CENTER ON YOUTH JUSTICE

Coming of Age with Stop and Frisk:

Experiences, Self-Perceptions, and Public Safety Implications

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Executive Summary

Amid the debate about stop and frisk, its relationship to reductions in crime, and concerns about racial profiling, one question has to date gone largely unexplored: How does being stopped by police, and the frequency of those stops, affect those who experience these stops at a young age?

This is a highly consequential question because a body of research indicates that negative encounters with police during an individual's developmental years can erode his or her confidence in the justice system. In New York City, at least half of all recorded stops annually involve those between the ages of 13 and 25. In 2012, the most recent year for which data is available, just over 286,000 young people in this age group were stopped.

The Vera Institute of Justice—which has a long history of working with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) on criminal justice system reform (see box on page 21)—launched a study in the fall of 2011 to examine this question. Focused exclusively on young people in highly patrolled, high-crime areas who have been stopped by police at least once, the study surveyed roughly 500 people between the ages of 18 and 25 and conducted in-depth interviews with a smaller sample of 13- to 21-year-olds. (The study does not evaluate the efficacy of stop and frisk in terms of its ability to suppress crime, nor does it assess whether or not the NYPD is conducting stops within the scope of what is permitted under the law. See page nine of this report for a description of the study methodology.)

The findings do not tell us how New Yorkers, in general, experience stop and frisk, or feel about the police. They do, however, reveal a great deal about the experiences and perceptions of young New Yorkers who are most likely to be stopped.

This summary report describes findings from the study and offers a series of recommendations.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

> For many young people, stops are a familiar and frequent experience and also perceived to be unjustified and unfair.
  - 44 percent of young people surveyed indicated they had been stopped repeatedly—9 times or more.
  - Less than a third—29 percent—reported ever being informed of the reason for a stop.

> Frisks, searches, threats, and use of force are common.
  - 71 percent of young people surveyed reported being frisked at least once, and 64 percent said they had been searched.
  - 45 percent reported encountering an officer who threatened them, and 46 percent said they had experienced physical force at the hands of an officer.
  - One out of four said they were involved in a stop in which the officer displayed his or her weapon.

> Trust in law enforcement and willingness to cooperate with police is alarmingly low.
  - 88 percent of young people surveyed believe that residents of their neighborhood do not trust the police.
  - Only four in 10 respondents said they would be comfortable seeking help from police if in trouble.
  - Only one in four respondents would report someone whom they believe had committed a crime.

> Young people who have been stopped more often in the past are less willing to report crimes, even when they themselves are the victims. Each additional stop in the span of a year is associated with an eight percent drop in the person's likelihood of reporting a violent crime he or she might experience in the future.

> Half of all young people surveyed had been the victim of a crime, including 39 percent who had been the victim of a violent crime.

> Young people are self-confident and optimistic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vera has a long history of working with the New York Police Department, with much of this work focused on improving police-community relations. In this spirit of collaboration, Vera recommends that the NYPD consider the following steps to address the collateral consequences of stop and frisk that this study reveals:

> In light of the fact that it decreased stops by 22 percent while the crime rate held steady, the NYPD should continue to recalibrate its stop and frisk practices so as to remedy the serious consequences to police-community relations and public safety that this study reveals.

> Expand upon existing trainings to encourage respectful policing that makes people feel they are treated fairly (including informing them of the reason for the stop), and emphasize strategies aimed at reducing the number of stops that escalate to the point where officers make threats and use physical force.

> Collaborate with the predominately black and Hispanic/Latino communities where stop and frisk has been concentrated to improve relationships by finding tangible strategies to put into practice.

> Partner with researchers to better understand the costs and benefits of various proactive policing strategies as well as individual practices such as stop and frisk.

The remainder of this summary report describes these and other key findings in more detail and briefly discusses the recommendations. For a complete presentation of findings, please see the Technical Report at www.vera.org/stop-and-frisk-technical-report.

Foreword

In 2011, the Pipeline Crisis, which studies and seeks solutions to issues that hold young black men back from their potential, reached out to the Vera Institute of Justice about doing a study on how these young men experience stop and frisk. The need for the research seemed critical, given that stops had escalated from 160,000 in 2003 to close to 700,000 in 2011, and there was increasing public anger about the high volume and disproportionate use of this policing strategy. There was descriptive and demographic research about the aggregate numbers of stop and frisks; detailed breakdowns on where they occurred; the race, ethnicity and age of those who were stopped; and the outcomes of those stops. But there was little to nothing about how the practice was experienced by those young adults of color (who are the overwhelming majority of those who are stopped) and, importantly, what this might mean for public safety.

At the time, I was Vera's president and director, and knew that we could contribute to the knowledge about stop and frisk and its potential 'costs' by doing this research. Just as importantly, because of Vera's history of work on community policing—much of it with the New York City Police Department—I knew that the NYPD was likely to engage with us around what we found, and that the research could help foster the kind of behind-the-scenes dialogue that leads to the justice system change that Vera has worked toward with government partners for more than half a century.

A lot has happened since we began the study. The NYPD has reduced stops significantly, by nearly a quarter over the past year, and crime has continued to decline. As the research was winding down last spring, I left Vera to start a new institute at the City University of New York. Vera found a stellar new leader in the ranks of its alumni—Nicholas Turner, who joined in August. Federal Judge Shira A. Scheindlin ruled that stop and frisk as practiced in New York City was unconstitutional. And in early September, Judge Scheindlin appointed my successor as facilitator to work with stakeholders and a federal monitor in seeking remedies for the way stop and frisk is practiced in New York City.

The findings of this study—most significantly, that the City's practice of stop and frisk has unintended adverse consequences resulting in a lack of trust in police and a clear unwillingness to report crimes and provide information to law enforcement—is a starting place for rebuilding trust between those communities and law enforcement. Indeed, by the time this report has been released, Vera will already have briefed the NYPD, the Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, and community-based organizations in the neighborhoods studied in an effort to start that dialogue.

Like all of Vera's work, this research is meant to help improve the systems that people rely on for justice and safety. New York City, thanks in no small measure to the New York Police Department, is after two decades of crime reduction the safest big city in America. It is in everyone's—communities as well as the police that work in those communities—interest for that trend to continue and for people to feel they are treated fairly and respectfully by their police force. It is my hope that this research can play a part in starting to rebuild that trust and sense of legitimacy which is essential for fair and effective policing.

Michael Jacobson
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Former Director, Vera Institute of Justice, 2005-2013

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COMING OF AGE WITH STOP AND FRISK:
EXPERIENCES, SELF-PERCEPTIONS, AND PUBLIC SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

As part of a study of how often police stop young New Yorkers and the nature of those encounters, the Vera Institute of Justice surveyed nearly 500 young people in some of the city's most highly patrolled neighborhoods who reported they had been stopped at least once, interviewed 42 young people along with their parents or caregivers, and conducted focus groups with people who work in the community.

Here is what we learned from the young people we surveyed.

South Bronx
East Harlem
THE BRONX
MANHATTAN
QUEENS
Bedford-Stuyvesant
East New York
BROOKLYN
Jamaica
STATEN ISLAND

GETTING STOPPED BY POLICE IS, FOR MANY, A FAMILIAR EXPERIENCE.

8 out of 10 have been stopped more than once in their lifetime.

44% reported being stopped at least nine times in their lifetime.

Some reported **more than 20** stops.

MOST WERE INVOLVED IN AT LEAST ONE STOP THAT WENT BEYOND A SIMPLE VERBAL INTERACTION WITH THE OFFICER.

70% reported being frisked or searched during at least one stop.

Nearly half reported that officers threatened them and/or used physical force against them.
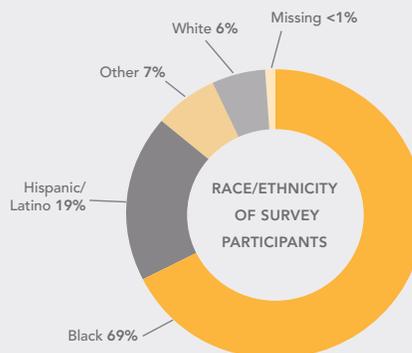
26% reported police displayed a weapon.

