

Cooperation with the police: a path analysis of residents in two Arab American-concentrated cities

Cooperation
with the police

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Abstract

Purpose – This study seeks to answer (1) how perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and disorder affect residents' cooperation with the police, both directly and indirectly through perceptions of the police and (2) how Arab American ethnicity moderates the linkages between perceived collective efficacy, disorder and cooperation.

Design/methodology/approach – Relying on survey interview data from a probability sample of 414 residents in Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, MI and path model analysis, this study tests an explanatory model of public cooperation with the police that integrates both neighborhood and policing factors.

Findings – Perceived neighborhood disorder undermines residents' desires to cooperate, and this influence is chiefly direct. Meanwhile, although no significant total effect, perception of neighborhood collective efficacy does have a positive effect on cooperation through the mediator of positive assessment of police effectiveness. Further, collective efficacy has a direct, positive effect on cooperation among Arab Americans only. Finally, perceptions of police equal treatment and effectiveness, rather than procedural justice, are significant correlates of public cooperation.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the extremely limited literature on policing and Arab American communities. The findings can deepen the understanding on why and for which groups neighborhood context is related to cooperation with the police. Findings can also add to the knowledge base for designing policies and practices that help secure and promote public support and cooperation in both Arab and non-Arab communities.

Keywords Collective efficacy, Arab Americans, Disorder, Cooperation with police, Perception of the police

Paper type Research paper



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Introduction

The police have received much public scrutiny in the past few years. Social movements such as “Black Lives Matter” and “Defund the Police” have emerged as citizens seek to influence policies and practices that improve police performance and accountability. Against this context, it is pivotal to continue the decades-long research on police-community relations including public willingness to cooperate with the police. Public cooperation is critical for the police to effectively perform their core functions of crime control and order maintenance (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003) and reflects essential principles of democratic policing (Heymann, 1997). Research efforts that investigate the factors accounting for people’s willingness to cooperate, especially among understudied groups, are highly warranted.

Much of the research on cooperation has centered on individuals’ assessments of the police. A Tylerian perspective of police legitimacy and public cooperation has dominated this line of inquiry, which suggests that people’s voluntary cooperation with the police is a function of police performance (effectiveness), distributive justice, and particularly, procedural justice (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). This concentration on policing variables is understandable as the dialectical relationships between the police and the public determine that people’s orientations toward the police relate closely to the way that the police treat them. Nonetheless, factors beyond police actions and behaviors can shape cooperation tendencies (Jackson *et al.*, 2012; Khatchatourian *et al.*, 2022; Kochel, 2018; Nix *et al.*, 2015; Papp *et al.*, 2019). A nascent literature examines the effects of neighborhood context on willingness to cooperate, revealing significant factors such as perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and disorder (Kochel, 2018; Liu *et al.*, 2020; Wehrman and De Angelis, 2011).

This study tests a conceptual model of cooperation that integrates both neighborhood and policing factors (Figure 1). The model proposes that neighborhood characteristics can affect public cooperation both directly and indirectly through policing variables. Previous research that includes both neighborhood and policing predictors tends to assess their independent effect on cooperation (e.g., Liu *et al.*, 2020). Yet, neighborhood conditions can shape both policing and people’s reactions to policing (Klinger, 1997), hence the viability and necessity to

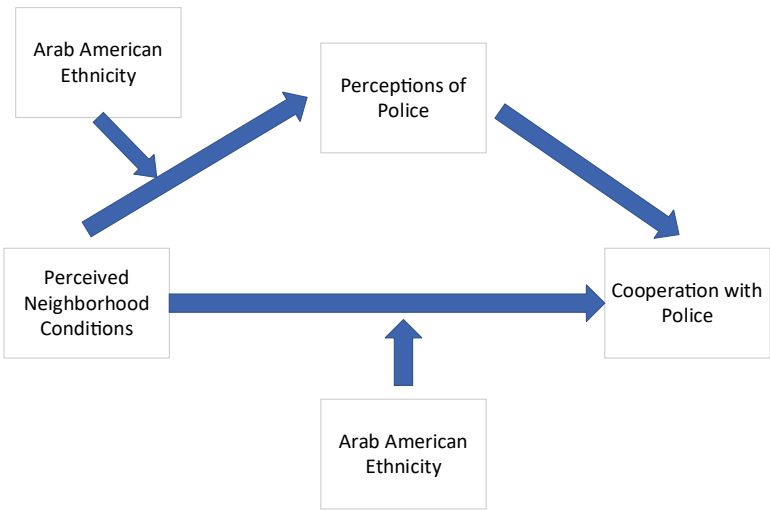


Figure 1.
The conceptual model
of public cooperation
with the police

assess the combined roles that context and policing variables may play in affecting cooperation. Indeed, [Kochel \(2018\)](#) revealed that in crime hot spots in St. Louis, MO, perceived reduced collective efficacy and high victimization risk relate to residents' perceptions of reliance on the police, which further relate to their cooperation. Similarly, [Jackson *et al.* \(2012\)](#) posited that procedural justice can mediate the relationship between collective efficacy and cooperation. Along this line of research, this study evaluates the relationships between perceived collective efficacy, disorder and willingness to cooperate, with perceptions of procedural justice, effectiveness and equal treatment positioned as mediators in these relationships.

