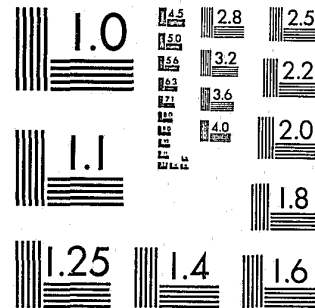


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and Crime Prevention: Practice and Research by [unclear]
(Bundeskriminalamt, public of Germany)

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Police Studies

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Public Priorities and Police Policy in a Bicultural Community¹

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Public opinion surveys about the police typically provide little direct guidance to police administrators in making practical decisions about department priorities, resource allocation, or crime control strategies. Instead, such surveys have generally tapped the more abstract—but nonetheless important—"symbolic dimension" of police performance,² i.e., perception of the police as being basically "good" or "bad," "effective" or "ineffective."

From the growing body of research on this topic, a rather stable "demography of police perception" is beginning to emerge. The most comprehensive of these studies³ drew upon data from the National Crime Survey and encompassed 13 cities, with approximately 10,000 respondents per city. In general, the most reliable predictors of attitude were age and race: with older subjects holding more favorable views of police than younger subjects, and Caucasians more positive than black respondents. There are also scattered signs of stronger police support among females⁴ and among wealthier subjects.⁵ Going beyond demographic characteristics, there is a tendency for more negative views of police among people who have been stopped or arrested by the police⁶ or who have been crime victims;⁷ however, the effects of victimization tend to disappear when age and race are held constant.

It is difficult to determine how much of the dissatisfaction registered by young people and black Americans is the fault of the police and how much is due to social forces beyond police control which disproportionately cast teenagers and minorities in critical roles as victims or offenders. It is clear, though, that acts by individual officers *can* influence the way that people perceive the police. Young people who had recent experience with officers who were

helpful or friendly were more positive toward the police than those without such contact.⁸ Likewise, police who had received crisis intervention training drew higher ratings from citizens on the handling of family fights than did untrained officers.⁹

The present study of police practice differs from most past survey research in that it: (1) examines the practical as well as "symbolic" aspects of law enforcement;¹⁰ (2) contrasts police and community assessments of crime problems and suggested solutions; (3) identifies law enforcement priorities from both the "traditional" and "community service" models of policing; (4) explores police-community tensions as an interactive process; (5) tests the level of police and community commitment to collaborative efforts; (6) solicits the opinion of youth and Hispanics, not just as victims of crime¹¹ or of police abuse¹² but as prospective police officers and participants in police-community programs; (7) and finally, it demonstrates the potential of survey research as an aid to police planning and program development.

Setting and Subjects

El Monte, a bicultural community of approximately 70,000 people, offers an instructive setting for this investigation because it shares a number of urban problems with many other suburbs of Los Angeles: rapid demographic change, high unemployment, high crime rates, tensions among ethnic groups, and conflicts among youth gangs. A series of surveys was initiated by the El Monte Police Department to identify crime problems, citizen complaints, community needs, and potential programs to impact crime. One of the special tasks of the survey was "... to shed some light as to why the Police Department, to this day, has not

been able to attract many Spanish surname police officers."¹³

Community Residents. A random sample of 324 adults (age 18 and over) was drawn within El Monte census blocks. Even though the survey was administered at the end of the working day, there was a higher proportion of females (57%) than males (43%). Approximately one-quarter of the sample elected to answer the Spanish form of the questionnaire, although a full 37% of the sample identified themselves as Mexican-American or Hispanic. Fifty-two percent were classified as Anglo-American.

High School Students. Permission was granted to survey all 9th and 12th grade students at three of the four city high schools, yielding a total of 1,397 students. In this sample, 51% were males and 49% were females; 53% were Anglo and 39% were Hispanic. Ten percent claimed to be members of youth gangs and 7% indicated membership in car clubs.

Police Officers. The survey included 83 regular officers, plus an auxiliary complement of 33 reserve officers, civilian jailers, dispatchers, and police cadets. The department is predominantly Anglo and male in composition, except for 20 Hispanics (17%) and 20 females (17%).

Results

Police and Neighborhood Services

The surveys will be explored in two phases: the first sweep of the data will examine differences *between* the survey samples, and the second sweep will employ multiple regression to identify demographic correlates of opinion *within* samples.

The students and adults rated five aspects of police performance and five neighborhood services (schools, street lighting, parks, street repair, and employment opportunities) on a scale of "good," "average," or "poor." The students were significantly more critical than the adults (chi square, $p < .01$) on all ten items. In their ratings of police, both groups gave the police their highest marks for basic honesty (9% of adults and 20% of students rated them "poor") and courtesy (13% vs. 26%, respectively). Conversely, both groups were most critical of police "speed in responding" (27% vs. 39%) and their "ability to provide protection from crime" (21% vs. 27%). Among community services, the groups were least critical of city parks and playgrounds (9% vs. 16%) and most

critical about the lack of employment opportunities (26% vs. 40%).

