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Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #2: Police, Crime, Offender Rights, and Attitudes Regarding the Homeless and Mentally Ill in Hampton Roads

Social Science Research Center, Old Dominion University

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Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #2

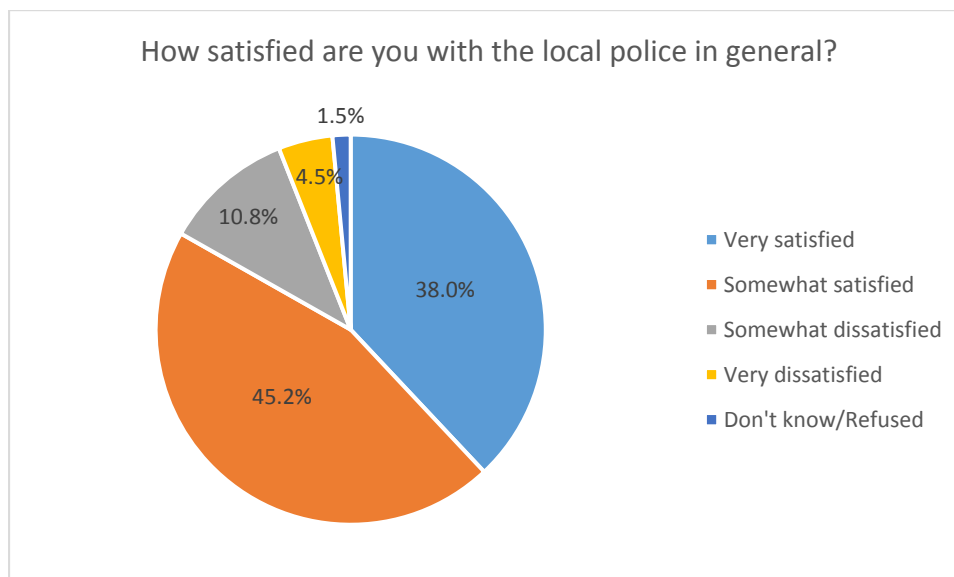
Police, Crime, Offender Rights, and Attitudes Regarding the Homeless and Mentally Ill in Hampton Roads

This report examines regional and sub-regional perceptions of crime and police from the 2016 Life In Hampton Roads survey (LIHR 2016) conducted by the Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show comparisons in responses over time. Responses were weighted by city population, race, age, gender, and phone usage (cell versus land-line) to be representative of the Hampton Roads region. For additional information on survey methodology, and analyses of other issues, please see the SSRC website at www.odu.edu/ssrc.

Control of crime and public safety are an important precondition for a high quality of life, and a significant concern among survey respondents. The 962 respondents were asked about various topics concerning local police and crime.

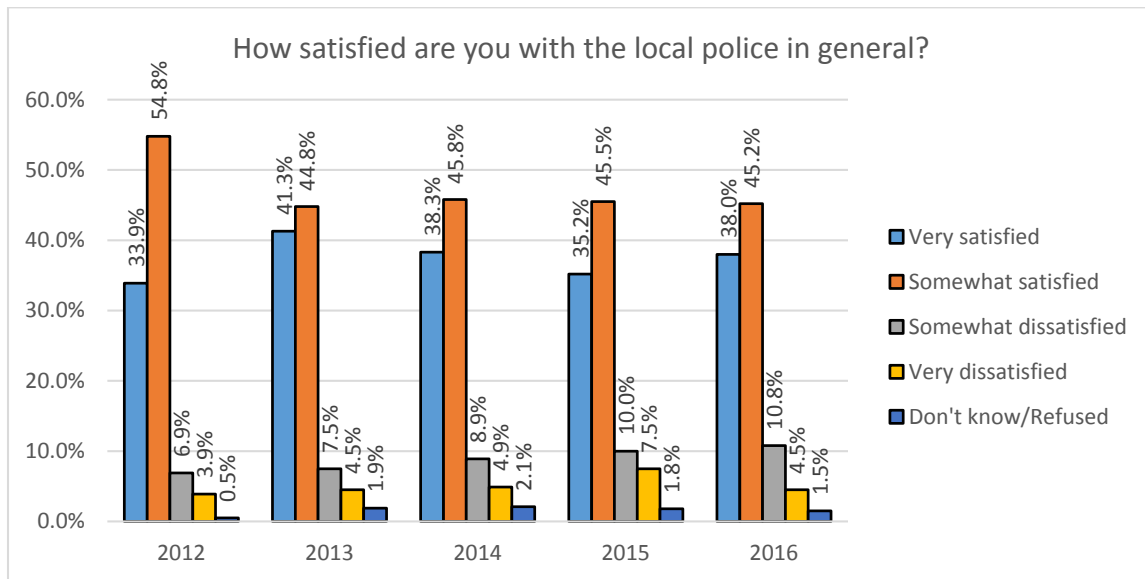
Satisfaction/Trust of Local Police and Perception of Crime

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the local police in general. The majority of respondents reported being somewhat satisfied (45.2%) and very satisfied (38.0%). Only 10.8 percent reported being somewhat dissatisfied and 4.5 percent reported being very dissatisfied with the local police. Additionally, 1.5 percent either did not know or refused to answer.

