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## Quality-of-Life Policing: Do Offenders Get the Message?

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# Quality-of-Life Policing: Do Offenders Get the Message?

## ABSTRACT

In the 1990s, the New York City Police Department increased patrols and enforcement of laws against quality-of-life [QOL] offenses. Many have heralded this focus as the primary cause for the decline in the City's crime rate citing the fixing broken windows argument that disorder breeds crime. However, the underlying mechanics of the broken windows paradigm have not yet been systematically explored. This paper assesses one aspect of the broken windows line of reasoning, that QOL policing sends a message to offenders that QOL misbehaviors will not be tolerated. Responses from 539 New York City arrestees interviewed in 1999 indicate that almost all of them were aware that police were targeting various QOL offenses. Among those active in QOL misbehaviors, about half reported that they had seriously cut back or stopped their involvements in the past six months, and about half had not. Those reducing their involvement cited general police presence as the most important factor, suggesting that for them QOL policing had served as a general deterrent.

# Quality-of-Life Policing: Do Offenders Get the Message?

## Introduction

During the 1990s, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) introduced numerous innovations intensifying their efforts to reduce crime and restore order (Bratton with Knobler, 1998; Maple with Mitchell, 1999; Silverman, 1999). One central aspect of that change, Quality-of-life (QOL) policing emphasized the control of minor misbehaviors that were highly visible, such as farebeating[1], aggressive panhandling, graffiti writing, and sleeping on public benches. In the past, these minor offenses would have been mostly ignored. Police might have asked individuals to move on or desist or at most issued a desk appearance ticket requiring the offender to appear in court where they would usually pay a fine. In the mid-1990s, the NYPD targeted these QOL behaviors for arrest.

This paper seeks to add to the small but growing empirical literature on the efficacy of QOL policing. The continual improvement of policing can be assisted through an assessment of the effectiveness of policing innovations and identification of the mechanisms by which they work. To this end, this analysis examines self-reports by a random sample of arrestees that participated in an Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) policing study performed in NYC in 1999 (hereafter, the Policing Study). QOL policing was designed to send a message to offenders that various disorderly behaviors would not be tolerated. (NYPD representatives emphasized this point to us in an early meeting during the project design.) By surveying arrestees, the study examined whether the arrestees had gotten the message and whether they had changed in response.

We emphasize that this analysis represents an extremely limited impact assessment. For a more thorough study, it would have been useful to have obtained data before implementation of

QOL policing to see how perceptions changed over time and even better to have simultaneously collected data from a similar location not subjected to QOL policing. The use of arrestees is also somewhat limiting in that the study seeks to examine changes to more conforming behavior but the sample is limited to persons who still commit illegal activities, presuming the instant arrest was justified. Lastly, the data are from one city. Other locations' experiences may differ depending on the nature of their crime problems and their implementation of QOL policing.

In spite of these limitations, we believe the findings are suggestive of the potential for QOL policing and provide insight into the micro-processes by which it is reputed to work. Perhaps even more importantly, the analysis illustrates the potential for expanded use of the ADAM program for monitoring, evaluating, revising, and justifying the exportation of policing innovations. This analysis was made possible by the ongoing systematic data collection of the ADAM program. It would be straightforward to design similar analyses to assist in evaluating future policing innovations at modest expense beyond the cost of the policy change. The remainder of this introduction describes how QOL policing relates to other policing concepts and reviews prior evaluations of QOL policing and related topics.

### *Policing concepts*

QOL policing is characterized by patrolling for and arresting individuals who commit various publicly-visible minor offenses. There are a variety of nearly synonymous terms that emphasize different aspects of the QOL policing experience including broken windows policing, order maintenance policing, and zero tolerance policing[2]. This section describes the interconnection between these terms as well as their relationship to several other currently popular policing concepts.

Proponents of QOL policing emphasize three interrelated expected benefits of the program: community development, resolution of serious crimes, and overall crime reduction. At the most

basic level, many contend that minor offenses such as aggressive panhandling, urinating in public, and writing graffiti violate civility (Kelling and Coles, 1996). Thus, the reduction of these disorderly misbehaviors improves the community's overall quality of life. Not everyone agrees with this claim. Research by Bohm et al. (2000) indicates a lack of consensus on the policing needs of a community. Bohm et al. contend that targeted policing efforts such as those introduced under the guise of community policing (or perhaps QOL policing) tend to favor the interests of businesses and wealthier homeowners.

Another possible benefit of QOL policing is its potential for solving serious crimes to the extent that the same people commit both QOL and more serious offenses. One of the most famous QOL arrests involved John Royster, Jr. In 1996, he was apprehended in NYC for farebeating and subsequently brought to the central booking facility (Silverman, 1999). A year later, a fingerprint match placed him at the scene of a recent murder and subsequently linked him to four other unsolved assault cases. He was eventually convicted of homicide. Another analysis from this Policing Study provides more systematic evidence that the same persons in NYC tend to engage in both QOL and serious offenses (Golub et al., 2001). A comparison of arrestees charged with QOL and serious offenses found the two groups to be similar according to prior arrests, participation in QOL offenses, and demographic composition.

