The Relationship between Global Perceptions of Police in the United States and Citizen Satisfaction with Local Police

Candace E. Griffith[1] and Allison J. Foley[2]

1 Augusta University, Augusta, GA, USA cagriffith@augusta.edu
2 Augusta University, Augusta, GA, USA ajfoley@augusta.edu

Abstract

Police are under increased public scrutiny due to particularly newsworthy officer-involved shootings that garner significant concern. This concern undoubtedly shapes the public's global perceptions of police legitimacy, but does it influence one's attitudes towards police in their local area? This paper examines the relationship between global perceptions of police in the United States as a whole and citizen satisfaction with local police. This is a notable addition to the existing literature on citizen perceptions of police, which largely assesses global perceptions at a neighborhood or organizational level. Instead, we distinguish perceptions of police as an institution from perceptions of police as individuals and as a localized organization. We explore the relationship between these attitudes using data collected from individuals who had personal encounters with their local law enforcement agency. Consistent with prior studies, we control for race, age, education, sex, and perceptions of officer bias. We find that global perceptions of police in the United States has a significant effect on satisfaction with local police. This suggests that future studies of citizen perceptions of police could benefit from assessing general attitudes about police as an institution. Overall, these findings have important implications for law enforcement agencies who are working to improve their relationships with the community, particularly in a time of ongoing protests over police brutality.

Introduction

Police across the United States are increasingly under the microscope due to significant events garnering the national spotlight. The officer-involved deaths of Black men in Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland, led to protests of police brutality in 2014 and 2015. This civil unrest spurred the development of the Black Lives Matter movement and protests of the national anthem at NFL football games led by Colin Kaepernick. At the same time, leading police scholars publicly encouraged police administrators to—among other things—enhance efforts to assess citizen satisfaction and meaningfully address their community's concerns (Lum and Nagin 2016). A few years into this post-Ferguson era, these scholars are joined by many other voices pushing for substantive and even radical police reform (Nagin, Lum, and McGuire 2020). Professional associations such as the American Society of Criminology and the American Sociological Association have issued statements condemning racism across the legal system and the United States more generally (American Society of Criminology 2020; American Sociological Association 2020). These calls follow from a series of acts of racialized violence and police brutality,

influenced largely by the officer-involved killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky in 2020. Whereas Ferguson and Baltimore fueled the Black Lives Matter movement, new protests throughout the United States are bringing forth a new era characterized by calls to defund or even abolish the police in a manner similar to Alex Vitale's call in *The End of Policing* (2017).

These calls extend beyond the academy, however. Minneapolis and Los Angeles announced plans to cut police funding or disband the police force to build something anew, and similar efforts have been made in over 20 other major cities, as of September (Local Progress 2020). These momentous events will surely impact how Americans view police, both as a general institution, and as public servants in their own communities. With more citizens vocalizing their desire for reform, and more politicians working to enact it, it has perhaps never been more important for law enforcement and cities more generally to "accurately measure community levels of trust and confidence [and]… overall community reactions to actions of the police" (Nagin, Lum, and McGuire 2020).

Literature Review

Citizen Perceptions of Police Legitimacy

Police and police scholars have assessed and studied citizen perceptions of police for decades, as a product of the advent of community policing and earlier demands for police reform (Mazzerole et al. 2013b; Reisig and Parks 2000; Worden and McLean 2017). Sometimes referred to as community-oriented policing, this overall policing strategy consists of a wide range of different techniques and programs. Community policing seeks to build "police-citizen partnerships to address community problems… and improve citizen's views… in order to establish a firmer foundation for cooperation" (Brandl, Frank, Worden, and Bynum 1994:131). If cooperative efforts are achieved, in theory, police should not have to use physical force to enforce the law. This makes community policing approaches attractive to advocates of police reforms.

A key determinant of the public's willingness to cooperate is their perception of police legitimacy. Tyler advanced a commonly accepted and utilized conceptualization of police legitimacy, arguing that "when people feel that an authority is legitimate, they authorize that authority to determine what their behavior will be within a given set of situations" (2004:87). In essence, those who support the police and feel a sense of obligation to obey them are likely to cooperate. Empirical studies validate the concept and importance of police legitimacy, but scholars do not universally agree on the best means to define and assess it (Worden and McLean 2017). With regard to Tyler's initial conceptualization, studies tend to focus on understanding support for police moreso than the obligation to obey. Support has been defined and assessed in terms of confidence or trust, but perceptions of satisfaction or effectiveness may be assessed as well (Mazerolle et al. 2013b; Worden and McLean 2017).