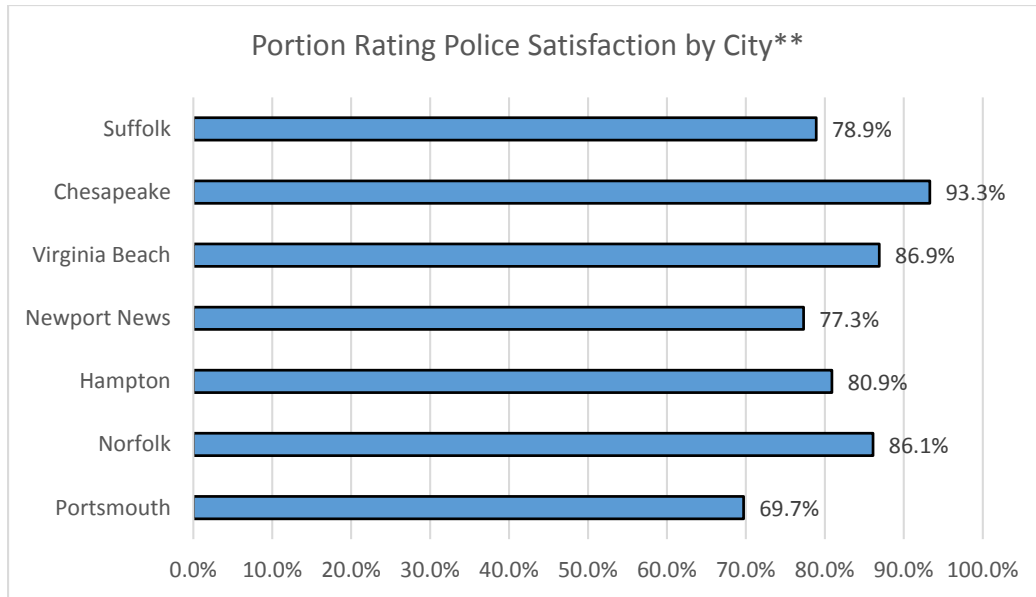


While overall satisfaction with the police remained fairly consistent with previous years, those reporting they are very satisfied with the local police increased by almost 3 percent (2.8%). In the four

years the LIHR survey has asked about satisfaction with the local police, the portion reporting that they are very or somewhat dissatisfied was at its highest in 2015, but has decreased this year by 2.2 percent. The portion of respondents somewhat or very satisfied with local police had declined from 88.7 percent in 2012 to 86.1 percent in 2013, 84.1 percent in 2014, and 80.7 percent in 2015. However, in 2016 the portion of respondents somewhat or very satisfied with local police rose to 83.2 percent.

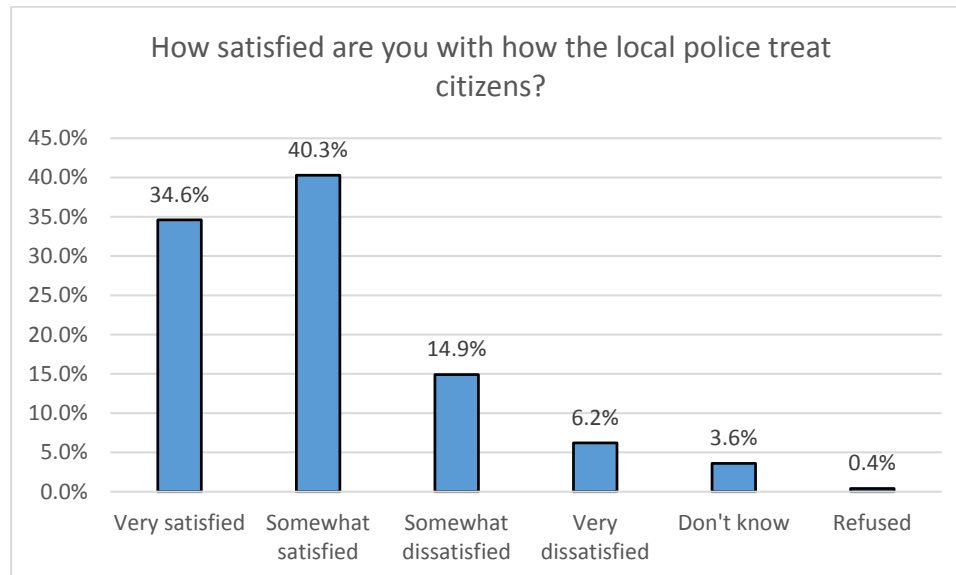


When examining respondent satisfaction with the local police by city, it is apparent that some cities are more satisfied than others. In fact, there is a significant difference in satisfaction with the local police across the seven cities of Hampton Roads ($p < .01$). For example, 93.3 percent of Chesapeake residents and 86.9 percent of Virginia Beach residents reported being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their local police compared to 77.3 percent of Newport News residents and 69.7 percent of Portsmouth residents.



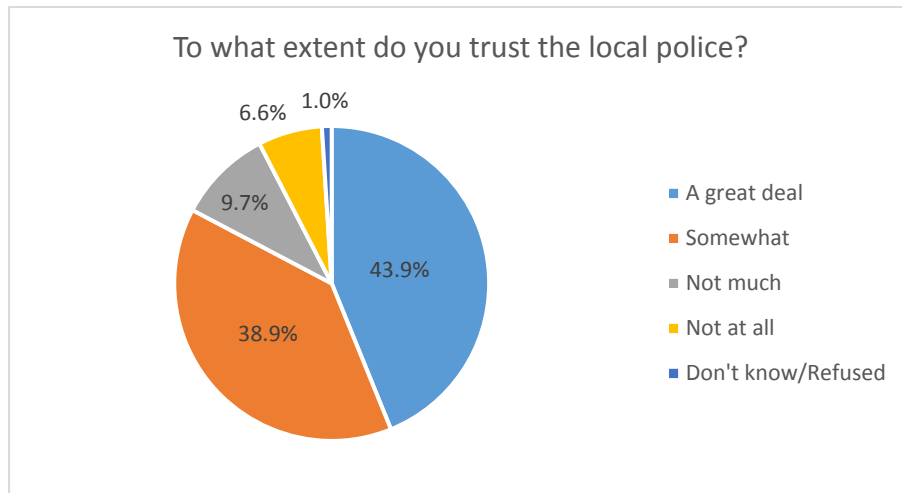
**p<.01 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

Respondents were asked how satisfied they are with how the local police treat citizens. The majority of respondents (74.9%) said they either were somewhat satisfied (40.3%) or very satisfied (34.6%) with how the local police treat citizens. Another 14.9 percent reported being somewhat dissatisfied and 6.2 percent were very dissatisfied with how the local police treat citizens.