QOL policing may also indirectly reduce serious crimes according to the broken windows line of reasoning. In a widely cited article published in *Atlantic Monthly*, Wilson and Kelling (1982) expounded the thesis that physical decay as well as uncivil behavior "sends a signal" to established and would-be criminal offenders that deviant behavior is tolerated which can lead to a downward spiral of disorder and decline (Kelling and Coles, 1996; Skogan, 1990). Public misbehaviors offend the community's sensibilities, instill a fear of crime, create a sense of disorder, lead law-abiding residents and visitors to withdraw from public spaces, send a signal

that deviant behavior is tolerated, and ultimately create an environment conducive to crime. By contrast, order-maintenance policing emphasizes the role of police to restore civility and ultimately reduce crime. Zero-tolerance policing emphasizes that no misbehavior, no matter how minor should be tolerated. Allowing any misbehavior to go unchecked could lead to the downward spiral and the degradation of the community.

Ponsaers (2001) and others (see Greene, 2000) contend that the focus of broken windows policing on resolving the underlying problems that generate crime as well as on public safety, fear of crime, and quality-of-life places this policing approach within the inter-related problem oriented (Goldstein, 1990) and community (Greene, 2000; McElroy, Cosgrove and Sadd, 1993; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997) policing movements. However, others maintain that zero-tolerance policing with its heavy emphasis on police patrols misinterprets both problem oriented and community policing (Rosenbaum, Lurigio and Davis, 1998; Greene, 2000). Problem oriented policing and community policing tend to emphasize deeper structural problems; to include the community in the coproduction of crime reduction; and to de-emphasize the arrest function, which can distance the police from the community. Walsh (2001) contends that NYC's enhanced command and control system of the 1990s best reflects the principles of professional policing dating in the U.S. from the turn of the Twentieth Century and back to the original London Metropolitan Police of 1829.

#### *Prior evaluations of QOL policing and related concepts*

QOL policing has been central to NYPD's intensification of policing in the 1990s. Mayor Michael Bloomberg who entered office in 2002 and his police commissioner, Raymond Kelly, have announced that QOL policing will continue to be of central importance to the city's policing strategy (New York Times 2001ab). This decision was based on the City's years of experience with the program. However, there have been very few direct systematic evaluations

of New York City's experiences or the QOL policing strategy itself. This section reviews four sets of empirical studies that partially evaluate the efficacy of QOL policing: aggregate trend analyses; controlled field experiments; cross-sectional comparisons; and deterrence studies.

These studies vary greatly with regard to the realism of the conditions in which they were performed and the precision with which they investigate the mechanics of the broken windows perspective. Aggregate trend analyses suggest that QOL policing contributed to the decline in crime in NYC, however it is unclear as to how much it helped and how it worked. Several recent controlled experiments have examined whether QOL policing can reduce crime and disorder. Several widely-cited cross-sectional studies have examined the interconnection between crime and disorder. The experimental and cross-sectional results have been mixed. Harcourt (2001, pp. 109-121) notes that the broken windows approach is expected to work by changing social norms. He notes that this intermediate step has as yet not been directly tested in the QOL policing literature. To examine the plausibility of this part of the chain reaction, he suggests viewing the deterrence literature as a precedent to the evaluation of QOL policing.

*Aggregate trend analysis.* In the 1990s, NYC experienced a dramatic decline in crime, especially violent crime. Many credited the NYPD's aggressive policing policies (Kelling and Sousa, 2001; Silverman, 1999), as planned and initially implemented by Police Commissioner William Bratton (with Knobler, 1998) and Deputy Commissioner Jack Maple (with Mitchell, 1999) and continued throughout mayor Rudolph Guiliani's tenure (1994-2001). On another note, others have decried NYPD's aggressive policing tactics leading to accusations of racial bias, civil rights infringement, and abuse of authority (Amnesty International, 1996; McArdle and Erzen, 2001; Spitzer, 1999; but see Golub et al., 2001; NYPD, 1999). However, these concerns are not the focus of this paper.

Based on a broad academic review of the evidence, Eck and Maguire (2000) concluded that policing innovations were at least partially responsible for the crime drop but that it was not yet possible to isolate the magnitude of the effect associated with each of a number of policing changes and several other possible confounding factors. Perhaps central to its administrative effectiveness in the 1990s, the NYPD instituted COMPSTAT, an intensive twice weekly meeting facilitated by computer-generated geographically-specific analyses of reported crimes and arrests designed to identify and respond to crime hot spots in a timely manner (Silverman, 1999; Walsh, 2001). However, Greene (1999) noted that a crime drop occurred across the nation, in cities with substantially different policing strategies. Blumstein and Wallman (2000) maintained that the overall decline may have been partially caused by a natural cycle; by the end of the crack epidemic and its attendant violence; by the baby boom aging passed their peak crime years; by declines in handgun use, particularly among youths; and, by a strong economy.

*Controlled field experiments.* Overall, the crime drop of the 1990s provides very limited evidence to suggest the efficacy of QOL policing. Three recent field studies provide a more direct test. Braga et al. (1999) provide the strongest support for the efficacy of QOL policing. They found significantly larger reductions in both disorder and crime in 12 Jersey City high crime areas that received increased attention (with aggressive order maintenance policing a central component of the treatment) compared with 12 matched locations that did not receive the experimental treatment.

