

CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH POLICE AND COMMUNITY POLICING

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Abstract

This article attempts to shed light on citizen satisfaction with police in a community policing environment. It specifically aims to analyze the influence of quality of police contact, police work ratings in terms of collaboration with local community, neighborhood ratings, victimization, and feeling of safety in the neighborhood. The study found that the most important predictor of citizen satisfaction with the police was police work ratings. Feeling of safety was a moderate level predictor of citizen satisfaction. The analysis confirmed our hypothesis that those who feel unsafe or victimized previously maintain a less satisfaction toward the police. The results of this study have implications for community policing activities intended to increase citizen satisfaction with police. As shown in this study, police rating in terms of collaboration with public has a strong positive effect on increasing satisfaction with police which confirms the utility of main philosophy of community policing. In this respect, gaining public support and involvement is critical for successful police services.

Keywords: Community Policing, Police-Public Relationship, Citizen Satisfaction

Introduction

The American models of policing have witnessed significant changes over the last thirty years that shifted police from a bureaucratic, incident driven force to new policies and programs what is known as community policing (Kelling & Coles, 1996, Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994). In this new policy, instead of responding single incidents, main focus of policing is to be identifying underlying causes of problems in the community and putting efforts to solve them (Goldstein, 1987). Community policing relies heavily on citizen

involvement to identify and solve community problems. Police should engage in community and communicate them effectively in order to identify underlying causes of problems, and then, police can help community to overcome its own problems (Miller & Hess, 2002). One of the key components of community policing philosophy is to increase the quantity and quality of police-citizen contacts (Sherman, 1997). Citizen satisfaction with police plays a key role in this process. Community policing activities such as citizen advisory boards, community meetings, foot patrol, neighborhood watch, and door-to-door visits aim to increase the satisfaction of citizens with police, to encourage people to share information about offenses, offenders, and public safety problems, as well as to increase a feeling that police care about the problems of the citizens and to build mutual trust. These activities also let people feel more comfortable contacting police to tell about problems and share information about crimes and criminals (Eck & Rosenbaum, 1994).

A variety of empirical research has been conducted on different aspects of community policing, like its effects on crime, fear of crime, citizen satisfaction with police, police officers' job satisfaction. Most research shows that citizens who are satisfied with the police are less likely to fear victimization, more likely to cooperate with the police, and even less likely to commit crime (Tyler, 2003). Although most Americans hold favorable attitudes toward the police (Tuch & Weitzer, 1997), it is becoming increasingly clear that many do not. In this respect, to understand the determinants of satisfaction, who becomes satisfied or less satisfied, and why, are essential questions that have been interest of a great number of studies. Based on this discussion, this paper attempts to shed light on citizen satisfaction with police in a community policing environment. It specifically aims to analyze the influence of quality of police contact, police work ratings in terms of collaboration with local community, neighborhood ratings, victimization, and feeling of safety in the neighborhood.

It was common in the literature to refer that some socio-demographic characteristics were independently associated with police satisfaction. However, today, a growing literature asserts that these kind of social demographic characteristics are not directly associated with citizen satisfaction with police. Current studies focus more on the analysis of neighborhood context, police contact, victimization, and other safety issues which are mediated or moderated by socio-demographic characteristics. In this respect, we suggest a set of hypotheses based on the common assumptions found in the literature to test if neighborhood, victimization, police work ratings, feeling of safety, and police contact influence citizen satisfaction with police. Demographics are used as control variables of the other variables.

The main hypotheses that will be tested as follow:

H 1: The citizens who feel unsafe in their neighborhood will express less satisfaction with the police than citizens who feel safe.

H 2: The citizens who rated police contact positively will express more satisfaction with the police than citizens who rated negatively.

H 3: The citizens who rated their neighborhood positively will express more satisfaction with the police than citizens who rated negatively.

H 4: The citizens who were victimized previously express less satisfaction with the police than citizens who were not victimized.

H 5: The citizens who rated police work positively express more satisfaction with the police than citizens who rated negatively.