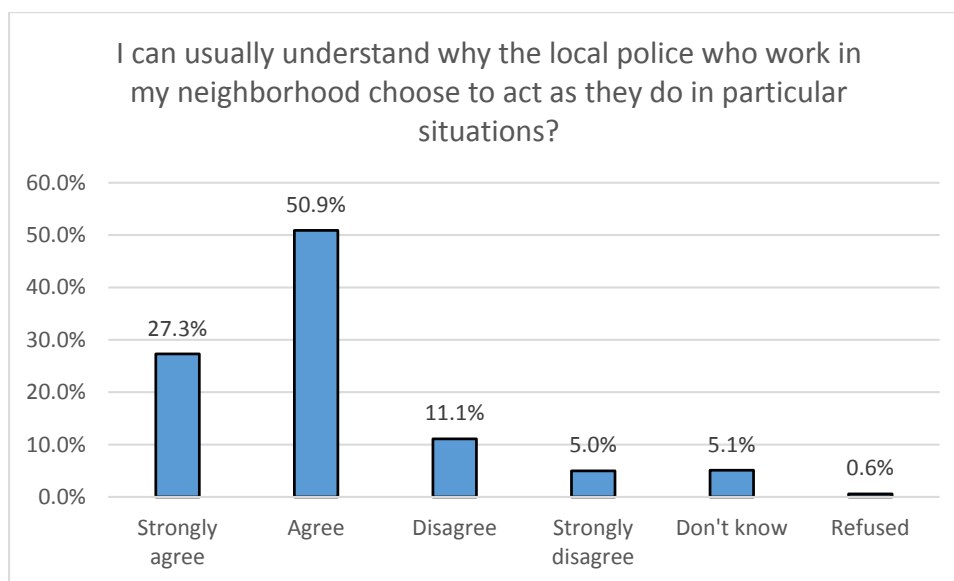


Respondents were also asked how much they trust the local police. The majority of respondents (82.8%) indicated they either trust the police a great deal (43.9%) or trust the police somewhat (38.9%).

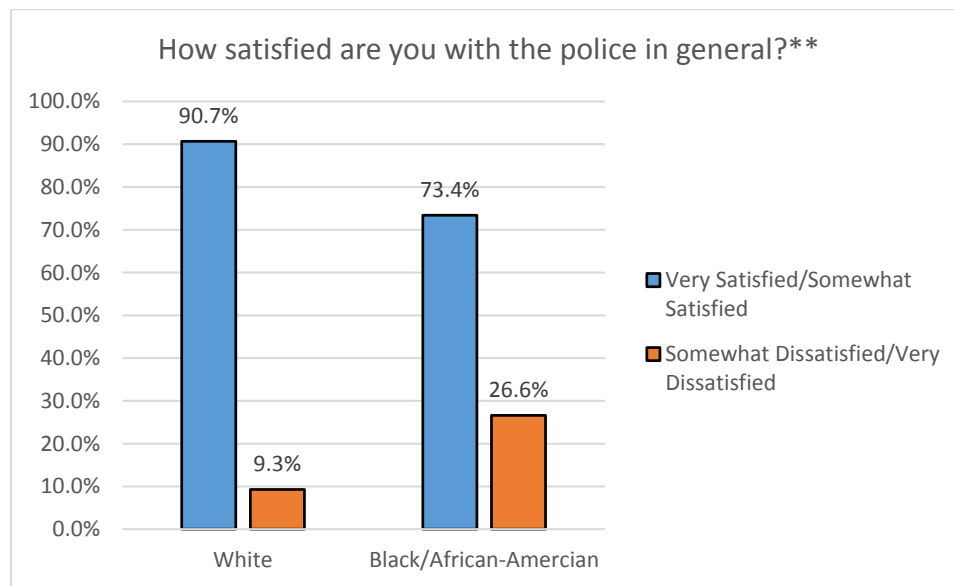
Only 6.6 percent reported not trusting the police at all and another 9.7 percent reported not trusting the police much. The percentages are almost identical to those reported in 2015.



Respondents were asked if they can usually understand why the police who work in their neighborhood choose to act as they do in particular situations. The majority of respondents (78.2%) said they either agree (50.9%) or strongly agree (27.3%) that they understand why the police who work in their neighborhood choose to act as they do in particular situations. Only 11.1 percent disagreed and 5 percent strongly disagreed that they understand why the police who work in their neighborhood choose to act as they do in particular situations.



Concerning race, there were some significant differences between White respondents and Black/African-American respondents in regards to police perceptions. White respondents were significantly more likely to say they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the police in general (90.7%) than Black/African-American respondents (73.4%). Conversely, over one-quarter (26.6%) of Black/African-American respondents said they were either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the police in general compared to only 9.3 percent of White respondents.



