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### **New Research Finds Minority High-Crime Rate Communities Want More Prevention and Protection and Less Punishment from Law Enforcement**

*ABF Researcher John Hagan and co-authors publish new findings in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*

CHICAGO, July 18, 2018 — A new study by [American Bar Foundation \(ABF\)](http://AmericanBarFoundation.org) Research Professor [John Hagan](https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnhagan) and co-authors examines the paradox that high-crime rate communities where residents are skeptical of police nonetheless rely heavily on 911 calls for police assistance. In a new article on “Racial Isolation, Legal Cynicism and Reported Crime,” published online last week in the prestigious [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences \(PNAS\)](https://www.pnas.org), Hagan and co-authors Bill McCarthy, Daniel Herda, and Andrea Cann Chandrasekher present an explanation of this paradox. Professor Hagan reports that “we set out to determine why residents of these neighborhoods call 911 if they do not trust law enforcement. Our analysis shows that neighborhood residents call in the desperate hope — despite past disappointment and lacking alternatives — that police will provide more protection and prevention.”

Hagan and his co-authors further examine how residents are unconsciously and consciously influenced by historical understandings that have developed over long periods of time. A result — especially in disadvantaged and racially isolated African-American neighborhoods — is a tendency toward “legal cynicism,” or a shared disbelief in the law, police and the criminal justice system that persists alongside frequent calls for police assistance. Using survey and census data from neighborhoods in Chicago, Hagan and his colleagues find that this cynicism dates historically from experiences of inequality — from slavery, through Jim Crow laws, to contemporary residential racial isolation, segregation and economic disadvantage. These factors join with higher mass incarceration among minority men and higher rates of home

foreclosures and evictions among minority families, which are continuing sources of distrust in law enforcement and neighborhood policing.

Through survey and official data gathered over several decades in Chicago, Hagan and his co-authors show that the problems of policing in high-crime rate, minority neighborhoods are far more complex and deeply entrenched than is acknowledged or resolved by reliance on policies of punishment and mass incarceration. The responses residents most seek are prevention and protection.

### ***About John Hagan***

*John Hagan is a research professor at the American Bar Foundation (ABF), and [the John D. MacArthur Professor of Sociology and Law](#) at Northwestern University. His research examines the intersection of law, crime, and mass incarceration. He has received numerous honors and distinguished scholar awards, including the Stockholm Prize in Criminology, the Edwin Sutherland and Harry J. Kalven Awards, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the C. Wright Mills Award and others. Hagan is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is a former president of the American Society of Criminology.*

### ***About the American Bar Foundation***

*The [American Bar Foundation](#) (ABF) is among the world's leading research institutes for the empirical and interdisciplinary study of law. The ABF seeks to expand knowledge and advance justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. To further this mission the ABF will produce timely, cutting-edge research of the highest quality to inform and guide the legal profession, the academy, and society in the United States and internationally. The ABF's primary funding is provided by the [American Bar Endowment](#) and the [Fellows of The American Bar Foundation](#).*

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