INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENT

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Police–Community
Relations in Cincinnati

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RAND INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENT

The research described in this report was conducted within RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment (ISE), a division of the RAND Corporation, for the City of Cincinnati.

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Summary

Introduction

In 2002, the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD), the Fraternal Order of Police, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) entered into a collaborative agreement. This agreement pledges the signatories to the agreement (referred to collectively as "the parties") to collaborate in efforts to resolve social conflict, improve community relations, and avoid litigation. The agreement requires the CPD to implement a variety of changes, most notably the adoption of Community Problem-Oriented Policing (CPOP) as a strategy for addressing crime problems and engaging the community. Other provisions of the agreement require the CPD to establish a civilian complaint review process. The collaborative agreement incorporates a previous agreement between the CPD and the U.S. Department of Justice on use-of-force issues.

The agreement has five primary goals:

- [Ensure that p]olice officers and community members…become proactive partners in community problem solving.
- Build relationships of respect, cooperation, and trust within and between police and communities.
- Improve education, oversight, monitoring, hiring practices, and accountability of the CPD.
- Ensure fair, equitable, and courteous treatment for all.
- Create methods to establish the public's understanding of police policies and procedures and recognition of exceptional service in an effort to foster support for the police (U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, undated, pp. 3–4).

The agreement also specifies the need to evaluate achievement of these goals. In 2004, the parties contracted with RAND to conduct this evaluation. These goals are assessed through a variety of evaluation mechanisms, including the following:

- A survey of citizen satisfaction with the CPD
- A survey of citizens who have interacted with the police through arrest, reporting a crime or victimization, or being stopped for a traffic violation
- A survey of CPD officers about their perceptions of support from the community, working conditions, and other factors related to job satisfaction and performance

- A survey of officers and citizens involved in a sample of citizen complaints against the officers and the department
- An analysis of motor vehicle stops for patterns of racial disparity in various aspects of the stop
- Periodic observations of structured meetings between citizens and representatives of the CPD
- A review of CPD statistical compilations
- Analysis of a sample of videotaped interactions between citizens and officers during motor vehicle stops
- Analysis of CPD staffing, recruitment, retention, and promotion patterns.

The collaborative agreement requires an annual assessment of progress toward these goals. This report is the first such annual review.

The Context of Policing in Cincinnati

This section compiles data from the CPD on crime, arrests, use of force, and calls for service. This information provides insight into the spatial distribution of incidents and the concentration of law enforcement effort and crime in particular neighborhoods.

Arrests and Citations

Five neighborhoods comprise 37 percent of the CPD's arrests and 31 percent of Cincinnati's reported crimes. The largest share of arrests and reported crimes occurred in the Central Business District (CBD)/Riverfront and Over-the-Rhine neighborhoods, both located in District 1. Citation rates and arrest rates were strongly negatively correlated ($r = -0.62$), implying that neighborhoods with the highest citation rates have the lowest arrest rates. Neighborhoods with high search rates, on the other hand, generally had high arrest rates ($r = 0.92$). These findings are consistent with research that indicates that police are less likely to exercise their discretion to enforce traffic and other less serious offenses in high-crime neighborhoods (Klinger, 1997).

Use of Force

RAND obtained data on use-of-force incidents occurring in 2004. In 2004, there were 1,067 use-of-force incidents in Cincinnati. Over-the-Rhine alone accounted for 20 percent of the incidents involving force. CBD/Riverfront, Walnut Hills, and Avondale, all of which are in close geographic proximity to Over-the-Rhine, each had about 6 percent of the incidents. These findings indicate that use of force by the CPD was geographically clustered in high-crime neighborhoods. Black individuals most frequently received use of force and accounted for 75 percent of these incidents ($n = 798$). There was no difference in the type of force used against individuals of different races.

Calls for Service

The number of calls for service and the number of reported Part 1 crimes in a neighborhood were highly correlated ($r = 0.96$) with an average of 11.4 calls for service for every reported Part 1 crime. The number of arrests was also highly correlated with both calls for service

$(r = 0.85)$ and the number of reported crimes $(r = 0.76)$. These findings indicate that crime, calls for service, and arrests were geographically clustered in the same areas of Cincinnati.