*** $p < .05$ statistically significant, 2-tailed test

When controlling for city and race when looking at police satisfaction, all seven cities had a higher percentage of Black/African American respondents who were somewhat or very dissatisfied with police compared to White respondents. These differences were statistically significant in Hampton, Newport News, and Virginia Beach¹. Newport News and Portsmouth had the highest percentage of dissatisfaction with the police among Black/African-American respondents (39.6% and 39.4%,

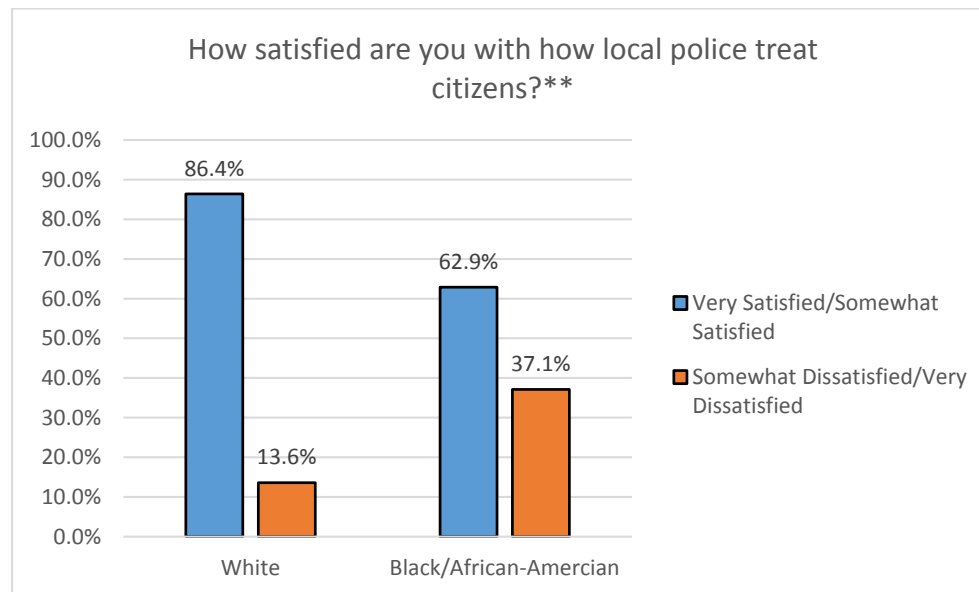
¹ We should emphasize that the sample size varies importantly across cities and this strongly affects the ability to detect statistically significant relationships. Indeed, it is possible to find larger differences in a particular city than the others but that difference may not be significant where in cities where the differences are smaller we may actually see statistically significant differences. The difference in percentage is important, but so is the sample size which increases our confidence that the differences we found in this sample would also be found in the whole population. With these current data, however, the trends are fairly consistent showing important differences between whites and blacks across cities of Hampton Roads.

respectively). Chesapeake had the highest percentage of police satisfaction among both White and Black/African-American respondents (96.7% and 87.0%, respectively).

How satisfied are you with the local police in general? **				
	White		Black/African-American	
	% Very Satisfied/ Somewhat satisfied	% Somewhat dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied	% Very Satisfied/ Somewhat satisfied	% Somewhat dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied
Chesapeake	96.7%	3.3%	87.0%	13.0%
Hampton **	92.5%	7.5%	70.2%	29.8%
Newport News **	88.3%	11.7%	60.4%	39.6%
Norfolk	90.8%	9.2%	81.4%	18.6%
Portsmouth	84.6%	15.4%	60.6%	39.4%
Suffolk	85.7%	14.3%	68.0%	32.0%
Virginia Beach **	89.8%	10.2%	75.4%	24.6%

**p<0.05 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

Similar to overall police satisfaction, when comparing White and Black/African-American respondents on satisfaction with how local police treat citizens, a significantly higher percentage of Black/African-American respondents were either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (37.1%) compared to White respondents (13.6%).



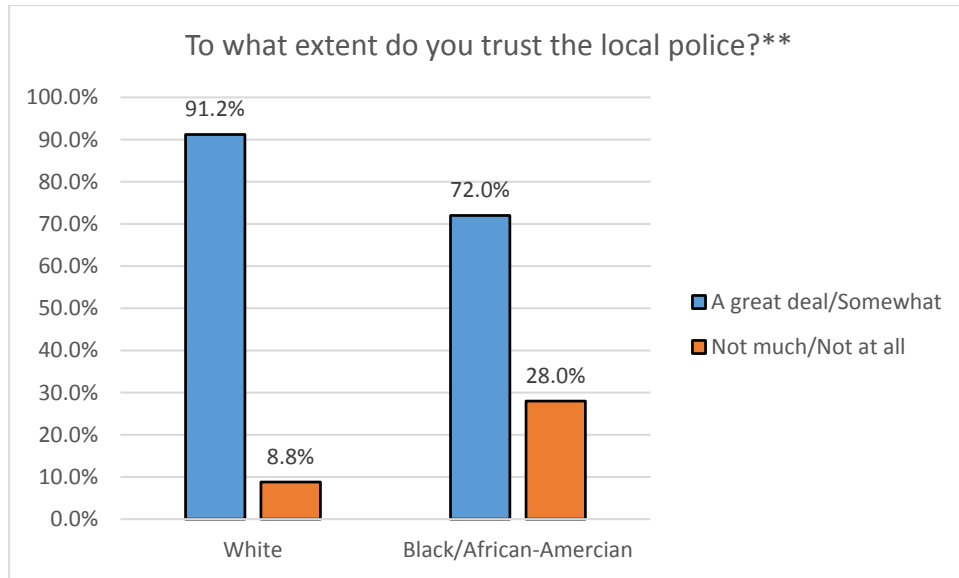
**p<.05 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

When controlling for city and race for satisfaction with how the local police treat citizens, all seven cities had a higher percentage of Black/African American respondents who were somewhat or very dissatisfied with how local police treat citizens compared to White respondents. These differences were statistically significant in Chesapeake, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. Portsmouth and Newport News had the highest percentage of dissatisfaction with how the local police treat citizens among Black/African-American respondents (67.6% and 42.6%, respectively). In fact, Portsmouth was the only city to have a majority of dissatisfied responses amongst Black/African-American respondents. Chesapeake had the highest percentage of satisfaction with how the local police treat citizens among White respondents (93.4%), while Hampton had the highest percentage of satisfaction with how the local police treat citizens among Black/African-American respondents (75.6%).

