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Examining the Effect of Selected Demographic Characteristics on Crime-Reporting Behavior

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Abstract: *Previous literature suggests there is partial support for the effects of demographic characteristics on crime-reporting behavior and attitudes toward the police. In an attempt to redefine rival research finding and to expand the dialogue on the effect of demographic variables, we tested five research hypotheses in this study. The findings of this study suggest that of the three selected demographic variables we tested (e.g., gender, race, and socio-economic status), gender and race were the best predictors of crime-reporting behavior, the main dependent variable. Both these two variables had a significant and substantial effect on crime-reporting behavior. Regarding race/ethnicity, the findings of this research study are quite unique. We found evidence contrary to theoretical prediction about the effect of race on crime-reporting behavior. Additionally, this study shows that an increase in socio-economic status (i.e., from poor to lower middle-class or from lower middle-class to middle-class) is manifested with an increase in the reporting of crimes in general and with a slightly higher increase on the reporting of property crimes, in specific.*

Keywords: *police; crime-reporting behavior; attitudes toward the police.*

1. Introduction

1. 1 Influence of Gender on Crime-Reporting Behavior

Crime-reporting behavior[1] is affected by a wide range of demographic factors, in addition to non-demographic factors. Gender differences in crime-reporting behavior, for instance, are considerably high (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998). Research shows that gender plays a significant role when it

[1] Crime-reporting behavior in this study refers to people's willingness to report (future) crimes to the authorities. The phrase "crime-reporting behavior" in this study is also used in reference to the existing literature, again in reference to people's willingness to report crimes to the police or other authorities.

comes to making the decision whether or not to report victimization events or witnessed crimes to the police. Research shows that females are generally more likely to report crime to the police compared to males (Green, 1981; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998; Skogan, 1984; see also Ashbaugh & Cornell, 2008; Bickman, 1976). However, when taking gender into consideration, the crime-reporting behavior differs by the type of crime and the relationship between the victim and the offender. Females, for example, are less likely than males to report crimes such as assaults to the police when the offender is known to them. Even for other crimes, other than assault, gender makes a difference in the decision whether or not to report a crime to the police. Carcach's (1997) study shows that gender-effect still remains a concern when taking the victim-offender relationship into account. Furthermore, research shows that female victims of property crimes are more likely to report crimes to the police when they know the offender, but less likely to report assault crimes. This is slightly different for male victims. When the offender is known to them, male victims are less likely to report property crimes to the police (Carcach, 1997).

In general, empirical studies show that reporting behavior for females is higher for all other types of crimes (i.e., serious crimes such as robbery, other crimes involving weapons, property crimes, etc.), except assault crimes when the offender is known to the victim (Carcach, 1997; Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Bachman, 1998). Additionally, when categorizing by age, empirical evidence shows that males age 15 to 24 are less likely to report crimes to the police compared to females of the same age category (Tanton & Jones, 2003). This age difference, by gender, remains in effect for all ages. Needless to say, regardless of sex differences, both males and females fail to report the majority of criminal events to the police (see Skogan, 1976a).

1.2 Influence of Race/Ethnicity on Crime-Reporting Behavior

Race of the victim has not been viewed as an important factor in determining one's willingness to report crime to the police (Davis & Henderson, 2003; Skogan, 1977, 1976a). In fact, Skogan (1977, 1976a) goes as far as arguing that race

is unrelated to crime-reporting behavior. However, this conclusion is too specific, and as such it cannot be used to rule-out race from the crime-reporting equation. In other words, this does not mean that race has no influence in crime-reporting behavior; it only means that race is not as strong a predictor of crime-reporting behavior as other relevant factors (i.e., age, gender, SES, seriousness of crime, victim-offender relationship, fear of criminal retaliation, attitudes toward the police, and police behavior). Empirical evidence shows that race becomes a good predictor of crime-reporting behavior when it is studied in the context of other variables, other than victimization by crime, namely victimization by the police and attitudes toward the police (see Xie, Pogarsky, Lynch, & McDowall, 2006; Hickman & Simpson, 2003, Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005a, 2005b; Brown & Delores, 2000; Holdaway, 2003; Bates & Fasenfest, 2005; Krahe, 1991).

To reiterate, race becomes an important factor when taking into account police behavior, attitudes toward the police, personal experiences with the police, and fear of criminal retaliation (see Salim, Voeten, & Keskiney, 2000; Davis, 2000; Taylor, 2003; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005a 2005b; see also Smith & Arian, 2006; Goudriaan, 2006; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006; Bachman, 1998; Felson, Messner, Hoskin, & Deane, 2002). Researchers have noted that there are differences in crime-reporting behavior within minority groups too. When comparing minority victims of crimes within ethnic groups, Davis and Henderson (2003) found that African Americans who were victimized by crimes were about 15% more likely to report crime to the police than other minority ethnic groups (i.e., Ecuadorians, Colombians, Dominicans, and other minority groups) (Davis & Henderson, 2003). Additionally, when comparing only African American victims of crime with white victims of crime, research shows that African Americans overall are more likely to report victimization events or witnessed crimes to the police than whites (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001, 2002, 2007a; see also Bachman, 1998; Liska, 1992). In numerical terms, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003) shows that blacks have a higher reporting rate by about 7% compared to whites. That is, black victims (49%) are more likely to report crime to the police compared to whites (42%),

regardless of the type of crime or victimization event (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003). Although these statistics vary from study to study, overall, blacks still remain higher across a number of studies in their crime-reporting rates compared to whites, even though this difference is considered low.