Summary

In short, the statistical compilation suggests that patterns of calls for service, reported crime, arrests, and police use of force were geographically clustered in Cincinnati. Neighborhoods afflicted by high rates of crime were also more likely to have a high volume of crime and police use-of-force incidents. Over-the-Rhine and other neighborhoods located in District 1 (CBD/Riverfront, Queensgate, West-End, Mt. Adams, and Pendleton) appear to be neighborhoods that were disproportionately affected by crime and police interventions (e.g., stops, arrests, and use of force). These findings are consistent with perceptions of neighborhood crime reported in the police community survey. It appears that resident perceptions of crime and police interventions mirror actual police reports. Use-of-force incidents disproportionately occurred in these high-crime and predominantly black neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, therefore, blacks were more likely than whites to be involved in police use-of-force events. When a police use-of-force event occurred, there were no differences in the type of police force applied. It does not appear that blacks received more intense forms of police force than whites. Overall, the results from the statistical compilations of official police reports indicated distinct neighborhood differences in the levels of crime and of police intervention. These differences most likely resulted from the different social conditions present in these neighborhoods.

Staffing and Personnel Actions in the Cincinnati Police

This chapter describes and analyzes CPD staffing to assess the extent to which CPD personnel reflect the population they serve and if and how personnel decisions are associated with race and sex. It provides context that can help in understanding other areas of this report, and offers a baseline by which staffing and personnel actions can be assessed over time. The analysis is based on CPD-supplied staffing reports. RAND's findings indicate that minorities and women were underrepresented among sworn officers and their representation tends to diminish with rank. They were also underrepresented in terms of promotions and applicants. Those who transferred varied little from sworn staff in terms of race, but women transferred more than their presence as sworn staff would suggest. Relative to sworn staff, whites and women separated from the CPD at a disproportionately higher rate, but in terms of resignation, which tends to occur early in the career cycle, the rates were fairly close to that expected from the race and sex distribution of sworn staff. Blacks and females were overrepresented as recruits relative to sworn staff but underrepresented relative to city residents. They were also more successful at completing the academy, and graduated in proportions greater than their composition as sworn staff.

Analysis of Vehicle Stops

The CPD's investigatory stop policy (CPD, Procedure 12.554) requires officers to complete Form 534, a citizen contact card, for all motor vehicle stops. In addition, for any passenger

detained separately, the officer must complete a separate Form 534. The contact cards include information on the vehicle (license plate, car make, and year), the driver (race, age, driver's license), passengers, and the stop (location of the stop, reason for the stop, whether a search occurred, the outcome of the stop, the duration of the stop). After examining the data, we conclude that approximately 20 percent of the stops did not get recorded on contact cards. In addition, important items from the contact cards were also frequently missing. For example, in 2004, 16 percent of stops were missing at least one of the following: stop location, time of day, stop duration, driver age, race, or sex, or whether a search occurred. RAND cannot rule out the possibility that the results of the analysis would be different with greater compliance and less missing data.

Using available data, RAND examined traffic stop data from 2003 and 2004 to assess whether there were indications of racial profiling on the part of CPD officers in their stop and post-stop behavior. RAND examined the data for both departmental-level and individual-level patterns of concern. RAND assesses three specific comparisons of bias here: in the decision to stop at the department level, in the decision to stop at the individual level, and in post-stop decisions at the department level.

Department-Level Stop Patterns

To assess bias in the decision to stop, RAND analyzed the data using the "veil of darkness" method. This method uses the seasonal changing of the clocks to compare stops that occur in daylight to those that occur in darkness. The authors would expect a race bias to be most prevalent during daylight hours when the driver's race is easier to see. In the absence of race bias and among stops made at the same time of day but during different months (and thus under different lighting conditions), the authors expect the percentage of black drivers among drivers stopped during daylight to equal the percentage of black drivers among those stopped in darkness. Since the driving population may vary between daylight and darkness hours, the seasonal changing of the clocks provides an important experimental control: On one Monday in October, drivers on the road at 6:30 p.m. are in daylight, and on the next Monday, they are in darkness. During this changeover, the only factor that varies is the officer's ability to see the race of the driver prior to the stop. Driving patterns, the racial distribution of drivers on the road, and enforcement patterns remain unchanged between these two Mondays.