How satisfied are you with how the local police treat citizens? **				
	White		Black/African-American	
	% Very Satisfied/ Somewhat satisfied	% Somewhat dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied	% Very Satisfied/Somewhat satisfied	% Somewhat dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied
Chesapeake**	93.4%	6.6%	68.2%	31.8%
Hampton	80.0%	20.0%	75.6%	24.4%
Newport News**	89.3%	10.7%	57.4%	42.6%
Norfolk**	85.1%	14.9%	60.9%	39.1%
Portsmouth**	72.0%	28.0%	32.4%	67.6%
Suffolk	85.7%	14.3%	64.0%	36.0%
Virginia Beach**	86.5%	13.5%	70.7%	29.3%

**p≤.01 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

As with both overall police satisfaction and satisfaction with how local police treat citizens, when comparing White and Black/African-American respondents on the extent to which they trust the local police, a significantly higher percentage of Black/African-American respondents were either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (28.0%) compared to White respondents (8.8%).



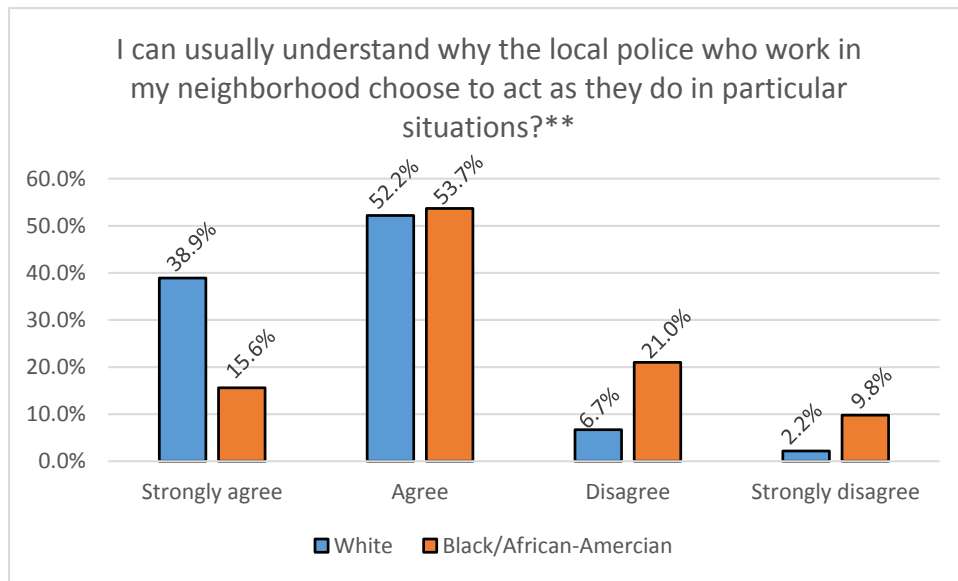
**p<.05 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

When controlling for city and race and examining the extent to which citizens trust the local police, all seven cities had a higher percentage of Black/African American respondents who either trusted the police not much or not at all compared to White respondents. These differences were statistically significant in Chesapeake, Newport News, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach. Newport News and Chesapeake had the highest percentage of distrust with the local police among Black/African-American respondents (39.6% and 38.3%, respectively). Chesapeake had the highest level of trust with the local police among White respondents (96.8%), while Virginia Beach had the highest level of trust with the local police among Black/African-American respondents (80.0%).

To what extent do you trust the local police? **				
	White		Black/African-American	
	% A great deal/Somewhat	% Not much/Not at all	% A great deal/Somewhat	% Not much/Not at all
Chesapeake**	96.8%	3.2%	61.7%	38.3%
Hampton	92.3%	7.7%	76.6%	23.4%
Newport News**	93.5%	6.5%	60.4%	39.6%
Norfolk**	90.9%	9.1%	78.1%	21.9%
Portsmouth	69.2%	30.8%	72.7%	27.3%
Suffolk	85.2%	14.8%	70.8%	29.2%
Virginia Beach**	91.8%	8.2%	80.0%	20.0%

**p<.05 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

Respondents were also asked the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “I can usually understand why the local police who work in my neighborhood choose to act as they do in particular situations?” When comparing White and Black/African-American respondents, a significantly higher percentage of Black/African-American respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (30.8%) compared to White respondents (8.9%).



**p<.001 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

When examining the extent to which citizens trust the local police by race and city, all seven cities had a higher percentage of Black/African American respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “I can usually understand why the local police who work in my neighborhood choose to act as they do in particular situations” compared to White respondents. These differences were statistically significant in Chesapeake, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. Portsmouth and Suffolk had the highest percentage of disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement among Black/African-American respondents (45.2% and 40.0%, respectively). Virginia Beach and Chesapeake had the highest percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement among White respondents (93.9% and 93.5%, respectively), while

Hampton had the highest level of agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement among Black/African-American respondents (81.8%).