Two other studies found that initiatives including QOL policing had no substantial effect on serious crime. Katz, Webb & Schaefer (2001) examined changes in calls-for-service in 10 offense categories for four sections of Chandler, Arizona, locations experiencing Operation Restoration, a QOL initiative involving increased patrolling for disorder as well as other law enforcement activities. No clear post-treatment change was observed across eight of the ten

categories including person crimes, property crimes and disorderly conduct. Public morals offenses (prostitution, public drinking) decreased and surprisingly physical disorder calls increased. Katz et al (2001, p. 857) speculate that the increase in physical disorder calls may have resulted from residents heightened awareness that police would act upon these calls. Novak et al. (1999) compared an area of a larger midwestern industrial city that received increased police patrols for disorder (mostly alcohol use in public and vehicles) violations with an adjacent area (not selected prior to the experimental treatment). They found the treatment had no effect on robbery and burglary rates. They did not measure changes in disorder.

*Cross-sectional comparisons.* In a previous and widely-cited effort to link crime and disorder, Skogan (1990) analyzed responses from 13,000 interviews conducted from 1977 to 1983 with residents of forty neighborhoods from six cities across the United States. He found that robbery victimization was higher in neighborhoods characterized by disorder, even after controlling for poverty, residential stability and racial composition using regression. He concluded that the findings supported the thesis that disorder leads to crime. Harcourt (2001) vigorously objected to Skogan's interpretation and presented numerous methodological concerns, especially that the robbery-disorder relationship disappeared after excluding Newark (which had the highest incidence of both robbery and disorder) from the analysis and that the crime-disorder relationship did not hold for other crime types including burglary, assault, rape and purse snatching/pickpocketing.

In another cross-sectional analysis, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) videotaped more than 23,000 face blocks in over 196 Chicago neighborhoods. These data were then coded to measure the level of physical disorder present. They found that crime was not related to disorder after controlling for a variety of other factors, especially concentrated poverty and collective efficacy

(a neighborhood-level measure of cohesion, informal social control, and optimism). Sampson and Raudenbush suggested that the causes of crime are much deeper than disorder.

*Deterrence.* The deterrence literature suggests that individual acceptance of pro-social norms is highly related to crime commission. In theory, changes in social norms might be effected by QOL policing. However, to date the deterrence literature has primarily examined the static relationship between norms and crime.

Much of the deterrence literature distinguishes between the risk of legal and extralegal sanctions (Foglia, 1997; Grasmick and Bursik, 1990; Meier and Johnson, 1977; Nagin and Pogarsky, 2001). Many individuals report not committing illegal acts because they would be embarrassed and even punished if their family and peers found out or because they would be personally ashamed of themselves for committing the offense. These persons exhibited a strong internal control based on their understanding and acceptance of prevailing social norms that guide their everyday behavior (Hechter and Opp, 2001; Johnson, 1973; Wolfgang and Ferricutti 1967). Nagin (1998, p. 20) reported that deterrence studies consistently find that, “[I]ndividuals who report higher stakes in conventionality are more deterred by perceived risk of exposure for law breaking.” Indeed, these extralegal sanctions may serve as a much greater deterrent than legal punishments. This may be because they operate according to very different mechanisms. Extralegal considerations (particularly embarrassment and shame) elevate deterrence from the cat-and-mouse game of cops and offenders and place the locus of control within the individual and their social context.

Consistent with this line of reasoning, studies on the impact of policing hot spots suggest that the impact of intensive policing can be geographically-limited and short-lived (Sherman, 1995; Sherman and Weisburd, 1995). Highly concentrated police enforcement in one location may cause offenders to move to another location that is “safer” (indoors or in dark corners) or to

employ a variety of concealment strategies. Once heavy enforcement ends and word gets out, offenders might return to that location. Thus, concentrated enforcement may effectively serve as eyewash, temporarily reducing the visibility but not necessarily the occurrence of various behaviors.

Thus, the empirical support for the efficacy of QOL policing is mixed. Aggregate trend analyses are confounded by numerous alternative explanations for the crime drop. Detected correlations between crime and disorder may be spurious or artifacts of other methodological limitations. Perhaps most centrally, several controlled experiments detected no improvement following QOL policing. Katz et al. (2001) and Novak et al. (1999) both conclude that their negative findings could have been strongly influenced by the nature of the crime problem or the implementation of the policing initiative. Novak et al. (1999, p. 186) noted, "media coverage is an essential ingredient to crackdowns," and that its lack in this study might account for their negative finding. Of importance to this study, neither Katz et al. (2001) nor Novak et al. (1999) measured whether potential offenders were aware that a policing initiative had occurred. Hence, the lack of significant findings does not necessarily refute the broken windows line of reasoning. This analysis examines the first steps of the broken windows line of reasoning, perception and behavioral change among persons that might engage in various QOL offenses. In this manner, it seeks to identify whether and how QOL policing can serve as a deterrent to disorderly behavior.

## **METHODS**

This analysis employed arrestee self-reports obtained by the Policing Study to identify whether they were aware of NYPD's QOL policing efforts and whether they had changed their behavior as a result. The remainder of this section describes the Policing Study, the self-report questions, and the characteristics of the sample.