Causes of Crime in the Community

All three groups evaluated 11 potential sources of local crime (Table 1). Only three sources were perceived to be a cause of "much crime" by a full majority of any of the three samples. El Monte adults identified gang activities, "too many teenagers with time on their hands," and community drug addicts as heavy contributors to community crime. Police assigned very strong importance to the role of drug addicts, with youth gangs following a distant second. Among the students, only "gang activities" elicited majority agreement as a major cause.

Among El Monte adults, the two most conservative items on crime causation ("not enough police" and "world owes me a living") received moderate endorsement, while the more liberal sociological explanations (broken homes, lack of opportunities, and housing turnover) drew less support. (Interestingly, the police were significantly more liberal on three of these items and more conservative on one.) The lowest level of community endorsement was given to charges of discrimination against youth or minorities by police and employers. However, this does not mean that there is no "police-community relations problem" in El Monte. For, if one-sixth of the adults and one-quarter of the students strongly believe that the police harass young people and minorities, then a problem exists. But what kind of problem? Is it a case of insensitive behavior by the police or of distorted perception by the public? Later evidence will reveal a bit of both.

New Directions for Community Crime Control

Police Priorities: The Traditional Model

The traditional model of law enforcement emphasizes the deployment of police as a paramilitary strike force against specified crime "targets." As shown in Table 2, each of the three groups had its own top priority for increased law enforcement, though there was heavy overlap across groups for the top five crime concerns. Among community residents, there was strongest sentiment for targeting the sale and use of heroin, followed by spray-paint vandalism of property (graffiti), gang fights, and assaults. Student priorities were: graffiti, heroin trafficking, assault, and gang

violence. The police placed greatest emphasis upon burglary (which ranked 6th among adults and 8th among students), followed by heroin trafficking, graffiti, and car theft.

The absolute percentages of response to each crime in Table 2 present a slightly different picture of the three groups. It is clear that the adults shared a broader consensus than students for more aggressive law enforcement; also, adults generally pushed for greater intensification of efforts than the police themselves.

On the other hand, students took a stronger stand than police for increased efforts to control assaults, gang fights, shoplifting, and public drunkenness; but, on the other hand, students were less inclined than police to favor enforcement of such youth-oriented offenses as curfew and traffic violations, use of marijuana and alcohol, and disturbing the peace through "loud parties." By far, the strongest disparity of opinion on these latter issues was between the adults and students. Here, we gain a sense

Table 1
Community, Student, and Police Views on the Causes of Local Crime^a

Source	Community (n = 324)		Students (n = 1397)		Police (n = 116)		Chi Square Significance Level		
	Causes Much Crime %	No Crime %	Causes Much Crime %	No Crime %	Causes Much Crime %	No Crime %	C/S	C/P	S/P
	Gang fights and other gang activities	74	6	59	16	70	3	**	
Too many teenagers with time on their hands	63	5	34	19	49	6	**	*	**
Presence of large numbers of drug addicts	57	15	29	29	92	2	**	**	**
Not enough police to enforce all the laws	45	10	22	29	33	19	**	*	**
Belief by too many people that "the world owes me a living"	33	24	19	40	10	49	*	**	**
Broken homes	25	21	22	25	31	8		**	**
Lack of legal opportunities to prove you're a man	20	31	20	35	10	47		**	**
Fast housing turnover. People don't know their neighbors anymore.	20	31	11	45	16	41	**		
Rough and unfair treatment of minority residents by the police	18	37	22	35	2	83		**	**
Rough and unfair treatment of teenagers by the police	17	31	31	25	0	78	**	**	**
Job discrimination against minorities	17	27	25	32	2	70	**	**	**

*p = .05

**p = .01

^aThe middle category, "Causes Some Crime," was omitted in order to simplify the table, but is obtainable by subtracting the other two values from 100%.

of the conflict-laden role of the police—hired as agents by community parents for the control of community children.

Crime Prevention Programs: The Community Model

Among other painful shocks experienced by Americans, as we enter our "era of limits," is the growing awareness of the limited capacity of outside agencies, such as police or prisons, to solve "the crime problem." How willing are citizens to accept some responsibility for community law enforcement? Or, perhaps more basic, how willing are police officers to relinquish the social isolation of the patrol car in order to involve citizens in police-community programs?

