Police officers as boundary personnel: attitude congruence between policeman and small businessmen in urban areas

Howard E Aldrich, Professor, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
Albert J Reiss, Jr, *Yale University*

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Police Officers as Boundary Personnel

Attitude Congruence Between Policemen and Small Businessmen in Urban Areas

HOWARD ALDRICH
Cornell University

ALBERT J. REISS, Jr.
Yale University

Organizational roles that bring incumbents into contact with members of other organizations where the boundaries of organizations intersect have been labeled boundary-spanning roles (Thompson, 1962). These roles provide a connecting link through which information flows among organizations. Beliefs and attitudes should be affected by contact with personnel in the boundary roles of an organization, and the boundary role perspective provides a way of explaining how contact between groups changes attitudes. Traditionally, attitude change resulting from intergroup contact has been dealt with either in the framework of intergroup relations or that of balance theory, as will be discussed in this paper. Using the boundary-personnel perspective, this paper reports a study of factors making for a high degree of similarity in the attitudes policemen and small businessmen in metropolitan areas hold toward their city governments. We will examine the effects of exposure to common environmental pressures and personal contact between policemen and businessmen on attitude congruence between the two groups, using data from three large urban areas.

METHOD OF STUDY

Two studies conducted for the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice are used to separate the

Authors’ Note: We wish to acknowledge the helpful comments of David Segal and Larry Williams.
effect of contact and assumed exchange of information from the effect of other environmental pressures may have in making for congruence of attitudes between small businessmen and policemen (Aldrich and Reiss, 1969; Reiss, 1967b). Interviews were taken in the summer of 1966 with 800 small businessmen and 203 policemen of less than lieutenant rank who operated within high crime-rate areas of Boston, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. We will examine the attitude of each group toward a third party—the city government. The city government's crime-fighting ability was chosen as an issue because of its direct relevance to the daily concerns of each group. The same question was asked of both groups: “What about the city government? Do you feel they are doing a very good job, a fairly good job, or not too good a job when it comes to fighting crime in this city?” The dependent variable in our analysis is the degree of similarity between the distribution of the policemen's responses and those of the small businessmen.

There are two approaches that might lead us to expect similarity in the attitudes of two groups whose members are interacting. The first is from the literature on interethnic or interracial contacts, while the second approach comes from the work of Heider and others on balance theory. The inadequacies of these two approaches, when applied to interorganizational contact, caused us to reject them in favor of Thompson's boundary-role perspective. We will discuss the two approaches and their limitations, and then move to a consideration of Thompson's work.

INTERGROUP CONTACTS

Research on intergroup relations has found that, in most cases, personal contact between members of two different racial or ethnic groups leads to more favorable attitudes toward the group that previously was stereotyped or viewed negatively. Much of the research on intergroup contacts has been conducted in public housing projects. Jahoda and West (1951) found that personal contacts resulted in a reduction in stereotyping and an increased acceptance of Negroes by whites. Wilner et al. (1952) report similar results. In a summary of more than thirty studies on the attitudinal outcomes of contact between members of different groups, Cook and Sellitt (1955) found that approximately half reported favorable changes, with the rest reporting qualified results, with favorable change taking place only under certain conditions. Conditions for favorable attitude change include contact in a nonhostile setting, a low degree of competition, and some minimal degree of similarity between the groups.

A study by Brink and Harris came to similar conclusions—whites having previous social contact with Negroes were less prejudiced and had fewer stereotypes than whites without such contact (Brink and Harris, 1963: 138-153). All these studies differ from the present one in that they are concerned with a dyadic relationship. The dependent variable is the attitude of one group toward the other, not toward some third object. However, these studies are useful to the present investigation for two reasons. First, they provide evidence that relationships between two groups can be influenced by the amount of contact between them. Second, in all these studies, amount of interaction is the independent variable and degree of attitudinal change is the dependent variable. As we will point out in the next section, this causal ordering is an important precedent.

