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RELATIONSHIP OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SATISFACTION IN A  
SUB-URBAN MAINE COMMUNITY

By

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## RELATIONSHIP OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SATISFACTION IN A SUB-URBAN MAINE COMMUNITY

### ABSTRACT

Crime statistics, while meaningful, do not provide adequate data in determining the effectiveness of police. Public satisfaction with the police is the operative measurement to determine the legitimacy and effectiveness for police agencies. While there is little data for communities with a population of less than 50,000, no data existed for the sub-urban southern Maine community under study. The purpose of this study was to inform stakeholders of the quality of police services in the community and additionally, to determine if the constructs of procedural justice (honesty, empathy, fairness, and transparency) had an affect on public satisfaction with police services. The police community interaction survey was used with an incomplete data set returned. A meta-analysis was formed within a geographic region of the initial survey which validated the PCI survey and showed a relationship of procedural justice to overall public satisfaction with police services. The results of this study provide empirical evidence for police leaders to adjust their mission and vision statement, training, and policy to incorporate procedural just practices in their everyday work. Additionally, police leaders should consider process-based evaluation rather than traditional outcome-based data in the determination of effectiveness of police officers.

**Keywords:** Procedural Justice, Public Satisfaction, Police, Legitimacy.

University of New England

Doctor of Education  
Educational Leadership

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*“Morality consists in the set of rules governing behavior, that rational people would accept, on the condition that others accept them as well.” – Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)*

There are several reasons a person obeys the law. Early philosophers such as Plato and Hobbes preached a loss of the ability to do what we please in return for security from the state (Cahn, 2014). One of the largest motivators to follow the rule of law is the moral and ethical values instilled into children by society (Tyler, 1990). One example of respect for the law and awareness of the consequences is the legitimacy of the police (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). However, when mass law-breaking occurs, the de-legitimization of police is often a central cause (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017). When citizens no longer believe the police are working in their best interest, the rule of law breaks down as police legitimacy fades away (Tyler, 1990). The fundamental principles laid down by Sir Robert Peel in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century stay true today; the law enforcement arm of government needs the support of citizens (Williams, 2003) to be effective in the mission of deterring and combating crime. A historical analysis of past theory aids the police service of future concerns in regards to legitimization of the police. As policing evolves with new technology and weaponry (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015), the core of public satisfaction and legitimacy of policing remains unchanged.

Policing strategies since the adoption of modern policing in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century have evolved. Some developments cause a sudden shift in approaches; for example, the influx of terrorism related enforcement after the attacks of 9/11/2001 (Titus, 2017). Other policing changes are a reaction to a systemic problem, for example the strict quality of life enforcement to combat slum and blight of Times Square in New York City (Stevens, 2017). Despite shifting

enforcement tactics, problems with legitimacy of police arise when the public does not approve of enforcement and efforts become unpopular (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017). Specifically, the police are de-legitimized and the rule of law is questioned (Tyler, 2017). The literature thus demonstrates when public satisfaction and the confidence of the police from the community is lost, legitimacy is lost and social order is at risk.

Evaluation and measurement of existing police programs is vital to gauge effectiveness for law enforcement agencies (Santos R.G. & Santos R.B., 2015). This study focused on the measurement of police and public contacts and examined public satisfaction of the police through the lens of the citizens using fairness, empathy, honesty, and transparency as the criteria for evaluation. The sum of those attributes is procedural justice. The underlying theory of procedural justice finds a positive relationship of public satisfaction with officers that are seen as fair, empathetic, honest, and transparent (Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, & Manning, 2013). Since the loss of legitimacy is one of critical importance for law enforcement, measurements of public satisfaction of law enforcement should also be critically important.

The role of police in modern day society has expanded and evolved over the last 30 years (Silver, 2017). Former President Obama formed the President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> century policing (2015) which declared a need to shift policing mentality from a "Warrior" to that of a "Guardian" (p. 11). The warrior was defined as an occupying force and is argued to exhibit an "us versus them" mindset. Instead, the report calls for law enforcement to shift to a guardian mentality which calls for procedurally just tactics to legitimize police efforts (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015). The guardian mentality supports a servient attitude of police engaged with the public. Efforts to build legitimacy go beyond collaboration with stakeholders, providing guardianship to a community means engaging in active feedback from

citizens on job performance (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015). The guardian mentality reverses in part traditional crime fighting mantras such as the “War on Drugs” and focuses on the relationship and contacts between members of the public and law enforcement. Based on a national needs-assessment from the President’s Task Force (2015), law enforcement needs to shift to police practices that help legitimize policing through outreach and transparency with enforcement seen as procedurally just – fair, empathetic, honest, and transparent.

### **Past Practice**

The premise of the broken window theory is slum and blight breeds crime; if a community does not care about blight, such as a broken window, then more vandalism, drunkenness, and misdemeanor crime will occur and lead into serious felonious crime (Burke, 2004, Welsh, Braga, & Bruinsma, 2015). Some policing strategies based on the broken windows theory have proven problematic in distancing or gentrifying parts of the community with heavy enforcement of minor violations (Welsh, Braga, & Bruinsma, 2015). Such strategies tend to encompass the warrior mentality. Zero tolerance or quality of life enforcement strategies were created to combat petty crime and better shake down minor vagrants to stop the broken window effect (Stevens, 2017).

One criticism of quality of life enforcement is that it does not address the root causes of most crime and disproportionately targets minorities while hampering trust and legitimacy within the community (Stevens, 2017). Police work that relies on enforcement efforts alone to “attack” disorder in order to prevent predatory crime are not as reliable as measurements of neighborhood trust and poverty to predict crime within urban areas (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001). While there is empirical evidence to suggest monitoring and repairing blight is effective within the

premise that disorder breeds crime, more evidence is needed to link broken window theory to the reduction of fear of crime and public satisfaction with police services.

### **Community Needs**

Community needs assessments are conducted in a variety of ways (Fowler, 2014). In a democratically elected society, an elected person represents the community and has an active role in shaping and addressing policy. Additionally, stakeholders from multiple realms within a community may have input in a collaborative problem-solving task force. However, a community survey can provide rigorous evidence about the greatest concerns for a community (Fowler, 2014). There is a strong need for police to use evidence-based practices and to evaluate if those practices are effective (Santos, R.B. & Santos, R.G., 2015). An evaluation of community-police contacts provides evidence of quality of interaction and satisfaction of police service.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A sub-urban southern Maine community of less than 50,000 people uses uniformed crime reporting (UCR) as the only rigorous indicator of successful policing practices. Justification was made nationwide for the National Crime Survey developed in the 1970's because of the underreporting of crime and the lack of accuracy between crime victimization and UCR data (Fowler, 2014). Crime statistics report the quantity of crime reported and solved: the outcome-based result. Community surveys such as the Police-Community Interaction (PCI) survey measure quality of the interaction, the survey is a process-based result. Policing strategies such as quality of life policing models were hailed as successful to decrease crime in the traditional outcome-based modeling. However, the quality of the interactions led to gentrification and biased-based policing that is largely blamed for civil unrest (Stevens, 2017). After all, police

organizations rarely have a crisis that stems from high crime rate, most public-police crisis stem from a lack of public trust or corruption (Rosenbaum, Lawrence, Hartnett, McDevitt, & Posick, 2015). Thus, policy makers should be cognizant of the quality of contact between police and community members.

Little research in process or quality of police contact evaluation exists for communities with populations of less than 50,000 (Mazerolle et al., 2013). Additionally, empirical data suggest urban, sub-urban, and rural communities have different priorities from law enforcement (Jiao, 2001). Large urban centers seek community policing, while sub-urban areas prioritize professional conduct; lastly, rural areas rank problem-oriented policing first (Jiao, 2001). Despite an extensive search, no studies were identified that evaluated performance or use needs assessments for the police department of the southern Maine community under study. Additionally, there is no evidence the Police-Community Interaction study has ever been performed in Maine, New Hampshire, or Vermont despite its growing popularity (A. Burstein, personal communication, July 23, 2019).

Urgency drives change (Kotter, 2012). Without an emergent reason to push change forward, the approach to measure quality of contact will remain stagnant. In 2014, officer involved deaths of several minority citizens served as a tipping point for police losing basic legitimacy in several communities (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015). Riots occurred in Ferguson, Missouri in 2015 and the clash between law enforcement and rioters left a demand for more police accountability and as a result, prioritizing police body cameras became an urgent matter (Culhane & Schweitzer, 2018). Vast local and federal grant funding became available to effect that change and force law enforcement to be more transparent (Culhane &

Schweitzer, 2018). Large policy changes are often driven by reactive incidents, calls for change, or when perceptions of urgency exist.

In the southern Maine community under study, police resources and funding are used for crime management and deterrence based on past models without local, evidence-based data to inform policy makers. Evidence-based data continue to provide the best localized information to maximize efficiency for public-sector institutions (Aarons, Hurlburt, & Horwitz, 2011). The need to conduct this study is centered on maximizing finite funding in a proactive manner to increase police legitimacy through public satisfaction. Leaders with evidence-based knowledge are better prepared to duplicate what works and change what is not working (Aarons, et al., 2011).

Smaller police agencies which serve communities of less than 50,000 are neglected when measuring procedural justice and development of best practices. As a result, police officials are tailoring their resources toward policing initiatives influenced by other departments' practices with little community input or objective measurements in place. Subsequently, there appears to be no empirical examination of a southern Maine community's needs as it relates to policing or evaluation of their efforts. Policing resources are dictated by stakeholders based on perceived need and public perception within their communities (Schafer, Huebner, & Bynum, 2003). This is significant when coupled with the concept that public contacts with police grant the agency their legitimacy (Tyler, 2004). Since legitimacy derives from public satisfaction and makes the police more effective in crime control and reduction (Tyler, 2017), assessment and evaluation of contacts is vital. The maximization of agency efficiency is complicated by a lack of clear measurements established based on empirical data.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to measure procedural justice and its relationship to public satisfaction within a community of less than 50,000-year-round residents. Additionally, the study identified variables hampering greater public satisfaction scores for police officers within the small southern Maine community. This study provided descriptive insight into factors that contribute to dissatisfaction with police which evidence suggests is linked to legitimacy (Mazerolle et al., 2013). The examination of different factors that influence public satisfaction highlight improved policing strategies. This study examined pre-existing data from the Police Community Interaction (PCI) survey taken in the fall of 2019.

Evidence-based learning is proven effective as a starting point to establish a baseline to change from by providing vital objective feedback to evaluate and fuel needed institutional change (Aarons et al., 2011). This community interaction study provided measurements for stakeholders in longitudinal studies and further provide a comparative yardstick for like communities. Unlike local organically created community surveys, the study sought to generate applicable data for future use in other jurisdictions. This study sought to a gap in research of New England communities with less than 50,000 people. The measurement of quality of contact and public satisfaction with police services in the public sector has parallels from private sector enterprise. Customer satisfaction surveys were created with the goal of learning to keep the customer happy. Private sector business may grow but will ultimately fail if customers are neglected and service is poor. A high positive public attitude in private sector business has a correlation with increased financial success (Williams & Naumann, 2011). In public sector institutions, dissatisfaction with police services causes citizens or customers to delegitimize police and thus they are unlikely to obey or follow the rule of law (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Tyler,

2017). This study aimed to serve as a baseline for policy leaders within the community, and serve as a regional example for the measurement of procedural justice.

This study resolved to determine what factors affect public satisfaction with police based on recent contacts with police officials. Measurements against other police agencies that have completed the same PCI survey sought to provide the southern Maine police department a comparative yardstick to evaluate their own use of procedural justice tactics. Additionally, the study added to the scholarly research of public satisfaction and procedural justice while offering additional data of PCI survey use in a small sub-urban community.

### **Research Questions**

The focus of this study is the satisfaction during and after contact with a police officer. A contact is further defined as an encounter with police for whatever reason, enforcement action or public service. The measurement used for satisfaction were traits of procedural justice. The research was guided by the below stated research questions.

RQ<sub>1</sub>: How well do persons having recent contact with police rate quality of services for the southern Maine police department?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: How do the constructs of procedural justice affect public satisfaction with police services?

The data were collected from a pre-existing survey in which the citizen provided reflective answers on a Likert scale measuring satisfaction of the police contact based on attributes of procedural justice. Additionally, the descriptive hypothesis is a high relationship between how the citizen contact rated attributes of procedural justice and overall satisfaction with the police contact. The null hypothesis describes no relationship between public satisfaction with the police and procedural justice.



## Conceptual Framework

Early work completed by Thibault & Walker (1975, 1978) indicate people focus more on the degree to which they can influence a decision as opposed to the favorability of the outcome from a third person (as cited by Tyler, 1990). Commonly referred to as the *control theory*, Thibaut and Walker posit that people recognize to the extent they can influence or control the outcome, they can control the favorability (as cited by Tyler, 1990). Largely based on this early work, Tyler (1990) brought forward a modern encapsulation of procedural justice to answer the question of why people obey the law. The basic premise of his work is people obey the law because they feel the law is moral and the enforcement mechanism, the police, are fair in their means to enforce the law.

The normative view of police legitimacy stems from the acceptance of law from the public (Hinds & Murphy, 2007). The empirical conception of legitimacy is rigid and without exception, when legitimacy of a state is defined as empirically legitimate, a state or other governing body could conceivably pass a law or enact a rule that bypasses moral code without objections (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017). However, legitimacy needs to be understood within the context of the place and rule, a normative legitimacy follows a political or social climate and is more flexible (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017).

Sir Robert Peel, an early criminal justice scholar developed the London Metropolitan Police Force based on similar theory. Sir Robert Peel and his “Bobbies” of London built modern policing on concepts of legitimacy and public approval in the early 19th century (Williams, 2003). Three of the nine principles went on to empower police only by virtue of public approval.

PRINCIPLE 2 is the “ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions” (p. 100).

PRINCIPLE 3... “Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public” (p. 100)

PRINCIPLE 4... “The degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force” (p. 100).

The theory of procedural justice ties fairness and empathetic traits to police legitimacy and thus higher public satisfaction with police and lower crime (Blader & Tyler, 2003). The resemblance of procedural justice and Sir Robert Peel’s principles in regards to public approval cannot be overlooked. The former and latter emphasize the need for public satisfaction and positive public approval to be effective. The overall mission of the police is to reduce crime which is achieved through voluntary compliance, which is gained from the common belief that the law is just and enforcement agents are legitimate (Hinds & Murphy, 2007). Since legitimacy derives from public satisfaction and makes the police more effective in crime control and reduction (Tyler, 2017), it is fitting to measure satisfaction in police encounters much the same the private sector measures satisfaction after a service is provided.

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope**

The survey sample was taken at random from October of 2019. The survey was collected by the National Police Research Platform (NPRP) after the police agency provided names and addresses extrapolated from police records. Information was de-identified and returned in aggregate form to the police agency whom turned the data over to the researcher for analysis. It is assumed all data were collected fairly and accurately by the NPRP. The survey participant should have filled the survey out based on their experience with the police contact, not the collective experience from past contacts with the police.

Explained in the conceptual framework, the normative view of legitimacy is derived from the relationship of the interactions between police and the public. The instrumental view of police stems from the police's ability to control crime through crime reporting and crimes solved (Hinds & Murphy, 2007). The instrumental view of legitimacy in a city with high crime will hold police less legitimate because their performance is considered poor to control crime. Uniform Crime Rates (UCR) and incident-based reporting view legitimacy through an instrumental lens, and are generally used as the yardstick for federal funding (Titus, 2017). However, UCR reporting does not provide input in the quality of the police service. To narrow the scope of this research, the normative view of legitimacy is sought out.