Another key concept related to police legitimacy is procedural justice, or perceptions that police act fairly and impartially, listen, and treat members of the public with respect (Gau 2014; Hinds, 2009; Tyler, Fagan, and Geller 2014). More generally, being friendly and courteous increases positive perceptions of police (Bradford, Jackson, and Stanko 2009; Frank, Smith, and Novak 2005; Lai and Zhao 2010; Lockwood and Wyant 2014), particularly when the interaction is citizen-initiated (a call for help) rather than officer-initiated (being stopped or approached by police) (Rosenbaum et al. 2005). That being said, Mazzerole and colleagues found that procedurally just stops influenced attitudes about police; "a little bit of nice goes a long way" encapsulates how influential a positive encounter can be (2013a:55). Police have much to gain from positive interactions with the public. Studies demonstrate that people who think highly of the police and find them trustworthy, respectful, and impartial are more likely to cooperate with them, to call police to report crimes, and to obey the law themselves (Hinds 2009; Rosenbaum et al. 2011; Tankebe 2013). Conversely, when residents perceive police injustice, they question officers' motives or intentions and report negative attitudes towards them, which erodes their willingness to cooperate (Mastrofski, Snipes, and Supina, 1996; Mazerolle et al. 2013a; Schuck and Rosenbaum 2005; Tyler and Fagan 2008; Wells 2007).

Disentangling Perceptions of Legitimacy and Procedural Justice

Though a number of studies, discussed above, understand procedural justice as a precursor to police legitimacy, scholars have yet to fully disentangle the various dimensions of police legitimacy and procedural justice. Hawdon (2008) sees legitimacy as distinct from trust for police. Bradford and Jackson (2009) posit that trust, confidence, support, satisfaction, and legitimacy are all different but still a part of one larger construct, as "people tend to subscribe to a single outlook about the police that shapes their judgments" (Worden and McLean

2017:483). Tankebe (2013) argues that procedural justice is a part of police legitimacy, as are perceptions of effectiveness. Programs and trainings designed to improve police legitimacy and/or procedural justice have framed goals and assess outcomes in terms of satisfaction, effectiveness, trust, or confidence (Mazzerole et al. 2013b).

The literature appears to be more consistent in distinguishing perceptions about specific encounters with individual police officers from more global perceptions about police (see Worden and McLean 2017). Many employ a cross-sectional design which does not allow the causal ordering of these constructs to be determined. A few do utilize longitudinal designs or panel surveys, however, and find that global perceptions change over time in response to police encounters that take place within that time frame (Brandl et al. 1994; Gau 2010; Tyler, Fagan, and Geller 2014). These studies find a stronger effect for global perceptions on satisfaction with or perceived legitimacy in a specific encounter than the reverse. However, these studies and others consistently assess global perceptions at the neighborhood level or organizational level (Gau 2014; Worden and McLean 2017). In other words, respondents are asked about police in their neighborhoods or about their local law enforcement agency as opposed to being asked about police nationally or in general. As Hoban (2016) explains, this narrow conceptualization of global perceptions does not account for more abstract and general understandings of police as an institution. This may be an important oversight, given the recent protests and calls to defund the police after the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Although major organizations such as The Urban Institute, The Cato Institute, and The Pew Research Center conducted large-scale surveys of these general perceptions of police in the post-Ferguson era, these studies overlook any comparison between the global attitudes they assess and attitudes about local police (Ekins 2017; LaVigne, Fontaine, and Dwivedi 2017; PEW Research Center 2016; Rosenbaum et al. 2015; Rosenbaum et al. 2017). This paper presents findings of a citizen satisfaction survey that does such a comparison. Similar to the studies discussed above, we distinguish perceptions about specific encounters with local law enforcement from perceptions about the law enforcement agency itself but, uniquely, we also assess perceptions about police across the United States as a whole. In other words, we assess perceptions of local police at an individual and an organizational level and we assess perceptions of American police as an institution. As with most of the hundreds of studies of citizen perceptions or police legitimacy interventions (Mazerolle et al. 2013b), the primary aim was to help a particular law enforcement

agency understand how they were viewed by the residents and citizens they serve. The current study also accounts for perceptions of officer bias on the basis of race and sex, and other factors that studies show to shape these attitudes. The next section of this paper will review that literature.

Demographic and Other Influences on Citizen Perceptions

A range of other factors influence citizen perceptions of and satisfaction with police. Perceptions vary depending on one's direct encounters with police and one's indirect or vicarious experiences (Rosenbaum et al. 2005). The appearance of officers (plain clothes or uniforms) and their methods of transportation to patrol and interact with the public (by car, on foot, by bike, or horse) also shape these perceptions (Simpson 2017). One's sense of safety in their neighborhood has influence (ibid.; Reisig and Parks 2000) as does the means by which individuals develop that sense of safety, including their knowledge of police and policing activities (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury 2005) and the methods police agencies use to communicate information to the public (Tat-Kei Ho and Cho 2016). Beyond what police intentionally communicate, media shapes perceptions as well but in nuanced ways. For instance, the type of media and patterns of consumption matters, as does the content itself. Some studies show less favorable attitudes toward police among those who primarily rely on local television for news, as opposed to internet (Graziano and Gauthier 2018). Others find less favorable perceptions among those who consume more media that focuses on police misconduct (ibid.; Lee and Gibbs 2015). Interestingly, Graziano and Gauthier (2018) find that perceptions of procedural justice have a stronger effect than media.