BALANCE THEORY

Balance theory has gained wide popularity as a theory of attitude change based on a triadic view of the social world. As summarized by Curry and Emerson (1970: 217), the core of the theory concerns two persons, A and B, and their joint relation to some object, X, as that relation is perceived by one of them. With A as ego, there are three basic variables: (1) A's attitude toward B; (2) A's attitude toward X; (3) A's perception of B's attitude toward X. The object, X, can be any object of human awareness, including A himself, provided that X is somehow relevant to the A-B relation. Given such relevance, there is then a 'strain toward symmetry' or balance among the above three variables.

The active force in such a three-variable system is the desire of persons to avoid situations that are unbalanced, since they are tension-provoking. "Any attitudinal or perceptual change which removes the incongruity removes the tension" (Curry and Emerson, 1970: 218).

As Davis (1963) has pointed out, in the theory as formulated by Heider and modified by Newcomb, the direction of causality between similarity and liking can be hypothesized to go either way. Thus in Homans' work, similarity between the attributes of two individuals is hypothesized to lead to friendship (Homans, 1950), whereas in Festinger's research, friendship is hypothesized to lead to similarity in attitudes (Festinger, 1957). Newcomb found little change in the attitudes of the individuals he studied during a four-month period (Newcomb, 1961). What he did find was that "as individuals acquired more information about each others' attitudes, their high attraction preferences tended to change in favor of individuals with whom they were more closely in agreement" (Newcomb, 1961: 254).

Although balance theory is a quite parsimonious explanation for a wide variety of social phenomena (compare with Davis, 1963), it is difficult to use in research on attitude change because it only specifies that a balancing change will occur without predicting the type of change. Curry and
Emerson’s recent replication of Newcomb’s study of the acquaintance process represents an attempt to specify more precisely which type of change occurs. The results call into question the current formulations of balance theory as a theory of interpersonal attraction. They state that

We find no empirical support in our study for an AB-X explanation of attraction as a dependent variable. What we do find is: (1) a tendency to perceive those to whom one is attracted as having ... values more similar to one's own, even when in fact they are not; (2) a tendency for A to perceive B’s attraction to C as similar to his own attraction to C ... and (3) a very strong tendency for social relations to become reciprocally attractive in a manner easily understood through simple exchange theory [Curry and Emerson, 1970: 235].

The authors state that their findings should lead to a reformulation of balance theory:

We recommend that interpersonal attraction ... be removed from the status of a dependent variable in AB-X theory. With this change, balance theory is not a theory of group structure and structural change. Rather, it is a theory of attitude formation and change, and it can then make more specific predictions. When applied in an interpersonal context, it is closely akin to, if not identical with, reference group theory, consensus validation, etc. [Curry and Emerson, 1970: 235].

Curry and Emerson’s revision of balance theory is in accord with Davis’ appraisal of the types of variables that are ignored by balance theory. Davis’ criticism has direct relevance to the police-small businessman transaction structure under consideration in this paper. He states that balance theory “ignores differentiation and the effects of a division of labor ... the benefits that accrue to Person from exchange and division of labor are precisely the forces that serve to compensate for or offset tendencies toward balance” (Davis, 1963: 448).

In terms of the policeman-businessman transaction structure, it is clear that the relationship is entered into by the small businessman because of the services the police offer. The differentiation of the labor force in urban areas has left the city police department responsible for the protection of businesses against crime. Businessmen enter into relationships with the police to obtain this service, especially if they are in a high crime-rate area.

Therefore, in this study, the relationship between the policemen and small businessmen studied will be taken as given, i.e., as something that is not affected by whether the businessman shares the policeman’s view of the city government’s crime-fighting ability. Moreover, to ensure that a drive toward balance is not affecting our results, we will control for the businessman’s general orientation toward policemen in his area. It is our contention that the businessman’s attitude toward city government is affected by information given to him by area policemen, and this attitude is unaffected by the businessman’s liking for the police.

