

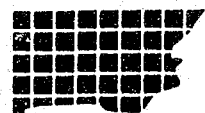
OFFICE OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

**CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN NEW YORK STATE:
A Survey of Public Opinion**

Volume II: Police, Criminal Courts and the State Prison System

122903

DIVISION OF
**CRIMINAL
JUSTICE
SERVICES**



**NEW YORK
STATE**



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NEW YORK STATE
MARIO M. CUOMO, GOVERNOR

CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN NEW YORK STATE: A Survey of Public Opinion

Volume II: Police, Criminal Courts and the State Prison System

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
John J. Poklemba
Director of Criminal Justice and Commissioner

OFFICE OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS
Barry C. Sample, Executive Deputy Commissioner

BUREAU OF STATISTICAL SERVICES
Richard A. Rosen, Chief

NCJRS

APR 30 1989

ACQUISITIONS

Prepared by:
Sharon E. Lansing

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This is the first time a public opinion survey has been undertaken by a State criminal justice agency. While the Division of Criminal Justice Services was responsible for the preparation of the survey instrument and the data analysis, Fact Finders, Inc. adapted the instrument for use in a telephone survey and conducted the actual survey. The technical expertise provided by Fact Finders, Inc., a survey research firm with experience in telephone surveys, helped to ensure the success of our first public opinion survey.

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CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 1	PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL POLICE	3
Chapter 2	PERCEPTIONS OF SENTENCING PRACTICES IN LOCAL CRIMINAL COURTS	9
Chapter 3	THE STATE PRISON SYSTEM	14
	Punishment vs. Rehabilitation	16
	Minimum Security Work-Release Programs	19
	SUMMARY	22
	NOTES	23
Appendix A	Research Methods	A-1
Appendix B	Definitions	B-1
Appendix C	Tables	C-1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade numerous public opinion surveys have examined perceptions and attitudes toward crime and the criminal justice system. While most public opinion surveys do not probe the underlying assumptions that form these perceptions and attitudes, they provide important indicators of public concern or satisfaction with existing policies and practices. As a result, the information gleaned from these surveys has become an important source of information for policy-makers, practitioners, and academics in the field of criminal justice.

Given the important role that public opinion should play in the development of policies and programs, New York State undertook its first public opinion survey in the area of criminal justice. During October and November of 1987, 1,000 people randomly selected from throughout the State participated in a telephone survey which examined their perceptions and attitudes toward crime, the criminal justice system, and other criminal justice issues. This report is the second volume in a series of publications that present the findings from this survey.

Volume II explores how people felt about the performance of local police and the criminal sentences handed down by the courts in their communities. This volume also examines whether people believed punishment or rehabilitation should be the primary objective of the State prison system and whether they supported or opposed the use of minimum security work-release programs in their communities to reintegrate inmates into communities. Research methods are presented in Appendix A.

In Volume I, the public's perceptions of crime and neighborhood safety and their responses to crime are explored. Juvenile justice is examined in Volume III.

Chapter 1

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL POLICE

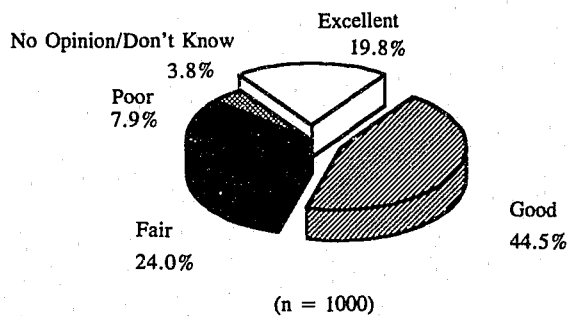
PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL POLICE

Almost two-thirds of the people in New York State felt that the performance of their local police was "excellent" or "good."

- One-fifth, 19.8 percent, of the survey respondents thought that the overall performance of their local police was "excellent," and 44.5 percent felt that performance was "good." One-quarter, 24.0 percent, of the respondents stated that performance was "fair," and only 7.9 percent felt performance was "poor."

The police are more visible to and have more contact with the public than other agencies in the criminal justice system. Research has found that the public's perception of the performance of local police is generally positive. In fact, people in New York State were more likely to have positive views of the performance of their local police than people nationwide. Almost two-thirds, 64.3 percent, of the New York State respondents felt that the performance of local police was good or excellent compared to 59 percent of those surveyed nationwide in the Media General/Associated Press Poll conducted in 1986.¹ In the national survey 31 percent of the respondents felt performance was fair and 8 percent poor.

"Would you rate the overall performance of your local police department as excellent, good, fair or poor?"



PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL POLICE - continued

Where people lived, how safe they felt in their neighborhoods, the perceived seriousness of neighborhood crime, and the degree to which people were aware of neighborhood crime were all related to their perceptions of local police performance.

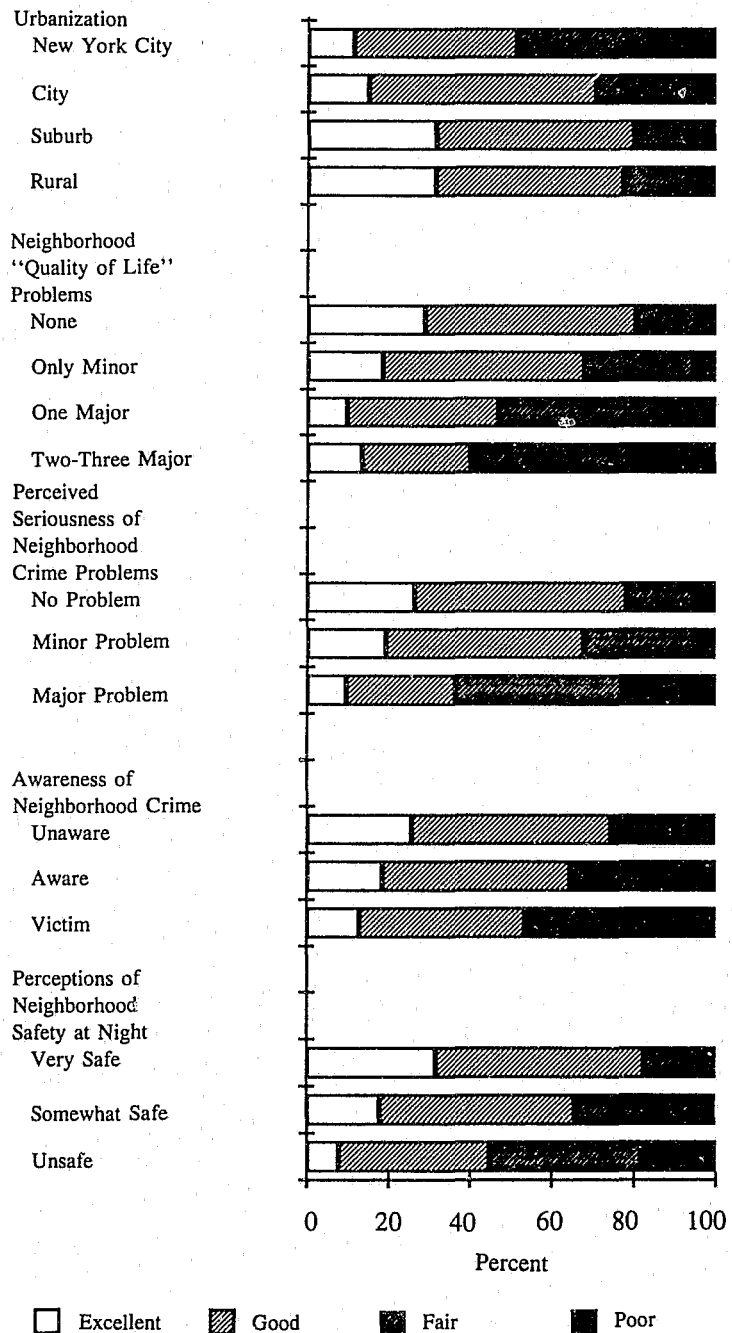
Appendix B contains definitions for urbanization, neighborhood "quality of life," seriousness of neighborhood crime, awareness of neighborhood crime, and neighborhood safety.

