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ABSTRACT

POLICE REFORMS AND CITIZEN COMPLAINTS:

Utilizing Citizen Complaint Data when Reexamining the State of American Policing

By

ISABELLA NUCCIO

May 2022

Committee Chair: Dr. Joshua Hinkle

Major Department: Criminal Justice and Criminology

Police violence in the United States has reignited calls for police reform in the past 10 to 15 years. Violent encounters captured on video have reinforced the claims that the current state of the American police needs to be reexamined, given how widespread reform efforts have been published and varied efforts to embrace reform have been implemented. Common reform themes have focused on police transparency, accountability, and training. Some research has examined citizen encounters or the role that community has in a community policing framework. However, citizen complaints have not been utilized or systematically examined as much as they could be. Part of the issue stems from the lack of data or quality of data that is available. This thesis examines citizen complaint data against officers in the New York City Police Department alongside a review of police reformist literature to highlight the gaps in prior research to discuss how reform efforts can benefit from the use of citizen complaint data.

POLICE REFORMS AND CITIZEN COMPLAINTS:

Utilizing Citizen Complaint Data when Reexamining the State of American Policing

BY

Isabella Nuccio

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Science of Criminal Justice
in the
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
of
Georgia State University

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

2022

ACCEPTANCE

This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Thesis Committee. It has been approved and accepted by all members of that committee, and it has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science of Criminal Justice in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies of Georgia State University.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The state and nature of policing has faced increasing criticism over the past 15 years, with various parties calling for different end goals for police departments. Reforming police departments, defunding police departments, and providing more funding to support the current model of police departments are all proposed ideas with vastly different outcomes that benefit different members of society. Given that the assumed purpose of police departments is to ensure citizen safety and provide support for a community, backlash against police departments, especially in recent years, highlights the growing problem that police departments are not working to support the communities where they are based. Among other factors, political agendas influence department policies and disciplinary action (or inaction) against police officers while structural barriers for some police departments make implementing reforms difficult.

Police reform literature has existed for decades but because of the new wave of protests calling for change, for example after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the state of American policing is ripe for reexamination. Literature has focused on police reform through mechanisms like more police training aimed at tactics like de-escalation, increased transparency with the community, and pushing for the adoption of a community policing model. However, we need to know more about the efforts of police departments to improve their relationships with the community. We also need to know if reforms have produced any real impacts or resulted in a "business as usual" situation. Any number of measures could be used to address these gaps in the literature. However, given that two goals of police reform are to improve community-police relations and increase transparency for the benefit of the community, a measure based on the community should be utilized, which not many studies have employed.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the state of policing by reviewing reformist literature and studies examining individual facets of police reform, alongside exploring complaints filed against officers to answer some of the questions above. Examining citizen complaints is important because it provides insight into police encounters that may otherwise go unsupervised and is a main way that citizens can provide feedback to their police departments. Further, having a record of complaints can help departments determine if an officer may be a "problem prone officer" (Terrill, Ingram, Somers, & Paoline III, 2018, p. 497) and provide transparency as to what kinds of decisions and disciplinary actions departments utilize (if any). Again, a central purpose of transparency should be to provide the community with information regarding the inner workings of a police department. Community support is essential if a police department wants to have legitimacy and cooperation, and by not involving a community- or citizen-based measure in examining the current state of policing, an important perspective is left out when complaints are not utilized and their results not made available to the public.

Further, changes in how citizens view their relationships with police departments calls for both a reexamination of the status of American policing and highlighting the impact that citizens can have on the police. It has become incredibly easy for the everyday citizen to record encounters with police, whether it be their own encounter or one that they witness. The proliferation of cell phones, which come equipped with cameras, has led to an accumulation of evidence that negative, or even violent, police encounters are not entirely rare circumstances (Brucato, 2015, p. 50). While noncriminal calls take up most of a police officer's time and often do not have violent endings (Harrell & Davis, 202), highlighting the interactions that are violent demonstrates how the system as a whole is faulty. While "one bad officer" may be the perpetuator of multiple incidents, it is still the policing system that could keep that officer on

duty. Multiple complaints filed against an officer can be one tool to find the “one bad apple.” However, without making those complaints public or having an effective review system of complaints, it may not be revealed whether the lack of accountability stems from a department not administering appropriate disciplinary action, contractual barriers like those formed with police unions, or a mixture of barriers. A fair and democratic society should not have to rely solely on citizens fighting for transparency and accountability with their own video evidence or complaints. Police departments should be willing and proactive in their transparency and accountability efforts and barriers should, at a minimum, be acknowledged to demonstrate that a lack of action assumed by the public to be intentional is but a result of barriers that a department faces.

The first part of this thesis will discuss existing literature for five facets of reform deemed important for this thesis. Specifically, literature from the past two decades that addresses the following topics will be reviewed: police transparency as a means of reform, police accountability as a means of reform, police training as reform, a general discussion of reforms (including topics such as their ability to endure over time), and the use of community input or citizen complaints to promote reform. Community input is a separate topic because relatively few researchers have framed community input as a mechanism to promote and support reforms. Again, these topics will be discussed through a reform lens because that has been the most vocalized strategy to change police departments, though strategies like defunding and abolishing police departments have been discussed more as of late.

The second part of this thesis will examine publicly available citizen complaint data for officers in the New York City Police Department. This city was chosen because of the availability of data on a public database due to recent legislation requiring that complaint

information be made public (Lo, 2020) and this city has been the epicenter for various reform strategies over the decades. Descriptive statistics from this data will be examined in Stata 17.0 and used to highlight the importance of utilizing this type of data, since it is not readily available for every department and not every department has comprehensive data. This will also highlight transparency and data collection issues that should be resolved if departments want to continue to tout transparency and accountability goals.

After a discussion of the results of the data, the key findings and limitations highlighted from previous literature will be used to recommend future action, research, and policy changes to take advantage of the shift in societal thinking of policing matters.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

With nearly 18,000 different police departments in the United States that have undergone waves of reforms over the past decades, it should be no surprise that research on policing has faced a variety of obstacles, setbacks, and mixed results depending on the question at hand and methodology used. But while research on policing has increased, there has also been a shift in focus towards crime-related matters, like prediction and management, rather than a focus on officers' behaviors, attitudes, or opinions regarding matters like reform (Wood, 2018). The high number of independent departments means there are 18,000 different policies for use of force, 18,000 different chiefs or sheriffs who have different views on reform efforts, and hundreds of thousands of officers employed. However, this also means that there is variability in the size, infrastructure, and demographic makeup of police departments, all which influence the ability for departments to implement and sustain reform efforts. Despite this, broad reform efforts can be discussed and suggested, as the underlying principles and goals are similar across jurisdictions.

This chapter will focus on how police reform efforts have been discussed over the past 15 years by highlighting suggestions that would ideally already be utilized. Further, gaps in prior research will be discussed in combination with how these research efforts could be benefitted from the use of community input or citizen complaints. Given how the past few years have exposed the continued failures of police departments – like the multiple cases of excessive uses of force that result in the deaths of persons of color, specifically Black men – and the support for reform efforts has reached a "tipping point" (White, Fradella, & Flippin, 2020, p. 450), the articles will also be used not just for review for this thesis but as a critique for American police and current police practices.

Police Transparency

There is no singular definition of what it means for a police department to be transparent or what "transparency," in a policing sense, means (Brucato, 2015). Police departments could have mission statements – which are traditionally the stated goals and values of a department – that mention transparency as a goal. However, this does not provide a guide as to what specific policies, actions, or behaviors of law enforcement citizens should be looking for to recognize as "transparency." To further muddy the waters, transparency does not have much research from the perspective of police officers, who may be required to act in a "transparent" manner if their department deems transparency as a necessity (Chanin & Espinosa, 2016). A lack of a clear definition for transparency can affect transparency-related research since researchers may have to create their own definition and can compromise the generalizability of results. Despite this, for the purposes of this thesis, transparency can be defined as practices meant to achieve accountability (Brucato, 2015; Chanin & Espinosa, 2016) and disclosing information and policies that may not otherwise be known to those outside of the institution to build trust with the community (Ingrams, 2017).

Transparency can be one sign of a "healthy democratic governance" (Chanin & Espinosa, 2016, p. 499) so having a clear conceptualization is key for police, society, and researchers to gauge if a department is meeting their transparency goals. Partaking in an open data initiative is a way for police departments to not only be transparent but also accountable (Wood, 2018). Providing citizens easy access to updated data like crime statistics and disciplinary citations is a simple way of using data police already gather to reinforce transparency. Citizens having access to data gives them an easy way to participate with departments (Wood, 2018) in that they are aware of what is happening in their community, which includes police departments. While data

may portray “bad” information like a high crime rate or an officer who has a long record of citations, having access to data in general should be viewed in a framework of being a public good (Wood, 2018). Considering that the mission statements of many police departments refer to serving their community, allowing citizens free access to a public good, in this case data, should be a priority that would strengthen community bonds and demonstrate a willingness to be transparent. If a department is struggling with data management or dissemination to the community, one possible option could be to partner with local universities or hire civilians to assist in optimizing the data that departments already have.

Another transparency-related reform effort that has been adopted across the United States is the use of body-worn cameras, which have outlined policies of use that most often include recording interactions with the public. While a full discussion of the quality of body-worn camera policies is outside the scope of this literature review, a major selling point for body-worn cameras is that they provide a first-person perspective of an officer’s daily interactions with the public. But just because a police department has body-worn cameras, it does not mean that access to this data is readily available, despite how new data is being generated daily. Additionally, the complexities of data storage, discussions on how long certain footage should be kept for, and the cost of upkeep of both body-worn cameras and the data management sites leads to more difficulties for departments implementing or maintaining body-worn cameras. This, in turn, can be an inadvertent barrier for transparency as departments have to handle the logistics of these tools. Further, when outside parties request footage, material linked to cases that are still being investigated can be blocked from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests under the Law Enforcement Exemption (Wenner, 2016). If a department continually denies FOIA requests under this broadly defined exemption, it will conflict with the idea of transparency and

unintentionally reinforce the idea that a police department could be trying to hide something, when really a department needs time to conduct an investigation or navigate the difficulties of maintaining a high volume of data.

A police department trying to pick-and-choose when to be transparent may also backfire because it has become easier for citizens to "watch" police (Brucato, 2015). It has been normalized for a government to surveil its citizens largely due to the authority and access to surveillance technology that governments have (Brucato, 2015). But thanks to the accessibility of cell phones and their cameras, citizens can now "watch back." This means that if police want to intentionally hide or postpone publishing an event, like an instance of excessive use of force, there is a high likelihood that a citizen has witnessed the event and digitally captured it. Not only would a citizen video of an incident provide evidence that a police officer was abusing their power, but that the police department was also trying to hide the evidence by restricting access to information like body-worn camera footage (Morton, 2018). Transparency should be proactively offered by a department as a means of servicing its community, not because the community is having to try and gather data on their own to fill in gaps left by departments (Wood, 2018).

Data, in general, has been long requested from police departments by researchers and federal agencies. On a national level, police departments submit mostly crime-related statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) each year. While this almost century-old data collection is extremely useful for researchers, a variety of limitations exist, ones that should be tackled by now if the upmost quality of data, as a means of transparency, is to be collected. Submitting information is voluntary and here is no requirement to submit data to the UCR just as there is no consequences for submitting only partial information (Wood, 2018). There is, however, an incentive for departments in that providing the FBI with data can make

departments eligible for grant funding. With the reputation of being a national database and the notoriety of being backed by the federal government, the UCR has been a widely used database for understanding and evaluating crime across the country (Wood, 2018) and the quality of data should live up to expectations. Having over 18,000 jurisdictions also means that the "same" crime gets defined in several ways which can affect reporting. An example is the definition of rape changing, which impacted data collection for the UCR and resulted in some cities reporting a total of 0 rapes for the year. While the FBI has prompted police departments to switch reporting under the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) model to try and combat some of these difficulties, as NIBRS collects more details about a criminal event and would fill holes from previous reporting methods, the switch has not been uniform across the country and will continue to leave pockets of information missing (Fisher, 2017). While the grant-funding incentive for departments is geared towards providing data in general, it is not geared towards providing consistent data across departments. At a minimum, different definitions and how a crime is reported can affect the integrity of data (Wood, 2018). Data collection agencies should provide support for departments, whether it be temporary staff when data needs to be submitted or training seminars on how departments can submit consistent information, to help increase the quality of data submitted.

As mentioned earlier in this section, police data typically leans towards information on crime or crime-related endeavors, not on police officers. Part of the reason could be that police departments are unable to be transparent, whether it be because of technological limitations, lack of staff to handle data collection and dissemination, union contracts that limit what information can be published, or policies that do not support transparency regarding police actions. With the variability of police departments and multi-level jurisdictions, data that is available can include

vague crime categories, varied definitions for similar police activities, and no identifying features of officers, whether it be names or unique identification numbers, which can make research focused on comparison or establishing patterns difficult (Wood, 2018). These complications are further exacerbated by the issue that, like transparency, there is no clear definition for "use of force" for data collection (Wood, 2018). If using one of the original definitions from the 1950s, use of force can be defined as "physical acts [by police] that were violent, excessive, and/or deadly" (Klahm IV, Frank, & Liederbach, 2014, p. 559). The definition has since expanded to include intentional threats and attempts at physical force and some definitions have gone so far to include any type of physical coercion outside of handcuffing (Klahm IV et al., 2014).

Another mechanism of transparency that has been advocated for is public databases regarding individual officer complaints and citations. As a representative of a police department, the actions of an individual officer reflects the department as a whole. Regarding transparency, police departments already keep a record of citations and grievances filed against officers. It should be noted that this push for a public database of complaints was prompted after the 1991 beating of Rodney King or a response to an instance of excessive use of force (Morton, 2018). By proactively making complaint data available, police departments can demonstrate that they want to reinforce the goal of transparency. Outside of previously mentioned barriers like data storage limitations, union contracts that regulate what data can be made public, or lack of staff to monitor and publish data, the quality of published information must also be fruitful for research and discussion.

Transparency opens the door for the community to monitor and gauge what a police department is doing and how well it is doing its job. Without any kind of transparency mechanism, whether it be an open data source or a department's willingness to release requested

data, a community will have to create their own transparency mechanisms. This can include recording officer interactions with citizens (Brucato, 2015) or creating their own databases, like *The Guardian*'s database of individuals killed by police officers in the United States (Morton, 2018). It is also important for police departments to demonstrate acts of transparency because it is the one way in which the community can be a watchdog for misconduct, abuse of power, or just to keep updated. Data sharing and transparency with the community can also be a two-way avenue. Civilian complaints are a way for the community to air their grievances, seek justice for potential negative encounters, or learn from review that an officer was acting according to department policy. Police departments that are not receptive to civilian complaints, or feedback in general from the community, can demonstrate that police departments are not willing to engage with their community. This can cast doubts as to whether a police department wants to be genuine in transparency efforts.

Police Accountability

As with transparency, there is not a unanimous definition for "accountability" and what it means for a police department to be held accountable. Accountability can be defined, for the purposes of this thesis, as policies designed to ensure investigation into officer misconduct, that proven incidents will be appropriately disciplined, and policies will outline proactive measures to safeguard against officer misconduct (Walker, 2012). One understanding about accountability is clear: calls for accountability (and transparency) have been increasing while police departments have been accumulating newer, deadly technology that has expanded their continuum of force (Brucato, 2015). For example, as more police departments employ body-worn cameras, which can increase the rate of transparency into daily police activities, the rate of accountability must

also rise when transgressions are discovered. Accountability and transparency are two sides of the same coin, not independent concepts that police departments can choose between.