Using this method, RAND did not find clear evidence of a race bias in an examination of stops that occurred within four weeks of either the spring or fall Daylight Saving Time change. In 2003, the odds that a daylight stop involved a black driver were 15 percent larger than the odds that a nighttime stop involved a black driver. In 2004, the daylight odds were 19 percent larger than the nighttime odds. This indicates that, in our samples, black drivers were more likely to be stopped when race was more visible. However, there is substantial uncertainty around these estimates and this means that additional data could swing the results one way or another. RAND performed an additional test that used all stops in the intertwilight period (stops in daylight or darkness, depending on the time of year) and found no statistically significant evidence of racial profiling. This test is more sensitive to seasonal changes in the mix of black and white drivers exposed to police, though it exhibits less variance because of the large sample size. Although these analyses did not reveal statistically significant evidence of racial profiling, the magnitude of the estimated effect stays at about the same level in both 2003 and 2004. The 2005 analysis will be important in determining

whether this lack of significant racial differences was due to a lack of statistical power to detect the biases, or due to a lack of any actual bias in stops.

Individual-Level Stop Patterns

Second, RAND developed an internal benchmark that compares each officer to similarly situated officers. This benchmark compares an officer to other officers making stops at the same time and in the same place. After controlling for these factors, the authors would expect similar race distributions in the stop patterns. For this analysis, RAND selected all CPD officers with more than 100 reported stops in 2004 for the analysis. The 100-stop cutoff focused the analysis on those officers most frequently interacting with drivers in Cincinnati. It also assured RAND of having at least a minimum level of statistical power for detecting differences if they existed. This produced a sample of 91 officers who frequently interact with drivers in Cincinnati.

Using this methodology, four officers seem to have stopped a larger percentage of black drivers than other officers making stops at the same times and places and appear to have stopped for equipment violations at a much higher rate. At this stage, the authors do not know whether there is a problem with these four officers. The officers may simply have been assigned to particular corners frequented more by black drivers, or by drivers likely to have equipment problems. It is impossible to determine from these data alone whether these officers are using equipment violations as a pretext to stop black drivers or whether their focus on equipment violations results in them stopping more black drivers. Their use of equipment violations as the reason for the stops warrants further investigation.[1]

Post-Stop Patterns

Third, RAND analyzed outcomes of the stop (i.e., citation rates, duration of the stop, search rates, and search outcomes) to assess race bias in actions taken post-stop. RAND statistically removed the effects of when, where, and why the stop took place in order to isolate the effect of race bias in the stop outcomes through a method called propensity scoring that helps the authors identify similarly situated drivers. After these adjustments, the authors observe no difference in the citation rates between black and white drivers.

With respect to stop duration, black drivers were less likely than nonblack drivers to have stops lasting less than 10 minutes. In both years, 40 percent of black drivers had stops lasting less than 10 minutes while 43–44 percent of the matched nonblack drivers had them. This difference is statistically significant, implying that this difference is not due to chance or to variation in stop conditions.

RAND also investigated post-stop search activity. The decision to search involves many factors and different levels of officer discretion. Officers searched black and nonblack drivers at nearly the same rate in cases when officers had discretion (5.9 percent versus 5.4 percent in 2003, 6.7 percent versus 6.2 percent in 2004). Black drivers were more likely to

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[1] All RAND studies fall under an Institutional Review Board that reviews research involving human subjects, as required by federal regulations. RAND's "Federalwide Assurance for the Protection of Human Subjects" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through 2008) serves as its assurance of compliance with the regulations of 16 federal departments and agencies. According to this assurance, the Committee is responsible for review regardless of source of funding. These federal regulations prevent RAND research from singling out specific individuals whom its research could adversely affect. The analysis in this section offers an estimate of the number of the CPD's patrol officers of concern. RAND encourages the CPD to implement a program that might offer explanations for these disparities or identify potential problem officers.

be subject to low-discretion searches, such as incident to arrest and when contraband was in plain view (8.1 percent versus 5.5 percent in 2003, 10.7 percent versus 7.0 percent in 2004), but these differences can be due to differences in offending rates rather than officer biases.

When searched, black drivers were more likely to be found with contraband (28 percent versus 22 percent in 2003, 29 percent versus 27 percent in 2004) when the officer initiated a high-discretion search. This indicates no racial bias in searches. Under conditions involving little officer discretion, recovery rates of contraband were the same (16 percent in 2003, 20 percent in 2004).