*A NYC Policing Study*

The Policing Study employed the ADAM program as a convenient and cost-effective platform for data collection (see Johnson et al., 2001, for further details). Since 1987, ADAM (formerly the Drug Use Forecasting or DUF program) has been interviewing arrestees about their drug use and obtaining urine samples at numerous police booking facilities across the United States. Participation in the ADAM survey is voluntary. At most sites in 1999, more than 80% of arrestees approached agreed to participate (NIJ, 2000). The ADAM data are kept confidential and used for scientific research purposes only.

In 1999, the ADAM-NYC program spent one week per quarter interviewing adult arrestees at the central booking facility in each of NYC's five boroughs. During the third and fourth quarters of 1999, interviewers from the Policing Study approached a subsample of these ADAM respondents for a supplemental interview. Prior to beginning the Policing Study interview, potential subjects were asked to provide written informed consent for the interviewer to record their arrest number, date and time, and other personal identifying information. The potential subjects were informed that the project would obtain their criminal histories from New York City and State agencies that retain such information. Respondents were promised \$15 after release for completing the questionnaire. Nearly everyone (97%) approached agreed to participate.

The preliminary sample yield was 470 respondents. An additional 36 arrestees interviewed in the second quarter of 1999 during the project's pilot stage were added to the final database. To increase the sample size further, the project performed supplemental data collection in the week after the official ADAM data collection period in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan, generating another 386 interviewees. The complete sample included 892 arrestees.

Starting in 1999, the ADAM program instituted procedures designed to obtain a representative sample of all arrestees (NIJ, 2000). To check the representativeness, the ADAM

program compares the data to a complete census of all arrestees during the time that data collection occurs. Starting with the ADAM-2000 data, the program added sample weights to further assure the generalizability of estimates (Hunt and Rhodes, 2001). To facilitate comparisons across gender, the ADAM program purposefully oversamples females, who usually account for about 15% of NYC arrestees. For this analysis, simple weights were employed so that females would constitute 15% of the weighted sample.

### *Questions on QOL offending*

All Policing Study respondents were asked a series of questions on QOL offending regardless of whether they had been arrested for QOL violations. The list of behaviors was based on readings of the literature and developed in consultation with NYPD staff. It included behaviors the NYPD has been explicitly targeting as part of QOL policing (e.g., farebeating, smoking marijuana in public), QOL offenses that the NYPD has not been targeting (e.g., littering), traffic offenses, and a few behaviors prohibited only to youths, as well as behaviors that do not violate an explicit statute but that arrestees may feel are the subject of enforcement efforts (e.g., hanging out in the street). The analysis of responses regarding underage drinking was limited to arrestees who were under age 21 at the time of the interview. Several QOL questions regarding cigarettes and truancy were excluded from this analysis because there were too few Policing Study respondents under the age of 18.

Respondents were asked up to four questions pertaining to each behavior: 1) Whether they perceived that police were targeting the behavior for warnings, tickets or arrests; 2) Whether they had engaged in the behavior during the past year; if yes 3) Whether they had reduced or stopped their involvement in the behavior during the previous 6 months; and if yes 4) The reason for the reduction. Respondents were offered several possible reasons for any reduction: a) police presence (hearing or seeing that the police target the behavior); b) contact with police or courts

regarding the behavior (such as a warning, ticket, arrest, jail, probation/parole); c) drug treatment or other social services; d) job duties or employment; e) family or a relationship; and f) other.

Pilot testing revealed that virtually no arrestees self-reported that they had increased their involvement in any of these QOL behaviors so questions were limited to reductions in participation.

~~A preliminary concern of the Policing Study was whether arrestee self reports were accurate.~~

Golub et al. (2002) examined those Policing Study variables that could be confirmed with objective data (prior criminal arrest and recent drug use) to determine how response accuracy varied across questions and individuals. They found that arrestees were highly likely to disclose less stigmatized information such as whether they had ever been arrested before and whether they had used marijuana recently as opposed to more stigmatized behaviors like commission of a violent crime or recent use of cocaine. This suggests that arrestees might be highly likely to disclose QOL offending behaviors.

Golub et al. (2002) also found that arrestees who disclosed having a prior arrest were substantially more likely to disclose other aspects of their criminal behavior. Moreover, persons who did not disclose that they had a prior lifetime arrest record generally did not disclose other criminal activities in their official record. In a multivariate analysis, this preliminary disclosure proved to be the strongest and most consistent predictor of disclosure on other questions—stronger than demographic characteristics, disclosure of recent drug use, and interviewer's assessment of the respondent's veracity. Accordingly, it was decided to limit the analysis to the 539 arrestees who had a prior arrest record and disclosed it. (The analysis excluded 189 arrestees that had no official record of arrest and 164 that did not disclose a prior arrest record.)

*Characteristics of the Policing Study subsample analyzed*

Table 1 presents the weighted characteristics of the subsample of the Policing Study used in this analysis. The average age of the arrestees was 33 years. The sample was predominately black (65%) and Hispanic (24%); only a modest portion was white (11%). Manhattan was relatively heavily represented in the sample (44%) compared to Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens (17-19% each), and especially Staten Island (3%). Just over half the study sample was recruited from among persons already included in the ADAM sample (56%).