Literature Review

Community Policing and Citizen Satisfaction with Police

Since community policing has become a dominant frame to explain new forms of policing in the US and other countries, its definition, construct and practical and theoretical implications changed extensively. Despite the confusion over the theory and concept of community policing, it has been argued that collaboration with community is essential in all theories and philosophies that form a background for it. Goldstein's (1979) problem oriented policing, Wilson and Kelling's (1982) "broken windows" theory along with Shaw and McKay's (1942) theory of social disorganization are the most renowned and widely accepted theoretical catalysts for community policing (Oliver, 2000). In spite of the fact that these theories have different perspectives in related to identify and solve crime problems, they all place citizen involvement and collaboration into the central of community policing. For instance, Goldstein's (1979) problem oriented policing supports the idea of engagement of police in community and communicate them effectively in order to identify underlying causes of problems. In a similar vein, "broken windows" theory assert that social cohesion and community involvement are the key factors to disappear physical and social signs of incivilities from the neighborhood. Police by working closely with community should remove the sign of incivility from the neighborhood and prevent crime through this proactive approach (Peak & Glensor, 2004). Shaw and McKay's (1942) theory of social disorganization proposed to solve crime problem in a simple way; the agencies should work with community in order to build a sense of community that takes care of its own problems and provides social control. Therefore, regardless of different theories and philosophies behind community policing, the proposal of collaboration and sharing responsibility with

community to maintain order overlaps within all these essential theoretical and philosophical backgrounds of community policing.

Determinants of Citizen Satisfaction with Police

As suggested in the discussion, community policing promotes a new partnership between people and their police (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990; Sherman, 2001; Tewksbury & West, 2001). Therefore, it is not surprising that citizen satisfaction with police has taken large scholarly attention in terms of its influence in community policing. Since the emergence of citizen satisfaction with police as a focal point in community policing, a relatively large body of policing research has reported findings on the relationship among socio-demographic characteristics, safety, neighborhood, police contact and satisfaction with police. In general, the literature suggests that citizens generally report positive attitudes toward the police and satisfaction with police service. However, the level of satisfaction has been found to be associated with a set of variables.

Socio-demographic characteristics such as race, age, gender, and socioeconomic status have been studied extensively as determinants of satisfaction. Most past research claimed that some socio demographic characteristics independently affect satisfaction level regardless of any police intervention”(Brown & Coulter, 1983). A review of findings on the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and citizen satisfaction with police might contribute us to understand general trend in these studies.

Historically, race and police has been subject to a variety of different research because of heavy criticism of unfair police attitudes towards African Americans displayed on different media sources. Researchers have examined this issue extensively to provide evidence on the nature of police and race interaction and mutual attitudes of different race groups and police. In this respect, a great deal of research focused on the relationship between citizens' race and perception of police services and satisfaction (Klyman & Kruckenberg, 1974; Kusow et al, 1998; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). The literature mostly suggests a strong relationship between respondent's race and satisfaction level, whites being more positive than do their nonwhite counterparts (Peek et al, 1981; Parker, Onyekwuluje & Murty, 1995; Kusow et al, 1998; Priest & Carter, 1999; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). In general, there are more consistent findings for race than most other demographic characteristics such as sex, age, or socioeconomic status (Nofziger & Williams, 2005). For instance, the relationship between age and citizen satisfaction with police services, that younger citizens have less favorable attitudes toward the police, has less consistent support (Webb & Marshall, 1995; Sullivan et al., 1987). Researchers also documented the relationship between gender and satisfaction with police. In

these studies, although some empirical findings suggest that men in general are less satisfied with police, the general trend is that the difference of males and females is not a function of gender attributes (Kusow et al., 1997). More consistent support was found regarding gender difference depending on being victim of crime. In their study on crime victims, Tewksbury and West (2001, p.281) reported a “strong relationship between victims’ gender and satisfaction-women being more positive than men”. Opposite of these results have also been documented in the literature.

In related to demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status has been studied as a determinant of citizen satisfaction with police. Socioeconomic status of an individual, that people having more income to be more satisfied, is related to citizen satisfaction (Walker, 1972). However, it should be noted that some studies challenge the relationship between socio-economic status and individual perception of police (Dunham & Alpert, 1988).

Clearly support for the association between socio-demographic characteristics and citizen satisfaction with police is limited at best. In fact, much of the empirical research that has tested the association has found non-significant and contradictory results. There were much more consistent results on the association between race and citizen satisfaction. All these socio-demographic characteristics are still taken into account when studying citizen satisfaction. However, because of these findings, the focus on these characteristics as the independent determinants of satisfaction has been challenged by the recent works. Today, much more research takes neighborhood characteristics, nature of police contact, feeling of safety, and perception of crime rates as the general determinants of citizen satisfaction with the police which are mediated or moderated by different socio-economic characteristics.

