The Police and the Public

WESLEY G. SKOGAN

Viewed from across the Atlantic Ocean, one of Hans Joachim Schneider's most significant contributions has been his encouragement and support for survey-based studies of victimization and the role of the public in criminal justice matters. His 1982 book *The Victim in International Perspective* included a major section on each of these topics, and featured chapters on community involvement in crime prevention, fear of crime, the impact of crime on the general public, and the role of the victim in the criminal justice system. This report from an International Symposium in Muenster helped expand the scope of criminological research by highlighting the importance of the attitudes and experiences of ordinary citizens.

My own interest in these topics has evolved over time, shifting from victimization research to community crime prevention, and then to evaluations of the criminal justice system. For the last decade I have focused on the agency in that system that plays a central role in linking both victims and the general public to the state, the police. Police, more than any other public service agency, must have the support of the community if they hope to perform their roles as service providers and crime fighters effectively. Police work is mostly reactive; the bulk of their work is derived from citizen initiated calls for service or assistance. In a landmark study, *Black and Reiss* found that over three-quarters of police activity in three US cities was initiated by calls from citizens.[1] Since there are not enough police to patrol every street corner, they must rely on citizens to report crimes and emergencies, and to provide them with information helpful to their investigations. I have suggested that two of the most important roles for the public in combating crime are reporting their own experiences as victims to the police and cooperating as witnesses when they have seen a crime being committed.[2] With-

---

[1] *Donald J. Black* and *Albert J. Reiss, Jr.*, Patterns of Behavior in Police and Citizen Transactions. Studies in Crime and Law Enforcement in Major Metropolitan Areas, Field Surveys III, submitted to The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1967.

[2] *Wesley G. Skogan*, The Police and the Public in England and Wales. Home Office Research Series No. 117. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1990.

out the support of citizens and their willingness to come forward with information, the police would be incapable of doing their jobs on a day to day basis.

And the same is true from the point of view of the public, victims and non-victims alike. The police are the primary representative of the criminal justice system. Surveys in the US and Britain indicate that between 50 and 65 percent of the adult public comes in contact with police over the course of a year[3]. Many fewer have any contact with prosecutors, courts or victim services. For example, *Maguire* estimates that only about one percent of victims in the UK come into contact with victim support schemes.[4] The public is also interested in the work of the police. Many believe police work is important and that it can make a difference in their lives. Furthermore, they are inundated with coverage of police issues in the mass media. While the impact of this coverage on citizen's attitudes toward the police is not yet known, it probably helps place crime-fighting and the police high on the public agenda.

Opinion surveys reveal that a majority of people are satisfied with the job that the police are doing. In these surveys, support for the police is fairly high, and the police rank higher in public confidence than legislatures, judges, lawyers and many other occupational groups. However, research on the effects of contact with the police on public attitudes has not been optimistic. Research suggests that, on balance, contacts have negative consequences. They are somewhat less negative for contacts that are voluntary and initiated by the public, including calling the police for information or to report an accident. They are worst for involuntary contacts, ones that are initiated by the police when they stop people while they are driving or on foot. Victims who contact the police fall somewhere between these two poles, but are on the unhappy side. With some exceptions, the more sustained contact people later have with the institutions of justice and security, the more unhappy they are about it.

A number of studies in the United States and Great Britain have looked into this, and they document a long list of factors that contribute to public satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the police. This chapter examines the public's assessments of the police, and how they are formed. It examines the impact of victimization, actual experiences with

[3] *Wesley G. Skogan*, Contacts Between Police and the Public: A British Crime Survey Report. Home Office Research Series No. 134. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1994.

[4] *Mike Maguire*, "The Needs and Rights of Victims of Crime". In: M. Tonry (Ed.), Crime and Justice: A Review of Research, Vol. 14. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 363–433.

the police, and factors such as race, class, and gender Each of these has an important effect on how people evaluate police performance and activities. Together, they can provide us with a better understanding of the determinants of the relationship between citizens and the state.