Other factors that shape citizen perceptions are attributional rather than attitudinal—sex, age, and race and ethnicity. Race is arguably one of the most important and most commonly studied of these factors. Although men tend to have more negative views than women (O'Connor 2008) and older individuals tend to have more favorable views than younger people (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury 2005; O'Connor 2008), race is a major factor. Most studies find that people of color have less favorable perceptions of police than whites; this includes Hispanic or Latinx and Asian individuals, but is especially pronounced among Black people (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury 2005; Ekins 2017; Garcia and Cao 2005; Hoban 2016; Lai and Zhao 2010; Lee and Gibbs 2015; PEW Research Center, 2016; Rosenbaum et al. 2005; Weitzer and Tuch 2005; Weitzer, Tuch, and Skogan 2008). The effect of race and ethnicity vary,

too, depending on various factors including age, sex, social class, whether one speaks English, how long one has lived in their neighborhood, prior contact with police, how positive or negative those prior experiences were, and how long standing any negative attitudes are in a particular neighborhood context (Hinds 2009; Reisig and Parks 2000; Rosenbaum et al. 2005; Weitzer, Tuch, and Skogan 2005). "The problem is more deeply rooted in the social fabric of the community" and therefore police perceptions among communities of color may be difficult to change (Rosenbaum et al. 2005:360). The words of Rosenbaum and his colleagues here is an important reminder that, as Hawdon (2008) also argues, one's impressions of police tend to form long before one makes any contact with them. Police "draw legitimacy from both the force of the government whose laws it enforces and the nature of the mythology and norms surrounding it" (Hoban 2016:64).

Though it may be difficult to capture the influence of this mythology, the current study offers a new means to attempt it by assessing global perceptions of police not only at a neighborhood or organizational level, but at the national, institutional level. The current study is based on a survey of citizen satisfaction that also assessed a number of the factors discussed above, including age, sex, race and ethnicity, neighborhood characteristics, and media habits. It also assessed educational background. This paper, however, does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of all relevant variables discussed above. Rather, it focuses on understanding the extent to which citizen satisfaction with local police is associated with (1) global perceptions of police as a national institution, (2) specific perceptions of local police as individuals, (3) perceptions of local officer bias, and (4) demographics of age, sex, race, and education. The next section of this paper will explain the methods utilized to conduct this study.

Data and Methods

The data utilized to answer these questions was collected over three cycles, as part of a larger effort to assist local law enforcement's assessment of citizen satisfaction. The first cycle was collected in summer 2015, the second in spring 2016 and the third in spring 2017. Each cycle had unique features due to ongoing efforts to increase the response rate. Each will be described individually and compared below. After this, we will describe the composition of the survey and the variables utilized in analysis.

The first cycle was a sample of convenience to test the web-based survey instrument. Participants were recruited via an email to current and former students, faculty, and staff of the authors' academic department.

This email was accompanied by a post on the department's social media page and 82 individuals completed the survey. Given the methods used to recruit participants—the number of individuals who were reached by these recruitment efforts is unknown—a response rate is not available.

The second cycle collected in spring 2016 started with a list provided by the local law enforcement agency including all adults listed on incident reports between November 1 and November 15, 2015 as victims, witnesses, complainants, or those who received a traffic citation. After removing duplicate entries, businesses, and individuals with missing or incomplete addresses, recruitment letters were sent to each of the 2,399 individuals on the list; 367 returned as undeliverable. After removing returned letters from the sample frame, postcard reminders were mailed to those who had not responded to the survey. Participants could complete the web-based survey online or call in to the research office to complete the survey live over the phone. The profile of those who did not respond to the survey are noted in Table 1. The non-respondents were 60 percent Black and about 50 percent male and female; around 40 percent were traffic stops. In the end, we received 55 completed surveys for cycle two with a response rate of 2.6 percent.

To shorten the timeframe between contact with law enforcement and survey recruitment for the third cycle, the local law enforcement agency provided a list of adult victims, witnesses and complainants listed on incident reports once per month for three months in December 2016, January 2017, and February 2017. After cleaning the data as previously described, recruitment letters were mailed to a random sample of 525 individuals per month. Approximately three weeks after the letters were mailed, we began phone follow-ups. We divided the list among our research assistants and used a dedicated phone line to call participants. We noted if the number was no longer in service, if a message was left, if there was no answer with no voicemail, and if an assistant spoke with an individual. After the follow-up over the next three months, we received 55 completed surveys for cycle three with a response rate of 3.5 percent. Table 1 outlines the demographic information of those who did not respond to the survey. Approximately 62 percent were Black, 56 percent were female, and 46 and 48 percent were victims and complainants, respectively.

While these response rates are low, it should be noted that many large-scale studies have encountered the same issue. For instance, the National Police Research Platform at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Center for Research in Law and Justice achieved less than a 7 percent response rate in implementing the Police-Community Interaction

Survey in over 50 jurisdictions in the United States using very similar methods to implement the survey by phone (Rosenbaum et al. 2017). Another study by the same group did not surpass a 20 percent response rate using a telephone survey, a web-based survey, and an interactive voice survey by phone (Rosenbaum et al. 2015). While the Urban Institute's recent study achieved a 34 percent response rate, 90 percent of the respondents completed a face-to-face survey after someone came to their door; they achieved a similar 3 percent response rate when they left a recruitment letter at homes who did not answer the door (LaVigne, Fontaine, and Dwivedi 2017).