In compatible with this new trend, neighborhood characteristics are claimed to be associated with citizen satisfaction with police. Mastrofski et al. (1998) found that the neighborhood in which the interaction with police occurs has significant effects on citizens’ positive perception of police. Especially, urban areas are under scrutiny of the researchers more than suburbs. These places are likely to have greater social problems, such as poverty and high crime rates which may contribute to citizens’ negative perception of police (Nofziger & Williams, 2005). Kusow et al. (1997) studied the relation of race and residential location. Based on their study, Kusow et al. (1997) reported that “whites who live in the suburbs are more satisfied with police performance than both whites and blacks who live in the city. Similarly, blacks who reside in the suburbs are more satisfied with police performance than both whites and blacks who reside in the city” (1997, p. 663). Unlike the

research suggesting a relation between race and citizen satisfaction, these findings indicate police perception is more a function of neighborhood context more than racial attributes (Kusow et al., 1997). However, this argument is still challenged by scholars who claim that the effect of the race is not completely eliminated by context.

Feeling of safety is another important determinant of citizen satisfaction studied by many scholars. Most research suggested that people who have a great sense of safety and who rate their neighborhoods favorably hold a higher opinion of police controlling for individual characteristics such as race and age (Hwang, McGarrell & Benson, 2006). In compatible with these findings, satisfaction with police and fear of crime are found to be negatively related with one another (Scheider, Rowell & Bezdikian, 2003). Victimization are also found to be a significant factor that changes the perception of individuals on feeling of safety and fear of crime, leading a change in their attitudes towards police (Tewksbury & West, 2001).

As suggested in the literature, in order to get the desired results of community policing, it is essential to create an environment in which collaboration and sharing responsibility with community becomes a part of policing. A number of studies focused on the influence of collaboration between police and public on citizens' perception of police work and satisfaction. These studies generally supported positive influence of police-community cooperation to solve the problems of neighborhoods on citizen satisfaction with the police (Goldstein, 1987; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990; Sherman, 2001). On the other hand, some scholars stated the role of community demographics, crime rates, and police image which mediates desired results for police –community relationships.

In addition to these general variables, police contact has long been perceived as a determinant of citizen satisfaction (Smith and Hawkins, 1973; Boggs & Galliher, 1975; Parks, 1976; Dean, 1980). Scaglione and Condon (1980, p. 490) reported that personal contact with the police as the “most significant determinant of general satisfaction with police services than all other variables combined”. In general, police contact is categorized as ‘officer initiated’ or ‘citizen initiated’ and “voluntary” (e.g. service calls) or “non-voluntary” (e.g. traffic stops). Classifying contacts helped researchers identify the factors that contribute to citizen satisfaction, and brought along an important question. What actually account for satisfaction: type (nature) or quality of contact?

Reisig and Correia (1997) reported that voluntary contacts have generally been associated with more positive ratings of the police. However, they also documented whether or not the contact is initiated voluntarily, “higher citizen evaluations of police are more likely to result when the police treat the individual fairly and with compassion” (p.312). “There is

also variation in satisfaction within these general categories of encounters, depending on the service rendered” (Skogan, 2005, p. 300), namely quality of the service and treatment. Given these findings, it is apparent that citizens are more likely to hold positive attitudes toward police services when police are viewed as respectful, helpful, and concerned (Weitzer, 2000).

Methodology

This study uses secondary data analysis method. This data set is downloaded from Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Web site. The number of the research in this Web site was 3160. The name of the dataset is “Project on Policing Neighborhoods in Indianapolis, Indiana, and St. Petersburg, Florida, 1996-1997” (POPNI) (Mastrofski et al, 1998).

Sample and Data Collection: Research was conducted in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1996 and in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1997. The most important criteria for selecting Indianapolis and St. Petersburg were that the police department had been engaging in community policing long enough for it to have an opportunity to affect police-community interactions. In addition, 12 neighborhoods (neighborhood in operational terms meant the patrol beat) were selected in each city basically matching their socio-economic condition of neighborhoods across cities as closely as possible (Mastrofski et al, 1998).

