

The Cleveland Police Review Board: An Examination of Citizen Complaints
and Complainants' Experience with the Citizen Complaint Process

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A Brief History of Civilian Oversight

Efforts to achieve greater police accountability through civilian oversight of police initially evolved out of the social and racial tensions in America following World War II with the advent of the modern civil rights movement. As the second wave of the Great Black Migration neared its end, millions of blacks had migrated from the rural South to cities throughout the country, particularly in the Northeast and the Midwest, in search of greater economic opportunities and social equality. Many of these black migrants soon found themselves segregated to the harsh living conditions of the ghetto. These black ghettos were characterized by rundown housing, inadequate schools, high unemployment rates, poor health care, and high crime rates. Black frustration and rage, further exacerbated by indiscriminate police bias and brutality and racial tensions, ultimately erupted in riots. Racial uprisings broke out in hundreds of cities and towns throughout the nation during the mid- to late-1960s, including in the major cities of Los Angeles in 1965, Chicago in 1966, Newark and Detroit in 1967, Washington D.C. in 1968, and in Cleveland in 1966 and again in 1968.

President Lyndon B. Johnson convened The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1967 to identify and analyze the root causes of the riots and the deteriorating racial climate in the nation and to make recommendations to address them. The Kerner Commission's findings issued in 1968 included the ominous warning, "Our nation is moving toward two societies; one black, one white - separate and unequal," and concluded that the riots were the result of blacks' profound dissatisfaction with an American society in which racism was found to be "deeply embedded," (Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). The Kerner Commission

Report cited the austere living conditions within America's black ghettos, which led to a number of riots in cities throughout the country in the summer of 1966. As the Kerner Commission reported, many of these riots stemmed from incidents between African American citizens and the police and involved charges of excessive use of force or abuse of authority by police. According to Wintersmith (1974, p. 44), "virtually every urban rebellion that took place during the sixties was immediately preceded by police-black-citizen confrontations." Walker (2005, p.23) reinforces this point when he states that "virtually all of the urban riots of the 1964-1968 period were sparked by an incident involving the police." This point was explicitly expressed in the words of the black nationalist leader at the center of a shootout with the police in Cleveland in 1968 that sparked a riot in the city's predominately black Glenville neighborhood, who when asked the reason for the shootings upon his arrest stated, "You police have bothered us too long," (Moore, 2002, p. 87).

Such conditions, coupled with the growing political power that accrued to blacks and other minorities as a result of their concentration within the nation's central cities, led to the civilian oversight and police accountability movement, which has spread throughout the country since the late-1960s. Civilian oversight mechanisms are just one of the latest in a number of attempts to reform American policing, which date back to the efforts of reformers such as O.W. Wilson and August Vollemer in the early 20th Century (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993). Vollemer attempted to professionalize policing by recruiting officers of higher educational backgrounds and increasing the educational requirements to become a police officer, instituting standardized entrance examinations, implementing enhanced police training, and utilizing scientific technology in the investigation of crime.

These efforts along with those of other Progressive-era reformers and blue ribbon commissions which were convened to investigate corruption in a number of big city police departments, sought to transform policing from the corrupt, abusive tools of political bosses, which had come to characterize police departments in many major cities throughout America (Berger, Free, & Searles, 2001).

Calls for reform and greater police accountability have resulted in an increase in departments across the country that has turned to community policing and citizen review mechanisms to address such concerns. Walker (2001, p. 5) defines citizen oversight as “a procedure for providing input into the complaint process by individuals who are not sworn officers.” As of 2002, there were an estimated 100 individual oversight agencies found throughout the nation, approximately 80 % of which are found in large cities (Livingston, 2002). In spite of the growth and popularity of citizen oversight entities, according to Walker, “neither the law enforcement profession nor the new citizen oversight professional community have developed a set of professional standards for complaint procedures (2005, p. 74). And a review of the literature on civilian oversight of police departments suggests that the results of studies on the effectiveness of such mechanisms have been mixed. In his recent book on preventive policing, David Harris (2005) reports that civilian oversight systems “have a mixed record nationally...some have performed well, others have failed utterly, still others have hobbled along for years without being of much use to anyone.

While there is not a set of professional standards governing citizen complaint procedures and the results of studies on the effectiveness of civilian oversight mechanisms vary, scholars emphasize the need for civilian review agencies to collect,

analyze, and publish the results of citizen complaint data regularly in order to build the public's trust in the police and to enhance police-community relations, particularly within communities of color (Harris, M., 2001). However, as Liederbach, Boyd, Taylor, and Kawhucha (2007) note, research on police complaint investigations lack systematic data because of the confidentiality surrounding complaint investigations and the resistance of police to make this information open to public scrutiny. This opposition to examination by those from outside of law enforcement is also due in part to the deeply ingrained belief within policing noted by Terrill "that only police understand the complex law enforcement task" (as cited by Bartels and Silverman, 2005) and thus suggests that only those within law enforcement or with an enforcement background should stand in judgment of another enforcement officer or agency (Greene, 2007).

Despite this resistance on the part of police to welcome the research of academics and scrutiny of others outside of the profession, particularly as it relates to civilian oversight of police and specific aspects of police work, there is a growing receptiveness to accountability within policing. As noted by Stone (2007), whereas the civilian oversight and police accountability movement of the 60s evolved from the social demands of those primarily on the left of the political spectrum, this newfound receptiveness to accountability within policing stems from its use as a tool by police administrators to ensure the efficient and effective expenditure of public resources, and its proponents include those from the right of the political continuum. Stone attributes this new embrace of accountability within policing to the use of COMPSTAT by the New York Police Department in the mid-90s, which coincided with a significant decrease in crime in New York City. This embrace of accountability within policing by "law and

order” advocates from the right was exemplified in a speech given by “America’s Mayor,” former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani in 2006 to the Indian Police Service in Mumbai, in which he invoked his host to ‘build the police department around accountability’ (Stone, 2007).

Within the concept of “accountability” exists the potential for advocates from both ends of the political spectrum to find common ground. The recent focus on accountability is part of the performance measurement movement, which has become institutionalized in governance. Public officials increasingly utilize performance data to make important, empirically-based decisions regarding public resources (Brunet, 2006). Law enforcement administrators, like many public sector managers, have traditionally been primarily concerned with performance measurement relative to evaluating their agencies to ensure they are operating in an effective and cost-efficient manner. The recent trend in the use of computerized performance management tools such as COMPSTAT to more efficiently track and fight crime is consistent with this tradition.

Social equity is also a strategic goal that many public organizations and administrators, including those in law enforcement, are now embracing and striving to achieve in the delivery of public services (Brunet, 2006; Dunn 2009). Inherent within the concept of social equity are the constitutional principles of fairness, justice, and equal treatment (i.e. protection) under the law. Walker (2005) refers to this convergence of the traditionally competing alternatives of external and internal accountability mechanisms within law enforcement as a “mixed system” of accountability.