Accountability is important because when we feel wronged, we seek justice. Police departments are not isolated institutions. Police departments are a part of a larger system in the United States that impacts the community (White et al., 2020), therefore it is reasonable for the public to want and have a say in seeking accountability from police, as is the same with other institutions that interact with communities. It is especially important for police departments to be accountable for their actions because one major goal of enacting new reforms is to increase accountability. Considering that there has been a "persistent undercurrent of racial injustice in United States policing" (White et al., 2020, p. 408) and that the system of policing has traditionally protected officers from sanctions and prosecution (Hathaway, 2019), it must be questioned why police departments are lacking effective accountability measures and what can be done to improve it. Having an outline of disciplinary procedures is not enough. The Minneapolis Police Department is touted as having a "sophisticated policy for disciplinary procedures for more than eight years" (Osgood, 2021, p. 110), yet Derek Chauvin had 18 complaints on his record over his 19-year career and only two complaints resulted in disciplinary action (White et al., 2020). Despite the supposed "sophisticated policy" he was employed under, Chauvin's actions still led to the death of George Floyd. While this is only one example of one officer among hundreds of thousands employed across the country, the policies that these officers work under are only as effective as the enforcement strategies behind them. Calling implicit bias training sessions "accountability," when these types of trainings have had mixed results regarding their effectiveness (Osgood, 2021), and moving on from a matter is not enough to target deeper flaws that lead to barriers for accountability.

The lack of accountability for the actions of individual officers and their departments has been continually highlighted over the past few years. In 2015, there were no convictions for deaths during on-duty encounters, despite 1,146 civilians being killed by law enforcement (Hathaway, 2019). While officers are protected from prosecution by connections to prosecutors or under qualified immunity, it is highly unlikely that all 1,146 deaths after review were deemed justifiable or without fault. Further, from 2007 to 2017, nearly every officer (over 99%) involved in an on-duty killing was not charged for the death of a civilian (Hathaway, 2019). Again, while investigations may find that the officer(s) involved in the incident were acting according to policy, it is highly unlikely that every death at the hands of law enforcement over a ten-year period was justifiable. Even if justification is given, like supposed involvement in a violent crime, 69% of Black people killed by law enforcement in 2014 were not involved in a violent crime nor did they possess a weapon (Hathaway, 2019). This likely means that many encounters that ended in deaths could have been deescalated and individuals could have been subdued with nonlethal force. In addition to issues around on-duty deaths, the lack of accountability is reinforced with the continued abuse of force directed towards persons of color, especially Black members of our community. The use of force rate against Black individuals is 3.6 times higher than the use of force rate against their White counterparts (Hathaway, 2019). While police departments are being given newer and deadlier tools to assist with enforcement, handling abuses of force has not kept up at the same rate (White et al., 2020).

Regarding disciplinary practices, the current models seen across the country act as barriers to accountability or are ineffective in combating abuses in use of force (Osgood, 2021). It is possible that most of the on-duty civilian deaths cited before were found to be justifiable or when examining civilian complaint data that not all complaints were sustained or established a

pattern of bad behavior. However, the continued cycle of under-investigated or under-prosecuted cases of police misconduct reflects a wider, institutionalized kind of failure (Hathaway, 2019). One barrier commonly cited is the power of unions in blocking investigations or creating strong contracts that make firing a police officer difficult for managers (Kraftchick, 2021). Agreements can allow police officers being investigated to examine evidence being used against them, having to have the investigations be conducted in a certain time frame or hinging strongly on protections offered under qualified immunity (Kraftchick, 2021). Unions can also influence macrolevel changes with the ability to sway public and political influence or use contract obligations to block policy changes (White et al., 2020). The narrow focus on procedural rights that unions can emphasize can inadvertently lead to assumptions that unions want to hinder accountability rather than provide officers with support.

Another barrier to accountability is the relationship that police departments have with local prosecutors. Law enforcement are often seen as workers for the state and prosecutors represent the state in trial, meaning both parties work together daily (Hathaway, 2019) and have a mutually beneficial relationship. An example of the benefit of knowing the local prosecutor is seen in the case of the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, where two district attorneys determined that there were no grounds for arrest before having to recuse themselves because of connections in the case (King, 2020). Footage of the incident was available from the time of the murder but, as with body-worn cameras, just because the footage exists does not guarantee prompt action and accountability (Morton, 2018). And akin to body-worn camera footage, accountability can only start when footage is released (Morton, 2018) or reviewed by an authority figure. If a police officer is found to be breaking the law, whether it be at the local or federal level, the local prosecutor is still required to initiate action (Hathaway, 2019).

Ineffective management and leadership can also hinder accountability, as chiefs and sheriffs can set the tone in their department regarding reform efforts (White et al., 2020). To a certain degree, alongside support from other local officials, police chiefs and upper management shape policies and the types of innovations they want to try and incorporate into their departments (White et al., 2020). And while having clearly outlined policies is one of the first steps towards accountability and avoiding misconduct, there also needs to be enforcement behind policies. A clear understanding of the disciplinary process should be built into policies, otherwise risk of violations may increase when police officers realize that there is little or no consequences for misconduct (White et al., 2020). Another leadership barrier to accountability that has been seen in recent years is reform-supportive police chiefs resigning or being fired from their positions in response to political strife (White et al., 2020). As leaders, police chiefs are accountable for the actions of their departments. While it can be a positive sign that those responsible for transgressions are held liable, constantly changing leadership can create instability with policies and procedures. Any mechanism for accountability should not be used as a hasty reaction to a crisis (White et al., 2020).

For a police department to be accountable, more needs to be done than just acknowledging a complaint or putting an officer in a racial bias or implicit bias training class and believing that the initial problem is solved. When recalling that the origins of police departments were slave patrols hunting runaway slaves (Hathaway, 2019), accountability begins with acknowledging harms done towards communities, especially communities of color, over past and current generations (White et al., 2020). Continued abuses by law enforcement have created a mistrust for law enforcement that extends over multiple generations (White et al., 2020). Acknowledging past harms, even if done by a “few bad apples,” demonstrates that police

departments are willing to be held accountable for their actions and open to learning new ways to avoid future complaints and misconduct. Acknowledgement of past harms can also help strengthen law enforcement legitimacy in the eyes of the community since a part of policing does hinge upon collaboration with the community (White et al., 2020). Police legitimacy can be defined as citizen compliance given to police because of assumed authority granted by police's status in society as a system of enforcement (Tyler, 2004). Legitimacy is a two-way street, however, and police departments must also view and treat the communities that they work with respectfully if the same views of legitimacy are to be reflected (White et al., 2020).

Evidence-based practices (EPB) are considered the gold standard of building policies and accountability can be influenced by these practices. Framing police departments as learning organizations can normalize the trial-and-error of seeking out best practices for a specific department, proactively adapting to community needs, and engaging in self-examination to identify flaws or weak points (White et al., 2020). EBPs can help develop effective strategies for police departments to integrate or change current models, along with helping to establish sound methodological standards for future research (Koziarski & Huey, 2021). Employing EBPs can also help identify policies or programs that are not effective (Koziarski & Huey, 2021), which can help accountability efforts by assisting police departments with both identifying weak policies and crafting new, effective replacements.

Police Training

Given that police officers go through hundreds and sometimes thousands of hours of training and retraining once hired, the focus of this section will be how training coincides with

the police subculture and how training can impact community relations. Because every officer must go through training, requiring training or classes as a type of disciplinary action is common (Dulin & Dulin, 2020). Classes offered can focus on a variety of topics like weapons handling (White et al., 2020) or understanding how to interact with persons going through a mental health crisis. In terms of weapons handling, training attitudes or instructor bias can emphasize a fear-mongering perspective of officer safety that pressures officers into thinking that any encounter can turn deadly (Stoughton, 2015), thus justifying the use of deadly force over less deadly tactics. With the multiple waves of reform that police departments have experienced over the past decades, training and classes have accompanied these changes. If police are continually subjected to training classes, like ones that highlight de-escalation tactics, why is there still an engrained mentality of "shoot first, think later" (Hathaway, 2019, p. 70) during encounters with the public?

One possible answer could be the integration of police training with the police subculture. Unfortunately, the intersection of police training and subculture has not been thoroughly researched (Dulin & Dulin, 2020) but could shed light on why reforms have had difficulty withstanding time. A subculture forms in a subgroup of a larger population due to similar experiences, views, and/or ideals and is not unique to police departments. The police subculture is a type of mentality that is traditionally associated with officers being resistant to change, idealizing individual officer autonomy, and creating strong loyalties that can help hide corruption (Dulin & Dulin, 2020). A mentality that is resistant to change makes implementing new policies difficult, as reforms can clash with an officer's perception of how their job should be done or what a "typical" police officer is supposed to be. If an officer patrols a community with a mentality aimed at fighting violent crime and violent offenders, whether it be because of

personal expectations of their job or influence from the policing system on how one should conduct themselves, interactions with the public may escalate to violence quicker and end deadlier. Interacting with the public is a daily and crucial factor of a police officer's job (Vila, James, & James, 2018) and should be conducted with a mentality that, at a minimum, expresses a willingness to engage and serve. Further, if a reform effort involves engaging with community members or deploying de-escalation tactics, those who have law-and-order mentalities could resist these kinds of reforms. Police departments can require their officers to attend classes that covers a diverse set of topics like implicit bias training, de-escalation tactics, or how to engage with certain members of the community, like the unhoused (White et al., 2020), but if members of the department are a part of a subculture that is not conducive to these ideals, the training will be unlikely to hold. Just as there is little research on training and the police subculture, there is also little empirical research on comparing an officer's training to their performance and interactions with the public (Vila et al., 2018).

While research on the topic of training and subculture is limited, some studies have hypothesized that the singular police subculture is dividing into multiple subcultures, one of which is more positive towards community engagement (Dulin & Dulin, 2020). Officers who enter the workforce with high levels of self-efficacy and are motivated to learn were more likely to express that same positive motivation in infield training (Dulin & Dulin, 2020). While there is the possible emergence of this new, more positive subculture, ones that reflect the stereotypical subculture (or the "enforcement commandos" (Dulin & Dulin, 2020, p. 344)) still exist and can continue to cause problems. Officers who supported traditional models and values of policing were found to be more likely to use coercive investigation tactics against civilians (Dulin & Dulin, 2020). Again, an officer can attend training seminars each year but if there is not a

mentality in place to support the theories being taught or recognizing that all human life has value (Vitale, 2017), there may be little practice of any theory reflected in the field.

Police officers engage with members of the public daily and are often unsupervised (Vila et al., 2018). More empirical research should be directed at microlevel officer behaviors rather than only focusing on macrolevel department policies and enforcement (Vila et al., 2018) to understand how training, both in the academy and in the field, and the subculture integrate into daily police practices and behaviors. While a subculture can be hard to change, even if only one among a few in a workplace hold a more negative mentality, there are some measures a department can take that can chip away a subculture's influence. When hiring, departments already screen out candidates with negative qualities but can also screen in candidates with positive qualities like good judgement, empathy, patience, and creativity (White et al., 2020). These kinds of qualities are more conducive to the goals of reform and can assist in implementation and compliance of new innovations, as officers with these traits would ideally be more supportive of reforms and their community. Creating policies that clearly outline what kinds of behaviors are or are not allowed can also establish a foundation for expectations (White et al., 2020) and guide officers in their decision making for the varying kinds of encounters they will face. Policies of police departments are commonly posted online for the public to view so creating clear policies can also increase transparency and accountability with the public.

Another measure police departments can employ that could benefit accountability and potentially combat negative subcultures is the use of early intervention systems (EIS). EISs are software programs that creates a problem-oriented response to misconduct by flagging officers when they engage in questionable behaviors (Walker, 2012). While research has produced mixed reviews on their usability and ability to consistently produce results (White et al., 2020), there is

merit in their capacity to notify supervisors of potentially problematic behavior. EISs should be used in conjunction with other disciplinary systems, like civilian complaints, to keep a record of officers who may not be complying with department policies or mission statements.

A General Discussion of Police Reforms

The beginning of this chapter provided a more focused look at specific characteristics of police reforms, specifically ones that would integrate well with a more community-focused narrative (or ones that were originally promoted as beneficial to community-policing relations). This section encompasses a more general discussion of reforms to understand the broader scope of modern reform efforts and their barriers because we have reached a "tipping point" (White et al., 2020, p. 450) in calls for reform. Reform can also encompass a variety of mechanisms, meaning that police departments utilize a variety of tools to accomplish multiple goals, which can both help encourage reform efforts and complicate examining the effects of said tools. It should be noted again that implementing any kind of reform requires time, money, and integration into the current structure of policing and that some departments may not have the budget, staff, or structural capacity to effectively implement a reform effort without external funding and assistance.

Some of the most commonly used reform programs, like hot spots policing or community-oriented policing, were originally enforced by a top-down model or by chiefs and upper management creating a bulk of policies that the rank-and-file must follow (Bayley, 2008). While this chapter has highlighted the need for upper management to create and enforce policies for accountability or community engagement measures, the pivotal role that rank-and-file police

officers have in the community in terms of their daily engagement has also been discussed. Reform ideas emanating from line officers, whether those ideas are used to shape policy or not, should be encouraged because of the amount of experience they have with patrolling and engaging with the community (Bayley, 2008) and because allowing rank-and-file officers to participate in policy making could increase their buy-in to new policies (Bayley, 2008). Policies that departments make should also not follow a "one size fits all" model (Koziarski & Huey, 2021, p. 271) or directly copy policies of other departments because of the variability of communities and structures of departments across the country.

Because some policies are reactionary (Koziarski & Huey, 2021), they may not have mechanisms built in to help them endure or become institutionalized. Institutionalizing policies or practices is defined as "establish[ing] as normal or mak[ing] something a customary and accepted part of the organization" (Walker, 2012, p. 58). As much as a police department wants to be viewed as accountable or wants to participate in community-oriented policing, if there are no mechanisms in place to help a department continue in certain practices, especially after instances like a reform-supportive chief leaving (Walker, 2012), then a reform will not last. For example, a police innovation that was implemented in the 1970s was called Team Policing, which tried to engage police departments with the community, but failed to reconceptualize police in a way that would connect community values with the then-current model of policing (Walker, 2012). Team Policing was a precursor for community-oriented policing (Walker, 2012), which has lasted longer than Team Policing, possibly because it requires police departments to view themselves as more than a law enforcement organization.

In general, little attention is paid to how reforms can be made to endure or become institutionalized into department policies and early reforms collapsed because they lacked an

institutional mechanism (Walker, 2012). More attention is paid to the results of reforms and innovations, like lowered crime rates or increased community satisfaction, rather than any long-term goal. If an innovation does not meet short-term goals, it risks being abandoned. One may argue that it could be worse for an innovation to meet short-term goals than fail, as it may cause practitioners to assume an innovation could last in the long-term. Even reforms that have been commonly implemented, like problem-oriented policing, could have difficulty being sustained in some departments because they lack mechanisms to promote their longevity (Bayley, 2008). Research relating to reforms should include assessing the sustainability of a reform (Walker, 2012) and ways to improve the sustainability of a reform.

Early movements for police reforms stem from reports like the 1967 President's Commission Report (Bayley, 2008) yet as of 2022, the public is still advocating for police reform. Whether relating to issues of reform endurance or adaptability to specific communities and departments, two police reforms that are not new but have garnered new interest are the defund the police and abolish the police movements. While highly political in nature and require a broad restructuring of multiple facets of society, both movements shift the focus of law enforcement towards nonmilitarized and community-based groups, meaning that the local community has a huge impact on what would be "policing." Because of the large focus on community, a summary discussion of these topics is relevant to this thesis. Starting with defunding the police, there have been different operationalizations and definitions of what "defund" means (Koziarski & Huey, 2021). Defunding can relate to complete abolition but can also refer to "substantial reform" like completely dismantling and rebuilding police departments or diverting portions of a police department's budget towards preventative groups like social workers or programs that employ a public health approach (Koziarski & Huey, 2021).

