

Police stops and community responses in the context of the New York crime decline

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The volume of documented stops made by the New York Police Department (NYPD) surged from 160,000 in 2003, the first year for which the data are complete, to 601,000 in 2010. This increase in stops, coupled with the fact that almost approximately 90 percent of these contacts do not result in arrests or summons, has generated a great deal of controversy on the social costs and benefits of this strategy . The NYPD and their supporters argue that stops are linked to the crime decline, that they are constitutionally sound and that most residents support them. Critics, including the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), claim that the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policy effectively results in racial profiling and that it violates several constitutional mandates. Moreover, they suggest that high volumes of stops amplify problems associated with the oversight of NYPD policies, increasing the likelihood of police abuse. Other actors in this debate have levied instrumental challenges. They argue that there are no direct benefits of this policy in terms of crime reduction, particularly for violent crime, that there are better uses for limited police resources, and that it undermines rather than facilitates the work of the police (e.g., Harcourt & Ludwig, 2007).

Given that much of the controversy surrounding the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policy is couched in terms of its social costs or benefits, surprisingly little is known about community responses to the increasing numbers of stops, especially in the context of the unprecedented decline in crime that has occurred in New York City. The purpose of this paper is to explore several hypotheses that could explain the apparently limited collective responses against this policy, particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Drawing on prior work, we define a collective response as an activity in which unrelated individuals join together to do something about a specific problem (see DuBow, McCabe, & Kaplan, 1979). These responses can vary in their size, level of organization, and whether they are carried out by groups of individuals on their own (e.g., a letter writing campaign) or with others (e.g., a rally). Some responses may operate through organizations or neighborhood groups. Others may reflect spontaneous

actions taken by neighbors often in response to a specific event. As such, our definition distinguishes collective responses from similar processes such as “collective efficacy” or the unfolding of social movements (Sampson et al., 2005; Castells, 1983) because collective responses are behavioral—rather than purely in the form of expectations—and reflect a wide range of rationales.

BACKGROUND

There is well documented evidence that stops, arrests and other types of NYPD law enforcement activity have been concentrated in poor minority communities, but less is known about how residents living in these areas perceive these policies. The media has provided anecdotal evidence that specific strategies such as stop-and-frisk or marijuana arrests are not well-received, especially among minorities and those who live in areas with the highest numbers of contacts.¹ Moreover, qualitative research conducted in New York City indicates that most minority youth do not feel “comfortable” when they see the police, do not “trust” the police, and are more likely to report adverse contacts (Ruck Harris, Fine, & Freudenberg, 2008; Solis, Portillos, & Brunson, 2009). Large scale scientific studies on New Yorkers’ reactions to stop-and-frisk policies are harder to find. Research using convenience sampling in Brownsville, a predominantly minority neighborhood in New York with high rates of violence and stop-and-frisks, found that 28% of those surveyed had been stopped and frisked in the last year and most of these respondents viewed this experience negatively (Hynynen, 2011).² Other studies using more diverse samples have provided additional insights. A scientific poll conducted in Philadelphia, another city with relatively high levels of stops, found that there is considerable support for the police and that 61% of people explicitly support the stop-and-frisk strategy (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011). Respondents are more skeptical about whether the police use good judgment when they conduct these stops and there were pronounced racial differences in perceptions of this policy; whites were substantially more likely than blacks to support stop-and-frisk and to think the police use good judgment in the context of these actions. Two studies conducted in New York City replicate these race differences in perceptions of the police and their policies. Using data from a 2001 telephone survey, Reitzel and Piquero (2006) found that the

¹ See for example Chang, A (2011, April 26). Stop and frisk investigation, Part 1. *WNYC Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.wnyc.org/>

² There are some methodological limitations with this study. Almost 20% of the sample did not reside in Brownsville. In addition, no information on refusal rates is provided in the report and some questions have as much as 20% missing data (Hynynen, 2011).

majority of respondents thought racial profiling was widespread, but this sentiment was more prevalent among non-whites and only a small percentage of the sample believed profiling was justified. Similarly, results from another telephone survey in 2002 indicate that African Americans were less likely to support giving the police more power, including the power to stop people (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). When taken together, this work suggests that while there may be general approval for intensive policing tactics, among poor minorities - who are disproportionately affected by this activity - there is much less support. It also suggests that general support for specific policies such as stop- and-frisk may co-exist with concerns about their implementation or may be shaped by perceptions of the effectiveness of these policies.

There has been relatively little discussion of community responses to stop-and-frisk policies in New York City. There has been some documentation of individual-level initiatives including allegations reported to the Citizen Complaint Review Board (CCRB), although incidents of suspected misconduct are seldom reported or challenged in court. Community mobilization appears relatively rare. There have been several class-action lawsuits filed by the CCR and other organizations.³ Aside from emerging reports of community mobilization in the media, many of which are linked to specific high profile stop-and-frisk incidents and other events such as police shootings,⁴ there is less documentation of broader, more systematic collective responses beyond discrete “know-your-rights” campaigns, “cop-watch” projects, and albeit rarely, the mobilization of local elected officials.⁵

More critically, there has been a lack of conceptualization on how to generate more substantive knowledge in a way that would inform policy, research, and advocacy. To address this issue there is a need for better data and more creative research designs. On the one hand this would entail systematically documenting perceptions of and experiences with police stops as well as individual-level responses to other forms of intensive policing, especially in poor minority communities. If there is overall support for

³ E.g., *Daniels, et al. v. The City of New York*, filed in 1999, and *Floyd, et al. v. The City of New York*, filed in 2008.

⁴ See for ex.: Lee, T. & Moynihan, C. (2010, August 8). After 50 shots in Harlem, one dead and 6 hurt, including 2 officers. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

⁵ See for ex: Gray, C. (2011, June 13). How cops turn “stop and frisk” into “stop and arrest”. *New American Media*. Retrieved from <http://newamericanmedia.org>. See also Rayman, G. (2010, September 2). Ray Kelly hears it from Brooklyn Politicians over stop-and-frisks. *The Village Voice*. Retrieved from <http://villagevoice.com>. For information on cop watch programs in New York City, see the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (<http://mxgm.org>) and the People’s Justice Coalition (<http://peoplesjustice.org>).

the NYPD then there is no reason to expect community mobilization around this issue. This task would require surveying hard-to-reach populations who might be reluctant to trust researchers who are asking about sensitive topics. Past efforts to collect survey data using traditional approaches have generated high refusal rates.⁶ On the other hand, to fully understand community response to intensive policing practices it is necessary to connect individual perceptions of the police with collective responses, such as those planned by organizations or residents within the community. This requires innovative approaches because there has been bias in terms of how to understand mobilization beyond protests and how to understand individual versus collective dynamics (Sampson et al., 2005). This paper provides a conceptual and methodological framework to explore these issues.