One way to explain this low association between race and crime-reporting behavior is disproportionate victimization rates. That is, blacks are more likely to become victims of crimes than whites. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007a), 49% of all homicide victims in 2005 were blacks (see also Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997a, p. 5). Additionally, for robbery victims, too, blacks are overrepresented. The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (2002) study shows that by gender, age, SES, and the location of residency, blacks are more likely to become victims of crime compared to whites and Hispanics/Latinos (see also Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003b, 2004, 2005c, 2006a, 2007b). Finally, evidence shows that blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police not because of race but rather because of the influence of other factors like high crime rates, high victimization rates, etc.

1.3 Influence of Socio-Economic Status on Crime-Reporting Behavior

Prior research shows that people who live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are less willing to cooperate with the police. Lack of cooperation, in this context, is manifested in the form of unwillingness to report witnessed crimes or victimization events to the police (Smith, 1986; Goudriaan et al., 2006; Baumer, 2002; Fishman, 1979; Tankebe, 2009). Thus, socio-economic status at the neighborhood level, as well as at the individual level, affects crime-reporting behavior. This effect is observed in many levels. Caracach (1997) argued that people who find themselves in difficult financial situations (e.g., unemployed) are less likely to report crimes to the police (see also Fisher et al., 2003). In addition to its effect on crime-reporting behavior, socio-economic status affects attitudes toward the police too (Avdija, 2010), which in turn, increases the total effect that socio-economic status has on crime-reporting

behavior. Johnson (1993) in his study indicates that attitudes toward the police were the most negative among persons with income below $20,000, the unemployed, and non-homeowners. Moreover, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods tend to have a higher level of crime compared to more economically developed neighborhoods. In high-crime areas the police then are more likely to exercise coercive means, including police use of excessive force, which negatively affects both residents' attitudes toward the police and their crime-reporting behavior (Smith, 1986; Goudriaan et al., 2006; Avdija, 2010; Baumer, 2002; see also Kane, 2002; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Rice & Smith, 2002; Jensen, 2003; Kelly, 2000; for reviews).

At the individual level, research shows that lower-income persons, overall, are slightly less likely to report crimes to the police compared to high-income persons. However, this behavior varies by the type of crimes, i.e., property crime or violent crime. Goudriaan's (2006) study, for example, shows that property crime, especially, is more likely to be reported to the police by high-income families compared to low-income families. Skogan's (1976a) study also confirms that high-income families are more likely to report property crime. According to Skogan (1976a), families of high-income reported about 14% more property crimes to the police compared to low-income families (Skogan, 1976a). This tells us that, in most cases, crime-reporting behavior that is based on socio-economic status is explained by its consequences. That is, reporting certain property crimes to the police is done with intent of recovery, for insurance purposes, or in some cases, as an expression of anger (Goudriaan, 2006; see also Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). This, however, should not be confused with crime-reporting behavior that is based on the seriousness of crime. Violent crimes, on the other hand, are more likely to be reported by lower-income persons. Lower-income victims of rape, for example, are more likely to report victimization events to the police than higher-income victims (Goudriaan, 2006). Skogan's (1976a) study shows that low-income families report about 19% more violent crimes than high-income families (Skogan, 1976a, 1976b; see also Liska, 1992). Perhaps low-income families are more often victimized by violent crimes than high-income families. Indeed,

statistics show that low-income persons have higher victimization rates for violent crimes (47% for those who make $7,500 or less annually) than high-income persons (18% for those who make $75,000 or more annually) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006b). Conversely, high-income families are more often victims of property crime, simply because they possess more property that can be targeted by potential offenders (see Skogan, 1984). Generally, research shows that the percentage of reported crimes against persons declines as the household income increases (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003; Liska, 1992; see also Zhang, Messner, & Liu, 2007). And the percentage of reported property crimes increases as the household income increases. Needless to say, these crime-reporting statistics vary from city to city.

Arguably, crime-reporting behavior is affected by one's socio-economic status. Yet, socio-economic status has an impact on one's attitudes toward the police, which in turn, affect one's willingness to report crimes to the police. In short, research shows that the effect of socio-economic status on attitudes toward the police is manifested in lower crime-reporting behavior. And the effect of socio-economic status on crime-reporting behavior varies by the type of crime (e.g., property crime vs, violent crime).