THE VAST MAJORITY BELIEVE THAT, IN GENERAL, THE STOPS THEY'VE EXPERIENCED WERE NOT WARRANTED.

More than 8 out of 10 disagreed with the statement, "The officer had a good reason to talk to me."

Less than a third reported ever being informed by police of the reason they were stopped.

85% said illegal items such as weapons, drugs, or open containers of alcohol were never discovered during a stop they had been involved in.

HALF BELIEVE THE OFFICERS WHO STOPPED THEM WERE BIASED AGAINST THEM.

White 6%
Missing <1%
Other 7%
Hispanic/Latino 19%

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Black 69%

51% believe they were treated worse because of their race/ethnicity.

61% believe the way the police acted towards them was influenced by their age.

THE VAST MAJORITY FEEL VERY POSITIVE ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE.

At least **8 out of 10 agreed** with these statements

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"My race and ethnicity are an important reflection of who I am."

"People who know me think I am good at what I do."

"I have just as much chance to succeed in life as people from other neighborhoods."
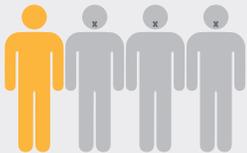
TRUST IN THE POLICE IS ALARMINGLY LOW.

Nearly 9 out of 10 agreed with the statement:

"PEOPLE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD DON'T TRUST THE POLICE."

59% would not feel comfortable asking a police officer for help if they were in trouble.

MOST SAID THEY WOULD NOT REPORT A NEW CRIME TO POLICE, EVEN IF THEY WERE THE VICTIM.

Fewer than 1 out of 4 would report a person who they believe had committed a crime against someone else.

Less than half would report a violent crime in which they were the victim.

Half said they had been a victim of a crime in the past.

WILLINGNESS TO REPORT CRIMES IS LOW OVERALL. BUT THOSE WHO SAY THEY WERE STOPPED MORE OFTEN IN THE PAST YEAR ARE EVEN LESS WILLING TO REPORT CRIME.

For each additional stop in the past year, young people were **8% less willing** to report to police their own future violent victimization.

For example, someone in our survey who reported seven stops in the past year—the average among our survey sample—is **48% less likely** than someone who reported only one stop to contact police if they were to experience a violent crime.

OPPORTUNITIES

Since the Vera Institute of Justice began this study in 2011, the number of stops has gone down by 22 percent, while the levels of violent crime have remained at record lows. Based on what we learned from young people, their parents and caretakers, and people who work in these communities, there are opportunities for the New York Police Department to rebuild trust with residents in ways that enhance public safety even further.

Detailed information about the findings included in this infographic and recommendations for increasing public safety are included in this report.

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Overview

New York City has experienced unparalleled reductions in crime, a phenomenon that social scientists are still struggling to fully understand. Over many of those same years, New York Police Department (NYPD) officers stopped millions of mainly black and Hispanic/Latino residents. The possible relationship between those two trends—the sustained decline in crime citywide and the increasing use of stop, question and frisk (often referred to as "stop and frisk") in minority neighborhoods where crime rates are higher—is the subject of intense debate.

Supporters of stop and frisk argue that it is essential to public safety and credit the practice with getting weapons off the streets and saving lives. Critics describe it as racial profiling and point to the 89 percent of stops in which officers discovered nothing illegal and took no further action. In August 2013, a federal court judge found the NYPD in violation of the Constitution because officers unfairly target blacks and Hispanics/Latinos, stopping and sometimes also frisking and searching them without sufficient reason.[1] The City, which has consistently maintained that the practice is both legal and effective, plans to appeal the decision.[2]

Nearly 10 years of data on stops in New York City reveal a great deal but also raise important questions. In at least 50 percent of recorded stops annually—just over 286,000 in 2012, the most recent full year of data available—those stopped are young, between the ages of 13 and 25. During the vast majority of these stops the officers discovered nothing illegal and took no further action. Understanding how the experience of being stopped by police might affect these young people is important, because prior research suggests that negative encounters with police during an individual's developmental years can change a young person's sense of him or herself and erode confidence in the justice system.[3]

With this issue in mind and building on prior research, the Vera Institute of Justice—which has a long history of working with the NYPD on criminal justice system reform (see box on page 21)—launched a study in the fall of 2011 focused exclusively on young people in highly patrolled, high-crime areas who have been stopped by police at least once. The study took place in six neighborhoods: Bedford-Stuyvesant and East New York in Brooklyn, Jamaica and Jackson Heights in Queens, East Harlem in Manhattan, and the South Bronx. Across these neighborhoods, researchers surveyed roughly 500 people between the ages of 18 and 25 and conducted in-depth interviews with a smaller sample of 13-to-21 year-olds. (See following page for a more detailed description of the study methodology.)

It is important to note that this study does not evaluate the efficacy of stop and frisk in terms of its ability to suppress crime, nor does it assess whether or not the NYPD is conducting stops within the scope of what is permitted

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Researchers began by analyzing administrative data maintained by the New York Police Department (NYPD) to assess where stops of young people documented by law enforcement are spatially concentrated. Based on that data analysis, researchers identified nine stop and frisk "hot spots" and, among those, selected six study sites: Bedford-Stuyvesant and East New York (including Brownsville) in Brooklyn, Jamaica and Jackson Heights in Queens, East Harlem in Manhattan, and the South Bronx—neighborhoods that are among the most highly patrolled in the city.

The study itself features a written survey administered to young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who were randomly intercepted on the streets in each study site, with semi-structured interviews with youth aged 13 to 21 and at least one parent or caregiver, and focus groups with community leaders in each study site. For both the survey and the interview, participation was limited to young people in the study site who said that they had been stopped by police at least once in their life. Because this study focuses exclusively on young people who have been stopped by police, their experiences and views cannot be compared to young people who have had no direct experience of stop and frisk and are not representative of all similarly aged young people living in these neighborhoods.

Most of the items on the 80-question survey—available in Spanish and English—are formulated as multiple-choice questions. The survey uses standardized scales and reflects the best available research on how to reliably elicit information from individuals about their experiences with and perceptions of law enforcement,[a][b][c][d][e] as well as their perceptions of themselves.[f] A copy is included in the Technical Report. In each study site, two researchers stationed themselves in high foot-traffic areas and randomly approached potentially eligible participants, aiming to recruit and survey 100 people.

The interviews with a separate sample of youth provided an opportunity to study younger individuals and to collect more detailed and in-depth information about the experience of being stopped by police. Researchers worked with local community-based organizations to recruit potential interview subjects and then randomly selected participants among eligible youth, aiming to interview 40 youth across the six sites. Interviews were conducted in English, French or Spanish, according to the subject's preference. Copies of the interview guides for youth and parents/caregivers are included in the Technical Report.

These activities began in October 2011, and researchers finished gathering data in April 2013. Because of difficulty recruiting study participants in Jackson Heights, as well as important differences in the nature of crime and policing in that neighborhood compared with the other five neighborhoods, the limited data collected in Jackson Heights was analyzed separately and those findings are presented only in the Technical Report. Across the other five study sites, Vera surveyed a total of 474 young people and interviewed 42 youth and their parents/caregivers. Please see the Technical Report at www.vera.org/stop-and-frisk-technical-report for a description of the methods researchers used to analyze the data they collected.

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a   Tom Tyler and Cheryl Wakslak, "Profiling and Police Legitimacy: Procedural Justice, Attribution of Motive, and Acceptance of Police Authority," *Criminology* 42, no. 2 (2004): 253-282.
b   Robyn Lacks and Jill Gordon, "Adults and Adolescents: The Same or Different? Exploring Police Trust in an Intercity, Adolescent Population," *Criminal Justice Studies,* 18, no. 3 (2005): 271-280.
c   David Brandt and Keith Markus, "Adolescent Attitudes Towards the Police: A New Generation," *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology,* 15, no. 3 (2008): 10-16.
d   Michael Reisig and Roger Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with Police *Justice Quarterly,* 17, no. 3 (2000): 607-630.
e   Delores Jones-Brown, Debunking the Myth of Officer Friendly: How African American Males Experience Community Policing." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 16, no. 2 (2000): 209-229.
f   Rila Luhtanen and Jennifer Crocker, "A Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-Evaluation of One's Social Identity." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, no. 3 (1992): 302-318.