In addition, this study evaluates the moderating effect of ethnicity, focusing on Arab Americans, on the relationship between neighborhood context and cooperation ([Figure 1](#)). Although research on minorities' cooperation with the police has been growing (e.g., [Murphy *et al.*, 2018](#); [Wehrman and De Angelis, 2011](#)), studies that include non-black, non-Hispanic minority groups remain limited. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Arabs (particularly Arab Muslims) have been a group highly scrutinized by the police. The aftermath of war on terrorism and heightened public suspicion of Arab Americans as terrorists have generated extra challenges for maintaining positive relationships between the police and Arab American communities. Empirical research on Arab Americans' perceptions of and willingness to cooperate with the police, however, continues to be sparse ([Sun and Wu, 2015](#); [Tyler *et al.*, 2010](#)). Understanding this population's experience is pivotal for uncovering the variant and invariant correlates of cooperation across ethnic groups.

Relying on a probability sample of 414 residents in two Arab American-concentrated cities in Michigan, this study aims to answer two questions: (1) how do perceived neighborhood conditions of collective efficacy and disorder affect residents' cooperation with the police both directly and indirectly through the mediating variables of perceptions of the police? (2) how does Arab American ethnicity moderate the linkages between perceived neighborhood context, perceptions of the police and cooperation with the police? This study contributes to the literature in two main areas. Theoretically, the moderated mediation model tested deepens our understanding of *why* neighborhood context is related to residents' cooperative tendencies, highlighting the roles that various policing variables play in explaining neighborhood effects on cooperation. The model also allows us to assess the moderating effect of being Arab American on the connections between neighborhood context, perceptions of the police and cooperation, revealing *for which group(s)* that neighborhood context is related to cooperative tendencies. These findings help isolate group effects and highlight cultural and ethnic influences. Practically, these findings add to the knowledge base for designing policies and practices that help secure and promote public support and cooperation in both Arab and non-Arab communities.

Literature review

The direct relationship between neighborhood context and cooperation

Neighborhood characteristics can shape people's reactions to policing. According to the social disorganization theory, disadvantaged neighborhoods, often indicated by such structural characteristics as high levels of poverty and residential mobility, tend to have lower levels of informal social control ([Bursik and Grasmick, 1993](#)) or collective efficacy ([Sampson *et al.*, 1997](#)), leading to higher levels of crime. The theory traditionally focuses on the outcomes of neighborhood crime and delinquency rates but can also be applied to predicting levels of willingness and capacity among community residents for indirect

social control, i.e., intervention through notifying the police (Slocum *et al.*, 2010; Warner, 2007).

A key neighborhood condition, collective efficacy, may directly impact residents' willingness to cooperate. Collective efficacy refers to the mutual trust and social cohesion among neighbors who are willing to intervene for common goals (Sampson *et al.*, 1997). Higher levels of perceived collective efficacy can directly promote residents' willingness to cooperate with the police, holding the perception of police variables such as police effectiveness, fairness and legitimacy constant (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2021). When community residents share trust and care for one another, they create a culture of accountability and safety (Hawdon and Ryan, 2011). Further, well-organized neighborhoods tend to have a stronger capacity to obtain public resources and connect with the police (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993), strengthening residents' confidence that they can collaborate with the police for community safety.

Another key neighborhood factor that may influence residents' willingness to cooperate with the police is disorder. Disorder represents minor disruptions of societal norms, and its signs can be physical or social. The former is characterized by conditions such as broken windows, littering and blighted buildings, and the latter is illustrated by activities such as public drunkenness, loud parties and unsupervised youths on the streets (Ross and Mirowsky, 1999). Evidence shows that perceived neighborhood disorder has a direct negative influence on residents' willingness to cooperate (Wehrman and De Angelis, 2011). Disorder signals a lack of social control and cohesion among residents (Skogan, 1990), discouraging them from actively working with the police in crime control. In addition, signs of disorder can increase residents' fear of crime (Skogan, 1990), including fear of being retaliated against if reporting crime to the police (Papp *et al.*, 2019). Wehrman and De Angelis (2011) found that after controlling for satisfaction with the police, individual feelings of safety in the neighborhood and satisfaction with the quality and safety of city streets increase people's willingness to work with police to improve quality of life.

