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NORTH CAROLINA LAW REVIEW

Volume 51 | Number 1

Article 7

11-1-1972

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Darlene Walker

Richard J. Richardson

Thomas Denyer

Oliver Williams

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Recommended Citation

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CONTACT AND SUPPORT: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICE AND THE COURTS

DARLENE WALKER†

RICHARD J. RICHARDSON
THOMAS DENYER

OLIVER WILLIAMS
SKIP MCGAUGHEY

INTRODUCTION

The level of public support for a political institution or actor is important in any governmental system. In a democratic system, it is particularly significant, since it is the means by which governmental spokesmen maintain tenure. Although considerable theoretical and empirical attention has been devoted to an analysis of the level of support enjoyed by political men and institutions, knowledge of the patterns and determinants of support is far from complete.

Analyses of support patterns have tended to focus on national political decisionmakers who are politically accountable on a regular basis. Scant attention has been given to the analysis of support for local officials and the decisions of less visible institutions. Though local decisionmakers are less visible nationally, they are often those governmental officials with whom the citizen is most likely to be in contact and therefore those about whom he is most likely to have developed attitudes and opinions. It is particularly appropriate, then, to analyze the support for these political actors and to determine the basis of public support and the sources of conflict and discontent.

This article will analyze the determinants of support for two agen-

†Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Houston. Data from which this study was drawn were collected as part of the Criminal Victimization project primarily funded by the North Carolina Bureau of Local Affairs, Division of Law and Order. This article is drawn from the dissertation of Darlene Walker under the direction of Richard J. Richardson, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of North Carolina. The other participants share authorship because of the collegial nature of the project development and data collection. Oliver Williams is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at North Carolina State University. Skip McGaughey and Thomas Denyer are doctoral candidates in political science at the University of North Carolina.

In addition to other funding, dissertation support was provided by the Graduate Fellowship Research Program of the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. Our financial support is gratefully acknowledged. Interpretations of the data are solely the responsibility of the authors. We are also grateful to the Institute for Research in Social Science, Chapel Hill for their generous assistance to this project.

cies of the legal system in North Carolina. These institutions, the police and state courts, are important political decisionmakers with whom many citizens come into contact and about whom they form opinions. Although analysts have recognized for some time that the important discretionary power¹ wielded by these agencies makes them important politically, systematic attention to the level of support for these institutions and for the decisions made here has been limited. Such analysis of legal justice institutions as exists has been nationally-oriented and frequently fragmentary, with attention focused on population subsamples such as attentive publics,² racial minorities,³ or political party members.⁴

It is the purpose of the present research (1) to ascertain the level of public support for selected institutions of the legal justice system—specifically, policemen and other law enforcement officers and state courts; (2) to isolate the determinants of that support in the general population; and (3) to explore the importance of contact with a governmental agency or actor as a major influence on support for it.

The data for the study were obtained from interviews with 1,148 respondents from the adult, non-institutionalized population of the State of North Carolina. A probability sample was selected by stratification and cluster procedures. Randomization was applied from the selection of 120 interview points to households and individuals within households. The data were stratified by five geographic regions of the state; and within geographic regions, by the residence, race, age, and sex of respondents. A generalized interview was conducted with each respondent which was designed to ascertain attitudes toward the activities and policies of the criminal justice system and whether any member of the household had been a victim of crime.⁵

¹J. WILSON, *VARIETIES OF POLICE BEHAVIOR* 83-139 (1968) [hereinafter cited as WILSON].

²*E.g.*, Kessel, *Public Perceptions of the Supreme Court*, 10 *MIDWEST J. POL. SCI.* 167 (1966).

³For examples of this type of analysis, see D. BAYLEY & H. MENDELSON, *MINORITIES AND THE POLICE* (1969) [hereinafter cited as BAYLEY & MENDELSON]; Hirsch & Donohew, *A Note on Negro-White Differences in Attitudes toward the Supreme Court*, 49 *SOCIAL SCI. Q.* 557 (1968).

⁴*E.g.*, Dolbeare & Hammond, *The Political Party Basis of Attitudes toward the Supreme Court*, 22 *PUB. OPINION Q.* 16 (1968).

⁵For a detailed analysis of sampling procedures and questionnaire construction, see R. RICHARDSON, O. WILLIAMS, T. DENYER, D. WALKER & S. MCGAUGHEY, *PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEGAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION 85-90* (1972) [hereinafter cited as *PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEGAL JUSTICE SYSTEM*].

The Conceptualization of Support

Support, by its nature, deals with the performance and output of the political system interacting with individual perceptions, values, expectations, and attitudinal predispositions. In the terms of Easton and Dennis, support can be defined as those "feelings of trust, confidence, or affection and their opposites which persons may direct toward some object."⁶

In an analysis of support for the police and the courts, it is useful and necessary to identify two dimensions of support: diffuse and specific.⁷ Diffuse support, as we will use it, refers to the degree to which individuals consider that an actor or institution is carrying out its responsibilities in an impartial, responsible, and competent fashion.⁸ It is a measure of institutional legitimacy: an overall evaluation of the institution's performance. Diffuse support for an institution may persist even when the policy outputs of the system are neutral or unsatisfactory to the subject.⁹ Thus, diffuse support is a reservoir of unconditional institutional support not subject to rapid fluctuations. It is conceived as an institutional attribute not wholly dependent on the incumbent who holds the office at any given time. It is the existence of diffuse support that theoretically allows an institution to persist despite temporary failures in rallying public support for its policies. This unconditional evaluation can be overstated however, since it is assumed that if an institution should fail over extended periods of time, or should fail on a critically important issue to produce a satisfactory policy, the direction and strength of diffuse attitudes may be reversed. In the short or even long run, however, diffuse support—the generalized feeling of trust and confidence that the actor or institution is performing as it should—is a feeling that persists even when specific policies fail to meet public approval.¹⁰

⁶D. EASTON & J. DENNIS, *CHILDREN IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM* 57 (1969) [hereinafter cited as EASTON & DENNIS].

⁷This is an Eastonian dichotomy. For discussions of systemic support, see D. EASTON, *A SYSTEMS ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL LIFE* (1965) [hereinafter cited as EASTON]; EASTON & DENNIS 62-63.

⁸Murphy and Tannenhaus used a definition similar to the one used here for both specific and diffuse support. Murphy & Tannenhaus, *Public Opinion and the United States Supreme Court*, in *FRONTIERS OF JUDICIAL RESEARCH* 273 (J. Grossman & J. Tannenhaus eds. 1969).

⁹EASTON 273.

¹⁰EASTON & DENNIS 62-64.

Specific support, on the other hand, is the extent to which people praise or criticize particular policies, actors or institutions. It is this kind of support which is likely to vary, since it changes in response to policy and its consequences in the political system. Specific attitudes, positive or negative, are viewed as related to policy or a particular official, rather than to an institution or system. That is, it is a judgment on a discrete political act or a single actor rather than an overall judgment of the institution's characteristics or its performance. Although specific support is seen as basically independent of diffuse support, at some point the ability or inability of the political actor to generate specific support may become critical and the specific evaluation may influence the level of diffuse support.¹¹

Diffuse support, because of its general nature, is an attitudinal predisposition that is held by most members of a stable political system. Contrarily, specific support attitudes are likely to be held only by individuals who have knowledge of or who are aware of public policies.¹²

The Contact Variable

It is a primary hypothesis of our research that citizen contact with an institution will be an important variable both in the explanation of variance in support for it and in the analysis of the relationship between the two dimensions of support, diffuse and specific. Contact can be defined in several ways. When social analysts have concerned themselves with contact between the citizen and the political system, they have frequently defined contact in narrow political terms. Participation in or contact with the system has been viewed and measured in terms of voting, campaigning, electioneering, or office holding.¹³ This kind of participation has its parallel in the legal justice system. Sheriffs and other legal officials are frequently elected and legal policies and issues are frequently the object of political debate. Campaigns are run and debates are carried on by individuals who involve themselves in this aspect of the legal justice system. Although there has been some success in showing that this kind of participation may have an attitudinal impact, such contact alone has contributed little to an explanation of total

¹¹*Id.*

¹²EASTON 153-70, 267-77.

¹³For a discussion of this type of participation, see L. MILBRATH, *POLITICAL PARTICIPATION* (1965).

variance in patterns of support because such participation affects only a small portion of the population.¹⁴

A much more universal form of contact, both in the broad political system and in the legal system, is that citizen-government encounter that results from the use of government services.¹⁵ Consumption activities have increased greatly in recent years and citizens have become closely tied to and involved in the political system as a result of their greater dependence on and demand for governmental services. Most individuals are consumers of governmental services. Herbert Jacob cites Census statistics to show that as early as 1960, "55 million people or almost half the adult population . . . consumed governmental outputs which were central to their life style."¹⁶ And the number of governmental consumers increases yearly. Consumption contact is thus the kind of governmental contact that most individuals are likely to have with the political system. Furthermore, given that this type of contact is much more likely than voting to involve a specific reward or deprivation, this kind of encounter will probably be much more salient to the individual.

The small percentage of response to, and information given in answer to, open-ended survey research questions about political institutions indicates a fairly low awareness of the political behavior of actors and institutions.¹⁷ The actions taken by political institutions about which the individual is most likely to be aware are those acts that involve him directly. That is, while it appears that the public has some difficulty in becoming aware of and in evaluating political phenomena and policy, it is easier to be aware of and evaluative of institutions with which one

¹⁴Milbrath suggests that only about 4% to 5% of the American public are extensively involved in politics by being active in parties, campaigns, and political meetings, and probably less than 1% are active to the extent of soliciting political funds, being a candidate for office or holding public office. *Id.* at 18-19.