● Respondents who lived in New York City were less likely to think that the performance of local police was "excellent" or "good" than those who lived elsewhere in the State. For instance, 51.4 percent of the New York City respondents thought performance was "excellent" or "good" compared to 70.8 percent of those who lived in other cities.

● The likelihood of respondents having positive views of local police performance decreased as neighborhood "quality of life" declined. While 80.4 percent of those who lived in neighborhoods with no "quality of life" problems thought performance was "excellent" or "good," only 40.0 percent of those who lived in neighborhoods with two or three problems held similar views.

● Almost four-fifths, 78.1 percent, of those who reported that crime was not a problem in their neighborhoods thought the performance of local police was "excellent" or "good" compared to 36.4 percent of those who reported that crime was a major neighborhood problem.

Several factors were related to people's perceptions of the performance of their local police.



NOTE: Percentage distributions can be found in Appendix C, Table C-1.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL POLICE - *continued*

● Victims of neighborhood crimes were less likely to feel the performance of local police was "excellent" or "good" than non-victims (53.4 percent versus 68.6 percent, respectively). Furthermore, non-victims who were *aware* of neighborhood crime were less likely to hold this view than non-victims who were *unaware* of neighborhood crime (64.5 percent versus 74.1 percent, respectively).

● The safer respondents felt out alone at night in their neighborhoods, the more likely they were to believe that the performance of local police was "excellent" or "good." For instance, 82.4 percent of those who felt very safe held these views compared to 44.8 percent of those who felt unsafe.

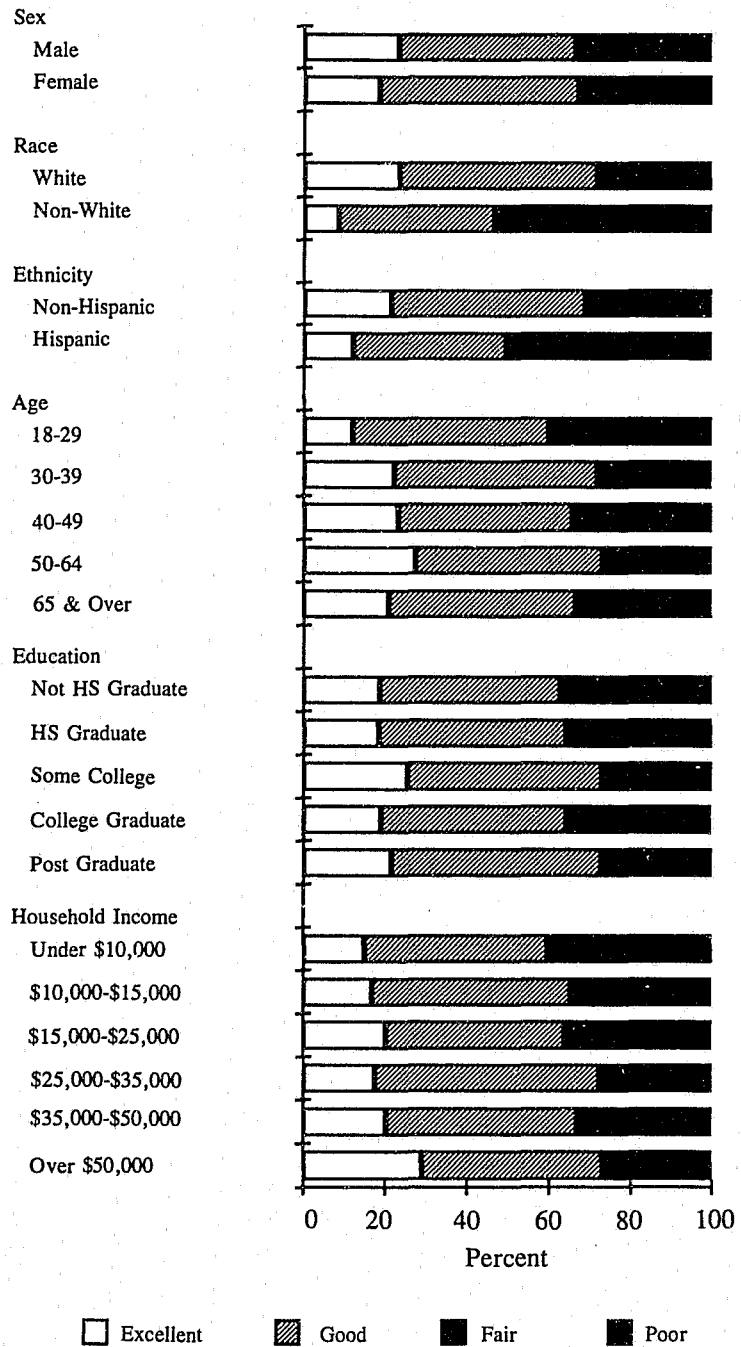
PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL POLICE - continued

Race, ethnicity, age and household income were associated with perceptions of local police performance.

- Whites were more likely than non-whites to believe that the performance of local police was "excellent" or "good" (71.7 percent versus 46.5 percent, respectively).
- Over two-thirds, 68.8 percent, of the non-Hispanics thought the performance of local police was "excellent" or "good," while one-half, 49.5 percent, of the Hispanics expressed similar opinions.
- Respondents 18 to 29 years of age were less likely than those in other age groups to report that the performance of local police was "excellent." For example, 11.9 percent of the respondents 18 to 29 years of age believed performance was "excellent" compared to 27.5 percent of those aged 50 to 64.
- Respondents with household incomes over \$50,000 were more likely to think that performance was "excellent" than those with incomes of \$15,000 or less.

The sex and educational background of respondents were not strongly related to perceptions of local police performance.

Perceptions of the performance of local law enforcement agencies varied across demographic characteristics.



NOTE: Percentage distributions can be found in Appendix C, Table C-2.

Chapter 2

**PERCEPTIONS OF SENTENCING PRACTICES
IN LOCAL CRIMINAL COURTS**

PERCEPTIONS OF SENTENCING PRACTICES IN LOCAL CRIMINAL COURTS

A majority of the people in New York State believed that the sentencing practices of criminal courts in their communities were "too lenient."