RAND recommends that the CPD implement a system that constantly audits their data collection process, checking each form for completeness and comparing the number of reported stops with dispatch communication logs to ensure that all officers are reporting on all vehicle stops that they make. RAND suggests that the CPD should track the race distribution of stops that individual officers make, comparing them with other officers with similar assignments and incorporating this program into an early warning system. A CPD early warning system should be able to identify officers easily with stop patterns outside the norm. A focused discussion on the stop duration problem is important. While RAND found no racial disparities in citation or search rates, black drivers did seem to have stops that lasted longer than nonblack drivers. RAND recommends a focused discussion on reasons for this difference, possibly resulting in supplemental data collection on the characteristics of stops that might account for these differences or changes in policies. In short, a theme of these findings is that they can be managed with intelligent policies. The CPD is already making efforts to improve data quality for data collected in 2005 that are not reflected in RAND's analysis of the 2003 and 2004 data.

Analysis of Videotaped Police-Motorist Interactions

Traffic stops constitute one of the most common interactions between police and community members. However, there has been very little objective information about what typically occurs in traffic stops and how it may depend on the race of the officer or driver. In the absence of any valid data, beliefs about possible racial difference in these interactions are inevitably based on personal anecdotes or guesses. In order to understand what occurs in typical traffic stops, RAND analyzed 313 randomly sampled video records of traffic stops. Independent, trained coders viewed these recordings and described the interactions using a wide range of measures. This analysis revealed three key differences as a function of the officers' and drivers' races: (1) Black drivers were more likely to experience proactive policing during the stop, resulting in longer stops that were significantly more likely to involve searches; (2) The communication quality of white drivers was, on average, more positive than of the black drivers—specifically, it was more apologetic, cooperative, and courteous; and (3) Officers' communication behavior was, on average, more positive when the officer and driver were of the same race. This analysis is descriptive and cannot determine the causes of these racial differences, or who is "to blame" for any communication problem. It does, however, point to specific changes that might improve the interactions.

Stop Characteristics

One key finding that sets the background for understanding these interactions is that, on average, blacks and whites experience different types of policing. White drivers typically experience traffic stops that are shorter and are less likely to involve an investigation beyond the original vehicle infraction—inquiries and searches for drugs, weapons, or contraband. This finding is generally consistent with the results of the racial profiling analyses presented in Chapter Four.

This style of policing may have negative effects on the interactions between police and black drivers. The longer, more invasive traffic stops experienced by black drivers may contribute to a more negative attitude in future traffic stops. This difference in personal history is one plausible explanation for the finding that, on average, black drivers have a more negative communication style in traffic stops than do white drivers.

It may be possible to make improvements in relations between the CPD and the black community by rethinking how black neighborhoods are policed. The proactive policing of motor vehicles that occurs in these communities (longer stops, more searches) is likely to put a high burden on law-abiding members of this community, and it may not match the policing priorities of the community. In other words, the high-crime, minority neighborhoods may want more police assistance with drugs and violent crime, but what they are getting is more tickets for speeding and more pat-down searches. This type of policing will certainly help to apprehend a small number of offenders, but it may have high costs for community relations.

Communication Quality

The authors found no significant evidence that black drivers were treated worse, on average, than were white drivers. However, the behavior of police officers was not race-blind. White officers used the most positive communication when they talked to white drivers, and black officers used the most positive communication when they were talking to black drivers. In same-race interactions, officers appeared to be listening more carefully, to be more accepting of what the drivers had to say, and to give the impression that they were interested in hearing the drivers' comments, relative to interracial interactions. While these differences were approximately symmetrical—about the same magnitude for white and black officers—the aggregate effect may not have been symmetrical because there were many more white officers than black officers in the CPD. Therefore, there were more officers on the force who typically had more positive communication with white drivers than there were who typically had more positive communication with black drivers. Motor vehicle stops are one of the most common interactions between officers and the community. If this contact reinforces negative racial expectations of the officers and drivers, it may make subsequent interactions less likely to be positive.

Education may play a role in improving these interactions. An individual's communication quality tends to rise, or sink, to the level of the person to whom he or she is talking, a pattern evident in the dataset. Because of this, both the officer and the community member have considerable power to improve, or degrade, the quality of the interaction. Specific training on this aspect of communication may lead to improved results.