STOP AND FRISK UNDER THE LAW

The legal parameters governing what has come to be called "stop, question and frisk," or more often just "stop and frisk," are rooted in the United States Supreme Court's 1968 landmark decision in *Terry v. Ohio*, which expanded police powers within the confines of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Fourth Amendment protects people from unreasonable search and seizure of their "persons, houses, papers, and effects" by government. Prior to the Court's decision in *Terry*, the Fourth Amendment was not widely understood to allow law enforcement officers to detain and search someone unless they had grounds to make an arrest—referred to as "probable cause" in legal parlance—or had a court-ordered search warrant.

Terry and cases that followed established that police officers may stop and question a person with "reasonable suspicion"—a lower standard than "probable cause"—that the person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime. If, in addition, the officer believes the suspect "may be armed and presently dangerous," the officer may quickly search the person's outer clothing for weapons.[a] These searches, often referred to as "pat-downs" or "frisks," are permitted only to protect the officer or others from harm. For this reason, the belief that a person may be armed and dangerous must be based on more than the officer's "hunch"; it must be grounded in "specific and articulable facts," such as seeing a bulge that might be a firearm. In a *Terry* stop, officers are not permitted to routinely turn out a suspect's pockets or rifle at random though his or her bags looking for contraband. Nor may an officer frisk other individuals merely for being in close proximity to the suspect.[b] With *Terry* serving as a constitutional floor, New York State codified standards for stop and frisk in Criminal Procedure Law Section 140.50; these standards were further refined in the New York State case *People vs. DeBour*[c] in 1976, which established four levels of police-civilian street encounters (ranging from requests for information to arrest) and the criteria for each.

a   *Terry v. Ohio* (1968), 392 U.S. 1, 30.
b   *See U.S. v. Cortez* (1981), 449 U.S. 411, 418.
c   *People v. De Bour* (1976), 40 N.Y.2d 210.

under the law. Also, the study does not tell us how New Yorkers, in general, experience stop and frisk, or feel about the police. It does, however, convey a great deal about the experiences and perceptions of the young New Yorkers who are most likely to be stopped. The findings reveal collateral consequences of stop and frisk that raise serious concerns for public safety in New York City. (These findings are briefly described in the pages that follow and reported fully in a Technical Report [www.vera.org/stop-and-frisk-technical-report].)

Nearly half of the young people Vera surveyed indicated they had been stopped many times over their young lives, with some people reporting more than 20 stops. While being stopped repeatedly doesn't seem to negatively affect how these young people see themselves and imagine their futures, it is strongly associated with a negative stance toward law enforcement: Among the young people Vera surveyed, the more often they have been stopped, according to their self-reports, the less likely they are to view the police as legitimate and cooperate with law enforcement by reporting crimes.

The remainder of this summary report is divided into our six key findings and four recommendations that flow from them.

Findings

## FINDING: FOR MANY, STOPS ARE A FAMILIAR AND FREQUENT EXPERIENCE

Much of the criticism of stop and frisk has centered on the big aggregate numbers—close to 533,000 stops in 2012. This study examines stop and frisk at a more granular, individual level. The key findings reveal that a significant proportion of young New Yorkers who reside in highly patrolled neighborhoods have been stopped by police repeatedly and that a majority of young people who have been stopped have also experienced the more intrusive and harsher aspects of street stops.

While 20 percent of young people surveyed reported just the one stop required for participation in the study,

eight out of ten reported being stopped more than once, and nearly half (44 percent) of the survey sample reported at least nine stops over their lifetime, including some people who reported more than 20 stops. When considering the past year alone, survey respondents reported an average of seven stops, again with a high of more than 20.[4]

   Vera also found statistically significant differences between the sexes. Young men reported an average of 10 stops over their lifetimes, while young women reported less than half that number, or four stops on average.[5] That males were stopped more frequently is not surprising given that nearly all stops citywide involve males.[6] The belief that young men are targets of stop and frisk while young women are largely overlooked came through in several interviews. For example, a 17-year old black and Hispanic male living in the South Bronx said, "The only time they stop females is if she's with boys...They know the cops won't really be searching the girls. I think if I was a girl I would be better off with the police."

Figure 1. Reported number of lifetime stops among young people surveyed*
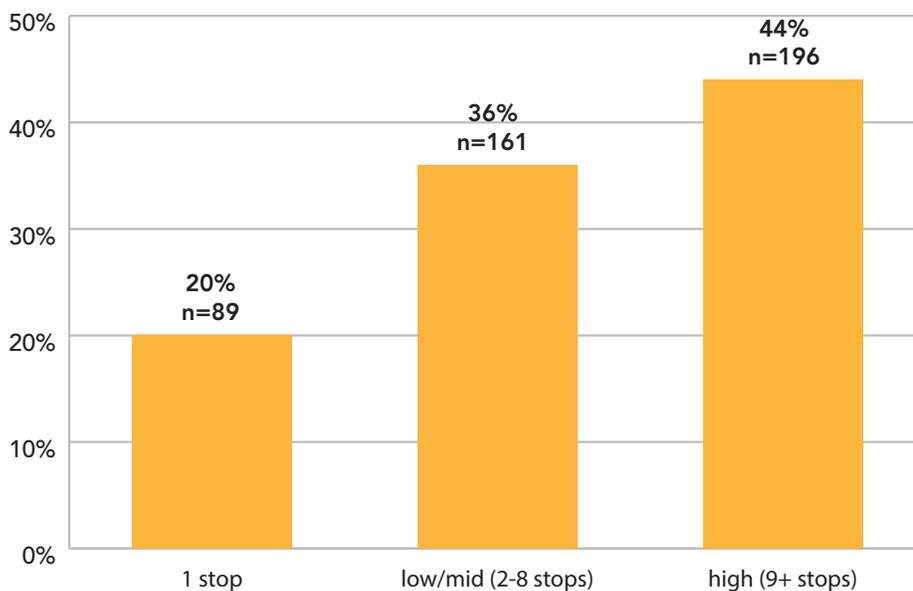
*The low/mid and high categories are constructed around the average number of lifetime stops reported, which is eight.

FINDING: FRISKS, SEARCHES, THREATS, AND USE OF FORCE ARE COMMON

Most of the young people surveyed were involved in at least one stop that went beyond a simple verbal interaction and escalated to involve a more intensive response by the officer. Specifically, 71 percent reported being frisked/patted down on at least one occasion; 64 percent indicated that their clothes or bag(s) had been searched; and 52 percent reported being asked to empty their pockets. This study did not assess whether or not the police were justified in these actions; our survey simply sought to quantify the number of respondents who had been involved in various types of interactions with officers who had stopped them.