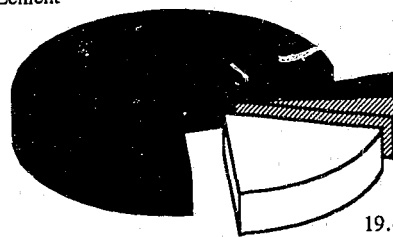
- Almost three-quarters, 71.6 percent, of the survey respondents thought that the sentences handed down by the criminal courts in their communities were "too lenient." Equal proportions of respondents, 4.5 percent, felt that sentences were either "fair" or "too harsh."

The sentencing practices of criminal courts are one aspect of judicial performance with which the public has consistently registered a high degree of dissatisfaction nationwide. The National Opinion Research Center's biannual General Social Survey has found that the level of public dissatisfaction with the severity of sentences handed down by local criminal courts has changed little over the past decade. In 1977, 83 percent of the population nationwide believed that sentencing was too lenient. Dissatisfaction rose to 86 percent in 1982 and 1983, and dropped slightly to 79 percent in 1987.² Compared to this last nationwide poll, people in New York State were less likely than people nationwide to believe that local criminal court sentences were too lenient (71.6 percent versus 79 percent, respectively).

It is important to note that a fairly large proportion, 19.4 percent, of respondents had "no opinion" or "didn't know" about the sentencing practices of the criminal courts in their communities. The proportion of those who responded similarly when asked about the performance of local law enforcement agencies was substantially smaller (3.5 percent). This may be due in part to the fact that the criminal courts are much less visible and, in turn, less

"In your opinion, are the criminal sentences being handed down by the courts in your community too lenient or too harsh?"

71.6% Lenient



4.5% Fair

4.5% Harsh

19.4%

No Opinion/Don't Know

(n = 1000)

familiar to the public than law enforcement agencies.

It has been argued that public cynicism about the sentencing process is a result of the disparity between sentences imposed and time actually served in an indeterminate sentencing environment, and that the news media's reporting of the theoretical maximum sentence rather than the minimum sentence -- which is normally served -- gives the public an incorrect impression of the actual severity of sentences.³ A survey conducted in 1987 by Joseph Jacoby and Christopher Dunn, "National Survey on Punishment for Criminal Offenses," lends support to this argument.⁴ While Jacoby and Dunn's survey found that people "mostly want offenders punished in proportion to the harmfulness of the offenses they commit," the sentence lengths recommended by people who participated in this national survey were longer than those served currently. Furthermore, people overwhelmingly supported the incarceration of convicted offenders for most offenses.

The use of plea bargaining may also contribute to the public's belief that criminals are not dealt with harshly enough. A survey conducted by the Hearst Corporation in 1983 found that 53 percent of the people nationwide felt "... persons accused of crimes should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law even if it is less than a 50-50 chance the person will be convicted."⁵ Only 35 percent felt "... persons accused of crimes should be able with the consent of the prosecutor to plead guilty to a lesser charge ensuring that they will receive sure punishment."

While these factors may play an important role in shaping people's perceptions about the sentencing practices of criminal courts, this survey found that the environment in which people lived and demographic characteristics were related to perceptions of sentencing in local criminal courts.⁶

State Prison and Local Jail Overcrowding

While most of the people in New York State believed that the criminal courts have been too lenient when sentencing criminals, the number and percentage of incarcerative sentences have, in fact, been increasing. In New York State the percentage of convicted offenders sentenced to State prison or local jails (including split sentences) increased from 34.3 percent in 1982 to 45.3 percent in 1987.⁷ This increase in incarcerative sentences has contributed to a severe overcrowding crisis in the State prison and county jail systems, forcing the State and some counties to undertake prison or jail expansion programs. Public officials have had to confront the difficult task of balancing the public outcry for tougher sentencing with the very real constraint of rising costs for both the operation and construction of prisons and jails.

PERCEPTIONS OF SENTENCING PRACTICES IN LOCAL CRIMINAL COURTS - continued

The environment in which people lived, their perceptions of local police performance, and demographic characteristics were associated with people's perceptions of sentences handed down in criminal courts.

Appendix B contains definitions for urbanization, neighborhood "quality of life," seriousness of neighborhood crime, awareness of neighborhood crime, and neighborhood safety.

Respondents who lived in neighborhoods with "quality of life" problems and those who felt that crime was a major neighborhood problem were more likely to think that sentencing practices were too lenient than those who lived in neighborhoods with no "quality of life" problems or major crime problem. Respondents who felt somewhat safe or unsafe out alone at night in their neighborhoods were more likely than those who felt very safe to believe sentencing was too lenient. Similarly, those who were aware or victims of neighborhood crime were more likely than those who were unaware of any neighborhood crime to think that sentencing was too lenient. Respondents who thought the performance of local police was excellent or good were less likely to feel that sentencing was too lenient than those who thought performance was fair or poor. Finally, the majority of respondents in both New York City and the rest of the State felt that criminal court sentences were too lenient.

It is important to note that respondents were more likely to have an opinion on sentencing in local criminal courts as neighborhood "quality of life" declined or as the perceived seriousness of neighborhood crime problems increased. This was also true for those who were aware or who were victims of neighborhood

Several factors were associated with people's perceptions of the sentences handed down by criminal courts in their communities.

	Perception of Sentences				(n)
	Too Lenient	Fair	Too Harsh	No Opinion ^a	
Urbanization					
New York City	74.1%	2.4%	5.3%	18.2%	413
City	76.2	6.6	4.9	12.3	122
Suburb	66.4	5.9	3.8	23.9	289
Rural	73.5	6.2	2.7	17.7	113
Neighborhood "Quality of Life" Problems					
None	66.4	7.1	3.3	23.2	396
Only Minor	73.6	2.9	4.6	18.8	345
One Major	76.8	2.2	5.5	15.5	181
Two-Three Major	76.9	3.8	7.7	11.5	78
Perceived Seriousness of Neighborhood Crime Problem					
No Problem	69.1	3.7	4.0	23.3	404
Minor Problem	71.0	5.9	4.7	18.4	424
Major Problem	80.9	3.1	5.6	10.5	162
Awareness of Neighborhood Crime					
Unaware	66.7	4.8	4.2	24.3	378
Aware	74.3	4.9	3.9	16.9	514
Victim	77.7	1.9	7.8	12.6	103
Perception of Neighborhood Safety					
Very Safe	64.0	6.9	4.2	24.9	333
Somewhat Safe	75.5	3.7	4.3	16.5	437
Unsafe	76.1	2.5	5.5	15.9	201
Perceptions of Local Law Enforcement					
Excellent	67.2	8.1	3.5	21.2	198
Good	68.5	4.3	4.5	22.7	445
Fair	81.7	3.8	3.8	10.8	240
Poor	78.5	1.3	11.4	8.9	79

^a Includes both "no opinion" and "don't know" responses. These responses were included in this analysis because they comprised a substantial portion of the responses (see Appendix A: Data Analysis)

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0% due to rounding.

PERCEPTIONS OF SENTENCING PRACTICES IN LOCAL CRIMINAL COURTS - continued

crime, those who felt somewhat safe or unsafe out alone at night in their neighborhoods, and those who thought the performance of local police was fair or poor.

