



Public Opinion of Law Enforcement

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Research Questions

- Research questions of our project were this...
 - What is the current public opinion of law enforcement?
 - How does police misconduct influence the public opinion?
 - What causes a person to have either a positive or negative view of the police?
 - What sources lead to that opinion?
 - What do you feel that police can improve on?



Literature Review

Numerous studies have been done discussing why people have such a negative perception of the police

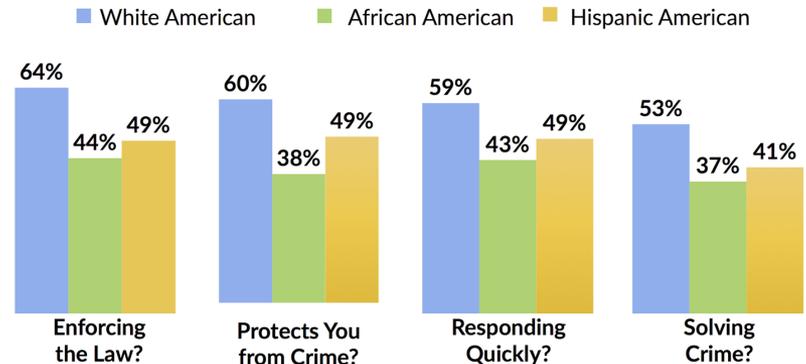
- Dowler, and Zawilski, (2007) discuss media consumption as a basis of the negative opinion of law enforcement. They examined true crime shows like 24, and CSI, and compared them to shows that depict real police moments like COPS and America's Most Wanted. They found that shows like COPS had little to no effect on the public opinion.
- When you have more crime in an area that means that you will have more interactions with the police, the more interactions you have with the police the higher your chances are of being involved in one that ends negatively. One bad interaction with a person it can affect the entire community's opinion of the police and their efforts (Miller, J., & Davis, R.C. 2008 p. 13)

Literature Review Cont.

- A study done by Higgins, Gabbidon, and Vito, (2010 pp. 120) traffic stops were looked at as a cause for a negative perception of the police. They interviewed black and hispanic minorities and found that black respondents were more likely to state that racial profiling was a widespread occurrence. They were also more likely to feel that profiling was unjustified and that they themselves had been profiled

Are Your Local Police Competent?

% Who Give Very Good/Excellent Ratings



CATO INSTITUTE/YOUGOV 2016 CRIMINAL JUSTICE SURVEY

Measuring process (Research Design)

- A survey was sent randomly to 500 UVU students organized and given to us by the IRI.
- To ensure that we had the most responses possible we discussed:
- Ethical issues
 - Autonomy
 - Negative impacts
 - Length of survey
 - Order and importance of questions- no trick questions, etc
- 3 emails were sent over the course of 9 days



Important Survey Questions Asked

Here is what we found and the questions we had to ask to be able to find this

- What is your current opinion of law enforcement?
- Have you ever been the victim of police misconduct?
- Do you believe that the Police in your community treat most people fairly?
- What sources do you find influence your opinion of Law Enforcement the most?
- What do you feel the police need in order to improve their effectiveness?