CURRENT STUDY

This paper explores several hypotheses aimed to explain why in New York City, during a period of unabated growth in police stops and other forms of police surveillance and control, has there has not been more community mobilization at the local and city levels, particularly in low-income, minority neighborhoods. We pose five hypotheses, which range from limitations in the organizational infrastructure needed to facilitate community mobilization to residents' willingness to exchange the benefits of increased safety for the costs associated with intensive policing. We evaluate each of these hypotheses using available research and media reports as well as data collected as part of a case study in the South Bronx. Based on this work, we discuss how researchers might go about more fully exploring community responses to police activity in marginalized communities.

DATA & METHODS

The data used in this study cover the administrative area known as Community District 1 of the South Bronx, New York. This area encompasses the neighborhoods of Melrose, Port Morris and Mott Haven in an area of 2.8 square miles. According to 2000 US Census figures, most of the approximately 82,000 District 1 residents are Hispanic (71%) or African American (20.8%). The South Bronx has been

⁶ For example in a 2008 survey of two housing developments in Harlem and Brooklyn, the response rate was only 21% due to “fear of retaliation by the police or by the housing authority” (New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, 2008). In a study on New Yorker’s perceptions of the police that used data from a random telephone survey, researchers had to collapse all minorities into a non-white category due to low response rates for these groups (Reitzel & Piquero, 2006; see also Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Other smaller case studies such as Hynynen (2011) appear to have been more successful, but documentation of research methods and strategy is limited.

systematically portrayed as a national symbol of urban decay, and concentrated disadvantage. In 2000, the majority of households in this area lived below the federal poverty line (52%) with a median household income of \$15,998. Traditional media accounts have also linked this area to high levels of violence, but like the larger city, District 1 experienced a crime decline beginning in the mid-nineties. For example, during 2006, 408 assaults and 242 burglaries were reported in District 1—down from 874 and 1,118 in 1994. This area has also experienced intense law-enforcement activity. In 2006 for example, the local police registered 11,147 arrests and over 13,000 stops—about 1.4 arrests per 10 residents, well above citywide figures.

Because no systematic dataset is available that catalogs collective responses to police activity in New York, this paper relies on previously published research, media reports, and data from a multi-method study on correlates of social organization in District 1 of the South Bronx. Although each of these sources has inherent limitations, it is our hope that collectively they provide some insight into the issues at hand. The first two data sources require little explanation, so the next section details our case study. Although this study was not designed to assess community responses to intensive policing practices, it serves several purposes in this paper. First, it provides a potential protocol for future research specifically devoted to studying this issue. Of particular relevance is the use of mixed methods data collection to compile diverse data and the recruiting techniques used to survey hard to reach populations about sensitive topics, such as police effectiveness and use of force. Second, the data were collected during a time period (2005 – 2006) in which local crime was declining but the number of stops and frisks was increasing and it surveyed residents of a community who are disproportionately affected by both high crime and intensive policing. Arguably this is a community most likely to reap the expected benefits of intensive enforcement (crime reduction) as well as the costs (e.g., harassment, profiling). Finally, these data can be used to assess, albeit in a very preliminary and descriptive capacity, potential explanations for the lack of widespread community mobilization against stop-and-frisk policies.

DATA

The case study consists of individual-level survey data on resident participation in local organizations, contact with the criminal justice system (including “stops and searches”) and perceptions of policing and the neighborhood. We also use tract-level data on the density of organizations in the area and on the numbers of stops, frisks, and searches reported by the police in 2005.

Resident Surveys

The survey data were collected by the lead author and trained fieldworkers between August 2005 and October 2006 (Rengifo, 2007). The sampling strategy for the survey was divided into two stages. In the first stage, a sample of 50 buildings was drawn from a list of residential structures located within District 1, 45 of which had residents. One unit from each building was randomly selected for participation in the study. The residents of the unit were mailed a letter describing the study and were asked to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. Two successful contacts were elicited with these letters. The remaining housing units were visited in person by fieldworkers at different times/days. After a minimum of three unsuccessful visits (e.g., no contact) the initial sample was progressively substituted with other housing units that were physically contiguous to the ones in the original draw. This approach resulted in 20 completed wave 1 surveys.

The second stage of the sampling design involved a chain-referral snowball procedure by which additional subjects were recruited by our initial set of respondents. This process, known as “Respondent-driven Sampling” (RDS), has been employed in research involving hidden populations (Salganick & Heckathorn, 2004). It has been argued that RDS generates estimates of population parameters that are not significantly different from those obtained by a larger, more difficult random sample approach (Salganick & Heckathorn, 2004). Following the guidelines of this methodology, respondents in wave 1 were free to nominate any adult they “knew”, regardless of these individuals’ place of residence or their relationship with the referral source. Potential new subjects contacted members of the research team via the phone or through the respondents engaged in the recruiting process. Seven waves of recruitment were conducted using this methodology. Overall, 103 adults were interviewed, but for the current study we use only the

83 who lived in our study area. Their characteristics are generally aligned with area Census estimates: About 92% of the District 1 sample was Hispanic, 7% was African American, and 61% was first generation immigrants. The average age was 38 years old and 57% were women. About 14% respondents reported having been the victim of a violent crime in the six months prior to the interview and 29% reported having been “stopped and searched” in the past five years.⁷

The survey was not designed to gauge community responses to stop-and-frisk policy, but responses to some of the questions may shed light on this issue. Respondents were asked to report on their participation in 10 different local organizations and how optimistic they were about the ability of community organizations and residents to bring about positive change in the community. In addition, a series of questions measured contact with the police, attitudes toward the police, and involvement in the criminal justice system. These measures are described in more detail later.

Census of Community Organizations

To measure resident access to organizations in the community that have the potential to mobilize on policing issues, we use a census of community organizations that was collected in 2005 by the first author and a team of field workers using systematic social observations of street blocks.⁸ These street block-level data were aggregated to the census tract level to generate counts of the number of community organizations. In this study we focus on the types of organizations that are likely to mobilize around issues related to policing and the treatment of minority populations—e.g., churches, service providers, advocacy organizations. It should be noted that our data contain only information on *local* organizations physically present in the community and therefore omit city wide or national organizations that may play a role in police reform.

⁷ It is difficult to know if the prevalence of stop-and-frisks is comparable to those in similar areas. A study in Brownsville (Hynynen, 2011) found 28% of respondents had been stopped –and-frisked in the last year; however the Brownsville study included adults and youths (who were stopped at a much higher rate than adults) and was conducted in 2010, when stop-and-frisks were more prevalent than in 2005.

⁸ When possible, the completeness of these data were checked by comparing them to administrative data from the New York City Department of City Planning (2006), which reports the names and addresses of select types of organizations and institutions operating in Community District 1.

Official NYPD Data on Stops, Searches, and Frisks

To capture the extent of stop-and-frisk activity in District 1 we rely on data from the NYPD Stop, Question and Frisk Database for 2005.⁹ This dataset contains information on street encounters between NYPD officers and citizens that resulted in the officer completing Stop, Question, and Frisk worksheets (NYPD Unified Form 250). Officers are required to complete this form when the stop involves the use of force; a frisk or a more extensive search occurs; the stop results in an arrest; or the person refuses to identify him or herself. It is estimated these forms cover approximately 70% of stops because stops that do not meet this criteria are not recorded and it is unlikely that police complete this form every time it is required (Gelman, Fagan, & Kiss, 2007).