Research Questions

The primary objective of an external civilian oversight mechanism, such as a police review board, is to provide public accountability in the citizen complaint process, by making the investigation of complaints of police misconduct, and incidents involving the excessive and/or deadly-use-of force by police, transparent and open to the public. As Greene (2007) states, “oversight of the police must be accessible and transparent to the public and the police, and must be conducted independently from the police” (p. 748). Oliver defines “transparency” as “a principle that allows those affected by administrative decisions...to know not only the basic facts and figures but the mechanisms and processes,” and adds “It is the duty of civil servants, managers and trustees to act visibly, predictably and understandably,” (2004, p. 5).

Walker (2005) identifies three operating principles of an effective citizen complaint procedure: openness, integrity, and accountability. Openness, according to Walker, “means that at the point of intake all complaints should be received, reserving for later determination about the merits of particular complaints” (2001, p. 188). He refers to integrity as the unbiased and thorough manner in which complaint procedures are to be conducted. And he states that, in order for a complaint procedure to provide accountability to the public and responsible public officials internal procedures designed to insure integrity must be developed and maintained and be subjected to regular audit by outside investigators (Walker, 2001, p. 188).

Cleveland established a citizen review board in 1984. There were only 20 citizen oversight bodies in the U.S. as of 1985 (Walker, 2001; Livingston, 2002; Angelis and Kupchik, 2007), making Cleveland’s citizen review board one of the longest standing

contemporary civilian oversight agencies in the country. Despite this fact, to-date a comprehensive and systematic review and analysis of its Police Review Board's records and data compiled over its 25-year history has not been conducted. This research is the first to examine the citizen complaints filed against officers in this large urban police department.

This research is designed to examine the extent to which the Cleveland Police Review Board is effective in providing public oversight of the police and police accountability. In order to do this, this study uses the citizen complaint files of this external oversight agency and a survey of former complainants to answer the following questions: Who are the citizens that file complaints against the police? What are the most frequent types of citizen complaints filed against officers in this department and what happens to these complaints? How do citizens feel about the complaint process and would they use the system again in the future should the need arise?

Cleveland and Its Civilian Review Board

Cleveland established a Civilian Review Board through a special election held in 1984. An emergency ordinance was introduced by the mayor (a current Republican U.S. Senator) and the city council president (a Democrat and the current president of the local chapter of the NAACP), for the distinct purpose of "the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health, and safety" (Cleveland Charter, 1984). As implied by the language in the legislation, it was enacted against the backdrop of historical tensions which existed between the city's police force and its African American community, which had grown from 16 % of the city's population in 1950 to 44 % in 1980 to 54 % of the population currently.

Cleveland is the second largest city in the state of Ohio with a population of 478,000 (2000 U.S. Census) and is the center of the state's largest metropolitan area. The city is one of the oldest major cities in the U.S. As is characteristic of other large Rustbelt cities in the nation's heartland, Cleveland has experienced significant decline to its once strong industrial-manufacturing based economy and has witnessed significant depopulation as its population has fallen from nearly 1 million residents in the 1950s to less than half of that today. The city has the largest black population in the state and is the third most racially segregated city in the country with blacks primarily concentrated on the city's Eastside, whites concentrated on the city's Westside, and a growing Hispanic community concentrated on the lower Westside (Salling, 2001). Sixty percent of the city's residents live in neighborhoods in which 90 % or more of the residents are of the same race (Smith & Davis, 2002). And the city has been rated as one of the most impoverished big cities (population above 250,000) in the country several times over the past five years.

As of 2008 there were 1,654 sworn officers in the Cleveland Police Department, 64 % of who were white, 27 % black, 8 % Hispanic, and 0.09 % of some other race/ethnicity. The police department's command staff, which is comprised of the chief, four deputy chiefs, and eleven commanders, includes one black male and one Hispanic male as deputy chiefs, and five black males and one white female commander. The remainder of the command staff is comprised of white males. The department has had two African-American chiefs of police in its history; a male in 1994 and a female in 2001. In spite of efforts to bring the minority representation within the department in line with the demographics of the city, there is still a considerable imbalance between the

internal racial demographics of the Cleveland Police Department (36 % minority) and the external demographics of the city (58.5 % minority).

Structure and Authority of the Police Review Board

The powers and duties of the five-member Police Review Board¹ appointed by the mayor and approved by the city council as stated in the City Charter are to:

...receive, cause investigation of, and recommend resolution of complaints filed with it alleging misconduct by members of the Cleveland police force, which such misconduct is directed toward any person who is not a member of that police force. The misconduct complained of may include, but need not be limited to, the use of excessive or deadly force....On its own complaint, the Board may cause investigation of incidents resulting in the injury or death of persons in the custody of the police force.

The emergency ordinance also established an Office of Professional Standards (OPS), which is charged with carrying out the administrative functions of the Board and investigating the citizen complaints that it receives. The OPS is staffed by a civilian administrator appointed by the city safety director and sworn officers from within the police department, excluding the chief and deputy chiefs of police (Cleveland Charter, 1984). There were four sworn officers assigned to the OPS as investigators at the time of this study giving the agency an investigator-to-officer ratio of 1:413 (Walker, 2005).² If the findings of a complaint investigation are sustained by the Board, it makes its recommendation of disciplinary actions to the chief of police.

¹ At the inception of this study the Police Review Board was comprised of one white male and female, one Hispanic male, and two African-American males, one being the board chairman and a retired FBI agent. A referendum was passed in 2008 increasing the size of the Police Review Board from five to seven members. The race/ethnicity of the new members is not known at this time neither are the occupational backgrounds of the other board members.

² According to the chairman of the Police Review Board (personal communication, 2007) and consistent with the literature on oversight agency's investigator staffing standards (Walker, 2005), there are no written standards specifying the number of investigators that are to be assigned to the Office of Professional Standards.

This external oversight agency is “structurally independent,” in that it is separate from the police department whose officers it is charged with investigating complaints against (Walker, 2001). However, using Walker’s four models of citizen oversight to assess independence, the Cleveland Police Review Board is classified as a Class II system, in that it has “some citizen input but the citizens are dependent upon the investigations done by the police,” (2001, p. 62).³ Therefore, although the PRB is an external oversight agency, structurally independent of the police department, its independence is mitigated internally as the Board is dependent on investigations conducted by sworn police officers (Walker, 2001).

Methodology

This study used quantitative data obtained from two sources to examine the citizen complaint and Police Review Board processes of the Cleveland Police Department. A database was acquired from the Office of Professional Standards (OPS), which receives and investigates complaints filed against Cleveland Police officers for the Police Review Board. This database contained 4,349 citizen complaints filed between 2000 and 2007.⁴ The variables used in this study to examine the complaint files in the

³ Class I systems are the most independent bodies in that the investigations are conducted by non-sworn personnel, whereas Class III systems are the least independent type of oversight entity given that the citizen review board only becomes involved if a complainant is not satisfied with their ruling and files an appeal. The citizen review board may then refer the complaint back to the police department for further investigation if they disagree with the complaint’s disposition or some aspect of the investigation. Class IV systems are the auditor model of oversight which does not investigate individual complaints, but are authorized to review, monitor, or audit the police department’s complaint process (Walker, 2001).

