

Example of annotated bibliography on the correlation between high profile cases a...

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



The Correlation Between High Profile Cases and Public Perception of the Police

Weitzer, R. (2002). Incidents of police misconduct and public opinion. *J Crim Jus*, 30(5), 397-408.

High profile cases of police misconduct have a negative impact on public perceptions of police departments, but no one knows how long the effect of such cases lasts. Weitzer evaluated the long-term impact of high profile incidents on perceived police misconduct in the Los Angeles Police Department, and the New York Police Department. Public opinion was analyzed before and after select incidents, and the responses of White, African Americans, and Hispanics were compared. The authors found that high profile cases induce a rapid and dramatic rise in negative public opinions towards the police, with long lasting effects, regardless of the demographics of the respondent or the victim.

Graziano, L., Schuck, A., & Martin, C. (2010). Police Misconduct, Media Coverage, and Public Perceptions of Racial Profiling: An Experiment *Justice Quarterly*, 27(1), 52-76.

In this study, the authors analyzed the role of the media in shaping public attitudes towards the police within a community and how this perception impacts community-public relations. People were shown a video clip of police officers handling a traffic incident in such a way that it appeared that the officers may have been engaging in racial profiling. The objective manner in which the incident was handled in the video impacted public perception.

None of the people who viewed the video, regardless of race or ethnicity, perceived the incidence as being a case of racial profiling but rather one

involving intervention at a dangerous traffic stop. This suggests that public attitude towards the police is affected by the manner in which the media handles incidents of police misconduct. In the case shown in the video, the focus was on the dangerousness of the driver's conducts, not on the discussion of racial profiling by the police.

Maxson, C., Hennigan, K., Sloane, D. C. (2003). *Factors That Influence Public Opinion of the Police*. Washington D. C.: U. S. Department of Justice Office, National Institute of Justice.

Maxson, Hennigan, and Sloane found that citizens' perception of the level of crime in their neighborhood impacted their opinion of law enforcement officers. Residents with casual contacts with the police had more positive perceptions about the police than residents with official contacts. In neighborhoods where crime rates were high, there was no variation in public opinion by race or ethnicity. In contrast to other studies, the media did not affect their perceptions of the police.

Ericson, R. V. (2007). Rules in policing: Five perspectives. *Theoretical Criminology*, 11(3), 367-401.

Ericson examined the impact of current surveillance trends on law enforcement and found that the role of police officers in criminal standards and procedures changes as the use of police-free technological surveillance rises. Police are now being watched, as much or even more than they watch others, and this is having an impact on the way they carry out their law enforcement activities.

McLaughlin, E., & Johansen, A. (2002). A force for change? The prospects for applying restorative justice to citizen complaints against the police in

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England and Wales. *Br J Criminol*, 42(3), 635-653.

In the United Kingdom, an aggrieved citizen who perceives he has been the victim of police misconduct and who then tries to lodge a complaint at the police department is not viewed by society as a person who has victimized by the system, but rather as a 'complainant' who tries to undermine the system. The effect of this is that the police complaint system is rather ineffective in that it focuses more on the motives of the 'complainant' and less on the alleged act of police misconduct. In a way, the system acts to punish or humiliate those citizens who dare file a complaint against a police officer for misconduct. This serves to remove the citizen out of the policy making equation.

Smith, G. (2004). Rethinking Police Complaints. *Br J Criminol*, 44(1), 15-33.

Smith analyzed the types of conducts that lead a citizen in the United Kingdom to file a complaint against a police officer and found that unprofessional conduct, criminal conduct, tortuous behavior, as well as issues dealing with unpopular law general enforcement policies were the main motivational factors. They also found that as varied as the basis for these complaints were, they were all handled by the system in the same way so that complaints against police policy were treated the same as complaints against individual police officers. The authors suggest that in order to involve citizens in the decision making process, as far as policy making is concerned, complaints against police policy should be evaluated through a different process.

Jefferis, E., Butcher, F., & Hanley, D. (2011). Measuring perceptions of police

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use of force. *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, 12(1), 81-96.

The premise of this study is that public support is essential to effective policing and crime control. A negative perception of the police may lead to a negative perception towards the entire legal system. In general, the public has a positive opinion of the police, although certain subpopulations have less favorable impressions, and this affects their perception of high profile media reports of excess-use-of-force arrests by police. The public knows very little about the mechanisms of the criminal justice system and what they see in the media shapes their opinions. Maxson et al. (2003) estimated that 35% of people base their knowledge of the police entirely as filtered through the media. Thus, high profile incidents of excessive use of force by police have a negative and long-lasting effect on public perception of the police (Weitzer, 2002). The authors of this study have developed a way to measure public perception of police force, the Force Factor, which allows a person to assess whether the force used was reasonable, excessive, or lies somewhere in between. The purpose of using the Force Factor is to include this data into every arrest record for immediate and future analyzes in hopes that it would improve public perceptions of the police.

Gau, J. M. (2010). A longitudinal analysis of citizens' attitudes about police. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 33(2), 236 – 252.

In his study, Gau analyzed the impact of public perception of police conduct on their opinion of law enforcement officers. He also analyzed the correlation between public perception of the police and public perception of the officers'

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ability to control serious crime. Gau found that a citizen's perception of the police correlated with the quality of a citizen's personal experience with the police, and that this impacted their evaluation of the officers' effectiveness in keeping their community safe. The implication of this finding is that were police to systematically treat citizens with respect during personal contacts, public perception of the police would improve. This would foster a feeling of trust towards the police and make the citizens feel that the police are keeping their community safe.