There are several reasons for the rejection of intergroup contact theory and balance theory as less helpful than boundary-role theory in explaining police-businessman attitude congruence. The first reason was given above—i.e., balance theory ignores the division of labor between police departments and small businessmen that causes a businessman to seek aid from a policeman regardless of his attitudes. Second, the intergroup contact literature is not specific enough to make useful predictions. Third, both approaches are interpersonal, not organizational theories.

In contrast, Thompson’s hypothesis about boundary roles has to do with contact between representatives of organizations. As such, it links role theory with organization theory by treating interorganizational relationships as contacts between persons acting in organizational roles. Finally, the rejected approaches treat similarity between persons in contact as an explanatory variable, whereas it is precisely similarity which we wish to make problematic.

**BOUNDARY-SPANNING ROLES**

Thompson (1962: 309) discusses boundary-spanning roles in the context of open-systems theory:

Complex purposive organizations receive inputs from, and discharge outputs to, environments, and virtually all such organizations develop specialized roles for these purposes. Output roles, designed to arrange for distribution of the organization's ultimate product, service or impact to other agents of the society thus are boundary-spanning roles linking organization and environment through interaction between member and non-member.

Persons in such roles are called boundary personnel and are given the responsibility for transacting business with the organization’s environment of customers, suppliers, creditors, and so forth. Boundary roles often are defined in reference to reciprocal roles, e.g., salesmen or social workers. Thompson points out (1962: 309) that “Because output roles exist in structures that span the boundaries of the organization, they may be important sources of organization adaptation to environmental influences.” Clearly, one way in which boundary personnel fulfill the function of adapting the organization to the environment is by interpreting it to nonmembers. Boundary personnel can serve as publicists for the organization, disseminating a desired image of the organization and its policies. This function is especially important when the activities of the organi-
zation involve publicly sensitive issues, such as "law and order," in the case of police departments.

Output roles and reciprocating nonmember roles are encompassed in transaction structures, i.e., structures of mutually reinforcing norms and expectations surrounding the interaction between members and nonmembers. As with most organization-environment transactions, "the organization cannot predict in advance... just what desires, attitudes, or actions the non-member will bring to the transaction structure" (Thompson, 1962: 310). However, two dimensions of the encounter can be predicted: (1) the extent to which the role provides routines of interaction, and (2) the extent to which nonmembers are compelled to participate in the relationship. The first, labeled specificity of control over member, ranges from standardized, "programmed," unvarying procedures to general guidelines for behavior. In this latter case, there is high discretion for role incumbents unless they are interacting with persons in boundary roles with programmed procedures. The second dimension, labeled degree of nonmember discretion, ranges from mandatory to optional interaction on the part of nonmembers.

Four types of transaction structures are derived by dichotomizing and relating the two dimensions: Type I, member programmed and mandatory nonmember participation; Type II, member programmed and nonmember participation optional; Type III, member heuristic and mandatory nonmember participation; and Type IV, member heuristic and nonmember participation optional. From the standpoint of police organizations, policemen have general regulations to guide them. The types of situations they encounter are so diverse that the department has only a low degree of specificity of control over their behavior. Small businessmen in the inner city have only the police to protect them against crime and so their participation is, in general, nondiscretionary.

Police-businessman interaction generally takes place within a Type III structure; this fact, combined with predictions from the two perspectives discussed in previous sections, leads us to predict that small businessmen will attempt to get to know policemen in their area, and that businessmen who know policemen will adopt the attitudes of the police in matters that are relevant to "law and order." The police officer the small businessman sees on the beat or the detectives who investigate reports of crimes against his business are generally the only links he has to the law enforcement agencies of the city. Business personnel are dependent upon the police not only for protection, but also for much of their information about law enforcement, particularly that beyond their immediate area.

