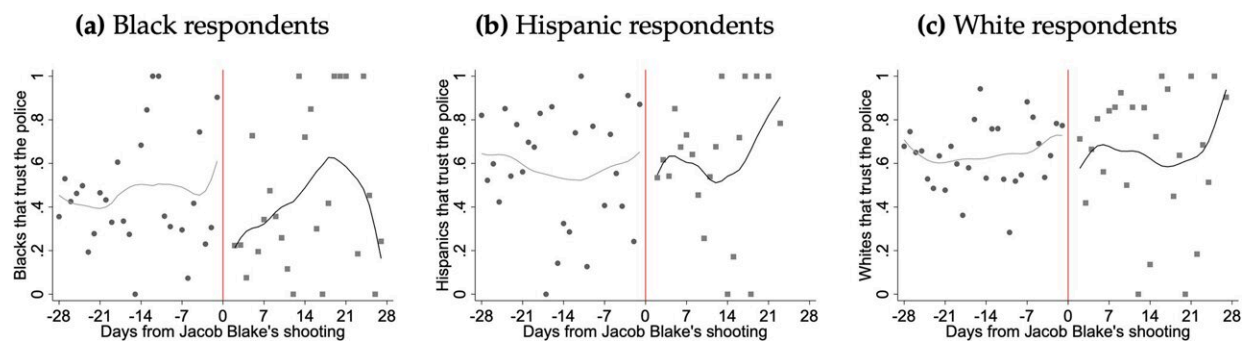


# Data show trust in police declined among Black Chicago residents after Jacob Blake shooting

September 11 2024



City-wide share of survey participants that reported trust in law enforcement in the days before and after Blake's shooting. Credit: Ben-Menachem, Torrats-Espinosa, 2024, *PLOS ONE*, CC-BY 4.0 ([creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/))

Survey data collected from Chicago, Illinois at the time of the 2020 police shooting of Jacob Blake in nearby Wisconsin shows that trust in police plummeted among Black residents after the shooting. Jonathan Ben-Menachem and Gerard Torrats-Espinosa of Columbia University in New York, U.S., present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on September 11, 2024.

For young minority men in the U.S., [police violence](#) has become a leading cause of death. Prior research has explored how police violence

and misconduct might reduce [trust](#) in police, but most studies have been limited in their ability to explore how trust might vary with individual factors such as age, race, or prior arrest.

On August 23, 2020, police officer Rusten Sheskey shot unarmed, 29-year-old Black man Jacob Blake in the back, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. A viral video of the [shooting](#) sparked widespread protests. At the time, the Chicago Department of Public Health was in the midst of conducting a survey broadly evaluating residents' health, which included questions about trust in law enforcement.

Ben-Menachem and Torrats-Espinosa recognized that the overlapping timing of the shooting and the survey could enable a quasi-experimental statistical analysis comparing how trust in police may have differed in the four weeks leading up to versus the four weeks following the shooting. Their dataset consisted of 584 Black and 939 white Chicago residents.

They found that, during the two weeks after the shooting, trust in police among Black residents declined by 31% overall. Declines were particularly pronounced for Black adults aged 18 to 44 and among Black residents who had previously experienced arrest or incarceration. Meanwhile, trust among white residents was relatively unchanged.

Further analysis showed that these results held true even when considering the possible influence of COVID-19 pandemic policies or the shootings perpetrated by Kyle Rittenhouse in Kenosha in the aftermath of the Jacob Blake shooting.

While further research is needed, these findings deepen understanding of how police violence may influence perceptions of [law enforcement](#), perhaps exacerbating public safety issues.

The authors add, "Although other studies have shown that high-profile police violence can change residents' perceptions of police, we found these changes were most pronounced among three groups: Black residents, [young people](#), and those who had previously been arrested or charged with a crime."

**More information:** Police violence reduces trust in the police among Black residents, *PLoS ONE* (2024). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0308487](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0308487)

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