The indirect relationship between neighborhood context and cooperation

Neighborhood context may affect public tendency to cooperate with the police through the mediating mechanism of perceptions of the police. The front part of this mediation model involves the effects of neighborhood conditions, both structural characteristics and process quality, on perception of the police. Researchers have reported a positive impact of neighborhood collective efficacy on perceptions of the police, including assessment of police effectiveness and procedural justice (Nix *et al.*, 2015; Wu *et al.*, 2011). Likely, people who report higher levels of mutual trust and cohesion with neighbors have higher levels of generalized trust in society, conducive to their greater trust in the police (Wu *et al.*, 2012). Also possibly, neighborhoods with greater collective efficacy often have lower risks of crime victimization (Sampson *et al.*, 1997), contributing to the residents' satisfaction with the police, particularly police effectiveness in crime control.

Meanwhile, since the police are often considered the key institution for crime control and order maintenance, perceived neighborhood disorder can undermine people's perceptions of the police (Reisig and Parks, 2000). Those who live in neighborhoods with more disorder problems tend to hold lower levels of confidence in police effectiveness and accountability (Skogan, 2009). Further, certain policing disorder strategies, such as New York City's zero-tolerance policing, can bring more aggressive and biased police actions toward neighborhood residents, damaging public evaluations of police procedural justice and equal treatment of different groups (Greene, 1999).

The rear part of the mediation model illustrates the relationship between perceptions of the police and cooperation with the police. Studies conducted in the US and other Western

societies have generally found police treatment, particularly procedural justice, a key antecedent of public cooperation (Bolger and Walters, 2019). A few studies conducted in non-Western countries demonstrate that police effectiveness remains a highly prominent predictor of cooperation (Tankebe, 2009; Sun *et al.*, 2017). This study includes three evaluative areas of the police, including equal treatment, effectiveness and procedural justice, to capture both normative and instrumental explanations of public cooperation.

The most popular normative explanation of cooperation with the police is the procedural justice theory of police legitimacy, arguing that people are more willing to cooperate when they perceive the police as legitimate, and such legitimacy partially derives from police performance (e.g., effectiveness) but most notably from procedural justice (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). Police officers are procedurally just when they show politeness and respect, remain neutral during decision-making, encourage citizens to express opinions and explain to citizens their behaviors and decisions. The instrumental motivation of cooperation, based on a theory of rational choice, focuses on outcomes such as crime control efforts (Papp *et al.*, 2019). Police effectiveness promotes people's willingness to turn to the police for help and protection (Tankebe, 2009; Sun *et al.*, 2017), especially in neighborhoods that are high-crime and at-risk (Wu and Mieth, 2022). A policing variable that has not received much attention in the cooperation literature is equal treatment (i.e., whether residents believe police treat all groups equally). Most Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity and social class, support the principle of equal treatment by the police (Weitzer and Tuch, 1999). If racial profiling or discrimination by the police is believed to happen, public support for the police decreases (Nix *et al.*, 2015). Perception of equal treatment, therefore, represents another salient normative explanation of public cooperation that deserves investigation.

The moderating effect of ethnicity on neighborhood context - cooperation connection

The effect of neighborhood context on cooperation may vary by race and ethnicity. Research starts to investigate the interactional effects of race/ethnicity and neighborhood conditions on police-resident relations. For example, data from Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky revealed that in low-disadvantaged neighborhoods, Black residents were less satisfied with the police than White residents, but in high-disadvantaged neighborhoods, race was not predictive of satisfaction (Wu *et al.*, 2009). Based on data from Trinidad and Tobago, Kochel (2017) found that the effect of race/ethnicity on perceptions of police legitimacy does not vary between high- and low-crime, or high and low collective efficacy neighborhoods. It remains unknown whether the effects of neighborhood collective efficacy and disorder on residents' willingness to cooperate with the police vary by Arab- and non-Arab American ethnicity.

The positive effect of perceived collective efficacy on cooperation may be stronger among Arab than non-Arab Americans, considering collectivism as a dominant value in the Arab culture (Fakhfakh, 2011). In contrast to the United States and its individualistic culture, the Arabic culture is categorized as collectivistic, emphasizing individual identity as based on their social system and individuals as dependent on their organizations and communities (Buda and Elsayed-Elkhoully, 1998). This collectivistic culture may contribute to a stronger influence of collective efficacy on cooperation among Arab Americans via two mechanisms. First, in neighborhoods where residents perceive higher levels of mutual trust, cohesion and group efforts, all being positive community features that Arab Americans especially value and pursue, their willingness to work with local police in crime control efforts may be elevated, possibly due to their enhanced satisfaction with social life and desires to maintain safe community life. Second, Arab residents may be more inclined than non-Arab residents to mimic their neighbors' orientations toward the police due to collectivism. Such learning/socialization effect could be especially profound in well-integrated neighborhoods that also happen to have more positive police-resident relationships with neighborhood norms

supporting cooperation with the police. Additionally, the indirect effect of perceived collective efficacy on cooperation via perceptions of the police may be larger among Arab than non-Arab Americans due to the same reasons of collectivistic values.

