

State
Of the
State
Survey

*Michigan Residents Speak Out About
Domestic Violence*

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Briefing Paper No. 95-10

Michigan Residents Speak Out About Domestic Violence

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KEY FINDINGS

The Survey

- A telephone survey of 1,202 adult residents of the state of Michigan was conducted by Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research between May 10 and June 20, 1995. This is the third quarterly MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS). It focused on issues related to families, women and children. The sampling error is $\pm 2.8\%$.
- The sample is designed to provide representative information for respondents from major regions of the state: Detroit City, Southeast Michigan (excluding Detroit), Southwest Michigan, Central Michigan (West and East), northern Lower Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula. (See attached information sheet for list of counties included in each region.) The data reported here are weighted to make the results representative of the adult population of Michigan.

Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence

- **A large majority of Michigan residents believe action should be taken against domestic violence.** They responded that something should be done when someone hits their spouse or partner with the force that it leaves a mark (86%). Of those individuals who believe something should be done, 80% believe the assailant should be incarcerated and 95% believe the assailant should receive mandatory treatment for the problem (Q.1, Q.3, Q.4 — *question wording is given below*).
- **Social services are seen as the most appropriate response to the problem of striking a spouse or partner.** When given a choice between providing social services, barring contact with the victim, or arrest, the majority of individuals who believe something should be done when there is an incident of domestic violence said that the most appropriate response is to provide social services. (See Figure 1.) (Q.2)
- **Men and women differ in their opinions of what should be done with domestic violence offenders.** For people who think domestic violence should not be ignored, men are somewhat more likely than women to say that incarceration should be part of the response (83% of men vs. 77% of women). The vast majority of women (97%) think that mandatory treatment should be part of the response, and most men (94%) agree. (See Figure 2.) (Q.3, Q.4).

Experience with Domestic Violence

- **For people living outside of Detroit, African American respondents are more likely to report that their spouse or partner uses force against them.** While 6% of Caucasian respondents report a spouse or partner has been violent toward them in the last year, 12% of African Americans and 6% of other racial categories report violence. In Detroit, Caucasian respondents (13%) and other racial categories (20%) are more likely than African American respondents (6%) to report violence. (See Figure 3.) (Q.5)

While rates of domestic violence may vary based on factors other than race (such as socioeconomic status), and residents of Detroit tend to have lower incomes than those living outside Detroit, the rates of reported domestic violence in this sample were low. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to assess whether economic status accounted for the variation in domestic violence by race.

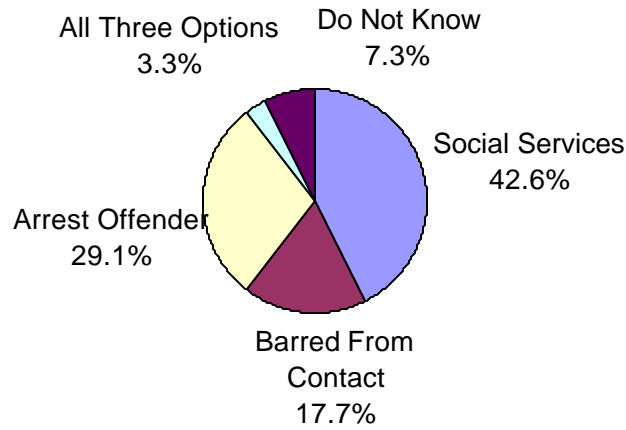
Getting Help for Domestic Violence

- **Almost a third of Michigan residents do not know where to get help in their communities for women who have been abused (physically or emotionally) by a spouse or partner.** Twenty-nine percent say that they would not know where to get help for a woman they know is being abused. Slightly more women (74%) than men (67%) are aware of sources of help. (Q.6).

As Figure 4 shows, people in Detroit are least likely to know where to get help for individuals suffering from abuse (60% compared to 74% outside Detroit). In Detroit, race has no connection to whether a person knows where to get help for abuse. However, outside of Detroit, whites (74%) are less likely than African Americans (82%) to know where to obtain assistance.