While the majority of both white and non-white respondents felt that sentencing practices were too lenient, whites were less likely than non-whites to believe that sentencing was too harsh. Similarly, the majority of respondents across all age groups felt that sentencing practices were too lenient. However, the likelihood that respondents feeling sentencing was too harsh decreased as the age of respondents increased. Respondents with post-graduate education were less likely to believe that sentencing practices were lenient than those with less education. Respondents' sex, ethnicity and household income did not appear to be strongly related to perceptions of the sentencing practices of local criminal courts.

Perceptions of the sentences handed down by local criminal courts varied across demographic characteristics.

	Perceptions of Sentences				No Opinion ^a (n)
	Too Lenient	Fair	Too Harsh		
Sex					
Male	70.3%	4.5%	4.1%	21.1%	441
Female	72.6	4.5	4.8	18.1	559
Race					
White	73.1	4.9	3.7	18.3	793
Non-White	65.2	2.2	8.9	23.7	135
Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic	71.9	4.3	4.2	19.6	886
Hispanic	70.1	6.2	8.2	15.5	97
Age					
18 - 29	71.0	4.8	7.5	16.7	252
30 - 39	72.8	2.5	5.4	19.2	239
40 - 49	72.6	3.8	4.5	19.1	157
50 - 64	67.7	8.1	2.2	22.0	186
65 & Over	76.3	3.3	1.3	19.1	152
Education					
Not H.S. Graduate	69.8	3.4	5.0	21.6	139
High School Grad.	76.0	3.9	4.2	15.9	334
Some College	74.3	5.6	3.7	16.4	214
College Graduate	75.2	4.3	5.0	15.5	161
Post Graduate	56.7	5.2	5.2	32.8	134
House Hold Income					
Under \$10,000	64.8	7.4	4.6	23.1	108
10,000 - 15,000	79.3	2.5	6.6	11.6	121
15,000 - 25,000	69.7	3.9	5.2	21.3	155
25,000 - 35,000	76.0	5.7	4.0	14.3	175
35,000 - 50,000	73.8	2.7	5.4	18.1	149
Over 50,000	74.0	5.1	4.5	16.4	177

^a Includes both "no opinion" and "don't know" responses. These responses were included in this analysis because they comprised a substantial portion of the responses (see Appendix A: Data Analysis).

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0% due to rounding.

Chapter 3

THE STATE PRISON SYSTEM

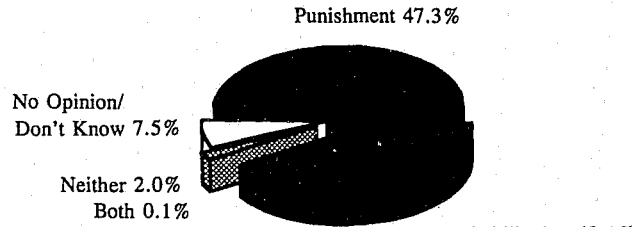
PUNISHMENT VS. REHABILITATION

The people of New York State were almost equally divided on whether inmate rehabilitation or punishment should be the primary objective of the State prison system.

- Respondents were just as likely to believe that punishment was the primary goal of the State prison system as they were rehabilitation (47.3 percent vs. 43.1 percent, respectively).

“Thinking about New York State’s prison system ...

Do you think the primary objective of the prison system should be punishment or changing offender’s behavior through rehabilitation?”

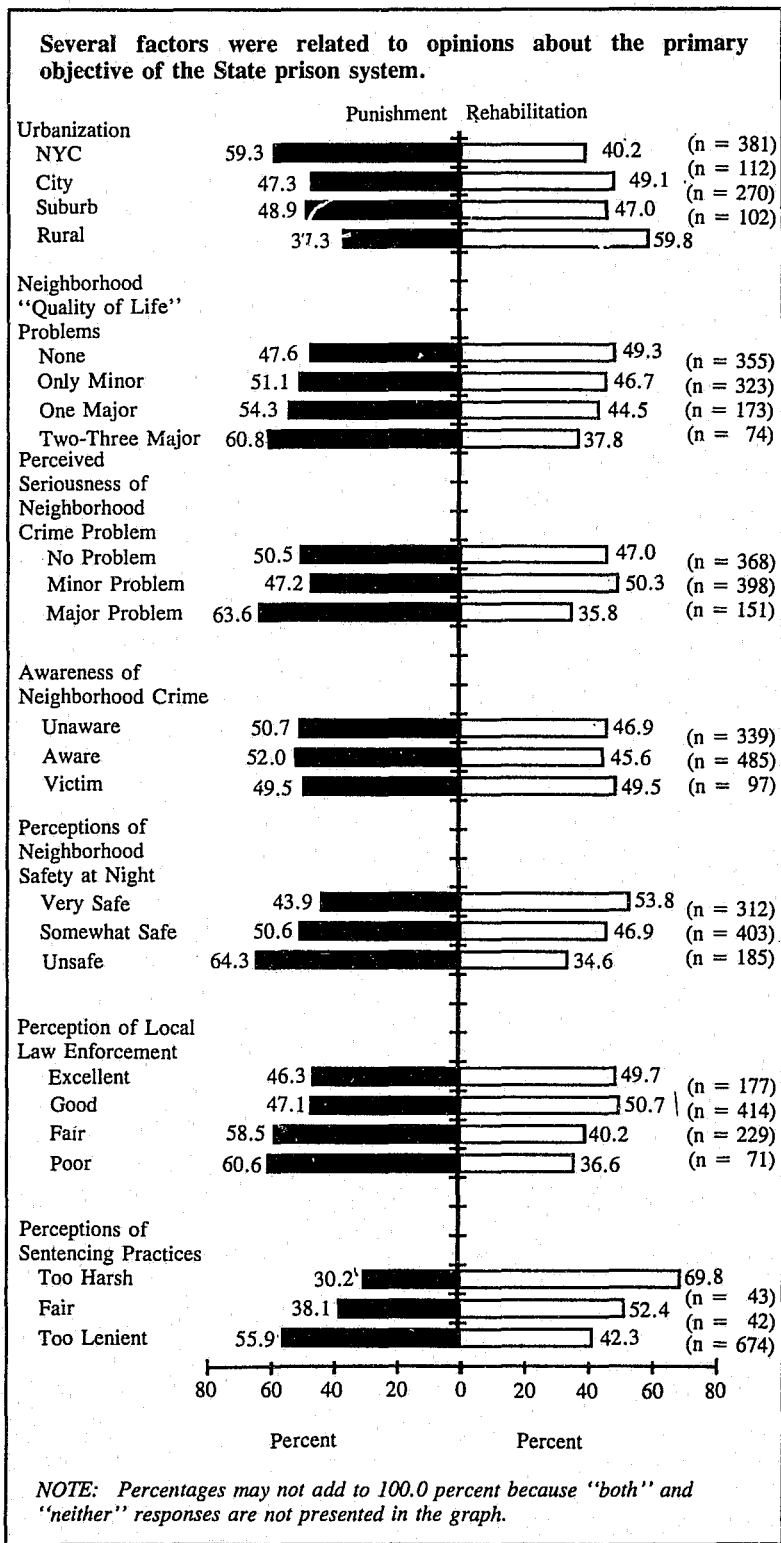


(n= 1000)

The environment in which people lived, their perceptions of local police and sentencing in the criminal courts, and demographic characteristics were related to their belief about the primary objective of the State prison system.