Meanwhile, the effect of perceived disorder on cooperation may be less strong among Arab than non-Arab Americans. A recent qualitative study (Zaatut and Jacobsen, 2022) found that Arab Americans' perception of victimization risk was not impacted by the presence of crime and disorder in and around their neighborhood, countering the commonly found linkage between disorder and fear of crime in the general population (Gibson *et al.*, 2002). This overall feeling of safety despite signs of disorder may come from the strong sense of community Arab immigrants felt inside their ethnic enclave (Zaatut and Jacobsen, 2022). If Arab American residents are less sensitive to the disorder conditions of their neighborhood, then the direct and indirect effect of perceived disorder on cooperation may be less evident as well.

Methods

Study setting

This study was conducted in the cities of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights located in the southwest suburb of Detroit, MI. Large waves of Arab American residents moved to the Metro-Detroit area in the 1920s to work primarily in the auto industry (the headquarters of Ford Company is in Dearborn), but the area continues to attract new immigrants and refugees from the Arab world in the following century. Dearborn is the center of Arab America, with Arab Americans accounting for 47% of the city's 109,976 residents in 2020 (City of Dearborn, 2022). Filled with Arabic shops, restaurants and mosques, Dearborn has a city council primarily governed by Arab American representatives and recently elected its first Arab American mayor in 2021. Dearborn Heights, adjacent to Dearborn, is also an Arab American-concentrated area with approximately 27% of the 62,451 residents of Arab ancestry (United States Census Bureau, 2022). This residential concentration allowed the researchers to use probability sampling methods to select a more representative sample of the population.

Compared to average Arab Americans across the nation, Arab Americans in the Metro-Detroit area are more likely to be bilingual and speak Arabic at home, have lower levels of education and family income and be Muslim (Weaver, 2010). Kayyali (2013, p. 1299) observed that in recent decades, "the rise of multiculturalism and ethnic pride, combined with influxes of new, more diverse immigrants, has created large segments of Arab Americans who do not feel 'white' and who perceive themselves as persons of color" and this observation certainly applies to the Arab communities in the study areas. Arabic cultural values are widely endorsed and Arab communities are highly institutionalized with organized community and political lives (Wu *et al.*, 2017).

The police-community relationship in the study areas has improved over time and is currently quite positive (Sun and Wu, 2015). In 2008, Dearborn had its first Arab American police chief, under whose 13-year leadership the department continued to increase its Arab American officer representation. In 2021, the Dearborn police hired its first Muslim and Arab American chief. Notably, local police had done a great job in responding to Arab Americans' concerns about retaliation and hate crimes after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Ramirez *et al.*, 2004). The police quickly strengthened their protection of Arab institutions and neighborhoods after 9/11, resulting in enhanced trust and collaboration between Arab American communities and police, preventing a major police-Arab community crisis that some other parts of the nation experienced (Sun and Wu, 2015). It is not surprising that among a sample of 1,000 adults of Arabic or Chaldean descent in Metro-Detroit, an overwhelming majority (85%) reported positive ratings of their local police (Sun and Wu, 2015).

Related to police protection efforts, the group characteristics of Arab Americans in Metro-Detroit may also serve as a buffer to criminal victimization. Wu and Klahm (2019) found that Arab Americans from Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, MI were not subject to higher rates of victimization than non-Arab Americans. This aligns with previous research indicating that attacks on persons and property were more likely to occur in suburban areas where Arab Muslims were a notable minority compared to the city and other suburbs where there were higher concentrations of Arabs (Cainkar, 2005).

Data collection

Data were collected between June and July of 2014. The sampling frame consisted of a list of all residential addresses obtained from the assessor's offices in Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, and a random number generator function was used to select household addresses from the sampling frame. Following address selection, a total of ten trained interviewers, eight bilingual, went door-to-door to introduce the project and invite adult residents to participate in the survey interview. Survey questionnaires were prepared in both English and standard Arabic versions, using the standard practice of double translation. Interested respondents chose whether the survey interview was conducted in Arabic or English. The interviewers then read the questions and recorded the responses of the participants. On average, the interviews ranged between 30–40 minutes. As a sign of appreciation for their support, a \$20 gift card for a big box store was given to the participants after the interview. A largely equivalent number of Arab American ($n = 211$) and non-Arab American ($n = 203$) households participated in the study. The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) cooperation rate was 65.97% while the AAPOR response rate was 33%.