[Table 1 about here]

On average, sample members rated poorly on various measures of mainstream attainment. Many respondents did not have a high school degree (37%), a few were still in high school (3%), others had received their degree (44%), and some had attended college (16%). Most of the respondents were single and never married (59%). Some were single again (11%) after being separated, widowed, or divorced. Some reported that they lived with someone (16%) to whom they were not married. Relatively few (only 13%) reported that they were currently married. Just over a quarter of the sample reported having a full-time job (27%), some worked part-time (12%), some had other legal sources like family (16%), and a few reported no income at all (3%). Some reported welfare (20%) and others reported illegal activities (22%) as their main source of income.

For many of the respondents, the current arrest was for a drug offense (34%). Others were currently charged with a property index (10%, including burglary, auto theft, larceny and arson), robbery (5%), or violent index (11%, including homicide, rape, and aggravated assault) offense. A substantial percentage had been charged with other, generally less serious offenses (39%).

An examination of the Policing Study subjects' New York State criminal histories (which excludes out-of-state arrests) showed that on average prior criminal histories were substantial (13

prior arrests). The number of prior arrests was particularly high partially because Policing Study respondents with no prior arrests were excluded from this analysis. A large proportion had been arrested within the last six months (57%). Most of the arrestees had at least one prior arrest for a drug (83%) and an index (74%) offense. Most had been to jail (72%) and a third had been to prison (33%).

Nearly all (83%) of the arrestees were detected as recent users of an illicit drug. About half were detected as recent users of cocaine (52%, including powder cocaine and crack) and marijuana (46%). A much smaller proportion detected as recent users of opiates such as heroin (16%). These arrestees appear to exist on society's margins, as evinced by their low socio-economic status, high level of drug involvement, and considerable prior involvement with the criminal justice system.

## Results

This section examines the respondents' participation in QOL behaviors, awareness of NYPD's QOL policing efforts, recent reductions in QOL behaviors and the reasons for reductions. For ease of presentation, the various QOL behaviors are divided into five functional categories as to whether they pertain to substance use; sanitation; public displays; illegal street businesses; and traffic violations (see Tables 2-6).

### *Participation in QOL behaviors*

The two most common QOL behaviors were hanging out in the street (47%) and farebeating (44%)—see Table 2. Public consumption behaviors were also relatively common. More than a third of the sample reported smoking marijuana, buying/carrying marijuana, and drinking alcohol in public as well as underage drinking (34-38%). Somewhat fewer reported selling marijuana (16%) or smoking in a non-smoking area (21%).

[Table 2 about here]

Public display behaviors (in addition to hanging out) were also fairly common. About a quarter of the sample reported engaging in disorderly conduct, loitering, and trespassing (25-28%). Making loud noises, belonging to a gang and failing to cooperate with the police were less common (4-16%). Almost a third of the respondents reported urinating in public (31%). Other sanitation offenses like littering were uncommon (3-15%). Other than farebeating, relatively few arrestees engaged in each of the street business offenses (2-13%).

Just over one-fifth of the sample reported jaywalking (22%) or driving without a license or registration (21%). Exceedingly few reported violating any of the other traffic regulations (3-11%). These responses are quite credible as many New Yorkers do not own cars, many drive infrequently, and it is not unusual for lifelong New Yorkers to never even learn to drive.

#### *Got the Message: Perceptions of QOL police activity*

Arrestees were well aware that police were targeting QOL behaviors (see Table 3). Most of the rates of awareness for individual QOL behaviors were over 80%. A few behaviors were much less likely (about 50%) to be perceived as the subject of policing enforcement such as failing to pick up after your dog. Indeed, NYPD officials had told the Policing Study during questionnaire development that they were not targeting many of these same offenses.

[Table 3 about here]

Nearly all arrestees reported that police were targeting public marijuana use/purchase/sale and public alcohol use (91-93%). Somewhat fewer perceived that police were targeting underage drinking (76%). Many fewer reported that police were targeting smoking in a non-smoking area (56%). Many reported that police were targeting public urination (82%). Other

sanitation offenses were mentioned less often (42-68%). Most reported that each of the public display offenses was being targeted (72-86%).

Farebeating (88%) and prostitution (88%) were the street business most often reported as targeted. Most arrestees perceived that other street businesses (69-83%) were being targeted except for squeegee work (60%), the cleaning (often aggressively) of car windshields at traffic lights for tips. This may have been the result of intensive QOL policing efforts that targeted and nearly eliminated this activity in the early 1990s. Almost none (2%, see Table 2) of the Policing Study respondents reported engaging in squeegee work.

Arrestees were quite sure that police were targeting various traffic violations including driving while intoxicated, driving without a license or registration, ignoring a stop, and speeding (89-94%). They were much less likely to report that police were targeting drag racing (70%), talking on a cell phone while driving (45%), violating traffic laws while on bicycle (59%) and jaywalking (52%).

#### *QOL participants' perceptions of police activity*

Those arrestees who engage in each behavior were significantly more likely to report that police were targeting the behavior (see Table 4). Arrestees who smoke/buy/sell marijuana in public or drink in public were virtually unanimous in their perception that police were targeting these behaviors (96-98%). Whereas, arrestees that do not engage in these behaviors were somewhat less likely to report that police were targeting these behaviors (88-91%). Both doers and non-doers were less likely to perceive that police were targeting smoking in a non-smoking area. Again, however, the doers (76%) were substantially more likely to report that the behavior was being targeted than were non-doers (53%).