Table 1: Demographics of Non-Respondents

		Cycle 2			Cycle 3		
		Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max
Age		38.31	18	88	41.69	18	100
		%			%		
Race							
	White	34.7			36.2		
	Black	60.4			62.8		
	AAPI	0.6			0.7		
	AIAN	0			0.1		
	Other	4.3			0.2		
Sex							
	Male	49.4			43.6		
	Female	50.6			56.4		

Overall, data collection concluded with 192 surveys with sufficient data to include in analysis. The overall sample (See Table 2) is 66 percent female, 34 percent male, 65 percent white and 25 percent Black, with 10 percent identifying as bi-racial, multi-racial, Asian, or Native American. The average age of respondents is 41.79. Approximately 10 percent of the sample has a high school education or less, while 48 percent has some college education and 36 percent has completed a college degree. Table 3 breaks down each cycle into their respective descriptive statistics to better understand differences between the cycles. While the cycles differ somewhat with regard to demographics, they are notably similar in terms of their perceptions—the variables of interest.

Conceptualizing and Constructing Variables

The survey itself consisted of a combination of items from existing citizen satisfaction surveys from the New Orleans, Milwaukee, Manchester, Anne Arundel County, and Kentucky police departments, along with items from Reisig and Parks (2000), Reisig and Stroshine Chandek (2001), Rosenbaum et al. (2011), and Durose, Smith, and Langan (2007). Each cycle of the survey assessed citizen perceptions of (1) police throughout the United States (global perceptions); (2) the local law enforcement agency (local satisfaction); and (3) views related to personal encounters with local police (local encounters). For the latter, respondents answered questions regarding the specific encounter that resulted in their inclusion in the sample (for cycles two and three) or, for the first cycle's pilot test, regarding their most recent encounter with the local law enforcement agency. Residents of the local county received specific questions regarding perceptions of local officer bias on the basis of sex and race. The survey concluded with demographic items such as sex, race, age, and education.

Independent Variables

The current study examined three main independent variables, as indicated in Table 2. The main independent variable is the global perceptions scale, regarding perceptions of police in the United States. The scale consists of items that assess confidence in and respect for police, and perceptions of how honest, respectful, fair, and effective police are. The scale is additive based on responses to the previous questions (See Appendix A for all questions in scales). Responses were based on a five point Likert scale—1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree (Cronbach's alpha=.922). A higher number indicates a more favorable outlook. The scale ranges from six to 30 with a mean score of 21.54. This means our sample has a more favorable outlook on police globally.

Table 2: Descriptives for the Full Sample

	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev
Satisfaction with Local Police	18.22	5	30	5.52
Global Police Perceptions Scale	21.54	6	30	5.72
Perceptions of Local Encounter	27	7	42	7.92
Perceived Officer Bias	4.4	2	10	1.86
Age	41.79	18	64	17.3
Race	%			
White	60.6			
Non-White	39.4			
Sex				
Male	33.7			
Female	66.3			
Education				
≤High School	10.5			
Some College	48.1			
College	35.9			

The second independent variable is the specific encounter scale, which is composed of seven questions asking about attitudes regarding their encounter with the local law enforcement officer. These questions assessed the officer in terms of trustworthiness, fairness, courteousness, knowledge and confidence, professional demeanor, and respectfulness, and assessed the respondent's overall satisfaction with the officer. The scale is additive based on the responses to the previous questions. Responses were based on a five point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree; Cronbach's alpha=.944). A higher number indicates a more favorable outlook. The scale ranges from seven to 42 with a mean score of 27. This means our sample has slightly more favorable perceptions of their encounter with local police.

The third independent variable assesses perceived officer bias by combining two separate measures of an officer's objectivity with regard to race and sex. The statement reads "Police in my neighborhood treat people objectively without considering their sex or gender/race." Responses were based on a five point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree; Cronbach's alpha=.938). The measure ranges from two to ten with a mean score of 4.4. This measure is only used to assess cycles two and three as the questions were not asked in cycle one.

Dependent Variable
Our dependent variable (local satisfaction) measures satisfaction with the local police. The scale is composed of five variables added together asking about satisfaction, professionalism, honesty, cooperation, and attitude (1=strongly disagree;

5=strongly agree), with a range of 5-30 and a mean score of 18.22, with a higher score indicating greater satisfaction (Cronbach's alpha=.957). The questions ask "How satisfied are you with the [law enforcement agency] office overall? With their honesty and integrity? With their professionalism as a department? With their ability to cooperate with the public to address their concerns? And with their general attitudes and behaviors towards citizens?"

Global perceptions, then, is a meaningfully different construct from local satisfaction, and not only because the focal point—police in the United States as a whole versus local police—differs. Global perceptions relies on perceived effectiveness rather than "satisfaction." We argue that satisfaction is appropriate given that the respondents received service from the local police, but less appropriate to assess perceptions of an institutional entity which respondents may not feel they have direct, literal experience with. Additionally, global perceptions relies on respondents to assess their own levels of confidence and respect towards police. Comparatively, the specific encounters scale and the local satisfaction scale focus on the behavior of individual officers and the characteristics of the local organization.