Measures

Dependent variable

An additive scale of three items was used to assess respondents' willingness to cooperate with the police. The respondents were asked to indicate their likelihood to (1) call the police to report a crime or suspicious activity occurring in their neighborhood; (2) help the police find someone suspected of committing a crime (by providing them with information); and (3) be a witness in court. These items arguably represent different levels of support for police work of crime control and criminal apprehension. Compared to reporting crime and providing tips about crime to the police, serving as a witness and giving evidence in court requires more commitment in time and energy and may generate more safety concerns. The response categories were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *completely likely*. Table 1 reports all additive scales and their associated items in this study. All these scales have acceptable internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70.

Exogenous variables

Perceived collective efficacy was assessed using a summative scale of five items such as: "People in my neighborhood can be trusted" and "People in my neighborhood feel like the neighborhood is close-knit". Similarly, perceived neighborhood disorder was constructed with a summative scale of five items such as: "There's trash lying around in my neighborhood", "I see rundown buildings/unkept lots/abandoned cars in my neighborhood", and "I see people drunk or high on drugs in public in my neighborhood". Response categories to these questions ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree*, to 4 = *strongly agree*.

A dummy variable specifies the respondents' ethnicity (0 = non-Arab American; 1 = Arab American). Interactional terms are formed between Arab American and collective efficacy and between Arab American and disorder.

Table 1.
Additive scales with
associated items and
reliability test results

Scales and items	Cronbach's <i>a</i>
<i>Willingness to cooperate</i>	0.77
How likely to report a crime or suspicious activity in the neighborhood	
How likely to help the police to find a suspect	
How likely to be a witness in court	
<i>Collective efficacy</i>	0.72
People in my neighborhood can be trusted	
People in my neighborhood don't get along with each other (reverse coded)	
People in my neighborhood feel like the neighborhood is "close-knit"	
Neighbors will do something to stop someone breaking into a house	
Neighbors will intervene if children skip school and hang out on street corner	
<i>Disorder</i>	0.76
Trash lying around my neighborhood	
Rundown buildings/unkempt lots/abandoned cars in my neighborhood	
People drunk or high on drugs in public in my neighborhood	
Inconsiderate neighbors	
Unsupervised youths hang out on the street in my neighborhood	
<i>Equal treatment</i>	0.92
Police treat wealthy people better than poor people	
Police treat English-speaking people better than non-English speaking people	
People treat Whites better than Blacks	
Police treat Whites better than Hispanics/Latinos	
Police treat Whites better than Arab Americans	
<i>Procedural justice</i>	0.75
Local police are usually friendly	
Local police do not give people a chance to explain (reverse coded)	
Local police do not show concern when you ask them questions (reverse coded)	
<i>Effectiveness</i>	0.83
Local police respond quickly to calls for help and assistance	
Local police do a good job in solving crime	
Local police do a good job in preventing crime	
Local police do a good job in responding to crime victims	
Local police are able to maintain order on the streets in the neighborhood	

Mediating variables

The mediating variables indicate perceptions of police equal treatment, effectiveness and procedural justice. Respondents were asked about their opinion on five statements, such as "Police treat wealthy people better than poor people", "Police treat English-speaking people better than non-English speaking people", and "Police treat Whites better than Arab Americans". For procedural justice, respondents were asked about three statements: "Local police are friendly", "Local police do not give people a chance to explain", and "Local police do not show concern when you ask them questions". Then for effectiveness, respondents were asked if they agreed with five statements such as "Local police respond quickly to calls for help and assistance" and "Local police do a good job in solving crime". The responses to all the perception of the police items ranged from 1 = *strongly agree* to 4 = *strongly disagree*. Some responses were reverse coded so higher values represent more positive views of the police.

Control variables

Control variables include basic demographic characteristics of *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female), *age* (0 = 26 or older; 1 = 18–25), *education* (1 = no school; 2 = primary school graduate, 3 = middle school graduate, 4 = high school graduate; 5 = some college; 6 = college graduate; and 7 = graduate or professional degree), employment status (0 = not employed

full-time, 1 = employed full-time) and household income (1 = less than \$5,000–24,999, 2 = \$25,000–49,999, 3 = \$50,000–89,999, 4 = \$90,000 and above). The city identifier is also controlled (0 = Dearborn Heights; 1 = Dearborn).