Over the decades, the role of police departments has shifted from only law enforcement to encompass more welfare and social causes. Police may view themselves as protecting their communities from dangerous offenders but for most officers, felony arrests are not as common as the media leads the public to believe and most officers do not fire their weapon in their entire career (Vitale, 2017). Because of the deinstitutionalization of mental health facilities in the United States, police departments have become the de facto answer to mental health crises. One goal and operationalization of defunding the police would move part of their budget to social workers or organizations that can help assist with relevant calls. Police officers would not be fully separated from calls regarding persons having a mental health crisis (Koziarski & Huey, 2021), as the original call may not reveal this information, but it could decrease a portion of calls to which the police respond. Additionally, crisis intervention teams and programs that partner social workers with police departments already exist and have started the process of making police officers a support mechanism for mental health calls rather than the only mechanism (Koziarski & Huey, 2021). Further limiting the role of police departments in mental health or other calls for service relating to social issues while empowering social workers and other supportive programs can continue the process of narrowing the scope of the police role and, in turn, supporting cuts to their budget.

An important sector of the defund the police movement is targeting the area of a department's budget that is used to buy more militarized weapons. Most police tools and tactics relate to law enforcement, not assistance, and communities of color often bear the brunt of invasive policing with said tools and tactics (Vitale, 2017). Visuals of a militarized police department sends a message that the community is dangerous and should be feared (Vitale, 2017), even if crime statistics say otherwise. Further, having deadlier weapons available

increases the risk that those weapons will be used (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018) and creates a negative public reaction (White et al., 2020) because of the implication of danger and violence. While most departments can justify needing guns or Tasers, it is harder to understand the overabundant need for tanks and "other equipment of war" (White et al., 2020, p. 423).

Alongside the life-and-death consequences of the presence of deadly weapons, there is a literal cost alongside the social one (White et al., 2020). For police departments that are not a part of the 1033 program that allows law enforcement agencies to requisition free excess equipment from the Department of Defense, the funds used to buy military-grade weapons could benefit the community if redirected away from police departments. Once more, most officers do not fire their gun during their career, let alone utilize tanks or riot gear, but the fear of potential violence and the influence of military contractors catering to local police departments makes convincing police to reduce their arsenal difficult (Vitale, 2017). A focus on reducing the budget for weapons is emphasized because it is a legitimate area to defund, alongside the goal of reducing police militarization. However, some departments that have been told to reduce their budgets have instead decided to decrease officer wages (Koziarski & Huey, 2021). While officer wages do make up a significant portion of a police department's budget (Hayes, 2020), wages do not encompass a department's entire budget and the proportion of officer wages to total budget vary across departments. Pulling funds from officer wages can feel like a political move meant to hold communities hostage, as reducing wages can threaten police engagement or response time. Departments ignoring efforts to reduce their weapons budget also overlook the potential benefits of improving community relations by acknowledging that there is not a need for an overly militarized police force.

In addition to defunding the police as a possible means of promoting reform, there is also the movement to abolish the current institution of policing. The abolition movement is not new, but the current model is an adaption of the prison abolition movement (McDowell, & Fernandez, 2018). A basis for police abolition is to challenge its right to exist as an institution (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018), which ties in with current efforts to increase police legitimacy. Without legitimacy, it is called into question whether police departments have a right to exist or exert as much influence over communities as they do. Where some see abuses coming from a few "bad apples," others see the root of problems as an "institutional 'rotten barrel' problem'" (Hathaway, 2019, p. 95). Police abolition also aims to challenge other harms in society, like the capitalistic structure of the United States that is supported by institutionalized racism (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Further, abolition is argued as the only answer because reform efforts have been criticized as a way to reconcile differences that leave the original policing system in place rather than addressing and changing the root causes of failures in the system (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). The power structure of police versus the community stays in place with reform (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018), as reform requires a policing system to change. Reform efforts have also been criticized as a means to give police departments more funding (Vitale, 2017) because there is an assumption that reform efforts will work. Since many reform efforts have a community aspect, whether it be improving relations or improving aspects of the community, funding going to police departments and not directly to the community is not questioned.

Some goals of the police abolition movement extend beyond dismantling police departments. In place of police departments would be strengthened social support and welfare networks and community organizations aimed at harm reduction or intervention, as a root of

many types of crime relate to social issues. A main mechanism for police abolition is disempowerment of police departments, like questioning police legitimacy or questioning laws that give police certain powers, and as the police become disempowered, efforts to strengthen the community and provide them with alternatives to the police strengthen (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). Instead of police departments leaving behind a void, there would be various mechanisms in place that would target specific community needs. Fear of crime intensified by police departments, media, and the government challenge abolition efforts as communities are left to struggle between short-term harm reduction/crime fighting efforts and long-term abolition goals (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018). But because it appears that the ideals of police abolition have in place mechanisms for longevity, police departments must also focus on longevity if they want to have public support for reform efforts.

Whether the public in the United States could embrace defunding or abolishing the police, the movements require strengthening communities and embracing their role in reducing harms in their area. These movements center around communities having a legitimate outlet to be proactive regarding their concerns and have an active role, whereas the current police model can make it difficult for citizens to engage. And, just like any police reform, the defund and abolition movements have their own set of logistical questions and areas of concern, like the ability to investigate or protect against certain crimes, like violent crime. In general, impeded access to citizen complaint forms or a mentality of "us vs. them" are ways in which police departments, whether intentionally or inadvertently due to the influence of political will or structural impediments from a decentralized policing institution, distance themselves from the communities they serve. Because reform efforts and advocacy have only grown over the decades, with what some would argue is short-lasting results, focusing instead on the legitimacy

of the policing institution has started to become more popular as a response to tackling institutionalized flaws in policing.

Use of Community Input and Citizen Complaints

Previous sections have explained the importance of community engagement with police departments and reforms. Police legitimacy stems from public opinion because police need community collaboration for certain investigations. When the community and public are not involved with police matters, faith in police departments decreases as does perceptions of transparency and accountability. While some police departments may want to view themselves as insular to the community they serve, public interest in police departments and reform have grown. Ayers, Althouse, Poliak, Leas, Nobles, Dredze, and Smith (2020) sought to quantify public interest, operationalized through total number of internet searches and breaking down searches and numbers by state, in police reform following political protests by examining internet searches for specific reforms or reform mechanisms. The purpose was to gauge community interest and, in turn, identify public needs in a public health framework (Ayers et al., 2020). Viewing police activity and consequences in a public health mindset is important considering that the American Public Health Association has called police violence a public health crisis (Ayers et al., 2020). Forty-one days after the murder of George Floyd, internet searches relating to reform were at their highest and, even at the end of the authors' examination period, searches relating to reform were still higher than before the before-protest period (Ayers et al., 2020). Reform, whether it involves changed policies or is advocating for police abolition, is a political fare that, at least in part, requires a level of approval from the public if police departments want to have support. Because of the rising criticism directed towards police

departments, research has not directed attention towards public interest, support, or critiques towards different reform efforts. As support for reform grows, the opinions of the public should be measured to gauge their support levels or satisfaction with the changes being implemented.

A common way for the public to provide feedback to police departments is through filing complaints. Because most patrol officers are alone on-duty (Vila et al., 2018), receiving feedback about their encounters with the public is important for catching officers who may be breaking department policies or laws. Complaints against use of force incidents are serious matters but previous research has not combined use of force data with citizen complaint data (Terrill et al., 2018). Using both data sources in research would allow a researcher to examine the relationship between use of force complaints and citizen complaints, along with looking at types of use of force complaints and the volume of complaints against an officer (Terrill et al., 2018). When regarding the disparity of increased use of force used against persons of color, examination of citizen complaint data found that nonwhite complainants were more likely to file a complaint about improper use of force (Hollis & Jennings, 2017). Examining these two data sources in conjunction with each other can provide more context to an encounter. For example, incidents with no or minor injuries correlated with officers who receive higher amounts of complaints (Terrill et al., 2018). This could mean that an officer's actions may not be aggressive enough to trigger a department use of force claim or review but is enough for a citizen to file a complaint. A complaint on record can then call into review an officer's actions and behaviors.

However, just because a complaint is filed does not guarantee immediate or substantive action from a department. Many departments review complaints internally, creating a mentality from the public that the police department is examining the police department, and creates doubt that a complaint will be reviewed and taken seriously. Common aspects of a complaint that are

reviewed are the encounter's outcome, whether applicable laws or policies were followed, and the totality of circumstances around the encounter (Vila et al., 2018). However, totality of the circumstances may only encompass the split-second decisions that the officer made (White et al., 2020) and ignore contextual information like previous officer decisions and if any actions made reflected a "protection of life" (White et al., 2018, p. 411). In some situations, officers are not given the luxury of time to consider all possible outcomes but review of those decisions after-the-fact should include past circumstances that could have impacted that present encounter. Failing to include all available information in an investigation may lead to a failure to reprimand a problem officer or prevent a future incident. Research has continually found that a small number of officers are responsible for a large portion of complaints (Terrill et al., 2018). If citizen complaints are not reviewed or given serious attention, officers who continually violate policies and rights will cause more harm to the community, both physically and to their faith in the police department.

A department's review method, whether it be internal or through a civilian review board, also has an impact on whether a complaint will be sustained (Terrill et al., 2018), with internal reviews more likely to conclude that a complaint is not sustained. As stated, a small portion of officers are responsible for most complaints, and internal affairs should be proactive in their reviews of complaints (White et al., 2020). One of the first steps of accountability is to first find the officers causing problems. Even if an investigation cannot garner a clear conclusion, a complaint should not be entirely disregarded. Combining citizen complaints with software like early intervention systems can help supervisors track complaints against officers (White et al., 2020) and potentially curb the effect of the subset of officers causing the majority of complaints.

The lack of action seen from reviews by internal affairs has prompted the use of citizen review boards (CRBs) or citizen advisory councils (CACs) to review officer complaints. The President's Taskforce on 21st Century policing has encouraged the use of CACs, both for community engagement, reviewing complaints, and assisting in revising department policies (Nix, Wolfe, & Tregle, 2018). Having a review system that is outside of the department being reviewed can help increase transparency, accountability, and legitimacy for a department. Further, having the review system be comprised of members of the community can help increase relations with the community and satisfaction that their complaints are being taken seriously. However, in order for civilian review boards to have an impact with their decision making, they must be granted powers like the ability to subpoena witnesses. Otherwise, all a civilian review board would have the power to do is review a case with no power to investigate complaints. Once more, the success of police departments hinges partly on acceptance and consent of the community (Nix et al., 2018).

The use of CRBs could also benefit more than just the community because when complaints are sustained and justice is delivered, police officers in the department can benefit from the organizational justice they are witnessing (Nix et al., 2018). Officers who perceive their workplace as fair, though organizational justice, also support policies that restrict the use of force and support policies that encourage community policing (Nix et al., 2018). Alongside perceived justice is perceived legitimacy, where officers who have higher self-legitimacy are more likely to follow department policies and have an overall more positive workplace attitude (Nix et al., 2018), which can also be a mechanism to combat the traditional police subculture. Police departments should encourage public oversight, just as hospitals have directors who come from outside the community (Vitale, 2017). If police departments want to push blame for abuses of

force on a “few bad apples,” they should encourage review from an outside review board to demonstrate that transparency and community engagement are values that are actively sought after.

As stated in this section, the use of citizen complaint data is often used in isolation to use of force complaints or in research regarding reforms. After focusing on specific aspects and goals of reform, areas of weakness have been highlighted in relation to how some reform aspects are not fully engaging with the community or could benefit from community engagement. By emphasizing the role of community in reform efforts, the use of citizen-related data, like complaints, can become a normalized data source. Therefore, how has the state of policing changed as calls for reform have intensified? Can citizen complaints be used to gauge community-police relations or provide researchers with data that can be used alongside reformist literature? These are the broad questions this thesis will address.

Chapter 3 – Methods

Citizen complaint data for the New York City Police Department (NYPD) was accessed via the NYPD Misconduct Complaint Database that is hosted by the ACLU of New York. Complaints being examined were reviewed by the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) due to their complaint type, called FADO type, and the results of their investigation are submitted to the New York Police Department. The New York Police Department was chosen because of its data availability, the department size which would generate enough complaints for analysis, and as a large department, this city has a vested interest in reform. Data will be examined in Stata 17.0 to gather descriptive statistics from January 2007 to December 2020. The examined years were first chosen because complaints against officers in the Chicago Police Department were going to be utilized in this thesis and had complaints starting in 2007 but, due to data quality issues that will be discussed later, that city had to be dropped from review. However, starting the sampling in 2007 also provides a robust sample to be analyzed and coincides with the increased discussions regarding police reform. 116,216 total complaints were submitted to the CCRB during the examination period.

Descriptive statistics, such as the frequency and means of variables, will be analyzed to see if trends over time or trends that coincide with public events can be established. Because of the high quality of the data, most of the variables did not have to be reformatted for analysis. Further, information for every officer involved in a complaint is available to review and information regarding the circumstances of a complaint is available, unlike other data sources considered for this thesis.

The Current Study

Of the variables available to examine, focus was directed towards demographic information and variables regarding the type of complaint and the complaint outcome. The information available regarding officers, besides their race (OfficerRace) and gender (OfficerGender), also included the number of days the officer was on the force at the time of the incident. This variable, DaysonForce, was used to generate a new variable, Years on Force, to categorize officers based on how many years they had been on the force at the time of the incident. Because the original variable Years of Force was generated from a variable with days as the unit of analysis, Years on Force categories like Less than 3 Years and 3 to 6 years do not contain duplicates. Officers were also given a single identification number by the CCRB, named OfficerID, which was used to quantify the number of unique officers that received a complaint over the examination period and the number of officers that received multiple complaints. Regarding the race of officers involved, it is not specified if the values, like White or Black, exclude Hispanic-identifying officers or where officers that, for example, identify as Black Hispanic would be categorized as.

Demographic variables available for complainants included their race (ImpactedRace), gender (ImpactedGender), and age (ImpactedAge). Unlike the officers, the complainants did not have to provide their demographic information and thus these variables have missing values, which will be discussed later. The variable ImpactedGender was beneficial in that it included values such as “gender non-conforming” or “Transman (FTM)” which can be beneficial in future research that wants to examine these populations and the types of complaints they submit. The ImpactedAge variable was used to create age categories for complainants to categorize the types of complaints a certain age category may submit. There are complainants who were minors and it

is not explained by the data host as to whether complaints had to be filed by the minor or on their behalf. For example, over the examination period, there were 87 complaints filed for minors aged 10 and younger. It is not explained how complaints that involve minors are handled. While the complainant demographic data is self-identified data, it is not specified where individuals who, for example, identify as White Hispanic are counted as White or Hispanic or both.

The primary variable examined regarding the substance of each complaint was called FADOType and was created by the CCRB for complaint categorization purposes. FADOType has five values: Abuse of Authority (where an officer uses their powers to intimidate or mistreat an individual), Force (which refers to excessive or unnecessary force, though these delimitators are not further defined), Discourtesy (like cursing or using foul language and/or gestures), Offensive Language (relating to slurs or derogatory remarks based on demographics and identity), and Untruthful Statements (which appears to be a new value and is not yet defined). An additional variable, named Allegation, also specified a breakdown of the complaint type (for example, a value coinciding with the "Abuse of Force" FADOType variable could be "Use of flashlight as club") and in total Allegation had 119 unique values. Another complaint-related variable that was used was ComplaintID, which was a unique identification number assigned to each complaint. This was an integral variable because if multiple officers were involved in a complaint, or there were multiple complaints against one officer in one incident, this variable identified the number of unique complaints rather than an aggregate number of complaints. BoardCat was another important variable, as it provided a categorization for what the outcome of a complaint was and included values such as "Substantiated." The variable CCRBDisposition provided further details on the CCRB's final evaluation of a complaint with values such as "Substantiated (Formal Training)." With the examined variables, aggregate numbers were

calculated along with totals per year. Cross tabulations were created to examine possible trends between variables, such as the complaint type and the outcome the CCRB decided.