Human socialization influences individual opinions about the belief of fairness in law and the enforcement of law. Pre-existing bias or learned behavior that deviate from the rule of law affect a police-citizen contact. Normative de-ontological behavior that conforms to written law is replaced with ethics derived from a moralistic consequentialism based on other learned behavior which may be inconsistent with the law. Contacts the police have with the public are often random and without any knowledge of past behavior or socialization within or outside the community. Police have contact with people who like and dislike the policing institution and who conform and do not conform to normative behavior.

Measurement of public satisfaction with community-police contacts were looked at through the lens of procedural justice from the eyes of the citizen having contact with a police officer. The citizen evaluated the police contact based on principles of fairness, empathy, transparency, and honesty. The survey was cross-sectional with the police-community contacts occurring during October of 2019. Police officers were not aware such a survey would occur. Lastly, the survey was administered to a random sample of persons with police contact, with

some exclusion of sensitive and ongoing cases along with juvenile contacts. The data are used for descriptive analysis based on the research questions.

### **Rationale and Significance**

Successful police strategy includes measurement and evaluation of current methods to determine effectiveness (Santos R.B & Santos R.G., 2015). Generally, most theory should be supported with successful application of evidence-based approaches. The measurement of public satisfaction within thirty days after a community-police contact serves to inform stakeholders of effectiveness of current policing strategy for a southern Maine police department. In this study, theory was supported by data from actual police-citizen contacts with measurements of the tenants of procedural justice.

The PCI survey is an instrument used to provide feedback through the lens of the citizen after the contact occurred. The survey has limited practical application for communities with a population of less than 50,000. Additionally, this survey instrument has not been completed in northern New England. The completed survey research will fill a gap in knowledge, adding to the research for smaller-sized communities and new research in northern New England. The research approach may be used by other agencies for replication within their own community. Furthermore, the research adds to the validity of the theoretical framework and specifically the descriptive hypothesis of procedural justice's relationship to public satisfaction. While there is rich empirical work correlating procedural justice to public satisfaction (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Sunshine, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008), there is no known research on this topic in the region.

The author of this study has worked in local law enforcement for 18 years in communities with a population less than 15,000. Additionally, he served with the US Army

Military Police. In 2018, he attended the FBI National Academy, a ten-week collective sharing of information and ideas of advanced law enforcement leaders throughout the country and world through structured credited classes sanctioned by the University of Virginia. It is the opinion of the author that each experience in local, state, and federal law enforcement is unique. While best practices can be universally shared for lessons learned, the consumer of that knowledge should be aware there are no “one size fits all” policing models. The misapplication of policing models for the betterment of a community can often be counterproductive for the community or be a waste of local resources. There are 17,985 local police agencies in the United States (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015) which have different needs based on demographics, economic, and social conditions.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Community Policing*: is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (US Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012).

*Legitimacy*: The power of an authority or institution that leads people to feel the authority or institution is entitled to be deferred to and obeyed (Tyler & Sunshine, 2003). The power of legitimacy derives from the respect and acceptance of the authority or institution (Hinds & Murphy, 2007).

*National Police Research Platform (NPRP)*: Supported by the National Institute for Justice, the NPRP is dedicated to the scientific advancement for law enforcement through measurement and feedback to participating police agencies.

*Policing*: To police; enforcement of law and order.

*Procedural Justice*: The notion that a process is fair and that people have the opportunity to be heard, are treated politely and respectfully, and are judged by a neutral system free of bias (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

### **Conclusion**

While this chapter introduced the problem and framework of the study, this researcher found a significant gap in the measurement of public satisfaction of police-public contacts within the police agency used for this study. The underlying concept of honest, fair, empathetic, and transparent policing encompasses the facets of procedural justice. The purpose of this study is to measure those inputs and evaluate the overall public satisfaction of interaction between the public and the police through a recent contact. The survey provides evidence-based data to inform policy makers and adds to scholarly research while providing a strong example for regional departments to duplicate.

Moving forward, Chapter Two is a comprehensive thematic review of the literature. The literature review is designed to inform readers not familiar with police theory and practice. A cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was chosen with pre-existing data collected by the National Police Research Platform, de-identified and given to the police agency used in this study. Descriptive research uses a sample frame to generalize information through data collection which allows the reader to make better informed decisions based on a sample frame (Fox & Bayat, 2007).

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Law enforcement efforts are not rigid, they adapt, change, and evolve with crisis or peace (Burke, 2004). While there are waves of different movements both for and against the police, as a nation most people are satisfied with police services (Norman, 2017). A deeper dive into policing, however, finds many sub-groups of Americans are unhappy with policing practices. This often occurs when those who interact with police officials feel disenfranchised, treated unfairly, or unjustly (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Reisig, Mays, & Telep, 2018). Beliefs about police theory and police practices have evolved over the history of modern policing (Stevens, 2017). There are underlying principles delivered by Sir Robert Peel with his founding of the London Metropolitan Police in 1829 that are echoed by modern police theory (Zedner, 2006). Specifically, law enforcement generates its authority to act from those whom they police, a value that has held true despite the influx of technology or weaponry (Williams, 2003). Modern technology has made the strategies to track a fugitive or solve crimes more intricate and new weaponry for the police can make community members feel safer and policing more efficient (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015). However, the powerful impressions of policing both then and now are made by the contact the police have with the public.

This study focuses on evaluation of procedural justice and the effects on police satisfaction in a sub-urban southern Maine community of about 10,000 year-round residents. The literature review will lay the groundwork of what procedural justice and community policing entails. In addition, the effectiveness of those policing principles in past and modern communities from a citizen satisfaction standpoint will be addressed. The literature will also demonstrate whether there is a relationship between transparent and fair contacts with police and

the perception of legitimacy for police officers from the public lens. Additionally, the literature will show how legitimacy correlates with public satisfaction of police services.

The purpose of this research is to inform police officials of assessment for police efficiency and satisfaction within a southern Maine community. Stakeholders will be better informed using evidence-based data of town specific police needs and satisfactions within the small community in Maine. Other researchers and police agencies may be able to analyze this research to see consistencies or differences in national police satisfaction evaluations or use this research as a model for further research duplication.

An in-depth examination of the literature was performed to support the descriptive hypothesis of a relationship between procedural justice and public satisfaction with police services. Additionally, the literature also revealed a strong relationship between public satisfaction with police services and legitimacy and decreased crime rates. A comprehensive literature review shows commonalities amongst early policing philosophy and modern police practice.

This literature review is designed to give the reader an overview of seminal work regarding procedural justice theory and a description of the past and current state of information in procedural justice (Creswell, 2015). A thematic approach to the literature is taken and introduces the reader to the evolution of policing, different theories or approaches, and how procedural justice and legitimacy are vital in police effectiveness. This literature review has been designed to inform individuals not familiar with police theory and practice about them.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The importance of this study is expressed when the reasoning for the study is explained and the means and methods are justified as being appropriate and rigorous (Riggan & Ravitch,



2017). The conceptual framework is a construction of the pertinent theories of procedural justice and the link to public satisfaction and police effectiveness. The construction of the conceptual framework is unique to this study. It reflects Maxwell's recommendation that conceptual frameworks should not be replicated from prior literature (2013).

Unlike the private sector, police services often do not compete for clients as the private sector may. There is no opposition or competitive challenge to a police agency taking a burglary report from another police agency. Dissatisfied citizens that use police services have no other options and continue to go back to the same police agencies when needed. The measurement of empathy and trust between law enforcement officials and the public post-contact with police is an important factor used to gauge the effectiveness of the police encounter (Rosenbaum, et al., 2017). An examination of public satisfaction with police services is needed to determine the level of approval and pre-emptively identify problems that threaten police legitimacy within the community.

Public satisfaction with police across the United States has remained somewhat consistent over the last 25 years, and most Americans in a national poll agree they are satisfied with police services which resulted in a 57% approval rating (Norman, 2017). However, national polls have little value to local government administrations and thus feedback to policing officials on how efficiently agency administrations use resources to improve public satisfaction is not available at the regional level. As a result, findings for local police agencies are not addressed on the level of evidence-based reasons.

There is a great deal of difference in local and national police concerns (Jiao, 2001; Matusiak, King, & Maguire, 2017). More detailed national crime satisfaction studies exist. For example, the Bureau of Justice Studies (BOJ) Police-Contact Surveys provide detail and identify

barriers for law enforcement; these data address overcoming policing deficiencies in an effort to improve public confidence and satisfaction with police (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). Studies such as the BOJ Police-Contact Survey are administered in large cities without consideration of local concerns. Empirical evidence suggests urban and rural populations want emphasis on different facets of police service (Jiao, 2001).

For local governments, the supporting approval or disapproval of public opinion stems from community meetings, local politicians, and stakeholders. This amateur assessment does not possess the same scientifically rigorous standards of a more scholarly examination of citizen satisfaction with police, and can skew public resources into inefficient police programs (Rosenbaum, Lawrence, Hartnett, McDevitt, & Posick, 2015). Additionally, more extensive measurements of police satisfaction may be cost prohibitive for smaller agencies doing routine business. Typically, the need for a community study or a change to the status quo of local government lies in a sense of urgency stemming from an existing failure (Kotter, 2012). Therefore, satisfaction with the police is stagnant until a severe problem arises creating an urgency.

Prior literature in procedural justice and police satisfaction focuses on urban areas with little or almost no attention to local communities under a 50,000 population (Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, & Manning, 2013). Additionally, past surveys which gauge police satisfaction and procedural justice are often solicited from random persons with no recent contact with police (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). A public opinion with random persons who may not have recent contact with police is less than ideal. Bias in media or television portrayal of law enforcement can further skew perception of police, influencing the likeability of police based on another's story. A review of the literature finds most community-based public satisfaction data are taken

from metropolitan areas with significantly different housing and community needs than sub-urban and rural areas (Mazerolle et al., 2013).

The police-community interaction survey is designed to measure procedural justice levels with subjects who had recent contact with police, and could accurately recall their contact (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). The instrument was used for large urban centers but also for smaller sub-urban and rural communities (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). A validated quantitative survey of recent contact with police measures procedure justice levels and thus informs local leaders of citizen satisfaction with police which is a byproduct of police legitimacy (Tyler, 2004).

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical frameworks provides the scaffolding for this study and provides boundaries based in pre-existing empirical work (Roberts, 2010). Procedural justice research suggests a positive correlation of increased transparent and fair tactics of procedural justice with an increase in police legitimacy (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Dai, Frank, & Sun, 2011; Tyler & Sunshine, 2003; Tyler, 2004). Police legitimacy or faith in law enforcement gives police the power to enforce the law while decreasing resistance toward law enforcement efforts (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). Early police theorists built the London Metropolitan Police Force in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century using concepts of transparency and public consent of police tactics (Williams, 2003). The resurgence of those same concepts over the last few decades has been redesigned and labeled procedural justice, which has historic roots in the founding of modern police. The second of Peel's principles focused on the power of the police needing public approval for police actions in order to efficiently do their jobs (Williams, 2003).

The perspective in which this study is based is through the descriptive lens of the citizen who had contact with the police and examines the process of the contact, not the outcome.

Specifically, the community under study is sub-urban and has a population of under 50,000. Measurement of the tenets of procedural justice – empathy, honesty, transparency, and fairness are taken by survey from the person who had contact with a police official less than 30 days previous. Ravitch & Riggan (2017) suggest the theoretical framework is a combination or aggregation of multiple theories that support the conceptual framework (p. 12).

In this study, the continuation of procedural justice theory is applied to the community under study. Specifically, past theory informs the descriptive hypothesis of a relationship between procedural justice and public satisfaction (Mazerolle, et. al., 2013). Additionally, a relationship exists between public satisfaction and police legitimacy (Tyler & Sunshine, 2003; Tyler, 2017). Lastly, with increased police legitimacy, crime rates decrease (Corsaro, Frank, & Ozer, 2015). Theory informs the framework that supports this study and the lens through which findings will be viewed.

### **Legitimacy**

The underlying concept of police legitimacy has deep seeded roots in early philosophy from Plato to Hobbes and Locke (Mouritz, 2010; Gau, 2014). The theoretical underpinnings of the Social Contract Theory mean belonging to a society where government will protect the citizens. Such an agreement comes with a collective set of rules and an arm of the government to enforce those rules (Mouritz, 2010). An argument for a social contract is the provision that stability comes from law and order; with stability, individuals may prosper. However, Locke's view on society must consent to the government as opposed to Hobbes, who earlier argued fear could serve as a motivator to obey (Mouritz, 2010). However, while coercive power is effective as seen in the quality of life policing initiatives, some studies have suggested the more punitive the police become, the less likely citizens will cooperate (Tankebe, 2013). Modern literature

provides empirical research supporting intrinsic motivators such as normative values that provide substantial legitimacy and a driving force for voluntarily choosing to obey the law (Tyler, 1990; Pink, 2007).

Legitimacy is important for police officials to decrease confrontation between the public and police. Faith in the government system and the rule of law decreases non-official retaliatory acts by the public and increases public cooperation with officials (Tyler, 2004). When the police conform to the expectations of society, legitimate power is granted and society feels obligated to follow the directives of legitimate authorities (Raven & French, 1957). Legitimate power is based on the norms and expectations society has for the police, when citizens believe the police hold the same thoughts and values – the same expectation of the role that police play, then legitimate power is granted (Bass & Bass, 2008). According to Bass (2008), legitimate power can be both won and lost through the actions of individuals, just as politicians gain and lose power. It is more difficult to gain legitimacy than to lose it through actions, for example, police shootings that turn citizens against the police. Such incidents will require years to re-gain the trust and confidence lost in the police.

While police still possess coercive power with the ability to use force to maintain order, the more effective approach to control social order is by a voluntary means (Tyler, 2004). Seeing police officials as legitimate goes beyond an obligation to obey and has a direct relationship with a person's wanting to cooperate with an investigation, which is more settled in a normative state (Tankebe, 2013). Tankebe (2013) went further in his analysis of legitimacy and offered procedural justice is one element of legitimacy for police; the others were distributive justice, effective in crime reduction, and lawful themselves (p. 125). Tankebe's findings (2013) suggest it is unimportant to argue which comes first, legitimacy or procedurally just contact because

legitimacy is larger than a single contact, as it encompasses many more elements not within the control of a police officer in the single contact. However, his findings also indicate procedural justice makes up a large part in the many factors of how citizens view police legitimacy.

Legality or positional power can often be confused with the concept of legitimacy. Bottoms & Tankebe (2012) argue the two forms of legitimacy are audience and power-holder. Much like a leader can hold positional power, a police officer holds authority based on the virtue of their profession and powers to effect an arrest or detention. However, audience power is granted when the officer uses their position to influence a person to cooperate without the expressed threat of force (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012). The concept of legitimacy for the purpose of public satisfaction with the police and the Police-Community Interaction (PCI) survey which is a normative measurement should not be confused with the legality of police actions. The importance of wanting those who interact with the police to comply without the fear of force is particularly important in a free society, and thus achieving voluntary compliance with the law should be the highest priority of the police.

