving.*
- ▶ *Yuma in the summer has a high break-in rate.*
- ▶ *Police officer pulled me out of my car because I crossed in front of his. He was driving too slow[ly] and I was running late to the office, so when I crossed him he got mad and asked me to pullover and was rude.*
- ▶ *Most officers enter the field of law enforcement for altruistic reasons – to help and serve. Their belief systems have been formed since birth. Some are helpful, some are not. Basically they do their best with their egotistic minds.*

-
- ▶ *The manager called the cops on me because I was walking around in the Store. The reason was because I was wearing all black. He said I was looking at everyone in the store as if I was going to do something. I think this is all a joke because there is no evidence that I did anything wrong. Next time I should ask for the security tape.*
 - ▶ *Officer was helpful and full of information*
 - ▶ *Pulled over for running a red-light. I explained I was distracted by back seat drivers on a road I was unfamiliar with and he let me go with a warning.*
 - ▶ *Contacts in years past — five years or more — were extremely helpful. They were looking for a murderer driving a stolen SUV identical to mine. Sheriff's deputy was somewhat tense at first, but relaxed as it became obvious I didn't fit the description of [the] individual they were looking for. Then suggested I repair my broken taillight and warned I might be pulled over again. Polite, professional.*
 - ▶ *The police officer who pulled me over was almost apologetic when giving me the ticket. I was pulled for speeding and the police officer pulled me over and gave me a stern warning that I was going too fast in a school zone. I was in the Army and I told him I was on my way to military formation. He knew I was a soldier and let me off with a warning and "have a nice day". That was cool.*
 - ▶ *I was pulled over and not happy about it and had a little interaction with the cop.*
 - ▶ *Stopped for HOV violation and received a ticket. The officer was polite and professional.*
 - ▶ *Glendale officer was polite, explaining my driving was fine, but my vehicle registration had expired.*
 - ▶ *Most police officers will respect you so long as you respect them. One or more bad experiences, indeed, even observations regarding treatment of others, does not always affect my judgment of individuals.*



Focus Group Questionnaire

Preliminary questions. Please mark the answer that best matches your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I generally feel safe in my neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I generally trust police officers to tell the truth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I believe police officers usually try to do what is right for my community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Most police officers usually treat people with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you had personal contact with police for any reason within the past 3 years?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No				
6. If so, was it a good experience?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Neither good nor bad				

Please add any comments you wish about the incident:

If more space is needed, please use the back ➡

Scenarios. Below are a number of short descriptions of behavior by police officers, some of which you might consider to be improper. We want to know what sort of misconduct by officers would affect your trust in all police. That is, whether learning about the acts described below— say by reading about them in the newspaper — would affect your overall level of trust in police.

Please rate each of the following items on a scale of 1 to 10 by circling the number that applies. The number 1 (least serious) means “would have no effect my overall trust in police;” number 10 (most serious) means “would strongly undermine my overall trust in police.”

HOW WOULD YOUR LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE POLICE BE AFFECTED — IF AT ALL — IF YOU FOUND OUT THAT...

- Officers routinely take advantage of their status while off duty.** (One example: Off-duty officers out to dinner with their families ask restaurant owners to move them to the front of the waiting line.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Officers misuse their access to confidential information.** (One example: Patrol officers who see attractive women while patrolling their beats seek out the women’s identity by checking their license plates on the official databases.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Numerous officers use marijuana off duty.**

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Some officers plant evidence on people they know to be hardened criminals.** (One example: Patrol officers who pull over motorists they know to be serious criminals sometimes plant a pistol or other contraband in the car, then arrest the driver.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Officers routinely fail to arrest fellow officers when warranted.** (One example: Officers who stop obviously drunk motorists who turn out to be fellow officers don’t arrest the drivers, but instead let them call someone to drive them home.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Officers sometimes fail to promptly respond to selected 911 calls.** (One example: Officers receiving 911 calls about domestic violence from an address they’ve repeatedly visited — only to have the victim refuse to press charges — drive slowly to the address, hoping the episode will be over before they arrive.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Numerous officers sometimes treat individuals disrespectfully.** (One example: An officer who pulls over a speeding car whose driver angrily yells out, “What the hell are you stopping me for, idiot?” might reply, “Because today is ‘Arrest a Jerk Day.’”)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Many officers accept small favors from citizens.** (One example: Patrol officers regularly accept free lunches and snacks from restaurants on their beats.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

- Officers sometimes steal from crime scenes.** (One example: Officers searching the home of an arrested drug dealer find new luxury watches and pocket them.)