Control Variables
Control variables include race, coded as a dummy variable (1=white); sex, coded as a dummy variable (1=male); age as a continuous variable; and education, coded as two dummy variables comparing to a category of high school or less (1=some college and 1=college).

Table 3: Demographics by Cycle

	Cycle 1				Cycle 2				Cycle 3			
	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev
Satisfaction with Local Police	17.62	5	30	6.18	18.2	5	30	5.1	19.2	5	30	4.81
Global Police Perceptions Scale	19.77	6	30	5.45	23.2	6	30	5.54	22.55	6	30	5.65
Perceptions of Local Encounter	26.92	7	42	7.54	27.04	7	42	8.92	29.85	7	42	7.1
Perceived Officer Bias					4.31	2	10	1.76	4.49	2	10	1.96
Age	32.99	18	64	13.5	48.83	20	85	17.6	48.29	24	86	16.67
Race	%				%				%			
White	77.6				57.7				54.9			
Black	15.8				28.8				33.3			
Other	6.6				13.5				11.8			
Sex												
Male	30.3				35.3				37.3			
Female	69.7				64.7				62.7			
Education												
≤High School	3.9				17.3				32.7			
Some College	46.8				57.7				40.4			
College	49.4				25				26.9			

Results

We first examined correlations (See Appendix B) between our dependent and independent variables to see if there are significant relationships between the variables. Global perceptions is significantly associated with local satisfaction (.714) and the more positive the perceptions of local encounters, the greater the perceptions of local satisfaction (.793). When bias is perceived in an officer's behavior, however, less favorable perceptions of local satisfaction are found (-.514). We ran a test of multicollinearity to ensure the relationship between the variables is not too strong (Allison, 1999). All collinearity statistics are below 10, indicating the assumption that no strong multicollinearity is present (Global Attitudes 1.859; Encounter 1.629; Perceived Bias 1.427).

Table 4: OLS Regression Models

	Model 1 (Cycle 1 only)		Model 2 (Cycles 2 and 3)		Model 3 (All Cycles)	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Global Perceptions	0.385 **	0.104	0.357 ***	0.074	0.402 ***	0.053
Local Encounter	0.428 ***	0.069	0.319 ***	0.047	0.349 ***	0.036
Perceived Officer Bias			-0.396 *	0.188		
Age	0.035	0.035	-0.026	0.019	-0.003	0.014
White	-0.922	1.044	-1.292 *	0.631	-0.837	0.482
Male	-0.234	0.920	1.315 *	0.645	0.687	0.474
Some College	-5.314	3.030	-0.122	0.703	-0.657	0.641
College	-5.192	3.022	-0.847	0.844	-0.844	0.670
N	59		69		148	
R^2	0.700		0.760		0.750	

Using a linear regression analysis to understand local satisfaction, we created three models presented in Table 4. Model 1 looks at the relationship between local satisfaction and global perceptions of police and perceptions of local encounters. This model includes only cycle 1 data. For this sample only, we find that for every one point increase in global perceptions, local satisfaction of police increased .385 (p=001). In addition, for every one point increase in perceptions of local encounters, local satisfaction of police increases .428 (p=.000). Model 2 uses only cycles 2 and 3 to assess the impact of perceived officer bias on local satisfaction with police. For every one point increase in global perceptions, local satisfaction of police increases .357 (p=.000). For every one point increase in perceptions of their local encounter, local

satisfaction increased .319 (p=.000). For every one point increase in perceived officer bias, local satisfaction decreases .396 (p=.039). When compared to non-whites, whites have a decreased satisfaction of local police (1.29 p=.045) whereas compared to females, males have an increased satisfaction of local police (1.32 p=.046). In Model 3, we bring all three cycles together and test global perceptions and perceptions of local encounters for any association with satisfaction with local police. The associations continue: for every one point increase in global perceptions, local satisfaction increases .402 (p=.000). With every one point increase in perceptions of the local encounter local satisfaction with police .349 (p=.000). Models 1, 2, and 3 explain 76, 74, and 79 percent of the variance between the variables, respectively.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our findings are largely consistent with prior studies of citizen satisfaction with police, particularly those that examine the influence of one's prior experiences with police (e.g. Hoban 2016; Mazerolle et al. 2013a; Mazerolle et al. 2013b; Lockwood and Wyant 2014; Reisig and Parks 2000; Rosenbaum et al. 2005; Rosenbaum et al. 2011; Schafer, Heubner, and Bynam 2003; Worden and McLean 2017). Our study suggests that people who view police as acting objectively and without racial or gendered bias, and those who report more positive encounters with police, have higher levels of satisfaction with police. These findings remain even when accounting for potential differences in the sex, race, age, and education level of the respondents. Race itself does have some influence on satisfaction, but this was small, perhaps due to the composition of the sample. The direction of the racial influence indicates whites having less satisfaction than non-whites, which conflicts with much prior research. This could be due to the demographic composition of the sample and of the county in which the local law enforcement office is located—just over half of residents in the jurisdiction are Black, as compared to a quarter of the sample.

The public's views of police in general, throughout the United States, are also relevant here. Our study is unique in differentiating between perceptions of local law enforcement and perceptions of police more globally—as an institution. The data suggest that global perceptions are associated with local levels of satisfaction, even when accounting for the influence of local encounters, perceived biases of local officers, sex, race, age, and education. Those

who view police throughout the United States more positively are more satisfied with their local police.

