

## The 2013 Officer Training Experiment

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This evaluation focuses on the Chicago Police Department's efforts to reshape its relationship with minority communities in Chicago and reset the character of its internal supervisory and decision-making processes. In both instances they plan to do so by adopting a procedural justice framework, externally for guiding how Chicago police deal with the public, and internally for guiding how police deal with one another.

The 2013 officer training experiment examined a key element of the department's plan for reshaping its relationship with the community. As part of this initiative, a "Procedural Justice and Legitimacy Workshop" training module was developed for rank-and-file Chicago officers. Classes of about 25 officers met with teams of three trainers for day-long sessions at the police training academy. By the end, about 8,700 officers had been trained. The officer training study



Our project is studying the Department's new initiatives. It is funded independently by private foundations. We want to get realistic feedback on what you are thinking. The results might bring about improvements in the program. We do not ask your name or anything that could identify you, so the information you provide is anonymous. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can stop at any time. If you want further information about the project, please contact the project director Prof. Wesley Skogan at 847-491-3395.

These questions are about your job and the CPD. Please circle the number that best corresponds to your agreement with the following statements.

|   | agree<br>strongly | agree | disagree | disagree<br>strongly |
|---|-------------------|-------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 When dealing with citizens, officers need to explain what will happen next, when they are done at the scene.      | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 2 It is important that we remind people they have rights and that we appear to follow them.                         | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 3 Officers should trust citizens as if they can be trusted to do the right thing.                                   | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 4 Listening and talking to people is a good way to take charge of situations.                                       | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 5 In certain areas of the city, it is more useful for an officer to be aggressive than to be courteous.             | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 6 It is important to give everyone a good reason why we are stopping them, even if there is no need.                | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 7 Officers shouldn't take time to listen to citizens complain about their problems.                                 | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 8 Officers should at all times treat people they encounter with dignity and respect.                                | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 9 Police have enough trust in the public for them to work together effectively.                                     | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 10 Officers need to show an honest interest in what people have to say, even if it is not going to change anything. | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 11 People should be treated with respect regardless of their attitude.  | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 12 Letting people talk back only encourages them to get angrier.  | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 13 Officers have reason to be distrustful of many citizens.   | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 14 It is very important that officers appear neutral in their application of legal rules.                           | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 15 If people ask why we are treating like we are, we should stop and explain.                                       | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |
| 16 Citizens will never trust the police enough to work together effectively.  | 1                 | 2     | 3        | 4                    |

17. I received this survey: \_\_\_ before the class began \_\_\_ at the end of the class
18. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)
19. My Bureau: \_\_\_ Patrol \_\_\_ Detective \_\_\_ Traffic \_\_\_ Administration/Development  
 \_\_\_ Other Field - Organized Crime, Narcotics, Special Events or Ops

That's it! Thanks a lot! 3 office use only

described here provides a modest experimental test of the short-term effectiveness of the training. In addition to creating a running stream of data on what trainees were thinking, completing the experimental survey also further challenged their ideas about how legitimacy affects their work. It thus served the purposes of training itself.

The study was conducted independently of the Chicago Police Department, but with the endorsement of the agency. It was supported by the John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Joyce Foundation. The CPD played no role in determining the content of the experimental survey, which was conducted with the cooperation of the training academy. To supplement our experiment we interviewed trainers regarding their experiences and sat in on training sessions. We maintained a continuing dialog with the project's managers. During the course of the study the direct stakeholders were provided with feedback based on our findings. A formal report on the findings will be submitted to all stakeholders at the end of the project, and scholarly materials will be prepared for publication.

## Survey Content

The survey that was conducted as part of the experiment included questions regarding officer's views of their relationship with the public. The questions tapped four core procedural justice concepts that were the training goals of the academy.

*Participation* involves giving citizens an opportunity to describe their situation and express their opinions about a problem (to “tell their side of the story”) while officers are deciding what to do.

*Neutrality* calls for consistency and even-handedness in decision-making across persons (equal treatment for all) and across time (the same procedures are followed every time). Neutral decisions are reasoned, objective, factually driven and respect rules and legal principles.

*Respect* encompasses treating citizens with dignity and respect, evidencing concern about respecting their rights, and politeness and other routine interactional signs of respect.