¹⁵For a complete discussion of this type of contact, see H. JACOB, *DEBTORS IN COURT* 1-24 (1969) [hereinafter cited as *DEBTORS IN COURT*]. For a similar kind of discussion of the power which accrues to government as a distributor of goods and services, see Reich, *The New Property*, 73 *YALE L.J.* 733 (1964).

¹⁶This is an estimate based on data found in U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, *STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES: 1965*, 108, 288, 308, *quoted in DEBTORS IN COURT* 4 n.1.

¹⁷Kessel found, for example, that only 40% of his respondents indicated that they had paid attention to what the Supreme Court has done in recent years. Kessel, *supra* note 2, at 189. For more complete verification of the low visibility of the Supreme Court, see S. GOLDMAN & T. JAHNIGE, *THE FEDERAL COURTS AS A POLITICAL SYSTEM* 139 (1971).

has contact. Thus, since consumption contact is so widespread and affects such a large proportion of the population and since it is often of a personal nature, contact with a governmental agency can be an important determinant of attitudes towards the agency. Jacob emphasized the potential importance of contact for the political system, particularly its importance in the development of supportive attitudes:

Consumption of governmental outputs is analogous to the consumption of goods and services in the economic marketplace. Consumption activities connote demands which, as in the economic system, affect the conditions under which supply becomes available . . . *Moreover, consumption activities are likely to play a central role in the promotion of supportive attitudes for a particular agency or for a regime; they may also produce hostile attitudes which create stress in the system.* Finally, consumption activities affect the distribution of outputs and the structure of agencies responsible for particular programs.¹⁸

The influence of consumption of attitude determination is a rather intriguing idea raised first with regard to the legal system by Jacob in his book *Debtors in Court*.¹⁹ Jacob compared the political attitudes of those who had been in court for either bankruptcy or wage-garnishment proceedings with the attitudes of a group of respondents without court contact and found significant differences in attitudes. Thus his data lead to the rather clear conclusion that this kind of court experience has impact on some dimensions of political attitudes of litigants.

Jahnige proposes a similar hypothesis with regard to the types of court experiences which are most widespread in the general population.²⁰ He maintains that the average citizen goes into the judicial arena with high expectations—anticipating exemplary objectivity and fairness. These expectations may be disappointed, for the rules and procedures which are supposed to promote objectivity and equity may actually undercut them. “To the court professional the rough and tumble manner of proceeding may seem obvious. . . . To litigants and witnesses, however, this may be an extremely disturbing experience. . . . Potentially, then, the litigants, witnesses, and jurors may leave the courtroom psychologically dissatisfied and with their respect for the courts greatly

¹⁸DEBTORS IN COURT 4 (emphasis added).

¹⁹*Id.*

²⁰Jahnige, *A Note on the Implications of Legal Rules and Procedures*, in THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM 139 (S. Goldman & T. Jahnige eds. 1971).

lowered."²¹ Thus Jahnige hypothesizes that the contact that the average individual is likely to have with the court system may lower support for it because its procedures do not measure up to the high standards he expects.²² One might hypothesize alternatively that high expectations which were reaffirmed by the court experience would lead to an increase in institutional support. These are appealing hypotheses, and ones that have far reaching implications for the legitimacy of legal institutions.

In the legal system an individual becomes a consumer of legal services when he reports a crime, calls the police for help, reports a victimization, or becomes a litigant in court. He has important contact with it when he receives a traffic ticket, is stopped by the police for questioning, serves as a witness in court, comes to the court as a spectator, or is called for jury duty. If we generalize Jacob's findings we would expect that any or all of these contacts are capable of playing an important role in the creation of supportive attitudes for the particular agency or subsystem; they may alternatively generate negative attitudes and systemic stress.

A more recent study by Jacob on the effect of contact with the police and courts on attitudes for these institutions found evidences of an attitudinal impact.²³ Also, Bayley and Mendelsohn have concluded that the attitudes of minorities toward police were associated with the presence or absence of personal contact. They observed that the sheer fact of contact with the police, whether initiative is possessed by the citizen or police, does influence opinions about the police.²⁴ Thus there is a growing body of both theoretical and empirical evidence to suggest that for those institutions which are largely service institutions for the public or which have frequent encounters with large numbers of citizens, contact has an effect on the level of public support.

The relationship between contact and support is not necessarily a direct one. It is anticipated that the direction and magnitude of the effect will be at least partially dependent on other factors. The impact

²¹*Id.* at 97.

²²A similar suggestion has been made: "The causes of these negative attitudes are many and complex, but some aspects of the problem may be traced directly to the treatment accorded witnesses and jurors." THE PRESIDENT'S COMM'N ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, TASK FORCE REPORT: THE COURTS 90 (1967) [hereinafter cited as TASK FORCE REPORT: THE COURTS].

²³See Jacob, *Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City*, 6 LAW & SOC'Y REV. 69 (1971) [hereinafter cited as *Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City*].

²⁴BAYLEY & MENDELSON 119.

may vary according to the conditions under which the contact arises, the outcome of the encounter, and the predispositions of the individual.

Several distinctions can be made concerning the conditions under which contact arises.²⁵ Perhaps the most important one is whether or not the individual seeks the contact or demands the service, or alternatively whether it is imposed upon him. That is, it may be important to know whether the contact is essentially voluntary or nonvoluntary. Decisions to call the police to ask for help, to report a victimization, or to bring a private conflict before the court for adjudication are essentially voluntary contacts. The citizen-government encounter that results from police questioning, being called as a witness in court, or receiving a traffic ticket is nonvoluntary in nature. It may be reasonable to hypothesize that contacts resulting from an encounter sought out by the individual have a higher probability of producing supportive feelings than do nonvoluntary encounters and that nonvoluntary contacts are those most likely to depress support.²⁶

The impact of the contact situation may also be mitigated by the level of satisfaction derived from the encounter. If an individual has a court case decided in his favor, is assisted by the police in locating a lost child, or finds a policeman courteous, and the contact is defined as satisfactory to the individual, the attitudinal impact may differ from the one that results from an unsatisfactory experience. It may be that satisfactory contacts are those most likely to produce supportive attitudes or to be associated with high levels of support²⁷ and that unsatisfactory contacts are most often related to low levels of attitudinal support and most likely to produce negative attitudes of support.²⁸ Alternatively, unsatisfactory contact may produce hostility or negative attitudes while

²⁵For a more complete discussion of the conditions under which contact may arise, see DEBTORS IN COURT 6-9.

²⁶For example, Jacob's data show that blacks, who have the highest percentage of involuntary encounters, also have the largest percentage of unsatisfactory experiences. *Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City* 74-76.

²⁷Jacob reports that his data reveal that black respondents with satisfactory experiences evaluated policemen more favorably than those with unsatisfactory experiences. *Id.* at 77.

²⁸Bayley and Mendelsohn state that the analysis of their survey data suggests such a thesis: "Whatever the evaluation of the police may be, among all ethnic groups, people who have had some personal experience of an unpleasant kind with the police hold less favorable opinions than people who have not had these experiences. People who have been badly treated by police or have seen what they consider to be improper treatment will rate the police very critically indeed" BAYLEY & MENDELSON 120; *accord*, DEBTORS IN COURT 10; TASK FORCE REPORT: THE COURTS 90.

a positive satisfactory encounter leaves the level of support unaffected.²⁹

Contacts with police and courts are widespread, but not equally distributed. Some subgroups in the population have a greater likelihood of having certain types of contacts. We know, for example, that young black men are more likely than other individuals to be arrested,³⁰ that the police are more likely to be called in to settle family arguments in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods than in higher income ones,³¹ that blacks are less likely than whites to report some types of victimizations,³² and that some groups are overrepresented on juries.³³ This is true both because of the range of discretion available to legal actors³⁴ and because of the varying conditions under which contact arises. Additionally, some subpopulation characteristics may have independent effects on the attitudinal outcome of a legal policy contact. Race, age, and income have been rather consistently identified as factors which are associated with political attitudes.³⁵ It is reasonable to hypothesize,

²⁹Jacob, *Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City* 78, and Bayley and Mendelsohn, BAYLEY & MENDELSON 119-20, suggest that unsatisfactory contacts have greater attitudinal impact than satisfactory ones do.

³⁰Negroes have a significantly higher rate of arrest in virtually every offense category. THE PRESIDENT'S COMM'N ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, THE CHALLENGE OF CRIME IN A FREE SOCIETY 44 (1967) [hereinafter cited as THE CHALLENGE OF CRIME IN A FREE SOCIETY].

³¹Cumming, Cumming & Edell, *Policeman as Philosopher, Guide, and Friend*, 12 SOCIAL PROB. 276 (1965).

³²P. ENNIS, CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A REPORT OF A NATIONAL SURVEY 41-51 (1967).

³³For data on jury composition, see the bibliographic citations in Jacob, *Judicial Insulation—Elections, Direct Participation, and Public Attention to the Courts in Wisconsin*, 1966 WIS. L. REV. 801, 801-19.