When discussing the outcomes for complaints, a complaint can have one of seven outcomes determined by the CCRB: Closed – Pending Litigation (a complaint case will not proceed because of pending litigation but the case has the ability to reopen after litigation ends), Exonerated (the events of the complaint did occur, however, a preponderance of evidence finds the officer(s) was not acting improperly), Miscellaneous (the officer involved in the complaint at the time of the investigation was no longer employed by the NYPD), Substantiated (a preponderance of evidence shows that the allegations in the complaint did occur), Truncated (occurs for a variety of reasons including the complainant withdraws the complaint, the complainant is uncooperative and cannot enable the board to conduct a full investigation, or the complainant is unable to be identified), Unfounded (a preponderance of evidence finds that the alleged events of the complaint did not occur), and Unsubstantiated (there is not enough evidence to determine whether misconduct that went against NYPD policies occurred).

To add context for discussions relating to demographic results, New York City, according to the 2020 Census, has a population of 8,804,190. 32.1% of the population, or 2,826,145 people, identified as White (non-Hispanic), 29.1% of the population (2,561,019 people) identified as Hispanic, 24.3% of the population (2,139,418 people) identified as Black (non-Hispanic), 14.1% of the population (1,241,391 people) identified as Asian, and 0.4% of the population (35,217 people) identified as Native American.

According to the NYPD's open data initiative, which is publicly available through their website, as of March 6, 2022, 81% of officers (N=28,188) are male and 19% (N=6,764) are female, totaling to 34,952 officers employed. As of March 7, 2022, according to the NYPD

website, 44% of officers (N=15,547) identify as White (non-Hispanic), 30% of officers (N=10,569) identify as Hispanic, 15% of officers (N=5,347) identify as Black (non-Hispanic), 10% of officers (N=3,466) identify as Asian, as 0.08% of officers (N=28) identify as Native American. Because the data was updated on two different dates, the total of officers based on the gender numbers versus the ethnic identity numbers are slightly different, so the total number of officers will be discussed on the ethnic-identity total, with 34,957 officers employed by the NYPD as of March 7, 2022. Data for demographics from prior years is unavailable.

Analysis of the data will help answer a set of research questions:

1. What is the demographic makeup of officers who receive complaints in New York City?
2. What is the demographic makeup of citizens who submit a complaint to the New York Police Department?
3. What are the most common complaint types submitted to the New York City Police Department?
4. What are the most common outcomes for specific complaint types in New York City Police Department citizen complaint data?
5. Are certain types of complaints against officers in New York City more likely to be substantiated than other complaint types?
6. Do the number of complaints and complaint types submitted to the New York City Police Department appear to relate with protests or other social-related movements?
7. What kind of information can civilian complaint data provide police reformist literature?

    7.1 Or, how can police reformist literature benefit from the use of civilian complaint data?

Chapter 4 – Results

Complaint Data

116,216 complaint cases were reviewed that spanned from January 2007 to December of 2020. Of the 116,216 total complaints, which can include multiple allegations in a complaint, there were 37,455 unique complaints. Figure 1 displays the count of complaints, both total and by unique identification number, across the years.

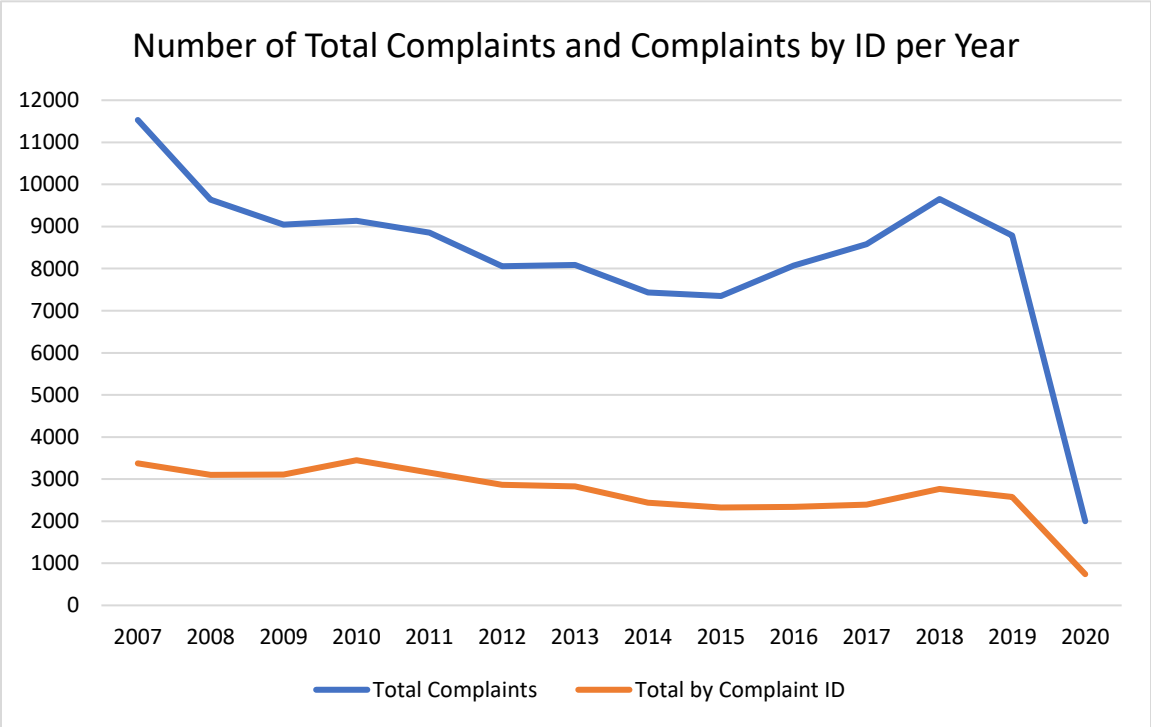

Figure 1: Number of total Complaints and Complaints by ID per Year

For most of the study period, the total number of complaints exhibits a decline except from 2015 to 2018, where complaints steadily rose. It is of worth to note that the NYPD used the practice of stop-and-frisk, which required temporarily detaining an individual and has been noted as a source of strife in communities, until it was ended in 2012 (Beck, Antonelli, & Pineros, 2022). Over the time that stop-and-frisk was utilized, complaints experienced an overall decline,

though it cannot be directly concluded as to whether this is a result of stop-and-frisk. The highest increase across years was from 2017 to 2018, where the total number of complaints rose by 12.46%, or from 8,580 complaints in 2017 to 9,649 complaints in 2018. The number of unique complaints also exhibited a similar trend and had a 15.35% increase from 2017 to 2018, with 2,397 unique complaints in 2017 to 2,765 complaints in 2018. This period, 2017 to 2018, was the highest increase in total and unique number of complaints across all examined years.

The largest decrease was from 2019 to 2020 where there was a 77.25% drop in complaints or a decrease from 8,785 complaints in 2019 to 1,999 complaints in 2020. This decrease was likely associated with the COVID-19 pandemic reducing time people spent in public. The next largest drop seen is from 2007 to 2008 where there was a 16.44% decrease or a decrease from 11,530 complaints in 2007 to 9,634 complaints in 2008.

Complaint Types

Across all examined years, Abuse of Authority was the most common complaint type (N= 60,911 or 52.41% of complaints) followed by Force (N=33,240 or 28.60%) (Figure 2, Table 1A). There was an average of 4,351 Abuse of Authority complaints per year and an average of 2,374 Force complaints per year. For most of the years, Abuse of Authority was either over half or near half of all complaint types per year. Regarding the overall increase in complaints from 2015 to 2018, Abuse of Authority complaints also increased over this period, increasing by the most (15.75%) from 2016 to 2017. Force complaints increased the most from 2017 to 2018, with

an increase of 18.07%. On average, during the rise of complaints from 2015 to 2018, Discourtesy complaints and Offensive Language complaints decreased by 3.29% and 3.34%, respectively.

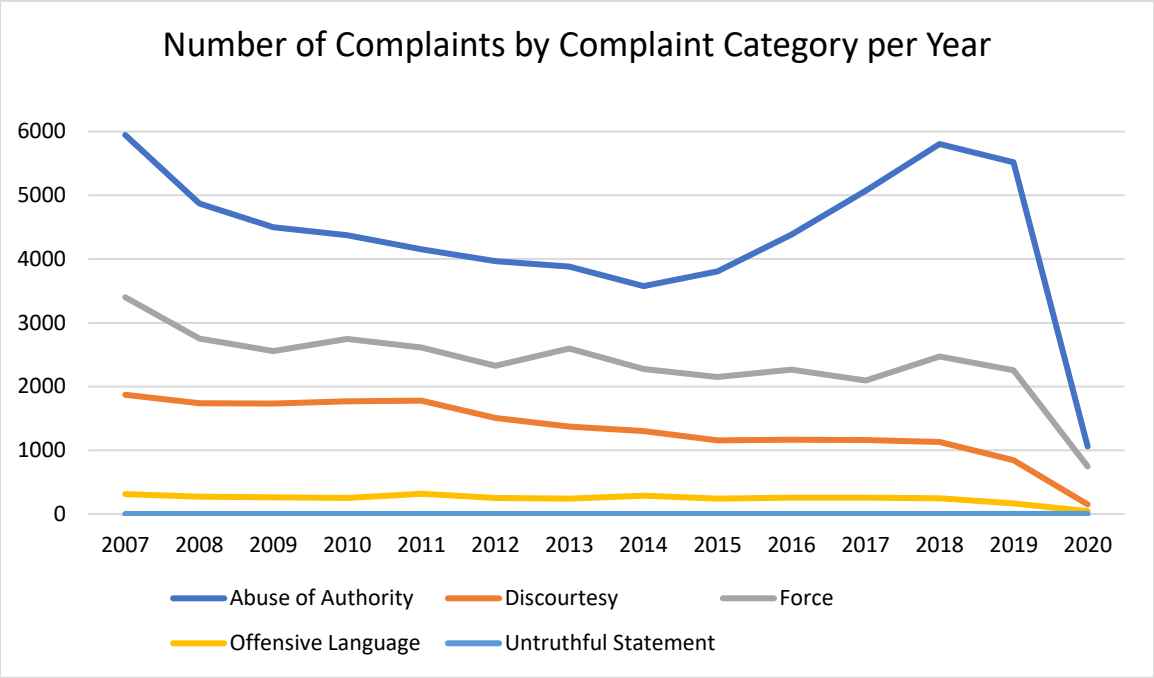

Figure 2: Number of Complaints by Complaint Category per Year

Complaint Outcomes

For all complaints (N=116,216), most were found by the CCRB to be Unsubstantiated or Truncated. 37,097 complaints (31.92% of total complaints) were Unsubstantiated and 35,232 complaints (30.32% of total complaints) were Truncated (Figure 3, Table 2A). Abuse of Force, Discourtesy, and Offensive Language complaints were more likely to be Unsubstantiated while Force complaints were more likely to be Truncated. The three total Untruthful Statements complaints were all Substantiated.

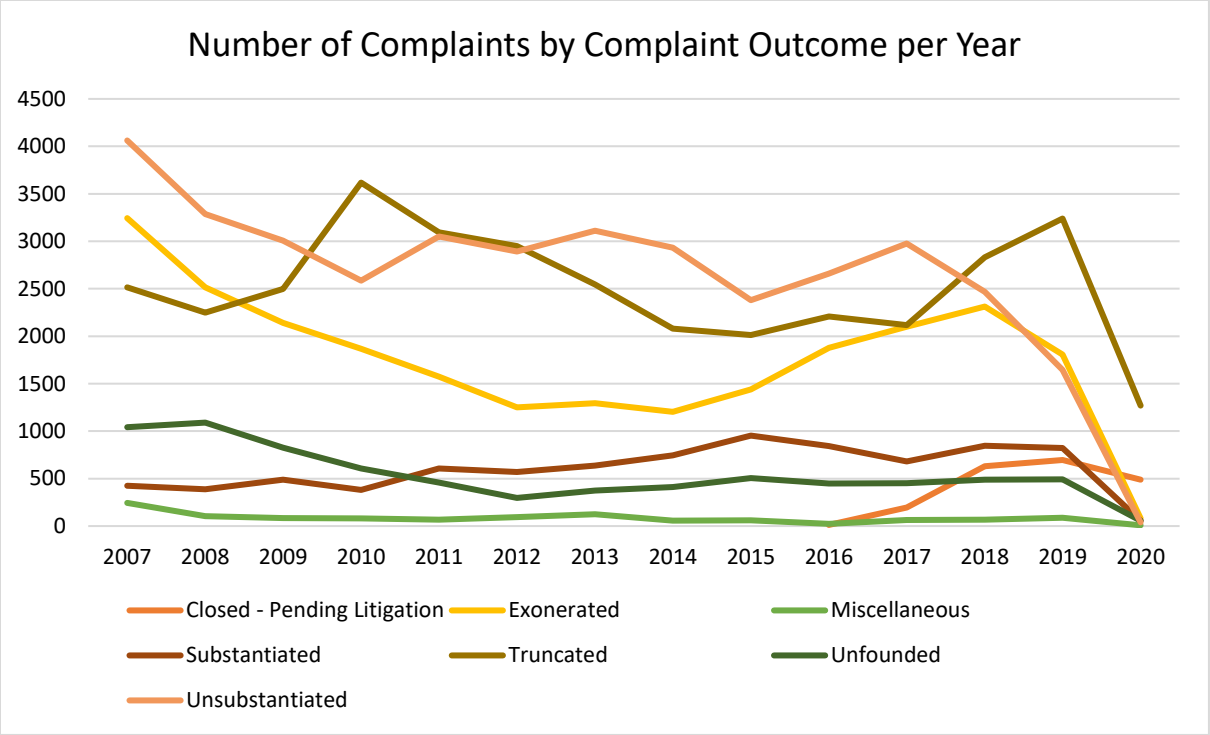

Figure 3: Number of Complaints by Complaint Outcome per Year

At the intersection of complaint type and CCRB outcome (with a full breakdown by year displayed in Table 3A in the appendix), across all years, 64.16% (N=1,296) of Closed – Pending Litigation complaints were for Force complaints. Over half of complaints that were Exonerated were for Abuse of Authority (59.62%, N=14,732) and is also true for Miscellaneous (52.37%, N=607). A majority of Substantiated complaints were for Abuse of Force (76.52%, N=6,463). Abuse of Authority also accounted for most Truncated complaints (46.94%, N=16,547). A plurality of complaints that were Unfounded were Force complaints (36.80%, N=2,779) and most complaints that were Unsubstantiated were Abuse of Force complaints (52.04%, N=19,304).

A specific outcome of interest was Substantiated complaints, which are complaints where a preponderance of evidence found that the complaint or allegation did occur, because the CCRB also includes a recommendation for how the NYPD should proceed with the case. Some values

included Formalized Training, which would require an officer to receive training relating to the complaint, or Charges, which would require an administrative hearing that is like a trial. Across the complaints that received a Substantiated outcome (N=8,446), the CCRB recommended that the outcome for 41.27% of complaints (N=3,486) receive Charges (Table 1). 40.65% of complaints (N=3,433) were recommended to receive some kind of Command Level Discipline or Command Level Instructions, which was defined to mean some kind of discipline from a local, command-level leader that could range from instructions, which is not defined but could mean a verbal reprimand or reminder of department policy, to up to ten days loss of pay. 14.17% of complaints (N=1,197) were recommended to Formalized Training. One note is that complaints did not start receiving Formalizing Training as an outcome until 2013, possibly because of a policy change within the department, though the potential policy that created this new recommendation type is unable to be located.

