



Comparing the Attitudes of Police Body-Worn Cameras

Nate LeMahieu, Na Liu M.S., Chris Sweadner, John Klofas Ph.D., and John McCluskey, Ph.D.



Center for Public Safety Initiatives

Introduction

Resulting from instances of use-of-force between citizens and police officers, body-worn cameras have been implemented in law enforcement agencies country-wide in hopes that officer accountability, agency transparency, and police-community relationships will improve.

The Rochester Police Departments implementation of Body-Worn Cameras began in the Summer of 2016 and finished in March of 2017. Currently there are approximately 435 Body-Worn Cameras in the Rochester Police Department.

A component of CPSI's Body-Worn Camera Project Evaluation included identifying the attitudes of officers and citizens in a variety of methods:

- Community Surveys
- Ride-Along Interviews
- Officers Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Community Forums

Research Questions

- Do the local Rochester Communities mirror the current national trend for support for police body-worn cameras?
- Does support for body-worn cameras vary for individuals of different backgrounds or interests?
- How do the officers at the Rochester Police Department Perceive body-worn cameras?
- Do perceptions of body-worn cameras vary between the community and the police?
- Do perceptions of body-worn cameras vary by RPD Patrol Section?

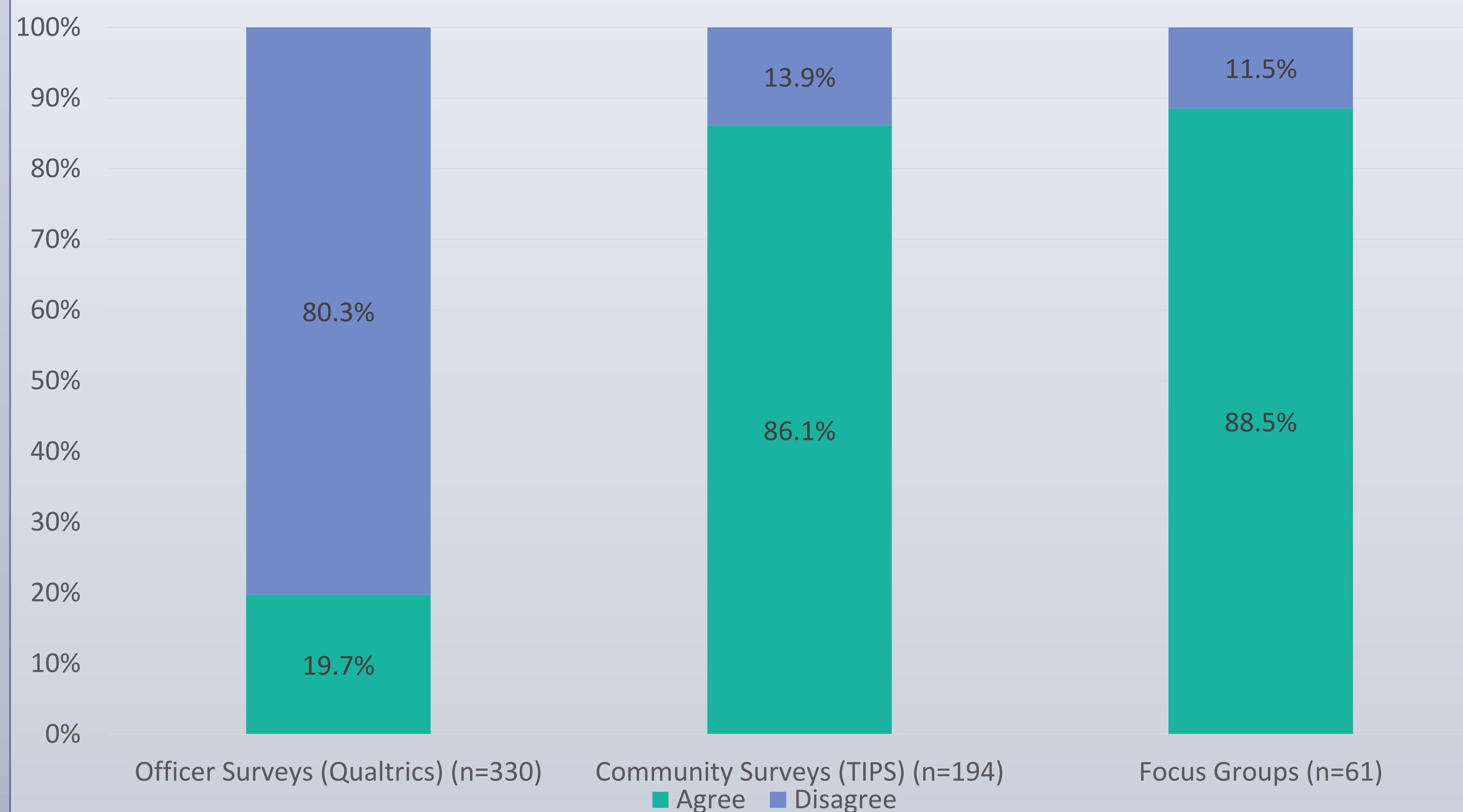


Body-Worn Camera Procedures



Quantitative & Qualitative Findings

“Body-Worn Cameras Are Good For Police-Community Relationships” (N=585)



Community Attitudes

- Recognize that body-worn cameras are beneficial, but not a singular solution to improving police-community relations
- Body-worn cameras could improve police and citizen behavior and cooperation
- Concerns regarding tax payer associations with the project
- Concerns over footage manipulation, including editing and redaction
- Interest in body-worn camera recording and footage retention policies

Law Enforcement Attitudes

- Cameras can be used to build probable cause and secure arrests
- Community members generally like the ideas of body-worn cameras, but individuals who regularly interact with the police don't
- Reduced intelligence from witnesses
- Police clientele do not regularly notice the body-worn cameras, thus limiting any effect on interactions
- Concerns for citizen and police privacy resulting from public disclosure laws

Future Analysis

Before-and-after Body-Worn Camera Comparisons

Complaint Data

Use-of-force data

Calls-for-service (arrests, frequency of calls)

Officer Survey Data

Community Survey Data

References

White, M. D. (2014). Police officer body-worn cameras: Assessing the evidence. *Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.*

Contact

Center for Public Safety Initiatives
 Department of Criminal Justice
 Building 1, Room 2383
 Rochester Institute of Technology
www.rit.edu/cla/criminaljustice/cpsi