Table 3 presents a list of 22 community-oriented programs which were rated by El Monte police. Some of these have been tried by other departments and others were offered in the spirit of brain-storming new ideas. (An additional item on saturation patrolling was included merely to provide a "bench-mark" for comparison with more traditional forms of police practice.) In general, there was very broad support for the more standard community programs such as neighborhood watch, property engraving, and block parents. Approximately 7 out of 10 officers were even receptive to programs which require intensive face-to-face interaction (such as neighborhood coffee klatches, school programs, and teen activities sponsorship) and they were willing to subject

Table 2
Community, Student, and Police Priorities for Law Enforcement

Offense Evaluate:	Community (n = 324)		Students (n = 1397)		Police (n = 116)		Chi Square Probability		
	More Time %	Less Time %	More Time %	Less Time %	More Time %	Less Time %	C/S	C/P	S/P
	Sale of heroin	88	2	77	5	78	2	**	*
Use of heroin	85	3	75	5	76	2	**	*	
Spray painting of property	85	3	78	6	73	4	*	*	
Gang fights	78	3	68	8	49	2	**	**	**
Assaults	76	2	73	5	24	4		**	**
Burglary	69	2	59	3	87	2	**	**	**
Sale of marijuana	68	10	44	24	59	2	**	**	**
Illegal pills	66	4	60	7	58	2			
Sale of alcohol to minors	65	7	32	27	38	4	**	**	**
Curfew violations	65	8	14	52	41	6	**	**	**
Carrying a concealed weapon	62	3	56	10	51	0			
Car theft	58	3	66	4	66	2	**		
Use of marijuana	54	19	34	34	33	10	**	**	**
School truancy	50	10	17	39	43	14	**		**
Shoplifting	41	6	38	9	15	7	**	**	**
Being drunk in public	38	12	34	15	10	13		**	**
Family fights	27	12	21	16	12	22	*	**	*
Loud parties	24	28	12	43	21	10	**		**
Traffic enforcement	16	21	9	43	16	8	**	**	**

*p = .05

**p = .01

Note: The middle category, "OK as is," was omitted in order to simplify the table, but is obtainable by subtracting the other two values from 100%.

themselves to training in interpersonal skills for handling street encounters and family disputes.

Almost half of the officers believed that little purpose would be served by involving the department in sponsoring a counseling service for drug abusers and runaways. About one in three doubted the usefulness of the "open phone" and "credit card" schemes. Some supplementary comments written by officers indicated concern that these programs might subject them to anonymous criticism without being able to face their accusers. A similar proportion were skeptical that "ethnic diversity seminars" or "minority recruitment" would significantly improve police effectiveness. This does not necessarily mean that they oppose minority hiring, *per se*, for they may simply be reacting to the wording of the question which implies a hiring quota. (In a more neutrally worded item from another part of the survey,

57% of the officers endorsed "increased minority hiring," 27% were undecided and 16% were opposed.) It is also noteworthy that 85% of the officers felt that a program of Spanish language training would be a constructive step for El Monte police.

Citizen support for police-community cooperation was equally strong. Community adults tended to prefer programs in which police either took direct control or moved the community toward clearly conceived projects such as neighborhood watch (70% in favor, 9% opposed), police advisement program on home security (72% vs. 14%), block parents (78% vs. 8%), and the We TIP anti-drug program (70% vs. 7%). There was less enthusiasm for general meetings between police and neighborhood groups to "talk about crime problems" (57% vs. 17%). Finally, to test the notion that the police might already be perceived as an unwanted "army of occupation" in some neigh-

Table 3
Police Evaluations of Potential Benefits From 22 Community Interventions

Program Description	Helpful %	Unde- cided %	Useless %
Neighborhood watch for mutual property surveillance	93	3	4
Saturation patrolling during peak crime periods	87	9	4
Spanish language training for all officers	85	6	9
Block parent program to protect children walking to school	85	9	7
Operation safeguard for property engraving and home security	79	13	8
Police workshop for improved handling of street encounters	75	14	11
Police and neighborhood meetings to discuss crime problems	72	18	10
Operation feedback on case progress for victims	70	25	5
Police-school program on bicycle safety, law, and rights	70	19	12
Police-youth program of supervised sports and car clubs	68	22	10
Crisis-intervention training in handling family disputes	68	18	14
Legal review of local ordinances to purge unnecessary laws	52	31	17
Community survey for law enforcement priorities	52	30	19
Police news column on police problems and unsolved cases	49	32	19
Open-phone for citizen complaints and suggestions	48	21	30
Hispanic culture seminars to orient Anglo officers	47	25	28
Ride-along program for driver's training and other students	47	25	28
Mini-city hall: officer and city official to hear problems	38	43	19
Adopt-a-cop: one officer per church for youth contacts	38	35	27
Police service center for counseling, runaways, and jobs	33	20	47
Credit cards for citizen commendations for good police work	32	32	36
Minority recruitment to double the number of Hispanic police	26	39	35

n = 116

borhoods, subjects were asked if it would be "better if there were fewer police patrolling your neighborhood?" Five percent agreed, 91% disagreed, and 4% were undecided.