The parts of the dataset which was used in this study were obtained from a telephone survey of resident’s from 12 neighborhoods selected in each city. Citizens in these neighborhoods were randomly selected for telephone surveys to determine their views about problems in their neighborhoods and other community issues. Several Likert-type scales were used in survey questions. The response rate for the citizen surveys was 53 % in Indianapolis and 42 % in St. Petersburg (Mastrofski et al, 1998). In total, 6977 individuals responded to survey. Characteristics of citizen survey respondents are shown in Table-1.

Table 1: Characteristics of Citizen Survey Respondents

		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender	Male	2761	39.6 %
	Female	4216	60.4 %
Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian	4424	63.4 %
	African American	2054	29.8 %
	Others	421	6.1 %
Age	18-20	145	2.1 %
	21-30	924	13.5 %
	31-40	1390	20.3 %
	41-50	1193	17.4 %
	51-60	903	13.2 %
	61-70	1039	15.2 %
	71- Higher	1245	18.2 %

The sample characteristics are generally close to census data demographics in these regions. According to 1990 census data, 48 % of the population was males in Indianapolis and 46 % in St. Petersburg. African Americans were 44 % in Indianapolis and 38 % in St. Petersburg. Data from surveyed citizens provide information about their neighborhoods, including years in the neighborhood, distance to various places in the neighborhood, neighborhood problems and effectiveness of police response to those problems, citizen knowledge of, or interactions with, the police, satisfaction with police services, and friends and relatives in the neighborhood. Citizen demographics and geographic and weight variables are also included (Mastrofski et al, 1998). Considering the interests of this study, only the survey questions asking for quality of contacts, neighborhood, police ratings, feeling of safety, victimization, overall satisfaction with police and demographics are included to this study.

Dependent Variable: In testing our hypotheses regarding the effects of quality of police contact, victimization, neighborhood and police ratings, and feeling of safety on citizen satisfaction with police, the dependent variable, satisfaction with police, was derived from a 2 Likert-scale items. The first question directly asks the extent of satisfaction. “Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of police services in your neighborhood? It was categorized into a four-point scale ranging from ‘1= very satisfied’ to ‘4= very unsatisfied’. It was recorded inversely as ‘1= very unsatisfied’ to ‘4= very satisfied’.

The second item asked a question on people’s belief about police services in their neighborhood. “The police in your neighborhood try to provide the kind of services that the people in your neighborhood want”. It was categorized into a four-point scale ranging from ‘1=strongly agree’ to ‘4=strongly disagree’. It was recorded inversely as ‘1= strongly disagree to ‘4= strongly agree’.

These two questions reflect at least two items of a scale (Reisig & Parks, 2000) which has been commonly implemented in the police satisfaction literature. Responses to these items were summed and averaged into a single measure. The resulting index appears to be internally consistent measure of satisfaction, with a Chrobach’s alpha of (.774). The mean of the index is 3.13 (SD = 0.72).

Independent Variables: The independent variables were selected on grounds of prior empirical research. The independent variables connected with citizen satisfaction are quality of police contact, neighborhood ratings, police ratings, feeling of safety, and victimization.

Feeling of safety was estimated by three questions: The first question is “how safe would you feel walking alone in your neighborhood after dark?” Responses to these question range

from '1 = very safe' to '4= very unsafe'. The other two questions are "how likely do you think it would be for someone to break into your house to steal things while you are away from home? And "how likely do you think it is that someone who has a gun or knife would try to rob you in your neighborhood?". Responses to these question range from '1 = very likely' to '4= very unlikely'. This first question was recorded inversely ranging from '1 = very unsafe' to '4=very safe'. Responses to these 3 items were summed and averaged into a single measure ranging from 1 to 4. Chrobach's alpha value (.661) indicated that it is close enough to claim reliability of scale. The mean of the index was 2.77 (SD = 0.75).

One of the independent variables in this study was quality of police contact which was estimated using the following question ranging from '1= very satisfied' to '4=very unsatisfied'. As we already discussed in the paper, scholars place more emphasis on the quality of contact and how the problem was handled by the police rather than nature of contact. In this sense, the following question was added as independent variable; "how satisfied were you with the way treated when stopped?" Responses were recoded as satisfied (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied) and dissatisfied (very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied) to make it categorical. Satisfied was coded as '1' and 'dissatisfied was coded as '0'. The descriptive statistics demonstrated that 58 % of respondents were satisfied with the way treated by police when stopped.