### **Procedural justice**

The concept of fairness and “The Golden Rule”, specifically, “do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” has deep seeded roots engrained in childhood for many. The concept of procedural justice is not far from this basic value in that it means procedural justice concepts are basic and fundamental. Further, law enforcement theory has evolved since the initial introduction of procedural justice, when the term was first coined by Thibaut and Walker in 1975 (Welsh, Braga, & Bruinsma, 2015). Modern scholars have shifted their definition of procedural justice to be more aligned with the fairness of the decision-making process, transparency, and trust (Blader & Tyler, 2003). The concept of fairness and trust while emergent

as a cry from the public could be measured at its highest point in 2016 (Wolfe & Nix, 2016), but the concept of procedural justice has historical roots.

Early and seminal studies of procedural justice started in the field of psychology, Tyler (1990) posed the question, why people obey the law? Understanding such a concept had significant importance in law enforcement. Many law enforcement scholars saw the question as how do police make people obey the law? and posed the question of how to decrease crime and improve quality of life. Tyler (1990) found public confidence for police was a precursor to police legitimacy; therefore, police needed legitimacy to achieve effectiveness. Tyler (1990, 2004) found a connection with the way citizens were treated during a contact to public satisfaction and thus legitimacy.

There is evidence of a linkage of citizen and police satisfaction when the policing agency and community are served by procedurally just officers. Police gain legitimacy when their actions are considered just by those whom they serve. Wells (2007) pointed out in a study of 3,719 police – public contacts, officers that were deemed “procedurally just officers” in the opinion of the respondent, resulted in a significant higher rate of satisfied citizens with their contact, regardless of the enforcement outcome (Wells, 2007). Further, Reisig, Mays, and Telep (2018) conducted a study of 594 college students and found that students who perceived personal encounters as procedurally unjust expressed far less satisfaction with the police and thus viewed the police authority as having less legitimacy (Reisig, Mays, & Telep, 2018). However, the latter study was based on hypothetical scenarios and did not use real field experiences with the police.

Research suggests there is strong evidence that procedural justice is linked to greater police and community satisfaction (Tyler, 1990, 2004; Mazerolle et al., 2013). There is also conflicting evidence that procedurally just officers aren’t reducing initial disrespect and non-

compliance of citizens toward the police (Dai et al., 2011). However, the study of 2,671 police contacts witnessed by trained graduate students saw a de-escalation of hostility and disrespect when officers exhibited a procedurally just approach and eliminated the “us versus them mentality” (Dai et al., 2011, p. 166). The study is consistent with the notion of compliance being gained when the contacted person deems the encounter legitimate.

A meta-analysis of 28 studies measured an outcome to an initiative to increase or implement procedural justice tactics spanning from 1987-2009 and showed a statistically significant correlation with increased procedural justice to increased police legitimacy (Mazerolle et al., 2013). Again, of the 28 studies conducted, none drew from city populations of less than 50,000. The target study in this work focuses on a year-round population of about 10,000. Law enforcement research in smaller communities tends to favor a more intervention community-based policing approach consistent with open government tactics like procedural justice (Whitten, 2016). Positive police interactions and presence consistently leads to higher satisfaction amongst citizens (Lord, Kuhns, & Friday, 2009). Thus, it stands to reason the measurement of how a smaller community rates citizen-police interaction and procedural justice should dictate the overall satisfaction of the community and be higher than metropolitan centers previously studied.

Past studies of implementations of significant procedural justice efforts differ from each other, and despite consistent use in quantitative studies, each survey instrument is not uniform and asks its own unique questions relevant to its respective study. Therefore, measurements were difficult to compare. However, the underlying meta-analysis showed a common trend of police-led procedural justice interventions were successful and enhanced public satisfaction with the police (Mazerolle et al., 2013). Absent of recent attempts using the Police Community



Interaction survey, there are no known universally-applied instruments to measure procedural justice within a community (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). As a result, a comparison of a multitude of past studies is imperfect requires some interpretative analysis by the author (Mazerolle et al., 2013).

### **Evaluating public satisfaction**

There is little empirical evidence of public satisfaction for the policing field in small communities (Mazerolle et al., 2013). No studies that focus on post-contact with police performed in southern Maine were found by this author. This research may aid policy makers in the direction of effective police practices based on citizen feedback and satisfaction.

Additionally, the research will aid further validation of the police citizen interaction survey which has not been used in Maine, New Hampshire, or Vermont to date (A. Burstein, personal communication, July 23, 2019). Instruments that measure procedural justice are primarily used in larger cities over 50,000 population (Mazerolle et al., 2013).

This research provides an example of police-citizen interaction survey use as well as a roadmap for police administrators for smaller communities (under 50,000 population) which comprise of most of the communities in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. This topic is worth studying to aid the community under examination to effectively use evidence-based data research in evaluating police practice. Additionally, the study adds to scholarly work and increases the knowledge of small sub-urban relationships of the police and community in northern New England.

**Historical policing.** The father of modern-day policing is Sir Robert Peel (Williams, 2003; Zedner, 2006). His nine principles of policing included the framework for what could be considered community policing concepts which has morphed into procedural justice concepts;

these are trends of the same basic policing philosophy (Williams, 2003). Two of Peel's principles are particularly important to the concepts of procedural justice. Principle Two states, "The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions" (as cited by Williams, 2003, p. 100). Principle Three noted, "Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public." (Williams, 2003, p. 100).

Since Peel developed the nine principles of policing in 1829 (Evan, 2006), there are instances that caused general distrust of local corrupt policing practices which resulted in many Americans calling for a national police force (Wright, 2013). The prohibition era is one such example of a level of police corruption with wrongful imprisonment and interrogations paramount to torture, that left a broken criminal justice system needing reform (Oliver, 2018). After the prohibition era, certain criminal justice reforms took hold to standardize the police, consistent with modern public pressures for procedural justice reforms in understanding the criminal justice process. Just as the public's popular opinion was untrusting of police in the prohibition era, the better part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is plagued with police shootings and a call for reform as transparency and trust have broken down between police and the public (Tyler, 2017; Wolfe & Nix, 2016).

**Broken window theory.** While the framework of policing was built on Peel's principles mentioned earlier, there are flashes of breakthrough theories that flirt with defying the concepts of fairness on which procedural justice places so much emphasis. The Broken Window Theory is one such strategy. This strategy was developed by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and grew in notoriety during its successful implementation in New York City in the early 1990's under Mayor Giuliani (Welsh et al., 2015). The basic concept was for police to strictly enforce all

minor offenses; this caused many of the economically disadvantaged to be on the receiving end of the enforcement.

The critics argued that such aggressive police tactics wear at the ethics of policing and cause decrease satisfaction with police officers conducting the enforcement action (Welsh et al., 2015). However, these tactics proved especially successful in New York City which had sharp reductions in violent crimes and increased in tourism as a result (Tyler, 2017). With the wide success of the broken window theory adapted in other communities, policing had shifted to crime reduction and aggressive pursuit of smaller offenses which reduced crime, but did not increase police popularity (Tyler, 2017). This so-called “Blue Revolution” focused on quality of life issues and had heavy enforcement in criminogenic activities deemed the precursor to more severe crime (Stevens, 2017).

**Post 9/11 policing.** Policing after 9/11 became geared toward terrorism and as a result police began to don military-like uniforms and military-like equipment (Titus, 2017; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Militarizing of police was a prior concern with quality of life policing because the heavy enforcement and tactics took on a greater tone of the police against citizens (Stevens, 2017). Funding from the Department of Homeland Security increased sharply for the police and while the protection of the American people was the goal, many critics saw post 9/11 legislation like the Uniting & Strengthening of America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism of 2001 (USA PATRIOT) Act, unfair. Subsequent legislation increased some law enforcement powers which many believed was an overstep that resulted in the infringement of the rights of those whom the legal system was designed to protect (Rossum & Tarr, 2013).

The response of the community policing philosophy trend of the 1990's took a new emphasis on terrorism prevention and was a contributing factor to the public dissatisfaction of police (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). The change in policing philosophy came after there was strong evidence of community policing efforts having success in the communities (Albrecht & Green, 1977; Ren, Cao, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2005). The need of police changed after the attacks on September 11, 2001 and the urgency of the nation shifted (Titus, 2017). A great urgency was created, one of the key ingredients for change to occur (Kotter, 2012).

Police effectiveness measures are commonly derived from community input (Sherwood, 2000). After the police-citizen clashes in Ferguson, MO in 2014, police officials saw a decreased willingness amongst line officers to pro-actively perform their duties whereas post-9/11 saw an overaggressive willingness to police. Both events were examples of dramatic shifts in the public's satisfaction levels of police which affected police legitimacy. In Ferguson, the community did not support the police and an empirical study showed the decreased willingness of civil servants to engage in their profession (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). The opposite is true for support of the police after the terror attacks of 9/11 and motivation surrounding a common goal which tends to unify a community (Putnam, 2000). There was a civic duty to be patriotic and rally around a common goal which led to fewer objections of police tactics.

**What makes a community safe.** The yardstick to effective policing is the successful closure of crimes. Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) is a staple in the universal reporting of cases since its inception. In 1929, UCR offered a standardized view of how violent a city is (FBI, 2018). Grant funding was tied to these crime reporting measures; it is the yardstick in deciding how monies are disbursed. The office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) along with two outside scholars have demonstrated in medium to large cities, the addition of one police

officer has a corresponding decline of 5.26 violent and 21.63 property crimes per 100,000 residents per year on average (Zhao, Scheider, & Thurman, 2002). While the reduction in crime is a significant part of the overall concept of a safe community, there is not a known comprehensive examination of data studying the same area's fear of crime or biased based crime reporting.

National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) was developed after the call for a more comprehensive comparison of the crime data. This program was done to supplement the larger Uniform Crime Reporting and is scheduled to completely replace bigger brother Uniform Crime Reporting by 2021. The National Incident Based Reporting System program reports not only crime data but victim and suspect information such as sex, race, and age. Additionally, the modus operandi, a Latin term for method of operation or how the crime was committed, and bias are reported to be compiled for more in depth analysis (FBI, 2018).

The emphasis placed on grant monies is typically based on need and more specifically, a high crime rate. To be rated as a safe community, most comparative models require a below average crime rate. The simplest approach in both examples is to use the Uniform Crime Reporting to capture a brief picture of the community; this provides a simple snapshot. The inherent flaw of measurement of crime statistics is that it does not paint an accurate picture of satisfaction with police or fear of crime (Corsaro, Frank, & Ozer, 2015). Again, the greatest indicator of satisfaction with police and crime rate reduction occurs when there is trust and legitimacy in the officer enforcing those laws. Corsaro, Frank, and Ozer (2015) examined two instruments: UCR reporting, and community surveys for Cincinnati, OH in the late 1990's. Following the different dynamics of community policing, it was found the UCR-based crime rate

was reduced when increased communications and procedural unjust encounters with police stopped.

**Motivation to police.** Community ownership has been a powerful force and has a linkage to procedural justice and police legitimacy. Specifically, as Putnam (2000) explained, there has been a decline in social capital for some time, including the decline of civic participation; empirical evidence suggests individuals are becoming more isolated from one another. This sense of individualism contradicts a principle of communication and transparency within procedural justice.

In relation to policing efforts, intrinsic motivation around a neighborhood can take the form of volunteerism and community pride. Community policing was built on the notion of active engagement of the police and community (Burke, 2004). The ownership created from community involvement within their neighborhoods increased police officers' intrinsic motivation to police according to a survey of two New York cities under 200,000 population (n = 510) and another in Connecticut under 200,000 population (n =403) (Sherwood, 2000). There is empirical evidence that intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic motivation (Pink, 2009). Community policing approaches and the investment made by the officers toward their work has increased job satisfaction (Sherwood, 2000). These findings are consistent with the stark findings in Ferguson, Missouri during civil disobedience in the wake of a highly published and critical police shooting. Motivation levels and the "de-policing" was believed to lead to the next big crime wave (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). The scholars in this study offset any "Ferguson Effect" (p. 1) with the internal capacity of the officers to see their actions as just and fair and thus willing to partner with the community regardless of the negative perception of police.

An unforeseen variable in the multitude of studies is the natural decline of civic participation. Police agencies have more than just a policing problem, they have inherited a societal hinderance (Tyler, 2017). For example, over the last 30 years, police popularity has not increased despite crime reduction in economically depressed regions. Some critics have asked police agencies to focus more of their efforts on procedurally just encounters and less on harm reduction (Tyler, 2017). This is an opposing approach to quality of life policing practices mentioned earlier.

### **Surveys of Police**

The strongest opinions and judgements of police have come from contact experience. In one study of 540 community members, those whom experienced what they perceived to be an unjust encounter with police noted preconceived bias of other police based on the encounters of their previous contact (Blader & Tyler, 2003). Honesty and empathy on behalf of the police officer during the contact are the two more common characteristics mentioned to deem the contact procedurally just (Skogan, 2005). Incorporating those characteristics into the police-citizen contacts has shown to increase the legitimacy of the police and thus improve public satisfaction with police. This is the same principle of customer satisfaction used in the private sector.

Private sector for-profit agencies engage in customer satisfaction as a mechanism for financial prosperity. Using longitudinal empirical evidence, there is a strong association between positive customer attitudes and continued financial growth (William & Naumann, 2011). When studying the private sector, there is matching cross-sector evidence that the relationship built from the contact can lead to trust, which from the private sector is evident by return business. Cooperation with police officials through legitimacy is built through trust for the public sector.

Over the last 25 years, trust in the American police is relatively consistent. According to a Gallop poll, 57% of Americans trust the police (Norman, 2017). Gallup reports the record low since 1993 was 52%, which was in 2015 at the height of civil unrest and racial tension from events in Ferguson, Missouri. The high rating of 64% reporting trust in 2004 followed America's entrance into the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While there are large discrepancies in the confidence of the police among minorities in particular (Norman, 2017), the polling indicates much more consistency and a higher rating than many other occupational fields.

There is a disproportionate lack of satisfaction of police in economically depressed areas. A 1977 study (n = 398) concluded the general public likes the police, but the ghettos had a strong dissent (Albrecht & Green, 1977). More recent studies continue to confirm the distinct differences in economically depressed areas and their increased frustration and cynicism toward law enforcement (Gau, Corsaro, Stewart, & Brunson, 2012). This strong dissent caused a high turnover and the absence of intrinsic motivation to police or community ownership in the affected areas. This seminal study showed a nexus between where police are and are not liked and a correlation with crime, morale, and high police turnover. Such dissatisfaction with police in economically depressed areas still exist today (Norman, 2017).

**Community study.** Community surveys and specifically police satisfaction surveys have been a tool to help the policing agency better know what the community expects and what the community prioritizes (Whitten, 2016). After all, seminal work from Tyler (2003, 2017) on procedural justice focused so much time and effort of the police on understanding and communicating with the public, and devoted less resources to the traditional focus of harm reduction (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2017).



Community policing strategy, which is effectively the precursor to procedural justice strategy has planted its roots in community stakeholders having an active voice in policing strategy. The results of community policing have been largely credited to the crime reduction of the 1990's (Norman, 2017; Ren, Cao, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2005; Sherwood, 2000; Zhao, Scheider, & Thurman, 2002). However, there have been many counter arguments to the reliance of community policing boards or otherwise untrained civilians having such a powerful say about policing practices. After all, there are not citizen review boards for critical nursing incidents or most other professions.