⁴ The variables in the complaint database included: an OPS case number, the complainant’s name, gender, race, and address, the police district in which the incident occurred, the complaint intake date, the complaint interview and transcription date, the date the case was assigned to an OPS investigator, a summary of the allegation or charge in the complaint, a priority number, whether the complaint was completed or dropped and if so, the reason for non-completion, the date the complaint was reviewed by the PRB, the case’s final disposition, and whether disciplinary actions were recommended in the case.

database were race, gender, the complaint summary, and whether the PRB recommended disciplinary actions be taken by the chief of police.

In addition, a 27-item survey instrument was developed and administered to gather information on complainants' experience with filing a citizen complaint and the Police Review Board process. The survey also collected demographic and socioeconomic data on the complainants, including gender, race/ethnicity, age, occupational status, educational level, and household income. The survey sample consisted of 1,189 complainants for whom a mailing address and a final disposition of the complaint was recorded in the OPS database. The other cases were excluded due to the lack of adequate information to allow follow-up.

Surveys were mailed to the 1,189 complainants along with a self-addressed, postage paid envelope. Two months after the initial survey was administered a second survey was mailed to non-respondents of the first mailing to generate a more complete response. Three hundred forty-six surveys were returned marked "non-deliverable," and a total of 163 completed survey responses were received. Assuming the surveys not returned marked "non-deliverable" were mailed to valid addresses the completed surveys received represent a response rate of 19.3 % of the 843 surveys mailed with a valid address.

This study's response rate is considerable in comparison to the response rates and sample sizes of similar studies of citizen complaints and external oversight systems that used surveys. Bartels and Silverman's (2005) study of the New York City CCRB had a response rate of 18 % (N=285) however, it surveyed both complainants and police officers while the current study surveyed only complainants. And even though Sviridoof

and McElroy's (1989) study of the New York City CCRB had a response rate of 35 % (N=371), that study used a survey administered by telephone. While Seron et al. report a "cooperation rate" (2004, p. 638) between 62.5% and 58.4% in their survey of New York City residents' perceptions of police misconduct they also computed a traditional response rate of 17.5% based on the total number of completed calls and the total number of valid telephone numbers.⁵ Additionally, while Waters and Brown's (2000) survey of complainants against police in the United Kingdom yielded a 26 % response rate, it had a sample size of only 51 respondents. In light of these results and Walker's contention that, "almost all attempts to survey complainants...have encountered the problem of very low response rates" (2005), this study's 19.3% response rate and sample size are generous for this type of study.

Data

Complaint Incident Summary

There were a number of data entry and management problems found in the database obtained from the Office of Professional Standards, including significant spelling errors and the inconsistent use of variable labels to categorize and summarize incidents in the complaints, which made it difficult to sort and analyze the data. The data had to be cleaned (corrected) for errors and uniformly categorized before it could be efficiently and accurately sorted and analyzed statistically. The complaint incident summaries were grouped into seven main categories: *Demeanor*, *Harassment* (including sexual), *Improper Procedure* (which included improper arrest, improper search, and improper tow), *Physical Abuse*, *Verbal Abuse* (including use of racial epithets and threats

⁵ As noted by Seron et al. (2004) in studies using telephone surveys it is customary to report a cooperation rate rather than a response rate.

of deadly-use-of force) and complaints broadly defined as related to *Service* and *Property* offenses (including missing and damaged property). By incident type 35.8 % of the complaints (1,561) were categorized as *Improper Procedure*, 22.9 % (996) were *Physical Abuse* complaints, 19.3 % (864) were for *Demeanor*, 6.3 % (278) were *Harassment* complaints, 3.3 % (144) were *Verbal Abuse* complaints, 6.1 % (266) were *Service* complaints, and 2.6 % (114) were *Property* related complaints. There was also one charge each of rape and robbery along with two allegations of bribery which were categorized as *Other Serious Crimes* (see Table 1). These cases were turned over to Internal Affairs (IA) by OPS for investigation. The incident summary data was blank on 75 complaint files.

Table 1: Complaints by Category

Type of Complaint	N	Percentage
Improper Procedure	1561	35.8
Physical Abuse	996	22.9
Demeanor	864	19.8
Harassment	278	6.3
Verbal Abuse	144	3.3
Service	266	6.1
Property	114	2.6
Uniform Traffic Ticket	29	0.6
Other serious crimes	4	0.09
No Complaint/To Be Determined	18	0.4
Blank Incident Summary Data	75	1.7
Total	4349	100

The Police Review Board made a recommendation in less than half (2,125) of all the complaints in the database (N=4,349). Two hundred and seven (9.7%) of the cases in which a recommendation was made were *Sustained* by the PRB while 610 (28.7%) were *Unfounded*. Another 692 cases (32.5%) were *Administratively Withdrawn*, 148 cases (6.9%) were *Voluntarily Withdrawn*, 332 (15.6%) were closed due to *Insufficient*

Evidence, 74 were out of the department’s jurisdiction, 45 cases were transferred to other units such as the CIU (Criminal Investigation Unit), the Prosecutor’s Office, or IA, 12 cases were on hold, and two were heard in public hearings.

The data indicated that disciplinary actions were recommended or taken in 81 (39.1%) of the sustained cases or 1.8 % of all cases. *Improper Procedure* complaints were the majority of the cases in which disciplinary actions were recommended, followed by *Physical Abuse*, *Demeanor*, *Service*, and *Harassment* complaints (Table 2). Information regarding the nature of the disciplinary action recommended to the chief and whether these actions were carried out was very limited in the database records.

Table 2: Disciplinary Actions in Sustained Complaints

Recommended Disciplinary Action	N	Percentage
Total	81	100
Improper Procedure	33	40.7
Physical Abuse	21	25.9
Demeanor	16	19.7
Service	7	8.6
Harassment	2	2.4

Complainant Survey Demographics

Race data was missing on more than half (713) of the 1,189 cases in the complainant survey database. Gender was missing on 14 (1.2 %) of the cases in the database. Of the 476 cases with race noted, blacks were 64.7 % (308) of the complainants, whites were 26.8 % (128), Hispanics were 7.4 % (35) and Arabs made up 0.8 % (4). Examining the data by race/gender cohort, black men were the largest cohort within the sample (169), followed by black women (139), white men (76), white women (52), Hispanic men (20), Hispanic women (15) and Arab men (4). There were no Arab women complainants in the sample (see Table 3).