Neighborhood ratings can be operationalized in many different ways. Most research operationalizes it by relying on social economic status, physical closeness to public buildings, and the extent of minorities within the population. In this study, we relied on the respondents' self-report about their neighborhoods illustrated in the following question, "In general, how do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?" Responses range from '1=excellent' to '4=poor'. Responses were recorded as positive '1' (excellent and good) and negative '0' (fair and poor) for the multiple regression analysis. The results of descriptive statistics showed that 56 % of respondents rate their neighborhood as an excellent or good place to live.

Victimization was estimated using the following questions which included '1=yes' and '5=no' responses. "Within the past six months, have you been the victim of any crime?" These categories were recoded as 'yes' (0) and 'no' (1). Descriptive statistics showed that only 12 % of the respondents were victim of crime at least once in the last six months.

Police ratings in terms of working with people in the neighborhood to solve local problems can be used as an important indicator of citizen satisfaction with police. As the research has been conducted in two community policing environments where police officers aimed to solve the problems with collaboration of public in compatible with community

policing philosophy, the belief of community on this issue is most likely to be associated with their satisfaction with police. Considering this point, following question were used to measure police ratings in terms of cooperation with public. “How would you rate the job the police are doing in terms of working with people in your neighborhood to solve local problems?” Responses range from ‘1=excellent’ to ‘4=poor’. Responses were recoded as positive ‘1’ (excellent and good) and negative ‘0’ (fair and poor) for the multiple regression analysis. The results of descriptive statistics showed that 53 % of the respondents’ rate police work as excellent or good.

Control Variables: I also included the following control variables which previous research has suggested predict attitudes toward the police: race (a dummy for Caucasians), sex (a dummy variable for males), and age (continuous).

Data Analysis: Multiple regression analysis was used to estimate the effects of variables on citizen satisfaction with police. Multiple regression analysis was preferred because of its strength in terms of controlling other variables and providing the magnitude of effect power. For this purpose, ordinal and nominal variables were recoded to dichotomize the variable. In this sense, using multiple regressions analysis resulted in loss of variation for some variables. However, the hypotheses specifically test the difference between two groups which let us ignore the loss of variation.

In order to test the relationship, firstly, correlation matrix was used. The results of the correlation matrix showed that dependent variables are all significantly related to independent variable. Therefore, we included all independent variables for regression analysis.

Results

This study hypothesizes a relation between feeling of safety, neighborhood, victimization, police work ratings, and quality of police contact on citizen satisfaction with police. Before testing the relationship, the survey question which represents in general the satisfaction level for police services was given to provide a general view of respondents. The result of the Table-2 shows that more than 80 % of the respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. These results indicated that individuals in general satisfied with the police services.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Dependent Variable used in the Analysis

Valid N :6752 Missing: 225	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	2224	32.9
Somewhat satisfied	3210	47.5
Somewhat dissatisfied	916	13.6
Very dissatisfied	402	5.8.

In fact, the results were consistent with past surveys which consistently find that most individuals have positive assessments of the police. A 1998 Bureau of Justice Statistics survey of twelve cities found that 85 % of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the police (Schuck, et al., 1999). A 2001 national Gallup poll found that 90 % of all Americans had a great deal or some confidence in the police. In this respect, the group has very much the same assessment of police.

The ANOVA test suggests that the model we use had a strong significant effect on citizen satisfaction ($F= 1078.533$, $df= 8$, $p= .00$). R square measure (.536) indicated that the variables we use in this model (police contact satisfaction, neighborhood and police work ratings, victimization, and feeling of safety) accounts for about 53 % of the variance in citizen satisfaction with police. The extent of percentage indicates that our model is a very good predictor of citizen satisfaction which explains more than 50 % of the variance.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Police Contact Satisfaction, Neighborhood and Police Work Ratings, Victimization, and Feeling of Safety on Citizen Satisfaction (N= 6977) (Weighted)

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
Constant	1.746	.031		.000
Age category (Control)	.067**	.005	.131	.000
Male (Control)	-.101**	.014	-.062	.000
White (Control)	.366**	.015	.225	.000
Feeling of safety	.219**	.009	.225	.000
Neighborhood ratings	-.064**	.017	-.040	.000
Victimization	.626**	.018	.339	.000
Stop satisfaction	.031*	.014	.019	.027
Police work ratings	.594**	.015	.367	.000

Note: Non-weighted data shows non-significant results for gender ($p= .485$), age ($p= .165$), stop satisfaction ($p= .833$), and neighborhood ratings ($p= .724$).