Figure 2. Proportion of survey respondents who reported ever being frisked, searched, and asked to empty their pockets
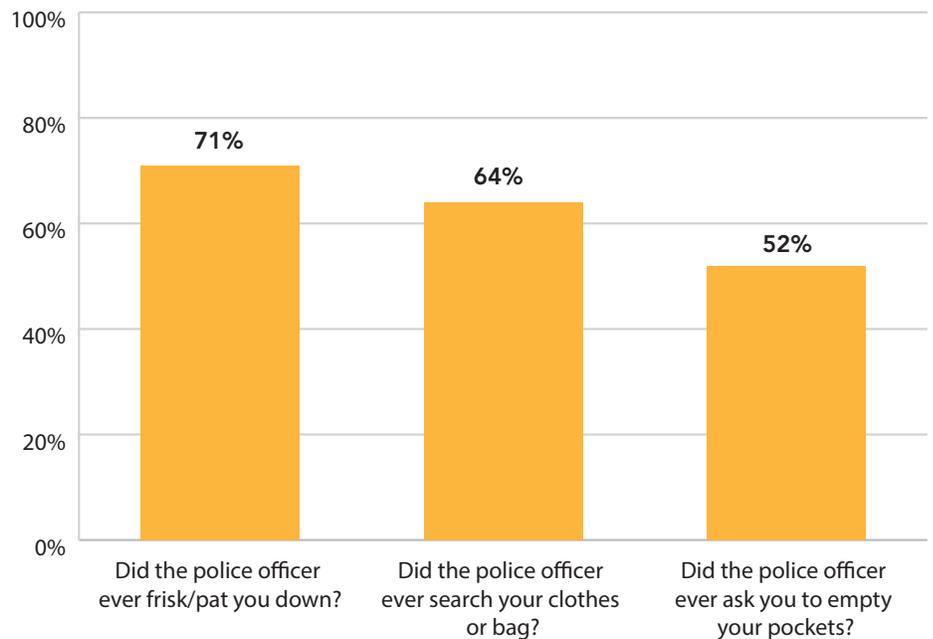
Stops in which the officer issued threats and/or used physical force against young people were common. Specifically, 45 percent of respondents reported that an officer had made a verbal threat during the course of at least one stop. A nearly identical proportion of people surveyed (46 percent) reported that an officer had used force against them during the course of at least one stop. The survey form noted that force includes, but is not limited to, an officer "putting his/her hands on you, forcing you to the ground, or pushing you up against a wall or a car." [7, 8] According to the young people interviewed, use of force typically occurred while an officer was frisking or searching them and often involved being pushed against a wall, although some people recalled officers twisting their arms and/or cuffing their hands while they were being patted

down or searched. One in four (27 percent) survey respondents reported being involved in at least one stop in which the officer displayed his or her weapon.
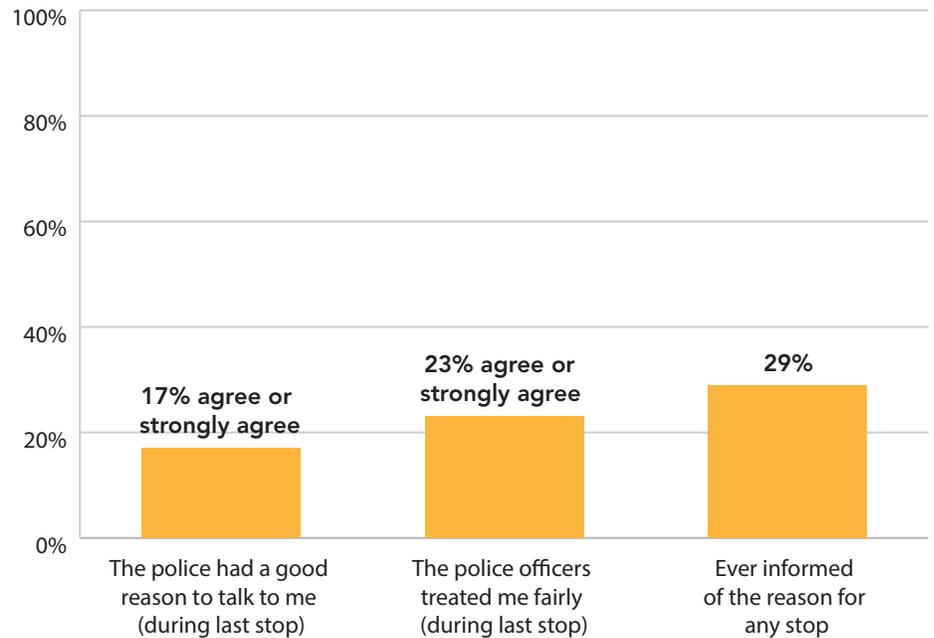
Figure 3. Proportion of survey respondents who reported ever being threatened, having force used against them, or being confronted by an officer displaying a weapon
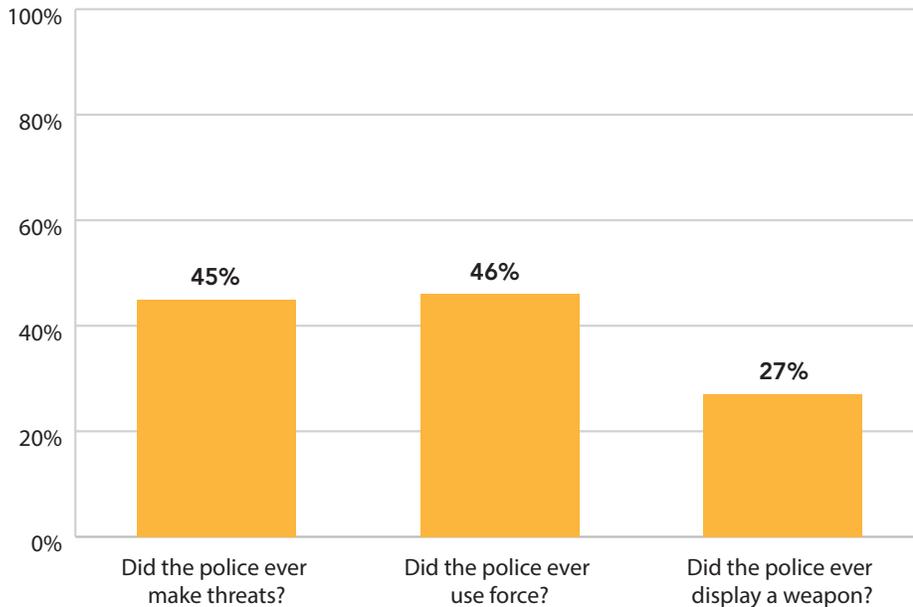
FINDING: STOPS ARE PERCEIVED TO BE UNJUSTIFIED AND UNFAIR

The survey included items designed to explore respondents' views about whether or not the stops they experienced felt justified. The vast majority felt they had been stopped without reason. In considering their last stop more than eight out of 10 people (83 percent) disagreed with the statement, "The officer had a good reason to talk to me." (See figure 4 on the next page for an illustration of this finding and related findings.) Less than a third (29 percent) of young people surveyed reported ever being informed of the reason for a stop.[9]

Figure 4. Survey respondents' perceptions of whether or not past stops were justified

Chart showing three bars:
- 17% agree or strongly agree — The police had a good reason to talk to me (during last stop)
- 23% agree or strongly agree — The police officers treated me fairly (during last stop)
- 29% — Ever informed of the reason for any stop

More than eight out of 10 young people surveyed (85 percent) reported that they were never involved in a stop in which the officer discovered illegal items such as weapons or drugs. Although their self-reports could not be verified with official records, these findings correspond closely with the large proportion of stops citywide—89 percent in 2012—in which officers discovered no illegal items and took no further action, and the small proportion of stops citywide in which officers recovered weapons or other contraband – less than two percent in 2012.

When interviewing young people, researchers asked what the person had been doing immediately prior to being stopped. Nearly all said they were engaged in routine activities such as walking home from school, crossing the street, standing in front of a store, or hanging out in the park. They were taken by surprise because they felt that they were doing nothing wrong when the officers stopped them. Only four of the 42 young people interviewed said that just prior to being stopped they had committed a violation (e.g. jumping a turnstile or walking between subway cars) or were engaged in behavior that might warrant police intervention, such as being among or near a group when a fight broke out. A 20-year-old black male living in East New York recalled being caught completely off guard when he was stopped: "I was going to the store for my mother. And then when I came out the building I see my uncle and he's coming from the way I'm going and we walk back to the store. And they [the police] just pulled up and hopped out and tried to pull up and take us. So I'm like whoa, too much is happening."

Many young people surveyed felt that the officers they encountered were biased against them. Specifically, 61 percent agreed with the statement, "The way the police acted toward me was influenced by my age." And half of them (51 percent) agreed with the statement, "I was treated worse than others in a similar situation because of my race/ethnicity." One young man interviewed in East Harlem said that the best way to stay out of trouble with the police is to "act white...and pull your pants above your waist."