The finding that officers treat same-race drivers more positively than different-race drivers was most evident in measures of how well they listened to the driver and acknowledged the driver's comments. While the authors expect that very few officers actually want to

hear drivers' excuses for infractions—or arguments against getting a citation—listening carefully and acknowledging these comments is important for maintaining a good relationship with the community being served. Police training that improves these skills may reduce the negative interracial interactions that the authors observed.

Community members, particularly black community members, also have a role to play in the improvement in police-community relations. Drivers who are argumentative do not get shorter stops, nor do they get lighter sanctions for their offenses. They do, however, get a less polite police officer. Individual efforts by black drivers to be friendly and polite may also make an impression such that the officer becomes more willing or able to see other blacks as friendly, respectful, and cooperative in the future.

In addition to improving their communication, officers may also be able to minimize the inconvenience caused by the stop. The length of the stop was the single best predictor of the quality of the drivers' communication, so efforts to expedite the stop—or to give the impression that they are trying to expedite the stop—may improve the driver's perception of the interaction.

Limits to the Analysis

There are a number of limitations to RAND's analysis of the audio-video records. One primary limitation is that it used observational data. These methods allowed RAND to describe what typically occurred in these interactions, but the authors cannot know definitively why it happened. Because of this limitation, the reader should avoid assigning blame for communication problems either to the community members or to police officers. Similarly, the reader should not conclude that the police chose to search black motorists, or hold them longer, *because* they are black, based on the correlations that the authors observed in this study.

The strength of the current study is that it looks at a random sample of each type of interaction. There was significant missing data, however. Missing data includes incidents in which contact cards were not filled out, incidents that could not be taped, incidents in which the recording could not be found, incidents that could not be identified on the recordings, the portion of incidents that were cut off if the recording ended prematurely, and the portion of the incidents that could not be coded due to low-quality audio or video. Fortunately, there was little evidence that missing data was associated with the race of the driver or the officer. This analysis will occur annually for the next three years, and the authors hope that future samples will show a substantial decrease in missing data.

Community Police Satisfaction Survey

To examine police-community relations in the City of Cincinnati, RAND conducted a survey from a representative sample of 3,000 residents living in Cincinnati neighborhoods. The community police satisfaction survey was primarily intended to understand community perceptions of the Cincinnati Police Department. RAND's approach involved three assessments of citizens' perceptions of police in Cincinnati:

- overall levels of satisfaction with the CPD and perceptions of CPD practices
- how satisfaction with the CPD and perceptions of CPD practices varies by race and police reporting district

- the relationship between race and other individual- and neighborhood-level factors on satisfaction with the CPD and perceptions of CPD practices.

The analysis yielded five key findings:

- Overall, the public had favorable opinions about the quality of police services they receive, police practices that they witnessed in their neighborhoods, and personal experiences they have had with the police.
- Blacks were more dissatisfied with the CPD and more likely to think that they had been the target of racial profiling than whites.
- Respondents living in District 1 have significantly less favorable perceptions of the quality of police services and less favorable experience with the CPD compared to other police reporting districts.
- Racial differences in perceptions appear to result partially from differences in neighborhood conditions and the perceived style of policing in specific regions of the city. Respondents who live in neighborhoods with perceived high rates of crime and disorder had less favorable views of the CPD.
- Knowing a police officer by name or sight related to improved perceptions of the CPD.

Perceptions of Citizens' Interactions with the Police in Cincinnati

The primary purpose of the police-citizen interaction survey was to understand the dynamics of daily interactions between civilians and officers working for the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD). RAND surveyed a random sample of 1,000 community residents, drawn from police records, who had been in contact with the police in 2004 through an arrest, reported crime, traffic stop, or traffic citation. The survey asked questions related to the respondent's perception of the officers' behavior during the interaction, including questions about the perceived fairness and professional standards of the police during the interaction.