Year	Charges	Command Level Discpline & Instructions	Training	Instructions	No Reccomendations
2007	334	72	0	9	8
2008	278	80	0	25	6
2009	344	89	0	23	33
2010	288	64	0	17	11
2011	442	136	0	26	3
2012	430	96	0	32	13
2013	346	162	41	82	7
2014	239	323	157	26	1
2015	207	472	271	1	2
2016	132	486	220	5	0
2017	211	346	124	0	0
2018	167	505	175	0	0
2019	58	557	208	0	0
2020	10	45	1	0	0
Total	**3486**	**3433**	**1197**	**246**	**84**

Table 1: Number of Substantiated Complaints by Substantiated Category per Year

Officer Demographics

On average, there were 1,746 officers involved across the total number of complaints for each year. Most officers were White (Table 2) and Male (Table 3) and had worked for the NYPD for 8.33 years at the time of the incident. Demographic totals for officers will equal the number of unique officers, 24,446, and not the total number of complaints of 116,216, which includes some officers counted multiple times.

Year	Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
2007	1	108	383	666	1430
2008	2	109	319	607	1014
2009	2	95	285	553	953
2010	2	79	339	508	929
2011	2	88	299	485	868
2012	3	89	270	436	888
2013	1	98	240	428	822
2014	3	64	216	387	677
2015	0	108	223	369	692
2016	1	108	251	474	754
2017	3	151	239	471	859
2018	0	168	293	589	1089
2019	1	194	287	716	1006
2020	0	66	83	173	330
Total	**21 (0.09%)**	**1525 (6.24%)**	**3727 (15.25%)**	**6862 (28.07%)**	**12311 (50.36%)**

Table 2: Officer Race Totals per Year

The standard deviation for Years on Force is 5.78 years and has a range of 0.19 years to 39.5 years. On average, officers had a total number of unique 12 complaints filed against them, which does not include duplicate complaints, with a standard deviation of 11.53 and a range of 1 to 100 complaints (with 1 officer having 100 total complaints filed against them). 434 officers, or 1.40% of the 24,446 officers, received more than 24 unique complaints, or more than one standard deviation of the average. Including complaints with multiple allegations to would produce duplicate counts, these officers are responsible for 14,224 or 12.24% of all complaints.

Year	Male	Female
2007	2265	323
2008	1802	249
2009	1668	220
2010	1610	247
2011	1517	225
2012	1480	206
2013	1393	196
2014	1182	165
2015	1223	169
2016	1366	222
2017	1469	254
2018	1832	307
2019	1884	320
2020	559	93
Total	**21250 (86.93%)**	**3196 (13.07%)**

Table 3: Officer Gender Totals per Year

Regarding years on force (Table 4), 24.59% of officers were employed from 3 to 6 years at the time of an incident, followed closely by 24.13% of complaints involving an officer who was hired for less than 3 years at time of incident.

Year	Less than 3 yrs	3-6 yrs	6-9 yrs	9-15 yrs	Greater than 15 yrs
2007	697	509	316	631	435
2008	483	472	287	423	386
2009	430	481	221	342	414
2010	296	580	285	311	385
2011	224	473	377	320	348
2012	297	358	399	323	309
2013	381	275	359	314	260
2014	357	227	272	275	216
2015	307	306	232	342	205
2016	390	394	177	404	223
2017	479	471	151	374	248
2018	654	545	268	411	261
2019	672	697	330	315	190
2020	232	223	83	68	46
Total	**5899 (24.13%)**	**6011 (24.59%)**	**3757 (15.37%)**	**4853 (19.85%)**	**3926 (16.06%)**

Table 4: Officer Year on Force Totals per Year

When looking at specific complaint types by officer demographics, Abuse of Authority followed by Force were the two most common complaint types across all demographic categories (race, gender, and years on force) except for the less than 3 year and 6 to 9 years Year On Force categories, which had Force as the third common complaint type behind Discourtesy.

Complainant Demographics

Unlike officers, the number of unique complainants cannot be determined because no unique identifier is given to complainants like there is for officers. Further, unlike officers, complainants did not have to provide demographic information and could refuse (where refusals were coded as Refused by the data source). The average age of complainants was 33.34 years old with a standard deviation of 12.39 years and a range of 1 to 93 years. There are values such as 0, -1, -7095, and 115 that were not defined by the data source and categorized together (coded as Other) because of potential typos.

44.85% of complaints (N=52,119) are from complainants who identified as Black, the highest category, followed by 19.60% of complaints (N=22,773) where complainants identified as Hispanic, and 10.03% of complaints (N=11,655) are from complainants who identify as White (Table 5). 11.05% of complaints are missing complainant race information and 1.27% of complainants refused to provide their race.

Year	Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Refused	Unknown	Missing
2007	29	186	5711	2264	1117	237	88	756	1142
2008	20	208	4699	1911	997	184	77	602	936
2009	10	163	4233	1929	803	155	64	682	1007
2010	30	113	4288	1744	766	135	114	775	1173
2011	18	140	4118	1832	815	182	89	734	925
2012	9	139	3805	1585	798	185	42	564	928
2013	9	133	3761	1596	844	142	100	792	713
2014	10	158	3435	1545	759	195	87	614	630
2015	18	107	3298	1433	864	242	99	672	619
2016	23	217	3461	1637	909	224	114	639	848
2017	24	304	3407	1661	868	279	185	676	1176
2018	41	200	3881	1732	995	310	170	1011	1309
2019	47	235	3432	1557	918	297	217	966	1116
2020	7	60	590	347	202	31	25	416	321
Total	**295 (0.25%)**	**2363 (2.03%)**	**52119 (44.85%)**	**22773 (19.60%)**	**11655 (10.03%)**	**2798 (2.41%)**	**1471 (1.27%)**	**9899 (8.52%)**	**12843 (11.05%)**

Table 5: Complainant Self-Identified Race Totals per Year

70.93% of complaints (N=82,436) were generated by male-identifying complainants, the largest complainant gender group, followed by self-identifying females who generated 20.26% of complainants (N=23,540) (Table 6). The data is unique in that it also provides expanded gender values that includes gender non-conforming (0.01% of complaints), transman (FTM) (0.01% of complaints), and transwoman (MTF) (0.05% of complaints).

Year	Female	Gender Non-Conforming	Male	Transman	Transwoman	Unknown	Missing
2007	2132	0	8475	0	0	5	918
2008	1959	0	6976	0	0	2	697
2009	1796	0	6498	0	0	3	749
2010	1685	0	6701	0	0	3	749
2011	1653	0	6549	0	0	3	648
2012	1456	0	5962	0	0	16	621
2013	1412	0	6123	0	0	10	545
2014	1468	0	5381	0	0	29	555
2015	1407	0	5389	0	1	39	516
2016	1692	0	5560	1	16	41	762
2017	1912	1	5657	11	9	60	930
2018	2336	9	6122	1	9	95	1077
2019	2117	2	5774	1	19	104	768
2020	515	3	1269	0	1	75	136
Total	**23540 (20.26%)**	**15 (0.01%)**	**82436 (70.93%)**	**14 (0.01%)**	**55 (0.05%)**	**485 (0.42%)**	**9671 (8.32%)**

Table 6: Complainant Self-Identified Gender Totals per Year

Regarding age, 27.56% of complaints (N=32,030) were generated by individuals between the ages of 25 to 34, followed by 22.71% of complaints (N=26,388) from individuals between the ages of 15 to 24 (Table 7).

Year	1-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Other	Missing
2007	222	3057	2988	2105	1077	292	98	11	1680
2008	106	2321	2542	1794	1056	282	74	0	1459
2009	107	2206	2437	1448	927	260	53	4	1604
2010	117	2369	2232	1418	887	276	59	4	1776
2011	106	2229	2224	1435	1090	314	42	0	1413
2012	85	1939	1986	1454	982	270	72	1	1266
2013	52	1987	2344	1377	1049	337	82	1	861
2014	75	1723	2018	1318	942	397	77	0	883
2015	61	1581	2246	1214	974	377	157	3	739
2016	100	1651	2356	1350	1024	396	178	3	1014
2017	102	1710	2572	1506	929	418	163	1	1179
2018	83	1657	2794	1653	1210	586	226	0	1440
2019	78	1641	2691	1678	952	446	191	6	1102
2020	10	317	600	374	245	142	45	1	265
Total	**1304 (1.12%)**	**26388 (22.71%)**	**32030 (27.56%)**	**20124 (17.32%)**	**13344 (11.48%)**	**4793 (4.12%)**	**1517 (1.31%)**	**35 (0.03%)**	**16681 (14.35%)**

Table 7: Complainant Age Category Totals per Year

Abuse of Authority followed by Force were the two highest complaint types across complainant age, race, and age category with the exception of Transmen (whose highest complaint type was Force, Discourtesy, and then Abuse of Authority) and the 1-14 year old age group (who had Force highest followed by Abuse of Authority). Complaints from minors were likely filed on their behalf, assuming that age values were inputted with no typos, but values that are assumed typos (for example, there were values for -1 and 115 for age) are categorized as "Other." For each race category except Hispanic and Unknown, Abuse of Authority accounted for at least 50% of complaints generated by an individual of that race. Complaints from individuals who Refused to provide their race had 56.97% complaints (N=838) that were Abuse of Authority, the highest of the categories, followed by Native Americans, where Abuse of Authority accounted for 56.95% (N=168) of their complaints. Abuse of Authority accounted for

46.51% (N=10,591) of complaints by Hispanic individuals and was still the highest complaint category for that race.

Complaint Trends

When looking at trends of complaints correlating with social or political events that took place in New York City, there are three events that could have influenced the rate at which the NYPD received complaints and were chosen because of the widely documented nature of the events in the news and media. Here it was decided to examine the potential impact of three major, distinct events that are well separated in time: the 2011 Occupy Wall Street Movement, the 2013 Flatbush Riots, and the 2020 George Floyd protests.

The Occupy Wall Street Movement gained traction in September of 2011 and included a raid in November of 2011 of the movement's headquarters (Nathanson, 2021). The average number of monthly complaints for 2011 was 738 complaints and the number of complaints per month for 2011 remained relatively stable. There were 712 complaints for August of 2011 and increased to 727 complaints for September before declining to 710 complaints in October and continued declining for the remainder of the year (Figure 4). For overall numbers, complaint totals decreased from 2011 to 2012 by 9.01% or from 8,853 complaints to 8,055 complaints. By only looking at monthly and total complaint numbers for 2011, there does not appear to be a fluctuation in the number of complaints received by the NYPD due to the 2011 Occupy Wall Street Movement.

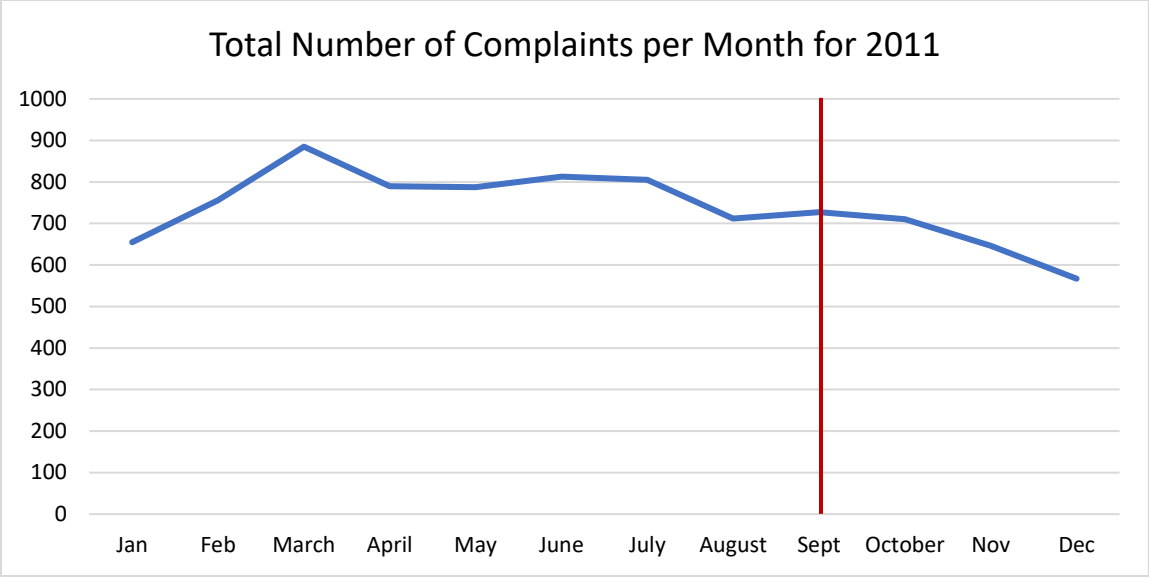

Figure 4: Total Number of Complaints per Month for 2011

In March of 2013, plainclothes officers shot and killed 16-year-old Kimani Gray and the following nights consisted of candlelight vigils, protests, and riots that resulted in arrests (Goodman, 2013). In 2013, the NYPD received 8,090 complaints with an average of 674 a month. The beginning of 2013 saw a total of 540 complaints in January and 532 complaints in February before increasing by 30.33% to a total of 754 complaints in March (Figure 5). The complaints then fell to 685 complaints in April. March contained the second highest number of complaints after May, which had a total of 795 complaints. The rise in complaints received during March of 2013 could be correlated with the events of the Flatbush Riots during March of 2013 and should be explored further in future research.

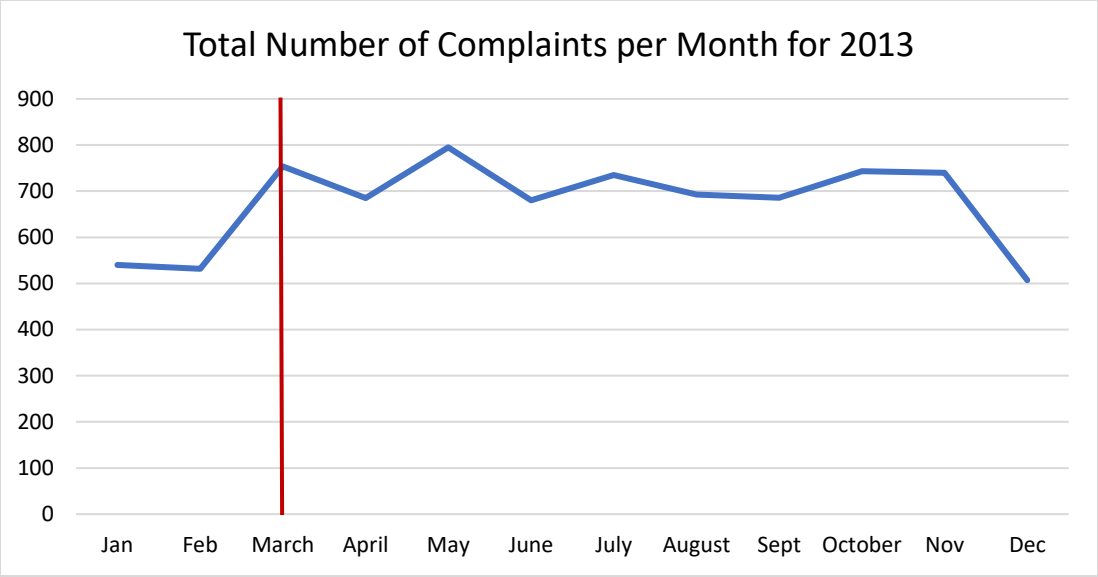

Figure 5: Total Number of Complaints per Month for 2013

The last set of examined events that could influence the rate of complaints received is the George Floyd protests. George Floyd was killed on May 25, 2020 and articles tracking the increase in the number of protests across the country state that, of the cities that had protests, New York City had the start of destructive protests beginning May 29 and extended into June (Taylor, 2021). Also occurring during the beginning of 2020 was the start of COVID-19-related lockdowns that affected typical movement and daily activities, which can impact numbers like crime rates and encounters with officers. There was a 77.25% decrease in complaints from 2019 to 2020, or 8,785 complaints to 1,999 complaints, that is likely attributed to these regulations and change in daily activities.