Direct comparisons between students and adults were seldom feasible because the school survey probed other issues (Table 4). On two questions which did overlap, the students showed less support than adults—from 7% fewer endorsements on neighborhood watch to 27% fewer on We TIP. The police ride-along program interested 2 out of 3 students and, surprisingly, at least half of the students expressed willingness to become closely identified with the police by taking a part-time job in the department. Nineteen percent indicated a readiness to consider full-time police work even though 28% felt that such a decision could rupture old friendships. More detailed discussion of Table 4 will be deferred for the next section.

Groups Within Groups

The opinion data from each of the three samples were subjected to factor analysis in order to reduce the number of dependent variables to manageable size. Oblique rotation was used (with *delta* set at zero) to allow low level inter-correlations to remain among the factors. The intention was to preserve, if possible, the relationship between the obtained factors and the *a priori* clusters of items discussed in the previous sections. Seeking the smallest number of factors which could account for the largest proportion of variance, five factors were extracted from the community and school items and seven factors were drawn from the police item pool. As expected, the five factors obtained from the school and community data were very similar. Here are some illustrative items and factor loadings from the community sample.

Hit "hard" crime. Devote "more time" to the control of: sale of heroin (.74), use of heroin (.66), and assaults (.61).

Service satisfaction. I am "satisfied" with: fairness of law enforcement (.73), courtesy of police officers (.70), and speed in responding (.67).

Hit "soft" crime. Devote "more time" to the control of: illegal parking (.64), use of marijuana (.62), and "loud parties" (.60).

Crime causation. "Much crime" in the community is due to: rough treatment of teenagers

by police (.60), lack of legal opportunities to prove you're a man (.56), and job discrimination against minorities (.56%).

Police participation. I would actively support: neighborhood talks with police on crime control (.60), police advisement program on home security techniques (.53), and neighborhood watch (.51).

The police items yielded similar factors for "hard" crime, "soft" crime, crime causation, and police participation in police-community programs. Three additional factors were:

Ethnic group support. I am "satisfied with support received from the "average" member of these groups: Mexican-American teenage male (.83), Mexican-American teenage female (.82), and Anglo teenage male (.71).

Community group support. I am satisfied with the support from: local business groups (.68), local Boys' Clubs (.53), and local churches (.50).

Crisis intervention training. I feel a "great need" for further training in handling: a violent drunken woman (.66), a mentally disturbed woman (.60), and a victim of child abuse (.54).

Community Groups

The upper third of Table 5 summarizes the relationship of each factor score to six demographic characteristics of the adult sample. In addition, two "experiential" variables were included to assess the effect of two kinds of encounters with the criminal justice system: as a victim of any of six crimes (residential burglary, auto theft, auto burglary, strong arm robbery, assault, or assault with a deadly weapon); or as a citizen who has been "stopped for questioning" by the police. The variables were first regressed in stepwise fashion against the five factor scores. Next, they were regressed in two "blocks" to determine whether the experiential variables yielded a significant increment to the multiple correlation beyond the level already provided by the demographic variables. In this analysis, as well as for the two to follow, the multiple regression procedure was applied only with subjects who could be identified as Anglo or Hispanic.

Age proved to be the most consistent demographic influence upon public opinion. Older people were the most adamant that the police should increase their control over such minor

Table 4
Willingness to Participate in Police Programs
by All Students, Hispanic Students, and Gang Members

	All Students (n = 1397)		Hispanic Students (n = 540)		All Gang Members (n = 126)		Male Hispanic Gang Members (n = 55)	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Have you participated (or would you be interested) in the "Ride-Along" program to observe officers patrol their beats?	66	22	63	24	46	37	36	45
If the police tried to organize groups of neighbors to watch over and protect their own property, would you be willing to help?	63	10	58	13	41	26	30	43
Would you support an intensive police program to "crack down" on burglaries in your neighborhood?	61	13	53	17	45	24	32	38
Would you like to have a chance to talk with the police about ways to improve their relationships with students?	55	18	57	18	44	37	35	52
Would you be willing to take a part-time job as a student worker with the police department?	54	20	57	20	35	39	35	45
Would you be willing to report a drug pusher to We TIP (Turn in Pushers)?	43	26	39	27	24	52	24	57
Have you taken (or would you be interested in taking) the police department's course at your school called "The Student and the Law"?	40	29	39	30	32	50	24	57
Do you think your parents would be proud of you if you were to decide to become a police officer?	39	18	40	19	37	27	31	41
Do you think that most of your old friends would avoid you if you were to become a police officer?	28	49	31	44	49	28	46	32
Have you ever had a chance to "rap" with the police Community Relations Officer?	22	75	22	73	31	65	41	59
Would you be willing to consider becoming a police officer after you graduate?	19	52	18	49	14	66	18	65