Results from the complainant survey are based on the 126 citizens who had an official contact with the CPD in 2004 and who returned the citizen-police interaction survey. With a response rate of 14 percent, RAND does not draw any inferences about the population of all citizen interactions with the CPD. The analysis of this select sample of civilian respondents who had an official contact with the CPD suggests that, on average, these citizens are satisfied with the services they receive during interactions with the CPD and feel that the police attempt to help them address their concerns. There was not a sufficient response from arrestees to compare their perceptions with other groups. As a result, RAND cannot ascertain whether people who have been arrested also have a favorable impression of their interactions with the police. The results for this select sample are promising, because prior research notes that impressions of the fairness and professionalism of interactions with the police are important in shaping individuals' views of the legitimacy of the law (Tyler, 1990). However, citizens who responded to these surveys may be a select sample of individuals who were more likely to be satisfied with the CPD than those who failed to respond. Options for increasing the response rate in subsequent years of this evaluation are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Satisfaction of Police Officers Working in Cincinnati

RAND developed a survey to ascertain CPD officers' opinions about personal safety, working conditions, morale, organizational barriers to effective policing, fairness in evaluation and promotion, and attitudes of citizens in Cincinnati. RAND selected a random sample of 143 officers whom it contacted by mail and asked to respond to the police officer survey. Forty officers responded to the survey. The relatively low response rate (29 percent) precludes RAND from generalizing the survey results to all officers who work for the CPD and have significant citizen interactions. For the select group who did respond to the survey, the majority were satisfied and committed to their jobs. Despite their commitment and satisfaction, the officers who responded to this survey suffered several strains from the community and citizens with whom they interact. The majority of respondents thought that the media and black community complained unfairly about racial profiling and police abuse of authority. The majority of respondents also indicated that they had suffered a workplace injury resulting from an altercation with a resisting or attacking suspect. Strategies for improving the response rate on future surveys are provided in Chapter Eight.

Citizen and Officer Satisfaction with the Complaint Process

The complaint survey assessed the perceived fairness of the complaint process, the level of input that citizens and officers have in the process, and the final resolution and its justification. RAND selected a random sample of matched pairs of 229 officers and citizens involved in official complaints, resulting in 170 valid cases. The sample was drawn from a list of officers and citizens involved in Citizen Complaint Resolution Process (CCRP), Citizen Complaint Authority (CCA), and Internal Investigations Section (IIS) complaint cases in 2004.

Results from the complainant survey are based on the 34 citizen and 19 officer surveys returned. RAND could not draw any inferences about the population of all citizens or officers involved in official complaints. Officers and citizens who responded to the survey did not feel that their concerns had been taken into account, and they were dissatisfied with the process of their case and its outcome. The response rate was too low to compare CCA, IIS, or CCRP cases to each other. For those who did respond to the survey, the complaint review process appears to be following up with an investigation and contacting complainants and witnesses. However, the majority of citizens and officers who responded to the survey indicated that they did not trust officials investigating the complaint. Chapter Nine also includes a discussion of options for improving the survey response rate in subsequent years.

Periodic Observations and Problem-Solving Processes

RAND conducted 16 periodic observations of community council and Community Problem-Oriented Policing (CPOP) meetings. The surveys that participants completed on their experiences and perceptions supplemented RAND's observations. The sample of periodic observations could not be randomly drawn, the sample size was small, and the response rate for the community meetings was low. The policy implications need to be interpreted with

caution, and judged in the context of other exposure that the parties have to such police-community interactions.

RAND conducted 16 periodic observations of community council and CPOP meetings, representing all five CPD districts from April 11 through May 12, 2005. These meetings present opportunities for the CPD and the community to become proactive partners in community problem solving and to build relationships of cooperation and trust, and for the CPD to enhance the public's understanding of police policies and procedures, all of which are specific goals laid out in the collaborative agreement. However, the scope of the analysis limited the insight RAND could gain. First, the number of periodic observations that could be conducted was small and it was not possible to sample them randomly. These factors, coupled with the low response rate for the community council meetings, preclude the ability to use the findings to summarize all community council and CPOP meetings. As such, the findings should be used simply as examples. Second, as requested, the analysis focuses mostly on process, leaving the question of problem-solving effectiveness unanswered.

RAND administered the survey in seven community council meetings, and 94 participants provided responses. A total of 229 individuals attended these meetings, thereby making the response rate about 41 percent. RAND's research suggests that respondents generally believed the meetings are open, their opinions are valued and considered, and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The most common sources of information about meetings were from a friend or neighbor, from a neighborhood police officer, and from attendance at community or council meetings. Most viewed the police as a partner, thought the community and police were responsive to each other's needs and concerns, and considered their relationship with the police as positive. Respondents cited a number of problems in their neighborhood, including litter, abandoned buildings, and drug dealing on the streets. Other problems included junk or trash in vacant lots, graffiti, burglary of homes, shooting and violence, abandoned cars, people being attacked or robbed, and gang violence. Some respondents also mentioned as problems theft from automobiles, noise problems, loitering, and panhandling .