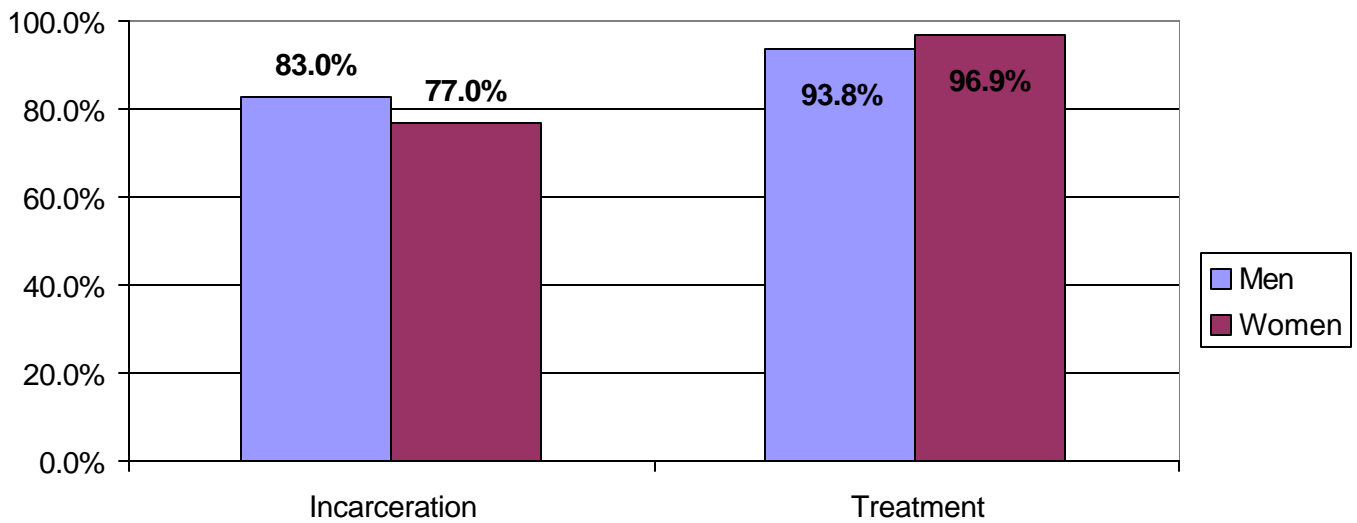
- **Women seeking help for themselves or someone else in the household because of abuse, neglect, or physical harm most often turn to police and clergy or counseling.** In a one year period, an estimated 124,142 Michigan women sought help from the police at least once for family violence, and 130,937 turned to the clergy or a counselor for assistance. An estimated 71,400 women sought assistance from a physician, and 50,824 from a shelter. The estimated number of women in contact with protective services was 37,673. The estimate for rape crisis services is 9,255.¹ (Q.8, Q.9, Q.10, Q.11, Q.12, Q.13)
- **Men seek help for themselves or someone else in the household because of abuse, neglect, or physical harm at lower rates than do women.** Estimated numbers are: 99,178 men sought help from the police and 71,378 from a physician. Results for other sorts of help-seeking behavior reported by men should be interpreted with caution, since less than 10 men in the sample reported each of the following sorts of contact: protective services (28,818), clergy/counseling (29,837), shelter (11,816), rape crisis center (6,990). Despite the low reporting rates, there is some certainty that for this last listing of sources of help, men are quite unlikely to be in contact for the purpose of obtaining assistance for themselves or a family member because of victimization through family violence).² (Q.8, Q.9, Q.10, Q.11, Q.12, Q.13)

Figure 1. What Should be Done about Domestic Violence?