However, when looking at the monthly breakdown for 2020, of which the monthly average is 167 complaints per month, May had the third highest number of complaints for 2020 (Figure 6). 303 complaints were submitted to the NYPD in May. April had a total of 141 complaints which means there was a 114.9% increase from April to May. After May, there was a 45.54% decrease in complaints in June, which had 165 complaints. January (347 complaints) and

February (326 complaints) were the two highest months, however no other month in 2020 surpassed 200 complaints.

It should be noted that the protests relating to the George Floyd movement did not just occur during May but extended into the summer of 2020. However, complaints after May dropped and continued to do so for the rest of 2020. While no specific reason can be given for why complaints would drop despite a sharp increase in May, one reason could be because focus of individuals involved in the protests turned their attention away from filing complaints or utilizing the system to seek justice. Because complaints were decreasing in the two months prior to May and in every month after May, there could be a correlation with the increase of complaints in May of 2020 with the George Floyd protests.

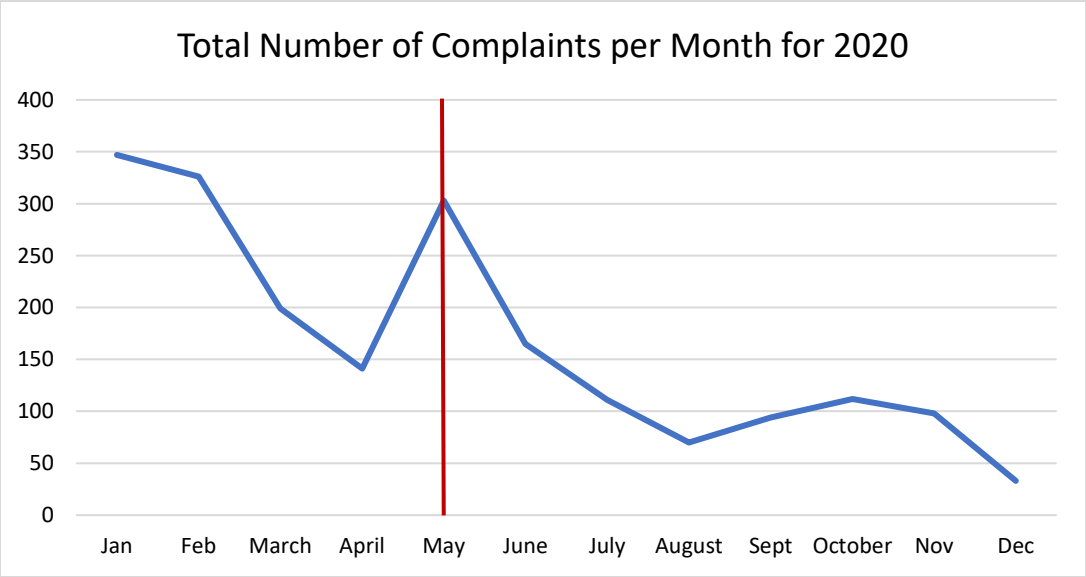

Figure 6: Total Number of Complaints per Month for 2020

The three protests were determined before analysis of the data and the three events fall outside of the increase in number of complaints that were observed from 2015 to 2018. While there may be no one specific cause for this increase, there could be multiple circumstances that overlapped during this period that led to an increase in number of complaints filed to the NYPD.

First, from 2015 to 2018, the NYPD employed a new neighborhood policing model that, among other changes, encouraged officers to interact more with the community and gave the NYPD the ability to hire 1,300 new officers (Beck et al., 2022). This would increase the number of interactions with community members and number of officers that would interact with the community that, in turn, could increase the likelihood that a citizen would find cause to file a complaint. The neighborhood program was employed across the city, just not in specific neighborhoods deemed a "hot spot" for crime rates (Beck et al., 2022), which would also contribute to the increased number of citizens the police would be interacting with and the scope of where the new policies would be utilized. A systematic assessment of this program also found that civilian complaints increased in the months after implementation of the program before leveling off (Beck et al., 2022), indicating that the NYPD neighborhood program had some influence on the increase in complaints for part of the 2015 to 2018 increase in citizen complaints.

Another possible theory for why complaints increased from 2015 to 2018 is due to leadership and the structural makeup of New York City and the NYPD during this period. A new Commissioner, James O'Neill, was hired in 2016 and Democrat Bill de Blasio was reelected as Mayor of New York City in 2017. Both positions come with influence over NYPD policies, the political makeup of the city, and both positions have a hand or opinion in how police matters should be handled, most notably with acknowledging support for the firing of the officer responsible for Eric Garner's death in 2014.

There were also other social or political-related movements occurring outside of New York City from 2015 to 2018. While no events in New York City during this period were examined, there were other movements around the country that could have sparked action in

New York City. As previously stated, the death of Eric Garner, along with the death of Michael Brown, occurred in the later half of 2014 and could have had continued effects relating to protests into 2015. These are two examples of police-related civilian deaths among others, approximately 3,918 deaths from 2015 to 2018 (The Washington Post, 2020), that could have initiated protests or related movements against police policies and actions, though it is difficult to determine how long the effects of these movements could last. Alongside protests relating to individual deaths, the creation and rise of the Black Lives Matter Movement could also influence the rate at which individuals file complaints against officers, either due to contact during protests or increased scrutiny against police actions that would encourage filing of complaints. Like with individual social movements, future research should examine the potential relationship between the Black Lives Matter Movement and effect on filing citizen complaints to determine the potential lasting impacts and effects.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Demographic Makeup of Officers in NYPD Complaints

Analyses revealed that, for the average citizen complaint submitted to the New York City Police Department, the average officer involved was White, Male, and had worked for the NYPD for 8.33 years at the time of the incident. Expanding out of demographics, the average NYPD officer from 2007 to 2020 had an average number of 12 complaints filed against them.

Comparing the demographic makeup of officers involved in complaints to the overall makeup of officers hired by the New York City Police Department revealed some differences. Males are slightly overrepresented in complaint data, with 86.93% of complaints involving male officers while the makeup of the NYPD is 81% male. Additionally, White officers are also overrepresented in complaint data. 50.36% of complaints involve a White officer while 44% of officers hired by the NYPD are White. Black and Native American officers are evenly represented (15.25% and 0.09%, respectively) while Asian officers are slightly underrepresented. 6.24% of complaints involved an Asian officer while 10% of NYPD officers are Asian. Hispanic officers are slightly underrepresented, with 28.07% of complaints involving a Hispanic officer while Hispanics account for 30% of NYPD officers.

The relatively similar demographic makeup of officers in complaints versus those in the workforce can indicate that complaints are not targeted towards a specific gender or race. Further, one reason why an officer may have multiple complaints against them is because they are encountering multiple members of the public each day, increasing the chance that a citizen may find a reason to submit a complaint. To put it plainly, NYPD officers are doing their job by interacting with the public. Similar complaint and official demographic data can indicate that

officers are doing their jobs by interacting and engaging with the public. While the gender demographics for complaints slightly overrepresent male officers, the same statements regarding officers and race can be said for officers and gender. Male and female officers receive complaints in an amount relatively proportional to their makeup of the overall department, meaning that officers may not be targeted by gender, and are engaging with the community enough to generate complaints proportional to their makeup in the department.

Demographic Makeup of Citizens in NYPD Complaints

To answer the question of what the average makeup of citizens who submitted complaints to the NYPD was, data analysis found with the non-missing information that the average complainant self-identified as Black, Male, and their average age was 33.34 years old. Because complainants had the right to refuse or not provide their demographics, less certainty can be said in comparing the makeup of complainant demographics with the makeup for New York City. For 20.83% of complainants, race data is missing because it was refused to be given, listed as unknown, or is missing entirely. Some comparison is still worth noting. Complaints from Black complainants comprise 44.85% of the data while Black residents include only 24.3% of the NYC population. Further, White complainants include 10.03% of complaint data but makeup 32.1% of the NYC population. In complaints against officers in NYC, Black citizens are overrepresented in complaint data while White citizens are underrepresented. Hispanic residents are also underrepresented in the data; 19.60% of data involves a Hispanic complainant while the population of NYC is 29.1% Hispanic. In the same manner, complaints involving an Asian complainant comprise 2.03% of complaints but encompass 14.1% of the community. NYPD complaint data is not representative of the community, indicating that there could be different

practices against different citizens or different neighborhoods have different understandings of the policies of police, thus generating more complaints based on what they have interpreted as misconduct. This should be discussed in future research.

Common Complaint Types Submitted in NYPD Complaints

In total and across the examination years, Abuse of Authority and Force complaints were the two most common complaint types submitted to the New York City Police Department. Abuse of Authority accounted for near half or over half of all complaints per year examined.

Common Complaint Outcomes per Complaint Category

For the most common outcomes per complaint type, it was found that Abuse of Force, Discourtesy, and Offensive Language complaints were more likely to be Unsubstantiated. Force complaints were more likely to be Truncated. Because Untruthful Statements is likely a new complaint category, as there are only three total complaints across the examination years, although information about this complaint type is not provided, all three Untruthful Statements complaints were Substantiated.

Type of NYPD Complaints to be Substantiated

When examining Substantiated cases to see if one complaint type was more likely to be Substantiated than others, as is one of the research questions for this thesis, out of each complaint type total, Abuse of Authority had the highest percentage of complaints be Substantiated. Out of

all outcomes for Abuse of Authority, 10.61% of outcomes were Substantiated with the next highest complaint category, Discourtesy, having 5.32% of its outcomes as Substantiated. 76.52% of Substantiated cases were for Abuse of Authority.

While only 7.27% of all complaints were substantiated, it still merits a discussion. Despite how most complaints were Truncated or Unsubstantiated, this is partly due to inability to contact a witness or examine enough evidence to support a complaint. Substantiated complaints are a result of review and investigation that produced either enough evidence or a witness able to provide the Civilian Complaint Review Board with enough information to aid an investigation. Further, most Substantiated complaints resulted in charges against an officer or recommended involvement of a command-level supervisor to render disciplinary action. These types of outcomes demonstrate that with proper evidence and examination, disciplinary action can result from submitting a complaint. The addition of Formalized Training as a Substantiated suggestion, as its use only started appearing in 2013, indicates that training as a reform effort has gained traction in the New York City Police Department and has been steadily suggested by the CCRB since 2013. While the original policy creating or recommending Formalized Training as a Substantiated outcome cannot be located online, current NYPD disciplinary guidelines outline scenarios in which training relevant to a complaint type can be used, demonstrating the department's support for training as a disciplinary outcome by including it in policies.

Trends of Number of Complaints with Social Movements and Protests

Another research question sought to examine if total number of complaint cases submitted to the New York Police Department would seem to relate to police-related protests or

similar social movements. Three potential events were chosen for examination based off of news report coverage and impact in the media: the 2011 Occupy Wall Street Movement, the 2013 Flatbush Riots, and the 2020 George Floyd protests. Of the three, the 2013 Flatbush Riots and the 2020 George Floyd protests had an increase in the number of complaints for the months in which the protests took place. A correlation between total number of complaints submitted and social movements may be dependent on what kind of matter a movement is focused on and the response of a police department. For example, while the Occupy Wall Street movement targeted the political infrastructure and organization of the country, of which police departments are a part of, the NYPD itself was not a specific focus for change and the potential response of the police may not have been significant enough to warrant continued filings of complaints. The start of the Flatbush Riots and George Floyd protests, however, were a direct result of action against police officers and the police department. However, complaint totals dropped after the initial month of the event in both years, despite the events lasting longer than one month, which could indicate that the effects of these events may not have a lasting effect, at least in terms of citizen complaint reporting. Future research should continue examining the number and type of citizen complaints submitted to a police department following a protest or related social movement to see if there are similar correlations, especially when examining social movements that have specific focuses and goals relating to police departments, and the longevity of these events in relation to complaint submission.

One effect that is seen in research relating to crime that can also impact citizen complaint research is the influence of the season on complaint totals per month. Generally, the number of crimes committed, and possibly the number of complaints submitted per month, decrease during the colder months. This is partly due to the changed activities of individuals, as colder weather

keeps more individuals inside and away from offenders or, in the context of this research, away from interactions with officers where reason to file a complaint may be found. However, because this phenomenon had only been examined regarding criminal offending, researchers should keep this potential impacting factor in mind when examining monthly counts and trends of citizen complaints.

Benefits of Citizen Complaints for Reformist Literature

Some of the broader research questions for this thesis sought to explore if there could be any potential benefits of including citizen complaint data in discussions of reformist literature and what citizen complaint data can provide these discussions. The literature review considered more general applications, like combination of citizen complaints with use of force data or use in conjunction with early intervention systems. Analysis of citizen complaints against officers in the New York City Police Department first found that for most of the examination period, the number of complaints was trending downward. This could possibly correlate with the continued discussions and efforts around reforming the police department over the past decade, however future researchers will have to examine this potential correlation. For the spike in complaint numbers seen from 2015 to 2018, it could be related to a variety of factors that stemmed from policies and action in New York City and response to movements around the country.

Second, analysis of NYPD complaint data provided officer demographics that revealed some similarities between officers involved in complaints and officers currently hired by the NYPD. Similarities in demographics, as previously discussed, could mean that complaints are not submitted to target certain demographics of officers or that a semi-proportional

representation of officers in complaints compared to officers in a police force represent officers doing their job. That is, officers are in the field interacting with citizens, which could increase the likelihood of generating complaints for whatever reason. But, because of the limitation of not having yearly NYPD officer demographic data, this idea can only be theorized and should be examined in other departments if the data is available.

The NYPD complaint data was able to provide type of complaint, the allegation that led to the complaint category (of which there were over 100 unique values), and the complaint outcome of the recommendation of the CCRB. These variables can help reformist literature by providing information regarding what the average citizen has a complaint about per year and what the average outcomes for complaints are. For example, analysis of the NYPD complaint data found that, in 2013, Formalized Training became a recommendation for Substantiated complaints. Since 2013, Formalized Training has been steadily recommended and incorporated into current disciplinary policy. Because training has been a general recommendation for reform, the NYPD data, and similar data sources that offer training as an outcome, can support reformist literature with quantified evidence of training being utilized by departments.

Overall, citizen complaints are one of the main ways in which the community had provide feedback to their local departments and voice their concerns. The anonymity that some departments allow in their complaints can provide ease for citizens in knowing that they would not have to worry about retribution, however legitimate a fear it may be, from the officer they are filing a complaint against. Anonymity could also increase the likelihood that a citizen could file a complaint and future research should examine the possible benefits of allowing anonymity in complaints in relation to number of complaints submitted to a department. In jurisdictions that do not allow for citizens to be anonymous when filing a complaint due to policy rules, this could be

easily fixed by adding a new variable to create a unique ID for each complainant. Just as the NYPD complaint data has a unique identification number for both officers involved in a complaint and the complaint case, a variable for a unique identification number for complainants would allow examination of a complaint be conducted without examining a person's name, thus keeping anonymity in place.

