

## Sharp Racial Divisions in Reactions to Brown, Garner Decisions

(this document contains excerpts from the original article available at: <http://www.people-press.org/2014/12/08/sharp-racial-divisions-in-reactions-to-brown-garner-decisions/>)

From Pew Research Center, December 8, 2014

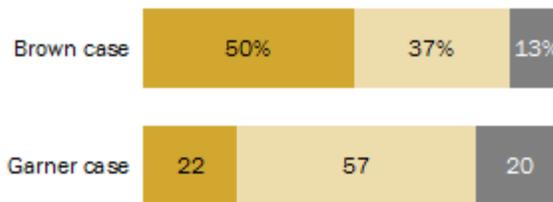
The public has very different reactions to the recent grand jury decisions in two police-related deaths that have sparked protests in cities across the country. By 50% to 37%, Americans say a grand jury made the right decision not to charge former Ferguson, Mo., police officer Darren Wilson in the death of Michael Brown.

---

### Decisions in Brown, Garner Cases Viewed Very Differently

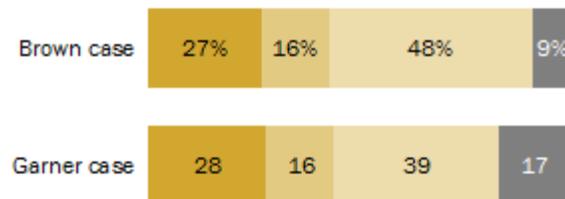
*Grand jury decisions not to charge police officers in Michael Brown/Eric Garner cases ...*

■ Right decision ■ Wrong decision ■ Don't know



*Race was \_\_\_\_ in decisions not to charge police officers in Michael Brown/Eric Garner deaths ...*

■ Major factor ■ Minor factor ■ Not a factor at all ■ DK



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. (Garner questions asked Dec 4-7, 2014).

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

---

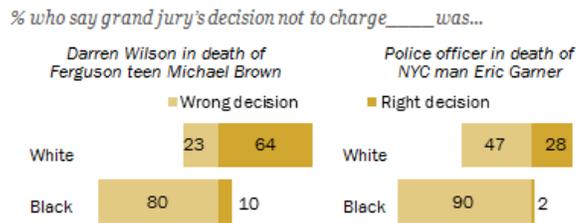
By contrast, a majority (57%) says a grand jury in New York City made the wrong decision in not charging a police officer in the death of Eric Garner. Just 22% viewed that as the right decision.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center and [USA TODAY](#), conducted Dec. 3-7 among 1,507 adults, finds that race is not widely viewed as being a major factor in either decision. About a quarter (27%) say race was a major factor in the Brown decision, and 16% say it was a minor factor; about half (48%) say it was not a factor at all in the ruling.

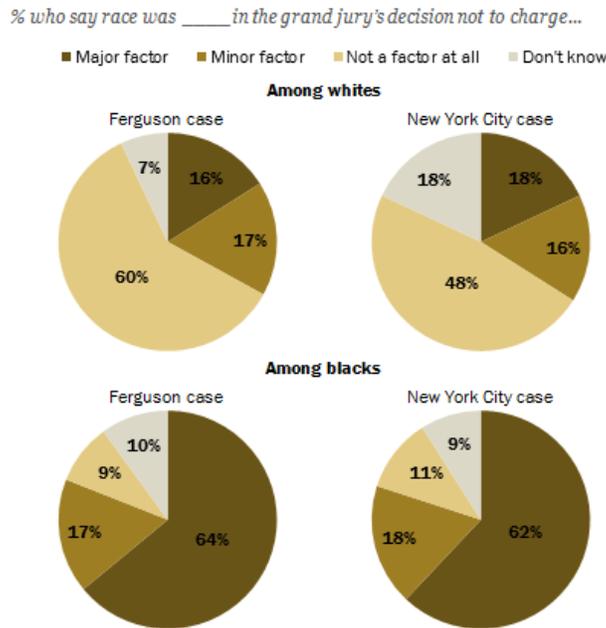
In the Garner case, 28% say race was a major factor, 16% say it was a minor factor, while 39% say it was not a factor; 17% express no opinion about the impact of race in the Garner decision, which was announced Dec. 3. (Questions about the Garner decision were asked Dec. 4-7.)

Blacks and whites have starkly different views of the decisions in the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases, and blacks are far more likely than whites to say that race was a major factor in both rulings.

### Huge Racial Disparity in Views of Ferguson Ruling, More Agreement in Views of Garner Decision



### Blacks More Likely to Say Race a Factor in Both Cases



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. (Garner questions asked Dec 4-7, 2014.) Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Fully 80% of blacks say the grand jury made the wrong decision in not charging Wilson in Brown’s death; 90% say the grand jury erred in not bringing charges against a police officer in Garner’s death. By a wide margin (64% to 23%), whites say the grand jury made the right decision in Brown’s death. However, just 28% of whites say the grand jury made the right decision in not charging a police officer in Garner’s death; nearly half (47%) say the grand jury made the wrong decision. A quarter of whites (25%) express no opinion about the Garner decision, compared with just 8% of blacks.

Most blacks say race was a major factor in the Brown (64%) and Garner decisions (62%). Among whites, just 16% say race played a major role in the decision not to charge Darren Wilson, and 18% say it was a major factor in the decision.

---

### Wide Partisan, Age Divisions in Grand Jury Opinions

*In not charging [Darren Wilson in Ferguson shooting of Michael Brown/Police officer in N.Y. shooting of Eric Garner], did grand jury make ...*

	<b>Michael Brown case (Ferguson)</b>		<b>Eric Garner case (N.Y.)</b>	
	<b>Right decision</b>	<b>Wrong decision</b>	<b>Right decision</b>	<b>Wrong decision</b>
	%	%	%	%
Total	50	37	22	57
White	64	23	28	47
Black	10	80	2	90
Hispanic	27	62	17	70
18-29	40	50	13	74
30-49	47	39	18	57
50-64	52	35	25	57
65+	63	22	36	41
Republican	76	12	42	31
Independent	54	34	20	58
Democrat	27	60	12	77

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. (Garner questions asked Dec 4-7, 2014.) Don't know responses not shown. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics; Hispanics are of any race.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

---

In addition to the racial gaps in opinions about the decisions of grand juries in Missouri and New York, there also are substantial partisan differences.

Republicans and Democrats disagree about both outcomes. Republicans widely support the Ferguson grand jury’s decision (76% right vs. 12% wrong), while most Democrats say it was wrong not to charge Wilson (60% wrong vs. 27% right decision).

## About the Surveys

Most of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 3-7, 2014 among a national sample of 1,507 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (605 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 902 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 513 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. **The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample** and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.