COLLECTIVE RESPONSES TO STOP-QUESTION-FRISK: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section outlines and evaluates five potential explanations for the limited nature of collective responses to stop-and-frisks in our study area and similar neighborhoods.

1. WEAK ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

It has been well-documented that neighborhood-based organizations may facilitate the mobilization of local residents around problems (Castells, 1983; Dubow & Polefsky, 1982).¹⁰ Organizations enhance information sharing among members and other residents and amplify the reach of their social networks by accessing non-local sources of information and resources. They also provide an umbrella of legitimacy to air complaints and reformulate individual demands and problems as collective issues. While research on the mobilization potential of organizations is limited, some studies suggest that collective action events occur more frequently in neighborhoods with more organizations (Sampson et al., 2005).

Community responses to NYPD's stop-and-frisk activity may be inhibited by the weak nature and limited scope of neighborhood-based organizations in minority communities. Low levels of organizational density may limit collective action vis-à-vis perceived common issues, perhaps reflecting a more generalized problem of social disorganization. Low levels of informal, resident-based controls can be further weakened by heightened police activity, which may be seen as competing with local

⁹ Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/analysis_and_planning/stop_question_and_frisk_report.shtml

¹⁰ Rabins, S. (2010, December 16). Two who work to make a difference. *Mott Haven Herald*. Retrieved from <http://motthavenherald.com/>

organizations and residents for control over public areas. As articulated by some activists, the debate about NYPD's strategies "(...) is not about crime, it is about control and policing in communities" aiming to simultaneously "win community control and police accountability".¹¹

The few studies that have systematically examined the density and characteristics of neighborhood-based organizations note that a wide array of organizations are present in poor, minority communities (e.g., Coulton, Korbin, & Su, 1996; Small & Stark, 2005), challenging in part the "de-institutionalization" thesis (Wilson, 1987). For example, in a study of three disadvantaged neighborhoods in Washington DC, researchers identified 334 community-based organizations, most of which were churches and service providers (Gouvis Roman & Moore, 2004). This is consistent with other studies indicating the predominant role of places of worship and social assistance programs in similar areas (Rose, 2000; Small & Stark, 2005). To our knowledge, however, there has been no systematic review of the types of organizations that have historically mobilized to change law enforcement practices and policies. Case studies, litigation and media reports provide some insight into this issue (e.g., Winship & Berrien, 1999). These sources suggest that religious organizations often serve as liaisons between the police and the community and can apply pressure on law enforcement agencies as well as politicians. Other organizations, such as tenant associations, conduct public education campaigns on legal rights or provide forums for discussion. For example, news reports from the South Bronx describe tenants in public housing voicing concerns about negative interactions with police as part of tenant association meetings.¹² In a similar complex in the same neighborhood, another press report describes how the local tenant president conducts "legal workshops" in connection to police-resident contacts.¹³

These local efforts are hardly the only ones. State- and national-level organizations like the NAACP and NYCLU have been at the forefront of the debate on intensive policing practices. Aside from challenging the legality of stops, they also offer guidelines on how to behave in order to be perceived by

¹¹ Tabachnick, C. (2008, May 27) Suits vs. NYPD move to challenge stop and frisk. *City Limits News*. Retrieved from <http://www.citylimits.org>. See also People's Justice Coalition (<http://www.peoplesjustice.org>)

¹² Rappleye, A. (2010, April 8). Cops may change frisk tactics. *City Limits News*. Retrieved from <http://www.citylimits.org>

¹³ Rabins, S. (2010, December 16). Two who work to make a difference. *Mott Haven Herald*. Retrieved from <http://motthavenherald.com/>

cops as “non-confrontational”.¹⁴ Similar advocacy work has been conducted by other, more local organizations. In some cases there is evidence of flow of demands from citizens to elected city officials to legal advocacy groups (New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, 2008). Other citizens, however, perceive the city council as ineffective at gaining compliance from the NYPD.¹⁵

To examine whether collective responses to intensive policing in the South Bronx are hampered by a lack of organizations, we used data from our census of community organizations. The results of our analysis indicate that there is an infrastructure in place that could potentially help residents of the South Bronx to mobilize around policing issues. As shown in table 1, the predominant types of organizations are churches and church related organizations (n = 101 and 21, respectively). Other types of organizations that could mobilize on behalf of residents are much less prevalent but do exist, such as political organizations (n = 4) and advocacy groups (n = 7).

(Table 1)

It is possible that the organizational infrastructure is weaker in areas where stops are more common. This would suggest that mobilization is inhibited because these organizations are less accessible to residents who are most affected by stop-and-frisk policies. Our exploratory analyses do not lend support to this argument. Using the census tract as the level of analysis (n = 22), there was no significant relationship between the rate of stops, frisks, or searches as reported by the NYPD and organizational density. Therefore, individuals living in neighborhoods with higher levels of police activity have access to the same organizational infrastructure as those living in low activity areas.

2. LOW LEVELS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Collective responses to stop and frisk policies may be linked to community organizations, but not in terms of institutional presence or density, but rather in terms of the levels of resident involvement. Low membership numbers and turnover both in leadership and the rank-and-file base have been shown to strain the financial and logistical resources of organizations, particularly in poor, minority neighborhoods.

¹⁴ Tady, M. (2007, October 9). Stop and frisk – Who’s being searched? Gotham Gazette. Retrieved from <http://www.gothamgazette.com>

¹⁵ Tady, M. (2007, October 9). Stop and frisk – Who’s being searched? Gotham Gazette. Retrieved from <http://www.gothamgazette.com>

¹⁶ Weaker resident support for organizations may translate into the need for institutions to pool resources and consolidate agendas with other organizations or actors, including local governments (Gouvis Roman & Moore, 2004). As these instrumental forces develop, alliances may lead to more nuanced positions and roles regarding key problems, with leaders finding themselves caught between sets of competing expectations and shifting loyalties (Venkatesh, 2000). According to a tenant association president in the South Bronx, crafting responses to resident demands is increasingly hard because “[they] believe you work for housing”.¹⁷ The decline in reported crime in New York may have amplified some of these conflicts as some organization leaders and members find themselves supporting practices such as stop-and-frisk because they lower crime while for others, the crime drop has not moderated the significance of longer-term issues such as police harassment (Brunson, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007).

A number of approaches emphasize the role that organizational membership plays in increasing social capital and other resources that provide the capacity for mobilization (Putnam, 2000). For example, in their work on collective responses to crime Dubow and Podolefsky (1982) found that individuals who are involved in organizations will engage in collective action not necessarily because they perceive a problem that needs to be solved, but rather as a part of their larger participation in the group. They argue, therefore, that low rates of collective responses are due to low participation in organizations. Yet a more recent study (Sampson et al., 2005) using the neighborhood as the level of analysis found that the number of collective action events that occurred in a community is unrelated to levels of organizational participation. Other work conceptualizes organizational membership as an indicator of community control and cohesion (Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996), and research has found a relationship between high neighborhood-level rates of participation in local organizations and low levels of violence (Sampson & Groves, 1989, but see Morenoff et al., 2001).