Experience with the Police

There are many sources of citizens's attitudes and opinions toward government and police. One of the most important may be the actual experiences that they have with the police over the telephone or personally. *Scaglion and Condon* examined the importance of experience as a determinant of attitudes toward the police. They found that how people perceive they were treated by the police during an encounter was more significant than socioeconomic variables in determining attitudes toward the police.[5] *Jacob* found that differences in encounters with the police account for a large portion of the disparity in racial differences in attitudes toward the police.[6] *Winfree and Griffiths* partitioned the variance in ratings of police performance and found that most of the explained variation in attitudes toward the police could be attributed to citizen's direct experiences with the police.[7] Of course, people's predispositions toward police – the attitudes that they hold before-hand – are also important determinants of how they interpret specific encounters. In an important study, *Brandl* et. al. examined the relationship between "global" attitudes toward police (indicators of how people generally thought about them) and "specific" attitudes (assessments of the quality of recent encounters they actually had had with police officers). They found that people's general views of police were surprisingly resistant to any influence by their recent experiences, even when those were negative. They conclude that "stereotyping and selective perception" play an important role in how the public evaluates police performance, and note that this may reduce the effectiveness of programs intended to increase people's support for the police.[8]

[5] *Robert Scaglion* and *R. G. Condon*, "Determinants of Attitudes Toward City Police", Criminology, Vol. 17, 1980, pp. 485–494.

[6] *Jacob, Herbert*, "Black and White Perceptions of Justice in the City". Law and Society Review, Vol. 6, 1971, pp. 69–90; Herbert Jacob, "Contact With Government Agencies: A Preliminary Analysis of the Distribution of Government Services". Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 16, 1971, pp. 123–146.

[7] *Thomas L. Winfree* and *Curt T. Griffiths*, "Adolescent Attitudes Toward the Police". In: T. Ferdinand (Ed.), Juvenile Delinquency: Little Brother Grows Up. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1971, pp. 1119–1124.

[8] *Steven Brandl, James Frank, Robert Worden* and *Timothy Bynum*, "Global and Specific Attitudes Toward the Police". Justice Quarterly, Vol. 11, 1994, pp. 119–134.

Past research has shown that direct experience with the police is generally related to lower levels of satisfaction with police performance and more negative assessments of the quality of service received, and that this is linked in part to the nature of the contacts. Contacts between the police and citizens can occur two ways. They can be initiated by the citizens, as calls for protection, service or assistance; or they can be initiated by the police. *Decker* noted that these are voluntary and involuntary contacts, and reports that voluntary contacts, those initiated by citizens, are more positive in substance than involuntary, police initiated contacts. He reasoned that police play a supportive role in citizen initiated contacts, while police initiated contacts are likely to be of a more suspicious and inquisitorial nature.[9]

Police initiate contacts with citizens for a variety of reasons. Two important ways that the police initiate contact with the public are by stopping individuals on the street while out walking and pulling them over while driving. The numbers involved can be quite large: in Chicago, my own research indicates that about 23 percent of residents 18 years of age and older are stopped by police every year while they are driving, and 8 percent are stopped while on foot.[10] These encounters are imposed on the public and imply some degree of suspicion on the part of police. Police initiated stops can lead to potentially violent confrontations and therefore, police must be handle them in a professional manner. Past studies have noted that police are not likely to randomly stop citizens: young males, the poor and racial minorities are by far the most likely to be stopped by police. In Britain, I also found that young adults, single persons, males, Afro-Caribbeans, the unemployed and upper-income residents were more likely to be stopped by the police. The relationship between upper income status and being stopped was due to the higher level of automobile ownership among this group[11].