Table 3: Complainants by Race

Race	Complainant Sample		
	N	Percentage of all cases	Percentage of cases with race
Total	1189	100	40.3
Race Noted	476	40.3	--
Black	308	25.9	64.7
White	128	10.7	26.8
Hispanic	35	3	7.4
Arab	4	0.3	0.8
Missing Race	714	59.9	0

*There were no complainants recorded as Native American or Asian in the CPD complaint database.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Cross-tabulations of survey demographic data on race, gender, and age with data on respondents and non-respondents revealed that race had a significant effect on whether a survey was returned or not.⁶ Race negatively influenced whether blacks and to a lesser degree, Hispanics responded to the survey. Among blacks there was a 13-percentage point difference between non-respondents and respondents (67.9 – 54.8 %), and a 6-percentage point difference between Hispanics that returned the survey and those that did not (8 – 1.9 %). Race had a positive influence on whites' survey completion rate as reflected in the 17.3-percentage point difference between respondents and non-respondents (40.6 – 23.3 %). Race did not influence the survey completion rate of the other racial/ethnic groups in the study (Arabs and Native Americans).

Women were 52.1 % of the complainant survey respondents, while men were 42.9 % of the respondents and black women represented the largest race/gender cohort (28.2 %) among survey respondents (see Table 4). Gender did not have an effect on whether a survey was returned or not.⁷

⁶ The effect of race on response rate: $\chi^2 = 22.440, p < .05$ ($df = 4, N = 417$)

⁷ The effect of gender on response rate: $\chi^2 = 1.484, p < .05$ ($df = 1, N = 830$)

Table 4: Demographic Data for Survey Respondents

N = 163

GENDER

Female	52.1 %
Male	42.9 %

RACE

	Black	White	Hispanic	Arab	Native America
Total	52.1%	37.9 %	1.8 %	1.2 %	1.8 %
Female	28.2 %	20.8 %	1.2 %	1.2 %	0.6 %
Male	23.9 %	17.1 %	0.6 %	0 %	1.2 %

AGE

16 – 24 yrs	25 – 34 yrs	35 – 44 yrs	45 – 54 yrs	55 – 64 yrs	65 – 74 yrs	75 yrs & Above
6.1 %	12.9 %	27.6 %	26.4 %	13.5 %	8.6 %	1.2 %

EDUCATION

Less than HS	HS Grad/GED	Vocational Sch.	Some College/No Degree	Bachelor Degree	Post Graduate
3.9 %	19.6 %	6.5 %	26.4 %	21.5 %	14.3 %

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Employed FT	Employed PT	Others	Student	Stay-at-Home Parents	Unemployed	Retired
50 %	0 %	10.4 %	7.8 %	3.9 %	3.9 %	13.6 %

INCOME

<\$20K	\$20 – 34.9K	\$35 – 49.9K	\$50 – 74.9K	\$75 – 99.9K	\$100 – 149.9K	\$150K
18 %	19 %	15.6 %	18 %	8.4 %	7.8 %	1.9 %

* Total percentages may not equal 100 % due to missing data.

Age did have a significant effect on survey response.⁸ The mean age of survey respondents was 41.4 years of age while the average age of non-respondents was 36.5 years of age, reflecting a mean difference of 4.88 years. Persons between the ages of 35 – 44 years old were the largest age group of respondents at 27.6 % (see Table 4). Examining education, occupation, and income, 26.4 % of the respondents had some college but less than a bachelor's degree, 50 % of the respondents were employed full-time, and 21.5 % of the survey respondents reported having an annual household income of less than \$20,000⁹ (see Table 4).

While the demographic background of complainants that responded to the survey reflect a broad racial/ethnic and socioeconomic cross-section of the city's population, based on the survey demographic data the typical characteristics of a person that filed a complaint against a member of the Cleveland Department and completed this survey is a middle-aged, black woman with some college education but less than a bachelor's degree, that worked full-time, and earned less than \$20,000 a year.

Survey Findings

In addition to the demographic data captured on the survey, the survey instrument examined four general realms of the citizen complaint process; *The Complaint Intake Process*, *The Complaint Investigation Process*, *The Overall Experience with the Citizen Complaint Process*, and *The Complainant's Objectives* in filing a complaint. The survey findings are presented within each domain and Walker's basic operating principles for

⁸ The effect of age on response rate: $\chi^2 = 90.143, p < .05 (df = 61, N = 699)$.

⁹ Although the median household income for Cleveland was \$26,535 in 2006, more than 9 % of the survey respondents reported household incomes above \$100,000.

citizen complaint procedures; *Openness, Integrity, and Accountability* (2001; 2005) are used to analyze each respectively.¹⁰

The Complaint Intake Process

The first eight survey questions examined issues related to complainant's experience in the intake process of filing a complaint with the Office of Professional Standards. The majority of survey respondents (59 %) reported that they were able to file a complaint against a member of the Cleveland Police without much difficulty while 29 % reported having some difficulty. Similarly, 55 % of the respondents thought the location where they filed their complaint was easy to reach from their home or job compared to 20 % that thought it was difficult to reach.

Almost half (49 %) of the respondents felt that the person taking their complaint treated their complaint as credible while almost a third (32 %) reported the contrary, and 54 % of respondents viewed the intake person as helpful compared to 24 % that thought otherwise. Sixteen percent of the respondents felt that the intake person tried to discourage them from filing a complaint while 67 % did not feel such pressure. Over half of the complainants (54 %) reported having the complaint process explained to them by the intake person while 31 % reported not receiving such an explanation. Conversely, 49 % of respondents stated that they were not informed of the amount of time it would take to investigate their complaint compared to 28 % that reported receiving this information. Similarly, 53 % said the approximate length of time it would take to receive a response to their complaint was not explained to them while 25 % reported receiving such information.

¹⁰ See the Appendix for a complete table of survey responses.

Using Walker's operating principle of *Openness* to assess the responses to questions related to the intake process collectively indicates that the citizen complaint intake process administered by the Cleveland Office of Professional Standards is perceived as being relatively open by the former complainants. The majority of the respondents responded positively to all except two of the questions pertaining to the customer service they received during the intake process and their ability to file a complaint without much difficulty or being dissuaded from doing so by the person handling intake at the OPS.

The Investigation Process

Looking at the investigation process itself, an overwhelming majority (83 %) of the complainants did not feel that their complaint was thoroughly investigated compared to only 10 % that did. Sixty-four percent of respondents did not feel their complaint was handled in a bias-free manner while only 16 % felt the contrary. Similar to the percentage found regarding the thorough investigation of their complaint, 83 % of respondents reported not being kept informed of the status of their complaint during the process while 10 % reported the opposite.¹¹ Only 11 % of the complaints felt their complaint was resolved in a timely manner while 74 % felt otherwise.

Examining data related to the disposition of complaints examined by the Police Review Board as a separate component of the citizen complaint process from the OPS's investigation, again the vast majority (81 %) of respondents did not believe their case had been thoroughly reviewed by the Police Review Board compared to a mere 6 % that did. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported being dissatisfied with the review board's

¹¹ It should be noted, a considerable number of complainants reported not having received information regarding the final disposition or outcome of their complaint. This information was reported verbally through follow-up interviews conducted with a sample of 20 respondents that provided contact information on their returned survey and it was hand-written on the survey instrument by other respondents.

ruling on their complaint compared to only 8 % that reported being satisfied with their ruling and 7 % that were neutral on this question. Asked differently, 88 % of complainants reported being dissatisfied with the final judgment regarding their complaint while only 6 % reported the contrary. When asked if they thought the process was fair, in spite of the outcome of their complaint a mere 11 % responded in the affirmative while 78 % responded in the contrary.