Table 5
Relationship of Demographic Characteristics and Criminal Justice Experiences
to Factor Scores on the Community, Student, and Policy Surveys

	"Hard" Crime		Satisfaction		"Soft" Crime		Crime Causes		Participation	
	r	Order R ² Change	r	Order R ² Change	r	Order R ² Change	r	Order R ² Change	r	Order R ² Change
<i>Community Factors</i>	I		II		III		IV		V	
<i>Demographic Variables</i>										
Male/Female	.13*	3 .009	-.03*	8 —	.09	3 .008	-.07	6 .002	.06	2 .004
Anglo/Hispanic	-.20**	1 .040**	.06	4 .015*	-.01	5 .009	.09	2 .008	-.05	7 —
Age	.17**	4 .008	.24**	1 .057**	.30**	1 .091**	-.10	4 .004	.11	1 .013
Years in the City	.16*	2 .016*	-.10	2 .041*	.01	4 .011	-.05	8 .000	.06	5 .000
Income	.07	5 .005	.02	7 .004	-.04	7 .001	.06	3 .005	.03	4 .001
Owner/Renter	-.09	8 .000	-.11	6 .006	-.07	8 .000	-.03	5 .004	-.07	3 .002
<i>Experiential Variables</i>										
Non-victim/Victim	-.05	7 .001	-.15*	5 .010	-.13	6 .005	.15*	1 .021*	-.03	6 .000
Not Stopped/Stopped	.02	6 .003	-.19**	3 .021*	-.16*	2 .016*	.07	7 .001	-.02	8 —
<i>R by Blocks of Variables</i>										
All Demographics	(R = .28)		(R = .34)		(R = .35)		(R = .16)		(R = .14)	
Experientials Added	(R = .29)		(R = .39)*		(R = .38)		(R = .21)		(R = .14)	
<i>School Factors</i>	I		III		I		II		IV	
<i>Demographic Variables</i>										
Male/Female	.10**	5 .003	.07*	6 .000	.14**	5 .003*	.01	4 .003*	.06*	5 .001
Anglo/Hispanic	-.15**	3 .006**	.02	5 .004*	.04	4 .009**	.11**	3 .008**	-.07*	6 .001
9th Grade/12th Grade	.07*	4 .004*	-.12**	3 .012**	-.12**	3 .015**	.01	6 .000	.06	3 .003*
Non-gang/Gang Member	-.32**	1 .100**	-.14**	4 .010**	-.24**	2 .042**	.04	5 .000	-.23**	1 .053**
<i>Experiential Variables</i>										
Non-victim/Victim	-.08**	6 .000	-.19**	2 .022**	-.12**	6 .002	.15**	1 .021**	.00	4 .001
Not Stopped/Stopped	-.15**	2 .013**	-.21**	1 .043**	-.28**	1 .078*	.13**	2 .011**	-.09**	2 .004*
<i>R by Blocks of Variables</i>										
All Demographics	(R = .34)		(R = .20)		(R = .31)		(R = .12)		(R = .24)	
Experientials Added	(R = .36)*		(R = .30)**		(R = .39)**		(R = .21)**		(R = .25)	
<i>Police Factors</i>	I		VI		VII		V		III	
<i>Demographic Variables</i>										
Male/Female	.16	4 .014	.12	7 .001	.27**	2 .024	-.08	5 .003	.28**	1 .078**
Anglo/Hispanic	-.09	5 .008	.13	2 .012	-.01	6 .005	-.05	7 .001	.08	5 .003
Age	-.12	8 .002	-.01	6 .009	-.03	5 .011	.03	8 —	-.03	3 .048*
Years of Service	-.16	3 .013	-.11	5 .029	-.10	8 .000	.02	3 .008	-.21*	2 .012
Rank	-.26**	1 .068*	.00	4 .006	-.15	4 .017	.11	4 .004	-.15	7 .000
Education	-.06	6 .003	-.08	3 .005	-.12	7 .001	.28**	1 .076**	-.07	8 —
<i>Experiential Variables</i>										
Public Exposure	.24*	2 .012	.01	8 .000	-.09	3 .016	-.04	6 .002	.06	4 .006
Public Abuse	-.06	7 .001	-.14	1 .021	-.30**	1 .088*	.21*	2 .031	-.21*	6 .000
<i>R by Blocks of Variables</i>										
All Demographics	(R = .33)		(R = .28)		(R = .32)		(R = .29)		(R = .39)	
Experientials Added	(R = .35)		(R = .29)		(R = .40)		(R = .35)		(R = .40)	

*p = .05
**p = .01

Notes: (1) This table is based only upon subjects who were identifiable as Anglo or Hispanic and for whom there were no missing data. The community sample n = 284, school sample n = 1229, and the police sample n = 98. For dichotomous variables, the variable after the slash (/) was assigned the higher value. (2) Significance of the F statistic testing the extent of contribution of each variable to a cumulating multiple correlation when entered stepwise. (3) Significance of the F statistic to determine whether the experiential variables brought a significant increment to the multiple correlation already provided by the demographic variables.

offenses as illegal parking, loud parties, public drunkenness, and the use of marijuana. Similarly, they were more inclined to press for a crack-down on heroin traffic and violent crime in the community. Despite the intensity of their concerns for increased crime control, older people were the most positive in their evaluation of the police. Long-time residents of the city shared in the recommendations to give increased attention to "hard crime" but, in contrast to older people *per se*, established residents of the city were more critical of the police than were newcomers.

