Voluntary Association Participation and Procedural Justice

Edilia Popoca Morales, Weber State University
Heeuk Dennis Lee, Weber State University
Myunghoon Roh, Salve Regina University

INTRODUCTION

- Community-Oriented Policing (COP) focuses on community engagement and reducing crime by being involved with the public. Studies have been done to determine if the participation in civic engagement increases a positive citizen attitude toward police and the willingness to participate creates confidence in the police.

- The present study provides the effectiveness of civic engagement participation and how this citizen participation including Block Watch programs, voting record, business and professional association can enhance citizen trust in the police.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Studies have shown that communities with a higher level of collective efficacy tend to have a higher percentage of people with positive attitudes towards the police and are more willing to assist the Police (Liu, Wu, Sun & Li, 2020)

- Studies have shown that positive interactions between police and members of the community are associated with increased participation in Community Policing Programs. (Reisig, 2007)

- Studies have shown that police could assist residents to live in safer environments free of any form of crime by helping build local institutions, and in return this helps build better police-community relationships (Torres & Vogel, 2001)

- Networks of civic engagement, such as neighborhood associations, extra-curricular activities, and Block Watch Programs are associated with positive attitudes towards police. Henceforth, increased neighborhood civic engagement is related with more willingness to volunteer (Blake & Gaffney, 2014)

METHODS

- The data for the analyses in this study were collected from 5 different states (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Washington). The data source is 2001 Community Policing Survey, administered by the Western Regional Institute for Community Oriented Public Safety at Washington State University. The survey instrument featured questions about public safety, citizen participation, police performance, victimization and community policing. In 2001 the community survey was sent to randomly selected households via mail with two follow-ups. Respondents were randomly selected from a listing of utility customers provided by the cities in 5 states. 100 + surveys collected in each state. 923 households were finally responded.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	n	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Age	799	68.78	16.87	34	80
Male	469	.58	.49	0	1
White	748	.92	.26	0	1
Non-White	60	.07	.26	0	1
Educational Level	811	.3.81	1.84	1	7
Income	753	7.32	1.94	1	9
Home Owner	683	.85	.35	0	1
Conservative political outlook	805	3.23	.81	1	5
How much informed crime issue	817	2.08	.62	1	3
Neighborhood civic engagement	750	7.30	2.30	3	12
Fear of crime	821	3.30	1.40	2	10
Collective efficacy	806	11.71	2.19	4	15
Attitude toward police	806	20.92	4.56	6	30

Table 2. Ordinary Least Squares Regression Model on Attitude toward Police (n = 612)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Age	.03	.01	**.11****
Male	.53	.38	.06
White	-	-	-
Non-White	-.07	.69	-.01
Educational Level	-.07	.10	-.03
Income	.18	.10	.07
Home Owner	-.91	.59	-.07
Conservative political outlook	.32	.22	.05
How much informed on crime issue	-.43	.29	-.05
Neighborhood civic engagement	.25	.08	**.13*****
Fear of crime	-.20	.14	-.06
Collective efficacy	.37	.09	**.18*****
Constant	12.37	1.89	

$R^2 = .11$
$F = 6.90^{***}$

RESULTS

- Overall, the OLS regression model was significant (F-test = 6.90, p < 0.001) and 11% of the variance of the citizen attitude toward police was accounted by the independent variables among respondents.

- Participation in the neighborhood civic engagement (B = .25, p < 0.001) provided a significant relationship with the citizen attitude toward police.

- Collective efficacy (B = .37, p < 0.001) also show a statistically significant relationship with the citizen attitude toward police.

CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

- The results support previous studies and provide statistically significant predictors that impact the citizen attitude toward police.

- The current study provides information to police administrators regarding the areas within their communities that could benefit from additional outreach in an effort to trust in the police and improve community-police relations.

- Due to the positive relationship between the participation of civic engagement and citizen attitude toward police, there is a potential social implication in which creating for greater civic engagement within communities could increase the overall confidence in the police and allow for greater informal social control in neighborhoods.

- Due to the positive relationship between the collective efficacy and citizen attitude toward police, various community programs could strengthen social cohesion among residents in the community.

LIMITATIONS

- Generalization – Sample drawn from small/rural regions may not be representative of other city settings.

- Cross-sectional research.

- Secondary data analysis

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