[Table 4 about here]

Persons that engage in various sanitation violations were more likely than those that did not to report that police were targeting the behavior. Similarly, persons that engage in public display violations and street businesses were more likely to report that police were targeting these behaviors. This relationship did not hold for the various traffic violations. Doers and non-doers were just as likely to perceive that police were targeting each behavior with one modest exception. Persons who reported driving without a license or registration (98%) were somewhat more likely than were non-doers (92%) to report that police were targeting this behavior.

#### *Reduction in QOL behaviors*

While most arrestees appear to have gotten the message that the NYPD had been targeting certain QOL behaviors, a considerable proportion of these arrestees reported past year involvement in some of these offenses. This section examines cessation or reduction in QOL behaviors among those respondents that had engaged in each QOL behavior and were aware that police were targeting the offense. Overall, about half of the arrestees reported cutting back on each QOL behavior (see Table 5). The rate of reduction was somewhat higher among farebeaters (69%) and among traffic violators (65-75%) excluding jaywalkers. The lowest rate of change was reported by jaywalkers (29%) and aggressive panhandlers (29%). Jaywalking (walking against traffic lights) is endemic in NYC among most segments of the population—yet this traffic rule is actively enforced and obeyed in many other parts of the United States.

[Table 5 about here.]

#### *Reasons for reducing QOL behaviors*

Consistent across the various QOL behaviors, about two-thirds of those reporting reductions listed *police presence* as their main reason (see Table 6, the range was 56-81%). The importance of police presence as a reason for reducing their behaviors stands in stark contrast to the lower

importance of direct contact with criminal justice agents (0-11%). With regard to most QOL behaviors, fewer than 10% of the respondents who indicated reducing their involvements listed a direct criminal justice contact as the reason for their behavioral change. Drug treatment (0-11%) and employment (0-10%) were also infrequently the primary reason given. Family (0-28%) was often the second most common explicit reason given for their reduction in a QOL behavior.

[Table 6 about here]

### **Conclusion**

The theory behind QOL policing is complex and involves multiple stages of influence. In particular, the broken windows line of reasoning indicates that this crime reduction process starts with a simple message to existing and would-be participants in QOL misbehaviors such as public drinking, farebeating, or disorderly conduct. In contrast, the quantitative evaluations of QOL policing have primarily followed an input-output approach. Aggregate trend analyses have focused on the co-occurrence of QOL policing implementation and declines in crime. Similarly, cross-sectional analyses have examined the co-location of high levels of crime and disorder. Controlled experiments have evaluated whether crime was lower in communities experiencing QOL policing.

Notably, several controlled experiments found that QOL policing had resulted in no significant change in crime. Interpretation of such findings however is confounded as to whether it represented a failure of the theory or of the implementation. More refined assessment techniques perhaps involving multiple measures are clearly needed. Such measurements could more explicitly locate where a local initiative failed to properly implement a theory.

Alternatively, the measurements could identify which aspects of a line of reasoning do not hold up in practice leading to more refined theories.

This study focused on measuring one aspect of QOL policing as operating in NYC in 1999, whether arrestees had gotten the message that police are targeting QOL behaviors. Nearly all of the arrestees, but especially QOL participants, reported having "gotten the message."

Furthermore, about half of those who had engaged in each behavior in the past year reported having stopped or reduced their involvement in the past six months. Still, QOL offending had not been eliminated. About a third or more of the respondents reported that in the past year they had engaged in farebeating, smoked and bought marijuana in public, drank in public, and urinated in public.

Most importantly, about two-thirds of the respondents that had reduced involvement in each behavior reported that a police presence was the primary reason. This suggests that QOL policing had served as a general deterrent to these respondents; either they had observed the police enforcement or word had gotten around. Each would-be offender did not have to be personally contacted for the policy to have an impact.

The value of a deterrent depends on the number of persons deterred, the range of behaviors deterred, and the persistence of the effect. The broken windows line of reasoning suggests that restoring order will also deter serious crime. The Policing Study did not directly examine this next element to the reputed chain reaction. Regarding persistence, the deterrence literature suggests that if offenders internalize norms against disorderly behavior (either because they felt such activities were wrong or because they would be ashamed if others learned of their conduct) that the impact could be long term. The policing study did not pose questions that might elicit this information. Prior deterrence research suggests that those with a weaker stake in conventional behavior will be less likely to have internalized norms of behavior. Many of the Policing Study respondents had not completed high school, few were married, few held full-time jobs, most used illicit drugs, and most had extensive criminal records. Accordingly, the deterrent

effect reported likely represented a proximal concern for arrest avoidance and not necessarily a long-term behavioral change.

This study advances the state of empirical knowledge about the mechanics behind the broken windows perspective. It is clear that in 1999 NYC arrestees had gotten the message that QOL misbehaviors were being targeted and many of them were changing their conduct. Further research is needed to more precisely estimate the size of the deterrent effect and the impact of long-term QOL policing both in NYC and elsewhere. Studying the specific mechanisms reputedly behind the efficacy of QOL policing holds out the promise of providing further insight into the extent to which QOL policing can reduce crime, why, how the approach can be effectively modified, and how it can be adapted for use in other locations and times.