*Trust* is evidenced when officers treat citizens as if they can be trusted “to do the right thing.” and demonstrate that they are acting on behalf of the best interests of the people they are dealing with.

## Experimental Procedures

The survey was administered during class sessions conducted at the Chicago Police Training Academy. Groups of trainers provided 8 hours of procedural justice and legitimacy training to classes of about 25 students. In total, about 8,700 officers, 230 new recruits, many of the department's civilian employees, and some civilian activists were trained.

Questionnaires are completed by trainees either before the class began, or at its conclusion. This was determined by a simple randomization procedure: questionnaires were distributed before the class begins on odd-numbered days (for example, December 3), and at the end of the class on even-numbered days. The odd-day and even-day questionnaires were identical except for their color (blue or white); this helped the instructors keep track of their administration. At the conclusion of each class, the instructors placed all of the questionnaires (including blanks, for the very small percentage of trainees who choose not to participate) into a large envelope. They wrote the date on the front of the envelope, and noted any unusual events that may have affected the class. The envelopes were securely stored, and picked up regularly for keying.

Over the many months during which training was conducted this odd-even approach equated the two groups quite effectively. The survey asked only one personal question, age; this was used to confirm that the two groups were in fact very similar. The survey also asked if it was being completed before or after the class, to confirm treatment implementation. Note that this was explicitly not an evaluation of individual trainers or training teams; instructors were not

asked to record the shift (2<sup>nd</sup> watch or 3<sup>rd</sup> watch) or section number of the class.

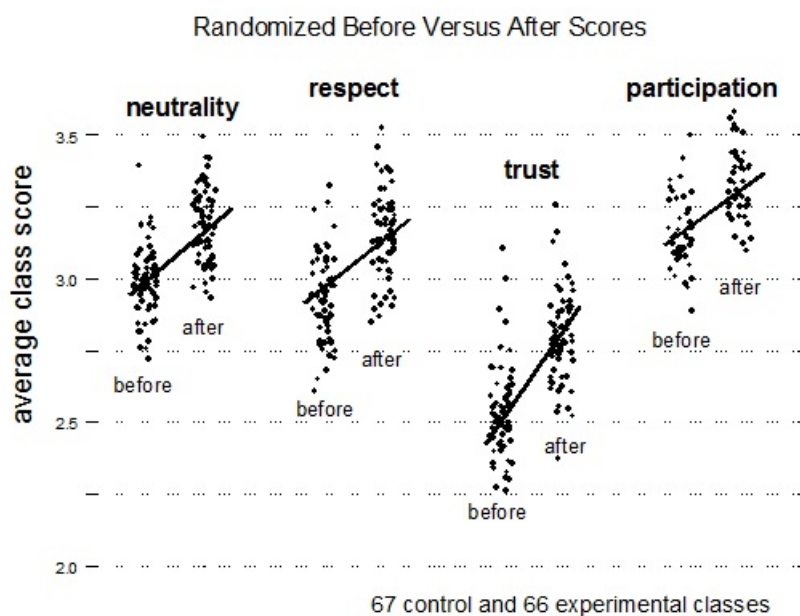
The survey had to be very short, filling one side of one page of legal paper. A section at the top described the survey and reminded trainees of their rights as human subjects. It then presented 16 attitudinal questions tapping four procedural justice concepts. Trainees were also asked to identify their Bureau, which is the largest administrative unit in the department.

## Findings

Because this was a randomized experiment, the analysis could focus on simple before-after differences in officers' views. Random assignment was at the classroom level, so we examined the differences between "before" classes and "after" classes. In all, a total of 2,654 officers completed the surveys (another 0.6% chose not to cooperate). They participated in 133 classes, 67 surveyed before training and 66 after training. The surveyed offices split 51%-49% between the two groups. Their ages confirmed the equality of the treatment and control classes: the median age of officers in the "before" group was 41.8, and the median age of the "after" group was 42.0.

How these two groups differed was in their views of procedural justice. The effects of training can easily be seen in the data. Figure 1 below compares treatment and control classrooms on the scores created by combining responses to the questions measuring each procedural justice concept. The results are positive. There was a significant shift toward support for citizen participation, neutrality, respect and trust among officers who were surveyed following training. All of these differences are statistically significant, with effect sizes (Cohen's d) ranging from 1.4 to 1.7. Effect sizes in this range are conventionally classified of as "strong." The correlation between treatment and outcome (Eta Squared) ranged from .34 to .45, which is substantial.