As might have been expected, people who have either been victimized by crime or "stopped by the police" were less satisfied with the police department and were less disposed to feel that the police should involve themselves in monitoring social activities centering around parties, soft drugs, and alcohol. For reasons that are unclear, victims were more prone than nonvictims to attribute psychological or sociological "causes" for criminal behavior. In contrast to the National Crime Surveys (Garofalo, 1978) which showed that demographics alone could account for most of the variance in attitudes towards the police, our data showed that experiential variables added a significant increment to the multiple regression equation in predicting citizen satisfaction with the police.

Two of the factors were found to be related to ethnicity. On the one hand, Hispanics were less likely to advocate a push to control the "hard crime" cluster of heroin, gangs, and assaults; but on the other, they also tended to be more satisfied with police performance. The lower level of concern with the so-called "hard crimes" is puzzling because the Hispanic family is supposedly more heavily victimized by such activities. A part of the explanation may lie in the concept of acculturation. The evidence, here, derives from a separate chi square analysis of Hispanic respondents, comparing those who answered the survey in English vs. Spanish. The English-speaking subjects took a significantly harder line for police control of gangs, gang graffiti, heroin traffic, assaults, rape, and burglary. They more strongly endorsed a police "crack-down" of neighborhood burglaries and they claimed a greater willingness to participate in We-TIP. However, the Spanish-speaking respondents gave significantly stronger endorsements of police performance.

Overall, the community survey reveals the errors that would be made in projecting simplistic stereotypes of a monolithic "Anglo community" or "Hispanic community." In general their similarities were far more apparent than their differences; and age was a stronger influence upon opinion than ethnicity. Furthermore, not one of the demographic or experiential variables was associated with the factor assessing willingness to participate in police-community programs. On this basis, then, one might expect that the introduction of such programs would not generate pockets of community resentment and might even provide a focus for cooperative efforts and community solidarity.

Student Groups

Scanning the middle portion of Table 5, we see that student opinion about law enforcement is more intricately determined than for adults. All of the predictor variables actively contributed to the five factor scores. Bear in mind, though, that because of the large sample size, even relatively small correlations become statistically significant. If the importance of the predictor variables can be judged by the rank order in which they are entered into the multiple regression equation, then it is apparent that all of the first and second ranked variables were concentrated in just three sources: status as a gang member, as a crime victim, or as an individual who has been "stopped for questioning" by the police. These three groups tended to move in unison with a pattern that could be characterized as being critical of police, sympathetic to offenders, opposed to police-community projects, and resistant to vigorous enforcement of either "soft" or "hard" crime.

Female students took a stand that was almost diametrically opposed to this pattern: they were more positive than males in their evaluations of police; they wanted stronger enforcement of all types of laws; and they favored police-and-youth programs. How does an additional three years of maturity and education influence attitudes toward these criminal justice issues? Like the females, seniors were more inclined to favor targeting such "hard" crimes as heroin traffic and gang violence; and they endorsed collaborative programs between youth and police. However, they were more critical of police than freshmen and they were less positive about police monitoring of that cluster of activities involving "loud parties" and use of alcohol and marijuana.

Hispanic youth, like their elders, were less enthusiastic than Anglos about increasing police efforts against "hard crime." One interpretation is that they may fear that an aggressive police campaign against youth gangs and graffiti will be intrusive and indiscriminate, thereby endangering their own civil rights. Furthermore, there are reasonable grounds for concern that an increased police presence in any neighborhood—Hispanic or Anglo—would have the effect of increasing the arrest rate for the youth of that neighborhood.¹⁴ It is evident from the blockwise multiple correlations for the student sample that an encounter with the police or experience as a victim seemed to heighten an anti-police attitude on four of the five factors. Taken at face value, this is a serious indictment of the police and of their manner of approach to the youth of the community.

Special attention will be given to the student responses in order to pursue the problem of police recruitment among Hispanics. At the time of this research, 17% of El Monte police personnel were Hispanic versus 37% of the respondents in the community sample. The multiple regression analysis showed that Hispanic youth were slightly less interested than Anglos about participating in police-youth programs. However, if we refer back to the item-by-item percentages in Table 4, we will see that the actual size of the deviation of Hispanics from the total sample was very small. Furthermore, on three questions the proportion of endorsements was slightly higher for the Hispanic students: willingness to talk with police, willingness to take a part-time police job, and parental pride if the student should decide to become a police officer.