Citizens contact the police for a variety of reasons. They call or visit police stations to report crimes, emergencies, suspicious persons, odd noises and events. They also contact the police in order to receive or give information about community concerns or other non-crime emergencies. Many people see the police as a vital community resource, one whom they can contact to discuss community problems. Past studies have shown that a large majority of citizen initiated contacts with the

[9] *Scott Decker*, "Citizen Attitudes Toward the Police: A Review of Past Findings and Suggestions for Future Policy". Journal of Police Science and Administration, Vol. 9, 1981, pp. 80–87.

[10] *Wesley G. Skogan* et. al., Community Policing in Chicago: Year Four. Chicago: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1997.

[11] See No. 2 above.

police are made by telephone and concern largely non-crime and non-emergency problems. Personal familiarity with an officer is likely to have positive consequences. People may chat with an officer while on patrol, eating lunch, or off duty. They can also hear an officers name from a friend or by attending a community meeting. Regardless of how this familiarity develops, it can help to contribute to greater confidence in the police and more positive assessments of their relations with the community.

In a study based on the 1988 British Crime Survey, I found that 56 percent of respondents had initiated at least one contact with the police during the previous year. They were three times as likely to have initiated contacts with the police then be involved in a police initiated stops.[12] While studies in the United States are less conclusive, results from national surveys indicate that about the same proportion of Americans come into contact with the police; in Chicago the figure is 52 percent[13]. In Britain, higher income, occupational and educational groups are more likely to contact the police, but persons over 60, females and Asians are less likely to engage in any form of contact with the police. Whites and older persons are more likely to contact the police about disturbances. Victimization is strongly related with contact of the police. Over 70 percent of crime victims reported contacting the police compared to 47 percent of non-victims.

Police seem to be judged by how much effort they apparently put into an encounter, by questioning witnesses and gathering evidence. One consistent finding of research is that victims are less "outcome" oriented than they are "process" oriented; that is, they are less concerned about someone being caught or (in many instances) getting their stolen property back than they are in how promptly and responsibly they are treated by the authorities. They are judged more by what physicians would call their "bedside manner." Factors such has how willing they are to listen to people's stories and show concern for their plight are very important, as are their politeness, helpfulness, and fairness. Information sharing is also important: police willingness to give advice and to notify victims of progress in their case have a great effect on victim satisfaction. In my Chicago study, persons who contacted the police to get or give information were more positive in their assessments of the police than those who contacted the police to report an emergency. Contacting the police to report a crime or to report a suspicious person, event or noise were related to the most negative attitudes toward the police.

[12] Ibid.
[13] See No. 10 above.

Victimization

Among the members of the community most likely to initiate contact with the police are crime victims. They are prime consumers of police services, and should be valued participants in the criminal justice process. Police rely on them to report criminal incidents and serve as witnesses in court proceedings. My examination of the rates at which victims and non-victims initiate contact with police in England and Wales found that 70 percent of victims and 47 percent of non-victims had contact with the police.[14]

While there have been contradictory findings on the relationship between victimization and citizen's attitudes toward the police, we would expect victims of crime to have less positive images of police. Studies find that victims experience an increase in fear after their experience[15]. They are also likely to feel frustrated following encounters with police. *Parks* found that victims who were satisfied with the treatment that they received from the police were more likely to hold attitudes toward the police similar to those held by noncrime victims. Otherwise, victims were generally more negative about police performance.[16] Many victims report feeling that they are not taken seriously by the police and complain about the lack of knowledge and support that they receive from police. Research on citizen-initiated contacts with police have found that of all citizen contacts, those who contact the police because they have been victimized are less satisfied than others as a result[17].

The relationship between past victimization and attitudes toward the police is to some extent dependent upon the quality of treatment that victims receive from police[18]. Studies of victim attitudes that use survey data can only indirectly test this assertion because there is no real way to link a particular victimization with some specific police activity or follow-up contact. *Smith and Hawkins* found that perceptions of *possible*

---

[14] See No. 2 above.

[15] *Wesley G. Skogan*, "Some Unexpected Effects of a Police Service for Victims". Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 33, 1987, pp. 490–501.