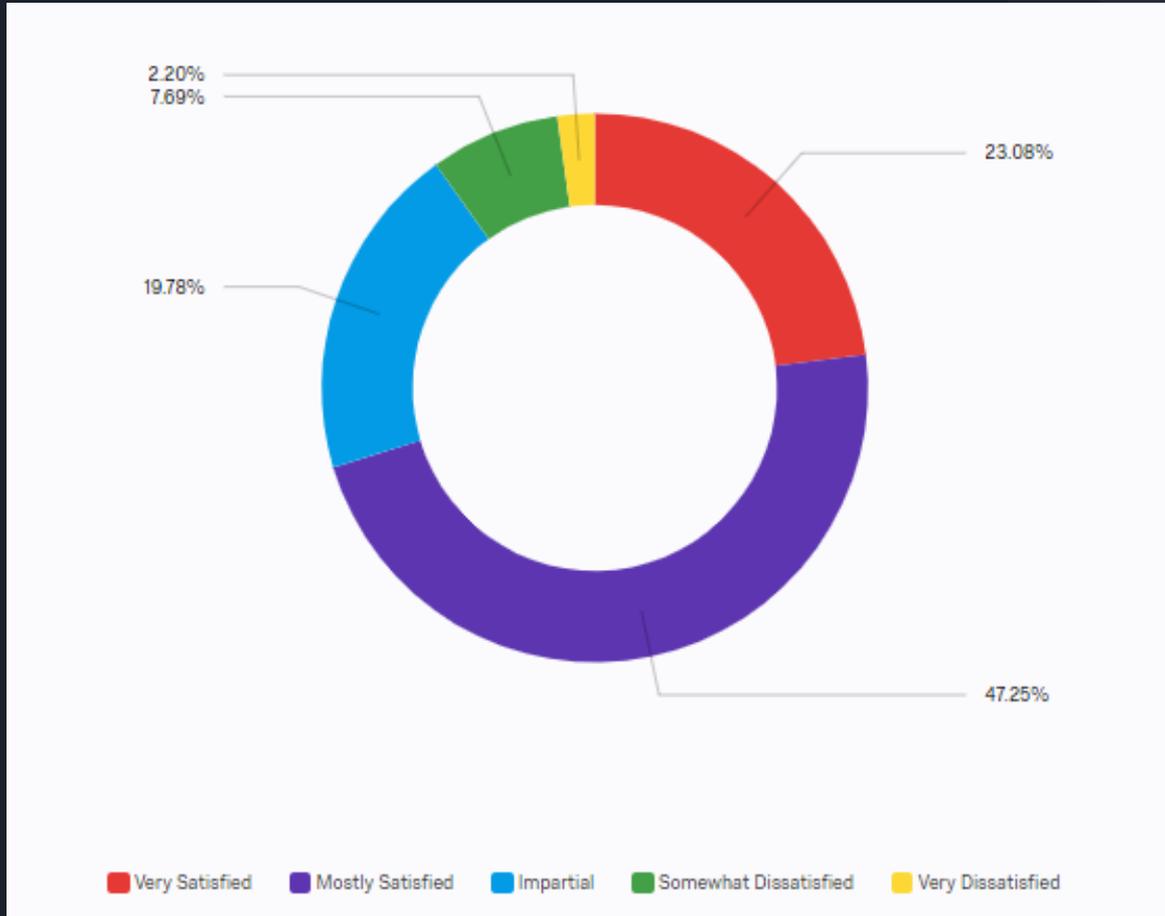




Response Analysis (Demographics)

- 97 People responded to the survey
- 42 male, 45 female, 1 other
- 3 African American, 77 Caucasian, 1 Asian, 6 Other
- Annual income mostly under \$10,000

Current Opinion of Law Enforcement



Have you ever been a victim of Police misconduct?

Yes - 8
No - 84

Who said yes?

Male - 3
Females - 2
Other - 1
Unspecified - 2

Q4 - Have you ever been the victim of police misconduct?



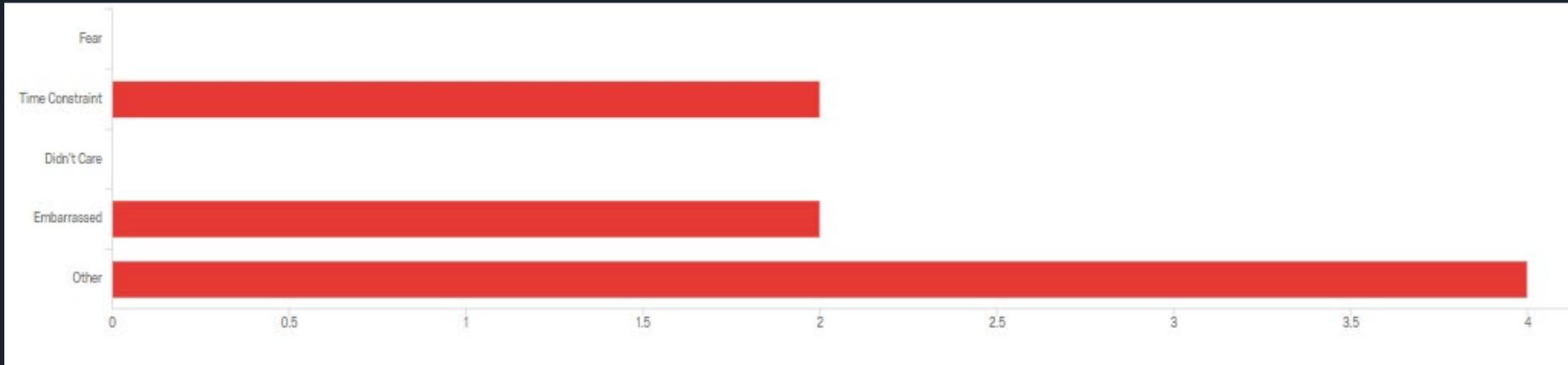
Did you report the misconduct to the proper authorities?

- We found that all 8 of the people that experienced what they would consider police misconduct chose not to report the incident.



Why did you choose not to report the incident?

- We asked our survey takers to select why they didn't report the incident from; Fear, Time Constraint, Don't Care, Embarrassed, or Other



The other responses for why the incident wasn't reported.

Other

It is like asking for trouble, and in some cases, it is like reporting an incident to the perpetrator about the perpetrator.