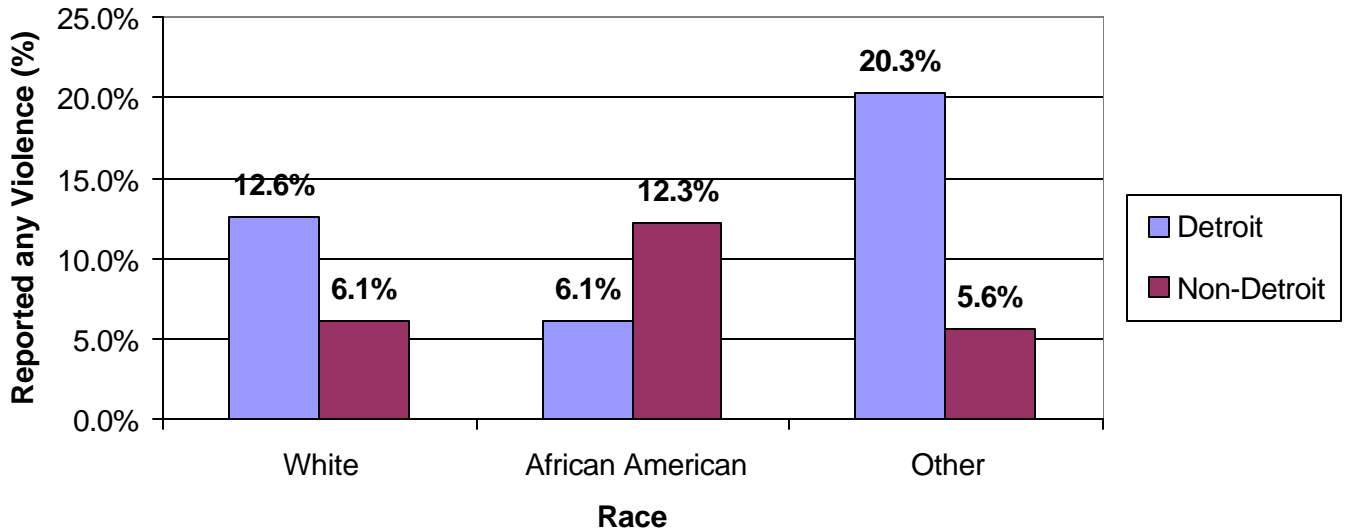
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS), May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error +/- 2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 2. How Should Domestic Violence Offenders be Handled?



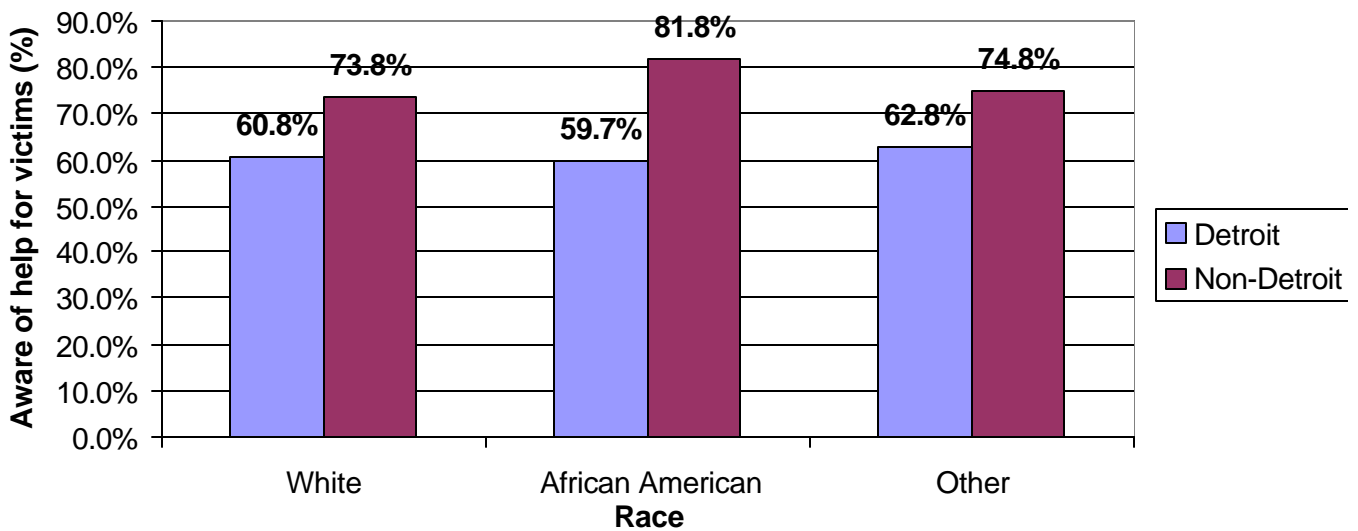
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS), May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error +/- 2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 3. Rates of Reported Domestic Violence
Differences by Race and Residence



MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS), May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error +/- 2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 4. Do You Know Where To Get Help for Domestic Violence Victims?
Differences by Race and Residence



MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS), May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error +/- 2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

SURVEY QUESTIONS

NOTE: The full wording of questions (and answer categories if other than yes or no) for the items discussed in this briefing paper is given here. The order in this list conforms with the order of bulleted items in the “Key Findings” section above, not with the order of questions in the survey instrument. Overall, the interviews lasted an average of 23 minutes. The questions about domestic violence consumed about five minutes of that time.