[16] *Roger Parks*, "Police Response: Effects on Citizen Attitudes and Perceptions". In: W. Skogan (Ed.), Sample Surveys of the Victims of Crime. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1976, pp. 89–104.

[17] *David J. Smith*, Police and People in London I: A Survey of Londoners. London: Policy Studies Institute,1983; *Darlene Walker*, "Contact and Support: An Empirical Assessment of Public Attitudes Toward the Police and the Courts". North Carolina Law Review, Vol. 51, 1972, pp. 43–79; *David Bordua* and *Larry L. Tifft*, "Citizen Interviews, Organizational Feedback, and Police-Community Relations Decisions". Law and Society Review, Vol. 6, 1971, pp. 155–182.

[18] *Wesley G. Skogan*, "The Impact of Police on Victims". In: E. Viano (Ed.), Crime and Its Victims. Washington, DC: Hemisphere Publishing Co, 1989, pp. 71–78.

victimization did not affect attitudes toward the police, but those who
had actually been victims of violent crimes were more negative.[19] *South-
gate and Ekblom* found that British citizens who had been victims of
crimes were less inclined than non-victims to indicate that the police
were generally helpful or pleasant.[20] Crime victims in the United States
and Great Britain identify the same reasons for their dissatisfaction with
police. They cite lack of communication between the police and victims,
in particular, victim frustration over the lack of feedback; and feelings
that the police provided inadequate protection as reasons for their more
negative attitudes.

Another important reason for negative views of police among victims
is that they are particularly likely to have run across them as *offenders* as
well. In a study based on the British Crime Survey, *Maxfield* found that
more than half of both personal and property crime victims had also
been stopped by police for motoring or other offenses within the past
year.[21] Criminologists have long been aware of the high overlap between
victimization and offending; in fact, *Singer* concludes from a review of
the literature that being a violent crime victim is the best predictor of of-
fending.[22] This and this affects the position of a large number of victims
in relation to the police.

Fear of Crime

Research on the relationship between fear of crime and attitudes to-
ward the police has mixed findings. Correlational studies in the United
States have found that police presence on the streets is associated with
feelings of safety. In a quasi-experimental study of foot patrol in Ne-
wark, New Jersey, *Pate* et. al. found that an increase in the number of
foot patrols resulted in residents feeling less fearful.[23] Trojanowicz[24] and

[19] *Paul E. Smith* and *Richard O. Hawkins*, "Victimization, Types of Citizen-Police
Contacts, and Attitudes Toward the Police". Law and Society Review, Vol. 8, 1973,
pp. 135–152.

[20] *Peter Southgate* and *Paul Ekblom*, Contacts Between Police and Public. Home
Office Research Study No. 77. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1984.

[21] *Michael J. Maxfield*, "The London Metropolitan Police and Their Clients: Victim
and Suspect Attitudes". Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 25, 1988,
pp. 188–206.

[22] *Simon Singer*, "Homogeneous Victim-Offender Populations: A Review and Some
Research Implications". Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. 72, 1981,
pp. 779–788.

[23] *Antony M. Pate, Mary Ann Wycoff, Wesley G. Skogan* and *Lawrence Sherman*, Re-
ducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark: A Summary Report. Washington, DC:
National Institute of Justice and The Police Foundation, 1986.

[24] *Robert C. Trojanowicz*, "An Evaluation of a Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program".
Journal of Police Science and Administration, Vol. 11, 1983, pp. 410–419.

Bennett[25] drew the same conclusion in their studies of police and levels of fear. *Box, Hale and Andrews* found that fear of crime was related to public confidence in the police in England and Wales, even when the effects of other variables were controlled.[26] Tabulation of individual-level data in the United States also suggests that a relationship between the two may exist. *Baker* et. al. found that residents who are less fearful also have a higher level of confidence in the police.[27] Police visibility can also help to increase citizens' levels of satisfaction with their communities and the police. Recent sightings of the police give citizens the impression that the police are routinely engaged in their protection and crime prevention functions. Like contacts with police, the number of people involved are large: in Chicago, over 80 percent of survey respondents recall seeing the police within the last week.