³⁴For discussion of the wide range and uses of discretion available to police, see THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, TASK FORCE REPORT: THE POLICE 13-41 (1967) [hereinafter cited as TASK FORCE REPORT: THE POLICE]. Court discretion and its impact is discussed in O. Williams & R. Richardson, *The Impact of Criminal Justice Policy on Blacks in Southern Trial Courts*, 1972 (unpublished paper at Department of Political Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

³⁵R. Lehen & G. Koch, *Adult Trust in Three Federal Institutions: Some Comparisons Based on Race and Income*, June, 1972 (unpublished paper at the Department of Political Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). For racial differences on court support, see Hirsch & Donohew, *supra* note 3. For additional verification of differences in attitudes toward police, see BAYLEY & MENDELSON 109-22; P. Ennis, *supra* note 32, at 52-80; THE PRESIDENT'S COMM'N ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, STUDIES OF CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS 1-114 (1967); TASK FORCE REPORT: THE POLICE 144-207; Feagin, *Home Defense and the Police*, 13 AM. BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST 797 (1970); Hahn, *Ghetto Assessments of Police Protection and Authority*, 6 LAW & SOC'Y REV. 183 (1971).

therefore, the probability of further relationships between subpopulation characteristics (socioeconomic status, race, income, age, and education, for example) and the types of contact, the level of satisfaction, and their effect on attitudes.

The Relationship between Support and Contact

Specific support is either positive or negative. For the purposes of this article specific support is measured by questions designed to ascertain policy approval or disapproval. Respondents were asked whether or not there was something about the police or courts in this state that they particularly liked or disliked. Individuals who expressed specific attitudes were judged on the basis of the response to have either positive or negative (high or low) specific support.

On a diffuse level, an individual either evaluates the institutions to be doing an equitable or competent job or he gives them a poor evaluation and judges them to be inequitable. To measure diffuse support, citizens were asked how good a job they thought the courts and law enforcement agencies in North Carolina were doing. Elsewhere in the questionnaire, they were asked if they or people like them would be treated fairly by courts or police. Also, we sought to ascertain if there were groups in the population who the public thinks are treated unfairly. Diffuse support is also dichotomous; it is either positive (high) or negative (low).

Thus, for any individual willing to evaluate these legal institutions, there are four possible configurations of support: high diffuse-high specific, high diffuse-low specific, low diffuse-high specific, and low diffuse-low specific. Broadly stated, a major task of our study is twofold. First, it is to identify the correlates of specific and diffuse support, giving special analysis to the role of contact in attitude determination. Second, it is the purpose of this article to investigate the complex relationship between levels of specific and diffuse support and their determinants.

One might hypothesize that the levels of diffuse support for the legal institutions and decisionmakers would be relatively high. Empirical evidence from several sources indicates that the level of diffuse support for an institution that enjoys political salience, rarely falls below fifty percent. That is, fifty percent of the population express supportive attitudes. For example, Lehnen's work on the comparative level of trust for political institutions shows that the population exhibits high levels of political trust. Seventy-five percent of his sample population ex-

pressed the opinion that the President can be trusted to do what is good for the people, sixty-seven percent expressed the same opinion for the governor, sixty-seven percent for local judges, sixty-three percent for U.S. Senators, and sixty percent for the Supreme Court.³⁶ Similarly, Ennis found in the National Victimization survey that more than a majority of the citizens interviewed gave high evaluations to the police on several diffuse and specific measures;³⁷ and Bayley and Mendelsohn report that an overwhelming majority of their Denver respondents (both majority and minority groups) say that policemen are doing a good job: a measure of diffuse support.³⁸ These findings are substantiated by the findings of a 1965 national survey which reported that seventy percent of the population indicated that they had a high level of support for the police.³⁹

This is consistent with what one might anticipate, since studies of childhood socialization and the development of support for political institutions indicate that children and adolescents hold a high regard for those institutions of which they are aware. Fred I. Greenstein in *Children in Politics* found children very accepting of political authority.⁴⁰ Easton and Dennis report similar findings. These authors found that the benevolent, protective, helpful, and otherwise positive qualities of government constitute the first childhood evaluations of political institutions.⁴¹ Even at the more critical adolescent stages of development, these qualities remain the "continuing overall context of evaluation."⁴² Interestingly, children early identify policemen, along with the President, as important political figures. The policeman is not only visible, he is viewed in highly positive, benevolent, and complimentary terms.⁴³ This positive disposition is expected to have an impact on the attitudes of the adult. In Easton's terms, "If our sample of children is at all typical, in the American system the child becomes tightly linked to the structure of authority. . . . As members grow older early orien-

³⁶Lehnen, *Public Views of State Governors*, in *THE AMERICAN GOVERNOR IN BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE* 260 (T. Beyle & O. Williams eds. 1972).

³⁷P. ENNIS, *supra* note 32, at 53.

³⁸BAYLEY & MENDELSON 42.

³⁹EASTON & DENNIS 312. This high regard for the police is also substantiated by G. ALMOND & S. VERBA, *THE CIVIC CULTURE* 108-09 (1963).

⁴⁰F. GREENSTEIN, *CHILDREN IN POLITICS* (1965).

⁴¹EASTON & DENNIS 128.

⁴²*Id.*

⁴³*Id.* at 209-42.

tations provide a solid supportive base for the regime."⁴⁴ This positive endorsement of government might be expected to persist unless something happens to cause the individual to alter his basic feelings of support and legitimacy for the political system.

Despite the evidence suggesting high diffuse evaluations among most members of the political system, there is data to indicate that variance does exist. There is evidence to show, for example, that support for the police shows a sharp decline in some subgroups in periods of early adolescence,⁴⁵ and some population subgroups uniformly evidence lower than average support for the police. Likewise, attitudinal studies of the courts show that some segments of the population evidence an a clear tendency to give a low evaluation to the courts. What accounts for the variance that exists? Why does diffuse support decline for some individuals?

One answer has been suggested by Easton and Dennis. They observe that although "specific responses may begin as feelings about the authorities, they may ultimately spill over to infect the attitudes toward the regime and political community itself."⁴⁶ By analogy, at the institutional level, low specific support may, under the conditions suggested above, spill over and affect the institutional level of diffuse support.

A loss of support emerges from the gap between expectations and perceptions. Low diffuse support may be the result of unrealized expectations. As noted earlier, it is anticipated that most adults enter the political system with high levels of support and with elevated expectations. When the individual is placed in a situation in which he must evaluate these expectations against a realistic view of the institution and its policies, there is the chance that such a gap will develop.

It is the thesis of this article that those specific incidents most likely to produce such a gap are those that affect the individual most directly, and those with which he expresses the most dissatisfaction. Face to face contact of an unsatisfactory nature for the consumer is the instance most likely to be associated with a low level of diffuse support. The more proximate the contact, or the more relevant the policy issue to the individual, the more likely it is to have an effect on the level of diffuse

⁴⁴*Id.* at 287.

⁴⁵*Id.* at 243-72.

⁴⁶*Id.* at 62.

support.⁴⁷

Since it has been demonstrated through previous research that income, age, and race have some independent effect on the level of support, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that some of the variance in levels of diffuse support for the legal system can be explained in these terms. Individuals who are members of groups or subgroups most likely to experience unsatisfactory contact, whether or not they have had such experience, may express attitudes that reflect the attitudes of their peers who have had such contact.⁴⁸

We have suggested that contact, and the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that results, interacts with socialization, socioeconomic, and racial characteristics to create a marked effect on diffuse support. We have also suggested that for some individuals the impact of contact or some other experience on diffuse support is through its influence on specific support.

While diffuse support was identified as a characteristic of most individuals, specific support, the ability and willingness to articulate specific complaints or commendations, is less widespread. In general, however, we anticipate that the direction of specific support is influenced by many of the same factors that affect diffuse support. Socioeconomic and racial variables which are expected to have an impact on general evaluations of legal personnel should exhibit roughly the same or similar influence on the direction of specific comments. And some socioeconomic characteristics may be related to the propensity to express specific opinions. Education, for example, may increase the likelihood that specific attitudes will be expressed.

Further, and more importantly, it is the thesis of this article that contact has a primary and important impact on specific support in two ways: First, it increases the likelihood that an individual will be aware

⁴⁷Murphy and Tannenhaus in an analysis of visibility of court decisions conclude that "[t]here can . . . be no doubt about the character of issues apt to be salient. They are clearly the ones that can be viewed in an intensely personal fashion." Murphy & Tannenhaus, *supra* note 8, at 279. See also Barth, *Perception and Acceptance of Supreme Court Decisions at the State and Local Level*, 17 J. PUB. L. 309, 319 "The degree to which the citizen perceives the outputs of the Supreme Court is closely related to the degree to which the citizen perceives his interests to be involved in the decisions."

⁴⁸As Jacob notes, "[P]ersonal contact may affect evaluation indirectly by creating a climate of opinion in the neighborhood among friends, neighbors, and acquaintances." *Black and White Perceptions of Justice In the City* 71.

of and willing to express opinions on the behavior and practices of these men and agencies. Second, the nature of the contact, and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction that the citizen feels as a result of the encounter, will determine the direction of the comments. That is, satisfied consumers of police or court services are expected to be more likely than other individuals to express specific approval, and individuals with unsatisfactory contact, most likely to be nonsupportive.

Since we have suggested that the distribution of contact and satisfaction is related to socioeconomic and racial variables, one might expect for this reason, as well as for those noted above, that specific support for those institutions in which contact is differentially distributed will vary by age, race, and income.