Figure 5. Survey respondents' perceptions of police bias during the most recent stop
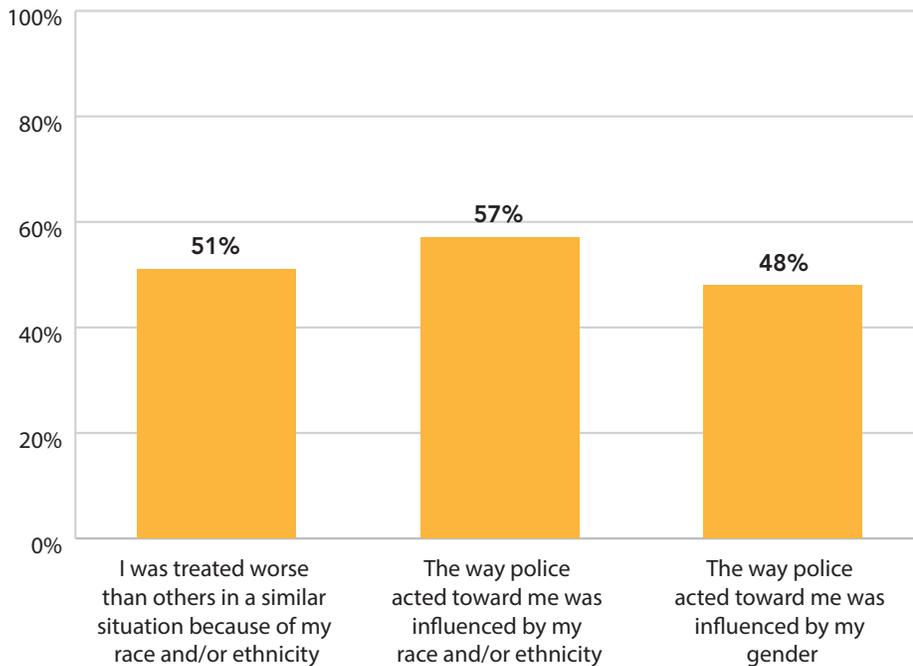
FINDING: TRUST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT IS ALARMINGLY LOW

When asked to think beyond specific officers who had stopped them and to comment more generally on police in their neighborhood, the young people surveyed expressed critical views in most areas. In particular, only 15 percent believe the police are honest, and 12 percent believe that residents of their neighborhood trust the police. Just four out of 10 respondents said they would be comfortable seeking help from police if in trouble.

Figure 6. Survey respondents' general attitudes toward the police
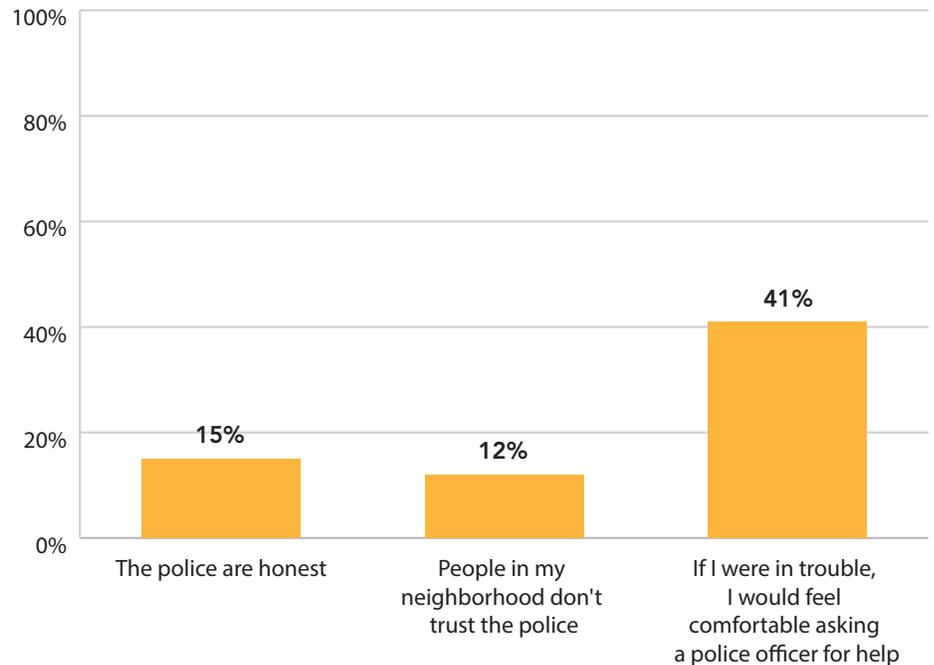
The young New Yorkers that Vera surveyed, all of whom live in highly patrolled neighborhoods and have been stopped by police, have more negative views of the officers they've encountered than most people in other cities, including those who have been stopped by police. A 2001 study of adults in Chicago, for example, found that 57 percent of people who reported being stopped by police officers on foot or pulled over while driving thought the officers treated them fairly, compared with just 23 percent of the young people Vera surveyed who considered their treatment to be fair.[10] Also, the Bureau of Justice Statistic's 2008 Police-Public Contact Survey, which was administered to a nationally representative sample of more than 60,000 people age 16 and older, found that among people who reported having had some contact with the police, either voluntarily or involuntarily, 90 percent felt that the officers acted respectfully.[11]

During a focus group with community leaders in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, two participants summed up the relationship with police as follows:

Participant one: "It's energy, it's a tension. You operate on two premises—I am glad they're here, but I also hate they're here. I need them and I can't stand them."

Participant two (immediately following): "...and I know they [the police] can't stand me either."

FINDING: YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN STOPPED REPEATEDLY ARE LESS WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

One of the chief criticisms of stop and frisk is that it has seriously damaged police-community relations in areas of New York City where they are needed most to protect residents and solve crimes. Research in the area of procedural justice shows that the experiences young people have with police matter. When a young person perceives an encounter with police to be procedurally fair and conducted in a professional manner, that person is more likely to come away with positive perceptions of the police, regardless of the outcome of the encounter.[12] And individuals who have more favorable views of police are more likely to report crimes and cooperate with police investigations and other law enforcement activities.[13]

The present study suggests that the opposite dynamics are at play among young New Yorkers who have been stopped by the police. Most of the young people Vera studied neither trust nor think highly of the officers who patrol their neighborhoods, which is perhaps not surprising given their belief that the stops they've experienced were largely unwarranted. Moreover, they expressed very little willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, even to seek justice for a violent crime they personally experienced. Specifically, only 41 percent indicated they would report their own violent victimization to the police, and even fewer (24 percent) would report a person whom they believe had committed a crime against someone else.

Figure 7. Survey respondents' likelihood of reporting a crime
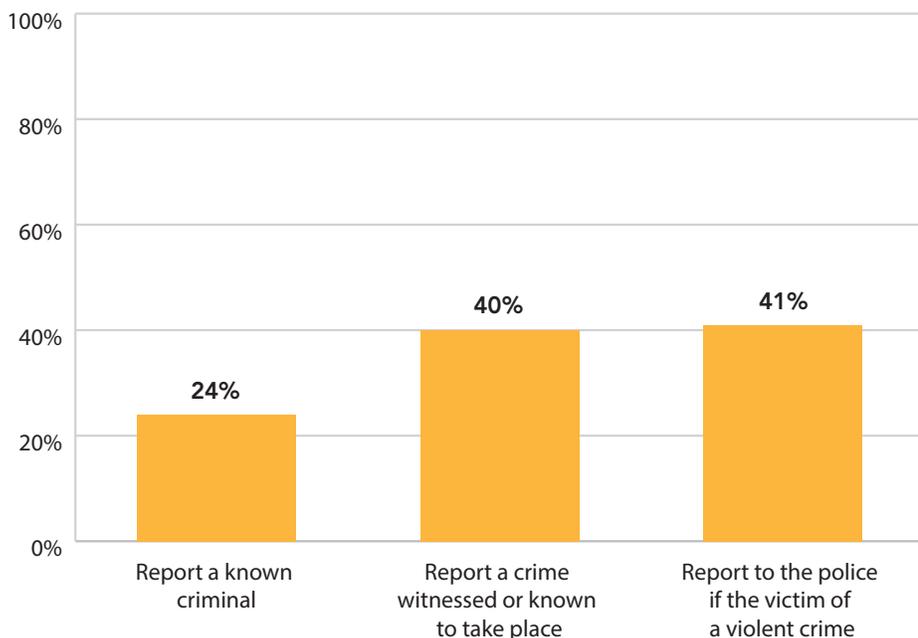
Their likelihood of reporting crimes is much lower than rates documented in other studies,[14] yet fully half of them have already been the victim of a crime—including 39 percent who've experienced a violent crime, in some cases more than once. They are precisely the individuals who are most at risk of future victimization and whom law enforcement needs to connect with to protect them, to solve crimes, and to significantly improve safety in high-crime neighborhoods.[15]