** $p < .001$, * $p < .050$

Table-4 summarizes the results of multiple regression analysis testing the effect of a set of factors (police contact satisfaction, neighborhood and police work ratings, victimization, and feeling of safety) on citizen satisfaction with the police. In our model, tolerance values of all variables were over .40 which confirms no evidence of multicollinearity. The residual analysis and plots showed no violations of the assumptions about the distribution of errors (Std. residuals mean=.000, SD= .999). The t test results show that all 5 dependent variables were significant predictors of citizen satisfaction with police. In this model, police work ratings (Beta= .367) was the strongest predictor of citizen satisfaction which was followed by victimization (Beta= .339). Other strong predictors were feeling of safety (Beta= .225) and race (Beta= .225).

The first hypothesis of the study was that the citizens who feel unsafe in their neighborhood will express less satisfaction with the police than citizens who feel safe. As

hypothesized, the regression coefficient results indicated that with an increase in feeling of safety, level of citizen satisfaction increased in size holding all other variables constant ($B = .219$, $SE = .009$, $p < .001$). In fact, the effect size ($Beta = .225$) suggests that feeling of safety was a very strong predictor of citizen satisfaction with the police. The second hypothesis of the study deals with the association between quality of police contacts and citizen satisfaction, such that the citizens who rated police contact positively will express more satisfaction with the police than citizens who rated negatively. As expected, police contact satisfaction had a significant positive effect on citizen satisfaction with police after controlling other factors ($B = .031$, $SE = .014$, $p < .05$). However, the effect size was rather small ($Beta = .019$) and non-weighted data showed a non-significant relationship between quality of police contacts and citizen satisfaction with the police. The third hypothesis tested that the citizens rating their neighborhood positively express more satisfaction than the citizens rating negatively. In contrast to our hypothesis, the regression coefficient suggests a negative relationship between these variables which means that the citizens who rated their neighborhood positively expressed less satisfaction with the police ($B = -.064$, $SE = .017$, $p < .001$). As it was in the stop satisfaction variable, the size of effect was rather small ($Beta = -.040$) and non-weighted data indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between these variables. The next hypothesis tested the relationship between victimization and citizen satisfaction with the police according to which being victim decreases the level of satisfaction. As hypothesized, being victim reduced significantly the level of satisfaction with the police holding other variables constant ($B = .626$, $SE = .018$, $p < .001$). The effect size was very strong ($Beta = .339$). Last hypothesis tested the association between police work ratings and satisfaction. That is, the citizens who rated police work positively express more satisfaction with the police than citizens who rated negatively. As expected, the individuals who rated police work positively expressed more satisfaction with police ($B = .594$, $SE = .015$, $p < .001$). In fact, police work rating was the strongest effect of all of the variables in the model with a standardized effect size of .367.

Among the control variables only race seemed an important variable to predict citizen satisfaction after controlling other variables. The regression coefficient results showed that whites express more satisfaction with police than African Americans ($B = .366$, $SE = .015$, $p < .001$). Although we did not hypothesize any relationship between race and citizen satisfaction with the police, as suggested in literature, race seems to affect citizen satisfaction. However, we were not able to control neighborhood and race interaction as suggested in the literature. In this sense, the results should be evaluated for this variable considering this limitation. In

addition, age and gender was not strong predictor of citizen satisfaction as shown in the literature.

Overall, the results of regression analysis seem to support 4 out of 5 hypotheses. Only, neighborhood ratings were not supported in our findings. In contrast to our hypothesis, the citizens who rated their neighborhood positively expressed less satisfaction with police though the relation was not very significant. The results may be due to lack of good measurement questions for the neighborhood context in our study. We used a proxy variable for measuring neighborhood context in contrast to past research which used more valid criteria like socio economic status, crime rates, and minority rates in combination to examine the relationship between neighborhood and satisfaction with the police. Considering these limitations, further research is needed to suggest a confidential claim for this relationship.

Discussion

Based on secondary data from a telephone survey of 6,977 respondents from two cities, this study undertook an examination of the predictors of satisfaction with the police. The principal aim of the current study was to examine the effects of feeling of safety, quality of police contact, victimization, and neighborhood and police work ratings on satisfaction with police. We have also investigated the effects of control variables such as race, age, and gender.