While the benefits of a community survey in relation to procedural justice and community policing practices are apparent, Marenin (1989) points out six inherent flaws. First, community surveys provide most of the guidance in those areas that are important only to the community. Second, information derived from the public is mostly only useful for policy makers, not line officers. Third, resources restrict strategy and police cannot serve all the needs of the public. Fourth, there are obvious problems that cannot be solved and do not need the attention of a survey to point out. Fifth, there are often demands from the public that cannot be legally resolved – for example Marenin (1989) described the targeted harassment of individuals (p. 76). Sixth, the community is not homogeneous and thus there will be conflict of priorities (Marenin, 1989).

However, there is a genuine need to have a standardized means to compare communities and rate overall satisfaction with police. Police surveys can generate timely feedback and build police practices around evidence-based problems and build more capacity for trust, an essential element in procedural just police agencies (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). Additionally, needs assessments should be performed periodically to standardize some police practices. In 2005,

Former President Obama commissioned a task force for the express purpose to identify emergent obstacles and opportunities in policing on a national level (President's Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015).

**Instruments.** The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has developed a survey tool as a boiler plate community survey; many of the questions are ambiguous and have general Likert scales to evaluate the performance and satisfaction rates of the respective police department administering the testing. Additionally, the IACP website offers community surveys from other agencies as a sampling for police agencies to review (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2018). While these surveys are unique and tailored to their own communities, none offer a validated instrument.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) offers the most comprehensive and widely used survey called the “Police-Public Contact Survey” which is administered every nine years and went through an overhaul in 2011 to accommodate better perceptions of police misconduct and satisfaction with policing services (Berzofsky, Ewing, & DeMichele, 2017). This instrument has been a part of the larger crime victimization study and is conducted nationwide. The underlying problem with this validated instrument is the design to cover all Americans with a broad brush; there is no local metric taken away from the study (Berzofsky, Ewing, & DeMichele, 2017). As reported in the literature earlier, Gallup polling shows a 25-year historical average of confidence in police at 57% (Norman, 2017), while communities with a high rate of procedural justice possess higher than average rates of confidence in their respective police forces (Wells, 2007).

The polling of specific procedural justice attributes of honesty, empathy, transparency, and trust the police employ are difficult variables to track down. The assessment of what is respectful and fair are somewhat subjective and can differ from person to person under the same

circumstances (Reisig et al., 2018). While there is a gap in comparative studies of police perception and citizen perception of the same encounter, there is research that has measured the two independently (Jonathan-Zamir, Mastrofski, & Moyal, 2015). A research flaw studying procedural justice in a small rural American community in 2011 occurred when the research staff was left to subjectively code what they believed respectful and fair treatment of a suspect. The coding was done while working alongside a police officer and often only getting the police officer's side of the story. The subjective analysis of "fair" led the researcher to conclude there was little or weak correlation between the procedural justice components (Jonathan-Zamir, Mastrofski, & Moyal, 2015). Dai, Frank, & Sun (2011), however, found respect and compliance toward police resulted in a change of behavior of the public when "fair" tactics were employed (n = 2,671), as observed by the opinion of trained graduate students socially observing.

The Police-Citizen Interaction Survey (PCI) was created by the National Police Research Platform as a means to conduct local, regional, and national surveys that encompassed procedural justice philosophy based on past contact with the police (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). The survey has been validated and tested alongside more traditional randomized control trial methods with data collection occurring via telephone interviews. The PCI Survey uses electronic means and generates a low response rate but has duplicated the randomized control trial results (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015).

### **Conclusion**

The common thread in most of the literature reviewed has demonstrated that procedural justice is not a new concept and was conceived long ago during the construction of modern policing. Sir Robert Peel developed his nine principles of policing well before the wide adoption of police forces in America and beyond (Zedner, 2006). However, his original principles have

been molded first into the new wave of policing called Community Policing since the late 1970's, which touts "a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues, such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime" (US Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012, p. 3). While still very much part of the fabric of today's policing regiment, the newer concept of procedural justice has taken the spotlight; fairness and transparency in the decision making process, specifically the quality of the decision making process and the quality of the treatment (Blader & Tyler, 2003). The literature indicates community policing and procedural justice are intertwined, and both show a need for transparency and good community relations.

The literature helps policy makers develop their strategic goals and detail what challenges are ahead. The improvement of police satisfaction and achievement of greater police legitimacy are sought out to decrease the crime rate. The literature cautions the policy makers not to indulge blindly in policing objectives without having a clear community assessment (Marenin, 1989). While national trends are informative, it's important to have a clear picture of the specific public needs in one's community (Marenin, 1989; Matusiak et al., 2017). Most of the empirical research in this literature review stems from major cities and there is a clear gap in literature about small town policing. Additionally, there were no data reviewed that were derived from the state of Maine, or from a community with a population less than 20,000 year-round residents (Mazerolle et al., 2013). The validated tool of Police-Community Interaction Survey is favorable to measure citizen contacts with the police who need police services or otherwise had contact with police.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Evidence-based learning from practical application provides rich feedback to improve public administration (Aarons et al., 2011). The prevailing data used to determine police effectiveness considered in crime rates are referred to as Uniform Crime Reporting (Rosenbaum, et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2002). While crime statistics are important, such data neglect the quality of a police contact or the satisfaction of the public. To address these concerns, the Police-Community Interaction (PCI) survey was developed to measure public satisfaction with police after a recent encounter a citizen had with law enforcement. This survey method measured public satisfaction and other characteristics of the encounter with law enforcement such as fairness, empathy, honesty, and transparency; these characteristics are the central tenets of procedural justice.

There is convincing evidence that positive public attitude about the police is increased when citizens believe they are treated with mannerisms consistent with procedural justice (Rosenbaum et al., 2017; Tyler & Sunshine, 2003). Public satisfaction with police services is tied to normative legitimacy (Bottoms, Anthony & Tankebe, 2012; Mazerolle et al., 2013; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Sunshine, 2003; Tyler, 2004). In societies with a high increase in respect and regard the police with high legitimacy, there is a decrease in crime committed (Corsaro et al., 2015). To enhance police legitimacy and the effectiveness of police services, policy leaders need a pedagogy grounded with evidence-based data of current performance (Aarons et al., 2011).

This chapter explains the purpose of the study and re-states the research questions. The design of the research and tools used are explored with a detailed explanation of the instrument

that was used. The validity of the instrument and reliability of this study is also discussed. Analysis of survey data was accomplished with comparative and descriptive statistics.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Police policy makers in a sub-urban southern Maine community are employing enforcement strategy based on crime statistics with the overarching goal of crime reduction through outcome driven results (crime data). Procedural justice measurements aim to evaluate the process of policing through a normative means (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). The purpose of this study is to measure procedural justice and satisfaction with police services. Measurement of the satisfaction of the police contact rather than outcome is a shift in the type of measurement historically used to evaluate performance of police effectiveness (Rosenbaum, et al., 2017; Tyler, 2017). Procedural justice weighs two significant factors: quality of the decision and quality of the treatment (Bottoms, Anthony & Tankebe, 2012; Tyler, 1990). Such attributes of quality are perceptions of honesty, transparency, and dignity in the decision. Measurement of crime rates through Uniform Crime Reporting is the prevalent approach to evaluating police effectiveness and the determining factor when the Department of Justice awards funding (Zhao et al., 2002). The largest federal law enforcement grant, the Justice Assistance Grant exclusively uses Uniform Crime Reporting to divide federal funds amongst police agencies (Part A: Edward Byrne memorial justice assistance grant program, 2015). This formula emphasizes outcome-based results (quantity of crime) while ignoring the process of policing (quality of contact).

The purpose of this descriptive survey research is to measure public satisfaction with police services in a sub-urban southern Maine community of under 50,000 population. There are few empirical studies in which data are collected from smaller communities measuring public satisfaction with police (Mazerolle et al., 2013). No study was found for the southern Maine

community to inform municipal decision makers through evidence-based data. The mechanism for the measurement of procedural justice will be a survey-based approach from the lens of the person who called, was stopped by, or otherwise had an encounter with a police officer.

Evidence-based learning provides vital feedback which should be embedded in the culture of effective public organizations (Aarons et al., 2011). Policy makers will have empirical data derived from a validated public satisfaction survey to inform their finite resource allocations. In the community alone, benchmarks should be established evaluating if the police are effective at interacting and gaining legitimacy. A hallmark of Sir Robert Peel's nine principles of policing is the need of public approval for police actions in order to efficiently do their jobs (Williams, K. L., 2003). Public satisfaction surveys also provide a method for citizens to interact and provide feedback and voice their approval or disapproval, and a chance for leaders to learn from the feedback. The survey sends a signal of trust and caring about the product the policy agency delivers.

Additionally, the survey in this study can be used in a continuation of data collection efforts and inform procedural justice scholarship. Communities with a population of less than 50,000 are underserved by such scholarship now and have minimal participation with the PCI. There are no police agencies in northern New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont) currently participating in the PCI survey (A. Burstein, personal communication, July 23, 2019). Results from this research brought a small sample of data, but the comparison of studies provided valuable findings for regional leaders who wish to duplicate similar studies or examine the results of the southern Maine community under this study for best practices.

### **Research Questions**

This descriptive survey examined the relationship of police in this southern Maine community with citizens with whom they come into contact through a variety of different encounters, to include traffic stops, car crashes, crime reports, or witness involvement. The research questions below guided the research design and analysis.

RQ<sub>1</sub>: How well do persons having recent contact with police rate quality of services for the southern Maine police department?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: How do the constructs of procedural justice affect public satisfaction with police services?

### **Research Design**

The methodology for this study is a cross-sectional, descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research reveals generalized information through data collection which allows the reader to make better informed decisions based on a sample frame (Fox & Bayat, 2007). The method for data collection was a mailed survey with a letter inviting the potential participant to go to a website to complete the PCI survey. The participant needed to access the internet and respond to the PCI survey using a code found on the letter.

Survey research is the collection of data from a sample of people in their response to questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). The goal of survey research is to assess and measure the scope of the issue (Check & Schutt, 2012) in a consistent and precise way (Fowler, 2014). The survey instrument is best described as a police-citizen contact from the lens of the citizen which reached a wide random sample. Quantitative descriptive surveys should have a larger sample size for a better representation (Creswell, 2015). Using Fowler's (1988) sample size chart, the recommendation was about 350 (as cited by Creswell, 2015). There were about 600 contacts



used for participation (Police Department, 2019). Some police calls for service had multiple persons while other calls for police services had none, and some citizens had more than one contact with police during the month of October of 2019.

The survey instrument is the Police-Community Interaction Survey. The instrument is validated and shows reliability when compared to a more traditional phone survey (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). The National Police Research Platform (NPRP) and the southern Maine police department sent a joint letter in early November to citizens having contact with the police in the month preceding the survey release. The sample frame group (target population) are those having contact with this southern Maine police department while the sample was taken from contacts in the month of October 2019. The researcher received aggregate survey data from the NPRP.

Fowler's (2014) three characteristics of a valid sample frame are met. The sample frame is comprehensive, meaning it covers the target group of those having contact with police. Secondly, after removal of vulnerable persons, the probability of selection is calculated within the calendar year of 1/12. Third, the efficiency of locating participants within the sample frame is based on police records revealing last known addresses (Fowler, 2014). The NPRP de-identified participants as the objective data collection center. Data were turned over for descriptive statistical analysis.

**Hypothesis.** The descriptive hypothesis for this study is the relationship of tenets of procedural justice and public satisfaction. The type of interaction varied from traffic stop or accident to a witness or victim of a reported crime. The variation of procedural justice used by the officer through the lens of the citizen also varied and different factors such as demographics, disposition (ticket or warning), fear of crime will all impact how the citizen judges the officer's performance.

H: There is a relationship between public satisfaction of police and procedural justice.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between public satisfaction of police and procedural justice.

**Population & sampling method.** The target population is a group of people with the same characteristics (Creswell, 2015); the sample should be a reflection of the target population. In this study, the target population is all police-community contacts between the agency under study and the affected citizens. The police agency had chosen the month of October of 2019 as the sample month. Names and addresses were extrapolated from police records during this month for participation in a survey.

The department itself has 24 full time police officers; the breakdown consists of a Chief, two Captains, five Sergeants, two Detectives and fourteen Patrol Officers (J. Putnam, personal communication, 2019). Some evidence suggests while police behavior is the biggest determination of citizen attitude toward the police, demographics of the citizenry play a large role (Avdija, 2010). The US Census reports a population of just over 10,000 year-round residents who are predominately white (97.5%) (US Census Bureau, 2017). Additionally, the median age is 53.4 years old, which is decisively older than the median age for Mainers (44.3 years old), and Americans in general (37.8 years old) (US Census Bureau, 2017).

Southern Maine has a significant increase in tourism during the summer months and the fall provided ample opportunity to administer this survey without a large out of state contingent. While home of residence did not exclude participants, the survey did ask the survey participant if they are local to the community which was examined in the data. The majority of the contacts taken in the fall months largely yielded local residents compared to the busier tourist summer

months. The sample size is consistent with Fowler's (2014) recommendations of 350 participants and is within the logistical scope of this study for time and resources.

The method of sampling was probability sampling, and specifically simple random sampling. The police agency chose representatives from the sample frame with few exclusions. In order to make generalizations about the target population, probability sampling was necessary for a clear depiction (Creswell, 2015). Simple random sampling is achieved when the researcher uses all contacts with few exceptions in one month and disperses the survey. The separating criteria of survey participation from the target population is police contact in the target month with automatic exclusion for sensitive cases. A sensitive case for this research is considered as ongoing investigations, sexual or domestic violence. Additionally, juveniles were excluded from participation in the research.

**Instrumentation.** The instrument chosen to measure the quality of the police-citizen contacts was developed by researchers for the National Police Research Platform called the Police-Community Interaction Survey (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). The survey consists of 96 questions using a Likert scale to determine the satisfaction of the contact through the lens of the contacted person and their perception of the encounter. The design of the instrument is to gauge public satisfaction with police based on the traits consistent with procedural justice, such as empathy, and transparency with the process of the contact. Other surveys were examined for this research to determine the best suited instrument.

The Police-Public Contact survey differs from previous instruments aimed toward measurement of police and community contacts. The Police-Public Contact survey employs a stratified multi-stage cluster sample of participants from larger cities and is part of the existing crime victimization study (Davis, Whyde, & Lagton, 2018). The scientifically rigorous study is

part of the larger crime victimization survey which casts a wider net collecting data from community members who may or may not had contact with police. The crime victimization study focuses more on crime reporting rates (Davis, et al., 2018). While the study yields descriptive data, it is not regionalized and would not measure the quality of police contacts for this southern Maine community. Additionally, the survey is not time sensitive to a police encounter.

Another type of survey often completed by local communities is an in-house survey created by members of the police organization or in partnership with a local community organization (Rosenbaum et al, 2017). A majority of the current surveys concerns customer satisfaction or are needs assessment-based, a parallel found in private sector enterprise. These surveys provide excellent feedback about local problems but are often so unique to their own communities that duplication is not appropriate (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). Additionally, most of these surveys are done with convenience sampling and do not pass the muster of scientific rigor.

Other measurements of procedural justice use observers to watch police contact and then code each interaction (Dai et al., 2011). These observational studies have concluded there is a relationship with procedural justice and de-escalation of conflict (Dai et al., 2011; Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015). However, with no survey follow up to the police contact, the satisfaction of the citizen with interaction is not measured. Additionally, observers vary in their judgement of empathy, and transparency, two central tenants of procedural justice.