2. The Present Study

In this study, we tested five research hypotheses about the influence of demographic factors on crime-reporting behavior, the main dependent variable, and attitudes toward the police, a secondary dependent variable. As discussed earlier, empirical evidence shows that by race, blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police compared whites (Hickman & Simpson, 2003, Conaway & Lohr, 1994). On the other hand, a great number of empirical studies show that by race, blacks are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police compared to whites (Avdija, 2010; Weitzer, 2000; Holdaway, 2003; Howell, Perry, & Wile, 2004; Brown & Delores, 2000; Regulus, Taylor, Jackson, & Katz, 2001). This empirical evidence conflicts with the empirical evidence that

links attitudes toward the police and crime-reporting behavior by race since research shows that negative attitudes toward the police have a negative effect on crime-reporting behavior (Davis & Henderson, 2003; Skogan, 1977, 1976a; see also Smith & Arian, 2006; Goudriaan, 2006; Goudriaan et al., 2006; Bachman, 1998; Felson et al., 2002).

The literature discussed earlier about the affect of gender on crime-reporting behavior indicate that, in general, females are more likely to report victimization events to the police compared to males. In terms of victimization, research shows that female victims are more likely to report their victimization experiences to the police compared to male victims **(**Ashbaugh & Cornell, 2008; Snyder, 2000; Durose et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2007; see also Tanton & Jones, 2003; Fisher et al., 2003; Green, 1981; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998; Skogan, 1984). What these studies do not report is the effect of gender on willingness to report witnessed crimes to the police. Witnessed crimes are different from victimization events. When one reports a victimization event, it means that that person is the victim of that particular criminal event. When one reports a witnessed crime to the police, on the other hand, it means that the reporting person is not a victim but rather a witness or an observer during the occurrence of a crime (i.e., bystander, neighbors reporting domestic violence for other neighbors, etc.). In this context, with regard to gender, most prior studies have been focused on the victimization effect on crime-reporting behavior, but they did not consider the gender effect when reporting crimes to the police is optional, i.e., when the person reporting crime is a witness of a criminal event. The current study addresses this very issue.

Furthermore, many researchers have linked willingness to report crimes with personal gain. Research shows that property crimes are more likely to be reported to the police by higher-income families compared to lower-income families. As discussed earlier, most of those who report property crimes to the police, do so with the intent of recovery, for insurance purposes (Skogan, 1984; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988; Goudriaan, 2006; Tanton & Jones, 2003). In this context, the review of the literature points out that higher-income families are more likely to become

victims of property crimes compared to lower-income families (Skogan, 1976a). However, the stability of the research findings in previous studies is questionable. Thus, this study is developed in response to the questionability of research findings in the previous studies.

To address the influence of demographic characteristics, specifically, gender, race, and socio-economic status, on crime-reporting behavior, the main dependent variable, and attitudes toward the police, a secondary dependent variable, the following five research hypotheses were developed:

Ha (1): Females are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to males.

Ha (2): Blacks are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police compared to whites.[2]

Ha (3): Blacks are more likely to report crime to the police compared to whites.

Ha (4): In general, individuals with higher socio-economic status (e.g., middle-class, upper middle-class, and the rich) are more likely to report crime to the police compared to individuals with lower socio-economic status (e.g., the poor and lower middle-class).

Ha (5): Individuals with higher socio-economic status are more likely to report property crimes compared to individuals with lower socio-economic status.

3. Data and Methods

Participants

The data for this research study were collected in 2009 as part of a larger study on crime-reporting behavior. A 111-item survey questionnaire was distributed to a final sample

[2] Ha (2) in this study is a replication of a previous study on attitudes toward the police (Avdija, 2010). In the previous study, this hypothesis was tested using a smaller sample size compared to the current study. To test the effect of race on both crime-reporting behavior and attitudes toward the police, we used a larger sample size (n=531) and a seventeen-variable model.

of 531 undergraduate university students (248 males and 283 females) in six colleges, who ranged in age from 18 to 52 years (M = 22, SD = 4.5). In terms of race/ethnicity, most participants identified themselves as Whites (72.3%), followed by African Americans (16.1%), Asians (3.8%), Hispanic/Latinos (1.3%), and "other" (6.5%). To draw the sample, we adopted a two-stage cluster sampling procedure, stratified by colleges. Thus, we drew six sub-samples, one sub-sample from each college, assuring an equal representation of undergraduate students in all six colleges. The participants were selected based on the total percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in each of the six colleges at a large public university in Pennsylvania, United States.

4. Measurements

4.1 Measures of Crime-Reporting Behavior

In this study, we measured crime-reporting behavior, the dependent variable, by using three separate composite measures with a total of 24 mini-scenarios/questions. The respondents were asked to read each mini-scenario/question and, based on their personal perception, were asked to mark their answers on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely). Sample questions included: "Would you report to the police or school officials if you saw someone using illicit drugs in the school bathroom?" "Would you report to the police or school officials if you saw someone attempting to commit a burglary (illegal entry or attempt breaking and entering into someone's property/house)?" "Would you report to the police or school officials if you saw a male student smashing the windshield of a car in the parking lot?" etc.