Our survey data indicates that approximately half of the 83 respondents in District 1 participate in a local organization of some type (Table 2). Participation is highest for religious organizations and church

¹⁶ See e.g., Lee, T. (2010, May 23). Some Harlem churches in fight for survival. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>. There is also the sense that perhaps some of the leaders that supported these organizations have move out or have passed away. See e.g., Clark, M. (2009, July 13). Mott Haven tenant leader passes away. *Mott Haven Herald*. Retrieved from <http://motthavenherald.com/>

¹⁷ Rabins, S. (2010, December 16). Two who work to make a difference. *Mott Haven Herald*. Retrieved from <http://motthavenherald.com/>

connected groups with a quarter of respondents participating in religious organizations and 17% belonging to church-connected groups. Results also suggest that participation is higher for organizations more likely to have indirect involvement in activism, particularly as it relates to law and order (churches, leisure groups, parent-teacher associations). Of the groups that seem most relevant for mobilization efforts--political groups; organizations of people with the same ethnicity/race; and block groups, tenant associations, and community councils—only the latter has participation rates of more than 10%.

(Table 2)

While survey respondents did belong to the types of organizations that have been involved in mobilization efforts in the past (i.e., churches and tenant organizations), it is possible that those who participate in these organizations are least affected by stop-and-frisk policies. That is, organization members may live in neighborhoods with fewer stops and frisks or they may not have been stopped themselves. If this is true, then members may be less willing to draw upon limited organizational resources to mobilize against the NYPD's policing practices. To examine this question, we conducted two sets of analyses. First, we explored whether there is a correlation between levels of stops, frisks, or searches at the tract-level and individual-level measures of organizational membership. We found that in areas with more stops, frisks, and searches there is generally less participation in all types of community organizations, but these relationships are mostly non-significant. However, we do observe a significant, robust negative relationship between participation in religious organizations and the frisk rate ($r = -.25$) such that in neighborhoods with more frisks, there is less participation in religious organizations.¹⁸ Second, using our survey data we explore whether those stopped and searched by the police, who make-up 29% of our sample, are less likely to be members of organizations. Chi square tests of independence indicate that individuals who have been stopped and searched are less likely to belong to religious organizations and groups associated with religious organizations, but there was no relationship between

¹⁸ We also explore the relationship between individual participation in religious organizations and the neighborhood frisk rate by regressing participation on the frisk rate using logistic regression and calculating robust standard errors to take into account the clustering of respondents in census tracts. The significant relationship between these two variables remains when using this methodology.

this experience and participation in other types of organizations.¹⁹ Together, these findings lend some credence to the idea that residents who are disproportionately exposed to stops (either personally or in their daily neighborhood life, are less active in one type of organization that might mobilize on their behalf, religious organizations. An alternate interpretation, however, is that high levels of public control (more stops) may lead residents to withdraw from collective life as formal social control comes to act as a substitute for informal control.

3. PERVASIVE PESSIMISM REGARDING THE POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

Research and media reports have consistently highlighted the harsh treatment minorities and their communities have endured at the hands of different criminal justice actors including police officers and the courts. These accumulated experiences have the potential to shape not only the interpretation of discrete law enforcement contacts (Brunson, 2007) but also other, more general attitudes and behaviors including legal cynicism and oppositional subcultures (e.g., Sampson & Bartusch, 1998).

More intense stop-and-frisk practices by the NYPD may have failed to trigger substantial collective responses because in the context of long-standing patterns of interaction between minority communities /residents and the criminal justice system, minority residents may lack confidence in the ability of specific forms of collective action to elicit positive change. There is evidence that residents in minority neighborhoods are skeptical of government initiatives to elicit feedback because they perceive these to be superficial and short-lived or because they fear retaliation (e.g., New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, 2008). For example, in a recent series of qualitative interviews, young minorities described how they were not only concerned about abusive treatment by police but also resigned to it because they saw it as “inevitable and unlikely to change” (Ruck et al., 2008:20). According to the authors, this perception was grounded in the notion that “no one listens to a black male complaining about the cops” (quotes in the original, *ibid*).

¹⁹ We also looked at the relationship between other types of involvement in the criminal justice system (receiving a summons, being ticketed, arrested, or convicted and serving time in jail or prison) and participation in organizations, but none of these relationships were significant.

More generally, there is a growing concern about the “illusion of oversight”²⁰ surrounding NYPD practices linked to the inaccurate reporting of major crimes, bias in the planning of specific tactics, and the lack of effective mechanisms of civilian accountability. Some accounts lend support to this perspective. A recent report by National Public Radio highlighted that only 3% of the cases involving illegal searches in the context of stop-and-frisks resulted in an officer being disciplined.²¹ Other reports challenge the ability of New York’s Citizen’s Review Board to effectively document and prosecute allegations of police misconduct due to problems ranging from insufficient funding to lack of training and independence (see e.g., Berry, 2000). When describing illegal marijuana arrests one of the suspects interviewed in an NPR show on this issue, talked about the lack of response to this abuse: “If I were to try to fight it I will still probably get bit for trying to pursue it. It makes me feel hopeless, basically, that they can just get away with stuff. It makes me feel completely powerless coz it doesn’t matter...it’s up to them”.²²

Drawing on our survey of South Bronx respondents we find that respondents were relatively optimistic about the ability of organizations to improve neighborhood conditions. Over 35% of those surveyed believed that it was “likely” that “neighborhood organizations could improve neighborhood conditions”, with an additional 48% saying this was “possible”. Another question more directly aimed at expectations of community mobilization to keep a “local fire house open” showed similar results, with about 60% of respondents saying that neighbors would be “likely” or very likely” to take action in such an event. With one exception—religious organizations—we found that organizational membership was not linked to these measures of optimism about community responses.

Because prior work suggests that cynicism, at least with regard to the law, can arise through interactions with police and other agents of formal social control, we examine whether attitudes about the possibility of positive neighborhood change vary based on whether the respondent had been stopped and searched in past five years. Chi square tests of independence indicate that there is no relationship between having been stopped and searched and the belief that local organizations can “improve

²⁰ Winston, A. (2007, September 17). Is NYPD oversight just spinning its wheels? *City Limits News*. Retrieved from <http://www.citylimits.org>

²¹ Chang, A (2011, April 27). Stop and frisk investigation, Part 2. *WNYC Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.wnyc.org>

²² Chang, A (2011, April 27). Stop and frisk investigation, Part 2. *WNYC Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.wnyc.org>

neighborhood conditions”; however, respondents who had been stopped and searched were less likely to think that neighbors could prevent the closing of a fire house. For example, of those who had been stopped and searched, 39% said that it was likely or very likely that residents could prevent the closing of a fire house compared to almost 75% of those who had not been searched.