Business personnel see policemen much more often than they see judges or other law enforcement-related individuals. Indeed, frequent contact seems high, as thirty percent of all businessmen in our survey claim they talk to a police officer at least once each day and another thirty percent claim they do so several times each week. A third report helping the police by giving them information, and at least a fourth report doing favors for them (Reiss, 1967b: 10-18). Given that police officers in a city police department develop a shared set of beliefs with regard to their city government, as will be shown in this paper, we would expect them to communicate this view to the citizens with whom they come in contact. A small businessman's view of the entire law enforcement process should be influenced by his relationship with the police.

Police officers thus act as boundary-spanning agents in the police precincts of the city, linking the law enforcement system with small businesses. Many police chiefs are aware of this function, as is shown by the use of "human relations training" and other preparations designed to turn police officers into organizational assets in the field. We do not maintain that the picture conveyed to the small businessman on an officer's beat is necessarily the one publicly held by the police department. What we are hypothesizing is that when a businessman enters into transaction structures with a policeman, the police officer's role as boundary-spanning agent serves as a communication channel through which the shared attitudes of officers are transmitted. For example, our observations in the field show that almost every small businessman has one or two "horror stories" about crimes in his neighborhood which he has learned from local policemen, and which he uses to illustrate his point about the perils of doing business in high crime-rate areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES

Before testing our prediction about the effect of police-businessman contact, we will consider the common impact that environmental pressures have on both the police and the small businessmen. Crime is an occupational hazard for both groups. For policemen, crime is a part of the job definition—combating crime is something the policeman cannot avoid. We would expect policemen to be highly sensitive, therefore, to the perceived or actual support given them by their city governments. For small businessmen, losses from crimes against their stores are a cost of doing business. Since losses from crime fall disproportionately upon small business in the inner city (Reiss, 1969: 96), we would expect small businessmen to be especially sensitive to the protection against crime given them by the city government.

Surveys for the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (Black and Reiss, 1966; Reiss, 1967b) and for
the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Rossi et al., 1968) provide evidence that small businessmen operating in the inner city perceive the problem of crime and neighborhood characteristics in much the same terms as do police officers. This congruence of perceptions contrasts sharply with the perceptions held by other groups. The commission on civil disorders found, for example, that educators and social workers tend to take positions rather different from those of policemen and businessmen.

The commission on civil disorders asked policemen in twelve cities whether particular groups considered them enemies or friends or were indifferent toward them (Rossi et al., 1968: 103-114). "Storekeepers" ranked second behind "old persons" as the group most often seen as being "on their side." Approximately eighty-three percent viewed storekeepers as friends, with the proportion dropping to thirty-four percent for Negroes and sixteen percent for adolescents. When these policemen were asked about how many people in particular groups they knew well enough to speak with whenever they saw them, eighty-nine percent mentioned six or more shopowners, managers, or clerks. Only three percent reported knowing no businessmen well enough to casually speak with. The portrait of police-businessman relationships emerging from these studies is that of relatively harmonious cooperation between the groups, at least from the policeman's perspective.

One implication of the above discussion is that businessmen and policemen in each city should resemble one another fairly closely in their crime-relevant attitudes. Table 1 presents the information necessary to test our prediction. Businessmen and policemen in Boston share a relatively negative view of their city government's capacity to combat crime. Washington, D.C., respondents also have a rather negative view of their city government, whereas respondents in Chicago have a relatively positive opinion of their city government. The absence of statistical significance for the chi-squares for Boston and Chicago in Table 1 lends support to the hypothesis that the pressures of facing a common environment and the same city government operate to produce a high degree of similarity in the attitudes of businessmen and policemen.