Least Serious
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most Serious

10. **Officers routinely do favors for fellow officers.** (One example: Off-duty officers working security at a sports stadium let fellow off-duty officers get prized parking spots while other motorists wait in line.)

Least Serious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most Serious

11. **Officers improperly use their authority.** (One example: Officers arresting women on suspicion of prostitution offer to let them go if they perform a sex act.)

Least Serious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most Serious

12. **Officers treat people differently based on their ethnicity.** (One example: Patrol officers assigned to reduce the number of drug runners passing through their jurisdiction stop all younger Latino and African-American drivers.)

Least Serious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most Serious

13. **Officers Commonly use inappropriate force.** (One example: Officers who know that gang members have threatened an African-American family – but can't obtain evidence to prosecute them – visit some of the gang's leaders, slap them around and threaten worse if the harassment doesn't stop.)

Least Serious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most Serious

14. **Officers regularly make false statements to supervisors.** (One example: Officers assigned to stay within a patrol area sometimes leave the assigned area for an extended period of time, but deny having done so when questioned by their sergeant.)

Least Serious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most Serious

15. **Officers enforce the law selectively.** (One example: Officers who know there are arrest warrants out for their friends don't arrest the friend but instead warn them about the warrants.)

Least Serious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most Serious

Demographic Information. Please check the following items:

Your gender Male Female

Your age _____

Your Race/ethnicity
 White
 African-American
 Hispanic/Latino
 Native American
 Asian American
 Other, please specify:

Your education level
 less than high school
 high school graduate (or GED)
 some college
 associate degree
 bachelor's degree
 post-graduate degree

Your political leanings
 conservative
 moderate
 liberal

Your political affiliation
 Republican
 Democrat
 Independent
 Libertarian
 Other, please specify:

Where would you say you get most of your information about the police?

newspapers TV news radio Internet
 other people TV police shows movies Other, please specify:

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Prepared by Dana Bennett

Applied Research Associates. *Community Needs Assessment: Implications for Patrol Officer Training and Selection.* Phoenix, Arizona, December 1997.

Summarizes 45 community workshops held throughout Arizona that attempted to define optimal qualities for police officers. The characteristics ranked the highest by both public and police were “honesty, listening, making sound decisions and performing effectively under stress, officer adherence to laws and rules, being responsible and dependable, being open-minded and nonjudgmental, having concern for the safety and welfare of others, and interpersonal sensitivity.” The study recommends that the basic training program be enhanced with more training in general interpersonal skills and general decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Brandl, Steven G., James Frank, Robert E. Worden, and Timothy S. Bynum. “Global and Specific Attitudes Toward the Police: Disentangling the Relationship.” *Justice Quarterly* 11 (March 1994): 119-134.

A direct relationship exists between global and specific attitudes toward law enforcement. The relationship, however, is not a strong one and might not be generalizable. Additional research is recommended, especially within and across different social contexts. In particular, future research should examine how people form global, or general, attitudes toward law enforcement.

Chermak, Steven, Edmund McGarrell, and Jeff Gruenewald. “Media coverage of police misconduct and attitudes toward police.” *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 29 (2006): 261-281.

Media coverage of a celebrated police misconduct case does not change general attitudes about the police, but does tend to affect a person’s perception of the guilt of the officers involved. A correlation exists between general attitudes about the police and concerns about neighborhood crime.

Christenson, James A. and Gregory S. Taylor. “The Socially Constructed and Situational Context for Assessment of Public Services.” *Social Sciences Quarterly* 64 (June 1983): 264-274.

The attitudes of public service recipients about that service are affected by the social situations of the recipients. Simply changing the provision of that service may not necessarily change attitudes.