Most important, the results of the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment have been widely interpreted as evidence that "policing doesn't make any difference" with regard to fear of crime or attitudes toward police. This conclusion came from an experiment in which police were selectively withdrawn from some experimental areas and increased in others, to gauge the effects of this change on crime and fear. The researchers found that residents did not notice these changes in levels of policing, and that their fear and attitudes did not change.[28] However, a mounting body of evidence points in another direction. In a recent book, I report an analysis of surveys that were conducted at two points in time, and examine the impact of the visibility of the police and contacts with them during the period between the interviews. I found that residents of experimental areas in Chicago clearly noticed increased levels of community-oriented policing. The more visible the police were, the more satisfied they were with the quality of police service. Visibility increased their satisfaction with how the police dealt with crime and neighborhood concerns, and reduced their fear of crime. The experimental program also increased their satisfaction with police, and had a positive impact on a broad range of crime and disorder problems.[29]

[25] *Trevor Bennett*, Contact Patrols in Birmingham and London: An Evaluation of a Fear Reducing Strategy. Cambridge: Institute of Criminology, 1989.

[26] *Steven Box, Chris Hale* and *Glen Andrews*, "Explaining Fear of Crime". British Journal of Criminology, Vol. 28, 1988, pp. 340–356.

[27] *Mary Baker, Barbara Nienstedt, Ronald Everett* and *Richard McCleary*, "The Impact of a Crime Wave: Perceptions, Fear and Confidence in the Police". Law and Society Review, Vol. 17, 1983, pp. 319–337.

[28] *George L. Kelling*, et. al., The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment: Technical Report. Washington, DC: The Police Foundation, 1974.

[29] *Wesley G. Skogan* and *Susan M. Hartnett*, Community Policing, Chicago Style. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Personal Factors

Past research has identified several personal factors that are related to attitudes toward police. The most widely studied are race, age, income and gender. While a majority of Americans maintain satisfactory images of the police, African-Americans are generally less satisfied than are whites, and they are more likely to express negative attitudes regarding police conduct, effectiveness and courtesy. Black Americans are two to three times as likely to report that the police rough people up, are disrespectful, searching them without good reason, and respond to incidents more slowly[30].

In America, the attitudes of other racial minorities have not been studied as extensively as those of African-Americans. This is mostly due to the small number of respondents in these groups that appear in national or regional sample surveys. *Bayley and Mendelsohn* studied the relationships between the police and minority groups in Denver, in a study that included large samples of African-American and Hispanic respondents. They found that the attitudes of Hispanics toward the police most closely resemble the attitudes held by blacks. Both minority groups were overwhelmingly more likely than whites to complain about police harassment. Hispanics were also just as likely as blacks to believe that the treatment they receive from police is definitely prejudiced and unfriendly.[31]

The attitudes of non-whites in Britain parallel attitudes of non-whites in the United States. In England and Wales, 44 percent of whites thought the police were doing a good job, only 27 percent of Afro-Caribbeans and 36 percent of Asians expressed such a sentiment. In Britain, as in the US, non-whites are more likely to indicate that they were stopped by the police, and when they initiated the contacts with the police, they were more likely to have a negative evaluation of these contacts.[32]

The most frequently cited complaint waged against the police by minorities is their failure to provide adequate services and protection in neighborhoods that are predominantly non-white. *Apple and O'Brien* found that as the percentage of black persons residing in a neighborhood

---

[30] *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice*, The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1967; *Angus Campbell* and *Howard Schuman*, "Racial Attitudes in Fifteen American Cities." Supplemental Studies for The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1968, pp. 1–67.

[31] *David H. Bayley* and *Harold Mendelsohn*, Minorities and the Police. New York: The Free Press, 1968.