The chosen survey is the PCI instrument which is best suited for this study because of the practicality of application in a local community. The PCI is designed for both large and small agencies with an emphasis on the satisfaction of the process of the police action, not the outcome. This survey sought to quantify the level of satisfaction with police contacts in a

southern Maine community and will also provide insight into the variables that affect satisfaction for the community under study. The instrument also provides metrics to gauge more general areas of the local police department based on the contact such as fear of crime, ease of reporting, trust in the agency, and how safe the participant feels. These metrics measure components of procedural justice which differentiate the PCI survey from others mentioned (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015).

**Validation of instrument.** A study instrument should accurately measure the objectives of the research questions, maximizing questions for ease in participation while providing succinct and quantifiable data (Fowler, 2014). Fowler (2014) presented four reasons survey respondents do not accurately report with perfect accuracy: 1. They do not understand the research question; 2. They do not know the answer; 3. They cannot recall; 4. They do not want to report the answer (p. 92). Studies have shown timely recall is pivotal for accurate reporting, the so-called “misinformation effect” occurs when post-event encounters warp the memory of the event (Blank & Launay, 2014). To alleviate effects from the mis-information effect, the instrument draws on participants having contact with police within one month from the contact.

The degree of what is measured can be ambiguous. Trustworthiness, fairness, and empathy are difficult to quantify. Content validity with the survey is broken up into components of those fields covering the range of meanings within an ambiguous question that rests on what the reader interprets as “empathy”. Questions are broken into blocks measuring these tenets of procedural justice where the survey asks the respondent on a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree (or even skip the question). For example, in the empathy block, survey questions cover “treated me fairly”, “listened to what I had to say”, “appeared to know what he or she was doing”, “seemed concerned about my feelings”, and “displayed a sense of

humor”. The instrument goes beyond asking if the officer was empathetic and implores the respondent to be reflective toward the elements of the officer’s behavior.

The PCI survey instrument had not yet been applied using criterion-based validity. Specifically, no data were found for agencies who completed the PCI survey and then compared crime rates. Further research could draw a connection with high or low success on this instrument to uniform crime reporting rates. There is convincing evidence that procedural justice is linked to police legitimacy (Bottoms, Anthony & Tankebe, 2012; Tyler, 2004), and also extensive evidence that police legitimacy is linked to decrease in crime rates (Ren et al., 2005; Tengpongsthorn, 2016; Tyler, 1990). Thus, high levels of public satisfaction with the police should lead to decreased crime rates in the communities surveyed.

Lastly, the PCI instrument is available to any police agency wishing to employ it for the purpose of public satisfaction measurement. The National Police Research Platform (NPRP) is a public not-for-profit subsidiary of the National Police Foundation and sponsored in part by the National Institute of Justice, the funding arm of the US Department of Justice (National law enforcement applied research & data platform, 2017). The researcher secured an agreement with NPRP staff to administer the survey in the Fall/Winter of 2019 using the PCI survey vetted through the Institutional Review Board from the Police Foundation in Washington, D.C. A southern Maine police department requested the NPRP to send out and collect this information. The Chief of Police has entered into an agreement with the researcher to use the aggregate data of the PCI survey for future data analysis. The information accessed for this study is considered archival data for the purpose of analysis.

### **Data Collection**

This research is a cross-sectional, descriptive study. The researcher entered into an agreement with the Chief of Police in a southern Maine community to use archival data collected from the PCI survey for data analysis for this research. The names of participants were taken from the department's record management system. The department excluded names of juveniles (under 18 years old), ongoing investigations, domestic and sexual-based crimes, and any other crime deemed by the researchers as sensitive in nature. The rest of the names were forwarded to the National Police Research Platform (NPRP) who conducted the survey.

The NPRP mailed a letter that was jointly from the southern Maine police department and the NPRP. The Chief of Police of the target community signed a letter of solicitation to encourage participation in the research. The joint letter from the NPRP established itself as an objective third party interested in the opinions of the participant and ensured the survey candidate their information is protected and be kept confidential. On the letter, there was a website and unique code for the participant to complete the survey online. Additionally, the participant could elect to do the survey over the phone with options outlined in the letter. The code ensured there was no duplication of the survey for one contact.

Data collection occurred from the full-time staff of the NPRP, who also de-identified the participants. The survey is powered by the online survey platform Qualtrics. The survey remained open until December 31, 2019 to potential survey participants. Aggregated data were returned to the police department, then researcher for analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics describe the general tendencies of data from a known population (Creswell, 2015). The data analysis completed by the NPRP was descriptive statistics of average

responses among participants; for example, the average level of satisfaction with a self-reported traffic stop. The data show variables that affect public satisfaction with police in a positive and negative way. Each variable should be analyzed and accounted for within the framework of procedural justice.

Qualtrics was used to build the survey and the NPRP provided preliminary comparative statistical data in a report form for the southern Maine police department. Along with reporting participation rate, a comparison of gender, race, and age brackets of the sample population was made with the survey respondents to determine if the participants are a true reflection of the sample frame.

**Limitations and delimitations of the research design.** The research design used survey research to reach a sample frame of police contact within a month. Limitations arise as potential survey participants likely did not choose to have contact with police. In any given contact, the intervention of a police contact with a member of the public can be stressful and burdensome. Since most contacts were not solicited out of desire to have contact and performed based on necessity, participation rates with a follow-up survey have proved difficult in similar studies (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). Non-response error is a lack of response from individuals solicited for participation in a survey. Ponto (2015) suggests follow-up or letters to boost response. The joint letter from the NPRP and the Chief of Police was aimed to personalize the experience and show a genuine desire for the feedback. The letter addressed from the Chief of Police asked for participation rather than only the NPRP was designed to help mitigate non-response error by boosting participation.

Delimitations are set by the researcher to narrow the scope of the study (Roberts, 2010). The timing of this survey was over one month in the fall to best represent the year-round



community. The survey data measured only recent contact within the last 30 days with police and excluded members of the general community without a recent contact with police. Additionally, some contacts are excluded as the police contact involved an ongoing or sensitive case or vulnerable person. The data are most germane to the police agency under study, with contacts arising from only one agency despite other state and federal law enforcement agencies working within the community. The survey instrument does not differentiate from one officer to another and thus some personalities may differ, offering more or less procedurally just mannerisms to navigate through a contact. The delimitations of this study are designed to thin an array of methods used to measure public satisfaction with police while gleaning meaningful data. The PCI survey instrument was chosen because it best fits the purpose of this research.

### **Internal and External Validity**

The challenge to experimental research is drawing inferences that are true and correct (Creswell, 2015). Creswell continues to describe external validity as “problems that threaten our ability to draw correct inferences from the sample data to other persons...” (2015, p. 306). While external validity challenges the researcher’s ability to have meaning outside of the study, internal validity questions the relationship of the dependent and independent variables (Creswell, 2015). The ability to generalize the findings of this study allows replication in other communities. As previously discussed, the Police-Community Interaction survey (PCI) is a validated instrument with local application for large and small communities, despite its lopsided use in larger populated communities. The intent to measure satisfaction of public citizen’s contact with police through the lens of the public can be replicated and generalized to other settings.

The planned survey was concealed from the police officers of this southern Maine agency (J. Putnam, personal communication, October 24, 2019). Emphasis was placed on concealing the

PCI survey from line staff during the actual police-community interaction. Knowing the PCI survey would occur may have delivered a “Hawthorne Effect” causing the patrol officers’ behavior to change knowing their actions would have been scrutinized. The effect was found to occur when the participant of an experiment knows they are being observed (McCambridge, Witton, & Elbourne, 2014). Empirical evidence suggests when the participant of an experiment is observed, their behavior changes to reflect better on behalf of the one observed (McCambridge, Witton, & Elbourne, 2014). Any change of behavior for the survey period alone would not be a clear reflection of the department and a significant external validity failure.

The setting for the survey is a community in southern Maine. Creswell (2015) notes external validity is threatened when conditions for measurement are artificial. In this research, real contacts with police in non-sterile conditions eliminate the external validity threat of artificial or manufactured environments. Contacts varied in nature and developed without any control of the researcher; contacts were taken from the police log. However, some internal validity concerns arise with additional confounding and unexpected variables that come about from unfiltered exposure to real-world contacts. Disposition of a traffic stop, preconceived notions of law enforcement are two examples of an internal validity threat. No two contacts are the same and thus it cannot be assumed each person completing the survey had no pre-conceived notions of law enforcement, for better or worse, prior to the police contact.

The selection bias concerns are diminished because the same criteria are used on previous studies; very few potential participants were eliminated. A participant with a poor history with police or holds biased toward police may continue to view law enforcement in a poor light regardless of the contact. Many unknown and concealed factors affect validity within a public and community contact indicative the real instability of police-community contacts.

### **Ethical Issues in the Study**

Research on human subjects requires minimization of risk to the participants (Fowler, 2014). The PCI survey informed potential participants before moving into the first question the overview of the study, risks and benefits, confidentiality, and clarifies participation is voluntary. Information gleaned from this survey was de-identified at the NPRP and were sent to the police department maintaining the integrity of the participant; the police agency then turned the data over to the researcher for analysis. Confidential responses ensured no participant was at risk for criminal or civil liability or damaged reputation. The benefits to participation are intrinsic, further stress or worry associated with completion of this survey did not exceed the discomforts of everyday examinations or tests (Fowler, 2014).

The PCI survey was created in partnership with the NPRP and the University of Illinois (Rosenbaum et. al, 2015). Since that collaboration, the NPRP has continued to administer the survey with the assistance of the Police Foundation providing Institutional Review Board (IRB) support for their research. The data in the study were scrubbed, de-identifying information and presented in aggregate form when given back to the researcher and individuals cannot be re-identified. Commitment to using only de-identified aggregate data for descriptive analysis demonstrates a minimization of risk to participants.

### **Conclusion and Summary**

The purpose of this study is to measure and describe public satisfaction through the lens of procedural justice in a sub-urban southern Maine community. Describing the conditions for policy makers gives them evidence-based data to adjust any policing strategy and gauges the level of police effectiveness within the community. The study provides meaningful data to local

leaders but also provides regional data for northern New England and add to the validity of the Police-Community Interaction survey for police agencies serving populations under 50,000.

The survey instrument passes the standard for scientific research having strong validity and reliability to provide accurate information to measure the central tenants of procedural justice. The use of descriptive statistics provides policy makers a strong representation of the current climate of public satisfaction and procedural justice use with police services. This chapter detailed the setting, participants, and analysis of this research. Moving forward, Chapter Four will present the findings of the study. Chapter Five will interpret the findings and any implications of the study while proving or disproving the descriptive hypothesis and make suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The impetus for this study was the lack of evidenced-based criteria for a proper evaluation of police efforts within the community under study. Additionally, little research exists in communities with a population of less than 50,000 or within the northern New England region. The research questions that guided this study were:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: How well do persons having recent contact with police rate quality of services for the southern Maine police department?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: How do the constructs of procedural justice affect public satisfaction with police services?

The descriptive hypothesis was based on an extensive literature review, and the researcher posits that a strong relationship exists between how citizens who interacted with police rated attributes of procedural justice and overall satisfaction with the police contact. Additionally, a null hypothesis would disprove a relationship. The instrument that was selected to uncover a relationship was the Police-Community Interaction (PCI) survey.

The conceptual framework for this research was based on prior studies which found a relationship of procedural justice and public satisfaction with police (Mazerolle et al., 2013; Tyler, 2004). Additionally, when public satisfaction of police is higher, the degree of legitimacy among the police within the community is also increased (Gau, et al., 2012). Police gain more social capital using procedural justice and citizens are more likely to cooperate with the police to deter and solve crime (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017; Matusiak et al., 2017). Authority does not lead to legitimacy, the interaction of the police-citizen contact is not only important for immediate compliance, but also for future cooperation.

The method for obtaining survey participants was guided by past PCI instrument use (Rosenbaum, et al., 2015). The southern Maine police department sent the names and addresses of 589 people to the National Police Research Platform (NPRP) for survey disbursement, and data collection. Criteria for inclusion in the sample size meant contact with the sub-urban southern Maine police department in the month of October of 2019. Potential participants needed to be at least 18 years old and not be involved in a call for service that was on-going or considered sensitive; specifically, a domestic or sexual related crime.

The potential participant was sent a letter from the NPRP signed by their research coordinator and the local Chief of Police encouraging participation. The letter included a web site address and code to access the survey. The participant then filled out the survey which took about 10 minutes to complete. The completed surveys were returned to the NPRP for data analysis and those data were sent to the researcher in aggregate de-identified form.

The data presented from the PCI survey were incomplete with total and partial non-response, a bleak 4.6% response came back. The survey results are presented below in the primary survey results. To support the primary survey results, a more extensive search of survey instruments was made at the regional level.

Regional data that could address the research questions were available, so those data sets were assembled and organized in the form of a meta-analysis. The researcher used community surveys administered by or for police agencies considered in the same geographic region to the original site when the current outreach did not produce sufficient data. These findings and their relationship to the conceptual framework will be addressed after the initial presentation of the PCI data set. This chapter will present the original PCI survey results, then provide a meta-

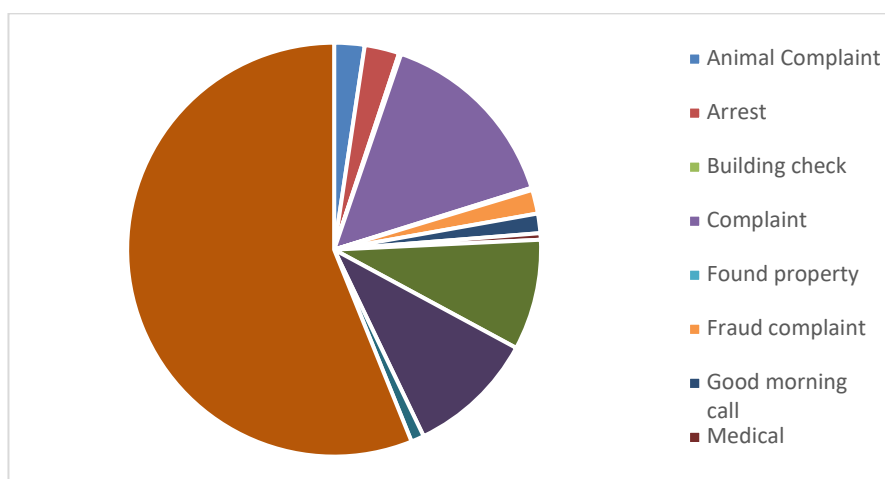
analysis of police agencies within a close geographic proximity using archival community surveys performed within the last four years to bring validity to the original PCI survey.