Erez, Edna. “Self-Defined ‘Desert’ and Citizens’ Assessment of the Police.” *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 75 (1984): 1276-1299.

The frequency of police contacts is explained more by offender

status than by demographics. Racial differences are not apparent among those who are stopped or questioned by the police; however, more blacks than whites are searched by police.

Negative attitudes toward police are affected more by race than by offender status. Blacks' negative attitudes appear to be based on more factors than direct experience.

Franks, James, Brad W. Smith, and Kenneth J. Novak. "Exploring the Basis of Citizens' Attitudes Toward the Police." *Police Quarterly*. 8 (June 2005): 206-228.

Public attitudes toward the police are significantly affected by contact with the police, but a negative encounter does not necessarily dilute generally supportive opinions. For those who do not experience a personal interaction with the police, the basis for general attitudes appears vague and might or might not be changeable. The development of people's general opinions of the police has not been sufficiently studied.

Franklin, Raymond A. *2005 Survey of POST Agencies Regarding Certification Practices*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, November 2005.

Most states operate law enforcement certification programs. Typically, law enforcement personnel are de-certified after felony convictions.

Fyfe, James J. and Robert Kane. *Bad Cops: A Study of Career-Ending Misconduct Among New York City Police Officers*. Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. February 2005.

Definitions of police misconduct and corruption are not clearly delineated. Education levels and continued training are important, and officer diversity, in both race and gender, has improved police behavior.

Gleason, Tag. "Ethics Training for Police." *The Police Chief* 73 (November 2006). Not paginated.

Ethics training is an important tool for police officers, and agencies can provide supportive environments. Ethical action, however, is dependent on the individual's choice.

Hickman, Matthew J. *Citizen Complaints about Police Use of Force*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, June 2006.

Large city police departments tend to be the subject of a higher number of complaints about police. Among all complaints, regardless of department size, 31 percent had sufficient evidence to pursue the allegations against the officers; of those, most were exonerated. In total, eight percent of complaints resulted in disciplinary actions, one-third did not have sufficient evidence, and one-fourth were unfounded.

Horowitz, Jake. “Making Every Encounter Count: Building Trust and Confidence in the Police.” *NIJ Journal* (January 2007): 8-11.

Public satisfaction with the police is generally high, but is affected by demographics, neighborhood crime, and direct and vicarious experiences and can be difficult to change. Race has an indirect affect on public attitudes.

Jackson, Jonathan, and Sunshine, Jason, “Public Confidence in Policing,” *British Journal of Criminology*, (2007) 47

This study, conducted in a rural English location, finds that trust and confidence in the police are shaped not by sentiments about risk and crime, but by evaluations of the values and morals that underpin community life.

Jesilow, Paul, J’ona Meyer, and Nazi Namazzi. “Public Attitudes Toward the Police.” *American Journal of Police* XIV (1995): 67-88.

Public attitudes about police are directly affected by their perceptions of their neighborhoods. Other factors that affect opinions are age and having requested police help. Ethnicity does not predict attitudes toward police.

Kelling, George L. “*Broken Windows*” and *Police Discretion*. NIJ Research Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October 1999.

Police officers would benefit from the development of guidelines that would assist them in the exercise of their professional judgment within the situational context of the neighborhood in which they work.

Klockars, Carl B., Sanja Kutnjak Ivkovich, and Maria R. Haberfeld. *Enhancing Police Integrity*. NIJ Research in Brief. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, December 2005.

Clearly developed and evenly applied policies and procedures are important factors in shaping a law enforcement agency’s “culture of integrity.” The willingness of line officers to conform to their agency’s rules over their personal concern about individual colleagues is also significant.

Koper, Christopher S., Edward R. Maguire, and Gretchen E. Moore. With contributions by David E. Huffer. *Hiring and Retention Issues in Police Agencies: Readings on the Determinants of Police Strength, Hiring and Retention of Officers, and the Federal COPS Program*. Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. October 2001.