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**Table 1: Characteristics of the ADAM-New York City Policing Subsample Analyzed (N=539)**

<u><i>Demographics</i></u>		<u><i>Educational attainment</i></u>		<u><i>Current charge</i></u>	
Average age	33	No H.S. degree	37%	Drugs	34%
		In H.S.	3%	Property index	10%
Black	65%	H.S. degree	44%	Robbery	5%
Hispanic	24%	Attended college	16%	Violent index	11%
White	11%			Other	39%
		<u><i>Marital status</i></u>		<u><i>NYS criminal record</i></u>	
<u><i>Source</i></u>		Single	59%	Average number	
Manhattan	44%	Sep/wid/div	11%	of lifetime arrests	13
Bronx	17%	Lives w/someone	16%	Arrest past 6 mo.	57%
Brooklyn	19%	Married	13%	Drug arrest	83%
Queens	17%			Index arrest	74%
Staten Island	3%	<u><i>Primary income source</i></u>		Served time in jail	72%
		Full-time job	27%	Served time in prison	33%
ADAM sample	56%	Part-time job	12%		
Supplemental sample	44%	Other legal	16%	<u><i>Recent use (urine+)</i></u>	
		No income	3%	Cocaine/crack	52%
		Welfare	20%	Heroin	16%
		Illegal activities	22%	Marijuana	46%
				Any of the three	83%

Note: Estimates weighted to control for overrepresentation of females.

**Table 2: Prevalence of Quality-of-Life Behaviors among New York City Arrestees****Percent that self-report doing each behavior in the past year**

<u><b>Substance Use</b></u>		<u><b>Street Business</b></u>	
Smoking marijuana in public	36	Farebeating	44
Buying/carrying marijuana in public	34	Aggressive panhandling	7
Selling marijuana in public	16	Squeegee work	2
Drinking alcohol in public	35	Vending w/o license	9
Underage drinking (under 21 only)	38	Selling counterfeit video/tapes	4
Smoking in non-smoking areas	21	Buying/selling alcohol to minors	3
		Buying/selling cigarettes to minors	4
		Gambling/numbers in public	13
		Prostitution in public	5
<u><b>Sanitation</b></u>		<u><b>Traffic</b></u>	
Urinating in public	31	Driving while intoxicated	7
Writing graffiti	4	Driving w/o a license/registration	21
Littering	15	Ignoring red lights and stop signs	8
Failing to pick up after your dog	3	Speeding	11
Failing to recycle garbage	5	Drag racing	3
		Talking on cell phone while driving	4
		Violating traffic laws while bicycling	9
		Jaywalking	22
<u><b>Public Display</b></u>			
Hanging out in street	47		
Engaging in disorderly conduct	28		
Making loud noises in public	16		
Loitering w/o cause	25		
Belonging to a gang	4		
Trespassing	28		
Failing to cooperate w/police	13		

Note: Estimates weighted to control for overrepresentation of females.

**Table 3: Arrestee Perception of New York City Police Quality-of-Life Efforts****Percent that perceived that police were targeting each behavior**

<u><i>Substance Use</i></u>		<u><i>Street Business</i></u>	
Smoking marijuana in public	92	Farebeating	88
Buying/carrying marijuana in public	91	Aggressive panhandling	73
Selling marijuana in public	92	Squeegee work	60
Drinking alcohol in public	93	Vending w/o license	83
Underage drinking (under 21 only)	76	Selling counterfeit video/tapes	78
Smoking in non-smoking areas	56	Buying/selling alcohol to minors	72
		Buying/selling cigarettes to minors	69
		Gambling/numbers in public	77
		Prostitution in public	88
<u><i>Sanitation</i></u>		<u><i>Traffic</i></u>	
Urinating in public	82	Driving while intoxicated	94
Writing graffiti	68	Driving w/o a license/registration	93
Littering	62	Ignoring red lights and stop signs	91
Failing to pick up after your dog	50	Speeding	89
Failing to recycle garbage	42	Drag racing	70
		Talking on cell phone while driving	45
		Violating traffic laws while bicycling	59
		Jaywalking	52
<u><i>Public Display</i></u>			
Hanging out in street	72		
Engaging in disorderly conduct	86		
Making loud noises in public	77		
Loitering w/o cause	86		
Belonging to a gang	76		
Trespassing	82		
Failing to cooperate w/police	85		

Note: Estimates weighted to control for overrepresentation of females.

**Table 4: Variation in Perception of New York City Police Quality-of-Life Efforts between arrestees who engage in QOL Behaviors and those who do not****Percent that perceived that police were targeting each behavior (doers – non-doers)**

<u><i>Substance Use</i></u>		<u><i>Street Business</i></u>	
Smoking marijuana in public	98-88**	Farebeating	95-84**
Buying/carrying marijuana in public	97-88**	Aggressive panhandling	95-72**
Selling marijuana in public	96-91	Squeegee work	--
Drinking alcohol in public	96-91*	Vending w/o license	99-82**
Underage drinking (under 21 only)	--	Buying/selling alcohol to minors	--
Smoking in non-smoking areas	76-53**	Buying/selling cigarettes to minors	--
		Selling counterfeit video/tapes	--
		Gambling/numbers in public	86-77
		Prostitution in public	100-87
<u><i>Sanitation</i></u>		<u><i>Traffic</i></u>	
Urinating in public	94-74**	Driving while intoxicated	100-94
Writing graffiti	--	Driving w/o a license/registration	98-92*
Littering	74-60*	Ignoring red lights and stop signs	94-91
Failing to pick up after your dog	--	Speeding	89-89
Failing to recycle garbage	64-42*	Drag racing	--
		Talking on cell phone while driving	--
		Violating traffic laws while bicycling	62-59
		Jaywalking	57-51
<u><i>Public Display</i></u>			
Hanging out in street	81-66**		
Engaging in disorderly conduct	98-82**		
Making loud noises in public	87-75*		
Loitering w/o cause	92-85*		
Belonging to a gang	--		
Trespassing	98-76**		
Failing to cooperate w/police	100-83**		

Note: Estimates weighted to control for overrepresentation of females.