Limitations

The results of the data analysis cannot be generalized across the country, given that one city is being examined. Another limitation was discovered in the attempted use of the Chicago Police Department citizen complaint data, which would be one of two data sources analyzed, where 70,249 out of 98,474 complaint records from 2007 to 2020 were missing all information except for time and date the complaint was received. Whether policy or union contracts blocks this data from being published, data that is not available cannot be examined or provide researchers with useful information regarding trends of complaints over time and potential correlations with events. Regarding missing NYPD data, because demographic data was not required by the NYPD for a complaint to be submitted, 20.83% of complainant race, 14.35% of complainant age, and 8.74% of complainant gender data is missing. While this is done to encourage reporting by keeping complaints anonymous, it is still a limitation when trying to compare complainant demographics with the population of New York City.

Second, for both officer race data and complainant race data, it is not specified if individuals that identify as Hispanic and another race identity are counted in both race categories or only one. Because different research databases and organizations have emphasized specifying

whether identities are White (non-Hispanic), for example, like the census data cited for New York City, this is a limitation for comparison of data sources. Incorporating a value specifying a Hispanic or non-Hispanic identity can help the NYPD complaint data begin to be more comparable to other data sources that offer this distinction.

Third, because yearly demographics data for officers hired by the NYPD is not available, comparison of the demographics of officers involved in complaints over the examination years with demographics of officers employed as of March of 2022 should be discussed with caution. Because of the various reasons why there is flux within a police department, whether officers are hired, retire, move precincts, and so forth, there is no way to accurately compare the demographics and numbers of unique officers involved in complaints with the NYPD officers employed in the current data.

Fourth, because complaints are submitted after-the-fact, contextual reasons that prompted an individual to file a complaint are not available to incorporate into analyses. While the NYPD citizen complaints include a variable about the initial contact reason, this still does not provide information as to why an individual decides to submit a complaint and conclusions and discussions regarding complaints and complaint outcomes should bear this in mind.

Lastly, previous literature has tried to use complaint data to quantify “problem officers” (Terrill et al., 2018, p. 497) and it should be considered that the different units of analyses make this quantifying difficult. The NYC citizen complaint data uses allegation(s) as the unit of analysis, before categorizing into one of five complaint types, meaning multiple allegations in a single encounter can generate multiple complaints against an officer. If only looking at broad numbers, it may appear that there are multiple “problem officers” within the NYPD force. When only the unique complaint ID number is counted, which only counts the first allegation in a

complaint and not count any duplicates, it is found that only 434 officers received more than 24 complaints or one standard deviation above the average across the observation period. However, future research must operationalize whether the total number of complaints, regardless of multiple complaints stemming from one incident, will be the unit of analysis or if the number of unique complaints against an officer will be the unit of analysis. Considering the variability of complaint data from departments across the country, researchers must make sure the style of each data source is taken into consideration.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to reexamine the state of police reform in the United States and assess whether citizen complaint data could be beneficial in discussing police reform. When discussing police reform, specific topics and goals should be specified to help guide policy makers and police department leaders on what areas of policing should be focused on or need help. Citizen complaint data that provides information regarding why a complaint is filed and what specific area of police behavior it relates to, as is seen with the New York City Police Department citizen complaint data, those numbers can be used to provide support for where reform efforts should be targeted. While complaint data is not available for all police departments, reform efforts aimed at publishing citizen complaint data should also have a focus on the usability and quality of the information these databases can provide. With barriers like hesitancy to release officer names, like the NYPD data has chosen to do, solutions like assigning officers unique identification numbers can help overcome these potential issues. This same solution can be used for cities where complainants are required to provide their information to, as a unique identification number can help keep anonymity. Data, whether it be sourced from

citizen complaint databases or department crime statistics databases, could benefit from standardization efforts which could be facilitated through state- or federal-level funding. This would also require an emphasis on the importance of these data sources, especially complaint databases, for research and analysis in current literature regarding policing and reforms.

Some of the goals of reform for policing in the United States advocate for causes like increased police transparency and accountability or increased accessibility to data like citizen complaint databases. While the makeup of police departments across the country varies in their staff size, ability to accommodate their budget for tools like body-worn cameras and their upkeep, or possess the infrastructure to house data-processing centers, advocacy for reform should not be swayed in their efforts. Discussions about police reform should acknowledge these institutional barriers to generate future discussions regarding how these barriers may be overcome to produce positive, lasting change.

Appendix A: Supplemental Tables

Year	Abuse of Authority	Discourtesy	Force	Offensive Language	Untruthful Statement	Total
2007	5947	1870	3401	312	0	**11530**
2008	4872	1737	2754	271	0	**9634**
2009	4500	1730	2554	262	0	**9046**
2010	4375	1768	2746	249	0	**9138**
2011	4153	1775	2609	316	0	**8853**
2012	3967	1508	2327	253	0	**8055**
2013	3882	1372	2595	241	0	**8090**
2014	3573	1299	2277	284	0	**7433**
2015	3805	1155	2149	243	0	**7352**
2016	4382	1165	2267	258	0	**8072**
2017	5072	1162	2092	254	0	**8580**
2018	5803	1131	2470	245	0	**9649**
2019	5521	844	2254	165	1	**8785**
2020	1059	149	745	44	2	**1999**
Total	**60911 (52.41%)**	**18665 (16.06%)**	**33240 (28.60%)**	**3397 (2.92%)**	**3 (0.003%)**	**116216**

Table 1A: Number of Complaints by Complaint Category per Year

Year	Closed - Pending Litigation	Exonerated	Miscellaneous	Substantiated	Truncated	Unfounded	Unsubstantiated	Total
2007	0	3,244	244	423	2,516	1,041	4,062	**11530**
2008	0	2,514	105	389	2,249	1,090	3,287	**9634**
2009	0	2,142	84	489	2,499	826	3,006	**9046**
2010	0	1,866	80	380	3,618	607	2,587	**9138**
2011	0	1,575	66	607	3,095	458	3,052	**8853**
2012	0	1,252	93	571	2,951	297	2,891	**8055**
2013	0	1,296	123	638	2,546	375	3,112	**8090**
2014	0	1,204	58	746	2,080	411	2,934	**7433**
2015	0	1,440	59	953	2,014	507	2,379	**7352**
2016	12	1,877	22	843	2,209	449	2,660	**8072**
2017	194	2,099	63	681	2,116	451	2,976	**8580**
2018	630	2,314	68	847	2,832	490	2,468	**9649**
2019	696	1,806	86	823	3,238	492	1,644	**8785**
2020	488	82	8	56	1,269	57	39	**1999**
Total	**2020 (1.74%)**	**24711 (21.26%)**	**1159 (1%)**	**8446 (7.27%)**	**35232 (30.32%)**	**7551 (6.5%)**	**37097 (31.92%)**	**116216**

Table 2A: Number of Complaints by Complaint Outcome per Year

Category and Year	Closed - Pending Litigation	Exonerated	Miscellaneous	Substantiated	Truncated	Unfounded	Unsubstantiated	Total
2007								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	1,826	122	329	1,225	376	2,069	**5,947**
Discourtesy	0	33	40	34	509	262	992	**1,870**
Force	0	1,385	77	57	675	337	870	**3,401**
Offensive Language	0		5	3	107	66	131	**312**
Total	*0*	*3,244*	*244*	*423*	*2,516*	*1,041*	*4,062*	***11,530***
2008								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	1,429	44	303	1,051	407	1,638	**4,872**
Discourtesy	0	40	21	36	496	264	880	**1,737**
Force	0	1,045	36	47	621	356	649	**2,754**
Offensive Language	0		4	3	81	63	120	**271**
Total	*0*	*2,514*	*105*	*389*	*2,249*	*1,090*	*3,287*	***9,634***
2009								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	1,149	40	404	1,162	274	1,471	**4,500**
Discourtesy	0	48	20	40	555	192	875	**1,730**
Force	0	944	20	39	684	318	549	**2,554**
Offensive Language	0	1	4	6	98	42	111	**262**
Total	*0*	*2,142*	*84*	*489*	*2,499*	*826*	*3,006*	***9,046***
2010								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	944	41	333	1,521	179	1,357	**4,375**
Discourtesy	0	69	18	25	781	184	691	**1,768**
Force	0	853	20	21	1,204	220	428	**2,746**
Offensive Language	0		1	1	112	24	111	**249**
Total	*0*	*1,866*	*80*	*380*	*3,618*	*607*	*2,587*	***9,138***
2011								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	713	28	512	1,319	127	1,454	**4,153**
Discourtesy	0	68	17	56	684	106	844	**1,775**
Force	0	794	19	33	959	193	611	**2,609**
Offensive Language	0		2	6	133	32	143	**316**
Total	*0*	*1,575*	*66*	*607*	*3,095*	*458*	*3,052*	***8,853***
2012								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	602	49	458	1,311	78	1,469	**3,967**
Discourtesy	0	27	16	54	633	77	701	**1,508**
Force	0	623	20	46	904	127	607	**2,327**
Offensive Language	0		8	13	103	15	114	**253**
Total	*0*	*1,252*	*93*	*571*	*2,951*	*297*	*2,891*	***8,055***
2013								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	661	59	511	960	90	1,601	**3,882**
Discourtesy	0	39	26	65	434	69	739	**1,372**
Force	0	596	34	55	1,066	197	647	**2,595**
Offensive Language	0		4	7	86	19	125	**241**
Total	*0*	*1,296*	*123*	*638*	*2,546*	*375*	*3,112*	***8,090***
2014								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	700	39	537	775	116	1,406	**3,573**
Discourtesy	0	26	8	83	420	98	664	**1,299**
Force	0	478	9	119	783	175	713	**2,277**
Offensive Language	0		2	7	102	22	151	**284**
Total	*0*	*1,204*	*58*	*746*	*2,080*	*411*	*2,934*	***7,433***

Category and Year	Closed - Pending Litigation	Exonerated	Miscellaneous	Substantiated	Truncated	Unfounded	Unsubstantiated	Total
2015								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	0	882	29	734	799	158	1,203	**3,805**
Discourtesy	0	26	11	116	346	99	557	**1,155**
Force	0	532	14	95	783	219	506	**2,149**
Offensive Language	0		5	8	86	31	113	**243**
Total	*0*	*1,440*	*59*	*953*	*2,014*	*507*	*2,379*	***7,352***
2016								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	1	1,242	11	632	1,019	147	1,330	**4,382**
Discourtesy	1	24	3	93	334	85	625	**1,165**
Force	10	611	8	101	772	189	576	**2,267**
Offensive Language	0	0	0	17	84	28	129	**258**
Total	*12*	*1,877*	*22*	*843*	*2,209*	*449*	*2,660*	***8,072***
2017								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	64	1,502	40	516	1,103	174	1,673	**5,072**
Discourtesy	11	29	12	67	335	77	631	**1,162**
Force	112	568	7	88	599	171	547	**2,092**
Offensive Language	7	0	4	10	79	29	125	**254**
Total	*194*	*2,099*	*63*	*681*	*2,116*	*451*	*2,976*	***8,580***
2018								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	197	1,686	43	526	1,683	195	1,473	**5,803**
Discourtesy	41	79	11	189	312	88	411	**1,131**
Force	391	547	13	106	770	172	471	**2,470**
Offensive Language	1	2	1	26	67	35	113	**245**
Total	*630*	*2,314*	*68*	*847*	*2,832*	*490*	*2,468*	***9,649***
2019								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	185	1,334	60	635	1,874	290	1,143	**5,521**
Discourtesy	21	59	9	129	303	85	238	**844**
Force	477	412	16	45	1,003	100	201	**2,254**
Offensive Language	13	1	1	13	58	17	62	**165**
Untruthful Statement	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	*696*	*1,806*	*86*	*823*	*3,238*	*492*	*1,644*	***8,785***
2020								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	157	62	2	33	745	43	17	**1,059**
Discourtesy	23	1	2	7	101	5	10	**149**
Force	306	19	2	11	393	5	9	**745**
Offensive Language	2	0	2	3	30	4	3	**44**
Untruthful Statement	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	**2**
Total	*488*	*82*	*8*	*56*	*1,269*	*57*	*39*	***1,999***
Total								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	604	14,732	607	6,463	16,547	2,654	19,304	**60,911**
Discourtesy	97	568	214	994	6,243	1,691	8,858	**18,665**
Force	1,296	9,407	295	863	11,216	2,779	7,384	**33,240**
Offensive Language	23	4	43	123	1,226	427	1,551	**3,397**
Untruthful Statement	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	**3**
Total	**2,020**	**24,711**	**1,159**	**8,446**	**35,232**	**7,551**	**37,097**	**116,216**

Table 3A. Total Number of Complaints by Category and CCRB Outcome per Year

Category and Year	Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Refused	Unknown	Missing	Total
2007										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	11	105	2,914	1,017	585	105	51	316	843	**5,947**
Discourtesy	5	34	854	412	214	57	19	164	111	**1,870**
Force	13	38	1,789	778	286	61	14	252	170	**3,401**
Offensive Language		9	154	57	32	14	4	24	18	**312**
Total	*29*	*186*	*5,711*	*2,264*	*1,117*	*237*	*88*	*756*	*1,142*	***11,530***
2008										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	9	89	2,396	879	497	88	42	229	643	**4,872**
Discourtesy	2	46	775	389	214	42	20	129	120	**1,737**
Force	6	62	1,391	600	252	49	14	226	154	**2,754**
Offensive Language	3	11	137	43	34	5	1	18	19	**271**
Total	*20*	*208*	*4,699*	*1,911*	*997*	*184*	*77*	*602*	*936*	***9,634***
2009										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	7	74	2,092	848	412	80	31	239	717	**4,500**
Discourtesy	1	35	751	412	192	34	19	169	117	**1,730**
Force	2	47	1,259	610	175	32	12	255	162	**2,554**
Offensive Language		7	131	59	24	9	2	19	11	**262**
Total	*10*	*163*	*4,233*	*1,929*	*803*	*155*	*64*	*682*	*1,007*	***9,046***
2010										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	18	46	2,085	794	348	65	60	227	732	**4,375**
Discourtesy	7	37	769	353	184	30	21	200	167	**1,768**
Force	4	25	1,306	550	221	36	26	322	256	**2,746**
Offensive Language	1	5	128	47	13	4	7	26	18	**249**
Total	*30*	*113*	*4,288*	*1,744*	*766*	*135*	*114*	*775*	*1,173*	***9,138***
2011										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	9	65	1,959	799	336	96	43	206	640	**4,153**
Discourtesy	3	29	756	421	207	44	22	180	113	**1,775**
Force	4	31	1,249	556	250	33	21	318	147	**2,609**
Offensive Language	2	15	154	56	22	9	3	30	25	**316**
Total	*18*	*140*	*4,118*	*1,832*	*815*	*182*	*89*	*734*	*925*	***8,853***
2012										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	2	67	1,863	744	380	75	22	178	636	**3,967**
Discourtesy	5	33	683	287	194	45	15	131	115	**1,508**
Force	2	33	1,138	504	201	54	5	235	155	**2,327**
Offensive Language		6	121	50	23	11		20	22	**253**
Total	*9*	*139*	*3,805*	*1,585*	*798*	*185*	*42*	*564*	*928*	***8,055***
2013										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	4	57	1,796	678	397	62	55	233	600	**3,882**
Discourtesy	3	26	607	299	187	32	23	154	41	**1,372**
Force	2	40	1,234	580	230	43	19	381	66	**2,595**
Offensive Language		10	124	39	30	5	3	24	6	**241**
Total	*9*	*133*	*3,761*	*1,596*	*844*	*142*	*100*	*792*	*713*	***8,090***
2014										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	9	76	1,503	714	375	80	47	190	579	**3,573**
Discourtesy	1	32	592	291	164	43	21	128	27	**1,299**
Force		40	1,183	485	187	66	17	277	22	**2,277**
Offensive Language		10	157	55	33	6	2	19	2	**294**
Total	*10*	*158*	*3,435*	*1,545*	*759*	*195*	*87*	*614*	*630*	***7,433***