[32] See No. 2 above.

increases, so does the level of negative attitudes toward the police.[33] In a study of race and attitudes toward police, I plotted data for 35 neighborhoods in seven different cities, and found that residents of non-white neighborhoods expressed much more negative views of police than residents of predominantly white neighborhoods.[34] Recent studies of attitudes toward police tend to confirm these findings and have led many scholars to conclude that, by far, race is the most important individual level social correlate of attitudes toward police. One of the few exceptions is a study in Detroit, which found that African-Americans were more positive about the police than were white residents of that city. The authors speculate that this is due to the long political domination of Detroit – and its police department – by the city's large African-American population. They note, "In Detroit, the people who perform the police function are not alien to African-Americans; instead they represent an indigeneous force."[35] This suggests that the political climate and composition of the police force may exercise an independent influence on citizen attitudes toward police, one that interacts with their race to produce different outcomes in different contexts.

Several studies have noted the importance of age in determining attitudes toward the police. Generally, they have found that as age increases, attitudes toward the police become more positive. It is likely that the attitudes of young adults are more negative because they are most likely to be involved in contacts with the police that are adversarial in nature. This age group is not only responsible for a disproportionate share of the crimes committed each year, they are also more likely to be the targets of police-initiated encounters. Furthermore, even though persons in this age group are among the most frequent consumers of police services, they are less likely to report having a compensatory encounter with police.

There is only a limited amount of research on the effects of socio-economic status on attitudes toward the police. Many presume that lower income and less educated people rely heavily on police services, but surveys often find that those further up on the socio-economic scale

[33] *Nancy Apple* and *David J. O'Brien*, "Neighborhood Racial Composition and Residents' Evaluation of Police Performance". Journal of Police Science and Administration, Vol. 11, 1983, pp. 76–84.

[34] *Wesley G. Skogan*, "Problem Solving Policing and Racial Conflict in the United States". In: K. Miyazawa and S. Miyazawa (Eds.), Crime Prevention in the Urban Community. Deventer and Boston: Kluwer, 1995, pp. 75–86.

[35] *James Frank, Steven Brandl, Francis Cullen* and *Amy Stichman*, "Reassessing the Impact of Race on Citizen's Attitudes Toward the Police". Justice Quarterly, Vol. 13, 1996, pp. 332.

contact the police more often than those at the bottom.[36] In the 1992 British Crime Survey, 50 percent of high income respondents had contacted the police about some matter during the past year, but only 31 percent of those in low income groupings. This difference persisted even when many other factors were taken into account statistically.[37] Researchers have found that high-status occupationals, more formal education and higher incomes are significantly related to positive images of the police. These findings are not surprising, given the fact that many police officers and their families reside in predominantly middle-income neighborhoods. The police identify more closely with middle and upper-class citizens because they are the ones from whom police seek positive evaluations and support.

Researchers have cautioned that social status is strongly correlated with other factors that are important in determining an individuals attitudes toward the police, including race. While low status groups are less likely to contact the police and more likely to express disapproval of police actions, they are also more prone to have had negative encounters with the police[38]. Jacob[39] and Schuman and Gruenberg[40] also found that social class is strongly associated with neighborhood culture, and this contextual variable may be as important as individual level measures of social and economic status in determining attitudes toward police.

Studies of the effects of gender on attitudes toward the police have found little relationship between sex and attitudes about police Generally, however, men express more negative opinions of the police then do women. This may be due to the fact that males have more contacts with the police, both as victims and perpetrators of crimes. *Southgate and Ekblom* found that, in Britain, an overwhelming majority of these contacts are adversarial.[41] Research in the United States supports these findings, and suggests that most of the disparity in attitudes toward the police can be attributed to differences in the experiences that people have with the police. In turn, these differences in experience are dominated by race and gender.

[36] See No. 20 above.

[37] See No. 3 above.

[38] See *Walker*, "Contact and Support ...", No. 17 above.

[39] See *Jacob*, "Black and White Perceptions ...", No. 6 above.