Of course, these findings are limited in generalizability. We look at perceptions of police in only one jurisdiction, as part of a larger effort to assist the local law enforcement agency in assessing individual officer performance. This agency has had no national attention due to any officer-involved shooting, either. Protests and marches after the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery were relatively few, small, and quite peaceful. This may all play a role in explaining local satisfaction. The law enforcement agency itself is mid-size, serving a metropolitan city and the surrounding county in the southern United States. The racial composition of the county is 55 percent African American, as compared to 25 percent of the survey sample. The sample is more representative of the larger metropolitan area, however, and was not limited to those who reside in the county itself. The small sample size is an additional limitation. Despite utilizing several different tactics to increase the response rate, including phone follow-ups, postcard reminders, and phone- and web-based survey options, we could not increase our response rate past 4 percent. Additional research is needed within this community to understand this issue. Similar research by much larger organizations, as previously discussed, encountered the same problem (LaVigne, Fontaine, and Dwivedi 2017; Rosenbaum et al. 2017; Rosenbaum et al. 2015).

Despite these issues, our findings have important implications for future research, for law enforcement agencies, and for the communities they serve. Firstly, the study has implications for survey implementation. The low response rate demonstrates the difficulty in assessing satisfaction from individuals with recent, known contact with police—these assessments are often conducted with a sample of members of the general public instead. We do not wish to discourage scholars and/or practitioners who wish to understand how individuals feel about recent interactions with police, however. We suggest considering how survey access could be made available to individuals at natural points of contact. For instance, the link to the web-based survey and a phone number for the phone-based survey could be made available to those who receive citations at the time when they make payment or appear in court. Similarly, and ideally, survey access information could be provided to individuals directly by the responding officer. Though this would take substantial buy-in from the rank and file officers themselves and/or a directive from command staff, we believe this would substantially reduce the time between the incident and the survey invitation and thus increase the response rate. The process of generating a sample from police reports and sending out survey invitations can be time consuming, particularly if there is not a dedicated staff member (within the law enforcement agency or the academic institution) to handle the data. Overall, we suggest following up within one to no more than two weeks after the incident. If resources allow, paper copies of the surveys could be made available in order to be more inclusive of those with limited access to web-based surveys.

Secondly, this study has implications for future studies of police legitimacy. It offers a framework for assessing legitimacy at the local, organizational, and national or institutional level. The findings suggest that perceptions of police as a national institution may impact views of local police organizations; for that matter, local perceptions may impact global views. Future research with larger, more representative samples—ideally with longitudinal methods—should investigate this relationship and examine changes over time to better understand its directionality. Police administrators can benefit from understanding this, as it can provide a basis for new conversations and means of cooperating to solve local problems. This is at the heart of community-police relationships, after all, and particularly important during a time of increasing calls for significant police reform. Positive perceptions of local police may drive change in global perceptions—making the work local agencies do to cultivate trust and legitimacy more impactful. Conversely, negative global perceptions, resulting in part from high-profile national events, have the potential to erode local perceptions of legitimacy over time. This would make the work local agencies do to facilitate positive community relationships that much harder. New techniques and strategies at all levels are likely necessary to remedy the current crisis of confidence in the United States, especially if the scrutiny characteristic of the post-Ferguson—and now post-Floyd—era continues.

References

Adams, Richard E., William M. Rohe and Thomas A. Arcury. 2005. "Awareness of Community-Oriented Policing and Neighborhood Perceptions in Five Small To Midsize Cities." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 33:43-54. Doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2004.10.008

Allison, Paul D. 1999. *Multiple Regression: A Primer.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

American Society of Criminology. 2020. Statement of the American Society of Criminology Executive Board Regarding the Deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud

Arbery. Retrieved June 20, 2020 (https://www.asc41.com/history/Statements/Statement%20of%20the%20American%20Society%20of%20Criminology%20Executive%20Board%20regarding%20the%20deaths%20of%20George%20Floyd.pdf).

American Sociological Association. 2020. ASA Condemns Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System. Retrieved June 20, 2020 (https://www.asanet.org/news-events/asa-news/asa-condemns-systemic-racism-criminal-justice-system).

Bradford, Ben, and Jonathan Jackson. 2009. *Public Trust in Criminal Justice: A Review of the Research Literature in the United States.* (Unpublished Manuscript.) London. Retreived June 23, 2020 (https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=%201369704).

Bradford, Ben, Jonathan Jackson, and Elizabeth A. Stanko. 2009. "Contact and Confidence: Revisiting the Impact of Public Encounters with the Police." *Policing & Society* 19(1):20-46. Doi: 10.1080/10439460802457594

Brandl, Steven G., James Frank, Robert E. Worden, and Timothy S. Bynum. 1994. "Global and Specific Attitudes toward the Police: Disentangling the Relationship." *Justice Quarterly* 11:119–34. Doi: 10.1080/07418829400092161

Durose, Matthew, Erica L. Smith, and Patrick A. Langan. 2007. "Contacts between Police and the Public, 2005." *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report.* Washington DC: United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

Ekins, Emily. 2017. *Policing in America: Understanding Public Attitudes toward the Police. Results from a National Survey.* Washington DC: Cato Institute.