Going a step further, we can see that much of the resistance to participating in police programs was centered in those students who were self-declared gang members, particularly the male gang members. (In the total sample, 128 students claimed gang membership. Of these, 72% were Hispanic.) If, for the moment, the responses of the gang members are set aside, the differences between Anglo and Hispanic students disappear. Finally, we must avoid overgeneralizing about the gang members, themselves, for a sizeable minority of them are quite open to approach by these programs. Thus, if there is a shortage of police applicants from the Hispanic population, it does not appear that attitudinal factors, alone, can account for it. More likely the obstacles lie at a

later stage in the process, such as college enrollment or the police recruitment process.

To what extent do the police contribute to the anti-police attitudes observed in many students? Table 6 lists the proportion of students from each of several identifiable groups who have been "stopped" by the police. Car club members and gang members were stopped at approximately twice the rate of service club members and student body officers. Likewise, the rate for males was almost double the rate for females. The table also shows a significant difference in the rate of police encounters for Hispanic and Anglo youth. Is this evidence for "police harassment of minorities?" Possibly. But such an interpretation would also seem to require an explanation for the fact that the police appear to have an even stronger "prejudice" against athletes vs. service club members or of males vs. females. As further evidence that it is the behavior of the youth rather than his ethnic group that is being singled out by the police, when gang members are excluded from the comparison, the difference in rates for Hispanic and Anglo students is no longer significant. As one final point, it should be noted that the car club members, who received the highest proportion of police "stops," are predominantly Anglos (70%).

The second column of Table 6 illustrates the fallacy of blaming the police as the "single cause" of anti-police attitudes. Police-youth encounters are a two-way street and each party contributes something to the quality of the interaction. Compared to all other students, higher proportions of student body officers, athletes, and female students came away from police encounters feeling that they had been "treated with respect." The evaluations of male students were less positive and those of gang members were distinctly negative. The athletes pose a particularly interesting case. In speculating about their high vulnerability to being "stopped" by police, we might assume that this predominantly male group resembles gang members in being "risk-takers" who have a strong need to demonstrate masculine "courage" through physical aggressiveness and fast driving. However, like student body officers, they are accustomed to working with adult authority figures and have learned to be deferential and accepting in the face of criticism. Despite this evidence for a student contribution to good and bad police encounters, the police should not be let off too easily. The fact

that only 56% of all students felt that they were treated with respect is far too low and suggests that there is great room for improvement in the social skills of the officers in their contact with the public.

Police Groups

Police personnel completed a somewhat more extensive questionnaire and it generated seven factors rather than just five. Since the police did not rate the quality of their own performance, the correlations listed in the second column in the lower part of Table 5 pertain to police satisfaction with community support. There were no significant demographic or experiential correlates with this factor, nor with a similar factor measuring feelings of support from various age and ethnic groups.

Ethnicity of the officer was unrelated to any of the seven factors, and education was related to only one; more highly educated officers were more willing to recognize external causes, such as unstable families and job discrimination, as contributors to crime. Female officers were

more positive than males, and veterans were less positive than rookies about the potential benefits of police-community programs and crisis intervention training. (The latter factor is not shown in Table 5.) Females also gave a higher priority than males to police activities to control "soft crimes" such as public drunkenness, loud parties and family fights. Finally, officers from the lower ranks were more emphatic than their superiors in stressing the need for programs to impact the "hard crimes" such as narcotics traffic and property crimes.

Continuing the theme that police-community interaction is a "two-way street" which produces effects upon both parties, the survey produced two parallel experiential variables for the police. To get some measure of the kind of "combat fatigue" that might develop from intensive street duty, a composite measure of "public exposure" was derived from items showing the amount of current duty time devoted to: walking patrol, motor patrol, tactical units, traffic violations, reckless driving, drunk driving, traffic accidents, and family

Table 6
Proportion of Student Groups Who Were "Stopped by the Police"
and the Proportion of Those Stopped Who Felt They Were "Treated With Respect"

Group	Have You Been "Stopped" by the EMPD?		If So, How Did They Treat YOU?		
	Total Group Size	Percent "Stopped"	Group	Size of Group Stopped	Percent "Treated With Respect"
Car Club Member	90	69%**1	Student Government	46	74%* 1
Gang Member	128	66%**1	Athletics	277	62%* 1
Males	697	59%**2	Females	207	62%* 2
Athletics	536	52%**1	Service Club	70	59%
Hispanics	517	52%**3	Anglo	314	58%
All Students	1358	46%	All Students	624	56%
Anglo	729	43%**3	Hispanics	266	55%
Student Government	122	38%	Males	413	54%* 2
Service Club	203	34%**1	Car Club Member	62	48%
Females	654	34%**2	Gang Member	85	33%**1

*p = .05
**p = .01

¹This group differs significantly in a Chi Square comparison with all other students who are not members of this group.