### Primary Survey Results

Of the 589 surveys sent, 72 were returned as undeliverable. Of the 517 presumed to be delivered, the response rate was 4.64% ( $n = 24$ ). Fowler (2014) argues there is clear evidence non-response rates can affect survey estimates, but the affect or non-affect varies among surveys with some surveys having mirrored results from a large response. Not all respondents answered each question in the PCI survey. While web-based surveys tend to produce lower response rates by an average of 11% (Fan & Yan, 2010), the final results are based on incomplete data based on a lack of response rate via total non-response and partial non-response. An ideal response rate to yield a 95% confidence level would have been 233 responses, or about 40% response rate (Qualtrics, 2019). The type of police-citizen interaction varied in the month of October of 2019 and was categorized by 12 forms of contact made by police:

#### Figure 1

##### *Survey disbursement*

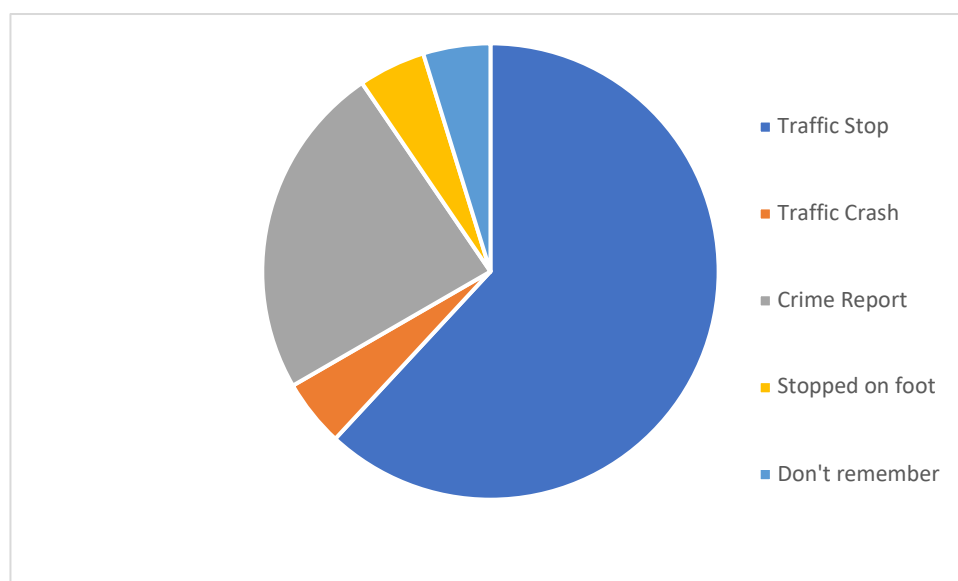


*Note.* This pie graph depicts the disbursement of contacts for the police in October of 2019.

Of the 24 survey participants, 21 (87.5%) responded to how the police contact occurred. The categories are similar to the survey disbursement chart, however, one respondent reported being stopped on foot which fell outside of the scope of the data categories being examined. In both charts, the majority of contacts and survey respondents were traffic stops.

## Figure 2

### *Survey Results*



*Note.* This pie graph depicts the type of contact for survey participants in October of 2019.

Of the survey participants, 15 of 24 (62.5%) responded to the disposition of the police contact. 6.67% (one survey respondent) was issued a ticket/fine/arrested. Seventy-three and one-third percent (11) were given a warning, and 20% (three), there was no action taken by police.

The respondents were asked the race of the officers that he or she had contact with: all were white and 86% of the officers were male and 14% female. The PCI survey also asked survey respondents to estimate the age of the officer they had contact with from three age brackets: under 30 years old (38%), 30-40 years old (43%), and over 40 years old (19%). Most



contacts (50%) occurred on the street, while others occurred in the survey participants' homes (16.67%), at the police station (16.67%), or other.

When asked if the survey participant blamed themselves for the police contact, 50% "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with that statement. Furthermore, 90% have responded they have taken action to prevent the police contact from happening again. 25% responded they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement they are angry about what happened – meaning the incident that caused the police contact.

Taking the whole police contact into account, 95.45% (21) were very satisfied with the way they were treated by the officer in their respective contact; 4.55% (one) were dissatisfied. No respondents answered satisfied or very dissatisfied. Additionally, all respondents (14) answered they thought the outcome they received was fair; 85.71% (12) answering strongly agreed with the statement, while 14.29% (2) answered agree. Fairness is one of the four tenets of procedural justice (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015).

Other tenets of procedural justice are honesty, transparency and empathy (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Skogan, 2005). The PCI survey broke down the elements of procedural justice using multiple questions to gauge the citizen's perception of the police officer during the contact. Questions were asked on a Likert scale. While the return rate did not meet a standard of a reliable sample, the findings are informative and were analyzed in relation to the conceptual framework as the researcher discerned how each question fell into the four categories of procedural justice.

### **Fairness**

Once the central question of public satisfaction with police was asked, the PCI survey went into more specific questioning regarding the fairness of the interaction. Multiple questions

assessing the citizen's perception of fairness was examined. A fair process is considered to generally produce fair outcomes (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015). The respondent was left to interpret what their understanding of fairness meant. Below is a representation of the data.

**Table 1**

*Fairness during the police contact*

During the encounter, the officer... <i>n</i> = 22	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Considered my views	59%	36.4%	0	4.5%
Took the matter seriously	72.7%	27.3%	0	0
Made decisions based on facts	72.7%	22.7%	0	4.5%
Was fair and evenhanded	72.7%	22.7%	0	4.5%
Discriminated against me based on my race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation	4.5%	0	0	95.5%
Remained calm	81.8%	18.2%	0	0

The data provides a consistently high level of fairness as perceived by the citizen having contact with the police. In almost all questions asked, one respondent in each question strongly disagreed with the statement the officer considered his or her view, made a decision based on fact, or was fair and evenhanded. Additionally, one respondent believed the officer discriminated against them during their contact.

**Transparency**

The second tenet of procedural justice is the transparency of the police contact. This meaning was also left to the survey respondent to define. Building upon fairness, the concept of transparency of the police contact is built around the understanding why the police took their respective action. The tenet of transparency includes officers' professionalism, and competency

– their ability to explain their actions allowing individuals to consent to police actions

(Rosenbaum, et al., 2017).

**Table 2**

*Transparency during the police contact*

During the encounter, the officer...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	<i>n</i>
Appeared to know what he or she was doing	71.4%	23.8%	4.8%	0	21
Clearly explained the reasons for his or her actions	72.7%	22.7%	4.5%	0	22
Explained what would happen next in the process	59.1%	40.9%	0	0	22
Answered all my questions well	72.7%	22.7%	0	4.5%	22

The table showed that a consistent level of respondents strongly agreed or agreed the police officers knew what they were doing and explained the process of whatever type of contact took place. While there was a sole response that disagreed with the statements regarding transparency in three of the four questions asked, the majority believed the officers were able to justify their actions. All respondents answered their police contact explained the next step in their contact, whether it was court, no further actions, or another step in the investigative case.

### **Honesty**

Honesty and trustworthiness have become synonyms in the PCI survey. Honesty includes the ability of the public to put their faith in law enforcement based on their ethical and moral behavior, specifically being honest during the police-citizen interaction (Rosenbaum, et. al., 2017). Honesty has a relationship to building institutional trust for police services (Gau, Jacinta, 2014). This component was separated from fairness by the researcher to ascertain the degree of sincerity between the police and citizen contact.

**Table 3***Honesty during the police contact*

During the encounter, the officer... <i>n</i> = 22	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Seemed trustworthy	68.2%	31.8%	0	0
Tried to be helpful	63.6%	31.8%	4.5%	0

The data show the majority of citizens having contact with police believe the officer was trying to be helpful. One respondent disagreed with that statement. All survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed the officer seemed trustworthy, a component of honesty. The table provides evidence those survey respondents trusted the officer they collectively had contact with.

**Empathy**

The last component of procedural justice is empathy. Empathy is measured by the level in which the officer listens, believes, shows concern, and/or comforted the survey respondent during the contact (Rosembaum, et al., 2017). Empirical evidence suggests those having contact with police want to be validated with the knowledge that the police understand their position before an enforcement decision has been reached (Rosembaum, et al., 2017). A bank of four questions comprise a comprehensive understanding of if the survey respondent believed the officer used empathy during the police-citizen contact.

**Table 4***Empathy during the police contact*

During the encounter, the officer...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	<i>n</i>
Listened to what I had to say	81.8%	13.6%	0	4.5%	22
Seemed concern about my feelings	57.1%	28.6%	4.8%	9.5%	21
Seemed to believe what I was saying	63.6%	31.5%	0	4.5%	22
Comforted and reassured me	42.9%	28.6%	19%	9.5%	21

The majority of survey respondents believe the officer in the sub-urban southern Maine police department under study were empathetic. While not as strong as the other tenets of procedural justice, most respondents either strongly agree or agree with the four questions that comprise empathy in this survey. The largest disagreement with any question comprising the tenets of procedural justice rested in the perception the police officer comforted and reassured the survey respondent during their respective contact. More than a quarter of the respondents (28.5%) did not perceive the police officer acted empathetically.

**Survey conclusion**

The results of the PCI survey suggest a high degree of fair, honest, transparent, and empathic behavior as perceived by the respondents during contact with police in October of 2019. While the data set is incomplete because of the low number of respondents, the data that do exist confirm the descriptive hypothesis of a relationship between how the citizen contact rated attributes of procedural justice and overall satisfaction with police services.

The level of satisfaction expressed in this small sample by citizens who experienced a police-community interaction (95.5%) is consistent with literature drawing a relationship

between procedural justice and public satisfaction with the police. Additionally, the PCI survey answers the first research question: How well do persons having recent contact with police rate quality of services for the southern Maine police department?

The second research question: How do the constructs of procedural justice affect public satisfaction with police services, is more complex without a larger pool of data to draw from. The meta-analysis was conducted to analyze the findings from the original survey and determine the validity of the original survey based on archival surveys performed in the same geographic region. Based on the limited data in the original survey, the four tenets of procedural justice are high and in turn, a high level of public satisfaction is observed. That relationship is supported by prior literature and aligns with the conceptual framework of this study which describes a relationship between the tenets of procedural justice and public satisfaction with police services.

### **Meta-Analysis**

In an effort to evaluate, compare, and validate the incomplete findings of the primary PCI survey to other studies about police-community interactions in the same geographic region, a meta-analysis was completed. The goal of a meta-analysis is to synthesize and understand a single study within the context of other quantitative surveys (Creswell, 2015). Findings from the identified studies were also analyzed in relation to the tenets of procedural justice with similar results. The surveys used in the meta-analysis were not designed in their entirety to evaluate the individual tenets of fairness, honesty, transparency, and empathy. However, the surveys do support the primary PCI survey results exhibiting a relationship between procedural justice and public satisfaction.

The researcher performed a comprehensive review of police agencies that performed a community survey since 2014. Five communities were identified in addition to the sub-urban southern Maine community already under study:

1. Portsmouth, New Hampshire
2. Portland, Maine
3. South Portland, Maine
4. Auburn, Maine
5. Durham, New Hampshire

Each community listed used their own organic survey instrument in an effort to identify community-based problems and gauge public satisfaction with police services. All surveys included a component of procedural justice with prompts for participants to answer. Marenin (1989) argues community surveys are an important autonomous and semi-independent way for citizens to have input in policy direction to identify emerging harms or community needs. Each community is different with diverse geopolitical and socioeconomic needs and values. For the purpose of this meta-analysis, the focus is narrow and examined the rated level of respect the citizenry holds for police and the effects on public satisfaction with their services.

The commonalities and differences in five sets of data are explained beginning with demographics and moving into instrument data sets. There is not an “apples to apples” comparison of data, meaning the data sought out in each survey varied. There are consistencies in regard to procedural justice, however, and specifically, respect citizens have for law enforcement during contact and the respective public satisfaction with police. Fear of crime, measured as feeling safe walking at night, will also be explored and the relationship to both violent crime Uniformed Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics and procedural justice.

## Demographics & Criteria

The selection criteria for the meta-analysis included the following: a survey completed within the last five years with an adequate sample size (more than 150 participants). The survey needed questions specific to public satisfaction, evaluation of police performance, and if the respondent felt safe. Additionally, the survey needed to deploy a scientifically rigorous method. Four of the five communities chosen were coastal which is consistent with the sub-urban southern Maine community under study (Portland, South Portland, Portsmouth, and Durham). Durham hosts University of New Hampshire. One inland community (Auburn) was also included.

**Table 5**

*Demographic breakdown of communities*

	Current Study	Portsmouth	Portland	S. Portland	Auburn	Durham
Year Conducted	2019	2018	2019	2014	2016	2016
Sample Size ( <i>n</i> )	24	1,206	809	534	188	635
Administrator	NPRP	UNH	UNE	Self	Self	UNH
Population	10,048	21,644	66,715	25,431	22,941	16,148
Median Age	53.4	40.8	36	40.8	39	20.9
% White	97.5%	88.1%	83.9%	93.7%	91%	93.4%
Distance from current study (miles)	0	23.8	32.6	32.5	62	32.1

*Note.* Data for community survey demographics by US Census Bureau (2017).



In addition to the variation within the sample size, some distinctions exist between communities based on location. Durham, New Hampshire has a large Division I University that skews the census data by having a median age that is artificially low and does not reflect year-round residents who were given the survey. Despite the discrepancy, the sub-urban southern Maine town under study has a substantially higher median age in comparison to the other communities.

Methodology was also a critical element of the meta-analysis. While all surveys use cross-sectional analysis, some agencies have repeated their surveys to gather data to conduct longitudinal analysis. The PCI survey conducted used random sampling from October of 2019. There were specific criteria needed for participation. Specifically, a survey participant needed to have contact with police during a defined time frame – the month of October of 2019. In the listed surveys for the meta-analysis, no criteria existed for prior contact within a certain time frame, some respondents had no recent contact with police.

### **Community Comparison**

The Portsmouth, New Hampshire Police Department used random sampling of addresses; 5,000 addresses were selected at random and sent mailed surveys (McKinley & Keirns, 2018). The participation rate was 24% (1,206 surveys came back) and that data were analyzed by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. In the survey instrument, the question of contact with police within the last 12 months was asked. Of those respondents, four sub-categories are broken down and the respondent is asked to rate the level of satisfaction for the call type (a) community event, (b) traffic issue, (c) non-emergency call, and (d) emergency call. Similar to the PCI survey, the community member taking the survey rated their level of satisfaction based on

the police-community contact. However, the timing from the contact varies from one month to up to 12 months in the Portsmouth survey.

The Portland, Maine Police Department used convenience sampling via an online survey, and data were returned to the University of New England for analysis (McLaughlin, 2019). Social and printed media was used to drive participation. Data were aggregated and stratified by neighborhood with a total response rate of 809 participants. Satisfaction with police response to a problem was used as a substitute for overall police satisfaction with a contact. However, there is no clear delineation of police-citizen contact. The data provided document that 91% of the respondents were not victims of a crime in the last two years. It is unknown when the survey respondents last had contact with police and how they are basing their judgement of satisfaction with police response.

The South Portland, Maine Police Department also used convenience sampling via an online survey advertised by the department (*South Portland police department strategic planning community survey results*, 2014). Unlike the previous survey instruments, the data collection and analysis were completed in-house. While much less rigorous, the South Portland study provides insight into public satisfaction with the police. The survey ( $n = 534$ ) asked how the police department is doing in serving the community, which was used in this meta-analysis as public satisfaction with police services. One question asked in the survey pertains to the survey participant or family having contact with police within the last five years. That question leads into how the officer treated the survey respondent or family member.

The Auburn, Maine Police Department used a similar survey in design and methodology to the South Portland Police Department. Convenience sampling was used and advertised over social media ( $n = 188$ ). Data were collected and analyzed by in-house staff (Auburn Police

Department, 2016). Survey respondents were asked about emerging concerns and then asked under what conditions they would contact Auburn Police officials. Their survey captured data specific to the neighborhoods that comprised the city. Their survey had a block of questions called procedural justice and asked respondents if they felt they were treated fairly, respectfully, transparently, with empathy, and if they trust the police agency (Auburn Police Department, 2016). The survey also breaks down satisfaction with police services based on multiple factors. For descriptive analysis, the researcher took the response for all questions and combined the totals to develop weighted averages regarding total satisfaction with police services.