If the present study shows that respondents who have had satisfactory contact with these legal agencies are consistently more positive in their evaluations of them and that those who have had unsatisfactory contact are more likely to have low estimates or specific policy complaints, then there is evidence for a contact theory. If most of the specific references, both positive and negative with regard to policy and behavior, are based on personal contact and observation, then this lends credence to the idea that contact is an important determinant of support attitudes. If it can be shown that those groups or individuals known to have the most unsatisfactory contact are also those that evidence the lowest levels of support, then there is evidence to support the theory. More persuasively, if it can be shown, for example, that for every low diffuse evaluation that there is a corresponding low specific complaint related to personal contact, then there is support for the interaction thesis.

THE POLICE

The Distribution of Contact

Few public agencies affect the lives of more people than do the police, and certainly few governmental agencies have broader public contact. Almost eighty percent (79.5)⁴⁹ of the population have reported

⁴⁹The total number of respondents for the survey was 1,148. For statements made about the total population in percentage terms, the total number (N) may vary from this figure because of missing data. The total "N" will not be reported for each percentage because the deviation from the maximum N will be reported for each group. Again, there may be some deviation from this figure due to missing data from other survey items. For a more complete discussion of the sample and for specific responses to each question, see R. RICHARDSON, O. WILLIAMS, T. DENYER & D. WALKER, *supra* note 5.

having contact with the police or other law enforcement officers, and a high percentage of the population (57.1%) reported having more than one type of contact. When asked if they had come into contact with the police by calling to ask for police assistance, volunteering information, having the police offer assistance, being questioned by the police, being stopped for a traffic or other violation, or by calling the police when victimized by crime, 21.9 percent of the population reported two types of contacts, 15.2 percent reported three types of encounters, and fully 20.0 percent had had four or more types of contacts with law enforcement personnel. There is substantial evidence that a large percentage of the population have not only had numerous contacts, but a variety of contacts as well.

Clearly then, not all of the individuals who have had contact have done so in the same manner or under the same conditions. Law enforcement contacts are essentially of two types: voluntary and nonvoluntary. Voluntary contacts are those which are initiated by the consumer at the will of or with the acquiescence of the individual involved.⁵⁰ Nonvoluntary contacts are initiated by law enforcement personnel in the exercise of the law enforcement function.

Of those individuals who reported having police contact, 17.0 percent reported having exclusively voluntary encounters,⁵¹ 24.3 percent reported exclusively nonvoluntary encounters,⁵² and 58.7 percent said that they had had both types of contacts.⁵³ This high percentage of the population with both types of contact is further support for the proposition that public contact with law enforcement officials is frequent and extensive. The fact that public encounters are so widespread takes on

⁵⁰For a discussion of voluntary contacts, see Bercal, *Calls for Police Assistance: Consumer Demands for Governmental Services*, 13 AM. BEHAVIORAL SCI. 681 (1970). The finding that police spend much time in performance of service functions unrelated to arrest and law enforcement is well documented. See TASK FORCE REPORT: THE POLICE 13; Cummings, Cummings & Edell, *supra* note 31, at 276-86 (1965); Johnson & Gregory, *Police-Community Relations in the United States: A Review of Recent Literature and Projects*, 62 J. CRIM. L.C. & P.S. 94, 94-103 (1971); Parnas, *The Police Response to the Domestic Disturbance*, 1967 WIS. L. REV. 914.

⁵¹To measure voluntary contact with the police, respondents were asked the following questions: (1) "Have you ever called the police to ask for help or advice of any kind?" (2) "Have you ever had the police to help you in any way, like changing a tire or finding a lost pet?" (3) "Have you ever volunteered information to the local police, the FBI, the state police or other law enforcement officers?" If the respondent was a victim of crime, he was asked (4) "Did you call the police?"

⁵²To measure nonvoluntary contacts, respondents were asked the following questions: (1) "Have you ever been asked questions by the police?" (2) "Have you ever been stopped by the police for a traffic violation, or something else?"

⁵³Total number of respondents with contact (N=913).

great importance in light of the contact theory of attitude determination raised earlier.

Though contact is widely distributed in the population, we have hypothesized that it is not equally distributed.⁵⁴ The allocation of services (voluntary encounters) depends largely on the willingness of the individual to call the police and his knowledge of how to call the assistance of law enforcement personnel into play. Once the police are contacted, their ability and willingness to assist partially determines the allocation of service. A wide range of discretion exists for policemen in the exercise of their duties. As noted by the *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice*,

Law enforcement policy is made by policemen. For policemen cannot and do not arrest all the offenders they encounter. It is doubtful they arrest most of them. A criminal code, in practice, is not a set of specific instructions to policemen but more or less a rough map of the territory in which policemen work.⁵⁵

Relatively few citizens in the population have contact with the police as a result of a serious violation of the criminal code. Yet nonvoluntary contacts as the result of being stopped by the police for a traffic violation or for routine questioning, for example, are widespread. As Bayley and Mendelsohn conclude, "Contact with the public is [discretionary] decision-making action, except in that very small minority of cases in which the offense is so serious and so obvious that duty is clear."⁵⁶ Wilson underlines the importance of police discretion in determining the distribution of most nonvoluntary contacts: "The patrolman's substantive and distributive conception of justice influences both his decision *whether* to intervene in a potentially disorderly or law-violating situation and his decision *how* to intervene."⁵⁷

⁵⁴For a discussion of the profile of citizen participants in encounters with police see D. BLACK & A. REISS, *Patterns of Behavior in Police and Citizen Transactions*, in *STUDIES IN CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS* 16-26 (1967). BAYLEY & MENDELSON 58-68 discusses the distribution of police contact. For a discussion of the characteristics of those who come into contact with the police as a result of victimization see P. ENNIS, *supra* note 32; Wilson, *supra* note 1 at 18; *Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City* 74-76; Jacob, *Contact with Governmental Agencies: A Preliminary Analysis of the Distribution of Governmental Services*, 16 *MIDWEST J. POL. SCI.* 123, 123-46 (1972).

⁵⁵THE CHALLENGE OF CRIME IN A FREE SOCIETY, *quoted in* H. JAMES, *CRISIS IN THE COURTS* 93 (1971).

⁵⁶BAYLEY & MENDELSON 70.

⁵⁷WILSON 38.

Both because of the varying conditions under which contact arises and because of the wide range of discretion available to law enforcement personnel, it has been hypothesized that police contacts will not be equally distributed in the population. The data support this hypothesis. Age, race, and income reveals consistent and interesting variations in contact and provides insight into the question of how these legal policies are distributed and what kinds of contact fall heaviest on which socioeconomic and racial groups.

There is significant variation in the distribution of police contact by race.⁵⁸ Blacks are less likely to have had each of the voluntary contacts measured by the survey except victimization contacts; they are somewhat more likely to report contact with the police as a result of victimization. Importantly, only about one-fifth (20.9%) of the blacks said the police volunteered assistance at any time, while more than a third (33.5%) of the white population reported such assistance. Of those who report having contact with law enforcement, fewer blacks (14.9%) than whites (17.5%) have exclusively voluntary contacts. This is consistent with other data which show that blacks appear to have the most sanctioned police contacts. The data here show that more than twice the percentage of blacks report only nonvoluntary (33.8%) contacts as report exclusively voluntary (14.9%) assistance.⁵⁹

A breakdown of contact by age⁶⁰ shows those thirty and under to be those most likely to have had exclusively nonvoluntary contacts; and a higher total percentage of those in this group have nonvoluntary contact than in any other group. This group is also least likely to have had exclusively voluntary contacts. There is a consistent relationship between age and having only voluntary contacts. Contact seems roughly to decrease as age increases.

Income, too, appears to affect the distribution of legal policy as it arises in the police-citizen encounter.⁶¹ The percentage of the population that reports having each of the voluntary encounters increases as income increases; the percentage reporting exclusively voluntary encounters decreases as income increases. The percentage of each income group

⁵⁸Racial distribution of the sample is: white (N=894), black and other minorities (N=215), and unknown (N=39).

⁵⁹Total white respondents with contact (N=737); total black respondents with contact (N=148).

⁶⁰Total respondents in sample by age were 30 and under (N=265); 31 to 45 (N=336); 46 to 65 (N=368); over 65 (N=154); unknown (N=25).

⁶¹Total respondents in sample by household income were under \$3,000 (N = 209); \$3,000 to \$7,499 (N=366); \$7500 to \$14,999 (N = 388); \$15,000 and over (N=114); unknown (N=71).

reporting nonvoluntary encounters also decreases as income increases.

There is also some variation in the distribution of police encounters by sex and education. Women have fewer enforcement contacts than do men. Women are less likely to have had each of the contacts measured by the survey, though they are more likely to report exclusively voluntary contact. The percentage of individuals having each type of contact increases as education increases and the total percentage of individuals having contact increases as education increases. This indicates, perhaps that education increases knowledge of how to enlist law enforcement assistance. At the very least it appears to increase the willingness to be a voluntary participant.

Thus the North Carolina data show that contact with law enforcement officers is not equally distributed. Blacks, the young, and those in low income groups are those most likely to have exclusively sanctioned encounters. Blacks and the young are also those least likely to enjoy solely voluntary contact or volunteered assistance. There are large and important differences in the distribution among groups in the services provided and the sanctions applied by law enforcement personnel.