Frank, James, Brad W. Smith, and Kenneth J. Novak. 2005. "Exploring the Basis of Citizens' Attitudes toward the Police." *Police Quarterly* 8:206–28. Doi: 10.1177/1098611103258955

Garcia, Venessa and Liqun Cao. 2005. "Race and Satisfaction with the Police in a Small City." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 33:191-199. Doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2004.12.010

Gau, Jacinta M. 2010. "A Longitudinal Analysis of Citizens' Attitudes about Police." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 33(2): 236-252.

Gau, Jacinta M. 2014. "Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy: A Test of Measurement and Structure." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 39:187-205. Doi: 10.1007/s12103-013-9220-8

Graziano, Lisa M. and Jane Florence Gauthier. 2018. "Media Consumption and Perceptions of Police Legitimacy." *Policing: An International Journal* 41(5): 593-607. Doi: 10.1108/PIJPSM-12-2016-0177

Hawdon, James. 2008. "Legitimacy, Trust, Social Capital, and Policing Styles: A Theoretical Statement." *Police Quarterly* 11:182–201. Doi: 10.1177/1098611107311852

Hinds, Lyn. 2009. "Public Satisfaction with Police: The Influence of General Attitudes and Police-Citizen Encounters." *International Journal of Police Science and Management* 11:54-66. Doi: 10.1350/ijps.2009.11.1.109

Hoban, Morgan Henry. 2016. *An Analysis of Conceptions of Legitimacy in Evaluations of Local Law Enforcement.* Master's Thesis, Department of Political Science, San Francisco State University. Retrieved June 20, 2020 (http://sfsu-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/173051/AS362016POLIH63.pdf?sequence=1)

Hawdon, James. 2008. "Legitimacy, Trust, Social Capital, and Policing Styles: A Theoretical Statement." *Police Quarterly* 11(2): 182-201. Doi.org/10.1177/1098611107311852

Lai, Yung-Lien and Jihong Solomon Zhao. 2010. "The Impact of Race/Ethnicity, Neighborhood Context, and Police/Citizen Interaction on Residents' Attitudes toward the Police." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 38:685-692. Doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2010.04.042

LaVigne, Nancy, Jocelyn Fontaine, and Anamika Dwivedi. 2017. *How Do People In High-Crime, Low-Income Communities View The Police?* Washington DC: The Urban Institute.

Lee, Joongyeup and Jennifer Gibbs. 2015. "Race and Attitudes toward Police: The Mediating Effect of Social Distance." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 38(2):314-332. Doi: 10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2015-0034

Local Progress. 2020. *Public Commitment Tracker: Divesting from Policing and Investing in Community Needs.* Washington, DC: Center for Popular Democracy. Retrieved on September 25, 2020 (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Rvp7OgYQ40zWjyhl15TLouRMCFhZ_ApjuJ5m1HmBurk).

Lockwood, Brian and Brian R. Wyant. 2014. "Who Cares Who Protects Us? The Relationship between Type of Police Coverage and Citizen Satisfaction With Police." *Police Practice and Research* 15(6):461-475. Doi: 10.1080/15614263.2013.827428

Lum, Cynthia and Daniel Nagin. 2016. "Guest Post: How to Reinvent American Policing." *The Washington Post.* October 3.

Mastrofski, Stephen D., Jeffrey B. Snipes, and Anne E. Supina. 1996. "Compliance on Demand: The Public's Response to Specific Police Requests." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 33:269–305. Doi: 10.1177/0022427896033003001

Mazerolle, Lorraine, Emma Antrobus, Sarah Bennett, and Tom Tyler. 2013a. "Shaping Citizen Perceptions of Police Legitimacy: A Randomized Field Trial of Procedural Justice." *Criminology* 51(1):33-63. Doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9125.2012.00289.x

Mazerolle, Lorraine, Sarah Bennett, Jacqueline Davis, Elise Sargeant, and Matthew Manning, 2013b. *Legitimacy in Policing: A Systematic Review.* Oslo, Norway: The Campbell Collaboration.

Nagin, Daniel, Cynthia Lum, and Tarrick McGuire. 2020. "Guest Post: Repairing the Fractured Foundations of the Police." *The Washington Post.* June 9.

O'Connor, Christopher D. 2008. "Citizen Attitudes toward Police in Canada." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 31(4):578-595. Doi: 10.1108/13639510810910571

PEW Research Center. 2016. *The Racial Confidence Gap in Police Performance.* Washington DC: Pew Research Center.

