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## **NATIONAL: WHITES, BLACKS ON JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

*Racial divide on whether Garner grand jury  
would have indicted police officer if victim was white*

West Long Branch, NJ – Public opinion of recent incidents involving police and the deaths of black men reveals a deep racial divide on perceived racism in the judicial process. The latest national **Monmouth University Poll** finds black Americans are significantly more likely than white or Hispanic Americans to believe that the grand jury in the Eric Garner chokehold case would have indicted the police officer involved if Garner had been white rather than black.

Nearly all Americans have been following news about incidents involving police officers and the deaths of black men as well as the recent grand jury decisions not to indict the officers involved. About half (48%) have been following these cases very closely and another 38% somewhat closely.

Overall, 43% of Americans say that blacks are justified at being upset with how these recent cases were handled while 38% say that the black community's reaction is not justified. Another 11% say it depends on the reaction. There is a clear racial difference in this opinion. Two-thirds (66%) of blacks say that black Americans are justified in being upset with how the judicial system has handled these cases. Only 41% of whites and 35% of Hispanics feel the same.

Just 3-in-10 (29%) Americans believe that the New York grand jury would have indicted the police officer who applied a chokehold in the Eric Garner case if Garner had been white, while about half (49%) say the victim's race would not have altered the grand jury outcome. Another 22% are unsure. A solid majority (58%) of blacks believe an indictment would have been handed down if Garner had been white. Just 24% of whites and 27% of Hispanics agree.

“The poll indicates a strong sense of distrust for the entire justice process among black Americans, not only for the police but for the actions of courts and prosecutors as well,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

Overall, 1-in-3 (33%) Americans feel that police officers are more likely to use excessive force against a black culprit than a white culprit when faced with a difficult or dangerous situation. A majority (58%), though, feel that police are just as likely to use excessive force against black and white culprits given the same type of situation. Again, there is a stark racial divide on this opinion. Blacks (64%) are significantly more likely than either Hispanics (35%) or whites (26%) to say police are more likely to use excessive force when dealing with a black individual in a dangerous situation.

Most Americans (56%) believe that racism is no more prevalent among police officers than it is among other groups in society. Another 25% say there is more racism among the police and 12% say there is less racism among the police. Just under half (48%) of blacks feel that police are more racist than other segments of society. Only 24% of Hispanics and 19% of whites feel the same.

One aspect of these recent incidents is that news and discussion about them exploded on social media, which is one of the reasons why 3-in-4 (73%) Americans report having watched the Garner arrest video. Some have speculated that this may have led to more confrontation as friends and acquaintances voiced differing views on these issues. The *Monmouth University Poll* asked about these interactions and found that 1-in-5 (19%) Americans say that a friend or coworker expressed an opinion about these incidents that really upset them. This includes 28% of blacks, 25% of Hispanics, and 15% of whites.

About half (49%) of this group say the distressing comment was made in person, 25% say it was made on social media, and another 25% of this group say they were upset by comments made both in person and on social media. Two-thirds (65%) of this group say the offending opinion was expressed by someone who is the same race as them, while just 22% say the comment came from someone of a different race and 12% say they heard or read comments from friends of both the same and different races as them.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from December 10 to 14, 2014 with 1,008 adults in the United States. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

***The questions referred to in this release are as follows:***

(\* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. How closely have you been following news about recent incidents involving police officers and the deaths of black men – very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very closely	<b>48%</b>	45%	50%	49%	54%	42%	39%	48%	56%	45%	72%	48%
Somewhat closely	<b>38%</b>	41%	36%	39%	34%	43%	42%	37%	37%	42%	21%	32%
Not too closely	<b>8%</b>	9%	10%	7%	8%	9%	12%	9%	4%	9%	4%	8%
Not at all closely	<b>4%</b>	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	2%	4%	3%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>1%</b>	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%

2. Have you heard that grand juries chose not to indict police officers in two separate incidents involving the death of black men in Missouri and New York, or not?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Have heard	<b>92%</b>	90%	92%	95%	94%	91%	85%	96%	96%	93%	97%	90%
Have not heard	<b>7%</b>	9%	7%	4%	6%	8%	14%	4%	3%	6%	3%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>1%</b>	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