Figure 8. Survey respondents' reports of previous victimization

Legend: once | more than once
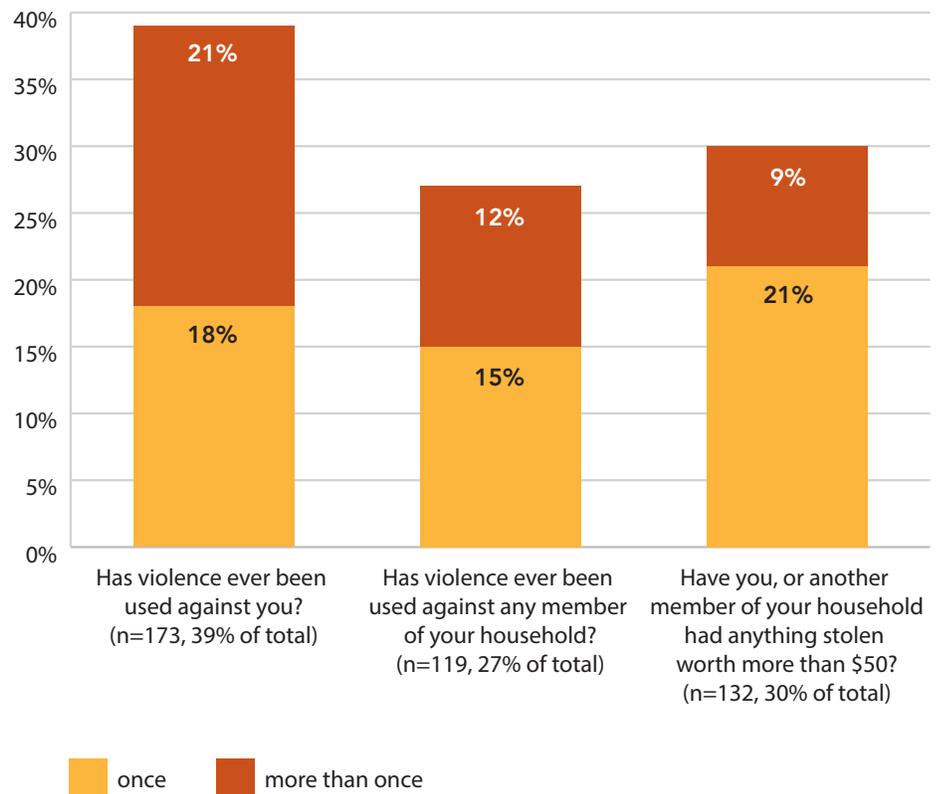
While willingness to cooperate with law enforcement is low across the entire sample of young people surveyed, those who said they had been stopped more often in the recent past are even less likely to cooperate with law enforcement. Among our sample of survey respondents, for every additional stop in the past year, the young person is eight percent less likely to indicate a willingness to report a violent crime that he or she might experience in the future. That means, for example, that someone who was stopped seven times in the past year—the average number of past-year stops among everyone surveyed—is 48 percent less likely to report their own violent victimization than someone who was stopped only once. Even after controlling for the influence of race, gender, age, and reports of previous victimization and prior arrests, the number of reported stops in the past year is the greatest predictor among the

young people Vera surveyed of their likelihood to notify the police about their own violent victimization.[16] This is a serious collateral consequence of stop and frisk in New York City.

This connection—between being stopped repeatedly and a reluctance to report crime—may explain, in part, why the proportion of serious violent crimes solved is relatively low and declining in certain parts of the city.[17] As our study shows, young residents of the neighborhoods where many violent crimes occur, who are likely to be the victims of crimes themselves, are unlikely to work with the police, the District Attorney, or the courts to help solve these crimes.

Vera's finding is supported by other research showing that intensive policing may reduce crime in the short term while also sowing the seeds for longer-term negative outcomes. A study by Brett Stoudt, Michelle Fine and Madeline Fox offers some specific evidence. They studied the extent to which young New Yorkers interact with police and the effects of those encounters. They found that many of the youth they studied had negative experiences with the NYPD and that, based on those experiences, the youth tried to avoid the police whenever possible and were less likely to seek help when needed.[18]

FINDING: YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SELF-CONFIDENT AND OPTIMISTIC, DESPITE ENCOUNTERS WITH POLICE

Research on labeling theory suggests that stop and frisk encounters with police—numerous for many of the young people in Vera's study—could have changed how they view themselves for the worse. According to this theory, treating groups of young people as if they are criminals—whether or not they have done anything wrong—can actually encourage them to adopt a deviant persona and behavior.[19] For example, researchers at the University of Missouri-St. Louis followed roughly 2,600 youth in seven cities over several years and found that those who were stopped by police early on in the study period committed more delinquent acts on average. They concluded that contacts with the police had a direct effect on a young person's likelihood of offending.[20]

Vera's study measured self-perceptions, and the findings suggest that young people's experiences of stop and frisk have not had a "labeling" effect. The study did not, however, focus on arrests or offending in the long-term. The overwhelming majority of young people surveyed feel very positive about their racial/ethnic identity and their abilities, and are optimistic about the future. Among this predominantly black (69 percent) and Latino/Hispanic (19 percent) pool of respondents, at least eight out of 10 agreed with each of the statements: "I feel good about the racial/ethnic groups I belong to" and "My race and ethnicity are an important reflection of who I am." These young people also believe that those who know them well view them in a positive light, with roughly nine out of 10 respondents agreeing with the statements: "People who know me trust and respect me" and "People who know me think I am good at what I do."

They also expressed considerable self-confidence and self-reliance. Roughly

nine out of 10 people surveyed agreed with the following statements: "I can get myself going when things are going really badly" and "I can solve my own problems." These young people are not only confident in themselves, fully 89 percent care about helping others in their community. There is also widespread agreement about their likelihood to succeed. At least eight out of 10 respondents agreed with the statement: "I have just as much chance to succeed in life as people from other neighborhoods."

Interviews revealed in more detail how young people see their future. The desire for stability, economic and otherwise, was a common thread linking several interviews. An 18-year-old black and Hispanic young man said, "I need a future, I need a career. I am trying to get a career so I can start a family and all of that. I want to get away from here…" Several young people spoke explicitly about wanting to leave the neighborhood or even move to another city to have a better life. In a few cases the desire to leave was directly linked to past experiences with police. An 18-year-old in Bedford-Stuyvesant said, "I want to get out of here and do something useful so they can't say I was one of those kids. If they see me in the future and don't recognize me, I want to shake their hands, be like 'you used to lock me up.'"

Figure 9. Survey respondents' self perceptions
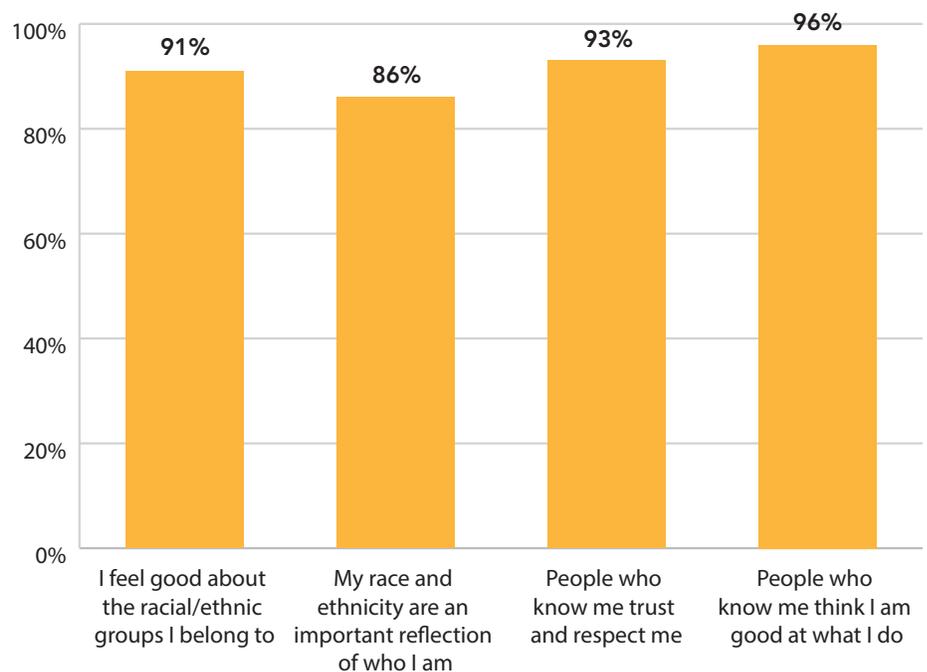
Recommendations

The remainder of this Summary Report outlines four critical actions that the City, and the NYPD in particular, should consider to begin to reverse the trends documented by this study and build the kind of positive relationships with young people that are necessary for effectively policing high-crime communities and promoting public safety citywide.