What is the impact of the inequitable distribution of public policy? First, and most obviously, it means that though contact is widespread in the population, the probability of being a consumer of governmental services in this way is not equal, and nonvoluntary police contacts fall heavier on some groups than on others. The implications of these findings are broad and the principles extend into other policy areas as well. This inequitable distribution of service and other contact is not limited to law enforcement contact exclusively. A 1969 survey of Milwaukee⁶² designed to measure the contacts of three socioeconomically distinct neighborhoods (a black ghetto, a white working class neighborhood, and a white middle class neighborhood) with educational, legal, welfare, regulatory, and recreational programs in that city found the two white samples similar in their number of contacts, while the black sample had a dissimilar and disproportionately smaller number of contacts. This was true despite the fact that the instrument was designed to oversample agencies and programs used mostly by poor and ghetto dwellers. In Milwaukee, race, but not income, was the determinant factor in the distribution of policies aimed specifically at low income groups. Clearly all groups do not share equally in the services and benefits provided by law enforcement and other governmental personnel.

⁶²Jacob, *supra* note 54, at 123-46.

Police Contact and Satisfaction

Another important, and hitherto unexamined, element in an analysis of the distribution of services is the level of satisfaction derived from the encounter. The most immediate and impressive fact that arises from an analysis of the data on satisfaction is that a high (84.9) percent of those who have had contact with the police said that they were satisfied with the contact. Insofar as we have hypothesized specific and diffuse support to be linked to satisfaction, support for the police is initially grounded in a positive and pervasive affect that is the impact of contact.

Satisfaction, even at this high level, does exhibit systematic variation. Earlier we raised the hypothesis that the type of contact and the level of satisfaction are related variables. An analysis of the data supports such a conclusion.

It appears that the large number of individuals who have had direct contact with the police are very satisfied with the services provided. The only deviation from this high satisfaction level for voluntary encounters (and essentially high level of satisfaction for nonvoluntary encounters as well) is the contact that results from victimization: 35.4 percent are dissatisfied.⁶³ Here, no doubt, the level of satisfaction is influenced by the fact that, in a real sense, victimization can be viewed as a failure of police to perform the law enforcement function. The type of contact does influence the level of satisfaction expressed:⁶⁴ of those who said that they had exclusively voluntary contacts, only 9.5 percent said that they were dissatisfied, while 15.2 percent of those with nonvoluntary contacts and 17.1 percent with both types of contacts said that they were dissatisfied. Clearly those with any nonvoluntary contact, and those with voluntary contact as a result of victimization, are those most likely to report

⁶³The National Victimization Study, however, failed to show any relationship between victimization and attitudes. P. ENNIS, *supra* note 32. A. BIDERMAN, L. JOHNSON, J. MCINTYRE, & A. WEIR, REPORT ON A PILOT STUDY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ON VICTIMIZATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD LAW ENFORCEMENT 141 (1967), also failed to find any association. See also R. Block, Foundations of Citizen Support for the Police 130, Fall 1966 (unpublished dissertation at University of Chicago), cited in Block, *Support for Civil Liberties and Support for the Police*, 13 AM. BEHAVIORAL SCI. 781-782 (1970); Conklin, *Criminal Environment and Support for the Law*, 6 LAW & SOC'Y REV. 247, 247-59 (1971).

⁶⁴To measure satisfaction with contact, respondents were asked two questions. The first followed the series of questions designed to ascertain whether the respondent had contact with the police: (1) "Based on your experience(s) with the police, how satisfied were you in your dealings with them? Were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?" Victims who had contact with the police were asked a similar question: (2) "I'd like to find out how satisfied you were with the way the police did their work."

dissatisfaction with the police encounter.

If contacts are unequally distributed by type in the population, and differing types of contact have differing probabilities of producing dissatisfaction, then we expect to find satisfaction also unequally distributed. Those groups with the highest proportion of exclusively voluntary contacts should have the lowest level of dissatisfaction and those with the largest number of nonvoluntary contacts and victim contacts should exhibit the highest level of dissatisfaction. In addition, satisfaction may be equally distributed in its own right. Some groups may enjoy substantially different treatment than others at the hands of law enforcement personnel. The same discretion which in large measure determines who will have contact also gives policemen latitude in the treatment of individuals with whom they come into contact. Thus results may show a difference in the level of satisfaction for groups who had substantially the same number and types of law enforcement contacts.

There is a significant difference in the tendency of blacks and whites to report dissatisfaction with police contact, though the level of satisfaction expressed by both groups is high. Blacks are less likely than whites to say that they were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the police contact and more likely to report dissatisfaction. Blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to say that they were dissatisfied: 27.3 percent of blacks compared to 13.0 percent of whites. These data show clear racial differences in the level of satisfaction resulting from police encounters; differences in the general overall measure of satisfaction and the differences hold for victim and non-victim contacts.

Thus survey responses strongly imply that the black community is less likely to be serviced by voluntary police encounters, most likely to have exclusively nonvoluntary encounters, and, though overall somewhat less likely to have police contact, that blacks are more likely in both victimization and all contacts to be dissatisfied with treatment by legal personnel.

The relationship between satisfaction and age is a more significant and stronger one than that which has been shown to exist between age and the distribution of police policy. The percentage of individuals who say that they are satisfied with police treatment increases as age increases. Of those satisfied, those over forty-five and especially those over sixty-five are much more likely to say that they are very satisfied. The most strikingly different group is that thirty and under. These individuals are much less likely than average to express satisfaction with police encounters, and of those satisfied, they are less likely to say that

they are very satisfied. They are also, importantly, those most likely to be somewhat dissatisfied and those most likely to be very dissatisfied. Thus, the total percentage dissatisfied is substantially above the population average of 15.3 percent and more than twice as high as the 9.8 percent of the over sixty-five group that expresses dissatisfaction.

Though we found some relationship between the distribution of policy and income, the level of satisfaction expressed by individuals having contact does not vary significantly by income. Although the data also show a differential distribution of contact by sex and education, the analysis of the distribution of satisfaction shows no relationship with either variable.

Thus in an analysis of the distribution of police policy it has been illustrated that voluntary and nonvoluntary contacts with the police are very widespread but not equally distributed. The level of satisfaction with police contacts is extremely high; yet it also exhibits variation. Blacks, the young, and the poor are more likely than others to be unhappy with the treatment received at the hands of legal personnel,⁶⁵ though it is worth emphasizing that satisfaction with all encounters, with the exception of victim contacts, is remarkably high. These data provide important insight into the impact of police discretion on the distribution of services and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction for the user of these services. More importantly, we have suggested that contact is closely related to the level of diffuse evaluations of police competence and to the specific comments and complaints made by the articulate public.

What is the level of support for the police? In what ways and to what degree can we say that contact and its attitudinal impact determine that support? It is to these questions that the following data analysis shall be directed.

Diffuse Support and the Police

Diffuse support,⁶⁶ the enduring, generalized feelings held by the

⁶⁵See TASK FORCE REPORT: THE POLICE 146-49, 180-83. In WILSON 45, there is a discussion of this report: "The surveys . . . show that the poor, the young, and the nonwhite are much more likely than others to be critical of the police (who enjoy a good deal of support among American citizens as a whole), precisely as one would expect given their vulnerable position." See also BAYLEY & MENDELSON 44; *Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City* 77.

⁶⁶Diffuse support evaluations of police competence were measured by responses to the question: "How good a job do you think policemen and other law enforcement officers in North

public about the police, is remarkably high. This type of support has been defined as the evaluation of an institution's ability to carry out its function in an impartial and competent fashion. When a question aimed at determining the public's evaluation of general police competence is used as a measure of diffuse support, 82.2 percent of the population indicate high diffuse support for the police, while only 17.8 percent of the population have low support. Support, however, is not universal. Some groups of individuals deny support, expressing the belief that the police are not performing their job competently. These are not random sentiments. Just as dissatisfaction was concentrated in selected groups and subgroups, so the tendency to withhold support from the police is also a patterned characteristic. And since it has been hypothesized that a strong relationship exists between being a consumer of services, the recipient of nonvoluntary contact, the satisfaction with the treatment, and the level of support, it is certainly not surprising that those who have been identified as those most likely to be dissatisfied are also those most likely to withhold diffuse support from these actors and that those with satisfactory encounters are those most likely to be supportive.

As Table I dramatically indicates, contact and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction that it produces are strongly correlated with diffuse support. The group most likely to give a high diffuse evaluation to the police are those who have generally satisfactory police encounters; those with no contact also give high, though somewhat lower support to the police. This, too, is as anticipated, since childhood socialization literature suggests that most individuals, particularly those of the white middle class, are socialized to high support, and this early support is sustained into adulthood unless experience has depressed support by altering the socialized perception of police as competent and equitable. Significantly, and consistently, those with unsatisfactory police contacts are much less likely to give a positive evaluation to the police; only 57.5 percent of this group gave high diffuse responses, while a full 86.2 percent of those satisfied said that the police do a good or very good job. The difference between the diffuse support levels of those dissatisfied with police contact and those with no contact is far greater than the one between those satisfied and the non-contact group, thus indicating that the dissatisfactory police encounter has a greater impact on the

Carolina are doing: very good, good, not so good, or not good at all?" High diffuse support is defined as the positive responses of "very good" or "good"; low diffuse support as the negatives "not so good" or "not good at all."

attitudes of the individual. In addition, support among those with no contact is so high that the potential for elevating it is far smaller than the potential for its possible depression.