In Washington, D.C., policemen and businessmen are relatively dissimilar in their attitudes. This difference arises because policemen in Washington, D.C., are the most negative in their attitudes of all policemen in the three cities. There is some evidence that the lack of home rule for the District affects the attitudes of police toward their "local" government. We are inclined to give weight to this evidence because of the special circumstances that characterized police-government relations at the time of our survey. The President had appointed a special crime commission for the District of Columbia. At the time of our survey, this commission was issuing reports that were sharply critical of the District police. One would expect that the effects of such releases would make the police more negative toward the city government than the businessmen who were not under attack, particularly in reducing the proportion of the police who see the relationship with city government as "very good." Such is the case. This explanation is consistent with a more general presumption underlying this paper—that a third party, city government, acting independently of businessmen or the police, constrains the attitudes of those subject to its activities. The city government of Chicago, through a reorganization of the police department and some other highly publicized innovations, has succeeded in winning the confidence of a substantial proportion of the officers in its police department. Both the Boston and District of Columbia departments were under sharp attack from government sources, community leaders, and the local media during this period, and this is reflected in police officers giving city government much less support. For another discussion of attitudinal differences between the residents of different cities, see Schuman and Gruenberg (1970). Their analysis also shows that actual differences between city governments lead to corresponding attitudinal differences between residents of the cities they studied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Evaluation of City Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>policemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>businessmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>policemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>businessmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>policemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>businessmen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Index of dissimilarity.
A TEST OF THE BOUNDARY PERSONNEL HYPOTHESIS

In testing our predictions, we need to take account of the fact that businessmen's attitudes toward the city government's capacity to fight crime are related to their attitude toward policemen in their area, as shown in Table 2. This is to be expected, since one basis for evaluating the city's battle against crime is how well the police are doing. Of businessmen holding a highly positive evaluation of the job area police are doing, 32.9% also rate the city government as "very good" and only 22.8% rate it as "not too good." These differences are even larger among those businessmen holding a negative view of area policemen. As we pointed out in the section on balance theory, it is possible that a businessman who knows a policeman would be influenced in his attitudes toward city government by his evaluation of area policemen. Therefore, when the impact of personal links with the police is investigated in the following analysis, businessmen's attitudes toward area police are controlled.

Our measure of personal links between businessmen and police officers is whether or not a businessman knows any police officers who work in his area well enough to talk with them. This measure of contact is related, of course, to police department policies and practices that affect contact between officers and businessmen. Traditionally, police officers were assigned to small beats they could cover on foot, a fact that facilitated contact with members of the business community, particularly since business areas were patrolled more regularly and frequently. The more modernized police departments today operate without foot patrol, relying almost exclusively on radio-dispatched mobile patrol that covers a large territory. The possibility of regular and frequent contact with businessmen is thereby reduced. Indeed, it becomes less likely that businessmen will know any officer in a modernized department since contact depends more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Toward Area Police</th>
<th>Attitude Toward City Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not too good</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All respondents</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(X^2 = 47.636\)  
\(p < .01\)

on unofficial encounters than on routine patrol. There may be other department policies and practices that affect contact between police officers and businessmen. In our study, the Boston police department facilitated work contacts between businessmen and off-duty police officers. Any Boston businessman may employ an off-duty police officer to protect his place of business, the contract for such employment being made with the department. Both Boston and Washington, D.C., are more given to foot patrol than Chicago, and their mobile patrol is less modernized.

We would expect, therefore, that businessmen in Chicago would be less likely to report contact with police officers than would those in Boston or Washington, D.C., a prediction upheld by our data. Only 53.7% of the businessmen in Chicago reported knowing policemen in their area, as compared with 69.9% in Washington, D.C., and 70.8% in Boston.

To restate the main hypothesis of this paper in terms of the data to be presented: When businessmen's attitudes toward area police are controlled, businessmen who report knowing police officers in the area are more likely to resemble the police in their attitudes toward city government than are businessmen who report they do not know officers in the area.