Utilizing Walker's principle of *Integrity* to examine the responses to questions related to the investigative aspects of the citizen complaint process (see survey items 9 – 16 in the Appendix), the respondents overwhelmingly felt that the investigation process was not thorough and unbiased. None of the eight survey items related to the investigation of citizen's complaints received more than a 15 % positive response rate. From the perspective of the survey respondents' both the OPS's investigation of citizens' complaints and the Police Review Board's disposition of the complaints, lacked integrity.

Overall Experience with the Citizen Complaint Process

Analyzing the survey responses to items (number 18 – 21) related to the complainants' overall experience and perception of filing a complaint against a member of the Cleveland Police Department reveals that the majority of the respondents viewed their experience negatively. Sixty-one percent of the respondents did not feel that the complaint process gave them a full opportunity to present their complaint compared to 24 % that felt the process afforded them a full opportunity to express themselves. Not surprisingly, a mere 14 % of the respondents felt that their experience with the citizen complaint process had strengthened their view that the police are held accountable for their behavior. An overwhelming 74 % majority of the complainants reported that their experience had not strengthened their view that police are held accountable for their

actions. Similarly, 68 % viewed the Police Review Board as an ineffective means of handling citizens' complaints against police whereas 12 % felt that it was effective in this regard.

The survey responses to the questions related to the respondents' overall experience with the Cleveland citizen complaint process (items 17 – 20) were also overwhelmingly negative. Employing Walker's principle of *Accountability* to gauge respondents' perception of the citizen complaint process and Police Review Board based on their experience, the majority do not believe that the system holds police accountable for their actions or misconduct.

Willingness to File a Complaint Again

Surprisingly, in spite of their overall dissatisfaction with their experience with the citizen complaint process and the Police Review Board, a majority of respondents (44 %) stated that they would go through the complaint process again if they had a need to file a complaint against a Cleveland Police officer in the future compared to those who said they would not (42 %). These findings are also consistent with those found in a number of other studies on citizen complaints and police oversight (Waters & Brown, 2000; Sviridoff & McElroy, 1989).

Exploring this finding, regression analyses revealed that a complaint's willingness to use the complaint system again in the future is related to their level of satisfaction with the Police Review Board's ruling on their complaint ($b = .477, p < .000$), their satisfaction with the final judgment in their case ($b = .493, p < .001$), and to whether their belief that police are held accountable for their behavior was strengthened by their experience with the complaint process ($b = .511, p < .000$). However, although the relationship between these variables and the willingness to use the complaint system

again are statistically significant, they only explain 16 % of the variation in respondents' willingness to file a complaint again in the future.

Demographic characteristics were also examined to further explore this phenomenon, but race was the only variable found to have a significant influence on complainants' willingness to file a complaint again in the future. Race had a positive effect on blacks' willingness to use the complaint system again in the future while it had a negative effect on whites' and other minorities' willingness to go through the complaint process again.¹² Fifty-one percent of blacks reported they would file a complaint again in the future compared to 34 % that stated they would not. Less than a third of whites (32 %) said they would use the citizen complaint system again to file a complaint against an officer should the need arise in the future while 57 % stated they would not. An equal percentage (37.5 %) of 'other' minorities were as likely to use the system in the future to file a complaint as were undecided whether they would go through the citizen complaint process again while 25 % stated they would not go through the process again should the need arise.

Complainant's Objectives

The survey also captured data regarding the respondents' objectives in filing a complaint or their desired outcome from the complaint. The most cited objective for filing a complaint was to have the officer *reprimanded* as reported by 24 % of respondents while 15 % sought to have the officer *counseled* regarding their offense. A smaller fraction of complainants sought more punitive objectives as 11 % wanted the officer *fired*, and another 11 % wanted the officer *suspended*. Seven percent of the

¹² The effect of race on willingness to file a complaint against police in the future: $\chi^2 = 11.106, p. < .025$ ($df=4, N=150$).

respondents would have been satisfied with *an apology* from the officer.¹³ More than twice as many complainants (46 %) sought moderate objectives such as an apology, a reprimand, or counseling than those that sought more severe penalties for officers (22 %) such as suspension or termination. These findings parallel the findings in other studies on civilian oversight of police (Sviridoff & McElroy, 1989; Waters & Brown, 2000; Walker, 2001).

Summary, Discussion, Recommendations, & Conclusion

The weight of the evidence in this analysis of the Cleveland Police Review Board, which is the first comprehensive examination of its citizen complaint files and procedures in the agency's 25-year history, indicates that the citizen complaint process and Police Review Board for the city of Cleveland is not operating at its highest potential level of efficiency and effectiveness in providing public oversight and police accountability. The former complainants surveyed in this study held overwhelmingly negative views of their experience with the citizen complaint and Police Review Board processes. Only one of the four dimensions of the citizen complaint process examined was rated positively by a majority of the survey respondents; the complaint intake process, which was considered to be relatively open. The majority of respondents did not view the investigation process, which includes the interviewing of the complainant, the police officer(s) involved, and any witnesses, along with the collection and examination of all relevant evidence, or the Police Review Board's examination of the evidence, as being thorough and unbiased.

Surprisingly, despite the survey respondents overwhelmingly negative view of their overall experience with the citizen complaint/Police Review Board process and their doubt that the police are held accountable for their actions, a slight majority (44%) of the

¹³ The remaining 27 % of respondents cited a combination of objectives in filing a complaint. Data was missing for item on 5 % of

former complainants, particularly blacks, were willing to use the system again in the future to file a complaint against a police officer should the need arise in comparison to those that were discouraged from going through the process again as a result of their experience (42%). Also of particular interest is the fact that the majority of the former complainants sought relatively moderate objectives from their complaint such as a reprimand or counseling for the officer rather than more punitive sanctions like suspension or termination although *Physical Abuse* complaints, which are generally related to the unnecessary use-of-force (including deadly force) and are viewed by the public as the most egregious form of police misconduct (Seron et al., 2004), were the second most prevalent type of complaint found in the database (22.9%).

Discussion

Although the citizen complaint process is perceived as being relatively open or accessible, there is a lack of transparency in the internal workings of the system and in the dissemination of information on its outcomes. The most telling indicator of this is the Board's failure to analyze its complaint data and to produce regularly published, periodic reports on the disposition of complaints filed by citizens against police and any disciplinary actions and remedial measures taken by the department in the agency's 25-year history. As noted by Walker and supported by the survey responses in this study, the lack of feedback or information on the status of citizen complaints is one of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction for complainants (2001).