Appendix B contains definitions for urbanization, neighborhood "quality of life," seriousness of neighborhood crime, awareness of neighborhood crime, and neighborhood safety.

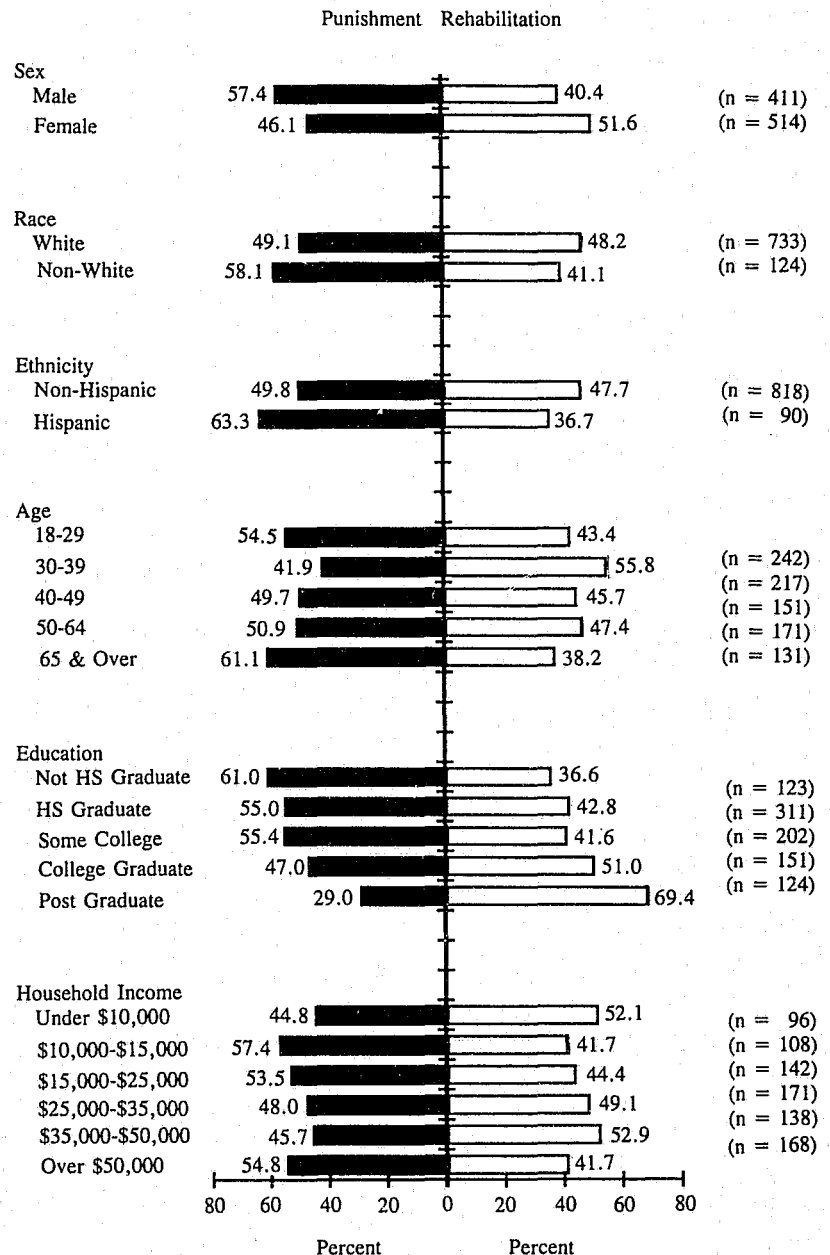
As the level of urbanization decreased, punishment gave way to rehabilitation as the primary objective of the State prison system. The likelihood of people believing punishment should be the primary objective increased as neighborhood "quality of life" decreased. Respondents who felt that crime was not a major neighborhood problem and those who thought the performance of local police was excellent or good were equally divided on the objectives of the State prison system. People who believed that crime was a major problem in their neighborhoods and those who thought local police performance was fair or poor were more likely to believe that punishment should be the primary objective. As respondents' feelings of safety out alone at night in their neighborhoods declined, rehabilitation gave way to punishment as the primary objective of the State prison system. People who felt criminal court sentences were too lenient were more likely to think punishment should be the primary objective, while those who believed that sentencing was too harsh or fair were more likely to believe that rehabilitation should be the primary objective. Awareness of neighborhood crime was not strongly related to beliefs about the primary objective of the State prison system.



PUNISHMENT VS. REHABILITATION - continued

Females, whites and non-Hispanics were equally divided on the objectives of the State prison system, while males, non-whites and Hispanics were more likely to believe that punishment should be the primary objective. Punishment gave way to rehabilitation as the primary objective as respondents' level of education increased. Age and household income did not appear to be strongly related to beliefs about the primary objective of the State prison system.

Opinions about the primary objective of the State prison system varied across demographic characteristics.



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100.0 percent because "both" and "neither" responses are not presented in the graph.

MINIMUM SECURITY WORK-RELEASE PROGRAMS

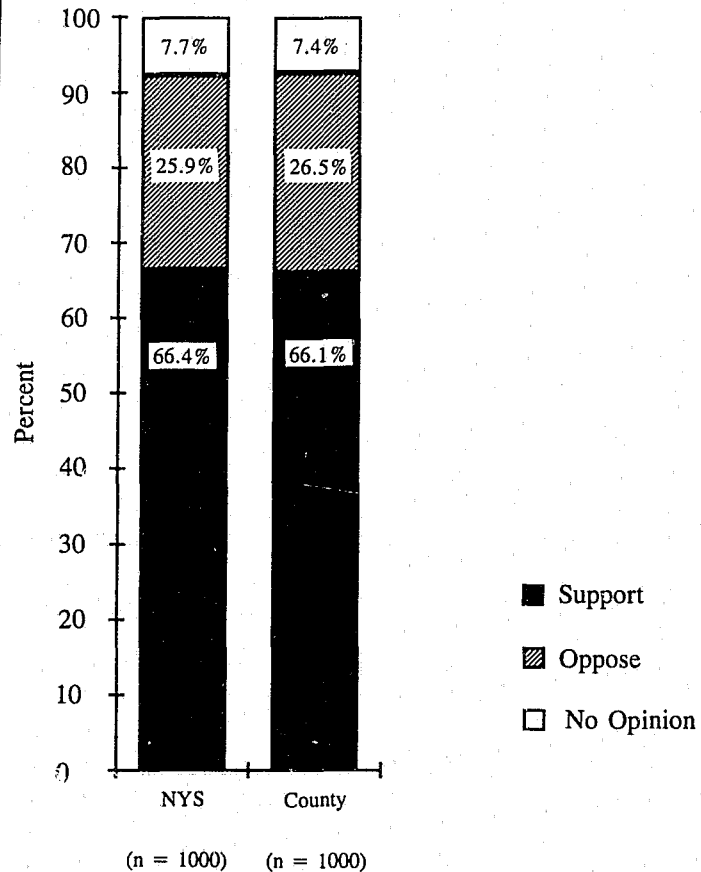
A majority of the people in New York State supported the use of minimum security work-release programs for prison inmates nearing release.