The data necessary to test this hypothesis are presented in Table 3. A chi-square is obtained for each line of the table by comparing the distribution of the line with the distribution for the police officers in that city. Because the expected value for some cells is fewer than ten cases, all chi-squares have been corrected by continuity. Note that our interest is not in the absolute values of the chi-squares but in the relative value of the "yes" (know policemen) line versus the value of the "no" (do not know policemen) line. Whenever the chi-square for the former is smaller than that for the latter, our hypothesis is supported. The index of dissimilarity, a measure that is one-half the sum of the absolute values of the differences between the distributions, is also reported for each comparison.

Table 3a includes all respondents who believe that policemen in their area are "doing a very good job." In all three cities, businessmen who report knowing policemen in their areas resemble city policemen more closely than do businessmen reporting not knowing any area policemen. Table 3b includes all respondents who feel that area policemen are "doing a fairly good job." In two of the three cities, the hypothesis is again supported. (In Boston the chi-square is smaller for those not knowing any policemen, although the difference is extremely small.) Finally, Table 3c includes all respondents who stated that area policemen are "not doing too good a job." Only five respondents in Chicago chose this alternative, so that part of the table has not been percentaged. In Boston and Washington, D.C., the hypothesis is again supported.
TABLE 3
EFFECT OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH POLICEMEN ON ATTITUDES OF WHITE SMALL BUSINESSMEN TOWARD CITY GOVERNMENT, CONTROLLING FOR BUSINESSMEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD AREA POLICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Know Policeman?</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Fairly Good</th>
<th>Not Too Good</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
<th>(\Delta)</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>2.516</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>4.068</td>
<td>33.55</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.743</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.758</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash. D.C.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>8.859</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>54.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>9.974</td>
<td>28.75</td>
<td>33</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Know Policeman?</th>
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<th>Fairly Good</th>
<th>Not Too Good</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
<th>(\Delta)</th>
<th>(n)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>48.8</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>10.45</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>13.30</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>3.084</td>
<td>23.60</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>62.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>3.470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wash. D.C.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2.180</td>
<td>16.65</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>6.790</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>20</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Know Policeman?</th>
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<th>Fairly Good</th>
<th>Not Too Good</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
<th>(\Delta)</th>
<th>(n)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>3.140</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash. D.C.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. A Chi-square was obtained for each line of the table by comparing the distribution of the line with the distribution for the police officers in that city. All values have been corrected for continuity.
b. Chi-square not computed on 5 cases or less.

In seven out of eight possible comparisons, then, the group of businessmen reporting that it knows some area policemen more closely resembles the city policeman’s attitudes toward city government than does the group of businessmen who reports not knowing any policeman. While several of the differences are quite small, the consistency across cities and attitudes toward area police gives us confidence in the results. It should be noted that, when an alternative measure of congruence is used, the index of dissimilarity—the differences between the lines in the direction of our hypothesis—becomes much larger and all eight comparisons support the hypothesis. We chose not to rest the case for testing the hypothesis on this index, because it cannot be adjusted for the number of cases in a table, whereas chi-square can be adjusted (the correction for continuity).

These findings thus support our hypothesis about the consequences of the boundary-spanning role that policemen play. The results do not support a balance theory interpretation, since the hypothesized differences were found even after attitudes toward area police were controlled. If small businessmen acquainted with area policemen do modify their attitudes toward city government on the basis of their orientation toward area police, then we would expect to find the greatest degree of congruence among those with a favorable orientation and the least degree of congruence among those with an unfavorable orientation toward police.