TABLE I. DIFFUSE SUPPORT BY CONTACT AND SATISFACTION FOR POLICE

Level of Support	No Contact	Contact			Total
	(N=222)	Satisfied (N=734)	Dissatisfied (N = 134)	Total (N=868)	
High	83.3	86.2	57.5	81.8	82.2
Low	16.7	13.8	42.5	18.2	17.8

Relationship between satisfaction-dissatisfaction and diffuse support:
 $\chi^2=61.1$, sig. = .001, gamma = .64536.

These data constitute strong evidence to support the major hypothesis: contact and its impact on the individual is a primary determinant of diffuse support. The data show it to be strongly related to diffuse evaluations of the competence of police and other law enforcement officers. Another aspect of diffuse support is that of impartiality. Further support for the contact-satisfaction influence on diffuse support comes from an analysis of data on the evaluation of police impartiality.⁶⁷ When asked if they or someone like them would be treated fairly by the police or courts, only 8.5 percent of the 721 respondents who had been satisfied with police contact said that they would not be treated fairly; fully 43.1 percent of the 126 dissatisfied individuals expressed doubt that they would be treated fairly. Clearly contact and its impact affect diffuse evaluations of competence and impartiality of police personnel.

One would anticipate finding low support for the police among blacks because they are more likely to have unsatisfactory contacts, which are associated with low support. This means not only that the individual who has an unsatisfactory contact will be less likely to be supportive; it also strongly implies that the climate of opinion in the black community is more likely to be critical, thus increasing the probability of low support among those with no or satisfactory contact. There is a significantly different level of diffuse support for blacks than for

⁶⁷Diffuse impartiality was measured by two questions: (1) "If you or someone like you were accused of breaking the law, do you think that you would be treated fairly by the police and courts in North Carolina?" and (2) "Do you think that any particular groups of people in North Carolina are treated unfairly by the police or courts?"

whites, though the differences are not as dramatic as one might anticipate. More than a quarter (26.2%) of all blacks give a low diffuse evaluation to the police while only 16.0 percent of all whites do so. Actually, the fact that 73.8 percent of all blacks give a high diffuse evaluation to the police is a remarkable one given the factors that work to depress it.

Black diffuse judgments about police impartiality are somewhat lower than the evaluation of police competence. Here the differences between blacks and whites are more pronounced. Blacks are more than three times as likely as whites to say that they would be treated unfairly by some legal official in North Carolina; 30.1 percent of all blacks said that they would be treated unfairly, while a very slight 8.9 percent (of 854) whites thought they would be treated unfairly.

In addition to the substantial percentage of blacks who thought that they and people like them would be treated unfairly, a very large proportion of all blacks said that they believed that there were some groups in the population treated unfairly by legal personnel. Nearly half of all blacks (45.3%) interviewed said that the police did not treat everyone equally while only slightly over a quarter (28.6%) of all whites felt that this was true.

Thus, diffuse support as a measure of evaluations of police competence and impartiality is high in both racial groups, particularly with regard to police competence. On evaluations of impartiality, however, blacks and whites are substantially less likely to express strong support. On both counts blacks are significantly less likely than whites to be supportive.

A significant relationship also exists between age and diffuse support, as measured by evaluations of police competence. As age increases, the tendency to give positive diffuse evaluations to the police also increases. The pattern of the data is strikingly similar to that observed between satisfaction and age. Those in the thirty and under category stand out: almost a fourth of those in this age group give low evaluations to police competence. This figure is substantially higher than for any other age group and well above the population average. The youngest group is also the one most likely to state that there are groups in the population treated unfairly by the police and other law enforcement officers, and they are also more likely to feel that they would not be treated fairly by legal officials.

The data thus show a consistent positive relationship between age and evaluations of police performance, competence, and impartiality.

These data findings are theoretically and empirically supported by the Easton and Dennis analysis of adolescent attitudes toward the police. In their terms:

In the United States the child is apt to see the policeman as something of a model of the "good guy." In cops and robbers, for most children the cops stand on the side of virtue and the robbers are the outlaws. But as the child moves into the teens and young adulthood, his experiences with the law begin to change. In the modern age he becomes part of the car culture; and this together with the greater mobility, assertiveness, and exuberance of youth raises the probability of increased conflict with the police over safety and order. . . .

But as the young adult grows older and, we would assume, takes on the responsibilities of job and family and acquires additional stakes in life, he probably also revises his relationship to the immediate enforcement agencies . . . Adults may not be so favorably disposed toward the police as are children. But the curve of respect ascends again.⁶⁸

To this analysis we would but emphasize the importance of contact and the satisfaction or stress created by it in determining the slope of that curve. Easton and Dennis note earlier that it is because the policeman is proximate and familiar that he first gains respect; it is this same proximity and contact that determines adult respect as well.

There is a weak but consistent relationship between diffuse support and income. Significantly, those with incomes under three thousand dollars, the group disproportionately more likely to be dissatisfied with police encounter, also exhibit the highest propensity to give a low evaluation of police performance. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice cites data that support the finding that low income groups are most critical of police.⁶⁹ The pattern is further substantiated by results from other questions from our survey. Those in low income groups are less likely than those at upper income levels to say that they would be treated fairly by legal personnel. Though there is no significant or consistent relationship between income and the willingness to cite groups treated unfairly by the police and other law enforcement officers, more than a third (35.1%) of those with incomes under three thousand dollars cited groups treated inequitably, a figure slightly exceeding the population average of 31.9 percent. Again, as in

⁶⁸EASTON & DENNIS 298.

⁶⁹TASK FORCE REPORT: THE POLICE 149.

an analysis of the correlates of contact-satisfaction, sex and education exhibit virtually no variation in diffuse support.

An analysis of the data on diffuse support and its correlates clearly shows a strong and consistent relationship and interrelationship between contact, satisfaction, socioeconomic and racial characteristics, and the enduring broad evaluations that the individual makes about the competence and impartiality of these legal actors.

The distribution of contact has an impact on individuals in addition to the situational satisfaction and dissatisfaction created in the consumer. The data here indicate that there is a considerable impact that may extend beyond the individual himself to the socioeconomic or racial group of which he is a part. In a real sense, the impact of contact on diffuse support demonstrated above is the most demanding test of the hypothesis that contact with the police is a major determinant of attitudes toward them. The hypothesis is also strengthened if it is also true that on a specific level support is correlated with contact and satisfaction, a task to which attention shall now be given.

Specific Support for the Police

Specific support⁷⁰ attitudes are those frontal, proximate, and changeable attitudes that an individual is willing and able to articulate with regard to an institution or individual. Although few individuals have specific complaints or commendations to make at any given time, the level of specific support for an institution is, nonetheless, extremely important. It is the vocal, the critical, the informed public of any institution that creates the atmosphere of public opinion for an agency or actor, however changeable and however temporary it might be.⁷¹ Thus, despite the fact that public opinion polls have repeatedly verified in recent years that the level of public support for the police is high, recent literature on public opinion and the police consistently speaks of the low level of public confidence in law enforcement personnel. One writer records, for example, that there are "widely held beliefs that policemen

⁷⁰Specific support was measured on the basis of responses to two questions: (1) "Is there something that a policeman in North Carolina has done or said that you particularly like? What is that?"; (2) "Is there something that a policemen in North Carolina has done or said that you don't like? What is that?"

⁷¹For examples of the types of comments made by respondents, see Richardson, Williams, Walker, Denyer & McGaughey, *Public Attitudes and the Legal Justice System*, 19 RESEARCH PRELUDES 2-3 (1972).

are uneducated and of low mentality; that they are selected for physical strength and courage alone; that they are of doubtful honesty and integrity; that they are engaged in a continuous offensive against society; that they are often rude and domineering."⁷² This view is the voice of a small, critical group with specific opinions. Revisions in police practice, the establishment of community-police relations programs, and police reform movements are often the result of these specific public complaints.

The informed public opinion of the police, despite popular conceptions to the contrary, is a highly favorable one. A large percentage of the public cannot or does not articulate specific positive attitudes of support, but the number of individuals in the population who have specific complaints about these legal personnel is small, and this percentage is exceeded by the percent of the population who said that there was something about the police or other law enforcement officers in North Carolina that they particularly liked. Only eighteen percent of the population said that there was something about the police that they specifically disliked, while 21.5 percent (N = 1137) were specifically favorably disposed.

Since we have noted previously that large percentages of the public have had frequent contact with the police, it is not surprising that the data show that specific support is significantly related to the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and contact, as Table II below indicates.

TABLE II. SPECIFIC SUPPORT BY CONTACT AND SATISFACTION FOR POLICE

Level of support	No Contact (N=211)	Contact			Total
		Satisfied (N=739)	Dissatisfied (N=137)	Total (N=876)	
Support	9.0	18.5	9.5	17.1	15.5
No Opinion	81.5	65.2	46.7	62.3	66.2
Neutral	1.4	6.8	13.1	7.8	6.4
Non-support	8.1	9.5	30.7	12.8	11.9

Relationship between satisfaction-dissatisfaction and specific support:
 $\chi^2=30.4$, sig. = .001, gamma = .72689

Those satisfied with police encounters are those most likely to have high specific support for the police; they are twice as likely as those dissatisfied or with no contact to express specific positive approval.

⁷²Gourley, *Public Relations and the Poilce*, 291 ANNALS 136 (1954), quoted in EASTON & DENNIS 311.