[40] See *Howard Schuman* and *Barry Gruenberg*, "Dissatisfaction with City Services: Is Race an Important Factor?" In: H. Hahn (Ed.), People and Politics in Urban Society*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1972, pp. 369–392.

[41] See No. 20 above.

Conclusion

Surveys in the United States and Great Britain find widespread support for the police. Even in surveys of cities, a majority typically express positive attitudes regarding the police. However, these opinions are influenced by a variety of factors. In general, people who come into contact with the police are less satisfied than those who do not. In part this is due to the nature of the contact, but *Smith and Hawkins* found that while non-confrontational contacts resulted in fewer consequences than adversarial ones, *any* form of contact with the police resulted in attitudinal consequences that were quite negative.[42] Victims are among those who are unhappy with the quality of service that they receive, principally because they do not think that police pay adequate attention to their needs and fears. Race and class factors are also important, with views of policing divided among the haves and have-nots of society.

In a study published in 1996, I examined the impact of most of the factors reviewed here on attitudes toward the police in Chicago. A survey of 2,573 residents included measures of contact with police (both police and citizen initiated), victimization by property and personal crime, and social and economic factors. Multivariate statistics were used to examine their independent effects on a ten-question index measuring assessments of the quality of police service in the respondents' immediate neighborhoods. Even when considered jointly, the effects of contact with police, victimization, and race remained significant. This was true even with when the influence of a number of other important demographic factors were accounted for, including home ownership, age, income, education and marital status. Statistically, race was the most important determinant of attitudes, and both African-Americans and Hispanics were disaffected. The impacts of police and citizen-initiated contacts with the police were about equal, and both were negative. Property crime victimization had more effect that violent crime in respondent's views of the police, but both were significant and negative.[43]

Race is the most salient division in attitudes toward the police not only empirically, but politically. Even after the effects of neighborhood problems, past experiences with the police and victimization have been controlled statistically, African-Americans and Britain's Afro-Caribbeans continue to hold negative views of the police. Blacks (and in the United States, Hispanics) perceive deep inequities in the way the police

[42] *Paul E. Smith* and *Richard O. Hawkins*, "Victimization, Types of Citizen-Police Contacts, and Attitudes Toward the Police". Law and Society Review, Vol. 8, 1973, pp. 135–152.

[43] *Wesley G. Skogan*, "Partners for Prevention? Some Obstacles to Police-Community Cooperation". In: T. Bennett (Ed.), Preventing Crime and Disorder. Cambridge Cropwood Series 1996. Cambridge: Institute of Criminology, 1996, pp. 225–252.

distribute services. In part this is because of factors that seem to affect everyone in those countries, including victimization, contact with the police, and perceptions of crime. Blacks are among those most likely to be swept up in police initiated contacts. We have seen that these experiences result in more negative attitudes toward the police. They are also much more likely to be the victims of crime, another factor that seems to erode confidence in the police. They are also the most likely to live in decaying and disorderly neighborhoods and be fearful of crime.

In both the United States and Britain, new initiatives have been taken to deal with public dissatisfaction with the quality of police service, and with how police relate to crime victims. This is part of a new "customer orientation" among public agencies in both countries. In Britain, police have opened themselves to public inspection as never before. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary proclaimed a list of workload and performance indicators that it collects and publishes. The Audit Commission (which holds sway over many different public sector organizations) developed performance guidelines of its own for the police, and the results are published yearly for every police force. Many police forces in Britain publish their performance ratings on the World Wide Web. In 1990, the Home Office announced a Victims's Charter that describes how victims can expect to be treated by the police, and what kinds of service they are entitled to receive from the criminal justice system. It encourages victims to complain if they do not believe they have received the standard of service they are entitled to[44].