- Two-thirds of the respondents supported the use of minimum security work-release programs for inmates nearing release both statewide and in the counties in which respondents lived.

While responses indicated that people were almost equally divided on the primary objective of the State's prison system, almost two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they would support the use of minimum security work-release programs for inmates nearing release. These programs are designed to increase the probability of the successful community reintegration of inmates at the time of release.

“Thinking about New York State’s prison system ...

Minimum security work-release programs would allow inmates to work in the community a short time before they are to be released. Would you support or oppose the use of minimum security work-release programs throughout New York State? ...in your county for inmates who are residents of your county?”



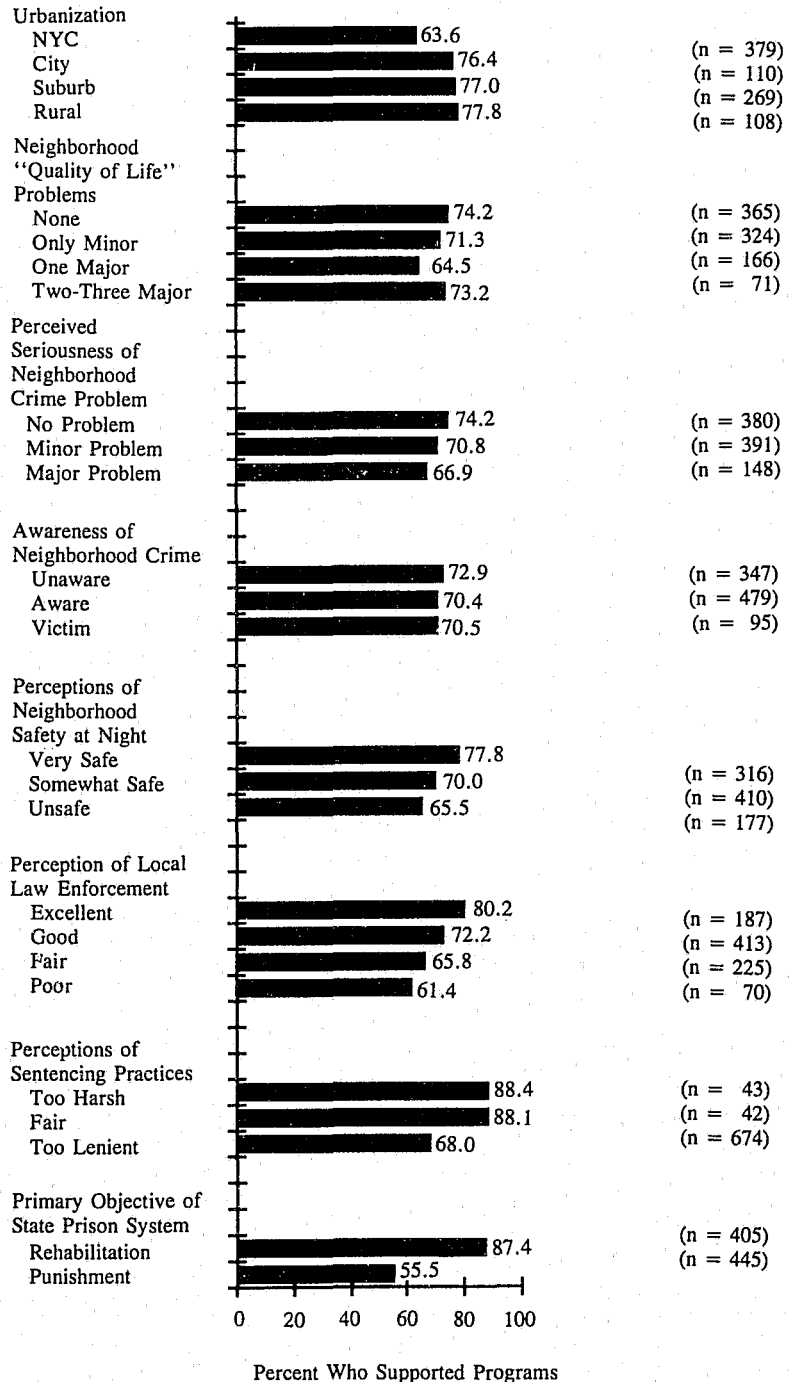
MINIMUM SECURITY WORK-RELEASE PROGRAMS - continued

The environment in which people lived, their perceptions of the criminal justice system, and demographic characteristics were associated with their support or opposition to the use of minimum security work-release programs in their counties for inmates from their counties nearing release.

Appendix B contains definitions for urbanization, neighborhood "quality of life," seriousness of neighborhood crime, awareness of neighborhood crime, and neighborhood safety.

New York City respondents were less likely to support the use of minimum security work-release programs in their counties than those living elsewhere in the State. Respondents were also less likely to support work-release programs as the perceived seriousness of neighborhood crime problems increased. Similarly, support for these programs decreased as feelings of safety out alone at night in neighborhoods declined and satisfaction with the performance of local law enforcement declined. Those who felt that the sentences handed down by the criminal courts in their communities were either too harsh or fair were more likely to support the use of work-release programs than those who felt sentencing was too lenient. Those who thought that rehabilitation should be the primary objective of the State prison system were far more likely to support the use of these programs than those who felt punishment should be the primary objective. The quality of the neighborhoods in which people lived and the extent to which they were aware of neighborhood crime were not strongly related to their support or opposition of the use of minimum security work-release programs in their counties for inmates nearing release.

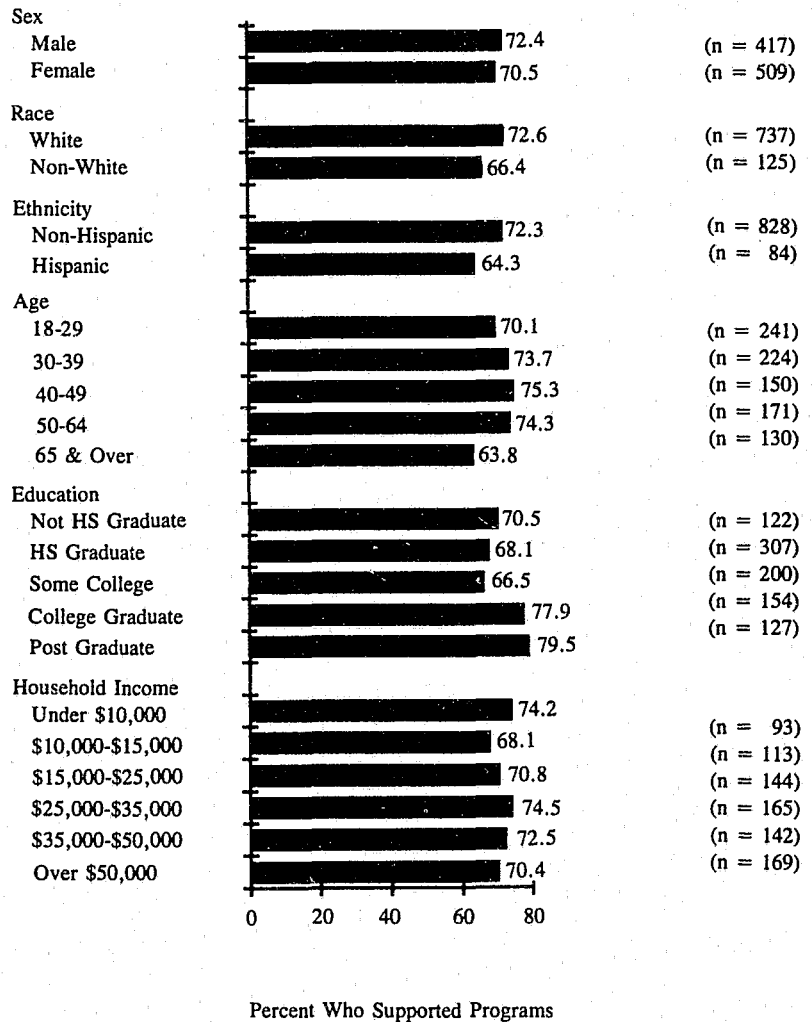
Several factors were associated with people's support or opposition for the use of minimum security work-release programs in their county.