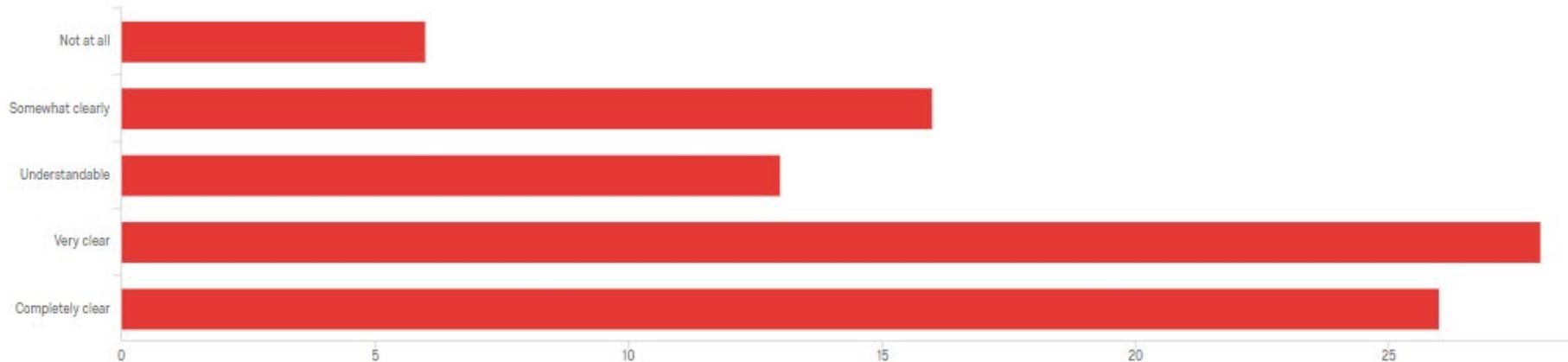
The event that occurred cannot be corrected, and so I do not see a reason to report it.

Fear and time constraint

How clear were the actions of the officer?

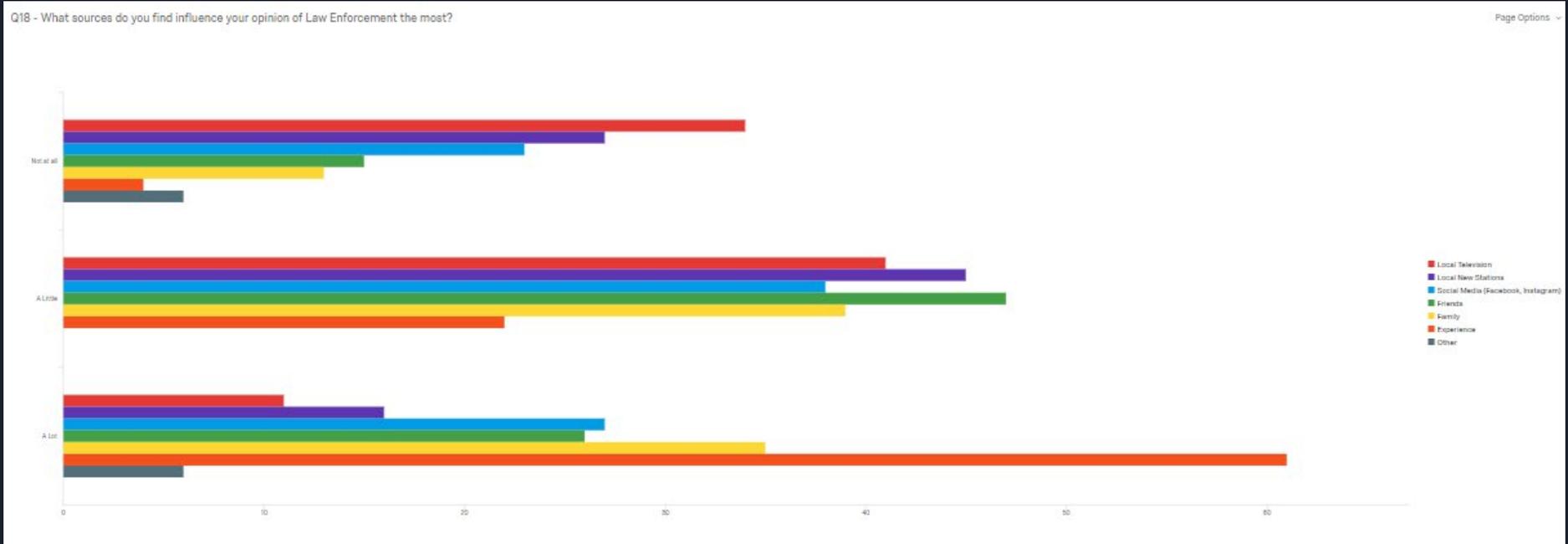
- Only six people stated that the actions of the officer during their last interaction were unclear.

Q16 - During you last interaction with the Police, to what extent did the officer explain their actions?