In the United States, this response has been in the form of adopting community policing strategies that promise to restore the confidence of the public in their police. These programs typically seek to involve the public in setting police priorities, adopting a prevention approach to crime rather than responding to it after it occurs, and giving the police responsibility for solving a broader range of community problems. Evaluations of how well these programs actually work find that (a) they often work well if they are implemented well, and (b) they are very hard to implement. In part the implementation problem is linked to resistance by police officers, but it is also surprisingly difficult to get the public involved as well[45]. Especially in poor and high-crime areas, dissatisfaction with police and a legacy of both abuse and neglect by the criminal justice system makes it difficult to convince residents that their new community orientation actually reflects a change in police practices.

[44] *Wesley G. Skogan*, "The Police and Public Opinion in Britain", American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 39, 1996, pp. 421–432.

[45] *Wesley G. Skogan*, "The Impact of Community Policing on Neighborhood Residents: A Cross-Site Analysis". In: D. Rosenbaum (Ed.), The Challenge of Community Policing: Testing the Hypotheses. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1994, pp. 167–181.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die Polizei ist mehr als jeder andere öffentliche Dienst auf die Unterstützung der Gemeinschaft angewiesen, wenn sie ihre Aufgabe wirksam erfüllen will. Befragungen in den USA und in Großbritannien zeigen, daß die Polizei die Unterstützung der Mehrheit der Bevölkerung besitzt. Die meiste Polizeiarbeit ist reaktiv; sie wird vom Bürger eingeleitet. In den USA und Großbritannien haben zwischen 50 Prozent und 65 Prozent der Erwachsenen während eines Jahres Kontakt mit der Polizei. Nach Meinungsbefragungen ist die Bevölkerungsmehrheit mit der Polizeiarbeit zufrieden. Polizeikontakte, insbesondere unfreiwillige Kontakte, haben freilich auch negative Konsequenzen, obgleich die Bewertung der Polizeiarbeit zum größten Teil auf Stereotypen und selektiven Wahrnehmungen beruht. In Chikago werden 23 Prozent der Bewohner, die 18 Jahre und älter sind, von der Polizei während eines Jahres angehalten, während sie Auto fahren; 8 Prozent der Fußgänger werden polizeilich kontrolliert.

Ein beständiges Forschungsergebnis besteht darin, daß Verbrechensopfer die Polizeiarbeit weniger am Ergebnis der Kontakte als am Kontaktprozeß messen. Es kommt nicht so sehr darauf an, ob jemand festgenommen wird oder ob das Opfer sein gestohlenes Eigentum zurückerhält. Entscheidend ist, ob die Autoritäten den Bürger pünktlich und verantwortlich behandeln. Wichtig sind Höflichkeit, Hilfsbereitschaft und Fairness der Polizei. Die Bereitschaft der Polizei, Rat zu erteilen und das Opfer über den Fortgang seines Falles zu unterrichten, hat große Bedeutung für die Zufriedenheit des Opfers. Verbrechensopfer in den USA und Großbritannien haben indessen häufig das Gefühl, daß die Polizei ihren Bedürfnissen und Befürchtungen keine angemessene Aufmerksamkeit entgegenbringt. Sie fühlen sich nicht ernstgenommen und beschweren sich häufig über einen Mangel an Kommunikation. Polizei-Sichtbarkeit, ihre Präsenz auf den Straßen, ist mit dem Sicherheitsgefühl der Bevölkerung und mit ihrer Polizeizufriedenheit eng verbunden. Rassische Minderheiten sind in den USA und Großbritannien mit der Polizeiarbeit weniger zufrieden. Frauen bringen der Polizei größeres Vertrauen entgegen als Männer. Der Respekt vor der Polizei wächst mit dem höheren Alter, mit der besseren Bildung und dem höheren Einkommen. Durch eine „Kundenorientierung" versucht man in den USA und Großbritannien die Qualität der Polizeiarbeit zu verbessern. Hierbei spielt ein Vorbeugungsansatz, speziell die gemeinschaftsorientierte Polizeiarbeit, eine hervorragende Rolle, um das teilweise verlorengegangene Vertrauen in die Polizei wiederherzustellen.