The study found that the most important predictor of citizen satisfaction with the police was police work ratings. Citizens who rated positively the job the police are doing in terms of working with people in the neighborhood to solve local problems expressed much more satisfaction with the police. As suggested in the introduction of this study, main focus of community policing is to be identifying underlying causes of problems in the community and putting efforts to solve them (Goldstein, 1987). Within this purpose, community policing relies heavily on citizen involvement to identify and solve community problems. In the cities where the survey was implemented, the police departments had been engaging in community policing long enough for it to have an opportunity to affect police-community relations (Mastrofski et al, 1998). Considering this point, it seems that police departments were able to engage in community to create an environment in which public supports and involves cooperation with police to overcome the local problems in their neighborhood.

The analysis confirmed our hypothesis that those who feel unsafe express less satisfaction with the police. Feeling of safety was a moderate level predictor of citizen satisfaction. In fact, regardless of the policing style, the main purpose of policing is to provide safety to the citizens. As expected, those who feel unsafe think that they do not get

what is expected from a police organization. On the other hand, feeling of safety in many neighborhoods can not be related directly with the real crime rates or safety problems. It might be result of misinformation, media attention on crime and so forth. Community policing provides valuable insights to improve feeling of safety and provide first hand information on local problems. Overall, whether perceived or real, as consistently supported by the current literature and this study, feeling of safety makes a difference in terms of citizen satisfaction with the police.

The analysis also confirmed that those who were victimized previously maintain a less satisfaction toward the police. The effect of the victimization was relatively strong in this study. Victimization has many components depending on crime type, police response time and the way the police handle the problem. Although all these factors may change the overall results of this finding, at the end, as expected, being victimized certainly decreases the level of satisfaction with the police.

Although our study confirmed that those who rated police contact positively expressed more satisfaction with the police, it was not a strong predictor of it. The influence of contact has been mediated by a number of other factors. As already mentioned, the party who initiated the contact, voluntary and non-voluntary nature of contact and the reason for contacting police (Smith & Hawkins, 1973; Boggs & Galliher, 1975; Parks, 1976; Dean, 1980) should be taken into account as well as quality of police contact. In this respect, classifying contacts and implementing a research considering all these variables may help to identify the effects of police contact in general and specific factors that contribute to citizen satisfaction.

Our study also suggests that people's perception of their neighborhood affects overall satisfaction toward the police. However, in contrast to our expectations, those who expressed positive ratings for their neighborhood expresses less satisfaction to police. The strength of the relationship in this study was quite small. In this hypothesis, we should address the limitation of measurement of neighborhood context. Most past research which found a significant relationship between neighborhood characteristics and citizen satisfaction had operationalized the neighborhood considering the ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and crime rates. However, our reliance on citizen self-reports by asking neighborhood ratings may not reflect truly these characteristics of neighborhood which were claimed to effect citizen satisfaction.

In our study, race seems to be another important predictor of citizen satisfaction with the police. Our analysis showed that whites were more satisfied with the police than African

Americans. Most past research suggested the same relationship between ethnicity and citizen satisfaction. However, even if that assumption was true at certain point of time, the social structure has changed a lot since the 1970s in the US. In this sense, the findings of this study (1997 survey) were vulnerable to social change experienced in the US. In addition, today, even the research which supports the independent effect of ethnicity points out the need for taking into account additional factors such as neighborhood culture, crime trends, and policing style. In these studies, the effects of ethnicity were modest at best after controlling a set of factors (Reisig & Correia, 1997). In our particular study, we were not able to control neighborhood characteristic as suggested in the literature which has to be taken into consideration evaluating the findings.

Limitations

These findings should be evaluated in the light of the study's methodological limitations. First, although the samples of neighborhoods represent a range of areas with different social and economical conditions, whether the present results can be generalized to other cities even neighborhoods in these cities, time periods or persons is unknown.

Second limitation was our reliance on self-report measures. This reliance raises questions about common method bias and the accuracy of respondents' perceptions and their willingness to respond honestly. It is accepted that self-report studies are weak in proving causal relationships. In fact, original research supplemented self-report measures with data from alternate sources such as systematic observation, personal interviews, telephone interviews, administrative records, and data from the United States Census Bureau (Mastrofski et al., 1998). The triangulation of data collection decreased the possible method bias for the research. However, our analysis in this particular study still relies on basically to self-report in survey responses.