Since crime-reporting as a behavior varies by the degree of the severity of crime, not all crimes are reported at the same rates. With this in mind, we developed these three composite measures (scales) based on the severity of crime. One scale measured the reporting of less serious crimes (e.g., smoking marijuana, selling illicit drugs, painting graffiti,

etc.); one scale measured the reporting of medium-level crimes (e.g., physical threats, future terroristic threats, etc); and the third scale measured the reporting of serious crimes (e.g., kidnapping, rape, murder, etc.). To determine the degree of severity of crimes, the pool of 24 crime-reporting items was subjected to factor analysis using SPSS version 19.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science). Initially, the factorability of the 24 crime-reporting items was examined. To determine the factorability of these items, we used two criteria, namely the Keiser-Meyer-Oklin Test and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value, which is a measure of the sampling adequacy, was .931, a value that greatly exceeded the minimum recommended value of .60 (see Kaiser, 1974; Marjorie, Lackey, Sullivan, 2003; Meyers et al., 2005). The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (see Bartlett, 1954) for this pool of crime-reporting items also reached the statistical significance of $p < .000$, which tells us that the analyses supported the elements that contributed to the results of the correlation matrix (see Child, 2006; Tobias & Carlson, 1969). In other words, the relationships between items in the scale were statistically significant.

Furthermore, the initial results of the factor analysis using the maximum likelihood extraction with the varimax rotation indicated that there were four factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0, explaining 43.83%, 14.43%, 7.33%, and 4.53% of the variance in crime-reporting behavior. After inspecting the scree plot, a three-factor solution was deemed suitable for further investigation. Thus, a second factor analysis with a forced extraction, limiting the number of extracted factors to three, was performed. The first factor was labeled "crime-reporting 1," the second factor was labeled "crime-reporting 2," and the third was labeled "crime-reporting 3. The main idea here was to extract a minimum number of factors that can explain the maximum amount of variance in the crime-reporting behavior. The internal consistency coefficients computed for each crime-reporting scale was adequate, .89, 87, and .94, respectively, indicating that these measures have excellent reliability for research purposes.

A second dependent variable in this study was attitudes toward the police. Attitudes toward the police are measured using a 30-item Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5). A higher score on the attitude scale indicates positive attitudes toward the police, whereas a lower score indicates more negative attitudes toward the police. The internal consistency coefficients computed for attitudes toward the police scale was also adequate, .94 respectively.

4.2 The Independent Variables

The main independent variables in this study are gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status (SES). The goal of this analysis was to test the effect of demographic variables (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status) on crime-reporting behavior and attitudes toward the police. We placed age, which was measured in years, in the control variables since we did not have enough variance in the sample to develop a research hypothesis about age. The independent variables in this study are assumed to cause an impressive difference in one's decision whether or not to mobilize the police when witnessing the commission of a crime from a bystander's point of view. Gender in this study is a dichotomous variable (male coded = 1, female coded = 0). Race/ethnicity was also measured as a dichotomous variable, with Whites being the base category. After the recoding took place, there were three distinguished categories for race: Black (yes = 1, no = 0), Asian (yes = 1, no = 0), Other (yes = 1, no = 0), with Whites selected as the base category. Socio-economic status was measured on a five-point scale (poor = 1, lower middle-class = 2, middle-class = 3, upper middle-class = 4, and rich = 5).

4.3 The Control Variables

Using multivariate linear regression analysis, this study controls a number of variables, including police behavior, fear of criminal retaliation, crime-reporting anonymity, which has been conceptually defined as the

desire to remain anonymous when calling the police to report a witnessed crime, and prior victimization. Police behavior was measured by a 22-item scale (Cronbach's Alpha = 9.27). There were two measures of prior victimization: 1) victimization for crimes against persons, which was measured by a 3-item index, and 2) victimization for crimes against property, which was measured by a 4-item index. Fear of criminal retaliation was measured by a one item with (1 to 5) response categories. We measured crime-reporting anonymity using a 4-item Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) with Cronbach's Alpha = .713 (refer to Table 2 for the list of variables).

In terms of interpreting the coefficients for the scales, a higher score on the police behavior scale, for instance, indicates the presence of police misconduct, and a lower score indicates the absence of police misconduct. A higher score on the crime-reporting anonymity scale indicates that respondents were concerned with their identity being revealed, whereas a lower score indicates the respondents were not concerned with anonymity when reporting crimes to the police. Among other control variables in this study was public interaction with the police. There were five variables that were used to measure public interaction with the police. This interaction was measured in terms of the quantity and quality of contacts with the police. The quality of contacts with the police refers to the types of contacts people had with the police, namely police-initiated and citizen-initiated contacts. To measure police-initiated contacts, we used a 12-item list of possible mini-scenarios pertaining to police-initiated contacts. To measure citizen-initiated contacts with the police, we used a 9-item list of possible mini-scenarios pertaining to citizen-initiated contacts. Each item had a binary response category (Yes = 1, No = 0). In some instances, people may not have contacts with the police, but they still have an opinion about the police. Weitzer and Tuch (1999, 2005), for example, contend that some people create their opinion about the police based on what they see on television (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999, 2005). To capture this influence, we used a one 4-point Likert item ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (often) that asked respondents to indicate how

often they heard or read about police misconduct on TV, radio, newspapers, internet, etc., which was borrowed from Weitzer and Tuch's (1999, 2005) study. This single item was designed to measure the influence of media exposure on people's decisions whether or not to report witnessed crimes or victimization events to the police; a vicarious form of contact with the police.

5. Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that, by gender, females are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to males. To test this hypothesis, we used OLS regression analysis. The hypothesis about gender effect on crime-reporting behavior is partially supported in this study. The data presented in Table 1 show that at the bivariate level, there is a significant difference between males and females in crime-reporting behavior. This difference, however, is significant only for the reporting of less serious and medium-level crimes. At the multivariate analysis, on the other hand, gender has a statistically significant effect on all three crime-reporting measures (see Tables 2). In general, the data suggest that females are more likely to report less serious crimes [b = -2.452, F (1,529) = 10.727, p < .0005], medium-level crimes [b = -2.018, F (1, 529) = 16.843, p < .0005], and serious crimes [b = -1.227, F (1, 529) = 2.542, p < .111].

However, since gender failed to reach the significance level p(critical) < .05 for the reporting of serious crimes at the bivariate level, the hypothesis about gender is rejected. It is noteworthy that gender becomes a significant factor for the reporting of all types of crimes (e.g., less serious crimes, medium-level crimes, and serious crimes) when controlling for the influence of other variables in the model.

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Table 1

Bivariate Regression Analysis: Regressing Crime-Reporting Behavior on Gender (n = 531)

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t
Constant (1)	23.710	.512	----	----
Gender (Male)	-2.452	.749	-.141	-3.275***
$R^2 = .020, F(1, 529) = 10.727$***				
Constant (2)	23.187	.336	----	----
Gender (Male)	-2.018	.492	-.176	-4.104***
$R^2 = .031, F(1, 529) = 16.843$***				
Constant (3)	43.760	.526	----	----
Gender (Male)	-1.227	.770	-.069	-1.594
$R^2 = .005, F(1, 529) = 2.542$				

Note: ***Significance at the .001 level. Constant (1) = Crime-reporting 1 (scale for measuring the reporting of less serious crimes). Constant (2) = Crime-reporting 2 (scale for measuring the reporting of medium-level crimes). Constant (3) = Crime-reporting 3 (scale for measuring the reporting of serious crimes).

Table 2

Multivariate Regression Analysis: Regressing Crime-Reporting Behavior on Independent Variables (n = 531)

Independent Variables	Crime-Reporting 1 Model 1		Crime-Reporting 2 Model 2		Crime-Reporting 3 Model 3	
	b	*B*	b	*B*	b	*B*
Constant	10.040***	----	17.846***	----	40.824***	----
Age	.485	.055	.392	.068	.898**	.100
Gender (Male)	-2.328***	-.134	-2.122***	-.185	-1.505*	-.085
Asian	-4.821***	-.106	-5.294***	-.176	-9.962***	-.214
Black	-.848**	-.036	-.255	-.016	-3.751***	-.155
Other Race	-.315	-.010	-1.757*	-.083	-4.023**	-.123
SES	-.487	-.053	.215	.035	-.162	-.017
Frequency of Contacts	.031	.004	.212	.040	.568	.069
Citizen-Initiated Contacts	2.148***	.122	-.789	-.068	-.033	-.002
Police-Initiated Contacts	.140	.007	-.507	-.039	.288	.015
Exposure to Media	.516	.054	.552*	.087	.828*	.085
Victimization	-.144	-.007	-.940	-.070	-1.888	-.091
Victim of Property Crimes	1.127	.064	.501	.043	1.483	.083
Victim of Crimes A/ Persons	-.238	-.013	.871	.074	1.741	.095
Fear of Criminal Retaliation	-1.084***	-.156	-.274	-.060	-1.163***	-.163
Crime-reporting Anonymity	.036	.015	.076	.049	.267*	.111
Police Behavior	-.014	-.028	-.014	-.045	-.099***	-.202
Attitudes toward the Police	.147***	.382	.039***	.154	.041	.105
	R^2 = .287 F (17, 513) = 12.128***		R^2 = .114 F (17, 513) = 3.894***		R^2 = .223 F (17, 513) = 8.646***	