A total of 55 out of 65 participants responded to the survey at the CPOP meetings, making the response rate about 85 percent. Questions focused on the characteristics of meetings and perceptions about the application of the Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA) approach to solving problems. The authors observed that meetings were typically led by residents or co-led by residents and police. Participants had a formal agenda to follow in half of the instances. Most of the meetings were open, but the atmosphere was unsupportive and contentious in two of the meetings. Residents typically dominated the discussion, but on a few occasions discussion seemed about equal among all who were present. CPOP meeting respondents also considered their meetings as open, and their opinions as valued by others. Generally, they judged the training they received and the police-community relationship as fairly good, and the problem-solving process mostly effective.

Summary and Conclusions

This first-year evaluation report was primarily intended to establish the baseline from which future progress toward or regression from the goals of the collaborative agreement can be measured. As such, RAND can offer only preliminary comment on progress toward

achievement of the goals spelled out in the collaborative agreement. The complexity—and difficulty—of the tasks facing the parties is best summarized by juxtaposing two findings from RAND's evaluation: Substantial majorities of black respondents think race is a factor in their perceived poorer treatment by police, yet the authors found no systemic pattern of the CPD targeting blacks for differential treatment based on their race. How can these seemingly irreconcilable facts be squared? Moreover, what does this pattern suggest for the coming years of the collaborative agreement? The overall story with respect to attainment of the goals established in the collaborative agreement process is complicated but, in the end, one for which there is some hope of achievement. Before turning to initial conclusions, the authors address some data issues.

Data Issues

Three critical data issues need to be addressed. First, the evaluation needs an improvement in the rate at which officers return the surveys. A letter or communication from CPD command staff and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) to the members of the force might increase the compliance rate. More generally, with the exception of the community survey, the response rates were weak. These response problems can be resolved, but they will require changes to the evaluation protocol established by the parties. Second, the CPD needs to improve documentation of vehicle stops, including the completion of information on the contact cards. An estimated 20 percent of the vehicle stops were not documented and 16 percent of the contact cards were missing important information. Third, a reduction in the number of video and audio recordings with missing and unintelligible information is needed. Overall, 60 percent of the requested incidents were missing. Among the viewed records, there were problems with the audio quality on approximately one-third of the tapes, and approximately 15 percent of the tapes ended before the incidents were complete. The authors realize that some of these problems are due to limitations of the equipment itself in this difficult operational environment. However, it appears that substantial improvements could be achieved by ensuring that officers are using the equipment correctly and that existing departmental policies are enforced.

Progress Toward the Goals of the Collaborative Agreement

The initial evaluation provides the opportunity to comment on each of the goals of the collaborative agreement. Again, this first-year evaluation report was primarily intended to establish the baseline against which future departures can be measured. That said, there are some evident lessons for each of the goals.

Proactive Partners in Community Problem Solving. CPOP has permeated the CPD and its interactions with the community to a considerable degree. Two elements of the CPOP process require attention: problem definition and community participation. With respect to problem definition, the authors saw little indication that problem-solving processes are explicitly being used to address community problems. With respect to engaging the black community, RAND's study indicates that knowing police officers by name or sight is related to improved perceptions of the Cincinnati police. Police-community relations may be enhanced by encouraging those with the most critical view of the police (blacks) to participate in community and CPOP meetings. The challenge lies in engaging the black community on these dimensions of police-community relations.

How can the parties' engagement of the black community in the CPOP process be improved? Several theorists have suggested specific actions that might improve the level of engagement with the community (e.g., Skogan, 1994). These processes attempt to make the police force more responsive to the concerns of the citizens they serve, and to make the citizens more actively involved in addressing crime problems in their community. Ultimately, Cincinnati will have to find methods of encouraging police-community collaboration that will work within the city's specific social, historical, and economic context. The Community Police Partnering Center may become one means to engage the black community; however, this should not preclude developing additional efforts to engage those elements of the community that are dissatisfied with the CPD.