Growth of law enforcement agencies is directly affected by rising crime rates and increasing population numbers. Decreases in law enforcement agencies are directly affected by available funding and lack of qualified applicants, but not by declining crime rates. Many agencies have reported difficulties in filling open positions, but the historical data does not exist to provide perspective on

this issue. Current difficulties may be attributable to a rising number of unanticipated vacancies, the strong economy, and the sharp increase in the number of hiring opportunities at the end of the 1990s.

Martinelli, Thomas J., “Unconstitutional Policing: The Ethical Challenges in Dealing with Noble Cause Corruption,” *Police Chief* 73, 10, October 2006.

Noble cause corruption, or “corruption committed in the name of good ends,” is a subtle and insidious type of corruption that, if unchecked, can do serious damage to departments and to the police-public relationship. Rooted in officer arrogance and supervisory cowardice, noble cause corruption must be prevented by internal structures that reduce cover-ups of misconduct and maintain transparency in the disciplinary process.

Maxson, Cheryl, Karen Hennigan, and David C. Sloane. “Not Just a Popularity Contest: Factors that Influence Public Opinion of the Police.” National Criminal Justice Reference Service. October 22, 2001.

The factors most closely linked to opinions about local police are personal experiences, feelings of safety, and neighborhood functionality. In particular, personal experience with an officer appears to be the driving factor in developing an opinion about local police. The demographic factor most correlated with higher police approval is lower education. Survey information would be more meaningful for law enforcement if studies such as this were conducted annually.

Merrill, Bruce D., *Public Expectations Regarding Police Officer Certification in Arizona*. November 23, 1993.

Most Arizonans believe that previous use of cocaine or heroin should disqualify someone from being a police officer; previous use of marijuana is not as important. Most also believe that a criminal record should be a reason for disqualification. Few Arizonans believe that disqualification should automatically result if a person’s background includes child molestation, a violent temper, a physical disability, homosexuality, domestic violence, or a bad driving record.

Miller, Joel, Robert C. Davis, Nicole J. Henderson, John Markovic, and Christopher Ortiz. “Measuring Influences on Public Opinion of the Police Using Time-Series Data: Results of a Pilot Study.” *Police Quarterly* 8 (September 2005): 394-401.

Media coverage of police activities does not cause public opinion to change measurably. In general, public opinion about the police appears to remain stable.

Moore, Mark. “Legitimizing criminal justice policies and practices.” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* 66 (October 1997): 14-22.

To “legitimate [the U.S. criminal justice system] in the eyes of citizens,” the system’s contacts with citizens must be perceived

as fair, accountable, and of a high quality, regardless of the point of contact between citizen and law enforcement.

Paternoster, Raymond and Bachman, Ronet. "Do Fair Procedures Matter? The Effect of Procedural Justice on Spouse Assault." *Law & Society Review* 31 (1997): 163-204.

Although a consensus has not yet been reached among researchers about the effects of arrest in domestic violence situations, indications are that domestic violence offenders who perceive that they were treated fairly by law enforcement do not re-offend.

Rosenbaum, Dennis P., Amie M. Schuck, Sandra K. Costello, Darnell F. Hawkins, and Marianne K. Ring. "Attitudes Toward the Police: The Effects of Direct and Vicarious Experience." *Police Quarterly* 8 (September 2005): 343-365.

An existing opinion about the police is ingrained and influences the perception that rises out of a future encounter. Direct contact does not greatly alter an existing opinion, but learning about another's direct encounter can influence opinion.

Samuels, Julie E. *The Measurement of Police Integrity*. NIJ Research in Brief. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, May 2000.

Police officers do not perceive various types of police misconduct to be of equal severity; however, the more serious the infraction, the more likely the police officer is to report it. Police officers tend to perceive as fair the expected discipline for infractions. Environments of integrity vary among law enforcement agencies.

Sewell, Charlie, "Gratuities: Pay Now or Later," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 76, 4 (April 2007)

It is always a tricky proposition for officers to accept even small favors, such as free coffee or snacks. While the gesture and acceptance might both be done in good faith, repeated occurrences can lead to problematic expectations and attitudes on either side, and can create an appearance of impropriety.