Category and Year	Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Refused	Unknown	Missing	Total
2015										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	10	57	1,662	637	403	123	52	314	547	**3,805**
Discourtesy	3	17	494	273	155	48	22	114	29	**1,155**
Force	4	23	1,032	468	282	57	22	223	38	**2,149**
Offensive Language	1	10	110	55	24	14	3	21	5	**243**
Total	*18*	*107*	*3,298*	*1,433*	*864*	*242*	*99*	*672*	*619*	***7,352***
2016										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	14	118	1,776	722	453	115	60	330	794	**4,382**
Discourtesy	1	38	463	293	172	39	23	116	20	**1,165**
Force	6	47	1,119	574	250	46	27	167	31	**2,267**
Offensive Language	2	14	103	48	34	24	4	26	3	**258**
Total	*23*	*217*	*3,461*	*1,637*	*909*	*224*	*114*	*639*	*848*	***8,072***
2017										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	14	180	1,813	850	490	152	114	416	1,043	**5,072**
Discourtesy	3	45	445	243	171	57	31	108	59	**1,162**
Force	7	67	1,034	521	176	54	32	131	70	**2,092**
Offensive Language		12	115	47	31	16	8	21	4	**254**
Total	*24*	*304*	*3,407*	*1,661*	*868*	*279*	*185*	*676*	*1,176*	***8,580***
2018										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	26	127	2,145	873	595	170	100	593	1,174	**5,803**
Discourtesy	2	34	440	234	122	54	26	159	60	**1,131**
Force	11	34	1,192	580	241	65	39	240	68	**2,470**
Offensive Language	2	5	104	45	37	21	5	19	7	**245**
Total	*41*	*200*	*3,881*	*1,732*	*995*	*310*	*170*	*1,011*	*1,309*	***9,649***
2019										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	33	144	2,045	873	567	206	146	586	921	**5,521**
Discourtesy	3	29	309	158	114	34	29	118	50	**844**
Force	9	51	1,016	494	217	50	38	240	139	**2,254**
Offensive Language	2	11	62	32	20	7	4	22	5	**165**
Untruthful Statement									1	**1**
Total	*47*	*235*	*3,432*	*1,557*	*918*	*297*	*217*	*966*	*1,116*	***8,785***
2020										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	2	29	284	163	101	21	15	247	197	**1,059**
Discourtesy	2	5	30	32	21	1	4	32	22	**149**
Force	1	20	271	145	75	8	6	130	89	**745**
Offensive Language	2	6	5	7	5	1		7	11	**44**
Untruthful Statement									2	**2**
Total	*7*	*60*	*590*	*347*	*202*	*31*	*25*	*416*	*321*	***1,999***
Total										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	168	1,234	26,333	10,591	5,939	1,438	838	4,304	10,066	**60,911**
Discourtesy	41	440	7,968	4,097	2,311	560	295	1,902	1,051	**18,665**
Force	71	558	16,213	7,445	3,043	654	292	3,397	1,567	**33,240**
Offensive Language	15	131	1,605	640	362	146	46	296	156	**3,397**
Untruthful Statement									3	**3**
Total	**295**	**2,363**	**52,119**	**22,773**	**11,655**	**2,798**	**1,471**	**9,899**	**12,843**	**116,216**

Table 4A: Number of Complainant Self-Identified Race by Complaint Category per Year

Category and Year	Female	Gender Non-Conforming	Male	Transman	Transwoman	Unknown	Missing	Total
2007								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	953		4,274			1	719	**5,947**
Discourtesy	486		1,309			3	72	**1,870**
Force	612		2,673			1	115	**3,401**
Offensive Language	81		219				12	**312**
Total	*2,132*		*8,475*			*5*	*918*	***11,530***
2008								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	869		3,471			2	530	**4,872**
Discourtesy	497		1,174				66	**1,737**
Force	505		2,164				85	**2,754**
Offensive Language	88		167				16	**271**
Total	*1,959*		*6,976*			*2*	*697*	***9,634***
2009								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	729		3,185			3	583	**4,500**
Discourtesy	492		1,180				58	**1,730**
Force	490		1,960				104	**2,554**
Offensive Language	85		173				4	**262**
Total	*1,796*		*6,498*			*3*	*749*	***9,046***
2010								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	640		3,154				581	**4,375**
Discourtesy	485		1,224			1	58	**1,768**
Force	488		2,151			2	105	**2,746**
Offensive Language	72		172				5	**249**
Total	*1,685*		*6,701*			*3*	*749*	***9,138***
2011								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	563		3,068			3	519	**4,153**
Discourtesy	511		1,214				50	**1,775**
Force	478		2,064				67	**2,609**
Offensive Language	101		203				12	**316**
Total	*1,653*		*6,549*			*3*	*648*	***8,853***
2012								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	587		2,857			4	519	**3,967**
Discourtesy	409		1,054			8	37	**1,508**
Force	381		1,888			4	54	**2,327**
Offensive Language	79		163				11	**253**
Total	*1,456*		*5,962*			*16*	*621*	***8,055***
2013								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	554		2,803			5	520	**3,882**
Discourtesy	388		973			1	10	**1,372**
Force	401		2,178			4	12	**2,595**
Offensive Language	69		169				3	**241**
Total	*1,412*		*6,123*			*10*	*545*	***8,090***
2014								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	587		2,447			9	530	**3,573**
Discourtesy	369		910			7	13	**1,299**
Force	402		1,855			9	11	**2,277**
Offensive Language	110		169			4	1	**284**
Total	*1,468*		*5,381*			*29*	*555*	***7,433***

Category and Year	Female	Gender Non-Conforming	Male	Transman	Transwoman	Unknown	Missing	Total
2015								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	681		2,605		1	22	496	**3,805**
Discourtesy	298		843			5	9	**1,155**
Force	344		1,787			9	9	**2,149**
Offensive Language	84		154			3	2	**243**
Total	*1,407*		*5,389*		*1*	*39*	*516*	***7,352***
2016								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	817		2,784		13	25	743	**4,382**
Discourtesy	337		809	1	2	5	11	**1,165**
Force	426		1,825			8	8	**2,267**
Offensive Language	112		142		1	3		**258**
Total	*1,692*		*5,560*	*1*	*16*	*41*	*762*	***8,072***
2017								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	1,053	1	3,067	1	6	41	903	**5,072**
Discourtesy	331		799	3		7	22	**1,162**
Force	429		1,642	6	1	10	4	**2,092**
Offensive Language	99		149	1	2	2	1	**254**
Total	*1,912*	*1*	*5,657*	*11*	*9*	*60*	*930*	***8,580***
2018								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	1,394	4	3,325	1	4	57	1,018	**5,803**
Discourtesy	305	1	776		3	13	33	**1,131**
Force	540	3	1,883		1	22	21	**2,470**
Offensive Language	97	1	138		1	3	5	**245**
Total	*2,336*	*9*	*6,122*	*1*	*9*	*95*	*1,077*	***9,649***
2019								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	1,334		3,405		10	62	710	**5,521**
Discourtesy	247		555	1		22	19	**844**
Force	464	2	1,731		4	15	38	**2,254**
Offensive Language	72		83		5	5		**165**
Untruthful Statement							1	**1**
Total	*2,117*	*2*	*5,774*	*1*	*19*	*104*	*768*	***8,785***
2020								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	316		635			32	76	**1,059**
Discourtesy	44	1	86			5	13	**149**
Force	136	1	530		1	36	41	**745**
Offensive Language	19	1	18			2	4	**44**
Untruthful Statement							2	**2**
Total	*515*	*3*	*1,269*		*1*	*75*	*136*	***1,999***
Total								
FADOType								
Abuse Of Authority	11,077	5	41,080	2	34	266	8,447	**60,911**
Discourtesy	5,199	2	12,906	5	5	77	471	**18,665**
Force	6,096	6	26,331	6	7	120	674	**33,240**
Offensive Language	1,168	2	2,119	1	9	22	76	**3,397**
Untruthful Statement							3	**3**
Total	**23,540**	**15**	**82,436**	**14**	**55**	**485**	**9,671**	**116,216**

Table 5A: Number of Complainant Self-Identified Gender by Complaint Category per Year

Category and Year	1-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Other	Missing	Total
2007										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	99	1,346	1,538	1,089	584	152	59	4	1,076	**5,947**
Discourtesy	36	510	501	356	187	43	9	1	227	**1,870**
Force	81	1,119	885	595	265	88	28	6	334	**3,401**
Offensive Language	6	82	64	65	41	9	2		43	**312**
Total	*222*	*3,057*	*2,988*	*2,105*	*1,077*	*292*	*98*	*11*	*1,680*	***11,530***
2008										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	36	1,050	1,228	927	551	160	42		878	**4,872**
Discourtesy	17	399	473	353	199	51	15		230	**1,737**
Force	50	825	767	457	267	59	17		312	**2,754**
Offensive Language	3	47	74	57	39	12			39	**271**
Total	*106*	*2,321*	*2,542*	*1,794*	*1,056*	*282*	*74*		*1,459*	***9,634***
2009										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	41	935	1,213	706	457	137	27	3	981	**4,500**
Discourtesy	18	432	498	288	165	50	5		274	**1,730**
Force	46	797	645	401	265	60	20		314	**2,554**
Offensive Language	2	42	81	53	40	7	1	1	35	**262**
Total	*107*	*2,206*	*2,437*	*1,448*	*927*	*260*	*53*	*4*	*1,604*	***9,046***
2010										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	36	992	1,104	674	458	134	30	3	944	**4,375**
Discourtesy	28	428	425	299	165	64	12		347	**1,768**
Force	51	896	646	397	232	72	16	1	435	**2,746**
Offensive Language	2	53	57	48	32	6	1		50	**249**
Total	*117*	*2,369*	*2,232*	*1,418*	*887*	*276*	*59*	*4*	*1,776*	***9,138***
2011										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	52	901	1,044	666	532	156	23		779	**4,153**
Discourtesy	15	435	442	312	240	66	7		258	**1,775**
Force	38	836	652	394	270	80	10		329	**2,609**
Offensive Language	1	57	86	63	48	12	2		47	**316**
Total	*106*	*2,229*	*2,224*	*1,435*	*1,090*	*314*	*42*		*1,413*	***8,853***
2012										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	34	865	903	693	519	155	39		759	**3,967**
Discourtesy	13	318	415	307	181	48	15		211	**1,508**
Force	33	702	599	406	246	58	17	1	265	**2,327**
Offensive Language	5	54	69	48	36	9	1		31	**253**
Total	*85*	*1,939*	*1,986*	*1,454*	*982*	*270*	*72*	*1*	*1,266*	***8,055***
2013										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	11	831	1,034	612	513	159	44		678	**3,882**
Discourtesy	7	285	424	274	210	69	18		85	**1,372**
Force	33	831	808	434	299	92	18	1	79	**2,595**
Offensive Language	1	40	78	57	27	17	2		19	**241**
Total	*52*	*1,987*	*2,344*	*1,377*	*1,049*	*337*	*82*	*1*	*861*	***8,090***
2014										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	27	658	876	605	464	204	39		700	**3,573**
Discourtesy	14	288	373	260	189	84	13		78	**1,299**
Force	31	719	686	394	243	91	23		90	**2,277**
Offensive Language	3	58	83	59	46	18	2		15	**284**
Total	*75*	*1,723*	*2,018*	*1,318*	*942*	*397*	*77*		*883*	***7,433***

Category and Year	1-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Other	Missing	Total
2015										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	15	736	1,069	597	476	198	81	2	631	**3,805**
Discourtesy	10	200	386	217	216	56	24	1	45	**1,155**
Force	35	602	719	350	238	110	43		52	**2,149**
Offensive Language	1	43	72	50	44	13	9		11	**243**
Total	*61*	*1,581*	*2,246*	*1,214*	*974*	*377*	*157*	*3*	*739*	***7,352***
2016										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	40	751	1,140	675	550	221	108	2	895	**4,382**
Discourtesy	13	219	364	277	160	51	23	1	57	**1,165**
Force	46	636	766	340	278	112	40		49	**2,267**
Offensive Language	1	45	86	58	36	12	7		13	**258**
Total	*100*	*1,651*	*2,356*	*1,350*	*1,024*	*396*	*178*	*3*	*1,014*	***8,072***
2017										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	47	888	1,402	774	541	253	108	1	1,058	**5,072**
Discourtesy	11	234	385	253	141	54	19		65	**1,162**
Force	41	530	707	432	212	91	31		48	**2,092**
Offensive Language	3	58	78	47	36	20	5		8	**254**
Total	*102*	*1,710*	*2,572*	*1,506*	*929*	*418*	*163*	*1*	*1,179*	***8,580***
2018										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	27	867	1,483	951	691	369	151		1,264	**5,803**
Discourtesy	17	167	378	217	170	68	25		89	**1,131**
Force	32	589	858	442	305	126	46		72	**2,470**
Offensive Language	7	34	75	43	44	23	4		15	**245**
Total	*83*	*1,657*	*2,794*	*1,653*	*1,210*	*586*	*226*		*1,440*	***9,649***
2019										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	26	915	1,577	1,038	584	305	147	4	925	**5,521**
Discourtesy	11	132	291	191	90	44	15	1	69	**844**
Force	39	566	772	418	255	85	26	1	92	**2,254**
Offensive Language	2	28	51	31	23	12	3		15	**165**
Untruthful Statement									1	**1**
Total	*78*	*1,641*	*2,691*	*1,678*	*952*	*446*	*191*	*6*	*1,102*	***8,785***
2020										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	7	129	296	190	159	85	33		160	**1,059**
Discourtesy		15	55	28	18	7	3		23	**149**
Force	3	167	240	148	58	47	9	1	72	**745**
Offensive Language		6	9	8	10	3			8	**44**
Untruthful Statement									2	**2**
Total	*10*	*317*	*600*	*374*	*245*	*142*	*45*	*1*	*265*	***1,999***
Total										
FADOType										
Abuse Of Authority	498	11,864	15,907	10,197	7,079	2,688	931	19	11,728	**60,911**
Discourtesy	210	4,062	5,410	3,632	2,331	755	203	4	2,058	**18,665**
Force	559	9,815	9,750	5,608	3,433	1,177	344	11	2,543	**33,240**
Offensive Language	37	647	963	687	501	173	39	1	349	**3,397**
Untruthful Statement									3	**3**
Total	**1,304**	**26,388**	**32,030**	**20,124**	**13,344**	**4,793**	**1,517**	**35**	**16,681**	**116,216**

Table 6A: Number of Complainant Age Categories by Complaint Category per Year

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Vita

Isabella Nuccio was born in New York but has lived in Georgia since 2006. After graduating with honors from Brookwood High School, she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia State University in 2020. She worked as an Undergraduate Research Assistant with multiple professors and helped on a variety of projects like analyzing Atlanta crime data dating back to the 1970s and evaluating Shotspotter data. As an undergraduate, she also assisted the Atlanta Police Foundation on researching repeat offenders in Atlanta with their Atlanta Crime Research Center team. After graduating *summa cum laude*, she obtained her Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology from Georgia State University in 2022. As a Graduate Research Assistant, she worked with other students and professors on research regarding Atlanta violent crime trends in comparison with major cities in the country and an ongoing analysis of the Swift Certain Fair program funded by the CJCC. In 2021, she assisted the Pima County Public Defender's Office in Tucson, Arizona on a project examining jail population and crime data to determine potential COVID-19 pandemic-related effects on crime rates.