Build Relationships Between Police and Communities. The surveys demonstrate community support for the police. Much lower levels of support in specific parts of the city temper this support, however. Differences in neighborhood quality conditions and the style of policing in specific regions of the city appear to drive partially the different perceptions. While research indicates that proactive policing behavior in the form of aggressive traffic enforcement is an effective method for reducing violent crime in the short run (see Sampson and Cohen, 1988; James Q. Wilson and Boland, 1980; Sherman, 1992), this approach also engenders greater distrust of the police (Taylor, 2001), because it presents an added burden to law-abiding citizens living in or traveling through high-crime neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, resolving the issue of the disproportionate impact that proactive policing has on the black community defies simple solution. Indeed, many communities all around the United States are struggling with the same problem. The parties should seek answers to two critical questions in this regard. First, how can Cincinnati build an effective policing model without an enforcement pattern that differentially affects the black community? Second, when effective policing does appear to affect the black community disproportionately, what tools are at the parties' disposal to ensure that the reasons for the policing policies are effectively communicated to community members? In short, the city needs to avoid the assumption that effective law enforcement and good community relations are mutually exclusive goals, and to work to find policies that can maximize both outcomes.

Staffing is another, more indirect way in which the goal of building relations between the police and community might be met. As noted earlier, blacks and women are generally underrepresented in civilian and sworn roles in the CPD. While it is unclear what short-term impact reducing this disparity will have on black perceptions of the CPD, the disparity likely raises questions in this community about the CPD's legitimacy and inhibits its ability to improve its interaction with the community. Police organizations can improve their legitimacy, and ultimate effectiveness, by ensuring fairness—and the appearness of fairness—in the hiring and promotion processes (Skogan and Frydl, 2004). Such demonstrations may increase their legitimacy, and ultimately help the CPD to become more effective and improve its overall relationship with the community. It is also worth noting that black and white officers acted differently in traffic stops. To the extent that these problems with interracial interactions persist, it would be better to have a force that is more evenly mixed with respect to race, so that the black citizens predominantly do not feel this problem.

Improve Education, Oversight, Monitoring, Hiring Practices, and Accountability of the CPD. National public opinion poll data indicate that citizens in general support community policing and efforts at police reform including the following: (1) methods of monitoring officer behavior, (2) sanctions for officers who engage in misconduct, (3) installing video

cameras in police cars, (4) early warning systems to flag officers who receive several complaints from citizens, and (5) a policy of recording information, including race, on all motorists stopped by officers (Weitzer and Tuch, 2005). The Cincinnati Police Department is currently engaged in these reform efforts, yet the extent to which the public and blacks in particular have been made aware of their efforts is unclear. Thus, one significant step toward reaching this objective may simply to be to increase communication on these topics, particularly through channels that blacks trust and use.

Ensure Fair, Equitable, and Courteous Treatment. The message on this topic is mixed. On the one hand, there is no clear evidence of racial profiling in the traffic stops or post-stop activity; reports obtained from participants in community council and CPOP meetings, verified by the authors' independent observations, indicate that the atmosphere at these meetings is considered fair and equitable. However, the videotape analyses suggest that there are differences in the communication styles between officers and suspects of different races. The good news is that changes in training or policies can likely address the problem of differences in the communication styles between officers and suspects of different races. Improving the skill and confidence with which officers of all races deal with suspects of other races will, over time, help improve the relationships between the police and the community. This will not be an easy task to undertake, but it is a concrete and identifiable step that the parties can undertake to achieve the goal of fair, equitable, and courteous treatment for all.

Create Methods to Foster Support of the Police. As stated in the collaborative agreement, the agreement's fifth goal is to "create methods to establish the public's understanding of police policies and procedures and recognition of exceptional service in an effort to foster support for the police" (U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, undated, p. 4). The results from the officer survey indicate that the officers perceived little community willingness to work with officers on problem solving and the perception that blacks complained and the media reported unfairly about racial profiling and police abuse of authority. In short, while the majority of officers appeared to be satisfied with the work, they also suffered significant strains from the job.

There are no easy solutions to these strains. At a minimum, more effective communication of CPD goals, policies, and strategies through channels that are trusted by community members would create opportunities to increase support. Similarly, providing training on interacting with suspects of a different race can be expected to increase the officers' confidence and skill in such interpersonal situations. As they are more effectively able to interact with people from other races, one can expect that they might begin to perceive less community resistance and, perhaps, more community support.