Contact, particularly unsatisfactory contact, increases the likelihood that an individual will be among law enforcement's informed public since fewer of those with contact and far fewer of those with dissatisfactory contact said that they had no specific opinions on the police. Though the number is small, virtually all of those who made both favorable and unfavorable comments about the police had had contact—another indication that contact increases the salience of these officials and the probability that those who encounter them will be among the articulate public. The most dramatic percentage differences appear in the data on nonsupport. Clearly, those dissatisfied with police contact are far more likely to withdraw specific support from them than are either of the other groups.

When we look only at those who express specific opinions, it is evident that a far larger percent of the white community praise police activity while the black community is more likely to be critical. This relationship is one that might be anticipated given the impact of contact, satisfaction, peer group influence, and socialization.

When we look at specific support by age, it is from those groups with low satisfaction and low diffuse support that the most specific dissatisfaction arises. Those in the thirty-and-under group are more likely to have specific complaints about the police, and the critical propensity decreases with age. Though specific support does consistently rise with age, those under thirty are clearly less likely to be supportive.

Income again shows some relationship to specific support. Those in low income groups are most critical and the propensity to be critical decreases as income increases.

There are two kinds of evidence in support of the general hypothesis that specific support is largely determined in contact situations. First, it is clear that contact and satisfaction are significantly related to specific public support and nonsupport. And from an analysis of the correlates of specific support and socioeconomic and racial variables, in light of earlier contact and satisfaction analysis, there is further evidence of a relationship. In general, it seems that those groups most satisfied in the largest number of contacts exhibit the highest propensity to have specific support; dissatisfaction increases nonsupport at worst, awareness and neutrality at best. An analysis of these variables and their relationship to support suggests that the impact of contact is twofold. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction affects support for the individual who is the consumer, and, particularly for racial groups and other groups with

high levels of dissatisfaction, it may influence the evaluation of the police in the community of peers of which he is a part. Having demonstrated that contact and satisfaction or dissatisfaction are crucial to both specific and diffuse support for police personnel and policy, one can now easily demonstrate that specific attitudes influenced by contact spill over and affect the generalized diffuse attitudes of North Carolina citizens. When one compares the level of diffuse support to specific responses, the conclusions are clear. Almost all (91.1 percent) of those (N = 168) with positive commendations of police work have positive diffuse attitudes as well. Thus, while only 8.9 percent of those with specific likes regarding police have low diffuse support, fully 42.2 percent of those with specific complaints give a low evaluation to these legal personnel on general attributes.

The importance of these findings extends beyond the first impact of the contact, the creation of situational satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the consumer, to more generalized and eventually more enduring attitudes that the individual holds for these legal personnel. These attitudes in turn constitute the basis of public support enjoyed by or denied to law enforcement agencies. In an era in which pervasive concern has been expressed about police performance in American society, perhaps no more significant conclusion could be drawn than that the fate of the policeman's image rests largely with his own performance.

THE COURTS

Contact and the Courts

In terms of the magnitude of their activities and the number of citizens they touch, state courts constitute a major distributor of public policy and a primary formulator of public attitudes.⁷³ Citizen contact with North Carolina courts, though less widespread than contact with police, is extensive and cuts across all sectors of the population. More than half (64.1%) of the survey respondents (N=1148) said they have had personal experience with the courts in North Carolina as spectator, juror, witness, litigant or defendant.⁷⁴ Although we often portray the

⁷³O. Williams & R. Richardson, *supra* note 34, at 1. See also K. DOLBEARE, *TRIAL COURTS IN URBAN POLITICS* 37-63 (1967).

⁷⁴Contact with the court was measured by the following questions: (1) "Have you ever attended a courtroom trial as a spectator in the audience?"; (2) "What about serving on jury duty? Have you ever done that?"; (3) "What about being a witness in a trial? Have you ever done that?"; (4)

judiciary as insulated from the populace and political system, the data clearly show that North Carolina citizenry has substantial interaction with judicial proceedings. As participants, 48.1 percent were spectators to court proceedings, 24.0 percent have served on juries, 25.7 percent have been witnesses, 10.0 percent brought suit, and 7.4 percent have been sued.

We noted that police contact was unequally distributed by type in the population. On the other hand, court contact of the type experienced by most individuals is more equally distributed. In his study in Wisconsin, Jacob concluded that with few exceptions "participants in the judicial process were a cross section of the population . . . Within each sex, age, income, and residence category, about the same proportion of citizens participated in the judiciary as litigants, jurors, and witnesses."⁷⁵ That the courts' clientele in criminal proceedings is overrepresented by defendants in certain socioeconomic groupings is not argued. However, this is but one visible dimension of court activity; it is not the most frequent nor does it constitute the major way by which the citizenry touches the judicial system. There is an almost equal level of participation of blacks and whites in contact with the judiciary. For example, 26.0 percent of the black community reported that they had been in court as witnesses while 25.3 percent of the whites reported doing so. The largest difference between the two groups on all measures of contact was in jury participation where 20.4 percent of blacks and 24.3 percent of white respondents report service. A total of 62.3 percent of all blacks and 64.9 percent of all whites said they have had court contact in some form.

When we look at distribution of contact by age, no major variations appear in the propensity to be a participant. However, the young (thirty and under) and the old (sixty-five and over) are less likely to have court contacts. More than half (54%) of those thirty and under and 62.3 percent of those over sixty-five report encounters. The figures increase to 67.0 percent for those in the age group thirty-one to forty-five and to 71.2 percent for those forty-six to sixty-five.

A high percentage of those with incomes of fifteen thousand dollars or over report contact with the state courts, greater than any other

"Have you ever sued anybody or brought a complaint against them in court?"; (5) "Has anyone ever sued you or brought a complaint against you in court?" Victims of crime were asked: (6) "Did this affair go to court?"

⁷⁵Jacob, *supra* note 33, at 813.

income group; 75.4 percent say that they have had contact, a figure that exceeds the population average by fully ten percentage points. Only 58.0 percent of those with incomes under three thousand dollars say that they have had contact. Though the relationship is not a significant one, the percent of the population reporting court contact seems to increase as income increases. This pattern is clearest in the data on jury participation. A low 12.6 percent of those with incomes under three thousand dollars report jury service; the figure increases as income increases to a high of 30.1 percent for those in the highest income groups.

There is no patterned or significant relationship between education and the tendency to report participation in judicial proceedings. When we look at the distribution of court contact by sex, however, we see that women are much less likely than men to have been a participant in court activities. More than three-quarters (75.6%) of all men versus only slightly over half of all women (55.0%) said they had been in court as a spectator, juror, witness, litigant or defendant.

With the exception of the differences in the participation levels of men and women, and with the exception of the variance in the distribution of jury duty, contact with the court, and participation in court activities of the type that most individuals are likely to have, is equally distributed in the population.

Court Contact and Satisfaction

Although the data show an equal distribution of citizenry contact with the courts, substantial differences could still be expressed in the level of satisfaction⁷⁶ with the court contact. Just as it was noted that discretion exists for law enforcement personnel, a wide range of discretion exists for judicial officials at every stage of legal proceedings.⁷⁷ Much attention has been given to the differences in sentencing that exists for black and white defendants.⁷⁸ In addition, Williams and Ri-

⁷⁶Satisfaction with court contact was measured by the following questions: (1) "Based on your experience(s) with the courts, how satisfied were you with the way the courts operated? Were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?" (2) Victims with court contact were asked, "I'd like to find out how satisfied you were with the way the courts handled this affair?"

⁷⁷H. JACOB, JUSTICE IN AMERICA 149-167 (1965).

⁷⁸E.g., E. GREEN, JUDICIAL ATTITUDES IN SENTENCING (1961); Bullock, *Significance of the Racial Factor in the Length of Prison Sentences*, 52 J. CRIM. L.C. & P.S. 411 (1961); Gaudlt, *Individual Differences in the Sentencing Tendencies of Judges*, 32 ARCHIVES OF PSYCHOLOGY ser. 320 (1938); Nagel, *Disparities in Criminal Procedure*, 14 U.C.L.A.L. REV. 1272, 1278-89 (1967);

Richardson suggest that at many levels of judicial proceedings, blacks in North Carolina are treated more harshly.⁷⁹ This, no doubt, would affect the level of satisfaction derived from the court encounter. This kind of treatment, though statistically significant, probably affects only a few of the respondents in the present study. As noted, most respondents have not been defendants in criminal proceedings. Yet, knowledge that peers have had unsatisfactory contact could influence attitudes toward the court. Also, in contact roles as witnesses, jurors, and spectators, citizens may observe court actions with which they are dissatisfied.

However persuasive the suggestion may be that satisfaction is unequally distributed among those with contact, there is no data evidence in support of this proposition. An analysis of contact satisfaction shows that there is no independent association between race or income and levels of satisfaction. For example, 20.8% of blacks with contact express dissatisfaction with the experience and 19.9 percent of whites express the same complaint. Though there are no significant differences in the level of satisfaction by either age or education, satisfaction seems to increase slightly as both education and age increase. Men are slightly less likely than women to report dissatisfaction with the court contact. Thus the level of satisfaction expressed by the participant for his court encounter is spread equally in population subgroups. It is also high. Almost eighty percent (79.9%) of the population said that they were satisfied with what they observed or how they were treated in court.

If we are correct in hypothesizing that public support for the court system, as with police, is heavily influenced by the contact it has with the population and the satisfaction it creates, the high level of satisfaction with the court system will be translated into positive support, and the dissatisfaction to nonsupport.