3. Do you think blacks are justified or not justified in being upset with how these cases were handled by prosecutors and the courts?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Justified	<b>43%</b>	29%	43%	58%	41%	45%	49%	38%	44%	41%	66%	35%
Not justified	<b>38%</b>	57%	34%	28%	40%	35%	34%	40%	39%	41%	21%	37%
(VOL) Depends	<b>11%</b>	8%	14%	9%	12%	10%	7%	14%	11%	11%	10%	13%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	7%	8%	5%	6%	9%	9%	7%	7%	7%	3%	15%

4. Based on what you know or have heard, [CHOICES WERE ROTATED] do grand juries try to determine whether someone is guilty or innocent OR do grand juries simply assess whether a crime may have been committed?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Determine whether someone is guilty or innocent	<b>26%</b>	24%	25%	28%	24%	27%	29%	25%	22%	22%	34%	21%
Assess whether a crime may have been committed	<b>63%</b>	65%	66%	58%	67%	60%	61%	65%	64%	67%	47%	68%
(VOL) Both	<b>3%</b>	1%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	9%	5%	11%	6%	10%	6%	7%	11%	8%	15%	7%

5. Have you seen the video showing Eric Garner being put in a chokehold by a police officer, or not?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Yes, have seen	<b>73%</b>	75%	70%	77%	78%	69%	62%	75%	84%	74%	85%	64%
No, have not	<b>26%</b>	24%	29%	22%	22%	29%	37%	25%	16%	26%	14%	36%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>1%</b>	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%

6. Do you think the grand jury would or would not have indicted the police officer if Eric Garner had been white?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Would have	<b>29%</b>	18%	27%	41%	27%	31%	33%	27%	28%	24%	58%	27%
Would not have	<b>49%</b>	62%	50%	37%	56%	43%	45%	54%	48%	54%	27%	50%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>22%</b>	20%	23%	22%	18%	26%	22%	20%	24%	23%	15%	23%

7. When faced with a difficult or dangerous situation, are police officers more likely to use excessive force if the culprit is black, or are they just as likely to use excessive force against black and white culprits given the same type of situation?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
More likely	<b>33%</b>	13%	33%	52%	33%	33%	39%	28%	34%	26%	64%	35%
Just as likely	<b>58%</b>	77%	58%	40%	59%	56%	50%	65%	57%	66%	31%	53%
(VOL) Police do not use excessive force	<b>1%</b>	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	10%	7%	7%	7%	10%	10%	7%	8%	8%	5%	10%

8. Do you think there is more racism, less racism, or about the same amount of racism among police officers than among other groups in society?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
More racism	<b>25%</b>	15%	21%	39%	22%	27%	25%	24%	24%	19%	48%	24%
Less racism	<b>12%</b>	16%	14%	5%	15%	9%	12%	12%	12%	12%	6%	12%
Same amount of racism	<b>56%</b>	60%	58%	50%	55%	56%	57%	55%	56%	61%	36%	54%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	9%	7%	6%	8%	8%	6%	9%	8%	7%	10%	10%

9. Do you have a friend or coworker who expressed an opinion about these recent incidents that really upset you? [*if NEEDED: Incidents involving the police and the deaths of black men.*]

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Yes	<b>19%</b>	15%	16%	27%	20%	18%	24%	18%	14%	15%	28%	25%
No	<b>81%</b>	85%	84%	73%	80%	82%	76%	82%	86%	85%	72%	75%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

[The following questions were asked of those who reported being upset by a friend's/coworker's expressed opinion about these recent events: n=173, moe=+/-7.5%]

10. Was this opinion expressed in person or on social media like Facebook?

	TOTAL
In person	<b>49%</b>
Social media	<b>25%</b>
(VOL) Both	<b>25%</b>
(VOL) Don't know	<b>0%</b>

11. Was this person the same race as you or a different race?

	TOTAL
Same race	<b>65%</b>
Different race	<b>22%</b>
(VOL) Both same & different races	<b>12%</b>
(VOL) Don't know	<b>1%</b>

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 10 to 14, 2014 with a national random sample of 1,008 adults age 18 and older. This includes 677 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 331 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
27% Rep	49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
42% Ind	51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
31% Dem		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Unweighted N	1,008	279	393	311	496	512	208	325	470	794	92	71
moe	3.1%	5.9%	5.0%	5.6%	4.4%	4.3%	6.8%	5.4%	4.5%	3.5%	10.2%	11.6%

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