Analysis

We used a moderated mediation analysis to investigate the relationships among all variables. Specifically, we employed three parallel mediators (i.e., three concurrent pathways of perceptions of the police) to evaluate the underlying processes that link perceived neighborhood characteristics to willingness to cooperate. We also assess the potential moderating effect of Arab American ethnicity on the relationships between neighborhood conditions and cooperation. Multicollinearity was not a concern, since all VIFs associated with the predictors of cooperation with the police are lower than 4. The highest VIFs are among collective efficacy, disorder and their interaction terms with Arab American. The two key exogenous variables, collective efficacy and disorder, are only moderately correlated (Pearson's $r = -0.32$). Lastly, the assumption of normality for the outcome variable is not violated (Skewness = -1.10 ; Kurtosis = 0.91).

The path analysis was performed using Mplus 8.3 which calculates indirect effects using the product of the coefficients approach (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). We applied the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) method to address missing data. As presented in Table 2, the missing data mostly exist in the three policing variables and the household income variable. Excluding these missing data from analysis produced results almost identical to the results of using FIML.

Results

Direct effects of perceived collective efficacy and disorder

Table 3 reports the direct effects of all predictors on the outcome. Results (Column "Cooperation" in Table 3) show that perceived neighborhood collective efficacy does not exert any significant, direct effect on people's willingness to cooperate, after controlling for other independent (e.g., disorder, police effectiveness) and control variables. Perceived

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
<i>Outcome variable</i>					
Willingness to cooperate	12.40	2.69	3	15	411
<i>Exogenous variables</i>					
Perceived collective efficacy	16.39	2.86	5	20	398
Perceived disorder	7.12	2.96	5	20	411
Arab American ethnicity	0.51	0.50	0	1	414
<i>Mediating variables</i>					
Police equal treatment	13.74	4.83	5	20	393
Police effectiveness	17.24	2.87	7	20	392
Police procedural justice	9.19	2.34	3	12	397
<i>Control variables</i>					
Female	0.56	0.50	0	1	404
Young (18–25)	0.16	0.37	0	1	413
Education	5.14	1.25	1	7	410
Employed full-time	0.40	0.49	0	1	409
Household income	2.25	0.97	1	4	329
Dearborn	0.75	0.43	0	1	412

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics of
variables

Table 3.
The direct effects of
perceived collective
efficacy and
disorder on
cooperation ($n = 414$)

	Equal treatment	Effectiveness	Procedural justice	Cooperation
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Perceived collective efficacy	0.17* (0.08)	0.29*** (0.08)	0.20* (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)
Perceived disorder	0.08 (0.08)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.16* (0.07)
Arab American household	-0.04 (0.05)	0.00 (0.05)	-0.16** (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Perceived collective efficacy $\times$ Arab	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.16* (0.07)
Perceived disorder $\times$ Arab	-0.18* (0.07)	-0.07 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)
Equal treatment	-	-	-	0.13* (0.05)
Effectiveness	-	-	-	0.23*** (0.05)
Procedural justice	-	-	-	0.01 (0.05)
<i>Control variables</i>				
Female	-0.13** (0.05)	0.00 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)
Young (18-25)	-0.17*** (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.15*** (0.05)
Education	-0.10 (0.05)	-0.14** (0.05)	-0.16** (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Employed full-time	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)
Household income	-0.12* (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)	0.07 (0.07)	0.10 (0.06)
Dearborn	0.15** (0.05)	0.16*** (0.05)	0.13** (0.05)	0.13** (0.05)
R^2	0.13	0.16	0.11	0.24
Note(s): Standardized coefficients are reported				
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$				

neighborhood disorder, meanwhile, has a significant, negative, direct relationship with cooperation ($\beta = -0.16, p < 0.05$). Individuals who believe their neighborhoods have higher levels of disorder report lower levels of tendency to cooperate, after controlling for perceived collective efficacy, perception of police variables and control variables. Further, while Arab American does not have a significant direct effect on cooperation, it moderates the effect of collective efficacy on cooperation ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$). That is, while perceived collective efficacy does not shape non-Arab Americans' willingness to cooperate, it is positively associated with Arab Americans' cooperation.

Concerning the policing variables, both perception of police equal treatment ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.05$) and perception of police effectiveness ($\beta = 0.23, p < 0.001$) have direct, positive effects on cooperation. In terms of the control variables, younger residents report lower desires to cooperate ($\beta = -0.15, p < 0.001$) and residents of Dearborn ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.01$) report greater willingness to cooperate.