Studies have shown that legal cynicism can be spread through social networks and does not require direct contact with the criminal justice system (Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004). Therefore, we also examined whether individuals who had vicarious experience with the criminal justice system through the incarceration of family members or close acquaintances (an experience shared by almost 60% of the sample) were less likely to believe in the ability of organizations and residents to bring about positive neighborhood change. Results from a chi-square test of independence indicate that there is a relationship between having incarcerated friends or family members and optimism regarding positive neighborhood change; of those who reported that someone close to them had been incarcerated in the past five years, 27% said it was likely that community organizations could bring about positive change compared to 50% of those without incarcerated friends or family members. A similar disparity emerged between those with and without incarcerated friends or family members when the respondents were asked about their belief in the ability of residents to address a shared problem.

Overall, our exploration suggests that there is substantial optimism regarding the ability of neighbors and organizations to promote neighborhood change, but this optimism is not shared by all residents: Those individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system, both personal and vicarious, tend to have more cynical attitudes regarding the potential for collective processes (carried out by both organizations and residents). It is possible, therefore, that collective action against NYPD’s policies is dampened because the people who are most affected by them have little faith in the ability of organizations or neighborhood residents to enact change.

4. BELIEF THAT STOPS ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

In New York City, like in many other jurisdictions, crime has decreased significantly since the mid-1990s after several decades of continuous growth. For the NYPD and other actors, gains in public

safety are linked to changes in policing strategies, including making more stops.²³ Last year, the NYPD Commissioner said that individualized records of stops were instrumental in identifying suspects in more than 170 criminal cases over an 18-month period.²⁴ Stops have also been linked to seizures of illegal weapons, drugs and other contraband. But even if the NYPD's stop -and-frisk policy is not directly responsible for any of the drop in crime, residents would be unlikely to engage in collective response to stops if they *perceive* a connection between more intensive law enforcement practices and lower rates of crime. Furthermore, perceptions of effectiveness may be distinct from beliefs about the fairness or legitimacy of these practices (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003) and in high crime areas residents may tolerate the costs of intensive policing, especially if the stops are conducted in a procedurally just manner (Tyler & Fagan, 2008), in exchange for the promise of safety.

This distinction between policing outcomes and process also structures interactions between law enforcement and residents on the ground. According to an officer deployed in the South Bronx "I understand them not wanting to be stopped, but what else can we do? We are here to keep you safe. If you work with us, we will help you."²⁵ An activist from one of the area housing developments supports this policy because it "has been successful in getting guns off the streets" even though her son was stopped and then arrested in the vicinity of their residence.²⁶ Another local story highlights how a tenant president worries about "police response times" as well as "police harassment."²⁷ This ambivalence has been captured in some qualitative studies as well. Research on legal cynicism conducted by Carr, Napolitano and Keating (2007) found that even though youth think that the police mistreat them and are unfair, they still believe that police have the potential to reduce crime (see also Ruck et al., 2008). Similarly, a recent study shows that residents of Brownsville, a predominantly black neighborhood in Brooklyn, want *both* a stronger police presence as well as more "respectful" treatment by police officers (Hynynen, 2011). More procedurally just and respectful treatment of residents by the police --particularly during non-voluntary

²³ MacDonald, H. (2010, June 25). Fighting crime where the criminals are. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from : <http://nytimes.com>

²⁴ Dicker, F. (2010, July 16). Mayor Bloomberg, cops fume as gov purges frisk list. *New York Post*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nypost.com>

²⁵ Rappleye, A. (2010, April 8). Cops may change frisk tactics. *City Limits News*. Retrieved from <http://www.citylimits.org>

²⁶ Conkwright, K. (2011, March 10). Tenants challenge police policy. *Mott Haven Herald*. Retrieved from: <http://motthavenherald.com>

²⁷ Rabins, S. (2010, December 16). Two who work to make a difference. *Mott Haven Herald*. Retrieved from <http://motthavenherald.com>

exchanges such as stops—could also contribute to decreased crime via a more fluid cooperation between residents and law enforcement (Tyler & Fagan, 2008)

Our survey lacks explicit measures of residents' perceptions of the potential costs and benefits of NYPD's stop-and-frisk strategies. Instead, we study how perceptions of local police performance, fear and neighborhood safety relate to aggregate levels of stop-and-frisk activity across census tracts of the South Bronx as well as individual-level involvement with the criminal justice system. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = not a problem, 10 = big problem) the extent to which the following police-related issues are a local problem: the police not responding to calls, the police using excessive force, and the police having an unfriendly attitude. The first question captures perceptions of police performance in terms of "outcomes" (responsiveness) and the latter two questions measure "process" (excessive use of force and unfriendliness). The means on these items range from 3.9 for excessive use of force to 4.6 for unfriendliness indicating that residents generally seem to be satisfied with the police. All three measures are significantly correlated to one another, yet the associations between the outcome measure (responsiveness) and the process variables (excessive force and unfriendliness) ($r = .38$ and $r = .29$, respectively) are much lower than the correlations between the two measures that capture process ($r = .71$). This suggests that perceptions of effectiveness are related to, but also distinct from perceptions of how police do their job. These estimates are aligned with results from similar case studies (e.g., Hynynen, 2011), but residents in our sample are somewhat more critical of the police when compared to nationally representative samples (Huang & Vaughn, 1996), perhaps reflecting differences in sample stratification in terms of race/class²⁸.

Although the variable means indicate that residents are generally satisfied with the police, an examination of the frequency distribution for each of these scales reflects a slightly more nuanced picture: A relatively large percentage of individuals see the police as posing no problem and a smaller, but still sizeable group of individuals see a big problem. The percentage of respondents who viewed the police's

²⁸ In the Brownsville convenience sample (Hynynen, 2011), 23% of respondents "strongly" disagreed with the statement that the police are "friendly and approachable" and 22% strongly disagree with the statement that the police are "helpful". A 2000 report by the U.S. Civil Rights commission cites data from a Bronx study that shows even more negative perceptions of treatment by the police in terms of "fairness" and "respect" (Berry, 2000).

unresponsiveness, use of force, and lack of friendliness, as a “big problem” were 20%, 14%, and 23%, respectively. This suggests there is uneven support for the police and raises the question, what prevents the group who is largely unsatisfied with the police from organizing to change police policies? One potential explanation is that individuals who are most dissatisfied with the police are least able to mobilize because of their own involvement in crime or the criminal justice system. Individuals with a criminal history or who are actively involved in crime may fear reprisals from the police or may not believe that they are in any position to challenge this organization. To explore this hypothesis, we examine the relationship between involvement in the criminal justice system and our three measures capturing perceptions of the police using independent sample t-tests. We find there is no difference in perceptions of responsiveness between those with ($M_{CJ} = 4.7$) and without criminal justice system involvement ($M_{No\ CJ} = 4.1$). However, significant differences emerge between these two groups for our process measures, with those who have been involved in the criminal justice system perceiving that police use of force and unfriendliness are bigger problems in their neighborhoods (Use of force: $M_{CJ} = 5.3$ vs. $M_{No\ CJ} = 2.3$; Unfriendliness: $M_{CJ} = 5.9$ vs. $M_{No\ CJ} = 3.3$). The differences in process ratings are even larger if we compare those with serious criminal justice system involvement (arrest, conviction, jail, or prison) to others in the sample (Use of force: $M_{Serious\ CJ} = 7.0$ vs. $M_{No\ Serious\ CJ} = 2.9$; Unfriendliness: $M_{Serious\ CJ} = 7.9$ vs. $M_{No\ Serious\ CJ} = 3.7$), but there are still no significant differences in the assessment of effectiveness ($M_{Serious\ CJ} = 4.9$ vs. $M_{No\ Serious\ CJ} = 4.2$). These findings support the idea that those who have the strongest incentive for collective action against stops (i.e. those who perceive the police as unfriendly and overly forceful), may not be in a position to do anything about this issue. Consistent with past research (e.g. Gallaher et al., 2001; Carr et al., 2007), they also provide further evidence of the distinction between subjective evaluations of policing outcomes and process and suggest that those with criminal justice system involvement may see the police as effective, but not fair.