In addition, the administrative issues identified in the Office of Professional Standards' data entry and management practices make the collection, categorization, and analysis of complaint data difficult, potentially inaccurate, and inefficient. These issues pose a threat to the integrity of the complaint data and its reliability. Further

compromising the city's civilian review process were the actions of personnel within the Office of Professional Standards. Four police officers assigned to OPS as investigators were found guilty and convicted of theft-in-office for falsifying their timesheets and claiming overtime they had not worked. In that these officers were found guilty of lying about the amount of time they spent working on investigations of citizen complaints lends weight to the survey respondents' contention that their complaints were not thoroughly investigated. In addition, the civilian administrator that supervised the unit was suspended for 20-days without pay for claiming two college degrees on his resume that he did not have as he applied for another position within the department (Baird, 2008). These illegal and unethical actions of the sworn personnel and the civilian administrator assigned to the OPS further undermine the integrity, credibility, and efficacy of this unit and by extension the whole citizen complaint process and the work of the Police Review Board.

However, despite these deficiencies there is evidence that suggests the agency can redeem itself and repair its tarnished image in due time, in that the police accountability literature is replete with examples of law enforcement agencies and units that were effectively reformed as a result of corruption and scandal (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; Berger, Free, & Searles, 2001; Harris, D., 2005; Walker, 2005). The fact that a majority of the former complainants surveyed were strong in their conviction that they would file another complaint in the future if the need arises in spite of their profound cynicism of the citizen complaint process indicates that the act of filing a complaint still holds some intrinsic value for these citizens and is something that public officials can potentially build upon to reform this external oversight agency.

Economist Albert Hirschman's theory of "exit, voice, and loyalty" may help explain this phenomenon of former complainants' seemingly counterintuitive willingness to file a complaint again in the future given their past negative experience with and perception of the citizen complaint process. Although Hirschman primarily framed his theory in an economic context as he states, it is applicable in a social (see Wilson and Taub, 2007) and political context as well. Hirschman argues that when people are dissatisfied with the quality of a business firm's product, the performance of an organization, or the conditions in their social setting in a political sense, management or those in authority are generally made aware of the customer or constituent's dissatisfaction through two competing alternatives: exit or voice. Hirschman contends that under the exit option, "some customers stop buying the firm's products or some members leave the organization. As a result, revenues drop, membership declines, and management is impelled to search for ways and means to correct whatever faults have led to exit," (1970, p. 4).

According to Hirschman, under voice "the firm's customers or the organization's members express their dissatisfaction directly to management...or through general protest addressed to anyone who cares to listen," at which point management seeks to find the causes of and solutions to their customers' and members' dissatisfaction (1970, p. 4). Similarly, in his discussion of the development of a more democratic police force law professor Erik Luna refers to "voice" as "the ability of affected individuals and groups to participate in the process of policy formulation and the review of specific actions, allowing their concerns to be aired and genuinely considered by law enforcement," (2003, p. 208). The very concept of a citizen complaint process is by design meant to give "voice" to the grievances of citizens, which in theory, are then

systematically analyzed and used to alert management to instances and patterns of burgeoning problems in police behavior and misconduct. This is the manner in which Walker (2005) and Luna (2003) suggest that citizen complaint data be used as an “early warning” system to notify police administrators of potential problems in officer behavior and enabling administration to identify and address such issues before they reach a critical point.

Within the context of Hirschman’s theoretical framework the Police Review Board represents the organization and the citizens that filed complaints with the Board are the consumers of the services it provides. As noted, the Board is a public agency established to provide oversight of the police which is a public service i.e. a public good. Hirschman defines a public good as goods “consumed by all those who are members of a given community...or geographical area in such a manner that consumption or use by one member does not detract from consumption or use by another,” and from which “there is no escape from consuming...unless one were to leave the community by which they are provided,” (Hirschman, 1970, p.101). Hirschman cites “crime prevention” i.e. policing, as a public good that results from public policies and is enjoyed by everyone (1970, p. 101).

The survey respondents that reported being deterred from using the citizen complaint system again given their past experience with the process are those consumers that choose to express their dissatisfaction through exit. However as Hirschman notes, “the concept of public goods makes it easy to understand...that in some situations there can be no real exit from a good or organization so that the decision to exit in the partial sense...must take into account any further deterioration in the good that may result,” (1970, pp. 101-102).

In Hirschman's example of exit the consumer or member that no longer buys the product or leaves the organization has no concern of the effect their departure has on the quality of the product or organization, in that they will move on to the next suitable product or organization that meets their needs. However, this is not necessarily the case in terms of public goods. As noted, unless a member leaves the community in which the public good is being provided they are still "a consumer of the article in spite of the decision not to buy it any longer, and a member of the organization in spite of formal exit," (Hirschman, 1970, p. 100). Therefore, although a sizable percentage of survey respondents are unwilling to use the citizen complaint process again to file a complaint against a police officer, they are still subjected to and affected by the unsatisfactory quality of the police services provided in the city unless they move outside of the city's police jurisdiction. Under such circumstances as Hirschman explains, the complainant or "buyer is involved...in both the production and consumption of the organization's output," (1970, p. 100) thus the cumulative effect of the alienated complainants' departure from the citizen complaint process can contribute to the further deterioration of the quality of policing in the jurisdiction.

Unlike in Hirschman's illustration of exit from consumption of a private good wherein the decline in revenue or membership due to the loss of dissatisfied customers or members gets management's attention and compels it to act to resolve the deficiencies causing the loss, a decrease in the number of complaints filed against police can send police administrators and city officials the wrong message. A decrease in the number of complaints filed against police could be interpreted by police administrators and city leaders to mean that the incidence of police misconduct has declined and that citizens are generally satisfied with the quality of police services. Such a decrease will not indicate to

administrators that a segment of the population has been alienated by the citizen complaint process due to their past experience and have an aversion to using the system again.

This illustrates the detrimental effect or the “high cost” (Hirschman, 1970) that exit can have on the citizen complaint and police oversight process. The exit option deprives management of valuable feedback i.e. complaints, which are the lifeblood of an external police oversight mechanism. As a result, in addition to management not receiving valuable information which should be used to address issues of police misconduct and to inform training and provide policy guidance, management also is not made aware of nor are they compelled to address deficiencies within the citizen complaint process itself. This missing feedback mechanism is what Walker (2001, p. 142) refers to as “the learning” feature of a complaint procedure. This feedback loop enables the responsible officials to make improvements to both the complaint procedure and the conduct of officers in the department. Similarly, Maguire and Corbett identify “providing information to managers with which to make improvements” and “to maintain discipline” as two of the key objectives of a police complaint system (as cited in Waters & Brown, 2000 p. 635).