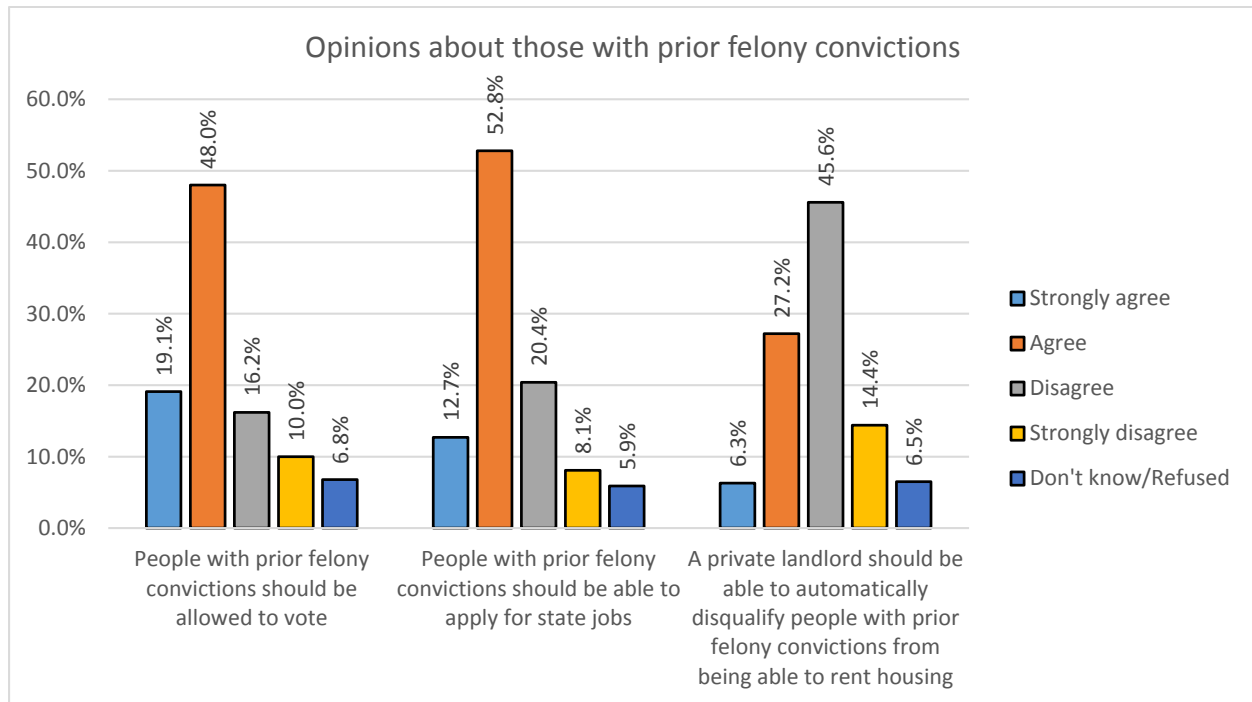
I can usually understand why the local police who work in my neighborhood choose to act as they do in particular situations? **				
	White		Black/African-American	
	% Strongly agree/Agree	% Strongly disagree/Disagree	% Strongly agree/Agree	% Strongly disagree/Disagree
Chesapeake**	93.5%	6.5%	63.4%	36.6%
Hampton	83.8%	16.2%	81.8%	18.2%
Newport News**	87.3%	12.7%	68.1%	31.9%
Norfolk**	88.9%	11.1%	67.1%	32.9%
Portsmouth**	91.7%	8.3%	54.8%	45.2%
Suffolk	85.2%	14.8%	60.0%	40.0%
Virginia Beach**	93.9%	6.1%	78.6%	21.4%