MINIMUM SECURITY WORK-RELEASE PROGRAMS - continued

Respondents who were college graduates or who had done post-graduate study were more likely to support the use of work-release programs in their counties for inmates nearing release than those with less education. The sex, race, ethnicity, age and household income of respondents did not appear to be strongly related to their support or opposition of these programs.

People's support for the use of minimum security work-release programs in their counties varied across demographic characteristics.



SUMMARY

The majority of people in New York State felt the performance of local police was excellent or good. Where people lived, how safe they felt in their neighborhoods, the perceived seriousness of neighborhood crime, and the extent to which they were aware of neighborhood crime were all related to their perceptions of local police performance. Race, ethnicity, age and household income were also associated with perceptions of local police.

Most people thought that the sentences handed down by the criminal courts in their communities were too lenient. This finding was not unusual. For over a decade, surveys conducted nationwide have documented the public's dissatisfaction with the sentencing practices of criminal courts. Survey findings found that the environment in which people lived, their perceptions of the criminal justice system, along with the demographic characteristics of race and age were related to perceptions of sentencing in the criminal courts.

New York State residents were almost equally divided on the primary objective of the State prison system -- punishment vs. rehabilitation. Two-thirds registered their support of the use of minimum security work-release programs both statewide and in the counties in which they lived for inmates nearing release from prison. Once again, the environment in which people lived, their perceptions of the criminal justice system, and demographic characteristics were associated with these opinions.

NOTES

- ¹ Flanagan, T. J. & Jamison, K. M. (Eds.). Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics - 1987. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1988), p. 135.
- ² Ibid, p. 142-143.
- ³ Blumestein, A. "Prison Populations: A System Out of Control?" In M. Tonry & N. Morris (Eds.), Crime and Justice: A Review of Research, Volume 10. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 231-266.
- ⁴ Jacoby, E. J. & Dunn, C. S. "National Survey On Punishment for Criminal Offenses." Paper presented at the National Conference on Punishment for Criminal Offenses, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 1987), p. 5.
- ⁵ Flanagan, T. J. & McGarrell, E. F. (Eds.). Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics - 1985. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1986), p. 168.
- ⁶ For a discussion of public perceptions of criminal courts see -

Flanagan, T. J., McGarrell, E. F., and Brown, E. J. "Public Perceptions of the Criminal Courts: The Role of Demographic and Related Attitudinal Variables." Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, (February 1985) 22(1):66-82.
- ⁷ New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Arrest and Processing Trends File.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

RESEARCH METHODS

This public opinion survey was conducted in the Fall of 1987 and was partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Interviews were conducted by Fact Finders, Inc., a survey research firm with experience in telephone surveys.

Questionnaire Design

The survey instrument was developed by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Several survey items were abstracted from surveys that had been conducted nationally or in other states. The draft survey instrument was revised and adapted for a telephone survey format by Fact Finders in consultation with DCJS. Twenty-five interviews were conducted during the pilot test on October 15, 1987. The final draft of the survey was translated by Fact Finders, Inc. into Spanish for administration to non-English speaking Hispanics. Copies of the questionnaire are available upon request.

Sample

Method. Interviews were conducted with 1000 non-institutionalized New York State residents 18 years of age or older during the Fall of 1987, utilizing "random digit dialing" to randomly select households for inclusion in the survey. The survey sample was stratified to proportionately represent the population in each of the State's 62 counties based on 1980 census data. Sample telephone numbers were redialed up to 10

separate times in an effort to gain contact or a disposition for each randomly selected telephone number. If a non-working or business number was encountered, a substitute random number was generated. Once contact had been made with a valid household, a probability selection method known as "next birthday selection" was employed to randomly select one adult from a multiple adult household. If the randomly selected respondent was not available, interviewers scheduled a callback. Up to five separate callbacks were attempted to gain an interview with each random respondent. It should be noted that approximately five to seven percent of the households in New York State that did not have telephones were not represented in this survey; this segment of the population might possess different attitudes and experiences than those found in this survey's sample.

Representativeness. The demographic characteristics of the survey respondents were compared to estimates of these characteristics in the population of New York State residents (see Table A-1). These estimates, which were provided by the New York State Department of Economic Development, were derived from the March 1987 Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census. The survey sample matched the population very closely. There were no statistically significant differences between the sample and population estimates for sex, race, ethnicity, age, or household income. People who did not attend high school were slightly under-represented, while those who

attended college for one to three years or for four years were slightly over-represented. The data were not weighted to compensate for these discrepancies.

Data Collection

Fact Finders, Inc. conducted interviews during the weekday hours of 4 - 9 PM and weekend hours of 10 AM - 6 PM on October 26 through November 13, 1987. Two staff interviewers were also employed weekdays from 10 AM - 4 PM to conduct daytime callbacks. In conducting the interviews, a total refusal rate of 20.8 percent was encountered with three-quarters of all refusals occurring in the New York City greater metropolitan counties (New York City boroughs, Westchester, Rockland, Nassau, and Suffolk counties). The overall completion rate of 79.2 percent of this survey's probability sampling is comparable to other statewide surveys conducted by Fact Finders and other research companies.