The potential loss of this vital feedback apparatus heightens the importance and value of the disgruntled complainants that are still willing to file a complaint against the police despite their negative past experiences, to the citizen complaint process and the concept of police accountability. The initial act of filing a complaint is an expression of “voice” by all complainants and for most people, all else being equal, the question of whether to go through the citizen complaint process again is a matter of weighing the cost and the potential benefits against the expected outcome. The cost would include the time,

transportation cost, and the physical and emotional energy expended in filing a complaint while the benefits would include a chance to “voice” their grievance, the possibility of having the complaint sustained and the officer sanctioned, potentially impacting police procedure, training, and policy, and ultimately incrementally improving the quality of policing overall. However, based on the survey responses related to complainants’ past experiences with the citizen complaint process the majority of the respondents did not hold high expectations for receiving a favorable outcome from any future complaints. Therefore, the willingness of some complainants to go through the process again in the face of their overwhelming pessimism regarding the system appears counterintuitive.

These citizens are exhibiting what Hirschman refers to as “loyalist behavior.” Loyalty to an organization, product, or in this case the citizen complaint/Police Review Board processes, is “the extent to which customer-members are willing to trade off the certainty of exit against the uncertainties of an improvement in the deteriorated product,” (Hirschman, 1970, p. 77). He adds that, “as a rule...loyalty holds exit at bay and activates voice,” and “in the face of discontent with the way things are going in an organization an individual member can remain loyal without being influential himself, but hardly without the expectation that someone will act or something will happen to improve matters,” (1970, p. 77). It is this expectation that someone or something will change things that these loyalist complainants, particularly blacks, hold on to in their willingness to go through the citizen complaint process again.

Why would dissatisfied former complainants, particularly blacks, be loyal to the citizen complaint process? Hirschman argues that exit is the option of preference within the American tradition, and that “the United States owes its very existence and growth to millions of decisions favoring exit over voice,” (1970, p. 106). He points to the actions

of the pilgrims, the settlers of the Western frontier, and the upward social mobility and physical relocation of individuals and groups away from their community of origin as they ascend the socioeconomic ladder of “success” in American society as illustrations of this preference for exit over voice within American culture. He cites the black power movement within America as an explicit rejection of this traditional pattern of social mobility which was deemed “unworkable and undesirable” for members of this “most depressed group in our society,” (1970, p. 109).

As Hirschman states, “in the case of the minority that has been discriminated against a further argument can often be made: namely, that exit is bound to be unsatisfactory and unsuccessful even from the point of view of the individuals who practice it,” (1970, p. 110). And in examining how community membership affects people’s behavior in addressing social dilemmas Tyler and DeGoey (1995) note that “identification with the community is often proposed to reflect people’s psychological attachment to their community, which alters the basis for their behavior and leads them to be concerned about the needs of the community.” Accordingly, Hirschman argued that the black power doctrine’s open advocacy of the group process of upward mobility over that of the individual “had immense shock value because it spurned and castigated a supreme value of American society – success via exit from one’s group,” (1970, p. 112).

Viewed from this perspective the “loyalist behavior” or attitudes expressed by the primarily black complainants that are willing to utilize the citizen complaint process again in the future is rational in that exit isn’t necessarily seen as a viable option and this behavior can be understood as “loyalty” to the African American community. This perspective is consistent with the tradition of resistance, civil disobedience, and protest which are central features of the African American experience in America as exemplified

by the long struggle to abolish slavery, and the civil rights and black power movements. As noted earlier, the civilian oversight movement evolved out of the civil rights struggle and blacks' demands for equality and this persistent willingness to use the citizen complaint system to "voice" complaints against police misconduct can be understood as the ongoing manifestation of these demands on the part of black complainants.

Also related to the expression of "voice" are the complainants' objectives in filing a complaint against the police. As noted, the majority of the survey respondents in this study were dissatisfied with the citizen complaint and police review board processes regardless of the outcome of their specific complaint. This respondent dissatisfaction is in spite of the relatively modest objectives the majority of the respondents held in filing a complaint. Less than a quarter (22 %) of the respondents sought severely punitive sanctions such as *having the officer fired or suspended* while the overwhelming majority sought relatively moderate measures ranging from *receiving an apology* to *having the officer counseled or reprimanded*.

Recommendations

The Office of Professional Standards must incorporate stricter quality control measures on the data entry and management of the citizen complaints. The administrative errors found in the complaint files complicate the efficient handling, categorizing, sorting, and analysis of this data which undermines the integrity of its use as a management tool to identify emerging problems in police behavior, practices, or protocol.

Also, the disparity between the complainants' satisfaction with the citizen complaint/Police Review Board process and their desired objectives in filing a complaint suggest that the range of potential outcomes from the citizen complaint process should be

modified to more closely align with the objectives of citizen complainants (Sviridoff & McElroy, 1989). Mediation is an alternative form of complaint resolution that several jurisdictions have adopted and that Cleveland public officials and police administrators should consider incorporating into the citizen complaint process. In mediation both parties to the complaint agree to have their case heard in a face-to-face meeting with a neutral mediator trained in dispute resolution rather than going through the traditional complainant and investigation process. Bartels and Silverman's exploratory research of the NYC CCRB mediation program found that complainants that had their cases mediated were significantly more satisfied with the citizen complaint process, and the NYPD overall, than those complainants whose cases were fully investigated (2005).

The city should also consider restructuring its civilian oversight mechanism by hiring and using non-sworn, trained-investigative personnel to conduct the investigations of the citizen complaints which are then handed over to the review board. This will transform the OPS/PRB from a Class II to a Class I oversight system which will increase the agency's independence from the police agency it is charged with providing oversight of and can serve to enhance the perception of the board's autonomy within the broader community. If public officials and police administrators are not willing to consider this option they must at the least implement a more stringent screening process by which police officers are assigned to the Office of Professional Standards in order to address ethical concerns raised by the actions of the former OPS personnel, in the eyes of both the community and the sworn officers within the Cleveland Police Department.

The firm commitment to participate in the citizen complaint process expressed by a considerable segment of the disgruntled former complainants also provides city leaders and PRB administrators with an opportunity to improve the effectiveness and the public

perception of the Police Review Board and the citizen complaint process in the eyes of its stakeholders. City officials should build upon this commitment among some citizens to express their “voice” through the citizen complaint process and the perceived “openness” of the existing complaint system to enhance the effectiveness and the public’s confidence in the citizen complaint process and the Police Review Board and to improve police-community relations, particularly within the African American community.

Lastly, the city and the Police Review Board must make the reporting of information on citizen complaints and their outcome to the public mandatory. In order for a civilian oversight mechanism to be effective and there be true accountability, the process must be completely transparent, both internally and externally, to the public it serves. This can be achieved by regularly producing (annually at the least) and publishing a comprehensive report detailing the types of complaints received, the length of the investigative process, the PRB’s ruling on the complaints, recommendations made by the PRB, the chief’s ruling on complaints by type, complaints’ final disposition, and any remedial actions taken. This information should be readily accessible to the public by making it available online through the agency’s website, and by releasing it to the traditional media outlets (newspapers, television news stations, and radio).