Sherman, Lawrence W. "Trust and Confidence in Criminal Justice." *NIJ Journal* (2002): 23-31.

Despite improvements in the criminal justice system, public trust in the police has eroded along with public confidence in government in general. Police trust is affected by perceptions of fairness and inclusivity within the criminal justice system.

Sklansky, David Alan. "Criminology: Not your Father's Police Department: Making Sense of the New Demographics of Law Enforcement." *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 96 (Spring 2006): 1209-1244.

Police agencies are more diverse than they were 30 years ago, but not as diverse as the communities they serve. A diverse

organization of law enforcement personnel, especially in gender and race, provides opportunities for additional reforms in policing and should continue to be encouraged.

Skogen, Wesley G. "Citizen Satisfaction with Police Encounters." *Police Quarterly* 8 (September 2005): 298-321.

This study found that the on-scene actions of police significantly affected citizens' satisfaction with their law enforcement encounters. People were more likely to have a positive opinion of the police if they believed they had been treated fairly, regardless of the outcome of the encounter. People were more likely to be satisfied with their police encounter if they had summoned the police and more likely to be dissatisfied if they had been stopped by the police.

Skolnick, Jerome H. *On Democratic Policing*. Ideas In American Policing Series. Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, August 1999.

Policing is one of the most visible functions of government, and former Communist countries can learn from American experiences with the role of police in a democratic environment in which the intersection of public safety, openness, and accountability is key.

Sunshine, Jason. "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing." *Law & Society Review* 37 (2003): 513-547.

Public support for police is rooted in people's social values. If people perceive police procedures as fair, they are more likely to perceive law enforcement as legitimate and obey the law on a daily basis.

Tyler, Tom. "Obeying the Law in America: Procedural Justice and the Sense of Fairness." *Issues of Democracy*. IIP Electronic Journals 6 (July 2001): 16-21.

For the most part, people obey the law out of a sense of ethics. Key to developing that sense is the perception that the system is fair and that they have been fairly treated within the system. A person's ethnicity, race, or gender does not directly affect that perception. Deterrence has little effect on compelling people to remain within the law.

Tyler, Tom R. "Policing in Black and White: Ethnic Group Differences in Trust and Confidence in the Police." *Police Quarterly* 8 (September 2005): 322-342.

The perception of fairness when police exercise their authority greatly influences the level of public trust. Public willingness to cooperate with law enforcement is directly linked to trust. Generally, public trust is moderately positive. Trust in the police is lower among members of minority groups.

Weisburd, David and Rosann Greenspan with Edwin E. Hamilton, Hubert Williams, and Kellie A. Bryant. *Police Attitudes Toward*

Abuse of Authority: Findings from a National Study. NIJ Research in Brief. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, May 2000.

The majority of American police officers think that police abuse is infrequent, training is important, and community policing does not affect the potential to abuse authority. The opinions of black and nonblack officers differed significantly.

Weitzer, Ronald and Steven A. Tuch. "Determinants of Public Satisfaction with the Police." *Police Quarterly* 8 (September 2005): 279-297.

Race is only one predictor of public satisfaction with the police. Perceptions of personal and neighborhood safety can affect attitudes toward police, and community and effective policing can improve levels of public satisfaction. Personal interaction can adversely affect Whites' opinions of police, vicarious experience can affect attitudes of Hispanics and Blacks, and media coverage of police misconduct appears to affect only Blacks' opinions.

Yearwood, Douglas L. and Stephanie Freeman. "Analyzing Concerns among Police Administrators: Recruitment and Retention of Police Officers in North Carolina." *The Police Chief* 71 (March 2004).

The most common recruitment obstacles are inter-agency and private sector competition, budget limitations, and agency size. External issues are the war in Iraq and economic restrictions.



Morrison Institute for Public Policy analyzes current and proposed public policies that are important to the future of greater Phoenix, the state of Arizona, and the nation. Its mission is to conduct research which informs, advises, and assists Arizona's state and community leaders. A unit in the School of Public Affairs (College of Public Programs) at Arizona State University, the Institute is a bridge between the university and the community.

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