²Males and females differ significantly on this comparison.

³Hispanic and Anglo students differ significantly on this comparison.

fights. A measure of police victimization due to "public abuse" was derived by a composite of questions asking how many times in his or her career, the officer has been: verbally threatened, verbally abused, stabbed, shot at, hit by fists, hit with any weapon, spit at, or made the target of rocks or bottles.¹⁵

It was found that the officers who are most directly involved in day-to-day street work acknowledged the greatest need for crisis management training to deal with alcoholics, psychotics and family violence (not shown in Table 5). They would also like to see the department direct greater attention to the so-called "hard crimes" involving narcotics traffic and property offenses. Perhaps understandably, those officers who have taken the greatest amount of direct abuse from the public were least enthusiastic about devoting more time toward the control of drunks, loud parties, and family fights because these are the very situations which are most likely to occasion such abuse. There may be a "burn-out" phenomenon operating here, for these same officers were least likely to endorse expanded contact with the public through police-community programs.

Of course these are only correlational findings and we have no independent evidence that these officers were, in fact, subjected to greater abuse. Just as it may be true that antisocial youth could be projecting their own hostility when they describe the police as being abusive, there could be some misanthropic police officers who trigger abusive reactions in the public or they could be selectively labeling trivial encounters as being major abuses. One final note—while the experiential variables were significantly related to some of the police scales, they did not add significantly more information than could have been obtained from the multiple regression of occupational and demographic variables alone.

Overview

This program of survey research was designed to provide a broader base of opinion for guiding police policy and practice within a bicultural community. Reviewing the top law enforcement priorities of El Monte students, adults, and police, one can recognize a common perception that the police should devote more resources to the control of heroin traffic, gang violence, and gang graffiti. A strong majority of police and community residents also shared a willing-

ness to work together in such collaborative crime control programs as neighborhood watch and block parents.

Even though the principal focus of this study was to highlight the problems of law enforcement in a bicultural community, if one were pressed to choose the single most powerful determinant of community opinion it would not be ethnicity, but age. Whether comparing the student sample vs. the adult sample or simply comparing the younger vs. older respondents in the adult sample, we came up with results which were much the same. Older people were inclined to give more positive evaluations of police performance and they tended to take a tougher stand on the need for police control of such youth-oriented offenses as "loud parties," under-age drinking, and drug use. Among police, years of police experience—and not age—seemed to color attitudes. In a pattern suggesting "occupational burnout," officers with longer service were less committed to becoming involved in police-community programs and were less likely to feel the need for training in crisis management.

Hispanic and Anglo police officers seemed to share a common perspective on law enforcement issues; however, there were some ethnic differences in the student and adult samples, particularly on the "hard crime" factor. While a clear majority of both ethnic groups wanted stronger police efforts to control this cluster of crimes (which included gang violence and gang graffiti), the emphasis was stronger among Anglos. It was also stronger among Hispanics who completed the survey in English rather than in Spanish. Among Hispanic youth, membership in a youth gang appeared to be a pivotal factor in suppressing willingness to participate in law enforcement programs. When responses from gang members were omitted from the analysis, there were few practical differences between Hispanic and Anglo youth. Therefore, based upon attitudes alone, we could see no obstacle to the eventual success of recruitment programs to attract more Hispanic-Americans into law enforcement.

There was evidence (albeit correlational evidence) that many police-community contacts seem to yield some negative attitudinal "fall-out" for both parties to the encounter. Crime victims and people who have been "stopped" by the police were more critical of the police and were less willing to endorse police efforts

to monitor the "soft crime" offenses involving traffic violations, public drunkenness, illicit drugs, and neighborhood disturbances. Likewise, police officers who claimed to have been targets of direct public abuse were less inclined to become involved in future crime programs requiring close cooperation with the public and, furthermore, they had little enthusiasm for police enforcement of the "soft crime" cluster—probably because these situations elicit the strongest public hostility.

It is important to remember that this research differs from most criminal justice surveys both by its origins and intent; for the surveys were initiated by a law enforcement agency with the clear expectation that they might guide police planning and practice. Subsequently, a number of new programs have been developed in the El Monte Police Department and preliminary evaluations of some of these programs are now complete: a police program for targeting heroin traffic¹⁶; a police program to secure employment for gang members¹⁷; a police-community program to control graffiti¹⁸; and a training program to improve police skills in handling disturbance calls.¹⁹ Thus, it appears that survey methods can be adapted to serve practical as well as theoretical goals in law enforcement research.

Notes

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