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the Cleveland Police Review Board, one of the oldest in the country, appears to be more symbolic than substantive in providing public oversight and greater police accountability. The regular examination and reporting of the outcome of citizen complaint investigations to the public is essential to the concept of civilian oversight and the failure to do so is antithetical to the principle of transparency which is a fundamental characteristic of government in a democratic society. The failure to

regularly produce and disseminate this information deprives the public of the primary mechanism by which the performance of the police agency can be measured and in turn held accountable to the public it serves for the performance or misconduct of its officers. In addition, the profound cynicism of the citizen complaint process expressed in the survey responses of citizens that have used the system, and the internal factors identified in this study that undermine the integrity and credibility of the agency are further evidence of the agency's marginal effectiveness.

The use of Hirschman's theory of "exit, voice, and loyalty" helps to illuminate the seemingly paradoxical phenomenon of the willingness of a significant percentage of persons that have gone through the citizen complaint process before to use the system in the future to file a complaint against a police officer in spite of their negative experience with the process. This behavior was particularly salient among African Americans. As noted, the demand for civilian oversight of police emerged out of the social struggles of the 1960s and 70s as reflected in the civil rights and black power movements which gave America's marginalized black population "voice." And 46-years after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 43-years after this city elected the nation's first African American mayor of a major U.S. city, and 26-years after it established one of the country's first contemporary civilian review boards, a segment of this city's population (as reflected in those citizens that have used the citizen complaint process) is determined to have their "voice" heard in regards to the effective oversight of the police.

Further Research

Additional research is needed to further explore this phenomenon of "voice" among citizens and to determine how public officials and police administrators can best use it to capitalize on this subset of citizens' unwavering commitment to civic

engagement in the citizen complaint and police oversight process. In-depth interviews should be conducted with stakeholders involved with the citizen complaint and Police Review Board processes including former complainants, rank-and-file patrol officers and representatives of their bargaining units, police administrators, community leaders and activists, representatives from civil rights and advocacy groups, members of the Police Review Board, local elected officials, as well as representatives from the legal community to further explore factors related to the use of “exit, voice, and loyalty” in regards to the citizen complaint process. In addition this qualitative data can be used to gain insight into each constituency’s experience with and perception of the citizen complaint process in order to enhance oversight of the police and help bridge the historical divide between the police and the African American community.

APPENDIX

RESULTS OF THE CLEVELAND POLICE CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCESS SURVEY

As a citizen who has filed a complaint against a Cleveland Police officer in the past, this survey is designed to collect information regarding your experience with the citizen complaint process. This study originated with a request from a member of the Cleveland Police Review Board, which asked for an analysis to be conducted of the board's records and procedures in order to determine its effectiveness in administering citizen complaints against the police and to determine ways to improve its operations.

While your name was used for mailing the survey, your identity will remain anonymous in relation to your participation in this survey and in any reports produced from the findings. We have written a number on your return envelope which will be used to record receipt of your survey. This procedure will ensure that we remove your name from our list and that you will not receive any follow-up correspondence regarding completion of the survey. There are (27) questions on this survey. Please place an "X" in the appropriate box to indicate your response. The survey consists of three pages. Please complete the questions below and then turn the page over to complete questions 11-21 on page 2, and then please complete the rest of the survey in items 22-27 on page 3. Once you've completed your survey please place it in the self-addressed, prepaid postage envelope provided and place it in the mail. Please return your completed survey in the envelope provided within 2 weeks. Thank you for participating in this survey.

		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1	I was able to file a complaint without much difficulty	26.5	32.7	11.7	14.2	14.8
2	The location where I filed the complaint was easy to reach from my home or place of employment	25.5	29.8	24.2	9.3	11.2
3	The person that took my complaint was helpful	21.2	32.5	21.9	13.1	11.2
4	I felt that the person that took my complaint treated it as a credible complaint.	20.0	29.4	18.1	18.1	14.1
5	The person that took my complaint did not try to discourage me from filling a complaint	29.2	37.3	17.4	7.5	8.7
6	The person that took my complaint explained the complaint process	18.1	36.2	15.0	18.1	12.5
7	This person explained the amount of time it would take to investigate my case	9.5	19.0	22.8	27.2	21.5
8	This person also explained how long it would take for me to receive a response to my complaint	8.2	16.5	22.2	27.8	25.3
9	I feel that my complaint was thoroughly investigated	6.8	3.1	7.5	25.5	57.1
10	I feel that the interview and investigation of my complaint were handled in a bias-free manner	7.5	8.1	20.0	22.5	41.9
11	I was kept informed of the status of my complaint during the process	3.9	6.5	6.5	34.4	48.7
12	My complaint was resolved in a timely manner	4.6	5.9	15.7	32.0	41.8
13	I feel that my case was thoroughly reviewed by the Police Review Board	4.6	2.0	12.4	26.1	54.9
14	I was satisfied with the Police Review Board's ruling on my complaint	5.2	2.6	7.2	25.5	59.5
15	I am satisfied with the final judgment regarding my	4.6	1.3	5.9	24.2	64.1
16	Regardless of the outcome of my complaint, I feel that the process was fair	5.3	5.3	11.3	21.2	57.0
17	The process gave me full opportunity to present my complaint.	9.7	14.2	14.8	18.7	42.6

18	If I have another complaint against a Cleveland Police officer I would go through the complaint process again.	30.3	13.5	14.2	11.6	30.3
19	My experience with the citizen complaint process has strengthened my view that police are held accountable for their behavior.	7.2	6.5	12.4	16.3	57.5
20	Overall, I would say that the Police Review Board is an effective means of handling citizens' complaints against police	5.9	5.9	20.3	19.6	48.4
21	Which option below best represents your purpose in filing a complaint against the police officer(s) To have the officer:	<i>Apologize</i>	<i>Counseled</i>	<i>Reprimand</i>	<i>Suspended</i>	<i>Fired</i>
		7.2	15.1	24.3	10.5	11.2

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

22	What is your gender	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>					
		42.9	52.1					
23	What is your age	<i>16-24</i>	<i>25-34</i>	<i>35-44</i>	<i>45-54</i>	<i>55-64</i>	<i>65-74</i>	<i>75-Above</i>
		6.1	12.9	27.6	26.4	13.5	8.6	1.2
24	What is your race/ethnicity	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Native Amer.</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>NH/PI</i>	
		53.4	38.0	1.8	1.8	1.2		
25	What is the highest level of education you completed	<i>Education</i>	<i><HS</i>	<i>HS/GED</i>	<i>Voc. Sch.</i>	<i>Some College</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>Grad Deg.</i>
		3.7	19.6	9.8	26.4	21.5	14.1	
26	What is your occupational status	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Emp. FT.</i>	<i>Emp. PT</i>	<i>Unemp.</i>	<i>Home-maker</i>	<i>Ret.</i>
		5.5	51.5	6.1	3.7	5.5	12.3	11.0
27	What is annual household income	<i>Income (thousands)</i>	<i><\$20</i>	<i>\$20-\$34.9</i>	<i>\$35-\$49.9</i>	<i>\$50-\$74.9</i>	<i>\$75-\$99.9</i>	<i>\$100-\$149.9</i>
		21.5	19.0	15.3	17.8	8.6	7.4	2.5

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