Lastly, The Durham, New Hampshire Police Department used the University of New Hampshire Survey Center in 2016 to perform their survey and analysis in a similar manner the center performed the latter Portsmouth survey. The center mailed 3,869 surveys to the tax-paying residences in town and received a response rate of 16% ( $n = 635$ ). Data collection and analysis were completed by the Survey Center and findings returned in aggregate form (Cazeau & Azem, 2016). This survey has been completed six times since 2000. Satisfaction with police services was based on the question of overall rating of the police department. While 62% of respondents had contact with Durham Police in the last three years, 96% rated that interaction as professional, with dignity and respect.

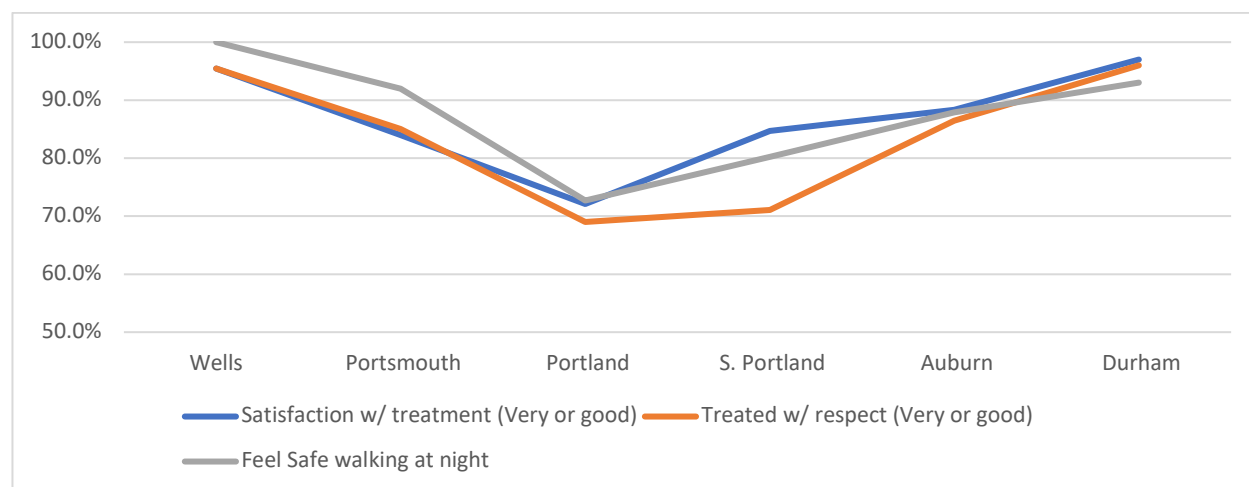
## **Data**

The meta-analysis did not yield data to compare each tenet of procedural justice with one another. A larger generalization of the citizen being treated with respect by local law enforcement is used to encompass all procedural justice elements. In the below figure, a positive relationship is drawn between respect for police and satisfaction for police services.

Additionally, a comparison of how each community responded with feelings of safety walking at night are compared against satisfaction with police services.

**Figure 3**

*Relationship between satisfaction with treatment and respect*



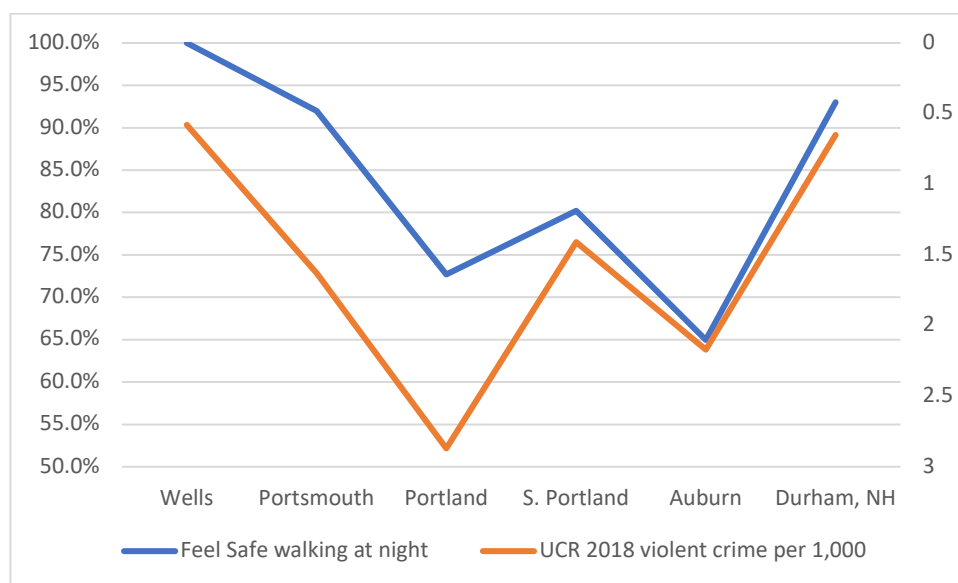
*Note.* This line graph depicts how the public perceived the collective treatment of the police and their satisfaction with the police services.

While a relationship can be drawn between respectful treatment and public satisfaction with police services, there also lies a relationship between feelings of safety walking at night and public satisfaction of police services. South Portland provides the only significant outlier, with a difference in perceived respectful treatment of the public (71%) and satisfaction with police services (84.7%).

However, there is a smaller relationship between crime and feeling safe walking at night in the communities participating in this meta-analysis. Using data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniformed Crime Reporting (2017), feelings of safety and violent crime per 1,000 of the population are not as closely related.

**Figure 4**

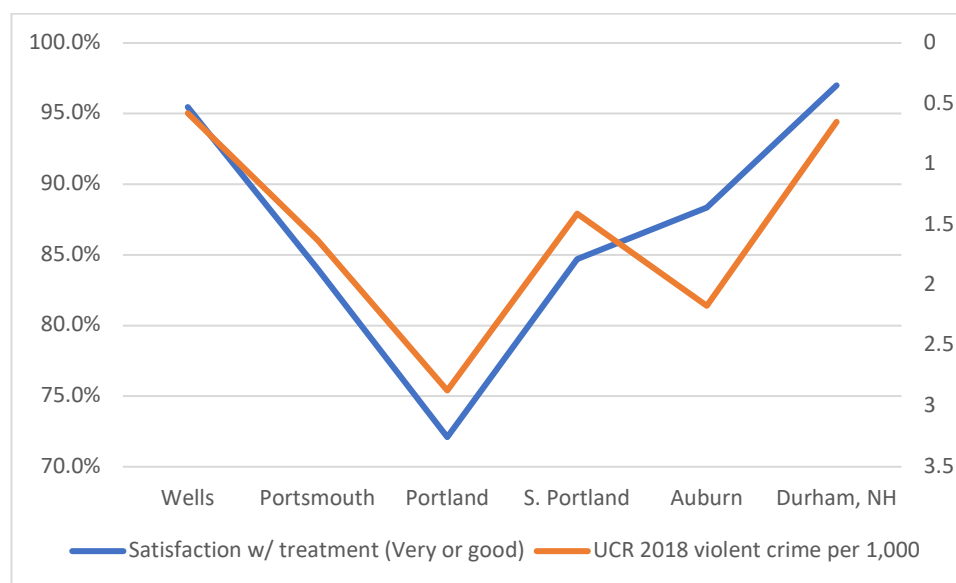
*Comparison of violent crime and feelings of safety walking at night.*



*Note.* This line chart depicts the relationship of crime and feelings of safety walking at night.

A small relationship seems to exist between crime data and the public perception of walking at night. The measurement of walking alone at night is used to gauge the effectiveness of police services in regard to fear of crime. The UCR data derive from violent crime per 1,000 of the population and is laid on the data set using a different axis to show a relationship between the data. For the purposes of identifying trends, the researcher determined how violent crime per 1,000 (right y axis) should overlay onto perception of safety at night (left y axis).

The last figure is used to judge effectiveness of the police departments in this meta-analysis with the UCR data. A relationship exists between violent crime per 1,000 and satisfaction with treatment of police. Prior literature made a connection between the effectiveness of police services and legitimacy of the police agency (Tyler, 2004). This research validates prior findings and finds a relationship between satisfaction of police services and violent crime per 1,000.

**Figure 5***UCR & Public Satisfaction with Police*

*Note.* This chart illustrates a relationship between public satisfaction with police services and violent crime per 1,000 according to UCR data (2017).

While respectful treatment from the police as perceived by the survey participant was used to represent procedural justice encounters, the data from some surveys depict a more detailed examination of the four tenets that comprise procedural justice. Meaningful data were taken from these surveys despite a lack of overt sampling to address each characteristic of fairness, honesty, transparency, and empathy.

**Table 6***Tenets of Procedural Justice*

	Current Study	Portsmouth	Portland	S. Portland	Auburn	Durham
Satisfaction w/ treatment	95.5%	84%	72.1%	84.7%	88.3%	97%
Treated w/ respect	95.5%	85%	69%	71.1%	86.5%	96%
Trustworthy & Honest	100%	84%			87.7%	89%
Fair	97%	85%				81%
Empathetic	95.5%	80%			81.9%	86%
Transparent Decision making	95.5%				79.6%	

Portsmouth, Auburn, and Durham collected data using surveys that asked about and found consistent findings with empathy in police-citizen contacts. Auburn also examined transparent contacts by police finding most citizens (79.9%) believed their contact with police officials was transparent. Additionally, Portsmouth & Durham Police asked about their contacts being fair, which showed 85% and 81% respectfully. McKinley and Keirns (2018) note in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire study residents whom are less satisfied with police are less likely to say agree the Portsmouth Police show concern (empathy) for their rights as a member of the community.

### **Conclusion**

The meta-analysis of findings from five other communities in the region lends support to the findings of the original PCI survey. Parallel ratings validate the results that were obtained

despite an incomplete data set. The descriptive hypothesis is valid and a high relationship exists between how the citizen contact rated attributes of procedural justice and their satisfaction with police service. Additionally, the PCI survey data answered how well persons having recent contact with police rated their experiences, specifically 95.5% were satisfied by the contact regardless of the type of contact. The second research question regarding the constructs of procedural justice effects on public satisfaction was examined in more detail during the original survey. However, using a meta-analysis, the tenets of procedural justice were represented in aggregate form as respect and show a positive relationship with overall public satisfaction.

Data gleaned in the original survey and subsequent archival surveys put together in a meta-analysis support prior literature and procedural justice theory. The effectiveness of police services using two measurements (a) fear of crime, and, (b) UCR violent crime reporting, show a relationship to satisfaction with police services gained through respectful treatment of the citizens. Chapter five will continue the data analysis by providing interpretation of the findings, explore the limitations of this research, and look forward to future studies.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents a summation of the data collected, the connection to criminal justice literature and the importance of the study, within the field of criminal justice and to local stakeholders. Interpretations of the data and their implementation for theory, research, and practice are discussed along with limitations and further study needed in this field. While the implementation of this study fell short of the original design, due to a lower than expected survey return rate, findings from the smaller study parallel the existing research from surrounding (regional) communities. The research questions are answered using supplemental data through the formation of a meta-analysis. Important conclusions are drawn from this study and recommendations are made to police agencies backed by evidence-based practices.

#### **Summary of Findings**

The original design of the study was to use the police-community interaction (PCI) survey, a product of the National Police Research Platform (NPRP) to assess the public satisfaction amongst those citizens who had a recent contact with police. A survey was conducted in a sub-urban southern Maine community which has a large seasonal influx of seasonal citizens. Police contacts were documented in October of 2019, which was used as the sample month. This month provided an adequate sample size and a majority of the police-citizen contacts resided local to the community. Surveys were sent via US Mail in November of 2019 with directions to visit a website and take a survey of the participant's recent contact with police.

The tenets of procedural justice – fairness, honesty, transparency, and empathy were included and stratified in the survey for comparison and evaluation. The descriptive hypothesis based on an extensive literature review was formed and stated a high relationship should exist

between citizens having contact with police and how they would rate the attributes of procedural justice to their overall satisfaction with police services. Additionally, procedural justice literature and theory states a high level of public satisfaction supports a high degree of police legitimacy (Gau, et al., 2012). This theory lends itself to the conclusion that, in order for police to be efficient, they need to be liked by the public. To be liked by the public, the police need to be fair, honest, transparent, and empathetic – more than simply effective at crime reduction (Tyler, 2017). This concept is also drawn from prior research literature from Tyler (1990, 2004) and Mazerolle et al. (2013), and also from early scholars such as Sir Robert Peel and his nine principles of policing dating back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Evans, 2006).

As policing has evolved, too much time is spent on crime reduction and “us versus them” strategy, and too little time is spent on public relations and collaborations (Tyler, 2017). The problem identified early in this research was the sub-urban southern Maine community under study used uniform crime reporting as the only rigorous methods to evaluate performance of the police. This study unpenned those methods by examining the process-based result versus the predominate method, which is outcome-based.

While the survey design was carefully planned, a total and partial non-response rate resulted in an incomplete data set returned to the researcher. To complete an examination of the alignment of survey data more generally with the tenets of procedural justice, a meta-analysis of community surveys completed within a close geographic proximity was conducted. Six communities’ survey findings were examined for relevance. After selecting five communities outside of the municipality already under study, an examination of the data took place. The data analysis of those surveys extrapolated information relevant to the research questions of this

study, and specifically, the tenets of procedural justice and public satisfaction with the police were scrutinized.

Research question one asked:

*How well do persons having recent contact with police rate the quality of services for the southern Maine police department?*

While the data for the original PCI survey are incomplete as the response rate for this survey was shy of 5%, the results showed a 95% rate of satisfaction with those whom had police contact. Additionally, multiple questions were asked regarding fairness, honesty, transparency, and empathy. Survey respondents rated each tenets of procedural justice as 95% or greater. From those who responded, the level of satisfaction for police services is well above the norm. In a national Gallop poll, only 57% had confidence with police (Norman, 2017). When expanded to the other communities in the meta-analysis, the results show consistent levels of public satisfaction with police services, with the average of each participating community identified at 85.2%, satisfaction level among the respondents.

Research question two asked:

*How do the constructs of procedural justice affect public satisfaction with police services?*

The data in the initial PCI survey were limited and thus the meta-analysis was formed. Anchored in theory, the data support prior literature and shows a relationship of each tenet of procedural justice and public satisfaction with police. When the perception of respect was lower between a police officer and the public, the satisfaction of police services was also lower. While uniformed crime rate (UCR) data provided insight into violent crimes per 1,000, which showed a small relationship to public satisfaction, the biggest indicator of public satisfaction with police

was the level of procedural justice. Movements on the graph depict a relationship between respect and public satisfaction. Furthermore, procedural justice theory is aligned with crime decreasing in communities having a high degree of public satisfaction. Therefore, some relationship of UCR data and public satisfaction is expected.

### **Interpretations of Findings**

The purpose of this study is to incorporate evidence-based strategy to maximize police efforts. The data provide evidence that procedural justice tactics are working to drive public satisfaction with police services and to increase legitimacy of the organization. The meta-analysis lends much needed support to the original survey in providing feedback within the same geographic region. When citizens feel they have been treated with respect, their likelihood of cooperating with the police and becoming “good citizens” is increased. Conversely, when they have been treated poorly, or feel the police will not look after them in a fair, honest, transparent, or empathic way, their satisfaction drops which decreases the legitimacy the public has for rule of law, however, in the meta-analysis completed, a higher than national average of public satisfaction with the police exist.