Q.1. When someone hits a spouse or partner so that it leaves a mark, do you feel the family should be left alone to deal with the situation or should something be done about it?

[Questions 2-4 were asked only of those whose answer to Q.1 was that something should be done.]

Q.2. Which of the following do you feel would be the most appropriate action to take in this situation? Should social services be provided to the family to reduce the chance of future harm, or should the person who causes the harm be barred from staying or having contact with the other person, or should the person who harmed the other be arrested?

Q.3. Should that person be given a jail or prison sentence?

Q.4. Should that person be required to receive treatment?

Q.5. When angry, how often does your spouse or partner push, physically fight, or hit you? Would you say always, often, seldom, or never?

Q.6. If you knew a woman who was being emotionally or physically abused by her husband, partner, ex-partner, or ex-spouse, would you know where to find help for her in your community?

Q.7. A variety of professionals and agencies provide assistance to individuals in situations of family-related abuse, neglect, or physical harm. These include battered women’s shelters and hotlines, rape crisis centers, child and protective services, counseling centers, clergy, the police, and medical personnel. In the past year, have you personally contacted any of these to get help for yourself or someone else in your household regarding abuse, neglect, or physical harm?

Q.8. In the past year, did you contact a battered women’s shelter or hotline (to get help for yourself, or someone else in your household for family-related abuse, neglect, or physical harm)?

[Questions 9-13 ended with the same phrase shown above in parentheses in Q.8.]

Q.9. In the past year, did you contact a rape crisis center or hotline?

Q.10. In the past year, did you contact child or family protective services?

Q.11. In the past year, did you contact a counseling center, counselor, minister, priest, or other clergy member?

Q.12. In the past year, did you contact the police?

Q.13. In the past year, did you contact a doctor or other medical personnel?

¹ 95 percent confidence intervals for the contact variables for women are: shelter $\pm 1,500$; rape crisis center ± 133 ; protective services $\pm 1,017$; clergy/counseling $\pm 4,609$; police $\pm 4,407$; physician $\pm 2,396$.

² 95 percent confidence intervals for the contact variables for men are: shelter ± 312 ; rape crisis center ± 145 ; protective services $\pm 1,095$; clergy/counseling $\pm 1,152$; police $\pm 3,868$; physician $\pm 3,262$.

REGIONAL CATEGORIES

NOTE: These regions are the ones used by the Michigan State University Extension Service, except that we treat Detroit City as a separate region.

Detroit: City of Detroit

Southeast: Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Wayne (excluding Detroit)

Southwest: Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren

West Central: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa

East Central: Arenac, Bay, Clare, Clinton, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola

Northern L.P.: Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Otsego, Oscoda, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Wexford

U.P.: Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft

Background Information

Michigan State University State of the State Survey [MSU SOSS]

What Is MSU SOSS?

The MSU State of the State Survey is a quarterly statewide survey of a random sample of the residents of Michigan. Although dozens of surveys are conducted in Michigan every year, none is designed to provide a regular systematic monitoring of the public mood in major regions of the state. Through SOSS, MSU aims to fill this information gap. SOSS has five main purposes: (1) to provide timely information about citizen opinions on critical issues; (2) to provide data for scientific and policy research by MSU faculty; (3) to provide information for programs and offices at MSU; (4) to develop survey research methodology; and (5) to provide opportunities for student training and research.

Each quarterly round or “wave” of SOSS has a different main theme: (a) January—quality of life, governmental reform, higher education; (b) April—family, women, and children; (c) July—ethnic and racial groups, Michigan communities; (d) October (even numbered years)—politics, the election, and political issues; (odd-numbered years)—health and the environment;

Who Is Conducting SOSS?

The State of the State Survey is administered by the Survey Research Division (SRD) of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR), using its computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology.

The design and overall planning of SOSS is the responsibility of a 17-person Steering Committee chaired by Dr. Brian D. Silver, Professor of Political Science. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from sponsoring units, which are primarily colleges and other administrative offices within MSU.

Subject to final approval by the Steering Committee, the questionnaire for each wave of SOSS is developed by a Working Group, most of whom also serve as analysts for that wave. The Working Group for the May 1995 wave includes Principal Investigators, a Research Team and an Advisory Council. Members are:

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