Diffuse Support and the Courts

The level of diffuse support for the courts is high, as 66.1 percent of the population gave positive diffuse evaluations to the courts in North Carolina.⁸⁰ This level of diffuse support, while high, is not as high as the level of support enjoyed by the police, just as the level of satisfaction

Sellin, *Race Prejudice in the Administration of Justice*, 41 AM. J. SOCIOLOGY 212 (1935).

⁷⁹O. Williams & R. Richardson, *supra* note 34.

⁸⁰The level of diffuse support was measured by the following question: (1) "How good a job do you think the courts in North Carolina are doing: very good, good, not so good, not good at all?"

resulting from the contact was lower. Of the 66.1 percent with positive evaluations of the job being done by the courts, only a slight 10.4 percent said that the courts were doing a "very good job." An analysis by race shows blacks (68% of 203) slightly more likely than whites (66.1% of 828) to praise the state courts by evaluating the job they are doing as "good" or "very good." Whites are slightly more likely to be critical, though the percentage difference between the two groups is not great, and the distribution is not statistically significant.

There is a slight positive relationship between age and the tendency to evaluate the job of the courts as good or poor. As in the case of evaluating the police, those in age groups under thirty are more likely to evaluate the job of the courts as "not so good" or "not good at all," and least likely to evaluate them as "good" or "very good." Those over sixty-five seem to be the most uncritical; only 27.1 percent (N=133) of those in this age group evaluate the courts' performance as less than good.

An analysis of the responses by income fails to show any consistent relationship between income and evaluation. An analysis of support by sex and education also shows no relationship.

Diffuse support, then, fails to show any significant variation by socioeconomic and racial characteristics. Diffuse support does, however, show important and strong variation with contact and satisfaction, as indicated by Table III below.

TABLE III. DIFFUSE SUPPORT BY CONTACT AND SATISFACTION FOR COURTS

Level of Support	No Contact N=362	Contact			Total
		Satisfied N=527	Dissatisfied N=138	Total N=665	
High	66.3	73.2	37.0	65.7	66.1
Low	33.7	26.8	63.0	34.3	33.9

Relationship between contact and satisfaction:
 $\chi^2=62.32$, sig.=0.0000, gamma=.647.

The impact of participation in court proceedings on the level of diffuse support for the courts in North Carolina is clear. Satisfactory contact elevates the level of public support above the level of support expressed by those with no contact. Those with unsatisfactory contact have a lower level of support than do those with no contact, and one dramatically lower than those with satisfactory contact. Those with satisfactory court encounters are almost twice as likely as those who

were critical to give positive diffuse evaluations to the courts. The level of diffuse support for these two groups is separated by fully thirty-six percentage points.

Court contact and satisfaction could not be isolated in any socio-economic or racial groups or individuals. Similarly, diffuse support showed few of the systematic variations caused by the effects of income, age, or race usually noted in analysis of public opinion toward political institutions. We suggest that the association between these variables and support does not exist because a primary determinant of support-contact-satisfaction is equally distributed in each of the groups.

This is impressive and persuasive evidence for the argument that it is firsthand knowledge of and information about the court that is a primary basis of more generalized attitudes toward it.

North Carolina Courts and Specific Support

In addition to the face-to-face participation of the citizen with courts, there is another dimension of contact that can be perceived by the populace. Unlike the police, the court has another visible contact with the public through public policies emerging from its decisions. Cases that are tried in the state do, on occasion, receive considerable media attention and are the object of political discussion and debate. These cases, particularly in the South, often center on racial questions and are frequently decisions with policy implications that can be personalized. Though the number of such cases and the number of direct participants is few, the number of individuals who may personalize the impact of the decision is great. The court has, in these visible decisions, often been seen as the champion of minority groups and causes. Blacks, then, are more likely on this basis to approve of the courts' behavior and would thus be expected as a group to evidence specific support for these judicial institutions.⁸¹

Almost a quarter (24.6%) of the sample named something about the North Carolina courts that they particularly disliked, thus providing some insight into the generally controversial issues that decrease public support for the court system. A large number of those who cited something about the court system that they specifically disliked also cited a

⁸¹Specific support or nonsupport was measured by the following questions: (1) "Is there something a court of law here in North Carolina has done that you particularly like? What is that?;" (2) "Is there something a court of law here in North Carolina has done that you don't like? What is that?"

specific decision or group of decisions made by the courts. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school busing decision⁸² was the decision cited most often. Other respondents stated more broadly that they disliked the "integration decisions" of the courts. Unlike the responses to a similar question about the police, specific likes and dislikes about the courts do not center solely around personal contacts with the courts; they are more general, broadly based comments. Some respondents complained about the sentencing practices of the court. Some felt that the state courts are generally too lenient with drug offenders. Only 13.9 percent of those interviewed named something about the courts that they specifically liked. These answers are far more diverse than the stated dislikes. Again the integration decisions of the courts were frequently mentioned, this time as something that the respondent specifically approves. The remainder of the specific likes stated is scattered evenly among a wide range of specific decisions and court practices.

It is interesting that a large number of those who state a specific like or dislike incorrectly attribute something to the courts. That is, a Supreme Court decision, a Congressional act, an action of the police or the department of corrections is incorrectly attributed to the North Carolina courts. Thus the courts are praised or condemned for actions taken by other officials and institutions.

Despite the fact that an analysis of the content of specific attitudes shows that citizens respond in terms of court policy more often than basing comments on personal encounters, the data show that those with unsatisfactory court contact are more likely than others to be verbally critical of the court policy or performance, as Table IV below illustrates. Interestingly, it appears that contact with the court, whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory, increases the propensity to be specifically critical; 29.9 percent of those with unsatisfactory contact and 18.7 percent of those with satisfactory contact cite specific court practices or decisions that they particularly dislike, as compared to 14.6 percent of those with no contact who criticize the court. Additionally, those satisfied are only very slightly more likely than all others to say that there is something about the courts in North Carolina that they particularly like. Contact increases consciousness markedly, particularly unsatisfactory contact; 13.5 percent of those with no contact failed to cite either a specific like or dislike, and only a low 3.8 percent named both. The figures for those with both specific likes and dislikes increases to 5.9 percent for those

⁸²Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bd. of Educ., 402 U.S. 1 (1972).

with satisfactory contact and 10.9 percent for those with unsatisfactory contact. The percentages of those with no opinion fall to 67.1 percent and 51.8 percent respectively.

TABLE IV. SPECIFIC SUPPORT BY CONTACT AND SATISFACTION FOR COURTS

	No Contact (N = 370)	Contact			Total
		Satisfied (N=523)	Dissatisfied (N=137)	Total (N = 660)	
Support	8.1	8.2	7.3	8.0	8.1
No opinion	73.5	67.1	51.8	63.9	67.3
Neutral	3.8	5.9	10.9	7.0	5.8
Nonsupport	14.6	18.7	29.9	21.1	18.8

Relationship between state court specific support and contact:
 $\chi^2=14.46453$, sig.=.002, gamma=.26207.

The relationship between contact-satisfaction and specific support for the court is not as pronounced as the same relationship for the police. This is, no doubt, partially because support for the court, particularly specific support, is a product of policy decisions that affect the individual, as well as the product of attitudes formed through participation.

Unlike diffuse support, specific support shows some significant variations with socioeconomic factors. Blacks are more likely to praise the courts, and less likely to be found among the courts' critical public. Blacks (15.6%) are more than twice as likely as whites (6.5%) to name something about the court that they particularly like. While 20.8 percent of whites named a specific complaint, only 11.6 percent of blacks did so. Specific black support for the court seems to be engendered by the courts' role in integration decisions; blacks seem to identify closely with these decisions and to credit the courts for them.

The tendency to be critical, that is, the propensity to cite something about the court that one particularly dislikes, increases gradually as income increases. Sex and age appear to be unrelated to specific support. Education increases awareness but is unpredictable of the direction of specific attitudes.

It would appear that specific support is related to contact. For the courts, however, contact must be viewed in two ways: (1) those contacts that result from face-to-face participation in judicial proceedings as observer or participant and (2) the contact that the citizen may feel as

the result of the personalizing of certain court policies, such as integration decisions.

Similar to the data on police, the data on the North Carolina state courts show that the level of specific support has a significant impact on the diffuse evaluations. Almost three quarters (72.1%) of those who have specific support, give positive diffuse evaluations to the court. Having specific complaints about the court, however, makes it more difficult to say that the job being done by the courts is either "good" or "very good." Thus more than a majority (55.4%) of the group who cite something about the court that they dislike generalize these feelings to evaluations of the courts' performance and competence. Those with no specific opinions are more likely than any others to be supportive on the diffuse level. Thus the inability or unwillingness to give an opinion on specific decisions or practices of the court appears to be acquiescent support. Those most aware, with neutral (that is both positive and negative) specific observations about the court, are on a diffuse level most critical; 59.0 percent of this group gave a low rating to the courts' performance.

We have sought in this article to explore the nature and extent of contact of North Carolina citizens with state police and courts, and the relationships between the satisfaction with these contacts and the level of specific and diffuse support for these institutions.

We have demonstrated that the extent of public contact with these agencies is broad and that the level of support is high. The data persuasively show that the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of citizen contacts is strongly related to the changing, specific opinions expressed by individuals that create the immediate opinion atmosphere in which the police and courts must function and to the more enduring, generalized public attitudes about the competence, impartiality, and quality of performance of these legal personnel.