The findings from the data are consistent with the descriptive hypothesis: a high relationship exists between procedural justice and public satisfaction with police services. The method arriving at this conclusion was twisted with an incomplete data set in the initial PCI survey which resulted in a subsequent formation of a meta-analysis to support the findings. The purpose of the study is to provide needed data for communities with a population of less than 50,000, while informing stakeholders within the community. Additionally, while the data can be used to inform, they should also be used to transform policy, training, and relevant police practices to achieve the designed results of maximization of police resources.

### **Context of Findings**

Procedural justice theory has a normative view that obeying the law is based on moral acceptance of the law (Hinds & Murphy, 2007). With this conceptual literature in mind, the premise exists that no crime should occur when police are considered completely and morally just. Conversely, the opposite is true, when there is no legitimate authority guiding moral acceptance of the law, the law as written will be broken without hesitation. An instrumental view of obeying the law is based solely on a fear of consequence (Tyler, 1990).

The findings from this study support the normative view of legitimacy and public satisfaction with police by means of intrinsic support, after all, crime rates across the state should be the same when the identical laws are enforced. While fear of punishment, the extrinsic means to achieve decrease crime rates is effective, a normative perspective and intrinsic desire to obey the law is the most effective social control method (Tyler, 1990; Pink, 2007). Using coercion to minimize crime would might lead to a backlash as seen in the quality of life policing tactics of New York City in the late 1990's (Tankebe, 2013), and the more recently controversial stop and frisk polices (Stevens, 2017). Community support of police through the meta-analysis and PCI survey support a normative approach to law enforcement tactics that also support a high degree of procedural justice and in turn lend a high degree of public satisfaction with the police. The argument can then be brought further as the literature suggests a high degree of legitimacy leads to decreased crime rates (Gau, 2012). In the data collected for this study, a small relationship exists with communities having a higher level of satisfaction with police services also reporting lower crime rates. While the argument can be made that lower crime rates result in higher satisfaction of police services, the literature presented indicates higher satisfaction of police services results in lower crime rates.

Alternative interpretations of the data were explored, primarily the instrumental perspective of policing. In the instrumental perspective, low crime rates and public satisfaction with police services are driven by greater enforcement and obedience to the law is related to consequences for rule breaking (Tyler, 1990). While police authority (effectiveness of police) is linked their legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017), the instrumental approach finds crime reduction and crime rates as the catalyst to public satisfaction. Harm reduction and pro-active strategies to reduce crime from 1970 to 2010 have led to reduced crime rates, but not an increased public satisfaction (Tyler, 2017). As the Portsmouth study pointed out, those least satisfied with police services also reported feeling the police department did not show concern for them (McKinley & Keirns, 2018). While the alternative explanation of this study's data being coincidental was considered, the notion was eliminated as prior literature supports the findings.

### **Research Implications**

This study provides needed empirical data for communities with a population of less than 50,000. Additionally, there was little empirical evidence in northern New England measuring public satisfaction with police services. This study provides scholarly literature that meets both of those standards. The research improves the base of knowledge within procedural justice theory by adding data from smaller New England communities. The pooling of multiple community surveys within a meta-analysis brings the geographic region valuable insight into the existing public satisfaction with police services. Theory is advanced and validated within the meta-analysis that is supported by existing literature.

Police leaders should consider the implications of this research along with other empirical evidence that suggest procedural justice tactics lead to higher public satisfaction. Furthermore, leaders should weigh the value of process-based evaluation of police services versus outcome-

based evaluation of police services. As the problem statement describes earlier in this study, police agencies use outcome-based evaluation as the yardstick for police performance. This study details the need to review the contact and satisfaction of the police contact between citizen and the police through the lens of the citizen. Greater public satisfaction lends greater police legitimacy and decreased crime rates. As police officers face individual evaluation as part of job performance, the collective way the police officer has contact with the public should be addressed, whether through training, a progressive mission statement, or policy direction from the department. Police agencies should prioritize procedurally just tactics emphasizing fairness, honesty, transparency, and empathy – behavior which has empirical evidence of successful application.

### **Limitations of Study**

The non-response and partial-response rate among potential survey participants proved significant in this research. While web-based response rates tend to yield less feedback, the researcher was not expecting such a dire response rate of under 10%. However, meaningful findings were derived from what incomplete data did come back. Additionally, the meta-analysis of regional community surveys yielded data to validate the original PCI survey findings.

While the survey instrument did not limit the study, the method of delivery in a web-based response to a mailed letter and closure of the survey without sending at least one additional letter to drive participation likely constrained the potential of this research. The survey participant had to enter a specific website with multiple special characters into a computer from what was written on the letter. The effort to do this is more complex than writing a response on a pre-printed survey or clicking on a survey that is already sent in an e-mail. The barrier for participation was higher than most other surveys.

Based on those barriers, future researchers should consider a mailed survey with self-paid postage in return, or a delivery method like e-mail. Surveys were directed to specific persons – those having recent contact with police. The survey instrument design could also allow for a web-based survey to be delivered through social media or a website with a qualifying question of recent contact with police within the community under study. In this study, a unique code was needed to validate the person who had contact with police. Another potential method could be the collection of telephone numbers during the police-community contact and follow-up with survey participants over the phone by a neutral third party such as the National Police Research Platform. In this collection method, the deviation from regular practice (the collection of phone numbers on traffic stops) who likely produce a Hawthorne Effect discussed earlier.

The narrow scope of the survey - the focus on public satisfaction with police after an interaction needed to be broadened to encompass the community surveys which tended to focus on general satisfaction with services while removing the variable of recent contact with police. Thus, the study design was broadened a bit with no detrimental impact on the research questions or descriptive hypothesis.

### **Future Action**

While the literature is rich with procedural justice theory and its impact on public satisfaction, a gap remains in the study of smaller communities. This research helps fill that gap. However, while the gap in academia is important to fill, the more impactful action for this research is to apply the findings to practice. Stakeholders can use the tenets of procedural justice to re-shape mission statements and policy. Training their officers on the benefits of a greater legitimacy and the effective methods for obtaining public satisfaction with police services would lead to a higher awareness of procedural justice and the purpose of such an approach in respects



to the effectiveness the method brings. Evidence-based learning leads to best practices (Aarons, et al, 2011). Additionally, officers evaluated using a process-based evaluation method would be critical to a successful implementation to a procedurally just police agency. Building meaningful change as Kotter (2012) describes means anchoring the tenets of procedural justice into a culture of the agency; a process-based evaluation is a meaningful step toward that goal which is not a current practice in the police agency under study.

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## APPENDIX A: Survey



## Platform Survey: Community Survey

We would like to ask your opinions about the police department that serves your community and the police in general. The survey is confidential; your individual responses will not be revealed to your agency, or any other agency or organization.

### Performance of Officers in Your Neighborhood

**Police Effectiveness** – We would like you to think about the police who work in the neighborhood where you live. How well are they doing...

	Very Good Job	Good Job	Poor Job	Very Poor Job	Do Not Know
Fighting Crime					
Dealing with problems that concern your neighborhood					
Being visible on the street					
Being available when you need them					
Responding promptly to call for assistance					
Helping victims of crime					
Treating people fairly regardless of who they are					

**Police Professionalism** – Still thinking about the police who work in the neighborhood where you live, please rate how common the following types of police actions are.

How common is it for the police to...

	Very Uncommon	Somewhat Uncommon	Somewhat Common	Very Common	Do Not Know

Stop people on the streets or in cars without good reason					
Use excessive force					
Use offensive language					
Break the law or break police rules					
Treat people differently depending on race, ethnicity, gender identification, religion, or immigration status					
Act professionally					

**Neighborhood Concerns**

How worried are you about...

	Very worried	Somewhat worried	Not at all worried
Having your car broken into or stolen			
Having your home broken into			
Being assaulted or robbed			
Being out in your neighborhood at night			
People selling or using drugs			
People using or selling guns			
Being hassled by youths or others drinking, loitering, or panhandling			

**Confidence in the Police Department (Legitimacy)**

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I trust my police department to make decisions that are good for everyone in my city				
I have confidence that my police department can do its job well				
I would feel comfortable calling the police department if I needed help				
I believe that if I complained about an officer to my police department, that the agency would take it seriously				

### Willingness to Cooperate with the Police and Community

How likely would you be to...

	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Work with the police to identify a person who has committed a crime in your neighborhood				
Work with the police to identify place for example – houses, businesses, parks, where crimes are taking place				
Attend a meeting of residents in your neighborhood to discuss crime prevention				

### Citizen Views Toward the Law and Compliance (Legal Cynicism)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I sometimes question the laws we are asked to obey				
When a police officer makes a request, you should do what they say even if you disagree with it				
I feel an obligation to obey the law				

### Community Members' Feelings of Safety and Privacy of Various Technologies

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Cameras worn by police officers make me feel safer				
Security cameras used in public spaces by the police are an invasion of privacy				
The use of drones by police makes me feel safer				
Cameras worn by police officers are an invasion of privacy				
Security cameras used in public spaces by police make me feel safer				
The use of drones by police in public spaces is an invasion of privacy				
The use of sensors by police to detect gunfire makes me feel safer				
The use of sensors by police to detect gunfire is an invasion of my privacy				

## Demographics

Finally, we would like some personal and household information so that we can better understand how different groups feel about the police. Your personal information is confidential. Only group information will be reported.

What is your gender

Male

Female

Please enter your age

Under 18

18-24

25-34

45-54

55-64

65-74

75-84

85 or older

What race do you consider yourself to be?

White

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latinx

Asian

Native American

Some other racial or ethnic group

Mixed (e.g. White-African American, Hispanic-African American)

What is the last grade you completed in school?

Some gradeschool

Some highschool

Graduated highschool



Technical/Vocational

Some college

Graduate college/Bachelors/BA

Graduate/Professional/PhD/JD/MA,etc.

What was the total combined income for all the people in your household, before taxes, for the past year? (Your specific response will be kept completely confidential.)

Less than \$25,000

\$25,001 to less than \$50,000

\$50,001 to less than \$75,000

\$75,001 to less than \$100,000

Over \$100,000

Is there anything you would like to share about your local agency and/or its officers, good or bad? (All responses are confidential)

 Condition: **No is Selected**. Skip To: **End of Survey**.

15. Are you willing to answer some additional questions about that interaction? All responses will remain confidential.

Yes

No

 Condition: **No is Selected**. Skip To: **End of Survey**.

## Police-Community Interaction Survey

14. Have you had an interaction with your local agency over the past year?

Yes

No

The following questions are about your police encounter, that is, the most recent period when you interacted with one or more police officers.

16. What was the age of the officer you interacted with the most?
- Under 30 years old
  - 30 to 40 years old
  - Over 40 years old
17. Was the officer you interacted with the most a male or female?
- Male
  - Female
18. To the best of your knowledge, what was this officer's race or ethnicity?
- White
  - Black
  - Hispanic or Latinx
  - Asian
  - Native American
  - Some other racial or ethnic group

### Encounter Type

19. How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur?
- It was a traffic stop
  - It was a traffic crash
  - It was a crime report
  - I was stopped by walking, riding a bike, or waiting in a public area
  - Do not remember

I have not fully recovered from this crime

### Traffic Stops, Pedestrian Stops, Traffic Crashes Only

**Display this question:**

**If:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a traffic stop **Is Selected**

**Or** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a traffic crash **Is Selected**

20. What happened as a result of this police contact?  
public area **Is Selected**

- I was given a ticket or fine
- I was given a warning only
- Nothing happened
- Something else

### Traffic Crashes/Crime Reports Only



**Display This Question:**

**If:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a traffic crash **Is Selected**

**Or:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a crime report **Is Selected**

21. Where did your police contact occur?

- On the street
- In your home
- At a district police station
- Other

22. How long did it take for the police to arrive?

- They arrived very slowly
- They arrived somewhat slowly
- They arrived somewhat quickly
- They arrived very quickly
- Not applicable

**Crime Reports Only**



**Display This Question:**

**If:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a crime report **Is Selected**

23. What type of crime incident was it?

- It was a personal crime, where someone was threatened or attacked by another person or had something taken from them by force or threat
- It was a property crime, where someone broke into a home, building, or car, and stole property or damaged property
- It was some other type of crime

**Victim Reactions to Victimization/Trauma**

24. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements that may describe your feelings since this incident occurred.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
sometimes blame myself for what happened				
have taken action to prevent this from happening again				
am angry about what happened				

**Display this Question: If** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a crime report **Is Selected**

### Overall Satisfaction of the Encounter

25. Taking the whole experience into account, how satisfied are you with the way you were treated by the officer in this case?
- Very satisfied
  - Satisfied
  - Dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied

### Outcome Fairness



**Display This Question:**

**If:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a traffic crash **Is Selected**

**Or** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a traffic stop **Is Selected**

26. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The outcome I received was fair				

### Officer Trustworthiness

27. During the encounter the officer...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Considered my views				
Seemed trustworthy				
Tried to be helpful				
Took the matter seriously				

### Officer Neutral or Unbiased

28. During the encounter the officer...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Made decisions based on the facts				
Was fair and evenhanded				

Discriminated against me because of my race, gender, a religion or sexual orientation				
--	--	--	--	--

**Officer Respectful**

29. During the encounter, the officer...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Treated me with dignity and respect				
Treated me politely				
Talked down to me				

**Officer Communication and Emotional Control**

30. During the encounter, the officer...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Remained Calm				
Displayed a sense of humor				
Interrupted me				

31. During the encounter with the police...

	Yes	No
At the start, did the officer greet you by saying 'hello' and stating his or her name?		
Did the officer raise his or her voice to you?		
Did the officer thank you for cooperating?		

**Citizen Non-compliance**

32. During your encounter with the police...

	Yes	No
Did you raise your voice to the officer?		

33. During the encounter, the officer...

<b>Officer Blaming</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Seemed to blame me for what happened				

#### **Officer Task Competence**

34. During the encounter, the officer...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Appeared to know what he or she was doing				
Clearly explained the reasons for his or her actions				
Explained what would happen next in the process				
Answered my questions well				

#### **Officer Emotional Support and Active Listening**

35. During the encounter the officer...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Listened to what I had to say				
Seemed concerned about my feelings				
Seemed to believe what I was saying				
Comforted and reassured me				

**Officer Informational Support****Display This Question:**

**If:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a crime report **Is Selected**

36. During the officer encounter, the officer...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Referred me to people or agencies that might be helpful				
Provided me with useful tips to avoid this situation in the future				

**Officer Use of Force****Display this question:**

**If:** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? It was a traffic stop **Is Selected**

**Or** How did your face-to-face contact with a police officer occur? I was stopped while walking, riding a bike, or waiting in a public area **Is Selected**

37. During the encounter...

	Yes	No
Did the officer threaten to use physical force against you?		
Did the officer <u>actually</u> use force against you, such as pushing, grabbing, hitting or kicking you?		
Did the officer search you by touching your body in different places?		
Did the officer point a weapon at you, such as pepper spray, a stun gun, or actual gun?		

**Final Questions****Fear of Crime**

How safe do you feel, or would you feel, being alone outside in your neighborhood at night?

- 38.
- Very safe
  - Somewhat safe
  - Somewhat unsafe
  - Very unsafe

39. Are you a resident of the city where you had the police encounter?

Yes

No

40. Finally, the last question – is there anything you would like to tell us about the way the officer handled the situation, either good or bad?