Title
Building the Case: Why Should We Care About Police-Community Relations? Current Research

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2bp2k7jr

Author
Anderson, Michelle Chernikoff

Publication Date
2006-12-04
Building the Case: Why Should We Care About Police/Community Relations?

Michelle Chernikoff Anderson
January 1, 2006
Pasadena, CA

Western Justice Center Foundation (WJCF) & Police Assessment Resource Center (PARC)
Regional Symposium on Police-Community Relations

Center on Police Practices and Community • UCSB
Building the Case: Why Should We Care About Police/Community Relations?

~ Current Research ~

• Why Care?
• Who / What is COPPAC?
• Examples of COPPAC Research
Why Care? Law Enforcement

• More Legitimate
• More Trusted

Law Enforcement

(National Research Council Committee to Review Research on Police Policies and Practices)

• More authority
• Vote
  – More tax dollars
• Call
  – Earlier
• Witness
  – Clearance
• Comply
  – Safety
Why Care? Community

- Your employees
- Your tax dollars
Why Care? Academia

- Methodologically sound research needed
  - Politics
  - Hunches
- Public Policy
COPPAC

- Center on Police Practices and Community
- ~ Researching Today for a Safer Tomorrow ~
- Academia + Police + Community
- ~ Research & Teaching ~
- =
- Knowledge + Theory + Practice
COPPAC brings members of law enforcement and the community to scholars so that academic research can be more relevant to the needs of law enforcement and the communities it serves.
COPPAC Opened Its Doors

September 24th 2002
COPPAC’s Directors

Howie Giles, PhD, DSc & Michelle Chernikoff Anderson, JD

~ see also: Affiliate List ~
We Distill the Information
Stakeholders Decide What to Do with It
ATP Surveys

. . . around the globe . . .
ATP Studies

- Demographics
  - Race / Ethnicity (age, sex)
- Neighborhood conditions
- Procedural Justice
- Communication
- Control for Demographics
- Trust & Communication Accommodation have far stronger influence
Survey Questions

- **Police Officer Accommodation**
  - In general, how accommodating are police officers? (i.e., how well do you think they listen to people, take their views into account, and want to understand their needs and unique situations?)
  - In general, how respectful of students are police officers?
  - How polite are police officers?
  - How well do police officers explain things to people (i.e., talk to people in ways that “sit right” with them, and that they understand)?

- **Trust**
  - How much respect do you have for the police?
  - To what degree do you think police officers are honest?
  - To what degree do you feel you should support the police?
  - To what degree do you feel that police decisions are fair?
  - To what degree do you feel the police protect citizen rights?
  - I have confidence that the police department can do its job well
  - I trust the police to make decisions that are good for everyone in the community

- **Tendency to Obey**
  - People should obey the police even if what the police officers say or do goes against what they think is right
  - I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do, even if I thought it was wrong
  - Disobeying a police officer is seldom justified

- **Safety**
  - I feel safe walking alone at night when it is dark
Figure 1: Structural Equation Model of City-Wide Responses to Local Police: English

- Age of Respondent
- Perceptions of Police Officers' Accommodation
- Caucasian (1) vs. Latino (2)
- Ratings of Police
- Willingness to Call Police Department
- Satisfaction with Police

Correlation Coefficients:
- Age of Respondent to Perceptions of Police Officers' Accommodation: .28
- Perceptions of Police Officers' Accommodation to Ratings of Police: .62
- Ratings of Police to Satisfaction with Police: .39
- Willingness to Call Police Department to Satisfaction with Police: .52
- Caucasian (1) vs. Latino (2) to Willingness to Call Police Department: .34
- Willingness to Call Police Department to Satisfaction with Police: -.08
- Satisfaction with Police to Ratings of Police: .05
- Satisfaction with Police to Age of Respondent: -.08
- Satisfaction with Police to Perceptions of Police Officers' Accommodation: -.11
Figure 2: Structural Equation Model of City-Wide Responses to Local Police: Spanish

- Perceptions of Police Accommodation in Country of Origin
- Years lived in City
- Speak Spanish only
- Church Location
- Perceptions of Police Officers' Accommodation
- Willingness to Call Police Department
- Ratings of Police

Path Coefficients:
- Perceptions of Police Accommodation in Country of Origin → Willingness to Call Police Department: 0.21
- Speak Spanish only → Perceptions of Police Accommodation in Country of Origin: 0.63
- Speak Spanish only → Willingness to Call Police Department: 0.10
- Church Location → Perceptions of Police Accommodation in Country of Origin: -0.08
- Church Location → Willingness to Call Police Department: 0.12
Figure 1.

Attitudes to Police: Peoples' Republic of China and US

Police Accommodation

PRC .42, US .41

Obey the Police

Police Performance Rating

PRC .36, US .47

Satisfaction with Police

PRC .78, US .89

Trust in Police

PRC .67, US .58

PRC .68, US .77

PRC .55, US .42

PRC .42, US .41
Figure 2.
Attitudes to Taiwanese Police

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Police Accommodation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (1)</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obey Police</th>
<th>Police Performance Rating</th>
<th>Satisfaction with Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions about Safety</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trust in Police

Figure 2.
Attitudes to Taiwanese Police
Open Ended Q Responses

Reflect Importance of Communication

• “unnecessarily bossy”
• “more politeness—it’s a university campus, not a prison”
• “the officers I have encountered have been very polite and professional”
• “an officer smiled at me and said ‘hello’ to me when I said ‘good morning’”
And on the other hand . . .

- Study effects of communicating with community members about task of law enforcement
Citizens’ Forum

• Before and After Surveys
Survey . . . Jail Tour . . . Survey
ACCOMMODATION: Before v. After

How ACCOMMODATING are LE Officials?

Mean

1 = very UNaccommodating . . . 7 = very accommodating
RATE: Before v. After

How RATE law enforcement?

Mean

BRATEPOL

ARATEPOL

1 = Very Poor . . . 7 = Excellent
Policy Implications of Findings

- Suggests LE can affect change in relations with Community
- Procedural Justice / Communication
  - Respectful communication
  - Accommodative communication
Next Steps

• COPPAC Surveys demonstrate significant predictors of Attitudes Toward Police (ATP)

• Analyze use/non-use of such factors in Real Life Police - Civilian Interactions

• Independence requires FUND$
More information . . .

- 
  Brochures

- 
  Contact ~

- 
  MICHELLE CHERNI KOFF ANDERSON
  Director of Research and Education
  Center on Police Practices and Community [COPPAC]
  ISBER, 2201 North Hall
  University of California
  Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2150

t: (805) 893-7879
f: (805) 893-7995
e: mca@coppac.ucsb.edu
www.coppac.ucsb.edu