Another limitation is related with the questionnaire. Citizen satisfaction with the police, the dependent variable, was drawn from a two questions index. This is a threat to the validity (construct validity) of our study. Because citizen satisfaction is a big concept, such concepts can not be operationalized by two questions. It would be better if we could create a large index of citizen satisfaction concept which includes sub-categories of citizen satisfaction. Similarly, some independent variables were drawn from a single question. This limitation was particularly the result of the limited eligible questions in dataset to make an index for all independent variables.

The original research was designed to provide an in-depth description of how the police and the community interact with each other in a community policing environment

(Mastrofski et al, 1998). However, this study adapts the dataset of this research in order to measure specifically satisfaction with the police. In this sense, it does not include all the questions needed to measure citizen satisfaction. The wordings of ones that can be used are not exactly appropriate to measure satisfaction which threatens construct validity of this study.

The response rate for the citizen surveys was very low (53 % in Indianapolis and 42 % in St. Petersburg). This low rate may threaten to the external validity of our study. The possibility of certain, identifiable population who did not respond the surveys increase the potential sample bias (external validity) of the study, leading the question of generalizability of results. Similarly, another threat for external validity is the sampling method used in the study. A common problem with telephone interviews is that they exclude people without a phone. In this sample, the population most likely excluded from the study was African-Americans living in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Therefore, it is possible that an identifiable minority population with the least favorable attitudes toward the police were absent from the sample. The good think about sample is that the comparison of the respondents' characteristics with the census data demographics showed that there is not a big divide between the respondents' characteristics and census data as illustrated in the Table-4.

Table 4: Characteristics of Survey Respondents and Census Demographics

		1990 Census	1997 Survey
Gender	Male	46 %	41 %
Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian	60 %	63 %
	African American	38 %	30 %
	Others	2 %	8 %

Although no evidence of multicollinearity was detected in our test, there is a need for more statistical analysis that examines the interactive predictive power of control variables and our independent variables on satisfaction with the police. In addition, the interaction between independent variables could be analyzed by using advanced statistical models to claim more confidentially independent effect of each variable.

The last limitation was related to statistical power of our analysis. In fact, the number of respondents was enough in general, but the percentage of missing values was considerable in questions asking police contact satisfaction and victimization. In this sense, there was a problem of lack of variance among in these independent variables and dependent variable. In addition, the findings of weighted and non-weighted data showed a difference in terms of significance of some variables. In contrast to weighted data, non-weighted data shows non-

significant results for gender, age, stop satisfaction and neighborhood ratings. The difference is result of statistical power of weighted data which should be taken into account evaluating the result of this study.

Conclusion

The results of this analysis may have implications for community policing activities intended to increase citizen satisfaction with police. In this study, police rating in terms of collaboration with public had a strong positive effect on increasing satisfaction with police which confirms the utility of main philosophy of community policing. In this respect, gaining public support and involvement is critical for successful police services. As suggested by Tyler (2003), who are satisfied with the police are less likely to fear victimization, more likely to cooperate with the police, and even less likely to commit crime. Therefore, citizen satisfaction may contribute directly to police service by increasing information sharing on offences and by decreasing possibility of committing crime. In addition, it may contribute the general increase in confidence level of citizens to the governmental agencies as the police are the most visible component of government.

Although most Americans hold favorable attitudes toward the police, it is clear that there is a room for development. These kinds of studies show the main factors that play role in determining attitudes toward the police. In this way, it informs police and increases the possibility of right policies and practices to get better results for citizen satisfaction. For instance, it is obvious in our study that feeling of safety is a strong indicator of citizen satisfaction. In this respect, the police departments may focus their attention to find ways how to decrease fear of crime in terms of community policing activities. In addition, victimization was another important predictor of citizen satisfaction which has to be considered by police organizations. Police may contribute overall satisfaction of citizens by the way they handle the problem of victims. As reported in many studies, victims seem to be more satisfied when an officer shows concern for their demands, and provides helpful information (Tewksbury & West, 2001).

Literature on citizen satisfaction with police has very well documented various determinants of citizen satisfaction. However, contradictory findings on the effects of socio-demographic variables and some other variables on citizen satisfaction with the police call for future research. Research comparing traditional and modern police response is also needed to clarify what aspects of police work contribute to citizen satisfaction.

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