It is also important to consider how levels of police activity are related to perceptions of the police and safety across neighborhoods. If high numbers of stops breed discontent with the police, we would expect more negative evaluations of the police, especially process evaluations, in areas with higher

number of stops, frisks and searches. In contrast, if residents feel that intensive policing promotes safety, then we expect residents who live in areas with more stops, frisks, and searches to feel safer. We did not find a significant relationship between perceptions of the police and tract level rates of stops, risks or searches. However, in neighborhoods with higher rates of stop, frisks, and searches, respondents were significantly less worried about being the victim of a crime in their neighborhood, although these relationship were only marginally significant for stops and searches ($\alpha = .10$).²⁹ While this exploratory assessment is limited given our reliance on cross-sectional data, these preliminary findings are consistent with prior research that has found fear of crime is reduced with police visibility (see Cordner, 2010 for a review). It is important to recognize that we lack information on the nature of law enforcement-resident interactions, such as whether those with police contact viewed their treatment by the police as just, which is an important determinant of ratings of police legitimacy in longitudinal studies (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

Overall, our findings suggest that residents, even those who have had contact with the criminal justice system, are generally satisfied with the responsiveness of the police. Moreover, in areas with more intensive policing, residents tend to be less worried about being victimized. Taken together, these results provide some support for the hypothesis that collective mobilization against intensive policing is not more prevalent because residents may be willing to put up with frequent “hassles” from the police in exchange for less crime (Ruck et al., 2008:26). Still, it is important to note, that just because residents might be willing to accept stops as an effective tool for reducing crime, it does not mean that they would not prefer other, less invasive methods of policing. For example, public housing residents in the South Bronx reportedly demand not that the police stop patrolling the area, but rather that they substitute stop-and-frisk with other tactics.³⁰ It is also important to keep in mind that negative perceptions regarding how law enforcement treat residents can affect the legitimacy of the police, eventually undermining their effectiveness and the public’s willingness to obey the law (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003).

²⁹ Findings were not replicated with other measures of fear and safety that captured how safe a person would feel if they were stopped by a stranger in their neighborhood at night for directions and how safe the respondent thinks the local playgrounds are during the day.

³⁰ Rappleye, A. (2010, April 8). Cops may change frisk tactics. *City Limits News*. Retrieved from <http://www.citylimits.org>

5. STOPS TARGET THOSE WHO ARE CRIMINALLY-INVOLVED OR FAIL TO ALIENATE THOSE INVOLVED IN “INNOCENT STOPS”

While it is known that only a small proportion of NYPD stops results in summons or arrests, it is still possible that the primary targets of these stops are individuals who have a criminal record or who may be involved more generally in criminal activity. As such, it is possible that community responses to heightened stop activity are less wide spread because these stops are effectively targeting criminally-involved individuals. These targets may have little interest in public visibility or further interactions with law enforcement, partly due to fear of retaliation or limited access to the law (Black, 1976). In disadvantaged neighborhoods especially, illegal behavior often takes place in public spaces, which enhances the likelihood that those involved in crime are known to the police (Klinger, 1997; Rosenfeld, Jacobs, & Wright, 2003). Furthermore, offenders are likely to believe that their complaints may not be taken seriously because they “cannot really be ‘victims’ in the eyes of the criminal justice system” (Topalli, Wright, & Fornango, 2002: 337). Together, these issues would prevent offenders from challenging unwarranted stops, collectively or individually.

Just as important, if stops are targeting individuals involved in illegal activity, residents may be less likely to view them as problematic. In an National Public Radio series on illegal marijuana arrests in New York City, many of the claims regarding improper stop or search procedures presented in the report, were dismissed by callers and commentators because in fact the target of the stop did have marijuana or an outstanding police matter.³¹

At the same time, when the police stop individuals with no criminal history and no involvement in crime – so called “innocent stops” (e.g., Skolnick, 2008) – the likelihood for collective action seems higher, especially if the stop is perceived as unreasonable, unwarranted, or accompanied by excessive use of force or rude treatment. Consistent with this account, research as well as high-profile stops in New York involving media executives, reporters and even top NYPD officials—all minority males—have confirmed that “innocent stops” are not rare. Moreover, research has documented the negative

³¹ Chang, A (2011, April 26). Stop and frisk investigation, Part 1. *WNYC Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.wnyc.org>

consequences associated with perceived unfair treatment by the police, which include the development of negative perceptions of the police, the erosion of the legitimacy of the law, and an unwillingness to participate in the legal system (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Stone and Pettigrew, 2000). Press reports and other anecdotal evidence support the idea that “innocent stops” may indeed realign citizen attitudes and behaviors through vicarious or direct experiences with law enforcement and promote various forms of mobilization and litigation.³² A recent newspaper article, for example, describes a plaintiff in a class-action suit against NYPD/NYCHA who is “still shaken after her nephew...was arrested last year while trying to visit her”³³. These responses to stops perceived as illegitimate may be the exception rather than the norm if residents are not aware of mechanisms and tools for mobilization, or have simply adapted passively to high levels of surveillance and control.

Survey respondents in the South Bronx were asked to provide information on various types of contacts with law enforcement or the criminal justice system. Almost half of the respondents in the study area report some contact with the criminal justice system in the five years prior to the interview. The most common form of contact is being given a ticket (32%), closely followed by being stopped and searched (29%). Receiving a summons (18%) is also relatively common. Even more serious forms of criminal justice system involvement are not rare: Over 20% of the sample has been arrested, while 7% have been convicted, 13% have been jailed and 6% imprisoned. The relatively high prevalence of criminal justice system involvement generally, and stops and searches specifically, is not unexpected given the levels of crime and police activity in the South Bronx and these estimates are similar to those provided in other studies of high crime, heavily policed areas of New York (Hynynen, 2011).