Note: ***Significance at the .001 level. **Significance at the .01 level. *Significance at the .05 level. Dependent Variables: Crime-Reporting 1 (reporting of less serious crimes), crime-reporting 2 (reporting of medium-level crimes), crime-reporting 3 (reporting of serious crimes).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that, by race, blacks are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police compared to whites. To test hypothesis 2, a one-factor between-groups analysis of variance was conducted (see Tables 3 and 4). The subjects were divided into six groups according to their race (group 1: Asians; group 2: Blacks, group 3: Latinos; group 4: Native Americans; group 5: Whites; and group 6: Others and Biracial or Multiracial). A one-factor analysis of variance (Table 3) shows that the mean responses for all racial groups were not the same. As hypothesized, the mean responses for blacks and whites were not the same either. The Post-Hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test (Table 4) indicates that the mean score for blacks (M = 81.38, SD = 98.789, $p < .0005$) was significantly lower than the mean score for whites (M = 100.57, SD = 21.996, $p < .0005$). A lower mean score indicates more negative attitudes toward the police, whereas a higher mean score indicates more favorable attitudes toward the police. This tells us that when looking within racial groups, blacks are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police compared to whites, and this difference is statistically significant at $p < .001$ level. Furthermore, when comparing whites and other racial/ethnic groups, the data in Tables 3 and 4 suggest that the differences in mean scores were not statistical significant at $p < .05$, except for the "others" category (e.g., Asians [M = 96.25, SD = 13.022, $p < .951$], Latinos [M = 88.86, SD = 24.079, $p < .705$], Native Americans [M = 87.50, SD = 13.435, $p < .955$], and Others [M = 12.53, SD = 3.878, $p < .016$]). In light of this empirical evidence, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Table 3

One-Factor ANOVA for the Attitudes toward the Police as a Function of Race/Ethnicity (n = 531)

Variables	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Asian	20	96.25	13.022
Black	85	81.38	19.789
Latino	7	88.86	24.079
Native Americans	2	87.50	13.435
White	384	100.57	21.996
Others	33	88.03	21.534
Total	531	96.35	22.513

Note: $R^2 = .107$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .098$). Dependent Variable: Attitudes toward the Police.

Table 4

Post-Hoc Comparisons Using the Tukey HSD Test Comparing Whites and all other Racial/Ethnic Groups (n = 531)

Variables		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Race I vs.	Race II			
Whites	Asians	4.32	4.903	.951
	Blacks	19.19	2.562	.000
	Latinos	11.71	8.153	.705
	Native Americans	13.07	15.155	.955
	Others	12.53	3.878	.016

Note: Dependent Variable: Attitudes toward the Police.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to whites. To test hypotheses 3, a one-factor between-groups analysis of variance was conducted (see Tables 5 and 6). Again the subjects were divided into six groups according to their race (group 1: Asians; group 2: Blacks, group 3: Latinos; group 4: Native Americans; group 5: Whites; and group 6: Others and Biracial or Multiracial). A one-factor analysis of variance (Table 5) shows that the mean scores for blacks and whites are not the same for all three crime-reporting measures. Additionally, the Post-Hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD

test (Table 6) indicates that the mean score for blacks (M = 19.66, SD = 9.154, $p < .0005$) was significantly lower than the mean score for whites (M = 23.57, SD = 8.401) for the reporting of less serious crimes. This means that blacks are less likely to report less serious crimes to the police. For the reporting of serious crimes, the mean score for blacks (M = 39.16, SD = 9.921, $p < .0005$) was also significantly lower than the mean score for whites (M = 44.91, SD = 6.994). This tells us that blacks are also less likely to report serious crimes to the police compared to whites. The difference in mean scores for the reporting of medium-level crimes, on the other hand, did not reach statistical significance ($p < .265$). Thus, the results about the reporting of medium-level crimes are inconclusive.

The data in Tables 5 and 6 tell us that blacks, in general, are less likely to report crimes to the police. Thus, our initial hypothesis that blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police was incorrect. Since the difference between blacks and whites did not reach statistical significance for at least one of the three crime-reporting measures, and yet we found evidence to the contrary of our initial hypothesis, hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Table 5

One-Factor ANOVA for Crime-Reporting Behavior as a Function of Race/Ethnicity (n = 531)

Variables	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Crime-Reporting 1				
Asian	20	17.95	7.141	
Black	85	19.66	9.154	
Latino	7	23.29	6.237	
Native Americans	2	22.00	8.485	
White	384	23.57	8.401	
Others	33	21.03	9.729	
Total	531	22.56	8.686	
Crime-Reporting 2				
Asian	20	17.40	5.826	
Black	85	21.98	6.736	
Latino	7	20.14	8.071	
Native Americans			2 .707	28.50
White	385	22.73	5.070	
Others	33	20.30	7.804	
Total	531	22.24	5.737	
Crime-Reporting 3				
Asian	20	34.50	12.996	
Black	85	39.16	9.921	
Latino	7	38.86	15.148	
Native Americans	2	49.50	.707	
White	385	44.91	6.994	
Others	33	39.27	12.885	
Total	531	43.19	8.864	

Note: Crime-Reporting 1 = Measure of the reporting of less serious crimes. Crime-Reporting 2 = Measure of the reporting of medium-level crimes. Crime-Reporting 3 = Measure of the reporting of serious crimes.