RECOMMENDATION: In light of the fact that it decreased stops by 22 percent while the crime rate held steady, the NYPD should continue to recalibrate its stop and frisk practices to remedy the serious consequences to police-community relations and public safety that this study reveals.*

The experience of being stopped repeatedly, coupled with the perception among the young people surveyed that they are unfairly targeted, turns out to have serious consequences for public safety. As described above, the more often young people are stopped, the less likely they are to trust and cooperate with law enforcement by reporting crimes. So when police stop an individual numerous times, those actions have a clear cost.

As blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, and other historically "minority" populations now collectively make up the majority of New York City's population,[21] it is concerning that younger members of these racial and ethnic groups have such low opinions of police that they are unlikely even to report a violent crime against themselves. It is a promising sign that the number of stops citywide decreased 22 percent from 2011 to 2012, while crime also continued to drop, and that stops appear to be declining further in 2013.[22]

The court decisions and prevailing laws that allow police officers under very specific and limited circumstances to stop, frisk, and search someone were never intended to sanction stop and frisk as a proactive policing strategy that law enforcement can use on a wide scale to deter crime.[23] The NYPD should recalibrate the number of stops in communities where they are currently

FOR VERA, A LONG HISTORY OF WORK ON POLICING AND RACIAL JUSTICE

For the Vera Institute of Justice, this study is part of a long history of work focused on understanding and improving police-community relations and promoting racial justice. In the early 1980s Vera partnered with the NYPD to develop the Community Patrol Officer Program (CPOP), one of the first and the largest community policing programs in the country. Vera's 1999 study of two police precincts in the South Bronx shifted the focus of policing minority communities to respectfulness and effectiveness and changed the conversation in New York City and nationally. Vera's creation in 2001 of the Police Assessment Resource Center helped to significantly advance civilian oversight of police. And in the wake of 9/11, Vera conducted an ambitious study of relations between Arab Americans and federal and local law enforcement that revealed what Arab Americans fear most, as well as conflicts between local law enforcement priorities and increasing pressure from the federal government to adopt counter-terrorism practices and enforce immigration laws. Today Vera is operating a project that examines how race affects the decisions prosecutors make; one that administers justice in a potentially more effective way to victims and perpetrators of violent crime, nearly all of whom are young, black and male; and one that examines how law enforcement can engage Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities in preventing crime—just a few examples among many.

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*   The annual total number of recorded stops decreased by 22 percent from 2011 to 2012, from 685,724 to 532,911. When comparing the number of stops for each of the first quarters of 2012 to the first two quarters of 2013, the decreases are more pronounced. The number of stops in the first quarter of each year declined by 51 percent from 2012 to 2013 and the number of stops in the second quarter declined by 57 percent.

concentrated so as to remedy the serious collateral consequences this study reveals.

Make no mistake, proactive policing is critical, and stops are an essential element of good policing when based upon specific observations that give rise to a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity. But there are additional ways to police proactively and effectively. For example, the NYPD is engaged in focused initiatives such as "Operation Crew Cut," in which police target active street gangs to reduce the violence associated with gang activity and rivalries between gangs.[24] Such initiatives have been recognized as promising approaches to both reducing violence and increasing prosecution rates in neighborhoods where cooperation with law enforcement is low and, as a result, so are conviction rates.[25] These approaches may result in sustainable decreases in crime without heavy reliance on broader tactics like stop and frisk.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand upon existing trainings to encourage respectful policing that makes people feel they are treated fairly (including informing them of the reason for the stop), and emphasize strategies aimed at reducing the number of stops that escalate to the point where officers make threats and use physical force.

As noted above, a significant proportion of the young people we surveyed reported experiencing the harsher aspects of stops—specifically threats and physical force—by the officers who stopped them. While we do not know the specific circumstances of these encounters, and how often threats and force were warranted, the rates suggest that officers may be able to handle these situations differently with increased training on how to work productively with young people. Supervisors should also mandate and ensure that patrol officers routinely inform individuals of the reason for which they are being stopped, consistent with NYPD policy.

Police training should focus on developmentally appropriate responses to people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. These efforts should extend beyond training for new recruits at the Police Academy and be mandatory and offered regularly. Research in the field of neuroscience on the developing brain shows that the poor impulse control many teens display is rooted in biology: many young people cannot fully appreciate the consequences of their decisions and behaviors.[26] This developmental limitation, which persists into their twenties, puts the burden on police officers in their role as adult authority figures to conduct stops in ways that, as often as possible, prevent escalation. Young people can also benefit from education and training in how to engage with police officers so that these encounters are less likely to escalate.

In the United States, there are few, if any, training curricula that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to have a positive effect on improving po-

lice-citizen interactions. One of the few is Chicago's Quality Intervention Program (QIP), a procedural justice training for police recruits in Chicago, which was evaluated and shows promising outcomes. While the evaluation yielded mixed results overall, there is strong evidence that officers trained using the QIP approach were better equipped to resolve conflicts with youth, and less likely to yell at youth, use physical force against them, or arrest them.[27]

RECOMMENDATION: Collaborate with the predominately black and Hispanic/Latino communities where stop and frisk has been concentrated to improve relationships by finding tangible strategies to put into practice.

A generation of young people in high-crime communities has grown up familiar with stop and frisk. They view it as both misguided and unfair, because too often, in their view, officers are stopping young people who have done nothing wrong. As this study shows, levels of trust in law enforcement are extremely low among young people who have been stopped by police in these neighborhoods. It will take creative, determined and sustained efforts to change this situation.

Many of the young people and adults we interviewed called on police to actually get to know residents, to become involved in their communities, and to function as real partners in making their neighborhoods safer and better overall. What this looks like in practice is something that police and residents must determine together. This type of work should extend beyond the NYPD's 184 Community Affairs officers—the equivalent of 1 percent of uniformed patrol officers—to involve the many officers assigned to patrol these communities.[28]

In neighborhoods where crime is of particular concern, police can best ensure public safety not only by enforcing the law, but by conducting themselves in a manner that fosters respect, trust, and a resulting spirit of cooperation with the residents of those neighborhoods. As one 18-year-old black male from the South Bronx said, "I guess, like, if you really want to protect you need to become acquainted with the people in the neighborhood. You can't just patrol; you actually need to speak to people." The resilience of the young people Vera surveyed and interviewed is an asset in this work. Their confidence in themselves and resolve to stay focused on what they can achieve and become is something for police to work with.

RECOMMENDATION: Partner with researchers to better understand the costs and benefits of various proactive policing strategies as well as individual practices such as stop and frisk.