Although we do not have self report data on involvement in illicit activity, we can examine the extent to which those who have been stopped and searched had other types of contact with the criminal justice system, especially the types of contact that are more likely to occur for individuals engaged in law violating behavior. Of the 24 individuals in our core sample who were stopped and searched, 75% had some other type of criminal justice system involvement and many of them had serious involvement: 58%

³² Milosheff, P. (2009, December 31). NYPD accused of racial profiling. *Bronx Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.bronx.com>

³³ Shifrel, S. (2011, March 5). NYPD stop-and-frisk policy in public housing leads to \$150K in settlements. *New York Daily News*. Retrieved from: <http://nydailynews.com>

had been arrested, 21% convicted, 42% had served time in jail and 17% had served time in prison. It is important to note that we cannot distinguish whether this involvement came about as a result of the search or if it emerged from an unrelated incident. It is also difficult to find comparable baseline data for these figures, although research indicates that police stops do target individuals “known” to law enforcement (Stone & Pettigrew, 2000), although many of these individuals may not be “hardened criminals” (Quinton et al., 2000). We also know that individuals in minority neighborhoods have a greater exposure to law enforcement, not only because of potentially higher-than-average crime rates, but also due to greater police presence.

A quarter of those who had been stopped and searched had no additional contact with the criminal justice system. While we cannot say that these individuals were not engaged in law violating behavior, these numbers support data which indicate that stops and searches are not entirely isolated to offenders. Given the emphasis in the literature on innocent stops and evidence that these types of stops may be more likely to erode the legitimacy of the police and lead to collective action, we explore whether perceptions of the police vary based on three different categories of involvement with the criminal justice system: no involvement; stopped and searched only; and stopped and searched with additional involvement. We are particularly interested in how those who have been stopped and searched only compare to the two other groups. While our analyses are limited by small sample sizes we believe this data exploration can provide a guide for how future research might answer this question.

Perceptions of the police do differ to some extent based on type of involvement with the criminal justice system. We find that on average, those who only had been stopped and searched held less favorable perceptions of the police than those with no criminal justice system contact, but more favorable perceptions than those with more extensive criminal justice system involvement). There was one exception to this, those who only had been stopped rated responsiveness as a bigger problem than the other two groups ($M_{\text{no CJ}} = 4.1$; $M_{\text{Stop}} = 6.5$; $M_{\text{Additional CJ}} = 4.3$). However, the results of an ANOVA and Scheffe’s post hoc tests indicate that the perceptions did not differ significantly between those who only had been stopped and searched and the other two groups. Individuals with criminal justice system

involvement above and beyond being searched did perceived police excessive use of force and unfriendliness as a significantly bigger problem than those who had no contact with the criminal justice system (average ratings of excessive use of force as a problem: $M_{\text{no CJ}} = 2.3$; $M_{\text{Stop}} = 5.0$; $M_{\text{Additional CJ}} = 5.3$, and unfriendliness: $M_{\text{no CJ}} = 3.3$; $M_{\text{Stop}} = 4.3$; $M_{\text{Additional CJ}} = 6.2$). Again, these results must be interpreted with caution due to small sample sizes.

For the most part, these results are consistent with the idea that individuals who are stopped and searched are involved in some sort of illegal behavior, even if they were not violating the law at the moment of the stop. Still it is important to remember, that our analyses say nothing about whether the search was warranted or legal or whether the respondent was doing anything wrong at the time of the search. This issue requires further attention because qualitative research has found that among active offenders there is a sense that if they are doing something wrong, then the police have the right to stop and arrest them, but otherwise they should be free from harassment; “Competition [between the police and offenders] is expected, but the competition has to be fair” (Rosenfeld et al., 2003:294). We don’t find any evidence to support the idea that “innocent stops” promote negative attitudes toward the police, but these results must be interpreted with a great deal of caution due to the very small number of people who were stopped and searched, but had no additional criminal justice involvement.

CONCLUSION AND NEW DIRECTIONS

This paper examines five hypotheses seeking to explain the limited systematic community responses to the surge in stop-and-frisk activity by the NYPD. Guided by theory, research and media reports, we first study whether mobilization could be limited by a weak neighborhood-based organizational infrastructure. We then assess other factors that could inhibit activism such as resident involvement in these organizations, pervasive pessimism with regards to neighborhood change, and perceived links between stops and various measures of public safety. We explore the empirical validity of these hypotheses drawing on publicly available sources and materials, and a case study of Community District 1 in the South Bronx. Despite the inherent constraints imposed by the nature and scope of these data—small sample size, limited spatial coverage, few direct measures of stop-and-frisk impacts—the

proposed framework and findings from this study provide some insight on promising directions for future work on collective responses to the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policies.

To further examine the correlates of these responses is an important undertaking for advocacy, policy, and research. The various debates, legal and otherwise, over the costs and benefits of stop-and-frisk policies and similar NYPD strategies is far from over: Stops for the first quarter of 2011 are at a record high and new lawsuits have been filed against the NYPD and other city agencies extending ongoing inquiries on the legality and effectiveness of *street* stops to stops in other contexts including public housing and for-hire cars.³⁴ More systematic knowledge about community responses can enable activists to capitalize on the strengths of their environment to better shape the local execution of these policies. This is a critical task for emerging initiatives on this topic, as conveyed by a staff attorney for the CCR, "(...) long-overdue changes will only happen if civil rights and police accountability advocates, city, state, and federal government officials and, most importantly, members of the communities most impacted by stop-and-frisk, make an effort to hold the NYPD's feet to the fire".³⁵ To understand collective responses is also important when considering the long-term sustainability of gains on public safety in New York City. As some measures of violent crime have begun to increase in several of the city's poorest neighborhoods, some fear a backlash against high-levels of police surveillance and control.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We articulate several explanations to account for the limited nature of systematic community responses to stop-and-frisk policies in New York City, particularly in poor, minority neighborhoods: 1) Weak organizational infrastructure, 2) Low civic engagement, 3) Pessimism regarding the likelihood of neighborhood improvement, 4) Perceived link between higher stops and enhanced public safety and, 5) Limited responses by individuals stopped.

Our exploratory case study finds uneven empirical support for these hypotheses: Contrary to hypotheses 1 and 2, but consistent with prior research on minority neighborhoods (e.g., Gouvis Roman & Moore, 2004), we find that there are a large number of organizations in the South Bronx and a majority of

³⁴ Golding, B. (2011, May 27). Taxi-frisk 'race' suit. *New York Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.nypost.com>

³⁵ Charney, D. (2011, March 31). The numbers don't lie: NYPD stop-and-frisk is about race, not crime-fighting. *Darius Charney's Blog at Brooklyn MC*. Retrieved from <http://brooklynmovementcenter.org/>

people participate in at least one type of organization; however, entities that may be best positioned to engage in direct, visible activism on policing issues, such as political organizations and advocacy groups, are relatively rare and membership in these organizations is lower than in other types, such as religious organizations. While religious organizations are the modal form of organization in the South Bronx, the media has criticized religious leaders' lack of attention and action regarding community problems, suggesting this may be due to politics or other influences.³⁶ Although there are many successful cases of church involvement in anti-crime programs and issues related to policing (Winship & Berrien, 1999), many of these are actually triggered by government action in the form of grants, new policies and programs and public campaigns rather than residents concerns (Gouvis Roman & Moore, 2004). Some research also indicates that the "social capital" generated by religious organizations and religious affiliations may not generate high levels of civic engagement due to the vertical nature of these institutions (Putnam, 2000). Tenant associations seem to hold promise as potential organizers of collective responses to policing policies. Our survey suggests that membership in these organizations is not rare (10%), and media accounts report that meetings of these associations often focus on policing-related issues. Therefore, research is needed to systematically review the types of responses these organizations have undertaken and if they have indeed been limited or ineffective, to explore why.