Analysis

A systematic procedure was followed to establish the significant subgroup response patterns that are identified in this report. For each item, it was first determined whether or not a significant overall relationship existed between the subgroup categories and the item response categories. Given the existence of such a relationship, difference of proportion tests were then used to examine subgroup differences across selected item categories. Only differences that were significant

RESEARCH METHODS - continued

TABLE A-1

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE vs.
NEW YORK STATE 1987 POPULATION ESTIMATES¹

	Sample	NYS 1987 Population Estimates		Sample	NYS 1987 Population Estimates
SEX			EDUCATION		
Male	44.1%	46.5%	None to Eighth Grade	4.5%	13.4%
Female	55.9	53.5	High School: 1-3 Years	9.7	7.8
RACE			High School: 4 Years	34.0	36.3
White	81.3	83.7	College: 1-3 Years	21.8	15.4
Black	10.1	12.4	College: 4 Years	16.4	7.9
Other	8.7	3.9	Post Graduate	13.6	10.7
ETHNICITY			INCOME		
Hispanic	9.9	10.8	Under \$10,000	12.2	13.9
Non-Hispanic	90.1	89.2	\$10,000 to \$15,000	13.7	7.8
AGE			\$15,000 to \$25,000	17.5	18.3
18 - 29	25.6	27.2	\$25,000 to \$35,000	19.8	16.0
30 - 39	24.2	21.2	\$35,000 to \$50,000	16.8	18.7
40 - 49	15.9	15.9	Over \$50,000	20.0	25.3
50 - 64	18.9	19.2			
65 & Over	15.4	16.6			

¹ New York State Department of Economic Development (from the March 1987 Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census).

at the 95 percent confidence level were highlighted in the text.

"No response/no opinion/don't know" responses were included in the overall sample analysis but were generally excluded from the analysis of subgroup responses except where they comprised a substantial portion of the responses or their exclusion altered the interpretation of survey findings.

Sampling Error

All surveys are subject to sampling error. The size of the sampling error varies with the size of the sample from which inferences to the population are made. The sample design and probability methods employed in constructing this statewide sample ensured statistical sampling error ranges, in theory, of plus or minus 1.9 to 3.1 percentage points (95 percent confidence interval) when inferences are based on the responses of all 1000 respondents. The sampling error for inferences drawn from subgroups are presented in Table A-2. For example, a reported percentage of 70 percent for a subgroup that includes 500 respondents is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4.0 percentage points, assuming a 95 percent confidence interval. In other words, 95 out of 100 cases will fall within the range of 66 percent to 74 percent.

Reported Percentage	Sample Size				
	1000	750	500	250	100
10 or 90	1.9	2.1	2.6	5.1	5.9
20 or 80	2.5	2.9	3.5	5.0	7.8
30 or 70	2.8	3.3	4.0	5.7	9.0
40 or 60	3.0	3.5	4.3	6.1	9.6
50	3.1	3.6	4.4	6.2	9.8

Appendix B

DEFINITIONS

Awareness of Crime - Survey respondents were asked if they or other members of their households had been the victims of crime committed in their neighborhoods during the 12 months prior to the survey. Respondents who reported that no household members were the victims of neighborhood crime were then asked if they knew of any crimes that had been committed in their neighborhoods during this same period. For the purpose of this report respondents were grouped into three categories: *victims* (those who were the victims of neighborhood crime or who resided in households where at least one member had been the victim of a neighborhood crime), *non-victims aware of neighborhood crime* (those who were aware of neighborhood crimes but were not *victims*), and *non-victims unaware of neighborhood crime* (those who were unaware of any neighborhood crime and were not *victims*).

Neighborhood "Quality of Life" - The measurement of neighborhood "quality of life" was based on respondents' perceptions of the incidence and seriousness of three specific problems: groups of youth hanging out on the streets, deteriorating houses or buildings, and homeless people wandering the streets. These problems acted as environmental cues or indicators of neighborhood "quality of life." For the purpose of this report respondents were grouped into four categories: *no problems* (those who did not report any of the three problems), *only minor problems* (those who reported that at least one of these problems was a minor neighborhood problem and that none were major neighborhood problems), *one major problem* (those who reported that only one of these problems was a major neighborhood problem), and *two to three major problems* (those who reported that two or three of the problems were major neighborhood problems).

Perceptions of Neighborhood Safety at Night - Respondents were asked how safe they felt out alone at night in their neighborhoods: *very safe, somewhat safe* or *unsafe*.

Perceptions of the Seriousness of the Neighborhood Crime Problem - Respondents were asked if crime was a *major problem, minor problem* or not really a problem at all (i.e., *no problem*) in their neighborhoods.

Urbanization - Respondents were asked if they lived in a city, suburban or rural area. For the purpose of this report respondents were grouped into four categories: *New York City* residents (all respondents who lived in the five boroughs of the City) and *city, suburban* or *rural* residents (all respondents who lived outside New York City).

Appendix C

TABLES

TABLE C-1

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
BY PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

	Perceptions of Local Law Enforcement (Percentage)				(n)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	
LEVEL OF URBANIZATION					
New York City	11.4	40.0	33.5	15.1	385
City	15.0	55.8	25.0	4.2	120
Suburb	31.6	48.4	17.5	2.5	285
Rural	31.5	45.9	15.3	7.2	111
NEIGHBORHOOD "QUALITY OF LIFE" PROBLEMS					
None	28.8	51.6	14.8	4.8	378
Only Minor	18.5	49.4	26.8	5.4	336
One Major	9.8	37.0	37.6	15.6	173
Two-Three Major	13.3	26.7	38.7	21.3	75
PERCEIVED SERIOUSNESS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PROBLEM					
No Problem	26.4	51.7	16.5	5.4	387
Minor Problem	19.2	48.5	26.9	5.3	412
Major Problem	9.6	26.8	40.8	22.9	157
AWARENESS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME					
Unaware	25.6	48.7	18.9	6.7	359
Aware	18.5	46.0	28.3	7.2	498
Victim	12.9	40.6	28.7	17.8	101
PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY					
Very Safe	31.6	50.8	12.7	5.0	323
Somewhat Safe	17.9	47.7	28.6	5.7	419
Unsafe	7.8	37.0	37.0	18.2	192

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

TABLES

TABLE C-2
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
BY PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Demographic Characteristics	Perceptions of Local Law Enforcement (Percentage)				(n)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	
SEX					
Male	23.3	43.3	23.5	10.0	430
Female	18.4	48.7	26.1	6.8	532
RACE					
White	23.5	48.2	21.4	6.9	766
Non-White	8.5	38.0	37.2	16.3	129
ETHNICITY					
Non-Hispanic	21.4	47.4	23.1	8.1	856
Hispanic	12.1	37.4	40.7	9.9	91
AGE					
18-29	11.9	48.0	32.4	7.8	244
30-39	22.2	49.6	20.4	7.8	230
40-49	23.2	42.4	23.2	11.3	151
50-64	27.5	45.6	19.8	7.1	182
65 & Over	21.0	45.5	25.9	7.7	143
EDUCATION					
No H. S. Diploma	18.7	44.0	26.1	11.2	134
High School Diploma	18.5	45.7	27.2	8.6	324
Some College	25.6	47.3	20.3	6.8	207
College Graduate	19.1	45.2	28.0	7.6	157
Post Graduate	21.6	51.2	21.6	5.6	125
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$10,000	14.9	44.6	28.7	11.9	101
\$10,000 - \$15,000	16.9	48.3	27.1	7.6	118
\$15,000 - \$25,000	20.4	43.4	25.7	10.5	152
\$25,000 - \$35,000	17.5	54.8	21.7	6.0	166
\$35,000 - \$50,000	20.4	46.5	26.8	6.3	142
Over \$50,000	29.1	44.0	20.6	6.3	175

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0% due to rounding.