Reisig, Michael and Megan Stroshine Chandek. 2001. "The Effects of Expectancy Disconfirmation on Outcome Satisfaction in Police-Citizen Encounters." *Policing: An International Journal* 24(1):88-99 Doi: 10.1108/13639510110382278

Reisig, Michael and Roger Parks. 2000. "Experience, Quality Of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satisfaction with Police." *Justice Quarterly* 17(3):607-630. Doi: 10.1080/07418820000094681

Rosenbaum, Dennis P., Daniel Lawrence, Susan Hartnett, Jack McDaniel, and Chad Posick. 2015. "Measuring Procedural Justice and Legitimacy at the Local Level: The Police-Community Interaction Survey." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 11(3):335-366. Doi: 10.1007/s11292-015-9228-9

Rosenbaum, Dennis P., Jon Maskaly, Daniel Lawrence, Justin H. Escamilla, Georgina Enicso, Thomas E. Christoff, and Chad Posick. 2017. "The Police-Community Interaction Survey: Measuring Police Performance in New Ways." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 40(1):112-127. Doi: 10.1108/PIJPSM-07-2016-0119

Rosenbaum, Dennis P., Amie M. Schuck, Sandra K. Costello, Darnell F. Hawkins, and Marianne K. Ring. 2005. "Attitudes toward the Police: The Effects of Direct and Vicarious Experience." *Police Quarterly* 8(3):343-365. Doi: 10.1177/1098611104271085

Rosenbaum, Dennis P., Amie M. Schuck, Daniel Lawrence, Susan Hartnett, Jack McDevitt, and Chad Posick. 2011. *Community-Based Indicators of Police Performance: Introducing the Platform's Public Satisfaction Survey.* Washington DC: US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

Schafer, Joseph A., Beth M. Huebner and Timothy S. Bynum. 2003. "Citizen Perceptions of Police Services: Race, Neighborhood Context, and Community Policing." *Police Quarterly* 6(4):440-468. Doi: 10.1177/1098611102250459

Schuck, Amie M. and Dennis P. Rosenbaum. 2005. "Global and Neighborhood Attitudes toward the Police: Differentiation by Race, Ethnicity and Type of Contact." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 21(4):391-418. Doi: 10.1007/s10940-005-7356-5

Simpson, Rylan. 2017. "The Police Officer Perception Project (POPP): An Experimental Evaluation of Factors that Impact Perceptions of the Police." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 13:393-415. Doi: 10.1007/s11292-017-9292-4

Tankebe, Justice. 2013. "Viewing Things Differently: The Dimensions of Public Perceptions of Police Legitimacy." *Criminology* 51(1):103-135. Doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9125.2012.00291.x

Tat-Kei Ho, Alfred, and Wonhyuk Cho. 2016. "Government Communication Effectiveness and Satisfaction with Police Performance: A Large-Scale Survey Study." *Public Administration Review*, 77(2): 228-239. Doi: 10.1111/puar.12563

Tyler, Tom R. 2004. "Enhancing Police Legitimacy." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 593(1): 84-99. Doi.org/10.1177/0002716203262627

Tyler, Tom R., and Jeffrey Fagan. 2008. "Legitimacy and Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in Their Communities?" *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6:231–75.

Tyler, Tom R., Jeffrey Fagan and Amanda Geller. 2014. "Street Stops and Police Legitimacy: Teachable Moments in Young Urban Men's Legal Socialization." *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 11(4):751-785. Doi: 10.1111/jels.12055

Vitale, A. (2017). *The End of Policing*. London: Verso.

Weitzer, Ronald and Steven A. Tuch. 2005. "Determinants of Public Satisfaction with the Police." *Police Quarterly* 8(3):279-297. Doi: 10.1177/1098611104271106

Weitzer, Ronald, Steven A. Tuch and Wesley G. Skogan. 2008. "Police-Community Relations in a Majority Black City." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. Doi: 10.1177/0022427808322617

Wells, William. 2007. "Type of Contact and Evaluations of Police Officers: The Effects of Procedural Justice across Three Types of Police–Citizen Contacts." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 35:612–21. Doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2007.09.006

Worden, Robert E. and Sarah J. McLean. 2017. "Research on Police Legitimacy: The State of the Art." *Policing: An International Journal* 40(3):480-513. Doi: 10.1108/PIJPSM-05-2017-0062

Appendices
Appendix A: Survey Items Comprising Scale

Scale	Survey Items Comprising Scale
Perceptions of Local Encounter	The officer behaved professionally.
	I perceived the officer to be trustworthy.
	The officer respected my rights as a citizen.
	The officer was fair.
	The officer was courteous.
	The officer was knowledgeable and confident.
	I was satisfied with how officer handled my situation.
Local Satisfaction	How satisfied are you with [this law enforcement agency]?
	With their honesty and integrity?
	With their professionalism as a department?
	With their ability to cooperate with the public to address their concerns?
	With their general attitudes and behaviors towards citizens?
Global Perceptions	I have confidence in the police.
	I have great respect for police.
	Police in the United States are generally honest in the way they deal with people.
	Police are concerned with respecting a citizen's individual rights.
	Police treat citizens fairly and equally.
	How effective or ineffective do you perceive American police officers to be overall?

Appendix B: Correlation Matrix of Dependent and Independent Variables

		Police Satisfaction	Global Attitude	Encounter	Bias
Local Satisfaction	Pearson	1	.714**	.793**	-.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
Global Perceptions	Pearson	.714**	1	.615**	-.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000
Local Encounter	Pearson	.793**	.615**	1	-.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
Perceived Officer Bias	Pearson	-.514**	-.476**	-.386**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	