**p<.05 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

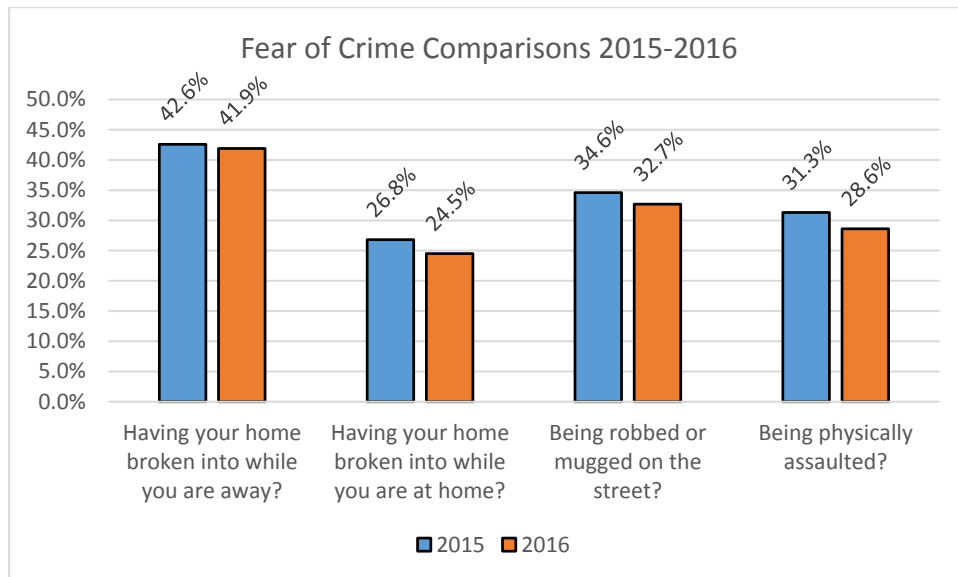
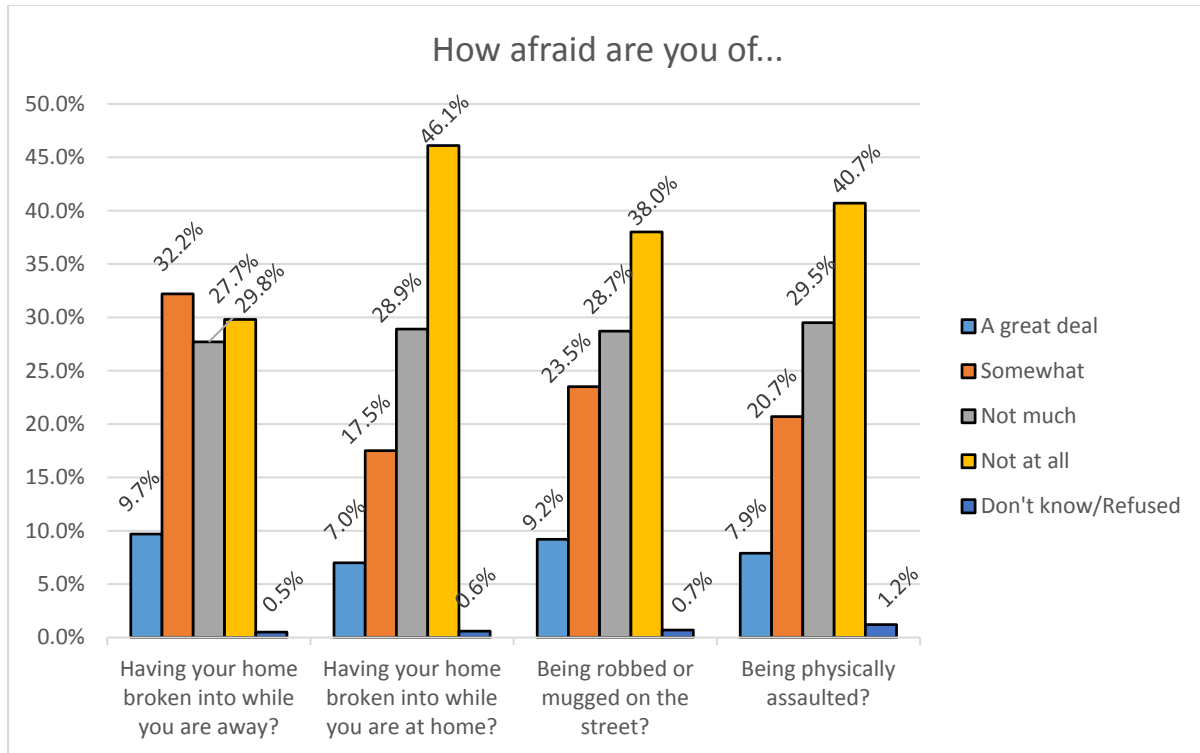
Respondents were asked a series of questions about the rights of citizens with prior felony convictions, such as whether they should be allowed to vote, apply for state jobs, or whether private landlords should be able to automatically disqualify people with prior felony convictions from being able to rent housing.

About two-thirds of respondents (67.1%) said they either strongly agreed (19.1%) or agreed (48.0%) that those with prior felony convictions should be allowed to vote. Only 26.2 percent either disagreed (16.2%) or strongly disagreed (10.0%) that those with prior felony convictions should be allowed to vote. Just under two-thirds (65.5%) also either strongly agreed (12.7%) or agreed (52.8%) that those with prior felony convictions should be able to apply for state jobs. Only 28.5 percent either disagreed (20.4%) or strongly disagreed (8.1%) that those with prior felony convictions should be able to apply for state jobs. Sixty percent of respondents said that a private landlord should not be able to automatically disqualify people with prior felony convictions from being able to rent housing, with 45.6 percent responding disagree and 14.4 percent responding strongly disagree. Over one-quarter of

respondents (33.5%) agreed that a private landlord should be able to automatically disqualify people with prior felony convictions from being able to rent housing.



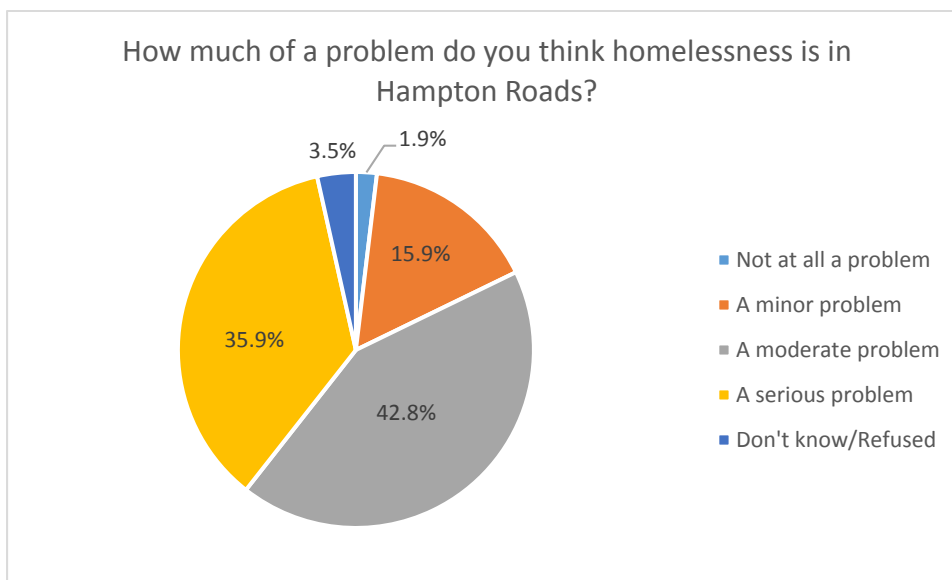
Respondents were asked to answer how afraid they are of certain crimes in Hampton Roads. Respondents reported being either somewhat afraid (32.2%) or afraid a great deal (9.7%) of having their home broken into while they are away (41.9%). Respondents were less afraid of having their home broken into while they are home (24.5%). About two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) reported either being not afraid at all (38.0%) or not much afraid (28.7%) of being robbed or mugged on the street. Only 9.2 percent reported being afraid a great deal of being robbed or mugged on the street and 23.5 percent reported being somewhat afraid of being robbed or mugged on the street. Additionally, 70.2 percent of respondents reported being either not at all afraid (40.7%) or not much afraid (29.5%) of being physically assaulted. In general, respondents reported being less afraid of these scenarios than they did in 2015.