There is a clear trend in public service toward "evidence-based" practice, and police departments are following suit by partnering with researchers to learn

what works and what strategies and tactics to avoid or minimize.[29] With cities facing increasing budgetary challenges, it is imperative that law enforcement policies be rooted in scientific evidence as well as rigorous cost-benefit analysis, because a policy might pay off in one important regard but have costly unintended consequences that overwhelm its value.[30]

The NYPD's commitment to data-driven policing strategies—most notably its innovative use of CompStat, which has been widely adopted nationally and often associated with drastic improvements in the way police departments control crime and hold officers accountable[31]—provides a good foundation on which to build relationships with external evaluators. The number of stops citywide is on the decline and crime rates are also falling—murders and shootings were down 29 percent by mid-year 2013, compared to the same time period last year.[32] These trends, along with the upcoming mayoral election, potential change in NYPD leadership, and the ruling and proposed remedies in *Floyd, et al. v. The City of New York, et al.*—all of which are likely to spur changes in the NYPD's policies and practices—should be closely studied.

Researchers could begin to answer these questions and provide the NYPD, city leaders, and the public with better evidence than currently exists about the true value and costs of different approaches to promoting public safety in New York City. Within this context, it is important to understand that changes in police practice may not yield meaningful results immediately. For a generation of young people, stop and frisk is the predominant type of policing they know. Even if the number of stops dropped 50 percent next year, it might not spark an immediate change in how young people view the police or their likelihood of working with them to prevent and solve crimes. This suggests the need to regularly survey young people to understand whether, and if so how, their perceptions of police and willingness to cooperate with law enforcement shift as policies and public discourse on the issue continue to change. Even more meaningful would be longitudinal research that follows groups of young people and other neighborhood residents over time.

Genuine partnerships are essential for any of this research, since researchers would need access to NYPD data that is currently unavailable, and the NYPD would need to share which practices seem to be successful and which appear to have disappointing results. The NYPD would benefit by joining the ranks of police departments across the country and worldwide that have welcomed open dialogue around their practices, and as a testament to this openness, invited researchers to use their data to assess and evaluate their policies.[33]

ENDNOTES

1   *Floyd, et al. v. City of New York, et al.* (2013), http://ccrjustice.org/files/Floyd-Liability-Opinion-8-12-13.pdf

2   Christie Smythe and Patricia Hurtado, "New York City Appeals Rulings Attacking Stop and Frisk," retrieved August 16, 2013 from Bloomberg.com, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-08-16/new-york-city-appeals-rulings-attacking-stop-and-frisk.html. NB: On September 4, 2013, in the final days of this report's preparation, Nicholas Turner, who in August became Vera's president and director, was named facilitator in the Floyd case by Judge Shira A. Scheindlin. Mr. Turner was not involved in the research described herein.

3   Jason Sunshine and Tom Tyler, "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing," *Law and Society Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 513-548; Jamie Flexon, Arthur Lurigio, and Richard Greenleaf, "Exploring the Dimensions of Distrust among Chicago Juveniles" *Journal of Criminal Justice* 37 (2009): 180-189.

4   These findings build on results from a survey of residents in Brownsville, Brooklyn, conducted by the Center for Court Innovation (CCI). CCI researchers surveyed 815 residents, both youth and adults, about various aspects of the community, including stop and frisk. Close to a third (28 percent) of people surveyed said they had been stopped and/or frisked in the previous year, for an average of five times each. Source: Center for Court Innovation, "Community Perceptions of Brownsville: A Survey of Neighborhood Quality of Life, Safety, and Services." New York, NY, 2011.

5   The vast majority (74 percent) of survey respondents is male—some evidence in itself that young males are more likely to be stopped, since being stopped at least once was a requirement for participating in the survey.

6   In 91 percent of all stops recorded in 2012, the suspects are male.

7   The UF-250 form, also known as the "Stop, Question and Frisk Report Worksheet," is filled out each time an officer makes a stop and the stop includes the use of force, a frisk or more extensive search, an arrest, or the person refuses to identify himself or herself. Delores Jones-Brown, Jaspreet Gill, and Jennifer Trone, "Stop, Question and Frisk Police Practices in New York City: A Primer," John Jay College, Center on Race, Crime and Justice: New York. March 2010.

8   The definitions for the use of force were consistent with those definitions on the UF-250 and in the stop and frisk database. The first type of force listed on the UF-250 form is "hands on suspect."

9   NYPD policy governing officers on patrol states that the officer should inform the person of the reason for the stop. See the 2010 NYPD patrol guide, online at http://subversion.assembla.com/svn/mobitek/NYPD/assets/11.txt. See also Al Baker, "Police get added order: Stop, Frisk and 'Explain'," T*he New York Times,* April 30, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/01/nyregion/01frisk.html?_r=0

10 Wesley Skogan, "Citizen Satisfaction with Police Encounters," *Police Quarterly* 8, no 3 (2005). 298-321.

11 Christine Eith and Matthew R. Durose, *Contacts between the Police and the Public, 2008* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008; prepared under grant number 234599).

12 Jason Sunshine and Tom Tyler, "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing," *Law and Society Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 513-548; Jamie Flexon, Arthur Lurigio, and Richard Greenleaf, "Exploring the Dimensions of Distrust Among Chicago Juveniles," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 37 (2009): 180-189.

13 Tom Tyler and Jeffrey Fagan, "Legitimacy and Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in Their Communities?" *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6, (2008): 231-275.

14 Timothy Hart and Violet Colavito, "College Student Victims and Reporting Crimes to the Police: The Effects of Collective Efficacy," *Western Criminology Review* 12, no. 3 (2011): 1-19.

15 Graham Farrell and Ken Pease, "Once Bitten, Twice Bitten: Repeat Victimization and Its Implications for Crime Prevention," Crime Prevention Unit Paper 46. London England: Police Research Group, 1993.

16 This finding is based on a logistic regression analysis that controls for the influence of other explanatory factors. For more details, see chapter 3 of the technical report, www.vera.org/stop-and-frisk-technical-report

17 New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services ("DCJS") data show that violent crime conviction rates for NYC have slowly declined since 2008, and that in some counties, most notably the Bronx, that decrease has been marked from 47 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2012. From Dispositions in Adult Arrests, retrieved August 29, 2013 at http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/dispos/index.htm

18 Brett Stoudt, Michelle Fine, and Madeline Fox, "Growing up Policed in the Age of Aggressive Policing Policies," *New York Law School Review* 56 (2011/2012): 1331-1370.

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22 "Behind the Decision on the Stop-and-Frisk Policy," *The New York Times,* August 12, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/08/12/nyregion/10-years-of-stop-and-frisk.html

23 *Terry v. Ohio* (1968), 392 U.S. 1; *U.S. v. Cortez* (1981), 449 U.S. 411, 418; *People v. Diaz* (1998), 81 N.Y. 2d 106, 109.

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25 David M. Kennedy, "Getting Beyond Stop and Frisk," *NY Daily News*, July 15, 2013 http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/stop-and-frisk-article-1.1397584

26 Lisa H. Thurau, "Training Law Enforcement on How to Police the Teen Brain" *Translational Criminology,* George Mason University: Fairfax VA, Spring 2013.

27   Dennis P. Rosenbaum and Daniel S. Lawrence, "Teaching Respectful Police Citizen Encounters and Good Decision-Making: Results of a Randomized Control Trial with Police Recruits," National Police Research Platform: Washington, DC, 2011.

28   The 2013 budget shows 184 uniformed officers in community affairs, compared to 17,626 uniformed patrol officers, with patrol expenditures of $1.4 billion, and community affairs expenditures of $13.3 million. The 2014 planned budget included an increase of $56,000 for community affairs.

29   See examples of these types of efforts at George Mason University Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy website, http://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/.

30   Chief Jim Beueerman (Ret), "Being Smart on Crime with Evidence Based Policing," *NIJ Journal* No. 269, (Washington DC: Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice), 2012.

31   Daniel DeLorenzi, Jon M. Shane, and Karen L. Amendola, "The CompStat Process: Managing Performance on the Pathway to Leadership," *The Police Chief,* vol. 73, no. 9 (2006).

32   NYC.gov, "Mayor Bloomberg Provides Mid-Year Crime Update," speech transcription, July 21, 2013. http://www.mikebloomberg.com/index.cfm?objectid=01A8E716-C29C-7CA2-FB42EA9C7DF818C8

33   For specific examples of leadership in this area, see efforts by members of the Evidence-Based Policing Hall of Fame: http://cebcp.org/hall-of-fame/

Acknowledgments

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