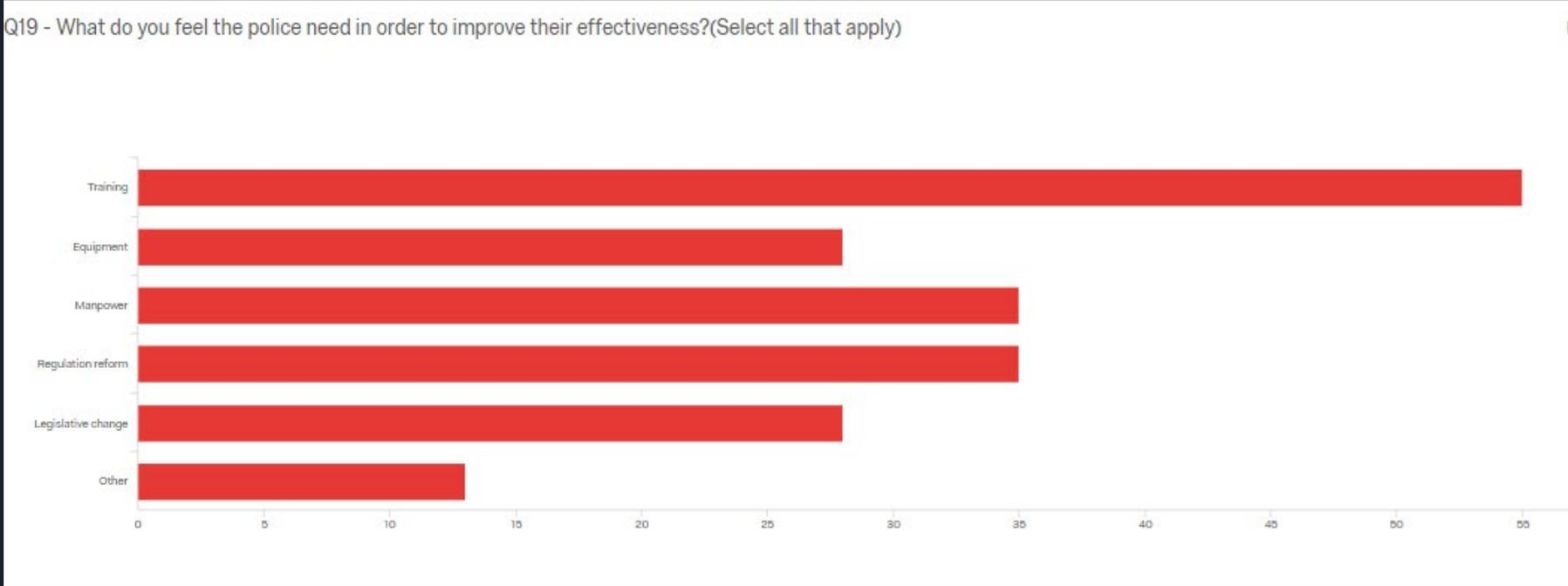
What sources influence your opinion of Law Enforcement?

- We found that there are 4 things that gave people their opinions and they are
 - 1 - Experience
 - 2 - Family
 - 3 - Social Media
 - 4 - Friends



What do the police need in order to improve their effectiveness?

- We ask what people think would increase the effectiveness of their local police department and the answer was resoundingly training.



We also received some other comments from some very opinionated survey takers.

Other

I have no recommendations, the law is the law. Police are the balance between tyranny and anarchy. If it keeps the peace I have no complaints.

Resources about/for mental illness, homelessness, racial relations and bias, and special needs/disabilities, and lower SES understanding and training

Therapy every so often

Some officers simply need to know the laws before acting on a guess. This can be the difference between either no incident or a simple interaction and a bad situation which puts the civilian at risk or in fear of loss in social status, job, money, and more.

Culture change

Other

Bigger and better cars. More money

Job requirements should change in order to have less police with higher pay.

Experience!! Just because you have a degree that doesn't mean you have experience in the field. White people here in Utah will always have a persecution of minority's no matter what Utah try's to change. We live in a state that isn't diverse and is predominantly racist. Change starts with just one person leading in a different direction.

Degrading people & mutual respect

Support from the people



Conclusion - Why this is Important

- This public opinion can have a positive or negative affect on police officers and their willingness to fulfill their duties. It can also affect law enforcements agencies to hire well prepared and trained officers because many people do not want to become officers.
- In our sample of UVU students, the overall opinion was satisfied with the opinion of law enforcement and have these opinions through experience, friends, family, and social media.
- Of the negative responses most people felt that officers needed more training to better serve their communities.



Conclusion continued....

- More diversity
 - It would have been better to send this survey out on a state, and national level, rather than just UVU because there were some factors that we thought might influence people in their opinions but because it was only college students, was not really a factor.
- Eliminate vague answers to go more in depthmore time