This is not the case, as in Boston and Washington, D.C., where those businessmen most unfavorable toward area policemen have actually greater similarity to city policemen than those favorably oriented to area police. The pattern is obscured in Chicago, because there are only five persons unfavorably disposed to area police. We are therefore left with the boundary personnel or exchange perspective as the most plausible interpretation for our results.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The tests reported in this paper support two positions on the forces making for attitude congruence between groups in a shared environment. The first position argues that when two or more groups are exposed to forces that are highly salient for each and there are similar consequences for each, there is a high degree of similarity in the attitudes of the two groups toward what they share in common. In our study, policemen and small businessmen face a common and in many ways a hostile environment. Crime prevention is a concern of both small businessmen and police officers. Both groups, moreover, are dependent on the city administration for the resources and the policies needed to carry out measures against crime. Thus, crime and the city government’s response to crime are salient
issues for both groups. As a result, policemen and businessmen in two of
the three cities are so similar in their attitudes toward the city govern-
ment's ability to combat crime that they appear to have been drawn from
a common pool. In Washington, D.C., the groups are not as congruent in
their attitudes mainly because of the extremely negative view which the
District of Columbia officers have of the city's administration.

A second position with regard to attitude congruence asserts that
interpersonal contact between representatives of two organizations can
lead to the transmission of attitudes from one group to the other. In our
study we have treated police officers as acting in the role of boundary
personnel for the police department. In this role, police officers interact
with the population served by the police force and attempt to establish
cooperative relations with them. Of course, much of the initiative for the
establishment of personal links may come from small businessmen as they
attempt to secure every possible protection against crime for their
businesses (Aldrich, 1969; Aldrich and Reiss, 1970).

One consequence of the relationship between police officers and
businessmen is that the officers' attitude toward law enforcement in the
city gets transmitted to the businessmen. The greater such contact, the
more businessmen come to resemble the officers in their attitudes toward
such things as crime and the city government's role in crime prevention.
When policemen have a rather negative view of what the city administra-
tion is doing on the crime front, this attitude is passed on to, and reflected
in, the attitudes of small businessmen in the city. This seems to have
occurred in Boston and Washington, D.C. When the officers have a positive
view, the opposite is the case. Chicago police officers hold a highly positive
view of the city administration. Small businessmen in Chicago also have a
highly favorable attitude toward the police force.

The above findings have some implications for the current issue of "law
and order." Our findings suggest that policemen are related to this issue in
a number of ways. First, crime as a political issue seems to affect
policemen, who work to prevent losses, as much as it does small
businessmen who must suffer the losses. The same pressures that point
toward the city government's role, perceived or actual, in fighting crime
affect both groups. Second, the effectiveness of the police force in the
various precincts of the city appears to have an impact on the attitudes
that small businessmen have toward government. When businessmen are
satisfied with the job that area police are doing, or the police they meet
report satisfaction with city government, the businessmen also are satisfied
with the city government's role, and vice versa.

Third, and perhaps most important, if our assumption is correct that
businessmen are heavily dependent upon policemen for "inside" infor-

mation about law enforcement, then the police through their contact with
businessmen have within their power the capacity to turn "law and order"
into a local issue. Our findings allow us to do no more than show that
policemen do influence the attitudes of small businessmen. Yet, the
findings are consistent with other evidence that policemen may create
"local support" for the police.

NOTES

1. Note that we are using chi-square for a purpose different from the ordinary
usage. We know that the two groups come from different populations, since they
were sampled from two different universes. We are comparing two populations to see
to what extent they depart from complete similarity. Rather than using chi-square to
derive a level of confidence concerning whether the two populations are similar
enough to treat as coming from the same universe, we are treating the magnitude of
the chi-square itself as an indicator of the degree of similarity of the two
distributions. Therefore, our interest lies not in a level of confidence, but in the raw
chi-squares and the differences between them. A difficulty that usually arises in the
use of chi-square is that there is a strong positive relationship between the size of the
sample and the size of the chi-square. In our analysis, the size of the samples is not a
problem because in every case the subgroup with the larger number of cases is the
group predicted to have the smaller chi-square by our hypothesis. The size factor thus
goes against our hypothesis. If the chi-square for the group knowing a policeman is
smaller than for the group not knowing a policeman, we know it is not because of a
bias in the computation of chi-square. Moreover, the fact that another indicator of
similarity—the index of dissimilarity—also supports our hypothesis gives us added
confidence in our results.

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