Table 6

Post-Hoc Comparisons Using the Tukey HSD Test Comparing Whites and all other Racial/Ethnic Groups (n = 531)

Variables		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Race I vs.	Race II			
Crime-Reporting 1				
Whites	Asians	5.62	1.961	.004
	Blacks	3.91	1.025	.000
	Latinos	.28	3.261	.930
	Native Americans	1.57	6.061	.796
	Others	2.54	1.551	.102
Crime-Reporting 2				
Whites	Asians	5.33	1.291	.000
	Blacks	.75	.675	.265
	Latinos	2.59	2.147	.229
	Native Americans	-5.77	3.992	.149
	Others	2.43	1.021	.018
Crime-Reporting 3				
Whites	Asians	10.41	1.923	.000
	Blacks	5.75	1.005	.000
	Latinos	6.05	3.198	.059
	Native Americans	-4.59	5.944	.440
	Others	5.64	1.521	.000

Note: Crime-Reporting 1 = Measure of the reporting of less serious crimes. Crime-Reporting 2 = Measure of the reporting of medium-level crimes. Crime-Reporting 3 = Measure of the reporting of serious crimes.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that people of higher socio-economic status (e.g., middle-class, upper middle-class, and the rich) are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to individuals of lower socio-economic status (e.g., lower middle-class and the poor). The bivariate analyses in Table 7 indicate that socio-economic status has a positive effect on crime-reporting behavior. However, the data in Table 7 indicate that the effect of SES on crime-reporting behavior did not reach the specified statistical significance level of $p < .05$, ($p < .583$ for predicting the reporting of less serious crimes, $p < .539$ for predicting medium-level crimes,

and p < .650 for predicting serious crimes). Even after controlling for the effect of other variables at the multivariate analysis, SES appeared to be insignificant in predicting crime-reporting behavior. The multivariate regression analyses in Tables 2 show that when controlling for the effect of other variables in the model, SES has a negative effect on the reporting of less serious crimes [partial b = -.487, F (17, 513) = 12.128, p < .180], a positive effect on the reporting of medium-level crimes [partial b = .215, F (17, 513) = 3.894, p < .421], and a negative effect on the reporting of serious crimes [partial b = -.162, F (17, 513) = 8.646, p < .675]. Since the effect of SES on crime-reporting behavior is in disagreement with the initial hypothesis and yet it did not reach the specified significance level of p < .05 in the bivariate level or the multivariate level, hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Table 7

Bivariate Regression Analysis: Regressing Crime-Reporting Behavior on Socio-Economic Status (n = 531)

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t
Constant (1)	21.930	1.218	----	----
Socio-Economic Status	.220	.400	.024	.549
R^2 = .001, F (1, 529) = .301				
Constant (2)	21.774	.804	----	----
Socio-Economic Status	.162	.264	.027	.615
R^2 = .001, F (1, 529) = .378				
Constant (3)	42.650	1.243	----	----
Socio-Economic Status	.185	.408	.020	.454
R^2 = .000, F (1, 529) = .206				

Note: ***Significance at the .001 level. **Significance at the .01 level. *Significance at the .05 level. Dependent Variables: Constant (1) = Crime-reporting 1 (scale for measuring the reporting of less serious crimes). Constant (2) = Crime-reporting 2 (scale for measuring the reporting of medium-level crimes). Constant (3) = Crime-reporting 3 (scale for measuring the reporting of serious crimes).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that people of higher socio-economic status (e.g., middle-class, upper middle-class, and the rich) are more likely to report property crimes to the police compared to individuals of lower socio-economic status (e.g., lower middle-class and the poor). The bivariate regression analysis in Table 8 shows that SES has a positive effect on the reporting of property crimes [b = .153, F (1, 529) = 1.157, p < .283]. This means that an increase of one unit in socio-economic status (i.e., from poor to lower middle-class or from lower middle-class to middle-class) produces an average linear contribution of .153 units increase in the reporting of property crimes to the police. In other words, this tells us that an increase in the socio-economic status is followed by an increase in willingness to report property crimes to the police. However, the hypothesis about the positive effect of SES on the reporting of property crimes is rejected since this effect did not reach the specified statistical significance of p < .05.

Table 8

Bivariate Regression Analysis: Regressing Crime-Reporting Behavior for Property Crimes on Socio-Economic Status (n = 531)

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t
Constant	10.240	.433	----	----
Socio-Economic Status	.153	.142	.047	1.076

R^2 = .002
F (1, 529) = 1.157

Note: ***Significance at the .001 level. **Significance at the .01 level. *Significance at the .05 level.
Dependent Variable: Willingness to Report Property Crimes.

6. Discussion

Empirical evidence shows that the link between personal experiences, attitudes toward the police, and crime-reporting behavior is mainly based on certain personal characteristics

such as age, gender, race, and socio-economic status. However, the existing empirical evidence is contradictive. This means, there is partial support for the effects of demographic characteristics on crime-reporting behavior and attitudes toward the police. Therefore, in an attempt to redefine rival research finding, further testing is needed. To test the influence of these demographic characteristics on crime-reporting behavior and attitudes toward the police, in this study we developed and tested five research hypotheses.