\*statistically significant at the  $\alpha=.05$  level \*\*statistically significant at the  $\alpha=.01$  level

-- Prevalence rates based on fewer than 25 respondents not shown.

**Table 5: Impact of Quality-of-Life Policing on New York City Arrestees****Among past year doers that reported police are targeting behavior, percent that stopped or cut back on behavior**

<u><i>Substance Use</i></u>		<u><i>Street Business</i></u>	
Smoking marijuana in public	48	Farebeating	69
Buying/carrying marijuana in public	50	Aggressive panhandling	29
Selling marijuana in public	50	Squeegee work	--
Drinking alcohol in public	56	Vending w/o license	62
Underage drinking (under 21 only)	42	Buying/selling alcohol to minors	--
Smoking in non-smoking areas	40	<del>Buying/selling cigarettes to minors</del>	--
		Selling counterfeit video/tapes	--
		Gambling/numbers in public	60
		Prostitution in public	44
<u><i>Sanitation</i></u>		<u><i>Traffic</i></u>	
Urinating in public	49	Driving while intoxicated	73
Writing graffiti	--	Driving w/o a license/registration	75
Littering	66	Ignoring red lights and stop signs	69
Failing to pick up after your dog	--	Speeding	65
Failing to recycle garbage	--	Drag racing	--
		Talking on cell phone while driving	--
		Violating traffic laws while bicycling	--
		Jaywalking	29
<u><i>Public Display</i></u>			
Hanging out in street	55		
Engaging in disorderly conduct	65		
Making loud noises in public	56		
Loitering w/o cause	53		
Belonging to a gang	--		
Trespassing	60		
Failing to cooperate w/police	55		

Note: Estimates weighted to control for overrepresentation of females.

-- Prevalence rates based on fewer than 25 respondents not shown.

**Table 6: Reasons New York City Arrestees gave for stopping/cutting back on Quality-of-Life Behaviors****Main reason for stopping or cutting back on a behavior (%):****(police presence.criminal justice contact.drug treatment.job.family.other)**

<u><b>Substance Use</b></u>		<u><b>Street Business</b></u>	
Smoking marijuana in public	68.7.1.8.8.9	Farebeating	66.3.1.6.10.13
Buying/carrying marijuana in public	67.6.2.6.12.6	Aggressive panhandling	--
Selling marijuana in public	74.6.0.7.10.3	Squeegee work	--
Drinking alcohol in public	71.6.2.2.6.13	Vending w/o license	--
Underage drinking (under 21 only)	--	Buying/selling alcohol to minors	--
<u>Smoking in non-smoking areas</u>	81.6.1.0.8.4	<u>Buying/selling cigarettes to minors</u>	--
		Selling counterfeit video/tapes	--
<u><b>Sanitation</b></u>		Gambling/numbers in public	68.1.1.1.9.20
Urinating in public	71.5.2.2.7.13	Prostitution in public	56.6.3.3.28.3
Writing graffiti	--		
Littering	65.0.3.1.0.31	<u><b>Traffic</b></u>	
Failing to pick up after your dog	--	Driving while intoxicated	65.9.11.5.1.9
Failing to recycle garbage	--	Driving w/o a license/reg.	73.10.5.2.2.9
		Ignoring red lights/stop signs	--
<u><b>Public Display</b></u>		Speeding	72.8.5.4.0.12
Hanging out in street	58.4.1.4.13.20	Buying cigars (under 18 only)	--
Engaging in disorderly conduct	69.7.4.4.11.5	Drag racing	--
Making loud noises in public	68.8.5.4.12.4	Talking on cell phone while driving	--
Loitering w/o cause	67.8.3.2.14.6	Violating traffic laws while bicycling	--
Belonging to a gang	--	Jaywalking	--
Trespassing	72.5.0.10.5.8		--
Failing to cooperate w/police	65.11.0.0.17.7		

Note: Estimates based on responses of the 539 arrestees with a prior record who disclosed it.

Estimates weighted to control for overrepresentation of females.

-- Prevalence rates based on fewer than 25 respondents not shown.

**Notes**

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1 Farebeating involves entering public transportation without paying by jumping over the subway turnstile, sneaking onto a bus through the back door, or other means.

2 These terms are “nearly synonymous” in that all of them are used (by some) to refer to QOL policing, especially as implemented in NYC in the 1990s. However, not everyone would agree that all of the terms are synonymous. For example, Kelling and Sousa (2001, p. i) hold that, “As implemented by the NYPD, ‘broken windows’ policing is not the rote and mindless ‘zero-tolerance’ approach that critics contend it is.” In this exposition, we focus on the denotative signification of each term. The term QOL policing holds a generally neutral connotation.

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