On the surface, our findings also did not support hypothesis 3, rather we find general optimism regarding the ability of organizations and residents to bring about change. It is important to note, however, those who had been stopped and searched and those with vicarious exposure to the criminal justice system exhibited less optimism. It is possible, therefore, that collective action against NYPD's policies is limited because the people who are most affected by them have little faith in the ability of organizations or neighborhood residents to alter the behavior of the police.

We find more preliminary support for hypothesis 4, which proposed that collective mobilization against intensive policing is limited because residents may be willing to put up with frequent "hassles" from the police in exchange for less crime. Our results suggest that residents, even those who have had

³⁶See e.g., Gangi, R. (2011, June 9). Tyranny in NYC: The NYPD's wasteful, ineffective, illegal, and unjust targeting of Blacks and Latinos. *Alternet*. Retrieved from <http://www.alternet.org/drugs>. See also Levitt, L. (2010, July 26). No rise out of stop and frisk. *One police plaza* (online blog). Retrieved from <http://www.nypdconfidential.com>

contact with the criminal justice system, are generally satisfied with the responsiveness of the police. Moreover, in areas with more intensive policing, residents tend to be less worried about being victimized.

We also found some evidence supporting Hypothesis 5: Three out of four respondents who had been stopped and searched by the police report some other type of criminal justice involvement in the five years prior to the interview and many had serious involvement. This suggests that the relative lack of collective mobilization against NYPD stops may be due to the fact that the primary targets of these stops have no interest in further engaging the courts or the police. This is further supported by results suggesting that those who had been stopped and searched may be less able to mobilize organizational resources on their own behalf. Finally, consistent with hypothesis 5 we also find that respondents who had been stopped and searched tend to have more negative views on the “process” of policing (friendliness, use of force), but there is no evidence that “innocent stops” are linked to alienation.

These results need to be interpreted with caution. Our research is exploratory due to the limited nature of available data and the rather narrow conceptual framework we employed to guide our analyses. Media reports and academic research, for example, point to recent changes in the form and content of citizen activism. These changes include the movement to more issue-oriented activism as well as collective responses organized outside the influence of local/extra-local organizations. In some cases, legal organizations have joined with social justice organizations and the media to host and promote activism tied to policing issues. These emerging forms of “blended action” (Sampson et al., 2005) reflect collective initiatives taking place at many levels (micro-local, local, national) and can have many different forms. Moreover, they can be civic events, protests or a hybrid of the two. Thus to fully understand this phenomenon requires mixed frameworks and methodologies and may require researchers to put aside their preconceived notions about what types of actions they should study. The nature of this challenge is reflected in the following vision for change articulated by the Brooklyn Movement Center in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights:

“We can pack a community board meeting to express our outrage when a school is closed, when a horrible crime occurs, or when snow isn't removed from the streets -- but we are less adept at changing the rules of the game so that these things never happen again on our watch. We complain about gentrification, our education system, the lack of jobs, and

the way our streets are policed -- but we don't fully understand what can be done to improve these complex and seemingly overwhelming problems. We know how to get people elected -- but don't trust our ability to make City Hall, Albany and Washington actually work for us. We live in a city of 8 million people -- but seldom do we build alliances with other communities to change public policies that affect the quality of our lives. As a result, many folks have disengaged from civic life. "Why bother?" we ask ourselves. "We don't have any power. Things will never change..."³⁷

To change this Brooklyn MC proposes to facilitate mobilization to affect politics:

"The MC keeps tracks of public policies that can further the aspirations of its Central Brooklyn membership. The MC works to measure the impact that proposed government policies will have on Central Brooklyn in order to inform broader conversations about how to reform our communities and city. The MC stimulates discussion and promotes ideas in Central Brooklyn through our website. We comment on local issues, recruit experts and journalists to offer policy solutions to problems we face, and highlight people and ideas that are making a difference."³⁸

New research needs to consider innovative strategies to capture the traction of these movements both in the community and in the city government. This requires not only a framework to understand collective action but also a set of methodologies to better capture data and offer empirical validation for arguments and hypotheses on the social costs and benefits of NYPD stop-and-frisk policies and similar practices.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Perhaps just as important as our preliminary findings, the lessons learned from this work can be used to guide the development of a future research project specifically designed to understand community responses to the NYPD's stop and frisk practices, something which is not possible with existing datasets. The first task of researchers should be systematically collecting data on both individual and organizational responses to stop-and-frisks. Both are needed because not all responses to this practice involve collective action. The collection of primary data should be aimed to obtain estimates on the prevalence of stops (including repeated stops) and other contacts with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. More importantly, research should be able to identify reactions to these stops, both attitudinal and behavioral. Non-traditional strategies for data collection should be considered to minimize the threat of low response

³⁷ Brooklyn Movement Center. Retrieved from <http://brooklynmovementcenter.org/>

³⁸ Brooklyn Movement Center. Retrieved from <http://brooklynmovementcenter.org/>

rates and informant bias and to enhance accuracy. Community participatory research may not only reduce these problems, but also help build an interface between research and advocacy at the local level.

We also need better information about the local organizational infrastructure and resources of communities, particularly low-income, minority neighborhoods. Beyond the presence and immediate influence of these organizations, it is key to catalog the capacity for mobilization of these organizations by interviewing leaders and members, surveying staff, and engaging organizations at large about their mission and interface with the local population.

Some new directions for research on community responses to stop and frisk activity may not require the collection of primary data in the form of surveys of residents or organizations. Consistent with prior work (Sampson et al., 2005), researchers may consider documenting all media reports on events of collective action, across neighborhoods and over time. Access to local newspapers and some online sources may decrease the threat of reporting bias. This effort can provide important leads on the extent of community mobilization above and beyond policing issues and above and beyond structural problems and the influence of community organizations.

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TABLE 1.
Presence of community organizations by type, Community District 1 (2005)

Type	Number	Percentage
Places of Worship	101	43.2%
Schools	35	15.0%
Community gardens	24	10.3%
Church-connected organizations	21	9.0%
Senior organizations	11	4.7%
Community centers	10	4.3%
Employment centers	9	3.8%
Advocacy	7	3.0%
Political organizations	4	1.7%
Adult education	6	2.6%
Youth education	3	1.3%
Economic development/other	3	1.3%
Total	234	100%

TABLE 2
Percentage of District 1 Survey Respondents Who Participated in Neighborhood Organizations (n = 83).

Type	Number	Percentage
Participation in any neighborhood organization or group	42	50.6%
Church, temple or any religious organization	22	26.5%
Church-connected groups but not the church itself	14	16.9%
Block group, tenant association or community council	9	10.8%
Parent-teacher association	9	10.8%
Informal leisure groups	8	9.6%
Other	8	9.6%
Organizations of people of the same nationality/ethnicity	5	6.0%
Youth groups (explorers, scouts, etc)	4	4.8%
Political groups or organizations	3	3.6%
Labor union	2	2.4%