Before discussing the indirect effects of perceived collective efficacy and disorder on cooperation, it is worthwhile to describe the other direct paths in the model. Results (Columns "Equal Treatment", "Effectiveness" and "Procedural Justice" in Table 3) show that perceived collective efficacy shapes residents' views on police equal treatment ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.05$), effectiveness ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$) and procedural justice ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, perceived disorder does not influence residents' evaluations of the police. Regarding the control variables, compared to males and older individuals, females ($\beta = -0.13, p < 0.01$) and younger individuals ($\beta = -0.17, p < 0.001$) hold lower ratings of police equal treatment. Respondents more educated hold lower ratings of police effectiveness ($\beta = -0.14, p < 0.01$) and procedural justice ($\beta = -0.16, p < 0.01$) than their less-educated counterparts and people with higher household income report lower levels of police equal treatment ($\beta = -0.12, p < 0.05$). Lastly, compared to residents in Dearborn Heights, residents in Dearborn think more positively of police equal treatment ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.01$), effectiveness ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.001$) and procedural justice ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.01$).

Indirect effects of perceived collective efficacy and disorder

We conducted formal indirect effect analyses to assess the indirect effects of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and disorder on cooperation through perceptions of the police. This part of the analysis also helps identify the specific pathways linking area conditions to cooperation. Table 4 reports the total, total indirect and significant specific indirect effects of perceived collective efficacy and disorder on cooperation.

Regarding the total effect, while perceived collective efficacy does not have a significant total effect on cooperation, perceived disorder has a significant, negative, total effect on cooperation ($\beta = -0.17$, $p < 0.05$). The null total effect of collective efficacy is mainly due to the opposite directions of its direct and indirect effect on cooperation. That is, even though perceived collective efficacy has a positive, total indirect effect on cooperation ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$), promoting cooperation with the police through improving perceptions of the police, its direct effect on cooperation, although not statistically significant, is negative, rendering its total effect non-significant. One specific pathway that links collective efficacy to cooperation is significant, through police effectiveness (specific indirect effect $\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, perceived neighborhood disorder shapes cooperation chiefly directly. Finally, the two interactional terms between neighborhood context and Arab American do not exert any significant indirect effect on the outcome.

Discussion*Summary of major findings*

Four major findings from this study are worth discussing. First, perceived neighborhood disorder has a significant direct effect on residents' willingness to cooperate with the police. When individuals observe higher levels of physical and social disorder in their neighborhoods, they report lower levels of tendencies to cooperate, after controlling for perceptions of police equal treatment, effectiveness and procedural justice. Hence perception of disorder discourages residents to take active measures to work with the police for reasons not limited to policing. Future research should investigate *why* neighborhood disorder reduces residents' cooperation with the police, exploring potential underlying mechanisms of elevated levels of legal cynicism and fear of retaliation. Legal cynicism promotes extrajudicial violence (Gordon, 2020) while fear of retaliation increases the costs of cooperation (Papp *et al.*, 2019).

	Coefficient	S.E.	Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%
<i>Total effects</i>				
Perceived collective efficacy	0.02	0.08	-0.13	0.18
Perceived disorder	-0.17*	0.07	-0.31	-0.02
Perceived collective efficacy $\times$ Arab	0.14	0.08	-0.02	0.29
Perceived disorder $\times$ Arab	0.03	0.07	-0.11	0.18
<i>Total indirect effects</i>				
Perceived collective efficacy	0.09**	0.03	0.03	0.15
Perceived disorder	-0.01	0.03	-0.06	0.04
Perceived collective efficacy $\times$ Arab	-0.03	0.02	-0.08	0.02
Perceived disorder $\times$ Arab	-0.04	0.02	-0.09	0.01
<i>Significant specific indirect effects</i>				
Perceived collective efficacy - $\rightarrow$ effectiveness - $\rightarrow$ cooperation	0.07**	0.02	0.02	0.11

Note(s): Standardized coefficients are reported

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4.
The total, total indirect,
and specific indirect
effects of perceived
collective efficacy and
disorder on
cooperation ($n = 414$)

Second, perceived neighborhood collective efficacy does not have a significant total effect on people's reported tendencies of cooperation, despite a promoting effect on cooperation through the specific pathway of perception of police effectiveness. This finding differs from previous research demonstrating that higher levels of collective efficacy led to greater willingness to cooperate with the police, holding perception of police variables such as effectiveness, fairness and legitimacy constant (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2021). This difference may partially be explained by the different measures and analysis models adopted in these studies. For example, Liu *et al.* (2020) utilize multi-level analysis and Wu *et al.* (2021) utilize OLS regression, as opposed to this study's moderated mediation analysis. In addition, both Liu *et al.* (2020) and Wu *et al.* (2021) are based on samples from China, a social and cultural context very different from that of the United States. This finding however echoes what Khatchatourian *et al.* (2022) revealed that perception of neighborhood informal social control (a key dimension of collective efficacy) does not predict cooperation after controlling for trust in police and felt obligation to obey the police. Khatchatourian *et al.* (2022) draw upon data from the city of Detroit and include an array of predictors that this study does not examine due to a lack of measures, such as perception of police legitimacy, legal cynicism, neighborhood anti-snitch culture, contact with police and fear of crime. Our similar findings nonetheless suggest that perceived direct informal social control does not necessarily translate to a willingness to exercise indirect informal social control by reporting crime or providing crime tips to the police.