Figure 1



The symbols in Figure 1 represent the data for every classroom in the study, divided into treatment and control groups. It is apparent that the clusters of responses in the classrooms that were surveyed after training were more positive than the before-training groups. The statistical lines presented in Figure 1 pass through the mean score of each group, highlighting differences between the classrooms.

Officers were most supportive of citizen participation. This was measured using responses to statements like "Listening and talking to people is a good way to take charge of situations," and "Officers need to show an honest interest in what people have to say, even it is not going to change anything." Scores on this dimension are presented at the right of Figure 1, and they were the highest for both the before and after classes. Support for citizen participation went up, on average, following training; this trend is illustrated by the regression line connecting the subgroup means.

In class, officers expressed the least enthusiasm for the procedural justice concept of "trust." This was measured by responses to questions like "Police have enough trust in the public for them to work together effectively," and "Officers should treat citizens as if they can be trusted to do the right thing." Figure 1 displays trust scores for our 133 study classrooms, and they are visibly lower than support for other procedural justice concepts. However, before-after differences in trust continued to resemble those for the other dimensions of procedural justice, and the mean difference between the two groups was also statistically significant. Notably, the biggest gain scores (differences between the two groups) were for trust; this can also be seen in the more sharply sloping regression link linking the before and after means for trust.

Between trust and participation lay our measures of neutrality and respect. Neutrality was measured by responses to questions including "It is very important that officers appear neutral in their application of legal rules," and "When dealing with citizens' concerns, officers need to explain what will happen next, when they are done at the scene." The level of support for treating citizens with dignity and respect was assessed with responses to statements that included "People should be treated with respect regardless of their attitude," and "In certain areas of the city, it is more useful for an officer to be aggressive than to be courteous." These measures too shifted in response to training.A

In addition to this study of in-service training, we conducted a parallel analysis of the impact of the procedural justice module on 240 new recruits. Their views were analyzed at the individual level, for they were packed into just four classroom groups, so the findings are only suggestive. However, the same patterns emerged for rookies, including scoring lowest on trust. In addition to police officers, training sessions have been held for the department's civilian employees and for representatives of community groups, but their data are not examined here.

At the conclusion of the first experimental study, the content of the classroom evaluation questionnaire changed, introducing a focus on the possible spill-over effects of the training on officers' views of engaging with the community. A consistent message throughout the training package was that quality interactions with the public would increase citizens' trust, cooperation with the police, compliance with orders, and officer safety. Endorsement of collaboration with the community would put officers generally in line with Chicago's community policing program, which emphasizes police-public collaboration. Two community engagement measures are examined here. The first was "moral alignment," which is an important component of procedural justice theory and research. In this research, moral alignment is described as a sense of shared moral values, or agreement on what is right and proper. When police and the public are generally

aligned in this way, each is more likely to trust and collaborate with the other. Community engagement questions more directly relevant to the departments community policing program were also included. In this phase of the experiment, officers surveyed following training were more likely to report feeling in alignment with the public and more likely to support consultation with the public about their safety concerns.

### **Long Term Effects**

The long term effects of training were examined in a survey of officers. The survey was conducted in each of the city's 22 police district stations, and involved Sergeants and Police Officers (the bottom rank). Randomly sampled employees were notified of their opportunity to participate in the survey, and interviews were conducted during their regular tour of duty, around the clock. The overall response rate was about 30 percent. A total of 714 Police Officers and Sergeants were interviewed. The survey questionnaire included many items matching those used in the training study.

In the district survey, 67 percent of those interviewed indicated that they had attended "the all-day training workshop on procedural justice and legitimacy at the Academy." Because of the timing of the district survey, officers could have participated in the workshop as long as six months or more in the past, or as recently as the week before. There were few differences between those who had and had not (yet) been trained, but statistical controls were used to take any measured differences between them into account. Based on this analysis, Chicago's procedural justice training appears to have had a relatively enduring impact on three of the four dimensions of procedural justice included in the short-term experiment. The biggest continuing effect of training was on respect. Training also had significant, positive effects on support for neutrality and voice. Training did not have a statistically reliable long-term impact on with willingness of Chicago officers to trust the public, although the impact of training on trust was in a positive direction.