Hypothesis one predicted that women are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to men. By gender, prior literature suggests that males are less likely to report crimes to the police compared to their female counterparts (Hawdon & Ryan, 2003; Thurman & Reisig, 1996; Frank et al., 2005; Carcach, 1997; Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Bachman, 1998). Consistent with prior literature, the findings of the current study show that males are significantly less likely to report crimes to the police. This finding is independent of other demographic (e.g., race/ethnicity and socio-economic status) and non-demographic variables (e.g., prior victimization, police behavior, attitudes toward the police, fear or criminal retaliation, etc.) included in the model.

Moreover, most researchers who have studied crime-reporting behavior have included race among the main crime-reporting predictors. Race has also been used to predict attitudes toward the police (Avdija, 2010). To put this into context, the existing literature suggests that, by race, blacks are more likely to become the target of police-initiated contacts (Bates & Fasenfest, 2005; see also Chiricos et al., 2004; Warren & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2009). Davis's (2000) study, for example, indicates that African Americans are more likely to have involuntary contacts with the police (Davis, 2000). The Bureau of Justice Statistics's (2007a) study also shows that minorities are more likely to experience police-initiated contacts compared to whites (see also Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Schafer et al., 2003; for reviews). Thus, according to the existing literature, past negative experiences are more likely to occur from police-initiated contacts, and those contacts are more likely to involve

minorities, which in turn produce negative effects on attitudes toward the police. In the context of this study, hypothesis two predicted that by race, blacks are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police compared to whites. However, since blacks statistically have more frequent contacts with the police, and in fact are more often victims of crime (see Howell et al., 2004; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001, 2002, 2007a; see also Bachman, 1998; Liska, 1992; Davis & Henderson, 2003; for reviews), hypothesis three predicted that blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police.

Consistent with prior literature, the findings of the current study show that, by race, blacks are more likely to display negative attitudes toward the police compared to whites and other racial groups (e.g., Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans). On the subject of crime-reporting behavior, the current study shows that blacks are less likely to report crimes to the police. These findings were also statistically supported at the multivariate analyses, which confirmed that blacks are less likely to report crimes to the police compared to whites. Thus, our initial hypothesis that blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police was incorrect. Researchers who suggested in prior studies that, by race, blacks are more likely to report crimes to the police will not find evidence to support their findings in the current study.

Finally, a great number of researchers have attempted to link socio-economic status to crime-reporting behavior. Along this edge, prior research indicates that people who live in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods – the poor and the unemployed – are less likely to report crimes to the police (Smith, 1986; Goudriaan et al., 2006; Baumer, 2002). In this context, hypothesis four predicted that individuals with higher socio-economic status (e.g., middle-class, upper middle-class, and the rich) are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to individuals with lower socio-economic status (e.g., the poor and the lower middle-class). Moreover, by the types of crimes (e.g., property crimes vs. crimes against persons), research shows that the percentage of reported property crimes increases as

the household income increases (Skogan, 1984, 1976a; Goudriaan, 2006; Greenberg, 1979). Thus, hypothesis five predicted that individuals with higher socio-economic status are more likely to report property crimes to the police compared to individuals with lower socio-economic status.

The findings of the current study are consistent with the prior literature showing that an increase in socio-economic status (i.e., from poor to lower middle-class or from lower middle-class to middle-class) is manifested with an increase in the reporting of crimes in general and an increase on the reporting of property crimes, in specific. Regardless of this positive relationship between the socio-economic status and crime-reporting behavior, these findings did not reach the specified significance level of $p < .05$ and as such, it is reasonable to conclude that socio-economic status is not a good predictor of crime-reporting behavior.

In summation, the findings of the current study suggest that of the three demographic variables that were tested in this study (e.g., gender, race, and socio-economic status), gender and race were the best predictors of crime-reporting behavior, the main dependent variable. Both of these two variables had a significant and substantial effect on crime-reporting behavior. With regard to age, prior research shows that age is identified as a strong predictor of crime-reporting behavior. The logic behind this assertion is that younger citizens are more likely to have more frequent and more negative contacts with the police; therefore, making them more inclined to form negative perceptions about the police. It is worthy to mention that we did not develop or test a research hypothesis about age since we did not have enough variance in the sample to draw empirical conclusions about the effect of age on crime-reporting behavior or attitudes toward the police. In this study, gender and socio-economic status have produced mixed results. However, gender coupled with the attitudes factor becomes a strong predictor of crime-reporting behavior. In this context, we conclude that females in general are more likely to report crimes to the police compared to males. Socio-economic status, on the other hand, offers a two-dimensional explanation of crime-reporting behavior. Low-income residents are less likely to

report property crimes compared to high-income residents. But, low-income residents are more likely to report crimes against persons than high-income residents.

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