Third, perceived collective efficacy has a direct, positive effect on cooperation among Arab Americans only. The neighborhood – perceptions of the police – cooperation pathways (i.e., the indirect relationships), meanwhile, apply invariantly to Arab- and non-Arab American respondents. These findings may be explained by collectivism, a core value in Arabic culture that places group priority over individuals. When Arab Americans believe in their community's conjoint capability to care for one another and achieve a common good, they may be especially encouraged and motivated to participate in courses of action that can better their community, including helping the police in crime control endeavors for community safety.

Fourth, police equal treatment and effectiveness matter in soliciting public cooperation, as both positively influence reported cooperative tendencies and effectiveness also serves as a significant mediator that connects collective efficacy to cooperation. Overall, police effectiveness is the strongest predictor of cooperation in this study. This result contradicts evidence from much research in the United States and other developed countries suggesting the primacy of procedural justice in securing public compliance and cooperation. For example, procedural justice is found predictive of cooperation with the police among Arab Muslim communities in Australia (Cherney and Murphy, 2013). It should be acknowledged that this study's measure of procedural justice contains only three items, failing to cover all four dimensions of the concept (voice, respect, accountability and neutrality), thus having a lower degree of content validity than previous research. Nonetheless, this finding reminds us that effectiveness remains a critical consideration for public cooperation for at least some communities and groups in the United States.

Limitations

A few limitations to this study must be acknowledged. First, this study relies on data collected from two cities in Metro-Detroit, thus findings cannot be generalized to other locations, especially those that do not have a large Arab American population. Future research should collect data from Arab Americans in other parts of the nation, including both Arab American-concentrated and -dispersed areas. Second, our cross-sectional data only allow for testing of correlational instead of causal relationships. Future research with a

longitudinal design can reveal the temporal order involved in these relationships. Third, our key measures indicate subjective evaluations of neighborhood conditions and local police, which may not correspond with objective measures of these concepts (e.g., clearance rates, observational data of police treatment and procedural justice). Future investigation on neighborhood effect should collect data from diverse neighborhoods (or police beats) and utilize multilevel models to gauge the influences of both objective and subjective neighborhood-level traits on residents' cooperation. Future research should also measure public cooperation through both reported willingness and past actions. Fourth, culture-specific factors are not assessed in this study. Future research should investigate the roles that relevant cultural measures, such as embracement of communal values, deference to authority and support for civic engagement, play in shaping both Arab and non-Arab Americans' cooperation with the police.

Implications

Findings of this study highlight a few policy implications, including reducing neighborhood disorder, increasing police effectiveness and strengthening Arab American communities' collective efficacy. Order in neighborhoods can be maintained through both informal and formal social control. On one hand, positive social actions should be organized by community leaders or taken by individuals to reduce signs of disorder (e.g., graffiti, broken windows) that arise in the neighborhood or near one's home. Community-drive disorder reduction, such as developing and maintaining green space in urban areas has been found effective and sustaining (Pizarro *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, police departments should employ programs "generated by community and problem-solving interventions designed to change disorder conditions at particular places", rather than "aggressive order maintenance strategies that target individual disorderly behavior" (Braga *et al.*, 2015, p. 567). Specifically, community policing activities appear to help promote perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate (Peyton *et al.*, 2019), including during periods of war on terror (Lyons, 2002), hence should be adopted or continued by police departments.

Given the saliency of perceived police effectiveness in promoting public cooperation, although scientific evidence on the effectiveness of police investigation policies and practices remains extremely limited (much rarer compared to that on the effectiveness of police patrol), a recent issue in *Criminology and Public Policy* (2019) has summarized a few core areas addressing police effectiveness, covering the design of investigation policy, practices and resources, engagement of high-risk populations and management of internal police problems (Braga and MacDonald, 2019). The police should also communicate more frequently with residents regarding the efforts and progress they have made in reducing crime and disorder.

Finally, the positive effect of perceived collective efficacy on cooperation among Arab Americans reaffirms the importance of recognizing cultural norms when working with ethnic communities. Policymakers and practitioners should continue to help Arab Americans solve their neighborhood problems and strengthen residents' sense of community. Community policing and problem-oriented policing have the potential to promote Arab Americans' cooperation with the police as they encourage officers to work with the communities to address local concerns, invigorate neighborhood organizations, enrich neighborhood activities and better neighborhood conditions (Peyton *et al.*, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2011).

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