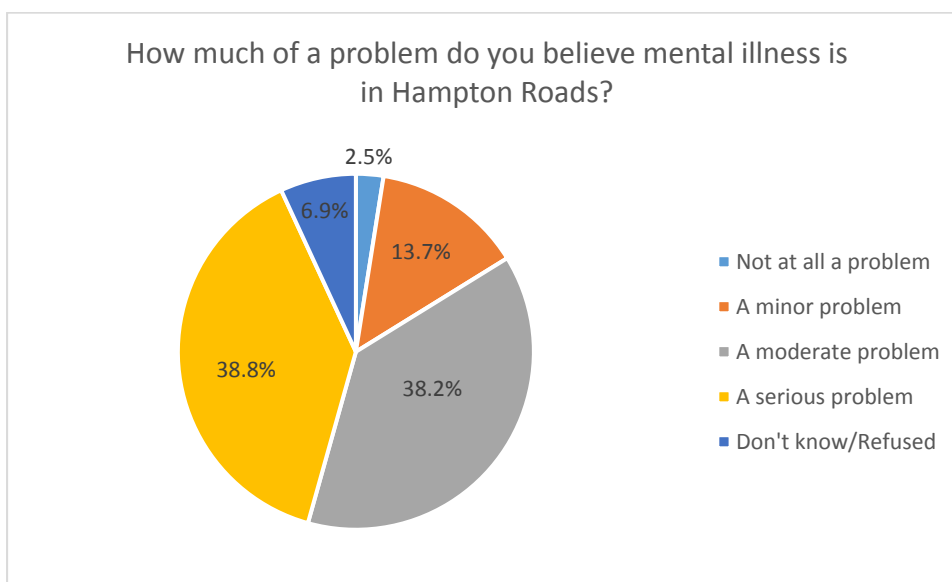
Homelessness and Mental Illness

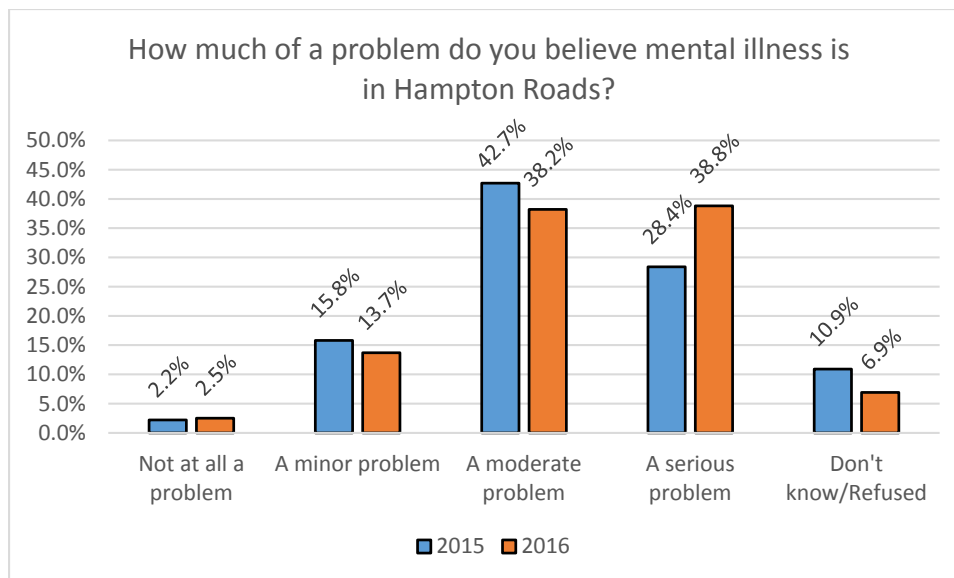
Respondents were asked how much of a problem they think homelessness and mental health are in Hampton Roads with the majority of respondents reporting they perceive homelessness and mental illness as problematic Hampton Roads. More than three-quarters of respondents (78.7%) said they

thought homelessness in Hampton Roads was either a moderate problem (42.8%) or a serious problem (35.9%). Another 15.9 percent thought that homelessness in Hampton Roads is a minor problem.



More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) also think that mental illness in Hampton Roads is either a moderate problem (38.2%) or a serious problem (38.8%). Another 13.7 percent reported that mental illness is a minor problem in Hampton Roads and only 2.5 percent reported that mental illness is not at all a problem in Hampton Roads. Those claiming that mental illness is a serious problem (38.8%) increased over 10 percent from last year (28.4%).





Overall, satisfaction with the local police is high among Hampton Roads residents. The percentage of respondents expressing satisfaction with the local police had decreased every year since 2012, but showed a small increase in 2016. Satisfaction with local police, satisfaction with how local police treat citizens, trust of local police, as well understanding why police act as they do is fairly high among Hampton Roads residents. However, satisfaction, trust and understanding are significantly higher among White respondents compared to Black/African-American respondents. While most Hampton Roads residents were not afraid of having their home broken into, they reported being slightly more fearful of having their home broken into while they are away. The majority of respondents also indicated that they believed both homelessness and mental illness were a moderate or serious problem in Hampton Roads.

All Life in Hampton Roads data summaries will be placed on the Social Science Research Center website as they are released (<http://www.odu.edu/al/centers/ssrc>). Follow-up questions about the 2016 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

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